

# COUNTRY LIFE

EVERY WEEK

JUNE 3, 2025

The Hampshire  
chronicles:  
13 reasons the  
county has it all



Austen's last home and Montagu's motors  
Mixing it: the restaurants that break rules  
Madrid revisited and the art of Rachel Whiteread

# Art market

**Fig 7: A satisfyingly solid still life of apples, a quince and a pomegranate, 1903–05, by Renoir. With Haynes Fine Art**



Mr Mackinnon also has a rare and lovely oil sketch of a Highland view by Landseer.

To move away from British art, among the prints offered by Emanuel von Baeyer is a pair of the famous wash-manner coloured etchings *L'Amour* and *La Folie* (Fig 5), 1777, by Jean François Janinet after Jean-Honoré Fragonard. Each measures 11½in by 8¼in and is in fine condition. Haynes Fine Art has a strong charcoal and blue pastel drawing of two dancers by Edgar Degas and also very strong is an 8¼in by 12¼in still life of apples, a quince and a pomegranate (Fig 7) by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, dating from 1903–05. These fruits are convincingly solid, no means always the case with Renoir's later still lifes, especially of roses, or, indeed, his sometimes boneless ladies.

Two outliers, as it were, among the exhibitions will be the framers Paul Mitchell in Avery Row, W1, known for the handmade and antique—which has recently reframed a Cézanne portrait (Fig 8) for the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, US—and Fine Art Commissions. The latter, which marries portrait artists with sitters, will have a display at Rountree Tryon, the sporting-arts gallery in Ryder Street, SW1. Rountree Tryon itself has an archetypal Munnings of *Davy Jones with the Hon Anthony Mildmay* up.

There will be a programme of talks and tours alongside the exhibitions, with events taking place at Colnaghi in Bury Street and other galleries, and at the Society of Antiquaries in Burlington House. The society will host four

**Fig 8: A portrait by Paul Cézanne reframed (below) by Paul Mitchell for the J. Paul Getty Museum**



talks on June 30, including a celebration of Turner's 250th anniversary and an entertaining evening in partnership with COUNTRY LIFE on July 1, when art-world figures will disclose their 'Piece I'd Never Part With'. Visit [www.classicartlondon.uk](http://www.classicartlondon.uk) for details. 🐉

**Next week Collector-dealers**

## Pick of the week

In 1808, Sir Frederick Morton Eden, social reformer and founding chairman of the Globe Insurance Company, proposed that the fire brigades maintained by individual London companies should be amalgamated for greater efficiency. Unfortunately, in 1809, before anything had been achieved, he died of scarlet fever caught from a schoolboy son, and it was not until 1832 (39 years after the French Battalion des Sapeurs-Pompiers de Paris and eight after the Edinburgh municipal brigade) that the London Fire-Engine Establishment was finally launched. A by-product was the collecting of accurate information and statistics about fires in the capital. It would seem from this that the Aurora Borealis was observed further south in the 1830s than now. In November 1835, and again on October 18, 1836, fire crews were scurrying about in chase of reported 'fires', with similar scares in Dublin, Utrecht and even Nantes, France.

However, it was no false alarm on March 26, 1836, when a fire in Old Bond



Street spread to the newly built Burlington Arcade, destroying much of it. The damage to the Arcade was exacerbated by 'the light nature of the buildings and the intimate connection at the back; there was also a want of water for some time at the south end'.

The fire had started at No 12, Old Bond Street, the premises of Mr Absolon, military clothier. According to a newspaper report, 'It would appear that the alarm of fire was first given by some ladies in Mr Absolon's house running from the back of the premises, calling fire, and that a candle had dropped on some speedily ignitable furniture, which soon set the room in flames. The whole house was shortly in one body of fire, and it spread with amazing rapidity'. At that time, one of the major causes of London blazes was candles setting fire to bed and window curtains.

Living with his father at No 12 was John Absolon (1815–95), who went on to have a distinguished career as a watercolourist. In the circumstances, it seems rather brave of him a couple of years later (when he had moved to Jermyn Street) to have painted the 19in by 15in *A Student's Lodgings* (left), of a young man dreaming, pipe in hand, before his fire, with Alexander Clayton-Payne at No 8, Duke Street, SW1. Surprisingly, the statistics show that tobacco smoking was a relatively infrequent cause of fires.

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