

Day 9

Poor Balthazar. He really had hit his head quite hard when he fell, and although the medicine woman said he was fine to continue his journey as long as he took paracetamol and avoided contact sports, he continued to see stars and camels in front of his eyes wherever he went. Camels being the main method of transport and a star being the main method of navigation on this journey, this rendered him an unreliable map-reader, and thus he was temporarily demoted from the position of leading wise man.

Caspar was only too happy to step up and volunteer himself to take up the route-planning duties, mainly because it afforded him a great many opportunities to demonstrate his skills in that most mysterious of arts- concocting six-figure grid references from Ordnance Survey maps.

Melchior, meanwhile, took over day to day running of the magi's expedition. The new responsibility brought out his hitherto unexercised organisational skills. Within a few days the three wise men had tidy backpacks and a map neatly folded into a concertina just like when it was new, while Kevin, Gary and Wayne had been allotted a strict ration of camel treats, based on their recommended daily allowance of calories.

All the while, the three wise men drew nearer the Christmas bazaar. Caspar liked to take Gary the camel slightly ahead of the others, and quietly muse upon what they might find there.

“The bizarre... synonym of strange, curious, inexplicable... what esoteric rites shall we encounter there? Yes, I, Casper, wisest of the magi shall be the first to record the mysteries of *the bizarre* and pass them down to future generations of learned scholars...”

Meanwhile Melchior, in between reorganising the Christmas shopping list by location-of-gift for efficient buying, and making sure that Balthazar took his paracetamol on time, took a rather more practical approach. He had always been the most excited about visiting the Christmas bazaar, and had paid a little more attention than Caspar had to the posters advertising the Christmas bazaar, which now seemed to adorn every building they came to. He knew that each of the three wise men would be charged an entrance fee of fifty pence, and that there was free tethering for camels.

By making economies elsewhere in the travel budget (the food hygiene credentials of the inns they now stayed overnight in were questionable at best), he had scraped together a modest allowance that he and the other magi could spend once inside the Christmas bazaar.

He had also encountered a local group of the Women's Institute, who were holding their annual jam-making-and-arm-wrestling competition in one of the inns where the magi had stayed. He had asked them about the bazaar, and they had been very happy to provide him with a list of all the items available to buy at the bazaar, as well as rather forcefully suggesting that he buy some raffle tickets.

Melchior loved Christmas bazaars, so had happily bought a strip of raffle tickets for each of the wise men, and had taken three posters advertising the bazaar, and affixed each one to the saddles worn by Kevin, Gary and Wayne the camels. This caused no small degree of disruption- Gary the camel, deprived of his usual amount of camel treats, was determined to eat his poster and to this end spent a long time turning round in circles attempting to reach the poster with his teeth, making Caspar rather dizzy in the process. However, Melchior argued, the bazaar was raising money for charity, and

surely wise men ought to be benevolent, so the posters stayed attached to the saddles, just out of nibbling-range.

Before long the Village Hall, venue for the much-anticipated Christmas bazaar, was spied on the horizon, and each wise man dived to the very bottom of his backpack in search of any spare change to add to their bazaar-budget.

How much money is there in each pile?

1.  = _____

2.  = _____

3.  = _____

Answers: 1- £5.37 2- £7.14 3- £2.73

cup of trendy mulled cider = £0.29
 mince pie = £0.09
 set of jingly bells suitable for camel harnesses = £3.98
 nice warm knitted hat = £1.68
 Christmas jumper = £9.96
 bag of reindeer dung suitable for use as plant fertiliser = £1.44

1. _____ If Balthazar buys a bag of reindeer dung suitable for use as plant fertiliser, what will his change be if he pays £5.00?
2. _____ What is the total cost of a mince pie?
3. _____ If Melchior wanted to buy a cup of trendy mulled cider, a set of jingly bells suitable for camel harnesses, and a mince pie, how much would it cost him?
4. _____ What is the total cost of a bag of reindeer dung suitable for use as plant fertiliser?
5. _____ If Caspar buys a Christmas jumper, what will his change be if he pays £20.00?
6. _____ If Melchior buys a Christmas jumper, how much change will he get back from £15.00?
7. _____ What is the total cost of a cup of trendy mulled cider, a mince pie, and a bag of reindeer dung suitable for use as plant fertiliser?
8. _____ Caspar wants to buy a nice warm knitted hat. How much will he have to pay?

Answers: 1- £3.56 2- £0.09 3- £4.36 4- £1.44 5- £10.04 6- £5.04 7- £1.82 8- £1.68