

# FASCINATING FACTS

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Welcome to this issue of Fascinating Facts. Now retired, with a background of journalism, literature production, international public relations, and ex editor of a leading industry publications, I now have the time to combine my abilities and share my interests in historic facts, especially in connection with military matters. While I have written most of the articles in the Scarletman I am happy to accept ideas and contributions from readers; giving them credit for their work. The Scarletman is free issue e-magazine therefore if you would like to circulate copies further then I am happy for you to create a wider readership of those with a similar interest to mine.

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*Winter-Time*

*Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,  
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;  
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,  
A blood-red orange, sets again.*

*Before the stars have left the skies,  
At morning in the dark I rise;  
And shivering in my nakedness,  
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.*

*Close by the jolly fire I sit  
To warm my frozen bones a bit;  
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore  
The colder countries round the door.*

*When to go out, my nurse doth wrap  
Me in my comforter and cap;  
The cold wind burns my face, and blows  
Its frosty pepper up my nose.*

*Black are my steps on silver sod;  
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;  
And tree and house, and hill and lake,  
Are frosted like a wedding cake.*

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

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## DANGER—AVALANCHE

Such innocuous tiny flakes of harmless snow, when in mass, can become deadly as a fully developed avalanche weighing up to millions of tons and can accelerate from standing to speeds approaching 200 miles per hour in minutes.

But an avalanche is not just snow; the force of the mass of snow gathers up rock, ice, soil, vehicles, buildings in its path and other material as it slides swiftly down a mountainside all faster than the world's fastest skier.

### SLIPPERY LAYERS

Avalanches occur as one layer of more recent packed snow, many feet thick, on the sloping side of a mountain, slides off a lower one which is of different make up—perhaps having previously melted and frozen.

The bonds between the layers of a snowpack may be weak. Melted snow that refreezes may cause a slick coating of ice to form on the surface of a layer. A new snowfall may not stick to this slippery layer, and it may slide off. During spring thaw, melted snow can seep through a snowpack, making the surface of a lower layer slippery. Any added weight or local vibration can send the top snow layers of a snowpack hurtling downhill.

### SLUFFS AND SLABS

There are two main types of snow avalanches—sluffs and slabs. Sluff avalanches occur when the weak layer of a snowpack falls on the top of a previous snow fall. A sluff avalanche results in a small slide of dry, powdery snow that moves as a formless mass. They are much less dangerous than slab avalanches. A slab avalanche occurs when the weak layer lies lower down in a snowpack. This

layer is covered with other layers of compressed snow. When the avalanche is triggered, the weak layer breaks off, pulling all the layers on top of it down the slope. These layers tumble and fall in a giant block, or slab. Once a slab avalanche starts, the slab shatters into many separate blocks which break up into ever-smaller pieces. Some of the pieces rise into the air as a moving cloud of icy particles. The cloud races downhill at very high speeds. The thickness and speed of slab avalanches make them a threat to skiers, snowboarders, mountaineers, and hikers. In the mountains of the western United States, there are about 100,000 avalanches each year. Overall avalanches kill more than 150 people worldwide each year. Most are snowmobilers, skiers, and snowboarders.

### RESCUED AFTER 35 DAYS

In 1755 in Bergemolletto, Italy, an avalanche buried 4 people in a stable. After 37 days in a pitch-dark confined space, 3 of the 4 people were rescued alive. They lived on goat milk, a few chestnuts, a few kg of raw kid meat, and meltwater. When extricated, they were unable to stand or walk.

Slope steepness, terrain, vegetation, and general snowpack conditions are all factors that influence whether an avalanche happens and what type occurs. Snow avalanches are most likely to occur after a fresh snowfall adds a new layer to a snowpack. If new snow piles up during a storm, the snowpack may become overloaded, setting off a slide. Earthquakes can set off avalanches, but much small-

### NATURE'S WEAPON

During World War I, more than 60,000 Italian and Austrian troops died in avalanches while fighting in snowy mountain passes in the Alps. More than 10,000 died in a single day on December 13, 1916. Avalanches killed more soldiers in World War I than poison gas did.

Avalanches strike suddenly and can be deadly. In 1970, a massive avalanche of rocks and ice destroyed the town of Yungay, Peru, killing 18,000 people. One of the most deadly avalanches on Mount Everest, killed 16 Sherpas, when an ice mass the weight of 657 buses plummeted down on top of hikers.

er vibrations can trigger them. A single skier can cause enough vibrations to set off a slide. In fact, 90 percent of avalanche incidents involving people are triggered by the victim or someone in the victim's party.

### UNABLE TO PREDICT

Currently, scientists are not able to predict with certainty when and where avalanches will happen. However, they can estimate hazard levels by checking on the snowpack, temperature, and wind conditions. Many ski areas employ avalanche control teams to lessen the danger by starting slides before skiers head for the slopes. At some ski areas, patrols use explosives to set off avalanches. Or they may blast hazardous slopes with a cannon to shake loose any large, new accumulations of snow. In Canada and Switzerland, special military troops are in charge of avalanche control. Many Swiss mountain villages are protected from snowslides by large, sturdy structures built to anchor snowpacks.

### NATURE'S POWERFUL EVENT

One of nature's most powerful events a fractured mass of snow may flow down a slope or become airborne. As a large avalanche speeds down a mountainside, it may compress the air below it, producing a powerful wind that can blow a house apart, breaking windows, splintering doors, and tearing off the roof.

The human body is three times denser than avalanche debris and will sink quickly making finding and rescuing avalanche victims much more difficult. Bodily movement is nearly impossible.

# THE WONDERS OF NATURAL PHENOMENA

## The Bleeding Glacier



National Science Foundation/Peter Rejcek, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Blood Falls is an outflow of an iron oxide-tainted plume of saltwater, flowing from the tongue of Taylor Glacier onto the ice-covered surface of West Lake Bonney in the Taylor Valley of the Mc Murdo Dry Valleys in Victoria Land, East Antarctica.

The iron-rich hypersaline water sporadically emerges from small fissures in the ice cascades. The saltwater source is a subglacial pool of unknown size overlain by about 400 metres (1,300 ft) of ice several kilometres from its tiny outlet at Blood Falls.

The reddish deposit was discovered in 1911 by Australian geologist Thomas Griffith Taylor, who first explored the valley that bears his name. The Antarctica pioneers first attributed the red colour to red algae, but later it was proven to be due to iron oxides.

## The liquid rainbow river



Mario Carvajal, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Crystal Channel is a Colombian river located in the Serranía de la Macarena, an isolated mountain range in the Meta Department. A tributary of the Guayabero River, it is part of the Orinoco basin. Caño Cristales was discovered in 1969 by a group of cattle farmers. The river is commonly called the "River of Five Colours" or the "Liquid Rainbow," and is noted for its striking colours. The water of the river is extremely clear due to the lack of nutrients and small particles, but the bed of the river from the end of July through November, during the rainy period is variously coloured yellow, green, blue, black, but more especially red, which is caused by *Rhynchospora clavigera* plants on the riverbed. They are green when young, then turn yellowish and finally various shade of red and adhere tightly to rocks in places where the river has faster current. In recent years, the river has become a tourist destination; there were more than 16,000 visitors.

## Lake That Turns Animals to Stone



© Nick Brandt 2013, Courtesy of Hasted Kraeutler Gallery, NY

Lake Natron in Tanzania is one of the most serene lakes in Africa, but it is also the source of some of the most incredible photographs ever captured; images that look as though living animals had instantly turned to stone. The alkaline water in Lake Natron has a pH as high as 10.5 and is so caustic it can burn the skin and eyes of animals that are not adapted to it. The water's alkalinity comes from the sodium carbonate and other minerals that flow into the lake from the surrounding hills. This deposits sodium carbonate; used in ancient Egyptian mummification. It also acts as a preservative for those animals unlucky enough to die in its waters. The animals do not simply turn to stone and die as the Lake's alkaline waters support a thriving ecosystem which supports wetland birds, tilapia and algae on which flocks of flamingos feed. The dead remains of birds and animals are preserved by the carbonate deposits leaving the bodies in sharp relief.

## Darvasa gas crater



© Tormod Sandtorv / Darvasa gas crater panorama

The Darvasa gas crater also known as the Door to Hell, or officially the Shining of Karakum, is a burning natural gas field collapsed into a cavern near Darvasa Turkmenistan, in the middle of the Karakum Desert, about 160 miles north of Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan. The crater has a diameter of 200–230 ft and a depth of about 98 ft. The crater is illuminated by hundreds of natural gas fires. The crater's history is uncertain. Relevant records are either absent, classified, or inaccessible. Some local geologists claim it collapsed into a crater in the 1960s. It was set on fire in the 1980s to prevent emission of poisonous gases. Others claim it has been burning for an unknown period of time. Another scenario was that in 1971 Soviet engineers drilled an oil field which collapsed within days, forming the crater, with the engineers choosing to flare the crater to prevent emissions. In 2010 plans were announced to extinguish the flames but despite good intentions, the crater remains open.

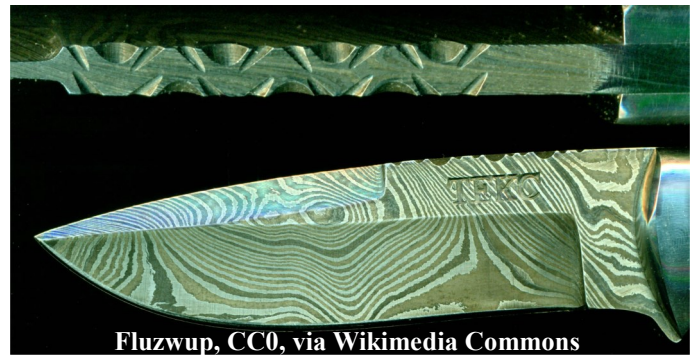
## FORGOTTEN TECHNOLOGY



### GLASS FLOWERS

Born in 1822 Leopold Blaschka and his son Rudolf were German glass artists from Dresden, and became known for their glass models. Prince Camille de Rohan, a naturalist, commissioned them to

craft 100 glass orchids for his private collection. Impressed by Leopold's work, he exhibited the orchids and other exotic plants, which brought the skill of the Blaschkas to the attention of Professor Ludwig Reichenbach director of the natural history museum in Dresden as this solved the problem of deterioration of the display of flowers and insects. Over their lives Leopold and Rudolf crafted as many as 10 thousand glass marine invertebrates, and 4,400 botanical glass flowers now displayed in many museums. Leopold developed what he termed "glass spinning", which enabled him to make precise and detailed works in glass. No one has been able to do. So the technique died with him,



### DAMASCUS STEEL

This term is used nowadays for a wide variety of pattern welded forged steel products. But historically Damascus steel was discovered in the Middle East many ye-ars ago and used for sword making. Stories allege that these swords could cut through rocks or could completely shear another blade, but what made this steel so special? The exact process they used is still unclear. The Damascus steel process created an incredibly strong but flexible metal that modern day smiths have struggled to recreate. Similar patterned steel was imported from Sri Lanka and used in the forging process with other metals to create patterns. While modern day Damascus steel is high quality and quite beautiful, it is only an approximation of its former glory.

### ROMAN CONCRETE



The Romans were builders and their aqueducts, bridges are still standing. The dome of the Pantheon is the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world, 2,000 years later. The exact recipe for Roman concrete, in particular its use underwater, has baffled scientists for millenia. During production, less carbon dioxide is released. Disadvantages are longer drying time and lower strength despite its greater durability. It gains strength for several decades after construction, which is not the case with modern concretes. It is "greener" than modern concrete.

### INCA ARCHITECTURE



There is absolutely no cement used to build the wall in the picture above. It is all dry bond. It has stood for many centuries. The fit is perfect. But there are two mysteries here. We are told all the stones are cut with tools not made of metal, since Incans didn't have metal tools. So how were they cut to the intricate shapes and dressed to the required size. Second the stones are giant size. Not only would we have problems transporting stones of this size but the lifting and placing of stones, weighing many tons is a mystery which has baffled scientists.



### EGYPTIAN STONE WORK

Yes, with modern tools we can carve and core drill work the same as the ancient Egyptian did; but how did they do it? What tools? We are told they only had 'pounders' balls of granite or copper chisels. So how did they carve the intricate detail on the temple wall as on the left. More to the point how did they core drill holes in granite? Right the granite core from one of those holes!



# THE SEVEN GENERATIONS

As a person of the Silent Generation I have lived through 6 generations and often reflect on the fact that, the Silent and Baby Boomers were the best generations. There was something about the pace of life, the lack of big brother, the nanny state of Health and Safety and the fear of expressing an opinion in case it causes offence and ends up in legal proceedings!

Children learned by experience. They were never stressed. If people were stressed they just got on with what they had to do. It was never an excuse

## GREATEST GENERATION

This generation refers to people who came of age during the Great Depression and World War I. They were a generation who fought not for fame or recognition, but because it was the right thing to do.

Often characterised as having experienced social and economic turmoil the majority who served in World War I were from this generation. Despite facing significant challenges and hardships, many members of this generation believed in better times and worked hard to achieve it.

They had a sense of community and responsibility living through World War I, This forged a strong sense of community and responsibility. They grew up where respect for authority was highly valued. Many of this carried this value throughout their lives.

## SILENT GENERATION

Popularised by a 1951 Time Magazine article was used to describe the generation of young adults was described as "silent" when compared to their parents, the Greatest Generation, who had fought in World War I, there was a desire for stability. The silent generation experienced significant historical events, including World War II and the Korean War, and as a result, many members of this generation valued stability and security even more. This generation also came of age when respect for authority was highly valued, and many members of the Silent Generation carried this value with them throughout their lives.

Loyalty to their employer: The silent generation was known for being loyal to their employers and often worked for the same company for many years.

## Greatest Generation:

Born 1901-1924

## Silent Generation:

Born 1925-1945

## Baby Boomers:

Born 1946-1964

## Generation X:

Born 1965-1980

## Millennials:

Born 1981-1996

## Generation Z:

Born 1997-2012

## Generation Alpha:

Born 2013-2025

## BABY BOOMERS

The Baby Boomers are so called due to the increase of births after WWII, due to military returning home and starting a family.

They had a desire for change and progress and were known for their desire to bring about social change and progress. Many were involved in the civil rights and feminist movements and often at the forefront of efforts to promote social justice and equality. With focus on personal fulfilment by prioritising personal fulfilment earned them the name of the "me" generation. They were the first generation to have access to technology. This generated the term "generation gap", describing the chasm with the older generation, in relation to culture, politics, and lifestyle.

## GENERATION X

The term was first used Robert Capa to describe a certain attitude, and mentality of young people after World War II, which was sceptical of traditional values.

The term was popularised to refer specifically to this generation Douglas Coupland in his novel Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture. Which he said included their willingness to challenge authority and to think for themselves.

They were the first generation to grow up experiencing the change to widespread access to personal computers and the internet. Having to cope with many changes.

Gen Xers emphasise achieving a balance between their work and personal lives.

## MILLENNIALS

"Millennials aspire to marry blue sky thinking of the Boomers with the grass-roots mindset of GenX. Many came of age during 2008-2009 and faced a challenging job market. Many are highly educated and been exposed to a range of ideas and perspectives which has led them to pursue careers and business opportunities aligned with their values and passions. Many also value flexibility, not being restricted to the traditional 9-5 workday, as they don't want to be tied to a desk, they explore opportunities to work independently, remotely, or as freelancers.

Some see them as the most narcissistic, others as the burnout generation, raised to be perfect and set up for failure. Others see them as the most diverse and socially conscious, changing the world for the better.

## GENERATION Z

Known as Zoomers, they are the first generation born into full internet access and digital technology which is why they are called "digital natives." They are also called "screenagers," as they grew up with screens, smartphones, laptops, and tablets, - a big part of their lives.

Socially and politically aware many Gen Zers are known for their concern about social and political issues and are often active in efforts to bring about positive change. More progressive and liberal than previous generations they tend to prioritise issues such as climate change, racial and gender equality, and LGBTQ rights. Gen Z is the most ethnically and racially diverse generation in history. It's been estimated that half of Gen Z identify as non-white which reflects the demographic changes and increased acceptance and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds.

## GENERATION ALPHA

"Alpha" are children born in the 21st century. They are known for their technological intuitiveness, sense of global citizenship, and adaptability to change. They don't think about technologies as tools. They integrate them singularly into their lives. They are considered highly individualistic as they prioritise self-expression, self-reliance, and personal fulfilment. As this generation is still young, it's too early to label their characteristics accurately.

# FEMALE PIRATES

Swash buckling, fighting and tough. That was the image of a pirate, certainly not of women. But there were female pirates! Female emancipation taken to the highest level.

## RACHEL WALL

The first and only American woman pirate she ran away from home as a teen and married George Wall a fisherman. Settling in Boston with constant money problems led them to turn to a life of crime. In 1781, they procured a small boat, and with a few low-life mariners preyed on ships off the coast of New England. Their ingenious and brutal strategy was when there was a storm make their boat look like it had been ravaged by rough seas. The comely Rachel would stand on deck pleading for aid from passing ships. When the rescuers came near, they were boarded, robbed and murdered.

Wall's siren song may have lured as many as a dozen ships to their doom, but her luck ran out in 1782 when a real storm destroyed her boat and killed George. She continued her thieving on land and was later arrested in 1789 for attacking and robbing a Boston woman. While in prison, she penned a confession admitting to "Sabbath-breaking, stealing, lying, disobedience to parents, and almost every other sin a person could commit, except murder." Unfortunately for Wall, it was not enough to sway the authorities. On October 8, she became the last woman executed in Massachusetts when she was hanged.

## CHENG I SAO

One of history's most influential raiders she was a prostitute and married a powerful corsair named Cheng I in 1801. They raised one of China's most formidable 50,000 strong pirate armies with a fleet of hundreds.

On her husband's death she partnered with Chang Pao and they plundered their way across Southeast Asia. She produced a rigorous code of conduct for her pirates. Rape of female prisoners was punishable by beheading, and deserters had their ears chopped off. Her bloody reign made her public enemy number one and in 1810, she shrewdly surrendered her fleet and lay down her cutlass in exchange for the right to keep her ill-gotten riches. She went on to run a gambling house until her death in 1844 at the age of 69.

## ANNE BONNY

A notorious pirate Anne Bonny was the illegitimate daughter of a wealthy Irish lawyer. To hide her dubious parentage, he dressed her as a boy working as a law clerk in his firm. In 1718 she moved to America, and married a sailor in the pirate-infested island of the Bahamas. She abandoned her husband and fell under the spell of "Calico" Jack Rackam, a flamboyant buccaneer. She had a "fierce and courageous temper" and reputedly beat a man nearly to death. She drank, cursed, wield a pistol and cutlass with the best. She forged a friendship with Mary Read, and the pair aided fishing boats and trading sloops. Her stint on the high seas was cut short when Calico Jack's ship was captured by pirate hunters. He was executed, but being pregnant Bonny and Read dodged the noose.

## MARY READ

Born in England in the late 1600's, most of her youth was spent disguised as her deceased half-brother so her penniless mother could scam the boy's grandmother. She adopted the name Mark Read and became a soldier and then

a merchant sailor. After pirates attacked her ship she was pressed to join them where she met Calico Jack Rackam, and Anne Bonny to whom she revealed herself as a woman. She sailed with Jack for a few months, winning a formidable reputation. A most fearsome exploit was on October 1720, when she and Anne Bonny fought to repel an attack by pirate hunters. Despite her heroics, she and the rest of Calico Jack's crew were captured and charged with piracy. She avoided execution as she was pregnant but later died of fever in prison.

## GRACE O'MALLEY

While most women were restrained to their homes, Grace O'Malley led a 20-ship fleet that defied the British monarchy. Born into a powerful Irish clan, she continued the family tradition of piracy. Her escapades were legendary, fighting in a battle the day after giving birth. Repelling a siege against her stronghold at Rockfleet Castle in 1574 she later did 18 months behind bars when captured during one of her raids.

Resuming her marauding after her release, more trouble arrived when British authorities impounded her fleet. The 63 year old appealed to Queen Elizabeth I portraying herself as a tired and broken old woman begging the Queen to return her ships, release her captured son and allow her to retire in peace. But she didn't keep her end of the bargain—as she and her sons continued pirating until her death in 1603.



# Have we learnt the lesson of self sufficiency!!!

Hitler was determined to starve this country into submission and directed the Kriegsmarine, using U-boats, mines and surface raiders, assisted by the Luftwaffe and Italian submarines, to strangle the transatlantic lifeline. For me this was history being born in 1936 I grew up just accepting the situation. But of course for my parents this was a lot of change. As less than one third of the food available in the UK at the start of the war was home produced. This meant that the country had to import some 20 million tons each year, such as meat, cheese, sugar, fruit, cereals and fats as well as large quantities of fuel. Hoping to be better prepared than during the First World War, by 1938 the government had printed ration books.

## FIRST ITEM RATIONED

In 1939 petrol was the first item rationed but soon was restricted to 'official' users only e.g. bus companies and farmers. On January 8th 1940 butter, bacon and sugar followed. Later meat, tea, jam, biscuits, breakfast cereals, cheese, eggs, lard, milk, canned and dried fruit joined the list. Babies, pregnant women and the sick were allocated additional food items such as milk, orange juice and cod liver oil.

Domestic coal was rationed to 15 hundredweight in London and 20 for those in the north. Anthracite was not rationed. All types of soap were rationed by weight or liquid quantity. Clothing was rationed using a point's system. This allowed one new outfit per year but was reduced steadily,

until buying a coat used up almost a year's supply of clothing points. For my family, self evacuating from London, due to my fathers medical discharge after 1 years service in the Military Police, to one of three farmers cottages on a hill in the middle of Salisbury Plain, three miles from the school, shops and other habitation. Moving from Greenwich and all mod cons, to an isolated brick floor farmers cottage was a culture shock. But on the other hand a life saver.

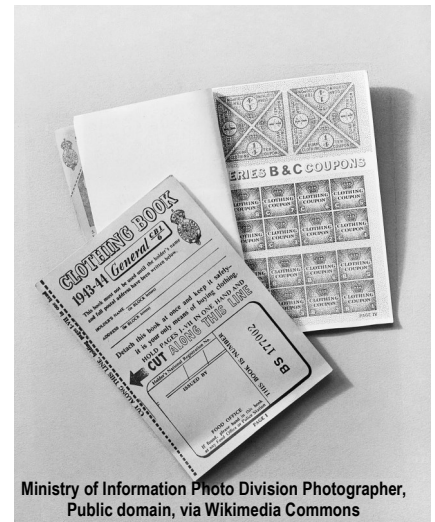
## LIVING OFF GRID!!

It was true living off grid!! No electric, bucket loos and one external water tap between the three cottages plus one acre of garden which provided us with vegetables. We kept chickens, goats and pigs. We became a haven of calm for relatives from London to visit!!! During that time, being virtually self sufficient we were not overly affected by rationing and costs.

In December 1939, there was an experiment to test whether the UK could survive without imports. Volunteers fed themselves with one egg, one pound of meat, and four ounces of fish a week; one quarter pint of milk a day; four ounces of margarine; and unlimited amounts of potatoes, vegetables, and whole-meal bread. Plus two weeks of intensive outdoor exercise They found that their health and performance remained very good after three months. But it led to an increase in flatulence from the high amount of starch in the diet!

## RATIONING A SUCCESS?

Rationing ensured the population got its allotted amounts, and therefore a nutritionally reasonable diet. Despite its complexity, queuing



Ministry of Information Photo Division Photographer, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

and paperwork, many appreciated the fairness and equality of rationing, providing everyone with enough to eat. The prevalence of obesity was negligible while birth weight and infant mortality improved. On the other hand, the lack of food variety became boring making it prudent to 'keep in' with the grocer, who reserve-ed extras for favoured customers.

## HAVE WE LEARNT LESSONS?

In 2020, no one country provided the UK with more than 11 per cent of one type of food imports, a picture which means that by value, £48 billion was imported and £21.4 billion was exported. That means the UK imported 46 percent of the food it consumed!

When it comes to fresh produce, we presently import almost half of our vegetables and around 80 per cent of our fruit. Items such as bell peppers, lettuce, cucumbers easily grown in this country are amongst some of the most imported foods, with fresh food imports reaching around 1.98 million metric tonnes in 2021.

## GLOBAL RAMIFICATIONS

Previously we had eaten only seasonal foods but now much is flown in adding to the world's carbon footprint!! Further disruption of food supply of several food staples was thrown into worry repercussion by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Resulting in global ramifications of the world's food and energy situation. So one questions the policy of globalisation of certain staple products. But this is not just about food. We only have one UK steel producer owned by an Indian company. If we were involved in another war. Would we have sufficient steel resources to produce armaments!?

**DEFENCE OF THE REALM. E.P. 6.**

**MINISTRY OF FOOD.**

## BREACHES OF THE RATIONING ORDER

The undermentioned convictions have been recently obtained:-

Court	Date	Nature of Offence	Result
HENDON - -	29th Aug., 1918	Unlawfully obtaining and using ration books -	3 Months' Imprisonment
WEST HAM -	29th Aug., 1918	Being a retailer & failing to detach proper number of coupons	Fined £20
SMETHWICK -	22nd July, 1918	Obtaining meat in excess quantities - - -	Fined £50 & £5 5s. costs
OLD STREET -	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer selling to unregistered customer	Fined £72 & £5 5s. costs
OLD STREET -	4th Sept., 1918	Not detaching sufficient coupons for meat sold -	Fined £25 & £2 2s. costs
CHESTER-LE-STREET	4th Sept., 1918	Being a retailer returning number of registered customers in excess of counterfoils deposited -	Fined £50 & £3 3s. costs
HIGH WYCOMBE	7th Sept., 1918	Making false statement on application for and using Ration Books unlawfully - - - - -	Fined £40 & £6 4s. costs

Imperial War Museum, London, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Enforcement Branch, Local Authorities Division, MINISTRY OF FOOD, September, 1928.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

The chicken came before the egg. Genesis 1:20-22 explains how God created every winged bird and then commanded them to multiply.

## DYNAMITE SNACK

Peanuts are used to make dynamite. Their oil is extracted to make glycerol, from which the explosive compound nitro-glycerine is obtained.

## GROWING WINGSPAN

As a butterfly emerges from its chrysalis, its wings are small, not big enough to enable it to fly. It therefore pumps fluids from its abdomen through veins in its wings to expand the wings to their full size.

## WINDY CITY?

Chicago, often referred to as the Windy City does not get its nickname from the weather. Journalists coined the term in the 1800s to criticise the people in Chicago as "full of hot air."

## STARS AND STRIPES

In 1958, high school pupil Bob Heft designed the 50-star American flag that flies today. At the time, Alaska and Hawaii were not yet states, but he assumed they would become states. So he added two more stars to his family's existing 48-star flag. His teacher gave him a B grade. Two years later, after President Dwight D. Eisenhower selected his flag's design out of 1,500, Heft's teacher changed his grade to an A.

## #WHOKNEW?

The "#" symbol, commonly referred to as a hashtag or pound sign, is actually called an octothorpe.

## ROOSEVELT'S ZOO

President Theodore Roosevelt and his family kept a variety of odd pets, including a small bear, pigs, lizard, guinea pigs, blue macaw (giant parrot), hens, one-legged rooster, hyena, barn owl, rabbit, pony and dogs.

## GOAT'S EYES

The pupils in goats' eyes are rectangular.

## LOBSTER FOR EVERYONE

During American colonial times lobster was so plentiful, and therefore so cheap, that it was often served to prisoners.

## FINGER MUSCLES?

You don't have muscles in your fingers to help you move them. They are controlled by the muscles in your palms and arms.

## A HUM-DINGER

You can not hum while holding your nose. To hum for an extended period of time, you have to exhale, which you can not do when both your mouth and your nose are closed.

## BLOND PRESLEY

Elvis Presley, renowned for his distinct voice and jet-black hair, was a natural blonde. He began dyeing his hair black as a teenager with shoe polish.

## HUMMING BIRD

An average North American hummingbird beats its wings 53 times per second.

## CAN Y'ALL BELIEVE THIS?

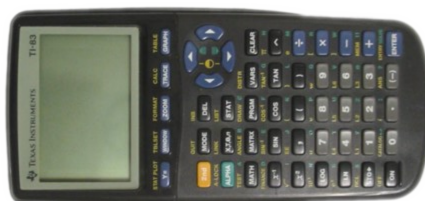
"Y'all," a contraction of "you all," is synonymous with the American South, especially in Texas. But the earliest-known use of "y'all" is in Englishman William Lisle's "The Faire Aethiopian."

## BRIDGE IN THE DESERT

London Bridge spanned the River Thames from 1832 to 1968 when it was sold to Robert McCulloch, Sr., who wanted to draw tourists to Lake Havasu City, the city he founded in Arizona. The inside the bridge is hollow and supported by a steel framework. The facade features the bridge's original granite blocks.

## COMPUTING POWER

A TI-83 calculator has six times more processing power than the computer that landed Apollo 11, the first spaceflight to land humans on the moon.



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## TANK TEA TIME

Since the end of World War II in 1945, British tanks have been equipped with all of the items needed to make tea, including a BV (boiling vessel) that heats water. This means that troops can stay in their tanks, keeping them protected from enemy attacks, while enjoying a fresh cuppa.

## OLDEST UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1088, the Italian University of Bologna, is the oldest university in the world.

## BERRY INTERESTING

Strawberries, raspberries, cherries and blackberries are not classified as berries! Scientists identify berries as a fruit that has three layers: outer skin, fleshy middle and innermost part that holds the seeds, has two or more seeds, develops from one flower that has one ovary. So the following are officially berries—bananas, blueberries, tomatoes, grapes, cranberries, watermelons, peppers, kiwis, oranges and eggplants

## WHEN THE UNDERGROUND IS NOT THE UNDERGROUND

London's public train transportation system is known as the London Underground is not truly underground! Only 45 per cent of the London Underground uses underground tunnels. The majority of the train lines travel above ground.

## SINCERELY IRONIC

"Oxymoron" refers to a group of self-contradicting words, such as icy hot and seriously funny. The word "oxymoron" is itself an oxymoron. Drawn from Ancient Greek, "oxy" means sharp, and "moron" means stupid.

## PAWSITIVE FACT

Cats have five toes on their front paws, but they have only four toes on their back two paws.

## ALASKA YOU A QUESTION

Alaska is the only U.S. state whose name is typed using one row of the keyboard.

## NOODLE OVER THIS FACT

One strand of spaghetti is called a "spaghetto."

## AN EYE FOR DETAIL

Human eyes focus on 50 different objects every second.



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Founded by Jeff Bezos in 1994, he chose Seattle due to its abundance of technical talent, and because Microsoft was located in the area.

Amazon went public in May 1997 selling music and videos in 1998. It began international operations by acquiring online sellers of books in the United Kingdom and Germany. The following year, it began selling music, video games, consumer electronics, home improvement items, software, games, and toys.

In 2002, it launched Amazon Web Services and in 2004, expanded AWS to provide website popularity statistics and web crawler data. In 2006, Amazon launched the Fulfillment program, allowing "third-party sellers" to sell products through its warehouses and infrastructure.

#### **PURCHASED SUPERMARKET**

Amazon purchased the Whole Foods Market supermarket chain in 2017 a leading US e-retailer with approximately US \$178 billion net sales and over 300 million global customers.

Amazon saw a large growth during the COVID-19 pandemic, hiring more than 100,000 staff in the United States and Canada, but they cut over 18,000 jobs in January 2023, primarily in consumer retail and its human resources division in an attempt to cut costs.

In February 2021, Bezos announced that he would step down as CEO to become executive chair of Amazon's board. Former CEO of AWS Andy Jassy replaced him as CEO.

#### **FIRST CENTIBILLIONAIRE**

The e-commerce platform is the 14th most visited website in the world and Bezos is the first centibillionaire on the Forbes Real Time Billionaires Index which named him the "richest man in modern history" with a net worth exceeding \$200 billion in 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his wealth grew by approximately \$24 billion. Amazon is worth more than \$1.7 trillion of which Jeff Bezos has 11% share. While the orange arrow below the word Amazon, extends from A to Z, looks like a smile of satisfaction it also means the company sells a range of products from A to Z.

Ebay was started as AuctionWeb in California on September 3, 1995, by French-born Iranian-American computer programmer Pierre Omidyar. It soon became the first online auction site allowing person-to-person transactions, and its popularity boomed. eBay was his hobby until his internet provider informed him to upgrade to a business account due to his high website traffic.

#### **PHENOMENAL GROWTH**

In 1996 the company started selling plane tickets and other travel products. Growth was phenomenal: from 250,000 auctions during 1996 to 200,000 in January 1997 alone.

The company changed its name to eBay in 1997, after Echo Bay Technology Group, and in 1997 it received \$6.7 million in funding from Benchmark Capital.

The leader in the toy category quickly became Beanie Babies, difficult to find in retail stores. It was the first business-to-consumer web site, where people could trade their Beanie Babies which quickly accounted for 10% of all listings in 1997. In 1998 the company had 30 employees, half a million users and revenues of \$4.7 million in the US.

#### **SHARE PRICE TREBLED**

In 1998 when eBay went public its target of \$18 per share went to \$53.50 on the first day of trading. and Omidyar became an instant billionaire. In 2000 eBay had 12 million registered users and more than 4.5 million items on sale. In 2001, eBay had the largest userbase of any e-commerce site.

By early 2008 the company had expanded worldwide, counting hundreds of millions of registered users as well as 15,000 employees and revenues of almost \$7.7 billion. In late 2009 eBay completed the sale of Skype for \$2.75 billion, but still owned 30% equity in the company.

In February 2002 the company purchased iBazar, a similar European auction web site founded in 1998, and then bought PayPal on October 3, 2002. One of the first items sold on Auction Web was a broken laser pointer for \$14.

Founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin Ph.D. students at Stanford University. Google is a US multinational technology company specialising in online advertising technologies, a search engine, cloud computing, software, and hardware. It is considered one of the Big Five technology companies in the U.S. information technology industry. Together Page and Brin own about 14 percent of its shares and control 56 percent of the stockholder voting power through super voting stock. They incorporated Google as a California privately held company on September 4, 1998. In 2004 Google moved to its headquarters California, nicknamed the Googleplex. In August 2015, Google reorganised its various interests as a conglomerate called Alphabet Inc with Google its leading subsidiary.

#### **RAPID GROWTH**

The company's rapid growth since incorporation triggered a chain of products, acquisitions, and partnerships beyond Google's core search engine offering services designed for work and productivity, email, scheduling and time management, cloud storage, instant messaging and video chat, language translation, mapping and navigation, podcast hosting, video sharing, blog publishing, note-taking, and photo organising and editing. The company leads the development of the Android mobile operating system, the Google Chrome web browser, and Chrome OS.

#### **MOST VALUABLE BRAND**

From 2010 to 2015, it partnered with major electronics manufacturers in the production multiple hardware products in 2016, including the Google Pixel line of smartphones, Google Home smart speaker, Google Wifi mesh wireless router, and Google Daydream virtual reality headset. Google.com is the most visited website worldwide. Several other Google-owned websites also are on the list of most popular websites, including YouTube and Blogger. Google was the most valuable brand in the world in 2017 .