

## **RAILROAD TRACKS – SOME INTERESTING HISTORY.**

The US standard railroad gauge is 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that?

Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since. The ruts in the roads were originally formed by the Roman war chariots, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

Therefore the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

Bureaucracies live forever. So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder 'What horse's arse came up with this?' you may be exactly right. Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two warhorses. It's a wonder the term "two horses arses" doesn't appear in engineering manuals.

Now, another twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SR13s. The SR13s are made by Thiokol at their factory.

The Engineers who designed the SR13s would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SR13s had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SR13s had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's arse. And you thought being a horse's arse wasn't important? You now know that Ancient horses' arses controlled almost everything.

And in Washington, some say, they are controlling everything else

## A WATERY SERMON

The preacher speaking on the evils of drink, pounded the pulpit and exclaimed,

'If I had all the beer in the world, I would take it, and throw it into the river'

*And the congregation cried, 'Amen!'*

'And if I had all the wine in the world, I would take it and throw it in the river'

*And the congregation cried, 'Amen!'*

'And if I had all the whiskey and rum in the world, I would take it all and throw it in the river'

*Again the congregation cried, 'Amen!'*

Finally the preacher sat down.

The deacon then stood up and said: 'for our closing hymn today, let us turn to page I26 of our hymn books and sing together 'We shall drink from that River.'

***THE CONGREGATION SCREAMED 'HALLELUIA, HALLELULIA'***

## POSTMAN PAT'S LAST DAY

After delivering the mail in the same suburb for many years it was Postman Pat's last day on the job.

When he arrived at the first house on his route, he was greeted by the whole family there, who all hugged him, congratulated him and sent him on his way with a cheque for \$50.

At the second house they presented him an 18 carat gold watch.

The folks at the third house handed him a bottle of 15 year old Scotch whisky.

At the fourth house a very attractive young lady wearing some very suggestive lingerie met him at the door. She took him by the arm and led him up the stairs to the bedroom where they made love. It was most passionate encounter he had ever experienced.

When they were finished they went downstairs, where she fixed him a full English breakfast: bacon, eggs, sausage and tomato with toast and freshly squeezed orange juice. As she was pouring him a cup of steaming coffee, he noticed a one-dollar coin sitting in the saucer.

'All this is just too wonderful for words,' he said, 'but what's the dollar for?'

'Well,' said the young lady, 'Last night, I told my husband that today would be your last day and that we should do something special for you. I asked him what I should give you.'

He said, 'Screw him. Give him a dollar.'

She smiled shyly and said, '*The breakfast was my idea.*'

## **ALWAYS ASK - NEVER ASSUME**

The News photographer was waiting on his editor's approval to cover the outbreak of bushfires in the country. As soon as his request was approved, he quickly telephoned the local airport to charter a flight.

He was told a twin-engined plane would be waiting for him at the airport.

Arriving at the airfield, he spotted the plane warming up outside a hanger. He jumped in with his bag, slammed the door shut, and shouted, 'Let's go!'

The pilot taxied out, swung the plane into the wind and took off.

Once they were airborne, the photographer instructed the pilot, 'Fly over the valley and make low passes so I can take pictures of the fires on the hillsides.'

'Why?' asked the pilot.

'Because I'm a photographer for The News, he responded, 'and I need to get some close up shots.'

The pilot was strangely silent for a moment, finally he stammered, 'So, what you're telling me, is ...

**You're NOT my flight instructor?**

,

## **DON'T MESS WITH OLD GUYS!!**

Fred had an appointment to see the urologist for a Prostate examination. He was a bit on edge because a lot of his Probus friends had either had surgery or undergone some other rather unpleasant procedures.

The waiting room was filled with patients. As he approached the receptionist's desk, he smiled at the receptionist - a largish rather unfriendly looking woman, somewhat in the style of a Sumo wrestler.

He gave her his name and address to which she replied in a very loud voice 'Yes, I have your name here, you want to see the doctor about your problems with erectile dysfunction, right?'

All the patients in the waiting room snapped their heads around to look at Fred, by now a very embarrassed man.

But as one would expect of a veteran from Turramurra Probus he recovered quickly, and in an equally loud voice replied,

*WELL, I'VE COME TO INQUIRE ABOUT A SEX CHANGE OPERATION, BUT I DON'T WANT THE SAME DOCTOR THAT DID YOURS."*

The room erupted in applause!

## IRISH DIESEL FITTER

Paddy and Mick were both laid off, so they went to the unemployment office. When asked his occupation, Paddy answered, Knicker Stitcher. I sew the elastic onto ladies' knickers and thongs.'

The clerk looked up Knicker Stitcher on his computer and, finding it classified as unskilled labour, he gave him \$80 a week unemployment pay.

Mick was next in and when asked his occupation replied. 'Diesel Fitter.'

Since a diesel fitter was a skilled job, the clerk gave Mick an allowance of \$160 a week.

When Paddy found out he was furious. He stormed back into the office to find out why his friend and co-worker was collecting double his unemployment pay.

The clerk explained, ' It's a simple matter, Knicker Stitchers are unskilled labour and Diesel Fitters are skilled labour.'

'What skill?' yelled Paddy. 'I sew the elastic on the knickers and thongs, then Mick puts them over his head and says: **'Yep, diesel fitter.'**

## WHY MEN SHOULDN'T WRITE 'DEAR JOHN' ADVICE

Dear John

I hope you can help me. The other day I set off for work, leaving my husband in the house watching TV. My car stalled and then it broke down about a mile down the road and I had to walk back to get my husband's help. When I got home, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was in our bedroom with the neighbour's daughter!

I am 32 my husband is 34 and the neighbour's daughter is 19, We have been married for 10 years. When I confronted him. he broke down and admitted they had been having an affair for the past six months, He won't go to counselling and I'm afraid I am a wreck and need advice urgently. Can you please help?

Sincerely, Sheila

*Dear Sheila.*

*A car stalling after being driven a short distance can be caused by a variety of faults with the engine. Start by checking that there is no debris in the fuel line! If it is clear, check the vacuum pipes and hoses on the intake manifold and also check all grounding wires. If none of these approaches solves the problem, it could be that the fuel pump itself is faulty, causing low delivery pressure to the injectors.*

*I hope this helps.*

*John*