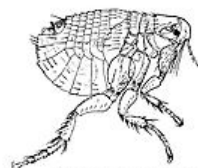


London 1665— Escape the Plague

A maze connection puzzle
designed by Kate Jones
for IPP34 Puzzle Exchange
London, England – August 2014

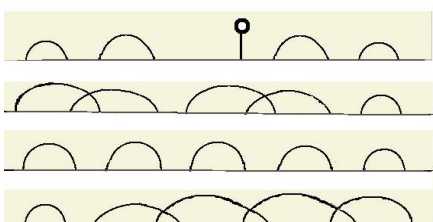
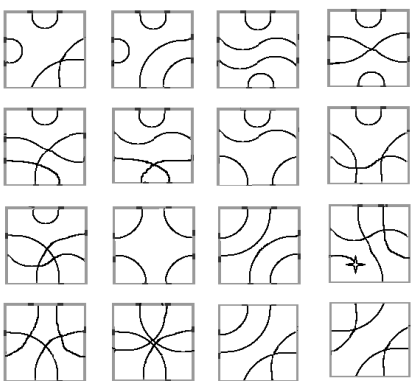


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The history

The *Black Death* was a bubonic plague pandemic which reached England in 1348 and killed about half the population. The *Great Plague* (1665–66) was the last major epidemic of the bubonic plague to occur in the Kingdom of England (part of modern-day United Kingdom). It happened within the centuries-long time period of the Second Pandemic, an extended period of intermittent bubonic plague epidemics which began in Europe in 1347, the first year of the "Black Death", and lasted until 1750.

Some of the city's necessities such as coal arrived by barge, but most came by road. Carts, carriages, horses and pedestrians were crowded together, and the gateways in the wall formed bottlenecks through which it was difficult to progress. The better-off used hackney carriages and sedan chairs to get to their destinations without getting filthy. The poor walked, and might be splashed by the wheeled vehicles and drenched by slops being thrown out and water falling from the overhanging roofs.



ESCAPE THE PLAGUE

Contents:

- 4 wall strips
- 16 path tiles

Goal 1: Arrange the four wall strips into a square. Fill the 4x4 area with the 16 tiles so that you create a single path that connects the starting point (red) to the exit gate and contains every path segment on all the tiles as well as every exterior loop on the wall strips. Do not retrace steps or jump tracks. Crossing paths continue through like underpasses. The wall strips have six possible

arrangements. The tiles have 16! possible locations and 1 to 4 possible orientations each. It is not known how many solutions exist. The first puzzler to provide proof of the number of solutions will receive a nice prize.

Goal 2: Form the most separate loops. Can you beat our 16?

➤ *Email digital solutions to:*
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1227 Lorene Dr., Suite 16
Pasadena, MD 21122—USA

The Great Plague killed an estimated 100,000-200,000 Brits, about 15% of London's population and up to 80% of surrounding areas. Bubonic plague is a disease caused by the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium, which is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected rat flea.

There was no sanitation, and open drains flowed along the centre of winding streets. The cobbles were slippery with animal dung, garbage and the slops thrown out of the houses, muddy and buzzing with flies in summer and awash with sewage in winter. Imagine the stench!

Another hazard was the choking black smoke belching from factories, breweries and iron smelters and from about 15,000 houses burning coal.

Outside the city walls, shanty towns had sprung up, providing homes for the craftsmen and tradespeople who had flocked to the already overcrowded city. Over a quarter of a million people lived here without sanitation. Other immigrants had taken over fine town houses, vacated by Royalists who had fled the country. These properties were soon vandalised and became rat-infested slums.

It was not until 1894 that the transmission of the bacterium by rat fleas became known. By July 1665, plague was rampant in the City of London. King Charles II of England, his family and his court left the city. The aldermen and most of the other city authorities opted to stay.

Businesses closed as merchants and professionals fled. Daniel Defoe wrote, "Nothing was to be seen but wagons and carts, with goods, women, servants, children, coaches filled with people of the better sort, and horsemen attending them, and all hurrying away."

As the plague raged throughout the summer, only a small number of clergymen, physicians and apothecaries remained to cope with an increasingly large number of victims.

The poorer people were also alarmed by the contagion and some left the city, but it was not easy for them to abandon their accommodation and livelihoods for an uncertain future elsewhere. Before exiting through the city gates, they were required to possess a certificate of good health signed by the Lord Mayor. As time went by and the numbers of plague victims rose, people

living in the villages outside London began to resent this exodus and were no longer prepared to accept townsfolk from London, with or without a certificate. The refugees were turned back, were not allowed to pass through towns and had to travel across country, and were forced to live rough on what they could steal or scavenge from the fields. Many died in wretched circumstances of starvation and thirst in the hot summer that was to follow. In the last week of July, the London Bill of Mortality showed 3,014 deaths, of which 2,020 had died from the plague.

The number of deaths as a result of plague may have been underestimated, as deaths in other years in the same period were much lower, at around 300. As the number of victims affected mounted up, burial grounds became overfull, and pits were dug to accommodate the dead. Drivers of dead-carts travelled the streets calling "Bring out your dead" and carted away piles of bodies. The authorities became concerned that the number of deaths might cause public alarm and ordered that body removal and interment should take place only at night. As time went on, there were too

many victims, and too few drivers to remove the bodies that began to be stacked up against the walls of houses. Daytime collection was resumed and the plague pits became mounds of decomposing corpses. In the parish of Aldgate, a great hole was dug near the churchyard, fifty feet long and twenty feet wide. Digging was continued by labourers at one end while the dead-carts tipped in corpses at the other. When there was no room for further extension it was dug deeper until ground water was reached at twenty feet. When finally covered with earth it housed 1,114 corpses.

Plague doctors traversed the streets diagnosing victims, although many of them had no formal medical training. Several public health efforts were attempted. Physicians were hired by city officials and burial details were carefully organized, but panic spread through the city and, out of the fear of contagion, people were hastily buried in overcrowded pits. The means of transmission of the disease were not known, but thinking they might be linked to the animals, the City Corporation ordered a cull of dogs and cats. This decision may have affected the length of the epidemic, since

those animals could have helped keep in check the rat population carrying the fleas which transmitted the disease.

Thinking bad air was involved in transmission, the authorities ordered giant bonfires to be burned in the streets and house fires to be kept burning night and day, in hopes that the air would be cleansed. Tobacco was thought to be a prophylactic, and it was later said that no London tobacconist had died from the plague during the epidemic. The streets were empty of people except for the dead-carts and the desperate dying victims.

One food source was the villages around London which, denied of their usual sales in the capital, left vegetables in specified market areas, negotiated their sale by shouting, and collected their payment after the money had been submerged in a bucket of water to "disinfect" the coins.

Records state that plague deaths in London and the suburbs crept up from 2,000 people per week to over 7,000 per week in September. These figures are likely to be a considerable underestimate.

(Source: Wikipedia.)