

## Nature

the fact that 'rowan gave us the best spoons for stirring milk and elm was first choice for coffins and lavatory seats'.

### THE SECRET LIFE OF THE GEORGIAN GARDEN

KATE FELUS

IB Tauris, 240pp, £16.99,  
Hatchards price £15.29

For 18th-century aristocrats, the garden was a backdrop for the great theatrical extravaganza of their play and diversions. Kate Felus's new book, divided into times of day from morning to midnight, catalogues the ingenious ways in which nature and landscape were the scenery for 24-hour pleasures.

In the *Times*, Adrian Tinniswood marvelled at the hijinks. 'She shows us an astonishing landscape in which retired admirals act out naval battles with miniature men of war and full-size cannon, while enormous Chinese junks emblazoned with dragons and tigers glide by, country squires go skinny-dipping and their wives escape the cares of supervising the servants by taking a solitary row on the lake. Her lawns are littered with exotic creatures; aviaries and menageries are filled with flying squirrels and squawking macaws, raccoons, eagles, even a tiger or two. By day, gentlemen fish while ladies play at haymaking, like Marie Antoinette in the Queen's Hamlet at Versailles.'

In the *Spectator*, Mary Keen found the book 'fascinating', noting that the lake battles were not without dangers: 'At Grimsthorpe Castle the 22-year-old composer Thomas Linley, often known as the English Mozart, was drowned when a summer storm capsized his boat.' But she loved the details: 'At Parson, Gilbert White's modest four-acre place, they sang and dressed as shepherds and shepherdesses, as well as enjoying the extra diversion of the parson's brother disguised as a hermit.'

The Jane Austen expert John Mullan, writing in the *Guardian*, also enjoyed the reveals – though he found that Felus lost some feeling of a century of change in a historical sweep ranging from the accession of George I in 1714 to the death of William IV in 1837. But he concluded: 'Yet one theme is consistent: nowadays the landscaped Georgian garden looks like an elegant and decorous arrangement, but originally it was the theatre for eccentric behaviour. Their gardens were where the British could go a little mad.'

## Current affairs

### THE EURO AND ITS THREAT TO THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

JOSEPH STIGLITZ

Allen Lane, 496pp, £20,  
Hatchards price £18

Joseph Stiglitz is an American Nobel-prize winning economist who recently gained wider fame in Britain when he was named by Jeremy Corbyn as one of the Labour leader's team of international economic advisers. His latest book is an attack on the euro and its failings; it is an analysis both of the problems inherent in the euro since its inception and of what has happened in Europe since the financial crash of 2008. Stiglitz also offers his own solutions to the crisis. He



calls the story of the eurozone a 'morality play': 'it illustrates how leaders out of touch with their electorates can design systems that do not serve their citizens well.'

The euro was indeed 'flawed at birth in the 1990s', wrote John Kampfner in his review of Stiglitz's book for the *Guardian*. Its architects 'laboured under the misapprehension that economic integration would beget political integration, and strong economic growth shared by all'. Kampfner found much to admire in Stiglitz's 'disembowelling' of the single currency project, yet he also detected the paradox that, 'having spent 300 pages dismantling the currency project, the author suggests it is still worth salvaging'. Martin Sandbu, writing in the *FT*, felt much the same. The book 'does much more than a demolition job', he wrote. 'These chapters are full of constructive proposals.' Yet the contradiction in Stiglitz's thesis is that he 'claims that the euro's design makes disaster inevitable, even as he (rightly) proves that things could have been better with other, perfectly available, policy choices.'

Dominic Lawson, reviewing the book in the *Sunday Times*, found Stiglitz's positions on his favoured targets, Germany and neoliberalism, to be unconvincing. Stiglitz's 'desire to slaughter "neoliberalism" obscures rather than illustrates the real problem of many European countries, which is

indeed an excess of deterrents to business formation and not just strangulation by the single currency'. Lawson also found the chapter on Brexit appeared 'hastily written'. Nonetheless he, like all reviewers, was impressed by Stiglitz's 'pulverising' catalogue of the failures that have led us up to this point.

### PINPOINT

HOW GPS IS CHANGING OUR  
WORLD

GREG MILNER

Granta, 336pp, £14.99,  
Hatchards price £13.49

Global Positioning System (GPS) is 'the world's only global utility', according to the US Air Force, who manage it on a daily basis. Today we all make use of it, whether directly or indirectly, but many don't appreciate where it comes from and how it works. GPS was created in the early 1970s by the US military as a way of improving the accuracy of bombers. Consisting at first of around twenty satellites orbiting at 20,000km above earth, with clear signals from four of them being required to pinpoint a terrestrial location, its value was proved to the Pentagon beyond doubt when it was successfully used in the first Gulf war in 1991. 'Thanks largely to GPS, the Coalition accomplished the first large-scale deep desert advance in the history of warfare,' wrote Greg Milner in his acclaimed new book on the subject.

For a while the Pentagon kept its most accurate service for military use only, but that proved unsustainable, and the service is now free for all to use. Milner suggests that our reliance on it might be damaging the parts of our brain that deal with navigation, and includes accounts of those who have followed it against their better judgement, such as the Japanese tourists in Australia who drove their car into the ocean.

Clive Cookson gave the book a rave review in the *Financial Times*. The military origins of GPS are explained 'brilliantly', he wrote, while there are

