

What's in a number?

Justin Nurse goes from 0 - 100 in celebration of The Big Issue's 100th edition

Librarians are notorious for gathering information - sometimes useless, often trivial. Enjoy the following bits of trivia in the Laugh it off column that appeared in celebration of *The Big Issue's* 100th birthday.

Happy 100 **Big Issue!** Or should I say ton? Or century? After all, what is in a number? Quite a lot, apparently. Check out these digits - it will only take a jiffy (1/100th of a second). Half the world - three billion people - live on less than two United States dollars a day. Slugs have four noses. The bulls-eye on a dartboard must be five feet eight inches off the ground. The typical person goes to the bathroom six times a day, while the average German goes seven days without washing his underwear. A cat may have nine lives, but a taste bud's lifespan is only ten days. Worldwide, 12 times a day, newborn babies are given to the wrong mother in the hospital.

Cape Town's average winter temperature is 11 to 16 degrees Celsius; average summer temperature: 18 to 20 degrees Celsius. Triskaidekaphobia is the fear of the number 13. The typical hen lays 19 dozen eggs a year. In a day, a baby robin will eat 14 feet of earthworms and the average person will laugh 15 times. 20/20: normal vision at 20 feet. 21 Jump Street starred Johnny Depp.

The Titanic was travelling at 22 knots when she hit the iceberg. Michael Jordan, and then as a tribute to him, David Beckham, have jersey number 23. 24 karats represents pure gold. 25 years of marriage is a silver wedding anniversary; 30 years, the pearl wedding anniversary. 26 is the atomic number for iron, 36 for krypton. 17 syllables in a haiku; 27 books in the New Testament, and 28 dominoes in a set. An adult human has 29 bones in his skull; a scalp that produces 34m of hair fibre every day; 32 teeth; 35 million digestive glands in his stomach, 46 chromosomes, and a 37 degrees Celsius body temperature. 31 ISO is the standard for quantities and units. Jesus died when he was 33. The 38th parallel divided North and South Korea, and Japanese Internet chat slang for 'thank you' is 39.



Life begins at 40, and the answer to it, according to Douglas Adams' book **The hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy**, is 42.

#41 is a song by Dave Matthews Band, *43folders.com* a blog for 'lifehacks', 44 Magnum a gun, 45 RPM a gramophone record, and **48 Hours** is a movie starring Eddie Murphy and Nick Nolte. Mosquitoes have 47 teeth and there are 50 million monkeys in India. Area 51 is a secret United States military aircraft testing facility famous for Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) spotting. 52 Pick-up is a practical joke card game, and 53 is the racing number of Herbie, the Volkswagen Beetle. You get a 55 US gallon drum; 49 strings on a harp; 54 squares on a Rubik's cube; and 59 days in two lunar months.

Michael Stipe sings 'yeah' 56 times in **Man on the moon**; Bruce Springsteen sings about there being '57 channels and nothin' on', while The Beatles ponder old age **When I'm 64**. Pity that males born today can only expect to live an average 58 years. A newborn expels its own body weight in waste every 60 hours. 62,63% of all statistics are inaccurate. 65% of Elvis impersonators are Asian. Get your kicks on Route 66.

The ideal temperature for developing black-and-white film is 68 degrees Celsius. Moses assembled 70 people in the desert under God's command; 72 different names of gods in the kabalah. 73 is a Morse code way of saying aloha. 74, 75, 76, 77, and 78 are boring numbers; and just as dull is that LXXIX is 79 in Roman numerals. If you are 80 you are an octogenarian.

Baby 81, Abhilasha Jeyarajah, a baby survivor of the tsunami, claimed by many different parents. 82 is the atomic number for lead; 94 for plutonium. 85 is the average age at which senior citizens surrender the wheel. 86: cockney for ignore. A slinky is 87 feet long. 90% of bird species are monogamous. The longest place name, TetaumatawhakatangiHangakoauaotamateaurae-haeaturipukapihimaungahoronukupokaiwhenuaakitanaorau, has 92 characters. United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania on 9/11. A jellyfish is 95% water: There were 96 victims of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster, and Johnny Cash sang a song **Wreck of the old 97**. 98 is the highest jersey number allowed in the National Hockey League, as 99 was retired to honour Wayne Gretzky. A sneeze travels out your mouth at over 100 mph. Bless you.

With acknowledgement to *The Big Issue*.

