Nil Desperandum

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club

ISSUE 15 June 2021 Isolated but not alone

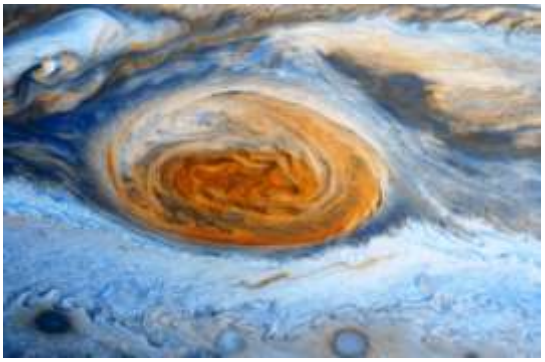
Picture Caption: "*you can't teach an old dog new tricks*"

Index:

Continued:

Jupiter – the planet with the red spot

Source: Article by Tibi Puiu at: https://www.zmescience.com/science/facts-about-jupiter-0523532/



Jupiter is at least twice as big as all other planets in the solar system combined. But that's not all… Jupiter is named after the Roman king of the gods for good reason. It's the largest planet in the solar system and has more moons than any other planet. Read on for more facts about one of the most amazing planets in the solar system.

1. Jupiter is the king of planets by mass: We probably all learned at school that Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system. But, this is a bit of an understatement. Jupiter is *by far* the most massive cosmic body in the solar system, being 2.5 times larger than all other planets *combined*. It is nearly 318 times more massive than Earth and it would take 11 Earths lined up next to each to match Jupiter's diameter.

2. Jupiter's Great Red Spot is actually a planetary-sized storm that has been raging on for centuries. In 1665, famed Italian astronomer Giovanni Cassini observed a huge blemish south of Jupiter's equator. This 'Great Red Spot', as it's still called today, has been the subject of contention among astronomers for centuries. Some have proposed that the feature, which is large enough to contain 2-3 planets the size of Earth's diameter, is a huge storm. This is indeed the case, NASA scientists found after the Voyager 1 mission completed a flyby of the planet in 1979.

The red spot spins anticlockwise and takes six Earth days to rotate completely. However, it remains a mystery why this stormy region is red. One possible explanation is the presence of red organic compounds. However, the Great Red Spot might disappear in the next few centuries. During Cassini's observations, the size of the spot is estimated to have been 40,000 km, whereas today it is about half as large. However, astronomers are fairly confident a new giant red spot will appear somewhere else on Jupiter's surface, due to the planet's atmospheric dynamics.

3. The first astronomers to track Jupiter were Babylonians: It's no secret that the ancient Babylonians were skilled mathematicians. For instance, they understood the Pythagorean theorem nearly 4,000 years ago, or more than a millennium before Pythagoras himself was born. Their mathematical prowess naturally extended to astronomy, regularly employing arithmetic to catalogue the movements of celestial bodies and improve their astronomical predictions.

4. Jupiter has the most powerful magnetic field of any planet in the solar system: Like Earth, Jupiter's core is made of active, swirling molten material whose motion generates a magnetic field — and a very powerful one to boot. According to measurements performed by NASA, Jupiter's magnetic field is at least 14 times stronger than Earth's, making it the most powerful in the solar system.

5. Jupiter has the shortest day of all planets, despite its size: For all its monstrous size and mass, you'd think Jupiter would be slow to rotate around its axis. However, it's the fastest spinning planet in the solar system, with a rotational velocity of 45,300 km/h. As such, a day on Jupiter only lasts 9 hours and 55 minutes. A year, however, is much longer — Jupiter orbits the sun every 11.8 Earth years. What's more, due to this rapid rotation, the planet has an oblate shape with flattened poles and a bulging equator. Its powerful rotation is also responsible for the next point.

6. Jupiter has a thin ring system: This wouldn't be a list of facts about Jupiter without mentioning its rings. Unlike Saturn's more iconic rings, Jupiter's are very faint and made of dust rather than ice. For centuries, these rings were too faint for astronomers to notice. Imagine everyone's surprise when NASA's Voyager 1 spacecraft beamed back images of Jupiter's rings in 1979. The three-ring system begins some 92,000 kilometres above Jupiter's cloud tops and stretches out to more than 225,000 km from the planet. They are between 2,000 to 12,500 kilometres thick.

7. Jupiter has 79 moons and counting: Until recently, Jupiter was widely regarded as the planet of the solar system with the most natural satellites. That's until 2019, when astronomers affiliated with the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington DC raised the total number of moons around Saturn to 82, beating Jupiter's 79. Almost all of Jupiter's moons are tiny, with a diameter of less than 10 kilometres. This is also one of the reasons why astronomers are constantly finding new moons around both Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter does have some moons that stand out more. These four major moons are collectively known as Galilean Moons. They are Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Ganymede, with a diameter of 5,262 km, is actually the largest moon in the solar system. And, who knows, perhaps Jupiter might regain its title as the most moon-populated planet as scientists believe it may have as many as 200 natural satellites orbiting it.

8. Jupiter has the brightest auroras in the solar system: From time to time, people are treated to nature's dazzling fireworks show – the *Aurora borealis*, also known as the Northern Lights. This eye candy phenomenon is caused by the collision of energetic charged particles with atoms in the high-altitude atmosphere — and it's not reserved to Earth. Auroras have also been spotted on Mars, Uranus, and, yes, Jupiter. Jupiter actually experiences the most intense auroras in the solar system, being hundreds of times brighter than on Earth. Just like on Earth, auroras on Jupiter are caused by solar storms. However, Jupiter has an additional source for its auroras: charged particles thrown into space by its orbiting moon Io, which is famous for its many large volcanoes.

9. Some of the moons may actually be capable of harboring life: The Voyager and Galileo missions that sent spacecraft to Jupiter and its moons found that Europa, one of the biggest moons in the solar system, has a subsurface liquid ocean covered in thick ice. Now, scientists believe that Europa may actually be capable of harboring life since it meets three essential conditions: biochemically useful molecules, a source of energy, and a liquid solvent (water) in which dissolved substances can chemically react with each other.

10. Jupiter is a 'failed star': The gas giant is virtually made of 90% hydrogen and 10% helium, that's mighty close to the sun's composition. In fact, some consider Jupiter to be a 'failed star'. Jupiter is already a big boy, but if it were roughly 80 times more massive than it is, it could have collapsed under its own gravity to form a star.

11. Jupiter is the solar system's asteroid vacuum cleaner: Due to its sheer mass and proximity to the Kuiper belt (a huge region of space beyond Neptune packed with asteroids and dwarf planets), Jupiter attracts a lot of visitors. Astronomers believe Jupiter experiences at least 200 times more meteorite impacts than Earth. So, credit to Jupiter for clearing the solar system of potentially hazardous asteroids that might have come dangerously close to Earth.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

How old is Marriage?

Introduction

Extracted from: https://www.thespruce.com/history-of-marriage-2300616

In *'How long has the Institution of Marriage existed for?',* Sheri Stritof says:

"Most ancient societies needed a secure environment for the perpetuation of the species, a system of rules to handle the granting of property rights, and the protection of bloodlines. The institution of marriage handled these needs. For example, in ancient Hebrew, the law required a man to become the husband of a deceased brother's widow."

How old is the institution?

Extracted from: https://theweek.com/articles/528746/origins-marriage

The best available evidence suggests that marriage is about 4,350 years old. For thousands of years before that, most anthropologists believe, families consisted of loosely organized groups of as many as 30 people, with several male leaders, multiple women shared by them, and children. As hunter-gatherers settled down into agrarian civilizations, society had a need for more stable arrangements. The first recorded evidence of marriage ceremonies uniting one woman with one man, dates from about 2350 B.C., in Mesopotamia. Over the next several hundred years, marriage evolved into a widespread institution embraced by the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. But back then, marriage had little to do with love or with religion.

The primary purpose of marriage was to bind women to men, and thus guarantee that a man's children were truly his biological heirs. Through marriage, a woman became a man's property. In the betrothal ceremony of ancient Greece, a father would hand over his daughter with these words: *"I pledge my daughter for the purpose of producing legitimate offspring."*

Among the ancient Hebrews, men were free to take several wives; married Greeks and Romans were free to satisfy their sexual urges with concubines, prostitutes, and even teenage male lovers, while their wives were required to stay home and tend to the household. If wives failed to produce offspring, their husbands could give them back and marry someone else.

When did religion become involved?

As the Roman Catholic Church became a powerful institution in Europe, the blessings of a priest became a necessary step for a marriage to be legally recognised. By the 8th century, marriage was widely accepted in the Catholic church as *'a sacrament, or a ceremony to bestow God's grace'*. At the Council of Trent in 1563, the sacramental nature of marriage was written into canon law.

Marriage – what is it?

From: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage

The definition of marriage varies around the world, not only between cultures and between religions, but also throughout the history of any given culture and religion. Over time, it has expanded and also constricted in terms of who and what is encompassed. Typically, it is an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged or sanctioned. In some cultures, marriage is recommended or considered to be compulsory before pursuing any sexual activity.

When defined broadly, marriage is considered a *'cultural universal'* – that is, common to all human cultures worldwide. In some parts of the world, arranged marriage, child marriage, polygamy, and sometimes forced marriage, may be practiced as a cultural tradition.

Marriage Timeline

There's an interesting timeline about the institution of marriage, *'Ten key moments in the history of marriage'*, by Lauren Everitt BBC News Magazine at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17351133.

Forms of Marriage

Many forms of marriage exist today:

- Common Law Marriage: An informal marriage and legal network that treats/allows people married due to, for example, living together for a period of time.
- Cousin Marriage: A marriage between cousins.
- Endogamy: The tradition of marrying within the limits of a local community only.
- Exogamy: When you marry outside of a specific clan or tribe.
- Monogamy: Marrying one person at a time.
- Polyandry: Women who have more than one husband.
- Polygamy: The practice of having more than one spouse at the same time.
- Polygyny: A man who has more than one wife.
- Same-sex Marriage: Partners of the same sex.

Improve your vocabulary with: Absquatulate

Absquatulate is a deeply silly word that means to make off with something or someone. Why say a thief ran away with your money when it's much more fun to say that he absquatulated with it?

The word *Absquatulate* came out of an odd fad in America in the 1830s for making playful words that sounded vaguely Latin.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Games of the Ancient World

Excerpts from article by Meilan Solly at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/best-board-games-ancient-world-180974094/

The history of board games goes back a long way. The Romans played a wide variety of them, including *Calculi* (Roman checkers) and *Terni Lapilli (Roman tic-tac-toe).* There are many ancient board games, like the Ancient Egyptian *Mehen* or "serpent's game", whose rules have been lost to time, although there are records of them being played, and even pieces from game sets still exist. Long before Settlers of Catan, Scrabble and Risk won legions of fans, Roman legions passed the time by playing *Ludus Latrunculorum*, a strategic showdown whose Latin name translates loosely to "Game of Mercenaries." In northwest Europe, meanwhile, the Viking game *Hnefatafl* popped up in such far-flung locales as Scotland, Norway and Iceland. Further south, the ancient Egyptian games of *Senet* dominated. To the east in India, *Chaturanga* emerged as a precursor to modern chess. And 5,000 years ago, in what is now southeast Turkey, a group of Bronze Age humans created an elaborate set of sculpted stones hailed as the world's oldest gaming pieces upon their discovery in 2013. From Go to Backgammon, *Nine Men's Morris* and *Mancala*, these were the cut-throat, quirky and surprisingly spiritual board games of the ancient world:

Senet: Tutankhamun and Queen Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II, loved playing Senet - one of the earliest known board games. Archaeological and artistic evidence suggest it was played as early as 3100 B.C., when Egypt's First Dynasty was just beginning to fade from power. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, upper-class members of Egyptian society played Senet using ornate game boards, examples of which still survive today. Those with fewer resources at their disposal made do with grids scratched on stone surfaces, tables or on the floor. The boards were long and lithe, consisting of 30 squares laid out in three parallel rows of ten.

Two players received equal numbers of gaming tokens, usually between five to seven, and raced to send all of their pieces to the end of the board. Rather than rolling dice to determine the number of squares moved, participants threw casting sticks or bones. As in most complex strategy games, players had the opportunity to thwart their opponent, blocking the competition from moving forward or even sending them backward on the board. Early game boards boast completely blank playing squares, but in most later versions, the final five squares feature hieroglyphics denoting special playing circumstances. Pieces that landed in square 27's "waters of chaos," for example, were sent all the way back to square 15—or removed from the board entirely.

The Royal Game of Ur: Researchers often struggle to determine the rules of games played millennia ago. But thanks to an unassuming cuneiform tablet translated by British Museum curator Irving Finkel in the 1980s, experts have a detailed set of instructions for the Royal Game of Ur, or Twenty Squares. The game board is structured similarly to Senet boards, with three rows of squares placed in parallel rows. The Royal Game of Ur, however, uses 20 squares rather than 30. To win, players raced their opponent to the opposite end of the board, moving pieces according to knucklebone dice rolls.

Mehen: In his Oxford History of Board Games, David Parlett describes Mehen, which derives its name from a serpentine deity, as the "Egyptian snake game." Played between roughly 3100 B.C. and 2300 B.C., the multiplayer matchup involved up to six participants tasked with guiding lion- and sphere-shaped pieces across a spiral racetrack reminiscent of a coiled snake. The rules of Mehen remain unclear, as the game faded from popularity following the decline of Egypt's Old Kingdom and is sparsely represented in the archaeological record.

Nine Men's Morris: In 2018, excavations at the Russian fortress of Vyborg Castle revealed a long-forgotten medieval game board etched into the surface of a clay brick. While the find itself dates to the comparatively recent 16th century, the game it represents was first played as early as 1400 B.C., when Egyptian workmen building the temple of Kurna inscribed a Morris board onto a roofing slab.

Comparable to modern-day checkers, Nine Men's Morris found opponents directing their army of nine "men," each represented by a different game piece, across a grid-like playing field. Erecting a mill, or row of three men, enabled a player to capture one of their opponent's pieces. The first person unable to form a mill, or the first to lose all but two men, forfeited the match. Alternate versions of the game called for each player to rely on an arsenal of 3, 6 or 12 pieces. The game was especially popular in medieval Europe and even earned a mention in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Tafl: Monks likely used the disc-shaped gaming board to play Hnefatafl, a Norse strategy game that pits a king and his defenders against two dozen attackers, during the 7th or 8th century. One of ancient Scandinavia's most popular pastimes was a family of strategy games known collectively as Tafl. Norsemen played Tafl as early as 400 A.D., according to the Oxford History of Board Games. A hybrid of war and chase games, Tafl spread from Scandinavia to Iceland, Britain and Ireland, but fell out of favour as chess gained traction in England and Nordic countries during the 11th and 12th centuries.

The most popular Tafl variation, Hnefatafl, deviated from standard two-player games in its use of highly unequal sides. To play, a king and his defenders battled a group of tafl men, or attackers, that outnumbered them by roughly two-to-one. As the king's men attempted to herd him to safety in one of the four burgs, or refuges, located in the corners of the grid-like game board, tafl men worked to thwart the escape. To end the game, the king had to either reach sanctuary or yield to captivity.

Ludus Latrunculorum: The toast of the Roman Empire, Ludus Latrunculorum or Latrunculi was a two-player strategy game designed to test participants' military prowess. Played on grids of varying sizes—the largest known example measures 17-by-18 squares—the so-called "Game of Mercenaries" was likely a variant of the ancient Greek game Petteia.

The first documented mention of Ludus Latrunculorum dates to the first century B.C., when Roman writer Varro described its coloured glass or precious stone playing pieces. The poets Ovid and Martial also referenced the game in their works. Despite its recurrence in both written and archaeological evidence, Ludus Latrunculorum's exact rules remain unclear. Various scholars have proposed potential reconstructions of the game over the past 130 years, according to https://www.ancientgames.org/ludus-latrunculorum-latrunculi/. Perhaps the most comprehensive of these is Ulrich Schädler's 1994 essay, translated into English in 2001, which suggests players moved pieces forward, backwards and sideways in hopes of surrounding an isolated enemy piece with two of their own. Captured tokens were then removed from the board, leaving victorious players' hands "rattl[ing] with the crowd of pieces," as Laus Pisonis put it.

Patolli: In Patolli, a gambling game invented by the early inhabitants of Mesoamerica, players raced to move pebbles from one end of a cross-shaped track to the other. Drilled beans used as dice dictated gameplay, but the exact rules of "entry and movement" are unknown. Among the Aztecs, Patolli held unusually high stakes, with participants wagering not just physical goods or currency, but their own lives. Commoners and aristocrats alike played Patolli, which was particularly popular in the Aztec capital of of Tenochtitlan.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

According to fellow 16th-century chronicler Francisco López de Gómara, even Emperor Montezuma enjoyed the game. The Spanish conquistadors are said to have destroyed every gaming mat and burned every drilled bean they could find, making it difficult for later historians to piece together the game's exact rules.

Chess (origins: *Chaturanga*): Modern-day chess traces its origins to the ancient Indian game of Chaturanga, whose Sanskrit name refers to the "four limbs" of the Gupta Empire's army: infantry, cavalry, chariots and war elephants. First recorded around the sixth century A.D., but presumably played prior to this period, Chaturanga pitted four players, each assuming the role of an imperial military arm, against each other. Pieces moved in patterns similar to those seen in modern chess. Infantry, for instance, marched forward and captured diagonally like pawns, while cavalry travelled in L-shapes like knights. Unlike today's game, however, Chaturanga involved an element of chance, with players casting sticks to determine pieces' movement.

During the mid-sixth century, Indian merchants introduced a revised two-player version of Chaturanga to Persia's Sasanian Empire, where it was quickly transformed into the improved game of *Shatranj*. (Declaring "check" and "checkmate" stems from the Persian practice of saying "shah mat" when an opponent's shah, or king, was cornered.) When Arabic armies conquered the Sasanian Empire in the mid-seventh century, the game further evolved, its pieces assuming an abstract shape in compliance with Islam's ban on figurative images.

Chess arrived in Europe by way of Arabic-held territories in Spain and the Iberian Peninsula. A Swiss monastery manuscript dated to the 990s contains the earliest known literary reference to the game, which rapidly gained popularity across the continent. By the end of the 12th century, chess was a staple everywhere from France to Germany, Scandinavia and Scotland, all of which followed a slightly different set of rules.

Backgammon: Like many entries on this list, the exact origins of backgammon, a two-player game in which rival players race to "bear off," or remove, all 15 of their pieces from the board, remain unclear. But elements of the beloved game are evident in such diverse offerings as the Royal Game of Ur, Senet, Parcheesi, Tabula, Nard and *Shwan-liu*, suggesting its basic premise found favour across both cultures and centuries. The earliest conceivable ancestor of what is now called backgammon is the Royal Game of Ur, which emerged in Mesopotamia around 4,500 years ago.

Modern backgammon's most memorable characteristic is its board, which features 24 narrow triangles divided into two sets of 12. Players roll pairs of dice to determine movement across these geometric arenas, making backgammon victories a mix of skill and luck. Variations of the game eventually spread to Asia, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Europe. During the medieval period, as many as 25 versions of backgammon, including France's Tric-Trac, Sweden's *Bräde* and Britain's somewhat confusingly titled Irish, popped up across the continent. By the 1640s, the last of these had evolved into the modern game of backgammon, so named in a nod to the words "back" and "game."

Go (then called *Weiqi*)
Go arose in China around 3,000 years ago. A game of "territorial occupation," according to the *Oxford History of Board Games*, Go is far more complex than it seems on the surface. Players take turns placing stones on a grid of 19-by-19 squares with the dual goals of capturing enemy tokens and controlling the largest amount of territory. Popular lore suggests *Weiqi* was first used as a fortune-telling device, or perhaps invented by the legendary Emperor Yao in hopes of reforming his wayward son. Whatever its true origins, *Weiqi* had become a staple of Chinese culture by the 6th century B.C., when Confucius mentioned it in his *Analects*. Later, the game was included as one of the four arts that Chinese scholar-gentlemen were required to master.

China may be the birthplace of Go, but Japan deserves much of the credit for developing the game that David Parlett describes as involving *"a higher degree of sophistication than any of the world's great board games, with the possible exception of chess."* Go reached China's eastern neighbour around 500 A.D. and was initially played by the seemingly discordant groups of aristocrats and Buddhist monks. By the 11th century, however, nobles and commoners alike had embraced what they called *I-go*, paving the way for the game's ascendance in Japanese culture.

During the 17th century, the ruling Tokugawa shogunate even set-up four schools dedicated to the study of Go.

Mancala: Mancala, from the Arabic word *naqala*, meaning "to move," is not one game, but hundreds united by several shared characteristics: namely, moving beans, seeds or similarly shaped tokens across a board filled with shallow pits or holes. The family of games emerged between roughly 3000 and 1000 B.C., with examples of mancala-like rows of holes appearing at archaeological sites across Africa, the Middle East and southern Asia.

The most popular mancala variant, *Oware*, finds two participants playing on a board with two rows of six holes. Players take turns "sowing" seeds by picking up tokens in a given pit and depositing them, one-by-one, in sequence around the board. Fast gameplay is encouraged, as taking one's time is considered anathema to the spirit of the game.

Mancala's goal is usually to capture more seeds than one's rival by counting and calculating strategic moves. But in some cultures, ensuring the game's longevity is actually more important than winning.

The Game of the Goose: Though not technically an ancient creation, the Game of the Goose is on this list as the earliest commercially produced board game. With a race governed purely by chance, the competition involves "not the slightest element of skill or true player interaction towards the winning of stakes," according to Parlett. The earliest reference to the Game of the Goose dates to between 1574 and 1587, when Duke Francesco de Medici gifted a game called Gioco dell'Oca to Spain's Philip II. Over the following centuries, various versions emerged, each with its own distinct illustrations and theming.

In the game, players vied to send their pieces to the centre of a coiled, snake-like board, travelling counter-clockwise as guided by dice rolls. Six of the board's 63 numbered spaces were illustrated with symbols denoting special rules, such as skip ahead to space 12 after landing on space 6, "The Bridge," or start over entirely upon arriving at space 58, the ominously named "Death" tile. As suggested by the game's name, images of geese feature heavily on most game boards. To win—or claim a pot established at the start of the race—a player has to land on space 63 with an exact dice throw. Those who roll higher numbers than needed are forced to retreat back down the track.

READ MORE:

- Tristan Donovan's *It's All a Game: The History of Board Games From Monopoly to Settlers of Catan*
- David Parlett's *Oxford History of Board Games*
- Frederic V Grunfeld's *Games of the World How to Make Them, How to Play Them, How They Came to Be*
- Board Games: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_game*
- Ulrich Schädler's 1994 essay: *http://history.chess.free.fr/papers/Schadler%202001.pdf*

Picture Credit: "Check" by Dano is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Monologues

Picture Credit: [Cropped] By Allan Warren - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Holloway#/media/File:Stanley_Holloway.jpg

Between the two World Wars several British poets wrote comical monologues to lift the spirits of their fellow citizens and servicemen. Almost one hundred years later, humour is very different today and yet these monologues still manage to raise a chuckle. And the chuckle is raised whether it's the first time you've heard it, or you've heard it so many times that you can recite it off by heart.

Perhaps the comic best known for reciting monologues is Stanley Holloway (OBE 1890-1982). Although Holloway was born in London, he had served with a Yorkshire Regiment in WW I and acquired a close and detailed knowledge of the Yorkshire dialect which he put to good use in his rendering of the monologues. He became famous for his comic character roles on both stage and the big screen, such as his role as Alfred Doolittle in 'My Fair Lady'. He began his recording career using 'The Ramsbottom's' monologues written by Marriott Edgar. The most popular of all these monologues is without doubt The Lion and Albert.

My connection with The Lion and Albert

When my youngest son was just 4 years of age, he recited most of The Lion and Albert at my brother's wedding in Ireland. That was a long time ago. I hadn't realised that Roy Hudd had performed the monologue otherwise, when he was my guest at a corporate dinner, I might have asked him to perform for us!

Listen to: The Lion and Albert

Stanley Holloway: https://youtu.be/oaw-savyK0s
Roy Hudd: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUVzki2j87k
Marriott Edgar: https://youtu.be/g3JxoxVqbY0

Selection of Monologues From http://monologues.co.uk

Read these monologues and enjoy – simply slick on the red links below:

- Pukka Sahib This sketch involved Stanley Holloway as a serious monologuist in full evening dress, hounded to distraction by Leslie Henson and Cyril Richard as two Indian army officers. From their vantage point in the stage box, they interrupted throughout and constantly sought to make Holloway 'dry' or smile.
- Sam Small's Shelter It occurred on an evening in springtime, And Sam 'ad coom out of his 'ouse, To look at his flowers, bulbs an' suchlike, And maybe to give 'em a souse.
- Sam Small It occurred on the evening before Waterloo, And troops were lined up on parade, The Sergeant inspecting 'em he was a terror, Of whom every man was afraid.
- Albert's Reunion You've 'eard of young Albert Ramsbottom, And Mrs. Ramsbottom, and Dad, And the trouble the poor lion went through, Trying to stomach the lad.
- Albert Evacuated Have you heard how young Albert Ramsbottom, Was evacuated from home, With his mother, clean socks and a toothbrush, Some syrup of figs and a comb.
- Sam Small at Westminster You've 'eard of Sam Small, 'oo dropped musket, On parade when ol' Boney 'eld sway. Well, thanks to the 'monkey gland' treatment, Old Sam is still with us, today.
- One Each Apiece, All Round Number 2-4-6-8, Private Samuel Small, Were up before his Captain, To explain away a brawl.
- 'Halt, Who Goes There? Old Sam first came to London, When George the Fourth were King, He'd been in th'Army, man and boy, For twenty year come Spring.
- The Food Demonstrator One day at a food demonstration, To which I shall later alude, Mrs. Cutterbuck, to her amazement, Found out there were three kinds of food.
- Sam's Fortune It happened one evening in Wigan, at a certain men's club I could name, We were some of us standing round talking, And some of us playing a game.
- Albert Evacuated Have you heard how young Albert Ramsbottom, Was evacuated from home, With his mother, clean socks and a toothbrush, Some syrup of figs and a comb.
- Brahn Boots One day at a food demonstration, To which I shall later allude, Mrs. Cutterbuck, to her amazement, Found out there were three kinds of food.
- Sam's Christmas Shopping Sam Small were invited one Christmas, To visit some friends down in Kent, But owing to war and taxation, Most of 'is money was spent.
- The Beefeater First of all, Sir, we come to the canteen, Where you wash the cobwebs off your chest. And in Yorkshire that means beer is best.
- The Famous Name of Small There are names as written down in Britain's history, Sooch as Drake and Nelson, Iron Dook an' all. But coom to work it out, bloomin' names like them are nowt, When reckoned wi' the name of Samuel Small.
- The Parson of Puddle In the sweet little, neat little, Only one street little, Parish of Puddle, Over which I preside.
- Brahn Boots Our Aunt Hanna's passed away, We 'ad her funeral today, And it was a posh affair, Had to have two p'licemen there!
- Sam's Parrot Na tha's 'eard of owd Sam, well, that very same chap, Were out walking one day for a stroll, And were padding down t' high street just casual like, On his way to sign on for the dole.
- The Green-Eyed Dragon Once upon a time lived a Fair Princess, Most beautiful and charming; Her Father, the King, was a wicked old thing, With manners most alarming.
- And Yet, I Don't Know Now, my sister's daughter Elizabeth May, Is going to get married next Sunday, they say. Now, what shall I buy her? She's such a nice gel! I think a piano would do very well.
- Beat the Retreat I'm a hundred and two today, bagoom! Eh, today I'm a hundred and two, And at ten years of age I was soldiering, aye, I wor drummer boy at Waterloo.
- Yorkshire Pudden Hi waitress, excuse me a minute, now listen, I'm not finding fault, but here, Miss, The 'taters look gradely... the beef is a'reet, But what kind of pudden is this?
- Sam's Medal You've 'eard of Samuel Small, per'aps? A lad of bulldog breed, 'Oo saved 'is Sergeant-Major's life; (A most unusual deed).
- My Word, You Do Look Queer I've been very poorly but now I feel prime, I've been out today for the very first time. I felt like a lad as I walked down the road, Then I met Old Jones and he said, 'Well I'm blowed!'
- Many Happy Returns Down at the school house at Runcorn, The 'eadmaster walked in one day, Looking all 'appy and cheerful, Which wasn't his habit, they say.
- The Street Watchman's Story Some chaps get the fat and some chaps get the lean, When they start on their journey thro' life. Some makes pots of money by being M.Ps, And some gets it by taking a wife.
- Sam, Drummed Out When a lad's been drummed out of the Army, He's an outcast despised by all men; I'd rather be shot at dawn any old time, 'Cause I never get up before ten.
- Sam's Sturgeon Sam Small were fishing in canal, 'Twixt Manchester and Sale; He hadn't had a bite all day, And nought to sup but ale.
- St. George and the Dragon Some folks'll boast about their family trees, And there's some trees they ought to lop; But our family tree, believe me, goes right back, You can see monkeys sitting on top!

Researched by

Martin Pollins

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Picture Credit: "BABY CARTOON" by IAN KERSHAW is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Naming babies

Naming laws restrict the names that parents can legally give to their children, usually to protect the child from being given an offensive or embarrassing name. Many countries around the world have such laws, with most governing the meaning of the name, while some only govern the scripts in which it is written.

Here are some examples:

In **Germany**, you must be able to tell the gender of the child by the first name, and the name chosen must not negatively affect the well-being of the child. Also, you cannot use last names or the names of objects or products as first names. Whether or not your chosen name will be accepted is up to the office of vital statistics, the *Standesamt*, located in the area in which the child was born. The name *Maria* cannot be used for a boy except as a second given name.

It's different in **Sweden** - the 1982 naming law in Sweden was created to prevent non-noble families from giving their children noble names, but it has made a few changes to the law since then. First names are not approved if they can cause offence or may cause discomfort for the one using it, or names which for some obvious reason are not suitable as a first name.

In **Japan**, one given name and one surname are chosen for babies, except for the imperial family, who only receive given names. The purpose of their restrictions is to make sure that all names can be easily read and written by the Japanese and names deemed inappropriate are excluded.

Denmark allows parents to choose names from a list of 18,000 female names and 15,000 male names pre-approved names (as of 1st January 2016). Special permission is required if parents want to choose a name outside of the approved list.

The Naming Committee, formed in **Iceland** in 1991, decides whether a new given name will be acceptable. If parents want to name their child something that is not included on the Icelandic National Register of Persons (with a list of about 1,800 names for each gender), the name must only contain letters in the Icelandic alphabet and must fit grammatically with the language. Other considerations include whether it will embarrass the child in the future and how well aligned it is with Icelandic traditions. Also, names should be gender specific, and no one can have more than three given names.

In **Finland**, the Names Act of 1985 requires that all citizens and residents have at least one, but no more than four, first names. Persons who do not have a first name are required to adopt one when they are entered into the Finnish national population database. The name may be chosen freely, but it must not be a name used primarily by persons of the other sex, or name foreign to the naming tradition in Finland, a surname, except a patronymic (a name derived from the name of a father or ancestor) as the last given name, or is a name already used by a sibling if this is to be the only given name.

In **Hungary**, a child's name must be chosen from a list of pre-approved names. If the intended chosen name is not on the list, the parents need to apply to the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for approval.

In **New Zealand**. the 1995 Births, Deaths, and Marriages Registration Act prevents parents naming their children anything that "*might cause offence to a reasonable person; or [...] is unreasonably long; or without adequate justification, [...] is, includes, or resembles, an official title or rank.*"

In **Israel**, according to a 1956 law, a person should have a first name (more than one is permitted) and surname (a double-barrelled name is permitted). Children receive the surname of their married parents or the surname of their father if the surnames of their parents differ one from another. For unmarried parents, or those in a common-law marriage, their children receive the surname of their mother unless both parents agreed to give them a double surname. If the parents do not have a common-law marriage children receive the surname of their mother only.

Most new babies in **China** are now basically required to be named based on the ability of computer scanners to read those names on national identification cards. The government encourages the use of Simplified characters over Traditional Chinese ones. Parents can choose the given name, but numbers and non-Chinese symbols and characters are not allowed. China bans 'extreme' names such as Muhammed or Islam in the Xinjiang-region.

In **Norway**, babies cannot have a given name that is traditionally a last name or a middle name, unless the family come from a culture that doesn't make that distinction. You're also not allowed to change your name more than once every ten years. And parents are not allowed to give a child a name that would be a major inconvenience.

In **Spain**, people have freedom to choose any name as long as it doesn't make identification confusing, isn't the same name as one of their living siblings and doesn't offend the person who is named.

In **Portugal**, there is set list of names which are approved and not approved. It is published periodically by the Institute of Registration at the Ministry of Justice. *Caterina* is OK in Portugal, but *Catherine* is unacceptable.

In 2014, the Interior Ministry in **Saudi Arabia** released a list of 51 banned names reportedly not in line with "social traditions." Whilst most selections appear to have religious connotations, foreign-sounding names such as Linda also got prohibited.

There is no law in the **United Kingdom** restricting names, but names that contain obscenities, numerals, misleading titles, or impossible to pronounce are likely to be rejected by the Registering Officer.

In the **United States of America**, restrictions vary by state, and most are imposed for the sake of practicality. For example, several states limit the number of characters in a name, due to limitations in the software used for official record keeping. For similar reasons, some states ban the use of numerals or pictograms, whilst a few ban the use of obscenities. A few states have no naming laws whatsoever.

READ MORE

- 8 Countries with fascinating baby naming laws, by David K Israel: https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/25034/8-countries-fascinating-baby-naming-laws
- Who, What, Why? Why do some countries regulate baby names: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21229475
- 60 Banned names from around the world: https://www.businessinsider.com/banned-baby-names-from-around-the-world-2016-10
- Sorry, you're not on the list: https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2020/09/19/why-no-one-is-called-linda-in-saudi-arabia
- What names are banned in different countries around the world: https://brightside.me/wonder-curiosities/what-names-are-banned-in-different-countries-around-the-world-684710/
- 35 outlawed baby names from around the world by Michele Debczak: https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/68768/22-outlawed-baby-names-around-world

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Make him an offer…

Picture Credit: "Godfather" by Steve Troughton is marked with CC PDM 1.0

Based on the frequency of questions posted on Quora.com, their readers seem to be obsessed with meanings and hidden meanings of words and actions in the award-winning film *The Godfather*, which unbelievably, came out nearly 50 years ago (1972). In case you were on another planet at the time and missed it, here's a quick overview:

The Godfather is a 1972 American crime film directed by Francis Ford Coppola who co-wrote the screenplay with Mario Puzo, based on Puzo's best-selling 1969 novel of the same name. The stellar cast includes Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, James Caan, Richard Castellano, Robert Duvall, Sterling Hayden, John Marley, Richard Conte, and Diane Keaton. The film is the first instalment in *The Godfather* trilogy. The story, spanning from 1945 to 1955, chronicles the Corleone family under patriarch Vito Corleone (Brando), focusing on the transformation of one of his sons, Michael Corleone (Pacino), from reluctant family outsider to ruthless mafia boss.Filming took place primarily on location around New York City and in Sicily and was completed ahead of schedule. *The Godfather* was the highest-grossing film of 1972 and was for a time the highest-grossing film ever made - earning between $246 and $287 million at the box office. The film received universal acclaim from critics and audiences, with praise for performances by its cast, particularly those of Brando and Pacino, the directing, screenplay, cinematography, editing, score, and portrayal of the mafia. *The Godfather* acted as a catalyst for the successful careers of Coppola, Pacino, and other relative newcomers in the cast and crew. At the 45th Academy Awards, the film won the Oscars for Best Picture, Best Actor (Brando), and Best Adapted Screenplay (for Puzo and Coppola). In addition, the seven other Oscar nominations included Pacino, Caan, and Duvall for Best Supporting Actor, and Coppola for Best Director. Since its release, *The Godfather* has been widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential films ever made, especially in the gangster genre and is ranked the second-greatest film in American cinema (behind *Citizen Kane*) by the American Film Institute. The film was followed by sequels *The Godfather Part II* (1974) and *The Godfather Part III* (1990).

Before we look at the question on Quora.com, it's necessary to provide some context. To do that, consider the article by Alison Cooper at: https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/horse-head-in-godfather-real-event.htm - she asks: *Was the horse head in 'The Godfather' based on a real event?* In the film, fictional movie producer Jack Woltz (played by John Marley) refuses a request from the Corleone family to cast Johnny Fontane, Don Corleone's godson(played by Al Martino) in his new film and makes a bunch of anti-Italian slurs in the process. When Woltz wakes up the next morning, he finds the severed head of his $600,000 thoroughbred horse Khartoum in his bed. It's bloody, it's gruesome and it's utterly unexpected (well, at least it was in 1972) and a real severed horse's head was used (taken from an already dead horse at the abattoir).

Alison Cooper says there's no evidence that a real-life horse-head incident inspired Puzo to write the scene. In fact, Puzo had always claimed that he had never even met any mafiosos until after he finished *The Godfather novel*, which became a worldwide best-seller in 1969. Everything in the book, he said, came from his imagination or through researching documented events.

The question on Quora.com

How true to the story of Frank Sinatra is that of Johnny Fontane in the book and film, The Godfather?

Joe Wein answers and explains that Frank Sinatra was the godson of Willie Moretti, an underboss of the Genovese crime family. According to Wikipedia:

"Anthony Moretti was the godfather of then-unknown singer Frank Sinatra. Sinatra's first wife, Nancy Barbato, was a paternal cousin of John Barbato, a Moretti associate. Moretti helped Sinatra get bookings in New Jersey clubs in return for kickbacks. Finally, in 1939, Sinatra signed a recording contract with band leader Tommy Dorsey. However, by the early 1940s, Sinatra had achieved national popularity and wanted to sign a more lucrative recording contract, but Dorsey refused to release him from their existing contract. A rumour claimed that Sinatra asked Moretti for help, and it was alleged that Moretti jammed a gun barrel down Dorsey's throat and threatened to kill him if he did not release Sinatra. Dorsey eventually sold the contract to Sinatra for one dollar."

Biography.com

Source: https://www.biography.com/news/godfather-true-stories-books-movies

According to this source: the similarities between the character of Johnny Fontane (played by Al Martino) and singer Frank Sinatra were so conspicuous that Sinatra was purportedly irked by it. In the film, Fontane reaches out to Vito to help him get out of a contract he was unhappy with. Likewise, in real life, Sinatra was able to extricate himself out of his contract with Tommy Dorsey with the help of his mob connections. Desperate to rescue his fading career, Fontane decides to go into acting and gets cast in a big movie — a move that Sinatra made when he starred in *From Here to Eternity*, which subsequently reinvigorated his popularity. Interestingly, Coppola briefly mulled over the idea of casting Sinatra as Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*.

A bit of advice: Look away if you are squeamish.

I wouldn't like to wake up to this, would you? Here's the scene from *The Godfather* – the setting is Jack Woltz's bedroom after has refused a request from the Corleone family that he should cast Johnny Fontane in his new film. It was an offer he couldn't refuse. But he did refuse (well, at first). The picture above is a screenshot from the movie clip at: https://youtu.be/VC1_tdnZq1A

Up the Albion!

Sources: • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brighton_%26_Hove_Albion_F.C • https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/sussex-news/goldstone-ground-demolished-hove-football-5386416 • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goldstone_Ground • https://groundhopperguides.com/english-football-brighton-and-hove-albion/ • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goldstone_Ground

The Goldstone Ground

Picture Credit: From geograph.org.uk, Author Steve Daniels, Permission - Creative Commons Attribution Share-alike license 2.0, Attribution - Steve Daniels / Goldstone Ground, Brighton / CC BY-SA 2.0

This is an update of the story about the ups and downs of Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club, which appeared in Nil *Desperandum* in December 2020.

Founded in 1901 and nicknamed the *Seagulls* or *Albion*, Brighton played their early professional football in the Southern League, before being elected to the Football League in 1920. The Goldstone Ground, previously part of Goldstone Farm, became the Albion's home in February 1902, with only one football match played there before (in September 1901).

The Albion climbed out of the Third Division (South) to the Second Division with an incredible 6-0 win against Watford at the old Goldstone Ground on 30th April 1958. I heard what was going on from outside the ground and could barely believe what was happening. It was a 6.15pm kick-off as there were no floodlights at the Goldstone at that time. The Albion went into that game needing a single point to gain promotion. Dave Sexton had picked up an injury the week before so a 20-year-old local player, Adrian Thorne, played in his stead. Within just 5 minutes, Thorne scored his first goal and only 4 minutes later he had a hat-trick, and the Albion were 3-0 up in front of a League record crowd of 31,038 – and thousands more were locked out, including me. That evening, Thorne scored 5 of the 6 goals that evening. He should have been knighted!

Brighton & Hove Albion gained promotion to the top-flight (the old First Division) with a win at Newcastle United back on 5th May 1979. With several friends, I put my life at risk by flying to the match in an old Comet aircraft. It was worth it. Brighton won 3-1. Albion supporters can relive the moment with this video. Matters went from bad to worse for the team from 1979 to 1983. Whilst the club reached the 1983 FA Cup Final drawing 2-2 at Wembley before losing to Manchester United 4-0 in the replay, they were relegated from the First Division in the same season and went down to the Second Division.

After relegation from the First Division in 1979, the Albion's fortunes spiralled downwards at an alarming rate. Relegation and disaster came and by 1996 the club's financial situation had seriously worsened leading to the sale of the Goldstone to pay off some of the club's huge debts.

The manager (Jimmy Case) was sacked after a very poor start to the 1996–97 season which saw Brighton rooted firmly at the bottom of the table. By the last day of the season, after being 13 points adrift at one stage, the Albion were off the bottom of the table but had to play the team directly below them, Hereford United – a win or draw would save the Albion and although at one time in the match it looked as though their 77-year league presence was finished, a late goal from Robbie Reinelt (see here) ensured that Brighton retained their league status but only on goals scored (the measure used at that time). They lived to fight another day, but Hereford's 25-year league run was over.

In 1997, the Goldstone Ground became a retail park accommodating Toys R Us and other companies*. The Goldstone Ground's glory days were nearly forgotten - it had served as a host for football games during the 1948 Olympic Games and it's where David Beckham made his professional debut in 1992.

The loss of its home ground hit the Albion hard. After the sale of the Goldstone Ground went through, the Albion had to play home games some 70 miles away at Gillingham's Priestfield stadium for two seasons.

Things started to pick up at the start of the 1999–2000 season when the Albion secured a lease to play home games at Withdean Stadium, a converted athletics track owned by the Brighton council. The upward spiral continued and 2000-2001 was Brighton's first successful season for 13 years and they were promoted to Division Two. The next year they were crowned as Division Two champions – winning a second successive promotion, just one division away from the Premier League.

Then, along came Tony Bloom as the new chairman and the funding for the new American Express Community Stadium at Falmer was put together. The Albion's final season at Withdean was 2010–11, in which they won League One under the management of Gus Poyet. The first league match at the new Falmer Stadium on the opening day of the 2011–12 season was against Doncaster Rovers – strangely the last opposition to play at the old Goldstone Ground in 1997.

The American Express Community Stadium at Falmer

Picture Credit: "American Express Community Stadium" by Simon Carey is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The 2016–17 season in the Championship found the Albion in an automatic promotion position for most of the year, and they finally clinched promotion to the Premier League after a 2–1 win against Wigan Athletic at home on 17th April 2017. Five seasons later, after a lot on nail-biting, the Albion are still in the Premiership, but only just, and everyone hopes for a better season next year.

* A new Lidl store has replaced Toys R Us in Goldstone Retail Park. Source: Sussex Live, here.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Recollections of the past: my time as an apprentice

Looking back is often discouraged as a negative activity but I find that as one gets older, it can be a pleasurable indulgence to reflect on one's experiences and the personalities encountered along the way.

My varied career, which I would not describe as colourful, has included characters and moments of special interest a place for which has been retained in my 'recollection library'.

Here's one recollection…

On leaving school in the late 1940s I joined a small company, as an apprentice. The company was developing office machinery and equipment.

In the early aftermath of the second world war when light industry had yet to get back on its feet, an opportunity arose for new businesses to be started and (hopefully) to prosper in the hands of enterprising ex-serviceman with only a modest amount of capital. Three former colleagues had founded the company two years earlier.

The driving force in the company was Jack Kirk. He was a skilled technician in the pre-war years who had been drafted into the army – the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME) - and despatched with thousands of others to India in 1942, to reinforce the campaign against the Japanese in Burma. He left behind a wife and a two-year old son, to keep the home fires burning.

Jack spent much of the next two years as a member of an intelligence unit in the Naga Hills on the Northeast Frontier, of what was then British India, among the Naga villagers in Japanese-occupied territory. He had a high regard for the resilience of the Naga people, their traditions and way of life and had learned much of their language.

Returning to the UK in 1946 and, with his pre-war job no longer available, he put his energies into starting the new business. At a time when there was little new office equipment available, Jack Kirk saw a gap in the market for restored and renovated office equipment that had been salvaged from bombed out business premises in London. Jack and his associates had the necessary skills and the innovative ability to design, adapt, and produce equipment that was much in demand.

It was a stimulating environment for me – a mere junior employee - from which I learned a great deal both technically and how to compete in an adult environment.

Jack Kirk was probably about 35 years old at the time but his experience in Burma had aged him. He was a tall man with iron grey hair and a moustache to match with an upright military bearing.

He had a clear and incisive mind and could, at odd moments, discourse on a wide range of subjects that engaged him.

In moments of frustration with a project, Jack would give voice in what I assumed was the Naga language. I also recall that he felt the Naga tribesmen's contribution to the bitter but successful battle at Kohima (subsequently the Naga capital) in 1944, was not fully acknowledged.

If Jack Kirk had a shortcoming it was a preference for a pipe, full of *Long John* tobacco, from which billows of smoke would emerge as he poured over a layout or technical problem.

Those early years with the company stimulated my long time interest of the history of both world wars (the cause and effect), and the chequered history of the British role in the region which encompassed Nagaland, a mountainous state in northeast India, bordering Myanmar.

Over time the office machinery and equipment company expanded its remit and grew commercially but, by then, my career had taken a very different direction.

Story by Reg Homes

Ash under the bed 200,000 years ago

Excerpted from: https://scroll.in/article/972575/discovery-of-200000-year-old-beds-throws-light-on-the-complex-behaviour-of-ancient-humans Article by Irene Esteban, The Conversation **&** Paloma de la Peña Alonso

Representational image. Wikimedia Commons: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e0/Le_Moustier.jpg

Research suggests our ancestors understood the benefits of using ash underneath the grass to repel insects and pests. The article says there is a fair amount of archaeological evidence that indicates complex behaviour among our ancestors. For instance, there are bone tools that were used as hunting projectiles, for working leather or processing plants. Ochre remnants were used for body and rock painting. But plants and their products have rarely been reported to embody this type of complex behaviour**.**

Now, a multidisciplinary, international team of archaeologists has presented evidence that more than 200,000 years ago, at the dawn of humankind (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) groups of our ancestors inhabited a cave in South Africa used grasses to create comfortable areas for sleeping and working. They also, the research suggests, understood the benefits of using ash underneath the grass to repel insects and pests. Before this time, there was tentative evidence of bedding being made using tree leaves some 185,000 years ago at Misliya Cave, Mount Carmel, Israel, contains rich Early Middle Palaeolithic* habitation layers. Groups of Neanderthals from the Iberian Middle Paleolithic also used grasses to build their beds and rest areas about 40,000 years ago at Esquilleu Cave (Cantabria, Spain). In South Africa, plant bedding has been observed at several locations, but it has never been studied or published in detail before.

* The Paleolithic or Palaeolithic or Palæolithic (also called the *Old Stone Age*), is a period in human prehistory distinguished by the original development of stone tools that covers nearly 100% of the time period of human technological prehistory.

Until now, the oldest bedding in South Africa came from Sibudu Cave in the KwaZulu-Natal province, where modern humans used sedges (Cyperaceae) to build sleeping beds about 70,000 years ago. The new research (see: https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abc7239), led by Professor Lyn Wadley of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, shows that before 2,00,000 years ago, at a time close to the origin of our species, people preferred the use of broad-leaved grasses to build their beds and resting areas. They also used fire, ash and medicinal plants to maintain clean, pest-free camps.

The construction of this bedding itself is unsurprising. Many animals such as chimpanzees or birds construct their beds and nests with plants. What is new, is the presence of ash layers underneath the bedding that demonstrates a more elaborate behaviour. These findings are important because they show that our ancestors were able to organise the space and the capacity of these early societies to develop strategies to provide health benefits, improving their daily living conditions. This helps to understand them better and to develop our understanding of where we have come from in terms of cognition and spatial awareness.

Siege of Paris

Excerpted from an article (at https://www.britannica.com/topic/Siege-of-Paris-1870-1871) by John Swift, a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Cumbria. His publications include *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Cold War* (2003) and *Labour in Crisis: Clement Attlee and the Labour Party in Opposition 1931–40* (2001). He is also a contributor to *1001 Battles That Changed the Course of History* (2015).

The Siege of Paris took place between September 1870 and January 1871. *[It is said that the conflict was caused primarily by France's determination to restore its dominant position in continental Europe, which it had lost following Prussia's crushing victory over Austria in 1866.]* It was an engagement of the Franco-German (Prussian) War. After the defeat at the Battle of the Sedan (where French emperor Napoleon III surrendered) the new French Third Republic was not ready to accept German peace terms. In order to end the Franco-Prussian War, the Germans besieged Paris starting on 19th September 1870. The length of the siege helped to salvage some French pride, but also left bitter political divisions.

The hastily assembled Parisian garrison was of doubtful quality, but the city's walls and outlying fortresses were formidable. Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke, commanding the German forces, had no intention of wasting lives by storming the city. Instead, the Germans settled down to starve Paris into submission. As food supplies dwindled, nearly every animal in the zoo was consumed in the course of the siege, and feline and canine butchers appeared. However, the poorest citizens suffered most; there were few deaths from starvation but infant mortality soared - and working-class resentment simmered.

Their patience spent, the Germans finally shelled the city, firing 12,000 shells in three weeks, but fewer than 100 Parisians were killed, and the shelling had little impact on Parisian morale. But it plummeted when the city stood on the verge of starvation. In the end, the city capitulated, on 28th January 1871, regular troops were taken prisoner, and the city suffered the humiliation of a triumphal German march through its streets. Such indignities would not be forgotten quickly.

Podcast

There's an interesting Podcast at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000d8rv which is well worth listening to.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

The waistcoat through history

Excerpted from: https://blog.samuel-windsor.co.uk/the-waistcoat-through-history

Picture Credit: Waistcoats came into style thanks to Charles II. Image: Peter Lely / Public domain

From its courtly beginnings in the 16th century to its modern status as a staple for bridegrooms, businessmen and boy-band members, the waistcoat has a long and illustrious history. A truly British invention, more than one brush with royalty has shaped the style in which we create and wear what was once just a humble vest. From snazzy to sombre, and back again, here's the waistcoat's journey over the last 400 years.

Royal Beginnings

The forerunner of the waistcoat first appeared at the court of Charles II in the 1660s. It evolved from a vest – which is what the garment is still known in the US today. As head of the newly restored monarchy, King Charles II wished to distance himself and his court from the extravagant 17th Century French style. He decided the vest was the way to do that.

The new style was announced by royal decree, with Samuel Pepys recording in his diary in 1666: *"The King hath yesterday in council declared his resolution of setting a fashion for clothes which he will never alter. It will be a vest…"*

It was inspired by fashion brought back from travellers to Persia, as clothier, Daniel Ireson, writing at The Gentlemen's Gent, notes:
"in Persia the higher average temperature did not call for a full jacket but something that could be decorative, provide shelter against the elements when needed and be practical in concealing things safely."

At a time when men's fashion in Britain called for coats cut long, this vest, which stopped at the waist was an innovation, and so the '*waistcoat*' was born.

Dapper Dandies

What began as a simple item, marking the difference between the courts of Britain and France was soon adopted by court dandies. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, court peacocks and popinjays became ever more flamboyant in their tastes, making the waistcoat a thing of colour and style. Black Tie Guide blogger, Peter Marshall, reflects:
"Late in the 1820s, dandies… developed a taste for waistcoat models in "all the colours of the rainbow" featuring lavish embroidery and rich plain or figured silks and satins."

Victorian values

Fashions changed over time and by the mid-19th century the waistcoat had become part of more workaday attire. Seen as a necessity for business dress, decoration gave way to decorum, and this menswear staple became more sober, with less colour and ornamentation.

As the fashion experts at Menswear Style note: *"It was quickly decided then that the waistcoat colours had to match the rest of the outfit and by the 18th century men were rarely seen without a waistcoat being part of their daily attire."*

The three-piece suit was firmly in and failing to wear a waistcoat would be about the same as being undressed.

Leaving the bottom button undone

One thing which [nearly] always appears to be observed when wearing a waistcoat nowadays is to leave the bottom button undone, but that wasn't always the case. This would appear to be common sense, helping the fit of the garment, but many people also attribute it to the second royal to influence the history of this style staple: Edward VII. Edward was reputedly a little portly and unable to do up his own bottom button – it led courtiers to follow suit and a new fashion was born*.

This approach has, however, been questioned by one fashion blogger, Kieron Casey at The Totality, who believes that the bottom button was undone to allow manual labour back when the three-piece suit was standard workwear: *"Next time you are about to leave the bottom button undone ask yourself "why?" Is it because you think it looks good or are you just doing it like you think you should because other people do it?"*

* Comment by Martin Pollins: *I'd heard that the tradition of leaving the bottom button undone comes from the time the Duke of Wellington, when out riding his horse, found it uncomfortable to have the bottom button 'done up'. It looks as if I may have been wrong!*

The smart choice for the modern gent

By the middle of the twentieth century, the waistcoat was no longer *de rigueur*, although it continues to be the popular choice for those seeking an ultra-smart look. Today it can still be seen on many men at weddings, as well as giving an extra edge to men dressing to impress at work or at interviews. A waistcoat will enhance anywhere that suits a suit.

Tailoring expert, Edward Dutton, writing at A Suit That Fits, recognises the item's timeless charm: *"Today, the waistcoat has carved out an unusual place within men's fashion – in part, because it's one of the most versatile garments a man can own."*

The waistcoat is ubiquitous. Seen on indie kids, pop stars, city bankers and trendy hipsters, it has transcended sartorial boundaries. Sported by vintage stars like Sean Connery and Steve McQueen as well as today's Justin Timberlake and Daniel Craig, there'll always be a place in the limelight for a great waistcoat.

Picture Credit: Image: Unknown author / Public domain

Looking to the future, it seems the waistcoat can only diversify, in single and double-breasted variants, in a wide variety of colours and cloths, and worn with everything from suits to jeans, and even shorts, and by both sexes.

Poem: 'The Battle of Maldon'

In AD 991, a marauding army of Vikings were confronted by a force of East Saxons led by Ealdorman Brihtnoth. The Vikings had already pillaged Folkestone, Sandwich and Ipswich and had established a temporary base on Northey Island, which was linked to the Essex mainland by a causeway, only accessible at low tide. Brihtnoth and his militia force took up their position at the causeway end during high tide, when the two sides could only shout insults at each other. He refused to pay the invaders to leave, challenging them to battle instead, even agreeing to let them cross the causeway to do so.

"*The Battle of Maldon*" is the name given to an Old English poem of uncertain date celebrating the real Battle of Maldon in August 991, at which an Anglo-Saxon army failed to repulse a Viking raid. Only 325 lines of the poem are extant; both the beginning and the ending are lost but it is remarkable for its vivid, dramatic combat scenes and for its expression of the Germanic ethos of loyalty to a leader. The poem, as it survives, opens with the war parties aligned on either side of a stream (the present River Blackwater near Maldon, Essex). The Vikings offer the cynical suggestion that the English may buy their peace with golden rings. The English commander Earl Byrhtnoth replies that they will pay their tribute in spears and darts. When the Vikings cannot advance because of their poor position, Byrhtnoth recklessly allows them safe conduct across the stream, and the battle follows. In spite of Byrhtnoth's supreme feats of courage, he is finally slain. In panic, some of the English warriors desert their names are carefully recorded in the poem along with the names and genealogies of the loyal retainers who stand fast to avenge Byrhtnoth's death. The 325-line fragment ends with the rallying speech of the old warrior Byrhtwold.

The Battle of Maldon was a battle that took during which the ealdorman of Essex, Byrhtnoth, allowed his *ofermod* ('pride' or 'overconfidence') to get the better of him. Byrhtnoth, the leader of his loyal veterans and local Anglo-Saxon troops, permitted a raiding Viking army to take up a position on land in preparati on for battle. This resulted in both his heroic death of Byrhtnoth, and ultimately a valiant defeat for the English ([Note 1]).

Dave Beard reappraised the significance of the Battle of Maldon ([Note 2]), and says this:

> *"The poem's survival is most fortunate as the only manuscript containing it was almost totally destroyed. This manuscript, which contains several other texts including the sole copy of Asser's Life of King Alfred once belonged to John Leland, the Antiquary. It later came into the possession of Archbishop Parker, who published the text of Asser's life. The manuscript did not pass to Corpus Christi College Cambridge with the rest of Parker's manuscripts after his death. Instead, it became part of the library of Lord Lumley where it was described in the catalogue by Dr Thomas James. Early in the 17th century it passed to the Cotton Library where it was almost completely destroyed by the tragic fire of 1731. It is possible that the Battle of Maldon was not bound in as part of the manuscript until it was acquired by Cotton…*
>
> *"The poem that appeared in the manuscript was itself a fragment consisting of 325 lines. Both the beginning and the end are missing, and it is not certain just how much of the poem has been lost. Fortunately, the part that does survive begins with a description of the English troops being arrayed for battle and seems to recount most of the actual battle. The fragment ends with the speech from one of the faithful retainers exhorting the remaining warriors to fight on to the death…*
>
> *"Do you hear, seamen, what this people say?*
> *They plan to give you nought but spears for tribute,*
> *Poisonous point and edge of tried old sword*
> *War-tax that will not help you in the fight."*

Notes:

1. https://www.bl.uk/anglo-saxons/articles/old-english-heroic-poetry
2. http://poppy.nsms.ox.ac.uk/woruldhord/files/original/8b36efe05b1ca1474f94555f715ab6b9.pdf

WWII National Savings Campaign

Warship Weeks were British National savings campaigns during WWII with the aim of a Royal Navy warship being 'adopted' by a civil community. During the early parts of the war, the Royal Navy not only had lost many capital ships but was facing increasing pressure to provide escorts for convoys in the Atlantic. Whilst there was no shortage of sailors, ships sunk by enemy action had to be replaced. Other national war campaigns included the '*Wings for Victory*' week to purchase bomber planes, a '*Spitfire Week*' to purchase fighter planes, a '*War Weapons Week*' and a '*Tanks for Attack*' week.

Between 1941 and 1942, the concept of National Savings was introduced by the British government. Each region in the country was provided with a savings target to achieve. This was based on the region's population, with each general level of savings having a class of warship assigned. This became known as *Warship Week*, due to its similarities with *War Weapons Week* – which was a drive to raise funds to replace the materiel lost or abandoned at Dunkirk.

Nelson's column at Brighton

Brighton adopted HMS Kipling, and Hove adopted HMS Unbeaten. It appears that as an indicator of savings progress, a replica of Nelson's Column with graduated markings was built on the Seven Dials roundabout in Brighton. During WWII there were a number of Civil Defence Control Rooms set up in Brighton, one of which was situated in the middle of the Preston Circus roundabout, on the main A23 road into Brighton. It was suitably camouflaged with Nelson's column and a tobacconist's shop called P C Brown. If you don't believe it, there's a photo online at:
https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/692358142684884932/

Did the campaign succeed?
The total amount raised for the war effort was £956m (which is equivalent to nearly £45 billion today).

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Thwarting an enemy invasion

Official photograph - Ministry of Information (IWM). Public Domain. © Crown Copyright. Created 1st January 1940

The picture above is a demonstration of 'fougasse', somewhere in Britain. A car is surrounded in flames and a huge cloud of smoke. In the foreground, a soldier can be seen running from left to right. The original MOI 'background story' caption for this sequence of photographs reads: More details are released today (3/6/45) about Britain's secret weapons against invasion. Pictures in this series show weapons developed by the Petroleum Warfare Department. A note on the negative bag indicates that these photographs were released "*To tie with Minister of Information's Conference on June 3, 1945*". It is probable that these photographs were actually taken in 1940.

A *flame fougasse* (sometimes contracted to fougasse and may be spelled foo gas) is a type of mine or improvised explosive device which uses an explosive charge to project burning liquid onto a target), or as an improvised mortar constructed by making a hollow in the ground or rock and filling it with explosives (originally, black powder) and projectiles.

In the 1850s, in a letter to his sister, Colonel Hugh Robert Hibbert described such a weapon being employed during the Crimean War (5th October 1853 – 30th March 1856):

"These wretched Russians have discovered a new system of annoyance which would be well-worthy of invention by Franky [their brother] and which consists of a series of small mines or barrels of gunpowder let into the ground between our works and theirs, and a little tin tube running along the ground a few inches above it, two or three feet long, which tube is filled with some composition which explodes immediately on being touched, so that any unfortunate meandering along the grass without knowing why, suddenly finds himself going up in the air like a squib with his legs and arms flying in different directions. We have had many men blown up by these things and the grass being so long one cannot see the tube at all. The technical name is "Fougasse…The ground between our old trenches, and the Russian ones that we took the other day is full of them. At night you hear a sudden explosion and you know that some wretched fellow has been crossing from one trench to another, on private speculation to see what he could get, has trod on the tube and been blown up…"

One of the few resources the British had in 1940 was oil and petroleum. It deployed 50,000 *fougasse* around the country, heavily concentrated in the south east along likely German invasion routes, concealed in hedgerows and banks along the roads and lanes. Bearing in mind it took the Allies several weeks to fight their way through the hedgerow country of Normandy despite total air and naval superiority - and they didn't have to contend with this nightmare weapon - if the Germans landed on British soil, facing deteriorating weather with open fields becoming mud baths, their progress would have been severely hampered if they had to contend with *fougasse* as well.

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/invasion_ww2_01.shtml

On 16 July 1940 Adolf Hitler issued Directive Number 16. It read:

'As England, in spite of the hopelessness of her military position, has so far shown herself unwilling to come to any compromise, I have decided to begin to prepare for, and if necessary to carry out, an invasion of England... and if necessary the island will be occupied.'

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_anti-invasion_preparations_of_the_Second_World_War

On 9th April 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. Denmark surrendered immediately, and, after a short-lived but unsuccessful attempt by the British to make a stand in the northern part of the country, Norway also fell. The invasion of Norway was a combined forces operation in which the German war machine projected its power across the sea and the German success would come to be seen by the British as a dire portent of bad things to come. Then, on 10th May 1940, Germany invaded France. By that time, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) consisted of 10 infantry divisions in three corps, a tank brigade and a Royal Air Force detachment of around 500 aircraft. The BEF was pinned by a German diversionary attack through Belgium and then isolated by the main attack that culminated in the withdrawal of the British Army to the beaches at Dunkirk.

As things had gone badly for the allies in France, the reality sunk in that an invasion of Britain by German forces would be on the cards - British anti-invasion preparations of the Second World War entailed a large-scale division of military and civilian mobilisation in response to the threat of invasion (Operation Sea Lion) by German armed forces in 1940 and 1941.

The British needed to recover from the defeat of the BEF in France, and 1.5 million men were enrolled as part-time soldiers in the Home Guard. The rapid construction of field fortifications transformed much of the United Kingdom, especially southern England, into a prepared battlefield. Sea Lion was never taken beyond the preliminary assembly of forces. The widespread use of *fougasse* was one element of the British plan to thwart a Nazi invasion. Today, little remains of Britain's other anti-invasion preparations; only reinforced concrete structures such as pillboxes and anti-tank cubes are commonly found.

Heritage at Risk

Excerpted from: https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/blog/2015/09/15/sealion-what-could-have-happened

Many of the German occupations of over-run territories in World War II resulted in the removal of cultural artefacts, art and literary works from museums, homes and other sites. Norman Longmate in his book *If Britain Had Fallen: The Real Nazi Occupation Plans*'*, says Hitler wanted Department III of the German security service to remove Nelson's Column and the 4 bronze lions from central London. The edifice was a symbol of British Naval superiority and a victory over the invading forces of Napoleon's French Republic. To Hitler, removing it would have created a visible and powerful reminder of his victory over the British Empire and his triumph where the great French Emperor had failed. Department III would also have been made responsible for emptying the National Gallery, the British Museum and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, ostensibly for protection; in actual fact, such plundering would have amounted to little more than theft. As a minor side note, Longmate points out that, except for Nelson's Column, none of the items wanted by the Germans were where they thought they were. Art, literary works and other precious items from the great museums had already been moved, prior to the outbreak of war, to various country estates and even a quarry in Wales. No doubt they would have been moved further afield had the Germans successfully landed on British shores.

*Available from Amazon at: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Britain-Had-Fallen-Norman-Longmate/dp/1853675997/

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

The History of Writing

Writing and its impact on humans

How the invention of writing gave humanity a history: this is the theme of a new programme on BBC. From hieroglyphs to emojis, it is an exploration of the way in which the technology of writing has shaped the world in which we live. The programme is available on BC iPlayer at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m000mtml/the-secret-history-of-writing

Picture Credit: The picture above is a screenshot from the iPlayer programme.

Where did writing begin?

Ewan Clayton has written an article on British Library. You can read it online at: https://www.bl.uk/history-of-writing/articles/where-did-writing-begin What appears below is an excerpt from the first part of the article.

From Mesopotamia to the Americas, you can discover how different regions around the world adopted writing at different times and for different reasons. Ewan Clayton says that full writing-systems appear to have been invented independently at least four times in human history: first in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) where cuneiform was used between 3400 and 3300 BC, and shortly afterwards in Egypt at around 3200 BC. By 1300 BC we have evidence of a fully operational writing system in late Shang-dynasty China. Sometime between 900 and 600 BC writing also appears in the cultures of Mesoamerica.

It's a long journey back in time. Ewan Clayton says this about the origins in Mesopotamia:

"Scholars generally agree that the earliest form of writing appeared almost 5,500 years ago in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). Early pictorial signs were gradually substituted by a complex system of characters representing the sounds of Sumerian (the language of Sumer in Southern Mesopotamia) and other languages. From 2900 BC, these began to be impressed in wet clay with a reed stylus, making wedge-shaped marks which are now known as cuneiform…"

How humans invented writing

Bridget Alex writes, interestingly, from a different perspective at: https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/how-humans-invented-writing-four-different-times. She takes us back to a time about 5,000 years ago, 30 goats changed hands between Sumerians. To record the transaction, a receipt was carved onto a clay tag, about the size of a Post-it Note. Simple geometric signs represented the livestock and purveyor. The indents of circles and semicircles denoted the quantity exchanged. The Sumerians would be surprised to know that their receipt is now held in a museum. That's because the tag is one of the earliest texts from the oldest known writing system, Mesopotamian cuneiform, developed around 3,200 BC in the area of present-day Iraq. Like most surviving records from the time, it's economic in nature. But the interesting part is not what these early texts said. It's how they came to exist.

These early texts beg the question: How was writing invented? That question has at least four answers because writing was independently invented at least four times in human history: in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and Mesoamerica*.

*Extending from approximately central Mexico through Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and northern Costa Rica.

And if all this is not enough, there's a lot of interesting information on writing on the Wikipedia site here.

Come, tickle a rat…

Picture Credit: This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

Excerpted from article by Dan Robitzski at: https://futurism.com/the-byte/discover-rats-like-tickled with other sources as specified.

A team of scientists has made a major leap forward in learning to communicate with animals. Through listening to the vocalisations of lab rats, they believe they can say which rats did and didn't enjoy being tickled, according to research published in the journal ***Current Biology***. Although it may sound a bit frivolous the discovery lends new insight into rats' emotional wellbeing.

Scientists have long assumed that the high-pitch noises rats make when being tickled or played with were similar to human laughter, but they had no way to know for sure. Now, the new study directly correlates the number of vocalisations to an individual rat's emotional response.

"Being able to measure a positive emotional response in animals is an important way to improve their welfare," lead author and University of Bristol psychopharmacology professor Emma Robinson said in a press release. *"What we have shown in this study is that the vocalizations made by rats in response to tickling are an accurate reflection of their emotional experience and something which is easy to measure."*

Robinson and her team want to determine whether the rat squeaks indicate emotional wellbeing in situations other than tickling. *"Should this be the case for other situations,"* Robinson added, *"measuring vocalisations could provide the simple, graded measure of emotional experience needed to better understand and improve the welfare of rats in a laboratory."*

Whilst on the subject of rats, did you know that an African giant pouched rat (giant is the right word for this species as it can weigh in at up to 3.3 lbs. One of these rats, a 7-year old named Magawa, has been awarded a prestigious gold medal for his work detecting land mines. By September 2020, Magawa had sniffed out 39 landmines and 28 unexploded munitions in his career. The UK veterinary charity PDSA has presented him with its Gold Medal for "life-saving devotion to duty, in the location and clearance of deadly landmines in Cambodia". There are thought to be up to six million landmines in the southeast Asian country. PDSA's Gold Medal is inscribed with the words "*For animal gallantry or devotion to duty*". Of the 30 animal recipients of the award, Magawa is the first rat.

READ MORE:
University of Bristol Do rats like to be tickled?
Pouched rats https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-54284952

Curry: a British national dish?

Excerpted from article by Debabrata Mukherjee at https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-British-Curry/

Picture Credit: "Dinner-Chicken Tikka Masala and Roti" by gogatsby is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Every October, the UK celebrates National Curry Week. Although curry is an Indian dish modified for British tastes, it's so popular that it contributes several £billions to the British economy. In 2001, Britain's foreign secretary at the time, Robin Cook, referred to Chicken Tikka Masala as a "true British national dish". Hardly surprising then that we are so crazy about curry, that chicken tikka masala regularly gets voted within the top five most popular meals.

If Britain taught India how to play cricket, India may have returned the favour by teaching the British how to enjoy a hot Indian curry. By the 18th century, East India Company men (popularly called 'nabobs', an English corruption of the Indian word 'nawab' meaning governors or viceroys) returning home wanted to recreate a slice of their time spent in India. Those who couldn't afford to bring back their Indian cooks were able to satisfy their appetite at coffee houses:

- As early as 1733, curry was served in the Norris Street Coffee House in Haymarket. In London.
- By 1784, curry and rice had become specialties in some popular restaurants in the area around London's Piccadilly.
- The first purely Indian restaurant in Britain was the Hindoostanee Coffee House which opened in 1810 at 34 George Street near Portman Square, Mayfair.

The owner of the Hindoostanee restaurant, Sake Dean Mahomed served in the army of the East India Company as a trainee surgeon. He later travelled to Britain and married an Irishwoman. With his coffee house, Mohamed tried to provide both authentic ambience and Indian cuisine "at the highest perfection". Guests could sit in custom-made bamboo-cane chairs surrounded by paintings of Indian scenes and enjoy dishes "allowed by the greatest epicures to be unequalled to any curries ever made in England". There was also a separate smoking room for hookahs.

Why do we love curry so much?

Excerpted from article by Eellie Zolfagharifard for Dailymail.com in March 2015 at: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2979794 based on a report at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/03/03/a-scientific-explanation-of-what-makes-indian-food-so-delicious/

Our love of curry is down to a lack of overlapping flavours - ingredients such as garam masala and bell peppers are usually teamed up with other ingredients that have no chemical similarity. This is what the scientists at the Indian Institute for Technology in Delhi found after studying the chemical compounds at a molecular level in 2,000 Indian recipes:

- Ingredients were teamed together that had no similarity - in contrast to many Western dishes that tend to pair flavours, and
- Out of the 381 cooking ingredients (although what they defined as *'ingredients'* is not clear) in the world, Indian food uses 200.

Humans were in Arabia 120,000 years ago

Prompted by story from Tibi Puiu in Anthropology News at https://www.zmescience.com/science/news-science/ancient-footprints-prove-that-humans-were-in-arabia-120000-years-ago/

The evidence

New archaeological research presents the oldest securely dated evidence for humans in Arabia. Discovered in the Nefud Desert in Saudi Arabia, along with human footprints, researchers were able to identify footprints also belonging to elephants, horses and camels, which have been exposed following the erosion of overlying sediments. See: https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/38/eaba8940

Where

The collection of around 120,000-year-old fossilised footprints were found on the surface of an ancient lakebed in Northern Arabia, which lies between Africa and Eurasia and is directly south of the only land bridge that connects the two continents.

How

As early humans began their long and arduous migrations out of their cradle in Africa, they inevitably passed through the Levant, a region at the eastern end of the Mediterranean at the crossroads between Africa, Asia, and Europe. Some of these pioneering hunter-gatherer groups went north, others west, and others still wandered east, through the Arabian Peninsula. Evidence of the latter migratory path has been recently documented in a new study that described the ancient footprints, which mark the oldest evidence of a human presence in Arabia.

The oldest evidence of humans in Arabia

The seven ancient footprints were etched by two or three people who walked along the shore of a shallow lake in northern Saudi Arabia. During the Pleistocene (often colloquially referred to as the Ice Age), the Arabian Peninsula was quite different to what exists today. Instead of deserts and arid landscapes, Arabia was actually much wetter than it is today. Ancient hunter-gatherers would have trekked through grasslands and woods that were crossed by rivers and lakes, such as the one in the western Nefud Desert where the ancient footprints were studied by palaeontologists at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Germany and Griffith University in Australia. Julien Louys, co-author of the study and a researcher at Griffith Univerity's Australian Research Centre for Human Evolution says: *"It was only the presence of freshwater lakes in the region that made the area so habitable for such a diverse community of elephants, camels, oryx, horses, buffaloes and humans."*

Both humans and local beasts likely came to the lake to drink and forage before moving on. Luckily for science, some of the tracks left in the mud have been fossilized.

The findings were reported in the journal Science Advances. See: https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/38/eaba8940 Royal Holloway University of London reports the above story at: https://royalholloway.ac.uk/about-us/news/ancient-human-footprints-in-saudi-arabia-provide-earliest-evidence-of-humans-on-the-arabian-peninsula/

The footprints described above are nowhere near the oldest ever found: the oldest human footprints ever found are 345,000 years old, give or take 6,000 years. Known as the "devils' trails", they have been preserved in volcanic ash atop the Roccamonfina volcano in Italy.
Source: https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14924-devils-trails-are-worlds-oldest-human-footprints/#ixzz6Yxa46s7b

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

The killer illness the Tudors called 'The Sweat'

Source: https://www.quora.com/What-was-the-illness-that-the-Tudors-called-The-Sweat

Picture Credit: A "danse macabre" (dance of death) from 1493, via Wikimedia Commons

Sudor Anglicus

Contemporary accounts describe an illness that began with a general feeling that something was not right, a strange premonition of oncoming horror, followed by the onset of violent headache, flu-like-shivers, and then aching limbs. This was succeeded by a raging fever complicated by pulse irregularities and cardiac palpitations. Death often simply seemed to occur due to dehydration and exhaustion.

Sweating sickness, also known as *the sweats*, *English sweating sickness* or *The English sweate* or (Latin) *Sudor Anglicus*, was a mysterious and contagious disease that struck England and later continental Europe in a series of epidemics beginning in 1485, then 1508, 1517, 1528 and 1551. Unlike the Covid-19 virus, it did not spread to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. It affected the nobility, especially rich young men, more than the general population for reasons unknown, sparing the very young and the very old.

Scientists have theorised that the Sweating Sickness in Tudor England was a form of hantavirus - diseases spread by rodents. The disease is spread to people via aerosolised virus that is shed in urine, faeces, and saliva.

In *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland,* a distinct age and sex predisposition was noted:
"… that this mortalitie fell chieflie or rather upon men, and those of the best age as between thirtie and fortie years. Few women, nor children, nor old men died thereof."

The sweating sickness, where you could be fine at breakfast and dead by noon, was virulent in Tudor England. Henry VIII lived in fear of the Sweating Sickness. Anne Boleyn contracted it and survived. Thomas Cardinal Wolsey had the sweats several times and survived, although surviving it provided no immunity. Thomas Cromwell lost most of his family, including his wife, to the disease. The mortality rate was as high as 50%.

Chronicler Edward Hall commented on how it affected the King's court and nobility in London:
"Suddenly there came a plague of sickness called the sweating sickness that turned all his [the King's] purpose. This malody was so cruel that it killed some within two houres, some merry at dinner and dedde at supper. Many died in the Kinges courte. The Lorde Clinton, the Lorde Gray of Wilton, and many knightes, gentleman and officiers."

The following description by Thomas Forrestier, a French physician, paints a vivid picture of what the disease must have been like:
"And this sickness cometh with a grete swetyng and stynkyng, with rednesse of the face and of all the body, and a contynual thurst, with a grete hete and hedache because of the fumes and venoms."

There were numerous reports of people suddenly dropping dead in the street. Thomas Forrestier again wrote of the disease:
"We saw two prestys standing togeder and speaking togeder, and we saw both of them dye sodenly. Also in die—proximi we se the wyf of a taylour taken and sodenly dyed. Another yonge man walking by the street fell down sodenly."

Again, in *Holinshed's Chronicles* published in 1557, the Sweating Sickness was described by men whose grandfathers had seen the Black Death as:
"So sharp and deadly that the lyke was never hearde of to any manne's remembrance before that tyme."

If there were an outbreak of the Sweating Sickness, Henry VIII would immediately move his household to another palace, usually in the country, where he felt the air was cleaner. He practiced what we now call social distancing and self-quarantine. Those who doubt that social distancing protects us from Covid-19 should look to Henry. He never contracted the sweating sickness, nor did he succumb to the plague, or any number of diseases that were rampant in the 16th century. By removing himself from the source, he survived.

The English Sweat is still with us today: Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome or HPS, erupted in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest in the summer of 1993. In this outbreak thirteen of the twenty-six people infected died. The symptoms were the same as in the 16th century. You have a headache in the morning, you are short of breath in the afternoon, you are on a ventilator by midnight, and dead by dawn. The Sweating Sickness left its victims breathless. Hantavirus also leaves people gasping, filling their lungs with fluid.

In the summer of 2012, there was another outbreak of Hantavirus, occurring in Yosemite National Park. Ten people were infected, ranging in age from 12 to 56. Three of the victims died. All the current outbreaks appeared in the summer and in rural areas, meaning that a rapidly breeding rodent may have been its primary host - in this case the deer mouse. Also, the Sweating Sickness typically killed healthy adults, just as the hantavirus does. Most flu viruses, on the other hand, strike hardest at the elderly. With modern medical intervention the mortality rate is still 35–40%.

After the outbreak in 1551, the disease vanished. There has been a great deal of speculation as to why this happened. The virus may have mutated to a less virulent form, or it became fatal to its host. Climate change could have been a factor, as Europe was becoming colder, perhaps making life harder for the virus. We simply do not know.

Even in the 21st century, the origins of the disease are as mysterious as its demise.

Television dramatisation

In the BBC historical drama *Wolf Hall*, based on Hilary Mantel's novel of the same name, Thomas Cromwell returns home to find his wife and two daughters have all died during the night, victims of a pestilence – the "sweating sickness" – that is scything through the Tudor world.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

More obvious signs that humanity is regressing…

Contributed by Alan Tatnall

Philately: still a popular hobby

Picture Credit: "Royal Mail British design classics stamps" by Scorpions and Centaurs is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

What is it?

Philately is the study of postage stamps and postal history. It also refers to the collection, appreciation and research activities on stamps and other philatelic products.

Rowland Hill

Postage stamps were the brainchild of Rowland Hill, who proposed them in his pamphlet *Post Office Reform* (1837). Postal charges were costed mainly by the distance travelled (and the weight of the letter), but Hill proved that the main cost of transport was in the handling and sorting of letters rather than in their carriage. He proposed a radical change - that all postage be prepaid, and that letters be carried any distance within Great Britain for a fixed rate (which he suggested should be a penny for each half-ounce).

Philately as a Hobby

Stamp collecting is still considered one of the most popular hobbies in the world. The name given to the hobby is philately. The word is the English transliteration of the French "*philatélie*", coined in 1864 by Georges Herpin. Herpin took the Greek root word *phil(o)*-, meaning "love or attraction or affinity for something" and *ateleia*, meaning "exempt from duties and taxes" to form "*philatélie*".

Philately involves more than just stamp collecting or the study of postage; it is possible for someone to be a philatelist without actually owning any stamps. For instance, the stamps being studied may be very rare or be displayed only in museums. It's a timeless hobby, requiring no skill or expertise to start a stamp collection and it doesn't have to be expensive either.

As a collection activity, philately appeared after the introduction of the postage stamps in 1840 but did not gain large attraction until the mid-1850s. Arguably, you could say that the first philatelist appeared on the day of the release of the world's first postage stamp, dated 6th May 1840 (see below), when the *Liverson, Denby and Lavie* London law firm sent a letter to Scotland franked franked with ten uncut Penny Blacks, stamped with the postmark "LS.6MY6. 1840." In 1992, at an auction in Zurich, this envelope was sold for 690 thousand francs.

By 1846, cases of collecting stamps in large numbers were known in England, but many stamps at this time were used for (strangely) pasting wallpaper. The first philatelist is considered to be a man called Mansen, a postmaster who lived in Paris, and in 1855 he sold his collection, which contained almost all the postage stamps issued by that time.

The Penny Black

Picture Credit: "School Boy's Birthday Present for John Irwin" by theirhistory is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The Penny Black was the world's first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system. The first stamp was issued in the United Kingdom, on 1st May 1840, but was not valid for use until 5 days later. The stamp features a profile of Queen Victoria. More than 68 million Penny Blacks were issued in their time but only about 1.3 million survive today, which is why they are so valuable.

The birth of Catalogues

Philately, as one of the most popular forms of collecting, continued to develop in the 20th century. Along with the Scott, Stanley Gibbons, and Yvert et Tellier catalogues, others - such as the Zumstein (first published in Switzerland, 1909), and the Michel (first published in Germany, 1910) - began publication.

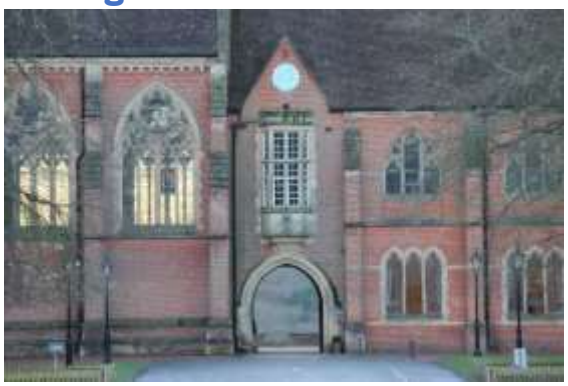
READ MORE:

- Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philately
- National Philatelic Society: http://www.ukphilately.org.uk/
- Royal Philatelic Society London, the oldest Philatelic Society in the world: https://www.rpsl.org.uk/
- All about stamps: https://www.allaboutstamps.co.uk/collecting-resources/what-is-philately/
- The Association of British Philatelic Societies - Who Was Who in Philately: https://www.abps.org.uk/who-was-who-in-philately/
- Stanley Gibbons – the home of stamp collecting: https://www.stanleygibbons.com/
- Why people collect stamps: https://www.stampworld.com/en/articles/why-people-collect-stamps/
- Post-modern - why millennials have fallen in love with stamp collecting: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/apr/11/post-modern-why-millennials-have-fallen-in-love-with-stamp-collecting
- Linns Glossary of Philatelic Terms: https://www.linns.com/news/postal-updates-page/glossary-terms-disabled.html
- Philately: https://www.britannica.com/topic/philately
- Stamp Collection for Beginners: https://www.warwickandwarwick.com/news/guides/stamp-collecting-for-beginners
- Stanley Gibbons' Guide to Stamp Collecting: https://www.stanleygibbons.com/dispatches/beginners-guide-to-stamp-collecting

Interesting Ending

A *British Guiana One-Cent Black on Magenta* stamp was purchased by a John Eleuthère du Pont for $935,000 in 1980. A wealthy heir to a chemical fortune, he was convicted in 1997 of murdering Olympic wrestler David Schultz and died in prison at the age of 67 in 2010. In his will, du Pont designated 20% of the stamp's proceeds to the wildlife foundation he funded, and 80% to former wrestler Valentin Jordanov Dimitrov. The stamp sold for $9.5 million in June 2014. The price is still a world record for the auction of a single stamp.

Educating the British



Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education_in_England
https://www.realmofhistory.com/2019/12/17/romans-influenced-modern-education/

This is a brief overview of how the education system has developed in this country. The history of education in England (Scotland has a separate system, not covered here) is documented from Saxon Settlement of England, and the setting up of the first cathedral schools at the end of the 6th and start of the 7th century.

Education remained closely linked to religious institutions until the 19th century, although charity schools and "free grammar schools", which were open to children of any religious beliefs, became more common in the early modern period. 19th century reforms expanded education provision and introduced widespread state-funded schools.

Medieval Period

Prior to the arrival of Augustine of Canterbury in England in 597, education was an oral affair or followed the Roman model in diaspora and integrated families. The earliest known organised schools in England were connected to the church. St Augustine gets the credit for kickstarting education in England: In the year 597 he founded King's School, Canterbury and in 604 he founded King's School, Rochester.

During the Middle Ages, schools were established to teach Latin grammar to the sons of the aristocracy destined for priesthood or monastic work with the ministry of government or the law. Two universities were established in affiliation with the church: the University of Oxford, followed by the University of Cambridge, to assist in the further training of the Catholic Christian clergy.

A reformed system of "*free grammar schools*" was established in the reign of King Edward VI; these too provided routes towards priesthood. Apprenticeship was the main way for youths to enter practical occupations.

Early Modern Period

Independent schools have a long history in England; some were set up before the 10th century. Many were charity schools. A group of these schools, much later, invoked the name "*public school*" to indicate that they were open to the public regardless of religious beliefs. In Tudor England, Edward VI (England's first monarch to be raised as a Protestant) reorganised grammar schools and instituted new ones so that there was a national system of "free grammar schools." In theory these were open to all, offering free tuition to those who could not afford to pay fees. The vast majority of poor children did not attend these schools since their labour was economically critical to their families.

In 1562, the Statute of Artificers and Apprentices was passed to regulate and protect the apprenticeship system, forbidding anyone from practising a trade or craft without first serving a 7-year period as an apprentice to a master. Guilds controlled many trades and used apprenticeships to control entry, although there were some exemptions.

Following the 1662 Act of Uniformity, religious dissenters set up academies to educate students of dissenting families, who did not wish to subscribe to the articles of the established Church of England. Some of these '*dissenting academies*' survive today, the oldest being Bristol Baptist College. Several Oxford colleges (Harris Manchester, Mansfield, and Regent's Park) are also descendants of this movement. Up to the 19th century, all university fellows and many schoolmasters were expected or required to be in holy orders. Usually, Schoolmistresses taught the 3Rs (reading, writing and 'rithmetic) in dame schools (an early form of a private elementary often located in the home of the teacher, who was usually a woman), charity schools, or informal village schools.

The Roman Influence

The Roman conquest of Britannia (the name given to our country by the Romans) was a gradual process, beginning in AD 43 under Emperor Claudius and being largely completed by AD 87 when the Stanegate (a Roman "M" grade road between Carlisle and Corbridge) was established as the northern frontier. In Roman times most children did not go to school. School was not free, and as parents had to pay for their children to be educated, only rich children went to school. Poor children learnt a trade from their fathers. Boys would learn the jobs that their fathers did like being a baker or a metalworker. Girls were taught household skills like weaving, spinning, and cooking from their mothers. Education was highly valued in Roman culture and left its undeniable mark on our education system. It was heavily influenced by the Greek education system. Many children, after learning to read and write, attended a school to study Latin, literature, history, math, music, and dialectics and are similar to secondary schools today. Ideas 'imported' from Rome to Britain included:

- ***The idea of learning everything in a gradual manner*** - with each class building off of the basics of the previous class, was something that the Romans changed for education.
- ***Using professional teachers*** – Schools were a very Roman idea and changed how people learned. Group learning in schools gave everyone the benefit of learning from someone who knows the best way to go about teaching them, not just the rich.
- ***Different learning environments*** – the Romans used diverse learning styles, giving people the chance to gain education even when they didn't have time or money for the traditional classroom environment, often through hands-on military training or craft training - schools were rarely an individual purpose-built dedicated building but an extension of a workshop only separated from the public by a curtain.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Chapter 1 of Derek Gillard's brilliant timeline (see READ MORE below) provides some useful and interesting information on the influence of the Romans: http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter01.html

The Norman Influence
The Norman Conquest of England changed the face of England and Western Europe forever: it broke our links with Denmark and Norway and connected us to Normandy and Europe. The Saxon nobles were 'sacked' and a feudal system was imposed on England. 1066 was a momentous year. The death on 5th January of the elderly English king, Edward the Confessor, set off a chain of events that would lead, on 14th October, to the Battle of Hastings. In the years that followed, the Normans had a profound impact on the people they had conquered and, like most things, on our education system. [Running out of space here, I will cover it on a later date.]

Education for the elite
Following the decimation of the priesthood as a result of the Black Death, Winchester College was established in 1382. It was to replenish the ranks by educating scholars (poor) and commoners (gentry). The education of scholars was without charge. The commoners paid. Winchester was the feeder school to New College, Oxford. Universities were new independent learning institutions, independent from church control.

The Modern Era
By the 1880s, education was compulsory for children aged 5 to 10, with the school leaving age progressively raised since then, most recently to 18 in 2015. The education system was expanded and reorganised multiple times throughout the 20th century, with a system introduced in the 1940s splitting secondary education into grammar schools, secondary technical schools and secondary modern schools. In the 1960s, this began to be phased out in favour of comprehensive schools. Further reforms in the 1980s introduced the National Curriculum and allowed parents to choose which school their children attended. Academies were introduced in the 2000s and became the main type of secondary school in the first decade of the 21st century.

READ MORE
- *Education in England: a history*, by Derek Gillard provides a chronological list of events and explores the development of education in England from the Roman occupation to the present day. http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/timeline.html
- *England's Schools - Historic England,* is an English Heritage publication available at: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/englands-schools/englands-schools /
- *Learning and education in Anglo-Saxon England,* article written by Becky Lawton, at: https://www.bl.uk/anglo-saxons/articles/learning-and-education-in-anglo-saxon-england
- *The Impact of the Norman Conquest of England,* article written by Mark Cartwright at: https://www.ancient.eu/article/1323/the-impact-of-the-norman-conquest-of-england/
- *A Short History of Education in England* at: https://www.schoolsmith.co.uk/history-of-education/

A quick look at Candles

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candle and https://www.quora.com/q/history--mystery-oh-my/Where-did-candles-originate

Picture Credit: "Candles 4" by ElTico68 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The Basics
A candle is an ignitable wick embedded in wax, or another flammable solid substance such as tallow, that provides light, and often today, a fragrance. A person who makes candles is traditionally known as a chandler.

Etymology
The word candle comes from Middle English *candel*, from Old English and from Anglo-Norman *candele*, both from Latin *candēla*, from *candēre*, to shine.

Early developments
Many ancient civilisations invented candles independently from one another but, due to the material they had available, they all turned out very different.

The ancient Egyptians have been using primitive torch-like devices made from reeds dipped in animal fat since 3000 BCE. But in the 5th century BCE, the Romans created "true" or wicked candles (a wick being the string in the middle of candles) made from tallow. In China, blubber candles were used since either the 4th or 2nd century BCE, and people in India made candles from cinnamon wax. Romans began making true dipped candles from tallow (beeswax being too costly), beginning around 500 BCE. European candles of antiquity were made from various forms of natural fat, tallow, and wax.

Native Americans were found to have been using fat fish (eulachons) as candles by skewering them and then lighting them up. This practice has been used since around the 1st century AD.

The earliest surviving candles originated in Han China around 200 BC. These early Chinese candles were made from whale fat. During the Middle Ages, tallow candles were most commonly used. By the 13th century, candle making had become a guild craft in England and France.

Candle oils
Beeswax, compared to animal-based tallow, burned cleanly, without a smoky flame and having a far more pleasant aroma but was expensive, and relatively few people could afford to burn beeswax candles in their homes in medieval Europe. However, they were widely used in religious ceremonies such as Baptism, Marriage and Funerals.

In the 18th and 19th centuries *spermaceti*, a waxy substance produced by the sperm whale, was used to produce a superior candle that burned longer, brighter and gave off no offensive smell. Later in the 18th century, colza oil and rapeseed oil came into use as much cheaper substitutes.

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club. Editorial contributions invited to mpollins@onesmartplace.com

Fountain pens – a short History

Picture Credit: "George V purchasing a Wyvern Redwing in Holborn, circa 1925" by lester pendragon is marked with CC PDM 1.0

Sources – include: http://www.historyofpencils.com/writing-instruments-history/fountain-pen-history/ • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_pen • https://www.bespokebritishpens.co.uk/history-old/ • http://www.conwaystewart.com • https://goodwriterspens.com/ • https://onoto.com/world-of-onoto/heritage/ • http://www.penmuseum.co.uk/master11.htm

I was inspired to put this article together after seeing the restoration of an old Wyvern fountain pen on the TV programme *The Repair Shop*. My researches revealed a wealth of interesting information:

The main flaws of quills and pens with no ink reservoir is that they must be constantly dipped in ink so they could write or draw and, because of that, they can very easily stain the surface on which they write. The fountain pen is the first solution for these problems. It has a reservoir in its body which holds water-based liquid ink for longer writing. This ink passes through a feed to the nib under the influence of gravity and capillary action. A fountain pen can be filled with ink in different ways, depending on the way it is built: with a pipette or syringe, with its own filling mechanism that works like a piston or by placing a cartridge filled with ink inside its body. Some rare models hold ink tablets that are dissolved in water and then poured in the fountain pen.

The earliest mention of a pen with an ink reservoir is from the year 973. Ma'ād al-Mu'izz, the caliph of the Maghreb region of Northwest Africa, asked for a pen that when used would keep his hands clean and would not leave as much mess as standard pens and quills. His wish was fulfilled with a pen that held ink inside and which could be held upside-down without spilling but we don't know precisely how this pen worked or what it looked like. The next mention of a pen with inner reservoir comes from 17th century when German inventor Daniel Schwenter invented a pen made from two quills: one quill was placed inside the other; it held the ink and was closed with a cork. Ink left the reservoir through a small hole which led to a nib

Samuel Pepys (1633 - 1703) is famous for his diaries, but he also enjoyed a successful career as a naval administrator and member of parliament. In his writings he mentioned a metal pen "to carry ink" in 1663 while Maryland historian Hester Dorsey Richardson also wrote about fountain pens that existed in 17th century. In the 19th century, standard pens were improved with mass production of cheap steel pen nibs. In 1827, Romanian inventor Petrache Poenaru received a patent from the French government for a fountain pen which had a barrel made from a large swan quill. In America in 1848, Azel Storrs Lyman patented a fountain pen with a 'method of supplying ink to pens from a reservoir in the handle'. These were not the only patents for fountain pens of that time but they needed three inventions to become popular: iridium-tipped gold nib, hard rubber, and free-flowing ink (early fountain pens didn't understand the role that air pressure plays in the operation of pens). The first fountain pen to have all this was made in 1850s. There is some evidence that a working fountain pen was constructed and used during the Renaissance by artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci.

Many fountain pen companies were doing reasonably well financially until 1938 when the Hungarian Laszlo Biro introduced his biro. Today, fountain pens are often treated as luxury goods and sometimes as status symbols.

Here is a short summary of British and foreign fountain pen companies, albeit limited by space restrictions. Some companies are not mentioned such as Lamy, Wordsworth & Black, Cross, Pelikan, Ingram, Aurora, Faber-Castell, Visconti, Platinum and Platignum. I am sure there may be more, and I apologise for any omissions.

Conway Stewart

Conway Stewart & Company Ltd is a British former manufacturing company of writing implements, founded in 1905 by entrepreneurs Frank Jarvis and Thomas Garner in London. They took a great risk in leaving their secure jobs to start a new enterprise reselling fountain pens made by other manufacturers and imported pens from the United States. The company became notable for its fountain pens, although, later on, it also produced ballpoint pens. The 1950s provided the last of the great Conway Stewart models. The company began to stagnate through the 1960s as the market turned relentlessly towards the disposable ballpoint. The company persevered in trying to keep up with the market trends with their ballpoint pen and also by launching the 106, a cartridge pen mounted with a semi-hooded nib. In the 1960s the company was sold and relocated to Wales, where the last pen rolled off their production floor in 1975. Conway Stewart was placed in receivership in 2014, with its stocks and assets acquired by Bespoke British Pens Ltd., which since then owns the rights to the brand and now sells a wide range of fountain pens under the "Conway Stewart" name.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and The Duke of Edinburgh were presented with two Conway Stewart pens from "The Gold Collection" to mark their Golden Wedding Anniversary. British Prime Minister Tony Blair presented Russian President Putin with a Conway Stewart Churchill Burgundy Fountain pen on a state visit to Russia and French President Jacques Chirac was given a Brown Marble Churchill to celebrate his 70th birthday in 2002. Conway Stewart was the official pen chosen by the British Government for the G8 Summit at which Prime Minister Blair presented a Conway Stewart No 58 set to each of the G8 world leaders. President Bush and President Clinton both owned Conway Stewart pens.

British Pens and Cumberland Pencils/Williams Mitchell

Joseph Gillott was a Sheffield-based working cutler but in 1821 he moved to Birmingham, where he found employment in the steel toy trade, the technical name for the manufacture of steel buckles, chains and light ornamental steel-work generally. In about 1830 he turned his attention to the manufacture of steel pens by machinery, and in 1831 patented a process for placing elongated points on the nibs of pens. He also devised improved modes of preparing the metal for the action of the press, tempering, cleansing, and polishing, and, in short, many little details of manufacture necessary to give

them the required flexibility to enable them to compete with the quill pen.

In 1920, Hinks Wells & Co and William Mitchell came together at the Pedigree Works in Birmingham, and founded a new company called *British Pens*, which added *Cumberland Pencils* in 1921. After World War II, they began to produce ballpoint pens. In 1961, British Pens acquired the pen businesses of Perry & Co. and other manufacturers like John Mitchell and Joseph Gillott. As part of the Twinlock Group its name was changed to *Cumberland Graphics* in 1975. Byron Head, of William Mitchell, acquired British Pens in 1982, renaming it *William Mitchell Ltd*. The company still makes pens in the West Midlands and is now part of *The Rical Group*, a privately owned group of manufacturing companies specialising in the subcontract manufacture of pressed and die casted metal components.

Wyvern Pen Company
The Wyvern Pen Company was named after the winged two-legged dragon with a barbed tail that appears in the coat-of-arms of the city. Production at the Vulcanite Works began as far back as 1896 and continued until the demise of the company in 1955. Despite being one of the oldest British pen companies, and producing a variety of high-quality pens, Wyvern does not have a strong following these days. From the 1880s onwards, the company went through various stages of development, importing pens, buying them in from outside contractors, assembling pens from parts and finally going into full production. By the late 1920s, they had their own nib plant and as well as producing their own-branded nibs bearing the Wyvern logo, they made nibs for other manufacturers. You may have bought a Wyvern without realising it, as they made pens for other companies and produced a great many promotional pens.

Mentmore
Mentmore pens were made in Hackney, East London, UK, between the 1920s and the mid-1950s. They were attractive, exceptionally well-made, and were very popular, especially between 1946 and the mid-1950s. Mentmore also manufactured for several other distributors and used the brand name of Spot.

Montblanc
A Hamburg banker, Alfred Nehemias, and a Berlin engineer, August Eberstein, produced simple pens in 1906. After a short period of time, Wilhelm Dziambor, Christian Lausen and later Claus Johannes Voss took over the business. Their first new model was the *Rouge et Noir* in 1909 followed in 1910 by the pen that was later to give the company its new name, *Montblanc.*

Onoto
The Onoto story began in 1905 when one of the world's largest printing companies, De La Rue, started producing high-end artisanal fountain pens first in Bunhill Row, London, and then in Strathendry, Scotland. At a time when ink was inserted into fountain pens largely with eye-droppers, Thomas de La Rue's son, Evelyn, persuaded his father to purchase a patent for a plunger-filling ink mechanism that was simple to use and guaranteed not to leak. Its inventor, George Sweetser, was a not only a brilliant mechanical engineer from Surrey, but a roller-skating champion and a famous female impersonator on the vaudeville circuit. While Sweetser went on skating into his 80s, "Onoto the Pen" gradually developed from the original black chased vulcanite model into its stylish marbled acrylic and resin versions. By the 1920s the range had grown into a vivid collection of distinct fountain pens with a global reputation. The last Strathendry Onoto pens, plain in colour, were made by De la Rue in 1958, before its production moved to Australia. Almost half a century later, in 2005, Onoto was restored to its former glory with centralised operations and leadership. It has introduced a growing number of limited-edition historic collections of fountain pens made in Britain. The company now exists to preserve the traditional craftsmanship techniques of pen-masters.

Parker Pen Company
The Parker Pen Company is an American manufacturer of luxury pens, founded in 1888 by George Safford Parker in Janesville, Wisconsin, United States. In 2011, the Parker factory at Newhaven, East Sussex, England, was closed, and its production transferred to Nantes, France.

Sheaffer
Sheaffer Pen Corporation is a manufacturer of writing instruments, particularly luxury fountain pens. The company was founded by Walter A. Sheaffer in Fort Madison, Iowa, USA and incorporated in 1913 to exploit his invention of a lever-filling fountain pen.

Waterman
The Waterman Pen Company was established in 1884 in New York City by Lewis Edson Waterman. It is one of the few remaining first-generation fountain pen companies, as Waterman S.A. Since 2000 it has been owned by the American group Newell Brands subsidiary Sanford L.P.

Swan Fountpens
One of the longest-lived makers of writing equipment, Mabie Todd was a firm whose partners' involvement in gold nib and pencil manufacture dates back to the 1840s; Mabie, Todd & Co. itself was established in 1860 in New York City, USA. The company was reformed as Mabie Todd & Bard in 1873 and continued to offer a wide range of top-quality pens, pencils, and accessories of innovative design. Their first fountain pen, the Calligraphic (or Calli-graphic), was introduced at the beginning of 1880, using the patents of pen inventor William W. Stewart. Production of Swan fountain pens appears to have begun by 1887. Export to Great Britain began early on, and a London office was opened in 1884. Manufacture of pens in Britain appears to have begun around 1909; in 1914, Mabie, Todd & Co, Limited, was established as a British firm, which at the beginning of 1915 acquired all Mabie Todd assets outside of the USA. Manufacture continued in the USA until the late 1930s, with quality and production volume declining sharply towards the end. Meanwhile, the British Mabie Todd firm went from success to success, and the Swan was widely advertised outside the USA *as 'the pen of the British Empire'*. Although the company initially prospered in the aftermath of WW II, production ceased before the end of the 1950s - another casualty in the ballpoint era.

The Wristwatch

Source:: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_watches

Picture Credit: "Black & White Breit #breiting #breitlingwatch #blackandwhite #monochrome #watch #wristwatch #time" by Phil Guest is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Introduction

The history of watches began in 16th century Europe, where watches evolved from portable spring-driven clocks, which first appeared in the 15th century. The watch which developed from the 16th century to the mid-20th century was a mechanical device, powered by winding a mainspring which turned gears and then moved the hands, and kept time with a rotating balance wheel. The invention of the quartz watch in the 1960s, which ran on electricity and kept time with a vibrating quartz crystal, proved a radical departure for the industry. During the 1980s quartz watches took over the market from mechanical watches, an event referred to as the *'quartz crisis'*. Although mechanical watches still sell at the high end of the market, most watches now have quartz movements.

The etymology of the word "watch" is that it came from the Old English word *woecce* which meant *'watchman'*, because it was used by town watchmen to keep track of their shifts. Another says that the term came from 17th century sailors, who used the new mechanisms to time the length of their shipboard *watches* (duty shifts). The British had predominated in watch manufacture for much of the 17th and 18th centuries but maintained a system of production that was geared towards high quality products for the elite. Although there was an attempt to modernise clock manufacture with mass production methods and the application of duplicating tools and machinery by the British Watch Company in 1843, it was in the US that this system took off. Aaron Dennison started a factory in 1851 in Massachusetts that used interchangeable parts, and by 1861 was running a successful enterprise incorporated as the Waltham Watch Co.

On the wrist or on the arm?

Excerpted from: https://www.govbergwatches.com/blog/history-of-horology/

Wristwatches were maainly worn by women as the watches were prone to damage by the elements. Men wore pocket watches instead until the early 20th century. The first wristwatch was created in 1810 or 1812 by Abraham-Louis Breguet for Caroline Murat, to fit the wrist of the Queen of Naples, however, having previously been introduced in the 1570s, they were described as an *arm watch.* However, according to Guinness World Records, the first wristwatch was made for Countess Koscowicz of Hungary by the Swiss watch manufacturer Patek Philippe in 1868. By the mid-19th century, most watchmakers produced a range of wristwatches, often marketed as bracelets, for women. To confuse matters further, it is known that Elizabeth I of England received a wristwatch from a Robert Dudley in 1571, described as an arm watch. Nuremberg clockmaker Peter Henlein (or Henle or Hele) (1485-1542) is often credited as the inventor of the watch in the early 1500s. He was one of the first German craftsmen who made "clock-watches", ornamental timepieces worn by women as jewellery pendants. However, this claim is disputed as other German clockmakers were creating miniature timepieces during this period.

War and its influence on the wristwatch

The impact of WW1 dramatically shifted public perceptions about a man's wristwatch and opened a mass market in the post-war era. Service watches produced during that War were specially designed for the rigours of trench warfare, with luminous dials and unbreakable glass. Wristwatches were also found to be needed in the air as much as on the ground: pilots found them more convenient than pocket watches The British War Department began issuing wristwatches to combatants from 1917 and by the end of the War, almost all enlisted men wore a wristwatch.

David Belcher wrote on the New York Times (here) about wristwatches made the journey from the *'Battlefield to become a Fashion Accessory'*. The evolution of the gentleman's pocket watch into the ubiquitous wristwatch had its roots in the wars of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As mentioned earlier, WWI was the seminal moment when the wristwatch became both a strategic military tool and a manly fashion accessory. Historians say that the idea of strapping little clocks to soldier's wrists probably was conceived during the Boer War or perhaps in the German navy shortly before — and there are some historical accounts of Napoleon's being frustrated by having to constantly open his pocket watch during battle — but most agree that World War I secured the wristwatch's place, both in military history and at the pinnacle of men's jewellery.

Not all watches were utilitarian - Wilsdorf & Davis, which ultimately adopted the trade name Rolex, began experimenting with wristwatches in 1905. Across the Atlantic, The Hamilton Watch Company, founded in 1892 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was getting in on the act. Hamilton became the official watch supplier to the U.S. military at the outset of World War I. It was Hamilton, too, that refined the wristwatch for the U.S. Air Force in the infancy of aviation.

The need to know the time

Nothing has shaped our present understanding of time as much as the invention of the wristwatch. In everyday life, people wear it out of normality. In reality, wristwatches are two centuries old and have made a lot of development since its introduction. The need to measure time has existed for several millennia: 5,000 years ago, the ancient Egyptians invented the sundial. Its circular design and time periods have helped shape the appearance of modern watches. Reading the time was dependent on sunlight and therefore only possible during the day. The first watch that was not dependent on sunlight was the water clock. It was followed by the hourglass and the wheel clock in the 14th century. The latter already contained the first basic elements that can currently be found in mechanical watches but was very inaccurate. It was equipped with a so called *'Unrast'* – a less accurate predecessor of the balance wheel.

Even today you can see that many watch series derive their origin from professional and military circumstances. Series like the Breitling Navitimer are equipped with additional navigation features that assist pilots: The rotating slide rule bezel for example, enabled precise aviation calculations directly from the watch and without having to employ additional tools. Today, on-board computers have replaced this function. The traditional history is still reflected in the design of the watch, the slide rule bezel gives it a striking look. Other series like the Rolex Air-King are based on minimalist design and readability in low light conditions.

Although many series were designed for professional use, they did not remain reserved for military use and quickly became admired amongst the civilian population. As time progressed, the market for wristwatches formed rapidly. The requirements of the war affected their features: Luminous hands for better readability, shockproof housings and scratch-resistant glasses are still important features today.

Timeline

https://www.watchtime.com/featured/10-milestone-moments-in-the-history-of-the-wristwatch/

Festivals of Britain

Sources and Further Reading:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival_of_Brexit
- https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/significant-events/festival-of-britain-1951/
- https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-festival-of-britain
- https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-Festival-of-Britain-1951/
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival_of_Britain
- https://www.festival2022.uk/
- https://www.gov.uk/government/news/10-teams-to-lead-celebration-of-creativity-and-innovation-in-2022
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival_of_Brexit

The Great Exhibition of 1851

The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations or *The Great Exhibition* (and sometimes referred to as the *Crystal Palace Exhibition*), was an international exhibition that took place in Hyde Park, London, from 1st May to 15th October 1851. It was the first in a series of World's Fairs, exhibitions of culture and industry that became popular in the 19th century and probably came about following the success of *The Great Exhibition of Products of French Industry* organised in Paris, France, from 1798 to 1849.

The Great Exhibition in London was organised by Henry Cole and by Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria. The prime motive to hold the 1851 event was for Britain to make "*clear to the world its role as industrial leader*".

Famous people of the time attended, including Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Michael Faraday (who assisted with the planning and judging of exhibits), Samuel Colt, members of the Orléanist Royal Family and the writers Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, Lewis Carroll, George Eliot, Alfred Tennyson and William Makepeace Thackeray. The opening music, under the superintendence of William Sterndale Bennett was directed by Sir George Smart.

A special building, *The Crystal Palace*, or *The Great Shalimar**, was built to house the show. The designer was Joseph Paxton, perhaps better known for cultivating the Cavendish banana, the most consumed banana in the Western world. Isambard Kingdom Brunel was involved too as part of a committee overseeing construction. *The Crystal Palace* took nine months to build. From its interior, the building's large size was emphasised with trees and statues to add beauty to the spectacle, and symbolically to demonstrate man's triumph over nature. *The Crystal Palace* was an enormous success, considered an architectural marvel, but also an engineering triumph that showed the importance of the Exhibition itself. The building was later moved and re-erected in 1854 in enlarged form at Sydenham Hill in south London, an area that was renamed Crystal Palace but sadly the building was destroyed by fire on 30th November 1936.

* named after the Shalimar Gardens in the Mughal garden complex located in Lahore, capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab, in the style of a Persian paradise garden intended to create a representation of an earthly utopia in which humans co-exist in perfect harmony with all elements of nature.

Hugely popular, the Great Exhibition of 1851 had six million visitors - a third of Britain's population at the time. The event made a surplus of £186,000 (nearly £20 million in today's money) which was used to found the *Victoria and Albert Museum*, the *Science Museum* and the *Natural History Museum* - all built to the south of the exhibition, nicknamed *Albertopolis*, alongside the Imperial Institute. The remaining surplus financed an educational trust to provide grants and scholarships for industrial research, which it still does today. A memorial to the exhibition, crowned with a statue of Prince Albert, is located behind the *Royal Albert Hall.* It is inscribed with statistics from the exhibition, including the number of visitors and exhibitors (British and foreign), and the profit made.

The Festival of Britain, 1951

The *1951 Festival of Britain* was a national showcase of Britain's best art, design, science and invention. London's South Bank site was the beating heart of the festival - home to the Dome of Discovery and Royal Festival Hall - where scientific discovery, architecture and art were displayed to millions of visitors.

Labour cabinet member Herbert Morrison was the prime mover; in 1947 he started with the original plan to celebrate the centennial of the *Great Exhibition of 1851*. However, it was not to be another World Fair, for international themes were absent, as was the British Commonwealth. Instead, the 1951 festival focused entirely on Britain and its achievements; it was funded chiefly by the government, with a budget of £12 million. The Labour government was losing support and so the implicit goal of the festival was to give the people a feeling of successful recovery from the devastation of World War II, as well as promoting British science, technology, industrial design, architecture and the arts.

The 1951 Festival's centrepiece was in London on the South Bank of the Thames. There were events in Poplar (Architecture), Battersea (the Festival Pleasure Gardens), South Kensington (Science) and Glasgow (Industrial Power). Festival celebrations took place in Cardiff, Stratford-upon-Avon, Bath, Perth, York, Bournemouth, Aldeburgh, Inverness, Oxford, Cheltenham, Norwich, Canterbury and many other places – as well as several touring exhibitions. by land and sea.

The Festival of Brexit 2022

The Festival of Brexit, with the working title Festival UK 2022, is a festival planned to take place around the UK in 2022. This is just an interim name and the actual festival name has yet to be announced. Its stated aim is to "bring people together" after the 2016 Brexit vote. It is headed by Martin Green, who previously organised the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics.

Ten creative teams from across the UK have been selected to develop a series of events, public engagement programmes and virtual projects as part of the *Festival UK 2022*, a major UK-wide festival of creativity and innovation, which will feature 10 major public engagement projects designed to reach millions, bring people together and showcase the UK's creativity globally.

The Festival is backed by £120 million of funding from the UK government, will be a showcase of UK British science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. The ten teams selected to take part will help to develop world-class talent and highlight the very best of British creativity and innovation. Drawn from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the teams have been deliberately asked to work across borders to ensure the Festival brings the nation together.

2022 is set to be a year of celebration for the UK with three major events, HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Commonwealth Games and *Festival UK 2022* all set to take place. Not everyone agrees to spending 3120 million on the event arguing that after COVID-19, perhaps the use of dwindling national funds needs to be questioned and re-thought.

Viz Comic: Jack Black's Mouse Plague Mystery

(Sorry, it's a bit gory)

Part 1

Picture Credit: "Viz Comic Jack Black's Mouse Plague Mystery (1)" by norbet1 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Part 2

Picture Credit: "Viz Comic : - Jack Black's Mouse Plague Mystery (2) - Very #DailyMail" by norbet1 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Finish with some memories

Picture Credit: "Boy's Own Paper [Feb 1952] 1" by Jim Barker is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Picture Credit: "Beano 1969" by Kollage Kid is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Picture Credit: "Rupert Bear 1970" by oddsock is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Picture Credit: "desperate_dan_club_3" by muteboy is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Picture Credit: "eagle comic October 7 1955-10-7 Page 01" by Robin Hutton is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0