

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

wieder einmal neigt sich ein ereignisreiches Jahr seinem Ende zu, das vor allem auf internationaler Ebene einige so vielleicht nicht erwartete Ergebnisse zu verzeichnen hatte. Eine knappe Mehrheit der Briten hat sich gegen die EU entschieden und die Vereinigten Staaten werden dank des dortigen Wahlsystems einen Präsidenten bekommen, den viele sicherlich nicht auf der Rechnung hatten. Wie sich all das auf die restliche Welt auswirken wird, werden wir ganz bestimmt im vor uns liegenden neuen Jahr erleben.

Die Arbeit unserer Gesellschaft war nicht ganz so überraschend. Wie üblich, können Sie in dieser Ausgabe unseres Newsletters wieder mehrere Beiträge z.B. zu unseren Vortragsveranstaltungen ab Seite 4 oder einen Bericht von Dorothea Böhme über unsere Tagesfahrt zur Miniwelt Lichtenstein lesen, der gleich im Anschluss an dieses Vorwort folgt.

Natürlich befasst sich ein Artikel entsprechend der Jahreszeit auch mit Weihnachten, doch dreht es sich dabei um weniger angenehme Umstände, mit denen britische Königinnen und Könige in der Vergangenheit konfrontiert waren. Lesen Sie mehr dazu ab Seite 6.

In dieser Zeit des Jahres, in der die Tage wieder kürzer werden und das Wetter nicht immer dazu einlädt, das Haus zu verlassen, vertreibt mancher die Langeweile mit Spielen. Eine beliebte Freizeitbeschäftigung nicht nur für Kinder sind Puzzles. In dem Beitrag auf Seite 10 können Sie mehr zu diesem Thema erfahren.

Abschließend wünschen wir Ihnen eine frohe Weihnachtszeit, alles Gute für das Neue Jahr sowie viel Spaß mit unserem neuesten Newsletter.

Die Redaktion



Ausfahrt zur Miniwelt Lichtenstein

Am 24.09.2016 treffen sich 13 Mitglieder unserer Gesellschaft mit ihren Partnern zu unserer diesjährigen Ausfahrt. Bei schönstem Sommerwetter ist es unser Ziel, auf eine kleine Weltreise zu gehen.

Wie kann es sein, all das an einem einzigen Tag zu erleben? Nur wenige Kilometer von Chemnitz entfernt beginnt unsere Weltreise in der Miniwelt Lichtenstein, die im Jahre 1999 eröffnet wurde.

Gestresst von vielen Umleitungen treffen alle mehr oder weniger glücklich gegen 10.00 Uhr am vereinbarten Treffpunkt, dem Parkplatz Miniwelt, ein.

Nach dem Finanziellen kann nun unsere Sightseeing-Tour rund um die Welt starten. Jeder auf seine Art und Weise, bereits Bekanntes wieder zu sehen oder Neues zu entdecken.

Auf einer Fläche von ca. fünf Hektar sind über 100 bedeutende historische und aktuelle Bauwerke der Erde aus fünf Kontinenten in einem Maßstab von 1:25 zu bewundern.



Tower of London

Unsere kleine Weltreise führt uns zum Eiffelturm und Triumphbogen von Paris, zur Oper von Sydney, zum Obelisk von Washington D.C., zum Schiefen Turm von Pisa, zum Tower von London, zur Porta Nigra, zum Capitol der United States, zur Freiheitsstatue von New York und zu vielen anderen bedeutenden Bauwerken der Erde. Die 7 Weltwunder der Antike und die der Neuzeit sind ebenfalls Ziel unserer kleinen Weltreise. Aber auch bedeutende historische Bauwerke Deutschlands und der Region sind in unserem Reiseprogramm mit enthalten wie Schloss Sanssouci, die Wuppertaler Schwebebahn, die Seebrücke von Sellin, das Brandenburger Tor und der Fernsehturm von Berlin, das Rathaus von Wernigerode, die Frauenkirche Dresden, der Flughafen München mit Extraflügen, die Burg Eltz, die Wartburg bei Eisenach, der Dom zu Speyer, die Göltzschtalbrücke, Schloss Augustusburg, Schloss Waldenburg, und der Rote Turm Chemnitz, um nur einige zu nennen.

Das Faszinierende an all diesen Bauwerken ist die Detailtreue, mit der die Bauherren die Miniwelt schufen. Über 3500 Jahre Baugeschichte sind hier zu erleben.

Interessantes erdachten sich die Bauherren für die Besucher ebenfalls. An verschiedenen Modellen können per Tastendruck spezifische Aktionen in Gang gesetzt werden, so z. B. der blinkende Leuchtturm, der

Glockenklang im Dom zu Speyer, Orgelmusik in der Frauenkirche, die Wuppertaler Schwebbahn fährt aus dem Bahnhof und der Airbus zieht seine Bahn über den Köpfen der Besucher. Selbst das Telefon in der englischen Telefonzelle ist scharf geschaltet. Auch die Eisenbahnfans kommen an diesem Tag bzw. Wochenende wegen des Gartenbahntreffens auf ihre Kosten.

Nach reichlich 1½ Stunden Weltreise wollen wir natürlich auch noch den Kosmos erkunden. Deshalb treffen wir uns alle kurz vor 12.00 Uhr vor dem Minikosmos, um uns von der Geschichte und Magie des Teleskops inspirieren zu lassen. Zwei kleine Linsen wollen unser Weltbild verändern. Es wird eine Reise durch 400 Jahre Astronomie von Galileo Galilei bis zum Hubble-Weltraumteleskop. In den drehbaren Sitzen des 360-Grad-Kinos mit 3-D-Effekt auf ca. 230 Quadratmetern gewölbter Kuppelleinwand kann jeder für eine halbe Stunde viel Neues erfahren und seinen eigenen Gedanken über den Kosmos nachgehen.

Zum Abschluss unserer kleinen Tagesweltreise treffen wir uns alle in der von mir reservierten Gaststätte „Zum Tor der Welt“ zum Mittagessen nach eigener Wahl.

Der Sonnengott tat sein Bestes. Ich denke es war insgesamt ein schöner erlebnisreicher Tag, zumal die Kosten für unsere „Weltreise“ für alle erschwinglich waren.

Dorothea Böhme

Review of the last months

25 August 2016

"Between Boston and Cape Cod - Impressions of the Freedom Trail and the New World"

We had to wait more than one year and a half for **Silvia Tröller's** talk that was originally scheduled for February 2015 but had to be cancelled due to her illness.

The region Mrs Tröller talked about lies in the north-east of the United States and played an important role in American history. That's why she mentioned a lot of historical facts in her presentation, beginning with the first English settlers who reached the new world in 1607 followed by the so called pilgrim fathers who arrived at Cape Cod on the Mayflower in 1620. With photos and very illustrative words she gave an idea of the conditions on the ship during the voyage. In the area there are several monuments dedicated to the settlers and to the native Americans who helped them to survive.

Mrs Tröller also showed photos of Plymouth, which was founded by the pilgrim fathers, and Boston, which is the capital of Massachusetts and was one of the centres of the fight for independence from England. On the so called Freedom Trail, that is 4 km long, visitors to the city are led by marks on the way and by means of an mp3-player to 16 sites that played a certain role in the course of incidents at that time, such as the Old South Meeting House, the Old State House and the Paul Revere House.

The very informative report ended with some impressive pictures of the skyline of Boston taken from a boat and at night.

27 October 2016

"Who was Currer Bell? Understanding the Victorian writer Charlotte Brontë"

Prof Dr Burkhard Niederhoff of the Ruhr University Bochum had come straight from Bochum to Chemnitz to give a talk on the English novelist and poet Charlotte Brontë on the occasion of her 200th birthday.

In the first part of his talk, Prof Niederhoff gave some insight into Charlotte's relatively short life by quoting from Elizabeth Gaskell's biography *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. To give an idea of her appearance he showed a painting of her and her two younger sisters that was painted by her brother. We also learned that due to their mother's early death Charlotte had to assume her role in the family. Prof Niederhoff explained that Currer Bell was her pseudonym as a writer.

In the second part, Prof Niederhoff dealt with Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* that is based on her own experiences. He gave an overview of the plots and played a clip from a film. Unfortunately, there were some sound problems, but Prof Niederhoff explained what it was about.

At the end he read passages from the book and compared the roles of men and women in the society at that time. The large audience thanked him with long lasting applause.

At this point I want to thank Mrs Prof Sandten and Dr Kronshage of the Department of English Literature at the TU Chemnitz who suggested Prof Dr Niederhoff as a potential lecturer and made the contact.

24 November 2016

"London Specials"

In her report about a 10-day visit to the British capital, **Marion Rotstein** took us to places that may not be so well-known to the average tourist, who usually sees the main attractions of London during a sight-seeing tour by coach.

Mrs Rotstein divided her talk into 5 parts beginning with the modern skyline of the city and its ancient buildings. In the following part History and Culture she showed photos from visits to the British Museum, the Southwark Cathedral with its Shakespeare Memorial and Shakespeare window, the Globe Theatre, and the Jack the Ripper Museum, to name only a few. She mentioned Sir Francis Drake, who played an important role for Britain to become the leading sea-power.

In part 3, that had the headline History and Technology, Mrs Rotstein reported about a trip to Greenwich on the Dockland Light Train, an example for modern technology since it runs driverless. We saw pictures of the Royal Observatory and the Cutty Sark, once the world's fastest tea-clipper and now a museum. As another example for historical technology, she showed the Tower Bridge that opens several times a day to allow ships to pass.

The destination of the next part was the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, a sporting complex built for the 2012 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. A special landmark of the park is the unusually shaped sculpture and observation tower ArcelorMittal Orbit and Mrs Rotstein showed photos of the fantastic view from the tower. She also mentioned the International Quarter, which is a new commercial district that will include several million square metres of office space and homes known as Glasshouse Gardens.

In the final part Mrs Rotstein dealt with the royal London. She showed pictures of Buckingham Palace, in front of which some sporting event was taking place when she was there, and of the Royal Mews, that combines horse stables, the carriage house and a garage for the cars of the Royal Family and can be visited by the public.

Mrs Rotstein's interesting report, that was well received by the audience, made clear that it definitely takes more than just one day or two to explore this big city.

Siegfried Rosch

Vorschau auf unsere nächsten Veranstaltungen

Fr., 16.12.2016, 18 Uhr, Veranstaltungsraum des Otto-Brenner-Hauses, Hainstr. 125: Kurzversammlung und Weihnachtsfeier der DBG

Di., 10.1.2017, 16 Uhr, Veranstaltungsraum des Otto-Brenner-Hauses, Hainstr. 125: Stollenparty, Eintritt: 2 Stück Stollen

Do., 26.1.2017, 19 Uhr, Veranstaltungssaal im DASTietz: "The Beautiful South: From Arundel to Winchester", Videovortrag in englischer Sprache von Siegfried Rosch

Do., 23.2.2017, 19 Uhr, Veranstaltungssaal im DASTietz: "The Music and Poetry of Bob Dylan", Vortrag in englischer Sprache von Einde O'Callaghan

Do., 30.3.2017, 19 Uhr, Veranstaltungssaal im DASTietz: geplant ist ein englischsprachiger Vortrag von Silvia Tröller, dessen Thema bis zum Druck noch nicht feststand

(Änderungen vorbehalten)

Royal Christmas Feuds

For royals of the past, Christmas has not always been a joyous time. True stories of imprisonment, assassination and execution might put our modern family quarrels into perspective. From King Henry I's death causing a civil war to Queen Victoria's chilly greeting to her daughter, history shows that Christmas isn't just a challenge for the modern family, but for the royals of the past, too.

Festive Force: In 1126, at the age of 58 and with no male heir to the throne, King Henry I gathered his barons, bishops and nobility and called them to swear that Henry's daughter, Matilda, be upheld as successor to the throne of England and Normandy. The nation had never had a female ruler, and the death of Henry led to a 19-year civil war ended only by a peace treaty on Christmas Day, 1153.

Christmas Rage: Tensions had long been high between King Henry II and his former close friend, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. But an inflammatory sermon on Christmas morning in 1170 saw four court knights riding to Canterbury, murdering the Archbishop on 29 December in his own church. Henry II is responsible for some of the country's most magnificent buildings, such as the Great Tower at Dover Castle, but he was a better builder of castles than family relationships, imprisoning his wife - Eleanor of Aquitaine - for 16 years and only releasing her at Christmas in 1184 to present a reunited family front and fulfill a pledge of fidelity.

Murderous Christmas time: In 1399, King Henry IV's first Christmas at Windsor after deposing his cousin, Richard II, saw nobles plotting an assassination attempt, thwarted only by one of the conspirators having a last minute change of heart.

All I Warrant for Christmas: Tudor Christmas was an extravagant and joyous affair at palaces such as Windsor and Eltham, but it was while keeping Christmas at Greenwich that Queen Elizabeth I drafted the formal warrant for the execution of her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots.

By George: The Georgians knew how to have an argumentative Christmas. King George I barred his son - the future George II - from attending court at one stage. He was also barred from being Regent in George I's absence, and generally relations were less than cordial. Things got even worse with George II and his son, Prince Frederick, who seem to have genuinely loathed each other. Fuelled by 14 years apart during Frederick's childhood in Hanover, by 1737 they were barely on speaking terms, Frederick ignored by his father and not speaking to his mother. He was forced to smuggle his pregnant wife away from court to prevent her being kept there by his father.

Queen Victoria is not amused: Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's youngest daughter, travelled to Germany in 1884 and met a young chap she took rather a shine to. Unfortunately, the Queen disapproved of the wish to marry and refused to speak to Beatrice other than in writing for 7 months. The chill lasted until Christmas, when Beatrice's suitor visited Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, and relations were restored.

Source: www.english-heritage.org.uk/

This and that from the 'island'

The Queen in the underground

Crossrail, the highly anticipated new rail system running from Reading to Shenfield through the heart of London, has been named the Elizabeth Line in honour of the Queen. The new name was unveiled at a ceremony at Bond Street Station in March, attended by Her Majesty.

The 26 miles of tunnelling (mainly under central London) were completed in June 2015. The focus is now on fitting out the new tunnels and stations as well as upgrading stations and infrastructure on existing parts of the network.

The new Elizabeth Line, that is set to open fully in December 2018, is a high-speed rail service intended to bring increased capacity to the capital's transport system. Once the line is fully open it is expected to carry over half a million passengers a day. It will link parts of Berkshire with Buckinghamshire and Essex, running more than 70 miles (120 km) from Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east to Reading and Heathrow in the west, including a 13 mile (21 km) stretch underground through central London.



Auctioned island

An island in the river Avon that went to auction at the end of September was sold for £280,000 following competitive bidding. With a guide price of £190,000, the small, grassy haven of Osier Island garnered a lot of interest - with one man even calling up from Canada - and more than 100 people turned up to bid for the lot.

"It was very exciting, in the end there was competitive bidding between four people," says Knight Frank's office Manager, Ellie Howells. "People really seemed to fancy that lifestyle change."

The one permanent residence on the island dates back to the 1940s and is a timber ranch-style two-bedroom house built on a raised platform away from floodwaters. No services are connected to the property although the previous owner used a solar panel for electricity, bottled gas for cooking, a wood burning stove for heating and a rainwater holding tank.

Osier is full of wildlife with barn owls, kingfishers and a wealth of ornithological interest. Spanning 0.44 acres, it has several boat moorings, a garden and not much else.

Despite being well hidden, Osier Island is just seven miles from Worcestershire and 1.5 miles from Pershore Station, which has direct trains into London and Birmingham.

Big Ben stops ringing

For more than 150 years, its four huge faces have gazed across London – watching over five monarchs, 23 prime ministers and two world wars. The giant bell known as Big Ben even rang throughout the Blitz, a defiant toll of normality that bolstered flagging spirits as German bombs rained down.

But next year, the clock tower will fall silent for several months as one of the biggest refurbishment projects in its history swings into action.

This won't be the first time the clock has stopped. It was silenced for nine months in August 1976 when metal fatigue in the supporting structure caused one of the clock's weights to fall out of control, causing the first and only breakdown in its history. And, in 2007, it was out of action for seven weeks during planned maintenance.

But the £29 million facelift, that begins early in 2017, will provide the best opportunity yet to ensure that the clock can continue ticking for at least another 150 years.



Engineered by lawyer and amateur horologist Sir Edward Beckett Denison, the clock at Elizabeth Tower, which is located at the north end of the Houses of Parliament, represented a fundamental breakthrough in clock design.

The restoration process will begin with the construction of a huge self-supporting scaffold that will enclose the tower, taking around six months to build. With the scaffolding in place, one of the project's most nerve-jangling procedures will be carried out: the removal of the huge cast-iron clock dials – each of which are 7m in diameter and contain 312 delicate pieces of individually cut pot opal glass.

"There are signs of rust on each face," says Steve Jaggs, who boasts the title 'keeper of the Great Clock'. "We're going to take out a clock face at a time, send it away from site, get it repaired, treated, x-rayed, brought back and put into position again."

Behind the scenes, Westminster's clockmakers will start the process of dismantling the clock mechanism itself, examining every pivot, bearing and tooth. Most of the clock's original components will be retained, although the cables which support the clock's weights along with the pendulum's suspension spring will be replaced.

The team will also examine and repair the Ayrton light – a huge lantern at the top of the tower, installed at the request of Queen Victoria, that is illuminated whenever Parliament is sitting.

For the first time, advanced non-destructive testing techniques also will be used to probe the clock, bells, and supporting structures and identify cracks or stress fractures that could need repairing.

But one aspect won't be repaired: a crack that has been in Big Ben since shortly after the bell began ringing in 1859. Caused by an over-powerful striking hammer, this unexpected imperfection subtly altered the properties of the bell – and is thought to be a key element in its distinctive bong.

Our language section

The following text was written by James Harbeck and is a part of BBC Britain – a series focused on exploring this extraordinary island.

Chaotic English - Part 2

Adding to the greed is the laziness – or, as linguists call it, “economy of effort”. Sounds tend to change to save effort for either the speaker (dropping sounds out) or the listener (making sounds more distinct). Under Scandinavian and French influence, we tossed out troublesome bits of the complex Old English inflections, so a word like *hopian* got whittled down to *hope*, and over time, the e on the end stopped being said. In more recent centuries, we have often kept the spelling when sounds wear down: “vittle” is still written as *victual*. We simplified some sound combinations – “kn” became “n” and “wr” became “r.” We also stopped using – but not writing – some sounds altogether: the “kh” sound we spelled gh got changed to “f” as in *laughter* or just dropped, as in *daughter*.

Sometimes sounds just change capriciously. The most significant instance of this in English was the Great Vowel Shift. From the 1400s to about 1700, for reasons that remain unclear, our long vowels all shifted in our mouths like cream swirling slowly in a cup of tea. Before it, *see* rhymed with “eh”; *boot* was said like “boat”; and *out* sounded like “oot.” But when the sounds shifted, the spelling stayed behind.

Tongues and ears aren’t the only lazy things. Scribes and typesetters can be, too. If you bring over scribes from France or typesetters from the Netherlands and Belgium, where the first presses in Britain came from, they will tend to the standards they are used to. The French scribes, with their Latin influence, didn’t see why we would write *cwen* when obviously what they heard should be spelled something like *queen*. The Dutch typesetters felt that *gost* was missing something, so they slipped in an h to make *ghost*.

And, heck, if you charge by the letter, why not add in some extra “e”s? They seemed to be all over the place anyway.

And then came snobbery

What really made sure that English spelling was a losing game, though, was snobbery.

It started in the 11th Century, when French became the high-class language and loaded up our culinary, legal and poetic vocabularies. But the snobbery kicked into top gear in the Renaissance, when scholars developed a crush on the ancient classics. They started borrowing words wholesale; many of our scientific and technical terms come from Latin and Greek (and most of the Greek terms came first through Latin, with Latin ideas of how to spell them). But they also decided that words that we already had ought to display their classical heritage, too. Does *peple* trace back to Latin *populus*? Then it ought to bear a special amulet to show its nobility – let’s add the “o” and make it *people*! *Det* owes a debt to *debitum*? Then put a “b” in so we know it! Many words had letters added by this indi(c)table fau(l)t; sometimes, they changed their pronunciation to match the spelling, as in *fault*. And sometimes the re-spellers were wrong about the etymology. While *isle* (formerly *ile*) comes from *insula* (hence the “s”), for example, *island* does not; it’s from Old English *iegland*.

One more layer of snobbery has added further complications across the Atlantic over the last couple of centuries: national pride. The (relatively few) American simplifications of spelling – *color* for *colour*, *center* for *centre* – largely owe their existence to Noah Webster’s desire to create a distinctive American English. Canadian preference for keeping many British spellings, on the other hand, has the same nationalistic origins... just in reverse.

And now? Now we don’t even *want* to spell things as they sound. How do spellings like *hed*, *hart*, *lafter*, *dotter*, and *det* look to you? Uneducated, perhaps? Annoyingly simplistic? Exactly. We enjoy our discomforts – and we really enjoy arbitrary practices that allow us to tell who are and aren’t the “right sort”. We’ve taken a useful tool and turned it into a social filter.

Greed started the problem of our language and laziness entrenched it, but snobbishness lionizes it. The history of English is a tale of vice... and that is a word, by the way, that we got from the French – even if we can’t blame them for the vices themselves. (end)

Festive food

Die folgenden Worte bezeichnen weihnachtliche Genüsse, die man in dieser Zeit häufig auf britischen Tischen findet. Leider sind die Buchstaben etwas durcheinander geraten. Können Sie sie wieder in die richtige Reihenfolge bringen?

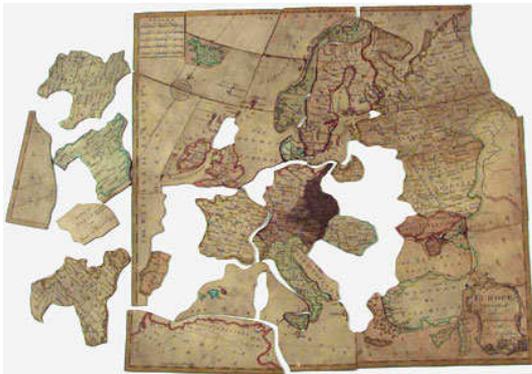
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. bingerdreag | 5. luey gol |
| 2. toast kurrey | 6. cinep mei |
| 3. gogeng | 7. Chramstis acke |
| 4. puld dumpgin | 8. wudell mien |

Auflösung aus Newsletter Nr. 77 "Summer Song Quiz"

- a) - 4. Summertime
- b) - 5. Summer Nights
- c) - 1. Cruel Summer
- d) - 2. The Boys Of Summer
- e) - 6. Summertime Blues
- f) - 3. In The Summertime
- g) - 8. Summer In The City
- h) - 7. Summer Of 69

The world in pieces

A **jigsaw puzzle** is a tiling puzzle that requires the assembly of often oddly shaped interlocking and tessellating pieces. Each piece usually has a small part of a picture on it; when complete, a jigsaw puzzle produces a complete picture. In some cases more advanced types have appeared on the market, such as spherical jigsaws and puzzles showing optical illusions.



The engraver and cartographer John Spilsbury, of London, is believed to have produced the first jigsaw puzzle around 1760, using a marquetry saw. Early jigsaws, known as dissections, were produced by mounting maps on sheets of hardwood and cutting along national boundaries, creating a puzzle useful for the teaching of geography. Such "dissected maps", were used to teach the children of King George III and Queen Charlotte by royal governess Lady Charlotte Finch.

The name "jigsaw" came to be associated with the puzzle around 1880 when fretsaws became the tool of choice for cutting the shapes. Since fretsaws are distinct from jigsaws, the name appears to be a misnomer.

Cardboard jigsaw puzzles appeared during the late 1800s, but were slow to replace the wooden jigsaw due to the manufacturer's belief that cardboard puzzles would be perceived as being of low quality, and the fact that profit margins on wooden jigsaws were larger.

Jigsaw puzzles soared in popularity during the Great Depression, as they provided a cheap, long-lasting, recyclable form of entertainment. It was around this time that jigsaws evolved to become more complex and more appealing to adults. They were also given away in product promotions, and used in advertising, with customers completing an image of the product being promoted.

Sales of wooden jigsaw puzzles fell after World War II as improved wages led to price increases, while at the same time improvements in manufacturing processes made cardboard jigsaws more attractive.

Most modern jigsaw puzzles are made out of cardboard since they are easier and cheaper to mass-produce than the original wooden models. An enlarged photograph or printed reproduction of a painting or other two-dimensional artwork is glued onto the cardboard before cutting. This board is then fed into a press. The press forces a set of hardened steel blades of the desired shape through the board until it is fully cut. This procedure is similar to making shaped cookies with a cookie cutter. The forces involved, however, are tremendously

greater and a typical 1000-piece puzzle requires a press that can generate upwards of 700 tons of force to push the knives of the puzzle die through the board. A puzzle die is a flat board, often made from plywood, which has slots cut or burned in the same shape as the knives that are used. These knives are set into the slots and covered in a compressible material, typically foam rubber, which serves to eject the cut puzzle pieces.

New technology has enabled laser-cutting of wooden or acrylic jigsaw puzzles. The advantage of cutting with a laser is that the puzzle can be custom cut into any size, any shape, with any size (or any number) of pieces.

Many museums have laser cut acrylic puzzles made of some of their more important pieces of art so that children visiting the museum can see the original piece and then assemble a jigsaw puzzle of the image that is also in the same shape as the piece of art. Acrylic is used because the pieces are very durable, waterproof, and can withstand continued use without the image fading, or the pieces wearing out, or becoming frayed. Also, because the print and cut patterns are computer based, lost pieces can be manufactured without remaking the entire puzzle.

According to the Alzheimer Society of Canada, doing jigsaw puzzles is one of many activities that can help keep the brain active and may contribute to reducing the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

(From Wikipedia)



Christmas fun

A boy writes to Santa asking for a brother and receives a reply back from Santa: send me your mother!

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped, "Didn't you get my e-mail?"

Mrs Claus: "Is it rain or hail?"

Santa: "It's reindeer."

