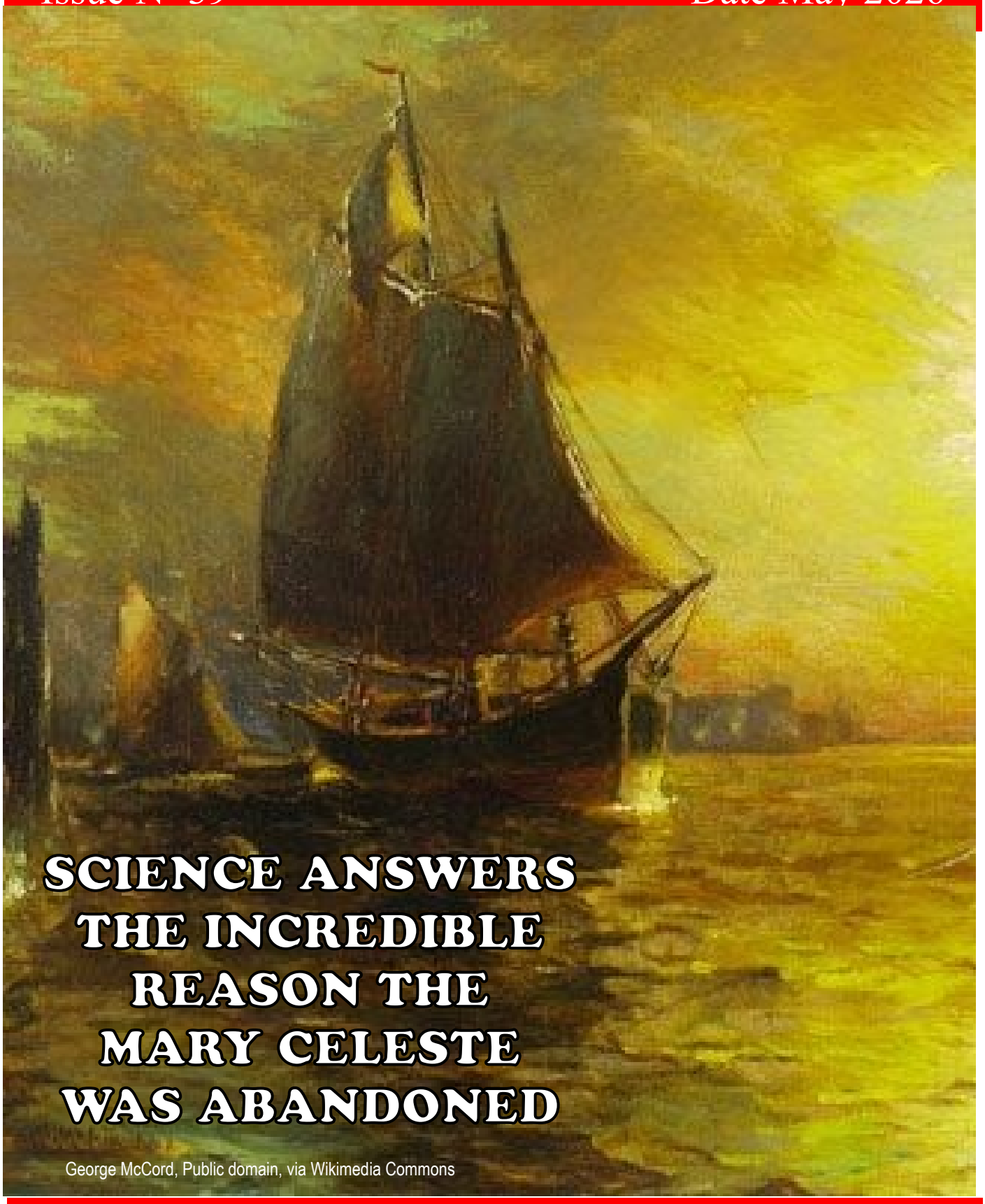
FASCINATING FACTS

Issue N° 39 Date May 2026



SCIENCE ANSWERS THE INCREDIBLE REASON THE MARY CELESTE WAS ABANDONED

George McCord, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Fascinating Facts is a free subscription monthly private circulion e– magazine of personal , historic and military interest.
To obtain your free copy please email ray@scarletman.co.uk

DICKEN MEDAL
\worth £30,000

Welcome to this issue of Fascinating Facts. Now retired, with a background of journalism, literature production, international pubic 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. Fascinating Facts 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.

In this issue In this issue In this issue

3 MARY CELESTE NO LONGER A MYSTERY !!

4 COMPLEXITY OF TIME ZONES

5 GOOD LUCK CHARMS BAD LUCK SYMBOLS

6 THE GOLDEN RULE

7 NINE THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE IN THE UK

8 SOME INTERESTING HISTORIC TIMBER FRAMED HOUSES

9 WHO WAS/IS OSCAR?

10 THE UNITED KINGDOM IN FIGURES

IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

UNUSUAL BRITSH VILLAGE NAMES

Bell End (Worcestershire): referring to the village end.

Wetwang (Yorkshire): Of Viking origin, meaning a "wet field" or "place of the trial".

Twatt (Orkney): Derived from Old Norse, this name means a "small homestead" or "clearing".

Beer (Devon): A coastal village whose name comes from the Old English bearu, meaning a grove or wood, rather than the drink.

Great Snoring (Norfolk): A name which has nothing to do with sleeping, but rather the "snoring" or "swelling" of the land in a local dialect.

Westward Ho! (Devon): The only place in the UK with an exclamation mark in its name, named after the 1855 novel by Charles Kingsley.

Pity Me (Durham): A village that probably got its name due to the difficulty of cultivating the land there.

Upper Dicker (East Sussex): The name is thought to originate from the term "dicker," referring to a unit of ten hides or animal skins.

Boggy Bottom (Hertfordshire): A very descriptive name for a low-lying, marshy area.

Cocks (Cornwall): A small village near Perranporth.

Mudford (Somerset): A village that might live up to its name, especially in wet weather.

No Man's Land (Devon/Cornwall): A name usually given to areas that were historically disputed or extra-parochial.

Sheepwash (Devon): A village named after a place where sheep were washed before shearing.

Slutshole Lane (Norfolk): An unfortunate name for a road, often found near other similarly named areas.

Misterton (Nottinghamshire): A village with a name that means a farm in a marshy area

Fascinating Facts is a free circulation e-magazine. If you like it then please make your friends aware. If you would like to submit material for inclusion then, if the editor considers it appropriate, he will inform you. Such material from contributors, for which the editor, while following normal journalistic principles, takes no responsibility. If you have an idea for an article which you consider would be of interest then please contact the editor. Establishing copyright is a complex issue and while every effort has been made, to secure permission for copyright of material used, if it has been inadvertently used a future issue will carry an acknowledgement. While the editor reserves the right to grant permission to use any material from this publication for reproduction, any reasonable request will be positively considered.

MARY CELESTE NO LONGER A MYSTERY !!

It is a mystery that has fascinated us with many theories, for more than 100 years. What really happened to cause the crew of the Mary Celeste, the legendary ghost ship, to disappear? Now one scientist claims to know.

So-called "ghost ships" were a fairly common sight on the well-travelled trade routes of the British Empire – but the Mary Celeste was different. There was no evidence of attack by pirates. But what was more unusual was it appeared everyone disappeared all at once. There was no sign or trace of her crew.

But first the story of its last voyage.

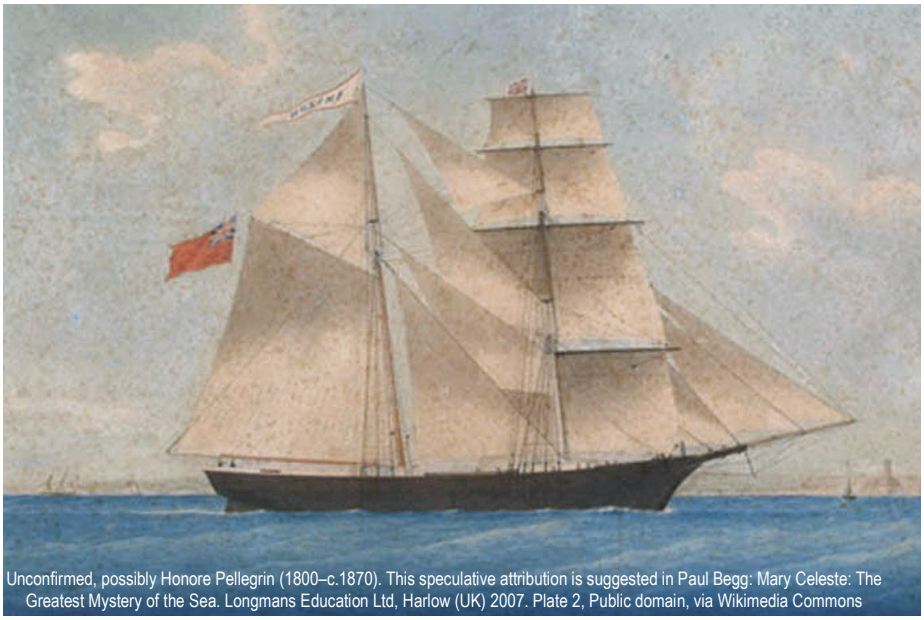
On December 4th 1872 the crew of the merchant ship Dei Gratia, enroute from Canada, spotted another merchant ship on the horizon, lurching from side to side and when they got closer saw its sails torn. They alerted the captain who, drawing alongside, realised it had been abandoned.

THE DISCOVERY

Captain Moorhouse dispatched two of his crew to search the Mary Celeste. They found the main hatch closed, but two smaller hatches open, then, descending below deck, they found 3ft of water in the hold – and the crew's clothing and supplies soaked. The ship's cargo – 1700 gallons of industrial strength alcohol – had been left behind, as had the 6 months' supplies of food and water. Captain Briggs' log book was open on a table, the last entry dated 9 days previously – describing the Mary Celeste's location as being near the coast of Santa Maria Island, 400 nautical miles from where she had been found. And the most glaring piece of evidence – the ship's lifeboat was missing – with no sign of the crew, or of Captain Briggs…and his wife and two year old daughter, who had accompanied him on the journey from New York.

THE AFTERMATH

Captain Moorhouse and his crew sailed the Mary Celeste to Gibraltar, the closest British-owned territory where an inquest was opened to determine her fate.



Unconfirmed, possibly Honore Pellegrin (1800–c.1870). This speculative attribution is suggested in Paul Begg: Mary Celeste: The Greatest Mystery of the Sea. Longmans Education Ltd, Harlow (UK) 2007. Plate 2, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

THE THEORIES

Mutiny! It was suggested that the crew had a drunken orgy which resulted in them killing Briggs and his family. But although the shipment was alcohol it is unlikely, as the alcohol was industrial strength and poisonous to drink!. So where were the bodies?

Murder! Briggs was a deeply religious man who some said, murdered his family and the crew in a fit of religious fervour. This is also unlikely as one man against his crew and also Briggs was regarded as a well-liked and reliable pair of hands.

Piracy! By Moorhouse! Some suggested that Moorhouse and his crew had killed the crew of the Mary Celeste to steal their cargo! But why would they then sail the ship to Gibraltar?

Giant Squid! Seems far fetched. Was the crew devoured by a beast from the ocean depths. But if so where were the lifeboats?

The mystery of the Mary Celeste has never been solved, but the most likely theory is that Captain Briggs abandoned ship because he believed it was about to sink. The presence of water below deck, plus the fact that the sounding rod – used to determine the level of water in the hold – was found on deck back up this theory. Perhaps Briggs panicked, ordered his family and crew into the lifeboat, and a maritime mishap caused them to perish

THE CAUSE!!

Recent research and experimentation claim it was highly possible that alcohol had leaked - more than enough to create a terrifying explosion. Naturally at that time the reason was something unknown to Captain Briggs sending him and the crew into a panic, and fearful, of what may happen next, they abandoned ship!

THE SOLUTION

By building a replica of the hold of the Mary Celeste Dr Andrea Sella, at UCL conducted an experiment which he claims has solved the mystery. This demonstrated that an explosion caused by some of the alcohol that had leaked from 300 gallons of alcohol was more than enough to create a terrifying explosion and was the key to the abandonment of the Mary Celeste and fate of Captain Briggs, his family and crew.

MASSIVE BLAST

Using butane gas, he simulated an explosion similar to alcohol leaking from the ship's industrial alcohol cargo in the hold. But instead of wooden barrels, he used paper cubes sprayed with industrial alcohol to simulate the industrial alcohol which leaked from the barrels.

The butane gas set light to the gas leaking from barrels of industrial alcohol resulting in a short huge blast, which sent a momentary ball of flame upwards blew off the hatch. Because it was pressure-wave type of explosion there was no fire and the paper cube barrels were neither burnt or blackened. It would have created fear with the Captain and the crew, not knowing the cause and inducing them to abandon ship.

COMPLEXITY OF TIME ZONES

I always thought that International Date Line time zones were 24, 15-degree-wide longitudinal strips (360 degrees divided by 24 hours equals 15 degrees) that run from the North to the South Pole, with each zone representing a one-hour difference from the next. This theoretical system was formalised in 1884, with 0° longitude (the Prime Meridian) passing through Greenwich, London, serving as the starting point was virtually straight. But they are heavily influenced by politics, economics, and geography that has created several notable anomalies where time "breaks" or deviates from the solar day.

EXTREME LONGITUDINAL OFFSETS

Some regions operate in time zones geographically "wrong" for their location to align with trading partners.

China's Single Time Zone: Despite spanning five geographical time zones, all of China uses Beijing Time (UTC+8). This leads to extreme anomalies like the sun rising as late as 10:00 AM in western Xinjiang.

Western Europe: France, Spain, and the Benelux countries are geographically aligned with the UK (UTC+0) but use **Central European Time** (UTC+1). A holdover from German occupation during WWII.

The 3.5-Hour Border Jump

Crossing the border from Afghanistan (UTC+4:30) into China (UTC+8) results in the world's largest single-border time jump.

FRACTIONAL OFFSETS

Not all time zones change by full one-hour increments. Several countries use 30 or 45-minute offsets.

30-Minute Offsets:

India (UTC+5:30),

Afghanistan (UTC+4:30), and parts of Australia (ACST, UTC+9:30) use half-hour increments.

45-Minute Offsets:

Nepal is unique for its 45-minute offset (UTC+5:45).

The New Zealand Chatham Islands (UTC+12:45) and the tiny Australian town of Eucla (UTC+8:45)

THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE (IDL) ZIG-ZAGS

The IDL is not a straight line, leading to situations where one can travel a short distance and change the date.

Kiribati and the "Three Day" Phenomenon:

In 1995, Kiribati moved the IDL to the east so the entire country could be on the same day. For two hours every day (between 10:00 and 11:59 UTC), three different calendar days exist simultaneously on Earth (e.g., Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday).

UTC is Coordinated Universal Time standard which regulates the world's clocks a precise successor to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). It is based on atomic time, not earth rotation, and is used for aviation, finance, and navigation.

The Diomede Islands: Big Diomede (Russia) and Little Diomede (USA) are only 2.4 miles apart but are separated by 21 hours because the IDL runs between them.

"ISLAND" AND ENCLAVE ANOMALIES

Certain regions create time "pockets" within states or countries.

Arizona's Layered Time: Arizona does not observe Daylight Saving Time (DST), but the Navajo Nation within it does. But the Hopi Reservation (inside the Navajo Nation) does not observe DST, creating a "time donut" where clocks change 3 times across the state.

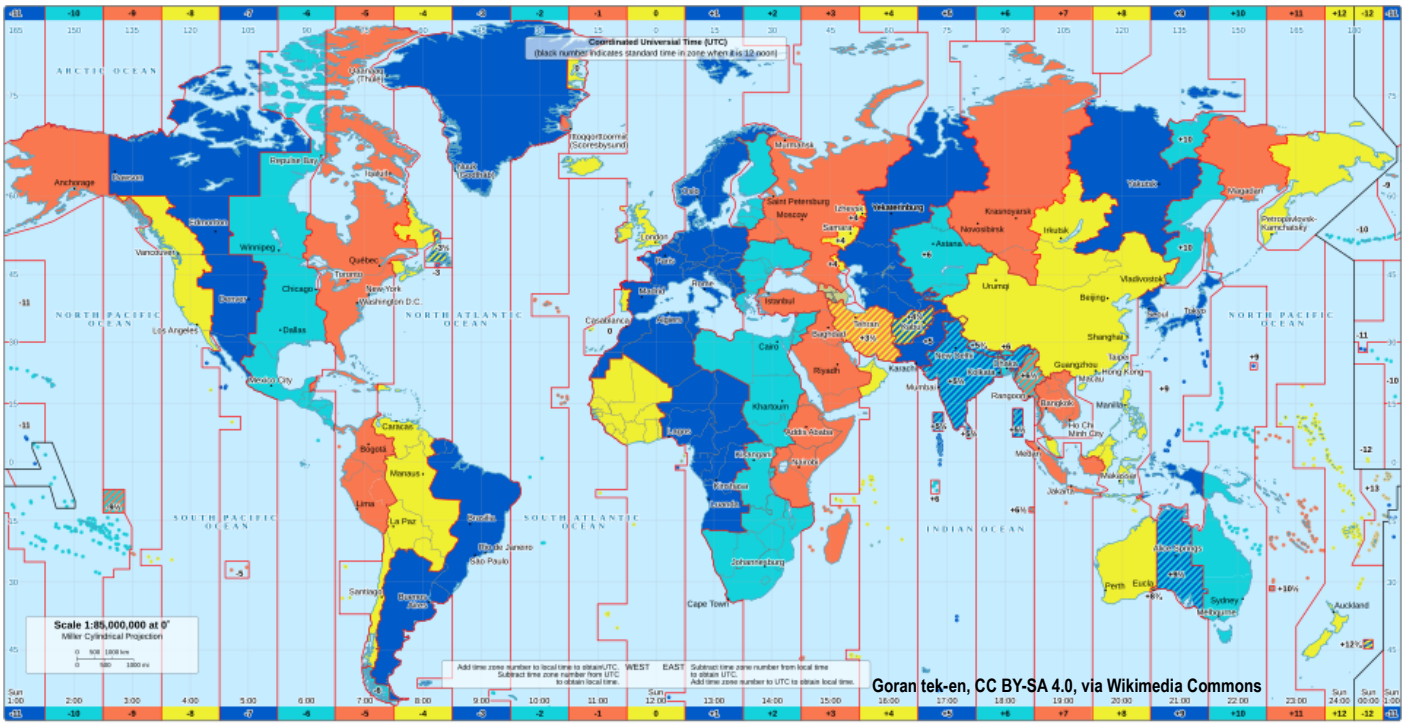
Märket Island This tiny island in the Baltic Sea is split between Sweden and Finland, resulting in two different time zones on a single uninhabited rock.

Polar Convergence. At the North and South Poles, all 24 longitudinal lines converge, making time zones technically meaningless.

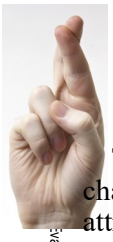
ANTARCTICA:

Research stations choose the time zone of their home country or their primary supply hub (e.g., McMurdo Station uses New Zealand time) for logistical convenience.

The map below indicates how time zones differ in different countries



GOOD LUCK CHARMS



Almost any item can be regarded as a good luck charm, especially small objects given as gifts or remberance. The mojo is a charm originating in African culture. It is used in voodoo ceremonies to carry several lucky objects or spells and intended to cause a specific effect. The concept is that particular objects placed in the bag and charged will create a supernatural effect for the bearer. Even today, mojo bags are still used. Europe also contributed to the concept of lucky charms. Adherents of St. Patrick (the patron saint of Ireland) adopted the four-leaf clover as a symbol of Irish luck because clovers are abundant in the hills of Ireland.

Windcatcher In Native American Ojibwa culture the human mind was believed to be susceptible to dark spirits, when the mind is weakest and would give bad dreams. In defence they would weave dream catchers. These talismans would let the good dream spirits through, while trapping the bad spirits in the pattern

The Albatross Considered a sign of good luck if seen by sailors and they allow it to live.

In Germany **Amanita muscari** seen as a good luck symbol similar to a 4-leaf clover in Irish tradition.

Chimney sweep in many parts of the world it is said to bring good luck when being touched, especially on New Year and on weddings.

Ladybird beetles. England, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Turky, Brazil, Serbia There is an old children's song "Fly, fly, ladybug, bring me the happiness".

Four-leaf clover Irish and Celtic, German, Polish Shamrock or Clover Irish. While in most of the world, only the four-leafed clover is considered lucky, in Ireland all Irish Shamrocks are.

Horseshoe English, Polish and several other European ethnicities, Indian and Nepali people. Horseshoes are considered to be able to ward off Satan's ill-effects. Some believe that upward-facing horseshoes catch luck, while others argue that downward-facing ones allow good fortune to flow onto those passing beneath. This usually depends on cultural and personal beliefs.

Rabbit's foot North America, England and Wales originating from a hare's foot) A rabbit's foot can be worn or carried as a lucky charm.

BAD LUCK SYMBOLS

Triskaidekaphobia is a fear of bad luck. Bad luck charms and signs are superstitious symbols believed to attract misfortune. Many cultures have superstitions or cultural taboos around certain numbers.

Broken Mirror: Often associated with seven years of bad luck because it was thought to break one's future chances or soul. No one knows why 7 years!

Black Cat: Crossing paths with a black cat, or having one walk towards you, is considered bad luck in many Western cultures.

Friday the 13th: A widely feared date stemming from biblical events or historical occurrences.

Opening an umbrella: Opening an umbrella indoors is thought to displease sun gods or act as a "black umbrella" omen.

Spilled Salt: Believed to invite misfortune, often requiring tossing the spilled salt over the left shoulder to counteract it or kill the Devil.

Chopsticks in Rice: Sticking chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice is a significant taboo in Asian cultures, resembling funeral customs.

Number 4 In East Asia, Japan, number 4 and 666 are widely regarded as harbinger of bad luck, death, or evil. In some Asian cultures the number four is unlucky because pronunciation of the word "four" in Mandarin is similar to the word for "death". According to a 2001 study cardiac mortality among Chinese and Japanese Americans peaked on the 4th day of the month.

Number 9. In Japanese culture because it sounds like the Japanese word for "suffering"

Number 13 Fear of the number 13, is unclear. The bible states there were 13 people at Jesus last supper. In Western culture many airlines do not have a number 13 row, and some hotels do not number the 13th floor 13. City planners often exclude “13th Street” from their road names. Since the 1970 Apollo 13 accident space missions are no longer numbered 13!.

Number 17 In Italy, perhaps due to Roman numerals where17 is written XVII. This can be rearranged to VIXI, which in Latin means "I have lived" but can also be a euphemism for "I am dead." In Italian airplanes have no row 17 and some Italian hotels have no room 17. Cruise ships built and operated by MSC Cruises lack a Deck 17.

Number 39. Fear of the number 39 is known as the curse of 39, in Afghan culture.

Number 43. In Japanese culture, maternity wards numbered 43 are considered taboo, as the word for the number means "stillbirth".

Owls/Ravens: In various cultures, hearing an owl hoot is associated with impending doom, while ravens are linked to bad omens.

Horseshoe: If hung with ends downward, it is thought to let all the good luck drain out.

The Thirteen Club. In 1881, a group of New Yorkers, led by US Civil War veteran Captain William Fowler, formed a dinner cabaret club, called the Thirteen Club. At the first meeting, on January 13, 1881, at 8:13 p.m., thirteen people sat down to dine in Room 13. To get there the guests walked under a ladder, they were seated among piles of spilled salt. "Thirteen Clubs" sprang up over North America in the next 45 years. Their numbers included five future US presidents. Eventually they closed due to lack of interest.

THE GOLDEN RULE

The Golden Rule applies to many religions. But they all have the same principle of treating others as one would expect them to treat you. It is sometimes called an ethics of reciprocity, meaning that one should reciprocate to others how one would like them to treat you. Various expressions of this rule can be found in most religions and creeds..

The earliest affirmation of such reciprocity, was the ancient Egyptian goddess Ma'at, in the story of "The Eloquent Peasant", dating from 2040–1650 BCE. This states" Now this is the command: Do to the doer to make him do."

ANCIENT PAPYRUS

A Late Period c. 664–323 BCE papyrus contains an early form of the Golden Rule: "That which you hate to be done to you, do not do to another."

The term "Golden Rule", or "Golden law", began to be used in the early 17th century Britain by Anglican theologians and preach-ers; the earliest recorded is of Anglicans Charles Gibbon and Thomas Jackson in 1604 The Golden Rule "can be found in some form in almost every ethical tradition".

MULTI FAITH POSTER

A multi-faith poster showing the Golden Rule in sacred writings from 13 faith traditions (designed by Paul McKenna of Scarboro Missions, 2000) has been on display at the Headquarters of the United Nations since 4 January 2002. Creating the poster "took 5 years of research that included consultations with experts in each of the 13 faith groups

Judaism	That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study. - Talmud, Shabbat 31a	**Buddhism**	Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful -Udanavarga 5:18
Christianity	In everything, do to others as you would have them do unto you; for this is the law and the Prophets. - New Testament, Matthew 7:12	**Jainism**	In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self, and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves. -Yogasastra
Islam	None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. - 40 Hadith 13	**Confucianism**	Zigong asked, "It there a single saying that one may put into practice all one's life?" The Master said, "That would be 'reciprocity': That which you do not desire, do not do to others." - The Analects of Confucius 15.24
Baha'i Faith	Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves. -Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, page 128	**Taoism**	Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss. - Lao Tse's Treatise on the Response of the Tao
Hinduism	One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self. This, in brief, is the rule of dharma. - Brihaspati, Mahabharata 13.113.8 (Critical edition)	**Wicca**	Ever mind the Rule of Three Three times your acts return to thee This lesson well, thou must learn Thou only gets what thee dost earn - The Rule of Three
Judaism	That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study. - Talmud, Shabbat 31a	**Buddhism**	Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful -Udanavarga 5:18
Christianity	In everything, do to others as you would have them do unto you; for this is the law and the Prophets. - New Testament, Matthew 7:12	**Jainism**	In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self, and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves. -Yogasastra
Islam	None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. - 40 Hadith 13	**Confucianism**	Zigong asked, "It there a single saying that one may put into practice all one's life?" The Master said, "That would be 'reciprocity': That which you do not desire, do not do to others." - The Analects of Confucius 15.24
Baha'i Faith	Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves. -Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, page 128	**Taoism**	Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss. - Lao Tse's Treatise on the Response of the Tao
Hinduism	One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self. This, in brief, is the rule of dharma. - Brihaspati, Mahabharata 13.113.8 (Critical edition)	**Wicca**	Ever mind the Rule of Three Three times your acts return to thee This lesson well, thou must learn Thou only gets what thee dost earn - The Rule of Three

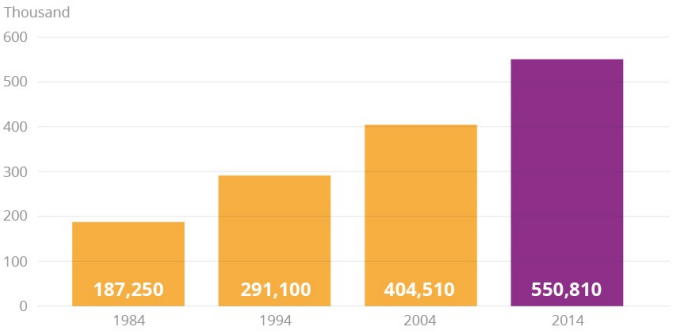
Di (they-them), CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

NINE THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE IN THE UK

BASED ON LATEST INFO 1O CTOBER 2015

October 1 is International Day of Older Persons (IDOP). UK Older People's Day is to celebrate the contributions of older people to society. Based on IDOP 2015, here are facts you may not know about older people. In 2015 there were around 600 million people over the age of 60 across the globe; which was expected to double by 2025, according to the United Nations. So now in 2025 the figure is 1 billion 2 hundred million.

1. There were more than half a million people aged 90 and over living in the UK in 2014, almost triple the number thirty years ago.

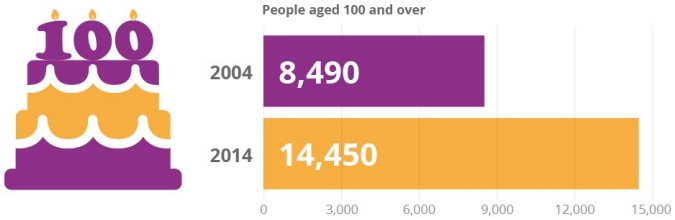


Source: Annual Mid-year Population Estimates, 2014

2. For every 100 people aged 90 and over in 2014, 29 were male and 71 were female.

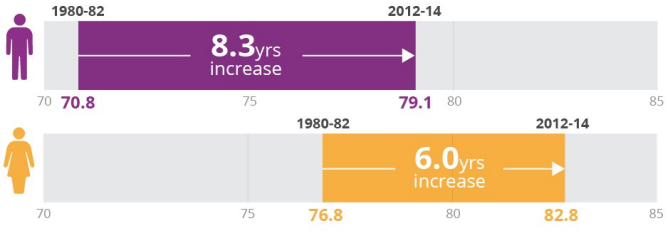
Source: Estimates of the Very Old (including Centenarians), 2002-2014

3. The number of centenarians (people aged 100 and over) living in the UK has risen by 72% over the last decade to 14,450 in 2014.



Source: Estimates of the Very Old (including Centenarians), 2002-2014

4. Male life expectancy has increased from 70.8 in 1980-82 to 79.1 in 2012-14. Female life expectancy has increased from 76.8 to 82.8 during the same period

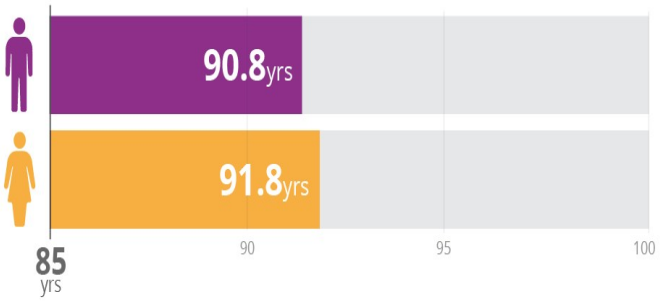


Source: National Life Tables, 2012-2014

5. The most common age of death was 86 years for men and 89 years for women. This is higher than current average life expectancy at birth.

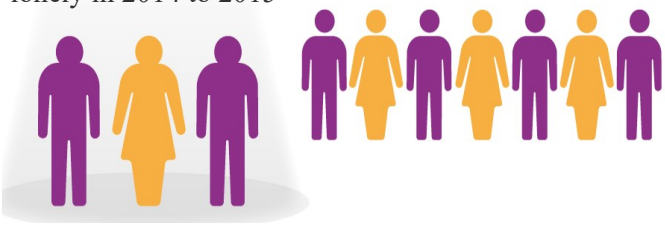
Source: National Life Tables, 2012-2014

6. Men aged 85 in 2012-14 could expect to live to 90.8 whereas women could expect to live to 91.8.



Source: National Life Tables, 2012-2014

7. Three in 10 of those aged 80 and over reported being lonely in 2014 to 2015



8. A third of those over 80 reported very high levels of life satisfaction in 2014 to 2015.

Source: Measuring National Well-being: Insights into Loneliness, Older People and Wellbeing, 2015

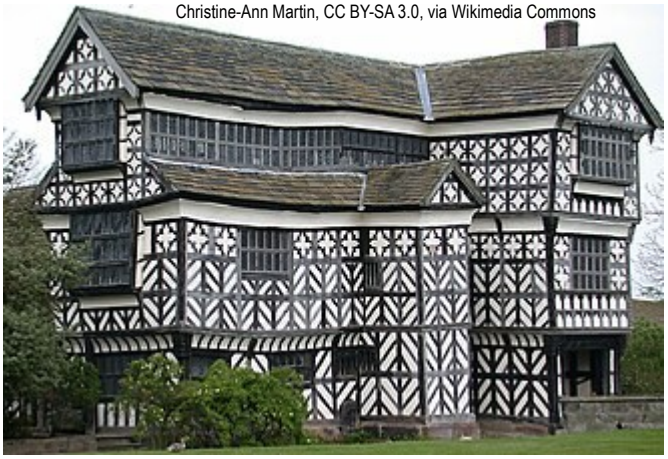
9. Around 1 in 10 (11%) of those aged 75 and over reported having no close friends in 2011 to 2012.

Source: Measuring National Well-being: Insights into Loneliness, Older People and Wellbeing, 2015

All content from the Open Government Licence 3.0,

SOME INTERESTING HISTORIC TIMBER FRAMED HOUSES

Timber framing and "post-and-beam" construction are traditional methods of building, creating structures using squared-off and carefully fitted timbers with joints secured by wooden pegs. If the structural frame is left exposed on the exterior of the building it is referred to as half-timbered. In many cases the infill is used for decorative effect. The country most known for this kind of architecture is Germany.



Christine-Ann Martin, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

LITTLE MORETON HALL

Surrounded by a 33-foot wide moat, the earliest parts of Little Moreton Hall were begun by the prosperous Cheshire landowner William Moreton in about 1504–08. The remainder was constructed in stages by successive family members until 1610. Since 1938 a National Trust property it is lifted straight from the fairy story, of a gingerbread house with a top-heavy appearance making it look like a stranded Noah's Ark due to the Long Gallery that runs the length of the upper floor. Described as "a feast of medieval carpentry", the diagonal oak braces create chevron and lozenge patterns while the herringbone pattern with quatrefoils are a typical feature of 15th-century work.

Alexander P Kapp / *Hall i' th' Wood*

HALL I' TH' WOOD

An early 16th-century manor house in Bolton, was the manor house for the villages of Tonge with Haulgh township by the Brownlows. The original building is timber framed and has a stone flagged roof. Later additions to the house were built from stone, in 1591 and 1648. It was not used as a gentry house but given over to multiple occupation by families engaged in industry. One part was let to Samuel Crompton during the 18th century, where he designed and built the first spinning mule; a machine which spun yarn suitable for use in the manufacture of muslin. It was known as the muslin wheel or the Hall i' th' Wood wheel. The name represents "Hall in the Wood' spoken in the local dialect. It is currently used as a museum by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council. .

OAK HOUSE, WEST BROMWICH

Built in 1620 the family most closely associated with it are the Turtons, who were living there by 1634. and it remained in the Turton family until 1768 when it passed to William Whyley, the "natural son" of John Turton. William Whyley felled surrounding oak trees, which were used to make lock-gates for the Birmingham Canal, being built through West Bromwich. Very few oaks remained in 1836. John Wesley preached at the house on two occasions in the late 18th century when it was in the ownership of the Whyley family until 1837. Following a succession of owners, Reuben Farley (three times Mayor of West Bromwich) purchased the property with the intention of making it his private residence, but resolved to present it to the town as a museum.

Brianboru100, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

STAFFORD HIGH HOUSE

The largest timber framed town house in England this Elizabethan town house is located on the main street in Stafford. Constructed in 1595 by the Dorrington family, from oak from the nearby Doxey Wood. It is also one of the first fabricated houses as the original timbers bear carpenter's marks indicating that the frame was pre-assembled on the ground and the joints numbered to aid the on-site construction. Many timbers have unused joint housings cut into them, which suggests that they have been reused from an earlier structure which was a common practice and the expression to 'up-sticks', which means to move house. Charles I made the High House his temporary headquarters during the English Civil War.

Stocksy, Public domain, via Wikimedia Common

WHO WAS/IS OSCAR?

The origin of the nickname of the golden trophy Oscar, presented at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, has been disputed with many people taking credit for it.
Margaret Herrick, the academy librarian and president of the Academy, said she named it after her supposed uncle Oscar when in 1938 she jokingly said to her husband "How's your uncle Oscar".
In her 1962 autobiography Bette Davis, claimed she named it in 1936 after her first husband, Harmon Oscar Nelson, whose behind looked like the statue.
Columnist Sidney Skolsky wrote in his 1970 memoir when in 1930 under pressure he used the term for a deadline, mocking Vaudeville comedians who asked "Will you have a cigar, Oscar?"

FIRST NEWSPAPER CREDIT

The Academy credits Skolsky with "the first confirmed newspaper reference" to Oscar in his March 16th 1934 column referring to the 6th Academy Awards. But in the newspaper clipping that Skolsky referred to, he wrote that "these statues are called 'Oscars'", meaning that the name was already in use.
In 2021 Brazilian researcher Waldemar Dalenogare Neto contradicted Skolsky's claim to have used the term stating the first public mention of the name "Oscar" in Relman Morin's "Cine-matters" column in the Los Angeles Evening Record on December 5, 1933. Since the awards did not take place that year, he said: "What's happened to the annual Academy banquet? As a rule, the banquet and the awarding of 'Oscar', the bronze statuette given for best performances, is all over long before this."
Bruce Davis, a former executive director of the Academy, credited Eleanore Lilleberg, a secretary at the Academy when the award was first introduced, for the nickname. She had overseen the pre-ceremony handling of the awards. Davis credits Lilleberg because he found in an autobiography of Einar Lilleberg, Eleanore's brother, that Einar had referenced a Norwegian army veteran named Oscar whom the two knew in Chicago, whom Einar described as having always "stood straight and tall". He asserts credit "should almost certainly belong to" Lilleberg.

Designed by Freepik

THE OSCAR STATUETTE

Officially the Academy Award of Merit, is presented to winners of each year's category awards. Made from gold-plated bronze on a black metal base, it is 13.5 in tall, weighs 8.5 lb and depicts a knight, holding a sword standing on a reel of film with five spokes, rendered in Art Deco style representing the original branches of the Academy: Actors, Writers, Directors, Producers, and Technicians.
Cedric Gibbons, the art director of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is credited with designing the iconic statue .

1929 THE FIRST CEREMONY

The first Academy Awards presentation of 15 statuettes took 15 minutes and was held on May 16, 1929, at a private dinner function at The Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel with an audience of about 270 people, followed by a post-awards party held at the Mayfair Hotel. The cost of guest tickets for that night's ceremony was $5 (equivalent to £74.00 in 2025). In 1958, an Oscar party called the Governors Ball was initiated, and over time became "the one Oscar party where almost everyone makes an appearance". The Vanity Fair Oscars Party, first held in 1994, is considered to be one of the premiere Oscar parties. Many of these events have adopted a charitable theme.
In 1929 winners were announced 3 months prior. In 1930 to 1940 the results were given to newspapers for publication at 11:00 pm on the night of the awards. Because, In 1940, the Los Angeles Times announced the winners before the ceremony the Academy now announces the names on the night..
Early statuettes were gold-plated solid bronze but within a few years, the bronze was changed to a pewter-like alloy which is then given copper, nickel, silver, and finally, 24-carat gold plating's.

PAINTED PLASTER STATUES

But for 3 years, due to a World War II metal shortage, they were made of painted plaster. After the war, the Academy exchanged the plaster figures for gold-plated metal ones.
The only addition to the Oscar since it was created is a minor streamlining of the base. The original Oscar mould was cast in 1928.
From 1972 to 1986, they were cast at the Dodge Trophy Company. From 1987 to 2015, approximately 50 Oscars were cast in a tin alloy with gold plating.. It would take between three and four weeks to manufacture 50 statuettes. In 2016, the Academy returned to bronze as the core metal of the statuettes. While based on a digital scan of an original 1929 Oscar, the statuettes retain their modern -era dimensions and black pedestal.
Cast in liquid bronze from 3D-printed ceramic moulds and polished, they are then electroplated in 24-carat gold. The time required to produce 50 such statuettes is roughly three months.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IN FIGURES

A look at a range of areas of the UK reduced to figures.

Currency
Pound sterling (GBP, £)

Fiscal year
1 April to 31 March

Population
69,281,437 (2024)

Trade organisation memberships
WTO World Trade Organisation
G20—Group of Twenty premier intergovernmental forum for international economic cooperation,
G7- Group of Seven an informal, intergovernmental forum of the world's leading industrialised democracies
CPTPP - Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership is a major free-trade bloc of 12 Pacific Rim nations plus Canada, Japan, and Australia, representing 15% of global GDP. It eliminates tariffs on 95% of goods, eases investment, and covers digital trade.
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development a forum of 38, nations to promotes policies to improve global economic and social well-being. setting standards, and addressing issues like tax evasion, climate change, and education.

Welfare state
Approximately 75 countries have some form of national health care, covering 69% of global population. The Uk ranks approx. 5th best

GDP -Gross Domestic Product 2026
A monetary measure of total market value of all final goods and services produced and rendered over a period of time -usually a year.
Nominal; £3.18 trillion - total market value of all goods and services produced during a specific period
PPP -Purchasing Power Parity,
£3.40 trillion comparing cost of living and inflation rates between countries.
GDP rank 2025
Based on rank of 200 countries
6th—nominal.
10th—PPP
GDP growth
1.1% (2024)
1.4% (2025)
GDP per capita
$60,011 (nominal; 2026)
$65,259 (PPP; 2026)
GDP per capita rank
20th (nominal; 2025)
30th (PPP; 2025)
GDP by sector 2023
Agriculture: 0.6%
Industry: 17.5%
Services: 72.5%

Inflation CPI
Consumer Price Index
An economic indicator to measure average change in prices paid by households for a representative "basket" of goods and services.
down 3.2% -Dec 2025

Base borrowing rate
down 3.75% Dec 2025

Population below poverty line
up 21% (2023)

GINI coefficient
A statistical measure of economic inequality, from 0 to 100, where 0 represents perfect income equality and 100 represents maximum inequality—36.5 medium (2022)

HDI Human Development Index
A measure developed by the United Nations Development Programme to evaluate national progress, beyond GDP economic indicators to rank countries on life expectancy, education and standard of living
0.946 very high (2023 (13th)

IHDI Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index
A UN-developed metric that adjusts a country's average Human Development Index (HDI) covering health, education, and income based on the level of inequality.
0.869 very high (2023) (13th)

Labour force
In employment 2024
33,856,000 / 74.9%
Unemployment
1,557,000 / 4.4%
Average gross salary
£728.30 per week

Exports –2024
£837.7 billion
Main export partners
European Union 41%
United States 22.5%
China 3.4%
Switzerland 2.9%
India 2.0%
Canada 1.9%

Imports -2024
Imports £865.7 billion
Main import partners
European Union 50.2%
United States 13.1%
China 7.6%
Norway 3.1%
India 2.8%
Switzerland 2.2%

FDI stock 2023—foreign direct investments
Represents the total, accumulated value of foreign direct investments made by a country's residents in foreign economies (outward) or by foreign investors in a host country (inward) It includes historical investments and reinvested earnings.
Inward: £2.079 trillion
Outward: £1.854 trillion

Current account –2023
A country's value of exports and imports of goods and services and international transfers of capital.
Current account £53.3 billion
Gross external debt £7.533 trillion
Net international investment position £658.2 billion

Public finances 2023/24
Government debt £2.686 trillion / 96% of GDP
Budget balance £131 billion / 4.8% of GDP
Revenues £1.098 trillion
Expenses £1.230 trillion
Economic aid $19.1 billion

Ethnic groups (2021/2022)
83.0% White
8.6% Asian
3.7% Black
2.7% Mixed
2.0% other

Religion (2021/2022)
46.5% Christianity
37.8% no religion
6.0% Islam
1.6% Hinduism
0.8% Sikhism
0.4% Buddhism
0.4% Judaism
0.6% other
5.9% not stated

CPI Corruption Perceptions Index—2024
Scores and ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption defined as an "abuse of entrusted power for private gain".
71 out of 100 points (20th)