

[Transcript] No Such Thing As A Fish / 493: No Such Thing As An X

Hey everyone, Dan here. Welcome to this week's episode of Fish. Before we get going I just want to let you know about today's guest. Joining us this week we were so excited to be joined by someone who is genuinely British nerd royalty. It is of course the lexicographer, the star of Dictionary Corner from Countdown and 8 out of 10 cats does Countdown and that is Susie Dent. Now Susie Dent is someone that we basically monitor her Twitter account on a 24 hour basis. She's just always pumping out incredible words with these definitions and you've never heard them before and we've never met her before. So this was such an exciting moment for us not only to be able to meet her in person, have a nice chat but also to sit down with her on stage in front of a crowd and dork out with her. So yeah I really hope you enjoy the episode. We absolutely loved it and outside of that I just want to quickly mention that you need to get your hands on Susie's two new upcoming books. The first one comes out September 28th and that one is called Interesting Stories About Curious Words. So it's sort of all those phrases that we know, stealing thunder, red herrings but what do they actually mean? So this book is going to be looking into all those phrases and terms on your behalf so that you now know who was sweet Fanny Adams or why are circles vicious. All those questions that you might have had she's put it into an ultimate compendium to explain it all. So that's out September 28th but then on the 5th of October she also has a book coming out called Roots of Happiness, 100 Words for Joy and Hope and that is a book for kids. Basically Susie had the idea when looking through a dictionary that there's far too many negative words in there and that we should be highlighting the more happy ones, the more uplifting ones. So reading directly from a blurb here it's going to lift you out of your muddle fubbles which is a slightly sad mood, make you grin like a giggle mug which is someone who never stopped smiling and have you feeling for blissed, extremely happy. So do pick up both those books but until then enjoy Susie here, live at the Soho Theatre with No Such Thing as a Fish, on with the show.

Hello and welcome to another episode of No Such Thing as a Fish, a weekly podcast this week coming to you live from the Soho Theatre in London. My name is Dan Schreiber, I'm sitting here with James Harkin, Andrew Hunter Murray and Susie Dent and once again we have gathered around our microphones with our four favorite facts from the last seven days and in no particular order here we go. Starting with fact number one and that is Susie. Okay, Samuel Johnson in his dictionary of the English language from 1755 decided that he would not include any words beginning with the letter X because he said thus begins no word in the English language. That's my fact. And is that true? Were we xylophone-less at this point? Yes, xylophone was a century later but also he was quite picky. You know how lexicography is today, we are really careful about not giving any opinion whatsoever even with words like Trumperiness which is my favorite meaning something completely showy but utterly worthless. We're not allowed to say anything but he was notoriously rude to the Scots you know about Americans so I think he probably didn't have much truck with anything from Greek. Okay, but we did have X words at the time. We had a few X words but a lot of them came later. Lovely words often Greek like Xenium which is a gift to strangers which I think is really nice but what was lovely is that it came from the Phoenicians and they had a letter Samek which actually gave the letter S we think but that meant fish so you could say there's no such thing as an X. That's a title of the episode. It's like the quickest we've ever got our title as well. Did they have xenophobe in those days? They have a xenophobe. Xenophobia I think most phobias are based on Greek but we kind of made

them up a little bit later but we based them on classical things like coolphobia fear of clowns which I have they didn't have clowns in ancient Greece so they chose the word for stilt walker. Are you also afraid of them because of the sort of knock on? Still no I like stilts. But yeah clowns definitely not. Really? No. Have you seen the new... Is it the Smiler? The horror? No. Okay don't. Wow. The reason I ask about xenophobia is because Johnson as you say probably didn't like the Scots very much. Maybe the Americans. Unlike the French for sure. He predicted that he'd write the dictionary in three years and then when someone pointed out that it had taken the French 40 years to write their own dictionary he said well this is proportion. 40 times 40 is 1600 as 3 to 1600 so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman. Yeah. Right. Yeah. Wow. So 42,000 words made into this first dictionary that he did right 42,000 definitions and he had self-deprecating jokes that he kind of included in there which is quite fun so yeah the word for dull the description for the word dull he explained to make dictionaries is dull work as part of his description and then also the definition of lexicographer he wrote a writer of dictionaries a harmless drudge yeah I'm looking know it by heart yeah Susie that's incredible and also he was quite he would never admit that he didn't know a word which was quite funny so or the or the origin of a word so um spider I loved he couldn't quite get to the root of spider so he just said is this not the insect that spies from a door that's the way it came from it's not an insect mate it's the rapnet exactly just feels like such a like the any old bollocks era of of study just feels like such a great time to be alive yeah Dan you would have absolutely I would have been king I would have been king back then yeah yeah that is true he was one of the last people in England to be touched for scruffula oh yeah so cool that's such a horrible word scruffula yeah and he is just a skin condition and um the monarch would touch people and and effectively cure them but ineffectively cure them of scruffula and Sammy Johnson's parents took him to London from his hometown when he was three years old you know your local parish would maybe club together raise the money they'd send you off and the queen the monarch would touch you they'd be big cues as well right huge cues yeah Charles II I think we might have mentioned this before he touched something like two percent of the population of England wow wow yeah steady it was a different time and like and and Johnson had it he had a gold coin which we now yeah touch piece which is the sort of yeah it didn't work though and actually he's quite disfigured his face through scruffula which is very sad yeah yeah and well there's some really weird but lovely etymologies in there uh so tarantula was an insect insect he does say call it an insect again uh whose bite can only be cured by music because it was thought it could be cured by the tarantella at the dawn wow was that proper doctor's advice at the time yeah that was the belief really yeah wow is there a doctor in the house dr Johnson yes get a hurdy-gurdy to this woman now and then he had retro mingency which means pissing backwards that's how he defined it when you say pissing backwards you don't mean sucking it up into your body oh i think it's like i hope not i think it's like some animals their penis points backwards right i think and so a retro mingent mammal oh you know on the back of its feet right i think this is a bit like Roy Keaton saying shove it up your bollocks he's like shove it up your bollocks but it does feel sometimes when you need to pee and you don't want to that the hold has a suck action to it as well am i alone here in that i rather think you might be alone no no no but properly think about it you're kind of like i really need to pee and you're going you're doing you are i am i am

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it's a word for that as well if you are holding on so tight it's piss you pressed and what does that means desperate it's used to forces mostly so it's kind of desperate to pee but holding it in piss you crest piss you press it's like piss suppressed ah don't do it dan because tikka brah he supposedly died from doing that didn't he yeah he was at a dinner and it was yeah famous astronomer and he was at a dinner and he was too polite yeah and his bladder exploded oh yeah so don't do that dan well he i imagine johnson would have had to pee a lot because supposedly he could drink in one sitting 25 cups of tea in one go no he loved his tea he loved his food boswell wrote about this boswell would say that to watch him eat was like watching the most intense thing ever he would not have any conversation he was just rampaging through his food the veins on his head were like pulsating he was just a man obsessed with needing to get the and he did that with reading as well he would you would just have to read really hard and and 25 cups of tea is what i read as well wow that is amazing he lived at the same time as france is gross who really was gross by figure yeah right so johnson always chose the classical references for his dictionary um he was quite a purist originally anyway um and then france's gross went to the brothels and the taverns and picked up all the street slang and i don't know if they ever met right you know but they would have had a good dinner party they would have known about each other i think they would yeah so while he's sort of harmlessly dredging away he's thinking of this other guy who's going to have fun yeah must have been terrible yeah i like some of his definitions um so the word etch is a country word of which i know not the meaning the word defluxion uh the definition is a defluxion that's a real friday afternoon word isn't it i gotta go to the brothel i just put any answer 25 cups of tea waiting just across the room that's great um a sock something put between the foot and the shoe it's good yeah lunch this is good lunch as much food as one's hand can hold oh there is a word for that a galpin and a yepsin so galpin is as much as you can hold in a single hand which and i think yepsin is two hands so biscuit it's good for biscuit measurements that's brilliant um i've got a couple of x word things oh yeah yeah so um uh the word x-ray you know what the x and x-ray stands for unknown unknown just x he didn't know what it was i'm just going to put x here for now when they work out what it is we can change and it just hasn't been changed um maybe called röntgen reis that would be a nightmare is that who it was child röntgen he was called from germany wasn't he so yeah röntgen reis röntgen reis yeah yeah yeah uh maybe you know this one uh the x-men why are they called the x-men oh i have no idea is it because they spent all their time on twitter yeah yeah well i i thought it was because professor x professor xavier oh yeah professor x x the x-men yeah but no it's um it's extra power which was said in a comic book oh really yeah and um just while we're if you insist we continue on x-men uh just discovered an amazing character from x-men oh my god i've never heard of before so did you know that there's a character in x-men called forget me not oh no okay no you don't because they don't either because if he is out of your sight no one can remember him amazing so the first time we meet him is someone from x-men going hey how you doing he's like i've been here six years and no one can remember this guy it's and it's that's a great superpower not if you want to be part of the team yeah but

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for robbing a bank yeah go in you rob a bank you leave that's true they just carry on with their day i think that's a really good superpower i think the superheroes generally aren't robbing the banks

but professor x the only reason he knew he existed because he said like a alarm on his iphone or whatever to remind him every so often like forget me you're not so a character in in our comic book oh okay cool so that's the professor x isn't aware that it's a comic book that he's taken part in i was i was just yeah i was i was leaving the i've broke the fourth wall there for him um anyway i don't know all right thanks for letting me get that out i've got another x for you oh yeah uh x when you watch things like it not the normal speed like one times two times one yeah exactly yeah okay does just a quick show of like whoops who here regularly watches things sped up who regularly listens to podcast sped up

i know our voices are probably like why are they talking so slow on stage hello and welcome to another episode yeah listen to our podcast sped up slow down do you follow an etiquette for your x's or messages because i was having this conversation with brilliant greg jenna historian oh yeah and

so he said x um has only just been kind of okay when the last 10 years yeah on a platonic text you know between friends xx is more romantic yeah and he would never put three x's and he and i said why i put three x's on my best friend all the time he looked up on his phone all porn i didn't realize did you realize that three x's that might be saying something about greg's phone no no the interesting thing about that is the first use we have of adding x for kisses or a greeting like that um is from 1763 and they did seven x's wow that's a lot isn't it to just go straight in with seven whoa yeah yeah that's intense according to the old question x well yeah they think that it was like a blessing great yeah it was like the cross yeah but yeah i heard well this is in relation to x rated that it was based on the skull and crossbones maybe oh really yeah it was exclusively films which featured pirate activity but yeah do you know why blue joke is called blue sorry do you know why blue joke is blue uh no no because sensors used to have a blue pencil and also um sex workers in prison had to wear blue gowns oh really that's great blue gowns blue gowns yeah oh wait sorry are they the are they prisoners in this in prisoners sorry i thought they were like visiting uniforms uniforms or you know yeah they weren't they weren't really imagine you've got to visit your friend like sorry we've run out of the white for visitors do you mind wearing blue andy while you're in that problem what a visit i've had good lord um maybe he's lost the cocaine um sorry too much too much

stop the podcast stop the podcast hi everybody just wanted to let you know we are sponsored this week by linkedin jobs ten years ago we were doing our three-person podcast me james here and ana and um we were going nowhere and uh and then we we hired a little little guy called dan shriver and everything changed yes uh but don't make the mistakes that we did instead go to linkedin jobs because linkedin is the place to find the right people for your team it's the place to find them faster and it's the place to find them for free what you do is you add your job to your linkedin and then you add a purple hashtag hiring frame to your profile and everyone can see at just a glance that you're the kind of person who's looking for a new hire that's right there are screening questions there are all sorts of simple tools that make it easier to focus on the candidates with the right skills maybe they can pronounce words correctly maybe they check their facts maybe they don't believe in the Loch Ness monster so find the qualified candidates that you want to talk to faster by posting your job for free at linkedin.com forward

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slash fish that's right just go to linkedin.com slash fish and you will be able to post your job for free terms and conditions apply okay on with the podcast on with the show it is time for fact number two and that is james okay my fact this week is that in 1986 a group of maths teachers organized a protest in washington dc against the use of calculators in schools their protests failed because they couldn't get the numbers that felt a bit ironic at that moment you became a dad that's such a good fact yeah maybe time for a numbers round see the suits oh yeah i'm the first person to make that connection since 1986 i bet no i i bet no one even did at the time as well you know i think well it was a mat wasn't it a maths it was a gathering of 6 000 maths teachers that they were at yeah it wasn't a massive story in the newspapers i must admit but it was in the newspapers and like you say it was the national council of teachers of mathematics so they were all maths teachers with 6 000 of them there and there are about 15 of them we think who had placards and songs and they were protesting against calculus because they thought that these kids because they were using calculators they wouldn't be able to do normal maths they would just kind of rely on them and they wouldn't be able to do any kind of multiplication or anything like that yeah right it was a simple time wasn't it it was oh no our kids and their screens sort of terrible stuff are they doing typing in boobs upside down it wasn't more innocent time yeah yeah their slogans are amazing the buttons nothing till the brain's trained and they chanted calculators later we shall not be moved calculators later is good there was um they interviewed them in the newspaper i was reading um they interviewed the leader john saxon who organized this whole thing and they said well mr saxon why are there no teachers you know why have you only got 15 people and he said teachers don't like to demonstrate because they are shy fair enough i guess a mental arithmetic is is an important thing i read something about you susie i want to know if this is something you still do but according to an interview you gave every single morning you do your 75 times table um i think i was being a little bit whimsical um no it's because for a very very long time if 75 came up on the countdown board yeah i just gave up because i can't do five 75s i have to write it down i don't know what it is and the more i struggled with it the worse it got because i became fixated on it so that was probably where it came from i don't know why it's stupid yeah it's your job to get the to get the numbers though is it like you can just let rachel do all that stuff yeah no i really do try and she's very good at giving three hundred and seventy five thank you well you can't see at home is that he's got a calculator yeah and that we've edited this that took him 15 minutes to the guy who listens to it slow down is not going to get to it for half an hour but i love all those old calculating methods because calculators from calculus little pebble because they counter with stones um and then they had abacuses didn't they it is a political hot potato though like it is well yeah so for example does it harm whether you can do mental arithmetic if you use a calculator all the time in your opinion yes probably okay well you're you're in good company because in 2011 there was a British mp who led public concerns on this and said i would describe this country as in love with the calculator from a very early age and said that too easy access to calculators is available in local schools oh that mp lis truss oh command of like large numbers is unparalleled so susie you're a great lovely lovely that reminds me of the petition to um get rid of all french words from the british passport and uh it went online we got quite a few signatures without realising

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that passport is french for the words on there were french yeah hiding to nothing i think um human calculators are amazing people who can do incredible you know something ahead so um there was i was

reading an interview with the 2020 world champion who is an indian guy who's called nila kantha bhanu

prakash and he got to it uh quite interesting way he was confined to bed as a child for a year and loads of people who are amazing at mental maths have either been confined to bed or they've been in solitary confinement or like something's happened where they've lived in their imagination for a long time um so all the way through school he would spend six to seven hours a day practicing mental arithmetic just doing that um when he was interviewed by the bbc throughout the interview he recited his 48 times table and when he's talking to someone he will count how many times they blink

just to keep himself engaged in the conversation wow that's amazing that's cool yeah there's been loads of them over there in fact one of the things that you have to do if guinness wants to find out if you're the fastest at working things out is they'll give you a 100 digit number and ask you to work out the 13th root so the square root is two things that you times together to get to that number so imagine then a cube root is three things you multiply together to get to that number you have to go all the way down to 13 so it might be 37 times 37 times 37 times 37 times 13 times the answer to the power of 13 is the number they give you in the first place that's right is the question i'll be honest i don't think you're going to trouble the guinness records people even even you describing this has put me into a sort of defensive crouch position okay so 30 through yeah and i was reading about a guy called vim klane um who was the record holder uh this was

in the 80s about he must be still quite close uh he managed to do it in one minute 28 seconds but his tactic was to mutter in dutch while he was doing the calculations and he would only mutter swear words so if imagine i'm dutch he'd be like fucking out i fuck up and then you go 263 and it would be right every single time there is there's so much science behind swearing lowering your cortisol levels and raising your serotonin levels and you know that experiment with you dip your arm in ice cold water you can hold in twice as long if you're shouting bollocks than if you're shouting bus um so and there's a lot of keys here is exactly it so that's what he was doing wow that's so it works yeah yeah okay would it help doing this podcast if i just said bollocks all the way through because that's what dan's been doing for the last 10 years you would say that if we lived in the time of samuel johnson may

um here's the thing you have to do at the mental calculation world cup just another example of so the calendar there's the calendar round this is an exciting round you get given a list of dates from 1600 to 2100 the years and you've given 60 seconds to name the day of the week that every one of those dates happened on okay so you get it right you get a minute to do it okay yeah and this great long list of um days like 24th of february 1603 monday right okay you're gonna say monday to all of the money have you got the answers no i can't disprove that it was a monday but the point might oh my god so i'm like the point well done dan no no no he didn't he may have got it right that's true but what i'm saying is next question no there are people who can do it even more effectively than just randomly guessing incredibly rapidly so the record the record winner in 2012 was someone called nafumi ogasawara okay they got 57 in a minute wow one per second they went old monday though were they they were all monday that was the trick that year yeah yeah that is

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amazing isn't that incredible that's incredible it's monday thursday tuesday saturday i think there are tricks aren't there to work it out really i've i've met someone who can do that it takes them a tiny bit longer obviously but we're talking about a champion here yeah but you can say any day

and they go over that and they work it out quite there are tricks you can make history in certain ways to get you to that day what well like what i don't know like a civil war broke out on a wednesday three and a half years earlier who knows yeah but there was when there used to be people who would go on stage and you would ask them to multiply two numbers together and they just be able to do it and that would be the whole act pretty good it's pretty cool it's unverifiable for everyone in the crowd as well that's true but that's good but that's oh no because if you've got someone on stage who's doing this um while they do it then yeah but they would be able to do they would be able to do it much quicker than that for sure but so you're right it would be quite unverifiable but the tricks that they used to use basically there's loads of math tricks like you would see on countdown it's like your nine times table is one way of doing it or removing things or adding things to a hundred all these different tricks they have but the way that they would mostly do it is someone would ask you to multiply this by this and then you would go okay what were they again and you keep stalling a few times but you're already doing it in your head and then you would multiply all the numbers and if I multiply two numbers I would always start from the digits

and work my way up to the highest number but they would always start with the highest number they might

say 17 million and they're working out the next ones as they go along but they haven't even got there yet so they would be able to say like I can answer the question immediately but actually they're kind of working it out as they went along amazing that's pretty clever isn't it yeah I once got brought up to the front of my school when I was a teenager in high school and told on the spot Daniel has achieved the top percentage of people in New South Wales Australia from mathematics in the recent exam that we took as part of thing and it was a multiple choice exam yeah

I literally guessed every single answer because I knew nothing about mathematics and I just happened through fluke to get it right and I still have a certificate at home from being one of the greatest mathematicians in New South Wales of my period did they did they sort of say well this is great because we've been wanting to put someone for the junior proper come on Daniel get your big old award I was like I was an idiot they they no it was it was humiliating

I've still got the certificate um that's amazing yeah it is fascinating watching countdown and I know that you're saying that you you like to do it as well but watching Rachel be able to get to those sums is it does feel like magic doesn't it yeah it really does yeah the camera crew who've been with us for such a long time as well they're also very nerdy so they give lots of approval for two things one is when I ever mention an orphaned negative which is when you have things like rooley grunted shevelled well shevelled doesn't exist but um roof full gorm full stuff like that whenever I mention orphan negative they go and whenever Rachel says yes that's the sum of two primes she'll we'll just go wow wow that is happy here we are do the camera men like play along with the game do you think I think they do yeah I think lots of camera women as well but they're all brilliant and um sorry yeah james sorry I wasn't ticking you off there um but yeah I reckon they do I reckon quite a lot of them get the conundrum uh not the women though

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they are more often than you would think

I've got a quick protest thing another protest thing to just tuck in

yeah is it the process waiting for James outside the room

camera folk of the world sorry this just me too we have so many camera women it would be really bad of me not to mention them but I honestly wasn't having a dig they're called cinematographers James

so the thing I want to mention about protest is one of my favorite things I've learned recently

in 1966 the procrastinators club of America held a protest against the war of 1812

and they made signs and everything they were protesting it and the the club newsletter that came out after it announced that the protest had in fact been a success because a treaty has now been signed so good on them that's so good

okay it is time for fact number three and that is Andy my fact is that for 30 years

Tibetan Buddhists have been saving fish from certain death and releasing them back into nature

unfortunately it turns out they have unwittingly been feeding them all straight to the local otters

so there's this ritual called feng sheng it's very it's very you know ancient traditional

thing you do it's called like life release is what it means you you get animals that

were destined for slaughter and and you sort of you you free them and you it's your way of like

paying a debt back to the universe it's that kind of thing and since the 1990s there are

lots of Buddhists in Tibet have been buying up fish from fish markets live ones and releasing them

into local rivers thousands of them every year and unfortunately there's a recent scientific

report which has looked at the the state of the nearby rivers because I mean it's not a great thing

to do in terms of ecology you know lots of that's a really invasive species risk and it'll completely

like mess up the local ecosystem anyway turns out that there are almost no fish left in the

rivers and the otter feces are full of the fish that have been released into the river so they

have been kind of helping nature in a way in that they've like a lot of very very fat happy otters

on this river yeah but and the otters are stopping the the non-native fish from destroying the

ecosystem so in many ways it's a happy story but not for them if they realized what they'd been

doing right no no no not for the fish that get released confused and immediately and no karma

for the Buddhists or what do you reckon it's above my pay grade I don't know there's a German word

for this which is I don't wonder if you've heard it Susie is the definition is an attempted

improvement that makes things worse yeah that's a great one I believe you just knew that I mean

I did see you peek at my notes here but yeah now there's this whole industry isn't there of people

capturing animals so that they can then be released yeah I think and obviously it is quite bad in

lots of places and they looked in Singapore and in Southeast Asia and they're just finding all of

these lizards and stuff which shouldn't be there and yet they are and so the Singapore Buddhist

Federation is saying that maybe you should just maybe just not eat meat instead oh I'd give some

money to animal shelters is there anything other than doing this thing which is inherently quite

bad it's slightly it does it's a slightly messed things up but there is there is something to be

said about if you go to a restaurant I speak as a veggie here but you go to a restaurant and you

see a tank full of lobsters I mean that's just I would do anything to rescue those things I thought

you would go and dump them in the local loch yeah I can see why I can see why no I definitely

understand it yeah for sure you get um in Shanghai what happens is that again when when the

people

turn up to carry out the Fang Sheng ritual a lot of people turn up selling them live turtles at

very inflated prices so already like they've created a secondary market in turtles at this point but then there are also fishermen waiting down sorry fish a folk uh anglers um waiting with nets but literally 20 meters away so yeah yeah yeah it creates a lot of uh it's an interesting from an economics point of view yeah but also like the temple ponds tend to be full of turtles because people just shove loads and loads of them in and obviously you can only have so many turtles living in a pond before they have a bad time with it yeah so these fish were carp weren't they uh yes they were then yeah why do you know good I was just sitting in there that I was thinking why don't we carp on about something or whether that's got anything to do with the fish but I know that is from a Latin word meaning to pull to pieces likewise carpet is sort of like tufts that you kind of pull but I don't think it's got anything to do with fish what about do we say that carp I thought it was harp on you can harp on as well so what's harping on versus just endlessly playing the same note on a harp and to carp on is to criticize and just kind of constantly have a go stop carping you know that kind of thing yeah yeah I don't think she was a fish I've got a question yes is carp pulling something apart related to carpal tunnel syndrome the wrist condition oh that's interesting yeah oh maybe I don't know is the answer that's a very good one yeah I think it's related to uh my favorite fish is the cod oh yeah because cod meant scrotum and the fish is supposed to look sorry sorry James you're about to take a bit of your beard I'll have the haddock yeah yeah yeah so it's because it looks like a bag apparently the fish yeah and a cod piece piece for you scrotum and brackets go back to a Spanish word meaning cod piece because they're a bit of support so architectural brackets but also they kind of support a bit of your sentence that's lovely yeah well it's not that lovely Andy I don't know if you heard the start of the scrotal I know it's scrotal but that's not I think that's nice that you think if you're scrotum as a sort of set of brackets yes gently supporting uh with the things that need keep going yeah but it's a weird weird word otherwise isn't it cod piece cod yes yeah I wonder if you what if you cod someone because a cod is a practical joke as well isn't it oh like I'm kidding but I'm not I'm coding yeah I'm coding I wonder if that's got anything to do with you talking balls or something I don't know I'd never heard of carping I've never heard of codding I've never heard of codding either no yeah to cod to cod I think it might be Irish I'm not sure and Cod's Wallop is completely different we're learning a lot today that's amazing let's not get into Cod's Wallop that's um do you know Gary Larson the far side yeah the comic books he was someone who was also into saving animals and and sort of playing around so when he was a when he was a cartoonist in his early days he was being paid but it wasn't a lot of money so he needed to get a secondary job so he applied to be an animal cruelty investigator for the Seattle Humane Society um but he never ended up doing the job because in the car on the way to the interview he hit a dog and so he thought that's a bad start um the dog was fine but he didn't end up doing it as a result yeah I was reading a bit about um reintroductions you know because this is about reintroducing animal maybe where it should be maybe it shouldn't and you know like Britain is um is kicking off beaver reintroductions which is very exciting uh because they they beavers are a bit controversial but basically they do do a lot of good in a lot of places they create wetlands and wetlands store carbon and they're more resistant to fire and you know they're they're very endangered like wetlands themselves are endangered beavers help bring them back um so this year north london got two beavers called Sigourney beaver and Justin beaver lovely did we literally only get two because they were the only puns we could think of that's sort of coming back but anyway like I say it has caused some controversy so there was a

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headline from the Daily Mail earlier this year could rewilding animals turn Britain into a modern-day Jurassic Park with beavers well firstly exactly yeah beavers and secondly Jurassic Park is set in the modern day oh yeah anyway sloppy headline writing and there's a problem in America you know when if you go to the coast often there are baby turtles that are born and you might wander into the city because they see the lights you often get people going to the beach and they see these turtles and put them in into the water but the problem is that in those areas especially around Florida there's also a lot of tortoises around there and people don't know the difference between turtles and tortoises one difference being that one could swim and one can't swim so number one don't go around grabbing turtles anyway because you know there are people who'll do it who know what they're doing but secondly tortoises have toes that's that's the way to tell oh that's good public service let's call them totals oh yeah that'll do it it helped me don't touch that it's a total it's hard to say that's probably why it didn't happen there's loads of red kites near me there red kites they've really done well with yeah yeah and the kite that we play with is from the bird hovering so nice yeah they're beautiful they're gorgeous yeah yeah they've done they've done amazingly they're everywhere wildcats might get new wildcats in Devon and Cornwall this is exciting right and you don't need permission to introduce them because there are already a few in Scotland so if something is if something is non-existent in the UK like a wolf then you need permission from the environment secretary and very boringly they are not allowing us to have wolves everywhere so could you and I just drive up to Scotland grab a few wildcats drive down and just set them free um it doesn't sound like it's loud it would be a loud would it I feel like I'm in a hell of a car ride the thing is we both have electric cars as well so we'd have to stop about five times um I don't know if it would and I'm sorry to reign on your parade chains but the problem is the wildcats in Scotland they get described as functionally extinct so this is weird they're real they exist but they're also extinct because they there are a few hundred of them left only and basically they spend all their time shagging domestic cats to the extent that the gene pool is just completely like scientists have studied lots and lots of dead cats from about the last hundred years and they found that that you need a particular kind like wildcats are quite a specific thing but they're they're randy and they will just wildcat are they really vicious wildcats or are they just quite cute a bit of a bit of a loaded way of describing them they're just I don't know I don't know what they are they're not they're not massive either they're sort of two cats the size of two cats I would say okay roughly a cat and a half two cats they're not they're not I don't think they are no no I think they very rarely take uh human young uh but I mean domestic cats are quite vicious aren't they they kill a lot of birds and stuff like that and I think wildcats are quite similar I just think it must be a pretty exciting day if you're uh just a normal domestic cat and a wild cat comes in town ah wild it'd be like John Travolta and Olivia Newton John wouldn't it it would just be like the leather bound dude walking in it must be like if a yeti was to approach you and have sex with you Dan because it's bigger it's hairier it's like it's a little slightly different species but still recognisably humanoid yeah and it's on yeah my wife and I have an agreement we are completely monogamous she's got a list of celebs yeah she's got like yeti yeti and brine blessed those are the two that make it in oh

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it is time for our final fact of the show and that is my fact my fact this week is mathematician David Cox has two things named after him a geometric coordinate ring and an algorithm that he invented with Stephen Zucker they are known as the Cox ring and the Cox sucker machine so what's particularly exciting about this is that in the 1970s Cox and Zucker met each other and went oh we've got to write a paper the invention came after the juvenile dream of having a cox sucker paper so then the um these things the coordinate rings and algorithms as the greatest mathematician New South Wales has ever produced

can you explain perhaps what they are um yes I would James because I have a maths degree and I fucking can't yeah is it complicated I really tried I really tried to understand it when I say I really tried I just knew I was going to throw it to James and if he can't understand it I feel fine um it's uh yeah no it is it is really really complicated the second thing that he invented was not an invention it was attributed to him uh by two other students because

he was the inspiration for it so the Cox ring was uh inspired by his earlier work and they thought let's play into the gag here but they came up with it and they named it yeah and they and it's just this wonderful thing about academics having a sense of humor this is something this is interesting there's a thing called Stigler's law of eponymy right and what it states is that no scientific discovery is actually named after the person who discovered it in the first place so like Pythagoras's theorem named after Pythagoras not discovered by him uh Halle didn't discover Halle's comet it'd been known about a bit earlier and so this is the Stigler law of economy and it was coined by a sociologist who was called Robert Merton named after someone else yeah and these these two guys when they did this by the way they were studying at Princeton University so the reason

I came across this fact is because I found out that you studied at Princeton University for you studied German there I know I'm weird no that's that's very cool did you mean was it a good degree or was it ever Schlimppes? No it was uh no it's brilliant I mean German is just so it just gets given such a hard wrap and it is honestly the most lyrical beautiful we're just used to people shouting orders in more films but it's really really beautiful but the people always say why isn't there a word for this in English and then they will always say well I bet there's one in German and usually is because it is quite like Lego isn't it you can just pile. Have you ever had Ben Schott on your show? No I love to. He wrote this brilliant book called Schottenfreude which was it basically finding as many gaps in English as he could find and then getting a German translator to make up a word and my favorite one was Depenfarer but Eugung which is the compulsion to stare at the person you're overtaking in your car that's wonderful that's really good yeah well that was that was him it was very good these people Cox and Zucker I was looking at some other people with similar kind of names that are what we call that double barrel names yeah if you go on the internet you can find loads of examples of people who got married and had quite unfortunate names I'm not sure all of them are true but I've looked at them all in the newspaper archives and found some that definitely are true and I'm going to do a little quiz see if you can I'm going to tell you the name of one of the people in this relationship and you can see if you can guess the name of the person they married so this is an easy one Elizabeth MacDonald um uh John Hadavarm

E.I.E.I. No

you can get this Elizabeth MacDonald married and they double barrel the names take away burger they didn't necessarily always double barrel but when you have the newspaper

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things it says this person married this person they call it the MacDonald burger wedding beautiful okay so um I can pull this back you got it right you can do this Andy Amy wide wide wide W.H.Y.D.E. Stephen Fanny uh sorry birth birth is good birth that would be great uh you were closest it was alexander whole hey so Amy and alexander white hole gosh uh joe looney joe what looney looney chun judy toony chun ben ben no chun close uh isn't quite a normal surname matthew tick looney tick looney take very good shelby ward looney ward and one final one uh Teresa come on uh michael england tim michael tim come on sim come on sim arnold mabak um down down down come on down okay come on so mr i david eileen no anyone in the audience no it was tereza come on and frankie topper me oh and i should also say that i was reading the reddit of uh jill stein you know the green party leader in america yes uh and she did an AMA so it was like ask her anything and the second most popular question they asked jill stein was dr stein have you ever thought about marrying senator al franken and hyphenating your last name very good that's very good um there's only one street in the world named after john major and he didn't know it was named after him and no one told him they were naming it after him right it was going to be sir john major close sounds menacing um but it's but it's going to be called sir john major close but then the london fire brigade said that's a bit complicated we might get confused if someone rings up and so they just called it major close there's cut out the sir job and then oh when when he was asked about it he said i think it's most unlikely they'd name a street after me and he just hadn't been told no one informed him market that has loads of stuff that market that has a peninsula named after her anyway that's quite interesting because in europe for every ten streets that are named after a man yeah um there's only one named after a woman it's much more likely that you would be named after a man if you're a woman is it well interestingly okay taking that in mind the most popular person in european streets names is a woman so can you guess who it is no andy's right it is the virgin mary oh in europe of course so lots of you know catholic countries and stuff yeah does they actually have virgin in the names or is it no it's usually just mary roe yeah and it's usually named after the church yeah yeah goes to so yeah or santa maria santa maria which i would argue is named after santa and the virgin mary so we should lob those off her numbers um that was a dumb fucking joke love it love it tawdry is another religious one that is an eponym because tawdry comes you know if something's tawdry it's really shoddy and that goes back to st audrey that she was um an abbess um and eventually a saint and she wore lots of kind of necklaces in her youth and then as a nun she got uh throat cancer and she thought this was revenge because she would just wear such a frippery but anyway lace such as the one that she wore around her neck was sold at fares and it was st audrey lace and then it's tawdry lace yeah what was it about being 55 minutes into this show that made me think of the word tawdry oh nothing it's the religious the religious side of it yeah you know the chippendales the dance troupe yeah oh yeah you know what they're named after the the thomas and yeah oh no i was thinking of a thomas chippendale the person who made all the furniture

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i was thinking of the children's costume i was thinking of the children's costume i was thinking of the children's costume

that one you know me i wear my collar james is right james is right i'm just going to put you out of your misery james is right they were named after the furniture in the club where they performed that's which was designed it designed to look like classic thomas chippendale furniture because they were kind of you know like muscular i guess they were sort of muscular and you know impressive looking so were the chairs oh i think they do sit on stage and you sit on their laps right sure do you i think so wait are they become the chairs i think so that's what i'm saying they oh don't pretend oh i think um this is from the man who suggested coming my back a few minutes ago

um i was looking into just a scientist who have humor i i like it when it makes it into a paper and i just found a couple of papers that have been published that i really like the titles of so a couple of them here they are the mouth the anus and the blaster pour open questions about questionable

openings um another paper the effects of having christmas dinner with in-laws on gut microbiota composition and then the third one head and neck injury risks in heavy metal head bangers stuck between rock and a hard base that's a good one i'm gonna have to wrap us up so guys we've got to the end i was just looking at very unintentionally like unintentional because this is about something where it was intentionally very rude yeah i was trying to find examples of things that were unintentionally rude okay just like a couple of very tiny quick ones so uh yolo williams welsh naturalist okay it was co-presenter on spring watch uh in 2016 he was uh discussing diving seabirds with a female conservationist and they watched one plunge into the water in front of them and he just turned her and said so is that the deepest jag you've ever had and she got to say no we have had deeper than that and we've i feel like we should end with like i think some of you have heard this before i know the the all-time classic harry carpenter after the boat race 1977 was reporting it live on tv and said ah isn't that nice the wife of the cambridge president is kissing the cocks of the oxford crew can i just do one more i know that's really good but uh in 2012 faiza the drug company came up with a new drug for osteoarthritis in dogs called rimadil uh and i went on to the newspaper archives for the adverts for this this is genuinely true there was an advert that said faiza animal health the manufacturers of rimadil have launched a program available only through veterinary hospitals register online at rimadog.com

okay that is it that is all of our facts thank you so much for listening

if you would like to get in contact with any of us about the things that we have said

on this show we can be found or what are the fuckies decided to call it this week uh but for

now i'm calling it twitter i'm on at shribeland james at james harkin andy at andrew hunter and

susie at susie at the school event yeah or you can go to our group account which is at no such

thing or you can go to our website no such thing as a fish dot com all of our previous

episodes are up there um you can also find links to club fish which is the secret members club any

club fish members in the crowd tonight there we go there's the six of them and uh so do join that

it's really really fun check out all the merch check out everything else we'll be back again next

week with another episode so ho theater thank you so much that was awesome say thank you to

susie

danton we'll see you again next time