

NEWS KIDS CAN **TRUST**

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR*



First News

2.6M
READERS*

Issue 981 £2.95 4 – 10 April 2025



WE MEET THE STARS OF
A MINECRAFT MOVIE



18

NEWS **SPORTS** ENTERTAINMENT
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES **COMPETITIONS**

NATURE'S TOILET!

THE DIRTY TRUTH ABOUT OUR RIVERS



Watch the FYI interview
with Steve Backshall.
Ask a responsible adult
to scan the QR code.

Spill data for the UK's
other nations is separate to
England's. Northern Ireland
doesn't monitor spills as they
happen, and Scotland only
collects data from just over a
quarter of spill sites. Data for
Welsh water companies
is released in July.

by editor in chief Nicky Cox MBE

WATER companies spilled raw sewage for a record 3.61 million hours into seas and rivers in England last year, says the Environment Agency.

Sewage is the waste that comes from our toilets, baths, showers and sinks.

It travels through pipes and ends up in sewage treatment works. This is where the wastewater is cleaned, so it can go back into our rivers and seas safely.

However, if it's raining a lot, sewage treatment works can't cope with collecting all the rain, as well as the sewage from our homes.

When this happens, water companies are allowed to release some untreated raw sewage – that's poo, wee and everything else – straight into rivers and seas. This is to stop the sewers from becoming overwhelmed and

flooding back up our drains into our homes.

But, Ofwat, the organisation that keeps a check on water companies, says some of them keep releasing sewage outside times of heavy downpours, which is against the rules. It has announced fines for some water companies.

Wildlife presenter Steve Backshall lives on the River Thames in the south of England and has been monitoring the river water for several years.

"If you took a cup of this water and drank it, you'd end up in hospital."

– Steve Backshall

He says sewage is a huge threat to people and wildlife: "We have a sewage plant 500m upstream from here. And, after heavy rain, they will discharge for ten hours, 20 hours, raw, human effluent [liquid waste] into the river.

"After one of those outages, if you took a cup of this water and drank it, you'd end up in hospital. It's incredibly damaging to human health, but also to animal health. I wouldn't want my dog to be drinking from the river right now.

"This year, when we've had a lot of sewage outages, the amount of wildlife on the river has been radically reduced. And it's not surprising because they're swimming around all day long in sewage."

Environmental charity The Rivers Trust is calling for urgent work to improve storm overflows so that we see less sewage in our waters. It says work to slow the flow of rainwater reaching the sewers can also help. This includes nature-based solutions that encourage land to hold water for longer, like swapping concreted ground for grass or gravel. This helps rain to soak into the earth rather than flow into drains.

MEET THE TEAM



Editor in Chief
Nicky Cox



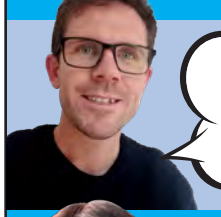
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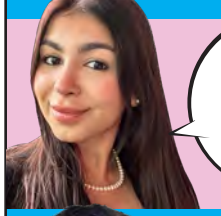
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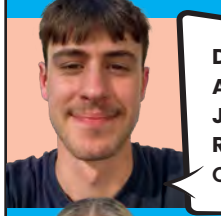
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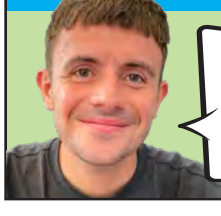
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HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



EMPTY PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES HIT RECORD HIGH

Latest figures show that empty places in England's primary schools have reached their highest level since records began. The Department for Education (DfE) data shows 611,000 places were empty across England in 2023-24, 5.8% higher than the year before. The DfE reports that 84 out of every 100 primary schools now have at least one empty place. This change is mainly due to fewer babies being born in recent years. Experts also say that some areas still need more school places, and the government has promised £1 billion to create new spaces where needed.



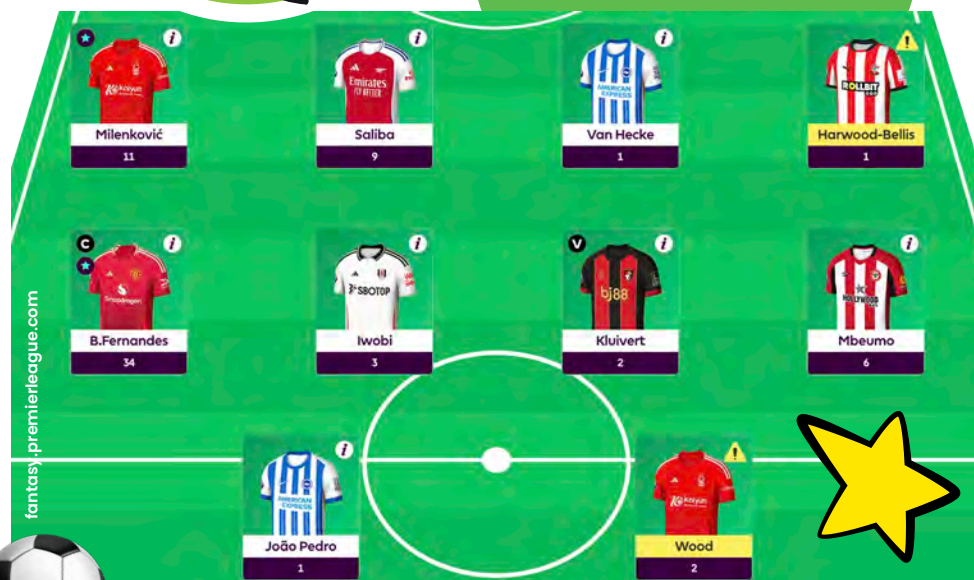
SWIM WORRIES FOR AUSTRALIAN KIDS

Almost half of Year 6 pupils in Australia can't swim 50 metres or tread water for two minutes, a study by Royal Life Saving Australia has found. One in ten children aged between five and 14 had never had a swimming lesson. The findings are particularly worrying as the country is surrounded by water and people spend a lot of time at the beach. Experts say more funding and attention is needed to make sure that drownings are prevented and that all children can swim safely. In British schools, kids are expected to swim 25 metres by the end of primary school.

THEY SAID THAT!

"At the ripe old age of 67, my weekly lists with pen and paper seem to be the secret to my success!"

– Susan Clarke



FANTASY FOOTBALL WIN

A 67-year-old woman has shocked millions by reaching the top of the Fantasy Premier League using just pen and paper. Susan Clarke, known as the Ruby Reds, is beating 11.4 million players worldwide without using AI or data analysis. Her simple approach has impressed experts, who say her achievement is like winning the lottery.



DISNEY ANNOUNCES COCO 2 MOVIE!

Disney has announced plans for a second Coco movie, bringing back the magical world of Miguel and his musical adventures! The new film is being developed at Pixar Animation Studios and is due to hit cinemas in 2029. Disney's CEO Bob Iger promises the new film will be packed with "humour, heart and adventure", but no story details have been released yet.

JUST STOP OIL TO END PROTESTS

Climate group Just Stop Oil has announced it is ending its disruptive demonstrations. The activists, whose protests have included blocking traffic and throwing paint in art galleries, say they will hang up their distinctive orange hi-vis jackets at the end of April. Hannah Hunt from the group said: "Just Stop Oil's demand to end new oil and gas is now government policy, making us one of the most successful civil resistance campaigns in recent history." The group plans to continue its work through legal action in the courts.



GLOBAL WORDS ADDED TO ENGLISH DICTIONARY

The Oxford English Dictionary has added 42 commonly used words from around the world to its latest edition. They include the Irish phrase "spice bag" (a popular takeaway) and "class" (a term of approval), as well as the Malaysian word "alamak" (an expression of surprise). The March 2025 update includes words from South Africa, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Ireland. Many of these terms describe unique foods, emotions and everyday expressions that had no direct English equivalent before.

WOMEN'S CYCLING WORRIES



Research reveals that women in the UK are less likely to cycle than men, due to safety concerns and poor cycling routes. A study by Cycling UK found that nearly six out of ten (58%) women said these issues limited their cycling. And, even though kids are receiving more cycle training, children's bike sales fell by 2% last year, the Bicycle Association says. Experts say this is because many families in poorer areas are struggling to afford bikes for their kids.

DEEP-SEA MINING TRACKS STILL VISIBLE

Scientists say that tracks from deep-sea mining tests can still be seen on the ocean floor 44 years later. In 2023, researchers used an underwater robot to study the Pacific Ocean floor, where a huge, 100-tonne machine tested out mining in 1979. While some small sea creatures have returned to live in the area, larger animals that attach to the seabed are still rare. "It's like seeing footprints on the moon that never fade away," explains Professor Daniel Jones, who led the study. "This helps us understand what might happen if we start mining the deep sea in the future."

US PLAN FOR GREENLAND CAUSES ANGER

US Vice President JD Vance's visit to Greenland sparked anger after he suggested America could take control of the country. Greenland is a self-ruling territory of Denmark. During a trip to a US military base in the country, Mr Vance hinted at making a deal, despite locals being dead against one. Most Greenlanders say it's a bad idea, with almost nine in ten (85%) saying they don't want to become part of America. The Danish prime minister called the visit unwanted, and Greenland's leader insisted his people wish to remain Greenlanders, not Americans or Danes.



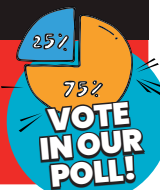
US Vice President JD Vance in Greenland

MP'S 'PET RENT' SPARKS ROW

A Labour MP's claim of £900 in expenses to cover 'pet rent' for her dog has triggered calls for changes to what politicians can claim from taxpayers' money. MP Taiwo Owatemi, who represents Coventry North West, made the claim to pay extra rent for her cockapoo dog Bella at her home in London. While this follows current rules, many people are unhappy about it, especially as MPs now earn nearly £94,000 a year. The government's security minister has promised to ask for a review of these rules, saying that, while Ms Owatemi didn't break any rules, these claims shouldn't be allowed.

Should MPs be allowed to use public money for pet costs?

Vote at first.news/polls



CHRIS' MARATHON DIARY

23 days to go

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

During one lunch break last week, I ran to Canary Wharf, and to the UK's third-tallest building (below). It's a landmark that I'll pass on the big day, at mile 15, and again at mile 18 – by which point I'll be very tired!

I've been thinking about the route of the 26.2-mile race. Some of you will have been to London and some of you won't, so here's an idea. It begins high up in Greenwich and curls downhill towards the River Thames. From there, thankfully, the route is quite flat.

Runners cross the famous Tower Bridge, then turn east, past the **First News** offices in Wapping. The route hooks around Canary Wharf, then shoots back west, right along the river, to the finish line at Buckingham Palace.

And, after that, I'll be hobbling to the nearest burger restaurant!



Why I'm running for...

Household air pollution in East Asia and the Pacific, such as burning coal for cooking and heating, is linked to nearly one in four deaths of children under five. UNICEF is helping families in Mongolia – like Bayan and his grandmother Dulmaa – by providing electric devices for cooking and heating, improving indoor air quality in their homes.

unicef
for every child



Donate at tinyurl.com/ChrisInTheMarathon

BRIGHTON MARATHON WEEKEND 4-6 APRIL

Thousands of runners and spectators will be heading off for a few days at the seaside. This is the third largest marathon in the UK.

WORLD HEALTH DAY 7 APRIL

Celebrates and promotes awareness of health topics to people around the world.

CALENDAR DATES



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



ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT **FASTER!**



Olympic rowing to be held on river with CROCODILES

THE rowing events at the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games are set to be held on a river that's home to saltwater crocodiles!

The Games will be hosted in Brisbane, Australia, but the rowing is planned to take place on the Fitzroy River, 500 kilometres (311 miles) further north, nearer to the tropical top end of the state of Queensland.

There are 25,000 crocodiles in Queensland, and some are known to lurk in the Fitzroy River.

Last week, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese questioned the idea of rowing there, although he joked: "People might break world records – they'd want to go pretty quickly, wouldn't they?"

Team GB's Olympians and Paralympians won 12 medals in rowing at last summer's Paris Games.

They're a fast bunch, and perhaps that's just as well!

The tooth of the matter

Experts say that rowers would have little to fear. Crocs are most active at night, and at the water's edge, rather than in deep water.

Andrew Liveris, the president of the Olympic organising committee, said: "There are sharks in the ocean – we still do surfing."

But let's not be too snappy – the decision hasn't been signed off yet, and a bigger issue is that the river's flow could make races unfair.



The Fitzroy River

EDITOR'S COMMENT

WATER companies must clean up our rivers and seas because they are harming fish, other wildlife, plants and people (front page).

The rowers on this page (left) might have to beware of crocodiles in Australia, but in UK rivers they face major health threats. The dirty water caused by sewage leaks can cause stomach bugs, skin infections and other serious illnesses. As Steve Backshall says, drinking a cup of river water could put you in hospital.

We need to keep on at water companies to clean up their act to make our rivers, lakes and seas healthy for future generations.



Nicky Cox MBE



Turtle doves come to the UK each summer to breed

Turtle doves

NEW figures reveal that the number of turtle doves in Europe is rising fast – there are 615,000 more breeding pairs of them than there were in 2021. The RSPB launched an action plan to protect the birds in 2018. It included limiting the hunting of them overseas, and improving their habitats.

Moving house hits exam grades

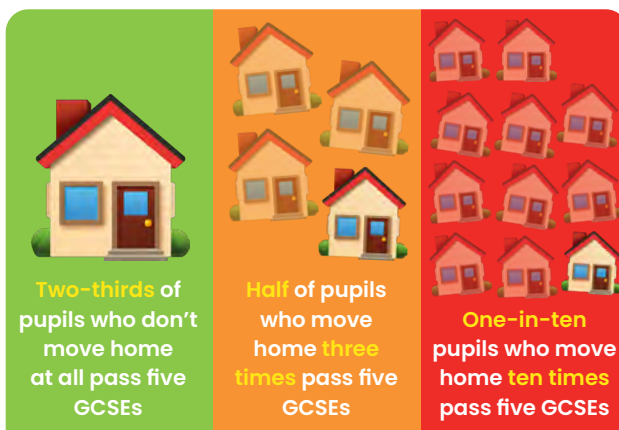
MOVING home is a major life event, so perhaps it isn't surprising that it can affect our grades at school.

Work by the Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, shows that the more a child moves house between Reception and Year 11, the less likely it is that they'll achieve five GCSEs (see right).

One in eight Year 11 pupils in England have moved home three times while at school. However, moving isn't always something that families want to do. Thousands have no choice, because their housing situation is difficult.

Some pupils have told Ms de Souza that they live in damp, dirty, overcrowded homes with no bed to sleep in.

"Children are paying the price of growing up in poverty,"



she said. "Some find it hard to concentrate at school because of unfit housing, while others are forced to move school in the middle of the year – so it's no surprise their education is paying the price of this disruption."

£33m to tackle smuggling gangs

THE government is spending £33m on a fresh push to tackle gangs who smuggle migrants to the UK illegally.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer says that, since Labour took power last July, 24,000 people who "have no right to be here" have been returned.

In that same length of time, 542 small boats have crossed the English Channel from France, carrying a combined 29,884 people.

Speaking at a border security meeting in London, Mr Starmer said he was "angry" about illegal immigration.

"This evil trade... pits nations against one another," he told guests from more than 40 countries. "The truth is, we can only smash these gangs once and for all if we work together."

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said: "Governments, not gangs, should be deciding who enters our country."



In this **Sky Kids FYI** video, Iranian refugee Arvin explains why people have to flee their country to seek safety.

QR codes should be scanned by a responsible adult.



Laying down the Law

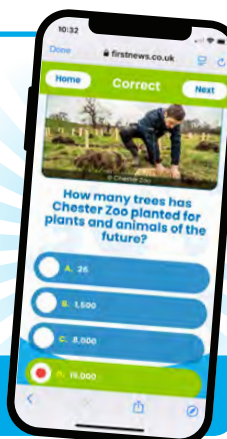
Liam Lawson

THE 23-year-old Formula 1 driver joined Red Bull to be Max Verstappen's team-mate this season, but he's been ditched just two races in! He crashed in the first race in Australia and qualified last in the second race in China, so the team have swapped him with Japanese driver Yuki Tsunoda who raced with their B team – Racing Bulls.

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.





VAPING AT SCHOOL: THE STATS

THERE is a vaping crisis in UK schools, with some pupils skipping lessons on their timetables in order to vape, says a major organisation of teachers.

It's illegal to sell e-cigarettes to under-18s, but children are still getting their hands on them.

The teachers' union NASUWT surveyed more than 5,000 teachers, and more than half of them said that they'd seen an increase in pupils vaping over the past year. Many pupils are sneaking puffs at break times, in the toilets and even inside classrooms during lessons.

Vapes are also causing damage to school property, as pupils lift ceiling tiles or flush them down toilets to try to hide them.

Disposable vapes will be banned in the UK from 1 June, and Dr Patrick Roach, General Secretary of NASUWT, says it's urgently needed. He's also calling on the government to fund school programmes to prevent youth vaping and provide guidance for teachers.

"In an age rife [widespread] with misinformation, schools need support and resources to make sure pupils fully understand the dangers of tobacco and nicotine," he said.



This **Sky Kids FYI** video investigates why children are vaping.

QR codes should be scanned by a responsible adult.

Pupils as young as **ten** years old use vapes regularly, say teachers

1/6

teachers say pupils vape while in lessons

3/5

teachers say pupils often leave their lessons to vape

4/5

teachers say pupils gather in the school toilets to vape

EU tells people to stock up on loo rolls



All pics: Getty

EUROPEANS have been told to stock up on three days' worth of toilet rolls, snacks and other essentials, just in case a major crisis ever strikes.

The European Union (EU) – a group of 27 nations, including France, Germany, Italy and Spain, but not the UK – gave the advice to its combined 450 million citizens to improve its security.

Also on the list are water, torches, medicine and shortwave radios. The idea is to make sure everyone is prepared, should war, a major cyberattack or a natural disaster caused by climate change occur in the future.

"Today's threats facing Europe are more complex than ever," said Hadja Lahbib, who leads crisis management at the EU.

Better safe than sorry

It sounds extreme, but it's nothing new.

Advice just like it already exists in France, Finland and Sweden, and even here in the UK. Last May, the Conservative Party launched a new website called Prepare. It lists all the things that British households might wish to keep handy, in case things like floods or power cuts happen.

If you're stuck at home for a few days, you don't want to be left without a bag of crisps or two!

More UK kids may be pushed into poverty

CHILDREN'S charities have criticised the government after hearing its latest plans for the UK economy.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves set out the government's latest spending plans last week at the House of Commons, in her Spring Statement.

They include freezes and cuts to welfare (money that people get if they're out of work) and to payments to support disabled people (called disability benefits). This led to disabled people and supporters protesting across the UK.

The government believes that it's the right way to help the UK's economy and, over time, make the country better off.

However, a YouGov poll has

revealed that over half of Britons think that their household will become poorer over the next year. The government's own forecasts say that its welfare cuts will affect 3.2 million families and could push 250,000 more people into poverty – including 50,000 children.

This has upset a number of big charities, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Oxfam and Save the Children (see left).

Scotland bucks the trend

Figures show that child poverty is falling in Scotland, but Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville warned: "Decisions taken by the UK government are holding us back."



Protests in London

"The rise in child poverty is a direct consequence of political choices. Ministers... must now take immediate action to ensure more children do not fall into poverty next year. If they don't, this could be the first Labour government that oversees a significant rise in child poverty – a record no-one wants."

– Dan Paskins, Save the Children

Big discovery in scientist's garden

A NEW type of antibiotic has been found in a lab technician's back garden!

Antibiotics are a type of antimicrobial, which are used to fight bacteria, viruses and fungi that cause diseases, but some are immune now to existing antimicrobials. This caused 1.27m deaths around the world in 2019, and contributed to millions more.

However, this new antibiotic, taken from soil in the garden of a lab technician from Canada, targets

bacteria in a new way.

Its discovery has excited scientists. Kim Lewis, a microbiologist from the USA, said it shows that "there is terrifically interesting stuff hiding in plain sight".

It won't be ready for testing on patients for a number years, but there are hopes that this could be the first step in developing new life-saving medicines.



A PILOT flying a plane full of passengers from Los Angeles to China had to make an emergency stop in San Francisco, after realising they'd forgotten their passport!

The United Airlines plane had already begun crossing the Pacific Ocean on its way to Shanghai on Saturday 22 March, before making a U-turn back to the US.

The 257 travellers on board were delayed for hours and United Airlines offered its sincere apologies. Travel website View From The Wing says they each got a \$15 (£11.57) food voucher to spend at the airport.

Ukraine peace talks

Head to the **First News** app for updates on the ongoing talks for a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, as they happen.





Myanmar



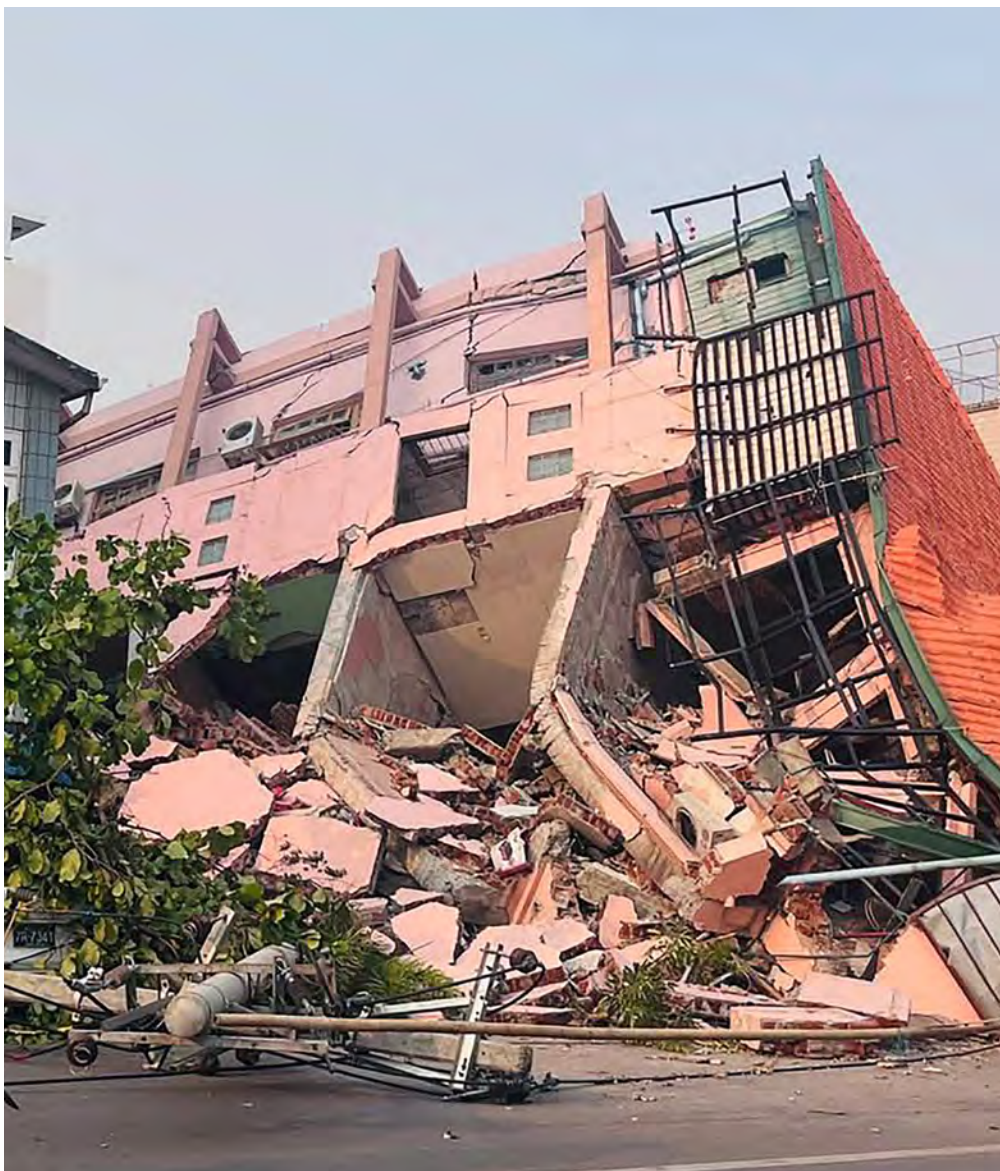
All pics: Getty

A DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee) appeal has been launched after a massive earthquake struck Myanmar in Southeast Asia. The 7.7-magnitude earthquake has devastated the country, destroying roads and causing buildings to collapse, leaving thousands of people without homes. The quake was felt in neighbouring Thailand, too. As *First News* went to press, the official death toll had risen to more than 2,000, with many more missing. The DEC, a group of 15 UK aid charities, launches appeals when large-scale disasters hit countries that may not be able to cope. The UN says that nearly 20 million people in Myanmar were already in need of aid following years of conflict and instability. Now, the DEC is appealing for donations to help provide emergency aid to those who need it. **You can get the latest news on the Myanmar earthquake by heading to the *First News* app.**



Why do natural disasters happen?

You can watch the FYI / Don't Get It episode explaining natural disasters by asking a responsible adult to scan this QR code.





Huai'an, China



KITES of all shapes and sizes fly high during the Lianshui Kite Festival.

California, USA



A SICK sea lion is rescued in Santa Barbara. Volunteers from the Channel Islands Marine & Wildlife Institute are checking on hundreds of marine animals that may have been poisoned, after toxic algae began to bloom off the coast.

Diamniadio, Senegal



A SENEGAL superfan cheers on the national football team during their 2-0 win over Togo. The victory puts them one step closer to qualification for the 2026 World Cup.

**GUISELEY****Christmas tree down for Easter**

"On the 130th day of Christmas, my true love sent to me..." That might be the version of the famous song that the people of Guiseley are now singing, after the town's Christmas tree was finally taken down on 24 March. Leeds City Council, which uses another company to deal with its holiday spruces, said: "It is not always possible to remove trees immediately after Christmas." Some locals said they enjoyed the extra cheer, while others said they'd be adding the council to their naughty lists this year...



The tree had been up since 15 November

Paul Alderson

Visitors enjoying the award-winning lanterns

**EDINBURGH****Lanterns make glow-rious return**

Edinburgh Zoo's popular lantern trail is back for the first time in six years. This winter, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland will be inviting visitors to explore a glowing world filled with hundreds of illuminations. The zoo has previously won an award for its lanterns. It picked up gold at the Giant Panda Global Awards in 2019 for its Giant Lanterns of China display. This year's event will have a brand-new theme and runs from 14 November 2025 to 22 February 2026. Tickets will be on sale soon.

ANGLESEY**New wildlife-only zone**

Coastal adventure activities on the island of Anglesey have been put on hold to protect rare birds. The RSPB has been allowed a six-month exclusion zone on an area called the Range. It's a popular spot for coasteering (exploring rocky coastlines by climbing, jumping and swimming). However, these activities will not be allowed in the protected area, where thrill-seekers have been disrupting wildlife. Breeding birds wanting to nest have been put off, while seals and plants have been disturbed, too. People will be able to walk along the scenic coastal paths still.



Coastal activities are influencing the lives of chough (inset) and seals

CARDIFF**Rise of the Bike Bus**

The founder of a popular cycling scheme will join schoolchildren for a morning ride in Cardiff this week. Coach Balto's Bike Buses are organised cycle rides you can join or leave anywhere along the route. Each Bike Bus has a 'driver' who looks after pupils and leads them to school. The scheme has taken off in the UK after first becoming popular in the US, and Coach Balto (inset) will be joining Cardiff pupils for a ride on Thursday 10 April. This comes after transport charity Sustrans found that 51% (half) of kids want to cycle more.



coachbalto

istock

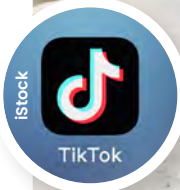


The big dig!

Social media influencers have been raving about Arlington Row

**BIBURY****Village to ban TikTok tourists**

A pretty village that has become a TikTok hit is battling a rise in tourists. Bibury in the Cotswolds is home to just 581 people, but can see as many as 20,000 visitors during weekends. Most people arrive on coaches, clogging narrow lanes and creating parking problems, say locals. Craig Chapman, chair of Bibury Parish Council, said the situation had become "intolerable and unacceptable". Now the village is fighting back and is set to ban coaches within the next two months.



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TikTok

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A DIAMOND DAY FOR SOCCER AID!



FIRST News caught up with Soccer Aid for UNICEF player Livi Sheldon (otherwise known as Diamond from *Gladiators*) on her surprise visit to Adderley Primary School in Birmingham to launch the Soccer Aid for UNICEF Academy. Here's a photo diary from her day!



1. ARRIVING AT ADDERLEY PRIMARY

"Stepping into Adderley Primary School was like a blast from the past! It had been ages since I've been in a classroom and, wow, what memories it brought back. The first thing that caught my eye was this incredible mural all about children's rights – it set the tone for an inspiring day ahead."



2. MEETING THE CHILDREN

"My morning started off with meeting the pupils. We handed out disposable cameras to the kids and asked them to capture the behind-the-scenes moments of everyone getting stuck into the Soccer Aid for UNICEF Academy challenges. Looking through their photos after and seeing the fun-filled day through their eyes was so special."



3. WARM-UP AND SETTING THE OBSTACLES

"We took to the playground and warmed up outside – practising our goalscoring celebrations! The kids had some seriously creative moves. Then they showed their teamwork skills and creativity for the first Soccer Aid for UNICEF Academy challenge: setting up an obstacle course. Dribbling through cones, scaling benches – it was a real test! Maybe the World XI FC team should include some of their ideas in the official Soccer Aid for UNICEF training!"



4. OBSTACLE COURSE CHALLENGE

"Tackling that obstacle course was a workout. The pupils definitely put me through my paces and brought out my competitive side. I may be a Gladiator, but they showed me a thing or two about agility and determination!"



5. GOALSCORING CHALLENGE

"Next, we moved onto the goalscoring and celebration challenge! I'm glad I'm not a goalkeeper in this year's match at Old Trafford in June. These children are giving me a run for my money – future footie stars in the making."



6. WRAP UP OF CHALLENGES – INCLUSIVITY

"What really stood out from the morning was seeing pupils coming together to take part in the Academy's challenges, each giving their all and bringing their own unique strengths. It brought me back to a time when I played for a boys' football team in Worcester at just six years old, when inclusivity in sports wasn't as common. The Academy's focus on everyone being in one big team was amazing to see."



7. RIGHTS-BASED ACTIVITY

"One of my favourite Academy challenges was the classroom session. The pupils designed posters about their rights, such as the right to play, eat nutritious food and have their voices heard – and why it's important that they're protected, which is what UNICEF's work is all about. I learned so much from the children, and that's the reason that Adderley Primary School are in the gold section as a Rights-Respecting School. It was so inspiring!"

8. MAKING A DIFFERENCE

"Reflecting on the day, I'm reminded of why I got involved with Soccer Aid for UNICEF – to help make a difference in children's lives. By participating in the Academy, schools are not only having fun but also raising money to help UNICEF's work for children. Together, we can make a real difference in children's lives around the world!"

JOIN IN!

Primary and secondary schools in the UK can now sign up to the Soccer Aid for UNICEF Academy, which features fun challenges and learning activities. By taking part in the Academy, schools will be raising money for the Soccer Aid for UNICEF campaign. To find out more, visit socceraid.org.uk/schools.

This year's celebrity Soccer Aid match takes place on Sunday 15 June at Old Trafford, Manchester, and will be broadcast live and shown live exclusively on ITV1, ITVX, STV and STV Player.



UK BUTTERFLY EMERGENCY



iStock

A small tortoiseshell on a flower head

LAST year was one of the worst ever for butterflies in the UK, with more than half of all species now at risk.

New data from the charity Butterfly Conservation shows that 51 out of 59 butterfly species saw falling numbers in 2024 compared to 2023. The low numbers are partly the result of the wet spring and cool summer, but 31 species are in long-term decline.

Even the small tortoiseshell, once a common garden visitor, has seen a drop of 86% (nearly nine tenths) since 1976.

Scientists blame habitat loss, pollution, pesticides and climate change for this alarming pattern.

Dr Richard Fox from Butterfly Conservation said: "When we have poor weather, these already-depleted [reduced] butterfly populations are highly vulnerable and can't bounce back like they once did."

People are being encouraged to let grass grow in gardens and parks to help butterfly numbers recover.

Energy-saving elephants

A NEW study shows that African elephants are smarter than we thought, choosing the easiest paths to find food.

Scientists tracked 157 elephants in Kenya over 22 years, between 1998 and 2020, and found that they carefully planned their food-finding journeys to avoid steep hills and rough ground in an effort to save energy.

Every step matters for these huge herbivores (plant eaters). They need to eat tonnes of low-calorie vegetation every day, so it's important to them to use as little physical effort as possible.

The data, collected by charity Save The Elephants, also found that water sources played a role in where elephants moved – some staying close and others roaming further.

The study was published in the *Journal of Animal Ecology*.



RARE SNAIL RETURNS!

A TINY tree snail has made an incredible return to its native home in French Polynesia, after previously being declared extinct!

The snail, *Partula tohiveana*, disappeared due to other predatory snails, but is now breeding in the wild after a rescue mission led by London Zoo conservationists.

Scientists carefully bred the snails in zoos worldwide before marking them with glow-in-the-dark paint. They then released them back into their forest home.

Fiona Sach from ZSL said: "It's incredibly rewarding to see these snails not only surviving but thriving in safe wild habitat again, and it gives us real hope for the many other species we are working to bring back from extinction."



ANEESHWAR'S ANIMAL OF THE WEEK

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

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

INLAND TAIPAN



HABITAT:

● Dry regions of southwest Queensland and northwest South Australia.

FUN FACTS:

● They have enough venom in one bite to kill around 100 adult humans.

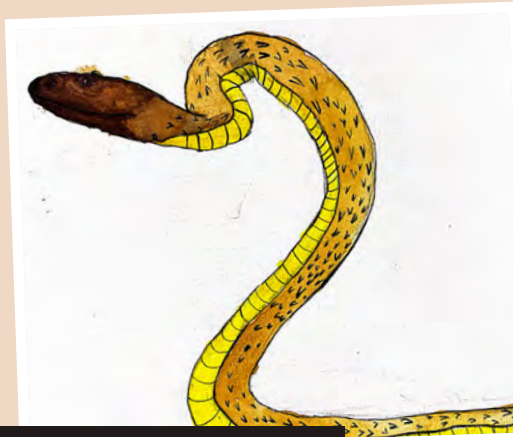
● This snake, also known as the fierce snake, is considered the most venomous in the world!

SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

● They change colour with the seasons. In winter, they become darker to absorb heat, and in summer, they become lighter to stay cool.

CONSERVATION STATUS:

● The inland taipan is of least concern, says the International Union for Conservation of Nature.



Aneeshwar's inland taipan art

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





A MILLION KIDS COULD DIE DUE TO BUDGET CUTS

A MILLION children could die from preventable diseases if the US pulls funding from a global health charity.



Dr Sania Nishtar,
the head of GAVI

The head of GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations) made the claim in response to a report in the *New York Times* that US President Donald Trump plans to stop funding the organisation.

Mr Trump's friend Elon Musk, the boss of Tesla, has been given the job of cutting US government spending, so lots of the money that the US donates to

improve health in other countries has been withdrawn.

The US gives around \$300m (£230m) a year to GAVI. Dr Sania Nishtar, the head of GAVI, said this would mean that 75 million children will miss out on vaccinations for diseases like measles and polio.

Between 2000 and 2003, GAVI vaccinated more than 1.1 billion children worldwide, preventing an estimated 18.8m deaths.

Measles outbreak in the US

Meanwhile in the US, children are being put at risk due to falling rates of measles vaccinations and false information being shared by Robert F Kennedy Jr, the country's health secretary. Vaccination rates are lower

than they were three years ago, which is one of the reasons for the current measles outbreak. Until this year, nobody had died from measles in America since 2015, but a six-year-old girl died in February.

Last week, doctors in West Texas said that they were seeing children with liver damage from taking too much vitamin A. Mr Kennedy has a history of repeating false claims about vaccines and has said that vitamin A can be used to prevent measles. However, experts say this isn't true – it can be used to treat the disease but it can't prevent it, and high doses of vitamins can have serious health effects.

"Relying on vitamin A instead of the vaccine is not only dangerous and ineffective, but it puts children at serious risk," said Dr Sue Kressly, the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

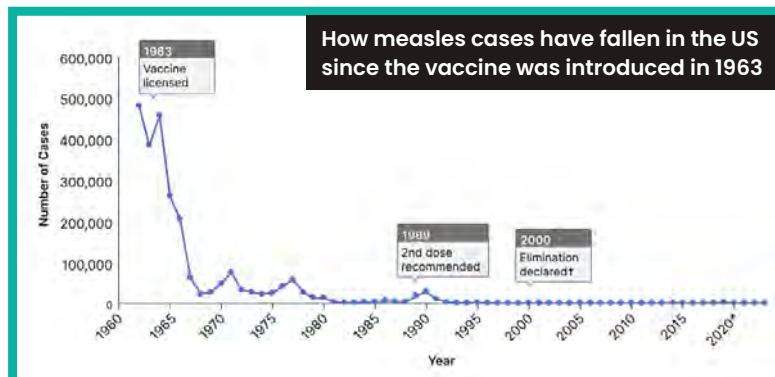


istock

MEASLES FACTS

- Measles is so infectious that one infected person can pass it on to 12–18 more.
- One in five children who get measles will need hospital treatment.
- One in 15 people with measles will develop serious health complications.
- To prevent outbreaks, 95% (19 out of 20) of a population should be vaccinated. But in 2024, only 85% of eligible people (17 out of 20) in the UK got two doses of the MMR jab.

Source: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



SEE-THROUGH WOOD!

YOU might have heard the saying about someone who 'can't see the wood for the trees', but here you can barely see the wood at all!

At the spring meeting of the American Chemical Society, scientists revealed their transparent wood that's an eco-friendly alternative to plastic. Bizarrely, it could lead to phone screens or even a house's windows being made out of wood.

Transparent wood has been made before, but only by using epoxies (a type of plastic) to hold it all together. Indian scientist Bharat Baruah wanted to create an alternative that only uses natural products and is biodegradable.

He knew that some buildings in India have stood for centuries and were built before cement was invented. How did

they do it? With egg whites and sticky rice! So Baruah and his colleagues borrowed that idea to create their see-through wood.

After removing two substances called lignin and hemicellulose from balsa wood, the gaps left over were then filled with the sticky mixture.

To test its properties, Baruah adapted a birdhouse into a tiny one-room home with a window made out of his creation. By measuring the temperature inside, he found that the transparent wooden window kept the tiny house 5–6°C cooler than when a glass window was used.

The material could be used for energy-efficient homes in hot countries.



Top: a square of the wood over the top of a photo. Below: testing the window on an old birdhouse

This report is from the
National Railway Museum
in York

**SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP**

FLYING Scotsman is the world's most famous steam locomotive. This 102-year-old engine broke records in its first few years in service in the UK, becoming the first train to hit 100mph (161km/h).

It was so popular that in the 1960s it went on a tour to the United States to promote British exports, and even to Australia in the 1980s – making it the first steam locomotive to go around the world!

Since 2016, and following a long restoration process to put it back into shape, Flying Scotsman has made a triumphant return on the tracks.

You can catch the famous locomotive at the National Railway Museum from 5–23 April and hear memories and stories from those intimately linked with Flying Scotsman, from owners and admirers to passengers and crew.



Flying Scotsman: not bad for 102 years old, eh?

LIFE ON A TINY ISLAND

THIS week on *FYI*, presenter Hughie heads to the tiny island of Alderney to surprise a *First News* *FYI* News Club there and find out about island life!

What is island life like?

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live on a tiny island like Alderney? Find out from Molly!

Going to school

There is only one school on Alderney, called St Anne's School. It's really small, with only 130 children attending from pre-school up to 16 years old. To go to college, you have to go to a bigger island called Guernsey.

Summer vs winter

- Living on Alderney in winter is limited. Things close, and outdoor activities can't be done because of the poor weather.
- In summer, it's much more fun because you get to go on the beach – the best part of the island!



Molly has grown up on Alderney

Leaving the island

Getting off the island can be tricky. It's expensive because of how small the planes are and transport gets delayed quite a lot because of how strong the winds are. It's also tricky for ships to get in. In the bad weather, ships can't come to deliver food so there can be a low number of supplies in shops.

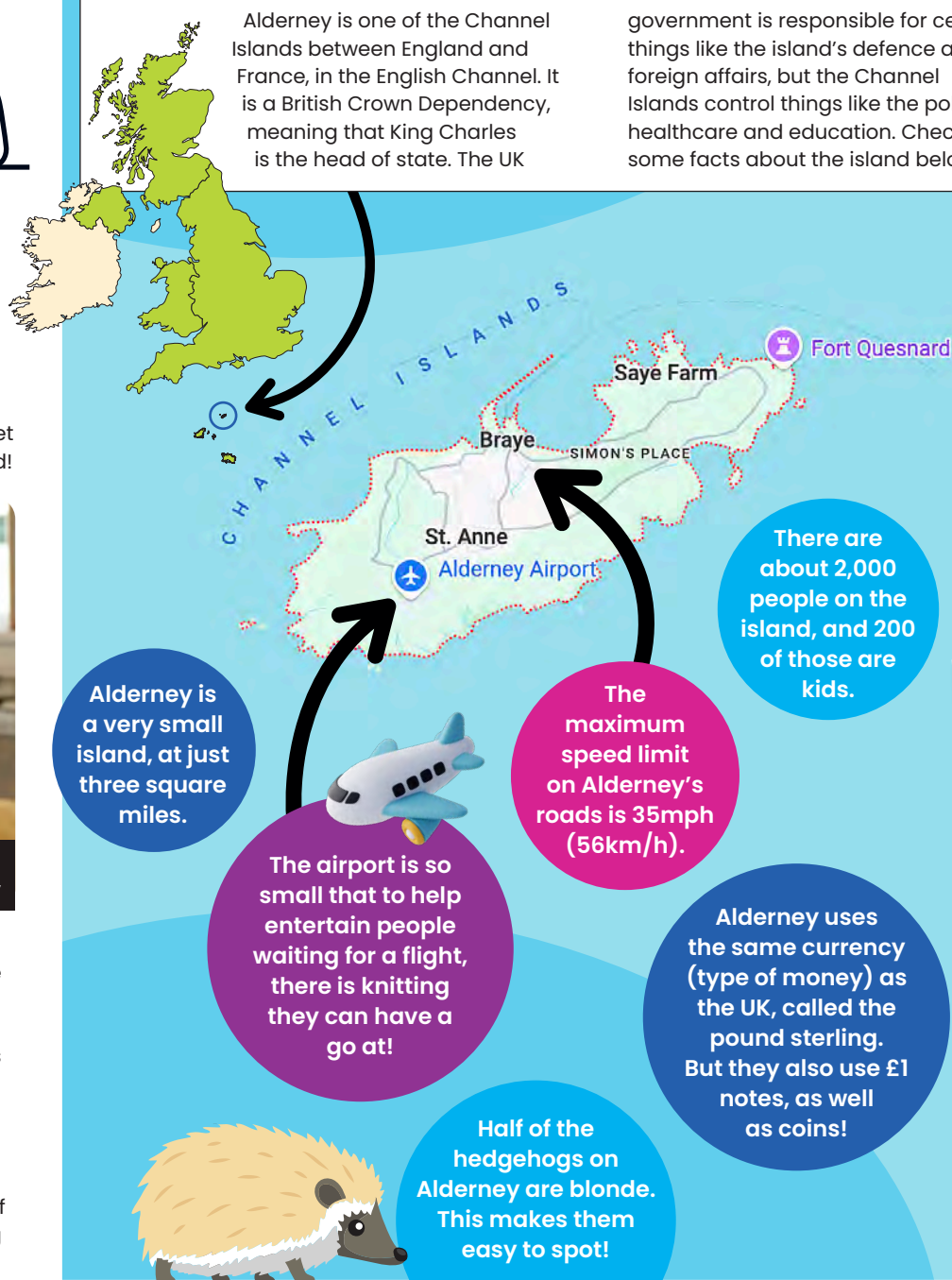
Kids having jobs

Many kids who live on Alderney have jobs. One of Molly's friends, Logan, works at the harbour fixing things like boats!

The tiny island of Alderney

Alderney is one of the Channel Islands between England and France, in the English Channel. It is a British Crown Dependency, meaning that King Charles is the head of state. The UK

government is responsible for certain things like the island's defence and foreign affairs, but the Channel Islands control things like the police, healthcare and education. Check out some facts about the island below!



FYI

sky kids

WATCH THE VIDEO

Find out more about life on Alderney by scanning the QR code.



Hughie's trip in snaps!



Hughie surprised pupils at St Anne's School, the only school on Alderney



Having a game of footie with kids on the island!



Filming on the beach



FEATURE ON THE SHOW!

Want to be in an episode of *FYI*? Just ask your teacher to set up a *First News FYI News Club* at your school by heading to first.news/FYInewsclub to find out more.



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



PUGSLEY'S TERRIFIC TAIL!

A MAINE coon cat from Minnesota, USA, has set a Guinness World Record for the longest tail on a living domestic cat, measuring 18.5 inches (47cm).

Two-year-old Mr Pugsley Addams – named after a character from the *Addams Family* movies – beat the

previous record after his unusually swishy tail caught the attention of his vet during check-ups.

Owner Amanda Cameron and her children say he can also perform tricks such as sitting on command and playing fetch.

Guinness World Records

Creme egg thief caught



The proceeds of the eggs-traordinary crime

A 26-YEAR-OLD man has been banned from the whole of Cambridgeshire for three months after stealing £220 worth of Cadbury Creme Eggs from a Tesco Express in Peterborough.

Deon De Groot stuffed a large number of the Easter treats into a duffel bag at the store in Dogsthorpe. Security staff spotted a passing police car and flagged down officers, who found chocolate eggs hidden in his jacket and a nearby dropped bag.

He received a 12-week suspended prison sentence and cannot enter the county for three months.

Donkey lured with mints

POLICE officers used mints to recapture an escaped donkey that was causing traffic disruption in the West Midlands.

The animal, nicknamed Ned by officers, was discovered wandering around the Beechdale estate in Bloxwich. Ned was already known to local officers.

Sergeant Chris Beards said: "He's a cheeky one and had escaped from his field before. He was causing a nuisance on the roads for motorists so my officers had to find him and take him back to his field."

He added: "He loves mints and once he had chomped down on one he was braying for more and was happy to come back with us."

Officers secured the fence before leaving so Ned couldn't escape again.

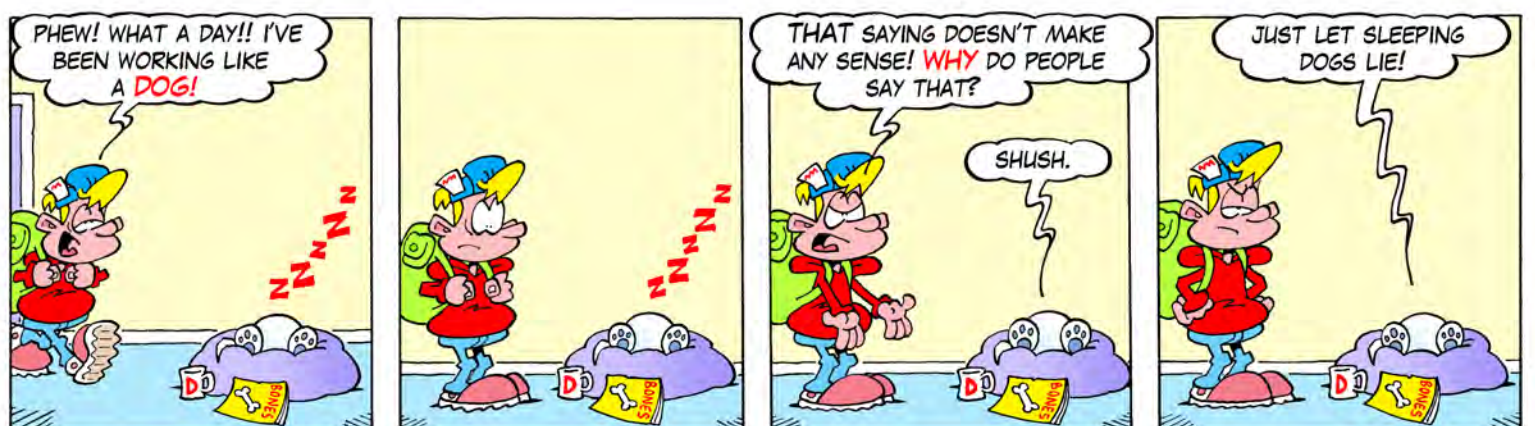


Instagram: West Midlands Police

Ned: eeyore-to know better



Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer

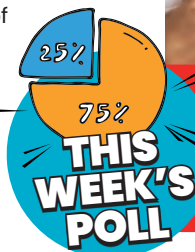




ITALY

Politician says babies should get mum's surname

A politician in Italy wants to change the law so that babies are given their mum's surname, rather than their dad's. Dario Franceschini said that the tradition of babies being given their dad's surname was a "cultural source" of gender inequality (unfairness), and that stopping it would end a "centuries-old injustice". Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini mocked the idea, saying: "Let's erase these dads from the face of the Earth, that way we'll solve all the problems." Babies usually get their dad's surname in the UK, too. In other countries, like Spain and Portugal, it's common for babies to be given both their mum and dad's surname, but their dad's name usually comes first.



Should babies be given their mum's surname or their dad's surname?

Vote at first.news/polls



NORWAY

Historic rocket launch crashes after 30 seconds

The first space rocket launch from mainland Europe outside of Russia spluttered and crashed just 30 seconds into its flight. The Spectrum rocket was built by German company Isar Aerospace. It took off from a spaceport in Norway last Sunday (30 March) before flipping over and exploding in the Norwegian Sea. However, Daniel Metzler, the CEO of Isar Aerospace, called the launch a "great success", because it was just a test flight, and the company collected the data that it wanted to.



Daniel Metzler



USA

Trump fumes at State Capitol portrait

A painting of Donald Trump that was hung in Colorado's State Capitol building in Denver has been taken down after it was criticised by the US president. The painting had been on display in the building's rotunda, a room filled with portraits of other US presidents, since 2019. It was created by British artist Sarah Boardman. Mr Trump suggested that Boardman had made him look bad on purpose. He said that her painting of Barack Obama was "wonderful", but "the one of me is truly the worst". His party, the Republicans, originally raised \$10,000 (£7,700) to have the oil painting made. However, Mr Trump said that Boardman, aged 63, "must have lost her talent as she got older", and claimed that lots of people in Colorado were



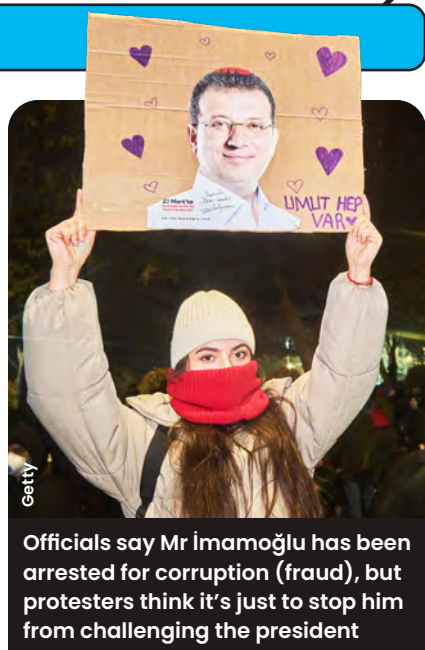
"angry" about the painting. Last month, Mr Trump was gifted a new portrait by Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin. A member of Mr Trump's staff told Fox News that the president was "touched" by the gift and thought it was "beautiful".



TURKEY

Riots over arrest of president's rival

Police have arrested more than 1,000 people after riots across Turkey. Protests broke out following the arrest of the mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu. He's the main challenger for the presidency, with the country's next election due in 2028. The president now, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has been in power for 22 years. Police have used tear gas and water cannon against protesters, while the government is trying to control the flow of information. Nine out of ten media outlets in Turkey are under government control, and there are reports of journalists being arrested for not reporting the news that the government wants it to. Hundreds of people's social media accounts have been blocked, too.



Officials say Mr İmamoğlu has been arrested for corruption (fraud), but protesters think it's just to stop him from challenging the president



SOUTH AFRICA

Boy loses arm in croc attack

A seven-year-old boy lost his arm after being bitten by a crocodile on a family fishing trip. Johandre Blom was playing in shallow water at the Roodekoppies Dam near Pretoria when the croc attacked. His friend Dylan, aged nine, grabbed Johandre's other arm and shouted for help, and their dads pulled both boys from the water. A fundraiser has been set up for one million rand (£42,000) to cover his hospital bills. The man who organised it, Juan van der Merwe, told *the Independent* newspaper: "A crocodile that size could kill an adult. It's a miracle he survived."



Nile crocodiles live in South Africa



EGYPT

Submarine tragedy kills six

Six Russian tourists died when a tourist submarine sank off the coast of a resort town on the Red Sea. Hurghada is a popular diving destination, with lots of coral reefs in its surrounding waters. A further 39 people who were on board the sub were rescued safely in the incident on 27 March. Investigators are yet to figure out what caused the submarine to sink. In November, another tourist boat sank in the Red Sea after it was hit by a wave, killing 11 people. At the time, UK investigators warned that they had “serious concerns” about the safety of tourist vessels in the area.



Hurghada, on the Red Sea



SOUTH KOREA

The country's disaster chief said the fires showed the “harsh reality” of the climate crisis

Korea suffers worst-ever wildfires

At least 27 people, mostly in their 60s and 70s, have been killed in the worst wildfires in South Korea's history. The blazes sparked into life on 21 March in the southeast of the country. Warm weather, strong winds and dry conditions helped them to spread for miles across several counties and cities. Pine forests also fed the flames. Gounsa Temple, a Buddhist temple that was built more than 1,300

years ago, was among more than 300 buildings that were destroyed. Officials moved 15 national treasures and artefacts out of the path of the fires to protect them, including paintings and a stone Buddha statue. Thousands of firefighters worked to bring the fires under control.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Facebook ban upsets people

Papua New Guinea says it's testing a ban on Facebook to limit the flow of fake news and misinformation. The government announced the sudden ban last week, but critics said that it harms human rights. Others said that press freedom is under threat in the country, and sites like Facebook had been a platform for freedom of speech. However, Police Minister Peter Tsiamalili Jr said that the government has a “responsibility to protect citizens from harmful content”. Facebook is the most popular social network in Papua New Guinea, with about 1.3 million users, and thousands of people rely on it to advertise their shops and businesses.



INDONESIA

New rules for naughty tourists

The Indonesian island of Bali has set out strict guidelines for foreigners to follow. Bali governor I Wayan Koster's rules include things like being well-behaved in shops and restaurants. Tourists aren't allowed to enter sacred temples “unless they are worshippers wearing traditional Balinese attire [clothing]”, and climbing or taking rude photos at sacred sites is banned. The governor is also clamping down on swearing, littering and single-use plastics, like plastic bags and straws. He said: “Bali is a beautiful, sacred island, and we expect our guests to show the same respect that we extend to them.” Last weekend, the island observed Nyepi, a sacred day of silence where everyone has to stay indoors for 24 hours.



AUSTRALIA

Pet dog survives for a year on Kangaroo Island

A dog that ran away from its owner while on holiday on a popular Australian tourist island has been spotted alive after 16 months. Valerie, a miniature dachshund with a pink collar, went missing on Kangaroo Island, near the city of Adelaide, in November 2023. Kangala Wildlife Rescue has helped to look for her. In a post on social media, it said: “She runs at the first sign of humans or vehicles and, despite the best efforts of dedicated island locals, Valerie has been impossible to catch.” Traps and cameras have been set up to lure her to safety. Valerie's owner, Georgia Gardner, told the *Guardian Australia* that her dog's survival skills were “incredible”.



Pokémon

TRADING CARD GAME



TRAINER'S POKÉMON BREAK INTO BATTLE!

WITH DEEP TRUST AND STEADY GUIDANCE, TRAINERS HELP BRING OUT THE BEST IN THEIR POKÉMON.

The bond they share empowers them to act as one in battle as they push their strength to the limit, including as Pokémon ex!

Team up with **Hop's Zacian ex**, **Lillie's Clefairy ex**, **N's Zoroark ex**, **Iono's Bellibolt ex** and more Trainer's Pokémon, and discover the unstoppable power of friendship in the Pokémon TCG: Scarlet & Violet – Journey Together expansion... **OUT NOW!**



This expansion contains ex cards and Illustration Rares featuring Trainers and their Pokémon partners!



BOOSTER PACKS



ELITE TRAINER BOX



Includes:

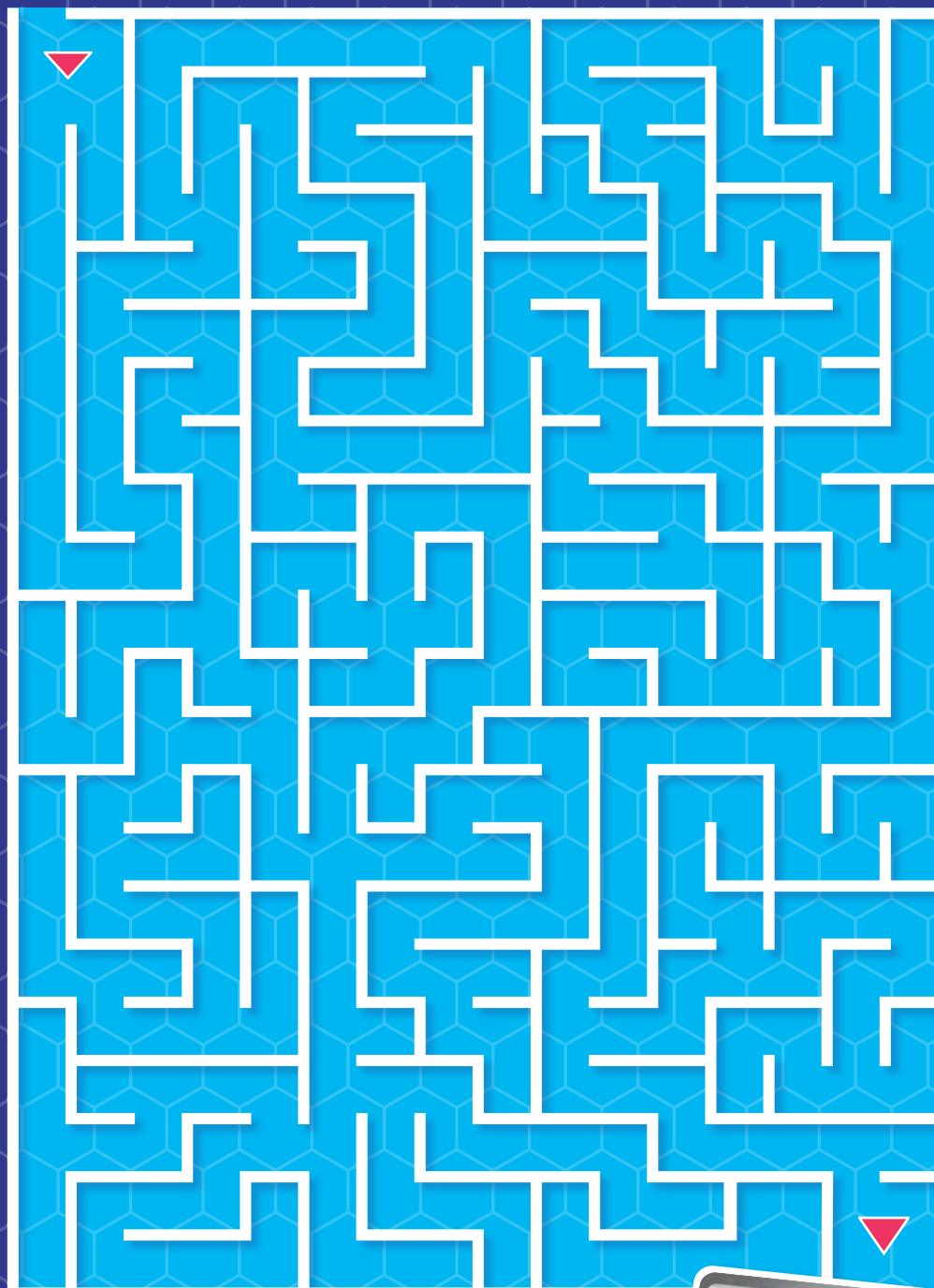
- 9 Pokémon TCG: Scarlet & Violet – Journey Together booster packs
- 1 full-art foil promo card featuring N's Zorua
- 65 card sleeves
- 45 Pokémon TCG Energy cards
- ...and so much more!



THE DREAM TEAM

START

Lillie and her Clefairy share an unbreakable bond – guide her Pokémon through the maze to stand them side-by-side, ready for their next battle!



FINISH



Pokémon Trading Card Game: Scarlet & Violet – Journey Together is available to buy now. Visit pokemoncenter.com/en-gb



@PokemonTCGUK |



@pokemontcgukofficial | #PokemonTCG

Please be aware of age restrictions on social media sites.



IN ANOTHER DIMENSION!

THE first ever big-screen, live-action adaptation of *Minecraft* has officially landed, just in time for the Easter holidays! We caught up with the megastar cast: Jason Momoa, Danielle Brooks, Sebastian Hansen and Emma Myers to get the lowdown on *A Minecraft Movie*.

● Hi everyone! Were you *Minecraft* game fans before the movie?

Jason: I never played videogames and I hadn't played *Minecraft*. But my character didn't need to know anything about it because he's stuck in the '80s, and he has a whole different game he's obsessed with. So, going into the *Minecraft* world, everything was completely new.

Danielle: I hadn't played it, but I tried it after and was not doing so well. On creative mode, for sure. But I plan on trying again!

Emma: Yes, I played the *Pocket Edition* on my phone a lot with my friends, and we'd sit and build stuff together.

Sebastian: I also played a lot when I was younger. Especially during Covid.

● Jason, can you tell us more about your character, Garrett?

Well, he's called 'the Garbage Man' because it's a signature move that he did in this game called *Hunk City Rampage*. Garrett was a world champion in 1989, and I think he's just really stayed in that year and never moved past it. He doesn't have many friends and he's stuck in his ways. So it's really beautiful when he comes into this *Minecraft* world, and love and friendship grow.

● Danielle, what was your favourite moment from behind the scenes?

I loved watching Jack Black [who plays Steve] sing: "La-la-la-lava,

First News' Safiyyah with Jason Momoa!

ch-ch-ch-chicken!" I think that was really funny and such a great moment.

● Emma and Sebastian, if you could bring back any item from the *Minecraft* world, what would it be?

Emma: I'd bring the mine carts and the tracks. That seems like a more fun mode of transportation than a car.

Sebastian: I'd say the same. But also elytra wings to just fly around.

● Lastly, Jason, what would your own *Minecraft* world look like?

I'd build some motorcycles, ride through all these beautiful lands, and check out everybody's different worlds.

A Minecraft Movie is in cinemas now!

DID YOU KNOW?

THE film follows four misfits who get sucked into a portal that pulls them into the Overworld. Luckily, master crafter Steve is there to help them on their journey!

WHAT'S HOT

FYI

● BAFTA TV nominations announced

The nominations for this year's BAFTA TV Awards are in, and our partner Sky Kids' show *FYI* is in the running! *FYI Investigates: Disability and Me* is up for best children's non-scripted show, alongside *Operation Ouch!* and *BooShoo!* Meanwhile, *Horrible Histories* is nominated for best children's scripted show and Ant and Dec are up for best entertainment performance.

● Theatre stars to be honoured

Stars of the stage will head to the Royal Albert Hall for the Olivier Awards on 6 April. The awards celebrate the best of London theatre, with shows such as *Starlight Express* and *Ballet Shoes* up for gongs.



Starlight Express



● *Dancing On Ice* gets the chop!

ITV has confirmed that *Dancing On Ice* has been axed after 17 series. A spokesperson said: "*Dancing On Ice* will be rested in 2026 with no current plans for another series." Boo!

● Cast revealed for new Marvel movie

The cast for new Marvel movie *Avengers: Doomsday* has been unveiled – and all of our favourite superheroes are set to return! That includes fan favourites Chris Hemsworth (pictured) as Thor, Tom Hiddleston as Loki and Paul Rudd as Ant-Man. A whopping 27 superstar names were revealed, but Marvel has teased there could be more. The movie is set for release on 1 May 2026.



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PAC-MAN GOES BANANAS!



SEGA

Chomp to the finish!

IT'S bye-bye bananas and hello pellets, as Pac-Man is now available in *Super Monkey Ball: Banana Rumble*!

SEGA has introduced the chomping yellow character as a paid-for extra in the game, which sees up to 16 players compete in online levels to become Top Banana! However, the in-game bananas will transform into

Pac-Man's famous pellets, and the golden bananas will turn into power pellets to give the character a big boost against opponents.

The update marks 45 years since *Pac-Man* first took the world by storm. The game sold more than 100,000 units in its first year, way back in 1980.



New Nintendo app

NINTENDO has released a new mobile app for its most dedicated fans.

Nintendo Today! brings fans daily updates on games and upcoming events. It syncs these events to a themed calendar based on the user's favourite Nintendo icons, including Mario and Luigi (below)!



HE'S most famous for his skills on the football pitch, but how will Cristiano Ronaldo fare in the fighting arena?

The Portuguese superstar will be a playable character in *Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves* (PEGI 12), which is set to be released this month.

He won't be completely out of his depth, though. Wearing his signature No 7 shirt, he uses a beaming blue football to launch attacks on his opponents before performing his famous goal celebration.

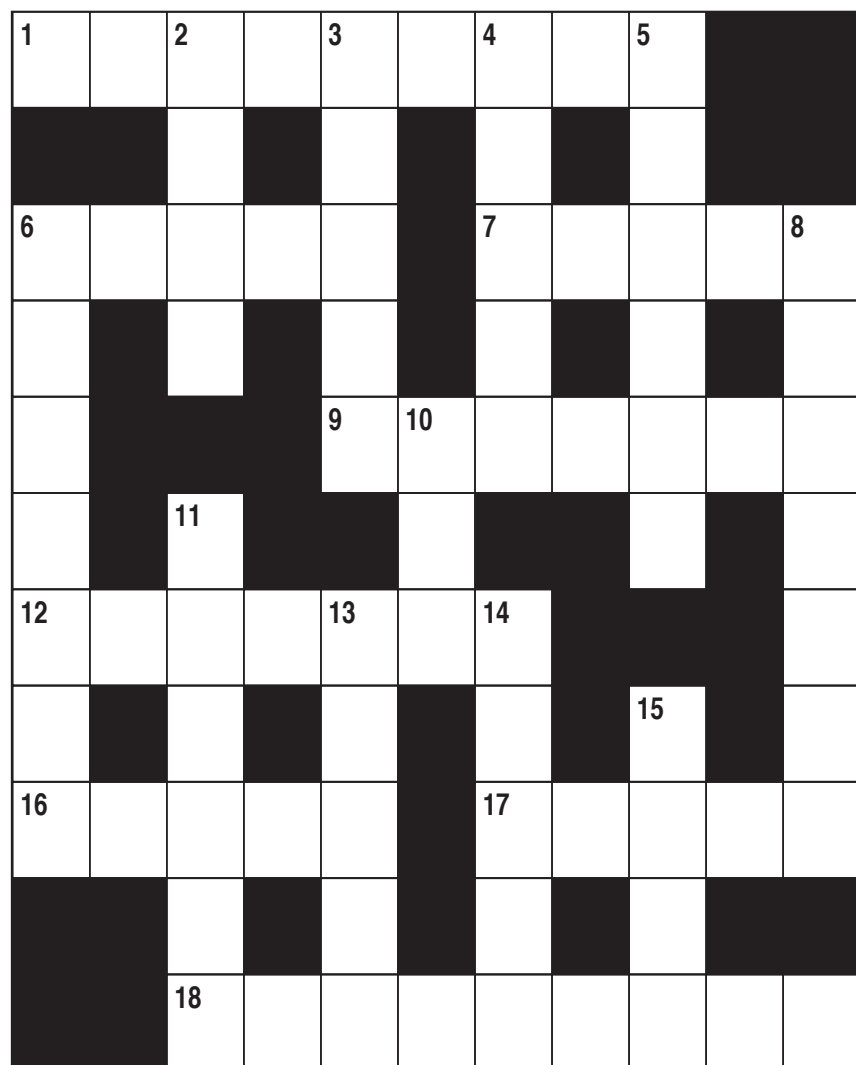
The game is developed by Japanese company SNK, which helped to make fighting games popular in the 1990s.

SNK



CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?

**ACROSS**

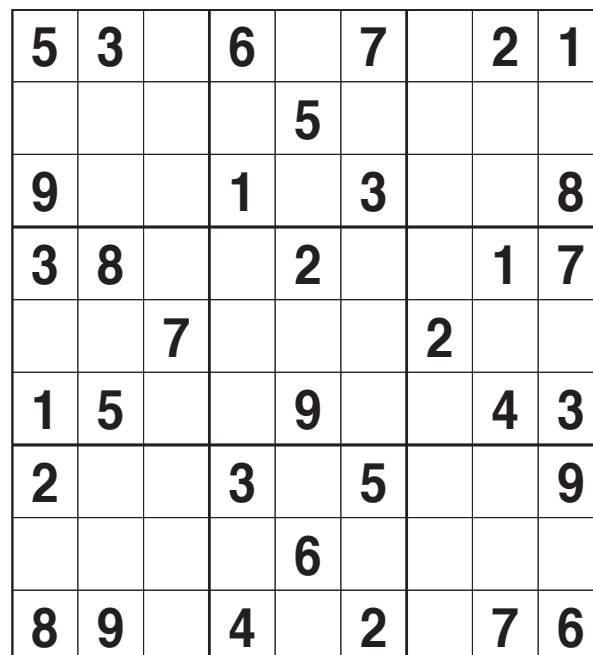
- 1) Pasta made in long, thin strings (9)
- 6) Not before (5)
- 7) A system for detecting the presence of aircraft (5)
- 9) The study of the past (7)
- 12) Feel distaste for (7)
- 16) Requires (5)
- 17) You put this sauce on a roast dinner (5)
- 18) TV show host (9)

DOWN

- 2) Small insects (4)
- 3) Severe or cruel (5)
- 4) Grows weary (5)
- 5) Opposite of outdoor (6)
- 6) Desert or stop supporting (7)
- 8) E.g. King Charles and Prince William (7)
- 10) A coloured fluid used for writing (3)
- 11) Not awake (6)
- 13) An important topic for discussion (5)
- 14) Golden _____ : bird of prey (5)
- 15) Ultimate (4)

Sudoku

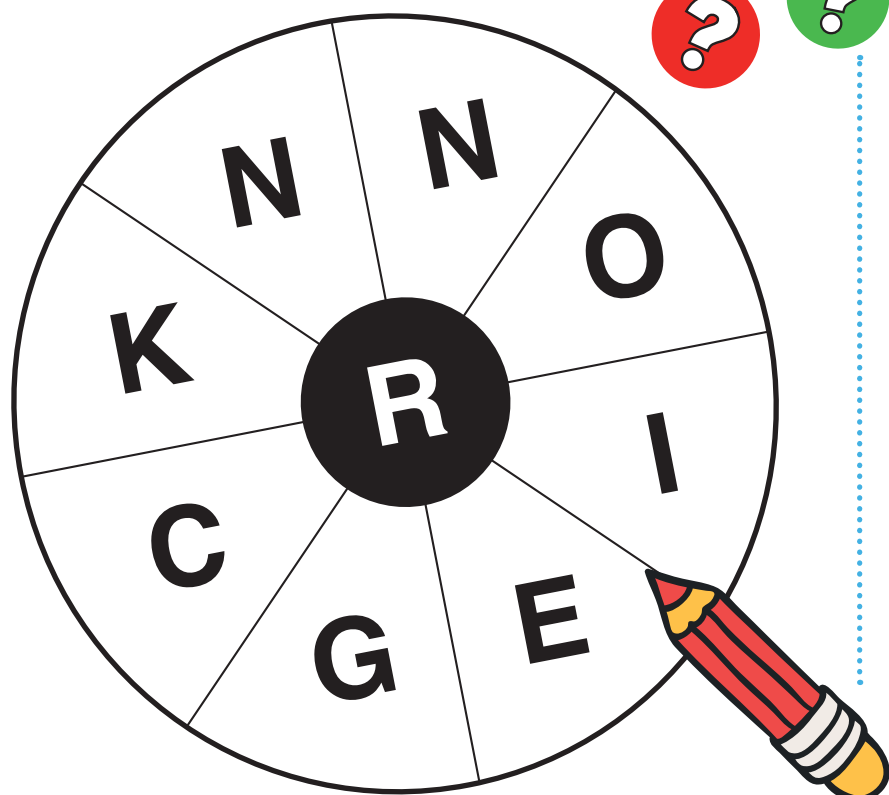
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?



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

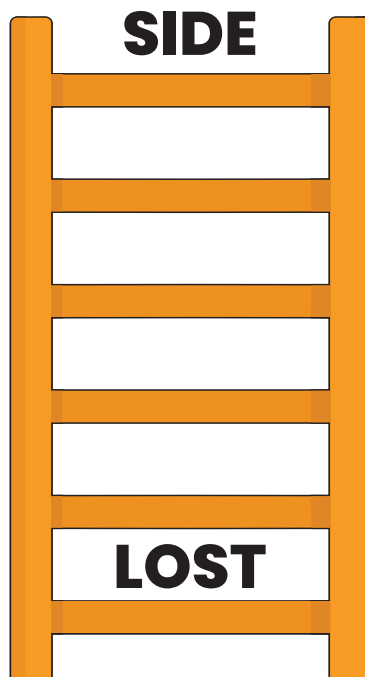
Word wheel

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?

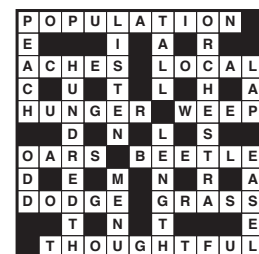


Word ladder

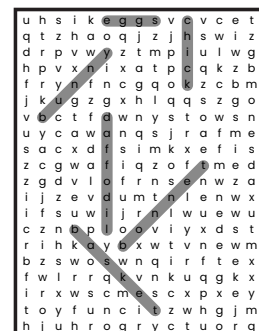
SEE if you can get from the top of the ladder to the bottom by changing one letter at a time to make a new word.

**ISSUE 980 ANSWERS:****Word wheel:** previewed.**Word ladder:** fast, cast, case, came, tame, time.**Spot the difference:** 1)

- Rabbit's nose has changed colour
- 2) Butterfly missing
- 3) Extra egg in basket
- 4) Cloud added
- 5) Extra butterfly on right
- 6) Spots added to orange egg
- 7) Bee on rabbit's paw
- 8) Eggshell on chick's head
- 9) End of rabbit's ear is missing
- 10) Rabbit's eye has moved.



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



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



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

CAN you find the ten changes we've made to this picnic scene?



Wordsearch

CAN you find all these words related to the theatre? Tick them off as you go!



- ☐ Curtains
- ☐ Lights
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Stage
- ☐ Costume
- ☐ Actors
- ☐ Dressing room
- ☐ Audience
- ☐ Programme
- ☐ Orchestra



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



STRONGER TOGETHER!

TO celebrate the launch of her new book, which empowers people with a disability, author Cathy Reay shares five top tips on how we can support our disabled friends.

by Cathy Reay

HEY! Are you disabled, or do you have any disabled friends at school, or at clubs that you go to?

Chances are your answer is yes – loads of kids are disabled. Some have disabilities that are obvious to others, some have those you might not know much about.

Just as with our non-disabled friends, it's important we support our disabled mates (especially when grown-ups are just a little bit clueless on how to help!). Here's how...

● Educate yourself!

Keep up to date with events in the news that affect disabled people and learn about the history of the disability rights movement in the UK. Borrow some books about disability (like my one!) from your local library, and do some research online. The more you know, the more you'll feel ready to speak to others about disability issues.

● Connect with disabled people your age

We all have different experiences and issues to share.

Activism isn't about being the 'hero' of a community, and it's not a good idea to try to speak on behalf of anyone else. Activism is about working together with others to create real change. We need all the help we can get!

● Speak up!

Whether that's in the classroom or at home, sharing your thoughts and educating others on disability can be powerful in creating change. We're stronger together.

● Support your friends to get their access needs met

Access needs are the things disabled people need in order to do something, like a lift to get into a building. Find out if your friends need any access needs met, and how they'd like you to support them in achieving that.

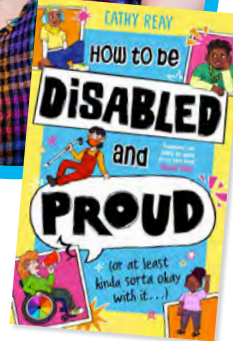
● Remember: every action counts

You don't have to be a hero, you don't even need to spend lots of time on this. Taking genuine care and interest in helping to squash barriers that disabled people face is amazing. The disabled community is lucky to have you!

How To Be Disabled And Proud is out now.



Alexa Loy



Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



It's time to read!

WE don't know about you, but *First News* is delighted that British Summer Time is here! A summer of longer days lie ahead, with the sun lighting up the pages of books like these five, all on the topic of time!



The Clockwork Conspiracy by Sam Sedgman

Aspiring inventor Isaac hunts for clues throughout London landmarks to solve a sinister plot and save his missing father – and save time itself!



The Book of Time by Clive Gifford, illustrated by Teo Georgiev

What even is time? Amaze your family and friends with fascinating facts about time, and see the universe in a whole new way.



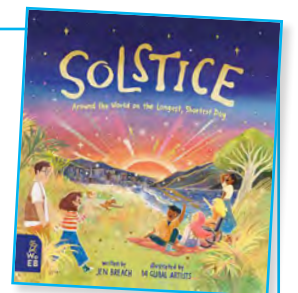
Time Runs Like A River by Emma Carlisle

Sometimes time rushes by, sometimes it seems to stand still... this book takes you for a river stroll to appreciate the rhythm of life.



Solstice: Around The World On The Longest, Shortest Day by Jen Breach

Journey across the world and discover the festivals for the upcoming June solstice, celebrating either the longest or shortest day of the year.



Time Travelling With A Tortoise by Ross Welford

Al Chaudhury gets tangled up in a rescue mission to recover his friend stuck in a prehistoric dimension. Turns out time travel is pretty complicated!

Meet the author

Eve Wersocki-Morris, author of *Clem Fatale Has Been Betrayed*

● What were you like as a kid?

Always daydreaming and drawing! Very competitive and confident. My favourite subject was drama.

● What's your best-ever memory?

Camping in the Lake District with family friends – in particular, the day we sailed to Bird Poo Island!

● What do you do outside of writing?

Doodle pictures on Post-its, and ballet.

● Tell us a cool fact about yourself!

I am very good at remembering song lyrics and quotes from films – I could do a one-woman performance of *The Incredibles*.

● If you had a million pounds, what's the first thing you'd buy?

I would panic and probably buy 50 packets of very expensive truffle-flavoured crisps!



● Can you describe your book in three words?

Gangsters. Comedy. Thriller.

● Tell us about the main character, Clem Fatale.

Clem is the youngest gangster in London Town, 1951. She's the daughter of a notorious jewel thief, Jimmy Fatale, leader of the Spider gang. Clem's tough as nails and she'll do anything for people she loves.

● What's one bit that readers should look out for?

The Havana nightclub heist! I wish I could break in to a fancy-pants 1950s nightclub and cause a rumpus!

● What was the hardest part of writing it?

It's got a very twisty mystery and I got very tangled up making all the clues fit!

Clem Fatale Has Been Betrayed is out now.



READER REVIEW

Geronimo Stilton: Lost in Time by Elisabetta Dami

THIS is the fourth book, and my favourite, of an eight-book series called *Journey Through Time*.

The main character, a mouse named Geronimo Stilton, goes on an adventure through time with his family and friends to find his friend, Professor Paws von Volt.

During his journey, with his time machine called 'the tail transporter', he goes to Cleopatra's time, Genghis Khan's time and Queen Elizabeth I's time.

I really enjoyed reading this book because it was really fun to read, but it also gave me the opportunity to learn lots of interesting facts about these different times and people in history. I'd highly recommend it!

Review by Ralph Arda Meric





XTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

WHAT is dyslexia? We asked Kate Griggs, author of *Xtraordinary People* and founder of global charity Made By Dyslexia, this very question – and why it's her mission to empower dyslexic thinking in every home, workplace and school.

What is dyslexic thinking?

It's an approach to problem solving, assessing information and learning used by people with dyslexia. It involves pattern recognition, spatial reasoning [how objects can move], lateral thinking [looking at problems from different angles] and interpersonal communication [how people talk or write to each other]. Dyslexic thinking is now a noun in the dictionary, officially recognised as a creative, innovative and valuable way to think.

What are the seven types of dyslexic thinking skills in children?

There are seven dyslexic thinking examples in children. Most people with dyslexia are a combination of a few of these examples, rarely all! These are:

- **Storytellers** – they invent stories and are great at persuading people and explaining things.
- **Makers** – they build amazing creations and enjoy drawing and painting.
- **Entertainers** – they sing, play musical instruments, dance and make people laugh.
- **Movers** – they are always on the move, happiest doing exercise and love sport.
- **Imaginors** – they're fantastic daydreamers, love making up games and inventing new things.

Famous faces with dyslexia

Some of the world's most brilliant people have been, or are, dyslexic. From inventors to world-famous scientists, physicists, film directors, artists, musicians, actors, designers, sports stars and chefs, the list really does go on and on! Among this group of people who have changed the world are inventors like Thomas Edison, who perfected the light bulb back in 1879; Henry Ford, who made cars accessible to all; and Steve Jobs, who founded the technology company Apple. There's also American film-maker Steven Spielberg, who created some of the biggest ever blockbuster films, including *Jurassic Park* and *ET*; and two stars from the hugely successful movie series *Pirates of the Caribbean* – Orlando Bloom and Keira Knightley!



Kate Griggs

What is dyslexia?

"Dyslexia is a 'learning difference'," says Kate. "While people with dyslexia may experience challenges with reading and spelling, we have strengths in creativity, problem-solving and communication."

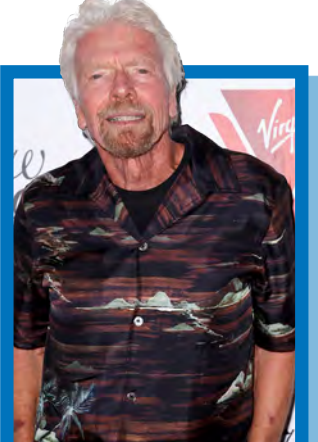
- **Questioners** – they ask things like 'What if?' and 'Why not?'
- **'People' people** – they are good at understanding how people feel and cheering friends up.



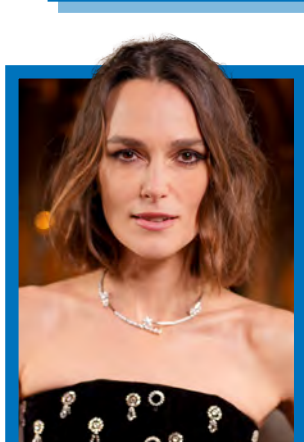
Steve Jobs helped to create iPads!



Space scientist Maggie Aderin-Pocock says her dyslexia helps her "think outside the planet"

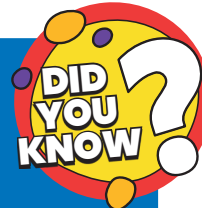


Founder of Virgin Richard Branson calls dyslexia his "superpower"



Actor Keira Knightley

WHILE many dyslexics will struggle with spelling and grammar, their dyslexic thinking skills mean they can be brilliant writers. Dav Pilkey and Liz Pichon have both spoken about their dyslexia.



ONE in five people have dyslexia – it is the most common neurodiversity.



I'M 11 and proud to be a dyslexic thinker!

When I was diagnosed aged six, I got a book called *Xtraordinary People: Made By Dyslexia* by Kate Griggs. It showed me that dyslexia isn't a problem, it's a superpower! But not every kid gets that message, so I decided to change that.

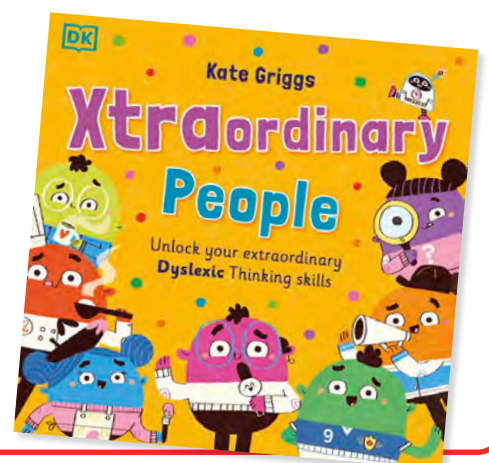
I walked 10km along the River Thames and held a fun event in my local park to raise money. I got people hunting for hidden pictures in Magic Eye puzzles, guessing how many cookies were in a jar (winner took all!), and selling cupcakes. No boring, straight-line thinking – just fun, out-the-box challenges, just like how dyslexic minds work!

Thanks to everyone's support, I raised enough money to donate *Xtraordinary People* to all 48 schools in Richmond upon Thames. Now more kids will know that thinking differently is actually pretty amazing!

WHAT IS MADE BY DYSLEXIA?

MADE By Dyslexia is a global charity led by successful dyslexics. It is the world's largest community of dyslexic people and their allies, with a mission to teach the world the brilliance of dyslexic thinking. Made By Dyslexia is aligned with the UN Sustainable Goals, so aims to achieve this by 2030.

Xtraordinary People by Kate Griggs is out now (Dorling Kindersley, £7.99) available in bookshops and online. See geni.us/xtraordinarypeople.





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

This week we have two reports from children who have been finding out what it's like to work in jobs in the construction and car industries! It's always interesting to hear what you want to be when you grow up. When I was younger I wanted to be a teacher and a pop star! Check out what some of you said below in our poll!

THIS WEEK'S POLL!

We asked you:

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM JOB?

Here's what you said:

Footballer
 Astronomer
 Author
 Illustrator
 Dance choreographer
 Historian
 Inventor
 Scientist
 Hockey player
 Actor
 Journalist
 Olympic dressage rider
 Lawyer
 Fashion designer
 Trauma surgeon

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

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

LEARNING ABOUT DIFFERENT JOBS



Construction



EVER wondered what it's like to work in the construction (building) industry? Parker got to find out!

by Parker

I visited Manchester City's Etihad Stadium during Open Doors Week 2025, which aims to get kids into construction. The North Stand is being made bigger so that the stadium can hold a total of 60,000 fans.

I was really interested to see what it is like to work on a construction site! I got to watch from a viewing platform while a huge steel beam was lifted into place for the roof. I also got to try on some of the personal protective equipment (PPE) that construction workers wear.

Open Doors is run by Build UK to show people the types of jobs



Parker headed to Man City's stadium to find out how it's being made bigger

you can get in construction. The construction industry builds the world around us and includes all types of buildings, such as houses, schools, hospitals and even roads. Imagine a world without any of those things – it would be nothing! I learnt that you don't have to be on site to work in construction because there are lots of other roles, such as architects, engineers and quantity surveyors. I think it would be interesting to be a quantity surveyor, as they manage the money on a project.

To see what working in construction would be like, we had a LEGO challenge where we had to build a 30-storey tower within a £150 million budget. The other team's tower was voted the best looking, but my team made the most profit! That's what construction is about – working as a team to build something amazing within a budget.

Building cars

A GROUP of pupils headed to Sunderland to learn about what it takes to make a car. Here's how they got on!

by Grace McCluskey, Lucy Whitelaw, Lucy Newbrook, Esme Nicholson-Toward and Lucas Brown

The tenth Nissan Skills Foundation anniversary trip was an honour to attend. As well as having great fun dancing along to *Macarena*, we had the opportunity to collaboratively build replica Qashqai cars out of LEGO, each taking on a different role.

The chance to go into the factory was amazing but the fact we built mini LEGO cars was just unreal. While we were there, we had a front-row experience of real cars being made on the factory floor. Above us, there was a giant claw machine that picked up cars (without wheels) and placed them on the conveyor belt for the next part of the process!

It was such a memorable experience. We were inspired to work hard and were shown the importance of working as a team. It showed us that STEM [science, technology, engineering and maths] careers are for everyone, and that women can be just as successful in this field as men.



Junior journalists at the Nissan car factory!



NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Haberdashers' Adams, St Christopher's The Hall School, Hargate Primary School, Outwood Academy Haydock and Roecliffe Church of England Primary School!



Improving nutrition across the world

SUNISCHITA attended the Nutrition for Growth summit in France. Nutrition is all about the food we eat and how it helps our bodies and minds to stay healthy, so it's really important that we improve nutrition for everyone across the world, especially for those in poorer countries. This meeting aims to do just that!

by Sunischita, aged 16

I am Sunischita, from Nepal in Asia. I recently went along with other children and young people to the Nutrition for Growth summit in Paris.

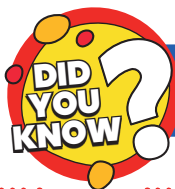
The summit was a fantastic opportunity to share our opinions and voices with many leaders. I felt honoured to represent children's voices from Asia and the whole world.

Bringing children's voices to the summit was a big responsibility that I took seriously, because children worldwide have many problems around malnutrition [a lack of proper nutrition] and hunger, and children's perspectives are not always heard. That is why being invited to the summit was very important for me – because my role was to talk from children's experiences so that leaders see the challenges from children's eyes, especially



Sunischita

the issue of gender inequality and discrimination around access to nutritious food, where men and women are treated unequally.



AROUND 181 million children worldwide (one in four) experience food poverty.

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

Step into Ancient Egypt: Tutankhamun exhibition brings history to life!

YOU might have learnt about the Ancient Egyptians in school. It's a fascinating time in history! News Club members Vicente and Catarina went to check out a new exhibition in London to learn all about it.

by Vicente and Catarina

We went to Tutankhamun: The Immersive Exhibition in London. It had many interesting exhibits, including replicas of famous artefacts like King Tutankhamun's mask, his coffin and his throne, copies of detailed drawings by Howard Carter [the famous archaeologist who found Tutankhamun's tomb] and some genuine artefacts, like a headrest.

There were also interactive experiences. Our favourite was the VR [virtual reality] room where you could visit the Valley of the Kings and the boy king's [Tutankhamun's] tomb; a cool immersive room that explained the Egyptian belief of the afterlife and the world's creation; and a holograph display that helped us learn more about mummification [preserving the bodies of dead people].

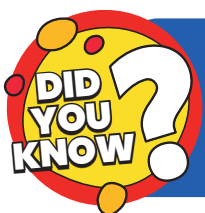
The exhibition had billboards explaining several things about the king, his tomb and its discovery. We read them all and they were fascinating.

At the end of our visit, we had the chance to take a picture as a pharaoh [an Ancient Egyptian king]. You go into a booth and take a photo, then AI puts your face onto a picture of a pharaoh. We found the results funny as the AI often made a mistake!

We really enjoyed the exhibition and recommend it to anyone who likes Ancient Egypt.



Enjoying the exhibition



TUTANKHAMUN became king at just nine years old, which is why he is known as the boy king. Can you imagine becoming king that young?



FirstNews Quiz

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

1 Which climate group has said it will stop its disruptive demonstrations at the end of April?

2 What did police officers use to recapture an escaped donkey in the West Midlands?



3 Soccer Aid for UNICEF player Livi Sheldon is also known as who from *Gladiators* – Fire, Fury or Diamond?



4 Which Portuguese football star features in a new fighting game?

5 Who fumed at the painting of them that was hung in Colorado's State Capitol building?

6 A seven-year-old boy lost his arm in South Africa after being bitten by what reptile?



7 Which ITV show has been axed after 17 series?



8 What sea does the tiny island of Alderney lie in?

9 What is the name of the popular cycling scheme coming to Cardiff this week?

10 Which wildlife presenter has warned about the threats of sewage to people and wildlife?



11 What has finally been taken down in Guiseley?

12 Which social media site is Papua New Guinea banning?

13 Who won the Women's Six Nations match between Wales and England?



14 Which Southeast Asian country has been hit by a massive earthquake?

15 Which Formula 1 team has ditched driver Liam Lawson after just two races?

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 and on the *First News* app!



Answers:
1 Just Stop Oil 2 Mints 3 Diamond 4 Cristiano Ronaldo 5 Donald Trump 6 Crocodile 7 *Dancing On Ice* 8 The English Channel 9 Bike Bus 10 Steve Backshall 11 A Christmas tree 12 Facebook 13 England 14 Myanmar 15 Red Bull.

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All images: Getty

LILAH Fear and Lewis Gibson have won Britain's first medal at the World Figure Skating Championships for 41 years.

Their free dance routine to a Beyoncé medley helped them pick up bronze in the ice dance category.

"I can't even describe my feelings, I'm still shaking," said Fear. "I'm in disbelief."

The last time GB won a world medal was in 1984, when Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean, from *Dancing On Ice*, won the last of their world titles. They won four gold medals in a row from 1981-1984 and also bagged the Olympic title in 1984.

Fear and Gibson will now be hoping to make the podium at the Winter Olympics in Italy in February.



Abi Burton scores England's final try

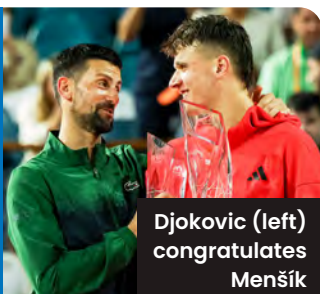
There was good news and bad news for Wales at the weekend. The good news was their match in the Women's Six Nations saw a record attendance for a Welsh women's sporting event in Wales, with 21,186 fans at the Principality Stadium. The bad news was that England racked up 11 tries in a 67-12 victory, including a nine-minute hat-trick for Ellie Kildunne.

THERE were cheers for the two tries scored by England's Abi Burton on her Test debut, as she's had a tough journey to get there. In 2022, she spent nearly four weeks in a coma in hospital after a disease called autoimmune encephalitis attacked her brain and changed her behaviour.

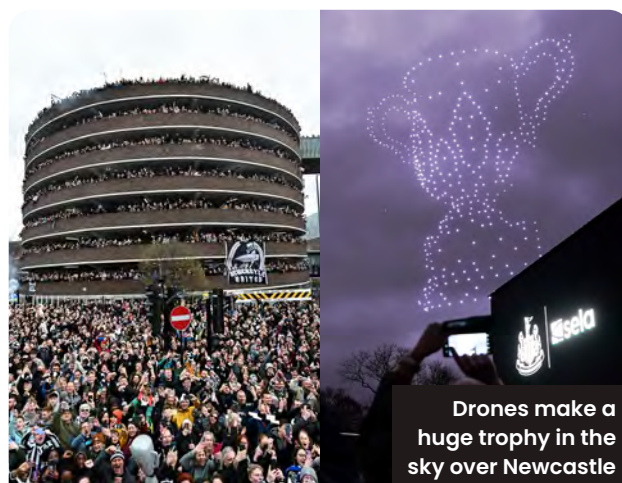


Brazil have sacked Dorival Júnior, the coach of the men's football team, after an embarrassing 4-1 away defeat against Argentina. It's Brazil's worst ever defeat in World Cup qualifying – and Argentina did it without Lionel Messi in the team!

Czech teenager Jakub Menšík, 19, claimed his first ATP Tour title by beating the legendary Novak Djokovic in the final of the Miami Open. The Czech star was just ten months old when Djokovic won his first title in 2006!



Djokovic (left) congratulates Menšík



Drones make a huge trophy in the sky over Newcastle



Judging by these pictures, there can't have been many people in Newcastle who didn't come out for the team's trophy parade after their win in the League Cup final. And of course Ant and Dec were there to get in on the action!

Braydon's on the ball



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

The quarter-finals of the FA Cup delivered the main talking points of the weekend. The action began at Craven Cottage, where Palace stunned Fulham with goals from Eberechi Eze, Ismaila Sarr and Eddie Nketiah to take the Eagles to Wembley.

They were followed by Forest, who continued their incredible season with success in a shoot-out at Brighton. Matz Sels was their hero when he saved Jack Hinshelwood and Diego Gómez's spot-kicks after the match had finished goalless. His saves made the difference to take Forest into the semi-finals for the first time since 1991.

On Sunday, Marcus Rashford broke his four-month goal drought in Aston Villa's comfortable 3-0 win at Preston. Over 22,000 packed into Deepdale, but their hopes of a dream trip to Wembley were crushed by a Villa side hoping to lift the cup in a competition that they last won in 1957. Villa are looking strong and will be aiming to finally put a trophy in the cabinet.



Rashford bagged two goals in five minutes

The final tie came at Bournemouth, who hosted Man City at the Vitality Stadium. Erling Haaland wasted an early penalty before Evanilson's scrambled 21st-minute finish put the Cherries ahead at half-time. With City looking to keep their unpredictable season alive, second-half goals from Haaland and Omar Marmoush took City to their seventh FA Cup semi-final in a row, in an impressive run stretching back to 2019.

The draw for the last four sees Forest facing City and Palace up against Villa for a place in the final in May. City may be the favourites, but Villa are in good form and all four will be optimistic.

In the Championship, the promotion battle enters the final stages with just two points separating the top three teams. Only two will go up automatically, so one of Sheffield United, Leeds or Burnley will be left disappointed and fighting in the play-offs. The Blades sit in first place following their 3-1 win over Coventry, but there's still so much to play for. United have to travel to Burnley in their third-from-last game, in what could be a season-defining match.

Braydon's Team of The Week: Crystal Palace. A storming win in a tough away tie, and five wins on the bounce for them.

Braydon's Player of The Week: Marcus Rashford, firing Villa to Wembley.

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

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