



no cats, fortunately - were recently found buried in the walls of a 17th-century farmhouse in the ancient Saxon village of Holywell Row in Suffolk. "The owners sent pictures to the Northampton Shoe Museum, which confirmed it was common at that time to seal up shoes in chimneys, doorways and roofs to ward off evil spirits," says Richard Freshwater, director of Cambridge-based Cheffins estate agency. "The owners left the shoes there when they sold the house." In Pembrokeshire, buying agent

PIECES OF THE PAST
Carol Peett with the remnants discovered in the grounds of her home in Wales, right



HOW TO MAKE A TIME CAPSULE

- Use a strong, airtight and non-corrodible container.
- The capsule should be welded shut or a lid screwed on. Inside it should be dry and oxygen-free; silica gel can be used to control the humidity.
- You can use polythene pipes or other plastic, but little is known about long-term wear. Don't use PVC as it will deteriorate. Wrap it in a waterproof membrane.
- Place the capsule in a cool, dry location, where it will not be exposed to changes in temperature.
- Any documents should be dried to reduce humidity. Use black and white photos rather than colour. Wood should be kept separate from metals as it releases acid. Place each item in a separate polyester bag.

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'There is an interesting tradition of deliberately burying things thought to be good luck charms'

Carol Peett encounters many homes that reveal a treasure hunter's dream, usually vestiges of the Welsh coast's ancient megalithic burial chambers and Iron Age forts.

When her parents began renovating the old, traditional Welsh farmhouse where she now lives, they discovered remnants of life that had been left behind. "My mother kept coming across old cattle shoes," says Peett, managing director of West Wales Property Finders. "Her research showed that the garden had once housed the most westerly forge for shoeing cattle, which were brought over from Ireland by boat and walked up on drovers' paths to London to sell."

It's not just humans that make these discoveries. Tim and Harriet Alban's brood of chickens dug up some bullets in the garden, left from the Second World War when American airmen were billeted in the house's barn. The Albans also discovered glass bottles and clay pipes buried in their cottage in Kelshall, Hertfordshire. "Until the Sixties our house was the local pub and even now we're still finding bottles from breweries that have long since disappeared," says Tim.

The whole of Kelshall is something of an extended time capsule, he adds, from the turn-of-the-century Marmite jars in his garden to the Byzantine plate unearthed just outside the village a year ago. He and his wife have put the house on the market with Cheffins for £1.35million. But, he says, the bottles will stay. "We feel like they belong to the house. But I like the idea of adding to its history in some way. My wife is a jewellery designer and my son writes his own music, so if someone was to find something of ours in 100 years' time I'd hope it would be some of her work or one of his CDs."



THE WEEKLY ROUND UP

Selected snippets from the world of property



Best buy: Brussels city centre

BEER, CHOCOLATE AND AFFORDABLE HOMES

The best European capital city to be a first-time buyer is Brussels, mortgage lender Together has revealed.

It took into account mortgage repayments as a percentage of income, average monthly bills, travel pass costs and price per square foot of a home in the city centre. The average homeowner in Belgium's capital spends half their monthly salary on mortgage repayments.

London was found to be the eighth-worst European capital for first-time buyers. Most expensive of all was Moscow, Russia, followed by Kiev in Ukraine and Budapest, Hungary.

Ranking below Brussels in the top five places for first-time buyers were Bern in Switzerland; Copenhagen, Denmark; Luxembourg City; and Nicosia, Cyprus.

A HOME FIT FOR A FIRST LADY

A plush New York townhouse once owned by Eleanor Roosevelt (left) has just come on to the market.

The red-brick, 19th-century property was where the former First Lady entertained the likes of Indira



Gandhi, Adlai Stevenson and John F Kennedy from 1953 to 1958.

It is located in the elegant Treadwell Farms district on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, whose previous residents have included actress Kim Novak and film director Martin Scorsese.

The house has six grand marble fireplaces and a sumptuous mahogany staircase which twists upwards to link 12 rooms spread across five storeys. There is a lift, a landscaped garden and roof terrace with views across the city's skyscrapers.

Roosevelt's former home is for sale with Savills for \$13.5million (£10.3million).



Growing up: high-rise London

LONDON SETS ITS SIGHTS HIGHER AND HIGHER

This year will see a record number of skyscrapers built in Britain's capital, with a total of 76 new buildings higher than 20 floors to be built by the end of December.

There are currently plans for 541 more skyscrapers in London, with construction underway on 121, according to research by New London Architecture and GL Hearn. Forty per cent of the buildings will have at least 30 floors.

The extra space, it is hoped, will ease London's housing problems by providing up to 110,000 new homes.