

BIG BEN GETS A BATH!

People from all over the world come to London and visit Big Ben but for one week in August, they might observe an unusual sight!

Five highly-trained abseiling experts will start cleaning all four clock faces on 18th August. It will be the clock's first scrub for 4 years. Experts think it will take a week to complete the cleaning so long as the weather stays fine.

The Houses of Parliament clock (nicknamed Big Ben), which was built in 1859, will also be checked for damage to the dials. Each clock face is made up of 312 pieces of opal glass, which must be treated carefully. The hands of the clock were made in copper because it is lighter than other metals.

To keep the climbing cleaners safe, the clock's hands have been frozen in the midday position.

DID YOU KNOW?

Big Ben's real name is the Great Clock of Westminster which is at the top of the Elizabeth Tower (named after the Queen). The Elizabeth Tower is part of the Houses of Parliament.

Questions:

1. Where is Big Ben?
2. What year was Big Ben last cleaned in?
3. Over 250 pieces of glass are used in Big Ben. True or false?
4. What material was chosen to make the hands of the clock and why?
5. How have they made sure the cleaners will not be in danger?
6. How many days will it take to finish the job?
7. What is the correct name for the building the clock is at the top of?

If you enjoy a research project, Mr Biggs and Miss Morris would love some facts about Big Ben!