



INSPECTOR GENERALS' MISSIVE WEEK 26



IG Missive 17th September 2020

A complete half-year gone then after 26 weeks of lockdown and curtailed social life. Life is not actually that uncomfortable for those of us with a garden and many of my not-yet-retired friends are enjoying working from home. The feared “second spike” is perhaps beginning to show itself in some places after the easing of lockdown a few weeks ago. I mentioned a few weeks ago that the fatality rate amongst those catching Covid-19 is less than that of Legionnaires’ disease, but we must not forget that legionella and other pathogens are far less infectious/contagious than the current pandemic - continued caution is therefore a very wise course. I am busy revising for a Royal Arch meeting this evening and was out for a Mark meeting on Tuesday. Only 6 people were/will be present and though such occasions are a welcome change, not being followed by a festive board does leave it a bit flat afterwards. Refreshing the ritual also seems a lot more difficult than I remember however!

Bill Parish was just squeaked out by Stephen Knight this week, but Nick Wilson trumped them both with a near-perfect set of answers. I did find a tiny reason for pinching

¼ point off him though. As usual, “marked” sets of answers will go out to all responders later this week. Happy researching.

Here are my answers to the week 25 questions:

1. Lilith was the first woman according to the Babylonian Talmud of ~400AD but the Christian Bible contains no reference to a wife before Eve so the answer to we Christians is obviously Eve.
2. Moore’s Law was derived in the late 1960s by Gordon E Moore and stated originally that the number of transistors on a computer chip would double every 18 months. The law’s terms have gradually changed over the years and while the law is now accepted as “computer capability will double roughly every 2 years”, leading experts now doubt that it will continue (but what do they know, they’ve been saying that since 1970?).
3. With 41 people in a room, the odds of finding 2 with the same birthday is 89.42, but 42 gives 90.55% - the answer is therefore 42.
4. Auguste and Louis Lumière developed their Cinématographe in 1895 – it was the first viable film camera.
5. Porridge Island was one of several small alleys near St Martin-in-the-Fields which were demolished in the 1830s to make way for Trafalgar Square.
6. According to Exodus 31, Moses instructed Aholiab and Bezaleel to construct the Ark of the Covenant. However, in Deuteronomy, Moses implies he did it himself (perhaps the translators were less than specific?).

7. Polar bears eat a lot of seals and seals have very high levels of Vitamin A to enable their pups to grow quickly in a cold environment. Polar bears don't need it but are very tolerant to excess Vitamin A. Humans are not tolerant and severe liver damage can result.
8. They are all adductor muscles, 3 in the thigh (part of the Quadriceps) and 1 working the big toe.
9. The collective noun for ocelots (queens and torns) is a clutter or a clowder.
10. On sailing, Sir Francis Drake's ship was named the Pelican (but the official name was changed on 20th August 1578 - mid-voyage - to the Golden Hind).

Here are the research topics for this week – still no official prizes but they keep our brains working.

1. What was the answer to life, the universe and everything?
2. How long ago is the first mass extinction event in Earth's history said to have taken place?
3. According to the International Commission for Stratigraphy, what is the correct chronological order of the following geological periods in Earth's history – Cretaceous, Devonian, Silurian, Carboniferous, Jurassic, Cambrian?
4. Who designed the font used on all Commonwealth War Graves headstones?
5. How many houses are there at Stowe School?
6. Why is the UK government apparently at risk of being labelled a scofflaw?
7. Which Oxford "club" is referred to in both "Brideshead Revisited" and "Decline and Fall"?
8. Who was the first British astronaut to walk in space?
9. What are the 2 main differences which distinguish between slow worms and grass snakes?
10. What are the 2 constituent organisms which constitute lichens?

Do keep phoning around to any friends you haven't heard from recently, put 16th November in your diaries and keep looking through the red book occasionally.

Do Stay Safe Everyone

Peter Harborne 33°
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