

Nil Desperandum

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Never Alone



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The Epic of Gilgamesh

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- https://www.ancient-literature.com/other_gilgamesh.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epic_of_Gilgamesh
- <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/>
- <http://www.markkronan.com/languages/gilgamesh/gilgamesh-full/>
- <https://uruk-warka.dk/Gilgamesh/The%20Epic%20of%20Gilgamesh.pdf>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Epic-of-Gilgamesh>
- <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/gilgamesh/facts/>



Picture Credit: "Epic of Gilgamesh - Gilgamesh King of Uruk" by FilipeHattori is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

What is it?

'The Epic of Gilgamesh' is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) and is regarded as the earliest surviving notable literature and the second oldest religious text, after the Pyramid Texts.

Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, and his companion Enkidu are the only heroes to have survived (well, immortalised) from the ancient literature of Babylon. Together they journey to the Spring of Youth, defeat the Bull of Heaven and slay the monster Humbaba.

The literary history of Gilgamesh begins with five Sumerian poems about Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, dating from the Third Dynasty of Ur. The poem was in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hurrian and Hittite, all written in cuneiform script.

In Tablet I, Enkidu appears, after which most of the story unfolds from Gilgamesh's perspective. Utnapishtim narrates the flood story in Tablet XI. The Old Babylonian tablets (c. 1800 BC) are the earliest surviving tablets for a single Epic of Gilgamesh narrative.

Author

The original was written long ago - circa the 20th to the 10th century BC. It runs to nearly 2,000 lines. The ancient authors of the stories that compose the poem are anonymous. The latest and most complete version found so far was written c 600 BC and was signed by a Babylonian author and editor named Sin-Leqi-Unninni.

Characters

The characters in the poem include:

- ❖ **Gilgamesh** - a major hero in ancient Mesopotamian mythology and the protagonist of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, considered to be the historical King of the Sumerian city-state of Uruk;
- ❖ **Enkidu** - the wartime comrade and friend of Gilgamesh, King of Uruk;
- ❖ **Utnapishtim** - tasked by the God Enki (Ea) to create a giant ship to be called *Preserver of Life* in preparation for the coming flood expected to decimate all life;
- ❖ **Humbaba** - surnamed the Terrible, was a monstrous giant of immemorial age raised by Utu, the Sun. Humbaba was the guardian of the Cedar Forest, where the gods lived, by the will of the God Enlil, who assigned [Humbaba] "as a terror to human beings";
- ❖ **Shamhat** - a sacred prostitute who plays a significant role in bringing the wild man Enkidu into contact with civilisation;
- ❖ **Gugalanna** - the first husband of Ereshkigal, the queen of the underworld. His name probably (originally) meant "canal inspector of An";
- ❖ **Shamash** - the son of Sin. Shamash, as the solar deity, exercised the power of light over darkness and evil. He became known as the God of justice and equity and the judge of both gods and men. Legend has it that the Babylonian King Hammurabi received his code of laws from Shamash;
- ❖ **Dumuzi** - later known by the alternative form Tammuz, was an ancient Mesopotamian god associated with shepherds, who was also the primary consort of the goddess Inanna (later known as Ishtar);
- ❖ **Ishtar** - Ishtar was the goddess of love and war. She has a small, devastating role in the Epic, letting fire and brimstone loose, which leads to a clash with Enkidu and Gilgamesh, which leads to Enkidu getting the death penalty from the gods - which in turn sends Gilgamesh off on his failed quest for immortality.

Source: Wikipedia

Summary

It originated as a series of Sumerian legends and poems in a cuneiform script dating back to the early 3rd or late 2nd millennium BCE and later gathered into a longer Akkadian poem (the most near-complete version existing today), preserved on 12 clay tablets, dating from the 12th to the 10th century BCE).

It follows the story of Gilgamesh, the mythological hero-king of Uruk - part divine and part human, the great builder and warrior - and his half-wild friend, Enkidu.

Together they undertake a series of dangerous quests and adventures. Gilgamesh searches for the secret of immortality after the death of his friend.

There is mention in 'The Epic of Gilgamesh' of a great flood akin to Noah's story in the Bible and elsewhere.

The story begins with the introduction of Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, two-thirds god and one-third human, described as blessed by the gods with strength, courage and beauty, and the strongest and greatest King who ever existed. The great city of Uruk receives praise for its glory and strong brick walls.

Most of the epic poem is told by an objective, unnamed narrator who never directly criticises Gilgamesh, always talking of him in the most heroic terms, albeit with some irony.

At first, Gilgamesh pays no heed to death, even to the point of rashness, while in the second part, he is obsessed with death to the point of self-paralysis.

In the first part of the poem, Gilgamesh bonds with his friend Enkidu and sets out to build an enviable reputation. In doing so, he incurs the wrath of the gods. In the end, Enkidu dies, and Gilgamesh becomes obsessed with his mortality. He sets out on a quest to find Utnapishtim, the 'Mesopotamian Noah' who received eternal life from the gods, hoping that he will tell him how he too can avoid death.

In time, Gilgamesh dies, and the people of Uruk mourn his passing, knowing they will never see anyone like him again.



Picture Credit: "File: Tablet V of the Epic of Gilgamesh. Newly discovered. The Sulaymaniyah Museum, Iraq.JPG" by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin FRCP(Glasg) licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Relationship to the Bible

Various themes, plot elements, and characters in the Hebrew Bible correlate with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* - notably, the accounts of the Garden of Eden, the advice from Ecclesiastes, and the Genesis flood narrative.

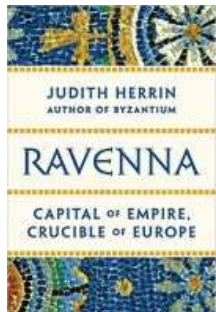
First Publication

The Tablet XI of Gilgamesh was first translated into English and published in 1872. The first comprehensive scholarly translation to be published in English was that of R. Campbell Thompson in 1930.

Read the whole Epic

The *Epic of Gilgamesh*, translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs, electronic edition by Wolf Carnahan, 1998, is available as a pdf [here](#).

Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe



This selection is from page(s): 9-13 of the book **Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe** by Judith Herrin, published by Princeton University Press, © Copyright 2020 Princeton University Press.

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<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/0691153434?dchild>

As the Roman Empire became increasingly threatened - and there was need for the emperor to be closer to the military frontier - the capital, at that point technically the capital of the Western Roman Empire, was moved to a location connected to the Adriatic coast of northern Italy. It remained the capital city of the Western Roman Empire from 402 until the empire collapsed in AD 476:

"In January 395 the ten-year-old Honorius thus became emperor of the western Roman Empire at the court based in Milan, where his guardian and very successful general (magister militum) Stilicho assumed effective control. With his wife Serena, an imperial princess in her own right, Stilicho had three children, Maria, Eucherius and Thermantia, who were all employed in advantageous marriage alliances.

"In 398 Maria, then about twelve years old, was married to the young Emperor Honorius, aged thirteen, and Eucherius was betrothed to Galla Placidia, integrating the orphaned imperial princess into Stilicho's family plans. It was a typical Roman betrothal of young children, though it did not lead on to marriage and the anticipated birth of a new generation. Nor did Honorius and Maria have any children before she died in about 407/8. Stilicho then persuaded the emperor to marry his second daughter, Thermantia, trying to ensure his own family's place within the ruling dynasty.

"But at the turn of the fourth century Stilicho and the imperial court in Milan received news that Alaric, chieftain of the Visigoths, had ravaged Greece and was threatening to invade Italy. By 401 he had crossed the Julian Alps (at the far east of the range) and laid siege to Aquileia. He moved on to besiege Milan in the winter of 401-2 as well as capturing many cities. Stilicho defeated the Goths in the summer of 402 (although Alaric escaped with most of his cavalry), and then advised Honorius that it might be wise to move the court away from Milan to a safer centre. This was the moment when Ravenna was selected as a suitable residence for the rulers of the western half of the Roman Empire.

"They chose the city of Ravenna partly because it was considered impregnable and partly because of its large port at Classis. The city was well served by river connections to the wide valley of the Po, rich in agricultural produce that could be stored inside the city if it was [sic] ever besieged, yet protected by treacherous marshes and lakes. Built in the second century B.C. on sandbanks that protruded from the surrounding waters, Ravenna followed a typical square garrison pattern, the quadrata romana. It was considered a secure city where distinguished hostages or refugees could be accommodated. Bato of Pannonia, who had been forced to march in Emperor Tiberius' triumph, was confined in what was in effect a glorified prison; similarly, the wife of Arminius of the Cherusci brought up her son there.

"In A.D. 43 Emperor Claudius constructed a ceremonial entrance to the city, the Golden Gate, dated by his inscription. The monument was demolished in the sixteenth century but drawings preserve an idea of its grandeur and a few fragments of the elegant sculptural decoration remain in the National Museum. The area around Classis also housed a school for training gladiators, who were said to benefit from the sea air. As naval challenges declined, the harbour at Classis was gradually adapted for the transport of goods across the Adriatic and throughout the Mediterranean. Shipbuilding, sailmaking and related maritime skills continued to be commemorated on funerary monuments, such as the second-century stele to Publius Longidienus, 'FABR.NAVALIS' (shipbuilder).

"Water-management was clearly necessary in the region where so many tributaries of the Po river descended towards the sea. Two major channels, the Padenna and the Lamisa, flowed around and into the city, creating a wide moat outside the city walls and a series of canals within them. In the sixth century Procopius described this:

This city of Ravenna ... is so situated as not to be easily approached either by ships or by a land army ... A land army cannot approach it at all; for the river Po ... and other navigable rivers together with some marshes, encircle it on all sides and so cause the city to be surrounded by water.

"The Po's heavy silt also meant that the canals and river outlets were regularly blocked, and boatmen on barges stirred up the sediment with their poles as they punted around in the marshes. Visitors commented on the ubiquity of water but the lack of drinkable supplies, which was relieved by Emperor Trajan in the early second century when he ordered the construction of a major aqueduct, 35km long, to bring water from the Apennines. Even so, floods and earthquakes in 393, 429, 443 and 467 caused buildings to sink with serious damage.

"The three intimately linked settlements - Ravenna, Caesarea and Classis - already commanded the attention of fourth-century emperors as an important location for watching naval and commercial activity in the Adriatic. Indeed, Honorius had visited the city in 399, and in that year, he united the province of Flaminia with neighbouring Picenum, a coastal region to the south.

"Thus enhanced as the seat of a governor, Ravenna acquired a full array of Roman administrative and cultural buildings, as well as some impressive villas such as the Domus dei Tappeti di Pietra (house of stone carpets). In the circuit of its old city walls, the Golden Gate made a particularly monumental, triumphal entrance that led to the heart of the city past an area associated with Hercules (perhaps a temple), the theatre and other urban facilities. The combined settlements were capable of housing and supporting a large additional force, such as the detachment of 4,000 soldiers, sent from Constantinople in the early fifth century, that remained in Ravenna. Like all Roman cities, Ravenna was governed by a local council (curia) of officials elected annually to collect taxation, provide basic services and maintain the city's walls and public buildings, though the council was under the ultimate authority of the commander of the fleet.

"In addition to the governor and the naval commander, the city also had a bishop, whose status was rather lowly in comparison with the established sees of Milan and Aquileia. Severus is the first officially recorded bishop who attended a church council held at Serdica in 343. The earliest references to a Christian presence in the area appear at Classis, which also claimed to house the relics of several early Christian martyrs, notably St Apollinaris who was later identified as the founding bishop of the city. It's quite likely that the earliest bishops resided there, but the episcopal centre was moved to Ravenna as soon as the imperial court was established, and the first cathedral building was probably begun in the early fifth century. Over the winter of 402-3, as this tripartite settlement on the Adriatic coast welcomed the emperor and his court, it took on its new role as the imperial capital of the West."

Comment from Martin Pollins

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Names for Animals and their Offspring

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://grammarist.com/usage/animal-adjectives/>
- <https://simplescium.wordpress.com/2016/02/28/how-do-animals-get-their-names/>
- <https://animalcorner.org/animal-names/>
- <https://www.dictionary.com/e/animal-adjectives/>
- <https://www.zooborns.com/zooborns/baby-animal-names.html>
- <https://www.eslcafe.com/resources/grammar-lessons/interesting-vocabulary/special-names-baby-animals>
- <https://www.scribd.com/doc/34907021/List-of-100-Animals-With-Their-Male-Female-Young-Group-Home-Sound>
- <https://animalcorner.org/animal-names/>
- https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_animal_names

Wildlife encounters are often more common in the summer, but the truth is anytime is OK too. Whether it's a trip to the zoo, visiting an aquarium or just heading outside for a hike or day at the beach, you're likely to encounter insects and animals who are enjoying the great outdoors as much as you do.

Dictionary.com ([here](#)) came up with some interesting stuff about animal vocabulary. You're probably already familiar with some of the more "fancy" names for animals. - words such as *canine*, *feline*, *equine*, or *bovine* – all Latin terms for dogs, cats, horses, and cows. In these words, the name for each animal is paired with the Latin suffix *-ine*, meaning 'of or pertaining to', 'of the nature of', 'made of' or 'like'. There are many more examples of this type of word formation that may surprise you. I have put together a list primarily from <https://grammarist.com/usage/animal-adjectives/> see opposite. Have I missed any?

How Animals are Named

Scientists use a special naming system to identify and group together all living and extinct creatures. The system is called 'taxonomy' and uses a set of rules to ensure every different type of creature has a unique name. The system was invented by a scientist and explorer called **Carolus Linnaeus***. His idea was to give each creature a two-part name: a species name and a genus name.

* The 18th century Swedish botanist, zoologist, taxonomist, and physician who formalised binomial nomenclature, the modern system of naming organisms. He is known as the "father of modern taxonomy".

The genus name is the family that the creature belongs to; the species name is the unique type of creature in that family. Both names are written in italics and the genus name always starts with a capital letter: for example, small and medium-sized cats belong to the genus *Felis* (a name that comes from the Latin word for cat). Within this genus, there are eight species of cats, the last two of which are extinct:

- ❖ *Felis bieti* – the Chinese mountain cat
- ❖ *Felis catus* – the domestic cat (or pet cat)

- ❖ *Felis chaus* – a jungle cat that lives in Asia
- ❖ *Felis margarita* – the sandcat
- ❖ *Felis nigripes* – the black-footed cat or small-spotted cat that lives in Africa
- ❖ *Felis silvestris* – the wildcat
- ❖ *Felis attica* – an extinct cat that was a bit like a lynx
- ❖ *Felis lunensis* – an extinct wildcat

Source: [Simplescium](#), [here](#).



Picture Credit: "Cats and Kittens" by [www.metaphoricalplatypus.com](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Animal groups and babies often have strange names. For example, baby sharks are called pups, baby kangaroos are called joeys and a group of camels are a flock.

Most animals have different names depending on whether they are male, female, young, domesticated, or in groups. I wrote an article for Nil Desperandum about the names given to animal groups on page 14 of Issue 24, [here](#).

Information on the names given to different baby animals is provided below.

Names for Baby Animals

Calf

The term *calf* is probably most commonly known as the name for a baby cow, but it is actually used for several types of baby animals:

- ❖ aardvark
- ❖ antelope
- ❖ bison
- ❖ buffalo
- ❖ camel
- ❖ cow
- ❖ dolphin (sometimes called pup instead)
- ❖ elephant
- ❖ giraffe
- ❖ gnu
- ❖ hippopotamus
- ❖ moose
- ❖ ox
- ❖ porpoise
- ❖ reindeer
- ❖ rhinoceros
- ❖ whale
- ❖ yak

Pup

The word *pup* is used for many baby animals, including (but not limited to) dogs, several rodents and sharks:

- ❖ armadillo
- ❖ bat

Adjective	Animal (Specific or Resembling)
accipitrine	hawk
anserine	goose
aquiline	eagle
asinine	ass
avine	bird
bovine	cow
bubaline	buffalo
cameline	camel
cancrine	crab
canine	dog
caprine	goat
corvine	deer
corvine	crow, raven
crocodiline	crocodile
elephantine	elephant
equine	horse
falconine	falcon
feline	cat
ferine	any wild animal
hippopotamine	hippopotamus
hircine	goat
hirundine	swallow
hystricine	porcupine
lacertine	lizard
larine	gull
leonine	lion
leporine	hare
limacine	slug
lumbricine	earthworm
lupine	wolf
murine	mouse/rodent
oscine	song-birds
ovine	sheep
pardine	leopard, panther
passerine	sparrow
pavonine	peacock
picine	woodpecker
piscine	fish
porcine	pig
pteropine	bat
ranine	frog
scolopendrine	centipede
serpentine	serpent
soricine	shrew
struthionine	ostrich
suilline	swine
taurine	bull
tigrine	tiger
ursine	bear
vespine	wasp
viperine	viper
vituline	calf
viverrine	mongoose
vulpine	fox
vulturine	vulture
zebrine/zebroid	zebra
zibeline	sable

- ❖ beaver (also called kitten)
- ❖ coyote (also called whelp)
- ❖ dog (commonly called puppy)
- ❖ fox (also called cub or kit)
- ❖ gerbil
- ❖ guinea pig
- ❖ hamster
- ❖ hedgehog (also called piglet)
- ❖ mink
- ❖ mole
- ❖ mouse (also called kitten or pinkie)
- ❖ otter (also called whelp)
- ❖ prairie dog
- ❖ rat (also called kitten or pinkie)
- ❖ seal
- ❖ shark
- ❖ squirrel (they can also be called *kits* or *kittens*)
- ❖ wolf (also called *whelp*)

Cub

Cub is the name for most baby big cats as well as some other animals:

- ❖ badger (also called *kits*)
- ❖ bear
- ❖ cheetah
- ❖ hyena
- ❖ leopard
- ❖ lion
- ❖ panda
- ❖ raccoon
- ❖ tiger (also called *whelp*)
- ❖ walrus (can also be called a *pup*)

Joey

Baby marsupial animals, as below, are referred to as **joeyes**:

- ❖ kangaroo
- ❖ koala
- ❖ opossum
- ❖ wallaby
- ❖ wombat

Hatchling

Several types of baby animals are referred to as **hatchlings**. The term **hatchling** can also be used for some baby birds, but only for the first few days of their life. The thing they all have in common is that they all hatch from eggs:

- ❖ alligator
- ❖ emu
- ❖ snake (but can also be called a *neonate* or *snakelet*).
- ❖ squid
- ❖ turtle
- ❖ lizard (for example, Anoles is the more commonly-known group name for a family of lizards called Dactyloidae, native to warmer parts of the Americas)

Other Baby Animal Names

Several names are specific to a particular type of animal, such as:

- ❖ **antling** - Baby ants are called antlings but can also be called *lava* or *pupa*.
- ❖ **baby** - a baby ape can be called a *baba*.
- ❖ **bunny** - A baby rabbit is usually called a *bunny* but can also be called a *kitten* or *kit*.
- ❖ **caterpillar** - *caterpillar* or *chrysalis* is a name given to baby butterflies (as well as *larva* and *pupa*).



Picture Credit: "*~Mom and new babies~*" by ~Sage~ is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

- ❖ **chick** - This is the general word for most young birds, including nesting birds, chickens, birds of prey and others.
- ❖ **cockrell** - The term cockrell is used to describe baby male chickens, also known as a *young rooster* or *chick*.
- ❖ **codling** - *Codling* is the name for a baby codfish.
- ❖ **colt** - The word *colt* is used for a male *foal*.
- ❖ **cria** - Baby llamas and alpacas are called *cria*.
- ❖ **cygnet** - Young swans are usually called *cygnets* but can also be described as *flappers*.
- ❖ **eaglet** - A baby eagle is called an *eaglet*.
- ❖ **fawn** - Baby deer and pronghorns are referred to as *fawn*.
- ❖ **filly** - The word *filly* describes a female *foal*.
- ❖ **fledgling** - The description of *fledgling* applies once a *chick* can leave the nest but isn't yet self-sufficient.
- ❖ **foal** - Baby asses, horses, mules and zebras are called *foals*.
- ❖ **froglet** - A *froglet* is a baby frog which starts out as a *tadpole* or *polliwog*.
- ❖ **fry** - Newborn fish are called *fry*.
- ❖ **infant** - Baby monkeys, gorillas and baboons are called *infants*.
- ❖ **kids** - Baby goats are referred to as *kids*.
- ❖ **kit** - Baby ferrets, skunks, badgers and weasels are called *kits*.
- ❖ **kitten** - Baby cats (pets, not big cats) are called *kittens*, as are baby servals.
- ❖ **lamb** - The name for a baby sheep is *lamb*.
- ❖ **larva** - Many insects and bugs start out as *larvae*, such as bees, beetles, wasps, yellow jackets, hornets and butterflies. It's also the name for baby clams.
- ❖ **leveret** - the name for a baby hare is a *leveret*.
- ❖ **maggot** - A baby fly starts out as a *maggot* - it's all downhill after that.
- ❖ **nestling** - A *chick* can be called a *nestling* once it passes the *hatchling* stage but cannot leave the nest.
- ❖ **nymph** - *Nymph* is the name for a baby cockroach or grasshopper.

- ❖ **owlet** - The term for a young owl is *owlet*.
- ❖ **piglet** - The word *piglet* is used for baby pigs, hogs and boars. They can also be called *farrow* or *shoat*.
- ❖ **poult** - The name used for a young turkey is *poult*.
- ❖ **puggle** - Strange, but the name for a young platypus is a *puggle*.
- ❖ **pullet** - The term *pullet* describes a baby female chicken (also known as a *young hen* or a *chick*).
- ❖ **salamanderling** - *Salamanderling* is the name for a baby salamander.
- ❖ **spiderling** - Baby spiders are called *spiderlings*.
- ❖ **squab** - A baby pigeon is called a *squab* but can be known as *squeakers*.
- ❖ **tadpole** - a baby toad is called a *tadpole*.
- ❖ **wormlet** - The name for a baby worm is *wormlet*.

Special mention

A goose (plural geese) is a bird of any of several waterfowl species in the family **Anatidae**. This group comprises the general **Anser** (the grey geese and white geese) and **Branta** (the black geese). Some other birds, mostly related to the shelducks, have 'goose' as part of their names.

More distantly-related members of the family Anatidae are swans, most of which are larger than true geese, and ducks, which are smaller.

The term 'goose' may refer to either a male or female bird, but when paired with 'gander', refers specifically to a female one (the latter referring to a male).

Young geese, before fledging, are called *goslings*. The collective noun for a group of geese on the ground is a *gaggle*; when in flight, they are called a *skein*, a *team*, or a *wedge*; but when flying close together, they are called a *plump*.

Regicide and King Charles I's Execution

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regicide>
- <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/why-was-king-charles-i-executed>
- <https://www.hrp.org.uk/banqueting-house/history-and-stories/the-execution-of-charles-i/#gs.5cc448>
- <https://www.historyanswers.co.uk/people-politics/how-many-british-monarchs-have-been-murdered/>
- <https://refactor.wordpress.com/2015/10/20/what-a-way-to-go-top-10-deaths-of-english-kings/>
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/charles_i_king.shtml

Regicide is the purposeful killing of a monarch or sovereign and is often associated with the usurpation of power. A regicide can also be the person responsible (i.e. the perpetrator) for the killing. The word comes from the Latin roots of *Regis* and *Cida* (cidium), meaning "of the monarch" and "killer", respectively.

In the British tradition, it refers to the judicial execution of a king after a trial, reflecting the historical precedent of the trial and execution of Charles I of England, but more about that later in this article.

A king in Shakespeare's time was thought to rule by 'divine right'. This meant that God had chosen that person directly to rule over others. The killing of a king (known as regicide) was considered to be just about the worst crime that anyone could commit.

Regicide was far more common before the 13th century. The Swedish historian, Sverre Bagge, counted 20 cases of regicide between the years 1200 and 1800, which means that their subjects killed 6% of monarchs. Regicide was more 'popular' before the 7th century. Bagge counted 94 cases of regicide between 600 and 1200, which means that their subjects killed 21.8 % of monarchs. He argues that the most likely reason for the decline in regicide is that clear rules of succession were established – this made it hard to remove rightful heirs to the throne and only made it so that the nearest heir (and their supporters) had a motive to kill the monarch.

Including the Scottish monarchy, a total of 17 monarchs in the British Isles have been murdered, assassinated or executed away from the battlefield, making it a very dangerous job indeed. *History Answers* ([here](#)) says that the number could be raised to 19 if we also count Richard II, who was placed in Pontefract Castle and most likely murdered there, and Edward V, one of the Princes in the Tower who were suspected of being smothered to death. There are also question marks hanging over the death of William II, Rufus, who was killed by an arrow whilst hunting in the New Forest, precisely the same

location where his nephew was killed three months previously. Apart from Charles I, perhaps the most famous of these is Edward II, who was supposedly murdered in Berkely Castle, in Gloucestershire.

Over time, different cultures and authors have used different definitions for what constitutes the crime of regicide. And so, it is not easy to make a definitive list of what constitutes a regicide. If you are curious and want to know which monarchs in history were deliberately killed, look for the list of regicides in the 4,000 years from 1962BC to 2001AD [here](#). You will be surprised at just how many there are.

Today, the word *regicide* can also be applied to politicians who topple a president or prime minister.

The Execution of King Charles I

Charles was born on 19th November 1600 at Dunfermline Castle in Fife, Scotland. He was a sickly child and relatively small in stature. He could not walk or talk until he was two years of age and inherited his father's lack of confidence and a slight speech impediment. In private, Charles was gentle and polite – and by all accounts, a loving father. But in public, his acute shyness made him appear haughty and arrogant. Not an endearing quality at all.

In 1625, Charles I succeeded his father, James I, as King of England and Scotland. During his reign, he frustrated his Parliament, causing the English Civil War and eventually, this led to his execution in 1649. His subjects and those closest to him generally considered him to be foolish.

The reign of Charles I began with an unpopular friendship with George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who used his influence against the wishes of other nobility. The Duke was assassinated in 1628. There was ongoing tension with parliament over money. In addition, Charles dissolved parliament three times between 1625 and 1629. In 1629, he dismissed parliament and resolved to rule alone. This forced him to raise revenue by non-parliamentary means, which added to his unpopularity. At the same time, there was a crackdown on Puritans and Catholics, and many emigrated to the American colonies.

- ❖ Charles married the Catholic Henrietta Maria. The marriage offended many English Protestants. Charles favoured a High Anglican form of worship, and his wife was Catholic – both made many of his subjects suspicious, particularly the Puritans.
- ❖ As King, he thought that God had chosen him and he was above the law.
- ❖ He would not allow anyone except his wife to sit in his presence. This infuriated his enemies, particularly Parliamentarians.
- ❖ He would only reassemble Parliament to raise funds to finance the prosecution of expensive foreign wars.

Trial, Conviction and Execution

After his defeat by Parliament in the Civil Wars, Charles I was locked away in prison. Although putting a king on trial was a contentious issue, on 20th January 1649, the High Court of Justice at Westminster Hall did exactly that.

Whilst incarcerated, Charles refused to see anyone but his children and his chaplain, Bishop Juxon. The foolish King refused to cooperate with the court. He did not enter a plea or recognise the legitimacy of the court. A week after the trial, the judges returned a guilty verdict and passed the sentence of execution.

At around ten o'clock on the morning of 30th January 1649, the King was marched by soldiers across St James's Park to the Palace of Whitehall. Other reports say he was carried in a sedan chair. Later that day, in the afternoon, outside the Banqueting House in Whitehall, with one blow of his axe, the heavily-disguised executioner severed the King's head from his body – killing him instantly.

Legacy

As a King, Charles I was disastrous (and foolish), but as a man, he faced his death with courage and dignity. His trial and execution were the first of their kind.

When Charles II, the eldest surviving child of Charles I of England, Scotland and Ireland, returned from exile in 1661, public opinion had swung in favour and support of the monarchy – mostly because many people were sick and tired of the sober restraints of Puritanism.



Picture Credit: "King Charles I, his wife, Queen Henrietta Maria, and two of their children" by [lybby1](#) is marked with CC PDM 1.0

Elizabethan Times

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/blog/shakespeares-london/>
- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/a-time-travellers-guide-to-medieval-shopping/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketplace>
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- <https://www.englandcast.com/2015/11/elizabethanshopping/>
- <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1577/clothes-in-the-elizabethan-era/>
- <https://www.elizabethi.org/contents/food/>
- <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1578/food--drink-in-the-elizabethan-era/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_retail

How it all started

It may be hard to believe, but it's a fact: retail markets have existed since ancient times. The markets probably started with barter systems more than 10,000 years ago. As those civilisations developed, barter was replaced with buying and selling, a retail trade involving coinage, which emerged in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) around the 7th millennium BC. Open-air, public markets were known to exist in ancient Babylonia, Assyria, Phoenicia, and Egypt, typically in the centre of towns. Skilled artisans, such as metalworkers and leather workers, had permanent premises in alleys that led to the open marketplace. These artisans may have sold wares directly from their premises but also prepared goods for sale on market days. In ancient Greece, markets operated within what was called the *agora* - an open space where, on market days, goods were displayed on mats or temporary stalls.

In ancient Rome, trade took place in the *forum*. Rome had two forums (or *fora*) - the *Forum Romanum* and *Trajan's Forum*. The latter was a vast expanse, comprising multiple buildings with shops on four levels. The Roman forum was arguably the earliest example of a permanent retail shopfront.

In different parts of the world, a marketplace may be described as a *souk* (from Arabic), a *bazaar* (from the Persian), fixed *mercado* (from the Spanish), or itinerant *tianguis* (Mexico), or *palengke* (Philippines).

Elizabethan Times

In Elizabethan times, there were about 800 different markets in England where people could buy their food. In London alone, there was an intricate network of around 16 markets - with stalls or stands selling various foods, spices, and even livestock. In rural areas, people regularly visited markets and fairs to get their food, but in cities, they shopped about once a week for food items such as meat, poultry, wines, cooking fats, and flour and spices. On sale in cities were specific goods such as herbs, cheese, or freshwater fish. In Shakespeare's day, just like today, you could spend whole days just walking through the narrow thoroughfares or strolling along the banks of the River Thames. You would pass many domestic, farm, and stray animals - cats, dogs, ducks, pigs, rats, goats, cows - and a jumbled mass of humanity. On the way, you would meet jugglers, sailors, blacksmiths, prostitutes, chimney sweeps, magicians, artisans of all types, milkmaids, merchants, minstrels, pickpockets and muggers.

All in all, it may not have been as sophisticated then as now, but the sheer mix of the people, the animals, the food, the clothing and so on would have taken your breath away.

London led the way

Back then, in the days of Shakespeare, the Bard of Avon, and just as now, London was a leading shopping venue. The Royal Exchange on Threadneedle Street is the world's first shopping mall - a vast arcaded building with banking facilities and space for more than 200 shops and thousands of businesspeople. Thomas Gresham, the builder and founder of the Royal Exchange, was inspired by the financial trading centres in Antwerp, Belgium. The Exchange was opened in January 1571 by Queen Elizabeth I - she gave it a royal title and a license to sell alcohol. The building lasted for 95 years but was burned to the ground in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Just three years later, its replacement suffered the same fate in 1838. After an eight-year wait, it too was replaced - by Queen Victoria in 1844.

The Food on offer

Back in Elizabethan times, the range of food that was eaten depended largely on their wealth and status. Generally, the poorest in society had humble and unvaried diets, while the rich and famous ate well and with little restriction:

- ❖ **For the poorest**, bread was the staple food, and it would be eaten with butter, cheese, eggs, and pottage (a vegetable soup thickened with oats). There was little beef or pork. They tended to eat white meat, like chicken, rabbit or hare, and birds they could catch, like blackbirds or pigeons.
- ❖ **For the rich**, their tables served most kinds of meat, including beef, pork, lamb, mutton, bacon, veal, and deer, and fancy fowl such as peacock, swan, and goose. Their diet also included freshwater and sea fish, such as salmon, trout, eel, pike, and sturgeon, and shellfish, such as crabs, lobsters, oysters, cockles and mussels. Expensive fruits, like peaches, oranges and pomegranates, were eaten only by the rich.



To support the fishing industry, in 1563, Queen Elizabeth I passed a law compelling everyone (including the poorest in society) to eat fish on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The Elizabethans also ate fruit and vegetables:

- ❖ Some fruits were apples, pears, plums, cherries, lemons, raspberries, blackberries, melons, tomatoes and strawberries. Strangely, fruits were regarded

with some suspicion and were rarely eaten raw. They were mainly baked in tarts or pies or boiled to make jams.

- ❖ Some vegetables available were turnips, parsnips, carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, cabbage, onions, leeks, spinach, radishes, garlic, and skirret (a popular root vegetable of the time).

Clothes

Clothes in Elizabethan times were more colourful, elaborate, and flamboyant than previously. Queen Elizabeth I was a dedicated follower of fashion, leading the way and influencing her court and the nobles of the day. Clothing was an important indicator of status:

- ❖ Those who could afford it were careful to wear the 'correct' colours, materials, and the latest fashions from Continental Europe. Heavy brocade, stockings, tight-fitting doublets, long billowing dresses embellished with pearls & jewels, knee-length trousers, stiff linen collars or ruffs, and feathered hats were all staple elements of the wardrobes of the well-off.
- ❖ The commoners and poor people tried to follow the new designs as best they could by using cheaper materials. But those who dressed beyond their station had to beware the authorities did not fine them and confiscate the offending item.

Source: WorldHistory.org, [here](#).

The increasing population of England in the 16th century fostered a corresponding growth in the cloth and clothing industries. As the Elizabethan period wore on, regions like East Anglia and Kent saw the arrival of immigrants (especially Dutch and Italians) with cloth manufacturing skills.

The Sumptuary Laws

Elizabeth was the last monarch to impose *sumptuary laws* (made to restrain luxury or extravagance, particularly against excessive expenditure on clothing, food, furniture, etc.). Consequently, there were strict rules on who could wear certain types of clothes, certain materials, and certain colours. There were other reasons to limit dress - such as the religious views of Protestantism that called for more austere clothing and the fact that the finer and more dazzling clothes typically came from abroad, and so hit the sales of plainer, home-produced clothes.

Picture Credit/Attribution: Lucas van Valckenborch, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, File from [here](#).

Anyone caught breaking the sumptuary laws risked various degrees of fines and having the article of clothing confiscated. The fact that such penalties were in place illustrates that many Elizabethans of all classes were willing to pay any price to wear the finest fashions of the day.

Source: WorldHistory.org, [here](#).

History of Foot Care

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://www.buchanan-clinic.co.uk/>
- <https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/divisions-diagnostics-and-procedures/medicine/podiatry>
- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podiatry>
- <https://www.britannica.com/science/podiatry>
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- <https://about-history.com/how-did-people-trim-and-maintain-their-nails-in-medieval-times/>
- <https://bcha-uk.org/>
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- <https://consultingfootpain.co.uk/when-did-podiatrists-first-use-local-anaesthetic/>
- <https://afacutah.com/the-history-of-podiatry/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/foot-problems-and-the-podiatrist/>



Picture Credit: "Podiatrist at work" is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Introduction

There have been various literary references to people cutting their nails throughout history, but the tool of choice was almost always a small knife or a blade. Depending on social status, cultural tradition, and place in history, carrying a knife may have been as common as putting on clothes.

Our feet are made of up to 26 bones each, making them one of the most intricate areas of the body. Nevertheless, it is estimated that humans walk 150,000 miles in their lifetime, roughly the equivalent of walking around the world six times. Your feet and mine take a lot of daily abuse from walking, running, jumping, and climbing (although to be honest, I don't do many of those things today), so naturally, they are subject to many different types of problems. But that's not a new thing.

Archaeologists have discovered evidence of foot doctors in Greek ruins and ancient Egyptian tombs. Abraham Lincoln (whose foot doctor - *Isachar Zacharie* - helped care for his ingrowing toenails and "troublesome corns"), the King of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, and other notable historical figures have written about the care they received from special foot doctors. Queen Victoria had a Surgeon-Chiropodist, (Lewis *Durlacher*) who in 1845 wrote *A Treatise on Corns, Bunions, the Diseases of Nails and the General Management of the Feet*.

The London Foot Hospital opened in 1911. Now there are 13 schools of Podiatry in the U.K., one of which is at the University of Brighton. On average, becoming a Podiatrist takes about 1,000 supervised clinical hours of training.

What is Podiatry?

Podiatry is a medical speciality concerned with diagnosing and treating foot disease and deformities. References to physicians who treated abnormalities or injuries in the foot are found in ancient Greek and Egyptian writings.

The first modern text on chiropody (podiatry's previous name) was published by D. Low in England in 1774, and titled *Chiropodologia* – see [here](#) for details. Physicians who specialised in foot treatment appeared first in England in the late 18th century. Later, during the 19th century, so-called *corn cutters* sought business in the rural areas of America. These often-untrained and itinerant therapists travelled here and there to help those who had corns, bunions, blisters, and other foot discomforts.

The word *podiatrist* comes from the Greek prefix *pod-*, meaning *foot*, and the Greek root *iātrós*, meaning *physician*. The use of the term *podiatrist* was first recorded around 1910–15.

Source: Mainly from [Encyclopedia.com](#) ([here](#))

What do Podiatrists do?

Podiatrists are medical specialists like gynaecologists, ophthalmologists, cardiologists, etc. They are the best-qualified medical professional to examine your feet, ankles, and lower legs and diagnose and treat any illnesses or injuries to this part of your body. For example, a podiatrist can:

- ❖ Check your feet and your medical history.
- ❖ Treat the foot-related impact of whole-body illnesses such as diabetes, peripheral arterial disease (PAD), and arthritis.
- ❖ Perform foot and ankle surgery.
- ❖ Diagnose and treat foot and ankle injuries and fractures.
- ❖ Diagnose and treat skin conditions such as plantar warts, athlete's foot, and fungal infections.
- ❖ Help you to manage foot pain caused by *plantar fasciitis* and other conditions.
- ❖ Fit and create custom orthotic devices for cushioning and support.
- ❖ Deal with toenail problems - such as thickened toenails, fungal nail infections or ingrowing toenails (also known as *onychogryphosis* or *unguis incarnatus*).
- ❖ Supply orthotics (tailor-made insoles, padding and arch supports) to relieve arch or heel pain.
- ❖ deal with verrucas and *hallux valgus* (bunions).

Source: Mostly [Encyclopedia.com](#) ([here](#))

When did Foot Care start?

Archaeological finds confirm that doctors were caring for feet in ancient Egypt. But Greece is where it started – Hippocrates wrote about removing corns and calluses from patients' feet with scalpels of his own invention and creation to help scrape the skin and remove hard skin spots. Celsus, a Roman scientist and philosopher, was probably responsible for giving corns their name.

Scissors were invented a long time ago and were even around during the time of the Babylonian kingdom, but they were for cutting hair and trimming beards. Breaking your own nails was common.

Chiropodists, Podiatrists and Orthotists

Until the 20th century, doctors who focused on feet, ankles, and legs were called *chiropodists* and

considered separate from other types of organised medicine. There is no difference between a *Podiatrist* and a *chiropodist*, but *podiatrist* is a more modern name. There is a great deal of cross-over between the work of a *podiatrist* and an *orthotist*; they will often work closely together. Generally speaking, an *orthotist* will be concerned about the whole body and how bracing can be applied to it, while a *podiatrist* deals mostly with feet.

Professional Organisations

The College of Podiatry is the premier podiatry organisation in the United Kingdom. It is a learned society, incorporated on 17th November 1945, with several branches across the U.K. and overseas. All the College's members in professional practice are registered with the *Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)*.

In 1938, the *Institute of Chiropodists and Podiatrists* was formed - several professional chiropody organisations throughout the United Kingdom came together in London to create a national professional body – initially called then the *Joint Council of Chiropodists (JCC)* – its purpose was to standardise training, enforce ethics, introduce professional indemnity insurance and both raise the profile of and guide the future development of the profession of Chiropody.

The National Association of Chiropodists (NAC) in the USA was founded in 1912. In 1917, M. J. Lewi coined the name podiatry, and in 1958, the NAC was renamed the *American Podiatric Association* to reflect the greater popularity of the new term. The *American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM)* is the collective union for the nine colleges of podiatric medicine in the USA and the more than 200 hospitals and institutions that offer postdoctoral training in podiatric medicine.

In Australia, graduates of recognised academic programs can register through the *Podiatry Board of Australia* as a "podiatrist", and those with additional recognised training may also be allowed to prescribe or administer restricted medications and/or seek specialist registration as a "podiatric surgeon".

Study

Degree courses are offered at various locations throughout the U.K. and take three or four years to complete, depending on where you study. Each course varies in its delivery structure, but all involve a lot of practical work with patients.

Further Information

There's an interesting Infographic available online [here](#). If you are worried about your feet, it could be useful for you. The *Ebers Papyrus* is an Egyptian compilation of medical texts dated about 1550 BC, one of the oldest known medical works. The scroll contains 700 magical formulas and folk remedies meant to cure afflictions ranging from crocodile bite to toenail pain and to rid the house of such pests as flies, rats, and scorpions.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ebers-papyrus>

Caution: No content on Nil Desperandum is advice and should never be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician, medical practitioner or specialist.

Nautical Terms, Metaphors, Superstitions and Mermaids

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/speak-like-a-sailor/nautical-terms-and-phrases-their-meaning-and-origin.html>
- https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_nautical_terms
- "Jackspeak: A Guide to British Naval Slang and Usage", available from Amazon [here](#).
- <https://www.nomadsailing.co.uk/learning-zone/glossary.html#YOLIMOhKill>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_nautical_terms
- <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:en:Nautical>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English-language_metaphors#Nautical
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- <https://phrontistery.info/nautical.html>
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- <https://www.maritimemuseum.co.nz/collections/top-20-sailing-superstitions>
- <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/what-mermaid>

- ❖ **Rudder** – A rudder is located under the boat. It's a flat piece of wood, fibreglass, or metal used to steer the ship. Larger sailboats control the rudder via a wheel, while smaller sailboats will have a steering mechanism directly aft.
- ❖ **Tacking** – The opposite of jibing, this basic sailing manoeuvre refers to turning *the bow* through the wind so that the wind changes from one side of the boat to the other side.
- ❖ **Jibing** – The opposite of tacking, another basic sailing manoeuvre refers to turning *the stern* through the wind so that the wind changes from one side of the boat to the other side. Jibing is a less common technique than *tacking* since it involves turning the boat directly into the wind.

Sources:

- <https://www.discoverboating.com/resources/sailing-basics-10-nautical-sailing-terms-to-know>

Nautical Terms and Glossaries

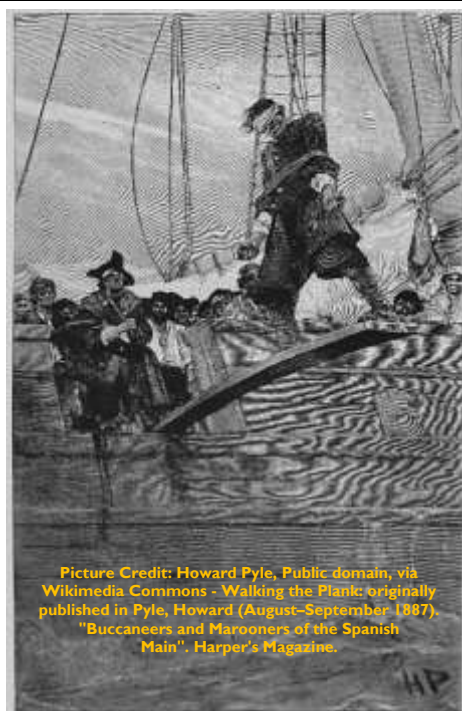
The internet is full of glossaries of nautical terms: some remain current, and many come from the 17th to the 19th centuries. To list all the nautical terms here would take more space than I have available in this article – accordingly, I have listed just a random selection. An excellent book on the subject is "*Jackspeak: A Guide to British Naval Slang and Usage*", available from Amazon, [here](#). I could only buy a used copy, but it was in good condition.

- ❖ **Aback**: A sail is aback when the wind fills it from the opposite side to the one usually used to move a ship forward.
- ❖ **Abaft**: Toward the stern, relative to some object (e.g. "abaft the cockpit").
- ❖ **Abeam**: On the beam, a relative bearing at right angles to the ship's keel.
- ❖ **Able Seaman (AB) Also 'able-bodied seaman'**: A merchant seaman qualified to perform all routine duties or a junior rank in some navies.
- ❖ **Above Board**: On or above the deck; in plain view; not hiding anything.
- ❖ **Accommodation Ladder**: A portable flight of steps down a ship's side.
- ❖ **Admiralty Law**: The body of law that deals with maritime cases. The Admiralty Court, a special court within the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice, administers the law in the U.K.
- ❖ **Ahoy**: A cry to draw attention. It is used to hail a boat or a ship, e.g. "boat ahoy".
- ❖ **Anchor Buoy**: A small buoy secured by a light line to an anchor to indicate the position of the anchor on the bottom.
- ❖ **Anchor's Aweigh**: Said of an anchor to indicate that it is just clear of the bottom and that the ship is no longer anchored.
- ❖ **As the crow flies**: The shortest distance between two points in the way that a crow or other bird would travel rather than a ship, which must go around land.
- ❖ **Banyan**: A traditional Royal Navy term for a time of relaxation.
- ❖ **Barrack Ship**: A ship or craft designed to function as a floating barracks for housing military personnel.
- ❖ **Bilge**: The part of the hull that the ship rests on if it takes the ground; the outer end of the floors.
- ❖ **Binnacle List**: A ship's sick list.
- ❖ **Boom**: (1) A floating barrier controls navigation into and out of rivers and harbours. (2) A spar attached to the foot of a fore-and-aft sail. (3) A spar to extend the foot of a gaffsail, trysail or jib.
- ❖ **Bridge**: A structure above the weather deck, which houses the ship's command centre.

- ❖ **Clean Bill of Health**: This widely used term originates in the document issued to a ship showing that the port it sailed from suffered from no epidemic or infection at the time of departure.
- ❖ **Coxswain**: A coxswain or cockswain was the boy servant in charge of the small cock or cockboat kept aboard for the ship's captain to row him to and from the ship.
- ❖ **Down the hatch**: A drinking expression that seems to have its origins in sea freight, where cargoes are lowered into the hatch. First used by seamen, it has only been traced back to the turn of the 21st century.
- ❖ **Duffle**: A name given to a sailor's personal effects. It referred to his principal clothing and to the seabag in which he carried and stowed it. The term comes from the Flemish town of Duffel near Antwerp and denotes a rough woollen cloth made there.
- ❖ **Fathom**: Although now a nautical unit of length equal to six feet, it was once defined by an Act of Parliament as "*the length of a man's arms around the object of his affections*." The word derives from the Old English *Faethm*, which means "embracing arms."
- ❖ **Foremast**: The mast nearest the bow of a ship
- ❖ **Foresail**: The lowest sail set on the foremast of a square-rigged ship.
- ❖ **Frap**: To draw a sail tight with ropes or cables.
- ❖ **Freeboard**: The distance between the water line and the main deck of a ship.
- ❖ **Gaff**: The spar on which the head of the fore-and-aft sail is extended.
- ❖ **Gangway**: Either of the sides of the upper deck of a ship.
- ❖ **Garboard**: The plank on a ship's bottom next to the keel.
- ❖ **Keel Hauling**: A naval punishment on ships during the 15th and 16th centuries. A rope was rigged from yardarm to yardarm, passing under the ship, and the unfortunate delinquent was secured to it, sometimes with lead or iron weights attached to his legs. He was hoisted up to one yardarm and then dropped suddenly into the sea, hauled underneath the ship, and hoisted up to the opposite yardarm, the punishment being repeated after he had had time to recover his breath.
- ❖ **Mayday**: The distress call for voice radio, for vessels and people in serious trouble at sea. The term was made official by an international telecommunications conference in 1948 and is an anglicising of the French "m'aidez," (help me).
- ❖ **Shows his true colours**: Early warships often carried flags from many nations on board to elude or deceive the enemy.
- ❖ **Tar, Jack Tar**: *Tar*, a slang term for a Sailor, has been used since at least 1676. *Jack Tar* was in use by the 1780s. Early Sailors wore overalls and broad-brimmed hats made of a tar-impregnated fabric called tarpaulin cloth. The hats, and the sailors who wore them, were called tarpaulins, which may have been shortened to *tars*.
- ❖ **Toe the line**: The space between each pair of deck planks in a wooden ship was filled with a packing material called "oakum" and then sealed with a mixture of pitch and tar.

Main Sources: <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/speak-like-a-sailor/nautical-terms-and-phrases-their-meaning-and-origin.html>
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_nautical_terms
<https://phrontistery.info/nautical.html>

Continued >>>



Picture Credit: Howard Pyle, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons - Walking the Plank: originally published in Pyle, Howard (August–September 1887), "Buccaneers and Marooners of the Spanish Main". Harper's Magazine.

Nautical Language

To know is to understand. When it comes to knowing your way round a ship or boat, it's useful to know these terms:

- ❖ **Aft** – The back of a ship or boat. Well, that's easy enough, except the aft is also known as the stern.
- ❖ **Bow** – The front of the ship or boat is called the bow.
- ❖ **Port** – Port is always the left-hand side when you are facing the bow.
- ❖ **Starboard** – Starboard is always the right-hand side when you are facing the bow.
- ❖ **Leeward** – Also known as lee, leeward is the direction opposite to the way the wind is currently blowing (windward).
- ❖ **Windward** – This is the direction in which the wind is currently blowing. Windward is the opposite of leeward (the opposite direction of the wind).
- ❖ **Boom** – The boom is the horizontal pole, which extends from the bottom of the mast. Adjusting the boom towards the direction of the wind is how a sailboat can harness wind power to move forward or backwards.

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Continued Nautical Metaphors

A *metaphor* is a literary figure of speech that uses an image, story or something tangible to represent a less tangible thing or some intangible quality or idea. A metaphor may also be used for any rhetorical figures of speech that achieve their effects via association, comparison or resemblance. In this broader sense, *antithesis*, *hyperbole*, *metonymy*, and *simile* would all be considered types of *metaphor*. Aristotle used both this sense and the regular, current sense above. With a *metaphor*, unlike an *analogy*, specific interpretations are not given explicitly.

Of particular interest are Nautical Metaphors. Take, for example, the following selection from a **listing** where the item shown has its meaning alongside:

- ❖ **Taken aback**, on a square-pingas, the sails were 'taken aback' when the wind was blowing on the wrong side of the sails, causing a dangerous situation. Later used to indicate a difficult or unexpected situation.
- ❖ **Clear the decks**, to get everything out of the way as a warship went into action.
- ❖ **Show someone the ropes**, to show or explain to someone how to do a task or operation. Taken from the use of ropes to orient and adjust the sails.
- ❖ **Sail close to the wind** means operating hazardously on very slim margins, usually applied in a financial sense. It is derived from the technique of sailing close to the direction of the oncoming wind.
- ❖ **With flying colours**, the "colours" was the national flag flown at sea during battle, a ship would surrender by lowering the colours, and the term is now used to indicate a triumphant victory or win.
- ❖ **Swinging the lead**, is to avoid duty by feigning illness or injury, original a confusion between *Swing the leg*, which related to how dogs can run on three legs to gain sympathy and the sailor's term *heaving the lead*, which was to take soundings.
- ❖ **Three sheets to the wind**, meaning "staggering drunk," refers to a ship whose sheets have come loose, causing the sails to flap uncontrolled and the ship to meander at the mercy of the elements. It also means being unsteady from alcohol.
- ❖ **Sun over the yardarm**, this phrase is widely used, both afloat and ashore, to indicate that the time of day has been reached at which it is acceptable to have lunch or (more commonly) to have an alcoholic beverage.
- ❖ **Take sounding**, in suspected shallow waters, a crew member may have the task of repeatedly throwing into the water a lead line or piece of lead tied to a string knotted every fathom, to estimate the depth of the sea.
- ❖ **By and large**, comes from a term for sailing a ship slightly off the wind.

Strange and Humorous Nautical words

Warning: These nautical words will probably raise a smile or eyebrow and will certainly make you more knowledgeable on the water

- ❖ **Scuttlebutt**: The scuttlebutt is a cask on a ship containing the vessel's drinking water.
- ❖ **Rollocks**: A commonly used spelling for "rowlocks", the spaces cut into the vessel or small clasps raised from the side of smaller boats used to rest oars when the ship is under paddle.
- ❖ **Poop deck**: A poop deck is a deck at the rear of a ship, generally formed by the roof of a cabin.

- ❖ **Widow-maker**: This is a colloquial term for a boat's bowsprit -- the long pole, or "spar," extending from the bow used by sailors to tend to sails.
- ❖ **Baggywrinkle**: This is a soft covering for ropes aboard yachts that prevent chafing of the sails.
- ❖ **Mainsheet**: The mainsheet is a rope or line attached to the boom that allows the sailor to control the speed of a boat by adjusting the main sail.
- ❖ **Bilge**: The bilge is the lowest part of the interior of a ship. It marks the spot at the inside-bottom of the hull, below any floorboards, and sits below the water line.
- ❖ **Futtock**: Futtocks are the curved timbers used to form the interior ribs on the hulls of wooden ships.
- ❖ **Cat-head**: The cat-head is a large wooden beam that extends from vessels at a 45-degree angle and is used to assist in raising and lowering the anchor.
- ❖ **Escutcheon**: This is the place on the stern of a ship where the boat's name is written.

Source:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2009/SPORT/04/22/sailing.words/>

Some Nautical Superstitions

Because of the dangers sailors and fishermen face, there are countless superstitions about safety and luck on the sea. Some are lucky, but most are warnings to avoid this or that to ensure you aren't dogged by bad luck. See what you think:

- ❖ **Non-sailing days**: It was considered to be unlucky to sail on Thursdays (God of Storms, Thor's day) or Fridays (the day Jesus was executed), the first Monday in April (the day Cain killed Abel), the second Monday in August (the day Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed), and on 31st December (the day on which Judas Iscariot hanged himself).
- ❖ **Re-naming a boat**: Don't do it – it's unlucky to change the boat's name.
- ❖ **Don't pass the Salt**: It was considered that bad luck would follow if a crew member passed the salt pot to another directly.
- ❖ **Step onto a Boat with Your Right Foot**: The left foot brings bad luck for the journey ahead.
- ❖ **Fresh fruit is good but not bananas**: Carrying bananas were considered so unlucky they could result in a ship being lost at sea.
- ❖ **A knife or fork is for eating, not stirring your tea**: Stirring tea with a knife or fork is certain to bring bad luck. Equally, turning a loaf of bread upside down once cut brings bad luck too.
- ❖ **Cats**: Having a cat on board was considered likely to bring good luck.
- ❖ **Having the caul (the amniotic membrane enclosing a fetus of a newborn child) on board**: Thought to prevent anyone on board from drowning.
- ❖ **It is considered very unlucky to kill an albatross**: in Coleridge's poem, the narrator kills the bird, and his fellow sailors eventually force him to wear the dead bird around his neck.
- ❖ **Tattoos**: A rooster and a pig were often tattooed onto sailors' feet in the belief that it would prevent the sailors from drowning by showing them the way to shore.
- ❖ **Red-heads and flat-footed people**: If you met one before boarding, it could bring bad luck.
- ❖ **Women**: Women were believed to make the seas angry, resulting in dangerous voyages. Having women on board could bring bad luck by distracting and tempting the crew. But naked women were OK.
- ❖ **Clergymen**: having a preacher on board is considered bad luck.

Sources: www.oldsaltblog.com www.boaterexam.com

<https://www.discoverboating.com/resources/boating-and-sailing-superstitions>

Mermaids

A mermaid, as you may know, is a mythical sea-dwelling creature. You'll immediately recognise one when you meet her. She has a woman's head and body and a fish's tail below the waist.

Mermaids appear in the folklore of many cultures worldwide, including Europe, Asia, and Africa. In some cultures, the mermaid signifies life and fertility within the ocean. In others, she embodies the destructive nature of the water, luring sailors to their deaths — serving as an omen for storms, unruly seas and disaster.

In days gone by, when sailors spent months crisscrossing vast oceans, it's not surprising that beliefs and superstitions of figures controlling the unpredictable weather appeared in nautical stories over the centuries. Here are just a few of them:

- ❖ The mermaids of Greek and Roman mythology are considerably close to the appearance and character of the European myths we think about today. Many ancient Greek myths equate sirens with mermaids.
- ❖ In ancient Assyria, the goddess *Atargatis* transformed herself into a mermaid out of shame for accidentally killing her human lover.
- ❖ One Greek folktale claimed that Alexander the Great's sister, *Thessalonike*, was transformed into a mermaid upon her death in 295 BC and lived in the Aegean sea. Whenever a ship passed, she would ask the sailors one question: "Is King Alexander alive?" If the sailors gave the right answer ("He lives and reigns and conquers the world") *Thessalonike* would allow the ship to continue on its journey. The wrong answer would anger her, and she would conjure a storm and doom the vessel and its sailors to death at sea.
- ❖ Archaeologists have found accounts in Mesopotamian mythology of *Oannes*, a male fish god from over five thousand years ago.
- ❖ One of the earliest mermaid legends appeared in Syria around 1000 BC when the goddess *Atargatis* dove into a lake to take the form of a fish. But as the gods would not allow her to give up her great beauty, only her bottom half became a fish, and she kept her top half in human form. Archaeologists have found *Atargatis'* figure on ancient temples, statues and coins.
- ❖ The earliest depiction of a mermaid in England can be found in the Norman chapel in Durham Castle, built around 1078 by Saxon stonemasons. Historians believe the mermaid symbolises the temptations of the soul.



Attribution/Credit: By Chiswick Chap - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24845254>

Mermaids often appear as figureheads on the front of nautical vessels. The figurehead, which was popular between the 16th and 20th centuries, is a carved wooden decoration located on the bow of ships.

Source: Excerpt from Royal Museums Greenwich <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/what-mermaid>

More about Mahjong

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://www.kveller.com/the-jewish-history-of-mah-jongg-is-complicated>

Picture Credit:
"Project 365
#222: 100813
A Night On
The
Tiles" by come
dy_nose is
licensed
under CC
PDM 1.0



Remember the article I wrote about Mahjong in Issue 10 (January 2021) edition of Nil Desperandum?

To remind you, Mahjong is one of the most popular games in China, especially among older people (so I should play it). It's also a popular game in many other countries too.

But I have never played it. A few years ago (in the 1970s, I think), my next-door neighbour offered me a chance to learn but, sadly, I could not accept. Anyway, I digress and apologise.

I read something recently (see [here](#)) about the game and was surprised to learn that issues of cultural identity and belonging are linked with the game.

University of Oregon history professor Annelise Heinz makes a compelling case for this in her book, *Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture*. In case you thought mahjong was just a fun game with pretty tiles (plus a side of snacks, of course), Heinz deftly chronicles how mahjong has ushered groups of "others" into a greater sense of belonging here in the U.S. — specifically, Jews and Asian Americans. She also details the many ways that mahjong has impacted our society and, conversely, how American culture changed the game.

The book takes us on a fascinating ride through the 1920s and 1930s, when mahjong first arrived on American shores from China, accompanied by equal parts reverence and racism. When hundreds of Jewish women gathered in 1937 to standardise — and Americanise — the game they called mah jongg (with an additional g), they created a consumer base that would last for generations. Mah jongg in America created economic and cultural change, and for many Jewish women, it served as a symbol of both cultural identity and assimilation.

Snopes

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snopes>
- <https://www.snopes.com>

Snopes (formerly known as the *Urban Legends Reference Pages*) is a fact-checking website. It has been described as a "well-regarded reference for sorting out myths and rumours" on the internet. When I came across the company, as it intrigued me as to what they did, I did some research. I fear you may be ahead of me on this, but here is what I found.

In 1994, David and Barbara Mikkelsen created an urban folklore website that would become Snopes.com. It was an early online encyclopedia focused on urban legends that mainly presented search results of user discussions.

The Snopes site grew to encompass a wide range of subjects and became a resource to which Internet users seeking the truth began submitting pictures and stories of questionable veracity.

According to the Mikkelsens, Snopes predated the search engine concept of fact-checking via search results. David Mikkelsen had originally adopted the username "Snopes" (the name of a family of often unpleasant people in the works of American author William Faulkner) in the Usenet newsgroup alt.folklore.urban.

When misinformation obscures the truth and readers don't know what or who to trust, Snopes claim that their fact-checking and original investigative reporting lights the way to evidence-based and contextualised analysis.

Snopes Media Group (here) says this about itself:

"When misinformation obscures the truth and readers don't know what to trust, Snopes' fact-checking and original, investigative reporting lights the way to evidence-based and contextualised analysis. We always link to and document our sources, so readers are empowered to do independent research and make up their own minds. Snopes got its start in 1994, investigating urban legends, hoaxes, and folklore. Founder David Mikkelsen, later joined by his wife, was publishing online before most people were connected to the internet. As demand for reliable fact checks grew, so did Snopes. Now it's the oldest and largest fact-checking site online, widely regarded by journalists, folklorists, and readers as an invaluable research companion."

Snopes aims to debunk or confirm widely spread urban legends. The site has been referenced by news media and other sites, including CNN, MSNBC, Fortune, Forbes, and The New York Times. Within 15 years, the Snopes website had more than six million visitors per month. I believe they make all their money from paid advertising, although a premium membership option which disables adverts is offered.

Typing Full Stops on Your iPhone

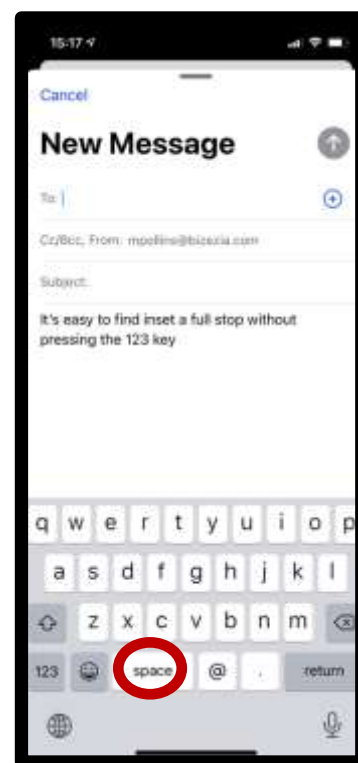
You don't need to tap the 123 key (the numeric key) to type a full stop.

You can save time with a shortcut using your iPhone keyboard. Full stops are at the end of almost every sentence, which means (normally) you have to keep tapping the numeric key button on the iPhone or iPad Numeric Keyboard. Fortunately, savvy people have found a shortcut using only the space bar. This is how it works:

1. Usually, you might tap the 123 key and then the full stop key.
2. Instead, type a sentence and quickly double tap the spacebar when it's time to insert a full stop.
3. Double tap immediately after typing the last word of the sentence; if you type the word and tap the space bar once, then decide to go back and double tap, the shortcut won't work.
4. A full stop will be inserted, and space will automatically be added, allowing you to keep typing or start a new paragraph.
5. It seems to work in any app on your iPhone or iPad.

Source:

<https://www.iphonelife.com/search/node/Period>



St. Mary-le-Bow and Cockneys

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Mary-le-Bow
- <https://www.stmarylebow.org.uk/>
- <https://thehistoryguide.co.uk/sancta-maria-de-arcubus/>
- <http://www.eastend-memories.org/cockney/cockney.htm>
- <https://www.thehistoryoflondon.co.uk/stmarylebow/>
- <https://archaeology-travel.com/england/london/st-mary-le-bow/>



Picture Credit: "File: St Mary-le-Bow Church as shown on Agas map of 1561.JPG" by Stephendickson is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

St. Mary-le-Bow is a historic church rebuilt by the great Sir Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of London in 1666 on the main east-west thoroughfare, a 'marketplace' called Cheapside. The sound of the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow is prominent in the story of *Dick Whittington and His Cat*, in which the bells are credited with having persuaded him to turn back from Highgate and remain in London to become Lord Mayor. The bells are also referred to in the nursery rhyme *Oranges and Lemons*.

The church, with its steeple, had been a landmark of London. Considered the second most important church in the City of London after St Paul's Cathedral, St. Mary-le-Bow was one of the first churches to be rebuilt after the 1666 fire to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren (between 1671 and 1673). The 223-foot steeple was completed in 1680.

History

Archaeological evidence indicates that a church existed on this site in Saxon times. A medieval version of the church was destroyed by the London Tornado of 1091 - one of the earliest recorded, as well as being one of the most violent tornadoes in Britain. The arched Norman crypt survived and is the oldest parochial building in London still in use, now as a café.

During the Henry II period, the church (known as *St. Mary de Arcubus*) was rebuilt and was so named because it was built over two stone arches or 'bows'. It has also been known as *St. Mary of the Arches*.

From at least the 13th century, the church was a *peculier* (sic) of the Diocese of Canterbury and the seat of the Anglican ecclesiastical court, the *Court of Arches*, to which it gave the name. The "bow bells", which could be heard as far away as Hackney Marshes, were once used to order a curfew in the City of London. This building burned in the Great Fire of London of 1666 (after which time, the *Court of Arches* transferred its sittings to the nearby *Doctors' Commons*).

Cockneys

Traditionally, people born within London who are within earshot of Bow Bells are said to be "Cockney". Of course, this excludes those who hear the bells on the radio – a recording of the Bow Bells made in 1926 is still used by the BBC World Service to introduce English language broadcasts. Today, Bow Bells ring out proclaiming the presence of a church which has been at the centre of London life since Llanfranc refounded St Mary-le-Bow in 1088.

Cockneys have the reputation of being happy-go-lucky, flamboyant and jocular characters; people of simple needs and an even simpler philosophy of life who talk in rhyme and wear their hearts of gold proudly on their sleeves. I know this as I am one, born in Whitechapel hospital. Cockneys are sometimes thought of as dressing in the sequin-decorated finery of pearly kings and queens (see below), feasting on *jellied eels* and *pies* n' *mash* and being prepared, at the drop of a hat, for a *knees-up*, *muvver brann*. World War II proved they were more than just friendly figures of fun and always full of humour. The war brought out their bull-dogged tenacity and strength and allowed them to resist the might of Hitler and his cronies.

Defining a Cockney

Many say the word Cockney comes from the Norman word for a sugar cake, *cocaigne*. The Normans called London the 'Land of Sugar Cake', and the name seems to have stuck with some variations over the years.

In the 1360s, the writer

William Langland also used the term 'cockney' to mean cock's egg. Ask anyone what defines a Cockney, and the chances are they will tell you it's someone who uses Cockney Rhyming slang. See Issue 12 of *Nil Desperandum* in March 2021 for several snippets about Cockneys.

Bell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Note	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	C



Picture Credit: "Pearly King & Queen" by hey Mr glen is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Bow Bells Mileposts

Distances by road from London to far-flung places in Britain are measured from Charing Cross, but, before the late 18th century, they were measured from the *London Stone* in Cannon Street or the *Standard* in Cornhill. However (and interesting for Sussex residents), on the road from London to Lewes, the mileage is taken from the church door of St. Mary-le-Bow. To note the reference point used, mileposts along the way are marked with the rebus** in cast-iron of a bow and four bells.

** A rebus is a puzzle device that combines the use of illustrated pictures with individual letters to depict words or phrases. It was a favourite form of heraldic expression in the Middle Ages to denote surnames. Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebus>



Picture Credit/Attribution: Public Domain. "Cheapside and Bow Church" engraved by W. Albutt, 1837 steel engraved print after a picture by T.H. Shepherd, first published in *The History of London: Illustrated by Views in London and Westminster*. Engraved by John Woods. Source: <http://www.ancestryimages.com/proddetail.php?prod=e9545>

The Bells

The Bells of St. Mary-le-Bow did not ring for 21 years (1941-1961). Much of the building was destroyed by fire caused by a German bomb during the Blitz in May 1941* - during the fire, the bells crashed to the ground. In 1956, the Lord Mayor of London launched an appeal to raise money to repair and restore the bells to the church.

* Source: "The London Encyclopedia" Hibbert, C; Weinreb, D; Keay, J; London, Pan Macmillan, 1983 (rev 1993, 2008)

The bells cast in 1956 by Mears & Stainbank, are hung for 'full circle ringing' – a method of ringing a bell such that it swings in a complete circle from mouth upwards around to mouth upwards and then back again repetitively. The 12 bells/notes are:

The previous "Great Bell at Bow", the tenor bell of the ring of bells installed in 1762 and destroyed in the London Blitz in May 1941, weighed 58 hundred-weight, with six tons of ironwork braces cut into the inside walls of the tower as reinforcement. The tower now contains a new peal of twelve bells (listen to them, [here](#)) that were cast at the famous Whitechapel bellfoundry of Mears & Stainbank in 1956. Salvaged metal from the destroyed bells in 1941 was reused, but the overall weight of the bells was reduced. The new bells were rung for the first time on 21st December 1961. They hang 100 feet (30 metres) above the ground in a bell frame made of Javanese Jang. The smallest bell weighs five cwt (285 kgs), and the biggest or tenor bell weighs almost 42 cwt (2135 kgs). Each bell has an inscription from a Psalm or New Testament canticle (that's a hymn, psalm or other Christian song of praise with lyrics taken from biblical or holy texts other than the Psalms) on it, and the first letters of each inscription spell the 12 letters of D WHITTINGTON.

Source: <https://www.stmarylebow.org.uk/bells/>

William of Normandy conquered England in 1066, and in the following years, he built castles and religious institutions in the Norman style. He erected the Tower of London in the east of London; in the west was the vast new St. Paul's Cathedral; and Bermondsey Abbey to the south. And, in the middle of the city, he commissioned a great new church – St. Mary-le-Bow - towering over all the buildings surrounding it.

Avoid being Scammed

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig05_avoiding_scams_inf.pdf
- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/suspicious-email-actions>
- <https://www.independentage.org/get-advice/money/scams/how-to-avoid-a-scam>

You have probably read or heard about this already, but to be on the safe side, here is a reminder to beware of SMS, phone and email scams. There are loads of scams around at the moment - just make sure you don't become a victim by following some simple rules.

If you get an unexpected email, the most important thing to do is to check the link before clicking on it. Often, the sender will use links like "Hermes.abc.org" (Hermes is a proper company, but abc.org is not).

You should never type in any account or card information from a link you are sent, and if someone calls you, even if they seem to know something about you, ask for a number to call them back on before providing any information.

What are Scams?

MoneySupermarket ([here](#)) define Scams like this: *"Scams are fraudulent schemes that dupe people into parting with their personal details and/or cash. They've been around for as long as we can remember, but they're no longer confined to shady door-to-door salesmen or dodgy second-hand car dealers."*

"Scammers now frequently target people through emails, online banking systems, text messages and online transactions. While fraud is becoming increasingly sophisticated, people are still getting caught out by traditional scam letters and phone calls. So you need to be wary."

"Some scams are obvious. Someone emails you to say a distant relative has died, and there's no one but you to inherit their \$100 million fortune – all you need to do is pay £500 upfront to release the funds. But some scams are a lot less obvious and a lot more intelligent."

What clever scammers try to do

Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government, your bank, or a utility company. They might use a company name you know or make up a name that sounds official. They use technology to change the telephone number that appears on your mobile or landline so that when you call them back, you get a message saying that the telephone number is unobtainable.



Picture Credit: "Data Security Breach" by Visual Content is licensed under CC BY 2.0



Picture Credit: "what-is-business-or-commercial-identity-theft" by DJANDYW.COM is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The caller tells you they are calling on behalf of an organisation that wants you to make a decision. They might say you're in trouble with the government. Or an official body – such as the National Crime Agency. Or you owe money. Or that your broadband service or National Insurance number will be suspended.

Some scammers tell you there's a problem and are trying to restore a service to which you subscribe. But first, they need some information from you or need to confirm what's on their file.

Scammers want you to act before you even have time to think. It may be difficult for you to call them back to check out what they are telling you.

Some scammers threaten legal proceedings and arrest. They might tell you that your email system and computer files have been corrupted. Or that their records show you were involved in an accident that wasn't your fault. They often insist that you pay in a specific way – perhaps on your credit card – to restore a service to which you subscribe or to take advantage of a wonderful new offer that will expire very soon.

Whatever scam you may face, they all have one thing in common: they are designed to get hold of your money. The scammers do this by tricking you into revealing your personal details, stealing your information, or even tricking you into willingly handing over your hard-earned cash.

Avoiding a Scam

- ❖ Block unwanted calls and text messages. If necessary, block unwanted calls and filter unwanted text messages to your mobile.
- ❖ Don't give any personal or financial information about you or your family in response to a request you didn't expect.
- ❖ Resist the pressure to act immediately.
- ❖ Never buy from doorstep sellers. Ask for a 'No cold callers' sign from your local council, get a printable version online, and put it in your window. Set up a password with your utility providers to be used by anyone they send round so you can be sure they're genuine.

Protecting your identity from being stolen

Identity Fraud happens when someone steals your identity and uses it to apply for credit and services, leaving you to pay the cost. They use several methods - including going through your rubbish bin, finding old letters and bank

statements paperwork and then applying for financial products using your details.

MoneySupermarket warns that some cybercriminals sweep personal details from social media accounts, such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter, to build up a stronger identity profile, so be very careful what you publish.

Online Resources

A free download on avoiding scams is available from Age U.K. – available from https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig05_avoiding_scams_inf.pdf.

The Metropolitan Police has produced a guide (*The Little Book of Big Scams*) which you can download from their website at <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/personal-fraud/prevent-personal-fraud/>.

You can also contact Ofcom for advice on dealing with nuisance calls or telephone scams – details at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/problems/tackling-nuisance-calls-and-messages>.

The MoneySupermarket guide at <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/sto-p-scams/> tells you what to do if you do get scammed. It also provides advice on how to avoid being tricked in the first place.

Fraudsters want to get their hands on your identity so they can enter into transactions, usually online and pretend they are you. MoneySupermarket has some tips for you at <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/credit-cards/identity-fraud/>.

Statistics

Only a fraction of fraud and cyber crimes in the UK are being reported to the authorities: according to estimates compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in its new telephone-operated *Crime Survey for England and Wales* (TCSEW). In June 2021, research from pollsters YouGov revealed that 25% of UK adults receive some form of scam messaging each day, with a further 39% saying they get them every week and 17% suffering the intrusion once a month. The so-called *Romance Fraud* alone reached £73.9m.

Last Words

Don't forget, if something seems too good to be true, it's right to be suspicious of it, particularly if it's made you think there may be something wrong with it that you have not noticed or that you didn't understand what was being proposed.

- **STOP:** Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information.
- **CHALLENGE:** Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **PROTECT:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> Telephone: 0300 123 2040

Sherlock Holmes - Fact or Fiction?

Fact

It's a fact that Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle (1859–1930) was a British writer and physician. He was born in Edinburgh. His father – Charles – was born in England, of Irish Catholic descent, and his mother was Irish Catholic, a descendant of the famous Percy family of Northumberland, in the line of Plantagenet. The family scattered because of Charles's growing alcoholism but came together again, albeit living in squalid conditions. A few years later, Doyle's father died in 1893. Doyle wrote letters to his mother from an early age, and many of them were preserved.

Supported by wealthy uncles, Doyle was sent to the Jesuit preparatory school in Stonyhurst, Lancashire at the age of nine in 1868 and two years later to Stonyhurst College for the next seven years. When Doyle graduated from Stonyhurst College, his parents expected that he would follow in his family's footsteps and study art, so they were surprised when he decided to pursue a medical degree at the University of Edinburgh instead.

From 1875 to 1876, he was educated at a Jesuit school in Austria to perfect his German and broaden his academic horizons, but he later rejected the Catholic faith and became an agnostic and a spiritualist mystic.

Medical Career

From 1876 to 1881, Doyle studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. He also studied botany at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. While studying, Doyle began writing short stories – on 20th September 1879, he published his first academic article, "Gelsemium* as a Poison", in the *British Medical Journal*, which *The Daily Telegraph* regarded as potentially useful in a 21st century murder investigation.

* Gelsemium is an Asian and North American genus of flowering plants belonging to the family Gelsemiaceae. The genus contains three species of shrubs, all of which are poisonous.

Doyle graduated with Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery degrees from the University of Edinburgh in 1881 and completed his Doctor of Medicine degree with a dissertation on *tabes dorsalis*** in 1885. Attempts at making a living from medical practice and as an ophthalmologist eluded him – while waiting for patients, Doyle returned to writing fiction.

** *Tabes Dorsalis* is a slow degeneration of the nerve cells and nerve fibres that carry sensory information to the brain. The degenerating nerves are in the dorsal columns of the spinal cord (the portion closest to the back of the body) and carry information that helps maintain a person's sense of position.

Writing Career

He created Sherlock Holmes in 1887 for *A Study in Scarlet*, the first of four novels and fifty-six short stories about the fictional characters Holmes and Dr Watson. The Sherlock Holmes stories are milestones in the field of crime fiction.



Picture Credit: [Cropped] "NO KNOWN RESTRICTIONS: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1859-1930 (Bain/LOC)" by pingnews.com is marked with CC PDM 1.0

At first, Doyle struggled to find a publisher. His first work featuring Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, *A Study in Scarlet*, was written in three weeks when he was 27 and was accepted for publication by Ward Lock & Co on 20th November 1886, which gave Doyle the paltry sum of £25 (equivalent to around £2,000 today). The piece appeared a year later in the *Beeton's Christmas Annual* and received favourable reviews in *The Scotsman* and the *Glasgow Herald*.

Robert Louis Stevenson recognised the strong similarity between Joseph Bell (Doyle's former university teacher) and Sherlock Holmes: Dr (John) Watson owes his surname, but nothing else, to a Portsmouth medical colleague of Doyle's, Dr James Watson.

Doyle was a prolific writer: other than the Sherlock Holmes stories, his works include fantasy and science fiction stories about *Professor Challenger* and humorous stories about the Napoleonic soldier *Brigadier Gerard*, as well as plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction and historical novels.

Sporting Career

While living in Southsea, Doyle played football as a goalkeeper for *Portsmouth Association Football Club*, an amateur side, under the pseudonym A. C. Smith. He was a keen cricketer, and between 1899 and 1907, he played ten first-class matches for the *Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)*. He also played for the amateur cricket teams the *Allahakbarries* and the *Authors XI* alongside fellow writers J. M. Barrie, P. G. Wodehouse and A. A. Milne. His highest score, in 1902 against *London County*, was 43. As an occasional bowler, he took just one first-class wicket, although one to be proud of as it dismissed the great W. G. Grace.

Doyle was an amateur boxer and a keen golfer – in 1910, he was elected captain of *Crowborough Beacon Golf Club* in Sussex. He had moved to *Little Windlesham* house in *Crowborough* with Jean Leckie, his second wife, and resided there with his family from 1907 until his death in July 1930. Doyle's five children died without issue, so there are no direct living descendants.

Political Activities

During the Second Boer War, Doyle served as a volunteer doctor in Bloemfontein between March and June 1900. Later that same year, he wrote a book on the war, *The Great Boer War*, as well as a short work titled *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct*, in which he responded to critics of the UK's role in that war and argued that its role was justified. The latter work was widely translated, and Doyle believed it was why he was knighted by King Edward VII.

He stood for Parliament twice as a Liberal Unionist: in 1900 in *Edinburgh Central*; and in 1906 in the *Hawick Burghs*, and although receiving a decent share of the vote, he was not elected. Doyle was also a fervent advocate of justice and personally investigated two closed cases, leading to two men being exonerated of the crimes of which they were accused.

Spiritualism and Freemasonry

As early as 1881, Conan Doyle showed an interest in Spiritualism. In 1916, Arthur Conan Doyle made a declaration that would impact the rest of his life – he stated his belief in spiritualism. Doyle had held a longstanding interest in mystical subjects and remained fascinated by the idea of paranormal phenomena, even though the strength of his belief in their reality waxed and waned periodically over the years. He found solace in supporting spiritualism's ideas, particularly in finding proof of an afterlife – an existence beyond the grave.

During that year, he attended a lecture on spiritualism. In 1887, *The Light*, a spiritualistic magazine, published an article by Conan Doyle describing a séance that he had attended. In February of 1889, he attended a lecture on mesmerism given by Professor Milo de Meyer. In fact, as part of the lecture, de Meyer tried to mesmerise or hypnotise Conan Doyle but failed***.

*** Source: Conan Doyle Info – [here](#).

Doyle wrote many non-fiction spiritualist works – perhaps his most famous of these was *The Coming of the Fairies* (1922). Doyle's two-volume book *The History of Spiritualism* was published in 1926. In the same year, Doyle laid the foundation stone for a Spiritualist Temple in Camden, London****.

**** Of the building's total £600 construction costs, Doyle provided £500.

In 1887, at age 27, he was initiated into Freemasonry at the *Phoenix Lodge No. 257* in Southsea, but resigned in 1889, returned in 1902, and resigned again in 1911. In 1901, he joined the *Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1* (Mary's Chapel) as an honorary member. He also became an honorary member in 1905 at *Lodge Canongate Kilwinning No. 2* (Edinburgh)*****.

***** Source: *The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia* – [here](#).

Famous Quotations

"There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

"You see, but you do not observe."

Continued>>>>

>>>>Continued Fiction

Sherlock Holmes



Picture Credit: "Sherlock Holmes outside Baker Street underground station" by gregwake is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Sherlock Holmes is a fictional detective of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Holmes first appeared in publication in 1887. Undoubtedly brilliant, and hugely intelligent, the London-based detective Holmes is famous for his prowess at using logic and astute observation to solve cases. He is perhaps the most famous fictional detective, and indeed one of the best known and most universally recognisable literary characters of all time.

Biography

The official site of the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Literary Estate (here) describes Holmes in this way:

"Holmes has essentially an obsessive personality. He works compulsively on all his cases and his deductive powers are phenomenal. He can get engulfed in periods of depression between cases and is known to take cocaine when he cannot stand the lack of activity. He has an in-depth knowledge of music and plays on a Stradivarius that he bought for a song in Tottenham. He is also known to run chemistry experiments in his spare time to the dismay of both Dr Watson and his landlady Mrs Hudson.

"Holmes is described as being 60, indicating that he was born in 1854. He lived in London at 221B Baker Street and shared rooms with Dr Watson until the latter's marriage in 1887 and then again after his wife's death. We do not know anything of Holmes' parents. He does mention, however, that his ancestors were "country squires". He claims that his grandfather was the artist Horace Vernet and we know that he has a brother Mycroft, a civil servant, who is seven years older than he is. Holmes worked as a detective for 23 years and retired in the Sussex Downs shortly before 1904. The details of his death are unknown."

The Baker Street Wiki (a FANDOM TV Community) here adds to our understanding of who Holmes is and what he is like:

"At the age of 20, Holmes was to find his life's calling. For it was in that year that he began his illustrious career as the world's first consulting detective, taking his first case... which his future friend and companion Dr John Watson would come to title, in his chronicles of Holmes' endeavours, "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott". His study of science at university, having informed his already keen mind and powers of observation, Holmes employed a process of deductive reasoning in his work with great success.

"In early 1881, he is presented as an independent student of chemistry with a variety of very curious side-interests, almost all of which turn out to be single-mindedly bent towards making him superior at solving crimes. In another early story, "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott", more background on what caused Holmes to become a detective is presented: a college friend's father complimented him very highly on his deductive skills.

"In "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter", Holmes states that his grandmother was the sister of the French painter "Vernet" (presumably Horace Vernet)."

In *A Study in Scarlet*, Dr Watson evaluates Sherlock Holmes' skills, perhaps somewhat tongue in cheek:

- ❖ Knowledge of Literature – Nil.
- ❖ Knowledge of Astronomy – Nil.
- ❖ Knowledge of Politics – Feeble.
- ❖ Knowledge of Botany – Variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening.
- ❖ Knowledge of Geology – Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. After walks, has shown me splashes upon his trousers and told me by their colour and consistence in what part of London he had received them.
- ❖ Knowledge of Chemistry – Profound.
- ❖ Knowledge of Anatomy – Accurate, but unsystematic.
- ❖ Knowledge of Sensationalism – Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.
- ❖ Plays the violin well.
- ❖ He is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.
- ❖ Has a good practical knowledge of British law.

Source:

https://bakerstreet.fandom.com/wiki/Sherlock_Holmes

Famous Quote

"How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?"

Dr John H. Watson



Picture Credit: "Photo of Granada TV Sherlock Holmes 1984 series" by Can Pac Swire is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0 [Watson is on the left of Holmes]

The character of Dr Watson was created by Conan Doyle. Along with Sherlock Holmes, Dr Watson first appeared in the novel *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). The fictional Watson was born in 1852. In 1878, at age 26, he received his medical degree from *Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry* at the University of London in 1878. In his younger days, Watson was an athlete: *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire* (1924) mentioned he had played Rugby for Blackheath.

Watson trained at Netley (near Southampton) as an assistant surgeon in the British Army. He saw service in India with the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers before being attached to the 66th (Berkshire) Regiment of Foot. He was wounded in July 1880 by a bullet to his shoulder at the *Battle of Maiwand* from a jezail (Afghan long rifle), and his health worsened. He suffered typhoid fever/dysentery and, following his recovery, was sent back to England on the troopship *HMS Orontes* to live on a small army pension of 11 shillings and 6 pence.

Whilst he lacked Holmes' extraordinary insight, Watson was a modest and intelligent man, discreet in character and highly honourable. He was also considered an excellent doctor and surgeon, especially by Holmes. He is a perfect foil for Holmes: the archetypal late Victorian/Edwardian gentleman against the brilliant, emotionally detached analytical machine.

Serendipitously, through a friend's introduction, Watson and Holmes meet in London and decide to share rooms at 221B Baker Street. Watson establishes a medical practice at those premises and accompanies Holmes on his crime-fighting cases, which he later records and publishes. Watson became Holmes' best friend, assistant and flatmate. He is a patient and sensitive observer, but his detecting capabilities are no match for the lightning-fast deductive skills of Sherlock Holmes.

Composed and Excerpted from:

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The Mysterious Death of Christopher Marlowe



Picture Credit: [Cropped] Unknown 21-year old man, supposed to be Christopher Marlowe - British School, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Introduction

Christopher Marlowe (aka Kit Marlowe) was born two months before William Shakespeare. The eldest son of John Marlowe, a strong-minded and argumentative shoemaker from Canterbury, he was a bright student. After scholarships to prestigious schools, he earned his B.A. from Cambridge in 1584. Whilst at Corpus Christi College, he wrote *Dido Queen of Carthage*. His literary career lasted less than six years; nine years later, aged only 29, he was dead.

After Cambridge

After 1587, Marlowe was in London, writing for the theatres, occasionally and perhaps too often, getting into hot water because of his violent and disreputable behaviour, but probably also spending time in government service. The Privy Council did not specify the nature of that service, but there was speculation that Marlowe had become a secret agent working for Sir Francis Walsingham's intelligence service. Spy, counter-spy, atheist, homosexual and government critic, Marlowe was feted for his plays, including *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II* and *Dr Faustus*. He also published a translation of *Ovid's Elegies* and the first book of *Lucan's Pharsalia* from Latin. Beyond his writing, evidence suggests he was also a heretic and a counterfeiter (of what and why is uncertain). He was the first to achieve critical notoriety for his use of what was called *blank verse* (poetry written with regular metrical but unrhymed lines, almost always in iambic pentameter).

30th May 1593

On 30th May 1593, Christopher Marlowe went to a respectable house in Deptford, a naval port on the Thames just outside London, and met with three men, Ingram Frizer, Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley. In one account of Marlowe's death, it was described as the result of a brawl in the streets of London in which he was killed by his own dagger. Other accounts suggest the brawl occurred "in a house used as a tavern." The Deptford house was owned by Dame Eleanor Bull. It was not a tavern as is frequently

alleged. Dame Bull had Court connections. Her sister, Blanche, was the god-daughter of Blanche Parry, who had been the much-loved nanny of the infant Elizabeth (later Queen) and was a "cousin" of Lord Burghley. The widowed Dame Bull hired out rooms and served meals, but her house was no tavern. It was likely that her home was a safe house for Government Agents.

The Mystery of Marlowe's Death

Historians have claimed that Marlowe's death was either an accident or a premeditated killing designed to protect a high-ranking member of the Elizabethan government. Some have even said the killing was faked to allow Marlowe to escape his political enemies.

What seems to be undisputed is that Marlowe and his three companions had been drinking for several hours. When the time came to pay up, an argument erupted, and the other two witnesses claim that Marlowe grabbed Ingram Frizer's knife, Frizer retrieved it and (he claimed, in self-defence) plunged it into Marlowe's head just above his right eye. It pierced his brain, and the writer died instantly.

At first glance, it appears to be a bar fight, a stupid disagreement escalated to an irrational level by a long day of drinking. But is that what really happened? Perhaps not.

In the official version of his death, Marlowe was murdered in 1593 after spending the day smoking, drinking and playing backgammon with three 'colleagues' - Frizer, Keres and Poley in Deptford, London. The Public Record Office notes they "*spent the day at the lodging house, where they passed the time together, walked in the garden, and, in company, dined.*"

The Guardian ([here](#)) reported (in 2001) that new research affirms the theory that Marlowe's death was ordered by the higher echelons of Elizabethan society - and claims to reveal the secret behind it.

There were constant rumours about Marlowe's religious proclivities. His former roommate, Thomas Kyd, also a playwright, was arrested for heresy, or atheism - a crime punishable by being burnt at the stake. Earlier in May 1593, Kyd was arrested and tortured for treason. He told authorities that "heretical" papers found in his room were not his but belonged to Marlowe, who was subsequently arrested but released on bail. While on bail, Marlowe became involved in the fight with Frizer and was stabbed to death.

Marlowe had embraced atheism and been getting vocal and polemic about his belief in trying to convince others. It was a rather stupid thing to do at that time in Elizabethan England, and some believe the Queen herself gave orders to silence Marlowe. If she did, it adds credence to the suggestion that Queen Elizabeth I pardoned Marlowe's murderer about four weeks after the heinous crime was committed.

Traditionally, Marlowe's death has been blamed on a long list of conjectures - a bar-room fight, blasphemous libel against the church, homosexual intrigue, and betrayal by another playwright, as well as espionage at the highest level in the land.

Possible Culprits and Marlovian Theory

Those who may have wanted Marlowe silenced include:

- ❖ Sir Walter Raleigh, who was worried about being implicated during Marlowe's inquisition.
- ❖ Sir Robert Cecil, who believed Marlowe's plays contained Catholic propaganda.
- ❖ Audrey Walsingham, whose spy-master husband Sir Francis Walsingham employed Marlowe, was said to have been jealous of her husband's relationship with the playwright.
- ❖ William Shakespeare: At the time of his death, Marlowe was known both as a notorious blasphemer as well as England's greatest playwright, surpassing that written by Shakespeare. But there is no evidence that the two ever met face-to-face.

Mental Floss ([here](#)) suggests another thought for the conspiracy theorists: People who subscribe to *Marlovian Theory* believe that Marlowe faked his death and fled the country to avoid his impending inquisition. Once he was safe, the playwright continued to produce and sent his works back to England to be performed. Naturally, those plays couldn't be attributed to Christopher Marlowe, who was supposed to be dead, so someone else had to take credit. That man was none other than William Shakespeare. *Marlovians* (those who subscribe to the theory) base their argument on supposed anomalies surrounding Marlowe's reported death and on the significant influence that, according to most scholars, Marlowe's works had on those of Shakespeare.

Evidence suggests that Marlowe was a spy for the government of Queen Elizabeth, that he was a heretic, a counterfeiter, a homosexual, and an atheist. His involvement in the shadowy world of Tudor espionage led to much debate as to the circumstances of his death and whether it was, indeed, simply the result of a moment of drunken violence.

More Information

For more information about Christopher Marlowe's death, you might like to read the source material listed below. Also, Charles Nicholl's *The Reckoning*, David Riggs' *The World of Christopher Marlowe* and *The Marlowe Papers* (published in 2012) by Ros Barber are all recommended.

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London's first Steam Railway

Source: British Newspapers Archive
 • www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk
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The London and Greenwich Railway (L&GR) was opened in London between 1836 and 1838. It was the first steam railway in the capital, the first to be built specifically for passengers, and the first entirely elevated railway.

The line ran parallel with Tooley Street, crossing Blue Anchor Road, Corbetts Lane and the Grand Surrey Canal. From there, it curved towards the first station, at Deptford High Street, and then to Greenwich.

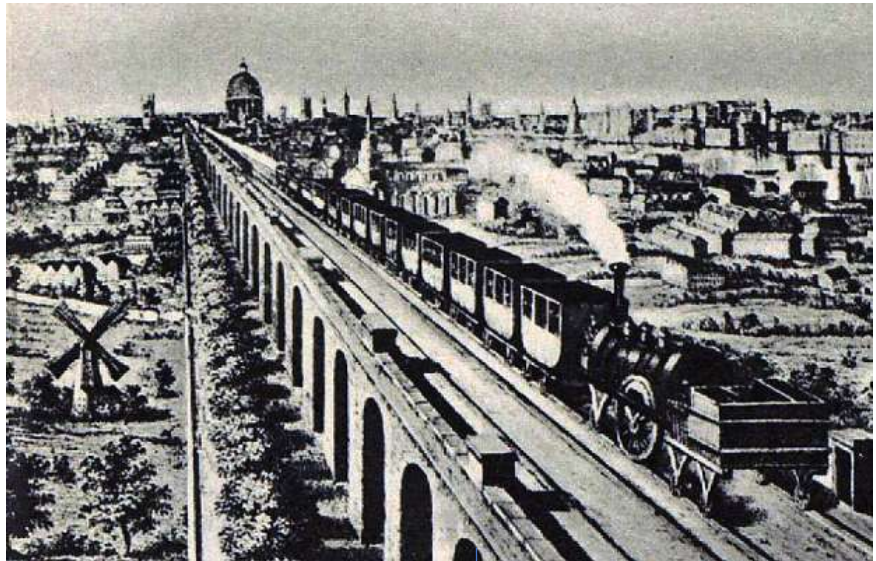
Not long after the official opening, the line carried around 13,000 passengers on a bank holiday.

The *Weekly Chronicle* (London) described the 'curiosity' that drove many people 'to make the experiment of a trip by this new conveyance,' which initially took ten minutes. This is how it was reported on Sunday 25th December 1836:

"The London and Greenwich Railway - Curiosity has drawn a vast number of persons to make the experiment of a trip by this new conveyance, since it was opened by the Lord Mayor last week. Six engines, or tenders, are now in constant use going backwards and forwards every half hour, and oftener as circumstances may require. The trains to Deptford go on the right-hand rail, and those coming from thence on the left. They generally stop, going and coming, to put down or take up passengers at the Bermondsey-road."

London & Greenwich Railway. Line engraving by Henry Alexander Ogg, after Edmund Bradley. Published by L. Stevens, London, 1836. "London and Greenwich Railway. From Forest Hill".

Picture Credit: [Cropped] ["London and Greenwich Railway. From Forest Hill \(print\)"](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)



The London and Greenwich Railway as it was in 1837, it was opened on December 14, 1836, and was the first railway to operate services into London.

Picture Credit: Anonymous Unknown author, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Page URL: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:London-and-greenwich-railway-1837.png>

"The carriages are of various constructions, some being close omnibuses, for which the fair is 1 shilling. Other carriages open at the sides, but close at each end the fare is 9d; and others open all round for which the fare is 6d. The carriages are accompanied by guards in livery of the company - dark green cloth, with a section of the railway on the button. The distance from Tooley-street to Deptford is generally accomplished in less than 10 minutes, including stoppages, and the necessity of starting and coming in at an easy rate."

"A part of the journey is, however, done at the rate of 25 miles an hour - proof that in going long distances without interruption the speed may be easily increased. At present the train takes about 200 each trip, but the carriages may be increased according to the demand, and one engine may take 12,000 passengers *diem*. The Deptford end, from the establishment of the manufactories there, is at present the depot for the extra engines and they there undergo frequent and minute inspection, a large arched shed with a cast iron roof, having been raised to shelter the passengers coming and going."

NOTICE:

British Newspapers Archive is an incredible source of information, dating from the 1700s. The majority of the titles they have digitised so far (nearly 50 million pages) are local and regional newspapers from Britain and Ireland: but don't imagine that local news is all they covered.

Local newspapers historically were very different from today: as well as covering (in incredible detail compared to modern times) all the local events and the people and places that featured in them, they would also report news stories from around the country and indeed from around the world. So, within the same issue, you could discover stories of international importance as well as a report of prizes awarded at the local agricultural show.

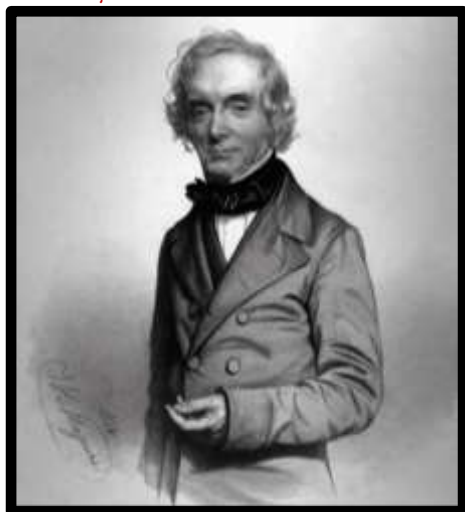
The cost of an annual subscription is £79.



William Burchell: Who was he?

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

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Portrait of William John Burchell in 1854, by Thomas Herbert Maguire (1821-1895) © National Portrait Gallery, London. Picture Credit: [Cropped], Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Introduction

William John Burchell was born in London (Fulham) on 23rd July 1781. He is probably the best naturalist you've never heard of. He was an English explorer, naturalist, traveller, artist, and author. His thousands of plant specimens, as well as field journals from his South African expedition, are held by Kew Gardens, and his insect collection by the Oxford University Museum.

William Burchell's father, Matthew Burchell, was a botanist and owned Fulham Nursery and nine and a half acres of land adjacent to the gardens of Fulham Palace.

William enjoyed privileged schooling at Raleigh House Academy in Surrey and undertook self-study. He also maintained friendly relationships with famous naturalists of the time. Driven by his thirst for knowledge and desire to travel, Burchell undertook extensive fieldwork. His travels in search of knowledge included St. Helena (1805-1810), where he was appointed official botanist to the English East India Company; South Africa (1810-1815); and Portugal, Tenerife and Brazil (1825-1830). In 1830 he finished his travels and returned to England.

While Burchell's primary interest was natural history and, in particular, botany, it may be argued that he was a polymath with numerous skills. He certainly knew a lot about a lot and could do a lot - perhaps a good definition of a polymath. Although Burchell had much in

common with fellow 19th century naturalists, he was different: he was also a geographer, natural philosopher, ethnographer, draughtsman and artist, a talented linguist and an accomplished author.

Lost Love

A minute of the East India Company Court of Directors in November 1807 records the decision 'That Miss Lucia Green be permitted to proceed to her uncle at St Helena'. In December 1807, Lucia set sail to join Burchell in the East India Company's ship *Walmer Castle*. By the time the ship arrived in St Helena in April 1808, Lucia had struck up a relationship with Captain Luke Dodds. On her arrival, she told Burchell that she no longer wanted to marry him. Burchell was devastated yet had to stand back and watch Lucia sail away with her Captain - they were married in Lingfield, Surrey on 29th May 1810.

Source: British Library, [here](#).

Abstracts

The South African Journal of Science provides this abstract:

"In November 1810, Burchell arrived in Cape Town and, in mid-1811, he set off on a 4-year, 7,000-km journey of scientific exploration. When he returned to Cape Town in April 1815, he had amassed 63,000 specimens and 500 drawings. He is remembered mainly for his contributions to descriptive and philosophical aspects of natural history of the country. He is less well known for some significant and novel contributions to the earth sciences, the social sciences and even astronomy. Burchell's observations in physical geography and geology and his contribution to cartography have received little attention. In natural history, some of his views were prescient of the concepts of evolution and holism. In the social sciences, he provided unique ethnographic descriptions, developed an orthography of two indigenous languages and produced drawings that have attracted international research. William John Burchell is worthy of our memory."

The Dictionary of South African Biography praises Burchell:

"His work as a naturalist has never been equalled. His careful preparation, execution and completion of his objectives, detailed annotation, and brilliant appreciation of nature set science a goal seldom achieved. Much of what he discovered has enriched the work of others."

The Journeys

Two years after his Kew apprenticeship, at age 24, he travelled on board the *East Indiaman Northumberland** to St. Helena, South Africa and then Brazil. He established himself briefly in St. Helena as a merchant and then became involved in the local Botanical Garden.

* *Northumberland* was launched in 1805. She made six voyages as an extra British East India Company (EIC) ship between 1805 and 1818. In 1810 and 1811, she served as a transport in the British invasions of Mauritius and Java. She was sold for breaking up in 1819.

Burchell travelled in South Africa through 1815, collecting over 50,000 specimens, and covering more than 7000 km, much over unexplored terrain. He described his journey in *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*, a two-volume work appearing in 1822 and 1824.

He is believed to have planned a third volume since the second ends long before he completed his journey. On 25th August 1815, he sailed from Cape Town with 48 crates of specimens aboard the vessel *Kate*, calling at St. Helena and reaching Fulham on 11th November 1815.

The South African public mostly remembers Burchell for his work and study of animals, not plants.

Burchell was qualified to teach mathematics on St. Helena, and while he made no novel contributions to the subject, he applied his knowledge effectively in celestial and dead-reckoning navigation and in cartography.

Burchell and his Colours

On his travels, Burchell embraced indigenous dyes in the manufacture of paints and ink. While on his African trek, he produced a metal-based paint from sibilite*. He also developed a long-lasting, bright yellow ink and paint from plants of the *Thymelaeaceae* family. While he was en route to Graaff-Reinet, his assistants shot a black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*). When his writing ink dried up, Burchell wrote his detailed morphological descriptions with an ink he made from the animal's blood.

** Sibilite is a powdered black micaceous or iron ore used as a cosmetic by certain African peoples.

Burchell painted colour charts between 1825-1830 to aid the identification of the plants he was collecting whilst travelling in Brazil. The charts show 60 colours ranging from white to Indian ink, along with assigned names and numbers to assist in describing the appearance of the plants. Burchell included colour names like Dragon's Blood (red), Gallstone (yellow), Cologne Earth (dark brown), Antwerp (blue), and Italian Pink (which is actually yellow).

A second, similar colour chart has sections of Burchell's travel itinerary written alongside it. Having these colour references to hand whilst travelling would have been invaluable to him. Over the last three decades of his life, he extensively catalogued the specimens he collected and used these colour charts to add detail and maintain accuracy within his work. His material from Brazil, totalling more than 52,000 specimens, was only catalogued in 1860. Naturalists regard these catalogues as basic sources of exceptional historical value on the botany of St. Helena, South Africa and Brazil. After his death in 1863, Burchell's sister Anna donated Burchell's collections and manuscripts to Kew.

Source: Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, [here](#).

A Sad Ending

After serving a botanical apprenticeship at Kew, William Burchell was elected F.L.S. (Fellow of the Linnaean Society) in 1803.

He died in Fulham 60 years later, ending his own life by hanging himself in a small outhouse in his garden after a failed suicide attempt by shooting. He is buried near his home at All Saints Church, Fulham.

Royal Palaces and Homes

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/facts-buckingham-palace-queen-king-royal-residence-london/>
- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/tudor/britains-10-best-palaces/>
- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/queen-victoria-great-palaces-homes-kensington-osborne-balmoral-castle/>
- <http://the-lothians.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-royal-residences-of-queen-victoria.html>
- <https://www.royal.uk/royal-residences-palace-holyroodhouse>
- <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/eltham-palace-and-gardens/>



Picture Credit: "Buckingham Palace Gates" by csmramsdn is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace has served as the British monarch's administrative headquarters since 1837. It was built in 1703 as Buckingham House - a London residence for John Sheffield, the 3rd Earl of Mulgrave. Today, the palace is a focal point for significant national celebrations and commemorations, with more than 50,000 visitors each year. I was there (in top hat and tails, of course) at a Garden Party, but that was many years ago. But how much do you know about this iconic building?

Interesting historical facts are:

- ❖ The palace **started out as Buckingham House**, which was built by John Sheffield, 3rd Earl of Mulgrave and Marquess of Norham, as his London residence in 1703. In the same year, Sheffield was made the Duke of Buckingham, and he consequently named the house after his title. In 1761, George III decided to purchase Buckingham House for his wife, Queen Charlotte, to create a comfortable family home near St James's Palace.
- ❖ The palace was built on a site where **James I planted a mulberry garden** to cultivate silkworms. Unfortunately, it seems as if the king used the wrong type of mulberry bush and was unable to successfully produce any silk. Queen Victoria was the first British monarch to use Buckingham palace as an official residence
- ❖ Buckingham House was **renovated into a palace in the 1820s** after George IV commissioned architect John Nash. Queen Victoria was the first British monarch to use the palace as their official residence when she moved there in 1837. Since then, the palace has served as the official London residence of Britain's sovereigns, and today it is the administrative headquarters of the monarch.
- ❖ Buckingham Palace was referred to as **"The Queen's Palace"** during George III's reign.

- ❖ **Queen Victoria was the first monarch to use the balcony for public appearances.** We are familiar with members of the royal family waving to crowds from the balcony of Buckingham Palace. However, in 1851, during the Great Exhibition opening – an international exhibition organised by Prince Albert – Queen Victoria made the first-ever public appearance on the balcony. In the 20th century, George VI brought in the tradition of commemorating the end of the *Trooping the Colour* celebrations, which marks the monarch's annual birthday parade, with an RAF fly-past.
- ❖ **Buckingham Palace has an impressive 775 rooms in total** - boasting 52 royal and guest bedrooms, 19 staterooms and 78 bathrooms. There are also 760 windows and 1,514 doors. Over the years, the palace's music room has been used for royal christenings. The Prince of Wales, Princess Anne, the Duke of York and Prince William have all been christened there by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Edward VII (1841–1910) was the only monarch to be born and die at Buckingham Palace. William IV was also born there, and Queen, Elizabeth II, gave birth to the Prince of Wales and Prince Andrew at the palace.
- ❖ Buckingham Palace was at the **centre of the suffragette campaign** - in 1914, a group of women attempted to breach the palace's gates to present their 'Votes for Women' petition. Two suffragettes also chained themselves to the railings of the palace.

Other British Royal Palaces and Homes

During Queen Victoria's long reign, she used several royal residences, primarily Windsor Castle, Kensington Palace and Buckingham Palace in London, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, Holyrood House in Edinburgh, and Balmoral Castle in the Scottish Highlands. Other buildings are no longer Royal residences but started that way. Here are some brief details of these magnificent buildings:

- ❖ **Kensington Palace** - In 1689, newly crowned monarchs William III and Mary II chose Nottingham House as a new retreat close to, but pleasantly removed from, urban London. It was rapidly redeveloped into Kensington Palace, and the royal couple were installed in December of that year. The palace was enlarged during the reign of George I; his successor's wife, Queen Caroline, shaped the design of the gardens. George III disliked Kensington Palace but granted apartments to royal family members, including Edward, Duke of Kent, whose wife Victoire gave birth to the future Queen Victoria here in 1819. Kept largely secluded in the palace by her mother, Victoria was still living here in 1837 when, after King William IV died, she ascended the throne. Victoria departed to live in Buckingham Palace shortly after her accession, but two of her daughters later lived here.
- ❖ **Windsor Castle** - Construction of the world's oldest and largest occupied castle was begun by William the Conqueror in 1070. Over the following nine and a half centuries, it has been home to 40 British sovereigns. Describing it as "prison-like", Victoria preferred to light the castle with candles rather than electric lighting and famously kept it cold and draughty. Nonetheless, it was a favoured family home – indeed, Victoria and Albert spent their honeymoon here. In 1861, Albert succumbed to illness in the Blue Room (also called the Albert Room). He was buried in a mausoleum at Frogmore Estate in Windsor Home Park, near the castle.
- ❖ **Osborne House** - Victoria and Albert bought the Osborne estate on the Isle of Wight in 1845, demolishing the existing house and replacing it with a grand Italianate 'palazzo' built under Albert's supervision. The Pavilion provided a royal retreat for Victoria, Albert and their growing family. Further additions were made after Albert's death in 1861, most notably the richly decorated Durbar Wing, inspired by Indian style; the Durbar Room, with its extravagant peacock overmantel, was designed by Lockwood Kipling, father of the poet and author Rudyard.
- ❖ **Balmoral Castle** - designed by Scottish architect William Smith was built of local granite in 1853. Victoria and Albert bought the Balmoral estate by the River Dee in Aberdeenshire in 1852. The following year they began building a grand Scottish baronial castle to replace the smaller existing building, landscaping the grounds and adding a model farm. After Albert's death, Victoria spent increasing periods at Balmoral, often staying at Glas-Ailt-Shiel lodge, her "widow's house".
- ❖ The Palace of Holyroodhouse - commonly referred to as Holyrood Palace or Holyrood House, is the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland. Founded as a monastery in 1128 at the end of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, the Palace of Holyroodhouse is closely associated with the History of Scotland. Today, the Palace is a close focus for national celebrations and events in Scotland, most notably The Queen's 'Holyrood Week', which usually runs from the end of June to the beginning of July every year. David I founded the Palace of Holyroodhouse as an Augustinian monastery in 1128. The Abbey prospered. With Edinburgh recognised as Scotland's capital, her kings chose to live in Holyroodhouse, surrounded by parkland, rather than in the bleak Castle, high on a rock overlooking the town and exposed to the elements. In 1501, James IV cleared the ground close to the Abbey and built a Palace for himself and his bride, Margaret Tudor – the sister of Henry VIII.
- ❖ **Eltham Palace** - first recorded in the *Domesday Book* in 1086, Eltham Palace (in Greenwich, London) was one of the largest and most popular residences of the medieval royals, and later, Henry VIII spent much of his childhood at the palace. Eltham then fell into a period of decline and was poorly maintained. The palace enjoyed a glamorous new lease of life in the 1930s when it was purchased by millionaire socialites Stephen and Virginia Courtauld. This stylish home now incorporates original medieval features into an otherwise ultra-modern 1930s design.
- ❖ **Kew Palace** (Richmond upon Thames) was built in 1631 as a country retreat for Flemish silk merchant Samuel Fortrey and his wife, Catherine. Kew Palace passed through the hands of several wealthy and well-known tenants in its early years, including the Lord Mayor of London in 1699. The red brick villa became a royal residence in 1729, when it was purchased by King George II and Queen Caroline. Kew is now world-renowned for its Royal Botanic Gardens, the foundations of which were laid by Prince Frederick, son of King George II, in the mid-18th century. After Frederick's unexpected death at age 44, his widow Augusta continued his work on the gardens. With architect William Chambers and gardener William Aiton, Augusta built an exotic miniature world in Kew's grounds, including a brick pagoda and replica mosque.

Continued >>>>

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❖ **Apethorpe Palace, Northamptonshire** - built between 1470 and 1480, Apethorpe was an informal retreat for Tudor and Stuart monarchs, including Elizabeth I, Henry VIII, James I and Charles I. It's a cross between a palace and hunting lodge and was well equipped for leisure and conveniently located close to quality hunting in the nearby Rockingham Forest. James I is the monarch most associated with the hall. English Heritage renovated the building to prevent decay and disrepair, and it was sold to French millionaire Baron von Pffetten in January 2015. He renamed it from Apethorpe Hall to Apethorpe Palace to recognise its connections to royal history. To find out more, [click here](#).

❖ **St Davids Bishop's Palace, Pembrokeshire** - a dramatic medieval ruin on the stunning Pembrokeshire coast, St Davids Bishop's Palace is one of Wales' most important ecclesiastical sites. A holy site dating from the 6th century, the religious community at St David's was ransacked by Norse raiders at least ten times over the next 400 years. Initially, it consisted of two grand sets of rooms around a courtyard; the simpler one intended for bishops' private use, the other for entertaining. Following the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, the Bishop's Palace fell into disrepair, eventually becoming the roofless ruins left standing today.

❖ **St James's Palace, Westminster** - built by Henry VIII between 1531 and 1536, St James's Palace stands on the site of a former hospital that treated leprosy patients in Westminster. Over the centuries, St James's has witnessed several royal events: Anne Boleyn stayed there the night before her coronation in 1533. Charles I stayed there the night before his execution. Today St James's is closed to the public, as it remains a working palace. To find out more, [click here](#).

❖ **Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire** - Blenheim is the only non-royal, non-episcopal house in England to be called a palace. It was built in the early 18th century by the Duke of Marlborough. An interesting woman in the palace's history was Consuelo Vanderbilt, an American heiress whose marriage to the 9th Duke of Marlborough in 1895 saved Blenheim from financial ruin. Blenheim is perhaps most famous as the family home of Winston Churchill. To find out more, [click here](#).

❖ **Hampton Court Palace, Surrey** - Henry VIII was a keen builder, and of all his 60 houses, Hampton Court was arguably the most significant and his favourite. From 1528 he undertook major building works to redesign and expand the palace (originally built by Cardinal Wolsey), modernising it for royal entertaining. He introduced tennis courts, pleasure gardens, a bowling alley, and a more than 1,100 acres hunting park. To find out more, [click here](#).

Police Graffiti: The Writings on the Wall

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://livinglondonhistory.com/the-mysterious-myddelton-passage-carvings/>
- <https://www.london-walking-tours.co.uk/secret-london/myddelton-passage.htm>
- <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/myddelton-passage-police-graffiti>
- <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol47/pp192-216#h2-0021>
- <https://blackcablondon.net/2015/02/26/cabbies-curios-the-policemens-wall/>

Here's a story I came across, and I thought I would share it with you.

It's about Myddelton Passage in Islington, near the *Sadler's Wells* theatre. At first glance, it looks like any other back street in any town you'd care to mention. It's located between Myddelton Square and the New River Head. The Square is a lovely Georgian-style square built between the 1820s and 1840s.

But looks can be deceiving, as they are in this case.

Along the south side of Myddelton Passage runs the perimeter wall of New River Head, dating from 1806–7. At some distance from Arlington Way is a large quantity of graffiti, scored into the brickwork in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Then, this was a dark and perhaps dangerous alley, not overlooked as it is now. George Gissing used it to stage a romantic rendezvous and a violent ambush in *The Nether World* (1889).

Source: British History Online, [here](#).

The New River Head is a reservoir built by the New River Company in 1613. Initially, it was the London terminus of the New River, an artificial watercourse to supply water to London. Subsequently, the site also became the headquarters in the 1820s for the New River Company, the owners of the New River, and its successors - the Metropolitan Water Board, the Thames Water Authority and Thames Water plc.

Looking at the brick wall on one side, you will see the carvings. Weird. Numbers, letters and names are carved into the wall almost everywhere you look. While the numbers and letters seem random, that isn't so, as they identify the perpetrators.

As a result of how the area was developed, it turned into a dark, poorly lit passageway behind the square. It became known as a hotbed of crime and general shenanigans. It is likely to have been a place that the local police officers frequented on their patrols and even potentially had someone stationed here most nights – perhaps to practice their wall carvings while waiting for criminals to emerge from the shadows and commit a crime.

One local rumour was that the wall was built by prisoners from the Napoleonic Wars and had carved their allocated prisoner numbers into the

wall - but that turned out to be false. Another false theory or urban myth and a variation of the first one was that the wall was constructed with bricks from a destroyed prison harbouring soldiers from the Napoleonic Wars, and the scratchings were remnants of prisoners' scrawls.

It turns out that the culprits were bored, tired and possibly drunk Victorian policemen from G division in the Metropolitan police. Most carvings have the collar number of the policeman concerned, followed by their division letter. Most have the 'G' for G division. This was the Finsbury Division operating out of King's Cross. Others, however, have left whole names and dates.

Thanks to the efforts of Peter Guillery of *English Heritage*, and Margaret Bird, of the *Metropolitan Police Service historical archives*, some of the individual police constables whose names appear on the wall have been identified.

How did it start - it's likely that one quiet night, a bored policeman decided to leave his mark on the wall, and others followed suit. We shall never know who started it.

The fact it was dark, away from the eyes of the public, and there was such a large area of brickwork to carve on must have made it a good spot and too tempting for the bored police officers.

The tradition seems to have died out with the onset of World War I. In 1950, the wall on the other side was demolished, and flats were built. It opened the passageway up to more light and prying eyes and ended the practice.

Today, Myddelton Passage has cleaned up its act, and you can walk the length of it any evening safely and without fear of attack.



If you want to visit it, the full address is: Myddelton Passage, Islington, London, EC1R 1XQ, located off Roseberry Avenue. The nearest underground stations are Chancery Lane or Farringdon.



Picture Credit: [Cropped] "Inside Hampton Court Palace" by edwin.11 is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Anyone for Tennis?

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/wimbledon-tennis-history-facts/>
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- <https://evanvanstours.com/blog/weird-and-wonderful-facts-about-wimbledon/>
- <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/The-History-of-the-Wimbledon-Tennis-Championships/>
- <https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/a-miscellaneous-history-of-wimbledon/>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/kids/cbc2/the-feed/10-fun-facts-about-wimbledon>

Tennis is believed to have originated in 12th century northern France, when what we now know as a racquet first came into use in a game called *jeu de paume*, or “game of the palm”. This developed into an indoor game called *real*, or “royal,” tennis. Henry VIII was said to be a keen player and had his own court at Hampton Court Palace. Real tennis grew into lawn tennis, which was played outside on grass and enjoyed a surge of popularity in the late 19th century.

The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club is a private club founded on 23rd July 1868, originally called *The All England Croquet Club*. You probably know it simply as Wimbledon.

On 9th July 1877, the first Wimbledon Tennis Championships were held at its first location - beside the London & South Western Railway in Worple Road, Wimbledon – and it is the oldest tennis tournament in the world. The first final had local land surveyor Spencer Gore comfortably defeat William Marshall in three sets (6-1, 6-2, 6-4) in just 48 minutes.



Picture Credit and Attribution: Unknown Author. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. URL, [here](#)

Spencer Gore (1850-1906), English tennis player, first Wimbledon Champion in 1877

The first prize was meagre by today's standards (see below), bearing in mind too that the players had to pay to take part:

FIRST PRIZE.—The GOLD CHAMPION PRIZE, value 12 guineas, with a Silver Challenge Cup, value 25 guineas (presented by the Proprietors of *The Field*).

In 2021, the total prize money was £35m, with the prize for the men's and ladies' champions being £1.7m each.

The 1877 championships were markedly different to the tournament we know today:

- ❖ The 1877 tournament was advertised as a ‘*lawn tennis meeting, open to all amateurs only*’.
- ❖ There was only one event played in 1877 - the Men's Singles.
- ❖ Ladies' Singles and Men's Doubles event came onto the Wimbledon scene in 1884, before the Ladies' Doubles and Mixed Doubles were added to the mix in 1913.
- ❖ Until 1922, the reigning champion had to play only in the final, against whoever had won through to challenge him/her.

By 1882, activity at the club was almost exclusively limited to lawn tennis, and the word “croquet” was dropped from the title that year. However, for sentimental reasons, it was restored in 1899.

The Club is best known as the venue for the Wimbledon Championships, the only Grand Slam tennis event still held on grass. It is now and has been, for some time, widely regarded as the world's premier tennis tournament, and the club's priority is to maintain that status.

Two hundred and fifty ball boys and girls - known as BBGs - have the tough job of tracking all those fast-moving tennis balls. It doesn't just happen - months before the tournament, BBGs go through intense training sessions to prepare for Wimbledon. There are lots of balls to track: about 54,000 tennis balls are used every year in the Wimbledon tennis tournament. The balls are stored in a refrigerated container at exactly 68°Fahrenheit.

The Wimbledon fortnight is a festival full of curious British traditions - strawberries and cream, Pimm's cups, the strict all-white dress code for the players, Royal patronage, queuing, and that old favourite, rain - although the retractable roof over the centre court puts paid to disruptions because of the weather.

Royalty played at Wimbledon in 1926

Members of the royal family have long taken their seats in the royal box on Centre Court, but in 1926 George VI (at that time, he was Duke of York) broke with tradition and played in the men's doubles tournament with wing commander Louis Greig. He faced Arthur Gore (aged 58) and H Roper Barrett (aged 52). He lost in three straight sets. To this day, he is the only member of the royal family to have played at Wimbledon.

Jean Borotra and René Lacoste were the defending men's doubles champions from the previous year but decided not to play together in 1926. Jacques Brugnon and Henri Cochet (both of France) became the new champions.

You can see the Duke of York in action on the hallowed turf by clicking [here](#).

The War Years and the Military

During World War II, the grounds of Wimbledon were transformed into a Civil

Defence camp. Centre Court even took a direct hit from a 500-pound German bomb in October 1940.

More than 1,000 bombs fell on the borough of Wimbledon during the German air raids. Wimbledon itself was turned into a working farm to provide wartime rations for civilians and soldiers. Vegetables were grown, and the animals arrived - pigs, horses, chickens, geese, ducks and rabbits. But the courts escaped and were left out of the farming equation.

Since 1946, uniformed men and women from the Army, Air Force and Navy have volunteered as stewards at Wimbledon.

Strictly All-White Attire

Wimbledon rules state that all players must be dressed almost entirely in white. Umpires can ask a player to change if their mode of dress fails to meet the dress code. For instance, in 2013, Roger Federer was told to switch his shoes for his next match because they had orange soles. Over the years, these rules have caused a few problems.

Lady tennis players have donned small skirts and shorts during their matches. That is, until 1949 when ‘Gorgeous Gussie’ Moran caused a scandal when she wore ruffled lace knickers very visibly under her tennis skirt. In later competitions, Moran chose to wear shorts rather than skirts. In 1985, Anne White went further against the strict clothing regulations in her first-round match against Pam Shriver when she wore a full-length white lycra body suit and matching white legwarmers. It didn't go down well, and the match referee asked Ms White to reconsider her outfit choice.

Cliff Richard, ‘Singing in the Rain’



Picture Credit: Screenshot from “Wimbledon 96 - Cliff entertains Centre Court” video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL2ql-32NdU>. All copyright and other rights duly acknowledged

In 1996, during rainy delays on Wimbledon's Centre Court, Sir Cliff Richard, who happened to be a spectator in the crowd, decided to raise spirits by delivering an improvised performance. Appropriately, he chose ‘*Singing in the Rain*’. It was sung with the help of an unlikely choir made up of tennis stars Martina Navratilova, Virginia Wade, Gigi Fernandez, Conchita Martinez and Pam Shriver. You can hear/watch Sir Cliff singing by clicking [here](#).

Poor and Punished

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

- Cambridge University Press: [here](https://www.cambridge.org/core)
- <https://kidsadl.com/articles/victorian-workhouses-ks2-everything-you-need-to-know>
- <https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2020.130>
- <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Victorian-Workhouse/>

The Victorian Workhouse was intended to provide work and shelter for poverty-stricken people who had no means to support themselves. Instead, they became a prison system, detaining the most vulnerable in society. The workhouses became synonymous with the Victorian era, an institution which became known for its terrible conditions, forced child labour, long hours, malnutrition, beatings and neglect. It would become a blight on the social conscience of a generation and led to opposition from the likes of author Charles Dickens.

The Workhouses wielded punishment upon its 'residents' in a wide-ranging way – from withholding food from inmates so they would starve, being locked up for 24 hours on just bread and water to more harsh punishment including being whipped, being sent to prison, and meals stopped altogether. And that's not all, not by a long stretch: Inmates were made to wear uniforms, making it impossible to distinguish people and demonstrate their 'identity' to those in the outside Victorian world. For women, this consisted of a shapeless dress made of striped (convict-style) fabric; for men, a striped shirt, ill-fitting trousers, and a thick vest and a coarse jacket. All inmates wore hob-nailed boots that were extremely durable.

Paupers Behaving Badly: Punishment in the Victorian Workhouse*

The deterrent workhouse, with its strict rules for the behaviour of inmates and boundaries of authority of the workhouse officers, was a central expression of the *Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834*, known widely as the *New Poor Law*.

The article, from which this excerpt is taken, explores for the first time the day-to-day experience of the power and authority of workhouse masters, matrons, other officers of the workhouse, its Board of Guardians, and the resistance and agency of resentful inmates. Despite new sets of regulations to guide workhouse officers in the uniform imposition of discipline on residents, there was a high degree of regional diversity not only in the types of offences committed by paupers but also in welfare policy relating to the punishments inflicted for disorderly and refractory behaviour. And while pauper agency was significant, it should not be overstated, given the disparity in power between inmates and workhouse officials. The workhouse was a central feature of the Act of 1834, and discipline and punishment for transgressions were essential to the workhouse regime. Nassau Senior, a member of the Royal Commission whose report resulted in the Act, wanted relief to the poor to be given only within "the strict discipline of well-regulated



Picture Credit: "Solution to homelessness!" by 70023venus2009 is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

workhouses." He saw maintaining discipline as an essential part of enforcing deterrence and efficiently administering a workhouse full of resentful inmates; yet discipline was more problematic than in asylums or prisons, as workhouse populations were constantly changing.

Nassau Senior wished to introduce the "workhouse test" as a measure of true destitution and the only means whereby paupers could receive poor relief in a workhouse. Moreover, workhouses were designed to deter the poor from applying for relief. Their prison-like appearance achieved this, their location, often on the outskirts of provincial towns, the separation of men, women, and children, the provision of hard work, and a highly regimented daily timetable. Discipline was essential because of the low ratio of staff to inmates; in Norwich workhouse in 1881, for instance, there were 529 paupers to twenty staff members.

The 1834 Act set up the Poor Law Commission, based at Somerset House in London and composed of three men: Thomas Frankland Lewis, George Nicholls, and John George Shaw Lefevre. Although independent of Parliament, it "did not have the power many people assumed." Nevertheless, to their opponents, including some Tories, radical defenders of the rights of the poor and the working class, the Poor Law commissioners were the "Tyrants of Somerset House." The commission ordered the formation of Poor Law unions—confederations of parishes large enough to support a workhouse. Parishes were grouped into some six hundred unions, and while some of these unions adapted existing workhouses, by 1841, about 320 new buildings had been completed.

The new union workhouses were the most iconic expressions of the change in policy, deliberately imposing structures designed not only to cow those applying at the workhouse gate but also to surveil them once they became inmates. The assistant Poor Law commissioner E. C. Tufnell commented that workhouses "prison-like appearance, and the notion that they are intended to torment the poor, inspires a salutary dread of them." Commonly referred to as "bastilles," they represented the principle and practice of the strict separation of paupers from the rest of society and each other. Little work has been published, however, on the day-to-day attempts to maintain discipline in union workhouses, the many acts of defiance by paupers, and the punishment inflicted upon inmates by workhouse staff. This internal

misbehaviour and insubordination of workhouse paupers is the subject of the article, and draws upon a range of union punishment books. Workhouse masters logged instances of breaches in discipline in pre-printed books that recorded:

- ❖ the name of the pauper,
- ❖ the offence and the date committed,
- ❖ the punishment inflicted by the master or other official,
- ❖ the opinion of the guardians on this punishment,
- ❖ the punishment ordered by the guardians, date of that punishment,
- ❖ and any notes attached to the case (which might include referrals to local courts and their outcomes).

The paper** was written within the context of contemporary understandings of discipline and the appropriate response of authorities through punishment. The author explored the types of recorded offences against workhouse rules, the punishments meted out by workhouse masters and other officers, and those ordered by the Board of Guardians and local magistrates. Tensions were inherent within the union workhouse, and assessment was made of the exercise of agency and authority by various residents of the workhouse, the paupers' chafing at its rules, and the lived experience of all within its walls. As evidenced in the punishment books, misbehaviour by inmates and responses to it provided a window into agency and authority. While there have been studies of the worst behaviour—workhouse riots—and the most severe punishment—commitments to prison—the only detailed study of pauper punishment is David Green's on London workhouses. Green draws primarily upon parliamentary returns, the *London Times*, and the West London Union Board of Guardians minutes, a different set of sources than Samantha Williams used in her research.

Green's study shows that "only a small number of breaches of discipline ended in a prosecution . . . the remainder were dealt with internally . . . [There was] a much larger problem of insubordination in the workhouse reflecting a wider variety of types of misbehaviour than just those paraded before the courts." Green argues that, although the combined authority of the workhouse master, Board of Guardians, and Poor Law commissioners tried to create "docile bodies," the "paupers themselves could be feisty" and misbehaviour enabled them to challenge workhouse discipline. Inmates had individual and group agency; the workhouse was a site of resistance in which they negotiated with workhouse officials over the provision of poor relief. Green contends that the union workhouse was a "deeply contested institution" and that pauper misbehaviour could challenge even "the legitimacy and authority of the poor law itself."

* Original Manuscript. From: *Journal of British Studies*, Volume 59, Issue 4, October 2020, pp. 764 – 792.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2020.130> [Opens in a new window] Cited as an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. Copyright © The North American Conference on British Studies, 2020.

** The paper was written and research carried out by Samantha Williams.

Introducing Opera

Sourced/Excerpted from and Further Reading:

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Operas and Musicals

An opera is primarily sung. In a musical, songs are interspersed with dialogue. In both cases, it is *drama* and *words* that drive the action. Both opera and musicals use librettos (the words) as their basis - in the case of opera, the singing tends to be continuous; in musicals, much of the plot unravels through spoken scenes around individual songs. Often, there is more dancing in musicals. In opera, the singing is split between arias, recitatives and bigger chorus numbers – see the glossary. In opera, music is at the forefront, whereas words are key to plot development in musical theatre. Audiences have been watching and listening to operas in foreign languages for many years: an understanding of the specific language is often seen as secondary to the music itself. In many cases, there is now a text screen on which appears the words in the 'home' language. Some musicals are closer in style to operas than others: Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* is a musical often categorised as an opera because of its focus on the libretto and its limited speech.

Too often, opera is dismissed as outdated and excessive and is perceived to focus on excessive passions, sumptuous costumes, and ill-mannered divas. In fact, operas address the most fundamental and universal of human passions - love, death, jealousy, greed, revenge and power. The English word *opera* abbreviates the Italian phrase *opera in musica* ("work in music").

Timeline

Opera originated in Italy in the late 16th century - *Jacopo Peri's* mostly lost *Dafne* was produced in Florence in 1598) and his *Euridice* of 1600 is generally regarded as the earliest surviving opera. Opera's first genius composer was *Claudio Monteverdi*, who wrote *Orfeo* in 1607 for an exclusive audience at the Duke of Mantua's court. The popularity of opera soon spread through Europe: *Heinrich Schütz* in Germany, *Jean-Baptiste Lully* in France, and *Henry Purcell* in England helped to establish their national traditions in the 17th century. In the 18th century, Italian opera still dominated most of Europe (except France).

Opera seria was the most prestigious form of Italian opera, until *Christoph Willibald Gluck* reacted against its artificiality with his "reform" operas in the 1760s.

The most renowned figure of late 18th century opera is *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*. He began with opera seria but is most famous for his Italian comic operas, especially *The Marriage of Figaro* (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, as well as *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), and *The Magic Flute* (*Die Zauberflöte*), landmarks in the German tradition.

The first third of the 19th century saw the high point of the *bel canto* style, with *Gioachino Rossini*, *Gaetano Donizetti* and *Vincenzo Bellini* all creating signature works of that style. It also saw the advent of grand opera typified by *Daniel Auber* and *Giacomo Meyerbeer's* works and *Carl Maria von Weber's* introduction of German *Romantische Oper* (German Romantic Opera).

The mid-to-late 19th century was a golden age of opera, led and dominated by *Giuseppe Verdi* in Italy and *Richard Wagner* in Germany. The popularity of opera continued through the *verismo* era in Italy and contemporary French opera through to *Giacomo Puccini* and *Richard Strauss* in the early 20th century. During the 19th century, parallel operatic traditions emerged in central and eastern Europe, particularly in Russia and Bohemia. The 20th century saw many experiments with modern styles, such as atonality and serialism (*Arnold Schoenberg* and *Alban Berg*), neoclassicism (*Igor Stravinsky*), and minimalism (*Philip Glass* and *John Adams*). With the rise of recording technology, singers of the likes of *Enrico Caruso* and *Maria Callas* became known to wider audiences that went beyond the circle of opera fans. The invention of the radio and television meant operas were also performed on (and written for) these media.

Glossary of Operatic Terms

- ❖ **Act** - sections of the story similar to acts in a play.
- ❖ **Aria** - a long accompanied song for a solo voice.
- ❖ **Banda** - musicians who perform on the stage, in addition to those in the pit.
- ❖ **Baritone** - an adult male mid-range singing voice between tenor and bass.
- ❖ **Baroque** - a style of European music of the 17th and 18th centuries, characterised by ornate detail. Major composers include *Vivaldi*, *Bach* and *Handel*.
- ❖ **Bass** - the lowest adult male singing voice.
- ❖ **Bel Canto** - a lyrical style of operatic singing using a full, rich, broad tone and smooth phrasing.
- ❖ **Brava! Bravo! Bravi!** - used during applause to commend the performers on stage: 'Brava' for female performers, 'Bravo' for male performers, 'Bravi' for the entire ensemble.
- ❖ **Buffa** is a comic opera, especially one with characters drawn from everyday life.
- ❖ **Cadenza** - a passage, usually at the end of a musical number, in which singers perform a few improvised measures of vocally showy music to personalise their characters and boast their virtuosity.
- ❖ **Capella** - unaccompanied vocal music.
- ❖ **Castrato** - a male singer castrated in boyhood to retain a soprano or alto voice. The barbaric practice was banned in 1903. Now female singers often sing the castrati parts.
- ❖ **Choral** - composed for or sung by a choir or chorus.
- ❖ **Chorus** - a large group of singers who perform with an orchestra or opera company.
- ❖ **Classical** - music written in the European tradition during a period lasting approximately from 1730 to 1820. Major opera composers include *Mozart* and *Rossini*.
- ❖ **Coloratura** - elaborate ornamentation of a vocal melody, especially in operatic singing.
- ❖ **Continuo** - an accompaniment for dry or 'secco' recitative, written for a harpsichord or other keyboard instrument together with a bass instrument (e.g. a cello). It usually follows and comments upon the dramatic action.
- ❖ **Contralto** - the lowest female singing voice
- ❖ **Countertenor** - the highest male adult singing voice (sometimes distinguished from the male alto voice by its strong, pure tone).
- ❖ **Da Capo Aria** - a popular musical form in the 17th century. A soloist sings it with the accompaniment of the orchestra. A da capo aria is composed of three sections.
- ❖ **Diction** - the style of enunciation in singing.
- ❖ **Diva** - a female opera star of rank or pretension.
- ❖ **Dramma Giocoso** - A sub-category of opera buffa, it means: *drama with jokes*. It is a genre of opera common in the mid-18th century.
- ❖ **Duet** - a performance by two singers.
- ❖ **Encore** - a repeated performance at the end of a concert, as called for by the audience.
- ❖ **Falsetto** - a heady, light voice common to the male voice.
- ❖ **Forte** - to be performed loudly.
- ❖ **Gesamtkunstwerk** - a term introduced by Wagner meaning a 'Total work of art'/'all-embracing art form' that uses all or many art forms.
- ❖ **Harmony** - the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes (forms of harmony).
- ❖ **Heldentenor** - a powerful tenor voice suitable for heroic roles in opera
- ❖ **Intermezzo** - a short musical composition usually offered between the acts of a longer operatic work.
- ❖ **Largo** - slow speed.
- ❖ **Legato** - a smooth, connected style of singing and playing.
- ❖ **Leitmotiv** - 'light motif'; a short thematic musical passage representing a character or situation in a musical drama.
- ❖ **Libretto** - the sung text of an opera.
- ❖ **Mezzo-Soprano** - a female singer with a voice pitched between soprano and contralto.
- ❖ **Minimalism** - an avant-garde style of music, characterised by the repetition of very short phrases which change gradually, producing a hypnotic effect.
- ❖ **Obbligato** - in Western classical music, obbligato usually describes a musical line that is in some way indispensable in performance. Its opposite is the marking *ad libitum*.
- ❖ **Operetta** - a short opera, usually on a light or humorous theme and typically having spoken dialogue. Gilbert & Sullivan is an example.
- ❖ **Oratorio** - a musical composition for chorus, orchestra and soloists whose text is usually religious, serious or philosophical.
- ❖ **Ornamentation** - decorative notes that enhance a melodic line, often when it is repeated.
- ❖ **Overture** - an orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera which often references musical ideas that the audience will hear throughout the opera.
- ❖ **Prelude** - an introductory piece of music, most commonly an orchestral opening to an act of an opera.

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- ❖ **Prima Donna** - 'first lady'; the female lead in an opera cast.
- ❖ **Proscenium** - the part of the stage between the curtain and the orchestra pit.
- ❖ **Queen of the Night** - one of the most famous characters in all of opera. A principal role in the 1791 Mozart opera *The Magic Flute* who sings a very recognisable aria.
- ❖ **Range** - the distance from the lowest to the highest pitch of an instrument or a singer.
- ❖ **Recitative** - a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech and that is used for dialogue and narrative in operas.
- ❖ **Repertoire** is the stock of operas that a company or a performer prepares to perform.
- ❖ **Repetiteur** - a tutor or coach of musicians, especially opera singers.
- ❖ **Romantic** is an era of Western classical music dating from 1780 to 1910. *Wagner, Verdi, Puccini* and *Tchaikovsky* are major opera composers from this era.
- ❖ **Seria** - an opera on a serious, usually classical or mythological theme.
- ❖ **Singspiel** - means "song play" - a popular form of theatre, mixing spoken drama with song, in 18th century Germany - including *The Magic Flute* by Mozart.
- ❖ **Soprano** - the highest female singing voice.
- ❖ **Spinto** - "pushed"; a voice is 'pushed' toward another, i.e., a lyric spinto is a lyric soprano that can lean toward a heavier, dramatic quality.
- ❖ **Staccato** - "clipped"; short, clipped, rapid articulation. The opposite of legato.
- ❖ **Surtitles/Supertitles** - a caption projected on a screen above the stage in an opera, showing the opera's libretto (the text being sung).
- ❖ **Tenor** - The highest natural adult male singing voice between baritone and alto or countertenor.
- ❖ **Tessitura** - (Italian: "texture") the general range of pitches found in a melody or vocal part.
- ❖ **Trill** - the very rapid alternation of pitch between two adjacent notes, used as a virtuosic vocal effect.
- ❖ **Toi Toi Toi** - originally an idiom used to ward off a spell or hex. Nowadays, people say this before an opera performance instead of saying 'good luck'. Similar to 'break a leg' in theatre.
- ❖ **Verismo** - "truth", a theatrical style in the late 1800s that depicted ordinary, everyday characters in melodramatic situations. Puccini's *Il Trittico*, a triptych, includes the 'verismo' melodramas *Il tabarro* (*The Cloak*) and *Suor Angelica* (*Sister Angelica*).
- ❖ **Vibrato** - a rapid, slight and gentle variation in pitch in singing or playing some musical instruments, producing a stronger, warmer or richer tone.
- ❖ **Yodelling** - a form of singing or calling marked by rapid alternation between the normal voice and falsetto that originated in Austro-Bavarian culture. Yodelling can be heard in some works by Richard Strauss.
- ❖ **Zarzuela** - Zarzuela is a Spanish lyric-dramatic genre that alternates between spoken and sung scenes, the latter incorporating operatic and popular songs, as well as dance.

An Operatic Selection

Here is an outline of some well-known and lesser-known operas, taken randomly. Do you have a favourite?

- ❖ **Don Pasquale** is an opera buffa, or comic opera, by *Gaetano Donizetti*, in three acts with an Italian libretto completed largely by Giovanni Ruffini and the composer. The music is suggestive of a comic opera; bright and lively, it starts with plenty of percussion and brass instruments. After a while, the ambience changes to suggest a party, and the overture ends with a finale. The opera was first performed in January 1843 by the Théâtre-Italien at the Salle Ventadour in Paris, with great success. It is generally regarded as the high point of the 19th century opera buffa tradition and, in fact, marking its ending.
- ❖ **Fidelio** was initially titled *Leonore, oder Der Triumph der ehelichen Liebe* (*Leonore, or The Triumph of Marital Love*). It is *Beethoven's* only Opera. With some spoken dialogue, the libretto tells how Leonore, disguised as a prison guard named "Fidelio", rescues her husband Florestan from death in a political prison. It is a story of personal sacrifice, heroism, and eventual triumph. Notable moments in the opera include the "Prisoners' Chorus" - an ode to freedom sung by a chorus of political prisoners, Florestan's vision of Leonore, which comes as an angel to rescue him, and the scene itself in which the rescue finally takes place. The finale celebrates Leonore's bravery with alternating contributions of soloists and chorus.
- ❖ **The Rake's Progress**, by *Igor Stravinsky*, is an English-language opera in three acts and an epilogue. The libretto, written by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, is based loosely on the eight paintings and engravings of William Hogarth, seen by Stravinsky at a Chicago exhibition. The story concerns the decline and fall of Tom Rakewell, who deserts Anne Trulove for the delights of London in the company of Nick Shadow, who turns out to be the Devil. Several misadventures later, all initiated by the devious Shadow, Tom ends up in Bedlam, a hospital for the insane then situated in the City of London. The moral in this tale is "*For idle hearts and hands and minds the Devil finds work to do.*"
- ❖ **Rigoletto** was written by *Giuseppe Verdi*. Few would argue that it is wonderful entertainment, as well as a daring attack on aristocratic privilege, a tender love story, and an impassioned appeal on behalf of the disadvantaged, all set to music of such wealth and beauty that, together with its sister operas *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore*, it has almost defined Italian opera for 150 years. The opera is in three acts. The Italian libretto was written by Francesco Maria Piave based on the 1832 play *Le roi s'amuse* by Victor Hugo.
- ❖ **La Traviata** is the story of the tragic love between the courtesan Violetta and the romantic Alfredo Germont. It features one of the most iconic, romantic and tragic scores of all time. *Giuseppe Verdi's* masterpiece contrasts spectacular party scenes with tender, intimate moments. Played out against the hypocrisy of upper-class fashionable society, Alfredo and Violetta's love threatens to bring shame to his family. When his father directly appeals to Violetta to relinquish her one chance of happiness, she submits, and her act of self-sacrifice leads to her paying the ultimate price. Sad but beautiful.
- ❖ **Carmen** is an opera in four acts by French composer *Georges Bizet*. The libretto was written by *Henri Meilhac* and *Ludovic Halévy*, based on the novella of the same title by *Prosper Mérimée*. *Carmen* is one of the most popular and frequently performed operas - the "*Habanera*" from act 1 and the "*Toreador Song*" from act 2 are among the best known of all operatic arias. The opera is set in Seville, Spain, in the early

1800s. It deals with the love and jealousy of Don José, who is lured away from his duty as a soldier and his beloved Micaëla by the gipsy factory girl Carmen. José allows her to escape from custody but later makes clear her love preference for a bullfighter called Escamillo. The last act, outside the bull-ring in Seville, sees Escamillo to the arena, accompanied by Carmen, there stabbed to death by Don José, who has been awaiting her arrival.

- ❖ **The Magic Flute** (*Die Zauberflöte*) by *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* is certainly full of magic plus some revealing Masonic elements. The opera takes the form of a *Singspiel* (which includes singing and spoken dialogue). Tamino, a prince lost in a foreign land, is being pursued by an enormous monster. He is rescued by three mysterious ladies, who kill the monster and give Tamino a picture of Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the Night, and Tamino falls in love. He learns that Pamina has been captured by the powerful and evil Sarastro, and Tamino vows to rescue her, but soon discovers that nothing is quite as it first appears.
- ❖ **The Barber of Seville** (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) is an opera in four acts by Italian composer *Gioachino Rossini*. The story follows the escapades of a talented barber (Figaro) as he assists a Spanish nobleman (Count Almaviva) in prising the apple of his eye (the beautiful Rosina) away from her guardian, the lecherous Dr Bartolo. The opera is full of great tunes that are all incredibly familiar, including the fast, jaunty overture and Figaro's famous aria, 'Make way for the servant who does everything' ('*Largo al factotum*').
- ❖ **The Marriage of Figaro** (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) was written by *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*. Figaro, servant to Count Almaviva, is about to marry Susanna, the Countess's maid. Susanna tells Figaro that the Count is lusting after her. Figaro vows to thwart the Count's plans. The Count cunningly attempts a tryst with Susanna. It gets more and more complicated but in the end, the Count declares his love for Susanna, who is really the Countess, while Figaro tells the Countess, who is really Susanna, about the tryst. But, Susanna forgets to disguise her voice, and Figaro works out it is she under the Countess's cloak. One thing leads to another, with many twists and turns on the way.
- ❖ **Madama Butterfly** (in Italian), by *Giacomo Puccini*, is one of opera's most enduring tales of unrequited love. Puccini's poignant score follows the tragic tale of a young Japanese girl who falls in love with US naval officer Lieutenant Pinkerton. He has paid for an arranged marriage to the 15-year-old geisha, Cio-Cio-San, known as Madam Butterfly. She falls in love, converts to Christianity and is renounced by her family. But Pinkerton is unmoved and returns to his homeland. Cio-Cio-San gives birth to a son by Pinkerton. Pinkerton does eventually return with Kate, his American wife, Kate, wishing to adopt his son - but it is too late: the bereft Cio-Cio-San has just committed suicide.
- ❖ **La Bohème**, by *Giacomo Puccini*, is perhaps the opera that everyone has heard about, and it has secured its place in the operatic 'hall of fame'. The music is what makes its great story a masterpiece and one of the most popular operas of all time. It starts on a cold Christmas night in bohemian Paris. The near-destitute artist Marcello and poet Rodolfo try to keep warm by feeding the stove with pages from Rodolfo's latest drama. They are soon joined by their roommates—Colline, a philosopher, and Schaunard, a musician, who brings food, fuel, and money he has collected from an eccentric nobleman. Then, a knock at the door starts a chain reaction: Mimi stands there in search of a candlelight and love is sparked that changes their lives forever. But can this love survive the harsh winter?

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Picture Credit: "La Bohème, 2013: Cast A" by Canadian Opera is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

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- ❖ **Der Ring des Nibelungen**, composed by Richard Wagner, is a cycle of four German-language epic music dramas. The monumental works are based loosely on characters from Germanic heroic legends, namely Norse legendary sagas and the Nibelungenlied. It is often referred to as the *Ring cycle*, *Wagner's Ring*, or simply *The Ring* - (usually literally rendered in English as *The Ring of the Nibelung*). A full performance of the cycle takes place over four nights at the opera, with a total playing time of about 15 hours, depending on the conductor's pacing. Wagner wrote the libretto and music over the course of nearly 26 years, from 1848 to 1874. The four parts that constitute the Ring Cycle are, in sequence: *Das Rheingold* (*The Rhinegold*), *Die Walküre* (*The Valkyrie*), *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods*). Individual works of the sequence are often performed separately, and indeed the operas contain dialogues that mention events in the previous operas so that a viewer could watch any of them without having watched the previous parts and still understand the plot. However, Wagner intended them to be performed in series. The Nibelung of the title is the dwarf Alberich, and the ring in question is the one he fashions from the Rhine Gold.

See [Plot Summaries of the Four Operas of the Ring Cycle, here](#).

- ❖ **Tosca**, by Giacomo Puccini to an Italian libretto by Luigi Illica and Giuseppe Giacosa, is a political thriller, set in Rome in June 1800. It was the time of the Napoleonic wars and a period of great political unrest. The action takes place over less than 24 hours and centres around three main characters – Rome's diva *Flora Tosca*, her lover *Mario Cavaradossi* (a painter and republican) and the corrupt Chief of Police, *Baron Scarpia*. The lecherous Baron has long lusted after *Flora*, and when he suspects *Cavaradossi* of assisting an escaped political prisoner, seizes the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. He will manipulate *Tosca* into revealing the prisoner's hiding place and *Cavaradossi's* involvement in the deed, and have her for himself. When *Cavaradossi* is captured, *Scarpia* offers *Tosca* a horrific bargain – she must give herself to *Scarpia*, or her lover is killed... what a dilemma. Who will she choose, and who will survive?

Picture Credit: "Tosca 9" by Canadian Opera is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)



River Valleys in the Green Sahara

Sourced/Excerpted from and for Further Reading:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tassili_n%27Ajjer
- <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1791>
- <https://national-parks.org/algeria/tassili-najjer>
- <https://www.africanworldheritagesites.org/natural-places/deserts/tassili-najjer-national-park-algeria.html>



Picture Credit: "River valleys at Tassili N'Ajjer National Park" by Ioklaar is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

River valleys, sandstone formations and 'rock forests' that sprout from orange Sahara Desert sands, are just some of the many curiosities you will find in Tassili N'Ajjer National Park in Algeria. Evidence exists going as far back as 8,000 years ago that this was not always the desert it is today.

Tassili N'Ajjer (meaning 'Plateau of the Rivers') was once part of a fertile land known as the Green Sahara. People made their way here for many thousands of years, hunting, herding and leaving behind archaeological remains, including ceramics and ancient rock carvings. The area remains more fertile than much of the surrounding desert, supporting scattered groves of rare Saharan cypress trees*.

* *Cupressus Dupreziana*, the Saharan cypress, or tarout, is a very rare coniferous tree native to the Tassili N'Ajjer mountains, where it forms a unique population of trees hundreds of miles from any other trees. There are only 233 specimens of this endangered species, the largest about 70 ft high.

Where is it?

Tassili N'Ajjer is a vast plateau in south-eastern Algeria at the borders of Libya, Niger, and Mali, covering a vast area of some 28,000 square miles. Its highest point is the Adrar Afao which peaks at 27,080 ft. It is a very remote place and lies more than six miles from the nearest town (Djanet).

Archaeological Importance

The archaeological site has been designated a national park, a Biosphere Reserve (cypresses) and was inducted into the UNESCO World Heritage Site list as Tassili N'Ajjer National Park. It has one of the most important groupings of prehistoric cave art in the world. The art depicts herds of cattle and large wild animals such as giraffes and elephants, as well as human activities, such as hunting and dancing. UNESCO (here) describe it like this:

"Located in a strange lunar landscape of great geological interest, this site has one of the most important groupings of prehistoric cave art in the world. More than

15,000 drawings and engravings record the climatic changes, the animal migrations and the evolution of human life on the edge of the Sahara from 6,000 BC to the first centuries of the present era. The geological formations are of outstanding scenic interest, with eroded sandstones forming 'forests of rock'."

The plateau is of great geological and aesthetic interest. Its panorama of geological formations of rock forests, composed of eroded sandstone, resembles a lunar landscape and hosts a range of rock art styles. The range is composed largely of sandstone which is stained by a thin outer layer of deposited metallic oxides that colour the rock formations variously from nearly-black to dull red. Erosion in the area has resulted in nearly 300 natural rock arches being formed in the south east, along with deep gorges and permanent water pools in the north.

Because of its altitude and the water-holding properties of sandstone, the vegetation here is richer than in the surrounding desert. It includes a very scattered woodland of the endangered endemic species of Saharan cypress and Saharan myrtle in the higher eastern half of the range.

The Tassili Cypress (see below) is one of the oldest trees in the world after the Barbed Pine in the USA.



Picture Credit/Attribution: File:Cupressus_dupreziana1.jpg by Gruban at Flickr - Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6001218> Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

Various other fauna still exists on the plateau, including Barbary sheep**, the only surviving type of the larger mammals depicted in the rock paintings of the area.

** Barbary sheep are part of the 'Caprinae' family (sheep and goats) and are the only species of wild sheep found in Africa. They are also known as *oudad* - a species of caprid that is native to the rocky mountains in North Africa.

Animal Welfare from Ancient Times

Sourced/Excerpted from and for Further Reading:

- <https://cvm.msu.edu/vetschool-tails/hammurabi-and-hippocrates-veterinary-medicine-bce>
- <https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/heritage-and-history/history-of-the-veterinary-profession/british-veterinary-medicine-timeline/>
- <https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/heritage-and-history/history-of-the-veterinary-profession/>
- <https://www.tuckahoevet.com/post/ancient-history-of-veterinary-medicine>

The Father of Veterinarians

The Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine ([here](#)) says that: *"Traditional Chinese veterinary medicine dates back to 10,000 years ago. According to legend, Emperor Fusi taught the existing primitive Chinese society how to domesticate animals. With domestication came the need to care for those animals, and so, Fusi founded animal husbandry and veterinary medicine in China. In Middle Eastern countries, shepherds used a "crude understanding" of basic medical techniques and skills to tend to their dogs and other animals. "During the Stone Age, ancient veterinarians used early forms of herbal medicine. Around the start of the Bronze Age (approximately 3000 BCE), a man named Urlugaledinna, who lived in the Mesopotamia region (modern-day Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Kuwait), was known to be an expert at healing animals. Urlugaledinna is sometimes given the title "father of veterinarians."*



The Code of Hammurabi

One of the earliest mentions of veterinary medicine appeared in the Egyptian Papyrus of Kahun around 1800 B.C., then shortly afterwards in the famous Code of Hammurabi - a collection of 282 rules, establishing standards for commercial interactions and setting fines and punishments to meet the requirements of justice. The code includes many harsh penalties, sometimes demanding the removal of the guilty

party's tongue, hands, breasts, eye or ear. But it is also one of the earliest examples of an accused person being considered innocent until proven guilty. All 282 rules are written in *if-then* form. For example, if a man steals an ox, then he must pay back 30 times its value.

While there are other written Mesopotamian laws, including the Sumerian *Lipit-Ishtar* and *Ur-Nammu*, that predate *Hammurabi's* by hundreds of years, *Hammurabi's* reputation remains as a pioneering lawgiver who worked, in the words of his monument: *'to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak and to see that justice is done to widows and orphans.'*

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/hammurabi>

The codes have served as a model to establish justice in other cultures and have influenced laws set by Hebrew scribes, including those in the Book of Exodus. Originally, the codes were carved into a massive monolith of black diorite, eight feet high. The pillar was lost for centuries after the fall of Babylon in 1595 BC but was rediscovered in the ruins of the Elamite city of Susa in 1901.

Code 224 says: *'If a veterinary surgeon performs a serious operation on an ass or an ox, and cure it, the owner shall pay the surgeon one-sixth of a shekel as a fee.'* Code 225 says: *'If he performs a serious operation on an ass or ox and kills it, he shall pay the owner one-fourth of its value.'*

Source: [Biography.com](#), [here](#).

Picture Credit: [Cropped] "Law Code of Hammurabi Detail" by [cajut](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

The ancient vets were called *Hippiatroi* (horse doctors), *Mulomedicus* (mule doctors) or *Medicus Pecuaris* (livestock doctors).

The word "veterinarian" (or 'vet' for short) comes from the Latin word *veterinarius*, which means *'concerned with Beasts of Burden.'* These animals provided the very basis of early economies, both civilian and military.

Hippocrates and Aesculapius

Those who had a profound effect in changing the practice of medicine from one of "Priest-Healer" to one based upon critical thought, careful observations and recorded experiences included *Hippocrates* and *Aesculapius*:

- ❖ *Hippocrates* held that cure comes from within the body's defensive and reactive powers (found in his book *The Nature of Animals*). He proposed using "similars" - drugs that produce symptoms similar to those of the disease being treated, i.e. *Homeopathic Medicine*.
- ❖ A century after *Hippocrates*, *Aesculapius*, the son of *Apollo*, was deified as the "god of healing" for bringing health to man and animals. *Aesculapius* proposed direct intervention by the physician and emphasised an understanding of anatomy and pathology. His symbol ** was a staff with serpents coiled around it and was carried by the messenger god *Hermes* or *Mercury*.

* Source: <https://www.tuckahoevet.com/post/ancient-history-of-veterinary-medicine>

** This emblem, called the *Caduceus*, is still used to represent the medical profession today.

More Modern Times

From the time of *Urlugaledinna* (who lived in 3000 BC in Mesopotamia), there are references to veterinarians and veterinary practices through extant written records. But everything changed in 1761 with the founding of the veterinary school in Lyon, France, by *Claude Bourgelat*. Arguably, the veterinary profession can be said to have started from that time. Four years later, the veterinary profession began in Britain when the *Odiham Agricultural Society* held a meeting at which it resolved:

"that the Society will consult the good of the community in general, and of the limits of the Society in particular, by encouraging such means as are likely to promote the study of farriery upon rational scientific principles."

Out of the Society's deliberations came the establishment of the London Veterinary College in 1791, the start of the development of veterinary science and a professional group dedicated to animal medicine. Initially, the veterinary profession was centred on the horse. It remained the focus for many years, influenced by the needs of the Army. Over time, the interests of the veterinary profession spread to cattle and other livestock, then to dogs and now to companion and exotic animals. Source: [Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#), [here](#).

UK Vet Schools

There are currently ten vet schools in the UK:

- ❖ Royal Veterinary College, University of London
- ❖ University of Cambridge
- ❖ University of Liverpool
- ❖ The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh
- ❖ University of Glasgow
- ❖ University of Bristol
- ❖ University of Nottingham
- ❖ University of Surrey
- ❖ Harper and Keele Veterinary School
- ❖ The Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science (in collaboration with the Royal Veterinary College)

Source: [BVA](#), [here](#).

The Musical Tudors

Sourced/Excerpted from and for Further Reading:

- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/tudor/tudor-tunes-music-at-the-courts-of-henry-viii-elizabeth-i-and-james-vi-and-i/>
- <http://e.historyextra.com/q/1tdBdbjezdDT0CI4Wve6IXBKF/wv>
- <https://kidadl.com/articles/tudor-music-ks2-and-dance-made-fun>
- <http://www.sixwives.info/tudor-musicians.htm>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrigal>

Introduction

The Tudors were in power for 118 years between 1485 (when Henry VII was crowned) and 1603 (when Elizabeth I died). Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond,



victorious in the battle of Bosworth Field, became King Henry VII and started the famous Tudor dynasty.

Picture Credit: See [here](#). Attribution: After Hans Holbein, the Younger, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Music was very important in the period,

especially in the royal court, with entertainers responsible for providing a suitable musical backdrop for kings and queens. Performers were tasked with privately entertaining monarchs and tutoring their children, and were rewarded with extravagant gratuities and even personal praise from the king or queen.

The Musical Tudors

You can listen to examples of Tudor-period music [here](#). The most famous tune from the period is probably 'Greensleeves', but contrary to what some people think, it is unlikely to have been composed by King Henry VIII. He was certainly the most musical Tudor monarch. In fact, all the era's kings and queens were musically minded as nearly all Tudor monarchs had an education in music, they patronised music, and most could play one or more instruments.

Music was provided both by professional musicians and by the courtiers themselves. Playing, singing and dancing were all essential elements of royal and noble education of the time.

Professional court musicians had their own hierarchy – those who played 'loud' bass instruments (for example, trumpets and cornets) were held in less esteem than those who played 'soft' instruments (such as stringed instruments and keyboards). These 'soft' players were the private entertainers of the monarch and would form part of his privy chamber (presumably behind a modesty screen), often being rewarded with extravagant tips, and even personal praise from the king or queen.

Although music and song lyrics were printed during the Tudor era, they were sold as separate documents. The Tudor composer John Dowland published his 'First Booke of Songes or Ayres' in 1597, becoming a best seller.

In Tudor times, home entertainment such as TV, radio and the internet did not exist, and only a minority of the population could read: people made their own entertainment. And that's why music became so popular, playing an important role in the lives of both rich and poor people. The most popular instrument was the *English Consort*, (violin, lute, flute and viol).

Music was an important feature of elite 16th century culture, playing a part in every aspect of court life: from processions, coronations, funerals, baptisms, fanfares announcing the monarch's approach, and music for the pageants and masques that entertained the court. Music was also an integral (and important) part of religious worship.

The emergence of the 'Madrigal'

Artistically, the *madrigal* was the most important form of secular music in Italy and reached its formal and historical zenith in the late 16th century. It was also taken up by German and English composers, such as *John Wilbye* (1574–1638), *Thomas Weelkes* (1576–1623), and *Thomas Morley* (1557–1602) of the English Madrigal School (1588–1627).

Although of British temper, most *English madrigals* were a *cappella* compositions (that is, without musical accompaniment) for three to six voices, which either copied or translated the musical styles of the original *madrigals* from Italy. By the mid-16th century, Italian composers began merging the *madrigal* into the composition of the cantata and the dialogue; and by the early 17th century, the aria replaced the *madrigal* in *opera*.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrigal>

Henry VIII

Of his musical family, Henry VIII was probably the most gifted. He played numerous instruments and was very proficient: he mastered the lute, the organ and other keyboards; recorders, the flute and the harp and had a good singing voice. He also wrote a number of compositions, the most famous probably being '*Pastime with Good Company*'.

Visiting ambassadors frequently commented on the beautiful music at Henry's court. He had 60 musicians at his disposal. As well as being a talented singer, King Henry VIII could dance and was an accomplished musician able to play many instruments, including the lute, the organ, the recorder, the flute and the harp. And, when he was not planning another family execution or marriage, he found time to write his own songs, such as the famous '*Pastime with Good Company*'. He composed ballads and church music, but all have been lost to the ravages of time.

Henry VIII didn't just play several instruments, he had an enormous collection of them: cornets, bagpipes (called drones), viols*, lutes, flutes, shawms** and more than 150 recorders.

He is said to have owned an early type of pianola** although it would have been very different to what we would expect today. Four bagpipes with ivory pipes belonging to Henry VIII survive, all at Westminster.

* The viol, viola da gamba, or informally gamba, is any one of a family of bowed, fretted and stringed instruments with hollow wooden bodies and pegboxes where the tension on the strings can be increased or decreased to adjust the pitch of each of the strings.

** Shawms were loud double-reed instruments - the ancestor of the oboe. By the end of the Middle Ages, they were the most important loud instrument in use.

*** The term 'Pianola' was originally a trademark, first used about a hundred years ago, but in more recent times has become a generic reference to the self-playing piano.

Music was a pleasure that Henry shared with some of his wives. He and *Catherine of Aragon* particularly favoured a friar by the name of *Dionysius Memmo*, who had been the organist at St Mark's in Venice and brought his "excellent instrument" to England at great expense.

Elizabeth I

The virginals (keyboard instruments of the harpsichord family) seem to have been the instrument of choice for Elizabeth I, who spent regular hours practising. Elizabeth also appreciated the musical performance of others. She may have inherited her talent as much from her mother, Anne Boleyn, as from her father. One of Elizabeth's instruments, dated from a tiny inscription to 1594, is now resplendent on display in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Composers of the Tudor Period

All of the Tudor and Stewart monarchs were musical and took a personal interest in the professional performers at their courts. Some of these court musicians were also well-known writers and performers. Henry VII's most important musician was Robert Fayrfax (c1460–1521), organist of St Alban's Abbey and the first doctor of music at Cambridge. Fayrfax continued to serve King Henry VIII, one of his last commissions being music for his meeting with the French king (Francois) at the Field of Cloth of Gold*** in June 1520.

**** A summit meeting between King Henry VIII and the king of France, held at Balingham, in the English Pale of Calais, arranged to increase the bond of friendship between the two kings following the Anglo-French treaty of 1514.

Some composers of the era

- ❖ **Thomas Tallis** – Tallis was one of the most important composers of sacred music in the 16th century. He usually composed simple reformation service music. He was also the one to introduce the influence of Continental polyphonic music in English music. He served under several monarchs such as Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I.
- ❖ **William Byrd** was another very important composer and organist of the 16th century. He is best known for his composition of English madrigals. His virginal and organ music helped to develop the English keyboard. He was a student and protege of Thomas Tallis.
- ❖ **Robert Fayrfax** – He was one of the early Tudor composers mostly known for his masses and motets. He differed from his contemporaries in various ways, and therefore, he was special. Fayrfax was unique in the incorporation of voices in a composition and his usage of the imitative counterpoint. He was awarded the degree of doctor of music twice, at Cambridge and Oxford. He also composed some excellent secular music.
- ❖ **Philip van Wilder** – Wilder was also one of the chief musicians at King Henry's court. He played at the King's privy chamber. He was also the teacher of Henry's son, Edward VI, who became a brilliant lutenist.

To Round it Off

Bob Newhart

Do you remember Bob Newhart and his problem at work? One day, he found that King Kong was climbing up the Empire State Building, carrying a woman. She was wearing only a nightie.



Click this <https://youtu.be/2RBeoxtjGNA> to find out what happened. If that doesn't make you chuckle, why not listen to Bob as he speaks to a suicide jumper man on the ledge of a building. Click this <https://youtu.be/rC3fd2DaIRk> and try not to smile.

Morecambe & Wise from Christmas 1971



André Previn experienced difficulty with Eric Morecambe's piano rendition and suggested that Eric had played all the wrong notes. Of course, Eric didn't agree.

Picture: Screenshot from video – click this to watch:

<https://youtu.be/uMPEUcVyJsc>



**The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.**

Picture Attribution: "Dr Seuss"
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Names for Collectors of 'Things'

It seems as if there's a name for most collectors, whether dolls, cigarette cards or something more obscure and sometimes even peculiar. Here are some you'll recognise and others that will intrigue you:

- ❖ Aerophilatelist - a collector of airmail stamps. It's a branch of philately.
- ❖ Antiquarians - collectors of antiques.
- ❖ Arctophiles - collectors of teddy bears.
- ❖ Arenophiles - they collect samples of sand from around the world.
- ❖ Bibliophile - someone who loves or collects books.
- ❖ Brandophilists - collector of (paper) cigar bands.
- ❖ Cartophilist - a collector of the cards that used to be inside cigarette packets.
- ❖ Coleopterist - beetles
- ❖ Copoclephilist - a collector of key rings.
- ❖ Deltiologists - they study and collect postcards.
- ❖ Digitabulist - someone who collects thimbles.
- ❖ Dipterist - collectors of flies.
- ❖ Entredentolignumologists - collectors of toothpick boxes.
- ❖ Falerists (or Phalerists) study and collect medals, badges, pins, and other military and civilian awards and decorations.
- ❖ Fusilatelist - collectors of phone cards.
- ❖ Galanthophiles - collectors of the snowdrop plant.
- ❖ Heortologist - collectors of religious calendars
- ❖ Helixophiles - they study and collect corkscrews.
- ❖ Iconophile - an expert in or collector of icons or images.
- ❖ Labeophilists - collectors of beer bottles
- ❖ Lepidopterist - butterflies and moths
- ❖ Lotologists - collectors of lottery tickets.
- ❖ Machiologist - someone who collects knives.
- ❖ Memomagnetist - the name for a person who collects refrigerator magnets.
- ❖ Militiludibriologist - a collector of toy soldiers.
- ❖ Notaphilist - they collect banknotes.
- ❖ Numismatist - a collector of coins and banknotes
- ❖ Oenophile - a person who enjoys wines, usually as a connoisseur.
- ❖ Oologist - collector of or expert in birds' eggs.
- ❖ Pannapictographists - they collect comic books.
- ❖ Pernalogist - a collector of pearls.
- ❖ Philatelist - postage stamp collectors.
- ❖ Phillumenists - they collect matchbooks and other match-related items.
- ❖ Plangonologist - a collector of dolls.
- ❖ Rabbophilist - someone who collects walking sticks (canes).

- ❖ Scrippophilists - they collect old bond and share certificates.
- ❖ Scutelliphiles - they are similar to falerists, but they collect souvenir patches and badges.
- ❖ Spermatologist - a seed collector.
- ❖ Sucrologists - collectors of little sugar packets that you see in restaurants. It probably also applies to collectors of artificial sweeteners.
- ❖ Tegestologists - collectors of coasters or beer mats.
- ❖ Tyrosemiophiles - collect the labels of Camembert cheese (and possibly other cheeses too).
- ❖ Velologists - they collect and study expired vehicle tax discs
- ❖ Vexillophiles - they collect and display flags.

My Shadow

Here's a poem you may have heard before. It's by ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. The poem is told from a child's perspective who is trying to understand what purpose his (or her) shadow serves. If you have children or grandchildren, read the poem to them and watch the wonder on their faces.

*I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.*

*The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.*

*He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!*

*One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.*

Source: <https://poemanalysis.com/robert-louis-stevenson/my-shadow/>