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Opening Extract from...

1,339 QI Facts

To Make Your Draw Drop

Compiled by
John Lloyd, John Mitchinson
& James Harkin

With the QI Elves

Anne Miller, Andrew Hunter Murray, Anna Ptaszynski & Alex Bell

Published by Faber and Faber Ltd

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A QUITE INTERESTING BOOK

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2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Contents

Introduction	vii
1,339 Facts	1
A Note on Sources	337
Index	339

Introduction

Truth is the daughter of search.

ARABIC PROVERB

When we came to write our first volume of facts – *1,227 Quite Interesting Facts To Blow Your Socks Off* – we set ourselves the modest goal of producing 1,000 nuggets of information that seemed to us unforgettable. We pooled ten years of extraordinary comparisons (there are 1,000 times as many bacteria in your gut as there are stars in the Milky Way); astonishing statistics (a single male produces enough sperm in two weeks to impregnate every fertile woman on the planet); unexpected truths (the Bible is



the most shoplifted book in America) and memorable absurdities (Richard Gere's middle name is Tiffany), and then counted up what we had. It turned out we had a file of 1,227 facts, which seemed both more interesting and more appropriate than the 1,000 we'd originally targeted.

In the course of editing and arranging that material we discovered something surprising: the facts seemed to have a mind of their own. Far from being inert pieces of trivia, they behaved much more like molecules, bristling with energy and a desire to form strong attractions with other facts to make longer and more meaningful sequences. All we had to do was keep trying the best combinations.

As well as being deeply satisfying, this process of fact-matching also meant we needed to create a much deeper pool of



truth in which to dip our editorial spoon. And before we'd finished, we realised that the new pile of strange and wonderful facts we hadn't been able to sequence was already forming the core of a new book.

We always tell our researchers that to find the best stuff, all you have to do is to look longer and more closely. That has been our guiding principle in compiling this second volume. Once you are in the Fact Zone, everywhere you look, astonishing *new* facts seem to wave and demand inclusion. We hope you find the combinations that we – and they – have made as satisfying as last time.

And, to adapt a line of Groucho Marx, if you don't like them – well, we've got others.

JOHN LLOYD, JOHN MITCHINSON
& JAMES HARKIN

*Facts are to the mind
what food is to the body.*

EDMUND BURKE (1729–1797)



There are 1,339 bank branches
in Peru.

There are 1,339 outdoor sculptures
in Texas.

There are 1,339 Christian churches
in Wenzhou, China.

There are 1,339 illegal factories
in Samanabad, Pakistan.



Pakistan means
'Land of the Pure'
in Urdu.

The most commonly used
word for 'detergent' in Urdu
is 'Surf'.

It is illegal in China
to show TV ads for
haemorrhoid cream
at mealtimes.

One in seven UK banknotes
carries traces of
anal bacteria.



Babies are born
with no bacteria
in their bodies.

The word 'infant'
is from the Latin for
'unable to speak'.

'Bow-wow', 'Ding-dong' and 'Pooh-pooh'
are all names for different theories
about the origin of language.

Winnie the Pooh's
real name is
Edward Bear.



The offspring of
a polar bear and a grizzly bear
is called a pizzly bear.

A baby pterosaur
is called a flapling.

Cockroaches
appeared 120 million years
before the dinosaurs.

The Himalayas were formed
25 million years after the last dinosaur
died out.



All the mountains
on Saturn's moon Titan
are named after peaks in
The Lord of the Rings.

J. R. R. Tolkien and Adolf Hitler
both fought at
the battle of the Somme.

During Hitler's years in power,
Mein Kampf was given away free
to every newly-wed couple.

Mussolini described *Mein Kampf* as
'a boring tome that I have never
been able to read'.



The most-read publication in the UK
is *Tesco* magazine.

A pint of milk in a supermarket
can contain milk from
over a thousand different cows.

The average Briton consumes
8 cows, 36 sheep and 36 pigs
in a lifetime.

A raw carrot
is still alive when you eat it.