

Countryspecial Lord of the manor

In the 1960s, every rock star purchased a country pile. But weren't they supposed to hate that sort of thing? Sophy Grimshaw takes a trip back in time

We spoke to each other the minute we saw each other. A thatched house, quite small, surrounded by a moat." Whose words are these, on chancing upon a 12th-century property for sale in West Wittering and purchasing it in cash that same day? Not Douglas Hogg, the Tory MP of the moat cleaning expenses scandal, though that might have been a fair guess; but Keith Richards. He is recalling (in his ▶

Keef in his element: Keith Richards pictured outside Redlands, his legendary country house, in 1973

COUNTRY HOMES FIT FOR A ROCK STAR

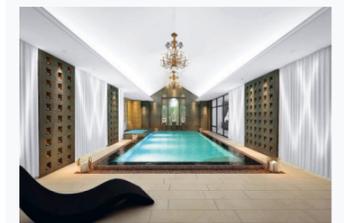
WILTSHIRE

Granted, he's not exactly a Rolling Stone, but Robbie Williams once lived in Compton Bassett House, now on the market. The seven-bedroom mansion is set in its own parkland, replete with helicopter hangar, football pitch, swimming pool, tennis courts, and flats for staff. £5.5m. knightfrank.co.uk and struttandparker.com



CHESHIRE

A six-car garage (perfect for those vintage Bentleys) and a pool with a chandelier that's just crying out for party guests to swing on it are all part of the appeal of Warford Hall, Cheshire. A rock star-ready home if ever we saw one, it includes a private bar room. £12m, jackson-stops.co.uk



BERKSHIRE

This five-bedroom home has its own pool and there's a highly bohemian vibe throughout, with Moroccan-influenced moulding and features and plenty of cosy, cave-like (in a good way) spaces to hang out in. £2.3m, sothebysrealty.co.uk



Come back to my place: Jimmy Page, and Plumpton Place, his Elizabethan manor house

PHOTOGRAPHS: MIRRORPIX; GETTY; REK; STUART CONWAY/CAMERA PRESS



autobiography, *Life*) the day he bought Redlands: "The house I still own in West Sussex, near Chichester Harbour; the house where we were busted, which burned down twice, the house I still love." As he remembers, "I had a brochure with a couple of houses marked and I'm poncing around in my Bentley, 'Oh, I'm going to buy a house.' I took a wrong turn and turned into Redlands." He asked directions from the resident owner, and in the course of their conversation it emerged that Redlands, too, was for sale. "I looked at him and said, how much? Because I fell in love with Redlands the minute I saw it. Nobody's going to let this thing go, it's too picturesque, ideal."

Being a fast-mover, Richards "zoomed up to London, just got to the bank in time, got the bread – twenty grand in a brown paper bag – and by the evening I was back down at Redlands, in front of the fireplace, and we signed the deal."

Rock and roll is the most urban of genres, the music of electrified instruments, born in dance halls and dive bars. It's the sound of subcultures and anti-establishment heroes. But its stars have also made a virtue of being a bundle of cultural contradictions. Rockers of the 1960s and 70s loved playing lord of the manor in country piles, or 'poncing around' as Richards puts it. There's a rich tradition of a sprawling

home counties residence as rock star's retreat: recording studio, party pad, detox clinic, or private space away from the paps. At the end of *This Is Spinal Tap*, we're even told that guitarist Nigel Tufnel has moved out to Kent.

The Redlands drug bust Richards referred to earlier is the one which generated the headline 'Naked girl at Stone's party' in 1967, the girl in question being Marianne Faithfull – who was in fact clad in a fur rug, to be fair, until a policewoman asked her to drop it. "At Redlands, we were all trying to keep our spirits up," writes Faithfull in her autobiography, adding, "I achieved this mainly by doing acid continually."

The bust at the country house also led to a court case and draconian establishment



Thatched entertainment: Jagger and Richards outside Redlands, where they were busted for drugs. Marianne Faithfull (below) liked a cuppa in the country

response (Richards and Jagger were sent to prison, but later freed on appeal) which prompted the then editor of *The Times*, William Rees-Mogg, to write his famous 'Who breaks a butterfly on a wheel?' editorial in the Stones' defence. (Rees-Mogg's children Annunziata and Jacob would grow up to become, not rock stars, but Tory MPs).

Faithfull points out that the commuter belt lifestyle of a Sussex manor house owner wasn't always compatible with that of a Rolling Stone, however, "Since it was a two-hour drive from London [...] Keith [...] often ended up staying in town with Brian or Mick."

Nearer to the buzz of Swinging Sixties London, yet still green and pleasant, was The Wick, Ronnie Wood's palatial Richmond home (Richards also spent some time living in the coach house there). At the corner of Nightingale Lane and Richmond Hill in Surrey, The Wick was previously the home of actor Sir John Mills and his family, including his actress daughter Hayley.

In her autobiography, model Bebe Buell recalls being invited to stay at The Wick and accepting chiefly because she wanted to sleep in Hayley Mills' childhood bedroom. Other guests of Wood's that night included Rod Stewart and Mick Jagger. It wasn't all sex, drugs and rock and roll behind