

## Quiz of the week

- 1) Which Romantic poet had a club foot?
- 2) Which play's cast of characters includes Dogberry and Verges?
- 3) What is the Spanish word for conqueror?
- 4) What is the name of the donkey in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*?
- 5) How many normal-size wine bottles would you have in a methuselah?

## 100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE

March 27, 1915



THE British farmer in his own fatalistic way resigns himself to the belief that there is a period in winter when he cannot expect any returns from his poultry. He lets them scratch about his stackyard and occasionally wrings the neck of one for eating, but he has not condescended so far to set about making the hens lay eggs in winter. The truth is that the return, as far as he knows it, has not been sufficient to dazzle his eyes. He is still under the belief of his fore-fathers that if the return from chickens, without going too closely into the amount of grain they have consumed, is sufficient to buy his wife a new gown at Easter, there is no reason to complain. The people who are revolutionising the little art of producing fresh eggs in winter are, as a matter of fact, newcomers in the field.

## Words of the week

- Perseverate** (Verb)  
To prolong
- Fantod** (Noun)  
(A state of) unease
- Mabble** (verb)  
To wrap up

1) Byron 2) 'Much Ado About Nothing' 3) 'Conquistador' 4) Benjamin 5) Eight

## The nature of things

### Grey lichens

WHEN scattered pieces of lichens appear on the lawn, we take it as a sign that nest-building is under way, the dropped bits not having made it to the nest.

As primitive life—formed by partnerships between fungi and algae—lichens hold their own fascination (more than 1,700 species occur in the British Isles). Some, like the oakmoss *Evernia prunastri* (right, top left) and its allies are beautiful—and ubiquitous in damper, western counties—yet they're soft organisms, so relatively few fossilised lichens have been found.

The presence or not of lichens is now known to be a reliable barometer of atmospheric pollution. Although 17th- and 18th-century botanists recorded numerous species in London, the cranking up of the Victorian industrial revolution saw about 50% of species disappear entirely from the capital and other industrialised hot-spots for more than a century. In London, it took the closing down in the early 1980s of the power stations at Battersea (now a luxury-homes development in the making



and Bankside (reincarnated as Tate Modern) to lure some of them back.

Oakmoss is used in perfumery for woody base notes and scent fixative and many other species were long used to make dyes. **KBH**

Illustration by Bill Donohoe

## Time to buy

### Handmade dog greeting card,

£2.60, Domenica More Gordon (www.domenicamoregordon.com)



**Byzantine dog collar and lead,** collar from £65, lead from £79.50, Mungo & Maud (020-7022 1207; www.mungoandmaud.com)



### Large travelling dog bed,

£88 (available to COUNTRY LIFE readers for £70.40), The English Room (0844 693 2224; www.theenglishroom.com)



### The Eagle & Child, Bispham Green, Lancashire

Settling down well under new-ish management, this is one of the

area's best dining pubs, the kitchen often excelling itself on its more ambitious dishes and unexpected combinations. The ingredients are always good and mostly local, whether it's Morecambe Bay shrimps, meat from the family farm over in Parbold or other produce from the well-run farm shop in the handsome next-door barn. The pub offers a wide choice of good local beers, too. It's a friendly place, quite roomy, with plenty of more or less local regulars (often with their dogs) and attractive prints and furniture, much of it old or antique oak, sometimes beautifully carved. Nearby Rufford Old Hall (closed Thursday and Friday)—a gem of a Tudor manor—is well worth a visit.

(01257 462297; www.ainscoughs.co.uk)

Alisdair Aird is co-editor of 'The Good Pub Guide 2015', out now from Ebury (£15.99)

## Unmissable events

**Festival**  
**March 27-29 Cheese & Wine Festival,** Business Design Centre, 52, Upper Street, London N1. The 30 cheesemakers include La Cave à Fromage, which will attempt to break the world record for the number of cheeses on one board. Admission costs £9 if booked online or £12 on the door and includes the concurrent Chocolate Festival (www.cheesewinefestival.com)

**Talk**  
**March 27 'Emma Bridgewater: Toast and Marmalade—Stories from the Kitchen Dresser',** Lord Leycester Hospital, Warwick. The renowned ceramicist on the stories behind the designs, as part of Warwick Words, 2pm. Tickets £20 including tea and signed copies of her new book (01926 334418; www.warwickwords.co.uk)

**Flower Show**  
**March 28-29 Cornwall Spring Flower Show,** Boconnoc, Lostwithiel, Cornwall. Show gardens,



floral art, tradestands, 'Gardeners' Question Time' and classes for magnolias, camellias, rhododendrons, daffodils, alpine, bulbs and pot plants. Entrance from £6 (www.cornwallgardensociety.org.uk)

**Exhibitions**  
**Until April 4 Circus Paintings by Francis Hamel** (above), Brian Sinfield Gallery, Burford, Oxfordshire. The results of a summer with Giffords Circus (01993 824464; www.briansinfield.com)

**Until April 10 Artwork from COUNTRY LIFE by Claire Mackie** (left), Potterton Books, 93, Lower Sloane Street, London SW1. Delightful illustrations as seen on the



'My Week' page (www.pottertonbooks.com; 020-7730 4235)

**Until July 11 'George Morland: In the Margins',** The Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds, West Yorkshire. The first major exhibition since the 1970s for the 18th-century painter (0113-343 2778; library.leeds.ac.uk)

**Until June 7 'Companions in Art',** Watts Gallery, Compton, Surrey. A first collaboration involving

## NGS garden of the week

**Chesham Bois House, 85, Bois Lane, Chesham Bois, Buckinghamshire HP6 6DF. March 29, 2pm-5pm. £3.50, children free.** A beautifully designed paradise surrounding an elegant Georgian house. At this time of year, hellebores are a highlight, as well as primroses and daffodils. You can also enjoy the structure of the planting, formal water and walled garden and the anticipation of new growth in the borders. Plants for sale, teas (www.ngs.org.uk)

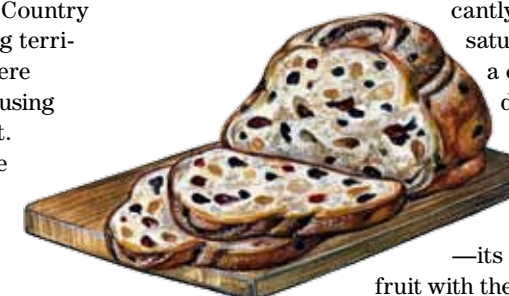


MORE lard than cake, this rich, fruity concoction is found in several British counties, each claiming to provide the original recipe. Wiltshire bakers maintain it's their specialty on the basis that the West Country is prime pig-farming territory and 'lardies' were invented as a way of using up unwanted pig fat. Wiltshire lardy cake is made with various combinations of dried fruit and spices, whereas the Northumberland version contains simply milk and currants. Hampshire lardies have no fruit at all.

Despite contemporary concerns about high-fat, calorific foods, lardy cake is still

## Buns (and cakes) of Britain

### Lardy cake



Ellie Hughes

Illustrations by Fiona Osbaldstone

widely eaten—it has been dished out at Buckingham Palace's summer garden parties and even reportedly appears on the menus of several hospitals. Contrary to its connotations, lard actually contains a significantly lower proportion of saturated fats than butter, a common cake ingredient. And, ironically, one of the bakeries most famous for lardies, Huffkins, doesn't even use lard—its bakers combine the fruit with the dough, spread it out with a mixture of butter and sugar and bundle it up like a Swiss roll.

## What to drink this week

### Wines from Mount Etna

Harry Eyres recommends refined reds grown on the slopes of Europe's best-known volcano



Something very remarkable is happening on the slopes of Mount Etna and I'm not talking about the regular rumblings and belchings of Europe's most active volcano. The land on and around Etna is shaped by the lava flows and stone litterings of the volcano, both for better and worse. The disruption caused by volcanic activity means there are no large plots of land, but the diversity and richness of terrains has turned out to be a boon for wine producers. Hardly on the wine map 20 years ago, Etna is now one of Europe's most fashionable wine areas.

**Why you should be drinking it**  
Etna wines, especially the reds, have a sensuous subtlety and refinement comparable to Burgundy. This may seem odd, given how far south this land is, but the vineyards are very high (about 2,300ft–2,950ft), the harvests late and the grape varieties quite distinctive and full of quality.

### What to drink

Etna's main red variety is Nerello Mascalese, which gives surprisingly pale-coloured, crushed-strawberry-scented wines whose power is all velvet glove, not iron fist. Pietradolce 2013 Etna Rosso (below, £15.99; www.armitwines.co.uk) is a good introduction: light in colour, with a generous, subtle red-fruit nose; silky on the palate. A step up, equally scented but with a smidgeon more structure, is Etna Rosso Tenuta delle Terre Nere 2013 (£100 per dozen in bond; www.justerinis.com). But the most interesting, headily scented and explosively flavoured Etna reds I have tried come from the natural producer Frank Cornelissen—try his Contadino 2011 (£24; www.noblefineliquor.co.uk).

