## BALMIS EXPEDITION: THE MOST MEMORABLE VOYAGE IN HISTORY



The Spaniards had brought the disease of smallpox to the new continent in the sixteenth century, and it was always a health problem of difficult control, due to its high lethality.

In 1796, the English physician *Edward Jenner* developed a vaccine against smallpox. It was the first vaccine in history. The Spanish doctor *Francisco Javier Balmis* set out to spread the vaccine from Spain to all the territories of the Spanish Empire. In addition, it intended to instruct local health workers to continue the practice of vaccination over time, and create "Vaccination Boards" as institutions to conserve, produce and supply active vaccines in order to maintain the campaign permanently.

The **Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition**, also known as the **Balmis Expedition**, was a philanthropic expedition that went around the world and lasted from 1803 to 1806. The Spanish king *Charles IV* supported and paid with public funds the expedition, since his own daughter, the Infanta *María Teresa*, had died from the disease.

The Balmis expedition is considered to be the first international sanitary expedition as well as the first mass vaccination in history. Jenner himself said, in 1806, of Balmis' expedition: "I don't imagine the annals of history furnish an example of philanthropy so noble, so extensive as this."

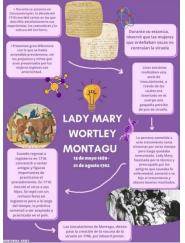
The Balmis Expedition is still very present, as it represents a feat and an example in the vaccination system. Today, we can affirm that the model of fight against covid-19 has its germ in this pioneering medical epic.

## The project "BALMIS EXPEDITION: THE MOST MEMORABLE VOYAGE IN HISTORY"

The students of Biology of S6 (2 and 4 periods), Spanish Section, European School of Brussels "Brussels III", has been working during this course in this project in collaboration with the "Rodríguez Moñino" high school of Badajoz (Spain), whose fundamental objective has been to publicize this historical and scientific feat.

The students of S6BI2ESA have made a poster exhibition that can be visited in the entrance to the "pasarrelle" between building A and C

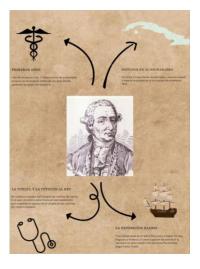


















S6BI4P students have made presentations on the Spanish scientist Margarita Salas, DNA sequencing, PCR and CRISPR technologies, and vaccines and vaccination, all in relation to the development of new vaccines against COVID-19

To learn more, you can visit the website of the project developed by the "Rodríguez Moñino" high school: <a href="https://sites.google.com/educarex.es/balmis-expedition/inicio">https://sites.google.com/educarex.es/balmis-expedition/inicio</a>