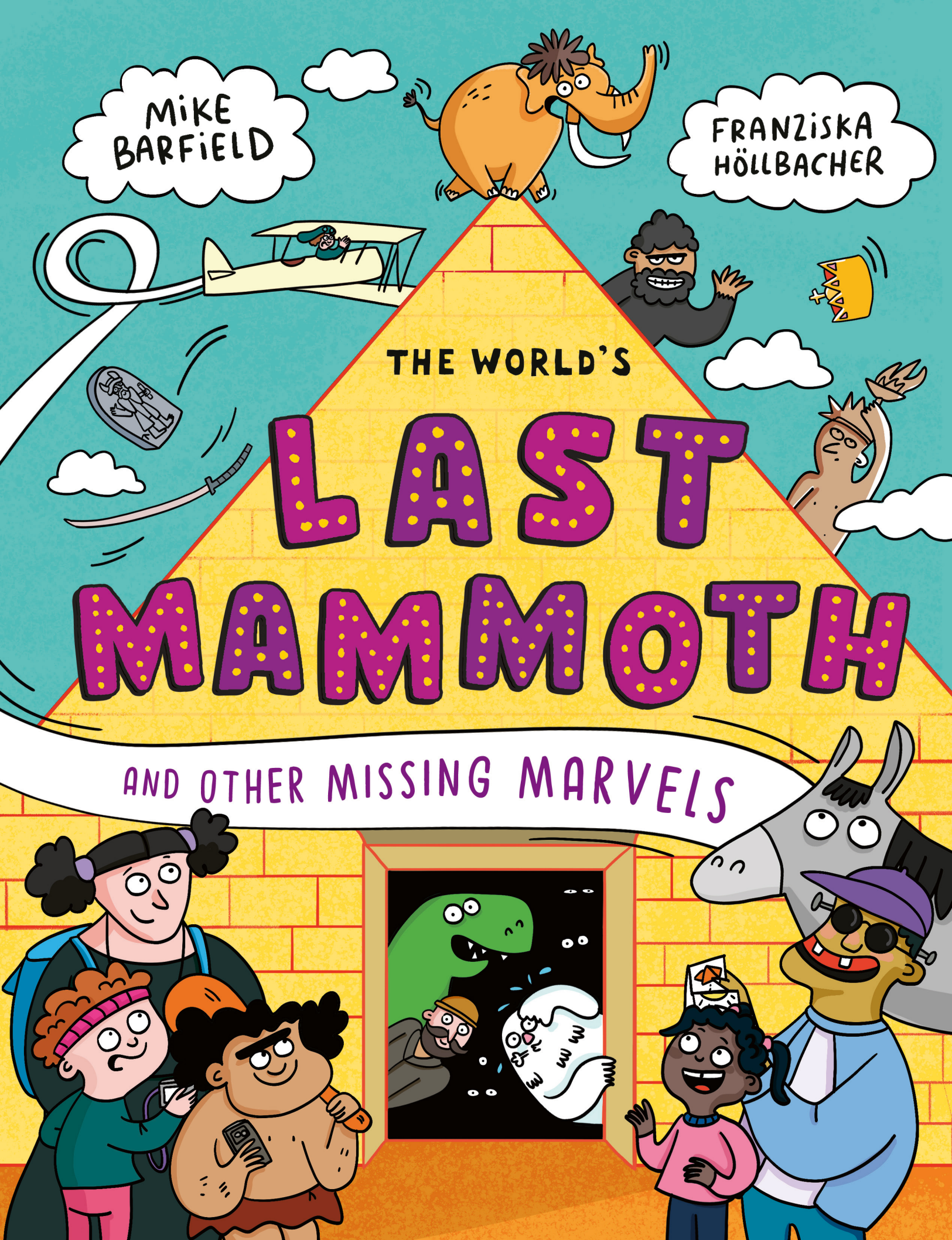
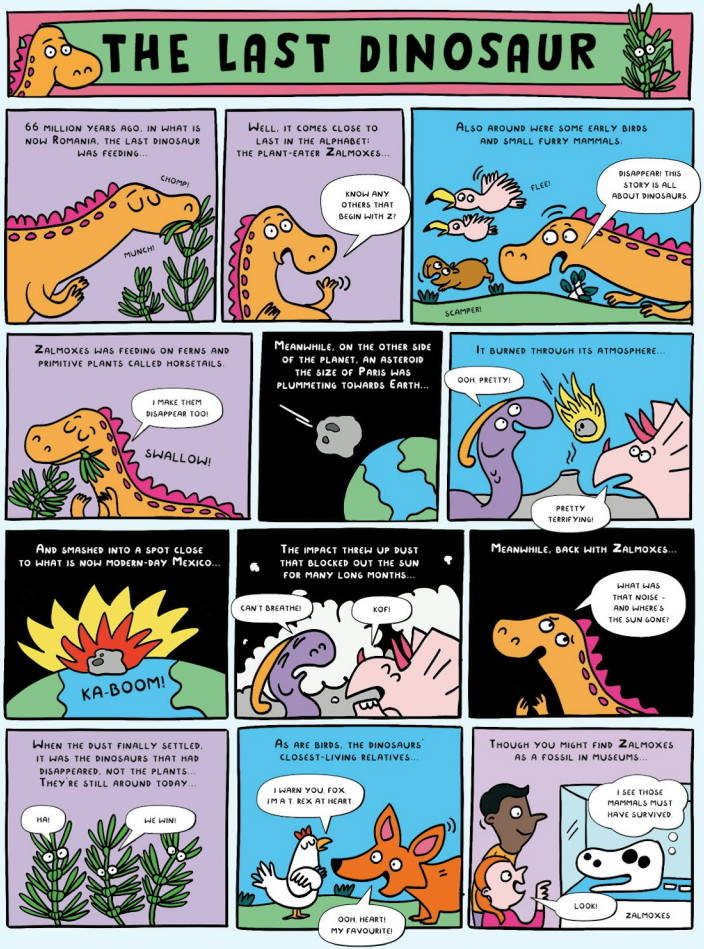
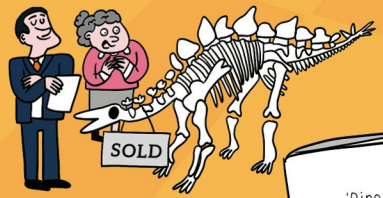

MIKE BARFIELD
FRANZISKA HÖLLBACHER
THE WORLD'S
LAST MAMMOTH
AND OTHER MISSING MARVELS



PAST AND PRESENT & JURASSIC PARTS

SAURUS COMING?

Fossils – the preserved remains of long-dead living things – are the best clues to Earth's dinosaur past. In July 2024, a fossilised Stegosaurus known as Apex sold at auction for a staggering $44.6 million US – a record amount for a bunch of stony bones!



DEEPLY DIPPY

Some famous fossils are fakes. Many museums across the world have a 'Dippy' – a 25-metre-long skeleton of a plant-eating Diplodocus from the late Jurassic period. However, the 292 'bones' are actually plaster copies modelled from an original fossil specimen.

ROCK STAR

London's Natural History Museum holds the world's most stupendous stone slab. It depicts Archaeopteryx – a small dinosaur with a beak and feathered wings that helped reveal birds were descended from dinos.

PARK LIFE

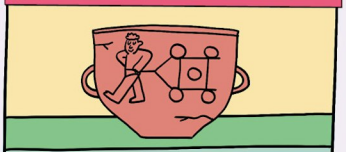
'Dinosaurs' didn't actually exist until 1842, when British boffin Sir Richard Owen invented the word. He also designed the first life-size public sculptures of dinosaurs – still on display in a south London park – and a feast was held inside one of them!

Ever since our species arose in Africa, humans have been going places. First it was on foot, now we fly, drive, ride and slide. In this chapter, we take a tour though vanished vehicles and lost forms of transport, hitting the road with four fab facts!

OLDEST-KNOWN SKIS

Missing for 1,300 years, a wooden ski dating to before the time of the Vikings was found buried in ice in Digervarden, Norway in 2014. Its pair then turned up nearby in 2021!

OLDEST SET OF WHEELS



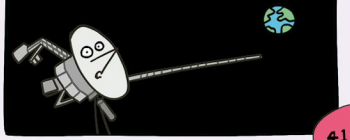
A pot found in Poland dating back about 5,500 years is decorated with what seems to be a four-wheeled farm wagon.

FIRST AIRBORNE SHEEP

The first animals to fly in a hot-air balloon were a rooster, a duck and a sheep called 'Montauciel'. Lifting off from near Paris, France, in September 1783, they all landed safely!

FURTHEST VEHICLE

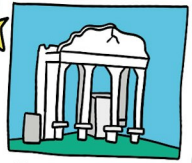
The Voyager 1 space probe was launched in 1977 by US space agency NASA and is now over 25 billion kilometres from Earth – the most distant human-made object ever.



OLDEST RESIDENTS

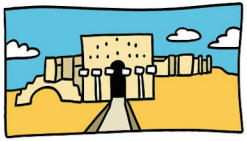
Humans have been choosing to gather together – then moan about their neighbours – for thousands of years. Here are the oldest continuously inhabited places on each of Earth's contents.

EUROPE



Plovdiv, Bulgaria, has evidence of stone age settlements dating back about 8,000 years.

ASIA



Syria is home to Damascus – the world's oldest continuously inhabited capital city – and Aleppo, where finds have been dated back over 11,000 years.

AUSTRALASIA

Evidence suggests that Aboriginal people lived around Sydney, Australia, more than 30,000 years ago.

NORTH AMERICA

People have lived in Cholula, a district of Puebla, Mexico, for about 3,000 years – right next to their Great Pyramid neighbour (see page 9).

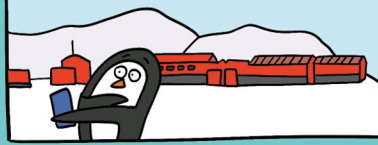
AFRICA

Girga in Egypt has been occupied for over 6,000 years and may have been the base for the first ever pharaoh, Narmer.

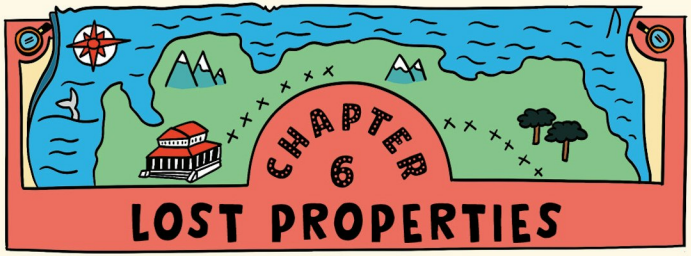
SOUTH AMERICA

Quito, Ecuador, has been lived in since 980 CE, but its origins may go back another 3,000 years!

ANTARCTICA



Orcadas Base is the continent's oldest permanently inhabited research station. It was started in 1903 by a Scottish Antarctic expedition and can fall as cold as -44 degrees Celsius. Brr!

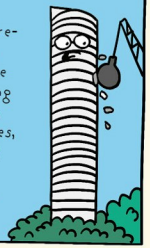


CHAPTER 6
LOST PROPERTIES

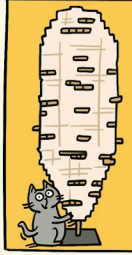
Modern cities all have buildings that come and go, while others may become lasting landmarks, like the Statue of Liberty in New York, USA, or the Sydney Opera House, Australia. In this section, we look at long-gone buildings, with four fab facts for our foundations.

TALLEST TOTALLED TOWER

In 2023, the 234-metre-high AXA Tower in Singapore became the world's tallest building to be demolished on purpose. At 305 metres, its replacement will become the city's tallest skyscraper.



TALLEST TOPPLE TOWER



The world record for a tower built from jenga bricks was set in Canada in 2025. At only one metre tall, it contained 3,000 pieces all balanced on a single brick!

MOSTLY MISSING PALACE

The UK's Houses of Parliament in Westminster, London, was home to kings and queens in the Middle Ages. Today, few parts have survived, the oldest being a 900-year-old meeting hall.

FLYING THE FLAG

Great Zimbabwe is a medieval stone city that gave its name to the modern African country of Zimbabwe. Now largely in ruins, its carved stone eagles inspired the one on the national flag!

MISSING PERSONS

'THE CREATURE'

Hello. I'm 'The Creature'. Not a very flattering name, is it? And that isn't exactly a flattering picture of me, though quite accurate, sadly.

I was created by a 19-year-old woman novelist called Mary Godwin. She fell in love with a famous English poet called Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was already married, causing a big scandal. Although Mary and Percy did later marry.

In the summer of 1816, Percy, Mary and her stepsister Claire had a summer holiday on the shores of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Only it was more like winter than summer, with constant rain, thunder and lightning.

Also staying nearby was another famous English poet, Lord Byron, and his personal physician Doctor Polidori. Bored of being imprisoned indoors by the weather, the group of friends started a contest to come up with a ghost story.

Mary struggled for an idea, until she had a nightmare vision of a mad university student called Victor Frankenstein trying to create a new living person using body parts stolen from corpses and animal slaughterhouses.

You guessed it. That 'monster' was me – 2.4 metres tall, heavily built and with yellow eyes and skin. I was a shocking sight, and my anger at being hated by humans made me kill, though all I really wanted was someone to share my life with.

Mary's monster horror story won among her group of friends, and it was later published as a novel in January 1818 under the title *Frankenstein*. The book made her famous and has been turned into many scary plays, films and TV series over the centuries.

Her story ends with Victor chasing me to the icy seas near the North Pole to try and kill his creation. However, the tables get turned and it is Victor who dies, while I escape over the ice, never to be seen again. (Though you might just want to check under your bed tonight...)