

NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR\*



# First News

Issue 962 £2.95 22 - 28 November 2024

2.6M READERS\*



NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT  
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS



## CHECK THIS OUT!

### THREE-YEAR-OLD BECOMES WORLD'S YOUNGEST RATED CHESS PLAYER



REAL-LIFE SPIDER-MAN SMUGGLES 300 TARANTULAS 23

ACT NOW! ON CLIMATE CHANGE, KIDS TELL WORLD LEADERS 26

by editor in chief Nicky Cox MBE and Chris Towers

AT three years old, we were playing with our food, getting toilet trained and learning nursery rhymes. We certainly weren't competing in chess tournaments!

However, one toddler in India is doing just that. Anish Sarkar, exactly three years and eight months young, has become the world's youngest official chess player after earning his first rating from the International Chess Federation (FIDE).

Anish got into chess after watching another boy play on a train.

#### Glued to YouTube chess videos

Now, while his friends are watching *Bluey* or *Baby Shark*, Anish is glued to chess videos on YouTube and is already playing in chess tournaments.

His mum told *The Times of India* newspaper that Anish's chess passion started almost a year ago when he was two. She said: "We introduced him to different YouTube channels, including cartoons like *Peppa Pig*, but he was drawn to chess videos."

Now India's second-ever grandmaster, Dibyendu Barua, is coaching Anish. He said: "Once he sits down at the board, he doesn't get up. His focus is truly astounding."



Chess originated in India in the sixth century.

Anish's mum said that his hero is former world champion Magnus Carlsen.

At a tournament last week, Anish met Carlsen (above), who many say is the greatest player of all time. He was ten when he was rated 900. At three, Anish has already got a 1,555 rating. Most tournament players have a rating of 1,400-1,599, above 2,000 is an expert, and a grandmaster is 2,500 or above.

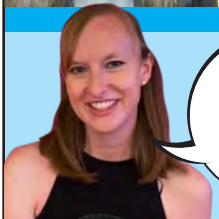
So, you can see why Anish's moves are shaking up the world of chess!

\* Newspaper Awards 2023, Niche market Newspaper of the Year. First News readership is 2,626,625. Source: Opinion Matters 2020. First News is the widest-read of all children's publications audited in the UK. First News supports children's charities.

## MEET THE TEAM



Editor in Chief  
Nicky Cox



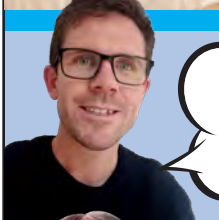
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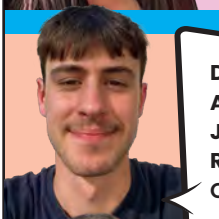
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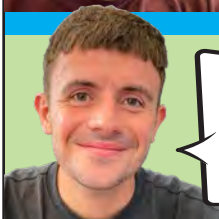
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# HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



## Kids feel more pressure but get less support

Kids are feeling more pressure at school, at the same time as getting less support from their friends and family, shows data from the World Health Organization and the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey. The survey looked at boys and girls aged 11, 13 and 15 across 44 countries, and found that girls feel like they get less support from teachers. Two-thirds of 15-year-old girls reported feeling overwhelmed by schoolwork.



Lama with her winning design

## Winners revealed for futuristic glasses contest

Two young girls have won a global contest to design futuristic glasses. Eight-year-old Lama from Saudi Arabia created Vision Friend, smart glasses made from bamboo with cameras to help visually impaired people. Five-year-old Grace from Kenya invented A Friend For My Eyes, colourful glasses that can sing and tell stories. The competition was run by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). The winning designs will be made into 3D models, showing how children's ideas can shape the future of eye care.



WOW!

The winner of a Harry Styles lookalike contest, Oscar, was cheered on by fans of the singer in London's Soho Square. Do you think he looks like Harry?



## Top tips to help pets this Christmas

The RSPCA is stressing the importance of preparing for pets' needs during Christmas celebrations. They say we should make sure pets have a quiet space during busy gatherings, consider pet-friendly travel arrangements, arrange proper care if leaving pets at home and to stock up on pet food and medication before shops close.

THEY SAID THAT!

*"It's really important to think about how our pets fit into our plans now, and to make a plan to ensure they're well looked after and happy during the festive season."*

– Pet welfare expert Dr Samantha Gaines

## Knitters spread festive cheer



The Secret Society of Hertford Crafters are well-known for their practice of 'yarnbombling' – secretly placing knitted items around town. For this Christmas, they've knitted a woolly version of the pantomime *Cinderella*. The characters are made from knitted and crocheted items, plus recycled materials like plastic bottles and old clothes. They've even decorated the town's Christmas tree and made a castle out of yarn. The crafters aim to bring joy, build community spirit and raise money for the Hertfordshire Breast Unit Appeal.



## Hundreds of schools at risk of crumbling concrete

Hundreds of schools in England are still at risk of crumbling concrete, says new data from the Information Commissioner's Office. Official figures show that 235 schools have the dangerous concrete called RAAC. This affects not just schools but also hospitals, prisons and other government buildings. The Labour Party has accused the previous Conservative government of hiding the true size of the issue. The new Labour government has promised to rebuild the affected schools and buildings.



## Railway competition invites young photographers

A new contest is looking for the best young railway photographers in the UK. The Young Railway Photographer of the Year competition is open to anyone aged 25 or under, and asks for six photos showing different aspects of trains and railways. The theme this year is Railway 200, celebrating 200 years of trains in Britain. Prizes include fancy cameras and exciting train experiences. The best photos will be displayed in museums in York and Shildon. Organisers hope this will get young people excited about railways and inspire them to work with trains in the future. The competition is open until 31 January 2025. You can apply at [youngrailphotographeroftheyear.co.uk](http://youngrailphotographeroftheyear.co.uk).



## Climate crisis impacts kids worldwide

A new report shows that nearly one in three children around the world faced extreme heat in 2024. This is the highest number since records began in 1992. The charity Save the Children found that 711 million kids experienced very hot weather in the first nine months of this year. That is almost double last year's number. The report warns that climate change is making heatwaves more common and intense, which puts children's health and wellbeing at risk.



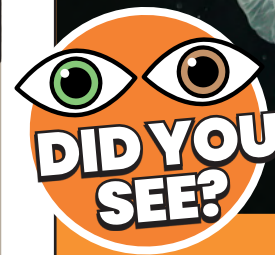
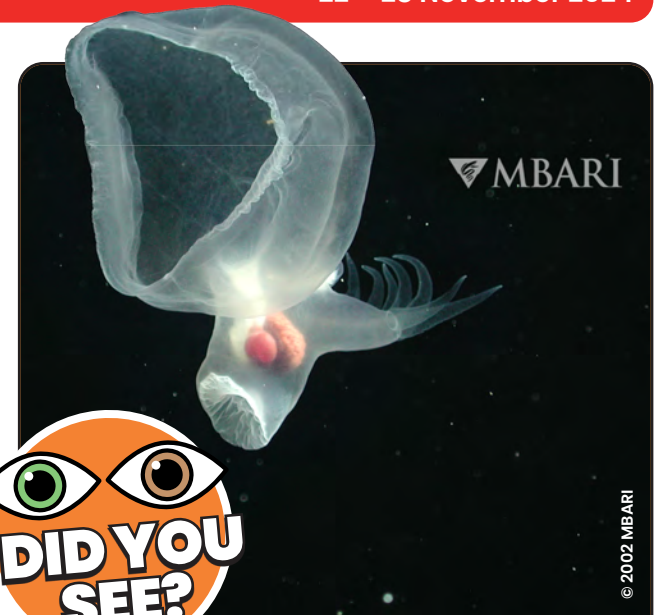
## Prince William wants to do things differently

Prince William spent time in South Africa recently for his Earthshot Prize. The Prince of Wales says he wants the monarchy to adapt, and wants to do his duties with a "smaller r in the royal". He says his main focus is on helping people and trying to do things differently.

## New mental health support project for children



A new programme called Space To Grow is offering free support for children's emotional health across the UK. The service aims to help 6,000 children aged 8-13 over the next two years. The project focuses on helping children who often miss out on these services. It will provide face-to-face support in 13 locations, as well as digital help through an app. Mark Russell, from one of the groups involved, The Children's Society, said: "We're thrilled to launch Space To Grow and support so many children before they reach crisis point – so that they are happier, healthier and thriving."



## New sea slug discovered

Scientists have discovered a new type of sea slug living deep in the Pacific Ocean. This unusual creature, which also glows in the dark, was found about 2.5km (1.55 miles) underwater in an area called the 'midnight zone'. Researchers from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in the USA have spent more than 20 years studying the species. They say it's different from other sea slugs because it swims in open water instead of living on the sea floor. The findings on the creature, whose scientific name is *Bathydevius caudactylus*, were published in the journal *Deep Sea Research Part I*.

## UK households 'wishcycling'

A new study finds that 'wishcycling' (where people put items in recycling bins and hope for the best) is becoming quite common in UK households. Researchers from Lancaster University say unclear labels and different recycling rules across the country are causing confusion. This leads to contamination and less effective recycling efforts. So, experts are warning against it and asking households to think twice before throwing items away.

● **DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**25 NOVEMBER**

Highlights how serious violence can be against women around the world.

● **THANKSGIVING DAY**

**28 NOVEMBER**

A national American holiday, where people celebrate with food, parades and fireworks.



Go to the **First News app** for daily news posted throughout the week.



# WILL COP29 MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



**UN boss says young people have a “right to be angry” about lack of action on climate change**

**\$1 trillion per year**

(that's £800 million) needed by poorer countries by 2030 to cope with climate change, say experts.

A boy in floods in Indonesia this week

TOP figures are calling for less talk and more action when it comes to fighting climate change.

World leaders, including major politicians from the UK, have been in Azerbaijan this week, trying to agree how to tackle the crisis at an annual climate conference called COP29.

A key question is how much money should be given to poorer countries to help them cope with rising temperatures and switch to greener energy.

While they chatted, children in Jakarta, Indonesia, were forced to trudge through flooded streets to get to school. In Northern India, a dense smog caused by pollution shut primary schools altogether, and a damaging tropical typhoon hit Central America.

*“In the leaders’ lounge, people eat, drink, meet and take photos... this seems exactly like what happens in the real world. Every day life goes on... and our speeches, full of good words about fighting climate change, change nothing. My point is, what on Earth are we doing, gathering over and over, if there is no political will on the horizon to go beyond words and unite for meaningful action?”*

– Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama

A powerful group of climate experts, including top scientists, have written to the UN to criticise COP29.

Azerbaijan produces lots of fossil fuels, which the country’s president, Ilham Aliyev, said were a “gift from God.” The experts told the UN that future summits should take place in countries that show clear support for climate action.

● COP29 finishes today (22 November), and nations must agree on a set of climate promises for the next year. Check the **First News app** for the latest updates.

**THEY SAID THAT!**



Mr Guterres

**“Right to be angry”**

Young climate activists held a meeting with António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, at COP29. They told him they were upset by the lack of urgent action from politicians to fix the climate. Mr Guterres agreed, telling them:

“You have every right to be angry. I’m angry, too.”

## Measles cases soar worldwide

MEASLES cases soared worldwide last year by 1.7 million, the World Health Organization (WHO) says.

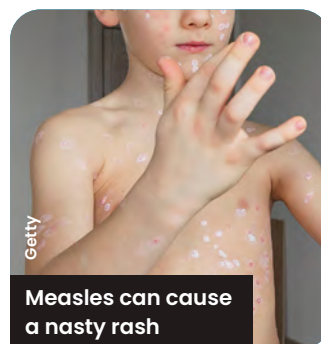
Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and makes people feel ill, followed by a rash. While most people feel better after a week or two, it can cause serious problems for some.

The WHO, together with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, estimate that there were 10.3 million cases of measles around the world in 2023, and

107,500 people, mostly aged under five, died from the disease.

Experts say that these deaths are easy to prevent – all a person needs is two doses of the measles vaccine, MMR. However, 22 million children worldwide missed their first dose of the vaccine last year.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, said: “Measles vaccine has saved more lives than any other vaccine in the past 50 years.”



Measles can cause a nasty rash

**BUT...**

**Trump gives top job to vaccine doubter**



DONALD Trump has given the top health job in the USA to a man who has a history of criticising vaccines.

Robert F Kennedy Jr, aged 70, will take charge of the USA’s Department of Health and Human Services when Mr Trump enters the White House in January. In the past, Mr Kennedy has spread fake news that children’s jabs cause autism. He declared that Covid-19 vaccines were deadly and that “no vaccines” are safe. He also once claimed that a worm entered his brain, ate some of it, and died.

On a better note, he says he’s keen to remove processed foods from American school lunches.

## EDITOR’S COMMENT



Nicky Cox MBE

WORLD leaders should listen to children about climate change because it’s you who will live with the choices made today (this page and p26).

You understand how serious the problem is and often come up with fresh ideas and answers that adults might not think of.

If world leaders and other adults ignore children’s voices, they miss a chance to work together with those who care deeply about the future. Children have the passion to help build a world that’s fair and healthy for everyone.

So, listening to young people isn’t just the right thing to do – it’s smart!

Beans is back with owner Cara!



## Beans the cat

THIS ginger and white cat, which went missing from its home near Glasgow last month, was found safely... 300 miles (483km) away, in Coventry! It’s not known how Beans strayed so far. The charity Cats Protection was able to reunite him with his owners, Cara and Colin McBurnie, because he was microchipped. Cara said: “I was shocked that he was still alive!”

**GOOD WEEK**



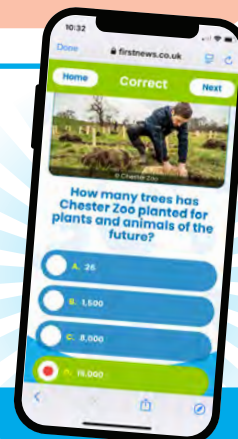
**X**

**BAD WEEK**

BRITISH newspaper *The Guardian* announced that it’s leaving social media platform X, saying it’s become “toxic”, and accusing its owner, Elon Musk, of using it to influence politics. Musk supported Donald Trump’s campaign to become US president. *The Guardian* runs more than 80 accounts on X, with a combined 27 million followers.

## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEEKLY QUIZ!

Test yourself on this week’s news with our new quiz, included with every subscription. Play with your family, friends or by yourself. Read this week’s issue to get all the answers right!

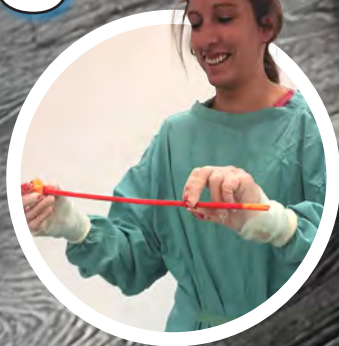


Ask a grown-up/bill-payer for your **WEB ID** to use the app.



# WE DON'T TALK ABOUT BRUNO'S LUNCH!

Puppy swallows **HUGE** toy arrow



56cm  
50cm is nearly the same as the width of these two pages!

**A PUPPY was darted to hospital after somehow swallowing an enormous toy arrow whole.**

Bruno, a four-month-old cane corso, had been playing in the garden when he came inside, retching. His worried owner, Stacey, quickly called the Manchester PDSA Pet Hospital, which told her to bring him in straight away.

## Emergency surgery

The vets gave Bruno an X-ray and were astonished to discover a 50cm (20in) plastic arrow lodged in his food pipe. Acting fast, they rushed him into surgery

and, with great care, they managed to safely remove it.

"It extended from his throat all the way to his stomach," said PDSA vet Caragh Kelleher. "There was a high risk it could pierce through his stomach wall," she said. "It may also have caused a blockage in his stomach, which would have been fatal if left untreated."

Bruno stayed in overnight and, happily, he was back home the next day.

"Bruno's our big baby, he's so soft with everyone," said Stacey. "He's quickly become a massive part of our family and I couldn't imagine life without him."

## Puppy problems

The PDSA, the UK's largest vet charity, says that because puppies explore with their mouths, they often get their paws on things they shouldn't. Since he got home, Bruno only has access to his own dog-safe toys. Owners are advised to contact their vet immediately if they suspect their dog has eaten something it shouldn't.

# Slender-billed curlew **EXTINCT**

Chris Gohersall/ RSPB Images



Last seen **FEBRUARY 1995**

**A SPECIES of bird unseen for 30 years has been declared extinct by scientists.**

The slender-billed curlew had a long, pointy beak. It bred in Siberia and spent winter months in Morocco.

It was last seen in February 1995. In the years since, nature groups have tried hard to find one again, without success. Analysis published in the journal *Ibis* suggests that there's a 99.6% chance that it no longer exists.

Scientists say that this is the first known global extinction of a bird species from mainland Europe, North Africa and West Asia, and that rich European countries need to do more to look after their animals.

Dr Alex Bond, from the Natural History Museum, said: "Tackling climate change, habitat destruction and pollution is the best chance we've got at protecting them, at home and abroad."

# Fantastic plastic won't pollute seas

**SCIENTISTS in Japan have developed a brand-new type of plastic that dissolves in seawater.**

Until now, when plastic ends up in the ocean, there's a risk of sea creatures getting tangled up in it. They might also swallow it, which means microplastics could enter our bodies through the seafood we eat.

The new plastic would put an end to that. It's been created by a team of scientists at the Takuzo RIKEN Center for Emergent Matter Science, who announced their breakthrough yesterday in the journal *Science*.

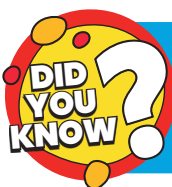
They said their new plastic is just as strong as water-resistant plastic. It's also non-toxic and non-flammable, so it would reduce carbon dioxide emissions that cause global warming.

The plastic also breaks down in soil, and the scientists say that, when that happens, it provides nitrogen and phosphorous just like a fertiliser.



Getty

Will pictures like this soon be a thing of the past?



IT'S estimated that **14 million tonnes** of plastic enter our oceans every year.



Left: Spreen  
Below: The stadium that he played in

# YOUTUBER ATTRACTS FOOTBALL FURY

**A FOOTBALL club in Argentina has angered fans and players by letting a YouTuber play for them in a top division match.**

Ivan Buhajeruk is known as Spreen on YouTube and he has nearly eight million subscribers.

On Sunday 10 November, he was named as striker for Deportivo Riestra in their match against league-leaders Vélez Sarsfield. The idea came from Victor Stinfale, who owns the club and its main sponsor, an energy drinks company.

"The club depends a lot on publicity," Stinfale explained to a local radio station. "It was probably a one-time thing."

Spreen may be an influencer, but he didn't get much of a chance to influence the game – he was subbed off after just 50 seconds.

However, despite his shortest of short cameos, the fact that he played at all still annoyed his opponents, pundits, fans and ex-players, who said it was shameful for the sport.

**THEY SAID THAT!**

"A total lack of respect for football and footballers."  
– ex-Premier League star Juan Sebastián Verón



**WOW!**

What a brave little Giza!

**A DARING dog has found stardom after he climbed to the summit of one of the Great Pyramids of Giza.**

Apollo, now nicknamed 'the pyramid puppy', is one of a pack of about eight strays that live around the famous ancient ruins.

He was filmed climbing the Pyramid of Khafre to bark at some birds. The clip went viral, and now people are rushing to meet him. Guides have made him a key part of their tours, celebrities are paying for selfies with him and local souvenir shops are cashing in!

Apollo was born within a crack in the pyramid itself. One expert says he's become "the strongest and bravest of his pack."



## London, UK



Tower Bridge

TOWER Bridge is celebrating ten years of its glass floors. If you've been brave enough to walk on them and peer down onto the road below, you'll know it gets the heart racing. In this picture, visitors are getting a unique view of runners in the London Marathon. The glass floors have also hosted proposals, weddings and, of course, pets (inset)!

## London, UK



Pinpep

TV presenter Ade Adepitan is ready to have a brick-tastic Christmas! Here he is in the LEGO Store on Leicester Square, which has launched a Storytelling Zone for the festive season. It's open until 1 January 2025.

## Shanghai, China



Getty

A GIANT carrot is snapped under the Oriental Pearl Tower. It's part of a colourful new exhibition called Sky Mojo Expo by the quirky clothing label StayReal.

## California, USA



Getty

WHAT are you staring at?! A giant eyeball sculpture by artist Tony Tasset makes quite a spectacle in the scenic Napa Valley.



# ACTIONS DO MATTER!



## ZAMBIAN COMMUNITY WORK TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF DROUGHT

All images: WaterAid/Angel Phiri

### COP29 COMES TO AN END

As COP29 comes to a close (22 November), a community in Zambia is showing how money and facilities can help to tackle climate change, despite the country suffering from severe drought. The Nteme community, in the southwest of Lusaka, has discovered that a newly built water tower is the key to survival.

### THE FARMER

Andrew, the farmer in charge of rationing the water, said: "The groundwater levels have dropped due to the drought and the nearby dams where we take our animals to drink are dry. When clean water isn't available, it has a severe impact on the community. If this system works as intended, it will help us to continue to combat the effects of the drought."



### THE KEEN GARDENER

Beatrice, who now has a vegetable garden, said: "Now I no longer walk long distances for water. I have it right here at my house and I've even started a garden because of it!"



### WHAT DOES THE WATER TOWER DO?

WaterAid installed the water tower to provide a clean water supply to the area. The water is managed by the village's water committee and is carefully rationed between people, farming and cattle herding.

*Where there is water,  
there is hope.*

### WHAT DIFFERENCES HAS THE COMMUNITY SEEN?

Families have seen huge differences. Infections are down, food is growing and healthcare can be given safely for the first time. The effects are a perfect example of climate adaptation in action and highlight the types of initiatives that should receive global government funding.



### THE NURSE

"Before, we had challenges because there was no water, and the situation was hard. There were no taps inside or outside, so hygiene was difficult to maintain. Now, things are different," said Patness, a nurse in the local healthcare facility.



### THE CATTLE HERDER

"With the new water system, my life and the lives of many others in the community have improved. Before, we were always in a panic about water. But now, I feel more relaxed," said cattle herder Mugabe.

### WATERAID CALLS FOR MORE ACTION – NOW

In response to the historic drought facing Southern Africa, WaterAid's Regional Director, Robert Kampala, said: "The dry season is tightening its grip across Southern Africa, putting millions of lives at risk – and water is the key to survival. World leaders must see this as a wake-up call and put water at the heart of all climate adaptation and financial decision making at COP29 and beyond."



## BALMORAL

## Queen's fave saved

A picnic spot that Queen Victoria enjoyed visiting during her trips to Balmoral Castle has been saved from ruin. The picnic cottage has been restored to its former glory by the National Trust for Scotland and will be ready to reopen to visitors next year. Queen Victoria and her family would visit the cabin regularly, built around 1850, to spend their free time on holiday. The cottage was rebuilt this year, saving it from crumbling to rubble. The walls and roof have been repaired, and additional information boards and furniture have been added to give visitors a royally nice welcome.



© Ben Addy, Moxon Architects

Hadrian's Wall was at the very edge of the Roman Empire

English Heritage



## NORTHUMBERLAND

## Celebrity gladiators

A newly discovered Roman knife is proof that gladiators had celebrity status even at the edges of the Roman Empire. The handle of the knife, which was discovered at Hadrian's Wall, is in the shape of a gladiator dressed in heavy equipment. Gladiators used to fight to entertain audiences in the Roman Empire almost 2,000 years ago. Dr Frances McIntosh, English Heritage's Collections Curator for Hadrian's Wall and the North East, said that, despite being used as slaves, "gladiators could become huge celebrities". English Heritage plans to display the knife at Corbridge Roman Town in 2025.

## PEMBROKESHIRE



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

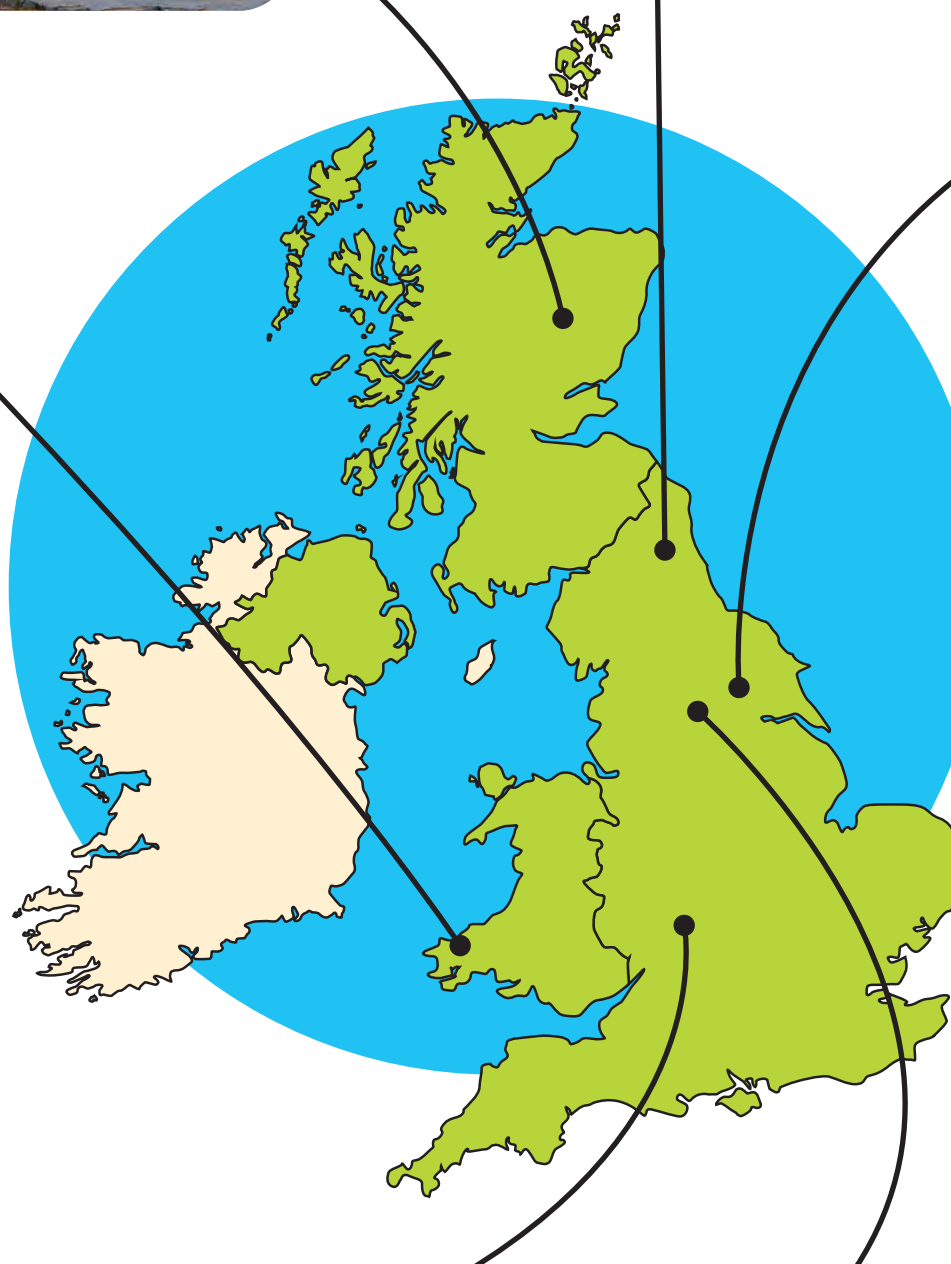
## Big hopes for tiny mammal

Conservationists are hopeful for the recovery of the hazel dormouse after one was found in Pembrokeshire. The tiny rodent is rare in Britain, having declined by 70% since 2000. Nesting boxes were set up in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park near Pengelli Wood as volunteers hoped for some luck – and that's exactly what they had. Even though it can be hard to tempt dormice into nesting boxes when good habitats already exist around them, conservationists say they "got lucky" with this one. Its long-term survival now looks much more promising.

## YORKSHIRE

## Yorkie-talkie

New technology has given King Richard III a voice, with a Yorkshire accent. The medieval king's skeleton, which was discovered underneath a car park in Leicester in 2012, has been used by scientists at Liverpool John Moores University to build a digital avatar of his head. This reconstruction of his vocal cords, alongside an examination of his letters and diary, have been used to recreate the king's voice. The avatar addressed an audience of history fans at the York Theatre Royal, where it is on display. Watch a video of the king 'speaking' on the *First News* app!



Face Lab LJMU

Richard III was king from 1483 until his death in 1485 in the War of the Roses

## STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

## Sinking feeling for boat thieves

A canal boat that was stolen and repainted by thieves has been found. Warwickshire Police had received a report of a stolen narrowboat. Despite the slow speed of these boats (3–9mph), they discovered the search area could be huge. After a Facebook appeal, the boat was discovered to have been given a disguise, but was tracked down eventually dozens of miles away in the Gloucester docks. Despite not finding the thieves yet, the police thanked the "incredible response" from hundreds of people online.



Warwickshire Police

The 40ft (12m) boat

## LEEDS

## Murals for heroes

Unsung sporting heroes and a trailblazing cricket team are set to be honoured with murals around Leeds. Athlete Kadeena Cox has been selected for winning a remarkable seven Paralympic medals in sprinting and cycling. She will be celebrated alongside swimmer Doris Storey, who smashed the record for the 220 yards breaststroke in 1938. Skateboarding stars will be in the spotlight, too, along with Leeds Caribbean Cricket Club – the first club of its kind in the UK when it was established in 1948. Now, Leeds Museums and Galleries will decide on the perfect mural locations.



Kadeena Cox is getting the recognition she deserves





## GLOWING SURFBOARDS COULD KEEP SHARKS AT BAY

**A BRIGHT idea by Australian scientists could help keep surfers safe from shark attacks.**

They've discovered that fixing bright LED lights to the bottom of seal-shaped boards will put off great white sharks from targeting them.

Great whites usually attack their prey from underneath, and it's thought that they mistake the shape of a surfboard – and the surfer – for a seal.

Most shark attacks are linked to people surfing and taking part in other board sports.

Researchers from Macquarie University in Sydney found that bright, horizontal lights on their seal-boards worked best at keeping sharks away.

Now, they want to test their idea on real surfboards and kayaks, as an easy way to protect people in the water without harming sharks.

iStock

## Coral reefs in crisis



**EXPERTS from the International Union for Conservation of Nature have warned that more than four in ten (44%) of the world's coral reefs could soon disappear because of rising sea temperatures.**

This is causing more frequent bleaching, which is when corals lose their colour and die.

Coral reefs are crucial for ocean life, providing homes for many sea creatures and protecting coastlines.

Scientists worry that losing our coral reefs could harm fish populations, affect tourism and leave coastal areas more vulnerable to storms and flooding.

They say we need to act quickly to reduce pollution and slow down climate change to save these important underwater ecosystems.

## African elephants suffer huge decline

**A NEW study reveals a worrying decline in African elephant populations in many countries.**

Over the past 50 years, nine in ten forest elephants have disappeared, while seven in ten savannah (open grassland) elephants vanished. Researchers looked at data from 475 sites across 37 African countries.

But it's not all bad news. They found that, while some elephant groups have vanished completely, others are growing rapidly. In southern Africa, savannah elephant numbers actually increased by four in ten (42%).

Scientists say there's still hope and that elephant populations can recover in some areas with proper protection and care.

The study was published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.



Forrest Hogg © WCS



**ANEESHWAR Kunchala** is a nine-year-old wildlife campaigner and officially the world's youngest newspaper columnist! He shot to fame as a finalist on *Britain's Got Talent*. Now, he's presenting the documentary *Save Our Wildlife* from Sky Kids and Sky Zero. You can watch it at [first.news/climatecrisis](http://first.news/climatecrisis).

Aneeshwar's Animal of the Week is the...

## FLYING FISH



**HABITAT:**

Flying fish live in warm oceans worldwide.

**FUN FACT:**

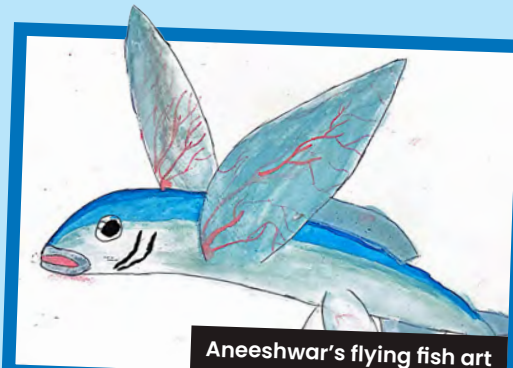
- There are more than 40 known species of flying fish.

**SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:**

They can get up to speeds of over 35mph (56km/h) underwater before breaking the surface. They then use their wing-like fins to glide through the air for up to 200m at a time to escape predators.

**CONSERVATION STATUS:**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature says they're of least concern.



Aneeshwar's flying fish art

We're asking you to send in photos of your own drawings or paintings of wildlife to add to an online gallery. Ask a parent, guardian or teacher to send in your photos by emailing them to [yournews@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:yournews@firstnews.co.uk). You can view the gallery by asking a responsible adult to scan this QR code!





 **SWEDEN**



If Ms Brandberg sees a banana, she'll split!

## Swedish ministers reveal fear of bananas

Two rival politicians in Sweden have united to take a stand against their "common enemy" – bananas! It's not just that Paulina Brandberg and Teresa Carvalho find the yellow fruit unap-peel-ing, they're actually afraid of them. Bananaphobia is rare but, for sufferers, seeing or smelling them can cause anxiety and sickness. Brandberg is said to have described it as the "world's weirdest phobia", and Swedish paper *Expressen* says it's seen official emails asking for any rooms she visits to be banana-free zones. In response to those reports, Carvalho told Brandberg: "We may have had many tough debates about conditions in working life but, on this issue, we stand united against a common enemy."

**WHAT?!**

 **INDIA**

## Bulldozer punishments banned

India's top court has banned authorities from bulldozing a person's home or shop just because they've been accused of a crime. In some states it's been used as a punishment, but critics say that it has mostly targeted Muslim families, especially following instances of religious protests and violence. The Supreme Court called the practice "chilling" and "simply unacceptable". Human rights group Amnesty International said: "This is a big win in ending the deeply unjust, widespread, unlawful... demolitions."

It's been nicknamed 'bulldozer justice'



 **SOLOMON ISLANDS**



Manu San Felix, National Geographic Pristine Seas

It's longer than the biggest animal on Earth, the blue whale

## World's biggest coral discovered

Scientists have discovered the world's largest coral, off the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. A coral isn't just a pretty rock, it's a living sea creature. This one is over 300 years old and the National Geographic Pristine Seas team, which discovered it, says it can be seen all the way from space. In total, it's taller than a double-decker bus – and both longer and wider than three of them placed end-to-end! The distance to swim all the way around it is 183 metres (600ft).

### How has it survived?

The huge coral is seen as a sign of hope, as lots of corals in shallower waters have struggled to survive in recent years due to rising temperatures across the world (see p9). Scientists think this one has survived because it lives in deeper, cooler waters.

 **COLOMBIA**

## Colombia bans child marriage

Colombia has become the 12th country out of the 33 in Latin America and the Caribbean to make it illegal to wed before the age of 18. For 137 years, there was a loophole in the country's laws that allowed children to be married if their parents gave their permission, but this put them at risk of harm. UNICEF says that 4.5 million girls and women in Colombia were married before they were 18, including one million who were married before they were 15.



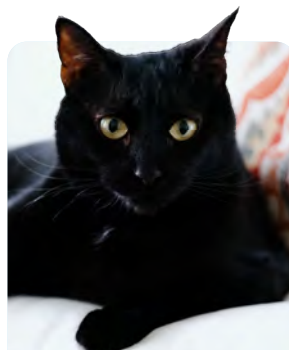
**THEY SAID THAT!**

"It's a great message, not only for Colombia in terms of respect for the rights of boys and girls, but also for the world. Colombian childhood is important, we have to protect it."  
– Politician Jennifer Pedraza on the law change

 **THAILAND**

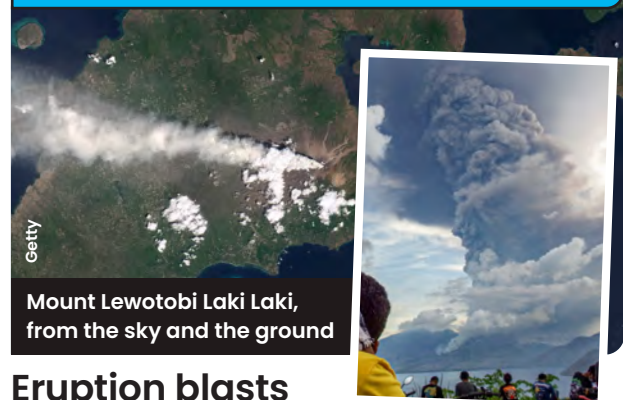
## Show accused of animal cruelty

A Thai TV show called *The Empress of Ayodhya* has been criticised for sedating a cat (giving it medicine to make it sleep) in order to film its pretend death. In episode five, the black cat, called Samli, drinks from a poisoned cup of tea and 'dies'. The scene angered viewers and animal rights groups, with Thai vets saying the animal's life was put at risk. Jason Baker, from animal charity PETA, said: "Anaesthetising a cat... for a scene in a TV show is reckless, dangerous and cruel." The show's director, Sant Srikaewlaw, posted an apology, saying: "I will be careful not to let something like this happen again."



A cat like the one on the show

 **INDONESIA**



Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki, from the sky and the ground

## Eruption blasts smoke 9km into sky

These dramatic photos show smoke from the eruption of an Indonesian volcano billowing 9km (5.5 miles) into the sky. The ash forced airlines to cancel flights both to and from Bali, a holiday hotspot 500km (310 miles) to the west, stranding tourists. Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki began erupting at the start of the month. In its first blast, at least ten people on the island of Flores were killed, and more than 10,000 villagers were affected when rocks, gravel and lava destroyed local homes and schools.

# THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

## THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS...

### CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

Can you find all of these festive words in the wordsearch? Tick them off as you go!

- Tree
- Baubles
- Nativity
- Stockings
- Carols
- Mince pies
- Sprouts
- Presents
- Cards
- Santa



e f i c p s a q w r g m m b p v  
 y c y q o t u r n b x s i f z c  
 k j y m e h b s h a a w j a z b  
 u z c o f o k t c n t u f f x x  
 w s d j l w c o g b i i b u j g  
 b a m f i p d c j k k h v l c e  
 t n v e b e x k q q m o k i e l  
 s t n v t s m i m p i x j c t s  
 e a y t l i i n s r v o e s y y  
 a g r o c w n g b e k a a p g v  
 o n r v v s c s d s t m r r t o  
 r a z v d o e m h e r y i o l v  
 c e h r t y p m g n c t l u n g  
 q f a a r n i w x t z u r t u p  
 d c z p e p e l i s k f z s c q  
 h n a t e r s j o o s y v q b t



### CHRISTMAS CRACKERS!

What is it called when a snowman has a tantrum?  
**A meltdown!**

What do reindeer hang on their Christmas trees?  
**Horn-aments!**

What do you call an elf who has won the lottery?  
**Welfy!**

How did Scrooge win the football game?  
**The ghost of Christmas passed!**

Who is Santa's favourite singer?  
**Elf-is Presley!**

ha ha ha

ha ha ha

# CRACKING CHRISTMAS DAYS OUT

THERE'S tons of fun to be had this winter! Here's our pick of the best events taking place across the UK.

## DISNEY ON ICE PRESENTS ROAD TRIP ADVENTURES UK



Grab your mouse ears, as Disney On Ice is skating into venues over the festive season! You can enjoy the magical adventures of *Mary Poppins Returns*, *Toy Story 4*, *Incredibles 2*, *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, *Moana* and *Frozen*. The show will tour Newcastle, Belfast, Manchester, Sheffield and London from now until 5 January next year. [www.disneyonice.co.uk](http://www.disneyonice.co.uk)



## SCARBOROUGH LIGHTS SCARBOROUGH

Britain's first seaside tourist resort is being brought to life with cool installations, sculptures and performances. Visitors will get to see venues across the town being reimagined through fire and light, and for five nights from 18 December, the Rose Garden will be lit by 230 Roman candles! [www.scarboroughfair.uk](http://www.scarboroughfair.uk)

## CHRISTMAS AT THE PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE EDINBURGH

Make like the royals and enjoy a Christmas like no other at the palace! Look out for the two 12ft-high (3.6m) Christmas trees taking centre stage! There's also a family Christmas activity day on 14 December. [www.rct.uk](http://www.rct.uk)

## MERRY BRICKMAS AT LEGOLAND WINDSOR RESORT WINDSOR

LEGOLAND Windsor Resort is being transformed into a bricktacular winter wonderland, complete with a giant DUPLO Christmas tree! Look out for cute festive scenes in Miniland, watch a DUPLO puppet show and check out Father Christmas' magical sleigh! [www.legoland.co.uk](http://www.legoland.co.uk)

## LANTERNS AND LIGHT AT CHESTER ZOO CHESTER

Experience the zoo after hours with a special trail called Lanterns and Light. The event features spectacular illuminations and colourful lanterns depicting all sorts of animals, from orangutans and butterflies to giraffes and wolves! You'll get to explore the zoo's 90-year history and learn about species that are threatened with extinction. [www.chesterzoo.org/lanterns](http://www.chesterzoo.org/lanterns)

## ALICE IN WONDERLAND AT SHAKESPEARE NORTH PLAYHOUSE LIVERPOOL

It's Christmas in Wonderland, and mischief is afoot! You're invited to join Alice as she falls down the rabbit hole again, this time at the exciting new venue, Shakespeare North Playhouse. This festive sequel to the classic story takes to the stage from now until Saturday 11 January 2025. [www.shakespearenorthplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.shakespearenorthplayhouse.co.uk)



## CHARLES DICKENS MUSEUM LONDON

Charles Dickens' first family home – 48 Doughty Street – has been decked out for Christmas in authentic Victorian style! There'll be special events, live performances, tours and a twinkly Christmas Eve at the museum to celebrate some of the author's most famous works, including *A Christmas Carol*. [www.dickensmuseum.com](http://www.dickensmuseum.com)



## EDEN PROJECT CORNWALL

The Eden Project's iconic biomes (above) are set to glow after dark with a must-see light display. There'll be dazzling installations both inside and outside, as well as Cornwall's only ice rink and a huge fairground carousel to ride. [www.edenproject.com](http://www.edenproject.com)



## NATIONAL TRUST CHRISTMAS EVENTS UK

Celebrate festive traditions throughout history at National Trust properties across the UK. There'll be light trails, activities and hot chocolate! Highlights include Christmas at Tredegar House in Newport, *Sleeping Beauty* at Waddesdon and a *Nutcracker* Christmas at Mottisfont. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)



## THE SNOWMAN LONDON

Looking for a family Christmas classic? Then look no further than *The Snowman!* From Saturday 23 November to Saturday 4 January 2025, the magical show returns to the Peacock Theatre in London's West End. Follow the story of a young boy's adventures when his snowman – and new friend – comes to life on Christmas Eve! You'll also hear the iconic *Walking In The Air*. [www.sadlerswells.com](http://www.sadlerswells.com)



## Next stop, Christmas

London Transport Museum | From 23 Nov

KIDS GO FREE



MAYOR OF LONDON



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

[ltmuseum.co.uk](http://ltmuseum.co.uk)  
Registered charity number 1123122



# FESTIVE FEAST OF BOOKS

**CHRISTMAS** is just around the corner, and we've been on the hunt for the best new books to enjoy. We've made a list, checked it twice and can officially confirm that the ones on this page are exceedingly nice!

They're filled with all the good Christmassy feels – joy, wonder and a big sprinkling of magic. They'd make a great addition to your stocking, too, so do enter our competition to win all ten!

**WIN!**  
**ALL TEN BOOKS!**

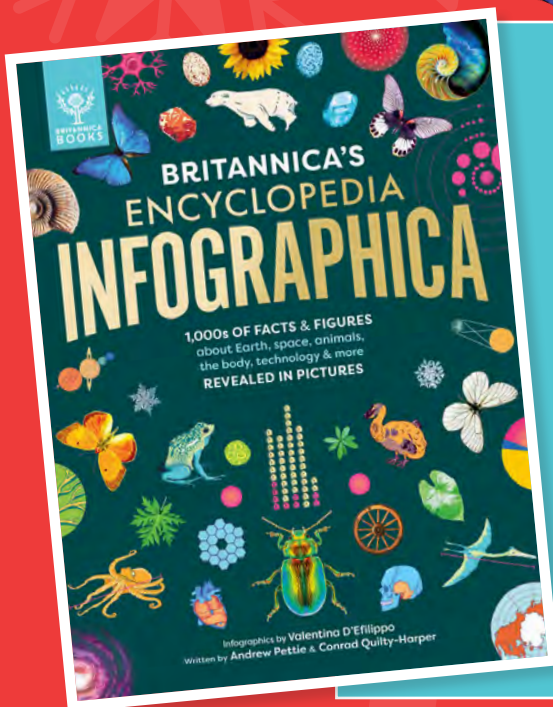
AS a cracking early Christmas present, we're giving away all ten of the books on this page to a lucky *First News* reader! Will it be you? Just answer this question to enter:

Which author wrote *A Christmas Carol*?

- a) Marcus Rashford   b) Jane Austen  
c) Charles Dickens

**ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRIES XMAS BOOKS**

[first.news/comps](http://first.news/comps) or see page 20. The closing date is 16 December.



**Britannica's Encyclopedia Infographica**  
by Valentina D'Elfilippo, Andrew Pettie and Conrad Quilty-Harper

The pictures do the talking in this epic, visual book to help you understand the world around us. The Earth, animals, humans and technology are cleverly explained in imaginative maps, charts, timelines and more!

Published by What on Earth!

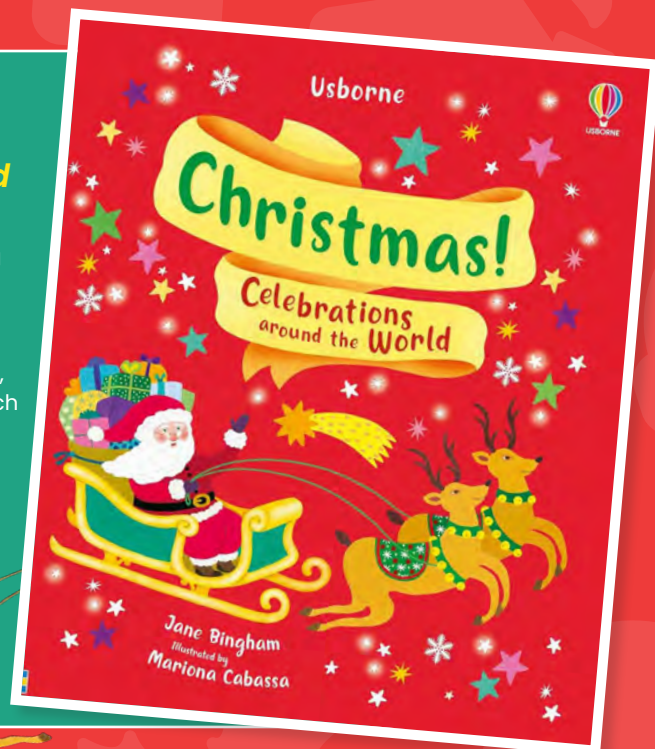


**Christmas! Celebrations Around The World**

by Jane Bingham

Discover all the surprising and wonderful ways that Christmas is celebrated in different countries and cultures around the world, from roller-skating to church to carving decorations from radishes!

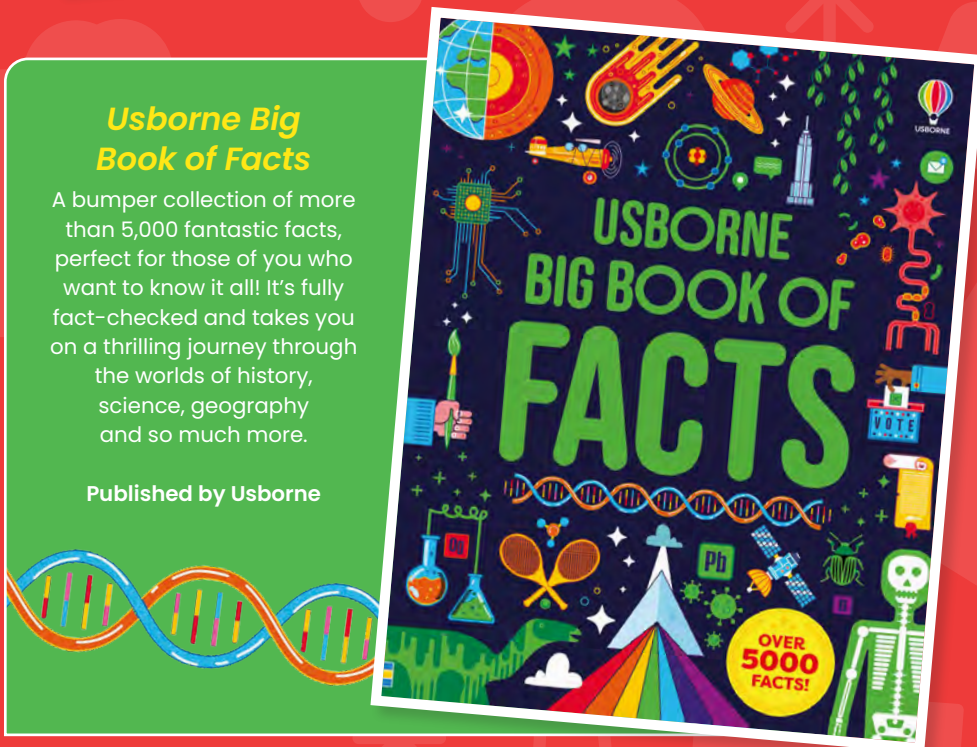
Published by Usborne



**Usborne Big Book of Facts**

A bumper collection of more than 5,000 fantastic facts, perfect for those of you who want to know it all! It's fully fact-checked and takes you on a thrilling journey through the worlds of history, science, geography and so much more.

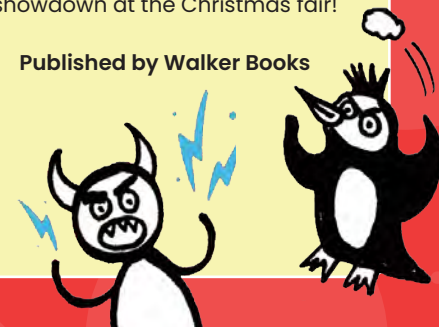
Published by Usborne

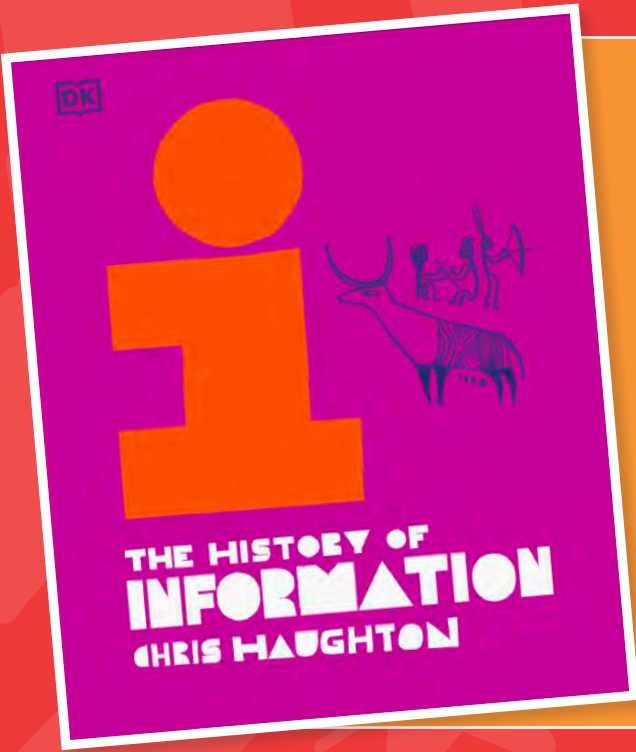


**Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Making Enemies**  
by Louie Stowell

In this fourth doodle-packed diary from a young Loki, he's challenged to a duel by an angry elf called Vinir. Loki thinks he's sweet-talked his way out of it by telling Vinir to pick on someone his own size, until Vinir shows up at his school in child form... ready for a showdown at the Christmas fair!

Published by Walker Books





### The History of Information

by Chris Haughton

Take a deep dive into an illustrated story of information, from the first languages and cave paintings through to all the modern ways that we humans communicate today – and how all of it has shaped and changed our world.

Published by DK Books

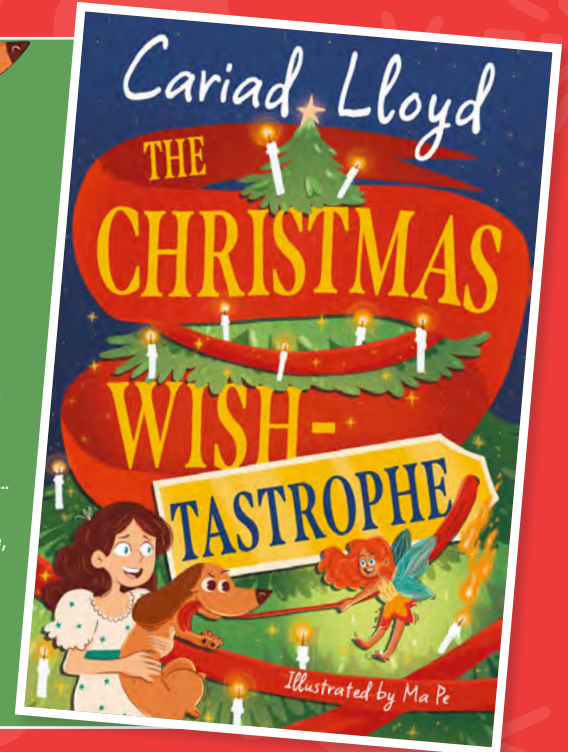


### The Christmas Wish-tastrophe

by Cariad Lloyd

When Lydia Marmalade makes a wish on the most magical night of the year, little does she know the chaos she's about to unleash... Come on a hilarious Christmas adventure starring a winter sprite, a mischievous sausage dog and a sprinkling of magic.

Published by Hachette

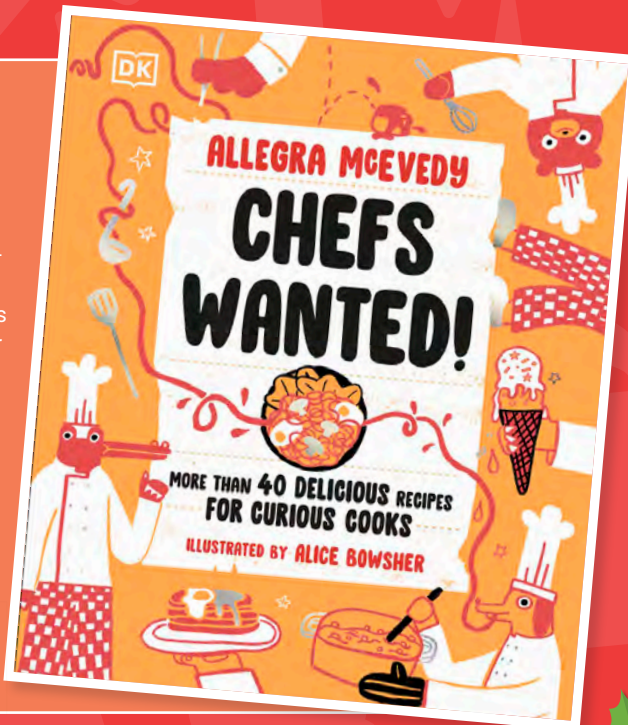


### Chefs Wanted!

by Allegra McEvedy

From family favourites like cannelloni and chilli to street food and sweet treats, award-winning chef Allegra McEvedy dishes up over 40 tasty recipes for budding chefs to take their skills to the next level!

Published by DK Books

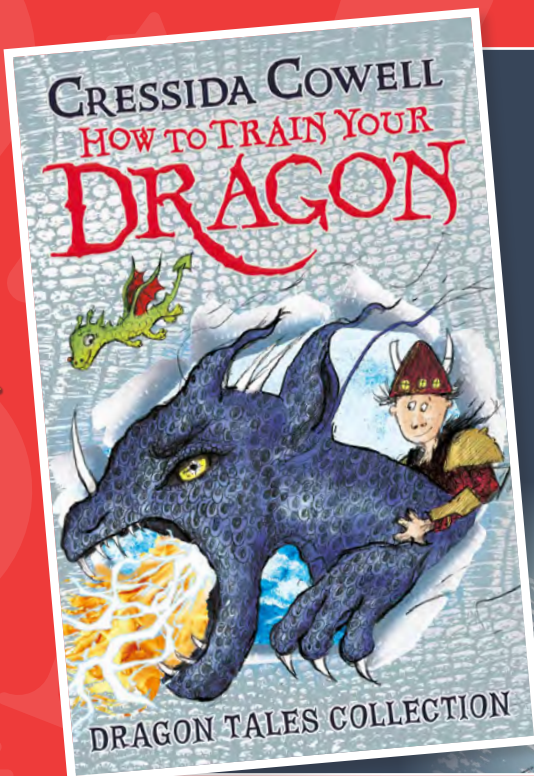


### The Biggest Christmas Secret Ever

by LD Lapinski

The gingerbread biscuits have come to life, flying reindeer have been spotted on the high street and the elves are on the lookout for trouble! Can Harper's family keep the BIGGEST Christmas secret ever?!

Published by Hachette



### How To Train Your Dragon: Dragon Tales Collection

by Cressida Cowell

An unmissable collection of three *How To Train Your Dragon* stories, fully illustrated by the author and including an exclusive all-new short tale, packed with excitement, adventure... and a grand reveal!

Published by Hachette



### The Snowman Code

by Simon Stephenson

Set during a long, chilly London winter, a 600-year-old snowman named Albert teams up with ten-year-old Blessing to beat bullies and rediscover Albert's lost love. It's a heartwarming tale by the screenwriter of hit film *Paddington 2*!

Published by Harper Collins



# PULL ON THOSE JUMPERS!



Christmas Jumper Day  
**12 December**

Shaun the Sheep

HERE'S your invite to the UK's biggest Christmas party!  
Let's make the world better with a sweater.

## FAMOUS FACES UNITE

Dozens of famous faces across the worlds of TV, film, radio, comedy, music and sport are urging the nation to swap, buy second-hand or re-wear a pre-loved jumper for Save the Children's annual festive fundraiser, Christmas Jumper Day.

All the stars have pulled on pre-loved festive knits to encourage the public to join in the UK's biggest Christmas party in an eco-conscious way, and donate to Save the Children this Thursday 12 December.



Ade Adepitan



Alison Hammond

Ejay Briss/Save the Children UK

## HOW THE MONEY HELPS

Since launching in 2012, Christmas Jumper Day has raised over **£37 million** to create lasting change for generations of children. The money raised supports children in the UK and around the world to stay safe, healthy and learning.

- £2 could buy a packet of seeds for a family in Kenya to grow their own food, after drought has killed their crops
- £6 could make all the difference for people in Gaza who are struggling to access drinkable water, by providing a pack of 12 water bottles
- £15 could pay for two weeks of super-powered peanut paste to help a child beat hunger

## A NEW HEAD OF WOOL

Joining this year's line-up of famous faces, Shaun the Sheep has taken on a new fleece of life in the hope of encouraging schools and youth groups up and down the country to sign up and take part in Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day.

Shaun the Sheep's creators, Academy Award-winning animation studio Aardman, have put together a new animation to celebrate the charity's fundraising campaign.

The festive film, *The Knit Before Christmas*, has launched today on Shaun the Sheep's YouTube channel, and Save the Children Ambassador Ashley Jensen hosted the film's premiere for schoolchildren at Launde Primary School in Leicester.



LAUNDE Primary was the top fundraising school for Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day in 2023, raising £3,744.84 for the charity's much-needed work.

## THE IMPACT YOU'LL HAVE

When you put on your silly sweater, it's important to remember it's for a very serious cause. The money you raise will support Save the Children's projects around the world, like this one in Cambodia. Khana is 12 years old and lives on Tonle Sap Lake, where she travels to school by boat. Unfortunately, pollution and rising water temperatures due to climate change have made it increasingly difficult to live here.

One of the many initiatives Save the Children run is encouraging families to create floating gardens out of the plastic bottles and items they find in the lake. Not only do the gardens reduce pollution, but they also help families like Khana's to grow the food they need to eat.

Save the Children has also introduced eco-lessons in schools. After Khana and her classmates learn about the environment and climate change, they spread the word to people in their community.



Ashley with pupils from Launde Primary School



Linh Pham/Save the Children

## HOW DO I TAKE PART?

1. It's simple! All you need to do is sign up for your free fundraising pack at [ChristmasJumperDay.org](https://ChristmasJumperDay.org).
2. Get your jumper out. You don't have to buy a new one; upcycle an old jumper with tinsel and baubles, or pop to your local charity shop to buy a pre-loved Christmas jumper.
3. Donate to Save the Children. By having fun and raising money, you're helping children in the UK and around the world.



# A **MAGICAL** FESTIVE SEASON AWAITS!

BRING your family along to a sleigh-full of shows at the Royal Albert Hall this Christmas!

## CAROLS AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Saturday 14 – Tuesday 24 December



Want a treat for the whole family? Invite everyone to the finest sing-along carol concert of the festive season with a great mix of carols, old and new!

## THE NUTCRACKER

Sunday 29 – Tuesday 31 December



Bring the whole family to Tchaikovsky's glorious ballet with gorgeous period costumes and dazzling projections.

## MY CHRISTMAS ORCHESTRAL ADVENTURE

Sunday 8 December



Calling Santa's little helpers! Join us for a festive family journey through Christmas classical music.

## SHOP!



Fill your stockings with decorations, kitchenware, books and more with our shop online and at Doors 6 and 12

Find out more at [royalalberthall.com/Christmas](http://royalalberthall.com/Christmas)



Royal Albert Hall



## MEET THE AUTHOR



**Name:** Alex T Smith  
**Age:** 39  
**Job:** Author and Illustrator  
**About his latest book:**  
*In Murder! By Narwhal!*, a big snowstorm traps young Edna and her trusted tortoise in her grandad's country estate... and worse still, there's murder afoot!



### AUTHOR and illustrator Alex T Smith chats to us about chickens, cookies, bongo drums... and his latest book!

● **What were you like as a kid, Alex?**

I think maybe a little bit eccentric [bizarre] – I wanted to be a rabbit when I grew up.

● **What was your favourite school subject?**

Art. Although the classroom was freezing, so I wore a fake fur coat I found in a costume bin in the drama department during lessons!

● **What's your best-ever memory?**

Gosh! So many, but I think being in Iceland floating about in a thermal pool while it snowed on me was very special.

● **What do you do outside of writing?**

I am bossed about by four tiny dogs and three very opinionated chickens most of the time. Besides that, I like eavesdropping and people watching (I'm very nosy) and having naps on the sofa.



● **Describe *Murder! By Narwhal!* in three words.**

Silly, intriguing, mysterious...

● **Can you tell us about the book's main character?**

Edna Gristle is nosy, giddy, opinionated, brave, hates onions, loves tortoises and spends most of the book detecting (and meddling) while dressed in her pyjamas.

● **What was the hardest part of writing it?**

When you write a mystery, you have to almost work backwards, making sure you keep 'whodunnit' a secret right to the very end.

● **Who was your favourite character to draw?**

I liked drawing them all, but Edna's elderly great aunt is very stylish and fabulous and terribly fond of wearing lots and lots of jewellery, so maybe she was my favourite to illustrate.

● **Lastly... what snack can't you live without while you're writing books?**

If you try to take cups of tea and chocolate chip cookies away from me, I will call the police!

*Murder! By Narwhal! A Grimaces Whodunnit!* by Alex T Smith is out now.

**"A set of bongo drums hit me on the bonce!"**



● **Tell us a cool fact about yourself!**

On my 14th birthday I had to get my head superglued, because a set of bongo drums fell off a shelf and hit me on the bonce.

## CHRISTMAS QUICK-FIRE!

● **Best Christmas song?**

Alex says: "I particularly like *The 12 Days Of Christmas* but I can never remember what present was given on what day!"

● **Best bit of Christmas dinner?**

Alex says: "Roast potatoes, obviously (but I do also enjoy lighting the Christmas pudding)."

● **What are you hoping for from Santa this Christmas?**

Alex says: "An alpaca, but how he'll wrap it, I don't know..."



## HAVE A CREATIVE CHRISTMAS WITH MAPED

Please be aware of age restrictions on social media sites



MapedHelix



maped\_helix



FOR GLITTER



FOR BLOW ART



FOR WATER-COLOURS



FOR MAGIC



For Christmas craft ideas visit our website.

Available online and instore at [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk) Sainsbury's ASDA Waitrose



[www.mapedhelix.co.uk](https://www.mapedhelix.co.uk)



# A WICKED TREAT!



THE biggest movie of the year is finally here and we're already hotfooting it to the cinema! Are you joining us?!

● **The enchanting story**

*Wicked* is based on the theatre show of the same name and tells the untold story of the witches of Oz. It follows a young woman called Elphaba, who is misunderstood because of her unusual green skin. At school, she makes an unlikely friend in popular girl Glinda and the duo go on to experience an encounter with the Wizard of Oz. Soon, their lives and friendship start changing and we discover how Elphaba becomes the Wicked Witch and Glinda the Good Witch.



THIS is only the first part of the movie. The second instalment is due to arrive in cinemas in November 2025.

● **The star-studded cast**

Pop princess Ariana Grande plays Glinda, while Cynthia Erivo plays Elphaba. You'll also spot Jonathan Bailey, Jeff Goldblum, Michelle Yeoh, Ethan Slater and Marissa Bode.

● **The hit soundtrack**

Of course, the show's stand-out song *Defying Gravity* is included for us all to sing along to! Fans will also get to hear *Popular* and *Dancing Through Life*. The movie's official soundtrack features vocals from the cast themselves and is available now.

Check out next week's *First News* for interviews with the cast!

*Wicked* is in cinemas now.



## SIX FUN FACTS

### BALLET SHOES

THE first major stage adaptation of the beloved book *Ballet Shoes* is coming to London this Christmas. To celebrate, we discovered six fun facts about the show.

- 1 The show is based on the book of the same name, written by Noel Streatfeild in 1936.
- 2 There are 23 actors/performers/dancers that make up the cast of *Ballet Shoes*, along with 19 members of the creative team.
- 3 It has taken 75 days for the team of highly skilled theatre makers to create the set and two days to build it on stage in the Olivier Theatre, the National Theatre's 1,150 seat auditorium.
- 4 It's set in a crumbling house filled full of dinosaur bones and fossils. A wide variety of animals and bones were used to build the world where the three adopted sisters Pauline, Petrova and Posy live with their guardians Sylvia and Nana, plus a host of unlikely lodgers.
- 5 25 litres of blue stain have been used to paint the set of *Ballet Shoes* – that's 85 cups of tea!
- 6 All the cupboards and shelves on the set weigh a total of 780kg – the same weight as an adult female giraffe!

*Ballet Shoes* is on at the National Theatre in London from 26 November to 22 February 2025. Visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk/productions/ballet-shoes](https://nationaltheatre.org.uk/productions/ballet-shoes)



# UNDER A SPELL

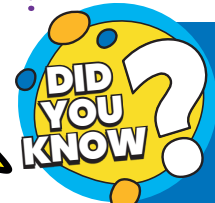
AS if there wasn't enough magic flying around, another fantastical family film has hit the screens – look out for *Spellbound* on Netflix.

The new animation follows the adventures of Ellian, the young daughter of the rulers of Lumbria, who must go on a daring quest to save her family and kingdom after a mysterious spell transforms her parents into monsters!



● **Strictly does Christmas!**

The line-up for this year's *Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special* has begun to be revealed! As *First News* went to press, the first three contestants taking to the dancefloor for a festive spin were comedian Josh Widdicombe (pictured), drag artist Tayce and presenter Vogue Williams. The line-up is being announced on *Strictly: It Takes Two*. The Christmas special is expected to air on BBC One and iPlayer on Christmas Day.

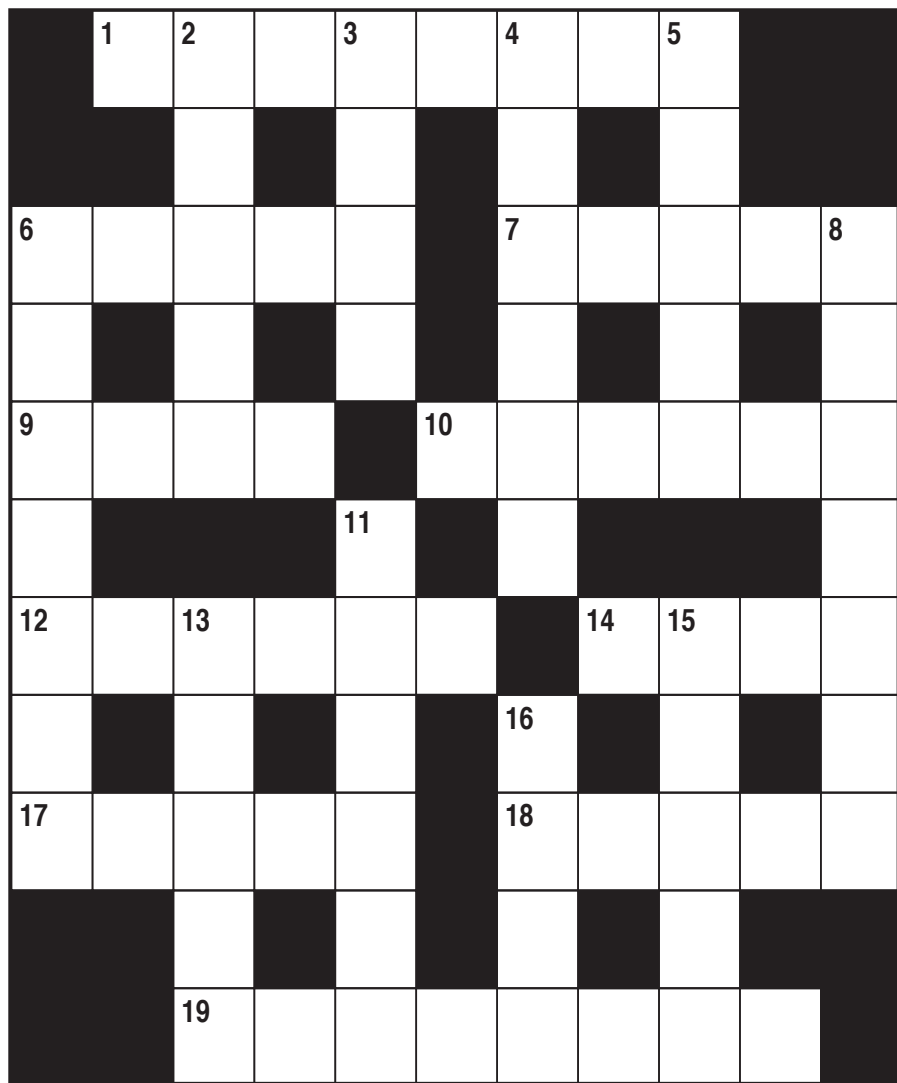


THE show stars Pearl Mackie, best known as the 12th Doctor's assistant Bill Potts in *Doctor Who*.



# CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



### ACROSS

- 1 Amaze (8)
- 6 Less common (5)
- 7 Sacked (5)
- 9 Climbing plant that grapes grow on (4)
- 10 Ill (6)
- 12 Type of trousers worn in warm weather (6)
- 14 Put in order (4)
- 17 Great fear (5)
- 18 Did something; performed in a play (5)
- 19 Item that you hang up on Christmas Eve for Santa to fill (8)

### DOWN

- 2 Warning sound of an emergency vehicle (5)
- 3 Shrek is one of these (4)
- 4 Young child (6)
- 5 Animal you would see at Royal Ascot (5)
- 6 Prepared for exams (7)
- 8 Erased (7)
- 11 Place where TV programmes are made (6)
- 13 Unwraps a present (5)
- 15 On a regular basis (5)
- 16 Sound a dog makes (4)



# Sudoku

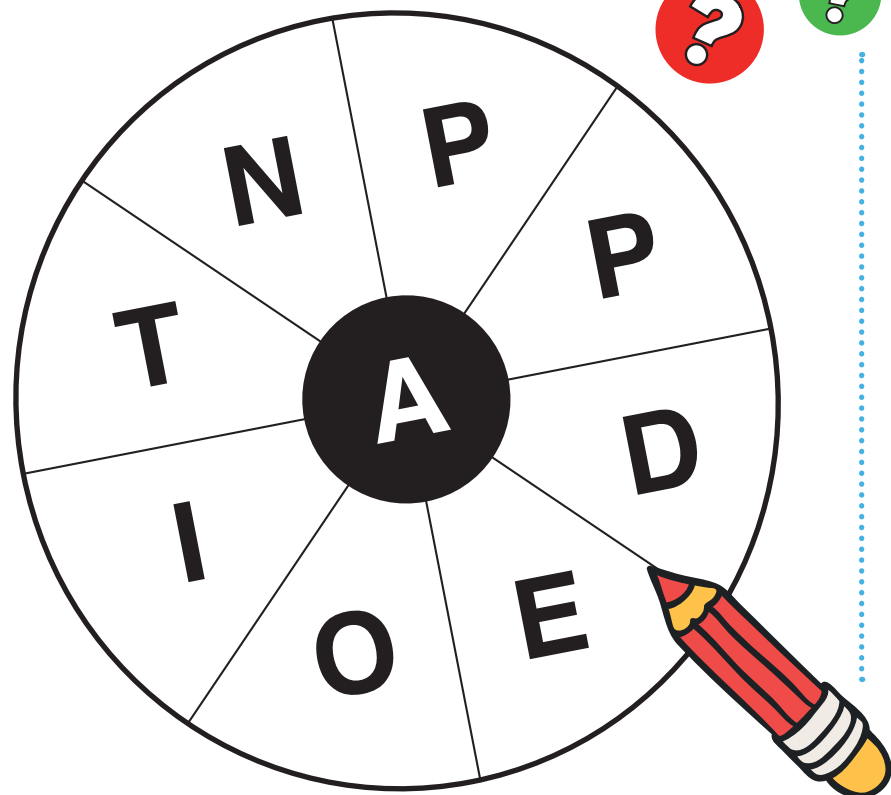
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?

2				1				9
7	9							4 5
	8			7				6
		7	5	4	9	6		
		9	2		6	7		
		2	7	3	1	5		
	3			2				1
1	7							5 3
6				5				7

**COMPETITIONS:** To enter, email us at [win@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:win@firstnews.co.uk) putting 'competition name' (e.g. Holiday), in the subject box or visit [firstnews.comps](http://firstnews.comps). *First News* competitions are only open to those aged 15 and under and residents of the UK & Republic of Ireland, except employees of *First News*, First Group Enterprises Ltd, Reach plc and any associated companies and their families. Winners will be selected at random from all those with the correct answer. No purchase necessary. *First News* will not enter into any correspondence. All winners will be notified accordingly. If you are a winner, your details will be securely passed on to the person who is providing the prize so they can post it out to you. If you are contacted but don't reply within 28 days, we may offer the prize to another entrant. No cash alternative for any prizes will be offered. The winner may be required to partake in media activity relating to the competition. Your personal data will be held for a maximum of 12 months after the competition and then destroyed. It will not be used for any other purpose unless you have given us permission. If you would like your data deleted before this, please do get in touch with us. You have the right to complain to the ICO if you believe there is a problem with the way your data has been handled.

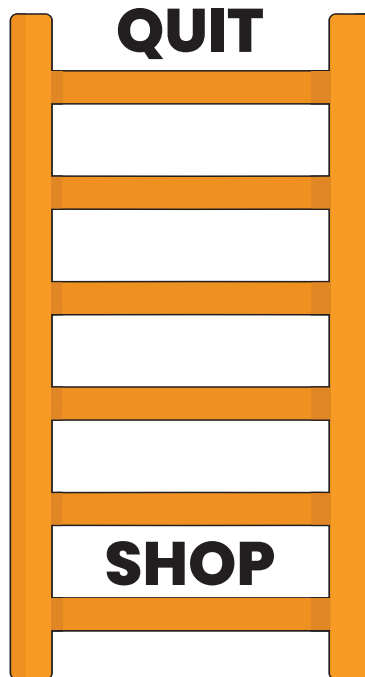
# Word wheel

SEE how many words of three or more letters you can make, using the middle letter in each one. And can you find the word that uses all the letters?



# Word ladder

SEE if you can get from the top of the ladder to the bottom by changing one letter at a time to make a new word.



## ISSUE 961 ANSWERS:

Word wheel: accordion.

Word ladder: east, mast, mist, mint, mind, wind.

I	D	E	N	T	I	F	Y	T
N	A	R	O	T				
V	E	R	B	I	G	U	A	N
I	L	S	N	T				
S	T	Y	L	E	E	G	Y	P
I	O	E						
B	E	A	R	D	B	R	A	I
L	R	F	P	T				
E	A	S	I	E	R	T	A	X
P	E	E	R	O				
E	S	K	E	L	E	T	O	N



9	8	2	6	1	3	7	5	4
5	4	3	7	2	9	1	8	6
6	7	1	4	5	8	2	3	9
8	2	6	9	3	7	5	4	1
4	1	7	8	6	5	9	2	3
3	9	5	1	4	2	6	7	8
2	6	9	5	8	4	3	1	7
1	3	4	2	7	6	8	9	5
7	5	8	3	9	1	4	6	2



Enjoying the puzzles? See the *First News* app for more fun, quizzes and games! This QR code should be scanned by a responsible adult.

# IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!

DON'T MISS IT!

## THE GREAT CABLE CHALLENGE



## MOANA 2



## THE CHRISTMAS WISH-TASTROPHE

# WIN! BLOX FRUITS GOODIES!

COLLECT all of your favourite magical Blox Fruits with the officially licensed toys from the hit game! You have the chance to get physical DLC (1:1 odds) or both physical AND permanent DLC (1:4 odds), giving you access to redeemable vouchers in the online game!

The range includes collectable single and two-pack minifigures containing mystery fruits and a super-cute cuddly plush. The fun is in the surprise! Which fruity characters will you get – fantastic Falcon, mystical Shadow, legendary Love or maybe even rare Rubber?

All toys are available at Smyths and Amazon.

We're giving seven lucky readers the chance to win one Blox Fruits collectable minifigure, one Blox Fruits collectable minifigure two-pack, one 10cm collectable plush and one 20cm collectable plush. All you have to do is answer this question:

When is Christmas Jumper Day?

- a) 12 December b) 24 December c) 12 November



Please note this game is rated 9+



## ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRY BLOX FRUITS

[first.news/comps](http://first.news/comps) or see page 20. The closing date is 6 December.

## Cartoon Network Advertisement Feature



# TEEN TITANS GO! IS BACK!



SEASON eight of *Teen Titans Go!* is back on Cartoon Network! Follow the Titans as they embark on super-powered hijinks and fantastic pranks. It promises to be a crazy ride, packed with comedy chaos driven by their rivalries and relationships.

Join Robin, Cyborg, Starfire, Raven and Beast Boy for a whirlwind of new adventures. By day, they're busy saving the good folks of Jump City, but by night, they're all about letting loose and having a blast. From tackling chores and navigating romantic tension to impromptu meatball parties, there's never a dull moment in the Tower.

But there's more – *Teen Titans Go!* will hit 400 episodes this season, making the

series the longest-running DC animation of all time! Catch the 400th episode on 30 November!

Don't miss out on the laughs in what promises to be the funniest season yet. Tune in daily and watch *Teen Titans Go!* on Cartoon Network now on Sky Channel 601, Virgin Channel 704, NOW and On Demand!



Remember, you can also enter now to win a *Teen Titans Go!* goody bag complete with brand-new Titans toys at [first.news/comps!](http://first.news/comps)



# SHY CATS SHIFT THEIR BEDTIME

**IN good news for mountain lions and humans, the big cats are becoming more nocturnal (active at night) so that they avoid people cycling, jogging and hiking in their habitat.**

A study carried out around Los Angeles, USA, found that mountain lions became more nocturnal in areas with lots of human activity.

Writing in *Biological Conservation*, the scientists say they tracked 22 mountain lions between 2011 and 2018. The most nocturnal were two males who lived in areas surrounded by houses, businesses and busy roads.

“People are increasingly enjoying recreating in nature,” said lead author Ellie Bolas. “This flexibility we see in mountain lion activity is what allows us to share these natural areas together. Mountain lions are doing the work so that co-existence can happen.”



**FOR the last nine years, residents of LA have been rocking out at the annual P-22 Day Festival in honour of a famous mountain lion! P-22 became known as the Hollywood Cat when he made a tiny patch of the city his home and became a celebrity – he even has his own Wikipedia page!**



A mountain lion looks out across LA at night. Many people assume that cats are nocturnal, but big cats and little kitties are all technically crepuscular, which means they're most active at dawn and dusk. If you want to show off, it comes from the Latin word crepusculum, which means twilight

## Fighting fatbergs

**SCIENTISTS in Australia have invented a coating for concrete pipes that could prevent ‘fatbergs’ forming and save billions of dollars every year.**

**BLOCKED sewers cost the UK around £200m every year. The researchers at RMIT say that fatbergs cost Australia A\$100m (£51m) every year, and \$25bn (£19.7bn) in the US.**



Fatbergs form when fat, oil, grease and things like wet wipes clump together. They can become so huge that people have to go down into the sewer and break them up with power tools, which takes a long time and costs a lot of money.

Researchers at RMIT University say that fats and oil mixing with calcium and water causes fatbergs to form. But their ‘zinc-enhanced polyurethane’ coating reduces the release of calcium from concrete sewer pipes by up to four-fifths (80%). The clever coating is also self-healing, so it closes up if it gets scratched or damaged.



A sewer technician with a piece of a fatberg

This report is from the National Railway Museum in York



**YOU might know ‘mallard’ as the name of a duck, but did you know it’s also the name of the fastest steam locomotive in the world?**

Designed by Sir Nigel Gresley (whose hobby of birdwatching inspired many locomotive names), Mallard is an A4 class locomotive. Their original shape helped them cut through the air as cleanly as possible.

In its first months, Mallard appeared to be just another express locomotive, but this all changed when Gresley authorised his team to try to beat the then British steam record of 114mph. On 3 July 1938, Mallard raced at 126mph to set a new steam locomotive world speed record – which still stands today.

You can see the iconic Mallard at the National Railway Museum in York.



## Sabre-toothed cat revealed

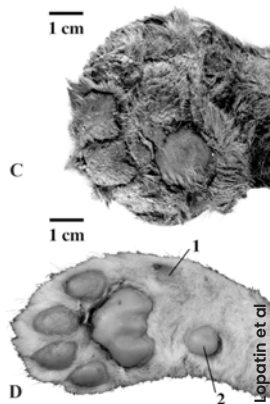
**IN more cat news, scientists in Russia have released a study of the best-preserved sabre-toothed cat that’s ever been found.**

We only know about these big cats through skeletons, but most of this three-week old kitten was found with its fur intact, trapped in ice near the Badyarikha River in Russia.

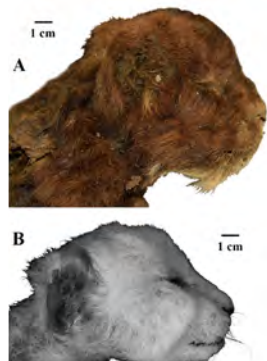
The cub’s short life ended about 31,800 years ago. The researchers say that finding mummified mammals from that period in history is very rare.

The cub has short, thick, soft, dark brown fur, and big muscles that make its neck twice as thick as a lion cub’s.

Its paws are so wide that they’re almost round. The study in *Scientific Reports* says this was probably to help it walk in snow.



The cub’s paw (top) compared to a lion’s



Scientists compared the sabre-toothed cat (the brown one) with a lion cub

# TEACHERS FALL FOR TIN-HAT GAG



**RUSSIAN teachers were tricked into wearing tinfoil hats as part of a prank to show how easily they would believe government messages.**

A prankster told the teachers that the hats would protect them from radiation sent by other countries' satellites. But tinfoil hats are a joke associated with people who believe conspiracy theories and think the foil will protect them from being brainwashed.

Vladislav 'Vladik' Bokhan wanted to show that Russians are so willing to obey their president that

they'd follow his instruction, even though it was silly.

The teachers were under the impression they were participating in a patriotic event for Russia.

One teacher is seen saying: "Let the helmet, which you will make with your own hands, become a means of defence against enemies of our beautiful country."

An education ministry official praised the teachers for their love for the nation, but added: "It was disappointing that they could not distinguish a genuine [political] party initiative from an inappropriate joke."

# Fake bear scam



**FOUR people in Los Angeles, USA, have been arrested for an insurance fraud scheme that involved dressing up as a bear.**

The gang claimed that a bear damaged the interiors of three luxury cars, and sent video footage of the incidents to three insurance companies.

After receiving \$141,839 (£111,800) in payouts, suspicions were raised and police found a bear costume during a search of the suspects' home.

The group now faces legal charges.

# REAL-LIFE SPIDER-MAN!



**A 28-YEAR-OLD South Korean man was arrested for attempting to smuggle hundreds of spiders through the airport in Lima, Peru.**

Security guards became suspicious of his unusually bulky appearance and discovered more than 300 tarantulas, around 100 centipedes and nine bullet ants hidden in plastic bags strapped to his body!

The man was caught trying to carry the creepy-crawlies from Peru to South Korea.

Experts warn that smuggling seriously threatens these species. Tarantulas are particularly vulnerable due to their long lifespans and the time it takes them to have babies.

All the creatures have been safely handed over to animal protection services now.

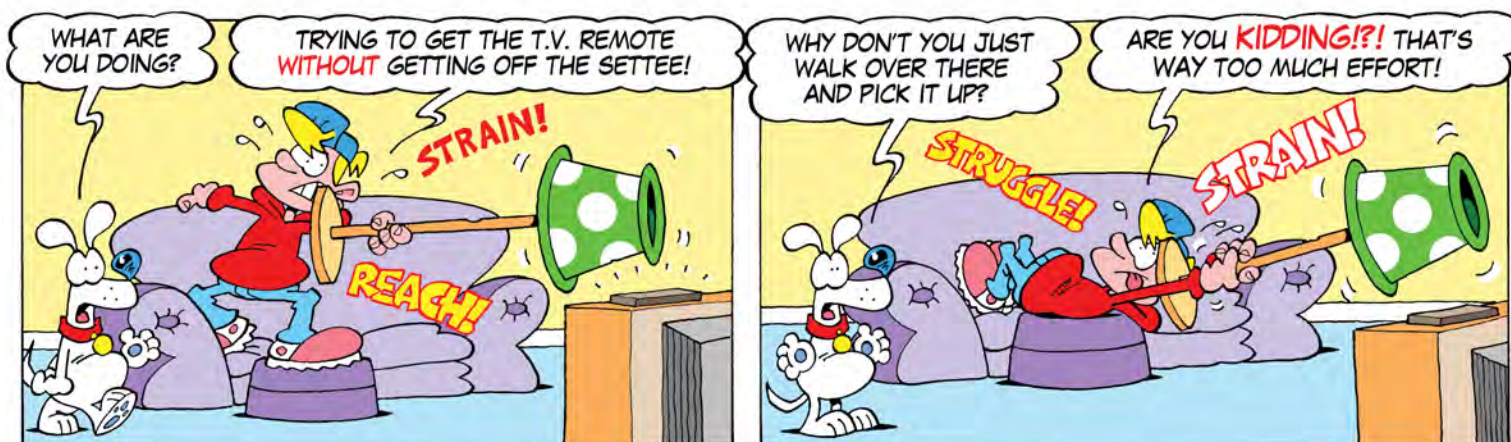
**JOKE OF THE WEEK**

hahaha

**What do you call a bear in the rain?**  
A drizzly bear!

# Paper Boy!

Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer





HELLO! I'm Milly, the leader of the *First News FYI News Club*.

Recently it was World Children's Day, a day to raise awareness for your voices, because they matter! So it's great to see this week on Your News that Aryan and Alwen are making their voices heard. I think you'll enjoy reading about what they've been getting up to.

But I was sad to see in our poll that nearly half of you don't feel like your voice is heard. *First News* wants to change that by giving you a place to share your thoughts, passions and opinions. Let us know what they are, and you could feature on these pages! Just ask an adult to email us at [yournews@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:yournews@firstnews.co.uk).

## THIS WEEK'S POLL!

We asked 5,220 of you:

Do you feel like your voice is heard?

**58%**  
of you  
said YES

**42%**  
of you  
said NO

So nearly half of you don't feel like you're being listened to!

### MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Cast your vote in our polls at [first.news/polls](http://first.news/polls)



I KNOW lots of you really care about animals. And somebody who is trying to help them is Aryan. Find out how below!

by Aryan, aged 11

Hi, I'm Aryan, and I am the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the Children's Parliament. In this role, I come up with ideas to solve issues that are important to young people. I joined the Children's Parliament to raise our voices and make sure we are heard!

One of the issues I am passionate about drawing attention to is irresponsible animal tourism, which is when people make money from tourist experiences with animals, but the animals get harmed in the process. It includes things like animals being made to perform (in a circus, for example), people interacting with animals in an unnatural way (like swimming with dolphins or riding elephants) and hunting. People who take part in these

activities don't think about the sad impact that it can have on the animals.

When animals are trained to perform, they might look cute and funny, but behind the scenes they are often put under extreme stress and even beaten if they don't perform well enough. Petting zoos and farms that are enjoyed by thousands of visitors each year have been criticised for overworking animals, keeping them in poor conditions and visitors badly treating them. Finally, worst of all is canned hunting – keeping animals in an enclosure for tourists to poach (hunt) them for fun. This is a clear abuse of an animal's right to life just for the entertainment of a few cruel-minded tourists.

The good news is that we can act now to create a kinder Britain for animals. I look forward to working to help get rid of animal abuse with Baroness Uddin, co-parliamentary champion of the Sir David Amess Children's Parliament.

Aryan is part of the Children's Parliament and wants to improve animal rights

## Learning the Pokémon Trading Card Game



Vicente, Sami and Catarina with Pikachu!

THREE junior journalists who are part of the *First News FYI News Club* got the chance to go to a Pokémon event to learn how to play the Trading Card Game.

by Vicente, Sami and Catarina

We were invited by *First News* to attend a Pokémon event at Chessington World of Adventures to learn how to play the Pokémon Trading Card Game, but the event had so much more to offer.

We learnt how to play the game by reading the booklet and following the tutorial or by asking one of the three Pokémon professors (experts) to help. The game is very exciting. If you have a Pokémon card collection, like we do, you can make your own deck and customise it, adding stronger cards to it as you get them.

There were also a few carnival games at the event, with Pokémon-themed prizes, such as cards and plushies.

When we arrived, a giant and very enthusiastic Pikachu welcomed us, jumping around and interacting with everyone. As the event was pretty long, we were also offered lunch. At the end of the day, we were given a bag containing *Battle Academy*, four extra decks of cards and a plushie.

We all thought the event was remarkably fun and helped us learn how to play the Pokémon Trading Card Game. Back in school, we have now started teaching our friends how to play.

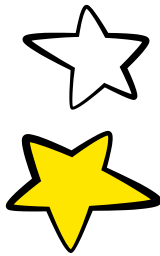
# NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Martham Academy and Nursery, St Joseph's College, Morna International College, Heronsgate Primary School and Highgate Junior School!





## Being a voice for change



GIRLGUIDING advocate Alwen recently attended the Fair Education Youth Summit, a big event where people think about how we can make education fair for all. She sat on the Girlguiding panel and spoke about how she thinks everybody deserves a fair education.

by Alwen

I attended the Fair Education Youth Summit to represent Girlguiding as a member of the advocate panel, and to voice my opinions on how I think it's important that everyone, no matter their race, religion, gender or postcode, deserves a fair education.

The purpose of the summit is for young people to have a safe space to voice their opinions and learn about what we can do to make change.

I think it's important that young people have access to these spaces because it inspires us to make a difference and encourages changemakers (people who work to change the world) to listen to us.

The best thing I experienced while I was there was hearing other youth activists talk about what they've achieved to make a difference.

The best idea I took from the day was about starting your own initiative, which meant learning about what we can do to make change for what's important to us.



Alwen at the summit

## I'm totally watching *Totally Spies!*



NEWS Club member Lizi went to an event to launch the new series of Cartoon Network's *Totally Spies!* on behalf of *First News*, and it seems like she really enjoyed it!

by Lizi

On Saturday I went to the *Totally Spies!* junior journalist event in London at the Charlotte Street Hotel.

It was so much fun, especially because of the fact that there were yummy foods. I ate some kiwis and strawberries, but did not try the dragon fruit. There were some fun activities when I arrived, including codebreaking and stealth, where I had to press buttons that lit up as quickly as I could. There was also the memory exercise, for which I had to remember several things that were in a suitcase.

After that, we watched a screening of two episodes of the new series of *Totally Spies!* I loved the scene when the rubbish went everywhere because the garbage truck had a loose part. It was so funny! Before the movie they held a Q&A (question and answer) with the singer, the writer and the voice actors for Clover and Sam (two characters in the show). I will totally be watching the new episodes!



Lizi taking part in the stealth activity

**BE A JUNIOR JOURNALIST!**  
If you'd like to get opportunities to go to cool events like the junior journalists in *Your News* this week, get your teacher to sign up to the News Club at [first.news/fynewsclub](http://first.news/fynewsclub)

# Unwrap the news this Christmas

Go to the *First News* website to see all our Christmas offers!



# First News



[first.news/christmas](http://first.news/christmas)



This QR code should be scanned by a responsible adult.



# “ACT NOW!”

## KIDS TELL WORLD LEADERS WHAT THEY WANT THEM TO DO ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

YOU have spoken! Recently, world leaders gathered in Azerbaijan for COP29 to discuss how to tackle climate change. But it's so important that your voices are heard too. It's your future they're in charge of, after all! So this week, *FYI* headed to a *First News FYI News Club* at St Cedd's School to get their thoughts on all things COP and climate change, and to find out what their messages to world leaders are. Here's what they had to say...

*FYI* is a weekly news show from Sky Kids that helps you to stay up-to-date with what's going on in the world. You can watch loads of cool videos from them by heading to [first.news/fyi](https://first.news/fyi) or asking an adult to download the *First News* app.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK OF COP29?



Emily

"I think that meetings like COP29 are good because they [world leaders] are talking about it and coming up with amazing plans."  
– Emily

"I don't think they [world leaders] should be just sitting and talking in a room. They should be acting."  
– Sophia



Sophia

### DO YOU TRUST WORLD LEADERS TO TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

"I don't trust world leaders to deal with climate change because nobody is doing what needs to be done."  
– Olivia



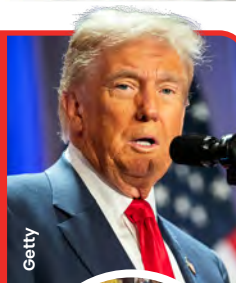
Getty



Rafael

"They [politicians] say a lot in their speeches to become government, but never enforce it."  
– Rafael

### WHAT DO YOU THINK OF DONALD TRUMP CALLING CLIMATE CHANGE A SCAM?



Getty

"World leaders need to stand up to Trump and tell him what they think, because climate change isn't something you can just not worry about."  
– Olivia



Olivia

"If I was Keir Starmer, I would say to Trump: 'You're such a big influence to all these countries around the world and you should follow what everyone else is saying.'"  
– Rafael

"Donald Trump saying that climate change is a scam isn't the right thing to do. If America stops caring about climate change, it could change what happens with climate change in the future."  
– Dylan



Dylan

"I think he just doesn't want to admit that we are responsible for it [climate change]. It's impacting people all over the world."  
– Emily

### HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN HELP OTHER, POORER COUNTRIES TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE?

"I think rich countries should help poorer countries. If every country just chipped in a bit of money it could make a big difference to the world."  
– Rafael



"Listen to us!" Kids want world leaders at COP (pictured) to take on board what they have to say



### WE WANT WORLD LEADERS TO...



#### ACT NOW

"We need to act now. The Earth has given us all the resources that we need to make ourselves greener, so why don't we just use them?"  
– Sophia

#### LISTEN TO CHILDREN

"Leaders should listen to more children because it's not only adults who make good decisions or have a say in everything."  
– Amelie



Amelie

#### MAKE SURE HUMANITY DOESN'T DIE

"If you are going to lead people, you also need to help them through tough times and make sure humanity doesn't die."  
– Dylan



Amber

#### PLANT TREES

"For every tree you cut down, plant ten more."  
– Amber



## JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION!

Have your say on *FYI* by asking your teacher to set up a *First News FYI News Club* at your school. You could take part in a Your Shout, like the kids above, or create your

own report for the show. You might end up on TV, or here in *First News*! Just ask your teacher to head to [first.news/FYInewsclub](https://first.news/FYInewsclub) to find out more.

# FirstNews Quiz

THE answers to all these questions can be found in the pages of this issue. Why not set yourself, or your friends and family, a time challenge to see who can get the highest score in the quickest time? See how well you did by checking the answers at the bottom.

**1** The Secret Society of Hertford Crafters have knitted a woolly version of which pantomime?



**2** Which empire is this knife handle from?



English Heritage

**3** Tower Bridge is celebrating how many years of its glass floors?



Tower Bridge

**4** Which new movie tells the untold story of the witches of Oz?



**5** Fat, oil, grease and things like wet wipes join together in sewers to form what?

**6** Comedian Josh Widdicombe is a contestant on the 2024 Christmas special of which TV show?



BBC

**7** Athlete Kadeena Cox is set to be honoured with a mural in which UK city?

**8** Which country was this sabretoothed cat discovered in?

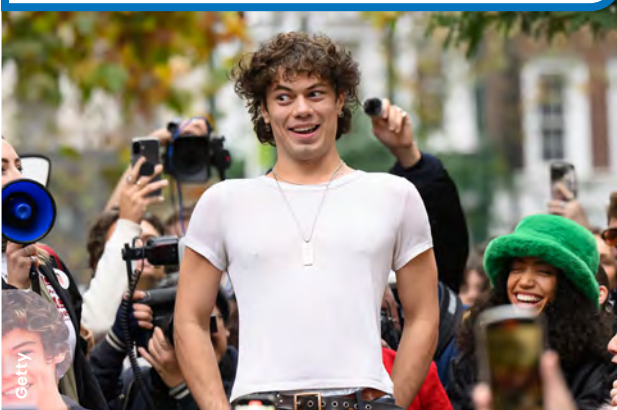


Lopatin et al

**9** Which newspaper will stop posting on social media site X?



**10** This man won a lookalike contest for which singer?



Getty

**11** When is Christmas Jumper Day this year?

**12** What might Australian scientists introduce to protect people from shark attacks?



**13** What's unique about this sea creature found off the Solomon Islands?



Manu San Felix, National Geographic Pristine Seas

**14** Four people in LA were arrested for a fraud scheme that involved dressing up as what animal?



**15** Which country's football team has just won their ever first away match?



Do you love our quiz? Check out our Quiz that you can play online as an individual or with your family! You can find it at [firstnews.co.uk/quiz](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/quiz) and on the *First News* app!

**FirstNews WEEKLY NEWS QUIZ!**  
Check out our new online Quiz!

Answers: 1 Cinderella 2 Roman Empire 3 Ten years 4 Wicked 5 Fatbergs 6 Strictly Come Dancing 7 Leeds 8 Russia 9 The Guardian 10 Harry Styles 11 12 December 12 Glowing surfboards 13 It's the world's largest coral 14 A bear 15 San Marino

# NATIONS LEAGUE ROUND-UP



England's Taylor Harwood-Bellis celebrates scoring on his England debut

**ENGLAND** have moved back up to the top tier of the Nations League, after a 5-0 win over ten-man Ireland at Wembley.

Ireland were doing well until Liam Scales got a second yellow card and gave away a penalty, and England were ruthless in taking advantage. Harry Kane tucked away the penalty, before the foursome of Anthony Gordon, Conor Gallagher, Jarrod Bowen and Taylor Harwood-Bellis all got their first England goals. It's the first time since 1930 that that's happened!

Although Northern Ireland were disappointed to give away a two-goal lead against Luxembourg, the point

was enough to see them secure top spot in Group C3.

A dramatic late goal for Scotland against Poland saw them win 2-1. If they win a two-legged play-off in March, they'll stay in Group 1.

Scotland's opener was scored by John McGinn, which was his 20th international goal – only four players have scored more, with legends Denis Law and Kenny Dalglish at the top, tied on 30 goals each.

Wales' match hadn't been played as we went to press, so check the daily news in the *First News* app to find out how they got on and who Scotland will be up against in the play-offs.

## Braydon's on the ball



THE *FYI* presenter takes us through his pick of the week's top footie action.

Chelsea continued their perfect start to the WSL season, making it seven wins on the bounce with a 2-0 victory over nearest rivals Man City on Saturday. In a game where both teams cancelled each other out for long periods, the Blues grabbed two goals in the late stages to put themselves clear at the top of the table with a game in hand. It seems that new boss Sonia Bompastor has made Chelsea even stronger since taking over.

It was a weekend of derby fixtures elsewhere in the WSL. Arsenal continued their recent form with a 3-0 win at Spurs and move up to fourth, while Everton got their first win of the season with a 1-0 win over Liverpool. A controversial penalty decided that one. The foul appeared to be outside the box, but the penalty was given and the Toffees took full advantage. Liverpool haven't won a WSL match at Everton since 2017 and this was another disappointing display for them.



Mayra Ramirez leaves Alanna Kennedy eating her dust

Brighton stay in third after a 3-2 win over West Ham, and Man United remain unbeaten and in fifth after a 2-0 win at Leicester. At the bottom, Crystal Palace lost again, this time to a dramatic 94th minute winner, as Ebony Salmon's goal secured Aston Villa's first win of the season.

With no Premier League action due to the international break, the focus shifted to the lower leagues, where Stockport played Wrexham at the top of League One. Louie Barry's goal won it for Stockport, who moved to within a point of Wrexham in the play-off places. Wycombe are top of League One and Port Vale sit at the top of League Two, so a shout out to those two.

**Centre Stage** this week goes to Mayra Ramirez of Chelsea, who scored a great goal against City, racing from half-way and delivering a neat finish low into the corner. It was the key moment and no doubt a key moment in the WSL title race too.

**Braydon's Team of The Week:** Chelsea. The team to beat and looking likely to retain their WSL title.  
**Braydon's Player of The Week:** Not a player this week, but a manager! Sonia Bompastor has won every game in all competitions so far as Chelsea manager. Incredible!

● Watch my weekly video on the *First News* app!



Wales' 52-20 defeat by Australia in Cardiff on Sunday was their 11th loss in a row, their worst run of all time

It's been reported that a globetrotting rugby union competition is being set up, with eight men's and women's teams playing at the world's biggest stadiums, with concerts and entertainment before matches. Players are being tempted with big-money offers and the prospect of shorter seasons, although some countries won't choose players for the national team if they play for clubs that are based abroad.



British ice skaters Lilah Fear and Lewis Gibson danced their way to a second ISU Grand Prix gold medal this season in Finland, with a superb routine set to a medley of Beyoncé tunes. The win also guaranteed their place in the ISU Grand Prix final.



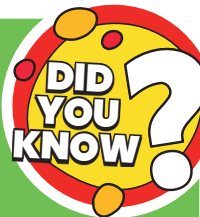
Nelly Korda's extraordinary season just saw her get her seventh win on the LPGA Tour. The American golfer is the first player since 2011 to get seven wins in a season, and the first American since 1990. She also bagged this cheque for nearly half a million dollars!



Freya Tarbit in action earlier this year

There was more success for GB's skeleton athletes, as both Amelia Coltman and Freya Tarbit won golds at the opening weekend of this season's World Cup series. It was only Tarbit's 11th senior appearance but she beat reigning Olympic Champion Hannah Neise by nearly a second, which is a huge margin in skeleton.

SAN Marino's 3-1 win over Liechtenstein in the Nations League was the first time in their country's history that they've won an away game, and also the first time that they've scored three goals. San Marino has a population of just 35,000 and is officially the worst men's team in world football, in 210th place at the bottom of the world rankings.



Issue 962 | £2.95



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