



Auckland Castle to be transformed

PLANS to transform the grounds of Auckland Castle (*above*) in Co Durham into a major tourist attraction have been unveiled three years after the estate was saved for the nation.

The 900-year-old former seat of the Bishop of Durham, home to a priceless set of 13 paintings by the 17th-century Spanish painter Zurbarán (*COUNTRY LIFE*, December 3, 2010; April 6, 2011), is going to be transformed into a cultural and arts centre

with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Next year, the castle will host the UK's largest open-air performance since the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games in 2012.

The Eleven Arches project, a night show featuring 1,000 local volunteers, will bring to life 2,000 years of British history from a North-Eastern perspective. The concept is based on the Puy du Fou attraction in France. *Geoff Heath-Taylor*



Walmer's makeover

WALMER CASTLE in Kent, a favourite residence of the Duke of Wellington, is marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo by re-presenting some of the rooms in his style. His bedroom, the Wellington Room, has period decor re-created from a contemporary watercolour of the chamber (*above*), including a carpet design sourced from the archive of Brintons Carpets, the campaign bed the Iron Duke insisted on sleeping on long after his army days were over and the armchair in which he died in 1852.

Walmer was the first Government-owned property to be opened to the public, in 1905—it's now in the care of English Heritage (01304 364288; www.english-heritage.org.uk)—and was the only one of the coastal forts built by Henry VIII to become a personal residence in the gift of the monarch. Its proximity to France meant that, in pre-queuers days, it served as a meeting spot for Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and his generals in the First World War. Apparently, Rupert Brooke drafted *The Soldier* here, as a guest of Asquith's daughter Violet Bonham Carter.

Walmer has been the official residence of the Lord Wardens of the Cinque Ports since 1708, a post Wellington held—he loved the castle for its views out to sea. A Regency Weekend (June 27–28) will include a restaging of the dispatch bringing news of his triumph and a presentation to the current Lord Warden, Lord Boyce. *Jack Watkins*

Where to find Wellington

UNSURPRISINGLY, this is the month for exhibitions on the Duke of Wellington's victory at Waterloo. In London, there are exhibitions at Somerset House (until August 31), the Guards Chapel (until June 30) and the Stair Saintry Gallery in Dover Street (June 18–July 30) through cartoons, sculptures and imaginary photographs as well as paintings.

Outside London, there are displays at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds, West Yorkshire (until August 23), the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh (until September 27)—where two surviving examples of Colours (*above*) can be seen—the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere, Cumbria (until November 1), the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, West Yorkshire (until January 3, 2016) and Windsor Castle (until January 13, 2016) (*see also exhibition review, page 126*).

Jonathan Voak, the former head of Apsley House (*page 94*), is giving a free talk to ticket holders at the Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair about the Duke's art collection at 12 noon on June 23—email talks@lapada.org to ensure a place.



Christina Broom's photograph of a suffragette pageant in 1908

First lady of press photography

CHRISTINA BROOM, who was considered Britain's first female press photographer, is celebrated in an exhibition at the Museum of London, EC2. Broom took up photography in 1903, at the age of 40, after her husband was injured and she borrowed a camera to photograph the Prince of Wales. Spotting an opportunity for income, she went on to capture images of winning racehorses, suffragette processions, young men leaving for

the Western Front and Coronations. One of the most poignant photos was of Rudyard Kipling's son Jack, shortly before his death at Loos in 1915.

Broom took some 40,000 photographs, selling them as postcards, and last year, the Museum of London acquired 2,500 images. 'Soldiers and Suffragettes: the photography of Christina Broom' runs from June 19 until November 1 (020-7001 9844; www.museumoflondon.org.uk). *JW*

Pointers on the payroll



POINTERS are an integral part of the GWCT's annual grouse counts in the uplands. The conservation body employs 20 dogs, which 'point' (*above*) incubating hen grouse and chicks on the moors and locate black grouse and capercaillie in woodland, the function for which they were bred more than 500 years ago. The cost of this work is £10,000 and the GWCT is seeking donations (www.justgiving.com/gwctpointingdogs).

A count of black grouse shows that the Species Action Plan target of 1,200 males in the north of England by 2015 has been reached ahead of schedule, but there has been limited success in increasing the range of distribution. Increases in the north Pennines and Yorkshire Dales are counteracted by declines in north Northumberland and black-grouse populations are becoming isolated from those in the Scottish borders due to fragmentation of habitat.

Country Mouse Rother wonderful

THE blackbirds are having a well-deserved feast of cherries after delighting all of us with their dawn chorus for the past few months. The blackbird is usually the first of the songsters to clear its throat in the morning and certainly has one of the prettiest songs. The cherry trees are in the Waitrose car park in Petersfield, which is also notable in having a storm drain filled with wild brown trout. It's amazing what you can find in the most unlikely places if you bother to look.

These trout led me to buying blind a year's fishing on a tiny stretch of the River Rother at an auction of promises at my daughter's school. My thinking went that if they can survive in the drain, there must be some trout in the river it drains into. Since April, I've been fishing several times and only once failed to connect with a plump, glistening trout. It's brought me an enormous amount of pleasure as nobody has bothered to fish the little stretch of this unfashionable river in recent years. Left to its own devices, Nature has created a haven for kingfishers, wrens and mallards to raise their young. Nature only needs to be given a chance and it will deliver. **MH**

Town Mouse In Eton's Yard

PAUSE to be gobsmacked,' said Lord Waldegrave, Provost of Eton, as he took me into the new McCrum Yard, and I was. Designed by John Simpson, it's one of the most elegant and ingenious buildings of the decade. There are classrooms, a Jafar Hall and a Jafar Gallery, on the outside of which plays a fountain. The fountain is part of a heat-exchange system that both heats and, in summer, cools the buildings: Eton opens few windows because of the noisy planes overhead. I suspect that The Prince of Wales, opening it the next day, may have quite liked it—and just as well, because it's visible from Windsor Castle.

Mr Simpson hasn't short-changed on erudition, either. One of the Orders is Doric, out of the capital of which sprouts a rogue volute: from Sparta, it hasn't been used since the Ancient World. This will be a talking point among Classicists and beaks, but the public—that select part of it that finds itself inside the college—will probably be more aware of the beauty of the proportions, the impeccable stonework, the mahogany museum cases of the museum that display Egyptian artifacts and some of the Hamilton vases, and the hall. It's a debating chamber for future Prime Ministers. As I left, I couldn't help wondering if Etonians don't find university a disappointment. They've had all that it could offer here. **CA**

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