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*British nuclear submarine plus the leaders of America, the UK and Australia*



## AUKUS PACT

The American president made an important announcement on 15th September. Joe Biden spoke at the White House, in Washington DC, the country's capital. The prime ministers of the UK and Australia, Boris Johnson and Scott Morrison, appeared on screens on either side of him.

The three men outlined the formation of a new security, or military, pact between their countries. They named it AUKUS (Australia-UK-United States). When they s

poke, none of the three mentioned the word 'China'. However, most experts agree that the agreement's main purpose is to counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific (or Indian and Pacific Oceans).

News of the AUKUS pact pleased several Asian countries. Japan, Taiwan and South Korea are among them. Others such as China and France

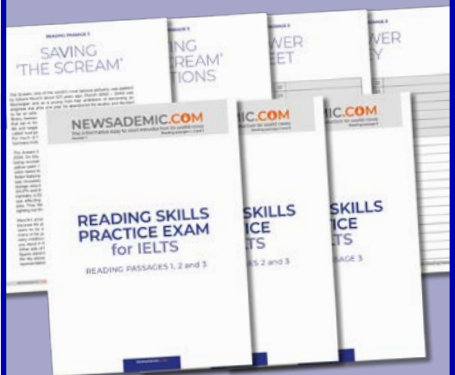
were annoyed (but for different reasons). Some people fear that the pact could lead to a 'new' Cold War.

As part of the security agreement, America and the UK will provide the technology for Australia to build several nuclear-powered submarines. These will be armed with American-designed long-range missiles.

Unlike surface ships, submarines, when under water, are difficult to detect. Most of the world's submarines are powered by diesel engines and electric batteries. To keep their engines running, they have to come to the surface frequently. Nuclear submarines have big advantages. Much faster, they can stay beneath the waves for many months or even years.

The USA built the world's first nuclear submarine in 1955. Currently, six countries have them. They are: the USA (14), Russia (11), China (6), the UK (4), France (4), and India (1). All of

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these countries are nuclear powers. They have nuclear weapons.

Australia will be the seventh nuclear-submarine nation. It is not a nuclear power. Mr Morrison stressed that its new submarines would not carry nuclear weapons. The USA helped the UK to build its nuclear submarine fleet 50 years ago. The AUKUS pact is only the second time that America has agreed to share its submarine technology.

In 2016, the Australian government signed a contract to buy 12 (diesel-electric) French-designed submarines. This contract was worth around €50 billion (£42 billion). Australia cancelled it a few hours before the AUKUS announcement. This news angered France. Traditionally, France has worked with the USA, the UK and Australia on security. It has several **strategically** important Indo-Pacific island territories. French Polynesia and New Caledonia are two.

One way a country can show displeasure with another is to withdraw its ambassador. Two days after the pact was announced, France withdrew its ambassadors from the USA and Australia. This was a first. France has never withdrawn its ambassador from America before.

Long ago, there was a civil war in China. It was between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (or the Nationalists). In 1949, the Communists forced the Nationalists to withdraw to the island of Taiwan. The CCP has ruled mainland China ever since. China is a one-party state. Taiwan held its first democratic elections in 1996.

In the past, China was a very poor country. Over the last 45 years, it has



Joe Biden, the American president, announcing the AUKUS security pact, with the leaders of Australia and the UK on screen



been very successful. Now, China's factories make goods that are sold worldwide. The country has many modern cities, the world's biggest high-speed train network, a successful space programme, and a growing and powerful army, navy and air force.

China claims ownership of many small uninhabited islands in the South China Sea. Other nearby countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines dispute many of its claims. In recent years, China has enlarged some of the islands and built military bases on them. China also claims ownership of a small uninhabited island group in the East China Sea. Japan has controlled these islands for over 120 years.

China's leaders describe Taiwan as a breakaway Chinese province. They openly say that, one day, it will be reunited with China. If necessary, they add, this will be done by force. Some people believe China is preparing to invade Taiwan. Nowadays, Chinese military aircraft frequently fly into Taiwan's air space. In the past, the USA has helped Taiwan. The majority of Taiwan's more expensive military equipment is American-made.

Some people accuse China's leaders of using their country's economic power to **intimidate** other nations. They do this by restricting or stopping the country's exports to China. Several years ago, South Korea deployed an American-made anti-missile defence system. China opposed

the deployment. It (unofficially) urged Chinese people not to buy South Korean-made goods or items.

The coronavirus began in the Chinese city of Wuhan. Chinese officials insist it came from bats. Some scientists think it may have originated within a Wuhan virus-studying laboratory. Australia said an international team should inspect the Wuhan laboratory. This annoyed China's leaders. They blocked imports of Australian beef, barley, wine, and coal. This has damaged Australia's economy.

Recently, there have been several cyber-attacks on Australian organisations. The Australian government suspects they originated from China.

China's leaders deny that they have any war-like intentions. America, they say, has many military bases around the world. China has only one in Eritrea. They accused the three AUKUS countries of trying to start another Cold War. The Cold War was not a real conflict. It describes the period between 1947 and 1991 when the Russian-led Soviet Union and America (with its allies) were enemies.

Some experts were surprised at the AUKUS announcement. They wondered why it did not involve a group known as the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). Set up over ten years ago, it is a security cooperation agreement between Japan, India, Australia, and the USA. The Quad's aim is a 'free and open Indo-Pacific'. ■





*Female capybara with three pups (Clodomiro Esteves Junior)*

## GIANT RODENT TAKEOVER

About 40% of all mammal species are rodents. Most rodents are small animals with short legs and long tails. Mice and rats are examples. Rodents have four incisors, or narrow-edged teeth, at the front of their mouths. These teeth keep growing. The animals must frequently gnaw on something hard, such as wood, to wear them down.

Capybaras are the world's biggest rodents. They live in South America. Adult capybaras can be 1.3 metres (4.4 feet) long. The giant rodents' wire-like fur is brown on their upper parts. Underneath, it is a yellowish-brown. Capybaras are semi-aquatic. They live near lakes, rivers and swamps. In some parts of South America, people hunt the giant rodents for their skins and meat.

Buenos Aires is Argentina's capital. About 20 years ago, a new housing project was built on the outskirts of the city. Called Nordelta, it is a wealthy gated community. Made up of nine neighbourhoods, a fence surrounds the community. Entry is restricted to people who live and work there.

Now, the residents of Nordelta are complaining about capybaras. The giant rodents, they say, are taking over. The animals ruin flowerbeds and leave their droppings on people's

lawns. Some overturn rubbish bins. Several people claim that capybaras have caused traffic accidents and bitten pet dogs.

Capybaras feed mainly on grass and water plants. The animals are good divers and excellent swimmers. A capybara can hold its breath and stay under water for five minutes. The rodents will do this when threatened. Capybaras live in groups of between ten and 30. Each group has a dominant male or leader.

Female capybaras have one litter of four babies, or pups, each year. The females in a group all look after the young capybaras. If they sense danger, the rodents make a barking sound. Capybaras are vocal animals. Other noises they make include: whistles, squeals, purrs, and grunts.

Nordelta was built on an area of wetlands. It is on the banks of the Paraná River. This river is the second longest in South America. (The Amazon is the longest.) The Nordelta community includes many swimming pools, tennis courts, football pitches, and a shopping mall. There are four schools.

The wetlands were a capybara habitat. When Nordelta was constructed, many environmentalists objected. They argued that the wetlands

should be protected. As Nordelta was being built, the number of capybaras declined. Yet, the giant rodents never disappeared.

Some larger animals kill and eat capybaras. Jaguars, anacondas (big snakes), caimans (a type of alligator), and harpy eagles all prey on them. None of these animals now live around Nordelta. As there are no natural predators, the Nordelta capybara population is growing. Currently, the rodents number about 400. Wildlife experts think there might be 3,000 within the next few years.

There are poorer areas of Buenos Aires near Nordelta. People who live in these places say Nordelta has disrupted the natural drainage. This means that their homes are more likely to flood. In Buenos Aires, the giant rodents have become a symbol of a 'class war'. This is the resentment that many poorer people have for the city's wealthy elite.

The Nordelta residents say officials should remove all the capybaras. To stop the animals from returning, they want the fencing to be upgraded. Environmentalists argue that the giant rodents lived in the wetlands first. Therefore, they say, the Nordelta residents must learn to coexist, or live, with the giant rodents. ■



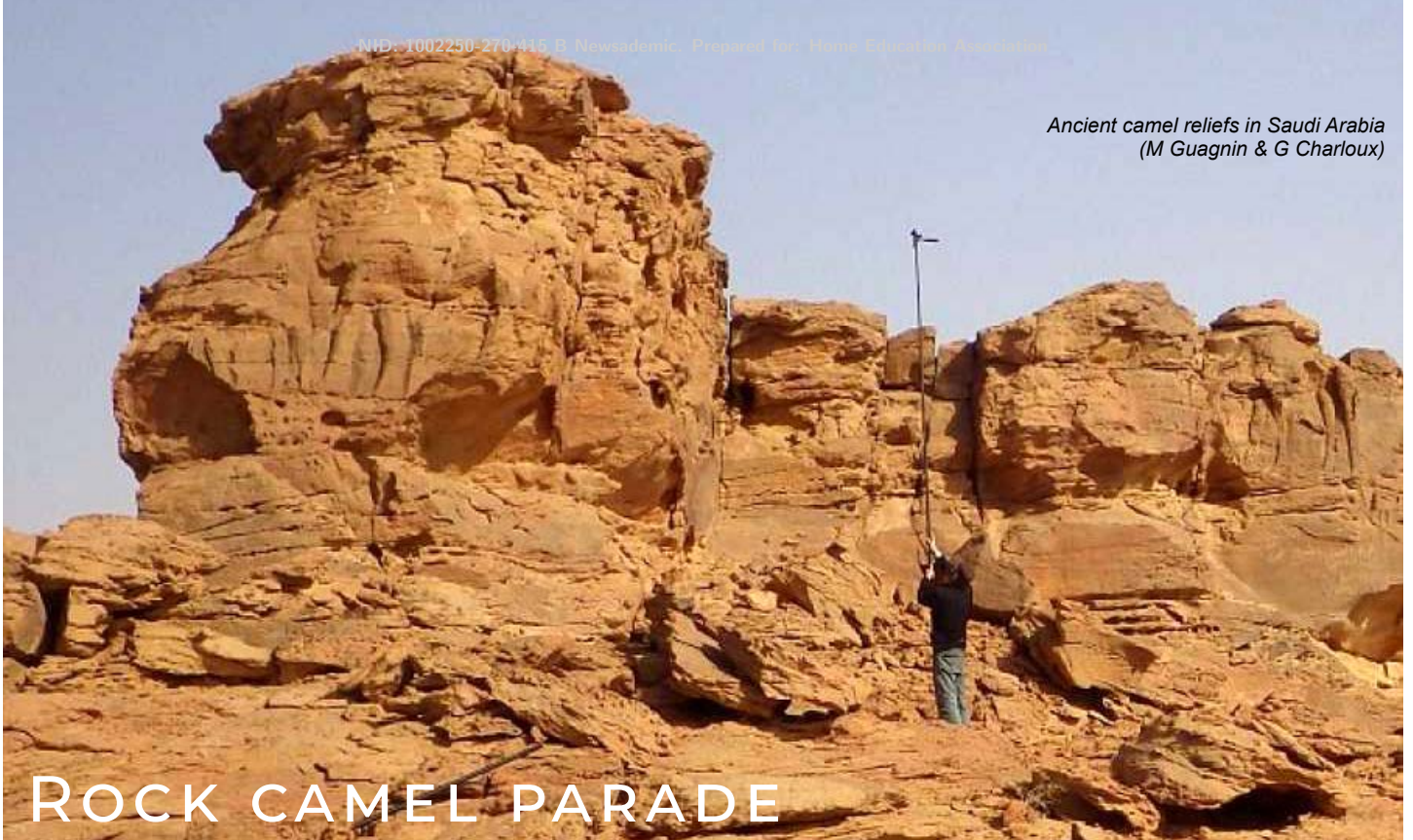
*Part of the Nordelta gated community near Buenos Aires, in Argentina*



*Capybaras in the Nordelta gated community*



*Ancient camel reliefs in Saudi Arabia  
(M Guagnin & G Charloux)*



## ROCK CAMEL PARADE

Saudi Arabia is a large country. Much of it is sandy hot deserts and arid rocky mountains. Few people live in these places. Al-Jawf is one of the country's provinces. In Saudi Arabia's north west, it shares a border with Jordan.

Three years ago, researchers from Saudi Arabia and France made a surprising discovery in Al-Jawf. They identified over 20 large rock face carvings. Most are of camels. Two might be mules, donkeys or horses. These types of rock carvings are also called reliefs. The reliefs are heavily eroded. The researchers called them a 'parade of camels'. At that time, they thought the reliefs were carved around 2,000 years ago.

Recently, an international team of scientists returned to the site. Its members excavated, or dug up, areas near the carvings. They used modern-day technology to investigate tool marks and erosion, or weathering, patterns. The scientists **concluded** that the carvings are far older than previously thought. They believe they are between 7,000 and 8,000 years old.

At that time, this part of the world was not a desert. It was cooler and had far more rain. There were grasslands, lakes and streams. The rains began to become less frequent between 7,300 and 5,500 years ago. Within the next 1,000 years, the land

area had become the desert that exists today.

Thousands of years ago, humans were hunter-gatherers. They did not grow their food. Instead, they travelled around hunting wild animals and collecting fruit, nuts and berries. Over a long period, farming slowly took over. Then, unlike hunter-gatherers, the farmers did not move from place to place. They lived in small settlements, grew food crops, and **domesticated** wild animals.

The Neolithic Revolution is the name given to the change from hunter-gatherers to farmers. It was an important time in human history. This



*Camel relief in Saudi Arabia  
(M Guagnin & G Charloux)*



'revolution' happened at different times in different parts of the world. The first farmers are thought to have lived between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers 10,000 years ago. This part of the Middle East is in present-day Iraq. Over time, farming spread west and north into Europe.

In today's world, there are two types of camels. One has a single hump. Known as a dromedary, it lives in the Middle East and North Africa. The other is a Bactrian. These animals are found in Central Asia. They have two humps. Both camel types can be domesticated, or trained and used by humans. Only a small number of wild Bactrian camels still exist. The ancient ancestors of one- and two-humped camels did not originate from these parts of the world.

Evolutionary scientists believe that camels' ancient ancestors lived in North America about 50 million years ago. This creature was only about 60 centimetres (two feet) tall. It evolved into several species. Around 2.5 million years ago, some of these camel-like animals moved into South America. Eventually, they developed into the alpacas and llamas that live there today. Around the same time, a camel-like creature crossed from North America into Asia. Now, the Bering Strait separates these two continents. Then this sea divide was dry land.

The camel-like creature reached Central Asia about two million years ago. By this time, it looked like today's 2.1-metre (seven-foot) Bactrian camel. The animals that moved from Central Asia to the Middle East became the one-hump dromedaries. Most of the larger animals in North America died out around 12,700 years ago. They included the camel-like creatures. The reason for this die-out is a mystery. Some people believe it is linked to pieces of a comet. They think the fragments struck the large ice sheet that covered much of Canada at that time. It melted very quickly and caused massive floods.

People began to domesticate camels around 3,200 years ago. The animals can carry weights of 227

kilograms (500 pounds). Long ago, like horses, people in the Middle East and North Africa rode camels to travel both short and long distances. Camels have often been described as 'ships of the desert'. Nowadays, they are mostly used for transporting goods and not humans.

The team suspects that the Neolithic people who made the Al-Jawf carvings herded cattle, sheep and goats. They probably hunted wild camels. The team thinks that the ancient people returned to the 'Camel Site' every year. This was done for many generations. The carvings were made with a harder stone called chert. It came from 15 kilometres (nine miles) away. The carvers must have used some type of scaffolding. The scientists say the

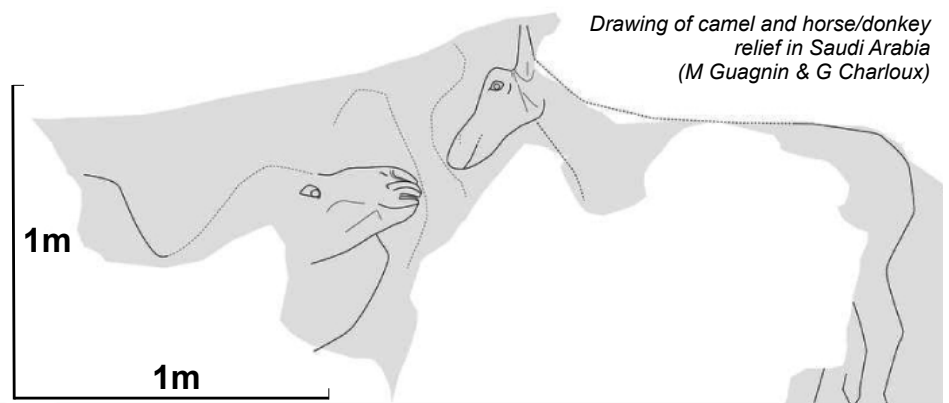
reliefs were, over time, reshaped and re-carved.

The ancient rock-carved city of Petra is in Jordan. It is not far from the camel sculptures. It's said that a group of people called the Nabateans built Petra about 2,300 years ago. This is why the researchers who discovered the camel sculptures thought they were around 2,000 years old.

The first part of Stonehenge in the UK was built about 5,000 years ago. Egypt's Giza pyramids are 4,500 years old. The scientists believe the camel sculptures are about twice as old as these well-known famous ancient structures. If they are correct, the parade of camels is the world's oldest set of large-scale animal reliefs. ▣



*Camel and horse/donkey relief in Saudi Arabia (M Guagnin & G Charloux)*



*Drawing of camel and horse/donkey relief in Saudi Arabia (M Guagnin & G Charloux)*

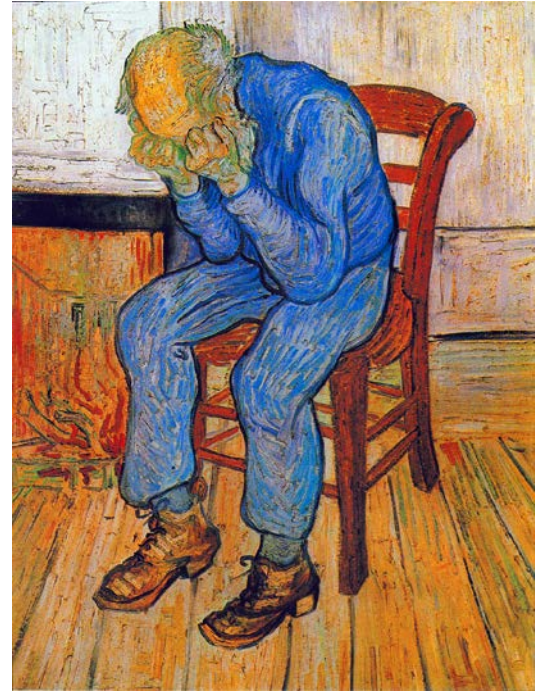




*'Worn Out'*  
by Vincent van Gogh  
(Van Gogh Museum)



*'Study for Worn Out', the newly  
discovered Vincent van Gogh drawing*  
(Van Gogh Museum)



*'Worn Out: At Eternity's Gate'*  
by Vincent van Gogh  
(Kröller-Müller Museum)

## VAN GOGH DRAWING DISCOVERED

The Van Gogh Museum is in Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands. It contains the world's biggest collection of the famous artist's paintings and drawings. Some time ago, a family in the Netherlands contacted the museum. They wondered if a picture they owned was drawn by van Gogh.

The drawing is of a tired older man sitting on a wooden chair. Wearing a waistcoat, trousers and boots, he holds his balding head in his hands. A signature on the drawing says 'Vincent'. Recently, museum workers confirmed that it was a van Gogh drawing. The family agreed to loan the drawing to the museum for several months. On 17th September, for the first time, it was displayed in the museum. Now, many people can see it.

Vincent van Gogh (1853 – 1890) came from the Netherlands. He was an unusual artist for his day. Van Gogh liked very bright colours, especially yellows. During his lifetime, van Gogh was not well known. He suffered from **anxiety** and depression.

Today, van Gogh's paintings are worth many millions of dollars. Yet, during his lifetime, he never sold any of his pictures. The artist had little money. His younger brother, Theo, lived in Paris, the capital of France. He worked for a company that bought and sold artworks. The brothers wrote many letters to each other. Van Gogh relied on Theo for money and help with his mental problems. Much

of what is known about van Gogh's life comes from the letters that he sent to his brother.

Van Gogh's father and grandfather were ministers or churchmen. As a young boy, he enjoyed drawing. Later, he had numerous jobs. For a time, he worked as a teacher in London, the capital of the UK. After returning to the Netherlands, he worked in a book store, in an art gallery and as a missionary.

When he was 27, van Gogh decided to become an artist, or spend all of his time painting. His early drawings were done with pencils and charcoal sticks. Later, he began to paint with watercolours. Van Gogh did not use oil paints until he made the decision to become an artist.

In 1886, Theo suggested that his brother move to Paris. There, he could learn about a new style of painting called Impressionism. This style, or movement, had originated with a group of Paris-based artists. Instead of depicting things accurately, these artists **conveyed** how they saw an object or landscape in



*Vincent van Gogh self-portrait*  
(Van Gogh Museum)



a changing light or atmosphere. The artists did this with visible (and sometimes messy) brushstrokes.

In Paris, van Gogh made friends with a French Impressionist painter called Paul Gauguin (1848 – 1903). Van Gogh began to use brighter colours and **prominent** brushstrokes. He painted street scenes and landscapes.

After two years in Paris, van Gogh moved to the city of Arles, in the south of France. He hoped that its warmer weather would improve his health. Many pictures that van Gogh produced in Arles were painted outdoors. Here, the sunlight is very strong. This is why these pictures have very bright colours. For a time, Gauguin stayed with van Gogh in Arles. Van Gogh is well-known for having cut off part of his ear. This happened after he and Gauguin argued.

During his life, van Gogh created over 2,000 artworks. About 850 are oil paintings. They include: portraits, self-portraits, landscapes, and

still life pictures. Art experts say that van Gogh's work influenced many famous artists who lived after him. His sunflower pictures are some of van Gogh's most famous still life paintings.

In Arles, van Gogh continued to suffer from anxiety and depression. In 1889, due to his mental problems, van Gogh went to live in an asylum. It was not far from Arles. Here, he produced a painting called 'The Starry Night'. Many experts believe that this picture is van Gogh's greatest work. The painting is the view from his window at the asylum.

In 1890, Theo arranged for his brother to move to a clinic in a village not far from Paris. During this time, he continued to paint. Two months after arriving in the village, van Gogh went to a nearby field and shot himself. He died a few days later. The artist was 37 years old. Van Gogh's death upset Theo. His own health became worse. Six months later, Theo died aged 33.



*Sunflowers by Vincent van Gogh  
(Van Gogh Museum)*

The drawing the Dutch family asked the museum to look at is similar to others that van Gogh did. One, called 'Worn Out', is owned by the museum. Workers at the museum say that van Gogh did these drawings when he was 29 years old. Then, he was living in The Hague, in the Netherlands.

The Dutch family have owned the drawing for over 120 years. Museum workers declined to say for what they thought it might sell.

The 'new' drawing has been named 'Study for Worn Out'. In 1890, van Gogh produced an oil painting that is based on these drawings. Owned by another art museum in the Netherlands, it's called 'Worn Out: At **Eternity's** Gate'. ■



*Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam (A Ocrum)*

*The Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh  
(Museum of Modern Art, New York City)*



## Mooncakes



## MID-AUTUMN MOONCAKES

Traditionally, most food crops are planted in the spring. They grow in the summer months. Then, at the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, all the crops were harvested and stored. Long ago, this food had to last for the next 12 months. People organised celebrations to thank their gods for successful harvests.

Many Asian countries have harvest festivals. They take place around the autumn equinox. An equinox is when the Sun is over the Equator. Then, the hours of daylight and darkness are roughly equal almost everywhere in the world. The name equinox comes from two Latin words. They mean 'equal' and 'night'.

After the autumn equinox, the days become shorter and the nights get longer. In the northern hemisphere (in the international calendar), the autumn equinox occurs between 21st and 24th September.

China's harvest 'thanksgiving' is called the Mid-

Autumn Festival. It is also known as the Moon Festival or the Mooncake Festival. Chinese historians believe it was first celebrated around 3,500 years ago. The festival is on the 15th day of the eighth month in the Chinese lunar calendar. On this date, there is a full Moon.

Lunar calendars are based on the cycles of the Moon. The international calendar is a solar calendar. These calendars are based on the position of the Sun as seen from the Earth. Unlike a lunar calendar, a solar calendar's months do not match the cycles of the Moon.

This year's Mid-Autumn Festival (in the international calendar) was on 21st September. It is China's second most important holiday. (The most important is Chinese New Year.) The festival is associated with Moon worship and a Moon goddess called Chang'e.

There are several legends about Chang'e. In one, she lived in the Jade Emperor's palace in heaven. One day, by accident,

she broke a **precious** jar. The emperor was very angry. As a punishment, he sent her to live among ordinary people on the Earth. Chang'e was transformed into a poor farmer's baby daughter.

Chang'e grew into a beautiful young woman. She met a man called Hou Yi. From another village, he was one of the best hunters and archers. One day, something strange happened. Instead of one, ten suns appeared in the sky. The world began to become too hot. Hou Yi used his arrows to shoot down nine of the suns. After saving the planet, he became the king. Hou Yi and Chang'e married.

As he became older, Hou Yi wanted to live forever. He ordered a potion, or **elixir**, to be made. This would make him immortal. Chang'e found the elixir. Either accidentally or on purpose, she swallowed it. Hou Yi flew into a rage. He chased her up to the highest tower in the palace. Trying to get away, Chang'e jumped out of the window. Instead of falling to the ground, she floated to the Moon. A friendly rabbit, called Yutu (or Jade Rabbit), accompanied her.



Picture of Chang'e flying to the Moon



Rabbit figure with pestle and mortar on the Moon



## Chinese lanterns

After Hou Yi died, he ascended to the Sun. There, he built a palace. According to the legend, Chang'e and Hou Yi still live on the Moon and the Sun. Yutu, Chinese people say, can be seen on the Moon. When viewed from the Earth, they say, light and dark patterns on the Moon resemble a rabbit. It is using a mortar and pestle. A mortar and pestle are two simple tools. They are used to crush and grind **ingredients** for cooking and natural medicines. People have used these tools since the Stone Age. On the Moon, Yutu needs them to make

Chang'e's life-prolonging elixir and mooncakes.

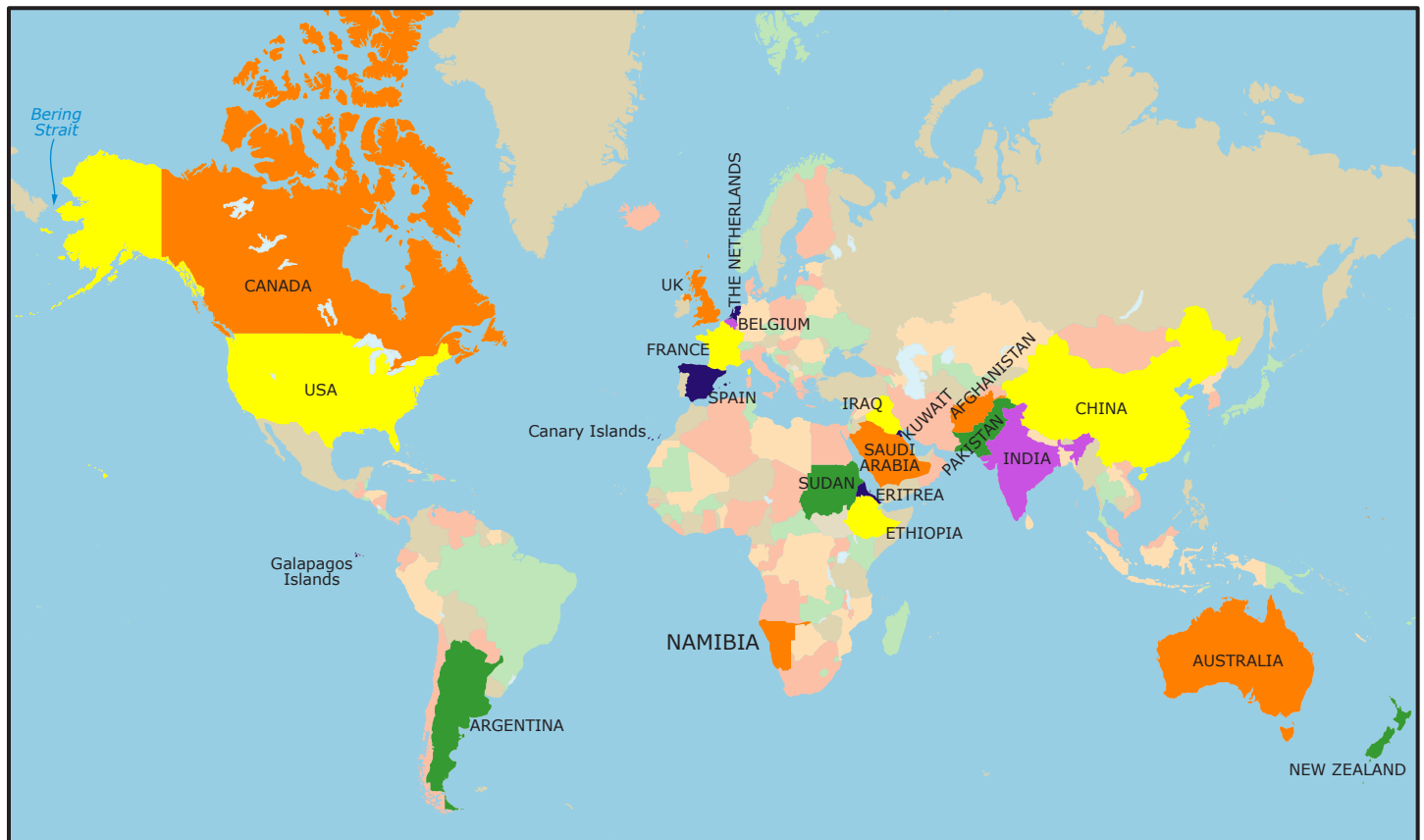
About ten centimetres (four inches) across, mooncakes are traditional round pastries. Their outer crust is made from rice flour. The filling is a sweet paste. It is created from red beans and lotus seeds. Some mooncakes have a duck egg yolk in their centre. Normally, they are eaten with tea. Nowadays, before the Mid-Autumn Festival, many Chinese people buy decoratively wrapped boxes of mooncakes. They are given to friends, family and fellow workers.



Long ago, villagers gathered together during the Mid-Autumn Festival. They praised the Moon and gave thanks for the harvest. The full Moon was a symbol of renewal and rebirth. Today, friends and families get together. Some gather outdoors. There, people can look at the full Moon and eat mooncakes. Many light lanterns. At this

time of year, there are lantern displays in most Chinese cities.

In recent decades, China has built several unmanned Moon-orbiting spacecraft. This space programme is called Chang'e. Two Chang'e spacecraft have landed small vehicles, or rovers, on the Moon. Their name is Yutu. ▣



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## JOKE PRIZES

*Ig Nobel Prize ceremony  
(Jeff Dlouhy)*

The 31st award ceremony for the Ig Nobel Prizes took place on 9th September. Usually, this yearly event is held at a Harvard University theatre. In the USA, Harvard is one of the world's most **prestigious** universities. Due to Covid-19 rules, this year's ceremony was webcast, or streamed over the internet.

Ig Nobels are joke prizes. An American humorous magazine called *Annals of Improbable Research (AIR)* awards them. Presented every year since 1991, they can be given to any scientists or researchers who have **published** their studies.

Each prize is for a different subject or discipline.

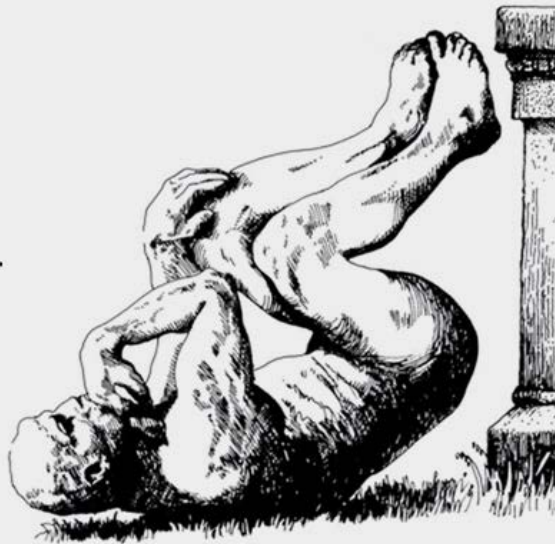
Normally, there are ten disciplines. They can include: medicine, physics, chemistry, biology, economics, and peace. Ig Nobel Prizes are a parody, or a joke version, of the famous Nobel Prizes. The awards are called 'Ig Nobel' because the name sounds like the word 'ignoble'. It means 'bad' or 'shameful'.

The Harvard Ig Nobel Prize ceremony takes place a few weeks before the Nobel Prizes are announced. Nobel Prizes were first awarded in 1901. They were named after Alfred Nobel (1833 – 1896). A very wealthy scientist and businessman, he was from Sweden. Nobel left a large amount of money to pay for the prizes after he died. There are Nobel Prizes for physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, and peace. People who win them are known as Nobel laureates.

Each year, the Nobel Prizes are awarded at a

# Ig<sup>®</sup> Nobel

## 2021





special ceremony. It takes place in Stockholm, the Swedish capital city. However, the Peace Prize ceremony is held in Oslo, the capital of Norway. This prize is given to the person, or organisation, thought to have done the most to promote peace in the world. Last year's Peace Prize went to the World Food Programme (WFP). It won the award for its work in several poor countries where hunger can be used as a 'weapon'.

The *AIR* gives its Ig Nobel Prizes for research that 'first makes people laugh,

and then makes them think'. For instance, in the past, an Ig Nobel Prize was given to scientists who studied why woodpeckers don't get headaches from tapping their beaks on tree trunks. Japanese researchers won a prize for studying banana skins. They discovered why, if stepped on, they are very slippery.

Real Nobel laureates are invited to the ceremony to give out the Ig Nobels. Several famous scientists have won them. For example, 21 years ago, Professor Andre Geim, a Russian-born scientist, won an Ig Nobel

*Audience at the Harvard theatre throwing paper airplanes at the Ig Nobel Prize ceremony (Mike Benveniste)*



Prize. He was awarded it for 'magnetically **levitating** a frog'. He used magnetic fields to make the frog float in the air. Ten years later, Professor Geim was awarded the (real) Nobel Prize for physics. This was for discovering an important new material called graphene.

This year, a team of scientists from America was given the Ig Nobel for transportation. Members of the team travelled to Namibia. There, they worked out how safe it is to transport a tranquilised, or sedated, rhinoceros by helicopter upside-down. The scientists set up an experiment. Twelve sedated rhinos were hung upside-down from a crane for ten minutes.

Researchers from Spain received the ecology award. They identified the bacteria in discarded chewing gum stuck on pavements in different countries. The economics prize went to a French professor. He dis-

covered that the obesity of a country's politicians can indicate how corrupt, or dishonest, they are. The Ig Nobel Peace Prize went to a group of researchers from an American university. They set up experiments to see if humans evolved to grow beards to protect themselves from being punched in the face.

Traditionally, the Ig Nobel award ceremony attendees throw paper airplanes onto the theatre's stage. Many of the scientists who win the prizes attend. When accepting their awards, they can only speak for one minute. Someone on the stage is dressed as a little girl. Called Miss Sweetie Poo, she interrupts if anyone talks for too long. In a high voice, she repeatedly shouts 'Please stop: I'm bored'.

The awards' host always ends the ceremony in the same way. He says, 'if you didn't win an Ig Nobel Prize tonight, and especially if you did, better luck next year'. ▣

*A sedated rhino being transported by helicopter in Namibia (Namibian Ministry of Environment)*







Computer-generated image of La Palma showing the location of the erupting vents  
(Jonni Walker)



La Palma's Cumbre Vieja eruption  
(Credit volcano)

## CANARIES' HOTSPOT

The Canary Islands, or the Canaries, are a group of islands. Off the coast of West Africa, the islands belong to Spain. There are eight main islands and many smaller ones. Four of the larger islands, Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, and Lanzarote, are popular tourist resorts. About 12 million people visit them each year.

Volcanic activity created all the Canary Islands. Tenerife is the most populous and largest. Teide (or Mount Teide) is its highest point. A volcano, it last erupted over 100 years ago. This eruption occurred through a vent, or fissure, at the side of the volcano. Teide is the highest peak in the Canaries and in the whole of Spain.

La Palma is another of the main islands. Its central peak is the Canary Islands' second highest point. A volcanic ridge runs from the peak towards the island's southernmost tip. Called Cumbre Vieja, it has many volcanic vents. On September 19th, several began to erupt. A few days before, scientists recorded a swarm, or thousands, of earth tremors in the area. The strongest had a magnitude of 3.2. The last La Palma eruption was in 1971. It also occurred on the Cumbre Vieja ridge.

The Canaries are what's known as an oceanic hotspot island chain. Deep below the Earth's surface, or the crust, there is a layer of very hot semi-liquid rock. It's called the mantle. A hotspot occurs above a thermal plume. Here, heat from the mantle rises towards the surface. These plumes can melt some of the crust's rocks. Where this happens, the hot semi-liquid rock, called magma, rises to the surface. It then erupts to form a volcano. Magma that reaches the surface is called lava.



The Earth's crust is made up of huge jigsaw-like pieces called tectonic plates. Normally called plates, they float on the mantle beneath the crust. The edge of one plate can slide over or under another. The edges can also move apart or push into each other. Any of these movements can create very strong vibrations or earthquakes. Most volcanoes are near plate boundaries. These are the places where tectonic plates meet.

Hotspot volcanoes are different. They do not form at plate boundaries. Thermal plumes stay in the same place. So, a plate will pass, very slowly, over the top of the plume. Plates move at about 59 millimetres (2.3 inches) each year.

Over millions of years, as a hotspot volcano forms, it gradually moves away from the thermal plume. Then, another volcano appears next to it. Therefore, the same thermal plume made all the Canary Islands. Hawaii and the Galapagos, in the Pacific



*Lava flow approaching houses on La Palma (INVOLCAN)*

Ocean, are other examples of island chains created by a hotspot.

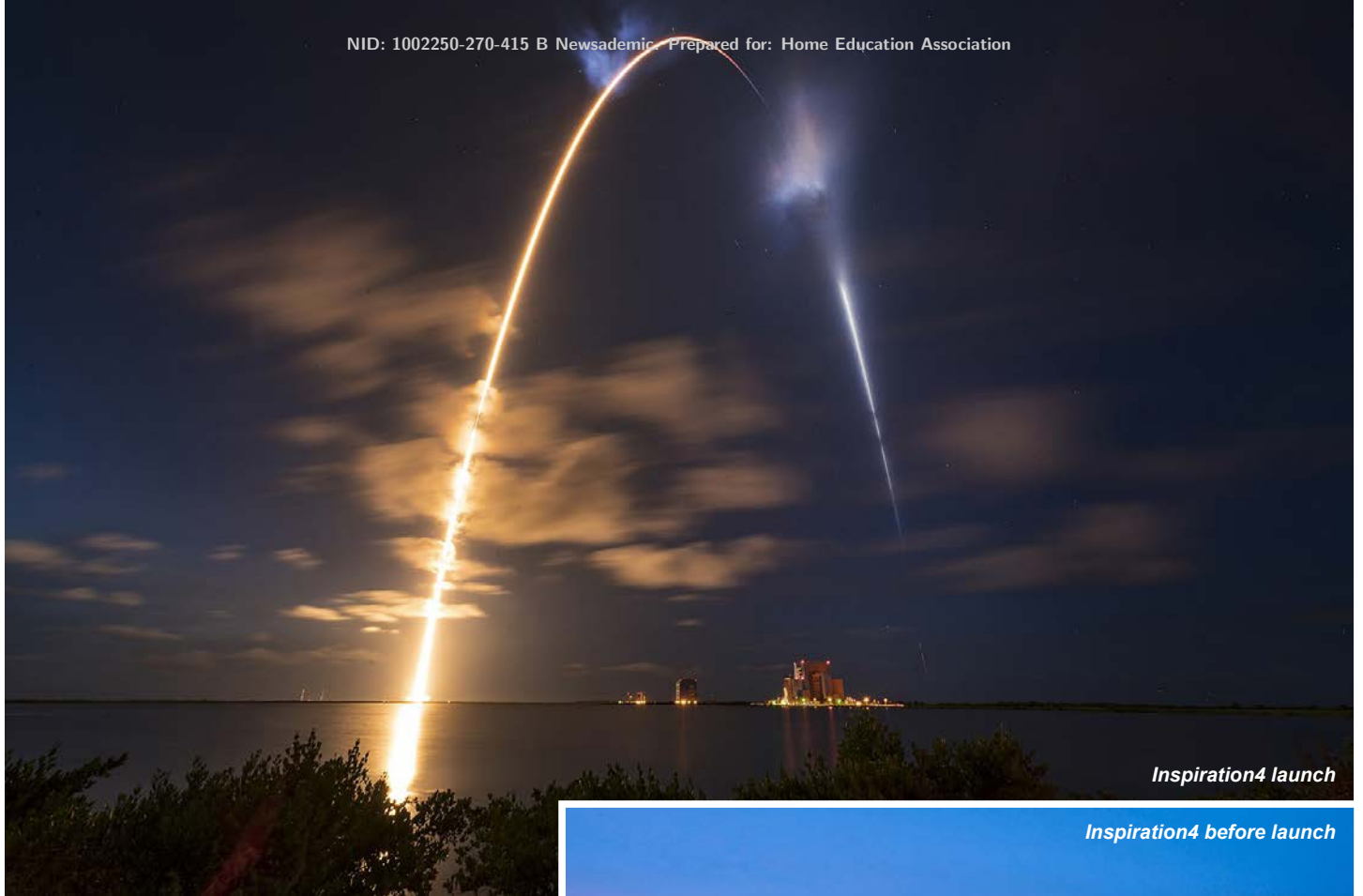
The Canaries are on the African Plate. They drift slowly towards the north west. The easternmost islands are the oldest. They passed over the hotspot many millions of years ago. The two westernmost islands are the newest. These are La Palma and El Hierro. The last eruption in the Canaries was in 2011. It was under the sea close to El Hierro. In future, there may be further undersea eruptions at the same place. If so, they may form a 'new' Canary Island.

La Palma has about 85,000 residents. Most live on the other side

of the island to the erupting vents. However, officials ordered over 10,000 people to leave their homes. Firefighters helped to catch and take away all the farm animals in the area.

Lava from the eruption flowed down the mountainside. It set fire to trees and other vegetation and destroyed hundreds of homes. The lava flow may reach the sea. When this happens, the lava cools suddenly and gives off dangerous gases. Scientists are unsure how long the eruption might last for. The El Hierro undersea volcanic activity, ten years ago, continued for five months. ▣





*Inspiration4 launch*



*Inspiration4 before launch*

## AMATEUR ASTRONAUTS

*The Inspiration4 crew (SpaceX)*



On 18th September, a space capsule returned to the Earth. Four parachutes slowed its descent. The capsule splashed down in the Atlantic Ocean not far from America's eastern seaboard. Several waiting recovery boats drew up alongside it.

Four people emerged from the capsule. All were civilians, or private citizens. The **amateur** astronauts had circled, or orbited, the Earth for three days. The space flight, or mission, was named 'Inspiration4'. It was the first manned space mission to circle the planet without any onboard professional astronauts.

Inspiration4 was organised by SpaceX. An American company, it





SpaceX headquarters building in California, in the USA (Steve Jurvetson)

was set up by Elon Musk almost 20 years ago. Mr Musk is a wealthy businessman. Before founding SpaceX, he made large amounts of money from selling several internet companies. Mr Musk has invested in, and runs, several other companies. Tesla, the electric car manufacturer, is one.

Some time ago, SpaceX developed a type of reusable rocket. The lower part falls back to the Earth, but lands upright. In the past, these lower stages fell into the sea. SpaceX's reusable rocket made space launches far less expensive. Nowadays, the company makes money by launching satellites for other companies and organisations.

Nowadays, NASA (the American Space agency) does not build its own rockets. Instead, it pays SpaceX and other companies, such as Boeing, to do this. SpaceX has built its own reusable spacecraft or space capsule called Dragon. About ten years ago, using its Dragon capsule, SpaceX began delivering supplies to the International Space Station (ISS). At the beginning of 2020, for the first time, it took two American NASA astronauts to and from the ISS.

Within the last few months, two other companies have organised civilian space flights. One is called Virgin Galactic and the other is Blue Origin. Both are run by wealthy businessmen. Sir Richard Branson is from the UK. He is best known for founding the Virgin Group. Today, this business group controls more than 400 companies. Jeff Bezos owns Blue Origin. One of the world's wealthiest people, he set up the Amazon Company.

The Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin first passenger space flights had four people on board. Mr Branson and Mr Bezos were among them. Both lasted

for about 90 minutes. They went 'straight up' and then 'straight down'. Each flew to either just below or just above what's known as the 'edge of space'. This is about 100 kilometres (62 miles) above the Earth's surface. Here, the passengers experienced weightlessness, or zero gravity, for a few minutes.

Now, Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin plan to sell tickets for their future space flights. They are very expensive. A ticket with Virgin Galactic is expected to cost US\$250,000. The Virgin Galactic and the Blue Origin flights marked the start of a new industry: space tourism.

Mr Musk was not one of the Inspiration4 civilian astronauts. Jared Isaacman led the four-man crew. Another wealthy businessman, he runs an online payment processing company. Mr Isaacman is a qualified pilot. It is not known how much he paid for the flight. Mr Isaacman used the space mission to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

St. Jude is in the city of Memphis. It helps children who suffer from cancers and other serious diseases. A person who works for the hospital was one of the crew. When younger, she survived bone cancer. St. Jude organised a raffle for another place on Inspiration4. It is thought to have raised around US\$200 million. The raffle winner donated their prize to a friend. This person is a former air force pilot. The fourth amateur astronaut was a winner of a best-business-idea competition. Mr Isaacman organised it.



Computer-generated image of the Inspiration4 space capsule in space (SpaceX)

Before their space flight, Mr Isaacman and the three other crew members spent six months training. The capsule they travelled in was one SpaceX uses to take astronauts to the space station. This capsule has a docking mechanism at the front. This is how it attaches to the ISS. For Inspiration4, the mechanism was removed. A domed plexiglass window was fitted in its place. This gave the crew a 360° view of the Earth below them.

The space capsule orbited the planet at a height of 590 kilometres (367 miles). This is about 160 kilometres (100 miles) higher than the space station. While orbiting the Earth, and in zero gravity, the crew carried out several in-flight health experiments. Throughout the whole flight, the capsule was 'piloted' remotely, or by SpaceX workers on the ground.

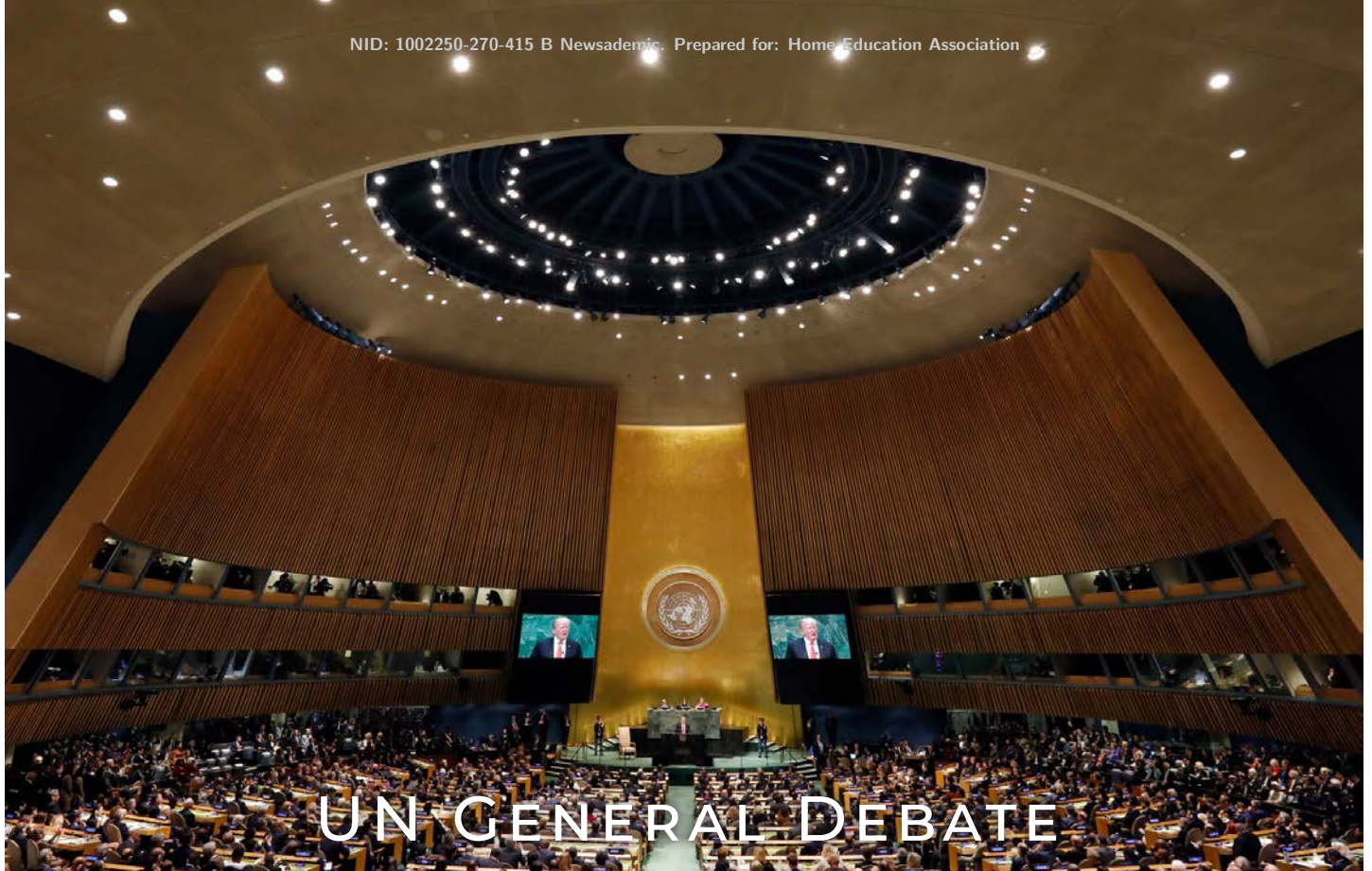
Experts say that the SpaceX Inspiration4 flight marked an important moment in space travel and science. Now, organisations such as universities will be able to pay for SpaceX flights to do experiments. Mr Musk plans to offer more adventurous space journeys in future. Flying around the Moon is one possibility.

When passenger airlines first began almost 100 years ago, tickets were very expensive. Only wealthy people could afford them. Nowadays, air tickets are inexpensive. Many people can buy them. Some people now predict that a similar **scenario** is likely to happen with space travel. ▣



The Inspiration4 space capsule splashes down in the Atlantic Ocean (SpaceX)





*General Assembly Hall at the United Nations (UN) headquarters building, in New York City, in the USA.*

The start of the United Nations General Assembly takes place in the second half of September. It is an annual event. Each assembly lasts for 12 months. This year, it began on 14th September. This date marked the start of the UN's seventy-sixth assembly. Therefore, it was the 76th anniversary of the founding of the UN in 1945.

The UN replaced the League of Nations. This organisation was set up at the end of the First World War (1914 – 1918). Its main purpose was to stop future major conflicts. The League was unsuccessful. In 1939, it failed to prevent the start of the Second World War. Near the war's end, a decision was made to close, or disband, the League of Nations. A new organisation (called the United Nations) would then take its place.

The UN headquarters is in New York City, in the



USA. A secretary-general leads the organisation. António Guterres is its current leader. He is a former diplomat and politician from Portugal.

Today, the UN has 193 member countries. Certain members have more power and influence than others. These countries are the five permanent members of the UN's Security Council. They are: the USA, the UK, Russia, France, and China. Apart from China, the permanent members

won the Second World War. China became a permanent member in 1971. These five countries select the UN's secretary-general.

In total, the Security Council has 15 members. The other ten countries are non-permanent members. They change, or rotate. Each non-permanent country remains a member of the Security Council for two years. Then, another replaces them. The UN divides all its members into different regions of the





world. The ten non-permanent Security Council members always represent each of these regions.

The Security Council makes all the UN's important decisions. These are called **resolutions**. Each of the five permanent members has the power to veto any resolution. This means that they can block resolutions that they dislike. If something important happens anywhere in the world, each of the five permanent members can 'call', or request, a meeting of the Security Council.

Soon after each General Assembly begins, there is a General Debate. During the debate, the leader, or a representative, from each member country can make a speech. These speeches are given one after the other. The General Debate takes place in the General Assembly Hall. With seats for 1,800 people, it is the largest room in the UN's headquarters.

The leaders do not have to talk about the same subject. They can say whatever they want to about international matters, or affairs.



*UN headquarters building in New York City  
(Jazz Guy)*

*Flags outside the UN headquarters building*



Each speech is supposed to be no longer than 15 minutes. (Famously, in 2009, Muammar Gaddafi, Libya's former leader, spoke for 90 minutes.) These speeches at the UN are often reported in the news. This is because they are a chance, or opportunity, for leaders to complain about, or criticise, other countries.

Usually, presidents, prime ministers, senior politicians, and their advisers from all over the world travel to New York City for the General Debate. This is the one time of year that they are all in the same place. Many separate meetings are arranged. Special rooms are made available. Member countries use them to hold bilateral talks. These are discussions between just two countries. They are not related to the General Debate.

Last year, due to the coronavirus pandemic,

no leaders went to New York City. The General Debate was 'virtual'. The leaders who wanted to speak pre-recorded their speeches. Traditionally, the president of Brazil gives the first speech. He or she is followed by the American president. The speaking order of all other member states may change from year to year. The leaders can speak in any language they wish to.

This year's General Debate started on 21st September. Around 100 leaders travelled to New York City to speak in General Assembly Hall. Others, such as Xi Jinping of China and Ebrahim Raisi from Iran, recorded their speeches. Many leaders spoke about climate change and the need for wealthy countries to help poorer nations with their coronavirus vaccination programmes. ▣



# GIANT PENGUINS

*The most recently discovered  
giant penguin fossil  
(Journal of Vertebrate  
Paleontology)*

There are many types of penguins. Emperor penguins are the largest. Adult emperors can be 1.2 metres (four feet) tall. From studying fossils, scientists know that millions of years ago, far bigger penguins existed.

Some giant penguins were almost as tall as people. Their fossils have been discovered in Antarctica and New Zealand. Recently, researchers in New Zealand identified a new type of oversized penguin. A group of students discovered its fossilised bones 15 years ago. At that time, they were members of a natural history club.

New Zealand has two main islands. The natural history club organised a fossil-hunting expedition to a remote coastal area of Waikato on the North Island. They planned to look for sea urchin fossils on the shore. Some younger club members noticed a different type of fossil. It was **embedded** in a block of sandstone.

The fossil was not on dry land. The sandstone block was only above the sea surface at low tide. At first, the students thought it was an old ship's anchor or rusty propeller. One of the club's instructors soon realised that the students had found something important. He also understood that the fossil was in danger of being eroded by the ocean waves.

Later, after getting permission to do so, some club members returned to the site. They cut out a section of the sandstone that contained the fossil. The work could be done only between high and low tides. It took a long time. The fossil in the sandstone was then kept at the club's headquarters. A few years ago, the club gave the fossil to the Waikato Museum. Soon afterwards, researchers from a New Zealand university began to analyse it.

The researchers have now confirmed that the fossil is a 'new' spe-



*Computer-generated image of the  
Crossvallia waiparensis giant penguin  
(Canterbury Museum)*



*Emperor penguin (L) and Kairuku waewaeroa*

*Emperor penguins (Ian Duffy)*

cies of giant penguin. What's more, it is the most complete giant penguin fossil ever found. The Maori people are the native inhabitants of New Zealand. The researchers named the giant penguin *Kairuku waewaeroa*. In the Maori language, the name means 'long-legged'. The oversized penguin lived around 30 million years ago.

Penguins are birds. They have evolved to 'fly' under the water. Most birds have hollow bones. As they are lighter, these bones help birds to fly. A penguin's bones are solid. If they were air-filled, the penguin would find it difficult to stay under water. Some animal experts believe penguins are one of the world's most streamlined animals. Their bodies are tapered at both ends. They have short necks and elongated bodies. This streamlined 'design' explains why penguins are such fast swimmers.

Many people imagine Antarctica's ice and freezing temperatures when they think of penguins. Yet, of today's 18 penguin species, only two breed on the frozen continent. These are the emperor and Adélie penguins. Chinstrap and gentoo penguins live on islands around the Antarctic Peninsula. King, Macaroni, royal, and rockhopper penguins are found on other islands in the Southern Ocean such as South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

Other types of penguins live farther to the north. They are found in places such as New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the southern part of South America. The most 'northerly' is called the Galapagos penguin. It lives on and around the Galapagos Islands. The Galapagos are part of Ecuador. The islands are on, or very close to, the Equator.

Most penguins eat squid, fish and small shrimp-like creatures called krill. The birds spend about half their lives on land and the other half in the water.

The Waikato 'long-legged' giant penguin was 1.4 metres (4.6 feet) tall. So far, the biggest known giant penguin grew to a height of 1.6 metres (5.2 feet). Called *Crossvallia waiparensis*, its fossilised bones have been found in Antarctica and New Zealand. This 'monster' penguin's fossils are around 50 million years old.

Scientists are unsure what happened to the giant penguins. One

idea is that all the larger meat-eating marine creatures died out at the same time as the dinosaurs, or 66 million years ago. Then, the predator-free seas and oceans were perfect for penguins to thrive and grow larger. Yet, by around 25 million years ago, larger marine creatures, such as toothed whales, had appeared. They preyed upon giant penguins. Eventually, the big underwater flying birds became extinct. ▣







*Wrapped Arc de Triomphe (Eric Salard)*



*Arc de Triomphe (Alexandre Prevot)*

## WRAPPED ARC DE TRIOMPHE

On 18th September, a new temporary art installation opened in Paris, France's capital city. It is the Arc de Triomphe wrapped in a silvery blue fabric. The Arc de Triomphe is a triumphal arch or commemorative monument. The arch is on the Champs-Élysées. This wide avenue is one of the city's best-known streets.

The installation was planned over 50 years ago by an unusual artist, called Christo. He died, aged 84, at his home in the USA, 16 months ago. His full name was Christo Vladimirov Javacheff. The artist and his wife, Claude de Guillebon, worked together. She died before him in 2009.

Christo was born in Bulgaria in 1935. After the end of the Second World War in 1945, Bulgaria became a communist country. Then, Europe was divided. Most of Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, was controlled by

the Russian-led Soviet Union. The majority of countries in Western Europe were allied to the USA. This divide became known as the Cold War. In 1957, Christo managed to travel or escape to Western Europe. He then studied art in Austria and Switzerland.

After a year, Christo moved to Paris, the capital of France. There, he met his future wife. They married in Paris and began to produce works of art jointly. In 1962, they created a controversial art installation. It was a stack of empty oil barrels that blocked a Paris street. Christo declared that the unusual artwork was a protest about the Berlin Wall in Germany. Then, this wall divided the city of Berlin. It had become a symbol of the Cold War.

Christo and his wife moved to the USA. There, he displayed some of his small works in art galleries. Others were sold. Christo and his wife began to work on bigger installations. Many of the couple's big projects involved wrapping buildings in fabric. Two famous examples of their work were the Reichstag, in Berlin, and an old stone bridge in France.

The Reichstag is Germany's parliament building. Both the Reichstag and the bridge were wrapped and tied in sheets of a coloured fabric. After the Cold War ended, the Berlin Wall came down. East and West Germany were



*Christo Vladimirov Javacheff and his wife, Jeanne-Claude de Guillebon (Wolfgang Volz 2005 Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation)*

reunited. The German government decided to renovate the Reichstag. It would then be used as the new parliament building. Before the work began, Christo received permission to enclose the Reichstag in silver fabric. In 1995, the famous building was wrapped up for two weeks.

*The Floating Piers* was one of Christo's last installations. It was on Lake Iseo. It is near Lake Garda and Lake Como in northern Italy. These lakes are popular holiday resorts. *The Floating Piers* opened in 2016. It was the first project that Christo had completed on his own, or after



*Christo's 1960s drawing of a wrapped Arc de Triomphe (Sotheby's / ArtDigital Studio)*





*Christo's wall of oil barrels in Paris  
(Jean-Dominique Lajoux 1962 Christo)*

his wife died. However, he said that it was based on an idea that they had discussed many years previously.

This artwork was several floating yellow walkways. They led to an island in the lake. The installation was created from 220,000 cubes of polyethylene (a type of plastic). They were covered with nearly three kilometres (1.9 miles) of fabric. The cubes floated on the lake. The installation took 22 months to set up. It cost millions of dollars. Engineers, construction companies, and divers all worked on the project. Athletes tested the walkways to make sure that they were safe to walk on.

Christo admitted that the lake installation served no purpose. He said it was meant to be beautiful. When people walked on the piers, he explained, it would be like walking on water. The installation was open for 16 days. People could use the walkways during the day and night. The number of visitors was far higher than expected. Around 100,000 people arrived each day. Due to the crowds, the organisers had to close the walkways for several hours each night to clean them. After the installation was removed, or **dismantled**, the cubes and fabric were cut up and sold.

Building work on the Arc de Triomphe began in 1806. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769 – 1821) commissioned



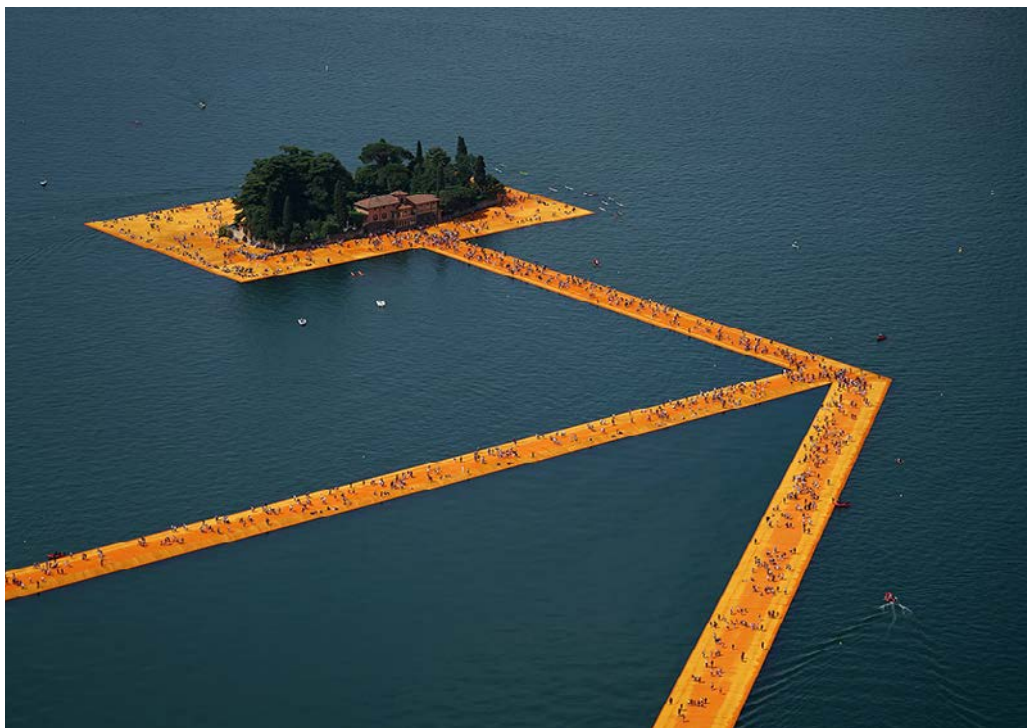
*Berlin's Reichstag building wrapped in silver fabric*

the monument. He was a successful military commander and the leader of France. The Arc de Triomphe commemorated the battles that he fought and the French soldiers who died in them. The arch was not completed until 1836, or long after Napoleon had died.

In the early 1960s, Christo lived near the Arc de Triomphe. Then, he made plans to enclose the monument in fabric. He produced detailed drawings as to how it would be done.

Several years ago, the French government granted Christo permission to wrap the arch for two weeks. After the artist's death, French officials announced that they would respect his plan.

Christo's nephew took charge of the installation. The project cost €14 million (£12 million). It was paid for from the sale of the drawings and models that Christo made of the Arc de Triomphe in the 1960s and some of his other artworks. ▣



*Aerial view of The Floating Piers installation on Lake Iseo, in Italy*





Roald Dahl in 1954

# NETFLIX AND ROALD DAHL

Netflix is an American company. It offers a subscription-based internet entertainment service. Customers who pay a monthly fee have access to a large library of films and television series. Nowadays, Netflix commissions, or makes, more and more of its own content. The company has over 200 million paying subscribers.

On 22nd September, the bosses of Netflix made an announcement. They had finalised a deal, or arrangement, with Roald Dahl's family. In return for a payment of £500 million (US\$685 million), Netflix now owns the rights to all the famous author's literary works. Dahl, who died in 1990, is best known for the 19 books he wrote for children.

Dahl was born in the UK in 1916. His parents were from Norway. Dahl's father was a wealthy shipbroker. He arranged for ships to transport certain cargoes both to and from the UK. Dahl was named after Roald Amundsen (1872 – 1928). A famous Norwegian polar explorer, he was the first person to reach the South Pole. Dahl's father died when he was only five years old.

After going to a local school, Dahl's mother sent him to several British boarding schools. At home, the family spoke Norwegian. In the summer months, Dahl often visited his grandparents in Norway. After leaving school in 1932, he decided not to go to university. He joined an expedition to Newfoundland in Canada. Afterwards, Dahl got a job with a large British oil company. It sent him to work in Tanzania, in Africa.

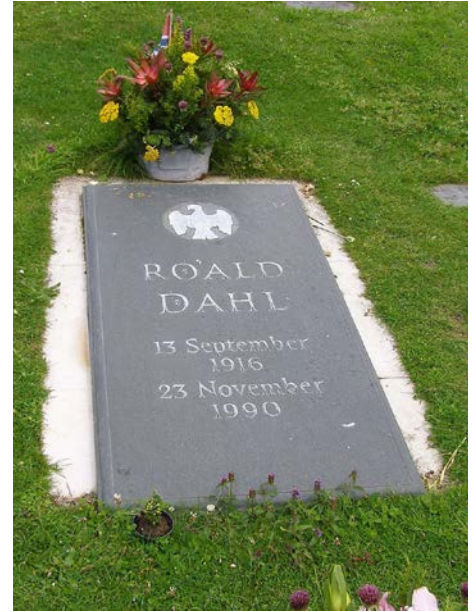
Roald Dahl's children's books







Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre museum in Great Missenden in the UK



Roald Dahl's grave in Great Missenden

The Second World War began in 1939. Dahl applied to join the air force. He was accepted and moved to Kenya. There, he was taught to fly. After completing his training, he was then posted to air bases in Iraq and Egypt. In Egypt, Dahl had to make an emergency landing in the desert. The crash left him with injuries to his skull, spine and one of his hips. He stayed in a hospital for several months.

By 1941, Dahl was fit to fly again. Then, the British air force was attacking German aircraft and soldiers in Greece. Dahl was involved in several aerial battles. He shot down at least five German aircraft. Yet, as a result of his previous injuries, Dahl began to suffer from bad headaches. Sometimes, he lost consciousness, or blacked out. As he was not able to fly, Dahl was sent back to the UK.

In London, by chance, Dahl met a senior politician. He had served in the air force in the First World War (1914 – 1918). The politician arranged for Dahl to go to America. There, he worked as an air attaché (or air force representative) in the UK's embassy in Washington DC.

When he was in America, Dahl began to write. His first story was about his wartime adventures. It was published in an American newspaper. In 1946, or the year after the war ended, Dahl was discharged from the air force. He married an American actress.

At first, Dahl wrote stories for adults. Many were **macabre** or sinister with surprising plot twists. Most were published in American magazines. Several were made into a popular television series called 'Tales of the Unexpected'. Dahl and his wife divorced in 1983. Soon afterwards, he remarried. By this time, the author was living in a village called Great Missenden, in the UK.

Dahl published his first well-known children's book in 1961. Called 'James and the Giant Peach', it is about a lonely little boy. In the story, the boy meets an old grasshopper and his insect friends on a giant magical peach. His next book, 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', was published three years later. His other children's books include: 'Fantastic Mr. Fox', 'The BFG', 'The Witches', and 'Matilda'.

Of all his children's books, Dahl said 'The BFG' was his favourite. It is about a 'big, friendly giant'. He catches dreams and stores them in his cave. The giant destroys the bad dreams and gives the good ones to children all around the world. Dahl often used made-up words in his children's books. For example, 'delumptious' is something that is good to

eat. It is a combination of delicious and **scrumptious**. Other 'Dahl words' include: uckyslush, rotsome, fizzlec-rump, and fizzwiggler.

Dahl wrote two screenplays. These are scripts for films. His best-known screenplay was for 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. This film is based on a book written by Ian Fleming (1908 – 1964). A British author, Fleming is best known for the James Bond books. Dahl wrote the screenplay for one James Bond film.

Dahl died aged 74. He is buried in the cemetery in Great Missenden. Visiting parents and their children often leave toys on his grave. More than 300 million copies of Dahl's children's books have been sold worldwide.

After his death, Dahl's family inherited the rights to his works. To manage them, the family set up The Roald Dahl Story Company. The company also operates the Roald Dahl museum in Great Missenden.

The recently announced deal means that The Roald Dahl Story Company will become part of Netflix. Last year, the Dahl Company had sales of £26 million (US\$36 million). These sales came mostly from sales of the author's books. Now, Netflix will be able to make films, television and stage shows, and create theme-park-like live experiences from all of Dahl's works. ■

# NETFLIX





## MAGDALA TREASURES RETURNED

Ethiopia's ambassador to the UK recently attended a special presentation. It was held in London. At the event, an organisation called the Scheherazade Foundation gave several artefacts to the ambassador. The items are some of the treasures that British soldiers looted from Ethiopia more than 150 years ago.

Over 100 years ago, the Ethiopian Empire was also called Abyssinia. It included the modern-day countries of Ethiopia and



*The Ethiopian emperor, Tewodros the Second, around 1860*



*Sir Robert Napier in 1860*



*Golden crown from Ethiopia displayed in a UK museum (V&A)*

Eritrea. Tewodros the Second (1818 – 1868) was an Ethiopian emperor. He wanted to create a modern fighting force. Then, he could defend his empire from hostile tribes and the Ottoman Turks.

At that time, the British Empire was very powerful. Queen Victoria (1819 – 1901) was the British monarch. Tewodros wrote to her. He asked Britain to send him modern weapons and ammunition. He also requested some British military experts. They would be needed to advise him and to train his army.

The British government decided not to comply with Tewodros's wishes. When, after three years, he had not received the help he had asked for, Tewodros became angry. He imprisoned a group of **missionaries** and some other Europeans who were in Ethiopia. The British sent an army captain to persuade the emperor to release them.

After agreeing to free the prisoners, Tewodros changed his mind. The group, including the captain, were rearrested. They were held in Magdala (or Makdala). A royal mountain fortress, or stronghold, it was in a remote part of central Ethiopia. After receiving the news, the British decided to send a military expedition to free the captives.

General Sir Robert Napier (1810 – 1890) led the expedition. He was based

in India. Then, India was a British colony. The British had a large 'Indian army'. Its senior officers were British and the soldiers Indians. Napier's force numbered 13,000 men. Half were Indian army soldiers. The expedition included horses, elephants, which carried heavy guns, and tens of thousands of pack mules.

Napier's ships landed at Annesley Bay in 1867. Also known as the Gulf of Zula, this inlet is in modern-day Eritrea. There, senior officers established a supply base. Napier arrived at the beginning of 1868. He led the force over mountainous terrain to Magdala. It took three months to complete the 644-kilometre (400-mile) journey. There were no roads or bridges. By this time, Tewodros had become unpopular in parts of his empire. Some local people helped to guide the British to the emperor's stronghold.

Tewodros's poorly equipped 9,000 soldiers were no match for the well-armed British and Indian troops. Napier's



*Prince Alamayou*

force quickly captured the Magdala fortress and rescued the prisoners. To avoid capture, Tewodros killed himself.

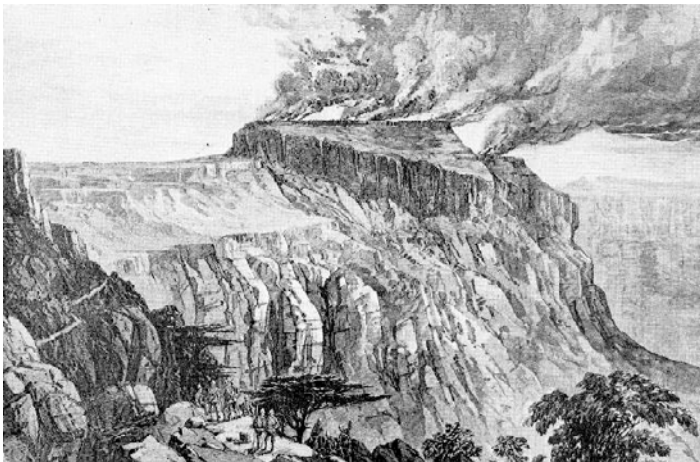
Napier's soldiers burned and looted the fortress' palace and church. Large amounts of treasure were taken back to the ships. It included crowns, religious icons, jewellery, swords and shields decorated with gold and silver, and many valuable manuscripts. A war artist accompanied the expedition. He drew a picture of the emperor after his death. The artist took two locks of Tewodros's hair. Later, he framed them with a letter and the emperor's seal.

Before he died, Tewodros asked his wife to tell Napier to look after his son and heir, Prince Alemayehu. She and the prince left Magdala with Napier's forces. The emperor's wife died soon afterwards. As he was an orphan, the prince was taken back to Britain.

In Britain, Prince Alemayehu was educated at a British school. He became a favourite of Queen Victoria. In 1879, at the age of 18, the prince died of pleurisy. This disease affects the lungs. Victoria arranged for him to be buried next to the royal chapel in Windsor Castle. This castle is one of the British monarch's main homes.



*British and Indian soldiers in Ethiopia in 1868*



*Drawing of the burning of the Magdala fortress in 1868*

Many of the most valuable items taken from Ethiopia are now in museums or private collections. The Victoria and Albert Museum in the UK has several artefacts from the expedition. One is a gold crown. The locks of hair remained in the possession of the artist's family. About 60 years ago, his descendants gave the hair to the Army Museum. This museum returned the hair to Ethiopia three and a half years ago.

Haile Selassie (1892 – 1972) was Ethiopia's emperor for over 45 years. Some items were given to him when he visited the UK. Soon afterwards, Britain's current monarch, Queen Elizabeth the Second, travelled to Ethiopia. She returned several other Magdala artefacts.

The Scheherazade Foundation is based in London. It has several aims. One is to empower women. Another is to bridge, or unite, countries that have different cultures. The foundation's name comes from 'One

Thousand and One Nights'. A collection of folktales from the Middle East, it was compiled over 1,000 years ago. These stories are often described as 'the greatest collection of tales the world has ever known'. In them, Scheherazade is a wise woman and the main storyteller.

The foundation purchased the Ethiopian artefacts from two private collectors. One was from the UK and the other from Belgium. A handwritten Ethiopian Bible, religious crosses, a royal shield, a set of cups made from animal horns, a wooden icon, and a magical scroll were among the items given to the Ethiopian ambassador.

At the ceremony, the ambassador welcomed the artefacts' return. Some will be sent to the National Museum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city. Others will go to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian government wants all the 'Magdala' artefacts to be returned. These, it says, include Prince Alemayehu's remains. ▣





*The Twin Towers in New York City in 2001, soon after they were struck by the hijacked aircraft (Michael Foran)*

*George W Bush, the former American president, speaking after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.*



## 'THE DAY THE WORLD CHANGED'

On 11th September, three ceremonies took place in the USA. Joe Biden, America's president, and several former presidents attended them. The ceremonies marked the 20th anniversary of '9/11' (11th September). Some people call it 'the day the world changed'. George W Bush was there. He

*'Tribute in Light' 9/11 memorial in New York City (Anthony Quintano)*



was America's president 20 years ago.

New York City has many skyscrapers. In 1973, two very tall buildings were completed. The same height, local people called them the Twin Towers. They were part of a complex called the World Trade Center. For a time, the towers were the world's tallest buildings. Many companies wanted to rent the office space inside them.

On 11th September 2001, a passenger aircraft flew into one tower. The upper floors caught fire. At first, people thought it was an accident. Yet, soon afterwards, another airliner crashed into the second tower. After burning for 56 minutes, it collapsed. The

other tower, or first to be hit, fell 30 minutes later. By this time, people knew the aircraft had been hijacked. Suicide attacks, they had been flown into the towers deliberately.

Another hijacked passenger aircraft crashed into one side of the Pentagon. A huge five-sided building, it is near Washington DC, America's capital city. The Pentagon is the headquarters of the United States military.

A fourth airliner was hijacked. Its passengers learned about the other hijackings from phone calls they received. Some passengers attempted to retake the airliner. While fighting the hijackers, the aircraft crashed into a field in the state of Pennsylvania. It's thought that the hijackers aimed to fly it into the US Capitol Building or the White House.

September 11th was the world's deadliest terrorist attack. Almost 3,000 people died. Tens of thousands were injured. The fatalities included 340 firefighters and 72 police officers. That evening President Bush spoke on live television. The people who planned the attacks, he said, would be found. Anyone who helped them would be punished. President Bush named it a 'War on Terror'.

An Islamist terrorist group called Al-Qaeda

carried out the 9/11 attacks. Then, Osama bin Laden was its leader. Born into a wealthy family, he came from Saudi Arabia. (Nearly all the 9/11 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia.)

In 1979, the Russian-led Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Bin Laden travelled to the country to fight against the invaders. He arranged for other Muslim volunteers to join the fight. Bin Laden gave money and weapons to the Afghans who fought the Russians. At that time, the USA and Russia were enemies. America secretly supported the Afghans fighting against them. In 1989, Russia withdrew its forces from the country. By now, bin Laden had built up a large organisation.

In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. This angered bin Laden. He believed it was wrong for one Muslim country to invade another. Bin Laden asked Saudi Arabia's rulers to let him use his organisation to free Kuwait. They refused. Instead, the rulers agreed that the

USA could send thousands of its troops to Saudi Arabia and use it as a base.

The American troops, with help from other countries such as the UK and France, forced the Iraqis to leave Kuwait. Bin Laden was annoyed. He thought foreign troops should not have been involved. Bin Laden moved to Sudan, in Africa. From there, he arranged bomb attacks on American embassies in several African countries.

Five years later, bin Laden returned to Afghanistan. By then, the Taliban were in control. Supporters of al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist groups want everyone to follow a very strict **interpretation** of Islam. Unlike the vast majority of Muslims, the Taliban also believes in similar stringent religious rules.

Before 9/11, the Taliban allowed al-Qaeda to operate training camps in Afghanistan. President Bush demanded that it hand over al-Qaeda leaders in the country. When

the Taliban refused, he ordered an American force to invade. The invasion was successful. Yet, the Taliban was not defeated. Most of its fighters hid in the mountainous areas close to the Afghan-Pakistani border.

American forces tracked down bin Laden in 2011. He was living in secret in a house in Pakistan. (Then, Barack Obama was the American president.) At night, specially trained American soldiers flew to the house by helicopter. They killed bin Laden and several others who lived there.

In 2003, the USA, with the UK and several other countries, invaded Iraq. This invasion was not connected to 9/11. Then, Saddam Hussein led Iraq. The Americans accused him of developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). These, they claimed, would be used to threaten other Middle Eastern countries. The invasion was successful. Yet, no WMD were ever found in the country. The USA withdrew nearly all its troops from Iraq in 2011. Those remaining have been helping to train Iraq's army.

Al-Qaeda is no longer as well organised as it was. However, since 2001, other **affiliated** Islamist terrorist groups have been formed. They operate in parts of the Middle East, Africa and South East Asia. These groups attack those who do not share their beliefs.

Recently, after occupying parts of the country for 20 years, American forces



*One World Trade Center building, in New York City (Pedro Szekely)*

(and soldiers from many other foreign countries) withdrew from Afghanistan. The Taliban have taken over again. The invasion of Afghanistan and the death of bin Laden did not end the War on Terror.

It took several years to remove all the debris from the fallen Twin Towers. Where they stood is now a memorial. A new skyscraper, called One World Trade Center (One WTC), has been built nearby. As well as New York City, remembrance ceremonies took place at the Pentagon and where the fourth airliner crashed.

Each year, since 2003, a light installation has lit up the night sky above New York City around 11th September. Set up on the roof of a building close to the Twin Towers memorial, it has 88 high-powered blue spotlights. Called the 'Tribute in Light', it creates two blue pillars of light. On clear nights, the pillars can be seen from 97 kilometres (60 miles) away. ■



*The Pentagon, near Washington DC (Touch Of Light)*



*9/11 memorial where the fourth hijacked aircraft crashed (Acroterion)*





*Mammoth Cave entrance  
(National Parks Service)*

## MAMMOTH CAVE

The longest cave system in the world is in the American state of Kentucky. It's called Mammoth Cave. The word 'mammoth' means 'huge' or 'enormous'. The cave was named over 200 years ago. Its name comes from its size and not the large elephant-like creature that died out long ago.

Over the years, explorers have continued to find and map more passageways in Mammoth Cave. Some are so small that they can only be crawled through. Others are vertical. Recently, an additional 13 kilometres (eight miles) of passageways were recorded and mapped. Now, the cave system's total known length is 676 kilometres (420 miles).

Large cave systems, like the Mammoth Cave, are normally found in massive layers of limestone rock. This rock type is soluble in water. Rain, which falls on

the surface, drains down to the limestone layer. It percolates, or seeps, through cracks in the rock. As it does, the water dissolves the limestone. Over many millions of years, it creates lengthy caves or passage-

ways. This type of limestone erosion is known as karst topography.

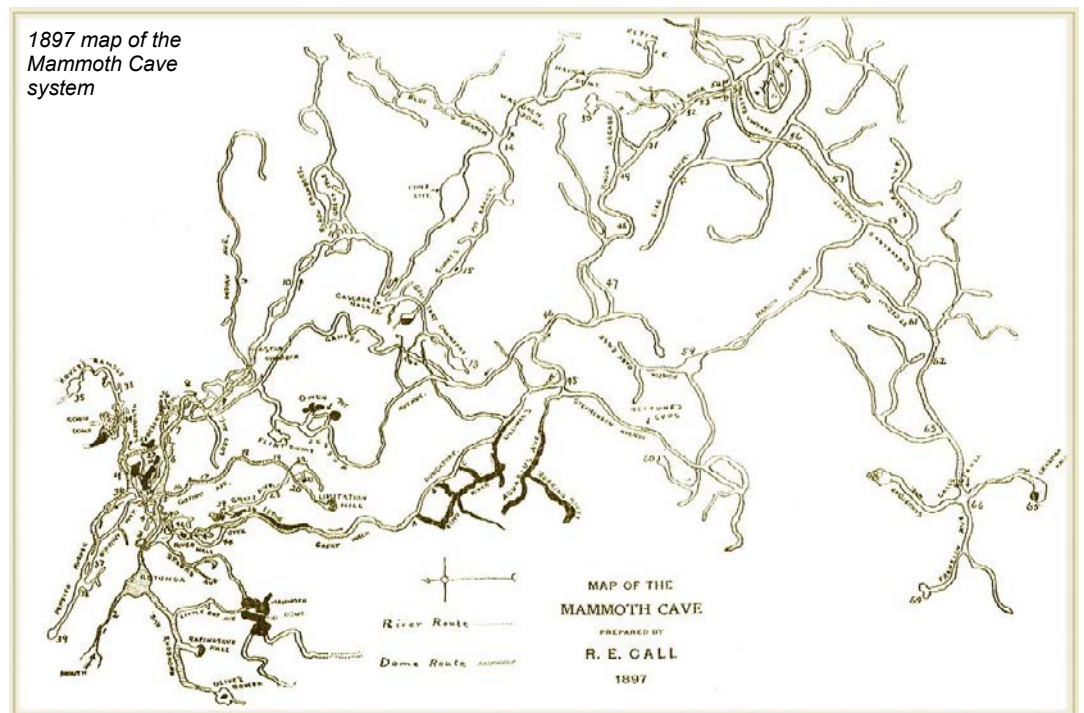
As well as caves, karst topography has underground rivers, streams and dripping water. Often, larger limestone caves have

big stalactites and stalagmites. Stalactites are icicle-like formations. They 'hang' from the ceiling of limestone caves. Stalagmites grow up from the cave floor. Calcite in dripping water forms them. Over thousands of years, as the stalactites and stalagmites grow, they can meet. When this happens, they form 'pillars' that join the floor to the ceiling.

The Mammoth Cave limestone formed beneath an ancient sea around 300 million years ago. Nearly all the fossils found in the rock are of sea creatures.

Humans first used the Mammoth Cave as a shelter about 4,000 years ago. They probably did this during the harsh winter months. Some of

*1897 map of the  
Mammoth Cave  
system*





*A reconstruction of the saltpetre mining operation in Mammoth Cave (National Park Kentucky)*

their bones, pottery, cane torches, and tools have been found. The location of these artefacts shows that these people went 30 kilometres (19 miles) into the caves.

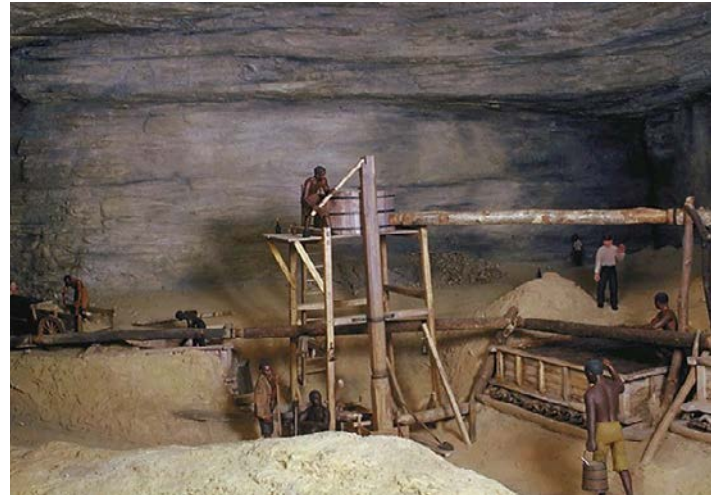
The cave's early inhabitants used mussel shells to scrape gypsum and other minerals from the walls. The shells came from a nearby river. Today, gypsum is used to make building materials, such as plaster, as a fertilizer, and to make paper. What the native Americans used the gypsum and other minerals for is not known.

Europeans began to arrive in North America around 500 years ago. The main entrance to the cave system was 'rediscovered' in 1797. It's said that a hunter chanced upon it. A bear

he was chasing ran into the cave.

A three-year war between the United States and Britain began in 1812. Then, enslaved African Americans mined saltpetre from the depths of the cave. Saltpetre was used to make gunpowder. Its chemical name is potassium nitrate. Saltpetre is formed when bat droppings come into contact with limestone. Working conditions for the slaves were bad. Smoke from oil lanterns made it difficult to see and breathe.

After the war ended, the cave became a tourist attraction. A hotel was built not far from its entrance. As they knew the cave, some enslaved saltpetre miners became guides. Others worked in the hotel.



Often, the sons of these guides took over from their fathers. Some early tourists used lantern smoke to write their names on the flat ceiling in one part of the cave.

For a short time, people with TB were housed in the cave. TB, or tuberculosis, is an infectious disease. Caused by airborne bacteria, it affects the lungs. Today, TB can be treated with antibiotics. Then, the disease could be fatal. It was hoped that the cave's air would help to heal the sufferers' lungs.

Slavery in America was abolished in 1865. The descendants of the guides continued to work in and explore the cave. A young engineer from Germany visited Mammoth Cave in 1908. He spent several months exploring the cave system. One of the guides accompanied him. The two men produced a remarkably accurate map of most of the cave's passageways.

An underground river in the cave system is called the River Styx. In Ancient Greek mythology, Styx is a god and a river. The river forms the boundary between the Earth and the Underworld (or hell). Mammoth Cave is home to many bats. More than ten unusual species live inside it. Over time, after living in the darkness, these creatures have lost their sight. They include types of freshwater shrimp, small fish and crickets.

Now, Mammoth Cave is within a national park. In the summer months, around 4,000 people visit it every day. It is America's second most popular tourist attraction. Only Niagara Falls, on the American-Canadian border, has more visitors. ■



*Names written in lantern smoke on the ceiling in Mammoth Cave (Dave Bunnell)*





Justin Trudeau, Canada's prime minister



Canada's parliament building in Ottawa (Saffron Blaze)

## CANADA'S MINORITY GOVERNMENT

Justin Trudeau is the prime minister of Canada. He leads the country's Liberal Party. Mr Trudeau became the prime minister six years ago. Then, his party won in an election landslide, or by a wide margin. For the next four years, Mr Trudeau led a majority government.

Elections for Canada's parliament usually take place every four years. In the election two years ago, Mr Trudeau lost his majority, but continued as prime minister. In Canada, prime ministers can, if they wish to, call an early election. Wanting to regain his majority, Mr Trudeau called an election two years early. It took place on 20th September. When a vote for members of parliament is called early, it's described as a 'snap election'.

Canada is what's known as a Commonwealth realm. Canadians

elect their own leaders. Yet, their country's head of state is Queen Elizabeth the Second, or monarch of the United Kingdom (UK). Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and Papua New Guinea (PNG) are other Commonwealth realms.

In Canada, the queen has few powers. The prime minister and senior government ministers make all the important decisions. Like other Commonwealth realms, Canada has a governor general. Queen Elizabeth, with advice from Canada's prime minister, appoints this person. They carry out the queen's official and ceremonial duties while she is not in the country.

Canada's parliament buildings are in Ottawa, the capital city. They are known as Parliament Hill (or just The Hill). The parliament has two

houses: the House of Commons, or lower house, and the Senate, or upper house. The prime minister usually leads the party with the greatest number of elected members, or seats, in the House of Commons. It has 338 seats. To have a majority, a party must win at least 170. Each member of the House of Commons represents an electoral district or constituency. (In Canada, these areas are known as ridings.)

Mr Trudeau's father was Pierre Trudeau (1919 – 2000). He was Canada's prime minister from 1968 to 1979 and again between 1980 and 1984. Pierre Trudeau also led the Liberal Party. When Mr Trudeau's father became prime minister, he was a very popular leader. At first, most young Canadians supported him. Many were excited about his new ideas. They believed that Pierre Trudeau represent-



ed a new type of 'modern' politics. Large crowds gathered to hear him speak. His popularity was nicknamed 'Trudeaumania'.

Mr Trudeau became the leader of the Liberal Party in 2013. Then, it had only 36 seats. The party was in third place behind its two main rivals: the Conservative Party and the New Democrats. The 2015 election surprised many people. With Mr Trudeau as its leader, the Liberal Party went from 36 seats to 184, or an increase

of 148. Then, at the age of 43, Mr Trudeau became Canada's second youngest ever prime minister. What's more, his party had a large majority. Many people joked that 'Trudeaumania was back'.

In recent years, Mr Trudeau's popularity has waned, or diminished. This is due to several political scandals and unfulfilled pledges. In the 2019 election, the Liberal Party lost seats. It got 157. The Conservative Party came second with 121 seats and the

New Democrats got 24. The Bloc Québécois went from ten seats to 32. This party only contests seats in Quebec. A **separatist** party, it wants the Province of Quebec to be an independent country.

After the election results were announced, Mr Trudeau declared that he would not try to form a co-alition with other parties. Instead, he would lead a minority government. This meant that, in the House of Commons, the Liberal Party could be outvoted easily. Governing without a majority is possible but difficult. To pass new laws, Mr Trudeau had to persuade other parties to work with him.

Many Canadians were surprised that Mr Trudeau called a snap election. Most thought that it was unnecessary. What's more, holding an election costs large sums of money. Like many other countries, Canada is having to deal with the pandemic. An election, many people said, could cause infection numbers to rise.

After all the votes were counted, it was announced that little had changed. The Liberal Party got a few additional seats. Yet, once again, it failed to win a majority. The Conservative Party came second with a similar number of seats that it won two years ago. Mr Trudeau will now lead another minority government. It will continue for four years, unless he calls another snap election. ■



Canada's House of Commons Chamber, the speaker's chair is at the rear centre

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Watson**

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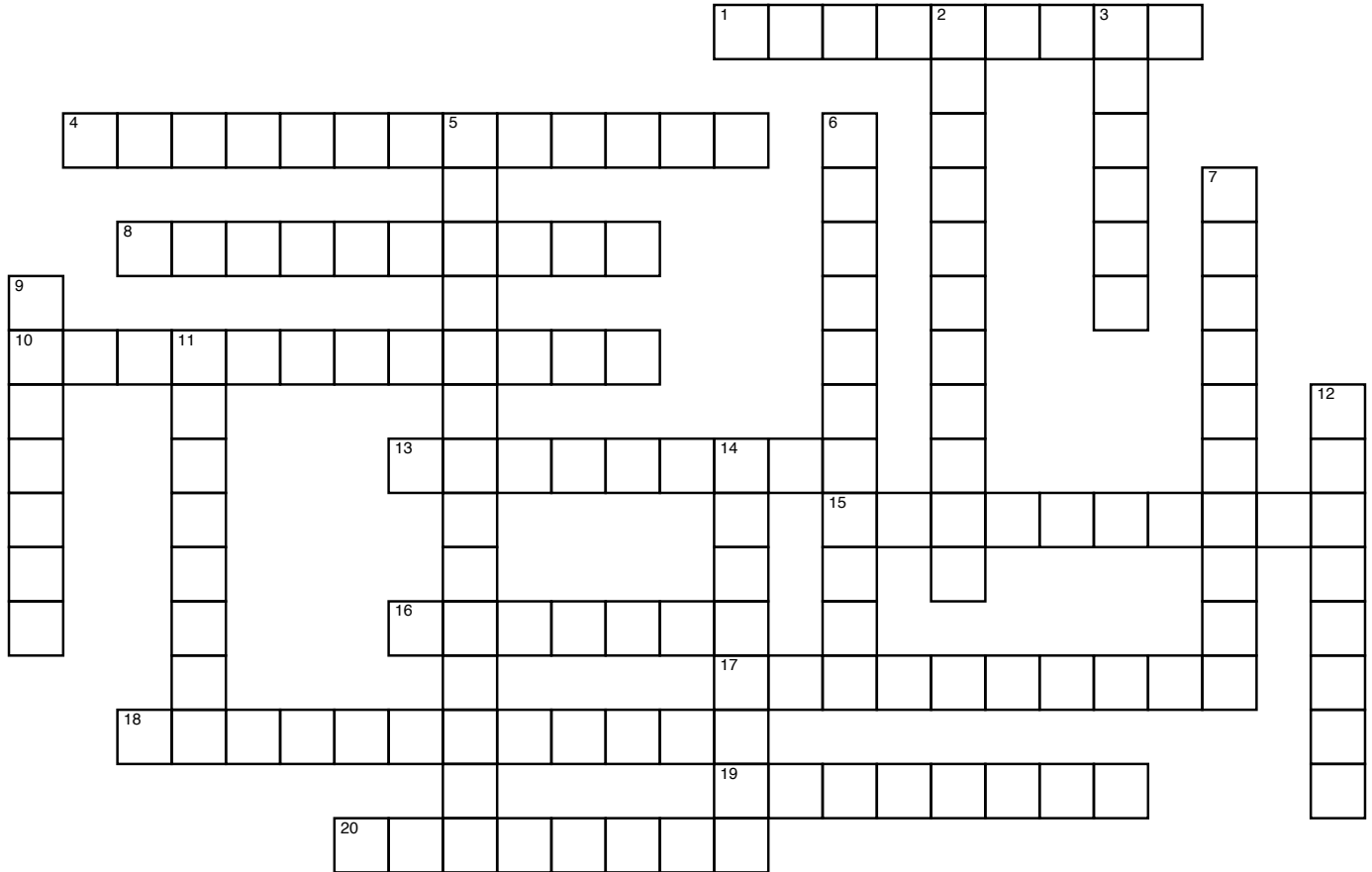
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# ISSUE 415 GLOSSARY PUZZLE

Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page.



## ACROSS

- 1. Verb:** Printed information and made it available to anybody who wants it
- 4. Adverb:** Relating to military or political plans to gain an advantage
- 8. Verb:** Floating in the air
- 10. Noun Plural:** People who travel to other countries for a religious purpose
- 13. Adjective:** Very noticeable, important or sticking out above everything else
- 15. Verb:** Frighten or threaten into submission
- 16. Adjective:** Disturbing and horrifying because it involves death or injury
- 17. Verb:** Removed or taken to pieces
- 18. Verb:** To have brought animals or plants under human control for transport, food, power or companionship
- 19. Noun:** Forever or time without end
- 20. Verb:** Made known or passed on information

## DOWN

- 2. Noun Plural:** Parts of a mixture or one of the things used in a recipe
- 3. Noun:** A magical or medicinal substance believed to cure all ills
- 5. Noun:** An explanation of something that is difficult to understand
- 6. Adjective:** Very tasty
- 7. Adjective:** Has a close connection with another, or larger, organisation
- 9. Noun:** A person who takes part in a sport or other activity unpaid
- 11. Noun:** A possible series of events
- 12. Adjective:** Of great value
- 14. Verb:** To be fixed firmly into something else

# ISSUE 415 GLOSSARY PUZZLE (CONTINUED)

Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the wordsearch. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

N Y P Y Z J W K G J D E T J D R Y S  
O I R A N E C S A Y G R D P E D K E  
I I V A L E H L J T N N E N D E J I  
T E I Y E G M E U I U B X I D T J R  
A N B K V S Y Z E N L S V N E A J A  
T T I P I C J V C R W L P G B C A N  
E N S E T W D Y K E C S U R M I P O  
R E E T A D I M I T N I B E E T S I  
P N R L T F D L I E V J L D V S B S  
R I B H I X S I W P R F I I W E Y S  
E M A H N X W K S X N B S E C M I I  
T O C X G H I F H M P H H N O O K M  
N R A E J X O R U B A N E T N D S R  
I P M O G X O F G Q W N D S V D H O  
E S U O I T P M U R C S T G E A G B  
F D Z Q E R X R S N M R N L Y W X Y  
S U O I C E R P O E A M A T E U R A  
Y L L A C I G E T A R T S I D D Y Y

MISSING WORD ANSWER =



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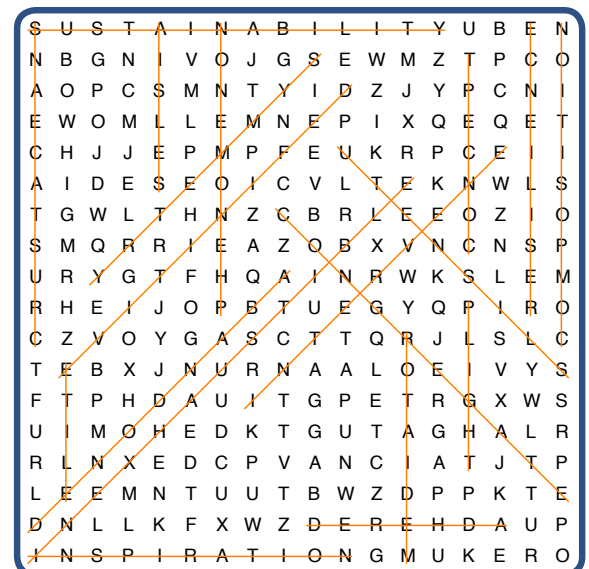
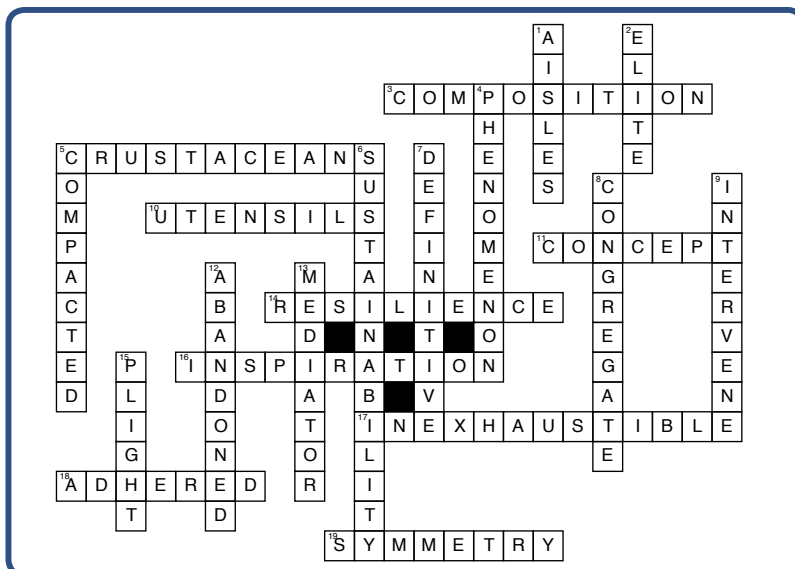
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# ISSUE 414 GLOSSARY PUZZLE ANSWERS



MISSING WORD: COMPACTED