

COUNTRY LIFE®

JANUARY 31, 2018

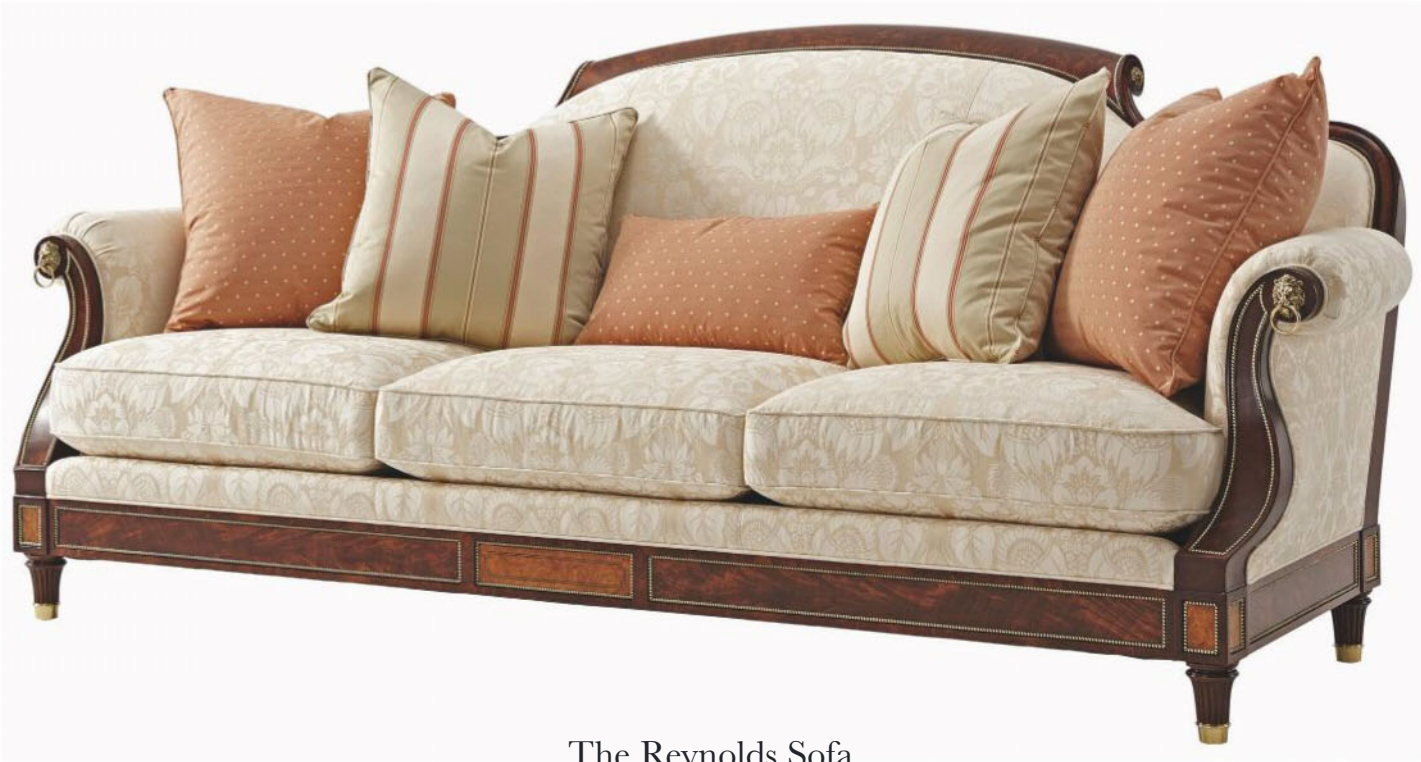
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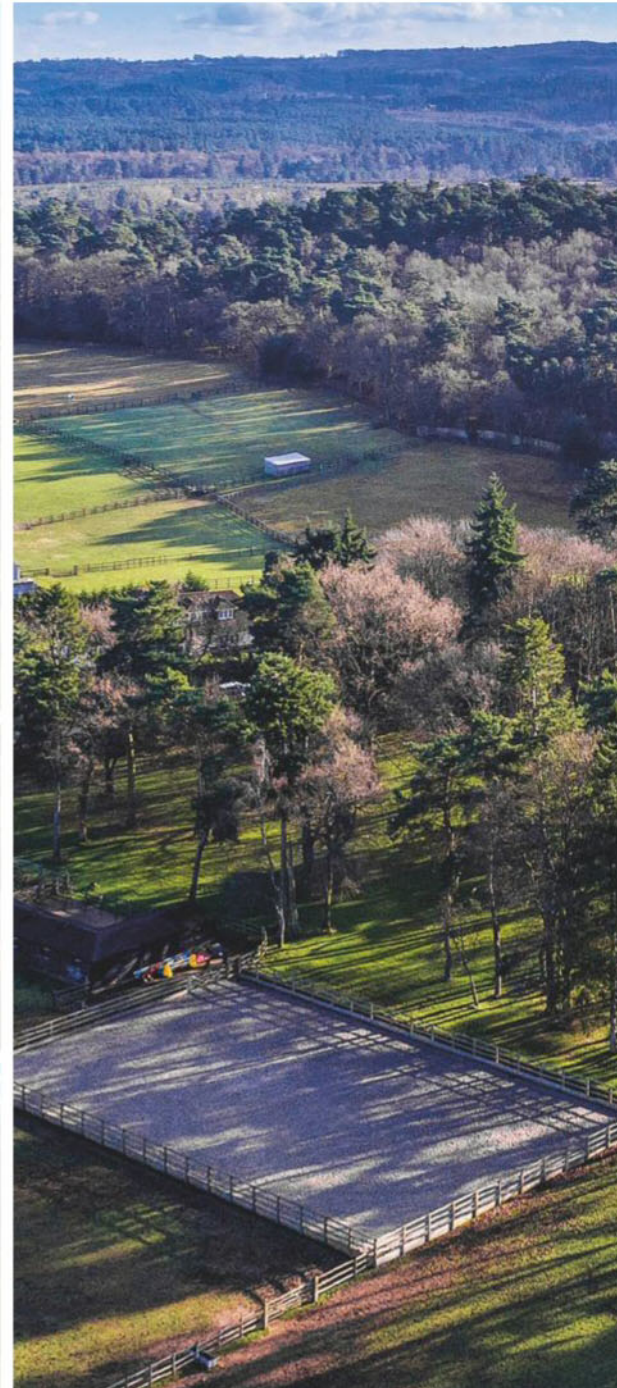
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Liz Berman
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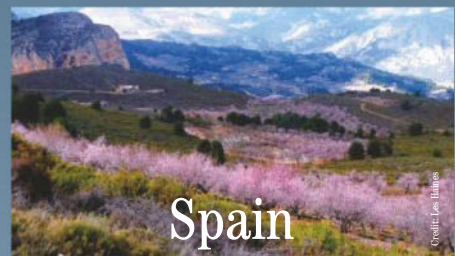
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Jake Attree • David Blackburn • Maxwell Doig



Jake Attree York Looking North East

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7 February – 2 March

Three artists from the north of England. Three artists fundamentally rooted in the depths of the land. Jake Attree, David Blackburn and Maxwell Doig – three artists at the heart of Messum's latest exhibition, opening at the Cork Street gallery on 7th February. It's an exhibition that delivers both power and sophistication, showing common strands and individual approaches in painting from a highly expressive region of the country. This is painting that comes from the core.

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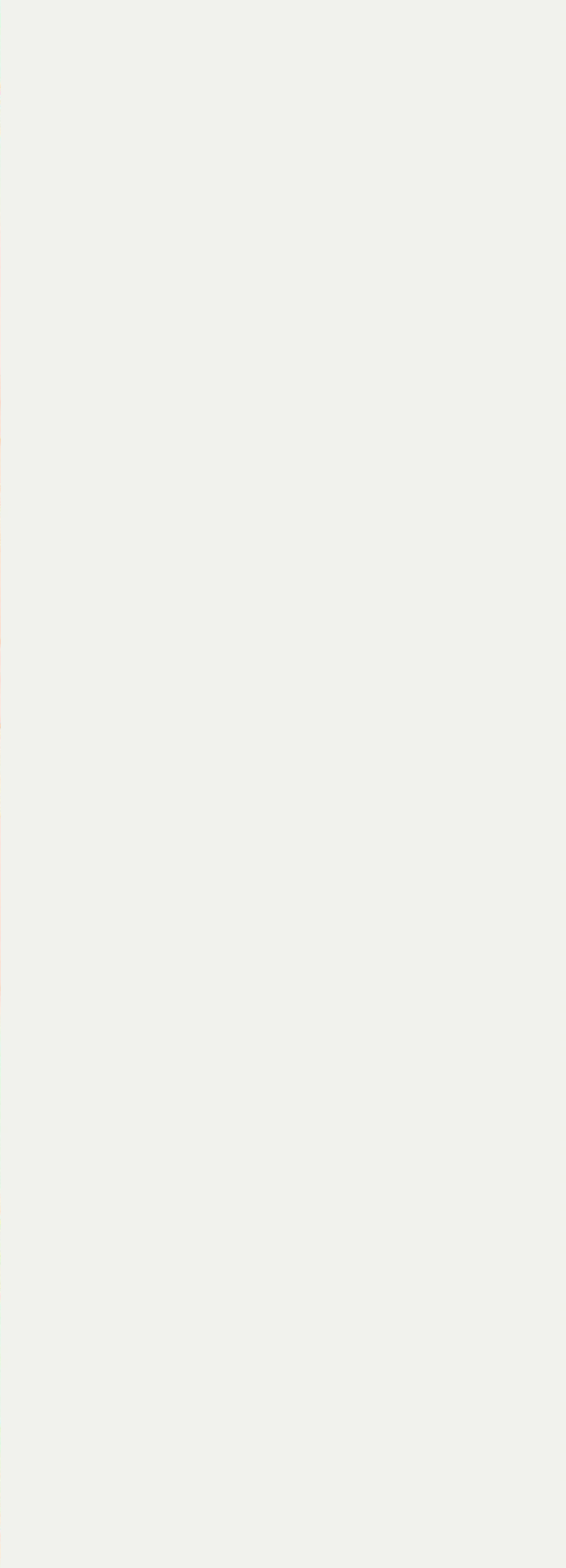
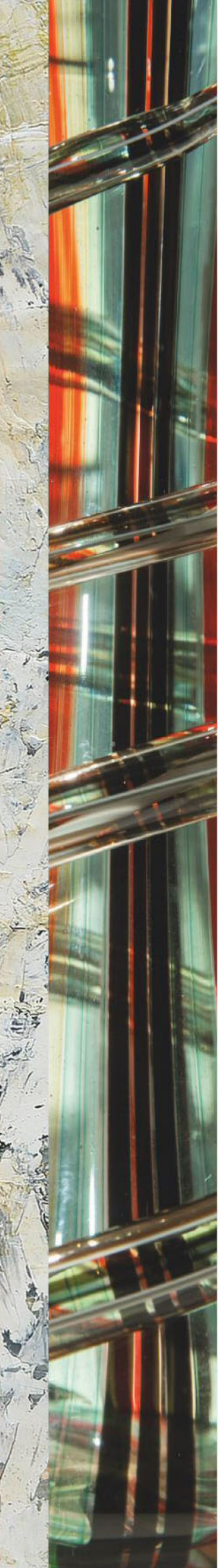
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COUNTRY LIFE

VOL CCXII NO 5, JANUARY 31, 2018



Miss Anouska Royle

Anouska, aged 20, is the elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Ivan Royle of Nether Wallop, Hampshire. Currently studying for a degree at the University of Sussex, Anouska is interested in pursuing a career in international development and foreign aid. Her mother, Tanya Royle, née Gordon, appeared on the Frontispiece in 1995.

Photographed at home by Anya Campbell

Contents January 31, 2018



Phil Yeomans/BNPS

A moo-vable feast: Dorset farmer Tom Foot with his wife, Kelly, and children plus some of his 900 dairy cows. Mr Foot is attracting attention for his pioneering home-made milking parlour, which he transports to the field rather than shepherding them inside



Irish wolfhound Marmaduke
(Sarah Farnsworth)

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Farmers, have your beef

WE have just lived through 'Veganuary', a month in which non-vegans were encouraged, with the fervour of Dickens's Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association, to 'take the pledge' and 'help our planet' (*My week*, page 32). The movement's dexterity with social media means it's been running away with the argument—last week, the BBC's environment correspondent declared a fake-meat burger to be 'delicious' and 'the future'—but livestock farming has answers aplenty to proffer and should get on the front hoof fast.

Cowpats, which you will read all about in next week's issue (*February 7*), may not be universally loved, but they're rich in nitrogen, phosphate, potash and sulphur, which fertilise the soil. As the swallows that swoop over them demonstrate, they provide a warm home for insects, numbers of which have drastically declined.

A Holstein dairy cow produces 21 tons of manure a year (a beef cow less), which does

wonders for the soil, but vegans are campaigning against milk production and, as any parent knows, their opinion is now close to being mainstream. It can be attractive to children, whose natural idealism combines with squeamishness. This is an ideology on the march.

‘The old slogan holds good: Drinka pinta (real) milka day,’

A school in Hampshire that kept four pigs as a means of teaching about food and farming has been forced to return them to the farmer after a petition started by a vegan parent garnered 20,000 signatures in 24 hours. Vegans have every right to their beliefs: of course, animals must be treated with compassion, it would be better if we ate fewer hamburgers and cows produce methane,

a potent greenhouse gas—although not, it's been reported, as much as mussels do furtively under water—but those of us who are not opposed to meat and dairy products must make a stronger, livelier case.

The Vegan Society may show photographs of its bronzed, muscly 'ambassadors' on its website, but humans evolved as omnivores. Doctors are now warning that vegans, by limiting themselves to, in Victorian terms, a pauper's diet, and eschewing cows' or goats' milk for almond or soya, run the risk of foregoing vital minerals, such as iodine and calcium. Supplements can remedy the deficiency, but the diseases of the Victorian poor, such as rickets and cretinism, are returning.

Ethics may be non-negotiable, but, in return, those of us who have made a different ethical choice and, having examined our consciences, are continuing to eat meat and dairy products, politely request that we aren't demonised. When it comes to a balanced diet, the old slogan holds good: Drinka pinta (real) milka day.

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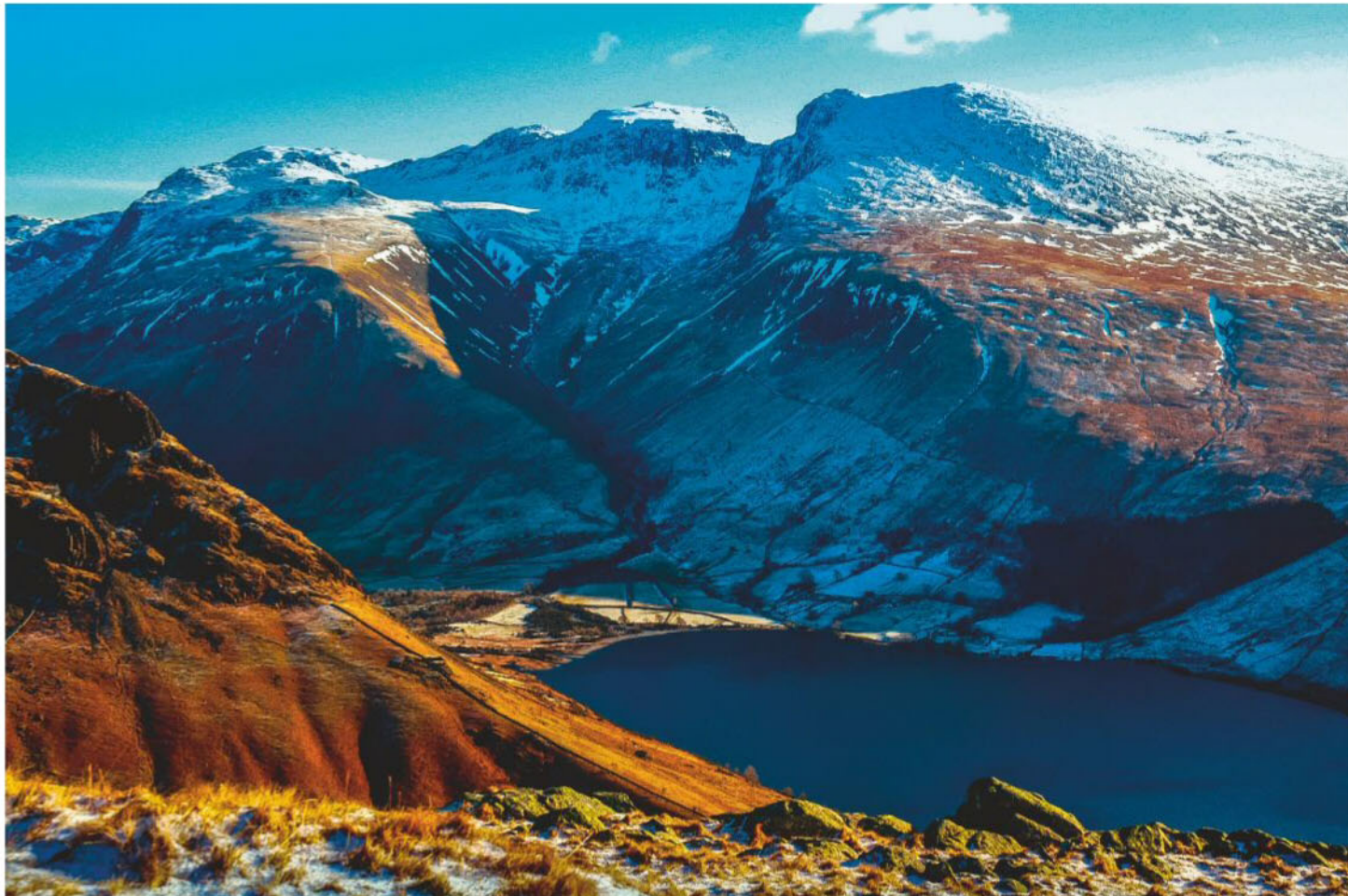
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Climb every mountain

THE memorial cairn on the summit of Scafell Pike (*above*) is to be rebuilt as part of a series of National Trust events and initiatives in the Lake District to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War.

At 977m (3,025ft), Scafell Pike is the highest mountain in England. It was donated by Lord Leconfield to the Trust in 1919 in

memory of the men of the Lake District who lost their lives in the conflict. The stone cairn is to be rebuilt this spring, and its memorial plaque reset, by rangers who will camp out on the mountain while they undertake the work.

Leconfield's gift triggered the donation of 12 more peaks to the Trust by the Fell & Rock Climbing Club in 1923, paving the way for the eventual conferring of National

Park status on the Lake District in 1951. Footpaths on Scafell Pike and Great Gable, one of the summits gifted in 1923, which is also the location of another famous First World War memorial, are to be restored. On Armistice Day, the Trust will light a beacon on top of Scafell Pike, re-enacting a ceremony led by Lord Leconfield on Peace Day on July 19, 1919. *Jack Watkins*



Back to the Arctic

PLANS to raise funds to restore the Hall of Clestrain (*left*), the Orkney birthplace and childhood home of 19th-century explorer Dr John Rae, have been given a boost by a 2019 Arctic expedition led by experienced adventurer David Reid.

Rae's 650km (404-mile) trek across the Boothia Peninsula in Canada in 1854 is widely regarded as one of the most important Arctic expeditions in history and, now, Mr Reid and the Arctic Return team plan to re-create his epic journey. In doing so, Mr Reid hopes to raise some of the £5 million that is needed to enable the Category-A listed Georgian building to be turned into a heritage centre.

The Hall of Clestrain, built in Stromness in 1769, was purchased by the John Rae Society in 2016. 'It's wind- and water-tight and structurally sound, but other than that, the house and its three floors require extensive work and renovation,' says Norman Shearer, chairman of the John Rae Society. 'We plan to keep the building as it was in John Rae's time and hope to open it to the public within five years.' Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/johnrae-society

Julie Harding



Scott Barbour/Stringer/Getty; Will Lee Cole/Getty; John Malley, S.J. Images/Alamy

The race is on

IF you dream of riding in a flat race, now's your chance. Applications are invited for the Pertemps Champions Challenge Willberry Charity Race over the Derby course and distance at Epsom Racecourse on August 27.

The race is in aid of The Bob Champion Cancer Trust and Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity, which was set up by Hannah Francis, who died of bone cancer aged 18 in 2016, having inspired the eventing community to take up her cause—cuddly Willberry toys adorn many a lorry and some riders go across country with one on their back.

Eventer Lissa Green and her cousin Lara Prior-Palmer, the youngest winner of the Mongol Derby and herself a cancer sufferer, are already signed up; there will be two more well-known riders and eight spaces are open to the public. Applicants must weigh under 12 stone, be competent riders and able to raise more than £5,000 and source a racehorse. Visit www.championswillberry.org.uk; the closing date is February 21. *KG*

Good week for

Wildflowers

Some 532 different species of wildflower are currently in bloom, compared to 20 or 30 a few decades ago, reports the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland, which has just completed its New Year Plant Hunt

Modern-day Poldarks

The boom in batteries for electric cars means that mining could return to Cornwall not for tin, but lithium

Bad week for

Sporting cheeses

Cheese rolling is no longer 'cool', say the organisers of the annual race at Stilton, Cambridgeshire. They've cancelled this year's event due to a lack of interest

Tea and biscuits

Pladis, the same company that recently decreased the number of Jaffa Cakes in a box, is now cutting down on McVitie's Digestives—packs of 34 will shrink to 27. They also own HobNobs, so best stockpile

Waste game

BASC has condemned the dumping of about 200 dead pheasants and ducks in Northern Ireland earlier this month and is calling for information to help catch those responsible



S. W. A. L. K.

THOSE wishing to go the extra mile for a Valentine this year can arrange to have a card or love letter posted from the village of Lover, Wiltshire, with a special stamp (above). The website www.lover.org.uk was set up last year. More than 1,000 cards were sent to 24 different countries, raising £5,000 for the New Forest village's community centre.

Bonjour, barbet

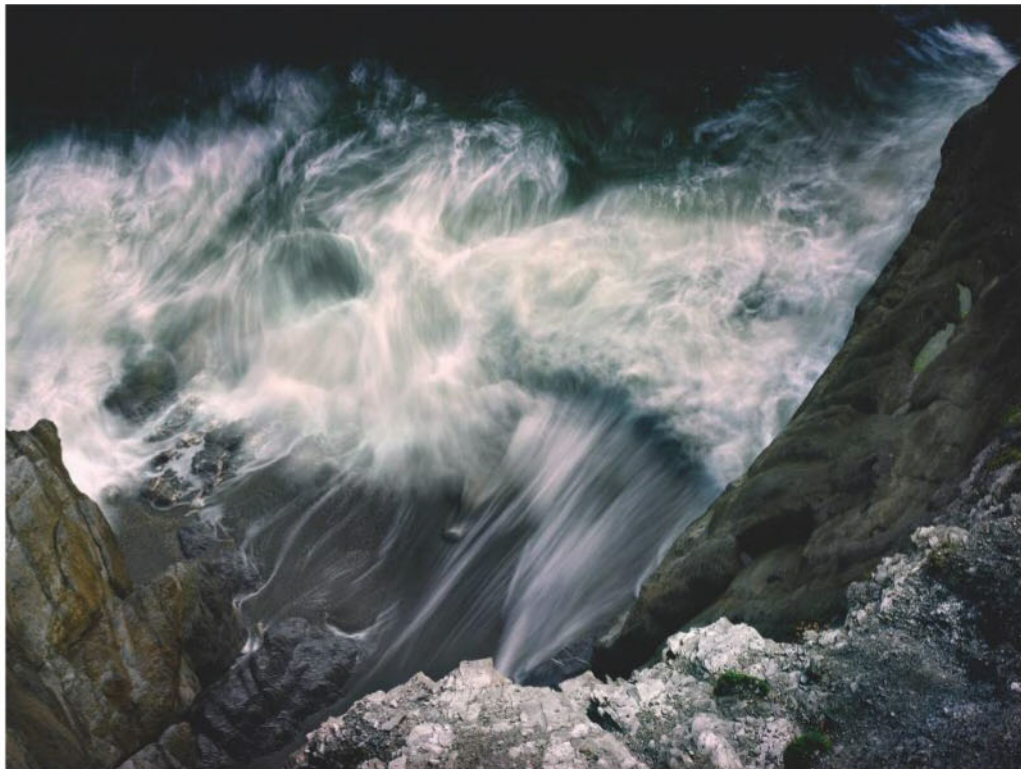
THE Kennel Club (KC) has bestowed its official recognition on the barbet, an ancient, bearded—hence the name, from the French *barbe*—breed with a curly coat, loyal, intelligent nature and penchant for leaping into bodies of water.

A gundog, it was originally bred to work with hunters and farmers around the lakes and estuaries of France and there are currently about 140 in the UK. Come April, the barbet (right) will be Britain's 220th pedigree dog breed and, to celebrate, there will be a barbet parade on the first day of Crufts, at Birmingham's NEC (March 8–11).

'The barbet is a truly versatile breed that loves being active, but equally enjoys curling up on the sofa,' says Wendy Preston, from the New Forest, Hampshire, who imported the first two barbets to the UK in 2007. 'We have barbets that take part in dog agility and gundog work and even one that is currently being trained as a search-and-rescue dog. We are thrilled that they have gained official recognition.'

Other breeds newly recognised by the KC include the white Swiss shepherd and Russian toy in 2017 and the braque d'Auvergne and Jack Russell in 2016. Before that came the Hungarian pumi, griffon fauve de Bretagne and Picardy sheepdog in 2014, and the Turkish kangal and the Portuguese pointer in 2013.





Paulene Stone, former *Vogue* cover girl, embodiment of Swinging London and famous for launching David Bailey's career by posing with a squirrel, is shown here photographed by Brian Duffy in 1963. The image is part of a new exhibition, 'Sixties Style: Shot by Duffy', at Proud Central, London WC2, from February 2 to March 18. Other subjects include John Lennon, David Bowie, Grace Coddington and Michael Caine

The great outdoors

IN my photographs, there is no real sense of time or of a specific place,' says David Magee. 'The location is totally secondary to the feeling. The feeling is everything.' From February 8 to 11, the Herrick Gallery on Piccadilly, London W1, will present the artist's first public exhibition, a retrospective of landscape and seascape photographs from the past 25 years. To coincide, a limited-edition book, *Outside*, is published by Concentric Editions (£145).

Hidden treasures

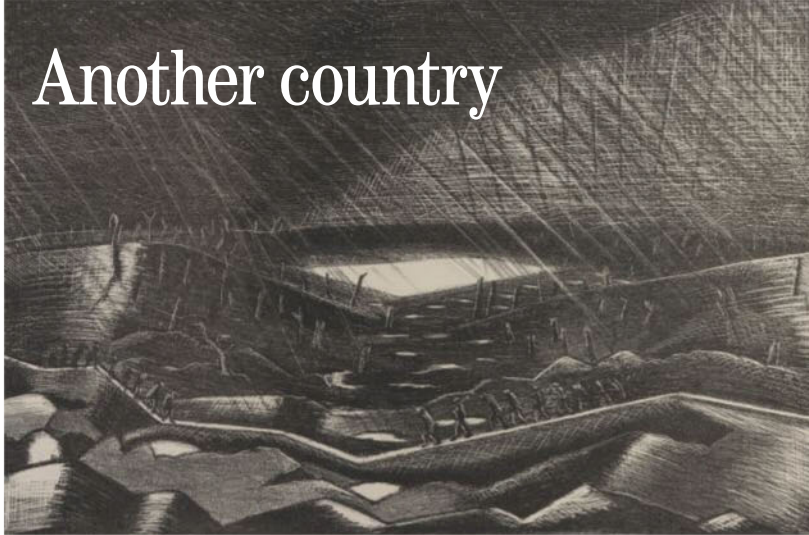
AS well as work by Picasso, Monet and Matisse, the forthcoming Christie's auction of the extraordinarily varied treasures accumulated by David and Peggy Rockefeller includes everything from hunting decoys to part of the dessert service that Napoleon took with him to Elba.

On February 23, from 5.30pm to 7pm, Jonathan Rendell, Christie's executive, will discuss some of the most significant highlights of the couple's collection, which will be auctioned in New York this May, following a global tour via Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Los Angeles. The London public-preview dates are February 21 to March 6. COUNTRY LIFE readers who would like to attend the talk, at Christie's King Street, should email rsvp@christies.com. Space is limited and an RSVP is essential.

In 1814, when Napoleon was exiled to Elba, he made sure to take this Sèvres porcelain 'Marly Rouge' dessert service with him. He had ordered it five years previously and it was in use at the palace of Fontainebleau. Not seen on the market for more than 75 years, it is now part of the Rockefeller Collection currently undertaking a global tour, before the auction at Christie's in New York in May. The service is estimated at between \$150,000 and \$250,000 (£105,923-£176,539)



Another country



WHILE in the trenches of the Western Front, artist Paul Nash observed that amidst all the barbed wire and exploding shells, the sun was shining, the birds were singing and the hawthorn was in blossom. So it's appropriate that his paintings, including *Rain* (above), and those of his brother John Nash feature in the exhibition 'Where Poppies Blow' at Wordsworth House (March 10 to October 28), as a further part of the Lake District's centenary commemorations (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/thelakes).

Featured in the show is the original manuscript of *Adlestrop*, by Edward Thomas, who died on the Front at Arras on Easter Monday 1917. Before leaving for France, Thomas, one of the greatest English poets of place, answered a question about what caused him to join up by lifting up a handful of soil and saying: 'Just this.'

'Where Poppies Blow' is curated by COUNTRY LIFE columnist John Lewis-Stempel, who maintains that the wonders and comforts of Nature 'helped men endure the hardship'. As one soldier of the Great War put it, 'If it weren't for the birds, what a hell it would be.' *Jack Watkins*

A different kettle of fish

AT 10am on March 10, Charles Jardine (right), fly-fisherman, Nature artist and founder and director of charity Fishing for Schools, will begin a gruelling 24 hours taking in three fisheries and a 60-mile run—the Wessex Water Challenge.



To raise money for both Fishing for Schools and sister charity Casting for Recovery, which offers fishing retreats to women who have or are recovering from breast cancer (both are run by the Countryside Alliance Foundation), he will catch a trout at three different reservoirs—Clatworthy and Hawkridge, both in Somerset, and Sutton Bingham, on the Dorset/Somerset border—and plans to run between them. The second and final leg of the journey involves running 46 miles through the night.

'It's scary,' admits Mr Jardine. 'I have an expert cartographer on the case, helping me to plot the best route, but it is going to be a very long way and I really do not know how long it will take. Then there's the fishing—as any angler knows, you never know what to expect when you pick up a rod, so that could also be a challenge.'

He adds: 'Angling can have amazing, restorative results for the young people we work with, many of whom have had really challenging starts in life and find school so difficult. And the results of Casting for Recovery are truly inspirational.'

Visit www.countryside-alliance.org to find out more about the charities and go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/wessexwaterchallenge to donate.



Country Mouse

Seeing is believing

A FEW months ago, I wrote in this column that I prefer winter to summer. My mum, a committed sun worshipper, was incredulous, but I stuck to my guns: frosty mornings, country sports and roaring log fires make me happy.

In recent weeks, however, as the rain continued to fall and the wind blew with all its might, I almost changed my mind. With few sharp, crisp days to enjoy and the countryside fast turning into a gloopy sea of mud, I nearly succumbed to the post-Christmas January gloom.

Then, the other night, on my way home from the station in the ink-black darkness, I noticed—thanks to the car's headlights and the varifocal contact lenses I've started wearing—that the snowdrops' dainty white flowers had begun to bloom. Suddenly, it was as though a flash of light had pierced my miserable mood and life seemed so much brighter.

Now that I can see more clearly, I can better appreciate this year's proliferation of hazel catkins. Even though many of these delicate, dangling appendages were blown off branches in last week's gales, carpeting the ground with what looks like a dusting of fuzzy yellow snow, I remain cheerful in the knowledge that spring is not so very far away. **PL**

Town Mouse

Better in a bowler

IT felt very peculiar to return home on a long-haul flight from China just in time to wake the family up on Monday morning. Still, I savoured the pleasure of rousing everybody out of bed for the start of the week. As the children woke up, they blearily formulated the most important question: do you have any presents?

I rarely buy anything for them on my travels, but, on this occasion, I did have something to satisfy their apparently insatiable appetite for key rings. Pleased as they were with these, however, the chief object of curiosity in my bag was a dragon fruit. Unfortunately, the taste of this extraordinarily beautiful and exotic-looking fruit was a terrible disappointment for the children. At the first bite, there were complaints that it tasted strange. Quite contentedly, I ate the lot.

As the normalities of life re-asserted themselves in the days that followed, I received one startling piece of advice that—I was assured—would transform my impression of London for the better: walk around it in a bowler hat. Apparently, it's a remarkably positive experience. Crowds part, doors open and the world smiles at you. I'm tempted to experiment, but for the fact that I have no bowler hat. **JG**





Quiz of the week

- 1) The old penny symbol, d, was an abbreviation of which Latin word?
- 2) According to the nursery rhyme, what did the old lady swallow to catch the dog?
- 3) Which London structure was formerly known as the Millennium Dome?
- 4) In which century was the *Mona Lisa* painted?
- 5) Who was the only man to survive the Biblical destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?

100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE February 2, 1918



ST. CUTHBERT was a popular Northumberland saint who in AD676 retired from the society of his fellowmen to the solitude of the Farne Island, where he died in AD687. During his residence on the Farne he took the birds of the islands under his special protection and taught them gentleness and confidence. To the eider ducks he is said to have paid more than ordinary attention. Tradition says that the tameness acquired by the birds in that age has never really left them, but has been continued down to the present time. Eiders are known even now in this district as St. Cuthbert's ducks.

The nature of things Supermoons

TONIGHT, we will be able to witness the third 'supermoon' in a row, the previous two having occurred at full moon on New Year's Day this year and on December 3 last year. There certainly appeared to be some exceptionally bright nights around the times of those earlier full moons, but what is a supermoon? The term is used when a full moon appears just at the moment during its elliptical orbit when it's as close as it gets to the Earth—this may give the impression of it appearing larger than usual in the sky.

Astronomers point out that the distances involved are so great, it would be difficult to discern a closer, or 'larger', moon with the naked eye. However, when the moon is seen near the horizon, it does indeed look much bigger, hence the remarkable photographs that are taken at such times. The moon's increased closeness also enables it to appear much brighter and, in the gloomy depths of winter, its silvery illuminations are more welcome than ever.

Tonight's supermoon is super exciting, for it is also a 'blue moon'—a rare enough occasion



when two full moons appear within a single calendar month. Some parts of the world will also see it as a lunar eclipse—the third supermoon in a row that's also blue and eclipsed. Hold onto your hat. **KBH**

Illustration by Bill Donohoe

Time to buy

Toucan pouring jug, £17, Fenella Smith (01491 412444; www.fenellasmith.com)



Suit carrier and holdall in oiled leather and canvas, £209.99, Teales (07867 973339; <http://teales.co.uk>)

A Novel Note

'There's a fine line between thinking about somebody and thinking about not thinking about somebody, but I have the patience and the self-control to walk that line for hours—days, if I have to'

A Visit from the Goon Squad, Jennifer Egan

Wicked words

He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man

Samuel Johnson

- 1) Denarius 2) A cow 3) The O2
- 4) 16th (1503) 5) Lot



Champagne Tea Tour Gift Experience, from £79.95, Highgrove Gardens (0333 222 4555; www.highgrovegardens.com)



Oh, the agony!

Resident agony uncle
Kit Hesketh-Harvey
solves your dilemmas

M*A*S*H

Q As newlyweds, I fear that my husband and I have hit our first serious obstacle. He insists on mashed potato with roast dinners, as served by his mother, with not a roast potato in sight. We have compromised by having both, but I fear for my weight. What should I do? *L. K., Suffolk*

A You are going to have to quit the field on this one. Lord knows in what benighted culture your husband was raised, but there are three areas in which a bride simply has to bite her tongue and replicate her mother-in-law. One, the Christmas-present opening: first thing or after The Queen. Two, the lavatory-seat lid: up or down. Three, roast dinners: in every detail.

Mashed potato, if made in quantity, is terribly useful for the rest of the week (fishcakes, colcannon, vichyssoise). Roast potatoes are cardiac gelignite, so it's not all bad. Cede this turf and the really important decisions—what he should wear, where he should live, whom he should see—will remain yours for life.

Unmissable events

Exhibition

January 31–February 24 'Emma Haworth: My Bright New Boots Squeaking into the White World' (right), Rebecca Hossack Conway Street Gallery, Fitzroy Square, London W1. The artist's first solo show since 2014 will centre on snow scenes and features several major works in oil on linen depicting London parks (020-7436 4899; www.rebeccahossack.com)

February 4–24 'The Land I Stepped Into: Tales from Persia', The Fosse Gallery, The Manor House, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire. Solo exhibition of 40 works by Charlie Calder-Potts, who travelled to Tehran and collaborated with Persian poet Rosa Jamali to rework the *Shahnameh* from a contemporary perspective (<http://fossegallery.com>; 01451 831319)

February 3–April 28 'Royal Women: Alexandra, Mary, Elizabeth, Margaret: public life, personal style' (below), Fashion Museum, Bennett Street, Bath, Somerset. This 'family tree' exhibition will look at successive female generations of the Royal Family—Queen Alexandra, Queen Mary, the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret—looking at each woman's style and role within the monarchy. Includes loaned garments from the Royal Collection (01225 477789; www.fashionmuseum.co.uk)



Festival

February 9–25 National Parks Dark Skies Festival, various. Take part in activities such as cycling, walking, running or caving at night, attend a stargazing party or learn more about constellations. This year, the joint festival includes the Yorkshire Dales, Northumberland, North York Moors and the South Downs. (www.darkskiesnationalparks.org.uk)

Book now

February 23 An Insight into Garden Design with the Cotswold Gardening School, Highgrove Gardens, Tetbury, Gloucestershire. One-day theoretical course explaining the creative process and practical methods behind professional garden design. Includes a guided tour of Highgrove and

a two-course lunch. £95pp (www.highgrovegardens.com; 0333 222 4555)

March 19 Henry James and Venice, Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1. Booker Prize-winning author Alan Hollinghurst discusses how Henry James wrote about and experienced Venice, exploring some of the most evocative prose ever written about the city. Tickets from £18, doors open at 6.30pm for 6.45pm start (020-7736 6891; www.veniceinperil.org)

March 21–23 The Reins of Power: Horses and Courts, The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Marylebone, London W1. International conference focusing on the role of horses in Court ceremonies, Court culture and military and political events. Includes curated visits to the Royal Mews, the Household Cavalry Barracks and the Household Cavalry Museum. Tickets range from £15–£150 (<http://horsepower2018.com>)

What to drink this week Burgundy 2016: the reds



Harry Eyres
selects thoroughly
desirable wines
from the lesser
appellations

As I reported last week, I'm excited about the 2016 vintage in Burgundy. Although heavily and in places disastrously frost-affected, it produced some very fine and typical wines throughout the region. The red wines shone especially and they are lovely, pure Burgundies that aficionados shouldn't miss.

Why you should be buying them

One benign aspect of 2016 (frost and price hikes apart) is that excellent wines were made in lesser *appellations* such as the Hautes Côtes and 'minor' *villages* such as Marsannay, Maranges and Fixin. There was good balance and ripeness in these wines, which can be tough or thin, and they are, if not bargains, thoroughly desirable.

What to buy

You don't expect stellar quality from a generic *appellation* that covers all the second-division *villages* from Pernand-Vergelesses to Santenay, but Côte de Beaune 2016 Joseph Drouhin (£135 per six IB; www.bbr.com) has great freshness and purity of raspberry fruit, with a lovely savoury finish. From another relatively humble, backwoods *appellation*, the Bourgogne Hautes Cotes de Nuits Rouge Les Dame Hughtettes 2016 Domaine Patrice et Maxime Rion (£156 per dozen IB; www.bbr.com) shows refined purity, with quite a bit of tannic substance. It is a wine to enjoy over the next two or three years. I liked the Fixin Petits Crais Château de Marsannay 2016 (£165 per six IB; www.justerinis.com) for its purity—a characteristic of this vintage—and grip. In the Côte de Beaune, the ever-reliable Domaine Tollot-Beaut has produced a winner with its Chorey-lès-Beaune 2016 (right, £110 per 12 half-bottles IB; www.justerinis.com): there is immediately attractive raspberry fragrance and forward fruit on the palate.



Fashion Museum Bath; Emma Haworth; The Print Collector/Getty

Living National Treasure

Orthopaedic shoe-maker

Photograph by Richard Cannon

BILL BIRD was born with a mild foot deformity, which, he explains, drew him into orthopaedic shoe-making. 'Shoes can make a huge difference and I aim to make ones that not only work, but also look beautiful,' he says.

In 1979, having studied architecture at the Bartlett, Mr Bird became an apprentice at John Lobb Ltd of St James's Street, SW1, bootmakers by Royal Appointment. The same year, he also started to study biomechanics and podiatry. 'I quickly realised that podiatrists knew what to do in a medical sense, but didn't know how to do it and that shoe-makers were uncertain as to what was needed, so I decided to bridge the disciplines.'

Mr Bird set up his company in 1987 and, today, the five-strong workshop produces about five pairs of shoes a week, from dance shoes to fell boots. The lasts he uses—the wooden blocks that the shoes are made around—are made in the traditional way using a 'draft': by tracing around the foot with the pencil held vertically, an outline of the instep taken with the pencil at 45° and a series of measurements. 'By palpating the foot, we find, then measure, the circumference of six specific structures, thereby getting a deep, felt sense of the foot's shape and how it works.' He used to carve the lasts from German beech wood, but now opts for local timber such as holly, ash and hornbeam.

No less important is the prescription. 'There are many different technical decisions to be taken. We might take foot impressions, photographs or digital measurements. An inkpad can also reveal where pressure is being exerted.'

Mr Bird reflects that his aim is to make his workshop run without him: 'I'm 67 and I need to make myself redundant. If something happens to me, this must carry on.' *JG*
www.billbird.co.uk







Letter of the week



Poor old Garry

HOW good to see that the Upper Garry (above) is being revived (*Reel Life, January 17*). Many years ago, the father of a friend who lives by Perth named his two children, Garry and Isla, after his favourite fishing rivers—how fortunate that the Ouse, Ure or Esk weren't his favourites. The human Garry is also a very fine fisherman and might be amused to read this sentence towards the end of David Profumo's article: 'The poor old Upper Garry has suffered from a 60-year hangover that requires gradual rehydration.'

James Arbuthnott, Worcestershire

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



Conservation and predation

YOUR fascinating article on the lynx (*January 24*) sets out many of the benefits that would be created by reintroducing them and dispersing foxes—but the same benefits could be harnessed by the reintroduction of foxhunting. By our very presence, we interfere with the whole ecosystem and the ever-increasing trend towards preventing interference at the top (where the killing takes place) is unhealthy for our islands. Man (with or without hound or gun) can be an apex predator and not just a conservator. Those who set out to destroy the long-established links between wildlife conservation and country sports do great harm as the two can—and, in my opinion, should—go hand in hand.

Edward Church, Kent



A dry spell

AS an entrepreneur who spends countless hours doing things at 1,000 miles per hour, the only time I slow down is when I sit to read this wonderful magazine. The diversity of what is written and the dry wit of some of the respondents never cease to make me chuckle. Having just read the letter about us drinking more than our parents (*January 17*), I can say that my father was at best a sherry drinker at Christmas and my mother not far behind him, whereas I like my fine wines and, occasionally, lesser wines. I am doing my bit for a healthier life and body and have embarked on dry January—which, thinking about it, is probably why I am now ill. Thank you for lifting my spirits. *Anne Stokes, by email*



Aisle try to be on time

I CHEERED when I read your 'Bad week for stress-free brides' about a church charging £100 if a bride is late (*Town & Country, January 10 and Letters, January 24*). However, I can't agree with your 'Let's hope it doesn't catch on'. As the wife of a church organist, I know how often brides keep him, the clergy, the choir and everyone else waiting. Last time, it was about 45 minutes—for apparently no good reason. They all have other duties and calls on their time. *Carol Brinson, by email*

May I introduce you

TWO grey squirrels are known to have been in this country a hundred years before those introduced to Henbury Park in the 19th century (*Letters, January 17*)—they were given as pets by Benjamin Franklin to the youngest daughter of his friend the Rev Jonathan Shipley. The first, Mungo, was killed by a dog in 1771 or 1772, but his replacement, Beebee, grew fat and lived until 1779. I have copies of the charming letter written by Georgiana to Franklin, telling him of the sad demise of Mungo, and his reply, including the elegy he composed for the creature.

Jean Ward, Hampshire



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(photographs welcome)

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Burn baby burn

I AM a keen fire lighter (*'Relight my fire', January 10*) and look forward to darker nights and cooler temperatures to light the fire in the *kakelugn* (Swedish tiled stove, *left*). Once lit, the tiles warm up and, with the door closed, it can be left alone to heat the room, with the occasional top up. Bizarrely, there is talk in Sweden that the installation of wood-burning stoves and

fireplaces will be banned for all new-build houses—for environmental reasons, of course.

Nicola Gapp, Sweden

A comedy of errors

IT was with interest that I read your article on the double-barrelled name (*'Giving them both barrels', January 10*). Our surname, Handley-Wright, has been the source of considerable amusement and, over the years, there has been a wealth of different interpretations. The all-time favourite has to be Hampy-Light, followed closely by Handy-Rite, Hendy-Rice and Headley-Rye. The local garage used to refer to us as the Handley-Smiths and my husband Peter is often called Andy Wright. It is especially entertaining when booking restaurant tables over the phone—who would have thought that the joining together of two simple names could cause such hilarity.

Linda Handley-Wright, Derbyshire



COUNTRY LIFE FEBRUARY 7

Sumptuous sweet peas; are you a real country-man? Try our quiz; the secret life of a cowpat; Marble Hill remodelled; how women got the vote; plus Carla Carlisle

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Why we're rubbish—again

WHY are we still such a dirty nation? Hedgerows and copses are despoiled with crisp bags and fast-food packaging, litter is piled high in laybys and farmers and landowners are having to deal with increasingly widespread illegal dumping. COUNTRY LIFE's campaign to clean up for The Queen's Jubilee made a real difference, but we're now a nation in relapse.

Despite all the voluntary action, the litter picks and the individual efforts of people proud of their local community, the situation has got out of hand again. That's the real lesson from recent campaigns about the plastic waste that gets into the oceans largely through litter. It's the bits and pieces, the bags and bottles and the wrappings that the ignorant and the careless drop. They blow their way into the rivers and out to sea and, as a result, huge numbers of fish are dying because of the plastic waste they've ingested.

That's why, at long last, the media and the public are really angry. Litter is no longer just a matter of aesthetics, it's a serious threat to the health of the planet. Of course it's always been a concern to the owners of livestock, but we've never been able to communicate that danger to the general public. The image of fish stuffed to the gills with plastic has changed all that.

Anger and revulsion is not enough, however. We need concerted, effective action and, on that, our record is pretty pathetic. Just one example sums it up. It took that notable countryman Lord Marlesford five years to get an act through Parliament to make it an offence to throw rubbish from a vehicle. Even then, when the law was finally changed, the Government avoided implementing it for another three years.

No matter which party is in control, our record for speedy and determined action on

waste is dismal, which is why Agromenes has produced his five-part plan designed to be in place before the end of 2018.

First, the Government's current consultation on fly-tipping should result in an urgent bill. Illegal tipping has become the curse of the countryside. Better licensing, heavier fines, real police commitment and greater understanding by the courts of the seriousness of this lucrative activity are all essential.

Secondly, on-the-spot fines for littering must become the norm instead of a rare and easily ignored exception. It must matter to the police and be backed by the courts on appeal. Like

drink driving, littering must become unacceptable behaviour, as it is in Japan.

The third part would increase recycling rates dramatically by implementing the radical reforms that have now been accepted across the whole of the packaging industry. These would tax non-recyclable packaging, make all busi-

nesses in the packaging chain pay their fair share towards recycling, reward companies that use recycled content and expand the industry.

Fourth: the money raised by this tax should be used to provide many more bins so there would be no excuse to drop litter. More bins, regularly emptied, and tough fines for people who drop litter would make all the difference.

The fifth element is to insist on common recycling standards for every local council. It's madness that adjacent authorities can have different lists of what they recycle. Packs should be able to say clearly that they are recyclable anywhere in the UK.

These five changes could make Britain the clean man of Europe and every one of them would be popular. All we need is the will.

‘Like drink driving, littering must become unacceptable behaviour’

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Jan Hohn/Alamy; Prisma by Dukas Presseagentur GmbH/Alamy; Andrew Twort/Alamy; Joe Dunckley/Alamy; Jacques Kimas/Alamy



Athena Cultural Crusader

Justified outrage at Tunbridge Wells

AS local authorities tighten their belts against the economic uncertainties of Brexit, the normally conservative Borough Council of Royal Tunbridge Wells is about to throw caution to the wind and assume the largest overdraft in its history.

The plan is to construct a new civic centre development that will place the town £90 million in debt. Athena was intrigued to discover more.

A new town hall (rather pretentiously called 'One Tunbridge Wells') and a new theatre for 1,200 people is proposed to be built to replace an existing town hall and theatre that are less than 100 yards away and that were only completed in 1941. The Council's planning application is expected to be approved by itself in the Spring.

The existing town hall, theatre and library cost £120,000 and were designed by Percy Thomas and Ernest Prestwich (whose other civic buildings include those at Swansea and Salford). Regrettably, they obliterated a row of distinguished early-19th-century terraces that formed part of Calverley New Town, one of the very earliest garden city schemes anywhere.

‘The motives of the Council’s leaders are difficult to comprehend’

Nevertheless, they are not unattractive: the style chosen for them was a rather chilly neo-Georgian style, that achieved ‘dignity without elaborate or unnecessary features’. In other words, they offer tea with napkins and biscuits, but no cake. In this way, they fit the perceived character of the town quite well. Above the front door is carved the town’s motto ‘Do Well Doubt Not’; and the council did well enough for the complex to be granted listed-building status in 1995.

According to the Council today, these 1940s facilities are not only outdated (which is reasonable enough), but they cannot be refurbished or the theatre extended. In fact, the solid brickwork façades and stone-lined concrete construction blatantly advertise the reverse. So too does the fact that the library—in use by the Kent County Council—is already the subject of a Heritage Lottery bid for an imaginative re-making. It’s a further concern that the new complex will compromise the character of Calverley Gardens, the surviving centrepiece park of the garden city.

Also, it will be necessary to requisition a private car park using a compulsory purchase order. Yet this is parking space that may underpin the viability of the town’s longest established and much loved department store (to whom it belongs).

Given the obviously negative economic and urban consequences of its proposed actions, the motives of the Council’s leaders are difficult to comprehend particularly since the council is shrinking. Future residents will doubtless curse the consequences of the Borough Council’s inexplicable vanity for decades to come. In this case, at least, Athena shares the outrage of Tunbridge Wells.

Fred van Deelen; Lucinda Rogers

What to see this week

The Enchanted Room: Modern Works from the Pinacoteca di Brera is at the Estorick Collection, 29A, Canonbury Square, London N1, until April 8 (020-7704 9522; www.estorickcollection.com)

The Estorick Collection of Modern Italian art begins its 20th-anniversary year with an exhibition of paintings and sculptures from Emilio and Maria Jesi’s outstanding 1976 donation to the Milan picture gallery. A major part of that bequest can now be seen outside Italy for the first time, including works by Boccioni, Severini, Carrà, Modigliani, de Chirico and Morandi.

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham: ‘The Joy of Colour’ The late Paintings & Prints is at Bohun Gallery, 15, Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames, February 3-24 (01491 576228; www.bohungallery.co.uk)

In 1998, when she was 86, the artist started to make screen-prints and entered into perhaps her most productive and creative period. This selling show of works from her hugely successful final five years shows her ‘letting rip’ as she translates her sensations into a riot of colour.

Glenn Brown: Come to Dust is at Gagosian, 20, Grosvenor Hill, London W1, until March 17 (020-7495 1500; www.gagosian.com)

‘I don’t like a blank canvas,’ says Glenn Brown, who appropriates Old Master images to create complex and sensuous art that merges art history with contemporary culture. Integral to these works are their elaborate frames, which add an additional element to the ‘richly layered visual anachronism’.



Lucinda Rogers: On Gentrification is at House of Illustration, 2, Granary Square, King’s Cross, London N1, until March 25 (www.houseofillustration.org.uk; 020-369 2020).

The gallery’s fourth ‘illustrator commission’ explores the tension between old and new through a series of deft ink-and-watercolour studies drawn from life (*above: View from Almond Lane Coffee House*). The artist turns her attention to the 200-year-old Ridley Road Market in East London, which is under threat from chain stores and online shopping and will soon be overshadowed by what planners call a ‘marker building’. ‘Markets allow people to gather, buy and sell direct. Without them, city life is solitary and dull. My work recording some of Ridley Road is simply to say “this place is important”. Where there are no records of things, it is easier to sweep them away.’



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Packing today, gone tomorrow

IT'S a miracle that I've got so far through life without some of its essentials: in this case, packing cubes. I didn't know they existed until my daughter Anna asked Father Christmas to give her some. A quick Google reveals a quite astonishing number of websites devoted to 'packing today', all of which confirm that everything would have been better, easier—indeed, transformed—had I ever had them in my life.

6 If you forgo eating meat to help the environment, dream on 9

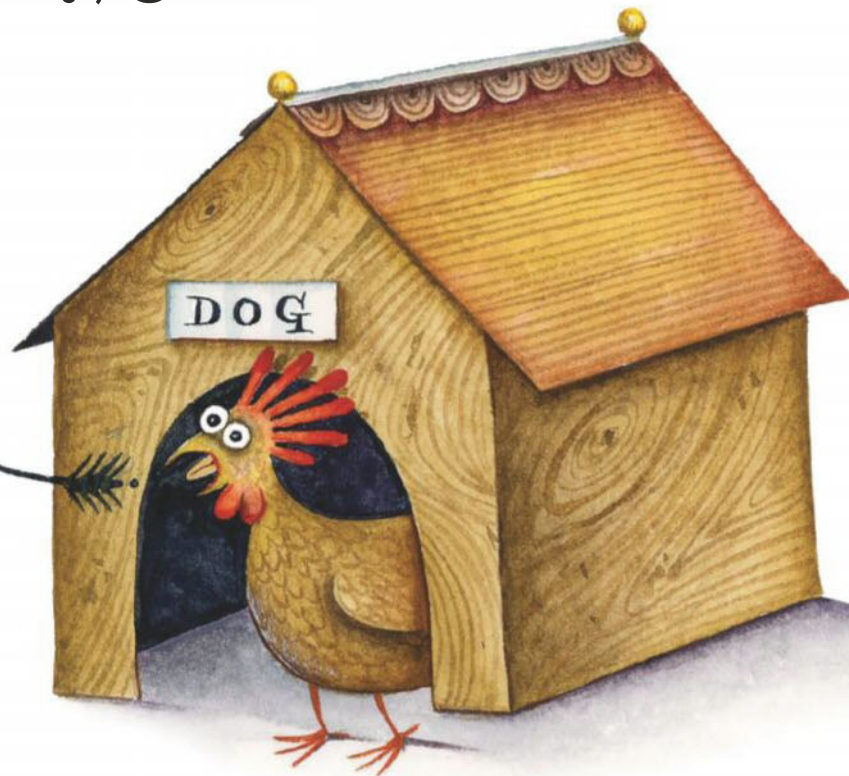
Anna's backpack, now heading to its third continent, is stuffed full of these cubes, which are themselves stuffed full of pants and socks. There are also bags you suck the air out of so that the shirts and towels screw up their faces and become a fraction of the real size, which means you can fit more stuff in—which means we can barely lift the thing onto her back.

My husband, Zam, wanders in to ask if she has a mosquito net, sun cream, a hat, an adaptor, bite cream—quite a long list and one at which Anna and I exchange shifty glances. 'What on earth have you been doing?' he exclaims with exasperation. 'We concentrated on tops,' I reply defensively. 'And she's got duct tape.'

When it becomes clear she has no backup should she lose her debit card, he walks out again, muttering: 'I wish I'd got more involved.' Anna returns to the pressing business of finishing a mini-series (all kidnapped women and rape) in the few hours before departure and I return to the map on my com-

Illustration: Clare Mackie

WOOF!



puter, which seems to think I've booked a Premier Inn in Minehead and not the one at Heathrow's Terminal 2. This is not helping my gap-year anxieties and deep fear of ring roads.

Anna has spent the past few months working in a petrol station with a supermarket attached from which the smell of air freshener followed her home. She preferred the days on 'retail' (shelf stacking) to working the till, mainly because customers can be so rude.

Next time you're asked 'How's your day?' or 'Is that everything?', please offer some conversational return instead of silence or grunting because this is how the eight hours become bearable.

I'm praising Anna's stamina at working long shifts and anti-social hours to her sister, who reminds me that making tuna-salad baguettes in a sweaty basement in which an ancient chicken breast was found behind the freezer (the smell meant the shop had to be evacuated for a day) was no fun either. Siblings don't award medals in the Top Trumps of gap-year jobs.

Dry January has been surprisingly bearable, but I'm dismayed by the increasing popularity of Veganuary in which, according to some reports, 52,000 people will be abandoning meat for a month—up from 1,500 just four years ago. Having recently read *Grass-Fed Nation* by Graham Harvey, agricultural advisor on *The Archers*, I feel compelled to beat its drum. The book was given to me by a friend who came to supper shortly after a bunch of 18 year olds had been, most of whom have become vegetarian. When I asked him to explain to Anna why she shouldn't follow this trend, he replied vehemently: 'Being a vegetarian is immoral.'

Strong words, but fully backed up by this book, which explains why vegetarians are killing the planet. If you think meat is bad for your health, bank balance or you don't want to eat something that was once alive, that's up to you, but if you forgo meat to help the environment, dream on. Without responsibly raised, grass-fed livestock, the soil will die.

I send the friend my suggestion for a catchy activist slogan: 'Don't be cereally stupid', but his is much better: 'We've got worms.'

Despite our best efforts, keeping our recently acquired silver-laced Wyandottes safe is an ongoing battle. We have a hen house within a disused dog kennel, over which we've constructed a predator-proof roof, but they wander the garden freely during the day, which means they're vulnerable to the red kite—I heard a poultry farmer on *Farming Today* blame one for the majority of his losses.

And, just now, I looked up at a violent commotion caused by a spaniel and a terrier that had strayed off the public footpath to chase them. I'm considering these unforeseen dangers when I receive a text. The backpack's shoulder straps broke before Anna reached Senegal. I blame the packing cubes. 🐾

Lucy Baring lives by a river in Hampshire with her family, some chickens and a dachshund called Fletcher

Next week Joe Gibbs



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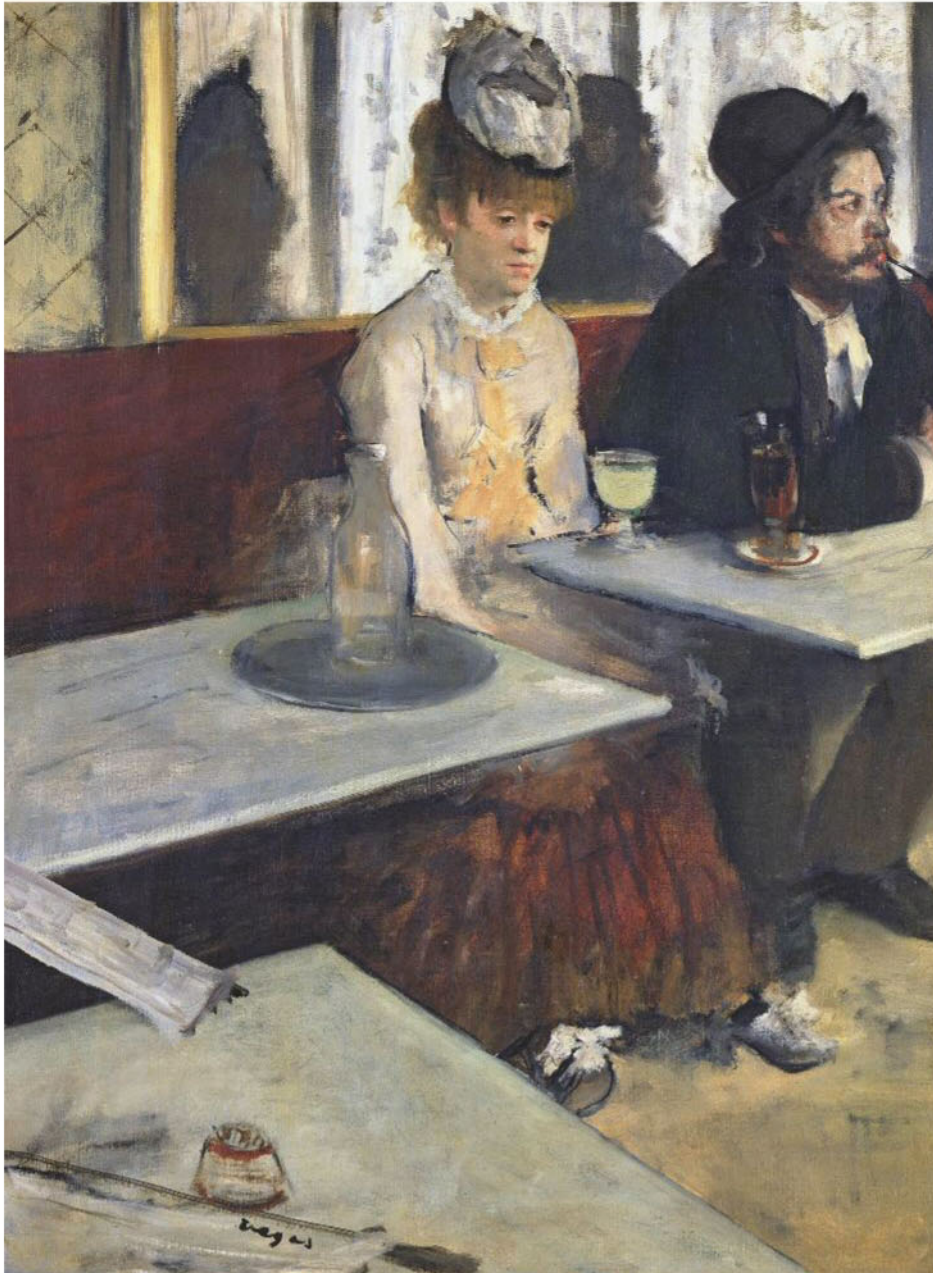
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My favourite painting Luke Irwin

L'Absinthe by Degas



L'Absinthe, 1876, by Edgar Degas (1834–1917), 36in by 29in, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France



Luke Irwin is an award-winning rug designer

‘I first saw this when I was 17 and living in Paris. I was so struck by the sense of place and time. More than that, I was intrigued by the desolation of the two figures. What was their relationship? Obviously, it was one of great familiarity to encapsulate such *ennui*. But is it *ennui* or simply stunned shock? Are they a brother and sister who have just had bad news? Husband and wife? Or simply two people in a drunken bond? The composition and use of brushstroke is very suggestive of the drunken state, the fractured nature of a hangover, the pause for thought before the first drink of the day. I love her shoelaces and his truncated pipe—such simplicity conjures up their shabby existence. I love the fact that he’s looking at something more interesting than what is in front of or beside him. To my impressionable eyes, this contrived snapshot of a previous era was beguiling and romantic in a way that only a 17 year old can view doom and desolation’

John McEwen comments on *L'Absinthe*

DEGAS was born Hilaire-Germain-Edgar De Gas. In French, the pronunciation remains ‘D’ga’ (as in De Gas), but, because of this elision, in English, we invariably say ‘Daygar’. His father was a Parisian banker, his mother a Creole from New Orleans. She died when he was 13, a loss that may have accounted for his fascination with women yet failure to find a mate.

On passing the Baccalaureat, he registered as a copyist at the Louvre, but his father, a notably cultured man, insisted he study law. His heart wasn’t in it and, following

a meeting with Ingres, his favourite living artist, he opted for the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Ingres told him: ‘Draw lines, young man, and still more lines, both from life and memory, and you will become a good artist.’

Like his hero, he spent a prolonged period in Italy copying the works of the Renaissance masters. This traditionalism set him at odds with his Impressionist contemporaries and their obsession with light and landscape. Although he exhibited in Impressionist exhibitions, he preferred to call his Parisian-inspired subjects ‘Realism’.

One modern craze was drinking absinthe, a potent aniseed-tainted spirit distilled to taste with water. With an alcoholic content as high as 80%, in bohemian circles, it promised inspiration, but was condemned as a plague and eventually widely banned. Degas’s painting, originally called *In a Café* (still the Musée d’Orsay’s title), caused a scandal in France and later in London. The models were the actress Ellen Andrée and Marcellin Desboutin, an artist he had met in Italy. Such was the furore, Degas had to state publicly that they were not alcoholics.




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It ain't nothing but a wolfhound

Mythical and magnificent, yet gentle and intensely loyal, the Irish wolfhound can only be described in superlatives, finds Flora Watkins

Photographs by Millie Pilkington and Sarah Farnsworth

AN early-19th-century painting of an Irish wolfhound by the artist Reinagle shows the dog 'looking back over his shoulder into the past'. It's an arresting image and one with which devotees are familiar, for myths and legends swirl around the wolfhound's origins, like so many ancient sites.

It was moving to a 16th-century house near Stonehenge that sparked Trudie Styler's love affair with the breed in the early 1990s. Something about the place itself inspired her husband, she recalls. 'Sting just said to me "I'd like to buy a wolfhound. I think you'd enjoy having your own dog and this house sort of looks like it should be for wolfhounds".'

The family acquired two puppies, Gideon and Finbarr, who immediately 'seemed to fit not just Lake House, but into our lives—so loyal and kind around children, so loyal to me; the ideal dog for this lovely place'.

Although Gideon lived to a good age, Finn 'didn't go on as long'—wolfhounds, sadly, only tend to live for 6–10 years—and the experience prompted Miss Styler to found her Dukesarum kennel, committed to breeding for health and longevity. 'Lake House was built in 1578 by a man called George Duke and Old Sarum was an Iron Age hill fort, the site of the old settlement, north of Salisbury,' she explains. Putting Duke and Sarum together gave her the perfect prefix for 'these majestic dogs'.

“Sting just said to me “I'd like to buy a wolfhound”;

When I visit, there are 11 Dukesarum wolfhounds in residence, including Cainagh and Winston, 'our house dogs', a handsome young hound called Atticus—'the second love of my life,' his mistress laughs—and four 13-week-old puppies, with coltish long legs and endearingly huge paws.

'It's tremendous going for walks up the old drover's road towards Stonehenge when there are seven or eight at a time,' muses Miss Styler. 'They can really gallop up there on that large stretch of land; they're in their element. It's like a sight from a different century.'

If it isn't hard to imagine Uther Pendragon walking among the Dukesarum wolfhounds on Salisbury Plain, that's because the breed, in some form, dates from well before ➤

Trudie Styler at home with six Irish wolfhounds from her Dukesarum kennel. She often walks seven or eight dogs at a time





Sit!: at 10 months, Marmaduke (facing page, with two-year-old Camilla Rolfe) already stands 36in at the shoulder, but is always ready for a rest at his Penton Park, Hampshire, home (above)

the time of the Arthurian legends. Hilary Jupp, a retired breeder who's researched the Irish wolfhound for 40 years, says that, although 'the name is quite a recent one, the hound itself goes back far into the mists of time'.

There are mentions of the *cú*—translated, variously, as wolf dog or Irish hound—in Irish laws pre-dating Christianity. Only kings and the nobility were allowed to own the great Irish hound, which was used to hunt wolves and deer, to protect herds and went into battle alongside its master. Tales abound of the *Fianna* and their greatest chief, Fionn mac Cumhall, hunting and fighting with their colossal hounds.

However, Mrs Jupp cautions that some of the stories about wolfhounds—such as that of Gelert, slain by his master, Prince Llewellyn of Wales, in the mistaken belief he had killed his infant son (Gelert had killed a wolf threatening the baby)—seem, sadly, 'to have been made up completely'.

After the last wolf was killed in Ireland in the 18th century, the breed came close to dying out and it fell to two Victorian Scots to revive it: Maj Richardson lived in Dublin and Capt Graham began breeding in Gloucestershire, outcrossing with Scottish deerhounds. The first modern Irish wolfhounds were registered with the English Kennel Club in 1886.

The breed continued to be a favourite of the aristocracy: that great sporting Diana, Elizabeth, Empress of Austria, who travelled to Ireland and Leicestershire for the hunting, had a brace of Irish wolfhounds: Shadow and Plato.

‘After the last wolf was killed in Ireland, the breed came close to dying out,’

A source of great pride for the Irish, the wolfhound features in the emblem of the national bank, founded by Daniel O'Connell, and the breed has been sought out by wealthy Americans with Irish ancestry. The film director John Huston kept them and John F. Kennedy, perhaps with his own Camelot in mind, had one at the White House.

Today, the Irish wolfhound is no longer the preserve of the aristocracy and is prized as a family pet rather than a hunter, but owners do need sizeable grounds. Danielle Rolfe and her husband, Guy, bought their first wolfhound, Montgomery, when they moved to Penton Park at Penton Mewsey in Hampshire. Once the country

seat of William Cubitt, when he was Lord Mayor of London, it's now owned by Mr Rolfe's parents and run by the family as a wedding venue.

'No breeder will let you buy a wolfhound without being checked. My uncle, who is on his fourth, originally had to submit aerial photos,' Mrs Rolfe discloses—these were to satisfy the breeder that the dog had sufficient space. Monty proved to be the archetypal 'gentle giant' with the couple's three little girls. 'When they were babies, all of my children used to lie on him to drink their bottles,' she continues. 'They're very conscious of their pack; when I used to take the twins out in the double buggy, Monty would place himself between the girls and the friend we had gone to see.'

It was heartbreaking, then, when Monty had to be put to sleep, aged just six, due to cancer. A neighbour put the Rolfes in touch with the Dukesarum kennel and Miss Styler's breeder, Glenys Gwilliam. Once they had been approved—for Mrs Gwilliam, the people are as important as the place as wolfhounds are 'soulful dogs and crave that interaction with humans more than anything else'—Marmaduke joined the household.

At the age of 10 months, he already stands 36in at the shoulder and, although still very puppyish, he's displaying the ➤



Above: Marmaduke and six-year-old Elizabeth Rolfe enjoy tea at their home. Facing page: Miss Styler stands tall with two of her Dukesarum wolfhounds, Atticus and Scout

breed's wonderful traits and temperament, following two-year-old Camilla around the garden to keep an eye on her.

'However, the minute a wedding cake comes into the house, we're on lockdown,' Mrs Rolfe adds hastily. 'He will go and find what he's not allowed.' To date, this has included a roast chicken, a whole Brie, several pats of butter and a sofa. Monty once wolfed down a delivery of scallops and king prawns, that had been ordered from a Chelsea fishmonger for a family barbecue.

6 Marmaduke's bowl is the size of a horse's feed bucket,

Space is essential for an Irish wolfhound, because, when you're as tall as a Shetland pony and the kitchen table is at shoulder height, all your accoutrements are Brobdingnagian. Marmaduke's bowl is the size of a horse's feed bucket and, instead of a stick, he helps himself to the contents of the log basket. He also refuses to get into the back of the family's Discovery, much in the way that some big horses won't load into a trailer.

Despite this, Maura Lyons, a molecular geneticist who is heavily involved with efforts to improve the health of the breed, manages to keep three wolfhounds at her two-bedroom cottage in Angus—although she reveals that 'we don't mind sharing our sofas' and 'Florrie gets into bed with us'. Florrie, along with Myrtle and Dahlia, is also 'fond of gardening', creating some 'spectacular holes'—think *The Great Escape*.

'They need exercise, like any other dog, but they're not high-energy, like spaniels and labradors,' Dr Lyons continues. As with other sighthounds, 'they'll take a bit of exercise, then like to take it easy'.

She speaks warmly of Miss Styler's efforts, as patron of the Irish Wolfhound Health Group, to try to reduce the heart problems and osteo-sarcoma that can affect the breed. Miss Styler hosts fundraisers and regular heart testing at Lake House and there's a bone-cancer research project running with Nottingham Vet School. If problems can be identified early, Dr Lyons explains, 'then owners know that you don't breed from that dog'.

The Irish wolfhound has graced these isles for thousands of years. Thanks to the efforts of Miss Styler and fellow passionate advocates, the wolfhound is looking to the future, as well as the past. 🐾

Dances with wolves...

○ An Irish wolfhound is the regimental mascot for the Irish Guards—it's currently a five-year-old dog called Domhnall (*'My regiment and other animals'*, February 11, 2015)—and 'The Fighting 69th' (1st Battalion, 69th Infantry), one of the most decorated units in the US Army. The 69th's wolfhounds are the only animals permitted in the St Patrick's Day parade on Fifth Avenue in New York

○ **Sporting artist Cecil Aldin repeatedly painted his wolfhound, Micky, alongside Cracker the bull terrier in the charming book *Sleeping Partners***

○ Other famous owners have included the actor Rudolph Valentino, who left a dog valued at \$5,000 (£3,735) when he died in 1926, and the Regency romance novelist Georgette Heyer, whose bitch, Misty Dawn, stood 33½in at the shoulder

○ **Many think Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had an Irish wolfhound in mind for *The Hound of the Baskervilles*—'a great black beast, shaped like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon'—but, as Ruth Rendell has noted, the illustration by Sidney Paget for *The Strand Magazine* (and on the wall at Baker Street Tube station) looks more like a German shepherd**





We have a plan

The Government's recently launched 25-year Environment Plan brings hope—provided people work together

Malcolm Greensmith/Adrian Brackbury/Mary Evans

NATURE has received its biggest shot in the arm for decades. With the welcome publication of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan (*Town & Country*, January 17), there is now a strategy in place to manage and improve our natural world. If it succeeds, we should all have cleaner air and water, thriving plants and wildlife and our 'green and pleasant land' (and seas) conserved and enhanced. We should be using land more sustainably, reducing waste and pollution and connecting people to their environment.

The plan, launched by the Prime Minister, doesn't guarantee a solution to deep-seated problems, but it gives us hope and a clear direction of long-term travel. It sets out how this generation can be the first to bequeath a better environment to its successor, reversing wildlife losses and seizing the opportunities presented by Britain's

departure from the EU and rapidly changing technology.

Goals like these take more than legislation to achieve and I'm pleased to say that the plan outlines the long-term, cultural shifts that will be necessary to match the ambition. The environment is clearly back on the nation's agenda and that is a heartening first step. I believe there are three compelling reasons why the plan should prove a success.

‘It means seeing Nature as not just a solitary entity, like a tree or a river, but as an entire system,’

First, enshrined in it is the concept of natural capital, which seeks to make us understand the essential value provided to us by Nature and to incorporate that understanding in all decisions we make affecting the environment.

This means seeing Nature as not just a solitary entity, like a tree or a river, but as an entire system that provides multiple benefits to people and wildlife, from the tangible—bees that pollinate crops—to the less tangible: the benefits to physical and mental health that are now widely recognised.

Second, the plan puts people at the heart of it. It sets out to increase the connection of

adults and, more importantly, children to the natural environment; this is essential because the environment can only be enhanced if society really cares about it and wants it to happen.

Third, another concept, that of putting 'net environmental gain' at the heart of planning decisions, will mean that developers will no longer only try to balance any damage they cause, but will be required to leave the environment better off after their building.

Some people will, of course, have doubts and questions. Will there be sufficient funding and legislation? Will there be a thriving and profitable farming industry, without which we cannot expect to achieve these goals? I'm an optimist, however. We now know what we need to do, for example, to reverse the decline of farmland birds or to improve soils and I believe there is a host of tools identified in the plan that can make a real difference to the long-term fortunes of wildlife, landscapes and seascapes.

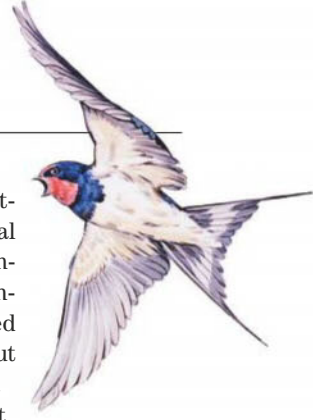
For example, creating a nature recovery network would make better use of our National Nature Reserves (NNRs), which are the crown jewels of conservation. The network will help to join up these NNRs, which will become wellsprings of wildlife that brim over into surrounding areas, making the countryside more resilient to the effects of climate change. As well as linking these prime sites on a huge scale, it will breathe more life into meadows, woods and urban greenspaces, giving more people an opportunity to enjoy connecting with Nature.

The introduction of conservation covenants is a far-sighted proposal that could safeguard environmental improvements in the long term. It would give people the opportunity to attach environmental protections to their land, not only for the next generation, but in perpetuity, if they wished.

None of these goals will be easy or quick to achieve. In many cases, they will require new partnerships to be forged and a great deal of commitment from all levels of society, but the important thing is that we now have a blueprint to shape our actions at a critical moment for the future of the country, its landscapes and the wildlife and people that inhabit them.

Natural England, as the statutory protector of the natural environment in this country, is ready to help the Government deliver its plan and avoid Philip Larkin's gloomy environmental prediction: 'And that will be England gone.'

Andrew Sells is chairman of Natural England



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Symbolism, splendour and grand opera

*Quinta da Regaleira,
Sintra, Portugal
In the care of Fundação
CulturSintra*

Between 1898 and 1912, one of the world's most mysterious gardens was created by the opera and theatre designer Luigi Manini. Tim Richardson introduces us to its splendours and its probable symbolism

Photographs by Paul Highnam

IN 1893, one of the richest men in Portugal, Antonio Augusto Carvalho Monteiro, purchased a small estate at Sintra, just outside Lisbon. Quinta da Regaleira, first known as Quinta da Torre, was named after the Baroness de Regaleira, its owner from 1840. She had turned the property into a summer retreat from Lisbon, erecting a new house and chapel on the steeply sloping site. Specimens of Araucaria (monkey-puzzle) that she planted still survive in the gardens.

Monteiro acquired the property with a view to commissioning a new house on the foundations of the existing building. However, having engaged an architect to draw up plans for a French neo-Gothic house, he abruptly changed his plans following a chance encounter with the opera- and theatre-set designer Manini on a train bound for Bussaco, where he was working on the Palace Hotel.

Much of the house has been reordered as a museum, but it is still possible to sense the ambition and opulence of the building from ➤

Fig 1: The Hunting Room conveys the opulence of the original interiors







Fig 2 above: A neo-Manueline garden bench carved in the form of branches and ropes. Fig 3 below: The Initiation Well. Fig 4 right: The promenade sweeps towards the house

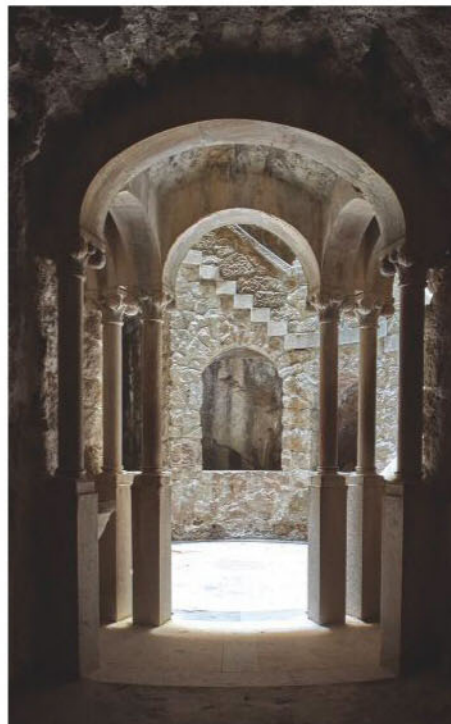
such surviving interiors as the Hunting Room (**Fig 1**), covered with carving, paintings and mosaic celebrating the chase. The gardens are, however, much more completely preserved.

Monteiro gradually acquired more land until the estate extended to about 10 acres, while Manini oversaw construction of an ambitious system of waterways (including five miles of aqueducts) to bring water into the estate from afar to feed the various pools and grotto features.

Manini's work at Regaleira can be characterised as neo-Manueline, the late-19th-century nationalist architectural movement that revived the forms of late-Gothic architecture in Portugal. This makes striking use of decoration in the form of twisted ropes, a reference to Portugal's maritime prowess (**Fig 2**).

The garden spreads up a steep hillside along winding paths and asphalt roadways. There is little sense of a coherent plan, as the garden's episodes appear in front of the visitor in quick succession—like scenes in an opera (indeed, many of the buildings appear to have 'wings'). However, there is a certain unity to decoration and materials; Manini employed a team of stonemasons from Coimbra to realise the work. As a result, all of the garden's features strike the visitor as variations on a theme.

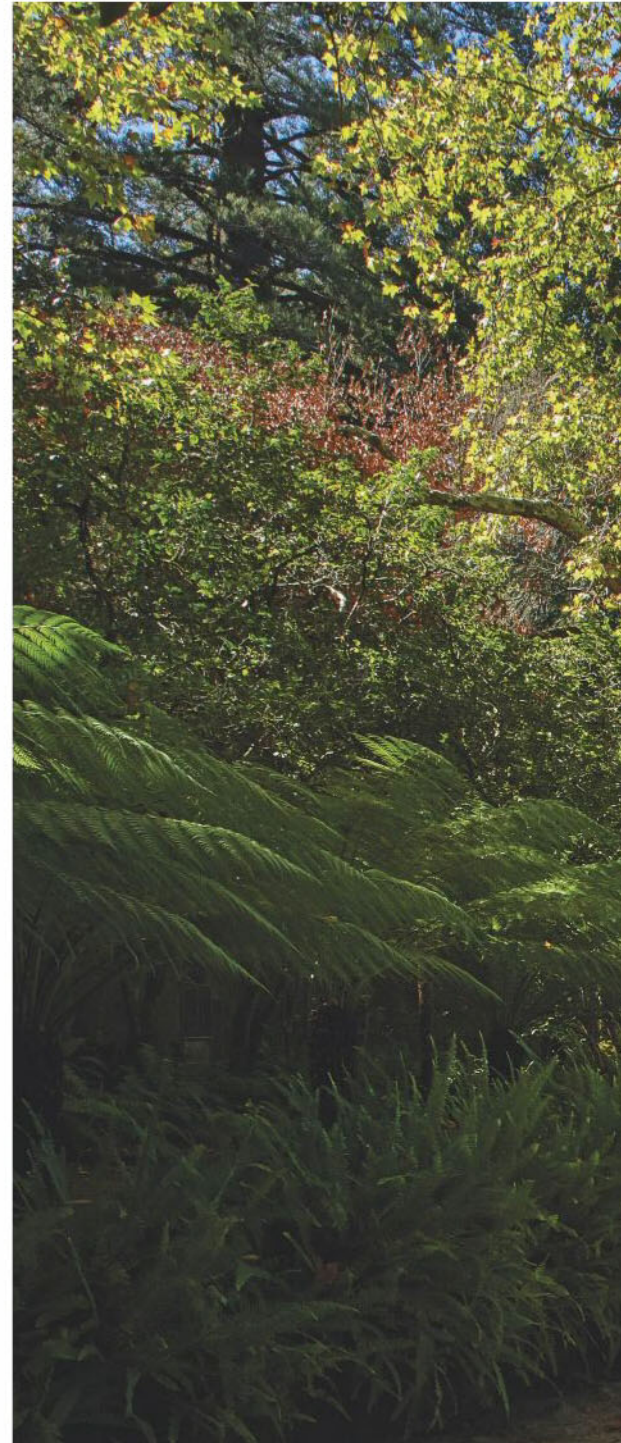
The Promenade of the Gods extends most of the way along the flat terrace that runs along the long wall lining the Sintra road (**Fig 4**). Shaded by magnificent plane trees, it is lined with statues—salvaged from Palacio Foz in Lisbon—representing Greek/Roman deities, including Ceres, Flora, Bacchus and Pan. At its far end is the Labyrinthic Grotto, built around a pool that is thought to have been in existence when Monteiro arrived. A short tunnel system through the grotto



arcades that edge it provides the visitor with a frisson of what is to come.

A little way uphill is Leda's Grotto, a circular room set at the base of what looks like the entrance to a castellated fort. Built-in planters containing aspidistra line the space, which is focused on a demure white-marble figure of Leda (the swan lurking at her feet). Adjacent is Monteiro's Greenhouse, where he grew or over-wintered tender subjects.

The visitor can climb up into the 'fort' above Leda's Grotto by means of a spiral staircase inside one of its towers, from whence the first of numerous fine vistas can be enjoyed. The castellated façade proves to be the frontage for yet another terrace, shaded by chestnut and lime trees, augmented in spring by the bright colours of the camellias and



azaleas that were planted in the garden in the 1950s—and which potentially detract somewhat from its mysterious air.

More towers and spires beckon from up the hill, most noticeably a zigguratic tower that is the garden's highest point. The spectacular Lake of the Waterfall is soon discovered at its foot. This exciting, grotto-like feature is essentially a vast pile of rocks overlooking a lake with stepping stones and a cascade, with a subterranean cavern below (**Fig 7**). This is a nexus of the garden's tunnel system, linking the two 'initiation wells', Regaleira's most celebrated and spectacular features.

Each of the wells has its own distinct character. The 33ft-deep Unfinished Well, entered via a tunnel leading to the west,



has rough stone walls running with water, a roundel of tree-fringed sky visible far above. To the east, the Initiation Well, some 90ft deep, is entered from either the top or the bottom. Spiral steps wind around the well's circumference, with nine landings and thin pilasters supporting elegant arches (**Fig 3**).

When the visitor reaches the top of the well, there is a surprise in that it is not a 'tower' at all, as most of its height is built into the hillside. The entrance to the well at the top level is afforded by means of a massive stone slab on a hinge, which acts as a disguised door—a delicious subterfuge.

There are several other entrances to the tunnel system, notably the Grotto of the East (**Fig 8**), inspired by Manini's set design

for Verdi's *Macbeth* (it features a cauldron and the Portal of the Guardians, a monumental castellated exedra with twin towers and a central rotunda, beneath which is an unsettling sculpture of a pair of snarling, crocodile-like creatures. If the garden at Regaleira is to be understood as an initiatory journey, then these beasts are just one more obstacle to be overcome on the route towards enlightenment and salvation.

Which brings us to the central question concerning Regaleira. Is there a coherent symbolism underlying this disconcerting array of features and symbols? Or is it a theme park of esoterism with no underlying rationale?

The key is the Chapel, which is set apart, physically and architecturally, from the

rest of the garden. It occupies a privileged position at a low level near the house and is the only garden feature that must unavoidably be encountered by visitors (**Fig 5**).

Manini conceived it in the neo-Manueline manner in 1904. The interior decoration is, in the main, liturgically conventional, with scenes depicting Christ and the Virgin Mary. There are, however, several less familiar decorative motifs here, chief of which is the distinctive red cross of the Order of Christ (which can also be found on the floor of the Initiation Well and at other places in the garden).

It can be seen on the exterior, above the entrance to the chapel, in the mosaic floor and in some of the carved decoration, most noticeably in the ceiling of the entrance ➤

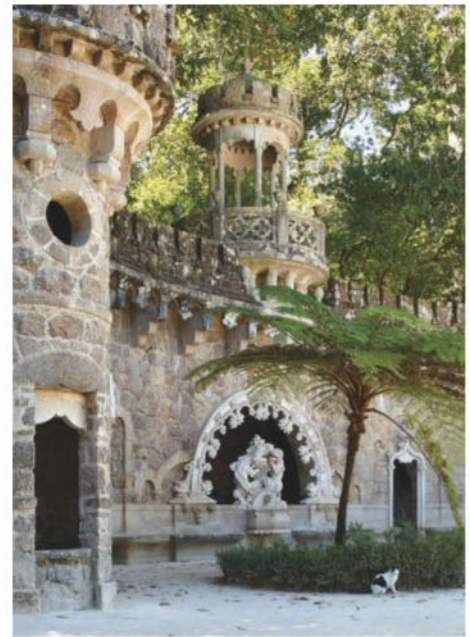


Fig 5 left: The spire of the chapel dominates the garden. Beyond is the fantastical outline of the house. Fig 6 above: The castelated walls of the Portal of the Guardians

hall, where it is set with a triangle, a stylised sunburst and the Eye of Providence.

The use of such motifs has strengthened the contention that the garden contains Freemasonic symbolism, although this assertion is not justified; the symbol of the Eye of Providence was not unique to Freemasonry. There is no evidence that Monteiro himself was a Freemason—indeed, ‘the craft’ was linked with republicanism in Portugal as it was in the rest of mainland Europe, which would have been anathema to Monteiro, as an ardent monarchist.

What is significant is the repeated use of this red cross of the Order of Christ, a quasi-monastic society founded in 1319, just seven years after the suppression of the Knights Templar by Pope Clement V. In its earliest

incarnation, the Order of Christ is understood to be the old Knights Templar of Portugal, reconstituted by the King under a new name.

The red cross of the order became a symbol of Portugal’s dominance during the age of imperial expansion—it was emblazoned on the sails of Henry the Navigator (a grandmaster of the order) and Vasco da Gama (another senior member). All of this was celebrated in Camões’s great patriotic poem of exploration, *The Lusiads* (1572). (Monteiro owned a significant collection of material related to Camões.)

For patriotic, conservative monarchists such as Monteiro, symbolism associated with the Order of Christ was a potent way of honouring Portugal’s glorious past and the old order associated with it.

Monteiro imaginatively extended and enriched the symbolism of the Order of Christ by introducing into the garden the concept of symbolic ‘initiation’ into a Templar-like society.

There are many stories around Templar initiation rites, but the most enduring is that the initiate was required to undertake a symbolic journey in a forest environment, experiencing hardship and disorientation along the way. The rituals of Continental Freemasonry have drawn on this tradition.

Such ideas, derived from Order of Christ and Templar lore (as opposed to 18th- and 19th-century Freemasonry), were physically enacted by Monteiro in the chapel crypt, which is almost bare excepting no fewer than four crosses of the Order of Christ and a large sepulchral stone. Additionally, a short tunnel leads into this chamber from outside—and also connects with the house—as an alternative to the spiral staircase from the chapel above.

If one imagines the rest of the garden as a confusing and disturbing labyrinth to be experienced by ‘initiates’, then the chapel crypt marks the climax of that journey. Even for someone who has not been blindfolded, the question of what is up and what is down soon becomes a moot point in this garden, as spatial disorientation arguably becomes its chief characteristic.

There is no evidence that Templar-inspired ‘intitiations’ ever took place at La Regaleira—indeed, if one views Monteiro’s use of symbolism as a cultural metaphor, there is no reason at all to imagine it may have done. Like Sir Francis Dashwood in England, who

convened the celebrated 'Hellfire Club' chiefly as a way of satirising the prurience of his political adversaries (there is no evidence his club ever existed in actuality), so it seems that Monteiro was utilising the Order of Christ and other esoteric lore partly as a commentary on the condition of Portugal at the turn of the 20th century.

The period 1890 to 1910 was one of the most intense in the country's political history. Republicanism had been on the rise since the 1870s and, in 1889, the monarchy was deposed in Brazil. In Portugal, radical republicans assassinated the King and his heir in Lisbon in 1908 and, two years later, a republic was established. The Order of Christ was summarily abolished in both countries.

‘For Monteiro, the very centre of his world was threatened at a time of chaos’

It is likely Monteiro chose Sintra itself because of its long association with the Portuguese royal family, as well as with the Crusaders and Knights Templar. The 8th-century Sintra Castle was a key strategic point and the Templars themselves were granted significant landholdings in and around the town in the 12th century (lands that later came into the ownership of the Order of Christ).

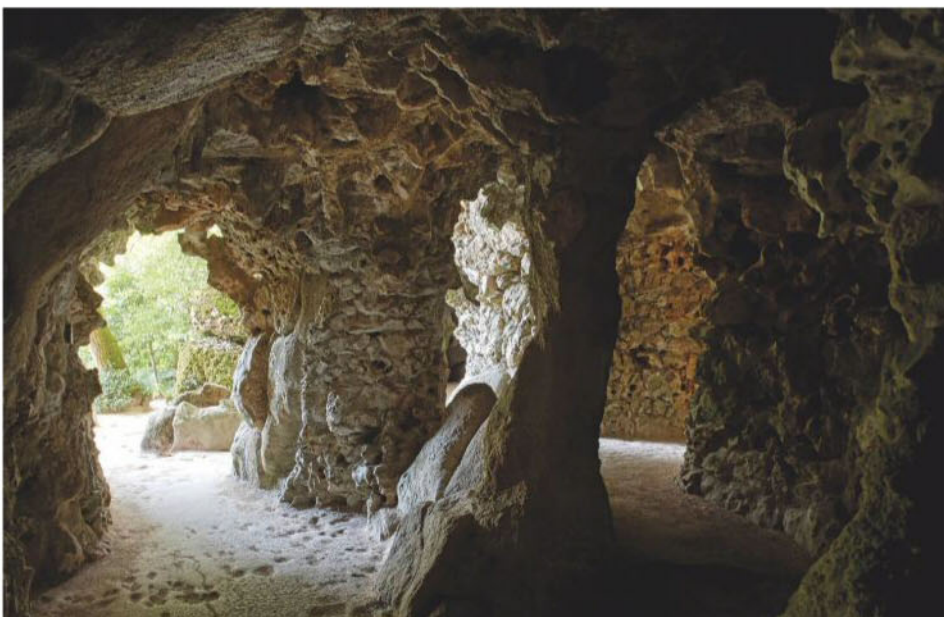
The long, castellated walls (*Fig 6*) that are a feature of the garden's terraces might be viewed as an homage to Crusader history and Monteiro's references to the Order of Christ has a political dimension, as a riposte to the anti-clericalism of the republican movement.

Monteiro was not some Lusitanian Aleister Crowley and the esoteric symbolism at Regaleira never seems sinister. In fact, it is rather polite and restrained compared with, for example, the full-blooded Rosicrucian rituals being enacted at this time. Monteiro was a rich man—a philanthropist and not a politician—using the decoration of his house and garden to make a cultural statement about the destruction of a world order he held dear.

W. B. Yeats, that other nationalist romantic with esoteric interests, observed of civilisation in the throes of early-20th-century modernity, that 'the centre cannot hold'. For Monteiro and other conservative patriots, the very centre of their world was threatened at a time of incipient chaos. The King had been killed and a republic loomed. Quinta da Regaleira can be read as a warning about the imminent disintegration of a cherished world order and the hope of a return to righteous leadership. 🐉



Fig 7 above: The Lake of the Waterfall is the nexus of the garden's tunnel system. Fig 8 below: The grotto inspired by Manini's haunt of the witches in his set for Macbeth



In for a penny

A miniature work of art, a piece of history brought to life, the cost of someone's thoughts: the endangered penny is still the most successful coin in the world, professes Jonathan Self





MY late grandfather had a somewhat obsessive and eccentric personality. For example, in 1938, he bet a man in his club that he could obtain a degree in German in nine months (the same time it took for a baby to be conceived and born), only studying for it during his daily commute to and from West Sussex. He won.

To offer another example, 25 years and several enthusiasms later, he became interested in eyesight, qualified as an ophthalmologist and invented an alternative cure for myopia. During this phase, every pocket in his coat, waistcoat and trousers was filled with lenses and he would frequently press one into my hand under the impression—he was fairly elderly at this juncture—that he was tipping me a crown.

When I eventually summoned up the courage to point out his error, he had a Toad of Toad Hall moment, dropped ophthalmology overnight and took up numismatics. Or, to be more accurate, he started collecting coins.

‘Coins bring history alive. They’re an excuse to research and study and to possess a fragment of our past,’

After his death, the bulk of his collection was sold, but, out of sentimentality—or more likely because Sotheby’s said they were worthless—a cardboard box containing some 20 or so Gold Block tobacco tins filled with cotton wool and pennies passed to my grandmother and thence, by descent, to me. They might have languished indefinitely in an unused attic bedroom had we not replaced the roof last year, for the first time since 1666, forcing me to sort through three and a half centuries’ worth of accumulated junk.

It was fully my intention to turn my grandfather’s collection of pennies into something more practical, specifically Blue Bangor slates. However, my plans changed when the dealer I consulted opened the first tin and said: ‘Ah. These are Norman silver pennies. Look: this one has two little stars and was struck for William the Conqueror—that’s him there—in Canterbury between 1066 and 1087. It’s in poor condition, but I’ll give you...’

Rob Webb/Getty

The figure he named seemed paltry for a coin that had survived almost 1,000 years. ➤

He opened some of the other tins. ‘This is even older. It was made for King Cnut in Colchester, some time before 1035. This is much later, Elizabeth I. This is later again, Charles I, and these are all Victorian, of course.’

‘Tragically, it seems that the British penny’s days may be numbered’

I flushed with the sudden remembrance of an incident at school in which I had made fun of a boy who had collected coins (Wynne-Morgan Minor, if you are still among us, I would like to apologise now), explained to the dealer that I had decided I would keep them, accepted an invitation to view, at some future date, pennies that might be of interest to me and came away. I had been bitten by the coin-collecting bug or, to be more specific, the penny-collecting bug.

The appeal is twofold. Coins bring history alive. They’re an excuse to research and study and, because I have an acquisitive streak, to possess a little fragment of our common past. Coins are also miniature works of art. They can be exquisite: part picture, part sculpture.

I love (there’s no other word for it) pennies because they’re ubiquitous. Only the wealthy ever possessed solid-gold angels, florins, nobles and sovereigns, but even the poorest handled pennies. Moreover, they’re the most successful coin in the world. Proto-pennies, small silver coins called *denarii*, were issued by the Romans during the Second Punic War (second century BC, to save you looking it up) and the English penny, in its various guises, has been in active use for more than 1,200 years. I feel almost dizzy contemplating the billions and billions of transactions that have involved this humble but invaluable coin.



An Anglo-Saxon penny that was discovered in Bedfordshire by an amateur metal detectorist. The coin sold for £230,000, breaking the world record for a British coin

The first proper English penny was the result of an import. Pepin the Short (whether this referred to his size or lack of money is unclear), King of the Franks, introduced a new currency system in 755, in which each silver penny weighed 1/240th of a pound. Pennies were indicated by the symbol ‘d’ (an abbreviation of the Latin *denarius*) and, for ease of daily use, it was determined that there would be 12 pennies to a shilling and 20 shillings to the pound.

King Offa of Mercia liked the system so much that he adopted it immediately when he came to power in 757. He put a great deal of thought into the design of his pennies. They not only carried his portrait in a variety of styles, but also, on the reverse, bore intricate crosses as well as serpents, eels and wolves.

For the next millennium, pennies were always made of silver, with one exception. In 1257, Henry III experimented with

a solid-gold penny, but, when the price of gold went up, most were melted down and only eight known examples survive.

Until the middle of the 17th century, pennies were struck. This process involved creating a die for each side of the coin, called, respectively, the pile and the puncheon. The blank coin was placed in the middle and the moneyer hit the end of the puncheon with a hammer, thus imprinting the image on the face and reverse.

The monarch outsourced this work to private contractors. Edward the Confessor, for instance, had as many as 70 mints in his employ, each of which was required to pay the royal purse 20 shillings every time a die was changed—a valuable source of revenue.

It wasn’t until 1797, with the introduction of copper pennies, that the coin officially became worth less than its metal content. A further cost saving was made with the introduction of bronze pennies in 1860.

To coin a phrase: pennies through time

211bc The first ‘penny’ is introduced by the Romans to fund the Second Punic War

755 Pepin the Short introduces silver pennies in Germany, each one weighing 1/240th of a pound



About 757

The first English penny is issued by King Offa of Mercia—one of the high points of Anglo-Saxon art and the most artistically accomplished coins produced anywhere in Europe at that time

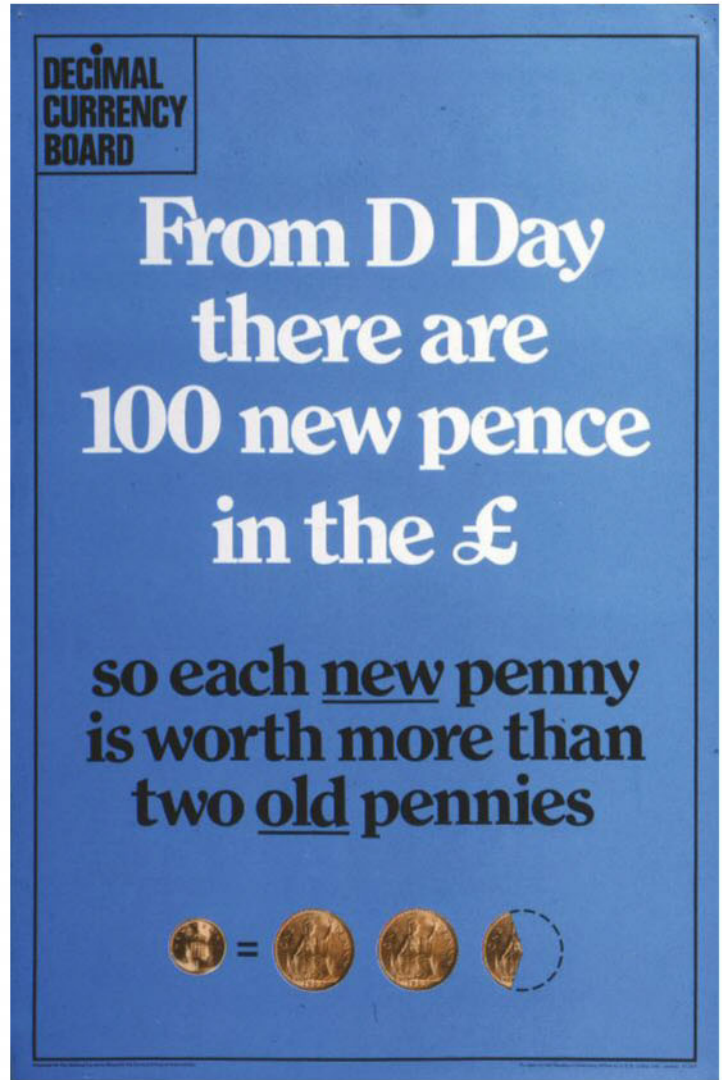


978 Anglo-Saxon silver pennies are the currency used to pay the Danegeld, protection money paid to the Vikings so that they would go away and not ravage the land.

Ethelred the Unready (978–1016) paid some 40 million pennies to the Danes and there were more English pennies in Denmark than in England at this time



Mary Evans/Peter & Dawn Pope Collection; Artokoloro Quint Lox Ltd/Alamy; Andrew Duke/Alamy; Ageev Rostislav/Alamy; The Royal Mint Museum/Bridgeman; The Print Collector/HIP/Topfoto; Fitzwilliam Museum/Bridgeman



Above left: A penny-inspired proverb, part of a series of postcards by May Bowley. Above right: A decimalisation poster from 1971


Although pennies are often extremely beautiful to look at, their utilitarian nature has not inspired writers, artists or composers. There is a Yeats poem entitled *Brown Penny* and... no, that's about it. Popular culture produces a slightly better harvest, with quite a few songs, from The Beatles' *Penny Lane* to Lionel Ritchie's *Penny Lover*. Dolly Parton famously sang: 'If teardrops were pennies and heartaches were gold, I'd have all the treasures my pockets could hold.'

Where they come into their own, however, is in daily language. There are dozens and dozens of penny-inspired expressions and proverbs of the 'A bad penny always comes back', 'A penny saved is a penny earned' and 'Find a penny, pick it up and all the day you'll have good luck' variety.

They're also the subject of insults ('If you gave him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change') and jokes ('I never had a penny to my name... so I changed my name') and a way of illustrating useful

advice: 'Watch the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves.'

Tragically, it seems that the British penny's days may be numbered. Having survived more than 50 rulers, fluctuations in the value of silver and other metals, the end of the Gold Standard, decimalisation and even inflation, it appears that electronic banking may prove the final nail in its coffin.

Instead of a penny for your thoughts, I beg you to spare a thought for your pennies. 

1066 The name 'penny' derives from the Old English *pennig*, which shares the same root as the German *pfennig*. During Norman times, a penny was also known as

'a sterling', an abbreviation of *Easterling*, which was the name associated with coins used by a group of Eastern European merchants



1213 King John starts the royal Maundy Money tradition by giving 13 silver pennies to 13 poor men



1257 Henry III mints the only gold penny ever. Only eight gold pennies are known to survive



1797 The first copper pennies are minted. Silver pennies are so valuable, they're withdrawn from circulation

1971 The British decimal one penny (1p) coin, usually simply known as a penny, is launched. It's worth 1/100th of a pound



Interiors

The designer's room

The interior designer and stylist **Katrin Cargill** has used a mix of classic fabrics to pull together a country bedroom

FOR this bedroom in north Norfolk, the designer used a restrained palette of colours, taking her cue from the cobalt-blue-and-white 19th-century Delft tiles in the fireplace. 'It was already a very beautiful room, with a wonderful collection of paintings and pictures,' explains Katrin. 'My role was to pull all the different elements together.'

Some of the furniture was already in place and included a magnificent four-poster bed that's a copy of a family heirloom. The latter has proved so popular among friends of the owner that it's now being manufactured locally (for enquiries, email teplandscapes@gmail.com).

For the canopy, she chose a contemporary blue-striped silk called *Rayure Trianon* from Verasetta and inside is a cream linen from Decortex. At the window is a toile in Delft blue from Jean Monro. All three are available through Turnell & Gigon (020-7259 7280; <http://turnellandgigon.com>).

Walls were painted in the 'very versatile' Camouflage by Dulux—a deep green that takes on different hues in different lights. At the foot of the bed is a Picton footstool from David Seyfried (020-7823 3848; www.davidseyfried.com) covered in *Fernbrook*, a linen also by Jean Monro.

On the floor is a carpet Tim Page called Yorkshire. 'I love carpets in bedrooms and often I'll layer a rug on top, too,' says Katrin. 'Layering fabrics and colours without making things overly complicated is my favourite approach.'

Arabella Youens

Katrin Cargill (020-7223 4499; www.katrincargill.com)





Hooked on classics

Inspired by Katrin Cargill's scheme, Amelia Thorpe chooses fabric and wallpaper designs that have stood the test of time



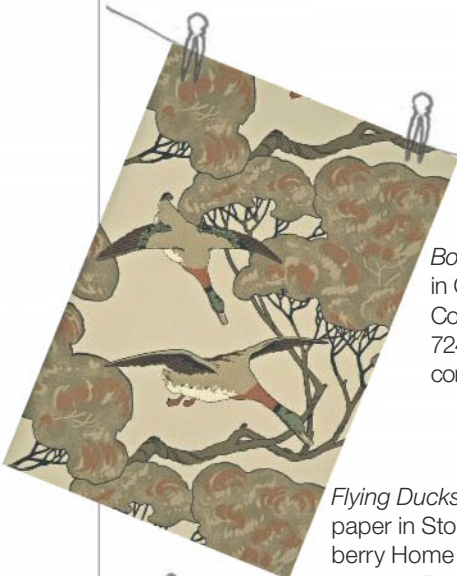
Malmaison wallpaper in Wedgewood is £141 per m from Zoffany (020-3621 1140; www.stylelibrary.com)



Swan Lake, cotton, £61 per m, Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little (020-8812 3123; www.osborneandlittle.com)



Egerton 100/9044 wallpaper, £85 per roll, Cole & Son (www.cole-and-son.com; 020-7376 4628)



Bowood 01020/01 chintz in Grey/Green, £75 per m, Colefax and Fowler (020-7244 7427; www.colefax.com)



Flying Ducks FG066.K102 wallpaper in Stone, £95 per roll, Mulberry Home (020-7351 7760; www.mulberryhome.com)



Christmas Roses, £214 per m, Bennison Fabrics (020-7730 8076; www.bennisonfabrics.com)



Damask 6500-01 linen in Aqua, £88 per m, Blithfield (020-7460 6454; www.blithfield.co.uk)



Adam's Eden linen in Ivory, £116.80 per m, Lewis & Wood (01453 878517; www.lewisandwood.co.uk)



Bellegarde 03064/04 wallpaper in Sepia, £67 per roll, Manuel Canovas (www.manuelcanovas.com; 020-7244 7427)

Interiors



Clockwise from top left: Lord Snowdon at work; the Linley Summer School; and new designs that will be launched at London Design Week 2018

Why craftsmanship matters

On Wednesday March 7, Lord Snowdon will discuss the vital role that the hand plays in contemporary design with COUNTRY LIFE's Interiors Editor Giles Kime at London Design Week 2018



FROM learning the art of furniture making at Parnham in the 1980s to his role as the Vice Patron of The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, Lord Snowdon has devoted his career to learning about, promoting and celebrating craftsmanship. Making by hand has also, for more than 30 years, been at the heart of his own business, Linley, one of the best-known names in luxury British furniture. In 2016, he launched the Linley Summer School at which eight design students are given an opportunity to develop their cabinet-making and marquetry skills.

This year, one of the highlights of London Design Week 2018 at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour is a one-hour session at which Lord Snowdon will discuss why he believes traditional skills are not just key to creating furniture that is beautiful, but that also functions well and has the capacity to last forever. A growing focus of his interest is design education—in particular, the decline in courses that offer students an understanding of the practical aspects of the design process.

The event

When Wednesday, March 7, 3–4pm

Where Design Club, Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, London SW10

Tickets: On offer to COUNTRY LIFE readers for £7.50 (usually £10). To book, visit dch.co.uk or email tickets@dch.co.uk and quote CL

Can England put the boot in again?

With the NatWest 6 Nations contest about to kick off, Owain Jones considers whether, with the help of flanker Sam 'the white orc' Underhill, England can hold off Ireland to claim their third title on the trot



THOSE who hanker after sporting action featuring an egg-shaped ball can rejoice as, from Saturday, the annual 6 Nations tournament positions itself at the front and centre of our screens over the next seven weeks, guiding us from the chills of winter to the first buds of spring. Eyes, as ever, will be on England to see if they can become the first side to conjure up a third consecutive 6 Nations' title, but primed to stop them will be the Celts, who love nothing better than giving their Anglo-Saxon neighbours a metaphorical bloody nose.

England

State of the nation The stats speak for themselves. England have won 22 of their last 23 tests since the 2015 World Cup—losing once to Ireland—and that remarkable sequence has seen their wily coach, Eddie Jones, earn himself a reputed £750,000-a-year contract extension. For the Barbour-clad masses at Twickenham, it's become a matter of how, rather than if, England will win. Definitely the team to beat.

Player to watch Sam Underhill (*above*). The son of an RAF officer, the 21-year-old Bath openside flanker is nicknamed 'the white orc' (from 'The Hobbit') by his captain Dylan Hartley thanks to his cropped hair and protruding ears. He's no less deadly either, as his thunderclap tackling is bound to thwart any opposition player looking to make inroads.

Likely outcome There are two potential banana skins for England. The first is tartan-clad, with a rejuvenated Scotland expected to launch fire and brimstone at Murrayfield in a stadium England haven't lost in since 1999. The Championship decider is touted to be at Twickenham, where they'll face the in-form Ireland side that extinguished their Grand Slam hopes in the squall of Dublin last March.

Prediction 1st

Ireland

State of the nation Joe Schmidt has been at the tiller of the good ship Ireland for four years and his tactical genius has seen them climb into the world's top four. They stick to a meticulously orchestrated gameplan—which saw them remain unbeaten in the autumn, thrashing the Springboks 38–3—and have world-class players in Tadhg Furlong, Conor Murray and Johnny Sexton who deliver when the pressure is on.

Player to watch Although Murray and Sexton look to dictate the pace of the game, they are likely to need a player to finish off their creativity. Step forward Ulster wing Jacob Stockdale, a rangy

6ft 4in son of a preacher man from Co Antrim. Blessed with poise, power and timing for hitting the cutest of lines, he's being talked up as their best wide-man in years.

Likely outcome The 'plucky Irish' tag has long since been dispatched by Ireland's rugby fans. Indeed, hope has been replaced by expectation and Schmidt will know a date with destiny lies at Twickenham on the final day. They'll need some magic, which could be provided by jet-heeled Jordan Larmour, 20, the youngest player in the tournament.

Prediction 2nd

Scotland

State of the nation Resurgent. The Scots have been the Celtic whipping boys for too long and their 1990 Grand Slam seems a lifetime away, yet fanned by the brilliance of full-back Stuart Hogg—who has the potential to become Scotland's greatest ever player—Gregor Townsend's men are playing with wit, invention and, most importantly, belief.

Four matches and four tries: is there any chance of stopping Jacob Stockdale?





From left to right: Scotland's Ali Price, Wales's James Davies and Italy's Jake Polledri.
Below: Anthony Belleau inherits France's cursed No 10 shirt, but can he make it his own?

Player to watch For so long, Greig Laidlaw—Scotland's pint-sized scrum half—has been Mr Dependable, but a long-term injury has given Glasgow's Ali Price an opening and he's prised it open with glee, dovetailing splendidly with club colleague Finn Russell. Price plays at a high tempo, snipes around the fringes and boasts a bonny kicking game.

Likely outcome The Scots ran the mighty All Blacks close in November at Murrayfield and that feel-good factor will see swathes of fans heading *en masse* to Cardiff on the opening weekend to try to inflict a morale-sapping loss on Wales. Win that, and edge England at Murrayfield, and the flying Scotsmen will feel anything is possible.

Prediction 3rd

Wales

State of the nation Wales have won four 6 Nations' titles in 12 years, but none since 2013 and head coach Warren Gatland's star is waning. With patchy form and injuries to three starting Lions (Sam Warburton, Taulupe Faletau and Jonathan Davies), Wales are underdogs for the first time in a decade. The ever-combative Gatland, however, says Wales represent a good outside bet. Time will tell.

Player to watch One of the main criticisms of the Welsh coaching set-up is their inability to evolve a bruising

yet limited game plan into more spontaneous, free-flowing fare, but the selection of openside James Davies points to a change in tack. The Olympic silver-medal winner from Llanelli is an old-school tear-away No 7 with a cult following and he could be Wales's catalyst.

Likely outcome So much hinges on the opening weekend's fixture with Scotland. Win it, and Wales go to Twickenham emboldened. Lose it, and there will be fears for their campaign. There is enough grizzled talent—step forward Alun Wyn Jones, Justin Tipuric and Rhys Webb—to see Wales through tight squeezes, but they may need the bounce of the ball to avert a season of mediocrity.

Prediction 4th

France

State of the nation *Sacre bleu*. Where do you start with Les Bleus? They've just sacked Guy Noves, a coach who made Inspector Clouseau look like a competent detective, and replaced him with Jacques Brunel, who inspires precious little *joie de vivre* among fans. France drew with lowly-ranked Japan in the autumn and there is little sign of them picking a balanced side, with systemic indecision hindering progress.

Player to watch Anthony Belleau. Much of France's trouble stems at fly-half—for many, the most important position on the pitch—where there have been dozens of limp auditions for the role in recent years, but the

promotion of 21-year-old Belleau to the French No 10 shirt gives a tantalising promise of stability. Lavishly talented, the Toulon pivot has the vision and subtle touches to kick-start a French renaissance.

Likely outcome In truth, not much is expected of France, with Brunel only running a handful of training sessions, but the French are nothing if not unpredictable and with a fair wind, the scalp of either England or Ireland will buoy the fickle masses at the Stade de France.

Prediction 5th

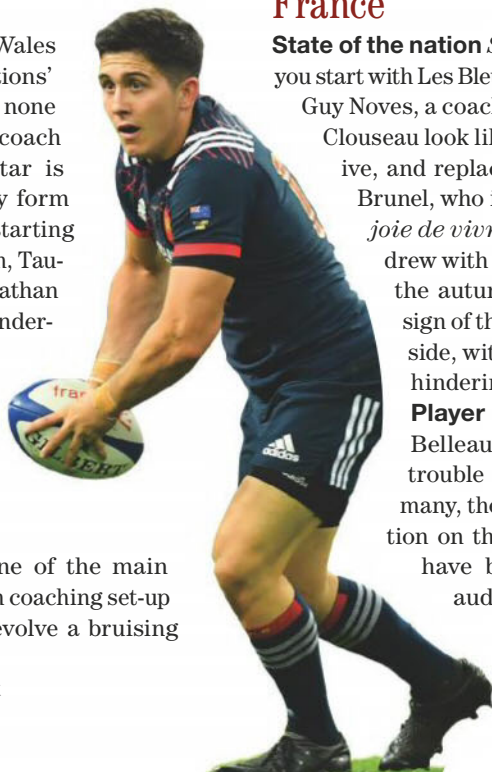
Italy

State of the nation Under former Ireland full-back Conor O'Shea, Italy have not regressed, but, in truth, they couldn't have back-tracked much further. They have won just 12 of their 85 fixtures in the 6 Nations, with victories usually coming over Scotland, yet improved results from their club sides Zebre and Treviso point to some of O'Shea's structures starting to bear fruit. Remaining competitive will be the realistic expectation.

Player to watch For a decade and a half, Sergio Parisse has carried the Italian back-row with his all-court game. However, with his limbs tiring, Parisse will look to 22-year-old Jake Polledri to take up the slack. The Gloucester openside is blessed with genuine pace and his line-breaking ability and workrate have impressed the Kingsholm faithful.

Likely outcome The Azzurri can no longer count on war-horses Martin Castrogiovanni, Mauro Bergamasco and Andrea Masi to provide *brio*, so this tournament will be one to consolidate and build towards the World Cup in Japan next year.

Prediction 6th 🐉



Lievig Christian/ABACA/PA Images; Suhaimi Abutallah/Getty; David Davies/PA Images; Christopher Lee/Getty



STYLE journalist Pip Durell has launched a gorgeous capsule range of 100% cotton shirts (*below*), designed to be worn both in bed and beyond. Ideal for eating toast on a Sunday morning, they're also smart enough for wearing out and about—comfort is the way forward. Shirts £80 (07900 947354; www.withnothingunderneath.com).

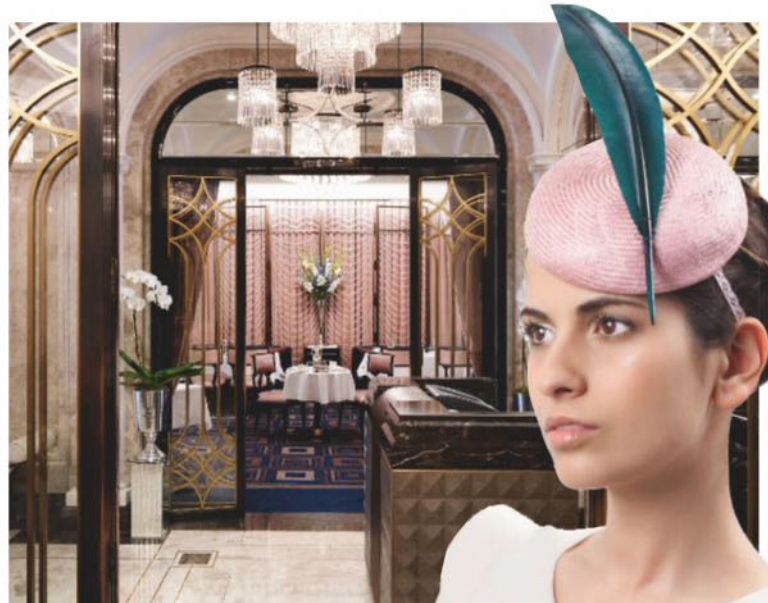


Bonhams has launched January Jewels, a campaign to reveal the true value of little-worn or inherited jewellery and precious stones. To establish if you have a piece of value, visit the auction house's dedicated webpage (www.bonhams.com/januaryjewels). Here, you can communicate directly with a jewellery specialist and upload pictures to help them reach a verdict ahead of a valuation meeting—these are free during January and February (www.bonhams.com/valuation_events).



PERCHED on a hillside at Porthallow on the Cornish coast, it's almost impossible to detect where the sky meets the sea at the Talland Bay Hotel. Wherever you are at this 16th-century eyrie, the sweeping views of the bay (*above*) are guaranteed to put anyone in a tranquil mood and pre-dinner drinks in the eclectic bar are the perfect way to prepare for a gourmet supper (the Terrace Restaurant was the Taste of the West's best restaurant in 2017). After an *amuse bouche* of pea *velouté* and toasted-almond soup, we feasted on local produce, including roasted scallops with pickled Granny Smith apples, woodpigeon terrine, lobster and lamb with artichoke and aubergine. Dog-friendly rooms from £235 per night, including bed and breakfast, dinner and based on two sharing (01503 272667; www.tallandbayhotel.co.uk). *PL*

IN celebration of London Hat Week (March 22–28), The Wellesley Hotel (*right*) in London's Knightsbridge is offering afternoon tea with millinery advice on Thursday, March 15—just a few days after Mothering Sunday. With flowers, feathers and fabrics at her fingertips, the award-winning milliner Katherine Elizabeth will talk guests through various techniques before helping to create their own bespoke piece to take home. £120 per person, including Champagne afternoon tea and all materials (020–7235 3535; www.thewellesley.co.uk).





Take your pooch to the powder

For skiers hoping to take their dogs with them this season, help is at hand from Alpine Guru's 'Paw Pair' dog-care service. With luxury ski chalets across Europe and the USA, Alpine Guru provides expert dog-sitting in select chalets, ensuring you can hit the slopes without worry. Along with a welcome-treat hamper on arrival, your pooch can enjoy a daily walk, followed by an in-chalet visit from a professional groomer. Luxury bedding and a dog-friendly menu are also provided, as well as the opportunity for nighttime dog-sitting, should the *après-ski* overrun. Leave the dogs at home? You'd have to be barking. In-chalet dog sitting starts from CHF35 (£26) per hour (020-3004 8750; www.alpineguru.com).

Katy Birchall

A SHINY new and serene private-members' health club has popped up in the heart of London, at 3, St James's Square. The only place in Mayfair where it's possible to play golf, the club boasts a state-of-the-art simulator, which features more than 100 of the world's best courses—professional golf coaching is on hand, too. Technology is also used to assess fitness through 360° monitoring of your progress, individually tailored to each client with DNA testing and 3D body scans. Afterwards, the spa offers heavenly treatments and an indulgent thermal suite.



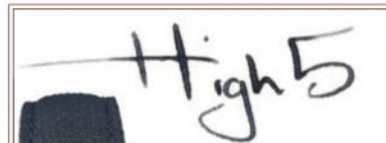
The best bits? There's a kit-laundering service, Truefitt & Hill offers hot-towel wet shaves and, last but not least, the changing rooms are equipped with Chanel perfumes, Dyson hairdryers and Elemis shower products. With a chill-out area, a bar and a lounge for business meetings, there's really no need to leave. Packages from £1,250 (020-3909 7133; www.3sjs.club)



By royal appointment

Established in 1798, and pharmacist to The Queen since 1958, John Bell & Croyden has just launched an In Residence luxury beauty room where bespoke facials are the name of the game. Maria di Chio tailors each treatment to ease your skin woes and can help with nutritional advice, too. You'll leave glowing and bewildered that it's possible to feel so relaxed in the heart of London. Facials from £60 (020-7935 5555; inresidence@johnbellandcroyden.co.uk)

Gary Garnick/Photoblibrary/Getty



← **Métropolitaine Galaxy**, £14,000, Parmigiani (020-7495 5172; www.parmigiani.ch)



→ **Drive de Cartier**, £13,800, launching September 2018, Cartier (020-3147 4850; www.cartier.com)



← **Polaris automatic watch with interchangeable straps**, £6,000, Jaeger LeCoultre (020-3402 1960; www.jaeger-lecoultre.com)



→ **1858 watch**, £4,100, Montblanc (020-7629 5883; www.montblanc.com)



← **Rose Gold Homage to Walter Lange watch**, £47,000, limited to 90 pieces (020-7730 1234; www.alangeandsoehne.com)

As seen at Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie 2018



‘Simple, understated glamour is our thing—we realised women in the country want something with a bit more edge.’
Rosie van Cutsem talks to Hetty Chidwick

COUNTRY wear and femininity haven't always gone hand in hand, until recently, when The Duchess of Cambridge's 'go-to' parka designer, Troy London, came to the public's attention. Country wear is now more chic thanks to the Ruck Keene sisters, Rosie (now van Cutsem) and Lucia, who were brought up in—and inspired by—the Oxfordshire countryside, as well as the Outer Hebrides, where they've always spent summer holidays.

They design practical country clothing without sacrificing style, which isn't an easy task when muted colours and keeping warm are top of the agenda in the field. Having eschewed London life, they're now based in Norfolk and are similarly influenced by its landscape.

'We've designed every piece ourselves, based on our own experiences in the countryside,' explains Rosie. 'It's been a steep learning curve for the two of us, being very hands-on, but it's given us a better understanding of how it all falls together.'

The siblings are passionate about their products being made in the UK, right down to the zips, finding new and unsung heroes of British craftsmanship around every corner. 'It's amazing what's going on in the UK with producing fabrics and weaves,' says Rosie. 'The amount of manufacturing that's hidden away and badly marketed is astonishing.'

Whether shooting, cheering at the side of a school sports pitch or gadding about town, Troy has beautifully cut pieces for all occasions, with the biggest joy being that, as each garment is so stylish, it barely matters what you've got on underneath.



Layer it up for winter under a parka or over a simple shirt for spring—this gilet will only get better with age.

Belted gilet in Rust, £480
(www.troylondon.com; 020-3457 8549)

Rosie and Lucia's tips for a weekend in the country

- Remember that colour is okay, especially hints of the right one, such as rust or purple
- Waisting jackets will enhance a feminine silhouette
- Our jackets look best with gold hoop earrings and just a hint of mascara, but try adding one of our suede baker-boy caps to add a cool and contemporary twist to trusted classics—the peaks in ours are made with layers of leather, rather than cardboard, so they're comfortable and malleable
- The best present to take? Top-quality olive oil usually does the trick

A few of my favourite things



Jasper Conran

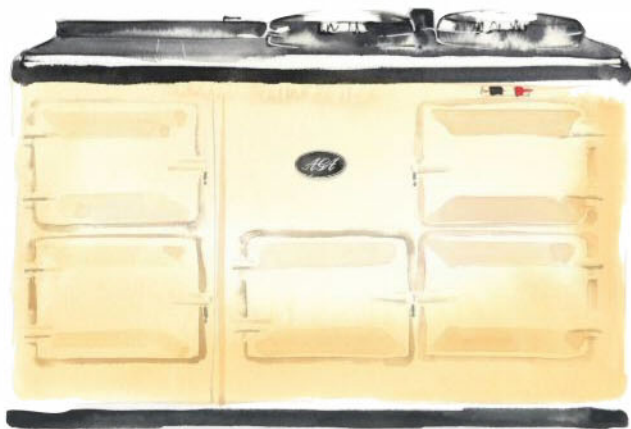
The British fashion designer launched his first womenswear collection in 1978 and helped to found London Designer Collections, now London Fashion Week. Jasper has since diversified into menswear, fragrance, eyewear and performing arts, creating costumes and sets for 13 ballets, operas and theatre productions. He lives in Dorset and has just opened his first hotel, L'Hotel Marrakech, in the heart of the *medina*

Illustrations by Ollie Maxwell

→ I think, on balance, that **parrot tulips** are my favourite flowers. Their extraordinary variety of colours, and colour mixes, lifts my soul at the end of long, hard, grey winters. I like growing them in pots, whether mixed or just one variety, or picking them from the garden and arranging them to look like 17th-century Dutch flower paintings (www.sarahraven.com/flowers; 0345 092 0283)



↓ This **trolley** is fantastic! It's perfect for shopping, collecting wood, moving pots around the garden and carrying nephews and nieces, dogs and garden produce. I use it all the time and for everything (www.trade-winds.be)



↑ Like many other people, I've developed a deep, romantic relationship with my **Aga**. Whether it's cooking toast in the morning, stews for lunch or jams for tea, I get immense pleasure being in its company. From £12,785 (0800 111 6477; www.agaliving.com)



Sloping off

Styled by Hetty Chidwick. Photographed by John Lawrence Jones



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Rolling in the deep

On a desolate January morning, John Lewis-Stempel peers into the murky depths of his pond and discovers how an unlucky squirrel met an untimely end

Illustrations by Philip Bannister

I GO up to the pond, look in and see the depths of winter. It's about 3pm, under a grey sky, and the pond is a ring of dull water. Nothing stirs, nothing moves. Even the moorhen is silent and keeps to her secret places under the willow. The surface shroud of pale scum, with its litter of twigs, is anti-human. Reeds look like broken swords. Beyond the pond, the silent mist.

I peer at the unmoving water—there's only the cold decay of leaves on the bottom. Like many a farm pond, ours is entirely artificial, made 300 years ago by cleverly damming a field ditch and spring to create a third-of-an-acre watering hole for cattle and a place to grow carp for fish on Friday.

There are still carp. Unseen, down in the oil-thick water, the fish lie torpid. Beneath them, in the centuries' ooze, the frogs stall their reptilian metabolism, so they're neither quite dead, nor quite alive. Is there

anything more desolate than still water in winter?

All the long day, I've been in the barn servicing the tractor and setting the plough for the new season, a hateful job of delicate geometry and big spanners. A breath of fresh air, away from oil and dust, seemed a good idea, but now, in the drab of a mid-January afternoon, I'm less sure. Electric lights and Thermos, suddenly, seem warmly welcoming.

It's the dog that finds the dead squirrel, at the junction where the ditch enters the pond. She paws at the animal's head, so it swivels on the spindle of its spine. I call Bluebell off—she refuses to come, so I drag her by the collar and make her sit. Usually the most placid of dogs, she whines her displeasure. I understand then that decades of selective breeding have failed to extinguish entirely the wolf inside a black labrador.

In front of the squirrel, which is warm to the touch, is the smashed white-china of a woodpigeon's egg. Above both squirrel and egg looms an oak. Turning the squirrel corpse over, I find small raised tufts of fur on its grey back. And bright blood spots. In the mud around the corpse are the paw prints of Reynard and one faint scuff from a bird's wing.

‘It doesn't require Sherlock Holmes to establish what's taken place’

It doesn't require Sherlock Holmes of 221B Baker Street to establish what took place. The squirrel had raided the woodpigeon's nest, but, in its getaway, had been attacked by a bird of prey, almost certainly a tawny owl forced to fly in daylight because of hard times.

Few British birds of prey will take on a buck squirrel. The tawny has the weight and the necessary equipment, talons in zygodactylous ('paired toes') arrangement, with two claws pointing forwards and two back. The talons make a spring trap of claws. As the owl's talons slice in, then close up, the prey dies from shock or the puncturing of a vital organ.

However, no sooner had the tawny brought the squirrel down than an opportunist fox (is there any other sort?) had interrupted the owl. The dog and I have disturbed the fox. Elementary, my dear Watson.

Nature is a game of consequences. The pigeon eats the acorn, the squirrel takes the pigeon's egg, the tawny seizes the squirrel, the



fox comes for the dead meat. Nature is a food chain, in which the links are death.

Something comes over me and I can't stand demise and lassitude any longer, so I grab a stick and chuck it at the dead pool. The dog follows for the retrieve and the water comes alive in small waves of excitement. Ponds have no motion of their own—they need external forces: wind, jumping fish, paddling mallards or swimming labradors.


January is, of course, named for the Roman god Janus, who faced two ways. January is the transition between the old year and the new year, between winter and

spring. I'd hoped to find some sign of spring in the pond. I'd sought frogs' spawn or the first green blade of rising reed. There are no such indications, but, as the dog and I turn to go home, a missel thrush starts up in the top of the pondside willow.

A missel thrush, especially set against bare January branches, always impresses with his physical bulk. He's Pavarotti in feathers. He's also an avian herald of spring. Since November, our missel thrush has sat in the hollies, jealously guarding his food store. Now, he's emerged to stake his claim to breeding land and wife in song. The yearly cycle of mating and birdsong has begun.

And doesn't the willow on which he perches have a blush of green? The colour of spring appears early in the willow's skin.

In this moment of optimism, I look up at the woodpigeon's chaotic nest of sticks in the oak. Perhaps, rather than being an absurdly late nester, she's an astutely early one and can divine the coming of spring better than I can?

It's human nature to live on a diet of hope. I go back to work in better mood. In fact, you might say, I have spring in my step. So ends the tableau of 'The Pond in Winter (With Squirrel Corpse)'. 

Twice crowned victor of the Wainwright Prize for nature writing, for 'Where Poppies Blow' (2017) and 'Meadowland' (2015), John Lewis-Stempel was the 2016 British Society of Magazine Editors Columnist of the Year





Fried to a crisp

No social gathering or visit to the pub is complete without a bag of salt and vinegar or cheese and onion. Nick Hammond traces the life of a Tyrrells crisp, from potato to packet

MIST creeps through the valley and a sharp frost fingers the verges of the narrow lane. It's a bright, beautiful morning in Herefordshire and on the far slope, where a roe deer tiptoes nervously over the brow of the hill, deep ochre soil is growing potatoes destined for greatness.

'Only the best end up in a Tyrrells crisp packet,' declares Patrick Lewis of co-op Gamber Growers, as our breath steams in the frigid air of Cobrey Farms' yard. 'We're always trying out new varieties, test planting an acre or two to see how they grow, how well they last. We have a good grasp on what does well and where. Here, for instance,' he says, sweeping his hand across the hillside in front of us, now bathed in sunshine, 'we've found that Lady Rosetta grows best. It makes a cracking good crisp, too.'

I don't think he'd be offended if I tell you that Mr Lewis is a potato nerd. His knowledge about growing conditions, varieties, the market, the consumer and everything else in between is encyclopaedic, which is why he's the co-op's managing director. He even has an app on his mobile phone that allows him—and his customers—to keep an eye on how any single field of its potatoes in Herefordshire is growing. The pictures are updated, by him, during his weekly farm visits. It's this level of detail that makes Cobrey Farms' potatoes perfect for Tyrrells.

The farm is owned by the Chinn family, which also grows rhubarb, blueberries, asparagus, beans and grapes for fine English fizz on the rolling hills. However, it's the tubers that provide the bread and butter.

'You're not going to get rich growing potatoes,' Mr Lewis admits, as we enter the stygian gloom of a giant storehouse, an earthy sweetness filling the air; a cold draught of the very essence of *terroir*. More than 1,000 tons of potatoes lie quietly in the dark. Thanks to branded crate information, each and every one of them can be traced back to the very field they were grown in and the date they were lifted.

Some are sent for frying immediately (the record from harvest to farmshop is a barely believable 46 minutes, apparently) and others are 'laid down' to keep up supplies all winter long. They can't just be left to doze unsupervised, however. Extremes of heat or cold can become catastrophic within hours, so there's a potato 'cellarmaster' here each day, carefully monitoring temperature and humidity levels.

'We have an excellent relationship with Tyrrells, which works for both parties,' explains Mr Lewis. 'They frequently come to us to ask if something different can be done and we'll do everything we can to make it happen—even if it's growing a type of potato the farmers aren't particularly keen on.'

There's a vast difference in variables when it comes to potatoes, from those that demand regular attention and irrigation to those that seem to thrive in the harshest possible conditions. Each has its own story of shelf life, consistency and suitability for the crisp-frying process (more on that later).

Potatoes can rot in the ground within 24 hours in wet weather, so lifting them when they're ready is of huge importance. In bad



A crisp off the old block

- Potato seeds are planted from March to May and are ready to go into the fields once the ground temperature reaches a consistent 8°C. There they will stay—with farmers monitoring the crop's progress by eye and even by aerial drone, which help in spotting disease—until July through to the end of October, when they will be lifted, weather permitting
- Good crisp potatoes include Golden Wonder, Rooster, Almera, Vales Everest, Mayan Gold and Lady Claire. Tyrrells uses mostly Lady Rosetta, Lady Claire, Setanta and Taurus
- Special-edition Tyrrells crisps have included Pesto & Parmesan, Black Truffle & Sea Salt and even Dorothy Goodbody Ale & Mature Cheddar Cheese in collaboration with the Wye Valley Brewery

years, it can mean all hands to the pumps for wet, cold and muddy mayhem in the fields.

One farmer recently faced the unenviable decision of whether to hire specialist lifting machinery, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds, or face losing his entire crop. It's a reminder that, with all the satnav, mobile-phone apps, high-tech meter readings and shiny machinery, farming is still ultimately reliant on Mother Nature.

‘They come hopping and bopping along the conveyor belt like hyped-up teenagers’

Once lifted, the potatoes are cleaned and graded (mud is returned to the fields to fight another day) and smaller ones are discarded for use in animal feed.

Prime specimens are loaded, pallet by pallet, onto lorries for the journey to Tyrrells Court Farm.

Founded in the early 2000s by potato farmer William Chase, Tyrrells has drawn worldwide acclaim for its array of flavours and the crunch of the skin-on, curled crisps. Although Sea Salt & Cider Vinegar and Mature Cheddar & Chive remain bestsellers, France loves a vegetable crisp. America can't get enough of both the wacky English flavours and their packaging.

There were two original fryers on Tyrrells Court farm, but now there are 12. Crisp-making is a 24-hours-a-day, 363-days-a-year business here, complete with several rotas of shiftwork and even robot packers, which are simul-

taneously mesmerising and a little bit sinister.

However, before that, the spuds are plunged into a chocolate-coloured pool of water, where the remaining dirt is thoroughly washed off. Next, they come hopping and bopping along the conveyor belt like hyped-up teenagers at the school disco. They look as if they're having a really, really good time.

Not for long, however, as they're next put through a razor-sharp slicer and then tipped into one of the vast vegetable-oil frying tanks, which ensure the thin slices cook quickly and cleanly into crunchy, bag-sized crisps. They're watched carefully to ensure they don't stay in a moment too long. Newly formed crisps remain in the fryer for about eight minutes, being gently paddled and turned from one end to the other before being sent on into a kind of tumble dryer, which whizzes them around to extract excess oil.

'It's another reason they're so crunchy,' reveals Cath White, Tyrrells' international marketing manager. 'And we leave the skin on, which adds crunch and gives our crisps their distinctive look.' Flavourings—and the company has tried some weird and wonderful ones over the years, from Worcestershire Sauce & Sundried Tomato to Honey Roast Ham & Cranberry—are made from powdered natural ingredients and applied to the warm crisps in batches.

Taking care not to break up their optimum size, an incredible 'laser eye' then picks out misshapen or undersized crisps with high-speed, individual jets of compressed air. It's too quick to see—and I spent a good few minutes trying.



The crisps are finally fed into their appropriate bag, nitrogen-flushed, sealed and dispatched to be packed by the robots. And you won't see the crinkly little devils again until they're on the bar in front of you, accompanying your favourite drink.

They'll have come from a little corner of Herefordshire where the soil is red, where men lose sleep over potatoes they can't see and where Nature still decides whether they'll grow or wither.

Tyrrells (www.tyrrellscrisps.co.uk; 01568 720244)

Stock/Getty Images Plus; Zoomer GmbH/Alamy; Alamy; Getty; R Tsubin/Getty; Michael Roberts/Getty; ur-ban-buzz/Clint Garnham/Alamy





More ways with kohlrabi

A side of roasted kohlrabi (below)

Peel a couple of kohlrabies, cut into even-sized pieces and drizzle with olive oil. Put them in a roasting tray with a couple of sprigs of rosemary on top and roast for about 30 minutes or until cooked through. Discard the rosemary, add a little lemon juice and grated Parmesan, toss well and serve. Delicious with pheasant Milanese and rocket salad.



Kohlrabi soup with hazelnut pesto (serves 2)

Peel and dice a kohlrabi, toss it in olive oil and roast in a moderate oven for 30 minutes. Gently fry a chopped onion, a finely diced carrot and 2 diced sticks of celery, add the kohlrabi to the pan and pour in enough chicken stock to just cover the vegetables. Simmer gently, tasting for seasoning. Process to a smooth purée, then add 50ml of cream and mix. In a food processor, combine 50g of toasted hazelnuts, 1 sprig of rosemary, a handful of rocket leaves, juice from 1 lemon, 50g of grated Parmesan and 75ml of olive oil and process to a paste. Spread the pesto on toasted sourdough and serve with the warmed soup.

Kohlrabi-and-potato rösti

Peel, grate and mix together equal amounts of potato and kohlrabi. Wrap them in a tea towel and squeeze firmly to remove any excess water. Heat butter and oil in a non-stick frying pan, then add small rounds of the kohlrabi and potato. Season and, once golden, turn over and cook the other side. Serve with meat dishes or topped with smoked salmon and sour cream.

Melanie Johnson

“Kohlrabi isn’t found on too many menus, but it’s not to be overlooked at this time of year. I love it with other root vegetables, as in the main recipe this week”



Cod with kohlrabi and root-vegetable crown

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 kohlrabies
3 beetroots
1 golden beetroot
1 small butternut squash
2 sprigs thyme
2 sprigs rosemary
Juice of 1 lemon
1 crushed clove garlic
1tbspn wholegrain mustard
2tbspn maple syrup

30g butter
4 cod fillets
Juice of 1 lemon
75ml double cream

Pea shoots to garnish

Method

Preheat your oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 and grease a casserole dish with olive oil. Peel the vegetables and slice them into thin discs with a mandolin, then toss them in a large bowl with olive oil so that they’re well coated. Chop the herbs and sprinkle them into the bowl, then arrange the slices neatly in the casserole dish and bake for about 40–45 minutes or until tender.

Meanwhile, whisk together the lemon juice, garlic, mustard and maple syrup with some seasoning. Remove the casserole dish from the oven and pour the maple-syrup mixture over the vegetables.

Melt the butter in a frying pan and, once hot, add the cod fillets. Reduce the temperature and, once the fish is opaque halfway up, turn it over and cook for a further couple of minutes. Add the lemon juice and the cream, mix well and heat gently, ensuring the fish is just cooked through.

Serve the cod on warmed plates, with the sauce from the pan spooned over it, alongside the roasted roots. Top with pea shoots as a garnish.

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In fine fettle

Trust in provenance—and the renovations of thoughtful owners



THIS week's launch onto the market, at a guide price of £12 million through Savills (020-7016 3713), of elegant, Grade II*-listed Hurst Lodge at St Nicholas Hurst, near Twyford, Berkshire, turns the spotlight on a very English country house with a 434-year history that is largely entwined with that of three dynamic families—the Barkers, the Palmers and the Palmer-Tomkinsons.

The original U-shaped, Elizabethan hall (still the core of the present house) was built in about 1580 by the Barker family of Hurst, a branch of the Barkers of Sonning. At that time, it was the home of John Barker, his wife and their eight children. Thirty-four years a gentleman usher to Elizabeth I, and 'greatly beloved of all good men', Barker died in 1620.

In 1697, Barker's great-great-granddaughter, Frances Fairfax, married David, 4th Lord Cardross, later 8th Earl of Buchan. They lived together at Hurst Lodge and, in about 1700, added a classic Queen Anne façade to the south-west front of the house, along with a two-storey extension.

Some 40 years later, however, finding the journey between Berkshire and Scotland

too onerous, Lady Cardross sold Hurst Lodge to London attorney Robert Palmer. His son, Richard, also an attorney, and even more successful than his father, was born at Hurst Lodge, but later moved to Holme Park, Sonning, having bought the Rich family manor, demolished the old Eliza-

Above and below: **Grade II*-listed Hurst Lodge, Berkshire, stands in 48 acres of gardens, grounds and paddocks, with numerous outbuildings. Recently refurbished, it has 12 bedrooms and six reception rooms over three floors. £12m**





Above and below: Carefully renovated, Arts-and-Crafts The Thatched House, Gloucestershire, is perched in an idyllic valley setting. £1.95m

bethan house and replaced it with a new Georgian mansion.

The Palmers retained Hurst Lodge until about 1919, when it was sold to Sir Philip Martineau, who played cricket for England and briefly renamed the house Hurst Court. A substantial extension was added between the wars, when the house was bought by the sporting Palmer-Tomkinson family.

Following the death of James Palmer-Tomkinson in a skiing accident in 1952, Hurst Lodge passed to his daughter, Lady Ingram, and then, in 1989, to her daughter, Mrs Alan Peck, who lived there with her

husband before selling, via Savills, to the current owners in 2004.

History sits lightly on the shoulders of this delightful house, one of the finest in this lively rural village, which will benefit from the arrival of Crossrail at nearby Twyford in a year or two. Imaginatively refurbished by its present owners, Hurst Lodge offers substantial accommodation on three floors, including a reception hall, six reception rooms, a striking, contemporary kitchen/breakfast room, an impressive master suite, 11 further bedrooms and nine further bathrooms.

Discreetly hidden from view behind a solid wooden electric gate, the house stands in some 48 acres of well-maintained gardens, grounds and paddocks. Numerous outbuildings include a gardener's cottage, a former coach house, a former squash court/studio, three agricultural buildings and excellent equestrian facilities, including stabling, a barn and level paddocks that surround the house on three sides, with woods and farmland beyond.

In sharp contrast to the often over-blown grandeur of the High Victorian period, houses of the Arts-and-Crafts era project the more homespun outlook of medieval times and the skill of craftsmen from that time. Nowhere are these seen to better effect than in the Cotswolds, where the beautifully restored Grade II-listed The Thatched House at Tunley, near Cirencester, Gloucestershire, has been launched on the market through Butler Sherborn (01285 883740) and Knight Frank (01285 659971) at a guide price of £1.95 million.

Set on high ground overlooking lovely gardens in an idyllic valley setting, two miles from Sapperton, The Thatched House was created from two humble, 18th-century cottages by Alfred Hoare Powell, the Arts-and-Crafts architect, designer and pottery painter. Powell was the architectural pupil of John Dando Sedding, through whom he came to know fellow pupils Ernest Gimson and Ernest Barnsley and the architects Philip Webb and Detmar Blow.





Sentry Hill, Surrey, comes with 10 acres of formal gardens and paddocks, six bedrooms and miles of hacking from the doorstep. £2.75m

Powell first came to Gloucestershire to recover from a bout of pleurisy and lived for a time with his fellow Arts-and-Crafts designers at Pinbury Park, Sapperton, a big old house leased by Gimson and Barnsley from the Bathurst family. Powell was enchanted by the peace of the area, which he described in a letter to his mother as 'perfectly exquisite', adding 'wherever you look are beautiful hilly woods and wooded hills'. At some point between 1906 and 1910, he took on the two cottages in the hamlet of Tunley, between the villages of Oakridge and Sapperton.

The cottages were set in sylvan isolation on one of those 'wooded hills' that Powell loved so much, overlooking steeply falling ground above a meadow that swept down below the buildings into a sheltered combe. The tranquil pastoral setting fed directly into Powell's work for Wedgwood, which features naturalistic images of flowers, plants, trees, birds and animals.

The easternmost cottage was converted to a studio, with the removal of the ceiling between attic and ground floors to create a single, full-height room with a large, reclaimed, stone-mullion and transom window in the gable wall at the north end. Both cottages were re-roofed in thatch, replacing earlier Cotswold tiles. A photograph in the Gloucester-

‘Wherever you look are beautiful hilly woods and wooded hills’

shire Archives shows the cottages at this stage, still separate, but with their thatched roofs—uncharacteristic for the area—the buildings lime-washed and the large window in place.

The house was extended in 1982 with the addition of a kitchen wing, but, by the turn of the 21st century, it had fallen into disrepair. Following extensive research by the current owners, who bought the house eight years ago, the building was carefully renovated throughout and now offers three reception rooms, a kitchen, a study, a media room, a mezzanine library, two double bedrooms and two bathrooms. Outside, wonderful views of the surrounding countryside and woodland can be enjoyed from almost every aspect of the property's 1¼ acres of beautifully laid-out gardens, says a captivated Ian Daniels of Butler Sherborn.

Brand new to the market, at a guide price of £2.75 million through the Farnham

office of Strutt & Parker (01252 821102), comes another house of impeccable Arts-and-Crafts parentage—spacious Sentry Hill at Frensham, three miles from Farnham. Designed by Farnham's own Harold Falkner in 1909, and extended in 1924, the striking, six-bedroom family house stands in almost 10 acres of formal gardens and paddocks in an AONB centred on the National Trust-owned Frensham Common, which offers miles of hacking over common land, with a bridleway right on the doorstep of Sentry Hill.

Confidently updated by the owners during their 14-year tenure, the house retains many signature features, including the original front door, fireplaces and oak panelling in the reception hall, complemented by new oak panelling, herringbone flooring and a wood burner in the drawing room and new windows throughout. The hub of the house is the open-plan, triple-aspect kitchen/dining/family room, which opens onto the wrap-around, west-facing terrace, via three sets of French doors. The coach house has also been renovated and arranged as two separate apartments and the neat stabling complex, screened from the house by trees, includes a useful all-weather manège. 🐾



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The good life

The finest farmhouses on the market

↑ Berkshire, in excess of £4.25 million

Beneath the kitchen at Norman Farm, a classic Grade II-listed Berkshire farmhouse at Burghclere, is a contemporary twist in the form of a large cellar with a sauna, steam room and underground tunnel. Upstairs, huge modern windows give panoramic views well beyond the swimming pool, lawns, tennis court, vegetable garden and pond with pontoon in the grounds. The farm's 146 acres also include a timber-frame barn, games room and additional out-buildings. There are four bedrooms and planning permission has been approved for a two-storey extension to create two additional bedrooms and increase the size of the drawing room. *Strutt & Parker (020-7318 5190)*



↑ Gloucestershire, £899,995

The charm of this 17th-century Cotswolds farmhouse lies not in its loveliness alone—one of its three bedrooms contains a magnificent Jacobean bed, believed to be part of the original structure of the Grade II*-listed building and, reputedly, a priest hole. In more than six acres, with millponds, paddocks and woodland, Wresden Farm, near Uley, comes with an early-18th-century barn, a self-contained one-bedroom flat and other buildings to do with an old 17th-century mill. *Murrays (01453 755552)*



↑ Herefordshire, £875,000

Petty France Farm, named for the tiny hamlet it adorns just west of the Malvern Hills, close to the market town of Ledbury, is an extremely pretty 16th-century farmhouse with four bedrooms and a separate two-bedroom converted barn. Dating from 1497, the building is largely of 17th-century construction, with Georgian additions. The seven acres also contain a traditional stable block and a two-storey granary, as well as 5.7 acres of pasture, woodland and ponds. *Grant & Co (01531 637341)*



↑ **East Sussex, £2 million**

There are no public footpaths or rights of way over the 37 acres, including a private bluebell wood, that come with Grade II-listed Mudbrooks Farmhouse, which is very unusual for this part of the world. At the northern edge of the Ashdown Forest, and with direct access to it via a bridlepath at the boundary, this charming five-bedroom house is on the market for the first time in 15 years. With wood-burning stoves, inglenook fireplaces, paddocks and ponds, the property is just outside the popular village of Forest Row and there is an option to purchase it with only 20 acres for £1.65 million. *Howard Cundey (01342 824824)*



↑ **Pembrokeshire, £700,000**

Representing a lovely business opportunity in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Summerhill Farm—near the ever popular village of Amroth, with its unspoilt Blue Flag beach—has three bedrooms in the main house and comes with two one-bedroom cottages in 1½ acres of landscaped grounds. There is also an opportunity to buy an adjacent three-bedroom property. At low tide, it's possible to walk along the beach to Wiseman's Bridge and the seaside town of Saundersfoot. *Savills (02920 368930)*



↑ **Somerset, £1.7 million**

In 2009, the vendors of charmingly situated Hill Farm, close to the village of Appley, established award-winning modern farm buildings for a cheese-making enterprise. In addition to a dairy and creamery, the 31 acres include a walled vegetable garden, pasture (15½ acres), woodland (12¾ acres) and single-bank fishing on the River Tone, at the bottom of the valley. The main house has five bedrooms and there's also a two-bedroom barn conversion plus other traditional stone barns. *Knight Frank (01392 848823)*



↑ **Shropshire, £1.15 million**

Handsome and Georgian, Ryton Farm House, in a small unspoilt village of the same name, near Shifnal, has five bedrooms and has been elegantly restored by the current owners—the formal knot garden outside is also beautifully maintained. As well as sunny gardens, the grounds include an annexe, a range of period barns and stables. *Savills (01952 239500)*

The brave heralds of spring

Knowle Hill Farm, Maidstone, Kent

A windy hilltop was no deterrent to the owners in creating a garden with a special focus on winter and early-spring flowers, finds George Plumptre

Photographs by Marianne Majerus







Preceding pages: Soft winter sunshine illuminates the distant views of the Weald, from the terrace. *Above:* Trim topiary and hedging maintain green architecture year-round

IT was when Elizabeth Cairns said casually 'We're very lucky, every year we have swifts nesting under the house roof eaves' that I suddenly had a complete picture of her Kentish garden. Our most enigmatic and exciting aerial summer visitors, which spend the summer tearing and screaming through the sky in squadron-like flocks, have very specific nesting requirements and only frequent places that offer a particular, undisturbed welcome.

The swifts had long departed for their summer in Africa when I visited. Nonetheless, as I looked out from the garden's spectacular vantage point across the wide expanse of the Weald, with low winter sunlight occasionally illuminating the scudding clouds, the garden's peaceful friendliness was immediately evident.

Positioned just below the narrow greensand ridge that runs from east to west through Kent, between the chalk North Downs to the north and the expanse of the Weald to the south, the view was a decisive factor when Elizabeth and her husband, Andrew, purchased Knowle Hill in 1982. There was no garden to speak of and, when faced with decrepit farm buildings, it was reassuring to have the incentive of creating a garden to make the most of the position and outlook.

Their canvas was made even blanker a few years later, when the 1987 storm removed the few trees they had inherited. Starting

a garden from scratch can be daunting, but Elizabeth was wisely patient, slowly developing the two acres that surround the house both to bring out the character in different areas created by the undulating terrain and to make it more accessible and integrated with flights of steps.

One subtle benefit of gradual progress over many years has been that the garden's footprint is reassuringly light. As a result, the informal pattern of lawns and borders, the lines of which are accentuated by hedges, domes and topiary birds of clipped box and yew, and the steps and paths that link them, has been gently integrated into the landscape of the site rather than bringing about wholesale change to its character and terrain.

The most overtly architectural addition has been a broad York-stone terrace along the front of the house. Given that the ground drops inexorably away from the house, the terrace provides a secure platform from which to look out at the view across a wide lawn sloping away to the garden's boundary of undulating box hedges and the panorama of countryside beyond. Clipped domes of lavender are a feature all along the terrace and a variety of salvias are particularly good among the mixed summer planting.

Shortly after their arrival at Knowle Hill, the Cairnses discovered a few scattered clumps of snowdrops, but it was the gift of a miscellaneous group of different snowdrops from Elizabeth's university friend, the distinguished plantsman and botanist



Martyn Rix, that first aroused the specialist interest that now gives her garden a very distinctive quality through late winter and early spring. She was intrigued by the pronounced differences in the snowdrop family and, over the years, has integrated a wide range throughout the garden.

There was also a quite different inspiration for one of her most successful snowdrop plantings. Knowle Hill's position might provide enviable views, but it also made the garden cruelly exposed to prevailing winter winds. They decided to put in a protective



A box hedge marks out one of the boundaries. Spreading bulbously, they have long been clipped into billowing cloud shapes

windbreak of trees along their western boundary, planting it with native English species, in particular quantities of hazel. Beneath and around the coppiced clumps Elizabeth introduced the common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*, which will naturalise more reliably than any other variety.

However, she confirms wryly: 'Naturalising snowdrops is a steady process and needs to be helped along by annual splitting and replanting of clumps in the spring.' Today, solid drifts of both single and double snow-

drops make a white carpet all through the little wood, mixing in places with delicate pink-and-white *Cyclamen coum* and bright-yellow aconites.

Many of the more unusual species of snowdrops do not readily naturalise and so Elizabeth has mixed them up throughout the different beds and borders in the garden. Overall, she likes those with a distinctive habit and has a few particular favourites. Very sensibly, she says that she prefers 'the good doers', but goes on to

admit that 'one or two of the frailer and more fussy ones are too delectable to miss out'.

She is intrigued by Three Ships, a rare treasure that always flowers at Knowle Hill by December 1. Mrs Macnamara is usually in flower for Christmas and Galatea is an old variety that also flowers early. A particular attraction of snowdrops is the very personal connotations of their names, not least Angelique, which has tiny green dots on the inner segments and was named after a French girl whose life was cut tragically short. ➤



Magenta *Cyclamen coum*, joined by bright-violet flames of *Crocus tommasinianus*

Many of Elizabeth's favourites have distinctive markings, such as Robin Hood, which is shaded with an X shape, and Cicely Hall—another one that needs cosseting—with dark green on the inner segments.

‘Her skill has been to grow snowdrops as garden plants, not as a collection’

She admires Fly Fishing—‘so elegant and refined, with its extra long pedicels supposedly like a fly fishing rod’—and Wendy's Gold is one of the few snowdrops with yellow markings that she favours, because it's such a good plant and showy.

Today, visitors can enjoy some 90 named varieties of snowdrops as well as large groups that are forms of *Galanthuses nivalis*, *plicatus* and *elwesii*. Elizabeth's enthusiasm is evident, but her skill has been to grow her snowdrops as garden plants, not as a trainspotter-style collection and she's philosophical about the balance of success and failure. ‘Every year, we acquire a few special ones; some have clumped up well, but others have disappeared without trace.’

Towards the top of the garden, two borders are given symmetry by domes of box clipped neatly into buns. The borders direct views to a sculpture made by the Cairnses' son, Bertie, which is set off by curving yew hedges and, as one moves through the garden, the contribution of structural clipped



Clockwise from above: ‘Naturalising snowdrops is a steady process,’ advises Elizabeth Cairns. She plants them and lets them take their chances; *Galanthus plicatus* Augustus; *Galanthus Ophelia*; *Galanthus nivalis*; *Helleborus x hybridus* with *Galanthus elwesii* and others

hedges and topiary becomes increasingly evident. It seems to continue the heritage of the old boundary box hedges inherited to the front of the house, which are now clipped into billowing cloud shapes.

Elsewhere, an arched opening in another yew hedge leads to the small wildflower meadow, which has been developed in recent years after an initial battle to eradicate all the dormant weeds that sprang up at the first sign of cultivation. Now, there is a succession from early spring of crocus to small narcissus, then cowslips, which are particularly good.

As I leave Knowle Hill, my last view is of the beautifully crafted iron weather-vane

on the barn roof, which incorporates a trio of swifts. I decide I would like to return to the garden on a summer evening when the birds have arrived to nest and are racing noisily around the farmhouse, when delicate Queen Anne's lace might still be out in the meadow and Elizabeth's summer favourites—such as the China rose, Comtesse du Cayla—are in flower. 🐦

The garden of Knowle Hill Farm, Maidstone, Kent, is open in aid of the NGS on February 3 and 4 and July 15 (www.ngs.org.uk) and on other days by prior arrangement (elizabeth@knowlehillfarm.co.uk). George Plumpton is Chief Executive of the NGS





How to be an Edward Scissorhands

NOT so very long ago, few plants were considered less chic than the tiny-leaved-and-flowered evergreen shrubby honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida*. It was the over-familiar front-garden hedge of the humbler inner suburbs, disdained by fashion dictators as little better than common privet. Of late, however, it has soared in smartness as blight has forced gardeners to seek alternatives to *Buxus* and to think (if you'll permit me) outside the box.

Fast-growing and all-forgiving, *Lonicera nitida* is a remarkably malleable material for traditional topiary, for clipping into low hedges around borders, along paths and in parterres and into spheres and cones, whether on the ground or on clear stems as standards.

Its plasticity is also inspiring experimental designs in which it takes startlingly novel forms: mounds that stand alone or in interlocking arrangements; serpentine hedges with undulating tops; groups of cubes, balls or blobs of contrasting sizes; skeins of cloud-pruned greenery on candelabra-like boughs.

Colour adds to its Protean potential. Typically, the leaves are forest green and shining (*nitida* in Latin), but there are cultivars in which they're solid gold or lime or edged with yellow or white.

So much for 'poor man's box', as people used to call this shrub. It has a close relation, *Lonicera pileata*, long undervalued as the carpeting of countless public car parks. It, too, is now enjoying a leap in status. Its leaves are



Fast-growing and all-forgiving *Lonicera nitida* is perfect for clipping

larger and more widely spaced than *L. nitida*'s and borne on low, frondy branches that arch and spread. This habit commends it, massed and unclipped, as groundcover.

Alternatively, one can prune and shear such group plantings into uniform-seeming expanses that resemble rolling dunes of verdure or flows of molten emerald.

Of course, these two *Lonicera* species don't have the same character as box and could never supplant it entirely. We grow them in the garden here as well as our beloved (and blight-free) *Buxus* Faulkner; each has its place and does its thing as only it could.

The shrubby honeysuckles are the most biddable of a range of

evergreen shrubs and small trees that aren't always as amenable to advanced topiary as the two classics, box and yew, but well worth shaping, as long as the aim isn't vegetable peacocks and giant chess pieces.

We've subjected quite a variety of species to the shears and secateurs, making low globes, cubes and ovoids of *Euonymus fortunei* and *E. japonicus* (their variegated cultivars included); tall parasols of *Prunus lusitanica* and knee-high squares, dramatic in their up-thrust dagger-like leaves, of *P. laurocerasus* Otto Luyken; pyramids of *Phillyrea latifolia*; domes of *Osmanthus x burkwoodii* that become mantled in spring with sweet-scented white blossom; and sharp-edged hedges of *Camellia sasanqua*, their long new shoots carefully pruned in late summer so as to leave the lowermost few inches where next season's flower buds form.

We find various hollies invaluable. Cloud-pruned specimens of the clippable *Ilex crenata* are popular, but we use it less showily, as a substitute for box balls, planted in the acid soil that it

needs. Elsewhere, we've groomed *Ilex aquifolium* *Angustifolia* into glittering dark-green spires; hewn blocks, in blackcurrant-tinted deepest cyan, of *I. x meserveae* *Blue Angel*; and pruned *I. x altaclerensis* *Golden King* into a conical standard, a magnificent small tree that's a beacon on dark days.

‘They’re a wonder in winter when the garden becomes theirs’

Finally, there are a few that need barely a tweak, being topiary-like by nature: the pillars of *Ilex crenata* *Sky Pencil* and *Euonymus japonicus* *Green Spire*; the ground-hugging hemispheres (and ravishingly fragrant flowers) of *Pittosporum tobira* *Nanum*; the cantilevered cumulonimbi of *Satsuki* azaleas; and the obelisk that is *Camellia* *Fairy Blush*, an enchanting winter-blooming newcomer, which, happily, is proving hardier than expected.

It sounds like a lot, like a garden tended by Edward Scissorhands, but we use these evergreens strategically, to frame and punctuate schemes and to throw ethereal or exuberant plantings into high relief with their solid formality.

And they're a wonder in winter when the garden becomes theirs. A few weeks ago, they were pure sculpture, first floodlit by the supermoon and then surrounded by snow. Today, they seem to proclaim the promise of the year ahead, waxing rich, brilliant, perfect, when all else is bare.

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

Next week: Growing pecans

GAP Photos/Nicola Stocken/Thornquimbald; Andrea Jones Images/Alamy

Horticultural aide memoire Chit potatoes

First-early potatoes such as *Pentland Javelin*, one of the special pleasures of kitchen gardening, should be started now. Get a seed tray and start placing the tubers in it one at a time until it is full. Each tuber should be stood on end with the rose end (bearing the most buds) facing upwards. Stand the trays on an unheated windowsill and leave them to sprout. If frost threatens, cover them loosely with newspaper. After three weeks, strong shoots will have arisen, an ideal start as you place them in the trench. **SCD**



As rare as hen's teeth

Our correspondent reports on the launch of a sought-after Cohiba Limited Edition that's sent the world's cigar collectors into a flat spin

THERE are times when the cigar world goes into a global collective mania—a type of bloodlust that's usually only seen in a David Attenborough documentary depicting a shiver of sharks slicing through a vast shoal of smaller fish. The closing weeks of 2017 saw just such a frenzy as collectors circled cigar shops, stalking the new Cohiba Talisman Limited Edition 2017 after its worldwide launch by Hunters & Frankau in London.

‘A Chinese collector asked to buy 100 boxes—that's 1,000 cigars’

A new limited-edition *vitola* from Cohiba is always going to be of note. Some of the most remarkable cigars of the century have fallen into this category: the Sublime of 2004, the 1966 from 2011 and the Supremos of 2014. By now, Cohiba Limited Edition, that magical trio of words, has established a Pavlovian pattern of behaviour that reached new heights of hysteria with this launch.

If you could find a box a month after the November 7 launch, then you could expect to pay at least double the not inconsiderable starting price of about £670 for a box of 10. The effect was electric and immediate: barely was the worm peeking out of the ground before the early birds were pecking at it.

Shortly after opening time at Davidoff on November 18, Edward Sahakian was approached by a Chinese collector asking to buy 100 boxes—that's 1,000 cigars. As several regular customers had already asked for the cigar, Mr Sahakian offered four boxes.

Hunters & Frankau



The Cohiba Talisman. There's been nothing like it in recent years

However, the collector went down St James's Street to Fox, where he bought 100. Soon, most merchants began rationing boxes, hence the 100%-plus price rise.

There's been nothing like it in recent years: the 1966, overshadowed by the launch of the Behike, got off to a slow start, to become, in my opinion, a strong contender for the title of second-best cigar of the century so far. When it appeared, the Supremos was all over the place in terms of flavour and, after a couple of attempts at it, I lost interest and took my eye off the ball—the next time I looked, it was accompanied by a three-digit price tag and warnings of impending shortages.

With the Talisman, the mania set in before most people had had a chance to set fire to one—there has been nothing like it since the Sublime. It put Mr Sahakian in mind of the 1980 opening of his shop, which coincided with

the launch of the Davidoff Dom Perignon—the Ferrari GTO of cigars—held at the Dorchester to honour him.

'That was when Zino Davidoff cut, lit and presented the Dom Perignon to Philippe de Rothschild and, in return, he poured a glass of Dom Perignon,' he recalls fondly. 'Then, they toasted each other—one with a cigar, the other with Champagne—and that was the start of the legend.'

The Talisman comes at a time when the cigar market is booming in a way not seen since the late 1990s. A new generation of cigar lovers, many from Hong Kong and China, is rapidly assembling the sort of collections that used to take enthusiasts years to build at a time when this was a recondite, almost eccentric activity. In addition, with Cohiba Behikes in such short supply for the past 16 months, any large-format cigar

with a Cohiba band generates interest. And, yes, there is some speculation.

As for the cigar itself, it's a handsome-looking thing with a pigtail cap, a 54-ring gauge and a length of 6½in. Wrapper colour varies, of course, from a rich, oily russet to a darker chocolate. Opinions of the cigar vary, too, some finding it mild and easy, with others detecting a core of strength. My own experience is that it starts approachably enough, but, after a while, the fullness of the flavour can be detected all over the palate.

This is mature tobacco, but there's a youthful petillance on the tip of the tongue and, when I waved the lit end under my nose, I detected the very tiniest suggestion of a hint of ammonia, again suggesting youth. Over time, it developed into a lovely melange, offering the sort of satisfaction to be found in salted-caramel chocolate, with overtones of shortbread and hazelnut. There was also a toffee-like quality, with the last couple of inches delivering increasingly strong flavours to the centre of the tongue.

In all, I found it more cohesive than the Supremos was at the first tasting, but, as with many releases from Cuba, this is one to be enjoyed in a few years' time, when some of that fairly forceful finish will perhaps have mellowed. 'I would keep them for a few years until I started smoking them regularly and, by then, prices will have shot up, so I don't know if I'd have the heart to smoke it,' confirms Mr Sahakian. 'We won't see anything as successful as this for some years.'



Scan this code using the QR Reader app on your smartphone to watch our COUNTRY LIFE video 'How to smoke a cigar'



Tearing down ivory towers

A proposed ban on the contentious material may have disastrous repercussions for the art and museum worlds

BABIES and bathwater inevitably come to mind when considering the Government's proposed ivory ban. It seems that a recent online poll commissioned by a collection of animal-welfare groups found that 85% of 'the British public' supported a ban on all ivory sales. The poll prompted 1,265 responses, so that 85% represents 1,075 individuals and, in fact, only 57%, or 721 individuals, backed an absolute ban.

Certainly, there is widespread support for ending the market in modern ivory, which the campaigners say 'drives demand for ivory and fuels the illegal slaughter of elephants', but it's not evident that a regulated trade in works of art made from antique ivory does so.

The majority of European antique ivory carvings did not come from the tusks of hunted elephants, even when there were plenty to be hunted, but either from those of mammoths pulled from the permafrost or from marine ivory when neither walrus nor



whales were in any danger of extinction. Ivory is one of the most perfect materials for carving and, over many centuries, was fashioned into superlative works of art in Europe, the Near and Middle East and, rather later, China and Japan.

Some animal-rights campaigners want everything destroyed, whatever its age or quality. Such indiscriminate destruction would be an aesthetic and historical disaster.

The British Art Market Federation (BAMF), the trade's lobbyist, has submitted a comprehensive document—one of more than 60,000 responses—to Defra's own consultation. It has abandoned the preference of many in the trade for the current European rules, which ban only those pieces dating from after June 1947—a defining date, as all objects made after it bear traces left by nuclear testing—

arguing instead, reasonably and strongly, for a certification system allowing for a number of exemptions.

These would include portrait

19th-century Japanese ivory netsuke. £1,300



Above: Ivory diptych depicting the Visitation and Baptism of Christ. £27,500



Above: Games box, about 1440–70. £10,000. Right: 'Museum quality' Cantonese ivory basket. £39,000



miniatures, items of artistic, cultural or historic interest that are 'of museum quality', and a *de minimis* exemption of items such as musical instruments or silver teapots, where ivory makes up only a small proportion of the piece. Sales to and between museums would also be allowed.

It is a testament to the diplomatic skill of my sometime colleague Anthony Browne, chairman of the BAMF, that the Government seems minded to support these exceptions, which are anyway in agreement with present European regulation, but

grave problems of definition may bedevil the future even if they are approved. *De minimis* could be a very profitable field for lawyers and the 'museum quality' clause is also problematic. What is museum quality to one connoisseur may be meretricious trumpery to another. Furthermore, there are many things that are neither superlative nor particularly rare



Anglo-Indian engraved Vizagapatm box. £3,750

and so might not deserve a place in a museum, but are nonetheless beautiful or at least curious: must they be put to the torch?

Where would lines be drawn? There would be repercussions on half the cultures of the world—from ancient Egyptian figurines, Viking chessmen, 12th-century School of Paris diptychs and mirror backs, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque Madonnas and crucifixes, Maastricht pistol butts, Dieppe carvings, Persian and Malay dagger handles, African tribal figures, 18th-century South Indian veneered furniture, Inuit walruses, Chinese libation cups and fan sticks and Japanese *netsuke*, down to penholders, letter openers, combs, toothpick boxes, billiard balls and gambling chips—the list is endless.

Defra has said that it will put out a summary of the responses to its consultation soon and thereafter produce a legislative proposal.

I may well be wrong on this, but I think that widespread use of elephant and similar ivory

came fairly late to Japan and it was boosted by the growth of the tourist trade from the 1870s. Even then, there were a number of substitutes that might well be sold as ivory, including tagua nut from the ivory pine, used for *netsuke*. Supposed samurai swords for tourists were often given elaborately carved ‘ivory’ mounts and scabbards; these were more likely to have been made from bone, which lacks ivory’s distinctive grain.

Despite these swords, Japanese Samurai armour would probably be covered by a *de minimis* exception, as any ivory would be incidental ornamentation. Thus the third annual Japanese Legacy Symposium, which will take place in Leiden in the Netherlands from February 16 to 18, should be safe from overzealous inspectors. The conference has as its centrepiece the exhibition ‘The Masked Warrior’, featuring 130 pieces from private collections, including that of the Dutch royal family. Organised by the Japanese Armor Society, the curriculum will include guest speakers, social events and the opportunity to learn and engage with collectors, dealers and experts from around the world.

Associated with it is a one-day Samurai Armor Fair on February 18 at the NH Caransa Hotel in Amsterdam, at which

Japanese *namban kabuto*. At the Samurai Armor Fair with Peter Finer



Pick of the week

Huberty & Breyne specialises in comic-strip art, with a gallery in Paris as well as one in Brussels, home of the *bande dessinée*. Philippe Geluck and his creation Le Chat deserve to be far better known beyond the French- and—invariably, to a lesser extent—Flemish-speaking worlds. After a 30-year run in the Brussels *Le Soir*, Le Chat is soon to have his own museum there and *m. Geluck* hopes to export his humour much more widely in future.

Recently (*My Favourite Painting, December 6*), John McEwen remarked that only snobbery denies cartoonists the status of artist. However, just as a news picture may be worth 1,000 words, so a good cartoon, with or without caption or speech bubbles, may speak truthful volumes. Le Chat certainly can, and reproductions of this original, which the dealers are offering at

BRAFA, should be sold at eye-watering prices to those unfortunates who, in the words of Christie’s, might believe that to own a Koons *Balloon Dog* would transform them into the ‘very top collectors in the world’ and their collections ‘to an unparalleled level of greatness’.



Above left: South German Renaissance casket. £118,750.



Above right: French ivory-and-bone dressing mirror. £6,250

at least five specialist arms and armour dealers will be offering *kosane dou gusoku*, *tosei dou gusoku* and other fine examples of armour.

Somehow, Peter Finer of London, who is currently showing at the Winter Antiques Fair in New York and will be at Maastricht in March, has the

organisation and energy to look in here, too. The other dealers so far announced are Jones & Jones Oriental Art, Giuseppe Piva Arte Giapponese from Italy, Philippe Leemans from Belgium and Henk Milius of the Netherlands.

Next week Ultimate huzziff

A fitting tribute

Philippa Stockley is captivated by a lavish new book that tells the story of a legendary fashion house

Fashion

**The House of Worth
1858-1954**

Various authors
(Thames & Hudson, £65)

THE story of Charles Frederick Worth, English-born founder of the fashion dynasty Worth, is legendary: a young English draper, born in 1825 in the small market town of Bourne in Lincolnshire, becomes arguably the most famous *couturier* in the world—and in Paris, at that.

This sumptuously illustrated monograph sets out to give a full account of the business through four generations. Anyone interested in high-class female clothing from 1860–1950 will relish its 486 illustrations, which are primarily colour photographs of existing and excellently preserved ensembles, with close-ups of stitching and construction, plus many paintings and contemporary fashion illustrations. Helpfully, the kaleidoscope of dresses in silks, velvets and furs—enough to make one salivate—is mainly chronological. Because Worth's output was enormous, and because women valued these costly garments, many survive in Europe and the USA. Furthermore, because of his wealthy and famous clients, Worth's dresses and cloaks appear in important portraits by numerous artists, including Winterhalter, Tissot and Manet.

As a teenager, Worth began work in London at the department store Swan & Edgar, followed by the draper Lewis & Allenby. He moved to Paris at the age of 20, where he worked for the French draper Gagelin. In 1858, he and young Swedish draper Otto Bobergh set up Worth & Bobergh. Worth, who was the sole designer, quickly became dressmaker and



Evening dress in satin brocade with velvet stars (about 1905)

aesthetic dictator to the French Court, European royalty, American millionaires and rich *demi-mondaines*. He employed thousands, charged astronomically and made the Rue de la Paix—where his ateliers filled two adjoining buildings, with dormitories for seamstresses above—the centre of Parisian fashion.

He amassed a fortune, created a Gothic *château* in Suresnes and handed the firm down to three further generations before the house closed in the early 1950s. It was not the only luxury brand unable to weather post-war sea changes, such as the move to simpler clothing. Although Worth was bought by its rival Paquin in 1954, Paquin closed in 1956 and Worth again in 1967.

Intriguing questions, such as precisely why designer Roger Worth suddenly quit in 1950, leaving his brother Maurice alone at the helm, are not explored by the book's four

authors, one of whom—Chantal Trubert-Tollu—is a direct descendant. However, this is an absorbing and inspiring account of the spectacular rise of a 19th-century entrepreneur who was so sure of himself that he flaunted French Court rules, turning up in his adopted artistic signature of a velvet suit and a beret, and told women, even queens, what to wear. Worth had an extraordinary eye for fabrics, often having historically inspired designs specially woven.

An innovator, he famously joined the skirt and bodice into a single, more streamlined garment and pioneered flared panels to give a smooth, slim waist, replacing bunching gathers. From its early days, the firm sold paper patterns, which were especially popular in the USA.

Perhaps surprising is the company's famed speed. In the 19th century, it was common to have as many as six fittings, but Worth prided himself on requiring just one. Existing documents show a set of complex garments being made in 12 days, but it could be done faster: *in extremis*, lavish ball gowns were whipped up on the day. His ateliers enthusiastically adopted Singer sewing machines to sprint along their seams.

In a sense, therefore, Charles Frederick Worth was not only the father of *haute couture*, but also, as this book reveals, the father of what would become ready-to-wear.

Fiction

The Only Story

Julian Barnes
(Jonathan Cape, £16.99)

MOST OF us have only one story to tell.' Paul, looking back from later life, tells us his: a love affair that begun when he was 19, in his 'particular patch of suburban sprawl' after his first year of university. He joins the tennis club 'in a spirit of nothing but satire', and there falls for Mrs Susan Macleod, in her forties and unhappily married to a drunken bore. Paul and Susan laugh off local disapproval and letters of expulsion from the tennis club, but the obstacles they face become more serious—Mr Macleod's anger erupts in violent episodes and he breaks Susan's teeth and cracks her jaw.

‘The author has an eye for the vital detail’

The lovers move to South London, but the brief idyll spoils as Susan develops a dependence on alcohol. An image recurs of Susan in a print dress sitting on a chintz sofa, momentarily camouflaged so that Paul can see only her face and legs: 'I'm doing my disappearing act!' she says. As she is taken over by alcoholism, 'you fear that she is, finally and utterly, doing her disappearing act'.

Julian Barnes's portrait of this love, from its inception to its demise, is masterfully done. He has an eye for the vital detail, penning individually curious lines that come together into an accomplished whole. He splits the novel into three parts, each narrated in its respective person: I, you and he. As time goes on, Paul works on the act of 'feeling less' as a means of survival and fostering 'enough human contact to sustain and divert, but not disturb'. His emotional retreat is from the world and also from himself, as his vision of himself slips from I to you to he. By the close of his 'only story', Paul has mastered his own disappearing act too.

Emily Rhodes

Museum of the City of New York/David Arkey; Will Pryce

Architecture Between Two Worlds

Jeremy Musson
(Scala, £29.95)

A detail of the reredos in Emmanuel's chapel, a gift from William Sancroft, 79th Archbishop of Canterbury



THERE WAS a time when the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge were open for members of the public to walk into and view at their pleasure. No more—too many nosy, noisy tourists made it impossible for them to continue the practice. As a result, college buildings are less familiar than they might be and college life appears more unwelcoming than it is. Emmanuel in Cambridge gives the impression of being particularly retiring: ordinary visitors to Cambridge can see little more than the façade of understated ashlar that fronts the street.

This elegant book, illustrated with intelligent photography by Will Pryce, is therefore specially welcome in providing an accessible architectural history. As Jeremy Musson comments in the introduction: 'The story of buildings is always revealing, even if they mean different things to different people.'

Emmanuel's spirit has remained remarkably consistent across the centuries. Elizabeth I's Chancellor, Sir Walter Mildmay, founded it in 1584, converting the ruins of a Dominican priory into a seed bed for 'those most noble plants of Theology and right good learning'. The name means 'God with us' and Mildmay's particular concern was to educate clergy for the Church of England.

John Aubrey remembered it as being a centre of (perhaps

hypocritical) Puritanism before the Civil War. One of the heroes of the tale is the Master who came in at the Restoration, William Sancroft, remembered later for his imprisonment, as Archbishop of Canterbury, by James II and his refusal to acknowledge William III and Queen Mary before James's death. He commissioned Christopher Wren to build the beautiful chapel range, partly inspired by the pre-Civil War 'Gothic Survival' chapel at Peterhouse. The arcaded Cloister—a word to recall the college's monastic origins—prefigures the walk beneath the Wren Library at Trinity.

Later contributions were made by the prickly Roman Catholic Leonard Stokes, in the Edwardian Free Style, and by Michael and Patty Hopkins, whose finely crafted Queen's Building is one of the most sensitive additions to Cambridge architecture from the late 20th century. The present Master, who writes a preface, is COUNTRY LIFE contributor Dame Fiona Reynolds, formerly of the National Trust.

A ravishing photograph shows the famous plane tree planted at the beginning of the 19th century, its boughs now bowed to the ground, but still going strong: a symbol of continuity in this sequestered and supremely civilised institution.

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‘On the banks of the Ocean’

Andrew Lambirth is delighted to find many works reunited in an exhibition that explores the influence of Sussex on the visionary artist-poet



The Sea of Time and Space (1821) weaves Classical imagery into an obscure narrative on the theme of choice

FOR those who think of William Blake (1757–1827) as a metropolitan artist, an urban visionary who execrated the dark satanic mills while dreaming of a better place, this exhibition will come as something of a surprise. For three years (1800–03), Blake moved out of London and lived in rural Felpham, near Bognor Regis on the Sussex coast, and there did some of his best work (including the hymn *Jerusalem*), while committing to memory the surrounding countryside.

Any landscape references that appear in his later pictures, and

especially in the small, intense wood engravings he made in 1821 for Thornton's *Pastorals of Virgil*, darkly beautiful as they look here as part of Petworth's superb new exhibition, owe their authenticity and authority to his time at Felpham.

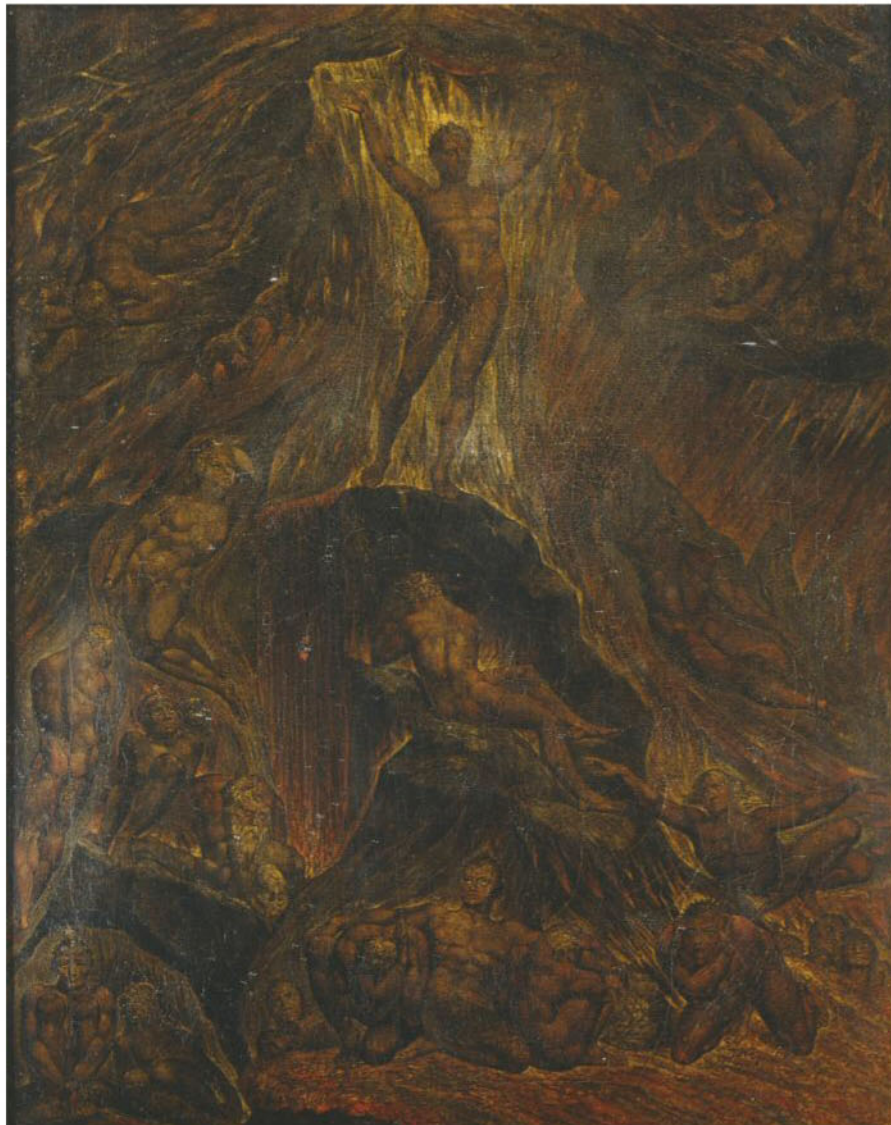
Although by temperament perhaps not suited to permanent rustication, Blake hugely benefited from his extended country sojourn, an exile driven by financial necessity and suggested by his new patron, the writer William Hayley, who lived nearby. As Blake wrote to the

sculptor John Flaxman: 'Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates.'

During his lifetime, Blake's genius was hardly recognised and he sold little of his most original work, relying upon commissions and engraving pictures by other artists to pay his modest expenses. Thus he painted at Felpham a series of 18 large decorative portraits in tempera of the great poets for Hayley's library, of which two (Edmund Spenser and John



William, plate 29 from *Milton: A poem in Two Books* by Blake



Far left: **Satan calling up his Legions** (1800–05) was inspired by a scene from Milton's *Paradise Lost* and was created for Elizabeth Ilive, wife of the 3rd Earl of Egremont. Left: **Winter** (about 1800–3) was painted, along with two other panels, for the Revd John Johnson, cousin of the poet William Cowper. The figure echoes a line from Cowper's poem *The Task*: 'Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled.'

Milton) hang at the beginning of this instructive exhibition. Next to them is another decorative panel, a wonderfully effective vertical evocation of *Winter*, white with sleet and snow, done for a Norfolk clergyman.

On the other side of the room is a watercolour head of the poet William Cowper, an example of the miniature portraits that Hayley suggested to Blake as a potential money-making venture. The problem with all these commissions, although initially welcome, was that they took up Blake's time and energy and diverted him from his own poetry and painting that were damming up inside him. The outcome was inevitable and, in 1803, Blake returned to London for the remainder of his life, settling in South Molton Street.

Before Felpham, Blake had never seen the sea. Now, it was

two minutes away and it's clear to anyone who knows this coast how affected he was by the experience, clearly entranced by what he called 'the shifting lights of the sea'. One of the most interesting of the smaller pictures in the exhibition is an almost abstract Indian-ink drawing of windblown waves with the title *The Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters* (about 1820–25). It's remarkably modern-looking and highly reminiscent of some of the sea paintings and drawings of Paul Nash, made 100 years later.


And look at the pale watercolour Blake made of the Felpham landscape, which features not only the pencil-drawn cottage where he lived, but great slanting spars of sunlight coming down through the cloud at far right. A familiar atmospheric sight to anyone walking this lit-

toral, the effect is nothing short of Blakean in its focus and numinous charge.

One of the reasons that a Blake exhibition is such a fitting subject for Petworth House is the presence in the permanent collection of three major works by the artist. Two were commissioned by Elizabeth Ilive, Countess of Egremont, an extraordinary woman whose interests were not simply artistic, but scientific as well. For her, Blake painted *Satan calling up his Legions*, in tempera over gold leaf on canvas, a rich, dark image shot through with frightful glimmers.

He also created *A Vision of the Last Judgement*, one of the most forceful flow diagrams ever, a mighty image of both ascending and cascading forms: families going up to Heaven, wicked sinners descending to the Fiery Pit.

The third painting, *The Characters in Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'*, was bought by the Earl of Egremont after Blake's death.

In Petworth's State rooms, an area has been rehung to celebrate Ilive and among various family portraits is a display case of scientific instruments from her personal laboratory. There's also a room of Philip Pullman's illustrations to 'His Dark Materials'. Mr Pullman is president of the Blake Society, so, all in all, this is a splendidly rounded tribute to the poet-prophet of English art. 

'William Blake in Sussex: Visions of Albion' is at Petworth House, Petworth, West Sussex, until March 25 (0344 249 1895; www.nationaltrust.org.uk/petworth). An accompanying book of the same title, edited by Andrew Loukes, is published by the National Trust and Paul Holberton (£16.50)

Crossword

A prize of £15 in book tokens will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions must reach Crossword No 4466, COUNTRY LIFE, Pinehurst II, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BF, by **Tuesday, February 14**. UK entrants only.

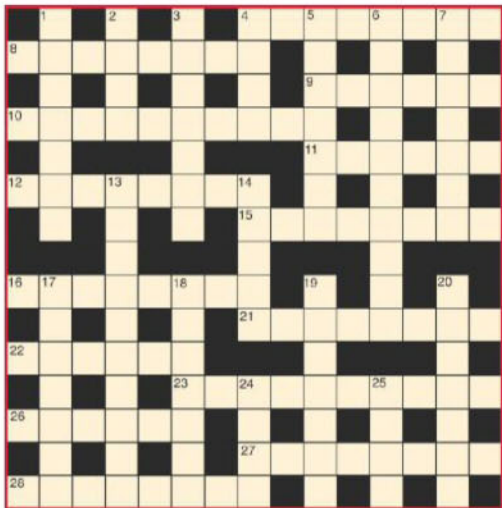
ACROSS

- 4 Fool's device for checking fluid level? (8)
- 8 Popular fellow at Eton initially in close relationship (8)
- 9 Bridge-players bear responsibility for lack of employment (3-3)
- 10 Confused, become angry with 4 down, perhaps (10)
- 11 US fridge, one civil engineer found by tree (6)
- 12 Foreshadowed national leader, superannuated (8)
- 15 Church employee whose output may be partly voluntary? (8)
- 16 Envoy from Dutch capital dined with English member (8)
- 21 Again cover item of tack? Certainly (8)
- 22 Tailor working in part of Venice (6)
- 23 Give away zoo employee, one managing retail outlet (10)
- 26 Labrador, possibly, returning with tailless bird (6)
- 27 Plant making cat smile, oddly (8)
- 28 What some dogs do to computerised information? (8)

DOWN

- 1 A hundred, almost, unfortunately not listened to (7)
- 2 Musical featuring two American soldiers? (4)
- 3 Musicians grow older, requiring dressing (7)
- 4 Ruminants needing grass to be raised (4)
- 5 Quiet conclusion in the offing (7)
- 6 Look after sea eagles, initially showing gentle concern (10)
- 7 Habits now associated with Revenue? (7)
- 13 Secure telephone for a criminal? (4-6)
- 14 American lost height above centre of ferry port (5)
- 17 Typical example—one found in old record book (7)
- 18 One who evangelises after dipping into alcoholic drink? (7)
- 19 Chose to cross lake, being the worse for wear (7)
- 20 Fine Welshman first to identify a flowering plant (7)
- 24 Small number going over church on a single occasion (4)
- 25 Crazy European overthrown? Hard cheese! (4)

4514 TAIT



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SOLUTION TO 4513 (Winner will be announced in two weeks' time)
 ACROSS: 1, Eggbeater; 7, Abrupt; 9, Evenhanded; 10, Acting; 11, Upstart; 13, Deadpan; 14, Shrinking violet; 16, Ignoble; 19, Abuttal; 21, Poncho; 23, Phlegmatic; 24, Sturdy; 25, Scotch egg.
 DOWN: 2, Give up the ghost; 3, Banditti; 4, Avatar; 5, Eddy; 6, Crated; 7, Adage; 8, Pancake landing; 12, Twine; 13, Dogma; 15, Outreach; 17, Occurs; 18, Loopy; 20, Blight; 22, Bloc.
 Winner of 4512 is Dr Stephen Jury, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.

Bridge

Andrew Robson

PARTNER Alexander Allfrey and I both fell off our bicycles on our way to the Open Pairs semi-final at the European Championships in Montecatini. Mr Allfrey momentarily forgot you drive on the left-hand side in Italy and narrowly avoided an altercation with a Fiat. In a completely separate incident involving my bag wedging in the front wheel, stopping the bike in its tracks, but not its rider, I careered over the handlebars a few minutes later (and—as I discovered a few days later—broke my radius).

Neither of us was in the best shape to finish in the top half of the field and so make the final. However, a devil-may-care approach early in the day worked well and we romped into the final. What's more, we were actually leading the final after 19 boards. Sadly, on board 20, I had a complete blindspot (I could blame the painkillers or low blood sugar, but I won't). Here it is.

Dealer West
Both vulnerable

♠ 5
 ♥ J 10 9 8
 ♦ 4
 ♣ Q 10 9 8 4 3 2

♠ K Q 10 9 4 3 2
 ♥ 6
 ♦ J 9 3 2
 ♣ 5

♠ 6
 ♥ K 4 3
 ♦ A Q 10 8 5
 ♣ A J 7 6

♠ A J 8 7
 ♥ A Q 7 5 2
 ♦ K 7 6
 ♣ K

South	West	North	East
	3♠	Pass	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♣(1)	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Dbl

End

(1) We play Stayman here—a great shot by partner Mr Allfrey. He'll bid Five Clubs if I don't have Four Hearts

West led the five of Clubs to East's Ace, at trick two, East switching to his singleton Spade. At the table, I (fatuously) ruffed a Spade, East cleverly discarding. At trick four, I led dummy's singleton Diamond, East rising with the Ace and leading a second club. There was no way home any more. In practice, I discarded, West ruffing and leading a third Spade, East overruffing. A ridiculous and heartbreaking down one.

In the cool light of day, the way is oh so clear. Simply lead a low

Heart at trick two. Let East beat the eight with the King (or not) as you can win his (say Spade) with the Ace, cross to the nine of Hearts, cash the Queen of Clubs and lead the ten for a marked ruffing finesse through his Knave. You ruff his Knave high and cross to the ten of Hearts to enjoy winning Clubs. Easy peasy.

Trick-taking came more freely on our second deal from the Open Pairs Final.

Dealer West
East-West vulnerable

♠ A K 7 4
 ♥ A 9 7
 ♦ 5
 ♣ A Q 6 5 2

♠ 5
 ♥ K 5
 ♦ K J 10 6 4 3 2
 ♣ K J 9

♠ Q J 10 9 6
 ♥ 8 6 3
 ♦ Q
 ♣ 10 7 4 3

♠ 8 3 2
 ♥ Q J 10 4 2
 ♦ A 9 8 7
 ♣ 8

South	West	North	East
	1♦	Dbl	Pass
2♥(1)	Pass	4♦(2)	Pass
6♥(3)	End		

(1) Worth the jump. Give partner a minimum 4441 shape with a singleton Diamond and a Heart contract will play brilliantly.
 (2) Pushy—There is no certainty partner even has a fifth Heart
 (3) I like it. Give partner as little as Ace-Queen-Knave-small of Spades, Ace-King-small-small of Hearts, a small Diamond and four small Clubs, and Six Hearts will depend on little more than the Spade finesse through the opening bidder

Unwilling to lead from his Kings, West led his singleton five of Spades. Declarer won dummy's King, crossed to the (Queen and) Ace of Diamonds and finessed the Queen of Clubs (a marked finesse on the bidding). He ruffed a low Club, then advanced the Queen of Hearts, the second marked finesse. West covered with the King and dummy's Ace won.


Declarer crossed to his Knave of Hearts and ruffed a low Diamond to dummy's nine (East discarding). He ruffed a third Club, cashed the ten of Hearts (drawing East's third Heart and discarding a Spade from dummy), led over to dummy's Ace of Spades and enjoyed the Ace of Clubs and the long Club. He merely gave up the last trick, a Spade, to East. Slam made.

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BEJ 93	10 DBA	I EJO	46 FP	HLH I
I BFH	DBG I	EK 3	GA I	5 HPS
II BGM	I DCR	I EMT	GAE 78	4 HRG



**Great number
Great investment**

I KDJ	85 LJC	94 ND	10 PLM	66 RLJ	I VEV
KDP 74	LUG 21	I NDG	I NDG	1 RLK	1 RLK
94 KJ	I LJR	6 NF	I PMS	6 RMJ	1 VK
KJC 93	2 LMO	6 NJJ	PPS 5	I RNC	I VMC
KJE 52	LN I	I NJN	6 PSA	RSJ 9	VP I
I KJF	LPD I6	I NLP	PSD I	I RTJ	78 WV
KJG I	LSD 73	I NLW	3 PSK	RWK I	I WAF
I KJN	LSR I	89 NMD	6 PST	SDP I	WE 2
I KLD	900 LW	NRL I	79 PT	8 SE	48 WH
KML 65	LZ I	I NRM	PTD I	I SGG	WJ I49
KN I	II MBW	NV 9	I PWP	SGP 73	I WJG
KNM 61	I MDF	14 OW	PWW I	SHB I2	I WJP I
9 KRL	MES 94	OY I	RA 5	I SLN	I WJT
KSJ 9	MGE I	9 PCA	I RAA	78 SLR	I WMC
I KU	MHF 71	3 PEF	RBH I	I SNH	I WMT
66 KWL	90 MHR	PFR I	RDJ 22	SNK II	WPS 4
5 LCR	I MLO	4 PHL	93 RE	I TEB	WR I
LDS 9	MMB	9 PGM	I REO	105 TR	I WRM
94 LE	58	10 PGR	3 RGG	2 TRD	WS 83
LGR I4	I MND	PGW 30	RGL 7	8 TRP	YS 39
LGS I	78 MPA	64 PHW	3 RGP	9 TS	I YD
I LGW	837 MW	3 PKH	RKM I	TY 4	YS 34
I LHH	NCA 66	3 PLJ	98 RLB	VE I	

NAMES WORDS NAMES WORDS

- BOW 3S**
- OLII VVE**
- I42 GE**
- G2 EET**
- TUR 70N**
- COM 8S**
- SII SSY**
- COP I3Y**
- DAN 5**
- 65 PAM**
- L34 VES**

ABB 333Y	BE57 BED	CAR 6IIL	DAW IIID	GAT 3R	H42 ROP	LAN 670N	MAM IIA	MUII ROE	PHO 3I3E	RIO BOT	SPE 4I2S	T7 NAN
AB12 AMS	83 VAN	C421 YLE	D2 OWN	G44 ULT	HAT I6E	LAR 635T	M42 RCO	MUII SON	PII3 RRE	20 CHE	SPI2 AGG	VAL I
ACK 207D	BEW I6K	C422 MEN	DUI2 ANT	G10 OLD	HAY 7I3Y	L421 SSA	MAR I33E	MUS I64L	PLE 4T	RON 4ID	574 CK	VER 2I7Y
ADE 3IE	B146 KER	CAR 22IE	EAG 6I3S	G0II DER	HEA 27Y	L42 SEN	M455 SON	MUT 6H	POII DER	ROS 720N	57 AND	VIII RGO
FAD I4N	BLY 7IIE	CEC IIII	EAR 2L	G60 LDS	HOW 24Y	L314 NNE	MAU 2A	MYL 355S	POR 2T	RIO UGH	STE IIII	VII CEZ
AKT 42R	BOG IO	CHE 3N	EAS1 TCR	GON 6G	HU6I LER	L3 ARY	MCA 20IE	NAR 6IIS	POT 77Y	ROW 33R	S7I LTS	W8 GNR
DAM 3S	BON I17A	CHE 227L	ECC I3S	GOU 2I3Y	HYS 5IOP	I34 VER	MCC I0IE	NEI3 DLE	PRA 27Y	RUB IIA	S17 ORK	WAK 3IIN
ANII GEL	B00 606K	C134 NER	EDN 3Y	GOW 32S	JAC 6K	LEN 2	MCC IIE	NER 7S	P23 TTY	R19 ERT	S777 OUT	WAI ETS
ANS 73Y	BOR 220W	CLII NCH	E6 R0S	G28 EME	JAV I3R	L3II NON	MCE I20Y	NEW 80ID	PRY 9E	SAB 444H	STR 44Y	WAL I70N
A26 HER	BOT 770M	CIII NGE	EII9 ENE	G23 ENE	JEI4 NNE	L35I EYS	M63 WEN	N333 WBY	PUD 5IE	SAL IIIH	SU54 NNA	W47 750N
AR63 NEL	B0II RKE	COM 8S	EXE 73R	GRE 7Y	JES IIIE	LES 23K	M662 ATH	NII6 HOL	PUD 4A	SAL ION	TAN IIG	W34I THY
ARL 3IE	BOW 32S	COO 7E	FAL 660N	GI20 GAN	JOY I13R	LOD 9E	MEA 4H	I NYE	RAM I3Y	S4IIE EER	T422 ANT	W33 WEE
ARR 24N	BRA 2I3R	COP I3Y	FAN 770M	GII ARD	KAR 2IIN	LOP 3S	MED 4IS	OLD 207D	R47 HOD	S4 MMY	TAR 2Y	W318 URN
ASH 88Y	B2 USH	COU I70N	FAR I4A	GGU 35T	KAY I13A	LOI1 THY	MEG I14N	ON12 ONS	RAU IIF	SAY 32S	TAI2 TAN	WEL I33R
ASH I16Y	BUG 6I3R	CRA I1IK	FEG 4N	GUII NER	KEE 93R	DIO DER	M6I EAN	OP2 2A	2 EED	MES I EXY	TEX 7	WH08 DAY
ATT 23E	BUS 5E	CRE 3W	FER 2N	GUN 73R	KEE 93R	DIO DER	MEH I13T	ORA I16E	SHE 42D	SKA 73S	THE 235E	W135 LAW
BAL I4D	BUS 73R	C2I PPS	FER I2Y	GWII YMS	KEI1 SEY	L7II DON	M3II ORS	ORG I85	REII DER	SI ACK	TII CKY	WII1 NES
B4I2 ROW	BUX 770N	CRO IIE	FI66 GHT	H46 KER	KEM 950N	MAH 6R	MER 2I7T	OSM I4N	2 EO	SLO 4IIE	THO 2N	W0I2 TON
B42 TON	C4II ELS	CRU IIP	FLO 2IN	HAF 54S	K3II NEY	MAH 6R	MUII DES	OVE 270N	REP 7IIE	SLO 4IIE	THI2 USH	WRA 46G
B4 TEY	R40 TEY	C4II ADA	FUR 83R	HAN 63R	KI12 WAN	MAU 357Y	M333 RRY	OXL 3Y	RES I14M	CUE IX	TOII CAN	Y420 LEY
BEI2 GER	C14 PON	DAI NTY	FUS 555Y	H4I2 DEN	KI17 SON	MAL I42D	MOT 724M	PAR 20T	RHO I7A	5 NUF	70 VEY	YESI EAT
B3 RTH	CAR 2D	DAR 2I3Y	GAR 20D	H4I2 PER	KNO 6K	MAL I13Y	MOU I1ID	P342 SON	2I VER	SOF 7I4D	724 CY	YOR I2K
					LAM 832T	MAII OYS	MOW 47T	PEE 3K	ROA 55T	SOU 54A	TUI2 TLE	YOII UNG

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When the best-laid plans are no plans

THE judges of this year's Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year Award are a choosy bunch and won't mind me saying so: being picky is our *raison d'être*. We've whittled dozens and dozens of travel books, good and bad, to a shortlist of seven. Now, we must closet ourselves away to argue their merits and choose who wins.

That's where it's become tricky. Forget the books. The challenge is finding a place in central London where we can meet over a reasonably priced dinner, in privacy, and still make the last train from Waterloo. When I rang my favourite restaurant in Soho, they said a private room would begin at £1,000.

Perhaps the answer is to plan less? When Kate and I last went up to town, we had no real plans beyond staying with friends and attending a charity dinner, yet everything passed as if we'd stepped into a dream or an Audrey Hepburn film.

Kate's wary of London, so we walk rather than go on the Under-

ground and we started gently with a rootle through the charity shops on Marylebone High Street. At Daunt, I remembered I had credit as a reward for speaking there last summer, so we indulged in the rare, deep pleasure of choosing new books, then slipped into the London Library, silently catching up on brainy journals in the Reading Room like the *London Review of Books* and *The New Yorker*.

After a while, we went up to the Royal Academy to see if there was anything on. There was, but we had less than an hour before the show closed and the tickets cost £18 apiece, so we chucked that idea and went down the road to Christie's, which was displaying an interesting collection of 20th-century British art. That was as free as the delicious espressos they gave us simply for coming in.

When Christie's shut, Fortnum & Mason was still open and looking invitingly warm. Attentive ladies squirted us with costly perfumes in preparation for dinner and pointed the way to the Food

Hall in the basement. It's all dry-aged beef, smoked salmon and stately pies, many of which are offered as tasters. I had a bit of sausage roll, slivers of *jamón ibérico* and some cheese, washed down with a tiny glass of claret and a sharpener of London gin.

‘Everything passed as if we'd stepped into a dream or an Audrey Hepburn film’

Good company, too: we chatted to Tom Parker Bowles, who was signing his cookbook, and in Hatchards next door, we bumped into friends that included Jenny Uglow sitting behind a diminishing pile of her book on Edward Lear. It was all rather surreal.

Next morning, our friends walked us to the boundary of their

borough, looking into various churches en route, with a quick tour of the medieval glories of the Charterhouse. In the churchyard of St Bartholomew the Great, Kate spotted something sticking up out of a wheelie bin. It was a fine Victorian porcelain bowl, with a bold pattern of flowers, that wasn't chipped, let alone cracked. Our host admired it furiously, so there was our thank-you present sorted.

At St Paul's Cathedral, we were slightly taken aback when grim custodians demanded £20 apiece for entering. Hesitating at the barrier—would even Wren's masterpiece quite justify £40?—we heard the call to midday Communion coming over the tannoy, so we got in, got shriven and got to see Wren's tomb in the crypt with the Duke of Wellington thrown in.

'Perfect hobo London,' Kate said when we got the train.

'Cast your bread upon the waters,' the Bible says. I may repeat this to my fellow judges, but I suspect they want soup. And that's just the first course.

TOTTERING-BY-GENTLY By Annie Tempest

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