



## Quiz of the week

- 1) A papal cross has how many horizontal sections?
- 2) 'Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him' is the opening sentence of which Graham Greene novel?
- 3) Which fruit comes from the tropical plant *Ananas comosus*?
- 4) 'The House at the Back' was one of three houses combined to form which prestigious London address?
- 5) Whisky, oatmeal, honey and cream make up which Scottish liqueur?

## 100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE December 7, 1918



MY marsh bailiff about fourteen days ago witnessed the following. He was attracted by two birds fighting in the grass, when to his surprise a bird rose, showing itself to be a hawk, and carrying in its talons another bird of about its own size. It flew to a watering trough and he saw from the splashing that the fight was being continued. He watched until the fight appeared to have ended. Cautiously approaching, he saw a hawk standing on its opponent. The bird made no attempt to fly away, but stood eyeing him savagely. He found that the bird had been standing on its opponent and holding it under the water. The victim, which was quite dead, was another hawk, rather bigger than the victor. It had evidently been deliberately drowned.—A. Havelock Case

## Wicked words

Most people don't grow up. It's too damn difficult. What happens is most people get older

Maya Angelou

- 1) Three 2) 'Brighton Rock' 3) Pineapple
- 4) 10, Downing Street 5) Atholl Brose

## Time to buy

**Festive Fig & Plum Chutney**, £4.50, Jeannie's Kitchen Garden (07771 652427; www.jeannieskitchengarden.com)



**Christmas plum liqueur (50cl)**, £20, Foxdenton (01280 824855; www.foxdentonestate.co.uk)

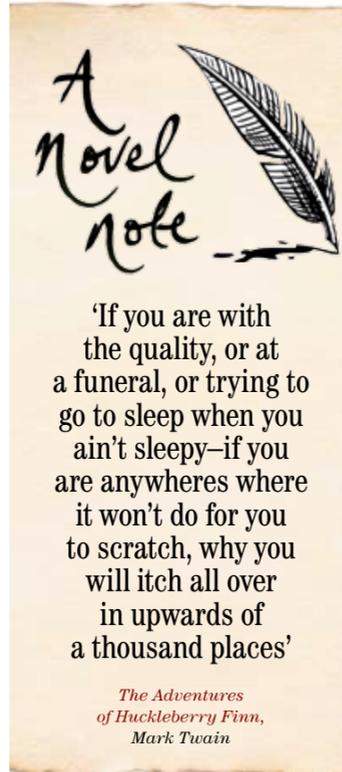


**Give a Goat for Christmas to a child in Darfur**, from £50, Kids for Kids (07957 206440; www.kidsforkids.org.uk)



## Five things you (probably) didn't know about... Hip flasks

- Personal flasks developed in cultures around the world, from the use of eggshells and earthenware containers to glass and metal bottles. Christian pilgrims employed them to carry water and oil on their travels.
- The word 'hipster' is said have originated with those who carried illicit hip flasks during Prohibition in the USA. 'Bootleggers' tucked them into their boots or garters (left).
- In the RAF, the term 'hip flask' was used as a coded reference to a revolver.
- These little bottles are usually shaped to fit the curve of the wearer's hip or thigh, rather than having straight edges, for reasons of both comfort and subtlety.
- It's said that drinks taste better from a solid-silver hip flask—this is due to the cleansing properties of the metal, which ionises its liquid contents. *Georgie Morgan*



'If you are with the quality, or at a funeral, or trying to go to sleep when you ain't sleepy—if you are anywheres where it won't do for you to scratch, why you will itch all over in upwards of a thousand places'

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain*



## Oh, the agony!

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

### Fun for all the family

**Q** My siblings persist in breeding (not with each other, I hasten to add) and it feels as if I'm gaining more nieces and nephews by the day. They're adorable, but birthdays and Christmas are becoming a financial nightmare—am I allowed to stop buying gifts for my brothers and sisters? Do I have to tell them or just fade it out? *P. C., London*

**A** Of course you're allowed to—your siblings will be grateful to be let off the same hook. Start by slipping into neutral and giving each family a shared gift they can enjoy as a nuclear unit. (I don't mean literally nuclear, as in a fun day out at Sellafield—perhaps a ride on the fabulous flumes at Center Parcs in Elvedon or a box for the pantomime at Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre?)

Thereafter, give the children a shared Xbox game, which will allow parents time off for good—or bad—behaviour, released from supervising their progeny; a gift in itself. Once the nieces and nephews turn 18, you can switch the present-giving back to your own generation. A family National Trust membership; a subscription to COUNTRY LIFE? If, at that point, the juniors grumble, the grasping little beasts don't deserve presents at all.

## Unmissable events

### Exhibition

**Until January 5, 2019 'Once Upon a Time'**, The North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Oxford. A journey through the history of fairytales and magical stories—including *Cinderella*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Peter Pan* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*—through the works of artists and illustrators from the 19th century to the present day (such as *They Came to the Warm Countries* by Michael Foreman, from *Thumbelina*, right). There will also be 50 rare books on display (01865 319450; www.thenorthwall.com)



**Until December 21 'Su Blackwell: Folk Tales, Forests and the Sea'**, Long & Ryle, John Islip Street, London SW1. Using her scalpel and collection of books, the artist cuts and glues the pages to create enchanting miniature dioramas, lit and encased in glass and wood boxes, 'like Victorian relics found in a museum of intrigue' (020-7834 1434; www.longandryle.com)

### Theatre

**Until December 22 A Christmas Carol**, various venues. This touring adaptation is a celebration of the 175th anniversary of the publication of Dickens's classic festive tale, in aid of the children's charity Barnado's. See website for dates, venues and prices (01622 756605; www.europeanarts.co.uk)

### Until December 23 The Greatest Snowman

Pedley Street Station, London E1. Board a luxury train carriage for an evening of espionage, make-believe and Christmas adventure. The immersive experience includes a delicious four-course meal. Tickets from £56 (www.funicularproductions.com)

### Cinema

**Until January 6, 2019 Royal Opera House Cinema Festival**, Bow Street, London WC2. Screenings of 21 ballets and operas in the newly refurbished Linbury Theatre, including *Sylvia*, *The Magic Flute*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Cendrillon*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Swan Lake*. Adult tickets from £10, free child tickets available for Saturday and Sunday matinees (020-7304 4000; www.roh.org.uk)

### Fair

**December 6 Festive Fair**, Four Seasons Hampshire, Dogmersfield Park. The Spa and Courtyard, located in the Georgian manor's 18th-century stable block, will host a Christmas market with a range of gifts for sale—both from the Four Seasons' own range and local businesses—plus mulled wine, hot chocolate and roasted chestnuts. 6pm-9pm, free entry with food and drink tickets also available (01252 853011; www.fourseasons.com/hampshire)

### Carol service

**December 12 Christmas Carol Service**, St Barnabas Church, Pimlico, London SW1. The evening, hosted by Strutt & Parker and BNP Paribas Real Estate, will feature the company's in-house choir, The S&Pranos, and is in aid of Shelter From The Storm, a London charity supporting the homeless. From 7pm, followed by wine and mince pies. Free entry with donations on the night. RSVP to events@struttandparker.com

### Book now

**December 21 and 22 Medieval Banquets at Beaulieu**, New Forest, Hampshire. Dine like a king or queen in the 13th-century Beaulieu Abbey Domus, which will once again echo with the sounds of feasting and frivolity. Within the ancient stone walls, you will enjoy mead served alongside great platters of meat, vegetables and potatoes. After dining, wander along the spectacular Tunnel of Light. £39.50pp (01590 614787; www.beaulieu.co.uk)

## What to drink this week Anything from Davy's Wine Merchants



This family business deserves to be better known, believes Harry Eyres

Some wine merchants fly—pretty successfully—under the radar. They may not be as familiar as certain others with a presence in the high street or storied premises in St James's, or beloved national institutions such as the Wine Society, but they deserve to be better known.

### Why you should be buying from them

For instance, I only recently cottoned on to the fact that the excellent chain of Davy's Wine Bars, concentrated in the City of London, also operates an equally impressive retail outfit under the name of Davy's Wine Merchants. There are obvious advantages in having a steady customer in the form of 23 wine bars, as James Davy, representing the fifth generation of this family business, founded in 1870, explained.

### What to buy

A star at the recent Davy's tasting was the grower Champagne house of Duménil. Duménil Grande Reserve Brut (*below*, £31.95/£30.35 case price; www.davywine.co.uk), made from one third each of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier, has lovely richness from a high proportion of reserve wine and excellent balance. Even more tight and structured is Duménil Les Pêcherines Vieilles Vignes Brut (£39.95/£37.95). Davy's is also strong on white Burgundy. For everyday drinking, its chalky and fresh Côteaux Bourguignon Blanc Le P'tit Bonheur Maison Pascal Prunier-Bonheur (£17.95/£17.05) is excellent value. Another strength is the Rhône. I especially enjoyed the peachy and beautifully textured Condrieu Les Ravines Domaine Rémi Niero 2016 (£37/£35.15) and the spicy, soft, full-bodied Cairanne Cuvée Col du Débat Domaine Les Hautes Cances 2015 (£26.50/£25.18).

