



Hello Members and Friends,

As we bid farewell to a blustery November here in Cape Town, we look forward—hopefully!—to the arrival of true summer with December’s sunshine.

With the year drawing to a close, it’s the perfect time to acknowledge those who make our magazine special. Our heartfelt thanks go to regular contributors: Club Manager Glen Marlow, Secretary Euan Smith, football pundit Howard Cohen, and motor racing enthusiast Jim Page, whose insights and knowledge enrich every edition. I am especially grateful to my co-editor, Colette Patience, whose thoughtful and eloquent contributions over many years have been nothing short of stellar. Euan also deserves recognition for ensuring the magazine reaches you promptly each month—even when working from the other side of the world at times!

December, with Christmas at its heart, always feels a little different. We hope this month’s Tattler brings you moments of nostalgia, laughter, and enjoyment as you turn its pages.

This edition brings together a vibrant mix of stories and features to delight every reader. From the world of sport, we explore the evolution of the value of a rugby try and the artistry of cover-driving, while Colette’s Gdańsk Travel Journal offers a captivating glimpse into her journey abroad. Seasonal highlights include the towering Rockefeller Christmas Tree, alongside cultural milestones such as the reopening of the Grand Egyptian Museum. Our editor shares a personal selection of the top ten male vocalists, and Colette contributes a beautifully crafted piece on the Queen of Cabaret and Comebacks, Liza Minnelli. All this and more await in this issue.

Colette and I extend our warmest wishes to all our readers for a joyful holiday season and a very Merry Christmas. Please note that our January edition will arrive a little later than usual due to various factors—we trust this won’t cause any inconvenience.

With gratitude and festive cheer, Your Editors

Message from the Club Secretary

Dear Members

It seems like the wind has stopped for a day or two so I can raise my head above the parapet and drive my small and light car from home to the shops and back without fear of being blown over.

Summer has arrived in full force with The Cape Doctor. The days are long, and the sun is shining. Soon the roads will be clogged



with traffic and the shops inaccessible. The town will be teeming with people from anywhere but here and we all tend to put our heads under a sun bed and try not to have to go out.

Well, there is an alternative little piece of peace and quiet where if you are a member you can escape to a lovely bar and have a secluded sip or two of your favourite beverages. You will pay the same price as every other day of the year whilst taking in the exceptional view or just looking down on the heaving masses below.

The Club closes on Christmas Day and the 1st and 2nd of January but otherwise will be open to welcome you. Glen has organised some temporary staff including one very helpful member who has volunteered to allow our full-time bar staff to take some well-earned leave too. We promise you the warmest of welcomes so drop in for a rest from the sun and the turmoil of Christmas.

Looking slightly backwards I am happy to report that The Club did very well in the month of October. Thanks to various events such as the Potjie competition and a very well attended Quiz night to mention but two, our incomes were much healthier than the previous month. Maybe the weather had an influence but thanks to everyone who made The Club a happening place to be. There will be a last quiz for the year on 10th December and Happy Hour is on the 2nd.

I remind members that the (summer) dress code permits shorts until 20h00.

So, see you all at the club, especially for the last quiz of the year and the New Year Happy Hour. With that then I wish you all the very best for the festive season. Enjoy the Saturnalia!

Euan

Musings from Abroad - Our Gdańsk Travel Journal

Bruce and I were invited by friends to join them for a long weekend in Gdańsk Poland. My first reaction was who the hell wants to go to Gdańsk; at least Warsaw makes sense as the Capital. As the planning continued and my research intensified, I could not wait to land at Lech Walesa International Airport.

We arrived late on Wednesday night, weary but excited. Even in the quiet streets, the cadence of Polish voices drifted from nearby pubs, and the faint cries of gulls echoed from the river. Bruce and I exchanged a smile — the city already felt alive.

Day 1 – Thursday

The morning view of the Motława River was breathtaking. Seagulls wheeled overhead, ducks quacked in chorus, and the water shimmered in the light. Bruce stood at the window, coffee in hand, grinning.

After a quick breakfast of eggs, bread, and delicious Polish salami from the corner shop, we walked about 15 minutes to the arranged meeting place and joined a “free” walking tour. Our guide, an anthropologist, spoke with a rich Eastern European accent that gave weight to every story. For nearly three hours, he walked us through Gdańsk’s history — from medieval trade to modern resilience — pointing out landmarks and weaving tales that made the city come alive.

We do these walking tours on the first morning of a visit to a city without exception. We repeat them on return visits they’re so good. You simply look them up on the internet and reserve a spot. Once its over, you can decide if you leave the guide a TIP. The going rate is between 15 and 20 euros I’d say, and worth every cent.

Our final stop of the walking tour was the Polish Post Office, another site of extraordinary resistance. In 1939, German forces attacked the post office, claiming Polish workers were plotting sabotage. In reality, it was a staged provocation — a ruse used to justify the invasion of Poland. The postal workers resisted for hours before being overwhelmed. Many were executed afterward. The story was heartbreaking, yet it revealed how Gdańsk became the spark that ignited a global conflict.

The idea behind doing a walking tour on the first morning is that you are inspired by what you have seen and learnt, and all this informs what you do next. After the walk of course, a lunch sampling local cuisine is in order paired with cold beer.

After lunch, we visited St. Mary’s Basilica. Bazylika Mariacka is the largest brick church in the world and one of the city’s most iconic landmarks. Construction, began in 1343, and completed in 1502. It can hold up to 25,000 people, nearly the entire population of medieval Gdańsk. The 82 meters high tower dominates the city skyline. Initially a Catholic church, it became Lutheran during the Reformation and remained so until 1945. After WWII, it was restored to Catholicism.

Its vastness was humbling, yet inside it was strikingly simple. Bruce whispered that the silence felt heavier than the walls themselves. The Astronomical clock (15th century) is a masterpiece of medieval engineering, showing time, zodiac signs, and religious calendars. Over 300 tombstones and 31 chapels line the interior. Dramatic Gothic vaults (all plain white) rise nearly 30 meters, creating a vast, luminous space.



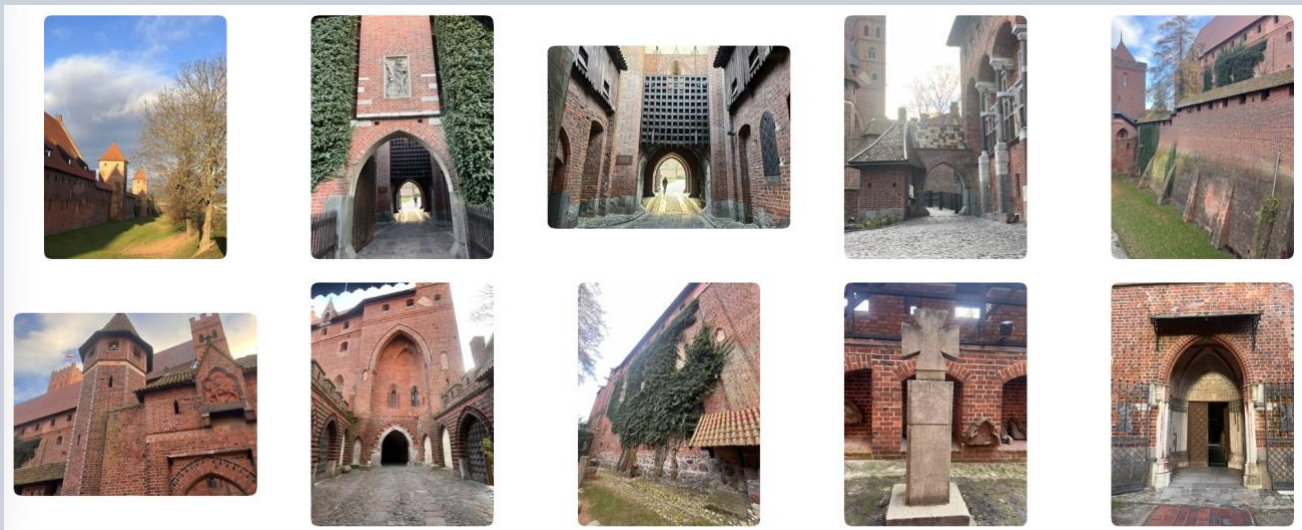
We continued to the Artus Court Museum. Artus Court in Gdańsk is a historic mansion turned museum, located opposite the Neptune Fountain. It is one of the city's most famous landmarks, often called the "parlour of historical Gdańsk.". We then wandered down the Amber Street, where shop windows glowed with the golden "Baltic gold." and vendors also displayed their wares in beautiful boxes on the pavement. The street runs from St. Mary's Basilica down to the Motława River, right in the heart of Gdańsk's Old Town. Gdańsk is often called the Amber Capital of the World, with about 90% of the world's amber coming from the Baltic region



Dinner was at an iconic pierogi restaurant, where Bruce suggested we order "one of everything." We laughed as dumplings arrived in endless varieties, each more delicious than the last. The day ended with a gentle stroll along the riverbank.

Day 2 – Friday

We boarded a train for the hour-long ride south to Malbork Castle, the colossal fortress of the Teutonic Knights. Its sheer scale left us speechless, footsteps echoing through stone halls that seemed to breathe history. It took us 3 hours to explore. Below are the photographs I took.



Back in Gdańsk, the Christmas Market had opened. The square was alive with sound and colour: twinkling lights strung overhead, vendors calling out, and the scent of mulled wine, roasted nuts, and sizzling sausages filling the air. At -2°C , everyone was bundled in faux fur caps and heavy coats.

We sampled more pierogi, pork knuckle (delicious; not eisbein as we generally know it; smoked but slow cooked in stock and sauerkraut with the top a little crispy where it peaks above the liquid.), gingerbread cookies, and even hot beer.



Later, we ducked into an underground pub, where we played canasta (card game) until late, the shuffle of cards blending with fabulous rock music being played. It was fun to just be hanging out with locals enjoying their Friday night.

Day 3 – Saturday

Before leaving for Poland, we had agreed on exploring Gdańsk's naval and military heritage. The morning was devoted to the World War II Museum, where the audio system guided us seamlessly through immersive exhibits. Each room carried its own soundtrack — marching boots, whispered testimonies, distant gunfire. We paused often, listening intently, as if the voices of history were speaking directly to us. History and War museums are always on my itinerary, and I can say that this was close to the best story telling I have ever experienced.



From there, we travelled to Westerplatte, the place where World War II began. This involved a bus ride to the north of the city. On September 1, 1939, the German battleship Schleswig-Holstein opened fire on Polish defences here, marking the first shots of the war. The Polish garrison, though vastly outnumbered, held out for seven days against overwhelming force. The silence was heavy, broken only by gulls overhead — a reminder of how courage can linger long after the guns fall silent.

In the afternoon, we joined a wild ride in a street-legal buggy, complete with “drink all you can” beer and a guide. Our guide was a very entertaining Australian (married to a Polish lass and has been living in Gdansk for 11 years). The engine roared as we rattled through the shipyard, past the main train station, and into corners of the city tourists rarely see.

We started at the shipyards but now seen through the lens of Poland's maritime past. Our guide explained how the shipyards weren't just about merchant vessels — they also supported naval construction and submarine maintenance. During the Cold War, Polish submarines patrolled the Gulf of Gdańsk, diving silently beneath the Baltic. Standing by the docks, you imagined the submariners training here, preparing for missions in icy waters.

By the time we returned to the river, the city felt different. The festive lights of the Christmas Market, the laughter from pubs, and the cries of gulls all seemed layered over a deeper soundtrack — one of submarines slipping beneath the Baltic, of gunfire at Westerplatte, the WW 11 museum and of voices silenced at the Post Office.

We had a drink in quiet reflection of the day, then settled into excellent schnitzel with creamed potatoes for dinner.

That evening, the candlelit Chopin concert at St. Catherine's Church was pure magic. St. Catherine's Church in Gdańsk is the city's oldest church, dating back to the 13th century. The 76-meter baroque tower houses a 49-bell carillon, which has chimed hourly since 1939. The church is also famous for its acoustics. The pianist's notes echoed against the vaulted ceiling. I squeezed Bruce's hand as the nocturnes unfolded, and I closed my eyes, letting the music carry me back to childhood memories. It was the perfect way to end the day.

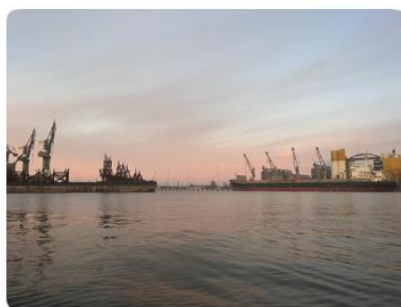
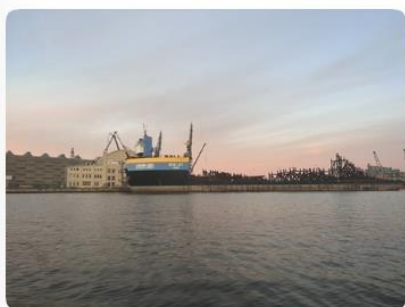
Day 4 – Sunday

Early breakfast by the river was again accompanied by the chatter of ducks and the cries of gulls swooping low over the water.

We visited the Solidarity Museum, where the story of Lech Wałęsa and the workers' movement came alive. Hearing the chants and speeches in their original accents was powerful — ordinary people reshaping history. This requires a good 3 hours as well, to immerse yourself in the history through superb story telling once again.



We took a slow 20-minute walk from the museum to the river to meet our boat. A decision was made that a river cruise with the setting sun would be a perfect end to the visit. As we boarded at 3pm, the gentle slap of water against the boat and the creak of ropes added to the soundtrack of the city. The boat headed upriver for a while and then turned around and made its way to the docks, through the shipyard and out towards the mighty Vistula River.



This final day tied everything together. Gdańsk wasn't just a place of amber, pierogi, and Chopin's music. It was a city where history turned on a dime — where the first shots of WWII were fired, where ordinary workers resisted tyranny, and where submarines patrolled the Baltic during the Cold War. Bruce and I left with the sense that Gdańsk carries the weight of history with dignity. We would go back!

Editorial

Top Referee

There has been much criticism (even more than usual!) of referees in recent times.

A big favourite of mine is one Hollie Davidson. (Her parents obviously had a sense of humour when naming her!).

Here is a little bit about this woman who does not get much wrong, and appears to have the respect of players, coaches and commentators alike.

Davidson has a degree in economic history from Edinburgh University.

Hollie Davidson is a Scottish professional rugby union referee who is contracted with the Scottish Rugby Union. She was given a Scotland referee cap in February 2025.



As a player

Davidson began playing competitive rugby when she was 14. She played at scrumhalf for Murrayfield Wanderers, until a shoulder injury put an end to her playing career. At Edinburgh University she played for the women's rugby side winning the BUCS final.

Davidson played for Scotland U20s for two seasons from 2010 to 2012. One week before she was due to receive a senior cap, she dislocated her shoulder.

As a referee

In 2015 Davidson joined the SRU's refereeing course, when a new course was held on Saturdays. Prior to this time the refereeing courses were held on Sunday, the same day as women's professional rugby matches, thus making it impossible for women to train as referees. Davidson became Scottish Rugby Union's first full time professional women's referee in 2017.

In 2018, Davidson was assistant referee for the Glasgow Warriors v Zebre match in the Pro14. In January 2021 Davidson was appointed to officiate a men's professional match for the first time. That match, and a subsequent match to which she was appointed, were cancelled, and she was then appointed in March 2021 to a further Pro 14 fixture.

She refereed her first Pro14 fixture on 19 March 2021; a Munster v Benetton match, winning plaudits from the Munster Head Coach Johann van Graan: "I thought the referee was very good. She was very calm; she communicated to the players exceptionally well before the game. I felt she handled the game really well and I think it was a really good step forward for her and I was very pleased with her performance."

In 2025 Davidson refereed the final of the 2024-25 EPCR Challenge Cup, becoming the first female referee for a European Final.

International career

In 2023 Davidson was the only female member of the panel of referees for the 2023 World Rugby U20 Championship. She was also appointed to be an assistant referee in three full international warm-up matches for the 2023 Rugby World Cup. In December 2023 Davidson was appointed to be an assistant referee at the England v Wales men's match in February 2024, where she became the first female assistant referee in a men's Six Nations Championship match.

On 20 July 2024 Davidson refereed a test match between South Africa and Portugal in Bloemfontein, becoming the first woman to referee a Springboks match.

In September 2025 Davidson was the referee for the final of the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup between Canada and England, making her the only referee other than André Watson to oversee two Rugby World Cup finals.

In November 2025, Davidson refereed Wales vs New Zealand in Cardiff, making her the first woman to referee an All-Blacks test match.

Some rugby scoring trivia for those that like this kind of thing!

Rugby tries value and effective periods

Initially, a try scored zero. It earned a kick at goal. For the 1889-90 season, England, Ireland and Wales awarded one point for a try, two points for converting a try and three points for scoring a drop goal or a goal from a mark. However, Scotland decided to award two points for a try. **(Tattler - Typical bloody Scots!)**

Between 1891 and 1893 a try counted 2 points

Between 1893 and 1971, a try was worth 3 points

Between 1971 and 1992, a try scored 4

In 1992 the value of a try was increased to 5

Some notable trivia related to the above:

Australia conceded the first four-point try in major Tests when they played France in Toulouse on November 20, 1971. Flanker Jean-Claude Skrela scored the try.

The last international test played under the four-point try Laws was Australia v Scotland in a Sunday match on June 21, 1992, at Brisbane's Ballymore Ground. Scotland were beaten 37-13 but their captain, David Sole, had the honour of scoring the last four-point try in international rugby.



The first five-pointer went to New Zealand winger Va'aiga Tuigamala when he trampled over David Campese to open the scoring in the fifth minute.



Scoring History Table

Northern Seasons	Hemisphere	Try	Conversion-goal	Penalty-goal	Dropped-goal	Goal mark	from
1886 to 1888		1 point	2 points		3 points		
1888/9 to 1890/1		1 point	2 points	2 points	3 points		
1891/2 to 1892/3		2 points	3 points	3 points	4 points	4 points	
1893/4 to 1904/5		3 points	2 points	3 points	4 points	4 points	E & W 1893, IB 1894
1905/6 to 1947/8		3 points	2 points	3 points	4 points	3 points	
1948/9 to 1970/1		3 points	2 points	3 points	3 points	3 points	
1971/2 to 1977/8		4 points	2 points	3 points	3 points	3 points	
1977/8 to 1991/2		4 points	2 points	3 points	3 points	-	
1992/3 -		5 points	2 points	3 points	3 points	-	

It never ceases to amaze me how many different versions of the 'history of scoring' there seem to be in various books etc. The above table represents my current understanding. (Author - from RugbyFootballHistory.com)

Tattler - Just a fun photo. Colette, my co-editor's mum Andrea, is pictured here with Jonah Lomu at Nederburg Wine Estate in Paarl.

We are not sure who the other fellow is. Can you help us identify him? Submit your thoughts on this to Jonathan .



Cricket - The Cover Drive

Readers are invited to consider this subject and possibly let us know who they think played it best.

Tattler has selected a few options. There are obviously many more.

The magnificent Graeme Pollock?



How about the really elegant David Gower?



The favourite of many, the "Little Master", Sechin Tendulkar?



South Africa's master all-rounder, Jacques Kallis?



Or my personal favourite for this shot, our "Captain Fantastic", Laura Wolfaardt?



Tattler - We would love to get your views!

Football corner with Howard Cohen

As of writing this column (28 November) Arsenal top the log on 29 points, Chelsea is second on 23 points, Man City third on 22 points and Aston Villa in the last Champions League spot on 22 points. Crystal Palace and Brighton occupy 5th and 6th spot with 20 and 19 points respectively. Clearly, with roughly a third of the season played there is everything to play for and the Christmas run in will be both critical and fascinating. Thankfully there are no further international breaks for World Cup qualifiers until March so for the football fan there is a surfeit of football ahead particularly with regard to all the domestic and European cup competitions. Teams will have their squad depth put under the microscope and managers will have to rotate their squads carefully.

The month under review has had surprisingly little league football due to another irritating international break. The most impressive team has been log leaders Arsenal who currently have a deserved 6-point lead over third placed Man City. Perhaps the game that best illustrated Arsenal's current superiority was their north London derby against Spurs at the Etihad. Thomas Frank showed his hand from the get-go. He changed formation to 3-4-3 which Spurs seldom play and essentially it was a negative, defensive strategy. Though he is a more pragmatic coach than the high press attack at all costs style of Ange Postecoglou, the previous Spurs manager, his decision to essentially play 5 at the back when Spurs were defending and employ a low block was a strategy that played right into the hands of Mikel Arteta. He stuck to his usual 4-3-3 formation and most crucially deployed Eze in his best position as a roving 10.

Outplayed and outnumbered in the midfield Spurs could not get their foot on the ball where the Gunners ruled. Saka and Trossard were a persistent threat down the flanks and Eze intuitive and imaginative in a role perfectly suited to his talents was a constant menace in the penalty area and particularly in the six-yard box. Arteta had experimented with Eze as a winger, but it is a role not suited to his natural talents.

Against Spurs he was given licence to roam and exploit the pockets of space Spurs left open. It was a strategy that worked a treat. Goals came from around the edge of the box where Spurs had difficulty tracking him. Trossard scored Arsenal's first goal when the dogged hard-working Belgium converted a Merino assist. The hat trick man Eze got the second Gunner's goal just before half time from inside the box and they went into the sheds with a commanding 2-0 lead.

Seconds after the break Eze was in action again sweeping a smart Jurien Timber assist into the back of the net. 3-0 and game effectively over. Not surprisingly Frank reverted to a back four in the second half, but it was too late for the change to have any impact on a rampant Arsenal. Richarlison scored a consolation for Spurs when Palhinha dispossessed Zubimendi who was dilly dallying inside the halfway line. The Portuguese fed Richarlison who spotted Raya lurking in no man's land well outside his area and lobbed the ball over him from 35 yards out for a well taken goal. His goal is the longest shot of the season and will take some beating. The icing on the cake came with 15 minutes to go when Trossard turned provider and the inimitable, ever present Eze scored from close range. Eze was making his north London derby debut, and it was a man of the match performance with the match ball a fitting reminder for him of a game he will savour. He produced a masterclass in the way a 10 should operate. Spurs were not brave enough from the kick off and Frank will have plenty to ponder over. They lack a creative, inventive player to create space and opportunity. Perhaps the return of Maddison and Kulusevski will alleviate this problem. Arteta's Gunners played attractive high tempo skilful football which they need to replicate in the season that lies ahead. In addition, he has added the necessary ballast to the squad necessary to mount a serious challenge for major domestic and European honours. Arteta has talent aplenty on his bench, the likes of Odegaard, White and Lewis - Skelley and Martinelli on call if required. They are playing with pomp and self-belief.

As someone with a soft spot for Newcastle I have been watching their season unfold with a measure of concern. They went into the international break on the back of two abject 3-1 losses to West Ham and Brentford where they were listless, uncommitted and seemingly having lost their appetite for the style of football that was exhilarating and effective last season and won them a Champion's League spot. One senses a certain restlessness and irritation from their dedicated supporters in what is perhaps their worst spell in Eddie Howe's four-year tenure. The Toon have never been a truly consistent team with spells of attacking football coupled to tenacious defending and quick tempo high press with lots of goals scored followed by inexplicably abject play. It has been said that they are a streaky team able to weaponise momentum as well as folding it. What they have always been able to rely on is ceaseless effort and a driving intensity and it is these characteristics that seem to have dissipated this season.

Courtesy of the BBC I have drawn some statistics which rather starkly showcase where Newcastle is found wanting in relation to past seasons. They have outrun their opponents in just 27% of games in 2025/6 a fall from 53% last season. Their defensive line is a full 5 metres deeper on average than in 2024/5 and 9 metres in retreat of Howe's first full season in charge while their 13 tackles in the final third is the lowest of any team in the division. They have also given up more points from winning positions than any other team in the league. What these stats don't tell one is that their retreat has meant that only Arsenal have kept more clean sheets than the Magpie's 5. What is of most concern however is that their goals have dried up. They have been one of the most prolific goal scoring teams but this season they have wandered around the box with a white stick. It would be unfair not to mention the Izak saga. Their ace striker contributed a significant 21 goals last season. In the summer he peremptorily decided that he no longer was interested in playing for the Toon and Liverpool was his chosen club for the 2025/6 season. Whilst Liverpool had shown an interest in the Swede negotiations were far from complete when the new season commenced. Izak then decided to throw a tantrum which would have shamed a five-year-old denied their third lollipop. Unprofessional and pig headed he refused to return to Newcastle as he was contractually bound to do and sucked on his dummy until protracted negotiations finally resulted in an injured Izak joining Liverpool for extortionate fees and wages. As a postscript on this tale after a long injury lay off Izak finally regained fitness and has been pathetic for his new club so far - a bit of Karma perhaps.

All this necessitated Newcastle having to explore the market late in the transfer window and hurriedly acquired the services of Nick Woltemade from VfB Stuttgart. He is a lanky six foot six inches German international who brings a different skill set to the strikers' role from his predecessor and will clearly need time to settle in. Woltemade did manage to score in his first three games at St James something only Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand managed before him. Clearly, he has potential, and one hopes it matures into a bunch of goals for the Magpies. What is perhaps an even more significant mitigating factor in the discussion of a lack of goals is that Yoane Wisse acquired from Brentford in the summer has yet to play for Newcastle. He scored 19 goals from open play last season and formed a lethal partnership with Bryan Mbeumo, now of Man United. There is no doubt in my mind that results will improve for the Toon who recently played well in beating Man City 2-1. They have largely the same personnel that brought them much success last season. What is required is a change of tactics to that which worked so well for them and a renewed commitment and appetite which has hitherto characterised their play.

Liverpool's woes need no examination, but their recent game against Notts Forest which they lost 3-0 was illustrative of Slot's difficulties. All their current frailties were on plain view. Defensive frailties, a lack of appetite, an inability to convert anything resembling an opportunity into a goal and a strange lack of rhythm and cohesion, not to mention the pathetic form of expensive acquisitions Izak and Wirtz and the previously dominant Mo Salah. The more telling aspect of the game was that a newly constructed Forest under the stewardship of recently installed manager Sean Dyche outplayed Liverpool. The focus on Liverpool's frailties does not do justice to an excellent performance by Forest. Forest have lost just one out of five matches since Dyche took over. He has done a pragmatic job of coaching the Ange methodology out of Forest who are a team quite unsuited to a suicidal high press and the insistence on attack regardless of the players abilities or the state of the game. Forest are a defensively minded team built on an excellent back four where Murillo and Milenkovic are standout performers. Dyche has returned them to the basics that were so good at before the rather comical guest appearance of the shoe gazing Oz. They were not intimidated by Liverpool, nor too proud to employ the high ball to counter the high press and on the night outplayed their more benighted opposition.

Chelsea who lies a handy second place on the log six points behind Arsenal have been flying under the radar winning their games without really being extended or showing their true potential. Their recent win against Burnley was a case in point. They ambled through a game where Burnley had probably the better of the first half hour. Turning up the pace when the mood took them Pedro Neto, who has been in sublime form netted in cool fashion from a Gittens cross. Enzo Fernandez, another player who is living up to his star billing sealed matters with a sharp goal from a Guiu assist. Chelsea was composed and dominant in the second half bossing the game in commanding fashion. If there were any doubts about Chelsea's ability to compete with the best and play to their true potential such reservations were dispelled when Barcelona visited the Bridge for a Champion's League game. Maresca's most interesting selection was Neto as a false 9, a decision which paid rich dividends on the night. The game was billed as the clash of the teens. Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, vastly more experienced at his young age and Chelsea's Brazilian whiz kid Estevao.

Chelsea was exceptional from the kick off, attacking Barcelona with venom and intensity and fierce commitment. Their line was imposingly high, the footwork and positioning exemplary. Fernandez controlled the middle of the park like an Argentinian version of Napoleon, Reece James and Moises Caicedo were commanding in their holding positions with some ferocious tackling and pinpoint distribution. A feature of the game was the manner the omnipresent Marc Cucurella played the much-vaunted Lamine Yamal out of the game. Try as he might Yamal could not shake off the Duracell bunny deployed to mark him. With seemingly inexhaustible energy, commitment and determination Cucurella tracked Yamal as if attached to him at the hip. Two Spaniards at war with one another with Cucurella the undisputed winner. The other young teenager Estevao led the Barcelona defence a merry dance. Quick, sharp, intuitive with an eye for space, elusive at close quarters he was a constant thorn in the Barcelona hide for the duration of the game. He is the jewel in the Chelsea crown.

The decisive moment in the game was Jules Kounde's unfortunate own goal on the half hour after relentless pressure. Just before the close of the first half Barcelona's skipper Ronald Araujo was sent to the showers for a second yellow card. Chelsea were exhilarating in the second half capitalising on their numerical advantage they quite literally ran rings around a hapless Barcelona who had no answers to a team playing to the zenith of their ability with seamless connection from back to front, from defence to attack. Hansi Flick the visitor's manager cut a forlorn figure bereft of ideas and antidote to a Chelsea team who were relentless. Young Estevao capped an incisive performance converting a Reece James assist and Rory Delap put the seal on the game when he scored from close range, 3-0 to Chelsea, a result which in no way flattered them. If Chelsea can play the sort of football which confronted Barcelona on the night, there is no limits to what they are potentially capable of this season.

That's all for now,

Yours in football,
Howard Cohen

On Board Hydrogen - Tattler picked this up from an article in BizNews Insider

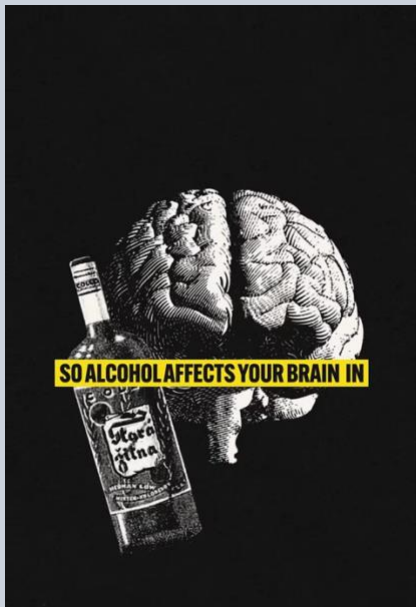
(written by Chuck Stephens)



“on-board Hydrogen”. It is one of the best technologies you’ve never heard of. This is a simple circuit that piggybacks on any diesel or petrol engine. It is not rocket-science and youth can be trained to fit the kits. At the moment, these kits are imported from Bulgaria and used mainly on big trucks in the mines. But they can be fitted on any internal-combustion engine.

In short, a small reactor powered by the car battery performs electrolysis. This vaporises water into hydrogen (2) and oxygen (1) gas. It passes through two filters to clean out impurities and is then fed into the air intake manifold. The engine does not just breathe in normal air. It breathes in air enriched with hydrogen and oxygen. This improves the internal combustion, with the following results... First, a fuel savings of between 10-25 percent. Second, an 80 percent drop in carbon emissions – less pollution means cleaner air to breathe, thus better health. You also get a longer engine life because so many impurities are burned away. Plus, a fourth bonus – a bit more power on the pedal!

Festive Season Shenanigans



Having a few drinky-poohs this festive season?

Tattler will certainly be celebrating this way, but let's be cautious!

Click on this image to the left, to see just how those drinky-poohs affect your brain!

What are club members doing about Christmas trees this month?

Rockefeller Christmas Tree

The Rockefeller Christmas tree arrived in New York City on the 8th of November, kicking off a tourist season that will see an estimated 750,000 people visit daily—more than 125 million people each year.

The tradition dates to 1931, when construction workers at what would become Rockefeller Plaza pooled resources to buy a 20-foot balsam fir tree. Since then, the tradition has involved larger trees, typically a Norway spruce lit with more than 50,000 LED lights and topped with a 900-pound Swarovski-crystal star. This year's tree is a 75-foot-tall, 11-ton Norway spruce from East Greenbush, New York, donated by a woman in honour of her late Husband. The tree will be lit from Dec. 3 to mid-January, after which the wood will be donated to Habitat for Humanity.



Why not skate on the world-famous Rink at Rockefeller Centre — a New York tradition since 1936. General Skate includes a 60-minute session in this iconic setting.



Grand Egyptian Museum Reopens

The Grand Egyptian Museum is an archaeological and national museum in Giza, Egypt, the largest museum in the world for a single civilization. It is located about two kilometres (1.2 miles) from the Giza Pyramid Complex.

The museum was announced in 1992, actual construction began in 2005, and it was fully completed in 2023 at a cost of \$1.2 billion. Trial opening began in October 2024, and the official opening took place on 1 November 2025.

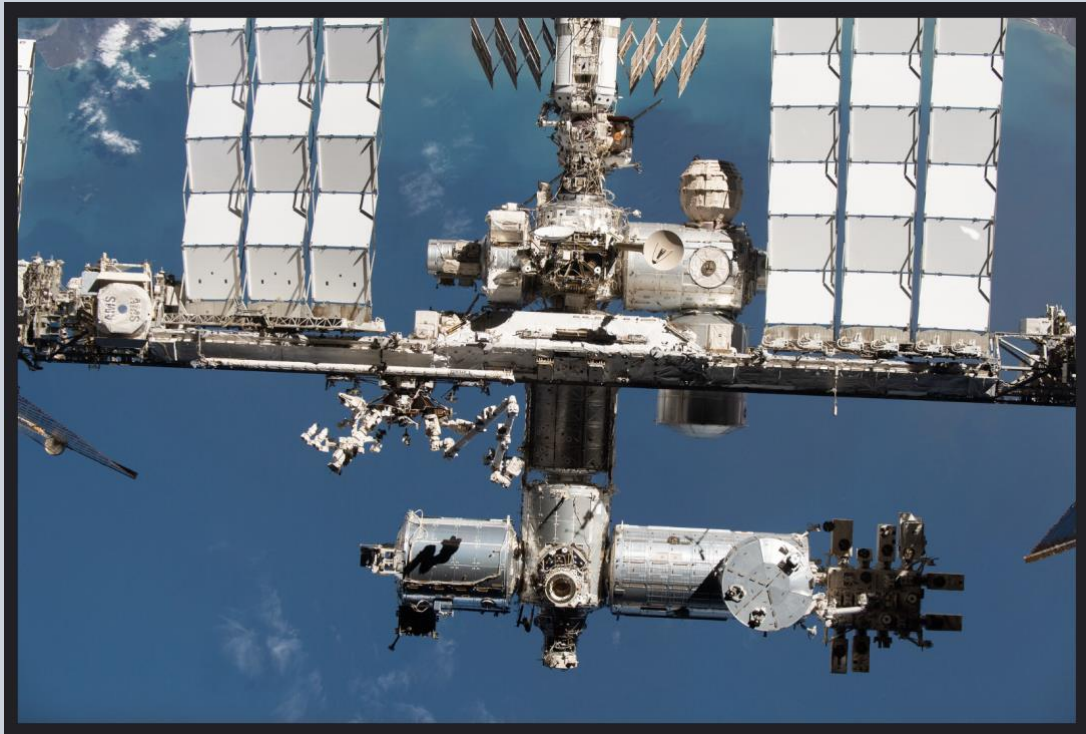
The museum houses a collection of Egyptian artifacts from various periods of the Egyptian civilization, from the Predynastic Period to Coptic Egypt, with an estimated total of over 100,000 artifacts, including at least 20,000 that will be displayed for the first time ever. The museum extends over a total area of 500,000 sqm.



Grand Hall (Atrium) with statue of Pharaoh Ramesses

Here is a two-minute video – Click on the image of the Head of Pharaoh Akhenaten, ca. 1353-1336 BCE, on the Grand Staircase, at the museum.

25 Years in Space



The 2nd of November 2025 marked 25 years of a continuous human presence in space—including at least one US citizen.

President Ronald Reagan commissioned the project that would become the International Space Station in 1984. (The idea of living in space dates back further, with author Edward Everett Hale imagining a fictional ISS in his 1869 tale, “The Brick Moon.”) Canada, Japan, Europe, and ultimately Russia joined the project. On Nov. 2, 2000, the Expedition 1 crew became the first group to reside on the ISS. Today, the station is the largest space vehicle ever built—as large as a football field, including solar arrays—with a habitable volume larger than a six-bedroom house.

More than 280 people from 27 countries have visited the station, typically to conduct scientific experiments in six-month rotations. The ISS will be deorbited in early 2031 and driven into the Pacific Ocean.

Spanish photographer captures world's first ever White Iberian lynx on camera

The white ghost of the Mediterranean forest. This is how Ángel Hidalgo, an amateur nature photographer, has described his latest find while reviewing the images from one of his photo-trapping cameras, placed in the depths of one of Jaén's mountain ranges in southern Spain.

Hidalgo has managed to record an Iberian lynx with leucism, a genetic condition that causes a partial or total lack of pigmentation in its skin, although not in the eyes, as would occur in the case of albino animals.



According to local media 'Ahora Jaén', this unprecedented discovery took place on 22 October in the province of Jaén.

Indestructible little creatures?

Tattler has just read about a tiny creature that can survive pressures six times greater than Earth's deepest ocean trench, and temperatures ranging from about -270 to 150 degrees Celsius.

Tardigrades, 101

(source - 1440)

Tardigrades are microscopic animals best known for their survivability in extreme environments, including the vacuum of space, pressures six times greater than Earth's deepest ocean trench, and temperatures ranging from about -270 to 150 degrees Celsius (or -454 to 302 degrees Fahrenheit). Nicknamed "water bears," these creatures traverse using four pairs of stubby legs that end in claws or adhesive pads and are found in habitats with moist sediments, like lake bottoms.

Their resilience comes from their ability to undergo cryptobiosis, in which a tardigrade expels nearly all the water in its body and tucks itself into a dried-up cyst called a tun. During this process, protectant molecules—including Dsup, a protein that shields DNA from radiation—create a glass-like matrix to protect a tardigrade's cells and reduce its metabolism by 99.99%. Even after decades, tardigrades in a tun state have been revived through rehydration.

Research is ongoing to identify medical applications of tardigrade-specific proteins, including using Dsup to protect healthy cells during radiotherapy cancer treatments.*



The name 'tardigrades' comes from the Latin word for 'slow walkers'. Before being renamed for their movements, German pastor Johann August Ephraim Goeze called them Kleiner Wasserbär—little water bears—in the first published observations of the creatures in 1773. He noted their voracious appetite made them seem like bears under a microscope.



Did you Know?

The Rolling Stones received \$3 million for the use of their song to launch Windows 95. The use of the song was part of a major marketing campaign for the new operating system in August 1995. The fee was the price Microsoft paid for the license to use the track in their commercials. The campaign was one of the first major instances of a top-selling rock song being used in a major advertising campaign.

Here is a video of the promo"
Click to watch.



And here is the video of the Stones performing it
Click to watch.



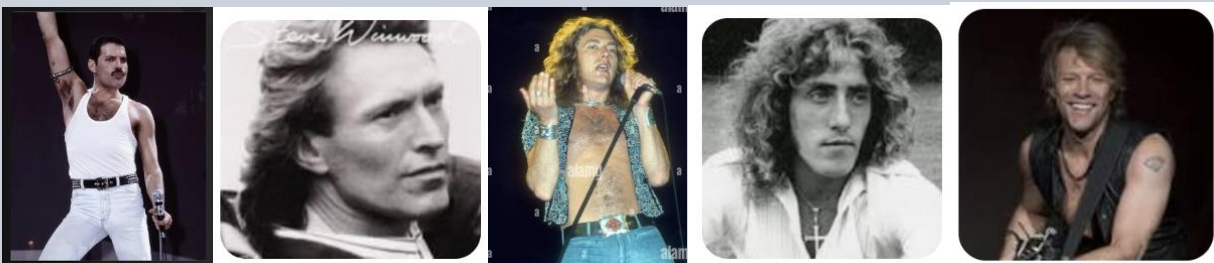
We did it for the "best female vocalists", now we do it for the males!

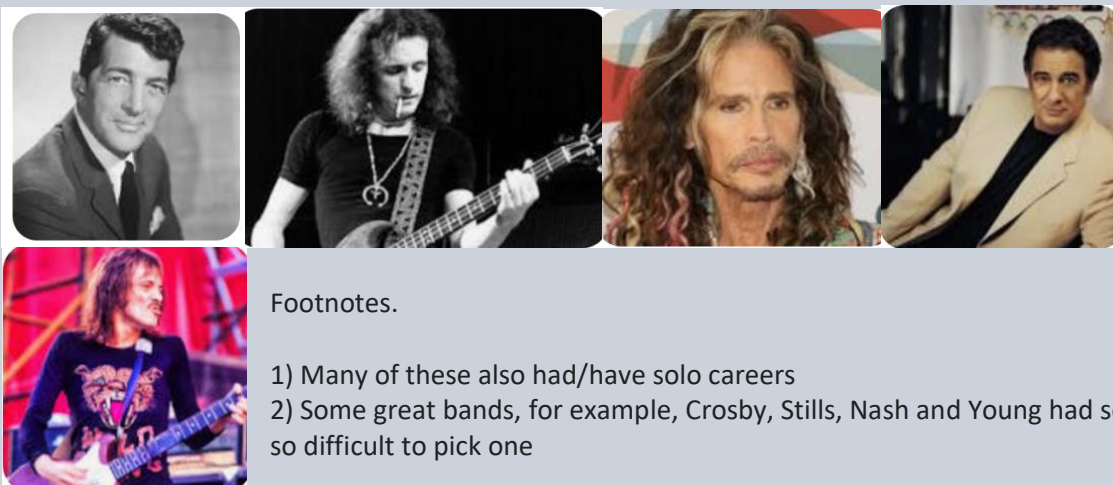
Tattler - This is no easy task. So many different genres, so many duos, but only 10 permitted!

Jonathan and Colette pick their top 10

Jonathan

Freddie Mercury (Queen)
Steve Winwood (Spencer Davis, Traffic, Blind Faith)
Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin)
Roger Daltrey (The Who)
Jon Bon Jovi (Bon Jovi)
Dean Martin
Jack Bruce (Graham Bond, Cream)
Steven Tylor (Aerosmith)
Placido Domingo
Steve Marriott (Small Faces, Humble Pie)





Footnotes.

- 1) Many of these also had/have solo careers
- 2) Some great bands, for example, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young had several singers so difficult to pick one

Colette - My thoughts on Jonathans list. This list is a blend of rock legends, pop crooners, and classical powerhouses. This list feels personal and not curated or trendy (much like Jonathan himself). There are many distinct voices, all shades of rock and some bluesy grit. Jonathan clearly lived through and cherished the golden age of rock in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. Dean Martin's inclusion adds a touch of old-school charm, and I suspect Placido Domingo who stands out as quite a bold choice is a nod to sheer vocal mastery.

Colette

Freddy Mercury
Chris Cornell
Jim Morrison
Robert Plant
Bryan Ferry
Marvin Gaye
Sting
Jaques Brel
Roy Orbison
Johnny Cash

About my own list, I can say that I also lived through vinyl and VHS. Songs sung by these men, made me dance anywhere and cry anywhere. I love voices that feel lived in and tell great stories. My choices are a mix of rock legends, blues, soul and suave (Bryan Ferry).



Art Corner

Submitted by Eddie Noble

I am not into art in a big way, but I did come across an English artist from the 1800's who had a fascination with naval vessels at war or in distress. I think he was on one of the British sailing boats during one of the naval battles and experienced the action, thus his paintings.

He is George Philp Reinagle, and my favourite is the First-Rate Man of War. It depicts the horrendous sea conditions that these sailors had to endure, and what makes me like it is the respect to these sailors who actually did it with passion and no fear, and I like the title - Man of War!



Tattler – Thanks for your contribution Eddie. Let's see if we can get a few more for next month. Please submit your favourite artworks.

Tattler previously featured expensive artwork. Maybe this "art" is even more beautiful and valuable? 'Mona Lisa Bible' (from Estense Digital Library)

A 15th-century Bible illustrated with gold and Afghan lapis lazuli was unveiled in Rome on 13 November. Typically stowed away in Modena, the two-volume manuscript is on display in the Italian Senate until Jan. 16 for the Vatican's Holy Year.

Said to be the most expensive book of its time—was made by Italian Renaissance artists for Borso d'Este, the first duke of Ferrara. The manuscript followed the Este family from Ferrara to Modena, where it remained until the family lost control of the city in 1859 and the last duke fled to Vienna. The Bible stayed among noble European families until Austria's last empress sold it to a Parisian antique collector in 1922. Italian industrialist Giovanni Treccani donated the Bible to the Italian state after purchasing it in 1923 for 3.3M French francs.

The Holy Year, a Roman Catholic tradition typically held every quarter century, draws tens of millions of pilgrims to Rome. Below are some random pages from the book.



Club Managers Report

100 Club Winners November 2025

Mr A. Collingridge – R300
Lt J. Payne (Ret) – R300
Cdr R. Stone (Ret) – R300
Mr C. Tosio – R1000

December Birthdays

Congratulations to all celebrating birthdays in December 2025! This month we look at Naval action on the dates of your birthdays.

Mr A. Cowie – 04 December.

1950 – Marines at Hagaru-Ri: In Korea, LtCol Raymond Davis led his battalion through snow and enemy fire to relieve trapped forces at Chosin Reservoir, a feat of endurance and valour.

Mr D.G. Oosthuizen – 04 December.

1676 – The Battle of Lund, becomes the bloodiest battle in Scandinavian history.

Ms M.C. Seyffert-Wirth – 04 December.

1872 – The American brigantine Mary Celeste is discovered drifting in the Atlantic. Her crew is never found.

Mrs L. Pauls – 10 December.

1898 – Treaty of Paris: Ended the Spanish-American War, ceding Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the U.S.—naval bases that reshaped global strategy.

Capt V.R. Neilson (Ret) – 13 December.

1939 – Battle of the River Plate: British cruisers forced the German pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* to scuttle off Uruguay—the first major naval clash of WWII.

Capt A.J.K. Uys (Ret) – 13 December.

1939 – The Battle of the River Plate is fought off the coast of Uruguay; the first naval battle of World War II.

Capt P.A. Napier (Ret) – 15 December.

Dec 15 – Royal Navy Christmas traditions: Crews aboard ships like HMS Dauntless mark the season with carols, camaraderie, and naval rituals.

R Adm A.G. Green (Ret) – 19 December.

1941 – HMS Neptune sunk: Struck mines off Libya, losing over 700 men—a devastating Royal Navy tragedy.

Mr J.V. Carne – 20 December.

1989 – U.S. invades Panama: Operation Just Cause ousted Manuel Noriega, showcasing rapid deployment forces.

Mr D.G. Nelson – 21 December.

1945 – Death of General Patton: The famed U.S. commander of armoured forces died after a car accident in occupied Germany, ending a storied career.

Mr D.C. Law-Brown – 22 December.

1944 – “Nuts!” at Bastogne: Surrounded by Germans, General McAuliffe’s defiant reply became legendary in the Battle of the Bulge.

R Adm H.T. Matsane – 24 December.

1814 – Treaty of Ghent: Ended the War of 1812, restoring peace between Britain and the U.S. while naval skirmishes still raged.

R Adm (J.G.) T. Honiball (Ret) – 25 December.

1776 – Washington crosses the Delaware: A daring Christmas night manoeuvre led to victory at Trenton, reviving the American Revolution.

Lt C. Chiste (Ret) – 25 December.

1758 – Halley's Comet is sighted by Johann Georg Palitzsch, confirming Edmund Halley's prediction of its passage. This was the first passage of a comet predicted ahead of time.

Mr J.A.H. Golding – 25 December.

1941 – Admiral Émile Muselier seizes the archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, which become the first part of France to be liberated by the Free French Forces.

Mr T. Allen – 30 December.

2006 – Saddam Hussein executed: His death symbolized the end of an era in Iraq, following U.S. military intervention.

Mrs A. Opperman – 31 December.

1999 – Panama Canal handover: The U.S. transferred control to Panama, ending nearly a century of strategic military stewardship.

New Club Members

We welcome the following new members and hope they enjoy their association with our club!

Mr Reinier van Gijzen married to Suzette and resides in Hofmeyer Street Oranjezicht. Reinier is employed by Sanlam. He is a Member of the Durbanville Shooting Club and enjoys Naval History as well as recreational fishing.

Aye,

Glen

November Quiz

Wow, what a great quiz we had on the 12th of November!
Five Teams did "battle". Included was a new team - such a pleasure to host new faces!

At the end of seven rounds, the top 3 teams were separated by a SINGLE point. A tie-breaker question was needed. And the winners - a team of just 2, proving that anything is possible! The whole group applauded this achievement.



(Tattler - note that every effort is made to create teams of 4 but this is not always possible)



As always, we provide one of the categories of questions which will hopefully lead to some new participants!

Category - Aeroplanes

- 1) Approximately how many horsepower does a Boeing 747 have (all 4 engines combined)? 160 000, 240 000, 400 000
- 2) What is the fastest recorded passenger plane flight time between London and New York? (Just over 2 hours, just short of 3 hours, just short of 4 hours?)
- 3) Which of these is made up? (the rest are genuine types of aircraft flaps) - Fowler, Slotted, Curated, Junkers?
- 4) On an aeroplane, what uses a computer system that receives data from navigation systems and calculates necessary adjustments to aircraft surfaces (like ailerons and elevator) via servos to maintain a desired course, altitude, or heading?
- 5) On a jumbo jet, if the captain is the one in command, what is the title of the 2nd in command?
- 6) During World War 2, which British heavy bomber was manufactured by Avro?
- 7) In the same period, the North American P-51 Mustangs used a British made engine, the same engine used in the Spitfire (While some early versions used an Allison engine, the most famous models of this fighter were fitted with the British-made engine, which gave them a performance boost). Which engine?
- 8) What was the name of Charles Lindbergh's famous plane?
- 9) Who famously flew a Lockheed Electra 10E, nicknamed "The Flying Laboratory"?
- 10) The Hughes H-4 Hercules (commonly known as the) was a prototype strategic airlift flying boat designed and built by the Hughes Aircraft Company. Intended as a transatlantic flight transport for use during World War II. It was not completed in time to be used in the war. Name it

We remind members that the quiz is free of any entry fees, members, their families and friends are welcome!

Maritime, Naval and Military

US Navy's first 'Ghost Ship' undergoes first trials at sea.

Source: Forces Network 31/10

Spooking sailors at sea

USX-1 Defiant was built under NOMARS, the US' programme to develop autonomous vessels with no need for physical crews

Halloween is upon us, and DARPA's USX-1 Defiant embodies the spirit of the season as it glides through the water like a ghost ship, with not a soul on board. Defiant is the first naval surface vessel ever built to operate without room or provision for human crew.

Part of the No Manning Required Ship (NOMARS) program, it marks a new chapter in maritime innovation. It's a first-in-class – and according to DARPA, the US government's defence research body, it's the first of many.



At 55 metres long and 240 metric tonnes in weight, the vessel was constructed at Everett Ship Repair in the US state of Washington. After being christened as per tradition by smashing a bottle on her hull, she's now undergoing extensive sea trials.

These have included high-speed manoeuvres at almost 20 knots, automated harbour entries and dockings and refuelling at sea. Water was used in place of fuel for safety.

During her first open-ocean voyage, the ship travelled more than 1,100 nautical miles to Port Hueneme, California, in five days. By removing the need to accommodate humans, vessels can be more compact, cheaper, and quicker to build.

One disadvantage, of course, is that if anything goes wrong, there are no humans on board to fix them, and a vessel could be hundreds of miles from shore.

"Defiant is a tough little ship and defies the idea that we cannot make a ship that can operate in the challenging environment of the open ocean without people to operate her," NOMARS Programme Manager Greg Avicola said. "While relatively small, Defiant is designed for extended voyages in the open ocean, can handle operations in sea state 5 with no degradation and survive much higher seas, continuing operations once the storm passes. "She's no wider than she must be to fit the largest piece of hardware and we have no human passageways to worry about."

Wearing medals on the right of your chest

Something many members of our club will know, but maybe, like me, some don't and will find this interesting

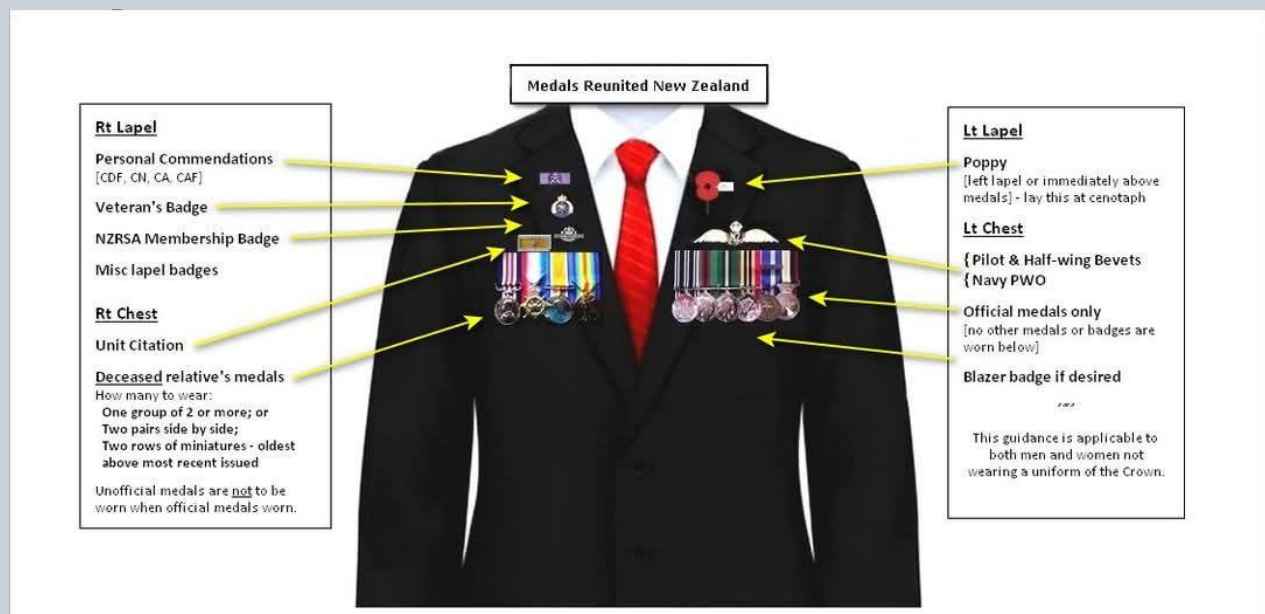
Medals one earns are typically worn on the left of one's chest, so which medals are worn on the right? A quick search provided the following

:

When medals are worn on the right side

- **To honour an ancestor:** Near relatives can wear the medals of a deceased service member on the right side of the chest to honour their legacy.
- **To represent family medals:** This indicates that the wearer is not the original recipient of the award.
- **To show state-issued awards:** Medals for service and bravery that are issued by a specific state are often worn on the right side, while the national awards are worn on the left.

Further, with that person's permission, one can wear medals (on the right) of living family members



Tattler thanks Bob Harrison for enlightening me!

A lady who saved countless lives

Maria Telkes - During World War II, she developed a solar water distillation device, deployed at the end of the war, which saved the lives of downed airmen and torpedoed sailors.



Telkes in 1956

Until a Hungarian chemist with a physics degree looked at that problem and thought: What if the thing trying to kill you could save you instead?

1942. American pilots are being shot down over the Pacific. Sailors' ships are being torpedoed. And the ones who survive the crash? They're dying slowly in life rafts, surrounded by millions of gallons of water their bodies can't use.

Salt water mocks you. Drink it and you accelerate death—your kidneys trying desperately to filter salt they can't process, pulling moisture from your tissues, making you more dehydrated. You die of thirst while floating on an ocean. The military needs a solution. Fast.

Enter Mária Telkes, age 42, working in a U.S. research lab. She's already known for unconventional thinking—this is a woman who emigrated from Budapest in 1925 with a chemistry PhD and an obsession with something most scientists considered impractical: capturing sunlight and making it do useful work.

She looks at the problem: Men dying of thirst at sea. Life rafts too small for heavy equipment. No electricity. No fuel. Just sun, salt water, and desperation. Her solution? Use the sun itself. She designs something that sounds almost magical: a portable solar still. Inflatable. Clear plastic. Folds small enough to pack in emergency kits. Weighs practically nothing.

Here's the genius: Sunlight heats the device. Seawater evaporates inside. Pure water vapor rises, condenses on the cooler plastic surface, and leaves salt behind. Fresh water drips into a collection container.

One quart per day.

That's it. One quart. Doesn't sound like much until you understand that one quart daily is exactly the difference between "dead in three days" and "alive when rescue arrives in two weeks."

The military starts adding Telkes solar stills to every life raft in the Navy and Air Force.

How many lives did it save? We'll never know exactly. But "countless" isn't hyperbole—every pilot who bailed out over the Pacific, every sailor who survived a torpedo attack and drifted for days, every rescue that arrived just in time because the stranded men weren't already dead from dehydration—some percentage of those survivals trace directly back to a Hungarian chemist who understood that the sun is humanity's most democratic energy source.

It doesn't care about rank or nationality or whether you "deserve" rescue. It just gives, if you know how to receive.

Her colleagues start calling her "The Sun Queen."

In 1952, Telkes became the first recipient of the Society of Women Engineers Achievement Award. She was awarded a lifetime achievement award from the National Academy of Sciences, subsequently receiving a Building Research Advisory Board Award in 1977. Telkes registered more than 20 patents.



U.S. service members show how to use Telkes' solar stills to make sea water drinkable. In one of the final parts of the process, the balloon-like containers are left under the sun so the sea water will evaporate.

This month in History - December 1975

(50 years ago)

General

3 Dec - The wreck of the British hospital ship HMHS Britannic was found by Jacques Cousteau, 59 years after it was sunk off of the coast of Greece by a German submarine on November 21, 1916.



8 Dec - The original store, in The Byte Shop, the first chain of personal computer sellers, was opened by Paul Terrell at 1063 West El Camino Real in Mountain View, California.

12 Dec - Satcom-1, only the third domestic communications satellite (after Anik 1 and Westar 1), was placed into orbit by the RCA Corporation.

14 Dec - The observation deck at 2 World Trade Centre opened, giving visitors a chance to see New York City from the 111th floor of the nation's tallest building.



15 Dec - A. Q. Khan, a Pakistani scientist who had been working on uranium enrichment for the FDO (Fysisch Dynamisch Onderzoekslaboratorium or Physical Dynamic Research Laboratory) in the Netherlands, left his job suddenly and returned home. Khan took with him copies of blueprints for centrifuges and company information about suppliers of components, then set about to accelerate the Pakistani nuclear program. Pakistan would successfully detonate its first atomic bomb on May 28, 1998.

23 Dec - A bolt of lightning killed 21 people, who were inside a hut, seeking shelter from a storm in eastern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The incident remains the record for number of people electrocuted by one bolt.

26 Dec - Tu-144, "the Soviet Concorde" begins service



.

In the first confrontation between the naval forces of the UK and Iceland in the Third Cod War over fishing rights, in the North Atlantic Ocean, the Icelandic Coast Guard vessel ICGV Týr rammed the Royal Navy frigate HMS Andromeda while she was escorting two British fishing trawlers in what Iceland claimed as its territorial waters.

Sport

6 Dec - Rugby - Australia lose to Scotland 3-10 at Murrayfield.

12 - 16 Dec - Cricket - West Indies hammer Australia by an innings and 87 runs at the WACA. Fredericks (169) and Lloyd (149) destroyers in chief.

20 Dec - Rugby - Australia get thumped by Wales 3-28.

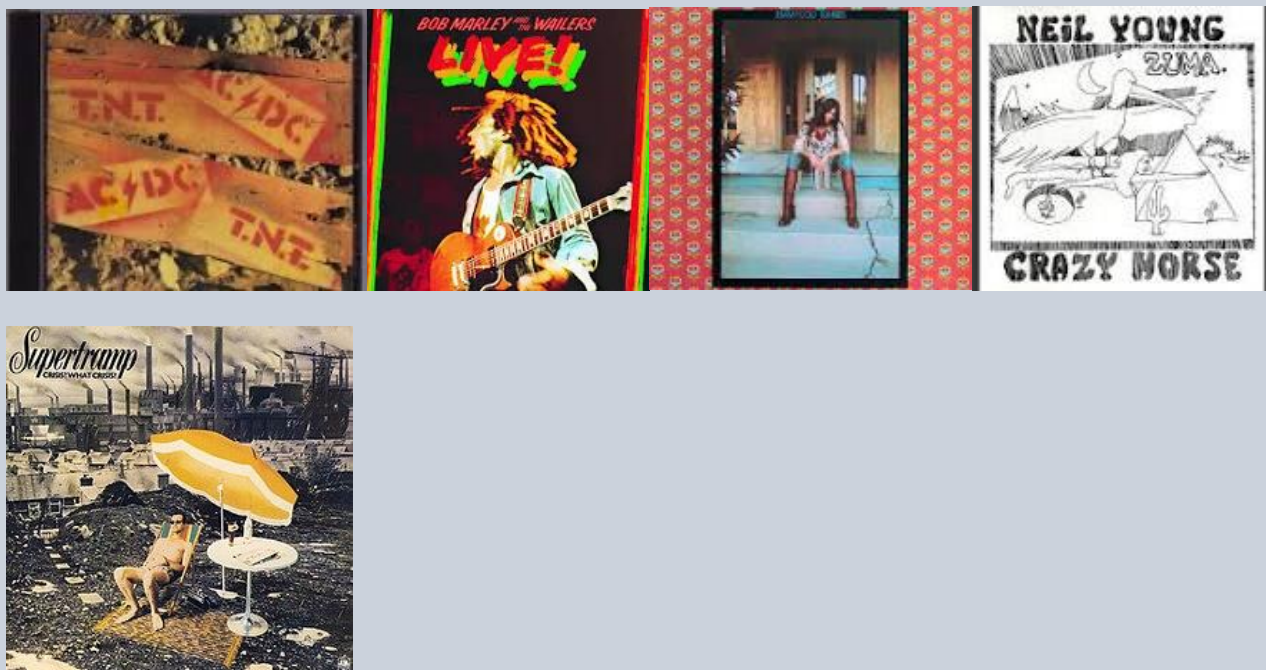
20 Dec - Boxing - Roberto Duran knocked out Leoncio Ortiz in the 15th round to retain his WBA lightweight title in San Juan, Puerto Rico.



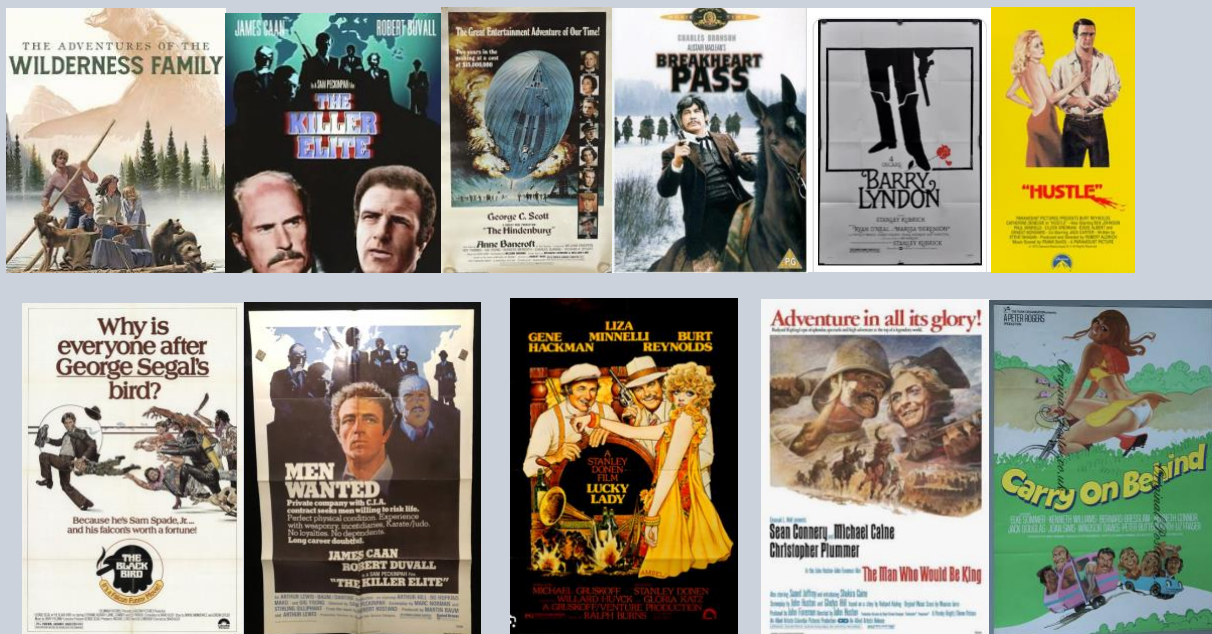
26 - 30 Dec - Cricket. In Melbourne, the Aussies beat the Windies by 8 wickets. Redpath and Cosier get tons. Another 100 by Lloyd was not enough.

30 Dec - The Dynamo Kyiv striker was awarded the Ballon d'Or, becoming the first Ukrainian to win the award for best footballer in Europe.

Music



Movies



Ahoy, dear readers of the Seven Seas Tattler! As the year 1975 sailed into its final port, Hollywood unleashed a flood of films that ranged from glittering gems to soggy seaweed. Let's look into December releases that made waves.

"The Man Who Would Be King" : Now here's a treasure chest of cinematic glory! Directed by John Huston and starring the dynamic duo Sean Connery and Michael Caine, this adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's tale was a darling for the critics. With sweeping vistas, it was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design. Connery and Caine's bromance burned bright.

“Barry Lyndon” : Stanley Kubrick’s period epic glided into select theatres like a gilded galleon. With its painterly cinematography and pacing, “Barry Lyndon” was either a masterpiece or a marathon, depending on your sea legs. Ryan O’Neal played the titular rogue with a porcelain smirk, and the film later won four Oscars, including Best Cinematography and Best Art Direction. A slow burn, yes—but one that left a lasting glow.

“Hustle”: Burt Reynolds doubled down in December, also starring in this gritty crime drama opposite Catherine Deneuve. “Hustle” was film noir with a melancholic heart, and Reynolds showed surprising depth beneath his usual swagger. Critics were divided, but the film found favour among fans of moody mysteries and French-accented femme fatales.

“The Hindenburg”: Robert Wise’s disaster epic dramatized the infamous 1937 airship explosion with George C. Scott at the helm. Despite its Oscar-winning sound effects, critics found it bloated and unintentionally hilarious.

“The Killer Elite”: Sam Peckinpah’s gritty espionage thriller starred James Caan and Robert Duvall as betrayed mercenaries. Stylish but convoluted, it limped through its plot like Caan’s brace-wearing protagonist.

“Barry Lyndon” : Stanley Kubrick’s slow-burning period piece was a visual masterpiece. Ryan O’Neal’s passive antihero drifted through 18th-century Europe in candlelit splendour. It won four Oscars and remains a triumph of style over speed.

“Breakheart Pass”: Charles Bronson rode the rails in this Western mystery set aboard a train bound for Fort Humboldt. With a plot full of twists and a cast of character actors, it was lean, entertaining, and underrated. *The Black Bird*: A spoof sequel to *THE MALTESE FALCON*, this comedy starred George Segal as Sam Spade Jr. Despite nostalgic callbacks, it flopped harder than a seagull in a windstorm.

“Carry On Behind”: The 27th entry in the cheeky British comedy series, this caravan-park romp was full of innuendo, slapstick, and striptease. A fan favourite despite missing Sid James.

And finally, our “Featured Film”: Lucky Lady

“Lucky Lady” (Released December 25)

Twentieth Century Fox bet big on this Prohibition-era caper starring Liza Minnelli, Gene Hackman, and Burt Reynolds. With a budget that ballooned, the film promised high-seas smuggling and high-stakes romance. But alas, the critics were less than charmed. Minnelli sparkled, Hackman brooded, and Reynolds smirked his way through the chaos, but the plot drifted. Still, it earned a modest box office haul and remains a curious relic of its time.

Set in the rum-soaked chaos of Prohibition-era Tijuana, *LUCKY LADY* follows Claire (Liza Minnelli), a nightclub singer who teams up with two bootleggers—Walker (Burt Reynolds) and Kibby (Gene Hackman)—to smuggle booze across the border. What begins as a business venture turns into a romantic triangle aboard a rickety smuggling boat. The film blends comedy, action, and drama with a touch of melancholy, as the trio navigates gangsters, government agents, and their own tangled emotions.

Directed by Stanley Donen and written by Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck, the film was a box office success, grossing over \$24 million against a \$12 million budget. Though critics were mixed, Minnelli’s performance earned her a Golden Globe nomination. Her charisma and vulnerability anchored the film, making Claire a character both glamorous and grounded.

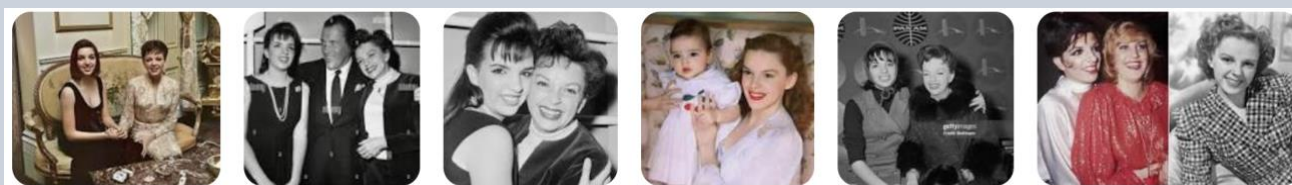
This month we feature the electrifyingly talented Liza Minnelli, American singer, dancer, and actress.

Liza Minnelli: The Queen of Cabaret and Comebacks

Liza Minnelli was born into Hollywood royalty and lived a life of dazzling highs and heartbreaking lows. Born on March 12, 1946, in Los Angeles, Liza May Minnelli was the daughter of Judy Garland, the iconic star of *The Wizard Of Oz*, and Vincente Minnelli, the acclaimed director of *Meet Me In St. Louis*. Her parents divorced in 1951, when Liza was just five years old.



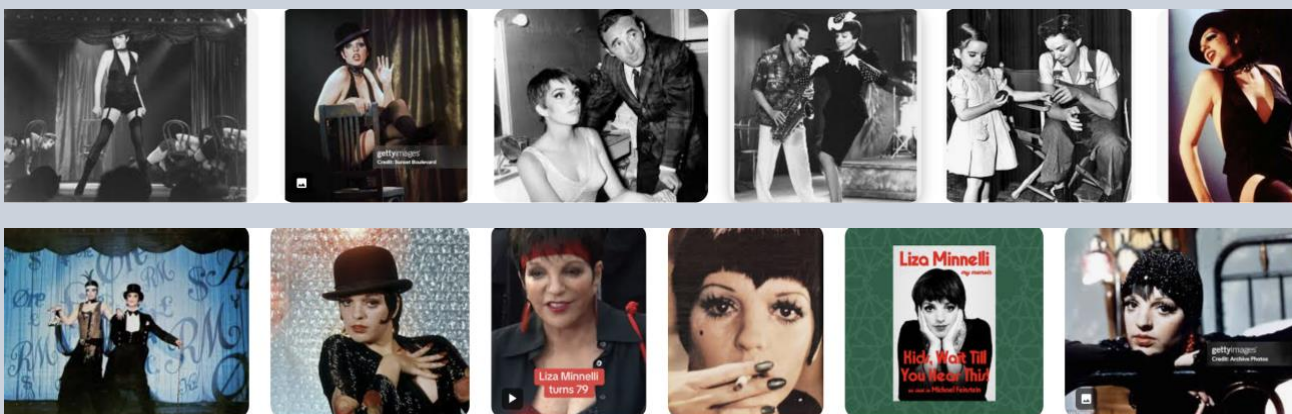
She was practically raised on the MGM lot, surrounded by stars and studio lights. Her childhood was a mix of glamour and instability, as her mother struggled with addiction and financial troubles. Despite this, Liza always insisted she had a happy upbringing, saying, “One of the biggest misconceptions about my mama is that she didn’t provide me with a happy childhood”.



Liza attended Chadwick School in California and later studied at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts in New York City. She also trained at the Herbert Berghof Studio, honing her craft in acting and singing.

Liza and Judy shared a close, complex bond. Garland was only 23 when she gave birth to Liza, and the two often performed together. Liza described her mother as her “best friend,” though their relationship was marked by Garland’s emotional volatility and substance abuse. After Garland’s death in 1969, Liza became a fierce guardian of her mother’s legacy, often speaking publicly about her love and admiration for her.

Raised amid MGM’s golden age, Liza made her screen debut at just 14 months old in *In The Good Old Summertime* (1949).



She began performing professionally as a teenager, starring in off-Broadway productions and cabaret shows. Her breakout came with *Flora The Red Menace* (1965), earning her a Tony Award at age 19. But it was her role as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* (1972) that immortalized her—winning her an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, and a BAFTA.

Minnelli married four times. Peter Allen (1967–1974), a singer-songwriter and close friend of her mother. Jack Haley Jr. (1974–1979), son of the Tin Man from *The Wizard Of Oz*. Mark Gero (1979–1992), a sculptor. David Gest (2002–2007), a producer whose lavish wedding featured Michael Jackson as best man. She had no children, but her extended family included half-siblings Lorna Luft and Joey Luft, children of Judy Garland and Sidney Luft.

In later years, Liza battled health issues but continued performing in concerts and TV specials. She earned an Emmy for *Liza With A Z* and multiple Tony Awards, including a special award for her contributions to Broadway. She was known for her resilience, humour, and generosity.

Liza Minnelli's career was not only defined by her talent but also by the remarkable friendships she cultivated across music, fashion, and art. Her circle reflected the cultural vibrancy of the late 20th century, and these relationships often shaped her image and sustained her through personal challenges.

Liza's friendship with Halston (Fashion Designer) was legendary. He designed many of her stage costumes, giving her the sleek, glamorous look that became her signature. Their bond went beyond fashion — Halston was part of her chosen family, and together they embodied the glittering nightlife of New York in the 1970s.

Liza and Elizabeth Taylor shared a deep connection, both women navigating fame, marriages, and health struggles. Their friendship was marked by loyalty and mutual support, with Taylor often described as a protective figure in Liza's life.

As part of the Rat Pack's extended circle, Liza found mentors and collaborators in Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. They admired her voice and stage presence, and she performed alongside them in concerts that celebrated the golden age of American entertainment.

Elton John and Liza bonded over their shared love of performance and flamboyant style. Their friendship was filled with mutual admiration, and Elton often praised her strength and artistry.

Liza's friendship with Michael Jackson reflected their shared experience of growing up in the spotlight. Both child stars who matured under intense public scrutiny, they understood each other's struggles with fame. Their bond was affectionate, and Liza often spoke warmly of Michael's kindness and artistry.

Andy Warhol adored Liza and frequently featured her in his work, capturing her as part of his pop-art vision of celebrity culture. She was a fixture at Studio 54, where Warhol, Halston, and Minnelli mingled with the era's creative elite. Warhol's fascination with her reflected her status as both performer and cultural icon.

Together, these friendships weren't just glamorous associations — they were sources of loyalty, creativity, and emotional support. Her inner circle helped shape her public persona, while also providing the private strength she needed to endure the pressures of fame.

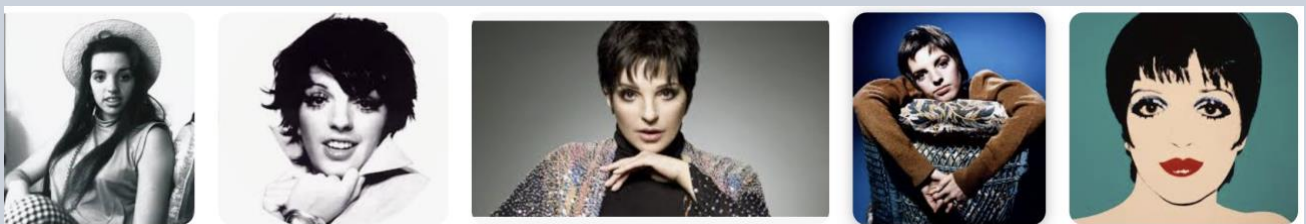
Liza Minnelli remains a symbol of survival, sparkle, and showbiz spirit. Whether belting out "Maybe This Time" or smuggling rum in *LUCKY LADY*, she's always the star of the show.





In her later years, Liza battled health issues including viral encephalitis, which she was told might leave her unable to walk or speak. She defied the odds and returned to performing, earning standing ovations and critical acclaim.

As of now, Liza Minnelli is still alive, though she has largely retired from public life. She remains a symbol of resilience, talent, and theatrical brilliance. Her legacy includes an EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony) and a lifetime of unforgettable performances.



And, 100 years back, December 1925

5 Dec - The portrait of Saint Teresa of Ávila, painted by Peter Paul Rubens in 1614, was found in Berlin after being missing for more than 200 years.



12 Dec - The first motel (a portmanteau of "motor" and "hotel") in the world, the Milestone Mo-Tel, was opened in San Luis Obispo, California. The business would later be renamed the Motel Inn.

20 Dec - The all-black Renaissance Big Five defeated the all-white Original Celtics, 37 to 30, in a professional basketball game between two of the best teams in the U.S., both of whom claimed that they were world champions in their respective races (Tattler - White men can't jump?).

26 Dec - Richard "Pegleg" Lonergan, leader of New York City's White Hand Gang, was killed along with two henchmen after arriving intoxicated at the Adonis Social Club, a speakeasy in Brooklyn. While he was uttering various racial slurs, the lights went out, and shots were fired. Al Capone had been in the club while on a visit to New York and had carried out the hit at the request of Frankie Yale. The ambush further enhanced Capone's notoriety.

Tattler – Laugh

Your December funny Video
Michael Mc Intyre on Christmas
Click below.

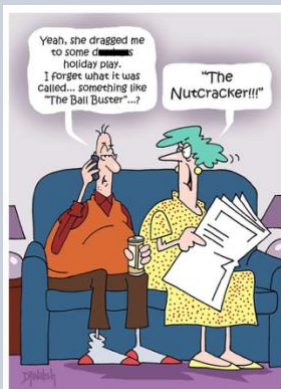


Bonus Video !
Click below.



Quiz Answers

- 1) 240 000
- 2) Just short of 3 hours - The fastest time is 2 hours, 52 minutes, and 59 seconds, set by the Concorde in 1996.
- 3) Curated
- 4) The autopilot
- 5) First Officer (Grudgingly accept co-pilot!)
- 6) The Avro Lancaster, commonly known as the Lancaster Bomber
- 7) Rolls-Royce Merlin (Accept Rolls-Royce. Accept Merlin)
- 8) The Spirit of St Louis
- 9) Amelia Earhart
- 10) Spruce Goose



Lawyer: "Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?"
 Witness: "No."
 Lawyer: "Did you check for blood pressure?"
 Witness: "No."
 Lawyer: "Did you check for breathing?"
 Witness: "No."
 Lawyer: "So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?"
 Witness: "No."
 Lawyer: "How can you be so sure, Doctor?"
 Witness: "Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar."
 Lawyer: "But could the patient have still been alive nevertheless?"
 Witness: "Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere."

We really would value more feedback. Please feel free to comment or submit items. Our email addresses are jonathanagolding@gmail.com and colettepatience@gmail.com
 Have a good month.