

Reached by committee,  
nineteen eighty-three

*Paul Magee*

A metre is the length travelled by a ray of light

in a  
vacuum  
over

299,792,458<sup>ths</sup>

of a second.

They used to count  
one million six hundred and fifty thousand  
seven hundred and sixty-three point seventy-three  
wave  
lengths

of the radiation between the levels two p ten and five d five  
of the Krypton eighty-six atom in the dark, old  
seconds prior to accurate measurement, before we embraced  
the light.