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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR\*



# First News

Issue 978 £2.95 14 – 20 March 2025

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**SOCCER AID 2025**  
**LINE-UP REVEALED**



NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT  
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS



# HISTORY MAKER!

Owen, ten, becomes the **youngest-ever** speaker in Parliament... after an epic voyage from his home on the world's most remote island



12



## MEET THE TEAM



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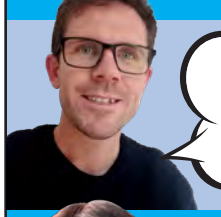
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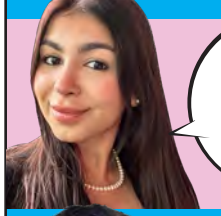
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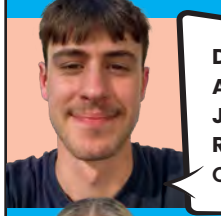
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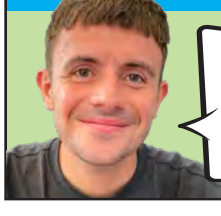
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# HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



## BOYS PULL AHEAD IN MATHS AND SCIENCE

Research shows that boys in England are outperforming girls in maths and science, compared to before the pandemic. The study by University College London (UCL) shows that in 2019, Year 9 boys scored an average of 516 against 514 for girls in maths but, by 2023, boys scored 538 against 512 for girls. Boys also led in science, but with a smaller gap. Dr Jennie Golding, co-head of UCL's research team, said it was "difficult to say exactly why this gap has opened up", but it might include confidence and absence rates. She said that more research was needed to know for sure.



## SCOTTISH TORIES WANT TO LOWER SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

Scottish Conservatives (Tories) say the minimum age for leaving school should be lowered from 16 to 14. Party leader Russell Findlay says this "bold idea" would help struggling teenagers to study and do an apprenticeship at the same time. However, Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth says the plan would affect working-class children unfairly and that the Tories are "rooted in the Victorian era". The proposal comes as Scotland looks to improve apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for minority ethnic students.



THEY SAID THAT!

"Throughout my life, music has meant a great deal to me. I know that is also the case for so many others."  
– King Charles

## KING CHARLES' PLAYLIST

To celebrate Commonwealth Day, King Charles has created a personal music playlist, sharing songs that have brought him joy throughout his life. The project, called the King's Music Room, features artists from Commonwealth countries, and includes music from Bob Marley, Kylie Minogue, Raye and Grace Jones.



## KIDZ BOP BREAK RECORD

Kidz Bop have become the youngest ever headliners to perform at the famous OVO Arena Wembley, bagging a new Guinness World Record. Celebrities including TV presenter Katie Piper, McFly's Harry Judd and actor Helen Flanagan joined the group's many other fans to enjoy loads of hit songs including Espresso, Greedy and Daddy Dance Off.



## OBESITY ON THE RISE

More than half the world's adults and a third of children could be overweight or obese (very overweight) in the next 25 years, new research warns. The study, published in *The Lancet* medical journal, says obesity rates have doubled in the last 30 years, and that without urgent action 3.8bn adults and 746m kids may be living with obesity by 2050. The United States is the most affected wealthy nation, with 42% of men and 46% of women being obese. Researchers say younger generations are gaining weight earlier than their parents did, raising health concerns.



## BODY IMAGE SHAPED FROM AGE SEVEN

Children's ideas of body weight are influenced by visual media from as young as seven years old, reveals new research from Durham University. The study, which looked at more than 200 people of different ages, found that seeing pictures of different body weights can change how both children and adults judge what is 'heavy' or 'light'. The findings show why it's important to show different body types in media that children see.



## SHIP COLLISION CREATES WILDLIFE WORRIES

An oil tanker and cargo ship burst into flames after the cargo ship hit the anchored tanker off the east coast of England. It happened near the Humber Estuary, forcing crew to abandon their ships. Rescue teams managed to bring 36 people safely to shore, and none needed hospital treatment. The crash happened in fog on Monday (10 March) between the US-flagged Stena Immaculate oil tanker and the Portuguese cargo ship Solong. Wildlife organisations are worried because both ships were carrying cargo that could be deadly to wildlife. One member of the cargo ship Solong's crew was still missing as we went to press.



## GOVERNMENT PLANS TO CLEAN UP LAKE DISTRICT

The government has promised to clean up England's biggest body of water after millions of litres of sewage were dumped illegally into it. Environment Secretary Steve Reed visited Windermere to announce a £200m plan to stop pollution entering its waters. The beautiful Lake District site, which attracts seven million visitors a year, has suffered from sewage problems that have harmed wildlife and made swimming unsafe.



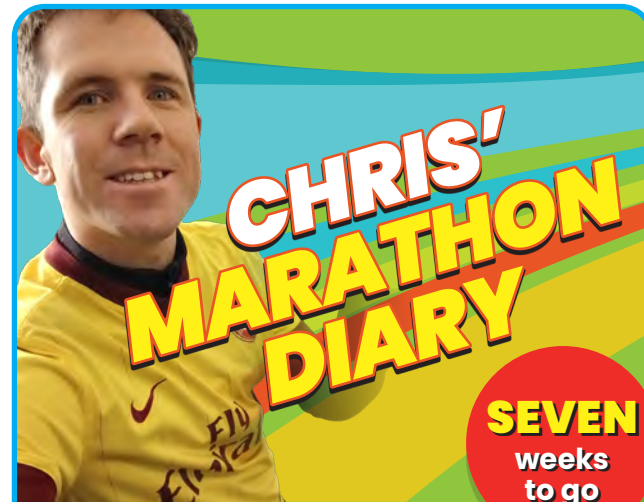
## ATTENBOROUGH'S OCEAN FILM COMING SOON

A new film called *Ocean with David Attenborough* will be released in cinemas worldwide on 8 May, to coincide with the broadcaster and biologist's 99th birthday. Sir David narrates the documentary, in which he shares his lifetime of ocean discoveries, reveals why healthy seas are essential for Earth's future, and delivers his important message that the ocean can recover to a glory beyond anything that anyone alive has ever seen. Expect plenty of amazing underwater scenes!

## WHIPPET WINS CRUFTS



A whippet named Miuccia has become the first Italian dog to win Best in Show at Crufts 2025. The four-year-old champion, handled by Giovanni Liguori, beat more than 18,000 other dogs at the event in Birmingham. The graceful hound impressed judges with her performance and close bond with her handler. Miuccia's victory earned her owner a trophy and £200 prize money. A Romanian Tibetan mastiff called Viking took second place in the famous competition.



Hi, guys! I'm Chris, one of your reporters at *First News*. This is week four of my training diary for the London Marathon on 27 April!

I'd love to tell you it's going great, but my prep has hit a hitch. If you read my last diary, you'll know that I hurt my calf running a half-marathon. Last week, I tried a short run, but didn't get very far – the pesky, painful calf wasn't having it and I had to hobble home! I'm going to see a physio about it. Wish me well...

On the brighter side, it's getting sunnier. One of the challenges in training for a marathon in April is having to train in the bitterly cold, dark winter. The warmer weather and lighter evenings are far more pleasant – but also a sign that the big day is creeping closer!

I had a lunchtime jog with my *First News* pal Charlie last month. We chatted about our dream conditions for a London Marathon – a cool 15°C, sunny spells... that's just what last year's lucky runners got.

Who knows what to expect from the UK weather in April, though? A heatwave, a blizzard, six month's worth of rain? Best prepare for anything!

### Why I'm running for...

unicef  
for every child

Amid rising conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, 795,000 children are being deprived of access to education. UNICEF is working with its partners to reopen schools and, since returning, Cassien (right) said that seeing his classmates in good health gives him hope and strength for himself, his friends and his community.



Find out more at [tinyurl.com/ChrisInTheMarathon](https://tinyurl.com/ChrisInTheMarathon)

## CALENDAR DATES

### ● HOLI 14 MARCH

This Indian celebration, also known as the Festival of Colours, is all about welcoming love and the arrival of spring.

### ● ST PATRICK'S DAY 17 MARCH

The day is a religious and cultural festival, marking the anniversary of the death of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. There are parties, parades, music and food!



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





THESE dramatic photos capture the moment a Canada goose had a rare face-off against a peckish bald eagle!

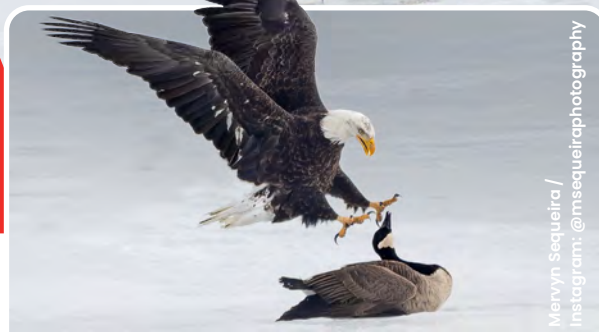
The pair scrapped for 20 minutes on an icy bay in the Canadian town of Burlington. The bald eagle – the national bird of the USA – tried several times to defeat its prey, but the goose fought it off and survived.

Nature photographer Mervyn Sequeira's snaps went viral after he posted them on Instagram.

#### The USA vs Canada?

One reason the photos went viral is because some saw them as symbolic of the tensions between long-term friends Canada and the USA. US President Donald Trump has ruffled feathers by speaking about wanting Canada to become the USA's 51st state.

Last week, Mr Trump announced higher tariffs (taxes on imports) on most Canadian goods. US companies



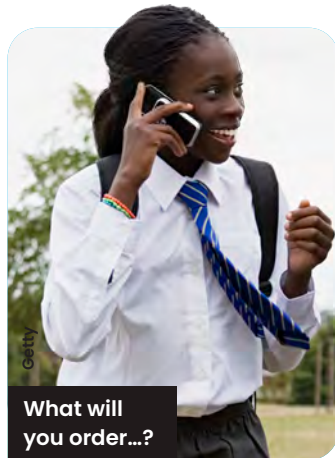
now have to pay more if they want to sell products from Canada, which is damaging for Canadian businesses.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called it a "very dumb thing to do." Like the goose, though, Canadians have been biting back. Angry store owners have removed American products from their shelves. Some people have cancelled holidays to the USA and booed its national anthem at sporting events.

The sooner we can get past this fight... the better we will all be," Mr Trudeau said. "Canadians are reasonable and we are polite – but we will not back down from a fight."

Mark Carney was expected to take over from Justin Trudeau as Canada's new prime minister this week.

## Government asks: What do you want?



THE government is giving children and young people a special chance to have their say on decisions that affect them.

It's inviting people in England aged 10–21 to take part in an online survey to say what services and activities they'd like, to make their lives better outside school.

The short survey is called 'Deliver You' (which sounds a bit like a popular food delivery company...), and it invites those taking part to "place their order" for things they'd like to see in their local area.

The government will use this, together with face-to-face workshops, to help it to decide how to spend £85 million that it's

put aside for fresh youth facilities.

The big aim is to spread opportunities around the country, and to make our local streets safer.

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities up to the age of 25 can take part in the survey, too.

Lisa Nandy, the culture secretary, called it "one of the most ambitious listening exercises for a generation" and said: "We're handing power back to young people and their communities."

● The survey is open until 16 April. To take part, visit [iwill.org.uk/NYS-Deliver-You](http://iwill.org.uk/NYS-Deliver-You).

## Doctors call for smacking ban

DOCTORS have called for a total ban on smacking in England, because it doesn't do any good.

Smacking is still allowed in England and Wales if grown-ups can argue that it's a "reasonable punishment". The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) wants this to be changed.

Professor Andrew Rowland, from the RCPCH, said: "Now is the time for this Victorian-era punishment to go." He added that physical punishment "undoubtedly harms children's health", and that there were no reliable scientific studies that showed it to have any positive effect on children.

The government says it has no plans to change the law right now. Smacking is already against the law in Scotland and Wales.



## EDITOR'S COMMENT

THE government makes decisions that affect everyone, including kids!

By asking children what they think in a survey, leaders can understand what young people need to be happy, safe and healthy.

Kids are the experts on schools and parks, and you have great ideas about the communities you live in. Your voices matter because you experience life differently from adults. If you share your opinions by taking part in the survey on this page (middle left), the government can make better choices for your future.

It's a way to be heard and to help improve things like health, education and safety.



Nicky Cox MBE



## Teeth

THE government is launching a scheme to boost the dental health of three to five-year-olds. Those in England's poorest areas will get supervision while they brush their teeth at nursery and primary school. To support this, Colgate is donating more than 23 million toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste.



## Moon landings

ATHENA, a spacecraft launched by Intuitive Machines on 27 February, has landed on the moon. Unfortunately, it toppled over, meaning its solar panels couldn't charge the battery. This means it can't complete its key mission – to drill a metre deep into the moon's soil to collect samples, in the hope of finding ice and other chemicals.



## 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.







# SCIENTISTS CREATE WOOLLY MICE

...but can they make a mammoth?

**A COMPANY that is trying to bring the woolly mammoth back to life has created woolly mice.**

Colossal Biosciences tweaked the genes in mice embryos to make mice with long, thick hair (genes are found in all cells and control how the body grows and functions). The company calls its creation the “colossal woolly mouse”.

The next plan is to do the same to the embryos of Asian elephants, in the hope of achieving its big mission of recreating woolly mammoths for the modern world.

Asian elephants are the closest living relative of the woolly mammoth, but they're still a very different species, having split onto a different evolutionary path (how species change over time) about six million years ago. They're also endangered, so experimenting on their embryos would be difficult.

Colossal Biosciences claims that its work could help with animal conservation efforts. However, other scientists are critical.

Christopher Preston, a wildlife expert from the University of Montana, pointed out that the company isn't actually achieving what it aims to. He told Sky News: “You might be able to alter the hair pattern of an Asian elephant... but it's not bringing back a woolly mammoth. It's changing an Asian elephant.”

Dr Adam Rutherford, a genetics lecturer from University College London, wrote in *The Guardian* that the project is “absurd” and “ghoulish”. He said that science should focus on protecting existing creatures instead.



## Researchers unlock body's secret mode!



Our immune system has a secret weapon...

**SCIENTISTS have discovered a new ‘secret mode’ in the human immune system.**

The immune system is our network of organs, tissues and cells that work together to protect us and fight off illnesses.

**What's the discovery?**

In every one of the cells in our body, there's a bit called the proteasome. Its job is to chop up old proteins and turn them into new ones.

However, researchers in Israel found that the proteasome can also spot when its cell has been infected – and when it does, it spews out bacteria-killing chemicals to defend it.

Professor Yifat Merbl, from the Weizmann

Institute of Science, told the BBC: “This is really exciting, because we never knew that this was happening.”

To test their find, researchers disabled the proteasome in some cells. When they did this, the cells became infected more easily.

**What does it all mean?**

It's changed our understanding of how our bodies battle infections. The proteasome could become the source of a wave of brand-new antibiotics to help us fight bugs, although this would need to be tested.

The findings were published in the science journal *Nature*.

## New homes too far from transport links

**A COMMUNITY group has found that too many new housing estates in England are being built without access to good, safe transport networks.**

Transport for New Homes looked at 35 recently built estates across England. The group says that those in charge of planning them aren't thinking enough about how people will get around.

The result is “tarmac” housing estates that are built in faraway, isolated areas, and depend on residents owning and using cars. This means more traffic, danger for cyclists and stress for people who would prefer not to drive everywhere.

The group said that, if residents struggle to get into town, it's also bad news for high street shops.

It recommends that new estates are built in better locations that are provided with tram and bus networks, as well as good walking routes.



## Big jump for heat pumps

**A RECORD number of UK homes took the climate-friendly step of installing heat pumps last year.**

Figures show that 100,000 heat pumps were sold in 2024 – up from the 60,000 sold in 2023.

**What are heat pumps?**

Unlike traditional boilers that use gas, heat pumps are machines that run on electricity.

In winter, they work by sucking heat from the air, the ground or water. This heat is boosted as it passes through the pump, before being released into buildings to keep them warm inside.

In the summer, they act like air conditioners – they suck heat from indoors and pump it outside!

**What's behind the rise in sales?**

The government sees heat pumps as a good way to help the country meet its climate targets.

To encourage more people to get them, it launched the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS), which reduces the cost for some customers to swap out their gas boilers and get heat pumps instead.

Thanks to the BUS, some energy companies offer heat pumps for as little as £500.

**Is 100,000 new heat pumps per year enough?**

No. Experts say their cost needs to come down further. The Climate Change Committee says that, by 2030, the UK needs to be installing 450,000 heat pumps per year, if it's to meet its climate targets.

The government is doubling its funding of the BUS this year to help more families to get them.



**A CHEETO snack shaped a bit like the Fire-type Pokémon Charizard has sold for almost £68,000!**

Nicknamed ‘Cheetozard’,

it was put in a case that copies the style of the famous cards and sold by Goldin, an auction house in the USA. In a “heated” battle, 60 bidders competed to buy it.

To think, Pokémon fans are used to ripping open booster packs in the hope of special finds, but this one lay hidden in a packet of crisps!

What flavour? Flamin' hot, of course!







## Antananarivo, Madagascar

"ARE you looking at me?" Primates have been loving the cameras this week! A visitor snaps a lemur at Lemurs' Park, and a red colobus monkey (inset) gets up close and personal in Gambia's Bijilo Forest Park.

## Madrid, Spain



THE Entierro de la Sardina (Burial of the Sardine) takes place to mark the end of carnival season. The unusual Ash Wednesday ritual, which dates back to the 18th century, sees a paper fish carried through Spanish cities and towns in a coffin before being burned. The tradition starts the build-up to Lent – the 40 days (not including Sundays) of fasting and reflection leading up to Easter.

## Daqing, China



AN owl pounces on a small rodent in a dramatic fashion.





## Cornwall, UK



National Trust Images, Hilary Daniel

IT'S not just us who've been enjoying the sunshine so far this month – these magnificent magnolia flowers have appeared at National Trust gardens across the southwest of England. After the trees bloomed early last year, many gardeners are saying this year's flowering is 'right on time'. The National Trust's annual blossom campaign will launch on 20 March, marking the first day of spring.

## Tunceli, Turkey



Getty

FOR the last six years, these two storks have stayed in their nest in Turkey all year round, even when all of the other storks have migrated as normal.

## Shanghai, China



Getty

IT'S a Doraemon takeover in Shanghai! The popular Japanese manga character features in the 100% Doraemon & Friends Tour, which is due to take place from 29 March to 5 May.

## Riga, Latvia



Getty

THE makers of Oscar-winning movie *Flow* are welcomed home by the black cat that stars in the film. The dialogue-free animation follows the cat on a journey to find safety after a devastating flood. It triumphed over blockbusters *Inside Out 2* and *The Wild Robot* to win the Oscar for best animated feature.

## Bitlis, Turkey



Getty

LOCALS make sure the horses and buffalo that live in stables over the winter get cleaned in a hot spring on cold days.



**ISLE OF SKYE****Dino cliffhanger**

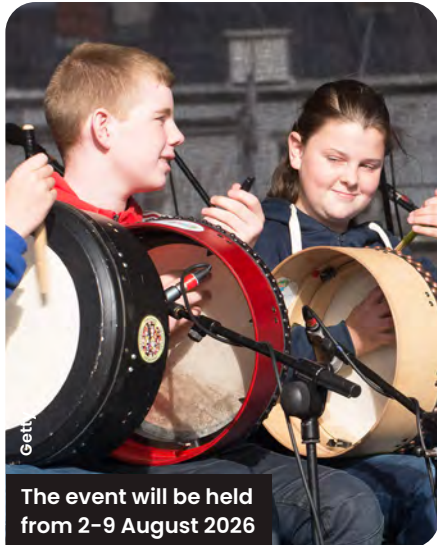
Researchers have removed a rare dinosaur fossil from a cliff, more than 50 years after it was first spotted. Discovered in 1973, it's the most complete dinosaur skeleton ever found in Scotland. The process of removing it from the cliff in Elgol on the Isle of Skye was challenging, but the reward is the identification of the animal's spine, ribs and hip bones. It's believed to be an ornithomimid (inset), which were a group of herbivores (plant-eaters). Its bones indicate it would have been roughly the size of a pony and was at least eight years old.

**EDINBURGH****Painting pebbles for penguins**

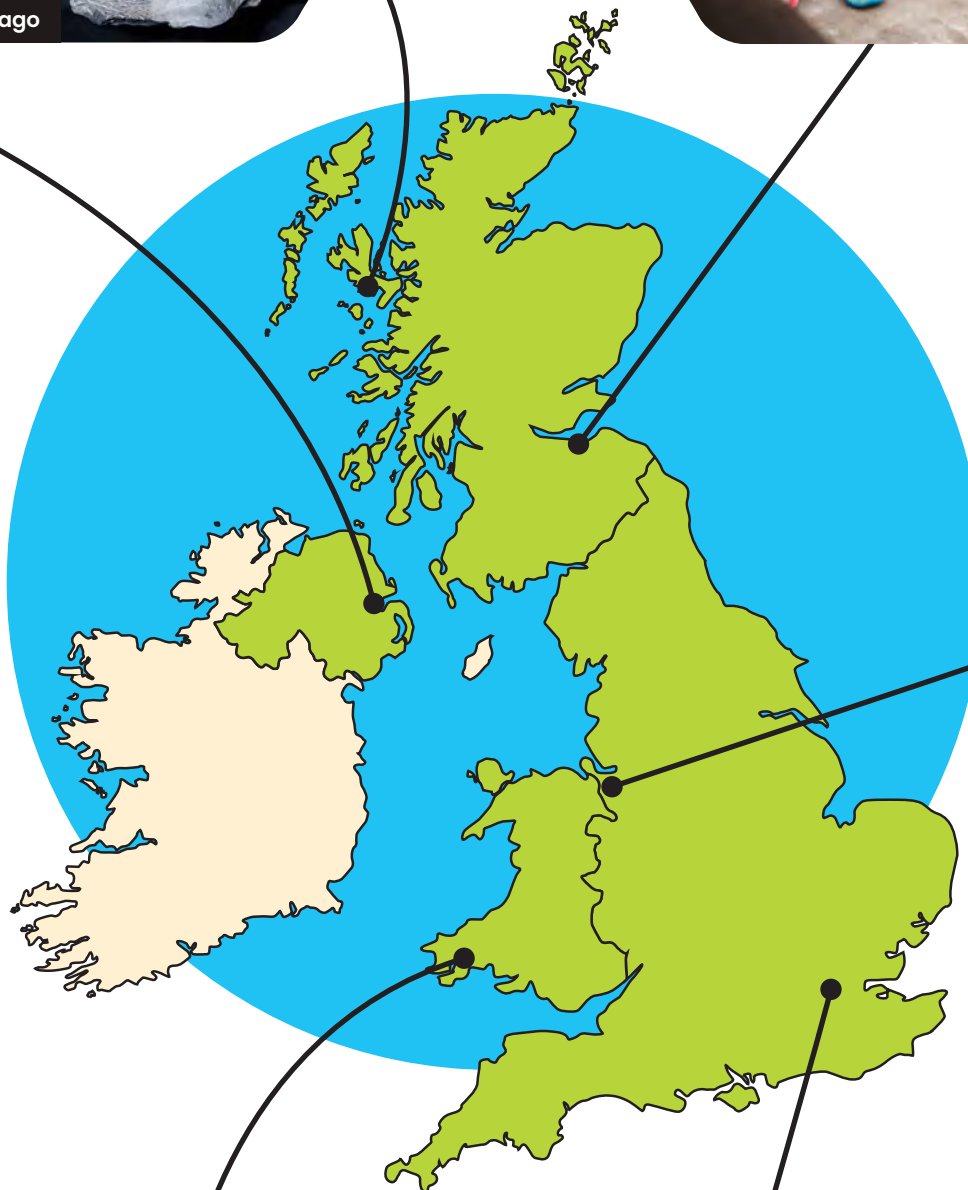
Pebbles painted by children in hospital have been delivered to penguins at Edinburgh Zoo. Children being supported by Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (EHC) coloured the pebbles to celebrate the beginning of penguin breeding season. The animals in the Penguins Rock enclosure looked interested in the pebbles, which they will use to build their nests. The children at EHC won't miss a moment thanks to live webcams of the enclosure. Watch a video of the penguins playing with the painted pebbles on the *First News* app!

**BELFAST****Tune in to festival**

The world's largest festival of Irish music and dance will take place in Belfast next year. The 2026 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann – the All-Ireland Fleadh – hopes to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the globe. They'll be treated to a range of performances and competitions, from large concerts to pop-up street acts. It's only the second time the festival will have been hosted in Northern Ireland. It will be an extra-special year, as 2026 marks 75 years of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, which works to preserve Irish music, song and dance, and the Irish language.



The event will be held from 2–9 August 2026

**Spooky streets****CHESTER****Spooky city**

Chester has been ranked tenth in a list of the world's most welcoming cities – but it's also one of the most haunted. Booking.com's annual Traveller Review Awards – based on more than 360 million customer reviews of accommodation and activities – described Chester as a "historic gem", with a "mysterious past". Founded by the Romans in 79 CE, the city has a reputation as one of the spookiest in the country. It was voted the UK's most haunted by 15% of respondents in a survey of 2,000 people who said they believed in ghosts.

**NARBERTH****It's been a wild ride**

The largest theme park in Wales has closed after nearly 40 years. Financial challenges forced Aspro Parks, which owns Oakwood Theme Park, to make the "difficult decision". Oakwood will not open in 2025 despite the recent refurbishment of Megafobia (pictured), the park's famous wooden rollercoaster. A drop in visitor numbers has led to Aspro's decision, too. The company said: "In the entire history of Aspro we have never closed any park or attraction. Unfortunately, we could no longer see a sustainable way forward."



Oakwood has been a much-loved destination for generations



Some of the young performers

**LONDON****Young voices celebrated**

Youth voices are being celebrated with 17 new works across theatre, podcasts and films. Company Three (C3), a youth centre in Islington, will host the festival of projects in April created by local young people. The works will feature issues that matter to them, including a podcast series sharing their thoughts directly with our nation's leaders. C3 will also invite Year 6 and 7 students from local schools to create a play in a day. Shayma, a young member of C3, said: "These shows are a glimpse into our thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and I can't wait to share them." Find out more at [companythree.co.uk/festivals-2025](https://companythree.co.uk/festivals-2025).





# MEET THE **YOUNG PEOPLE** CHAMPIONING YOUR RIGHTS

THE Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has picked 17 young ambassadors to champion the views of children across the country. The group are all aged 15-17 and have been chosen for their personal experiences and for their passion to try to change issues that really affect children and young people. Let's find out more about their big ambitions...



- Name: Yusuf
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure that care-experienced, working-class and disadvantaged young people are no longer overlooked.



- Name: Rosanna
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure children's voices and perspectives are heard in decisions that affect their lives.



- Name: Zani
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure that every young person has access to safe spaces, especially during school holidays.



- Name: Gabriella
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure that children can get the best support for their mental health, especially linked to their time in school.



- Name: Annabel
- My Big Ambition is... to champion children with prosthetics, ensuring every child is offered the prosthetic that will enable them to live a full life.



- Name: Valarie
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure no child feels left out or lonely and every child feels valued, encouraged and supported.



- Name: Ariana
- My Big Ambition is... to make the online world and social media safer for young people, and ensure they know how to spot misinformation.



- Name: Finlay
- My Big Ambition is... to champion support for children who don't always get the results they need to do the courses they want to do.



- Name: Anthony
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure that all children thoroughly enjoy their school experience and benefit from all opportunities presented to them.



- Name: Ellencia
- My Big Ambition is... to use my voice to share the concerns of children in my community and to inspire change for young people.



- Name: Chan
- My Big Ambition is... to use my daily lived experience of being adopted to speak up about issues impacting young people like me.



- Name: Violet
- My Big Ambition is... to ensure that all children have the life skills to live confidently. In education but also socially, financially and emotionally.



- Name: Naemi
- My Big Ambition is... to support improvements in education, especially for children in deprived areas.



- Name: Emma
- My Big Ambition is... for all children to have a voice in issues affecting our society, no matter their background.



- Name: Ashaz
- My Big Ambition is... to champion access to quality education for all children, from all backgrounds.



- Name: Cassidy
- My Big Ambition is... to speak out about how to help children and young people going into care.



- Name: Lucas
- My Big Ambition is... to speak up for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).





# HOVERFLIES: “THE UNSUNG HEROES”



THE RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) and Wildlife Trusts are launching their annual Wild About Gardens campaign, and this year's theme is hoverflies. *First News* caught up with bug specialist Josie Stuart, who explained why these insects are so important and how we can protect them.

● **Hi Josie! You're an entomologist – can you explain what that is?**

Entomologists typically study insects, but at the RHS we cover invertebrates [animals without backbones] in general. So, my work involves giving our members advice on how to find insects in their gardens, how to love these insects, and how to plant for them. I also look at ways to manage slightly more unwanted insects, like aphids, in an environmentally friendly way.

● **Can you tell us what the Wild About Gardens campaign is?**

Wild About Gardens is a joint initiative, or campaign, between the RHS and The Wildlife Trusts. So, every year, we focus on one group of garden wildlife. Last year, it was slugs and snails, and I think we've covered butterflies and birds before, too. We look at how to encourage them into your garden, how to identify them and how to build habitats for them, that sort of thing. This year, our focus is the hoverfly.



● **Why are hoverflies the focus of this year's campaign?**

Because they are the unsung heroes of the pollinator world! When people think of pollinators, they think of bees and butterflies. But hoverflies are actually the second most important pollinator. They pollinate about 52% of global crops, and they're just forgotten about. So we thought this year we'd shine the light on them.

● **Can you tell us any cool facts about these creatures?**

Hoverfly larvae can be found in various habitats, depending on the species. The reason they're quite useful in gardens is that about 40% of UK hoverflies are predators of aphids and other insects, like leaf beetles. So they search for their prey using touch and chemical signals, and when they find their target, they stab it with mouth hooks and then suck out the body.

● **How can we help hoverflies thrive?**

If you have a garden, you can build what's called a 'hoverfly lagoon'. It is an excellent way of helping them, especially species like the drone fly that need pools of water to let their larvae grow in. So, you can just place any container on a tray with drain holes. Then, fill the container with water and organic garden matter like leaves, compact it, and push it down. And you can put a few sticks pushing all this stuff down as well. You then add a little layer of loose leaf litter at the top, and this means that the hoverflies will be attracted to the stagnant organic water. It's a nice place for them to let their larvae grow in, so it's a fantastic way to help them thrive.



## Solar farms could be bird havens

SCIENTISTS have discovered that solar farms can support three times more birds than farmland, thanks to new research from the University of Cambridge.

The study found that when solar farms are properly managed with wild plants and hedgerows, they become perfect homes for many bird species, including some that are becoming rare in the UK.

Researchers saw that solar sites with long grass and natural hedges attracted more birds than both tidy solar farms and regular crop fields.

This suggests that solar farms could protect nature and fight climate change at the same time.



**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](http://first.news/climatecrisis).

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

## NILE CROCODILE



### HABITAT:

● They live in large freshwater lakes, rivers, swamps, coastal estuaries and mangrove swamps in sub-Saharan Africa.

### FUN FACTS:

● Young crocodiles feed on insects and small fish, and grow about 30cm a year.  
● They can live as long as 45 years and mothers protect their offspring against predators for up to two years.

### SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

● The Nile crocodile is Africa's largest predator and, after the saltwater crocodile, the second-largest reptile in the world. Due to their enormous size and powerful bite, they can easily take down large prey such as antelopes and buffalo.

### CONSERVATION STATUS:

● They are of least concern, says the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Aneeshwar's  
Nile croc art



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







# FEATHERED FARMERS

**SCIENTISTS have added the superb lyrebird to the list of species that are farmers.**

The birds dig up soil and arrange it with fallen leaves in a way that attracts more of its prey by providing them with food sources. The birds then give the worms, centipedes and spiders time to fatten up, before returning later to eat them.

Three researchers at La Trobe University in Australia studied the birds, which live on the ground in the moist eucalypt forests in the southeast of the country. To see what effects the birds have on their environment, the scientists fenced off some areas of forest to keep lyrebirds out. They left some areas alone, and raked others to mimic the birds' actions.

They found that the raked areas and lyrebird habitats had more prey compared to the areas that were untouched. The researchers say that digging up soil and piling up leaf litter creates lots of "microhabitats" that provide homes for all kinds of bugs. Part of the reason is that it allows microbes to break down the fallen leaves, providing food for bugs.

Although other creatures such as ants are known to be farmers (see far right), the report in the *Journal of Animal Ecology* says that lyrebirds affect a much wider area than any of them – around 17 million hectares, which is more than 24 million football pitches!



**THERE** are hundreds of ant species that have been farming fungus for millions of years. They feed bits of leaves to the fungus and protect it from pests and mould, so that the ants can feed the fungus to their larvae. The ants also carry bacteria on their bodies that produce antimicrobial substances to kill any invading fungi that threaten to ruin their crop!

The male superb lyrebird has elaborate tail feathers that it uses for mating displays, like a peacock

**WHEN** lyrebirds bury fallen leaves and twigs, they're broken down faster by microbes that live in the soil. This means that there's less flammable material on the forest floor, which helps to reduce damage from wildfires.



## Voyagers keep on voyaging

**THE furthest human-made objects from Earth will be able to keep working for a bit longer, after engineers at NASA decided to turn off another instrument on each one.**

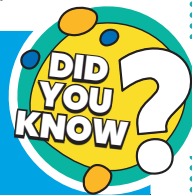
Voyager 1 and 2 are powered by the heat produced by the radioactive decay of plutonium, but are slowly losing power with each passing year. They've been doing pretty well to keep going all this time though, given that they were both launched way back in 1977!

The two spacecraft are identical, and both had the same ten instruments on board. But since 25 February, Voyager 1 only has three that are working, and Voyager 2 will only have three after 24 March, when NASA turns off its Low-Energy Charged Particle (LECP) detector, which has been collecting data on electrons and charged particles travelling through space.

Voyager 1's LECP is still working, and both craft still have a working Magnetometer (which measures the sun's magnetic field)

and Plasma Wave Subsystem (which helps us to understand more about what interstellar space is made of). Voyager 2 also still has a working Cosmic Ray Subsystem, which detects high-energy particles from the sun and elsewhere in our galaxy.

**ALTHOUGH** the Voyagers are very, very far away (15m and 13m miles) from Earth, they still haven't left our solar system. NASA estimates that would take another 30,000 years!



Both Voyagers were equipped with a golden record containing sounds from Earth and greetings in 55 languages. It also featured music from composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky and Mozart. If aliens ever find the record and figure out how to play it, they'll also be able to hear rock 'n' roll legend Chuck Berry's classic *Johnny B Goode*!

This report is from the Science Museum in London

**SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP**

**THIS** colourful device is a type of planetary model, popular in 1700s at social gatherings or lectures to demonstrate how the Earth and the moon moved around the sun.

By winding a handle on the side of the model, the Earth would be set into motion, turning on its axis around the sun, with the moon doing the same around our planet.

The example pictured here was made for Charles Boyle, the fourth Earl of Orrery in Ireland, in 1712. This model, which was called an 'orrery' after the name of its owner, became so popular that it gave its name to all other models of the solar system.

You can see this orrery and more models in Science City 1550-1800: The Linbury Gallery at the Science Museum.

The orrery made by John Rowley for the Earl of Orrery



**THE** Voyager craft are the only human-made objects to leave the heliosphere, a bubble of charged particles and magnetic fields that protect Earth from harmful cosmic radiation.



# FROM SEA TO SPEECH!

## MEET THE YOUNGEST PERSON EVER TO SPEAK IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

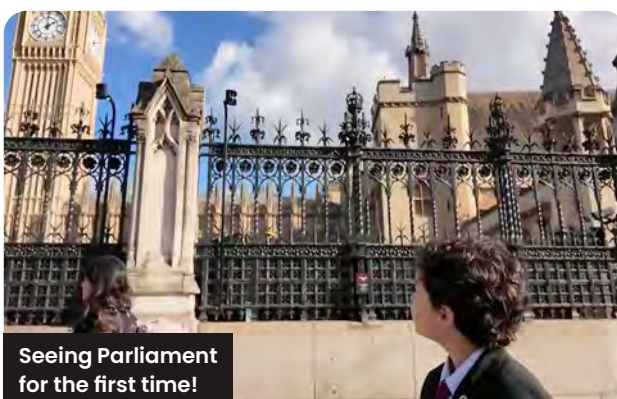


TEN-YEAR-OLD Owen has just become the youngest person ever to speak in the House of Commons, where he delivered a speech all about his life on the tiny remote island of Tristan da Cunha.

### Where is Tristan da Cunha?

Ten-year-old Owen is from the world's most remote inhabited (has people living there) island in the South Atlantic Ocean called Tristan da Cunha. If you're wondering where that is, it's about halfway between South Africa and Brazil in the wide open ocean. Check out the map below! Tristan da Cunha is one of 14 British overseas territories, meaning that it has historical links to the UK and follows many of the same laws, and the people who live there have British passports.

Owen is from Tristan da Cunha in the middle of the South Atlantic ocean. It's so tiny that it doesn't really show on a map (see below), but if you were to zoom in closely, it would look like this from a bird's-eye view



Seeing Parliament for the first time!

### What's life like on Tristan da Cunha?

As you can imagine, living on an island that's so remote is very different to the life that most of you are probably used to. Check out these facts:

- There are only 230 people living on Tristan da Cunha.
- Last year in Owen's class at school there were only four people, and this year there are only six.
- There's only one shop on the whole island and there are no restaurants.
- There is a hospital, but for anything more serious, you'd need to go by ship to Cape Town in South Africa.
- Owen's favourite thing to do on the island is go fishing.

### A long trip to Parliament in London

Owen made an epic journey to represent Tristan da Cunha at the meeting of the Youth Parliament in London. Before this trip, he had only left the island once before and this was his first ever time in London. He said he couldn't wait to explore and see Parliament, but also noted that London was much busier than island life, with people bumping into him!



IT took Owen ten days to get from Tristan da Cunha to London!

### Advice from an expert

Before Owen spoke in the House of Commons, he got advice from someone with experience! Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP is the Speaker of the House of Commons, making him responsible for the smooth running of Parliament and ensuring that all MPs have a chance to speak. He also referees the debates. Sir Lindsay told Owen: "Don't worry about it. Just concentrate on delivering your speech because the floor is yours, the House of Commons chamber is yours at that moment. In the end, you are the next generation of politicians."



Owen getting some top tips from the Speaker of the House of Commons

### The speech

Owen successfully delivered his speech in the House of Commons to a room full of Members of Youth Parliament. He said: "My island is beautiful, but living there and getting educated there does come with challenges. We have only one school and just a handful of trained teachers. Our internet connection has just got much faster. We are now learning, playing and connecting in ways we never thought possible. My dream is to pass my IGCSEs [international GCSEs] and then get trained to be a mechanic. Those skills could take me anywhere in the world. I have to leave the island to get my training – it's expensive, and going so far from home is tough for young people. I hope the island and UK will support me."

Owen got a round of applause at the end of his speech, and when FYI spoke to him afterwards he said: "It was an amazing experience and I felt very proud of myself. I felt very emotional when all the people were cheering for me – it's the first time people have ever cheered for me."

FYI

sky kids

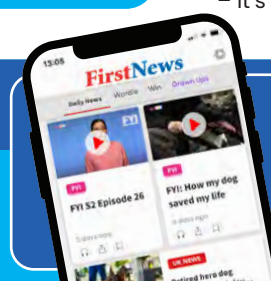
## WATCH THE VIDEO

Learn more about Owen's life on Tristan da Cunha and hear his speech by scanning the QR code!



## 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](http://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](http://first.news/fyi) or on the *First News* app.



**USA**

Have cops caught a brick burglar?



## Man accused of stealing nearly £20,000 of LEGO

A 32-year-old man has been accused of stealing a stash of LEGO sets worth \$25,000 (£19,400) in California. Michael Ivory Fletcher is said to have committed the plastic-pinching crime seven separate times between August and February at Target stores. County officials claim he entered the stores, filled his trolley with sets, loaded them into his car, which was parked in a disabled parking space, and left. On top of this, he's also accused of stealing \$1,881 (£1,460) of Star Wars LEGO sets in another county. He was arrested in a Target store in Walnut Creek and, if found guilty, could face more than nine years in jail.

**SERBIA**

## Chaos in Serbian parliament

Flares and smoke grenades were let off inside Serbia's parliament chamber by opposition politicians last week. They did it to support student protests against the ruling party, the Serbian Progressive Party, and President Aleksandar Vučić. The room filled with pink and black smoke, and three MPs were injured in the chaos. After the incident, parliamentary speaker Ana Brnabić told the opposition: "Your colour revolution has failed... this country will continue to win." Serbian students have protested against the government since November, after the roof of a train station collapsed, killing 15 people.

**SOUTH KOREA**

The bombs were dropped by a KF-16 jet

## Jet accidentally bombs village

A fighter jet bombed a small village by mistake during a training drill, injuring 15 people. The eight bombs struck an area of Pocheon, a city near the border with North Korea, at 10am on Thursday 6 March, shattering windows and damaging a number of buildings. South Korean media reported that the jet's pilot had entered the wrong co-ordinates to drop the bombs, leading to a swift apology from the country's air force. "We deeply regret the unintended release of the bombs... and wish those injured a swift recovery," it said. Local residents had complained about nearby air force drills before. Luckily, none of the injuries were life-threatening.

**DENMARK**

## Post office stops letter delivery

Denmark's postal service, PostNord, has announced it will stop delivering letters at the end of the year. It will also begin removing all of the 1,500 postboxes around the country in June. There's been a huge drop in the number of letters posted in Denmark, from more than 1.4 billion in 2000 to only 110 million in 2024. PostNord says that delivering them doesn't make the company money any more. A third of PostNord's 4,600 employees will lose their jobs, and the business will focus on parcels instead. However, transport minister Thomas Danielsen says it will still be possible for letters to be sent and received, with another company offering to take over the service.

**INDIA**

## Teen bags record for hairiest face

This 18-year-old from India has the world's hairiest face! Lalit Patidar has hypertrichosis, also known as 'werewolf syndrome'. It affects one in a billion people, with just 50 recorded cases since the Middle Ages. Lalit keeps a video diary of his life on YouTube, and says that his Guinness World Record has made him "very happy". Sometimes, people tell him he should have his hair removed, but he says: "I like how I am and I don't want to change my look."

**THAILAND**

## Strict school hair rules dropped

Thailand's top court has removed a 50-year-old rule that set strict controls on children's hair in school. In 1975, its education ministry insisted that schoolgirls had to wear their hair in a tidy bob that didn't fall below their ears, while schoolboys had to cut their hair short. Older schoolboys had to shave off any early beards or moustaches, too. In recent years, students have protested against the rule, saying it's out of touch and it restricts their freedom. Now, the government is leaving hair rules up to individual schools and parents to decide.





# START BEGINNING

## WHAT WOULD YOU START TODAY, IF YOU COULD?

PERHAPS you'd like to be a vet because you love being around animals, or you'd join a football team because you like to spend time with friends outside, or you'd start writing poems because you love words and creating stories.

All sportspeople, writers and designers have one thing in common – at some point in their lives, they began.

To celebrate STABILO's Start Beginning campaign, alongside World Poetry Day on Friday 21 March, we want YOU to think about what you can start beginning... and write a short poem telling us all about it!

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Using the lined paper on the right, grab yourself a pen or pencil and think about the exciting things that could happen if you make a start and begin your dream idea or activity! By writing and sharing your poem with us, you'll be in with a chance of winning a huge bundle of STABILO products for you and your whole class!

## THE JUDGES

A panel of judges from *First News* and STABILO is eagerly awaiting your poems and will read every entry to select the lucky winner!

Use extra  
paper if you  
need it!

# IT'S TIME TO START BE

## MY POEM

ENTER TODAY AT WIN



# ME TO BEGINNING

Celebrate  
**World Poetry Day** on  
21 March!

## ENTER NOW!

TAKE a quiet moment to think about what you'd begin today if you could.

Once you have an idea, put your pen to paper and write a short poem about your idea, what it means to you, and why. Once you're happy with your work, ask an adult to take a photo of your entry or type it out and send it to [win@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:win@firstnews.co.uk), putting STABILO in the subject line.

Remember, it's only one entry per person!  
The closing date is 4 April 2025.

## NEED SOME INSPIRATION?

You could:

- Dream of becoming a basketball player
- Start going to pottery classes
- Run a 5k
- Learn how to play chess
- Read one book every month for a year

**WIN!**

## A BUNDLE OF STABILO GOODIES FOR YOU AND YOUR WHOLE CLASS!

HERE are the prizes up for grabs...

### ● STABILO EASYoriginal class pack

The STABILO EASYoriginal rollerball pen has been created to help you to develop clean and neat writing skills. The non-slip grip area provides a solid hold, and the lightness of the pen will help you to write fluidly.



### ● STABILO EASYgraph class pack

Keep a good grip at all times! When learning to write, it is particularly important to guide the pen or pencil in a controlled manner without too much pressure, because otherwise your muscles seize up and your hand quickly gets tired.

### ● STABILO Trio thick Gratnell

The STABILO Trio thick pencil is ideal if you want to start writing your first letters. The thick triangular shape encourages a relaxed pen grip for successful learning.



### ● STABILO power Gratnell

Featuring 30 different colours, the STABILO fibre-tipped pens can be left uncapped for up to eight weeks and they still won't dry out!

Check out more products like these at [www.stabilo.com/uk](http://www.stabilo.com/uk).

Worth over  
**£400!**





The **Carnegies**

# LET'S GET SHADOWING!

THE longest-running and best-loved children's book awards in the UK is back – it's the return of the Carnegies!

The awards date all the way back to 1936. Each year, golden medals are dished out to outstanding kids' authors and illustrators, after their books are judged by librarians across the country. The winners also each win a £5,000 cash prize!

This year's shortlisted books have just been announced (see right), so now it's time for you to get involved!

## Get involved

Every year, thousands of reading groups in schools and libraries in the UK and overseas get involved in the Carnegies.

They're called shadowing groups, and they get to 'shadow' (follow along) the official judging process by reading, discussing and reviewing the books from one or both shortlists. Then, they vote for their favourite books to win the Carnegie Shadowers' Choice Medals for Writing and Illustration.

## Register now

This year's shadowing process is now open! If you're interested

Register your 2025 Carnegies shadowing group now at [carnegies.co.uk/take-part](https://carnegies.co.uk/take-part)

First News is the official media partner of the 2025 Carnegies!



Tia Fisher (middle) gets her Shadowers' Choice Medal for Writing at last year's awards

in taking part, register your group on the link below. That way, you'll get a load of free shadowing group goodies including:

- Downloadable posters, bookmarks and stickers.
- Exclusive video interviews with the authors and illustrators.
- Resources packed with fun activities to help you discuss each book.

You'll also be able to register your votes for the Shadowers' Choice Medals. The winners of the 2025 Carnegies will be announced at London's Cambridge Theatre on 19 June, at a live-streamed ceremony.

## SHORTLISTS REVEALED

### 2025 Carnegie Medal for Writing



### 2025 Carnegie Medal for Illustration



Head to the First News app for more on each of this year's shortlisted authors and illustrators!

## Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



## Labora-stories

HAVE you been in the lab celebrating British Science Week at school this week? It runs until Sunday 16 March. Here are five clever and surprising books to spark the scientific spirit in all of us!

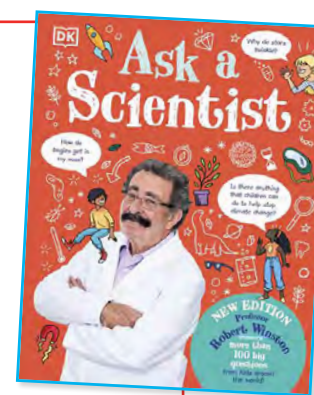


### Darwin's Dragons by Lindsay Galvin

Syms is the cabin boy on board Charles Darwin's ship. But when he's shipwrecked on an island, he discovers an extraordinary beast of his own.

### Ask A Scientist by Professor Robert Winston

Bursting with questions about the world? Professor Robert Winston has the answers in this book made up of more than a hundred real-life questions from kids.



### The Wanderdays: Journey to Fantome Island by Clare Povey

Welcome aboard Flo and Joseph's first daring mission! They're on a quest to save their mum – one of the world's greatest explorers – and uncover some secrets.

### Itch by Simon Mayo

Science-mad Itch finds his life in danger when he discovers a new element. With no superpowers (and no eyebrows), he must use his passion to stay alive...



### The Greatest Show on Earth by Mini Grey

Laugh as you learn about the 4.6-billion-year-old story of life on our planet – all performed by an insect theatre troupe!

## One last chance!

This is your final call to grab yourself a free £1 book from this year's brilliant World Book Day selection. There are 15 books to choose from and, whatever types of books you're into and whatever your age, there's something for everyone! For more, visit [worldbookday.com](https://worldbookday.com).

WORLD BOOK DAY  
6 MARCH 2025

## £1 BOOK TOKEN

Changing lives through a love of books and reading



World Book Day® is a charity sponsored by

NATIONAL BOOK tokens

This Story is a Lie is not suitable for younger readers. Fox & Son Tailors and Ag Buzzdail sa Ghairdin are exclusive to Ireland. Gwydd ein Byd is exclusive to Wales.

View the full line-up at [worldbookday.com/books](https://worldbookday.com/books)

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Valid from 13 February – 23 March 2025

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATORS**  
This token is for single-use only and entitles children (under 18) to ONE FREE WORLD BOOK DAY 2025 BOOK or £1 off a book or audiobook costing £2.99 or more in participating booksellers only, subject to stock availability. Find your nearest participating bookseller at [worldbookday.com/participating-retailers](https://worldbookday.com/participating-retailers).

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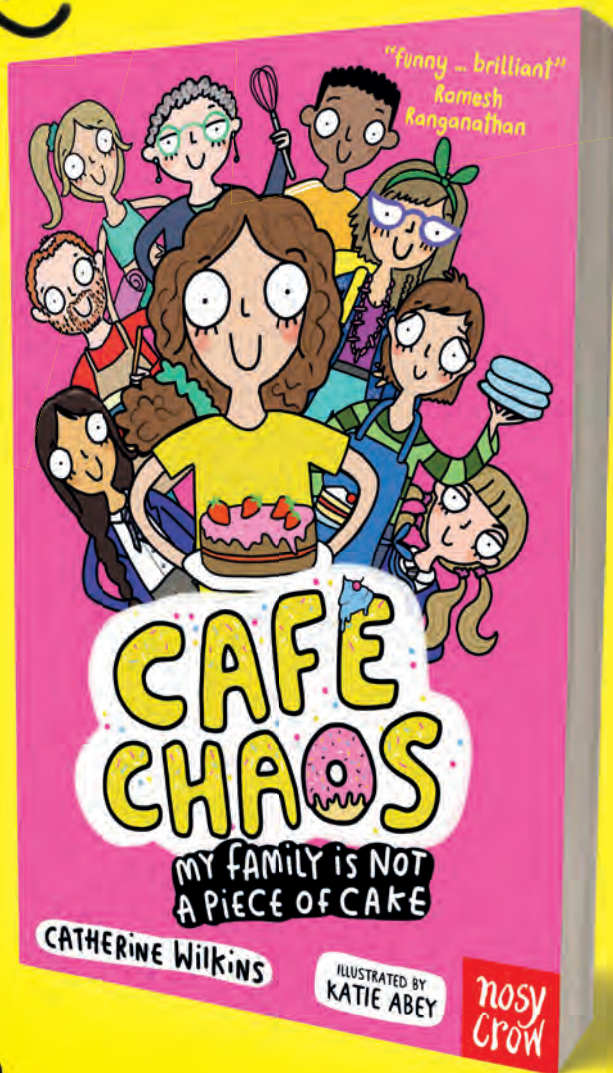


9 930430 241005



Hi! I'm Hope Crumble

Mum



My family run **CAFÉ CRUMBLE**.  
I know. OK? We decided to lean into it.

There are **HORDES** of  
customers who get in the way of  
having a normal family conversation.

Which isn't usually a **PROBLEM**, except  
my school life has turned upside down,  
Auntie Rita is **SUDDENLY** sharing my  
bedroom, and I'm in **DANGER** of being  
**FORCED** to dress as a giant ice cream.

Me

**LAUGH-OUT-LOUD**  
new series  
from comedian,  
**CATHERINE WILKINS**  
and illustrator,  
**KATIE ABEY**

Dad

"funny ... brilliant"  
Romesh  
Ranganathan

More hilarious books by  
**CATHERINE WILKINS!**



Grandma





Meet the team (from third left):  
Zara, Aoife, Nyla and Charlotte



# SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS!

A BRAND-NEW comedy series about a high school basketball player and her hopes for fame, love and success is coming to CBBC this week. Here, we find out a little more about *High Hoops*.

## What's the plot?

Aoife O'Neill and her family have just moved to a new area and a new school. But Aoife soon discovers that the only place she really fits in is the school basketball team – but they're terrible. Can she turn their fortunes around? Each episode sees the group face a new challenge and edge closer to their hoop dreams.

## The cast

The show features an amazing new children's cast including Darci Hull as lead character Aoife. Robert Webb plays head teacher Mr Holt, Isy Suttie plays Aoife's mum Brid, and Nigel Boyle plays the school basketball coach, Jim.

## What's Aoife like as a character?

Actor Darci reveals: "Aoife is a tall, nerdy girl who sticks out – she's a bit geeky. She's always having a laugh and being crazy, and she falls over a lot. She's always on the floor! When Aoife arrives at her new school, she decides to jazz up the uniform and she makes herself very well-known to everyone."

## And what about the other characters?

Darci says: "Aoife clicks with the Vipers, the school's 3x3 basketball team. So that's Zara, Charlotte and Nyla, they all become really close. And then there's Jessica, who Aoife doesn't really like; Dylan, who's Aoife's love interest; and Aoife's brother, Conor."



Robert Webb and Isy Suttie

*High Hoops* arrives on CBBC and BBC iPlayer on 17 March.

FIVE  
MINUTES  
WITH...

## THEATRE STAR CHRISTINA NGOYI

CHRISTINA is starring in the new theatre show *Pig Heart Boy*, based on Malorie Blackman's famous book of the same name. We caught up with her to find out more about what audiences can expect.

## Hi Christina! How does it feel to be in a play that deals with such important themes as organ transplants?

When the book was written, pig heart transplants were just an unimaginable concept. But now we are in a place in time where this is something that doctors are trying to use because there aren't enough human hearts for transplants. It's still a bit crazy and surreal to think about, but we are getting to a stage where these things are happening now and at a quicker pace. So, I feel grateful to be a part of the show.

## How would you describe the play in three words?

Exhilarating, breathtaking and warm!

## What's your favourite scene to perform?

The beginning classroom scene, as all the cast are in it, and it's full of high-energy vibes. You get to see these kids be boisterous and fun and it just starts the play brilliantly.

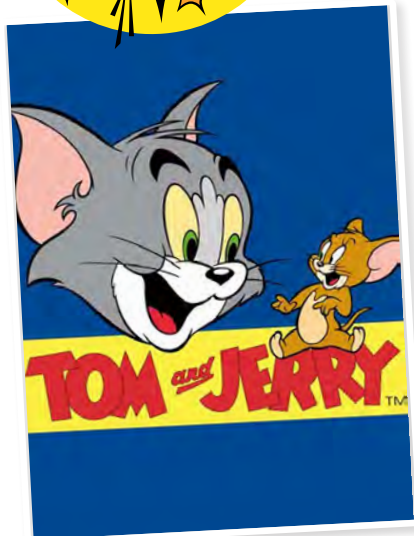
## What would you tell children who dream of being on the stage someday?

Be brave and fall in love with the playing – it's what will keep you going; that playfulness, that creativity, so keep tapping into it. You could also watch a TV show and copy the accents or lines.

## Finally, what message do you hope the audience will take away from the show?

There's a big issue within the Afro-Caribbean community that there are not enough blood and organ donors. I'm hoping audiences will understand the troubles that patients go through and hopefully come out of it thinking of ways to contribute.

**Pig Heart Boy is touring the UK from 18 March to 14 June 2025. To find out more, visit [pigheartboyplay.co.uk](http://pigheartboyplay.co.uk).**



## TOM and Jerry's big birthday!

Did you know that this year marks the 85th anniversary of the cartoon legends Tom and Jerry? Here are five fabulously fun facts to celebrate!

**1** The iconic duo made their first appearance in 1940, in an animated short film called *Puss Gets the Boot*.

**2** They were created by animators William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, who also created *The Flintstones*.

**3** The original characters were called Jasper the cat and Jinx the mouse, but a studio contest was held to rename them.

**4** Tom and Jerry have won seven Oscars!



**5** A live-action movie was released in 2021.

Warner Bros Discovery is unveiling a year-long global celebration for Tom and Jerry, so keep your eyes peeled for more exciting events!





# SOCCER AID KICKS OFF!


**SOCCER AID**  
 itv unicef stv


SOCCER Aid for UNICEF is returning to Old Trafford in Manchester this June, and some of the players and managers have already been revealed. Let's take a closer look at what fans can expect!



Tyson Fury and Wayne Rooney

## What is Soccer Aid?

Soccer Aid is a celebrity football match that takes place every year. Celebs and famous footie stars join forces to form two teams: England vs the Soccer Aid World XI FC. The aim of the game is to raise as much money as possible for the charity UNICEF to help families, communities and trusted organisations to create and protect safe spaces for children to play.

## The past and the Fury-ous!

This year's event features a world first as boxer Tyson Fury will co-manage England alongside professional football manager and former England star Wayne Rooney.

### Wayne Rooney said:

"Tyson and I are taking it incredibly seriously – we'll put on a show for you!"

### Tyson Fury said:

"Tyson Fury: ENGLAND MANAGER! Who would ever have thought it!?"

## Who are this year's newbies?

Joining Soccer Aid for the first time are Tyson Fury, YouTuber Angry Ginge, former England goalkeeper Joe Hart, former England women's footballers Steph Houghton and Toni Duggan, professional footballer Nadia Nadim and former Italian footballer Leonardo Bonucci.



She's a Diamond player!

## Which celebs are coming back?

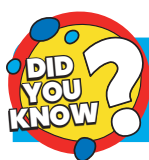
Taking to the field once again are singers Louis Tomlinson and Tom Grennan, actor Vicky McClure, former England hockey player Sam Quek, presenter Paddy McGuinness, *Gladiators* star Diamond, reality TV star Sam Thompson, presenter Alex Brooker, entrepreneur Steven Bartlett and Olympic champion Sir Mo Farah.

## Which footballers are returning?

The sporting greats include former England footballers Wayne Rooney, Gary Neville, Paul Scholes, Jermain Defoe, Jill Scott and David James, plus manager Harry Redknapp and former Canadian soccer player Kaylyn Kyle are all coming back. Plus, there are more to be revealed in the run-up to the event!

### Louis Tomlinson said:

"I am a massive football fan so playing with some legends of the game is a dream come true."



WAYNE Rooney is Manchester United's all-time record goalscorer!

## THE LOWDOWN

Here are all the details you need to know for Soccer Aid 2025:

● **When:** The match will take place on Sunday 15 June.

● **Where:** Old Trafford, Manchester.

● **Tickets:** Tickets for the game are on sale now via [socceraid.org.uk/tickets](https://socceraid.org.uk/tickets).

● **Watching at home?** The game will be aired live on ITV1, ITVX, STV and STV Player.



This year's Soccer Aid newbies

## FIVE TOP FACTS

1. Soccer Aid for UNICEF has raised over £106 million for UNICEF since 2006.

2. Since the first match, England have won six times and the World XI have won seven.

3. This year, Soccer Aid World XI FC will wear a new Adidas kit made especially for the event.

4. England will wear a specially commissioned remake of their 2001 strip.

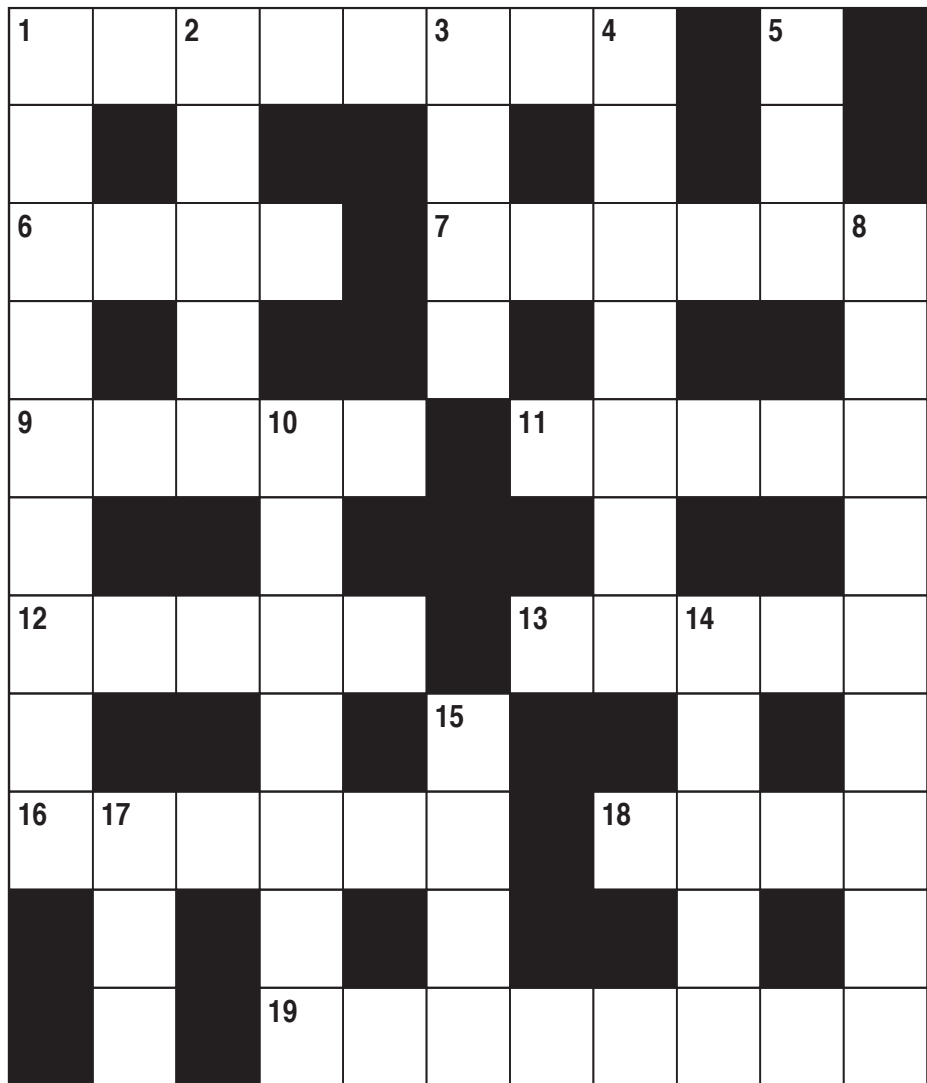
5. Soccer Aid was created by UNICEF UK Ambassador and singer Robbie Williams, and presenter Jonathan Wilkes.





# CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



## ACROSS

- 1 Very theatrical or exciting (8)
- 6 A small animal that hops (4)
- 7 Berries that grow on a vine (6)
- 9 Rub out (5)
- 11 A woolly animal that looks like an alpaca (5)
- 12 A piece of writing (5)
- 13 Freedom from disturbance (5)
- 16 Small pill (6)
- 18 Scratch; an urge (4)
- 19 Major football tournament (5,3)

## DOWN

- 1 Not the same (9)
- 2 Smell (5)
- 3 Pulls at (4)
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ and the Chocolate Factory: popular book (7)
- 5 Half of two (3)
- 8 A vehicle that can explore outer space (9)
- 10 Songbird with a forked tail (7)
- 14 Room inside the roof of a building (5)
- 15 A twinkly object in the night sky (4)
- 17 The whole of (3)

# Sudoku

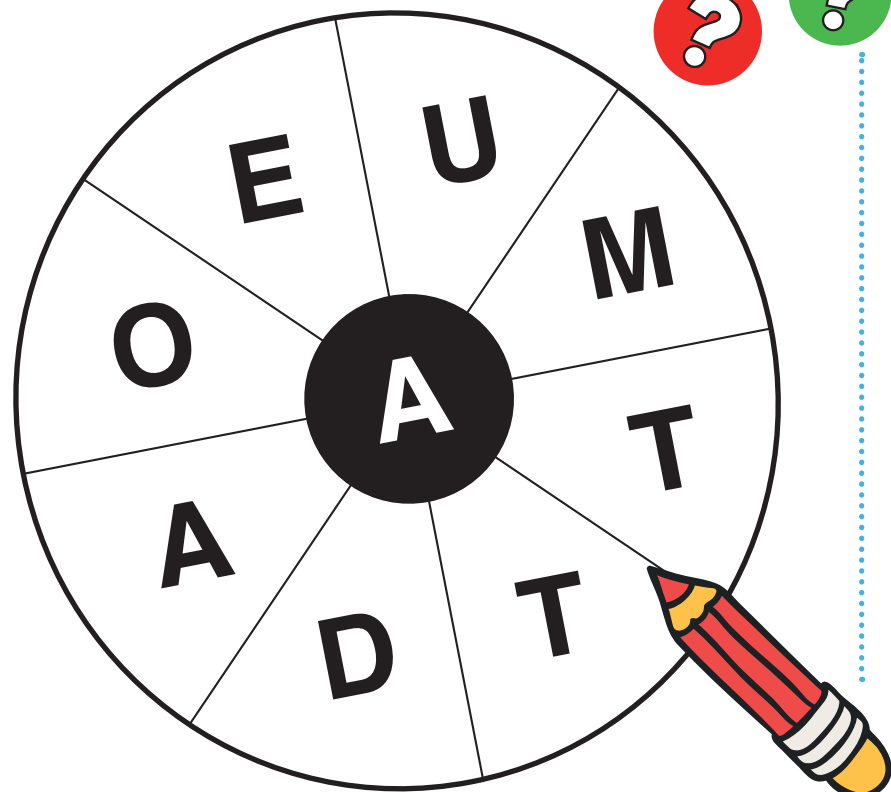
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?

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

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

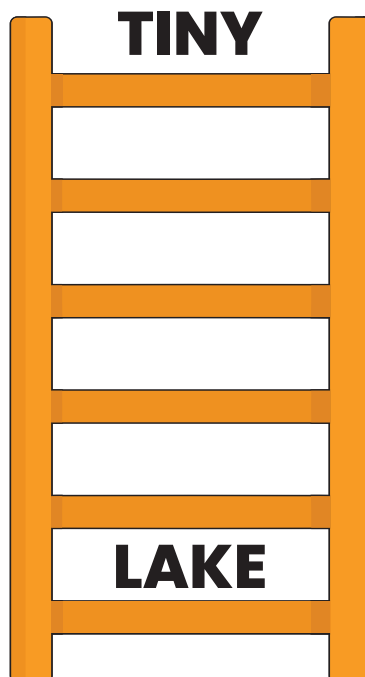
# Word wheel

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



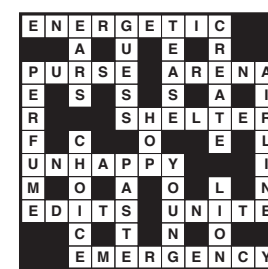
# Word ladder

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



## ISSUE 977 ANSWERS:

- Word wheel:** punchline.  
**Word ladder:** swim, swam, seam, seat, meat, moat.  
**Spot the difference:** 1) Loaf removed from shelf 2) Light is lower 3) Cake slice on counter 4) Basket of baguettes removed 5) First News Logo on sandwich bag 6) Cake turned blue 7) Doily removed from top shelf 8) Baker's hair is darker 9) Seeds removed from pretzel 10) Slice of cake removed from display.



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



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





# 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 story, then turn the page upside down to see if you were right.

## PARTY FOR **ST PATRICK!**

PEOPLE around the world will celebrate St Patrick's Day on 17 March. The day allows people to remember St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Irish communities will mark the occasion by wearing red. Every year, the Chicago River in the USA is also dyed red in honour of the famous saint.



Check out more on spotting fake news at:

• [first.news/fakeorfact](https://first.news/fakeorfact) • [first.news/spotfakenews](https://first.news/spotfakenews)

Or get yourself a free copy of our updated 28-page special edition, all about making sense of the news, how to spot bias, fake news and much more! Go to [first.news/fake-news](https://first.news/fake-news)



This story is **FALSE**. While it is St Patrick's Day on 17 March, people don't celebrate by wearing red. In fact, they wear green instead. The Chicago River is also dyed green. This highlights the importance of getting your facts correct.

## IN NEXT WEEK'S **ISSUE!**



**OUR NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION LAUNCHES!**

**WORLD WATER DAY**



**DON'T MISS IT!**



**SNOW WHITE**

**DAILY NEWS**

# FirstNews

**IN PRINT. ONLINE. ALL THE TIME!**

**Level up your news game with more fun on the app!**

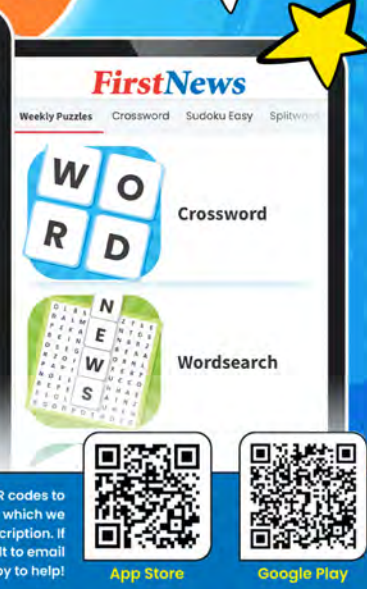
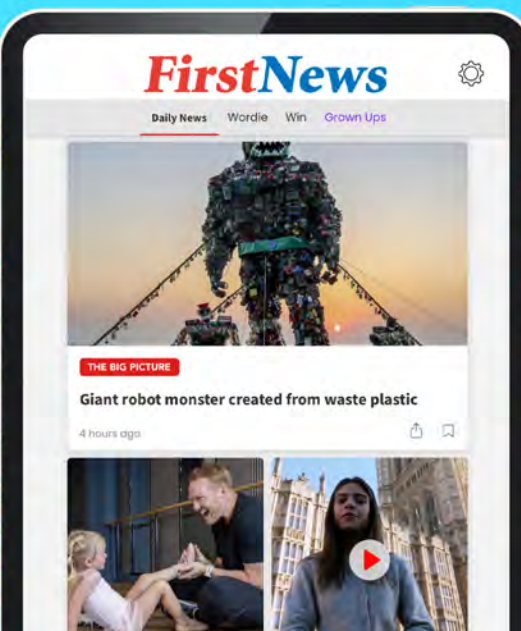
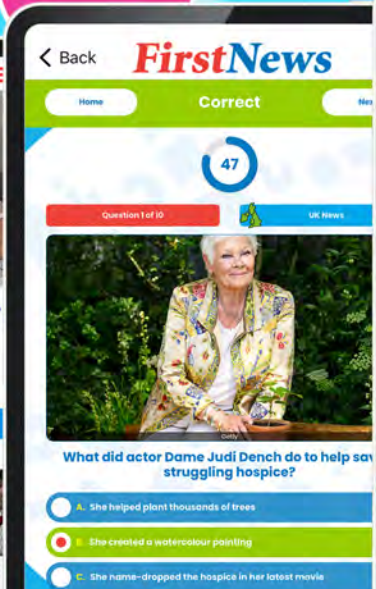
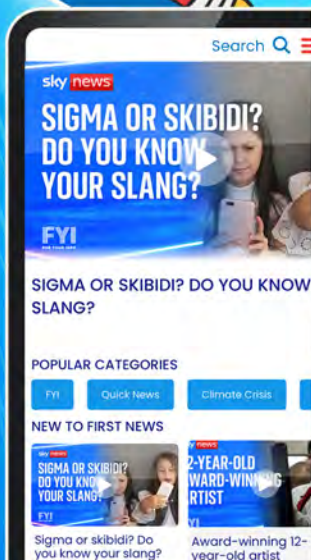
**AWESOME PUZZLES**

**VIDEOS**

**WATCH SKY FYI**

**PLAY FUN GAMES**

**LISTEN TO ARTICLES**



Get an adult to scan one of these QR codes to download the app. They'll need the Web ID which we emailed to the person who paid for your subscription. If they can't find it please ask an adult to email [info@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:info@firstnews.co.uk) and we will be happy to help!



App Store



Google Play





# ICE CREAM SSSURPRISE!



I scream!

**A THAI man discovered a frozen snake inside the ice cream bar that he'd bought from a street seller, sparking concerns about food safety.**

The small golden tree snake was found completely intact within the black bean-flavoured dessert.

Rayban Naklengboon shared photos of his startling discovery on Facebook, where the post quickly gained

attention from around the world.

The incident has led to calls for an investigation into the ice cream maker's hygiene standards.

Local experts identified the reptile as a mildly venomous species common to the region. While some social media users joked about the "protein boost", others expressed serious worries about food safety.

# Doughnut emergency



Dough-nut even think about it

**A TODDLER in Oklahoma, USA, made an unusual emergency call requesting doughnuts, leading to a sweet response from local police officers.**

Bennett, a young boy who was playing with an old mobile phone, dialled 911 to report his "emergency doughnuts" situation.

Despite being an unusual call, Moore Police Department officers decided to surprise the child by delivering some Dunkin' Donuts to his home.

# Giant goldfish problem

**AN oversized goldfish discovered in Pennsylvania, USA, has highlighted the dangers of releasing fish into the wild.**

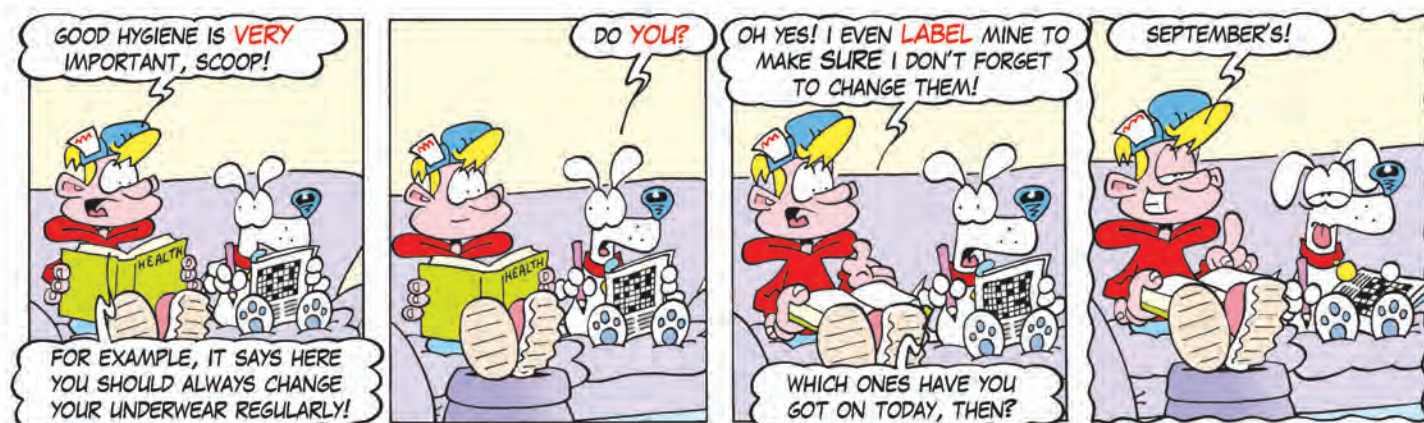
The massive fish – bigger than a man's hand – was found by researchers carrying out a survey of the aquatic animals in Erie County.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has reminded owners not to release their goldfish into waterways. It warns that these former pets take food from other fish species and have no natural predators, so their numbers can grow very quickly.

It's not just because it's nearer the camera...



Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer







# A DAY AT WIGHTWICK MANOR

TEN Year 6 pupils from Colmore Junior School went to visit a beautiful National Trust property called Wightwick Manor and Gardens in Wolverhampton to try their hand at gardening, take a tour of the house and learn all about the property's history. Here's how they got on!



## ● Planting snowdrops

The first activity we did was planting snowdrops. We went to the woods to collect the snowdrops 'in the green' – a type of gardening where you dig up a plant while it has flowers on it and replant it elsewhere. Digging the snowdrops up was fun, but very hard work! Surprisingly, the hardest part was moving them to their new home, called Bridge Garden – getting its name



from the bridge (believe it or not) that we had to cross to get there. You can see a photo of this bridge in our top five facts! We wanted the planting to look random and natural, so chose where to plant the snowdrops by gently throwing them and planting them wherever they landed.



## ● House tour

Next, we had a tour around the house. As we entered, we noticed above the door there were two wood carvings: a bat and an owl. The owner of the house, Theodore Mander, who had a great love for animals, had fabric by a designer called William Morris on his walls, since his creations were inspired by nature. In the living room, there were four stained glass windows, each representing a different season. As we went into the kitchen, we learnt that the owner underwent an operation on his dining table back in 1901, claiming it was cleaner than the hospital!



## ● Stained glass window activity

After we had eaten, we headed off to do an arts and crafts activity linked to the stained glass windows in the house. We sat down with two ladies (who work at Wightwick Manor) and they showed us how to create our own stained glass art project. We used tracing paper, tissue paper and pens to make and decorate our stained glass windows. First, we created frames by cutting black card to stick our tracing paper on to. Then, we decorated them with pens and tissue paper. After doing this, we put them up against the windows to let light through them so they showed their true colour. We got to take them home!

## TOP 5 FACTS!

1. Theodore Mander (right) owned the house and collected lots of amazing art.
2. The room with the billiards table in was massive and really impressive. You can even have a go at playing billiards, which is like snooker or pool.
3. There was a hidden room behind a secret door in the house.
4. The Mathematical Bridge was recently rebuilt.
5. Theodore Mander loved animals and nature, and these influences can be seen throughout the manor.



The new Mathematical Bridge

## ● Fantastic food

Lunchtime at Wightwick Manor was delightful, as there was a variety of foods and drinks on offer, such as freshly made sausage rolls and delicious potato crisps. We sat in the old stables to eat but, don't worry, there weren't any animals there! The chef was very nice, and he even came round halfway through our second course to give us extra food. Elijah ate eight sausage rolls! We don't blame him – they were delicious!

## KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED...

...for an exciting competition we're launching with the National Trust in next week's issue!







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

Recently, young people from the Youth Parliament gathered in the House of Commons to debate on important issues. It's great that they're making their voices heard in such a prestigious place where real politicians debate!

One way you can have your voice heard is by writing an article on an issue that you're passionate about. It might feature here on these pages! Find out how to get involved in the top right of the opposite page.

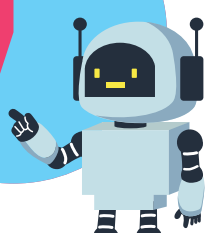
## THIS WEEK'S POLL!

We asked 2,992 of you:

Do you trust what AI chatbots say?

**56%**  
of you  
said NO

**44%**  
of you  
said YES



**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

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



© House of Commons



# YOUTH PARLIAMENT GATHERS IN LONDON

RECENTLY, Members of Youth Parliament met in London to debate on important topics. One person who attended was Shiven, who believes in the importance of young people learning about politics. He tells you all about it below.

by Shiven Kumar, aged 15

On Friday 28 February 2025, Members of Youth Parliament gathered in the House of Commons to debate on important topics, one being political literacy. Throughout the day we learnt about the power of politics, which inspired us to participate in our democracy [the system of government that we have in the UK, which means that people get to vote and have a say in how things are run].

I believe that political literacy is an important issue that affects everyone. In our rapidly changing world, the ability to understand



Shiven

and engage with political matters is crucial for every person. But unfortunately, political literacy isn't really taught in schools. Instead, the gap is filled by social media, which injects fake news and misinformation, diminishing our ability to engage meaningfully.

Including political literacy in the curriculum is really important. Education should encourage critical thinking and informed debate. By doing so, we empower young people to know fact from fiction, protect our democracy and ensure that future generations can make informed choices and uphold the values we cherish.

**FIND OUT MORE** about the Youth Parliament meeting and hear from the youngest ever speaker in the House of Commons on this week's **FYI** page (p12).

## Fighting for my future



Elysa

ELYSA is from Indonesia. Here's how she's using fencing to give herself a better future.

by Elysa

I first tried fencing when I was 11. But in Indonesia fencing is expensive and my family, who survive running a street food stall, couldn't afford it. When feeding your family is a struggle, becoming a fencing champion feels impossible.

But the local Compassion centre saw that I loved the sport and recognised it as a path out of poverty. Ever since, they have supported me a lot, encouraged me and helped cover training and competition fees.

Recently, I came third in a regional competition and have also earned a full school scholarship through fencing.

I want to become a doctor when I'm older to help other people, and fencing can even help me to secure a university scholarship.

Fencing teaches me to be focused and diligent [hard-working and careful]. I need to know when to dodge and when to attack. I apply that to my studies and daily life as well.

Through fencing, and Compassion's help, I now dare to dream big and fight for my future.

## NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Southgate School, St Anselm's Catholic Primary School, Farleigh School, St Bernard's Preparatory School and The International High School of the Gothenburg Region!







# A book lover's dream!



Ruby  
outside the  
Waterstones  
Children's  
Book Festival

ONE person who loves to read is Ruby, so she headed to a festival all about books! Find out how she got on.

by Ruby Lee

In February, my family went to the Waterstones Children's Book Festival and had a really fun time. We went because I love books and I wanted to write a report for *First News*!

First of all, we went to an epic comic battle between Jamie Smart (author of *Bunny vs Monkey* and *Looshkin*) and Neill Cameron (author of *Mega Robo Bros* and *Donut Squad*). Neill drew Freddie from *Mega Robo Bros* with a penguin bazooka (a bizarre idea from the crowd) and he went head to head with Jamie's drawing of Looshkin with Danger Sausage and a baked bean weapon on his head! The crowd was a bigger fan of Looshkin, so he was the winner! Following this, there were two more exciting battles.

After the comic battles, we went to 'A conversation with Jacqueline Wilson' about her new book *The Girl Who Wasn't There*. It's about a girl called Luna, her sister Aurora and her family moving into a folly (a small Victorian-style castle). Aurora makes an imaginary friend called Tansy, who may or may not be real. Jacqueline told us all about herself, including her daily routine, pets and facts about her life, and gave us 15 minutes for a Q&A. Did you know that one time a while back when she wasn't famous and was in a bad mood, when someone asked her what her name was, she said that she was another children's author called Enid Blyton? What's even more surprising, they actually believed her! And did you know she came up with Tracy Beaker's name when she was in a bathroom?

The whole experience was amazing for me, so I hope there are more book festivals for me and you too!

**WANT TO  
FEATURE ON  
THESE PAGES?**

FirstNews

FYI

NEWS  
CLUB

sky Kids

If you want to be a junior journalist for *First News* and go to cool press events or write about a topic that you're passionate about, get in touch by asking a trusted adult to email us at [yournews@firstnews.co.uk](mailto:yournews@firstnews.co.uk).

Or, get your teacher to sign up to the *First News* FYI News Club at [first.news/fynewsclub](http://first.news/fynewsclub).

# The Robot Zoo!



NEWS Club member Eva recently headed to a zoo like no other where all of the animals are robots! Interested to know what that's like? Read on!

by Eva McGrath, aged seven

I give this exhibition five stars!

It was really interesting to see how insects and animals move in real life using their arms, legs, tongues, wings, feet, eyes, mouths and tentacles. Except these animals were robots, so much bigger than real animals!

When we first walked into The Robot Zoo, we saw a huge, spotted giraffe. His neck was super long and he was looking down at us. His ears had microphones inside them!

The other insects and animals that we saw included a multi-coloured chameleon, a thousand-eye fly, a terrifying giant squid, a hanging fruit bat, a massive grasshopper and a raging rhino.

We also played games like the squid race and swat a fly, and there was also a platypus puzzle game. I tried hanging like a bat to see how long I could last.

My favourite part of The Robot Zoo was the tongue gun, where we had to help the chameleon catch insects by firing his tongue at bugs.

I would highly recommend The Robot Zoo to everyone who wants to learn how nature works. My brother and I had so much fun!



Some of the robot animals included a thousand-eye fly (above) and hanging fruit bat (below)



Junior journalist Eva at The Robot Zoo



# 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** Who has created a music playlist to celebrate Commonwealth Day?

**2** Who has won Soccer Aid for UNICEF more times: England or World XI?



**3** Ten-year-old Owen has just become the youngest person ever to speak in which famous building in London?



**4** What did children in hospital paint for penguins at Edinburgh Zoo?

**5** Politicians in Scotland want to lower the school leaving age to what?

**6** Which film with no words in it won the Oscar for best animated feature?



**7** A giant species of what fish has been discovered in Pennsylvania, USA?



**8** Oakwood has closed in Wales, but what kind of park was Oakwood?

**9** Which country has removed a 50-year-old rule that set strict rules on children's hair in school?

**10** 'Cheetozaard' is the nickname that's been given to a Cheeto snack shaped like which Pokémon?



**11** The longest-running and best-loved children's book awards in the UK are back. What are they called?

**12** What did a South Korean jet accidentally drop on a small village?

**13** What is the name of the brand-new comedy series about a high school basketball player coming to CBBC this week?



**14** Athena, a spacecraft launched by Intuitive Machines, has toppled over after landing on what?

**15** Which city has been voted the UK's most welcoming?

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://firstnews.co.uk/quiz) and on the *First News* app!



**Answers:**  
1 King Charles III 2 World XI 3 House of Commons  
4 Pebbles 5 14 6 Flow 7 Goldfish 8 A theme park  
9 Thailand 10 Chazward 11 The Carnegies 12 Bombs  
13 High Hoops 14 The moon 15 Chester

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# GREEN FOOTBALL'S GREAT SAVE!

GREEN Football's Great Save is a campaign that uses the power of football to tackle climate change. Everyone can get involved, from football clubs, players, 5-a-side leagues, youth teams, and, of course, football fans like you!



## Let's talk sports kit

This year, the campaign is focusing on sports kit, asking everyone to think about how they might sell, reuse, repair, upcycle or pass on any sports kit or clothes they no longer want. There's so much kit out there with no chance of getting a game!



AN estimated 100,000 tonnes of sportswear end up in landfill every year. That's the equivalent of 500 million football shirts!

This is a problem because landfills produce large amounts of methane, one of the most powerful greenhouse gases, which fuels climate change.

Also, have you had a football match or training session postponed this season? Chances are, you have. Around 120,000 grassroots games are likely to be called off this year because of flooding alone. That's why it's important that we do our bit to help protect the game we love from climate change.



## How can I help?

Whether your boots no longer fit, you've changed the team you support, you're having a clear-out or you're in a new Sunday league team, we're asking everyone who loves playing, watching or supporting football to think about what you can do with your kit to avoid it going to landfill. By taking part, you'll not only be doing your bit, but you could also help people in your community who otherwise might not have the kit they need to be able to play.

## Footie supporters

We're working with two incredible footballers on this campaign who agree that saving football kit from landfill is important. Meet Alexei Rojas, goalkeeper for the Arsenal youth academy, and Bec Thomas, who plays in goal for Wolves Women.

### Alexei Rojas, Arsenal goalkeeper and sustainability advocate, said:

"I'm excited to be part of Green Football's Great Save this year! Football is a game of teamwork and, just like the planet, we must all play together to make big saves for the environment. I'll be donating kit to my local charity shop, and who knows what hidden gems we will find!"



### Wolves goalkeeper Bec Thomas said:

"As a goalkeeper, I know the importance of great saves. I've got loads of old kit at home, so I'm excited to try upcycling some of it. It's a fun and easy way to give old sportswear a new lease of life. Let's see how my craft skills go!"



## INTERESTED IN JOINING THE GREAT SAVE? HERE ARE THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO:

### 1. Footie in the classroom

Ask your teacher to download our free activity packs from [greenfootball.org](https://greenfootball.org) to bring the campaign into your classroom.

### 2. Host a sports kit sale at school

Ask your school to host a sports kit sale. It's a great way to pass on kit you no longer want, or pick up some pre-loved goodies! It could also raise money for your school or a great cause.

### 3. Have a go at sewing

Got an old top in need of some TLC, or want to get creative by upcycling your kit into something new? Grab a needle and thread and give sewing a go! Ask a parent or grandparent to help you out, and look out for some fun videos on the Green Football website to see some of your favourite footballers showing off their sewing skills. You could even turn an old football shirt into a cool bag or cushion.

Check out [greenfootball.org](https://greenfootball.org) and you can pick up some tips by watching top footballers having a go at sewing and repairing their favourite sports kits. You'll be doing your bit to help protect the environment by keeping your kit in play for longer.



## WIN PRIZES!

By taking part in Green Football's Great Save you can score green goals for your favourite football team. It could also help your school win some amazing prizes, such as an immersive experience at Sky Studios, a fantastic selection of books for your school library or classroom, and more!





# GOLDEN BOY!

**MATT Weston has become the first British athlete to win the Skeleton World Championship more than once, beating his closest rival by a huge 1.9 seconds!**

Like in many sports, a tenth of a second can make a big difference in skeleton, so to win the title by such a large margin is an impressive achievement.

GB's Marcus Wyatt won silver, making it the first time ever that a British pair has shared a World Championship podium since the event began in 1982.

"It makes today even more special getting to share

it with a good mate who pushes me to be even better every single day," said Weston.

Weston's achievement comes just a few weeks after he won the overall World Cup crown.

**WESTON** was just a tenth of a second away from winning double gold, as he and team-mate Tabby Stoecker won silver in the team event, for the second year in a row.

**DID YOU KNOW?**



India won the 50-over Champions Trophy final, beating New Zealand by four wickets. Captain Rohit Sharma was top scorer with 76 of India's 254 runs. India's feat was overshadowed by the controversy over them playing all their matches in Dubai, as they refused to travel to the event in Pakistan. India also showed that winning the toss maybe isn't that important – they've now lost 15 in a row in one-day matches!



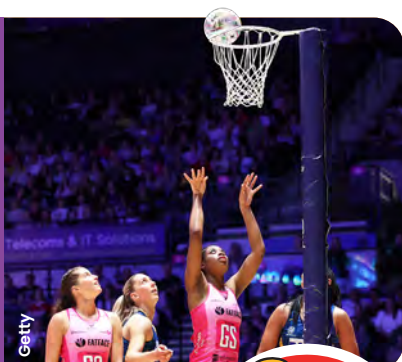
Arise, King Jeremiah!

Jeremiah Azu won Team GB's only gold medal at the European Athletics Indoor Championships in the Netherlands. His personal best in the 60m gave him his first international title. Britain finished eighth in the medal table, with the hosts way out in front with eight golds. No other country won more than three.



In basketball, Oaklands Wolves grabbed the headlines for their win in the SLB Women's Cup final, claiming their first ever trophy. They beat Sheffield Hatters 65-51, although Sheffield had more luck in the men's final, with the Sharks beating the Surrey 89ers 105-97 to win their 15th trophy.

London Pulse will go down in history as the first ever winners of the new Netball Super Cup. They beat Leeds Rhinos 20-15 in the final in Sheffield, with Olivia Tchine (pictured) scoring 16 points.



**BRITAIN'S** double Olympic taekwondo champion Jade Jones has switched sports to boxing. "To be a world champion in two sports would be pretty cool," the Welsh star said, adding that all her family think she's "crazy". Jones also won a World Taekwondo Championship and Youth Olympic gold medal.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

## Braydon's on the ball

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



Liverpool now find themselves an incredible 15 points ahead of their closest rivals at the top of the Premier League. It's not a case of 'if' Liverpool can win it, it's surely a case of 'when', with 85 points the most that Arsenal can reach. Liverpool can reach that amount with plenty of games to spare, and could realistically take the crown and be celebrating in just over a month's time.

For Arsenal, their challenge has again fallen short. Their draw at Man United on Sunday all but ended their hopes for another year. They looked like a team that had already given up the fight.

Meanwhile, Nottingham Forest's top-four dreams are still burning bright, with another good home win to keep them in third. Man City were the latest victims, who fell to a late Callum Hudson-Odoi goal at the City Ground. It's all so close, with just seven points separating third-place Forest and ninth-placed Bournemouth, and all of the teams within that group will believe that they have a chance to be among those most coveted European spots at the end of the season.



What joy for Hudson-Odoi!

In other weekend highlights, Brighton left it late to squeeze past Fulham, with João Pedro's 98th-minute penalty grabbing victory for the Seagulls, and Ollie Watkins scored the decisive goal in Aston Villa's win over his old club, Brentford.

**Centre Stage** this week is Leicester goalkeeper Mads Hermansen, who became the first keeper to save a penalty from Chelsea's Cole Palmer. Palmer previously had a 100% penalty record, scoring all 13 of his spot-kicks in his career, but his low effort was well saved by Hermansen. Chelsea recovered to move back into the top four, as Marc Cucurella's second-half strike was just enough to secure a scrappy win at Stamford Bridge.

In the women's game, it was FA Cup weekend! The two Manchester clubs will now face each other in the semi-finals following home victories for both in the quarter-finals. It'll be City v United for a place in the final against either Chelsea or Liverpool on 18 May. Should be interesting!

**Braydon's Team of The Week:** Nottingham Forest – one of the big surprises of the season and still going strong.

**Braydon's Player of The Week:** Bruno Fernandes with another goal. Without him, Man United would be really struggling.

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12 >