

Edvard Grieg wrote 'In The Hall of the Mountain King' as a satire of terrible music and said he could barely stand to hear it. It is now one of his most played and best remembered pieces.

There is a cloud in the constellation Aquila that has enough alcohol in it to make 400 trillion trillion pints of beer.

The punishment for serving bad beer in ancient Babylon was drowning.

According to his biography, one of Stephen Hawking's great regrets was "not having an opportunity to run over Margaret Thatcher's toes".

The German word 'kummerspeck' means excess weight gained from emotional overeating. Literally, grief bacon.

St Brigid of Ireland, the 6th-century abbess of Kildare, was noted for the miracle of transforming her used bathwater into beer for visiting clerics.

When you first meet people it is common to forget their names - a phenomenon called the 'next-in-line' effect. This is because people are too worried about themselves, and what they'll say next, to focus on remembering the names of people they're introduced to.

The word "PEZ" comes from the German word for peppermint—Pfefferminz.

There is one and a half times more caffeine in milk chocolate than in Coca-Cola.

A single human being's DNA contains as much information as fifty novels

All galaxies, regardless of size, rotate roughly once every billion years.

In the 19th Century, there was a belief that the ridges and lines observed on Mars were canals that had been excavated by the Martians for irrigation.

Word of the day: GLUGGAVEÐUR (Icelandic) - Weather that looks lovely from inside your house, but is horrible to be outside in. Literally 'window-weather'.

Word of the day: "lasair-choille" - Gaelic name for the goldfinch, meaning "flame of the woods", "light of the forest".

When a thing is funny, search it for a hidden truth. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

A barnacle's penis can be up to 20 times the length of its body.

People with tetrachromacy can see 100 times as many shades of colour as most people; they have four different types of cone cell in their eyes to detect colour, rather than the usual three.

If all the asteroids in the Solar System were lumped together, they'd be smaller than the Moon.

An adult produces enough hydrogen in their urine each year to drive a car 2,700 kilometres.

I never drink coffee at lunch. I find it keeps me awake for the afternoon. RONALD REAGAN

Word of the day: CLAGARNACH (Irish) - The clattering of heavy rain on a rooftop.

Paddington Bear was originally 'from darkest Africa' until it was pointed out that there are no bears in Africa.

Russian bears get high by sniffing discarded aviation fuel.

In order to compose, all you need to do is remember a tune that no one else has thought of.

ROBERT SCHUMANN

In 1994 a convicted murderer was given a retrial after it was revealed that some of the jurors had consulted a ouija board before finding him guilty.

Saint-Louis-du-Ha!-Ha! in Canada holds the Guinness World Record for the most exclamation marks in a town name.

In Norse mythology, Naglfar was a ship made from the untrimmed fingernails of the dead.

Word of the day: SHINRIN-YOKU (Japanese) - Walking through the forest and feeling restored. Literally 'forest bath'.

Leonardo da Vinci designed chairs made of cake, a giant whisk as tall as a giraffe, and a horse-powered nutcracker.

What is a man's eye, but a machine for the little creature that sits behind his brain to look through. SAMUEL BUTLER

In 18th-century slang, a person with one eye was a "seven-sided animal": front side, backside, right side, left side, outside, inside and blind side.

The word 'speakeasy' came from barkeeper slang during prohibition encouraging patrons, when ordering, not to draw attention to themselves by acting nervous or by ordering the drink by its real name.

Word of the day: ROKRASSGAT (Icelandic) - used to describe a notoriously windy place.

Literally meaning 'wind-ass'.