

Nil Desperandum

Published for Haywards Heath & District Probus Club

ISSUE 9

December 2020

Isolated but not alone



Picture Credit: "Hughenden Christmas 2019" by Amateur with a Camera is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Index:

1. What are some weird facts about the sacred Mayan bird?
1. Head to Toe: Gentle seated chair exercises for Seniors improve range of motion
1. Apologies for any irreverence...
1. Autocorrect
2. Why you should first seek to understand — before trying to be understood
2. Great One-Liners
2. 'Paradox' and 'Oxymoron' : Is there a difference?
3. The Great Influenza
4. Do you remember this?
4. Keep Smiling
4. Lemons and Drunks
4. Letters from Hollywood: Inside the Private World of Classic American Movie-making
5. Well, I didn't know that!
6. Inspiration for Seniors on Learning
6. Was Kilroy really here?
7. The forgotten army and war
8. Anne of Cleves: Successful Queen but 'ugly wife'
8. The local cinemas in 1940
8. Old Bill
9. The Queue
9. Why did God make mothers?
9. What does SINGULARITY mean?

Cont:

9. Word Botching
10. What made Churchill an effective orator?
10. Unusual phrases
10. Snippets
11. Your eyes: Warning signs of serious problems
11. Why is the ocean salty?
11. Saucy, but Nice!
12. Walking Sticks and Canes
12. Who are the top 5 intelligent people in human history?
13. Just coincidental or weird?
13. Napoleon Hill's 10 Rules for Success
14. Eric Melrose "Winkle" Brown
15. If at first you don't succeed, try again and again...
16. Chaps, Blokes etc... who are they?
16. The Albion – Warts and All
17. General Knowledge – Did you know that...
18. An amusing story
18. Pets
18. Look - no keys!
19. New Year in Vienna
19. The Virus and our Vocabularies
20. All Around My Hat and The Wadhurst Connection
21. The Uyghurs
21. What's the quickest way to Donegal?
22. Jane Austen
23. Finish with a Smile, Laugh or Chuckle



What are some weird facts about the sacred Mayan bird?

Posted by Victor Dirikebamor on Quora.com



Picture Credit: "Temple of Kukulcan, Chichen Itza" by dungdung is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

When you clap your hands at the base of the Kulkan Temple in Mexico, the song of a sacred Mayan bird will echo through the air. Listen to it [here](#).

It is believed that the Mayan people constructed the Temple in a way that a clap at the base of the temple produces an echo that sounds like a call of the sacred Quetzal bird, a gorgeous bird cloaked in an array of green and red feathers.

Also, every equinox, when the sun rays hit the pyramid, the resulting shadow is like that of an enormous snake which slithers down the side of the Temple.

Like the snake, the quetzal was considered divine by the Maya.

The chirp and a rasping whisper of an echo were believed to be the voice of the god.

If the Maya intentionally crafted the pyramid with such effects in mind, then it was an outstanding and marvellous architectural and engineering feat.

Source: [Here's How This Ancient Mayan Pyramid Makes Bird Calls](#)



"My four-year-old son usually helps me, but he's at his grandparents' home. Can you show me how to use my new phone?"

Head to Toe: Gentle seated chair exercises for Seniors improve range of motion

Found on [DailyCaring.com](#)

Older adults who can't easily move around or are frail can still benefit from regular exercise. The important thing is to find exercises that can be safely done.

That's why chair exercises work so well.

Seniors stay seated in a sturdy, non-slip chair while exercising. It's ideal for people who are at high risk of falls, have severe joint problems, or are wheelchair-bound.

The exercises are also an effective way to reduce fall risk and can help reduce pain. Plus, any kind of exercise boosts mood and self-esteem as well as maintaining and improving range of motion.

There's a video showing how to do it, click [here](#).



CAUTION: Please consult your GP or medical specialist before starting any kind of exercise routine.

Apologies for any irreverence...

Bush, Obama and Trump are invited to speak with God...

God asks Bush: "What do you believe in?"

Bush answered: "I believe in the free market, and the strong American nation!" "Very well", says God. "Come sit to my right."

Next, God asks Obama: "What do you believe in?"

Obama answered: "I believe in the power of democracy, and equal rights for all."

"Good", says God. "You shall sit to my left."

Finally, God asks Trump: "What do you believe in?"

Trump answered: "I believe you're sitting in my chair."

Autocorrect

A priest, a rabbit and a minister walk into a bar.

The bartender asks the rabbit "What can I get you to drink?"

The rabbit says "I have no idea, I'm only here because of autocorrect".

Cheers!

Why you should first seek to understand — before trying to be understood

By Mike Greene: the article appeared [here](#).



People really don't listen. People just either not that interested in what you're saying, or they are too focused on their own agenda. It's ridiculous to see two people acting like they really hear each other — by chance.

In "*The Significance Principle*", authors Les Carter and Jim Underwood state that we should listen past what the other person has finished. We should even pause before answering. Let's get their point, their story, their compliment, and even their criticism out. Completely.

SEE ALSO: [How to drive performance by chasing new goals](#)

Then, before preparing your response, ask more about what they said. Get engaged. Understand what and why.

Stephen Covey defines this as the fifth habit in his bestselling book, "*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*." It's critical: Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

Seeking real understanding affirms the other person and what they have to say. That's what they want. That's what we all want — to be understood, valued and affirmed.

What if you seek to understand but others don't?

Two things come to mind. One person truly listening is generally better than none. More important, one person listening generally leads to two people listening. Let's be honest, if I honour you with my ears, you'll be more likely to reciprocate. Others learn the habit through our example.

Do you want to be a better leader, salesperson, parent, spouse or friend? Be a better listener. Let's avoid the habit of collective monologue by really listening — with the intent of understanding, appreciating, and affirming.

The ability to hear is a gift. The willingness to listen is a choice.

The Author

Mike Greene owns IntegrityWorks Coaching, an integrity-driven coaching, training and consulting company focused on planned and purposeful growth for individuals, teams and organizations. It specifically focuses on sales, leadership, communication and team development. He has authored three books, *60 Second Time Out*, *60 Second Leadership* and *60 Second Perspective*.

mike@integrityworkcoaching.com

Website: <https://www.integrityworkcoaching.com/>

Great One-Liners

Posted by Lorian Flint, on Quora.com

1. The first computer dates back to Adam and Eve. It was an Apple with limited memory, just one byte. And then everything crashed.
2. We live in a society where pizza gets to your house before the police.
3. I find it ironic that the colors red, white, and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you.
4. Alcohol is a perfect solvent: It dissolves marriages, families and careers.
5. What is the best thing about living in Switzerland? Well, the flag is a big plus.
6. If you're not supposed to eat at night, why is there a light bulb in the refrigerator?
7. My therapist says I have a preoccupation with vengeance. We'll see about that.
8. A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.
9. Hospitality is making your guests feel like they're at home, even if you wish they were.
10. Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
11. We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
12. Team work is important; it helps to put the blame on someone else.
13. I was born to be a pessimist - my blood type is B Negative.
14. Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

'Paradox' and 'Oxymoron': Is there a difference?

Although both a *paradox* and an *oxymoron* involve contradictions, they have an important difference. A *paradox* is a rhetorical device or a self-contradictory statement that can actually be true. A *paradox* is a logical puzzle that seems to contradict itself.

On the other hand, an *oxymoron* is a figure of speech that pairs two opposing words. A contradiction in terms, if you like.

The key to easily spotting the difference is to focus on the meanings of the words themselves. In an *oxymoron*, the words themselves have a shade of contradiction in their definitions.

The Great Influenza

Extracted from a book of that title, by John M. Barry, © copyright 2004, 2005. Publisher: Penguin Group

Once President Woodrow Wilson decided that America should enter World War I, he did so with fire and fury, brushing aside individual liberties and crystalizing Americans around the single focal point of war:

"His fire informed virtually everything that happened in the country, including fashion: to save cloth, a war material -- everything was a war material -- designers narrowed lapels and eliminated or shrank pockets. And his fury particularly informed every act of the United States government. During the Civil War, Lincoln had suspended the writ of habeas corpus, imprisoning hundreds of people. But those imprisoned presented a real threat of armed rebellion. He left unchecked extraordinarily harsh criticism. Wilson believed he had not gone far enough and told his cousin, *'Thank God for Abraham Lincoln. I won't make the mistakes that he made.'*

"The government compelled conformity, controlled speech in ways, frightening ways, not known in America before or since. Soon after the declaration of war, Wilson pushed the Espionage Act through a cooperative Congress, which balked [balked] only at legalizing outright press censorship -- despite Wilson's calling it 'an imperative necessity.' The bill gave Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson the right to refuse to deliver any periodical he deemed unpatriotic or critical of the administration. And, before television and radio, most of the political discourse in the country went through the mails. A southerner, a narrow man and a hater, nominally a populist but closer to the Pitchfork Ben Tillman wing of the party than to that of William Jennings Bryan, Burleson soon had the post office stop delivery of virtually all publications and any foreign-language publication that hinted at less-than-enthusiastic support of the war.

"Attorney General Thomas Gregory called for still more power. Gregory was a progressive largely responsible for Wilson's nominating Louis Brandeis to the Supreme Court, a liberal and the court's first Jew. Now, observing that America was 'a country governed by public opinion,' Gregory intended to help Wilson rule opinion and, through opinion, the country. He demanded that the Librarian of Congress report the names of those who had asked for certain books and also explained that the government needed to monitor 'the individual casual or impulsive disloyal utterances.' To do the latter, Gregory pushed for a law broad enough to punish statements made 'from good motives or ... [if] traitorous motives weren't provable.' The administration got such a law.

"In 1798, Federalist President John Adams and his party, under pressure of undeclared war with France, passed the Sedition Act, which made it unlawful to 'print, utter, or publish ... any false, scandalous, or malicious writing' against the government. But that law inflamed controversy, contributed to Adams's re-election defeat, and led to the only impeachment of a Supreme Court justice in history, when Samuel Chase both helped get grand jury indictments of critics and then sentenced these same critics to maximum terms.

"Wilson's administration went further, yet engendered little opposition. The new Sedition Act made it punishable by twenty years in jail to 'utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the government of the United States.' One could go to jail for cursing the government, or criticizing it, even if what one said was true. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the Supreme Court opinion that found the act constitutional - after the war ended, upholding lengthy prison terms for the defendants - arguing that the First Amendment did not protect speech if 'the words used... create a clear and present danger.'

"To enforce that law, the head of what became the Federal Bureau of Investigation agreed to make a volunteer group called the American Protective League an adjunct to the Justice Department, and authorized them to carry badges identifying them as 'Secret Service.' Within a few months the APL would have ninety thousand members.

"Within a year, two hundred thousand APL members were operating in a thousand communities. In Chicago a 'flying squad' of league members and police trailed, harassed, and beat members of the International Workers of the World. In Arizona, league members and vigilantes locked twelve hundred IWW members and their 'collaborators' into boxcars and left them on a siding in the desert across the state line in New Mexico. In Rockford, Illinois, the army asked the league for help in gaining confessions from twenty-one black soldiers accused of assaulting white women. Throughout the country, the league's American Vigilance Patrol targeted 'seditious street oratory' sometimes calling upon the police to arrest speakers for disorderly conduct, sometimes acting more ... directly. And everywhere the league spied: on neighbors, investigated 'slackers' and 'food hoarders,' demanded to know why people didn't buy - or didn't buy more - Liberty Bonds.

"States outlawed the teaching of German, while an Iowa politician warned that 'ninety percent of all the men and women who teach the German language are traitors.' Conversations in German on the street or over the telephone became suspicious. Sauerkraut was renamed 'Liberty cabbage.' The Cleveland Plain Dealer stated: *'What the nation demands is that treason, whether thinly veiled or quite unmasked, be stamped out.'* Every day the Providence Journal carried a banner warning, *'Every German or Austrian in the United States unless known by years of association should be treated as a spy.'* The Illinois Bar Association declared that lawyers who defended draft resisters were 'unpatriotic' and 'unprofessional.' Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler, a national leader of the Republican Party, fired faculty critical of the government and observed, *'What had been tolerable became intolerable now. What had been wrongheadedness was now sedition. What had been folly was now treason.'*

"Thousands of government posters and advertisements urged people to report to the Justice Department anyone 'who spreads pessimistic stories, divulges - or seeks - confidential military information, cries for peace, or belittles our effort to win the war.' Wilson himself began speaking of the 'sinister intrigue' in America carried on 'high and low' by 'agents and dupes.'

"Even Wilson's enemies, even the supposedly internationalist Communists, distrusted foreigners. Two Communist parties initially emerged in the United States, one with a membership of native-born Americans, one 90 percent immigrants.

"Judge Learned Hand, one of Simon Flexner's closest friends, later observed, 'That community is already in the process of dissolution where each man begins to eye his neighbor as a possible enemy, where nonconformity with the accepted creed, political as well as religious, becomes a mark of disaffection; where denunciation, without specification or backing, takes the place of evidence; where orthodoxy chokes freedom of dissent.' But American society hardly seemed to be dissolving. In fact it was crystalizing around a single focal point; it was more intent upon a goal than it had ever been, or might possibly ever be again."

Comment from Martin Pollins

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

Eclectic excerpts delivered to your email every day

 Delanceyplace.com

Do you remember this?



(Morecome & Wise). It's a simple enough plot: described as 'another play wot Ernie wrote': "Escape From Stalag 54" with guest star John Mills. That's Eric in the furnace, by the way.

Bring those memories flooding back [here](#).

Keep Smiling

From Alan Tatnall



Lemons and Drunks

A drunk walks into a bar and orders several shots of Vodka. After a few of these, the drunk is well away, and slurring his words he says to the barman: "DO lemons have LEGS?"

The frustrated barman replies: "Of course they blooming don't"

The drunk, speaks, louder than before: "I shed, DO lemons have LEGS!"

The barman, now really agitated, say: "NO!"

The drunk, slurring his words and half falling off his stool, says: "Thenn... I think I've just squeezed yer canary into me drink."

Letters from Hollywood: Inside the Private World of Classic American Moviemaking

Extracted on Delanceyplace from a book of that title, by Rocky Lang & Barbara Hall, © copyright 2019. Publisher: Abrams

In this terse wire, United Artists, the company funding the first James Bond film, rejected Sean Connery for the role:

"Harry Saltzman - Warwickfilm - London.

"Blumofe reports New York did not care for Connery feels we can do better - Cubby'

"With just a few Telexed words to his partner Harry Saltzman, the producer Albert 'Cubby' Broccoli sums up the progress on casting the leading role in *Dr. No*, the first film based on the popular James Bond novels by Ian Fleming. Though they were produced in England, the films were bankrolled by United Artists, and clearly UA was keeping an eye on its investment.

"Luckily for Bond fans everywhere, Robert Blumofe, UA's head of production, changed his mind about Sean Connery and approved his casting, though no doubt he would have preferred Cary Grant, who was also at one time under consideration for the part. One of the most durable franchises in movie history, the Bond films are still produced by Broccoli and Saltzman's company, Eon Productions."



Picture Credit: "Sean Connery" by twm1340 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Comment from Martin Pollins

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

Eclectic excerpts delivered to your email every day

 Delanceyplace.com

Well, I didn't know that!

- Planning consent was first required for development of new buildings and change of use in 1947.** The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 was an Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom passed by the Labour government led by Clement Attlee. It came into effect on 1 July 1948, and along with the 1947 Act was the foundation of modern town and country planning in the United Kingdom.
- Hospitals were founded and funded in the middle ages in Britain, in a quite different manner to today.** See [BBC on development of patient care](#): The Church played a major role in patient care in the Middle Ages. The Church regarded it a religious duty to care for the sick and it was the Church which provided hospital care. It also funded the universities, where doctors trained. [ScienceMuseum.org adds](#): In England, hospital care was forced to become secular after the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII. Most of the 900 or so religious alms houses offering lodging to pilgrims and the sick were disbanded. The City of London petitioned the King to keep their monastic hospitals and he relented, endowing St Bartholomew's, St Thomas', and St Mary's of Bethlehem as secular charitable institutions. To fill the gap left by the alms houses, Henry's daughter Elizabeth I passed the 1601 Act for the Relief of the Poor, which made local parishes responsible for the 'impotent poor'—the old and the sick. Funding for their care came from local taxes on landowners in the parish.
- Queen Elizabeth II is the longest serving British Monarch having reigned since 1952.** Before her, the longest serving British Monarchs were Queen Victoria (1837 to 1901) and George III (1760 to 1820).
- The oldest building in Haywards Heath is not St. Wilfrid's Church as some might think.** The Church was built between 1863 and 1865. The oldest building is *The Old House*, in Boltro Road, which Historic England records it as being built circa 1590.
- The London to Brighton Railway opened in September 1841.** The main line was opened in two sections, as major earthworks delayed completion in one piece. The Norwood Junction to Haywards Heath section was opened on 12 July 1841 and the remainder of the line from Haywards Heath to Brighton on 21 September 1841.
- The musical 'West Side Story' film was first shown to the public in 1961.** The film was an adaptation of the 1957 Broadway musical of the same name, which in turn was inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. The lead female star in the film was Natalie Wood.
- Britain occupied the island of Hong Kong on 25 January 1841 and used it as a military staging point.** The Qing dynasty ceded Hong Kong to the British Empire in 1842 through the treaty



of Nanjing, ending the First Opium War. Hong Kong then became a British crown colony. Britain also won the Second Opium War, forcing the Qing Empire to cede Kowloon in 1860, while leasing the New Territories for 99 years from 1898.

Picture Credit: "hong kong" by erasmusa is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

- Before a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament in the United Kingdom, it has to go through several readings:** See [here](#) for more information.



- In the game of Snooker, pocketing the pink ball scores six points.** There is one white cue ball, 15 red balls worth one point each (sometimes played with fewer red balls, commonly 6 or 10), and six balls of different colours: yellow (2 points), green (3), brown (4), blue (5), pink (6) and black (7). The objective of the game is to strike the white cue ball with a cue so that it hit the object balls in turn and causes them to fall into one of the six pockets.
- The main town in the Shetland Islands is Lerwick.** In fact, it is the only town. The Shetland archipelago comprises about 300 islands and skerries, of which 16 are inhabited. In addition to the Shetland Mainland the larger islands are Unst, Yell and Fetlar.
- The most northerly town in England is Berwick Upon Tweed.** The town is in the county of Northumberland. It lies at the mouth of the River Tweed on the east coast, 2.5 miles (4 kilometres) south of the Scottish border (the hamlet of Marshall Meadows is the actual northernmost settlement).
- The reason the Manchester Ship Canal was built was to cut the time and cost of transporting goods between Manchester and Liverpool by road and rail and helped the North West to become an industrial powerhouse.** It turned a landlocked city into a port. Construction started in November 1887 and took seven years to complete, with Queen Victoria opening the canal in 1894. The canal runs for 36 miles from astham on the Mersey estuary to Salford in Greater Manchester. The Canal is also known as the 'Big Ditch'.
- The 'Silk Road' primarily refers to the land routes connecting East Asia and Southeast Asia with South Asia, Persia, the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa and Southern Europe.** The Silk Road derives its name from the lucrative trade in silk carried out along its length, beginning in the Han dynasty in China (207 BCE–220 CE).

Contributed by David Waite



Inspiration for Seniors on Learning

Here is some inspiration to get your grey matter buzzing: whether you are in your 60s, 70s or even 80 and 90s, there's something here for you. Remember, you're never too old to learn something new. Quotations about learning are important to inspire us all to learn more.



"The longer I live the more beautiful life becomes." Frank Lloyd Wright

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young." Henry Ford

"Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art." Eleanor Roosevelt

"To keep the heart unwrinkled, to be hopeful, kindly, cheerful, reverent that is to triumph over old age." Thomas B. Aldrich

"Age is whatever you think it is. You are as old as you think you are." Muhammad Ali

"When our memories outweigh our dreams, we have grown old." Bill Clinton

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." C.S. Lewis

"And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Abraham Lincoln

"Aging seems to be the only available way to live a long life." Daniel Francois Esprit Auber

"If I'd known how old I was going to be I'd have taken better care of myself." Adolph Zukor

"If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be written upon the heart. The spirit should not grow old." James A. Garfield

"Grow old with me the best is yet to come." Robert Browning

"Age is a matter of feeling, not of years." Washington Irving

"To be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old." Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter." Mark Twain

"I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught." Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill

"Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." Albert Einstein

"There are few things more pathetic than those who have lost their curiosity and sense of adventure, and who no longer care to learn." Gordon B. Hinckley

"You're never too old to start learning, and you're never too young to aim high and achieve great things." Asa Hutchinson

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." Benjamin Franklin

"A wise man can learn more from a foolish question than a fool can learn from a wise answer." Bruce Lee

"It's what you learn, after you know it all, that counts." John Wooden

Was Kilroy really here?

"Kilroy was here" was an American symbol that became popular during World War II, typically seen in graffiti. Kilroy's origin is hotly debated, but the phrase and the distinctive accompanying doodle became associated with GIs in the 1940s: a bald-headed man (sometimes depicted as having a few hairs) with a prominent nose peeking over a wall with his fingers clutching the wall. Like this:



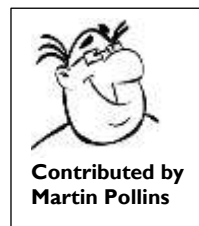
"Kilroy" was the American equivalent of the Australian Foo was here which originated during World War I. In the UK, the version that became popular was Mr Chad or just Chad. The

character of Chad may have been derived from a British cartoonist in 1938, possibly pre-dating Kilroy was here. Other names for the character include Smoe, Clem, Flywheel, Private Snoops, Overby, The Jeep, and Sapo.

Jon Bourgetti on Quora.com says that Kilroy was real and worked as an inspector at a shipyard. Back during World War II, ship hulls were often riveted. Kilroy was a rivet inspector. Riveters were paid by the number of rivets they installed. Rivet inspectors counted them and circled each counted rivet with a piece of chalk then chalked their name on the hull so that other rivet inspectors did not duplicate the count.

A problem arose when the riveters would scrub away the chalk marks so that they could be paid double. Kilroy would have none of it. Kilroy started using a wax crayon that could not be so easily eradicated, including the words *Kilroy was here*. The crayon writing remained as the marked ship hull was passed down the assembly line, much to the amusement of shipyard workers. They created the iconic funny Kilroy sketch and started scrawling it on cargo headed for Europe. Apparently, the Camden Shipyard & Maritime Museum know all about it - they have a Kilroy display and a photo of Kilroy, although I haven't been able to find it yet.

But a *Kilroy was here* drawing can be found in two locations at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. And, according to Mental Floss ([here](#)), although the Oxford English Dictionary writes Kilroy off as a mythical person, dozens of real people claimed to be the doodle's namesake in 1946, when the American Transit Association (ATA) held a radio contest to establish the origin of the phrase. One of them was James J. Kilroy, who worked at the Bethlehem Steel shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts during the war inspecting the work done by others on the tanks and hulls of warships.



Contributed by
Martin Pollins

What do you think? Is Kilroy a figment of someone's imagination or was he as real as the watery monster found from time to time on a Loch in Scotland?

The forgotten army and war

Economically and strategically, the Suez Canal was a vital route for both Middle Eastern oil and trade with the Far East. Britain had maintained a military presence in Egypt to protect the canal under the terms of a treaty signed in 1936. But dissident locals, Egyptian nationalists, resented the British presence in their country. British forces concentrated in the area immediately adjacent to the canal, known as 'the Canal Zone', and withdrew from the cities.

Opened in the 1880s the British-French-owned Suez Canal, which connected the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, provided Britain with a shorter shipping route to its empire but also to the crucially important oilfields of the Persian Gulf. A treaty signed in 1936 with the Egyptian government allowed the British to stay in the country but concentrated in the Suez Canal Zone, an area running along the length of the waterway. But Egyptian nationalists, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, fought back and demanded a revision of the treaty and the immediate withdrawal of all British troops. The British and French-owned canal was nationalised by Nasser, prompting military action by Israel, Britain and France to restore Western control.

Previous agreements were torn up and in October 1951, the Egyptian government repealed the 1936 treaty. In October 1954, Britain and Egypt agreed on the evacuation of Britain's Canal Zone garrison, and the treaty provided that the Suez Canal Company would transfer to Egyptian government control in 1968.

The Stand-Off

In the years after World War Two the British government was struggling to maintain its colonial empire in Egypt and beyond; national servicemen were seen as having a crucial role in keeping control.

By the 1950s males between 17 and 21 had to spend two years in the armed forces, with nearly two million going through national service between 1939 and 1960. They were deployed all over the world to protect British economic and strategic interests - and nowhere was more important to these than the Suez Canal Zone.

In October 1951, a tense stand-off between the British and Egyptian governments broke down over the number of UK troops stationed in the country. In response, the British government mobilised 60,000 troops in 10 days, in what was described as the biggest airlift of troops since World War Two.

The Conscription

In the years after World War Two the British government was struggling to maintain its colonial empire in Egypt and beyond; national servicemen were seen as having a crucial role in keeping control. By the 1950s, males between 17 and 21 had to spend two years in the armed forces, with nearly two million going through national service between 1939 and 1960. They were deployed all over the world to protect British economic and strategic interests - and nowhere was more important to these than the Suez Canal Zone.

The National Army Museum [records](#) that, between 1945 and 1956, British soldiers manned bases on the Suez Canal in Egypt. It was not a popular posting for the soldiers: as well as being subjected to regular attacks by local nationalists, they also had to endure disease and a harsh climate.

The Suez Crisis (see more detail, [here](#))

The Suez Crisis, or the Second Arab-Israeli war, was an invasion of Egypt in late 1956 by Israel, followed by the United Kingdom and France. The aims were to regain Western control of the Suez Canal and to remove Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had just nationalised the canal. After the fighting had started, political pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Nations led to a withdrawal by the three invading Nations. The episode humiliated the UK and France and strengthened the position of the Egyptian president Col. Nasser.

On 29th October 1956, Israel invaded the Egyptian Sinai. Britain and France issued a joint ultimatum to cease fire, which was ignored. On 5th November 1956, Britain and France landed paratroopers along the Suez Canal.

British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden, said on 8th August 1956:



'Our quarrel is not with Egypt, still less with the Arab world. It is with Colonel Nasser. He has shown that he is not a man who can be trusted to keep an agreement. Now he has torn up all his country's promises to the Suez Canal Company and has even gone back on his own statements. We cannot agree that an act of plunder which threatens the livelihood of many nations should be allowed to succeed. And we must make sure that the life of the great trading nations of the world cannot in the future be strangled at any moment by some interruption to the free passage of the canal.'

While the Egyptian forces were defeated, they had blocked the canal to all shipping, and the canal was useless. Historians conclude the crisis "signified the end of Great Britain's role as one of the world's major powers".

The Debacle

Pamela Parkes, wrote about the Suez Emergency on BBC News on 24th October 2016, [here](#).

The operation was hampered from the very start by a severe lack of resources. There were insufficient ships and landing craft. And, when it was decided to add armour to the force, a shortage of transporters meant that the tanks had to be moved to their embarkation points by a commercial removals firm.

Thousands of British conscripts were sent to Egypt to defend the Suez Canal in the wake of rising Egyptian nationalism. The troops were poorly trained and under-equipped, they faced a brutal and bloody situation, protecting British interests in a conflict they wanted no part of.

It was the beginning of the end of Western control of the Suez Canal and the start of the three-year Suez Emergency, which has been described as a "forgotten war fought by a forgotten army". British prime minister Anthony Eden resigned over the debacle.

Footnote: My conscription was deferred until completion of my articles as a trainee accountant otherwise I'd have been off to the Suez Canal in 1956.



Contributed by
Martin Pollins

Anne of Cleves: Successful Queen but 'ugly wife'

Picture Credit: "Princess Anne of Cleves, 1530s" by [lisby1](#) is licensed under [CC-PDM 1.0](#)



Anne of Cleves was Henry VIII's wife for just six months, making her the shortest reigning of all his Queens. She is often dismissed as little more than a blip in the history of England's most-married monarch. But, suggests Tracy Borman, the true story is entirely different to this humiliating fiction. Anne of Cleves has gone down in history as the ugly wife. Henry VIII was so revolted when he first clapped eyes on her that he immediately instructed his lawyers to get him out of the marriage. Thereafter, his poor, spurned 4th Queen retreated quietly

into obscurity to hide her face from the world, while Henry joyfully married the infinitely more desirable Catherine Howard.

Anne, was Henry's wife for just six months, making her the shortest reigning of all his queens. Although she has been dismissed as little more than a blip in the history of England's most-married monarch, the true story of Henry VIII's fourth wife is entirely different to this humiliating fiction. Anne may not have been to the king's liking, but how she responded proves that she was far from being the hapless victim of legend. In fact, she can justifiably claim to have been the most successful of all Henry's wives.

You can read Tracy Borman's story on History Extra [here](#).

Old Bill



Per Wikipedia: The custodian helmet used by the [Metropolitan Police Service](#) in London.

Let's make one thing clear from the outset. *Old Bill* has nothing to do with an invoice you haven't paid yet.

History By the Yard ([here](#)) notes that the slang phrase "Watch Out! Old Bill's about!" was in use in Covent Garden in 1968, and "Old Bill" was used in Maidstone in 1966.

However, it is probably much older than this. It is now commonly used as a slang phrase referring to the police, certainly made more familiar to the general public by the TV series "The Bill" about the police. It does not appear in the comprehensive *Slang Terms and Criminal Jargon* in *The Book for Police* published by Caxton in 1958 whereas Partridge's Dictionary of Slang dates it from the 1950s or 'perhaps earlier'. The *Official Encyclopedia of Scotland Yard* (by Martin Fido and Keith Skinner) offers several possibilities for the origin of the phrase (the origin probably being distinctly different from when it came into common use):

1. Old Bill referred to King William IV who came to the throne in 1830, a year after the founding of the Metropolitan Police.
2. *The Custom of the Century* a play of 1619 by John Fletcher has constables of the watch refer to themselves as "us peacemakers and all our bill of authority".
3. Old constables of the watch were sometimes nicknamed for the bills or billhooks they carried as weapons.
4. Kaiser Wilhelm I of Prussia (Kaiser Bill) visited England about the time that police adopted the current shaped helmet in place of a top hat in 1864 and this association may be relevant.
5. The 'old bill' was in Victorian times a bill presumed to be presented by the police for a bribe to persuade them to turn a blind eye to some nefarious activity.
6. New laws for the police start their life as bills in Parliament.
7. 'Old Bill' might refer to the music hall song "Won't you come home, Bill Bailey" also referring to the Old Bailey court.
8. In the 1860s a popular Sergeant Bill Smith at Limehouse was asked for as 'Old Bill'.
9. Many police officers did wear authoritarian looking 'Old Bill' moustaches like Bruce Bairnsfather's famous WWI cartoon character, the wily old soldier in the trenches.
10. In 1917, the government adopted Bairnsfather's cartoon character in posters and advertisements putting over wartime messages under the heading 'Old Bill says.' and for at least some of these, the figure was dressed in Special Constable's uniform.
11. The original vehicles used by the Flying Squad had registration plates with the letters BYL.
12. The London County Council at one time registered all police, fire and ambulance vehicles with plates including letters BYL.
13. According to the late author and politician Robin Finlayson Cook, 'old bill' is a racing term for an outsider or unknown quantity; hence a dodgy prospect for an illegal gambler's point of view.



Researched by
Martin Pollins

The local cinemas in 1940



Mid Sussex Times - Tuesday
23rd January 1940, Image ©
Johnston Press plc. Image
created courtesy of THE
BRITISH LIBRARY
BOARD.

The Queue



Picture Credit: Image by sderling is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Whilst waiting in a long queue early one morning for the supermarket to open for us 'seniors', I was surprised to see a young man saunter along and try to cut in at the front of the queue.

A furious old lady waved her cane at him, and he quickly backed away.

A moment later, the young man tried again. He managed to dodge the old lady, but then two old men started shouting at him. Again, the young man backed away.

But he wasn't giving up, and soon the young man approached the queue for the third time. By now, all of us pensioners were ready for him, an angry wall of opposition. The young man stood there for a moment, and then shrugged his shoulders. "If you people won't let me unlock the door, none of you will ever get in to shop."

Why did God make mothers?

Here are some of the answers seven-year-olds gave to the following questions...

Why did God give you your mother and not some other mum? *God knew she likes me a lot more than other kids' mums like me.*

What kind of little girl was your mum? *I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.*

What did your mum need to know about your dad before she married him? *His last name.*

Why did your mum marry your dad? *She got too old to do anything else with him.*

What's the difference between mums & dads? *Mum knows how to talk to teachers without scaring them.*

What would it take to make your mum perfect? *On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.*



What does SINGULARITY mean?

It sounds like a word the meaning of which we ought to know. But a surprising number of people haven't got a clue. It certainly doesn't mean "not the marrying kind".

Dictionary.com says:

Singularity is a hypothesized future era or event when exponential improvements in computer intelligence and advances in technology will result in an acute change in human society and evolution.

Wikipedia puts it a little more simply:

Singularity is a hypothetical point in time at which technological growth becomes uncontrollable and irreversible, resulting in unforeseeable changes to human civilization.

Word Botching



Do you remember this chap?

Frank Herbert Muir was an English comedy writer, radio and television personality, and raconteur. His writing and performing partnership with Denis Norden endured for most of their careers. Together they wrote BBC radio's *Take It From Here* for over 10 years, and then appeared on BBC radio quizzes *My Word!* and *My Music* for another 35 years. Frank became Assistant Head of

Light Entertainment at the BBC in the 1960s, and was then London Weekend Television's founding Head of Entertainment.

On one occasion, Frank was seated alongside another guest on an evening chat show. It was a long time ago and nobody can remember whose show it was or who the other guests were, except they were chatting about birds, and the other guest said "I'm not actually an *orthinologist*". That's when Frank Muir interjected in a split second quip with "I would say you're more of a *word-botcher*."

I think this is one of his funniest quotes: "It has been said that a bride's attitude towards her betrothed can be summed up in three words: Aisle. Alter. Hymn."



Then a long time ago, there was a TV show called "What's my Line" and another called "Twenty Questions", featuring a man with a deep voice, Gilbert Harding, whose many careers included schoolmaster, journalist, policeman, disc-jockey, actor, interviewer and television presenter. See a video about him [here](#).

Gilbert had a wicked sense of humour. For example, he said: "A judge said that all his experience, both as counsel and judge, had been spent sorting out the difficulties of people who, upon the recommendation of people they did not know, signed documents which they did not read, to buy goods they did not need, with money they had not got."

What made Churchill an effective orator?

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was not a born orator. He worked very hard to transform himself into a great public speaker. Nor did he have a particularly attractive speaking voice. But, he understood the power that words, both written and spoken, could have on an audience and was determined to master the art of public speaking – and do it well.



Picture Credit: "Sir Winston Churchill 'Never Give In' Wallpaper" by British Wallpapers is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Brent Cooper wrote an interesting article on Quora.com ([here](#)). He explains: Churchill's extraordinary speeches hinged on a series of Classical rhetorical devices. In an essay entitled *The Scaffolding of Rhetoric*, he described their use as 'the subtle art of combining the various elements that separately mean nothing and collectively mean so much in an harmonious proportion is known to a very few'.

Here are a few of Churchill's most famous flourishes:

Anaphora: The repetition of words or phrases at the start of a succession of clauses.

'We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing grounds. We shall fight in the fields, and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender'

Litotes: Deliberate understatement.

'Business carried on as usual during alterations on the map of Europe'

Antimetabole: The repetition of words in successive clauses, but with their order transposed.

'This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning'

Paronomasia: Using similar-sounding words or phrases.

'To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war'

Catachresis: An arresting image that pushes the boundaries of ordinary usage.

'...a new Dark Age made more sinister... by the lights of perverted science'

Epizeuxis: Emphatic repetition.

'...this is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never.'

Also worth reading is an unpublished Essay by Churchill (*The Scaffolding of Rhetoric*, November 1897, by Winston S. Churchill © Winston S. Churchill, renewal copyright 2000) - which you can find online [here](#).

Attribution: "6 Famous Rhetorical Devices used by Winston Churchill - Country Life", on 8th January 2015, [here](#).

Unusual phrases

Bob's your Uncle

This phrase is mainly used in Britain. It is often used immediately after a set of simple instructions and roughly means the same as '... and hey presto, it's as simple as that!'

It's probably, technically, an aphorism - a brief saying or phrase that expresses an opinion or makes a statement of wisdom without the flowery language of a proverb.

Its origin is uncertain, but a common theory is that the expression arose after Conservative Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury ("Bob") appointed his nephew Arthur Balfour as Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1887, an act of nepotism which was apparently both surprising and unpopular.

Sweet Fanny Adams*

Sadly, the meaning of this is very easy to pinpoint and refers to eight-year-old Fanny Adams, who was killed and dismembered in Alton in 1867. The Royal Navy reportedly came to refer to their paltry meat rations as "Fanny Adams". It later came to stand for nothing at all, the initials conveniently standing for another more common expression, resulting in Sweet FA.

Kicking the bucket*

First mentioned in print in 1775, it has been suggested that the bucket refers to the Old French buquet for a balance, or a trebuchet, the medieval siege weapon for hurling missiles at the enemy.

A bit of how's your father*

This expression is first credited to music-hall comedian Harry Tate, who, when asked an awkward question, would reply with "How's your father?". This was then used by First World War servicemen as a stand-in for all manner of implications, including the racy one it is now most often associated with.

Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey*

This phrase was first recorded in America in the mid-1800s. Some believe it originated from the Napoleonic wars and derived from the brass plate (called a monkey) that cannonballs were stacked on. When it was cold, the brass would contract and the balls would fall off. Others think this is unlikely and merely refers to the extremities on actual brass monkeys.

A few sandwiches short of a picnic **

This phrase suggest that someone that lacks common sense might be described as "a few sandwiches short of a picnic." It was first documented in the BBC's "Lenny Henry Christmas Special" in 1987.

Acknowledgement: The items marked * were mentioned in an article on British Sayings by Hazel Davis in *The Telegraph* on 22nd April 2016, [here](#). The last item ** about sandwiches was mentioned in an article by Bobbie Edsall in the Independent on 2nd January 2018 [here](#).

Snippets

From The Economist 17th-23rd October 2020

- **Holocaust denial** is to be banned on Facebook.
- The US, Britain, Japan and five other countries became the first signatories to the Artemis accords, a NASA initiative to establish principles for the sustainable and peaceful exploration of the **Moon**

Your eyes: Warning signs of serious problems

Picture Credit: "EYE CLINIC 3" by NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0



Eyes aren't exempt from the wear and tear of ageing. Some of the age-related changes in the eyes are annoying but not serious — for example, it can become difficult to focus on near objects, and eyelashes may thin out a bit. But other changes can be serious eye problems that threaten vision.

Issues such as Diabetes can have a serious impact on the eyes. *The Aging Eye: Preventing and treating eye disease*, published by Harvard Health Publishing has information to help.

Here's some of what you'll find in *The Aging Eye*:

- How you can safeguard your eyes from the most serious eye conditions
- Nutrients and supplements that may help reduce the risk of advanced age-related macular degeneration
- Everything you need to know about buying UV-blocking sunglasses
- 20 signs you should see your eye specialist
- Comprehensive review of glaucoma medications
- Tests for glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration you can do at home

More information is available [here](#).

Caution: No content on Nil Desperandum, regardless of date, should ever be used as a substitute for direct medical advice from your doctor or other qualified clinician/medical practitioner.

Why is the ocean salty?

Every time you bathe in the sea, you have geology to thank for the extra buoyancy that salty water provides. Large-scale geological processes bring salt into the oceans and then recycle it deep into the planet.

The short answer to 'why is the ocean salty' sounds something like this: Salts eroded from rocks and soil are carried by rivers into the oceans, where salt accumulates. Another source of salt comes from hydrothermal vents, deep down on the surface of the ocean floor. We say "salts" — because the oceans carry several types of salts, not just what we call table salt.

But the longer answer is much more interesting: we have to go back in time — a lot. Billions of years ago, during a period called the Archean, our planet was a very different environment than it is today. The atmosphere was different, the landscape was different, but as far as ocean saltness goes, there may have been more similarities than differences.

Geologists look at ancient rocks that preserved ancient water (and therefore, its ancient salinity); one such study found that Earth's Archean oceans may have been ~1.2 times saltier than they are today. At first glance, this sounds pretty weird. Since salt in the seas and oceans is brought in by river runoff and erosion, the salts hadn't yet had time to accumulate in Earth's earliest days. So what's going on?

It is believed that while the very first primeval oceans were less salty than they are today, our oceans have had a significant salinity for billions of years.

You can read the full article by Mihai Andrei by Mihai Andrei, [here](#).

Saucy, but Nice!

Picture Credit: "Frazer Nash's A to Zed Of English For The Benefit Of Johnny Foreigner (Especially Seppos): W" by Steve Sparshott is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Worcestershire Sauce has its roots in India but its unique flavour was actually created by accident in Worcester, England in 1835.

The Lea & Perrins company says that a Lord Sandys had returned home to England to retire after successfully governing Bengal, India for many years. Missing his favourite Indian sauce, he commissioned local chemist John Lea and William Perrins to come up with a reasonable copy. There's another version of the story which had the two chemists concocting a new condiment which, after 18 months, they found had matured into a delicious sauce. So delicious in fact that they decided to put it on sale.



The 1835 date is in some dispute as elsewhere it is suggested that the sauce was first launched in 1837 (that may be true as it was left to ferment in a cellar). The identity of Lord Sandys, said to be a nobleman of the Worcester area, is disputed by some. The nobleman in question was Arthur Moyses William Sandys, 2nd Baron Sandys (1792-1860) of Ombersley Court, Worcestershire, Lieutenant-General and politician, a member of the House of Commons.

What is not disputed is that **Worcestershire Sauce** has been successful, however it arrived to our shores. Sauces were particularly popular during the 19th century as they gave flavour to otherwise plain food and also helped tenderise tough cuts of meat. The guarded recipe for Worcester Sauce basically remains the same today as its original. However, the advertising no longer purports to "make your hair grow beautiful." Since 1876, the term *Worcestershire Sauce* can be used as a generic term for similar sauces.

Today, the Lea & Perrins company is owned by Heinz.

Walking Sticks and Canes

Sources: Various, including [Encyclopedia.com](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking_stick), [Classy Walking Canes, Just Walkers](#), and [Fashionable Canes](#).



Picture Credit: "Walking stick handle" by Henry Rado, American, 1859–1921 is licensed under [CC0 1.0](#)

Whilst first used as a weapon, the walking stick or walking cane has long been a symbol of strength and power, authority and social prestige, and used mainly by men. Rulers of many cultures carried some form of walking stick or staff. Egyptian rulers

were believed to have carried staffs varying from three to six feet in length. These were often topped by an ornamental knob in the shape of a lotus, a symbol of long life. Ancient Greek gods were often depicted with a staff in hand. But even gorillas have been known to use sticks or branches as a walking aid.

Walking sticks date back to ancient times. The Bible refers to the walking staff as a symbol of office and dignity.

During the eighteenth century the walking stick gained wider acceptance. Modest canes were used among ordinary people, while those who could afford it opted for walking sticks of great elegance and style. Etiquette rules were greatly relaxed and owners could now safely lean on their canes in casual poses.

The end of the nineteenth century marked a decline in cane styles. The actual phrase "walking cane" was not in existence until the sixteenth century. During the period when they became a fashionable item, walking sticks began to be constructed out of the jointed stems of tropical grasses such as bamboo, cane and rattan - hence, the word "cane!" They are now used interchangeably among some people, but the walking stick is associated more with active pursuits as hiking, whereas the cane is usually for the elderly or for anyone with a leg injury. While they often seem to be interchangeable words, walking sticks and walking canes are actually two very different types of product with different uses. Many people get them mixed up, but if you read on, you will be one of the elite few who know the difference between walking sticks and canes.

The main difference, of course, is function. Walking canes are designed to take weight on a regular basis. If you need support while walking, and you want to be able to lean your full weight on a walking aid, it is important that you use a walking cane. Canes are most often made of wood, aluminium, or steel. They are meant to take constant weight and are designed to be comfortable and practical for daily use.



Who are the top 5 intelligent people in human history?

Gianni Pudic posted this question on 21st July 2020 on Quora.com. His answer ranked (his words) the raw ability of the person and not necessarily to the contributions they made.

#1 William James Sidis (1898–1944)

This child was able to read the *New York Times* at only 18 months old. At age 8, the boy was fluent in eight languages (Latin, Greek, French, Russian, German, Hebrew, Turkish, and Armenian). At the age of 11, he was finally enrolled in Harvard and gave lectures in higher mathematics. His giftedness was evidently off charts, so much so that MIT physics professor Daniel F. Comstock claimed that this individual's talent was matched only by one historical figure, namely by that of German mathematician Carl Friedrich Gauss.

#2 Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855)

Carl Friedrich Gauss said he was calculating before he learned to speak properly. He is most famous for solving the assignment of his math-teacher, which was to add all numbers from 1 to 100 (1+2+3...+98+99+100). According to French mathematician Laplace, Gauss was the best mathematician to ever exist and that by a large margin.

#3 John von Neumann (1903–1957)

If you were to rank them by word of mouth however, this man would easily take the number one spot on this list. He was an allrounder, knowledgeable in physics, engineering, maths, and computer science. He was said to be able to recall any sentence (word for word) of all the books he read - plain simple perfect recall.

#4 Sir Isaac Newton (1643–1727)

According to the wishes of his parents, Newton should have become a farmer but didn't meet their wishes. Instead, Newton dedicated his life to algebra, mechanics, and optics. He also single-handedly invented calculus. This alone provides you with have a rough estimate of what this genius was capable of. Many regard Newton as the most influential scientist of all time.

#5 Nikola Tesla (1856–1943)

Nikola Tesla, the man who was ahead of his time, was born in Serbia. He became a physicist and electrical engineer is most famous for being the inventor of the alternating-current (AC) system, which today is the prevalent electrical system across the world. In 1926, Tesla even predicted wireless data exchange. Bizarrely, because of this and many other visions, he was declared as a mad man and not too seldom, also a dreamer. As for his cognitive abilities, Tesla was able to perform integral calculus in his head to the extent that teachers at the time believed he was cheating.

Just coincidental or weird?

Source: <https://www.parhlo.com/21-similarities-abraham-lincoln-j-f-kennedy-downright-creepy/>



This is Abraham Lincoln.

Picture Credit: "twlncn63" by [gygoebel](#) is licensed under [CC PDM 1.0](#)



And this is John F. Kennedy.

Picture Credit: [cropped], "John F. Kennedy" by [Worlds Direction](#) is licensed under [CC0 1.0](#)

They had something (well, quite a lot, no, a great deal) in common.

Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846.

John F. Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946.

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in 1860.

John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960.

And their wives lost a child while living in the White House.

Both Presidents were shot on a Friday.

Both were succeeded by Southerners.

The surname of the President who succeeded both of them was **Johnson** (Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Lincoln, was born in 1808, and Lyndon Baines Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy, was born in 1908.

John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Lincoln, was born in 1839. Lee Harvey Oswald, who assassinated Kennedy, was born in 1939.

Both assassins were known by their three names.

Both names are composed of fifteen letters.

Lincoln was shot at the theatre named "Ford."

Kennedy was shot in a car called "Lincoln" made by "Ford."

Booth (Lincoln's Assassin) was shot and killed in police custody before going to trial.

Oswald (Kennedy's Assassin) was shot and killed in police custody before going to trial.

Lincoln had 2 sons named Robert and Edward. Edward Lincoln died young and Robert Lincoln lived on.

Kennedy had 2 brothers named Robert and Edward. Robert Kennedy died young and Edward Kennedy lived on.

A week before Lincoln was shot, he was at Monroe, Maryland.

A week before Kennedy was shot, he was with Marilyn Monroe.

Rathbone, who was with Lincoln when he was shot, was injured.

Connally, who was with Kennedy when he was shot, was injured.

Lincoln was shot in a theatre and the assassin ran to a warehouse...

Kennedy was shot from a warehouse and the assassin ran to a theatre...

Napoleon Hill's 10 Rules for Success



If you have any interest in success, Napoleon Hill will need no introduction. Oliver Napoleon Hill was an American self-help author. He authored *Think & Grow Rich*, the book responsible for more millionaires than any other and among the 10 best-selling self-help books of all time. His work is that of legends and will live on forever through his books and wise quotes. Most of his books were promoted as expounding principles to achieve "success". Yet he is, in modern times, a controversial figure. Accused of fraud, modern historians also doubt many of his claims, such as that he met Andrew Carnegie and that he was an lawyer. Gizmodo has called him "the most famous conman you've probably never heard of" (at least, according to Matt Novak, in "The Untold Story of Napoleon Hill, the Greatest Self-Help Scammer of All Time", see [here](#)).

Hill's 10 Rules for Success (in business or life) re:

1. Have a definite purpose.
2. Get along peacefully with others.
3. Believe.
4. Your only limit is yourself.
5. Take action.
6. Improve your personality.
7. Create, recognize, and act upon opportunities.
8. Success must be planned.
9. Move with courage and determination.
10. Conceive, believe, achieve.

You can see a video of Napoleon Hill in action, [here](#).

Selected quotations:

- No man can succeed in a line of endeavour which he does not like.
- Man, alone, has the power to transform his thoughts into physical reality; man, alone, can dream and make his dreams come true.
- Think twice before you speak, because your words and influence will plant the seed of either success or failure in the mind of another.
- The starting point of all achievement is desire.
- Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.
- Procrastination is the bad habit of putting off until the day after tomorrow what should have been done the day before yesterday.

Eric Melrose "Winkle" Brown



Photo Attribution: By Unknown author - <http://media.iwm.org.uk/iwm/mediaLib/270/media-270516/large.jpg> This is photograph A 31015 from the collections of the Imperial War Museums., Public Domain <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=25266535>

Who? Many people might say they have never heard of him. You could simply say he was a pilot but if you did, it would be a very large understatement.

World War II Captain Eric Melrose "Winkle" Brown, CBE, DSC, AFC, Hon FRAeS, RN, died a month after his 97th birthday in February 2016. He was a British Royal Navy officer and test pilot who flew 487 types of aircraft, more than anyone else in history. He was also the most-decorated pilot in the history of the Royal Navy. Brown holds the world record for the most aircraft carrier deck take-offs and landings performed (2,407 and 2,271 respectively) and achieved several "firsts" in naval aviation, including the first landings on an aircraft carrier of a twin-engined aircraft, an aircraft with a tricycle undercarriage, a jet aircraft, and a rotary-wing aircraft. He flew almost every category of Royal Navy and RAF aircraft: glider, fighter, bomber, airliner, amphibian, flying boat and helicopter.

During World War II, he flew many types of captured German, Italian, and Japanese aircraft, including new jet and rocket aircraft. He was a pioneer of jet technology into the post-war era.

In 1936, Brown's father took him to see the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Hermann Göring had recently announced the existence of the Luftwaffe. There, the Browns met Ernst Udet, a former World War I fighter ace, who was happy to make the acquaintance of Brown senior, a former RFC pilot. Udet offered to take Eric up in a two-seat Bücker Jungmann. Eric Brown recalled the incident nearly 80 years later on the BBC radio programme *Desert Island Discs*.

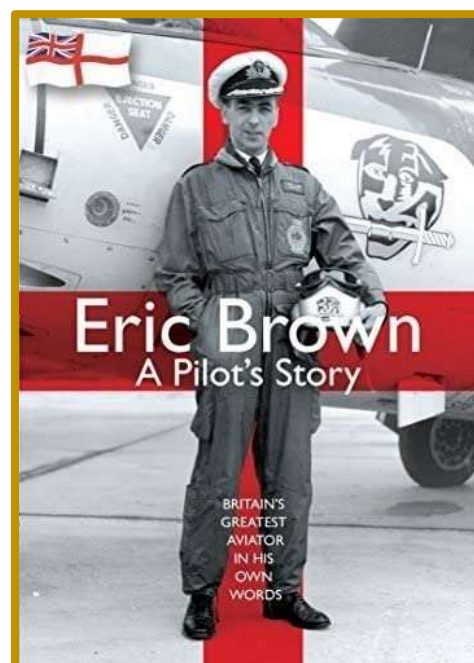
You can read about Brown's career [here](#) and [here](#). After World War II, Brown commanded the **Enemy Aircraft Flight**, an elite group of pilots who testflew captured German and Italian aircraft. That experience rendered Brown one of the few men to have been qualified to compare both Allied and Axis aeroplanes as they flew during the war. He flight-tested 53 German aircraft, including the Messerschmitt Me 163 Komet rocket fighter (now on display at the **National Museum of Flight** east of Edinburgh in Scotland). His flight test of this rocket plane, the only one by an Allied pilot using the rocket motor, was accomplished unofficially: it was deemed to be more or less suicidal due to the notoriously dangerous C-Stoff fuel and T-Stoff oxidizer combination.

In case you wondered about his nickname, this is the explanation: Brown received the affectionate nickname "Winkle" from his Royal Navy colleagues. Short for "Periwinkle", a small **mollusc**, the name was given to Brown because of his short stature of 5ft 7in. Brown partly attributed his survival of dangerous incidents to his ability to "curl himself up in the cockpit".

To mark the centenary of the birth of Scotland's greatest aviator, TV and film producer Nicholas Jones re-issued the DVD of his documentary entitled *Eric Brown – A Pilot's Story* (available on Amazon [here](#)). The core of Mr Jones's comprehensive film is a long interview with Captain Brown where he opens up about his life and times – including the years he commanded the Navy's fighter jet 804 squadron at Lossiemouth (see article by Rachel Lee, on 2nd January 2020, in *The Press and Journal*, [here](#)).

Eric Brown was in Germany when World War 2 broke out. He was locked up for three days by the SS then kicked out into Switzerland complete with his MG sports car. He had been selected to take part as an exchange student at the Schule Schloss Salem, located on the banks of Lake Constance, and it was while there in Germany that Brown was woken up with a loud knocking on his door one morning in September 1939. Upon opening the door, he was met by a woman with the announcement that "our countries are at war". Soon after, Brown was arrested by the SS. However, after three days' incarceration, they merely escorted Brown in his MG Magnette sports car to the Swiss border, saying they were allowing him to keep the car because they "had no spares for it".

From *Eric Brown (pilot)#Early_Life*



If at first you don't succeed, try again and again...

Rita Hayworth and *Shawshank Redemption* is a novella by Stephen King from his 1982 collection *Different Seasons*, subtitled *Hope Springs Eternal*. It has been thought to be loosely based on Leo Tolstoy's 1872 short story "God Sees the Truth, But Waits".

The film, simply called *The Shawshank Redemption*, tells the story of an innocent banker Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins), sentenced to life in Shawshank State Penitentiary for the murder of his wife and her lover. Over the next 20 years, he befriends a fellow prisoner, Ellis "Red" Redding (Morgan Freeman), and becomes instrumental in a money-laundering operation led by the prison warden Samuel Norton (Bob Gunton).

Peter Ramirez wrote an interesting piece on Quora.com in connection with *The Shawshank Redemption*, [here](#), and asks: 'why did Red get rejected in the first two times when he acted compliantly in front of the interrogation group [at his parole hearing] and incredibly got approved when he acted sarcastically in the same condition?' Ramirez says that the reason was because the [parole] board could tell he really was sorry the last time he said so.

"Ellis Boyd Redding. Your files say you've served forty years of a life sentence. You feel you've been rehabilitated?" (Parole Reviewer)

"Rehabilitated. Well, now let me see. You know, I don't have any idea what that means." (Ellis "Red" Redding)

"Well, it means you're ready to rejoin society —"

"I know what you think it means, sonny. To me, it's just a made-up word, a politician's word, so that young fellas like yourself can wear a suit and tie and have a job. What do you really want to know? Am I sorry for what I did?"

"Well, are you?"

"There's not a day goes by I don't feel regret ... not because I'm in here or because you think I should. I look back on the way I was then ... a young, stupid kid who committed that terrible crime ... I wanna to talk to him ... I wanna to try to talk some sense to him ... tell him the way things are. But I can't. That kid's long gone and ... this old man is all that's left ... I gotta to live with that. Rehabilitated? It's just a bullshit word ... so you go on and stamp your form, sonny, and stop wasting my time. Because to tell you the truth, I don't give a shit."

The Shawshank Redemption (1994)

Red's words demonstrated the resounding heartbreak of having wasted forty years of his life for making a tragic, stupid decision – namely, interfering with the brakes on his wife's car and causing the death of three people.

The words used were quite different to those presented to the parole board 10 and 20 years before.

It's why we relate so closely to Red, Ramirez suggests, because most of us know the regret of a long-term decision for which we can never go back and change, yet the results of it 'mean we have to live with it for the rest of our lives, for better or worse.'

At previous parole hearings Red simply said what he thought the Board wanted to hear:

"“Do you feel you've been rehabilitated?” (Parole Reviewer)

"Oh, yes, sir. Absolutely sir. I've learned my lesson. I can honestly say I'm a changed man. I'm no longer a danger to society. That's God's honest truth."

The Shawshank Redemption (1994)

The dialogue used in Red Redding's final application for parole, is compelling and believable (see screen shot below and video [here](#)):



Comments by Martin Pollins

I loved the film. It's one of my all-time favourites. A great storyline. Great acting. And a great ending. Everyone gets what they deserved.

If you haven't seen the film before, I suggest you go out tomorrow morning and buy the video or order it from Amazon [here](#).



Picture Credit: "The Shawshank Redemption" by wmy9jiz26 is licensed under CC0 1.0



Researched by
Martin Pollins

Chaps, Blokes etc... who are they?

Source: Mark Harrison, CTO of werarewe and author "The CTO's Guide to Code Quality" (now available on Amazon), article in Quora.com

Here are some important explanations for you:

- A **chap** (and particularly an "old chap") is upper class. He plays cricket rather than football, went to either of the Universities (or Dartmouth) and wears tweed.
- A **bloke** is working class. He works hard, and drinks down the pub. He plays football in a local team one evening a week.

Both of these are broadly positive terms. They suggest a certain reliability and integrity that transcends class.

Geezer is hard, and comes in two variants:

- An **old geezer** is a nightwatchman, semi-retired, and a bit wobbly on his feet (through age, not drink.) He's not inherently nasty, but a bit of a laughing-stock.
- A **geezer** (without the old) is sort of the London Mob equivalent of what New Yorkers (or their Hollywood portrayals) would call a "made man." At his funeral, there will be a temporary suspension of hostilities, and hundreds of people will show their loyalty by walking behind his hearse, making sure they dress smart and wear something black.

In terms of where the words come from:

- **Bloke** appeared in the 19th Century, in London. The etymology before that is only speculation, but the Celtic word "ploc" is possible.
- **Chap** is Late Middle English, with an unknown origin before that.
- **Geezer** is a late 19th Century spelling of "guiser", which in turn comes from "guise" (as in disguise). It's believed to be a corruption of a term that meant "mummer" (in the sense of a masked actor.)

The following are edits in response to questions put to the Author:

- **Mate** is a slightly different type of word. While bloke, chap and geezer refer to descriptions of someone in isolation, the word mate refers to the description of someone's relationship to another person. It's more obvious in terms like shipmate or classmate. But the earlier meaning is related to the word meat and has the sense of "people who share food." (The meaning of sexual partner is much more recent compared to the food one.)
- **Fellow** is a word that originally referred to membership of a close group. The word "fellowship" makes this much more obvious. A fellow was simply a member of a fellowship. The "fellow of Oxford College" sense still preserves this, and, probably because of that, became associated with a certain status / erudition.



The last word on this comes from vocabulary.com:

A **chap** is a **guy** or a **fellow** — a **boy** or **man** who's a friend, acquaintance, or a friendly stranger. You might ask a chap on the bus if the seat beside him is free. can refer to any male person as a **chap**, and you can also address him that way: "Hello there, old chap! I haven't seen you in ages!" It's more common in Britain than the US, where the chap will know what you mean but might look at you oddly.

Picture Credit: "DrawingPaul" by Andy2Boyz is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

The Albion – Warts and All

Founded in 1901 and nicknamed the *Seagulls* or *Albion*, Brighton played their early professional football in the Southern League, before being elected to the Football League in 1920. The club enjoyed prominence between 1979 and 1983 when they played in the old First Division.



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

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

After relegation from the First Division in 1979, the Albion's fortunes spiralled downwards at an alarming rate. Relegation and disaster came and by 1996 the club's financial situation had seriously worsened leading to the sale of the Goldstone to pay off some of the club's huge debts. The manager (Jimmy Case) was sacked after a very poor start to the 1996-97 season which saw Brighton rooted firmly at the bottom of the table. By the last day of the season, after being 13 points adrift at one stage, the Albion were off the bottom of the table but had to play the team directly below them, Hereford United – a win or draw would save the Albion and although at one time in the match it looked as though their 77-year league presence was finished, a late goal from Robbie Reinelt ensured that Brighton retained their league status but only on goals scored (the measure used at that time). They lived to fight another day, but Hereford's 25-year league run was over.

After 1997, when the sale of the Goldstone Ground went through, Brighton had to play some 70 miles away at Gillingham's Priestfield stadium for two seasons. Things started to pick up at the start of the 1999-2000 season when the Albion secured a lease to play home games at Withdean Stadium, a converted athletics track owned by the Brighton council. The upward spiral continued and 2000-2001 was Brighton's first successful season for 13 years and they were promoted to Division Two. The next year they were crowned as Division Two champions – winning a second successive promotion, just one division away from the Premier League.

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

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



Written by Martin Pollins (with help from Wikipedia)

General Knowledge – Did you know that...



1. Thomas Hughes QC was an English lawyer, judge, politician, and author. He is most famous for his novel **Tom Brown's School Days**, a semi-autobiographical work set at Rugby School, which Hughes had attended. There was a lesser-known sequel, **Tom Brown at Oxford**. Hughes died in Brighton in his 74th year in 1896.
2. There are seven planets within our solar system apart from the Earth: they are **Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune**. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) downgraded the status of **Pluto** to that of a dwarf planet because it did not meet the three criteria the IAU uses to define a full-sized planet. Essentially Pluto meets all the criteria except one—it *"has not cleared its neighbouring region of other objects."*
3. The planet nearest to earth is **Mars** (the minimum distance from the Earth to Mars is about 33.9 million miles (54.6 million km). The planet furthest away from Earth is **Neptune** (4.38 billion km from Earth).
4. William Shakespeare's plays were mainly performed at the **Globe Theatre, London**. The Globe, which opened in 1599, became the playhouse where audiences first saw some of Shakespeare's best-known plays. The Globe burned to the ground in 1613 when the roof caught fire during a performance of Shakespeare's Henry VIII. A new, second Globe was quickly built on the same site, and opened the next year.
5. The opening lines in the **Chorus in Shakespeare's famous play Henry V**, are:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <i>O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend</i> | <i>A kingdom for a stage, princes to act</i> | <i>Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,</i> |
| <i>The brightest heaven of invention,</i> | <i>And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!</i> | <i>Assume the port of Mars...</i> |

At first, this seems confusing, but Henry V is unique among Shakespeare's works for the way it uses a 'Chorus' figure to present the story to the audience. The 'Chorus' was like a professional storyteller: she addresses the audience directly to set the scene, introduce us to certain characters, and fills us in on events that happen between scenes.
6. The **law requiring all drivers to wear their seatbelts** came into force on 31st January 1983. Car manufacturers were obliged to install seatbelts since 1965 but the law requiring drivers to wear them took another 18 years to come into effect.
7. **Gold mining in Alaska** has been a major industry and impetus for exploration and settlement since a few years after the USA acquired the territory from Russia. Russian explorers first discovered gold in the Kenai River in 1848, but no gold was produced. Gold mining started in 1870 from placers southeast of Juneau, Alaska (a **placer** is a deposit of sand or gravel in the bed of a river or lake, containing particles of valuable minerals). A Tagish Indian, Skookum Jim, along with Dawson Charlie and an ex-California miner named George Carmack, stumbled upon gold "lying like cheese in a sandwich" **on the afternoon of 16th August 1896**. It's worth reading **GOLD IN ALASKA: A CENTURY OF MINING HISTORY IN ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS**, available for download from [here](#).
8. **Econometrics** is the branch of economics concerned with the use of mathematical methods (especially statistics) in describing economic systems. It focuses on the most cost-effective means of analysing a problem within an economic system, not just as a specific date but allowing time horizons to be inserted in calculations. It involves searching through and analysing mounds of data to extract simple relationships. It can also be used to try to forecast future economic or financial trends. The first known use of the term "econometrics" was by Polish economist **Paweł Ciompa** in 1910, sixteen years prior to **Ragnar Frisch**. **Jan Tinbergen** is considered by many to be one of the founding fathers of econometrics and was awarded the first Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1969, which he shared with Ragnar Frisch.
9. **Æthelstan** or **Athelstan** was **King of the Anglo-Saxons** from 924 to 927 AD and King of the English from 927 to 939 AD when he died. He was the son of King Edward the Elder and his first wife, Ecgwynn. Modern historians regard him as the first King of England and one of the greatest Anglo-Saxon kings. The title '**King of England**' was first used to describe him within a charter of 928 AD. However, Egbert (Ecgherht) was the first monarch to establish a stable and extensive rule over all of Anglo-Saxon England. After returning from exile at the court of Charlemagne in 802, he regained his kingdom of Wessex. Following his conquest of Mercia in 827, he controlled all of England south of the Humber.
10. The word **hieroglyphics** is derived from the wording in sacred carvings first used by the ancient Egyptians as a writing system. It is the earliest form of writing from whence we write from left to right. **Hieroglyphs combined logographic, syllabic and alphabetic elements**, with a total of some 1,000 distinct characters. Cursive hieroglyphs were used for religious literature on papyrus and wood. The actual word is Greek for "sacred carvings".
11. The capital of **Venezuela** is Caracas. It is perhaps most famous as having the highest per capita murder rates in the world. **Caracas** is the city with the highest homicide rate in the world outside of a warzone.
12. **Love Me Do** was the debut single by the Beatles. When the single was originally released in the United Kingdom on 5th October 1962, it peaked at number 17. It was released in the United States in 1964, where it became a number one hit. The song was written several years before it was recorded, and prior to the existence of the Beatles. The single features John Lennon's prominent harmonica playing and duet vocals by him and Paul McCartney.
13. The word '**science**' is derived from the **Latin word 'Scientia' which means knowledge**. Science refers to a system of acquiring knowledge using observation and experimentation to describe and explain natural phenomena.
14. The name '**Sussex**' derives from the Kingdom of Sussex, founded by Ælle of Sussex in 477 AD, which in 825 was absorbed into the Kingdom of Wessex and the later Kingdom of England. Sussex has been a key location for England's major invasions, including the Roman invasion of Britain and the Battle of Hastings. '**Sussex**' is derived from the Middle English Suth-sæxe, which is in turn derived from the Old English Suth-Seaxe which means (land or people) of the South Saxons.
15. The most easterly town in England is **Lowestoft in Suffolk**. On the edge of The Broads, it is 110 miles (177 km) north-east of London, 38 miles (61 km) north-east of Ipswich and 22 miles (35 km) south-east of Norwich.
16. In Italian history, '**il Risorgimento**' is the Italian unification - the political and social movement in the 19th century that consolidated different states of the Italian peninsula into the single state of the **Kingdom of Italy** in 1861.

Contributed by David Waite



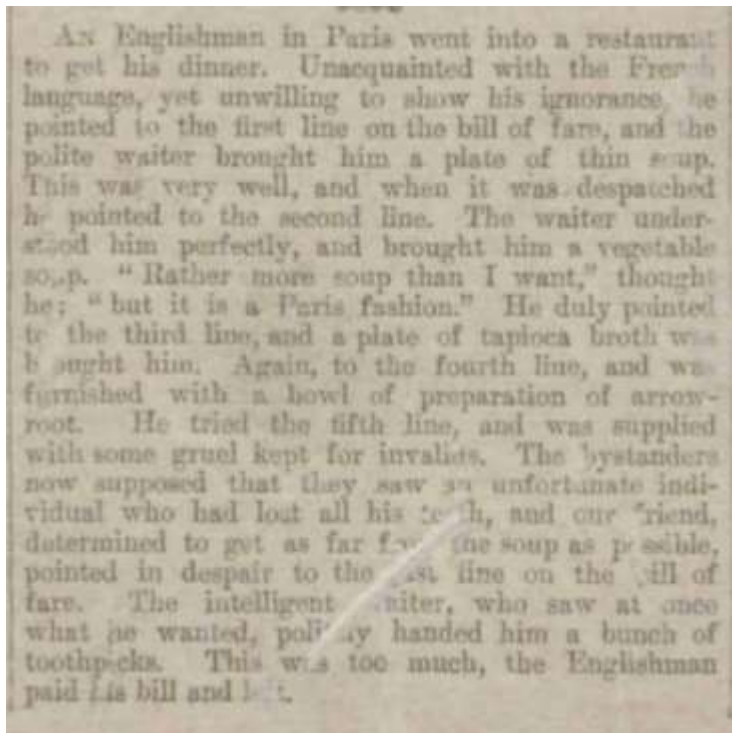
An amusing story

A lovely paper was launched in 1881. It was called *Tit-Bits*. It was a British weekly magazine founded by George Newnes on 22nd October 1881. An extract from the editorial introduction is:

There is no paper in the world conducted along the lines which will be followed in Tit-Bits. It will be a production of all that is most interesting in the books, periodicals and newspapers of this and other countries. Opinions may differ as to whether it is fair for newspapers to use other people's writings so extensively as has now become the practice. Whatever faults may be found by some of this wholesale abstracting, in the case of Tit-Bits at any rate done openly and avowedly, and no attempt will be made to pass off extracts as original compositions. There is scarcely a newspaper which does not give some extracts. The business of the conductors of Tit-Bits will be like that of the dentist - an organised system of extracting but instead of, like the dentist, extracting that which is bad and leaving that which is good, they will pursue exactly the opposite course and extract that which is good and leave the remainder...

On the front page of *Tit-Bits*, there was an amusing story about an Englishman in Paris. He was in a restaurant and was trying to order from a menu he couldn't understand. Yet he was unwilling to reveal his linguistic inadequacy. It appeared in issue 1, volume 1 of *Tit-Bits* on Saturday 22nd October 1881. I hope you can read it.

Image © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



Contributed
by Martin
Pollins

Comment: I subscribe to British Newspapers Archive (£79 a year). They have digitised nearly 40 million pages and provide access to hundreds of historic newspapers from all over Britain and Ireland (and I think some other countries too).

Pages were recently added from 1699: The oldest newspaper to appear on The Archive yet, the *Edinburgh Gazette* was published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Like its contemporary the *London Gazette*, it was produced by the government and featured news on state and parliamentary matters.

The people behind this resource are Findmypast Newspaper Archive Limited in partnership with the British Library. Look them up, [here](#).

Pets

Dawg is the comic dog of Desperate Dan from the comic the Beano Published in Dundee. This statue Dawg is in Dundee City Centre along with a statue of Desperate Dan and Mini The Minx.



Picture Credit:
"Dawg" by gordon2208 is
licensed under CC BY-NC-ND
2.0

Look - no keys!

It's real... Please read the information below before watching the video. I have never heard of this instrument before.

Read this first

It is truly quite amazing... an almost human like quality to its sound. In this orchestra, a woman is playing an instrument called a *Theremin*: it is a quantum instrument that is played only with the energy of the hands. Only three countries in the world have music schools that learn how to play the *Theremin*: Russia, Japan and Ireland.



Theremin was invented by Leon Theremin, a Russian in 1920. It's an instrument that forms a magnetic field and is played without being touched. It has no keys. Watch it/hear it [here](#).

Credits: Theremin: Katika Illényi Ennio Morricone: Once Upon a Time in the West . Győr Philharmonic Orchestra.

Contributed by the late Brian Bridges

New Year in Vienna



Picture Credit: "Viennese Ball - 2007" by flickr-rickr is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

As many of you know, Marian and I are enthusiastic ballroom dancers. Almost twenty years ago we achieved one of our ambitions, when we celebrated New Year by dancing a Viennese Waltz in Vienna.

A select group of six couples left Heathrow on 29th December 2000, arriving in Vienna early afternoon. Our hotel was centrally located, within ten minutes' walk of St Stephens Cathedral and the State Opera House.

On the following day we enjoyed the sights of Vienna and in the evening, we went to the State Opera House to see the ballet "Cinderella" performed to the music of Johann Strauss.

On the evening of 31st December, we were taken by horse drawn carriage, to the Hofburg Palace to attend the Kaiser Ball. We felt like celebrities on arrival as there were crowds outside the palace watching each carriage disgorge its passengers.

We entered the Palace and at the top of the Grand staircase we were welcomed by the "Emperor" and "Empress" of the evening. We then proceeded to the magnificent Ceremonial Ballroom with its sparkling chandeliers and rich golden baroque decor, which is one of the three main Ballrooms. As expected, the Gala Banquet was an event in itself!

Throughout the evening, different military bands and dance orchestras played, enabling one to dance during the banquet and into the early hours of the New Year.

Obviously there were many different nationalities present and each group celebrated "their" New Year dependent on each country's time zone; a truly unique experience. On New Year's Day, a large screen was available to watch a live broadcast of the famous *New Year Day Concert* by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, followed by a Jazz brunch.

We flew home the next day, exhausted but exhilarated, after a memorable few days.



Contributed by Tony Ashby

The Virus and our Vocabularies

The coronavirus pandemic has affected the lives of most of us on planet Earth, including (according to [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com)) the expansion of vocabularies.

It *feels* like years (not months) ago that we learned our first **COVID-19** terms, like *social distancing* and *flatten the curve*. We had to process so much, in so little time; we had to become experts about important differences: *epidemic vs. pandemic*, *quarantine vs. isolation* and *respirator vs. ventilators*. The conversation continues with *contagious vs. infectious* and *what antibodies do*. The new words and concepts keep coming.

Here are some of the new slang terms born of this unique, unprecedented time in modern life—a time of upheaval that some more jokingly call: the *coronapocalypse* (*corona apocalypse*) or *coronageddon* (*corona armageddon*).

- **Rona** (often in the phrase *the rona*) — is an informal shortening of *coronavirus*. *Coronavirus* is popularly shortened to *corona*, which was apparently further clipped to *rona*.
- **Cornteen** is an intentional misspelling of *quarantine*, often used in ironic commentary on what it's like to be at home during the coronavirus pandemic. It may have originated as an actual misspelling of *quarantine*.
- **Doom-scrolling**: Life under the *rona* has meant that it's even harder to peel our eyes away from our phones and computers, constantly refreshing our feeds for the latest news about the pandemic. At least there's a word for that: *doom-scrolling*, also *doomscrolling*. The term has been notably used—and popularized in part by her exhortations to a take a break from doing it—by Quartz reporter Karen K. Ho.
- **Covidiot**: A blend of *COVID-19* and *idiot*, *covidiot* is a slang insult for someone who disregards healthy and safety guidelines about the novel coronavirus. Some signs of *covidiocy* are: not washing your hands regularly, hanging out in groups of people, standing within six feet of a stranger at the grocery, hoarding items like toilet paper and hand sanitizer all to yourself.
- **Quaranteam**: The (very limited) group of people you see during self-isolation; one of the many slang terms that plays on *quarantine*. Whether you call it a *germ pod*, a *COVID bubble*, or your *quaranteam*, this is the group of people you voluntarily choose to socialise with or even live with during the quarantine. Basically, your *pod* chooses to isolate together, promising not to have close contact (within six feet) with anyone outside the pod. This form of *contact clustering* (yet another term used by epidemiologists to describe the situation – see [here](#)) allows you to socialise while also staying safe.
- **Quaranteam** is a blend of *quarantine* and *team*, and sounds like *quarantine*—it's a punning blend.
- **Moronavirus**: Another term for a *covidiot*. The wordplay, here, centres on the word *moron*. Calling someone a *covidiot* or *moronavirus* is a form of *quarantine shaming*.
- **Quarantini** is a slang term for a cocktail (a blend of *quarantine* and *martini*) that people drink at home while under quarantine during—and because of—the coronavirus.

There's much more at [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) - click [here](#).



Accidentally found by Martin Pollins

All Around My Hat and The Wadhurst Connection By Bryan Joyner

On enlistment to the RAF, we were all issued with two berets, both similar: one for working, one for best. The peak hat had yet to be introduced.

We were told to prepare ourselves for inspection the next day dressed in Working Blue, marching boots, highly polished and working beret correctly worn. On parade, we, that is most of us, were greeted with new words and unkind phrases - "What's that on yer 'ead? A kitbag? a flying saucer? What a xx shower, call yourselves airmen???"

We were told that 'ats on 'ead needed shrinking, first in hot water, then cold. I did this as instructed and it resulted in one too small to fit "ead", the other just right.

Following initial and trade training I was posted to Egypt. Boots Marching (now highly polished) were rarely required except for Guard Duties, and I seemed to pass alright with the one beret. I was very fortunate in having an elderly Chief in charge of our maintenance section who looked on me in a fatherly way and selected me to go around the Middle East to embody a modification on Meteor aircraft. My part was to wire up a unit, that had been fitted by airframe fitters. My task, including function, would take four hours maximum to complete.

My first aircraft was in Cyprus and I was taken there like a celebrity, flown in by pilot and co-pilot in a little runabout aircraft used by the Middle East RAF. I should have returned to base after four days: however, my stay on this "Jolly" lasted ten weeks!

My extended stay was due to the New Zealand Airforce. They were on exercise there at the time and had the misfortune of belly landing two of their Vampire Aircraft (the term used was Wheels Up, Belly Down). The airframe guys were put to work to repair their damaged aircraft and I became their 'Go Fetch Guy'.

As there was very little to Go Fetch, my seniors suggested I "Go Explore". This I did, visiting many lovely places and at a time before conflict started and before tourism had begun. Even in the camp surrounds there were fields full of wild flowers amongst the grass: no sand like Egypt! My lack of attendance at Base Camp was noted and I was informed WE NEED YOU! RETURN PRONTO!

After one week on guard duties: a duty I found a bit frightening and lonely, the only comfort my loaded 303 (fortunately no trespasser came to harm...), I was then dispatched to fix my second aircraft. This RAF camp held a very smart and busy fighter squadron. I soon embodied the modification. On the day I was due to return to base I left the hangar and started to walk across the parade ground to the billet. This was normal but, as I later found out, not on this day.

On my way I noticed an unusual aircraft parked to one side of the parade ground and, having my newly bought camera, I went up to it and took a picture. I was about to take a second frame when I heard "Airman" and then louder "AIRMAN". I looked up. Who might be calling I wondered? I noticed on the opposite side of the parade ground was a large group of smartly dressed airmen. In front of the men was a rather tall officer who carried a small stick under his arm. He shouted "Airman, double up". I did and stopping just in front of him I put one up! - saluted that is. He did not return the gesture but started to fire questions at me: Who was I? Why was I not on parade? And Why was I taking pictures of the AOC Middle East Aircraft? Before I had time to answer there came the cutting question...

"WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR HEAD? Remove it!" I removed the beret and noticed for the first time that it was rather shabby. The RAF Blue was now a deep sea green and, here and there, spots of white had appeared on it. He had me taken by two RAF policemen to the guard room. They in turn questioned me, smiled gently at my answers and fortunately believed I was harmless and just a "Silly Billy".

They had me remove the film from my camera, which they kept, and I am glad to say they gave me back my valued camera. They also advised me to remove the sweat inner covering and turn the beret inside out. I did so and found it was a nice RAF Blue.

Arriving back at base I was soon whisked away to my third aircraft. I fixed the aircraft. Whilst on this RAF camp, I found out what had been happening on the parade ground and my encounter with the AOC aircraft and officer with stick. The airmen had been on a rehearsal for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Coronation Parade. I was delighted to watch the spectacle from the sideline. I wore my inside out beret, the two thousand airmen nicely presented with the new peaked hat.

I returned back to base. Again, a period of guard duties. No more aircraft to fix as others had learnt how to do it. Before I was able to upgrade my hat arrangements, I was posted to a very small RAF staging post. It was very basic: even our runway was hard, sun-baked sand, our hangar was a large tent. No perimeter wire to guard, little need for boots marching or 'ats on 'ead to wear. After two and a half years, I returned to England, now having been issued with the new peaked job. I wore this with pride. Took a taxi for part of my journey home and, in my eagerness, left it on the back seat! I still had old faithful "at on ead".

Just prior to Demob, I was found in the billet by an RAF police flight sergeant who told me to report immediately to the guard room. He instructed me to wear Working Blue, overcoat, marching boots and beret. I put on all he said, however I put on a new recruit's At On Head lying on the bed next to mine. At the guard room I collected a 303 rifle, without ammo I was pleased to say, and was dispatched to Wadhurst. At Wadhurst a very tragic incident had occurred. One of our squadron's Meteor aircraft had crashed into the village. Sadly, the pilot had been killed and others too (see video link below). I was to guard against salvage hunters. The whole incident was very sad and took a very long time to remove from my brain.

Demob approached and I was interviewed by a very keen officer who told me there was very little aircraft work to be had on Civvy Street. He attempted to sign me up for a further ten years. He said I was officer material and recommended me as such. Furthermore, I could sign for ten years and transfer to Motor Transport and go for officer. I didn't even have a driving license then, thought he was a "joker", refused and was demobbed!

All my RAF kit was handed in, including my one and only trusted beret. RAF days became distant memories, some happy, some sad. Move on some twenty-five years, I was now, I believed, a mature aircraft quality engineer, alone one-night shift in need of pen and paper to write a report. This was the time where computers were yet to be in fashion and typewriters were only used by the chief's secretary. I went to the stationery cupboard, picked up pen and paper, and noticed a pile of aircraft magazines on the floor of the cupboard. On the top magazine I noticed the word 'Wadhurst'. I picked it up and read an account of the tragic accident that had happened all those years ago. There was also a picture of an airman wearing a beret or was it a kitbag or a flying saucer? The airman was me with the new recruit's 'at on 'ead.

Oh, why hadn't I worn my old faithful inside/outside hat? I looked a right plonker! Memories, may God bless us and them all.



Picture Credit: Screenshot from video available at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=EqYbfejoMR4>

The Uyghurs



Picture Credit: "Uyghur man at market" by Photography_IOI is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

You could be forgiven for being unaware of China's Uyghurs as their plight is not well known. The Economist, 17th-23rd October 2020, pages 13/14, ran an article titled: 'Torment of the Uyghurs'. It makes interesting reading. The full article is [here](#).

The Uyghurs, alternately spelled Uighurs, Uygurs or Ugurs, are a Turkic-speaking minority ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia. The Uyghurs are recognized as native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China. They are considered to be one of China's 55 officially recognised ethnic minorities. The Uyghurs are recognized by the Chinese government only as a regional minority within a multicultural nation. The Chinese government rejects the notion of the Uyghurs being an indigenous group.

Here's what the Economist had to say at the beginning of their article:

The persecution of the Uyghurs is a crime against humanity. It is also the gravest example of a worldwide attack on human rights. The first stories from Xinjiang were hard to believe. Surely the Chinese government was not running a gulag for Muslims? Surely Uyghurs were not being branded "extremists" and locked up simply for praying in public or growing long beards? Yet, the evidence of a campaign against the Uyghurs at home and abroad becomes more shocking with each scouring of the satellite evidence, each leak of official documents and each survivor's pitiful account.

In 2018 the government pivoted from denying the camps' existence to calling them "vocational education and training centres"—a kindly effort to help backward people gain marketable skills. The world should instead heed Uyghur victims of China's coercive indoctrination. Month after month, inmates say, they are drilled to renounce extremism and put their faith in "Xi Jinping Thought" rather than the Koran. One told us that guards ask prisoners if there is a God and beat those who say there is. And the camps are only part of a vast system of social control.

A Senior's view of Facebook

For those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists, I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom.

I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I also listen to their conversations, give them "thumbs up" and tell them I "like" them.

And it works just like Facebook. I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator, and a psychologist.

Contributed by:
Sorry, his name has
been withheld

What's the quickest way to Donegal?

Click here to find out:

<http://onesmartplace.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FB3846F7-A3A0-4753-A9C0-ABD6EFE6DAFF.mp4>



Jane Austen

By Martin Pollins



Members of the Haywards Heath & District Probosc Club and others were treated to a splendid talk via Zoom by historian Rupert Matthews on 11th November 2020 - fittingly Remembrance Day as the talk was titled 'Jane Austen and the Military'.

Picture Credit: "Jane Austen sculpture at Winchester Cathedral (2)" by Jayembee69, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

About Jane Austen

Jane Austen was an English novelist known primarily for her six major novels, which interpret, critique and comment upon the British landed gentry at the end of the 18th century. Her books, set among the English middle and upper classes, are notable for their wit, social observation and insights into the lives of early 19th century women. Her plots often explore the dependence of women on marriage in the pursuit of favourable social standing and economic security. She uses biting irony, along with her realism, humour, and social commentary, which have long earned her acclaim among critics, scholars, and popular audiences alike.

Jane Austen's Major Novels

The BBC History website ([here](#)) summarises the novels: "[Jane Austen's] first novel, 'Sense and Sensibility', appeared in 1811. Her next novel 'Pride and Prejudice', which she described as her "own darling child" received highly favourable reviews. 'Mansfield Park' was published in 1814, then 'Emma' in 1816. 'Emma' was dedicated to the prince regent, an admirer of her work. All of Jane Austen's novels were published anonymously. In 1816, Jane began to suffer from ill-health, probably due to Addison's disease. She travelled to Winchester to receive treatment and died there on 18 July 1817. Two more novels, 'Persuasion' and 'Northanger Abbey' were published posthumously, and a final novel was left incomplete."

For me, there were three stand-out topics mentioned in Rupert Matthews' talk:

- Colonel Fitzwilliam and the 'Purchase System' (from *Pride & Prejudice*)
- Frederick Wentworth and 'Prize Money' (from *Persuasion*)
- The Enigma of Admiral Croft (from *Persuasion*)

Pride and Prejudice: An overview

This romantic novel set in rural England in the early 19th century, was published anonymously in three volumes in 1813 and has become a classic of English literature. It centres on the turbulent relationship between Elizabeth Bennet, the daughter of a country squire, and Fitzwilliam Darcy, a rich aristocratic landowner. Elizabeth Bennet's mother attempts to persuade her husband to visit Mr. Bingley, a rich bachelor recently arrived in the neighbourhood. The reluctant Mr. Bennet visited Mr. Bingley's rented home (Netherfield) and somewhat out of the blue, an invitation to a ball to which the entire neighbourhood were to be invited, arrives. At the ball, we meet Mr. Darcy, Mr Bingley's dearest friend. At first, Mr. Darcy appears attracted to Elizabeth's elder sister, Jane.

Mr. Bingley's sisters, Caroline and Louisa later invite Jane to Netherfield for dinner. Catching a bad cold, Jane Bennet is forced to stay there to recover and is later visited by Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth who seems oblivious to Mr Darcy's interest in her. Elizabeth is then pursued by a dashing and charming army officer, George Wickham. Wickham was an outsider and lived on credit. Although depicted as a charming person, Jane Austen gives enough clues for the reader to realise that Wickham is not what he appears to be at all.

Elizabeth's dislike of Mr. Darcy and his love for Elizabeth are growing in equal measure. When Mr. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth, declaring his ardent love for her despite her low social connections, she rejects him angrily, stating she could never love a man who caused her sister unhappiness and further accuses him of treating Wickham unjustly. But some time later, upon learning the truth about Mr. Darcy, when she is again asked for her hand in marriage, she accepts. The novel concludes with an overview of the marriages of the three daughters and the great satisfaction of both parents at the fine, happy matches made by Jane and Elizabeth.

Persuasion: an overview

The main character of the novel, Anne Elliot, is a 27-year-old 'spinster' who is intelligent and warm. Her father, Sir Walter Elliot, although a baronet and holder of a hereditary title, finds himself in dire financial straits and in risk of losing their home, Kellynch Hall. The story begins seven years after the broken engagement of Anne Elliot to the then Commander Frederick Wentworth. Anne, then 19 years old, had fallen in love and accepted a proposal of marriage from the dashing young naval officer. Wentworth was considered clever, confident, ambitious, and employed, but his low social status made Anne's friends and family view the Commander as an unfavourable husband and no match for an 'Elliot of Kellynch Hall' (the family estate). Anne is persuaded to break off the engagement.

Several years later, the Elliot family is in financial trouble, so they let Kellynch Hall, and decide to settle in Bath until finances improve. Lady Anne Russell, by then the widow of the late Sir Henry Russell, lives near Kellynch Hall, the family seat of the Elliot family. She was extremely good friends with the late Lady Elliot and admits she was wrong about Wentworth and befriends the new couple and they marry at last, and Anne settles into life as the wife of a Navy captain.

Learning More about Jane Austen and the Military

Rupert Matthews recognises that you may want to find out more about the subject of his talk. Listed below are some books you might care to purchase and some places to visit - one of them might even make for a nice coach trip for readers of Nil Desperandum.

The following books are available on Amazon or from bookshops:

- *Jane Austen at Home* by Lucy Worsley ISBN-13: 978-1473632202
- *Jane Austen – A Life* by Claire Tomalin ISBN-13: 978-0241963272
- *Jane Austen's Letters* edited by Deirdre Faye ISBN-13: 978-0198704492
- *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen* ISBN-13 979-8618964654

You can order books written by Rupert Matthews from his website at: <https://rupertmatthews.com/buy-books>

Places to Visit

Jane Austen's House: Winchester Road, Chawton, Hampshire. GU34 1SD. This is the house where Jane Austen lived and wrote. It was here that Jane's genius flourished and where she wrote, revised and had published all her novels. <https://janeaustens.house/>

The Jane Austen Centre, 40 Gay Street, Bath, Somerset. BA1 2NT

The Jane Austen Centre showcases life during Regency times and explores how living in this magnificent city affected Jane Austen and her writing. Guides dressed in Regency costume, period decoration throughout and exhibits bring visitors closer to Jane Austen. The centre also organises the Jane Austen Festival. <https://janeaustron.co.uk/>

About the Speaker



Rupert Matthews is an established public speaker, school visitor, history consultant and author of non-fiction books, magazine articles and newspaper columns. His work has been translated into 28 languages (including Sioux). You can look him up at: <https://rupertmatthews.com/> 07721 455944

Finish with a Smile, Laugh or Chuckle or Snigger



© Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

Picture Credit: "Dilbert_Jan21.gif" by mrapplegate is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Picture Credit: "1958-06-28 Ken_Reid Jonah" by Briany Najar is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

No Nativity this year because the 3 Wise Men face a travel ban. The shepherds have been furloughed. The Inn keeper has shut under tier 3 regulations and had a slump in bookings. Santa won't be working as he would break the rule of 6 with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner and Blitzen. As for Rudolph, with that red nose, he should be isolating and taking a test.

Contributed by
Chris Muschamp

