

SHARDS OF WISDOM

"Heard it Through the Grapevine"



Who knew that? (*I did, with a little help from a friend.*)

With thanks, says Ralph Finch

I have written maybe a thousand stories, on glass, on toilet paper (literally and figuratively), done interviews with famous people and just “normal” people, serious research and silly nonsense.

Sometimes, people think I’m knowledgeable, but...not really. I do know how to type (sumewhat), and how to ask for help, and Helper No. 1 is...Wikipedia!

I once got an email that said: “It’s Wikipedia’s 20th birthday! Let’s celebrate the millions of people who have come together to make knowledge free for everyone, everywhere!”

I last donated \$50 (I donate every year, since I use Wikipedia several times a day; I couldn’t write without my “personal library” at my fingertips).

From Wikipedia: “200,000+ editors contribute to Wikipedia projects every month. 47+ million media files on Wikipedia Commons; 1+ billion unique devices access Wikipedia projects every month.”

Wikipedia comprises more than 55 million articles, attracting 1.7 billion unique visitors per month. I am one of those one billion, and hardly unique.

I like learning, and I like learning...odd stuff. Once, when doing my 80-page journal for target ball collectors, a subscriber wrote: “I learn so much reading your stories...although I don’t know what I’ll ever do with it.” I was honored.

I like learning...stuff. If you asked me to write about...say: Q-tips. I could respond in a paragraph; maybe even a sentence. But I could

add a page on the development of the Q-Tip, and who invented it. And how many billions of Q-tips there are in the world. And, with luck, add a bad joke about Q-tips. (Or include my doctor’s scary story about Q-tips, but I won’t, since it still gives me the willies.)

And, with luck, a bad pun...

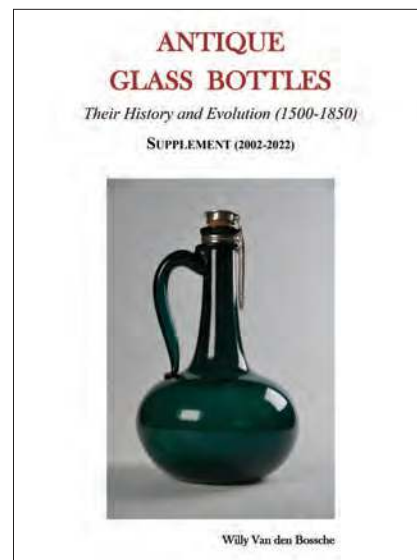
First, knowledge: The term Q-tip—invented in 1923—“is often used as a genericized trademark for a cotton swab. The Q-tips brand is owned by Unilever and had over \$200 million in U.S. sales in 2014. Johnson’s buds are made by Johnson & Johnson.”

And, dumb? Who is named “Q-Tip”? An American rapper. I don’t want to stick that in my ear, either.

And bad joke? “What did the Q-tip say before he went to work? ‘Just another day at the orifice.’”

And old bottles? Whatever you collect, go to Wikipedia and type in the bottle, medicine, whatever, and Wikipedia likely will tell you something you didn’t know. And maybe photos, too.

New Willy Van den Bossche Book: ANTIQUE GLASS BOTTLES—Their History and Evolution (1500-1850) SUPPLEMENT (2002-2022)



The 2001 publication of the international reference work *Antique Glass Bottles - Their History and Evolution (1500-1850)*, fills a major knowledge gap in the history and evolution of utility bottles and jars throughout Continental Europe. In honour of the 20th anniversary of this publication, the work has been enlarged with a separate Supplement (2002-2022) of 112 carefully selected, mainly Continental bottles and jars depicted on

147 colour plates with thorough description printed on 123 pages single-sided. This Supplement (2002-2022) has been written for antique dealers, archaeologists, auctioneers, bottle-makers, collectors, historians, institutions, libraries, museums, pharmacists, researchers, wine and beer lovers, writers, and all others curious about the art of collecting antique glass.

SHARDS OF WISDOM

“Heard it Through the Grapevine”



Trained pigeons advertise Coke!

Another misleading comment by Ralph Finch

Anyone who has been to London's Trafalgar Square many decades ago will remember the, oh...one million pigeons that flocked across that world-popular attraction. Laughing children would run and “launch” the fluttering flocks, and visitors would be photographed, hands out and filled with seeds—and pigeons.

And Trafalgar was also known for its ton of pigeon droppings. The city finally barred the pigeon seed sellers—there was such an uproar that the government had to buy them out, sort of an early retirement.

But, the attached photo: In the late 1960s, Coca Cola spread out a huge amount of birdseed in St. Mark's Square in the shape of their logo. It was immediately covered/consumed by thousands of pigeons who clearly spelled out the Coca Cola logo, the aerial publicity photo was taken and it remains a very famous/infamous piece of advertising today. It was not an original idea. Coca Cola had borrowed it from Assicurazioni Generali, a Venetian insurance company, which had its headquarters in the piazza. Assicurazioni Generali would regularly set out birdseed in such a way that the pigeons would form the letters of the company.

A word of advice to anyone who might like to follow suit: since 2008 it has been against the law to feed the pigeons in Piazza San Marco. Ditto Trafalgar.

The earliest mention of the birds was about ten years after the square was first laid out in the 1830s. By Victorian times, market traders had moved in to set up stalls selling bird seed. There's a famous scene in *Mary Poppins* where the umbrella-wielding nanny sings a song called *Feed the Birds* in which an old beggar woman sells bags of breadcrumbs for twopence a go (although this was on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral rather than Trafalgar Square).

January – February 2023

It was in 2001 that the authorities first started making an effort to boot out the birds. Ken Livingstone described the pigeons as “flying rats” and said their acidic waste was causing £140,000 worth of damage to Nelson's Column and promptly withdrew the license of all the bird food sellers.

He even brought in a huge industrial vacuum cleaner to suck up the seed on the street and paid people to blast the birds with loud speakers. (I don't know which was more annoying, the pigeons or the people shouting through the loudspeakers.)

The most famous guy to fall foul of the law (pardon the pun) was a vendor called Bernard Rayner, whose family had been happily selling seeds for nearly half a century. He must have made a fortune over the years judging by his prices, because every tourist seemed to have purchased at least one cup of nuts/seeds from him. He tried to take them to the High Court but ended up accepting an undisclosed amount of money in an out-of-court settlement.

APR: Signing in from your Smart Phone



Most FOHBC members have had no problems signing in to the APR from their laptop or desktop computers. It is more challenging from your smartphone which

you might use at a bottle show for instance. We offer the following advice:

In case you haven't already, we recommend bookmarking the following URL on the browser you are using:

<https://www.auctionpricereport.com/>

The next step would be to save the username and password (provided on the following page: <https://www.fohbc.org/how-to-access-the-fohbc-auction-price-report-website/>) somewhere safely on your phone. This could be done as a text note that you can simply copy and paste directly onto the APR website's login form on your phone's browser. Or, you can also use a password manager like LastPass or the password manager provided by the browsers themselves to store the credentials for you.

If you go straight to <https://auctionpricereport.com/> to log in and use the stored credentials, you won't have to log in to two different sites in order to access the APR website.

I tested this process and I was able to log in to the APR website on my phone with the credentials provided on the FOHBC.org website without a problem.

Miguel Ruiz, APR website developer

