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# Historical News

Rebecca Rylatt

## The Siege of Leningrad: 80 years on

This year, on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, we commemorate eighty years since the liberation of Leningrad. Taking place during the Second World War, this siege began on September 8, 1941, when the Wehrmacht (unified armed forces of Germany) severed the last connecting road to the city. Nicknamed the *900-day siege*, Leningrad was not liberated until a narrow corridor was opened in early 1943, exactly 872 days after it began. This makes it one of the longest sieges in history, as well as one of the costliest.

An estimated 1.5 million people died as a result of the deprivation suffered through this, with tens of thousands more casualties. Whilst this was not considered a war crime at the time, modern historians point to this as a genocide due to the intentional destruction and systematic starvation of civilians. With food rations falling to 125g of bread a day and temperatures of -30°C, many resulted to eating tree bark, wallpaper paste, and, though rare, even cannibalism to stay alive. This was so devastating that upon Leningrad's liberation, it was found to be impossible to tell the gender of those who were persecuted.

Leningrad was prioritized by Hitler as a target due to its legacy as the former capital of the USSR, naming it as one of three strategic goals in the infamous German Operation Barbarossa. Even the name of the city itself was incriminating to the Nazis, a symbol of the Russian Revolution and Bolshevism.

# Sports News

Abigail Hannan

## **Women's test match cricket: should the women's game have 5-day matches?**

The highest level of international cricket is a test match. Teams go head to head over many days creating complexity and tension as they strategise for the win. For centuries, men have played series of 5-day test matches, making up the majority of international men's cricket. At last, test match cricket is gaining a foothold in the women's game, but there's something different about it: it's shorter.

The reason for this is that women's cricket, especially long format games, have lower attendance than the men's equivalent. Men's test matches at Trent Bridge in Nottingham in the past five years brought crowds of an average of 15000 per day, in contrast to the 3000 brought to the ground by the women's test. This reason, however, perpetuates itself. Tests result in a draw if there is no result by the end of the last day. In recent years, 64% of women's tests have ended in a draw due to running out of time, as opposed to the men's 30%. No wonder the crowds are smaller; people watch cricket for the result, so why would crowds fill with people watching a dead end match?

There is a financial argument for reduced length women's tests, but at a time when cricket is striving for equity, shouldn't the women's game be given a chance to prove its potential?

# Engineering News

Isaac Eccles

## NASA's new jet

The x-59 was first designed in 2016 and was planned to begin flight testing in 2021. Due to delays, it could not be delivered to NASA for testing until January 2024. It is predicted to travel at a speed of 1480km an hour (925 miles an hour), which is 1.4 times the speed of sound. You may know that when an object travels faster than the speed of sound it creates a sonic boom; however the idea of the x-59 is that the sonic boom will be quieter. An estimation is that it will be slightly louder than an average conversation, significantly quieter than the usual 110 decibels which is about the same as a jackhammer. The main hope for the x-59 is to be similar to the Concorde which was a plane that could travel from London to New York in under three and a half hours; this flight takes eight hours fifteen minutes on a commercial airline. Unfortunately, the Concorde crashed. This caused it to be scrapped for being too dangerous.

The x-59 is the first plane to ever be built by NASA. The shape of the plane itself might be confusing to some, however there is engineering reason behind each square centimeter. It is 29.5 meters long, 8.99 meters wide and 4.26 meters tall. The wing's angles get steeper as they get further along from the body. These angles are 76 degrees to 44.6 degrees. This jet could be the future of international travel, allowing long flights and emissions to be drastically decreased. However, a date for the first official flight has not yet been released.

# Maths News

Isaac Eccles

## Mystical tile proves mathematician wrong

Last year, after over six decades of searching, a mathematical tile was found that can tile the plane; this means it is able to be placed with other versions of itself, extending to infinity with no gaps, infinitely without ever repeating. Back in 1961, mathematician Hao Wang was thinking about types of tiles and their symmetries. He claimed that no set of tiles could be put together in a way that could only tile the plane aperiodically (without ever repeating). However, after declaring this, one of his students found a set of 20,426 tiles that could only tile the plane aperiodically.

Slowly, over time, this number of tiles was decreased as more practical solutions were found. Eventually, in 1997, a set of two tiles (kites and darts) were found. This was widely accepted as the smallest possible amount of tiles required until last year. Everything changed on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 when the Einstein tile was discovered. The tile itself is also known as a hat or a shirt dependent on the angle you perceive it.

This shape was discovered by David Smith, and had thirteen sides and thirteen vertices.

# Chinese New Year

Grace Bishell

## Chinese New Year traditions and celebrations

Chinese New Year begins on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. In accordance with the rotation of the twelve zodiac, this year will be the year of the dragon. The dragon symbolises power, nobility, honour, luck and success. In China, the new year is a celebration spanning multiple weeks, lasting a total of fifteen days this year. It is traditional to wear red or other bright colours and share pockets of money for good fortune. It includes many unique traditions and superstitions that are still seen today.

It is believed that you should never clean your house, hair or clothes during the New Year Celebrations because by doing so, you are washing the New Year's luck away! There is a similar belief about not leaving sharp objects around that could slice through the good luck. It is also commonplace to leave doors open on New Year's Eve. By leaving the doors open just before midnight, you are allowing all of the good luck and positivity to enter your home.

Ask your friends and family if they have ever done any of these wonderful traditions or maybe even try some yourself this Chinese New Year!

# Book Review

Alexis Parsons

## 007 – Casino Royale

The novel *Casino Royale*, by Ian Fleming, is an excellent novel; it includes a bunch of action-packed chapters, and over 200 pages to explore. There is one main villain in the story, who is called Le Chiffre. Even though I am only halfway through the novel, I would love to read the other novels in the 16-book series. James Bond (The famous spy, 007) was sent to a French casino for a dangerously lethal game of baccarat (a card game usually played at casinos) against Le Chiffre (translated from French meaning “The Cypher” or “The Number”). Le Chiffre eventually dies, being killed by a character called Mr. White.

Some people may disagree with my thoughts on this novel. Critics may argue that the descriptions are too long and with arguably sexist undertones, as Bond is appalled by the fact his partner is female. Though I must admit the descriptions are sort of long, it is still enjoyable for me to read the descriptions. A film based on the book, starring Daniel Craig, was made in 2006.

Who knows who the next James Bond will be?

# Entertainment News

Alfie Swaby-Mills

## WrestleMania 38

Every year, since March 31<sup>st</sup> 1985, the world famous sports organization WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) has produced WrestleMania, multiple fights for titles (belts). The most recent one in 2022, was amazing, perfect execution on everything. From the return of Stone Cold Steve Austin to Roman Reigns stealing the show, This year's show was fantastic!

The matches included are: Charlotte Flair vs Ronda Rousey, Becky Lynch vs Bianca Belair, Cody Rhodes vs Roman Reigns, Bianca Belair vs Auska, Brock Lesnar vs Amos. And so much more!

This is accessible on Virgin TV, BT Sport, and the WWE website or app.

I highly recommend this show.