

FASCINATING FACTS

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THE MAN WHO MADE A MEAL OF A CESNA 150 AND A STOMACH FULL OF 1,440 NAILS



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MetalSlugX at English Wikipedia, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

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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GETTING OLD

A group of men, all approaching 30 who attended the same school, and played for the local football team, decided it would be interesting to meet every 10 years for a lunch to keep in contact and confirm their school friendship.

INITIAL 30 YEAR OLD MEETING

The group, after much deliberation agreed that they would meet at the local Wetherspoons as it held many memories

FORTY YEAR OLD MEETING

Ten years later they met and decided to meet at Wetherspoons because it had big screen TV and they could watch sport while they ate.

FIFTY YEAR OLD MEETING

Ten years later, the friends once again discussed where they should meet for lunch.

Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Cannock because the waitresses were attractive. The food and service was good and the beer selection was excellent.

SIXTY YEAR OLD MEETING

Ten years later, the friends again discussed where they should meet for lunch.

Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Cannock because there was plenty of parking, they could dine in peace and quiet with no loud music, and it was good value for money.

SEVENTY YEAR OLD MEETING

Ten years later, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch.

Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Cannock because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible and had a toilet for the disabled.

EIGHTY YEAR OLD MEETING

Ten years later, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch.

Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Cannock because they had never been there before.

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LIVING ROOT BRIDGES

A living root bridge is created by manipulating and weaving the pliable roots of the rubber fig, and other trees across a stream or river, and then allowing the roots to grow and strengthen over time. Eventually they become strong enough to hold the weight of a human being. The young roots are sometimes tied, plaited or twisted together, and are often encouraged to combine via the process of inosculation. Inosculation is the process of natural fusing of two or more trees, branches, or roots into a single, continuous organism through a biological process similar to grafting.

RUBBER FIG TREE

The rubber fig tree is well suited this as it tends to anchor itself to steep slopes and rocky surfaces. Therefore it is ideal as its roots take hold on opposing river banks.

As root bridges are created from living, growing organisms, the useful lifespan of any given living root bridge is variable. As long as the trees which formed the bridge remain healthy as it will naturally self-renew and self-strengthen as its component roots grow thicker.

LAST MANY YEARS

It is thought that, under ideal conditions, a root bridge can last for many hundreds of years. Often, locals



Arshiya Urveeja Bose, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Double living root bridge in East Khasi India

using root bridges will make small alterations to them, manipulating young roots as the opportunity presents itself. Because of this, one can say that the development of a living root bridge is very much a social endeavor and that the structures are perpetual works in progress.

BAMBOO SCAFFOLD

Root bridges are also commonly formed by training young rubber fig roots over scaffolds made from wood or bamboo, materials which are abundant in Northeast India. In these instances, the roots are wrapped around the outside of the perishable material. The scaffolds may be replaced many times over the years as the root bridge becomes stronger.

The pliable tree roots are often made to grow through hollow tree trunks placed across rivers and streams until the figs' roots establish a strong connection on the other side. The trunks serve as guides and provide the roots with nutrients as they decay. This process can take up to 15 years to complete.

Rubber fig roots have also been trained across a pre-existing rusting steel bridges, so that it has time to form as the steel elements fail. The roots will form into a usable living root bridge.

Root bridges can also be trained to grow across conventional structures, such as already existing steel wire suspension bridges. This means that when the already deteriorating structure eventually fails the root bridge will still be useable.

A root bridge being grown using bamboo scaffold in North East India



Elbowmacaroni, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

NOTABLE ROOT BRIDGES

The double-decker two-lane living root bridge of Padu Village is over 50 metres long. The longest known living root bridge is near the small Khasi town of Pynursla in India, accessed from either the village of Mawkyrnot and known as Rangthylliang bridge.

Aerial roots of the tree have been interwoven in the spaces between several branches so that platforms have been created from which villagers can watch local football games. The "Double Decker" root bridge of Nongriat is estimated to be 200 years old. There is also a possibly Triple Decker root bridge near the Indian village of Rangthylliang, close to Pynursla.

FEELING HUNGRY?



FANCY A CESSNA 150 SNACK?

Pica ("PIE-kuh") is the psychological craving or consumption of objects normally intended for consumption. Classified as an eating disorder it can be the result of an existing mental disorder. The ingested substance may be biological, natural, or man made. .

MICHEL LOTITO

French entertainer Michel Lotito, known as Monsieur Mangetout Mister Eats-All', was famous for the deliberate consumption of indigestible objects. His digestive system allowed him to consume up to 900 g (2.0 lb) of metal per day! In 1966, at the age of 16 he began eating unusual material when he performed. He had an eating disorder known as pica, a psychological disorder characterised by an appetite for substances that are largely non-nutritive. Doctors also determined that he had a thick lining in his stomach and intestines which allowed his consumption of sharp metal without suffering injury.

POWERFUL DIGESTIVE JUICES

Lotito also had digestive juices that meant he could digest unusual materials. Soft foods, such as bananas, gave him heartburn, specifically when he had metal in his stomach. His performance involved consumption of metal, glass, rubber and other materials. He disassembled, cut up, and consumed items such as bicycles, shopping carts, televisions, beds and even a complete Cessna 150 among other items. It took him roughly 2 years, from 1978 to 1980, to eat the Cessna 15. He claimed not to suffer ill effects from his consumption of substances typically considered poisonous. When performing, he ingested approximately 2.2 lb of material, drinking mineral oil and considerable quantities of water during the performance. It is estimated that between 1959 and 1997, Lotito "had eaten

nearly nine tons of metal. Lotito's method for eating all of this metal was to break it into small pieces before attempting to eat it. . This allowed him to swallow the metal without damaging his throat. Incredibly Lotito did not have any digestive problems as a result of his unusual diet. With a high pain threshold he allowed people to light matches under his fingernails and throw darts into his back. He was paid nearly \$1,000 per day,

GUINNESS RECORD

He holds the record for the "strangest diet" in the Guinness Book of Records and was awarded a plaque, made of brass, by the publishers to commemorate his abilities. He ate his award. He died of natural causes at age 55 on 17 April 2006, in Grenoble.

Unusual items allegedly consumed

- 45 door hinges
- 18 bicycles
- 15 shopping carts
- 7 television sets
- 6 chandeliers
- 2 beds
- 1 pair of skis
- 1 computer
- 1 copy of the textbook Gravitation
- 1 Cessna 150 light aircraft
- 1 waterbed
- 1,600 ft of steel chain
- 1 coffin (with handles)
- 1 Guinness World Records award plaque—

JACQUES DE FALAISE



Became famous for ingesting nuts, pipes, unshelled hard-boiled eggs, flowers watches, and live animals . He committed suicide in 1825 age 71.

1,440 ITEMS FOUND IN THE STOMACH OF A PATIENT SUFFERING FROM PICA. TAKEN AT THE GLORE PSYCHIATRIC MUSEUM, SAINT JOSEPH, MISSOURI.



MetalSlugX at English Wikipedia, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

ORIGIN OF COMMON PHRASES

History can be fascinating by learning the etymology of common words idioms, part of our rich language and can back hundreds of years.

A NEST EGG

Farmers collecting eggs often left one to encourage the chickens to continue laying eggs in the same nest. The phrase “nest egg” was used in this context in the seventeenth century to mean set aside a money for the future.

A PINCH OF SALT

“Addito salis grano” was first used by Pliny the Elder around AD 77 referring to King Mithridates VI who claimed to develop immunity to poisoning by ingesting small, regular doses of a poison with a grain of salt to make them more tolerable

In the middle ages the English started using a similar expression—“cum grano salis” as a more modern version to imply that, just as by adding salt enhances flavour or taking a dubious story with a pinch of salt makes it more digestible.

Ironically when Mithridates was defeated by the Romans he drank poison to kill himself, only to discover that this was no longer effective. He ended up stabbing himself instead.

A RED-LETTER DAY

The feast days and saints days of Medieval ecclesiastical calendars, were marked in red, while other days were in black.

BAKER'S DOZEN

The Assize of Bread and Ale Act of 1262 was a piece of medieval legislation aimed to prevent bakers selling underweight loaves. To stay on the right side of the law, bakers started to give an extra piece of bread away with every loaf, and a thirteenth loaf with every dozen.

BEYOND THE PALE

While you may think the phrase has to do with one's complexion, the word “pale” actually originates from the Latin word “palum,” meaning ‘stake.’ In English, it initially referred to a

fence marking the boundaries of a territory under specific authority, such as a cathedral pale. Over time, this extended to denote the limits of political jurisdiction. The phrase came to be viewed as what was within the pale was considered civilised, while beyond it was seen as barbaric.

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

While records of this phrase date back to the 14th century, its origins are not clear. One Medieval theory attributes it to a law related to collecting firewood, that allowed peasants to only take what they could cut from dead trees by using their reaper's bill-hook or a shepherd's crook.



CURRY FAVOUR

The unlikely phrase originates from Le Roman de Favuel, a 14th-century French romance in which characters groomed a chestnut horse to gain favour and assistance. In Middle English the Old French ‘estriller fauvel’ translated as to ‘curry favel’, This led people to accuse those who tried to further their own ends by flattery to be currying favel. And now “currying favour.”

DEAD AS A DOORNAIL

Door nails used by Medieval carpenters were particularly thick, and were hammered right through the wood so the point could be clinched on the other side and couldn't be pulled out or used again. Such a nail was appropriately called a “dead nail.”

DYED IN THE WOOL

In medieval times, people applied vegetable dye directly to raw wool rather than spin yarn for finished cloth to enable the dye to penetrate into all the fibers, resulting in a more consistent and durable color in the final cloth. The technique led

to the expression therefore referred to a person someone deeply believing a particular characteristic or belief.

GET OFF SCOT-FREE

There are two potential explanations of this saying. The most likely is from medieval times when peasants had to pay their feudal lords a ‘scotage’. As the poorest were exempt they got it “scot-free.” Another explanation relates to tavern bills, often known as “scots.” If a companion or friend covered the cost you got it “scot-free” .

HUE AND CRY

Hue comes from Middle Ages Old French, where ‘huer’ means crier and if you saw a crime being committed, you were commanded to raise to shout and make noise to warn the rest of the community. To hue and cry.

THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

This originates from medieval markets, where sneaky sellers would show a sample of goods, possibly a pig. Then gave customers a sealed bag, in which was a cat and claimed the item was ready to go. However, when opened later the cat was found.

PEEPING TOM

This was first used in the eighteenth century but refers to the medieval legend of Lady Godiva, dating back to the 13th century when Godiva rode naked through the streets of Coventry to protest against the oppressive taxation imposed on people by her husband, Leofric, Earl of Mercia. Leofric who challenged her to do this and if she did he'd reduce the levy if she did.

Enjoying lower taxes, the townsfolk stayed indoors, but Tom the Tailor succumbed to curiosity and peered at Lady Godiva through a window. This ‘Peeping Tom’ then was blinded, either through divine punishment or from angry neighbours.

PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

In the early 16th century, Pope Leo X created the Promoter of the Faith to argue against the proposed canonisation of a saint by highlighting unfavourable items to the claim—a task that led to the unofficial title of ‘advocatus diaboli’, or Devil's advocate.

STATISTICALLY IMPROBABLE COINCIDENCES

MARK TWAIN AND HALLEY'S COMET

According to the New York Times, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, who was born in 1835, the same year as Halley's Comet made its first appearance, famously predicted that the two events would coincide. He was quoted as saying, "The Almighty has said, no doubt, 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together.'" The comet made its second appearance in 1910, the year that Twain died.

THE FIRST AND LAST

By the time World War I came to an end, it had claimed an estimated one million British lives buried in a wide number of cemeteries. But somehow, without any planning, the graves of the first recorded English casualty of the war, 17-year-old soldier John Parr, and the last recorded casualty, 30-year-old George Edwin Ellison are both in the Saint Symphorien Military Cemetery. But what is more of a coincidence they are just 15 ft apart facing each other!

THE HOOVER DAM

Over 20,000 men worked on the massive Hoover dam and with the odds of perishing on the job at 1 in 220 a total of 96 died during its construction. The first recorded death was JG Tierney which took place on December 20, 1921. The last death connected with the dam occurred on the exact same day 14 years later — December 20, 1935. when Patrick Tierney, his only son, fell to his death from one of the huge intake towers.

THE RED BALLOON

Ten-year-old Laura Buxton stood in her front yard with a red balloon. On the side of the balloon, she had written the words, "Please return to Laura Buxton," and her address before realising it into a strong wind. The balloon travelled roughly 140 miles south before descending, and landing in the yard of another 10-year-old girl whose name was Laura ! Buxton! After getting in touch and

the girls decided to meet, and discovered a whole range of uncanny similarities. Not only did they look and dress alike, but both girls had three-year-old chocolate labradors, a grey rabbit, and a guinea pig, and both having brought their guinea pigs to the meeting, unplanned!

STEPHEN HAWKING

Theoretical physicist cosmologist, and author Stephen Hawking was born on the 300th anniversary of Galileo's death, and died on what would have been Einstein's 139th birthday. But also statistically confounding is the improbability surrounding his life in surviving to be 76 despite living with Lou Gehrig's Disease. While very little is known about the disease, most of those diagnosed live for about five years past diagnosis. Yet Hawking survived for more than five additional decades

DOUBLE ATOMIC BOMB SURVIVOR

According to the Japanese Government Tsutomu Yamaguchi is the only person recognised by the Japanese government to have having survived both atomicbombings. He was either incredibly lucky or incredibly unlucky, depending on how you look at it. Unlucky in that he happened to be present in 1945 in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the times of their catastrophic atomic bombings, and yet lucky that he miraculously survived both. He reportedly fled Hiroshima in search of safety, to Nagasaki only to see a second flash of white light that would cover over half of his body in burns from radioactive ash. He therefore lived a further 65 years and died in 2010 of cancer.

THE TITAN OR TITANIC??

In 1898 author Robert Morgan wrote The Wreck of the Titan with incredible similarities—not just the name -but in many facts relating to the Titanic There are many uncanny similarities between the fictional novella and the actual events beyond the coincidence of the similarity of the ships' names and both being described as "unsinkable," Both the fictional Titan and the Titanic ran into trouble after hitting icebergs on the starboard side of the ship. They

were both 400 miles off Newfoundland when they sank, both on April nights, and in both cases, the passengers suffered tragically due to a shortage of lifeboats!!

A FREE COMET

National Geographic reported that the odds of being killed by a meteor are 1 in 1,600,000. So the odds would seem infinitesimally small that a meteor—flying through space for more than four-and-a-half billion years without hitting a target—would hit the home of the French "Commette." family. Thankfully, no one was hurt, and the Commettes are now the proud owners of their own rare extra-terrestrial rock.

MISS UNSINKABLE

Violet Jessop was a nurse and ocean liner stewardess who earned the nickname "Miss Unsinkable" by surviving both the accidents of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 and its sister ship, the HMHS Britannic, which met the same fate in 1916. She was also on board a third boat, the RMS Olympic, when it hit a war ship—but fortunately, the Olympic stayed afloat.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Aimee Maiden and Nick Wheeler were sifting through old family photographs in anticipation of their upcoming wedding when they discovered a striking coincidence. They had unknowingly both been in a photograph taken 11 years before they had met. Though they grew up over 300 miles apart in opposite corners of England, Nick's family had been on a beach vacation in Aimee's hometown, and the snap of the two shows Aimee and her family sitting just feet behind Nick, both playing in the sand.

DOUBLE DROWNING

It would have been an incredible story without the coincidence when, despite his advanced age and recent injuries, 80-year-old Xu Weifang of Jiangsu Province, China saved an 8-year-old boy from drowning. . But, according to Newsweek, the events took an odd turn when Xu discovered that 30 years prior, he had actually saved the boy's father from drowning as well. With those odds, it's clear why some people believe in guardian angels!

HISTORY OF THE LOTTERY

Keno slips, a lottery-like gambling game often played at modern casinos, was played in the Chinese Han dynasty between 205 and 187 BC is considered to be the first recorded form of a lottery and is believed to have helped to finance projects like building the Great Wall of China. Also from the Chinese Book of Songs (2nd millennium BC.) there is a reference to a game of chance as "the drawing of wood", which, in context, appears to describe the drawing of lots.

FIRST EUROPEAN LOTTERIES

The first known European lotteries were held during the Roman Empire, as an amusement at dinner parties. Guests received a ticket and every ticket holder was assured of winning something. The earliest records of a lottery offering tickets for sale was the organised by Roman Emperor Augustus to raise funds for repairs in the City of Rome.

MEDIEVAL LOTTERIES

Moving to medieval times the first recorded lotteries to offer tickets for sale with prizes in the form of money were held in the Low Countries in the 15th century. Towns held public lotteries to raise money for town fortifications, and to help the poor. Town records of Ghent, Utrecht, and Bruges. A record dated 9 May 1445 refers to a lottery of 4,304 tickets raising funds to build walls and town fortifications. In the 17th century it was quite usual in the Netherlands to organise lotteries to collect money for the poor and to raise funds for public projects. Proving popular they were hailed as a painless form of taxation. The Dutch state-owned Staatsloterij is the oldest running lottery (1726).

To finance the war against the Republic of Venice, the Milanese Golden Ambrosian Republic organised the first recorded Italian lottery on 9 January 1449. However, it was in Genoa that Lotto became popular. People bet on the name of Great Council members, drawn by chance, five out of ninety candidates every six months. This kind was called Lotto or Semenaiu. When people wanted to bet more frequently than twice a year, they began to substitute the can-

didates names with numbers and modern lotto was born, to which modern legal lotteries and illegal numbers game can trace ancestry.

FRANCE, 1539–1836

King Francis I of France discovered the lotteries during campaigns in Italy and organised one to help state finances. The first French lottery, the Loterie Royale, was held in 1539 and was authorised with the edict of Châteaurenard. It was a fiasco, as tickets were too costly for the social classes so they opposed the project.

Between 1757 and 1836, with interruption during the French Revolution, the French state ran a profitable Loterie to fund the École militaire. Casanova defended the project in conversations with Madame de Pompadour, the French mathematician Jean d'Alembert. Unlike modern lotteries the state cannot lose, but in the French lottery the state could have lost. But a choice of payoff ensured a profit for the state.

ENGLAND, 1566–1826

While the English experimented with games of chance, the first recorded official lottery was chartered by Queen Elizabeth I, in 1566, and was drawn in 1569. Each of the 400,000 tickets cost equivalent of 50p, roughly three weeks of wages for ordinary citizens. The grand prize was roughly £5,000. It was designed to raise money for rebuilding of ports and new ships for the royal fleet and the "*reparation of the havens and strength of the Realme, and towards such other publique good workes*". Additionally, each participant was granted immunity from one arrest, "*so long as the crime wasn't piracy, murder, felonies, or treason.*" Each ticket holder won a prize, and the total value of the prizes equalled the money raised. The lottery money was an in-

An 1809 lottery drawing at Coopers' Hall in London



Public domain via wiki commons

terest-free loan to the government during the three years that the tickets were sold. The government also sold ticket rights to brokers who eventually became the modern-day stockbrokers. As most people could not afford a ticket, the brokers would sell shares which resulted in tickets being issued with a notation such as "*Sixteenth*" or "*Third Class*".

Many private lotteries were held, to support settlement in America. The English State Lottery ran from 1694 until 1826 until the government, under opposition pressure declared a final lottery in 1826.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

In 1612 an English lottery, was granted by King James I to the Virginia Company of London with the right to raise money to establish settlers in the first permanent English colony at Jamestown, Virginia. These lotteries played a significant part in the financing of both private and public ventures. More than 200 were sanctioned between 1744 and 1776 financing infrastructure. In the 1740s, the foundation of Princeton and Columbia Universities was financed by lotteries, as was the University of Pennsylvania by the Academy Lottery in 1755.

SPAIN 1763

The first Spanish lottery dates from 1763 and, since then playing the lottery has become a tradition. The Spanish Christmas Lottery officially Sorteo Extraordinario de Navidad is a national lottery organised since 1812 by the Spanish Public Administration, now called Loterías y Apuestas del Estado. The Spanish Christmas lottery is the second longest continuously running lottery in the world.

COLLECTORS ITEMS

Benjamin Franklin organised a lottery to raise money to purchase cannons for the defence of Philadelphia. Several of these lotteries offered prizes in the form of "Pieces of Eight". George Washington's Mountain Road Lottery in 1768 was unsuccessful, but these rare lottery tickets bearing Washington's signature became collectors' items; one example sold for about \$15,000 in 2007.

By the early 20th century, lotteries and sweepstakes, were illegal in the U.S. and most of Europe until after World War II. In the 1960s, casinos and lotteries began to re-appear.

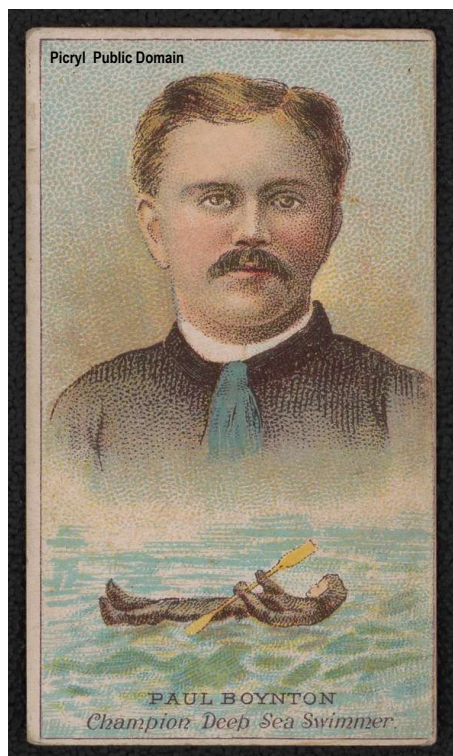


There have been notable successful swims across the English Channel which is a straight-line distance of at least 33.7 kilometres— 20.9 m.

THE FIRST ATTEMPT??

First recorded attempt in 1872 was made by 23 year old J B Johnson. He hired a band in Dover to promote his attempt, entertaining the crowd before diving in and starting his swim. After several hours he boarded the accompanying boat as the water was too cold, and continued to Calais. He left the boat and swam ashore making the waiting crowd believe he had swum the channel. But he later admitted it was a publicity stunt.

A SUCCESSFUL CROSSING??



Wearing a rubber ship survival suit, to aid buoyancy, Paul Boynton, known as known as the Fearless Frogman, is questionably recorded as the first to swim across the English Channel on 28 May 1875 in 23 hrs 30 mins

FIRST ACCEPTED ATTEMPT

Without any aids Captain Matthew Webb was successful on his second attempt on 25 August 1875 when he made the crossing in 21 hours and 45 minutes, despite challenging tides, which delayed him for 5 hours, and stung by a jellyfish.

SECOND ACCEPTED ATTEMPT

Eighty failed attempts were made before Thomas William Burgess, on 6 September 1911, became the second person to make the crossing without artificial buoyancy. Having only trained for 18 hours and his longest practice swim was only 10 kilometres, this was his 16th try after eating a meal of ham and eggs. Crossing in 22 hrs and 35 mins.

DAILY SKETCH £1,000 PRIZE

In 1920's The Daily Mail offered a £1,000 (£102,500 in 2025) prize for anyone who completed the swim, a prize that both Sullivan and Tirabocchi received. Tirabocchi donated his to the International Swimming Federation.

FOURTH ATTEMPT

After 7 attempts Henry Sullivan was the third to swim the channel on 5 August 1923. He was also the first American to make the crossing. It is calculated that due to choppy waters and capricious tides he actually swam 90 kilometres finishing in 27 hr and 45 min.

FIFTH AND FIRST REVERSE SWIM

Two other swimmers completed the swim that summer. Argentinian Enrique Tirabocchi was the first to swim it starting from France on 13 August 1923 completing it in a record time of 16 hours and 33 minutes.

SIXTH SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT

American Bostonian Charles Toth completed the swim on 9 September 1923, in 16 hours and 40 minutes, two days after the expiration of The Daily Sketch prize.

FIRST FEMALE CROSSING

American Gertrude Ederle's made the first successful cross-channel female swim from France at 07:05 on 6 August 1926 and came ashore at Kingsdown, Kent, in a total time of 14 hours and 39 minutes, setting the record for the fastest time, breaking the previous mark set by Tirabocchi by almost two hours. She was met by a British immigration official, who recorded the biographical details of Ederle and the individuals on board the support boat, none of whom had their passports. She was finally allowed ashore, after promising to report to the authorities next day.

WINNING THE BET

Financed by American L. Walter Lissberger to the tune of \$3,000 to cover expenses of Amelia Gade Corson and her husband in preparing for the Channel swim Lissberger also made \$5,000, 20 to 1 bet with Lloyd's of London she would swim across the Channel. She became the seventh person, third American and second woman to swim across the English Channel. She completed the swim in 15 hours and 29 minutes. Lissberger won his bet and received \$100,000 in 1926 (equivalent today to \$2,324,086.33 or £1,720,576.81



Dover, Channel Swimmer's Monument by Helmut Zozmann, Wikimedia Commons

LIFE OF THE TELEPHONE KIOSK

Designed by architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, also responsible for Liverpool Cathedral and Battersea Power Station the red telephone box has become a very a familiar sight on the streets of the United Kingdom. Also in its associated Crown Dependencies, the British Overseas Territories and Malta. With personal mobiles there has been a considerable reduction in recent year in their numbers from 73,000 in 1980 to 20,000 in 2025. Red was chosen to make them easy to spot.

REINFORCED CONCRETE K1

The Post Office having taken over almost all of the country's telephone network in 1912 produced the first standardised public telephone kiosk in the United Kingdom in 1921. Produced in concrete it was designated K1 (Kiosk No.1 below). Some local authorities refused permission for the K1; Eastbourne Corporation insisted the kiosks could only be installed if they had thatched roofs. There remain fourteen K1 boxes in the UK, including seven that are in museums and museum collections. A further two remain are in the Republic of Ireland. Seven of the UK's fourteen have been listed at Grade II by Historic England; some still located on British streets, including one situated in Trinity Market in Kingston-upon-Hull,[10] and another in Bembridge High Street, Isle of Wight.



klmstaphof, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons



Murgatroyd49, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Common

A local call cost four old pence. When the person answered you posted your four coins into the slot and pressed button A. If it wasn't answered (no answering system in those days!) you pressed button B and your coins were returned. The kiosk had a telephone directory.

THE CAST IRON K2



Mötty via Wikimedia

A competition in 1924 to design a kiosk acceptable to the London Metropolitan Boroughs, resisted by the Post Office resulted in the K2 design. by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Scott's original is the only one to survive in the left entrance arch to the Royal Academy at Burlington House. In 2019, it was listed to Grade II* in "recognition of its iconic design status".

While Scott had suggested manufactured in mild steel, The Post Office decided to make his winning design in cast iron. Scott also suggested the external silver, with a "greenish-blue" interior. But the Poist Office decided to paint it red. From 1926 K2 was deployed in and around London and the K1 continued to be erected elsewhere.

REINFORCED CONCRETE K3

Giles Scott's K3, in 1929 redesign, was constructed from reinforced concrete and intended for nationwide use. While cheaper than the K2, it was more costly than the K1. The colour scheme for both the K1 and the K3 was a light stone colour, with red glazing bars. A rare surviving K3 kiosk can be seen beside the Penguin Beach London Zoo and another in

STAMP MACHINE K4



Public Domain

Ten of the 50 K4 kiosks remain. Some reports stated that the noise of the stampmachine when operated disturbed phone-users. Also the stamps became damp and stuck

together. This has been widely repeated A fine example of a K4 is outside Bewdley station. Also a fully restored K4 at Bury Transport Museum, Greater Manchester

PLYWOOD K5

The K5 was a metal-faced plywood introduced in 1934 and designed to be assembled and dismantled and used at exhibitions. There is little evidence they ever reached more than prototype stage.

JUBILEE K6

Designed in 1935 the K6 commemorated the Silver Jubilee of George V. Slightly smaller it was the first red telephone kiosk many thousands were deployed replacing most of the existing kiosks and establishing thousands of new sites.

GLASS PANEL K8

K7 was abandoned and K8, introduced in 1968. Designed by Bruce Martin. it was used primarily for new sites; around 11,000 were installed. It featured a large glass panel on two sides and the door, improving visibility and illumination inside the box. There were two versions, differing mainly in roof detail.



Oxyman, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Set to be the world's tallest building Saudi Arabia's Jeddah Tower megatall sky scraper will reach 1.000 m high. Currently under construction it is also known as the Burj Jeddah and was previously called the Kingdom Tower making it the world's first one-kilometre-tall building.

Presently there are only three of megatall worldwide, including the 830-metre-tall Burj Khalifa in Dubai – the world's current tallest building.

252 STORIES

The tower will surpass the Burj Khalifa in height by at least 173 metres. Although the number of floor has yet to be confirmed reports suggest there could be 167 above ground, overtaking the 163 at the world's current tallest building in Dubai.

A website dedicated to the building states there will be 252 stories in total, though it is not confirmed how many of these will be above and how many will be below ground.

THREE-SIDED SILHOUETTE

Designed by architect Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture in Chicago, The proposal is being developed with structural engineer Thornton Tomasetti, after they won a competition to design it together in 2009.

It was commissioned by investor Kingdom Holding Company and its partner business Jeddah Economic Company and expected to cost around \$1.23 billion - £972 million.

With a tapered, three-sided silhouette it will be built from reinforced concrete and steel and cloaked in glass. Its narrowing form was designed to help reduce wind loads at its peak and also help maximise usable space on the upper levels by reducing the size of its concrete core.

167 FLOORS

The three-pronged shape is intended to evoke the fronds of a palm tree while another major is a cantilevering steel 30 m diameter balcony projecting out from one of the penthouses at a height of around 600 metres.

Situated as the heart of Jeddah Economic City, a 5.3-million-square-metre development along the coast of the Red Sea, 20 kilometres to the north of Jeddah it is also known as the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), a \$20-billion development which will be made up of a range of commercial and residential architecture with the intention of encouraging investments and tourism into the country, as part

BURJ JEDDAH THE 1 KILOMETRE MEGATALL SKYSCRAPER



of the Saudi Vision 2030 plan to diversify its economy. The 167 floor skyscraper will contain a mix of apartments and offices, an observation deck and a Four Seasons hotel. The tower will have over 360 apartments and 121 serviced apartments for sale and on lease. Saudi residents are allowed to purchase apartments while foreigners must get government approval

59 LIFTS

Another key element of the building will be 59 lifts and 12 escalators; five of the lifts will be double decker and they will not reach the speeds of normal lifts as the change in air pressure at those altitudes would cause nausea. Three sky lobbies will prevent lifts going from the bottom all the way to the top, eliminating the need for excessively long and huge cables.

The building is supported by a network of 270 1.8 m diameter drilled concrete piles to a depth of up to 110 meters supporting a five-metre-thick raft foundation. It will contain 80,000 tons of steel and parts of the core will contain concrete several meters thick

Construction began in 2013, two years after the designs were first revealed it was expected to open in 2020. But the project has been plagued by delays such as financial issues, the Covid-19 pandemic and technical challenges, such as those relating to a weak soil structure. But the biggest contractor Binladin Group was taken off the project due to its owner Bakr bin Laden being arrested as part of the country's 2017 corruption purges.

FLOOR EVERY FOUR DAYS.

Nevertheless the firm has since been rehired to complete the construction work. At the resumption ceremony, concrete was poured for the 64th floor. A representative for Kingdom Holding Company said it planned to complete a floor every four days.

In October 2024, reaching more than 250 metres high, 63 floors of the 167 floors had been constructed, Kingdom Holding Company announced it is targeting for completion in 2028.

The recent change in pace is thanks to new funding agreements, renewed contracts and technological advancements.