

NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR*



First News

Issue 973 £2.95 7 – 13 February 2025

2.6M READERS*



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NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS

TOBY TAKES ON TECH TITANS

16-YEAR-OLD PUTS OFF HIS GCSEs TO START A MILLION-DOLLAR AI BUSINESS

by Ian Eddy

THE latest big development in AI hasn't come from Elon Musk or one of the other major tech players in the US, South Korea or China, but a 16-year-old in his bedroom in London.

Toby Brown is in his last year of school but has decided to postpone his GCSEs so that he can head out to San Francisco to start up a business selling his first product, an AI-powered virtual assistant called Beem.

The teen entrepreneur claims that Beem will make people's lives easier by responding to emails or playing the "perfect film for the mood", plus doing more complicated things like syncing a family's calendars so that it can book

a holiday that works for everyone.

Toby has been handed a \$1m pot from an American group called South Park Commons, which helps to get businesses up and running, in exchange for a share of the profits. His dad Alastair works in marketing (promoting products and services), but insists that he hasn't helped Toby with his business.

"It's very exciting to know I'll be out there working for a few months setting up and running my new company, Beem!" Toby told us. "It will be very hard not being with my family day to day, but I'll be staying with close family friends, and sending my parents, brother and dog daily vlogs to keep them updated on what's going on!"

Good luck making your millions, Toby!

“ Almost everything you use day to day – your phone, your car, even your dishwasher and microwave – has been invented by someone. Everything around us has been created by someone just as smart as you. This means you can do it too. You can change things, you can make things! Don't ever sit around waiting for something to change, create that change yourself. ”

– Beem founder Toby Brown



Toby Brown

Toby hard at work in his bedroom

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

MEET THE TEAM



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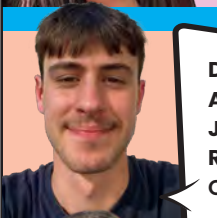
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HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



WINNING WRITERS TO MEET THE QUEEN

Six young writers will have their winning stories read by celebrities including Oscar-winner Olivia Colman and McFly stars Tom Fletcher and Danny Jones. The BBC 500 Words competition attracted nearly 44,000 entries from children across the UK, and the winners will be announced at a special ceremony hosted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace this month. The winners, chosen from two age groups (5-7 and 8-11), will receive prizes including illustrated versions of their stories and book bundles.



TEACHERS HELPING KIDS OUTSIDE SCHOOL

Schools across England are stepping in more and more to provide essential support for struggling families, from food and money to teeth-brushing. A survey by Teacher Tapp for the BBC reveals that nearly half of senior teachers have helped with money to families in the past year, while two-thirds of schools offered food outside school hours. It also found that a third of teachers helped with teeth-brushing, and 15% (one in seven) used their own money to feed hungry students.

THEY SAID THAT!



"For us it is still the Gulf of Mexico, and for the entire world it is still the Gulf of Mexico."

—Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum

MEXICO APPEALS TO GOOGLE

Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum has written to Google to argue against its decision to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America" for US Google Maps users. US President Donald Trump ordered the change in his first week in office. President Sheinbaum says that countries can control waters only up to 12 miles from their coast, meaning the name change isn't valid for most of the Gulf. Google says it will show both names to users outside the US and Mexico.



AMAZON DRONE DELIVERY PLANNED FOR UK

Amazon says it wants to bring its successful drone delivery service to the UK. The company's Prime Air service has already delivered thousands of packages using drones in the United States, but will need approval before launching in the UK. If that's granted, customers will be able to order items for drone delivery direct to their door. Amazon says its drones make deliveries more environmentally friendly.

ENERGY-SAVING COMPETITION

British Gas has launched a competition for UK primary schools to promote energy-saving awareness, with Olympic diving star Tom Daley and Paralympic swimming champion Ellie Simmonds leading the campaign. The nationwide contest invites pupils aged 5–11 to design banners showing how families can save energy at home. The top prize includes a £5,000 grant and a special school assembly with an Olympic or Paralympic athlete. Twenty-five runner-up schools will receive £500 each. Sign up at getset.co.uk/everydayenergycompetition. The closing date is 25 April.



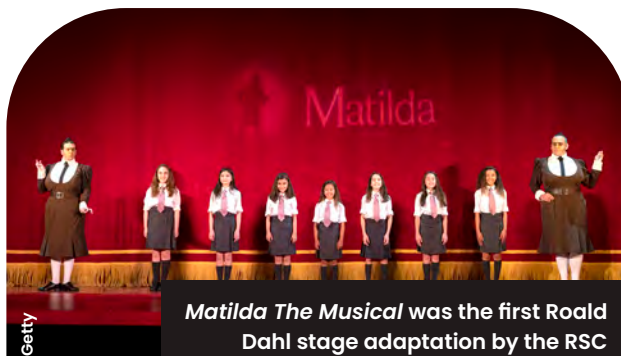
POLICE STRUGGLE WITH XL BULLY BAN

UK police are struggling with huge costs and challenges as they enforce the ban on XL bully dogs in England and Wales. The price of looking after seized dogs jumped from £4m in 2018 to more than £11m in just eight months of 2024. The police warn costs could reach £25m by April 2025. Each dog costs about £1,000 per month to keep in kennels, which are quickly filling up. Nearly 850 dogs have been put down since the ban started in February 2024.



MOST ENGLISH STREETS LITTERED, STUDY FINDS

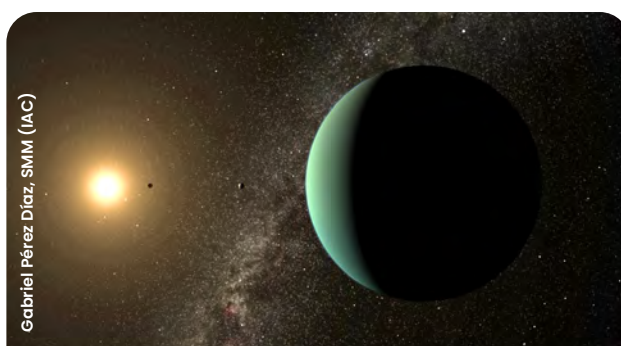
A new study has found that just one out of ten streets and parks in England are litter-free. Keep Britain Tidy's researchers walked 1,140 miles (1,835km) between 2013 and 2024 to check how clean the streets are. The most common items dropped were cigarette packets, sweet wrappers and drink bottles. It also revealed that poorer areas had three times more litter than wealthy neighbourhoods. Two-thirds of people said they wouldn't feel safe walking on littered streets at night, and 87% (nearly nine in ten) wouldn't want to live there.



Matilda The Musical was the first Roald Dahl stage adaptation by the RSC

THE BFG TAKES TO THE STAGE!

The Royal Shakespeare Company is bringing Roald Dahl's beloved story *The BFG* to the stage in Stratford-upon-Avon for Christmas 2025. This will be the first Dahl adaptation by the company since their hugely successful *Matilda the Musical* in 2010. *The BFG* tells the story of Sophie, an orphan girl who teams up with a friendly giant to save children from being eaten by other giants. The book of *The BFG* has sold more than 21 million copies worldwide and was made into a film by Steven Spielberg in 2016.



NEW 'SUPER-EARTH' COULD SUPPORT LIFE

Scientists at Oxford University have discovered a planet six times bigger than Earth that might be able to host life. They say the 'super-Earth', named HD 20794 d, could be the right distance from its star to have water on its surface. The researchers spotted the planet, which is 20 light years away and orbits a star similar to our sun, from the La Silla Observatory in Chile.



BIG WINTER WANDER!

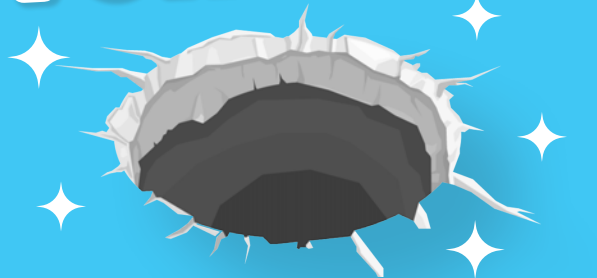
The WWF is launching a nationwide winter walking challenge to raise funds for wildlife conservation and to encourage people to connect with nature. The Big Winter Wander invites people to walk anywhere for 5k or 10k between 10 and 23 February, with special rewards for those who get involved. It is suitable for groups of all ages and abilities, although you must be aged 16+ to sign up for an individual walk. Find out how to get involved at www.wwf.org.uk/events/winter-wander.

DON'T SCRATCH THAT ITCH!

Scientists have discovered why scratching an itchy rash makes it worse, and they hope the finding could help millions of people with skin problems. Research from the University of Pittsburgh, USA, shows that, when we scratch, our skin releases a chemical that causes more swelling and inflammation. While scratching might feel good and can help fight off some bacteria, it makes skin conditions like eczema worse in the long run. The team's findings could lead to new treatments and hope for people with itchy skin conditions.



SELF- HEALING POTHOLES?!



Researchers at Swansea University have created a new road surface that can repair itself when it cracks, which could end the problem of dangerous potholes on our streets. The material contains tiny plant particles filled with oil. When cars drive over cracks in the road, these particles release their oil, which helps the road surface stick back together. Tests show it can fix small cracks within just one hour. The team says this technology could make roads last 30% longer and save millions of pounds spent on repairs each year. The new surface could be on UK roads within two years.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE

11 FEBRUARY

Set up by the United Nations to celebrate women working in STEM.

WORLD RADIO DAY

13 FEBRUARY

A day to celebrate this wonderful audio form. Do you listen to the radio?



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



PICK N' KICKS!

A LONDON man has laced up his running shoes to go litter-picking all across the UK!

Vivek Gurav, who is originally from India, is 'plogging' (that's picking up litter and jogging) his way around 50 UK cities.

He thinks that, rather than waiting around for the government to do something about the climate crisis, more people should get on with fixing it themselves, like he is.

"Instead of just screaming, if they go and pick up rubbish... it's going to bring them closer

to the green spaces," the 29-year-old told the BBC.

He wants university students and local communities to join in if they spot him jogging past with his picker.

This is actually Vivek's second big UK plogging tour. He also did it in December 2022, visiting 30 cities in 30 days, including London, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester. On that 1,500 mile (2,414km) tour, he collected 360kg (56 stone) of rubbish, with the help of 250 local volunteers.



ONE MILLION!
Vivek started a plogging group in his home town of Pune, India. It picked over 1,000,000kg of litter between 2017 and 2022!

Fix mental health to boost UK's wealth, says report



4/10
More than four out of ten parents worry about their child's mental health

NEW research has warned that the UK must improve children's mental health to protect the country's wealth.

More than one in five kids in England have a condition such as anxiety or depression, and that figure is rising.

Unless the government quickly gets a grip on the crisis, it could cost the country **£1 trillion** in lost earnings in the future, say four of the UK's leading children's mental health groups.

That includes the cost of:

- Repeated school absences
- Healthcare services
- Less work being completed at work to care for mental health
- Increased spending to support the unemployed

The groups have launched the Future Minds Campaign, which is calling on the

"Parents, health professionals, teachers, and children themselves see and experience it every day... poor mental health is holding back the life chances of so many of our young people."

THEY SAID THAT!

Baroness Anne Longfield, Centre for Young lives

government to set aside much more money to tackle poor mental health.

At the moment, £1.1 billion is spent each year on young people's mental health, but it's only enough to help four in ten of those in need.

The groups want to see that improve, as well as having new support hubs for kids in every community.

Cyberattack alert

THE UK government has been told that it's at "severe" risk from cyberattacks, because of gaps in its IT security.

A cyberattack is an attempt by criminals to hack into computer systems to steal or destroy important data.

The National Audit Office (NAO) keeps an eye on the government's spending, and it says that many of the government's critical (important) systems are outdated, while other systems aren't secure enough to block the latest advanced attacks.

It needs to act now to protect itself, the UK's public services, and its people, from harm. However, there's a shortage of people with the skills to help.

The NAO says that, in 2023-24, a third of cybersecurity jobs in some government departments weren't filled. Another issue is needing more money to strengthen security.

The NAO says this needs fixing within a year to be able to stop the latest threats.

In June 2024, a cyberattack forced the NHS to cancel 10,000 appointments.

Could you help the UK to stop cyberattacks? Learn about the job on our **First Careers page!**

QR codes should be scanned by a responsible adult.

EDITOR'S COMMENT



Nicky Cox MBE

AT just 16, Toby Brown is making a decision that most adults would agonise over.

He's leaving his family behind in the UK while he heads to America to follow his dream (front page).

He's giving up his GCSEs not to lounge around, but to pursue the opportunity of a lifetime – building his AI company in Silicon Valley.

It's a bold move, but so was dropping out of Harvard for Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, and for Steve Jobs leaving university to build the Apple computer company.

Everyone at *First News* hopes Toby's decision will pay off for him. While exams are important, they aren't the only way to succeed.



A safe summer in Wales

GOOD WEEK

Wales

THE Welsh government has said that last year's summer holidays were the safest ever on the nation's roads. Wales had cut the speed limit from 30mph down to 20mph on many of its streets and, as a result, casualties (injuries or deaths) between July and September were at their lowest level since records began.



The figures were revealed this week

BAD WEEK

Education

A **GOBSMACKING** 443,322 fines were given to parents in England for taking their children out of school and on holiday during the 2023-24 academic year. That's the most ever recorded, and three times higher than in 2016-17, when the Department for Education began keeping count.

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.



PRAISE FOR UK'S POLLUTION PLAN

THE UK'S fresh plan to cut pollution has been praised by environmental groups.

The government has announced a new national climate plan and promised that, by 2035, the amount of greenhouse gases that the UK produces will be 81% lower than in 1990. The UK's emissions had already fallen by 53% (a half) between 1990 and 2023.

Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide. It's produced when we burn fossil fuels and it heats the atmosphere, damaging the Earth's climate.

The UK first outlined its ambitious plan

at the COP29 global climate conference in November.

Friends of the Earth welcomed the news, and the World Resources Institute said the "clear, detailed" plan sets an example for other countries to follow.

"Key commitments, such as exploring a ban on new fossil fuel licences, ending petrol car sales by 2030... and accelerating renewables, show that the UK means business on climate action," said the head of its UK office, Edward Davey, adding that the plan will cut people's energy bills and create jobs.



Greenhouse gases come from burning fossil fuels, like when petrol-powered cars burn fuel

BUT...



Friends of the Earth also said that the good news is spoiled by the government's support for building a new runway at Heathrow Airport. "With storms and floods battering the UK at an increasing rate... it couldn't be more vital the UK matches its warm words with transformative action," said its head of policy, Mike Childs.



25%
75%
THIS WEEK'S POLL

DEEPSEEK WHAT IS IT... AND IS IT SAFE?

What is DeepSeek?

It's the Chinese company behind a new AI chatbot that's shocked the tech world. It was much cheaper to make than other top AI chatbots, like ChatGPT, and it quickly shot to the top spot as the most popular free app on both the App Store and Google Play in the US and the UK.

How have people reacted to DeepSeek?

It's damaged confidence in US tech firms, whose AI systems are more expensive. US President Donald Trump said that it should be a "wake-up call" for its American rivals to be "laser-focused on competing to win".

What are the risks of using AI chatbots?

AI might seem like it knows everything, but it doesn't. Last week, we brought you a story about Google's AI producing incorrect news headlines. DeepSeek itself hides information that makes China look bad; it won't tell you about Tiananmen Square, a site where China's government killed student protesters in 1989. Experts say people shouldn't share their personal information with DeepSeek, as it's unknown what the Chinese government might do with their private data.

What does this mean for the future?

Dr Andrew Duncan, a director at the Alan Turing Institute, told the BBC: "DeepSeek is demonstrating that you don't need vast resources to build AI models. My guess is we'll start to see [more] highly-capable AI models being developed, with ever-fewer resources."

Do you trust what AI chatbots say?

[Vote at first.news/polls](#)

New asteroid on its way towards Earth



It's roughly half the size of a football pitch

WE'VE heard of getting a lump of coal for Christmas, but never a 200-foot (61m) asteroid!

Scientists have discovered a new ball of rock that they say has a 1 in 83 chance of striking Earth on 22 December 2032.

Don't panic, though – it's far more likely to drift close to our planet and pass by harmlessly. Even in the tiny event that it did hit, it would leave a crater, but the planet would survive.

"We're not worried at all," said Paul Chodas, from NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies.

The asteroid is called 2024 YR4, and it's classed as a Near-Earth Object. It's 27 million miles away, and experts expect it might come within 66,000 miles (106,200km) of Earth.

It was discovered using a NASA telescope in Chile, and the world's top telescopes will keep tracking it over the coming months to get a clearer idea of its course.

Homosexuality rises in the UK



UK population aged 16 and over who identify as straight



UK population aged 16 and over who identify as LGB



"Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are a growing part of UK society... and they will deserve – and demand – equal rights and opportunities."

Simon Blake, CEO of LGBTQ+ group Stonewall

THE proportion of UK grown-ups who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual (LGB) has risen in recent years, official stats show.

A gay or lesbian person is someone who's attracted to people of the same sex, while a bisexual person is someone who is attracted to both men and women.

The Office for National Statistics compared responses from its Annual Population Survey in 2018 and 2023. We've broken down the key stats on the right.

The survey also showed that one in ten 16 to 24-year-olds in the UK identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual – a much larger proportion than over-65s (one in 100). The proportion of 16 to 24-year-olds who identify as bisexual has doubled since 2018.

Support for death penalty rises

The death penalty still exists in other countries, like the USA

A POLL has found that most Brits would like to see the return of the death penalty.

The last executions to take place here in the UK were in 1964, and the death penalty was dropped from law altogether in 1998.

However, research group More in Common has found that support for it has risen, from half the population in 2023 to just over half the population (11 in 20) today.

A number of politicians from the Reform UK party have recently called for the death penalty to return for the most serious crimes.

However, the government says it has "no plans" to bring it back, and human rights group Amnesty says it shouldn't exist in any country, calling it "cruel" and "inhuman".



Montreal, Canada



©Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas



CHECK out this incredible image of an insect! Alexis Tinker-Tsavalas' snap is the winner of the under-18 category in the 2024 Royal Entomological Society Photography Competition. The 17-year-old amateur photographer captured a jagged ambush bug waiting for prey on a tansy flower head. The annual contest gives us a glimpse of diverse insect life around the world. See more winning images on the *First News* app!

London, UK



Getty

THIS pink plant is part of a Peruvian paradise in Kew Gardens. This year, the annual orchid festival celebrates the biodiversity of Peru in South America, to brighten up the winter months.

Magelang, Indonesia



Getty

A DANCING dragon entertains visitors to the Borobudur Temple, a ninth-century Buddhist site, for Chinese New Year. Families came together to celebrate the new year, and we are now in the Year of the Snake.



Oslo, Norway

WHAT a hoot! An owl mascot cheers on Nicolai Budkov Kjaer of Team Norway in the Davis Cup. The tennis tournament gives players a rare chance to represent their country.



Beijing, China

WHO let the dogs out? Check out our special report on robot pets on p10.



Redon, France

A VAN sits partially under water as western France feels the effects of heavy storms. Thousands of people have left their homes due to flooding.

Chongqing, China



FRANKLY, we didn't think one picture of primates opening (and arguing over) lucky red envelopes was enough, so here are four! Just like humans, the animals at Chongqing Zoo have been taking part in Chinese New Year celebrations.



OUTER HEBRIDES

Gaelic school plan

A Gaelic language secondary school could be coming to Stornoway soon. There is already a Gaelic secondary in Glasgow, but an increase in the number of people using the language could push it further across Scotland. Gaelic is the Celtic language of Scotland, and it's on the rise again thanks to the 60 primary schools around the country teaching the curriculum in Gaelic. The Scottish government is due to decide next week whether to fund a study into setting up the new Gaelic school.



Stornoway is the capital of Lewis and Harris

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LEEDS

Miffy's birthday

Get ready for some birthday magic to celebrate 70 years of Miffy! Leeds City Museum is hosting a free exhibition for the illustrated bunny. People of all ages, who may have had the books when they were small, can take part in activities and see original sketches from decades ago. Miffy's 70th birthday runs from today (Friday 7 February) until 7 September. As part of the celebrations, Miffy herself will be making a special visit to the museum tomorrow (8 February), for birthday hugs and photos.



Getty

Miffy was created by Dutch artist Dick Bruna in 1955

WALES

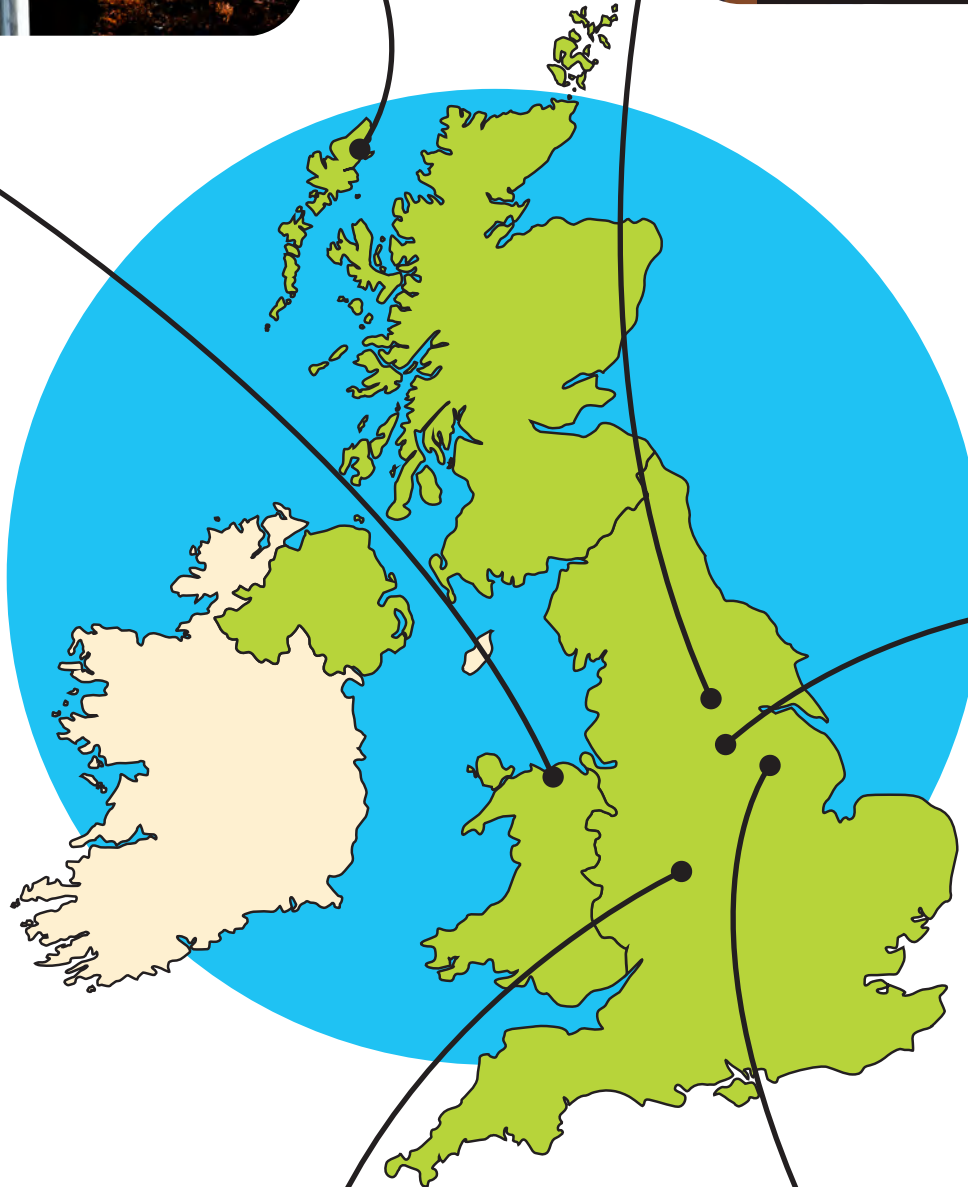
Alligator ambulance

"We can't send an ambulance for an alligator." That was the response to one of the many bizarre 999 calls made to the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) last year. Other non-life-threatening reasons for calling included being locked out, a chipped tooth, a toenail-cutting mishap and a bracelet being on too tight. There were an average of 175 inappropriate calls to the service every day in 2024. Andy Swinburn from WAST has reminded people to use "common sense". People with minor injuries are being urged to use the NHS 111 Wales website or visit their GP.



Getty

You're not allowed in, Mr Gator!



Sheffield Home of Football

Proud historian Steve Wood

SHEFFIELD

Plaque of the net!

Two blue plaques have been unveiled recognising Sheffield as the home of football. The first remembers the world's very first inter-city 'away' match. On 2 January 1865, Sheffield FC travelled to Nottingham and defeated a club that became Notts County FC (who now play in League Two, the English fourth division). The second plaque, outside a pub called The York, goes back even further, to 1861. It marks the location where the very first football club from a hotel, York FC, was formed. The plaques were unveiled by charity Sheffield Home of Football.

WEST MIDLANDS

Stopping smartphones

Parents are being asked by 49 schools to delay buying smartphones for their children over concerns about harms caused by overuse. The group of schools is being led by head teacher Tom Beveridge from Alderbrook School in Solihull, who has introduced a voluntary hand-in scheme for Year 7s at his school. More than half have already handed in their devices. Mr Beveridge told the BBC: "When we do see incidents of students being unkind or even bullying it is almost always... linked to some form of online activity."



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Ofcom says that 97% of children have their own phone by the age of 12



Getty

Children's Laureate Frank Cottrell-Boyce will be joined by AF Steadman (left) and Jacqueline Wilson

LINCOLN

Book bonanza

Waterstones has announced its first ever Children's Book Festival. Taking place around the historic city of Lincoln, the schedule is jam-packed full of free writing workshops, craft activities and author events. Some of the incredible names attending include Jamie Smart, Jacqueline Wilson and Cressida Cowell. AF Steadman will host an event for the latest book in her *Skandar* series, too. The festival takes place from 14 to 16 February. Find out about both the free and ticketed events at tinyurl.com/waterstonesfest.



INDIA'S TIGERS SHOW US THE WAY AHEAD

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Did you know that each tiger's stripe pattern is unique, just like a human fingerprint?

THE way that India has doubled its tiger population in a decade should give scientists hope that the same can be done for other large species, a new study says.

Three-quarters of the world's tigers live in an area that is half the size of the UK, alongside some 60 million people.

A new study in *Science* says that this roaring success

came from protecting tigers from poaching (illegal hunting), securing their food sources and working with local communities to reduce human-wildlife interactions.

Researchers say this proves that wildlife conservation can work even in crowded areas when people and animals learn to live together safely, and these lessons can be passed on.

Ivory ban extended to whales and hippos

THE UK government has widened its ban on ivory trading to include hippos, narwhals (see far right), killer whales and sperm whales.

Experts say this update to the Ivory Act, which originally protected only elephants, shows the UK's commitment to wildlife conservation.

The Act makes it illegal to buy and sell anything containing ivory, even if the things, such as jewellery and ornaments, are old.

Anyone caught breaking these laws could face unlimited fines or up to five years in jail.

Ivory is a very hard material, made from the teeth and tusks of some animals. It is very valuable and can be sold for lots of money.

Mary Creagh, the government's international nature minister, described the ban as an "important moment for all wildlife lovers".



Hippos are the second most at-risk species from ivory hunting after elephants

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Volunteers planting the first trees at Bowden Pillars

Ancient forest revival plan

A MAJOR tree-planting project in Devon aims to bring back an ancient type of forest that once covered much of Britain's west coast.

More than 2,500 native trees have already been planted at Devon Wildlife Trust's Bowden Pillars site, with plans to add another 4,500.

The temperate forest, also called a Celtic rainforest, will help fight climate change by storing carbon and providing homes for birds such as woodcocks, plus ferns, mosses and fungi.

Local volunteers, including youth groups, have worked through tough weather to plant trees including oak, rowan, and holly.

Claire Inglis from Devon Wildlife Trust said: "It will be fascinating to see how it develops."



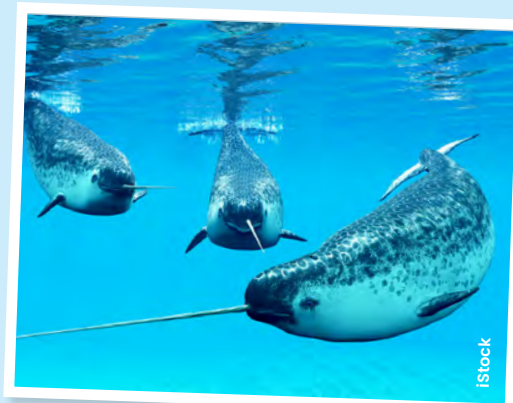
ANEESHWAR'S ANIMAL OF THE WEEK

MULTI-WORLD RECORD HOLDER!

ANEESHWAR Kunchala is a ten-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...

NARWHAL



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HABITAT:

Narwhals live in the Arctic waters of Canada, Greenland, Norway and Russia.

FUN FACTS:

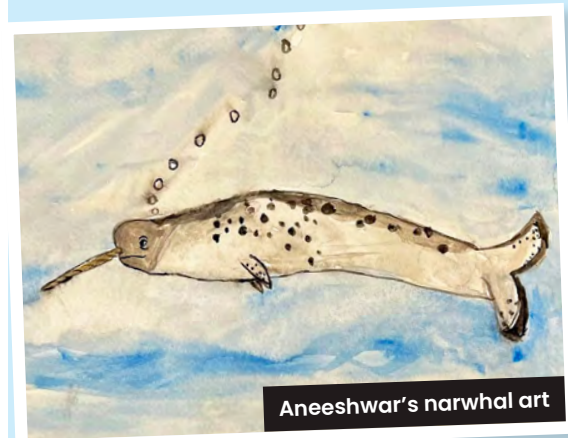
They can dive nearly 1.5 miles (2.4km) deep, making them one of nature's deepest divers. They are often called 'unicorns of the sea'.

SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

A male narwhal's tusk is actually a long canine tooth, which can grow up to 3m (10ft) long.

CONSERVATION STATUS:

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has listed them as of least concern.



Aneeshwar's narwhal 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.



GOODBYE PETS, HELLO ROBOTS?



Getty

THE RSPCA has launched the “biggest ever” conversation on the future of animal welfare in this country – and they want to hear from you! *Animal Futures: The Big Conversation* aims to give people a chance to have their say on the world they want to see for animals and humans.

Would you swap the real thing for a robot?

Last week we told you that a quarter (26%) of people want a robot dog, with millennials (those aged 25–34) the most likely to welcome one into their home. Millennials also admitted that as artificial intelligence and technology develops, they could see AI replacing their bond with animals, with 24% saying they could rely on computers over cats and dogs for relationships.

Gemma Hope, the RSPCA’s assistant director of policy, advocacy and evidence said: “Many of us think the bond we have with animals is irreplaceable, but these polling results show some younger generations potentially seeing tech replace many of the roles that animals currently play in their lives.” So, what do you think?

What can having a pet teach you?

Pets are often considered part of the family, but they provide much more than just affection or love.

Megan Mueller, associate professor of human-animal interaction at Tufts University, USA, says that having a pet helps children to learn about being responsible and caring for another creature.

Other claims go further, saying pets can influence your:

- Social skills
- Physical health
- Cognitive development (how your brain develops)

Is there a future for robot pets?

Robot pets might seem like a big change, but think about the potential benefits. You wouldn’t have to walk them, train them or pick up their poop! You also wouldn’t need to pay for vet bills and they might live longer than a real pet – possibly even forever!

“Having a robot pet could be better because you don’t have to clean up after it.”

– lig

“Having a robot pet would not feel very natural. It just destroys the purpose of having a living pet.”

– zachbuzu



Have you seen the movie *Robo-Dog*?

After the death of a family pet, a father invents a robotic replacement with mechanical abilities to be the new family pet. Imagine having a robotic pet like that in real life!

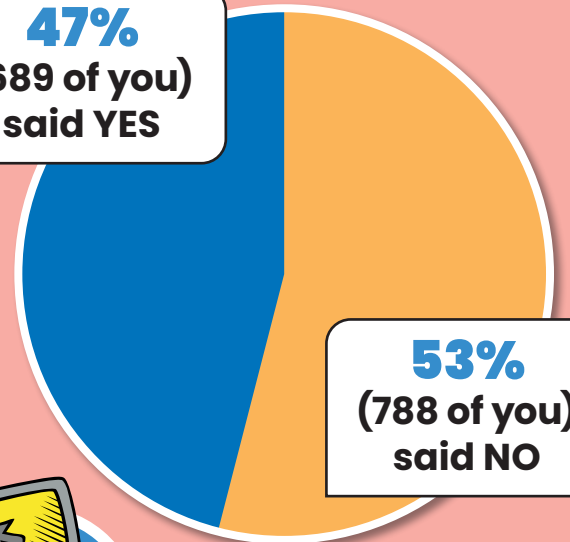
Although this robot that saves the day is fictional, technology is moving so quickly that robot pets are getting much closer to the real thing.



WHAT YOU SAID!

Last week we asked you if you’d like to have a robot pet. Here are the results so far:

47%
(689 of you)
said YES



53%
(788 of you)
said NO



Let us know what you think at first.news/polls

Virtual pets through the ages

Virtual and robot pets aren’t a new idea. In fact, you might find your parents actually ‘owned’ one when they were growing up! Let’s take a look at some of the most well known.



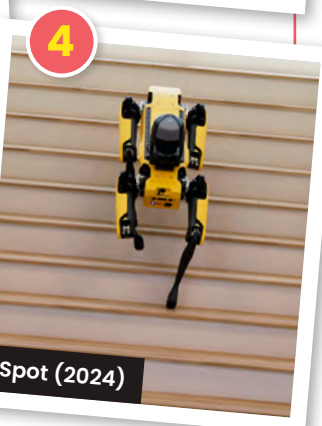
Tamagotchi (1996)



Dog.com (2002)



Nintendogs (2005)



Spot (2024)



The purrrfect friend!



Getty

To find out more about *Animal Futures: The Big Conversation*, visit animalfutures.rspca.org.uk



GREASY BEARS' FUR DOESN'T FREEZE



AN adult male polar bear standing on its back legs can be over 3m (10ft) tall and weigh over half a tonne!

Bears use their greasy fur to slide across the ice on their bellies when they hunt, as it makes less noise and allows them to sneak up on seals

POLAR bears have been studied by scientists for a very long time, but experts have only just figured out why ice doesn't stick to the bears' fur.

It's an unusual scientific breakthrough, as it was inspired by a TV show! Professor Bodil Holst at the University of Bergen in Norway was watching a wildlife documentary and started wondering why polar bears don't have ice all over their fur, like other mammals in the Arctic.

After getting samples of fur, Holst discovered that it's nothing to do with the structure of the

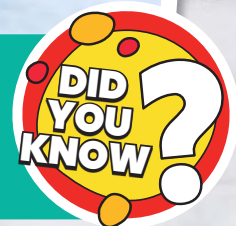
hairs, but a substance called sebum that's released from glands at the base of the fur.

Sebum contains oils and fats, and in humans it helps to protect the skin from the sun, friction and bacteria – and is also responsible for making your hair greasy if you don't wash it.

The study showed that washing the fur with shampoo means that ice starts to stick to it.

Holst is now trying to use her results to create a ski wax that's more environmentally friendly than the ones in use at the moment.

NATIVE Inuits have known about the properties of polar bear fur for a long time. They put fur 'slippers' over their boots to allow them to cross the ice easily and quietly when they're hunting.



The 'asteroid' with four wheels

AT the beginning of the year, an amateur astronomer was feeling pretty pleased after spotting an asteroid, especially as it was travelling close to Earth and was probably going to be of great interest to science.

However, shortly after that, it was discovered that it wasn't an asteroid at all – it was Elon Musk's old Tesla car. The Minor Planet Center at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, USA, then sent out a notice to cancel the discovery of the 'asteroid'.

THE mannequin in the car is called **Starman**, a reference to the classic David Bowie song. **Starman has been listening to Bowie's *Space Oddity* and *Life on Mars?* on repeat ever since the launch in 2018.**



The SpaceX boss used to drive the Tesla Roadster, but he decided to have it strapped to the upper stage of a Falcon Heavy rocket for its first test flight in 2018.

Although the story has raised a smile, the serious side to it is that the increasing amount of human-made junk in space could lead to a lot of time and money being wasted on tracking it.

"It's a nuisance, but not a hugely serious problem – yet," said Dr Jonathan McDowell from the Harvard-Smithsonian Center. "But as space activity increases, it can become one."

Experts say that countries and private companies need to work together to build a database of everything in space, to avoid any confusion in future.

THE car's dashboard features a sign that says "Don't panic!" in a nod to the cult sci-fi novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams.



SpaceX/Getty

Starman in Elon Musk's Tesla after leaving Earth

This report is from the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

THIS object isn't an unusually shaped gun, it's actually a camera!

Suitably called the Revolver Camera, it was invented in the 1860s by an Englishman called Mr Thompson. Instead of releasing bullets, pressing the trigger would allow you to take up to four 'shots' before you had to load the camera again. The aim was to make it effortless to take a picture with a single hand holding the grip and aiming it like a pistol. Although the Revolver Camera was ingenious, it led to blurred images and no doubt frightened subjects, so it never caught on.

You can see this surprising camera and many more objects exploring the history of photography in the Kodak Gallery at the National Science and Media Museum.

It brings a whole new meaning to the phrase 'photo shoot'!



Science Museum Group



 **GREECE**



Santorini is one of the most popular tourist islands in the world

Schools shut over earthquake fears

Schools on the Greek island of Santorini were closed last week, and thousands of people have left over fears that a strong earthquake and tsunami (giant wave) could hit. More than 300 tremors were recorded in the area during one 48-hour period this week. Many were between 4-5 on the moment magnitude scale, meaning they can be felt but not cause damage. Greece is used to having small earthquakes, but the increased activity has led officials to send special forces and rescue teams to the island in case a bigger earthquake strikes.

 **USA**

Passenger plane collides with military helicopter

An American Airlines plane and a military helicopter crashed into each other in Washington, DC, last week, killing all 64 people on board the plane, including top ice skaters from the US and Russia. Three soldiers in the helicopter also died. It's not known what caused the crash, but an investigation has begun. President Donald Trump said America was "in mourning".



Flowers are laid beside the Potomac River where the aircraft fell

 **THE NETHERLANDS**

Ancient gold artefacts stolen

Dutch police have arrested three people after thieves used explosives to blast their way into the Drents Museum in Assen and steal four golden artefacts. The objects included three gold bracelets and the 2,500-year-old Helmet of Coțofenești, which were all on loan from the National History Museum of Romania. Claudia Marcu, a Romanian art historian and journalist, said: "This is more than just a theft, it is a wound to the Romanian community."



The golden Helmet of Coțofenești

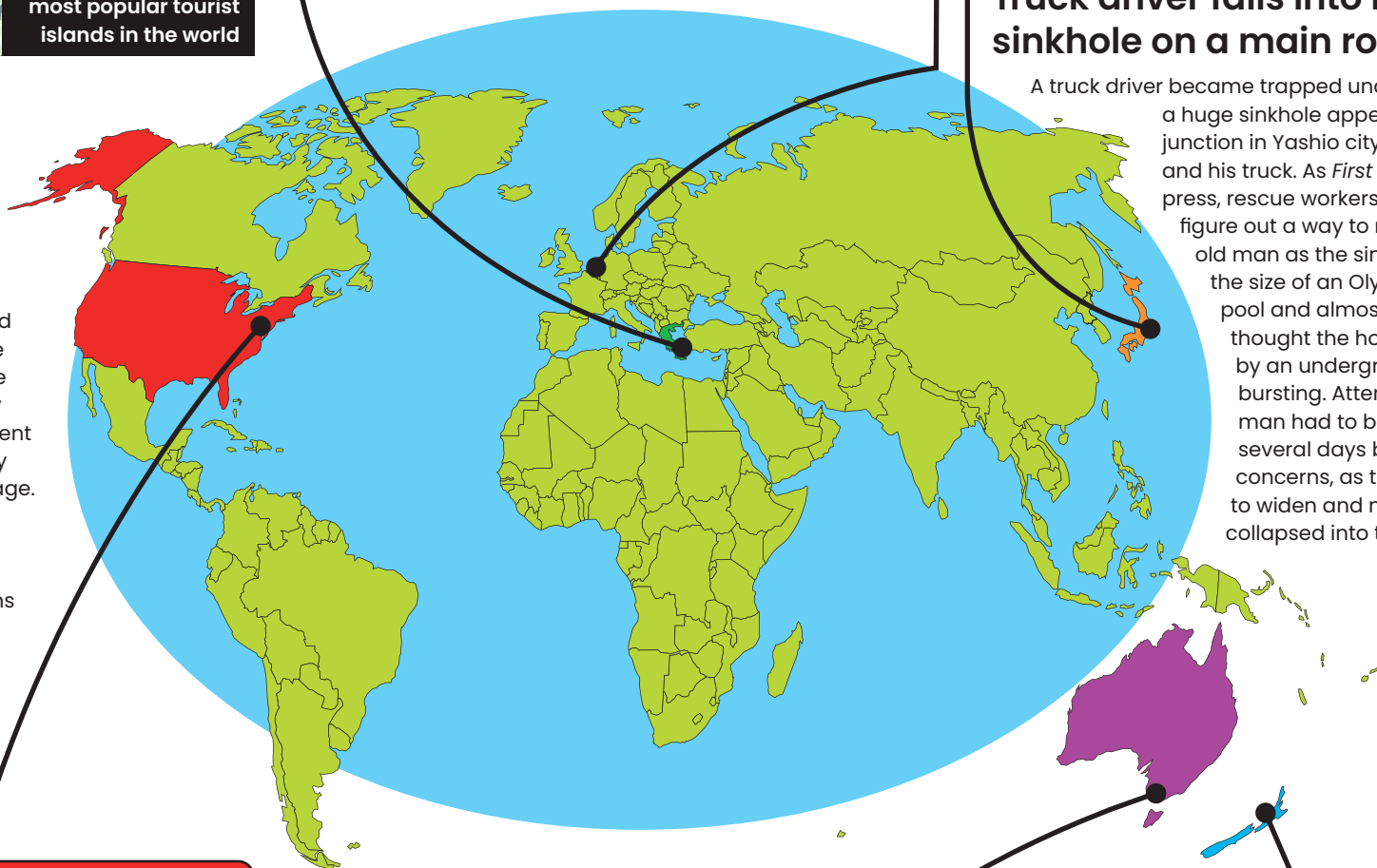
 **JAPAN**



The sinkhole continues to grow

Truck driver falls into huge sinkhole on a main road

A truck driver became trapped underground when a huge sinkhole appeared at a road junction in Yashio city, swallowing him and his truck. As *First News* went to press, rescue workers were trying to figure out a way to reach the 74-year-old man as the sinkhole grew to the size of an Olympic swimming pool and almost 30m deep. It's thought the hole was caused by an underground sewer pipe bursting. Attempts to rescue the man had to be stopped after several days because of safety concerns, as the hole continued to widen and more of the road collapsed into the hole.



 **AUSTRALIA**

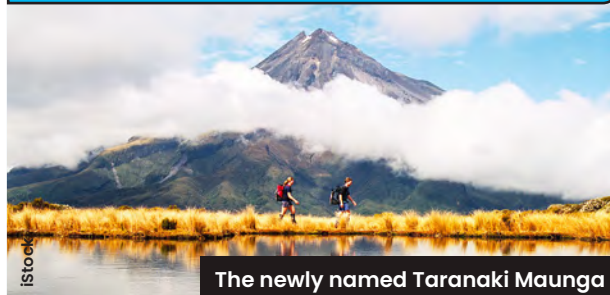
Pesto the penguin turns one!



Hey, Pesto!

Pesto the penguin has celebrated his first birthday at Sea Life Melbourne with a Winter One-derland party! The super cute penguin, who went viral in 2024 for his exceptionally large size as a baby, was treated to a penguin-friendly jelly cake, bubbles and decorations. Claire Burrell, General Manager at Sea Life Melbourne Aquarium, said: "With his playful personality and newfound love for swimming, Pesto is continuing to steal hearts."

 **NEW ZEALAND**



The newly named Taranaki Maunga

Mountain gets the same rights as a person!

Mount Taranaki has been given the same legal rights as a human. That means it will be given a new legal name and its peak and lands must be protected. At first, the mountain was given the name Mount Egmont by British explorer James Cook in the 18th century, but it will now be called Taranaki Maunga instead. The change means the mountain will actually own itself but be looked after by local tribes, called iwi, and the government. The new law was put in place to honour the mountain's Māori heritage and the tribes who believe it is a sacred living being.



1
Following the likes of *Frozen* and *The Lion King*, the next Disney movie to be turned into a stage show is *Hercules* – its first show will be on 6 June!

29,500
The Mousetrap is the longest-running play in the world. It's been performed more than 29,500 times in London since its opening night in 1952!



SHOWTIME SPECIAL!

130
Matilda the Musical has been running since 2010, and 130 girls have played the hero role of Matilda in that time!

WITH musical movies filling our cinema screens, their spine-tingling songs hitting high numbers on Spotify and the very popular *Wicked* in the running for major film awards, we've put together a special pull-out to help you have a fabulously theatrical half-term break. The stage is set – enjoy the show!

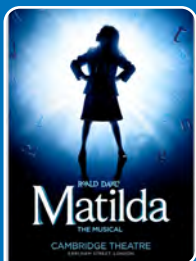
240+
London is famous for its 39 West End theatres – but in total, there are over 240 theatres in the capital alone!

FIRST NEWS FAVES

What's your favourite theatre show? Here are the picks of your *First News* friends!



Nicky
Wicked



Hannah
Matilda



Eddy
Little Shop Of Horrors



Chris
Mrs Doubtfire



Safiyah
The Nutcracker



Charlie
The Lion King



Milly
Six

INSIDE...

- Fantastic facts!
- Theatre in the 1930s!
- Make your own props!
- How to write a song!
- Musical jokes!
- Half-term activities!

THEATRES IN THE THIRTIES!

AUTHOR Judith Eagle shares some fascinating theatre facts from the 1930s that she learned while writing *The Great Theatre Rescue!*

by Judith Eagle

Imagine growing up in a theatre – every day a whirl of rehearsals, costume fittings, first nights and encores.

In my new book, *The Great Theatre Rescue*, this is Charley's life. Each night, the cast – a rowdy group, including tap dancing duo the Skip Sisters, Violet 'the voice' Nightingale, trumpeter Wilbert Heaven, and gymnasts the Tumbling Twins – play a sell-out show.



Until... one day, Charley's dad has to go away on urgent business, Charley is sent to boarding school, and a sinister figure begins to plot the theatre's downfall. Can the show go on?

Back in the 1930s, which is when



Judith Eagle



The Great Theatre Rescue is set, London theatreland was an incredibly lively place. The capital was home to more than 40 theatres, putting on plays and pantomimes and operas and ballets. Many of the theatres that audiences still visit today were thriving back then. Famous venues like the Theatre Royal, Sadler's Wells, the Old Vic, the Lyceum and the Coliseum were all drawing in crowds.

One of the best parts of writing historical fiction is the research and discovering all sorts of interesting facts. Below is just some of what I learned!

The Great Theatre Rescue by Judith Eagle is out now.



● Fred Astaire

Before legendary dancer Fred Astaire teamed up with Ginger Rogers, his partner was his sister, Adele. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Fred and Adele regularly wowed London audiences with their dancing. Their show *Funny Face* ran for 263 performances. The royal family were also fans!



● Duke Ellington

The famous American jazz pianist Duke Ellington travelled to London with his 14-piece band in 1933. Audiences were so swept away by his band, they cheered for ten whole minutes. Ellington said that playing in Europe had lifted him "out of the groove" and inspired him to make better music.



● Noel Streatfeild

The author Noel Streatfeild was an actress at first. She performed on stage before writing her first novel. Published in 1936, and inspired by her time in the theatre, *Ballet Shoes* is the story of the Fossil sisters, who attend a children's dancing and stage school.



● Shim Sham Soho

The Soho area of London was the centre of jazz in the 1930s. In clubs like the Shim Sham, guests dined on mock turtle soup, lobster mayonnaise and peach Melba, then danced the night away. Interestingly, the Shim Sham is also the name of a famous tap dance, first performed in 1928!

TRULY WICKED FACTS

Five facts about the musical smash hit to leave your friends spellbound!



● Most popular

On Spotify, the most-played song from the original Broadway cast's recording of *Wicked* is, of course, *Defying Gravity*, with 179 million plays!

● Flying free

Defying Gravity has even been played in space! NASA has used it as the alarm tune to wake up its gravity-defying astronauts.

● Grande dreams

Ariana Grande saw the show a number of times as a

teenager. In 2013, she posted on X that playing Glinda was her "dream role" – and 13 years later, she landed the part in the movie!

● It's show time!

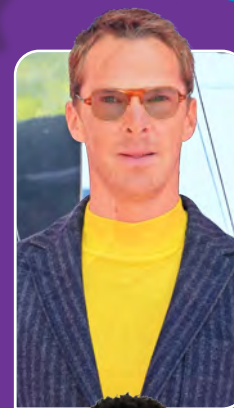
On stage, *Wicked* runs for two hours 25 minutes. Even though last year's movie told just half the tale, it ran for 15 minutes more!

● Electrifying performances

Each performance of *Wicked* uses enough electricity to power 12 homes!

FROM SCHOOL TO STARDOM!

If your school has a drama club, get involved – this lot did! When they were your age, they all performed in school plays on their journey to superstar fame...



Benedict Cumberbatch

Best known as: Doctor Strange, from movies in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.
At school: He performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at school at the age of 12.



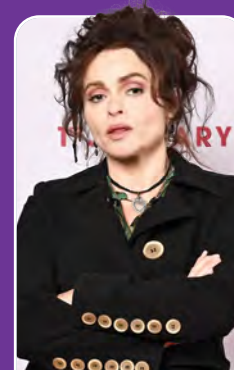
John Boyega

Best known as: Finn from some of the recent *Star Wars* films.
At school: In John's first-ever acting role, he was a leopard in a primary school play!



Emma Watson

Best known as: Harry's pal, Hermione Granger, from the *Harry Potter* movies.
At school: Before Hogwarts, Emma played the title role in a production of *The Happy Prince*.



Helena Bonham Carter

Best known as: The wicked witch and death eater, Bellatrix Lestrange.
At school: This BAFTA-winner played Juliet, from *Romeo and Juliet*, in a TV ad, aged 15.



Hugh Grant

Best known as: The singing, dancing Oompa-Loompa from *Wonka*.
At school: He played one of the von Trapp daughters in *The Sound Of Music* – an absolute classic!

THE PROP DEPARTMENT

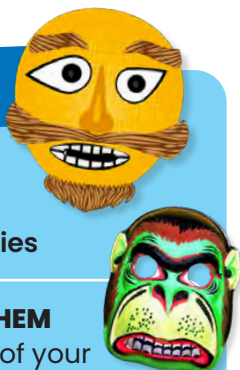
EVERY good show needs a prop department! Here's how to unleash your creativity and make three show-stealing props this half-term.

MASKS

Great for shows about: animals, criminals or parties

HOW TO MAKE THEM

Draw the outline of your mask on card or a paper plate. Carefully cut out holes for eyes and a mouth, then use paper, pens and paint to decorate the mask. If it's human, add details like eyebrows and a nose. If it's an animal, you could add horns or feathers. Make it as scary or funny as you would like! Finally, measure around your head and tape ribbon or string to either side of the mask so that it fits.



FLOWERS

Great for shows about: romance, family or outdoor adventures

HOW TO MAKE THEM

Once you've finished with your issue of *First News*, transform it into a top prop! Cut eight strips and fold them in half, using glue or tape to stick the ends together as you go. These are your petals. Arrange them in a circle. Then, cut two circles out of some coloured paper or card and stick them in the centre of the petals, on both sides, to create a pretty paper flower. You could use a pencil as a stem!



SLIME

Great for shows about: monsters, mad scientists or bugs...

You'll need:

- 100ml of PVA glue
- ½ teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda
- Green or yellow gel food colouring
- 1-3 teaspoons of contact lens solution

HOW TO MAKE IT

Step 1: Put the glue and the bicarbonate of soda in a mixing bowl and mix well.

Step 2: Add a couple of drops of the gel food colouring and mix again.

Step 3: Add one teaspoon of the contact lens solution. Mix well for about a minute until it turns from watery to slimy. If needed, add another teaspoon. As you mix, the slime should eventually go stringy and then turn into a ball, leaving the bowl clean.

Step 4: Knead the ball of slime in your hands until it loses its stickiness. This should take a minute or so.

Step 5: Have fun with your slime! Store it in a pot with a lid to stop it drying out.

Ask an adult to help you – and check all ingredients for safety info!



A simple recipe for 'snail slime' from the brilliant new book, **Beastie Bros: The Cabbage Juice Crime** by David O'Connell – out now!

HOW TO WRITE A TOP MUSICAL SONG



...by **Lin-Manuel Miranda**

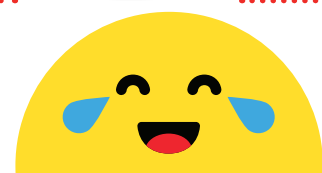
LIN-MANUEL Miranda is the songwriting star behind huge Broadway hits, and the music in films like *Moana* and *Encanto*.

When creating a new song, first he jams on his piano until he finds a tune that suits the mood or moment in the story.

"I'll record just enough of it to get a loop," he once told CNN. "Then I'll go off and talk to myself and figure out the lyrics as I'm walking the dog or washing the dishes."

It helps to get into character, too! "When I'm writing *How Far I'll Go*, I'm Moana!" he said. "I'm Moana until I figure out what Moana needs to say – and when we say it in the right way, I write it down."

LEAVE THEM LAUGHING!



ARE these musical jokes top comedy or a total tragedy?! We'll let you decide...

Why did the actor go to jail?

He stole the show!

What do you get if you cross a singing Disney star with fine art?

The Moana-Lisa!

What do you say to the person who plays the triangle in the orchestra?

Thanks for every ting!

What did Elsa from *Frozen* play with as a child?

Legoooooo, Legoooooo!

What did one actor say to another after they broke their bone?

I'm glad you got into the cast!



FAMILY DAYS OUT

It might be cold outside but these exciting activities will keep you entertained all day long! Just remember to pack your winter warmers!



Make history with English Heritage

From pantomimes and plays to spear-throwing and sword school, there are loads of activities to get your teeth into at English Heritage properties this February. english-heritage.org.uk



Paddington Adventures at the Eden Project

Enjoy a Paddington-inspired adventure (15-23 Feb) through the jungle in search of five treasures of the rainforest! Find hidden clues and solve fun puzzles. edenproject.com



Winter Wonders Week at Longleat Safari Park

Step inside the park's indoor winter snow-tacular! There will be a giant toboggan slide, indoor snowboarding and an inflatable snow globe from 15-23 February. longleat.co.uk



Brick Day events at LEGOLAND Windsor Resort

From 15 February until 9 March, LEGOLAND is hosting a series of special Brick Day events. Families will get access to 30 rides and attractions including the newly reopened Deep Sea Adventure. legoland.co.uk



Sci-fi Galactic Adventures at Glasgow's Riverside Museum

Get ready for a super sci-fi mission (now until 6 April)! There are 16 minifigures hidden in unexpected places around the museum. Can you find them all? glasgowlife.org.uk



Imagine Children's Festival at London's Southbank Centre

This fun-filled family festival features top performances, art and free fun (18-23 February). One of the highlights is a drawing class with famous illustrator Rob Biddulph. southbankcentre.co.uk



London Transport Museum

Covent Garden | Kids go free

MAYOR OF LONDON



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

ltmuseum.co.uk
Registered charity number 1123122

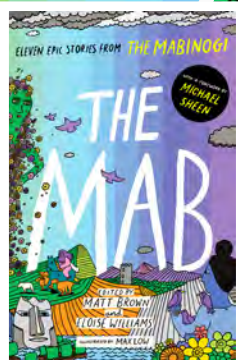




TALES FROM WALES!



THIS week saw the release of a new edition of *The Mab* – an amazing, illustrated collection of 11 enchanting short stories from Welsh legend! We spoke to the book's creators, Matt Brown and Eloise Williams, to hear more.



● **What is *The Mab*?**

Eloise says: *The Mab* is a retelling of the ancient Welsh stories of the *Mabinogi*, which are legends that came about around 1,000 years ago. We've re-written them with 11 different authors to bring those stories back to life for young readers.

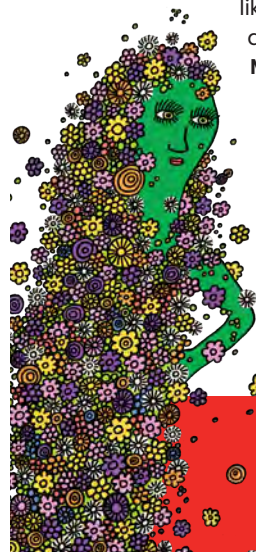
● **Do all children in Wales know about these stories?**

Matt says: I think that if you're from Welsh-speaking Wales, they're probably very familiar. It depends where you're from. I remember having some of these stories read to me in school and really liking them. They're really weird, funny, interesting stories about things like knights, dragons and evil magicians.

● **Do you each have a favourite story from the book?**

Eloise says: I got to tell the story of Blodeuwedd, which is the woman who's made out of flowers to be a wife for somebody, and she's not very happy about it. I really like it because it's full of murder and magic!

Matt says: There's a character called Peredur, who I love. He's a kid who just wants to be a knight, and he gets pots and pans for armour. Everybody underestimates him – but little do they know that he's been trained by the nine witches of Gloucester!



● **We talk a lot about Greek and Roman myths, so do you think that British mythology needs a bit more celebrating?**

Matt says: I think, absolutely! When I go into schools I talk about exactly that. The creator of *The Hobbit*, JRR Tolkien, loved the *Mabinogi* – there are so many [bits] in *The Mab* that he used in his stories. There's a story about a woman called Luned who has a magic ring that has the power of invisibility when you put it on. These stories are part of the films and books that we love, but we don't know it.

IN the book, the stories are included in both English and Welsh. Welsh is taught to all pupils in Wales, and Matt and Eloise think that's brilliant.

"It's part of understanding your culture and feeling represented," says Matt. "That's so important. I'm so envious of people who can speak Welsh fluently... it's such a beautiful language."

Eloise says that it's vital to keep all of the UK's languages alive. "People have tried to stamp Welsh out for a long time. It's fantastic children get the chance to learn it. The more people who speak Welsh, the better!"



Learning Welsh

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THING ABOUT WALES?

Eloise says: The people are natural storytellers!



Matt says: Barry Island beach!



The Mab, edited by Matt Brown and Eloise Williams, and illustrated by Max Low, is out now.

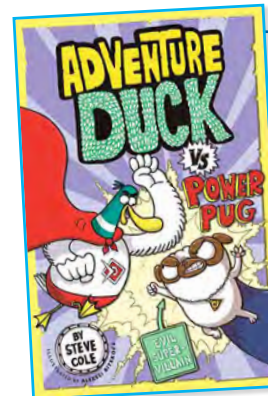
Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



Animal heroes!

WITH the *Dog Man* movie hitting cinemas today (7 February), we thought it was the paw-fect time to shine a light on other animals who fight for justice and save lives – some fictional, others very real!

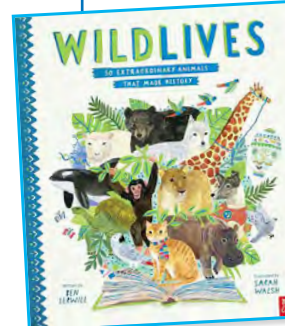


Adventure Duck vs Power Pug by Steve Cole and Aleksei Bitskoff

Prepare for a quacktastic battle between good and evil when a meteor gives a wise-cracking duck and an evil pug superpowers.

Mighty Mittens by WG White, illustrated by Natalia Jiménez Osorio

After a cat-food accident, Mittens becomes lightning fast, super strong, and can shoot lasers from her eyes! Is she the hero her town needs?



WildLives: 50 Extraordinary Animals that Made History by Ben Lerwill, illustrated by Sarah Walsh

Meet 50 real-life rescuers, adventurers and pioneers of the animal kingdom. You don't need to be human to be a hero!

Batpig: Go Pig or Go Home by Rob Harrell

Join in another adventure with Batpig and friends as they face magical sharks, lake monsters and summer camp.



Patron Sniffs Out Danger by Bruce Berglund, illustrated by Mark Simmons

During Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a Jack Russell terrier sniffs out deadly explosives among the rubble and helps people feel safer in their homeland.

READER REVIEW

Felix Dashwood and the Mutating Mansion by Luke Temple

THIS book is about a creepy mansion in the middle of nowhere.

Many years ago, a little girl lived there and all of her nightmares started to come true. Can Felix and her friends save it before it's too late? Once I started reading this, I couldn't put it down until the mystery was solved.

You'll enjoy this book too, if you like getting jump-scared in the middle of a book and if you love horror mysteries.

This book felt extra special for me because the author, Luke Temple, came to my school and I got to meet him and ask about being a writer.

I highly recommend it and give it a five-star rating!

Review by Akira, aged seven



WRITE US A BOOK REVIEW!

WHETHER it's fiction, non-fiction, a comic book or an audiobook, we'd love to hear about it! Simply send 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 and we may pop it in the paper!

AN UNLIKELY HERO!



All images: © 2025 DreamWorks Animation LLC. All Rights Reserved.

A NEW action movie is coming to cinemas today (7 February), with an unusual kind of hero at the helm! Meet Dog Man – part dog, part man! Here's the lowdown on this comedy caper set to be the highlight of February half-term!



THE film is based on the *Dog Man* series by Dav Pilkey, which now features 13 books in total. Pilkey also writes the *Captain Underpants* books.

● **What's the story?**

When a police dog and his human police officer handler are injured together on the job, a bizarre but life-saving surgery fuses the two of them together and Dog Man is born! As Dog Man embraces his new identity and strives to impress the Chief, he also has to try to stop the evil plots of feline supervillain Petey the Cat. But when Petey clones himself and creates the kitten Li'l Petey, things get complicated as the kitten befriends Dog Man. When Li'l Petey falls into the clutches of a common enemy, can Dog Man and Petey put their differences aside to save the day?



BRITISH actor Ricky Gervais (above) voices Flippy the Fish!

● **The power of family!**

Dog Man is all about discovering how family can bring people together, even when they might not like each other! Director Peter Hastings said: "The movie is incredibly funny, with plenty of silly and wacky moments, but, like all great stories, it has heart." Other themes include friendship, redemption (when someone is saved from being evil) and the idea that everyone can be a hero.

● **Say what?**

Dog Man doesn't actually 'speak' in the movie. Instead the character communicates through a series of dog-like noises, which were brought to life by none other than director Peter Hastings himself!

● **Meet the baddie**

Petey describes himself as the 'World's Most Evilst Cat', but there could be more to him than meets the eye. Pete Davidson, who voices the character, said: "He's like your average guy who wants to be bad but, deep down, knows he should do the right thing."

● **Top tune**

Listen out for an original song that was written just for the movie, called *Supa Good* by Yung Gravy ft James Brown.



Catch *Dog Man* in cinemas now.



OUR TOP PICKS!



● **Disney On Ice is back for spring!**

Disney On Ice is coming back to the UK this February and March! *Disney On Ice presents 100 Years of Wonder* features exciting routines from *Encanto*, *Moana*, *Finding Dory*, *Frozen* and *Toy Story*. The show will visit London for half-term before moving on to Glasgow, Liverpool, Cardiff and Leeds.

● **Beyoncé confirms world tour!**

Beyoncé has confirmed a *Cowboy Carter* world tour in 2025. The superstar will travel round the US, Europe and the UK, where she'll play four dates in London. The news came after *Cowboy Carter* scooped Album of the Year and Best Country Album at the Grammys. Beyoncé is the most awarded artist in Grammys history, with 35 awards!



BITE-SIZED NEWS

● **Kendrick Lamar at the Super Bowl**

American rapper Kendrick Lamar is set to perform in the famous half-time show at the Super Bowl on 9 February. The NFL Super Bowl is one of the biggest sporting events in the world, marking the final game of the National Football League of the United States. Lamar will be joined on stage by fellow American singer SZA.





FORZA ARRIVES ON PLAYSTATION!

A POPULAR Xbox racing game is the latest to make a big move to PlayStation.

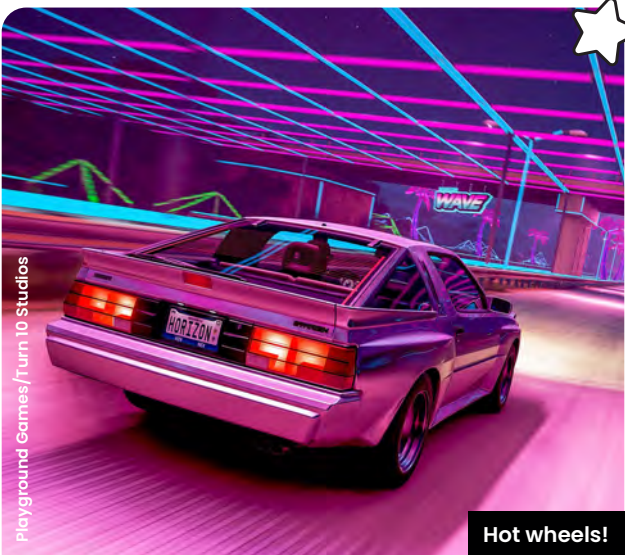
Forza Horizon 5 is coming to PS5 in spring and will feature the same content as the Xbox and PC releases of the game.

It was first released back in 2021, so here's a rundown for fans who have been waiting to play it.

Set in the ever-changing open-world landscapes of Mexico, players can lead expeditions and campaigns and get to grips with nearly 900 different cars.

Challenges await in the form of intense dust storms, but the rewards are worth it.

Also, you can team up with other players online and enter the Horizon Arcade, or create your own races for the hot wheels in your garage.



Playground Games/Turn 10 Studios

Hot wheels!

Forza Horizon 5 is one of many Xbox exclusives set to make the move to PlayStation this year. But why would Microsoft, which makes Xbox games, want its rival PlayStation to have them?

Speaking on videogame developer podcast *Kiwi Talkz*, former PlayStation boss Shawn Layden said it was about making games available to more people: "Multiplatform is a strategy, particularly in a world where the cost of development is increasing so dramatically. Multiplatform means widening your... market, just giving more people a chance to see it. I welcome that."

Major games being made available across multiple platforms is a very welcome sight, and seems like something we should start getting used to.



Playground Games/Turn 10 Studios

Forza Horizon 5 has received high praise, winning the BAFTA Games Award for British Game in 2022



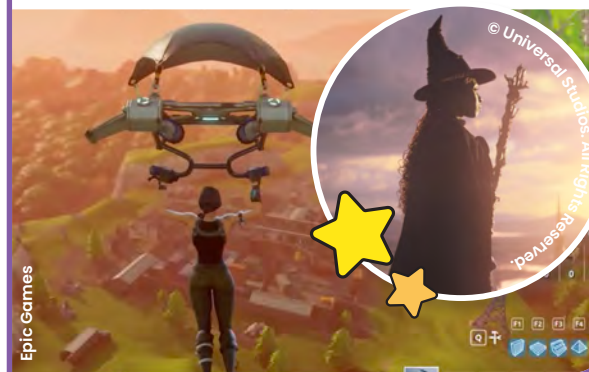
Fortnite sound gets Wicked part

ANY *Fortnite* fans who watched the box office hit *Wicked* might have felt their ears prick up, and with good reason!

That's because the movie uses a *Fortnite* sound effect in a sequence for its most famous song, *Defying Gravity*.

As Elphaba falls from a tower while trying to fly with her broom, the familiar skydiving sounds can be heard. *Fortnite* fans will have heard this sound loads of times while playing the Battle Royale game mode – it's the sound effect of the skydive from the Battle Bus to the ground.

Wicked editor Myron Kerstein confirmed the pick in a YouTube video from *The Rough Cut*.



Epic Games

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OMG!

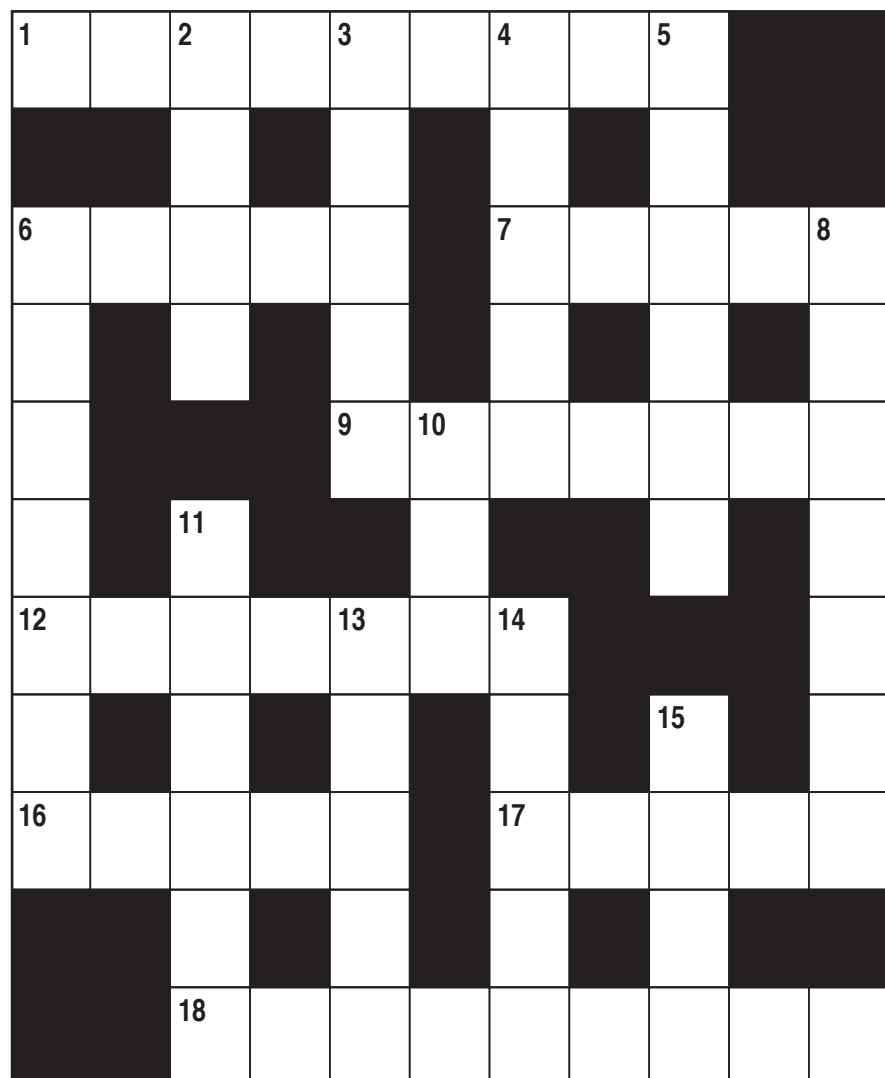
YOUR dream town could look something like this!
It's our first glimpse of *Town to City*, a cosy city-builder coming to PC this year. Created by UK game publisher Kwalee, the relaxing game invites you to build a bustling community from scratch. Carefully place each house and flower bed to encourage families to move in, and grow your voxel (3D pixel) world. Cool features include the ability to research trees, snap your creations in photo mode and endlessly customise!

Kwalee



CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



ACROSS

- 1 These might fall from dark clouds (9)
- 6 Boats (5)
- 7 Bacteria (5)
- 9 Very large flightless bird (7)
- 12 Stretchy material (7)
- 16 More pleasant (5)
- 17 Changes (5)
- 18 Machine used to cut grass (9)

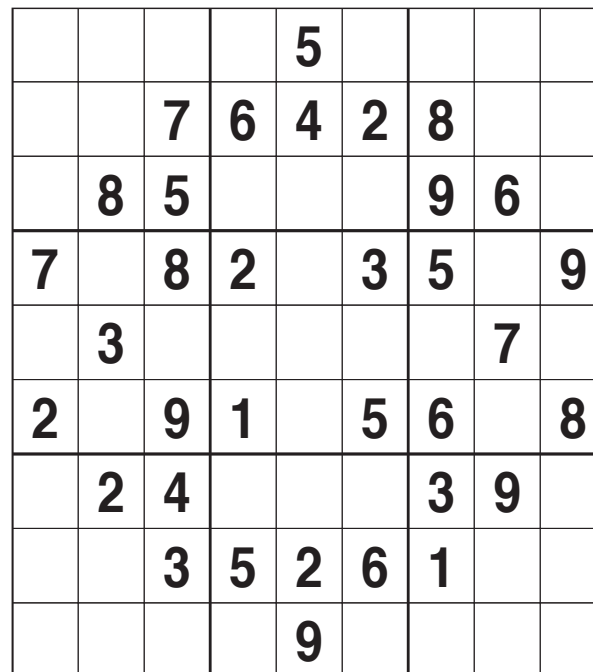
DOWN

- 2 Popular flower and part of the eye (4)
- 3 A public dance hall that plays music (5)
- 4 Should (5)
- 5 Make a great effort; struggle (6)
- 6 The number 16 (7)
- 8 Balls or globes (7)
- 10 Travel over snow on runners (3)
- 11 Abandon a plan (6)
- 13 Hurl a ball (5)
- 14 Strawberries and _____ : tasty food combination (5)
- 15 Outlook; field of vision (4)



Sudoku

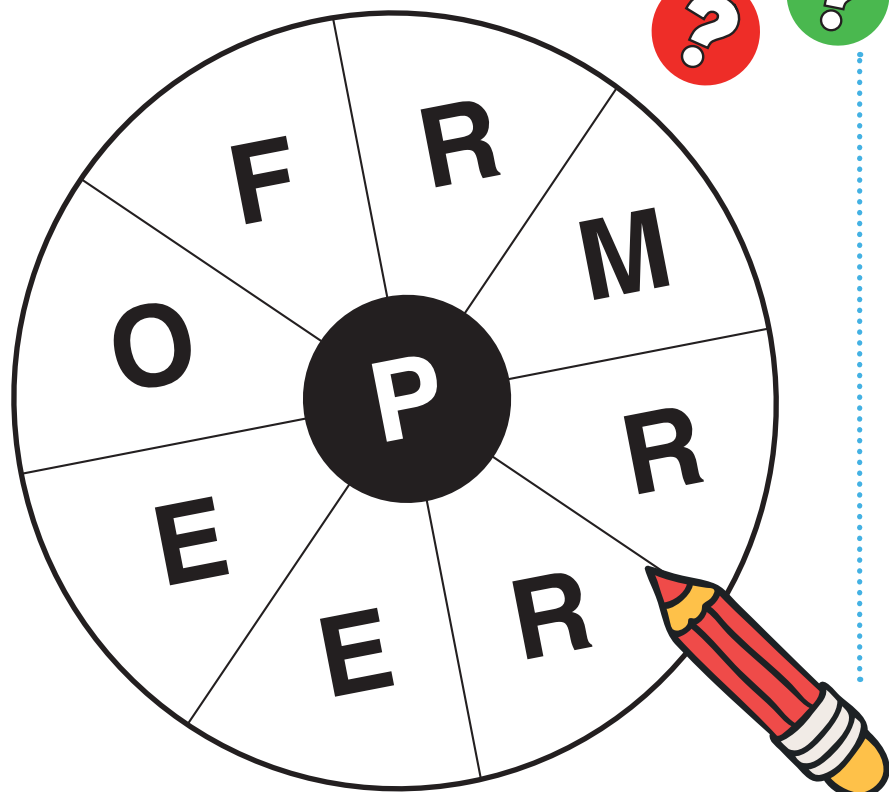
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?



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

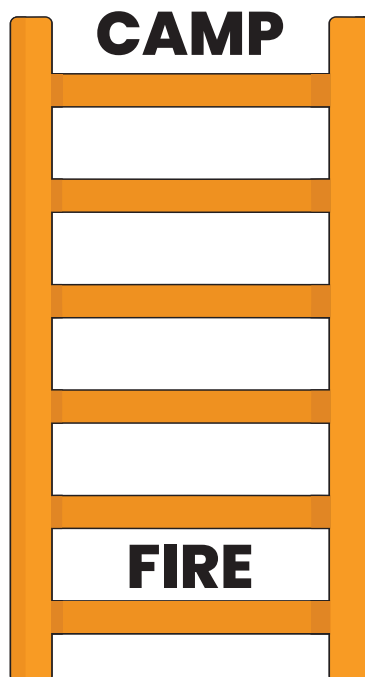
Word wheel

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?



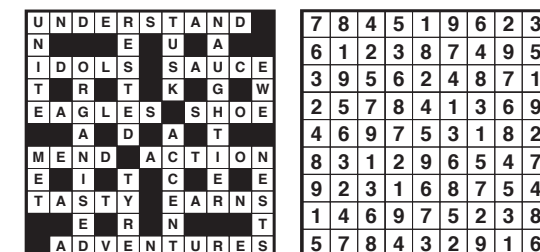
Word ladder

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 972 ANSWERS:

- Word wheel: intercept.
- Word ladder: sets, sees, fees, feet, fret, free.
- Spot the difference: 1) Extra turtle 2) Strip missing off top right fish 3) Spots on turtle's flipper missing 4) Seahorse changed colour 5) Extra octopus eye 6) Extra bubble in centre 7) Ray facing opposite way 8) Sea plants added at bottom 9) Extra octopus arm 10) Extra fish in top left hand corner.



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 science lesson?



Wordsearch



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



- Piano
- Drum
- Recorder
- Guitar
- Flute
- Violin
- Saxophone
- Maracas
- Harp
- Trumpet



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



HIGHEST BALLOON WALK EVER



TWO German adventurers have made history by walking across a rope suspended between hot air balloons at the staggering height of 8,202 feet (2,500m).

Friedi Kühne and Lukas Irmeler braved changing winds and their balloons spinning, but managed to cross the gap on a slackline more than a mile above Riedering in southeast Germany.

The pair were able to top the previous Guinness World Record set in 2021 by nearly 2,000 feet (610m)!

After several nerve-racking attempts and falls (while safely attached, of course), both athletes successfully completed the crossing. They then safely returned to the ground, with Kühne even parachuting off the connected balloons after a walk across the line without a safety rope!

Museum marathon

A MUSEUM enthusiast has smashed a world record by visiting 42 London museums in just 24 hours.

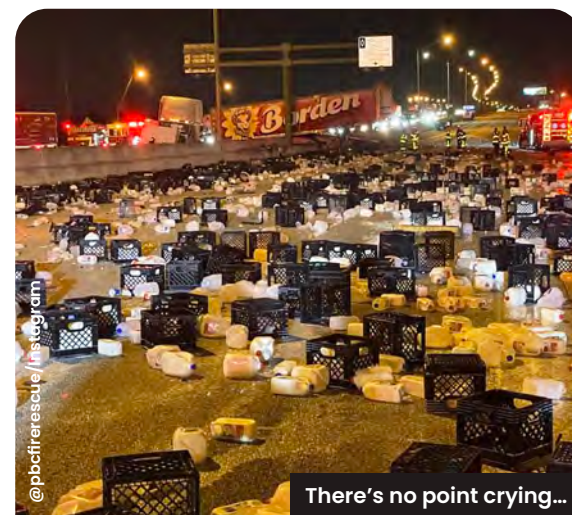
Ben Melham, from Surrey, raced through London's most famous museums, including the British Museum, Natural History Museum and Science Museum, zooming between venues on a kick scooter.

He beat the previous record of 33 museums set in Delhi, India, earlier this year.

Melham said: "Museums are essential to our understanding of who we are and where we come from. Through this record attempt, I hoped to raise awareness and inspire greater engagement with museums and the incredible collections they safeguard."



Udderly unlucky spillage



There's no point crying...

A TRUCK spill caused chaos on a highway in Florida, USA, creating a slippery situation with more than 15,747 litres of milk flooding the road.

The crash happened on Interstate 95 when a Borden Dairy truck lost its cargo.

Emergency teams rushed to the scene where 11 people were checked but, fortunately, no-one was hurt.

Clean-up crews mopped up the milky mess for three hours, while local firefighters couldn't resist making dairy-themed jokes about the "cream-ergency".

JOKE OF THE WEEK

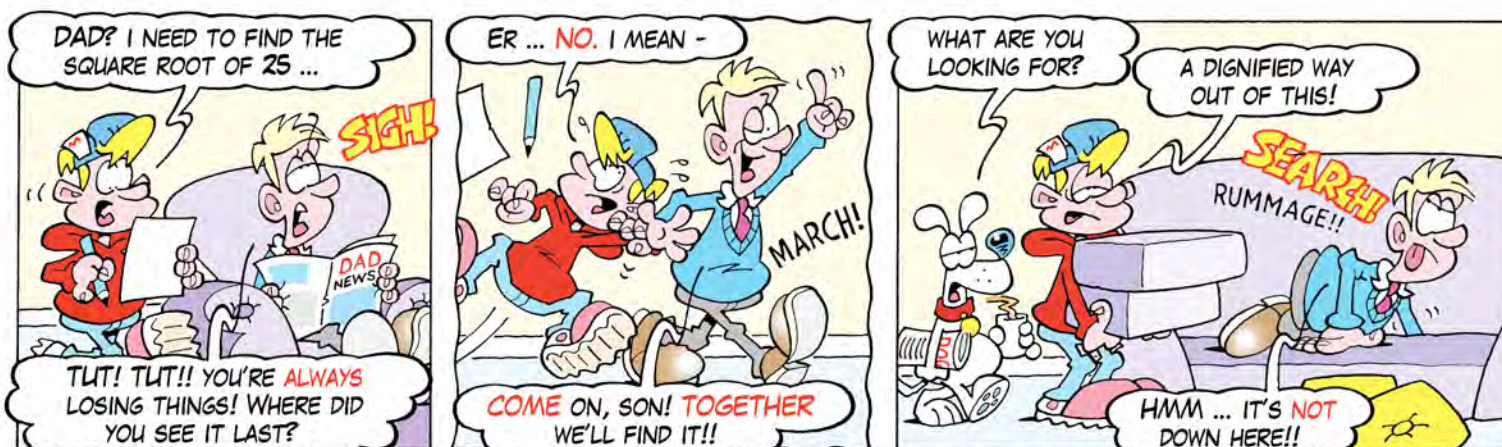
Can February March?
No, but April May!

FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY

hahaha

Paper Boy!

Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer



SAFER INTERNET DAY

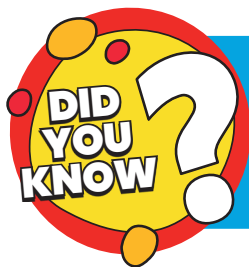
IT'S Safer Internet Day on 11 February, and this year's theme is 'Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online.' To mark it, we take a look at a special documentary from Sky Kids' *FYI*, *Stand Up To Scammers*, and get advice from Internet Matters, a not-for-profit organisation that helps people to stay safe online.



STAND UP TO SCAMMERS

SCAMMING is a huge problem, not just for adults, but for children and young people, too. In a special episode of *FYI*, called *Stand Up To Scammers*, the team explore this issue. The film covers:

- Information about scamming
- Where to watch out for scammers
- Stories from two children who have been the victims of scams
- Top tips on how to avoid being scammed
- Advice from experts, including the police and an ex-scammer



OVER 1,000 kids in the UK are scammed every month. That's more than 12,000 a year!



WATCH THE FILM

Ask a responsible adult to scan the QR code, or head to first.news/scamming



Get more top tips!

Want more top tips on how to stand up to scammers? Just head to our website at first.news/scammingadvice



Getty

Advice from Internet Matters

TO help you spot and handle scams, we got some advice from Sheena Peckham who works at Internet Matters.



What types of scam are there?

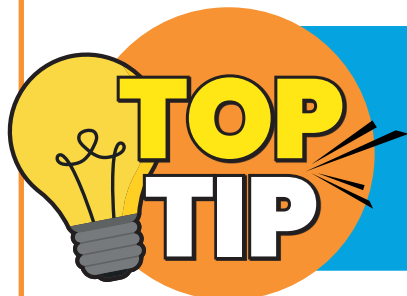
Online scams are cybercrimes that target people using the internet. Young people can be at risk of a range of scams, including:

- **Phishing:** Scammers send fake emails, texts or social media messages to create a sense of urgency and demand immediate action.
- **False promises:** Scammers may offer deals that are too good to be true in order to lure potential victims.
- **Social media spoofing:** Where scammers create online accounts to impersonate others.
- **Counterfeiting and misleading goods (selling fake versions of real products):** Some shops on social media create cheap items that copy more expensive or lesser-known brands.

How can you protect yourself from a scam?

So that you don't fall victim to a scam, it's important to build the right skills to understand what to look out for, using the 3 Rs: recognise, react and resolve.

- **Recognise:** If anything ever feels 'off', follow your gut. Ask your parents or guardians about the common types of scams and what they look like so you can spot them.
- **React:** Before clicking on a link, responding to someone or sharing information, pause and ask: Is this real? Could it be too good to be true? Could it cause harm? Doing simple checks can help you make safer choices online.
- **Resolve:** If you find yourself somewhere that makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, leave the space and tell your parent or guardian. If a user is making you uncomfortable, block and report them.



ALWAYS remember the 3 Rs: recognise, react and resolve. They can help you to stay safe from a scam (see right).

Get more advice from Internet Matters at internetmatters.org



THINK YOU'VE BEEN SCAMMED? REPORT IT!

If you think you've been scammed, it's important to report it. A trusted adult can contact Action Fraud (run by the City of London Police) on your behalf by heading to their website at actionfraud.police.uk.



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 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 or on the *First News* app.



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

I was really sad to find out from this week's poll that 50% of you suffer from climate anxiety (worrying about our planet). One way to help combat that is by doing something to help the world around you. Two campaigners who are doing just that are Benjamin and Lottie, who feature on these pages. They're standing up for nature and hope the UK government will, too!

STAND UP FOR NATURE!



WE know that you care about nature, and for good reason! But nature in the UK is struggling, with one in five species now at risk of extinction. So it's more important than ever to stand up for it! Recently, the Climate and Nature Bill, a plan for a new UK law that addresses climate change, global warming and the nature crisis, had its first reading in Parliament. MPs voted to end the bill, meaning it won't return to Parliament until July and is unlikely to become law. Young campaigners Benjamin Fallow and Lottie Lowe tell you about the bill and why they support it.

WATCH A FILM

Want to find out more about nature loss in the UK? Watch a special documentary from *Sky Kids' FYI, Saving Nature: Where Has Our Wildlife Gone?* Just ask an adult to scan the QR code or head to first.news/investigates.



Benjamin backs nature

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD Benjamin Fallow is a young artist and naturalist. He's passionate about protecting nature and hopes his artwork will encourage people to care for wildlife and nature. He's a representative of the Youth Land Trust, and has raised over £8,000 for nature charities with his artwork and sponsored challenges.

by Benjamin Fallow

I'm Benjamin Fallow and I'm 11 years old. I've always loved being out in nature and I use my artwork to encourage people to care for it. We're not separate from nature; we're part of it and we can't survive without it. We have to stop climate change!

Recently, it was the first reading of the Climate and Nature (CAN) Bill. It calls on the government to end fossil fuel production, reverse the decline of nature in the UK, and form a climate and nature assembly.

I found out about the CAN Bill when I marched against pollution last year, and I was proud to speak outside Parliament with the youth voices in front of 15,000 people!

The *State of Nature* report found that a fifth of species in the UK are at risk of extinction, from birds to plants and pollinators. We need these things so that we can grow crops and survive.

I really hope MPs back the CAN Bill. If you'd like to get involved, speak to your MP and encourage them to support the bill before the vote in July. Try to speak up for nature whenever you can!



Benjamin Fallow (right) with other young environmental campaigners

THIS WEEK'S POLL!

We asked 4,308 of you:

Do you suffer from climate anxiety?



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Cast your vote in our polls at first.news/polls

Lottie backs CAN Bill!

LOTTIE went to Parliament to support the Climate and Nature Bill. She tells you all about it!

by Lottie Lowe

Climate and nature are so important! Going to London to support the Climate and Nature Bill was the best day ever! I loved meeting Dr Roz Savage MP and Liz Jarvis MP and helping the CAN Bill supporters. It was so exciting to be able to go into the Houses of Parliament and see the MPs debating from the green sofas. I'm so glad I wrote to my head teacher and asked for the day out of school to go! I wrote to Prime Minister Keir Starmer before I went, too, and when he drove by us in London, I held up a copy of my letter for him to see. When I got home, I had a letter back from him – so exciting!

I hope the UK government does its best to save nature and the planet, especially with the recent news that US President Donald Trump has pulled out of the Paris Agreement (an international treaty to combat climate change).



Lottie outside Parliament with her mum

BACK THE CLIMATE AND NATURE BILL



NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Bangkok Patana School, Packwood School, Wales High School, Bensham Manor School and New Bolsover Primary School!



A NEED FOR SPEED

NEWS Club member Arjun went to check out the F1 Drive experience in Tottenham. Find out how he got on!

by Arjun

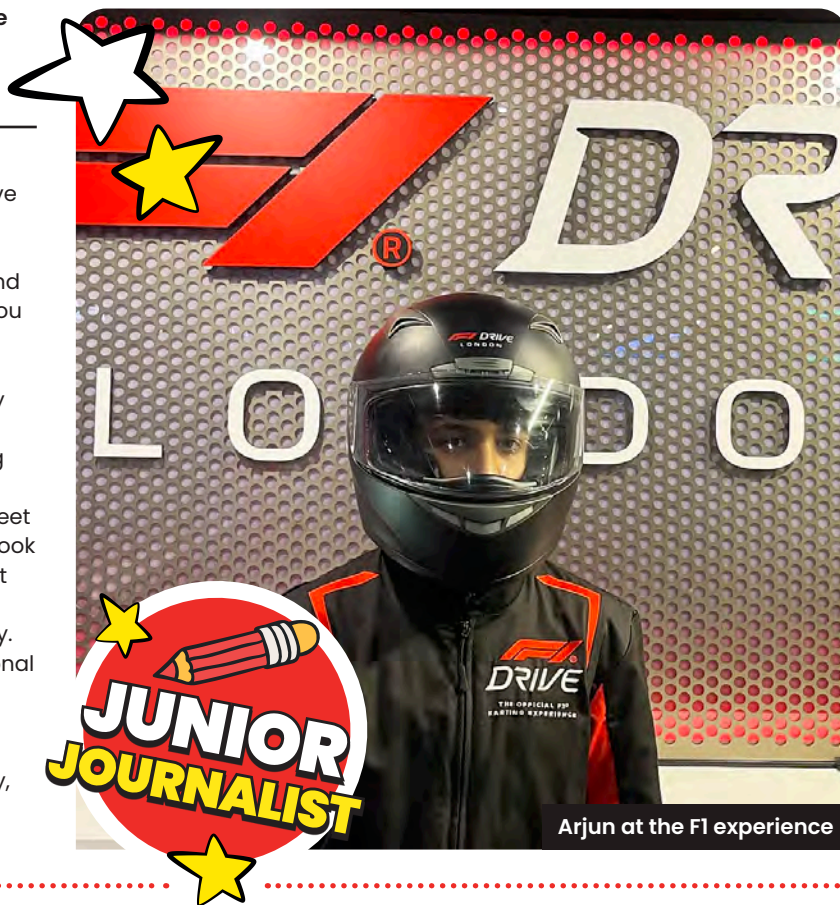
Red! Yellow! Green! That was the start of one of my favourite and most memorable experiences – the F1 Drive experience.

Racers speed through neon-lit tracks at a maximum speed of 40mph! The go-karts are uniquely designed and have their own onboard screens that tell you how fast you are going.

Each go-kart is even fitted with state-of-the-art DRS (Drag Reduction System) technology, which means they have flaps that can be opened in certain zones to make the car go faster. This is similar to the *Mario Kart* gaming system!

The 500m track is inspired by the classic Formula 1 street circuits. This made it feel really realistic. With 17 turns, it took me a while to master! Luckily I had a warm-up to perfect the skills to speed round them. I found slowing down on the approach and speeding up on the curve was the key. The onboard computer told me when I had hit my personal best throughout the circuit, encouraging me to go even faster! This really is the biggest go-karting challenge.

At the end of the circuit, when your adrenaline is still pumping, you can see a real F1 car. At the end of the day, you can refuel on food and drink while watching others zoom round the track. This really is the ultimate day out!



Arjun at the F1 experience

FirstNews
FYI
NEWS CLUB
sky kids

FEATURE IN YOUR NEWS

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.

Or, get your teacher to sign up to the *First News* FYI News Club at first.news/fyinesclub.

Crazy for crochet!

EVER heard of crocheting? It's a bit like knitting but uses one crochet hook rather than two needles. One reader loves it!

Yi Shan Guo said: "I've been crocheting for about two to three months and I've really become hooked! My biggest, and my third, project is the snake in the middle of the image you see below.

"I made the stockings for Christmas last year. My favourite projects are probably the Chinese New Year lantern (my family is Chinese), the toilet and poo and the mermaid hiding under her blanket! I really recommend crochet. Although it might seem hard when you start, it gets easier the more you practise!"



Yi Shan Guo's crocheting

DID YOU KNOW?
CROCHET is French for the word 'hook'.

WIN! THE ULTIMATE FAMILY GAMES BUNDLE!

CELEBRATE half-term with the chance to win this **Ultimate Family Games Bundle** from Asmodee, the leading board game distributors in the UK.

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

Dobble Lilo & 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 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. Get creative with *Azul Mini* and draft coloured tiles to create beautiful murals in the Royal Palace of Evora, and work on your strategic teamwork with *Monkey Palace*, where players work together to construct the Monkey Palace while competing for the highest brick income and points, all under the watchful gaze of the Monkey.

For a chance to win this fantastic prize, just answer this question:

In Lilo & Stitch, what does Ohana mean?
a) Family b) Enemies c) Children

ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRY GAMES
first.news/comps or see page 20. The closing date is 21 February.

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 Which beloved Roald Dahl story is heading for the stage this Christmas?

2 Which South American country is being celebrated at Kew Gardens?



3 This man is 'plogging', but what does the word mean?



4 Schools in Greece were closed due to fears of what?

5 Which company plans to bring its successful drone delivery service to the UK?

6 How many London museums did this record-breaker visit in 24 hours?



7 Which illustrated character is celebrating her 70th birthday this year?



8 Which exclusive Xbox game will soon be arriving on PS5?

9 Which UK city is recognised as the home of football?

10 What is this unusual looking object?



11 Which animal species is most at risk from ivory hunting?

12 A *Fortnite* sound effect made it into which 2024 hit movie?

13 What birthday has Pesto the penguin just celebrated?



14 What is the longest-running play in the world?

15 Scientists have discovered an asteroid that could strike the Earth in what year?

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!

- Answers:**
- 1 The BFG 2 Peru 3 Picking up litter and jogging
 - 4 An earthquake 5 Amazon 6 42 7 Miffy
 - 8 Forza Horizon 9 Sheffield 10 A camera
 - 11 Elephants 12 *Wicked* 13 His first birthday
 - 14 *The Mousetrap* 15 2032

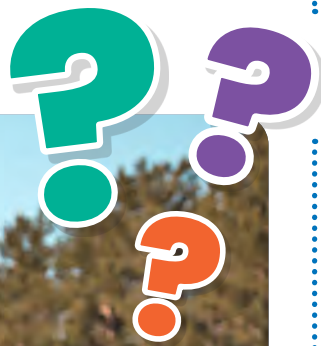
First News team details available at www.firstnews.co.uk/team. For editorial enquiries, contact newsdesk@firstnews.co.uk. For home subscription enquiries, email subscriptions@firstnews.co.uk or call 0330 333 0186 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm). For school subscription enquiries, email education@firstnews.co.uk or call (01371) 851 898 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm). Web: www.firstnews.co.uk. All material in this newspaper is © 2025 First Group Enterprises Ltd and cannot be used without written permission. First News is published by First Group Enterprises Ltd, 10 London Mews, London, W2 1HY. Printed by Reach Printing Services, St Albans Rd, Watford WD24 7RG. Distributed by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 3rd floor, 161 Marsh Wall, London, E14 9AP. Tel: 0330 390 6555.

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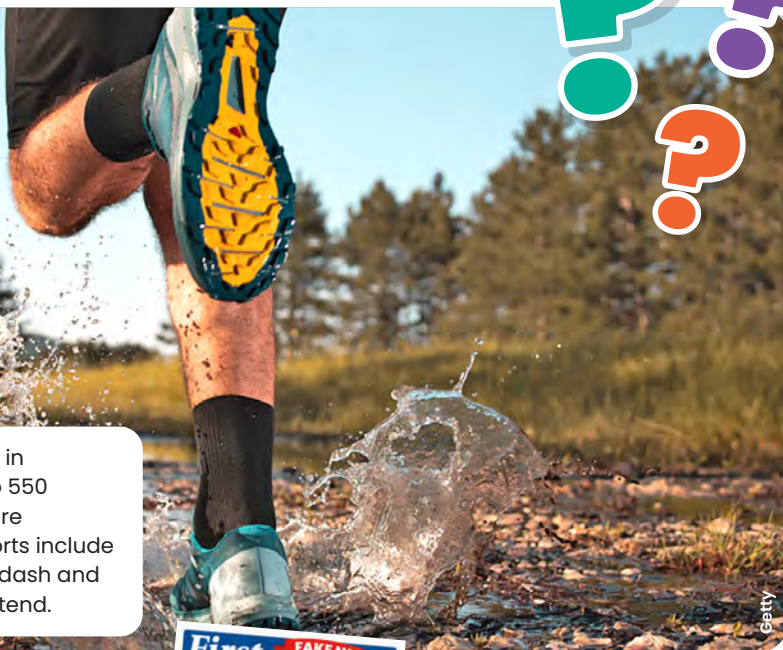
IS IT FAKE OR FACT?

CAN you tell if a story is the real deal or made up? Every week, we'll be challenging you to see if you can sniff out the news from the nonsense! See what you think of this sporty piece, then turn the page upside down to see if you were right.



THE SPLASH GAMES BEGIN

THE Splash Games begin on 8 February in Vancouver and Whistler, Canada. Up to 550 competitors from 25 different nations are expected to compete. This year the sports include super skiing, splash swimming, puddle dash and welly wanging. Prince Harry is due to attend.



Check out more on spotting fake news at:
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This story is FAKE. There's no such thing as the Splash Games. The Invictus Games however do begin on 8 February in Canada and Prince Harry is expected to attend.

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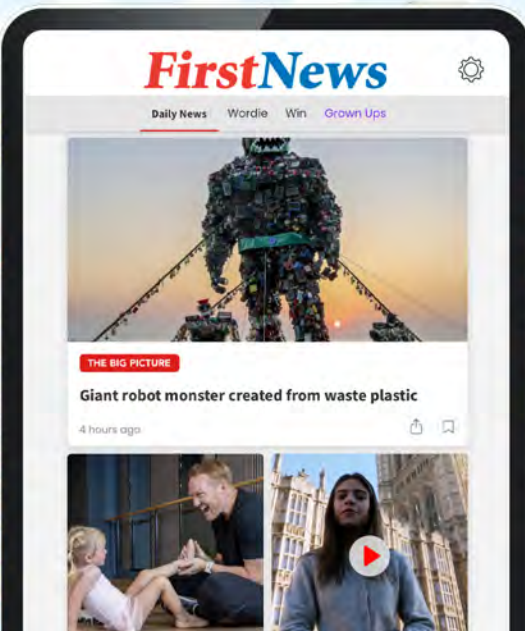
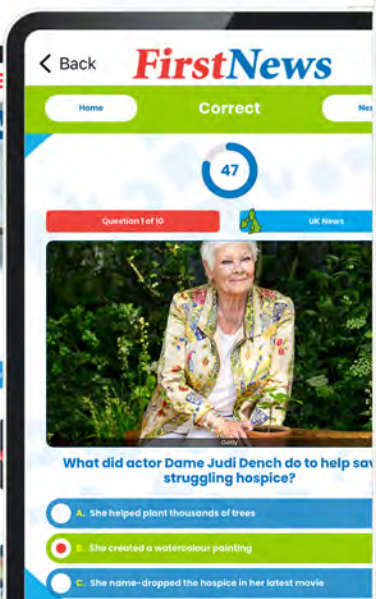
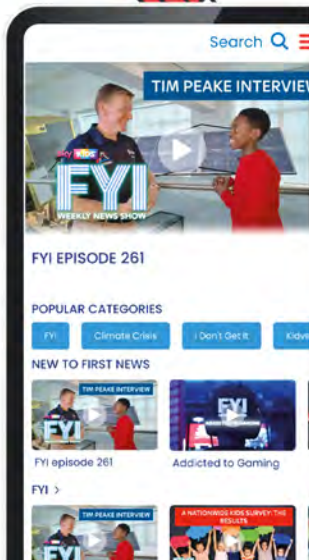
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Zoe Bäckstedt braves the cold and the mud on the way to defending her title

MUD AND MEDALS FOR ZOE

ZOE Bäckstedt showed her strength and stamina to win two gold medals for GB at the UCI Cyclo-Cross World Championships in France.

She successfully defended her under-23 world title to become only the second woman to ever win the trophy twice, after fellow Brit Evie Richards.

But before that, she also helped GB to win the mixed team relay title for the first time, alongside Milo Wills, Zoe Roche, Oscar Amey, Cat Ferguson and Thomas

Mein. The mixed relay involves elite, under-23 and junior riders, and GB's team managed to just beat Italy to the finishing line to win by two seconds.

"Heading over the finish line first was an incredible feeling, knowing how hard we worked and how well as a team, and to see my dad at the finish line – amazing!"

– Thomas Mein



England's Sophie Ecclestone walks off after losing her wicket

England's shocking performance in the Women's Ashes has led to questions over the team's fitness and leadership. They lost the only Test of the series by an innings and 122 runs, to give Australia an overall 16-0 victory. "We won't shy away from difficult and honest conversations about how to take the team forward," said Clare Connor, the deputy CEO of the England and Wales Cricket Board.



Corie Mapp (above) has won the Para Bobsleigh World Cup title for the second year in a row, after leading the standings from start to finish. He ended the series of eight races with three golds, a silver and two bronzes. It was also a great weekend for Charlotte Bankes, who won two golds in two races at the start of the Snowboard Cross World Cup season.



Abhishek Sharma's 37-ball century is India's second fastest ever in a T20

It was a terrible week all round for English cricket, as the men lost their T20 series against India 4-1. The final game saw England lose by 150 runs, which is by far their biggest margin of defeat in a T20. England were all out in just 10.3 overs, which was another unwanted record for the team.



Dupont helped to hand Wales their 13th Test defeat in a row

Wales had the worst start possible to their Six Nations campaign, with an embarrassing 43-0 pasting in Paris. France captain Antoine Dupont helped his team to give Wales their heaviest ever defeat in the competition. Defending champions Ireland beat England 27-22, while Scotland got the better of Italy in a 31-19 victory.

Braydon's on the ball



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

Many predicted that the title battle would be between Man City and Arsenal this season, with Gunners fans hoping that perhaps Arsenal could close the gap on the champions. On Sunday, Arsenal showed that the gap has been well and truly closed, with an emphatic 5-1 win over their rivals. City have been leaking goals throughout a very inconsistent season, and Arsenal exposed City's defensive problems in style. A day to remember for Arsenal, but a day to forget for City, who have some tough fixtures coming up.

Liverpool continued their quest for the title with another impressive victory, this time at in-form Bournemouth. The Reds didn't have it all their own way, but a mark of champions is that they find a way to win, and that's exactly what Liverpool have been doing. Two goals, including a disputed penalty, were tucked away by Mo Salah to move him on to 21 for the season and 178 Premier League goals overall. Salah is flying and his goals are a major force in Liverpool's drive for the big prize. They're six points clear of their nearest rivals at the top and have a game in hand.

Centre Stage this week goes to Chris Wood, who scored a hat-trick in Forest's incredible 7-0 win over Brighton. Forest bounced straight back from their heavy defeat at Bournemouth, with Wood again at the heart of Forest's forward line. He now has 17 for the season and Forest are well positioned in third. Could they really be in the Champions League next season?



Chris Wood has got 17 league goals this season from just 27 shots on target

In the WSL, Arsenal's women also beat Man City to move above them in the table and complete a miserable week for City. Chelsea remain unbeaten after 13 games, following a narrow victory at Aston Villa. Champions Chelsea look to be comfortably retaining the WSL title.

The FA Cup returns this weekend, and the fourth round sees Leyton Orient hosting Man City, Birmingham are at home to Newcastle, and Liverpool travel to Plymouth. Should be interesting!

Braydon's Team of The Week: Arsenal, with a five-star show against City.

Braydon's Player of The Week: Chris Wood, Forest's main man again.

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

KANSAS City Chiefs are hoping for a historic win in the Super Bowl this Sunday (9 February). Victory over the Philadelphia Eagles would make the Chiefs the first team in history to win the trophy three times in a row.



Issue 973 | £2.95

