

Town & Country Notebook

Stay at home



Launceston Farm, Blandford, Dorset

Everything about this highly regarded B&B, from its valley setting to the homemade biscuits and hot-water bottles laid on for guests, is delightful. The spacious property, which stands in the heart of a working organic farm, has six supremely comfortable double rooms, each with its own bathroom. Stylish informality is the name of the game—there's not a whiff of chintz to be seen. Breakfast is a feast of locally sourced food (sausages from the resident rare-breed pigs, eggs from the chickens in the orchard and seasonal fruits) and, afterwards, you can request a tour of the farm with the owner's son, who manages it. Rooms from £90 per night, including breakfast.

(01258 830528;
www.launcestonfarm.co.uk)

Words of the week

Charientism (noun)

A veiled insult

Escargatoire (noun)

A place where snails are reared

Macilent (adjective)

Extremely thin

A debutante's diary

Thursday October 1st, 1868

MY retriever alluded to our last scene in the cedar room, which I for my part had almost forgotten. 'Do you remember that thick gold bracelet of yours falling off, and my picking it up and clasping it for you? Looking back I wonder how my self-possession ever carried me through.' He then went on to tell me the sort of reputation Kelham bears in the county, as being a house no woman under forty should venture into. Poor Kelham! Its morals were certainly *d'occasion* but still it didn't strike me as being as bad as all that.

Of course, Morland interspersed his conversation with several pretty little nothings which coming from a man of his stamp mean so much, to all of which I listened with downcast eyes, smiling mouth, and the general air of soft contentment you may remark on the countenance of a cat when she is being petted. The train meanwhile rushed along with the most unnecessary speed, and was in London before we thought we were halfway.

He stayed till the last, only leaving us at the Paddington Hotel, and I declare I could have cried when we said goodbye. Alas! With my last glimpse of his handsome face fades away my last English flirtation, and I may make up my mind now to Paris and those insupportable Frenchmen for the next six months, to say nothing of an indefinite period beyond!



'Every Girl's Duty', edited by Maggy Parsons and published by Andre Deutsch

Next week COUNTRY LIFE's new series, 'Forgotten Heroes', begins



Unmissable events



Exhibitions

November 12–15 'A Portrait of Highgrove', Jeremy Houghton, Broadway, Gloucestershire. 25 watercolours (above). Proceeds go to The Prince's Countryside Fund. Viewing by appointment only (www.jeremyhoughton.co.uk; 07981 655515)

November 13–December 7 'Warts and All: The Portrait Miniatures of Samuel Cooper', Philip Mould & Co, 29, Dover Street, London W1. Works by the artist (right) once referred to as 'Vandyck in little', including a portrait of Oliver Cromwell (020–7499 6818; www.philipmould.com)



Until

November 21 'Tim Bowen Antiques Winter Exhibition', Aberglasney Gardens, Llangathen, Carmarthenshire. Selling exhibition from the specialist in oak and country furniture (01558 668998; www.aberglasney.org)

Talk

'Fenland: That sinking feeling', Ely Museum, Ely, Cambridgeshire. With coastal ecologist Dr Pat Doody, in association with the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cam-

bridgeshire and Northamptonshire. 7.45pm–9.30pm, suggested donation £2.50 (01353 661339; www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Fairs

November 17 The National Vintage Fishing Tackle Fair, Kingsley Sports Centre, Woodrow, Worcestershire. 9am–2pm, £2 entry. 40 stalls, plus free valuations (07980 274383)

November 19 Heythrop & Countryside Alliance Christmas Fair, Batsford

Park, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire. 11am–8pm, £5 for adults and free for children under 15 (www.countryside-alliance.org)

Book now

November 20 Plant Propagation

Workshop, Osborne House, East Cowes, Isle of Wight. Hands-on demonstrations of techniques. 10am–1pm, tickets £20 for English Heritage members and £25 for non-members (0870 333 1183; www.english-heritage.org.uk)

November 26 'Twentieth Century Castles', Sackler Centre, V&A, London SW7. Amicia de Moubray on modern fortifications and visionary restorations. 6.30pm, tickets £9 (020–7942 2002; www.vam.ac.uk)

How to... tie a ribbon around a present



Place your present on top of the ribbon. Bring both ends of the ribbon up and form a cross by twisting them together



Turn the present over. Pass one end of the ribbon under the horizontal ribbon



Repeat with the other end, then tie a knot above the centre



Finally, tie a bow and trim the ends