



Quiz of the week

- 1) Which military event did Sir Winston Churchill describe as the 'miracle of deliverance'?
- 2) With which plant is the red-and-black cinnabar moth closely associated?
- 3) The bubbles in Champagne are made of which gas?
- 4) Which tyre company's mascot is officially called Bibendum?
- 5) The writer Eric Arthur Blair was known by what pen name?

Word of the week

Aasvogel (noun)

A vulture

100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE August 27, 1921



At the beginning of May I was walking along a path near the village of Gateford. I noticed a bird about as large as a pigeon and of pure white plumage dashing along near the bottom of the hedge. At first sight I supposed the bird was a pigeon, but what happened a moment later showed that it belonged to a very different species. A hedge-sparrow flitted out of the undergrowth. The 'pigeon' seized it and, turning swiftly in flight, bore it away to an ash near by. A glimpse of the curved bill, the bold, flashing eyes, the long yellow legs and formidable talons placed the identity of the marauder beyond question. It was an albino sparrowhawk—a rarity so great that only once before have I heard of its occurrence.—
Clifford W. Greatorex

- 1) *The evacuation of Dunkirk* 2) *Ragwort ('Senecio jacobaea')* 3) *Carbon dioxide*
4) *Michelin (The Michelin man)*
5) *George Orwell*
Riddle me this: *A centipede on its back*



Oh, the agony!

New agony aunt Mrs Hudson solves your dilemmas

A smash hit

Q For our wedding, my mother-in-law bought us an incredibly expensive and equally hideous vase, which generally resides in a cupboard. Of course, it sits in pride of place in the hallway for her visits—but the last time I was putting it away, I dropped it. It's beyond repair—do I really have to pay to replace it or should I confess?

A. S., Wiltshire

A Confess that you finally cracked and threw it against a wall, only considering the ramifications once it was too late? This might ensure that you have one less to cook for at Christmas, but is unlikely to do much for familial harmony—either between you and

your mother-in-law or you and your spouse, who will inevitably be caught in the crossfire.

I believe it is customary, in these situations, to blame the housekeeper. Of course, you will have to fire said housekeeper for authenticity and your mother-in-law will probably replace the vase out of pity. You will then have a hideous vase and no housekeeper, which seems a lose-lose situation. Alternatively, you could blame a child, if you have one to hand, although the bribery required to buy their silence might end up costing you as much as a replacement vase.

On balance, I think that yes, you will have to buy a new one—even if it means tracking one down on eBay. You could always recoup your loss by gifting your mother-in-law one of the other hideous items kept in the cupboard for her next birthday. Revenge is sweet.

In need of advice? Email your problem to countrylife.letters@futurenet.com

Time to buy

Padlock Heart Door Knocker, £159,
Gipsy Hill Hardware
(www.gipsyhillhardware.com)



No 3 Wildflower Gin, £34.95,
Cotswolds Distillery
(01608 238533;
www.cotswoldsdistillery.com)

The Wildflower Candle, £18 each,
Olive & Co (www.byoliveandco.com)



A novel note



'For home had a way of shifting, of changing shape and temperature. Home was homeless. It could exist anywhere, because its only substance was familiarity'

*26a,
Diana Evans*



Riddle me this

One hundred feet in the air,
yet my back is on the ground.
What am I?