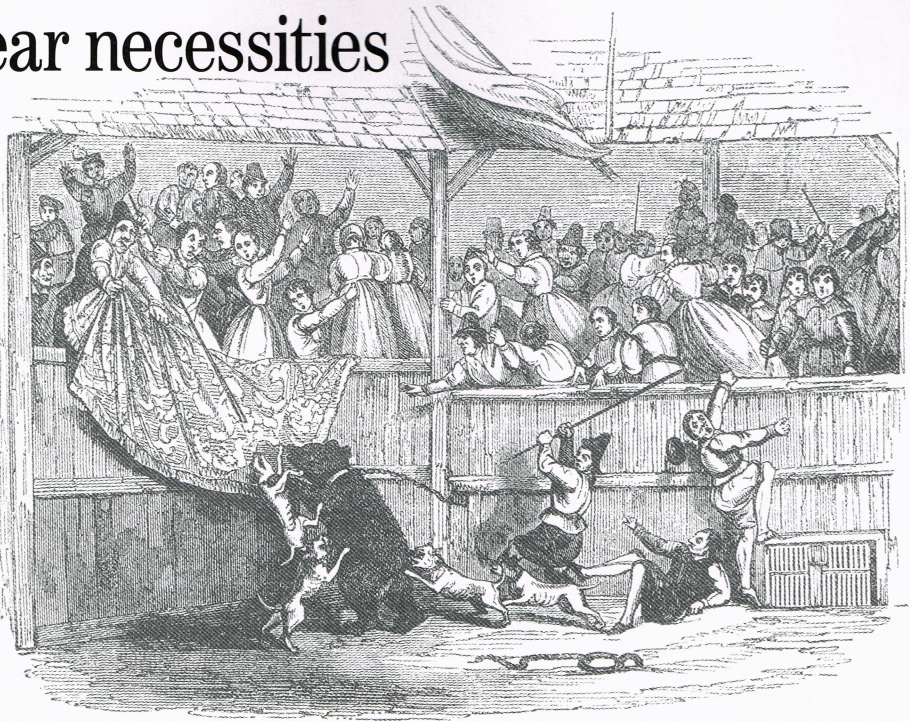


Bear necessities



This graphic wood engraving shows bear baiting in Clerkenwell during the 17th century

SHAKESPEARE'S stage direction 'Exit, Spurred by a bear' is not as fantastical as you might think. The 'very rude and nasty pleasure' of bear baiting, to quote Samuel Pepys, was popular from Saxon times through to the 19th century and, during the Elizabethan era, it shared a stage with the latest entertainments from the likes of Marlowe and Jonson.

Last week, three bear-baiting pits in the Bankside area of London, near the Globe, were listed as scheduled monuments, scuppering further riverside high-rises. The 'Bear Gardens' are a rarity, as few animal-baiting locations are now known; they are hidden under car parks and buildings and are unlikely to ever be opened to the public.

The archaeological remains of two Elizabethan playhouses—The Theatre in Hackney, where *Hamlet* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* were first performed, built in 1576–77, and The Hope in Southwark—have also achieved protected status.

These theatres are 'where some of the world's greatest stories were first told', says Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England. 'They deserve protection as part of England's precious historic fabric.'

The popularity of animal baiting eventually eclipsed all other entertainments at The Hope. Its acting company departed in 1617 and the building was dismantled during the English Civil War.

Bronze beasts

TO mark the opening today of his latest triennial exhibition at Mall Galleries, London SW1, Hamish Mackie's larger than life *Andalusian Stallion* (left) will be erected on the terrace of the British Council's Mall headquarters. In this, he follows in the footsteps of Henry Moore and Turner Prize-winning Mark Wallinger (he of the first fourth-plinth sculpture, *Ecce Homo*).

The powerful bronze will remain in situ for a month and the exhibition, 'Life in Bronze', which brings together 100 sculptures inspired by travels to Australia, India and Africa, in addition to British wild and domestic animals, will run from October 10 to 22 (www.mallgalleries.org.uk).

Mr Mackie has supported wildlife charity Tusk for 20 years and this exhibition is no exception. In addition, 10% of sales will go to the Countryside Alliance. On October 18, COUNTRY LIFE will host a private view for readers with Roxton Field Sports and the Countryside Alliance, with drinks and canapés (6pm–9pm). Email rosie.paterson@timeinc.com if you would like to come.

Good week for Five-a-day

The heaviest-cabbage record has been trounced after nearly a century; Cornish gardener David Thomas's weighed in at 23.2kg (51.1lbs)

Lost art

Two stolen Van Goghs have been found in Italy and a 17th-century work by Jordaens, worth £3 million, has been discovered in Swansea

Would-be gardeners

The National Trust has launched a Heritage Gardening Programme to train green-fingered hopefuls to care for its 240 heritage gardens

Bad week for

Beachgoers

Sightings of the potentially fatal Portuguese man-of-war have prompted warnings from the Marine Conservation Society

Heritage

A museum in Burnley, the last working example of Lancashire cotton-spinning and weaving, is among five museums in the county to close due to budget cuts

Nervous shoppers

An undetonated Second World War bomb was found near a Portsmouth shopping centre, which was evacuated; the Royal Navy towed it out to sea for a controlled explosion

Checkmate

AN innovative, interactive storybook, *The Foolish King: The Secret History of Chess*, published by David Fickling Books (£10.99), details the magical origins of the world-popular game as a spectator sport between teams of talking insects.

The first children's book from Mark Price, International Trade Minister and former MD of Waitrose—who wanted to find a fun way to teach his daughter how to play chess—*The Foolish King* is accompanied by an iPad app, which features tutorials, tips and chess games that can be played in three different levels.

Children may recognise the style of *The Foolish King's* illustrations: they are by Martin Brown, best known for bringing the gory 'Horrible Histories' series to life.

