

Unmissable events

Exhibition

February 11–June 4 'From Rome to the Royal Crescent', No 1, Royal Crescent, Bath, Somerset. A selection of detailed architectural models by Timothy Richards, including Rome's Pantheon, London's Somerset House and 1, Royal Crescent itself, will be on display as part of Bath Preservation Trust's celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the city. Admission included in standard museum entry, adults £10 (<http://no1royalcrescent.org.uk>; 01225 428126)

Cookery class

February 18 Knife Skills: Slice and Dice, Cookery School, Little Portland Street, London W1. Learn how to wield a kitchen knife like an expert, chopping, slicing, dicing and filleting. After sampling the results, you will leave with the recipes for the dishes you have created. 4pm–7.30pm, £140 (020–7631 4590; www.cookeryschool.co.uk)

Literary festival

February 16–25 Purbeck Literary Festival, Isle of Purbeck, Dorset. A programme full of literary magic includes talks from 'Beetle Boy' author M. G. Leonard, children's writer Nicholas Frith and travel writer Nick Hunt, plus film, poetry and music. Now in its fourth year, the festival, which has a 'wild' theme, will be using Victorian folly Durlston Castle as its base. Visit the website for event prices and to book (www.purbeckliteraryfestival.info)

Orienteering

February 11–19 Orienteering Week, Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Join the Thames Valley Orienteering Club for a muddy adventure, with four routes to choose from. 11am–3pm, normal grounds admission applies (01296 820414; <http://waddesdon.org.uk>)

Household hints from 90 years ago

Airing a bed

Put a stout stick upright under the bed-clothes, so forming a kind of miniature tent; then put in the hot-water bottles. By this method, the hot air is dispersed all over the bed, instead of warming only the part where the bottles have been placed. From '500 Household Hints by 500 Housewives', published by COUNTRY LIFE in 1926. We cannot vouch for the accuracy of any advice given



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Theatre

February 16 Saint Joan, National Theatre Live (above), nationwide. Shaw's masterpiece, starring Gemma Arterton and directed by Josie Rourke, will be broadcast live to cinemas around the country from the Donmar Warehouse in London's Covent Garden. Visit the website for venues and to book tickets (<http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk>)

Auction

February 11 Sale of antiques and collectables, Swan & Turner, Jedburgh, Roxburghshire. More than 700 lots will go under the hammer in the auction room's final sale before closing its doors. Highlights of the

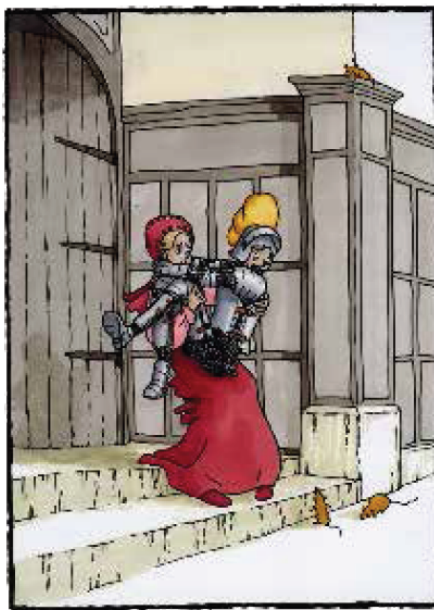
catalogue include a near-life-size bronze sculpture of a horse and jockey (£5,000–£7,000) and a *cocarde-mer* shell (£300–£500). 10am start (www.swanturner.co.uk; 01835 863445)

Book now

February 25–26 Traditional Upholstery Weekend, Schumacher College, Dartington, Devon. Bring along 1m of your chosen fabric and you will be provided with the materials and tools to create a deep-buttoned foot stool, with the aid of professional upholsterer Leigh-Anne Treadwell, during this two-day course. 9.30am–5pm, £250 (01803 847070; www.dartington.org)

Knight Time

By Margaret Noble



Fright Knight

Valentine's Day wines



Harry Eyres advises the charmers out there on the perfect pink Champagne

Our Valentine's Day celebration, the learned among you will remember, is thought to have its origins in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, when, according to Plutarch, noble youths and magistrates ran through the streets of Rome naked and women held out their hands to be struck with shaggy thongs in the hope of getting pregnant. Nowadays, you might think of it as the day when romance gets into bed with commerce.

Why you should be celebrating it

I always imagined that London's so-called 'carriage trade'—the seriously smart merchants with headquarters in SW1—would shrivel up and die rather than have anything to do with Valentine's Day, but at least one of them, Berry Bros & Rudd of St James's Street, seems to be exchanging the pinstripe suit for nothing at all.

What to drink

Champagne and Valentine's Day are as hard to prise apart as Port and Stilton. The more flamboyantly romantic will also feel that the Champagne needs to be pink. Berry Bros & Rudd Champagne Brut Rosé (£33; www.bbr.com, below) is savoury, meaty stuff, not frivolous at all, and would go well with the last game of the season. Alternatively, you can combine a bottle of Berry's Champagne Mailly, Grand Cru—which has lots of ripe, Pinot Noir character—with the excellent, cedary and voluptuous 2012 Berry Bros & Rudd Pauillac, from the cellars of Jean-Charles Cazes, in a special Valentine's Duo Gift Set (£50, including gift wrapping and delivery; www.bbr.com). How could Cupid's arrow miss after that?



Country Life Picture Library; Dreamstime; Jack Sain; Alexander Pladdat/Dreamstime; Margaret Noble

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