



## Quiz of the week

- 1) Which British artist was famous for painting industrial scenes from the North-West of England?
- 2) How many native amphibian species does the UK have?
- 3) In Enid Blyton's *Noddy*, what kind of creature is Big Ears?
- 4) What was the name of the Duke of Wellington's war horse, which he rode at Waterloo?
- 5) What's the name for a young eel?

## Word of the week

### Diverberate (verb)

To strike through, cleave asunder

## 100 years ago in COUNTRY LIFE

October 13, 1923



ALTHOUGH the origin of the Large Black dates far back into history, the breed as we know it today is a well blended fusion of the eastern counties Large Black with the variety from the western counties of England... Since its incorporation into a pedigree breed society in 1899, the Large Black Pig Society has sent animals to all parts of the world. It now has a membership of over 1,900 breeders... No breed could achieve such popularity without genuine merit. Whether it is for the production of pork or bacon, the Large Black pig is equally good. The Large Blacks are the holders of the Whitley Challenge Cup, presented at the London Dairy Show for the best bacon from six pigs of a breed, and they have won this cup ever since it was first offered, in the face of keen competition—*Sir Arthur Hazlerigg*

1) L. S. Lowry 2) 7 3) A gnome 4) Copenhagen 5) Elver. Riddle me this: A hole

## Cabinet of curiosities by David Profumo

ONE of those seemingly inexplicable novelty fads (like Pet Rocks or Furbies), Big Mouth Billy Bass was the brainchild of Joe Pellettieri, who invented this plaque-mounted, animatronic, latex singing fish after visiting a Texan tackle store. Activated by a sensor, its head swivels towards the unwitting passer-by and begins wiggling, together with the tail fin, to a recorded song—the 1999 original lip-synched Al Green's *Take Me To The River*.

It became a cultural sensation, making more than \$100 million in its first year for manufacturers Gemmy and earned a cameo role in *The Sopranos*, as well as a place on the piano at Balmoral. Billy spawned numerous progeny, although Mrs P has confiscated the batteries from my collection, to silence its pandemonic chorus. Featured here are Syd Salmon (The



Troggs's *Wild Thing*), anniversary 2000 Santa Billy (who warbles a Westernised *Jingle Bells* beginning 'Yee Har!'), classic BB, a rapping CoolCatFish, and Travis the Trout, who sings a 'Do-wah-Doo' variant. Other iterations include a Great White, Rocky the Lobster and a luminous Halloween skeleton. I can't think why they never produced a Tina Tuna.

Follow David on Instagram @david\_profumo

## Time to buy

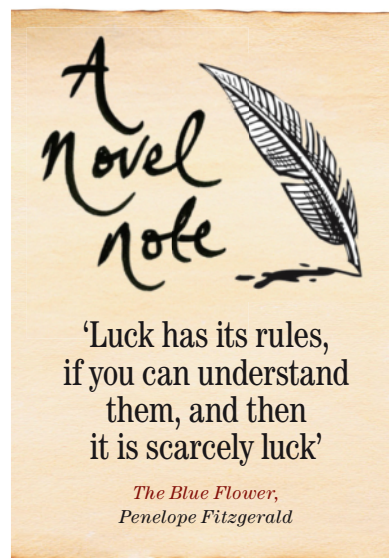
Botany blue paisley men's pyjamas, £175, PJ Pan ([www.pjpan.co.uk](http://www.pjpan.co.uk))



Another Day probiotic fabric freshener, £24, byMATTER ([www.bymatter.com](http://www.bymatter.com))



Regeneratively farmed mature cheddar, from £3.75 for 200g, Golden Hooves (visit [www.goldenhooves.co.uk](http://www.goldenhooves.co.uk) for stockists)



## Riddle me this

It's black in space, but you also find it on earth, where the more you take from it, the larger it gets. What is it?

**In the spotlight**  
Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*)



Now that it has gone to seed, the spiny teasel comes into its own as the classic goldfinch bird feeder, the colourful birds perching precariously on the large, oval seedhead to peck out its embedded progeny with a skilful, tweezer-like action. The uses of *Dipsacus fullonum* are various, however. Its sessile leaves, meeting and merging at the stem, form a water-holding cup, which can potentially quench the thirst of small creatures, although insects often fall in and die in the tiny well. As fuller's teasel, it has a long history in the

textile industry for use as an effective carder, combing and raising the pile of fabrics by 'teasing' the fibres with its seedhead. Teasels are boldly architectural and handsome, growing 3ft–6ft tall, depending on conditions, and having a general uprightness in demeanour, with flowerheads like prickly hen's eggs, held aloft on spiny wards. The lilac-coloured flowers usually emerge in rings, rather than all at once and, when in summer bloom, they are a feeding station for foraging bumblebees and peacock butterflies.

**Unmissable events**

**Until October 28 'Heads & Tails'**, The Fermoy Gallery and Shakespeare Barn, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Ten East Anglian artists explore the relationship between people and animals—whether real or imagined ([www.guildhall-events.co.uk](http://www.guildhall-events.co.uk)).

**Until October 29 'Queer Nature'**, Kew Gardens, Kew, London TW9. A horticultural installation and other artworks highlight the diverse nature of plants and fungi (020–8332 5655; [www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org))



**October 11–January 7, 2024 'Hiroshi Sugimoto: Time Machine'**, Hayward Gallery, London SE1. The largest retrospective to date of the Japanese photographer's work (020–3879 9555; [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk))

**Until November 12 'Autumn colour (pictured)'**, Ramster Garden, Ramster Hall, Petworth Road, Chiddingfold, Surrey. Take in the seasonal symphony of russet, gold, orange and brown in this woodland garden with its avenue of 100-year-old maples ([www.ramsterevents.com](http://www.ramsterevents.com))

**October 14–April 14, 2024 'You and I are Earth'**, Firstsite, Colchester, Essex. Artist Claire Cansick explores the devastating effects of climate change in a poignant exhibition (01206 713700; [www.firstsite.uk](http://www.firstsite.uk))

**Did you know?**

In 1975, Frank Kelland, a gardener from Exwick, Devon, grew the world's tallest sunflower from a free seed packet he had received when entering a competition. Only two plants survived a slug onslaught, but one shot up to more than 21ft 5in—winning the competition's top prize and breaking the then world record. The British record now stands at 26ft 5in and the world record at 30ft 1in.

**Wines of the week**

**Simply the zest**

**Waitrose, Loved & Found Zibibbo, Sicily, Italy, 2022. £8.99, Waitrose, alc 12.5%**

It's easy to see the appeal of this incarnation of the Muscat of Alexandria variety, unoaked to show off its intensely aromatic character. Zesty, vibrant, with a perfume of grapefruit, mandarin and rose petals—a perfect accompaniment to Asian cuisine.

**Lemon aid**

**Les Vignerons de Florensac, Picpoul de Pinet, Languedoc, France, 2022. £12.78, Private Cellar, alc 12.5%**

The recent success this variety has enjoyed means that diluted, dull examples are all too common. Fear not, however, with this well-made co-op wine, which bursts with lemon and lime-curd citrus zestiness, white flowers and orchard fruits.

**More wine in the Cabernet Co-op, Irresistible Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo Valley, Chile, 2022. £8, Co-op, alc 14%**

From a cool vintage in Maipo, this Cabernet was aged for eight months in French oak. Vanilla and blackcurrant leaves on the nose with dark and red fruits. Juicy dark berries on the palate, soft textured with a spiced herbal undertone. Lovely acidity to refresh.

**Lord and master**

**Blank Bottle, Master of None, Western Cape, South Africa, 2021. £18.20–£20, Butlers Wine Cellar, L'Art du Vin, Lay & Wheeler, Taurus Wines, alc 13.5%**

Pieter Walser's wines (and labels) are always a little crazy, but this quaffable blend of Grenache, Cinsault, Pinot Noir, Pinotage and 16% white varieties is truly original. It's a delicate, ethereal style, packed with rosehip, rhubarb and balsamic-macerated strawberry flavours, and is perfect to enjoy slightly chilled.

For more, visit [www.decanter.com](http://www.decanter.com)

**Decanter**

