

September 14th

Memory Verse

My times are in thy hand:

deliver me from the hand of mine enemies,
and from them that persecute me.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant:

save me for thy mercies' sake. Psalm 31:15 and 16.

Tiny children can learn the words in bold and understand that “thy” is “your” that is God's hand. Two children can learn the lines by one saying the words in green and the other the words in orange. The uncoloured words may be said together. These memory verses form a prayer. In the previous verse (14) the psalmist tells us that he trusts in God. We can pray the same prayer if we love Him. Who are the enemies that persecute us? The devil and his angels who would accuse us of sin. But if we are God's servants, His face “shines” on us. He will save us because in his mercy he has sent his Son to die for us.

Map Work and a Game to Make

Do you enjoy playing board games like snakes and ladders, or monopoly? Have you ever wondered when families first began playing such games? On **14th September** 1759 John Jeffreys of Chapel Street Westminster published a game called *A Journey Through Europe or The Play of Geography*. It was the first published game of this kind. Mr Jeffreys sold the game from his house and it took the form of a canvas backed map which could be folded up into a case, just like a real map.



Mr Jeffreys was a “teacher of geography, writing and arithmetic” and he was obviously keen to make learning geography (and perhaps basic arithmetic) more fun for his pupils. You may be able to see the small numbers in circles on the map which mark out the route taken round the map by the players. The side panels contain the instructions relating to the numbers. Rather than throw a dice to determine the number of circles moved, the players spun an eight-sided teetotum. This is just a little top with numbers marked on it; nowadays you sometimes get them inside party crackers. The player spins it and the face that comes to rest on the table surface when it stops spinning is the player's score. In the game, the players set out from Dover, tour Europe and finish at London. The instructions in Mr Jeffreys' game give real life details: “Frankfort. Here the traveller must stay one turn and see the field of battle at Dettingen,” or “Archangel. The traveller is to stay one turn at this place, to purchase timber for England.”

Use an ordinance survey map¹ to draw a map of the area where you live on a large piece of paper (or join several pieces together). If you want to make your game more long lasting you could use a piece of cardboard from a large box. You can either draw on it directly or glue your map onto the cardboard. Use this to make your own local map game. Number various features just as Mr Jeffreys did and make a “walk” round your local area by joining them up with a line. He has 103 different numbers but I think you could make a decent little game with only 50 if you cannot find 100. You could make the game start at a friend's house and end at your own, calling at other friend's houses *en route*. On side panels or separate pieces of paper you can list the features, the greengrocers, the railway station, the statue in the town centre, the parish church, the war memorial, the town hall, the supermarket, a café, the park, the swimming pool and so on. For each feature add some information and for some of them you can make the player miss a turn (“stop for a cup of tea”) or go forward to another square (“catch a train to...”). Another idea would be to make a map of your whole county and mark all the places of interest. You can make yourself a teetotum if you wish, out of card and a cocktail stick, or just use dice to play the game. If the side panels are too cumbersome you could make a small numbered card for each stop in the game.

Very small children might just enjoy making a teetotum. An eight sided shape is easiest to draw (with some help) as it is a square with the corners cut off! The numbers can be marked on and a cocktail stick driven through the centre. Such a toy is fun to make and can help reinforce whatever number work you happen to be doing. If the teetotum comes out a bit lopsided they can perhaps notice that some scores come up more often than others and work out why. Any sort of “route” game can be invented and drawn out with help with a sufficiently small number of “steps” to engage the attention.

A tale from history for older children – parents might like this too!

Suppose you went to bed on the 2nd of September and when you woke up in the morning you found it was not September 3rd but **September 14th**! This is exactly what had happened in 1752, seven years before Mr Jeffreys published his game. The calendar in use in Britain had been different to that in use on the continent of Europe. European nations had adjusted the calendar long ago in 1582 to correct some drift in the old Julian calendar. This drift was caused by the fact that the Julian calendar year was not exactly the same length of time as the earth's rotation round the sun.² Britain had continued to use the Julian calendar although Europe used the newer Gregorian Calendar, named after the pope who introduced it. Parliament decided in 1752 to bring the British calendar into line with the Gregorian calendar and this took place on **14th September**.

If you look up this event in popular history books, encyclopaedia entries or online history websites

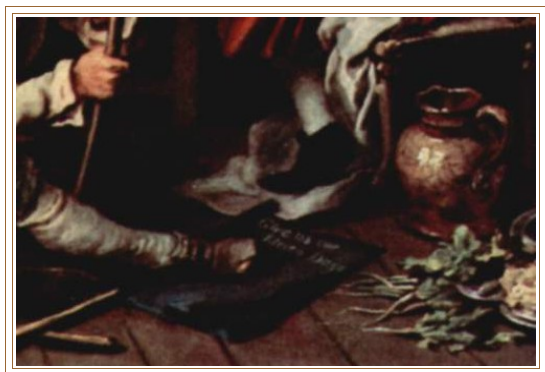
1 If you do not have an OS map of your own area these can be found on line at Bing maps.

2 The difficulty is caused by the fact that the earth takes 365 days, 5 hours, 59 minutes and 16 seconds to rotate round the sun. For the origin of the Julian system see the lesson for 29th February – which you may have missed especially if this year is not a leap year!

you will probably read that this adjustment caused a furore and people rioted in protest. Many thought they were losing eleven days from their lives. Others were enraged that a calendar devised by the pope was being introduced into Protestant Britain. Others again feared that moving the church festivals was sacrilegious and would lead to divine retribution. Rioters shouting “give us our eleven days!” pursued the government minister in his carriage and the riots were worst in Bristol where several people were killed.

But despite what you might read, none of this is true! There were, as far as we can tell, no riots. No one was killed and no government minister was accosted in his carriage with shouts of “give us our eleven days”. The legislation passed smoothly through Parliament and was implemented without much fuss. Historian Robert Poole investigated the whole issue for his book about calendar reform *Time's Alteration* (Routledge,1998) and discovered no riots and no deaths. Where did the “myth of the English calendar riots of 1752” come from then? Professor Poole set out to track the myth to its origin and this is what he found:

One source for the story comes from a painting by William Hogarth (1697-1764). His series “Humours of an Election” depicted an Oxford election which had been so chaotic that the Sheriff was reduced to returning all four candidates to Parliament, leaving the house of Commons to decide who was to be MP! This series of paintings began with one called, “An Election Entertainment” – a chaotic scene of bribery and corruption but not a riot. Among the symbolic debris on the floor, where it is being trampled under foot, is a black banner bearing the words “give us our eleven days”. But Hogarth is mocking the more educated political classes, not the ignorant and the picture has nothing to do with riots about calendar reform. “The slogan, like so much of Hogarth's work is an inspired invention... the calendar rioters are a magnificent myth.”³



The supposed “riots” themselves do not get mentioned in accounts of the calendar reform before about 1820 when a strong version of the riot story began to emerge. Popular science writer Augustus de Morgan, for example, wrote about them in 1850 in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He, although careful not to scorn the assumed “anti-popey” spirit of the supposed rioting mob, described calendar reform as an example of how scientific truth will always triumph over ignorance and superstition. This in turn fed into the idea which saw “Science” moving inevitably forward in spite of ignorant religious people in general and Christian ignorant people in particular. This was an idea that was definitely in the wind at the time. American writer Washington Irving (1783-1859) was popularising a similar distortion of the truth about Christopher Columbus in his four volume *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828). “Its theme was the victory of a lone believer in a spherical Earth [Columbus] over a united front of Bible-quoting, superstitious ignoramuses, convinced the Earth was flat. In fact, the well-known argument ... was about the dubious distance between Europe and Japan which Columbus presented — it had *nothing to do* with the shape of the Earth.”⁴ People had been aware that the earth was a sphere since at least the days of Eratosthenes the Greek who calculated its circumference around 240 BC. His calculations were well known in Columbus's day.

The “give us back our eleven days” idea was later taken up in a much respected eight volume *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* by W E H Lecky (1838-1903). Lecky's earlier book, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, tried to trace what he

³ *Time's Alteration* (Routledge,1998) p.14.

⁴ <https://creation.com/who-invented-the-flat-earth>

considered to be the rise of reason and the decline of superstition in Europe to underlying *natural* causes – rather in the same way that Charles Darwin had tried to account for the development of the human and animal kingdom without a Creator God. In his *History of England*, the anti-Christian, Lecky presents the calendar reforms as inevitable scientific progress overriding the reaction of ignorance and superstition, although he does not go so far as to mention actual riots. This is substantially the form the story has taken ever since – with more and more embellishments and exaggerations. It is a story crafted as part of the support for the doctrine that rationality, the ability to think logically, *evolved*, and is continuing to evolve, towards a higher (and therefore atheistic) future.

Something to think about

What is the moral of this extraordinary tale? Unbelieving historians have no concept of the end and purpose of history, nor do they take into account the rôle of the Lord's people for whom all of history is a grand series of events which is “working together for good”.⁵ But secular historians often do not just *fail to understand* the point of history. They have an agenda, a world-view, which they are actively trying to *promote*. Sometimes this will lead to the uncritical acceptance of mistakes (or as in the case of Washington Irving, deliberate fabrications) which are then embellished by popular science writers because they fit their world-view so well. Interestingly, Professor Poole does not expect his discovery about the non-existent riots to greatly influence what is written in popular history books. “[T]he calendar rioters will continue to have their uses long after this book [*Time's Alteration*] is out of print,” he writes.⁶

Something to do



Find an account of the voyage of Christopher Columbus written for children. Does it repeat Washington Irving's made up idea?

⁵ Romans 8:28.

⁶ *Time's Alteration* p.20.