



MENSA
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MENSA WORLD JOURNAL



In a world first, special Mensa commemorative postage stamps were issued to the public by the Isle of Man Post Office on October 1, the day of Mensa's 75th anniversary. British Chairman, Chris Leek, was photographed with the British Mensa chief executive, Cath Hill, on this special occasion. More information in the January issue!

what's in the MWJ this month...



- Don't forget to book in for the Mensa Youth (MY)-SIG's New Year's Bash in Denmark! Details on p2.

- The Mensa International Poetry Competition 2021 results are on p4 and the winning poem on p5. The top six poems will be published in the MWJ in the months to come, along with as many entries as space permits. Congratulations to all!

- p6 Climate Change - Back to the Future?

- p7 Member Profile

- A Christmas poem, The Mensa Elf by Canadian Member Arthur J. L. Salvat, is on p8, while on p9, Inham Hessen asks Is remote work here to stay? John Blinks's Science shorts are on p10, and of course, Therese's Teasers are with us on p12.

*Happy reading,
Kate*

Download/read the full-colour MWJ at www.mensa.org

Mensa Youth SIG (MY-SIG)

***Bymose Hegn Hotel, Helsingør, Denmark
27 December 2021 - 02 January 2022***

A New Year's blast with the MY-SIG

For its 12th edition, MY-NY returns to the well-loved venue in 2016 of MY-Camp X: Bymose Hegn in Denmark! This is a luxury congress centre, complete with lots of activity rooms, soundproofed rooms, swimming pool and sauna.

We shall gather more than 150 young (or young-at-heart) Mensans to feast, drink mead and reminisce about the glorious battles and the craziness of the Nordic gods this past year. Will you be one of us?



By now you must have guessed, the theme of this year's MY-NY will be "Vikings".

Prices start at €240. This includes accommodation, basic activities, a hot dinner every day, and the eternal kitchen at your disposal 24/7, where you can make yourself a sandwich or pancake any time of day.

Rooms this year will be max. 3 beds only, so you can relax in between all the fun.

Sign-up at www.my-ny.org

Join the hype in our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mynyragnarok/>

FROM THE EXCOMM

I've previously touched on the benefits of volunteering and would like to expand on some of the areas within Mensa in which this is practised – which frankly is most of them!

The variety of tasks carried out largely or wholly by volunteers is staggering, and brings benefits both to Mensa and to the volunteers themselves. I've never been a SIGSec or a Newsletter Editor; within British Mensa, however, a number of our most talented members do fulfil these roles, and I'm aware that the same holds true for many other National groups as well as Mensa International itself. In British Mensa we have over 100 Special Interest Groups (SIGs), with topics ranging from Lego to Longevity, Crafts to Cricket, Maths to Medics.

I've recently been helping digitise archival newsletter copies of several of our SIGs and in the process experiencing, through the pages, the enthusiasm, and passion, demonstrated by members for their particular subjects.

As well as the SIG newsletters, there is also a local magazine for each of the 13 regions of British Mensa. An army of experts in their field and talented writers are responsible for this output. In addition to their usual responsibilities, they have recently been involved in the switch of all printed output (with

the exception of our national Mensa Magazine) to digital-only format.

Our editors eagerly took up the challenge of switching and, following several months of trialling, rollout of new desktop publishing software to editors, and an online workshop, the first digital issues launched in October. This has brought a removal of page limits, introduction of colour, the ability to include more photographs and contributions from members, embedded videos, and more up-to-date meeting information through shorter lead times.

For an active volunteer there is plenty of variety and rarely a dull moment. A few areas I have been involved in recently have included helping plan and run a workshop for current and incoming Board members; helping the organiser of the prestigious Mensa@Cambridge conference find and negotiate a new venue for 2022



Chris Leek, Chairman, British Mensa

at short notice, after Covid-related issues meant the original planned venue suddenly became unavailable (venue will be Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, founded in 1596, sited in the heart of Cambridge, with beautiful grounds and buildings); working as a System admin on the Mensa International website, and contributing to a project to transform the way British Mensa works.

The past year has been busy, including an office move, introduction of new regular member communications, move of SIGs and Regional magazines on-line, positive PR including getting Mensa featured on a stunning set of postage stamps, working through a pandemic with

(continued on p11)

Mensa International Poetry Competition 2021

I am delighted to report that the Mensa World Journal International Poetry Competition 2021 has been an outstanding success! Congratulations to all members for their fine entries!

The rules were changed slightly this year with only one entry permitted (rather than three in 2020) and the theme was **Reflection**. There were entries from more than a dozen countries and all entries were graded and processed into a shortlist of 25 by the original judging team of Mensan Therese Moodie-Bloom, publishing company executive Cassandra McLeod, lawyer and poet Richard Wakim, Mensan and businessman Peter Tankard, and me, Kate Nacard. Many long hours were spent in processing the shortlist for the International Judging Panel. Thank you to everyone for your not inconsiderable time and effort!

The International Judging Panel who were asked to rank the top six of the shortlist of thirty were unanimous in their selection (read their comment on p5):

First place: Stephen K. Roney (Canada)

Runners-up: Ronald L. Johnson (USA), Gary Lai (Hong Kong)

Honorable Mentions: Kishore Asthana (India), Jill Engelstad (USA), Kelley J. P. Lindberg (USA)

The International Judging Panel



USA

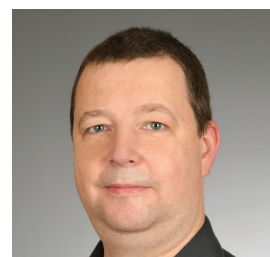
Bruce Miller is an American Mensan with a deep interest in poetry. He is a member of the National Book Critics Circle, a trade association for editors, critics, agents and publishers. Bruce has a degree in writing and fine arts and is the founder and facilitator of the official USA and International Poetry SIGs. His chapbook *HaikuBones* is in its second printing, and his poetic translations from classic French poems have been featured in the USA Mensa Bulletin and other Mensa newsletters. Bruce enjoys reading and evaluating writers' works and participating in poetic workshop sessions.



UK

Maggie Sawkins holds an MA with distinction in Creative Writing and is a professional member of the National Association of Writers in Education. She won the 2013 Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry for her live literature production, *Zones of Avoidance*. Maggie is the founder of Portsmouth poetry and music club, *Tongues&Grooves*, set up in 2003 with the aim of empowering people to express themselves through poetry and music.

Read more about Maggie on her website:
<https://hookedonwords.me>



GERMANY

Henning ('Stachel') Höllein lives with his wife and children in Mönchengladbach, a city close to Düsseldorf, where he works as an IT forensic specialist at police headquarters. In 2015 he started delving deeply into poetry-reading and writing. Simultaneously, he was a singer-songwriter and soon began to combine composition and poetry. He then started to interpret and review poetry, studying its forms and principles. He has self-published two books of poems and his website www.stachellyrik.de contains the vast majority of his writings (594 poems).

and the winner is... Stephen K. Roney



Stephen K. Roney is a Canadian writer, editor, and college instructor, now semi-retired. He is a past president of the Editors' Association of Canada ("Editors Canada"). You may have seen his commentary in Report Newsmagazine, the Toronto Star, Catholic Insight, or in several dozen other publications in Canada and abroad. He was born in the small town of Gananoque, Ontario.

His first poem was composed at age four. It was about the cowboy life. He has since spent more time as an English professor than on the open range, but has, as an act of open rebellion, continued to write and publish poetry. He has been a Mensan since some time in the 1980s. He is currently living in the wilds of Toronto, married, with two children.

Visit him online at gerebernus.wordpress.com, where you can read many of his articles.

On the Night We Held the Moon for Ransom

by Stephen K. Roney

*As we arose in bedroom clothes and toed along the beach
And casting out past dark and doubt, past stones in common reach
A net we threw of breath and dew returned us something rare
A thing long known, cold and alone; above - we thought - all care.*

*And homeward bound through hilltops crowned with silence and with snow
The way was steep, the way was cold, the way was far to go;
And riding down through sundark town, the captive moon our guide,
I laughed until I could not laugh, and, sick from laughing, cried.*

*We called our feat from street to street, as lamp to lamp caught fire;
'Till some crank called out "Mountebank!" and others echoed, "liar!"
And casting off the swaddling cloth, to show old friend new prize -
We found the stone we'd found was only water and God's lies.*

*And all we knew we were, could be, or someday might become
Melted like that ice and left us naked in that sun;
And all we knew we were, had been, or someday still might be
Fell back and fell away, like foam, stone-broken, to the sea.*

The International Judging Panel's comment on the winning entry...

"This technical sophisticated text with its multilayer content won over the entire panel. We were pleased to join this walk from the beach over snowy hills to the city, from morning to evening, from past to transience, from the lie to the truth and from the metaphorical childhood into the bare presence of the Self.

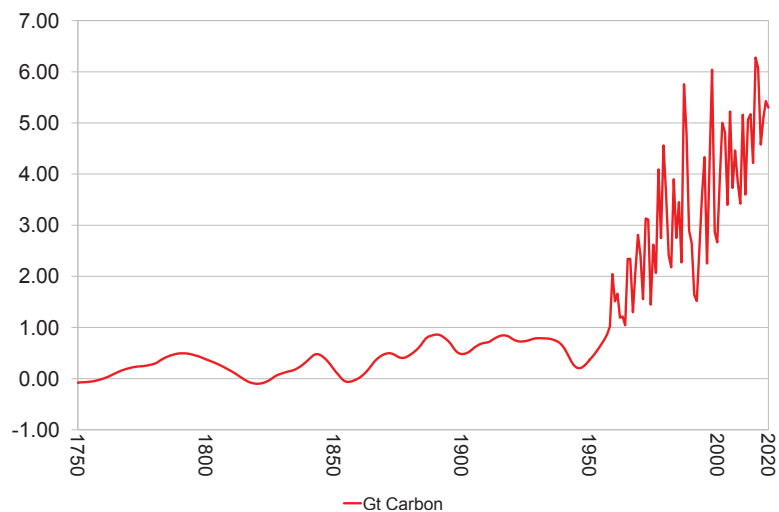
"The skilful play with internal rhymes and with breaking and changing the self-set rules, underlines the imagery of the poem in an outstanding way. The verses fit together like pieces of mosaic, with the the next mosaic already shining through the joints, again with joints. As I ponder, I feel a little reminded of Alice's rabbit hole."

Climate Change - Back to the Future?

Everyone knows that atmospheric CO₂ levels increase when CO₂ emissions exceed the amount being reabsorbed by the environment. This is a scientific law. For stable greenhouse gas (GHG) levels, GHG emissions must equal GHG sinks¹. There is no alternative.

There is only one cause of excessive GHG emissions – our lifestyle multiplied by the size of the population. So the key question is, ‘what is a suitable lifestyle that does not emit excessive GHGs and that can be enjoyed by everyone?’

Clearly if you reduce the population, each individual can emit more GHGs and contrariwise, if you increase the population you must reduce the amount individuals emit. This means we need to know what this level is. The best place to start is data from the Global Carbon Project at: <https://tinyurl.com/Global-Carbon-2020> [.xls]



Carbon in the atmosphere since 1750 (currently around 5.3 gigatonne)

So the hard facts are that humans have been causing excessive CO₂ emissions all the way back to 1750 but it is unlikely this caused any noticeable impact on climate due to larger natural variations. However since the 1960's there has been a calamitous increase in atmospheric carbon lifting the quantity up and over 1 gigatonne even though early signs of climate change were reported in the 1950's. The drop in atmospheric CO₂ after 1940 is a common feature in other environ-

mental data series as well.

All this suggests strongly that CO₂ will increase rapidly in the atmosphere as long as our lifestyle emission and population levels exceed the equivalent of levels from 1960 or 1950.

Based on the data, is there any other option?

Christopher Warren (Australian Mensa), Gwendolin Korinek (Austria), Will Arnold (UK)

1. www.tinyurl.com/carbon-sinks-sources

Contributing to the Mensa World Journal

Please send your articles of general interest, your ideas, your poems and your letters to mwjeditor@mensa.org

Articles should be no more than 500 words, presented in MSWord, and be accompanied by hi-res graphics or photos.

MEMBER PROFILE

by Susan Jensen

SiaYeun Tay of Mensa Singapore, is a well-known musician/singer/actor who launched her successful performing career just six years ago, at the age of forty-three.

SiaYeun was born in Singapore, to Chinese parents, the fourth of six children. At a very early age, she began singing along with the TV and took up piano in first grade. In High School she joined the school's Chinese Orchestra, playing the Er Hu, a two stringed, vertical fiddle.

No one realized she was exceptionally bright - not her teachers, parents or SiaYuen herself. Lack of fluency in English (most High School classes were in English) and boredom obscured her keen intelligence.

In 1999 SiaYeun saw an ad for Singapore Mensa, took the sample IQ test and did so well that she took (and passed) the Mensa exam. She was surprised her IQ was rated as 156 as she never saw herself as being smart.

SiaYeun worked in the corporate world, singing on the side, always hopeful that her singing career would take off one day.

Her combination of optimism and determination were tested by several catastrophes. In 2006, she fractured her T9 vertebra, making it difficult to expand her ribs sufficiently to deeply inhale.

A nasty flu in 2008 left her with permanent hearing loss and tinnitus in both ears. SiaYeun worked hard to overcome these issues and regain her good singing voice.

Two tragedies struck in 2013 that gave her the impetus she needed to pursue singing full time. In April, she was hospitalized for exhaustion. In June, her beloved aunt died, exhorting SiaYeun to "do what you always wanted, unlike me." SiaYeun took a year off from her job as Management Executive at IBM Software Singapore to recuperate. At the end of the year, she left the corporate world forever.

As soon as SiaYeun fully committed to her singing career, opportunities arose. Right away, she began earning enough money singing commercial jingles to support herself. In 2014 she acted in her first movie: 3688 (as one of The Four Beauties) and also sang the movie's theme song. The movie was featured in film festivals all over the world and Sia Yeun continues to act and do musicals in Singapore and Malaysia.

SiaYeun has competed in two well-known Chinese TV talent shows. A clip from the *Sound of My Dreams* competition is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS2sw5GLGL0>



[watch?v=SS2sw5GLGL0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS2sw5GLGL0)

Since 2017 she has been teaching singing and music to regular and special needs students, has released an LP (*Set Forth*), and formed a quirky music trio, *LimTayPeng* (here is their music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zISTe-REcl>).

SiaYeun got her career and health on track at a later age than most and now is seeking to get her personal life on track, too. She would love to meet a male life partner to enjoy a life of music, learning, and growing together.

SiaYeun's busy schedule hasn't left much time to participate in Mensa activities, although she did hold a singing workshop in 2019 for Singapore's *Mensa's Got Talent* show. She looks forward to the pandemic lifting, participating in international Mensa events, and meeting new Mensan friends.

SJ

The Mensa Elf



*I've heard that one of Santa's elves
Is a current Mensa member.
He goes to all the gatherings,
Except those in December.*

*He wasn't very self-assured
When he wrote the Mensa test.
But when his scores were verified
The proctor was impressed.*

*Just how this brainy little elf
Has helped Santa is quite clear:
His theories of time management
Have made this a tranquil year.*

*The workshop is computerized
And the staff is now less frantic.
The toys are made in half the time,
And the savings are gigantic!*

*All the elves can now review
The names on Santa's list,
Which carefully they scrutinize
So that no child is missed.*

*There is more time for cocoa breaks,
Which makes for happy elves,
Who stack the toys for Santa Claus
Upon the warehouse shelves.*

*All the elves are jubilant;
The reindeer are contented.
Serenity pervades the Pole -
Concord's unprecedented.*

*So now old, merry Santa Claus
Has a more efficient staff,
And the Mensa elf has lots of time
To tweak Santa's jolly laugh.*

*The elf is satisfied to help
Make the Yuletide a success,
And to help make Santa's job
Appear so effortless.*

*He is a happy Mensa elf
Who doesn't need applause.
It seems that he has found his niche -
As a subordinate Claus!*

**Arthur J. L. Salvas,
Mensa Canada**

This poem first appeared in the Jan/Feb issue of Montage, the newsletter of Toronto Mensa (vol.33, no.1, p.13), 2009.

Later it was printed in the Nov. 2019 issue of MC², the journal published by Mensa Canada Communications (vol.52, no.5, p.7).

To cheat or not to cheat?

The ability of cognitive control allows humans to override the brain's impulses, such as focusing on one person in the crowd and ignoring distractions. It also plays a role in making moral decisions.

But does cognitive control override a moral impulse to be honest, or to be dishonest? It depends on a person's moral default, according to new research published in *Journal of Neuroscience*.

Speer et al. used EEG to find the activity pattern of cognitive control and compare it to the brain activity of participants during a cheating task.

Participants played spot-the-difference and won a reward when they reported finding three differences. But only some pairs of images actually contained three differences, encouraging the participants to cheat.

The moral default of the participants varied: some people chose to cheat a few times, while others only told the truth a few times. As participants decided whether or not to cheat, the activity of theta brainwaves strengthened — an activity pattern representative of cognitive control.

Stronger theta activity meant participants were more likely to go against their moral default: cheaters were more likely to be honest, and honest people were more likely to cheat.

<https://neurosciencenews.com/cognitive-control-honesty-19304/>

Is remote work here to stay? One tech giant thinks otherwise...

by Inham Hassen

If 2020 was a year of discontent, 2021 is a year of recovery for most of us. Lockdowns, sanitizers, face masks and social distancing will soon be in history books. But some changes made by the pandemic will last much longer than others. One of them is remote working, which has well-documented benefits, including reduced infrastructure costs for companies, zero commute times and better work/life balance for employees.

The idea of working from home was not sprouted by the pandemic. People have been working remotely for decades. Some jobs just needed access to a post-box, some just needed a telephone and most remote work could be achieved as long as there was internet connectivity.

While such companies as Webex, Zoom and Teams have been around for some time, the mindset to trust employees to remain productive outside of their work environs was missing. The pandemic turned it around. Employers had no choice. And the result? Remote working grew exponentially. Statistics show that in the USA, at most 5% of the workforce was working from home before the pandemic and within a matter of weeks, it increased to 37%.

Is remote working here to stay? Employees who moved from London to Cornwall (a county with extensive coastlines, approximately 450 km from the capital) or Sydney to Cairns

(2,500km apart) would readily agree. But are the benefits as great as they appear?

To evaluate this, Microsoft, one of the world's largest tech companies, commissioned a study with the support of a researcher from University of California, Berkeley, to understand the effects of remote working on collaboration between employees.

The study covered the period of December 2019 to June 2020, assessed 61,000 employees and evaluated anonymized data on the number of e-mails, meetings, instant messages, corporate chat, and meetings held over conferencing tools, as well as data input to their time sheet system. It was published in the *Nature Human Behaviour* journal in September 2021 and was immediately picked up by media around the world.

Some of the results were not too positive. Microsoft stated that the shift to company-wide remote work caused the collaboration network to become more siloed, with workers less likely to communicate with those in other departments. They also concluded that collaborative time employees spent with other groups dropped by about 25% compared to pre-pandemic levels. One important finding was that during this time period, the number of phone and video calls and face-to-face meetings (which they call "rich" communication forms)



reduced in favour of asynchronous forms such as e-mail, corporate chat and text messages, which, in Microsoft's opinion, affects productivity and innovation. In fact, the authors of the paper state that "In light of these findings, companies should be thoughtful about if and how they choose to adopt long-term work-from-home policies".

It is important to point out that the study took place during a period of uncertainty and fear. The pandemic as well as the political events that took place in the USA at the time, would have had an impact on employee behaviour, which the researchers do not appear to have captured. For example, employees declining requests for face-to-face meetings because of family members being affected by COVID-19 is not a rare occurrence during a pandemic but would be rare under normal circumstances. In a period of

(continued on p11)

supplementally...

by John Blinke

Dark History

Science Magazine, August 17, 2021.

“Archaeologists unearth Nazi-era massacre in Poland’s ‘Death Valley’” (Antiquity)

Scientists from the Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology have begun to employ archaeological techniques to probe recent historic events. They used LIDAR and ground-penetrating radar to find evidence of World War II massacres in a place known locally as Poland’s Valley of Death. When excavating areas identified by remote probes, they found bone fragments, bullet casings, and jewellery belonging to hundreds of victims of two mass executions, one in 1939 and the other in 1945. Witnesses said bodies had been burned on pyres that blazed for several days. Then the remains were dumped into long trenches and covered up.

Hot Times

ScienceDaily August 11, 2021.

“Global Warming Begets More Warming, New Paleoclimate Study Finds.” (Science Advances)

The past can inform us about the future. From 66 million years ago to 5 million years ago, the global climate experienced many “warming events” — like those currently in the American Southwest and elsewhere — and few cold ones. Scientists at MIT’s Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences say comparatively small climate influences like volcanic activity or changes in Earth’s orbit were amplified, produc-



ing withering hot spells — apparently because ice sheets were not present to act as a buffer. The global climate became more stable when ice sheets returned to the northern hemisphere 5 million years ago. And now we are losing them again. This could explain the extreme hot periods we have been experiencing. And it suggests things will get worse.

Green Hornet

Science Magazine, August 24, 2021.

“These wasp nests give off one of the most powerful green glows in the animal kingdom.” (Journal of the Royal Society Interface).

The nests of *Polistes* wasps glow a brilliant green colour when illuminated by ultraviolet light. We can’t say this has any specific purpose, but it does great things for the wasps. Their eyes are most sensitive to the exact colour of that green glow. So the nest can be a kind of porch light for foraging wasps. Also, the fluores-

cent green protein absorbs UV from sunlight, protecting larvae in the nest.

Holey Cluster (Image above)

Scientific American, August 12, 2021. “Bumper Crop of Black Holes.” Contributed by Stephen Darnell.

Palomar 5 is a dispersed globular star cluster in the Milky Way’s halo. It is famous for the impressive star trails extending from it. Researchers at Yale University thought a bunch of stellar sized black holes might be causing the trails. So they created a number of computer simulations with different numbers of black holes. They thought thirty might do it. But the model that worked best had a hundred black holes flinging stars out of the cluster. The scientists think this process will eventually disperse the cluster. But it reveals a hiding place of many of the “small” black holes astronomers have been trying to find.

(continued from p9)

uncertainty, there will also be cancelled projects, postponed projects and projects which were changed significantly, which would also result in meetings getting cancelled, or sometimes replaced by e-mails and other forms of messages. These too, did not appear to have been captured.

Regardless of its shortcomings, the study has value because it is one of the very few of its kind which has taken place in a large company. It is also one of the few studies which presents clear arguments against remote working, backed by extensive data.

Can these findings be replicated at a different point of time within Microsoft or in other organizations? That is the important question.

(continued from p3)

activities moved online, and now starting to get back to in-person events. The coming year looks as though it will be even more interesting!

That board workshop I mentioned – we had commissioned a wide-ranging survey to find out what our members value about Mensa and what they would like to see in the future, and identified a range of new initiatives to help transform BML for the 21st century - including a complete overhaul of our ageing office systems. Requirements gathering has started for a brand new CRM, CMS and website to help us improve member experience, engagement with members, and communications between office, members, and

volunteers, and enhance the support offered.

We will also be relaunching our national magazine, and seeking to develop a much stronger voice for Mensa in the media and elsewhere to ensure we are part of any debate on human intelligence and IQ, helping deliver core objectives from the Mensa Constitution.

Chris Leek
Chairman, British Mensa

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THERESE'S TEASERS

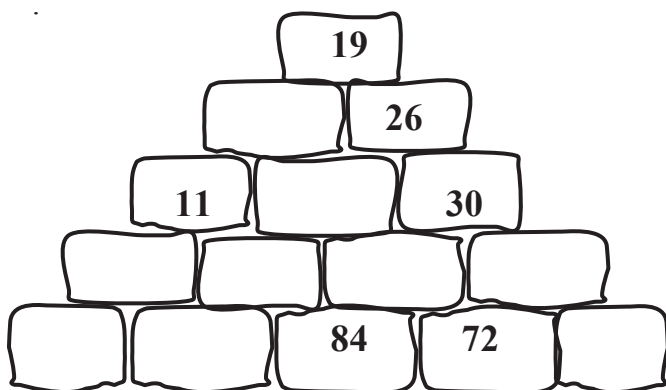
Cryptosum

Each symbol represents a different digit from 1 to 9. The sum of the digits in each row and column is shown. Find the sum of the numbers along the diagonal line from the top left-hand corner.

♁	♁	⚡	&	20
♠	♁	♠	○	19
□	♠	○	♠	18
♁	⚡	&	♁	22
27	19	10	23	?

Cairn

The number on each stone represents the difference between the numbers in the two stones on which it sits. There is a two-digit number in each of the bottom stones, using the digits 0-9 once each.



Rebus

An obstacle?



Cryptic legend protection

- Cot punch
- Coaches?
- Little dagger
- Ill-fitting TWIGPIN
- Places of residence
- Cads or scoundrels!
- Belonging to a Duke?
- Scrambled BROWKOOT
- First frog in swimming top
- Capone enters S & S?
- Governor-General follows you (reportedly) to German boat.
- Garden-waterer?

Riddle

My first is topflight; my last is rearlight;
My middle is somewhere to rest.
I may have some masts; I can be really fast;
I'm usually sent out on a quest.

Answers

Cryptosum: 22 (5 + 7 + 2 + 8) **Cairn:** 95 16 84 72 30
Rebus: Drawback **Cryptic Legend (foot) Protection:**
Bedsock, Trainers, Stiletto, Wingtip, Flats, Heels,
Wellingtons, Workboot, Fins, Sandals, Ugg boot, Hose.
Riddle: a F-LEE-T © Therese Moodie-Bloom