



MENSA
INTERNATIONAL

MARCH, 2022

ISSUE NO. 110

MENSA WORLD JOURNAL



p8

Member

profile:

Hana

Dojcanova,

a driving force

in the growth

of Mensa

Slovakia

by

Dr Susan Jensen

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what's in the MWJ this month...



- our Chairman Björn Liljeqvist reports on the 2021 IBD meeting on pp 3 and 4.

- there's an extra page this month to accommodate the financial reports. Thank you to our Treasurer, Jacek Cywinski, for four pages of these statements on pp 4, 5, 6 and 7.

- meet Hana Dojcanova, President of Mensa Slovakia, on p8.

- if you've been feeling guilty about that 'must-have' morning coffee, there's good news for you on p9!

- ever wondered what happens in the brain when you switch from simply hearing, to actively listening? p10 has the latest research.

- a big thank you to John Blinke, our Science guru, who never fails to provide timely and interesting science snippets! Read his latest Supplementally... column on p11.

- and on p13, internationally-renowned 'puzzlist' and Mensa's own Therese Moodie-Bloom confounds us again with her logic puzzles.

Happy reading!

The genetic signature of memory

Unique memory genes are expressed in different areas of the brain

Despite their common involvement in memory, the human cortex and subcortex display a distinct collection of gene signatures. The work recently published in *eNeuro* increases our understanding of how the brain creates memories and identifies potential genes for further investigation.

While scientists have extensively explored the anatomy and function of memory, its biological basis remains a mystery. Tan et al. analyzed the distribution of gene expression across brain regions linked with memory in humans to identify gene signatures of memory. To do so, the research team examined data from the Allen Human Brain Atlas, containing expression data for approximately

24,000 genes, in memory areas defined by a neuroimaging database. The team distilled the gene expression into memory gene signatures using bioinformatics.

The analysis revealed a set of unique genes expressed in the cortical memory areas, containing the entorhinal cortex, and another set in the subcortex, including the hippocampus. Genes preferentially expressed in the cortex are involved in memory processes and immune signalling. The subcortex expressed genes associated with generating new neurons and genes that give rise to non-neuronal brain cells. Genes expressed in both areas are involved in mRNA production and the cellular changes needed for memory creation.

Sciencedaily.com

MWJ INTERNATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION 2022

Members are invited to submit their original poems to the editor, mwjeditor@mensa.org, by August 1, 2022.

Poems are to be previously unpublished and no longer than 30 lines in length. The theme for the competition is **Nature**. All entries must be in English and following the judges' decision, no correspondence will be entered into.

By submitting an entry (maximum of one entry) into the competition, members understand that their poem may be published in the *Mensa World Journal* or in any other National Mensa journal at the editors' discretion. The author will, of course, be acknowledged.

Please include your National Mensa and membership number with your entry.

Björn Liljeqvist, Chairman Mensa International

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

After two years the coronavirus caught up with me as well. Even with two vaccine shots, COVID packed quite a punch, and hit just as I was getting ready for the third booster inoculation. The fever and sore throat were bad, but most annoying right now is the signature disappearance of all smell and flavour. Admittedly Swedish food is not known for its pungency but coffee has been reduced to nothing but hot black water. Even chocolate is no longer chocolate, but at least it tastes sweet.

Of course, none of this is unusual in any way. With a disease that has killed well over five million people, one should be lucky if these relatively mild discomforts are the worst that happens. By some estimates the Omicron variant is so contagious it will soon find a home in just about everyone's nostrils. And maybe this is how it ends - and it will not be too soon!

When I wrote this column back in 2020, I described how we had to cancel our Ex-Comm spring meeting due to Covid. Now in 2022 it's the exact same story. How little has changed in two years! But also how much! And just like many shops and restaurants used the pandemic to renovate and rebuild while the customers were gone, Mensa International has focused inwards on our internal processes and services. So I like to think 2022 is the year we go back to normal, with more strength and preparation as an organisation.

The 2021 IBD Meeting

The main yearly event for Mensa International is the meeting of the International Board of Directors (IBD), with representatives from each Full National Mensa. Last year it was held on two Saturdays in November as an online Zoom conference live streamed to members on our Workplace community. You can actually still watch it there. More importantly, if you are curious about the governance and politics of the Mensa organisation, the IBD meeting should be your focal point.

The Agenda alone is 179 pages. Fewer than 20 of those pages deal with the actual meeting. The rest is a compact set of reports from each national Mensa in the world, as well as all international volunteers. Lots of fascinating data in there. You can find all historic agendas, and minutes on mensa.org. You can read what is going on in every national group, what has changed since last year, projects relating to PR, giftedness, testing and so on. A table of the membership number by country counts our worldwide membership to be 143,666. Comparing with the



2019 numbers, it means the pandemic has only caused a 1 per cent drop in members. This bodes well for the continuation.

Motions passed

Most motions passed were minor updates to the Bylaws, but some more substantial decisions were also made.

- The IBD voted to sponsor the European Mensa Juniors Camp in Germany this summer, with £4000.
- A donation of £16 000 to the Mensa Education and Research Foundation, for the purpose of funding international scholarships.
- The updated strategic plan for Mensa International was approved, replacing

the older document from 2012.

- An update to the Special Interest Group policy. It makes clearer the distinction between National SIGs and International SIGs. N-SIGs are the responsibility of national Mensas, but they may still accept foreign members if they want. I-SIGs are the responsibility of Mensa International and have by definition members from more than one country from the start.
- A Task Group was set up to gather data and propose actions needed to reduce harassment and other inappropriate behaviours within Mensa.
- The 2024 IBD meeting will be held in the Asia-Pacific region. Host country to be decided in October. By earlier decisions the 2022 meeting is in Montenegro and 2023 in Texas, USA.
- An international member directory

is to be set up, to serve as the master source of membership status information internationally.

This will require both the acquisition of an appropriate software platform (a CRM system) and coordination with each single national Mensa to ensure that updated member data can be shared with Mensa International routinely, securely and in line with data privacy regulations. An international member directory would be used to verify membership outside of one's home group and would allow for easier access to FB groups, SIGs, the website, the Workplace community and whatever other services Mensa will offer in the future. A lot of work remains, but a policy foundation has now been laid in our Bylaws that will guide this work going forward.

A note on Workplace

Our sprawling community on Workplace from Meta is alive and well. Last year we managed to secure free access under the "Workplace for Good" programme open to eligible non-profit organisations. All Mensa members are welcome to sign up. This is both a volunteer community where the IBD and ExComm are doing business, and a place for members to hang out with seventy active groups on many topics. See <https://www.mensa.org/members/connections/workplace> for information on how to log in. If you cannot access mensa.org, please contact your national Mensa member support.

Floreat Mensa!

Björn Liljeqvist
Chairman, Mensa International

MENSA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (REGISTERED NUMBER: 00848100)

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
TURNOVER	3	492,560	456,287
Administrative expenses		238,386	402,682
		254,174	53,605
Other operating income		1,447	-
OPERATING SURPLUS and SURPLUS BEFORE TAXATION		255,621	53,605
Tax on surplus		-	-
SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR		<u>255,621</u>	<u>53,605</u>

MENSA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (REGISTERED NUMBER: 00848100)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
31 DECEMBER 2020

	Notes	2020		2019	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Intangible assets	5		1		1
Tangible assets	6		3,899		1,553
Investments	7		1,654		1,641
			<u>5,554</u>		<u>3,195</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	8	78,007		71,249	
Cash at bank and in hand		838,265		557,985	
		<u>916,272</u>		<u>629,234</u>	
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	9	88,314		54,538	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>827,958</u>		<u>574,696</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>833,512</u>		<u>577,891</u>
RESERVES					
Income and expenditure account			<u>833,512</u>		<u>577,891</u>
			<u>833,512</u>		<u>577,891</u>

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors and authorised for issue on and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
J Cywinski - Director

MENSA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (REGISTERED NUMBER: 00848100)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

3. TURNOVER

In the year to 31 December 2020 85% (2019: 85%) of the company's turnover was derived from markets outside of the United Kingdom & Ireland.

Component income is analysed geographically as follows:

	2020 £	2019 £
USA & Canada	192,428	193,116
UK & Ireland	65,998	62,491
Europe	141,907	136,482
Asia-Pacific	23,483	28,571
South Africa	974	1,088
South America	1,201	1,392
	<u>425,991</u>	<u>423,140</u>

4. EMPLOYEES AND DIRECTORS

The average number of employees during the year was 2 (2019 - 2).

5. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Patents and licences £
COST	
At 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020	<u>10,270</u>
AMORTISATION	
At 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020	<u>10,269</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 December 2020	<u><u>1</u></u>
At 31 December 2019	<u><u>1</u></u>

MENSA INTERNATIONAL LIMITED (REGISTERED NUMBER: 00848100)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Plant and machinery etc £
COST	
At 1 January 2020	3,572
Additions	3,034
	<u>6,606</u>
At 31 December 2020	6,606
DEPRECIATION	
At 1 January 2020	2,019
Charge for year	688
	<u>2,707</u>
At 31 December 2020	2,707
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 December 2020	<u>3,899</u>
At 31 December 2019	<u>1,553</u>

7. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

The shares in group undertakings present a 100% holding of the ordinary share capital of Intermensa Limited, a dormant non trading company.

8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade debtors	70,843	67,784
Other debtors	7,164	3,465
	<u>78,007</u>	<u>71,249</u>

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2020 £	2019 £
Bank loans and overdrafts	2,195	-
Trade creditors	36,123	27,107
Taxation and social security	4,596	-
Other creditors	45,400	27,431
	<u>88,314</u>	<u>54,538</u>

MEMBER PROFILE

by Susan Jensen

Hana Dojcanova has been a driving force in the growth of Mensa Slovakia.

Hana was born 59 years ago in Kosice, in the Slovakian part of Czechoslovakia. When she was two, her family moved to her mother's home town of Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, where she has lived ever since.

Her paternal grandfather was a judge in Prague. Her maternal grandfather was the mayor of Sucevany, Slovakia, known as a centre for intellectuals, and co-founded a progressive school that is now an English/Slovakian bilingual high school.

Hana's grandmother and mother were highly educated, brilliant women who lived on egalitarian terms with their husbands and the world, "generations ahead of their time." They had open hearts as well as open minds, and taught young Hana to embrace the world and other people without fear or prejudice.

Hana grew up in a rondo-cubist modern home with her civil engineer father, journalist mother and two siblings. At an early age, she showed an interest in many things ranging from drama and horseback riding to history and literature. After graduating from Comenius University with degrees in marketing and journalism, she did a year's internship at the Na-

tional Journalism Center in Washington, D.C. Since then, she has worked as a journalist and anchorwoman for Public Radio and TV and also as a freelance Public Relations person.

Hana married at age 30 and had two daughters, both Mensa members. Dominika (28) is now completing her PhD in neuroscience in Prague and Dorota (19) is finishing bilingual high school and preparing to study opera singing.

Hana, who speaks fluent Slovak, Czech, English, and Russian (and can passably speak French and German), has worked as a freelance PR person for some of the world's biggest companies. Right now, she is the deputy for the old town of Bratislava, working as a journalist, on the board of several institutions, and completing her PhD in critical thinking at Paneuropean University.

When Hana and her husband L'Ubos joined Mensa Slovakia in 2007, it was a small group of people without many activities and had only provisional status with Mensa International. Hana became Vice-President and then President of Mensa Slovakia, leading it into full Mensa Status (2012) and growing it into the current level of 700+ members. She



was recently elected to the position of President again.

As part of her efforts to expand Mensa membership, Hana developed IQ tests that became widely distributed in schools and private settings. Whenever people score in the upper 2% on these tests, they are encouraged to join Mensa.

Mensa Slovakia has several active groups throughout the country and hosts Fall and Spring annual gatherings in various locations that always include beautiful excursions. They also hosted the EMAG and Silvensa European Mensa gathering, in Bratislava, in

(continued on p12)

enjoy your morning coffee!

Good news for those of us who can't face the day without their morning flat white: a long-term study has revealed drinking higher amounts of coffee may make you less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.

As part of the Australian Imaging, Biomarkers and Lifestyle Study of ageing, researchers from Edith Cowan University (ECU) investigated whether coffee intake affected the rate of cognitive decline of more than 200 Australians over a decade.

Lead investigator Dr Samantha Gardener said results showed an association between coffee and several important markers related to Alzheimer's disease.

"We found participants with no memory impairments and with higher coffee consumption at the start of the study had lower risk of transitioning to mild cognitive impairment - which often precedes Alzheimer's disease - or developing Alzheimer's disease over the course of the study," she said.

Drinking more coffee gave positive results in relation to certain domains of cognitive function, specifically executive function which includes planning, self-control, and attention.

Higher coffee intake also seemed to be linked to slowing the accumulation of the amyloid protein in the brain, a key factor in the development of Alzheimer's disease.

Dr Gardener said although further research was needed, the study was encouraging as it indicated drinking coffee could be an easy way to help delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

"It's a simple thing that people can change," she said. "It could be particularly useful for people who are at risk of cognitive decline but haven't developed any symptoms.

"We might be able to develop some clear guidelines people can follow in middle age and hopefully it could then have a lasting effect."

If you only allow yourself one cup of coffee a day, the study indicates you might be better off treating yourself to an extra cup, although a maximum number of cups per day that provided a beneficial effect was not able to be established from the current study.

"If the average cup of coffee made at home is 240g, increasing to two cups a day could potentially lower cognitive decline by eight per cent after 18 months," Dr Gardener said.

"It could also see a five per cent decrease in amyloid accumulation in the brain over the same time period."

In Alzheimer's disease, the amyloid clumps together forming plaques



which are toxic to the brain. The study was unable to differentiate between caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee, nor the benefits or consequences of how it was prepared (brewing method, the presence of milk and/or sugar etc).

Dr Gardener said the relationship between coffee and brain function was worth pursuing.

"We need to evaluate whether coffee intake could one day be recommended as a lifestyle factor aimed at delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease," she said.

Researchers are yet to determine precisely which constituents of coffee are behind its seemingly positive effects on brain health. Though caffeine has been linked to the results, preliminary research shows it may not be the sole contributor to potentially delaying Alzheimer's disease.

"Crude caffeine" is the by-product of de-caffeinating coffee and has been shown to be as effective in partially preventing memory impairment in mice, while other coffee components such as cafestol, kahweol and Eicosanoyl-5-hydroxytryptamide have also been seen to affect cognitive impairment in animals in various studies.

Sciencedaily.com November 23, 2021

Graphic: Guy Basabose on Unsplash.com

When the brain switches from hearing to listening

What happens in the brain when simply hearing becomes listening? To answer this question, researchers at the University of Basel have traced the neuronal fingerprint of the two types of sound processing in the mouse brain.

It is intuitively clear to us that there is a difference between passive hearing and active listening. Attention and an animated state, but also movement, play a role in how sound processing in the brain adjusts accordingly. Neuroscientists Professor Tania Rinaldi Barkat and Dr. Gioia De Franceschi from the Department of Biomedicine at the University of Basel have provided an accurate account of what happens in this process in the journal *Cell Reports*.

For their study, the researchers examined the activity of neurons in four different areas in the brains of mice known to be involved in increasingly complex sound processing. During the experiment, the animals were either passively hearing the sounds played to them, or actively listening to them to receive a reward for detecting the sounds.

Activity pattern depends on various factors

It was shown that the majority of neurons changed their activity when switching between hearing and listening. "But this doesn't mean that all neurons behaved the same way," explains De Franceschi. "We actually found ten

distinct and specific types of activity change."

While most of the neurons showed a change that was probably related to varying levels of attention, some of them also showed patterns of activity that were related to the arousal level of the mice, their movement, the availability of a reward, or a combination of these factors.

Impact on all processing levels

The auditory pathway in the brain consists of a number of different nuclei that relay acoustic information from the cochlea to the primary auditory cortex. Two of the four areas along the auditory pathway studied by the researchers are thought to be at a "higher level" in terms of processing complexity. "At the beginning of our study, we suspected that these were the areas particularly affected by attention to sounds," said Barkat. "Surprisingly, however, this wasn't the case." Attention also alters activity in brain areas previously thought to perform only basic forms of sound processing.

"The results make it clear that even the detection of a simple sound is a cognitive process that profoundly and extensively shapes the way the brain works, even at very early stages of sensory processing."

Sciencedaily.com December 14, 2021



The Mensa World Journal

is your magazine and it would be wonderful if you were to share your thoughts with the rest of the Mensa world. By and large, most of the articles are written by Mensans - for Mensans - and the opportunity is there for you to be one of these authors.

Topics can cover reports of Mensa events you've attended, your achievements, unusual hobbies and interests, or your successes.

Please limit your article length to 600 words and send it to the Editor, Kate Nacard: mweditor@mensa.org. Please also include your National Mensa and your membership number.

supplementally...

by John Blinke

Battle Ax

New York Times, December 1, 2021. "This Dinosaur Found in Chile Had a Battle Axe for a Tail." (Nature) Ankylosaurs (pictured at right) are famous for having mace-like tails that could bash the daylight out of predators. But a small, newly found creature called *Stegouros elen-gassen* had armour like an ankylosaur with a one-of-a-kind bladed tail designed for slicing and dicing.

Stegouros had a body plan more like a stegosaur. Which means the origin of these kinds of critters was complicated.

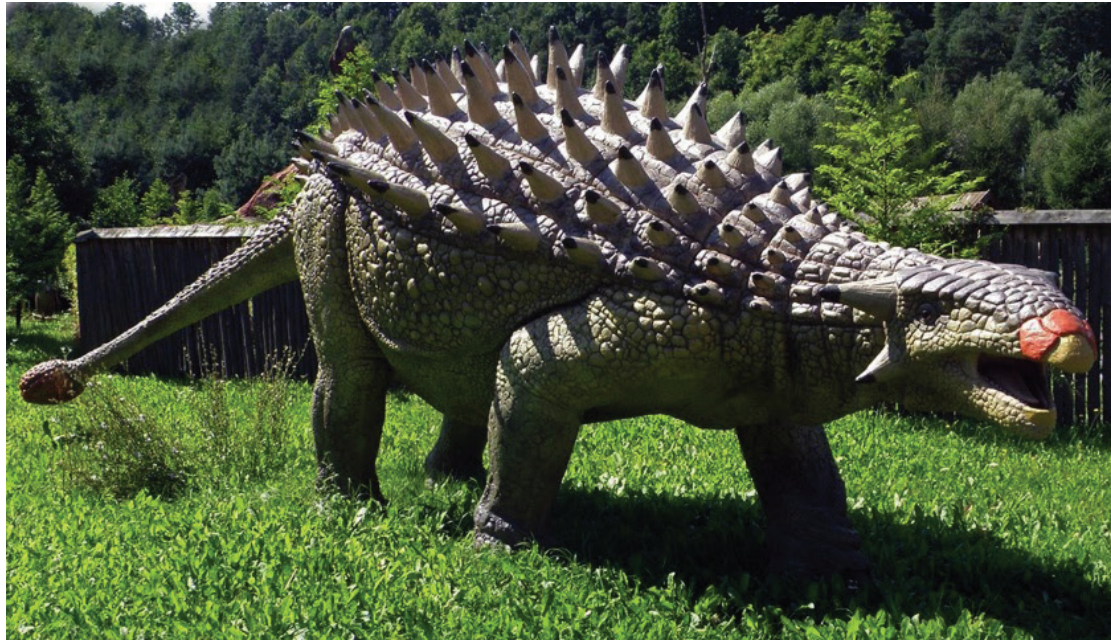
Pol Position

NASA HQ News. "NASA Launches New Mission to Explore Universe's Most Dramatic Objects."

What can you say about light? It has frequency. It has brightness. And, although we seldom think about it, it has polarization. The IXPE mission is set to explore the sky in the kind of energetic light we call X-rays. For the first time, it will look for polarization along with those other properties. Because X-rays are emitted by the most energetic phenomena, IXPE will teach us about black holes and neutron stars and maybe some new sky objects we are not yet familiar with.

Iconic

ScienceDaily, November 29, 2021. "Strong Winds Power Electric Fields



In The Upper Atmosphere." (Nature Geoscience)

The ionosphere is the last wisp of Earth's atmosphere before outer space begins. It is largely composed of oxygen that is ionized by sunlight. To radio and satellite operators, it is like a squirming funhouse mirror roughly 80km above the ground. It can variously block, reflect, or transmit radio signals because the thin air is electrically charged. Disturbances caused by the sun are most obvious.

But NASA's ICON satellite has found that hot air rising from the ground is equally important. Hot packets of air bloom into the ionosphere when the sun is up. They churn the ionosphere, creating winds of tornado speed and driving a planet-wide electric generator made of air. Wind can cause electric charge separation because it moves large, positively charged particles more easily than smaller

negative particles.

The Blues

Science News, January 21, 2021. "Space Station Detectors Found The Source Of Weird 'Blue Jet' Lightning."

Lightning usually happens when charged areas in clouds discharge into each other from many kilometres away. But, sometimes, turbulence within clouds can bring oppositely charged areas together very quickly, so the spark path is short. When this happens, you get a brief but massive discharge that causes the phenomenon known as a blue jet. Astronauts on the ISS recorded one of these with their instruments, finally proving the origin of blue jets. The jets are blue coloured because the discharge is strong enough to excite stratospheric nitrogen in the atmosphere.

(continued on p12)

(continued from p11)

Moon Has Mail

Smithsonian, December 21, 2021.
"Jupiter's Moon Ganymede Sounds Like Dial-Up Internet." Contributed by Stephen Darnell.

Ganymede is the largest moon of Jupiter. And it is the only moon in our solar system with a magnetic field. NASA's Juno orbiter is primarily studying the giant planet itself. But it passed within a thousand kilometres of Ganymede — close enough to take a good look at it with all its instruments. A recording of electromagnetic waves there sounds like an early internet handshake on a telephone modem. "You have mail!"

John Blinke

Johnb44221@cs.com

(continued from p8)

2018.

Hana and her family have visited every world continent, travelling together to over 100 countries. They enjoy cycling, skiing, art, literature and connecting with people from different cultures.

Hana faces each day with optimism and enthusiasm, and cherishes the deep relationships she enjoys with her family, friends and the many people who have crossed her path.

She feels a sense of connectedness with everyone inhabiting planet earth and believes each person is born with their own unique gifts and unique mission.

SJ

Mensa International Photographer of the Year 2022

The details of the MIL Photocup Competition will be announced in the April 2022 edition of the Mensa World Journal, so get your cameras ready! The competition has been going for some 10 years, and over that time there have been thousands of entries. Make yours one of the 2022 ones!

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THERESE'S TEASERS

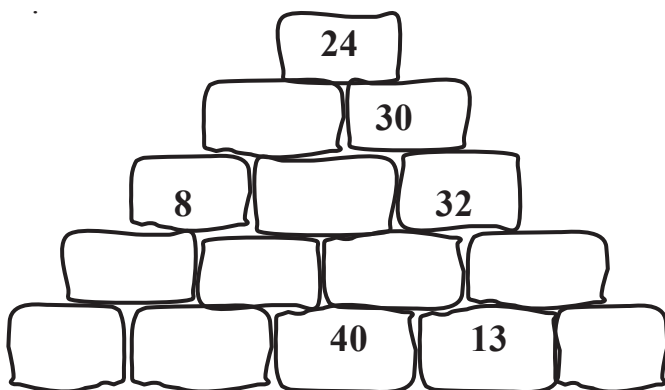
Cryptosum

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.

◆	♏	■	◯	21
♁	♎	◆	⚡	14
♋	◯	⊗	■	27
♏	⚡	♁	♋	19
24	15	21	21	?

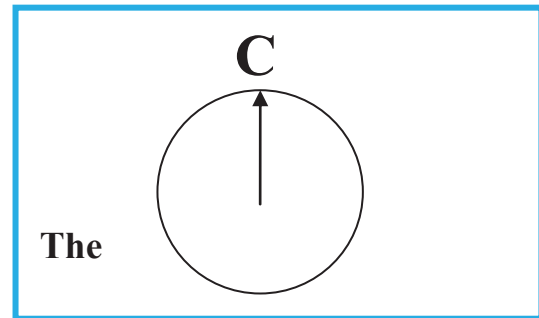
Cairn

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

Decipher the rebus to find a place



Camel Race

Two Afghani tribesman decided to race their camels over a 220 metre stretch of desert. Abdul beat Reza by twenty metres and claimed that he would still win even if he started 22 metres behind the starting line. Presuming the camels each travelled at a consistent speed, was he right?

Wordplay

Find a two-word palindrome for each of the following :

- A dull poet
- Unsteadiness caused by disease
- Components of a narrow band
- Sharing of watercraft for commuting
- Exchange feet
- Clothes skite

Answers

Cryptosum: 24 (6 + 2 + 7 + 9) **Cairn:** 98 65 40 13 72
Rebus: The North Sea **Camel Race:** No. It would be a dead heat. **Wordplay:** Drab bard; Yaws sway; Strap parts; Sloop pools, Swap paws; Garb brag

© Therese Moodie-Bloom

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