



## INSPECTOR GENERALS' MISSIVE WEEK 33

Week 33 IG Missive – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020



Rather as was feared, we are into lockdown again today for at least 4 weeks. Time to dig out the Netflix and Amazon Prime catalogues and stack your books alongside your chair. No golf permitted for at least a month so my Kindle will no doubt get a bruising too.

It was a thoroughly encouraging Zoom meeting last evening with very few glitches and a fair number “present”. Thank you to all who joined in and let us hope the Supreme Council “visit” a week on Monday runs as well. More details and reminders will come from District Recorder Peter before then but do register with him if you wish to attend (so that you can be sent the correct codes for entry) and keep sending potential questions to him for discussion after the Sovereign Grand Commander’s address.

Stephen Knight and Nick Wilson each got 9 questions right last week (although they got different questions wrong). Here are my answers to week 32’s questions:

1. Concorde was designed for supersonic flight so had a very thin wing and a long thin nose to reduce drag. This meant that at slow speed, it needed a marked nose up attitude to ensure the wing produced enough lift. Ordinary aircraft have flaps at the rear of the wing which, when lowered, allow the effective angle of attack of the wing to be increased without raising the nose (which would make seeing forwards more difficult for the pilot). Concorde’s delta wing design precluded the fitting of flaps, so the solution was to lower the front part of the nose instead.
2. There are 35 common keywords in the Python programming language, but the number used varies with different versions (ver.2.7.18 from Apr2020 has only 31, ver. 3.7 has 33).
3. Microsoft Excel only allows a number to have 15 significant digits so the last number of a credit card would be changed to 0. But if Excel is told that it isn’t a number, it is text, then the digits are stored correctly.
4. 63. The obvious answer of 31BC +33AD making 64 is wrong because there never was a year zero. Calendars referring to BC and AD weren’t invented until 525AD (by Dionysius Exiguus).
5. Beowulf is regarded as “the greatest epic poem in the English language” although actually written down in Anglo-Saxon sometime around 1000AD. It also remained un-named until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was first translated into modern English by John Mitchell Kemble in 1837.
6. Carol Capek wrote about “Rossum’s Universal Robots” in 1920, The word “robota” is Czech for “forced labourer” and though it was Karel’s book which introduced the word, he credited his brother Josef for applying the word robot to Karel’s automata.
7. The 6 armed elements of the United States in order of precedence are the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard.
8. Standard gauge in rail track terms is 4’8½” and it is the most common gauge in use. It is said to derive from the width of a pair of yoked horses (and hence the track of a wagon’s wheels).
9. The “Salisbury Convention (or Doctrine)” is a convention that the House of Lords will not oppose the second or third reading of any government legislation which has been in the election manifesto of the governing party.

10. It is alleged that iron cannon balls on sailing ships after the 16<sup>th</sup> century were stacked on brass carriers called “monkeys” with dimples to hold the bottom layer in place. Since brass and iron have different coefficients of expansion, it was theoretically possible for the brass to shrink more than the iron and for the balls to topple. This could only happen at extremely low temperatures so if it was very cold the sailors could claim it was cold enough to “freeze the balls off the brass monkey” (although ice between the balls from frozen seawater below -3°C might also help to do it).

Here are this week’s posers:

1. How high and how fast are GPS satellites travelling?
2. How may US Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D Roosevelt be linked in history?
3. What important feature of the Earth involves a figure of 21 kilometres?
4. Who was the first woman to read the news on BBC television?
5. Who lives at beard.spices.issue?
6. Who were Puss, Bess and Tiney?
7. Why was Pinza a great relief?
8. Who has been described as the first theoretical physicist?
9. Which is the oldest national scientific institution in the world?
10. Who was the shortest-serving US President (so far)?

Maintain the mantra - Hands, Face, Space – and may we all be spared the virus.

Stay Safe

Peter Harborne 33°

Inspector General

Buckinghamshire