

CUMBRIA

Mountain rescues increase

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



Bowfell Mountain, Lake District

EDINBURGH

Zoo pandas may go

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



Tian Tian munches bamboo

SWANSEA



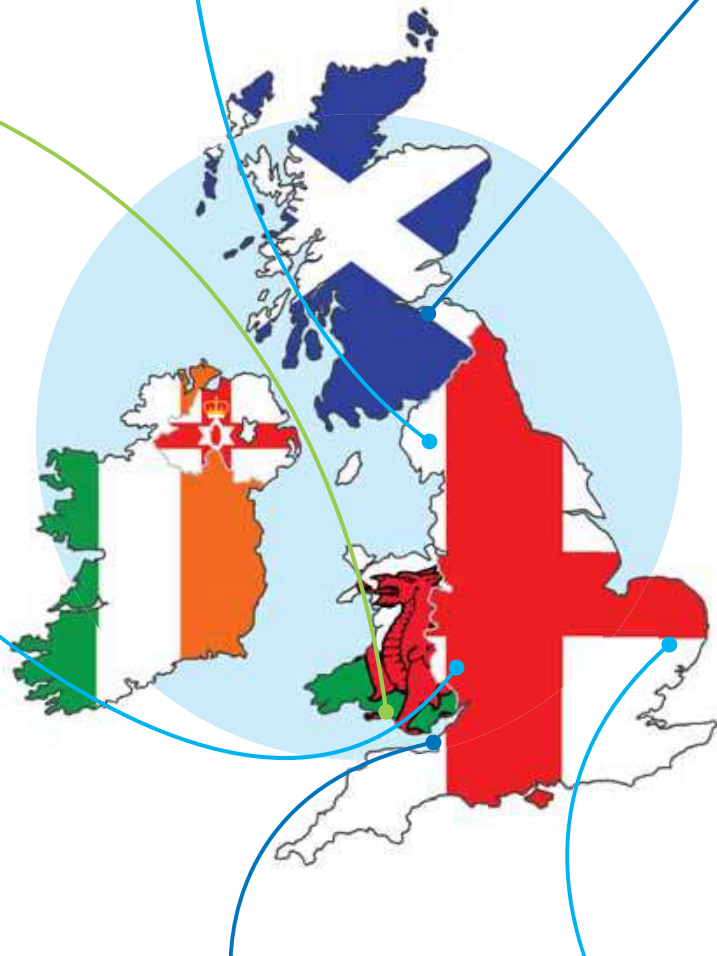
Solar-powered hospital

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

WORCESTERSHIRE

Medics finally married

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



UK



Money problems

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

SOMERSET

Rare black fox returned home

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



AnimalFarmAdventurePark/Facebook

SUFFOLK

31 marathons in 31 days

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



tom's_trust/Twitter

MPs SAY 'NO DEAL'



TO JUNK FOOD

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

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

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

Figures suggest that around two-thirds of UK adults are

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

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

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

HOPE FOR RARE TURTLE



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

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

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

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

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

HENRY'S APPEAL

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

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

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

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

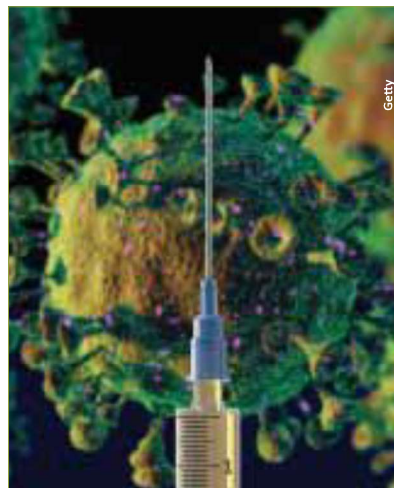
You can find out more at solvingkidscancer.org.uk/appeal/henry.



henry_the_brave/Twitter

NEW JOB STRATEGY

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



Getty

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

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

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

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

CROATIA



● Deadly earthquake

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

PERU



● Scientist threatened

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

NORWAY

● Landslide tragedy

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



USA

● President asks for votes

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



RUSSIA

● Women at the wheel

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



SOUTH KOREA

● Population falls

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



VATICAN CITY

● Pope against flights

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



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

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

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

MEATBALL

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

PILOU

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

MILADY

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

LAMPO

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

WIN!

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

What is the name of the band that the 44 Cats play in?
 a) The Fluffycats b) The Buffycats
 c) The Puppycats

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

The competition closes on 20 January 2021

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

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

BIRDWATCH WEEK IS BACK

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

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

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

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

LONGEST RESIDENT

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

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

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

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



Bristol Zoo Gardens

WIND FARM WORRIES

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

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

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



iStock

BITESIZE NEWS

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