

# COUNTRY LIFE<sup>®</sup>

DECEMBER 27, 2017

EVERY WEEK

## Spring into 2018

Month-by-month guide to everything  
you need to know



# B BRIGHTS OF NETTLEBED

1,500 DESIGNS OF CLASSICAL FURNITURE IN STOCK  
CABINETRY, UPHOLSTERY, LIGHTING, MIRRORS, PAINTINGS & SILK RUGS



An ingenious mahogany bureau desk in the George III manner. The sloping fall front encloses an elaborately fitted interior of faux books and hidden drawers and cabinets. The staircase gallery interior has suede panelling with a short frieze drawer below flanked by dummy drawers. Below this are two short and two long drawers on bracket feet whilst the sides have further drawers plus hidden drawers. Inspired by the Grand staircase and gallery at Althorp.

Width 45¼" (115.5cm) | Depth when closed 23" (59cm) | Height 44" (112cm) £6,230

AVAILABLE TO VIEW IN YOUR HOME PRIOR TO PURCHASE - CALL FOR DETAILS



The above piece is from a collection of exquisitely hand-crafted furniture inspired by the interior of Althorp House, built up over 500 years and 20 generations of the Spencer family for their home.

View more than 100 pieces of Althorp Living History, endorsed by Charles, 9th Earl Spencer, in stock on our website.



*At this time of year we reflect on those who have made our activities possible.  
In this spirit we thank you for your support and wish you a happy and healthy new year.*

#### LONDON

608 King's Road · London · SW6 2DX | Telephone 020 7610 9597  
Open Monday to Saturday 10am - 5.30pm

#### OXFORDSHIRE

Kingston House · High Street · Nettlebed · RG9 5DD | Telephone 01491 641115  
Open Tuesday to Saturday 9am - 5.30pm

ONE FAMILY SPECIALISING IN FINE FURNITURE SINCE 1866  
WWW.BRIGHTSOFNETTLEBED.CO.UK



## Somerset

### A quintessential English country house in a peaceful parkland setting

Wells 9 miles, Bristol (Clifton Village) 13.3 miles, Bath 16 miles

Available for the first time in nearly 100 years, this beautiful country house is privately positioned on the edge of a popular village with panoramic views over the Chew Valley, situated in the Mendip AONB. 6 reception rooms, 6 principal bedrooms, 7 bathrooms. 3 bedroom cottage, former stable yard, walled garden, traditional farm buildings. Parkland, pasture and woodland. In all about 51.7 acres.

[KnightFrank.co.uk/country](https://www.KnightFrank.co.uk/country)  
[james.mckillop@knightfrank.com](mailto:james.mckillop@knightfrank.com)  
+44 20 7861 1528

[KnightFrank.co.uk/bristol](https://www.KnightFrank.co.uk/bristol)  
[james.toogood@knightfrank.com](mailto:james.toogood@knightfrank.com)  
+44 0117 317 1999

**KnightFrank.co.uk**

 OnTheMarket.com



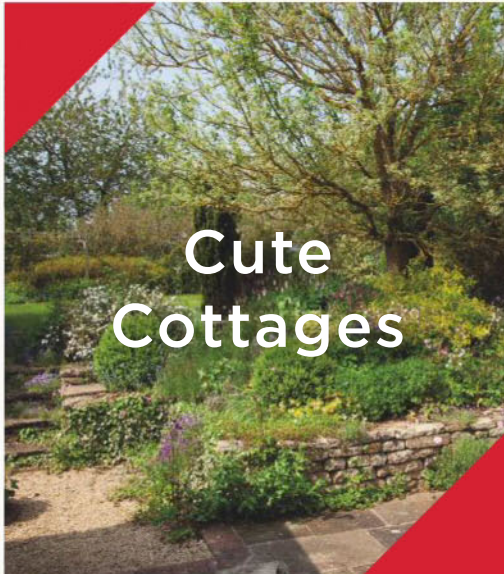
Somerset Halse Guide price: £450,000  
TAUNTON 01823 325 144



Oxfordshire Taynton Guide price: £850,000  
BURFORD 01993 822 661



Surrey Oxted  
Guide price: £895,000  
OXTED 01883 712 375



Kent West Malling  
Guide price: £800,000  
SEVENOAKS 01732 740 600



Suffolk Woodbridge Guide price: £650,000  
IPSWICH 01473 218 218



Cheshire Tilston Offers in excess of £600,000  
CHESTER 01244 328 361



## Buckinghamshire

### A unique, architect-designed riverside property

Marlow 4.3 miles, Beaconsfield 4.6 miles, Central London 30.9 miles

A spectacular brand new house situated on the banks of the River Thames on Riversdale, a prestigious private road ideally located between Cookham and Bourne End. 6 bedrooms including former boathouse and annexe, 4 reception rooms, 6 bathrooms, double garage, secure enclosed landscaped gardens, private mooring. EPC: B. In all about 0.57 acre.

[KnightFrank.co.uk/country](https://www.knightfrank.co.uk/country)  
[edward.welton@knightfrank.com](mailto:edward.welton@knightfrank.com)  
[daisy.casement@knightfrank.com](mailto:daisy.casement@knightfrank.com)  
+44 20 7861 1114

[KnightFrank.co.uk/henley](https://www.knightfrank.co.uk/henley)  
[matthew.mannall@knightfrank.com](mailto:matthew.mannall@knightfrank.com)  
+44 1491 844900

**KnightFrank.co.uk**



## *Beautiful riverside country estate*

TEWIN, HERTFORDSHIRE

Welwyn North station (Digswell): 2.1 miles (Kings Cross from 29 minutes), Welwyn Garden City: 2.8 miles, Knebworth: 6.4 miles (Kings Cross from 33 minutes), A1(M) junction 6: 2.7 miles, Luton Airport: 14.5 miles

A small country estate in a beautiful riverside setting. The main residence includes 5 reception rooms, kitchen with larder and scullery, master bedroom with balcony, 3 further bedrooms (1 en suite), 2 further bath/shower rooms. Two separate cottages. Estate grounds around the river Mimram include landscaped garden 'rooms', woodland, rose gardens, wildflower meadows, donkey fields, an orchard and an extensive range of outbuildings. EPC's = E-F

**About 9.83 acres | Guide £3.5 million**

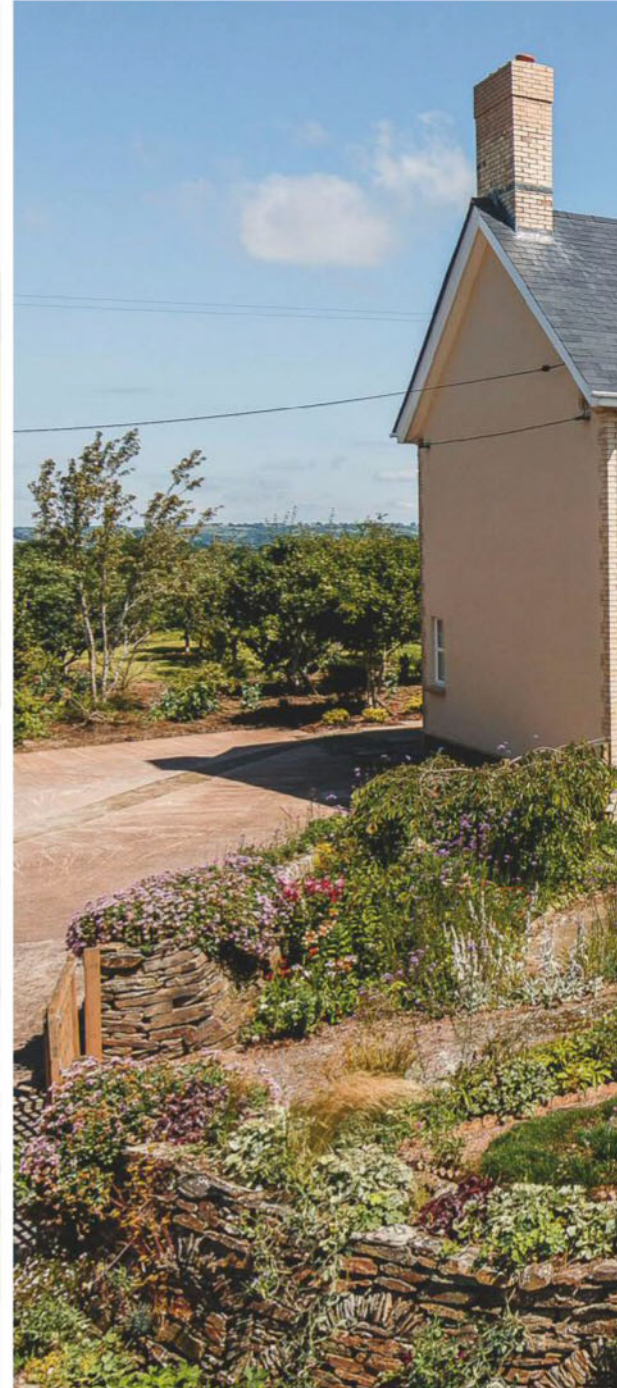


Nick Ingle  
Savills Harpenden  
**01582 807930**  
ningle@savills.com



[savills.co.uk](https://www.savills.co.uk)

## Devon, Chilton



A unique refurbished seven bedroom house with outbuildings, stables, paddocks and further development potential, with stunning countryside views

Crediton: 3 miles | Exeter: 11 miles | Exeter International Airport: 17 miles

Hall | Drawing room | Dining room | Morning room | Family room | Kitchen | Master bedroom with dressing room and ensuite shower room | Guest suite with ensuite shower | 6 Further bedrooms (4 ensuite) | 2 Further shower rooms | Second floor sitting room | Formal gardens | Staff accommodation | Outbuildings | Stables | Paddocks | EPC rating D

**About 84.42 acres**



**Oliver Custance Baker**  
Exeter Office | 01392 248 207

**Richard Speedy**  
Exeter Office | 01392 248 207

# New Year, New Home



## WHITECHAPEL MANOR, WHITECHAPEL, NR EXMOOR, DEVON EX36 3EG

WHITECHAPEL MANOR IS A MAGNIFICENT GRADE I LISTED ELIZABETHAN MANOR HOUSE LOCATED IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AND STEEPED IN HISTORY DATING BACK TO THE 13TH CENTURY.

Its 13.5 Acres include stunning and meticulously maintained gardens with spectacular views over the rolling devon countryside.

**Guide price:** £2,650,000

**Agent:** Savills **Phone number:** +44 (0)20 39182414

**Email:** george.nares@savills.com

**Website:** www.savills.com



## ALDERLEY PARK FROM DEVELOPER PH HOMES

AN EXCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECTACULAR GROUNDS OF A FORMER COUNTRY ESTATE OFFERING THREE DISTINCT STYLES OF HOME DESIGNED BY WORLD-CLASS ARCHITECT ROBERT ADAM.

As well as a stunning Cheshire setting, residents benefit from leisure facilities, a Farm Shop, Café and top class dining/accommodation, all on site. A truly unique development that redefines Alderley living.

**Guide price:** £525,000 – £1,999,500

**Agent:** PH Homes **Phone number:** 01625 586 130

**Email:** alderleypark@p-ph.co.uk

**Website:** www.p-ph.co.uk



## MAYFIELD PLACE

RESERVE BY 31/01/18 AND RECEIVE £10K STAMP DUTY!

**Guide price:** from £465,000

**Agent:** Jones Homes **Phone number:** 01435 872513

**Website:** www.jones-homes.co.uk



## THE UPLANDS, LOUGHTON, ESSEX

FULL OF CHARM AND CHARACTER LIES THIS BEAUTIFUL PERIOD HOME SET WITHIN THE STAPLES ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AND WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE CENTRAL LINE STATION, HIGH ROAD SHOPS AND EPPING FOREST.

Immaculately presented the property has two reception rooms both with fireplaces; a 17ft kitchen/ breakfast room; 14ft garden room; utility room; and guest cloakroom. There is a 13ft Jack and Jill en-suite to the master bedroom and an en-suite to the fourth bedroom. The well-established rear garden measures 77ft and there is off street parking as well as a 15ft garage.

**Guide price:** £1,075,000

**Agent:** Petty Son & Prestwich **Phone number:** 020 8504 5403

**Email:** sashag@pettyson.co.uk

**Website:** www.pettyson.co.uk



## WARLEIGH, BATHFORD, BATH

A TRULY OUTSTANDING, EXCEPTIONAL COUNTRY RESIDENCE OCCUPYING THE MAJOR WING OF THIS MAGNIFICENT G II\* LISTED BUILDING WITH EXQUISITE, LIGHT AND IMPRESSIVE ACCOMMODATION.

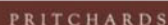
Master bedroom and guest bedroom suites and 2 further double bedrooms and family bathroom. Magnificent entrance hall with library and drawing room off. Impressive kitchen/dining room, larder and utility. 2 garages and ample driveway parking. Cellar storage. Enchanting private and landscaped grounds approx 2.4 acres extending to the River Avon with riparian rights.

**Guide price:** £2.75 million

**Agent:** Pritchards **Phone number:** 01225 466225

**Email:** lheath@pritchards-bath.co.uk

**Website:** www.pritchards-bath.co.uk



## We offer friendly and expert advice on

- Purchases • Remortgages • First Time Buyers
- Buy To Let • Limited Company Buy To Let
- Help To Buy • Right To Buy • Second Charge
- Loans • Life Insurance • Critical Illness

Call our experts

T: 01932 350641  
or 0203 004 2559

info@xpressmortgages.co.uk  
www.xpressmortgages.co.uk



# norman neasom

RWS RBSA, 1915-2010



Craig Rhiwarth, Llangynog, 1980

gouache 30 x 38 cms 11¼ x 14¾ ins

There is a heartfelt Englishness about Norman Neasom's paintings, something about his work that speaks in a poetic way about English village life, about farming in the hills, about locals teasing each other in the pub, that reminds us what it feels like to be hefted to this land. Our humour and modesty, our dotty fascinations, and the beauty of our landscape – Neasom captures them all. All will be revealed, and all discovered, in a new show of his work at Messum's from 10th January to 2nd February 2018.

Fully illustrated catalogue, with informative text, of the 97 works available from the studio collection – £15 inc p&p.

## MESSUM'S

28 Cork Street, London W1S 3NG Tel: +44 (0)20 7437 5545 [www.messums.com](http://www.messums.com)

MASTERPIECE  
2018 | LONDON  
THE UNMISSABLE ART FAIR



Royal Bank of Canada

Principal sponsor

**SAVE THE DATE**

28 JUNE – 4 JULY

[masterpiecefair.com](http://masterpiecefair.com)

# WOOLLEY & WALLIS 威立士

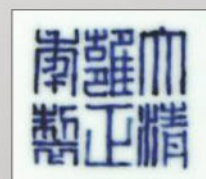
SPECIALIST ASIAN ART AUCTION

SPRING 2018

NOW ACCEPTING ENTRIES

A rare Chinese Imperial pale blue ground *Fu*-type two-handled archaistic vase, six-character Yongzheng mark and of the period 1723-35, 33cm high.

**SOLD FOR £162,500**



John Axford +44 (0)1722 424506 | [jea@woolleyandwallis.co.uk](mailto:jea@woolleyandwallis.co.uk)  
Jeremy Morgan +44 (0)7812 601098 | [jm@woolleyandwallis.co.uk](mailto:jm@woolleyandwallis.co.uk)



51-61 Castle Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3SU, UK  
[www.woolleyandwallis.co.uk](http://www.woolleyandwallis.co.uk)

# HUBLOT



**BUCHERER**  
1888

[WWW.BUCHERER.COM/UK](http://WWW.BUCHERER.COM/UK)

[hublot.com](http://hublot.com) • f • t • i

**CLASSIC FUSION  
CHRONOGRAPH AEROFUSION  
RED LIMITED EDITION**

Hublot exclusive available at Bucherer

# COUNTRY LIFE

VOL CCXI NO 52, DECEMBER 27, 2017



## *Miss Antonia Foyle*

Antonia, aged 29, is the younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Foyle of Carolside, Earlston, in the Scottish Borders. The great-granddaughter of William Foyle, the founder of Foyles bookshops, Antonia runs the luxury clothing brand Verheyen London. Antonia's sister, Serena Balfour *née* Foyle, appeared on the Frontispiece in 2013.

*Photographed by Jo Hanley*



Matt Gibson/Loop Images/Alamy

Light at the end of the tunnel: a late-December sunrise beams through the arch of Durdle Door on Dorset's Jurassic Coast



**Primavera by Botticelli**  
(about 1478)  
(Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy/Bridgeman Images)

## Cover stories

### 41 Things to do in 2018

We bring you the best events to try and anniversaries to remember each month, foraging supremo John Wright looks for things to harvest, Simon Lester reveals the comings and goings of wildlife to watch out for and Melanie Johnson has recipes to make the most of what's growing in the garden. Compiled by Kate Green

## This week

**22 Living National Treasure**  
Bell foundry

**30 Kevin Crossley-Holland's favourite painting**

The children's author and poet chooses a mighty depiction of Norse legend that's charged with energy and drama

**32 Putting the cat among the fish**

On an annual pilgrimage to Scotland in pursuit of silver salmon, Richard Parker enjoys the many charms of the Jaguar XJ R-Sport Saloon

**34 In the cathedral's shadow**

The splendours of Wells Cathedral in Somerset can easily distract from the astonishing architecture that surrounds it. John Goodall describes the remarkable history of the precinct

**66 Out and About**

The *Gentleman's Life* launch party at Huntsman, Savile Row

**68 Good intentions**

Leading lights in the interior-

design world share their hopes and aspirations for 2018

**78 When earth stands hard as iron**

Green structure and trees that lead the eye are the designer's solution to creating an interesting winter garden in Greater London, finds Jane Perrone

**85 Kitchen garden cook**

Melanie Johnson uses parsnips for warming comfort food

**90 The best and worst of 2018**

Theatre critic Michael Billington names the brilliantly good, the excruciatingly bad and the movingly sad productions he's seen this year

## Every week

18 Town & Country

20 Notebook

24 Letters

25 Agromenes

26 Athena

28 My Week

74 Property market

84 In the Garden

86 Art Market

88 Exhibition

92 Books

93 Bridge and Crossword

94 Classified Advertisements

98 Spectator

98 Tottering-by-Gently

## COUNTRY LIFE

**Christmas subscription offer: pay just £31\***

Subscribe online at [www.countrylifesub.co.uk/BAY7](http://www.countrylifesub.co.uk/BAY7)

Telephone: 0330 333 1113 Quote code: BAY7





Pinehurst II, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BF  
Telephone 01252 555072 www.countrylife.co.uk

# The shape of 2018

## January

Guinness World Records sets a new category, for the person who can eat the most out-of-date food and survive—Stanley Johnson trumps Bear Grylls's Second World War Spam with Shackleton's pemmican. Hunt saboteurs attack a haggis factory, not realising that haggises aren't sentient.

## February

Brexit talks are going well until Cornwall demands a hard border. Grey-squirrel pâté and pheasant-feather quill pens are identified as our best international trade opportunities.

## March

Kim Jong-Un agrees to halt nuclear tests if Donald Trump hands over his hair-gel formula. Police are called to manage stampedes in Hay-on-Wye after Apple announces its latest product: a book.

## April

The Duchess of Cambridge's third child, Princess Britannia, is born on April 1. Unusually dry weather and a miscalculation over tides forces Boat Race teams to run the last stretch carrying their vessels.

## May

Guy, Meghan Markle's beagle, is a beautifully behaved ringbearer until an Eton schoolboy releases a rabbit. New Prime Minister Jeremy Corbyn dons a morning coat for the occasion. Boris Johnson optimistically auditions as Bond and Philip Hammond leaves raw fish in the skirting at Number 11.

## June

Crowd barriers dismantled after Trooping the Colour are mistaken for an art installation entitled 'No Hard Borders' and sold abroad for £2 billion; the Department of Culture starts an appeal to keep them here. A bored Duke of Edinburgh celebrates his 97th birthday with a wing walk.

## July

Devon's happy dairy farmers make hay as Cornish clotted cream is impounded at the border en route to Wimbledon, where precocious talent Princess Charlotte wins the Junior title.

## August

The M1 melts in a bank-holiday heatwave, trapping two million cars.

## September

Arlene Foster and Nicola Sturgeon save Brexit talks by inviting Angela Merkel to join them in *Rule, Britannia!* at the Last Night of the Proms. Eton opens outposts in Frankfurt, Dublin and, to pupils' delight, Amsterdam.

## October

Plans to reopen the Oxford-Cambridge railway are shelved amid protests of elitism and worries about the stolen-bicycle trade.

## November

Wales gets its first garden town; unfortunately, no one outside the Principality realises that its name means something really rude. A Christmas screening of *Casablanca* is cancelled because it shows Bogart smoking.

## December

Nativity play producers report a sheep shortage due to the success of Natural England's wolf reintroduction. Jacob Rees-Mogg's gavotte earns a standing ovation on *Strictly*. An internet crash prompts a rush on Christmas cards. Happy New Year!

**British Society of Magazine Editors Scoop of the Year 2015/16**  
**PPA Specialist Consumer Magazine of the Year 2014/15**  
**British Society of Magazine Editors Innovation of the Year 2014/15**  
**British Society of Magazine Editors Columnist of the Year (Special Interest) 2016**

**Editor** Mark Hedges  
**Editor's PA** Rosie Paterson 555062

Telephone numbers are prefixed by 01252  
 Emails are name.surname@timeinc.com  
**Editorial Enquiries** 555062  
**Subscription Enquiries** 0330 333 1113  
**Back issues** 01733 385170

**Deputy Editor** Kate Green 555063  
**Architectural Editor** John Goodall 555064  
**Gardens Editor** Kathryn Bradley-Hole 555065  
**Fine Arts & Books Editor** Mary Miers 555066  
**Interiors Editor** Giles Kime 555083  
**Managing & Features Editor**  
 Paula Lester 555068  
**Deputy Features Editor** Victoria Marston 555079

**News & Property Editor**  
 Annunciata Elwes 555078  
**Luxury Editor** Hetty Chidwick 555071  
**Art Editor** Emma Earnshaw 555080  
**Deputy Art Editor** Heather Clark 555074  
**Picture Editor** Lucy Ford 555075  
**Deputy Picture Editor** Emily Anderson 555076  
**Group Chief Sub-Editor** Jane Watkins 555077  
**Sub-Editor** James Fisher 555089  
**Digital Editor** Toby Keel 555086  
**Property Correspondent** Penny Churchill

**Group Managing Director** Oswin Grady  
**Assistant Business Director**  
 Kirsty Setchell 551111  
**Studio Director** Brett Lewis  
**Group Art Director, Country** Dean Usher

**Photographic Library Manager**  
 Melanie Bryan 555090  
**Photographic Library Assistants**  
 Paula Fahey 555092; Sarah Hart 555093  
**Marketing Manager**  
 Nicola McClure 555115  
**PR Manager** Victoria Higham 020-3148 5401

**Antiques & Fine Arts Manager**  
 Jonathan Hearn 01252 555318

**Commercial Director Property** Paul Ward 55342  
**Country** Johanne Calnan 020-3148 4208;  
 Nick Poulton 020-3148 4232; George Amor  
 020-3148 2608  
**International** Lucy Hall 020-3148 4206

**Head of Market: Country & Gardening**  
 Kate Barnfield 07817 629935

**Luxury Advertising**  
 Jade Bousfield 07583 672665; Katie Ruocco  
 07929 364909

**Classified Advertising**  
 Chloe Lummis 01252 555345

**Advertising and Classified Production**  
 Stephen Turner 020-3148 2681

**Inserts** Canopy Media 020-7611 8151;  
 lindsay@canopymedia.co.uk



# I met a traveller from an antique land

**T**HE anniversary on everyone's lips in 2018 will be the end of the First World War. The Armistice was signed in a railway carriage in the forest outside Compiègne in France. The carriage was destroyed in 1945, but two relics remain at the Musée de l'Armée in Paris: the pen with which the agreement was signed and an ashtray.

Peace came on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month and the name of the last British soldier to be killed was George Edwin Ellison—these details still matter. The poet Wilfred Owen had been killed in action exactly a week earlier, almost to the hour, and was posthumously awarded the MC.

After such a traumatic four years, and some 18 million deaths, it's strange to think that, only 20 years previously, the installation of Britain's first 'moving staircase' at Harrods was headline news. Nervous customers were offered a tot of brandy when they reached the top of the escalator to help them recover from the 'ordeal'. They had no idea what was really ahead.

The sands and ravages of time were acknowledged by Shelley in *Ozymandias*, long-time favourite of school poetry recitals, published 200 years ago come 2018: 'Half sunk a shattered visage lies... Round the decay/Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare/The lone and level sands stretch far away.' That year, 1818, also saw the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the founding of the Old Vic theatre in London and, on Christmas Eve, the first performance, in Austria, of the newly composed *Silent Night*. Of particular interest to COUNTRY LIFE is the bicentenary of the death of Humphry Repton, 'the last great landscape designer of the 18th century' (more on this in the January 10, 2018 number).

A far less respectable personality, the notorious blaggard and pirate Blackbeard died 300 years ago, the same year that Chippendale was born. Another adventurer, Sir Walter Raleigh, marks an unhappy anniversary this year, the 400th since he lost his head. His widow kept it, severed and embalmed, in a red-velvet bag until she died 29 years later.

Other anniversaries worth remembering are the founding of the Royal Academy and the launching of Capt James Cook's *Endeavour* 250 years ago, plus, 150 years ago, the publication of Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*, the first full-length detective novel, and the birth of architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Come February, it'll be 100 years since British women were first allowed to vote, a landmark to be revisited in COUNTRY LIFE later this year.

Ninety years ago, D. H. Lawrence's controversial *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in Italy (it didn't legally reach our shores until 1960) and Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* hit the shelves in Britain. Ten years later, it was Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* and, 20 years after that, T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*.

Speaking of future kings, 1958 saw a young Prince Charles become The Prince of Wales—he will celebrate his 70th birthday in 2018. The year 1958 also witnessed the first meeting of The Victorian Society, the first women in the House of Lords, Britain's first motorway

(Preston Bypass), the first *Blue Peter* broadcast and the first 'Carry On' film, *Carry on Sergeant*. Less entertaining, but infinitely more nourishing, we'll celebrate the 140th season of the Jersey Royal potato between April and June.

Eighty years ago, Neville Chamberlain gave his famous 'Peace for our time' speech (the peace was shortlived) and the first green belts were established. Ninety years ago, after 70 years in the making, the *Oxford English Dictionary* was published. Fifty years ago, London Bridge was sold to an American and rebuilt in Arizona, 5p and 10p coins were introduced, *Dad's Army* first aired, Bond actor Daniel Craig and Blur frontman Damon Albarn were born, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *Oliver!* delighted us and Enid Blyton died.

In 1978, 40 years ago, the otter became a protected species, the first British nudist beach opened and the May Day bank holiday arrived. The year 1978 also saw the erection of *Concrete Cows*, in Milton Keynes, one of the most influential—and tampered with—works of 20th-century open-air sculpture.

Over the years, they've been painted pink, become zebras, worn pyjama bottoms, enjoyed a visit from a *papier-mâché* bull, acquired BSE and produced concrete cowpats.

Next, 30 years ago, we cashed in £1 notes and welcomed all-day drinking. Ten years later, the first DVDs were sold in the UK (farewell VHS) and, 10 years ago, an earthquake with its epicentre in Lincolnshire rippled across Britain. Whatever next?



Kevin Foy/Alamy; Studioshots/Alamy; Entertainment Pictures/Alamy; Lee Dalton/Alamy; Granger Historical Picture Archive/Alamy; Razorpix/Alamy; Leemage/Corbis via Getty; Photo12/UGC/Getty



## All that jazz

**I**N a few days' time, we'll be able to say that jazz reached Britain exactly 100 years ago. To celebrate, Two Temple Place, London WC2, is hosting an exhibition, 'Rhythm & Reaction: The Age of Jazz in Britain' (January 27, 2018 to April 22, 2018).

The show will explore the social and visual impact of jazz on British art and society from 1918, its vibrancy as a soundtrack to the inter World War years and its complex reception, bringing together instruments, paintings, prints, cartoons, textiles and ceramics from public collections—accompanied by the all-important sound of that wandering bassline. We often imagine the Jazz Age as peopled by flappers, gregarious trombonists and Champagne fountains, but this exhibition tells a different story, demonstrating the degree to which the music and its aesthetic permeated everyday life in Britain. Visit [www.twotempleplace.org](http://www.twotempleplace.org)

## A hero and a fisherman

**T**HOSE who wish to pay tribute to Orri Vigfússon (*right*)—award-winning Icelandic entrepreneur, environmentalist and founder and chairman of the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF), who died in July—are invited to Fishmonger's Hall, London EC4, on January 23, 2018, at 12.30pm.

With the help of donors, international NASF director Tarquin Millington-Drake will host up to 200 guests for drinks and canapés. If you wish to attend, contact Edwina Ord-Hume at [support@frontierstrvl.co.uk](mailto:support@frontierstrvl.co.uk) stating how you knew Orri. Numbered admission invitations will be sent out. There is no ticket price, but contributions are welcome.



## John Cornforth lectures

**L**ONG-TIME readers of COUNTRY LIFE will well remember the late John Cornforth—he wrote more than 800 articles for the magazine and was Architectural Editor—but any country-house enthusiast will find interest in the annual John Cornforth Memorial Lectures. Tickets are now available for the 2018 series.

In association with Christie's, speakers include the Earl of Shaftesbury on St Giles House in Dorset (January 22), Lord and Lady Heseltine on Thenford House, Northamptonshire (February 19) and Viscount Windsor on Oakly Park, Shropshire (March 19). Tickets cost £40, 6.30pm for 7pm at Christie's King Street, London SW1. To book, contact Emma Tersigni on [etersigni@christies.com](mailto:etersigni@christies.com) or 020-7389 2145.

Birgir Isleifur Gunnarsson, Estate of the artist/Courtesy of Lefevre Fine Art Ltd/London and British Council Collection

## Country Mouse

*Out with the old*



**F**OR a number of reasons, I can't wait to see the back of 2017 and hope the turning of the year will bring happier and better times, but, looking back over the year, there were a number of highlights. There always are.

As my eyesight fails, requiring stronger and stronger reading glasses, my shooting has improved—I've no idea why. I even caught a salmon during a rainstorm in Iceland, but the precious hand-built salmon rod I was given on my 50th birthday has still not landed a fish. I've lost four rods on rivers in Ireland and Scotland this year. Perhaps, in 2018, my fishing luck will change.

Where I've been most fortunate is with the team that works with me at COUNTRY LIFE. It's a remarkable achievement to produce a weekly magazine, let alone one that's increased its annual sales every year this decade. The late nights and early starts show a dedication that leaves me in awe. I'm most grateful to them, but, above all, it's to you the reader where my greatest thanks lie. I hope that you continue to enjoy the magazine. Happy New Year! **MH**

## Town Mouse

*Gold to black and back*



**I**S daily life about to be regulated in disturbing new ways? That thought flashed through my mind when one of the children began constructing a behaviour chart at home last week. The idea comes from school. Each member of the family has been allotted a piece of paper with their name on it and this rises or falls on the different coloured panels of the chart according to their behaviour.

We all begin in the middle on green—which is clearly marked 'Daily start'. From there, the virtuous can rise via silver to gold or the ill-behaved sink via red to black. The black bears the message 'no free time', which, while threatening, actually feels more or less like the natural state of my life. At the opposite extreme is the inscription 'If you get on gold, the reward is £1, 10 hugs and a huge round of applause'.

Parents, it seems, are generously treated by the system: on the first night, I was placed on gold simply for returning from work. Then, I was applauded, hugged and awarded a £1 coin. All very touching, of course, but I'm suspicious that the children will be as generous to each other and I'm pretty certain that the £1 came from my dressing table. **JG**



## Quiz of the week

- 1) Who wrote the 1956 play *Look Back in Anger*?
- 2) Orzo is a type of what?
- 3) Which Kentish castle has been described as 'the key to England'?
- 4) Racing homer is a breed of what?
- 5) Ballerina Dame Ninette de Valois was born in which country?

## 100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE December 29, 1917



WITHIN a few days we shall be in 1918. For the fourth time under conditions of war we wish our readers A Happy New Year. It is difficult to associate the idea of happiness with the knowledge that the British soldier is standing face to face with death, yet though now, 'hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to men', there is a constancy, faith and devotion in the British mind which looks forward with confidence to a triumphant issue from these troubles. 'God is not dead; nor doth He sleep.' We have the assurance that in the end 'the Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail'.

## Wicked words

Getting information from the internet is like getting a glass of water from Niagara

*Sir Arthur C. Clarke*

- 1) John Osborne 2) Pasta 3) Dover Castle  
4) Domestic pigeon 5) Ireland

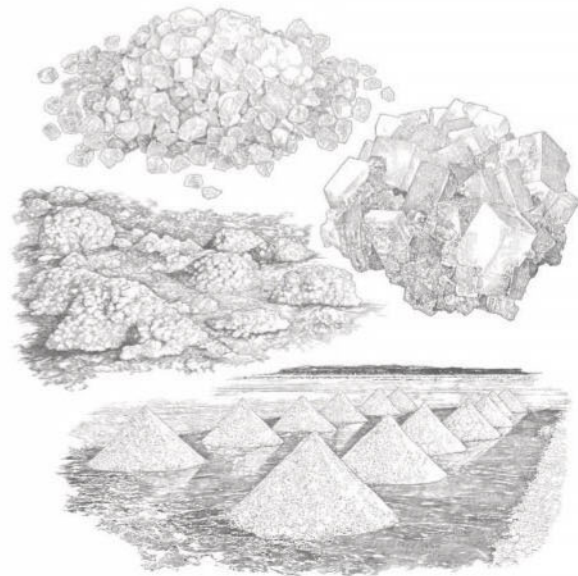
## The nature of things

### Salt

SINCE earliest times, cultures have paid due reverence to salt. Tacitus, the Roman historian, noted the long-held belief of Germanic tribesmen that prayers to the gods were most readily received if delivered in a salt mine; likewise, in ancient cultures across the world, salt was connected with sacredness and therefore set aside for use by the deities.

It's not surprising as all life depends, to some degree, on the chemical properties of sodium chloride and, in a very practical sense, salt has been the time-honoured food preservative for fish and meat. Where it didn't occur locally, it was one of the first commodities of long-distance trade—the *via Salaria* in Italy, for example, was established by the Bronze Age.

The two main sources of salt are seawater and, inland, underground beds of halite or rock salt. Britain has several regions famous for the production of either kind, with both Cornwall and Essex having long-established harvestings of sea salt. Inland, Cheshire holds deep deposits of rock salt, laid down some 220 million years ago when seas washed over the area. We know that the Romans extracted



salt from the county's briny springs (Middlewich, a major supplier, was known by them as *Salinae*), but mining for salt in the county only got under way in the mid 17th century, with the locally available mineral aiding both its tanning industry and production of the famous Cheshire cheese. **KBH**

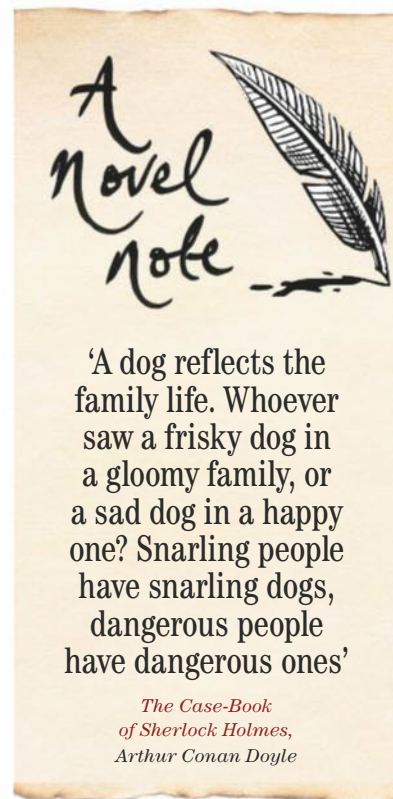
*Illustration by Bill Donohoe*

## Time to buy



**Clara ladies' luxury pyjama set in damson**, £185, Blue Marmalade London (0845 603 3320; <http://bluemarmaladelondon.com>)

**Nature's Beauty bee-venom face mask**, £35, Natural History Museum (020-7942 5494; [www.nhmshop.co.uk](http://www.nhmshop.co.uk))



'A dog reflects the family life. Whoever saw a frisky dog in a gloomy family, or a sad dog in a happy one? Snarling people have snarling dogs, dangerous people have dangerous ones'

*The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle*



**Clonakilty black pudding**, £2.09, Ocado (0345 656 1234; [www.ocado.com](http://www.ocado.com))



## Oh, the agony!

**Resident agony uncle Kit Hesketh-Harvey solves your dilemmas**

### Thou shalt not...

**Q** I have no concrete evidence, but I fear that something might be afoot between my neighbour and my husband. I'm quite sure there's no need for them to be chatting over the garden fence while still in their robes. Should I be worried? *C. C., Cumbria*

**A** I'm worried. About the robes, I mean. Are they members of some sort of cult? Or are we talking dressing gowns? If the latter, that, at least, is a comfort. The Christopher Robin look is unalluring on either gender. Humour is your best weapon.

Tease him about his crush. Indicate that you don't take it seriously, that you know him better than he does and that he's married to a resilient woman who can take these mid-life wobbles in her stride. Doing so will make you far more attractive than a winceyted suburbanite whose lack of make-up is cruelly exposed by the harsh light of morning.

Failing that, invoke the Commandment. Not the one about adultery—the one about coveting thy neighbour's ass.

## Unmissable events

### Exhibition

**Until January 14, 2018 'Kaffe Fassett's Colour at Mottisfont exhibition' (right),** Romsey, Hampshire. A vibrant showcase of textiles by the artist, with rooms at the medieval priory transformed into colour-themed 'landscapes' using knitwear, tapestry and quilts. Until January 2, you can also see the Christmas decorations, including statement trees and dramatic flower arrangements, inspired by the exhibition (01794 340757; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont))

**Until January 26, 2018 'Albert Adams: Prints and Drawings 1950–2006',** Michael Richardson Contemporary Art, St Peter's Street, London N1. Works by the South African-born artist, who excelled as an intaglio printmaker, including self-portraits, an incarceration series and multiple series of animals, both in the wild and caged. This is the first exhibition of these works in London (020-7359 7002; [www.artspacegallery.co.uk](http://www.artspacegallery.co.uk))

**Point-to-point December 29 Harkaway Club at Chaddesley Corbett,** Worcestershire. Wrap up warm and enjoy a picnic before the first race at 11am. For up-to-date weather reports and form guide, telephone 09068 446061 or visit [www.pointtopoint.co.uk](http://www.pointtopoint.co.uk)

**Horse show December 29–31 Liverpool International Horse Show,** Echo Arena, Kings Dock. An extravaganza of international showjumping, stunt riding, dressage to music, the Shetland Pony Grand National and equestrian shopping galore, plus live music and New Year's Eve fireworks and celebrations. Adult tickets from £27, children from £16.20 (0844 800 0400; [www.liverpoolhorseshow.com](http://www.liverpoolhorseshow.com))



**Walk Until December 31 Twixmas Walk,** Weston Park, Weston-under-Lizard, Shropshire. This Capability Brown landscaped parkland is the perfect setting for an invigorating winter walk among the twinkling, frost-covered trees. 10am–4pm, entry £3 per person ([www.weston-park.com](http://www.weston-park.com); 01952 852100)

**Until January 1, 2018 Winter Walks at Hever Castle and Gardens (below),** Edenbridge, Kent. Enjoy a stroll among red-wood trees, yew topiary and hellebores, explore the Winter Garden, with its daphne, viburnum and dogwood, and take a turn around the lake. Castle entry is included with garden admission, so you



can also warm your fingers by a log fire, see the Christmas decorations and place a wish on the Wishing Tree. 10.30am–4.30pm, adult entry £13.40 (01732 865224; [www.hevercastle.co.uk](http://www.hevercastle.co.uk))

**Book now January 24, 2018 Artisan Bread Making,** the Cookery School at Daylesford, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire. Discover the secrets behind Daylesford's delicious organic artisan breads. The course covers texture, kneading, proving and baking and includes lunch, refreshments and breads made during the day plus some sourdough starter to take home with you. 9.30am–3pm, £185pp (01608 731620; <http://daylesford.com>)

**January 25, 2018 Improve Your Learning: a talk by Lord Winston,** Clayesmore School, Iwerne Minster, Dorset. Illustrated talk presented by doctor and scientist Prof Robert Winston, which will show how we can all improve how we learn, from youth into old age, resulting in a healthier, happier and longer life. 7pm–9pm, tickets from £12.50 (01747 813160; [www.clayesmore.com](http://www.clayesmore.com))

## What to drink this week Madeira



Have some Madeira, m'dear, encourages Harry Eyres

Not long ago, Madeira wines made very rare appearances on the tasting circuit. This seemed a pity as anyone who has ever experienced a great aged Sercial, Verdelho, Bual or Malmsey knows that they deliver a unique combination of power, acidity, richness and finesse. It was also understandable, as the vineyards on the steep Atlantic island had got into poor shape, with a confusion of vines and a preponderance of the not-very-distinguished variety Tinta Negra Mole.

**Why you should be drinking it** Overdue work has been done on the steep terraced sites: vines have been properly identified and, in many cases, replanted. A few family firms such as Blandy's and Henriques & Henriques survive on the island and they're making determined efforts to restore the reputation of one of the world's great and unique wines.

**What to drink** As an introduction, Henriques & Henriques' three-year-old Full Rich Madeira (£11.99 per 50cl; [www.majestic.co.uk](http://www.majestic.co.uk)) is a blend of grape varieties: it's medium sweet with notes of dried apricot, but nicely balanced and fresh. The 10-year-old Sercial (*right*, £19.99 per 50cl; [www.waitrose.com](http://www.waitrose.com)) comes from 100% Sercial grapes, from Henriques & Henriques' own estates. This is pale gold in colour, with a subtle, complex nose reminiscent of Palo Cortado sherry—the swingeing acidity and relative dryness are, however, utterly distinctive. Blandy's 15-year-old Bual (£24.99 per 50cl; [www.waitrose.com](http://www.waitrose.com)) is very intense and raisiny on the nose, medium sweet and quite nutty, but is once again balanced by that uniquely powerful acidity.



Russell Kord/Alamy; Kaffe Fassett; Prisma Bildagentur/UG via Getty Images





## Living National Treasure

### Bell foundry

Photograph by  
Richard Cannon

**W**HEN church bells ring this New Year, spare a thought for the origins of this joyous festive sound.

Britain's bell foundries are renowned worldwide, but, as of last year, John Taylor & Co of Loughborough in Leicestershire became our last remaining one. It's been producing bells, famed for their beautiful purity of tone, since 1784.

Only 40% of the company's work today involves new production—recent commissions include a new peel of bells for St George's Memorial Church at Ypres as well as ones for the church of St Mary in Richmond, North Yorkshire, and that of All Saints in Liddington, Wiltshire. The remainder of the work involves the conservation and restoration of existing bells, from retuning to rehanging or refurbishment. This year, the bells of St Mary the Virgin in Black Bourton, Oxfordshire, rang for the first time in 60 years after the ministrations of the Taylor team.

'A visitor from the Victorian period would find little has changed,' says Simon Adams, director of the foundry, which has been on the same site since 1858. 'It's a rather cold and Dickensian place in winter.' Despite this, the company still attracts young people—of 25 members of staff, eight are under 40. *Tessa Waugh*

[www.taylorbells.co.uk](http://www.taylorbells.co.uk);

<http://heritagecrafts.org.uk>



## Letter of the week

### Last orders at the museum

**A**THENA'S excellent and accurate article regarding closing times at museums and galleries (*November 22*) brought me a wry smile as I've noticed just the same practices over the years with no sign of improvement. Some 'sweeping out' operations are less gentle than others, with some of the best-known institutions being especially fierce and almost rude. Goodness knows what visitors from abroad make of it.

What adds insult to injury is that you usually then find the lovely gift shop is closed. One would have thought that, purely for money-making reasons, it would be open to tempt the captive audience coming out.

We do have some of the finest art and cultural institutions in the world, with much to be joyful about—if only they could improve this part.  
*David Tsang, London*

**The writer of the letter of the week will win a bottle of Pol Roger Brut Réserve Champagne**



### Food, glorious food!

**Y**OUR most interesting article 'The menus that made history' (*November 15*) might have added that, in the days of extensively long menus, it wasn't necessary to eat every course. I have an etiquette book from the 1890s recommending young men as they start out in society always to read the menu carefully first, to decide which dishes they will refuse, so that they don't have to interrupt their conversations by checking the menu when those dishes are offered.

*David Damant, Lincolnshire*



### A dog is for life, not just for Christmas

**I**AM thrilled and shocked at the same time—thrilled that you have done an article about rescue dogs (I've had many over the years), but shocked that you would publish this just in time for Christmas. It may seem like a good idea to give a warm home and a comfy bed to a dog at this time of year, but all reason flies out of the window about the commitment this requires: cost, time, vets' bills and exercise are just a few things to consider.

This is a lovely, feelgood article, but, in my opinion, it shouldn't have been published until after the 'silly season'.

*String Seymour-Li, Bedfordshire*  
*The Editor replies: We take your point, but hope that COUNTRY LIFE readers understand that a dog is for life.*

### Remembering the fallen

**I**DID appreciate Gavin Stamp's well-researched article on the different approaches taken by the key belligerents of the First World War in remembering their fallen soldiers, sailors and airmen (*'Monuments to the dead', November 8*). There were, however, two nations omitted in his article: Great Britain's then ally Russia and then enemy Turkey.

Turkey has memorials such as the Çanakkale Martyrs' Memorial (*below*). There are also cemeteries and memorials in Russia and Poland to the fallen. I know of a cemetery and memorial in France to Russian soldiers killed during the Battle of the Marne.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission hasn't changed its style over the past 100 years, whereas the USSR developed an array of imposing memorials to remember the terrible loss in the Great Patriotic War. No matter the nation, all of them remind us of the tragedy that is war.

*Roger Dunshea, Shropshire*



### Letting Nature take its course

**M**ALCOLM MELLOR is so right to identify the issue of over-protection of one species to the detriment of others (*Letters, December 6*).

Just do the maths—the more raptors that breed, the more food they need. Eventually, their prey will die out. The raptors will then have nothing to eat and they too will die out. As a result, instead of one species being 'saved', several will have been destroyed due to overzealous interference.

*Louise Mangles, Suffolk*

COUNTRY LIFE, ISSN 0045-8856, is published weekly by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, 3rd Floor, 161, Marsh Wall, London, E14 9AP, United Kingdom. Country Life Subscriptions: For enquiries and orders, please email: help@magazinesdirect.com, alternatively from the UK call: 0330 333 1113, overseas call: 00 44 330 333 1113 (Lines are open Monday–Saturday, 8am–6pm GMT ex. Bank Holidays). One year full subscription rates: 1 Year (51 issues), UK £185; Europe/Eire €380 (delivery 3–5 days); USA \$460 (delivery 5–12 days); Rest of World £359 (delivery 5–7 days) Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to COUNTRY LIFE, Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business, c/o Liberty Express Distributions USA LLC, Suite 201, 153–63 Rockaway Blvd, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscription records are maintained at Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent. BACK NUMBERS Subject to availability, issues from the past three years are £6 a copy (£8 in the EU, £10 overseas); 01733 385170; www.mags-uk.com. Subscriptions queries: 0844 848 0848. If you have difficulty in obtaining COUNTRY LIFE from your newsagent, please contact us on: 020–3148 3300. We regret we cannot be liable for the safe custody or return of any solicited or unsolicited material, whether typescripts, photographs, transparencies, artwork or computer discs. Articles and images published in this and previous issues are available, subject to copyright, from the photograph library: 020–3148 4474. INDEX: Half-Yearly indices, listing all articles and authors, are available at £40 each, and the Cumulative Index, listing all articles on country houses and gardens since 1897, at £40 each (including postage and packing) from Paula Fahey, COUNTRY LIFE Picture Library, Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Hampshire GU14 7BF. Cheques should be made payable to Time Inc. (UK) Ltd. If two Half-Yearly indices from a single year, and the Cumulative Index, are required, the total price will be £80.

**Editorial Complaints** We work hard to achieve the highest standards of editorial content and we are committed to complying with the Editors' Code of Practice (<https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html>) as enforced by IPSO. If you have a complaint about our editorial content, you can email us at [complaints@timeinc.com](mailto:complaints@timeinc.com) or write to Complaints Manager, Time Inc. (UK) Ltd Legal Department, 3rd Floor, Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. Please provide details of the material you are complaining about and explain your complaint by reference to the Editors' Code. We will try to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and we aim to correct substantial errors as soon as possible.

## Whistle while you work

REGARDING A Novel Note (*Notebook, December 6*) and Nancy Mitford's comparison of the effort that is expended through housework versus hunting, I observe that nobody ever remarks when one has done the housework—rather, they only notice when one has not. *Janet Jones, Surrey*

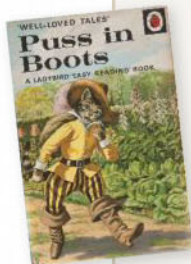


## Everybody's heard about the bird

IN John McEwen's review of *The Brass Eagle Lecterns of England* (*Books, December 6*), he refers to the turkey lectern somewhere in Yorkshire (*above*). This lectern was designed by Francis Johnson in 1936 for the Church of St Andrew, Boynton, near Bridlington. It was given by the parish in memory of Maj Fred Strickland of Boynton Hall. William Strickland (d.1598) is thought to have introduced the turkey from America to England and when granted a coat of arms in 1550, he chose as his crest 'a turkey cock in its pride proper'. *Digby Harris, East Riding of Yorkshire*

## COUNTRY LIFE JANUARY 3

The nine lives of literary cats, where to get a suit made outside London, life in 1918, what your socks say about you, and the pelicans of St James's Park



**Make someone's week, every week, with a COUNTRY LIFE subscription**  
0844 848 0848



# Season of goodwill?

GETTING ready for Christmas in the countryside is always a joy: the tree, the holly and the ivy, the gaily-wrapped presents, the cards and the logs made ready for roaring fires. Much of this may be only as old as Dickens and Prince Albert, but a traditional Christmas still warms the heart and rekindles the faith. People do give more generously, post offices do run out of Nativity-themed stamps and Midnight Masses in country churches still draw the crowds.

Christmas doesn't come cheap, however, and the season of goodwill has become an essential factor in the fortunes of retailers. Some household names will make as much profit over the festive period as they do in the whole of the rest of the year and their annual results are thus dependent on our seasonal purchases.

Things don't look so good for them. Monthly inflation, at the six-year high of 3.1%, is increasingly eating into family budgets, particularly as food prices are rising at the even faster rate of 4.1%. The burden is perhaps heaviest in the countryside, where wages are low and median annual earnings are not much above £23,000. Farmers' incomes average £38,000.

Neither will it be sensible for people to spend now and hope for better things next year as the future doesn't look much brighter. The recent income report from international headhunter Korn Ferry suggests that pay increases in 2018 will average 2% and Britain is likely to be the worst-performing economy in the developed world. The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board has warned that farm profits could halve as a result of Brexit. We can all hope that it won't be as bad as feared, but the uncertainty will make many people leery of spending what they don't have in their pockets.

However, as most tighten their belts this Christmas, a few have never had it so good. Take a well-known tabloid editor. The company he works for has seen a 13% drop in its profits, but his annual pay and rations have gone up by 50% to £2.4 million. It would take a rural worker more than 100 years to earn what he earns in one.

Look, too, at house builder Persimmon, many of whose 18,000 new houses will be scattered around the countryside next year. The company has already been pretty generous with handouts to its directors, with a previous chief executive netting an additional £20 million in shares back in 2015. This year, the company excelled itself by handing the new chief executive a bonus of shares reportedly worth £112 million.

“As most tighten their belts this Christmas, a few have never had it so good”

The stark difference between the gets and the get-nots in our society ought to be a challenge to us all this season. Of course, we'd be foolish to deny reward for enterprise and risk—societies that have done that have only made the poor poorer. The bleak lives and unfulfilled hopes of those imprisoned by the

Berlin Wall must never be forgotten.

However, this doesn't mean that we should tolerate these examples of excess that are so disproportionate and damaging. Indeed, no one ought to be more angry than the properly paid directors and senior managers of British industry. These gigantic awards reflect on them, undermining their reputations and the whole notion of free enterprise and a free society.

The sturdy independence of our rural communities is built on risk and reward, spotting opportunities and risking money to turn them into reality. That's the basis of a prosperous society. Grasping greed is not—it undermines our stability and our community and is an assault on us all.



Follow @agromenes on Twitter



## Athena Cultural Crusader

### Leeds is losing the pharaoh's touch

**A**s the train approaches the great city of Leeds, Athena always enjoys the prospect of an extraordinary cluster of tall factory chimneys east of the railway viaduct, one modelled on the tower of the Uffizi, another on Giotto's Tower. More distant is an outstanding industrial landmark and one that perhaps stood out even more when sheep grazed on its roof between serried ranks of conical skylights.

This vast single-storey, cast-iron framed, brick-arched interior must be the most exotic industrial building in Britain: Marshall's Mill, or Temple Works (so called because the grand stone front with palm columns was modelled on the Temple of Horus at Edfu, *below*).

The Egyptian Revival gave us a range of unlikely monuments, many of them in

cemeteries, but also cinemas and pumping stations. Factories may seem a more unlikely candidate for Egyptianising, although, as late as the 1920s, Mornington Crescent gardens were built on by the polychromatic reinforced-concrete Carreras Cigarette Factory with its ceramic black cats as sentinels.

**‘ This is a building of significance and it shouldn't be left to languish ,**

Temple Works was a linen-thread spinning factory built by James Garth Marshall in 1838–42 in two stages: the steam-powered mill first, followed by the office block facing Marshall Street with its temple front. The designer was Joseph Bonomi, brother of the architect Ignatius Bonomi, together with the engineer James Combe and with a little help from the artist David Roberts, who'd sketched the temple at Edfu.

The choice of an Egyptian style for the mill might be the link between Ancient Egypt and flax, the raw material for linen (and the bandages used for mummies), although Marshall's father, John Marshall,

was an Egyptologist and the former president of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, which was the proud possessor of three Egyptian mummies.

Today, Temple Works is in rather more danger than any of the surviving antiquities of Egypt. Marshall & Co closed in 1886, the mill eventually becoming the offices and warehouse of Kay & Co, the catalogue and mail-order firm. This was taken over by a property-management company, later bought by the Barclay Brothers, millionaire owners of the *Daily Telegraph*.

After long neglect, part of the front of Temple Works collapsed in 2008, since when no repairs whatsoever have been undertaken. A scheme for Burberry to restore and take on the building foundered—a victim of Brexit. The Barclay Brothers proposed putting up their accidental inheritance for auction—with a minimum guide price of £1—but it was sold a day before the auction to developer CEG.

It is not only sympathy for the gods of Egypt that makes Athena deplore utterly the present state of the building. This is a historic building of national, indeed international, significance and an unusually delightful one as well. It should not be left to languish after this needless mistreatment.

Fred van Deelen

## Temple Works



The linen-thread spinning factory at Temple Works is a building needlessly abandoned and placed in danger. This photo shows it in 1997, before its present neglected state following a collapse in 2008. It was erected in 1838–42 to the designs of Joseph Bonomi. The main front is modelled on the Ancient Egyptian temple at Edfu

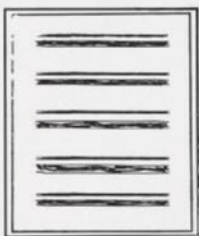
Malcolm & Jane. Truro, Cornwall.

*Finally found the perfect sofa to align  
with their obsession for stripes.*

*Winter  
Sale*

*It's your story.*

**So it's tailored to you.**



Alwinton large sofa in Walloon Stripe, as shown.  
Alwinton large sofas from £1,180 in Gibraltar House Fabric.



**SOFAS & STUFF**

Let's design together

**Stores in London & Nationwide**

Call us on **0808 178 3211** or visit **sofasandstuff.com**



## Back to the future

I AM writing this in front of a peat fire with what Burns calls a 'gude-willie waught' following a long, solitary tramp through sodden countryside. I've reached an age when all weather is good weather, but, even so, I'm glad to be indoors for the night. The shortest day is behind us. Those resolutions with which we will doubtless, in the fullness of time, be paving the road to Hell are before us. All is right with the world.

**‘I’ve decided not to begin thinning down until after the holidays are well and truly over ;**

Well, almost. I've promised myself that, in the months ahead, I will lose some weight. I should explain that I started writing in earnest and keeping a diary when I was eight years old. How I filled my time prior to then, I'm not entirely sure—I mooched about, I suppose.

At any rate, a quick comparison of spring entries going back half a century reveals that I've resolved to lose weight before—23 times, to be precise. In fact, if you were to add up all the weight I've lost since the year 2000 alone, I should be the size of a stick insect. Food for thought, of course, but no substitute for the actual thing.

Anyway, I've decided not to begin thinning down until after the holidays are well and truly over. This is partly because there's still a good deal of eating, drinking and merry-making to be done and partly because I find this season surprisingly emotional. I can't help myself from dwelling on the past or, for that matter, contemplating the future, neither of which is a diet-propitious activity.

Illustration: Clare Mackie



It's not that I'm low in spirit—far from it. If there was a law against writing when one over the eight, I fear a police officer would now be asking me politely to step/wobble away from the typewriter and blow into a little tube. No, I'm cheery enough, just thoughtful. Indeed, today, I was so moved as to set aside a terrifically gripping thriller (*The Strangler Vine* by M. J. Carter, not that you asked) and to rummage among our poetry books to see if I could find some comfort there.

Not surprisingly, given that the New Year is all about life, death, regret and hope, the anthologies are bursting with appropriate verse. My research has revealed that anything before the 18th century tends to be more positive in tone, but turgid. Robert Herrick, whose saucy *Upon the Nipples of Julia's Breast* has brought blushes to the cheeks of shy British school-boys for more than 300 years, returned to the topic more than

once, most noticeably in *A New Year's Gift Sent to Sir Simeon Steward*, a poem that sets new standards in sycophancy.

In 1692, Nahum Tate, the Poet Laureate, began the practice of an annual New Year poem to be presented to the king, knocking eight of them out before he died. Which is probably why Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate from 1850, felt it incumbent upon himself to pen *In Memoriam*. This, at least, is uplifting, containing those wonderful lines: 'Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,/The flying cloud, the frosty light:/The year is dying in the night;/Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.'

The New Year poetry of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries is, on the whole, better but gloomier. One has Wordsworth's *Lament of Mary, Queen of Scots: On the Eve of a New Year* ('Hark, the death note of the year'), John Clare's *The Old Year* ('The Old Year's gone

away/To nothingness and night') and Richard Wilbur's *Year's End* ('More time, more time. Barrages of applause/Come muffled from a buried radio').

William Cullen Bryant is mildly more optimistic, urging his readers to enjoy the old year right up until the last moment ('Stay yet, my friends, a moment stay—/ Stay till the good old year,/ So long companion of our way,/ Shakes hands, and leaves us here') and I have always enjoyed Ella Wheeler Wilcox's *The Year*, which ends: 'We live, we love, we woo, we wed,/ We wreath our brides, we sheet our dead./ We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,/ And that's the burden of the year.'

My favourite is a *haiku* by the Japanese master Kobayashi Issa, who, presumably in the grip of a hangover, wrote: 'New Year's Day—/ everything is in blossom!/ I feel about average.'

In light of the above, it's easy to understand the extraordinary popularity of *Auld Lang Syne*. With good reason, we slur our way through it every year: 'And we'll tak' a right gude-willie waught,/ For auld lang syne.' 🐉

Jonathan Self is the author of *Good Money, Become an Ethical Entrepreneur* (Head of Zeus) and a raw dog-food maker (<http://honeysrealdogfood.com>), who lives in Co Cork, Ireland

**Next week: Joe Gibbs**



# PURDEY

*Gun & Rifle Makers*

LONDON 1814

DISCOVER THE END OF SEASON SALE

IN-STORE FROM 28<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER • ONLINE FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY

57- 58 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET LONDON W1K 2ED + 44 (0) 20 7499 1801 PURDEY.COM

# My favourite painting Kevin Crossley-Holland

## *The Wild Hunt of Odin* by Peter Nicolai Arbo



*The Wild Hunt of Odin*, 1872, by Peter Nicolai Arbo (1831–92), 66in by 95in, Nasjonalmuseet, Oslo, Norway



### John McEwen comments on *The Wild Hunt of Odin*

PETER NICOLAI ARBO'S painting was inspired by the Norse myth of the Wild Hunt, about a supernatural group of huntsmen who crossed the heavens led by Wodan, god of the wind and the dead, or his equivalent. In Scandinavia, this was Odin, who had hunted on Sundays and was doomed to hunt down and kill supernatural beings forever. In England, we had Herlechin, Herne the Hunter and even, in a Dartmoor folk legend, Sir Francis Drake.

The Wild Hunt was first documented by Jacob Grimm in 1835: 'Another class of spectres... sweep through forest and air in whole companies with a horrible din. This is the widely spread legend of the furious host, the furious hunt, which is of high antiquity, and interweaves itself, now with gods, and now with heroes. Look where you will, it betrays its connection with heathenism.'

Arbo's interpretation mixes Norse mythology with contemporary romantic poetry, specifically Johan Sebastian Welhaven's poem of the same name, which opens: 'Through the nightly air stampedes a train of frothing black horses.' Odin leads the celestial charge, topless war goddesses to the fore, accompanied by his ravens, scavengers of the dead, as distant hammer-wielding Thor, his most famous son, rides the storm in his goat-led chariot.

Arbo was the son of a headmaster. His childhood was in Drammen, Norway, but he studied as an art student in Copenhagen and Dusseldorf, among a school of painters with which he remains identified. He returned to Norway in 1861, where his fame earned him a knighthood there twice over and a number of official posts. 🐉

The children's author and poet Kevin Crossley-Holland is a patron of the Society for Storytelling and The Story Museum and President of the School Library Association. His new book, *Norse Myths: Tales of Odin, Thor, and Loki*, was published last month

‘This mighty painting, charged with tremendous energy and drama, but also with great grace, is a meeting place between the Northern World and Romanticism. Ethereal Asgard-lit Valkyries, arms outstretched, led by Odin and his son Thor brandishing his short-handled hammer, soar over a world darkened by armed pursuers and those pursued—muscular naked men, wild-eyed greys, leaping hounds—while far below, the always-moon rises proud of the mountains and goes on his stately way. To my mind, this brilliant mythological painting is the perfect visual counterpart to Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*’

# Flying high with AQUILA!

*AQUILA Magazine is perfect for inquisitive children, and it has a great line-up of intelligent articles you will probably want to read yourself.*



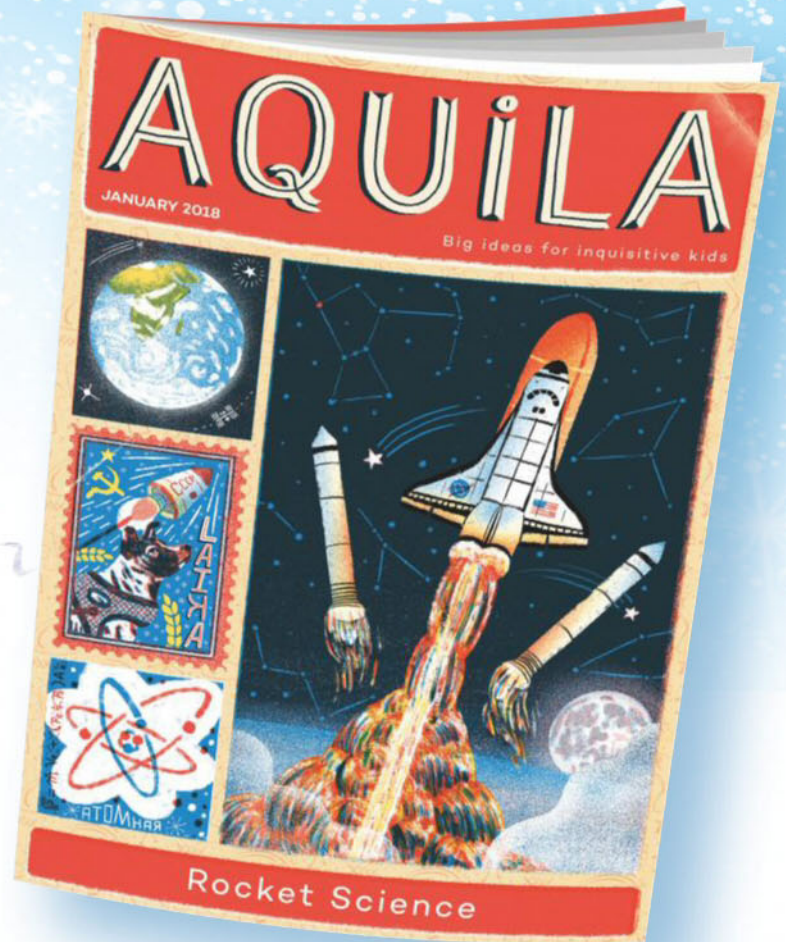
From **Rocket Science** to **The Story of Humankind**, this advanced and philosophical publication introduces young readers to a thought-provoking mix of **Science, Arts and General Knowledge**.

### What's special about AQUILA?

**AQUILA** is not like any magazine you will find on the newsstand – it is more like a club for inquisitive kids. They will soon discover a community of other youngsters just like them – kind, creative and curious. Every issue is a pleasing combination of challenge and fun; readers can explore advanced concepts beyond the range of the school classroom and build strong foundations for their future education.

### What's inside?

**AQUILA** takes an in-depth look at a new topic every month; the editorial is both witty and intelligent, with articles written and researched by educational specialists. Each issue is beautifully illustrated with diagrams, photos and contemporary artworks.



### January issue: Rocket Science

It's all systems go for 2018! Join **AQUILA** for this exciting issue as we discover Newton's laws of motion, and the maths behind the Moon landings. PLUS: meet the wannabe spacemen of the ancient world and see how the 'space race' excited and inspired 20th-century designers and artists.

- ✓ **BIG IDEAS** for 8–12 year-olds
- ✓ **Challenging Reading & Puzzles**
- ✓ **Teachers & Parents love AQUILA**

**SERIOUS  
FUN  
EVERY MONTH!**

See sample  
online

Topics from January 2018: **Rocket Science, Money Maths, Grow Your Own, Pop Art, Zoologist Safari & The Science of Games.**

UK Subscriptions start from £30 and include a welcome pack.

Overseas available. Subscribe at [www.AQUILA.co.uk](http://www.AQUILA.co.uk) or call 01323 431313 weekdays 9–4 pm.

See subscription options at:

[www.AQUILA.co.uk](http://www.AQUILA.co.uk)



# Putting the cat among the fish

On an annual pilgrimage to Scotland in pursuit of silver salmon, Richard Parker enjoys the many charms of the Jaguar XJ R-Sport saloon



AS has become traditional in September, I was heading north with the Editor as (always) passenger in the never-ending quest for the leaper. Over the years, our transport has been on an upward trajectory, from the baseline of a Range Rover in about 2005. This year, I was promised an icon, a car of legend and, to most, extraordinary sculptured beauty bearing a prancing horse on the bonnet and boot.

When endeavouring to maximise the prospect of catching a salmon, timing is everything; you need to hit a weather pattern promising clouds and rain. I discovered that timing is important for prancing horses, too. The week I was chauffeuring COUNTRY LIFE's own giant of letters to Scotland turned out to be the same week as the Goodwood Festival of Speed. The consequence was that Ferrari no longer had a car available for two middle-aged fishermen. All press cars understandably followed roads leading only to West Sussex, not a place renowned for its run of autumn fish.

However, there's another leaping creature to add to the menagerie and it was the Jaguar that came to our rescue. Jaguar may not have quite the immediate cachet

of Ferrari, but, on our drive up, it occurred to me that cats catch more fish than horses, which just might be a good omen.

Jaguar also has quite a pedigree. Seven-time Le Mans winner, fourth on the all-time constructor list, only two behind Ferrari, maker of perhaps the most beautiful racing car ever built (the D-type) and the once-fastest production car (XK 120), not to mention the E-type.

Times changed. One wonders what the Jaguar management made of the PR coup when, on November 17, 1999, the then Tory leader William Hague said in the House of Commons: 'People work hard and save to own a car. They don't want to be told that they can't drive it by a Deputy Prime Minister whose idea of park and ride is to park one Jaguar and be driven away in another.' I imagine that 'Two Jags' Prescott might not have been the target market for Jaguar's marketing department.

It seems to me that, like John Prescott, four-door saloons are not necessarily things of beauty and although, of course, beauty is very much in the eye of the beholder, I concluded that, unfortunately, the Jaguar XJ R-Sport SWB 3.0 V6 bucked no trend. From outside, this is an enormous car, idiosyncratic to look at. Most

car manufacturers avoid straying too far from a design standard, but Jaguar has a history of boldness. The mark 2, 3.8-litre four-door saloon of the 1960s looked unique and collectors still spend thousands restoring them. The same won't be happening to the XJ R-Sport any time soon.

However, at least it's different to look at. There's something else about this car, too—it's fabulous to drive. It looks vaguely purposeful and your eyes have not been deceived; it's very comfortable and very fast. Of all the cars I've reviewed for COUNTRY LIFE—Range Rovers, Porsches, Rollers, Bentleys and Aston Martins—this is the *non-pareil* for comfort and elegance; pace with grace. It's also the cheapest by a country mile. The one we drove costs £72,000 new, but you can pick one up second hand for about half that. It's also economical—we averaged nearly 50mpg.

The back seats looked a bit cramped in terms of headroom, but that may have been a consequence of the nine fishing rods, three nets, 14 reels, three pairs of waders and various fly boxes we had chucked in. Bearing in mind it's only really possible to use one fly-fishing rod at a time, we never quite reached the stage when either

### On the road

**Jaguar XJ R-Sport SWB 3.0 V6 diesel**

**Price** from £72,415 for the basic model

**Annual road fund licence** £190


**0–60mph** 5.7 seconds

**Top speed** 155mph

**Combined fuel consumption** 48mpg

of us could travel in the rear. That the Editor would have fitted comfortably, and with room to spare, says little.

Thus, I remain a Ferrari virgin—I've never sat in one, let alone driven one. However, would we have got all our clobber on the back of an Italian pony? I doubt it. Would we have used the extra power? No. Would we have turned more heads? Yes, of course. However, we fishermen are superstitious types and horses and fish don't mix.

As I lay on a grassy bank on the afternoon of our last day, staring at a blue sky checked with puffy clouds and contemplating the 42lb of salmon I'd had the staggering good fortune to land over two days, I felt sure that Jaguars and fish are nothing if not compatible. 

0345 303 2303; [www.jaguar.co.uk](http://www.jaguar.co.uk)



# It's a mirror. It's a TV.

With MirrorTV you've got both at the touch of a button.

With a choice of over 100 frames to suit any interior.

All bathroom models come with MirrorClear™ Technology to keep them mist free.

Available with 6.4" to 65" (as well as custom built sizes) with the latest Full HD LCD or LED screens.

Contact us on +44 (0)870 3866333 or e-mail [sales@mirrormedia.com](mailto:sales@mirrormedia.com)



[www.mirrormedia.com](http://www.mirrormedia.com)

# In the cathedral's shadow

*The Cathedral Close,  
Wells, Somerset*

The splendours of Wells Cathedral can easily distract from the astonishing architecture that surrounds it. In the second of two articles, John Goodall describes the remarkable history of the precinct

Photographs by Paul Highnam

**W**ELLS CATHEDRAL is the focus of one of the most complete medieval townscapes to survive in Europe. Its immediate surrounds formerly constituted an ecclesiastical enclave, partly enclosed by walls and shut off from the town by gates (most of which survive), known as the Liberty of St Andrew. Within this lay not only the moated palace that has served since the 13th century as the principal seat of Bishops of Bath and Wells, but an area to the north of the cathedral developed by the community that served the church.

Responsibility for the cathedral was vested in a college of priests, termed canons, governed by a Dean and served by four senior officers: a Treasurer, an Archdeacon (responsible for the management of parishes), a Precentor (who managed the singing) and a Chancellor (who cared for choir books).

As explained last week, from 1219, this collegiate body or chapter established its church as a joint cathedral with Bath Abbey (although, in the 1240s, it had to fight a ruinously expensive legal case in Rome to secure that title). Wells thereafter naturally emerged as one of a small but important group of 'secular' English cathedrals, a denomination that distinguished it from the many major cathedral churches served by monks.

In 1264, the chapter was definitively constituted in its late-medieval form as a body of





53 canons. Each one received an income from a parcel of property individually assigned to him, termed a prebend. The canons did not live in community and enjoyed a degree of personal independence. Those who were not regularly resident were required to appoint a vicar, who would perform their duties in choir.

Not only as individuals, but as a chapter, the canons enjoyed an unusually free hand, for example electing their own officials. To the despair of several bishops, they also successfully resisted disciplinary visitation.

In about 1255, the chapter embarked on a new architectural project to embody its wealth, independence and newfound prestige. Hitherto, the canons had formally assembled in chapter, both for occasional meetings and a daily gathering at about 9am, in the north transept of the church. To clergy familiar with the purpose-built chapter houses of other great church institutions, however, this must have seemed a hopelessly unsatisfactory and makeshift arrangement.

Work began, therefore, on a purpose-built chapter house accessible from the north transept. The new building was laid out on an octagonal plan, a design characteristic of the most ambitious English chapter houses. Its principal chamber was planned at first-floor level above a sacristy or strong room, an arrangement that implicitly linked the chapter as an institution with its most valued possessions.

At Wells, the sacristy is protected from fire by massive stone vaults and from robbery by heavy grilles across the windows and a double door to the church densely ornamented with ironwork (*Fig 6*). In one corner is a sink playfully decorated with a dog chewing a bone (*Fig 5*).

In obscure circumstances, work to the new chapter house seems to have foundered, leaving only the sacristy and the staircase to the new chamber complete (*Fig 3*). Then, in 1286, the chapter committed a tithe of every canon's income to 'a new structure begun long since'. This must refer to the chapter-house chamber proper, which was now finished by a mason familiar with royal building projects in London.

The interior is dazzling, its vault supported on a single, central column and articulated with fans of ribs (*Fig 2*). Around the lower register of the walls, which incorporates a double step for seating, is a decorative arcade. Above, the walls dissolve into huge windows filled with stained glass.

As the 13th century progressed, the chapter at Wells increasingly attracted ambitious ➤

*Fig 1: The Chain Gate Bridge of 1459. Visible beyond is the Old Deanery*



*Fig 2 above: The chapterhouse interior. Its use of contrasting colours of stone accentuates the intricacy of the design. Fig 3 facing page: A stair travels from the north transept into the chapterhouse chamber. To the left, a door leads over the Chain Gate to the Vicars' Hall*

and well-connected clergy. Such individuals often held multiple livings and chose to draw their salaries as absentees. Indeed, by the 14th century, about two-thirds of the canons were non-resident. Absenteeism, of course, was effectively licensed because canons could legitimately appoint vicars or deputies to perform their duties. As it increased, however, a new problem emerged.

In the 12th century, the understanding seems to have been that vicars would live in the houses of those they deputised for. As more and more canons abandoned Wells entirely, however, their vicars were thrown upon the town. From anecdotal evidence, it seems clear that they were a relatively unruly body. In 1318, an attempt was made to provide common lodgings for the vicars.

Then, on December 30, 1348, in an initiative led by the Bishop, the vicars were constituted as a community under royal charter.

His intention was to bring the vicars 'nearer the church, [to] attend divine service constantly and meet together for meals in a companionable way'.

To this end, work began on a new precinct to the north of the chapter house, now known as Vicars' Close. It comprised a gateway facing onto the street with a common hall for the vicars to eat in set over it, completed in 1348. Beyond the gate was laid out a regular street of 42 houses, complete by 1353–4 and provided with walled front gardens in about 1420 (*Fig 4*). Each house comprised a lower hall and a bedchamber above, both interiors warmed by a fire. The stairs connect-

ing them were projected slightly into the garden to the rear. Beneath each stair was a latrine, washed clean by a conduit.

At the opposite end of the close from the gate, and probably begun in the 1420s, was a chapel with a library chamber above it. Soon afterwards, in about 1448, a new entrance stair to the hall was built inside the gateway to the Vicars' Close. It was incorporated within a tower porch that also accommodated an exchequer chamber, muniment room and treasury in its upper two floors. Remarkably, these preserve their original 14th-century furnishings and the latter is secured by a lock ingeniously concealed beneath a floorboard.

‘As more and more canons abandoned Wells entirely, their vicars were thrown upon the town,’

Soon after the vicars were incorporated, other elements of the cathedral community were likewise regulated. The choristers were provided with a new house in 1354 and the priests serving chantry chapels in the cathedral were constituted as Monterey College in 1399 (of which nothing now survives). All of these bodies were then in turn reshaped by the Somerset-born Bishop Thomas Bekynton (d.1465), a Wykehamist who was raised to prominence by Henry VI. His treatment of the vicars' college is representative of his wider approach to the institutions of his see.

In 1459, he conducted a disciplinary visitation of the community and found much that could be improved. The vicars, for example, were 'wearing the wanton and outrageous clothes of laymen', so he forbade them from dressing in high collars and low-cut doublets and cloaks. To improve matters, he reissued the original governing statutes with his own emendations.

Bishop Bekynton also renovated the vicars' houses, constructing high chimneys for each. To identify his work, there appears here, and all over the Liberty, including its gates, his device: a frame with a flaming barrel. This is a visual pun on his name: beacon-tun.

At the same time, he also built the Chain Gate Bridge (*Fig 1*). This connects the Vicars' Hall to the cathedral by way of the chapterhouse stairs. Henceforth, the vicars could attend services in the cathedral without entering the public realm or being troubled by the weather.

Bishop Bekynton also seems to have been important in developing a tradition ➤





*Fig 4 above: The Vicars' Close, completed by 1354 and renovated with tall chimneys by Bishop Bekynton in the 1450s.*  
*Fig 5 left: A dog with his bone covers the plughole of a sink. Fig 6 below: The strongroom door*



of music and scholarship at Wells. This continued into the 16th century, as for example in the figure of the Italian Humanist Polydore Vergil, who was Archdeacon from 1508 to 1546.

Wells continued to support a number of extremely wealthy clergy, some of whom were prominent by their total absence, but others made important contributions to the precinct. One such was Dean John Gunthorpe (d.1498), who built a castle-like residence overlooking the cathedral green, one of the most opulent domestic buildings of its period to survive in Britain.

Wells had a very unusual experience of the Reformation. Being a secular cathedral, it did not fall victim to the dissolution of the monasteries. Moreover, in an attempt to stave off ruin, the chapter elected Thomas Cromwell, the architect of Henry VIII's seizure of church goods, Dean in 1537. He occupied the post until his own disgrace and execution three years later.

The first blow to the institution of the cathedral, therefore, came with the surrender of the Deanery and its prebend to Edward VI in 1547. This was immediately followed by the royal suppression chantries, which divested the chapter of a substantial slice of wealth as well as many of its junior clergy.

Nevertheless, in complex circumstances, the chapter effectively survived intact until November 25, 1591, when, for purposes of clarity, Elizabeth I issued a charter to 'create, erect, found and establish the... cathedral church anew'. The constitution of the Elizabethan foundation was directly drawn from its medieval predecessor. One difference of long-term importance, however, was that a majority of the vicars now became singing men. They seem to have lost none of their unruliness in the process.

The liturgical and doctrinal changes associated with the Reformation were undoubtedly accompanied by iconoclasm in the cathedral. Nevertheless, the building and its medieval glazing seem to have survived

remarkably intact until the Civil War, when there are at least four distinct episodes of destruction recorded in 1642 and 1643.

Following the Restoration in 1660, however, the chapter had the resources from fines to undertake major repairs to the buildings.

An outsider's impression of their work is supplied by the Dutchman, Willem Schellinks, who came to Wells on July 22, 1662. He described the west front of the church as 'being in a very bad condition because of its great age, as well as the war, but it is all being repaired... A very large organ was in hand to be installed in the church. Next to the church is the Bishop's palace, which was badly damaged'.

## ‘The first blow to the cathedral came with the surrender of the Deanery and its prebend to Edward VI in 1547’

By the 18th century, the chapter returned to much its former numerical strength and prosperity. In 1724–6, Daniel Defoe remarked: 'Here are no less than seventeen and twenty prebends and 19 canons, belonging to this church, besides a dean, a chancellor, a precentor and three archdeacons; a number which very few cathedrals in England have.'

Indeed, the reduction of the cathedral clergy did not properly begin until the Cathedral Act of 1840. Institutional changes have followed thick and fast through the 20th century, although the titular organisation of the community with a Dean and canons has been preserved to the present. Considering the long musical tradition of the cathedral, it is notable that Wells also founded a new choir for girls—corresponding to that of the boy choristers—in 1994.

No less significant in architectural terms has been a £7 million redevelopment project overseen by Martin Stancliffe of Purcell Miller Tritton and the cathedral architect Peter Bird between 2005 and 2009. It has provided public access to the undercroft of the chapterhouse and also created a new complex of buildings to the south of the church. Entrance to the cathedral is now through a small lead-spired porch, which leads to a new cloister, restaurant, shop and facilities for the cathedral choirs including a cruck-framed song school.

These new buildings do not try to rival the medieval architecture of Wells, but they will hopefully help future generations more easily to use and enjoy this astonishing place. 🐦

# What is the environment worth to you?

Just £62 could help save  
our landscape from tree disease



**WOODLAND  
TRUST**

The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark. The Woodland Trust is a charity registered in England and Wales number 294344 and in Scotland number SC038885. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England number 1982873. Image: Ben Lee/WTML 10701 09/17

**Targeting  
tree disease**  
Get your pack of 45  
trees today  
[woodlandtrust.org.uk/  
buytrees](http://woodlandtrust.org.uk/buytrees)



TAKE OUT A SUBSCRIPTION TO COUNTRY LIFE

# JANUARY SALE

# SAVE £58 A YEAR\*

Not only will you have the very best of British life delivered to your door every week, you will also receive your personal copy of our international property and schools supplements. All of our subscribers are entitled to join Rewards for free and take advantage of our handpicked offers, unique giveaways and unmissable prizes.

HURRY! OFFER ENDS 5TH FEBRUARY 2018.

\* when paying by quarterly Direct Debit



[www.countrylifesubs.co.uk/BUC7](http://www.countrylifesubs.co.uk/BUC7) ☎ +44(0)330 333 1113

Phone lines open Monday – Saturday, 8:00am – 6:00pm, UK time. Please have your payment details ready and quote code **BUC7**

THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE - This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits - If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Time Inc. (UK) Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Time Inc. (UK) Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request. If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society - If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Time Inc. (UK) Ltd asks you to - You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

#### COUNTRY LIFE SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Quarterly Direct Debit (UK only): Pay only £31.74 per quarter – saving £14.51 on the full price of £46.25

#### 1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION – 51 ISSUES:

	OFFER PRICE	FULL PRICE	YOU SAVE
<input type="checkbox"/> UK	£135.49	£185	26%
<input type="checkbox"/> EUROPE	€226.99	€380	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> USA	\$274.99	\$460	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> ROW	£213.99	£359	40%

#### 2 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION – 102 ISSUES:

	OFFER PRICE	FULL PRICE	YOU SAVE
<input type="checkbox"/> UK	£216.99	£370	41%
<input type="checkbox"/> EUROPE	€454.99	€760	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> USA	\$550.99	\$920	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> ROW	£429.49	£718	40%

#### US TELEPHONE ORDER LINE: 888-313-5528

#### SEND COMPLETED COUPON TO:

UK : FREEPOST Time Inc  
(No further address needed. No stamp required – for UK only)  
Overseas: PO Box 20501  
1001 NM Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
(Affix correct postage)

£31.74 payable by quarterly UK Direct Debit. This price is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Offer open to new subscribers only. Direct Debit offer open to new UK subscribers only. Offer closes 5th February 2018. All orders will start with the next available issue – please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery, 8 weeks for overseas orders. The full subscription rate is for 1 year (51 issues) and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For full terms and conditions, visit [www.magazinesdirect.com/terms](http://www.magazinesdirect.com/terms). For enquiries and overseas rates please call +44(0)330 333 1113 (lines are open Monday-Saturday from 8am to 6pm UK time) or email: [help@magazinesdirect.com](mailto:help@magazinesdirect.com). Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle. The Rewards scheme is available for all active print subscribers of magazines published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, free of charge. Full terms and conditions are available at [mymagazinesdirect.com](http://mymagazinesdirect.com). Digital subscribers also get access as long as the subscription has been purchased directly through the publishers at [magazinesdirect.com](http://magazinesdirect.com).

#### YOUR DETAILS:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Tel (inc Country/area code): \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: DD MM YYYY

By submitting your information, you agree to our Privacy Policy available at [www.timeincuk.com/privacy](http://www.timeincuk.com/privacy). Please keep me up to date with special offers and news from Country Life and other brands within the Time Inc. UK Group by email  post  telephone  and/or SMS  You can unsubscribe at any time.  Please keep me up to date with special offers and news just by email from carefully selected companies. Your personal details will not be shared with those companies - we send the emails and you can unsubscribe at any time.

#### GIFT SUBSCRIPTION:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

#### PAYMENT DETAILS - CASH CREDIT CARD:

1. I enclose a cheque made payable to Time Inc. (UK) Ltd for the total £/€/\$

2. Please debit my:  Visa  Visa Debit  Mastercard  Amex

Card No: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: MM YY

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(I am over 18)

3. DIRECT DEBIT - (UK ONLY) Pay £31.74 every 3 months

For office use only:  
Originators Reference – 764 221



Name of bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of account holder: \_\_\_\_\_

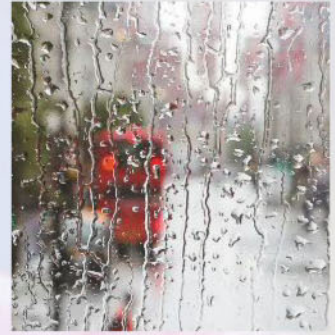
Sort code: \_\_\_\_\_ Account no.: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society  
Please pay Time Inc. (UK) Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed on this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Time Inc. (UK) Ltd and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(I am over 18)

**XCL CODE BUC7**



# Things to do in 2018

Over the next 24 pages, we bring you ideas for different events to try and eclectic anniversaries to remember each month, foraging supremo **John Wright** finds plenty to harvest, even in the seemingly gloomiest times of year, **Simon Lester** reveals the sometimes spectacular comings and goings of wildlife to watch out for and **Melanie Johnson** has recipes to help make the most of what's in your garden

Compiled by Kate Green



# January

## Stark beauty, numb fingers, unrealistic ambitions—and hope

**B**LOODY January again.' So closes Flanders and Swann's gently sardonic parody of Sara Coleridge's rather twee poem. Few poets have much to say about this difficult month beyond reminding us how cold it is, as if this might have escaped our attention.

Despite its long nights, short days and a talent for making feet and fingers glow, those days are lengthening, however, and the summer solstice is beyond a distant horizon. After the disquieting prospect of successfully navigating yet another year has dissolved from the mind, January is, above all, a month filled with hope.

January is thought to be named for Janus, the double-faced figure who, perforce, looks both ways. The god of transitions and doorways, he sees the new year coming and the old fading. It's in January that I usually embark on a new book, in my freezing attic office, swaddled in blankets and a woolly hat and brimming with self-imposed and totally unrealistic daily targets.

Once, January was a time for seed catalogues, but I gave up gardening for foraging years ago. Gardening involved hard work and disappointment in equal measure and had to go. I do go for walks on occasion, just to stay sane. There is little that's green beyond those plants that are forever so and I content myself with the stark beauty of winter trees on the skyline.

At least one plant is at its best: black mustard (*Brassica nigra*). This annual plant grows from a tiny seed to be 5ft tall by late spring and colonises wasteland and coastal cliffs. The leaves are coarse, but their flavour is astounding—mild and nutty, followed by an intense, but pleasant mustard heat.

### Quiz

- 1) Who, according to the song of the same title, 'walks abroad in woollen coat and boots of leather'?
- 2) What title was Queen Victoria awarded on January 1, 1877?
- 3) Who were the two key players in the Casablanca Conference, which took place 75 years ago this month?
- 4) What is *Capra hircus*?
- 5) Which plant, flowering this month, can be used to alleviate spots, piles and bags under the eyes?

Some mushrooms are equipped to brave the low temperatures. One, the velvet shank (*Flammulina velutipes*), contains a polysaccharide that prevents the formation of damaging ice crystals. This pretty mushroom forms dense and sticky/slimy tufts on rotting tree stumps and is, surprisingly, edible. Its bright-orange cap and dark, velvety stem provide its Latin name, which means 'little flame with a velvet foot'. It's a bright lamp in a grey scene. *JW*

“To read a poem in January is as lovely as to go for a walk in June”

*Jean-Paul Sartre*

### Comings and goings

Look out for lesser-spotted woodpeckers drumming on tree trunks; vixens screaming to attract a mate; and white mountain hares—now highly visible unless there's snow—starting to mate. *SL*

### Do something different

**January 7** The point-to-point season proper gets under way in the New Year with fixtures this weekend at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire (Larkhill Racing Club), at Alnwick in Northumberland (Percy Hunt) and near Wadebridge in Cornwall (North Cornwall Hunt). Check the weather forecast first (01933 304795; [www.pointtopoint.co.uk](http://www.pointtopoint.co.uk))

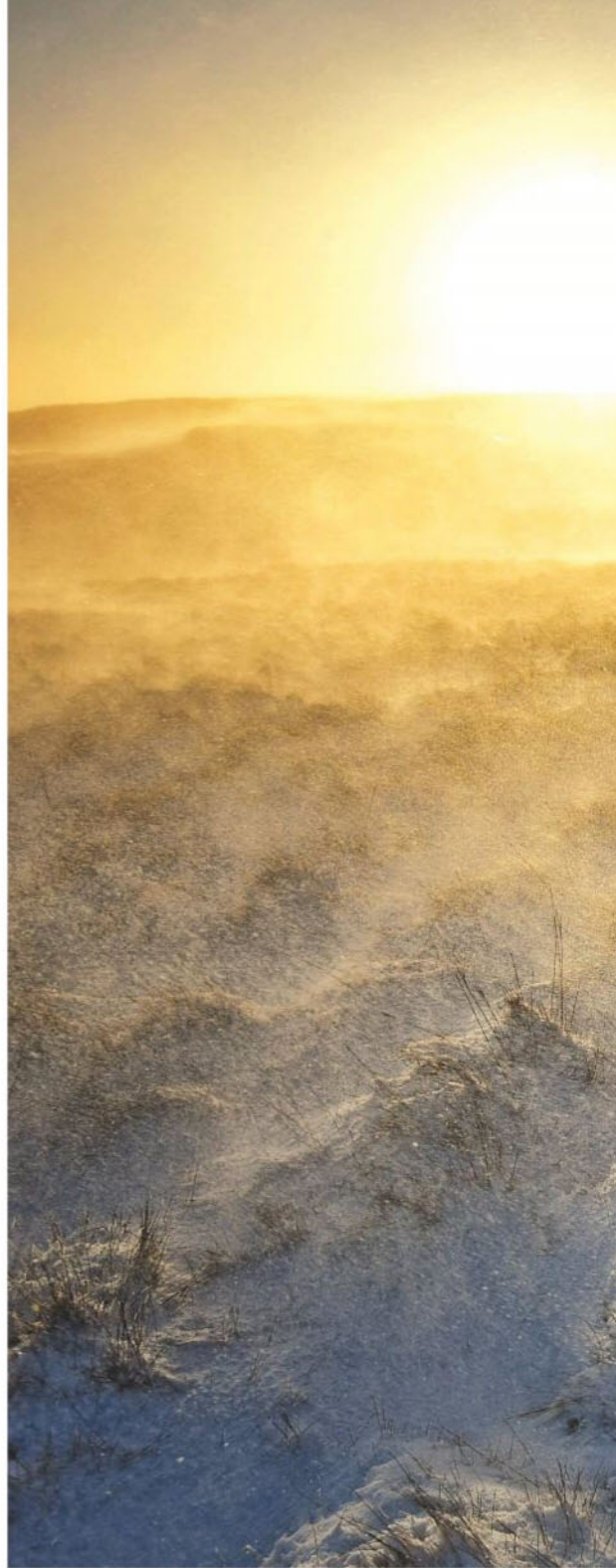
**January 10** Coppicing day at Garston Wood, near Sixpenny Handley, Wiltshire, with the RSPB. Volunteers



are welcome and training (plus tools and gloves) is provided (01722 712713; [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk))

**January 19** Go behind the scenes at Tate Britain, London SW1, with a conservation expert and have a private view of Turner Prize-winning sculptor Rachel Whiteread's exhibition. Tickets £24 (6.30pm, 020-7887 8888; [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk))

**January 21** There's a terrific opportunity to see a live performance by the Bolshoi Ballet when the company's new production of *Romeo and Juliet* is



Alamy; shutterstock; Péter Mocsonoky/Alamy; haldelight / Alamy; Paul Kingston/North News and Pictures; Private Collection/The Stapleton Collection/Bridgeman Images; Emma Earnshaw



screened as it happens in Moscow in cinemas across the UK. Visit [www.bolshoiballetcinema.co.uk](http://www.bolshoiballetcinema.co.uk)



**January 25** The UK tour of a new adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, with music by Joe

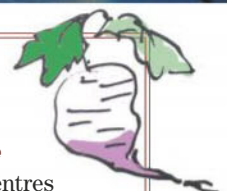
Stilgoe, starts at Chichester Festival Theatre, West Sussex (until February 3, 01243 781312; [www.cft.org.uk](http://www.cft.org.uk)) before continuing on to 12 other venues between Newcastle and Plymouth

## January 2018

- **1,942 years ago** Hadrian, Emperor of Rome, was born
- **599 years ago** Rouen surrendered to Henry V in the Hundred Years' War
- **200 years ago** The British Institution of Civil Engineers was founded
- **125 years ago** The first meeting of the Independent Labour Party took place
- **45 years ago** Britain was admitted into the European Community



## Cook



### A take on turnip tartiflette

Parboil 4 turnips, cut the centres out and fill with cheese and chopped spring onions. Wrap a rasher of bacon around each one and bake in a hot oven for about 30 minutes or until the bacon is cooked and the cheese has melted. Serve with a glass of red wine for a fabulous Sunday supper. **MJ**

Answers: 1) *The January Man* (by Dave Goulder, 1970) 2) *Empress of India*; 3) *Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, who were discussing strategy in the Second World War* 4) *Domestic goat* 5) *Witch hazel* ➤



# February

## Snowdrops and seaweed lift the Lenten austerity

**H**AVING negotiated January, February seems like an imposition too far. I spent much of my schooldays writing 100 lines for some minor misdemeanour, only to be ordered to do it all again because my work was illegible. That is February.

Poets and essayists have few good things to say about the month, the worst coming from *New York Times* columnist Anna Quindlen, who cheerfully informs us that it's 'a suitable month for dying'. Shakespeare speaks of a 'February face, So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness'. There's St Valentine's Day, of course, but that's a double-edged sword, a burden to the temporarily or habitually unloved.

Then, if things weren't bad enough, comes Lent. This purification ritual predates Christianity and gives us the name of the month, Juno Februata being the Roman goddess of purification. Lent seems misplaced these days, with its spiritual heart moving to January 1, when, drowning in alcohol, carbohydrates and self-loathing, we vow to do better. However, it does provide a second chance to those who found themselves hitting the bottle and the Lindt by January 10.

The most loved of plants to appear at this time is the snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis* (literally, snowy milk-flower). There is a remarkable box-and-yew wood five miles east of my Dorset home that sports vast carpets of this lovely plant. Among them are hundreds of scarlet elf cups (*Sarcosypha austriaca*), a brilliant-red fungus, startling and incongruous against the sombre winter colours, but complementing the snowdrops perfectly.

Not wishing to end February as miserably as I began it, I will mention one of my favourite foraged treasures at its best this month.

It is the seaweed, a type of laver, called *Porphyra linearis*. Its slender fronds cling to the rocks in the splash zone on the upper shore, forming what looks like a coat of brown varnish at low tide. These can only be collected with a fork, wound around the delicate fronds like spag-hetti. It's the tastiest of the lavers and something of a fast food in that it only takes five hours of boiling to make it palatable. *JW*

“The February sunshine steeps your boughs and tints the buds and swells the leaves within”

*William C. Bryant*

### Comings and goings

Look out for large packs of grouse moving about on moorland, sometimes descending to lower ground when there's deep snow; buzzards performing territorial displays; white hares turning brown. *SL*

### Do something different

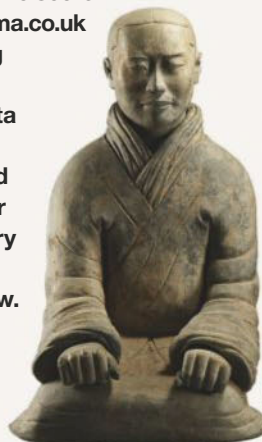
**February 3** The 6 Nations rugby tournament begins in the UK with Wales versus Scotland at the Principality Stadium, Cardiff. Even if you're not interested in the game, the singing will be spine-tingling and the atmosphere friendly and stirring ([www.sixnationsrugby.com](http://www.sixnationsrugby.com); [www.principalitystadium.wales](http://www.principalitystadium.wales))

**February 4** This month's cinematic offering from the Bolshoi Ballet is the tragic tale of *The Lady of the Camellias*, based on Alexandre Dumas's novel and

accompanied by Chopin's piano score. Visit [www.bolshoiballetcinema.co.uk](http://www.bolshoiballetcinema.co.uk) to find your nearest showing

**February 9** China's Terracotta Warriors come to the UK for the first time in 10 years to the World Museum in Liverpool, plus other artefacts not seen in this country before. Booking essential (until October 28, 0151-478 4444; [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk))

**February 16-18** Shepton Mallet Snowdrop Festival, Somerset.



dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Alamy; Picture Library/Alamy; Mr. Ziyu Qiu; Drew Buckley; LISP/Photography/Alamy; Getty; Emma Earnshaw

### Quiz

- 1) According to legend, which Roman emperor was said to have ordered the execution of St Valentine in about AD269?
- 2) Where is a relic described as a small vessel tinged with St Valentine's blood kept?
- 3) Of which illness is St Valentine the patron saint?
- 4) Of which rural hobby is St Valentine patron saint?
- 5) Which poet wrote, in *Parlement of Foules*, of birds choosing their mates on St Valentine's Day?





The town was home to James Allen, the 'Snowdrop King', who was the first person to breed new varieties from wild plants. For further details, visit [www.sheptonssnowdropfestival.org.uk](http://www.sheptonssnowdropfestival.org.uk)

**February 22** The National Theatre's production of Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, starring Sienna Miller and Jack O'Connell, will be shown live in cinemas around the country. To find your nearest, visit [ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk)



## February 2018

- **431 years ago** Mary, Queen of Scots was executed
- **309 years ago** Alexander Selkirk was rescued from a desert island, inspiring the book *Robinson Crusoe*
- **117 years ago** Queen Victoria's funeral
- **65 years ago** The rationing of sweets, introduced in the Second World War, came to an end
- **28 years ago** Nelson Mandela was freed from prison in South Africa, after serving 27 years

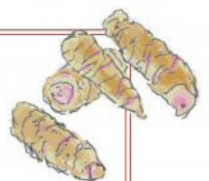


Answers 1) Claudius II 2) Whitefriar Street Church, Dublin 3) Epilepsy 4) Bee-keeping 5) Geoffrey Chaucer

## Cook

### Jerusalem-artichoke soup

Add 200g each of peeled Jerusalem artichokes and potatoes to a saucepan with 2 cloves of garlic, 1 chopped onion, 1 sprig of rosemary and 2 sprigs of thyme. Add just enough chicken stock to cover and simmer until everything is tender. Remove the herbs and blitz with a stick blender. Add a splash of cream and serve with focaccia. Simple and delicious. **MJ**





# March

## The sap and the sea kale are rising, but beware a deadly hemlock plant

**M**ARCH is when the Romans recommenced war, their second-favourite pastime, presumably after a winter spent enjoying their most favourite. War in winter is all but impossible, so spring it had to be and March is named for Mars, the bringer of that horror.

There aren't many new leaves on trees or blossom, the cherry plum being a notable exception. However, Nature is busy with its preparations, for, unseen, the sap is rising.

Halfway through the second week of the month, I venture into a birch wood armed with brace, bit, bucket and spouts. An exploratory drill into a birch tree will, by mid March, be rewarded with a flow of sap. In 24 hours, five to seven pints may be collected from each tree. Simmered, oh so slowly, in a *bain-marie*, it will reduce to birch-sap syrup, one of the most prized of the forager's commodities.

In early March, I descend on a beach to heap pebbles over the hidden roots of sea kale, returning in mid April to cut the succulent, blanched young shoots. Beneath the hedges of wooded countryside, wild garlic can be found: juicy, bright green and fresh of flavour.

However, not everything lush and green in the March countryside is edible. I met two ladies recently who had been invited for a lunch, which, they were told, included 'wild parsley dumplings'. Despite knowing that there is no such thing as 'wild parsley' but there most certainly is the deadly, parsley lookalike, hemlock water dropwort, they ate it. Perhaps dying a horrible death seemed preferable to embarrassing one's hostess.

Courage gained through sloe gin permitted them to make polite enquiries as to the provenance of their meal and the resultant walk to the stream where the herb was

collected confirmed their fears. Knowing that the leaves are less poisonous than the roots, and that only a small quantity had been consumed, they decided not to call a helicopter to take them to A&E. I asked if they'd suffered any ill effects. 'No,' I was assured, 'but that night, we had the best dreams of our lives.'

By the end of the month, all the hedges in need of serious attention will have been repaired and laid—or, more likely, machine-cut to the bone—and the countryside is neat and ready for the explosion that is April. *JW*

## March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb

### Comings and goings

Look out for toads crossing roads on their way to breeding ponds; swallows and swifts arriving after an epic journey from south of the Sahara; antlers—red-deer stags start to cast them now; hen harriers returning to the uplands after wintering in the lowlands. *SL*

### Do something different



**From March 1** Benedict Cumberbatch's famous 2015 performance in the title role of *Hamlet* will be shown in cinemas across the country through NT

Live. To find your nearest showing, visit [ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk)

**March 5–24** *Matilda the Musical*, the adaptation of Roald Dahl's much-loved story about a remarkable little girl and her horrible headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, goes on tour, starting



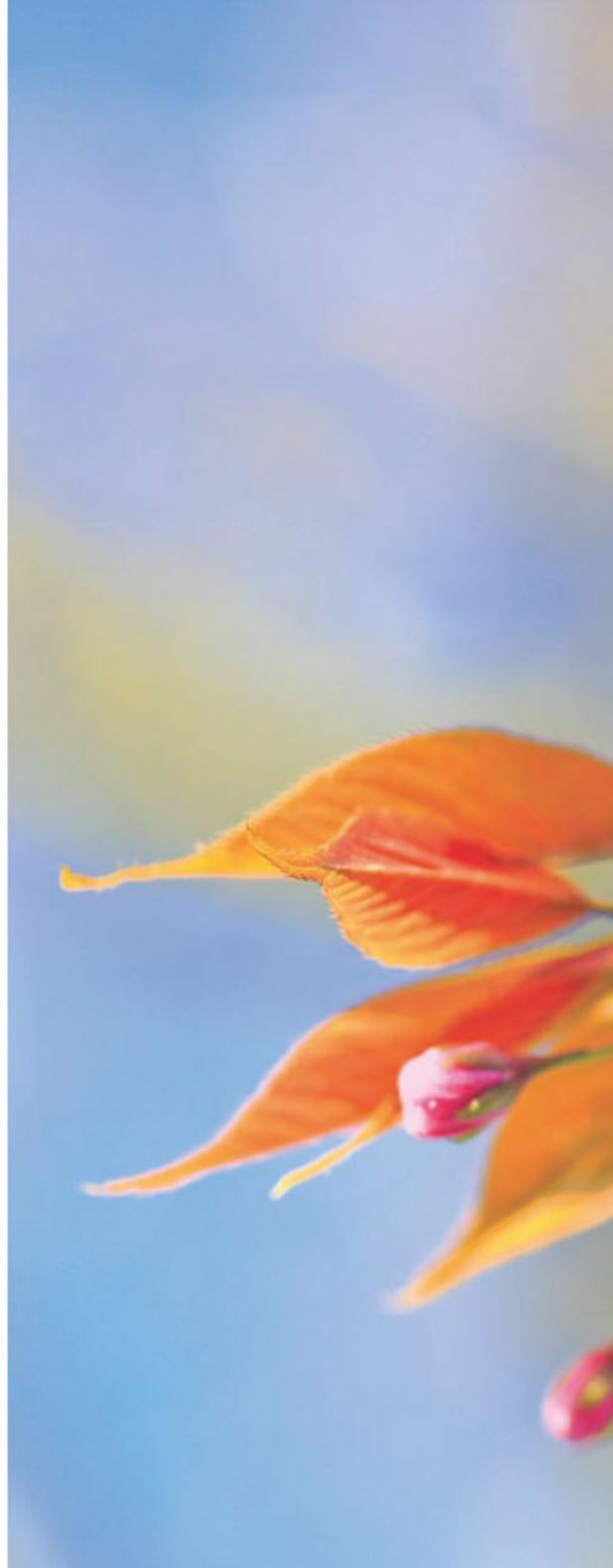
at the Leicester Curve (0116-242 3595; [www.curveonline.co.uk](http://www.curveonline.co.uk))

**March 9** Grand Military Gold Cup, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey, a great day's racing that incorporates the aforementioned steeplechase for amateur jockeys who have served in any branch of the Forces—it was famously won in 2017 by Capt Guy Disney, who lost a leg in Afghanistan (<http://sandown.thejockeyclub.co.uk>; 0344 579 3012)

dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; The Photo Access/Alamy; PpTravel/Alamy; Robert Birkby; GL Archive/Alamy; Emma Eamshaw

### Quiz

- 1) What were the Corn Laws, passed on March 15, 1815?
- 2) Who said 'Beware the Ides of March'?
- 3) Who told Alice 'it wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited'?
- 4) What was the 'hare with the amber eyes'?
- 5) Which saint commemorated Easter with bonfires and added the sun to what we now know as the Celtic cross?





**March 15–20** Boscastle Walking Week, a programme of guided walks around the dramatic rocky inlets of north Cornwall where Thomas Hardy met his wife, Emma, who has a memorial tablet in the church at Boscastle (01840 250010; [www.visitboscastle.com](http://www.visitboscastle.com))

**March 20** Free garden opening at Harlow Carr, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire. The 58-acre site, which is run by the RHS, is on what was an ancient royal hunting ground where springs of sulphur water were discovered in 1734 (01423 565418; [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk))

### March 2018

- **316 years ago** Anne Stuart became Queen Regnant of England, Scotland and Ireland
- **106 years ago** Lawrence Oates told Capt Scott: 'I am just going outside and may be some time'
- **71 years ago** The Thames flooded after a notoriously harsh winter
- **40 years ago** The first radio episode of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* aired
- **10 years ago** Heathrow's Terminal 5 opened—500 flights were cancelled



*Answers 1) Tariffs on imported grain 2) A soothsayer to Julius Caesar 3) The March Hare in 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' 4) A piece of Japanese netsuke 5) St Patrick ➤*

### Cook

#### Spinach-and-potato croquettes

A great way of using up leftover mashed potatoes. Add 250g of wilted and chopped spinach, 75g of grated Parmesan, seasoning and a drizzle of truffle oil to 450g of cold mashed potatoes and mix well. Roll spoonfuls into small sausages and dip them in seasoned plain flour, followed by beaten egg and then breadcrumbs. Repeat until you've used all the potatoes. Fry in olive oil and butter and serve. **MJ**





# April

## Nature is let loose

**T**HIS must be my favourite. It's the month of Venus and it may be that April is named for her Greek equivalent, Aphrodite. The goddess of flowers, Flora, has her festival at the end of the month—a libidinous Roman affair that has, sadly, gone out of fashion.

'April hath put a spirit of youth in everything,' wrote Shakespeare. April weather is certainly full of spirit and notoriously unreliable; extremes of all types frequently arrive on the same day, as if it were rehearsing its repertoire for the year to come.

Nature is let loose: roadside, hedgerow and wood all burst with life. The writer Edith Pargeter described spring as 'a perpetual astonishment' and this month it's astounding. Enjoy it while you can. Most plants are in full leaf and nothing has been cut back. Yet.

April 14 is traditionally the day when the first cuckoo is heard. I've never much liked birds—nasty, pecky, flappy things—but I haven't heard a cuckoo in our Dorset village for perhaps 10 years. I miss it and wonder why they've abandoned us.

For the forager, there are wild herbs, flowers and spring fungi. A much-anticipated edible plant is the bulrush, *Typha latifolia* (you can call it 'great reedmace' if you wish, but bulrush has an earlier provenance). It's the young shoots that I collect and a messy business it is as they need to be cut where they join the rope-like roots, 6in into the mud.

Nettles are perfect early in the month and gorse (for wine, vodka infusion, panna cotta and more) and dandelion (for a wine much nicer than gorse and a syrup) are traditionally collected around St George's Day. This brings me to St George's mushrooms. Mushroom fruiting times are unreliable, but this large, white, tasty species can frequently be picked on its name day and I always make the effort to find some on April 23. It's a gift

for the novice mushroom hunter, as almost nothing else is around with which they may be confused.

Morels are also spring fungi, but they're the most unreliable of all fruiters. They're oddly and inordinately fond of human company, as I've only ever found the morel, *Morchella esculenta*, in gardens and the black morel, *M. conica*, in the wood-mulch placed on flowerbeds. *JW*

“Snow in April is abominable,” said Anne. “Like a slap in the face when you expected a kiss”

*L. M. Montgomery (Anne of Ingleside)*

### Comings and goings

Look out for cuckoos and turtle doves arriving from Africa; flocks of redwings and fieldfares gathering for the return to their breeding grounds; hares boxing; moles tunnelling to drier ground if the earth becomes waterlogged and earthworms die; black grouse lekking; fox cubs gambolling outside earths. *SL*

### Do something different

**April 2** Easter Monday point-to-pointing. There are 10 fixtures all over the country, from Dalston in Cumbria (Cumberland Farmers Hunt) to Trebudannon in Cornwall (Four Burrow Hunt), as well as others in Kent, Dyfed, Hampshire, Shropshire and Somerset (01933 304795; [www.pointtopoint.co.uk](http://www.pointtopoint.co.uk))

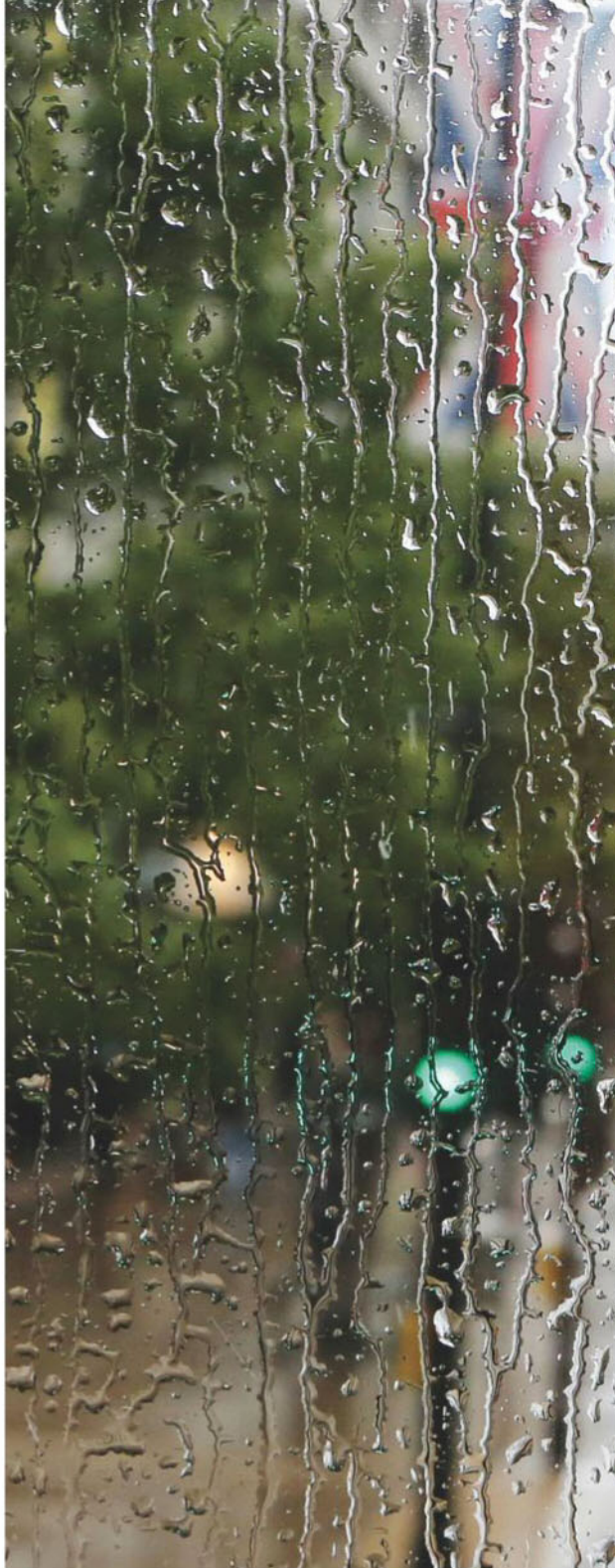
**April 4–14** Walk Scilly—more than 25 guided walks around the scenic Isles of Scilly, including foraging, flower-farm visits and trips to



deserted islands (01720 242036; [www.visitislesofscilly.com](http://www.visitislesofscilly.com))

**April 20–22** Folk Weekend Oxford, including ceilidhs, Morris dancing, workshops and much more, all around the city. Some tickets are sold out, but there are plenty of free performances ([www.folk-arts-oxford.co.uk](http://www.folk-arts-oxford.co.uk))

**April 21** Fish-cooking course at Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage, near Axminster, Devon. Learn how to fillet mackerel and dress a crab, as well as cook (and eat) a three-



dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Stockphoto/Alamy; Richard Newsstead/Getty; Blaize Pascall/Alamy; Emma Earnshaw

### Quiz

- 1) 'The sheep with their little lambs,/Passed me by on the road' is a line from which poem?
- 2) Which comedians based a skit on the song *April Showers*?
- 3) What date was once known as Huntigowk Day?
- 4) What is *Cuculus canoris*?
- 5) Which Shakespeare character said: 'Cry God for Harry, England and St George!'?



course fish supper. £240 (01297 630300; [www.rivercottage.net](http://www.rivercottage.net))

**April 22** Smallholding for beginners course on Kate Humble's farm at Penallt, Monmouthshire. You'll learn how to prepare your fields for livestock,

the breeds to choose, how to catch a sheep and the paperwork involved. £130 (01600 714595; [www.humblebynature.com](http://www.humblebynature.com))

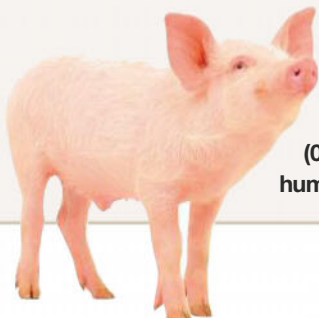


### April 2018

- **412 years ago** Great Britain adopted the Union Flag
- **100 years ago** The RAF was formed
- **92 years ago** Princess Elizabeth was born, on April 21
- **50 years ago** Enoch Powell made his controversial 'rivers of blood' speech
- **25 years ago** The Queen announced that Buckingham Palace would be opened to the public

### Cook **Rhubarb-and-ginger crème brûlée**

Cut rhubarb into chunks and cook in a pan with a little sugar and water until tender. Set aside. In a bowl, mix together 3 egg yolks and 40g of caster sugar. Bring to a simmer 300ml of double cream, 100ml of milk and a little vanilla-bean paste in a pan, then pour a spoonful of the cream mixture into the eggs, adding more until combined. Return mixture to the heat to thicken. Spoon rhubarb into the bottom of ramekins and top with the cream. Sit the ramekins in an ovenproof dish half-filled with water and cook at a moderate heat for 30 minutes. Scatter with sugar and use a blowtorch to *brûlée* the tops. **MJ**



Answers 1) All in an April Evening (Katharine Tynan) 2) Morecambe and Wise 3) April Fool's Day (April 1) in Scotland—a 'gowk' is a cuckoo or foolish person 4) The cuckoo 5) Henry V ➤



# May

## Nature is irrepressible, with miles and miles of foaming white hedges

**A**PRIL is a promise that May is bound to keep,' as the American naturalist and writer Hal Borland tells us. May is April writ large. All that was growing in April continues in May and is joined by others, lush and exuberant. It's all too much for some. We love Nature, but, in truth, only when it's under control.

There's a tiny, secluded car park in our village. At the entrance is a small patch of grass. Every year, it's golden with dandelions; every year, just when they're in full flower, they're mowed to the ground, leaving a battleground heaped with green-and-yellow corpses and a dock-infested wasteland.

The assaults of mower and strimmer continue countrywide and Nature is put in its place. Yes, I know verges need to be kept short, but only to prevent them reverting to woodland and provide visibility for drivers. There are endless stretches of road where it could easily be left until August. Sometimes, cutting is done at the vocal behest of the overly tidy-minded. Such voices should be ignored. More thoughtful cutting regimes have been introduced in many areas and we can only hope that such practices become more widespread.

The hawthorn is, however, irrepressible. It's the commonest of our native trees, long established in wooded country and planted in 'champion country' by the millions during the enclosure period as a hedgerow tree. Its blossom turns miles of hedge a blinding, frothy white.

I have several unhinged friends who swim in the sea every day of the year. I refuse to get a toe wet until May and, even then, will insist on a wetsuit or drysuit. Aside from admiring and collecting seaweeds—which are never better than in May—the purpose of these cold excursions is to carry crab

pots into the sea and get them out again the following day. Often, towards the end of the month, a pot heaves with a dozen or more spider crabs. Most are too small to take home and I always put the hen crabs back in the sea, regardless of size. Any sizeable cock crabs that are left are, usually, beneficiaries of my pity and I begin to wonder why I bother. It's the hunt rather than the prize, I suppose.

Spider crabs are harmless creatures of fearsome aspect, named for the month of their arrival—*Maia squinado*, meaning 'thing with lots of angles that comes in May', Maia being the motherly goddess of the month. *JW*

### ‘What potent blood hath modest May,’

*Ralph W. Emerson*

#### Comings and goings

Look out for painted lady butterflies arriving from North Africa; basking sharks; mayflies hatching in colossal numbers; cockchafer buzzing about on warm evenings and, if it's dry weather, moles tunnelling in search of damper, more manageable soil. *SL*

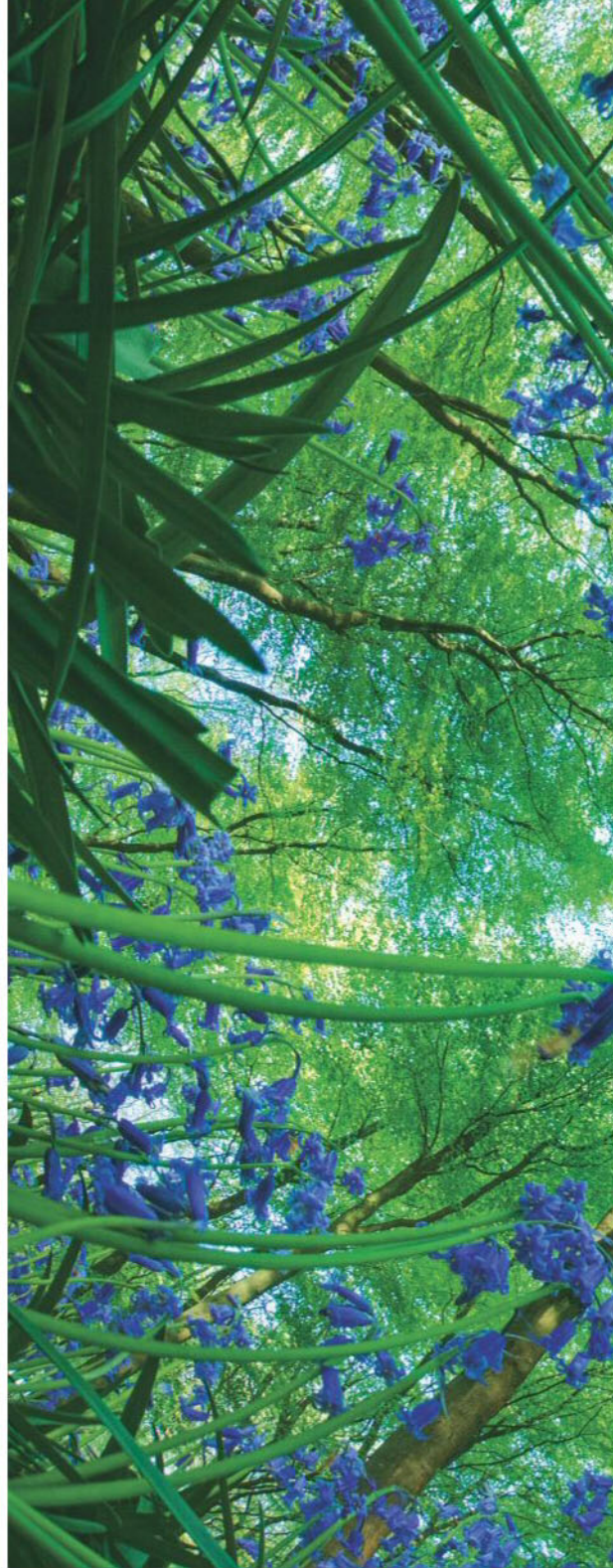
### Do something different

**May 11–13** Dodson & Horrell Chatsworth International Horse Trials, Bakewell, Derbyshire. If the bustle of the previous weekend's Badminton Horse Trials is all too much, this has all the top riders and the graceful country-house setting, but with smaller crowds—plus the Sheep Show ([www.chatsworth.org](http://www.chatsworth.org))

**May 16–20** Bishop's Castle Walking Festival, Shropshire, with hundreds of routes, including Offa's Dyke and the Clun Forest Highlands (<https://walkingfestival.co.uk>)

**May 17–19** Devon County Show, Clyst St Mary, Devon, a showcase of all that's best in West Country agriculture, including flagship native breeds such as Red Ruby Devon cattle and Dartmoor longwool sheep ([www.devoncountyshow.co.uk](http://www.devoncountyshow.co.uk); 01392 353700)

**May 22** Lest We Forget—Poetry & Remembrance of the Great War, Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere, Hampshire. To mark the centenary of the Armistice, Jonathan Jones will read First World War poetry as part of the Newbury



dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Julie Pigula/Alamy; Guy Edwards/2020VISION; Olga Mitsova/Alamy; John Frost Newspapers/Mary Evans Picture Library; Emma Earnshaw

### Quiz

- 1) A swarm of bees in May is worth what, according to the traditional rhyme?
- 2) Which nautically minded musical opened 140 years ago?
- 3) Which ship set sail for the New World in 1620?
- 4) What do a rock musician, a politician and a former cricketer all have in common?
- 5) Which insect is mashed up to form the African food *kungu*?



**Spring Festival (May 12–26)**, which includes the Elgar Cello Concerto, Bach's B Minor Mass by only 10 singers and Tallis's 40-part motet, *Spem in Alium*, in Douai Abbey. Tickets go on sale in March ([www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk](http://www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk))



**May 18–28** The Charleston Festival, Fittlehampton, East Sussex. Literary festival at the restored former home of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. The programme will be announced in February. ([www.charleston.org.uk](http://www.charleston.org.uk); 01323 811626)

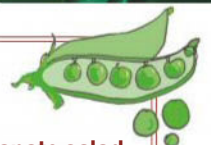
### May 2018

- **866 years ago** Henry II marries Eleanor of Aquitaine
- **450 years ago** Elizabeth I orders arrest of Mary, Queen of Scots
- **198 years ago** HMS *Beagle*, the ship that carried Charles Darwin on his voyage of discovery, is launched
- **73 years ago** VE-Day is celebrated
- **64 years ago** Roger Bannister runs a mile in less than four minutes



*Answers 1) A load of hay 2) 'HMS Pinafore' 3) Mayflower 4) They all have the surname May (Brian, Theresa and Peter) 5) Mayfly*

### Cook



#### Scallop, pea and pomegranate salad

Toss together a couple of handfuls of rocket, 2 tablespoons of pomegranate seeds and 100g of cooked peas. Shake together olive oil and lemon juice in an old jam jar and pour it over the salad. Fry six scallops, together with a few sprigs of rosemary, in a hot pan for a couple of minutes on each side, until lightly caramelised. Divide between two bowls, topping each portion with three scallops. Season and serve. **MJ**



# June

## Gather ye rosebuds while ye may

**M**ONTH of roses, steamy poetry and marriage—June is named for Juno, wife of Jupiter and goddess of that blessed state. For the steamy verse, I recommend Claude McKay's poignantly passionate *A Memory of June*.

However, poets are not to be trusted and some witter on about 'the sexton's hand' and suchlike. I understand the slight melancholy that glummer poets express. The summer solstice means a turn in the year and we know that things will not be so alive, so green again until next spring.

Roses, of course. Our native dog and field rose scatter our hedgerows with pink and white. The one I'm most pleased to see, however, is the foreign and rather invasive hedging rose, *Rosa rugosa*; the deep pink and sometimes white petals are the most fragrant of them all. It's from these that I make rose-petal vodka, not a great drink on its own, but wonderful in a long, summer cocktail with raspberry juice, rosehip syrup and soda.

The flower I welcome most is that of the elder. It seldom appears much before the first of the month and I try to wait until then to take my first sniff. It brings elderflower sparkly, cordial and, best of all, Turkish delight with lemon.

Now is the time there's most to see in the hedgerow. A brisk walk may fill the lungs and flood the body with feel-good hormones, but a slow, observant stroll will replenish the soul. I love not only the broad canvas, but also the fine brushstrokes of Nature. It's time to slow down.

Every tree and herb is home to countless visitors and, yes, parasites. Galls are among the more noticeable: leaves, buds and stems are deformed into unnatural shapes at the chemical instruction of insects' larvae and fungi to make a nursery for themselves.

The pocket plum gall, *Taphrina pruni*, takes control of the creation of sloes and makes instead large, acorn-like structures that house

the fungus. *Diastrophus rubi*, a tiny wasp, swells the stems of brambles to form what looks like a small, elongated wasps' nest.

There are many, many more and all are beautiful. Nearly every plant will have its associated brilliant orange, rust fungi. The name will often reflect that of the plant: *Puccinia urticata* on nettles and *Puccinia smyrnii* on alexanders. *JW*

### Comings and goings

Look out for grey partridge chicks hatching—traditionally in Royal Ascot week; corncrakes calling; glow worms glowing; common blue, meadow brown and large skipper butterflies flitting on downland and road verges; red deer calving. *SL*

### Cook

#### Spiced-aubergine and coconut curry

Slice 2 large aubergines into rounds, arrange on a baking tray and drizzle with coconut oil. Roast in a hot oven for 20 minutes, turning the slices over after 10 minutes. Fry 2 chopped red onions in coconut oil with a crushed clove of garlic, a teaspoon of turmeric and a sliced red chilli. Pour in a can of tomatoes and mix well. Once cooked, add the aubergine to the pan with a tin of coconut cream—take care not to boil it. Serve with rice and a scattering of coriander. *MJ*



### June 2018

- **370 years ago** The Roundheads defeated the Cavaliers in the Civil War
- **189 years ago** The first Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge universities
- **105 years ago** The Suffragette Emily Davison ran in front of George V's Derby runner and was killed
- **25 years ago** The first high-speed train journey from France to England takes place along what will be the Channel Tunnel



6 June suns, you cannot store them/  
To warm the winter's cold,

A. E. Housman

### Do something different

**Until June 9** *King Lear*, RSC Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, with Antony Sher in the title role. There's also *The Fantastic Follies of Mrs Rich* (until June 14), *Macbeth* with Christopher Eccleston and Niamh Cusack (until September 18), *The Duchess of Malfi* (until August 3) and *Miss Littlewood* (June 22–August 4) (01789 403493; [www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk))

**June 8–9** Racing at Stratford, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. The two evening meetings at this pretty, relaxed racecourse represent the climax of the hunter-chase season (<https://stratfordracecourse.net>; 01789 267949)

**June 18–24** Aegon Tennis Championships, Queen's Club, London W14. This warm-up for Wimbledon has all the big male stars—Spain's Feliciano Lopez beat Marin Cilic in a tie-break decider last year—but is somehow more intimate and charming. (0844 209 7356; [www.lta.org.uk](http://www.lta.org.uk))

**June 23–July 3** *La Traviata*, Longborough Festival Opera, Longborough, Gloucestershire. Verdi's tragic, lyrical opera in a glorious, bring-your-own-picnic Cotswold setting. The season (June 6–August 2) includes Wagner, Richard Strauss and Monteverdi. Booking opens in March (01451 830292; <https://lfo.org.uk>)

**June 27–28** Royal Norfolk Show, Norwich. About 800 head of cattle will be judged, along with pigs, sheep and heavy horses, plus there's a major choral project, show jumping, craft demonstrations, gundogs and flyfishing (01603 748931; <http://royalnorfolkshow.maa.org.uk>)



Answers: 1) Sir Frederic Leighton  
2) Puerto Rico, in the Museo de Arte de Ponce  
3) Aureole was second  
4) George III  
5) June Brown

dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; gameover/Alamy; Sergio Azenha/Alamy; Dreamstime; David/Rupert Hartley/REX/Shutterstock; Emma Eamshaw

### Quiz

- 1) Who painted *Flaming June* (1895)?
- 2) In which country is the painting now?
- 3) Four days after her Coronation, 65 years ago, The Queen had a Derby runner. Where did it finish?
- 4) Whose birthday is marked by Eton's annual Fourth of June celebrations?
- 5) Which 90-year-old actress plays Dot Cotton in *EastEnders*?





# July

## Marsh samphire and raspberries enliven this 'in between' month

**T**HE food writer Katie Stewart ruined August for me forever by noting in her *Calendar Cookbook* that it's a sharp reminder of autumn. Unfortunately, much the same can be said for July. The succulent green vibrancy of the months of spring and early June has faded; things are turning brown. It's not a sign of decay, however, but of fulfilment. It's in late June and early July that haymaking takes place and the seeds of many herbaceous plants have already formed and fallen.

For those who like to collect their food from hedgerow and field, July is the month between seasons, separating the greens of spring from the reds and browns of autumn, but it's not a barren month. Elderflowers are harder to find, but still there for the tardy sparkling-wine maker and, towards the end of the month, I usually pick my main crop of blackberries. I do live in the warm South-West, however—not everyone will be so lucky.

July is high season for some plants. Marsh samphire, for example, is not, as many think, a seaweed, but a member of the spinach family, with wild cousins such as fat hen and spear-leaved orache. Muddy estuaries can be transformed into bowling greens by its succulent, bright-green leaves. You'll need scissors, as uprooting it (or, indeed, any wild plant without the landowner's permission) is a criminal offence. Not that the law is the slightest use in this case—it's an annual plant and can never regrow.

Making a sticky mess of pavements and roadsides, cherry plum is the unsung wild-fruit hero of July. Appearing to be not quite a cherry, yet not quite a plum either, it's viewed with suspicion and left to fall and rot. Its Latin name, *Prunus cerasifera* (plum that bears cherries), is less than helpful, merely reflecting this confusion. It is a plum, albeit one that looks like a cherry.

### Quiz

- 1) Who is the writer son of the Society beauty Lady Diana Cooper?
- 2) Who said 'I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him'?
- 3) In which year was the Declaration of Independence adopted in the USA on July 4?
- 4) What is the July Cup?
- 5) Where is the July Course?

I collect pounds every year for wine, pies and, best of all, jam.

Then, there are raspberries. Denizens of woodland glades, rough grassland and the occasional hedge, these are the delight of the season. No one is going to fill their freezer with this lovely fruit—they're small and tricky to pick—but an hour or two of meditative picking and eating on the hoof will have your worries evaporate. *JW*

**Answer July—  
Where is the Bee—  
Where is the Blush—  
Where is the Hay?;**

*(Emily Dickinson, 'Answer July')*

### Comings and goings

Look out for dragonflies, such as brown and southern hawkers, the common darter and delicate azure and common blue damselflies; snakes shedding skins; flocks of pigeons on laid corn; swifts screaming and feeding high over rooftops. *SL*

### Do something different

**July 15** Seaside foraging with our own John Wright, searching for shellfish, crabs and edible seaweed along the Dorset/east Devon coast. Also on June 14 and September 12, plus there are mushrooming and hedgerow days. Book through River Cottage, £195 (01297 630300; [www.rivercottage.net](http://www.rivercottage.net))



**July 10–14** A *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Harborough Theatre, Market Harborough, Leicestershire. Shakespeare's magical,

seasonal comedy performed at a venue described as 'local theatre at its best'. Tickets on sale four weeks before performance (<https://harboroughtheatre.com>)

**July 26–29** Port Eliot Festival, St Germans, Cornwall. A vast array of things to do—literary discussion, music, workshops, camping—and, best of all, swimming in the estuary (<https://porteliotfestival.com>)

**July 23–26** Royal Welsh Show, Llanelwedd, Powys. The UK's



*dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Picture Partners/Alamy; StockFood/Ulrike Koeb; Gioaga/Alamy; Heritage Image Partnership Ltd/Alamy; Emma Earshaw*



largest agricultural show, which showcases beautifully marked Welsh sheep and high-stepping Welsh cobs among many other attractions (01982 553683; [www.rwas.wales](http://www.rwas.wales))

**July 28–August 4** Three Choirs Festival, Hereford. Choral extravaganza that's three centuries old and rotates between the atmospheric cathedrals of Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester. Programme will include Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Brahms's *Requiem*. Booking opens to the public on April 23 (01452 768928; [www.3choirs.org](http://www.3choirs.org))

### July 2018

- **723 years ago** Scotland and France formed the 'Auld Alliance' against England
- **160 years ago** Darwin and Wallace's theories of evolution were read to the Linnean Society
- **80 years ago** The *Mallard* reached a speed of 126mph
- **70 years ago** The 'austerity' Olympics took place in London — car headlamps were used to illuminate some races
- **30 years ago** The Church announced it would ordain women priests



Answers 1) John Julius Norwich 2) Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* 3) 1776 4) A flat race 5) Newmarket, Suffolk

### Cook



#### Gooseberry fool

This is the classic gooseberry pudding. Wash, top and tail the berries and cook them gently with a little caster sugar, then leave to cool. Whip cream with a little icing sugar and fold through an equal amount of Greek yoghurt. Spoon some of the mixture into a glass, add a few cooked gooseberries and repeat until the glass is full. Serve immediately, preferably in the garden on a sunny afternoon. **MJ**



# August

## Field fungi and, if you're incredibly lucky, the summer truffle

**A**UGUST is the month when I start worrying about October. I shall explain. October, overall, is by far the most reliable month to find mushrooms in the south of England and the month in which I run all of my English mushroom forays. A wet summer followed by that ultimate horror, an Indian summer, will ensure that most of them appear in August and early September and fewer in October. It's worse than being a gardener—at least you can water your garden.

Putting my concerns aside, if mushrooms come up in summer, I welcome them. Individual species have their favoured times of fruiting and it's often in late summer that field fungi, such as parasols, field mushrooms, horse mushrooms and giant puffballs, first appear.

Field fungi are generally safer than woodland fungi, as it's only in the woods that ones with the word 'deadly' or 'death' in their names are found. The only thing to worry about in fields (provided you're well away from hedgerow oaks) is the yellow stainer, *Agaricus xanthodermus*. It looks just like a field mushroom, except that it bruises brilliant yellow the instant the cap edge, ring or base of stem is damaged. Eating them will result in a couple of days confined to quarters, reflecting mournfully on your folly.

Unmistakeable—but only if you can see it—is the summer truffle. I spent an enlightening afternoon last August with my friend (let's call him Dave) and his lagotto romagnolo (a dog, let's call her Bella) in a beech forest somewhere in the south of England. Sorry not to be more precise, but you know how it is.

I've been out with truffle hunters before, and have done a bit myself with a borrowed

spaniel that I trained, but this was a remarkable experience. Bella would sniff around, then suddenly dart off when she had the scent and start digging furiously. Dave had to run to get the hoped-for truffle before Bella ate it. Sometimes, I could see the truffle shooting out between her back legs and grabbed it myself.

Within an hour, we had 30 good-sized truffles. It was an August morning to remember—and, later, the best of dinners. *JW*

‘That August time  
it was delight/To  
watch the red moons  
wane to white’

*Algernon Charles Swinburne*

### Comings and goings

Look out for swifts leaving; shelducks migrating to moult in safety in Heligoland, Germany, and Bridgwater Bay on the Bristol Channel; spider crabs migrating to their breeding grounds in shallow water; puffins and auks leaving their breeding grounds on the cliffs; craneflies appearing en masse. *SL*

### Do something different

**July 30–August 11 Menai Strait Regattas, Beaumaris, Anglesey, North Wales.** Irresistible sounding races, such as to Caernarfon via the Swellies and Puffin Island, for chiefly classic boats, but also cruisers and dinghies (07840 643834; [www.menaistraitregattas.org.uk](http://www.menaistraitregattas.org.uk))

**August 8 Isle of Skye Highland Games, The Lump, Skye.** Stirring displays of strength and agility, including solo piping and tug-of-war, plus a sailing and rowing regatta.



Tickets can only be bought on the day ([www.skye-highland-games.co.uk](http://www.skye-highland-games.co.uk); 01478 612540)

**August 11–12 Lowther Show, Penrith, Cumbria.** Carriage-driving trials, fell-hound show, trail run, folk festival, fishing, clay-shooting, antiques fair, beer festival—you name it, this show, in the grounds of Lowther Castle, has it all (01889 563232; [www.lowthershow.co.uk](http://www.lowthershow.co.uk))

**August 17 Dunster Show, Somerset.** The afternoon parade of sheep, cattle and



dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; AbleStock.com/Getty Images Plus; Leo Mason/Corbis via Getty Images; Alex Fieldhouse/Alamy; GL Archive/Alamy; Emma Earmshaw

### Quiz

- 1) What relation was Augustus Caesar to Julius Caesar?
- 2) What do Wodehouse character Gussie Fink-Nottle and former London mayor Ken Livingstone have in common?
- 3) Who painted *Woman Smiling* in 1908-09?
- 4) What do an American actor, an Italian painter and a Russian writer all have in common?
- 5) Which town on the River Savannah is host to an annual golf tournament?



horses, including Exmoor ponies, against the idyllic setting of Dunster Castle and the sea, is not to be missed. For a really good day out, travel there on the West Somerset Railway (01984 656990; [www.thedunstershow.co.uk](http://www.thedunstershow.co.uk))

**August 23–26** Equi-Trek Blair Castle International Horse Trials, Blair Atholl, Perthshire. The world's top riders take on Scottish Olympian Ian Stark's imposing cross-country fences (on Saturday), plus Bruadar Country Fair ([www.blairhorsetrials.co.uk](http://www.blairhorsetrials.co.uk))

### August 2018

- **713 years ago** William Wallace was captured in Glasgow and executed horribly in London
- **250 years ago** Capt Cook set sail on HMS *Endeavour*, bound for Tahiti and New Zealand
- **104 years ago** Britain declared war on Germany
- **63 years ago** Sir Peter Hall directed the British premier of Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*
- **55 years ago** The Great Train Robbery



Answers: 1) Great nephew 2) They are both newt fanciers 3) Augustus John 4) Their names begin with Leo (Dicaprio, da Vinci and Tolstoy) 5) Augusta, USA

### Cook



#### Old-fashioned cherry pie

Line a tart tin with a pre-rolled sheet of shortcrust pastry and scatter with ground almonds. In a separate bowl, mix together 2 handfuls of halved and stoned cherries with a few tablespoons of sugar and a tablespoon of cornflour and pour into the tart tin. Top the tart with a second sheet of pastry, brush with beaten egg and bake for about 35 minutes in a moderately hot oven. Serve with whipped cream, laced with a little *amaretto* and icing sugar. **MJ**



# September

## Model airplane memories, unrequited love and discovering fungi

**S**PRING creeps up slowly. Autumn, however, arrives like a descending boot. Early September was once a mixed blessing. My birthday, should you feel the need to send me a card or a bottle of whisky, is on the 3rd. This was always near to, and sometimes coincided with, a return to school: softening the blow while spoiling the joys of my birthday. On Sundays, I would join my friend Peter Marsden and his parents on a trip to the New Forest to fly model airplanes. Peter's dad owned Tiptop Model Shop in Portsmouth and had all the latest kit. They were wonderful days, full of gadgetry, eccentric people and Mrs Marsden's apple pie.

It was partly on these trips, and partly via a doomed attempt to impress a young lady whose hobby was wildlife, that I first took an interest in natural history. I found something utterly mysterious which Mr Marsden explained that was a puffball, that puffballs were a type of fungus and that the New Forest is famous for such marvels. I was entranced.

Julia also showed me daphnia, hydra and caddis-fly larvae, but my hopes that she would show me more remained unrealised. A couple of years ago, I received the considerable and surprising honour of having a species named for me: the diatom *Colliculoamphora johnwrightii*, a species of pondlife. Perhaps Julia would be more interested in me now.

September is now the month of seashore and hedgerow harvest. Dulse, a red seaweed of the lower shore, is my main crop. I collect pounds of the stuff, which I dry to crispiness before blending them to a fine powder for use as a flavour enhancer. In the hedgerows, early sloes, bullaces, crab apples, haws, elderberries and more appear in abundance.

### Quiz

- 1) Who wrote 'Departing summer hath assumed/ An aspect tenderly illumed'?
- 2) Which piscatorial war began 80 years ago this month?
- 3) To which school will Grabber, Headmaster Grimes and Peason be returning this term?
- 4) Who made September the ninth instead of the seventh month?
- 5) Complete the missing words in the hymn *We Plow The Fields*: 'He paints the \_\_/He lights the \_\_'

My best crop is sea buckthorn. The bright-orange berries cluster densely on the spiny branches, which need to be frozen whole and the berries shaken off. The juice is famously like battery acid, but, adequately sweetened, it's pleasant—and terribly good for you. *JW*

**‘Try to remember the kind of September/ When life was slow and oh so mellow’**

*The Fantasticks (Try to Remember)*

### Comings and goings

Look out for pipistrelle bats venturing south, some even crossing the Channel; painted lady butterflies returning to North Africa; swallows lining up on telegraph wires; curlew heading to the coast to overwinter; pink-footed geese arriving from their breeding grounds in Greenland, Iceland and Svalbard to feed on sugarbeet, carrots and potatoes; and great grey shrikes arriving from Northern Europe. *SL*

### Do something different

**September 1** Moreton Show, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire. Traditional farming and food show (01608 651908; [www.moretonshow.co.uk](http://www.moretonshow.co.uk))

**September 6–9** Festival No6, Portmeirion, Gwynedd. Music, arts and culture in a magical setting. (0844 967 0002; <http://festivalnumber6.com>)

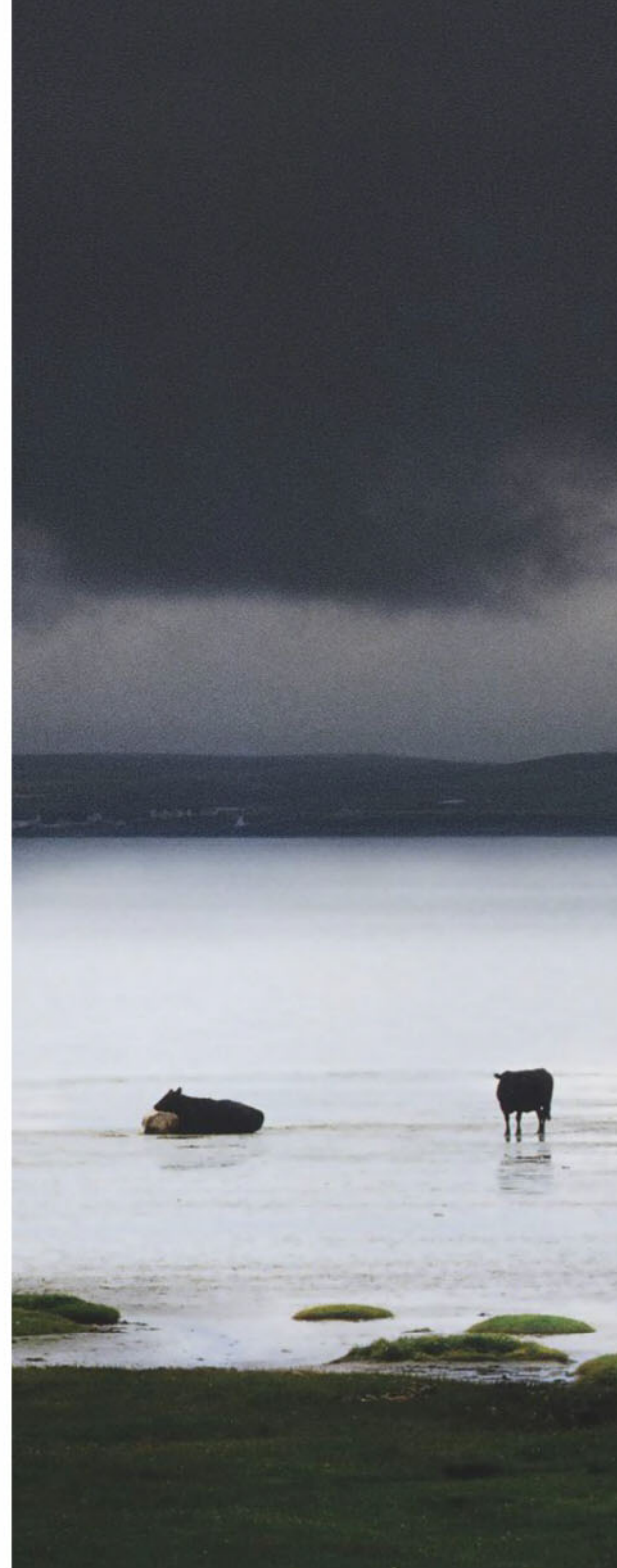
**September 8** Proms in the Park. Celebrate the Last Night of the BBC Proms in London's Hyde Park, Swansea's Singleton Park, Glasgow Green or Castle Coole in

Co Fermanagh. All are linked live to the Albert Hall (*below*) ([www.bbc.co.uk/events](http://www.bbc.co.uk/events))

**September 15** International Agatha Christie Festival, Torre Abbey, Torquay, Devon (01803 293593; [www.iacf-uk.org](http://www.iacf-uk.org))



**September 29–30** RHS Malvern Autumn Show, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire. (01684 584924; [www.malvertautumn.co.uk](http://www.malvertautumn.co.uk))



dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Gregory King/Alamy; Charlie Waite/www.charliewaite.com; Emma Earnshaw



## September 2018

• **266 years ago** Britain joined the rest of Europe in adopting the Gregorian calendar

• **80 years ago** Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain tried to negotiate with Hitler to prevent the Second World War

• **80 years ago** RMS *Queen Elizabeth*

was launched, then the largest ship in the world

• **50 years ago** The hippie musical *Hair* opened in London; the cast included Marsha Hunt (left)

• **25 years ago** UKIP was formed



## Cook

### The vicar's tea cake: apple and cinnamon

Cream 100g of butter with 200g of caster sugar, add an egg, 1 teaspoon of vanilla-bean paste and a pinch of salt and mix well. Next, alternate between adding 185g of self-raising flour and 150ml of milk, being sure to start and end with flour. Pour the mixture into a



well-greased 10in diameter cake tin and arrange 2 cored, peeled and sliced apples in circles on top. Sprinkle with a few tablespoons of brown sugar and a dusting of cinnamon, then bake in a moderately hot oven for about an hour or until a fork comes out clean. Serve warm with another sprinkling of sugar and whipped cream. **MJ**

Answers 1) William Wordsworth in the poem 'September' 2) The Cod Wars, when Iceland expanded its fishing zone 3) St Custard's (the school in Geoffrey Willans's 'Molesworth' books) 4) The Romans, who slipped two extra months, named after emperors, into their 10-month calendar 5) 'Wayside flower' and 'evening star' ➤



# October

## Fungi, fungi everywhere and the New Forest at its magical best

**F**UNGI have been an obsession since I saw that puffball more than 50 years ago. I do nothing in October except look for mushrooms, identify mushrooms, photograph mushrooms, eat mushrooms, dry mushrooms for the larder and take people on mushroom forays.

October is my other favourite month. Each foray is something of a party. I'm fortunate in my choice of specialty as people come along to learn how to identify mushrooms for the table. I teach them this, of course, but soon they (almost) forget about their stomachs and become entranced by the fungal world. My friends who teach ornithology, lichenology or bryology don't have this enticement into their subject, although I suppose you can eat most birds.

Most trips are in the New Forest. It's the most magical of places at any time, but October suits it best. The leaves are still on the trees, for the most part, and chestnuts lie thick on the ground, crab apples surround the base of their parent trees in a green corona and fungi are everywhere.

Even a drive through the Forest, circumnavigating ponies, cattle and, quite possibly, pigs on their autumn acorn hunt, will reveal horse mushrooms, stately parasols, colourful waxcaps and more on the grassy roadside banks. A walk, however, is much more exciting. On a typical day, we'll find 60 species; my all-time record is 125.

Most will be common, some will be edible, a few will be rare and some will be new to me. This year, for example, I found a large, flattish, furry fungus called *Thelephora palmata*, which looks a little like roadkill. Even though it's both rare and new to me, its Latin name was mysteriously

lodged in my head—something I always find worrying.

At the end of the day, we lay out our specimens on what can only be described as a 'Nature table', complete with the obligatory Latin names hastily written on cards and always spelled correctly. I don't much like the common names, as they're almost all recent inventions and vastly more trouble than they're worth. If anyone insists on a common name, I'll just make something up. *JW*

‘The twilight of the year is sweet:/ Where shadow and the darkness meet ,

*Ernest Dowson ('Autumnal')*

### Comings and goings

Look out for dormice retiring for the winter; grey seals breeding on rocky coasts; mice leaving the fields for our houses; red-deer stags rutting noisily; glimmering blankets of gossamer spider webs; the soft, sighing calls (at night) of redwings as they arrive from Scandinavia and Russia. *SL*

### Do something different

**Throughout the month** Early-morning deer walks on Exmoor. Bring your binoculars and join a National Park ranger for a dawn walk to see—and, hopefully, hear—red deer during the rut. For dates, times, meeting places and how to book, keep an eye on the website [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

**September 29–October 7** Haltwhistle Walking Festival, Northumberland. Themed walks—literary, invertebrates—from easy to strenuous plus quizzes,



talks and social evenings in the pub. Booking essential ([www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org](http://www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org); 01434 322025)

**October 1–January 27, 2019**

'Mantegna and Bellini', National Gallery, London SW1. Exhibition comparing the work of two Italian Renaissance painters who were related by marriage. Members go free ([www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk); 0800 912 6958)

**October 12–20** Two Moors Festival, Exmoor and Dartmoor. Music and arts

dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Dreamstime; Alex Hyde; Helen Sessions/Alamy; Anthony Kay/Flight/Alamy; Emma Earnshaw

### Quiz

- 1) In which country did Red October take place?
- 2) In whose novel did the *Red October* play a prominent role?
- 3) In which East Anglian town is National Trust founder Octavia Hill's birthplace?
- 4) What are Blue Lakota, Cinderella and Long Island Cheese?
- 5) 'The mussel pooled and the heron/Priested shore' are lines from which poet's *Poem in October*?



festival, in rural churches across Devon and west Somerset, which was set up in 2001 to support the farming community. Programme will be available in summer ([www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk](http://www.thetwomoorsfestival.co.uk); 01392 665885)



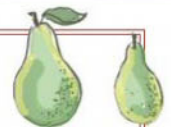
**October 27–28** RHS Urban Garden Show, RHS Horticultural Halls (Lindley and Lawrence), London SW1. Even if you've only got space for a yucca, this show will give you planting ideas. Tickets are on sale (0844 995 9664; [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk))

### October 2018

- **400 years ago** Elizabeth I's favourite, Sir Walter Raleigh, was beheaded
- **100 years ago** The renowned soldier T. E. Lawrence and his combined forces captured Damascus
- **78 years ago** St Paul's Cathedral survived being hit by a German bomb
- **49 years ago** Concord broke the sound barrier
- **30 years ago** The Government allowed extracts from banned book *Spycatcher*, by former MI5 officer Peter Wright, to be published



### Cook



#### Ginger-and-pear chutney

Peel and core 2lb of pears and cut them into chunks. Put them in a pan along with 2 sprigs of rosemary, 125g of dried apricots, 125g of prunes, 200g of sultanas, 100g of crystallised ginger, 2 peeled and chopped red onions, 1 apple, 250g of brown sugar and 500ml of apple-cider vinegar. Simmer and cook for about an hour, until thickened, stirring to make sure the base doesn't burn. Remove the rosemary and spoon into jars, place wax paper on the surface, leave to cool and then seal. **MJ**

Answers: 1) Russia 2) Tom Clancy 3) Wisbech 4) Pumpkin varieties 5) Dylan Thomas



# November

## Bangs, whizzes, wild horseradish and some token gardening

**I**N November, ninth month of the old Roman calendar, Nature is, for the most part, taking its rest.

'No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,/No comfortable feel in any member—/No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,/No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—November!'

The 19th-century poet Thomas Hood's November seems worse than January, although he does not suggest, as does the late-18th-century essayist Joseph Addison, that it's the month in which the people of England hang and drown themselves. Things are better now with modern heating systems and clothes that keep you dry and warm—and the climate is a degree or so milder than when Addison was writing. Now, the first week or two of November often escape the return of frost, although my early memories of the bangs, whizzes and soaring colours of the 5th were icy affairs.

Mushrooms continue when all else has withdrawn, provided there's no frost—a hard frost without woodland canopies will destroy them.

There is a succession to all things and fungi are no different. It's time for the latecomers: magnificent troops of clouded funnel, *Clitocybe nebularis*, fill hedgerow and woodland. These substantial mushrooms provide false promise of a pleasant breakfast and I often receive pictures of them for identification.

There's a related November mushroom destined for the table: the wood blewit, *Lepista nuda*, striking with its intense lilac colours. In late autumn, its cousin, the violet-stemmed field blewit, *L. saeva*, makes its rings in grassland.

Early November provides the last chance to dig up wild horseradish before the leaves

vanish completely and it's a good time to uproot dandelion roots for the surprisingly undisappointing dandelion coffee.

November is the only time when I prune my fig tree. It produces about two dozen figs every year. Large and succulent, sweet and sticky when perfectly ripe, they are an order of magnitude better than any bought in the shops. Unfortunately, the tree does suffer a little from coral spot fungus, *Nectria cinnabarina*, and needs to be cut right back on infected branches. That's the gardening done for the year. *JW*

6 Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the Earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus,

*Charles Dickens (Bleak House)*

### Comings and goings

Look out for our 12 species of bat finding their winter roosts for hibernation; flocks of waxwings descending from their sub-Arctic breeding grounds; the last brimstone butterflies sleepily sitting around before they hibernate; salmon leaping and spawning on their redds (spawning grounds); barnacle geese arriving from Greenland and northern Russia to winter on the north-west coast, as Brent geese from Siberia descend on muddy estuaries. *SL*



### Do something different

**November 11** Mark a centenary of the Armistice. Visit [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org) to find plays, exhibitions and ceremonies all over Britain. Visit also the Imperial War Museum, which has permanent First World War exhibitions, in London, Manchester, Duxford or Belfast ([www.iwm.org](http://www.iwm.org))

**Poetry in Aldeburgh** (to be announced) is a three-day celebration of verse through readings, lectures, discussions and master-classes, curated by The Poetry School in the Suffolk seaside town ([www.poetryinaldeburgh.org](http://www.poetryinaldeburgh.org))

dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Ross Hodgkinott/NaturePL; Painting/Alamy; Edda Westmacott/Alamy; Emma Earwushau

### Quiz

- 1) What is the next line of the nursery rhyme that begins: 'Remember, remember the fifth of November'?
- 2) Who traditionally searches the cellars of the Palace of Westminster before the monarch enters?
- 3) In which country did the two-minute silence to mark Armistice Day originate?
- 4) What do Scotland, Cyprus, Romania and the Columbian island of San Andres have in common?
- 5) Which signs of the zodiac overlap in November?



**November 4** The exhibition 'Klimt and Schiele' at the Royal Academy marks 100 years since the deaths of the Austrian artists Gustav Klimt and his protégé Egon Schiele and shows how they influenced each other ([www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk))

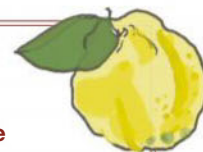
**New films** to look forward to this month include *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms* (Disney) and *Holmes and Watson* with Will Ferrell as Sherlock Holmes and John C. Reilly as Watson

### November 2018

- **414 years ago** Shakespeare's *Othello* was first staged, at the Whitehall Palace, London
- **100 years ago** On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the armistice was signed, ending the First World War
- **72 years ago** Peter Scott, the artist and naturalist, opened the Slimbridge Wetland Reserve
- **70 years ago** The Prince of Wales was born, on November 14
- **44 years ago** A large salmon was caught in the Thames—the first for more than 100 years



### Cook



#### Partridge in a quince tree

Quarter and core 3 quinces, rub with lemon, drizzle with olive oil and season. Bake in a hot oven, then set aside. Butter 4 partridges, scatter them with chopped rosemary and thyme and lay unsmoked bacon rashers over the breasts. Using the tray from the quinces, roast the birds for 20–25 minutes, allow to rest, then serve (one partridge per person) with the quinces and pan juices. **MJ**

Answers 1) 'Gunpowder, treason and plot' 2) 'The Yeoman of the Guard' 3) South Africa 4) They all have St Andrew as their patron saint 5) Scorpio and Sagittarius ➤



# December

## There's beauty even in the bleakest landscape

**D** ECEMBER—indeed all cold months—seem more bearable in the country than in the town. I recall winter mornings in Portsmouth, catching a 6.15am bus to the furniture factory in which I worked. Everything seemed grey, dull, ugly, dirty and my fellow passengers defeated. That feeling never accompanies me in the countryside, no matter what the weather.

The muted colours, the bare trees, even the mud, are natural, even beautiful, and lift my spirits. When the short, cold and frequently wet days become too much to bear, a walk in the park or along a hedgerow will always restore body and mind.

Although *Jingle Bells*, pumped out by shops with no sense of a time and place for anything, has been assailing our ears since September, I refuse to give Christmas a thought until December 1.

I once had to write an article (with a shamefully forgotten deadline) while on holiday in the Sahara Desert in August. It was, unfortunately, about Christmas foraging. I had to sit beneath an air-conditioning duct to stand a chance of getting into the mood. However, once December arrives, you'll hear no humbug from me; I love it.

Each year, some complain that Christmas has become commercialised and its religious significance lost, and others say it's a pagan festival pre-dating Christ so what's the fuss? Let's be clear—Christmas is a way of making December pass more pleasantly than it might otherwise and to mark an ending.

Whether it's a holiday, a single day at the seaside or the year itself, all have a beginning filled with hope, a contented period

when hope is fulfilled and the end—when buckets and spades are packed up—seems a long way away.

From newborn January through the teenage years of April, the maturity of August and the failing days of December, with its unthinkable end in sight, each month mirrors the hopes and fears that follow us through our lives. December, then, is the end of all, and an end should be with a bang, never a whimper. And then what? Bloody January again. *JW*

‘It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats’

*Dylan Thomas*  
(‘A Child's Christmas in Wales’)

### Comings and goings

In late afternoon, look out for rooks and jackdaws heading for their winter roosts; seagulls coming inland for winter lambing and to follow the plough; surviving salmon (kelts) returning to the sea after spawning; river lampreys moving upstream from the sea, in readiness to spawn in the spring; barn owls hunting in daytime; hungry buzzards and kestrels sitting, staring and listening, on telegraph wires; red-nosed reindeer flying overhead (only on December 24). *SL*

### Quiz

- 1) What creatures from *The Wind in the Willows* are these carol-singers: ‘They glanced shyly at each other, sniggering a little, sniffing and applying coat-sleeves a good deal’?
- 2) Who first set Christina Rossetti's poem *In the Bleak Midwinter* to music?
- 3) At which cathedral did the tradition of Nine Lessons and Carols start?
- 4) Who is the ‘Ghost of Christmas Past’?
- 5) Which oratorio features the choruses ‘For unto us a Son is born’ and ‘All we like sheep’?



### Do something different

**Go to a service** at your nearest cathedral for the finest musical performance you'll hear this Christmas or listen to the service from King's College, Cambridge (usually 3pm on Radio 3)

**Make your own wreath**—the Covent Garden Academy of Flowers has courses, in London and the Cotswolds, (020—7240 6359; [www.academyofflowers.com](http://www.academyofflowers.com))

**Skate at a pop-up ice rink** Most major cities have one—spectacular



dpa picture alliance/Alamy; Shutterstock; Ben Stansall/AFP/Getty Images; A. Astes/Alamy; Maryana Lyubenko/Alamy; Emma Earnshaw



settings include the one outside Winchester Cathedral and Brighton's Royal Pavilion rink, plus there's one at the Eden Project in south Cornwall

Get a backstage ticket at Olympia, The London International Horse Show (December 17–23) to watch some of the world's best horses and riders warming up, plus Father Christmas and his entourage lining up ([www.olympiahorseshow.com](http://www.olympiahorseshow.com))

Go the Welsh Grand National at Chepstow, Gwent, on December 27 ([www.chepstow-racecourse.co.uk](http://www.chepstow-racecourse.co.uk))



### December 2018

- **358 years ago** The first female actress appeared on a public stage: Margaret (Peg) Hughes, mistress of Prince Rupert of the Rhine, played Desdemona in *Othello*
- **252 years ago** The auctioneer James Christie held his first sale, in London
- **227 years ago** The world's first Sunday newspaper, *The Observer*, was published
- **67 years ago** Britain's first National Park was designated: the Peak District
- **30 years ago** Health minister Edwina Currie made headlines by announcing that most eggs were infected with salmonella

### Cook

#### Brussels-sprout carbonara

Cook some linguini and, while it's boiling away, fry quartered Brussels sprouts in olive oil with bacon lardons. Cook for a few minutes before adding a splash of cream. Add the pasta, stir well, then add generous amounts of grated Parmesan. Taste for seasoning, divide the carbonara between bowls and top with a final grating of Parmesan, a little lemon zest and black pepper. **MJ**



Answers 1) Field mice 2) Gustav Holst 3) Truro 4) Jacob Marley in Dickens's 'A Christmas Carol' 5) Handel's 'Messiah' ➤

# Out & About Gentleman's Life party at Huntsman



John Franklin, lucky winner of a Huntsman shirt, with Laura de Castiglioni



Sabrina Percy and Lady Tatiana Mountbatten



The high life: Luxury Editor Hetty Chidwick and Daisy Knatchbull



Agony uncle Kit Hesketh-Harvey feeling no pain



Pierre Legrange of Huntsman and COUNTRY LIFE Editor Mark Hedges



Henry Deakin of Deakin & Francis, John Holt, James Massey and James Wall

## It's a gentleman's life

Photographs by Marcus Dawes

LONDON'S sartorially aware made their way to Huntsman, Savile Row, W1, to celebrate the launch of this year's *Gentleman's Life* magazine. The pop-up shoe shiner from Burlington Arcade, jazz band and fancy-dress photo booth from Wretch & Rascal ensured the evening went with a swing, as did flowing Pol Roger Champagne, Chase's Great Chase cocktail and whisky tasting by John Rigby & Co, plus goody bags full of treats from Mr Trotters, Atlas & L, Chase, Huntsman, Prestat and Floris.



**Hemmo Bloemers and Lorna Chase from Chase Distillery**



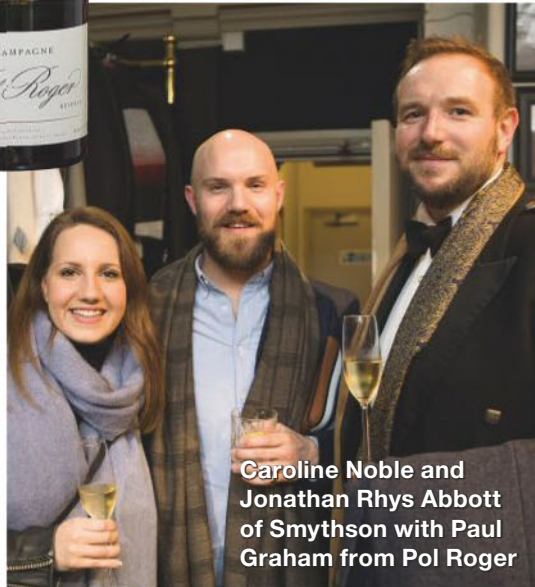
**Debon Nobra and Paulina Cebrzynska**



**The eclectic interiors of Huntsman**



**Omar Vaja and Illias Kabsalis of Bentley & Skinner**



**Caroline Noble and Jonathan Rhys Abbott of Smythson with Paul Graham from Pol Roger**



**TV presenter Jonnie Irwin (right) chats with the whisky team from Rigby**



**COUNTRY LIFE making a stand on Savile Row**



**Arthur Lintell, Marie Huth and Kim Jackson**



## The best intentions

Designers tell Arabella Youens their plans for 2018, from the new ideas they'll be exploring, to the exhibitions and far-flung places they are planning to visit

### Ashley Hicks

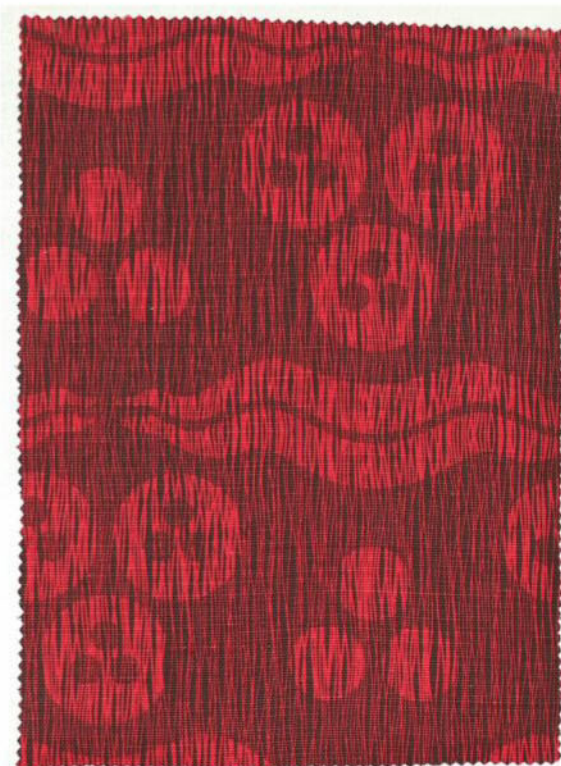
Author, designer and interior decorator



THE forthcoming exhibition 'Charles I: King and Collector' (January 27 to April 15, 2018; *COUNTRY LIFE*, December 13/20, 2017) at the Royal Academy is so exciting: England's greatest art collection, bought from the Gonzagas, sold after his death, and reassembled at Burlington House. I can't wait (020-7300 8000; [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)).

Next year will be about custom everything, whether it's handpainted wallpaper from de Gournay or a tailored suit in a special fabric like the one I'm having Huntsman make in my *Ragged Sultan* design (right), specially printed on wool.

Finally, I'm planning to visit Milan in April for a wonderful tour of houses by the late, great Renzo Mongiardino, followed by dinner in Giacomo, the restaurant he designed ([www.giacomoristorante.com](http://www.giacomoristorante.com); 00 39 02 7602 3313).





## Will Fisher

Founder, Jamb



Next year, I'm looking forward to setting up my new office in a renovated factory. We've moved our warehouse and workshop to an out-of-town space to house our antique-chimneypiece collection and growing reproduction range—it's the engine behind our Pimlico Road showroom.

Also on my horizon is a new book called *Creating Beauty: Interiors*, to be published by Rizzoli in March (left). It's the first book written by the Brooklyn-based interior designer Kathryn Scott and photographed by William Abranowicz.

Increasingly, we're asked for bespoke coloured-marble chimneypieces and, next year, we launch our Mereworth design, which is available in a really beautiful and unusual Occhio di Pavone marble.

I always get inspiration from the landscapes created by Sir Humphry Repton, who was regarded as the last great landscape designer of the 18th century. Next year marks 200 years since his death and I would like to visit more of the estates he worked on. We photograph our collections in these wonderful locations that influence our imagery.

## Stephen Lewis

Co-founder, Lewis & Wood



I'M very much looking forward to visiting the V&A to see the 'Into the Woods' photography exhibition (until April 22, 2018: 020-7942 2000; [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)). Trees

have long been a source of inspiration for artists and our two recent Wide Width Wallpapers *Beech* and *Bosky* seem to have really struck a chord with customers (coincidentally, the working title for both designs was *Into the Woods*).

This new exhibition, which includes work by Ansel Adams (right), acknowledges the powerful nature of trees in art. How we translate the majesty and magnificence of trees into fabric and wallpaper at Lewis & Wood is something that keeps me excited.

I believe wallpaper is having a strong renaissance; customers very much like the way it instantly transforms the mood of a room. A new generation has been weaned on beige and monochrome interiors and are now appreciating the dramatic impact that wallpaper can have on even the smallest space.

Next year, I'll be spending more time in America, in Charleston, North Carolina, a city I've recently come to know, as Lewis & Wood has a loyal following in the southern states. It has a booming economy, wonderful architecture, beautiful islands on its doorstep and a perfect climate. There's a palpable sense of great optimism and prosperity coupled with some absolutely fabulous old Southern-style houses that really suit our collection. Add in the friendly Southern hospitality, and all these elements make Charleston a great place to be.



# Interiors



## Michael Vaughan

Founder, Vaughan Designs



**L**UCY [my wife and co-founder] and I are planning to go to Burma in 2018 to gain inspiration for a new collection based on local arts and crafts.

I'm really looking forward to seeing an exhibition in February at Tate Britain entitled 'All Too Human: Bacon, Freud and a Century of Painting Life' (above, February 28 to August 27: 020-7887 8888; www.tate.org.uk).

I think the colours for 2018 will be warm and colourful, including oranges and reds, to relieve the rather gloomy political situation around the world.



## David Linley

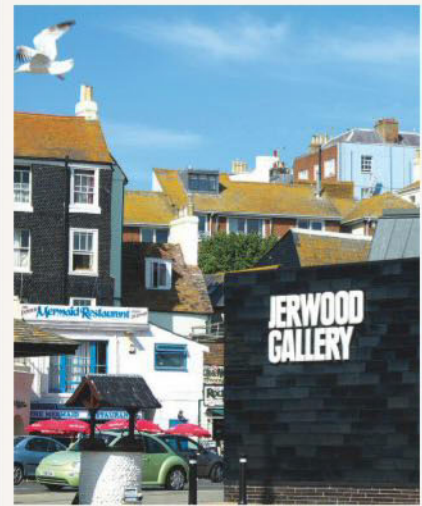
Founder, Linley

**I**'M hoping that the trend for handmade items and craftsmanship will continue throughout 2018. My working life has always been about championing the craftsman and I'm thrilled that there are more people excited about commissioning unique pieces and working with artisans. Commissioning will definitely become more popular. We're already seeing that at the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (of which I'm vice patron) with more people visiting the website to engage directly with some of the country's best artisans.

One exhibition that I'm very much looking forward to seeing is 'The Future Starts Here' at the V&A (opening on May 12). Through 100

objects, it explores artificial intelligence and digital technology in design from 'smart' household objects to 3D printing (above) and much more. I've been collaborating with Jonny Yeo and his sculpture for the Royal Academy 200-year exhibition using cutting-edge digital design and it's very much on my agenda for next year. Digital luxury: watch this space!

Every year, I'm inspired by Provence. Going back to the house my wife, Serena, and I renovated is special and the peace it affords means I return to London full of ideas and enthusiasm.



## Bunny Turner

Co-founder, Turner Pocock



There are lots of exciting exhibitions in the pipeline for 2018: the Picasso show at the Tate in the spring will be unmissable: a feast of colour and form ('Picasso 1932 —Love, Fame, Tragedy',

March 8 to September 9). I'm also looking forward to the Royal Academy's Klimt/Schiele show later on in the year (November 4, 2018 to February 3, 2019)—I can spend hours looking at their haunting and beautiful images.

Carmody Groarke's beautiful Windermere Jetty Museum opens next year and I can't wait to find an excuse to go up and see it (www.carmodygroarke.com). It's in an amazing setting and looks as if it will be an architectural masterclass in volumes and materials.

Closer to home, we're excited that Soho House in White City (www.sohohouse.com) will open its doors—the area is crying out for a comfortable hangout and our studio is round the corner.

We're seeing an increasing trend towards florals and predict the return of glazed chintz. Green is the new blue and we're working with all shades of the spectrum at the moment. There's also a definite revival of *terrazzo* [a composite floor finish], with varying degrees of enthusiasm from Turner Pocock—the team keeps trying to sneak it into schemes.

I'm aiming to visit the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings, Kent, next year (above, 01424 728377; www.jerwoodgallery.org). I've been admiring this beautiful gallery space from afar since it opened in 2012 and it's about time that I actually saw it. The building is clad in glazed tiles that shimmer like fish scales and couldn't feel more appropriate for its coastal setting, plus the collection is always inspiring.



## Bernie de Le Cuona

Founder and owner, de Le Cuona



**M**ORE public figures and companies are looking into ways that they can support social causes; fashion designer Emma Willis has created Style for Soldiers that makes bespoke

shirts for those injured in active service and dry cleaners are helping the unemployed go for interviews by cleaning an outfit free of charge. I hope we see more of this in 2018.

Travel is the bedrock of my creativity and I journey far and wide working with the best artisans and specialist mills to create unique linen. One of the places that I haven't seen yet is Burma and I would love to explore the textile industry there. Mandalay (*left*), with its pagodas and palaces, sounds fascinating.

I'm excited about an exhibition at the V&A opening on April 21 called 'Fashioned from Nature', which will explore the relationship between fashion and nature. I'm interested in seeing the innovative new fabrics, dyeing processes and the sources of textiles.



## Susie Atkinson

Interior designer



**F**OR my 'London fix', I'm excited that the restaurant of the new Covent Garden outpost of Petersham Nurseries opens early in the new year (*above*, <http://petershamnurseries.com>). I often visit the shop and the original nursery in Richmond and I'm sure it won't disappoint.

For my 'country fix', I understand that The Grange Festival in Hampshire is introducing ballet for the first time, directed by Wayne McGregor with the Royal Ballet's principal Edward Watson as co-curator. (June 7 and 10: 01962 791020; <http://thegrangefestival.co.uk>).

I suspect the stronger primary colour palettes we've seen emerging will continue through 2018, alongside the bold-and-beautiful botanical and tropical prints and rattan and cane furniture. For new trends, I see more use of red in walls, upholstery and furniture and stronger blues perhaps not often used since the 1980s.

In addition, how and where things are made will remain important, with the emphasis on craftsmanship and a growing trend in ceramics and glassware.

## Willow Crossley

Floral stylist and author



I've been trying to get to Keukenhof [one of the world's largest flower gardens, in Lisse, Netherlands] for years to see the tulips and I'm determined to make it happen next year. The 2018 theme is Romance in Flowers (00 31 252 465 555; <https://keukenhof.nl/en>). I'm also desperate to go to Jaipur and learn more about block printing.

I'm very bad at following trends—with clothes I get it, but not with interiors and flowers. Right now, however, I love colour, print and pattern all at once. More is definitely more. I'm mad about fabric walls. We've just finished decorating the new VIP suite at George Pragnell the jeweller on Mount Street and covered the bathroom in William Yeoward's *Raffaele* fabric (*below*). It makes me so happy (020-7349 7828; [www.williamyeoward.com](http://www.williamyeoward.com)).





*An English Country Home designed by Janine Stone*

If you would like to discuss commissioning a unique country home of architectural distinction, that is craftsman built, finished to immaculate standards and which perfectly reflects your aspirations, then we would be pleased to arrange an initial meeting to discuss and explore the opportunities.



# JANINE STONE

ARCHITECTURAL & INTERIOR DESIGN,  
BUILD & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

T. +44 (0)20 7349 8888 / JANINESTONE.COM



## It was tough at the top

The market faced some serious challenges in 2017, but there were still sales to celebrate



*Top:* The biggest estate sale of the year was that of 4,227-acre Sutton Scotney in Hampshire at £45m. *Above left:* Bibury Court in Gloucestershire. £17.5m. *Above right:* The Stubhampton estate on the Dorset-Wiltshire border exchanged for £13m

**F**OR Rob Fanshawe of buying agents Property Vision, 2017 has been ‘a forgettable year’. What with the crushing effect of Stamp Duty (SDLT) on transactions at the top of the market, buyers behaving badly and vendors—especially downsizers—wondering whether or not to hang on for another year, the past 12 months have not been the best of times for anyone involved in the country-house market.

On the other hand, they’ve not been the worst of times either. ‘Despite a dearth of

estates for sale and the uncertainties facing farming post-Brexit, in terms of employment, subsidy, production and Inheritance Tax, there have been many more buyers than sellers for properties with enough land to qualify as “mixed use”, Mr Fanshawe maintains. In addition, the current shortage of new houses coming to the market has meant that most of the old stock has now been cleared off estate agents’ shelves.

His view is supported by some reasonably encouraging statistics from Savills, which

show an increase of 47% in the number of new country-house buyers looking to buy houses at £3 million-plus in 2017, compared with the previous year. Also in 2017, the firm saw an increase of some 27% in sales of houses priced at more than £5m in the southern and Home Counties, with sales of £5m-plus houses in Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex more than doubling in 2017, again compared with 2016.

It takes two to tango in the current market, says Clive Hopkins of Knight Frank’s country-



**Sporting Upton Grove, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire. £4.75m**



**Elegant Georgian Seend Park at Seend in Wiltshire. £4.5m**



**Exquisite Freshford Hall is only six miles from Bath. £3.95m**



**Also near to Bath, Grade II-listed Conkwell Grange. £2.5m**



**Described as 'the perfect small estate', the 65-acre Longbottom estate, at Biddesden, Wiltshire, was sold at a guide price of £8.25m**

estates department, who finds that even genuine buyers have been inclined to drag their feet unless, and until, a competitor enters the fray, at which point, they tend to react immediately.

With demand still outstripping supply for the most prestigious country estates, one of the highlights of Mr Hopkins's year was the sale in May of the picturesque, 762-acre Bibury Court estate on the banks of the River Coln, near Cirencester, Gloucestershire, which boasted a house by Quinlan Terry and

a price tag of £17.5m. Another was the private sale, at a guide price of 'excess £13m', of the 2,500-acre Sawley Hall sporting estate near Harrogate, North Yorkshire, where the successful estate shoot has been run in recent years by Sir Ian Botham's son, Liam.

The biggest estate sale of the year took place in February, when Savills handled the sale to European buyers of insurance giant Zurich's 4,227-acre Sutton Scotney estate between Winchester, Basingstoke and Andover in Hampshire, at a guide price of £45m.

At the time, the estate, previously owned by Eagle Star (later bought by Zurich), was entirely let, with a commercial rent-roll of £635,000 a year, its mainly arable land tenanted by four farmers, with 24 estate houses either let long-term or on Assured Short-hold Tenancies.

For Crispin Holborow of Savills, one of the most satisfying outcomes of the year was to see the 1,044-acre Stubhampton farming estate at Tarrant Gunville, within the Cranborne Chase AONB on the Dorset-Wiltshire border, exchange contracts in November, at a guide price of 'excess £13m', following a well-managed planning application that secured consent to build a brand-new, 15,000sq ft main house on a splendid woodland site at the heart of the estate.

Originally part of the Tarrant Gunville Manor estate, owned at one time by Josiah Wedgwood II, of pottery fame, Stubhampton incorporates one of the oldest deer parks in the area, first mentioned in records from 1279.

By contrast, one of the most charming residential properties sold in Hampshire this year was the secluded, 65-acre Longbottom estate at Biddesden, near the county border with Wiltshire. Described by selling agents Strutt & Parker as 'the perfect small estate', its sale was one of Strutt's 'deals of the year' when it found a buyer in August at a guide price of £8.25m. ➤

# Property market



Family-friendly Lovelwood House in Buckinghamshire. £950,000



The Chantry, West Sussex, sold within 22 days. £4.95m



Set in Capability Brown parkland: Youngsbury, Hertfordshire. £5m



Broad Close is only 15 miles from central Oxford. £2.5m

Despite falling demand for high-end homes in the capital, which has seen new construction drop by some 30% since 2015, largely due to an ever-more challenging planning environment, mortgage restrictions and the current levels of SDLT, families with school-age children are increasingly desperate to move out of London, Mr Fanshawe reveals. 'With London schools so competitive and so expensive and the ability to work from home now an accepted part of the business environment, it makes more and more sense to move to the country.'

An increased sense of urgency among London buyers was reflected in a succession of rapid sales achieved by leading agents in established 'hotspots' around the country, notably the Cotswolds, where houses within easy reach of the exclusive Soho Farmhouse near Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, and Daylesford Farm Shop on the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire border invariably command a premium. Oxford itself remains a firm favourite among buyers from South-East Asia.

A British buyer in his forties, working in London's financial sector and with a young family, bought imposing, Grade II-listed

Upton Grove near Tetbury, Gloucestershire, home of the sporting Pope family since 1952. Launched on the market in the Cotswold number of *COUNTRY LIFE* in May, at a guide price of £4.75m through Knight Frank, the deal—scrutinised every step of the way by former John D. Wood chairman and Beaufort Hunt legend George Pope—was eventually sealed in October.

The majority of potential purchasers who came to view the classic Georgian Seend Park, on the edge of the pretty Wiltshire village of Seend, four miles from Devizes and 16 miles from Bath, were London-based, reveals James Mackenzie of Strutt & Parker. Launched on the market in June at a guide price of £4.5m and now under offer, the elegant 17th-century house, set in 26 acres of magnificent gardens and parkland, was remodelled in the mid 18th century by the formidable Mary, Dowager Duchess of Somerset, and again in the 1990s by the current vendors.

The emergence of Bath as a magnet for British expatriates working in Hong Kong and China was highlighted by the sale, in September—at a guide price of £3.95m

through Knight Frank and Strutt & Parker—of the exquisite, Grade II-listed Freshford Hall at Freshford, six miles south of Bath, to a British buyer based in Shanghai (*COUNTRY LIFE*, December 6, 2017).

On the other hand, it was a British buyer with family ties to Bath and national business interests who eventually purchased Grade II-listed Conkwell Grange with 20 acres at Limpley Stoke, five miles from Bath, at a guide price of £2.5m through Knight Frank. Designed by the Edwardian architect Sir Edward Guy Dawber for James Thornton in 1907, the substantial, 10-bedroom house in need of refurbishment was being sold on behalf of a vendor who was looking to downsize, but tragically passed away while the sale was still in progress—a grim reminder of the agonising problems facing older vendors of large houses in the current market.

As Dawn Carritt of Jackson-Stops confirms: 'This year, the most difficult sector of the country market involved vendors wishing to downsize from substantial country properties. This problem is particularly stressful for elderly owners looking to sell when



**Hurstbourne is set in three acres on the Wentworth estate in north Surrey. £25m**

time may not be on their side. One thing is certain, however: although sales are being achieved, predicting a time frame is now more of an art than a science!

On the other hand, Miss Carritt points out, 'the traditional family house has performed unexpectedly well, despite the political and financial uncertainty. With fewer properties coming to the market, the lack of choice has resulted in some properties, such as Lovelwood House at Lillingstone Lovel, Buckinghamshire, going to "best and final offers" and exceeding the guide price of £950,000'.

This scenario was repeated throughout the year in popular areas of the Home Counties and the Cotswolds, where Strutt & Parker racked up some rapid sales of houses in good locations and priced between £2m and £3m.

Strutt were joint agents with Knight Frank in the sale of The Chantry at Storrington, West Sussex, which sold in 22 days from the first viewing in May, exchanging contracts on June 13. Sole agents in the sale of Georgian, Grade II-listed Youngsbury, which sits in 95 acres of Capability Brown parkland, four miles from Ware, Hertfordshire, they found a buyer on the second viewing at a guide price of £5m.



**Also on the Wentworth estate with three acres, the Palladian-style Dawn Hill. £29m**

And having launched pretty, Grade II-listed Broad Close at Church Enstone, three miles from Great Tew and Soho Farmhouse and 15 miles from central Oxford, at a guide price of £2.5m in mid September, they had a sale agreed a month later and contracts exchanged by October 31.

At the opposite end of the price spectrum, overseas buyers ruled the roost within the secure confines of north Surrey's most exclusive estates, where developer Con-

sero London scored a 'double whammy' with the sale of the sumptuous, Palladian-style Dawn Hill and Hurstbourne, each set in three acres of grounds on the prestigious Wentworth estate.

Offered through Knight Frank and Hanover Private Office at guide prices of £29m and £25m respectively, both were sold to canny international buyers, who were happy to take advantage of the current advantageous dollar-sterling exchange rate. 🐦





# When earth stands hard as iron

*Theobald's Farm, near Enfield, Greater London*  
Plenty of green structure and trees that lead the eye  
are one designer's solution to creating an interesting  
garden for the bleakest winter months, finds Jane Perrone

Photographs by Marianne Majerus

ONCE winter's grip has transformed the lush green foliage of spring and summer into a melange of papery browns and greys, a garden's structure is laid bare. The crisp line of a yew hedge, the tight globe of a topiary ball or the bark of a cherry tree, glowing like embers in the low, winter sun, all come into their own.

At Theobald's Farm near Enfield, north London, owner Alison Green puts much thought into how her garden looks in winter. 'I think a garden needs to look as exciting in January as it does in the height of summer,' she explains as we begin an exploration of the space, accompanied by her bouncy English setter Bertie.

Alison achieves that thrill with a number of thoughtfully laid-out garden rooms, each with a sturdy backbone of evergreen planting and trees that offer winter interest, much of its success being due to her careful planning and planting since she moved in, 18 years ago.

**“ I think a garden needs to look as exciting in January as it does at the height of summer ;**

One of the most striking features at this time of year is a turf-clad earthwork, skirted on one side by silver birches (*Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* Grayswood Ghost). Their regimentation is halted by the sloping trunks of a cork oak, *Quercus suber*, at one end and a golden Indian bean tree, *Catalpa bignonioides* Aurea, on the other.

Alison based its spiral design on the golden section, the mathematical ratio of harmony and balance; when the low-angled winter sunshine hits this composition, the spiral lights up and the birches turn into glowing white pillars, through which the scene beyond is framed.

Alison has also planted silver birches in trios near the swimming pond at the back of the garden, where their white trunks sing out against the dark-green yew hedge behind. It's a near-monochrome scheme, echoed by several black Indian pots by the water's edge and white furniture arranged alongside.

The yew hedges act as the garden's skeleton, dividing the garden into rooms and drawing the eye when all else is subdued and topiary also serves a similar purpose. 'I use the box-ball topiary as full-stop points,' says Alison, 'so that it rests the eye among the mass of planting.'



The pointed calyces around unopened rosebuds are enhanced by a touch of frost



Above: A dusting of ice enhances the last of the season's flowers, including this *Helianthus*. Below: Cold turned the berberis leaves to beetroot before they fall



Preceding pages: Winter reveals the many layers of protection and enclosure for the garden. Above: Delaying dead-heading can have unexpected benefits when late-flowering roses put on their final show

A long border that margins the lawn around the spiral earthwork is full of exotic things in summer, but also has its own winter attractions, with a series of hornbeam columns alternating with trios of *Prunus serrula*, clipped into tight lollipop. 'When the herbaceous plants are at their height in the summer, you can't see their trunks at all, but they look marvellous in the winter: when the sun hits them, the bark glows red.'

Reach the end of the exotic border, turn a corner and the unexpected sight of the spring walk—previously hidden from view by tall, two-tier hedges—opens up. The wide grass path, flanked with fruit trees and punctuated with box cones, terminates in a seat tucked between a *Paulownia* tree and a hornbeam, alongside another pair of box cones. It's a scene pleasing on the eye, that will be further enhanced as a newer planting of yew in a curve behind the seat begins to establish itself. ➤



## Spent flowers: to cut or not to cut?

Received wisdom on when to clear away herbaceous perennials has shifted in recent years. Where once borders were routinely cleaned and laid bare by November, in many gardens, russet grasses and desiccated stems are now left to persist until spring, to be cut back as new growth begins to appear.

This can be beneficial to wildlife, but practical and aesthetic considerations must also play a part, Alison advises. On her heavy, London clay soil, mulching with mushroom compost is a vital part of the January routine—not easy if every square foot is still thick with plants. 'It's about knowing when to leave dead plants; when they're orange, brown and tawny-beige, they're great. There's a great tendency to leave all of it, but you have to look at it and think "well, actually, that looks rotten, let's take that out".'

In the exotic border, *Achillea filipendulina* Gold Plate is a keeper, its flat seed-heads offering layers of texture against the desiccated stems of tall heleniums, rudbeckias and silphiums. However, clearance is particularly vital around the garden's natural swim pond, as rotting foliage of the water reeds, if allowed to fall into the water, fuel a huge explosion in that unwelcome invader, pond weed.

**Tiered levels of interest surround a pebble-and-brick mosaic with fish designs ranged around a central floral motif**





Alison chooses tree species with year-round interest and especially likes a pair of diminutive wedding-cake trees, *Cornus controversa* Variegata, planted in her front garden. 'They have great shape and dark-red stems in winter, flower in spring, variegated foliage and autumn colour, so they work hard for their place.' They also cast atmospheric shadows against the cream walls of the farmhouse on a sunny day—an added bonus. 🐾

**Top: A view across the pond, with its distinctive waterside plantings and contrasting, protective yew hedge. The sunloungers make striking eye-catchers, although are unlikely to have many takers at this time of year. Above: The intricately woven knot garden features paired designs flanking the front doorway**

### The box knot garden

The farmhouse dates back to 1650, so to create a garden in keeping with this frontispiece, Alison planted a Celtic knot garden of *Buxus sempervirens* on either side of the front path, lined up in perfect symmetry with the windows. There is the ongoing threat of attack from the disease box blight, not to mention the unwanted attentions of the box-tree caterpillar, a relatively recent addition to the ranks of UK garden pests (for successful treatment of these, see *COUNTRY LIFE*, In the Garden, September 20, 2017).

And yet the undulations of the knot look neat and strong, especially when rimed with frost. Alison hopes to keep box blight at bay by ensuring maximum air circulation between plants: 'The real trick with box is that it thrives in conditions where it's getting good airflow. In the knot garden, there are bulbs in the spring and for the rest of the year, nothing is grown between the box at all.'

Pyramids of variegated box (*Buxus sempervirens* Elegantiissima) stand sentinel around the knots and a low yew hedge marks the boundary with the gravel driveway.



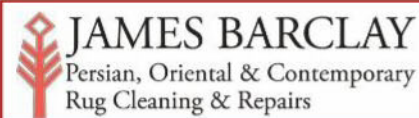
Call For Our New Brochure!



THE FINEST OAK FRAMED BUILDINGS

MADE IN ENGLAND [www.primeoak.co.uk](http://www.primeoak.co.uk) [info@primeoak.co.uk](mailto:info@primeoak.co.uk) 01384 296611

GARAGES | GARDEN ROOMS | ORANGERIES | HOME OFFICES | CONSERVATORIES | BARNs | STABLES



### HAND CLEANING AND ALL REPAIRS UNDERTAKEN

We collect daily in London, weekly in England, Wales & Scotland. Please call for uplift and advice or bring rugs to our workshop.

WORKSHOP & OFFICE  
14 Oliver Park, London  
NW10 7JB

[www.jamesbarclay.co.uk](http://www.jamesbarclay.co.uk)  
020 3174 2427



- Sides & Ends Repaired
- Moth Damage
- Deodorising
- Holes & Tears Repaired
- Colour Run & Stains
- Re-piling Worn Areas



# A walk in the Parks

**A**LONG with the Bodleian Library and the Covered Market, one of my main reasons for staying in Oxford is the University Parks. Despite its name, the Parks is, in both senses, singular, just one outstanding expanse, first laid out in 1864. Enjoyed by Gown and Town alike, its 70 or so acres encompass groves, gravelled walks, areas of garden both informal and intensively cultivated, sweeps of turf both long and shorn and sports pitches.

An age ago, I used it daily as a running circuit. For the past 25 years, however, I've only ever walked there and more and more slowly—a change of pace that's due to the Parks' transformation over this period. Such beauty and fascination are not for taking at a gallop.

In summer, it's the Elysian Fields. The knock of cricket or croquet ball on bat or mallet counterpoints the laughter and splash of punters on its willow-draped boundary the River Cherwell. The air is perfumed with new-mown grass, mock orange, *Fabiana*, antique and species roses, heliotrope and *Nicotiana*.

Its visual delights range from classic herbaceous borders to subtropical bedding by way of shrubberies that summon the Far East and Mediterranean. Crowning all, the trees (some 1,600 of them, representing more than 250 species) appear to have been placed and posed by the world's great landscape painters.

It's in winter that the Parks means most to me, once the maples and swamp cypresses



Oxford's University Parks has a rare vitality even in winter

have flung their fiery last. Now, the bare branches loom, intricate and rooky, and the paths lie quiet under freezing river mist. And yet, all around, there's life: chillproof scents of *Daphne*, *Sarcococca*, *Chimonanthus*, *Viburnum*, *Lonicera fragrantissima* and *Mahonia*; brave blossom of *Prunus incisa* and *Chaenomeles*; incandescent wands of willow and dogwood; hazels and alders heavy with catkins; hellebores and pulmonarias lifting their heads; and, among the Arthur Rackhamish tree trunks, dances of snowdrops and *Crocus tommasinianus*.

Accompanying these precocious prodigies is a multitude of evergreen trees, shrubs and groundcover. In some, the foliage is as Nature intended; in others, it's variegated or suffused with

gold, lime, silver and white. In all, there's a vitality that lifts the spirits even when the short days seem unending.

I and countless others have one man to thank for this Eden: Walter Sawyer, who retired last summer after 26 years as Superintendent of the Parks. The other day, over lunch at his beautiful 17th-century home in Warwickshire, he told me how it happened.

‘The trees appear to have been posed by the great painters’

Captivated in boyhood by the pot plants that his mother grew in his native Gateshead, Mr Sawyer went to work at the age of 16 for Newcastle upon Tyne's Parks Department. Following formal training at Askham Bryan College near York, he moved to the Oxford Botanic Garden, coming under the masterly mentorship of its then director, Ken Burras, and meeting his future wife, Celia (as in the violet-scented snowdrop *Galanthus Celia Sawyer*), who tended the rock garden and alpine collection.

Next, in 1982, he was appointed head gardener to the newly constructed Wolfson College. There, he developed innovative ways of landscaping with plants that formed an idyllic setting for the Modernist riverside buildings. Oxford garden-watchers (myself included) were amazed.

It's little wonder that, in 1991, he was invited to take command of the Parks. He set about the task with astonishing energy, rejuvenating and redesigning old areas and creating many others from scratch, a venture that involved installing thousands of plants and striving for, and attaining, the highest standards. This, for most, would be achievement enough, but Mr Sawyer's vision and expertise soon began to extend far beyond the Parks.

He grew the department in his charge, increasing its staff from 12 to 42, and turning it into the university's crack horticultural force. Currently responsible for planting and maintaining no fewer than 210 sites in addition to the Parks, this service's environmental and aesthetic benefits to Oxford are ubiquitous and immense. Faculty buildings, colleges, thoroughfares and squares all now bear witness to Mr Sawyer's determination to create public and institutional green spaces that meet the demands and constraints placed upon them while miraculously rivalling the most lovingly planted and tended private gardens.

'My aim,' he told me the other day, 'has always been to try to give people something I'd be happy with.' That means only the best, as I was reminded when, after lunch, we took a turn in his and Celia's own garden, the private paradise of this hero of public horticulture.

Mark Griffiths is editor of the *New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening*

Next week: *Delicate Daphnes*

Darrell Goddaman/www.dgphotos; Herb Bendicks/Alamy

## Horticultural aide memoire

### Bring in ornamental shoots

With a bit of thought and care, plenty of attractive seasonal decoration can be brought in from the garden at this special time. Winter-flowering shrubs such as *Hamamelis* (right), *Viburnum* and *Sarcococca*, evergreen foliage from a wide range of plants and the fruits of hollies, cotoneasters and some rowans form a ready source. You need to be careful where you tread and work carefully so the plants appear undamaged, but the choice is wide. Coloured stems, such as those of *Cornus*, are desirable on the same basis. Reserve the task for a special table decoration and do it just the once. **SCD**





## More ways with parsnips

### Parsnip, garlic and almond-butter soup (serves 4, below)

Drizzle 500g of peeled parsnips with olive oil and place on a baking sheet with 8 cloves of garlic (skins on). Roast until cooked and squeeze the garlic cloves from their skins. Add to a saucepan with a peeled, chopped potato and pour over enough chicken stock to cover. Season and simmer until the potato is cooked, then blitz in a food processor until smooth. Divide between bowls and drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil before serving with seeded crackers.



### Almond-and-Parmesan parsnips

Peel parsnips and cut into even-sized pieces. Combine equal amounts of ground almonds and Parmesan to a bowl with seasoning and chopped parsley and mix well. Drop the parsnips into boiling water for a few minutes, then remove them and toss in the Parmesan mixture before arranging on a baking sheet. Bake the parsnips for about 15 minutes or until lightly golden and serve with *aioli*.

### Parsnip, carrot and cabbage rösti (makes about 10)

Grate 3 parsnips and 3 carrots into a bowl and add a quarter of a Savoy cabbage (finely chopped). Mix together with 2 eggs, chopped chives, 2 tablespoons of corn-flour, seasoning and a drizzle of olive oil. Drop spoonfuls of the mixture into a pan of hot oil and cook until golden on both sides.

Melanie Johnson

6 In this week's main recipe, deliciously slow-cooked brisket topped with the smoothest parsnip-and-truffle mash lifts a winning dish to new heights 9



## Brisket cottage pie with parsnip-and-truffle mash

Serves 6

### Ingredients

3tbspn olive oil  
1tbspn plain flour  
1.5kg flat beef brisket  
4 peeled and sliced cloves garlic  
8 quartered baby onions  
4 sprigs thyme  
1 sprig rosemary  
1 bay leaf  
300ml red wine  
  
450g parsnips  
450g floury potatoes  
100ml milk  
25g butter  
50ml truffle oil  
  
4 extra-large brown onions

### Method

Preheat your oven to 160°C/300°F/gas mark 2. Heat the olive oil in a large casserole dish. Sprinkle the flour and seasoning over the brisket, then sear it on all sides in the dish. Add the garlic and baby onions and cook for a few minutes before adding the thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, red wine and seasoning. Put a lid on the casserole dish and cook in the oven for about 3–4 hours, until the meat is falling apart (cook for a further half hour if necessary).

Remove the meat and shred it using two forks. Place the casserole dish back over a high heat until the gravy reduces and thickens slightly, then remove the herbs. Transfer the gravy into a processor and blend until smooth, then return it to the casserole dish along with the meat and set aside until ready to assemble.

Peel the parsnips and potatoes and cut them into even-sized pieces. In a pan of cold, salted water, bring them to a boil, before lowering the temperature to a simmer until the vegetables are tender. Drain in a colander, then return the parsnips and potatoes to the pan. Add the milk, butter, truffle oil and seasoning. Mash together, then use a stick blender to purée. Cover and set aside.

Peel the large brown onions and cut a centimetre from the base, to make them level, and a couple of centimetres from the top. Drop the onions into boiling water and cook until soft. Remove from the water with a slotted spoon and, once cool enough to handle, push out the inner layers of the onions. Taking the largest rings of onion, fill each one with brisket and top with parsnip purée. Arrange in an ovenproof dish and bake for 20 minutes before serving. Any remaining brisket and mash can be served on the side.



# A few of my favourite things

A personal look at the most intriguing and appealing items in the salerooms this year

I HAVE always liked Ceylan iridescent glass vases by René Lalique and I recall that, during my time at Christie's in the early 1970s, examples routinely made 45 guineas in our London auctions. These vases, sometimes fitted as lamps, are satisfying market indicators: neither excessively rare nor commonplace, the design of paired lovebirds is standard, but there are slight differences in colour and quality.

Over the next couple of decades, prices rose to about £2,000 and, now, £8,000 or even £10,000 is quite possible. In 2011, one sold for \$22,500 (£16,800), but I'm not aware that there has been anything similar since.

Of course, in these times when a painting that is not, shall we say, universally esteemed has been hammered down at \$450 million (£336 million), even that last price is a relative pittance, but I would like to look back at some other things that I have enjoyed during the year, which have been sold very reasonably. One or two of them have appeared here before and the others deserve to, I feel, because of their quality or interest.

One of 2016's earliest art-and-antiques sales introduced me to something that I don't recall ever having come across before: the 'go-to-bed'. This was a 19th-century device intended to lessen the



Fig 1: An early-19th-century oak high dresser. £843

danger of bed curtains catching fire. It was a metal, wood or ivory container and stood on the mantelpiece to hold matches. It had a striker on its bottom or side and a finial hole into which a lit

post-Second World War silver items and objects of *vertú*, and in it was a lot of five go-to-beds. Two were brass, one ivory and two in Mauchline ware, wooden cylinder boxes decorated with prints of Dryburgh and Furness Abbeys (Fig 3). They made £195, which represents £39 each, now on the cheap side for Mauchline wares in general.

The next item is one that I included here on March 15 and, at £843, it is the most expensive of my choices this week. Sold earlier in the year by Reeman Dansie of Colchester, it is a very handsome early-19th-century oak high dresser and the price seemed most reasonable to me (Fig 1). I have now searched a website devoted to dressers currently on the market and the nearest equivalent that I have found is priced at nearly £3,000.

Admittedly, that had been professionally cleaned and polished, and includes the dealer's mark-up, whereas the Reeman Dansie dresser was 'in good condition,

match could be set so that people could scuttle into bed without carrying a dangerous candle.

The January sale at Woolley & Wallis in Salisbury was one of a series dispersing the Arthur Holder collection of antique and

Fig 2: Silver drachm minted and well used in the time of Alexander the Great. £75



Fig 3 above: Five go-to-beds. £195. Fig 4 right: Bodiam Castle. £635





**Fig 5 left: Meteorite fragments estimated to be four billion years old. £5 each**

commensurate with age.' I would certainly be happy to house it.

In March, Cheffins of Cambridge took £635 for a 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>in by 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>in watercolour of Bodiam Castle by John Inigo Richards (**Fig 4**). Regular readers might have noticed my penchant for English watercolours and it becomes a passion when one comes with a provenance such as this. It belonged to Iolo Williams, the collector (and Museums Correspondent of *The Times*), who illustrated it in his *Early English Watercolours* (1952), one of the hardest-worked books on my shelves. Richards (1731–1810) was a founder member and Secretary of the Royal Academy and he was paid 12 guineas to repair its Leonardo cartoon. He was a charming draughtsman with a fondness for ruins.

Continuing chronologically, we come to the cheapest and oldest offerings of the year, the meteorite fragments that were offered at £5 each in early April at the Antiques for Everyone Fair at the Birmingham NEC (**Fig 5**). With the dealer Hiscock & Shepherd, these were, give or take, four billion years old.

In May, I illustrated two more reasonably priced items from auctions. The typescript of *From Cowboy to Pulpit Being Reminiscences from my Life* by the Rev Sir Genille Cave-Browne-Cave, Bt (1869–1929), was sold by



**Fig 6 right: Vodka decanter and six glasses. £635**

**Fig 7 below: A mahogany pocket compass. £364**



Tennants of Leyburn, North Yorkshire, for just £171 (**Fig 9**). Whether fairly or not, baronets and vicars are often considered eccentric and Sir Genille certainly seems to have justified the suspicion.

Both a regular and a freelance soldier before he took Orders, during his years 'busting bronchos, roping steers, and herding cattle in the West' and tending bars in Denver, he wisely seems to have used the alias Mr Harrison. I wonder whether the buyer of the typescript could make a film of it.

Sir Genille would probably have enjoyed the vodka decanter and six glasses illustrated here the following week (*May 24*) (**Fig 6**). These were attractively enamelled and carried Russian drinking adages, several of which contra-

**Fig 9: The Rev Sir Genille Cave-Browne-Cave's autobiographical typescript. £171**



**Fig 8 above: The remains of a 1st or 2nd century Roman bronze finger ring. £35**

dicted each other enough to provoke brawls, but the glasses were surely too attractive to be thrown into fireplaces. The set made £635 at Cheffins.

A July sale at Woolley & Wallis included a mahogany pocket compass made, according to an inscription, for visitors to the Great Exhibition (**Fig 7**). It had a dial giving distances not only to Hyde Park, but also such attractions as the African Exhibition and the Egyptian Hall, in miles from a central point at Regent's Circus. This was the intended culmination that John Nash planned for Regent Street, where Portland Place reaches the park. It would have been larger than Oxford and Piccadilly Circuses, but the developer went bankrupt, with only the southern sector, now Park Crescent, completed. The compass remained with the family of the original purchaser until this sale, where it took £364.

For serious coin collectors, condition is all-important, but for those of us who value links and associations, it may matter less. Thus, £75 would be worth paying for the silver *drachm* minted a little before 323BC in the lifetime of Alexander the Great, sold by Duke's Auctioneers of Dorchester in October (**Fig 2**). On the obverse was a head of Herakles and, on the reverse, a seated Zeus with an eagle on his wrist. It showed the wear of its long life; had it been in better condition, like two that will be offered next week in New York, it might have made four times as much.

Still more evocative, at £35, was the remains of a Roman bronze finger ring worn by a soldier of the Seventh Legion during the 1st or 2nd century AD (**Fig 8**).

The total for this week's shopping trolley is £2,110—which does not seem out of the way for such a variety of pleasurable items. 🐉

**Next week A virtual duel**

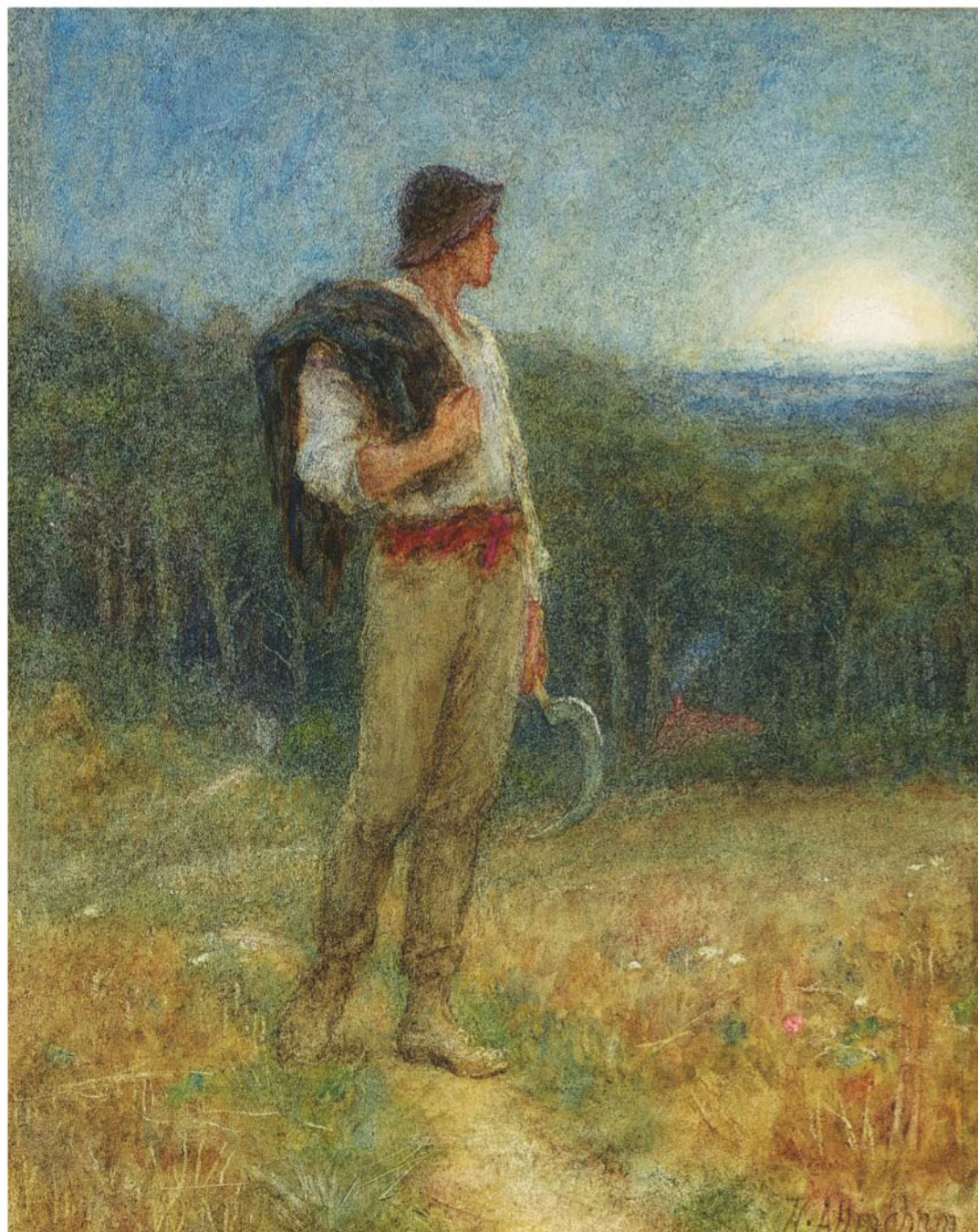
# No wilting rose

Peyton Skipwith enjoys an exhibition that reasserts the reputation of a leading female figure in Victorian art

**I**N the early 1960s, when Victorian art was at the nadir of its fortunes, Helen Allingham (1848–1926) was regarded as the doyenne of the ‘Jolly Hollyhocks School’ of watercolour painting. Her entire output, and sole subject matter, was deemed to consist of rather twee view of Surrey cottages with roses rambling round the porch and hollyhocks beside the door. True, she did paint a number of such scenes, but she also painted a great deal more and she only lived in Surrey for a mere seven years of her 78-year life.

Born Helen Paterson, the daughter of a doctor, she was brought up in Altrincham, Cheshire, until she was 14, when her father died of diphtheria, as did her three-year-old sister. After this tragedy, her mother moved the family to Birmingham, where Helen attended the School of Art; two years later, she moved to London and entered the Royal Academy Schools and, very soon after, she was receiving her first commissions for black-and-white magazine illustrations.

These were not sentimental scenes, but tough and gritty drawings of social deprivation designed to appeal to audiences reared on Luke Fildes’s *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* and Frank Holl’s *No Tidings from the Sea*.



**Harvest Moon (1879): an exquisite little painting that ennobles rural life**

Van Gogh, a collector of engravings after such works, was said to be greatly taken with her harrowing illustration to a story by Victor Hugo, *Ninety-three—Dolorosa*, which appeared in *The Graphic* magazine in 1874, and Thomas Hardy described her as ‘the best illustrator I ever had’ after her drawings for *Far From the Madding Crowd* appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine* the same year.

To modern-day audiences, some of these drawings look rather over-dramatic, but Paterson, the first woman to be on the staff of *The Graphic*, was no wilting rose.

The year these illustrations appeared, she married the Irish poet William Allingham, who was, at the time, the editor of *Fraser’s Magazine* and the exhibition includes a beautiful watercolour of him painted on their honeymoon. William sits relaxed in his gorgeously coloured paisley dressing gown reading a book; appropriately, this hangs in the exhibition as a pendant to a similarly posed portrait of their friend Alfred, Lord Tennyson painted a decade or so later.

This informal study contrasts with Watts’s monumental plaster

of the Poet Laureate with his dog, which stands in an adjacent studio, and from which was cast the memorial statue that stands outside the cathedral in Lincoln.

It is works such as these portraits by Allingham, plus the magical little study *Harvest Moon*, that set the scene for this mini-retrospective. Although modest in size, *Harvest Moon* (1879) is monumental in conception and equal to the best work of George Pinwell, Frederick Walker and the other acclaimed illustrators of the 1860s. The harvester with his sickle, pausing in the twi-

Private Collection; Royal Watercolour Society; Burgh House & Hampstead Museum



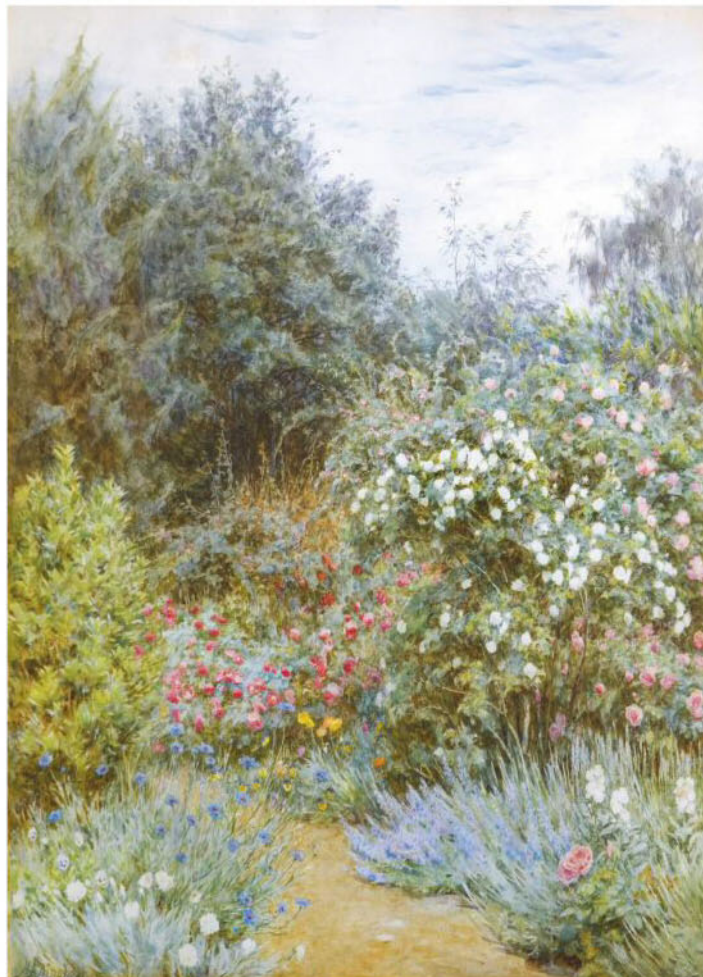
**Feeding the Fowls, Pinner (1890):** Allingham's domestic paintings were not just chocolate-box cottage scenes, but records of a vanishing way of rural English life. Passionately concerned about the threat to vernacular buildings, she would have been pleased to know that this farmhouse still stands. The figures were probably added later

light to look back, has the same noble dignity as Hamo Thornycroft's bronze *The Mower* of the following decade.

Despite spending only seven years of her life in the county, Allingham is the quintessential Surrey artist, having achieved wide acclaim with her 1886 exhibition 'Surrey Cottages' at the Fine Art Society in Bond Street. For better or worse, from that time on, she was inexorably linked with that county and that subject matter for the remaining 40 years of her life. It is a burden that has been handed on to posterity.

Recording domesticated nature was the subject matter at which she excelled. The first Christmas card I received this year was a reproduction of a sheet of studies of robins by her. There's nothing sentimental about them; they're acutely observed quick sketches in pencil, some touched with watercolour, of that most domestic of wild birds as it hopped around the place where she was sitting.

Direct observation was important to Allingham, as is borne out here by three architectural




**In about 1900, Allingham painted parts of the gardens at Munstead Wood, such as *Roses in Gertrude Jekyll's Garden***



**Helen's husband, the Irish poet William Allingham, painted on their honeymoon in 1874**

studies of stonework and doorways lent by the British Museum, and it was this quality that she brought to bear on her garden subjects. The exhibition includes two superb watercolours of her friend Gertrude Jekyll's garden at Munstead Wood and one of Tennyson's at Farringford.

Without getting bogged down in pernickety detail, Allingham's observation and her knowledge of plants enabled her to capture their essence so that the well-informed viewer can identify precisely what Jekyll was growing in her summer border. (Appropriately, the exhibition has been guest-curated by Annabel Watts, Head Gardener at Munstead Wood, as well as the author of *Helen Allingham's Cottage Homes Revisited*, which the Watts Gallery Trust has just republished.)

It was undoubtedly in the Home Counties that Allingham found her true *métier* and the Watts Gallery, with its overtones of nobility and domesticity, is the ideal setting in which to reassess it. 

'Helen Allingham' is at Watts Gallery Artists' Village, Down Lane, Compton, Surrey, until February 18, 2018 (01483 810235; [www.wattsgallery.org.uk](http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk))

**Next week: Modigliani at Tate Modern**



# The best and worst of 2017

After watching new productions at a rate of about four a week, our theatre critic presents the brilliantly good, the excruciatingly bad and the movingly sad of this year

**H**OLLYWOOD has its Oscars and Broadway its Tonys. Here, based on 200 nights spent in theatres in 2017, are the Billies: my idiosyncratic selection of the best and worst of the tumultuous past 12 months.

**Best new play**

It's been a big year for live animals on stage, with goats and dogs making stellar appearances. It's not just because Jez Butterworth's *The Ferryman* includes real rabbits and a goose in the cast that it gets my vote, it's because the play encompasses so much: a Northern Irish political thriller, a study of unspoken love and a Thomas Hardy-like evocation of timeless rural rituals.

In an outstanding year for new plays—*Albion, Ink, Girl from the North Country* and *Consent*—Mr Butterworth's play



Top: The inspiring Imelda Staunton in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. Above: Laura Donnelly and Paddy Considine in *The Ferryman*

takes the prize (as it did at this month's *London Evening Standard* Theatre Awards).

**Worst new play**

It pains me to say this, as I'm a long-standing admirer of his work, but Sir Alan Ayckbourn's *The Divide* was the year's most

crushing disappointment. This futuristic drama, set in a world of enforced sexual segregation in which the species is continued by artificial insemination, occupied six energy-draining hours of one's time at the Edinburgh Festival and is destined to have a brief afterlife at the

Old Vic. Sir Alan's genius is for exposing the absurdities of the here and now rather than for taking the road to dystopia.

**Most striking newcomer**

If one good thing came out of *The Divide*, it was the emergence of Erin Doherty. It fell to her to convey the sweetness and sadness of a woman who saw herself as a reborn Jane Eyre. Miss Doherty went on to enhance her reputation as the eponymous heroine of *My Name is Rachel Corrie* at the Young Vic, in which she played a young American activist crushed by an Israeli army bulldozer.

To cap an amazing year, she's currently playing Scrooge's spurned sweetheart in the Old Vic's superb *A Christmas Carol*. There's something about her capacity to shift in a second from dolefulness to delight that marks her out as a future star.



The Ustinov Studio in Bath has launched many West End successes



Hadley Fraser, Ross Noble and Summer Strallen in *Young Frankenstein*

**Most enjoyable musical**

*Follies* has more depth and *An American in Paris* better dancing, but, purely on the pleasure principle, I would opt for Mel Brooks's *Young Frankenstein*. A century ago, the American critic George Jean Nathan wrote that one doesn't go to a music show 'for a Bjornson plot or the symphonic poems of a Liszt'. Similarly, one doesn't go to a Mel Brooks musical for subtlety, but for a cornucopia of gags that make a bonfire of good taste. This one is also exhilaratingly performed, with Summer Strallen lighting up the stage as a yodelling Transylvanian.

**Most exciting Shakespeare revival**

*Titus Andronicus* was once described as 'blood-bolter'd balderdash', but, every time I see it, my admiration increases. Blanche McIntyre's RSC production, currently at London's Barbican, did not downplay the violence, but reminded us that the play is a masterly study of grief.

The scene in which the venerable Titus confronts his ravaged, mutilated daughter, Lavinia, moved me more than anything I saw on stage all year, partly because of the sight of David Troughton's soldierly stoicism disintegrating in the face of Hannah Morrish's enforced silence and partly because of Shakespeare's capacity, long before *King Lear*, to plumb the depths of human suffering.

**Worst Shakespeare revival**

This one's easy: Daniel Kramer's production of *Romeo and Juliet*

at Shakespeare's Globe was a horror. Black-robed figures bearing mini-coffins desperately signalled the play's ending from the outset. The Capulets' ball was a grotesque affair, with everyone in animal masks, the host attended by a bloke on all fours and the guests dancing to the Village People's *YMCA*. Even the normally excellent Kirsty Bushell was forced to shriek and scream as a pampered Juliet. The only cheering factor is that Emma Rice has now departed as the Globe's artistic director.

**‘Daniel Kramer’s production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Globe was a horror’**

**Most inspiring performers**

The list is long but, apart from those already mentioned, I would single out two outstanding actors. Bryan Cranston was astonishing as the newscaster suffering a nervous breakdown in the National Theatre's *Network* (*Theatre, December 6*): he not only had the weathered features of a veteran anchorman, but made you listen to the demented hero's diatribes.

Imelda Staunton once again showed her limitless range. One month, she was the foul-mouthed

but vulnerable Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and the next, she was the self-deluding Sally in *Follies*, lovingly singing *In Buddy's Eyes* in the belief she was still adored by her husband. Is there nothing she can't do?

**Most attractive new theatres**

One of my biggest treats was visiting Chester's newly opened Storyhouse, where a theatre has been perfectly integrated into a building also containing a library and cinema. At the opening and very lively summer production by Loveday Ingram of *Julius Caesar*, it was heartening to see book borrowers mingling with theatregoers.

London's The Bridge is an architectural triumph; it sits conveniently on the south side of Tower Bridge, has a spacious foyer, a big bar, comfortable seats and perfect sightlines. *Young Marx* got it off to a vigor-

ous start and I suspect there are even better evenings to come.

**Most exciting regional theatre**

These are good times for Manchester's Royal Exchange and Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum, but the theatre I currently visit with greatest anticipation is the Ustinov Studio at the back of Bath's Theatre Royal. Over the past six years, its adventurous director, Laurence Boswell, has given us plays from Spain, France and Canada and, this year, work from Germany and North America.

Daniel Kehlmann's *The Mentor*, with F. Murray Abraham as a testy old writer smelling of whisky and insecurity, quickly moved to the West End. The current production of Will Eno's *The Open House*, with Greg Hicks in fine form as a bilious patriarch, also transfers to the Print Room at the Coronet in January, but it's even better to catch these shows in Nash's beautiful Bath.

**Saddest farewell**

Sir Peter Hall, who founded the RSC and steered the National Theatre into its South Bank home, died in September. He was a great director, a consummate producer, a complex, many-layered man and someone who left the British theatre infinitely richer than he found it.

**Biggest hope for 2018**

That the torrent of good new plays will continue and be accompanied by a far more assiduous excavation of the great works of the past. 🐉



Sir Peter Hall, founder of the RSC, died in September

Johan Persson; Robert Hollingworth; Rich Gold/Alamy Live News; Pam Francis/Hulton Archive/Getty

# Chronicler of a remote world

An award-winning biographer has painted a subtle portrait of the master novelist and social observer, finds James Fergusson

**Biography**

**Anthony Powell: Dancing to the Music of Time**

Hilary Spurling  
(Hamish Hamilton, £25)

**I**F an image persists of Anthony Powell (*right*) as a snobbish writer of antique vintage, it is partly of his own making. The diaries of his seniority, written when he was 76 to 87 and published in 1995–7, are comically crusty; the dustwrappers bear a cartoon portrait by Mark Boxer of a stern, four-square figure, shirt checked, *Burke's Landed Gentry* to hand. He has made his Somerset 'Chantry' a castle, and drawn up the drawbridge: he resents the visits of strangers, preferring to re-read a Shakespeare play a day and count his figs; he combs deaths columns and honours lists, details telephone calls and assesses the 'body' of his claret. When he died in 2000, he was a very grand old man of letters.

Hilary Spurling, selected as Powell's biographer in his lifetime, neatly swerves his dotage by stopping her main narrative in 1975. The writer, a mere 69, has just published the 12th and final volume of 'A Dance to the Music of Time', the *roman fleuve* by which he will be remembered. She allows for his final years in a postscript that is more personal memoir than conventional biography. We are spared the medical bulletins with which lives, however great, usually limp to an end.

Her biography of Matisse won the Whitbread Prize. The subtle portrait she paints of Powell is, likewise, of an artist: Powell, like his friend Evelyn Waugh, first had ambitions to draw rather than to write. His sequence of novels takes its name from a complex painting by Poussin, laden with symbolism, in the Wallace



Collection. Just as Powell had found solace in the Drawing Schools at Eton, so he became obsessed by the techniques of his craft, how writers build their picture. His best letters (and diary entries) are those about method and practice: the management of illusion.

Powell and Waugh first met at Holborn Polytechnic, where Waugh was studying carpentry, Powell printing. Both came to writing by circuitous routes, both were governed always by principles of hard-learned design.

Far from being grand, Anthony Powell was not particularly 'well-born'. His habit of genealogy (much of it Welsh) came, his biographer suggests, from childhood loneliness. He was the only child of a disappointed army officer; his parents were constantly on the move. When he was sent to Eton, it gave him the 'family' he never had. School, university (Oxford) and the Army (wartime service in the Welch Regiment, then the Intelligence Corps) afforded the *dramatis personae*, in various forms, some characters more manipulated than others, for the volumes of the

'Dance' beginning with *A Question of Upbringing* in 1951.

His vital female characters were imports, it emerges, from a very raffish youth: before he settled down with Violet Pakenham, the sister of an eccentric Irish peer of republican sympathies, he had affairs with a series of fascinating women, some already married. Enid the art-student turned model, the glamorous Varda and others, would haunt his *oeuvre*.

In the 1960s, as his children left home, and to the horror of some of his friends, Powell embarked on a 'monstrous' collage in his basement boiler room, a scrap mural, said Ferdinand Mount, his nephew, 'of almost Sistine proportions'. Some saw this swirling mass of photographs and newsprint as a metaphor for the 'Dance'. Others only found their own images in it.

The 'Dance' was artful, certainly, but, many readers wondered, was it really fiction? To the end of his life, Powell's brother-in-law Frank Longford insisted he was the original of the sequence's most famous character—the ghastly Kenneth Widmerpool.

**Letters**

**Carrington's Letters**

Edited by Anne Chisholm  
(Chatto & Windus, £30)

THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP still arouses great interest, so this new and enlarged edition of Dora Carrington's letters (the first was published in 1970, edited by David Garnett with extracts from her diaries) is perhaps no surprise. The book contains previously unpublished material, but then it seems that some 2,000 letters by her survive, of which more than 500 were addressed to Lytton Strachey, 400 to Gerald Brenan and 150 to Mark Gertler, so plenty of choice.

These figures are the main co-ordinates of her existence: Strachey, the love of her life despite his homosexuality, Gertler and then Brenan, men with whom she had deeply unsatisfactory affairs. In between, she married Ralph Partridge and they lived together in the country, first at Tidmarsh, later at Ham Spray House, both in Berkshire, in an unusual threesome with Strachey.

Carrington's story is well known from Christopher Hampton's 1995 film, but that was inevitably an over-simplification of her complex personality and life. Here, the sometimes wearisome detail is supplied over 400 pages. Anne Chisholm delivers a minimum of editorial interference, which makes this a hard book to read all at once: the narrative is inevitably one-sided and the reader longs for the correspondents' replies to vary the tone a little.

Carrington was a prolific letter writer and also wrote a diary, so quite when she found time to paint is something of a mystery. In fact, reading these self-obsessed missives, it becomes clear that writing was a kind of displacement activity for her. Despite being the star of her year as a Slade student, she never fulfilled this early promise and preferred to make tiles or decorative glass pictures than risk ambitious paintings. If you've ever been puzzled by the Carrington phenomenon, this book explains her particular allure.

Andrew Lambirth

Topfoto

**V**OIDS are normally great assets in defence. On our first of two deals featuring elegant Loser-on-Loser plays, the last in the series, West's void Diamond was a complete liability.

**Dealer South**  
East-West vulnerable

♠ 7 3  
♥ K 8 6 5  
♦ K 7 2  
♣ K Q 8 2

♠ J 9 8 6 4 2  
♥ 10 4  
♦ —  
♣ J 9 7 5 4

♠ Q 10  
♥ 9 3  
♦ A Q 9 8 5 3  
♣ 10 6 3

♠ A K 5  
♥ A Q J 7 2  
♦ J 10 6 4  
♣ A

South	West	North	East
1♥	Pass	4♥(1)	Pass
6♥(2)	End		

(1) Three-and-a-half Hearts.  
(2) Loves his shape and hopes for something in Diamonds opposite.

East hoped for an opening Diamond lead versus declarer's Six Hearts, even fiddling with the expensive ring on the finger (only joking). West couldn't be blamed for failing to find that lead, instead choosing a Spade.

Declarer won the King of Spades and drew trumps in two rounds. He unblocked the Ace of Clubs, cashed the Ace of Spades and ruffed his third Spade, East discarding an encouraging nine of Diamonds (with a pointed look at partner). Declarer cashed dummy's King-Queen of Clubs (discarding the four and six of Diamonds) and led a fourth Club, East discarding.

Declarer was just about to ruff the fourth Club and tackle Diamonds when he paused to count the missing shapes. East had shown up with two Spades, two Hearts and three Clubs. Ergo, he held all six missing Diamonds. Instead of ruffing the fourth Club, declarer discarded a third Diamond (key play).

West won the Club, but held only black cards. Declarer ruffed his black card in dummy while shedding his fourth and last Diamond from hand. Slam made, as East's frustration turned to a wry, somewhat masochistic, grin at the cruel Diamond layout, and admiration for declarer's fine technique.

For our final deal on the Loser-on-Loser theme, we see that declarer doesn't always have the upper hand. Watch a really superb defence from the Norwegian East-

West to scupper declarer's planned Loser-on-Loser.

**Dealer West**  
North-South vulnerable

♠ K Q J  
♥ A Q J 4 2  
♦ Q J 4 3  
♣ 5

♠ A 5  
♥ K 10 9 5 3  
♦ 2  
♣ A K J 6 3

♠ 3 2  
♥ 8 7  
♦ 10 9 8 7  
♣ Q 10 8 4 2

♠ 10 9 8 7 6 4  
♥ 4  
♦ A K 6 5  
♣ 9 7

South	West	North	East
	1♥	Dbl(1)	Pass
3♠(2)	4♣	4♠	5♣(3)
5♠(4)	End		

- (1) Slightly odd to make a takeout double with such good Hearts. I'd have passed for a round.  
(2) Might bid Four Spades. Would that have shut West out?  
(3) Clear to sacrifice at the favourable vulnerability, given his defenceless hand.  
(4) 'Six-four, bid some more.' However, 'five is for the other side' and Five Clubs doubled would have gone two down. Mind you, +300 on defence to Five Clubs doubled is scant compensation for the vulnerable Five Spades, worth +650.

West didn't cash a top Club. Instead, he led his singleton Diamond, his cunning plan being to win the first Spade with the Ace, underlead his Clubs to partner and score a second-round Diamond ruff.

Cashing a top Club would ruin the communications and render Five Spades unbeatable.

Declarer won the Diamond in hand and knew absolutely what West was up to. At trick two, he led a Heart to the Queen (he knew West held the King on the bidding). At trick three, he cashed the Ace of Hearts, discarding a Club and, at trick four, he innocuously led a small Heart.

If East had made the autopilot defence of discarding, declarer would have thrown his second Club and the defensive lines of communication for the Diamond ruff would have been snipped.

However, East, Kjell Moen, alertly ruffed the third Heart (key play). All declarer could do now was overruff and lead a Spade.

No good—West rose with the Ace of Spades, underled his Ace-King of Clubs to East's hoped-for Queen and was soon ruffing East's second Diamond. Down one.

A prize of £15 in book tokens will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions must reach Crossword No 4509, COUNTRY LIFE, Pinehurst II, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BE, by **Tuesday, January 2**. UK entrants only.

## ACROSS

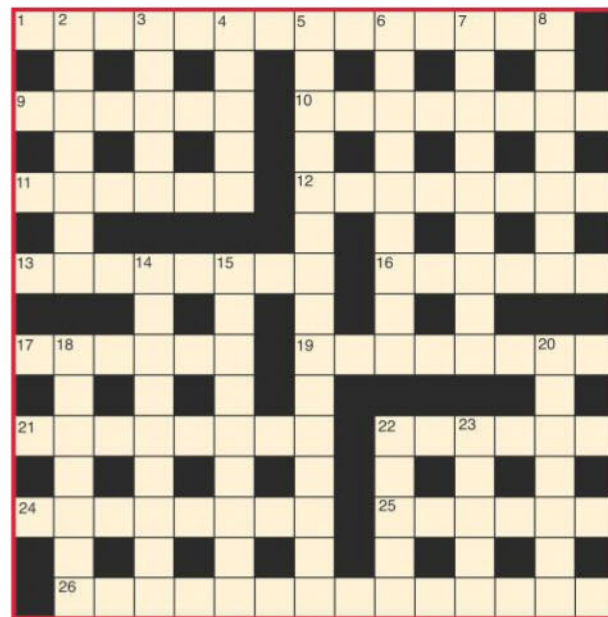
- No longer mention small measure to specific person in a monarchy (4, 3, 7)
- Elaborate colour (6)
- Lack of energy as in heat wave (8)
- Flower for Bertie's aunt (6)
- People he saw through viewing device (8)
- Revolutionary abolitionist lost out from the beginning (2, 6)
- Unusual piece found at start of dismal day in town yesterday (6)
- Stagger to rag-and-bone man (6)
- Similarly we ski and lie around (8)
- Sea lot leave dictatorial regime (8)
- Woos legal bodies (6)
- Battle station (8)
- Prepare for sporting activity in heat (4-2)
- Princess to emphasis firing a sling as indication of peril (8, 6)

## DOWN

- Said to regret cutting remark in plant (7)
- One in the eye for student (5)
- Animal hides in flashy enamelware (5)
- Hobbyists with a record of putting a foot down? (5, 10)
- How a manual worker may act according to established rules? (2, 3, 4)
- Make up that I reportedly follow (9)
- Allow small group to write poem (7)
- Ten saints' peculiarly smart appearance (9)
- The first two taking Rottweiler without Chinese dynasty is a choker (9)
- Card game with former servant (3, 4)
- Took calculation for top-grade fruit (7)
- Caught birds in hoods (5)
- Ruing choice to strip (5)

4509

TAIT



NAME (PLEASE PRINT IN CAPITALS) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY LIFE, published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd will collect your personal information to process your entry. Would you like to receive emails from COUNTRY LIFE and Time Inc. (UK) Ltd containing news, special offers and product and service information and take part in our magazine research via email? If yes, please tick here.  COUNTRY LIFE and Time Inc. (UK) Ltd would like to contact you by post or telephone to promote and ask your opinion on our magazines and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to hear from us.  Time Inc. (UK) Ltd may occasionally pass your details to carefully selected organisations so they can contact you by telephone or post with regards to promoting and researching their products and services. Please tick here if you prefer not to be contacted.

Winner of 4507 is Candida French, London SW6.

# the directory

## COUNTRY LIFE classified advertising guide

To advertise in the  
classified section  
please call 01252 555 345  
email: [chloe.lummis@timeinc.com](mailto:chloe.lummis@timeinc.com)

### Antiques

### Art



GARETH  
HAWKER  
PORTRAIT PAINTER

01603 760575  
[garethhawker.com](http://garethhawker.com)



William Teather - Contemporary Portrait Painter  
Enquiries: 07792 419898  
[www.britishportraitartist.com](http://www.britishportraitartist.com)

### Gardens & Outdoors



## pool design

Indoor and outdoor  
pool consultants

March House, Charlton Down,  
Tetbury, Glous GL8 8TZ

T 01666 840065  
MB 07973 525318

[saxton@poolarchitecture.co.uk](mailto:saxton@poolarchitecture.co.uk)  
[www.poolarchitecture.co.uk](http://www.poolarchitecture.co.uk)

### Art



Andrew Kay  
SCULPTURE

Free delivery for Christmas

[www.andrewkaysculpture.com](http://www.andrewkaysculpture.com)  
07740 306412



20% OFF - SEASON DISCOUNT OCT - DEC  
SPECIALIST LANDSCAPING & PONDS  
NATURAL SWIMMING PONDS  
13 (10 GOLD) CHELSEA SHOW GARDENS  
NEW PROJECTS & SUPERB RENOVATIONS

[www.landscapedesign-build.co.uk](http://www.landscapedesign-build.co.uk)  
[www.waterfeatures.co.uk](http://www.waterfeatures.co.uk)

BRANCHES ALL UK & OVERSEAS  
**Water Features & Gardens Ltd**  
Designers Direct Advice Line:  
7 Days 8am to 8pm 07970 309 165  
Office Hours Only: 0800 91 98 33

### Kitchens

### Gardens & Outdoors




Fast installation



Unique hidden  
Roldeck pit



Safety for pets  
and children

**STARLINE MONOBLOCK**  
The most complete One-piece pool!

[WWW.STARLINEPOOLS.CO.UK](http://WWW.STARLINEPOOLS.CO.UK)  
Tel. 0845 604 5534

**STARLINE**  
POOLS & EQUIPMENT

## INCHYRA

Luxury Scottish Pure Wool Throws  
The perfect heirloom gift



[inchyradesigns.co.uk](http://inchyradesigns.co.uk) | 01738 860066  
with FREE optional hand-stamped personalisation and FREE delivery

# COUNTRY LIFE

## Health & Wellbeing

### MELROSE SKINCARE

Made by Roberts & Sheppey (Melrose) Ltd. Est 1880

#### 18G MULTI-PURPOSE SKINCARE STICK



SOOTHES DRY SKIN, SORE LIPS AND PAINFUL CRACKED HEELS.

Enquire at your supermarket 'In-House Pharmacy' or your local chemist pharmacy department. Now on Boots dispensary database.

MELROSE advertised in Chemist & Druggist Price List. Pip code 0146449 or for AAH.MEL.100B

melrosellamay@aol.com  
www.melrose-skincare.co.uk

## Interiors



**STEVENSONS**  
Decorative Plasterwork

Tel. 01603 400824  
www.stevensonsofnorwich.com

## Luxury Life

### HARRY FANE

wishes to purchase vintage

### CARTIER

Jewellery, clocks, objects, watches, etc.

www.harryfane.com

T:020 7930 8606 E:info@hfane.com

harryfanelondon



VISIT WWW.PENTREATH-HALL.COM

Please mention Country Life when replying to adverts.

## Interiors

The Headboard Workshop

Made to order  
Made in the UK

Visit [www.theheadboardworkshop.co.uk](http://www.theheadboardworkshop.co.uk)  
or call us on 01291 628216

**THE LIMEHOUSE LAMP COMPANY**

**FINE PERIOD LIGHTING**

FOR OUR 2016 BROCHURE PLEASE CALL 01273 497070  
OR VISIT [WWW.LIMEHOUSELIGHTING.CO.UK](http://WWW.LIMEHOUSELIGHTING.CO.UK)

**THE WHITE KITCHEN COMPANY**  
*Wooden Kitchens Handmade For You.*

New kitchen displays at our Design Studio. Call for an appointment.

All the furniture in this stunning image would cost you just £5,138 including delivery & vat.

**Beautiful Bespoke Kitchens**  
Hand-painted Solid Wood & Lacquered Oak Kitchen Furniture

Design & Buy Your Own Kitchen Online or Call Us to Book a Design Visit.

To discover more about our exceptional value visit:  
[www.thewhitekitchencompany.co.uk](http://www.thewhitekitchencompany.co.uk)  
01604 821003

Extraordinary  
kitchens

“All kitchen showrooms are the same, until you step into Unfitted. Prepare to be inspired.”



Whether its traditional or classic, fitted or freestanding, our kitchens are refreshingly different with a unique range of painted, timber, distressed, vintage and industrial finishes. If you're looking for a truly bespoke kitchen tailored to your exact requirements, visit our showroom at Moreton in Marsh in the heart of the Cotswolds or register online for a brochure and free no obligation home visit. Commissions fulfilled throughout UK, Europe and worldwide.

Hope House High Street Moreton-in-Marsh GL56 0LH

www.unfitted.co.uk  
01608 650065

unfitted 

The Willow & Hall January Sale is now on  
10% off selected lines\*



The Buttermere Sofa or Sofa Bed from £935 or £1,070

SOFAS, SOFA BEDS & BEDS CUSTOMISED BY YOU TO SUIT YOUR STYLE & COMFORT, DELIVERED IN 4-5 WEEKS



WILLOW & HALL

BEAUTIFULLY BRITISH HANDMADE FURNITURE

Call us on 020 8939 3800 or visit our London showroom

willowandhall.co.uk

\*T&Cs apply. Selected lines only.

**Regtransfers.co.uk**  
PERSONAL NUMBER PLATES

01582 967777  
8am-10pm 7days



**THE UK'S LARGEST PRIVATE NUMBER PLATES DEALER**

Established 1982 • Over a Million Satisfied Customers  
Over 48 Million Numbers Online • Free Celebrity Magazine

INITIALS INITIALS INITIALS

55 HJR	AAW I	BPW I	969 DG	EL 8	II GEP	JFF 4
HFB 48	6 ABW	BT 25	7 DHD	I EMT	99 GEW	68 JGA
9 PGM	25 ACJ	I6 BU	7 DHJ	EST I	8 GFC	JGK 54
EL 8	I AEA	225 CD	DMM I	I2 EU	I GHH	8 JJT
6 DSN	I AER	5 CDD	3 DPN	I EV	54 GHR	JKW I
LS 8	4 FP	66 CDF	DRE 24	IO FAD	GK 94	83 JLM
5 ERD	50 AJY	3 CEF	8 DSA	I FAW	GL I	JM 49
E 2	93 ALW	2 CFP	8 DTL	II FEH	93 GMA	JN I
68 JGA	76 APM	I5 CGS	I8 DU	70 FJ	GPS 55	25 JPD
WN 6	I6 ASD	CHG I	DWG 23	70 FLC	9 GRV	I JRK
3 FGM	BAE I	55 CHR	65 DY	FLH 43	3 GV	JTR 59
	3 BCT	I CPM	90 EA	9 FLW	90 HAK	JTT I
	9 BDB	I COK	4 EAL	8 FMT	94 HAS	JWG I
	I BDF	8 CPR	I EAS	80 FR	96 HB	I JXK
	4 BDG	IO CRN	32I EB	FV IO	3 HDW	43 JY
	I BEF	I2 CSA	I ECD	5 GAK	HMH I	I KBC
	BEM 37	8 CTA	I ECH	6 GCP	800 JA	I KDB
	6 BJE	80 CU	ECH 34	6 GOC	90 HT	I KDF
	II BJL	2 CY	9 EEL	6 GCP	800 JA	KEJ 76
	9 BM	4 DBD	9 EFJ	II GDB	JCG 88	6 KGC
	I BN	3 DCA	45 EJ	6 GDR	9II JD	I KJF
	18 BPP	I DCE	I EJO	GEB 36	I JDO	5 KKK
	7 BPR	DFB I	7 EKS	I GEC	JFA 97	I KLD

**Regtransfers**  
1982 35 2017  
**NEW ISSUE OUT NOW! FREE MAGAZINE**

MCP 74	8 NMS	PO I	I SEK	2 VJA
8 MDN	II NPM	40 PTC	SHB I2	2 VJF
I MDO	I NRD	PTD I	I SHG	I VMM
MEA 72	NRJ I	9 PV	92 SJP	I VMP
MFF I	NRL I	I PWD	96 SLT	VMR IO
MFL 9	NRS 83	RA 5	59 SML	VMT I
MGD 4	NS I	RCG 87	I SRK	9 WN
9 MGT	I NSP	I RDK	I SRR	VS I
I MHK	000 78	4 RDR	SWJ I	I WCL
23 MHW	I PAC	RFT 7	TAD I	3 WDS
MMT I	I PBH	9 RHC	I TBS	I WHM
I6 MRJ	9 PCA	80 RHT	I TRC	WJA 8I
I MTB	6 PCJ	99 RJJ	TDB 97	WJB 8
MWG I	PDL I	I RKW	TJJ I	WJP I
78 MWP	329 PE	5 RLA	I TJN	85 WL
NCA 66	PFW I	I RLR	TJP 60	WN 6
I NEG	I PFH	84 RMD	I TLD	WR I
I NVJ	5 PVJ	90 RRB	2 TLF	WS 83
86 NK	I PKD	I RRT	9 TMJ	I YH
8 NLB	5 PKW	I RTJ	TWP I	2I YJ
I NLP	5 PMO	SBW I	I UL	I YR
I NLW	15 PMR	99 SDR	I VAP	YS 34
NML I2	90 PN	735 SE	I VCM	YZ I

**0% Finance**  
on 1000s of numbers

Spread the cost with our affordable, credit options

[www.regtransfers.co.uk/finance](http://www.regtransfers.co.uk/finance)

**What's online?**

- Buy
- Sell
- Auction
- Stamps

[www.regtransfers.co.uk](http://www.regtransfers.co.uk)

**WINTER SALE**

**25% OFF**

Thousands of selected plates

NAMES WORDS NAMES WORDS

N47 LOR	AAD 3L	BAS 70N	B206 DEN	COM 905E	DII VYA	FII NCH	HEW 3R	K3II NEY	MAD 6E	MUL IIA	POO I	S4 YLE	TOII LEY
D4 NNO	FAD I4N	BAT I3Y	BR66 KER	COII DON	DOR 66N	FLA 6K	HOA IIG	KET 7IIE	MAII ARD	MUII SON	POP 6E	S62I VEN	TON IIE
SAR 50N	ADII LTS	B4 TON	B38 MER	CON 3Y	DOII MER	FIO REN	HOL 3E	KEY 7S	M4II LEE	MUT 6H	PRA 7I3Y	S34 GER	TOW 5E
FOS 73R	AGA 7A	B38 MER	B27 ANT	COI2 NES	DOT 7Y	FIO XEN	HOL IIT	KI2 KUP	M42 CEL	MUT 7I3Y	P206 TER	SET 7H	T234 NOR
PER 6H	AGA 7E	BEI4 RDS	BUII ART	COU IIL	DO55 ETT	FLO 77D	HOR IIBY	KI25 TEN	MAR 23E	NAD 4L	PRY 9E	SHI GGY	STI DOR
WRE 57IE	AII I EEN	BEE 6H	BUG 6I3R	COW 3Y	DUG 94N	FOR 63T	HOW 4T	KI2 TON	M4I2 SHA	N3I MES	PUB 80Y	SHA 29E	TU5I CON
BAS 70N	ALF 23D	BEH 4N	BUR 2N	60 YLE	EAR IIE	FOX 70N	HUA IIG	KI7 SON	MAR 277N	NEW 80ID	PUG 55Y	SHE IIL	TYL 32R
HUII OCK	ALL I50P	8 ENT	BUS 777Y	C22 EWE	EMM 377T	F2 ANC	HUI8 ERT	K275 TAL	MAS 553Y	NI ALL	PUII TER	SHO 273R	UTT IIG
T45 TER	ALM 4N	BE57 BED	BYF I3ID	C2I CKY	EMS 5I3Y	FUR 5E	HUII AND	LAM 870N	MAS 7T	NI8I ETT	R438 URN	FSII VER	3 VAL
M3II ORS	ALT 74F	BE5I ONE	C4 DET	C2I PPS	EVE 235T	FYF 333E	HUN IIG	LAI NCE	MCC 60Y	NII6 OLL	R4II ONA	SIO UPS	V0I I3Y
PAT 7Y	AME 7Y	83 VAN	CAI DLE	CRO IIE	EVE 270N	94 NT	H7I AND	LAV 32Y	MCG IIN	NOE IIE	REI4 DER	SOU 773R	VII I8O
	AM 6IIN	BIE 6AY	CAR 273R	CRO 570N	EXL 3Y	G420 NER	JAI USZ	LAT 73R	M66I NTY	N00 I2R	2 EO	SPR 46G	VOI 33R
	ANH 4R	BIA 6MB	CA5I TLC	CUI2 NOW	EI YRE	GEA 2Y	JOW 37T	LAV I3Y	M66I NTY	NII5 RAT	R0I DLE	STA 70N	WAI2 NES
	ASH IIOK	BLO 473R	CAV 3E	CUR 2IIE	FAB 8I4N	GEA 266E	JUD 63E	L34 VEY	MEA 4D	PAC 3E	2I VER	STA 70N	WAS 5S
	BAG IY	BON 35Y	CEC IIE	CUR 50N	FAL 660N	GIB BON	KAR IIA	LEG 3IID	M34 DON	PAG 3T	ROG 3I2S	STO 88S	W477 SON
	BAL 7IC	BLY 7IIE	CHA 2D	DAG I5H	FAI OUT	GOA 7IE	K34 LEY	LEN 70N	M336 HAN	P422 OTT	ROL 4IID	S724 KER	W38 LTH
	BAN 93R	BOS 74N	CHA 77IN	DAII LEY	FAI OWS	GOA 73R	K34 LEY	LEY 770N	M3II VYN	P47 TON	ROL 9H	TAG 642T	WEI RDO
	BAN IIR	BOS 35Y	CHE 227L	OAM ION	FAN 6G	PGR 33D	KEA 4R	LOT 7T	MEN 5	PAV 6L	ROS 4A	TAI BOY	W3I8 URN
	BAR I73Y	BRA IY	CLA I2A	D3 BUT	FAR IIOA	HAY 7I3Y	K34 TON	L0W 2IIE	MER 77L	P47 YNE	RO54 NNA	T45 TER	WHA 7I3Y
	BAS 6	BRA 4Y	CLA I2K	DEI2 DRE	F422 RAH	HEA 27S	KEA 4Y	LUM 503N	M00 I2S	PET 77Y	ROX 4IIA	T3I FER	WOI DER
		BRJ3 EZE	CI34 NER	DER IIEK	F42 ROW	HEA 27Y	KEI7 THS	LVA IIL	M0II LDS	P176 HER	SAIL RAS	THO 2I3Y	YEO IIAN
		B2I DES	COL I37T	DI3 SKS	FAU IIX	H3II SON	KEII SEY	LYN 4M	MOY 44A	POL I42D	SAY 6D	THI2 USH	Y0II SEF

**CLASSIC LAND ROVERS**  
Range Rovers

One Land Rover, many different hats

A roads, B roads, No roads, Snow or sun have some fun in one of our rebuilt classic land rovers "what's not to like"....Delivering Nationwide, and shipping worldwide for more than 30 years

[www.landrovercentre.com](http://www.landrovercentre.com)  
or tel **01484 542092** for stock list  
Thank you

**CREATIVE FREEDOM + ACADEMIC RIGOUR**

**HURTWOOD HOUSE**  
hurtwoodhouse.com

**LJW RECRUITMENT**

Worldwide Domestic Household Staff & Commercial Recruitment service for permanent and short-term placements

For a truly personalised service  
Call +44 (0) 20 7801 0643  
Email: [info@ljwrecruitment.com](mailto:info@ljwrecruitment.com)

64 Knightsbridge  
London, SW1X 7JE, UK  
[www.ljwrecruitment.com](http://www.ljwrecruitment.com)

**COUNTRY LIFE**

Circulation: **40,047**

Readership: **216,000**

Global: **393,389**

To advertise in the Classified section please call **01252 555345** or email [chloe.lummis@timeinc.com](mailto:chloe.lummis@timeinc.com)



# Change for change's sake

**A** CARTOON in *Private Eye* by Russell has two Vikings chatting. Both wear fierce helmets and have large, bushy beards and glaring eyes. One says: 'We've stopped calling it "Rape and Pillage". It's "A Journey".' For me, that says it all. Rape and pillage may not be nice, but you know what it means; a 'journey' is meaningless.

This is modern rebranding: taking a perfectly sensible name and changing it to one so abstract that it has no meaning whatsoever. Relate was once the National Marriage Guidance Council, which was founded, in 1938, by a clergyman who was worried about the rate of divorce in Britain. In one of his enjoyable rants, Rod Liddle writes in *The Spectator* that the title Relate is 'mimsy and stupid'. More to the point, it gives no clue as to its purpose.

Mr Liddle again: 'The National Marriage Guidance Council, as a title, conveyed the impression that as a country we valued marriage and that it might be a good idea to sort out one's differences

rather than head to the divorce courts. But as a country we no longer think that, so I suppose the old title is redundant.'

Here's a rant of my own against rebranding. Proponents often cite the change from the Army Benevolent Association to ABF The Soldiers' Charity, which was certainly a good one—the old name means nothing but a formless wish to be benevolent. The Soldiers' Charity means what it says and we all agree with it.

This reasoning is cited by the Historic Houses Association, which recently announced that it's to drop 'Association' from its title. Again, it's so amorphous as to be pointless—what was wrong with a group we all knew as the HHA?

The same is happening to NADFAS. It was the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, which I can see might be a mouthful, but at least you knew what it did. It's now The Arts Society, but seems a bit confused in that, on Google, it calls itself both. The

new name could refer to any group of artists.

Hew ran a group of provincial newspapers in which new editors, on being appointed, nearly always wanted to make some major change quickly: go to a tabloid shape or change the name (my first job was on *The Yorkshire Evening Press*, now *The Press*) or typeface.

**‘This is modern rebranding: taking a perfectly sensible name and changing it to something meaningless,’**

The top man would say, with a sigh: 'Oh, let them get on with it.' He knew it was something they needed to get out of the way.

Rebranding isn't confined to names. Hew has been infuriated

by Schweppes, which has recently changed the shape of its bottles from an ordinary one to something that looks like an Indian club. This wouldn't matter—except that twice now I've been given gin and soda—but for the new one being wider at its base so it won't fit easily into the fridge or larder shelf. Anyway, what was the point of the change, no doubt at considerable cost?

I hope I'm not overdoing my rant. Some rebranding has its reasons. When Kentucky Fried Chicken became KFC, it was because the firm wanted to sell a more diverse range, although KFC was a bit unimaginative.

Full praise to Boots and Heinz, which have managed to modernise so unobtrusively that you're not aware of what's happened. The brands still seem the same, but avoid becoming old-fashioned, which takes real skill and smaller egos. Back to the Vikings, who will, no doubt, probably carry on doing what they did before, unnoticed.

**Next week Jason Goodwin**

## TOTTERING-BY-GENTLY By Annie Tempest

Visit *Tottering-By-Gently* on our website: [www.countrylife.co.uk/tottering](http://www.countrylife.co.uk/tottering)



**Time Inc.**

Member of the  
ABC Audit Bureau of Circulation

**Conditions of Sale and Supply:** This periodical is sold subject to the following conditions, namely that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade at a price in excess of the recommended maximum price shown on the cover (selling price in Eire subject to VAT); and that it shall not be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover by way of trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. COUNTRY LIFE (incorporating LONDON PORTRAIT) is published weekly (51 issues) by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd., 161 Marsh Wall, London, England E14 9AP (020-314 85000). Website: [www.timeincuk.com](http://www.timeincuk.com) © Time Inc. (UK) Ltd. Printed by in the UK by Wyndeham Group ISSN 0045 8856. Distributed by MarketForce UK Ltd., 5, Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London E14 5HU (020-3787 9001). COUNTRY LIFE® is a registered Time Inc. (UK) Ltd trademark. © Time Inc. (UK) Ltd 2011.

**recycle**  
When you have finished with  
this magazine please recycle it.



THE SLOANE CLUB  
CHELSEA LONDON

## ELEGANCE IN CHELSEA

Enjoy a relaxing night in one of our charming bedrooms with an introductory rate and discover the benefits of Sloane Club Membership.

Contact us on 020 7730 9131, go to [www.sloaneclub.co.uk](http://www.sloaneclub.co.uk)  
or email [membership@sloaneclub.co.uk](mailto:membership@sloaneclub.co.uk)



Bedrooms & Suites | Roof Terrace | Fine Dining | Spa | Members' Lounge

Terms and conditions apply



# Playing on our strengths to deliver first-class performance.

Comprehensive private banking solutions; solid range of investment and advisory services; delivered one relationship at a time.

**EFG** Private Banking

[efginternational.com](http://efginternational.com)

EFG International's global private banking network operates in around 40 locations worldwide, including Zurich, Geneva, Lugano, London, Madrid, Milan, Monaco, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Singapore, Miami, Bogotá and Montevideo. In the United Kingdom, EFG Private Bank Limited's principal place of business and registered office is located at Leconfield House, Curzon Street, London W1J 5JB, T + 44 20 7491 9111. EFG Private Bank Limited is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. EFG Private Bank Limited is a member of the London Stock Exchange. Registered in England and Wales as no. 2321802. EFG Private Bank Ltd is a subsidiary of EFG International.