**Text 1**

**A confused generation**

Change brings problems. Bella lives with her parents in a brand new apartment in Shanghai. Her real name is Zhou Jiaying – ‘Bella’ is the name that she has been given by her English teacher. Her parents are representative of a confused generation in a confused time. In modern Chinese society different ideologies are fighting against each other. Enormous material benefits have been brought by China’s economic boom, but the debate is not about these; it’s about family life and values. Old values – the respect of family and the older generations – are being replaced by new ones which place money as the critical measurement of one’s position in society. But at the same time these new values are also being questioned. Have our lives been made richer by all our new possessions? Is Chinese culture being supplanted? As in all changing societies people are trying to find the right balance between the ‘new’ and ‘old’.

Recently, Bella’s family put their grandfather into a nursing home. It was a painful decision. In traditional China, caring for aged parents has always been an unavoidable duty, but times are changing. Bella’s ambition? ‘I want one day to put my parents in the best nursing home’ – the best that money can buy, she means.

‘When she told us that’ Bella’s father says, ‘I thought – is it selfish to think she will be a dutiful and caring daughter and look after us? We don’t want to be a burden on her when we get old. This is something my daughter has taught us. Once it was parents who taught children, but now we learn from them.’ The family can buy many more things these days, and when they go shopping, Bella makes sure that the ‘right’ western brands are selected. (Pizza Hut is her favourite restaurant.)

She also teaches her parents the latest slang. Her parents want to be supportive, but they no longer help with Bella’s homework; in spoken English she has surpassed them. She has already learnt much more about the world outside than them. ‘Our advice is not listened to and it is not wanted,’ her mother says. ‘When she was little, she agreed with all my opinions. Now she sits there without saying anything, but I know she doesn’t agree with me.’ Bella glares, but says nothing. ‘I suppose our child-raising has been a failure.’ In China there is no concept of the rebellious teenager.

**Text 2**

**Blood lines**

America itself is well-known for being a melting pot of different ethnic groups and cultures, but nowhere is this diversity more pronounced than in Queens, New York. Here, second-generation Puerto Ricans live alongside third-generation Greeks and first-generation Koreans, all united by a common feeling of pride in their American identity.

However, they are also proud and curious about their ancestral roots. National Geographic’s Genographic Project, known also as the Human Family Tree, set out to trace the origins and common ancestry of the various immigrants in this community by examining their genetic makeup using a simple DNA test. The study was well supported by local residents, but often what was of more immediate interest to people was something which intrigues us all: the history of our recent ancestry. In other words, how their grandparents and great-grandparents arrived in America, and what brought them there in the first place.

One recurring theme among immigrants seems to be the hard work and sacrifices that went in to building a new life and how their descendants now feel a duty to honour their efforts by working hard too. Here are two Queens residents’ stories.

Richard, 38

My great-grandfather Tomas came to America from Poland when he was fifteen. His mother had become ill and died, and his father remarried to be able to take care of his seven children. Tomas didn’t like his stepmother, so he ran away to Belgium, where he boarded a ship to America – without a ticket. He was clearly something of a free spirit. Arriving in America with nothing, he got a job on the railroads in California. Then one day he saw an announcement in a newspaper that was read by immigrants. It was from his brother in New York who was also seeking his fortune in America and was looking for him. Tomas got in touch and they had an emotional reunion in New York, where Tomas subsequently settled. This is the story that my grandmother has passed down to us, to my parents and all my aunts and uncles. She is an amazing woman and the head of the family, I suppose; the one who holds us all together. She’s actually quite forgetful now, but she never forgets family details. What that has meant is that all of us – brothers, aunts, cousins – have a strong family bond and a strong sense of belonging to a group that has struggled and fought together to succeed here.

Tanja, 29

I’m a first generation American. Both my parents came here from Jamaica, where getting a good education is a must. My mother always says that people may take everything away from you, but they can never take away your education. My father was a nurse in Jamaica, but he had an ambition to be a doctor in the US; when he first came here, he studied during the day and went to work at night. My parents have a strong work ethic. My mum has always worked as a nurse, but at the same time has always been very involved in our lives also, helping with our studies and following our careers with interest. Both my sister and I have followed them into the medical profession and now I’m working as a doctor at the Mount Sinai hospital in Queens. I don’t know if that kind of dedication is genetic or just something that you learn from your parents, but that desire to get ahead … we’ve certainly both inherited it. The great thing about America is that it gives you the opportunity to live those dreams too.

**Text 3**

**A close shave**

Kaziranga National Park in India is home to two of the world’s most endangered species: the tiger and the single-horned rhino. Photographer Steve Winter and writer Douglas Chadwick had only been working there a few days when they had a rather frightening close shave with some rhinos.

They were driving into the park to start filming, when their guide stopped the jeep to move a turtle from the middle of the road just ahead of them. Winter, Chadwick and their guard got out to stretch their legs and watch. But when Chadwick turned to look up the road, he saw something terrible.

About 50 metres away, a rhino was charging at them. Rhinos can sprint at more than 40 kilometres an hour, so there was no time to leap back in the car. Instinctively, the guard fired a shot into the ground just in front of the rhino. The crack of the rifle and the dirt that the bullet kicked up was enough to distract their attacker and he veered off into the grass seconds before reaching them.

Shaken, but relieved the incident had not been worse, they drove on. As they were entering the forest area on a raised section of road, three young rhinos climbed onto the road in front of them. The jeep stopped hurriedly, but this time the animals seemed uninterested and disappeared into the forest. Just then, however, the mother of the three, who had been keeping an eye on her young, came crashing through the trees from their left. No time to shoot this time. The female rhino slammed into the side of the jeep and started to wrestle it off the road. Indian rhinos don’t use their horns in a fight; instead they bite and this female’s teeth were gouging deep into the side of the jeep.

The guide had laid down a rule for his guests at Kaziranga – ‘No one is allowed to be scared.’ But his guests were breaking the rule, praying the driver could get them out of there. With the engine screaming, at last the vehicle skidded free. Even then the rhino came after them and it was only 150 metres later that she gave up the chase.

**Text 4**

**Once upon a t ime ...**



Once upon a time there lived in Germany two brothers who loved a good story – one with magic and danger, royalty and villains. At school they met a wise man who led them to a treasure – a library of old books with tales more enchanting than any they had ever heard. Inspired, the brothers began collecting their own stories, listening to the folktales people told them. Soon they produced their own treasure – a book of fairy tales that would charm millions in faraway lands for generations to come.

The brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm, named their story collection Children’s and Household Tales and published it in Germany in 1812. The collection has been translated into more than 160 languages, from Inupiat in the Arctic to Swahili in Africa. As a world publishing phenomenon it competes with the Bible. The stories and their characters continue to feature in virtually every media: theatre, opera, comic books, movies, paintings, rock music, advertising, fashion. The Japanese have built two theme parks devoted to the tales. In the United States the Grimms’ collection helped launch Disney as a media giant.

Such fame would have shocked the humble Grimms. During their lifetimes the collection sold few copies in Germany. The early editions were not even aimed at children. They had no illustrations, and scholarly footnotes took up almost as much space as the tales themselves. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm viewed themselves as patriotic students of folklore. They began their work at a time when Germany had been occupied by the French under Napoleon. The new rulers suppressed local culture. As young scholars, the brothers Grimm began work on the fairy tale collection in order to save the endangered oral storytelling tradition of Germany.

Long before the Grimms’ time, storytelling thrived in inns, barns and the homes of peasant women. During winter nights, as they sat spinning wool, women kept each other company and entertained themselves with tales of adventure, romance and magic. Altogether, 40 such storytellers delivered tales to the Grimms, many of them coming to their house in Kassel. One of them, ‘Marie’, was credited with narrating many of the most famous tales: Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White and Sleeping Beauty. But these were not from the German oral tradition. Marie had had French nannies who retold stories to her that they themselves had read in a collection written by Charles Perrault in 1697, Tales of My Mother Goose.

Although the brothers implied that they were just keeping records of tales, Wilhelm continued to polish and reshape the stories up to the final edition of 1857. In an effort to make them more acceptable to children and their parents, he stressed the moral of each tale, and emphasised gender roles. According to the Grimms, the collection served as ‘a manual of manners.’ To this day, parents read them to their children because they approve of the lessons in the stories: keep your promises, don’t talk to strangers, work hard, obey your parents.

Yet despite all Wilhelm’s additions, the core of these stories was left untouched, in all their medieval coarseness. The cruel treatment of children (the children Hansel and Gretel are put in a cage by a witch and then fattened ready for eating), the violent punishments handed out to the stories’ villains (in the original Snow White the evil stepmother is forced to dance in red-hot iron shoes until she falls down dead), are too much for some parents.

So what accounts for their popularity? Some have suggested it is because the characters are always striving for happiness. But the truth probably lies in their origin. Grimms tales were born out of a storytelling tradition without boundaries of age or culture. The brothers’ skill was to translate these into a universal style of writing that seems to mirror whatever moods or interests we bring to our reading of them. And so it was that the Grimms’ fairy tales lived happily ever after.

**Text 5**

**Revealed world**

By Tim Folger

The regular world presented to us by our five senses – you could call it reality 1.0 – is not always the most user-friendly of places. We get lost in unfamiliar cities; we meet people whose language we don’t understand. So why not try the improved version: augmented reality (AR) or reality 2.0? AR technology superimposes computer-generated images on the real world, via a mobile phone camera or special video glasses.

Early forms of AR are already here. With the right downloads, smart phones can deliver information about nearby ATMs and restaurants and other points of interest. But that’s just the beginning. A few years from now the quantity of information available will have increased enormously. You will not only see that there’s a Chinese restaurant on the next block, you will be able to see the menu and prices, read reviews of it and even find out how busy it is at the time.

This is where the next revolution in computing will take place: not in ever-more sophisticated games that exist in a virtual reality world, but rather in the interface between the real world and the information brought to us via the Internet. Imagine bubbles floating before your eyes, filled with cool information about anything and everything that you see in front of you. Information overload? Perhaps not.

Let’s jump ahead to ten years from now. A person trying to fix their car won’t be looking at a repair manual online or a book with illustrations; they will be wearing a device that projects animated 3-D computer graphics onto the equipment under repair, labelling parts and giving step-by-step guidance. Such technology is already being used by trainee mechanics in the US marines.

The window onto the AR world can be a smart phone or special video glasses that look like wraparound sunglasses. But in ten years’ time these will have been replaced by contact lenses etched with tiny LEDs, which display text and images at a readable distance in front of the eye. So a deaf person wearing these inconspicuous lenses will be able to see a real-time transcript of what people are saying as they speak.

The question is: while we are all absorbed in our new augmented reality worlds, how will we be interacting with each other?

**Text 6**

**One size doesn’t fit all**

****Even if the term ‘appropriate technology’ is a relatively new one, the concept certainly isn’t. In the 1930s Mahatma Gandhi claimed that the advanced technology used by western industrialised nations did not represent the right route to progress for his homeland, India. His favourite machines were the sewing machine, a device invented ‘out of love’, he said, and the bicycle, a means of transport that he used all his life. He wanted the poor villagers of India to use technology in a way that empowered them and helped them to become self-reliant.

This was also the philosophy promoted by E.F. Schumacher in his famous book Small is Beautiful, published in the 1970s, which called for ‘intermediate technology’ solutions. Do not start with technology and see what it can do for people, he argued. Instead, ‘find out what people are doing and then help them to do it better’. According to Schumacher, it did not matter whether the technological answers to people’s needs were simple or sophisticated. What was important was that solutions were long-term, practical and above all firmly in the hands of the people who used them.

More recently the term ‘appropriate technology’ has come to mean not just technology which is suited to the needs and capabilities of the user, but technology that takes particular account of environmental, ethical and cultural considerations. That is clearly a much more difficult thing to achieve. Often it is found in rural communities in developing or less industrialised countries. For example, solar-powered lamps that bring light to areas with no electricity and water purifiers that work simply by the action of sucking through a straw. But the principle of appropriate technology does not only apply to developing countries. It also has its place in the developed world.

For example, a Swedish state-owned company, Jernhuset, has found a way to harness the energy produced by the 250,000 bodies rushing through Stockholm’s central train station each day. The body heat is absorbed by the building’s ventilation system, then used to warm up water that is pumped through pipes over to the new office building nearby. It’s old technology – a system of pipes, water and pumps – but used in a new way. It is expected to bring down central heating costs in the building by up to twenty per cent.

Wherever it is deployed, there is no guarantee, however, that so-called ‘appropriate technology’ will in fact be appropriate. After some visiting engineers observed how labour-intensive and slow it was for the women of a Guatemalan village to shell corn by hand, they designed a simple mechanical device to do the job more quickly. The new device certainly saved time, but after a few weeks the women returned to the old manual method. Why? Because they valued the time they spent hand-shelling: it enabled them to chat and exchange news with each other.

In another case, in Malawi, a local entrepreneur was encouraged to manufacture super-efficient wood-burning stoves under licence to sell to local villagers. Burning wood in a traditional open fire, which is a common method of cooking food in the developing world, is responsible for 10–20% of all global CO2 emissions, so this seemed to be an excellent scheme. However the local entrepreneur was so successful that he went out and bought himself a whole fleet of gas-guzzling cars. ‘We haven’t worked out the CO2 implications of that yet,’ said a spokesman from the organisation that promoted the scheme.

**Text 7**

**Reverse graffiti**

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When is cleaning walls a crime? When you’re doing it to create art, obviously. A number of street artists around the world have started expressing themselves through a practice known as reverse graffiti. Inspired by the ‘clean me’ messages that you see written on the back of some trucks, they find dirty surfaces and inscribe them with images or messages using cleaning brushes or pressure hoses. Either way, it’s the same principle: the image is made by cleaning away the dirt.

Each artist has their own individual style but all artists share a common aim: to draw attention to the pollution in our cities. The UK’s Paul Curtis, better known as Moose, operates around Leeds and London and has been commissioned by a number of companies to make reverse graffiti advertisements.

Brazilian artist, Alexandre Orion, turned one of São Paulo’s transport tunnels into an amazing mural in 2006 by scraping away the dirt. Made up of a series of white skulls, the mural reminds drivers of the effect their pollution is having on the planet. ‘Every motorist sits in the comfort of their car, but they don’t give any consideration to the price their comfort has for the environment and consequently for themselves,’ says Orion.

The anti-pollution message of the reverse graffiti artists confuses city authorities since the main argument against graffiti is that it spoils the appearance of both types of property: public and private. This was what Leeds City Council said about Moose’s work: ‘Leeds residents want to live in clean and attractive neighbourhoods. We view this kind of advertising as environmental damage and will take strong action against any advertisers carrying out such campaigns.’ It seems that no action was taken against the advertisers – no fines nor any other punishment – but Moose himself was ordered to ‘clean up his act’. How was he supposed to do this: by making all property he had cleaned dirty again?

As for the Brazilian artist’s work, the authorities were annoyed but could find nothing to charge him with. They had no other option but to clean the tunnel – but only the parts Alexandre had already cleaned. The artist merely continued his campaign on the other side. The city officials then decided to take drastic action. They not only cleaned the whole tunnel but also every tunnel in São Paulo.

**Text 8**

**Hip-hop planet**

****By James McBride

I first heard rap at a party in Harlem in 1980. It sounded like a broken record. It was a version of an old hit record called Good Times, the same four bars looped over and over. And on top of this loop, a kid chanted a rhyme about how he was the best disc jockey in the world. It was called Rapper’s Delight. I thought it was the most ridiculous thing I’d ever heard.

For the next 26 years, I avoided rap music the way you step over a crack in the pavement. I heard it booming out of cars and alleyways from Paris to Abidjan, but I never listened. In doing so, I missed the most important cultural event in my lifetime. No American music has exploded across the world with such force since swing jazz in the 1930s. This defiant culture of song, graffiti and dance, collectively known as hip-hop, has permeated almost every society.

Hip-hop began in the mid-1970s, in an almost bankrupt New York City. The bored kids of the South Bronx and Harlem came up with a new entertainment. This is how it worked: one guy, the DJ, played records on two turntables. Another guy – or girl – served as master of ceremonies, or MC. The DJs learnt to move the record back and forth under the needle to create a scratch, or to drop the needle on the record and play a break over and over to keep people dancing. The MCs rapped over the music to keep the party going. One MC sought to out-chat the other. Dance styles were created. Graffiti artists also emphasised the I because the music was all about identity: I am the best.

Initially hip-hop artists produced socially-conscious songs that described life on the other side of the tracks, where people are denied the same opportunities as the rich. The lyrics of Grandmaster Flash’s 1982 hit The Message are a perfect example.

They describe a child who is born and grows up in the ghetto, hating the world for his situation and all the things that he cannot have.

These days most commercial rappers in America brag about their lives of crime and the things that fame and money have brought them, among which women seem to be just another material possession. For those from poor backgrounds the life of a successful rapper has become an aspiration, for richer suburban kids it is a symbol of something cool.

In poor urban communities around the globe, rap music is a universal expression of outrage at the injustice of the distribution of wealth. Its macho pose has been borrowed from commercial hip-hop in the US, but for most the music represents an old dream: a better life. ‘We want money to help our parents,’ Assane, a nineteen-year-old budding DJ from Dakar in Senegal tells me. ‘We watch our mothers boil water to cook and have nothing to put in the pot. Rap doesn’t belong to American culture,’ he says. ‘It belongs here. It has always existed here, because of our pain and our hardships and our suffering.’

That is why, after 26 years, I have come to embrace this music I tried so hard to ignore. Much of hip-hop, particularly the commercial side, I hate. Yet I love the good of it. Even if some of it embraces violence, hip-hop is a music that exposes the empty moral cupboard that we have left for our children. They can hear it and understand it. The question is: can we?

**Text 9**

**From reality to fantasy**

****There once was a sheikh with big dreams. His land was a sleepy village occupied by pearl divers, fishermen and traders who docked their boats along a small creek through the town. It was here that Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al Maktoum imagined creating a gateway to the world. It was a dream he could not afford to realise. So in 1959 he asked a neighbour to lend him many millions of dollars. He made the creek wider, built roads, schools and homes. With his young son, Mohammed, by his side, he walked along the empty waterfront and painted his dream with words. And some years later, it was as he had said. He built it, and they came.

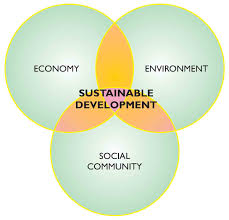
Then it was his son’s turn to carry on developing his father’s vision. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum transformed Dubai into an air-conditioned fantasy world of 1.5 million people. No project seemed to be too ambitious for him. He built the world’s tallest high-rise building, the 828 metre Burj Khalifa, the world’s biggest shopping mall and the world’s largest motorway intersection. He helped Little Dubai become the shopping capital of the Middle East. In the last five years, it has attracted more tourists than India. Its most famous landmark, the Palm Jumeirah, an artificial island built in the shape of a palm tree, provides holiday villas for the rich and famous.

But the financial crisis in 2008 made people think again and Dubai failed to sell many of its new luxury apartments. Up to then property in Dubai had been increasing in value and it had been easy to get people to invest. These days, investors risk losing money.

The rest of the world looks on with a mixture of wonder and suspicion. Is this a capitalist model that people want to copy or do they feel that Dubai has decided to abandon its true heritage and become instead the Las Vegas of the Middle East?

**Text 10**

**Sustainable development?**

****Kai Kensavaong will never again walk along the muddy lanes of Sop On, the village in southern Laos where she was born. Her old home now lies at the bottom of a reservoir of brown water created to feed a hydroelectric power plant, the first to be funded by the World Bank for over twenty years. ‘I’ll never forget that place,’ says the 41-year-old villager. ‘It was my home. I picked my first bamboo stalks there.’

The World Bank stopped financing hydroelectric dam projects in developing countries twenty years ago because of criticism that such projects were harming local communities and the environment. But Nam Theun 2 – a 39-metre high dam on the Mekong River that generates over 1,000 megawatts of electricity – is the showpiece for the bank’s new policy of supporting sustainable hydropower projects. For Laos it is part of a longer-term strategy to revitalise the economy and become the battery of South-East Asia.

The bank says that lessons have been learnt from the projects of the sixties and seventies when people were forced to resettle and whole areas of forest or agricultural land were flooded. When it comes to clean sources of energy, the bank thinks hydropower is the pick of the bunch, offering the best solution in a world where 1.5 billion people have no access to electricity.

In 2010 the dam brought $5.6 million in sales of electricity and it is estimated that during the next 25 years Nam Theun 2 will generate around $2 billion in revenue to Laos, one of Asia’s poorest countries, since most of the electricity will be exported to its power-hungry neighbour, Thailand. The government has promised that this money will be spent on reducing poverty and both renewing and improving the country’s infrastructure.

Seventeen villages in the flooded area have now been rebuilt and the 6,200 people – mostly farmers – who lived in them have been retrained to make a living from the reservoir.

The power company has promised to double their living standards within five years. According to the World Bank, 87 per cent of those resettled believe life is much better than before as they now have electricity, sanitation, clean water, new roads and greater access to schools and health care.

‘In the old village things just weren’t convenient,’ said Tiea, 25, one of the relocated villagers. ‘It wasn’t a pretty place, the houses weren’t very nice and we didn’t have power. In the new village we have electricity, we can see better.’

But the old criticisms have not gone away. Environmental and human rights groups warn that the dam will have a negative impact on water quality and fish and that the local people who were relocated after the area was flooded may not be able to support themselves economically in future.

‘People are happy with these new amenities, but the real problem is how to restore sustainable livelihoods for communities who used to rely on the natural resources – forests, fish and grazing lands for their animals – now that they’ve lost these,’ says Ikuko Matsumoto, programme director for the environmental group, International Rivers.

As well as the 6,200 villagers already rehoused, activists also point out that there are over 110,000 people in riverside villages downstream from the dam whose lives will have to change because of the new river ecosystem. They claim that these people will have to deal with issues like flooding, decline of the fish population and poor water quality. How quickly they will pick up new skills is uncertain.

But the World Bank says it is responsive to these problems. A 4,100-square kilometre protected area has been established around the dam to safeguard flora and fauna. It admits though that rebuilding the lives of the villagers is not a short-term process and everyone is trying to learn and readjust as they go along.

**Text 11**

**Staycations**

****You probably don’t like the term ‘staycation’. Me neither. But you mustn’t be put off. As a concept, it is quite attractive. Perhaps you’ve already had one, but weren’t aware that’s what it was called. Staycations don’t just mean staying in doing things around the house or just relaxing at home. They involve getting out more by taking day trips from your home to see local sights. If you don’t want to stay at home, you can holiday locally – for example, camping at a local campsite.

Staycations originally became popular after the financial crisis of 2008, when people were looking for ways to cut back on their spending. Apart from the savings, let’s not ignore the other benefits: you don’t have any of the problems associated with travel, such as packing, long drives, delays at airports and so on; and you bring money to the local economy, by eating out, for example. The only people who hope this kind of holiday won’t catch on are the holiday companies themselves.

Some staycationers who base themselves at home like to follow a set of rules, such as setting a start and end date, planning their activities ahead of time and avoiding routine. You don’t have to do these things, but it helps to create the feel of a traditional vacation. Others, aware that an extra barbecue and a visit to the local zoo may not match the thrill of foreign travel, take it a step further. A recent example was Karen Ash, whose story appeared in the Wall Street Journal.

A resident of New York, Karen Ash decided not to go to Japan, as she had originally planned, but instead took a weeklong Japanese vacation in her own city. This included buying postcards and souvenirs at a Japanese market, admiring bonsai plants, eating ramen (and even speaking Japanese when ordering), all without leaving New York. Her itinerary also involved joining in at a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, attending a taiko drumming concert and watching Japanese soap operas on DVD. I don’t think many people would want to take this much trouble to create their staycation, but you get the idea!

**Text 12**

**Unusual places to stay**

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Prison hotels Built in 1905, Karosta naval jail in Latvia was originally home to mutinous Russian sailors. In the 1970s it housed political prisoners. According to their website this is ‘an opportunity to stay overnight on real prisoners’ benches and mattresses’. In direct contrast to most hotel publicity, the website goes on to describe Karosta proudly as ‘unfriendly, unheated and uncomfortable’. They are not lying. This is more a reality jail experience than a hotel. ‘Reception’ is a dark corridor where a former prison guard explains the rules to you (no luggage except a toothbrush, no attempts to escape), and then fires his gun in the air to show you he is serious. After a meal of bread and sweet Russian tea, ‘guests’ are given five minutes to wash before making up their own bed from a wooden bench and thin mattress. Sound unpleasant? It is. Mind you, for $12 per night, what do you expect?

Period hotels Would you like to experience life in America’s Wild West 150 years ago? Virginia City in Montana, a former gold-rush town, was a ghost town until it began to be restored in the 1950s for tourism. Owned largely by the state government, the town operates now as a large open-air museum. Nearby is the Nevada City Hotel and cabins where you can hang up your Stetson hat and enjoy life as a cowboy. The rooms feature period Victorian furniture and downstairs the saloon has a true Wild West feel. The cabins look extremely rustic and basic from the outside – two even have their original earth roofs – but inside they have large double beds and private bathrooms. Bear in mind that if you book in the week, you might be disappointed because the city only comes to life at weekends, when actors walk around in period costumes, such as sheriffs, cowboys and gold prospectors.

Cave hotels If you had more primitive accommodation in mind, why not try the caves of Sassi di Matera on the toe of Italy, which have been inhabited since the Bronze Age? During the Renaissance they developed into more sophisticated rooms with stone walls, vaulted ceilings and balustrades. But in recent history they are best known as the poor homes of the peasants who lived there with their animals until as late as 1952. Now, however, they have been renovated to provide hospitality in a historical setting. Although visitors to Le Grotte Della Civita must do without television or fridges, the rooms are comfortably furnished with antique furniture and period terracotta tiles. The owners wanted the caves to still feel as authentic as possible, so they have built the furniture into the walls of the caves and left in place the iron rings where peasants tied up their animals. Prices start at $300 per night

Art hotels A modern art gallery is a place where you can lose yourself in an artist’s vision of the world. A hotel is essentially a place where you can spend the night, in either more or less comfort according to your budget. As its advertising promises, Propeller Island City Lodge in Berlin manages to combine the two. Housed in a former apartment block, the hotel is a collection of individually designed rooms – the upside-down room, the all-orange room, the mirror-filled room – which are often so extreme that you have no choice except to get into the spirit of it. In some art hotels, you could forget the art and simply enjoy the comfort of your surroundings. That’s not the case with Propeller Island. However, the rooms can be small and claustrophobic (although some have balconies) and often you have to share a bathroom with other guests. But if you don’t mind that, it may be the next best thing to spending the night in a gallery.

**Text 13**

**The minister for no oil**

One thing you do not expect an oil minister to do is to block the development of his own country’s oil fields. But that is exactly what Alberto Acosta did when he was appointed Ecuador’s Oil Minister in 2007.

For a relatively poor country whose main income is from oil exports, this proposal seemed like madness. But if Ecuador is not rich by economic standards, in terms of biodiversity, it is one of the richest places on Earth. When scientists studied trees in the Yasuni National Park in Ecuador’s unspoiled rain forest, they found over 650 different species of tree in just one hectare – more than the total number in all of the US and Canada combined.

Mr Acosta said he would rather the oil companies did not destroy these natural riches. His innovative idea was to leave the oil reserves beneath Yasuni Park untouched, in return for compensation of half their value. The oil is worth more than $7 billion, so Ecuador asked the international community to pay $3.6 billion not to extract it.

But the plan has met with problems, both from within Ecuador and from outside. The state oil company, Petroecuador, opposes the scheme and many suspect that President Correa now wishes he had never supported it. At the same time only a few countries have shown interest, with only Germany promising $800 million over thirteen years.

Ecuador is not the only country trying to get richer nations to pay for not exploiting their forests. Both Nigeria and Guatemala are hoping they will be able to make similar deals. A spokesperson for local environmental groups explained, ‘This is a fantastic initiative. If only people in developed countries appreciated that these forests absorb a lot of the CO2 that their industries produce. I just wish they would take a longer-term view of this problem. If we don’t do something to protect biodiversity and prevent climate change, we will all be losers – with consequences I’d rather not even think about.’

**Text 14**

**A world of its own**

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Madagascar is an island – the world’s fourth largest, at over 225,000 square miles – but an island nevertheless. Although all islands have their own unique ecosystems, nature has blessed Madagascar with exceptional riches. Roughly 90 per cent of its flora and fauna is found nowhere else on the planet. The spectacle of its carrot-shaped baobab trees and ghostly lemurs make even the most well-travelled visitors wide-eyed with amazement and delight.

But its rare beauty hides the desperate situation of its people. The typical Madagascan lives on about a dollar a day, even though you would not guess this from the attitude of the Malagasy, the island’s main ethnic group, who are a cheerful and optimistic race. Since the first humans arrived in Madagascar some 2,300 years ago, loggers and developers have destroyed nearly 90 per cent of the island’s original forest habitat, harvesting it for timber or burning it down to create room for crops and, more recently, cattle.

Considering that Madagascar’s population is growing by three per cent a year, this tension between rich land and poor residents is increasing day by day. Alarmed ecologists have named Madagascar a biodiversity hot spot, deploring the practice of slash-and-burn agriculture. In 2002 the global environmental community rejoiced when green-friendly Marc Ravalomanana was elected president. But only seven years later, in the spring of 2009, the military replaced Ravalomanana with a former radio disc jockey who seemed to have little interest in protecting the environment.

Needing money, the new government reversed a ban on the export of precious hardwoods, making it legal to sell wood from trees which had already been cut down or had fallen during the cyclones that regularly hit the island. Yet in reality they did little to control the loggers who continued to rob the forests of new wood. The main targets of this environmental crime are the rosewood tree and the ebony tree. The wood from these majestic trees is in high demand: in China it is used to make exotic imperial-style furniture for the new middle class; in Europe and America it is a valued material in the manufacture of expensive musical instruments.

The locals are caught in a trap. Poverty and the high value of rosewood – at $3,000 per cubic metre it is ten times as valuable as oak – have driven them to cut down trees that are traditionally believed to be sacred. It is dangerous and back-breaking work. Using hand axes, in a few hours they bring down a tree that has stood tall for many centuries. Then they cut the trees into two-metre logs and drag these several kilometres to the nearest river.

The rare hardwood trees are not the only casualties. In order to transport the heavy rosewood logs downriver, rafts must be built from other wood. For each raft the loggers cut down four or five lighter trees from near the riverside, causing the earth to erode and silt up the rivers. At the same time animals’ natural habitat has been disturbed, putting their survival at risk.

In this bleak landscape what can bring hope? One man’s work may offer a possible route out of the darkness. Olivier Behra who first came to Madagascar from France in 1987 believes that the only solution is to give local people economic alternatives. Almost single-handedly, he has stopped deforestation in the Vohimana forest by encouraging the locals instead to collect medicinal plants, which they never imagined had any monetary value, and sell them overseas to companies like Chanel. The village lemur hunter has been retrained to act as a guide for tourists obsessed with lemurs. The same tourists also pay to visit the wild orchid conservatory that Behra has set up. Can small-scale and sensitive initiatives like this compete with the rosewood mafia of Madagascar? Only time will tell.

Madagascar in numbers

4th largest island in the world after Greenland, New Guinea and Borneo

90% of its flora and fauna is found nowhere else on Earth

Number 1 producer of vanilla in the world

22 million: population of Madagascar

70 different species of lemur live only on Madagascar

18 different ethnic groups of Asian and African origin

300 years: the time it takes a rosewood tree to reach maturity

24,560 tonnes of ebony and rosewood exported in 2009, much of it illegally

**Text 15**

**A life revealed**

She remembers the moment the photographer took her picture. The man was a stranger, but he asked if he could and she agreed to let him take it. She had never been photographed before and until they met a second time seventeen years later, she was not photographed again.

The photographer, Steve McCurry, remembers the moment too. It was 1984 and he was recording the lives of Afghan refugees in a camp in Pakistan. She was staring out of the school tent and he admits thinking at the time that the picture would be nothing special. Yet the ‘Afghan girl’, as the portrait is now known, became one of the most iconic images of our time. McCurry used her intense expression, so untypical of an average, carefree twelve-year-old girl, to warn us not to ignore the victims of war, especially its young victims.

In 2002 National Geographic persuaded McCurry to return to Pakistan to look for the girl. After showing her photo around the refugee camp, he found a man who had known her as a child and knew where to find her. He offered to fetch her from her home in the Tora Bora mountains and after three days returned with Sharbat Gula, a woman perhaps 29 years old. McCurry knew at once that this was her.

Time and hardship had erased her youth. Her skin was weathered. Yet her eyes still burned with the same intensity. Her brother explained the story of their lives, blaming the war for forcing them and many other Afghans out of their homeland. When Sharbat was six years old, they fled to the mountains, hiding in caves and begging people to give them food and blankets. She married when she was sixteen and now her time is occupied with bringing up her three children, cooking, cleaning and caring for them. Yet she does not complain about having a hard life. More amazingly, she is not aware of the impact that the photo of the young Sharbat with her sea-green eyes had on the world.

**Text 16**

**From hero to zero**

****In January 2008, hours after saving his plane from crashing at Heathrow Airport, flight captain Peter Burkill was being praised as a hero. Only days later, when reports appeared in the press accusing him of freezing at the controls, he became a villain. How did this extraordinary transformation come about?

Peter Burkill was the pilot on flight 38 from Hong Kong and ultimately responsible for the lives of its 152 passengers. But 35 seconds from landing, two of the plane’s engines failed. With the plane losing height fast, Burkill let his co-pilot John Coward take the controls while he himself adjusted the wing flaps to help the plane reach the runway. It was a risky decision, but it worked. The plane just missed some houses and landed heavily on the grass just short of the runway. After skidding for a few hundred metres, it miraculously came to a stop without turning over. The passengers escaped without serious injury. As far as Burkill was concerned, he had done what any captain would have done and the rest was luck.

However, this was not the version of events that began to circulate among BA’s staff in the following days. Whether they just liked to gossip or felt Burkill was incompetent, word went around that rather than taking control of the plane, he had frozen. Worse than that, it was reported that he had failed to issue a mayday call and had not evacuated the passengers correctly.

Some newspapers, sensing a chance to sell more copies, picked up the story, claiming that John Coward was the real hero. They published details of Burkill’s colourful past, painting a picture of a well-paid pilot, who had lived the life of a playboy, but – when it mattered – had let down his crew and passengers. Worse still for Burkill, it wasn’t even his word against theirs. British Airways banned him from speaking about the events until the full investigation by Air Accidents Investigations Branch (AAIB) was complete.

Overnight Burkill’s life changed. Before the accident, he had had everything: a great job, a beautiful home, a loving family and the respect of his colleagues. Now he felt betrayed and desperate. The stress put enormous pressure on his family. In the weeks that followed, he spent more time at home helping his wife, Maria, to look after their young children. But he became depressed. He begged the company to issue a statement to clear his name, but they refused, clearly anxious not to receive bad publicity in case the official investigation found Burkill guilty of a mistake. Even when they published their own internal report in May 2008, which cleared him of any wrongdoing, it was only read by the senior management. No word of it reached his close colleagues and rumours circulated that crew members were afraid to fly with him. He wrote to BA’s chief executive asking for help, but got no reply.

The official AAIB report, the result of a completely independent enquiry, was finally published in February 2009. It concluded that ice had formed in the fuel system during the approach to Heathrow, cutting the fuel supply to the engines. The actions of the crew had saved the lives of all on board, it said, in particular Captain Burkill’s split-second decision to reduce the flap setting.

The pilots and thirteen cabin crew were awarded the British Airways Safety Medal and the story of Peter Burkill the hero once again made the headlines. But the damage had been done. In August 2009, Peter Burkill took voluntary redundancy from the company he had served for 25 years. He began applying for jobs with other airlines, but he was not invited to a single interview.

So did his critics win? No. Burkill himself had the last word. BA said that he was and always had been welcome in the company and in September 2010 invited him to come back and fly Boeing 777s for them. Burkhill accepted their invitation.

**Text 17**

**An ordinary man**

****Neil Armstrong, the most famous of the astronauts on Apollo 11, has been called the ultimate professional. He was hired to do a job. He did the job and then he went home and kept quiet about it. In 40 years, he gave two interviews. But how can the man who first set foot on the Moon, a hero to millions of people, remain such a mystery?

People like Armstrong often develop their interests at a young age. He followed a career built on a passion for flying that he developed in his childhood in the 1930s. He learnt to fly before he had graduated from high school in Wapakoneta, Ohio. He then did a course in aerospace engineering at Purdue University in Indiana, sponsored by the United States Navy, which meant that Armstrong was obliged to serve as a naval pilot for three years. He saw action almost immediately, flying 78 missions in the war in Korea.

He left the Navy in 1952 and two years later got a job with the Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory where he flew experimental aircraft. He reached speeds of 6,615 kilometres an hour and altitudes of over 200,000 feet. When he decided to become an astronaut is not clear. Certainly, it was not his ambition to be famous. An extremely talented pilot, his aim was simply to push the boundaries of flight.

He was selected for a space plane pilot training programme in 1960 but shortly after news began to circulate that NASA was looking for astronauts for their Apollo programme. Incredibly excited, he applied for the job and in 1962 was accepted. The rest, as they say, is history.

When the astronauts returned from the Apollo 11 Moon landing of July 1969, Armstrong was a worldwide celebrity and could have done anything he wanted – TV shows, public speaking. Instead, he became a teacher at the University of Cincinnati and at the weekend went flying to get away from all the attention. He subsequently worked for two private avionics firms until he retired in 2002. In 40 years he only gave two interviews. Why? Certainly he felt fortunate to have had the chance to fulfil his dream, but he did not feel any more special than the thousands of people who worked on the Apollo space programme. He was just the pilot.

**Text 18**

**The king herself**

****Today she is in the Royal Mummy Rooms at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, reunited at long last with her family of fellow pharaohs, with a sign saying she is Hatshepsut, the king herself (1479–1458 BC).

But in 1903, when the archaeologist Howard Carter found Hatshepsut’s sarcophagus in the Valley of the Kings, it was empty. Had her mummy been stolen or destroyed? The truth only came out a century later when Egyptian scientists positively identified a mummy called KV60a, discovered more than a century earlier in a minor tomb, as that of Hatshepsut. None of the treasures normally found with pharaohs’ mummies were with it. It was not even in a coffin.

For Hatshepsut, a pharaoh who did not fear death as long as she was remembered, the irony is great. As one of the greatest builders in one of the greatest Egyptian dynasties, she raised numerous temples and shrines. She commissioned hundreds of statues of herself and left accounts in stone of her titles, her history, even her hopes and fears. Inscribed on an obelisk at Karnak are the words: ‘Now my heart turns this way and that, as I think what the people will say. Those who see my monuments in years to come, and who shall speak of what I have done.’

But following her death, her successor and stepson Thutmose III set about erasing her memory, ordering all images of her as king to be removed from monuments and temples. At Deir el Bahri, at the temple designed to be the centre of Hatshepsut’s cult, her statues were smashed and thrown into a pit. Images of her as queen were left undisturbed, but wherever she proclaimed herself king, the destruction was careful and precise. Why?

Hatshepsut was the eldest daughter of Thutmose I and Queen Ahmose. But Thutmose also had a son by another queen, and this son, Thutmose II, became pharaoh when his father died. As was common among Egyptian royalty, Thutmose II married his sister, Hatshepsut. They produced one daughter; another, less important wife, Isis, gave Thutmose II the male heir that he longed for, but Hatshepsut was unable to provide.

When Thutmose II died not long after from heart disease, his heir, Thutmose III, was still a young boy. As was the custom, Hatshepsut assumed control as the young pharaoh’s queen regent. And so began one of the most intriguing periods of ancient Egyptian history.

At first, Hatshepsut acted on her stepson’s behalf, respecting the convention that the queen should handle political affairs while the young king learnt the ropes. But before long, she began performing kingly functions, like making offerings to the gods. After a few years she assumed the role of ‘king’ of Egypt, supreme power in the land. Her stepson was relegated to second-in-command and ‘the king herself ’ proceeded to rule for an amazing 21 years.

What caused Hatshepsut to break so radically with the traditional role of queen regent? A social or military crisis? A desire for power? A belief that she had the same right to rule as a man? No one really knows. Maybe she felt, as a direct descendant of the pharoah Thutmose I, she had a greater claim to the divine line of pharaohs than Thutmose III. At first she made no secret of her sex – in images her body is unmistakably a woman’s – but later she is depicted as a male king, with headdress and beard, standing imposingly with legs apart.

Her hieroglyph inscriptions have frequent references to ‘my people’ which suggest that she knew she had broken with tradition and wanted her subjects’ approval. Whatever their opinion was, there is no doubting the frustration of the king in waiting, Thutmose III. After Hapshepsut’s death, he took his revenge, wiping his stepmother’s reign as pharaoh out of history. But in the long term it is she, the King Herself, who has achieved greater fame.

**Text 19**

**Cruel to be kind**

Is there a right way to bring up children? Some parents read guides to find an answer, many just follow their instinct. Whatever they do, a doubt always remains: could I have done a better job?

A recent contribution to the subject is Amy Chua’s controversial book Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother, which describes the approach to child-rearing of an ambitious Chinese parent living in the West. According to Chua, western mothers are far too soft on their children. She says they are always praising their children for every effort they make, even if the result is coming last in a race or playing a piano piece badly. These are the kind of parents who will give in to their children’s demands to go out and play rather than do their homework, if they protest loud enough.

The tiger mother method is very different and the key is total control. Tiger mothers will accept nothing less than ‘A’ grades in every subject – failure to achieve these is just proof that they have not worked hard enough. They will encourage not with praise and reward, but by punishing and shaming. Chua told her own daughter that she would take her doll’s house to a charity shop if she failed to master a difficult piano piece. She even rejected a homemade birthday card from her daughter Sophia because she had drawn it in a hurry.

But that highlights another difference, says Chua, which is directness and honesty. A tiger mother will not hesitate to tell their child that they are lazy, whereas western parents are always telling their children not to worry, that they will do better next time, even if they think they have been lazy.

The constant nagging of the tiger mother, the banning of TV and computer games seems harsh, but perhaps it works. Chua’s children have not rebelled, and they don’t resent their strict upbringing. They regularly get the top grades at school and are proficient at violin and piano – stereotypical symbols of success, critics would say. By contrast, children with more freedom and more laid-back parents will often lack self-discipline and will fail to push themselves to achieve more.

**Text 20**

**A universal language**

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People love to compare and contrast. In most parts of England, you buy your bus ticket on the bus. In France, you buy it at a metro station. In Australia, you can buy it from a newsagent. We all find this kind of comparison entertaining. Books on cross-cultural communication exploit our curiosity by focussing on differences between people across the world: in social behaviour, the roles they adopt in society, their attitudes to money, the significance of their body language, etc.

Proxemics, the study of different standards of personal space, is one example. How close I stand to someone when I am speaking to them depends not only on my relationship to them, but also on my culture. This is important because if the person I am with is not used to standing as near as I do when we are talking to each other, they might feel uncomfortable. Statistics tell us that the average distance at which two people stand in a social context – neighbours chatting for example – is anything between 1.2 metres and 3.5 metres. In Latin cultures (South America, Italy, etc.) and also in China this distance tends to be smaller, while in Nordic cultures (Sweden, Denmark, etc.) people usually stand further apart.

The messages sent by your posture and gestures is another case in point. For example, it is quite common in European countries to sit with your legs crossed and the top foot outstretched. But, as I know from personal experience, people in Arab countries hardly ever sit in this way – because they might show you the bottom of their shoe, which is a serious insult. It is said that in the Philippines, people often greet each other by raising their eyebrows quickly. In the USA, this is a sign of surprise.

Such information fills the pages of guides for travellers and international business people. But I would really question the usefulness of what are presented as ‘essential’ or ‘must know’ facts. Clearly it is important to know a little about eating customs, tipping and the rules concerning basic greetings – whether you should bow or shake someone’s hand. But beneath the surface, we are not so different. There are many signs that are universal in the emotions that they communicate. Focussing on these similarities – the things that we all have in common – is a much more profitable route than focussing on the differences.

Smiling is the best known of these, but not the only one. Behaviourists have proven that all over the world, people show sadness in a similar way. The face ‘falls’: the mouth becomes downturned and the eyes begin to look glassy. The person will probably look down or away and seem distracted.

There are also common factors when people are bored. They will look at other things in a distracted way – their watches, for example. Their feet will begin to move restlessly indicating that they want to escape; they tap their fingers or scratch their heads. Anger can also be read quite easily: the facial muscles tense up, often causing people to frown; the eyes stare, fixing themselves on the target of their anger; blood rushes to the face causing it to become red. If the anger is great, the body will also tense up as if preparing itself for a physical fight.

Understanding these universal signals and reacting appropriately is the real key to cross-cultural communication. If we all apply just a little sensitivity and common sense, it is unlikely that we will cause lasting offence by making the wrong gesture or invading a stranger’s personal space. Of course some cultures show their emotions more openly and others prefer to keep them more hidden. But isn’t that also the case within cultures, from one individual to another?

**Text 21**

**Knowledge conservation**

Dr Maria Fadiman is an ethnobotanist – she studies how people use plants. ‘Looking at plant conservation without including people is a fantasy,’ she says. ‘The focus of my work is finding a balance where people use resources in a sustainable way.’

It struck Fadiman early on that this was what she wanted to do. ‘I was born with a passion for conservation and a fascination with indigenous cultures,’ she explains. ‘Ethnobotany lets me bring it all together. On my first trip to the rain forest I met a woman who was in terrible pain because the people in her village weren’t able to remember which plant would cure her. I saw traditional plant knowledge was being lost, and at that moment I knew conserving this kind of knowledge was what I wanted to do with my life.’

Visiting the Ecuadorian rain forest, Dr Fadiman was amazed at the variety of plants. ‘It looked like one big, green mish-mash to me’, she says. ‘But the people who lived there were able to pick out the right plants for medicine and could distinguish not only the plants that were safe to eat, but also the right part of each plant.’

The problem often is that such knowledge is stored only in local people’s minds and it is passed down from generation to generation. Fadiman managed to persuade inhabitants of the Ecuadorian rain forest to let her record the information in written form. ‘They are excited by this idea because suddenly their knowledge is valued.’

But conservation doesn’t just mean protecting indigenous plants. If bringing in non-native plants – cash crops like coffee – is beneficial to people and the environment, then that’s fine too. In the Galapagos Islands, where overfishing was a real problem, environmentalists like Fadiman succeeded in getting local people to think about alternatives to fishing, such as growing coffee.

By forming close relationships with local people and joining in with their way of life, Fadiman has inspired her own students in her teaching at Florida Atlantic University. Students who couldn’t easily absorb facts and statistics said they were able to engage much more easily with the subject when they heard her stories of going to the river to brush her teeth or sitting around a cooking fire.

**Text 22**

**Who’s a clever bird, then?**

How does a scientist find out to what extent an animal is capable of thinking? What evidence is there that it is able to acquire information about the world and act on it, learning as it goes along?

In 1977 Irene Pepperberg, a recent graduate of Harvard University, decided to investigate the thought processes of another creature by talking to it. In order to do this she would teach a one-year-old African grey parrot named Alex to reproduce the sounds of the English language. ‘I thought if he learnt to communicate, I could ask him questions about how he sees the world.’

Pepperberg bought Alex in a Chicago pet store. She let the store’s assistant choose him because she didn’t want other scientists to say that she had deliberately chosen an especially smart bird. Given that Alex’s brain was the size of a walnut, most researchers thought Pepperberg’s communication study would be futile. ‘Some people actually called me crazy for trying this,’ she said.

With Pepperberg’s patient teaching, Alex learnt how to imitate almost one hundred English words, including the names of food. He could count to six and had learnt the sounds for seven and eight. But the point was not to see if Alex could learn words by heart. Pepperberg wanted to get inside his mind and learn more about a bird’s understanding of the world. She couldn’t ask him what he was thinking about, but she could ask him about his knowledge of numbers, shapes and colours.

In one demonstration, Pepperberg placed Alex on a wooden perch in the middle of the room. She then held up a green key and a small green cup for him to look at. ‘What’s the same?’ she asked.

Without hesitation, Alex’s beak opened: ‘Co-lour.’

‘What’s different?’ Pepperberg asked.

‘Shape,’ Alex said. His voice had the sound of a cartoon character. But the words – and what can only be called the thoughts – were entirely his. Many of Alex’s cognitive skills, such as his ability to understand the concepts of ‘same’ and ‘different’, are rare in the animal world. Very few animals share these skills. But parrots, like humans, live a long time in complex societies. And like humans, these birds must keep track of the dynamics of changing relationships and environments.

‘They need to be able to distinguish colours to know when a fruit is ripe or unripe,’ Pepperberg explained. ‘They need to categorise things – what’s edible, what isn’t – and to know the shapes of predators. And it helps to have a concept of numbers if you need to keep track of your flock. For a long-lived bird, you can’t do all of this with instinct; cognition must be involved.’

In the demonstration, Alex then ran through various tests, distinguishing colours, shapes, sizes, and materials (wool versus wood versus metal). He did some simple arithmetic, such as counting the yellow toy blocks among a pile of mixed coloured blocks. And then, as if to offer final proof of the mind inside his bird’s brain, Alex spoke up. ‘Talk clearly!’ he commanded, when one of the younger birds Pepperberg was also teaching mispronounced the word green. ‘Talk clearly!’

Alex knew all the answers himself and was getting bored. ‘He’s moody,’ said Pepperberg, ‘so he interrupts the others, or he gives the wrong answer just to be difficult.’ Pepperberg was certainly learning more about the mind of a parrot, but like the parent of a troublesome teenager, she was learning the hard way.

**Text 23**

**Saving for a rainy day**

****Come on, Norway; this isn’t even a competition anymore! For the last eight years, Norway has registered the highest quality of life among the world’s nations. It is one of the wealthiest countries in the world – only Luxembourg and a couple of others are richer. Norwegians can also expect to get a good education, find the job they want – unemployment is only 2.5 per cent – enjoy good health and live a long life. People say the prisons are quite comfortable too!

Norway has not always been a rich country. Just 80 years ago Norwegians were emigrating to the USA in their thousands in search of a better life. The rise in oil prices in the 1970s changed all that. But Norway’s success is not only the result of its huge reserves of oil. Other countries have had such riches and squandered them. It is also due to the Norwegians’ natural thrift and their strong work ethic.

When you arrive in Oslo for the first time, don’t expect to be met with Dubai-style skyscrapers, entrepreneurs in designer suits and rows of Ferraris and Porsches. Norway may be rich, but it is modest in its wealth. Norwegians also work hard and are always near the top in surveys of global worker productivity rates. But in today’s high-tech world where work seems to follow us wherever we go, the people of Norway are redefining what wealth means. Laws just recently passed by the government emphasise the importance of family and time off, offering generous maternity and paternity leave, subsidised childcare and long holidays as well.

Also, the country is saving for the future. Every dollar earned from oil is put straight into what is now the world’s biggest pension fund – worth over $200 billion. Extraordinarily, none of this money is allowed to be spent on state infrastructure projects. It is not even invested in new schools and hospitals. But at a time when most other countries are wondering how they will finance the pensions of a growing retired population, Norway is sitting pretty.

**Text 24**

**The gift economy**

****The banking crisis of 2008 again raised concerns that our economy is based too much on individual greed. Such an economic model, critics say, comes from a false understanding of human nature. Human society is not made up of individuals pursuing private gain through competition with each other. The real essence of human nature lies in the social bonds that we make through family, friendships, professional associations and local communities. These bonds produce a sense of common purpose and shared values, in which groups of people strive for the things that are for the common good: a sound education, a pleasant environment to live in, a healthy population. It is this idea of shared social interests that is at the heart of the gift economy.

Gift economies thrived in earlier times when people lived in a world of greater abundance and when their wants were fewer. Stone Age hunter-gatherers had shelter and enough food and did not need many possessions – a few weapons for hunting and clothing to keep warm. They helped each other by sharing food and tools without any expectation of payment or immediate reward. But this is not only an idea that applies to a more primitive way of life. There are also many recent examples of the gift economy at work.

In the past, American companies operating in Japan found it difficult to attract Japanese recruits, even though, compared with Japanese employers, they offered more generous wages, shorter work hours and better promotion prospects. But these factors were traditionally not so important to Japanese employees, who did not think of their services as being ‘bought’. Rather, they felt they were entering into a long-term – ‘gift exchange’ – relationship with their employer, which was of mutual benefit.

This relationship had many aspects. At its most basic it involved the simple exchange of physical gifts. For example, if the employee got married, the company sent a gift and even a departmental manager to represent it at the wedding.

Another company gift which is still popular among Japanese employees is the yearly company vacation. On these organised weekends co-workers share dormitories, eat together and visit the same attractions, largely at the company’s expense. For their part, the main gift given by the employees to their company is their hard work and this is why each Japanese employee gives such great attention to accuracy, quality in their work and promptness in its delivery. Even the simplest tasks are carried out with extraordinary care.

Elsewhere, the Internet is facilitating the re-emergence of the gift economy. Neighbourhood groups use online networks to share tools and skills. Someone who needs a long ladder to repair their roof does not need to go out and buy one; they simply put a message up on the neighbourhood discussion board and soon a neighbour will offer theirs. They will probably even help them with the repair, because helping and giving is part of human nature. Via the Internet, knowledge and advice can be shared on almost everything, from how a nuclear reactor works to how to plan your holiday or build your own canoe.

All this is very well, but these are hard times: helping our neighbour with his roof isn’t going to pay the bills, I hear you say. But in an indirect way it is. The point is that by stressing the co-operative side of human nature, the gift economy helps us all. It keeps in check the excesses of big commercial organisations that seek to exploit situations for their own gain. So the big supermarket chains must understand that it is in the common interest not to force small shopkeepers out of business. Big industrial farms must realise that they cannot go on intensively farming the land until there is nothing left in it. Other large companies should not always seek to drive the hardest bargain possible with their suppliers, but just pay them fairly. That is the real lesson of the gift economy.

**Text 25**

**A beach**

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By John Russell

Imagine a beach; a quiet place, with only the noise of the sea and the gulls in the background. There are boats floating near the shore and a few people swimming in the water next to them. It’s a hot day, and there are some people lying on the sand enjoying the sunshine and slowly going brown. There are no shops, no people making noises, no loud music, everything is peaceful. There is just the sea, the sun, and the beach; a little paradise.

Where is it?

The beach is on the south coast of Scotland, near a little town called Gatehouse of Fleet in the county of Dumfries and Galloway. 22 years ago my family and I found this place for the first time and we have never really left it. Every year in the summer while other people go on holiday to foreign countries and exotic places, we go to our private paradise and relax. There is a little campsite with tents and caravans next to the beach, and this becomes our home for one month every year.

Growing up

For a child a beach is a wonderful place. Here I found lots of space to run and play on the sand or to swim in the water. Being a campsite there were always lots of other families with children to play with. Another of my favourite activities was climbing on the rocks and cliffs around the beach. Rock pools were very educational places where I used to study the little fish and sea animals. Silence was also important; at school I was always surrounded by people and noise but the beach gave me the chance to be on my own and think, or read, away from anyone else.

Storms

Although the sea can be beautiful, this beach is sometimes a dangerous place to be. When the weather is bad there are often storms with strong winds. When this happens the waves can get up to 2-3 metres high – definitely not weather for swimming. Every year some of the boats anchored on the beach are lost because the sea is so rough. I remember holding down our tent to stop the wind blowing it away on many occasions! However, if the waves weren’t too high all the children (and some adults) used to go swimming in life jackets, as it was very exciting.

An interesting hobby

Sailing is a very serious activity in the UK, and this beach is no different. There are large racing boats for three or more people, smaller boats (such as the Topper) for just one or two people, fishing boats and windsurfers. In fact people on this beach are willing to try any type of water-sport; water skiing, speed boating, even the recent sport of sail surfing is becoming popular. Over the years my family has had 4 different boats, from a small Topper to a large Caprice for racing. We have sailed, raced, and fished off the boats, and have even capsized in bad weather a few times.

Surroundings

If this beach had been next to a town or near a popular tourist area I don’t think we would have continued going there. But its location is very beautiful indeed. It’s in the middle of green countryside with many different types of plants and flowers, and in the background the hills of Galloway can be seen. Lots of photographers and artists come to the area (also known as the Solway) because they can capture such beautiful scenery.

A refuge

Even after 22 years, the beach is still a sanctuary for me. It’s a place away from the rest of the world where I can forget about life’s problems, and just relax. In today’s modern, busy world, everyone should have a place like this.

**Text 26**

**A quick glance to Dance**

****Ballet

Ballet is a specific academic dance form and technique which is taught in ballet schools according to specific methods. There are many ballet schools around the world that specialize in various styles of ballet and different techniques offered. Works of dance choreographed using this technique are called ballets, and usually include dance, mime, acting, and music (usually orchestral but occasionally vocal). Ballet is best known for its unique features and techniques, such as pointe work, turn-out of the legs, and high extensions; its graceful, flowing, precise movements; and its ethereal qualities. These carefully organized movements tell a story or express an idea.

Ballroom dancing

Ballroom dance, refers collectively to a set of partner dances, which originated in the Western world and are now enjoyed both socially and competitively around the globe. Its performance and entertainment aspects are also widely enjoyed on stage, in film, and on television.

While historically ballroom dance may refer to any form of formal social dancing as recreation, with the eminence of dancesport in modern times the term has became much narrower in scope, usually referring specifically to the International Standard and International Latin style dances (see dance groupings below). In the United States, two additional variations—"American Smooth" and "American Rhythm"—have also been popularized and are commonly recognized as styles of "ballroom dance".

Break dancing

Breakdance, breaking, b-boying or b-girling is a street dance style that evolved as part of the hip hop movement among African American and Latin American youths in the South Bronx of New York City during the early 1970s. It is normally danced to funk or hip hop music, often remixed to prolong the breaks, and is arguably the best known of all hip hop dance styles.

Breakdancing is generally unstructured and highly improvisational, allowing the incorporation of many different elements. A basic routine might include toprock, a transition into downrock, a display of power moves, and finally a climactic freeze or suicide.

Flamenco

El baile flamenco is a highly-expressive solo dance, known for its emotional sweeping of the arms and rhythmic stomping of the feet. While flamenco dancers (bailaors and bailaoras) invest a considerable amount of study and practice into their art form, the dances are not choreographed, but are improvised along the palo or rhythm. In addition to the percussion provided by the heels of the dancers striking the floor, castanets are sometimes held in the hands and clicked together rapidly to the rhythm of the music. Sometimes, folding fans are used for visual effect.

Salsa

Salsa refers to a fusion of informal dance styles having roots in Cuba and the Caribbean, Latin America and North America. Salsa is danced to Salsa music. There is a strong African influence in the music and the dance.

Salsa is usually a partner dance, although there are recognized solo steps and some forms are danced in groups of couples, with frequent exchanges of partner. Improvisation and social dancing are important elements of Salsa but it appears as a performance dance too.

Samba

Samba is a lively, rhythmical dance of Brazilian origin in 2/4 time danced under the Samba music. However, there are three steps to every bar, making the Samba feel like a 3/4 timed dance. Its origins include the Maxixe. There are two major streams of Samba dance that differ significantly: the Brazilian Samba music has been danced in Brazil since its inception in the late 19th century. There is actually a set of dances, rather than a single dance, that define the Samba dancing scene in the country; thus, no one dance can be claimed with certainty as the "original" Samba style.

 Tango

Tango is a social dance originating in Buenos Aires Argentina. The musical styles that evolved together with the dance are also known as "tango".

Early tango was known as tango criollo, or simply tango. Today, there are many tango dance styles, including Argentine Tango, Uruguayan Tango, Ballroom tango (American and International styles), Finnish tango, Chinese tango, and vintage tangos. The Argentine tango is often regarded as the "authentic" tango since it is closest to that originally danced in Argentina and Uruguay, though other types of tango have developed into mature dances in their own right.

Music and dance elements of tango are popular in activities related to dancing, such as figure skating, synchronized swimming, etc., because of its dramatic feeling and its cultural associations with romance and love.

 A waltz is a ballroom and folk dance in 3/4 time, done primarily in closed position.

The waltz first became fashionable in Vienna around the 1780s, spreading to many other countries in the years to follow. The waltz, and especially its closed position, became the example for the creation of many other ballroom dances. Subsequently, new types of waltz have developed, including many folk and several ballroom dances.

In the 19th century the word primarily indicated that the dance was a turning one; one would "waltz" in the polka to indicate rotating rather than going straight forward without turning.

**Text 27**

**Acupuncture**

The person who takes medicine must recover twice, once from the disease and once from the medicine. William Osler, M.D

If all the medicine in the world were thrown into the sea, it would be bad for the fish and good for humanity. O.W. Holmes, Professor of Medicine Harvard University

Alternative medicine has become much more popular in the West in recent years. It seems that people are becoming increasingly worried about the side effects of drugs, and are turning to treatments such as homeopathy, osteopathy, yoga, reflexology and acupuncture to complement, or sometimes even replace, Western medicine.

An event in my life three or four years ago made me examine my own attitudes towards alternative medicine. After suffering from insomnia for a few months, I was feeling mentally and physically exhausted. A trip to my GP, and attempts at self-medication with nightly doses of Guinness and whisky, failed to bring any relief from my condition. My friend Tony, who was studying acupuncture at a college near London at the time, suggested that I visit an acupuncturist. Since I have a healthy fear of needles from waiting in line for vaccinations in gloomy school corridors, I was reluctant to take his advice, but by this time I was so tired that I was prepared to try almost anything.

I made an appointment with the only acupuncturist in my area, and after another nearly sleepless night, turned up at his room in the local alternative health centre the following morning. After taking my pulse, looking at my tongue, and asking a few questions about my diet and lifestyle, the acupuncturist correctly deduced that I was worn-out (I found this extremely impressive since he hadn’t asked me why I had come to see him.) He then inserted a needle in my right foot between my first and second toe, and, despite my anxiety, I fell asleep immediately. At the time I considered the whole experience to be close to a miracle.

What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture is based on the idea that energy flows through the human body along 12 lines or meridians. These meridians end up at organs in the body, and illness is the result of a blockage of the energy flow to these organs. To remove the blockage, an acupuncturist inserts very fine needles into the body at points along the meridians. This stimulates the flow of energy, and restores the patient’s health.

What is the history of acupuncture?

Traditional Chinese medicine has been practised for around 3000 years in the Far East, but is relatively recent in the West, and acupuncture only really became well-known in the West in the 1970s as people began to travel more frequently between the two areas of the world.

A significant event in the history of acupuncture came in 1971, when a journalist from the New York Times had his appendix removed in China, when on a trip to the country with Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State for the USA. Surgeons used acupuncture to deaden the pain of the operation, which greatly impressed Kissinger.

Although at first doctors in the West were often sceptical of the medical value of acupuncture, in the last few years it has become more established as an alternative to Western medical treatments, since clinical tests have shown that acupuncture is effective for a number of conditions.

What can acupuncture be used to treat?

In the Far East acupuncture is used to treat a wide range of complaints, and is also used as a preventative medicine, since it is thought to increase the body’s resistance to infection. In the West, the treatment is often used to relieve headaches, dental pain, back pain, and arthritis, and to treat depression, asthma, stress, high blood pressure and anxiety.

Who uses acupuncture?

Since acupuncture is known to be effective against pain, it is not surprising that many sportspeople have experimented with acupuncture when fighting injury. Martina Hingis, the famous tennis player, had a wrist injury cured through treatment, and English Premier Division football club Bolton Wanderers employ an acupuncturist to keep their squad in good physical condition. While in Korea for the World Cup in 2002, soojichim, a Korean form of acupuncture, was very popular with the German football team.

Cherie Blair, a well-known human rights lawyer, and the wife of the British Prime Minister, was recently spotted wearing an acupuncture needle in her ear, suggesting that she uses the treatment to cope with stress. The Queen of England is also interested in acupuncture, although she doesn’t use the treatment herself – she and many of her family rely on another alternative medical treatment, homeopathy, to keep them healthy.

What are the risks?

Finally, if you do decide to visit an acupuncturist, it is important that you check that they are qualified and registered to practise acupuncture. In the past some people have experienced allergic reactions, broken needles and even punctured lungs while being treated, although this is very uncommon.

**Text 28**

**Amelia Earhart**

by Linda Baxter

Amelia Earhart was born in 1897, in Kansas, USA. Even as a child she didn't behave in a conventionally 'feminine' way. She climbed trees and hunted rats with her rifle - but she wasn't particularly interested in flying. She saw her first plane when she was 10, and wasn't impressed at all. But she was very interested in newspaper reports about women who were successful in male-dominated professions, such as engineering, law and management. She cut them out and kept them.  
  
During the First World War she worked as a nursing assistant in a military hospital, and later started to study medicine at university. Then, in 1920, Amelia's life changed. She went to an aviation fair with her father and had a 10-minute flight in a plane. That was it. As soon as the plane left the ground, Amelia knew that she had to fly.  
  
So Amelia found herself a female flying teacher and started to learn to fly. She took all sorts of odd jobs to pay for the lessons, and also saved and borrowed enough money to buy a second-hand plane. It was bright yellow and she called it 'Canary'. In 1922 she took 'Canary' up to a height of 14,000 feet, breaking the women's altitude record.  
  
In 1928, Amelia was working as a social worker in Boston when she received an amazing phone call inviting her to join pilot Wilmer Stultz on a flight across the Atlantic. The man who organised the flight was the American publisher, George Putnam. Amelia's official title was 'commander' but she herself said that she was just a passenger. But she was still the first woman passenger to fly across the Atlantic. She became famous, wrote a book about the crossing (called '20 Hours, 40 minutes') and travelled around the country giving lectures. George Putnam was like a manager to her, and she eventually married him in 1931.  
Then, in 1932, Amelia flew solo across the Atlantic, something that only one person, Lindbergh, had ever done before. Because of bad weather, she was forced to land in the middle of a field in Ireland, frightening the cows. She broke several records with this flight: the first woman to make the solo crossing, the only person to make the crossing twice, the longest non-stop distance for a woman and the shortest time for the flight.  
Now she was really famous. She was given the Distinguished Flying Cross (another first for a woman), wrote another book, and continued to lecture. She also designed a flying suit for women, and went on to design other clothes for women who led active lives.  
Amelia continued to break all sorts of aviation records over the next few years. But not everyone was comfortable with the idea of a woman living the kind of life that Amelia led. One newspaper article about her finished with the question "But can she bake a cake?"  
When she was nearly 40, Amelia decided that she was ready for a final challenge - to be the first woman to fly around the world. Her first attempt was unsuccessful (the plane was damaged) but she tried again in June 1937, with her navigator, Fred Noonan. She had decided that this was going to be her last long-distance 'record breaking' flight.  
Everything went smoothly and they landed in New Guinea in July. The next stage was from New Guinea to Howland Island, a tiny spot of land in the Pacific Ocean. But in mid flight the plane, navigator and pilot simply disappeared in the bad weather.  
A rescue search was started immediately but nothing was found. The United States government spent $4 million looking for Amelia, which makes it the most expensive air and sea search in history. A lighthouse was built on Howland Island in her memory.  
Amelia always knew that what she did was dangerous and that every flight could be her last. She left a letter for her husband saying that she knew the dangers, but she wanted to do what she did. People today are still speculating about what might have happened to Amelia and Fred Noonan. There are even theories that they might have landed on an unknown island and lived for many more years. Whatever happened, Amelia Earhart is remembered as a brave pioneer for both aviation and for women.

**Text 29**

**Animal conservation**

Many animal and plant species have become extinct and many more are in critical danger. Finding ways to protect the earth's wildlife and conserve the natural world they inhabit is now more important than ever.

Extinction

Extinction is a natural process. Many species had ceased to exist before humans evolved. However, in the last 400 years, the number of animals and plants becoming extinct has reached crisis point. Human population levels have risen dramatically in the same time period and man's predatory instincts combined with his ruthless consumption of natural resources are directly responsible for the situation.

Dodo

The dodo is a classic example of how human behaviour can cause irreparable damage to the earth's biological diversity. The flightless dodo was native to the Island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. It lived off fruit fallen from the island's trees and lived unthreatened until humans arrived in 1505. The docile bird became a source of food for sailors and lacked the ability to protect itself from animals introduced to the island by humans such as pigs, monkeys and rats. The population of dodos rapidly decreased and the last one was killed in 1681.

Endangered Animals

In 2002, many animals remain threatened with extinction as a result of human activity. The World Wildlife Fund works tirelessly to raise awareness of the predicament facing these animals and find ways to protect them. By focusing on a number of high profile, 'charismatic icons' such as the rhino, panda, whale and tiger, the WWF aims to communicate 'critically important environmental issues'. The organization's ultimate goal is to 'stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature'.

Rhinos

The rhino horn is a highly prized item for practitioners of Asian medicine. This has led to the animal being relentlessly hunted in its natural habitat. Once widespread in Africa and Eurasia, most rhinos now live in protected natural parks and reserves. Their numbers have rapidly decreased in the last 50 years, over half the remaining rhinos disappeared in the 1970s, and the animals remain under constant threat from poachers.

The Giant Panda

The future of the WWF's symbol is far from certain. As few as 1,000 remain in the wild, living in small isolated groups. These groups have been cut off from each other as a result of deforestation and human expansion into their natural habitat. The Chinese government has set up 33 panda reserves to protect these beautiful animals and made poaching them punishable with 20 years in prison. However, the panda's distinct black and white patched coat fetches a high price on the black market and determined poachers still pose one of the most serious threats to the animal's continued existence.

Whales

The International Whaling Commission meets every year. The agenda covers ways to ensure the survival of the species and the complex problems arising from countries such as Japan, wishing to hunt certain whales for 'scientific' purposes. Despite the fact that one third of the world's oceans have been proclaimed whale sanctuaries, seven out of 13 whale species remain endangered. The plight of the North Atlantic Right Whale is particularly serious. Hunted for their rich supply of oil, their numbers have dwindled to just 300. Collisions with ships, toxic pollution and becoming entangled in fishing nets are other major causes of whale deaths.

Tigers

The last 100 years has seen a 95% reduction in the numbers of remaining tigers to between 5,000 and 7,000 and the Bali, Javan, and Caspian tigers are already extinct. The South China tiger is precariously close to disappearing, with only 20–30 still alive. Like the rhino horn, tiger bones and organs are sought after for traditional Chinese medicines. These items are traded illegally along with tiger skins.

Take Action

The WWF is actively involved in many areas of the world fighting to protect the natural habitats of endangered animals from further damage and curb the activities of poachers. They also work to influence governments and policy makers to introduce laws aimed at reducing the threat of pollution and deforestation. Our own individual efforts at home and in the workplace can also make a difference. By reducing waste and pollution, saving water, wood and energy, and reusing and recycling whenever possible, we can reduce the possibility of even more animals being lost, never to return.

**Text 30**

**April Fools Day**

by Claire Powell and Dave Collett

What is April Fools Day and what are its origins? It is commonly believed that in medieval France, New Year was celebrated on 1 April. Then in 1562, Pope Gregory introduced a new calendar for the Christian world, changing New Year to 1 January. With no modern communications, news travelled slowly and new ideas were often questioned. Many people did not hear of the change, others chose to ignore it, while some merely forgot. These people were called fools. Invitations to non-existent ‘New Year’ parties were sent and other practical jokes were played. This jesting evolved over time into a tradition of playing pranks on 1 April. The custom eventually spread to England and Scotland, and it was later transported across the Atlantic to the American colonies of the English and the French. April Fools Day has now developed into an international festival of fun, with different nationalities celebrating the day in special ways.

In France and Italy, if someone plays a trick on you, you are the ‘fish of April’. By the month of April fish have only just hatched and are therefore easy to catch. Children stick paper fish to their friends’ backs and chocolate fish are found in the shops.

In Scotland, April Fools Day lasts for two days! The second day is called ‘Taily Day’ and tricks on this day involve the bottom (or the ‘tail’ in informal speech). Often a sign saying ‘kick me’ is stuck onto someone’s back without them knowing.

In Spain and Mexico, similar celebrations take place on 28 December. The day is the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Originally, the day was a sad remembrance of the slaughter of the innocent children by Herod in his search for the baby Jesus. It eventually changed to a lighter commemoration of innocence involving pranks and trickery.

Today, Americans and the British play small tricks on friends and strangers alike on 1 April. A common trick is to point to a friend's shoe and say ‘Your shoelace is untied.’ When they look down, they are laughed at. Schoolchildren might tell a friend that school has been cancelled. A bag of flour might be balanced on the top of a door so that when the ‘victim’ opens the door, the flour empties over their head. Sometimes the media gets involved. Once, a British short film was shown on April Fools Day about spaghetti farmers and how they harvest their crop from spaghetti trees!

Most April Fool jokes are in good fun and not meant to harm anyone. The best trick is the one where everyone laughs, especially the person upon whom the joke has been played.

April Fool’s Day, 1989

UFO Lands Near London

Two British policemen were sent to investigate a glowing flying saucer on 31 March, the day before April Fool’s Day. When the policemen arrived at a field in Surrey, they saw a small figure wearing a silver space suit walking out of a spacecraft. Immediately the police ran off in the opposite direction. Reports revealed that the alien was in fact a midget, and the flying saucer was a hot air balloon that had been specially built to look like a UFO by Richard Branson, the 36-year-old chairman of Virgin Records.

Branson had planned to land the balloon in London’s Hyde Park on 1 April. However, a wind change had brought him down in a Surrey field. The police were bombarded with phone calls from terrified motorists as the balloon drifted over the motorway. One lady was so shocked by the incident that she didn’t realise that she was standing naked in front of her window as she was describing the UFO to a radio station

**Text 31**

**Archaeology**



by Paul Millard

Archaeology, like many academic words, comes from Greek and means, more or less, ‘the study of old things’. So, it is really a part of the study of history. However, most historians use paper evidence, such as letters, documents, paintings and photographs, but archaeologists learn from the objects left behind by the humans of long ago. Normally, these are the hard materials that don’t decompose or disappear very quickly – things like human bones and skeletons, objects made from stone and metal, and ceramics.

Sometimes, archaeologists and historians work together. Take, for example, the study of the Romans, who dominated the Mediterranean area and much of Europe two thousand years ago. We know a lot about them from their writing, and some of their most famous writers are still quoted in English. We also know a lot about them from what they made, from their coins to their buildings. Archaeologists have worked on Roman remains as far apart as Hadrian’s Wall in the north of England and Leptis Magna in Libya.

Of course, for much of human history, there are no written documents at all. Who were the first humans, and where did they come from? This is a job for the archaeologists, who have found and dated the bones and objects left behind. From this evidence, they believe that humans first appeared in Africa and began moving to other parts of the world about 80,000 years ago. The movement of our ancestors across the planet has been mapped from their remains – humans went to Australia about 70,000 years ago, but have been in South America for just 15,000 years. The evidence of archaeology has helped to show the shared origin and history of us all.

It is very unusual to find anything more than the hard evidence of history – normally, the bacteria in the air eat away at soft organic material, like bodies, clothes and things made of wood. Occasionally, things are different.

A mind-boggling discovery

In 1984, two men made an amazing discovery while working in a bog called Lindow Moss, near Manchester in the north of England. A bog is a very wet area of earth, with a lot of plants growing in it. It can be like a very big and very thick vegetable soup – walk in the wrong place and you can sink and disappear forever. After hundreds of years, the dead plants can compress together and make ‘peat’, which is like soil, but is so rich in energy that it can be burned on a fire, like coal.

The men were cutting the peat when one of them saw something sticking out – a human foot! Naturally, the men called the police, who then found the rest of the body. Was it a case of murder? Possibly – but it was a death nearly two thousand years old. The two men had found a body from the time of the Roman invasion of Celtic Britain. Despite being so old, this body had skin, muscles, hair and internal organs – the scientists who examined him were able to look inside the man’s stomach and find the food that he had eaten for his last meal!

Why was this man so well preserved? It was because he was in a very watery environment, safe from the bacteria that need oxygen to live. Also, the water in the bog was very acidic. The acid preserved the man’s skin in the way that animal skin is preserved for leather coats and shoes.

How did he die? Understandably, archaeologists and other scientists wanted to know more about the person that they called, ‘Lindow Man’. His hands and fingernails suggested that he hadn’t done heavy manual work in his life– he could have been a rich man or a priest. They found that he hadn’t died by accident. The forensic examination revealed that he had been hit on the head three times and his throat was cut with a knife. Then a rope was tightened around his neck. As if that wasn’t enough, he was then thrown into the bog.

So, Lindow Man was killed using three different methods, when just one would have been sufficient. The archaeologists believe that he was sacrificed to three different Celtic gods, called Taranis, Esus and Teutates. Each god required a different form of death. A sacrifice to Teutates required drowning, which is why he was found in the bog. Nobody can tell the complete story of Lindow Man. The Romans said that the Celts made sacrifices every May to make sure that there was enough food that year. Was he a typical ‘routine’ sacrifice?

An archaeologist called Anne Ross has suggested that Lindow Man was a special case. Why would an important man be sacrificed to three gods? Perhaps it was in response to the Roman invasion of Britain, which started in the year AD 43, close to the time that Lindow Man died. He might have been killed to gain the help of the gods against the Romans. It didn’t work. The Romans stayed in Britain for four hundred years and Lindow Man stayed in his bog for two thousand.

Say hello to Lindow Man

If you visit London, you can go and see Lindow Man at the British Museum, where he is spending some time in the company of more famous mummies from Egypt. Whereas the bodies of the Egyptian kings and queens were intentionally preserved, Lindow Man is with us by accident. Whatever his origins, it is a fascinating experience to see him face to face. I recommend it.

**Text 32**

**ASSASSINATION**

"My heart burnt within me with indignation and grief; we could think of nothing else. All night long we had only snatches of sleep, waking up perpetually to the sense of a great shock and grief. Every one is feeling the same. I never knew so universal a feeling."

The quote above was the reaction of Elizabeth Gaskell, an English writer, on hearing of the shooting of US President Abraham Lincoln in 1865; but it could well describe the feelings of millions on November 22nd 1963 when another US president fell victim to an assassin’s bullet. The event so etched itself into the collective memory that years after people could remember exactly where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news. There are few other types of historical moment that affect so many people in quite this way.

When in Rome

Back in the days of the Roman Empire, being the top dog was just as risky a business and assassination was an occupational hazard. If you take a look at the long list of emperors who met their death at the hands of others, you wonder what made the job so attractive. In the period between 284 and 41 BC, more than half of the 40 or so emperors came to a premature and violent end while in office, often at the hands of the soldiers who were supposed to protect them - from Heliogabalus down to Claudius and Julius Caesar, not forgetting Caligula this very week in AD 41.

Where it all began

The earliest known examples of assassination may be in Iran, where three Kings were done away with after palace intrigue in the 5th century BC. The father of Alexander the Great, Phillip of Macedon, received his coup de grâce in similar fashion a century later. The word itself is supposed to derive from an 11th century religious sect in Iran called the Assassins or Hashishim, who saw it as their duty to eliminate enemies in this way, their name coming possibly from their habit of eating hashish.

Headcount

Throughout history, political or religious succession has often been a bloody affair. In virtually every society, the phenomenon repeats itself. In the United States, four presidents have been assassinated, most recently of course John F Kennedy on that day in Dallas, Texas in 1963. In Russia three Tsars have perished in the same way. In Italy seven Popes, in Egypt, one President and two Prime Ministers, in France three kings, including the last…or was that merely execution?

Little triggers

So what exactly constitutes an assassination? The word always implies the murder of someone important, usually involved in politics. And the assassin is sometimes doing it for money, but more often for a cause. The Anarchists of late 19th century Europe saw it as a legitimate political weapon which would cause the downfall of the whole ruling hierarchy: President Carnot of France, the Empress of Austria, and King Umberto I of Italy were all sacrificed to this philosophy, although the edifice refused to crumble. Political extremists of the Far Left followed the same path in Italy and Germany in the 1970s. At certain points in history, however, such acts can set off a far larger chain of violence, as occurred after the slaying of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austro-Hungary in 1914 or the Prime Minister of Rwanda in 1994.

Democratisation of death

The demise of absolute rulers in the 20th century hasn’t put an end to this type of selective killing. Prime Minister was just as dangerous a position to occupy as king or emperor before it; Afghanistan, Burundi, India, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Rumania, South Africa, and Sri Lanka are among the nations that have had at least one PM assassinated at some point. A certain ruler of the United Kingdom narrowly escaped death from a bomb meant for her in 1984.

Fair game?

Political activists are also seen as legitimate targets for assassination by those who disagree with their views. Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Chico Mendes immediately spring to mind. More recently, it is powerful men in the world of business and law who have become prey to the dedicated assassin. In Europe, since the 1980s, German industrialists, Greek ship owners, Spanish bank directors and Italian judges have all been bumped off.

Hidden hands

Other states are sometimes involved in assassination by proxy: a prime example being SS leader Heydrich in Czechoslovakia during WWII, killed by resistance fighters on the orders of the UK government intelligence service. The involvement of foreign powers is suspected but still unproven in other cases: Salvador Allende, Prime Minister of Chile and Samora Machel, President of Mozambique, are but two; Belgium has now apologised for the part its intelligence services played in the death in 1961 of Patrice Lumumba, PM of Congo.

Give us the tools…

And how has the assassin plied his trade? In ancient times, the knife was favoured for a quick end and poisoning for a slower lingering death, while in modern times it is usually the gun, but not only. The bomb, the plane crash, the ice-pick and the exploding cigar have all been employed. And as for that infamous Russian personal lifestyle coach, Rasputin, poisoning, shooting, beating and drowning were all apparently necessary before he finally gave up the ghost.

Conspiracy theories

One persistent feature of assassinations are the conspiracy theories that go with them - did the marksman really act alone? Conspiracies are not difficult to construct. Ask yourself who would have wanted the victim dead and then collect a few facts about the crime that don’t quite tally. Add in the obvious point that high-ranking figures are often involved with the secret services and have access to sensitive information that ordinary citizens are not allowed to see, and you have yourself a very fertile mixture which can keep those with an active imagination busy for years .

By the content of their character

Whatever the true circumstances surrounding their death, many high profile figures live on long after they are taken from us in so sudden and shocking a manner. I leave you with the portentous words of Martin Luther King spoken on the night before he died. His life is now celebrated in the USA by a public holiday on the third Monday of January every year.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he’s allowed me to go to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land! I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.

**Text 33**

**Asthma**

by John Russell

With World Health day on 7th April, this week we take a closer look at a very common health problem.

Does your chest regularly feel tight? Do you find it difficult to breathe after light exercise? Do you sometimes make a wheezing sound when you breathe? If so, you might be asthmatic. If you have breathing problems please consult a doctor, but even if you do have asthma - don’t worry, you are not alone.

What is asthma?

Asthma is a condition that affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide and more than 5 million people in the UK are asthmatic, about one in thirteen people. It is a lung disease that affects your airways – the tubes that carry air to and from your lungs. It causes the muscles in these tubes to contract, the tubes themselves to swell and also causes sticky mucus to be produced. All of these factors can make it very difficult for a sufferer to breathe properly.

Shortness of breath, especially after exercise, coughing, or difficulty breathing while sleeping, are all common symptoms. These can be described as mild asthma attacks; however, they can usually be controlled by medication. A severe asthma attack, on the other hand, where a sufferer finds it very difficult to breathe, may require hospital treatment. How badly you are affected by these symptoms depends on what type of asthma you have; from mild to chronic; and how well you are able to control the disorder.

What causes it?

Asthma is not contagious, although it’s still not known precisely what causes it. People can be born with it; develop it in childhood, or at any age. If you have asthma, it’s likely that someone else in your family had it, as the illness is known to run in families. There is also some evidence that environmental factors, such as diet, housing conditions or smoking during pregnancy, can cause asthma.

Having the condition doesn’t necessarily mean you will suffer badly from the symptoms. Mild or moderate asthma can be easily controlled through medication or lifestyle changes. Additionally, all attacks need a trigger, and if these triggers can be identified and avoided, the likelihood of an attack decreases. Triggers can include: pollution, smoking, dust, animal hair, stress, pollen, exercise, and cold air. These triggers are personal to each individual sufferer, so if you have asthma, make sure you know what is causing your attacks, you can then better avoid these triggers.

History

Asthma is not a recent condition, in fact there is written evidence of the condition from ancient Egyptian times. The word asthma itself was first coined by the physician Hippocrates over 3000 years ago, and was the Greek for ‘difficult breathing.’ Over the years, people have tried many remedies both physical and mental, to combat the illness.

To alleviate the symptoms, people changed their diet, avoided polluted towns, or took herbal/folk cures such as tobacco smoke, owl’s blood, chicken soup, tar fumes, or acupuncture. Blood letting and opium were also popular treatments. Prayer and meditation were used to enable people to better control their own breathing. Some of these remedies or breathing techniques are still being used today.

Medicine and preventative measures

It wasn’t until the mid 20th century that doctors realised asthma attacks were caused by the swelling and contraction of the airways. Consequently, in the last 40 years there have been many developments in the treatment of asthma. There are presently two main types of medicine: preventers and relievers. A preventer is used every day and reduces the swelling of the airways, cutting the risk of an attack. A reliever, such as Ventolin, is taken when breathing has become (or is going to become) difficult, this actually relaxes the muscles of the airways, reducing constriction and improving the airflow. The medicine is usually taken using an inhaler.

Prevention is also good treatment, so if you have asthma, remember to keep generally healthy, take regular exercise and lots of vitamin C to avoid colds and flu – which can be dangerous for asthma sufferers. A healthy diet is also important, and do watch what you eat, as certain foods or food additives can be asthma triggers.

By taking the right medication and making the right lifestyle choices, there is no reason why most asthma sufferers shouldn’t be able to lead perfectly healthy and active lives.

Famous sufferers

There have been many famous asthmatics past and present. These include:

Beethoven, Che Guevera, Benjamin Disraeli, Marcel Proust, Bob Hope and Martin Scorsese

There are even asthmatic sporting heroes such as:

Dennis Rodman (basketball), Paul Scholes (football - Manchester United) and Paula Radcliffe (UK Long Distance runner)

The future

Unfortunately there is still no cure for asthma, although the development of new treatments has led to a much better quality of life for most sufferers. However, the number of people being diagnosed as asthmatic has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. This increase could be due to environmental or dietary factors, but for the moment researchers are puzzled.

It is not unusual for the symptoms of asthma to diminish as sufferers get older, although personally after 27 years I’m still waiting ...

**Text 34**

**Awards**



by Chris Rose

The Nobels are the originals, of course. Alfred Nobel, the man who invented deadly explosives, decided to try and do something good with all the money he earned, and gave prizes to people who made progress in literature, science, economics and – perhaps most importantly – peace.

Not all awards are as noble as the Nobels.  Even though most countries have a system for recognising, honouring and rewarding people who have done something good in their countries, there are now hundreds of awards and awards ceremonies for all kinds of things.

The Oscars are probably the most famous, a time for the (mostly) American film industry to tell itself how good it is, an annual opportunity for lots of big stars to give each other awards and make tearful speeches. As well as that there are also the Golden Globes, apparently for the same thing.

But it’s not only films – now there are also Grammies, Brits, the Mercury Prize and the MTV and Q awards for music. In Britain, a writer who wins the Booker prize can expect to see their difficult, literary novel hit the bestseller lists and compete with "The Da Vinci Code” for popularity.  The Turner Prize is an award for a British contemporary artist – each year it causes controversy by apparently giving lots of money to artists who do things like display their beds, put animals in glass cases or – this year – build a garden shed.

Awards don’t only exist for the arts.  There are now awards for Sports Personality of the Year, for European Footballer of the year and World Footballer of the Year.  This seems very strange – sometimes awards can be good to give recognition to people who deserve it, or to help people who don’t make a lot of money carry on their work without worrying about finances, but professional soccer players these days certainly aren’t short of cash!

Many small towns and communities all over the world also have their own awards ceremonies, for local writers or artists, or just for people who have graduated from high school or got a university degree.  Even the British Council has its own awards for “Innovation in English Language Teaching”.

Why have all these awards and ceremonies appeared recently?  Shakespeare never won a prize, nor did Leonardo da Vinci or Adam Smith or Charles Dickens.

It would be possible to say, however, that in the past, scientists and artists could win “patronage” from rich people – a king or a lord would give the artist or scientist money to have them paint their palaces or help them develop new ways of making money.  With the change in social systems across the world, this no longer happens.  A lot of scientific research is now either funded by the state or by private companies.  Perhaps awards ceremonies are just the most recent face of this process.

However, there is more to it than that.  When a film wins an Oscar, many more people will go and see it, or buy the DVD.  When a writer wins the Nobel prize, many more people buy their books.  When a group win the MTV awards, the ceremony is seen by hundreds of thousands of people across the world.  The result?   The group sell lots more records.

Most awards ceremonies are now sponsored by big organisations or companies.  This means that it is not only the person who wins the award who benefits – but also the sponsors.  The MTV awards, for example, are great for publicising not only music, but also MTV itself!

On the surface, it seems to be a “win-win” situation, with everyone being happy, but let me ask you a question – how far do you think that publicity and marketing are winning here, and how much genuine recognition of achievement is taking place?

**Text 35**

**Be your own investigative journalist**

by John Kuti

News in the age of information

We are often told that the age of the “information economy” has arrived. The idea is that intellectual work is becoming a more important source of wealth than manufacturing. There are already too many factories for the number of people who want to buy stuff, so the winners in the marketplace need to have a lead in terms of fashion, or technology to beat the competition. You can easily see this process at work in important industries like cars and clothing and computers where big companies prefer to concentrate on promoting their brand and let subcontractors do the less profitable work of manufacturing the products.

But there is a problem with information as an organising principle in society. It only counts if people pay attention to it. Together with inventors and designers, the information economy needs Public Relations executives to make sure customers are getting the right message. So, faced with the increasing claims on our attention, organisations in other spheres of life have to do more to get their share of it too. So PR people may work for politicians (then we call them “spin doctors”) or they may work for artists (then we call them “publicists” or “pluggers”.) A lot of our news is actually compiled from press releases and reports of events deliberately staged for journalists. Journalists spend their time, not investigating, but passing on the words of a spokesperson, publicist or other professional propagandist.

Quoting from Evelyn Waugh

The manipulation of news is most clearly visible in times of war. A BBC journalist speaking about the present war in Iraq compared his situation with that of the reporters in Scoop, Waugh’s satirical novel on the press. In the book, everyone was sure that the real story was happening somewhere else - but they weren’t exactly sure how to get there. Nowadays, the journalist who arrives in the right place at the right time is almost guaranteed a world exclusive. Armed with digital cameras and satellite phones, they can file their story on the spot. Which is why the military control the movements of journalists ever more closely.

Don’t believe everything you read in the papers

The best joke in Scoop is about the newspaper’s owner, Lord Copper. The editors can never disagree with him. When he’s right about something they answer “definitely”, and when he’s wrong they say “up to a point, Lord Copper.” It seems reasonable to suppose that, in the real world, the opinions of such powerful tycoons still influence the journalists and editors who work for them.

Infotainment

In countries where the news is not officially controlled, it is likely to be provided by commercial organisations who depend on advertising. The news has to attract viewers and maintain its audience ratings. I suspect that some stories get air-time just because there happen to be exciting pictures to show. In Britain, we have the tabloid newspapers which millions of people read simply for entertainment, without even expecting to get any important information from them. I think this is why politicians’ speeches nowadays have to include a “sound bite” the small segment that seems to give a powerful message. There is progressively less room for historical background, or statistics, which are harder to present as a sensational story. The arrival of CNN, the 24-hour all-news channel, has not increased the amount of real news reporting because the format of the channel is designed so that people who want to get the headlines will not have to wait long. It tends to concentrate on the main story and repeat it.

Alternative reporters

There is an argument that with spreading access to the internet and cheap technology for recording sound and images we will all be able to find exactly the information we want. People around the world will be able to publish their own eye-witness accounts and compete with the established news-gatherers on something like equal terms.

I think this is true, up to a point. But what it will mean also is that we’ll be subjected to a still greater amount of nonsense and lies. Any web log may contain the scoop of the year, or equally, a fabricated story that you will never be able to check.

Have you ever wished you were better informed?

Maybe the time has come to do something about it, and I don’t just mean changing your choice of TV channel or newspaper. In a world where everyone wants you to listen to their version, you only have two choices: switch off altogether or start looking for sources you can trust. The investigative journalist of the future is everyone who wants to know the truth.

**Text 36**

**Bilingualism**

by Jo Bertrand

Being the mother of two potentially bilingual children (the youngest is only three months old) and the teacher of French and English bilingual children, the subject of bilingualism is very important to me. In fact we have recently moved to China and are now considering multilingualism. But what are the advantages of learning several languages from an early age? What are the dangers? What’s the best way to teach your child two or more languages simultaneously? I don’t suggest I have the answers here but like most mothers and teachers I certainly have a point of view!

What is a bilingual child?

The way I see it, being bilingual means being able to communicate almost perfectly in two languages and also knowing something about both cultures. If I take the example of my daughter it’s about being able to understand when someone is speaking another language and being able to switch automatically into speaking it with them. At two and a half she has already grasped the concept of ‘Daddy speaks French and Mummy speaks English’. She has even picked up that Bai Yuoine speaks Chinese! I think it’s very important for her to know that the cartoon character Noddy is also called Oui Oui by her friends at playgroup and that Marmite and Cadburys chocolate exist as well as croissants. This is what makes it possible for her to communicate with the people around her regardless of whether they are French or English.

Why encourage bilingualism?

In our case it is logical that with an English mother and French father our children should be able to speak both languages to communicate, not only with us, but with their grandparents and extended family. On a wider scale, learning two or more languages helps children to accept cultures other than their own. If speaking their mother tongue(s) at home and at school is encouraged they are more likely to enjoy their difference and view difference in general as a positive thing.

How do you raise a bilingual child?

There may be a dominant language and this will normally depend on the country you live in or the language your child uses most at school. However, it will also depend on what language is spoken in the home. We lived in France and spoke French at home but I always speak to my children in English. It’s imperative that the child has consistency. They know that their English auntie will always speak to them in English and that for her to understand them they should speak to her in English.

What are the dangers?

It can be very difficult for people around you to support what you do. Grandparents can be upset if they don’t understand what you’re saying to their grandchild and worry that they will never be able to communicate with them. This is of course highly unlikely and you should stick to your guns.

Another problem we have encountered was when our daughter refused to listen to either of us. A psychologist advised us that as there wasn’t a common language at home between the parents and child and so I should stop speaking English and spend the weekend speaking only in French. Thankfully I decided to ignore this piece of advice and persisted with my English!

I also know of one child who had problems at school because his friends made fun of him. His parents eventually gave up speaking English to him. Unfortunately children can be cruel and differences, whatever they may be, are often a source of bullying. Differences need to be promoted and valued and celebrations such as the International Mother Language Day help to do just that.

International Mother Language Day

21st February 2000 saw the first Mother Language Day celebrated internationally. However the importance of this date originated in Bangladesh where in 1952 a handful of students, now known as language martyrs, were killed in demonstrations defending Bangla, their mother language. In 1999 UNESCO decided to take this cause onto an international scale in order to encourage cultural diversity and worldwide tolerance.

The Themes

Each year the celebration is devoted to a different aspect of language. This has ranged from how children learn their literacy skills at school to how to preserve some of the 6000 languages that exist worldwide. One year was about developing the teaching of mother languages and in 2002 the celebration helped raise awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions around the world. This year the International Mother Language Day is dedicated to Braille and Sign Language, two non-verbal languages that are an invaluable source of communication for many people around the world.

A Multilingual Community

It’s essential that we limit alienation throughout the world. By speaking other languages as well as your own, or having two or more mother languages, you can contribute to the creation of a global community. My contribution to this multilingual community is exposing my children to varied cultures and languages, maintaining their mother language, while trying to learn the language of the people around me. Although with my ten or so words of Mandarin I am far from being multilingual!

**Text 37**

**Black sheep and the mysterious Uncle Bob**

by Keith Sands

I’m an English teacher working in Russia, and for some reason I really don’t like that classroom topic – Talk About Your Family. Perhaps it’s because everyone studied English from the same book at school. So all the students say, “My family consists of five members. Me, my mother, my father, my brother and my dog…” And so on. As if all families are exactly the same.

It’s such a shame, because our families are unique. All families have their stories, their dramas, their private jokes, nicknames and phrases. They’re the place where our personalities were made. How often have you heard someone with young children complain “Oh no, I think I’m turning into my parents…”?

The other day I found myself turning into one of my grandparents. I was trying to get my daughter (1 year and 8 months old) to eat her dinner and I said “That’ll make your hair curl.” Now, I don’t think that green vegetables give you curly hair, or even that curly hair is a great thing to have. It’s just a phrase I heard from my Granddad a hundred times when I was small. It had stayed in my mind, half-forgotten, until the time I could use it myself. I wonder if he heard it from his own grandparents? How many other old-fashioned phrases like this stay inside families, when the rest of the world has forgotten them?

Shaking the family tree

Talk about your family? “Well…they’re just there”, we say. Our families are so ordinary to us that we even think they’re boring. Not a bit of it! Families are the most exotic things on earth. If you dig enough in your own family, you’re sure to come up with all the stuff you could want for a great novel. Surprising characters, dramatic or funny stories passed down for generations, or a face from the past you ealizee – maybe in your own. Someone or something unique to your family. Or, as genealogists like to say, “Shake your family tree – and watch the nuts fall out.”

My mother started tracing our family tree a few years ago, not expecting to get far. But, digging in old records and libraries she got back three hundred years. She turned up old stories and a few mysteries. What happened to the big family farm? Where did the family fortune go in the 1870s? More to the point – where is it now?

I’m the ealize in my family, and I like to think I got it from a great-grandfather on my Dad’s side. He was an adventurous soul. My two favourite family heirlooms are a photo of him on a horse in a desert landscape (1897 in Patagonia) and a postcard home from Portugal complaining that his boat was late because of the Revolution in Lisbon. “Dreadful business, they seem to have arrested the King...” he says. If you look at your family, you open a window on the past.

History in miniature

Start someone talking about their family stories and they might never stop. You’ll find the whole history of your country there, too. When my mother, still putting the family tree together, asked me for a few names from my Russian wife’s family, my wife got on the phone to her own mother. Just to check a name or two. But they were still talking an hour later, and she’d filled 5 pages of A4 paper. And so I was introduced to: someone who lived through the siege of Leningrad (but forgot how to read in the process), a high official in the Communist Party, and some rich relations who used to go to Switzerland for their holidays before the Revolution. There was also a black sheep of the family (or “white crow” as they say in Russian) who left his wife and children and disappeared in the Civil War – though nobody in the family knows which side he fought on. All these people seemed impossibly exotic to me.

Who wears the trousers?

To go back to that English class then, let’s get rid of the phrase “my family consists of…” and look at some more interesting ways to talk about families. English is rich in idioms to talk about family life. We’ve mentioned the black sheep of the family – that’s someone who didn’t fit in, or caused a family scandal. If you’re loyal to your family, you can say blood is thicker than water or keep it in the family. If you share a talent with another family member, you can say it runs in the family. You might have your father’s eyes or your mother’s nose. If you’re like one of your parents, you can say like father, like son or you can be a chip off the old block.

Who wears the trousers in your family? (Who’s the head of your family?) You might affectionately talk about your bro, your sis or your folks (parents). Or if you like Cockney slang, what about her indoors or the missus to talk about your wife? Though both these phrases make feminists reach for their guns.

If you want to get more technical, you can discuss the benefits of the nuclear family : a small family, just parents and children living in the same house. If grandparents or other relatives live there too, then you have an extended family. In English we talk about the average nuclear family with the phrase 2.4 children.

Then there are idioms that have left the family (flown the nest) and gone on to have a life of their own. You can’t teach your grandmother to suck eggs. It means you can’t tell your elders anything they don’t know already. But why would anyone want to suck eggs anyway? Now here’s a really strange one. A Londoner is telling someone how to get a new passport. “Get four pictures taken, pick up a form in the post office, hand it in with your old passport and …Bob’s your uncle.” It means “the problem is solved”. But I’d love to know who the original Bob was, and why he was such a useful uncle to have.

**Text 38**

**Building Bridges**



By Linda Baxter

Being old is when you know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions. (Anonymous)

Six months before she died, my grandmother moved into an old people’s home and I visited her there when I was in Britain. She was sitting in the living room with about fifteen other residents, mostly women, half of them asleep. The room was clean and warm, with flowers and pictures, and the care assistants were kind and cheerful. ‘The Weakest Link’ was on the television (‘to keep their brains active’ one of the assistants said), and the only other sound was snoring and embarrassing digestive noises. People only moved when they needed to be helped to the bathroom. It was depressing. Gran talked a lot about how much she missed seeing her grandchildren (my nieces, aged 7 and 5), but I knew from my sister that they hated going to visit her there and, to be perfectly honest, I couldn’t wait to get away myself.

So I was interested to read a newspaper article about a new concept in old people’s homes in France. The idea is simple, but revolutionary: combining a residential home for the elderly with a crèche/nursery school in the same building. The children and the residents eat lunch together and share activities such as music, painting, gardening and caring for the pets which the residents are encouraged to keep. In the afternoons, the residents enjoy reading or telling stories to the children and, if a child is feeling sad or tired, there is always a kind lap to sit on and a cuddle. There are trips out and birthday parties too.

The advantages are enormous for everyone concerned. The children are happy because they get a lot more individual attention and respond well because someone has time for them. They also learn that old people are not different or frightening in any way. And of course, they see illness and death and learn to accept them. The residents are happy because they feel useful and needed. They are more active and more interested in life when the children are around and they take more interest in their appearance too. And the staff are happy because they see an improvement in the physical and psychological health of the residents and have an army of assistants to help with the children.

Nowadays there is less and less contact between the old and the young. There are many reasons for this, including the breakdown of the extended family, working parents with no time to care for ageing relations, families that have moved away and smaller flats with no room for grandparents. But the result is the same: increasing numbers of children without grandparents and old people who have no contact with children. And more old people who are lonely and feel useless, along with more and more families with young children who desperately need more support. It’s a major problem in many societies.

That’s why intergenerational programmes, designed to bring the old and the young together, are growing in popularity all over the world, supported by UNESCO and other local and international organisations. There are examples of successful initiatives all over the world. Using young people to teach IT skills to older people is one obvious example. Using old people as volunteer assistants in schools is another, perhaps reading with children who need extra attention. There are schemes which involve older people visiting families who are having problems, maybe looking after the children for a while to give the tired mother a break. Or ‘adopt a grandparent’ schemes in which children write letters or visit a lonely old person in their area. There are even holiday companies that ealizeed in holidays for children and grandparents together. One successful scheme in London pairs young volunteers with old people who are losing their sight. The young people help with practical things such as writing letters, reading bank statements and helping with shopping, and the older people can pass on their knowledge and experience to their young visitors. For example, a retired judge may be paired with a teenager who wants to study law. Lasting friendships often develop.

But it isn’t only the individuals concerned who gain from intergenerational activities. The advantages to society are enormous too. If older people can understand and accept the youth of today, and vice versa, there will be less conflict in a community. In a world where the number of old people is increasing, we need as much understanding and tolerance as possible. Modern Western society has isolated people into age groups and now we need to rediscover what ‘community’ really means. And we can use the strengths of one generation to help another. Then perhaps getting old won’t be such a depressing prospect after all.

**Text 39**

**Calendars**



Are you looking forward to summer? In Saint Petersburg, where this article was written, a day can be less than less six hours long in the middle of winter and nearly 19 hours in summer. At this time of year, you can easily see in people’s faces that they are ready for brighter, sunnier days to come round again.

Months from the moon and years from the sun

To the first people it was obvious that time went in circles. The sun rises (comes up in the morning) and sets (goes down in the evening). The moon waxes (gets fatter or wider) and wanes (gets thinner or narrower). The seasons follow each other in order. These things happen because we are all going round in circles…the earth spins round in 24 hours, the moon goes around the Earth, and the Earth goes round the Sun in about 365 and a quarter days. The most natural kind of calendar comes from the sun and the moon. You can count the number of days and nights in the moon’s cycle from New Moon (when it is all dark) to Full Moon (a bright disk), and back again: 29 and a half.

The basic problem for calendar makers is how to get the months (which come from the moon) to stay in synch with the years. The years all have a bit more than 12 New Moons in them. Maybe you read about the Chinese New Year in Claire Powell’s article in January. If you did, you already know that some years, the Chinese calendar has an extra month, so they have exactly 235 months in every period of 19 years. This article is about how the western world solved the same problem by adding an extra day in leap years (and having longer months the rest of the time.)

Days and weeks from the planets

You can’t find any cycles of seven days by looking at the sky. However, the ancient world knew five planets apart from the sun and moon: Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. They probably made the week seven days long to give one day for each. In English, the first days of the week clearly come from The Sun (Sunday) and The Moon (Monday). The last day comes from Saturn (Saturday). Just like the rest of our language, an English week is a mixture of Latin and words from other places … Germanic gods: Tiw (an Anglo-Saxon god of the sun and war) and Wodin (the head of Anglo-Saxon gods) for Tuesday and Wednesday and Scandinavian gods Thor (another god of war) and Frigg (goddess of love) for Thursday and Friday.

Months of the Year

Our names of months all come from Latin. Janus a god with two faces, the god of doors and gates gives us January; and February comes from a Roman festival of spring cleaning. Mars, who didn’t get a day of the week in English, got the whole month of March. Jupiter , well his wife was Juno – which makes the month of June. Most of the later months just come from the Latin words for numbers 7, 8, 9 and 10 septem, octo, nove, decem. But why isn’t September month number seven? It was for the Romans, because they started the year with March.

The Emperors’ calendars

July is occupied by Julius Caesar, who also occupied part of Britain. And August by Augustus Caesar who was the next Roman emperor. These two men both played an important role in creating the modern calendar. The Julian calendar (which Julius introduced in 46 BC) had a leap year every four years, when one day was added onto the end of the year (as it was then) on February 29th. Julius’ calendar was much simpler than the old one, and it was pretty accurate, although not as good as the Chinese one. It was only 11 minutes and 14 seconds a year too slow. Somehow, the people in charge of the calendars in Rome didn’t understand their instructions and added an extra day every three years. Augustus, the next emperor, corrected that mistake but left the leap years as they were, so the calendar went on being 11 minutes a year too slow for centuries. Russia only introduced the Julian calendar in 1700 and changed to the Gregorian one after the revolution.

Behind the times

Over the centuries those 11 extra minutes in the Julian calendar added up to quite a lot. Our modern “Gregorian” calendar goes more quickly because we don’t have leap years at the end of most centuries – only 1600 and 2000. When Pope Gregory brought it in in 1582, they had to take out 10 days to catch up. The year jumped directly from 4th to 15th October. In the same year, William Shakespeare got married in Stratford-upon-Avon, but Britain went on for another 180 years with the old calendar. By 1752, when Britain changed to the new Gregorian calendar, they needed to miss 11 days to catch up. This caused violent protests…people thought the government was making their lives 11 days shorter, or even worse, stealing their wages for the 11 missing days. Here in Russia, the years carried on being a bit too long right into the twentieth century. On the 25th October 1917, when the Bolsheviks pushed their way into the Winter Palace it was already 7th November across the rest of Europe…a difference of 13 days. As a result, in 1918 Russia missed the whole first half of February: going directly from 31st January to 14th February. Maybe they were pleased to get closer to the summer.

**Text 40**

**Collecting things – My Grandmother’s elephant**

By Chris Wilson

My grandmother had a beautiful elephant carved out of sandalwood on her dressing table which I secretly used to covet. I wanted it more than anything in the world. It was about the size of a football and had a cheeky smile. It was inlaid with tiny circular mirrors and mother of pearl, and had real ivory tusks and toenails. One day my sister said “Oh Grandma, please can I have it?” and, to my fury and disbelief, she just gave it to her! I immediately made two resolutions: 1) never to speak to either of them ever again. 2) To find another elephant just like it.

Ever since I have been scouring the world. I have rummaged round junk shops and antique shops all over Europe, I have been to garage sales and flea markets in America, I have hung about in Arab souks and Indian bazaars, but I have never seen anything quite the same.

Along the way, however, I have acquired all sorts of other elephants and my collection has grown and grown. I have got  black ebony elephants from Malawi, and a couple of ivory – all, I hasten to add, made a long time ago, before  the ebony trees were chopped down and the ivory trade was made illegal. I also have soap stone elephants from Zimbabwe, and an exotic  Congolese one carved out of bright green malachite. I have a whole family of wooden Thai elephants marching along the top of my piano – sometimes when I sit and play  I could swear they are marching in time to the music. I have two very heavy, long legged elephants which I bought in Khan el Khalili, in Cairo, which I use as bookends, and an enormous fat one from the Sudan which I use as a coffee table. My search goes on, but it gets more and more difficult to find really good pieces. On recent trips to Africa I have noticed how the quality of the workmanship has deteriorated. In craft markets all over the continent you can find thousands of elephants, but they are nearly all shoddily made, churned out for tourists by people who probably have never seen a real elephant in their lives.

Why do people collect things? Probably many, like me, don’t set out to do so. You just acquire something, then another and another and then, once you’ve got a small collection you just keep adding to it. I have an uncle who collects key rings – he has hundreds of them from all over the world – but he can’t remember how it started. Other people collect stamps, stones,  beer cans, beer mats, match boxes, all sorts of things. For some it can become a total obsession and they will go to any lengths to get something. One of my colleagues collects Royal memorabilia, which to me is the ultimate in bad taste! Her house is crammed full of kitsch things like Coronation mugs, ashtrays with pictures of Charles and Diana, British flags, tea towels printed with Windsor Castle and even a toilet seat cover with Prince Andrew grinning widely up at you. What is this urge to possess all these things?

I recently discussed this question with a group of students in Mozambique and what rapidly became evident was that few of them had such an urge. “Why not?” I asked. “I don’t know” said Anotonio. “It’s just not in our culture”.“Does that mean you’re not as materialistic as Europeans?”Antonio laughed. “No way! We want cars and houses and fancy things just like anyone else, but we don’t collect knick knacks, things we can’t use”.“I think it’s because of our recent war” said Maria “and the state of the economy. For many years there was nothing to collect, except shells off the beach perhaps”.“Ï collect shoes” said Teresa, who comes from Angola. “I have over seventy pairs. But I buy them to wear, not just for the sake of having them”.“Oh come on!” laughed Antonio. “Anything you don’t actually need you have for the sake of having it, and you can’t possibly need seventy pairs!”“I do, I need every single pair!” she insisted.“So you are a collector!”“No I’m not!”“Yes you are!” shouted the whole class.

Paula stuck up her hand. “I’m a collector” she said. “Ï am a fan of  Julio Iglesias and I have all his CD’s, every  one, even the latest  which, I have to admit, isn’t very good at all”. “So why did you buy it?” I asked. “Well, because I’ve got all the others of course” she said. “And my son collects those little plastic dinosaurs you find inside cereal packets. He’s only got to get T Rex and then he’s got the whole set.”“They are exploiting you” said Antonio. “They encourage children to become collectors so that you keep buying more and more. This is something new in our country. Soon we will all be fanatically collecting things, just like everyone else in the world”.

Harshill, who is of Indian origin, had been silent all this time. He cleared his throat. “One good reason to collect things is that a collection is worth more – how do you say in English? More than the sum of its parts. If you sold your elephants one by one you wouldn’t get nearly as much as if you sold the whole collection. So it is a way of saving money, a good investment.”

On the way back to my hotel a young boy was selling a badly carved elephant by the side of the road. I didn’t want it but I bought it because I felt sorry for him. Later I thought I should just have given him some money and let him try to sell it to someone else. It would never be part of my collection, each in its own special place in a different part of my house. I imagined walking round looking at them all and thought about what Harshill had said – it’s a way of increasing the value of what you already have – but as usual there was that niggling feeling that my collection, not matter how valuable, would never be complete. Not without my Grandmothers elephant! What a waste for it to be with my sister when it could be, should be,  with me!“Oh well, never mind, try not to be obsessed” I told myself.

Ever since though, I have been lying awake at night, thinking of it standing there on a brass table in her hallway, next to the window she always leaves open  for her cat. Her dogs know me, so they won’t be a problem when I climb over the wall in my gloves and balaclava. The whole operation will be over in less than five minutes. The only problem is, having acquired it, what will I do when my sister comes barging in to nose around, as she periodically does, and sees it in pride of place in my house? I’ll have to keep it hidden and then what will be the point of having it? Oh dear. Perhaps I could have a special alarm that would only ring when my sister is on her way. No that’s silly. I’ll just have to move. To another country, under another name, far, far away. But even then, knowing her, she’ll track me down. Oh  – dear Reader, what would you do if you were me?

**Text 41**

**Creepy Crawlies**

By Alison Driver

When you read in English, sometimes you will meet new words. It is a good idea to try to guess the meaning of the unknown words by looking at the context in which they appear before using a dictionary. This way you can become a more proficient reader.

What is a creepy crawly?

Well, it isn’t easy to give a straight definition so I’ll tell you a couple of stories to try to explain. A few years ago I was on holiday in Holland. I was on a bicycle trip and at the very first sign of a hill, I got off my bike for a rest. I sat down by the side of the road on the grass. A few seconds later, I was covered in ants. They were swarming all over me so I quickly got up and brushed them off. I had obviously sat near an anthill and they were protecting their territory from an invader. It was a strange experience but I soon forgot about it, got back on my bike and tackled the hill.

A couple of years later, I was living in Jordan. I had just moved into a modern flat and was unpacking plates and saucepans, when I saw something move out of the corner of my eye. I looked over at the kitchen drawer, where I had put the knives and forks, and there was a cockroach crawling out of it. I screamed. Then, my heart pounding, and probably still screaming, I grabbed a handy can of insecticide and sprayed half of it on the very hardy cockroach. He ran at me but I jumped out of the way and he scuttled out of the kitchen and under the nearby toilet door. It took me three days before I found the courage to open the toilet door (luckily there was another bathroom in the house!) to see if he was still alive. He wasn’t.

Why did I react so violently to one lone insect when a closer encounter with hundreds of ants hardly affected me? The answer is easy: because cockroaches are creepy crawlies and ants aren’t.

Creepy crawlies are those little bugs which provoke feelings such as apprehension, anxiety or aversion – they make your skin crawl. Flies aren’t creepy crawlies but spiders are. Ladybirds are rather sweet but centipedes are scary. Guess which is a creepy crawly?

Did you know that some people can feel such a fear of bugs that it can even become a phobia? I realized that my reaction was exaggerated. I knew the cockroach wasn’t going to harm me, even though he did seem to be running straight for me even as I sprayed, but I couldn’t help myself. Why did I react the way I did to a relatively innocuous creature?

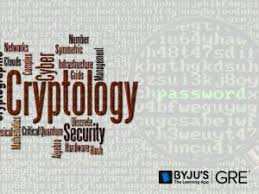
Psychologists have offered many explanations. Some say it was an instinctive reaction to a perceived threat, the idea being that these insects were harmful to us many generations back and that this fear is harboured in our subconscious. Others explain it by saying that we associate them with dirt and disease. Or that these are life forms that are so alien to us, that we find them repulsive for their dissimilarity. A more cultural-specific reason proffered is that in Western philosophy the individual is held to be the most important creature of all God’s creatures and other living creatures are subordinate to him. Insects, instead, don’t follow our rules – they just do what they want and invade our space. It is interesting to note that in China, where man is viewed as only one element of the world and humans and nature are one and the same, aversion to insects is not as common.

Whatever the cause, entomologists despair at this squeamish attitude towards their object of study. They would like us to appreciate insects for the benefits they bring, which are many. Pest control and waste decomposition to name a couple. Unfortunately, although insects and bugs have been a very successful animal species up to now, many of them, like many other species nowadays, are under threat of extinction. Entomologists warn that this could upset entire ecosystems and lead to all kinds of disastrous consequences.

So my plea to you is: the next time you feel the urge to stamp on, splatter or spray a creepy crawly, give a thought to the planet and desist !

**Text 41**

**Cryptology**

By Paul Millard

Dbo zpv sfbe uijt? Ju’t b tfdsfu dpef! If you don’t understand that, it is because I wrote it in a secret code. It isn’t a very complicated code. I just changed every letter for the one following it in the alphabet. So, ‘b’ is ‘c’, ‘c’ is ‘d’ and so on. Fbtz

Secret codes are not a new idea. They are almost as old as writing itself. We know that the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks used them, as did the Arabs of a thousand years ago. They were especially important in war. Commanders didn’t want the enemy to capture their messages and understand their plans, so they wrote them in code. Of course, the enemy did want to understand the messages, so they would try to find the code, or ‘break’ it.

The Enigma code

As a result, codes became more and more complicated. One of the most famous is the Enigma code, invented by the Germans and used in the Second World War. People believed that it was impossible to break, because it was so clever. The amazing thing about Enigma was that it was always changing. In one message, the letter ‘e’ could be ‘f’, but in another message it could be ‘z’. So, there were millions of possibilities in every coded message.

The first people to attempt to break the code were the Polish, who were concerned about Hitler’s rise to power. A group of mathematicians worked on the Enigma problem. They found out a lot about how it worked, but they couldn’t understand it. When Hitler attacked in 1939, the Poles told the British everything that they knew about the code.

Atlantic danger

Most of the British code-breakers thought that Enigma was unbreakable. They were especially concerned about the Enigma variations used by the German navy. The submarines sent by Hitler to attack ships in the Atlantic were probably the greatest danger faced by the British and American allies in the war. Britain needed food and other essentials from outside, and the Americans needed to send soldiers and supplies safely across the ocean. Without breaking the code, there was little chance of defeating the submarines. Without control of the Atlantic, there was little chance of victory.

Alan Turing, code-breaker

Almost alone, one man began to work on the problem. He was a brilliant young mathematician called Alan Turing. He believed that he could break the code with advanced logic and statistics. However, he needed to make a machine that could do a very large number of calculations very quickly. By improving on the machines that the Poles had made, he built a machine called the ‘Bombe’.

It worked. He broke the Enigma code. The British and Americans could read the messages that were sent to and from Hitler’s submarines. Slowly, the allies won the Battle of the Atlantic. They had freedom to move at sea and could send their armies to liberate Western Europe from Hitler and the Nazis. In 1943, they went to Italy and in 1944 they successfully landed in France. This was the landing shown in the film, ‘Saving Private Ryan’. Without Turing and his code-breaking, the history of Europe and the world could have been very different.

From code-breaking to computer-building

Turing continued working with machines and electronics and in 1944 he talked about ‘building a brain’. Turing had an idea for an electronic ‘universal machine’ that could do any logical task. Soon after the war, he went to work at Manchester University and in 1948 the ‘Manchester Baby’ was born. It was Turing’s second great invention and the world’s first digital computer. When he sent a message from his computer to a telex machine, Alan Turing wrote the first e-mail in history.

So, what happened next in the life of this highly talented man? His great achievements in code-breaking and computing happened in his twenties and thirties. He was still a young man – in the same year that his computer worked for the first time, he nearly ran in the Olympic Games for Britain. We know that he had many ideas to develop in digital computing, quantum physics, biology and philosophy. Sadly, he wasn’t able to work fully on these ideas. Turing’s personal life became more and more problematic.

A genius under attack

Alan Turing was a homosexual. Nowadays, this is legal and widely accepted in Britain and most other Western countries. Fifty years ago, it was a very different story, and people were sent to prison for homosexual acts. Turing had to stop doing code-breaking work for the British government because his homosexuality was a ‘security risk’. This hurt and angered him, especially as it hadn’t been a problem in the war years. Increasingly, Turing refused to hide his homosexuality, believing that there was nothing wrong with him. Perhaps he felt that he deserved individual freedom, having done so much for freedom in the world.

Finally, he was arrested by the police and in March 1952 he was found guilty at a criminal trial. He wasn’t sent to prison – instead he was injected with the female hormone, oestrogen, in an attempt to stop his homosexual behaviour.

A tragic end

Two years later, Alan Turing was dead. He killed himself by eating an apple containing the poison, cyanide. The apple – the symbol of the physics of Newton, of forbidden love, of knowledge itself – became the symbol of tragic death.

For many years, Turing was a forgotten hero. Now, more than fifty years after his death, more and more people are learning of his work in war and in peace. The BBC made a television programme about him. Some years ago, a statue designed by Glyn Hughes was put up in a small park in Manchester. It is of Turing, sitting on a park bench, with an apple in his hand. The money for the statue mostly came from individual people who wanted to remember him. No money came from the British government or any major computer company, despite the great work that Turing had done for them.

It is a wonderful memorial, but perhaps a greater memorial is that you are reading this now because of Turing’s computing work, and that I could write it in a democratic country in Western Europe.

**Text 42**

**Development**



By John Kuti

Why are there so many people in the world without food, water, schools and doctors?

For people living in the rich countries talking about “development” usually means feeling sorry for poor people in poor countries, or feeling happy about pop stars or politicians who say they have done something to help them. But, if you look at it another way, all of the human race is developing…

Twenty years ago the world was divided into three parts. The “first world” was the rich countries of Western Europe, North America and Japan. The Soviet Union and countries closely connected with it made another different world, and then there was the “Third World” – countries which had to choose which side they were on. The “Third World” did not get its name for being poor but for being outside of the Cold War, or in fact the places where the Cold War could turn into a real one.

Then the second world disappeared. This meant that poor countries were only left with one choice if they wanted to get richer – doing business with everyone else on the planet. Many of the poorest countries got professional “help” to do this from the International Monetary Fund, The World Bank and other organisations. These organisations lent them money and told them what kind of political changes to make in their country.

During the same period the economies of the rich countries have been changing. A lot of industries have closed down or been moved abroad, There has been a big increase in the employment of people who provide services – complicated services like investments or insurance and simple ones like sandwiches. It’s clearly not true that that these countries have finished developing, in fact they are changing faster and faster with every new technology and fashion.

Development is happening everywhere around the world and it has started to be called “ealizeedn”. There is a serious argument that this process is unfair and that it is causing a lot of poverty in poor countries and in rich ones.

Some of the “anti-globalists” are really not interested about economics at all. However, the economic parts of the argument go something like this:International trade is good for a minority of people who receive the profits from big transactions. These rich people tend to spend or save their money in the capitals of rich countries, so they don’t do much to help people in their own countries. The worst situation occurs in areas where there are no resources that the rest of the world wants to buy. International trade can’t help these countries at all.

The world’s wealth ends up going to the richest organisations in the richest countries, the banks and the big companies that are involved in international trade. It leaves the poor countries either to pay back loans, or to buy expensive luxuries, weapons and other things that only the “First World” produces.

**Text 43**

**Disability**



by Chris Wilson

Nowadays in the “west” the able bodied are constantly reminded that disabled people have rights just like everyone else and they mustn’t discriminate against them in any way. Public buildings have to have ramps and toilets big enough for  wheelchairs. Bus drivers are supposed to announce every stop so that blind people know when to get off. One is not allowed to refuse a person a job on the grounds that he or she has only one leg, or cannot speak. We use phrases like “physically challenged” instead of crippled or spastic. We avoid using the word “dumb” to mean stupid – and this is not just us trying to be “politically correct”. Things like the Para Olympics have done wonders to raise people’s awareness with so many positive images and  perceptions of disabled people genuinely have changed. Not that Western society  doesn’t  still have a long way to go, but disabled people are far less ealizeedn, far more integrated than in the past when they were confined to institutions, out of sight and out of mind.  
Disabled people’s own self esteem has risen enormously in recent years and they have become far more assertive and insistent on their rights, and their ability to compete with everyone else. Even the words “disabled” and “handicapped” are challenged. Is a blind person disabled when he or she can function just as well as everyone else? New technology of course is making a huge difference.  Instead of clumsy wooden legs, for example, new materials and designs in prosthetic limbs enable people to walk and run  as fast  as everyone else.  High tech hearing aids exist for the deaf, as well as laser surgery for the very short sighted. Cars are adapted so that people can drive them with only one hand, or even no hands at all.  Very recently a chip was inserted into the brain of a person paralysed from the neck down enabling him to move a cursor on a screen simply by looking at it. This means he can now do all sorts of things -  switch the television and  the lights on and off,  type, surf the internet, even send e-mails. Who knows what he’ll be able to do next? Drive a car?  
Also many things that previously were not considered disabilities now are ealizeed for what they are -  serious handicaps, and arrangements have been made for the people who suffer from them. Dyslexia is a good example. Not so long ago dyslexic people were considered at school to be slow, or stupid, and that was that. Nowadays it is seen as a serious condition and teachers have to be aware of it.  
But what is it like in the Developing World? In  places where there are no facilities at all? Where polio victims have to crawl through the traffic on their knees and elbows? Where every disabled person is unemployed and forced to beg, or depend on relatives?  
“Despite all that” says Anna, a Swedish Volunteer in Mozambique, “ it is often in these places that disabled people are actually more integrated and happier in society. Western society is so obsessed with beauty and physical perfection that even an overweight person feels ealizeed, let alone a person missing an entire limb. Here having one leg is no more remarkable than having a big nose”.  
But is this really so?  
“Yes and no” says Adolfo, a blind Mozambican who, as an accomplished guitar player, is actually the only breadwinner in his family. “I’m lucky. I have a skill. More importantly I was given the opportunity to acquire one. And so I am able to contribute to society and I am respected. Most disabled people are totally unskilled and so are burdens on society whether they like it or not. Maybe we are more generous, we don’t reject people who cannot contribute. They are not outcasts – but that doesn’t mean we respect them either. I think that is too idealistic a view of African society, how we would like it to be rather than how it really is. In reality these days, with so much poverty and HIV Aids, its every man for himself, every woman for herself,  and disabled people are completely forgotten, left behind. I heard a story about a  woman in a very dry part of our country. She had lost both legs in a land mine explosion. Because of drought  there was no food and when a UN truck full of supplies arrived she was left behind in the stampede, and so she got none. Later everyone had to register in order to get a ration card, then because she didn’t get one she was told that she did not officially exist and therefore was not entitled to food! No thank you, I  would rather have no legs in Europe any day than here”.  
“I don’t believe that story” says Anna. “People here just wouldn’t behave like that”.“Have you ever been eally hungry?” asks Adolfo.“No” she is forced to admit.“Then how would you know?”  
But Anna still  thinks its worse in the West. “ In Africa people are much more tactile, much more tolerant, much more accepting. Even the mentally deranged are part of society. What’s the use of all those facilities if no one actually ever talks to you? Disabled people in Europe are dying of loneliness.  People are physically repulsed by handicapped people. The idea that disabled people have sexual desires just like anyone else is quite shocking.  Here in the market there is a young girl who sells tomatoes. She must have been in an awful fire because one side of her is completely  burnt and her left hand has no fingers at all. Her face is terribly disfigured, she has only one eye and just a hole for a nose. But she flirts with all the guys, and then makes bawdy jokes about them to the other women, and has everyone in fits of laughter.” “That doesn’t mean they actually fancy her though” says Adolfo. “Unless they’re blind like me” he jokes.  
“But going back to technology, it  is  making things easier here too” he adds. “Look at my mobile phone”. “Wouldn’t you like a speaking clock or a computer with software to enable it to read aloud to you?” asks Anna. Adolfo  just laughs. “My wife does that for me” he says. “She reads the newspaper to me every day”.“You see!” says Anna. “That proves me right. Nobody where I come from has got time to read to a blind person! And don’t tell me that a machine can do it just as well because it can’t!”

**Text 44**

**Ecotourism**

by Linda Baxter

Imagine the scene. You’re sitting in the hot sunshine beside the swimming pool of your international luxury hotel, drinking your imported gin and tonic. In front of you is the beach, reserved for hotel guests with motor boats for hire. Behind you is an 18-hole golf course, which was cleared from the native forest and is kept green by hundreds of water sprinklers. Around the hotel are familiar international restaurant chains and the same shops that you have at home. You’ve seen some local people – some of them sell local handicrafts outside the hotel. You bought a small wooden statue and after arguing for half an hour you only paid a quarter of what the man was asking. Really cheap!

Is this your idea of heaven or would you prefer something different?

Before you read on, try the vocabulary activity, which ealizee words and phrases that are important for you to understand the text.

Nowadays, many of us try to live in a way that will damage the environment as little as possible. We recycle our newspapers and bottles, we take public transport to get to work, we try to buy locally produced fruit and vegetables and we stopped using aerosol sprays years ago. And we want to take these attitudes on holiday with us. This is why alternative forms of tourism are becoming more popular all over the world.

But what is ecotourism?

There are lots of names for these new forms of tourism: responsible tourism, alternative tourism, sustainable tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, educational tourism and more. Ecotourism probably involves a little of all of them. Everyone has a different definition but most people agree that ecotourism must:

conserve the wildlife and culture of the area.

benefit the local people and involve the local community

be sustainable, that is make a profit without destroying natural resources

provide an experience that tourists want to pay for.

So for example, in a true ecotourism project, a nature reserve allows a small number of tourists to visit its rare animals and uses the money that is generated to continue with important conservation work. The local people have jobs in the nature reserve as guides and wardens, but also have a voice in how the project develops. Tourists stay in local houses with local people, not in specially built hotels. So they experience the local culture and do not take precious energy and water away from the local population. They travel on foot, by boat, bicycle or elephant so that there is no pollution. And they have a special experience that they will remember all of their lives.

This type of tourism can only involve small numbers of people so it can be expensive. But you can apply the principles of ecotourism wherever you go for your holiday. Just remember these basic rules.

Be prepared. Learn about the place that you’re going to visit. Find out about its culture and history. Learn a little of the native language, at least basics like ‘Please’, ‘Thank you’, and ‘Good Morning’. Think of your holiday as an opportunity to learn something.

Have respect for local culture. Wear clothes that will not offend people. Always ask permission before you take a photograph. Remember that you are a visitor.

Don’t waste resources. If the area doesn’t have much water, don’t take two showers every day.

Remember the phrase “Leave nothing behind you except footprints and take nothing away except photographs.” Take as much care of the places that you visit as you take of your own home. · Don't buy souvenirs made from endangered animals or plants.

Walk or use other non-polluting forms of transport whenever you can.

Be flexible and keep a sense of humour when things go wrong.

Stay in local hotels and eat in local restaurants. Buy local products whenever possible and pay a fair price for what you buy.

Choose your holiday carefully. Don’t be afraid to ask the holiday company about what they do that is ‘eco’. Remember that ‘eco’ is very fashionable today and a lot of holidays that are advertised as ecotourism are not much better than traditional tourism.

But before you get too enthusiastic, think about how you are going to get to your dream ‘eco’ paradise. Flying is one of the biggest man-made sources of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Friends of the Earth say that one return flight from London to Miami puts as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as the average British car driver produces in a year. So don’t forget that you don’t have to fly to exotic locations for your ‘eco’ holiday. There are probably places of natural beauty and interest in your own country that you’ve never visited.

Environmental Protest Groups

Don’t it always seem to go that you don’t know what you’ve got ’till it’s gone  
They paved paradise and they put up a parking lot  
(Joni Mitchell – Big Yellow Taxi)

Facts about the state of the global environment read like quotes on a poster for an epic Hollywood movie – expanding deserts in Africa, huge forest fires in Indonesia, serious shortages of fish in Europe, thousands of deaths from air pollution in Brazil, disappearing forests in the Amazon, melting ice-caps and increasing radiation levels in the polar regions. But just as there is no evil Lex Luther or Ernst Blofeld responsible for these disasters, there is no Superman or James Bond to save the world. The human race has caused these problems and we are going to have to work together to solve them.

However, many people feel that the governments of countries around the world are not taking environmental issues seriously enough. To allow the voices of concerned people to be heard, a large number of protest groups have been set up by ordinary people to raise awareness of the issues, and to put pressure on politicians to act before it is too late. A few of the organisations have become household names, particularly Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. Two smaller groups, Surfers Against Sewage and Reclaim The Streets, are less well known, but take themselves just as seriously.

Surfers Against Sewage (SAS)

Surfers Against Sewage was founded in 1990 by water sports enthusiasts, who were becoming more and more concerned about the health risks they faced when using beaches in Cornwall in the UK. Human and toxic waste pumped into the sea was causing serious illnesses, and beach goers felt that they were “playing Russian Roulette with their health” every time they went into the water.

SAS alerted people to the problem by going to public events with their surfboards, where they handed out leaflets wearing wetsuits and gasmasks. They soon attracted the attention of the media and other concerned water users from around Britain and were able to put pressure on the government to ban dumping untreated waste in the sea, rivers and lakes. The group was so successful that in 1998, only 8 years after they started campaigning, the government agreed to spend 8.5 billion pounds on cleaning up Britain’s aquatic environment.

Surfers Against Sewage has acquired a cool image over the years. In 1999 the director of The Beach, a Hollywood blockbuster starring Leonardo Di Caprio, wanted to use the SAS logo on actors’ backpacks. SAS refused permission however, because they were concerned about the environmental damage that making the film had caused to the tiny tropical island of Phi Phi in Thailand.

Reclaim The Streets (RTS)

Reclaim The Streets was started in London in 1991 to campaign “FOR walking, cycling and cheap, or free, public transport, and AGAINST cars, roads and the system that pushes them.” RTS began by protesting against road building through unspoilt areas of the British countryside, and now have expanded their activities to draw attention to environmental, political, economic and social injustice around the world.

RTS campaigns by stopping traffic and turning roads and motorways into huge street parties. Members of the group dig up tarmac and plant trees, make beaches and paddling pools for children to play in, decorate the street with colourful banners, and give out free food and drink. A huge sound system is set up, bands, jugglers and clowns perform, and hundreds or even thousands of people dance and party. The carnival is usually broken up by the police after a few hours, and in the past some of the demonstrations have been marred by violence between police and protesters.

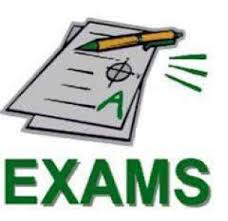
RTS doesn’t have any clear aims, it says that it is a ‘disorganisation’ rather than an ealizeedn, since there is no one in charge, but the methods that the group uses have caught on, and are now used worldwide. As the RTS website says, “The Reclaim The Streets idea has grown up and left home, street parties and suchlike often happen without anyone in RTS London hearing about them until afterwards.”

Protest and the Internet

Both SAS and RTS have extensive websites providing information about their activities, and providing links to like-minded groups around the world. It seems that nowadays the Internet is helping more and more people express their dissatisfaction with the status quo, and work together to find solutions to the problems that the modern world faces.

**Text 45**

**Exams**

By Jo Bertrand

Do you remember that nasty feeling of sweaty palms? A wave of nausea coming over you? The sudden inability to talk your mouth is so dry? No, it’s not the first meeting with the dreaded in-laws, although some parallels could easily be made. I’m talking about waiting at the door of an exam room, convinced that you know nothing and that there’s no way you will get through this experience alive.

We’ve all been there at some point of our lives, whether it be for the 11+, the G.C.S.E French oral exam, university finals, the FCE exam… the list is endless. Somehow though we get through it. We survive to see another day. But what has always baffled me is how people react so differently when faced with the prospect of taking an exam.

I don’t know about you but I’ve always been insanely jealous of those people who party all year round, then the night before the exam flick through my course book, (theirs is empty because they didn’t go to any lectures), and then somehow manage to sail through the exam with flying colours. In the meantime I’m there, present and correct at most of my lectures, panicking for weeks before my finals, and the night before, not only am I trying to cram like mad everything my clever friend points out is missing from my file as he flicks through my text books and observes that I’ve missed out a whole chapter of essential work that is bound to come up in the exam, (draw for breath!), but I’m also panicking about packing my school bag.

Once you’re in the exam room there is the obligatory ritual of snacks and refreshments to be ealizee. It’s essential that you line them up in edible order so as not to have to think too much whilst writing. The idea is also not to make too much noise during the exam. There’s nothing worse than popcorn rustling in a cinema. The exam room is no exception. So it’s vitally important that the aforementioned sweets are opened and ready to go. Your packet of Polos should be completely opened. These should be sucked and not crunched at the time of consumption otherwise it defeats the whole object of trying to avoid noise pollution. Finally, no cans or cartons should be taken into the exams as both are far too noisy.

Next up is the bulging pencil case. You should of course have at least 2 pencils and 6 pens. 2 black, 2 blue, 2 red. If you want to go for the novelty points then choose a purple, or green scented pen. Any attempt to make the examiner smile can’t be wrong, can it? Don’t forget your highlighter pens, one of each colour, Tipp-ex, Blu-tack, glue. You never know what might happen. You need a personal clock, although the space on the table is becoming relatively limited at this point, so a watch is an acceptable option.

As you turn your paper over, your mind inevitably goes blank for at least the first ten minutes and you start thinking back to the days when you had a life, in the pre-revision era. Suddenly though, fear takes over. You jab your forehead incessantly with a pen in the hope that this will encourage some sort of intelligent thought to flow from your brain to the paper via your biro. And miracles of miracles, it does. For the next three hours you write constantly, not even pausing for breath, let alone pausing to pick up a polo. In any case their destiny is to get sticky at the bottom of your bag because you stupidly opened the whole packet. But none of that matters anymore because you’re on fire. Nothing can stop you now. And three hours later you’re mentally exhausted and your arm wants to drop off. But you’ve got through it, or at least you think you have…

The post-exam ritual involves everyone saying; ‘Ok lets talk about anything other than the exam because that was absolutely awful.’, and then you all proceed to talk about nothing else but the exam for the next hour. Where you thought you’d done well, now after having listened to what everyone else put, well there’s just no way you could have passed. I wouldn’t even pass myself if I were marking it; the answers I put were so irrelevant. Quality not quantity is what we’ve always been told and I forgot that golden rule. I have an aching arm for nothing.

Now comes the wait. Why can’t examining boards devise a wonderful marking system that can put you out of your misery within the next couple of days. Two months is an obscene amount of time if you ask me. Eventually the envelope arrives. A hot tip: when asked for your address you should always give your parents’ address to avoid having to rush to the door for a week around the results day and then actually having to open the dreaded envelope once it eventually arrives two days late, a sadistic delay intended so that you sweat it out some more. In any case your mum is scared enough as it is and is only too happy to pass on the good news when it arrives on her doorstep. Lo and behold the day when I fail an exam! I’m touching lots of wood as I write this.

Anyway, the upshot of all the stress and anxiety is that the hard work has paid off and even though you don’t quite get the A++ that your jammy friend got, you’re ecstatic with your well-earned B+.

Though one thing I haven’t quite worked out yet is what the attraction of exams is. There must be something addictive about the stress related to them. I spent last summer doing a teaching course followed by a horribly stress-inducing exam in December. Nobody forced me to do it. I actually volunteered and handed over a scary amount of money for the privilege. That’s stressful in itself! Neither have I learnt from my school exam days as I still went through the same old emotions, and the same old rituals and I’m very pleased to say it worked. Although I’m still convinced that it’s not so much what I wrote in my exam that did it but how I wrote it. The infallible mint-scented biro strikes again!

**Text 46**

**Twins**



by Richard Sidaway

What do the singer Alanis Morissette, the supermodel Gisele Bundchen and the ex-Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan all have in common? The answer is, they all have a brother or sister who was born on the same day as them – a twin. And what links actresses Julia Roberts, Geena Davis and Holly Hunter? They all have twin children.

You probably either have some twins in your family or you know/knew some at school – there are more of them about these days. This is because women are older when they have their first child and because more women are having fertility treatment. Both of these things increase the probabilities of two babies developing from the same egg.

The USA seems like a particularly good place to have a similar sibling. At the University of Minnesota they have been studying 8,000 pairs of twins since they were born. In the state of Ohio, there is a festival for twins every year in a place called… Twinsburg. And in New York there is even a restaurant which employs 37 sets of identical twins!

Scientists love twins. Because they share the same genes, any differences between them must be because of environmental factors. Science now understands more about heart disease, cancer, and getting old from studying twins.

Sometimes twins are separated at birth and only meet again when they are grown up. Even so, they sometimes make choices in life which are strangely similar. One pair only met each other after 40 years apart and found that their wives had the same name. And so did their children and their pets!

Is there a difference between being physically identical and only being born on the same day? I knew a pair of non-identical twins when I was a boy. They were proud to be completely different from each other. One was very short-sighted from an early age and wore glasses. He picked up the local accent and was obsessed with trains. His brother spoke with a posh accent and was very musical. The first became a train driver and moved to Scotland. His brother went to a music college in London and became a concert pianist.

I have recently been the teacher of two pairs of identical twins – I often have difficulty telling which is which. Luckily they don’t seem to mind. One day, I gave them a list of questions to see what they felt about being so close. Each twin answered the questions in a separate room.

Both pairs said they did many everyday activities together – studying, shopping, watching TV, or just spending time together. Both pairs had similar tastes in music and food, and even thought their voices sounded the same sometimes. Both pairs also commented that they would like more time to themselves…

When I asked them what they were good at in school, one pair wrote the same five subjects almost in the same order. The other pair only had three subjects in common – one was interested in the Arts and the other more in science subjects.

I also asked them if they ever had the same thoughts as their twin. The first pair said yes –for example, one of them often started talking about what the other one was thinking. Strangely, the other pair disagreed about whether this was true. One of the twins said that her sister would take the words out of her mouth, while the other said this never happened to her.

The most interesting thing for me was studying the results of the psychological part of the test. I asked them to describe their personality using twelve different pairs of sentences. I found that each twin gave almost identical answers to her sister!

**Text 47**

**Champion Yourself At Work**

If you’re a younger employee, you’ve no doubt run up against the struggle of getting noticed for your work. One of the biggest battles in the workplace is getting recognition for the work you do without coming across as boastful or a braggart. Even older, seasoned workers have to fight to get their work ealizeed.

The truth is, however, that you have lots of opportunities to champion yourself at work and point out your victories: in meetings, presentations and even company-wide e-mails. However, it’s a fine line to walk; there’s a definite art involved in the subtleties of touting your accomplishments. If you’re always talking about how good you are at your job and how lucky the company is to have you, you’ll come across as conceited, or even just as an idiot. But speak too little of your work, and you could miss out on assignments, raises, promotions, and your own private jet. OK, maybe not the last one, but if you want to take your career to the next level, you need to champion yourself at work.

Focus On Specifics

The first rule of championing yourself at work is to have something worth crowing about. You need a particular achievement, because going around telling people you’re great for no reason at all makes you sound full of yourself. You should always have something specific, and it should be measurable.

Measurements are a sure way to show change, improvement in an area that was weak, etc. There’s a saying in business: “If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.” We know, we know; things like your team’s morale are important too, but the fact is your boss, your boss’ boss and everyone else has a preference for numbers. Why? Numbers are an easy handle. Your boss could spend a few hours a week sitting in on the sales team, watching how many deals are made, and the overall mood of the division. Or, he could read the sales figures for the month, and the number of employees who’ve quit this year versus last. As a busy man, which do you think he’s more likely to do? Exactly.

Present Accomplishments As Company Victories, Not Your Own

When you achieve the result you’ve aimed for, you truly have something to brag about. However, if you play that victory off the wrong way you’ll come across as cocky. So instead of going around bragging about what a fine job you did, share with the others around you how proud they should be of the success the company had. Do what you can to share the praise: It makes you look like a bigger man and nobody will be confused about who actually made the win possible.

Be Persistent

Have you ever had a question for your boss or something to get their feedback on and felt brushed off by them? You may have even felt unimportant or unappreciated to them. Well, barring the few truly bad bosses out there, most bosses care about their teams a great deal. Your boss doesn’t mean to ignore you, he’s just busy. Get a promotion to management, and you’ll quickly ealize how much work your boss was dealing with that you weren’t even aware of. They have people above them to answer to, their own work and, last but not least, you and your coworkers on the level below. So don’t feel bad if you get a lukewarm reception from your boss – you may have caught them at a bad time. Keep bringing up the good things you’re accomplishing. Don’t give up, and keep reminding your boss of your past accomplishments and the big projects you’re currently facing.

**Text 48**

**U.S. Constitution Comprehension**



It was soon becoming apparent that the Articles of Confederation were insufficient as a means of governing the nation. Important legislators such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison quickly realized the importance of establishing national laws to prevent the states from becoming independent countries on their own. The new United States was on the verge of collapse due to a lack of monetary funds, and a series of rebellions. Shays's Rebellion, in Massachusetts, was an uprising of debtor farmers led by Daniel Shays that resulted in a failed attempt to seize a federal arsenal in Springfield.

The Constitutional (Philadelphia) Convention was called in 1786, and held at Independence Hall in 1787.

55 men from throughout the colonies convened for the purpose of strengthening the Articles of Confederation. George Washington was chosen to preside over the convention. From the start of the convention, controversy arose concerning voting on legislation. Larger states such as Pennsylvania wanted their votes to count more than smaller states because they represented larger populations. Smaller states such as Rhode Island and New Jersey feared that their interests would be ignored.

On May 29, 1787, Virginia governor Edmund Randolph presented the Virginia Plan, a compilation of proposals drafted by future president James Madison. Madison proposed a three-tiered government with a legislative branch consisting of two houses (Senate and House of Representatives) that would make laws, an executive branch to carry out the laws, and a judicial branch to enforce the laws. Madison's proposal also called for proportional representation in both houses of the legislative branch. This meant that states would be represented based on their populations or the amount of tax payments paid. Furthermore, the House of Representatives would be elected by the people, and the Senate would be elected by the representatives. To quell the rising tide of state sovereignty (independence), The Virginia Plan would authorize the national government to have direct authority over American citizens, as well as to negate any state laws that were not deemed in the best interest of the United States.

While the larger states seemed to support the Virginia Plan, the smaller states began to voice their opposition. William Paterson, from New Jersey, warned that his state would never go along with the plan, and Roger Sherman, from Connecticut opposed the popular election (by the people) of representatives. Others, such as Alexander Hamilton, claimed that the Virginia Plan was too democratic, and failed to protect the government against the passage of popular, but ultimately, harmful laws. Nevertheless, the Virginia Plan was voted (7 states to 3) as the convention's basis for deliberations. Thus, the Articles of Confederation would be effectively replaced rather than amended.

The issue of equal versus proportional representation, however, was the most contentious issue and threatened to destroy the deliberations, and perhaps, the new nation. The smaller states would not agree to any plan in which the larger ones had more votes. On July 5, 1787, a special committee was formed to try to come to a compromise regarding the issue of representation. The Great Compromise, as it came to be known, formed an alternative plan in which the House of Representatives would include one state delegate for every 40,000 citizens of a particular state, and the Senate would have the same number of delegates, regardless of population, for each state. On July 16, five states voted for the plan, and four (the larger states) voted against it. It was a victory for the smaller states.

On July 26, another committee was formed to begin drafting what would become the U.S. Constitution. On August 17, 1787, the Constitution was signed. The Constitution was first ratified by Delaware on December 7, 1787, and then by Pennsylvania on December 12. Although wealthy and powerful citizens in many states were reluctant to lend support to the Constitution because they would be relinquishing some powers, influential officials such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington voiced their support for the Constitution which helped sway popular opinion. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were among those who wrote The Federalist - a series of political essays written to promote ratification of the Constitution. By 1790, all thirteen colonies ratified the Constitution and became states.

**Text 49**

**Battles of New York**

After the British Pyrrhic (costly) victory at Bunker Hill in 1775, British General William Howe decided a lethal blow needed to be delivered to the Patriot cause. Howe proposed to launch an attack on New York City using tens of thousands of troops. He began mobilizing the massive fleet in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Meanwhile, American Commander-in-Chief George Washington had ordered General Charles Lee to prepare for the defense of the city. That June, Howe and 9,000 troops set sail for New York. Howe’s army was to be met in the city by additional regiments of German and British troops. Reinforcements from Halifax led by Howe’s brother would follow them.   
  
Howe’s initial fleet arrived in New York Harbor and began landing troops on Staten Island. On August 27, 1776, British forces engaged the Americans at the Battle of Brooklyn Heights (also called the Battle of Long Island). Howe’s army successfully outflanked Washington’s, eventually causing the Patriots, after some resistance, to withdraw to Manhattan under the cover of darkness, thereby avoiding a potentially costly siege at the hands of the British.

After failed peace negotiations, the British Army next struck at Lower Manhattan, where 12,000 British troops quickly overtook the city. Most of the Continental Army had retreated to defensible positions at Harlem Heights and then to White Plains, well north of the city, but some soldiers remained at Fort Washington in Manhattan. Howe’s army chased Washington and the Continental Army into positions north of White Plains before returning to Manhattan. In Manhattan, Howe set his sights on Fort Washington, the last Patriot stronghold in Manhattan. In the furious, three-pronged attacked, British forces easily took the fort, capturing nearly 3,000 American prisoners and at least 34 cannons in the process. Most of the prisoners were taken to squalid British prison ships where all but 800 or so died of disease or starvation. General Washington, now at Fort Lee, directly across the Hudson River from Fort Washington, witnessed the events that happened. Following the fall of Fort Washington, British forces ferried up the Hudson River in barges toward Fort Lee. Washington ordered the evacuation of the fort’s 2,000 soldiers across the Hackensack River at New Bridge Landing. Washington would lead his army clear across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

Following the events in and around New York City, the outlook was bleak for the Continental Army. Morale in the army was extremely low, enlistments were ending, and desertions were commonplace. Even General Washington admitted his army’s chances of success were slim. Meanwhile, General Howe ordered his army into their winter quarters that December and established several outposts from New York City south to New Brunswick, New Jersey.

**Text 50**

**CHARITIES**

These days there are thousands of charities round the world and it is possible to donate money to help people, animals and places.

The RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was the first project dedicated to the well-being of animals anywhere in the world. In England and Wales alone, the RSPCA employ more than three hundred inspectors whose job it is to investigate reported cruelty to animals. The SPCA was set up in London in 1824. At this time it was considered strange that people should care about cruelty to animals. They were regarded as either food, transport or sport. In 1840 Queen Victoria gave the the project permission to be called a royal society: The RSPCA. These days there are almost two hundred branches in the UK.

The RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind) is the UK’s leading charity for the blind. Sight loss is one of the most common disabilities in the UK with over a million people suffering from either partial or total blindness. The RNIB challenges the disabling effects of sight loss by providing information and offering practical services to help people lead as normal a life as possible. The organisation also works on the underlying causes of blindness working towards its prevention, cure or alleviation. The RNIB have centres all over the UK.

TBG (Tidy Britain Group) is an independent national charity fighting to improve the quality of the local environment. They aim to make people more aware of the negative effects of litter, dog fouling, graffiti and vandalism and to get everyone involved in doing their bit to keep Britain clean. The work of the TBG is done mainly through campaigning. Volunteers work closely with councils and businesses to realize educational programmes designed to raise awareness of the problems. The TBG’s sister organisation, Going for Green, concentrates on pollution issues. The two groups share premises and have the same Chief Executive.

Mencap is a charity which is dedicated to fighting against discrimination towards those people who suffer from any kind of learning disability. Most of Mencap’s work is campaigning. People with learning disabilities are disadvantaged because of discrimination and lack of funding of community care. Mencap raises awareness by working at local, national and European levels to raise the profile of those issues that affect people with learning disabilities. It also provides services of education, housing and employment as well as support and advice for families and carers of sufferers.

EveryChild is a relatively new charity which was created when two existing organisations, the CCFGB (The Christian Children’s Fund of Great Britain) and the ECT (European children’s Trust) decided to merge in 1983. They organisation works with children, families and communities in twelve countries. The organisation believes that every child has the right to grow up and develop to their full potential in a secure, safe, family environment, free from poverty and exploitation. EveryChild identifies the needs of a particular community and then sets up sustainable projects to ensure that children in these communities have basic rights such as healthcare, education, social services and community development. EveryChild sets up the projects so that they are self running. The organisation then moves on to new projects, leaving things in the hand of locals.