

THE UK'S
CHILDREN'S
NEWSPAPER
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SPECIAL EDITION – LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

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FirstNews

HELPING THE UK GROW

NEWS | SPORTS | ENTERTAINMENT | INTERVIEWS | PUZZLES | COMPETITIONS



CRAZY
EVENTS



FAB
FILMS



HERE'S TO A
HAPPIER
NEW YEAR!

GREAT
GAMES



WE WON'T MISS
2020, BUT THERE'S
LOTS TO LOOK
FORWARD TO IN
2021, PROMISE!

SUMMER
OF SPORT

AWESOME
PICS



*First News readership is 2,626,625. Source: Opinion Matters 2020. First News is the widest-read of all children's publications audited in the UK. First News supports children's charities, see p17.

A-Z OF 2021

FINALLY, IT'S 2021! We have to admit we're not that sad to see the back of 2020 and we are so happy a new year has started – it's set to be packed with awesome activities, super shows and epic events!

A

awareness is being raised about climate change, with simultaneous global climate concerts in more than 40 countries around the world in 2021. The Climate Live events, led by Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future, will take place on 24 April and 16 October and feature musical acts, activists and scientists.



Getty

C

Chinese New Year takes place on 12 February, and 2021 is the Year of the Ox (the last time was 2009),

according to the Chinese zodiac. People born in the Year of the Ox are said to be determined, strong and conservative. Chinese New Year is China's most important festival and will be marked with events up and down the UK.



iStock

B

Bristol International Balloon Fiesta will return to Ashton Court from 12 to 15 August. The free event, which is Europe's largest annual hot air balloon event, will feature more than 100 balloons taking off at dawn and dusk.



Universal Pictures

D

is for the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, who'll be 100 years old on 10 June. He has

been married to the Queen for 72 years. Normal events for a big royal birthday usually involve a carriage procession, a balcony appearance and a gun salute. The Duke isn't fond of a fuss though, so he may keep his celebrations quiet.



Getty

E

Edinburgh International Children's Festival is back and takes place between 19 and 30 May with a programme of theatre, storytelling and dance events especially for children. Popular with families, the event is designed to appeal to a whole range of ages and includes performances, pop-ups and activities.



Ian Watson

F

is for flowers, and where better to see them than one of the world's most famous

shows? Last year's Chelsea Flower Show was virtual, but this year it will be back with the usual show-stopping garden designs and some brilliant blooms. The Duchess of Cambridge designed her own garden there back in 2019, which featured a rope swing and tree house.



Getty

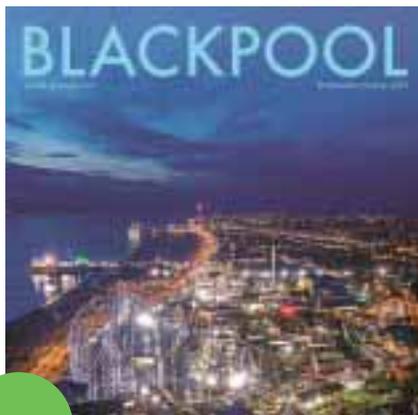


G

Glastonbury Festival missed its 50th birthday last year, but it's hoped that the iconic music festival will take place this June. No news yet on who will be performing in 2021 (Taylor Swift was due to headline last year), but the festival is set to be a big one. Around 200,000 people are expected to attend, with tickets from last year's cancelled event rolling over to this year.

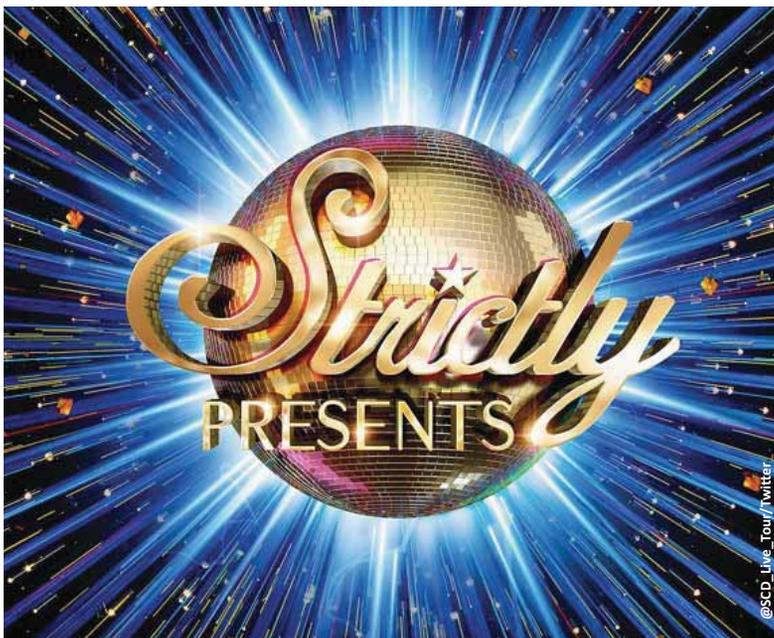
I

Illuminations don't come much better than Blackpool's and this year Blackpool Pleasure Beach is celebrating its 125th anniversary. There are lots of fun events planned to celebrate the family-owned theme park's special birthday – and you'd better believe Christmas 2021's Blackpool Illuminations are going to be bigger and better than ever.



K

Keep dancing with the *Strictly Come Dancing* pros as they travel all over the country on two tours. Kicking off on 7 May in Brighton, the first show will feature all your faves from the show, including Karen Hauer, Gorka Márquez, Katya Jones and Johannes Radebe. And if you can't get enough of the *Strictly* stars' smooth moves and jaw-dropping dance routines, then their other show, *Strictly Presents: The Power of Dance*, is hitting the road in the summer. Featuring pros Amy Dowden, Janette Manrara, Neil Jones and Dianne Buswell, the show will see the stars showcase every type of dance style seen on the show.



H

Hounds, and lots of them, will be taking to the stage at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre this summer, for a new musical of *101 Dalmatians*. Although the cast is still top secret, you can expect to see songs, dancing and amazing puppetry when Cruella and co hit the stage from 15 May.



istock

J

Japan is the place to be in 2021 when Super Nintendo World opens at Universal Studios Japan. The new land at the theme park will open on 4 February, bringing Mario and his mates to life. Super Nintendo World will feature Mario Kart and Yoshi-themed rides and attractions, including Bowser's Castle, Yoshi's Adventure (where you climb on the back of Yoshi to follow Captain Toad on a treasure-hunting adventure) and the world's first Mario Kart theme park ride, Mario Kart: Koopa's Challenge.



L

London Marathon has moved from its traditional slot in April. In 2021 the 41st London Marathon will take place on 3 October. Once again, the streets of London will be filled with more than 40,000 runners. Many are athletes and regular runners, but most are people raising money for charity. Runners in fancy dress add to the carnival atmosphere and, along with some celebrity runners, draw huge crowds of supporters along the route.



Getty

M

Mummies will have a new home when the Grand Egyptian Museum opens in Egypt. It will be the largest archaeological museum in the world, filled with ancient Egyptian treasures, including the complete Tutankhamun collection. Many of the objects have never been seen in public before. The museum is close to the site of the pyramids in Giza and will also contain a museum for children.



iStock

O

Oh baby, 2021 is going to welcome some super cute new arrivals! Two

new royal babies are due this year: Zara Tindall is expecting her third child and Princess Eugenie is expecting her first, while other famous faces expecting new arrivals in 2021 are singer Meghan Trainor and conservationist Bindi Irwin.



Meghan Trainor / Instagram

P

P is for **President** and the USA is getting a new one! Joe Biden is to be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States with vice president Kamala Harris

on 20 January in Washington DC. In what may be a first, it's possible that the previous president, Donald Trump, may not turn up for the official inauguration ceremony. Mr Trump claimed he had won and that the election was fixed, but provided no evidence. The Electoral College officially made Joe Biden the winner on 15 December.



Getty

N

Notting Hill Carnival, one of the most colourful and exciting festivals around, will run over the weekend of 29-30 August. The free Caribbean festival is the largest street party in Europe, with music, floats and fabulous costumes worn by the dancing teams. After being cancelled in 2020, it's likely to be bigger and better than ever and should give everyone a lift at the end of summer.

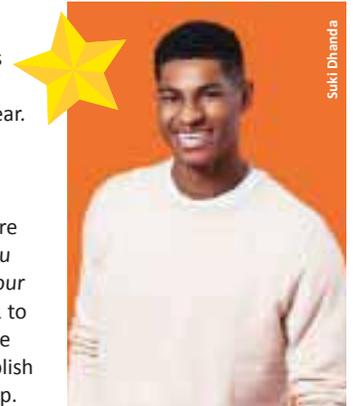


Getty

Q

Q is for **quiet time** and curling up with a good book thanks to Marcus Rashford's book club, which launches this year. The Manchester United star

has teamed up with Macmillan Children's Books to focus on young people's reading and literacy. As part of the project, there will be an illustrated non-fiction book called *You Are A Champion: Unlock Your Potential, Find Your Voice And Be The Best You Can Be*, aimed at 11 to 16-year-olds, which will feature stories from the footballer's own life. Then Marcus plans to publish two fiction books for readers aged seven and up.



Suki Dhanda

S

SlimeFest will be back this year! Hosts Jordan, Perri, Max and Harvey, plus Holly H, will return for the Nickelodeon event at Blackpool Pleasure Beach from 16-18 October for a weekend of music, mayhem and, of course, lots and lots of slime!



Getty

R

Record your own song and enter it into the Young Songwriter Competition 2021. A host of stars and recording industry big-

wigs will be on hand to judge the entries from budding young artists this year. Anyone aged 8-18 can enter by writing and recording a song that is under four and a half minutes long. You don't have to have fancy recording equipment to record your entry: a simple recording on a phone or tablet will do. Find out all the details and how to enter at songacademy.co.uk.



5. A-Z OF 2021

The **Real Games** is a brand-new show hosted by Holly Willoughby and Freddie Flintoff, which sees celebrities go head-to-head in a range of sporting challenges. The show will see six female and six male competitors battle it out in the athletics arena, swimming pool and gymnasium. As well as live coverage of the events, each episode will feature the celebrities' preparation and their gruelling training programme leading up to the competition.



Velociraptors are getting their own rollercoaster! The Jurassic World VelociCoaster Ride will open at Universal Studio's Islands of Adventure this summer and will take riders on a high-speed chase alongside a raptor pack. The ride is not for the faint-hearted, as it catapults guests at up to 70mph and more than 45m (148ft) into the air.



Xmarks the spot and that spot is Plymouth's Barbican where, every year, it hosts two days of swashbuckling fun at the Plymouth Pirate Weekend. The event usually features a pirate trail, sword school, mermaids, bands and children's entertainment to keep all you landlubbers entertained.



Zoos had a hard time in 2020, but they will be back open in 2021 with lots of new attractions and animals, including the chance to see Hamish (the first polar bear born in the UK), who has moved to his new home at Yorkshire Wildlife Park. This is the only place in England where you can see polar bears.

U is for **United Nations**. The UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021 is due to take place in Glasgow between 1-12 November. It follows up the deal made in Paris in 2016 between most of the countries of the world in response to the climate crisis. Many campaigners say there hasn't been enough action in the years since the Paris Agreement, so will want to see bigger commitments.



UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE UK 2021
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

W is for the **World Health Organization (WHO)**. The United Nations agency is responsible for global public health and will be important in helping to make sure COVID-19 vaccinations reach as many people as possible in 2021. COVAX, the campaign to make sure vaccines are accessible worldwide, recently said that it has nearly two billion doses being prepared, enough to vaccinate a quarter of all people on Earth. The plan is to get vaccines in the hands of the 190 participating world economies in the first half of 2021. Fingers crossed!



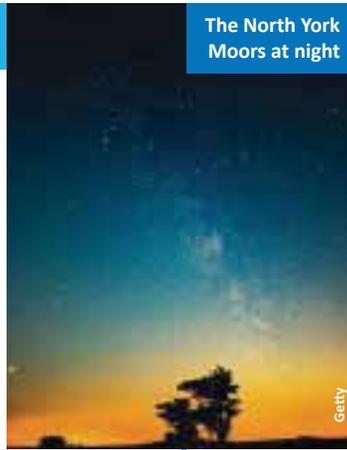
You can make a difference to the planet in 2021 by taking part in the Great British Beach Clean. The information that volunteers have collected at beach cleans over the years has helped make some of the most significant impacts on beach litter ever, from the plastic bag charge to microplastics being banned in personal care products. So far, the cleans have picked up 319 tonnes of litter. This year's events run from 18 to 20 September.



YORKSHIRE

● See the stars

The Dark Skies Festivals will be returning to the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales in February 2021. Recently, the parks have been made Dark Sky Reserves, as they are some of the best places in the UK for stargazing. The festival promises lots of family fun, opportunities to get out in nature and to see the stars and find out about nocturnal wildlife, as well as events like astro-photography evenings. For people living in the south, there's also the South Downs Dark Skies Festival the same month. Visit darkskiesnationalparks.org.uk for more information.



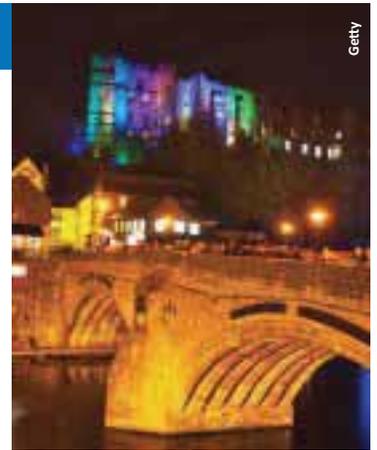
The North York Moors at night

Getty

COUNTY DURHAM

● Festival of lights

After 2020's online behind-the-scenes exhibition, the Lumiere festival is set to return and light up the city of Durham from 18-21 November. Helen Marriage, director of organisers Artichoke, said: "There's no denying the impact that COVID-19 continues to have in the Northeast and across the UK. The return of Lumiere is a look ahead to brighter times, and the festival will be as uplifting and full of wonder as ever." You can find out more at lumiere-festival.com.



Getty

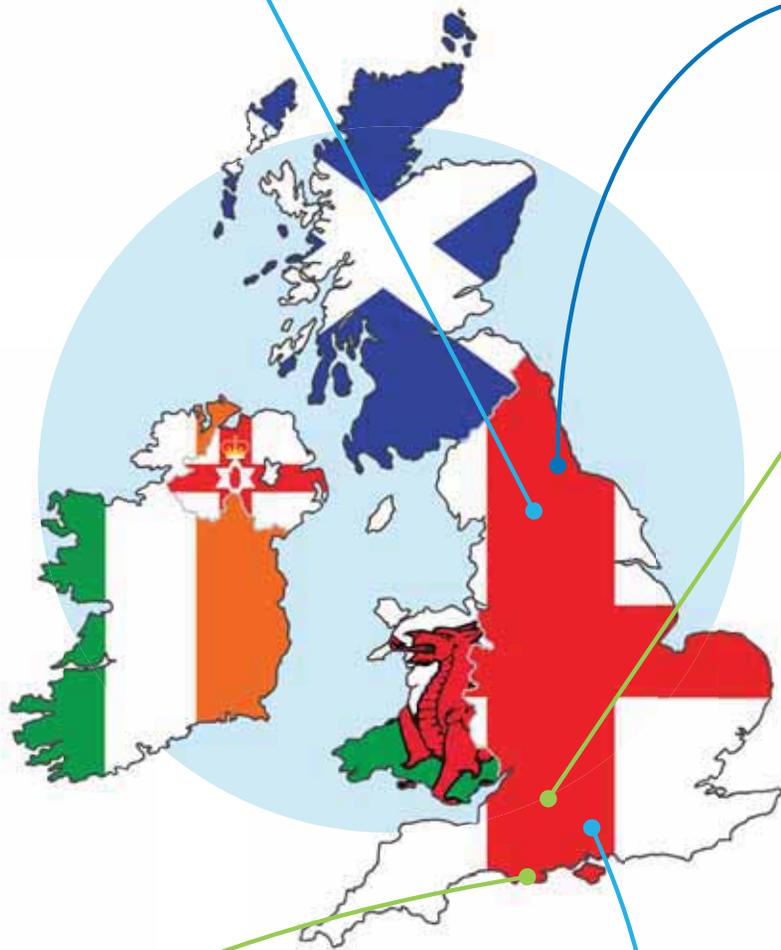
UK



Getty

● Science spectacular

British Science Week is a ten-day celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths that takes place between 5 and 14 March 2021. There are loads of opportunities to get involved. Taster activity packs are available now, while the full packs will be released this month. There's a poster competition too, with the theme of Innovating For The Future. For 2021, British Science Week is also running a Smashing Stereotypes campaign, to highlight the diversity of people working in STEM. You can share your stories of science on social media too, using [#EverydayScientist](https://twitter.com/EverydayScientist). Visit britishscienceweek.org to find out more. Please be aware of age restrictions on social media.



WILTSHIRE

● Summer solstice

People from across the UK will gather at Stonehenge early on 21 June to celebrate the summer solstice. The solstice is the longest day of the year and marks the changing of the seasons. Stonehenge is one of the most famous places to celebrate, and people often watch the sunrise there.

UK



A play of the Roald Dahl classic *Matilda*

● Roald Dahl Day

Legendary children's author Roald Dahl was born on 13 September, and every year since 2006, that day has been Roald Dahl Day. In 2021, expect to celebrate your favourite Roald Dahl characters, stories and moments with fans the world over. There are always lots of fun activities, downloads and party packs, as well as opportunities to raise some money for Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity. Keep your eyes peeled on roalddahl.com.

DORSET

● Family festival

Like pretty much every music festival in 2020, Camp Bestival didn't take place. But we're all hoping the Best Family Festival award winner is able to return in 2021. Set to take place at Lulworth Castle from 29 July to 1 August, Camp Bestival caters for kids and parents alike, with a huge range of music, comedy, cinema, crafts and all-round entertainment. The family-friendly fest is perfect for kids from toddlers to teens.



Getty

HAMPSHIRE

● Marwell's marvels!

Some giant creatures can be seen at Marwell Zoo's Supersized! exhibition. Thirty brick beasts have been made using more than two million toy bricks. From a colourful kingfisher to three-metre tarantulas and spitting cobras, the massive models will be on display until 21 February. Head to marwell.org.uk for more information.



BRICOLIVEGROUP/TWITTER

A photograph showing a man in a dark shirt and shorts rowing a narrow wooden boat through a river. The river is completely filled with a dense layer of plastic waste, including bottles, bags, and other debris. The water is dark and murky. The background shows more of the polluted river stretching into the distance. In the top right corner, there is a small 'Getty' logo.

THE BIG PICTURE

A MAN rows his boat through plastic waste on the Siak River in Indonesia.

The health of our oceans continues to be a major problem in 2021. Rivers are the main source of ocean plastic pollution and 80% of river plastic comes from 1,000 rivers around the world. One hope to beat pollution in these rivers is the Interceptor. These solar-powered vessels have a conveyor belt that catches plastic as water passes through it.

Hopefully, scenes like this will be less common in 2021.

USA




Getty

● Insect invasion

Every year, a small number of *Magicicada cassinii*, better known as cicadas, emerge from the ground in the eastern United States. But, every 17 years, a huge swarm of the insects, referred to as Brood X, appear. 2021 is one of those years, so billions of the creatures are set to take flight across large parts of the US. Luckily, they're mostly harmless, but it's still not great if you live in the middle of a swarm and have a bug phobia!

BARBADOS



● Going public

Barbados plans to remove Britain's Queen as head of state in 2021 and become a republic. This means that Barbados will have an elected president in power, instead of a king or queen. Governor-General Dame Sandra Mason called the move "the ultimate statement of confidence in who we are and what we are capable of". The country gained independence from Britain in 1966.



Dame Sandra Mason meeting the Queen

SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND



● Iceberg alert

One of the world's largest icebergs, A68a, is on a collision course with South Georgia island and could cause problems for wildlife there. The island, in the southern Atlantic Ocean, is populated with penguins and seals. They could have trouble hunting for food around the island's waters if the iceberg gets too close. The big berg is 3,900km², or more than ten times the size of the Isle of Wight!

SWEDEN AND WORLDWIDE



● Greta grows up

This week, Greta Thunberg turns 18 – on 3 January, to be exact. Thinking of everything she has helped to achieve as a child, it's exciting to think of what she will do as an adult. In 2021, a series of concerts called Climate Live will take place in various locations around the world with her involvement – turn to p2 for details and dates. Also, Greta could be up for an Oscar! The documentary film *I Am Greta*, released last year, is one of three films that Sweden is considering to enter as their country's Best International Feature Film at the legendary awards show.



CHINA



● New theme park

Universal Studios is planning to open a new theme park in China, the Universal Beijing Resort. It could be open by May and will include loads of cool-sounding areas like Minion Land, Jurassic World and The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.



RWANDA



● Name the gorillas

It was believed once that mountain gorillas would be extinct by the year 2000 but, thanks to the efforts of conservationists, the species is still around. In September 2021, the Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda will continue its annual tradition of Kwita Izina, meaning "to give a name" in Rwanda's national language, Kinyarwanda. The week-long event sees all the baby mountain gorillas named, and raises awareness and funds for the ongoing protection of the endangered animals – less than 1,000 are left in the wild.



FRANCE



● Time for a sing-song

France will host European singing contest Junior Eurovision in 2021. The date and host city haven't been announced yet. Meanwhile, the Netherlands will host the main Eurovision Song Contest in May. The event will take place in Rotterdam's Ahoy Arena, which became an emergency hospital for COVID-19 patients in 2020.



The iceberg (bottom left) heads to South Georgia (top right)

SCIENCE OF THE FUTURE

WHAT will happen in the worlds of technology, medicine and astronomy in 2021? It's impossible to predict the scientific breakthroughs that will amaze us next year, but the calendar is already filling up with some incredible events!



An image of the spiral galaxy Messier 81 taken by the Hubble Space Telescope

Getty

A REAL SHOT IN THE ARM



The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine

A HUNDRED years ago in 1921, the first BCG vaccine was given to a baby.

Designed to protect against TB (tuberculosis), 100 million children worldwide are now immunised with the vaccine every year.

It's hoped that we can protect people against catching COVID-19, just like we can stop the spread of TB. The first COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in the UK in December 2020 was created by Pfizer and BioNTech. Other vaccines are being developed and manufacturers are co-operating in combined

trials. British company AstraZeneca is working with Russia's Gamaleya Institute to test if their products work better if given together.

If more people can't catch a disease, it's less likely that disease will be able to spread. This is called herd immunity or herd protection. Measles and polio are two diseases that are now rare thanks to herd immunity. For this level of protection, between half and 90% of a population need to be immune. Thanks to vaccination, US infectious disease expert Dr Anthony Fauci and many health experts worldwide are predicting that herd immunity against COVID-19 could be achieved in their countries in 2021, as long as enough people can be vaccinated.

DEEP IMPACT

BUILDING a spacecraft and launching it is not cheap.

The DART mission, due to launch in July, is expected to cost around £230 million to build and safely send into space. And its ultimate aim? To crash into an asteroid!

It's estimated that there are about 25,000 near-Earth asteroids more than 500ft wide (152m). If one hit the Earth, it would have disastrous results. It's believed that the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago may have been caused by an asteroid hitting the planet. DART, or the Double Asteroid Redirection Test, is designed to investigate whether an asteroid could be deflected away from Earth.

The DART probe is about the size of a small car. It will contain a camera, as well as a sun sensor and star tracker for navigation. DART's planned destination is the asteroid Didymos, which it should reach in September 2022. There, it will collide with the asteroid's small moon, Didymos B (also known as Didymoon), which is around 520 feet (160 metres) in diameter. It's hoped that the impact will alter Didymoon's course, demonstrating how our planet could be defended in the future.



An asteroid entering Earth's atmosphere could be devastating

Getty

SUPERIOR SPACE SNAPS

A NEW telescope will be launched into space in October to explore distant worlds and stars and help uncover the origins of our universe.

The James Webb Space Telescope (also known as the JWST) will be a successor to the famed Hubble Space Telescope, launched in 1990. It is named after James E Webb, who oversaw NASA in the 1960s during their Mercury and Gemini launches.

The JWST will be six times larger than the Hubble, with a main mirror 21ft (6.5m) wide. It also requires a huge sunshield, to keep some of its instruments a few degrees above absolute zero, which is -273°C, the lowest possible temperature. The sunshield will be as large as a tennis court!

The JWST will orbit the sun, about 932,000 miles (1.5 million kilometres) from Earth. The telescope mainly uses infrared because interstellar dust blocks visible light, but not infrared. The Hubble has transmitted some breathtaking images from space and it's hoped that the JWST can show us many more older stars. It should be able to detect light from the first generation of galaxies that were formed in the early universe.



An illustration of the James Webb Space Telescope

Getty



Getty

A SMASHING TIME...

AFTER being switched off more than two years ago to be upgraded, the Large Hadron Collider (or LHC) in Switzerland is ready to be restarted in May.

The LHC is located underground, beneath the French and Swiss borders at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), where the World Wide Web was first developed. 'Large' doesn't do justice to this incredible machine – it's an impressive 17-mile-long (27km) circular tunnel! The LHC is the world's most powerful particle accelerator. It makes particles known as hadrons travel at high speed, and it's called a collider because the machine makes these particles smash into each other. It can create one billion collisions every second!

The LHC was built to find out more about particles. In 2013, it even discovered a new one, the Higgs boson. It will also investigate dark matter, which is thought to make up 27% of the universe. After it's switched on again, the LHC will run until the end of 2024. Then it will be upgraded to the High-Luminosity LHC, which will be started up in 2027 and should produce ten times the amount of data as the LHC!



THE ULTIMATE 2021

WITH so many film releases delayed in 2020, this year looks like it'll be movie mad!

February



Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway

Peter gets tired of life in the garden and decides to venture out to the big city, but things don't go as smoothly as planned! First News got a sneaky peek behind the scenes of the new movie, so keep an eye out for some exciting reveals in a future issue!

March



Raya and the Last Dragon

In this exciting new Disney animation, Raya is a lone warrior tasked with finding the last dragon in the world. However, along her journey, she will realise that it's not just a dragon that is needed to save her land and reunite its people. Get ready for some awesome girl power!

March



Tom and Jerry

The classic cat and mouse duo, best known for their comedy cartoon capers, are set to win a legion of new fans with this live-action/animated movie about how they met and became rivals. The pair should keep us entertained with more games and silliness, but could they be reunited as friends?

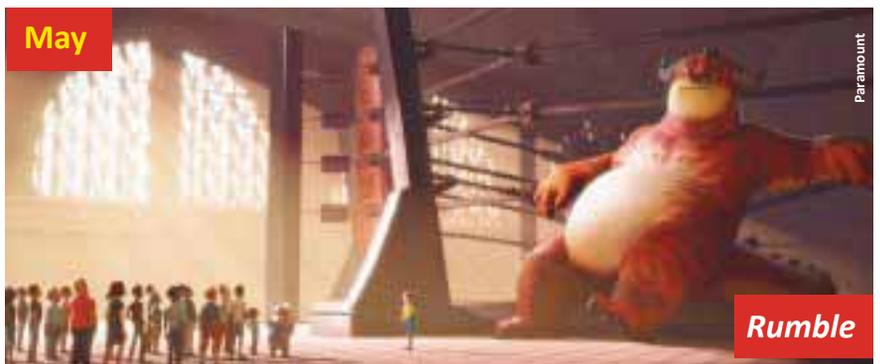
April



No Time To Die

007's peaceful life in Jamaica is interrupted when he's called on to help rescue a kidnapped scientist. First, of course, he must defeat a mysterious villain who possesses dangerous new technology. This is Daniel Craig's last outing as the famous spy.

May



Rumble

In this animated comedy, a teenager makes it her mission to follow in her father's footsteps and coach a monster wrestler to become a champion. The only problem is that the monster wrestler she's coaching isn't so keen!

FILM PREVIEW



May



Cruella

The iconic villain from *101 Dalmatians* is getting her own movie, and it looks spot-acular! In this Disney live-action picture, fans will get to learn all about Cruella de Vil as a young fashion designer in 1970s London. We'll also discover why she's obsessed with Dalmatian skin. Spot Emma Stone as the leading lady!

July



Minions 2: The Rise of Gru

The loveable little oddballs are back for this laugh-out-loud *Minions* sequel. This time round we learn all about Gru and how he dreamed of becoming the world's greatest super-villain when he was just 12 years old.

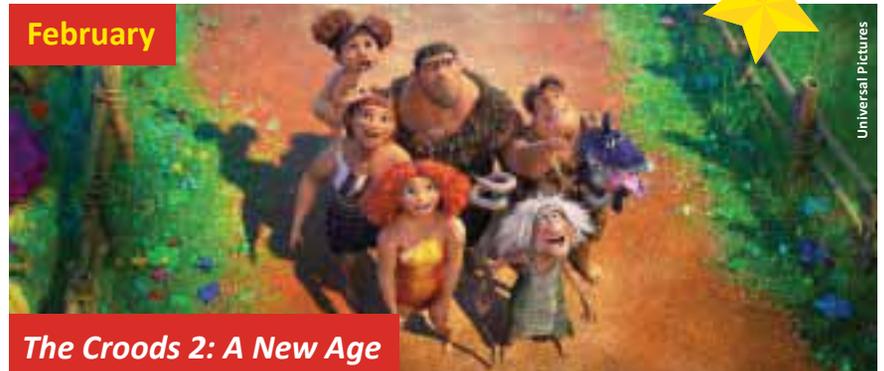
March



The Boss Baby 2: Family Business

Boss Baby Ted is all grown up, but has drifted apart from his older brother Tim. When a new villain starts teaching babies to be bad, the brothers must reunite to save the day – with a little bit of help from the newest member of the family!

February



The Croods 2: A New Age

Our favourite prehistoric family face their scariest challenge yet when they meet a new family while searching for a new home. But new isn't always better...

July



Jungle Cruise

This film was delayed for a whole year because of COVID, so we can't wait to finally see it! Based on a classic Disney theme park ride, the story sees a group of travellers search the jungles of the Amazon for a legendary tree. Dwayne Johnson stars as riverboat captain Frank Wolff and Emily Blunt plays Dr Lily Houghton.

ALSO OUT IN 2021:

Black Widow (May) **Space Jam** (July)

Ghostbusters: Afterlife (June) **Fantastic Beasts 3** (November)

West Side Story (December)

Some of the release dates shown may change, so please check with your local cinema nearer the time.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THERE are loads of things going on in the world of entertainment this year. Many have been postponed from 2020, which means we're even more excited about them! Here are just a few that we can't wait for...

January



Saturday Knight fun

Ant and Dec are back on our screens to brighten up our January with *Saturday Knight Takeaway*. Join the duo on Saturday 2 January at 5.15pm on ITV for this hilarious *Saturday Night Takeaway* special.

February



Dragon adventures

Cornelia Funke's best-selling *Dragon Rider* book series has been turned into an animated feature for Sky and it looks amazing! Join Firedrake the silver dragon and his friends as they search for a mythical safe haven.

January



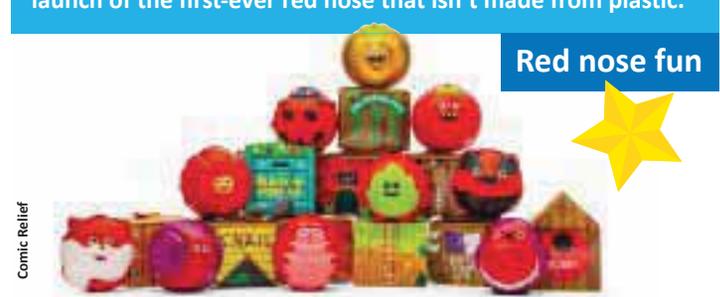
New judge

Anne-Marie has joined the panel of *The Voice UK*. She said: "I am SO excited to join Sir Tom, will.i.am and Olly as the new coach on *The Voice UK*. I can't wait to work with incredible undiscovered talent! Wahooooo!" The new series starts this week!

March

The fundraising Red Nose Day is back to bring us some much-needed laughter. Expect some epic celebrity challenges, a night of brilliant TV (19 March) and the launch of the first-ever red nose that isn't made from plastic.

Red nose fun



Spring/autumn



Top tours

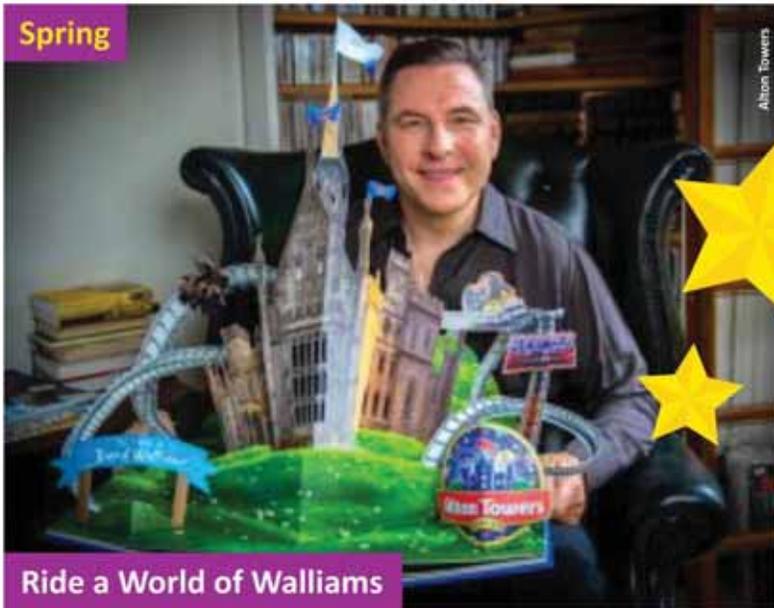
Little Mix are hitting the road in April for their first tour as a trio and McFly kick off their 2021 tour in May. Towards the end of the year, *Strictly Come Dancing* finalist HRVY, Gary Barlow and Paloma Faith will all be touring too. Live acts can't wait to perform again!

Early 2021



A new Twist

This modern version of Charles Dickens' classic story *Oliver Twist* features an all-star cast, including Rita Ora, Sir Michael Caine, Raff Law and David Walliams. *Twist* will be coming to Sky Cinema and Now TV in early 2021.



Alton Towers

Spring

Ride a World of Walliams

The brand-new attraction based on the books and characters created by David Walliams was due to open at Alton Towers in 2020, but the launch was delayed due to COVID-19. The World of Walliams is expected to finally open this spring.



Early 2021

Tracy Beaker is back!

Tracy Beaker is back for a new series and this time she's a grown-up with an 11-year-old daughter! My Mum Tracy Beaker is coming to CBBC this year. We can't wait to see what they get up to!

The much-talked about Friends reunion is due to happen in March! Lots of the details are yet to be revealed, but the six main stars have confirmed that they will film together again for the first time since the hit series ended.

March



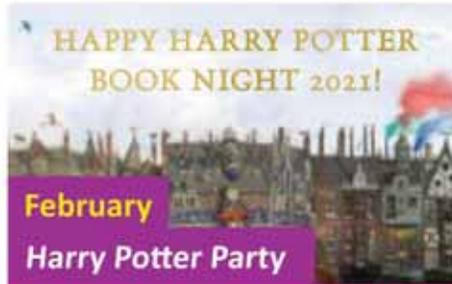
Top TV reunion



Dancing on Ice

Twelve new celebrities get their skates on for the new series of Dancing on Ice. Myleene Klass, Jason Donovan and Denise Van Outen are just a few of the famous faces you can see braving the ice.

January



February

Harry Potter Party

The theme of 2021's Harry Potter Book Night is Diagon Alley. Join in with the celebrations on 4 February by registering for your free event kit at harrypotter.bloomsbury.com.



Early 2021

Tom Gates on TV

Tom Gates is getting his first TV series! The Brilliant World of Tom Gates, based on the hit books by Liz Pichon, has an amazing cast and will be available on Sky Kids on demand early this year. There'll be 20 episodes to watch!



Spring

Shows are back!

London's West End shows are all scheduled to restart from April! The brand-new Frozen The Musical, Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cindersella, Back To The Future The Musical and Phantom of the Opera have all announced opening dates after being closed or delayed because of COVID-19.



Spring

Art fun

After his spell on Celebrity Supply Teacher last year, Ricky Wilson has a new series on CBBC, Ricky Wilson's Art Jam. In this fun show, Ricky invites celebrity guests to his art studio, where he creates a personalised piece of art for them!



WWF's Land for Life appeal is supporting Maasai communities to develop solutions for people and wildlife to coexist and thrive, aiming to improve the livelihoods of more than 27,000 people. To find out more, including how the Government will match donations, go to www.wwf.org.uk/life



HAVE A

MAKE 2021 a wild year by learning about some of the amazing wildlife in Africa that is part of conservation projects supported by WWF – you can even learn the traditional names for some of the species!

JANUARY

In January, African wild dogs tend to avoid areas in the southern Serengeti because they are rich in the migrating prey that attract lions, which are a threat to wild dog cubs. Every African wild dog has colours and patterns that are one of a kind, and these can be used to identify each individual animal – just like fingerprints in humans. African wild dogs hunt in packs and are fast runners – they can get up to 60km/h when chasing their prey. The African wild dogs' habitat is becoming smaller and broken up, so WWF is working with local people to help create joined-up spaces so wild dogs can roam.



© Martin Harvey/WWF

In Swahili, a national language of Kenya and Tanzania, African wild dog is 'mbwa mwitu'

FEBRUARY

Valentine's Day would be a big hit with elephants. After being separated, even for only a few hours, African savannah elephants 'hug' each other by weaving together their trunks and tusks. They love to touch, to comfort and cheer each other up. The African elephant is the world's largest land mammal and males can measure up to three metres high and weigh up to six tonnes. They need 150kg of food per day and spend around 12-18 hours eating – that's up to 75% of their day. WWF is protecting elephants by joining forces with local communities to help stop poaching.



© Martin Harvey/WWF

In Maa, the language of the Maasai people, elephant is 'oltome', which means 'living mountain'

MARCH

Giraffes are the world's tallest land mammal – the males can reach about 5m tall. Even the babies are born measuring 1.8m, which is taller than the average human! Their neck is the longest of any animal, but it still has only seven neck bones, just like other mammals. These long necks mean they can eat the leaves right at the top of trees, so they don't have to compete with other, shorter, leaf-eaters. In March, after the start of the rainy season in the Serengeti, leaves are plentiful, so giraffes can enjoy the full benefit of being so tall. Giraffes are very sociable and roam together in groups called towers.



© Greg Armfield/WWF-UK

In Maa, giraffe is 'olmeut'

JULY



© WWF-US/Elissa Poma

The hyena, Africa's most common big carnivore, has lots of prey in the Maasai Mara in July. There are three species of hyena – brown, striped

and spotted, with spotted being the largest. Hyenas live in large groups called clans, which are headed by a female and can include up to 90 animals. Although hyenas are famed as scavengers, they also hunt, sometimes including people's cattle, sheep and goats, which can lead to them being killed with poison in retaliation. WWF is supporting Maasai people with ways to protect their livestock and help stop the killings.

In Maa, hyena is 'olkonoi'

AUGUST

It's estimated that more than 40% of Africa's lions are found in Tanzania. Lionesses mostly hunt and take care of cubs, while adult male lions protect their pride from other lions and hyenas. August is a bonus month for the Maasai Mara's lions, as plenty of prey arrives with the wildebeest migration. A pride of lions is mostly made up of females and cubs. Groups of male lions, who are usually brothers, are called a 'coalition'. Although known for their roar, for a friendly greeting lions make



© Greg Armfield/WWF-UK

a puffing noise that sounds like sneezing. WWF supports work that monitors and protects lions in Kenya's Maasai Mara.

In Maa, lion is 'olngatuny'

SEPTEMBER



© Steve Morello/WWF

September sees World Rhino Day. There are only around 5,600 black rhinos left in the wild, with about 680 black rhinos in Kenya. Black rhinos

(which are a grey colour, despite their name) are critically endangered. The name rhinoceros comes from two Greek words: 'rhino', meaning nose, and 'ceros', meaning horn. The black rhino has two horns, of which the front is larger and can grow to 1.3m. They weigh up to 1.3 tonnes but, despite this, can run at speeds of up to 55km/h in short spurts. WWF has worked in African rhino conservation since the organisation started in 1961.

In Maa, rhino is 'emuny'

WILDLIFE YEAR!

APRIL

During April's heavy rains, cheetahs and other species have wildlife parks to themselves. Cheetahs are the fastest land mammals, reaching up to 103km/h, although they can only keep that up for a few hundred metres. Cheetahs' paw pads have ridges, like the treads on car tyres, which act like running spikes to give them a better grip during a chase. There are only around 6,600 cheetahs left in the wild and they suffer from loss of habitat, as they need big areas of land to survive. WWF is working with communities to keep vital movement routes open for cheetahs and other wildlife.



© naturepl.com/Anup Shah/WWF

In Swahili, cheetah is 'duma'

MAY

Hippos need to stay in water during the day, as their skin must stay moist or it will crack. Their skin produces a red liquid, believed to act like a sunscreen. Rather than eat the plants in the river, hippos come out of the water after sunset to spend the night grazing on short grass. May is a favourite time for the species, as the rainy season means more grass for them to munch. They're sociable creatures and live together in herds. WWF is helping hippos by tackling the loss of their habitats – one of the biggest threats they face.



© naturepl.com/Anup Shah/WWF

In Swahili, hippo is 'kiboko'

JUNE

June is the beginning of the annual wildebeest migration cycle, travelling from the southern Serengeti in Tanzania to the Maasai Mara in Kenya and back again. Over a million wildebeest travel a total of 800km or more during the cycle, as they follow the rains in search of lush grass. This amazing sight is under threat, as more and more areas of land are fenced off for farming. WWF is working with governments and communities to keep areas open so this life-saving journey can continue.



© Martin Harvey/WWF

In Maa, wildebeest is 'oyingat'

OCTOBER

Leopards are one of the major predators of the Serengeti in Tanzania. They prey on the wildebeest and other herbivores. However, in dry months like October, prey is hard to find, and leopards are at risk themselves from lions and spotted hyenas stealing their food. Leopards tend to rely on cover to hunt and in areas where there are competitors like lions for food, leopards will often drag prey into trees to keep it safe. The spots on leopards' coats are known as rosettes and are unique. WWF is helping leopards by tackling the destruction of their habitat.



© Greg Armitfield/WWF-UK

In Swahili, leopard is 'chui'

NOVEMBER

Burchell's zebras, or plains zebras, make up most of those that live in East Africa's savannahs. They travel in groups, sometimes known as a dazzle, but split up during the day to munch on grass before meeting up later to find water. Zebras live in permanent, small family groups, often mixing herds with antelope for extra protection against predators. There are around 250,000 zebras living in the Serengeti in Tanzania and 200,000 of these join the wildebeest in the world's biggest mammal migration, beginning their journey home in November. Although they may seem identical, no two zebras are exactly alike, as each zebra's stripes are different.



© Martin Harvey/WWF

In Maa, zebra is 'oloitiko'

DECEMBER

Temminck's pangolin is the only type of pangolin found in East Africa. It is the second largest of the African species and weighs an average of 7-12kg – about the same as a standard dachshund. Pangolins are solitary, mostly nocturnal and easily recognised by their full body armour of scales. If attacked, they roll into a ball and use the sharp scales of their tails to lash out. Temminck's pangolins mostly eat ants and termites, but they are fussy about which types they choose. Dry months like December suit them better, as there is less chance of their burrows being flooded.



African People & Wildlife

In Swahili, pangolin is 'kakakuona'



THE
BIG
PICTURE

IN this incredible photo, Petri Pietiläinen snapped a polar bear giving a big fright to a barnacle goose.

Taken in Svalbard, Norway, the photo is one of 25 images nominated for the People's Choice award in the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year contest.

Have a look at the other contenders at nhm.ac.uk/wpy/peoples-choice and vote for your favourite!

● **The Masked Singer is back, filmed with COVID rules in place. How was that, Joel? You were a big hugger in the last series!**

Joel: Yes, even though they were in these huge costumes, the people within the costumes were probably the people most protected from COVID of all time, but I still had to be two metres away. So I couldn't touch any of their costumes this year, which was a real shame! Apart from that, honestly, you wouldn't know that the show was done within COVID restrictions. The show looks so good that it looks even bigger and better than last year.

Jonathan: That was the one silver lining for me – that Joel couldn't hug me any more!

Joel: I know there is a lot of the country and the world waiting for this COVID to pass by, but for me especially, I really can't wait for it to end just so that I can hug Jonathan again!

● **How did you all find being on the panel with the new safety measures in place?**

Jonathan: It was interesting. The new panels initially threw me off. They are behind us to stop us breaking any guidance, but they kind of didn't matter too much because we could see each other, we could still hear each other and we were still close. So much of the show is us looking towards the stage that I think we were quite well placed to carry on. Obviously Joel had to stand a bit further away, but he never gets that close to the costumes anyway. We were lucky to be a show that could still function under COVID restrictions. Interestingly, we were recording with a small audience that were in groups of six so, of course, many of them were family groups with younger children. It was quite nice to be doing it and seeing eight, nine and ten-year-olds in the audience, because it is a family show.

Davina: You all had to watch your potty-mouths!

● **Mo, what was it like entering this strange new world?**

Mo: Oh my gosh, for me it was crazy because watching it on TV is so different to being there and being a detective. Everyone is so welcoming to the show and, early on, you realise that I'm not here to be a judge, I'm here to be a detective, which relieved the pressure a little bit. The last thing I want to do is be on a show and tell people they aren't good enough. If you're a detective, your job is just to guess. Everyone was super-welcoming and it felt like I was starting a show that I had already been a part of. It was a lot of fun and I really enjoyed it.



THE most bonkers singing show on TV is back with a whole new batch of mystery celebs in fantastic costumes. We caught up with host Joel Dommett and panellists Davina McCall, Jonathan Ross and Mo Gilligan at the virtual launch for the new series of *The Masked Singer*.

Davina: It was great watching him. He was like a puppy, he was so excited. Then, every now and then, he'd look over and he'd go: "It's really weird, this show!"

Joel: The number of times at the end of a performance, he'd go: "This show is mad, you know!" That was basically what he said at the end of every performance.

● **It seems like the audience and the panel were even more up for the fun this year!**

Davina: I was just so grateful to be with people. When I saw the dancers come out on stage I got a bit teary first of all. It was like, oh my goodness, there are dancers! This is actual entertainment! I felt so privileged to be able to come to work, to be with other people and sit next to people I love. For me, it was next-level emotional and exciting!

Joel: I think it reminded us, and made us appreciate even more, what we do. I tend to be so wrapped up in a project when I work that I stress so much and I don't tend to enjoy it. This is the first time where I took a step back a bit and really enjoyed the project and the fact that we can make this amazing show!

● **What was it like backstage this time? Were you all in your own little spaces?**

Jonathan: Yes and no. There were only a certain number of people allowed in any dressing room or space at a time. We did pop in and see each other, but we always had masks on. My dressing room was the coolest. I brought in posters and a record player and a box of vinyl so I could chill out.

Davina: It was amazing. I'm upping my game next time.



● **How did you all do with guessing the singers this year?**

Joel: Jonathan comes out with some mad names!

Davina: What I loved about this series was that all of us were wrong quite a lot! None of us got it.

Jonathan: The clues were really tricky this year.

Mo: It's so hard because the clue package to the performance doesn't always match up. So you look at the clues and think it is that person. Then they perform and it goes out the window.

Jonathan: Some people you think must be world-class singers, but some people you wouldn't think of as a singer. In fact, you might never have heard them sing before, but yet everyone on the show sounds like a professional singer. I think some even bigger surprises are in store this series. A lot of people guessed a lot of the celebrities last year, or said they did. I would be amazed if they did this year. No-one is going to get a full house and guess everyone!

The Masked Singer is back on ITV on Saturdays

CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY FIRST NEWS





HI! Do you remember us? We're Lampo and Milady, two friends who are in the band The Buffycats. Our other band members are Meatball and Pilou. The four of us live in the garage next to Granny Pina's house and that's where we play The Buffycats music to all our pawtastic friends.

One of the things we love to do is spend time outside and playing with our friends. We know that being in the fresh air is very good for us and it's where we learn about plants, flowers, animals, and the seasons.



LAMPO

In the last year we've been spending lots of time outside at a wonderful entertainment park for kids and families, called Gulliver's World. Every day Milady and I have been saying "hi" to children who've been visiting and enjoying the rides and activities at Gulliver's. We're really sad that we've not been able to give them bear hugs this year but, instead, we've been doing socially-distanced selfies and air hugs! Let's hope next year is better for everyone.

Check out our competition on this page for one lucky family to come to see us in 2021 and have a pawtastic weekend away.

2020 has been a strange year, hasn't it? No hugs, no holidays and lots of time spent at home. We've learned that having friends is so important as we can help each other, especially when things are a little bit different. In our TV show on POP TV we spend time helping each other, and the music from our band, The Buffycats, always puts a smile on our cat-tastic friends' faces. Don't forget, there's nothing more important than friendship! Let's hope that 2021 is a year where we can spend more time outside, playing and having fun with friends and family.

Happy pawtastic 2021!



MILADY

WIN!

A pawtastic weekend away for a family of up to five people at Gulliver's World in Warrington, near Liverpool, where the 44 Cats are currently making daily appearances. The prize includes accommodation for one night, evening meals and entrance to the theme park resort for two days. Travel expenses will also be included and a 44 Cats goody bag for the kids! To enter, just answer this question:

Who is NOT a member of The Buffycats?
a) Meatball b) Granny Pina c) Pilou

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

The competition closes on 10 January 2021



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*The prize can be redeemed on any weekend during 2021 subject to availability and COVID-19 restrictions. 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.

IN 2020, WE RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF YOUR REPORTS...



LOADS of you told us all about what you'd been up to throughout the year, and we've loved hearing from you.

Here's a brief look back at just a few of the amazing events, experiences and, of course, lockdown activities that some of our readers have been involved in.

Don't forget to keep telling us what you get up to this year. Email your report (including pictures) to yournews@firstnews.co.uk. Remember 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.



Alex told us how he had been using his 3D printer at home to make protective masks for a variety of NHS departments during lockdown.



After reading an article in *First News*, Nicole and her brother Luca became aware of the struggles of children living in refugee camps. Over the summer holidays, they rode their bikes a total distance of 100 miles between them, to raise £260 for UNICEF's Save Generation Covid appeal.



Back in January, Lucia from Whitefield Primary School told us what it was like to be the Junior Lord Mayor of Liverpool. Through shadowing the Lord Mayor, Lucia was able to support local charities and community groups.



A group of Year 6 pupils from Guilsborough C of E Primary School told us how they use *First News* in the classroom. They even created a *First News* Newspaper Club.



Iris decided to fill her spare time by making face masks for the people in her local community and raising money for charity at the same time!



After hearing about the tragic fires in Australia, Mia and her class wanted to help. They set up a bake sale to raise money for a charity called RARA, which helps Australian people and animals affected by the fires. They raised over £450.



Ben told us how he managed to collect all 60 Cub badges during the first lockdown.



St Andrew's C of E Primary School worked on their time capsule project. As part of the project, they took aspects of the year 2020 and wrote newspaper reports about them. The subjects varied from the Black Lives Matter protests to music, movies and celebrities in 2020. The time capsule included pictures to show what life was like for them during lockdown, a copy of the local newspaper and a memory stick containing pictures and electronic copies of all their written work. They also included a copy of *First News*.



Lilah explained how her class wrote a letter to Comic Relief asking them to make their famous red noses plastic-free. And it worked, as Comic Relief are making them 100% plastic-free and plant-based now. Well done, Fourlanesend School!

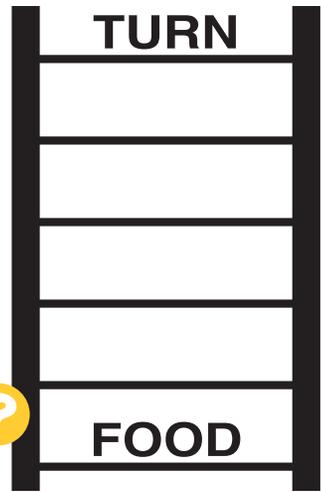
SUDOKU!

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

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

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.



CROSSWORD

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

1		2		3		4		5	
6						7			8
				9	10				
		11							
12				13		14			
								15	
16						17			
				18					

ACROSS

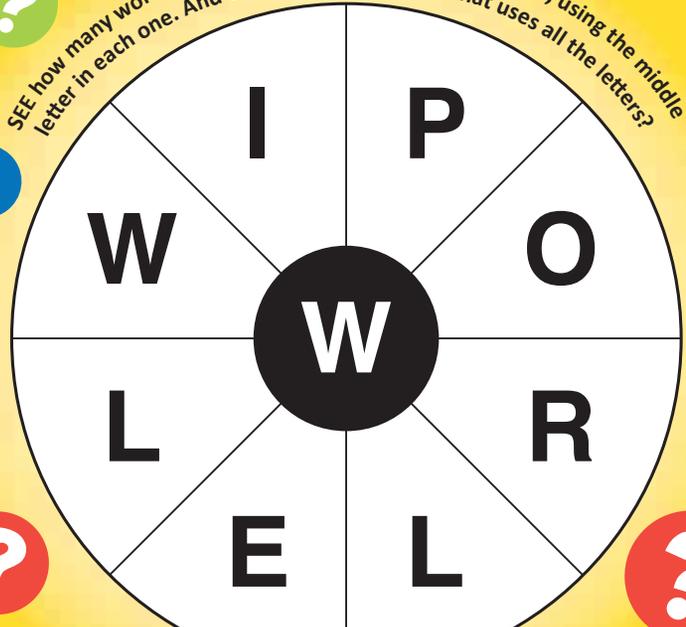
- 1 Practice performance (9)
- 6 Get on an aeroplane (5)
- 7 Disagree about; quarrel (5)
- 9 Jumper (7)
- 12 A pair of organs that are found on either side of the spine (7)
- 16 Fastening with string (5)
- 17 Sweet sugar topping for a cake (5)
- 18 Very (9)

DOWN

- 2 Warmth (4)
- 3 South American mountain range (5)
- 4 Smooth grey rock (5)
- 5 Slight (anagram) (6)
- 6 Large piece of fabric used as a cover on a bed (7)
- 8 Simple item of jewellery (7)
- 10 Method of doing something (3)
- 11 Guidance (6)
- 13 One less than nine (5)
- 14 Item added to food to add flavour (5)
- 15 Next after four (4)

WORD WHEEL

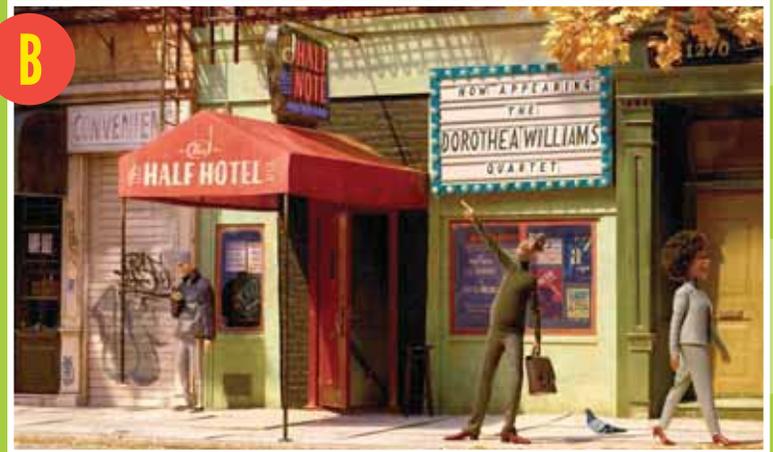
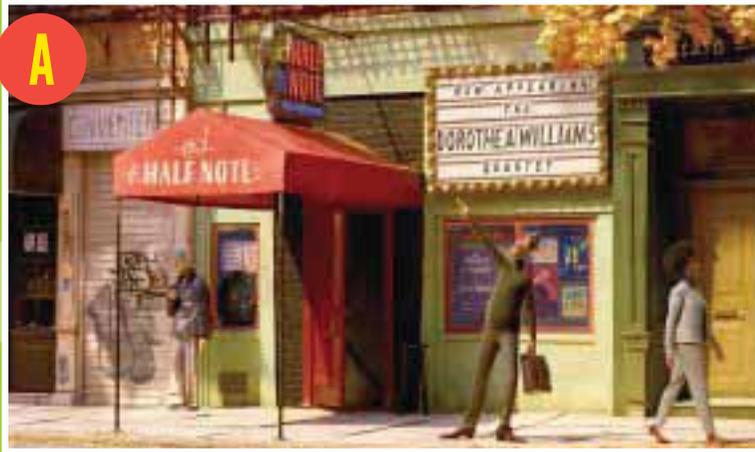
SEE how many words of three or more letters you can make, using the middle letter in each one. And can you find the word that uses all the letters?



HOW TO ENTER: Send your finished puzzles by email to win@firstnews.co.uk. Don't forget to put **Puzzles 759** in the subject box. We're afraid we can't accept postal entries for now. The closing date for puzzle entries is **Thursday 7 January 2021**.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

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

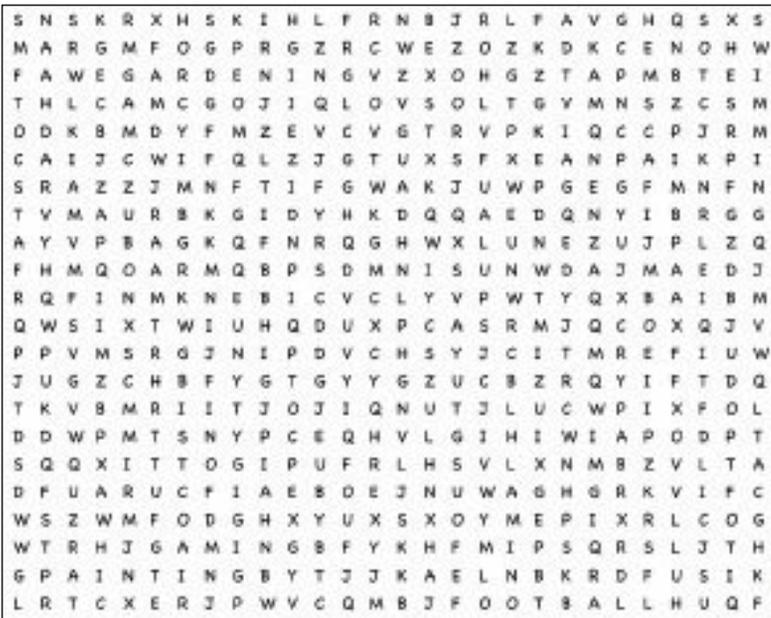


WORDSEARCH

WHAT ON EARTH?

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

THESE are all associated with New Year. Can you guess what they are?

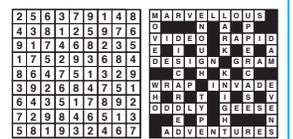


- Reading
- Football
- Swimming
- Painting
- Gaming
- Baking
- Dancing
- Fishing
- Jogging
- Gardening
- Cycling
- Judo

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: Santa has been removed, Ho is missing from the sign, stripe on jumper is a different colour, Goofy's nose is bigger, hair on head missing.
What on Earth?: yule log, pigs in blankets, Brussels sprouts, gingerbread house, mince pies, cranberries.
Word wheel: guarantee. **Word ladder:** lobs, lows, bows, bowl, bawl, ball.



HOW MANY?

How many of these items can you find in this picture?

Robin <input type="checkbox"/>	Hat <input type="checkbox"/>
Sock <input type="checkbox"/>	Skis <input type="checkbox"/>
Glove <input type="checkbox"/>	Berries <input type="checkbox"/>
Sledge <input type="checkbox"/>	Poles <input type="checkbox"/>
Ice skate <input type="checkbox"/>	Candle <input type="checkbox"/>
Snowflake <input type="checkbox"/>	Straw <input type="checkbox"/>

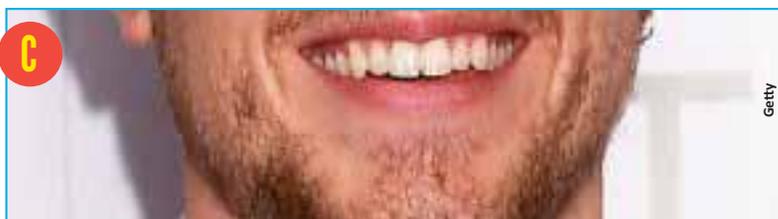
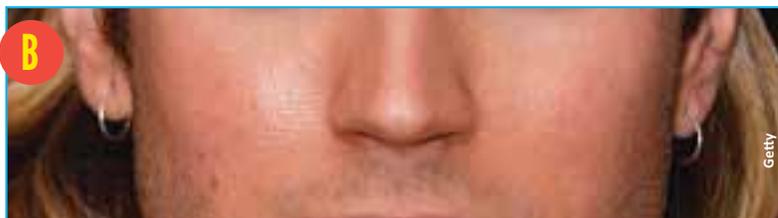


WHO ON EARTH?

ALL of these have appeared on *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!*

One was a recent runner-up, one is a boy band member who won in 2011, while the other has his own radio breakfast show.

Can you guess who they are?



GUESS THE CONNECTION

1. One word can go after each of these words. Can you work out what the word is?

2. One letter can go at the start of these words! Work out the missing letter then guess what the words have in common.

3. Change the first letter in each word to make a new word. All the new words should have a connection...

BED _____
 BATH _____
 CLASS _____
 MUSH _____

— EACH
 — EAR
 — ASTA
 — IZZA

LOG
 WIG
 HOUSE
 COAT

ONE of our favourite shows of 2020 has returned for 2021!

Can you guess which show we're talking about by looking at these people who were in it last year?



GETTING CRAZY IN 2021!

SURELY after the unbelievably strange year we've had, 2021 can't get any crazier?! Regardless, there are still plenty of weird and wonderful things (hopefully) happening around the world. Here's just a small selection...

TURNIP THROWING

IN just a couple of weeks in Spain, locals in Piorral will gather round to throw turnips at a man dressed as a devil.

Turnips. Not squishy tomatoes. Rock hard, root vegetable turnips. Ouch!

Dressing up as the monstrous figure at the Jarramplas Festival is a real honour. The waiting list to play the turnip-dodging creature is about 20 years long!



JANUARY

Getty

CHEESE ROLLING



Getty

MAY

TAKE a walk on Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire in late May and you might witness an army of people chasing cheese.

The ancient event, which is said to go back almost 2,000 years, sees a wheel of cheese hurtling down the hill at up to 70mph. Lots of people take a tumble and get hurt during the hill run, so we guess they must REALLY love cheese.

WIFE CARRYING COMP



JULY

ONE of the stranger 'feats of strength' events has to be the Wife Carrying World Championship in Finland.

Men run, jump and swim while carrying their wives or partners backwards on their shoulder.

The victorious couple win the wife's weight in beer.

That does not look comfy!

Getty

HOT DOG EATING CONTEST



JULY

ONE of the few events that didn't get cancelled in 2020, Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest took place under COVID-safe conditions.

This year, the New York event will see competitive eaters try to beat the records set in 2020. For the men's comp, Joey Chestnut ate 75 dogs in ten minutes while Miki Sudo set a women's record with 48.5!

istock

SLUDGY SWIMMING

FANCY swimming 60m in a muddy bog? Then it's off to Wales with you!

That's where the World Bog Snorkelling Championships have been taking place for more than three decades.

Competitors come from all over the world to get muddy and a bit chilly in the bog at Llanwrtyd Wells.



AUGUST

Can you beat the bog?

Getty

XMAS PUDDING RACE

LIKE so many things, London's Great Christmas Pudding Race had to be cancelled in 2020.

But it should be back with a bang in 2021! Organised as a fundraiser for Cancer Research UK, teams in fancy dress have to get through an obstacle course while holding a Christmas pud on a tray!



DECEMBER

Getty



Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer



2021 IN GAMING



FOLLOWING the launch of the next-gen consoles last year, there are some awesome games and updates on the way in 2021 that should keep gamers very busy indeed. Here are some of the titles we're most looking forward to playing this year.



LEGO STAR WARS: THE SKYWALKER SAGA SWITCH, PLAYSTATION 4/5, XBOX ONE/SERIES S/X, PC

INITIALLY planned for release in 2020, we're hoping that the new LEGO Star Wars game isn't too far, far away!

LEGO Star Wars: The Skywalker Saga is set to shake up the formula of the other LEGO games, while keeping the series' brilliant sense of humour. You'll be able to play through all nine films (in LEGO), plus the game will feature "every Star Wars character you can think of!" We can't wait!

BALAN WONDERWORLD SWITCH, PLAYSTATION 4/5, XBOX ONE/SERIES S/X, PC

IN March, we're off to the mysterious Balan Theatre, where we'll travel through a strange land, led by the very odd maestro Balan.

In the game, which can be single-player or multi-player, you play as characters Leo Craig and Emma Cole. The two are invited into Balan Wonderworld by the maestro to restore the lost balance of their hearts.



Once there, they take on a variety of challenges through strange worlds, with the help of magical costumes that give them special abilities and powers.

There are more than 80 costumes, each of which has a unique power.

AMONG US UPDATE iOS, ANDROID, SWITCH, PC

MULTI-PLAYER smash hit *Among Us* is soon getting an update that features a new airship map!

It's been hard to avoid *Among Us*, which became incredibly popular over the last few months – and we don't think it's going anywhere any time soon!

Revealed at The Game Awards, the new, bright airship map features multiple floors for deception to take place upon...



RATCHET AND CLANK: RIFT APART PS5

BLAST your way through interdimensional chaos in this upcoming adventure for the PS5.



The game sees Ratchet and Clank fling themselves through different realities to stop a villainous emperor from erasing all life in the universe, while a dimensional collapse happens around them! No biggie, right?

Set for release in the first half of 2021, those lucky enough to have a PlayStation 5 can smugly look forward to this.

NEW POKÉMON SNAP SWITCH



RECKON you could be a wildlife photographer? Why not practise with Pokémon?

New *Pokémon Snap* is the long-awaited follow-up to 1999's original *Pokémon Snap* game.

As you might have guessed, you've got to take pictures of Pokémon as you roll around their habitats in a spherical vehicle on rails.

The better your pictures, the more points you get. Be the very best at taking Pokémon snaps and you can unlock new habitats to take pictures in.

While there's no release date as yet, we're especially looking forward to this one coming out!

MINECRAFT: CAVES AND CLIFFS UPDATE ALL CONSOLES AND DEVICES

THIS upcoming update for *Minecraft* is set to add loads to the game, and we can't wait!

New mobs will be added, including the terrifying Warden – a powerful, blind creature found in

the new, deep, dark biome.

Set for release this summer, we can't wait to mine and craft all the new things coming in the *Caves and Cliffs* update!



THE BOOKS WE CAN'T WAIT TO READ IN 2021!



A NEW year means a new bunch of books to read! We've taken a look ahead at some of the top titles coming out that we'll be getting stuck into early this year. Which one are you most excited for?

FANTASTICALLY GREAT WOMEN SCIENTISTS AND THEIR STORIES

KATE PANKHURST out 4 February

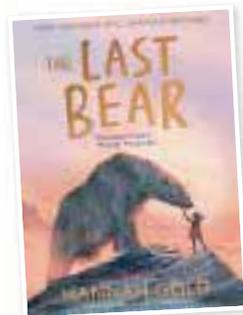
Women have been responsible for many of the world's most ground-breaking scientific discoveries. In this new book, Kate Pankhurst, descendent of suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst, tells the stories of some incredible female scientists whose hard work has changed the world.



THE VALLEY OF LOST SECRETS

LESLEY PARR out 1 January

Taking place during World War 2, this book is about a boy called Jimmy who is evacuated to a small village in Wales. When Jimmy finds a skull hidden in a tree, suddenly the valley is more frightening than the war. We're looking forward to this exciting mystery!



THE LAST BEAR

HANNAH GOLD out 18 February

There are no polar bears left on Bear Island. At least, that's what April's father tells her when his scientific research takes them to this remote Arctic outpost for six months. But, one endless summer night, April meets one. In this touching story, the two end up on a magical adventure with a heart as big as a bear's!



SHOW US WHO YOU ARE

ELLE MCNICOLL out 4 March

This is a story set in the near future about a girl called Cora, a 12-year-old girl who becomes involved with a company called Pomegranate Institute, where AI is being used to create holograms to comfort grieving families. With lots of twists and turns, *Show Us Who You Are* is about what really makes us who we are.



THE BOY WHO SANG WITH DRAGONS

ANDY SHEPHERD out 7 January

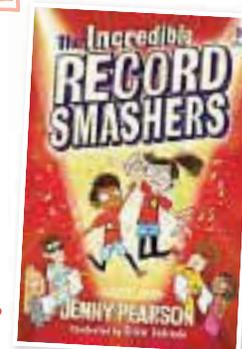
Tomas is a top-notch dragon grower and protector of the special dragonfruit tree. But his life is turned upside down when he discovers a huge secret about Aura, his new friend. The fifth and final book in the series will see the two go on an unbelievable journey together.



THE INCREDIBLE RECORD SMASHERS

JENNY PEARSON out March 2021

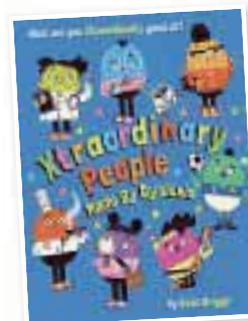
Lucy is good at fixing broken things, but there's nothing she can do about her unhappy mum. So, with the help of her best friend, Sandesh, Lucy aims to smash a world record and solve her and her mum's problems. But it might not be as easy as she first thought...



EVERYDAY MAGIC

JESS KIDD out 4 February

When Alfie Blackstack's parents meet an unfortunate end, he goes to live with his weird aunts, Gertie and Zita, in the village of Little Snoddington. He thinks his aunts are just the local chemists, but soon discovers they're actually witches! All sorts of magic and mayhem soon begin in this bizarre adventure.



XTRAORDINARY PEOPLE: MADE BY DYSLEXIA

ebook out now

KATE GRIGGS

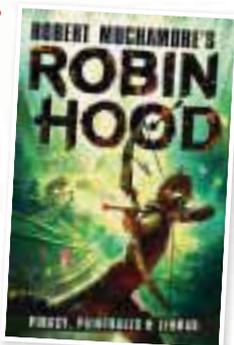
Dyslexic people think differently, and this different way of thinking makes dyslexics 'Xtraordinaryly' good at some things. This book will help you discover the seven different types of 'Xtraordinary' people and their 'superpowers', and discover what yours are too!



ROBIN HOOD: PIRACY, PAINTBALLS AND ZEBRAS

ROBERT MUCHAMORE out 7 January

Robin Hood is back as you've never seen him before, in this action-packed re-imagining of the folklore hero! The second book in the series, *Robin Hood: Piracy, Paintballs and Zebras* sees the 12-year-old rebel determined to fight back, with a robbery and a plot to hack the computers at Sherwood Castle.



THE HATMAKERS

TAMZIN MERCHANT out 18 February

The first adventure in a spellbinding new magical world, where Making – crafting items such as hats, cloaks, watches, boots and gloves from magical ingredients – is a rare and ancient skill, and only a few special Maker families remain. But one of the Makers is using their powers to try to start a war...



WHAT'S IN THE SHOPS?

ANIMALS

WILD ANIMALS LIGHT SWITCH ART IWANTONEOFTHOSE.COM £7.99

These fun pre-cut wild animal stickers will brighten any room and are perfect for adding a touch of fun. Simply peel off the individual pre-cut piece and place around the light switch.



ANIMAL MUGS ASDA £3.50 EACH

These fun and quirky mugs are ideal for a hot chocolate on a cold winter day. The range includes a tropical parrot, striking flamingo, cuddly panda, a roarsome dinosaur and a cool cat in glasses.



BRIGHT EYES ANIMAL HAT NOTONTHEHIGHSTREET.COM £16.95

This fab hat is also a torch! The hat contains two ultra-bright white LED lights built into the eyes of the raccoon, allowing you to light your way home. With two light modes, the lights can be switched on for use as a head torch, or flash on and off to attract attention and be seen.



3D ANIMALS JIGSAW PUZZLE FINDMEAGIFT.CO.UK £15.49

This innovative new puzzle by Ginger Fox brings 3D jigsaws to life in a way you won't have seen before. Once all the pieces are in place, a strikingly beautiful picture comes together. The puzzle includes three viewing glasses in red, green and blue. When you pop on a pair of the glasses, you will see a distinct animal brought to life before your very eyes. Each pair of the glasses will show you a different image!



*All prices correct at time of printing.

ANIMAL PALS STATIONERY SET DIY DESIGN KIT HOBBYCRAFT.CO.UK £15.99

Send cute notes to everyone with this animal stationery set. The set includes 12 animal note cards, a blank journal, two sheets of stickers, four coloured double-sided pencils and illustrated instructions. Choose from a cat, an owl, a koala bear and more! You can personalise each of the folding animal notes to suit friends, and customise your own notebook as a keepsake.



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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.

FIRST NEWS HOME iHUB



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

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

AWARD WINNING!

AVAILABLE NOW FOR HOME LEARNING

LIMITED NEW YEAR OFFER!

*Offer ends 10 January 2021

THE First News iHub is an interactive e-learning platform created to support children from 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. Only £15 for three months.*

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

England captain Sarah Hunter (with the ball) will be hoping for another Grand Slam in the Six Nations



IT'S ALL KICKING OFF IN 2021

RUGBY UNION

A busy year in rugby union kicks off with the Six Nations (**6 February – 20 March**) – a fiercely competitive tournament that takes place every year between England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France and Italy. Last year's championships were postponed due to the pandemic, with only a handful of games left to play. However, play resumed in October, with England winning the men's and women's titles.

This summer (**3 July – 7 August**) also sees the British and Irish Lions – a team made up of players from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland – go on tour again, as they do every four years. This time, they're heading to South Africa and will play the current world champions across three test matches. England's Owen Farrell and Maro Itoje, as well as Wales' Alun Wyn Jones, are all contenders for the captain's armband.

There could be more success for the England women's team, as they travel to New Zealand for the Rugby World Cup (**18 September – 16 October**). The Red Roses face France, South Africa and Fiji in Pool C, while Wales have been handed a nightmare draw in Pool A, taking on Australia and hosts New Zealand, who have won five out of the last six World Cups.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Fans of rugby league are also set for a big year, with the World Cup (**23 October – 27 November**) heading to England in the autumn.

For the first time ever, the men's, women's and wheelchair competitions will all run alongside each other, with an epic weekend of finals to look forward to.

In the men's tournament, England will fancy their chances against Samoa, France and debutants Greece, while Scotland face a tricky task against Fiji, Italy and defending champions Australia. The women's competition sees England's Lionesses do battle with Papua New Guinea, Canada and Brazil – the first ever South American team to qualify for the World Cup.



GOLF

The golfing calendar will be returning to some normality after a year of disruption. America's Dustin Johnson will be chasing a second consecutive green jacket at The Masters (**5-11 April**), while the PGA Championship (**20-23 May**) – won last year by 23-year-old Collin Morikawa – is to be held at the exotic Kiawah Island resort in South Carolina.

The US Open (**17-20 June**) and the British Open (**15-18 July**) follow, but the main men's event is set to be the Ryder Cup (**24-26 September**) – a team competition between Europe and the United States held every two years, which was postponed in 2020. Team Europe, who won the last event in 2018, will head to Whistling Straights in Wisconsin as underdogs against a strong American team likely to feature Johnson, Morikawa and US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau (left).



The Solheim Cup (**31 August – 6 September**) – the women's equivalent to the Ryder Cup – also takes place this year, with Scotland's Catriona Matthew captaining Europe for the second time.

TENNIS

All eyes will be on Wimbledon (**28 June – 11 July**) this summer, after the 2020 Championships were cancelled. Andy Murray will be hoping to return to the singles competition following a career-threatening hip operation in 2018, while 16-year-old Cori 'Coco' Gauff (below) – who shocked the world by beating fellow American Venus Williams in the opening round in 2019 – is a potential world-beater.

Elsewhere, 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer faces a race to be fit to play at the Australian Open (**8-21 February**), while Rafael Nadal and Iga Świątek hope to defend their titles at the French Open (**23 May – 6 June**). The US Open follows from **30 August – 12 September**.



FUN AND GAMES!

AFTER 2020 saw some of the world's biggest sporting events cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, 2021 is set to be absolutely packed with amazing sports action (fingers crossed!). Here's our guide to the unmissable year ahead!



TOKYO OLYMPICS

23 July – 8 August

In March, athletes and sports fans around the world were devastated when it was announced that the 2020 Games in Japan were postponed until 2021.

However, organisers are hopeful that the event will be able to take place in July this year, with more than 11,000 athletes set to take part in more than 30 sports at 42 different venues all over the country.

Four sports – surfing, skateboarding, karate and sport climbing – will be making their Olympic debut in Tokyo, while baseball and softball will be returning, too, after not featuring at the Games since 2008.

Team GB have several medal hopes in the athletics, with sprinter Dina Asher-Smith going for gold in the 200m and heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson looking to add to her 2019 World Championship win. In the pool, Adam Peaty will be hoping to match his success at Rio 2016, where he set a new world record as he won 200m breaststroke gold. 19-year-old Freya Anderson could also make a big splash at her first Olympics.



Freya Anderson

Getty

FOOTBALL

The highlight of the footballing calendar in 2021 is the European Championship (11 June – 11 July), which was postponed

from 2020 due to the pandemic.

The tournament, which takes place every four years, will be held in 12 cities across 12 European countries, with the semi-finals and final being hosted at Wembley Stadium in London.

England and Wales both qualified from their groups, while Scotland booked their place with a dramatic play-off victory against Serbia in November (below). The Scots, who haven't played in a major tournament since 1998, join England, Croatia and the Czech Republic in Group D, while Wales face Turkey, Italy and Switzerland in Group A.

The tournament's 'Group of Death', Group F, sees defending champions Portugal take on Hungary, Germany and World Cup winners France. Portuguese captain Cristiano Ronaldo is expected to make his final international tournament appearance at the Euros, when he'll be 36 years old.

Club football, meanwhile, is set to be as hectic as ever, with Lyon hoping to add to their incredible record of five Women's Champions League trophies in a row, and Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool looking to defend their Premier League title.



Getty

TOKYO PARALYMPICS

24 August – 5 September



Amy Truesdale (right)

Just two weeks after the Olympics, a fortnight of Paralympic sport will get underway in Tokyo.

More than 4,000 Paralympians will compete across 22 sports. There are different categories for athletes' various disabilities – they may be paralysed, missing limbs or have conditions that limit their movement or vision, and events are modified to account for this.

Among Team GB's many stars to look out for is Claire Cashmore, who will be competing at her fifth Paralympics, having

switched from swimming to para-triathlon after Rio 2016.

Double world champion Amy Truesdale will be hungry for success as her sport, para-taekwondo, makes its Paralympic debut.



Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar became the second youngest winner of the Tour de France last year, aged just 21

MORE DIARY DATES

- Darts:** 3 January PDC World Darts Championship final
- Cricket:** 5 February – 8 March India vs England Test series
- American Football:** 7 February Super Bowl LV
- Horse racing:** 10 April Grand National
- Snooker:** 17 April – 3 May World Snooker Championship
- Cycling:** 26 June – 18 July Tour de France
- Futsal:** 12 September – 3 October FIFA Futsal World Cup
- Cricket:** October – November ICC Men's T20 World Cup
- Netball:** 1-19 December Netball World Youth Cup

TURN TO PAGE 27 FOR MORE SPORT IN 2021

