



Maths Puzzle – Week 3

This week's puzzle looks at old measurements:

A rod (sometimes called a pole, or a perch) was an old unit of length. To measure a rod you were supposed to stand outside church on a Sunday morning, stop the first sixteen men to come out, and line them up with their left feet in one long line touching toe to heel: the distance from the front of the first foot to the back of the last foot was then taken as a rod. The exact length depended on who went to church that day, but it was always more-or-less the same length.

How long was '1 rod' to the nearest metre?



Solution

This one proved to be tricky! The answer was 5m. (There is a reason why the length '1foot' is called a 'foot'. And 3 feet make 1 yard, which is 10% less than 1 metre. So 16 feet is close to 5 metres. Officially, '1 rod is 5½yards', or 5.03m. Garden allotments are still sometimes measured in rods.

