

NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR*



First News

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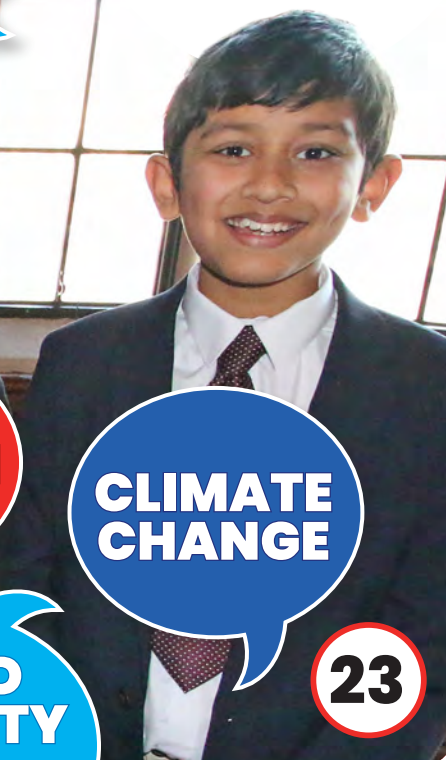


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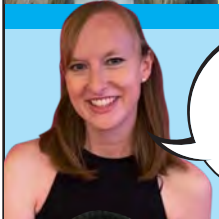
Dan Jordan

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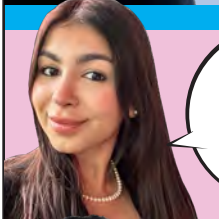
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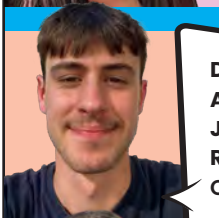
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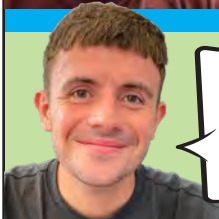
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HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



NEW ASTHMA MEDICINE BRINGS HOPE

Scientists from King's College London have discovered a new medicine to help people who suffer from bad asthma attacks. It's the first major breakthrough in treating asthma emergencies in 50 years, and has been called "game changing" by doctors and patients. The medicine, called benralizumab, works by targeting specific white blood cells that cause breathing problems. During tests, it worked much better than the usual steroid tablets that doctors have been using for many years.



GIRLGUIDING AND GOOGLE TEAM UP TO TEACH AI

Google and Girlguiding have joined up to help 300,000 young girls learn about artificial intelligence (AI). The new scheme will teach girls aged four to 18 how to use AI safely and creatively. Younger girls can write stories using AI, while teenagers can learn to plan events with the technology. The partnership aims to encourage more girls to get interested in technology and science. This comes at an important time, as research shows more than half of young women think STEM subjects are mainly for boys.



THEY SAID THAT!

"I don't give my children dirty food or dirty water, and I don't want them breathing dirty air."

– Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer on climate change affecting the young

PRIME MINISTER WANTS CLEAN AIR FOR CHILDREN

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer promised to tackle air pollution when he met with primary school pupils at 10 Downing Street. Mr Starmer told the group he wanted all children to breathe clean air. He also said that switching to electric buses and renewable energy would help make the air cleaner in cities, and that he would work with other world leaders to tackle climate change.



WOW!

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey filmed a TikTok to promote his new Christmas song with Bath Philharmonic's Young Carers' Choir. They hope to reach No 1 in the charts with *Love Is Enough* while celebrating young carers.

In the next few weeks, TikTok will stop users under 18 from using filters that change how they look, amid concern about young people's mental health and low self esteem. The app will block teenagers from using beauty filters, such as Bold Glamour, that can change lip size or skin tone. However, fun filters like animal ears will continue to be available to everyone. The decision comes after research commissioned by TikTok showed that many young people feel pressure to look perfect online. TikTok also announced it was tightening its systems to block users under 13 from the platform before the end of the year.



TIKTOK TO BLOCK BEAUTY FILTERS FOR TEENAGERS



DofE AWARD BOOSTS YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING, SAYS REPORT

New research shows that teenagers who take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award are happier and more confident than those who don't. The DofE's Impact Report looked at more than 40,000 young people aged 14-24 who completed activities like hiking, volunteering and learning new skills as part of the programme. It found that each person who took part felt about £4,400 worth of 'social value' to their happiness and wellbeing. They also made more friends in their local area and were more active than before starting the scheme.



DID YOU SEE?

TOKYO'S HAND-BUILT TOWER

A Japanese architect has spent 20 years building an unusual concrete tower that looks like it belongs in an animated or fantasy movie. Keisuke Oka, 59, created the four-storey Arimaston Building in Tokyo completely by hand, mixing his own concrete and designing it as he went. Oka says his slow, careful approach to construction shows there's an alternative to today's fast-paced, wasteful building methods. It is both his home and workspace, and he claims it will stand for more than 200 years.



SCHOOLS FAIL TO SPOT COLOUR-BLIND PUPILS

Nearly half a million children in UK schools are struggling because their colour blindness is not being properly supported, says a new study. Education expert Marie Difulco says that one student in every class of 30 is likely to have colour vision problems and that since eye tests for colour blindness were stopped in 2009, many children are finding it hard to learn using coloured teaching materials. The condition affects 1 in 12 boys and 1 in 200 girls and, without help, these students can have trouble with everything from reading charts to playing sports.



ANIMAL CARTOONS BOOST YOUNG KIDS' DEVELOPMENT, SAYS STUDY

New research shows that young children understand social situations better when watching stories or cartoons with animal characters than with human characters. Scientists at the University of Plymouth found that five-year-olds could match the understanding of seven-year-olds when stories featured animals instead of people. They say this shows that both human and non-human characters are essential in helping kids develop and understand the world around them. Experts think this finding could be particularly helpful for children with autism.



RESTAURANTS CAUGHT SERVING READY MEALS TO KIDS

UK restaurants are being criticised for serving pre-made and processed food to kids instead of fresh meals, says a new report. The Soil Association, a food and farming charity, found that many

popular restaurant chains like Bella Italia and TGI Fridays are simply reheating pre-made sauces rather than cooking fresh meals. Only Wahaca regularly makes its children's meals from scratch. Surprisingly, some of the healthiest options were offered at cheaper restaurants. Pizza chain Franco Manca came bottom of the rankings.



'BRAIN ROT' NAMED WORD OF THE YEAR

Oxford Dictionary has chosen 'brain rot' as its word of the year. The term describes feeling less clever after watching too many low-quality social media videos and memes. While scientists say watching videos won't actually harm your brain, its use among teenagers shows that many of them worry about spending hours scrolling through apps like TikTok and Instagram. The use of the phrase more than tripled from 2023 to 2024, going up by 230%.



AUSTRALIA BANS SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UNDER-16S

Australia has passed the world's strictest laws to stop children under 16 from using social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram. The government says it will help protect young people, but some worry the rules might be hard to enforce. The ban is due to start in a year's time.

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY

11 DECEMBER

The day is all about protecting the lives of mountain people and mountain environments around the world.

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

12 DECEMBER

Sport your favourite festive jumper for charity.

CALENDAR DATES



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



"I put in my actual birthday – like day and month – but when it gets to the year, I'll just scroll ten years back."

Pupil at Rosshall Academy, Glasgow

ONE IN FIVE KIDS FAKE THEIR AGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

A SURVEY by Ofcom has revealed that one in five children lie about their age while using social media apps.

Ofcom said their findings were "alarming", because if kids pass themselves off as adults, it increases the risk of them seeing harmful content.

Social media sites have a minimum age that you're supposed to be in order to use them. For the most popular sites, like Instagram and TikTok, it's 13.

Often, though, while these sites ask new users how old they are, they don't ask for any proof of it.

Pupils at a school in Glasgow told the BBC that they all gave themselves adult ages for their profiles. "It's just so easy to lie," said one.

Under the Online Safety Act, which comes into law in 2025, social media companies will face heavy fines if they don't do enough to prevent underage users from creating accounts.

Ian Macrae, a director at Ofcom, told the BBC: "Platforms need to do much, much more to know the age of their children online."

TikTok told the BBC that it removes thousands of suspected underage accounts every day.



OFCOM is the Office of Communications – the government office that sets rules for TV, radio and online channels to follow.

That's one pricey snack!

A TECH entrepreneur has kept his promise of eating the banana that he bought for £4.9 million!

Last week, we told you the crazy but true story of the banana, which had been taped to a wall to create an odd artwork, called *Comedian*. It was bought at auction in New York by Justin Sun for just shy of £5 million, even though the banana had been bought from a shop that same day for about 30p.

Mr Sun gobbled his pricey purchase at a press conference in Hong Kong, which he also used to publicise his business.

He said: "It's much better than other bananas."



Our story last week



Assisted dying: why is it in the news?



MP Kim Leadbeater introduced the bill

POLITICIANS have agreed to debate a law change, called a bill, that could make assisted dying legal in the UK.

It's called the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, and it's designed to give adults the right to choose to end their life if they have a terminal illness (see below right).

Even if a person is very badly ill, choosing to end their life is an incredibly serious choice to make, so the bill has suggested a set of strict rules. The person must:

- Be over 18 and have been registered with a GP for at least one year.
- Have the mental ability to make the choice, without any pressure from others.
- Be expected to die within six months.

- Make two separate declarations that they wish to die, signed and witnessed by other people.
- Get the okay from two separate, independent doctors, at least a week apart.
- Get the agreement of a high court judge.

The bill will be debated thoroughly by politicians for months, possibly years, before they decide whether or not to make it law.

What is a terminal illness?

A serious illness that can't be cured and is expected to result in death.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

OUR Speech Your Mind ceremony at the House of Lords was fantastic (p23).

The finalists of our writing competition got to deliver their speeches to a room full of important people including a Lord, MPs, the Children's Commissioner and the media.

It's important to listen to what young people think because your ideas matter. You see the world in ways that adults sometimes miss. And your creativity can help solve big problems.

Sharing your thoughts helps others understand what's important to young people and how changes in the world affect you.

You can watch all the speeches by going to first.news/speechcomp.



Nicky Cox MBE



The study was carried out in a German supermarket chain

Lonely fruit

WHEN grown-ups head out on their weekly shop, they mainly buy fruit in bundles. But a study by the University of Bath has found that if shops label the lonely last pieces of fruit on the shelf as "sad singles", it tugs on shoppers' heartstrings and encourages them to buy them – reducing food waste.



President Emmerson Mnangagwa was left in the dark

Zimbabwe's parliament

A POWER cut struck Zimbabwe's parliament in the middle of an important speech about the country's finances. A drought means that Zimbabwe's main source of power, the Kariba Dam, is struggling to generate electricity.



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.



RECORD NUMBER OF CHILDREN HOMELESS

A RECORD 159,380 children in England are homeless and living in temporary accommodation, show new government figures.

That number is up 20,290 (15%) on last year and is the highest since records began in 2004.

It's thought more and more families are struggling because of an increase in rent and a lack of affordable social homes.

The new government figures show that one in three households (32% or almost 39,000) are being placed in temporary accommodation outside of the area they normally live, which is up by 10,940 (39%) from a year ago. This means that families are away from their support networks, jobs and children's schools.

The homeless charity Shelter has launched an urgent appeal to help support those facing homelessness this winter.

Polly Neate from Shelter said: "A grim homeless hostel or mouldy studio flat with your entire family living on top of each other is no place for any child to grow up. Toddlers have no space to play while teenagers have to share beds with their siblings."

The charity has called on the government to build 90,000 affordable social homes each year to help give more children a permanent home to live in. It has also encouraged people to donate to Shelter's winter campaign if they can.

IN NUMBERS

159,380 CHILDREN LIVE IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

123,100 HOUSEHOLDS LIVE IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

9,550 FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN LIVE IN HOSTELS OR B&BS

Net migration falling after record high

ANNUAL net migration – the difference between those entering and leaving the UK – hit a record 906,000 in the year to June 2023, which is much higher than thought before.

The Office for National Statistics originally estimated the number to be 740,000 but now say 82,000 more people came to live in the UK than it previously thought and 84,000 fewer people left the country.

The figures are important as they can affect all sorts of things in the country, like how many jobs are available, how many people are accessing medical services and how local communities are changing.

The number has dropped since by 178,000 (20%) to 728,000 for the year to June 2024.

Electric cars putting tribes at risk

THE demand for electric vehicles is destroying the lives of uncontacted tribes in Indonesia, says a new report by Survival International.

Uncontacted tribes are those that largely choose to live in isolation from the rest of the world.

The report found that the Indigenous Hongana Manyawa people of Halmahera island are facing a severe threat because there are at least 19 companies mining nickel on their land for use in electric vehicle batteries.

The mining is destroying the tribe's rainforest home and putting them at risk of catching deadly diseases.

Survival International is calling for an end to the mining and the introduction of a 'no-go zone' so that the tribe can continue to live and thrive in the area.



Uncontacted Hongana Manyawa at a Weda Bay Nickel mining camp



SUPERMARKETS BACK BAN ON CAGES FOR HENS

TWO-THIRDS (67%) of British people say they would pay more for eggs that come from hens that don't have to live in cages.

The poll, carried out by More in Common, says shoppers would be happy to pay around 6p more on their weekly shop for all UK hens to be cage free and live a better life.

Now, some of the UK's largest food companies – including Waitrose, Greggs and M&S – have joined international animal welfare and environmental charity Compassion in World Farming, to call for an end to using cages to keep the birds in.

The group has sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed, supporting a ban.

Around eight million hens in the UK spend their entire lives confined in cages, unable to properly carry out natural activities such as nesting, perching, foraging and scratching.

Should cages be banned for egg-laying hens?

Vote at first.news/polls

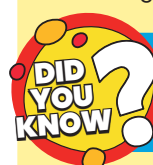


A European beaver



A BEAVER has been spotted in Brussels for the first time in 200 years.

The European beaver has made its home in the city's River Senne and, finally, was caught on camera by the Brussels Environment agency. The animals disappeared from the area in the 19th century, so people are delighted that they are returning now and increasing biodiversity.



BEAVERS can hold their breath for up to 15 minutes underwater!



Shanghai, China



THIS amazing giant cat has been very popular with locals and tourists who want to grab a unique selfie!

Jiuquan, China



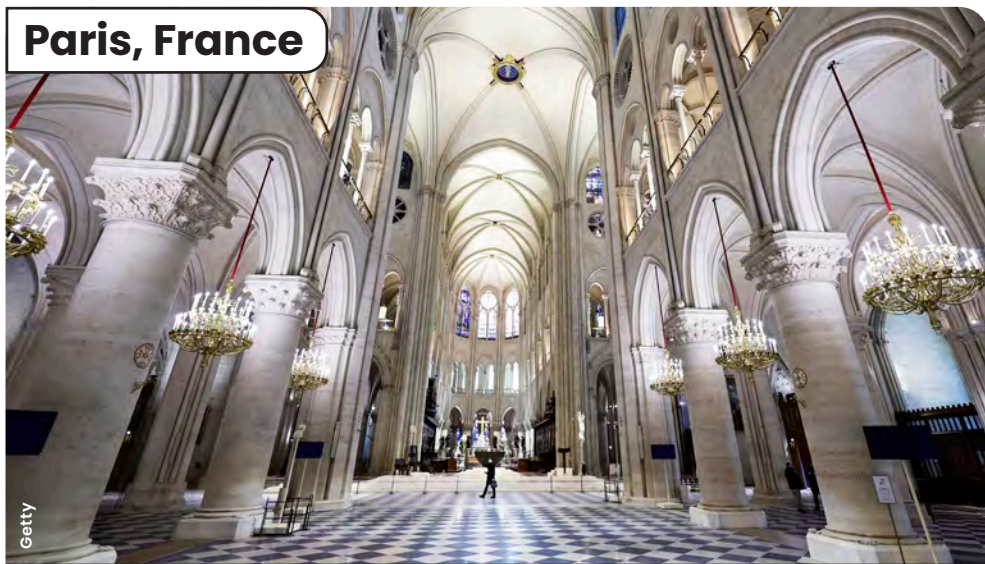
A ROCKET blasts off on a mission to release two test satellites into orbit.

Cimahi, Indonesia



IT'S not totally clear why these three felt the need to dress up as superheroes to vote in Indonesia's regional elections, but we appreciate their silliness for giving us a good picture. The fingers they're holding up have been stained with dye, which is a common technique in many countries to prevent people trying to vote more than once.

Paris, France



MORE than five years after a fire destroyed the roof of the famous cathedral, Notre-Dame has reopened to the public. The work cost an estimated €700m (£580m), with hundreds of experts helping with the rebuild. The full restoration will be complete by 2026.

Barcelona, Spain



A BRIGHT Christmas star shines in the middle of Plaça Sant Jaume, the centre of the Old City.



Sydney, Australia

ONE of the works on show at the Art Gallery of New South Wales for the Cao Fei: My City Is Yours exhibition, by Chinese multimedia artist Cao Fei.

Nevsehir, Turkey



THE skies over Turkey's picturesque Cappadocia region are full of tourists in hot-air balloons, after flights had been paused for six days due to bad weather. The area is famous for its magical-looking 'fairy chimneys', which are tall rock formations that have been sculpted by weathering over thousands of years. Some reach as high as 40m (131ft).

Unwrap the news this Christmas

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



First News



first.news/christmas

This QR code should be scanned by a responsible adult.





MAGHERA

Science teacher wins
top award

A teacher from Saint Patrick's College in Maghera has been crowned Outstanding New Teacher of the Year in the 2024 Pearson National Teaching Awards. Ciara Mulholland was awarded for helping to encourage girls to study science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and running a popular after-school science club. Ms Mulholland found out she'd won the award on the BBC's *The One Show* last week, calling it an "absolute honour". A host of other teachers from across the UK were celebrated for their work helping young people, too.

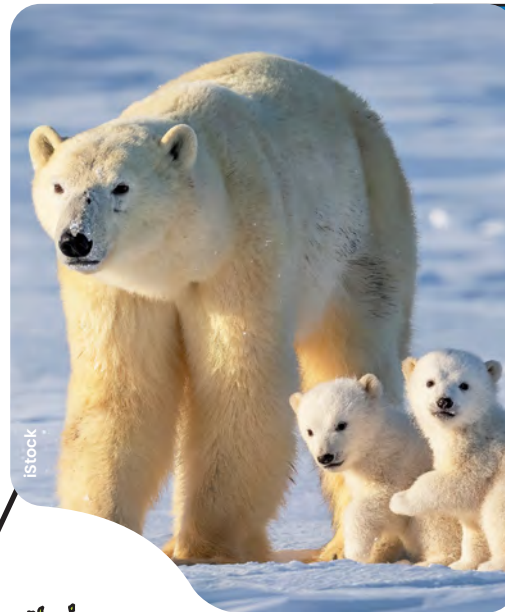


Ms Mulholland was surprised with her award on *The One Show*

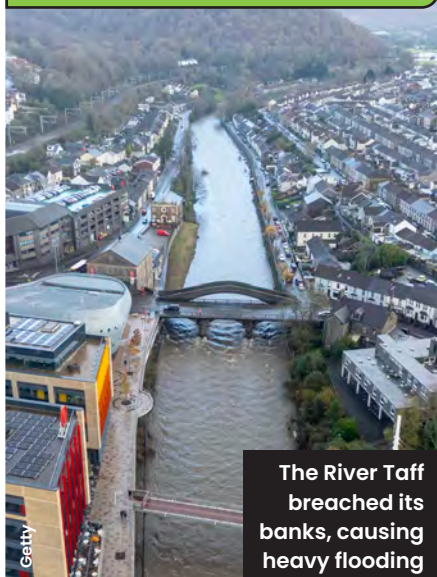
ASSYNT

An ice surprise

Researchers say that polar bears may have lived in Scotland up to 50,000 years ago, during the last Ice Age. Fossil samples, which once were thought to be from brown bears, have been studied again with more advanced technology. The fossils were found in the Inchnadamph 'Bone Caves'. Experts from National Museums Scotland and the universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh say the fossils belonged to bears that ate mostly seafood, just like polar bears today. They're now carrying out more tests to work out the exact species of the bears.



WALES



The River Taff breached its banks, causing heavy flooding

Leaders call for better
flood warnings

Welsh leaders have called for better flood warnings, following the severe damage caused by Storm Bert last month. Rhondda Cynon Taf council leader Andrew Morgan said locals were warned an hour too late about possible flooding, which went on to affect hundreds of homes and businesses. Welsh First Minister Eluned Morgan also spoke out when residents complained that they weren't alerted by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Met Office. A major clean-up operation has been taking place since the storm.

DORSET

King's tower opens

A tower built for King Henry I in the 12th century is open to the public for the first time, thanks to a new platform allowing visitors to see the countryside from where Henry would have stood. Corfe Castle was one of the most majestic castles in England when it was built by William the Conqueror, Henry's father, in the 11th century. The King's Tower added to its formidable nature, standing 23m tall. The tower was mostly destroyed in 1646 during the English Civil War, but now is giving visitors a unique look into the life of a king.



National Trust/
Richard Gregory



The tower built for King Henry I (inset)

LEEDS

An NHS Christmas

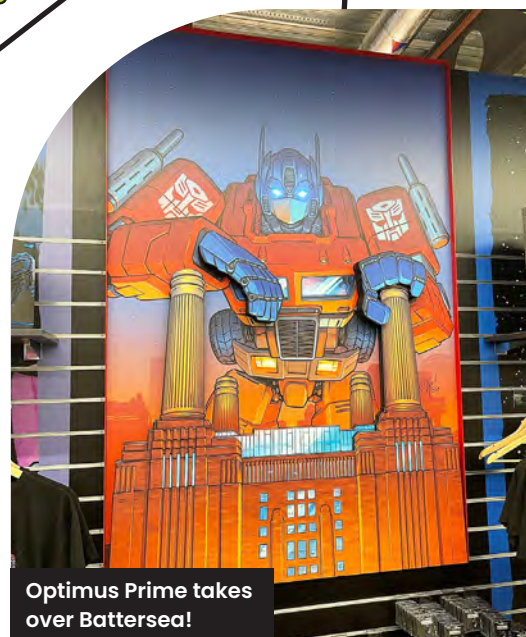
An installation has opened at Thackray Museum of Medicine, exploring what it's like to work in a hospital at Christmas. Inspired by the famous poem *A Visit from St Nicholas* (aka *The Night Before Christmas*), it features memories and experiences shared by NHS workers from across Leeds. The stories now feature in a series of installations by paper artist and illustrator Andy Singleton and are brought to life in performances by family theatre company Wrongsemble.



LONDON

World's first
Peppa Pig and
Transformers stores

Get ready to celebrate your favourite characters like never before! The world's first-ever official stores dedicated entirely to *Peppa Pig* and *Transformers* have opened at Battersea Power Station. Fans can enjoy interactive experiences, meet and greets with some of the characters and the chance to snap up exclusive products. The stores have launched to celebrate two big birthdays – *Peppa Pig* turns 20 this year, while *Transformers* is 40 years old!



Optimus Prime takes over Battersea!



TREES OF HOPE



©National Trust Images James Dobson



The famous Sycamore Gap tree

The saplings at the National Trust Plant Conservation Centre

SAPLINGS (young trees) grown from the famous Sycamore Gap tree are being gifted to people and communities around the UK.

The National Trust announced who would be receiving the 49 'Trees of Hope' during National Tree Week.

Three organisations to receive the saplings are the Rob Burrow Centre for Motor Neurone Disease in Leeds, Holly's Hope (alongside Hexham Abbey in Northumberland) and The Tree Sanctuary in Coventry and their young 'Tree Amigos'.

Nearly 500 applications were received for the 49

saplings – one to represent each foot in height that the tree was at the time it was chopped down. Two men are due in court this month after being charged with felling the tree and damaging Hadrian's Wall.

The new homes for the saplings will all be open to the public so that many more people feel part of the Sycamore Gap tree's legacy. The saplings should be ready to plant in winter 2025/26.

Andrew Poad, general manager for the National Trust's Hadrian Wall properties, said: "The tree meant so much to so many... Each sapling will carry a message of hope."

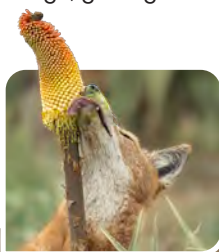
Wolves discover a sweet tooth

SCIENTISTS have found wolves in Ethiopia drinking sweet nectar from flowers – something never seen before in large carnivorous (meat-eating) animals.

Ethiopian wolves, which usually hunt small animals for food, were spotted licking nectar from bright red flowers called Ethiopian red hot poker. Researchers watched as the wolves visited up to 30 flowers in one go, getting their faces covered in sticky yellow pollen! Adult wolves also taught their cubs to tuck in.

Ethiopian wolves are endangered, as less than 500 remain in the wild.

The study was published in the journal *Ecology*.



Orcas wear fishy hats!

SCIENTISTS are puzzled after seeing an orca (killer whale) swimming with a dead salmon on its head off the coast of Washington state, USA.

This strange behaviour was first seen in the 1980s but hasn't been spotted much since then.

Marine experts think the whale might have been playing with its food, which is actually good news. "Here we've got some animals that are playing with their food. That tells me they must have full bellies and they must have time on their hands," says Professor Andrew Trites from the University of British Columbia.

This is great because it means the whales aren't starving or in danger of disappearing, especially as the population in this area has struggled in recent years.



ANEESHWAR'S ANIMAL OF THE WEEK

MULTI-WORLD RECORD HOLDER!

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.

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

PELICAN



HABITAT:

Modern pelicans are found on all continents except Antarctica.

FUN FACT:

They are strong swimmers as they have totipalmate feet, which means fully webbed feet.

SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

The large pouch (called a gular) hanging from the pelican's bill is used to scoop up fish along with water. It then drains the water out before devouring the fish.

CONSERVATION STATUS:

The International Union for Conservation of Nature says three species are Near Threatened and the other five are of Least Concern.



Aneeshwar's pelican 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. You can view the gallery by asking a responsible adult to scan this QR code!





NOW THAT'S A FIRE!

SINCE most people don't have real fires in their living room any more, videos of log fires crackling away are really popular on YouTube and Netflix at this time of year.

But if you fancy a more sciency (and slightly surreal) option this winter, NASA has cooked up this rocket-powered version!

You certainly feel pretty toasty watching the four RS-25 rocket engines and a pair of rocket boosters, although we're not sure that Santa will fancy his chances of getting past them without scorching his beard!

Help your Christmas take off at tinyurl.com/NASARocketfire.

NASA



THE rockets in the video are from the Artemis I launch in November 2022 that sent an unmanned Orion spaceship around the moon and back, in preparation for putting humans on the moon again.

Steve spreads the word

AN experiment in *Minecraft* has seen characters powered by artificial intelligence (AI) find jobs, vote on new rules and convince people to join their religion. Researchers say these are "significant milestones" towards building an AI civilisation.

AI experts at Altera started off by giving up to 1,000 characters some basic personality traits, then set them away in *Minecraft* to see what would happen.

Even in tests with a small group of 30, the characters developed roles for themselves, such as builder, artist or trader, without any prompting.

After scaling it up to worlds with 500 people, the scientists then introduced a few characters to try to spread the religion of Pastafarianism (see right). As they converted characters to the religion, the new converts would then go off to nearby towns to spread the religion even further.

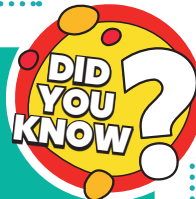
AI working together with humans

The characters aren't alive, as they've just been trained using data from real people, but the work could have a few uses. It might lead to realistic characters that can work together with real people to solve problems, look after us or simply entertain us. Researchers would also be able to test how people might react to new laws or other changes in society, as it would be much cheaper and easier than carrying out surveys with thousands of real people.

"We believe digital beings and digital relationships will enhance, not replace, human-to-human interactions," Altera says. Company founder Robert Yang told the *MIT Technology Review* that "the true power of AI will be unlocked" when AI-powered 'agents' can work together without human control.

PASTAFARIANISM is the joke religion of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, which began after physics student Bobby Henderson wrote to the Kansas State Board of Education.

His letter poked fun at the board's proposal to start teaching 'intelligent design' (ID) in science classes. ID says that some aspects of the universe can't have come about randomly, so must have had some form of intelligence behind them. Critics say that ID isn't real science and is just a way of trying to sneak religious ideas into schools. Henderson said that if schools were going to teach ID, they should also teach other theories of ID, including his belief that "the universe was created by a Flying Spaghetti Monster". A famous court case in the US in 2005 led to ID being banned from science classes because it isn't science.



Followers of the church wearing colanders to show their faith



Could AI-powered 'agents' start a new civilisation?

This report is from the Science Museum in London

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

THIS is a model of the Apollo 11 lunar module, which was built after the spacecraft made the first manned moon landing in 1969.

It was made by a 12-year-old boy who, like many others of his age, followed the Apollo missions on television and then built kits of the spacecraft on the kitchen table.

The lunar surface of this model is an interesting shade of light blue because the youngster lacked a pot of grey paint. The model's descent stage was similarly painted a misleading black and white but was later improved with foil wrappers from a well-known brand of chocolate.

The boy drifted away from the space programme for many years, but now looks after the space collection at the Science Museum as Deputy Keeper of Technologies and Engineering!



Science Museum Group

Doug Millard's model of the Apollo 11 lander



WORLD'S LARGEST LATTE

A FAMOUS chef and social media star teamed up with a coffee shop chain in Massachusetts, USA, to create the world's largest iced coffee drink!

Nick DiGiovanni and Dunkin' Donuts filled a giant 2.45m (8ft 0.5in) cup with ice, milk and coffee to break the world record.

The massive drink used 3,200 shots of coffee and needed 378.5 litres of milk.

After officials confirmed the record, the colossal coffee was shared among 300 workers at the company's main office.

The event was held to celebrate US National Espresso Day.



Education emergency



"And while you're on the phone, sonny, it's maths with an 's'."

A TEN-YEAR-OLD in Wisconsin, USA, rang the 911 emergency number for help with his maths homework – and got the answer!

The worker who answered the call explained to the young caller that it was wrong to call 911 without a real emergency, but she did offer to help him.

However, when asked about the "long problem with decimals", she had to call for back-up herself.

Eventually, the Deputy Sheriff managed to solve the caller's problem, and also gave him a non-emergency number to use in future.

POKÉMON FANS BREAK RECORD



THIRTY gaming fans have made history by breaking a world record for opening Pokémon trading cards non-stop for 24 hours.

The team was made up of popular online content creators from across Europe, who unwrapped an incredible 20,000 Pokémon cards during their

day-long livestream.

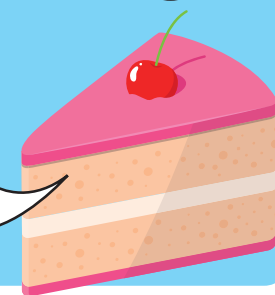
All the cards will be carefully stored and given to children's charities across Europe, including Barnardo's UK.

The famous Pokémon mascot Pikachu even joined the celebration when the team reached their goal!

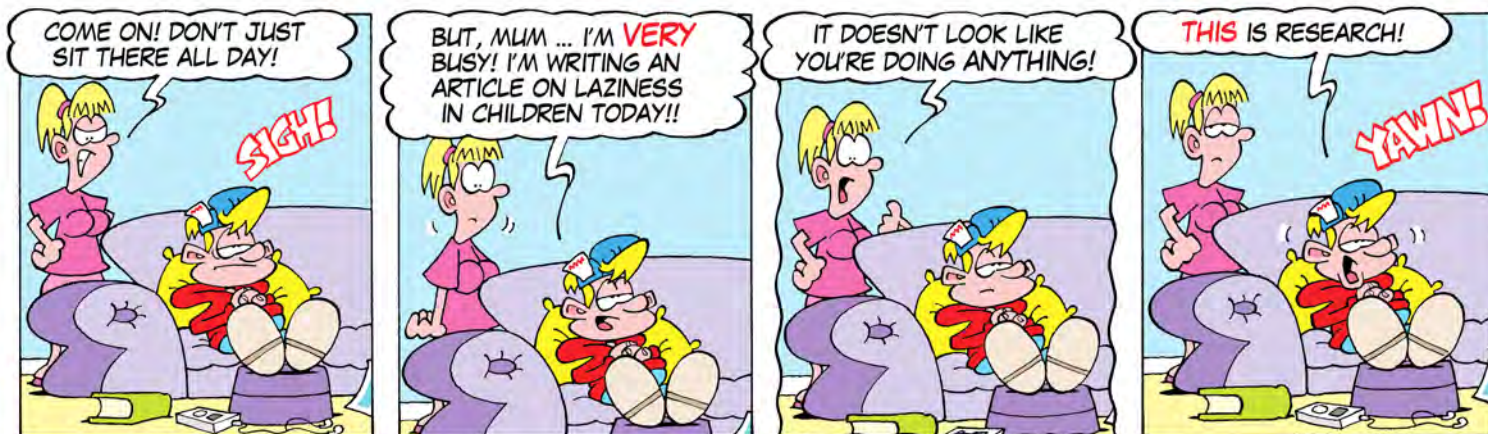
JOKE OF THE WEEK

ha ha ha

Why did the student eat their homework?
Because the teacher said it was a piece of cake!



Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer





RESPECT MY RIGHTS

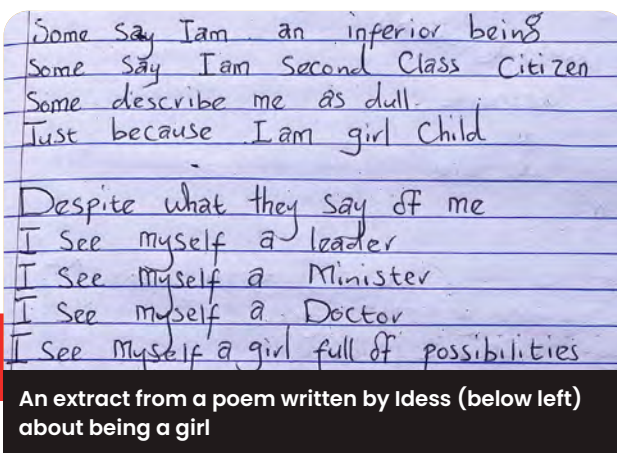
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – 10 DECEMBER



HUMAN Rights Day was set up by the United Nations to highlight the rights that everyone should have as a human being, no matter what race, colour, religion, gender or nationality. One of those rights is for everyone to have access to an education. Unfortunately, in some parts of the world that still isn't the case, or children have to make long and sometimes dangerous journeys just to get to school. We hear from the McConnell International Foundation about life for children living in Malawi.

GETTING TO SCHOOL

Every day, schoolchildren in Malawi set off for school on foot from around 5am. Some will have to walk seven kilometres (4.3 miles) from their village home, often without breakfast. By the time they reach their desks at



An extract from a poem written by Idess (below left) about being a girl

7am they are already tired, yet have to do a full day's school work before setting off on the long walk home.

MALAWI FACT FILE

- Malawi, in southeast Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world.
- Its population is 21 million and growing.
- Over half the population (51%) is 18 years old or younger.
- Only one in ten children (10%) attend upper secondary school (Form 3 and 4).
- Most schools do not have electricity, running water or access to computers.



Idess, from Thavite Community Day Secondary School, reading her poem

PAYING TO LEARN

Primary education is free in Malawi, but secondary education is not. Even the most basic secondary schools charge fees, uniforms are compulsory and students have to pay to sit exams, as well as buy their own notebooks and often textbooks. The full cost of a year at secondary school is around £120, which means that many thousands of children cannot attend school because their parents simply cannot afford to send them.

HELPING GIRLS TO STAY IN SCHOOL

Three years ago, a Scottish charity, the McConnell International Foundation, established by Lord Jack McConnell, former First Minister of Scotland, set up Keep Girls in School: Malawi. This programme started by providing scholarships for 100 girls in rural Malawi so that they could stay in school, where they belong. Last year the scheme doubled to 200 girls.



Pupils from Kaulatsitsi Community Day Secondary School

MEET THEODORAH AND SAINA



Saina and her mother

Theodorah is 16 and lives with her grandmother. She couldn't afford to go to secondary school, until she received a scholarship from the McConnell International Foundation. Now she is in Form 2 and even learning to like maths. She says: "My challenge was that I did not know how to solve mathematics. I love English a lot and now I do well in mathematics and even in geography."

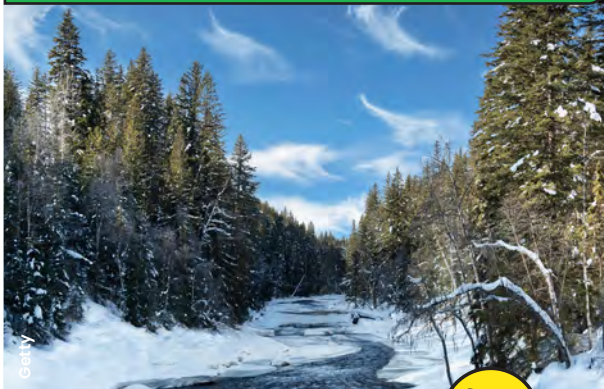
Saina Bwanali is 19 and has just started her nursing degree

at Mzuzu University. She was one of the first girls to receive a scholarship from the foundation three years ago and it has changed her life. "I would not have been able to go to school and qualify for university without this support," she says.

Lord McConnell, a former maths teacher, says that everyone deserves an education. "Countries like Malawi will not flourish unless every child is able to go to school and realise their full potential."



CANADA



Sam went missing hours from the nearest town and somehow survived on limited supplies



Hiker survives weeks in wilderness

A missing hiker who was feared dead after more than five weeks in the freezing Canadian wilderness has been found alive. Sam Benastick, aged 20, was reported missing in October when he didn't return from a fishing trip in the northern Rocky Mountains. Authorities had given up their rescue efforts but, last week, he was found by two people on their way to work. Sam had spent two nights sleeping in his car before building a camp and shelter in a dried-out creek, where he stayed for around a fortnight. He eventually cut up his sleeping bag and wrapped it around his legs to survive temperatures as low as -20°C. He was taken to hospital to recover, and police said his family is "thrilled" that he's safe.



GREENLAND

Take-off for international flights

A huge new runway has opened at the airport of Greenland's capital, Nuuk (below), paving the way for big tourist jets to land on the territory for the first time. Until now, only small planes were able to land on its short, 950-metre runway, but the new one is more than twice as long. Greenland boasts beautiful fjords and epic views of the northern lights, and Nuuk is home to more than a third of the territory's total population. Some locals are worried that the arrival of tourists could spoil the stunning landscape. However, last week, the first international jet – an Air Greenland plane from Denmark – touched down to cheering crowds.



Two more international airports are planned to open in Greenland in 2026



GERMANY

Locals worry about city's culture

Plans to cut Berlin's arts budget by over €130m (£108.6m) in 2025 have upset locals, who say it will destroy the city's culture. The cuts are expected to affect theatres, nightclubs and galleries, putting jobs at risk. Many theatres say they have had to cancel performances already because they don't have enough money. Around 450 venues have teamed up to force the government to think again about the plans, which have been called "brutal".

Berlin is a lively cultural city



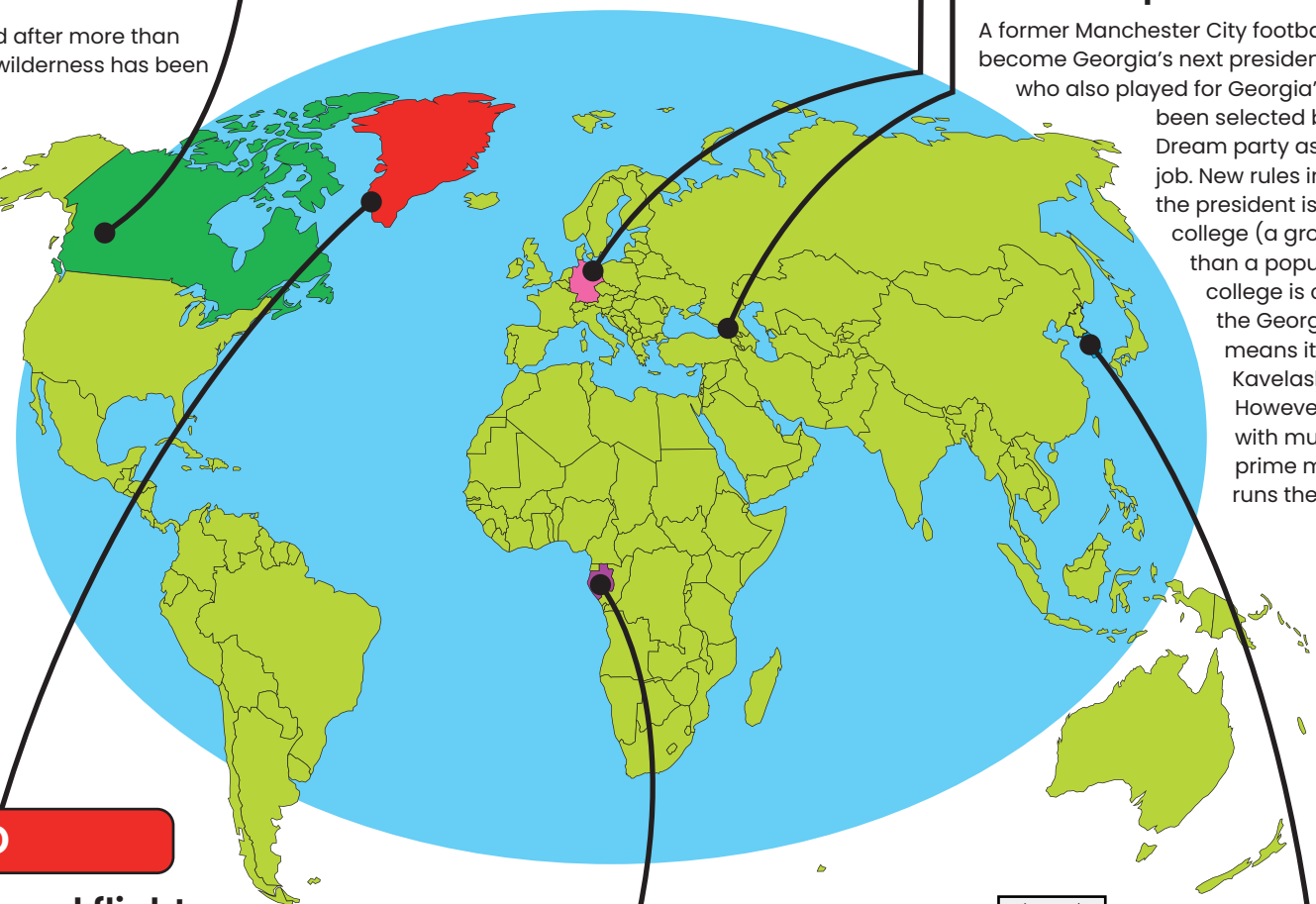
GEORGIA



Kavelashvili played for Man City between 1995 and 1997

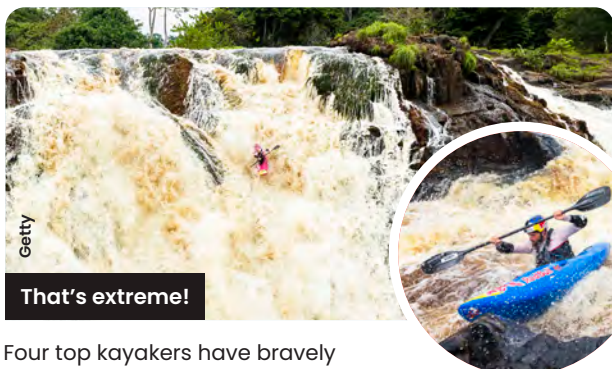
Ex-Man City striker set to become president

A former Manchester City footballer is expected to become Georgia's next president. Mikheil Kavelashvili, who also played for Georgia's national team, has been selected by the ruling Georgian Dream party as its candidate for the job. New rules in Georgia mean that the president is chosen by an electoral college (a group of people), rather than a popular vote. The electoral college is controlled largely by the Georgian Dream party, which means it's almost certain that Kavelashvili will be elected. However, the role doesn't come with much power, as it's the prime minister of Georgia that runs the country.



GABON

Kayakers conquer mystical river

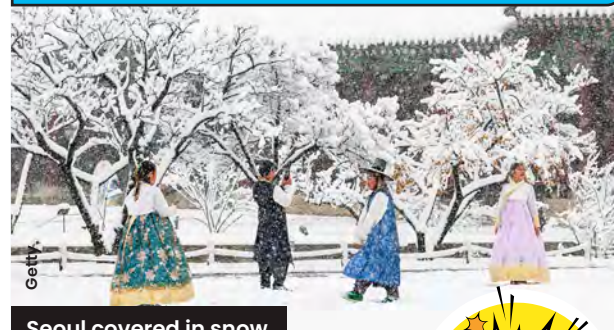


That's extreme!

Four top kayakers have bravely become the first people ever to descend Gabon's Ivindo River. Adrian Mattern, Dane Jackson, Kalob Grady and Bren Orton conquered a 20-metre-high waterfall and wild, dangerous rapids on a 145km (90-mile) journey through unexplored rainforest. They also had to be trained in case they met hippos, crocodiles or snakes! Their journey features on the show *Gabon Uncharted: Sending Ivindo Falls*, on Red Bull TV.



SOUTH KOREA



Seoul covered in snow

Heaviest November snowfall on record



South Korea's capital city, Seoul, has experienced the heaviest November snowfall since records began in 1907. The Korea Meteorological Administration said 16.5cm (6.5 inches) of snow fell on 27 November, compared with the previous record of 12.4cm on 28 November 1972. Hundreds of flights were cancelled and boats ordered to stay in port, as commuters struggled to get to work on the icy roads. Thousands of homes also had power cuts.

Vodafone launched this creative writing competition with *First News* to invite children to be a part of the online safety conversation. This is part of Vodafone's continued work to help families stay safe online. For more tips and advice, visit www.vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting.

WINNING WRITING REVEALED!

BACK in September, we challenged you to write your own fables focusing on online safety and creating positive digital experiences. Hundreds of you entered, with each fable judged by an expert panel, including authors, illustrators and people from Vodafone, *First News*, the NSPCC and their Voice of Online Youth, and Andersen Press. We're now delighted to reveal the six fantastic winners!

Age 7-9 winner

Penny Vincent – *The Open Window*

An extract:

Deep inside the wood was a tiny house in a tiny tree where Molly lived with her mummy. She was very young and did not know anything about the world outside.

One day she looked out of the window and saw a beautiful sparkly thing covered in dew drops that were shining in the sunlight. The window was open and she wanted to go outside and find out what the thing was. It was drawing her towards it.

She fluttered out through the open window and hovered above the shiny lights. Then a voice whispered: "Hello little moth. Would you like to come in and rest your wings?" Molly looked down and saw who was talking. He was quite big and furry. He seemed friendly though because he was smiling at her when he said: "I have some lovely nectar tea."

Molly was quite convinced it would be fine for her to go inside his lovely, glimmering home.

Competition judge author Jeanne Willis said:

"I was really impressed by the use of traditional picture book structure in many of the stories. It's much harder to write a short, precise story with a great concept than people imagine, and to have mastered this at such a young age shows great promise."

Age 7-9 winner

Alexa de Lloyd – *The Very Lazy Vampire*

An extract:

Hundreds of centuries ago, in the time of vampires, there lived a very lazy vampire whose name was Leopold. He was known as Leopold the lazy.

One afternoon he was eating his favourite blood biscuits and texting his friends. He ate and he ate, he texted and he texted until he ran out of blood biscuits!

So he shouted from his coffin demanding that his mum make him a batch of blood biscuits. His mum replied: "No darling, this time you can make them yourself." "Urgh!" he stamped his foot.

After that his brain whispered to him: "Why don't you order a batch online?"

"Great idea brain. I'll get my phone. Oh, I got a reply from Mike. He wants a batch of blood biscuits too." Leopold looked up the famous blood biscuit website and saw the price. "No way am I buying those! They're £40." There was a website underneath. A company he'd never heard of. "That's a much better price, only £2.50 a batch."

Competition judge *First News* CEO Katie Tilleke Irvin said:

"The overall calibre of entries in this competition was exceptionally high, with each story offering a unique and engaging take on the theme of online safety. It was a pleasure to read them all, as they not only entertained but also delivered strong, relevant messages that are crucial for young readers today."

Age 10-11 winner

Hawa Amer – *The Smart Fox and the Naughty Mouse*

An extract:

There once was a fox and a laptop-loving mouse, Who lived in a beautiful, but very tiny house. The mouse loved to play on his device, And the fox thought that playing outside was nice.

Mouse with a tablet bright upon his lap, He's tapping away fighting the urge to nap. He scrolls through games with a flick and a swipe, Chasing after cheese, oh what a hype! With pixelated friends he takes to the skies, In a world of adventure, where imagination flies. With a click and a swipe, he's lost in his zone, But then a pesky pop-up interrupts with a groan.

ERS



Age 10-11 winner

Avery Kendall – *The Lamb and the Lasso*

An extract:

Tom the Lamb was twizzling his hooves on the console controller as he fought furiously to round up humans in his favourite game, *Human Round Up*. He was about to earn a special 'Lamb Lasso', which would give him an advantage in the next stages. Suddenly, Tom's 30-minute timer started up, signalling that his game time was over for the day.

Just as he was about to switch off, a message appeared on the screen: "Are you sure you want to quit now? Your progress will not be saved and your reward will not be available." Tom paused and sighed, then ended the game.

In the farmyard the next morning, Tom joined his friends around the feeding trough. Sam the Calf and Timmy the Goat were already discussing the game.

"The Lamb Lasso is epic! It has infinite loops and you can round up loads of humans!" Timmy exclaimed excitedly.

Competition judge Paul Black from Andersen Press said:

"I think the level of storytelling and language used throughout is absolutely fantastic – what a brilliant crop of new and up-and-coming writers out there!"

Age 12-15 winner

Catarina Prata Cuginotti – *Pig Date Gone Wrong*

An extract:

"We're here!" said the first pig. "Finally!" said the second. "Let's start building!" said the third pig.

The three little pigs had just moved to a neighbourhood with no wolves, after barely escaping the Big Bad Wolf and his blows. The middle pig, having learnt his lesson, built his house out of bricks like his brother. A house of sticks was more vulnerable to fall over, and he didn't want to risk it again.

But the youngest pig wanted to be an influencer, so he thought: "I won't waste my time making a silly brick house. There aren't any wolves here. If I build my house out of straw, I'll have more time to post on social media." And so he did. In ten minutes, the house was done, and the pig inside it was happily scrolling on InstaOink. He took a picture of his new house and wrote: "Just moved to a wolf-free area!" then posted it.

Almost immediately, he got a friend request from the prettiest girl pig he had ever seen. Her name was Charming Piggy!

The full stories will now be brought to life by renowned children's illustrators and published in a handy online safety book for other families and children. Keep your eyes peeled for the book in 2025!

Age 12-15 winner

Oprah Nefertah Bihai-Nguidjol – *Bee Safe!*

An extract:

There was once a flower garden named Sunny Meadows, where the skies were blue and the bees buzzed in harmony. One of those bees was a curious young bee, named Bella.

She was full of excitement and loved adventures. Her favourite adventures were always in The Grand Hive.

Inside, there was a magnificent structure, with glowing cells that connected all the bugs in Sunny Meadows.

It was known as The Great Network, where all the bugs could share stories, trade pollen and make new friends!

It was Bella's favourite spot. She would buzz up every day, and browse through the sweet honeycomb cells to learn about all the fields and flowers. But she especially loved learning about the Animal Kingdom.

One vibrant afternoon, while browsing each of the cells, a new message glowed especially brightly. It read: "Meet me at the big oak tree for a treasure of nectar!" Bella was curious, as it was from a bug she had never seen in the Animal Kingdom.

THE PRIZE

The six winners each get:

- Their winning fable published by Andersen Press in a book (printed and ebook), illustrated by Sue Cheung, Fiona Lumbers and Paddy Donnelly
- Two tablets for their school

- A library pack of 100 books for their school
- A Kindle Paperwhite (kids)
- A £50 book token
- The chance to feature in *First News*!

*Prizes may look different from those pictured.



Staying safe online

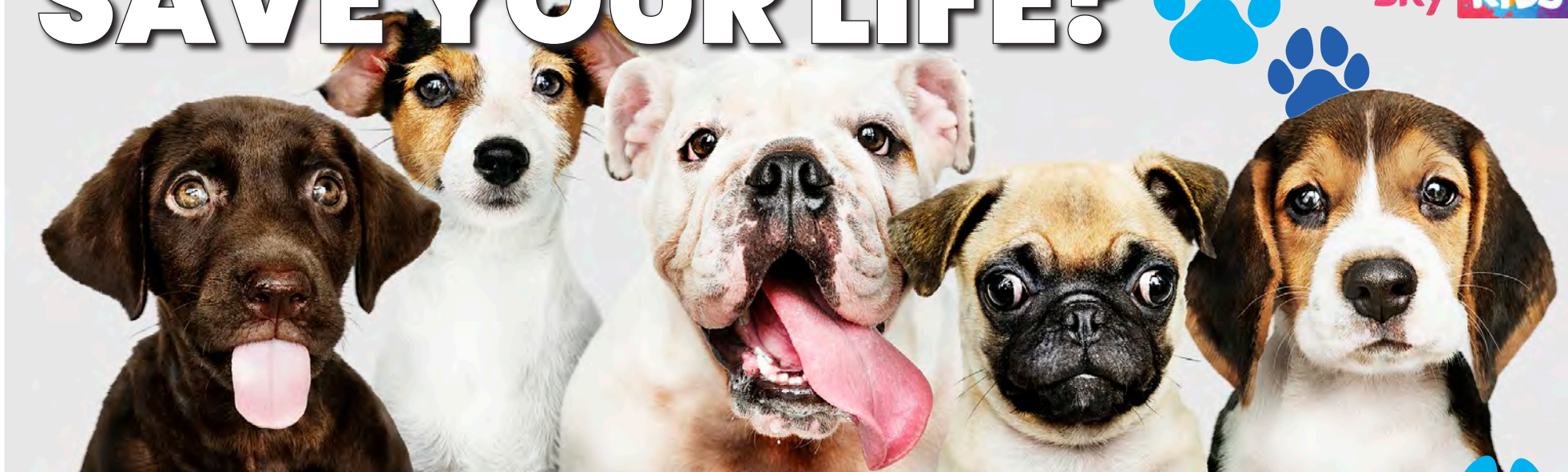
Being online is a vital part of our lives, and everyone should enjoy it safely and happily. Vodafone helps families build healthy digital habits through its products and free resources.

Vodafone works with the NSPCC, the UK's leading children's charity, to make sure young people's voices are brought to the front of the online safety conversation.

You can find out more by visiting Vodafone's Digital Parenting website below.

Thank you for joining us on this journey to make the online world a safer and more enjoyable place for everyone.

COULD YOUR DOG SAVE YOUR LIFE?



istock

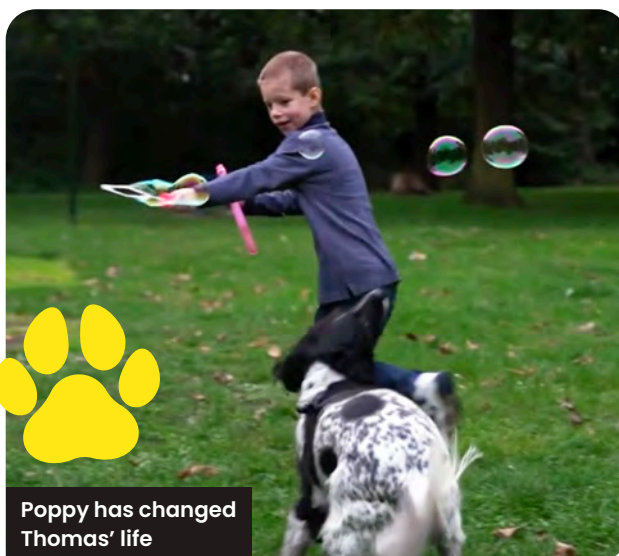
DID you know that if you're not feeling well, you smell different? Well, dogs do! This week on **FYI**, presenter Maya discovers how our pets are even more skilled than we might think!

Smelling a problem!

Aside from being loving family pets, dogs are also used to perform vital jobs such as sheep herding, helping in search and rescue operations and fighting crime with the police. Now, they're also helping the medical profession. But how? Well, because dogs have such an incredible sense of smell, they can be trained to sniff out specific illnesses or medical conditions.



Maya meets Thomas and Poppy



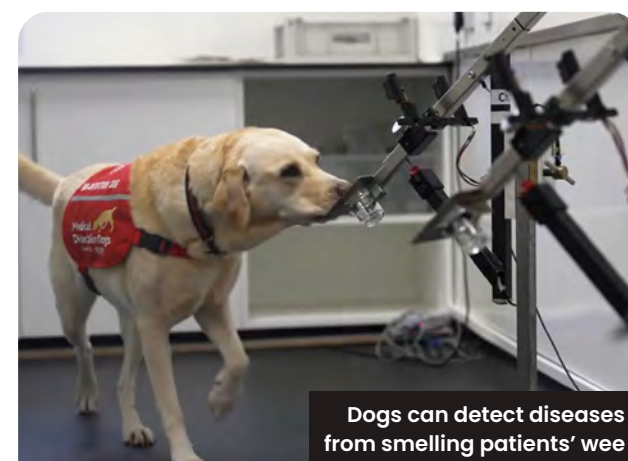
Poppy has changed Thomas' life

Dogs as medical assistants

Today, service and assistant dogs help to support young people with all sorts of conditions, from autism and epilepsy to diabetes. Nine-year-old Thomas is one of those who benefits from having an assistant dog. Thomas has type 1 diabetes, which means his body can't process sugar and he has to have injections several times a day to regulate his blood sugar levels. Very high or low blood sugar levels can be extremely serious and involve Thomas being rushed to hospital. Thankfully, Thomas was offered a lifeline when he was paired with a dog called Poppy, who has been trained by a charity called Hypo Hounds.

How does Poppy help Thomas?

Poppy is able to use her very strong sense of smell to detect when Thomas' blood sugar levels are too high or too low. If she detects that Thomas has high levels, she'll circle around in front of him. If she senses they're low, she'll paw him. Thomas then knows what he needs to do to avoid any dangerous attacks. Poppy is even credited with saving Thomas' life when the machine that reads his blood sugar levels wasn't working one day!

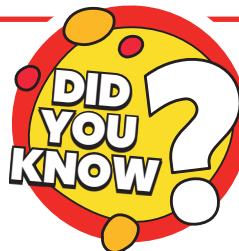


Dogs can detect diseases from smelling patients' wee

Aiding science too!

Dogs are also helping the world of medical science, which could help thousands of patients in the future. The charity Medical Detection Dogs trains a team of canine sense smellers to detect diseases such as bowel cancer. The dogs are taught how to sniff out the disease from a patient's wee.

LOTS of animals are also used as therapy pets to help those dealing with physical or mental conditions. Dogs, cats and even horses are among the most popular.



Poppy is a brilliant dog. I can play football now. I can play with my friends. It just makes it feel like a normal life.

– Thomas



FEATURE ON THE SHOW!

Want to be in an episode of **FYI**? Just ask your teacher to set up a **First News FYI News Club** at your school. You could take part in a Your Shout to have your say,

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 to find out more.

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 or on the **First News** app.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!

DON'T MISS IT!

THE PENGUIN POST OFFICE



FUNNIEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR!



MADDIE MOATE'S CURIOUS CHRISTMAS



Advertisement Feature

Ravensburger

ASSEMBLE YOUR HEROES!

WITH new Hylkies you can build, display and collect your favourite characters from across the incredible Marvel universe. Your biggest decision is which one to choose first!



54 PIECES TO CHALLENGE YOU

You won't need the super strength of Captain Marvel to piece together your chosen Hylkies character. Each one is made up of 54 specially shaped pieces. Use your skills to build your Hylkie - no glue is needed; Hylkies form a perfect capsule shape just as they are!



SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS

Inside the box, you'll find a character card and a useful stand so that you can display your finished Hylkie and admire your handiwork.

BUILD YOUR COLLECTION

There are six Hylkies from the Marvel universe to collect in Series 2, so you can create a unique feature of your heroes from the iconic universe. And watch out for Hylkies Series 1, which features unforgettable Star Wars characters too!



MEET HYLKIES SERIES 2 - MARVEL COLLECTION

Which is your favourite?

Discover new Hylkies from Ravensburger at hylkies.net or at amazon.co.uk

Ravensburger



A STAR WARS ADVENTURE!

DID YOU KNOW?

THE animatronic head for Robert's character, Neel, had a special panel between the eyes that allowed for more facial expressions to be added after filming.

RAVI, Ryan, Kyriana and Robert would often zoom down a slide-like feature on the ship's set during breaks, turning it into a fun personal playground.



FIRST News' Safiyyah spoke with the cast of *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew* about their experiences filming the TV show. Ravi Cabot-Conyers (Wim), Ryan Kiera Armstrong (Fern), Kyriana Kratter (KB) and Robert Timothy Smith (Neel) shared their favourite moments from filming. Here's what they had to say:

● **Hi Kyriana. What's it like becoming part of such an iconic universe?**

It's so amazing, and especially getting to be so different. My character acts very similar to me, but the way she looks is very different. She's got silver hair and I got to shave half my head. I got an excuse to be this cool girl, and so it's fantastic. I've never been part of such a big production.

● **Ryan, what was your favourite scene to film?**

Every single day was so much fun! But I specifically loved the speeder bike scenes because we were literally driving around, and we would have wind in our faces. I felt really cool.

● **Ravi, were you already a *Star Wars* fan before joining the show?**

Oh, definitely. My initial introduction was through my dad. When I was five, I watched *Star Wars: A New Hope*. So one of the things that felt familiar between me and my character was our love for *Star Wars*. I loved implementing some of my love for Jedi and the universe into my character to make him feel even more real.

● **Robert, you play Neel, an adorable alien-looking character. What was it like working with the special effects?**

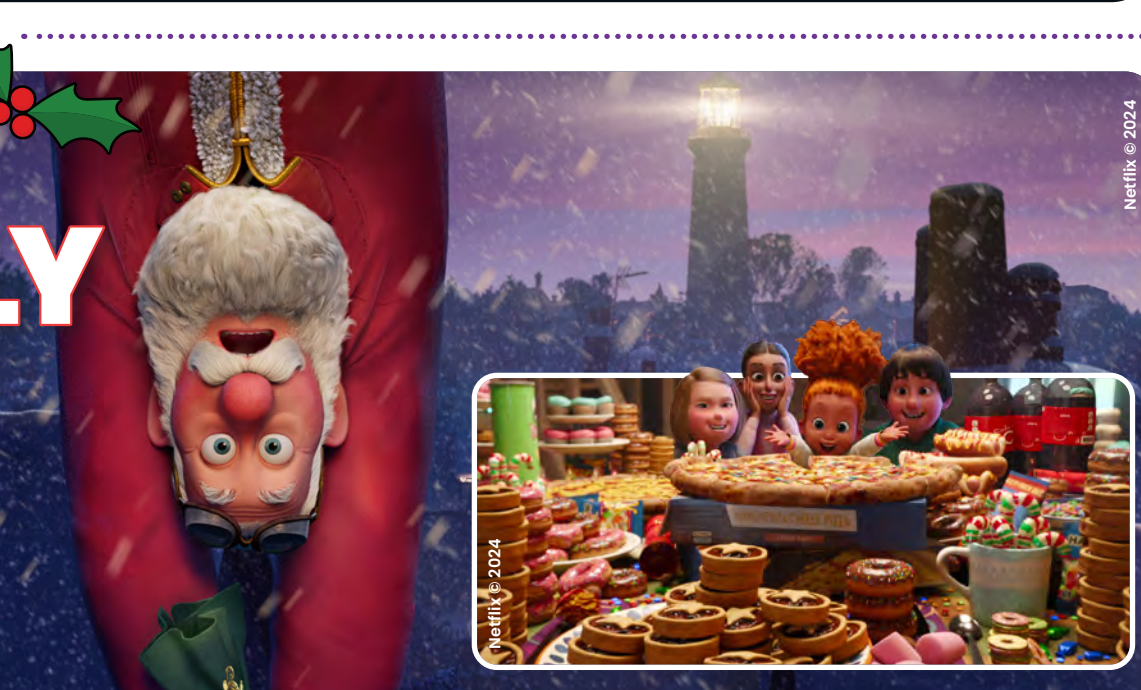
Well, for the most part we didn't use much green screen; Neel's head was like a headband I wore. We would all call it 'Rambo mode'. But when I wasn't wearing it there would be an animatronic head that looked so real. You need to watch the show to see how cool it is.

Star Wars: Skeleton Crew is available on Disney+, with new episodes streaming every Wednesday

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY

A FESTIVE new film has touched down on Netflix, and it's perfect to get you in the Christmas spirit!

That Christmas is based on a series of children's books by award-winning screenwriter and director Richard Curtis (he's also the mastermind behind classic Christmas movie *Love Actually*). The film follows the children of Wellington-on-Sea and their different stories in the build-up to Christmas Day. There's love, loneliness, family and friends, plus Santa Claus making a big mistake! Listen out for an original song called *Under The Tree* by none other than Ed Sheeran, too! *That Christmas* is on Netflix now.



BITE-SIZED NEWS

● **Taylor's last hurrah!**

Taylor Swift is due to finish her record-breaking Eras Tour on 8 December, when the pop superstar will perform her last date in Vancouver. Will she pull out all the stops to go out with a big bang? We'll have to wait and see!



● **Golden Globe nominations**

The nominations for the 2025 Golden Globes will be revealed on 9 December. The awards honour the best of TV and film. Movie of the moment *Wicked* is among the favourites to get a nomination, as well as actors Timothée Chalamet and Florence Pugh. The official awards ceremony takes place on Sunday 5 January 2025.





THE SNOWMAN AND ME

FROM FIRST AUDITION TO THE STAGE



A FESTIVE TRADITION

The Snowman stage show has become a Christmas favourite for families, returning for its 27th year at the West End's Peacock Theatre. This year, CBBC's *My Life* has followed the story of two boys, Teddy and Phoenix, who play the boy in the show. Watch their journey from audition to the first night (see below right). We spoke to them before their first night...

THE FIRST AUDITION

Phoenix: I had to learn a short dance routine and then perform it in front of the casting team. Because I belong to a street dance crew, it wasn't too tricky because I am used to picking up choreography quickly, although this was slightly different because some of the moves were ballet steps. I was also interviewed by the CBBC film crew and they asked me about my hobbies and interests and my favourite part of the *Snowman* story.



GETTING THE PART

Teddy: I enjoyed the audition, but it was quite nerve-racking. I then had to wait about a week to find out if I'd got the part. I thought if it was a 'no' I'd be so sad. I felt amazing when I found out that I had got it. Out of all the children who auditioned, I can't believe it! It's so crazy.



WALKING IN THE AIR

Phoenix: This is such a magical show and I hope everyone who comes loves watching it as much as I love being in it!

Teddy: Like Phoenix, I'm also really excited to fly. I'm in the air for seven minutes! It's so much fun. The best Christmas ever.

THE HARDEST PART ABOUT TRAINING AND REHEARSING

Teddy: The hardest part is going over sections of the show you think you already know, but have to do again and again to make it perfect. You have to really focus and keep your energy up to make it as good as you can, to get your performance to West End standard.

Phoenix: There is so much to remember (like the stage positioning and listening out for musical cues because there is no talking), but thankfully it gets easier with practice. I've never performed on a West End stage, never taken ballet classes and I wondered if I would be able to remember everything!



ADVICE FOR OTHER YOUNG PERFORMERS

Teddy: Don't give up, keep working hard to achieve your dreams and always believe in yourself.

Phoenix: Believe in yourself, practise lots and always try your best. Have lots of fun along the way and never give up on your dreams.

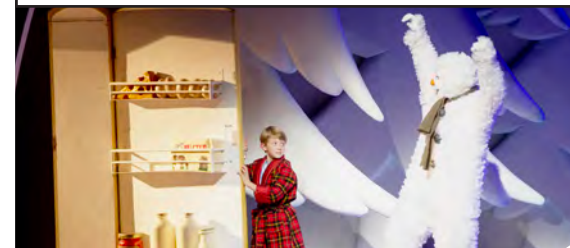


Phoenix and Teddy

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING IN THE SHOW

Phoenix: I love being a part of the *Snowman* family and making people happy when they come to watch the show, but flying is definitely my number one favourite thing in this stage show!

Teddy: My favourite thing is playing a different character to me. It's so much fun and you feel free to express yourself in a different way. I love the applause at the end. It's such an amazing feeling as you take your final bow and the audience are cheering for you. It makes me so happy.

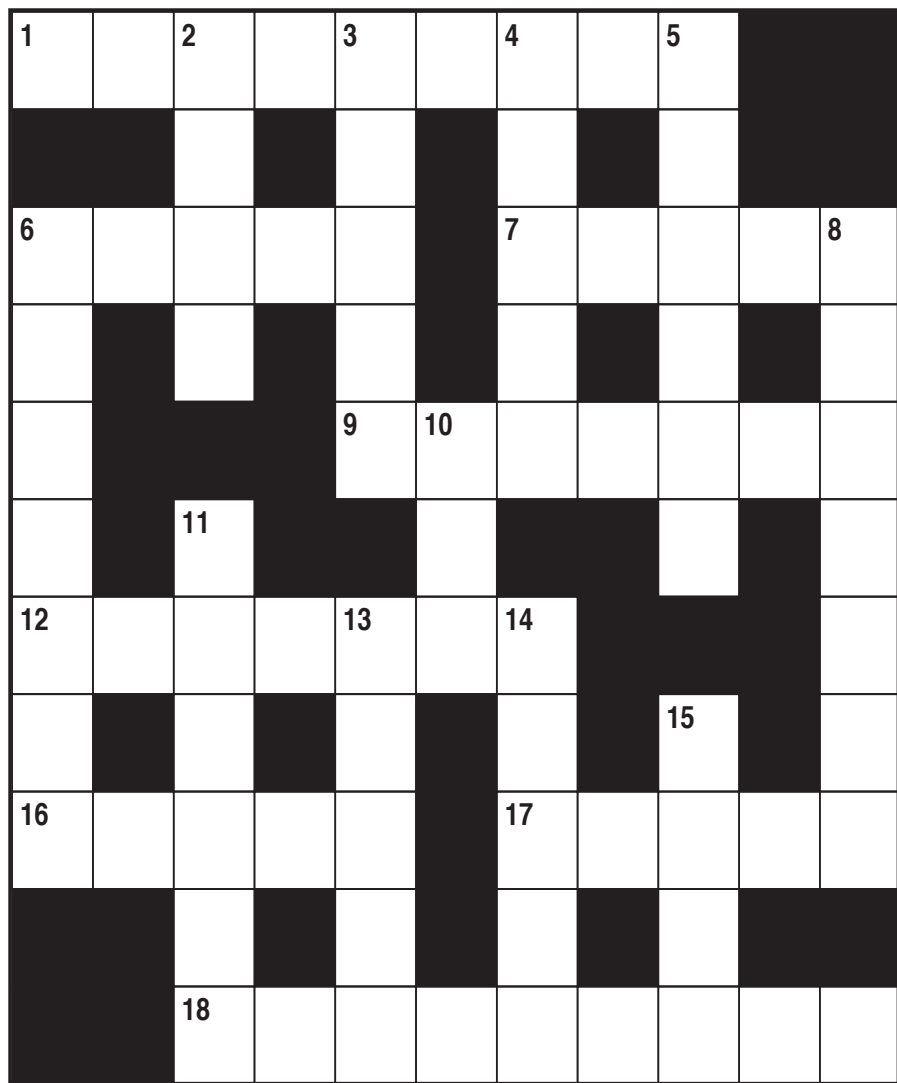


Check out more from the boys on *My Life: The Snowman and Me* on CBBC at 5:30pm on 13 December and then on BBC iPlayer. *The Snowman* stage show is on at London's Peacock Theatre from now until 4 January 2025.



CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



ACROSS

- 1 Moving staircase (9)
- 6 Tiny piece of bread (5)
- 7 Confess to be true (5)
- 9 A leafy green vegetable (7)
- 12 Blow up (7)
- 16 Subject (5)
- 17 Lift up (5)
- 18 Next after the ninety-ninth (9)

DOWN

- 2 Hint (4)
- 3 A tag or sticker attached to an object (5)
- 4 Popular breakfast food (5)
- 5 Piece of gossip (6)
- 6 Gather together (7)
- 8 A building in which plays are performed (7)
- 10 Finish (3)
- 11 A formal talk (6)
- 13 A large expanse of water (5)
- 14 Mistake (5)
- 15 Brain (4)



Sudoku

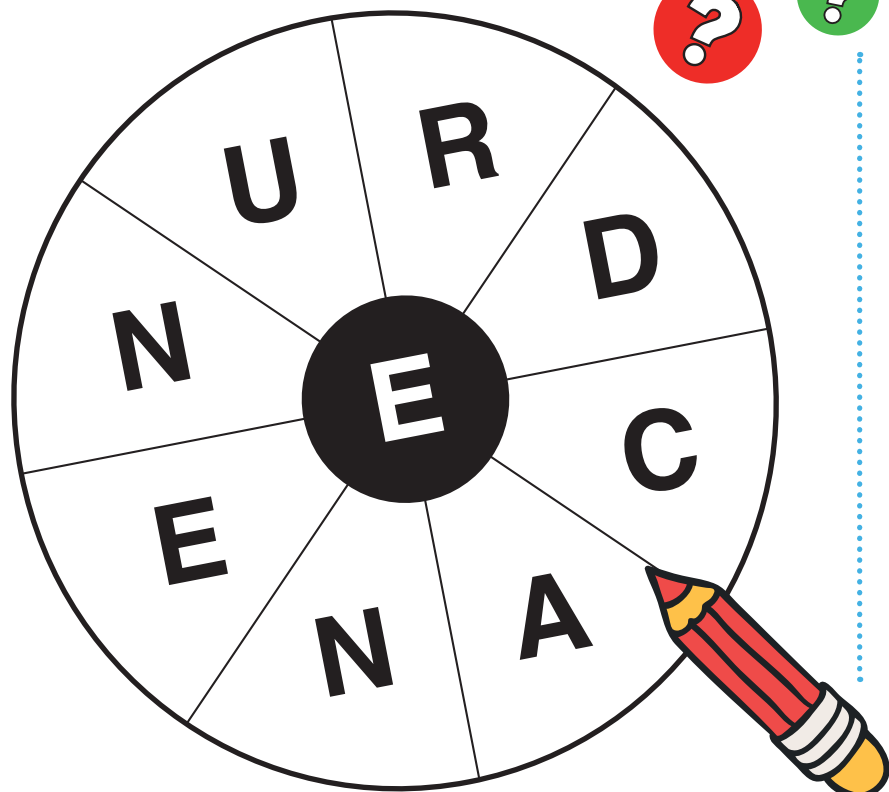
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?

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

COMPETITIONS: To enter, email us at win@firstnews.co.uk putting 'competition name' (e.g. Holiday), in the subject box or visit 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.

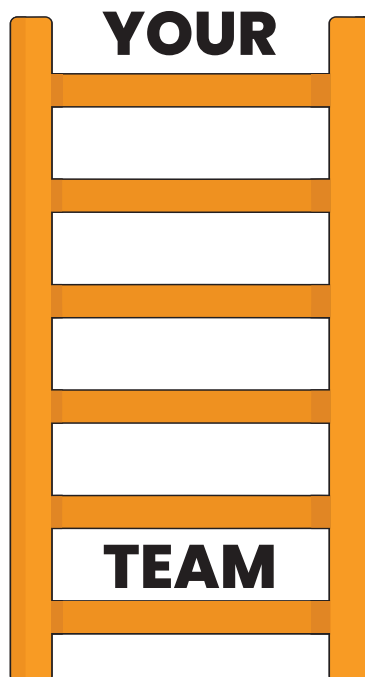
Word wheel

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 963 ANSWERS:

Word wheel: bettering.

Word ladder: wise, rise, rose, pose, post, poet.

G	Y	M	N	A	S	T	I	C	S
E			N		I		E		
R	O	C	K	S	D	O	L	L	S
M		R	W		E		E		P
S	H	O	W	E	R	O	B	E	Y
	S		R		K		R		
P	E	S	T	R	E	G	I	O	N
A		W		H		R		T	
W	H	O	L	E	M	A	Y	B	E
	R		R		I				D
A	D	V	E	N	T	U	R	E	S

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

POKÉMON
TRADING CARD GAME

SCARLET & VIOLET
SURGING SPARKS

A GROWING STORM OF STELLAR STRENGTH!

TERAWATTS of electricity crash down from the sky in a tropical paradise, setting the stage for the supercharged Pikachu ex!

With the power of a Stellar Tera Pokémon ex, it lights up the shoreline, revealing a parade of dragon Pokémon led by the towering Alolan Exeggutor ex!

Archaludon ex and Latias ex round out the horde, while new ACE SPEC cards and more new Pokémon ex bring surprises of their own.

Currents crackle and dragons roar in the Pokémon TCG: Scarlet & Violet – Surging Sparks expansion!



Which of Pikachu's surging sparks leads to Alolan Exeggutor?

A B C



Answer: C

©2024 Pokémon / Nintendo / Creatures / GAME FREAK. TM. © Nintendo.



Scarlet & Violet – Surging Sparks is available to buy now

For more information, visit pokemon.com/uk/pokemon-tcg

CHARIZARD GUARDS YOUR FAVOURITE CARD!



WITH explosive attacks and huge HP, Charizard ex has a commanding presence on the battlefield!

Bring that burning tenacity to life on your desk, bookcase or nightstand with an awesome Charizard figure, featuring translucent fire effects to show off a favourite card – like the foil Charmander, Charmeleon or Charizard ex you also get in this collection!

Even more fun awaits in a stack of ten booster packs from different Pokémon TCG expansions.



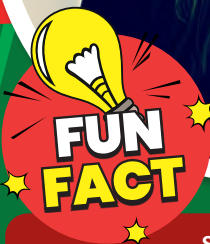
The Pokémon TCG: Charizard ex Super-Premium Collection includes:

- A foil promo card featuring Charizard ex
- Two foil cards featuring Charmander and Charmeleon
- A card-display figure featuring Charizard
- Ten Pokémon TCG booster packs



CHRISTMAS EVERY DAY?!

THAT'S the reality in Sibéal Pounder's new book, *Sprouts*. But is it all it's cracked up to be? Be careful what you wish for...



● **Hi Sibéal! Tell us about your new book, *Sprouts*.**

It's set in the year 4024, and Christmas is everywhere. Santa Claus rules the world and he has an army of Krampus beasts who patrol the skies and make sure everyone is very jolly. Witches have been banished to the Mince Pie Isles, this horrible, snow-swept place, because they only believe in celebrating Christmas once per year.

● **That seems unfair! So, who's the story about?**

Gryla Garland, a witch who dreams of it being Christmas every day. She meets Merrilee Claus, the daughter of the ruling Santa Claus, and discovers that Christmas every day isn't all it's cracked up to be, and they set about trying to restore the magic of Christmas.

● **What happens if someone's caught not celebrating Christmas?**

Well, there's a Krampus Code – very strict rules. You have to decorate your tree every morning, wear Christmas clothes, and eat a sprout-flavoured candy cane every day that's meant to keep the witches away. If the Krampus catch you [breaking it], they punish you. For the worst crimes, you're taken down these chimneys to the Krampus lair. No-one comes back from the Krampus lair!

● **Eek! Santa in *Sprouts* isn't the Santa we know and love, is he?**

He lives in a sort of gingerbread castle, and has these snowman footmen, and the snowmen rise up to become the next Santa. The ruling Santa is picked from the snowmen. Only boys are allowed to become a ruling Santa. He doesn't deliver presents or things, he just rules over the world!

● **We've got to ask – would you like it to be Christmas every day?**

The witches in *Sprouts* say that having too much of something is as good as having none of it at all. The true magic of Christmas is that it builds up, and in looking forward to it every year. If it's Christmas every morning, it gets a bit boring. I like it as it is now in 2024!

● **And lastly, where does your love of Christmas come from?**

I always remember the snowy Christmases. One year, we were knee-deep in snow in Scotland, delivering Christmas cards... I think I'll remember that forever. A tradition I loved, which I put in *Tinsel*, my first Christmas book, was mince pie picnics, where you get the picnic blanket and sit out in the snow with mince pies and hot chocolate!



Sprouts is Sibéal's third festive book – she also wrote *Tinsel* and, last year, the book version of the *Wonka* movie! She had to have the book ready for when the film came out, so she was sent the movie's top-secret scripts and photos from filming to work from. Some scenes that were cut from the film live on in Sibéal's book version!



- **Favourite Christmas film?** Definitely *Home Alone*.
- **Best role you ever had in your school's Christmas play?**

One of the angels in the Nativity.

- **Favourite Christmas song?** I like *Driving Home For Christmas*.
- **Do you cheat with your advent calendars?** I do – on the first day, I open the 25th door for the massive chocolate!
- **Best Christmas present ever received?** My mum piled my Christmas dinner plate high with chocolates after I became a vegetarian!
- **What's on your list to Santa this year?** Another silly ornament to add to my collection of ridiculous Christmas decorations!

Sprouts by Sibéal Pounder is out now.



Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



ON the lookout for more Christmassy stories to fill your stockings? Look no further. These books are stuffed with seasonal silliness, wintry wonder and all the festive feels!



The Great Reindeer Rescue by Stephen Mangan

Dave the reindeer has had enough! But after causing an accident that flings all of Santa's reindeer across the globe, can he gather them all and save Christmas?

How Winston Came Home For Christmas by Alex T Smith

This festive mystery about a mouse's global adventure has 24 and a half chapters, so you can read one for every day up to Christmas.



Juniper's Christmas by Eoin Colfer

Juniper is thrown into a Christmas adventure like no other when she seeks the help of a mysterious woodsman living in her local park.

The Biggest Christmas Secret Ever by LD Lapinski

Imagine Father Christmas as your stepdad! Harper and Will don't have to imagine, but can the family keep this festive truth secret any longer?



The Boy Who Slept Through Christmas by Matt Lucas

This story combines the joy of musicals and books! Listen to over 20 original songs as you read about how Leo tries to fix his Christmas wish.

BOOK OF THE YEAR!



ROSS Montgomery's *I am Rebel* has been named the 2024 Waterstones Children's Book of the Year!

The shop's Head of Books, Bea Carvalho, said the tale of a boy's bond with his dog "is a book to remind adults of the joy and wonder to be found in children's books, and to help young readers discover a love of reading." Congratulations, Ross!



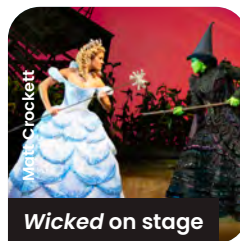
Are you a wicked writer?

THE National Literacy Trust and stage show *Wicked* are teaming up for a third year to re-launch their epic writing competition!

Wicked Writers: Be The Change challenges pupils in Years 5-6 and in Years 7-9 to use their voices to try to change the world. You're asked to write a short, passionate piece about a change you'd like to see in your local community.

Even the prizes are wicked. You could have your entry published in a book, win book bundles for your school and bag a class trip to see the famous *Wicked* show on stage in London's West End.

● **Watch this space – we'll have more when it all launches in January!**



Wicked on stage



FIRST NEWS READERS SPEECH THEIR MINDS



All pics: Dan Jordan

FirstNews
SPEECH YOUR MIND

HEAR MORE ON FYI

The Speech Your Mind competition features on this week's episode of *FYI*, our partner weekly news show from Sky Kids. Find out how everyone got on at the event at first.news/fyi.

LAST week, winners of the *First News* Speech Your Mind competition headed to the Houses of Parliament. They read their speeches to a room full of important people in the House of Lords, including our host Lord Jack McConnell, Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza, *First News* Editor in Chief Nicky Cox MBE, Sky Kids' Ian France, WWF's Lisa Lee and MPs.

WHAT WERE THE WINNING SPEECHES ABOUT?

Our winners spoke about all sorts of issues that matter to them and other young people, including:

- Being accepting and getting to be yourself.
- Supporting neurodiverse young people.
- More support for young people facing challenging family situations.
- Nature loss and how we should protect the planet.
- Supporting children in poverty in the UK.
- Putting an end to suffering through war.
- The damage to our planet and how we can stop it.
- Raising awareness of mental health among young people.
- Racism and building trust between the community and the police.

GETTING READY TO SPEAK

Our winners get ready to take to the mic! Jamie and Mya gave their speeches via video link while these guys delivered their brilliant speeches inside the House of Lords' historic River Room.



From left to right: Akira, Julia, Andrii, Frida, Excel, Joan and Alekhya



FIRST NEWS ON THE ROAD!

There's never a bad time to have a quick read of all the latest headlines in *First News* – even when you're visiting the House of Lords!



Lord Jack McConnell with Andrii

MEETING LORD JACK McCONNELL

Everyone got to chat to Lord Jack McConnell, who was once a teacher and served as first minister of Scotland. They talked about what inspired their speeches and the issues they want to tackle in the future.

"My experience of speaking in the House of Lords was something I'll never forget, and I loved being interviewed too. All the speeches were AMAZING! People laughed and cried when they listened, and I think that everyone really enjoyed them. I loved how fancy everything was inside Parliament too, especially the gold wallpaper." – Akira



The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, champions children's voices in England. She was there to hear the winners' speeches, before making her very own speech!

Watch the winning speeches at first.news/speechcomp



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

I can't believe we're now in December. I don't know about you, but I'm counting down the days until Christmas!

It's been a busy year for junior journalists in the *First News FYI News Club*. You've done some pretty impressive things – going out to exciting events for us, sending in your stories and making your voices heard by voting in our polls! If you want to get involved in 2025, make sure to ask your teacher to sign up to the *First News FYI News Club* by heading to first.news/fyinewsclub.

And, to feature before this year is up, make sure to take part in our 'best bits'. Find out more below!

LET US KNOW YOUR BEST BITS OF 2024!

This year is rapidly coming to an end, and I want to reflect with you on how you've found it. Let me know what your best bits of 2024 have been and what you're looking forward to in 2025. Write in to let us know and you might feature in a special page we're putting together!



Write to us!

Ask a responsible adult to email us at yournews@firstnews.co.uk



A BRIEF HISTORY OF MONEY

WHERE DID IT COME FROM? WHO INVENTED IT? WHAT CAME BEFORE?

JUNIOR JOURNALIST

Edwin

FIRST News reader Edwin wrote to us about his interest in money and finance, and wanted to share some of his knowledge with you. He tells you about the history of money from 8,000 years ago to today!

by Edwin Shoesmith

Just think for a moment about a world where you could trade your pet cat for milk... Well, 8,000 years ago you didn't have to imagine it – this actually happened! The system was called bartering, where people traded things without using money. It wasn't great though, because sometimes trades were unfair. Luckily, this system isn't in existence today because we have money instead!

It is believed that money was invented in Mesopotamia (an old region of southwestern Asia) about 5,000 years ago. Gold and

silver coins were used, although where these metals weren't available, such as in Oceania and the Pacific, shiny shells were used instead. Then in 600 BCE, the ancient Kingdom of Lydia took it one step further and produced the first ever recorded official coins, all with different values depending on the material used.

In the 1500s and 1600s, many banks across the world were set up, with the first ones in Florence and Genoa in Italy. In the UK there was the Bank of England, which was created to manage our finances. You can visit its fantastic museum (which I highly recommend) in the centre of London!

Fast forward to now and more than 150 currencies are used across the world, from the pound to the yen, and the rupee to the dollar. We can even use money on our mobile phones! From 8,000 years ago to today, we can all agree that money has come a very long way.

Making our school sign



Pupils with their creation

CHILDREN at Felixstowe School have learnt about the ancient art of letter carving with the Lettering Arts Trust. The result is a huge 60cm-high mural that is on permanent display at the school. Poppy, one of the children who took part, tells you all about it!

by Poppy

I really enjoyed the lettering workshop as it made me look at letters in a different way. It made me aware of how different types of letters are used in things like posters and notices to get attention.

I loved using bright colours and different materials to make my letter. It was great that the letters were so big and bold and irregular to work with, as it made them seem more interesting and eye-catching. I also liked the creativity that was needed to decide what images to put in my letter. I really wanted my letter to reflect Felixstowe (which is near the sea), so chose images like a seagull and the docks.

The support from Sue, who led the session, was very helpful. She was kind and very encouraging.

We are all really pleased with the end result and it's great to see our letters displayed in our main school hall!

NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... The Edith Borthwick School, St Julian's School, Neston High School, Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle de Londres and Mellor Community Primary School!



The best movie ever!

OLIVIA went to an exclusive film screening for a new heart-warming festive film called *That Christmas* at the London Film Festival for Free. We find out how she got on.

by Olivia, aged nine

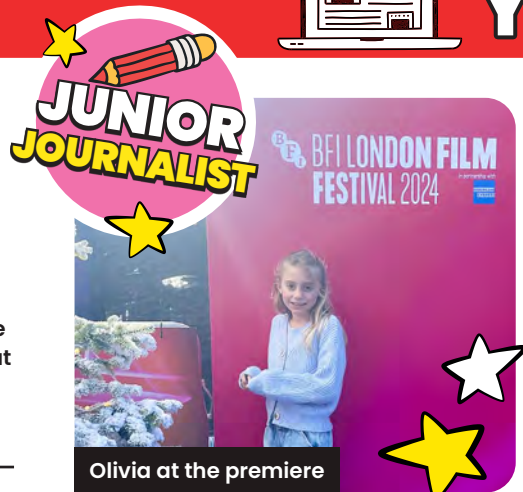
I was super lucky to go to a special family event for the launch of the movie *That Christmas* at the BFI London Film Festival for Free. We were the first people in the whole world to watch it!

Before the film screening, there was a fun workshop for children. I did cookie decorating, colouring and made Christmas decorations.

Then, we walked on a blue carpet that had snow on it. I loved it! I also liked that there were Christmas trees there because they had shimmering ornaments and presents underneath them.

We watched the film in a huge theatre called the Royal Festival Hall. The actors and other people who were involved in making the film were there too. They gave a talk about *That Christmas*.

This is the best movie I have ever seen.



Olivia at the premiere

It has breathtaking scenes, amazing voices and most of all there is lots of kindness in it, which is beautiful. Well done to everyone who helped to make this movie, because they put so much hard work into it.

This really was the best day of my life. If I had to rate it out of ten, I would choose 100! I would definitely recommend the film to everybody out there, no matter who you are or where you are from. Please watch it!

BE A JUNIOR JOURNALIST!

If you'd like to get opportunities to go to cool events like Olivia, Lucy and James, get your teacher to sign up to the News Club at first.news/fynewsclub

What makes a world record?



Watching the hula hooping record holder

LUCY and James recently headed to London for a Guinness World Record event. They tell you all about it!

by Lucy and James Hutton

When we first arrived at the event, we enjoyed a lovely pastry breakfast. Then we learnt what a Guinness World Record adjudicator (person who decides) does and what it takes to qualify a world record. The records have to be measurable, and each one has very specific rules that have to be followed. We then got to put what we had learnt to the

test, practising as junior adjudicators.

Our favourite was trying to find out how many normal-sized blueberries weigh the same as the world's largest blueberry (20.4g). It ended up being about ten!

Throughout the day, we watched some amazing world record holders showing us their skills, including hula hooping, burping and magic tricks. We even got to attempt some world records ourselves and nearly broke one for completing a game of *Hungry Hungry Hippos* in the fastest time. It was a lovely day!

The Guinness World Records 2025 book is out now.

THIS WEEK'S BIG QUESTION



We asked you...

Should unhealthy snacks be made more expensive?

36%
(1,078 of you)
said YES

64%
(1,920 of you)
said NO



What do you think? Join in the conversation and cast your vote!

Vote at first.news/polls

WIN! THE ULTIMATE FAMILY GAMES BUNDLE!

WIN the ultimate family games bundle with these fantastic games from Asmodee, the leading board game distributor in the UK.

With this games bundle for all ages and interests, you and your family will never be bored again.

Lilo and Stitch is the brand-new addition to the Dobble family, featuring the beloved characters and scenes from Disney's animated hit.

In *The Sock Game Junior*, players will race against the clock to find the items in the sock.

Get rid of your cards before the pear stops rocking and be the quickest to

match with the card in the centre in *Pear Shaped*.

With *Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza*, play your cards, shout the next word in the sequence and race to match before the chaos unfolds!

Finally, create your own grid using letter tiles and compete to be the first to use them all in *Bananagrams*, the fast-paced word-building game.

All you have to do to win this fantastic prize is answer this question:

Which of these is a traditional Christmas carol?
a) Silent Light b) Quiet Night
c) Silent Night



ENTER NOW!
MARK YOUR ENTRY
ASMODEE

first.news/comps or see page 20. The closing date is 20 December.

THE BIG PICTURE



WE see thousands and thousands of pictures every week here at *First News* HQ, so an image has to be pretty special to bag a spot as our Big Picture.

And we hope you agree that Stuff the Magic Dragon riding around on a quad bike like an absolute legend is very much deserving of a place on this page.

Stuff is the mascot of US basketball team Orlando Magic, as well as being a budding artist. Although this banana taped to a bit of card that he tried to sell at a recent game bears an uncanny resemblance to a certain famous artwork that sold for millions recently (see p4)!

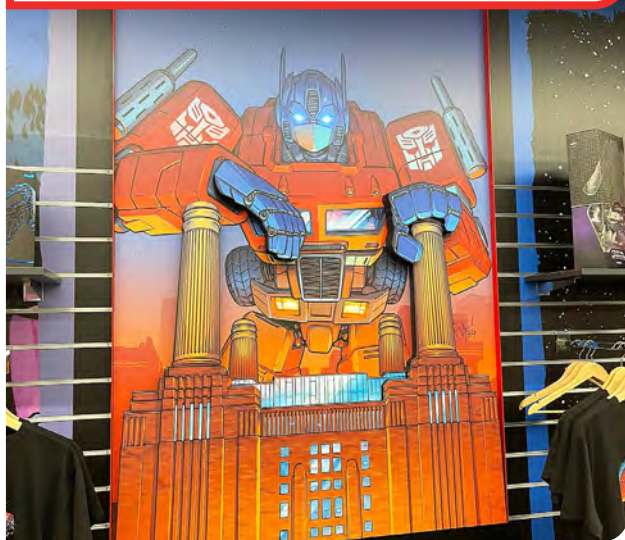
FirstNews Quiz

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 Has South Korea's capital city, Seoul, experienced its heaviest November rainfall or snowfall?



2 In which city would you find the world's first-ever official stores dedicated entirely to Peppa Pig and Transformers?



3 An orca off the coast of the USA was spotted with what on its head?



4 A beaver has been spotted in Brussels for the first time in how many years?



5 What fruit did tech entrepreneur Justin Sun eat after buying it for £4.9 million?

6 The House of Lords hosted the winners of which *First News* competition?



7 *Skeleton Crew* is a new series that's part of what iconic universe?

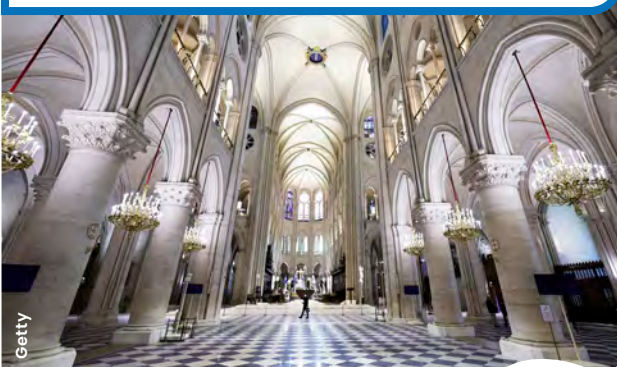
8 Which awards ceremony is this gold-coloured trophy from?



9 Which app will stop users under 18 from using beauty filters?



10 What is the name of this Paris cathedral, which has been restored after a big fire?



11 Nuuk is the capital of which territory?



12 People around the UK are being gifted saplings from which tree?



13 What is the name of the joke religion of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster?



14 Thirty gaming fans broke a world record by spending 24 hours opening what cards?



15 Bournemouth's Justin Kluivert made Premier League history by scoring a hat-trick of what?



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 and on the *First News* app!

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

- Answers:**
- 1 Snowfall 2 London 3 A dead salmon 4 200 years
 - 5 A banana 6 Speech Your Mind 7 Star Wars
 - 8 Golden Globes 9 TikTok 10 Notre-Dame
 - 11 Greenland 12 The Sycamore Gap tree
 - 13 Pastafarianism 14 Pokémon cards 15 Penalties



HOLE IN ONE OVER A HOUSE!

OUR favourite sporting moment of the week didn't take place live on TV or in one of the world's biggest sporting venues, but at golfer Bryson DeChambeau's house in Texas.

The golfer went viral after people started following his daily attempt to score a hole in one on a green in his back garden. The twist is that to do it, he had to hit the ball up and over his house!

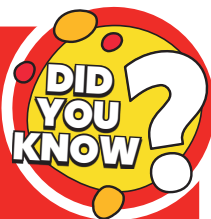
It's debatable whether people were tuning in because they wanted him to succeed or because they wanted to watch him duff a shot through one of his full-length windows, but it got millions hooked anyway.

He started off with one attempt on the first day, two on the second day, three on the third and so on. Most of us would have been at it for years (and have quite a few less windows), but it only took DeChambeau until his 14th attempt on the 16th day of his challenge before he pulled it off. "What a journey," he posted on X.



It took DeChambeau 134 shots to get his hole in one, although an earlier shot went in the hole but bounced back out!

THE hat-trick of penalties scored by Bournemouth's Justin Kluivert in his team's 4-2 win against Wolves was the first time that's ever been done in the Premier League. The last time it happened in the top flight of English football was way back in December 1957 when Man City's Ken Barnes scored from the spot three times in a 6-2 win over Everton!



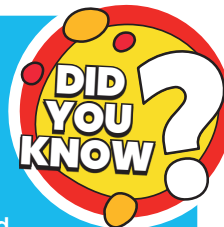
Sawe winning the Boston 10K earlier this year

Kenya's Sabastian Sawe had never run a marathon until Sunday's Valencia Marathon Trinidad Alfonso, but he went on to win it by running the fifth-fastest marathon of all time! If he wants to go for Kelvin Kiptum's record, he'll need to improve his time of 2hr 2min 5sec by a minute and a half. Out of the fastest 30 marathon runners of all time, 17 are from Kenya and 11 are from Ethiopia.



The 17-year-old snowboarder Mia Brookes won her first Big Air World Cup gold in Beijing at the weekend. Although she won the overall title last year, her best finish in an individual World Cup event until now had been second place. Brookes said she was "really hyped" about her performance.

WHEN Liverpool beat Man City 2-0 on Sunday, it was the 36th Premier League game that Mo Salah has scored and assisted in. That's the joint most (with Wayne Rooney) since the Premier League began in 1992-93. It also set another unwanted record for City boss Pep Guardiola, as it was the first time in his managerial career that he's lost four league matches in a row.



Braydon's on the ball



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

Liverpool gave a powerful display against Man City on Sunday afternoon, which further strengthened their position at the top of the table, while City's search for a win continues. The Reds started the game well and attacked City from the start, taking the lead with a goal from Cody Gakpo before missing a host of chances to add to that lead. City offered little going forward and Mo Salah sealed the game from the penalty spot to put them 11 points clear of City, who now sit in fifth following their unexpected run of bad form. It looks like a mountain to climb for City, but don't write them off just yet, as they've definitely managed to climb those big mountains before. A good week for Arne Slot but much to do for Pep Guardiola.



Salah makes it 2-0 from the penalty spot

Arsenal moved into second place with another dominant display, this one coming at the expense of West Ham. All the goals came in the first half, and from seven different scorers, as Arsenal won 5-2. The Gunners are spreading the goals throughout the side and that's always a sign of a good team that's playing well. Bukayo Saka and Martin Ødegaard were again at the heart of Arsenal's creativity and they'll believe that they still have a big say in the title race.

Free-scoring Brentford continued their impressive home form with another solid performance against Leicester, where their 4-1 win included a hat-trick from Kevin Schade.

Another player who takes **Centre Stage** with a hat-trick was Bournemouth's Justin Kluivert, but unusually all of his came from the penalty spot (see left). An incredible record for him that is unlikely to be beaten for quite a while!

Other results worth noting were Chelsea's 3-0 win over Aston Villa and Ruben Amorim completing a positive week at Man United with a 4-0 win over Everton.

Braydon's Team of The Week: Liverpool. Clear at the top, with victories over Real Madrid and City in the space of a few days.

Braydon's Player of The Week: Justin Kluivert. A hat-trick of penalties – one for the record books!

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

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