

COUNTRY LIFE®

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EVERY WEEK

The magic of bluebells Let the enchantment begin



The Editor's Easter Quiz

Military dogs: saving lives, saving soldiers

Great cakes in literature



A river runs through it

The waterways of London provide ample inspiration for new property developments



Museum of London; Getty; Alberto Pezzali/Nurphoto via Getty

THE lost waterways of London—which, although long forgotten, often inspired the names of areas and streets that run their course (Fleet Street, Conduit Street, Bayswater (above) and Clerkenwell spring to mind)—will be celebrated in a new exhibition. ‘Secret Rivers’ will be at the Museum of London Docklands from May 24 to October 27 and should be well worth a visit, especially as, after hundreds of years, today’s new-builds are still shaped by the capital’s underground rivers.

Take Clivedale’s The Mansion, a ‘contemporary Georgian’ block of 23 homes currently in development at 9, Marylebone Lane, W1. The site is directly above the River Tyburn, a major Thames tributary that supplied the capital with water from the 13th century. Relatively untouched until the 18th century, the watercourse defined the lane’s shape and architect DSDHA has mindfully designed the building’s balustrade lines and floor slabs to follow the course of the river below.

By the same developer, 73, Brook Street, W1—on a road that takes its name from the

underlying Tyburn Brook, which once flowed in its path between Hanover and Grosvenor Squares—pays homage to its origins with an undulating light installation in the lobby, simulating flowing water (www.clivedale.com).

The much-anticipated 12.8-acre Chelsea Barracks, SW1 (www.chelseabarracks.com), featuring apartments and town houses around seven garden squares atop the River Westbourne, makes a nod to history with a 1,300ft-long rill by landscape architect Kim Wilkie and Squire & Partners. Once it’s been completed, it will run the entire length of the Chelsea Bridge Road boundary. This water feature ‘will create a visual and sensory buffer’, say the developers.

In the early 18th century, the Westbourne was pooled to create an ornamental lake that formed part of the Ranelagh Pleasure Gardens (now partly appropriated by the Chelsea Hospital’s grounds), but was redirected underground following the development of Belgravia in the early 19th century, so its re-emergence is particularly poignant.

High on a hill



The second Paragraph 55 house to feature in *COUNTRY LIFE* this year—named for the clause in planning policy allowing homes of exceptional design to be built in rural areas—one-of-a-kind Ozone will be built on the idyllic slopes of Pitch Hill, between the villages of Ewhurst and Shere, in the Surrey Hills.

Spanning 15,030sq ft, the six-bedroom, six-bathroom, ‘eco-concrete’ property is designed by architect Burrell & Mistry. Set in 22 acres of private grounds with far-reaching views of the South Downs, it will incorporate an indoor pool, a gym and a cinema, as well as a sky room and roof garden. Cranleigh is only four miles away and Guildford 10.

Paragraph 55 properties are extremely rare, with permission having been granted to only about 100 nationally since 1997. £3.5 million, The Grantley Group (01483 407620).

Feeling fruity

PINEAPPLES, figs and other exotic fruits once thrived in the village of Mentmore, Buckinghamshire. The 19th-century owner of Mentmore Towers (the 5th Earl of Rosebery) was partial to the fruits, which were grown in greenhouses fuelled by steam from the former smithy. The site of the smithy is now home to a cutting-edge, eco-friendly modern property: The Forge.

With four bedrooms and flooded with natural light, it features a vaulted hallway and an oak-and-glass staircase and is the first new-build in the village for 30 years. Renewable energy and Green technology are integral to its design, with hot water and heating provided via an outdoor air-source heat pump. £1.6 million through Michael Graham (01296 336227).

