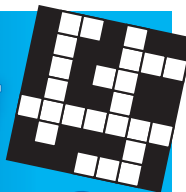


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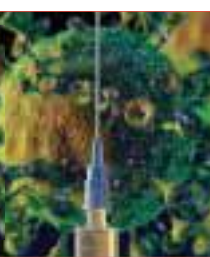
**BIG CAT
ALERT!**
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**PREVENTING
PANDEMICS**
OUR Q&A
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FirstNews

Issue 760 £2.25 8 – 14 January 2021

**HELPING
THE UK GROW**



NEWS | SPORTS | ENTERTAINMENT | INTERVIEWS | PUZZLES | COMPETITIONS

POO POO TRAIN



TRAINS powered by human poo and food waste could be coming to a platform near you soon...

by editor in chief Nicky Cox

The BioUltra train is being developed to replace dirty diesel engines, to help cut air pollution and greenhouse gases. Diesel trains are set to be banned by the Government from 2040, so more green technologies are needed.

Beverley Nielsen, Chair of Ultra Light Rail Partners, the developers of the BioUltra train, told *First News*: "I'm really aware of how little time we have to tackle climate change and want to help make a real difference."

The challenge Councillor Nielsen and her team of experts faced was how to find a way to power trains that wouldn't take too much energy to produce and wouldn't pollute the world through carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions.

CLlr Nielsen explained: "Biomethane is very good as a

solution. It's produced from organic waste – animal, human, crop, food – and by using it we prevent very harmful methane emissions, which are up to 34 times more damaging as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide."

Only 3% of the 90 million tonnes of animal manure produced each year in the UK is processed. So there is no shortage of poo to make the biomethane.

The plan is for the BioUltra train to run in urban and rural places, creating public transport that is clean, affordable and safe. And, with an eye on the coronavirus pandemic, CLlr Nielsen added: "We've also tried to make sure it will keep our passengers from getting COVID or other viruses with a clever air filtration system."

The new train is due to go into production over the coming year.

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

SCHOOLS are closed in England and exams have been cancelled as part of a new coronavirus lockdown expected to last well into February.



Once again, most of you will be learning at home with only a small number of pupils at school, such as the children of key workers.

Scotland has also put out a stay at home order and joined Wales in closing classrooms for most pupils. Schoolchildren in Northern Ireland will also be learning at home.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said all the new rules in England would last until at least the middle of February, as a more infectious variant of the virus spreads across the UK. But the PM did add that "we are getting closer to the end", with two different vaccines now being given out across the country. He said that, once enough people have been vaccinated, we will be able to relax the restrictions and start to live our lives more normally.

Turn to p5 to find out what lockdown means for you

GET ARTY

World leaders will come together in Glasgow this November for the UN COP26 Climate Change Conference. To mark the event, a nationwide art competition has been launched with the WWF – and you can take part! The Creative Earth competition allows you to showcase your vision for a greener, healthier and happier planet. Check out more at together-for-our-planet.ukcop26.org/creative-earth.



ARISE, SIR LEWIS

Lewis Hamilton has been given a knighthood in the Queen's New Year Honours list. The racing driver has been recognised for his sporting achievements, after scooping seven Formula 1 world titles. He was also named BBC Sports Personality of the Year in December last year.

OLDEST SIBLINGS

The D'Cruz family have been awarded a Guinness World Record for the highest combined age for living siblings. The 12 brothers and sisters range in age from 75 to 97 and their combined ages add up to an incredible 1,042 years. Despite their advanced years, the baby of the family, 75-year-old Genia, says all 12 of them are still in good health.

IT'S A HIT!



Music streaming continues to grow in popularity in the UK, with numbers up for the sixth year in a row. There were 139 billion audio streams in 2020, according to the British Phonographic Industry. Harry Styles (above), Lewis Capaldi and Dua Lipa had the most streamed or bought albums.

QUICK NEWS

TO READ YOURSELF AND SHARE WITH FRIENDS

FOOTY DOG ADOPTED

A stray dog who gatecrashed a Bolivian football match has been adopted by one of the players. Cachito, as fans named him, ran onto the pitch with a shoe in his mouth during the game between The Strongest and Nacional Potosí. Raúl Castro, a player for The Strongest who carried Cachito off the pitch, later said he would be adopting the cheeky pup.



BUTTER UP!

Residents in Pennsylvania, USA, are being urged to get creative and make their own slippery sculptures – out of butter! They can use up to five pounds (2.27kg) of the spreadable stuff, but must not use any food colouring or dye. The unusual competition is part of this year's virtual Pennsylvania Farm Show. What would you make?

CAMPING CHAMPION

A while ago, we told you about Max Woosey, who was sleeping outdoors in a tent to raise money for the hospice that looked after his friend and neighbour Rik, who died in February. Well, Max is still going strong! The 11-year-old has been camping outside since 29 March and hopes to do a full year. So far, he's raised more than £100,000 for North Devon Hospice. Incredible job, Max!

STRONGEST MAN

A man from Wiltshire has come second in the World's Strongest Disabled Man competition. Dave Walsh, who has multiple sclerosis, beat off competitors from across the world to take the runner-up spot. He's also the 2020 British champ. Dave said he felt great, just a little sore. Ouch!

PAP THAT PEBBLE!

Have you ever found an unusual stone or shell washed up on a beach? One Twitter user has been keeping his followers entertained by sharing bizarre pebble pictures. Poet Dean Wilson posts a "pebble of the day" from his daily beach walks, and plans to share 1,000 pictures. The photos have been getting thousands of likes!



YOUNG AUTHOR

Eight-year-old Milan Kumar has written his own book, after completing an epic reading challenge. Milan read 50 books in three months during last year's first lockdown, but he's now self-published his own story called *Covid Christmas Parade*. It's the tale of a young boy spreading festive joy during a pandemic. The money raised from book sales will go to the National Literacy Trust.

ELEPHANT RESCUE

CPR is an amazing thing to know how to do, as it can save someone's life if they stop breathing. It's normally done on humans but a Thai rescue worker used it to save a baby elephant that had been hit by a motorcycle. After watching a video clip to work out where the elephant's heart was, Mana Srivate pumped its chest and revived it! To find out how to perform CPR, visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/first-aid/cpr.



BRRRILIAN IDEA

A mountain road became a makeshift ski slope in Scotland over the holidays. The road in the Cairngorms was closed after heavy snowfall, which made it the perfect practice venue for a group of local skiing students from the Alpine Training Centre.

SWIMMING RECORD

A Danish swimmer has broken a world record by swimming 202 metres (662 feet) underwater with a single breath. Stig Severinsen said he wants to inspire children and raise awareness of protecting oceans and undersea life.

TERRIFIC TARDIS!

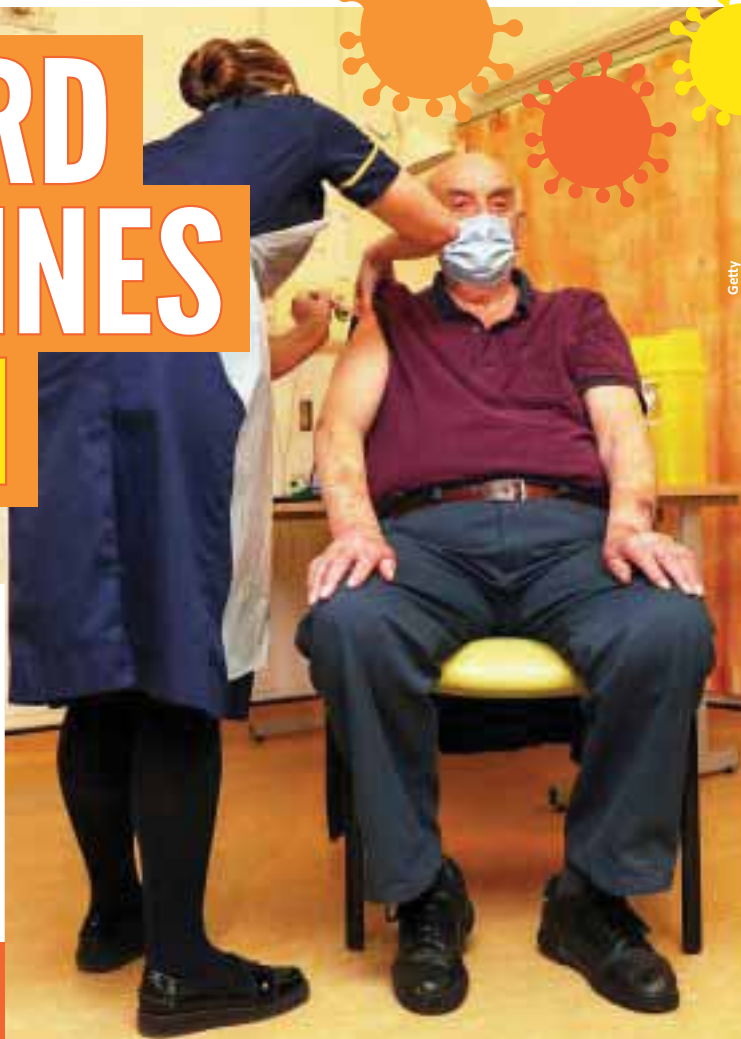
An eight-year-old Doctor Who fan had a surprise when his dad transformed his room into the TARDIS! Dad Phil Tucker recreated the awesome doorway for his son Luke. Mum Mandy shared pics on Twitter and it's been liked more than 150,000 times.



OXFORD VACCINES BEGIN



Margaret Keenan, 90 at the time, was the first person in the UK to receive the Pfizer jab, the first vaccine to be approved in the UK



Brian Pinker, 82, is the first person to receive the new Oxford vaccine

THE Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine started to be rolled out this week. It is the second vaccine to be approved for use in the UK, and there are more than half a million doses ready to be distributed among the country's health workers and the vulnerable.

The first person to receive the new Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine was 82-year-old Brian Pinker. Mr Pinker, who got his jab on 4 January, said he was proud the vaccine was developed in Oxford.

He added: "The nurses, doctors and staff today have all been brilliant and I can now really look forward to celebrating my 48th wedding anniversary with my wife Shirley later this year."

Boris Johnson has said that there will be a big increase in the number of vaccinations in the coming weeks.

The prime minister also said that there will be "tens of millions" of vaccine doses available by the end of March.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GRETA!

GRETA Thunberg turned 18 on Sunday 3 January.

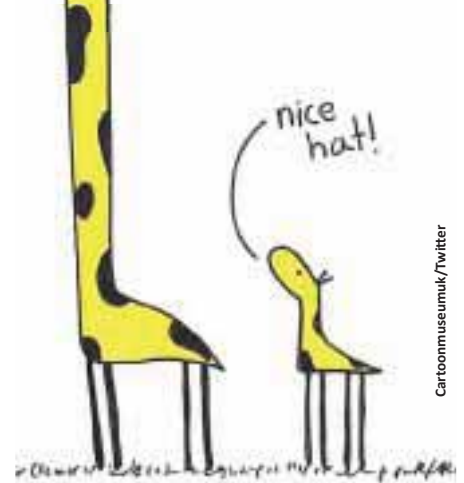
Officially now an adult, the climate activist thanked her fans on Twitter and made some jokey remarks aimed at her critics.

She tweeted: "Thank you so much for all the well-wishes on my 18th birthday!

"Tonight you will find me down at the local pub exposing all the dark secrets behind the climate and school strike conspiracy and my evil handlers who can no longer control me! I am free at last!!"



YOUNG CARTOONIST OF THE YEAR



Cartoonmuseumuk/Twitter

AN 11-year-old boy has won the Young Cartoonist of the Year under-18s award.

Daniel Meikle's winning cartoon shows a little giraffe looking at a big giraffe whose head is far out of sight. "Nice hat!" says the little giraffe.

Daniel said: "I like the enjoyment my cartoons give to people. It makes me happy, and it's a bit like writing – you can really tell a story." As well as winning £250, Daniel will have his cartoon displayed at The Cartoon Museum.

DOGS ARE FOR LIFE NOT JUST LOCKDOWN



Getty

HUNDREDS of puppies bought during 2020 are being sold or given to rescue centres now.

Since October, the Dogs Trust charity has received more than 1,800 calls from people looking to give up dogs under one year old. On 27 and 28 December alone, they had 114 calls. These 'lockdown puppies' are seen as impulse buys by people who were suddenly working from home during lockdown but didn't anticipate the time and effort it takes to look after a dog.

Adam Clowes from Dogs Trust wants to remind people that getting a dog is a 10 to 15-year commitment. He said: "All that initial lockdown excitement – 'We are never going to have to go into the office again, let's get a dog!' – we are now seeing the consequences of that."



Royal Mint

THE Royal Mint has released a set of commemorative coins for 2021, celebrating people and events from history. The coins will feature HG Wells, John Logie Baird and Sir Walter Scott, and there'll be a special coin to mark the 50th anniversary of Decimal Day (before then, a pound was 240 pence!). Another special coin to celebrate the Queen's 95th birthday will be worth £5.



NEW YORK, USA

PEOPLE watch the moon from the Edge observation deck, which is 100 storeys above the ground and has a glass floor!



Lorna Hughes

EDINBURGH, UK

KEEPERS at Edinburgh Zoo have shared a first-look image of the UK's only koala joey. The tiny joey, who was born on 26 June 2020, has been caught on camera for the first time peeking out of its mother's pouch. The joey will spend a few more months in the pouch before it is big enough to leave.



Getty

KASHMIR, INDIA

CLOTHES donated to the poor hang on the Wall of Kindness in Kashmir. Heavy snow in the region has led to the closure of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, the main road that connects Kashmir to the rest of India.



Getty

BAYINGOLIN, CHINA

THE Quadrantid meteor shower helped to light up the sky above Bosten Lake.



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BORIS Johnson signed a trade deal with the European Union in the last week of December, avoiding a 'no-deal' Brexit that risked causing a lot of disruption for the UK during the pandemic.

The deal is a legal document, over 1,200 pages long, that sets out the future relationship between the EU and the UK.

After the UK voted for Brexit in the referendum, back in the summer of 2016, the UK and EU began working on a withdrawal deal.

MPs struggled to agree on what should be in the deal, which caused many extensions and delays, and several deadlines were missed.

Following the election in 2019, however, the Conservative Party had enough MPs to be able to get their plan through Parliament.

The UK then left the EU on 31 January 2020. We entered a 'transition period', where we had 11 months to make a trade deal with the EU – and on the last possible day before negotiations ended, a deal was signed. The prime minister said that "the destiny of this great country now resides firmly in our hands." His critics say the deal makes the UK worse off, and the Scottish and Northern Irish parliaments both rejected it, but can't stop it.

So, what's in the deal? Well, loads, but only some of it will affect you! Here's what you need to know.

- **Travel is changing!** You'll need a visa (an approval from an EU country) to stay somewhere in the EU for longer than 90 days, and go through different passport checks when entering.
- **There are new rules for taking pets abroad** – and mobile phone operators could bring back different roaming charges.
- **Things might take longer to arrive from the EU**, since there will now be checks on goods coming into the UK.
- **The UK is no longer in the Erasmus exchange programme** which allowed UK university students to do part of their studies in the EU. Instead, the government has promised a new Turing scheme for students to travel to universities worldwide, not just in Europe.

"WE CAN'T CATCH THE BIG POLLUTERS"

THE head of the UK's Environment Agency has said that the organisation doesn't have the money to stop people from illegally polluting the countryside.

In a letter to environment secretary George Eustice, Emma Howard Boyd, the agency's chair, said that the organisation "no longer has the investment we need to protect and enhance the environment".

A director at the environmental charity Greenpeace told *The Times*: "Unless the Environment Agency is given the funds it needs to do its job, the quality of England's rivers and land will fall behind the EU".

HORSE VS WI-FI

WI-FI in rural Germany is so slow, it's quicker to send files via horse!

Klaus-Peter Kappest, a photographer from Oberkirchen in Germany, was sick of his slow internet. Getting just 1.5 megabits per second, around ten times lower than the lowest speeds in Berlin, Klaus-Peter suggested it might be faster to send files via horse to his editor.

While it was initially a joke, Klaus-Peter and his editor decided to put it to the test. They hired local horserider Jakob Schütte and his horse, Favo, to take a DVD containing 800 photos on a 10km ride to his

printer's office in Schmallingberg.

Klaus-Peter began uploading the images 20 minutes before Jakob and the horse set out. The horse took 104 minutes to deliver the DVD, while the upload took more than five hours!

The stunt worked, and Klaus-Peter's broadband provider has said it will provide fibre-optic broadband in the village, after being embarrassed by the story.



EDITOR'S COMMENT



WELL, here we are again in lockdown.

But it feels different this time. Back in March last year, we had no idea what was ahead and how we would crack the coronavirus pandemic.

This time, it feels like this should be our last national effort to hang on in there while the vaccine is rolled out across the country.

Spring beckons even more happily than usual – along with the shoots of flowers will be the shoots of recovery for the whole country.

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GOOD WEEK FOR...

WHAM!

THIRTY-SIX years after it was released, festive classic *Last Christmas* by Wham! has topped the UK charts. While the band gained one record, they lost another. Previously, *Last Christmas* was the UK's biggest-selling single never to have reached No1.



BAD WEEK FOR...

TICKETMASTER

TICKET sale site Ticketmaster has agreed to pay \$10 million (£7.3m) in fines after admitting that it hacked a rival ticket company's computers and stole information. US lawyers said the company "repeatedly and illegally accessed a competitor's computers".



CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE:

What does lockdown mean for you?

- People can't leave home except for certain essential reasons like food shopping, visiting the doctor and exercise.
- People can only go to work if they can't do their jobs at home.
- Schools and colleges are closed to most pupils, with home learning until February half term.
- Summer exams won't happen as normal. Uni students will also be taught online.
- Non-essential shops will be closed and restaurants can only serve takeaways.
- Outdoor sports venues, such as golf courses, tennis courts and outside gyms, are closed, but outdoor playgrounds are open.
- Amateur team sports are not allowed, but professional sport such as Premier League football can continue.

CUMBRIA

Mountain rescues increase

The Lake District Search and Mountain Rescue Association reported a 70% increase in call-outs last month compared with December 2019. Chairman Richard Warren said that the rescues could have been avoided if hikers had used “good planning and preparation”. He added: “We understand why people want to leave their Tier 3 and Tier 4 areas, taking advantage of the wide open spaces in our parks, but please remember that if a team is infected on a rescue, it can mean the whole team has to isolate.”



Bowfell Mountain, Lake District

EDINBURGH

Zoo pandas may go

Edinburgh Zoo may have to return its two giant pandas to China because of money troubles. The zoo has looked after Tian Tian and Yang Guang for the last ten years and hoped to breed them to increase the global number of pandas, but that hasn't happened yet. Since the pandas cost £1m a year, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, which lost £2m in 2020, may have to give them back to the Chinese government to save money.



Tian Tian munches bamboo

SWANSEA



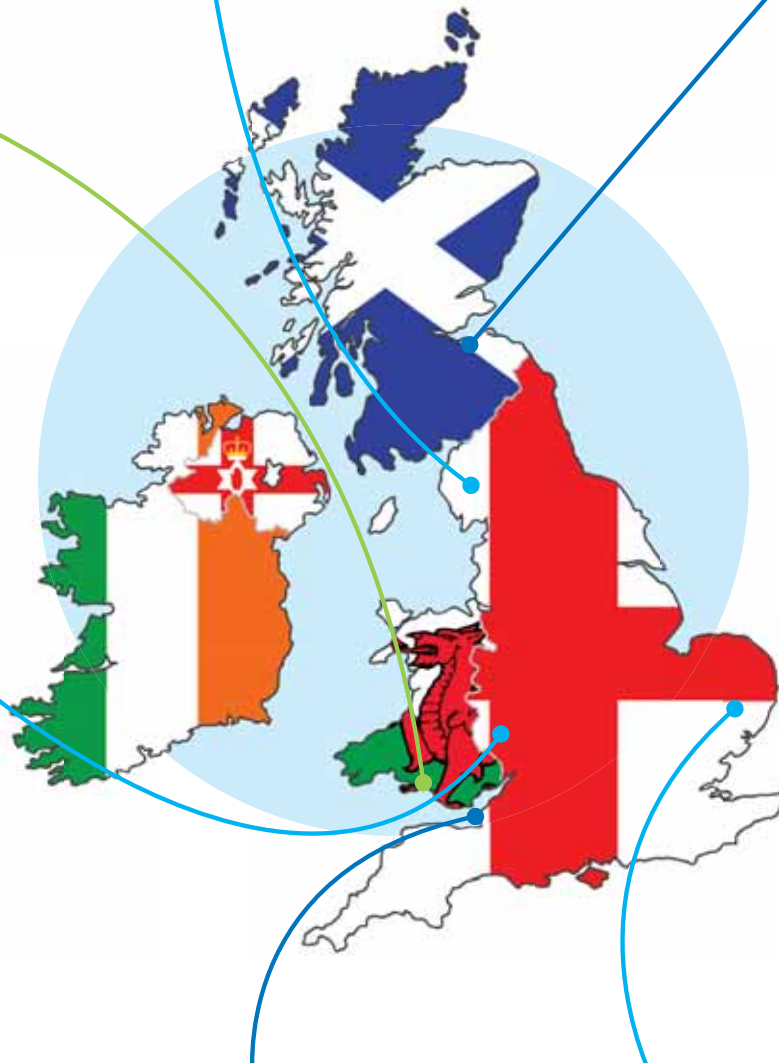
Solar-powered hospital

Morriston Hospital will be getting a quarter of its power from a nearby solar farm soon. The £5.7m solar farm is part of the Welsh Government's attempt to save energy and reduce carbon emissions. Swansea Bay University Health Board spends £6.9m each year on electricity, gas and water, and expects to save £1.5m a year using the 10,000 solar panels, as well as reducing annual carbon emissions by around 3,000 tonnes.

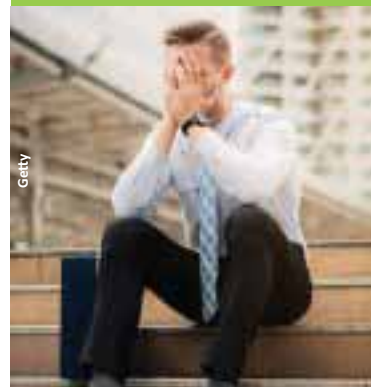
WORCESTERSHIRE

Medics finally married

Two paramedics who had to cancel their wedding four times have finally married. Beth Griffin and Rob Stewart tied the knot in Worcester, which was in Tier 2, with 15 guests. Due to the coronavirus, their original wedding had to be cancelled in March 2020, followed by three rescheduled dates. The happy couple had one day off to celebrate before returning to work at West Midlands Ambulance Service.



UK



Money problems

Citizens Advice, the network of charities that help people with financial matters, took 12 calls every minute throughout 2020, it told the BBC. Some 1.1m people phoned for advice, while the website was visited 47.7m times, a 23% increase on 2019. Around 75% of the 481,834 people who called to ask about benefits had never done so before. Similarly, 83% of the 175,852 people who called about problems with their jobs were first-time callers, showing the effect that coronavirus and lockdowns have had on people's lives. Jamie McGlynn said: “It's really very sad. We're seeing people who have always been employed, say for 20 years at the same company, and need help navigating the benefits system for the first time after [losing their job].”

SOMERSET

Rare black fox returned home

A rare black fox that escaped from Animal Farm Adventure Park has returned safely. Wilf was found holding up traffic near Bream and returned home. The sneaky fox is known for jailbreaks, having escaped his old home in Manchester before being found in a clothes shop. Keeper Krystal Finch said: “Wilf does love an adventure and we were pre-warned that, whatever you do, he will find a way [to escape].” Black foxes are very rare and are thought to make up less than 0.1% of the UK's fox population.



AnimalFarmAdventurePark / Facebook

SUFFOLK

31 marathons in 31 days

Super-runner Ben Blowes has raised more than £150,000 for charity by running a marathon every day in December. The incredible feat saw Ben run a total of 1,307km (812.2 miles). That's about the same as running from Land's End in southwest England to John O'Groats in northeast Scotland! The money is for Tom's Trust, which supports children with brain tumours. Ben said: “Every painful step I take is nothing compared to what some of these kids are going through right now.”



tom's_trust / twitter

MPs SAY 'NO DEAL'



TO JUNK FOOD

THE Government has announced plans to ban 'buy one, get one free' deals on unhealthy food by April 2022. The move is an attempt to tackle obesity in the UK.

Tempting promotions and cheap deals on foods high in salt, sugar and fat – such as crisps, chocolate, soft drinks and ready meals – will not be allowed.

Professor Graham MacGregor, from Action on Sugar, said: "Downing Street is acting decisively with a bold first step to restrict the sale of junk food on multi-buy offers and at checkouts, and taking on one of the biggest threats to Britain's future health – childhood obesity."

Figures suggest that around two-thirds of UK adults are

overweight or obese. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health says one in five primary school children are overweight, rising to one in three by secondary school.

As well as putting an end to junk food deals, retailers will also have to stop putting unhealthy food in prominent places, like at checkouts or by the entrance.

However, the ban will only be for businesses with more than 50 employees or large stores. Smaller stores will be allowed to run the promotions still.

HOPE FOR RARE TURTLE



A FEMALE Swinhoe's softshell turtle has been discovered, giving hope to the world's most endangered turtle species.

The only known male is at Suzhou Zoo in China. There were no known females until the 86kg (13 stone) turtle was discovered last year in Vietnam's Dong Mo Lake.

Now, DNA tests have confirmed that the female turtle is a Swinhoe's softshell turtle. Andrew Walde, from the Turtle Survival Alliance, said: "This is the best news of the year, and quite possibly the last decade, for global turtle conservation!"

There are plans for the two turtles to meet now. Scientists hope they will breed and be able to save the Swinhoe's softshell turtle from becoming extinct.

A 2018 report found that more than half of the world's 356 species of turtle are either threatened with extinction or nearly extinct.

HENRY'S APPEAL

THE family of a five-year-old boy who beat cancer are raising money to stop the risk of it returning.

At the age of three, Henry was diagnosed with a type of cancer called high-risk neuroblastoma, which is a type of cancer that affects nerve cells. He has been through several rounds of therapy, including a seven-hour surgery, over the last two years to try to stop the cancer coming back.

Now his mum and dad are trying to raise £163,000 to send Henry to New York. There, he can join a clinical trial that will aim to stop his neuroblastoma from coming back.

Dad Graham said:

"Every child deserves the chance to enjoy a normal life. We are very grateful for everyone's support. It helps to provide options and opportunities, whatever direction his journey takes."

You can find out more at solvingkidscancer.org.uk/appeal/henry.



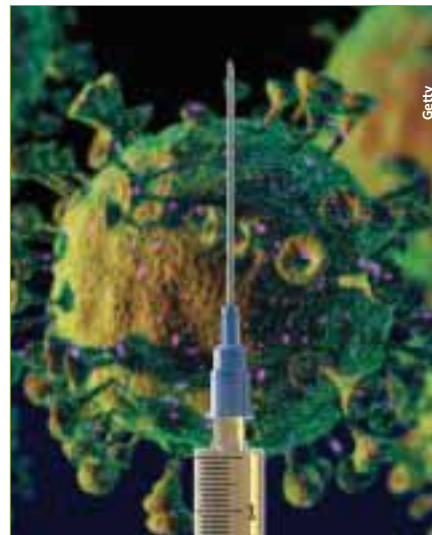
henry_the_brave/Twitter



NEW JAB STRATEGY



THE UK Government has changed its mind about how to vaccinate people, saying it is best to give more of the population protection with a first jab, and to wait longer for their second.



Getty

The UK has decided to give both doses of the Oxford and Pfizer vaccines 12 weeks apart – the original plan was to leave three weeks between the Pfizer jabs. The idea now is to vaccinate as many people as possible with a first dose, giving a larger number of people protection from the virus. The UK's Chief Medical Officers say this latest change is the best move, but there are concerns.

US firm Pfizer says it has only tested its vaccine with two doses 21 days apart. American regulators say the vaccine is 70% effective after one dose but Pfizer says there is "no data" showing it will continue to be effective after 21 days.

People who have already had their first jab will be told their second dose is being delayed, a situation the British Medical Association has called "grossly unfair".

But the UK's four chief medical officers said: "The great majority of protection from clinical disease is after the first dose of vaccine." They say that, for every 1,000 people waiting for their second dose, there are 1,000 more people getting their first jab and being given some protection.

CROATIA



Deadly earthquake

Croatia is recovering after a series of earthquakes and aftershocks hit the country at the end of December. Seven people died, 20 people were injured and dozens of villages were partly destroyed. The main earthquake had a magnitude of 6.4 and was the largest earthquake that the country has experienced in decades.

PERU



Scientist threatened

Squatters have invaded the ruins of the oldest city in the Americas, claimed ownership of the land, and threatened the archaeologist who discovered the 5,000-year-old site. Ruth Shady began excavating the ancient city of Caral in 1996, uncovering materials that date back 4,600 years. The area is now a World Heritage site. The group say the land was given to them in the 1970s, but have offered no proof.

NORWAY



Landslide tragedy

Last week, a hillside collapse destroyed homes and killed at least seven people in the village of Ask. Rescuers have been trying to find survivors, but the lack of daylight and the unstable ground has made it difficult. Norway's king and queen visited the site of the landslide to pay tribute to the victims. "I'm having trouble finding something to say, because it's absolutely horrible," King Harald said after the visit.



USA



President asks for votes

In a call between US President Donald Trump and an official in the state of Georgia, President Trump asked that the official "recalculate" or "find" enough votes to change the result of the election in the state. The full call between President Trump and Georgia's secretary of state Brad Raffensperger went on for an hour. During the call, President Trump said that Raffensperger could be committing a "criminal offence" by not reporting Trump as the winner. Raffensperger stood up to the president, saying his data was wrong and that Georgia's election was fair.



RUSSIA



Women at the wheel

The Moscow Metro has hired its first female train drivers since the 1980s. Until September last year, the job was on a list of professions described as "harmful to women's health" by the government. The ban has been widely criticised, and while the number of banned jobs has fallen significantly, there are still some that only men are allowed to do.



SOUTH KOREA



Population falls

For the first time in South Korea's history, the country's population has fallen. At the end of December 2020, the population was at 51,829,023 – 20,838 less than the population at the end of 2019. To try to encourage families to have more children, President Moon Jae-in recently announced payments for women who become pregnant, then monthly payments after the birth, but some say that it's not enough of an incentive.



VATICAN CITY



Pope against flights

Pope Francis has spoken out against those who have taken flights to avoid coronavirus lockdowns. In a weekly message, the Pope said that he had read newspaper reports of people catching flights to escape lockdowns, and that it "saddened" him. He said that people should "take care of each other".





Hi! We are the 44 Cats – Lampo, Milady, Meatball and Pilou. We're four super-friendly kittens who live in the garage of Granny Pina's house.

She likes to look after us and lets us perform in our band, The Buffycats, singing and playing music to our pawtastic cat friends. Helping them, having fun and looking after each other is really important to us, and we know there's nothing better than friendship.

We also have our own TV series, so why don't you join the fun and watch with us?



MEATBALL

I play keyboards in The Buffycats! When I get hungry, I know danger is near. But when I'm not sensing danger, I like to make my friends laugh, chill out and eat pasta!



LAMPO

Hi everybody! I'm Lampo and I'm the unofficial leader of the 44 Cats. I love to look after my friends. I play the guitar in The Buffycats.



MILADY

I have a special power called Kat-Fu! It means I'm clever and really fast when I need to be! I play the bass guitar in our band.



PILOU

I love to be silly and mess about! But I also like to look after people. If I can make you smile, I will! I like being noisy, so the instrument I play is the drums! Boom!

WIN!

44 Cats is giving you the chance to win a tea party for you and 19 friends in a venue near your home. The prize will include an appearance by the 44 Cats, food, music, games and goody bags*. To enter, just answer this question:

What is the name of the band that the 44 Cats play in?

a) The Fluffycats b) The Buffycats c) The Puppycats

Send us your answer, along with your name, age and contact details to: win@grapevine-pr.co.uk

The competition closes on 20 January 2021

*The tea party will be arranged at a suitable time when it can go ahead with COVID-19 safety measures in place. Entry is open to residents of the UK and Republic of Ireland only. Please make sure you have your parent or guardian's permission to enter. Full terms and conditions can be found at live.firstnews.co.uk/terms

44 Cats is on **Pop TV** every morning, seven days a week.
It's also available on **Nick Toons**, **Netflix** and **YouTube**.



BIRDWATCH WEEK IS BACK



SCHOOLS may be closed but you can still join in with RSPB's Big Schools' Birdwatch this month!

Every year the RSPB asks schools around the country to spend an hour counting and monitoring birds and wildlife. This year's Birdwatch runs from 5 January – 22 February, and is free to join in. Get your teacher to register at rspb.org.uk to get access to a whole pack of free, downloadable resources which will help you learn about the UK's birds, even if you are learning at home.

Monitoring the wildlife in our local areas is important because it helps conservationists understand how well, or badly, a species is doing. It helps them create a picture of different species found in the UK and where they are living.

If your school can't take part this year, you can join in at home with the Big Garden Birdwatch, which runs from 29-31 January.

LONGEST RESIDENT

BIGGIE the giant tortoise is celebrating 45 years at Bristol Zoo Gardens.

He has been at the zoo longer than any other animal, having arrived back on Christmas Eve in 1975. Biggie is a giant Aldabra tortoise and lives with three other giant Aldabra tortoises – Helen, Mike and Twiggy.

Keepers think Biggie is around 60 years old, and say that he could live to be more than 100. Aldabra tortoises are classed as vulnerable to extinction and can only be found on islands in the western Indian Ocean. Slowly their habitats are disappearing, making it harder for the species to grow old enough to reproduce.

Biggie is one of the animals that visitors can "adopt" at Bristol Zoo Gardens.



Bristol Zoo Gardens

WIND FARM WORRIES

A NEW wind farm being planned by the Government may seriously impact native seabirds, says a wildlife charity.

The RSPB is concerned that the new development in Yorkshire will be in the direct path of seabirds and their feeding grounds. The development is just 120 kilometres away from England's biggest seabird colony at Flamborough Head, meaning birds will have to dodge the turbines to get between their nests and their food supply.

Developers are planning to build four nesting towers for the birds, but the animal charity, which works to help protect the UK's native species, says that the development will still have a negative impact on the birds.



Istock

BITESIZE NEWS

SCIENTISTS at SeaWorld Parks and Resorts have released new data they hope will help them better understand the health of bottlenose dolphins in captivity and in the wild. New "health markers" were found using blood samples from 156 bottlenose dolphins kept at SeaWorld parks. More than 1,500 blood samples taken during routine examinations were analysed to find any changes that indicate whether a dolphin is ill. The data will help conservationists understand disease, signs of stress and other health issues in wild dolphins that need help from rescue teams.

SPOTTED BIG CAT SPOTTED

REPORTS of a big spotted cat led to an odd call-out for US police.

A concerned resident in Multnomah County, Oregon, called the police after seeing a suspected cheetah lying in a wooded area.

Deputy Raymond Sullivan, who investigated, said: "I used my ninja-like skills to sneak up on the beast. Of course, it sat there dumbfounded that I was able to get so close for a couple of photos. Turns out it was a stuffed animal!"

The police had their suspicions. Although big cats like cougars have been spotted on occasion, they've never dealt with a wild cheetah before. They also called the nearby Oregon Zoo first to see if they were missing a cheetah, but all their animals were present and correct.



From a distance, the beast could easily be real. But close up, it's clear that it was a stuffed toy!

120-YEAR-OLD CHOCOLATE!

A 120-YEAR-OLD box of chocolates has been found by staff at the National Library of Australia.

The chocolate belonged to a poet and journalist called AB 'Banjo' Paterson, and was found among his papers.

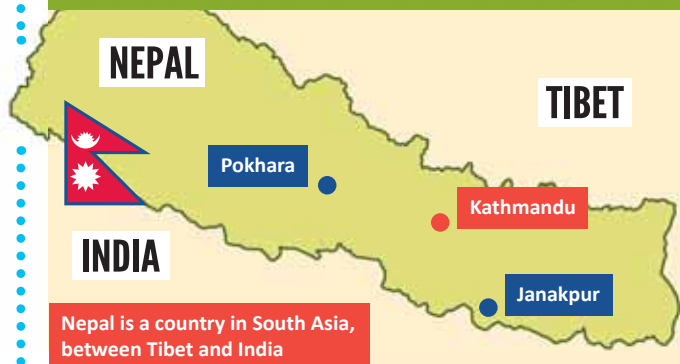
The tin chocolate box was one sent to soldiers in South Africa during the Boer War around 1900. It was a gift to the troops ordered by the UK's Queen Victoria.

Jennifer Todd, from the library, said: "There was quite an interesting smell when they were unwrapped." We bet there was!

What do you think 120-year-old chocolate tastes like?



FLIGHT FARCE!



A "COMMUNICATIONS mix-up" led to a Nepalese flight landing 250km (155 miles) away from its destination!

The flight left the capital of Kathmandu and was supposed to fly south to the city of Janakpur. Unfortunately, the plane flew west, ending up 250km away in the city of Pokhara. That's like if you were flying to Edinburgh but ended up in Belfast!

Luckily, the Buddha Air flight was allowed to take off again, dropping its 69 passengers off at the correct destination... a few hours late, of course.

GRENADE FISHING



A UK magnet fisher has pulled 19 grenades from the River Tame, just outside of Birmingham.

Magnet fishing is like metal detecting on land, except fishers throw a magnet into the water to see what they will find.



We doubt Che Williams expected to pull out a bunch of grenades though! Likely from World War Two, two of the grenades still had their pins in.

Thankfully, police used X-rays to test the grenades and none of them had explosives in them. Phew!



Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer



FOLLOW TOMAS ON HIS FINAL EPIC JOURNEY!

FOLLOW Tomas on his sparkling final journey to unlock the last mysteries of the dragon-fruit tree in *The Boy Who Sang With Dragons*.

Tomas is now a fully-fledged expert dragon grower and protector of the dragon-fruit tree.

But he's not quite prepared for the adventure that awaits him when a huge secret is revealed about his new friend, Aura. A thrilling secret that will take them on a journey of discovery that all the dragons will be in on.

And just what will happen when lightning bolt dragon Zing and storm dragon Flicker get together?

**OUT
NOW**



16 JANUARY IS DRAGON APPRECIATION DAY!

TO show your appreciation for dragons, why not grow your own dragon just like Tomas? Scribble some ideas of what your dragon might look and be like. Have a think about the following:

- What makes your dragon unique?
- Does it have horns or spikes?
- Does it breathe fire or ice?
- Does it have special powers?
- What colour is it?
- Where is it from?
- What does it like to eat?
- What is it called?

Don't forget to check out all the books in the best-selling *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* series!



Head to andyshepherdwriter.co.uk to follow more of her work.

**Piccadilly
PRESS**

Available from **Waterstones**



● What are Grace and Arthur up to in the new book?

Vick: In the first book, *Listen Up*, we saw them solve the mystery of the school using their radio shows. This time they take it up a level because there's a rival school involved, more mysteries to solve and even more student media to get involved in. There's a student paper and a massive competition where they could be broadcasting nationally, so it's all to play for.

● What inspired this storyline?

Roman: We came up with the storyline while sat on a train on our way to a school. Vick was holding a cake and flowers and trying to write down my ideas.

Vick: It was my birthday; I don't just carry around cake and flowers everywhere I go! We were doing this amazing school tour with our last book, and it was during this time that we wanted to do a second book. Ro has so many ideas and is so exuberant with them and I try to get it all into some kind of structure on my laptop. We wanted to show the ways that kids can use their voices if they believe in something and also to stand up for something. In this book there are protests going on over the park, which is under threat of being destroyed. The kids don't want this, so they use their voice to save the park. We wanted to show the way you can use your voice, that if something in our society isn't right, you should stand up for what you believe in. I think that in 2020 and 2021 it means more than ever.

● When you do school tours, what kind of feedback do you get from the kids?

Roman: Kids are just the best. They love being able to solve the mystery; solving mysteries is something that it doesn't matter what age you are, it's a lot of fun in a book. So that's definitely one thing. Vick and I will do a little bit of reading from the book. Vick's a good reader, so she'll read it out and I'll try and act it out, and there's always a bit where she'll make me fall over a million times. The kids love it. It means a lot to us to be able to go there and see the enjoyment of something we've been a part of.

Vick: Also, afterwards we get to have a chat with



Joe Magowan



KIDS ARE THE BEST!

RADIO DJs and best buddies Vick Hope and Roman Kemp also write books for kids. Their second novel, *Shout Out*, is out now, so they told us all about it!

them and I love hearing what their favourite subjects are. Seeing so many kids come over and saying they really love maths or science or design and technology. When you see how different their answers are, there's something really special about that. You don't want them to feel that they have to follow certain paths; at that stage they can do anything. They can do everything. And they are, that's why all their answers are different. It's the best time.

● What is your writing process for these books?

Roman: This one was quite funny! Y'know, I'm not a great writer, I'm not very academic. I struggled with reading books and I've always struggled in that sense. Vick is a fantastic writer and someone who reads an astronomical number of books, so when it comes to brainstorming ideas, I mind-blurt everything down onto a page and Vick will make sense of it. But with this one, it came together in terms of a story and I had to say to Vick: "I'm really sorry, I'm not going to have a phone: I'm leaving the country for four weeks because I'm on *I'm A Celeb*!" So Vick really had her work cut out on this one and she really

pulled through because there are deadlines that you have to hit. When I came back out of it, she was like: "Don't worry, I've sorted it!"

● Are the characters based on you?

Vick: There are definitely parts of us in them and parts of friends we had growing up, friends we have now, teachers we knew. That's where we got inspiration from. I think we wanted to show that everyone is different and that's a really spectacular thing. Everyone's got different skills and we should celebrate how unique every child is, but also show that when they work together, that's when they're most powerful. Work as a team, that's when you solve a mystery.

● What was school like for you?

Roman: School for me was about friends and playing football. I went to a very posh school, so I did subjects like classical civilisation and I loved that. It's all mythology, it's all made-up stories. I loved doing drama at school, but it was always about the social aspect. It was where I learned how to talk to people!

Vick: I was quite academic but I don't think I was very proud of it. I was a bit embarrassed to be, I guess, a bit of a swot. I basically wanted to do everything. Every play, every drama club, every sport, every dance class. I just liked to get involved and I loved to learn. I still do. But I didn't realise that was a good thing until recently. The problem I did have was that I was quite opinionated, so if I didn't agree with the teacher, I used to argue, which is not a good trait.

● Looking back, what advice would you give your 11-year-old self?

Vick: I think we always say this, but you're going to be okay. Don't worry. There are so many things that we get stressed about, and are constantly looking at the future or worrying about the past, but actually you'll be fine. All the things you get to do on a daily basis, enjoy them and revel in them. Live in the present, live in the moment.

Roman: Mine would be: you're never going to sign for Arsenal, so make sure you pay attention in science. And worry less!



Shout Out by Roman Kemp and Vick Hope is out now



CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY FIRST NEWS



COOK WITH OMARI

TOP TIP!

Always wash your hands before you start cooking!

MEET Omari McQueen, the 12-year-old star of CBBC's cooking show, *What's Cooking, Omari?* Omari shared his top vegan cooking tips and one of his favourite recipes with *First News*!

"Hi First News, I'm Omari and I am 12 years old. I started cooking when I was seven, which was when my mum got sick, so my dad taught me how to cook. I introduced my mum to a vegan-based diet to make her feel better! Here are my tips for being a top chef, some interesting facts and a recipe from my TV series!"

OMARI'S YUM PLUM AND BLACKBERRY CRUMBLE

A plum and blackberry base with nutmeg, caster sugar and golden syrup, topped with an oatly biscuit and sugar crumble. Garnished with sliced plums.

INGREDIENTS

- 150g/handful of blackberries
- 3.5 plums
- ½ teaspoon of nutmeg
- 50g brown caster sugar
- Sprinkle of icing sugar
- 2 tbsp/squeeze of golden syrup
- 150g plain flour
- 100g vegan butter
- 125g/handful of oatly biscuits

METHOD

1. Put blackberries, 2 plums, nutmeg, 2 tsp caster sugar and golden syrup into a blender and mix.
2. Pour mixture into a baking dish. Set aside.
3. Crush oat biscuits until they are a fine texture.
4. Mix the crushed biscuits with the flour, then add sugar.
5. Add two large spoons of vegan butter. Mix.
6. Add nutmeg and mix again until crumbly.
7. Spread crumble on top of the plum and berry mixture.
8. Slice remaining plums to decorate top of crumble.
9. Bake in the oven for 20 mins at 170°C.
10. Once baked, dust with icing sugar and serve.

TOP TIP!

You can make this recipe vegan or non-vegan.

TOP TIPS!

Write down your favourite meals and look for their vegan alternatives. There are lots of great vegan egg, dairy and meat replacements available in the shops.

Courgette is technically a fruit, although it is treated and commonly referred to as a vegetable.

Jackfruit is a great alternative to meat and that's why I love it!

To stop bananas from over-ripening, wrap the stem with tape. This makes them last longer and stops them getting all squishy.

The kitchen is like a science lab and it's fun to experiment with new flavours! Try out different seasonings and spices. Check the label before buying, as some herb and spice mixes can contain additives or extra salt.

Try different types of fruits and vegetables, even the funny-looking ones! Remember that trying new foods is all part of experimenting with your taste buds.

Behind the scenes of *What's Cooking, Omari?*



Tune into *What's Cooking, Omari?* on CBBC and BBC iPlayer from Sunday 10 January at 9:30am

The book, *Omari McQueen's Best Bites*, is out now from Scholastic

THIS WEEK

1 The list of authors writing the official books for World Book Day 2021 has been announced. This March you'll be able to buy the special £1 books from a host of top authors, including Katherine Rundell, Derek Landy, Jonny Duddle, Zanib Mian, Tom Fletcher and Julia Donaldson. World Book Day is 4 March, and this year there will be lots of online events for everyone to join in with!



2 The Young Songwriter of the Year competition for budding young songwriters is now open. The competition is open for 8 to 18-year-olds and songs must be under 4.5 minutes long and written by you. The rules for entering can be found at songacademy.co.uk along with a list of the fab prizes on offer and the full list of all-star judges.

3 It's been confirmed that there will be a third series of *His Dark Materials* on BBC One. The drama is based on the book trilogy by Philip Pullman. The third series is expected to be based on the third book in the trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*. Production of the new series will start this year!

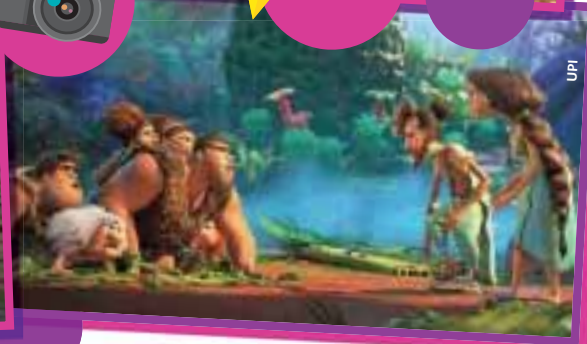


PICS OF THE WEEK

THE Croods are moving house in the hilarious second film about the cave family.

Eep and her family are still looking for a safe place to call home, and when they crash through a mysterious wall, their new adventures begin. For the first time, the Croods meet other humans, the Bettermans, who have developed a more civilised way of living. Will the Crood family swap sleep piles for showers and a life as farmers? You'll have to watch to find out! If you enjoyed the first film, you'll love this one.

The Croods 2: A New Age is released on 26 March.



SUPER POWERS

THE stars of Netflix's new superhero flick, *We Can Be Heroes*, talked to us about superpowers!

● **YaYa Gosselin (plays Missy Moreno)**

"I think my favourite superhero power of one of the kids is Guppy's. She can move water, mould water, make water into what she wants. And also Rewind and Fast Forward; they work as a team and I think that is really special."

● **Vivien Lyra Blair (plays Guppy)**

"If I could have a superpower I would like to be able to speak to animals, so I could hear their thoughts and I could help them with any troubles. That is my best dream, to help animals."

● **Lotus Blossom (plays A Capella)**

"Everyone has such awesome superpowers. I think I'd probably like Wild Card's powers because he has all the powers and it would be awesome to have every power in the world."



● **Isaiah Russell-Bailey (plays Rewind)**

"I really like my power in the film; rewinding and manipulating time is really cool, but there's another power that I really like, which is the ability to take powers, so no matter what happens I can still have any power I wanted."

● **Dylan Henry Lau (plays Slo-Mo)**

"I think my favourite power is A Capella's because she actually sings. It's a very weird power because everyone can sing, but she sings really good and she can move objects. That's crazy."

● **Akira Akbar (plays Fast Forward)**

"I really like my power, fast forwarding time, but I also really like to have teleportation. I could just snap my fingers and I'd be anywhere!"

● **Christian Slater (plays Tech-No)**

"If I had a superpower in real life, it's pretty obvious, I'd certainly want to be able to fly! You ever have those flying dreams? They're so exciting! I enjoy those and if I could have that skill or power I'd be happy!"

● **Nathan Blair (plays Wild Card)**

"I'd love to time travel – you can do so much with it. People would usually use that to do bad, but I would use it to do good and go back and correct people's wrongs. But I wouldn't want to mess with it too much because that power comes with a lot of responsibility!"

We Can Be Heroes
is out now on Netflix!

PREVENTING PANDEMICS



Getty

DOCTOR Peter Daszak is the president of EcoHealth Alliance, an organisation that studies new viruses and ‘emerging diseases’ (like the coronavirus that causes COVID-19), and is one of the world’s leading experts. We talked to him about why pandemics start and why there’ll definitely be more, but also what we can all do to help prevent them in the future.

A scientist in Thailand taking samples from a bat, as part of a hunt to find out where the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 came from

● **The word ‘unprecedented’ [never seen before] has been used a lot by politicians to excuse the slow response to this pandemic. Would you say it was unprecedented?**

We’ve had pandemics like this, just a long time ago. The 1918 influenza pandemic did exactly what this one is doing. So no, we knew what would happen, I just don’t think we expected it. People just aren’t good at preparing; it’s in our human nature. Like if you’re getting ready for an exam, you know you’ve got to do the revision but you say: “I’ll start in an hour”. But every now and again you don’t do enough and you fail, and that’s what we’ve done here. A government’s job is to get ready and make the world a safer place for its citizens, but some governments failed in that with this pandemic.

● **In the UK, the preparations were for a flu-like disease. Was that a reasonable guess?**

Most preparedness plans are built around flu. And there’s a reason for that: flu caused the big 1918 pandemic and we get seasonal flu every year. But if we only use that as the model for everything we do, then when a new disease emerges that’s different, we’re caught by surprise. We’ve been working in China for 15 years before COVID, looking for coronaviruses that come from bats that could infect people, so we were working on the exact thing that

had a system ready to catch new cases of pneumonia, the illness that you get with COVID. I don’t think most people took the risk seriously.

REDUCE CONSUMPTION

● **You’ve said that demand from consumers in rich countries drives things like deforestation and increases the risks of pandemics. Do you think that message has got across to people?**

We’ve been saying that for decades. These viruses are in wildlife where they don’t really do anything. But every now and again one gets into people and it causes really significant disease. So how do you reduce that contact between people and wildlife? Well, think about the things involved in COVID: the wildlife trade, people hunting and eating wildlife, using wildlife for medicine, farming them, shipping them around the world. Or deforestation, building roads into remote areas, bringing people into contact with populations of wildlife – these are the things that drive pandemics. We know that, but what we haven’t done is try to reduce our global footprint to reduce the risk of pandemics. If we don’t do anything, we’re going to see more and more pandemics. But we can reduce our global footprint individually and that will help. If we start working to become more sustainable to prevent pandemics, we also have an impact on conservation because we’re going to be consuming less wildlife as food or medicines, and we’re going to have an impact on climate change, because deforestation is also part of climate change. We can make a significant difference by realising that these things are all linked.

● **Do you think younger people will be more open to reducing their consumption?**

Yeah, I really do. The climate campaigns are exactly what we need to do around consumption for pandemic risk. They’re the same things that drive climate change, like deforestation and over-consumption of meat, driving cars every day. And climate change itself drives pandemic risk. So I do hope that the next generation is really going to take this seriously. I’ve said in the past that the metals in smartphones are part of the problem because we

have mines in forests that drive pandemic risks. You can’t just throw away your phone, but what you can do is put pressure on the people who produce them, and you can be more activist about it and say: “Find a solution. Come up with an alternative. Have more sustainable products or I’m not going to buy them”.



Getty

A Chinese mine where rare earth elements are extracted for use in gadgets such as smartphones

● **How likely is another pandemic?**

It’s not something to be scared of in everyday life, but it’s a fact that if we continue exploiting the planet in the way we’re doing, we’re going to see more pandemics, they’ll emerge more often and they’ll spread more quickly. And we can deal with it. We’ve dealt with this pandemic; we’ve not done a really good job of it, but vaccines are here and we will be safe eventually. But my concern is that we’ll see more and more pandemics, so we need to rethink our relationship with nature, and prevent pandemics instead of just waiting for them to happen.

● **Do governments realise that?**

I worry that it’ll be back to business as usual after this pandemic. It’s quite surprising to think that might happen, but people have a short memory, especially politicians who’ve got urgent budget requests for everything else. They need to spend money on healthcare for the elderly, for cancer, and people quickly forget. In five years there’ll be less interest in spending money to prevent future pandemics.

DESIGN FUTURE VACCINES

● **So how do we prevent the next pandemic?**

We know new viruses are out there, but finding them will cost money – but it’s not that expensive



Getty

Red Cross workers wearing masks during the 1918 flu pandemic



happened. During that time we’ve found evidence of hundreds of new viruses in wildlife around Southeast Asia, especially in China. We talked to the US government; we talked to the World Health Organization. Some folks listened – the Chinese government took this very seriously and they

compared to a pandemic. So we should go out and do that, first of all. Then we need to work with drug companies to help design vaccines against those future diseases. That will require putting money into it, because without a disease having emerged, no-one is going to buy the vaccine. But we know where emerging diseases normally start: they tend to be poor, rural communities that don't have great healthcare systems. We can build better hospitals and clinics for them, and catch viruses the minute they get into populations. And we can work with those communities and talk to them about activities that are high risk, like hunting bats or using pangolins in traditional Chinese medicine. There are organisations doing that, but we need to do it on a global scale.

● In all the media coverage, do you think there's anything else that's been overlooked?

Yeah, I think there's a mistake that we all make. We look at scientists from the point of view of TV or the movies, where they have white coats and work in a lab and will design a vaccine to save us all. But the answers to pandemics are a lot more complicated than that, and it's all about how local communities in places around the world interact with the environment. It's about what we buy every day and how that has an impact. If I buy toothpaste with palm oil in, that's part of the deforestation of Indonesia that drives diseases. So the idea that scientists in labs are the solution to pandemics is not really true. It's ecologists, it's veterinarians, it's conservationists, it's people working with communities, trying to help them do things in a safer way for their health, because that will benefit our health. We need to go beyond just thinking that everything is going to be fixed by doing some lab work. It's not.

DON'T EXPLOIT THE PLANET

● Has the criticism of China been fair?

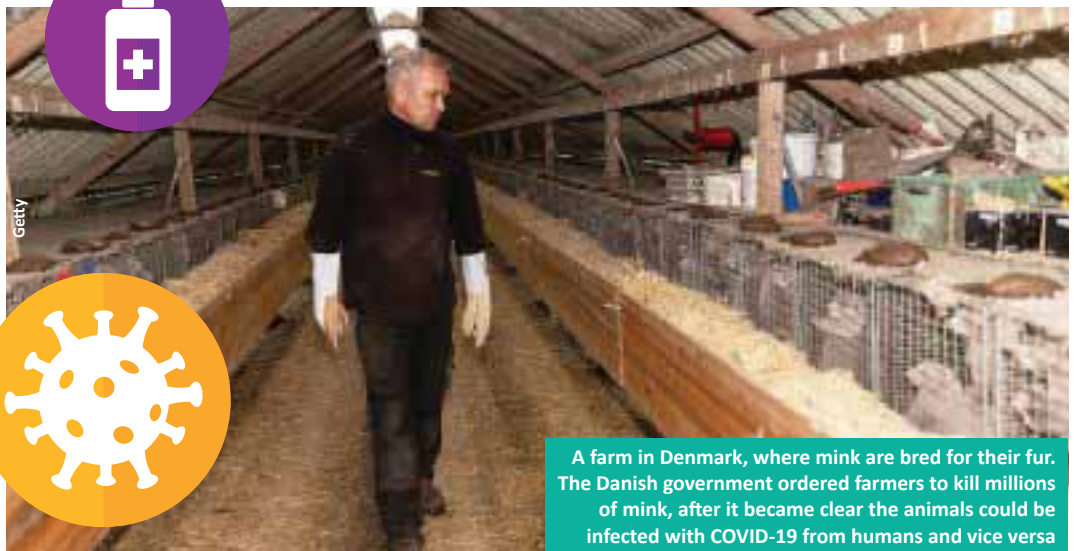
Everybody who works on emerging diseases knows that these things can happen anywhere – we've found emerging diseases in the UK. I remember mad cow disease and salmonellosis in eggs back in the 1980s/1990s. We've got industrial farming, we've got global deforestation, climate change. The impacts of that are going to be pandemics. They're likely to happen in places where there is more wildlife, and it just so happens that south China has got lots of diversity of bats and lots of people, all making contact, so it's not China's fault – it's our collective fault. We need to look within ourselves and ask what we can do to reduce our global impact and not exploit the planet to the point that we get pandemics.



A huge cattle farm in Brazil, where forests are cleared to make way for cattle farms or to grow crops like soy to feed animals with

● What about critics of the World Health Organization's (WHO) response?

When it's a new disease and people are dying, it's very chaotic. You're scared. The people who are



A farm in Denmark, where mink are bred for their fur. The Danish government ordered farmers to kill millions of mink, after it became clear the animals could be infected with COVID-19 from humans and vice versa

trying to help patients are scared that they're going to get infected – and a lot of them did. You don't know how quickly the virus spreads. Often you don't even know what the virus is yet, so there's a lot of worry and fear and panic, and that means things happen that could have been done better in hindsight. But I think they did a pretty good job. The WHO is an amazing organisation that is really there to protect us at a global level.

● How big a worry are fur farms?

Fur has gradually crept back into the fashion industry, with little trims of fur, and it seems harmless. But it is cruel. It's wild animals kept in unpleasant conditions, bred just for the statement of a fur coat or a fur trim around your hood. There are millions and millions of mink in Europe that now turn out to be really good at transmitting SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind COVID-19, and they've infected people. There's a chance that the virus could evolve in those animals or just spread more widely. Anything you can do to persuade your friends not to buy fur is a really good move.

● The poor have been hit hardest by this pandemic, but do you think it's likely that countries will try to make things fairer?

I really thought the pandemic would drive this message home, but politics in some countries has become so divided that there's almost a cruelty to it. People die from COVID at a higher rate if they're minority races or they're poor, and that's just not fair. Why would we have our neighbours dying at a higher rate just because they have less money?

FOLLOW THE SCIENCE

● How well do you think the health advice and risk is being communicated to the public?

What I've seen that's great is scientists on the news giving really good advice and being listened to and respected again. The problem has been that some people just don't listen, and there's been this growing background of conspiracy theories and anti-science feelings and an anti-vaccine movement that's really undermined basic common sense. Scientists look at things from a very logical point of view. They look at the evidence and come to a conclusion and say this is going to happen, we should really get ready for it. They don't do it because they have an agenda [plan] or want to make money out of it. They do it because they believe in understanding the truth.

● How big a danger is fake news?

What I've seen in the US and the UK is really dangerous. People believe theories that just clearly aren't true. They believe this virus was made on purpose and released to kill people, but there's no evidence for that at all. But it's because we're in this position where we've lost control over our own lives: we're on lockdown, we're not in school, we're not at work, so we feel powerless and look for something to blame. This has happened throughout history, but we need to be aware that if we're being fooled, there's a real price to pay. I worry that so many people believe this misinformation that it is going to affect the future, that we're going to have this group of people, maybe 30% of the population, that won't take a vaccine, for instance. And if they don't take a vaccine, the virus will carry on circulating.



Anti-lockdown protests (like this one in London) have helped to spread nonsense conspiracy theories

● What message do you have for our readers?

Firstly, understand more about what causes diseases like COVID to emerge, about the connections with wildlife, and get involved with organisations that are working in conservation and climate change, and talk to them about how the work they're doing is also going to benefit by reducing pandemics. And then the second thing: I'm really worried about the way countries don't come together at times of crisis, and some have tried to gang up and blame each other for the origins of pandemics, and that's a real mistake. Viruses don't think or act on feelings, they just spread from one person to another. I don't care what passport you've got or how old you are or what race you are, what religion, and if we get stuck on all those things, viruses are always going to defeat us. So I recommend talking to your friends who are from other countries, talking about their relatives, and just becoming more global in the way you think and the way you act with your friends, and thinking about the world as one living planet that we're all here on and depend on, and need to preserve for the future.



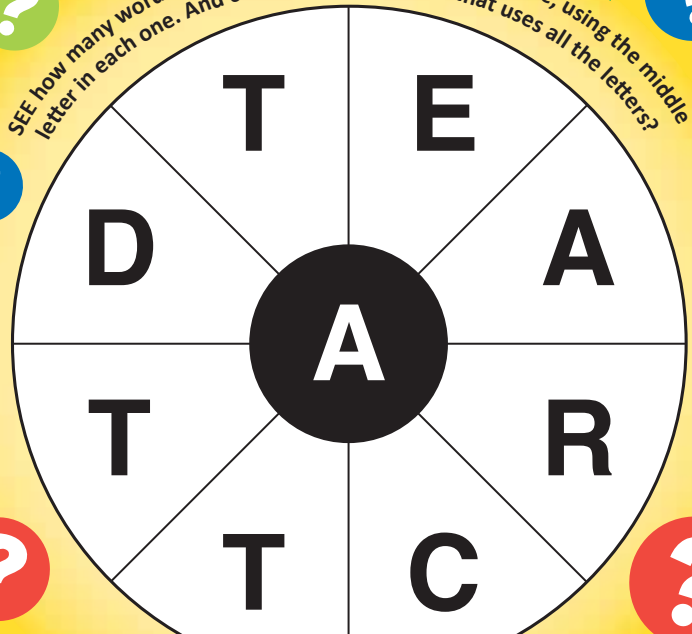
SUDOKU!

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

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

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.



READ

BOOK

CROSSWORD

CAN you complete our crossword puzzle by using the clues below?



ACROSS

- 1 Bike with three wheels (8)
- 6 Put things into a vehicle (4)
- 7 Air taken into the lungs (6)
- 9 Factual evidence of something (5)
- 11 Material jeans are made of (5)
- 12 Small green or black oval fruit (5)
- 13 Book of maps (5)
- 16 Repeat performance (6)
- 18 Small; tiny (4)
- 19 Have difficulty with (8)

DOWN

- 1 Mobile ____ : communications device (9)
- 2 US state (5)
- 3 Young foxes (4)
- 4 Mount ____ : very high mountain (7)
- 5 Animal doctor (3)
- 8 English county where you'll find Southampton (9)
- 10 Easy to see or understand (7)
- 14 Telling an untruth (5)
- 15 Pick up sound with the ears (4)
- 17 Quick sleep (3)



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

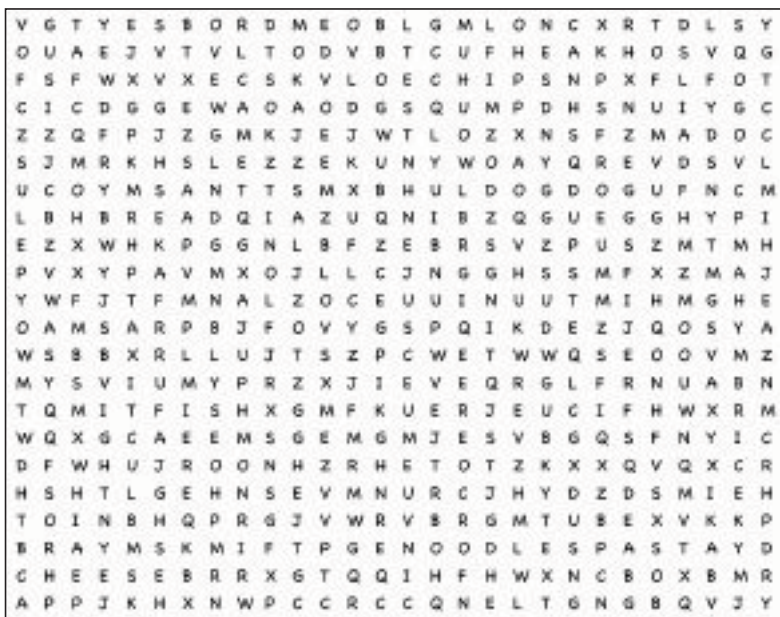
JUST for fun this week! Can you spot the five changes we've made to this picture from *The Croods* 2?



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WORDSEARCH

CAN you find the words in our food-themed wordsearch?
Remember that the words can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.



- ☐ Pasta
- ☐ Bread
- ☐ Cheese
- ☐ Noodles



- ☐ Tofu
- ☐ Hamburger
- ☐ Rice
- ☐ Fish



- ☐ Chips
- ☐ Steak
- ☐ Vegetables
- ☐ Eggs



WHAT ON EARTH?

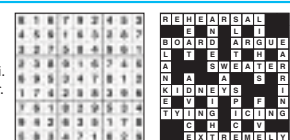
THESE can all be found at the park. Can you guess what they are?



COMPETITIONS: You can enter First News competitions in one of two ways. 1. Go to firstnews.co.uk/competitions and follow the instructions. 2. Email us at win@firstnews.co.uk putting 'competition name' (e.g. Holiday), in the subject box. Please note: First News will not share your personal details with third parties. First News will only use your details to contact the competition winners. First News competitions are only open to those aged 17-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 the first correct entries drawn after the closing dates. No purchase necessary. No responsibility can be accepted for entries that have been lost or damaged in transit. First News will not enter into any correspondence. All winners will be notified accordingly and their names and location will be available on request. No cash alternative for any prizes will be offered. The winner may be required to partake in media activity relating to the competition.

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS:

Spot the difference: Hotel name changed, pigeon added, theatre sign is a different colour, lady's head is bigger, end of pole is missing. **What on Earth?:** party poppers, champagne, fireworks, Big Ben, calendar, confetti. **Word ladder:** turn, torn, worn, word, ford, food. **Word wheel:** willpower. **Who on Earth?:** Vernon Kay, Dougie Poynter, Roman Kemp. **Connection:** 1. room 2. p; they're all foods 3. dog, pig, mouse, goat; all animals 4. The Masked Singer.



ROBIN HOOD

AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE!

ROBIN Hood is back in this action-packed sequel, *Robin Hood: Piracy, Paintballs and Zebras*, by the bestselling author of *CHERUB*, Robert Muchamore.

Robin Hood lives... but for how long? Mobster Guy Gisborne has offered a £100,000 reward for anyone who captures Robin Hood.

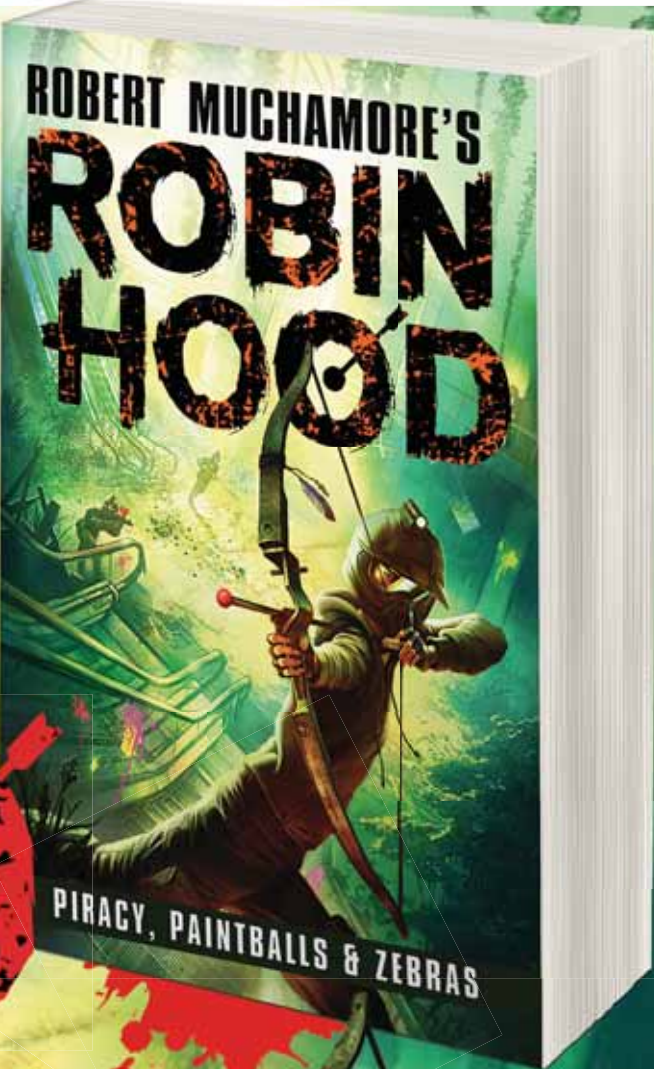
But while grown-ups try to keep Robin out of danger, the 12-year-old rebel is determined to fight back, with a lucrative robbery, a plot to hack the computers at Sherwood Castle and a daring assault using paintball guns and smoke bombs...



Make sure you check out the first book in the series, *Robin Hood: Hacking, Heists and Flaming Arrows!*

Head to muchamore.com to find more of Robert Muchamore's work

OUT NOW



ROBIN HOOD WORD HUNT!

Where is Robin hiding? Find all of the words in the grid. The remaining letters will spell out his hiding place!

P	E	Y	E	S	L	L	U	B
D	A	R	R	O	W	H	E	I
O	P	I	R	A	C	Y	N	S
O	S	I	N	N	S	I	A	C
W	H	E	R	T	B	R	A	W
R	E	N	R	O	B	S	I	G
E	O	O	R	E	T	A	D	U
H	F	O	Z	L	R	E	L	Y
S	S	T	E	D	O	O	H	L

- ARROW
- BULLSEYE
- CASTLE
- GISBORNE
- GUY
- HOOD
- PAINTBALL
- PIRACY
- ROBIN
- SHERWOOD
- ZEBRAS



Where is Robin hiding?

ANSWER: He is in Sherwood Forest

HOT KEY BOOKS



THE BIG PICTURE

WHAT a way to start the new year!

This spectacular laser show took place on 2 January at Dishui Lake, a huge artificial lake in Shanghai, China.

Getty

CLADDING CRISIS



AFTER the 2017 Grenfell Tower disaster, it was discovered that thousands of buildings were at similar risk from fire. Three years later, why are many people still having to live in unsafe homes?

The tragedy at London's Grenfell Tower was the worst residential fire in the UK since the Second World War. One reason the blaze spread so quickly and was so difficult to control was that the cladding on the outside of the building was combustible, meaning that it could catch fire easily.

Cladding helps keep heat in a building and protects it from the weather. The cladding that was used on Grenfell, and other buildings, is called ACM. But it's been discovered that other types of combustible cladding, such as zinc, have also been used on homes.

Additional fire risks such as timber balconies have been identified too. Work has since been carried out to renovate some homes at risk, but a lot of residents are enduring a long, worrying wait.

FOOTING THE BILL

Many of the people affected live in flats in tower blocks. The people who pay money to live in these flats are known as leaseholders, while the whole building is owned by the freeholder. A lot of leaseholders have formed groups to support each other and campaign for renovations around the UK.

The UK Cladding Action Group (UKCAG) claims that more than three million people across the UK are living in unsafe buildings – and the cost of the work is causing anxiety for many of them.

A spokesperson for UKCAG said that although "the Government has suggested that freeholders have the work done [to make the buildings safe], it is not law". Even if work is done, the cost often falls on the leaseholders, who find their service charge – money you pay to the owners so they look after the building – increasing.

"As leaseholders, we are legally obliged to pay [for renovations], so you can see it is grossly unfair, since we do not own the building! So many people are suffering through no fault of their own with staggering bills."



In October 2020, 1,000 people had to leave their homes in London due to unsafe cladding

FAMILIES' FEARS

In September 2020, the residents of one block of flats in Hendon, North London, discovered that their building had been constructed with five different combustible materials. The leaseholders and their families are obviously worried.

Eleven-year-old Mo says: "If somebody accidentally causes a little fire, then the building will burn down easily. All of our belongings will get burned and people will get seriously injured."

Deborah Daus, aged eight, says: "It has affected me and my mum because our anxiety levels have been higher. If there's a fire, with this cladding, it's all going to be burnt down. I have lots of good friends here and I go to a really good school and I would just be so sad to leave it all behind."

"If I could talk to the prime minister, I would say the cladding needs to be fixed and Notting Hill Genesis [the freeholders] and the Government should have to pay. They shouldn't make the residents pay, because it's not their fault the building is unsafe."

Work hasn't started on the flats – and it isn't due to be completed for another four years! Deborah's mum, Charlotte, says: "The thought that me and my daughter have been sleeping in what is, effectively, a tinderbox [a device used to start fires], for the past seven years fills me with horror. Imagining the nightmare of being woken in the night and having to quickly leave my home with Deborah is terrifying, as is the thought of losing our possessions, or worse, our lives."



Deborah Daus is one of many children living in unsafe buildings around the UK. Moving to safer housing is difficult, as unsafe properties cannot be sold until the freeholders make them safe. Families are stuck living in homes that are viewed as too dangerous to sell

THE GRENFELL TOWER FIRE

Grenfell Tower was a 24-storey block of flats in West London.

On 14 June 2017, a faulty fridge-freezer started a fire, which quickly spread throughout the building. It burned for 24 hours and hundreds of firefighters were needed to extinguish the blaze.

Tragically, 72 people died and more than 70 others were injured. The remains of the building are still standing, but plans have been announced to build a memorial there for those who lost their lives, after it has been demolished.



23. SPECIAL REPORT

♥ PAPERWORK PROBLEMS

Although Charlotte and Deborah don't want to move, other leaseholders do. However, they can't sell or rent their flats until the renovation work is done. The building then needs to be inspected and a certificate called an EWS1 is awarded if it's safe.

Unfortunately, EWS1 inspectors remain in short supply, which is creating a backlog. Some freeholders don't even think they have to apply for a certificate, creating further potential problems for leaseholders.

With leaseholders continuing to fear for their safety and facing huge renovation costs, plus long delays for building inspections, the scandal of combustible cladding is likely to continue for many years to come.

We contacted the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on several occasions to put forward the concerns of our interviewees, but we weren't given any answers to our questions.



A memorial to those who died in the Grenfell Tower fire. Campaigners hope that action will be taken before another avoidable tragedy occurs

KEEP CALM AND KEEP SAFE

If you have any worries about anything you've read on this page, do talk to an adult about it, and remember these safety tips:

- Check your home has smoke detectors and that they are tested regularly
- If you see something that could be a fire risk, such as a box of matches that has been left out by mistake, always tell an adult
- Make a fire escape plan with everyone in your home, so that they know the best routes to leave the building. Organise a fire drill to practise the plan
- If a fire does break out, follow a safe route outside unless advised otherwise
- Agree on a safe place well away from the building, where everyone can meet
- Call the fire service and never return to a burning building for any reason

BOOKS

YOUR READS!



THE BAD LUCK LIGHTHOUSE NICKI THORNTON

reviewed
by **Daniel
Salmon,**
aged ten

The Bad Luck Lighthouse is based on a young kitchen boy who finds himself swept away into his second magical adventure.

Seth Seppi becomes stranded on a small cove by the glistening sea. He pretends to be the new kitchen boy at a nearby lighthouse, but as he gets himself settled in, multiple unexplained deaths occur! What unspeakable horrors await?

I would rate this mystery book five out of five stars and recommend it for ages 9-15.

I absolutely loved this book and was so attached to it that I couldn't put it down! I would thoroughly recommend you read it.

WE WANT YOUR BOOK REVIEWS!

We'll need around 100 words on a book you've been reading and a picture of yourself (with parents' permission!) sent to bookreviews@firstnews.co.uk.

National Literacy Trust's Virtual School Library

SPEND time with Tracy Beaker and Jacqueline Wilson.



Our author of the week in the Virtual School Library is Jacqueline Wilson!

Schools might be closed again, but there's no need to miss out on reading. The Virtual School Library from the National Literacy Trust and Oak Academy, the online classroom, provides free books and access to your favourite authors and illustrators.

Inside the library this week, there's an exclusive video with Jacqueline Wilson, and you can read the book about everyone's favourite rebel, *The Story of Tracy Beaker*, for free! There are also fun Tracy activities to make and do from home.

Jacqueline recommends these children's books:

- *Ballet Shoes* by Noel Streatfeild
- *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell
- *Do You Speak Chocolate?* by Cas Lester

Head to library.thenational.academy to find out more.

Words for Life

Virtual School Library

FOR MORE TIPS AND ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE YOUR READING, WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING AT HOME, VISIT [WORDSFORLIFE.ORG.UK](https://www.wordsforlife.org.uk)

LONG-LOST GAME RELEASED

A JAPANESE game for the original PlayStation has finally been finished, 23 years after work on it began!

Back in 1997, a small team of Japanese developers spent eight months working on a game called *Magic Castle*.

Although the game went down well with bosses at Sony, they asked the team to work on another project instead. But they said no and the game was never published. Eventually the team went their separate ways.

However, after more than 20 years, one of the original developers decided to finish the game, which can now be downloaded free.

In the game, you've got to make your way through 20 floors of enemies as one of four different characters. Along the way, you'll find new weapons and upgrades to help you beat bad guys as you descend!



Kaigo Games



Young Horses

BUGSNAX

PC,
PS4/5

BUGSNAX is a bizarre adventure that puts you in the shoes of a journalist investigating the story of an island filled with half-bug, half-snack creatures. Reviewed by Amelia, aged 11.

"In the world of BugsNax, the people are called Grumpuses and look sort of like puppets. You're a journalist Grampus on the hunt for Lizbert Megafig, an explorer who has invited you to check out the goings-on on a mysterious island.

When you get to the island, lots has already happened! The Grumpuses who arrived with Lizbert have left their homes and, to make things worse, Lizbert herself has gone missing!

The other Grumpuses, who are all very funny characters, are hungry. Luckily, there's lots of "food" around the island – the BugsNax! These creatures are all over the place and, using tools given to you by other Grumpuses, you can catch some of them.

Different BugsNax will require different tools. For example, to catch the French fry-like spider (called a Fryder), you'll need to attract it with ketchup.

By collecting the BugsNax and feeding them to the Grumpuses, maybe you can find out what's really going on, but be warned: the answers you'll find are very, very odd indeed!"

STEAM HITS CHRISTMAS PEAK



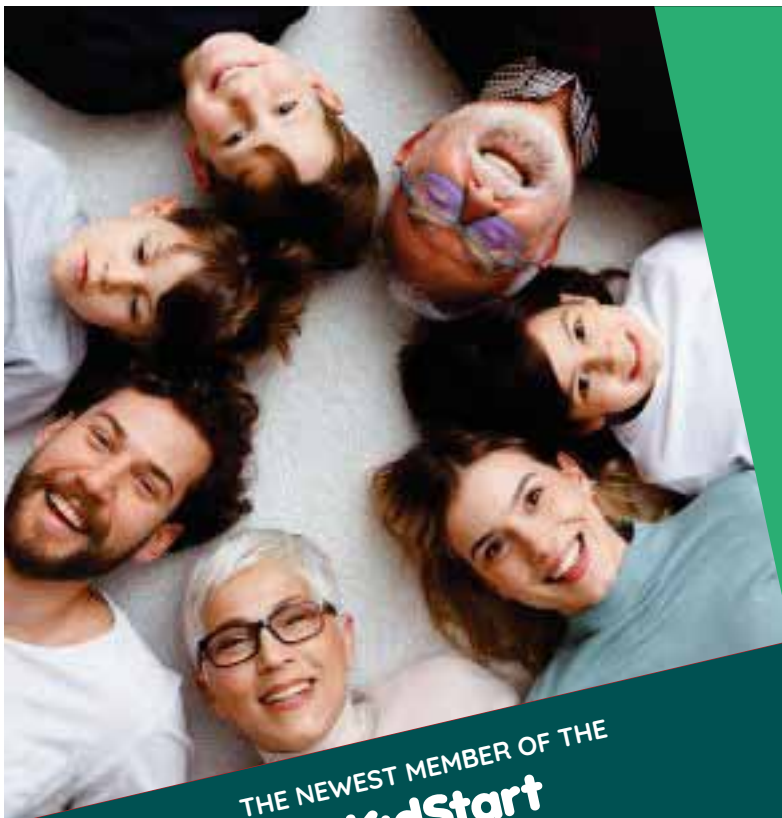
iStock

GAMING platform Steam set a new record for players over Christmas.

More than 25 million people were signed into the PC gaming platform on Christmas Day, the largest number ever to be logged on to the platform at the same time.

Of course, not everyone was playing a game at the time. The Steam database reported that 7.4 million people were actually in a game at the time the record was broken.

The previous record of over 22 million was set back in March, when Europe first went into lockdown.



THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE
KidStart
FAMILY

 BEANSTALK

Where parents + grandparents

come together to save

for their kids' future



beanstalkapp.co.uk/firstnews

CAPITAL AT RISK. Beanstalk is a trading name of KidStart Limited. KidStart Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Our FCA number is 473606.

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

by Daisy-Mae

DURING the October half-term break I saw what Marcus Rashford was doing about the free school meal movement and asked my mum: "What can I do to help?" And so the idea of the hampers was formed.

I thought of an idea to make up hampers for people who don't have much money to afford food and gifts at Christmas.

Some friends helped come up with the idea of the reverse advent calendar. Instead of taking something out each day, on the countdown to Christmas, you could donate something to put into a collection box. Then I could make up hampers to give to those that need them the most, and off it flew.

We had lots of support from the community, and the local

estate agents offered to have a collection box at their offices. My school also helped with collections and many local people have donated very generously.

I had a meeting with my head teacher about how our school can help me, and one with the local vicar, who also helped.

2020 was a strange year and Christmas was set to be different due to the coronavirus.

I hope the hampers spread a little sparkle around, and I am very grateful for everyone's support. Thank you.



Hampers ready for delivery

JUNIOR JOURNALIST

WE WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU/YOUR SCHOOL IS UP TO

Write in to let us know what you've been up to lately! Have you been getting creative? Been for a great day out? How has the coronavirus affected your school, friends and family? Why not share your experiences with First News readers?

Email your report (including pictures) to yournews@firstnews.co.uk

Don't forget to include your name and age (and your school's name and address for school news reports). By writing in, you give consent to First News printing details and photographs of those involved in the report.

VIRTUAL PANTO

by Amrit Kaur Matharu

I WAS lucky enough to take part in *Sisterhood In The Wood*, a virtual pantomime created by Girlguiding, and had such an amazing time.



Amrit

It was fantastic how all of the children got involved to help guide Goldie and Red (the main characters) in their adventure. I even got to sing *Campfires Burning* as part of the choir. I loved taking part and had so much fun.

Lots of things that we usually do at Christmas have been cancelled due to COVID-19. To take part in the pantomime meant I could look forward to something and see my friends. I felt excited because I love acting and meeting new people.

The pandemic has been difficult as there have been so many changes to our normal lives. I missed my friends and family over lockdown, but Brownies has kept me busy doing all of the challenges and earning badges.

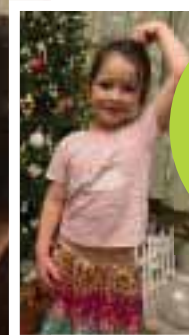
I look forward every week to my Brownies meeting and seeing Snowy Owl, my Brownies leader. I have designed a chocolate bar (as part of our marketing challenge) and recently took part in Children in Need, where I raised £100 by doing a sponsored silence for nine hours.

JUNIOR JOURNALIST

BRILLIANT BALLET



The ballet barre lesson online



JUNIOR JOURNALIST

by Madison

MY sister Eleanor and I took part in a virtual ballet barre lesson to help launch a new show on Disney+.

The lesson took place online over the Christmas holidays with a professional dance teacher called Stephanie. She sent us some special ballet shoes before the lesson, which were fun to wear. During the class we tried some special stretches that ballet dancers learn when they are training. She also showed us some moves from the ballet *The Nutcracker*. The new show on Disney+ is called *On Pointe* and it is all about a famous ballet school in America. My sister and I want to learn how to do big ballerina twirls, but we might need a bit more practice, as we keep falling over when we try!

On Pointe is on Disney+ now!

SUBSCRIBE FOR SCHOOL – FIND OUT MORE AT [SCHOOLS.FIRSTNEWS.CO.UK](https://schools.firstnews.co.uk)
CALL: (020) 3195 7256 EMAIL: [SCHOOLS@FIRSTNEWS.CO.UK](mailto:schools@firstnews.co.uk)

WHAT'S IN THE SHOPS?

JURASSIC PARK 3D DESK LAMP NUMSKULL.COM £24.99

This cool, 3D moulded lamp is just the job when you want to sit down and watch your favourite movie. The logo lights up to give a subtle glow to the room and the lamp fits easily onto the wall or on a side table. It's the perfect collectable for any fan of the iconic films.

*All prices correct at time of printing



JURASSIC PARK DANGER! BOARD GAME MENKIND.COM £25.00

A strategy game based on the popular Jurassic Park franchise. Play as the main characters, working as a team, and try to escape the island before the dinosaurs get you. The clever board is made of a series of hexagons that you can arrange any way you like, meaning that the board can be different every time you play, bringing new challenges and making it more nail-biting.



LEGO JURASSIC WORLD CLAIRE MINIFIGURE LINK WATCH IWANTONEOFTHOSE.COM £15.99

Claire Dearing is the operations manager of Jurassic World and features on this LEGO watch. The LEGO Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom buildable watch comes complete with interchangeable, multicoloured watch links for you to build and design as you like.



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We are extremely passionate about the environment and we are always looking at ways to reduce waste throughout the company and across all of our products. Our paper comes from sustainable sources. The new material we use to wrap mailed copies is made from potato starch, so it is now fully home compostable and completely biodegradable, and you can put it in with your food waste, in your green garden waste recycling bins, or on your own compost heap.

WIN! 2020 ROYAL MAIL YEARBOOK

If you entered any of our stamp competitions last year, then this competition is definitely one for you!

The 2020 Royal Mail Yearbook invites you to look again at the diverse range of subjects featured in last year's stamp programme. With each chapter written by a specially commissioned expert, it offers a new, often unusual perspective on each of the topics celebrated on special stamps.

It takes a particular talent to create a great stamp image. The constraints of working on such a small canvas mean that designers need to think differently, finding original ways to convey their ideas.

Last year's stamps have portrayed areas as far apart as classic British computer games and the much-loved Coronation Street; the Gothic Revival Palace of Westminster and the flamboyant rock band Queen; the UK's brilliant pollinating bugs and the perennially inspiring Romantic poets.

We have one 2020 Royal Mail Yearbook up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question:

When was Parliament's Westminster Hall first built?
a) 1016 b) 1136 c) 1097

ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRY BOOK

firstnews.co.uk/competitions or see page 19. The closing date is 21 January 2021.

FIRST NEWS HOME iHUB



THE First News iHub is an interactive e-learning platform created to support children aged 7-14 to develop key reading, comprehension, writing and oracy skills, while also learning about key news stories from around the world.

With hundreds of activities available, this is a fantastic tool for parents to support their child's learning at school and for home educators.

"The iHub is fun, educational but most of all informative. I love it!"
Mete, ten years old, May 2020

AWARD
WINNING!

"The iHub has become a regular and popular choice for our 'home-school' during lockdown!"
A Crawford, parent, May 2020

HEAD TO WWW.FIRSTNEWS.CO.UK/HOMEIHUB TO FIND OUT MORE

SPORT IN PICTURES



Poland's Dawid Kubacki soars through the air during the third leg of the Four Hills ski jumping tournament at Innsbruck, Austria. Dawid won the second leg at Garmisch-Partenkirchen on New Year's Day, setting a record hill jump of 144m in the process

Linn Svahn of Sweden leads the way at the women's Tour De Ski in Switzerland. Linn won both the sprint free and the 10km classic mass start



Frank Lampard feels the heat after his Chelsea side suffered a fourth defeat in six Premier League matches. The Blues lost 3-1 at home to Manchester City. Frank said: "The pressure remains constant in this job"



Gerwyn Price of Wales holds the trophy aloft after winning darts' PDC World Championship. Gerwyn won his first world title after beating two-time champion Gary Anderson 7-3 in the final

Robert Jackson of the Cleveland Browns (left) clashes with Diontae Johnson of the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Browns won 24-22 to secure an NFL play-off spot for the first time since 2002



SPORT IN NUMBERS

62 points were scored by basketball star Steph Curry as his team, the Golden State Warriors, beat the Portland Trail Blazers 137-122. Steph, 32, became the second oldest player to score over 60 points in an NBA game. Kobe Bryant set the record in his final game when he was aged 37.



27 -year-old Dutch rider Denise Betsema won the fourth round of the UCI Cyclo-cross World Cup in the Netherlands. She served a ban last year after failing anti-doping tests. Fellow Dutch cyclist Mathieu van der Poel won the men's race.



3 conversions and five penalties were scored by Leicester Tigers' George Ford as his side beat Bath 36-31. The exciting Premiership match saw Bath go 14-0 up at Welford Road, before a stunning comeback left the two sides level with just 17 minutes to go. Leicester then took control, with George scoring a total of 21 points.



"Queen" Petra Vlhová wears her crown – and a fetching cape – after winning the World Cup slalom race in Croatia

SNOW QUEEN!

ALPINE skier Petra Vlhová of Slovakia has been crowned "Snow Queen" for the second year in a row after narrowly winning the World Cup slalom event in Zagreb, Croatia.

The Snow Queen race went ahead even though the mountain it took place on, Medvednica, is just 50 kilometres away from the epicentre of a major earthquake that took place at the end of December (see page 8).

Petra's two runs had a combined time of 1 minute 59.08 seconds. She pipped second-placed Katharina Liensberger of Austria by just five hundredths of a second! Switzerland's Michelle Gisin came third, 22 hundredths of a second behind the winner.

The victory took Vlhová 128 points clear at the top of the World Cup standings. She said: "Today was a really tough day... but I found something and pushed more before the finish."

The races in Croatia have been named Snow Queen since 2005, in honour of local legend Janica Kostelić, a three-time World Cup champion. She never won the Snow Queen trophy herself, but came third in 2006.

As First News went to press, the men's race was due to take place on 6 January.



Erik Lamela (left), Giovani Lo Celso and Aleksandar Mitrović (below) are among several players who broke COVID-19 rules

STARS BREAK COVID RULES

FIVE Premier League clubs have promised to punish footballers who have recently broken coronavirus restrictions.

Fulham, Manchester City, Tottenham, West Ham and Crystal Palace are all under the spotlight after some of their players were found to have breached Tier 4 restrictions over the New Year period. City said they were "disappointed" that Benjamin Mendy invited people over for a New Year's Eve party at his house. The club said they would hold an "internal investigation". Separately, pictures on social media showed Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrović apparently at a New Year party with Palace star Luka Milivojević and several other people. Fulham said the matter would be "dealt with internally," while Palace boss Roy Hodgson said: "We condemn it, we certainly apologise for it."

Tottenham manager José Mourinho said he was "disappointed" after a picture on social media showed Spurs stars Erik Lamela, Sergio Reguilón and Giovani Lo Celso at a party with West Ham's Manuel Lanzini.

Some ex-players and fans have called for clubs to dish out tough punishments – including dropping players from the first team – for breaches of COVID-19 rules.

