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I wanted to put my house on the market...but what a mess!

THE agents' call took me by surprise: "You remember we valued your property last year," he said. Indeed I did – and it wasn't enough! "Well," he added, "the market's really taken off since then, and there's a lot of demand for your type of property. If you put it on the market now, I reckon I could get you another 10% – are you interested?"

My hand shook as I put down the phone. Interested? Too right! But as I looked around me the awful truth dawned – the place was a mess! Spring cleaning time had come and gone and now, as the

summer sun struggled through the dusty windows, it was clear that if we were going to sell we needed help.

On the recommendation of a friend I called Trish Fuller, a partner in Absolutely Spotless a leading professional cleaning firm covering whole of the Greater London area. Founded five years ago, the firm specialises in one-off major cleaning jobs, as well as carpets and upholstery. Typical Absolutely Spotless customers include spring

clean candidates, builders handing over a new or refurbished property, landlords and letting agents, people about to move into or out of a property, and those with a cleaning disaster on their hands.

What they don't do is the regular weekly spruce-up.

"Some people imagine we're going to send a couple of Mrs Mops on the bus, with a bucket and some Jif," Trish explained. "They're a bit surprised when four burly blokes arrive with profes-

sional cleaning equipment!"

She gave me an estimate of the cost and explained that it would take about four hours.

Spring Cleaning Day dawned and Jack Pead, another of the firm's partners, rang the doorbell, clipboard in hand. The four burly blokes were nowhere to be seen as Jack inspected each room, asking in great detail what I wanted done. He itemised the cost of each task and then discussed my priorities and budget, helping ensure that

the work we agreed would stay within it.

Jack then returned with his colleagues and their industrial cleaning machinery. Each was briefed on his part of the job, and for four hours they worked, quietly, professionally and very efficiently – without even a coffee break.

The cost is surprisingly reasonable and very good value. To spring clean an average three-bedroom house like ours costs between £110 and £130. On top of

Sue Spenceley Burch has her home cleaned up by experts who don't even stop for a coffee break – and then decides it really is a rather pleasant place to live after all

that comes dry cleaning the curtains, carpet cleaning is £1 per square yard and upholstery costs £10 per seat. Cleaning all the windows – inside and out – would cost from £20 to £40.

With their equipment packed away, the cheerful Absolutely Spotless team headed off in their van and I wandered around, admiring their handiwork.

Just then the phone rang – it was the estate agent, could he pop round and do a valuation? "No thanks," I told him, "we've decided to stay. Our house looks great now it's absolutely spotless."