50 years of events

**1963**

*June 16* Russian cosmonaut, Lieutenant Valentina Tereshkova, becomes the first woman to go into space August 8. A gang of 15 men steal £2.6 million from a travelling post office “Up Special” train, in what is to become known as The Great Train Robbery

*August 28* Between 200,000 and 300,000 people take part in the 'March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom’. During the march, Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his historic “I Have a Dream” speech

*November 22* John F. Kennedy is assassinated while riding with his wife Jacqueline in a Presidential motorcade

**1964**

*January 5* Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I meet in Jerusalem – the first meeting between leaders of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches since the 15th century

*January 11* United States Surgeon General Luther Leonidas Terry releases the first report claiming that smoking may be hazardous to one’s health

*August 13* Murderers Gwynne Owen Evans and Peter Anthony Allen are the last people to be executed in the United Kingdom

**1965**

*January 30* Sir Winston Churchill is buried in a state funeral

*8 March* 3,500 U.S. Marines are dispatched to South Vietnam, marking the beginning of the American ground war

*July 25* Bob Dylan is backed by an electric blues band at the Newport Folk Festival, causing controversy amonst folk purists and signalling his move from folk to rock

*November 6* Cuba and the United States agree to start an airlift for Cubans who want to go to the United States.

**1966**

*July 30* England beats West Germany 4-2 to win the World Cup. The trophy was stolen in the run-up to the tournament but was found a week later by a dog named “Pickles”

*May 6* 'Moors murderers’ Ian Brody and Myra Hindley are jailed for life

May 16 Mao Zedong, chairman of the Communist Party of China, launches the Cultural Revolution

**1967**

*3 December* Christiaan Barnard performs the first successful human-to-human heart transplant in Cape Town, South Africa

*28 May* Francis Chicester becomes the first person to sail single-handed around the world

*June 27* The world’s first ATM is installed in Barclay’s Bank in Enfield Town, North London

*October 9* Che Guevara is executed

**1968**

*March 16* In South Vietnam, American troops kill scores of unarmed civilians in what will become known as the My Lai Massacre. The story will not become public until November 1969

*April 4* Martin Luther King is assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, sparking several days of riots

*Aug 21* Several thousand Soviet troops invade Czechoslovakia in reaction to the Prague Spring

*October 17* African American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos perform the Black power salute as they collect their Olympic gold and bronze medals for the 200 metre race.

**1969**

*March 5* Gangland twins Ronald and Reginald Kray are given life sentences for murder.

*April 15-18* 500,000 music fans travel to Bethel, New York for Woodstock festival

*June 30* The Nigerian government bans all Red Cross aid to Biafra, leaving four million people facing starvation

*July 21* American astronaut Neil Armstrong becomes the first man to set foot on the moon

*September 1* Muammar al Gaddafi and his revolutionary army officers sieze power of Libya from King Idris

*October 5* The first episode of Monty Python’s Flying Circus airs on the BBC

**1970**

*Jan 22-23* The Boeing 747 jumbo jet makes its first commerical flight from New York to London, with Pan Am

*November 12* Bohla cyclone strikes Bangladesh and India’s West Bengal, killing between 300,000 and 500,000 people

**1971**

*January* BBC Open University begins in the United Kingdom

*February 15* The United Kingdom and Ireland switch to decimal currency

*March 26* Sk. Mujibur Rahman declares the independence of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)

*July 3* Jim Morrison, leader of The Doors is found dead in his bathtub in Paris, France

*December 2* Six Persian Gulf sheikdoms found the United Arab Emirates

**1972**

*30 Jan* 26 unarmed civil rights protestors and bystanders are shot by members of the Britsh Army during a Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association march in Derry. The incident later becomes known as 'Bloody Sunday’

*September 5* Eleven Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich are murdered when eight members of the Arab terrorist group Black September storm the Olympic Village

*May 28 and June 17* Five men break into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate office complex. The burglaries commence the Watergate scandal.

**1973**

*January 4* The pilot episode of Last of the Summer Wine, which became the longest-running TV comedy series in the world, is broadcast on BBC One

*March 17* Pink Floyd’s The Dark Side of the Moon is released

*April 3* Martin Cooper, Motorola engineer, makes the first ever public mobile phone call in New York City

*October 20* The Sydney Opera House is opened by Queen Elizabeth

**1974**

*August 8* U.S. President Richard Nixon delivers his resignation speech on national television following his involvement in covering up the Watergate scandal

*March* The Terracotta Army is discovered by Chinese archeologists near the capital of Xi’an

*September 23* Ceefax (one of the first public service information systems) is started by the BBC

**1975**

*30 April* The Vietnam war is ended as North Vietnamese troops take control of Saigon

*Sept 18* Patty Hearst is arrested after turning from kidnap hostage to guerilla

*November 15* The Group of Six or G6 (now the G8) is formed

**1976**

*Jan 21* Concorde begins its first commercial flight

*April 1* Apple Computer Company is founded by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak

*August 26* The first known outbreak of Ebola virus occurs in Yambuku, Zaire

**1977**

*May 25* The first Star Wars film is released

*June 6* A week of celebrations begins for the Queen’s Silver jubilee

*August 16* Elvis Presley dies in his home in Graceland. Two days later, 75,000 fans line the streets of Memphis for his funeral.

*October 26* The last natural smallpox case is discovered in Somalia leading the WHO and the CDC to name the date the anniversary of the eradication of smallpox

**1978**

*25 July* Louise Joy Brown, the world’s first test tube baby, is born in Oldham, Greater Manchester

*Nov 29* 918 members of American cult, the People’s Temple, are found dead from cyanide poisoning at the Jonestown commune in Guyana. A note left by cult leader Jim Jones explains the deaths as suicides but survivors claim that he forced the group to drink a soft drink laced with the poison

**1979**

*January 8* Vietnamese regular forces take control of the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh, overthrowing Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge regime and ending four years of genocide

*January 16* The Shah of Iran is driven into exile by supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini following a mass protest by millions of Iranians across a number of cities. On February 1 Khomeini returns to Iran after 14 years of exile.

*March 26* Egypt and Israel sign a peace treaty

*March 28* A partial meltdown of the reactor core at Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station, Pennsylvania, releases a significant amount of radioactivity into the surrounding environment, causing national panic.

*May 4* Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain’s first female Prime Minister

*August 27* Lord Mountbatten is killed in by an IRA bomb

**1980**

*April 17* Rhodesia becomes Zimbabwe as Britain’s last African colony gains independence

*April 24* San Francisco resident Ken Horne becomes the first AIDS case in the United States to be recognised at the time

*May 5* The SAS storm the terrorist-occupied Iranian embassy in London, killig four of the five terrorists and rescuing the 19 surviving hostages

*July 19 – August 3* The United States and 64 other countries boycot the Moscow Summer Olympics in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

*December 8* John Lennon is shot dead outside his New York home by 25-year-old Mark Chapman

**1981**

*May 13* Pope John Paul II is nearly killed by Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca

*July 29* 700 million TV viewers worldwide watch Prince Charles marry Lady Diana Spencer at St Paul’s Cathedral

**1982**

*April 2* Argentinian troops invade and capture the Falkland Islands sparking 74 days of conflict before British forces regain control

*6 June* The first Lebanon War begins as Israel Defense Forces invade Lebanon

**1983**

*May 6* Stern Magazine publishes the “Hitler Diaries”, which are later found to be forgeries

*September 25* 38 Irish republican prisoners, armed with six handguns, escape from Maze Prison in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. It is the biggest prison escape in British history

**1984**

*October 12* Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet are the victims of an IRA assassination attempt when the hotel in which they are staying for the Conservative Party conference is bombed. 5 people are killed but the Prime Minister and her ministers survive

**1985**

*1 January* The first British mobile phone call is made (by Ernie Wise to Vodafone).

*July 13* Bob Geldof’s dual-venue Live Aid concert raises £30m for African famine victims

**1986**

*January 28* The American space shuttle Challenger explodes seconds after lift-off, killing its crew of seven

*26 April* One of four nuclear reactors at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant explodes, sending a cloud of radioactive fallout into the atmosphere, which affects large areas of Europe

*22 June* Argentina beats England 2-1 to win the World Cup, aided by Maradona’s 'Hand of God’

**1987**

*19 Oct* Stock markets around the world crash and the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DIJA) drops by 508 points on the day referred to as Black Monday.

*Nov 8* An IRA bombs kills eleven people and injures 63 in the northern Irish town of Enniskillen as they assemble for the annual Remembrance Day parade

*Dec 8* President Reagan and Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, sign the first ever treaty to cut the size of their nuclear arsenals.

**1988**

*25 March* 10,000 protestors take part in the peaceful Candle Demonstration in Bratislava, protesting against the communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

*May 15* After more than 8 years of fighting, Soviet forces begin withdrawing from Afghanistan.

*21 December* Pan Am Flight 103 explodes over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway and kills a total of 270 people - including all 259 who were on board. It is believed that the cause of the explosion was a terrorist bomb.

**1989**

*November 9* After separating East and West Germany for 28 years, the Berlin Wall falls.

*June* Troops and tanks from the People’s Liberation Army open fire on protestors in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, killing approximately 400-800 people

**1990**

*February 11* Nelson Mandela is released from Victor Verster Prison after more than 27 years in prison.

*August 2* Iraqi troops invade Kuwait, marking the beginning of the Gulf War.

*25 December* British engineer and computer scientist, Sir Timothy Berners-Lee, perfects his invention; the World Wide Web.

**1991**

*March 14* The Birmingham Six are released after 16 years of wrongful imprisonment

*June 17* The South African Parliament repeals the Population Registration Act, which had required South Africans to be racially classified at birth.

*July 1* The Warsaw Pact is officially dissolved at a meeting in Prague.

*December 26* The Soviet Union is formally dissolved

**1992**

*April 5* The Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina declares independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, leading to the Bosnian War.

**1993**

*October 5* China performs a nuclear test, ending the worldwide de facto moratorium.

*November 1* The European Union is formally established when the Maastricht Treaty takes effect.

**1994**

*27 April* The first fully multiracial South African general election is held, marking the end of apartheid.

*January 14* U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin sign the Kremlin Accords, stopping the preprogrammed aiming of nuclear missiles toward each country.

*May 6* After seven years of construction, the Channel Tunnel opens.

*May 10* Nelson Mandela becomes South Africa’s first black president.

**1995**

*October 3* O.J. Simpson is found not guilty of the murder of Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman. He later penned a book called If I Did It, in which he puts forth a hypothetical description of the murders.

**1996**

*March 13* Unemployed Thomas Hamilton opens fire on Dunblane Primary School in Scotland, killing 16 pupils and one teacher, before committing suicide

*June 10* Peace talks begin in Northern Ireland without Sinn Féin

*July 5* Dolly the sheep, the first mammal to be successfully cloned from an adult cell, is born at the Roslin Institute in Midlothian, Scotland

**1997**

*31 August* Diana, Princess of Wales and Dodi Al-Fayed are killed in a car crash in the Pont de l’Alma road tunnel in Paris.

*June 30* Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone is released by Bloomsbury Publishing

*July 10* British scientists report that their DNA analysis findings from a Neanderthal skeleton support the out of Africa theory of human evolution.

*5 September* Mother Teresa dies

*December 11* A United Nations committee adopts the Kyoto Protocol, aimed at fighting global warming through the reduction of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere

**1998**

*January 26* President Bill Clinton denies he had “sexual relations” with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. He later admits that he did have an “improper physical relationship”.

*August 2* San Luis Obispo, California becomes the first municipality in the world to ban smoking in all public buildings, including bars and restaurants

*August 15* A Real IRA car bomb kills 29 people and injures over 200 in Omagh, Northern Ireland

*September 4* Google is founded by Sergey M. Brin and Lawrence E. Page

**1999**

*January 1* The euro is introduced as an accounting currency to the world financial markets

*August 11* A total solar eclipse occurs which is probably the most-viewed in human history.

**2000**

*January 1* The Millennium Dome opens its doors to the public for one year

*March 12* Pope John Paul II apologises for past wrongdoings by members of the Roman Catholic Church

*May 4* The ILOVEYOU computer virus spreads quickly throughout the world, successfully attacking tens of millions of Windows computers

**2001**

*January 15* Online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, launches

*September 11* Al-Qaeda terrorists hijack four commercial airliners en route to Los Angeles and San Francisco. American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175 are flown into the World Trade Center’s Twin Towers in New York, American Airlines Flight 77 is flown into the Pentagon in Washington, and United Airlines Flight 93 crashes into grassland in Shanksville, Pennsylvania after passengers attempted to regain control from the hijackers.

*October 7* The United States invades Afghanistan, with participation from the British Armed Forces, in response to the September 11 attacks. The invasion marks the beginning of the current, ongoing war in Afghanistan.

*November 13* U.S. President George W. Bush signs an order allowing military tribunals against any foreigners suspected of having connections to terrorist acts or planned acts against the United States. This is the first act of its kind since World War II.

*December 2* Enron files for bankruptcy.

**2002**

*April 9* The funeral of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother takes place in Westminster Abbey

*June 3* The Party in the Palace takes place at Buckingham Palace, London for Queen Elizabeth II’s Golden Jubilee celebrations

*July 1* The International Criminal Court is established to prosecute individuals for crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and the crime of aggression

*November 8* The UN Security Council Resolution 1441 is passed, offering Saddam Hussein “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations”. Iraq later allows weapons inspectors into the country and submits a 12,000-page weapons declaration to the UN but fails to account for chemical and biological stockpiles.

**2003**

*February 15* More than 10 million people in over 600 cities worldwide protest against a prospective U.S. invasion of Iraq, the largest protest ever to take place before a war occurs

*March 19* U.S. and allied forces invade Iraq, beginning the Iraq War

*April 14* The International Human Genome Consortium announces the successful completion of the Human Genome Project

*December 13* Saddam Hussein is captured by US forces at a farmhouse in ad-Dawr

**2004**

*January 28* The Hutton Inquiry findings are published, clearing the British Government of “sexing up” the September Dossier, a report into Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. The report strongly criticises the BBC, leading to the resignation of its chairman, director-general and journalist Andrew Gilligan.

*February 3* The CIA admits that there was no imminent threat from weapons of mass destruction before the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

*February 4* Facebook is founded by Mark Zuckerberg

*May 12* American civilian, Nick Berg, is shown being decapitated in Iraq by a group allegedly linked to al-Qaida on a web-distributed video

*September 2* A law banning religious items and clothing from schools in France comes into effect

*December 26* Around 230,000 people in fourteen countries are killed as the Boxing Day Tsunami sends waves of up to 30 meters in height crashing into coasting communities

**2005**

*January 30* Iraq holds its first free Parliamentary elections since 1958

*July 7* 52 people are killed and over 700 injured when al-Qaeda-associated militants detonate four bombs in London, three on the London Underground and one on a bus

*July 24* Lance Armstrong makes history by winning the Tour de France for a seventh consecutive time

*September 30* Controversial drawings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad are printed in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, sparking Islamic protests across the world

**2006**

*July 12* Israeli troops invade Lebanon in response to Hezbollah kidnapping two Israeli soldiers and killing three. Two days later, Hezbollah declares war against Israel

*November 5* Saddam Hussein is sentenced by the Iraqi Special Tribunal to death by hanging. His execution takes place on December 30 in Kadhimiya at Iraqi army base, Camp Justice

**2007**

*January 1*7 The fifth series of television series Celebrity Big Brother triggers protests in India and the United Kingdom after Jade Goody, Danielle Lloyd and Jo O’Meara are allegedly racially abusive towards fellow contestant, Bollywood star Shilpa Shetty

*May 3* Madelaine McCann disappears prompting a worldwide search, which is continued today by her family.

*July 21* Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, the final book in the series, is released and sells over 11 million copies in the first 24 hours, making it the fastest selling book in history

**2008**

*January 2* The price of petroleum hits $100 per barrel for the first time in history

*January 21* Stock markets around the world crash amid growing fears of a global recession

*February 22* Northern Rock becomes the first bank in Europe to be taken into public ownership

*September 15* Lehman Brothers files for bankruptcy

**2009**

*January 20* Senator Barack Obama is inaugurated as the United States of America’s first African American President

*19 May* The President of Sri Lanka claims an end to the insurgency of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, following the death of their leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. His announcement marks the end of over 25 years of civil war.

*June 25* Michael Jackson dies of a cardiac arrest, prompting worldwide mourning from fans.

*August 16* Usain Bolt sets a new World Record of 9.58 seconds for the Men’s 100m at the Berlin World Championships.

*August 31* Following the withdrawal of British troops from June onwards and withdrawal of the last U.S. combat brigades on August 19, Obama announces the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom, bringing the war to a close

**2010**

*January 12* A 7.0-magnitude earthquake kills over 230,000 people in Haiti.

*January 29* Tony Blair appears in front of the panel at the Chilcot Inquiry to face questions over his role in taking Britain into the Iraq war. He claims he has “no regrets” about removing Saddam Hussein.

*April 14* A volcanic ash cloud from beneath Eyjafjallajökull ice cap in Iceland begins to disrupt air traffic across northern and western Europe. The disruption will last for over a month and leave millions of passengers stranded

*April 20* The Deepwater Horizon oil platform explodes in the Gulf of Mexico, killing eleven workers. In the months that follow, an estimated 205.8 million gallons of crude oil spill into the water, damaging an estimated area of 80,000 square kilometres

*July 25* Over 90,000 internal reports about the United States-led involvement in the War in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2010 are leaked to the public via Wikileaks, an online publisher of anonymous, covert, and classified material

*August 5 – October 13* Following a cave-in at the San José copper-gold mine in Chile, 33 miners survive underground for a record 69 days

*November 13* Burmese opposition politician Aung San Suu Kyi is released after almost 15 years fo house arrest

*November 16* It is announced that Prince William of Wales will marry long-term girlfriend, Kate Middleton

**2011**

*January 11* Heavy rains trigger some of the deadliest landslides in Brazilian history. On January 23, the death toll reached 806

*January 14* Following a continuing series of street demonstrations, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Tunisian Republic, steps down from office and flees Tunisia after 23 years in power

*January 21* Tony Blair appears for the second time at the Iraq Inquiry. He expresses “deep and profound regret” about the loss of life suffered by UK personnel and Iraqi citizens during and after the 2003 war

*25 January* The first of a series of street demonstrations, protests, and civil disobedience acts take place in Egypt with the goal of ousting President Hosni Mubarak’s regime.