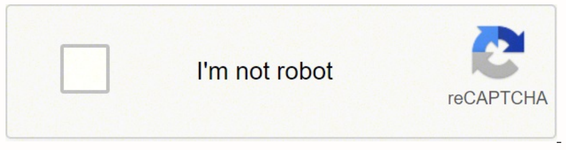

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When did humphry davy discovered laughing gas

In a drawing room above his laboratory, English chemist Humphry Davy threw quite the soiree.He offered his guests — poets, playwrights, doctors and scientists — not a drink, but a puff from a green silk bag containing nitrous oxide — laughing gas.It was 1799 and the parties — or 'experiments', as Davy called them — were more than just a rollicking good time.They formed part of his research into nitrous oxide and fuelled his mission to better understand the brain.They also led to one of the most significant medical advances of the 19th century: anaesthesia. Humphry Davy invited friends to try laughing gas so he could observe their responses.(National Portrait Gallery, London)'I felt like the sound of a harp'Author and historian Mike Jay has written extensively about science, medicine and drug use, and says there were strange moments of disinhibition at Davy's parties."It must have been quite like a performance," he says.Party attendees, he says, would shout: "Give me more, give me more; this is the most pleasurable thing I've ever experienced.""[Others] were running up and down the stairs and all around the house, saying odd things that they'd forget later," Mr Jay says. Those attending the parties described states of calm ecstasy and involuntary laughter.(Wellcome Collection)We can recall them, though, as Davy asked his friends to record their experiences. He collated their responses in a book of research, published in 1800.In it, Peter Mark Roget, who went on to publish Roget's Thesaurus, writes: "I seemed to lose the sense of my own weight, and imagined I was sinking into the ground.""Thoughts rushed like a torrent through my mind, as if their velocity had been suddenly accelerated by the bursting of a barrier which had before retained them in their natural and equable course."Another party-goer, who is unnamed, explains: "I felt like the sound of a harp."Poet Samuel Coleridge describes a state of calm ecstasy, "like returning from a walk in the snow into a warm room". In this excerpt from Davy's book, a friend recounts his experience inhaling laughing gas.(Supplied)Davy collected around 30 such responses, many detailing feelings of intense joy — but he had more on his mind than parties.A fascinating discoveryAt the beginning of the industrial revolution, Davy and his boss, English physician Thomas Beddoes, were preoccupied by the increasing number of factory workers contracting lung conditions and tuberculosis."[It] was a big killer," says Mr Jay, and Beddoes was driving research into new treatments.One gas, oxygen, had already been isolated as beneficial to the lungs, but Beddoes and Davy wondered if there might be others."Pretty soon they isolated nitrous oxide," Mr Jay says.At that point, he says, the gas had never been breathed — until Davy gave it a go.Nitrous oxide can relax reflexes and inhibitions, and lead to loss of consciousness and anaesthesia.Its disinhibition effect can stimulate laughter (hence its common name, laughing gas).It can also have a depressive effect.With frequent use, there is a risk of permanent and irreversible physical damage, including paralysis.(Source: Professor Barry Baker)"He was just astonished to find this incredible wave of euphoria and energy," Mr Jay says."He started leaping around the laboratory, shouting and screaming and laughing, so it was a total surprise."The revelation also sparked some "really big questions" of the existential kind."The prevailing views of the time were that the higher functions of the human intellectual were divinely inspired," Mr Jay says.Davy and Beddoes were perplexed that a gas synthesised in a laboratory could produce "these amazing ideas and these wonderful moods"."So that was what they found totally fascinating, trying to figure out what was going on," Mr Jay says.Thus the parties began, so Davy could observe how the gas affected others.A significant medical breakthroughThe parties led to one of the most significant medical advancements of the 19th century.Davy was first to note, at the end of the 18th century, that nitrous oxide was analgesic, or numbing.By 1840, at nitrous oxide and ether parties happening in both England and the US, people were noting the analgesic properties anew. Laughing gas parties were also an attempt to find answers to existential questions.(Wellcome Collection)They included American dentist Horace Wells, who — after noting someone had hurt themselves but felt no pain — decided to try taking nitrous oxide while he had a tooth removed. He was so impressed with its numbing effect that he shared his experience with surgeons, to persuade them to try nitrous oxide on patients. Unfortunately, most surgery is more painful than removing a tooth — and more time consuming."He didn't get the dose right and it was a complete disaster, so nitrous oxide got pooh-poohed as a result of that," says Barry Baker, Emeritus Professor at the University of Sydney and a former cardiovascular anaesthetist.But all was not lost.A colleague of Wells, who had witnessed the failed surgery experiment, suggested to another dentist, William Morton, that ether could be a better anaesthetic than nitrous oxide.After experimenting on his dogs and himself, he performed a successful public surgery demonstration in 1846, using ether as a pain-killer."That really launched anaesthesia," Professor Barker says."It took off... it was like a lightning strike," he says."So these frolics were basically the set-up for the development of anaesthesia." An 1850 reenactment of the first successful operation under ether. (US Library of Congress)And what of the man responsible for the frolics?"Davy got very into the gas," says Mr Jay, which could be why he stopped taking it after he published his book of research."I lost all connections with external things," Davy writes in his book, after one gas experiment.Yet, recovering his "former state of mind", he recalls a discovery he'd made, one of many throughout his research with the gas: "Nothing exists but thoughts. The universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures and pains."Laughing gas can be addictive and have dangerous side effects, including a risk of permanent and irreversible physical damage. Rising prices at the pump got you down? Whether you drive a little or a lot, saving money on gas can make you feel like a champion. In addition to an internet search for the “cheapest gas nearest me,” these apps make it easy to find cheap gas prices nearby.Gas BuddyGas Buddy has roughly 70 million users, and its users give it consistent iTunes and Google Play ratings of 4.5 stars. Not only can you find the “cheapest gas nearest me,” but you can also do your part to help others do the same. This innovative app uses crowdsourcing to fuel its information by asking users to input the prices they’re paying. The app then lists all the gas stations near you along with prices, allowing you to choose the station with the cheapest gas prices in the area.WazeMany people already use Waze for real-time traffic information. With its community of around 90 million users, Waze is great to use for figuring out detours to avoid traffic snarls and tolls. It’s also a great tool for discovering which gas stations offer the cheapest gas prices nearby. It also offers “Waze only” deals in partnership with specific gas stations. All around, this popular travel app earns ratings between 4.5 and five stars on iTunes and Google Play.Gas GuruUnlike the first apps on this list, Gas Guru doesn’t require you to add your two cents to the mix for crowdsourcing. Instead, it receives up to date pricing directly from the Oil Price Information Service. The Balance calls it “the yellow pages of gas,” noting that the app is owned by the same company that puts out the ubiquitous phone resource. In addition to giving you directions using the cheap gas finder by ZIP code, Gas Guru also lets you share your windfall with your Facebook friends.AAA TripTik Travel PlannerAlways reliable, always there to help design your ideal trip, AAA’s travel app is a multifunctional gem. AAA TripTik Travel Planner is the holy grail for anyone heading out on a journey or adventure. Whether you travel for work or you’re taking an epic road trip, this app lets you do everything from mapping out your route for maximum efficiency to planning the cheapest places to stop to fill your tank.MapQuestOnce the darling of the map-centric directions world, MapQuest has become more than just a route planner. Back in the day, visitors to the site used MapQuest to print out directions. Today, however, you can use the app for turn-by-turn directions, live maps, real-time traffic information and restaurant reservations along the way. It’s also a great resource to compare the cheapest gas prices in the area. MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET Home Science Chemistry Sir Humphry Davy, in full Sir Humphry Davy, Baronet, (born December 17, 1778, Penzance, Cornwall, England—died May 29, 1829, Geneva, Switzerland), English chemist who discovered several chemical elements (including sodium and potassium) and compounds, invented the miner’s safety lamp, and became one of the greatest exponents of the scientific method. Davy was the elder son of middle-class parents who owned an estate in Ludgvan, Cornwall, England. He was educated at the grammar school in nearby Penzance and, in 1793, at Truro. In 1795, a year after the death of his father, Robert, he was apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary, and he hoped eventually to qualify in medicine. An exuberant, affectionate, and popular lad, of quick wit and lively imagination, he was fond of composing verses, sketching, making fireworks, fishing, shooting, and collecting minerals. He loved to wander, one pocket filled with fishing tackle and the other with rock specimens; he never lost his intense love of nature and, particularly, of mountain and water scenery. Galileo Galilei. Anders Celsius. You may recognize their names, but do you know who they really are? Gather your data and test your knowledge of famous scientists in this quiz. While still a youth, ingenuous and somewhat impetuous, Davy had plans for a volume of poems, but he began the serious study of science in 1797, and these visions “fled before the voice of truth.” He was befriended by Davies Giddy (later Gilbert; president of the Royal Society, 1827–30), who offered him the use of his library in Tradea and took him to a chemistry laboratory that was well equipped for that day. There he formed strongly independent views on topics of the moment, such as the nature of heat, light, and electricity and the chemical and physical doctrines of Antoine Lavoisier. On Gilbert’s recommendation, he was appointed (1798) chemical superintendent of the Pneumatic Institution, founded at Clifton to inquire into the possible therapeutic uses of various gases. Davy attacked the problem with characteristic enthusiasm, evincing an outstanding talent for experimental inquiry. In his small private laboratory, he prepared and inhaled nitrous oxide (laughing gas) in order to test a claim that it was the “principle of contagion,” that is, caused diseases. He investigated the composition of the oxides and acids of nitrogen, as well as ammonia, and persuaded his scientific and literary friends, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, and Peter Mark Roget, to report the effects of inhaling nitrous oxide. He nearly lost his own life inhaling water gas, a mixture of hydrogen and carbon monoxide sometimes used as fuel. The account of his work, published as Researches, Chemical and Philosophical, Chiefly Concerning Nitrous Oxide, or Dephlogisticated Nitrous Air, and Its Respiration (1800), immediately established Davy’s reputation, and he was invited to lecture at the newly founded Royal Institution of Great Britain in London, where he moved in 1801, with the promise of help from the British-American scientist Sir Benjamin Thompson (Count von Rumford), the British naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, and the English chemist and physicist Henry Cavendish in furthering his researches—e.g., on voltaic cells, early forms of electric batteries. His carefully prepared and rehearsed lectures rapidly became important social functions and added greatly to the prestige of science and the institution. In 1802 he became professor of chemistry. His duties included a special study of tanning: he found catechu, the extract of a tropical plant, as effective as and cheaper than the usual oak extracts, and his published account was long used as a tanner’s guide. In 1803 he was admitted a fellow of the Royal Society and an honorary member of the Dublin Society and delivered the first of an annual series of lectures before the board of agriculture. This led to his Elements of Agricultural Chemistry (1813), the only systematic work available for many years. For his researches on voltaic cells, tanning, and mineral analysis, he received the Copley Medal in 1805. He was elected secretary of the Royal Society in 1807. Davy early concluded that the production of electricity in simple electrolytic cells resulted from chemical action and that chemical combination occurred between substances of opposite charge. He therefore reasoned that electrolysis, the interactions of electric currents with chemical compounds, offered the most likely means of decomposing all substances to their elements. These views were explained in 1806 in his lecture “On Some Chemical Agencies of Electricity,” for which, despite the fact that England and France were at war, he received the Napoleon Prize from the Institut de France (1807). This work led directly to the isolation of sodium and potassium from their compounds (1807) and of the alkaline-earth metals magnesium, calcium, strontium, and barium from their compounds (1808). He also discovered boron (by heating borax with potassium), hydrogen telluride, and hydrogen phosphide (phosphine). He showed the correct relation of chlorine to hydrochloric acid and the untenability of the earlier name (oxymuriatic acid) for chlorine; this negated Lavoisier’s theory that all acids contained oxygen. He also showed that chlorine is a chemical element, and experiments designed to reveal oxygen in chlorine failed. He explained the bleaching action of chlorine (through its liberation of oxygen from water) and discovered two of its oxides (1811 and 1815), but his views on the nature of chlorine were disputed. In 1810 and 1811 he lectured to large audiences at Dublin (on agricultural chemistry, the elements of chemical philosophy, geology) and received £1,275 in fees, as well as the honorary degree of LL.D., from Trinity College. In 1812 he was knighted by the Prince Regent (April 8), delivered a farewell lecture to members of the Royal Institution (April 9), and married Jane Apreece, a wealthy widow well known in social and literary circles in England and Scotland (April 11). He also published the first part of the Elements of Chemical Philosophy, which contained much of his own work. His plan was too ambitious, however, and nothing further appeared. Its completion, according to Swedish chemist Jöns Jacob Berzelius, would have “advanced the science of chemistry a full century.” His last important act at the Royal Institution, of which he remained honorary professor, was to interview the young Michael Faraday, later to become one of England’s great scientists, who became laboratory assistant there in 1813 and accompanied the Davys on a European tour (1813–15). By permission of Napoleon, he travelled through France, meeting many prominent scientists, and was presented to the empress Marie Louise. With the aid of a small portable laboratory and of various institutions in France and Italy, he investigated the substance “X” (later called iodine), whose properties and similarity to chlorine he quickly discovered; further work on various compounds of iodine and chlorine was done before he reached Rome. He also analyzed many specimens of classical pigments and proved that diamond is a form of carbon.

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