

# QUINTON CHRONICLE

## ISSUE 2



QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL

# HAVE YOU HEARD OF...?

# THE QUOKKA

Andreas Constantinou

## QUICK FACTS

- **STATUS:** Vulnerable
- **POPULATION:** 12,000 - 14,000
- **SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Setonix Brachyurus*
- **HEIGHT:** 40 - 54cm
- **WEIGHT:** 2.5 - 5kg



**T**he quokka is a nocturnal marsupial native to densely vegetated and swampy areas of western Australia, but they are mostly found on Rottnest, an island off the coast of Australia, and the smaller Bald Island, due to the humidity being preferable. As a marsupial, Quokkas are closely related to kangaroos, and share the feature of a flap of skin and fur around their belly known as a pouch which is essentially what makes a mammal a marsupial in the first place.

This pouch isn't just for show, it actually allows the Quokka to hold its joey for thirty weeks whilst still having suitable manoeuvrability for nightly activities. A female quokka can have up to two joeys a year, and over the span of their lifetime around seventeen with the help of their one-month gestation period. Fascinatingly, female quokkas are capable of something called embryonic diapause (delayed impregnation) which is used by a mother to wait to start developing the embryo until favourable conditions are met, only a few other animals can do this including some species of armadillos, bears, and badgers.



The life of a quokka is a simple one, spending most of their lives either asleep or foraging. Due to them being herbivorous, they forage for plant roots, stems, bark, leaves, and grass easily obtained by their impressive ability to climb trees. Although they live in colonies, Quokkas tend to lead rather solitary lives only using said colonies for added protection and shared food locations. These colonies are also very peaceful as Quokkas don't fight for dominance, territory, food, or mates. Quokkas have a polyandrous mating system, where both the males and females have multiple partners however some quokkas have mated with the same partner multiple times in a row. Their breeding season takes place in the cooler months of January through to March. Furthermore, their isolated location on Rottnest allows them no natural predators other than snakes. Whilst on the less densely populated Bald Island the Quokkas have no threats at all. On the other hand, the few inland have to face a greater few foes like red foxes and dingoes. This lack of predators has led to quokkas having no fear of humans and even posing for selfies.

The quokkas discovery was unusual: they were sighted many times by Europeans however they couldn't tell they were a new species. They were described as cats, and even rats (giving the name of Rottnest to their main island). However, their known discovery is really up to what you believe as in 1658 Samuel Vlackertzoon documented them as wild cats.



# BABEL

by R. F. Kuang: Reviewed by Francis Pendleton-Crane



## Is violence ever necessary?

Rebecca Kuang crafts an alternate version of early 19th century Oxford in which translation can create magic through silver working. After his mother dies from a cholera epidemic in Canton, Robin is whisked away to England by Professor Lovell and taught Latin and Ancient Greek so he may get into the centre of translation and silver, not just in Britain but the whole world. But, after he is accepted, the world starts to crumble around him as he is forced to face the unavoidable, ugly truth of the Empire.

The plot was generally good and functioned well as a vessel for the characters journeys. At the start, when Robin is still a child in an unfamiliar country, everything felt very realistic. As early as the first few chapters Robin has to face the reality of his predicament; some of the early scenes really hit hard and set the tone for the rest of the book. This first part is fairly slow though I always felt engaged and the narrative ultimately speeds up as our protagonist enters Oxford and comes up against unforeseen dilemmas. This momentum continues to build until it ultimately reaches a visceral, emotional denouement in the final pages.

Our main character is well fleshed-out and has clear motives for all of his actions. It's also interesting to see these motives change overtime as more influences are introduced. This praise is not necessarily applicable to the rest of the cohort, however: Victoire, Ramy and Letty are all fairly well developed but could each be boiled down to a set of two or three key personality traits in a way that their friend just couldn't (although interludes from all three throughout the book help with this). Other characters introduced later in the book add much thematic development through their own opinions on what needs to be done and – more controversially – how to do it. A character I personally would have really liked to see more of is Professor Chakravarti. Scenes in the last chapters tease what he has to give but ultimately he doesn't get a whole lot of time in the spotlight.

Oxford is a perfect setting for such a dark academia book with it's scholarly, almost romantic allure. Although, obviously, this isn't Oxford as we know it; it has a whole new, looming tower slap bang in the middle of it. This tower is Babel, Oxford's highly prestigious translation centre. Translation is such a key part of this world because, essentially, if you inscribe two words on a silver bar that constitute a "match-pair" (two words in different languages that have the same basic meaning), the semantic difference comes into being: whatever is lost in translation turns into magic. Such a unique magic system obviously has much political impact on the world, which we do see but it feels like all previous history in this world is the same. Same wars, same empires. This is a flaw that can be overlooked but a concept that has such potential for great worldbuilding not being fully explored leaves a bit of a bad taste in my mouth. Surely with magic, history would've unfolded very differently. Right? Still, this fantastical mechanic is fascinating and works very well both thematically and with the plot.

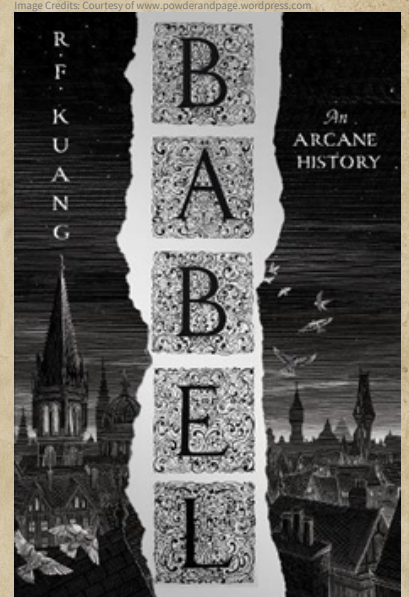
This book has strong and clear stances on colonialism and imperialism which I found really thought-provoking and shine through the writing. You could, however, definitely make the argument they are too overt, that they could have been done subtler. It sometimes feels like the message is said just a few too many times when the reader probably already has it. But this subtlety is down to personal taste and, on the other hand, it without a doubt adds to the realistic tone and helps convey the scale of some of the real and fictional atrocities the book mentions.

This book is great and I would definitely recommend it to just about anyone. And, as a final point, I would like to mention Kuang's beautiful prose and leave you with my favourite quote of the book:

“ That's just what translation is, I think. That's all speaking is. Listening to the other and trying to see past your own biases to glimpse what they're trying to say. Showing yourself to the world, and hoping someone else understands. ”



Average rating on Goodreads: 4.35



# AROUND THE WORLD: MINERALS

Martina Pastor Prado

**M**inerals are curious things. With distinctive colours and unique shapes and sizes, in the past they were often associated with the wild history of witchcraft and zodiacs. Plus, minerals can be easily found – some more than others – all over the Earth! From Russia's vast producers to Myanmar's unique discoveries, minerals are something worth checking out.

Generally speaking, minerals are present wherever rocks are. However, the amounts vary, the types as well. Presented here are statistics of minerals from Earth's crust.

## MOST COMMON MINERAL: FELDSPAR

Feldspar is a large group of rock-forming silicate minerals that makes up over 50% of Earth's crust. All feldspars are a large source of alumina, an oxide ceramic material, which is an important element in glassmaking and ceramic industries. Feldspars are mainly produced in Turkey, where we can also find boron, chrome, coal, copper, and marble.



## RAREST MINERAL: KWAYTHUITE

In the region of Myanmar, kwaythuite was found and recognised in 2015. Only one sample has been found up to the present, and there is a huge lack of information about it. In Myanmar we can also find minerals such as painite, the second rarest material: when found it is in small pieces, and from 1975 to 2001 only two specimens were discovered – now about a thousand minute fragments.



## STRONGEST MINERAL: DIAMOND

Diamonds are very popular for many things, like their beauty, their rarity, and their hardness. These minerals rank a ten out of ten on the Mohs scale of mineral hardness. Their number one producer is Russia, counting with more than twelve open-pit mines. In second place, we have Africa's top diamond producer, Botswana.

## WEAKEST MINERAL: TALC

Talc, opposite to diamond, is the easiest to break of all minerals, in fact being at the lowest level of the Mohs scale, at one. India is noticed, along with some other countries, to be a big producer of talc. It in fact produced in 2021 almost two million tonnes, winning first place. In India we can also find more minerals such as the iron ore. Iron is not a mineral, nevertheless, iron ore is considered one. Note: a common misconception is that elements are also minerals, which they are not. Minerals are elements stacked together, creating a substance. Ores, to become the pure element, are made to go through a process that extracts oxygen from them.

## MINERAL WITH HIGHEST DENSITY:

### BRIDGMANITE

Bridgmanite, named after Percy Williams Bridgmanite in 2014, is known to be the most abundant mineral Earth's totality. It is also the mineral with the highest density. It can be found not in countries' land, but further below our feet: in Earth's lower mantle, about 660 to 2,900 kilometres beneath Earth's surface. It can only exist under pressure in temperatures of about 2,100°C.

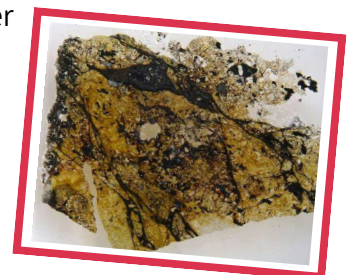


Image credits: Kwaythuite - Courtesy of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM)

# BITS & BOBS

Have a go at a brainteaser, learn about Batwoman's role in Pride History, or catch up on the latest in film: there's something for everyone!

## PRIDE HISTORY FACTOIDS

### The Mafia ran gay bars in NYC in the 1960s

Yes, this partnership sounds unlikely, if not ridiculous, but between New York's gay community in the 1960s being forced to live on the outskirts of society and the Mafia's disregard for the law, the two became a profitable, if uneasy, match. To operate its bars and nightclubs (including the infamous Stonewall Inn), the Mafia bribed the NYPD to turn a blind eye to the "indecent conduct" occurring behind closed doors.

### It might never have been called "Pride" at all

To commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots, activists proposed an annual march on the last Saturday in June with "no dress or age regulations." When organisers were looking for a slogan for the event, a member of the planning committee, L. Craig Schoonmaker, suggested "Pride." The idea of "Gay Power" was thrown around as well, but Schoonmaker argued that while gay individuals lacked power, one thing they did have was pride.

### Batwoman's creation kept Batman straight

In the mid-1950s, Batman and Robin comics came under scrutiny from fans and government agencies alike, being criticised for implying a romantic relationship between the two superheroes. So, Batwoman was added to the comics in 1956 as Batman's love interest to clear the air of any perceived subtext around Batman and Robin's sexualities. Ironically, she soon became a somewhat icon for female empowerment. Brainy, beautiful and badass, Batwoman cruised around Gotham on a motorcycle in an era defined by shackling women to marriage and kitchens.



Source and Image Credits:  
www.History.com

## 9-LETTER

F	A	W
C	I	D
U	R	L

Using the letters in the word grid above, create as many words as possible with at least 3 letters, and each time using the letter in the middle of the grid. You may only use each letter once per word. All words listed at the bottom! (According to Scrabble® UK list)

## FILM

Looking for something to watch? See if you missed anything from the most watched movies and series of 2022 on Netflix.

### MOVIES

- 1 The Gray Man
- 2 The Adam Project
- 3 Purple Hearts
- 4 Hustle
- 5 The Sea Beast

### SERIES

- 1 Stranger Things (S4)
- 2 Wednesday (S1)
- 3 Dahmer
- 4 Bridgerton (S2)
- 5 All of Us Are Dead (S1)

Source: [www.Forbes.com](http://www.Forbes.com)

Please note not all movies/series listed above are age appropriate for all audiences.

## ANSWERS

CAREFUL, FULCRA, FURCAL, AIDFUL, RAUCID, CURIAL, LAURIC, URACIL, CALIF, FARCI, FLUID, ACRID, ALCID, CAIRD, CALID, CARDI, DARIC, FILAR, FLAIR, FRAIL, LUCID, LUDIC, AULIC, AURIC, CAURI, CURIA, DRAIL, DULIA, LAIRD, LIARD, LIDAR, LURID, URALI, URIAL, WAIF, CUIF, FLIC, FUCI, WADI, WAD, WILD, ACID, ALIF, CADI, CAID, DUCI, FAIL, FAIR, FIAR, FILA, FLIR, WAIL, WAIR, WALI, CIRL, CRIA, LAIC, URIC, ARID, DALI, DARI, DIAL, DURL, LAID, RAID, RIAD, RUDI, ARIL, LAIR, LARI, LIAR, LIRA, RAIL, RIAL, DIF, FID, CID, FIL, FIR, RIF, AID, DUI, LID, RID, AIL, AIR, RAI, RIA

# SAINT VALENTINE

Abdul-Rashid Daud

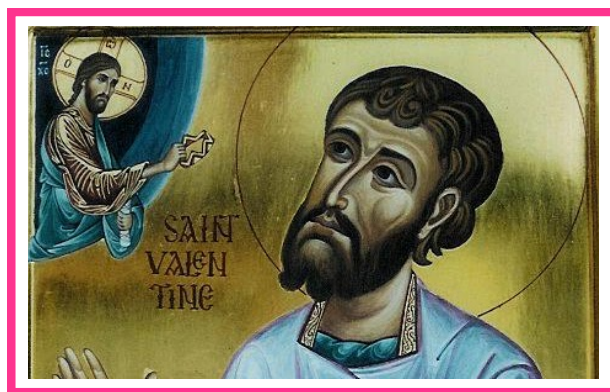
## WHO WAS HE?

Saint Valentine was either a priest or a bishop who was alive during the Roman times. Born of Italian heritage, he went on many expeditions including one to London - or Londinium, as it was called. Religiously, he is seen as a legendary Christian. However, he was included in the Kregymen (a group of warriors) who were seen as quite barbarous characters. The community described him as pious and intelligent. Unfortunately, he died on February 14th as a martyr – that’s why Valentine’s is on 14th February!

## WHAT IS VALENTINE'S DAY TO THE WORLD?

Valentine's is an annual celebration of love and romance that happens on February 14th across the globe. In Asia, they celebrate friendship whereas in South America, they focus on admiration. Admiration is widely celebrated and links to when Chile celebrated their illustrious, friendly riot to protest against the government.

**Fun Fact:** approximately 145 million cards are sent in America each year!



## GIFT IDEAS

It could be difficult for you to choose the right present, so here are a few ideas:

- **Keep it simple** - but make someone smile - a colourful card with a nice message could be an easy and accessible gift for most people.
- **For a higher budget**, there are flowers which represent different feelings depending on the colour: red shows love, yellow is friendship and pink roses show gratitude!
- **If you want to go all out** with a card and flowers, finish it off with a box of chocolates which is probably the best item to give – who doesn't love getting a box of Celebrations?

# AROUND THE WORLD: CULINARY CULTURE

Martina Pastor Prado

**D**ifferent territories have different soil; therefore, they grow different vegetation and breed different wildlife. The flora and fauna of each country is unique, and using those two elements, people can create mouth-watering delights. Now, instead of looking into the known ones, such as France's croissants, Mexico's tacos, or Japan's sushi, we are going to look at the unpopular but tasty delicacies.

## ENGLAND

Starting with England –a bit of local culture–, we can find the worldly well-known fish and chips. These consist in fried fish in crispy batter, served with chips. We can also find the English breakfast, which includes hot cooked food such as bacon, sausages, and eggs. Plus, it is worth mentioning the Sunday roast, which not only is eaten in England but in the whole United Kingdom and Ireland. This dish includes roasted meat, roast potatoes, and various accompaniments such as Yorkshire pudding, stuffing, and gravy.

## ARMENIA

In Armenia, many local foods are heavenly. The dish dolma is minced meat and spiced rice wrapped in vine or cabbage leaves, often served with matsun, a fermented milk yogurt, mixed with garlic. Next, lavash is considered the best of Armenian breads, being the traditional and national flatbread. Locals say it is a must-have to tourists. Topik is another Armenian delight and is best described as a chickpea dumpling. Greens and spices are the most common filling ingredients.



## BRAZIL

Next, travelling to Brazil, where we first find tapioca. Tapioca flour is commonly used in Brazilian regions for making unique sandwiches, usually with ham and cheese. Feijoada is quite an unusual plate, it consists of black beans with pork or other meat and vegetables, served with rice. Sometimes the rice is below the rest of food. Usually curved or rectangular, pastry pockets called pastels are filled with cheese, ground beef, or chicken, or more unusual fillings such as heart of palm and guava jam.

## GHANA

In Ghana, the most popular food there is waakye. A tasty dish of cooked rice and beans, it a common lunch item. Another delicacy found there is fufu. It is made from boiled starchy root vegetables that are then kneaded until dough-like consistency. It is normally served with palm nut soup. Another popular dish is jollof rice, which looks like any other dish of spiced rice, but it tastes different to others. The Ghanaian version is spiced with excessive amounts of tomato and a selection of juicy meats.

## NORWAY

Our first dish from this Nordic country is Fårikål, which literally translates to 'mutton in cabbage.' Similarly to a stew, mutton and cabbage are added to water and seasoned. Hjertevafler are worth mentioning. They are waffles but expertly presented in a heart shaped form, flavoured with cardamom and vanilla. They are commonly topped with sour cream, whipped cream, berries, jam, or chocolate. Lastly, an unusual dish – disgusting for some – smalahove. Smalahove, or 'sheep's head,' is exactly what it sounds like. For those who enjoy it, the tongue or eyes are considered the uttermost delicacies.



## TAIWAN

Finally, a bit of Asian culture. Taiwan's national dish is beef noodle soup. Even though its origins are Chinese, Taiwan modified it by adding classic Taiwanese ingredients. Originating from 1980s Taiwan, bubble tea is another popular item. It consists of flavoured milk tea, usually with added tapioca pearls, and has become very popular in Europe and the USA. We can also find the common dessert pineapple cake. These are small pastries filled with pineapple paste, and for many are considered the tastiest of sweets in Taiwan!

# TESLA

By Abdul-Rashid Daud

Tesla, an electric car company, is selling rapidly and reaching new heights with the help of Elon Musk. Everyone knows them but does anybody know how much the prices have decreased?

## PRICE CUTS

Tesla has cut back the price of some of its most popular electric cars by thousands of pounds to boost sales, however, they face competition from other carmakers, as customers are looking for cheaper alternatives. The price cuts are between 10 and 13% in the UK and are controversial as more than 16,000 customers bought models last year, and some are angry that they had paid more.



**CRAZY FACT:** The price cuts have been controversial as there have been price changes twice in the last 4 months!

## POSSIBLE CHALLENGES

Many critics have described it as “poor marketing.” The electric carmaker has been growing rapidly and is seen as a premium brand to manufacturers. However, they are facing many challenges, including slow global growth, higher interest rates, increasing competition and fewer people willing to pay the price. Demand for electric vehicles has been rising, driven by rising fuel costs and customers’ concerns about climate change. Electric models accounted for almost one-fifth of new car sales last year!

Elon Musk, is worried as he acknowledged last year that prices for new Teslas had become "embarrassingly high" and could hurt demand. The dramatic change in last year’s profit knocked Elon Musk off his spot as the world's richest person!

Despite these controversies, Tesla and Musk have managed to remain successful, and are continuing to push the boundaries of electric vehicles and sustainable energy technology.



# Credits

## **Francis Pendleton-Crane:**

- Editor-in-Chief, Writer ('Babel' by R.F. Kuang)

## **Abdul-Rashid Daud:**

- Editor, Writer (Saint Valentine, Tesla)

## **Rachael Fajebe:**

- Designer

## **Ethan Freeman-Smith:**

- Designer, Writer (Bits & Bobs)

## **Andreas Constantinou:**

- Writer (The Quokka)

## **Autumn Harley:**

- Writer (Various contributions)

## **Martina Pastor Prado:**

- Writer (Around the World: Minerals, Culinary Culture)

**Thank you for supporting the Quinton Chronicle!**