

## ASK THE EXPERT

By James Berwick, owner of Berwick & Berwick, **team** estate agent in St Ives:

**Q. Is there any point putting my home on the market before Christmas, or should I wait until the New Year?**

**A.** Generally speaking – assuming someone is serious about moving - there is nothing to be gained by waiting. However, in this particular instance, I would say that the opposite is true, and there is nothing to be gained by rushing to market this side of Christmas. Why? Well, for the simple reason that in spite of the fact that things have clearly started to pick up again over the last few months, the annual Christmas lull in housing market activity is almost upon us. With a few exceptions, most people have other things on their minds than looking at properties that – even with the best will in the world - they won't be able to move into until next Spring.



However...far from simply sitting on your hands until the New Year, I suggest that you actually turn this lull to your advantage. Most estate agents are going to have quite a lot of time to spare over the next two or three weeks. My advice is that you use this period to get everything in place, so that you're in a position to hit the ground running, immediately the festive season is over. So, do your research, select your agent and instruct them. They in turn will have plenty of time to get everything ready – from taking good-quality photographs and preparing property details and other marketing materials, to advising you on any little things you can do to improve the buyer-appeal of your home, and getting your Home Information Pack sorted out.

The net result of all this is that you will be ideally placed to take the fullest possible advantage of the New Year surge in market activity which always follows the Christmas lull, like night follows day. So, while everyone else is waiting for their HIPs to come through, you will be able to begin marketing from Day One.

Bear in mind that one of the biggest challenges facing the market right now is a shortage of instructions - so if you can steal a march on other sellers in this way, you should really be in line for a happy New Year!