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From today's featured article



Acamptonectes fossil specimen discovered in Germany in 2005

Acamptonectes is a genus of ophthalmosaurid ichthyosaurs, dolphin-like marine reptiles that lived during the Early Cretaceous around 130 million years ago.

The first specimen—a partial adult skeleton—was discovered in Speeton, England, in 1958, but it was not formally described until 2012. *Acamptonectes* had unusual adaptations that made its trunk rigid, including tightly-fitting bones in the occiput (back and lower part of the skull) and interlocking vertebral centra, likely allowing it to swim at high speeds with a tuna-like form of locomotion. Other distinguishing characteristics include an extremely slender snout and unique ridges on the basioccipital bone of the braincase. As an ichthyosaur, *Acamptonectes* had large eye sockets and a tail fluke. Its teeth, which were slender and textured with longitudinal ridges, were probably adapted for impaling prey such as squid and fleshy fish. (**Full article...**)

Recently featured: Hurricane Humberto (2019) · Roman withdrawal from Africa (255 BC) · Raymond Pace Alexander

Did you know ...

- ... that Prince Charles donated money to help repair the **Cambus O' May bridge** (pictured) after it was badly damaged by Storm Frank in 2015?
- ... that **Mariner 1**, the United States' first interplanetary probe, was lost in 1962 due to the miscoding of a single character in its software?
- ... that more than fifty years after **Hilde Scheppan** appeared in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the 1943 Bayreuth Festival, reviewer **Alan Blyth** called her "a dream of an Eva"?



Cambus O' May bridge

In the news

- SpaceX launches **Inspiration4** (pictured), the first all-civilian orbital spaceflight.



Inspiration4 launch

- The United States, United Kingdom and Australia sign a **security pact** that will provide Australia with nuclear submarines.
- British tennis player **Emma Raducanu** wins the US Open, becoming the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam title.
- In Gaelic football, Tyrone win the All-Ireland Senior Football Championship, defeating Mayo in **the final**.
- The National Rally of Independents, led by Aziz Akhannouch wins the most seats in the **Moroccan general election**.

Ongoing: COVID-19 pandemic

Recent deaths: Norman Bailey · Clive Sinclair · Gene Littles · Antony Hewish · Ruly Carpenter · Charlotte Johnson Wahl

On this day

September 18

- 324 – Constantine the Great decisively defeated Licinius in the **Battle of Chrysopolis**, establishing Constantine's sole control over the Roman Empire and ending the Tetrarchy.
- 1879 – The **Blackpool Illuminations** (example pictured) in the English seaside town of Blackpool were switched on for the first time.



Illuminated tram in Blackpool

- ... that in 1908, you could "throw a cat through the cracks" of the dynamite shanties on **Powder House Island**?
- ... that the sea anemone ***Metridium dianthus*** is parasitised by the sea spider ***Pycnogonum littorale***?
- ... that **Jonathan Trichter**, a registered Democrat, was the Republican nominee for New York State Comptroller in 2018?
- ... that **scouring** in wool is among the essential pre-treatments of textiles that prepares them for subsequent processes such as bleaching, dyeing, and printing?
- ... that Julio Mayora was most happy about winning his silver medal for **Venezuela at the 2020 Summer Olympics** because it meant the government might give his mother a house?

- 1948 – The Australian cricket team's **Invincibles tour** of England concluded; they had played 34 matches, including five Tests, without defeat.
- 1961 – En route to negotiate a ceasefire between Katanga troops and United Nations forces, the plane carrying United Nations secretary-general **Dag Hammarskjöld** crashed under mysterious circumstances near Ndola in Northern Rhodesia, resulting in the deaths of Hammarskjöld and 15 others on board.
- 2001 – Five letters containing anthrax spores **were mailed to various media outlets** in the United States.

Henry Stafford, 1st Baron Stafford (b. 1501) · **André Dacier** (d. 1722) · **Jamey Rodemeyer** (d. 2011)

More anniversaries: September 17 · **September 18** · September 19

Today's featured picture



The **siege of Osaka** was a series of battles undertaken by the Japanese Tokugawa shogunate against the Toyotomi clan, and ending in the clan's dissolution. Divided into two stages (the winter campaign and the summer campaign), and lasting from 1614 to 1615, the siege put an end to the last major armed opposition to the shogunate's establishment. This eight-metre-long (26 ft) painting, titled *The Summer Battle of Osaka Castle* and executed on a Japanese folding screen, illustrates Osaka Castle under siege, and was commissioned by the daimyo Kuroda Nagamasa, who took a team of painters with him to the battlefield to record the event. The painting depicts 5071 people and 21 generals, and is held in the collection of Osaka Castle.

Painting credit: unknown

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