

NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR\*



# First News

2.6M READERS\*

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NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT  
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS

## LUKE HITS THE BULLSEYE



by editor in chief Nicky Cox MBE

**LUKE Littler's darts success has started a worldwide craze for the sport.**

Last week, 17-year-old Luke 'The Nuke' became the youngest darts world champion in history in a 7-3 victory over Michael van Gerwen at Alexandra Palace. More than 3.7 million TV viewers saw him lift the trophy. His life – and the sport – has gone crazy.

Luke has become so famous he trended higher than the prime minister and the King in Google's most searched people list in the UK in 2024. He was behind only Catherine, Princess of Wales, and Donald Trump!

Littler darts, boards, cabinets and shirts are being snapped up in big numbers. At Christmas more than 100,000 children opened Littler-branded magnetic dartboards as presents. Luke's backers include a clothing range, cereal firm and

train company, and he has appeared in a remake of TV darts show *Bullseye*.

Now, everyone wants to have a go at playing darts, too! Across the country, darts has become one of the fastest growing sports with children. The number of academies for children under the age of 16 has doubled in the last year, says Junior Darts Corporation chairman Steve Brown.

"We've seen so many inquiries from around the world, it's been such a boom," said Mr Brown.

Despite Luke's £500,000 world championship prize money, to add to his winnings of £1,081,000 in 2024, his feet seem firmly on the ground. He told reporters that he'd only treated himself to a new bag!

And he's not getting big-headed: "It's not a normal 17-year-old's life," said Luke. "People might say I'm the best at the minute but I'll never admit I'm the best player."

INSIDE!



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**FIRST LOOK!**

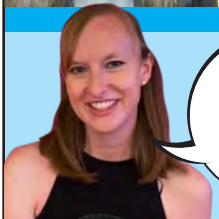
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## MEET THE TEAM



Editor in Chief  
Nicky Cox



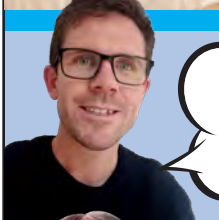
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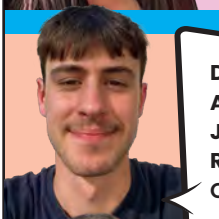
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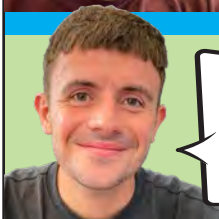
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# HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



istock

## FINNISH SCHOOLS TO BAN PHONES

Finland is set to ban mobile devices in schools from August. A government bill, unveiled by Minister of Education Anders Adlercreutz, aims to help students focus better on learning. Teachers would be able to take phones away if students use them during lessons, but schools could decide their own rules about phones during break times. While most schools in big cities like Helsinki already have phone bans, this law would widen the ban to all Finnish schools. Students who need their phones for medical or special learning needs will be allowed to use them.

THEY SAID THAT!



*"This plan will deliver millions more appointments, and greater choice and convenience for patients."*

– Sir Keir Starmer

## STARMER PROMISES TO CUT NHS WAITING LISTS

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has announced plans to cut waiting times for hospital treatments in England from 18 months to 18 weeks over five years. He said patients would be able to get medical tests and scans during evenings and weekends at local health centres. The centres would be open seven days a week, with the aim of creating two million more appointments by next year.



Getty

## STARS HONOURED IN NEW YEAR LIST

More than 1,200 people, including England football coach Gareth Southgate and writer Jacqueline Wilson, have been given special awards by King Charles in the New Year Honours. Southgate, who led England to two Euro finals, has been knighted, while Jacqueline Wilson, who wrote the *Tracy Beaker* books, has been made a Dame. Olympic athletes, including runner Keely Hodgkinson, heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson and swimmer Duncan Scott, were also honoured.

## MRBEAST GETS ENGAGED



Getty

The world's most popular YouTuber MrBeast has announced his engagement to fellow content creator Thea Booysen, after proposing on Christmas Day. The 26-year-old internet star, whose real name is Jimmy Donaldson, chose a private moment to pop the question while Thea's family was visiting. The couple plans to have a small wedding on a remote island with close family and friends, rather than the extravagant events MrBeast is famous for creating on his channel, which has more than 340 million subscribers.

## UK'S EDUCATION GAP GROWING

A difference in education and skills around the country has been highlighted in a report by the Learning and Work Institute. It says that, if the trend continues, by 2035 around seven out of ten people in London will have a university degree, compared to three in ten in Hull and East Yorkshire. Experts say this is because London attracts many skilled workers, making it harder for other regions to catch up. The government is trying to fix this by creating a new organisation called Skills England to help more people get training and education.



## TRANSPLANT GIVES WOMAN "SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE"

A woman who was given a liver transplant after advanced bowel cancer spread to it is now free of the disease. Bianca Perea, 32, from Manchester, is the first person in the UK to undergo this type of surgery. After lots of treatment, including special drugs and chemotherapy, doctors removed the bowel tumour, but her liver still showed signs of the disease. A liver donor was found last summer and a transplant successfully carried out. Bianca was able to drive and walk her dogs just four weeks after surgery and is now completely cancer-free. "I've been given a second chance at life," she said.

## RAINFOREST AT FLOWER SHOW



The Wildlife Trusts plan to build a lush garden at the Chelsea Flower Show this May to show people what British rainforests look like and why we need to save them. The garden will have a wooden walkway where visitors can walk through the mossy ground and see a waterfall. It will be filled with British plants like silver birch trees and ferns, and colourful flowers like bluebells. Rainforests used to make up a fifth of the country (20%) but now only cover 1%. The garden aims to inspire people to help bring these forests back and show everyone how special they are.



## SCURVY HITS POOREST IN FRANCE

Rising food prices in France have led to the return of scurvy. The disease is caused by a lack of vitamin C, which is found in fresh fruit and vegetables. French doctors are seeing more kids get sick with the illness, and are worried that families who can't afford healthy food are being forced to eat cheaper processed foods instead. The problem has increased since Covid-19, and been made worse by a 15% rise in food prices last year. Scurvy, which causes tiredness and bleeding gums, was common among sailors centuries ago because of little fresh food.



## RIVERDANCE TURNS 30!

Famous Irish dance show *Riverdance* is celebrating its 30th birthday, with a cast who weren't even born when it started. The phenomenon began as a short performance during the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest, and has grown into a worldwide hit. The show has created quite a family among its cast over the years, producing 70 marriages and 130 children – three of whom have performed in the show!



## LONDON AGAIN NAMED EUROPE'S MOST JAMMED CITY

London has kept its unwanted title as Europe's most traffic-heavy city for the fourth year running, with drivers wasting more than four days stuck in jams last year. A new report from transport research company Inrix shows that London drivers spent 101 hours in traffic during 2024, slightly up on the year before. Paris came second with 97 hours of delays, while Dublin took third place with 81 hours.



## LONDON ZOO'S ANNUAL COUNT

London Zoo's annual animal count has shown a successful year for breeding endangered species, with new arrivals including baby gorillas and lion cubs joining the zoo family. The count, on 3 January, involved zookeepers checking on more than 10,000 animals from tiny frogs to tall giraffes. While counting big animals was straightforward, keepers had a trickier time with smaller creatures like the dozens of honeybees living at the zoo.

## CHARITY HELPS KIDS IN HYGIENE POVERTY

A charity set up by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown is stepping up its work to help children who can't afford basic toiletries like soap and toothpaste. The charity, Multibank, works with sports clubs across the UK to collect hygiene products. During Christmas, thousands of items were donated at sports events. Online shopping company Amazon has also promised to give 250,000 hygiene products to the charity. The project started after teachers said they were spending their own money to buy toiletries for pupils who couldn't afford them. Mr Brown says these donations will help children feel more confident at school.



### ● VEGANUARY MONTH OF JANUARY

The campaign aims to inspire people to try a meat and dairy-free diet based on plants such as vegetables, grains, nuts and fruits. See p23.

### ● MAHAYANA NEW YEAR 14 JANUARY

The traditional Buddhist New Year celebration.



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



Emma Nicholls/Oxford University Museum of Natural History

## HUGE TRAIL OF DINO PRINTS FOUND

**THE UK's biggest ever dinosaur footprint site has been discovered in a quarry in Oxfordshire.**

Almost 200 dino footprints, dating from over 166 million years ago, were found in Dewars Farm Quarry. Gary Johnson, a quarry worker, came across them with his digger, so his boss alerted researchers.

After a full excavation by more than 100 scientists, students and volunteers, five different dino tracks were unearthed – with one as long as 150m!

The tracks appear to show two different types of dinosaurs criss-crossing each other – a long-necked, plant-eating dino called a *Cetiosaurus* and a smaller meat-eating one called a *Megalosaurus*.

"This is one of the most impressive track sites I've ever seen, in terms of scale, in terms of the size of the tracks," said Professor Kirsty Edgar, a micropalaeontologist (someone who studies very small fossils) from the University of Birmingham. She added: "You can step back in time and get an idea of what it would have been like, these massive creatures just roaming around, going about their own business."

Experts believe there could be even more tracks still to discover. They're now working with the company that operates the quarry, as well as Natural England, to try to preserve the site.



Emma Nicholls/Oxford University Museum of Natural History

One of the dinosaur footprints

## Child soldier numbers rise

**THE use of child soldiers is increasing across the world, says the United Nations (UN).**

Armed groups are recruiting children – especially girls – to use in armed conflicts in countries including Colombia, Mozambique, Syria, Sudan and Ukraine, as well as in Gaza.

Virginia Gamba, a UN expert in children and war, has called for better protection for all children, saying: "As we move into 2025, let us choose compassion over indifference and peace over war."

Last year marked the 35th anniversary of a UN commitment to protect children's rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. An extra section came into force in 2002 aimed at preventing under-18s being recruited as soldiers.



Getty

## Boy survives five days lost in wild park

**A YOUNG boy has survived five days in a game park in Zimbabwe, living among lions and elephants.**

Tinotenda Pudu, aged seven, ended up in the dangerous Matusadona National Park (a protected area for wild animals), after wandering 49km (30 miles) from home.

A member of the Zimbabwean parliament, Mutsa Murombedzi, shared the ordeal on her X account, writing that Tinotenda had been "sleeping on a rocky perch, amid roaring lions, passing elephants, eating wild fruits." He'd used his survival skills to stay alive.

A search party was sent out to look for the missing boy, but he was eventually rescued by park rangers, when Tinotenda heard their car.

Matusadona National Park



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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

**WE campaigned in First News against the use of child soldiers 15 years ago.**

Nicky Cox MBE



So this week's news that the use of children as fighters in adult wars is increasing is hard to hear (this page).

Children deserve to grow up in safety, with the chance to play, learn and dream.

Every child has the right to be protected from war and violence. Instead of holding weapons, children should be holding books, toys and the hands of friends and family.

We must all use our voices and work together to protect children, give them hope and help them to grow up in peace.



## Norway

ALMOST 89% of new cars bought in Norway last year were electric. That means the country only needs just over 10% more to reach its goal of going fully electric by 2025. Norway has been encouraging road users to choose electric cars by offering free parking in public car parks and the use of public transport traffic lanes.



## Stormzy

THE rapper has been banned from driving for nine months after he was caught using his phone at the wheel. Stormzy, whose real name is Michael Ebenazer Owuo Junior, pleaded guilty to using his phone while driving in London last March. A judge said his actions were "dangerous and irresponsible".

## 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.



# MARATHON MAGIC!

WOW!



A BELGIAN woman has earned herself a serious rest after running a marathon every single day in 2024.

Usually, that would be a total of 365 marathons – but Hilde Dosogne, aged 55, ran 366, because it was a leap year!

Overall, she ran almost 15,444 kilometres (9,596 miles), raising around £50,000 for breast cancer research in the process.

Crossing the line in the city of Ghent on New Year's Eve, she said: "I'm glad it's over."

DID YOU KNOW?

THE total distance that Hilde ran in 2024 is even further than the distance from the UK to Australia!

Hilde is the first woman to run a marathon every day for a year!

## Fireworks fib fools thousands



Centenary Square in Birmingham

THOUSANDS of fireworks fans showed up to a fake New Year display in Birmingham that had been promoted by artificial intelligence (AI).

AI-generated articles spread online, advertising a made-up midnight show that was supposedly being held in the city's Centenary Square to celebrate the new year.

One of the fake news articles promised "a mix of performances, local food vendors and a spectacular midnight show". Another said it would be "one of the most spectacular New Year's Eve fireworks displays in the country, and definitely the biggest in Birmingham!"

Even though West Midlands Police had warned locals that no event was planned, the fake articles led crowds of people, including kids, to squeeze into the square, only to be left disappointed.

## UK buzzing over cleanest-ever electricity

THE electricity we used in the UK in 2024 was cleaner and friendlier to the planet than ever!

This is because the country is burning less fossil fuel than it used to, and is using more clean energy sources instead, like solar and wind power, to generate its electricity.

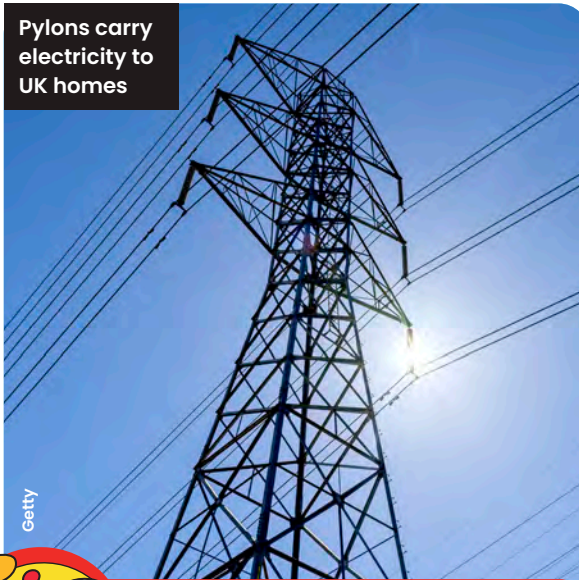
Research by Carbon Brief shows that more than half (58%) of the electricity generated in the UK in 2024 came from clean energy sources. However,

that's still some way short of the government's target, which is to generate 95% of the country's power from clean energy sources by 2030.

The UK's last coal-fired power station closed in September.

Gas-fired power stations are still our main source of electricity, but wind is the UK's fastest-growing energy source, and several new offshore wind farms are due to open over the next two years.

Pylons carry electricity to UK homes



DID YOU KNOW?

THE UK is generating less than half as much electricity from burning fossil fuels than it was ten years ago.



Jabbar

## ATTACK IN NEW ORLEANS

AN act of terror was committed in the US city of New Orleans on New Year's Day when a man drove a pick-up truck into a crowd.

The FBI described the attack, which killed 14 people and injured at least 39 others, as an "evil act". It happened on a busy street in the city's French Quarter. An American citizen, Shamsud-Din Jabbar, is the only suspect.

He was shot dead by police at the scene.

### Who was the suspect?

Jabbar, aged 42, was from Texas. He served in the US Army but, in videos filmed before the attack, declared his support for a terrorist group called Islamic State (IS). Police searched his phones, laptop and the Airbnb that he'd stayed at for evidence. They also found an IS flag in the pick-up truck.

### Who were the victims?

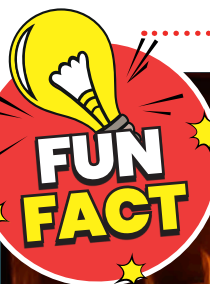
The 14 people killed included a trainee nurse, an American college football player and one British man – Edward Pettifer, from London.

### How have people reacted?

President Joe Biden flew to New Orleans to support the families of the victims and told them: "You are not alone." Donald Trump said the attack made a "laughing stock" of the US and appeared to blame it on immigrants, even though the suspect was an American.

Locals held memorials for the victims and laid flowers and messages at the scene.

The street has re-opened now.



Log on, feel festive!

CAN you guess what the hottest thing to watch on Netflix over Christmas was?

It wasn't a festive family film, a Christmas classic or even any of the Harry Potter movies – it was hour-long footage of a log fireplace, snap-crackle-and-popping away.

It was the streaming platform's most-watched show on Boxing Day in the UK, creating traditional, heart-warming vibes in living rooms across the country.



## Saundersfoot, Wales



All images: Getty

WHAT better way to celebrate the new year than by dressing up as an inflatable shark and going for a dip?! Lots of people around the world take part in New Year's Day swims for charity.

## Hong Kong, China



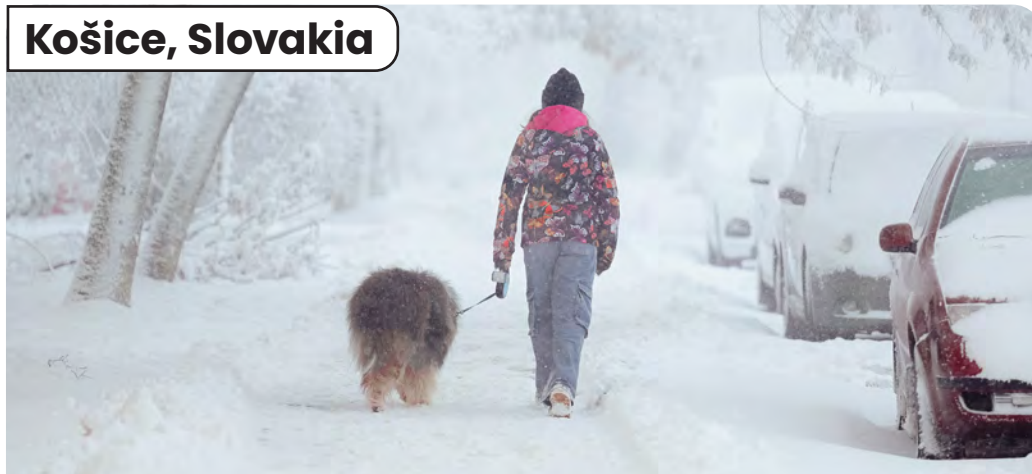
A SEVEN-METRE-TALL Mickey Mouse inflatable sends its best wishes to visitors.

## Manchester, UK



MUCH of the UK saw heavy rain at the start of the year, with cars trapped and homes evacuated.

## Košice, Slovakia



SLOVAKIA'S second biggest city, Košice, saw snow due to a rather odd reason. This snowfall formed as the result of a combination of low temperatures, humid air and emissions from a nearby steel plant's cooling towers. The city's surrounding areas didn't get any snow!



**Harbin, China**



LOTS of cute snowmen have been created to greet visitors in Harbin, the home of the world's largest ice and snow theme park.

**Beijing, China**



BEIJING brings in the new year with a giant ball decorated in flowers.

**London, UK**



**Paris, France**



**New York, USA**



**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**



NEW year celebrations from major cities around the world.



## ISLE OF MULL

### Shake it off

Homes across western Scotland have been shaken by a 2.9 magnitude earthquake. Magnitude scales are used to describe the strength or “size” of an earthquake. The 2.9 magnitude quake, which was centred at Kinloch, wasn’t strong enough to cause damage, but was felt in Oban and on the Isle of Mull. The British Geological Survey (BGS) detects about 300 quakes every year in the UK, but only about 30 are felt or heard by people. This was a natural phenomenon, unlike in June last year when Taylor Swift (inset) performed in Edinburgh. Then, it was the dancing of her fans that was picked up by the BGS!



Tremors were felt on the Isle of Mull

## The stars of Harry Potter



## NORTH YORKSHIRE

### Find fave film spots

Film fans in North Yorkshire unite! A trail showcasing TV and movie locations in the region is opening this year. A campaign called Starring North Yorkshire aims to boost tourism in the region. Created by Visit North Yorkshire, it will highlight spots that feature in blockbuster movies. One of these is North Yorkshire Moors Railway, which Tom Cruise visited for filming on *Mission Impossible 7*, as well as being a location for the Harry Potter series. The young wizard also visited Malham Cove – another location on the trail.

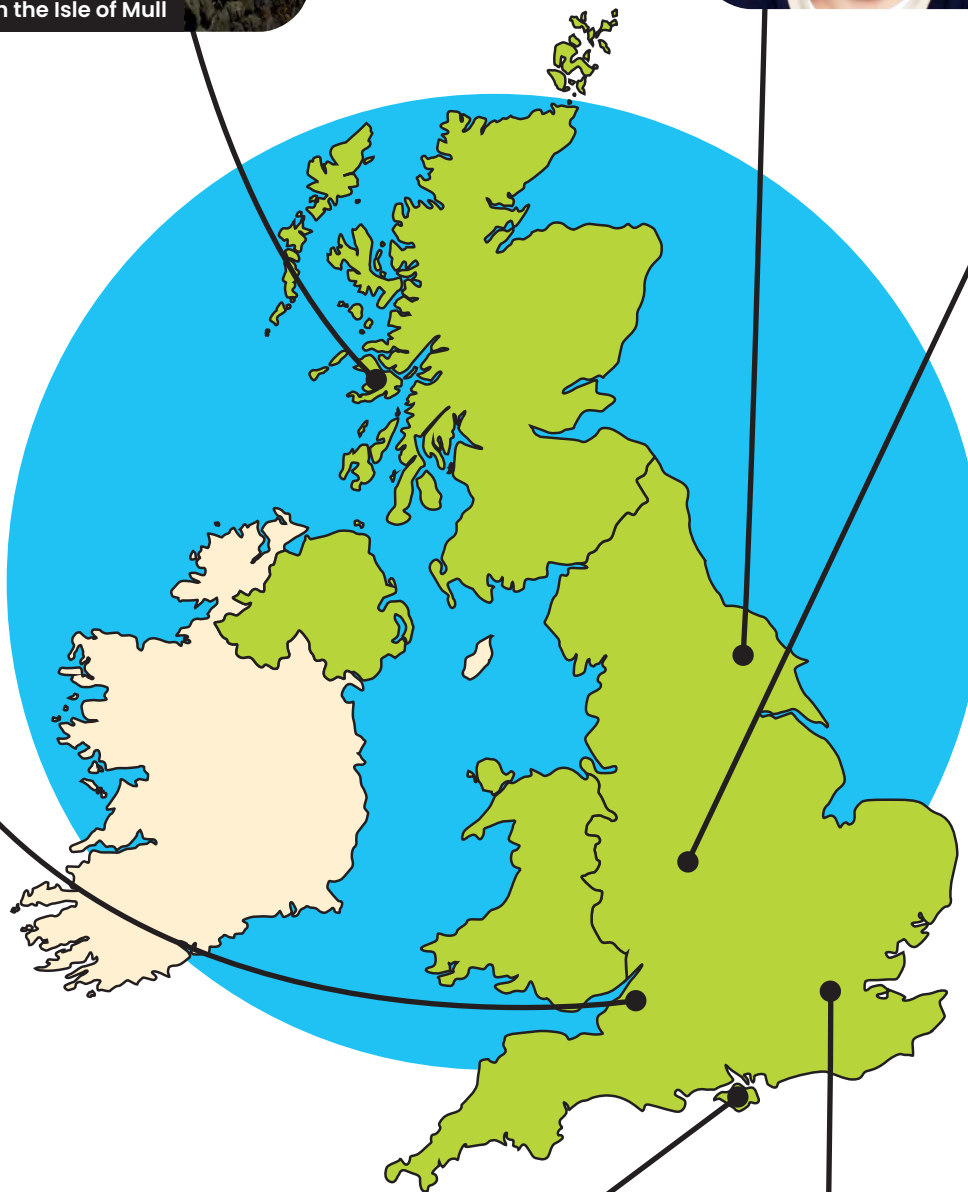
## A good roast to boast!



## BRISTOL

### Roast winner

A pub’s roast dinner bookings for the whole of 2025 have sold out in just 13 minutes. The Bank Tavern is famous for its huge Sunday roast, topped off with an impressive Yorkshire pudding. People from all over the world have travelled to try it, and the pub will be packed this year too. On its Instagram page, the pub announced that its website crashed due to the number of people trying to book. For those who missed out, cancelled spots will become available, or you’ll have to wait until 2026!



## WOLVERHAMPTON

### Padel power

Wolverhampton Lawn Tennis & Squash Club has submitted plans for three new indoor padel courts. Padel is a mix of tennis and squash that started in Mexico in 1969. But while tennis is focused on power, padel is more about strategy. Its popularity in the UK has soared in recent years, with the number of courts rising from 50 in 2019 to 500 by the end of 2023. Speaking to *First News* in September, Tia Norton, the British No 2 padel player, said: “Padel is one of those sports where, if you pick up a racquet, you’re going to learn and get better instantly.”

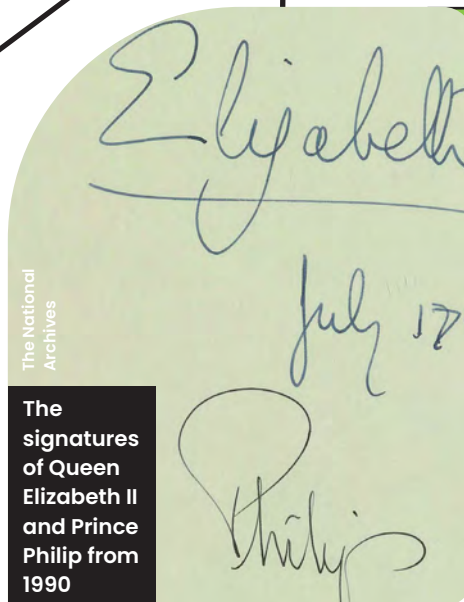


Padel is the new sporting craze in the UK

## ISLE OF WIGHT

### False teeth left on ferry

False teeth, a banjo and a child’s potty were just some of the 2,447 items left behind by passengers travelling on Wightlink ferries in 2024. The ferries take people between the south coast and the Isle of Wight. While the most common lost property items were sunglasses and scarves, there were lots of unusual items too. These included a packet of Hobnobs, a road bike and a bag of shopping! Wightlink says anything left behind by the four million people who use its ferries each year is kept for a month before being recycled or destroyed.



The signatures of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip from 1990

## LONDON

### Royal signature reveal

Visitor books featuring famous signatures have been released by the government for the first time. They provide an insight into the world leaders and other important figures who passed through the doors of 10 Downing Street, the home of the prime minister, from 1970 to 2003. Two people who signed the book on many occasions were the late Queen Elizabeth II and her husband Philip, the late Duke of Edinburgh. The books have been released now thanks to something called the 20-year rule. This requires the government to transfer records of historical value to The National Archives up to 20 years after their publication.





# BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH RETURNS



**THE world's largest garden wildlife survey returns to the UK this month.**

The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch will take place from 24 to 26 January, and asks people to spend an hour counting birds in their gardens, from their balconies or in local parks.

Last year's count saw an impressive turnout, with more than 600,000 people spotting nearly ten

million birds.

House sparrows topped the 2024 list, although their numbers have dropped by 60% since the count began in 1979.

The project helps scientists track changes in bird populations and understand how our feathered friends are coping with environmental challenges.

*First News'* Aneeshwar Kunchala will be taking part this year. He said: "It is very important for you to get involved because you see these birds in your garden every day. So, it's easy to help both the RSPB and birds. It is also fun and it gives an opportunity to spend time outdoors."

You can sign up for the Birdwatch at [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk).

## Manatees are new to Florida

**RESEARCHERS** have discovered that Florida's beloved manatees, also known as sea cows, are actually recent visitors to the state, arriving just after waters warmed up in the late 1700s.

Work by experts in the US claims that these gentle giants weren't originally from Florida at all, but only occasional visitors from warmer Caribbean waters. They only started to live near Florida when temperatures began rising after a long cold period called the Little Ice Age, which lasted from about 1300 to the 1800s.

With around 10,000 manatees left in Florida's waters, this new understanding of their history could help to better protect them.

Scientists say creating more warm-water spots for manatees could be key to their survival, as older power plants, which currently release warm water into the ocean, begin to close.



## New eel discovery

**SCIENTISTS** have discovered a new species of eel that lives in dark, muddy rivers across parts of Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

A team of researchers from Taiwan, Japan and the Philippines found the unusual creature while looking for a different type of eel.

The new species, named *Uropterygius hades*, or Hades' snake moray (after the Greek god of the underworld), has unique features that help it survive in cloudy waters.

Unlike most eels that live in the sea, this dark brown eel prefers river mouths. It digs tail-first into the mud and doesn't like bright light.

Instead of using its small eyes to find food, it uses special sensors to detect chemicals in the water.

The findings were published in the journal *ZooKeys*.



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...

## HUMPBACK WHALE



**HABITAT:**

Oceans all around the world.

**FUN FACT:**

They are one of the mammals with the largest migrations, travelling thousands of miles.

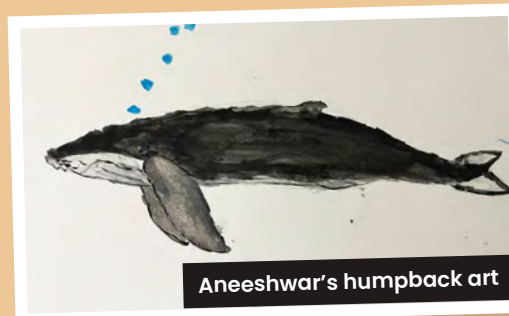
**SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:**

They sing long, complex songs, most likely to communicate and attract a mate.

**CONSERVATION STATUS:**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature says that the humpback whale is of least concern.

Aneeshwar has a new book out called *Adventures of a Young Naturalist: The Arctic Expedition*. It's available at [aneeshwarkunchala.com](http://aneeshwarkunchala.com).



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.





# A RED-HOT RECORD!

NASA

ON Christmas Eve, NASA's Parker Solar Probe made history by passing closer to the surface of the sun than any other human-made object in history.

The spacecraft is allowing us to get the best ever scientific measurements of our star, and maybe help us to learn which stars in outer space could have habitable planets around them.

To guard the probe's instruments from the sun's intense heat, they're protected by a shield that can withstand temperatures of up to 1,377°C.

"Flying this close to the sun is a historic moment in humanity's first mission to a star," said NASA's Nicky Fox.

AS well as setting a record for a close approach to the sun, Parker was also travelling "faster than any human-made object has ever moved," NASA said. It whizzed past the sun at an incredible 430,000mph (692,000km/h). That's more than 1,800 times faster than the top speed ever reached in an F1 car on the track, 234.9mph (378km/h), set by Valtteri Bottas during qualifying for the 2016 Grand Prix in Baku.



## Oasis of power

SATELLITE images have shown a small part of the progress that China is making towards building a 'Solar Great Wall' that can provide clean power for Beijing's 20 million residents.

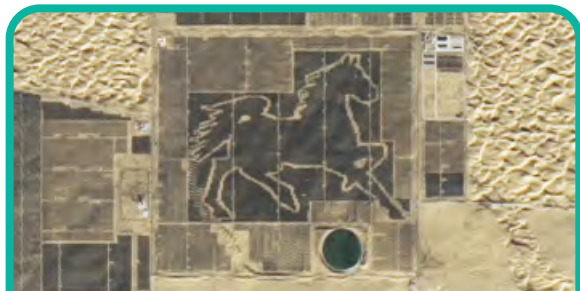
These two images were taken seven years apart, in December 2017 and last month, and each one is around 25km (15.5 miles) across.

The epic project is set to stretch 400km (250 miles) across the Kubuqi Desert in China's Inner Mongolia region. When it's finished in 2030, it's expected to produce around 180,000GWh of electricity per year, which is 44,200GWh more than Beijing used in 2023.

Lots of power for the city currently comes from dirty fossil fuels such as coal, which is part of the reason why air pollution there is so bad.

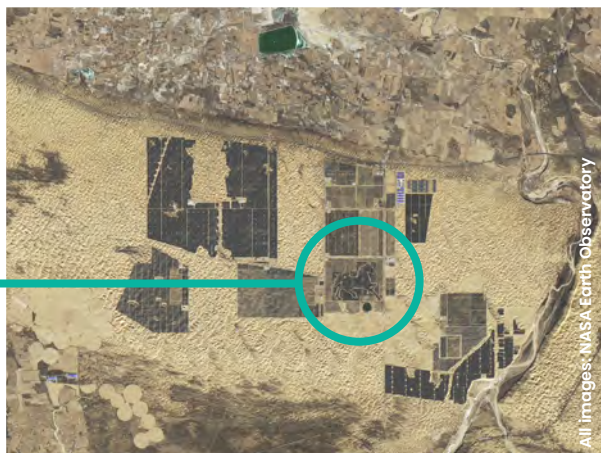
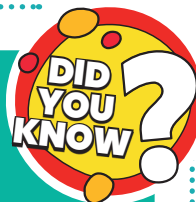
### Holding back the desert

As well as reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and air pollution, the Solar Great Wall will also help to stop the desert spreading. That's because grasses and other plants are being sown around the base of the panels, and their roots will help to hold the soil in place.



One of the solar farms in the picture set a Guinness World Record for the largest image made of solar panels. The picture of a horse takes up just under 140 hectares, or 200 football pitches!

THE International Energy Agency expects solar power to be providing more of the world's energy than any fossil fuel by 2027. By next year, solar should be making more energy than gas, and will overtake coal in 2027.



The area has been transformed from empty desert to an important source of clean power

This report is from the Science Museum in London

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

WHAT is this wooden box with a cable and a switch? It's the ancestor of an object we still use today – a computer mouse.

With two metal wheels hidden under its shell, this mouse was first imagined in the 1960s by American engineer Douglas Engelbart, who wanted to make computer use more efficient. At the time, people used light pens (which were tiring for users as they had to keep lifting their arms to the monitor), or joysticks like you might have used for videogames.

The mouse became a quick success as it was easier to use, leading to fewer mistakes. While no-one knows exactly when it started being called a mouse, the name it received due to its tail-like wire is still the one we use today.



A replica of the 1963 mouse prototype (an early test version of a product)



# THIS IS YOUTH!

## A CELEBRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE



Would you like to do the DofE Award one day? You can find out more at [www.dofe.org](http://www.dofe.org)

The This is Youth winners with the Duke of Edinburgh

THE Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) held its This is Youth celebration this month, recognising the amazing stories behind participants completing the award. We decided to find out more.

### What is The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and who is it for?

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) was launched by HRH Prince Philip (King Charles' dad) back in 1956 to support young people. Today, it inspires thousands of people aged 14 to 24 to explore who they are, grow in confidence and develop the skills they need to successfully get through life. Participants build their own programmes, choosing activities and a cause to volunteer for in order to achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE Award – and have a lot of fun along the way!

The DofE is offered in schools, colleges, community organisations, hospitals, prisons and more, all over the UK.

### Who were the celebrity judges?

This year's This is Youth celebrity judges were McFly's Harry Judd and mum Emma Judd, *Harry Potter* actor Oliver Phelps, athlete and TV *Gladiator* Jodie Ounsley, SAS: *Who Dares Wins* star Jason Fox, influencer Fats Timbo, high-profile chef Jon Watts and broadcaster Karthi Gnanasegaram.

### How many categories were there?

There were seven categories, five of which recognise the achievements of young people, and two that recognise the achievements of adults who volunteer for DofE.



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has half a million participants (like Rosa, pictured) and nearly 40,000 volunteers!

### How were the winners recognised?

The This is Youth winners were celebrated at a star-studded event hosted by the current Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward, at Buckingham Palace, where they shared their stories – and afternoon tea – with the Duke and some of the celebrity judges.



Six Derbyshire police cadets have been awarded

## MEET THE YOUNG WINNERS

### ■ **Boundary Breaker of the Year: Rosa Ross, 14, from Edinburgh**

Rosa was determined not to let her stage four non-Hodgkin lymphoma diagnosis stop her from doing her DofE. She used her DofE activities to support young cancer patients while going through weeks of intense treatment herself. She helped to reduce other young cancer patients' isolation by organising ward activities to bring them together and also provided support to those worried about hair loss.

### ■ **All-Stars of the Year: Police cadets, Clarissa, Bethan, Amelie, Emilia, Rosie and Teri, 14-15, from Derbyshire**

The group's DofE preparation and training potentially saved a participant's life! Teri collapsed while on the group's expedition and her friends quickly acted by elevating her legs and head, keeping her warm and checking her heart rate and breathing. This was all while calmly communicating the situation with emergency services via their DofE Leader.

### ■ **Innovator of the Year: Josh Ellicott, 17, from Cornwall**

Josh designs recycled fabric clothing for himself, and to support disabled participants to go on their DofE Expedition.

### ■ **Change Maker of the Year: Dora Abbi, 17, from Reading**

Dora goes above and beyond to 'give back' to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, organising care packages for patients and speaking up for young people's needs via the hospital's Youth Forum. She also volunteers at a local care home and food bank.

### ■ **Trailblazer of the Year: Harry Jones, 18, from Great Missenden**

Harry is an inspirational leader to other students at his special educational needs school. Through his DofE, he has overcome speech and language difficulties and pushed himself out of his comfort zone to not only complete his Gold Award, but encourage others to go above and beyond what they think is possible to complete their own DofE.



DofE participant Dora packs care packages for Royal Berkshire Hospital

### What is the This is Youth celebration?

This is Youth recognises the amazing stories behind The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, from those who have shown great teamwork and innovation to those who have overcome personal challenges. It aims to celebrate the astonishing things that young people achieve and the dedication of the adult volunteers who support them.

Now in its second year, This is Youth received hundreds of nominations across seven categories, with the final winners chosen by panels including DofE Youth Ambassadors and celebrity judges.



## ONE MILLION POUND TUNA

A GIANT bluefin tuna has sold for an incredible 207 million yen (£1 million) at a famous fish market in Tokyo, Japan.

The annual New Year auction always creates lots of excitement,

and buying the first tuna of the year is said to bring good luck.

The Onodera Group, which owns fancy sushi restaurants, bought the massive fish. The tuna weighs 276kg and is about the size and weight of

a motorbike!

It was only the second-highest price ever paid for a New Year's tuna, but shows a big recovery from recent years, when tuna prices were much lower during Covid-19.

## A brie-lliant idea?!



HOW would you go about catching a cheese thief?

One restaurant owner got so fed up with someone pinching his cheese deliveries that he came up with a brie-lliant plan to catch the culprit.

David Straker, who runs the William & Victoria restaurant in Harrogate, decided to hide an Apple AirTag in a wheel of brie to track down where it was being taken. The tracking device was connected to Mr Straker's phone and showed it moving around Yorkshire before finally coming to a halt around Knarsborough.

Although Straker was able to identify the cheese's location, he couldn't decide whether to alert the police or leave it. He wrote on his restaurant's website: "Next time you see a suspicious cyclist with a backpack full of dairy, spare a thought for us and our lost brie."

For now, the adventures of the missing cheese continue, but the publicity should help to make the thief think twice and protect a local business.

## THAT'S CHRISTMAS CRACKED!

LIDL supermarket has revealed it made more than a whopping £1bn in sales in the run-up to Christmas 2024. That's a lot of food and drink! Check out these fun facts.

**1** turkey was sold every second between 19 and 24 December.

**16m** British pigs in blankets were sold.

**8m** stuffing balls were sold.

**2m** litres of gravy flew off the shop's shelves.



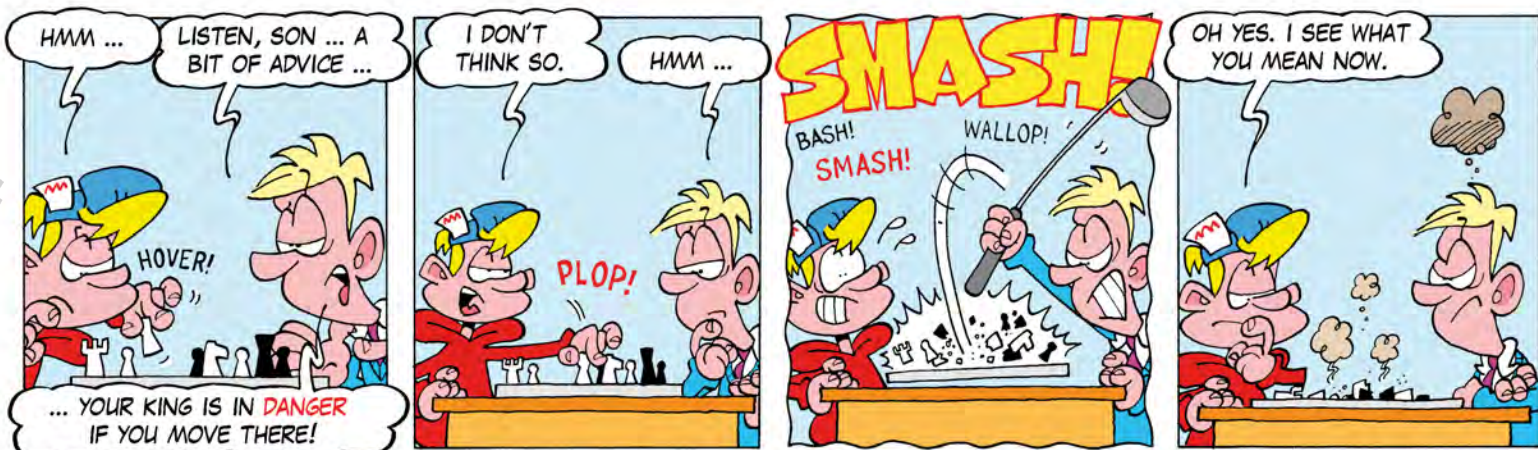
**JOKE OF THE WEEK**

What's the best food to eat in winter?  
**Brrr-itos!**

haha ha

## Paper Boy!

Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer



# THE BIG PICTURE



ANYONE walking along this train platform in Shijiazhuang, China, might think that they've stepped into an episode of *Thomas & Friends*. The retired Dongfeng 4C locomotive has been turned into a tourist attraction, thanks to a pair of glowing eyes and a cosy-looking hat and jumper.



 **USA**

**Former president honoured**

A number of events have taken place to remember former US President Jimmy Carter, who died, aged 100. Mr Carter, who served as president from 1977 to 1981, was due to be honoured with a state funeral in Washington, DC, on 9 January, attended by famous people including current US President Joe Biden and Donald Trump. He was set to be buried the same day in his home town of Plains, Georgia. He will be remembered for his campaign work for peace, the environment and human rights.



 **CANADA**

**Prime minister quits his job**

Canada is seeking a new prime minister. On Monday (6 January), Justin Trudeau stepped down from his post after nearly ten years in the job. Mr Trudeau swept to power in 2015 but people's support for him has crumbled. Last month, less than a quarter of Canadians said they liked his leadership. Even some of his colleagues in the Liberal Party called on him to quit after a surge in support for Pierre Poilievre, leader of the rival Conservative Party. Parliament has been suspended until 24 March to give the Liberal Party time to pick a new leader.



 **AFGHANISTAN**

**Taliban bans windows to keep women hidden**

The Taliban, the extreme Islamist group that controls Afghanistan, has banned certain windows in order to stop women from being seen while they're at home. A new order says that buildings shouldn't have windows that look into "the courtyard, kitchen, neighbour's well and other places usually used by women". Owners of existing buildings with such windows are encouraged to block the view "to avoid nuisances caused to neighbours". Since returning to power in 2021, the Taliban has already banned women and girls from schools and workplaces and stopped them from taking part in sports, and even speaking in public.



**THEY SAID THAT**

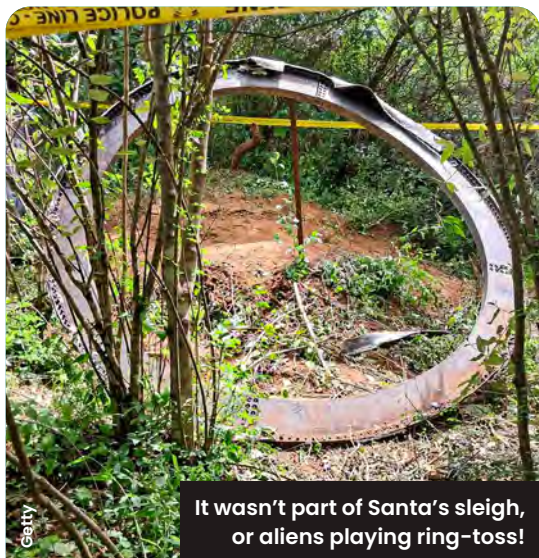
"They're essentially stopping women from even looking out of the window. They are stopping women from being seen. They are stopping women from seeing the world."

— Heather Barr, Human Rights Watch  
Source: *The Independent*

 **KENYA**

**Huge metal ring falls from the sky**

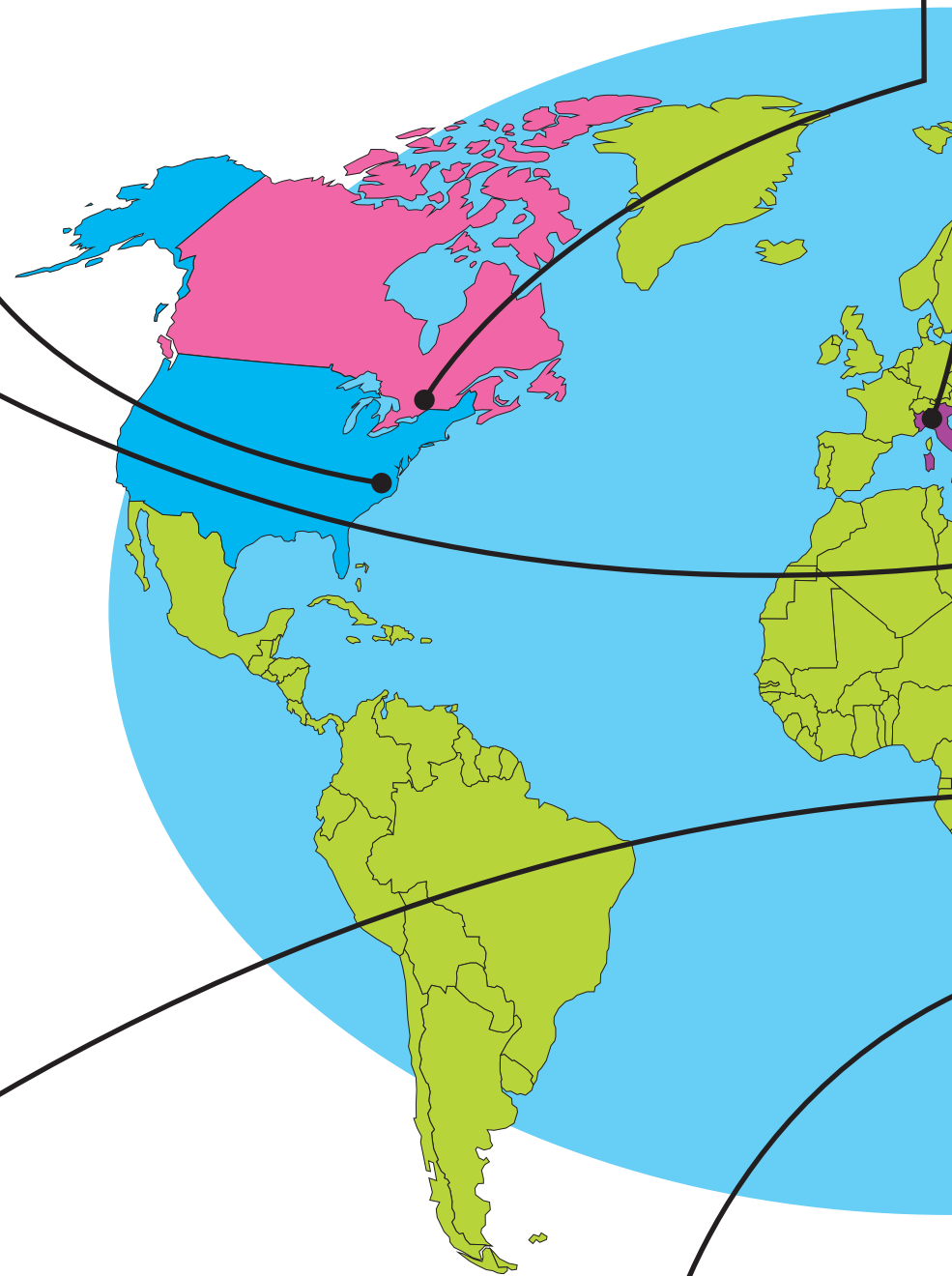
A red-hot metal ring fell from the sky and crash-landed in Mukuku village, in Kenya, over the Christmas holidays. The Kenya Space Agency (KSA) reckon that it's probably a part of a space rocket that fell back to Earth after launch. It's normal for this to happen but, usually, such bits are designed to burn up in the Earth's atmosphere or land in large, empty places like oceans. The KSA said: "Incidents like this are extremely rare." Some other observers believe the ring may be from a plane instead. Either way, it's lucky no villagers were hurt!



 **ZIMBABWE**

**Zimbabwe ditches the death penalty**

Zimbabwe has become the 113th country to abolish (get rid of) the death penalty. It last carried out an execution by hanging way back in 2005, but its courts have continued to dish out death sentences for serious crimes, such as murder. Criminals who were due to die will have their sentences changed. Human rights group Amnesty called the decision to ditch the death penalty a "major milestone" in global efforts to end the "cruel, inhuman punishment".





## ITALY

### Milan bans smoking outdoors

The city of Milan has banned people from smoking cigarettes in “all public spaces, including streets”. Anybody caught doing so could be fined between £30 and £200. The decision is part of a plan to clean up the city’s air and make it a healthier place to live. Smoking at bus stops, children’s playgrounds and outdoor sports facilities has been banned since 2021. However, people are still allowed to smoke in tucked-away places, as long as they’re at least ten metres (33ft) away from other people. Italy’s health ministry says that nearly a quarter of the country’s population are smokers.



Getty



## SOUTH KOREA

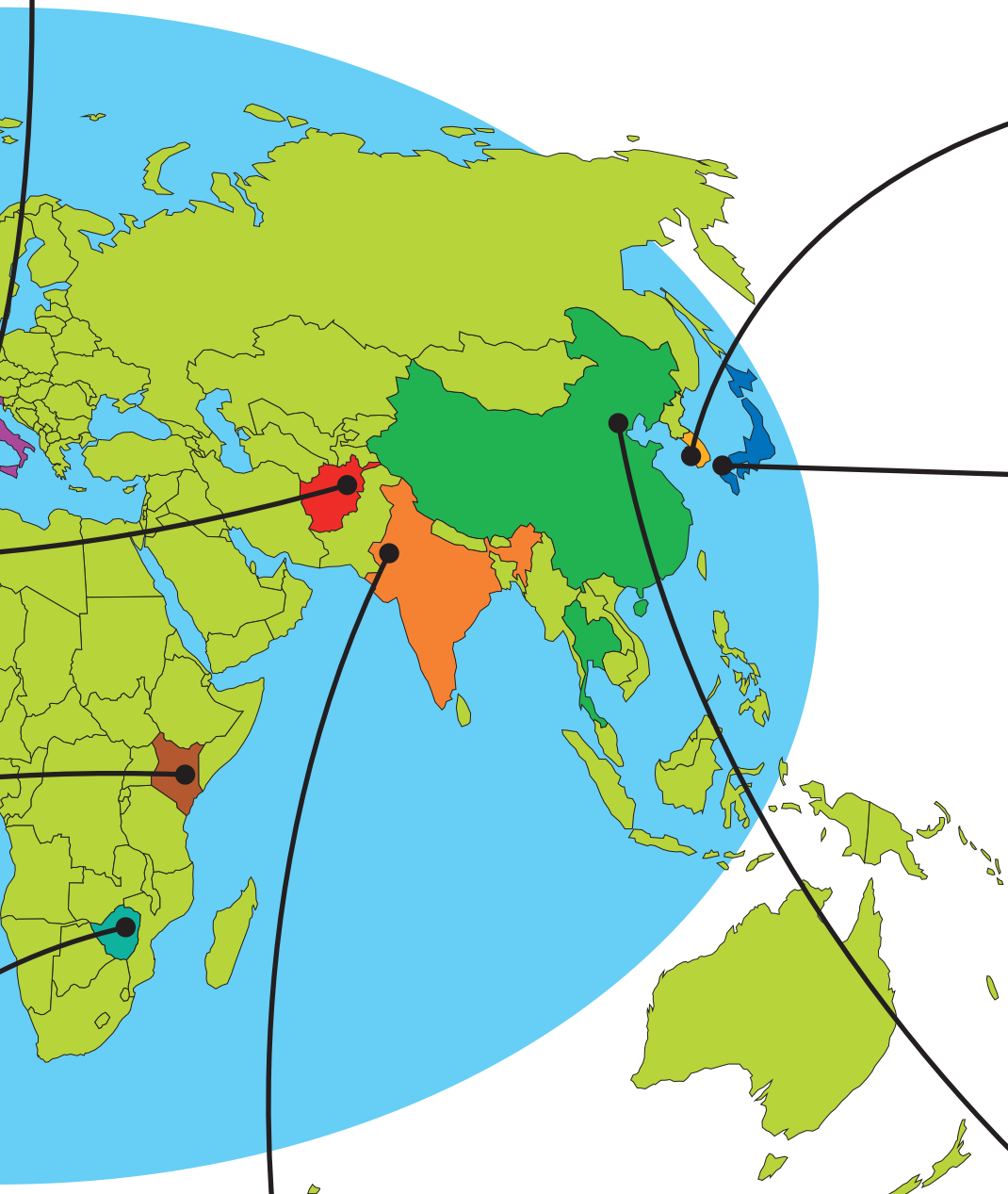


Main: the plane wreckage. Right: respects paid in Seoul

### Investigations into tragic air disaster

Investigations are continuing into the worst air disaster in South Korea’s history. Just two of the 181 people on board a Jeju Air flight from Thailand survived an emergency landing at Muan International Airport on 29 December. The plane’s wheels failed to drop, causing it to skid off the runway and crash into a concrete barrier. It’s possible that the plane had

hit a bird before trying to land, but flight data and recordings from the cockpit are being studied in South Korea and the USA to work out exactly what happened. All Boeing 737-800 planes operated by South Korean airlines are being inspected, too. A memorial altar has been set up in the capital city of Seoul for people to pay their respects to the victims.



## JAPAN

### Toilet maker’s wee seat-wiping warning!

It’s never nice when you’re busting for the toilet, only to find splashes on the seat. Most of us solve the problem by ripping off a piece of toilet paper and wiping it dry – but a major company has warned against doing this. Japanese brand Toto says that, over time, loo roll scratches the plastic resin that its toilet seats are made of, causing them to lose their bright white look. It comes after angry owners complained about their Toto toilet seats changing colour. The company recommends using a soft cloth soaked in water or detergent instead – that’s assuming you can hold on just a little bit longer!



Toilets are a big deal in Japan, famed for their high-tech features



Getty



## CHINA

### Warmest year on record

Last year was China’s warmest year on record, with the average temperature coming in at 10.92°C, which is 1.03°C higher than the average. “The top four warmest years ever were the past four years,” said the China Meteorological Administration. This is since full records began in 1961. China already recorded its hottest month ever in July 2024, as well as the hottest August and the warmest autumn on record. The country not only experienced extreme heat last year, but also severe flooding. Environmental groups have warned it shows the effects of global warming.



China feels the heat



## INDIA

### Sport-loving schoolgirl shoots to fame

A ten-year-old schoolgirl from a small village in northern India has become an overnight sensation after national hero Sachin Tendulkar shared a video of her cricket skills online. Tendulkar said that Sushila Meena’s “smooth” bowling style reminded him of another cricket legend, his ex-team-mate Zaheer Khan. The post went viral, the video was viewed by millions and Sushila is recognised in the streets and is stopped for photographs now. She loves playing for her school team but told the BBC that she doesn’t actually know who Tendulkar is – her family doesn’t own a TV and she’s never watched cricket!



Tendulkar loves Sushila’s skills!



## A NIGHTMARE START TO THE YEAR!

IT'S not a happy new year for Finnegan Quick. Each night, he's haunted by horrible nightmares filled with monsters, from mummies and zombies to goblins and ghosts – and now, his nightmares are coming true! *First News* spoke to author Larry Hayes to find out what's going on.



● **Hi Larry – tell us about *The Nightmares of Finnegan Quick*! It sounds like poor Finn is in a real spot of bother.** Finn dreams that a creature snatches his pet dog, Biscuit. The next morning, Biscuit's gone, and no-one seems to remember him. There isn't even a dog bowl left. Next, creatures take his mum, then his dad. And now they're coming for his gran! On the plus side, if he can just dream up a PS5, that might come true, too.

● **It's a comedy and a horror story at the same time. How do you blend the two?**

I love the rollercoaster, flipping from comedy to creepy and back again. Jokes are funnier when you're afraid, and when you're expecting fun, terror is more horrifying. There's something about the silliness of horror that's funny, too – if a teacher started growing hair in strange places on a full moon, most kids would see the funny side! Finn, Cass and Squid (the main characters) can't stop joking around, even in the face of their freakiest fears.



**"A girl invented a pet hamster that ate people's brains!"**  
– Larry Hayes

● **What would you say is the scariest monster they meet?**

There's a dead woman, who lost her eyes in a terrible accident and is out for revenge. If you're brave enough to look her in the empty eye sockets then you're braver than I am. *The Nightmares of Finnegan Quick* is definitely not for the faint-hearted!

● **How are you at remembering dreams and nightmares?**

I wish I remembered more. Every now and again I have a vampire dream where I'm a total comic-book hero. It's like a videogame but so much better.

### Larry's worst-ever nightmare

"I was a little kid... and it may not even have been a dream! I was sharing a bedroom with my brother, and I woke one night to see a goblin sitting on him – crouched low, and peering down at his head. It was probably just an illusion, but maybe not. I didn't hang around to find out – I was under the duvet in a heartbeat. I never did tell my brother. The goblin is on the cover of the book (above), so hopefully he doesn't read *First News* or it'll definitely freak him out!"



● **You visit schools and create monsters with pupils. What's the scariest monster they've ever come up with?**

Two things stand out in the writing workshops. One, kids are funnier than adults. That's just a fact. And two, they've got better imaginations. They can think up some really creepy stuff. One girl invented a pet hamster that ate people's brains in the night, chewing through their skulls. I've been slightly nervous of our gerbils ever since...



*The Nightmares of Finnegan Quick* is out now.

## Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



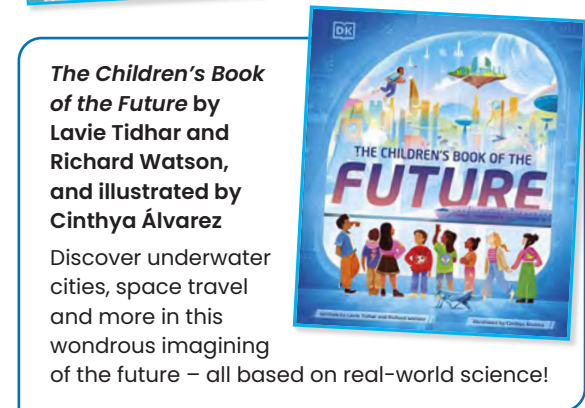
## Looking forward!

AT the start of a brand-new year, it's natural to wonder what the future has in store. These books are all set in the future! Try them, and think about whether they're the type of future you'd enjoy.



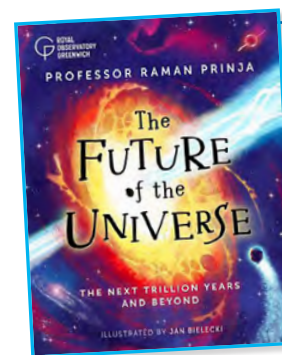
**The Cloud Thief** by James Nicol

In a future world where clouds are bought and sold, can Mara take on the greedy cloud-makers to save her little village?



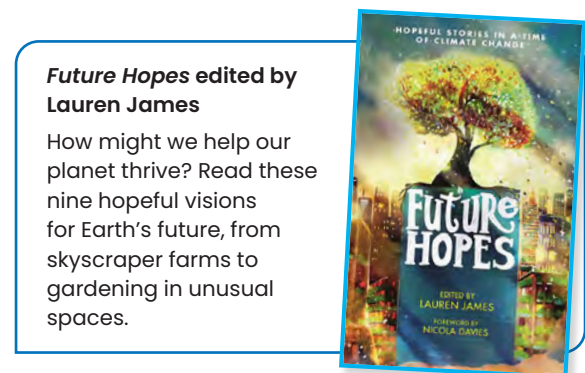
**The Children's Book of the Future** by Lavie Tidhar and Richard Watson, and illustrated by Cinthya Álvarez

Discover underwater cities, space travel and more in this wondrous imagining of the future – all based on real-world science!



**The Future of the Universe** by Professor Raman Prinja and illustrated by Jan Bielecki

Calling all astronomers! Rocket a trillion years into our universe's future and discover galaxy-crashing phenomena.



**Future Hopes** edited by Lauren James

How might we help our planet thrive? Read these nine hopeful visions for Earth's future, from skyscraper farms to gardening in unusual spaces.



**The Monkey Who Fell From the Future** by Ross Welford

After a botched experiment, two kids get stuck in a nightmare world 400 years in the future. Can they get back home and save humanity?

## Wicked Writers competition lifts off!

**EVERYONE** deserves a chance to fly, and here's just the chance for you wicked writers out there!

The Wicked Writers: Be the Change writing competition opens on Monday (13 January). It challenges 9 to 14-year-olds to write passionately about a positive change they'd like to see happen in their local community.

It's organised by the National Literacy Trust and Wicked Active Learning – the education programme

for the musical *Wicked*.

It's open to all UK schools, entries are judged in two age categories (9-11 and 11-14) and prizes include book bundles, school writing workshops and class trips to see *Wicked* in London's West End!

Could that be you and your school? As Elphaba says, until you try, you'll never know!

For information on how to enter, and to download free classroom resources, visit [literacytrust.org.uk](http://literacytrust.org.uk).

Entries close 28 February.



'Witch' change would you like to see in your local community?



## ★ WRITE US A BOOK REVIEW! ★

BAG a new book for Christmas? Whether it was fiction, non-fiction, a comic book or an audiobook, we'd love to hear about it! Send us a review of 100-120 words, along with your name, age and, if you like, your photo (with your parents' permission) to [bookreviews@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:bookreviews@firstnews.co.uk), and we'll print it!



# IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!

DON'T MISS IT!

**FYI**  
INVESTIGATES  
SCAMMING



**THE DUMPING  
GROUND IS BACK!**

**WE CHAT TO AUTHOR  
SUSAN BROWNRIGG**



Love reading

# FirstNews?

There's even more on  
the *First News* app!

**DAILY NEWS**

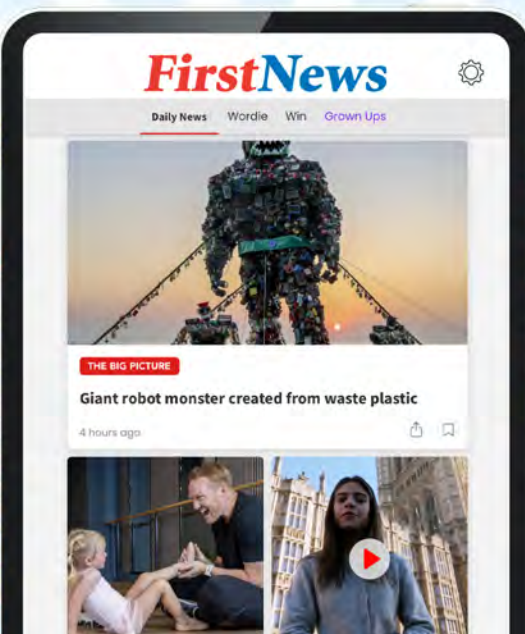
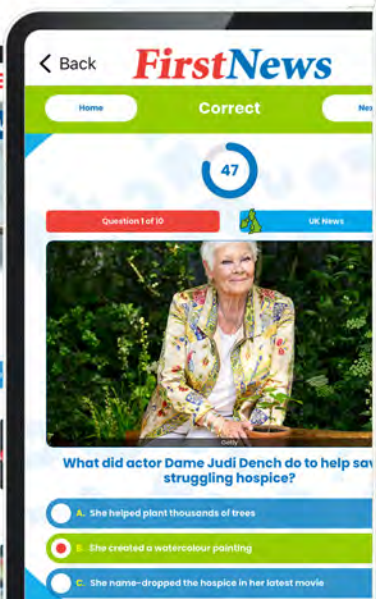
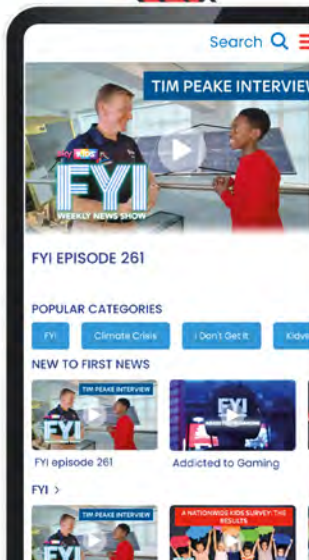
**PLAY FUN GAMES**

**AWESOME PUZZLES**

**WATCH SKY FYI**

**PLAY OUR WEEKLY NEWS QUIZ!**

**VIDEOS**



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App Store

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# CRONGTON KIDS



A NEW comedy-drama series called *Crongton* is coming to BBC iPlayer later this year!

The show is based on the best-selling children's books by Alex Wheatle and will look at the lives of a group of young people growing up on a fictional urban housing estate. Here's a first look at the talented young cast!

FIRST LOOK!



GOLDEN GLOBES

A LOAD of movies and TV shows were honoured at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards in Los Angeles last week. Here's some of the hot gossip.

● **A *Wicked* win!**

Despite being nominated for four awards, *Wicked* only picked up one on the night for Cinematic and Box Office Achievement. The film was awarded after becoming the highest-grossing film based on a Broadway musical of all time! Sadly, Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande both missed out on awards for their performances.

● **Shock result!**

*Flow* scooped the surprise win for Best Animated Picture, beating the likes of *The Wild Robot*, *Inside Out 2*, *Moana 2* and *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl*. The Latvian movie tells the story of a cat who loses its home due to a flood and takes refuge on a boat with lots of other animals.

● **The power couple!**

Kylie Jenner and Timothée Chalamet (pictured) were the talk of the town as they proved they're still very much a couple in love. The duo sat next to each other throughout the ceremony, laughing and chatting.

● **A ring?!**

Zendaya was spotted with a huge ring on her left hand, suggesting she and her partner, *Spider-Man* actor Tom Holland, are engaged!

LOOK OUT FOR THE BAFTA NOMINATIONS THIS WEEK, TOO!

## A HERCULEAN ADVENTURE

CASTING has begun for this year's exciting new West End musical, Disney's *Hercules!* To celebrate, here are three fun facts about the show we'll all be talking about this summer.

**1** The musical is based on the 1997 Disney animated film of the same name. It's all about the legendary Hercules, who is taken from the gods as a newborn and adopted on Earth. In order to return to Mount Olympus with his dad Zeus, he must prove he is a true hero. Along with Pegasus, the flying stallion (horse), and Phil, a feisty

personal trainer, can Hercules defeat the evil god Hades?

**2** Luke Brady has been cast as the lead character of Hercules. The British actor said he is "absolutely honoured" to take on the role. "I can't wait to bring one of my favourite Disney characters to life!" he said.

**3** The show features music by eight-time Oscar winner Alan Menken and lyrics by Tony Award winner David Zippel. You can look forward to catchy tunes including *Go The Distance* and *Zero To Hero*.



Luke Brady

Disney's *Hercules* opens at London's Theatre Royal Drury Lane on 6 June.

## OUR TOP TV PICKS THIS JANUARY



● **Dancing On Ice**

A host of brave celebs are taking to the ice each week to dazzle us with their dance moves! Our ones to watch include reality TV star Chris Taylor, *Coronation Street* star Sam Aston and *Springwatch* presenter Michaela Strachan. ITVI and ITVX

● **Junior Bake Off**

Our favourite spin-off baking show is back for its tenth season! Watch as lots of talented young bakers take to the tent for more challenges and giggles! Who'll scoop the trophy this year? Channel 4



Channel 4 / Love Productions / Laura Palmer



● **The Masked Singer UK**

Can you guess who the mystery celeb singers are? Maya Jama has joined the panel to help us in our mission! We're loving the fabulous new costumes, too. ITVI and ITVX



# THE BIG PICTURE

**IF you look closely, you can just about see ice hockey star Hardy Häman Aktell buried under this mountain of soft toys in Hershey, in the US state of Pennsylvania.**

New teddy bears and other plushies were thrown onto the ice after the first goal for the Hershey Bears in their match against the Providence Bruins, before players and staff helped to collect them all.

The chaos of the annual Giant Teddy Bear Toss is all for a good cause, as the toys are divided between more than 35 local charities.

The sell-out crowd smashed last year's record of 74,599 toys, lobbing an incredible 102,343 onto the ice.

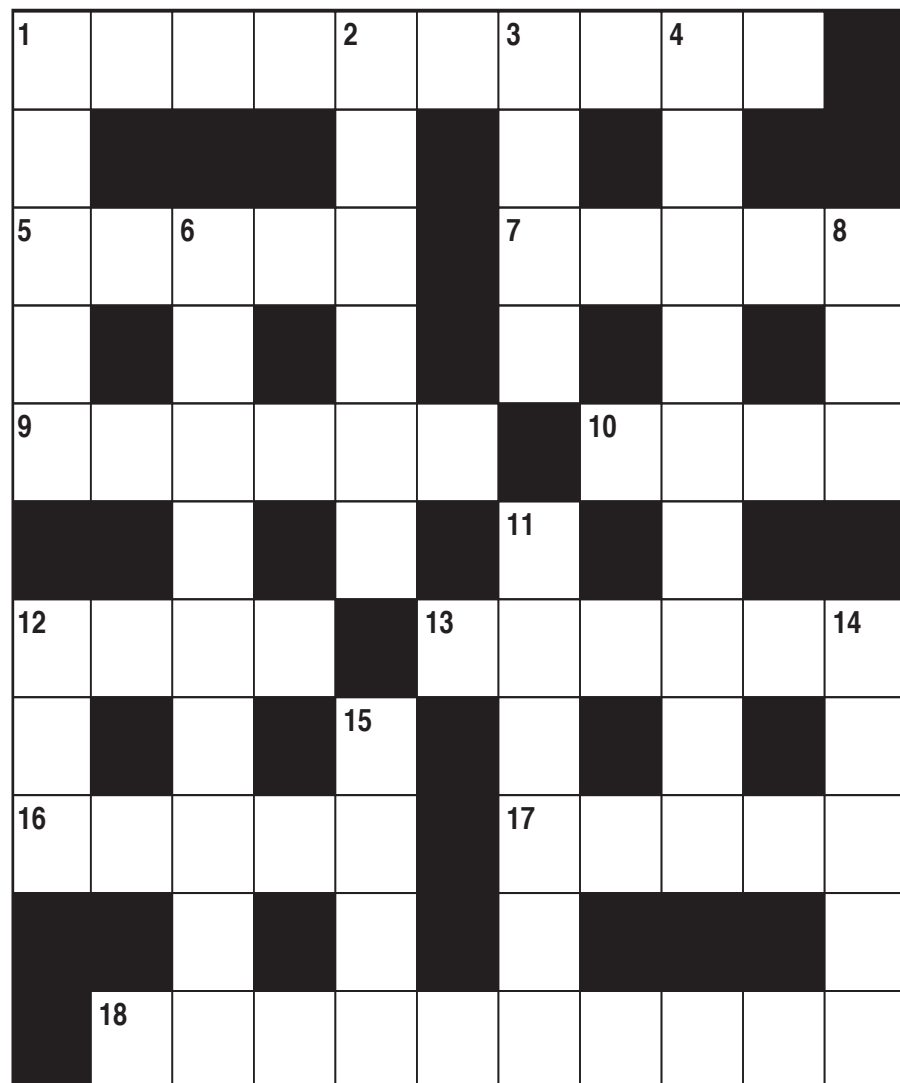
It was a happy day all round for the Hershey fans, as the Bears then went on to win 5-1.

And in case you're wondering, the town is indeed also the home of the famous American chocolate company Hershey. Some roads in the area even have street lights in the shape of the company's popular Hershey's Kisses!



# CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



### ACROSS

- 1 All the words you know (10)
- 5 Puts in the mail (5)
- 7 Bodily organ (5)
- 9 Made the sound of a lion (6)
- 10 Feeling happy (4)
- 12 A reflected sound such as experienced when talking in an empty room (4)
- 13 Throughout the course of (6)
- 16 Additional (5)
- 17 Large bird of prey (5)
- 18 Instrument that makes things look bigger (10)

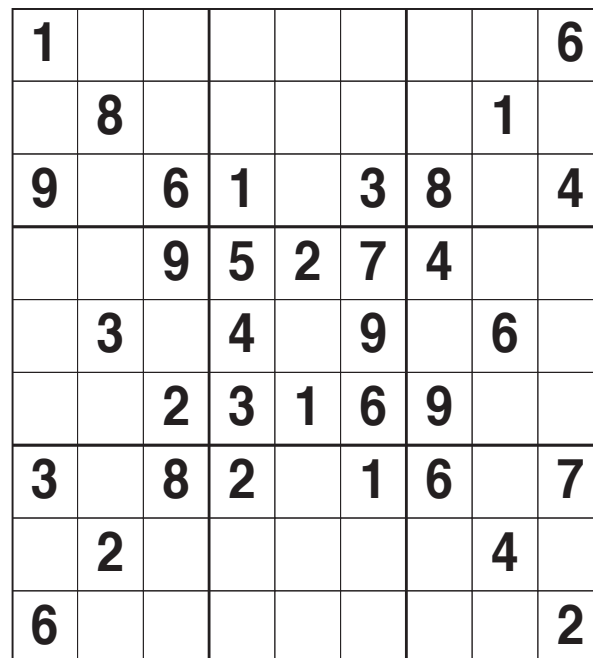
### DOWN

- 1 Type of snake (5)
- 2 Container used to carry things in (6)
- 3 Type of flower (4)
- 4 Horrible (9)
- 6 Type of pasta that you get in thin strings (9)
- 8 Primary colour (3)
- 11 Female rulers (6)
- 12 Female sheep (3)
- 14 Web-footed birds (5)
- 15 Set of two (4)



# Sudoku

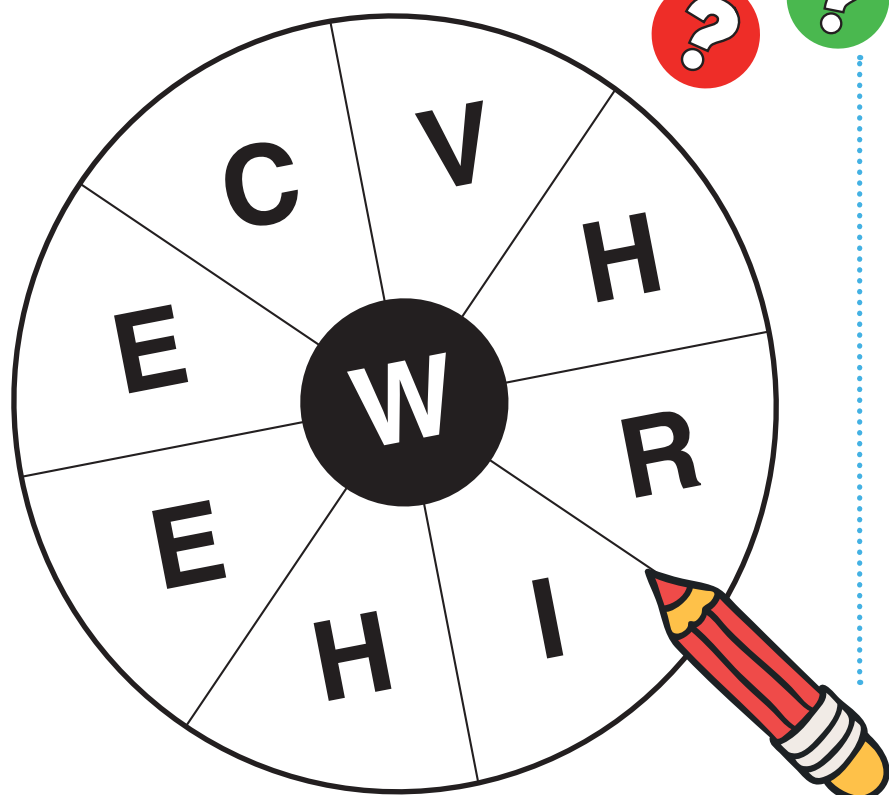
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?



**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.

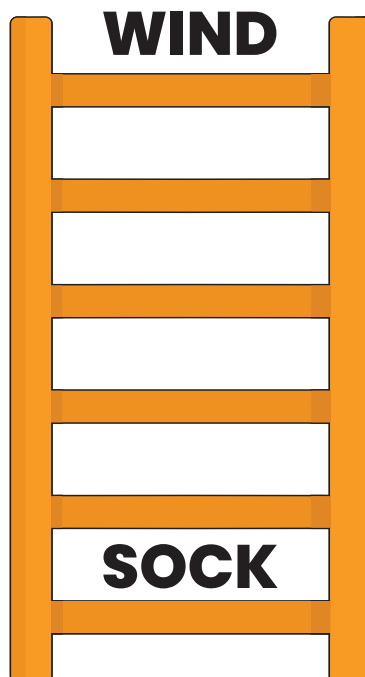
## Word wheel

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?



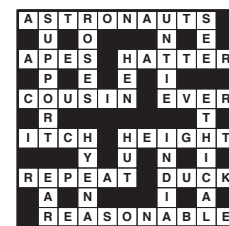
## Word ladder

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 968 ANSWERS:

- Word wheel: fearfully.
- Word ladder: give, gave, pave, pace, pack, back.
- Spot the difference: 1) White circle on ice cream van roof 2) F facing the opposite way on UFO 3) Green stripe on boy's jumper 4) Wheel missing on hot dog van 5) Leg missing off horse on fairground ride 6) Extra cloud 7) Blue cage on Ferris wheel now red 8) Star missing on hot dog van roof 9) Ice cream missing from ice cream van 10) Smaller mouth on octopus.



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



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



# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

CAN you spot the ten changes we've made to this cinema scene?



## Wordsearch

It's Veganuary! Can you find all of these vegan-friendly foods in the wordsearch? Tick them off as you go!

- Cucumber
- Broccoli
- Carrot
- Lettuce
- Mushroom
- Onion
- Pepper
- Cabbage
- Parsnip
- Celery

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



# ROCKET LEAGUE... WITHOUT THE CARS!

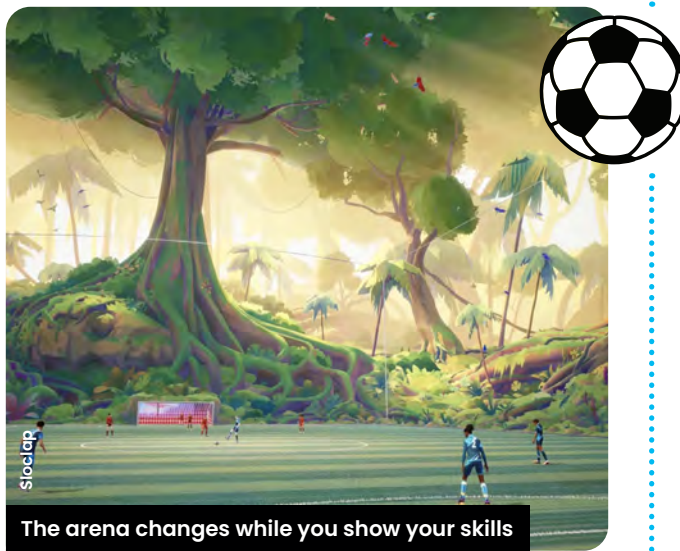
AN arcade football world is aiming to forever change the way we play the beautiful game.

*Rematch*, which is developed by Paris-based studio Sloclap, will aim to give football a fresh perspective with *Rocket League*-style gameplay.

It'll be a 5v5 online multiplayer game where players take to an ever-changing pitch from a third-person perspective.

Gamers will only be able to control a single player, but Sloclap has said that the joy will come from the importance of playing as a team. Providing an assist will be just as rewarding as scoring a goal.

Let's take a look at more of the game's features below:



The arena changes while you show your skills

- **Non-stop action** – just like *Rocket League*, the game is played in a cage, so the ball bounces straight back into play off the walls. There'll also be no fouls or offsides.
- **Choose your favourite position** – playable positions include striker, defender and goalkeeper, with unique mechanics for each.
- **Multiple game modes** – as well as the 5v5 mode, players will be able to join quick-play modes and private matches.
- **Everything you love about football** – passing, shooting, volleying and lots more!

*Rematch* will be available for Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 5 and PC. An exact release date and price for the game will be announced at a later date.



Teamwork makes the dream work!



## Using a videogame for real-life hiring?!

THE virtual and real worlds are colliding in the USA, where an NFL boss is reportedly using the *Madden NFL* videogame to decide which players to sign.

*The Athletic* reported that New York Jets owner Woody Johnson uses the annual American football game to make big player decisions.

One of these was a deal with another team, the Denver Broncos, to bring in wide receiver Jerry Jeudy. However, the deal fell apart when Johnson stepped in to say Jeudy's player rating in *Madden NFL* was too low!

Johnson also apparently turned down another player due to their awareness stat not being high enough in the game.



Woody Johnson (inset) is reportedly mad for *Madden NFL*!



## FASHION Week is back in Pokémon GO!

Not only does this special week come with some sweet new styles, there are lots of in-game rewards up for grabs too. Players will receive double the amount of Stardust for catching Pokémon, and there will also be debuts for new costumed Pokémon – the adorable Mincino and Cincinno (pictured)! Fashion Week takes place from Friday 10 January to Sunday 19 January.



# MIGHTY MEATY OR PLANT-BASED POWER?



IN the last year, the number of vegans in the UK has almost doubled. It's especially popular to try veganism in January during a 31-day challenge known as Veganuary. But why has there been such a big rise in people switching to a plant-based diet in the past few years? FYI's Thomas finds out and speaks to 16-year-old vegan chef Omari.



Around 2.5 million people in the UK now follow a plant-based diet.

**VOTE IN OUR POLL**

Would you consider switching to a plant-based diet?

Cast your vote at [first.news/polls](https://first.news/polls)

## What is a plant-based diet?



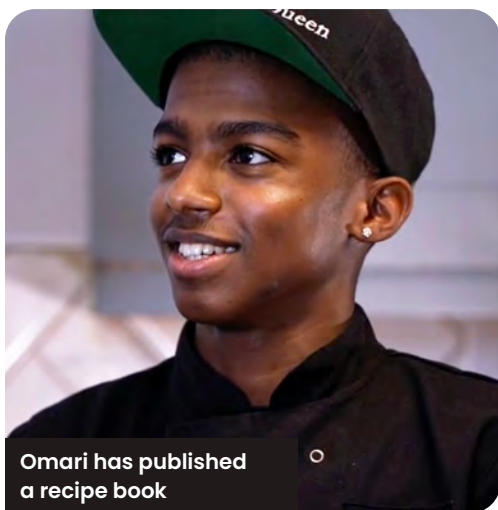
A PLANT-BASED diet, also known as a vegan diet, means that somebody eats no meat or other products from animals such as cheese, butter and eggs.



## MEET VEGAN CHEF OMARI!

Omari McQueen is a 16-year-old vegan chef who wants to convert as many people as possible to going meat-free and becoming vegetarian. He has a passion for Caribbean cookery, has won multiple awards, cooked all around the world with some of the top chefs and written two cookery books. In this episode of FYI, Thomas meets Omari to find out why he loves to cook vegan food.

**Thomas:** How did you get into cooking?  
**Omari:** I got into cooking at the age of seven. At that age my dad was teaching me how to do the basics. At the age of eight, I started cooking by myself and I taught myself how to cook vegan meals.



Omari has published a recipe book



In the episode, Omari teaches Thomas how to make a jackfruit burger

**Thomas:** What would you say is your favourite part of cooking?  
**Omari:** Experimenting – it's just fun. If it doesn't taste nice, I do something different and experiment until it's perfect.

**Thomas:** Why is being vegan important to you?  
**Omari:** I don't really like the way that animals are treated for food and clothes, and I found out about veganism and how healthy it is for your body.

**Thomas:** Is cooking in your family competitive?  
**Omari:** Me and my dad do this challenge where he will cook a dish that's non-vegan and I have to cook the vegan version too. My family decides the winner!

## The pros

- A vegan diet has a smaller carbon footprint than one that is meat-based, meaning it's better for the environment
- It's better for animal welfare
- There are health benefits



## The cons

- Some people say vegan food doesn't taste as good as real meat
- It can sometimes be harder to get all the nutrients you need from a vegan diet
- Lots of restaurants still have quite limited vegan options



## 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 by heading to [first.news/FYInewsclub](https://first.news/FYInewsclub) to find out more.



FYI is a weekly news show from Sky Kids that helps you 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 on the First News app.



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

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a great break over Christmas.

This week on *Your News*, it's a great start to 2025, with some brilliant reports written by you! We hear from Eden and Ciara, who went to some festive shows, about reader Elenore's love for ice skating, and from Grace about the launch of a new competition!

Don't forget, I'm always looking for you to contribute to these pages. If you want to feature in *Your News* this year, you can find out how below!

# FESTIVE SHOWS

OVER Christmas, Eden and Ciara headed to some festive theatre shows and wanted to tell you all about them!

## Horrible Christmas!

by Eden

How was your Christmas? I had a horrible Christmas... only joking! But I did see the most amazing show at the Alexandra Palace in London – *Horrible Histories* presents *Horrible Christmas!*

The show tells the story of a young boy called Watson who has his presents stolen on Christmas Eve by an evil copy of Father Christmas and his sidekick, Buster the Blue-Nosed Reindeer. They want to ruin Christmas for all, including all past Christmases!

Watson goes back in time with Sherlock Holmes, using his time machine, to stop them from ruining Christmas. They stop at different points in history, visiting Charles Dickens, King Henry VIII and St Nicholas.

This wonderful show is suitable for all ages, with stunning entertainment and lots of fantastic, catchy songs that make you jump out of your seat. There are lots of funny jokes for old and young people and they really get the crowd joining in. There were also lots of fascinating facts for everyone to learn about. It was a brilliant show, and a great way to start the new year!



Eden kicked off 2025 by heading to watch *Horrible Christmas*



## FEATURE IN YOUR NEWS IN 2025!

If you want to be a junior journalist for *First News* and go to cool press events or write something on a topic that you're passionate about, get in touch by asking a trusted adult to email us at [yournews@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:yournews@firstnews.co.uk). Or, get your teacher to sign up to the *First News FYI News Club* at [first.news/fyinewsclub](http://first.news/fyinewsclub).



Pan in action at Chickenshed



## Pan

by Ciara, aged 11

When I arrived at the Chickenshed theatre to see *Pan*, I was really excited. I was immediately greeted by the kind people who work there. When I sat down, I saw how beautiful the set was. It changed for every scene and was all really magical. We were transported from the children's bedroom to Neverland in the blink of an eye. As I was watching, I kept thinking it couldn't get any better, but it did. I especially liked it when Peter started flying and doing backflips in the air!

There was a live orchestra playing music and there were BSL translators. The actors made sign language part of the show and it was done in such a lovely way. I really liked the characters Smee and Smea with Captain Hook, who were all so funny! I also thought it was amazing that they had so many children in the cast, as lost ones or part of the pirate crew. They had speaking and singing parts for kids of all ages. It was so impressive to get at least 70 children on stage, all taking part in the dance moves so effortlessly.

All of the songs were really catchy and I can't stop singing them! The song *Pirate Code* sung by the pirates was so fun and there was even an interactive song called *Clap! (If You Believe In Fairies)*, where all of the audience clapped and sang along.

Overall, seeing *Pan* was a ten out of ten experience and I would definitely recommend it. Chickenshed is such a wonderfully inclusive and diverse community, who put on such excellent shows.

## NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Taipei European School, Reedings Junior School, Woodcroft Primary School, Our Lady of Pity RC Primary School and Dial Park Primary School







Elenore on the rink



## Ice skating: scrapes, slips and spins!



ONE activity that you might have tried out before, especially in the winter months, is ice skating, and Elenore loves it! She tells you why.

by Elenore

My name is Elenore and I'm currently in Year 8 at school. Six months ago, I went ice skating with my friends and, despite it being chaotic, I loved it. Several months, two falls and plenty of stumbles later, I'm a level five ice skater! I've definitely faced some setbacks during what feels like the

short time I've taken ice skating lessons. For example, through my level one, I found it particularly challenging to skate backwards.

However, I mastered the skill because of the encouragement of my friends and skating coach, and it is now one of my favourite tricks to perform.

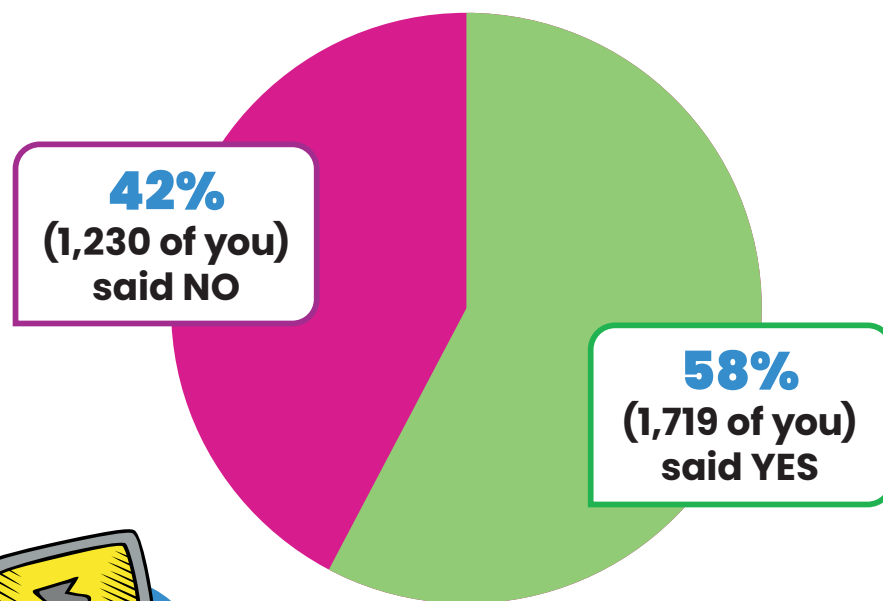
At the moment I'm working on mastering a half-spin while gliding on one foot, and although I am still a bit wobbly, I've managed to do it a few times. My goal is to spin properly, and I can't wait to learn how to jump!

## THIS WEEK'S BIG QUESTION



We asked 2,949 of you...

Is it okay for grown-ups to tell kids little white lies?



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

Vote at [first.news/polls](https://first.news/polls)

## Making my voice heard



VOICES is a creative writing competition held each year to give children in care and young care leavers the opportunity to have their voices heard. Last year, Grace was a runner-up. This was her experience.

by Grace

Voices is a writing competition run by Coram Voice for children who might not live with their mums and dads – for children just like me. I entered last year and had to write a story around the question 'what makes me different?' I wrote about how I didn't live with my mum or dad, and about all the things I love, including chatting, history and writing stories! I was the 4th runner-up. It was great to read my story on stage and it felt like I was just chatting to everyone in the room. I also got to meet

other boys and girls just like me, as well as actor Peter Capaldi. I also got a goody bag!

The competition is great because it's a place where children in care can meet other kids just like them. I felt like I could talk to them about things that I wouldn't normally talk about. The people at Coram Voice were very kind, too.

Voices 2025 is now open! To find out more about the competition and how to enter this year, head to [coramvoice.org.uk/voices](https://coramvoice.org.uk/voices).

**PETER Capaldi** was the 12th Doctor in *Doctor Who* and played the role from 2013 to 2017.



Grace with famous actor Peter Capaldi



# 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** What does DofE stand for?

**2** What is the name of this former US president, who has passed away aged 100?



**3** How many marathons did this brilliant Belgian run in 2024?



**4** Which country has become the 113th to get rid of the death penalty?

**5** How many days did a lost boy survive in a wild park in Zimbabwe?

**6** What sport features in the Madden NFL videogame?



**7** In which UK city did a New Year fireworks fib fool thousands of people?



**8** Wolverhampton is set to open three new courts for which sport?

**9** What has the Taliban banned to keep women hidden?

**10** What is the name of this England football coach, who has been knighted?



**11** Rising food prices in France have led to the return of what disease?

**12** How long did it take for a Bristol pub's roast dinner bookings for 2025 to sell out?

**13** Which country is building a Solar Great Wall?



**14** How many awards did *Wicked* pick up at the Golden Globes?

**15** Which YouTube star, who has 340 million subscribers, has announced that he's engaged?

If you enjoyed this, why not 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 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award 2 Jimmy Carter  
3 366 marathons 4 Zimbabwe 5 Five days  
6 American football 7 Birmingham 8 Padel  
9 Windows 10 Gareth Southgate 11 Scurvy  
12 13 minutes 13 China 14 One 15 MrBeast

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All pictures: Getty

WATCH out below...! Although it looks like an accident about to happen, Polish ski jumper Paweł Wąsek was definitely headed for a safe landing on the slope in Innsbruck, Austria, rather than on people's heads.



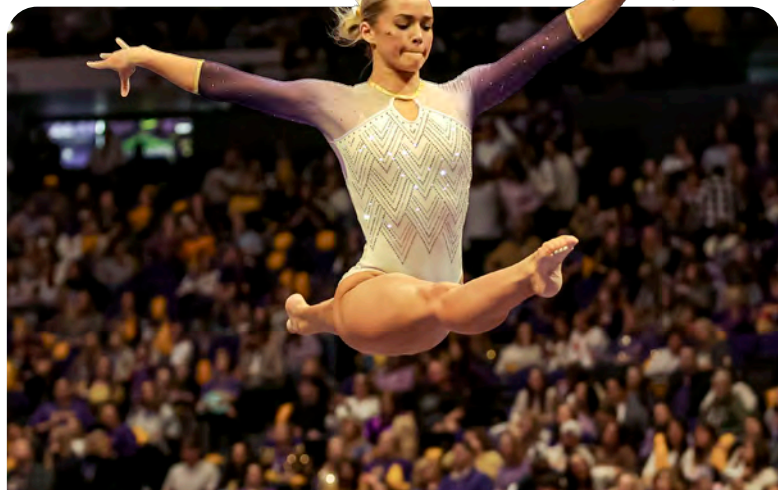
THIS slip in the snow for Kobbie Mainoo could well have summed up Man United's season so far, but Ruben Amorim's team found some form and belief to come away from Anfield with a 2-2 draw against league leaders Liverpool.



CHELSEA stars Erin Cuthbert, Millie Bright, Sam Kerr and Guro Reiten are all fantastic footballers but not such great gymnasts, if this handstand competition during a training session in Portugal is anything to go by!



BRAZILIAN footballer Dudu celebrates signing for Cruzeiro with Raposo, the club's mascot.



US gymnast Olivia Dunne warms up on the balance beam before an event in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



WE think that's British cyclist Zoe Bäckstedt under all that mud, after she finished fifth at the UCI Cyclo-cross World Cup event in Dendermonde, Belgium. Dutch riders dominated the race, taking up the other six of the top seven places. It's whoever has to clean the kits that we feel sorry for!



# RUGBY GOES MAHER MAD

Ilona Maher meeting some of the many fans who turned up to see her. Inset: in action on her debut

**WOMEN'S rugby got a huge boost at the weekend, with the debut of Ilona Maher for the Bristol Bears.**

Although the Bears lost 40-17 to Gloucester-Hartpury, the attendance of 9,240 was a record for Premiership Women's Rugby. The demand for tickets was so high that the game had to be moved to the bigger Ashton Gate stadium.

Rugby hasn't had many celebrity players in the way that football does, but Maher has more followers on social media than any other rugby player. She's also

respected for standing up for women and women's sport, and was a popular runner-up on *Dancing With The Stars*, the US version of *Strictly*.

Maher won bronze in the rugby sevens at the Paris Olympics, but has switched back to the 15-player format in the hope of being picked for the USA for this summer's Rugby World Cup.

Her deal with the Bears only lasts for three months, but hopefully her impact will last much longer and help to boost the sport's profile.



The USA won back their United Cup title, thanks to victories from Coco Gauff and Taylor Fritz over Poland's Iga Świątek and Hubert Hurkacz in the final. Gauff won all six of her matches in the tournament, without dropping a single set. The mixed-sex tennis tournament has only been going for three years, but the USA won the first one, with Germany taking the title last year.



**There was success for GB in two icy sports this week. Brad Hall's four-man team celebrated a gold in the latest leg of the bobsleigh World Cup, while Matt Weston (pictured) won his skeleton World Cup race to take the overall lead and keep up his record of winning a medal in every race this season.**




Basketball legend LeBron James set yet another record in his phenomenal career last week. His 30 points in a win over the Atlanta Hawks means that he's now scored 30 or more points in 563 games, passing the record set by Michael Jordan in 2003. It took James 1,523 games, but Jordan did it in just 1,072!



British snowboarder Mia Brookes (pictured, centre) won her second World Cup event in a row at the weekend. It puts her second in the standings, just behind Japan's Mari Fukada.

TWO golfers made a very expensive mistake when they accidentally hit each other's ball during the final round of The Sentry tournament in Hawaii. The two-shot penalty led to Cameron Davis winning nearly £250,000 less than he would have done, and Will Zalatoris missed out on almost £100,000!



## Braydon's on the ball



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

With half of the season now completed, it's still Liverpool who sit top of the table, with a healthy lead and a game in hand. Arne Slot's men have had only one defeat in 19 league games, and although they weren't at their best against Man United on Sunday, they remain the team to beat. For the rest of the chasing pack, Chelsea's form has fallen off, with just two points from the last 12, and Arsenal just can't seem to put a run of wins together to truly put the pressure on Liverpool.

Nottingham Forest are the real surprise package, and who would have believed that they'd be level with Arsenal at this stage? It's been an incredible season so far at the City Ground and Forest's emphatic 3-0 win at Wolves was their sixth win in a row.

Forest are flying and it's Liverpool next in the league for them. Could they pull off a shock double over the men from Anfield, having already beaten them in September? That would really open the title race back up, and Forest fans will be dreaming of a famous win.



Morgan Gibbs-White (left) bagged the first goal for Forest against Wolves

Newcastle have climbed to fifth after a very profitable Christmas, and Man City have started to pick up points again after their unexpected dip. Bournemouth remain strong too, and it's great to see them right up there in the table.

At the bottom, it looks like Southampton are doomed to the drop despite their change of manager, but there are reasons to be optimistic for Ipswich and Wolves, who've picked up some points and will believe that they can survive.

The FA Cup third round takes **Centre Stage** this week, with some intriguing fixtures coming up. League Two Salford travel just down the road to face Man City, Accrington Stanley go to Anfield, Morecambe are at Chelsea and Tamworth host Spurs. Could one of them create what would be one of the biggest FA Cup shocks of all time?

**Braydon's Team of The Week:** Forest, flying high!  
**Braydon's Player of The Week:** Mo Salah. With 18 goals and 13 assists so far, he's on fire.

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

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