Prime Minister Boris Johnson has urged people to work from home, not to travel unless they need to and to avoid places like restaurants, cinemas and theatres. It’s thought schools may have to close as the virus spreads.

One of the other key parts of the prime minister’s battle plan is for older people to shield themselves from others by staying home alone for 12 weeks. This is because the over-70s aren’t doing so well with COVID-19, with this age group most at risk of dying from the illness.

The good news is that, even among the elderly, nearly everyone survives unless they have other serious health problems already. The illness is generally mild in younger adults and children, no worse than a cold.

Earlier this week, Mr Johnson said anyone who lives with someone who has a cough or a temperature should stay at home for 14 days. This is to stop their illness spreading, in case it’s caused by the coronavirus.

The virus was first found in China on 31 December. Since then it has spread around the world. Now, countries across the globe are at war with it.
2. QUICK NEWS

20 THINGS TO KNOW AND TELL

QUICK NEWS TO READ YOURSELF AND SHARE WITH FRIENDS

1. HEDGE YOUR BETS
The RSPB charity is asking gardeners to stop hedge cutting until August to help wildlife. Breeding season for birds is almost here and pruning hedges could have a big effect if nests are dislodged or damaged. Charlotte Ambrose, RSPB Wildlife Adviser, says: “If you must prune, please be aware that it is illegal to damage or destroy an active nest. It’s crucial we all play our part in giving nature a home.”

5. SCREEN STUDY
YouGov research has shown that 40% of UK children have their own tablet by age six, while 10% own a smartphone. By age 17, 96% have their own phone. Some studies suggest that kids should be limited to less than two hours of screen time a day. It has also been suggested that between one and two hours a day can be good for the wellbeing of children.

6. FLYING HIGH
The Aerobility charity gives disabled people the chance to fly a plane. Stuart Miller, a wheelchair user, now has a pilot’s licence thanks to help from the charity. He said: “Once you’re up in the air, there’s no disability.”

7. BY GUM
Salisbury City Council has used chalk to circle all the chewing gum that litters the streets. It says it will cost £36,000 to steam clean the gum to remove it from pavements. A council spokesman said: “It costs 3p per stick to buy and 10p to prise off the streets. It’s a blight on our beautiful city.”

8. STORMS IN EGYPT
Thunderstorms across Egypt have caused havoc, killing five people and injuring many. Rain caused flooding that demolished houses, lightning sparked several fires and strong winds blew a car into a canal.

9. FIX IT, DON’T BIN IT!
People in the city of Lincoln are taking their broken items to be repaired at the Lincoln Repair Cafe. Plastic Free Lincoln set up the project to help people get things fixed instead of binning them and making more waste.

10. POLL RESULTS
Last week, we showed you a gaming bed and asked if you thought it was a good idea: 16% of you said it was, while 84% thought it was too much!

11. PEST PREDICTION
Locusts continue to threaten food supplies across East Africa. Kenya, Somalia and Uganda have been particularly affected. Britain has donated a supercomputer that uses satellite data to track the locusts and predict where they will go next. It is hoped the computer will help to control outbreaks. A small swarm of locusts can eat enough crops in a single day to feed 35,000 people.

12. FALCON CRIME
A peregrine falcon has been shot in the wing and may never fly again. The birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act but are still illegally killed. The bird was shot in Telford and police are investigating.

13. DODGY DISNEY DEALS
A woman who sold fake trips to Disneyland has been jailed for 29 months. Katherine Clark, from Durham, caused at least 35 victims to lose a total of £12,000. The judge said she “took away sunshine” from the victims’ children.

14. 100 YEARS YOUNG
Marion Watson is a former gymnast and a 100-year-old keep fit teacher! She teaches exercise classes three times a week at her retirement home in Essex. Marion says: “I just love the joy of movement and seeing people improve.”

15. SEA LEVELS RISE
The World Meteorological Organization says that global sea levels hit a record high in 2019. Melting ice caps and warmer water raised sea levels, making coastal communities more vulnerable to storm surges.

16. UNIFORM COSTS
Some parents don’t apply to send their children to certain schools because the uniforms are so expensive. England’s school standards minister Nick Gibb said: “Some families are facing uniform bills in the hundreds of pounds.” He added the idea of a uniform being a barrier to a certain school was “simply unacceptable”. It is hoped that a law to give cheaper uniform options to parents will be passed by the Government.

17. HAND GEL HOPE
Authorities in Greece say they have up to 155 tonnes of confiscated alcohol that could be turned into hand sanitiser to fight coronavirus. They are looking for manufacturers willing to turn it into antiseptic hand gels.

18. RARE GIRAFFES KILLED
Poachers have killed two extremely rare white giraffes. A female and her calf were killed and later discovered by rangers at Kenya’s Ishiqbini Hirola Community Conservancy. A spokesperson said: “This is a very sad day for Kenya.” It is believed that only one white giraffe now remains in the world.

19. BOXING BOOST
Bristol boxing charity Empire Fighting Chance has been given £30,000 to continue its great work. The charity offers non-contact boxing courses, mentoring and therapy for more than 4,000 vulnerable children and teenagers each year.

20. CAT STUCK FAST
Firefighters from Barry in Wales were called to help a poor cat who got itself stuck in a very narrow space. The cat was too wedged in to be pulled free, so some bricks were removed to get her out. The cat, named Max, is safe and sound and relaxing at home after being reunited with her owners.

2. LONG IN THE TOOTH
Indian student Pawan Bhavsar has set a record after having a tooth that was causing him pain removed. The massive molar measured 1.53 inches (3.89cm) long, beating the previous Guinness World Record of 1.46 inches.

3. WAITING FOR ORGANS
NHS Blood and Transplant says the average wait for a lifesaving organ is one to three years. More than 250 people have waited over seven years for a kidney. New organ laws are coming into force in England on 20 May that should improve wait times.

4. SEA PLEA
Sir David Attenborough has called for an end to deep sea mining, where companies dig for minerals for things like mobile phones and batteries. Sir David said: “Mining of the deep sea could create a devastating series of impacts that threaten the processes that are critical to the health and function of our oceans.”

10. POLL RESULTS
First News Live! user unicorn248 thinks it is a bad idea because “it focuses kids too much on screens and will also lead to obesity and a lack of sleep.”

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IT feels a bit like we’re at war, doesn’t it? However, the enemy is not an army, it is a new strain of coronavirus disease called COVID-19. But, although wars are harsh, they also bring out the best in people. There is a sense that people put aside their differences and pull together for the good of those around them. We’ve been hearing about a lot of good things going on in communities, with people looking out for one another. Share this page with older people you know who are most at risk from the virus, but also from loneliness in the coming weeks. Stay in touch.

COVID-19 is a lot more dangerous to older people than younger ones.

To keep older generations safe from the coronavirus, the Government has said that the over-70s should ‘self-isolate’ and avoid others for 12 weeks. For many older people across the UK, maybe your grandparents or neighbours, this will be difficult and they could get very lonely.

As these rules are brought in, we’re calling on our readers and their families to help the older people in their lives keep loneliness away, by keeping in touch with them while the coronavirus is with us.

Below, we’ve included some guides for you to share with elderly people you know on how to set up various video-calling apps and software. And there are some other ways that you can help.

While tech may come easy to you, it can be hard for older people to get the hang of things.

So, with the help of a parent or carer, send this page to older people and help them stay connected even if you can’t see them in person.
MEET Eleanora. She is 15 years old and lives in Verona, Italy. We asked her to tell us what life is like in lockdown, with no school to go to.

“The situation is really, really strange because we’re not allowed to leave the house unless you have to go to work, to buy something or just for medical reasons. Bars and restaurants are all empty. The streets are empty. People are also asked to maintain one metre of distance and there are people in scarves and masks. We also must wear plastic gloves at the grocery store before touching anything. Some people are panicking, but most of them are just following the rules and doing their best to stop the spread.

I have not been to school for over two weeks and if school is not open by 3 April, everyone passes with full marks. Woo hoo!

In conclusion, I miss my normal life but I don’t miss waking up every morning at six for school.”

CORONAVIRUS: FACT OR FAKE?

Hairdressers in China are using long poles to cut hair from a distance.

FACT! Weirdly, this is true! You can watch the video in episode 66 of FYI.

VOTE IN OUR POLL

Do you think schools in the UK should close?

first.news/polls

ON LOCKDOWN IN ITALY

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ONLINE CLIMATE STRIKES

GRETA Thunberg has told students around the world to protest against climate change online, to avoid gathering in large groups during the coronavirus outbreak.

She suggests taking part in a digital strike at home by posting a photo with a sign and the new hashtag #ClimateStrikeOnline. “Keep your numbers low but your spirits high,” she says.

The 17-year-old campaigner outlined a number of ways activists can make their voice heard without leaving the house, including emailing politicians, putting a strike sign in the window and posting on social media.

COW PEE “CURE”

A HINDU group in India has hosted parties where people drink cow urine to protect themselves from COVID-19.

The cow is considered to be sacred (special and greatly respected) by many Hindus. Some believe cow urine or cow dung can cure cancer, despite there being no evidence that it does. Experts have also warned that it will not prevent coronavirus.

“We have been drinking cow urine for 21 years, we also take a bath in cow dung. We have never felt the need to consume English medicine,” said Om Prakash, who attended one of the parties.
**5. CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL**

## TRUMP ASKED TO RESPECT SCIENCE

**DONALD Trump’s response to the coronavirus pandemic has been widely criticised by scientists, even though the US president rated his handling of the crisis as ten out of ten.**

At first, Trump dismissed the outbreak as a “hoax” and said that his political rivals were making a meal out of it to make him look bad.

It was pointed out that Trump’s government broke up the team responsible for preparing for a possible pandemic, and didn’t replace them. When journalists asked him about it last week, he denied knowing anything about it.

The respected journal Science printed an editor’s comment that blasted Trump. “The nation has had nearly four years of harming and ignoring science,” wrote Holden Thorp, who also said that the president’s words “are now clearly a matter of life and death”.

## HOW TO CLEAN YOUR PHONE

**WHEN is the last time you cleaned your phone?**

Even though we touch our phones dozens of times each day, it’s not exactly something we think to do regularly.

During the coronavirus pandemic, some health officials are suggesting that we clean our phones whenever we wash our hands – but just how do we do that?

Apple and Samsung say that anti-bacterial wipes can damage a smartphone’s protective screen, so to clean it they recommend that you use a soft, damp, lint-free cloth and soap.

Make sure you clean the full device, including the case if you have one.

## £25,000 TECH PRIZE

**THE Longitude Explorer Prize is offering £25,000 for a school or youth group who comes up with the best tech solution to some of the problems facing the world today.**

This week, 40 teams of 11 to 16-year-olds were revealed to have made it to the finals, and a number of the inventions could really help people who are affected by the coronavirus.

One is the MedBot (pictured above), developed by West Exe School, which can deliver prescriptions to those who cannot leave the house. Or there’s the Loneliness Buddy, developed by Titus Salt School, which can chat to lonely people and connect them to people who like similar topics.

The teams will now be mentored ahead of the finals in July.

## VENTILATORS NEEDED

**IN countries affected by the coronavirus, factories have been helping out.**

Coronavirus can lead to breathing troubles for some, so they may need ventilators to help them breathe.

Lots of factories are now trying to use their machines to make ventilators instead of their usual products.

In Italy, a hospital that ran out of ventilator valves was contacted by a 3D printing company, who designed and printed 100 in 24 hours for them.

## VIRAL KINDNESS

**WHILE there are certainly some who are behaving selfishly during this outbreak, lots of people are doing their bit to help out wherever they can.**

In the UK, tens of thousands of people have come together (while staying a safe distance apart), and joined up with community groups to help out the most vulnerable in our society.

They’re delivering leaflets with contact information on, so those who need to can call and request help from someone who’s healthy and has washed their hands.

The volunteers are offering to pick up shopping, deliver medicine or just chat, should someone be feeling lonely.

Celebrities have been helping out too. Ryan Reynolds (the voice of Detective Pikachu) has donated $1 million to food banks in the US and Canada. Noel Fielding, Great British Bake Off presenter, hosted an art competition online to keep people busy and lift spirits.

All over the world, people are showing kindness. Kuwait has donated $10 million to coronavirus relief in Iran, and Chinese billionaire Jack Ma has pledged to donate more than a million testing kits to Africa, as cases begin to rise there.

### SHOPPERS

**Even though supermarket bosses and the prime minister have asked people to only buy what they need, people have been filling trolleys with toilet paper, canned food, rice, pasta, tissues, hand sanitiser and painkillers.**

“Please think before you buy and only buy what you and your family need,” the supermarkets said. “If we all do this then we can make sure we have enough for everyone.”

At first, the stockpiling resulted in lots of jokes on social media, but then people started to get annoyed because they couldn’t get products that they genuinely needed.

Stores have now put limits on how many of some items people can buy, but some shoppers have been going back in, or taking family members so that each person can grab as much as possible.

To make sure that vulnerable people don’t miss out, many supermarkets are now allowing only older people into stores for the first or hour or two that they’re open every day.

### SELFISH SHOPPERS

**by Ian Eddy and Aaron Henderson**

**SHOPPERS across the UK have been called “selfish” for emptying supermarket shelves and leaving nothing for other people.**

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WE'VE talked about the health effects of the new coronavirus in recent weeks, but there are many other negative effects of such a widespread outbreak. We took a look at some of the disruption that the coronavirus is causing for societies, businesses and governments around the world.

**HOLIDAYS HALTED**

The travel and tourism industries were the first to feel the effects, as people started to worry about travelling to countries where outbreaks have occurred. Reports of cruise ships being quarantined or not allowed to dock has also put people off booking a cruise.

Italy has been hit hard by the virus and is on almost total lockdown. Many businesses in the country rely on tourists, whether that's in cities like Rome and Venice or one of the many ski resorts in the north of the country. More countries soon followed suit, and the UK Government has recommended against all but essential travel to anywhere in the world.

The International Air Transport Association said last week that losses for airlines in 2020 will be at least $63-113 billion (around £48-86 billion). That's just for the passenger side of the business – there'll also be huge losses for cargo flights as well. That's due to travel restrictions, but also because companies can't produce as many goods because their factories have had to close down, either because staff are ill or because they can't get the materials they need to make things.

**IT'S NOT KICKING OFF**

The effects on society and culture are also increasing, as events and sports matches are called off – Euro 2020 has been postponed for a year. Officials have said that some leagues may not even finish this year, so they'll have to decide how, or even whether, to award the titles. There are also worries that the Olympics – the world’s biggest sporting event – will be delayed or called off.

As people stay home, it means that shops, pubs, restaurants, cinemas and theatres are going to lose money, and these are some of the most vulnerable businesses that don't have huge piles of cash to fall back on. Even Cineworld, the world's second-largest cinema chain, has said that closing cinemas for three months could put it out of business.

There is pressure on governments to give businesses money so they don’t close, so it’s likely that rich countries will have to pay out billions of pounds to stop the world economy from collapsing.

In China and Italy, the two worst-affected countries, travel restrictions mean that many workers have had to stay at home. Although some people can work from home, many people, such as those who work in factories or drive vans, can't. This means that lots of companies are losing money, and some workers who don’t get sick pay won’t be earning anything. For small companies, there's a real risk of going out of business or having to sack people they can't afford to pay. People who aren't getting paid then have to worry about paying bills and putting food on the table.

Although it seems heartless to talk about money when people are dying, if poorer countries get hit with the coronavirus and have to put travel restrictions in place as well, the effect on their economy could mean less money going to their health service, making everything much worse. Plus, if people lose their jobs and have no money, it affects their physical and mental health in lots of negative ways.

Food banks are suffering due to panic buying (where people buy much more than they need), which means they can't use cash donations to buy basic food products, as shops are out of stock.

Schools have been closed in many countries, including Poland, Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic and Ireland. Many experts think it could backfire, as kids will be more likely to pass the virus on to older relatives. It also forces parents to take time off work, including many health workers who are needed now more than ever.

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**IS THERE ANY GOOD NEWS?**

One image that went viral during China’s lockdown period was this NASA pic, showing how nitrogen dioxide pollution (from factories, car exhausts, etc) had fallen dramatically since January. Some scientists have suggested that this will even save lives because there'll be many fewer deaths from air pollution. However, António Guterres, the head of the UN, said that countries shouldn't let the coronavirus distract from the climate crisis. “We will not fight climate change with a virus,” he said.
**Damaged Teeth Could Fix Themselves!**

**Scientists** think they could be able to create a drug that helps damaged teeth repair themselves.

When a tooth isn’t healthy, it decays and a hole called a cavity can form inside it. To fix them, we can get fillings from dentists, who use certain materials to fill the cavity and protect the tooth from further decay.

Researchers at King’s College London have found that a drug called Tideguslib can activate stem cells (cells that make other cells) in teeth. These stem cells can make a substance similar to dentine, the part of the tooth between the hard enamel on the outside and the sensitive pulp on the inside.

Paul Sharpe, who is involved with the research, said: “The latest results bring us another step closer to natural tooth repair.” He added that the approach could prove to be “simple and cost effective [value for money]”.

**Meat Eating Must Halve**

The UK may have to cut the amount of meat and dairy it eats by half to hit its climate change targets, a Government-funded report suggests.

Last year, the Committee on Climate Change proposed that meat and dairy consumption would need to reduce by a fifth. But a report by Energy Systems Catapult, a not-for-profit centre, said that a fifth would not be enough for Britain to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Even with positive growth in other areas like more solar and wind farms, the report said that less meat, as well as less flying, were the “two key lifestyle changes [that] will need to be achieved”.

Their report also studied other ways that the UK can help to hit its 2050 target. They said up to 124,000 acres of trees need to be planted each year to store carbon. Another suggestion was that electricity needs to be generated by four times as many wind farms, five times more solar farms and up to 32 new nuclear plants.

The report admitted that making such big changes would need a lot of technological innovation, as well as convincing people to change their ways.

**Dairy butter is three times worse for the planet than plant-based spreads,** according to research. This is because cows burp a lot, causing more emissions. Plant spreads come from oils with low emissions – as long as the plants aren’t grown on deforested land.

**Rare Blond Badger**

A rare ‘blond’ badger has been found in a garden in Oxford.

The light-coloured badger – very different to their usual black-and-white markings – was found last month. However, it was only released back into the wild last week after recovering from some injuries.

RSPCA officer Peter Green said: “We had a call about a ‘strange’ animal in the back garden and when I first arrived it wasn’t quite clear what it was. But as I managed to get closer I could see that it was in fact an albino or blond badger!”

Blond badgers are quite unusual. The change in colour is caused by a condition called leucism. This is when pigment, the natural colouring of an animal, is reduced, causing the fur to turn a pale yellow colour. It’s similar to albinism, where skin, hair or feathers turn white.

**Good Week for...**

**Salford**

The city in Greater Manchester has been announced as the greenest place to live in England and Wales. Salford is building more energy-efficient homes and green spaces than any other place. It also has low energy consumption and high recycling rates.

**Bad Week for...**

**Walking In The Wind**

A man who chased his umbrella off a cliff in Bournemouth tumbled 100ft and was trapped above beach huts before someone heard his cries and he was rescued. Amazingly, he only suffered a broken shoulder after the spectacular fall.

**Did You Know?**

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THE V&A museum has announced it has acquired a rare late-medieval cluster brooch, after it was uncovered in 2017 by a metal detectorist. Dating from 1400-1450, it is the only one of its kind to be found in the UK, and one of only seven known examples in the world.

A PRIEST live-streams Mass via YouTube at an empty Santa Maria di Betlem church, as people follow orders to stay home due to the coronavirus.

More than 600 children, families and adults donned their red and white stripes to walk, jog and run for the National Literacy Trust’s annual Where’s Wally? fun run. The event, in its eighth year, raised more than £25,000 for the Trust.

A NEW collector’s edition James Bond coin with a face value of £7,000 has been unveiled by the Royal Mint. The 7kg gold coin, which measures 185mm in diameter, features an engraving of an Aston Martin DB5 with its famous BMT 216A number plate. It is the largest coin with the highest face value ever produced by the Royal Mint in its 1,100-year history.

THE 100th floor of the Hudson Yards skyscraper is home to Edge, the highest outdoor sky deck in the western hemisphere. It is made of glass panels that tilt outwards, allowing the brave to step out 1,100ft (335m) over the city and take in the spectacular view of the New York skyline.
THE World Wide Web is failing girls, according to its creator, Tim Berners-Lee.

In an open letter, he says many women in the world don’t have internet access. He also worries the internet is not safe enough and that artificial intelligence (AI) is stopping women from getting jobs. Discrimination is especially bad for those from vulnerable groups.

Research by the Web Foundation and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts found over half of young women have experienced abuse online, and 84% think the problem is getting worse. “Online abuse forces women out of jobs and causes girls to skip school, it damages relationships and causes tremendous distress,” says Berners-Lee. He is now asking companies and governments to put women first.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak is in charge of delivering the Budget, an annual announcement that sets out how the nation’s money will be spent. He said there would be funding for specialist 16-19 maths schools in every region, £25,000 on average for each secondary school to invest in arts activities and £29 million a year to improve PE teaching.

Meanwhile, climate spending will focus on limiting CO₂ pollution and protecting communities from flooding. There will be tax breaks (reductions) for electricity and an increase in tax on gas and non-recycled plastic. There’ll also be investment in protecting and planting woodland.

However, teaching unions say less money will be available to repair school buildings, which they say could create dangerous teaching conditions. Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, thinks the investment doesn’t go far enough. “It is welcome,” she said, “but it falls well short of the £12.6bn needed to replace the cuts since 2015, let alone provide a world-class education for every child.”

People have also said that parts of the Budget could be harmful to the environment. New road building plans and a freeze on petrol prices could lead to an increase in cars on the road.
UK

- **Bus cuts**
  More than a million people could end up feeling “trapped in their homes” because of cuts to bus services, the Campaign For Better Transport has said. BBC research revealed disabled people and the elderly have used their free bus passes 18% less since 2010. This is in part because Government funding for bus services has fallen by £800m in the last ten years. Many people now rely on charity-run bus services or neighbours to get them to the shops or the doctor. Judith Lawrence, 75, says she hasn’t left her village at all this year. “I’ve got a bus pass, but no bus,” she said.

- **Crackdown on illegal parking**
  Stirling Council is cracking down on drivers who illegally park in disabled spaces. A blue badge is given to disabled people so they can use these spaces, but last year Stirling Council said there were 1,100 penalty notices due to illegal parking. Councillor Jim Thomson said: “It is completely unacceptable that a small minority of drivers continue to act this way with no consideration to disabled people.”

CORNWALL

- **Garden gone**
  A huge hole has appeared near a house in Cornwall, swallowing up most of its garden. The hole in Beacon, near Camborne, is believed to have collapsed because of an old mine shaft under the ground. Geologist Dale Foster suggested the mine could be “from the late 1700s into the early 1800s”. The area has been cordoned off and is still being monitored, as the ground around it is very weak.

BRISTOL

- **Surf therapy**
  Kids with poor mental health will be offered surf therapy by the NHS. The Wave Project began in Cornwall but will be based inland for the first time, in partnership with Bristol’s wave machine, The Wave. It aims to build confidence and self-esteem in children. A 2018 report found that the Cornish course “consistently improved the wellbeing of young people” and “had a lasting, positive impact.”

BRACKLEY

- **Songs for soap**
  A teenager has created a website that matches song lyrics to a 13-step hand-washing routine. Seventeen-year-old William Gibson wanted more options than just singing Happy Birthday twice. His website, Wash Your Lyrics, allows you to pick a song and download the musical poster. Over 175,000 posters were downloaded in the first three days. Queen’s Bohemian Rhapsody is the most popular song so far.

OXFORDSHIRE

- **Junior jungle**
  A tiny forest the size of a tennis court is being planted in Witney. Some 600 trees will be planted by the Earthwatch charity, council staff and volunteers. The idea of tiny forests is to mimic native woodland in urban areas. The trees have lots of uses, such as storing carbon, attracting wildlife, improving air quality and soaking up water to reduce flooding.

NEWS IN NUMBERS

- **89** is the age of powerlifter Ted Brown. His passion for weightlifting has spanned 70 years. He has won nine world and 30 British titles and still competes today.
- **£437,500** is being paid by Barratt Homes to re-home ten rare birds. The company will be allowed to build new homes in Devon, as long as it builds a new home for five pairs of cirl buntings (right), which are found in south Devon and Cornwall.
- **£30,000** was raised by residents in Albrighton to buy an emergency vehicle. First responders (volunteers who can get to patients quicker than an ambulance) used to have to use their own vehicles, but can now use a proper emergency vehicle for their 999 calls.
- **50** men turned up for the first Leicester Walking Men’s Club. Jack Voss organised the club to encourage men to talk about their feelings and mental health in a fun way... and with dogs!
ALMOST five million children have been born in war-torn Syria and its neighbouring countries since the war began nine years ago.

Charity UNICEF released the figures this week as the country enters its tenth year as a warzone. As well as the 4.8 million born in Syria itself, more than a million children were born as refugees in temporary camps.

Violence and conflict is still ongoing in the region, with more than 9,000 children killed or injured during the war. Hundreds of thousands of kids are still living in refugee camps with only basic services and supplies.

UNICEF executive director Henrietta Fore said: “Millions of children are entering their second decade of life surrounded by war, violence, death and displacement. The need for peace has never been more pressing.”

Rescuers searching for a lost dog near Loch an Nid in Wester Ross, Scotland used a BBQ to lure her out of hiding. The team from Dundonnell Mountain Rescue cooked sausages and bacon in a bid to attract Nell to the area. It worked and she was reunited with her owners!

BEACHES in parts of Australia will be patrolled by drones to keep swimmers safe from shark attacks after a successful trial in New South Wales.

Shark attacks off New South Wales beaches fell to just four last year, half the number of previous years, and much lower than 2015 when 14 people were attacked. The trial was the largest drone operation conducted in Australia, with more than 8,000 flights by drones along 1,300 miles of beach. The drones spotted sharks swimming too close to shore and triggered an early warning alarm to allow swimmers time to get safely out of the water, keeping both swimmers and sharks out of danger.

State authorities have announced that drone flights will become a permanent part of its plans to survey sharks. Other measures include tagging large sharks, which will trigger an alert if they swim too close to beaches.

Some of the largest species of shark in the world can be found in Australian waters and, so far, 500 large sharks have been tagged.

In other shark news, a team of marine scientists have found two new species of sixgill sawsharks in the Western Indian Ocean.

The sixgill sawsharks were discovered during an investigation into fisheries. The species are rarely seen and experts say it shows how much there is still to discover about our oceans.

AN entire car-free neighbourhood is being built in Utrecht in the Netherlands, with homes for more than 12,000 people.

The residential area, located between two canals, will be the largest car-free area of its kind in the world, spanning 24 hectares.

Around 20,000 bicycles are expected to be used by the community in the new Merwede district.

Construction on the site doesn’t begin until early 2022, but will include two new primary schools, a high school, sports centre and shops.

Utrecht has a reputation as the bicycling capital of Europe, with huge multi-storey car parks for regular bike users.

A FIRST NEWS reader has raised more than £2,300 for a children’s charity by taking part in a fundraising race.

Charlotte Howard, eight, from Haywards Heath has a heart condition and is raising money to help other families in a similar situation.

Charlotte was just nine weeks old when she underwent six-hour, open-heart surgery to fix a serious heart problem. Thankfully, the surgery went well and Charlotte was soon on the way to recovery.

Charlotte said: “I feel passionate about helping children with special hearts. I am impressed by how much people have donated – they have been generous.”

Charlotte has been training to run the Brighton Marathon Mini Mile under-9s race in April. The money she raises will go to Evelina London Children’s Hospital and ECHO.

WOW!
Dead Sea deception
This week, 16 fragments thought to be from the Dead Sea Scrolls were found to be fakes. After months of re-testing, the Museum of the Bible has announced that the pieces are likely to be made of ancient leather and the Hebrew on them was written in modern times, but carefully made to look like the real scrolls. The real Dead Sea Scrolls are ancient religious manuscripts that were discovered in 1946 in caves in the Middle East, close to the Dead Sea. They are thought to be more than 2,000 years old and contain some of the oldest-known biblical writing in the world. The Museum of the Bible bought the fragments for millions of pounds.

Ecosystem collapse
Scientists have said that large ecosystems could collapse sooner than originally thought. A report in the science journal Nature Communications says that the Amazon could become “a savannah-type ecosystem of trees and grass in only 49 years” (a savannah is a flat grassland with trees spaced out very widely). Computer simulations and real-world data from 40 natural environments found that once these ecosystems reach a “tipping point”, they can quickly collapse.

Epidemic ends
The last Ebola patient in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been discharged from hospital. The disease has killed more than 2,200 people in the country, since this outbreak began in August 2018. Health workers were seen dancing to celebrate the end of the epidemic. “This is very good news,” said World Health Organization boss Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

African adventures
Star Wars actor John Boyega (above), has signed a deal with Netflix to develop film projects focused on West and East Africa. Netflix said that it is thrilled to be creating movies focused on Africa, which will “bring unique African stories to members in Africa and around the world”.

More power for Putin
President Putin could stay in charge of Russia until 2036, after the country’s ruling party, United Russia, announced it would back a change to Russian law. At the moment, the law bans Putin from running for more than two terms in a row (12 years). But Putin has asked Russia’s constitutional court if it is legal for him to change the constitution (the laws of a country that set out people’s rights).

Is this a cow-nvict or a ref-moo-gee?
Police in the town of Pembroke Pines, Florida, are asking for help to track down an escaped cow. Officers released a wanted poster for the ‘unknown cow’, which was described as: “Brown with a white head. Faster than it looks. Talented fence jumper. Enjoys pools.” As First News went to press, the bovine fugitive was still on the loose.

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STUDENTS at a London college have created a simple device that could reduce pollution caused by driving.

The invention attaches to the wheels of a car and is said to collect up to 60% of airborne tyre particles before they enter the atmosphere. The students from Imperial College, who call themselves The Tyre Collective, say the collected particles could be reused in processes like 3D printing and soundproofing.

Non-exhaust emissions (NEE) are expected to rise from 7.4% today to 10% of all UK PM2.5 emissions by 2030.

A NEW study has revealed that house cats who hunt have a big effect on local animals, because they kill more prey in the area than similar-sized wild predators do.

If you’ve got a pet cat then you’ll know they sometimes do like to bring you grim little gifts, like a mouse or a bird that they’ve caught. But did you know that their hunting trips could be having a huge effect on the local wildlife?

Researchers at NC State University and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences worked with scientists and pet owners from six countries to collect GPS tracking data on cats, as well as reports on the prey captured by 925 of the pets. They discovered that, as these are pet cats, they’re fed every day so don’t kill as many animals a day as wild cats. But because they only tend to roam a small area – a 100-metre radius around their homes – the effect on local prey is quite concentrated. Also as there can often be quite a lot of pet cats in the same area, this makes the risks to birds and small mammals worse. The scientists found that house cats have a 2-10 times larger impact on wildlife than wild predators. They discovered that house cats kill between 14 and 39 prey animals per 100 acres every year. Knowing that, would you keep your cat indoors to help protect local wildlife?

SOME people think that choosing an artificial sweetener is a healthier option than sugar, but a new study has revealed that combining them with carbohydrates can affect the body’s ability to regulate blood sugar.

New research from Yale University has shown that sugar substitutes could also be bad for you. They asked 60 people to take seven drinks over two weeks: some people had drinks with sugar; others had drinks containing the low-calorie sweetener sucralose; some had a non-sweetening carbohydrate; others had both sucralose and the carbohydrate.

The study showed that people who drank the sucralose-carbohydrate combo had a lower insulin sensitivity (a measure of how well the body regulates blood sugar) after the trial than before. Low insulin sensitivity can come before diabetes.

They also discovered that combining artificial sweeteners with carbohydrates alters a person’s sensitivity to sweet tastes, so might not be a healthy option after all.
Congratulations on winning The Greatest Dancer!

Michael: We are over the moon, we can’t believe it. It’s even more than a dream come true. We didn’t think we would get past the mirror at the first auditions.

Jowita: We were so stressed and thought we were not spectacular or good enough for that show, then the mirror opened and Oti was there and we were like: “We did it!” We worked so hard to make her proud and to make ourselves proud and to show that ballroom and Latin can be very exciting.

The contestants were all so different this year. What did you learn from each other?

Jowita: of course, we were all just dancing all the time. Every time we were in the studio we would show each other some stuff. We were always having fun and dancing. I’m so happy that we met the final 12 and we made friends. Hopefully when this crazy time is finished we can all meet again and dance!

Michael: We actually started teaching them some of the Polish language as well.

How did you celebrate? Did you give yourselves a day off from dancing?

Michael: Oh no, absolutely not. We were rehearsing again straight away.

Jowita: Early Sunday morning we went straight to the studio and we rehearsed for the Havana Nights UK tour, which we started on Tuesday with Graziano Di Prima. We never stop; we just love dancing and we love what we do. We never feel tired, even if our bodies are feeling tired. We are so excited to join the tour; it’s like a dream come true. We feel blessed to dance with her.

You’ve become quite well known for your daring lifts and tricks, but do you ever get nervous?

Jowita: We get nervous all the time. We were nervous every Saturday.

Michael: Some of the tricks we did were quite scary. We never went the easy way.

Jowita: Sometimes on the Saturday we were practising and the tricks weren’t working, so we just had to relax and try again – but the stress is always there.

Which of the dances from the series was your favourite?

Jowita: The favourite one was with Oti in the final. We feel blessed to dance with her.

Michael: Dancing with a Strictly winner was just something else.

You’ve got a huge fan of yours from the start. How much did having her as your dance captain mean to you?

Jowita: Oti was the best dance captain ever and I think without her we couldn’t do what we’ve done or achieve what we’ve achieved. She wasn’t just a dance captain and mentor, she was also our friend. She was there with us when we were down and up, when we were crying and laughing. I just want to say how hard she works. In the beginning she had three acts and she was travelling every day; a few hours each day to help everyone be great. I can’t believe she did it and I can’t believe what a machine she is! We thought we were working hard, but she made us work even harder.

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PIGS OF THE WEEK

1. Comedian Matt Lucas is replacing Sandi Toksvig as co-host of The Great British Bake Off. He will join Noel Fielding to present the show. Matt said: “I’m chuffed to bits to be joining the most delicious show on television. I can’t wait to break bread with Noel, Prue and Paul and meet the brilliant bakers. And bearing in mind my love of cake, I’ve already ordered some much larger trousers in anticipation. See you in the tent!”

2. Coachella, one of the world’s biggest music festivals, has been postponed until October because of the spread of the coronavirus. The Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards have also been postponed. In the UK, the release of Peter Rabbit 2 has also been delayed and it will now hit cinemas in August.

3. Chris Ramsey will join Little Mix for the live shows when their series Little Mix: The Search starts on BBC One this spring. Little Mix said: “We’re so happy Chris has come on board to present The Search. He’s genuinely one of the funniest people we know and he’ll bring loads of his South Shields charm to the show. We can’t wait.”

HAMLET, one of William Shakespeare’s most famous plays, has been re-imagined for young people!

These fun pictures from the hour-long show were taken on the show’s schools tour. The play is currently touring primary schools in the UK, before heading to the National Theatre in London. Hamlet will be at the National Theatre from 30 March – 9 April. For tickets, visit www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/hamlet

4. Tell us about your character.
At the beginning, Gwyn is just a normal nine-year-old boy. His sister Bethan went missing four years ago on his fifth birthday, and his dad has blamed Gwyn for Bethan’s disappearance ever since. On his ninth birthday his gran, Nain, gives him five gifts, and Gwyn comes to realise that he has magic and he grows more in character. He has a good friend called Alun, and he makes friends with Arianwen, the Snow Spider. At first, Gwyn is really scared, but mostly he becomes really brave throughout the show!

5. How would you describe The Snow Spider?
It’s a really adventurous show. I think Harry Potter lovers will absolutely love it! There is also a great quote in the show that Nain says: “You’ve got to be scared to be brave.” I think anyone who watches it, will be inspired to be more brave.

6. What has been your favourite moment in the series so far?
I think a favourite moment was when we were filming in the bedroom for the first time. I’d read the books and they say that Gwyn has a really cool bedroom with cool wallpaper, drawers and everything. But when I walked in it for the first time, it had spaceships and little knights everywhere too. It was so cool! Another favourite moment was when we were filming the special effects, as I’d never done it before – I was amazed by how they did it all! I just thought they filmed it and then edited it in later, so I learned something new that day.

7. What was it like auditioning for The Snow Spider?
Well, first of all, I’d never done anything like it before. This is my first big thing! I sent a video clip to my mum, who told me: “Fflyn, I don’t think there’s a really big chance of you getting this because some kids have had a lot of experience.” And I was like: “Okay, but I still want to do it.” So I sent a video in and we had a call back. I was really excited because I’d never done it before.

8. The show is about magic. If you could have any magical power in real life, what would it be?
I would like to breathe underwater, but I would also like to fly. I think I’d go with flying!

Catch the first episode of The Snow Spider on CBBC and BBC One Wales on Sunday 29 March

THE Snow Spider is a magical new TV series, based on Jenny Nimmo’s best-selling book trilogy. Fflyn plays Gwyn Griffiths, the lead character in the story.
Hi Tony! When did you first hear about this new Disney+ show?

After I finished work on Toy Story 4, Pixar approached me and asked: “Would you be interested in doing a series where Forky asks a ton of questions?” When Pixar asks you to do something, you immediately say yes. I was really excited to be Forky again!

What’s your favourite episode of the show?

Oh, man… it’s so hard to pick a favourite. There are ten episodes in total and the one that comes to mind right now is What Is A Friend? In that episode, Forky develops a friendship with a coffee mug. It’s a really quirky and silly episode, but it’s also beautiful and funny. It’s really, really well done.

What have you learned from Forky’s questions?

I have learned to take time out. In my head, I get very busy. Sometimes my mind is like a fast-moving train and there’s a lot of noise in there, but watching these episodes makes me sit back and unwind. When you watch them, you think: “Let me just sit for four minutes and focus on these very simple values.” I like that.

How much has your love for Forky grown since Toy Story 4?

I can’t get enough of Forky. When you work on an animation like this, you can be really silly and goofy. There are no limits with animation, so I love stepping into that arena where there are no holds barred. You can be as crazy as you want to be!

Will we see any other Toy Story characters?

Sure! You’ll see Hamm, Rex and Trixie. You’ll also see Mr Potato Head.

Do you get to step into the recording booth with any of the other voice actors?

No. I didn’t record with any of the actors for the film either, which is odd. Well, it’s odd but it’s not unusual. Typically in animation, you go into the recording booth on your own. You have a real trust in the director because he’s heard all of the vocal performances. You have to trust in the director that you’re responding and reacting correctly to the way the other characters speak.

Do you have tons of Forky merchandise at home?

I have various pieces of merchandise. I have the tiny car. There’s a little racecar toy that’s very special. It looks like Forky has been flattened out. It’s tiny. I have a little Forky toy. You know what? It’s fun to give the merchandise away. I always carry little Forky magnets and button badges with me so I can give them away whenever I meet a kid who is a Toy Story fan.

What excites you the most about the launch of Forky Asks A Question?

There’s so much going on in the world right now. It’s such a busy world, but I love the way that Forky Asks A Question gives everyone a four-minute bump of joy. Each episode is a very simple message of kindness. I love anything that brings the world back to a sense of kindness and seeing things in simple, truthful values. I’m absolutely crazy about that. That’s why Forky Asks A Question is so special to me.
THE UK’s only sea otters have arrived at their new home in Birmingham.

Ozzy and Ola have joined the other residents at the National Sea Life Centre in Birmingham after travelling 5,000 miles from Alaska.

The otters were found as very young pups in different areas of Alaska and rehabilitated in captivity. Experts believe these animals would not be able to survive if they were to be released into the wild, so have found them a new permanent home in England.

The move to Birmingham has taken a lot of planning, and the UK has been granted guardianship of the endangered animals. This means that any money raised by people going to see the animals in Birmingham will be used to help environmental efforts in Alaska, their native home.

There are only two other places in Europe where sea otters can be found in captivity and just 17 places globally.

A NEW study has found that sea turtles are eating plastic because it smells like food.

It’s well known that turtles often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, but that didn’t explain why they also eat so many small pieces of plastic. Scientists from the University of North Carolina found that plastic that had been in the ocean for a long time smelt like food, which encouraged the turtles to eat it.

In the study, 15 loggerhead turtles in captivity were exposed to the smell of clean plastic and ‘biofouled’ plastic. Biofouled plastic is plastic that has been in the ocean and has algae, microbes, small plants and microscopic animals growing on it. Experts found that the turtles reacted to the biofouled plastic in the same way they reacted to food.

Scientists say that nearly every sea bird and more than half of the world’s sea turtles have eaten plastic. More than eight million tonnes of plastic is dumped into our oceans every year, putting all marine species under threat. The study was published in Current Biology.
SUPER SMART company Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) has opened up a whole new world of reading to those who thought that chapter of their lives was closed forever.

TECHNOLOGY CHANGES LIVES
Digital innovations are often created to make life easier for us. From drones that can deliver our Amazon packages, to AI that can write our shopping lists, innovation has created a world where technology has touched and improved endless aspects of day-to-day human life. Technology has changed all of our lives, but it has truly transformed some people’s lives.

THE GIFT OF READING
Digital innovating goes way beyond creating thinner smartphones and slicker tablets. Take one such innovation created by our friends at TCS. It’s a platform known as Access Infinity and it has given the gift of reading to thousands in India – a country where books published in Braille and other accessible formats are not readily available.

Reading is a gift that most of us take for granted. The ability to pick up a book, separate the pages and dive into a world of wonder and learning is something most of us barely think about, because we can choose to do it anytime we please.

Some aren’t so lucky.

WHAT IS A PRINT DISABILITY?
Millions suffer from what is known as a print disability. According to TCS, a print disability is “a condition that prevents a person from being able to read a printed book, either because of blindness or other physical impairment”.

According to The World Health Organization, there are more than 285 million visually-impaired people in the world, most of whom live in developing countries.

“These with a print disability can only read books specially formatted for that disability,” explains TCS.

“According to the World Blind Union, of the million or so books published in the world each year, less than 5% are made available in accessible formats.” Imagine not being able to read 95% of the books in your school library.

It’s all quite hard to imagine, isn’t it? Not being able to read because of a physical condition? For many, this is a reality, but TCS, believing in “accessibility for all”, have found a solution using their unique innovation.

WHAT IS ACCESS INFINITY?
Access Infinity is a platform that brings together a range of organisations, including schools, libraries, universities, government bodies and publishers such as Bookshare – an international online library for people with a print disability – to achieve a ground-breaking solution.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
Well, simply, the team at TCS automated the process that converts books into different formats. The platform allows quick and easy creation and distribution of reading materials into a range of formats like Braille, DAISY text and EPUB 3, which are all accessible to those with print disabilities.

These formats can then be accessed across a wide range of channels – from local libraries to individual smartphones – in a wide range of languages, gifting reading to thousands.

Today, more than 400,000 books can be accessed and read by those with print disabilities, thanks to this remarkable innovation.

CHECK OUT OUR SCHOOL RESOURCES AT FIRST.NEWS/INNOVATORS
Each year, Chickenshed’s Tales from the Shed team puts on a new show based on stories both old and new, anything from The Arabian Nights to The Jungle Book. This year the team are looking at Arthurian legends. There are hundreds of different myths and tales told about King Arthur and the legendary round table. The Chickenshed team liked the image of the round table, because when a table is round then no-one is at the head and everyone’s ideas are equal, which is the way their team like to work. Whether someone’s been working for Chickenshed for many years or they’ve just started, their ideas have the same weight. The show will be built from many different Arthurian stories. It will feature famous characters such as Guinevere, Merlin, the Lady in the Lake, Sir Lancelot, the legendary sword Excalibur, dragons – of course – and other mysterious stories that aren’t as well known. The team want to bring these stories to life in a new and exciting way for today’s audiences. The show will have a total cast of up to 30 performers. The key thing about any Tales from the Shed show is that the audience will have a say over some of the action, so no two shows will be the same! Here’s a sneak peek at how the show is shaping up…

A practical ride on a pantomime horse (the team will visit a real stable to see how horses move!)

The team of people behind the show is much bigger than the people you see on stage. There are the costume makers, puppet makers, set designers and a big team of writers... and one of those writers could be you! Don’t miss the chance to write a section of the show (see below). Optional extra: if you want to add a bit of humour to your entry, Chickenshed are also looking for funny alternatives to the sword in the stone. So, it could be the sausage in the stone, or the sword in the jelly, perhaps! These will be acted out by the cast and the audience will vote for their favourite each show! Or if you don’t want to enter the competition but just want to send in some funny ideas (to the address below), Chickenshed would love to hear from you!

Find out more about Chickenshed at chickenshed.org.uk.

CALLING all budding writers! Would you like to see your writing performed on stage?

Chickenshed are looking for a talented First News reader to write a section of Tales from the Round Table (see above for more about the show). They’d like you to write a section about the Lady in the Lake, who always appears just before something magical happens in the story.

They’d like you to bring this character up-to-date (perhaps including environmental concerns or any other modern-day issues).

Chickenshed shows are always original and full of fun, so use your imagination and be as creative as you like!

Chickenshed would like the section to be:

- Written in rhyming verse
- Five verses, maximum
- Include a modern-day twist
- Suitable for all children, from babies upwards (Tales shows are aimed at younger children).

(You could also include an optional extra funny idea based on the sword in the stone – see above.)

The winner will be invited to see Tales from the Round Table with their family and friends (up to a maximum of eight tickets).

Transport costs are not included, so the winner will need to be able to get to Chickenshed Theatre in Southgate, London.

Send in your entry to Chickenshed Easter Tales, First News, 7 Playhouse Court, 62 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 0AT or email win@firstnews.co.uk with Chickenshed Easter Tales in the subject line.

Dates for Tales from the Round Table are yet to be confirmed (the show has now been postponed from the original dates, 14-19 April) firstnews.co.uk/competitions or see page 23. The closing date is 17 April 2020.
JUNIOR BAKE OFF
...IS LOOKING FOR THE UK’S BEST YOUNG BAKERS AGED 9 - 15
WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK
APPLY BY 5th APRIL 2020
Enquiries: applytojuniorbakeoff@loveproductions.co.uk

WIN! THE EPIC KID NORMAL SERIES
BY GREG JAMES AND CHRIS SMITH!

TO celebrate the publication of Kid Normal and the Final Five, we’re offering you the chance to join the Super Zeroes on all four of their high-flying, horse-summoning, storm-gathering, mind-blowing adventures!

Murph Cooper and the Super Zeroes are about to face their greatest challenge yet... the general public!

In a plan to become the planet’s most powerful leader, super-smarmy ubervillain Nicholas Knox has revealed the existence of Heroes to the world at large, painting them as mad, bad and dangerous to know. Can Kid Normal expose Knox’s evil plan, or is the world of Heroes doomed forever?

We have ten sets of this super series up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question:

Which of these three famous book characters is not a villain?

a) Miss Trunchbull  b) Murph Cooper  c) Lord Voldemort

ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRY KID
firstnews.co.uk/competitions or see page 23. The closing date is 2 April 2020.

WHAT’S IN THE SHOPS?

FART NINJAS
AMAZON.CO.UK £5.99 EACH
Surprise and disgust your friends and family with fart sounds when they least expect it. Hide your Fart Ninja figure and launch a fart attack! This ninja clan has eight characters, with ten realistic fart sounds activated by a motion sensor. These stealthy ninjas really are “silent, butt deadly”.

BLUME SURPRISE DOLL
THETOYSHOP.COM £8.00
Blume dolls come hidden in their own flower pots. Just add water to your Blume pot and watch them grow and bloom right before your eyes! Each Blume Doll has hair that matches their distinctive personalities and outfits. Mix and match outfits, accessories and friends between your Blume dolls. With ten surprises in each pot, including accessories, stickers, miniplaysets and a surprise friend for your Blume, you’ll have hours of fun!

POP! VINYL FIGURES
SMYTHSTOYS.COM FROM £9.99 EACH
Pop! figures bring all your favourite characters to life with a unique stylised design. Each vinyl figure comes in window-box packaging, making them great for keeping on display! There are hundreds to collect, from Trolls to Harry Potter, Star Wars to WWE wrestlers. How many will you add to your collection?

COLLECTABLES

*All prices correct at time of printing.

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.
PIG POO FIRE

A GREEDY pig caused a fire in a very strange chain of events at a farm in Yorkshire.

One porker was wearing a pedometer, which was tracking its movements to show it was free-range (had lots of room to move). But then another pig ate the device!

When that pig had a poo, out came the pedometer. But the batteries in the pedometer leaked copper and reacted with all the pig poo and dry hay, starting a fire.

The fire spread across four pigpens at the farm and firefighters were called to put out the blaze. Luckily, no pigs or people were harmed.

RARE ROLLS

LOO rolls are becoming a luxury item, as panicked shoppers are buying them in bulk and causing supermarkets to run out (see p5).

One cheeky chappie in Yorkshire decided to have some fun with the shortage. Eddy Chapman, who runs Chapmans Funland, took all the toys out of his claw-grabber machine and filled it full of paper prizes instead!

It costs 30p a go to try and win one. Local punter Kev McCabe (above) posted on Facebook: “Come to Bridlington to get your toilet rolls when the supermarkets are sold out.” However, after having a go, Kev admitted that he had failed to grab any of the white wonder wipes.

MULLETFEST!

THE annual Mulletofest took place last month in the Australian town of Kurri Kurri.

The festival celebrates the mullet haircut, which, although popular in the 1980s, is rarely seen today. Someone with a mullet has their hair short on the top and sides but grows it long at the back.

The festival has lots of awards for people sporting the strange style, including trophies for the grubbiest and most extreme mullet. Rob Ayton, from the UK, won Best International Mullet.

There are even four awards for under-18 age groups. Why not grow your own mullet ready for Mulletfest 2021?!
WIN! THE CURE FOR A CRIME

CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle and fill in the numbers one to nine?

Send in your answers and five lucky winners will a copy of The Cure For A Crime, a thrilling new medical mystery series by junior doctor Roopa Farooki.

WIN! HAPPY CONFIDENT ME JOURNAL

CAN you complete our crossword by using the clues below?

Send in your answers and two lucky winners will get a copy of the Happy Confident Me Journal, a brand-new journal that helps you develop positive daily habits, happiness and confidence. This colourful journal is super-easy to jot in, with daily questions, worry boxes, weekly activities (that sometimes involve your family!) and free pages for doodling.

WIN! AN AMAZON VOUCHER

TO be in with a chance of winning one of two £50 Amazon vouchers, visit first.news/survey2020 and complete our readership survey!

The survey is for all First News readers under the age of 16. To enter this competition, you’ll need a parent or guardian to confirm they are happy for you to have your say.

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?

ACROSS
1 US musician whose hits include Shake It Off (6,5)
6 Ringing instrument (4)
8 A request made in an urgent manner (4)
9 Free time (7)
10 Temporary outdoor shelters (5)
11 Item put on a letter before posting (5)
13 Scrape (7)
15 Not any (4)
16 Note (anag) (4)
17 Large shop (11)

DOWN
1 Game also called ping-pong (5,6)
2 Shout or scream loudly (4)
3 A traditional type of Sunday dinner (5)
4 Inactive or doing nothing (4)
5 See-through (11)
7 A leafy green vegetable (7)
8 Look after (7)
12 Saying; proverb (5)
13 Cut a little bit off (4)
14 Curved piece of metal (4)
**HOW TO ENTER:** Send your finished puzzles to Puzzles 718, First News, 7 Playhouse Court, 62 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 0AT. Or by email to win@firstnews.co.uk. The closing date for puzzle entries is Thursday 26 March 2020.

**WIN! TEAMSTERZ VEHICLE BUNDLE**

CAN you spot the five changes we’ve made to this picture from Disney’s Mulan? Send in your answers and one lucky winner will win an exclusive bundle of Teamsterz vehicles, including the Mighty Moverz Fire Engine, Delivery Van, JCB Dump Truck, Street Starz Colour Change Car and Red Wheelie Bike.

**WIN! PREMIUM PASSES TO THE ALTON TOWERS RESORT**

WE’VE teamed up with Alton Towers Resort to give away two Premium Season Passes, which include Theme Park entry throughout their 2020 season, including summer weekends and Scarefest*. Celebrate 40 years of The Power of the Towers this year as you share joy, laughter and thrills with family and friends at Britain’s Greatest Escape! New for 2020, take a spin through the sewers on Gangsta Granny: The Ride!, based on the World of David Walliams, and pull off the greatest jewel heist in history on a 360° special effects-laden wild ride to break into the crown jewels vault, from spring! Plus, enjoy an awesome choice of world-class rollercoasters, including Wicker Man, Nemesis, Oblivion and The Smiler, plus a host of fantastic family attractions in CBeebies Land! To be in with a chance of winning, just answer this question:

**Gangsta Granny is the story of a boy called…**

a) Matt  
b) Ben  
c) James

**WIN! FAMILY TICKETS TO DISNEY ON ICE**

WE’VE teamed up with Disney On Ice to offer five lucky readers and their family the chance to see Disney On Ice presents Magical Ice Festival.

Disney On Ice presents Magical Ice Festival is a magical mix of royalty, featuring Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse and your friends from around the Disney Kingdom. The star-studded talent extravaganza will feature Moana, Ariel, Rapunzel and Flynn Rider, plus Anna and Elsa. If you’re ready to enter a world of adventure, simply answer the following question to be in with a chance of winning:

**What object does the Little Mermaid call a “dinglehopper”?**

a) fork  
b) spoon  
c) knife

**Puzzles**

**ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRY ALTON**

firstnews.co.uk/competitions or see below. The closing date is 2 April 2020.

**ENTER NOW! MARK YOUR ENTRY ICE**

firstnews.co.uk/competitions or see below. The closing date is 29 March 2020.

**COMPETITIONS:** You can enter First News competitions in one of two ways. 1. Go to firstnews.co.uk/competitions and follow the instructions. 2. Write to us at ‘competition name’ (eg, Holiday), First News, 7 Playhouse Court, 62 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 0AT. 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 open to those aged 17 and under and residents of the UK & Republic of Ireland, except employees of First News, First Group Enterprises Ltd, Trinity Mirror 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 addresses will be available on request. No cash alternative for any prizes will be offered. The winner may be required to participate in media activity relating to the competition.

**LAST WEEK’S ANSWERS:**

Spot the difference: handle is missing, extra books have been added, T-shirt is a different colour, exclamation mark is missing, board rubber is missing.

Word Wheel: encourage.
GET 50% OFF FIRST WONDER BOXES & ACTIVITY BOOK BUNDLES - PERFECT FOR KEEPING KIDS ENTERTAINED

Bored in the holidays? Why not go on a PGL adventure? You'll get to try amazing activities like raft building, kayaking or abseiling, make new friends and enjoy the best of the great outdoors. Plus we now have an amazing 'up to 40% off*'. What are you waiting for?

Call free on 0800 840 3744 or visit www.pgl.co.uk/50
THE OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) MIGHT MEAN THAT you’ll soon have to spend a lot more time at home. While that might seem daunting, one brilliant way you can make those hours go quickly is by getting lost in a book! We’ve rounded up a few of our favourite stories with deep, intriguing worlds that you can get lost in for days..."

THE MORTAL ENGINES QUARTET

MORTAL ENGINES IS SET IN A Distant future where enormous moving cities roam the Earth, gobbling each other up. It’s the first in a quartet of books set in this strange world, filled with fighting factions, secret societies and impossible inventions.

MORTAL ENGINES QUARTET

RECOMMENDATION OF the Month

REDWALL SERIES

A SERIES FOR SLIGHTLY OLDER READERS, THE Redwall books are about a fantasy world of lords and warriors. Oh, and all the characters in it are woodland creatures, like mice, badgers and snakes! With 22 books in the series, set across decades, there’s plenty to get lost in!

THE WIZARDS OF ONCE

HOW TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD. THIS book is all about how you can make positive changes in the world. It gives you lots of ideas for things you can do, like starting a litter-picking team, travelling by plane and car less, or eating less meat.

HOW TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD

THE BEST BOOKS TO... WHISK YOU AWAY

No list about books that whisk you away would be complete without a mention of the Camp Half-Blood Chronicles. Originally based on ancient Greek and Roman myths and legends, Rick Riordan’s books have woven in both ancient Egyptian and Norse stories into modern-day settings. All of them are great, including the various spin-offs.

CAMP HALF-BLOOD CHRONICLES

THE OUTCASTS

UKI AND THE OUTCASTS

KIERAN LARWOOD

reviewed by Anna Sagarillo, Parkland Primary School

UKI IS A BOY RABBIT WHO WAS REJECTED BY his tribe because his fur is black and white patchwork. When he and his mother escaped from the death threat from the tribe, his mother died. He was saved by Iffrit, the good guard spirit from the Crystal. Uki must capture four bad spirits before they cause devastation to the world, otherwise he would fade into blackness. On his quest to seize the bad spirits, he made friends with Lori, a trained assassin rabbit who refuses to kill, and Kree, a messenger rabbit who rides a jerboa. The three friends arrested the spirit of War, but Uki was caught by a traitor in the city of Syn. He was rescued by his friends.

THE OUTCASTS

HOW TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD

KEILLY SWIFT

reviewed by Erin Sales, aged nine

This book is all about how you can make positive changes in the world. It gives you lots of ideas for things you can do, like starting a litter-picking team, travelling by plane and car less, or eating less meat.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD. THIS book is all about how you can make positive changes in the world. It gives you lots of ideas for things you can do, like starting a litter-picking team, travelling by plane and car less, or eating less meat.

HOW TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD

BECOME A FIRST NEWS BOOK REVIEWER!

HAVE YOU READ A BOOK RECENTLY THAT YOU DESPERATELY WANT TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT? Write us a review! We’ll need around 100 words on a book you’ve been reading — good or bad — and a picture of yourself (with parents’ permission!). Email your review to bookreviews@firstnews.co.uk

BECOME A FIRST NEWS BOOK REVIEWER!
YOU may have seen on our front page last week that Italy is in lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak, and schools and universities have been closed.

Italy’s biggest internet company, Telecom Italia, has revealed that since the shutdown began, internet use in the country has rocketed by 70% – and a lot of that is because of Fortnite (PEGI 12)! The company say it’ll be boosting network capacity as more people turn to streaming services, videogames and other internet-dependent boredom busters.

REPORTERS Without Borders, an international group dedicated to sharing news and information freely, has created a library for censored information – in Minecraft! In many countries, governments ban news websites that publish articles that they don’t want people to see. To get around the bans, Reporters Without Borders has built a library in Minecraft filled with books and articles that were banned in the countries where they were written – since Minecraft isn’t banned anywhere.

“These articles are now available again within Minecraft, hidden from government surveillance technology inside a computer game” the group explained last week.

THE world’s biggest video game convention, E3, has officially been cancelled.

Along with sporting events, festivals and shows, E3 has been called off due to the coronavirus outbreak. It had been expected that Microsoft and Sony were going to officially unveil their new consoles during E3, the PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X.

Rather than revealing new products with big stage shows, Microsoft and Ubisoft have said they’ll be showing off new stuff in ‘digital events’ instead.

As First News went to press, there had been nothing from Sony or Nintendo on their summer plans, but it’s likely they’ll end up hosting similar online events. E3’s hosts have promised that the big show will be back next year, saying that they “look forward to bringing you E3 2021 as a re-imagined event that brings fans, media and the industry together in a showcase that celebrates the global videogame industry.”

NINTENDO and LEGO have partnered up to create a unique interactive Mario LEGO set – and it looks super!

Developed over four years, LEGO’s new Super Mario set isn’t your average set of bricks. Like a real-life Super Mario Maker, you can use the different parts and bricks in the set to create your own Mario levels, featuring Goombas, Bowser Jr and a whole load of coins.

These levels can then be played, by bouncing an interactive LEGO Mario figure through the level. According to LEGO, the new set will let you experience “the playful world of Super Mario like never before.” From what we can gather from the trailer released by LEGO and Nintendo, it looks like the figure will play classic Super Mario Bros music as you move the character through a level.

LEGO says that full details are still to come, but from what you can see in the trailer, Bluetooth connectivity may play a part in the set. Last year, LEGO released the augmented reality (AR) game LEGO Hidden Side, which worked alongside a LEGO set. Here at First News, we’re wondering if something similar will be released to work with the LEGO Super Mario set?

MEMBERS of the European Union (EU) are hoping to create a new law that forces electronics manufacturers to make it easier to repair their products.

The Right to Repair initiative would mean that all manufacturers of electronic products, from smartphones to tumble dryers, would have to offer more repairs, upgrades and ways to reuse existing goods, instead of encouraging consumers to buy new ones.

Virginijus Sinkevičius, the union’s environment commissioner, said that the EU wants greener products that are “designed to last longer, to be easier to repair and upgrade, easier to recycle and easier to reuse.”

It will take a while before the plans are anywhere near becoming law, however, as they’ll first need the approval of the European Union’s parliament and the governments of its 27 member states. EU experts say that could take around four years!
I took the fight for clean air to the top, meeting with over 30 MPs, including Environment Minister Rebecca Pow and Shadow Environment Secretary Luke Pollard, at a parliamentary reception hosted by the British Lung Foundation in Westminster.

Together with my sister Alice and my parents (who are members of the British Lung Foundation’s Clean Air Parents’ Network in Birmingham), we are calling for tougher air pollution limits to be included within the Environment Bill.

The Clean Air Parents’ Network brings together and supports concerned families across the country who want to take action to help solve the UK’s air pollution health crisis.

These actions can include campaigning for the introduction of active transport options such as walking school buses, clean air zones around schools and behaviour change to discourage engine idling at the school gates.

Air pollution is bad for all of us and especially for my friends who suffer with asthma. The MPs seemed very keen to talk to me and listen to my health concerns.

I hope they do more to protect children in Birmingham and all over the country.

I MET with senior MPs in London to call for tougher action on air pollution.

I HAVE made it through to the finals of The Big Bang UK Young Scientists & Engineers Competition with my project, Porta-Brew.

Did you know that we are the world’s third top tea drinkers and consume 165 million cups of tea a day?

In fact, it seems that hot drinks in general are everyone’s cup of tea, with around 95 million coffees drunk per day too.

The Porta-Brew was created to allow hot drinks to be made anywhere, even without a power supply, and it is environmentally friendly.

It makes it perfect for camping, festivals or in a power cut, and has the ability to heat any liquid to temperatures up to 100°C or to maintain any temperature within that range. It’s the only heating device you will ever need again.

Using electro-magnetic induction to generate the heat, no harmful gases or particulates are released, so it can be used inside or in nature without risking damaging yourself or the environment. The lightweight cup and user-friendly interface make it easy to control and set the perfect temperature, giving you the perfect drink every time.

So wherever you are, wherever you go, tea will be there.

TO celebrate World Book Day, my school, Highfield Juniors, encouraged us to come to school dressed as a significant person from the past or present.

This was because our book day theme was non-fiction.

I dressed up as Greta Thunberg because she is changing the way people think about the climate. I can’t believe she does great, big speeches in front of important people like world leaders and how someone so young is making such a massive difference.

Greta is an inspiration for all of us.
Formula 1 driver couldn’t cope with a weekend without racing, so when the Australian Grand Prix was cancelled, Lando Norris took part in an esports race instead. Bizarrely, one of his opponents was Real Madrid goalie Thibaut Courtois, as well as a host of esports pros and YouTubers.

under par was Alice Hewson’s final score at the South African Open. The British golfer will be pleased that it was one of the few events not to be cancelled, as she finished in top spot to win her first Ladies European Tour title.

Russian track and field athletes is the maximum number that will be allowed to compete at the Tokyo Olympics. World Athletics (formerly the IAAF) made the announcement last week, as well as handing Russia an £8m fine for the way it broke rules to help athletes cheat by using drugs. However, it’s still not definite that the Olympics will even go ahead, due to the coronavirus situation.

It was a close game, but Leicester ended up winning 70-66. Leicester’s Icelandic star Sara Hinriksdóttir was the top scorer, with 23 points, and was named as the game’s MVP (most valuable player).

It was tough on Durham, who have now lost three major finals in the last 12 months. They’ll also have a long while to stew over their defeat, as the season has now been suspended due the coronavirus outbreak. “We’re the only teams playing right now, which is kind of outrageous,” Durham’s Nicolette Fong told the BBC. “Health is more important than basketball.”

The men’s final was even closer, as Newcastle Eagles came close to a shock defeat from the second division’s Team Solent Kestrels. The game went into overtime, but Newcastle just edged it 96-94 to take the trophy (right). The Eagles were missing three of their international stars due to the coronavirus, but Rahmon Fletcher led the way for the team with an outstanding 29 points.

LEICESTER Riders made it a hat-trick of WBBL Trophy wins, beating Durham Palatinates at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow to win the tournament for the third year in a row.

WHAT A CROSS!

SOUTHAMPTON were due to play Norwich, so challenged them to a game of noughts and crosses on Twitter instead. When the Canaries failed to respond, Man City jumped in and tweeted: “We’ll play!”

After a hilarious move-by-move commentary, the game ended with a draw, with City tweeting that it was a “decent point on the road in the circumstances”!

Other teams stuck with football, and quite a few matches were played out on Football Manager instead, including a 1-1 draw between Watford and Leicester. Some fans even suggested using Football Manager to simulate the rest of the season in case it can’t be completed!