

April 11th

Memory verse for the week:

Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Psalm 143:10

Young children can learn the words in bold. More about this verse in tomorrow's lesson.

Something to read about the weather

How would you like to live through a “year without a summer”? This was how 1816 was described and it was not just a case of miserable weather making life unpleasant. It was a year in which crops were killed by frosts, and farm animals died. Late in the year there were snowstorms. Torrential rain added to the difficulties. Famines resulted and as a result epidemics of disease claimed many lives as the starving people had little resistance to illness. This happened in Britain and in Europe as well. What caused all this to happen?

On **April 11th** 1815 the largest volcanic eruption ever recorded began. **Mount Tambora** in **Indonesia** erupted and it was the effect of this volcano that caused the cold wet, weather in the following summer. Can you find Mount Tambora and the other places highlighted in **green** in your atlas? The picture shows what this volcano looks like today.



As the volcano erupted, the explosion was heard on the island of **Sumatra**, more than 2,000 kilometres (1,200 miles) away. Then came the ash. It rained down on the islands of **Borneo**, **Sulawesi**, **Java**, and **Maluku**. The intensity of a volcanic eruption is measured on the Volcanic Explosivity Index in a way similar to the way earthquakes are measured on the Richter Scale. The Index is numbered from 1 to 8 and the Mount Tambora eruption reached 7 on the scale. But why should a volcano far away in Indonesia cause a cold wet summer in Britain?

The particles of dust and ash as well as gasses thrown into the air by a volcano shade the earth from the warmth of the sun. As the ash circulates in the earth's atmosphere, the effect spreads far away from the original eruption.

Volcanic activity on the earth has been gradually reducing since a time in the past when eruptions were much greater. That time was during the Flood of Noah's day, 4,500 years ago. When God brought the flood upon the earth it did not just rain. Water also burst from underground from “the fountains of the great deep” (Genesis 7:11). The crust of the earth broke up. Volcanoes resulted. For hundreds of years after the flood there was a great amount of volcanic activity before things settled down. The result at that time was not just a “year without a summer” but an ice age.

The lesson for May 19th gives you instructions for making your own volcano. If you did this last year and enjoyed it you could repeat it now. If you have not done the experiment yet you could do it today and repeat it on May 19th!

Something to bake

Thomas Johnson (d.1644) was an apothecary (a dealer in medicines rather like a modern pharmacist) with a shop in Snow Hill, London. Around **11th April** 1633 he received a most unusual

gift from his friend John Argent, President of the College of Physicians. He in turn had got it from a merchant who had just sailed home from the Bahamas.



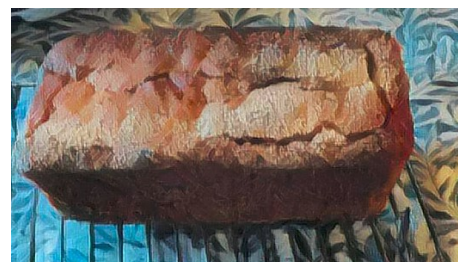
The gift was a bunch of bananas complete with some of the leaves! The bananas were not yet ripe and Mr Johnson hung them up in his shop window. The strange display caused a sensation – they were the first bananas ever seen in Britain. Mr Johnson was a botanist (which must be why his friend thought he would like the bananas) and he carefully described what they were like. They were ripe after about a month and he was delighted to find the flesh was soft and tender. The flavour? Well that was, he thought, a bit like that of a musk-melon. The leaves amazed him by their size, “of bigness sufficient to wrap a child of two yeeres old”.

Despite Thomas Johnson's enthusiasm, it was a long time before regular imports of bananas were made into Britain. It was not until 1884 that Elder, Dempster and Co. began importing them from the Canary Islands.

If you have a couple of ripe bananas here is an easy recipe you could make. It is from an old book so I'm afraid if you want metric measures you will have to do a little converting.

Banana Cake

3 oz butter
6 oz dark muscovado sugar
1 teasp. vanilla extract
1 beaten egg
2 ripe mashed bananas
8 oz self raising flour
2 fl oz milk



Grease and line a two pound loaf tin. Melt the butter, sugar and vanilla together – in the microwave is probably easiest. Add the mashed bananas and egg and mix well. Stir in the flour and the milk. Bake at about 325°F for an hour. Test in the usual way with a skewer.

Something to read about: cuneiform writing¹

Sometimes archaeologists discover inscriptions that relate to events or people we can read of in the Bible. These inscriptions are usually in a kind of writing called cuneiform, a script that archaeologists believe goes back to at least 3,000 years BC.

Cuneiform was a method of writing that could be used for many different languages. It became common over the area of modern-day Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Northern Egypt, northern Kuwait, South-eastern Turkey and the western portion of Iran that we now call the Fertile Crescent. The word cuneiform means *wedge-shaped*, because people originally wrote it using a reed stylus cut to make a wedge-shaped mark on a clay tablet. There were 300 cuneiform signs and they were known only to trained scribes.

With the passage of time alphabetic writing such as we use today took over from cuneiform and the meaning of the signs was forgotten. When in the nineteenth century archaeologists found or collected cuneiform tablets they could not read them.

¹ Illustration By PersianDutchNetwork - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=50210803> Information from Brian Edwards and Clive Anderson *Evidence for the Bible* (Leominster, 2014) and other sources.

In July we will be reading about the discovery of the Rosetta Stone² in 1799 which enabled researchers to understand Egyptian Hieroglyphics. The Rosetta Stone was the key to this because it contained three inscriptions in different languages all of which *said the same thing*. It was not until 1835 that a similar discovery was made that led to the understanding of cuneiform writing.



Intrepid Sir Henry Rawlinson (1810-1895), born on April 11th, was not put off trying to read the cuneiform inscriptions he found in the Kermanshah Province of Iran by the fact that they were 15 metres high by 25 metres wide, and 100 metres up a cliff face! The inscription was made very inaccessible by the fact that the mountainside was removed by the original designers to make the inscription more visible after its completion. From a dangerous perch on a narrow ledge with a sheer

drop beneath him, Sir Henry Rawlinson worked to copy the inscription bit by bit. Carved in the reign of King Darius of Persia (522–486 BC) it was, like the Rosetta Stone, an identical text in three different languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. The inscriptions were all written in cuneiform. It took Rawlinson until 1846 to work out what the Old Persian said. Then he and some other scholars worked to decipher cuneiform itself.

When they were satisfied that they understood it, they took a test. Each, without consulting the others, translated the same cuneiform prism in the British Museum. The results were so closely similar that there was no more doubt. They had mastered the art of cuneiform.³

A Cuneiform "Alphabet"			
A	▶	N	▶▶
B	◀▶	O	▶
C	▶▶	P	▶▶
D	◀▶▶	Q	▶▶
E	▶▶▶	R	▶▶▶
F	▶▶▶▶	S	▶▶▶▶
G	▶▶▶▶▶	T	▶▶▶▶▶
H	▶▶▶▶▶▶	U	▶▶▶▶▶▶
I	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	V	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
J	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	W	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
K	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	X	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
L	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	Y	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
M	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶	Z	▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶

Something to make

Make your own cuneiform tablet

You will need:

Ingredients

1 cup bicarbonate of soda

1 cup corn flour

½ cup instant coffee granuals

1½ cups water

and for writing:

chopsticks or similar wooden sticks.

Instructions

Use a saucepan on the cooker to heat together the ingredients over a low heat (with adult help, please, if you are not used to cooking!) stirring frequently for 10 to 15 minutes until it has the consistency of mashed potato. Pour it onto a plate and allow to cool.



While the dough is cooling, use a craft knife to shape the wide edges of the chopsticks so that they make a

² See the lesson for 15th July.

³ For more about deciphering cuneiform see <https://creation.com/the-sounds-of-long-dead-languages> and <https://creation.com/new-archaeological-find-affirms-old-testament-historicity>.

cuneiform shape (above right) when pressed into the clay you have made. Do this by cutting off the tip of one of the edges to form a small triangle.

Cut your cooled clay into a number of pieces and mould it into a tablet shape.

You can either make your own designs or use the alphabet chart⁴ above to write your name or a message. You could try the opening words of your memory verse.

More about cuneiform and the Bible in the lesson for 3rd December.⁵



4 Permission sought from Wallingford-Swarthmore School District via webadmin@wssd.org 07/02/22

5 Yet to come.