

Nil Desperandum

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Isolated but not alone



Picture Credit: "Continuing On" by John Fraissinet is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Index:

1. The Patcham Pylons
2. How can this be? A camel needed to divide but not otherwise required...
2. The Four Tiers
3. Galileo, the Plague and the Opposition of the Catholic Church
4. Mistresses of King Edward VII
5. A Great British Car: The Morgan
5. My Friend Grahame... aka V.Twin
5. Identical twins are not so identical, new study suggests
6. Sailing into Oblivion
6. Amy Johnson's final flight
7. HMS Lutine – The ship that refuses to give up her treasure
7. Spring-heeled Jack came to Brighton
8. What was John von Neumann's personality like?
9. Poor Drunken Paddy
9. You've got to laugh...
10. Play Canasta
12. An Introduction to Bridge
13. Alpacas and Llamas: How are they different?
14. Why, Why, Why?
14. Then and Now...

Continued

15. The RAF's 100th birthday and the Bouncing Bomb
15. The lightning-fast quest for COVID vaccines — and what it means for other diseases
16. Hirohito and the making of Modern Japan
17. All Hands to the Pump or Wheel or Grindstone... and the 'Bevin Boys'
18. Age-old Humour
18. Future cars will be made of Magnesium
18. The Bridge of San Luis Rey
19. African Proverbs
19. Two actors with striking parallel lives
20. Heinrich Rudolf Hertz: 'What I have invented is of no use..'
20. The history of the Last Post
20. On the other hand... what is the origin of SINISTRALITY?
21. Invasion Publicity during the Second World War
21. Rationing in World War II
22. British Geriatrics Society (BGS)
22. Rationing of Clothing, Cloth and Footwear from 1st June 1941
23. This will bring back the memories
24. Finish with a smile, with Dilbert's help



The Patcham Pylons

Source: *The Beauty of Transport*, [here](#).

The following text is an extract from that source.

Picture Credit: The east pylon. Photo by Anthony McIntosh [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0] via [Public Sculptures of Sussex](#)



Anyone who has travelled southward on the road to Brighton, will have seen two architectural structures at Brighton's northern border on the A23 at Patcham. The Patcham Pylons frame the southbound carriageway of this dual carriageway road, proudly telling drivers that they have entered the environs of Brighton.

The Patcham Pylons were built in 1928, to commemorate an extension of the boundaries of what was then the County Borough of Brighton (it only became a city, along with Hove, in 2000). They are not really pylons at all in its general sense in strict architectural terms a pylon is two monumental towers, joined by a lower structure. They are perfect examples of 1920s Art Deco design, which often drew inspiration from ancient Egyptian motifs. In plan, they are triangular (isosceles) with the narrow parts pointing towards the carriageway. A tapering column is carved at this vertex. The long sides feature panels with carvings and inscriptions. At the top, the pylons step back and have a thoroughly Deco fluted design. The inscriptions on the panels mark the construction of the pylons, except for the north face of the western pylon, which has a relief sculpture of a woman holding an ankh (explanation: the **ankh** or key of life is an ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic symbol that was most commonly used in writing and in Egyptian art to represent the word for "life" and, by extension, as a symbol of life itself. The ankh has a cross shape but with an oval loop in place of an upper bar) and torch, over the words:

*Hail guest – we ask not what thou art.
If friend, we greet thee, hand & heart:
If stranger, such no longer be:
If foe, our love shall conquer thee.*

Fuller description of the Pylons

[Public Sculptures of Sussex](#) describe the pylons in more detail:

The 2 long sides and the outer side are very slightly concave in plan but with flat panels superimposed upon them, and concave-chamfered buttresses at the corners; the narrow end is treated as a tapering engaged column; the long sides carry inscriptions and emblems of Brighton and the County of Sussex, carved in relief; the top of the pylons are set back all round, and fluted. There are low curved stone seats next to the pylons, segmental in plan, and embracing but not touching the ends of the pylons; moulded seat with stepped backs about 1 m high between squat columns of stepped profile that once held bronze lamps.

The pylons were designed by local architect John Leopold Denman, though the inscription on the east pylon adds Charles Kingston as an architect. The pylons were substantially funded to the tune of £2,555 by local councillor Herbert Carden, who must have been enormously proud of the extension of his borough council's limits, with a public subscription of £993 making up the rest of the cost.

Around the base of each pylon is a seat, also by Denman, of a moulded stone design, running between stepped columns. Both pylons and both seats were listed by Historic England in 1999, at Grade II.

The west pylon together with its seat, is forlornly marooned in the central reservation of the A23, and they are now virtually inaccessible. When the pylons were built, they framed the road perfectly, as the A23 then was single carriageway. It has since been doubled to a dual carriageway, leaving the western pylon marooned in the central reservation. Its seat is essentially useless, as you'd be taking your life into your hands to try to reach it.

When they were built, they must have been considerably more attractive, because traffic speeds then were a lot lower, traffic much less dense, and maximum vehicle size a lot smaller. The pylons witness each year a reminder of this lost age of motoring because they are on the route of the annual London-Brighton veteran car run.

Details of the pylons' design and their place in events commemorating transport history are likely to escape you as you zoom past them at 70mph or so. Hopefully, this article will fill in one or two gaps for you.

Unesco, World Heritage Site

On 26th August 1999, the Patcham Pylons were designated as a world heritage site.

A Little History of the A23

Source: Dabre, [here](#): Unlike many of the "First 99" roads that start in London, the A23's London section hasn't really changed since 1935. The southern end, on the other hand, particularly south of the M23, has seen many improvements, resulting in today's road being mostly dual carriageway south of the M23 as far as Patcham where it meets with the A27. The original start of the A23 was at Purley Cross, where it met the A22 and A235. The remainder of the route north, including the then-unbuilt Purley Way (which opened in April 1925), was part of the A22. The numbers switched in the 1935 Road numbering revision.

Will there ever be a third pylon?

I have a lingering question: why doesn't the City of Brighton & Hove erect a third pylon to balance the effect so that those driving north can see a pylon of their own? My research reveals that a third pylon was apparently considered at one time but nothing seems to have happened. See Seldon 2002, p. 73, *Brave New City: Brighton & Hove Past, Present and Future*. Lewes: Pomegranate Press. ISBN 0-9542587-1-1.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

How can this be? A camel needed to divide but not otherwise required...



Once upon a time, a very long time ago there was an old man in Arabia who was called **Abdul**. Abdul had three sons. They were **Amir, Ali, and Abbas**.

Abdul was very sick and was on his deathbed. He called for his sons. He had to tell them one last thing. He said, "After I die, I want to divide my belongings among the 3 of you."

Abdul turned to his oldest son **Amir** and said, "I want you to have half of my possessions."

Then he turned to his middle son **Ali** and said, "I want you to have $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of my belongings."

At last, he called for his youngest son **Abbas** and said, "You shall have $\frac{1}{9}$ th of my worldly belongings."

Poor Abdul passed away shortly after their final conversation. After a few days, the three successors to Abdul's possessions gathered. An account was taken of Abdul's possessions and it was found out that **all he owned were 17 camels**.

It was impossible to divide the camels as their father had told them. They began to quarrel among themselves. Unable to find a solution for the problem they decided to counsel Abdul's oldest and closest companion, Jaffar. Jaffar was a poor man. When the problem was presented to him, he was perplexed. He thought to himself for a while and then came across a solution.

Jaffar with a heavy heart said, "I own only one camel. I'll give it to you. When you add it to your herd then you can divide the camels according to your father's wishes and be peaceful among yourselves."

When he added his camel to the herd which then became 18 camels, the men easily divided the camels as per their father's wish."

Amir received half of the total camels - 9 camels.

Ali got $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the 18 camels - 6 camels.

And lastly, **Abas got $\frac{1}{9}$ th of the 18 camels - 2 camels.**

The men left happily.

When Jafar turned around, he suddenly realised that his own camel remained! He then realised that his camel was needed to divide the herd and wasn't required otherwise. Hence, he was left with his camel in the end. Jafar was so selfless that he was willing to give away his only possession for the dignity of his old friend and to preserve peace among his sons.

But how can this be?

The Four Tiers

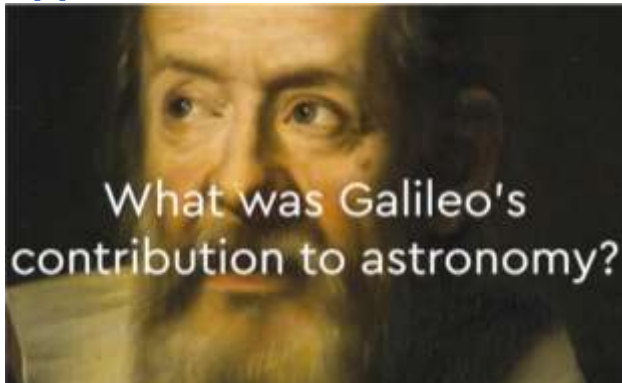
If you want to know how the Government arrived at the idea of four tiers (now five of course) to protect us and our loved ones from the Covid virus, you must watch this video.

It could bring tears to your eyes.

Just click the link >> [Here](#)



Galileo, the Plague and the Opposition of the Catholic Church



Did you know that there have been three great pandemics, or large epidemics, of the Bubonic Plague? The first came in the 6th century and is usually referred to as the *Plague of Justinian*. The second started in the late 1340s and ended in Marseilles in 1720. The third began in Mongolia in the middle of the nineteenth century. It eventually reached San Francisco, USA around 1904.

The Great Plague of Marseille was the last major outbreak of bubonic plague in western Europe. Arriving in Marseille, France in 1720, the disease killed a total of 100,000 people: 50,000 in the city during the next two years and another 50,000 to the north in surrounding provinces and towns.

Bubonic plague, spread by fleas on the body of the black rat, is one of the most painful diseases observed on earth.

The Galileo Project

The Galileo Project ([here](#)) is a source of information on the life and work of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), a project that is currently supported by the Office of the Vice President of Computing of [Rice University](#).

From [The Galileo Project](#): When the plague infected a person, the chances were high that both the individual and people in close contact with him or her would die within a few days. In Florence, for instance, of a population of 76,000, 9,000 people died from plague in 1630-1631. For this reason, when the plague broke out in a particular city, other cities would stop all contact with that city. The plague affected everyone in Italy, directly or indirectly. Galileo himself was forced to work around the constraints that the plague placed on his life. Since religion dominated life in seventeenth-century Italy, prayer was naturally an important weapon against the plague. When the plague worsened in Florence during the summer of 1633, an order came from the Commissioner of Health requiring nuns to pray continuously for the next 40 days for divine [intervention]. This came on the heels of the procession of the "Madonna of Imprunetta" (a statue of the Virgin Mary) through the region. It seemed to work: a few months later the plague receded from Tuscany.

Galileo, the thinker

Galileo di Vincenzo Bonaiuti de Galilei was born in Florence in 1564 and died in 1642. By all accounts, he is acknowledged to have been a leading thinker of his time, although the championing of his beliefs put him at odds with the Roman Inquisition and eventually, he was incarcerated.

Galileo was an astronomer, physicist and engineer and was sometimes described as a polymath – *someone whose knowledge spans a significant number of subjects, known to draw on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems*. Galileo has been called the "father of observational astronomy", the "father of modern physics", the "father of the scientific method" (empirical method of acquiring knowledge that has characterized the development of science since at least the 17th century) and the "father of modern science".

Galileo's championing of Heliocentrism (the astronomical model in which the Earth and planets revolve around the Sun at the centre of the Solar System) and Copernicanism (the name given to the astronomical model developed by Nicolaus Copernicus and published in 1543. This model positioned the Sun near the centre of the Universe, motionless, with Earth and the other planets orbiting around it in circular paths, modified by epicycles, and at uniform speeds. The Copernican model displaced the geocentric model of Claudius Ptolemy that had prevailed for centuries, which had placed Earth at the centre of the Universe) met with opposition from within the Catholic Church and from some astronomers. The matter was investigated by the Roman Inquisition in 1615, which concluded that heliocentrism was "foolish and absurd in philosophy, and formally heretical since it explicitly contradicts in many places the sense of Holy Scripture".

Galileo stuck to his guns - he was tried by the Inquisition, found "vehemently suspect of heresy", and forced to recant. He spent the rest of his life under house arrest.

Galileo's work provided a number of scientific insights that laid the foundation for future scientists.

Discovery of the moons of Jupiter and the rings of Saturn

Galileo pioneered the use of the telescope for observing the night sky. His discoveries undermined traditional ideas about a perfect and unchanging cosmos with the Earth at its centre. Of all of Galileo's telescope discoveries, he is perhaps most known for his discovery of the four most massive moons of Jupiter, now known as the Galilean moons: Io, Ganymede, Europa and Callisto. When NASA sent a mission to Jupiter in the 1990s, it was called Galileo in his honour. Galileo is the name given to a global navigation satellite system (GNSS) that went live in 2016, created by the European Union through the European GNSS Agency (GSA), headquartered in Prague, Czech Republic, with two ground operations centers in Fucino, Italy, and Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany.

Online Resources

There's an interesting video on the Royal Museums website ([here](#)), a screenshot from which is given above.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy website has some useful background information on Galileo, [here](#).

Recommended reading is *MEN OF SCIENCE* (Galileo) 1918, Edited by S. Chapman, M.A., D.Sc., by W. W. Bryant, F.R.A.S. of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, available online at: [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Galileo_\(1918\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Galileo_(1918)).

'Galileo's Lessons for Living and Working through a Plague' is a blog covering the outbreak of the plague in Italy in the 1630s forced Galileo to find new ways of doing his research and connecting with his family. It's on Scientific American ([here](#)) but you will need a subscription to read it.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

Mistresses of King Edward VII

Extract from post by Jessica Storoschuk, 26th September 2019, on Royal Central, [here](#).



Picture Credit: By W. & D. Downey - Weltrundschau zu Reclams Universum 1902, Public Domain, Wikimedia Comm

King Edward VII's reign was relatively short, lasting from January 1901 to 1910. He was infamously known for his prolific love life rather than his time as king and earned the mantle of a 'celebrated royal womaniser'

He had several notable mistresses who shared his life with him over the years. Edward married Princess Alexandra of Denmark at 21 in 1863. Their marriage was not a particularly happy one, as it was an arranged marriage for dynastic purposes. However, they were cordial with each other and had certainly reached a comfortable agreement with one another.

The Scottish King got around, and because of it, he fathered at least eight illegitimate children. His favourite mistress of all time was supposedly Margaret Drummond, though it's not known how many of those eight children are hers.

Lillie Langtry

The first serious mistress of Queen Victoria's eldest son was Lillie Langtry. Lillie, an actress, met her Prince at a dinner party in 1877. Edward quickly became infatuated with her, and the two were inseparable for the next three years. The affair ended when Langtry became pregnant, most likely by a friend. Edward separated himself from her after her affair with the Earl of Shrewsbury resulted in the press suggesting that he would be called upon in the divorce case. Edward would use his influence to help her stage career, but that was it.

Daisy Brooke

Edward's second long-term mistress was Daisy Brooke, the society hostess married to Francis Greville, Lord Brooke. She was a member of the Marlborough House Set, the group of socialites that formed the Prince and Princess of Wales's inner circle. Her affair with the Prince would continue for nine years and was a source of fun and entertainment. During the affair, her husband inherited the Earldom of Warwick which provided Brooke with countless opportunities to publicly spend time with the Prince. She was known as the Babbling Brooke for allowing news of her affairs to get out, but she also challenged Edward on many social issues. After their affair ended, she went on to found countless charities for women and children of the poorest ranks of society. Brooke also became a socialist and wrote over ten books on different topics, including socialism and the First World War. In 1923, she stood (but was unsuccessful) for election for the Labour party.

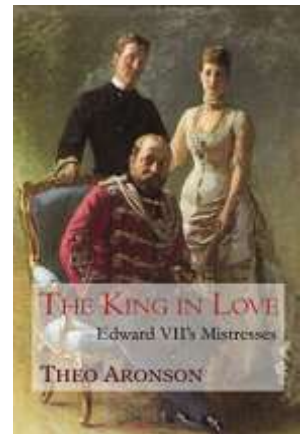
Alice Keppel

Alice Keppel, Edward's final mistress, is without a doubt the most infamous, due to her being the Duchess of Cornwall's great-grandmother. Keppel met the King in 1898 at the age of 29, and despite a 26 year age gap, quickly won him over. Instead of paying her directly, Edward gave her shares in a rubber company, which earned her the money needed to finance a royal lifestyle. He preferred Keppel to Brooke, as she was far more discreet and useful in his working life. When Edward became king in 1901, Keppel held a prominent role at court and often went between the King and his ministers. Alexandra allowed Keppel to come to the King's bedside when he was dying, though she had to be removed due to hysterics. Once he had passed, she and her family left Britain. Several gifts from Edward to Keppel were stolen from Sudeley Castle in September 2019; see the [Royal Central article here](#). Unfortunately, the thieves have not yet been apprehended.

Book: 'The King in Love: Edward VII's Mistresses'

In his 2014 book, *The King in Love: Edward VII's Mistresses*, Theo Aronson provides an all-embracing account of the loves of King Edward VII. Amazon, from whom you can [buy the book](#), say this:

"... a study of the three women with whom the King was most deeply in love — his 'official' mistresses, Lillie Langtry, Daisy Warwick and Alice Keppel. In their different ways, all three were exceptional personalities. Lillie Langtry, the socially ambitious girl from the vicarage, became a famous actress. Daisy Warwick, an immensely wealthy heiress and social butterfly, was converted to socialism. Alice Keppel, probably the King's greatest love, developed into an astute and fascinating figure in her own right."



Spanning three decades and packed with incident, scandal and high romance, the story is set in the extravagant and hypocritical world of late Victorian and Edwardian society. It is full of colourful characters: Edward's beautiful and betrayed wife Alexandra; the three cuckolded husbands — Edward Langtry, the Earl of Warwick and the Hon. George Keppel; the flamboyant Oscar Wilde; the sensuous Sarah Bernhardt; the dissipated Prince Albert Victor; the sexually complex W.E. Gladstone.

Royal biographer Theo Aronson draws on much new and unfamiliar material in this vivid book and reassesses many aspects of his subjects' lives. He challenges long-established myths and reveals much that was hitherto unknown: not least the extraordinary scene that took place at the deathbed of King Edward VII. The result is a brilliant evocation of a world, and a way of life that has gone forever."

Other mistresses

Other mistresses ([see here](#)) are:

- Sarah Bernhardt
- Lady Randolph Churchill
- Nellie Clifden
- Patsy Cornwallis-West
- Agnes Keyser
- La Belle Otero
- Hortense Schneider
- Lady Susan Vane-Tempest
- Catherine Walters

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Martin Pollins

A Great British Car: The Morgan



Picture Credit: "Morgan Plus 4" by jfhweb is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The Morgan Motor Company is a British motor car manufacturer founded in 1910 by Henry Frederick Stanley (HFS) Morgan). For most of its history until 2019, the company was owned by the Morgan family. In March 2019, the Italian investment group *InvestIndustrial* acquired a majority stake in the company.

The Morgan company is based in Malvern Link, Worcestershire, and employs approximately 220 people. Morgan has stated that they produce 850 cars per year, all assembled by hand. The waiting list for a car is approximately six months, and has sometimes been as long as ten years.

Morgan cars are unusual in that wood has been used in their construction for a century, and is still used in the 21st century for framing the body shell. Today, Morgan builds around 800 cars a year, with a model line-up comprising the 3 Wheeler, Plus Four and the Plus Six.

Morgan Clubs

The Morgan Sports Car Club (MSCC) is for enthusiasts of Morgan cars. There are nearly 5,000 members worldwide, with a network of more than 35 local Centres in the UK and 47 affiliated Clubs in other countries. The club hold races and speed events and have their own annual race meeting.

The Morgan Three-Wheeler Club (MTWC) is a club for all Morgan Three-Wheelers from 1909 to the present day. The Club, first formed in 1945, has a proud history of offering its members a wide range of activities and support and is an essential part of owning and running a Morgan Three-Wheeler.

Identical twins are not so identical, new study suggests

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/jan/08/identical-twins-are-not-so-identical-study-suggests>



Picture Credit: "Twins" by kevin dooley is licensed under CC BY 2.0

A scientific study goes beyond earlier work by including DNA of parents, children and spouses of identical twins - a closer look at identical twins shows they are not so identical after all. Differences start to appear as early as the first stages of development, before embryos form a mass of cells says a report in *The Guardian* on 8th January 2021. On average, mutations during cell replication resulted in 5.2 of these genetic differences in each twin pair, scientists reported in a new study in *Nature Genetics*. Researchers say the findings can help us better understand human development and improve studies that use twins to look at the genetic and behavioral impacts of nature versus nurture.

Genetic differences between identical twins can begin very early in embryonic development, according to a study that researchers say has implications for examining the effects of nature versus nurture. Identical – or monozygotic – twins come from a single fertilised egg that splits in two. They are important research subjects because they are thought to have minimal genetic differences. This means that when physical or behavioural differences emerge, environmental factors are presumed to be the likely cause.

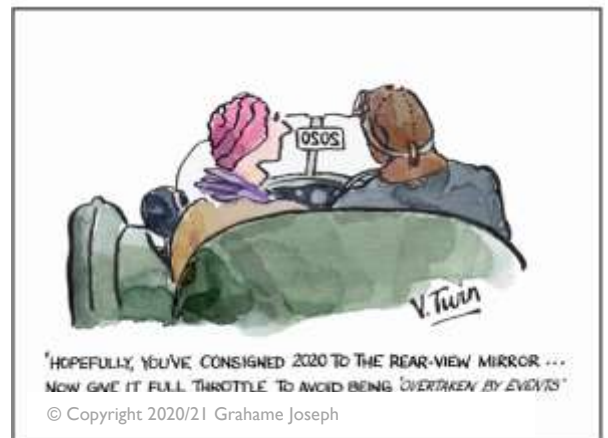
But the new research in the journal *Nature Genetics*, suggests the role of genetic factors in shaping these differences has been underestimated. Kári Stefánsson an Icelandic neurologist and the co-author of the research paper, said identical twins had been used traditionally to help researchers try to separate the influence of genetics v environment in the analysis of diseases and other conditions.

My Friend Grahame... aka V.Twin

Let me tell you about my friend Grahame Joseph - an identical twin and, like his brother, a former BA pilot and Rolls-Royce Aero engineer extraordinaire. They are also both artists and own vintage Morgan Three-Wheeler cars with v-twin engines. Grahame draws cartoons for several different vintage car and motorcycle club magazines but the Morgan Three-Wheeler Club in particular.

Grahame has kindly allowed me to use his cartoons in Nil Desperandum.

He has a cartoon talk set up on PowerPoint which he has presented a few times and which has always gone down well. When normality returns post-Covid, he would be happy to come to our Probus Club to share his enthusiasm for his art and the beloved Morgan car with the humour it evokes.



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Sailing into Oblivion

The *Madagascar* as painted by Thomas Goldsworthy Dutton.



Have you heard the story about a merchant ship laden with cargo, gold and people – it disappeared after sailing from Melbourne Australia, never to be seen again...

The story appeared on 12th August 2020, ([here](#)) by Ray Setterfield about something that happened in 1853.

On 12th August 1853, the frigate *Madagascar* left Melbourne for London carrying more than 150 passengers and crew. She also had nearly three tons of gold on board. Both the ship and her passengers and cargo were never seen again.

Madagascar was a large British merchant ship built for the trade to India and China in 1837. The disappearance of *Madagascar* is one of the great maritime mysteries of the 19th century and has probably been the subject of more speculation than any other 19th century maritime puzzle, except for the *Mary Celeste*.

Madagascar carried freight, passengers, and troops between England and India until the end of 1852. In addition to her normal crew she also carried many boys in training as officers for the merchant marine. Known as midshipmen from naval practice, their parents or guardians paid for their training, and they only received a nominal wage of usually a shilling (5 new pence) a month.

Wikipedia, [here](#), adds to the story: due to the Victorian Gold Rush, *Madagascar*, under the command of Captain Fortescue William Harris, was sent to Melbourne with emigrants. She left Plymouth on 11 March 1853 and, after an uneventful passage of 87 days, reached Melbourne on 10th June that year. Fourteen of her 60 crew jumped ship for the gold diggings, and it is believed only about three replacements were signed on. She then loaded a cargo that included wool, rice, and about two tonnes of gold (other accounts say it was nearly three tonnes) valued then at £240,000 and took on board about 110 passengers bound for London. Most passengers paid £43 for a cabin, with a select few stumping up £84 for a first-class berth.

On Wednesday 10th August 1853, just as she was preparing to sail, police went on board and arrested a bushranger John Francis, who was later found to have been one of those responsible for robbing in the previous month, the Melbourne Private Escort between the Mclvor goldfield (Heathcote, Victoria) and Kyneton. On the following day, the police arrested two others, one on board the ship and the other as he was preparing to board. As a result of these arrests *Madagascar* did not leave Melbourne until Friday 12th August 1853. After she left Port Phillip Heads, the *Madagascar* was never seen again.

When the ship became overdue many theories were floated, including spontaneous combustion of the wool cargo, hitting an iceberg and, most controversially, being seized by criminal elements of the passengers and/or crew and scuttled, with the gold being stolen and the remaining passengers and crew murdered.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

In 1872, rumours of a supposed death-bed confession by a man who "knew who murdered the captain of the *Madagascar*" were first published. Over the next century many purely fictional stories based on this rumour have been published (being mentioned by authors of such reputation as Basil Lubbock and James A. Michener). Most 20th century versions state that the death-bed confession was by a woman passenger who was taken by the mutineers, and by implication raped, and was too ashamed of what had happened to her to confess beforehand.

The legend of *Madagascar* and her fate has also been used many times as a plot device in popular fiction, the earliest known being in Frank Fowler's *Adrift; or The Rock in the South Atlantic* in 1861 (which is probably the foundation of the modern mutiny legends), and later in Thomas Harrison's *My Story; or, the Fate of the "Madagascar"*, first published as a serial in *The Colonial Magazine*, Melbourne, in 1868. It probably influenced many other gold-rush era sea stories including Clark Russell's *The Tale of Ten: A Salt Water Romance* in 1896, and the alleged loss of the *Starry Crown*—reported as fact in T. C. Bridges' *The Romance of Buried Treasure* in 1931—which was in turn used in 1949 by Captain W. E. Johns in *Biggles Breaks the Silence*. The most recent use of the mystery in a fictional setting is probably Sandy Curtis's *Deadly Tide* (Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd., 2003, ISBN 0-33036398-0).

Amy Johnson's final flight

Excerpted from story in [Surrey Life](#) by Margaret Brecknell on 6/1/20

On 5th January 1941, the pioneering aviator Amy Johnson set off on what proved to be her final flight.



Picture Credit: "Amy Johnson" by Tom Doel is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Her death was widely mourned. Yet only 11 years earlier she had set off as a virtual unknown from Croydon Airport on the flight that was to make her name.

Following a visit to the Stag Lane Aerodrome in North London, home to a popular flying club for would-be pilots, Amy began to learn to fly and in July 1929 was awarded her pilot's licence. Amy also became interested in aircraft mechanics and that December became the first woman in Britain to obtain a ground engineer's licence. As no woman had previously attempted the long solo flight to Australia, she decided to make this her goal. In April 1930 she purchased a secondhand de Havilland Gipsy Moth, which she called "Jason". On 5th May 1930, Amy took off from Croydon Airport, with only a handful of people on hand to wish her well. She had never flown further than Hull on a solo flight. Armed with only a basic map, she took the decision to fly via a more direct route than had been previously attempted and reached India in a new record time. By the time Amy reached Darwin at the northern tip of Australia on 24th May 1930, news of her exploits had spread and she was greeted by a huge crowd. Only adverse weather conditions towards the end of her flight had prevented making the journey in a world record-breaking time. When she returned to Croydon Airport in early August, 1930, thousands welcome her.

On that fateful morning in January 1941, she set off from RAF Squires Gate, near Blackpool, on what should have been a routine 90-minute flight to RAF Kidlington in Oxfordshire. It is thought she flew off course in adverse weather conditions and was not seen again until four hours later when she had to parachute out of her plane over the Thames Estuary. Despite desperate efforts to reach her, Amy was lost at sea.

HMS Lutine – The ship that refuses to give up her treasure

A story published 12th August 2020, ([here](#)) makes interesting reading: British and American bombing of Hamburg in the Second World War was one of the most devastating attacks on Germany. Intended to cripple the country's industrial strength, the attack lasted for eight days and killed 42,000 people. But some 145 years earlier, it was a very different story. Then, London chose to lend Hamburg a helping hand. In 1799, the economy in the German city was on the brink of collapse. To prevent it, and a possible stock market crash, City of London merchants produced a vast quantity of silver and gold bullion which was loaded aboard the British Navy frigate HMS Lutine. It was despatched on 9th October 1799 to Hamburg in the hope that the funds raised would help avert a financial crisis. But the Lutine didn't make it.

A North Sea storm blew up on this day as the frigate passed the Dutch coast and the Lutine foundered off the West Frisian Islands. There was only one survivor, 239 crew and passengers losing their lives. The cargo of silver and gold bullion – reportedly then worth about one million pounds – was also lost.

Wikipedia, [here](#), adds to the story: *Lutine* was a frigate which served in both the French Navy and the Royal Navy. She was launched by the French in 1779. The ship passed to British control in 1793 and was taken into service as *HMS Lutine*. She sank during a storm in 1799 (see below) carrying about £1.2 million in bullion and coins equivalent in value to £119 million in 2020, from Yarmouth to Cuxhaven in order to provide Hamburg's banks with funds in order to prevent a stock market crash and, possibly, for paying troops in North Holland.

She was built as a French Magicienne-class frigate with 32 guns and was launched at Toulon in 1779. During the French Revolution, *Lutine* came under French Royalist control. On 18th December 1793, she was one of sixteen ships handed over to a British fleet at the end of the Siege of Toulon, to prevent her being captured by the French Republicans. In 1795, she was rebuilt by the British as a fifth-rate frigate (being the second smallest class of warships in a hierarchical system of six "ratings" based on size and firepower) with 38 guns. She served thereafter in the North Sea, where she was part of the blockade of Amsterdam.

As mentioned, *Lutine* sank during a storm - at Vlieland in the West Frisian Islands - on 9th October 1799, whilst carrying a large shipment of gold. Shifting sandbanks disrupted salvage attempts, and the majority of the cargo has never been recovered. Lloyd's of London (see below) has preserved her salvaged bell – the **Lutine Bell** – sounded once for bad

news and twice for good news, although these days it is only used on ceremonial occasions.

Lloyd's of London

Lloyd's of London, generally known simply as Lloyd's, is an insurance and reinsurance market located in London. Unlike most of its competitors in the industry, it is not an insurance company; rather, Lloyd's is a corporate body governed by the Lloyd's Act 1871 and subsequent Acts of Parliament.



Picture Credit: "The Bell" by Jessicastjohn is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Spring-heeled Jack came to Brighton

In a blog on the Brighton Museums website ([here](#)) you will find a story posted by Kevin Bacon, the Digital Manager at Royal Pavilion & Museums:

In April 1838 the *Brighton Gazette* informed its readers that a local gardener had been attacked by a mysterious creature. The attack took place in the evening, between 9 and 10 pm in what would now be described as the Round Hill area of Brighton. At the time, this area was largely undeveloped apart from some affluent housing on Rose Hill that had been built in the 1820s. The attack took place within the garden of one of these houses.

The gardener said that a 'growing beast' 'in the shape of a bear or some other four-footed animal' climbed up on the garden wall and, even though the wall was protected by broken glass, ran across it. Before the terrified gardener could escape, the creature leaped down and chased the man and his equally terrified dog. After toying with his victims for some time, the monster abruptly scaled the wall and vanished.

This odd story was published a week after the attack. Although there was no mention of it by the *Gazette's* local rival, *The Brighton Herald*, the story gathered national interest. The following day, the Brighton *Gazette* piece was reprinted in full by *The Times*. Why did this obscure local story achieve such prominence?

The reason was that the attack was blamed on a notorious figure who had already been terrifying London in the early months of 1838, and would go on to make unwelcome appearances throughout the 19th century: **Spring-heeled Jack**.

"Spring-heeled Jack" has, it seems, found his way to the Sussex coast. On Friday evening, between 9 and 10 o'clock, he appeared, as we are informed, to a gardener near Rose-hill, "in the shape of a bear or some other four footed animal," and having first attracted attention by growl, then mounted the garden wall, covered as it was with broken glass, and ran along it upon all-fours, to the great terror and consternation of the gardener, who began to think it time to escape. He was accordingly about to leave the garden, when Spring-heeled Jack leaped from the wall, and chased him for some time; the dog was called, but slunk away, apparently as much terrified as his master. Having amused himself for some time with the trembling gardener Spring-heeled Jack scaled the wall, and made his exit. The fellow may probably amuse himself in this way once too often — *Brighton Gazette*.

'Spring-heeled Jack' article from The Times, 14 April 1838

Kevin Bacon concludes an interesting post, saying:

Spring-heeled Jack has never returned to Brighton since his encounter with the Round Hill gardener. But Jack has left one legacy in our collections. Take a trip to the Wizard's Attic in Hove Museum, take a look around the display cases, and you will find box of spring-soled children's shoes called 'Spring-Heeled Jacks'.

What was John von Neumann's personality like?

Posted on Quora.com, [here](#).



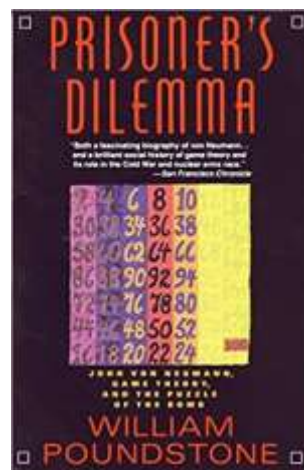
Picture Credit: "File:John von Neumann.jpg" by wikispaces is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

John von Neumann was a Hungarian-American mathematician, physicist, computer scientist, engineer and polymath. He was generally regarded as the foremost mathematician of his time and said to be "the last representative of the great mathematicians": he integrated pure and applied sciences.

There is a lengthy discussion of von Neumann's personality in William Poundstone's book, *Prisoner's Dilemma: John von Neumann, Game Theory, and the Puzzle of the Bomb*. It paints the man in a very pleasant light:

- "There is no scientific 'queerness' about Dr. von Neumann's appearance." (*Good Housekeeping Magazine*, 1956).
- A picture in *Life* magazine suggested, "a kindly milquetoast uncle."
- He wore prim vested suits with a white handkerchief in his pocket. (As evidenced in almost every photo you can find of the man).
- **"Neumann's mastery of English was excellent.** For that matter, so was his mastery of Hungarian, German, and French. His English betrayed a Middle European accent that was invariably described as charming, never harsh. He had trouble pronouncing 'th' and 'r,' and pronounced 'integer' with a hard 'g' - this being a von Neumann trademark."
- "He retained a strong grasp of Greek and Latin learned in childhood. **It was said that von Neumann could speak in any of seven languages faster than most people could speak in one.**"
- **"He was the life of the party...** Parties and nightlife held a special appeal for him... It was a common occurrence for him to begin scribbling with pencil and paper in the midst of a nightclub floor show or a lively party." As his wife said, **"The noisier, the better," for him.**
- He enjoyed limericks.
- He was clever and humorous. But some of his jokes would be considered sexist by today's standards, though they were probably not out of place at the time. Rape, he once defined as, **"assault with intent to please,"** as one example.

- He was also known for practical jokes.
- "[His] sense of humour was often sarcastic. Witty, but also insensitive."
- "[He] liked hearing and spreading gossip." A colleague claimed that, "one often had the feeling that in his memory he was making a collection of human peculiarities as if preparing a statistical study."
- He was a political conservative.
- **"The founder of game theory enjoyed games and toys."** And he was given them regularly as gifts by his friends.
- There are claims that he was an occasional heavy drinker. But probably no more than the average for a Princeton intellectual at the time. His brother claimed that he "pretended to be drunk in order 'to get along' with his peers."
- "[He] was an aggressive and apparently reckless driver. He supposedly wrote off a car every year or so." **There was an intersection at Princeton nicknamed "Von Neumann Corner" for all the accidents he had there.**
- Poundstone writes that, **"the fascination of John von Neumann derives from his contradictions. He was a mild, charming man who conceived starting a nuclear war and suspected the human race was doomed by its misuse of technology. But one searches long and hard for unambiguous evidence of a darker side to his personal relations. Most who knew him held him in the highest admiration."**
- In *Illustrious Immigrants*, historian Laura Fermi wrote that **"[he] was one of the very few men about whom I have not heard a single critical remark. It is astonishing that so much equanimity and so much intelligence could be concentrated in a man of not extraordinary appearance."**
- Fellow mathematician Norbert Weiner (of whom he had somewhat of a feud with) recommended von Neumann to Yuk Wing Lee of Tsing Hua University with the following praise: **"Neumann is one of the two or three top mathematicians in the world, is totally without national or race prejudice, and has an enormously great gift for inspiring younger men and getting them to do research... Neumann is not high-hat in any way, and is most accessible to young students."**



William Poundstone's book provides a wonderful portrait of the brilliant mathematician.

It is available ([here](#)) at Amazon.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

Poor Drunken Paddy

It's late on a Friday night, and Paddy O'Leary is parked on his favourite stool in his favourite pub, roaring drunk as usual. He drains his latest pint, slaps the glass down on the bar, and bellows, "ere now, barkeep, let's have another!"

The barman, who's great good friends with Paddy, says, "You've 'ad enough, old chum, you need to go 'ome now, and sleep it off."

Patty is indignant, and splutters, "That's a load of it mate, I'm fine, just give me a drink."

His old friend refuses. Getting mad now, Paddy says, "I'm fine and I'll prove it!" He slides off the stool, tries to take a step, and falls flat on his face! "You can't walk, Paddy, now go home!" says the barman.

Paddy tries again, with the same result, then crawls to the door, pulls himself up on it, and falls right over again. "Maybe I am a wee bit tipsy," he thinks to himself, "I'd better just crawl home." His flat is just three doors from the pub, so he crawls home, lets himself in, and crawls into bed with his sleeping wife.

Next morning about nine o'clock, Paddy is awakened by the sound of the phone ringing and his wife answering it. She listens for a moment, says, "Right then" and hangs up. She turns to poor Paddy, glaring angrily at him, and says, "Well, you've done it again, you sot, you great drunken idiot you!"

"What is it I've done again, my dear?" asks Paddy meekly.

"You've left your wheelchair at the pub again!"



Humour contributed by Alan Tattall



Humour from Billingshurst Weald Probosc Club Newsletter

You've got to laugh...

"I went to my doctor and asked for something for persistent wind. He gave me a kite."

Les Dawson, from Les Dawson's Joke Book



"There are only two conditions where you're allowed to wake up a woman on a lie-in: it's snowing or the death of a celebrity."

Michael McIntyre, from The Complete Laughter Box (DVD)

"What do you call an Alsatian in a grey jumper? A plain-clothes police dog."

Harry Hill, from Harry Hill's Whopping Great Joke Book

I said, 'It's serious doctor, I've broken my arm in 20 places.' He said: 'Well stop going to those places.'

Tommy Cooper, on his TV show

"My wedding was like a fairy tale. It wasn't magical; it's just that I've got an ugly sister."

Ellie Taylor, at the Edinburgh Fringe 2015

"I got a package in the post last week, and on it it said, 'Please don't bend.' So how was I supposed to pick it up?"

Lee Mack, from Hit the Road Mack (DVD)

"A cement mixer has collided with a prison van. Motorists are asked to look out for 16 hardened criminals."

Ronnie Corbett, from The Two Ronnies (DVD)

"I needed a password eight characters long so I picked Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."

Nick Helm, at the Edinburgh Fringe 2011

"My husband can do the work of two men. Unfortunately those men are Laurel and Hardy."

Jo Brand, during a live stand-up show

"About a month before he died, my grandfather covered his back full of lard. After that he went downhill very quickly."

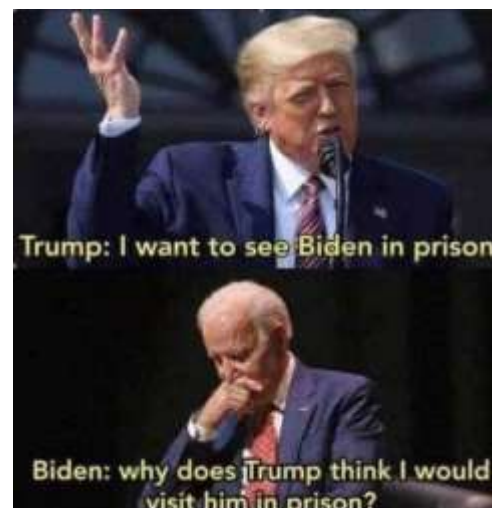
Milton Jones, during a live stand-up show

"I saw this bloke chatting up a cheetah. He was trying to pull a fast one."

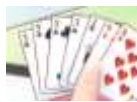
Tim Vine

"My mum's so pessimistic that if there was an Olympics for pessimism... she wouldn't fancy her chances."

Nish Kumar, at the Edinburgh Fringe



Play Canasta



Cards and Melds

Canasta usually uses two complete decks of 52 playing cards (French Deck) plus the four Jokers, making a total of 108 cards. A meld is a set of matching cards, typically three or more, that earn a player points and/or allow them to deplete their hand. Melds typically come in sequences of ascending cards belonging to the same suit known as runs (8♠ 9♠ 10♠) or sets/groups of cards of identical rank (8♠ 8♣ 8♥). Other ones may be marriage (e.g. K♥ and Q♥) and bezique (Q♠ and J♦).

The Classic Game

The classic game is for **four players in two partnerships**. Variations exist for two and three player games wherein each plays alone, and also for a six-player game in two partnerships of three. If partners are chosen, they must sit opposite each other. Yes, the rules below do look incredibly complicated, but if you print and study the PDF version by clicking [here](#), it will become clearer in an instant. Canasta has numerous variations. The most popular version is Classic Canasta (4 Players in 2 Partnerships), which can also be played with minor variations. Canasta is generally best for four players, playing in partnerships, but beginners might prefer to start with the 2-Player version.

The Cards

Canasta is played with two standard 52 card packs plus 4 Jokers (two from each pack), making 108 cards in all. If you like the game, packs of specially designed Canasta cards can be bought on-line or in most quality stores. Each card has a point value as follows:

Jokers:	50 pts	• A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 are called Natural Cards.
A, 2:	20 pts	• Jokers and Deuces (2s) are Wild Cards.
K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8:	10 pts	• Black 3s & Red 3s have their own 'special functions' (see later).
7, 6, 5, 4:	5 pts	• With some restrictions, Wild Cards can be used as substitutes for any natural card.
Black 3:	5 pts	
Red 3:	100 pts	

The Deal

As mentioned above, Canasta is best played with 4 players in 2 partnerships, these partnerships playing against each other. Players sit opposite their Partners. The first dealer is chosen at random and thereafter the turn to deal rotates clockwise after each hand. The dealer shuffles the pack and the player to dealer's right cuts the cards. Each player is dealt 11 cards and the remainder of the pack is turned face-down in the centre of the table to form a **Stock Pile**. The top card of the stock is taken off and placed face-up, next to the Stock Pile, to start what is called the **Discard Pile**. If this first face-up card is either Wild (a Joker or a 2) or a Red 3, another card is turned and placed on top of it, continuing until a card which is neither Wild nor a Red 3 sits face-up on the Discard Pile. All Wild cards or Red 3s should be stacked at right angles to the rest of the pile, to indicate that the Discard Pile is frozen (see later). Play is now ready to begin with the player to dealer's left, but first we need to understand Melds and Canastas.

Melds and Canastas

1. The object of the game is to score points by melding cards. A valid meld consists of 3 or more cards of the same natural rank (any rank from Four up to Ace), such as 5-5-5-5-5-5, 10-10-10-10, A-A-A etc.
2. Wild cards (Jokers and 2s) can normally be used in melds as substitutes for natural cards of any rank. For example: Q-Q-Q-2 or 8-8-8-2-Joker would be valid melds. There are, however, restrictions on using wild cards.
3. When playing with partners, melds belong to a partnership, not to an individual player. They are kept face up in front of one of the partners. Typically, a partnership will have several melds, each of a different rank. You can add further cards of the appropriate rank to any of your side's melds, whether begun by yourself or by your partner, but you can never add cards to an opponent's meld.
4. Black 3s and Red 3s each have their own special function and cannot be melded in the normal way.
5. A meld of 7 (or more) cards is called a Canasta. If all of the cards in it are natural, it is called a Natural Canasta. If it includes one or more wild cards it is called a Mixed Canasta. If any wild cards are added to a previously natural canasta, it thereby becomes a mixed canasta.

The Initial Meld

6. For each partnership, the first time in a hand when they place one or more melds (face-up) on the table is called their Initial Meld. When making the initial meld for your partnership, you must meet a certain Initial Meld Requirement

(see below), in terms of the total value of cards that you put down. You are allowed to count several separate melds laid down at the same time in order to meet this requirement. In Classic Canasta, you are also allowed to use the top card of the discard pile along with cards from your hand to satisfy the minimum count, before picking up the remainder of the pile (see later).

7. The initial meld requirement applies to a partnership, not to an individual player. Therefore, after either you or your partner have made a meld that meets the requirement, you can both meld freely for the rest of that hand. However, if the opponents have not yet melded, they must still meet the requirement in order to begin melding.

Initial Meld Requirement

If your partnership has not yet melded, then in order to meld for the first time, the total value of the cards you lay down must meet a minimum requirement. This requirement depends on your partnership's cumulative score from previous hands as follows >

Score	Minimum
Less than 0	15
From 0 to 1495	50
From 1500 to 2995	90
3000 or more	120

To achieve this count, you can place several melds on the table and the melds can be of more than the minimum size of 3 cards.

The standard values of the cards you play are added to check whether the requirement has been met.

In order to achieve the minimum count, you must either meld entirely from your hand after drawing from the stock, or you must use 2 natural cards from your hand which match the top card of the discard pile. In this second case, you can count the value of the top discard, along with the cards you play from your hand in this and any other melds, towards the minimum count. You cannot count any other cards in the pile which you may intend to add in the same turn. (See TAKING THE DISCARD PILE below.)

Example: There is a King on top of the discard pile and a King and a Queen buried in the pile. You have 2 Kings, 2 Queens and a 2 in your hand. If your initial meld requirement is 50, you can meld K-K-K, Q-Q-2, using the King from the top of the pile, for 70 points. You can then add the King and Queen from inside the pile to these melds in the same turn, if you wish. (See TAKING THE DISCARD PILE below.) But you could not make this play if you needed a minimum count of 90: even though the King and Queen from the pile are ultimately worth a further 20, you cannot include these towards your initial requirement.

Bonuses for Red 3s, canastas and so on cannot be counted towards meeting the minimum requirement. Even if you have a complete canasta in your hand, you are not allowed to put it down as your initial meld if the total value of its individual cards does not meet your minimum count requirement.

There is just one exception to this minimum count requirement. If, having drawn from the stock, you are able to meld your entire hand, including a canasta, without having previously melded any cards, you may do so (with or without a final discard) and Go Out (see later) without having to meet any minimum count requirement. In doing this you will score the extra bonus for going out Concealed (see later). This option remains available to a player who has exposed Red 3s, provided that they have not melded anything else.

More on Melds

8. Every meld must contain at least 2 natural cards. The smallest possible meld consists of 3 cards, which could be 3 natural cards (such as K-K-K) or 2 natural cards and a wild card (such as 4-4-2)
9. Melds can grow as large as you wish. A meld of 7 or more cards counts as a Canasta. No meld can contain more than 3 wild cards - so a 6-card meld must include at least 3 natural cards and a Canasta must contain at least 4 natural cards. There is no limit on the number of natural cards that can be added to a canasta. Don't forget: a wild card added to a natural canasta downgrades it to a mixed canasta and, once a canasta contains 3 wild cards, no further wild cards can be added.
10. Melds consisting entirely of wild cards are not allowed. A wild card in a meld cannot be moved to another meld or back into your hand.
11. It is not allowed for one partnership to have two separate melds of the same rank. Any cards melded by a partnership which are the same rank as one of their existing melds must be added to that meld. It is however quite possible and not unusual to have a meld of the same rank as one of your opponents' melds.

Starting the Play

On picking up their 11-card hands, each player checks to see whether or not they hold a Red 3. Before playing any other cards, each player, at their first turn

NOTE: Haywards Heath & District U3A has a Canasta & Cribbage Group. Details available from Janet Davies 01444 456781 or email: janetcdavies@hotmail.co.uk

to play, must immediately place face-up on the table any Red 3s that they were dealt and draw an equal number of cards from the top of the face-down Stock Pile to replace them. The player to the Dealer's left, starts the game.

After drawing the top card from the Stock Pile but before discarding, players may be able to play some cards from their hand face-up on the table. To play cards to the table in this way is known as melding and the sets of cards so played are called melds (see above). These melded cards remain face up on the table until the end of the current hand.

Taking the Discard Pile

Under certain conditions, instead of drawing from the stock, players are permitted to take all of the discard pile, but they must be able to meld the top discard, without needing any of the other cards in the discard pile to make their meld valid. The procedure is:

1. Place the necessary cards from your hand face up on the table and add the top card of the discard pile to them to form a valid meld.
2. Take all the remaining cards of the discard pile and add them to your hand.
3. If you wish, make further melds from the cards you now have in your hand.
4. Discard one card face up on the discard pile to end your turn.

Examples:

- a) If there is a 5 on top of the pile and another 5 buried in it, you cannot use a single 5 in your hand to take the pile and meld the three 5s. But if you have two 5s in your hand you can meld these with the 5 on top of the pile, take the pile, and then add the previously buried 5 to this meld.
- b) You play 2 cards from your hand that make a valid meld with the top discard: these could be either 2 natural cards of the same rank as the top discard, or 1 natural card and 1 wild card.
- c) If the top discard matches the rank of one of your partnership's existing melds, you can simply add it to that meld and take the pile.

Each player's turn begins by either drawing the top card from the face-down stock or taking the whole of the discard pile. Players may then meld some cards before ending their turn by discarding one card face-up on top of the discard pile. A player may always opt to draw the top card of the face down stock pile.

Remember: You can only take the discard pile if you can meld its top card direct to one of your melds or, if necessary, in combination with cards from your hand. There are additional restrictions on taking the discard pile if it is frozen against your partnership (see below). Note that you can never take the discard pile if its top card is a Wild Card or a Black 3 (see below). Note also that it is not necessary to take the discard pile in order to meld. If you wish, you can meld after drawing the top card from the stock.

Frozen Discard Pile

There are 3 ways that the discard pile can be frozen against your partnership.

1. The discard pile is frozen against all players if it contains a wild card. To show that it is frozen, the wild card is placed at right angles in the pile, so that it is still visible after other cards are discarded on top of it.
2. In the unusual case where a Red 3 is turned up to start the discard pile after the deal, the discard is frozen against all players, and the Red 3 is placed at a right angle to show this.
3. If your partnership has not yet melded, the discard pile is frozen against you. When the discard pile is frozen against your partnership, you can only take it if you hold in your hand TWO natural cards of the same rank as the top card of the discard pile, and you use these with the top discard to make a meld. This meld can either be a new one or could be the same rank as an existing meld belonging to your partnership, in which case the melds are then merged.

(Sometimes holding back two natural cards from a meld can be a good tactic, especially if you suspect your opponents might be about to freeze the discard pile by discarding a wild card. They might do this if they think your partnership has a better chance than theirs of taking a large discard pile - with all its lovely points!)

Example: Suppose the pile is frozen and our team already has a meld of four 7s on the table. If the player before me discards a seven, I cannot pick up the discard pile unless I have two further 7s concealed in my hand. If I do have two 7s in my hand, I can add them and the discarded 7 to our meld (making a Canasta), and then take the pile.

RED 3s are Bonus Cards

If you draw a Red 3, you must immediately place it face-up on the table with your partnership's melds (or where your melds will be, if you have not yet melded). You then draw a replacement card from the face-down stock. Although Red 3s score bonus points they do not count as melds, and do not help you to satisfy the minimum count requirement for your initial meld. Also, they do not prevent you from subsequently scoring the bonus for going out with a concealed hand (see later). Occasionally it happens that a Red 3 is turned up at the end of the deal as a start card for the discard pile.

This freezes the discard pile. When the discard pile is eventually taken, the player puts the Red 3 face-up with the partnership's melds but does NOT draw a replacement card.

BLACK 3s are Stop Cards

By discarding a Black 3 you prevent the next player from taking the discard pile. However, Black 3s do not freeze the pile. After the Black 3 has been covered by another card, it has no further effect, and the pile can be taken in the usual way. Black 3s cannot be melded, except in one exceptional case. A player who is 'going out' may meld a group of three or four Black 3s as part of that last turn. Such a meld of Black 3s cannot contain wild cards.

GOING OUT ends the Hand

Play ends when a player Goes Out, i.e. disposes of all the cards in his or her hand. Players are only allowed to go out after their team has fulfilled certain conditions, including the completion of at least one 7-card meld - a Canasta. Having achieved this, they can go out by melding all but one of the cards in their hand and discarding this last card. They can also go out by melding their whole hand, leaving no discard. It is legal to complete the required canasta and go out on the same turn. If your side does not yet have a canasta, you are not allowed to leave yourself without any cards at the end of your turn. You must play in such a way as to keep at least 1 card after discarding. It is against the rules in this case to meld all of your cards but one, because you would then be forced to discard this last card, which would constitute going out illegally.

Note: it is not always an advantage to go out as soon as you are able to; the cards left in your partner's hand will count against your side, and you may be able to score many more points than your opponents by continuing. If you are able to go out but are unsure whether to do so, you may, if you wish, ask your partner, "May I go out?" This question can only be asked immediately after drawing from the stock or taking the discard pile and before making any further melds other than the one involving the top card of the pile, if it was taken. Your partner must answer "yes" or "no" and the answer is binding. If the answer is "yes", you must go out; if the answer is "no" you cannot go out. But you are under no obligation to ask your partner's permission before going out.

Stock Pile runs out

Another way that hand can end is when there are no more cards left in the face-down stock. Play can continue with no stock as long as each player takes the previous player's discard and melds it. In this situation a player must take the discard if the pile is not frozen and if the discard matches any previous meld of that player's side. As soon as a player is entitled to draw from the stock and chooses to do so, but there is no card in the stock, the play ends. If a player draws a Red 3 as the last card of the stock, the Red 3 is placed face up as usual and then, since there is no replacement card that can be drawn from the stock, the play immediately ends. The player who drew the Red 3 is not allowed to meld or discard.

Scoring: Classic Canasta

When the play has ended, the hand is scored. Each partnership's score is:

- the total value of any bonuses they are entitled to (see below),
- plus the total value of all the cards they have melded,
- minus the total value of any cards remaining in their hands.

The bonus scores are as follows:

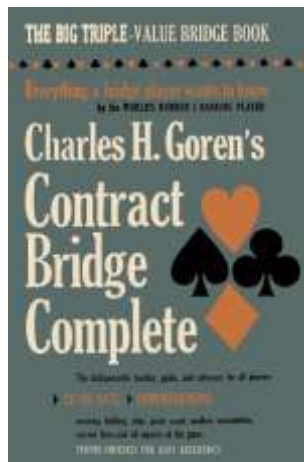
For going out	100 points	
For going out concealed	200 points	(while melding for the first time - it must include a Canasta.)
For each natural Canasta	500 points	
For each mixed Canasta	300 points	
For each Red 3	100 points	(but minus 100 points if the partnership does not have at least one meld.)
For all four Red 3s	800 points	(but minus 800 pts, if the partnership does not have at least one meld.)

Conclusion: After the bonuses have been calculated, the cards melded by each team are counted using their standard values. For ease of counting and checking, the usual method is to group the cards into piles worth 100 points each. In Classic Canasta, the values of the cards themselves are counted in addition to the bonus for the Canasta so, for example, a natural canasta of 7 Kings is really worth 570 points altogether - 500 for the canasta and 70 for the Kings. The remaining cards with the players are also counted using the same standard values, but these points count against the partnership and are subtracted from their score. A cumulative total score is kept for each partnership. It is possible to have a negative score. When one or both partnerships have a total of 5,000 or more points at the end of a hand, the game ends and the side with the higher total score wins. The margin of victory is the difference between the scores of the two sides.

Source: mainly from http://www.raggyspelk.co.uk/other_pages/canasta.html

An Introduction to Bridge

Picture Credit: "Contract Bridge Complete" by samtsloan@gmail.com is licensed under CC BY 2.0



History*

Since about 1896, bridge whist, auction bridge, and contract bridge have successively been the principal intellectual card games of English-speaking countries. The third game of the series, contract bridge, spread throughout the world and in some respects constituted a social phenomenon unparalleled in the history of games. In addition to millions of casual players worldwide, there exist numerous national federations affiliated with the World Bridge Federation (WBF), which organises international tournaments for more-serious competitors.

* from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/bridge-card-game>

What Do You Need to Play Bridge?

Once you have decided to learn the bridge game, the bare minimum materials you need:

- 4 players
- A 52 cards deck
- A score pad
- Something with which to write.

Advanced players, particularly playing duplicate bridge, will also need bidding boxes and "boards," which are trays into which the cards are inserted.

Learn to Play**

Bridge is considered to be by far the greatest card game of all, and it can provide immense challenge and enjoyment for the rest of your life. This lesson is intended for the complete beginner, one who knows nothing, or almost nothing, about bridge. If that is you, read on.

Where to begin? Bridge is more complicated than other card games, and beginners are sometimes discouraged by this. Relax! After this lesson you will understand the card play involved and be well on your way to becoming a bridge player. Take your time! There is no hurry. And have a deck of cards handy.

** from <http://www.rpbridge.net/1a00.htm>

Some Basics

The game of bridge has two main parts: the Bidding (also called the Auction) and the Play. You should learn the Play first because it will give you a better sense of what the bidding means. In fact, learning the bidding first is a mistake and can be a turn-off to new players.

Bridge is a partnership game requiring four players. Each player sits opposite his partner at a card table.

Bridge is played with a standard deck of 52 playing cards. One of the players deals all of the cards, 13 to each player, in clockwise rotation, beginning with the player to the left of the dealer.

One way to determine the partnerships and first dealer is to draw cards. The two highest cards are partners against the two lowest, and the highest card deals. In the case of a tie (e.g., two aces) it is broken by the suit rank. Partnerships can be prearranged if desired and just draw to see who deals first.

The object of the game is simple: you and your partner try to score more points than your opposing pair. There are various forms, the one I am familiar with is "Chicago", in which you and your partner always attempt to maximise the performance of your cards.

Based on notes
from Gerry Lerner



Cards and points

In Bridge there are four suits, and they are ranked: spades (highest), hearts, diamonds and clubs (lowest). The ranking is for bidding purposes only. In the play all suits are equal, unless one suit has been named as trumps, then it beats all the others. Suits are sometimes shown as symbols, or abbreviated: S H D C.

The cards of each suit are ranked from the ace (highest) through the two (lowest). The exact order using common abbreviations: A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2. The ace is always high, unlike in some games such as poker or gin rummy, where it can be low.

The groups (suits) in order of rank for bridge are spades S, hearts H, diamonds D, and clubs C. There are symbols on the cards depicting the suit. In bridge the points values are ace 4 king 3 queen 2 and jack 1, the pack therefore contains 40 points.

Each player plays in turn and after the four cards are laid down the highest card wins the trick, except if a trump has been played. Bridge is based on the concept of "trumps". A suit is declared as trumps and that means that any card in that suit wins a round of cards irrespective of it being of a lower value than any other card played in that round. However due to the nature of the cards in your hand you may have a better chance of succeeding if there are no trumps during the play of the cards, see bidding below.

Bidding

The person who dealt the cards has the first bid, their opponent to the left then bids and this continues clockwise around the table until a contract is agreed, no more bids are made. In bidding you are trying to convey information to your partner as to the content and strength of your cards (your hand) in order that you or your partner can play the cards and score points. Likewise your partner is trying to give you information from their bidding. In addition you gain information from the bids made by your opponents as to the content of their hands.

If a player does not want to bid at their turn they simply say *no bid*. To open the bidding you must have a minimum of 12 points and usually five cards in the suit you have bid. A bid at the one level means you think you can make seven tricks with trumps being the suit bid.

Due to the ranking of the suits there can be more than one bid at a level, for example, I can bid 1C and the next person can still bid at the one level e.g. 1H. At any level a no trump bid is the highest bid i.e. above a spade bid.

Bidding is about judgement and risk. If you achieve what you have bid you score points. If you fail, your opponents score points. In an ideal situation you will try to bid to game level because you score lots of points by achieving a game contract. With regard to the suits described above there is a further refinement, major and minor suits. Spades and hearts are majors, and diamond and clubs are minors. To achieve a game in no trumps you need to make nine tricks; in a major suit ten tricks and in a minor suit, eleven tricks (a trick being a round when each player plays a card).

Examples of bidding

You	Opposition	Your partner	Opposition partner
1C	1S	2H	No bid
3H	No bid	4H	No bid
No bid	No bid	No bid	No bid

Your contract is 4H, since you both like hearts and your partner has a good hand of cards (lots of points).

You	Opposition	Your partner	Opposition partner
No bid	1H	2C	2D
No bid	2S	No bid	No bid

Opposition has good spades but does not have many points but does have some spades.

Bidding is ideally done with bidding boxes, that is a box that contains cards which show a bid e.g. a card saying 3C. Without the bidding boxes, you say your bid, but this can be a problem because how you say your bid can also reveal information!

[Continued on next page>>>](#)

>>> Continued from previous page

As well as game contract there are also two other types of contract, small-slam and slam. A small slam is when you bid 6 of a suit or NT (the forcing **No Trump** is a bidding convention in the card game) and so is saying you will make 12 tricks and a slam is bidding 7 of a suit and making 13 tricks rare events but scoring lots of points.

Playing the Game

I am playing the contract, the opponent on my left plays the first card, my partner then lays down their cards so all can see them, this is called the dummy hand.

Each player then plays a card in turn and the highest card then wins the trick. The player who won the trick then plays the next card to start the next round. This continues until all 13 cards have been played. The score for that round is then determined.

The information apparent from the bidding process re your partner's hand and the opposition's hands can guide you as to the order in which you play your cards to maximise the chance of you winning a trick. If I am in a suit contract it is often a good idea to play rounds of trumps to get rid of the trumps held by the opposition so that the opposition cannot take a trick from you with a trump card.

Bridge is about memory, trying to remember what cards have been played, what is the top card in a suit that is still to be played. It is also about retaining control of the game, don't play your winners too soon and then let the opposition take over the game and win the contract!

More Information

- How to play Bridge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lomnCvxWzM#>
- Contract Bridge: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract_bridge

Alpacas and Llamas: How are they different?

Inspired by article at: <https://www.dictionary.com/e/alpaca-vs-llama/>

Picture Credit: "llamas" by ECohen is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0



Look at these pictures. The animals look similar. But are these adorable shaggy mammals popping up across home goods, clothing, and toys *llamas*? Or are these sweet, fluffy creatures that people adore called *alpacas*?

And what's the difference between the two?

Picture Credit: "Alpaca" by nannettturner is licensed under CC BY 2.0



The Llama Park at Wych Cross

Why not visit the Llama Park at Wych Cross on the A22. Details at: <https://llamapark.co.uk/> or call: 01825 712040.

Despite being commonly mixed up, *llamas* and *alpacas* are two distinct animals with several defining features. Let's take a closer look.

What is an alpaca?

An *alpaca* is a domesticated mammal from South America. This ruminant, or cloven-hoofed and cud-chewing mammal, is also known as *Lama pacos*. Although related to the camel family, *alpacas* don't have humps. Instead, they are slender with soft, silky fleece. Their coveted fleece is made into a fabric or yarn because it is lightweight yet strong and provides impressive insulation. *Alpacas* are typically found in southern Peru or western Bolivia and some are bred for fleece production.

Alpaca can also refer to the specific fleece made from their hair: a glossy, commonly black woolen fabric with cotton warp.

Alpacas are part of the lamoid species which also includes *llamas*, as well as their wild cousins - guanacos, and vicuña. The first recorded use of *alpaca* in English dates back to around 1805–15, and this word originated from the Spanish word *alpaca*. It is believed to stem from *allpaca*, the Aymara word used by the Indigenous people living in the mountainous regions of Bolivia and Peru to refer to the animal, which is also related to the *Quechua p'ake* ("yellowish-red").

What is a llama?

Like *alpacas*, *llamas* are part of the lamoid species and they are also closely related to camels. However, their fleece is coarse and is considered less desirable than an *alpaca's* wool. These are also domesticated mammals from South America and are typically found in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Chile, and Argentina.

How to tell alpacas and llamas apart

Although these mammals are closely related, there are a few distinguishing characteristics that help make it easy to tell them apart. For a start, *llamas* are much larger than *alpacas*. As the biggest lamoid, some *llamas* can carry more than 130 pounds. Due to their strength as well as their endurance and thirst tolerance, *llamas* are used for transporting goods on a long-distance journey. They also have the reputation of being cranky, however they are typically gentle and only spit or become stubborn if they're overworked. Their slender bodies do not have humps; instead, some of their defining features include a smaller head, larger pointed ears—some describe them as banana-shaped—and long necks.

On the other hand, *alpacas* are much smaller, typically weighing around 140 pounds versus a *llama's* 250 pounds. *Alpacas* have shaggy wool that's much finer and softer as well. *Alpacas* have small faces and shorter ears, and their faces are covered in fur. On the other hand, *llamas* have less fur on the face and longer snouts. *Alpacas* also tend to have a shyer disposition and aren't typically used as pack animals.

The last word on the matter

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/story/whats-the-difference-between-llamas-and-alpacas>

Llamas and *alpacas* have been used by humans for transportation and fleece production for a few thousand years. Both species are primarily found in Peru and Bolivia and are part of the camel family, *Camelidae*. *Alpacas* and *llamas* are two of the four lamoid species. Interestingly, all four species are able to interbreed and create fertile offspring. While often conflated, *alpacas* and *llamas* differ in key ways. The most-distinguishing physical differences between *alpacas* and *llamas* are their size, their hair, and their face shapes. Also, they differ in disposition, which affects the way humans have used them over the years.

Why, Why, Why?

Something to think about when you have nothing else to do...

WHY, do some supermarkets make the sick and infirm, walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions, whilst healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front?

WHY, do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a DIET COKE?

WHY, do banks leave their vault doors open, and then chain their pens to the counter?

WHY, do we leave cars worth thousands of pounds on our driveways, and put all our useless junk in our locked garage?

WHY, does the sun lighten our hair, but darkens our skin?

WHY, can't women put on mascara with their mouths closed?

WHY, don't we ever see the headline "Psychic Wins Lottery"?

WHY, is "abbreviated" such a long word?

WHY, is it that Doctors, Accountants and Lawyers call what they do as "Practice"?

WHY, is lemon juice made with artificial flavouring, but dish washing liquid made with real lemons?

WHY, is the man that invests all your money called a "Broker"?

WHY, is the time of day with the slowest traffic, called "The Rush Hour"?

WHY, isn't there a mouse flavoured cat food?

WHY, didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?

WHY, do they sterilise the needle for lethal injections?

WHY, don't they make the plane out of that indestructible black box material?

WHY, don't sheep shrink when it rains?

WHY, are they called apartments, when they are all stuck together?

AND Finally, WHY, if flying is so safe, they call the airport the Terminal?

Contributed by the late and sorely missed, Brian Bridges



Humour contributed by Michael Mench

Then and Now...

Britain compared: 1948 and now, by Mandy Barrow

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/war/changessince.htm>

In 1948, it's interesting to note that:

- A quarter of British homes had no electricity.
- People often lived in the same town all their lives, near their families.
- There were often more than three children in every family.
- One third of the British population went to the cinema at least once a week.
- Hardly any homes had a television. There were only 14,500 television sets in the whole country and there was only one channel (BBC).
- Most families listened to the wireless (radio) for their entertainment.
- Many homes did not have a telephone or an indoor toilet.
- Cooking was done from scratch using produce grown locally. You could only buy items that were in season and most of what you bought was made or grown in the UK.
- There were only just over a million cars on Britain's roads. Petrol rationing remained until 1954. For most people, this made the car an unaffordable luxury. Most people used public transport to get around.
- Air travel was mainly for the rich. To go abroad, most people travelled by ship.
- The average weekly wage was £3 18s (£3.90). Now it is about £400.

Homes

The home was an important aspect of lifestyle. A home's decoration and furniture revealed what type of person you were and how well off you appeared to be.

Many houses did not have indoor toilets or a telephone. There was no central heating. Houses were kept warm from the heat of a fire in the fireplace.

Few houses had fitted carpets, most had wooden or stone floors.



Humour contributed by Alan Tatnall

The RAF's 100th birthday and the Bouncing Bomb

The **badge of the Royal Air Force** is the **heraldic emblem** used to represent the RAF which features an eagle superimposed on a circlet which is surmounted by a crown. The badge was based on a design by a tailor at Gieves Ltd of Savile Row. The **Royal Air Force Ensign** is the official **flag** which is used to represent the **Royal Air Force**. The ensign has a field of air force blue with the United Kingdom's **flag** in the canton and the **Royal Air Force's** roundel in the middle of the fly.



The Royal Air Force (RAF) was founded by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service and was controlled by the British Government Air

Ministry which had been established three months earlier. It is the United Kingdom's aerial warfare force. It was formed towards the end of the First World War on 1 April 1918.

Following the Allied victory in 1918, the RAF emerged as the largest air force in the world at the time.

After the First World War, the RAF was reduced in size and during the inter-war years was used to "police" the British Empire.

The RAF underwent rapid expansion prior to and during the Second World War. During the war it was responsible for the aerial defence of Great Britain, the strategic bombing campaign against Germany and tactical support to the British Army around the world.

During the Cold War, the main role of the RAF was the defence of the continent of Europe against potential attack by the Soviet Union, including holding the British nuclear deterrent for a number of years. After the end of the Cold War, the RAF took part in several large-scale operations, including the Gulf War, the Kosovo War, the War in Afghanistan, and the Iraq War.

For more information, see [here](#).

The Bouncing Bomb

The August 2020 edition of Surrey Life ([here](#)) had an interesting and very human story about Barnes Wallis and the bouncing bomb he invented. Barnes Wallis designed the "Bouncing Bomb" (code name: Upkeep) for Operation Chastise, the attack on Germany's Ruhr Valley dams. That Operation was carried out on 16th 17th May 1943 by Royal Air Force No. 617 Squadron, later called the Dam Busters. The bombs were given their name because they could skip on water and avoid torpedo nets, before sinking and becoming a depth charge.



Although the Lancaster was primarily a night bomber, it excelled in many other roles, including daylight precision bombing: in the latter role some Avro Lancasters were adapted to carry the 12,000 lb (5,443 kg) Tallboy and, ultimately, the 22,000 lb (9,979 kg) Grand Slam "earthquake" bombs (also designed by Barnes Wallis).

You can see a video [here](#) taken from the 1955 classic war movie 'The Dambusters'. Wing Commander Guy Gibson's Lancaster crew attacked the Mohne dam while under fire from the dam's defences. The late actor Richard Todd, who portrayed Wing Commander Gibson in this movie, was himself a veteran of WW2, having taken part in the capture of Pegasus Bridge in the early hours of D-Day, as a member of the Parachute Regiment.

The picture (bottom left) is a screenshot from the film.

Sad to note: Commander Gibson continued to fly and was killed in action while on another raid over Germany, his plane crashing in the Netherlands on 19th September 1944. He was only 26 years of age.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

The lightning-fast quest for COVID vaccines — and what it means for other diseases



Picture Credit: "Doctor in face mask holding syringe with Covid-19 Vaccine text" by focusnm ore.com is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The speedy approach used to tackle the Corona virus could change the future of vaccine science, wrote Philip Ball in a News Feature on 18th December 2020, on the Nature.com website, [here](#).

The race to be the first to develop a vaccine started in earnest as soon as the coronavirus made its unwelcome appearance in early 2020. But scientists were careful not to promise quick success. After all, the fastest any vaccine had previously been developed, from viral sampling to approval, was four years, for mumps in the 1960s.

Yet, by early December 2020, the developers of several vaccines had announced excellent results in large trials, with more showing promise. And on 2nd December 2020, a vaccine made by drug giant Pfizer with German biotech firm BioNTech, became the first fully-tested immunisation to be approved for emergency use.

That speed of advance "challenges our whole paradigm of what is possible in vaccine development", said Natalie Dean, a biostatistician at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Read the full article at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03626-1>

Hirohito and the making of Modern Japan

Extracted from a book of that title written by Herbert P. Bix. © Copyright, 2000, published by Harper Perennial

In 1928, Hirohito was enthroned as the new emperor of Japan. However, there was a growing scepticism regarding the deification of the emperor, along with new opposition to Japan's form of government by communists and other radicals - especially with the onset of a severe economic recession. To counter this, the Japanese government planned an elaborate yearlong celebration of Hirohito's enthronement, including dramatic gestures of benevolence. And it simultaneously increased the number of officials engaged in "thought control":

"Meanwhile the attention of Hirohito and the court group was focusing increasingly on his forthcoming enthronement. ...

"The Showa enthronement rituals, festivities, and national unity banquets were planned and staged under recession conditions. ... After all, tradition and mythology helped to hold society together, despite its underlying conflicts.

"Technology was also harnessed to the glorification of the monarchy. In 1928, when the enthronement year began, Japan had entered the age of mass advertising and mass consumer culture. For nearly three years, regular nationwide radio broadcasts had been affecting public opinion and values. ...

"The government [also] appointed in all prefectures 'thought procurators' and 'special higher police.' The armed forces established their own 'military thought police,' and special Home Ministry police officials were assigned to work full-time on uncovering anti-kokutai 'conspiracies' being plotted by communists and other radicals. As a result, from 1928 onward the imperial state assumed a sterner attitude toward its critics. First, communists and leaders of the sectarian Shinto organizations of Omotokyo and Tenrikyo, which refused to recognize Amaterasu Omikami as a superior deity, were subjected to increased police surveillance and repression; later the surveillance was extended to liberal intellectuals in journalism and the universities. Thus the process of manufacturing a new emperor through ritual and propaganda went hand in hand with a major expansion and dispersion of the thought-control apparatus ...

"Assisting the commission in this remaking of the monarchy were the still new and relatively independent mass media, mainly radio and newspapers, which rose to the occasion by instructing the nation on the meaning of the unfamiliar rites and celebrations that were planned. Japanese newspapers were expanding their circulation and becoming national rather than local and regional. Their reporters were anxious to ingratiate themselves with the central bureaucracy. So, too, were radio announcers, who, in reporting on the pageantry at Kyoto, were dependent on scripts prepared in advance by the Imperial Household Ministry.

"For a whole year, press and radio reported the ceremonies and rituals on a daily basis, day and night, throughout the home islands and in the Japanese colonies, as Hirohito and his entourage skillfully implemented the real lessons they had learned from King George V - lessons not about the constraints of constitutionalism but the importance of state spectacle and ritual in enhancing the monarch's dignity and authority. ...

"Censoring itself whenever it was not censored by authority, the press never became a free voice of conscience for the Japanese nation.

"The enthronement rituals and ceremonies, from their start in January to their climax in early December 1928, helped to manufacture a new imperial image for the young emperor. ... The enthronement culminated during the months of November and December 1928. In November, in towns and cities in every prefecture and metropolitan district throughout the empire, hundreds of thousands of people took part in banquets and award ceremonies; millions of schoolchildren joined in flag parades and lantern festivals. Before the year ended the throne had dispensed millions of yen as an expression of imperial benevolence for the nation's poor, liberally awarded medals, granted titles, and bestowed posthumous decorations on historical figures from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and nineteenth centuries who were noted for loyalty to the throne. Also in the name of the emperor, the government reduced the sentences of 32,968 criminals, including the assassin of Hara Kei; commuted the punishments of 26,684 prisoners in the colonies; and granted special amnesty to another 16,878 prisoners."



Picture Credit: "File:Emperor Hirohito of Japan. Drawing by A.L. Tarter, 194-. Wellcome V0010667.jpg" is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Comment from Martin Pollins

Delanceyplace is a FREE brief daily email with an excerpt or quote they view as interesting or noteworthy, offered with commentary to provide context. There is no theme, except that most excerpts will come from a non-fiction work, mainly works of history, and they hope will have a more universal relevance than simply the subject of the book from which they came. And there is not necessarily an endorsement, and in some cases an excerpt may be particularly controversial, and Delanceyplace may disagree with some or all of it, but nevertheless deem it worth noting.

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All Hands to the Pump or Wheel or Grindstone... and the 'Bevin Boys'

Source: <https://dailybritain.wordpress.com/tag/essential-work-order/>

Picture Credit: "File:Clement Attlee.jpg" by Winterbergen is licensed under CC0 1.0



In 1940, Clement Attlee (see picture above), the Labour leader in Churchill's war-time cabinet, urged everyone to stay calm and continue in his or her job until ordered to do otherwise. Attlee took Labour into the wartime coalition government in 1940 and he served under Winston Churchill, initially as Lord Privy Seal and then as Deputy Prime Minister from 1942. After the end of the war, the coalition was dissolved and Attlee led Labour to a landslide victory at the 1945 general election,

This was at a time when the government had won the right to direct any adult aged between 14 and 65 into some kind of employment. By 1942, Labour Minister, Ernest Bevin had mobilised 22 million workers and troops, causing the News Chronicle to reflect Today: 'no country in the world has ever mobilised its manpower to this extent', and went on, 'that only about 350,000 men and women were directed into jobs they hadn't chosen'. Perhaps this was government propaganda!

In May 1940, Parliament had rushed through, in three hours, **the Emergency Powers Act**, which gave the government unlimited authority over every person and all property in the land. Banks, munitions, industry, wages and profits where there were powers to impose 100% tax.

All strikes were banned under Order 1305, of July 1940, but there were some stoppages later in the war, in aircraft production, coal and shipbuilding. Many over seemingly trivial matters such as canteen facilities, but important when one considers the long hours and general pressures people were working under.

One concern was the abolition of differentials between skilled and unskilled being watered-down with new recruits of both sexes receiving the same, admittedly, good money.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

The Imperial War Museum website summarises the position, **here:**

From early 1941, it became compulsory for women aged between 18 and 60 to register for war work. Conscription of women began in December. Unmarried 'mobile' women between the ages of 20 and 30 were called up and given a choice between joining the services or working in industry. Pregnant women, those who had a child under the age of 14 or women with heavy domestic responsibilities could not be made to do war work, but they could volunteer. 'Immobile' women, who had a husband at home or were married to a serviceman, were directed into local war work. As well as men and women carrying out paid war work in Britain's factories, there were also thousands of part-time volunteer workers contributing to the war effort on top of their everyday domestic responsibilities. Other vital war work was carried out on the land and on Britain's transport network.

Those in vital industries were kept there by Bevin's, **1941 Essential Work Orders (EWO)**, which affected eight million workers. It also stopped sacking in key industries, shipbuilding, engineering, aircraft work, railways and the building trade, where conditions were eased by better rates of pay. Women played a vital part in all areas of war-work as the Daily Telegraph reported in May, of a New Register of Women for War Work.

Some 400,000 women of the 1920 Class registered under the Registration for Employment Order and would be entered on a National Work Register, and to consider what they wanted to do including uniformed services.

However, women would not be taken away from useful employment, such as looking after evacuees, and those running homes and looking after children weren't expected to move. The EWO could be blamed for a decline in production especially in coal, which fell every year of the War, though loss of young manpower and long shifts must have contributed.

The shortage of manpower was improved later by a ballot of men which allocated many to work in mining: the Bevin Boys.



Picture Credit: [Cropped] "File:Bevin Boys memorial, National Memorial Arboretum (1).JPG" by Harry Mitchell is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Age-old Humour

- What goes up but never comes down? Your age!
- Aging gracefully is like the nice way of saying you're slowly looking worse.
- At my age, the only pole dancing I do is to hold on to the safety bar in the bathtub.
- The older we get, the earlier it gets late.
- You know you're getting older when you have a party and the neighbours don't even realise it.
- Why am I getting older and wider instead of older and wiser?
- These are not grey hairs! They are wisdom highlights! I happen to be very wise.
- Allow me to politely suggest that this be the year you start lying about your age.
- Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative.
- If my body were a car I would trade it in a newer model...every time I cough sneeze or sputter my radiant leaks and my exhaust backfires.
- You're not getting older, you're just becoming a classic!

And quotes/quips from the funny/famous:



Picture Credit: "Bob Hope & Phyllis Diller" by ewm1340 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

- "You know you're getting old when the candles cost more than the cake." —Bob Hope
- "I'm at an age when my back goes out more than I do." —Phyllis Diller
- "You know you're getting old when you get that one candle on the cake. It's like: See if you can blow this out." —Jerry Seinfeld
- "I've learned that life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes." —Andy Rooney
- "So far, this is the oldest I've been." —George Carlin
- "By the time a man is wise enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere." —Billy Crystal
- "As you get older, the pickings get slimmer, but the people sure don't." —Carrie Fisher
- "You know you're getting older when you're told to slow down by your doctor, instead of by the police." —Joan Rivers

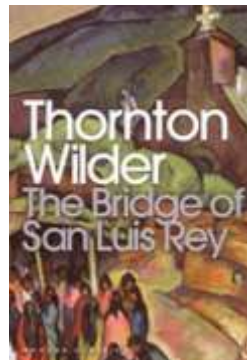
Future cars will be made of Magnesium

Source: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/future-cars-will-be-made-of-magnesium/>. Originally published in August 1946, in Scientific American

This is what the 1946 article said:

"According to one contention, magnesium will eventually replace iron as the world's basic constructional raw material. Hence, it might be feasible to call the next age of man the 'magnesium age.' The element appears to be the only 'basic' material of which the supply is inexhaustible: one cubic mile of sea water contains 9.2 billion pounds of metal in the form of magnesium chloride. It is the lightest of the structural metals, and magnesium's so-called 'fire hazard' is only a factor when handling fine powders or the molten metal. However, if magnesium is to become the prime raw material it is not likely to do so for centuries. Its competitors—iron and steel, aluminum and structural plastics—would have to reach a state of depleted supply and high prices."

The Bridge of San Luis Rey



I see that *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (Penguin Modern Classics) was published in paperback on 27th July 2020 and is available from Amazon, [here](#).

The book was American author Thornton Wilder's second novel, first published in 1927 to worldwide acclaim. It tells the story of several interrelated people who die in the collapse of an Inca rope bridge in Peru, and the events that lead up to their being on the bridge. In the story, a priest tries to find the connection between the five people killed by the unexpected collapse of the Bridge of San Luis Rey (on 20th July 1714) and his faith in God. For his efforts to see a link between the character of a person and the sudden, premature death brought on by calamity, he is burned at the stake for heresy.

The book won the 1928 Pulitzer Prize for the Novel, and remains widely acclaimed as Wilder's most famous work.

In 2004, the company for which my role was Operations Director, financed and produced the film based on the book. The film was directed by Mary McGuckian and had a stellar cast including: F. Murray Abraham, Kathy Bates, Gabriel Byrne, Geraldine Chaplin, Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel.

There's a theatrical trailer available online, [here](#).



Contributed by



Martin Pollins

African Proverbs

Posted by **Victor Dirikebamor** on Quora.com

Here are 10 African proverbs that could cause one to think twice:

1. If beards signified intelligence, the goat would have been a genius — Nigerian.
2. You won't last long, so leave a legacy —
Somalian
3. If your only tool is a hammer you will see every problem as a nail — Gambian
4. Be a mountain or lean on one— Somalian
5. The death of an elderly man is like a burning library — Ivorian
6. A bird that flies off the earth and lands on an anthill is still on the ground — Nigerian
7. You have little power over what is not yours —
Zimbabwean
8. An intelligent enemy is better than a stupid friend — Senegalese
9. Do not follow a person who is running away —
Kenyan
10. If you're building a house and a nail breaks, do you stop building or do you change the nail? —
Rwandan

The great Nigerian author Chinua Achebe once wrote:
"Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten."

Two actors with striking parallel lives

Posted by **Ryan Buleza** on Quora.com

The two actors are Charles Bronson and Jack Palance.

- Both were born and raised in Pennsylvania, USA. Palance was originally from Hazelton, while Bronson was from Ehrenfeld.
- They both worked as coal miners when they were young.
- They both served on bombers in the Army Air Force during the Second World War and received the Purple Heart for being wounded during a bombing run.
- They both lost their fathers when they were young.
- They were both of Slavic/Eastern European heritage. Palance's heritage was Ukrainian while Bronson's was of Lithuanian..
- Both changed their names to be more Anglo sounding. Bronson was born Charles Buchinsky, while Palance was born Volodomyr Palahniuk.
- They both moved to Europe at around the same time (Palance in the 1950s and Bronson in the 1960s) because they were dissatisfied with the roles they were receiving in America.
- Both were often typecast as tough-guy characters.
- They died only three years apart from one another. Bronson passed away in 2003, while Palance passed away in 2006.

- They were both offered the role of Curly Washburn in the 1991 comedy *City Slickers*. Although Palance was the first to be offered the role, he initially turned it down. Bronson declined the role after Palance did, at which point Palance accepted it. Palance would go on to win an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his role in the film.
- They both appeared in a classic western together, *Chato's Land*.

Long live the Hollywood tough guys.



Picture Credit: "Jack Palance" by Mexicaans fotomagazijn is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0



Picture Credit: "Charles Bronson 1970s" by Movie-Fan is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Heinrich Rudolf Hertz: 'What I have invented is of no use.'



Based on a post by **Michael Karnerfors** on Quora.com

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Heinrich Hertz (b1857 d1894) was a German physicist and mathematician best known for his discovery of what became known as wireless waves. He was the first person to conclusively prove the existence of the **electromagnetic waves** predicted by **James Clerk Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism**. The **unit of frequency, cycle per second, was named the "Hertz" in his honour.**

His parents were Gustav Ferdinand Hertz and Anna Elisabeth Pfefferkorn. Gustav Hertz was a Jew who converted to become a Lutheran. Anna, the daughter of a Frankfurt doctor, came from a Lutheran family, so Heinrich was brought up as a Lutheran. He was the oldest of his parents' five children, having three younger brothers and one younger sister.

Heinrich did not realise what he had just discovered. When asked about the importance of an experiment he had performed, Herr Heinrich said: *"It is of no use whatsoever [...] this is just an experiment that proves Maestro Maxwell was right — we just have these mysterious electromagnetic waves that we cannot see with the naked eye. But they are there."*

When asked what the practical application of this was, he said: *"Nothing, I guess."*

Yet, **Heinrich Rudolf Hertz** had just invented the **radio**, of sorts - it was not a practical device by any means, but it was the first specifically made to transmit and detect radio-waves. He did not foresee the incredible applications which, after Marconi read Hertz's paper and saw its practical application, would transform communication and entertainment.

To say that the emission and detection of radio-waves have in some small way shaped modern society since Hertz first made his invention, or rather, confirmed the validity of Maxwell's equations in real life, is to re-define the concept of "understatement". His contribution to science is colossal, concluding that light and heat are electromagnetic radiations and showing that the velocity and length of the electromagnetic waves can be measured.

Quite simply, he proved that electromagnetic waves could transport electricity.

The history of the Last Post

Based on a story on [BBC_here](#)



Picture Credit: "Playing last post Start of World War I-2=" by Sheba_Also
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The Last Post was first published in the 1790s. It was just one of the two dozen, or so bugle calls sounded daily in British Army camps. The inspection would take about 30 minutes, and at the end there would be sounded the Last Post, the name simply confirming that the final sentry-post had been inspected. Traditionally, it is played on a bugle.

The sound of a lone bugler playing the Last Post has become one of the most distinctive sounds in the world. Eerie and evocative, it exists beyond all the usual barriers of nation, religion, race and class, charged with the memory of generations of the fallen.

But, from the 1850s onwards, it became customary for the regimental bugler to sound the Last Post over the grave of any soldier who died overseas, where often there was no other music available to accompany him on his final journey. Over time the custom was adopted at home as well as abroad and, by the time World War I broke out in 1914, it was routinely played at soldiers' funerals.

The tune, which has gone from 45 seconds to 75 seconds, has also been played at the funerals of political leaders: this includes Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela.

Read more on the story of the Last Post, [here](#).

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

On the other hand... what is the origin of SINISTRALITY?

There is nothing sinister about sinistrality: the word simply means "left-handedness" (as opposed to right-handedness) or "left-sidedness."

It's the opposite of *dextral*. The terms are derived from the Latin words for "left" (*sinister*) and "right" (*dexter*).

Sinistrality is a derivation of the adjective *sinistral*, whose current sense is "on the left-hand side, left" (in Middle English *sinistralle* meant "unlucky, adverse").

Invasion Publicity during the Second World War

Posted by: [Dr Henry Irving](#), on 18 June 2015, [here](#)

How should a responsible government deal with the threat of military invasion? This question is not one that many British governments have had to consider. Yet for a 12-month period after May 1940 it was one that exercised those in power. Their discussions emphasised the need for decisive leadership and clear instruction. However, they also showed just how difficult these were to achieve when facing a threat which had previously been inconceivable.

Planning for Invasion

The threat of invasion had been discussed in government since October 1939. It was not until spring 1940, however, that it was treated as a serious possibility. The Nazis' rapid advance into Western Europe after 10 May 1940 pushed the matter to the very top of the government's agenda. It was for this reason that the 'Invasion of Great Britain' was discussed on 19 occasions during the first three weeks of Winston Churchill's premiership.

The withdrawal from Dunkirk served to underline the perilous situation that Britain faced. Although the evacuation of troops was a success, large amounts of equipment had been lost and military leaders feared that Hitler would seek to exploit the confusion caused. Plans were hastily drawn up to meet the imminent threat of invasion. A Home Defence Executive was established, men were encouraged to join the then recently-formed Local Defence Volunteers (better-known as the Home Guard), road signs were removed, and large parts of the South East were designated as Defence Areas.

Further reading

- Read more [here](#).
- See Dr Henry Irving's blog post [If the Invader Comes](#) on the 'Talking Humanities' blog
- You can find out more about the history of the Ministry of Information at <http://www.moidigital.ac.uk>

See also:

- Angus Calder, *The People's War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Pimlico, 1992)
- Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979)

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**Humour
contributed by
Alan Tatnall**

Rationing in World War II

Based on a post by [Stephen Wilson](#) on [Historic UK](#) at: <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Rationing-in-World-War-Two/>

From Wikipedia: At the start of the Second World War in 1939, the United Kingdom was importing 20 million tons of food per year, including about 70% of its cheese and sugar, almost 80% of fruit and about 70% of cereals and fats. The UK also imported more than half of its meat. It relied on imported feed to support its domestic meat production. The civilian population of the country was about 50 million. It was one of the principal strategies of the Germans in the Battle of the Atlantic to attack shipping bound for Britain, restricting British industry and potentially starving the nation into submission.

Have you ever wondered how much food a person was entitled to during World War Two? Rationing began on 8th January 1940 when bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. By 1942 many other foodstuffs, including meat, milk, cheese, eggs and cooking fat were also 'on the ration'. This is a typical weekly food ration for an adult:

- Bacon & Ham - 4 oz, Other meat - value of 1 shilling and 2 pence (equivalent to 2 chops)
- Butter - 2 oz. Cheese - 2 oz
- Margarine - 4 oz, Cooking fat - 4 oz
- Milk - 3 pints, Sugar - 8 oz
- Preserves - 1 lb every 2 months, Tea - 2 oz
- Eggs - 1 fresh egg (plus allowance of dried egg)
- Sweets - 12 oz every 4 weeks

Yes, I know what you are thinking... This doesn't look like much, right? In fact, ordinary people survived on such rations, although those who produced their own food were able to have that little bit extra. You might be wondering how this was even possible.



Rationing was a means of ensuring the fair distribution of food and commodities when they were scarce. It began after the start of WW2 with petrol and later included other goods such as butter, sugar and bacon. Eventually, most foods were covered by the rationing system with the exception of fruit and vegetables.

Ration books were given to everyone in Britain who then registered in a shop of their choice. When something was purchased the shopkeeper marked the purchase off in the customer's book. Special exceptions made allowing for some groups of people who required additional food like underground mine workers, members of the Women's Land Army and members of the Armed forces.

Additional Information

Imperial War Museum: What You Need to Know About Rationing in the Second World War, [here](#).

There are several videos online showing what rationing was like. The picture above is a screenshot from a video available online [here](#).

British Geriatrics Society (BGS)

On their website, BGS have an interesting posting titled: *As We Once Were: Wartime Rationing*. It was authored by Michael Denham and published on 14th November 2015, [here](#). The point is made that petrol was the first item rationed in 1939 but was eventually restricted to 'official' users only e.g. bus companies and farmers.

On 8th January 1940 butter, bacon and sugar rationing followed. Later meat, tea, jam, biscuits, breakfast cereals, cheese, eggs, lard, milk, canned and dried fruit joined the list. Babies, pregnant women and the sick were allocated additional food items such as milk, orange juice and cod liver oil. Domestic coal was rationed to 15 hundredweight in London and 20 hundredweight for those in the north. Anthracite was not rationed. All types of soap were rationed by weight or liquid quantity. Some families supplemented their rations with food parcels from friends living abroad.

Picture Credit:
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/e/2/James_Beck-1973.jpg



By 1942, most foods were rationed except vegetables, bread, and fish. Lemons and bananas disappeared but oranges were occasionally available. Cigarettes and tobacco were not rationed.

Strict controls produced a thriving 'black market': alcohol was in short supply, as Private Walker in Dad's Army knew quite well.

From September 1939, newspapers were limited at first to 60% of their pre-war consumption of newsprint. Wrapping paper for most goods was prohibited. Whether rationed or not, many consumer goods, such as razor blades became difficult to obtain.

The government strongly encouraged 'Growing your own fruit and vegetables' with well-publicised 'Dig for Victory' campaigns and imaginative ideas about using potatoes. Women from the Women's Land Army helped on farms. Recruitment was originally voluntarily but later conscription was introduced producing an army of over 80,000 women.

Contributed by



Martin Pollins

Allotments thrived with numbers reaching 1.4 million. Pigs, chickens and rabbits were reared domestically for meat. In 1940, the wastage of food became a criminal offence.

Rationing of Clothing, Cloth and Footwear from 1st June 1941

In Britain, during World War 2, if you wanted new clothes or shoes etc. for yourself or children, you were allocated 66 coupons under the Board of Trade rationing scheme to last you for a full 12 months. Look below to what you could buy and the coupons required to do so. It couldn't have been easy for Mum and Dad, could it?

RATIONING
of Clothing, Cloth, Footwear
from June 1, 1941

Rationing has been introduced, not to deprive you of your real needs, but to make more certain that you get your share of the country's goods—to get fair shares with everybody else.

When the shops re-open you will be able to buy cloth, clothes, footwear and knitting wool only if you bring your Food Ration Book with you. The shopkeeper will detach the required number of coupons from the unused margarine page. Each margarine coupon counts as one coupon towards the purchase of clothing or footwear. You will have a total of 66 coupons to last you for a year; so go sparingly. You can buy where you like and when you like without registering.

NUMBER OF COUPONS NEEDED

Men and Boys		Adult	Child	Women and Girls		Adult	Child
Unlined mackintosh or cape ..	9	7		Lined mackintoshes, or coats (over 28 in. in length) ..	24	11	
Other mackintoshes, or raincoat, or overcoat ..	16	11		Jacket, or short coat (under 28 in. in length) ..	11	8	
Coat, or jacket, or blazer or like garment ..	13	8		Dress, or gown, or frock—woollen	11	8	
Waistcoat, or pull-over, or cardigan, or jersey ..	5	3		Dress, or gown, or frock—other material ..	7	5	
Trousers (other than fustian or corduroy) ..	8	6		Gym tunic, or girl's skirt with bodice	8	6	
Fustian or corduroy trousers ..	5	5		Blouse, or sports shirt, or cardigan, or jumper ..	5	3	
Shorts ..	5	3		Skirt, or divided skirt ..	7	5	
Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4		Overalls, or dungarees or like garment ..	6	4	
Dressing-gown or bathing-gown	8	6		Apron, or pinafore ..	3	2	
Night-shirt or pair of pyjamas ..	8	6		Pyjamas ..	8	6	
Shirt, or combinations—woollen	8	6		Nightdress ..	6	5	
Shirt, or combinations—other material ..	5	4		Petticoat, or slip, or combination, or cami-knickers ..	4	3	
Pants, or vest, or bathing costume, or child's blouse ..	4	2		Other undergarments, including corsets ..	3	2	
Pair of socks or stockings ..	3	1		Pair of stockings ..	2	1	
Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs ..	1	1		Pair of socks (ankle length) ..	2	1	
Two handkerchiefs ..	1	1		Collar, or tie, or pair of cuffs ..	2	1	
Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens	2	2		Two handkerchiefs ..	2	1	
Pair of slippers or goloshes ..	4	2		Scarf, or pair of gloves or mittens or muff ..	2	2	
Pair of boots or shoes ..	7	3		Pair of slippers, boots or shoes ..	5	3	
Pair of leggings, gaiters or spats	3	2					

CLOTH. Coupons needed per yard depend on the width. For example, a yard of woollen cloth 36 inches wide requires 3 coupons. The same amount of cotton or other cloth needs 2 coupons.

KNITTING WOOL. 1 coupon for two ounces.

THESE GOODS MAY BE BOUGHT WITHOUT COUPONS

Children's clothing of sizes generally suitable for infants less than 4 years old. Boiler suits and workmen's bib and brace overalls. Hats and caps. Sewing thread. Mending wool and mending silk. Boots and shoe laces. Tapes, braids, ribbons and other fabrics of 3 inches or less in width. Elastic. Lace and lace net. Sanitary towels. Braces, suspenders and garters. Hard haberdashery. Clogs. Black-out cloth dyed black. All second-hand articles.

Special Notice to Retailers

Retailers will be allowed to get fresh stocks of cloth up to and including June 28th, of other rationed goods up to and including June 21st, WITHOUT SURRENDERING COUPONS. After those dates they will be able to obtain fresh stocks only by turning in their customers' coupons. Steps have been taken, in the interests of the smaller retailers, to limit during these periods the quantity of goods which can be supplied by a wholesaler or manufacturer to any one retailer however large his orders. Further information can be obtained from your Trade Organisations.

ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE

This will bring back the memories

This leading words in an article on 14 March 2006 by Jonathan Margolis in the *Independent* ([here](#)) caught my eye,

"Marmite's getting a 21st-century makeover. Sales of Angel Delight are booming. Tinned meat pies are on the rise. Why are our taste buds drawn to the past? Jonathan Margolis tucks into a feast of nostalgia."

Article extract:

MARMITE

Picture Credit: This image was marked with a CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 license.



Apparently, you love it or hate it. But Marmite is far from dead. As the author says: *"Designed to be spread thinly on slices of wholesome, hard-earned bread, it evokes the pre-consumer age, when larders were bare and housewives had to make a little go a very long way."* Marmite has joined the 21st century and now comes in a squeeze bottle. And if my eyes didn't deceive me, when I was last in Waitrose (before the lockdown), I recall seeing a low-fat version of Marmite. There's even a Guinness-flavoured version available now.

IZAL MEDICATED TOILET TISSUE

Surely Izal is no more. Wrong. It's still on the shelves of some supermarkets. That's if you still like using it. Personally, I always hated it. The maker Jeyes says: *"It is bought mainly by the older age group and we have steady sales."*

ANGEL DELIGHT

You'd think the one-time children's favourite Angel Delight has long passed into oblivion but you'd be wrong. Ambient Foods of Spalding, Lincs bought Angel Delight Kraft a few years back ago, along with Bird's custard. Angel Delight is selling 15 million packs a year and has reclaimed its place as "the No 1 brand in the instant desserts sector".

CAMP COFFEE

Then there's that sweet chicory coffee concoction called Camp Coffee. Personally, I love it. But it's only 4% coffee and 26% chicory. Hopefully the other 70% isn't sugar or as a Type 2 diabetic, I'm in big trouble.

BISTO



Looking similar in colour to Camp Coffee, Bisto gravy powder, still comes in similar brown packs as it did more than 80 years ago. Basically, it's potato starch, salt, wheat starch, colour, dried yeast and onion powder. It's still going strong. Same taste, same colour as we all remember from the past.

Picture Credit: "Oh! LOVELY" by the justified sinner is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

PEARCE DUFF'S BLANCMANGE POWDER

If you are under 80 years of age, you will have little idea what blancmange is - a wobbly, vaguely milky jellified pudding, often with lumps, left to set in a bulbous mould (as the author describes it). But some people love it.

HEINZ SANDWICH SPREAD

Heinz say this spread is "the perfect addition to any sandwich." It's healthy too - with 42% of content being vegetables. It's popular in my home.

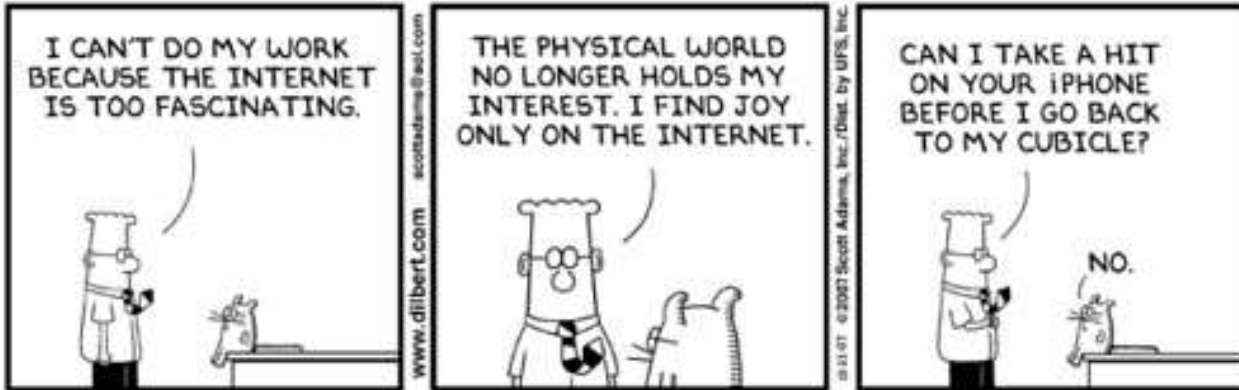
BRASSO METAL POLISH



You could say that Brasso metal polish, first made in Hull in 1905, helped to win two world wars and it certainly put Hitler in his place. Brasso boasts the Ministry of Defence as its biggest customer.

Picture Credit: "Bluebell Metal Polish 1907" by growlerthecat is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Finish with a smile, with Dilbert's help



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