

16th February

Memory verse

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

1 Corinthians 11:26

There is more information about this verse in yesterday's lesson.

For this first story we are going to Tanzania so get out your atlas and find out just where that is in the world.

Something to read from history



Do you like peanuts – in their shells perhaps or made into peanut butter? Did you know that peanuts are also known as groundnuts¹ because the peanut pods develop underground? You can see them attached at the bottom of the plant in the picture on the left. Peanuts are legumes – members of the pea and bean family and they can also be processed to produce a large quantity of oil.



Just after the war Winston Churchill, the wartime prime minister, lost an election. The Labour Party came to power and Clement Attlee was prime minister. After the Second World War, Britain was short of food. Many things were rationed, including bread which had not been rationed during the war. Oils for making margarine were also in very short supply. The head of a large British company that traded in oils with Africa told the minister for food that a large area in Tanganyika, (now Tanzania) would be good for growing ground nuts to give the oil for the much needed margarine. The government made some surveys and then took up the idea enthusiastically. On 16th February 1948 a former newspaper manager, Leslie Plummer, officially became chairman of the Overseas Food Corporation, which was created by the government to take charge of the Tanganyika Groundnut Scheme.

Before and during the First World War, Tanganyika had been a German colony.² It was ruled by Britain under a League of Nations mandate during the interwar years. After the Second World War it was ruled by Britain as a United Nations Trust territory. One of the attractions of the area put forward for the Groundnut Scheme (it was roughly equal in size to the whole of Yorkshire) was that it was not owned or occupied by native Tanganyikans so no native rights would be disturbed. Two thousand British workers would be sent in to supervise a 32,000 strong Tanganyikan workforce that would be recruited. Many British ex-soldiers at once volunteered for the jobs involved in setting up the scheme. A new port, railway system, airstrips and roads, together with all that would be needed to cater for the African and UK personnel also had to be constructed. The Groundnut Scheme was going to be a sensational triumph for socialist planning. Britain's ally in the Second World War, Russia, had had a huge socialist agricultural experiment under Joseph Stalin's leadership. It resulted in the the death of millions in Russia through famine in the 1930s. The British government would have done well to take note.

The Labour government knew it would probably lose the next election if food supplies did not improve and rationing did not ease. It announced the groundnut scheme in a blaze of publicity designed to win votes. The next general election would be in 1951 and that meant the Groundnut Scheme had to be pushed forward to produce tangible results (i.e. margarine) that could be

¹ They are also sometimes called monkey nuts.

² For a description of German colonial methods see the lesson for July 4th.

presented to the electorate before that date. Government haste and mismanagement added to the disastrous results of the scheme.

The soil of the area turned out to be a heavy red clay that hardened like concrete in dry conditions. Maybe this was why it was not already farmed by Tanganyikans. It was impossible logistically to supply enough mechanical equipment so clearing the ground was much slower than anticipated. Drought conditions developed. Tanganyikans were willing to work on the Groundnuts Scheme but not permanently. They preferred to earn some money and then return home to their own villages. As a result of all these difficulties the first year's harvest was a disaster but the British government claimed this was mere teething troubles and the scheme continued.

At home in Britain the Labour government was carrying out a programme of nationalisation. About 20% of the economy, including coal, railways, road transport, the Bank of England, civil aviation, electricity, gas and steel was taken out of private hands to be controlled by the government. The Groundnut Scheme was to be a demonstration of how well the idea of government planning in industry and agriculture worked. Instead it turned out to be a disastrous waste of taxpayers' money. The scheme was abandoned after four years. £36 million – equivalent to £1 billion today – was wasted.

And the election? Labour lost.

Something to Read

Missionary Doctor, Paul White, worked in Tanganyika. His books of stories based on his experiences make interesting reading. His *Jungle Doctor and the Whirlwind*, was written in 1952. It makes passing reference to the peanut growing scheme and the negative impact it had on Tanganyikan society.

Something to cook



Peanuts are a good source of protein and also vitamin E and a number of essential minerals. However I can't promise that the recipe below, which uses either crunchy or smooth peanut butter, will be particularly healthy. It will be fun to make and delicious – if you like peanuts.

Peanut bars

150 ml light brown muscovado sugar
150 ml peanut butter
2 tabs unsalted butter
2 large eggs
½ teasp. Vanilla extract
250 ml plain flour
5 tabs chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Grease and line a square tin.

Mix together the sugar, peanut butter and butter until smooth.

Add the egg and vanilla and mix well.

Add the flour and mix well.

Stir in the chocolate chips.

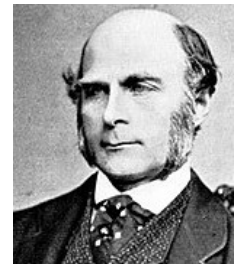
This should give you a soft dough.
Press the dough into an even layer in the tin.
Bake for 30 mins.
Allow to cool completely. The dough will have risen but it should flatten again as it cools.
Remove from tin and slice into bars or squares when cold.

Something to grow

If you ever buy raw, unshelled peanuts to eat you can plant one of the nuts in a pot and watch it grow indoors. Of course, for this to work the peanuts must not be ones that have been roasted or cooked in any way before being sold! The climate in Britain is not really suited to peanuts so your plant will not be able to be planted out in the garden to produce more peanuts.

Something to think about for older children³

Francis Galton (1822-1911) was Charles Darwin's half-cousin. Born on 16th February, he was to develop his relative's theory of evolution to produce one of the most evil ideas ever thought-out in human history. For this "contribution to science" he was knighted in 1909 but what was his idea?



Galton had the ambitious idea of improving the human race by careful breeding and he coined the term "eugenics" for his methods.

Galton was a man with plenty of money and had spent time in Africa exploring. He came to the conclusion that humanity would be improved if evolution was given a helping hand. Not only would it be a good idea to encourage fit, intelligent people to marry and have children who would therefore also be intelligent and fit but also people who were unintelligent ("mentally defective" or "feeble-minded" were the eugenicists' terms for them) should be discouraged or even prevented from having families.

While Galton's ideas were distasteful to many in Britain, there was a group of clever people who thought they were scientific. The Eugenics Society founded in 1908,⁴ had strong connections with University College, London and what is now Imperial College. These ideas were adopted as scientific in the USA, Canada and Sweden. Cruel measures were put in place to prevent handicapped people from having families in those countries. In the goodness of God, this never happened in Britain. In Germany Adolph Hitler adopted Galton's ideas with gusto, taking them even further, putting "undesirable" people themselves to death directly as we shall see in the lesson for 29th April. Eugenics had unleashed a tide of misery on innocent and vulnerable people.



Eugenics, having its basis in a falsehood (evolution⁵) was bound to lead to terrible trouble. After the Germans were defeated in the Second World War, eugenics was seen as rather tainted by Hitler's ideas. But the ideas are still around today, although they are not usually described as eugenics any more. Have you ever made a donation to the charity Cancer Research or perhaps bought some of their Christmas cards? Cancer Research money goes to support the Francis Crick Institute (pictured on the left), Britain's modern day eugenics lab where experiments are carried out on tiny unborn babies who are then just thrown away.



³ Parents of sensitive children may wish to remove the final paragraph. Image of the Francis Crick Building By Miguel Discart - 2016-09-07_09-41-42_ILCE-6300_DSC08717, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=52129333>

⁴ Still going but now called Adelphi Genetics Forum.

⁵ More on this topic in the lesson for 27th December. If you missed that lesson last year because you were on holiday you could read the relevant part today. See also the lessons for April 19th and March 25th.