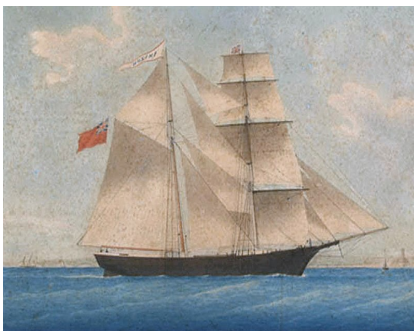


November 24<sup>th</sup>

Memory verse

These all died in faith,  
not having received the promises,  
but having seen them afar off,  
and were persuaded of them,  
and embraced them,  
and confessed  
that they were **strangers and pilgrims on the earth.** Hebrews 11:13

Very small children can learn the words in bold and understand that Christians are **strangers** because they do not belong here and **pilgrims** because they are travelling to heaven. More about today's memory verse in the lesson for 29<sup>th</sup> November.



An unsolved mystery<sup>1</sup>

The sea hides the answers to many unsolved mysteries. One of the most baffling is the story of the American Brigantine the *Mary Celeste*. Mysteries are fascinating, especially to writers of detective fiction and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes books wrote a short story, *J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement* about the *Mary Celeste* in which he called the vessel the *Marie Celeste* with the result that you will often see the ship's name written in this way.

In the first week of November 1872, under her captain, Benjamin Briggs, the *Mary Celeste* left **New York** for **Genoa** with a cargo of 1,600 casks of alcohol. The captain had his wife and baby daughter on board with him.

At the end of the month the ship was floating derelict in the north Atlantic. The crew of a British vessel, the *Dei Gratia*, sighted her, hailed her, and receiving no reply, boarded her. They searched the ship from bow to stern but not a living thing was to be found, not even the ship's cat. There was plenty of food and water in the galley and the ship appeared to be perfectly seaworthy.

The last entry in the log book read: **24<sup>th</sup> November**, 1872. lat. 36,56., long. 27,20 W. The *Mary Celeste* had been abandoned in great haste, the crew even leaving their pipes and tobacco behind. There were no boats aboard and the cabin windows had been covered up with planks and canvas as though the officers had been expecting an attack from without.

The *Dei Gratia* towed their find into **Gibraltar** and the naval authorities began an enquiry into the mystery. Their findings suggested the ship had actually been abandoned some days after the last entry in the log book; that she had not passed through any bad weather; that stains that may have been blood were found on deck; that the bows on both sides had been slashed with an axe or a sword.

Many solutions have been offered to this mystery but not one of them fits all the facts of the case. Did a freak of weather scare the officers and crew and cause them to abandon her? Was there a mutiny on board? Why was the ship abandoned so hurriedly?

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today?* Book 3 available on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>

Do you know what *lat. 36,56., long. 27,20 W.* means? If not, use your own encyclopedias and reference books to find out. Can you find it on a map?

### Something to write

Can you use your imagination to solve the mystery of the *Mary Celeste*? Read all the information you can from your own reference books and encyclopedias about the ship's disappearance and then write your own reconstruction of events using what you think is the most plausible solution. If you prefer you can make up your own solution and write about that.

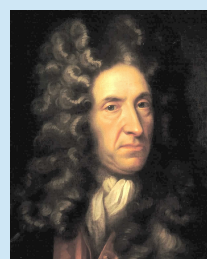
### Autumn weather

Do you remember learning way back in April<sup>2</sup> about Daniel Defoe the author of *Robinson Crusoe*? Windy weather is common at this time of year. Here is part of Defoe's account of something that happened in 1703:

It had blown exceeding hard, as I have already observed, for about fourteen Days past; and that so hard; that we thought it terrible Weather: several Stacks of Chimnies were blown down and several Ships were lost, and the Tiles in many Places were blown off from the Houses... the Tempestuousness of the Weather encreas'd.

On the Wednesday Morning... being 24<sup>th</sup> of November, it was fair Weather, and blew hard; but not so as to give any Apprensions, till about 4 a Clock in the Afternoon the Wind encreas'd, and with Squauls of Rain and terrible Gusts blew very furiously.

The Collector of these Sheets narrowly escap'd the Mischief of a Part of a House, which fell on the evening of that Day by the Violence of the Wind; and continued with unusual Violence all next Day and Night...



I have left Defoe's spelling, punctuation and capitalization just as he has it. Can you spot just what kind of words he capitalizes that we do not today? – although they do in German. Who does he mean by the “Collector of these Sheets”? you might be wondering. He is talking about sheets of paper (not bed linen!) – in this case the sheets of paper that will form the book he is writing i.e. himself. To find out what happened next you will have to wait for the lesson for 27<sup>th</sup> November.

Meanwhile, is it windy today? Don't forget to keep a good record of the weather. If you do not already have a weather chart you can start one now – any time of year is fine to begin a record of the weather. There are instructions for a chart suitable for recording the weather in the lesson for 2<sup>nd</sup> January or you can design your own.

The speed of the wind is measured by a device called an anemometer. You can make a simple anemometer of your own from paper cups.<sup>3</sup> If you count the number of times the cups go round in a minute you can keep a record of wind speed. It is tricky to do though! Another way to estimate wind speed is to use the Beaufort scale. Information on how to make a Beaufort scale chart is in today's Optional Resources files. Use the blank pages provided to illustrate the conditions described on each sheet. Then you can put the pictures up on the wall to make a chart. Study the wind conditions you observe and compare them with the description on the chart in order to gauge the wind speed.

<sup>2</sup> See the lesson for 24<sup>th</sup> April.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/build\\_an\\_anemometer.pdf](https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/build_an_anemometer.pdf)

## Something to read from history<sup>4</sup>



The Czech Christian leader, grammarian, translator and musician, *Jan Blahoslav*, (1523-1571) died on 24<sup>th</sup> November while travelling in Moravský Krumlov (about 25 miles from Brno in the Czech Republic) visiting his flock. He was only 48 years old yet, although sick for much of his life, his masterly translation of the New Testament into his native Czech plays a part similar to that of Tyndale in English. In addition he grappled with the problems of dialect in Czech and came to conclusions about dialect generally that were ahead of his time. He also wrote words and music for hymns in Czech.

Blahoslav studied with Luther and Melanchthon, both of whom were interested in the question of dialect. “Germany has so many dialects that people in thirty miles distance cannot understand each other,” explained Luther.<sup>5</sup> He changed the German language forever with his translation of the Bible creating a unified language as the German Bible became a reference point for all German speakers. Using a common form of Middle German he drew on the dialect used by the Saxon Court. All German people, well educated or not, could read the Bible in Luther's translation which unified the Germans, giving them a common form of the German language.

Blahoslav found the same problem in Czech. He noted that everyone thinks their own dialect is the best. “Every fox praises his own tail,” he said. Just as Luther solved the problem and so forged the German language, Blahoslav solved it for Czech. His translation of the New Testament became a part of the Kralice Bible, so called because it was first printed in Kralice. This translation had a similar effect on the Czech language to that of Luther's translation on German.

The early editions of the Kralice Bible were printed in six individual volumes – you needed to carry six books around with you if you wanted to take your Bible with you! This was because the extensive notes and introductions to the actual text made the Kralice Bible very bulky. It was not until 1596 that a handy one volume edition was published by leaving out all the notes and explanations.

Copies of the original six volume set are now very rare but there is a complete one in the Moravian Museum in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the USA which had been handed down among the descendants of Frank Travniček Nechuta (c.1814-1901). He discovered that a Catholic family in Moravia owned a Kralice Bible and he bought the set in the days when owning a copy of this Protestant Bible translation was illegal in Czech lands. How this happened is an interesting story. One of his descendants explained:

“About 1845-1850, Frank Nechuta, my Great Grandfather, on my Mother’s side, an active member of a Church in Vanovice, near Borotin, his birth place, learned of a six volume Kralitz Bible owned by friends. After some hesitation he was permitted to see the Bible. So, in the night, a tin box was dug up in the garden containing a well preserved Kralitz Bible. His heart’s desire was to own such a set. After several visits and a liberal amount of money, the purchase was made. The next problem was how to transfer the Bible to his home. Sacks [were] filled with hay, into which, one by one, the six volumes were carried to his home.”

Nechuta emigrated to America in 1852 and brought his Kralice Bible with him. The set was handed down in the family until Rev. Andrew P. Slabey purchased it from Lillie Svacha, granddaughter of Frank Nechuta. In 1952 Slabey sold the set to the Moravian Archives. The set is in relatively good condition although there are clear signs of use. Parts of pages are missing and some pages have

<sup>4</sup> Information from [www.moravianchurcharchives.org](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org) and other sources.

<sup>5</sup> Herman Seldeslachts, Every fox praises its own tail'. Jan Blahoslav (1523–1571) on Slavic dialects”, 2022, *Zeitschrift für Slavistik*, Issue 1 Vol.67.

been torn out. Throughout the Bible there are handwritten notes with information on the Klattovsky family, the family that kept the Bible hidden in their backyard.<sup>6</sup>

### Something to think about

Where would you put your Bible if you had to hide it? Can you think of a good hiding place?

### Some encouraging words



“A man with God is always in the majority.” The man who made that encouraging observation was John Knox (1514-1572) about whom we learned back in May. Today is the anniversary of his death. If you did not do that lesson and would like to learn about this Scottish Reformer you could do the relevant part of the lesson for 2<sup>nd</sup> May today.

### An important book

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 1859, Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* was published. We learned all about the ideas Darwin set out in that book in the lesson for April 19<sup>th</sup>. If you missed that lesson you could look at the part in it about Darwin today.

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<sup>6</sup> Permission for quotation kindly granted by [info@moravianchurcharchives.org](mailto:info@moravianchurcharchives.org) 19/10/23