



## Farmers can't face 'bureaucratic' schemes

**P**ROGRESS made in environmentally friendly farming will stall unless Defra's new Countryside Stewardship scheme attracts a better take-up, says the CLA. The scheme, a more results-driven version of current agri-environment agreements (*Town & Country*, June 17), is due to start in January 2016, but, last week, Natural England had only received 2,314 applications for the Mid-Tier level. This is against the 11,000 agreements of a comparable level that expire this year—currently, 70% of English agricultural land is covered by a stewardship scheme.

The CLA suggests that the more competitive packages, in which a scoring system is used to apportion funding, are too onerous. 'The chaos of the new scheme's introduction and the complexity of its requirements have put land managers off and the natural environment and wildlife will pay the price,' warns CLA President Henry Robinson.

Matters have been exacerbated by delays on agri-environment payments this month—only 50% of the overall claim has been paid to about 50% of the claimants. 'This will do nothing to encourage farmers to think positively about the new Countryside Stewardship schemes,' points out NFU Vice-President Guy Smith.

Another problem was the collapse of the Rural Payments system and this, combined with decisions being made at EU level, 'had a major impact on Defra and Natural England's available time to explain the schemes', says the RSPB's Tom Lancaster. 'There's a feeling that farmers have reached saturation point and some have probably been advised to leave it until next year, by which time we would expect more clarity. Defra also needs to fix its IT—the Mid-Tier schemes should have gone online, but instead went out on paper, and I think farmers found it overwhelming. All is not lost, but things do need to happen—and quickly.'



## National-park delay 'pathetic'

**G**OVERNMENT delay on extending the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales national parks was described as 'pathetic', 'unacceptable' and 'frustrating' at last week's National Park Authorities conference on Dartmoor. Two years ago, the Planning Inspector submitted his report to Defra; a decision was delayed by the Somerset Levels floods and the departure of the then Defra Secretary, Owen Paterson, and the report appears to have languished in the in-tray ever since—incurring administration costs of more than £600,000.

The idea is to extend the two national parks so they meet at Tebay, around junction 38 of the

M6 in Cumbria. 'Much of the countryside outside the parks is similar to that inside them, but wasn't originally included because, at the time, the county boundaries were different and Westmorland (now absorbed into Cumbria) couldn't have two national parks,' explains Douglas Chalmers, director of Friends of the Lake District. 'It hasn't been a good year for farming in the area, with many family farms being sold. If they were on protected landscape, they might stand a better chance of getting Government support.'

**The Lake District and Yorkshire Dales would meet at Tebay, Cumbria**

## The tools of murder

**F**OR the first time in history, the extraordinary collection of the Metropolitan Police's Crime Museum has been opened for public viewing in an exhibition, 'The Crime Museum Uncovered' at the Museum of London (until April 10, 2016, [www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk)). It features ghoulish original evidence from notorious crimes, such as the 1948 diary of serial killer John Haigh and the pyjama fragments that encased the remains of Dr Crippen's wife, which, until now, has only been available to police professionals. Murder weapons, forgery implements, court illustrations, letters between victims and their loved ones and police equipment dating back to the mid 1870s will also be on display, showing the evolution of crime and detection.

There will be a series of talks and events plus an accompanying book, *The Crime Museum Uncovered: Inside Scotland Yard's Special Collection*, by curators Jackie Keily and Julia Hoffbrand, revealing 400 selected objects from the case files. *KB*



**Inspector's gadgets: find out how to solve a crime**

## Yo ho and up she rises!

**W**ITH remarkable serendipity, as the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt approaches (pages 58, 64, 68 and 80), the second of Henry V's four 'great ships' has been discovered buried deep in the mud of the River Hamble in Hampshire. Ian Friel, who has spent years researching Henry V's navy, believes the skeleton of the *Holigost* lies not far from the spot where Henry's flagship, the *Grace Dieu*, was identified in the 1930s. Dr Friel spotted it when studying aerial photographs of the site near Bursledon, thought to be a medieval breakers' yard.

The *Holigost*—or 'Holy Ghost'—was one of four magnificent ships commissioned by the king to signify English naval might during the Hundred Years War. Completed in November 1415, she was too late to join the flotilla that carried Henry V and his men to Agincourt, but she suffered extensive damage the following year at the Battle of Harfleur. The first recorded instance of a diver making underwater ship repairs was for the *Holigost*, in 1423, and it's



**Up from the depths: Henry V's ship the Holigost has been rediscovered in a Hampshire riverbed**

thought that Henry V may have sailed on the ship himself. Historic England has announced that it will launch a full-scale archaeological investigation of the site, using sonar, remote sensing and drones.

In London, the richly ornamented rock-crystal sceptre, used at Coronations, which was given by Henry V to the City of London in recognition of its generous funding of English forces at Agincourt, will be on public display for the first time in its 600-year history, at the Guildhall Art Gallery, EC2, from October 24 to December 3 (020-7332 3700; [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do)). *GH-T*



**T**HE buff-tailed bumblebee (*above*), which communicates with fellow workers through a 'waggle dance', has been voted the nation's favourite insect. *Bombus terrestris*, a major pollinator of most UK crops, earned 3,033 votes—40.5% of the total of nearly 7,500 votes. It's not rare, but it needs all the help it can get through the growing of bee-friendly plants and delaying the mowing of flowers.

'Insects are ubiquitous, diverse and exhibit a fascinating array of behaviours,' says David Urry of the Royal Society of Biology, which organised the survey. 'They play a fundamental role in ecosystems, yet they are too often ignored, overlooked or considered little more than a nuisance.'

The seven-spot ladybird came second, with 1,139 votes, followed by the emperor dragonfly, small tortoiseshell butterfly, stag beetle, marmalade hoverfly, green shieldbug, garden tiger moth, black garden ant and large bee-fly.

## Country Mouse Setting the standard

**T**HE Jack Russell has existed for decades as a terrier with a bit of white somewhere about its body and... er... that was about it. You knew one when you saw one. The news that the Kennel Club is to 'accept' the Jack Russell into its fold has left many wondering what the breed standard will be. Before officialdom takes over, I, instead, am suggesting my own. **Size:** smallish, should be able to fit half-way down a rabbit hole or through a cat flap to mate with the neighbour's dog **Colour/coat:** white—add black, tan, brown, mud as you see fit. Scars encouraged **Head:** endearing, contains weapons of mass destruction (teeth) **Character:** imagine Genghis Khan having a spa treatment. A born leader, other soppo breeds such as labradors will follow a Jack Russell on hunting parties, despite their normal goody-two-shoes nature **Motto:** action speaks louder than words **Bark:** annoying **Likes:** holes, big dogs to boss around, sex, sofas and sunshine **Hates:** cats, rats and pacifists **Human relationship:** strictly untrainable, but with the ability to break a man's heart **MH**

## Town Mouse Silver linings

**L**ION masks, half fluting, gadrooning, double shells—if you're keen on silver, you'll know what I'm on about. They were the favourite motifs of Paul Storr, whose work has been brought together for an exhibition at Koopman Rare Art on Chancery Lane, WC2 (*Regency entrepreneur*, October 14). Not only is this the first exhibition of the great Regency silversmith, but it shows some 200 of his pieces. Storr was one of the phenomena of his age. At their height, his workshops employed 500 craftsmen. Like Josiah Wedgwood, he saw the benefit of applying industrial techniques to the production of luxury goods. The age was hungry for opulence.

And thirsty, too. The dinner service presented to Sir John Gladstone, father of the Prime Minister, by the citizens of Liverpool in 1824 contained four wine coolers, modelled on the Warwick Vase. Many of Storr's most ostentatious pieces celebrate drink. It was served, as Christopher Hartop explains in his book *Art in Industry: The Work of Paul Storr*, quite differently then—no preprandial cocktail and little wine with the food, but a great deal of it afterwards. Hence the decanters, coasters and elaborate centrepieces for dessert. Fortunately, Royal Tokaji provided a glass of wine to accompany my perusal of the objects; I would have felt bereft without it. **CA**