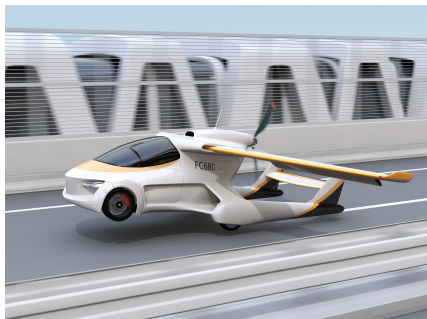




Published by the Peter Underwood Centre

July 13, 2020

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difference
puzzle:
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SCI-FI FACTS

The fiction predictions that became reality

ARE you a fan of science fiction?

Most of you have probably seen a *Star Wars* or *Back to the Future* movie.

Maybe you like reading science fiction books or comics.

There is some debate about what true science fiction is, but it usually involves imaginative ideas about science and technology, and events that will happen in the future.

Time travel, for example, is a popular theme.

If you head to the Internet (which by the way was itself predicted in science fiction) there are many articles about science fiction writers correctly predicting future inventions and events.

In 1865, author Jules Verne famously wrote about a mission by three Americans to launch a spacecraft and land on the moon in his novel *From Earth to the Moon*.

It was 104 years later that American astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins were launched in Apollo 11 at the Kennedy Space Centre on Merritt Island, Florida.

Verne's characters also launched from Florida, and his fictional spacecraft was a similar shape and size to Apollo 11.

Among other things, Verne is also credited with predicting the invention of radio.

In 1889, he wrote about listening to the news, rather than reading a newspaper.

The first radio broadcast did not

happen until 1920. In his 1968 novel *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Arthur C. Clarke wrote about an electric paper or "newspad" that people would read.

The iPad was released in 2010. But that wasn't Clarke's most impressive prediction, and there were many.

In a 1945 article he suggested artificial satellites could be launched into orbit to relay radio waves from space to provide global communication services, including television coverage.

It was a bold concept, particularly given televisions were in very few homes at the time, but only 12 years later the world's first artificial satellite, *Sputnik 1*, was launched.

Since then thousands of satellites have been launched into orbit for all sorts of purposes.

Clarke, who had a degree in mathematics and physics, was undoubtedly a clever person.

It is worth noting though that while Clarke popularised, or made the idea of satellites well known to many people around the world, he did not come up with the idea.

That is the case with many predictions that science fiction writers have been credited with.

And for every concept in science fiction that has become reality, there are many more that haven't.

Perhaps we need to give more credit to the scientists who have made these ideas a reality.

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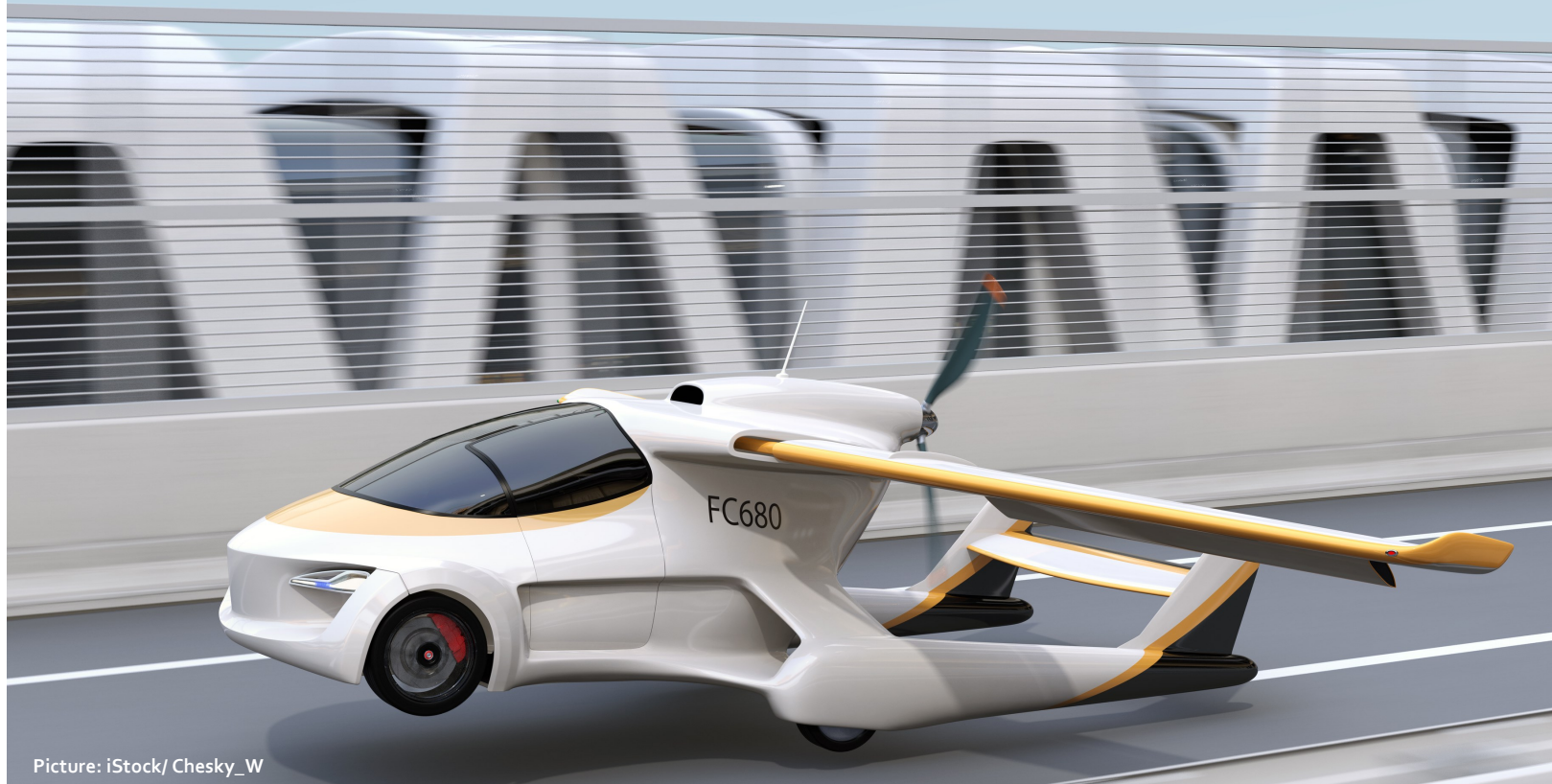


Picture: iStock/ MaryLB

Did Arthur C. Clarke predict Virtual Reality games?

The City and the Stars (1956): Of all the thousands of forms of recreation in the city, these were the most popular. When you entered a saga, you were not merely a passive observer... You were an active participant and possessed - or seemed to possess - free will. The events and scenes which were the raw material of your adventures might have been prepared beforehand by forgotten artists, but there was enough flexibility to allow for wide variation. You could go into these phantom worlds with your friends, seeking the excitement that did not exist in Diaspar—and as long as the dream lasted there was no way in which it could be distinguished from reality.

Flying cars are set for take off



Picture: iStock/ Chesky_W

FLYING CARS featured in the animated television series *The Jetsons*, *Back to the Future*, and who could forget Luke Skywalker jumping into his landspeeder in *Star Wars*.

But flying cars do not just exist in science fiction.

People have been trying to develop a flying car since the early 1900s.

The problem is not so much building one.

There have been plenty of prototypes, dating back to 1917

and the Curtiss Autoplane, which had removable fuselage and wings.

The problem has always been producing one that is affordable, safe and reliable, in the air and on the road.

That presents many very big challenges for engineers and scientists.

But several large aviation and automobile companies say they are very close to meeting all those challenges.

Several VTOL (Vertical Take

Off and Landing) aircraft have undergone demonstration and test flights, and even entered the production stage.

Most look like a cross between a drone and a small plane, and are intended to be used as remote-controlled air taxis.

UBER want to have electric VTOLs up and running by 2023.

Passengers would just sit in the VTOL aircraft and be flown from one place to another, which in big cities would be a

way of saving time by avoiding the traffic on busy roads.

But there are still many obstacles to flying cars being approved.

Governments and other bodies who make the rules about road and air travel have to consider all the impacts flying cars could have.

These impacts include noise and privacy, and many people probably won't like the idea of a flying car hovering above them.

Scientists turn fiction into fact

From Page 1

It is amazing to think that scientists and engineers have achieved and developed ideas that were once considered so far-fetched that they were found in science fiction books, movies and TV shows like *Star Trek*.

Very few people believed in 1966, that the pocket communicator featured in *Star Trek* would inspire the modern-day mobile phone.

Most people in the 1960s would have laughed if they were told that anything like the replicators they were introduced to in *Star Trek* that could 3D print food and everyday objects in a few seconds, might really exist in the future.

The 3D printers we have today have a little bit of ground to make up on *Star Trek*, but don't underestimate scientists.

Your challenge is to let your imaginations run wild and come up with an idea that might be achieved in the future.

Your idea could be something that will change the world, or just something that makes life a little easier.

It might seem far-fetched now, but things can change.

Perhaps draw a design of your idea, or try writing a short science fiction story to demonstrate how it would work.

Children's University Tasmania members can earn stamps in their passports for this challenge, at the discretion of school coordinators.

Australia had a dinosaur to rival the mighty T-Rex

IT is a really exciting time for Australian palaeontologists and everyone interested in dinosaurs.

The recent analysis of 80-centimetre fossil footprints in Queensland suggests Australia was once home to a giant predatory dinosaur, almost as large as a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Palaeontologists believe the footprints are from the mid to late Jurassic period, about 160 million years ago, and belonged to a meat-eating dinosaur which was 3-metres tall and the length of a bus.

The step distances suggest these large carnivores were moving at speeds of up to 35 kilometres per hour, which would have made them an effective predator.

The footprints were discovered in the ceilings of underground coalmines

near Ipswich and Toowoomba about 70 years ago, and were stored in museums.

It is only recently that they were rediscovered and studied by palaeontologists from the University of Queensland.

While large dinosaur tracks have been found in Australia, until now they have belonged to plant eaters.

Find out more here: theconversation.com/au

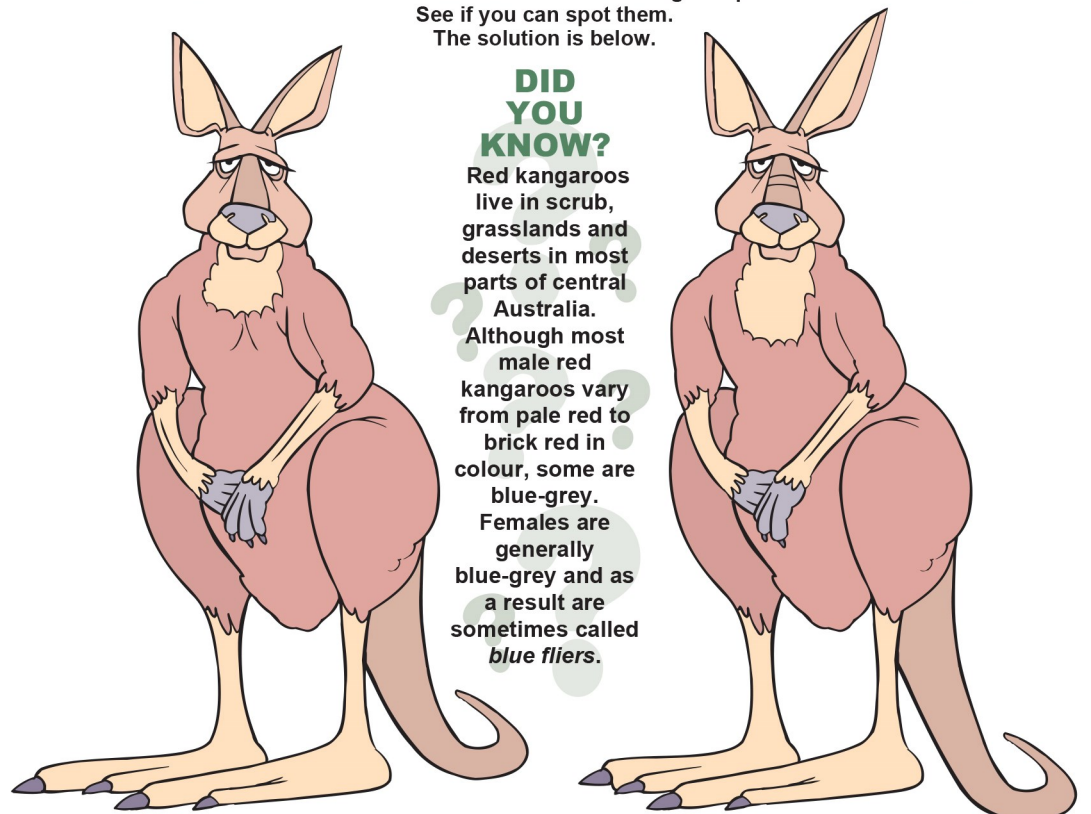
The June 8 edition of *The Wonder Weekly* featured some of Tasmania's amazing fossil finds.

Remember, if you find what you think might be (or definitely is) a fossil, take a photo or draw a picture of the find, and share it with us:

UnderwoodCentre.Enquiries@utas.edu.au

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

There are seven small differences between the first red kangaroo picture and the second one. See if you can spot them. The solution is below.



DID YOU KNOW?

Red kangaroos live in scrub, grasslands and deserts in most parts of central Australia. Although most male red kangaroos vary from pale red to brick red in colour, some are blue-grey. Females are generally blue-grey and as a result are sometimes called *blue fliers*.

SOLUTION: 1. Tail longer, 2. Ear bigger, 3. Nose changed, 4. Marking on chest bigger, 5. Line on arm missing, 6. Finger missing, 7. Toe shorter.