



Issue 170

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Celebrating the festival of lights

Hindu people around the world, including around a million in the UK, are preparing to celebrate the major festival of Diwali.

It falls on Monday, October 20, this year but the festivities began two days before the big day and carry on for a further two days afterwards.

Diwali celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.

It is often referred to as the festival of lights because of the

custom of decorating homes, shops and public places with small oil lamps known as diyas. Diwali is also marked among the Sikh and Jain communities.

Homes are cleaned in preparation for family gatherings and feasts, and one of the popular customs is the exchange of gifts, often sweets and cakes.

Another favourite is to create intricate and colourful patterns on the floor, known as rangoli, using powder, sand and rice.



Princess's phone warning

The Princess of Wales has warned of the dangers to family life posed by smartphones and other technology.

She said using the devices is a distraction from time families spend together.

Catherine, the future queen, issued the warning in an essay on the Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood website. It was written together with Professor Robert Waldinger, a psychiatry expert at an American university.

They write: "While digital devices promise to keep us connected, they frequently do the opposite.

"Our smartphones, tablets and computers have become sources of constant distraction, fragmenting our focus and preventing us from giving others the undivided attention that relationships require.



"We sit together in the same room while our minds are scattered across dozens of apps, notifications and feeds. We're physically present but mentally absent, unable to fully engage with the people right in front of us."

The warning comes at a time children and young people are alerted to online dangers such as bullying, and the use of smartphones is increasingly being banned during the school day.

The essay adds: "When we check our phones during conversations, scroll through social media during family dinners, or respond to e-mails while playing with our children, we're not just being distracted, we are withdrawing the basic form of love that human connection requires.

"The challenge is particularly acute for today's babies and young children who have been born into a world immersed in digital technology."

William, the Prince of Wales, recently revealed that none of the couple's three children, George (12), Charlotte (10) and Louis (7), are allowed to have smartphones.



◆ The next edition of The News Shed will cover two weeks, from October 24 to November 7, while we take a break for half-term.

◆ That means we can feature two of children's favourite nights of the year, Halloween on October 31 and Bonfire Night on November 5.

◆ Don't miss it – out next Friday, October 24.



WILDLIFE WATCH



◆ While many sea creatures are in danger because of pollution, climate change and over-fishing, green turtles are bouncing back.

Conservation efforts such as protecting eggs on beach patrols and trying to avoid getting them caught up in fishing nets have seen numbers around the world increase and their classification has been changed from 'endangered' to 'least concern'.

Christine Madden of the World

Wildlife Fund said: "This is a major win for turtle conservation and proof that co-ordinated action can reverse populations at risk of extinction."

Green turtles, one of the largest species of sea turtles, were once hunted widely to make turtle soup and their eggs were considered a delicacy.

***Did you know?** They get their name not from the colour of their shells but from their greenish fat, caused by a herbivore diet.*



◆ Four fossa pups have been born at Chester Zoo, the first anywhere in the UK this year.

It is a major boost for conservation work across Europe, where only three litters have been born this year. Native to Madagascar, the cat-like creatures are at risk with fewer than 2,500 estimated to remain in the wild.

Chester Zoo head of mammals Mark Brayshaw said: "These births are incredibly special. Not only are they the only pups in the UK and vital additions to a European breeding programme, but they also give us a unique opportunity to learn more about their biology, behaviours and social dynamics."

◆ A pair of peregrine falcon brothers who became webcam stars have spread their wings.

The two birds of prey had almost 400,000 webcam views when they hatched in a nest high on St Albans Cathedral in 2023. It is one of several webcams operated by The Wildlife Trusts, watching wild animals around the country.

Now the two birds have been spotted almost 90 miles apart, in Hampshire and Northamptonshire. They were identified by rings attached to their legs.

Licensed bird ringer Barry Travis said: "It's very interesting to learn that two more of the St Albans peregrine offspring have been re-sighted. This year's juveniles can still be seen close to St Albans Cathedral but as they develop they too will look to fly further and establish their own territories."





CRUISE CONTROL!

Emma Swan is not only a children's author but also a West End actress who has starred in shows such as *Horrible Histories*. As a child, she was 'ship-schooled' as she travelled the world on cruise ships which both her parents worked on, which has inspired her debut book *Cruise Ship Kid*. She talks to **Emily Weston**

Q You grew up on a cruise ship! How was that experience?

A Yes! In my early years of childhood I lived nearly full-time on a cruise ship and was 'ship-schooled'. I did end up going to 'normal' school but, even then, every holiday we were back on a cruise.

Q What was the best place you went to?

A I could not get my head around roads being made of water, so Venice was amazing! I included that in the book. A lot of the places I went to, though, I don't actually remember. I'm more likely to remember the snacks or the rooms I could play in.

I was able to really use this when writing the character Silver in the books.

Q As this was your childhood, how long did it take you to have the idea for *Cruise Ship Kid*?

A I've read a lot of children's books and I still read them now! You'll often find me on the tube with a middle-grade book.

Whenever anyone asks for a fun fact, saying I grew up on a cruise ship was always my go-to answer. I then realised it might make a really interesting book.

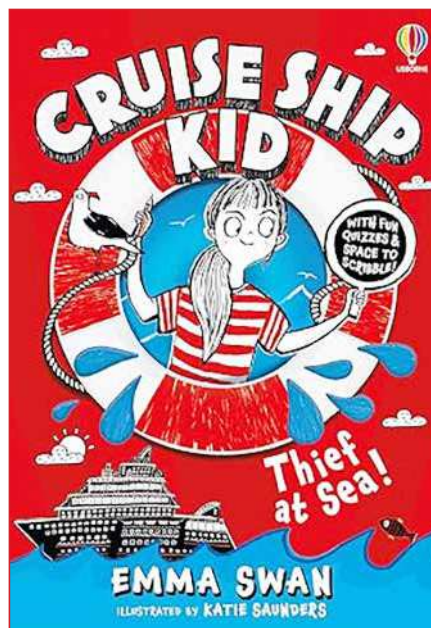
Q It's certainly a unique setting for a book, isn't it?

A Yes. And what I hope makes it different too is that it's through the eyes of a mini crew member – she can go through the 'crew only' doors and talk about the ship in perhaps a different way to what another character would.

Q It's lovely that the book talks about friendship and her quest for a friend. It's great children can talk about this in an open way. Did you think about the 'take-away' from the book while you were writing?



“I want to change perceptions of older people – they are really cool!”



A Yes. If I'm lucky enough that they spend time reading my book, I want them to take something away from it.

In *Cruise Ship Kid*, I want them to know they don't need to change for anyone else – they can make friends being themselves!

I also put in the inter-generational relationships that Silver has with 'The Gang'. I want to change perceptions of older people – they are really cool!

In the next book, it's about how much Silver wants a phone and it digs into a lot of questions about when children should be allowed phones and also explores social media use.

Q The book has space for children to write and get involved in the book. What gave you the idea to do this?

A When I finished grammar school, I did some tutoring and I often gave the children prompts about themselves to start their writing and inspire them.

So it made sense to include this in the book, especially as Silver is so desperate for friends that it makes sense that she would ask the reader questions.

Q It's almost like you've sneaked some comprehension in without them knowing, isn't it?

A I've not thought about that – it is like sneaky comprehension! I do think it's a book schools and children can engage with.

Q There are illustrations throughout. Did you decide what and where these were, or was it down to illustrator Katie Saunders?

A I made some notes and suggestions to go alongside the humour! But other than that, it was all down to Katie. She's so amazing and I'm lucky to be working with her.



WORD IN THE NEWS

FLOOD

Emergency services on both sides of the Atlantic have been tackling the devastating effects of flash floods.

The highest level red alert was announced in the Catalonia region of Spain where flood water swept through the towns of La Rapita and Santa Barbara after seven inches (18cm) of rain fell in 12 hours.

In Mexico, almost 50 people died and rescue workers were searching for around 40 missing people after floods across five states.

◆ *Word derivation: the word 'flood' comes from the Old English 'flod' which in turn derived from the Germanic 'floduz', also the source of the German 'flut' and Dutch 'vloed'.*

A-Z OF COUNTRIES No.7: GUATEMALA



◆ With 17.6 million people, Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America. (Neighbouring Mexico is not considered part of Central America.)

◆ The country's name comes from the word Cuauhtemallan in the Nahuatl language, meaning 'place of many trees'.

◆ The capital and largest city, Guatemala City, is the most populous city in Central America with more than 1.2 million people.

◆ Sitting on the boundary between two tectonic plates, the country is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity. That has led to Guatemala City being the country's third capital after the previous two were destroyed in 1541 and 1773.



◆ Conquered by Spain in the 16th century, the country later became part of the Mexican empire until it declared itself independent in 1847.

◆ What is now modern Guatemala was the centre of the Maya civilisation which dominated the area from around 2000 BC to well into the first millennium AD.

◆ Guatemala remains dotted with many reminders of the Maya civilisation which attract millions of tourists each year, a key part of the country's economy.

◆ Best known of these sites is the ruin of the ancient Maya city of Tikal in the north of the country, now a World Heritage Site. At its centre stands the Tikal Temple (pictured), also known as the Temple of the Great Jaguar.

QUIZ TIME TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

CAPITAL CITIES

- 1 Which city took over from Rio de Janeiro as capital of Brazil in 1960?
- 2 Canada's capital is only the country's sixth largest city by population. Name it.
- 3 Which city, established in 1913, sits within the Australian Capital Territory?

BOOKS

- 1 Who wrote the 1964 children's book Charlie and the Chocolate Factory?
- 2 Who or what is Timmy in Enid Blyton's Famous Five series of books?
- 3 Which footballer has written the Breakfast Club Adventures series of children's books?

FOOTBALL

- 1 Which Dutch club won the old European Cup in 1971, 1972 and 1973?
- 2 Which two English clubs did legendary Manchester United manager Matt Busby represent as a player?
- 3 Who is the new manager of West Ham United?

ANSWERS

- CAPITAL CITIES**
1. Brasilia
 2. Ottawa
 3. Canberra
- BOOKS**
1. Roald Dahl
 2. A dog
 3. Marcus Rashford
- FOOTBALL**
1. Ajax
 2. Man City & Liverpool
 3. Nuno Espirito Santo



NUMBER IN THE NEWS



An Australian police officer and bodybuilder has broken the world record for the number of pull-ups completed in an hour.

Jade Henderson had originally targeted the record of more than 7,000 in 24 hours but switched to the hour record after suffering an injury in training.

And she managed 733 in that time, confirmed by Guinness World Records, averaging more than 12 every minute to beat the previous record of 725.

Picture: Guinness World Records

HISTORY WHAT HAPPENED ON THIS DAY

OCTOBER 24, 1926

Painful end as Houdini failed to make one final escape act

Harry Houdini amazed audiences on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the early years of the 20th century with his remarkable escape acts.

But his career came to a sudden end when a show at a theatre in Detroit on October 24, 1926, proved to be his last.

Houdini often boasted of the strength of his stomach muscles and, two days earlier, a man called Jocelyn Whitehead had asked to test this. Houdini agreed but was not ready for Whitehead's heavy punches and was hurt by them.

He still went ahead with his show that night and again in Detroit, but was found to be suffering from acute appendicitis and died in hospital a week later. It was never proved whether Whitehead's

punches were to blame.

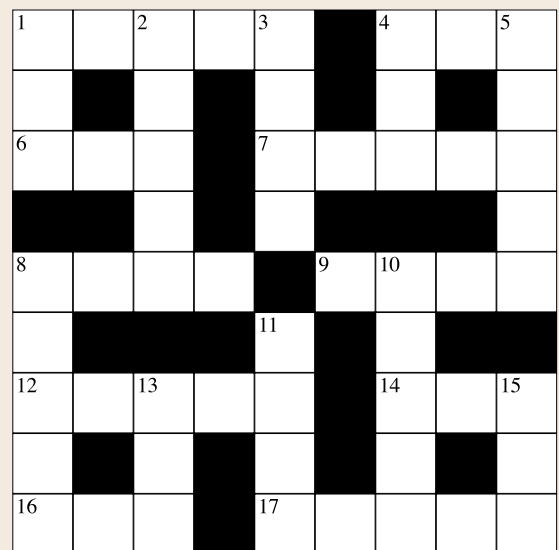
Houdini's acts included escaping from a set of special handcuffs which had taken a British locksmith five years to build. In other acts, he escaped after being wrapped in chains and locked inside a packing case that was dropped into the East River in New York.

He could also escape when chained up and locked in a milk churn filled with water and when suspended by his feet upside down in a sealed tank of water.

Nobody has ever really known what tricks – if there were any – were involved in Houdini's remarkable feats.



CROSSWORD TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



ACROSS

- 1 & 4 Canine security worker (5,3)
- 6 Pastry-encased food (3)
- 7 Chocolate factory owner Willy (5)
- 8 Unkind; intend (4)
- 9 Capital of Fiji (4)
- 12 Africa's most populous city and former capital of Nigeria (5)
- 14 Once around a track (3)
- 16 Upper limb (3)
- 17 Change (5)

DOWN

- 1 Space between two things (3)
- 2 Stadium or large indoor venue (5)
- 3 One of these clues; county in Northern Ireland (4)
- 4 Loud annoying noise (3)
- 5 West African country, capital Accra (5)
- 8 Mediterranean island nation, capital Valletta (5)
- 10 Dark (5)
- 11 Continent to the east of Europe (4)
- 13 Jewel (3)
- 15 Expected score in golf (3)

ABOUT US

◆ The News Shed is a digital news magazine, produced weekly in term-time to inform, entertain and educate pupils and to provide resources for their teachers.

◆ It is among a whole host of educational resources at: www.literacyshedplus.com

◆ For contact details please see the website.



Your teacher can find the solutions at www.literacyshedplus.com



RUGBY LEAGUE Hull Kingston Rovers completed the treble when they won their first ever Super League Grand Final.

They beat Wigan Warriors 24-6 at Old Trafford to add the end-of-season showpiece to the Challenge Cup and League Leaders Shield.

In the process, they left Wigan without a trophy this season, having completed an unprecedented quadruple – the domestic treble plus World Club Challenge – in 2024.

Hull KR's brilliant season has earned three of their players a place in the England squad for the upcoming Ashes series against Australia. Mikey Lewis, man of the match in the Grand Final, gets the call-up alongside hooker Jez Litten and wing Joe Burgess, who scored two tries at Old Trafford.



See next week's edition for a full Ashes series preview

THE GREAT GRACE

The third part in our series on sporting siblings turns the spotlight on English cricket

THE GRACES

WG Grace was the first superstar of cricket and remains one of the sport's greatest players.

In a first-class career spanning 870 matches and more than 40 years from 1865 to 1906, he scored more than 54,000 runs and took over 2,800 wickets.

Many of those feats were for Gloucestershire, often playing alongside brothers EM Grace and Fred Grace.

In an era of far fewer international matches than there are today, WG Grace played 22 times for England and in an 1880 match against Australia at The Oval the Graces became the first three brothers to play together in a Test match. It was the only international appearance for EM and Fred.

When London Spirit beat Southern Brave in The Hundred competition this summer, the game was won when Jamie Overton bowled out his identical twin brother Craig.



England scored almost 6,000 runs. Leslie played for Middlesex for 18 years but did not appear in the national team.

At a time when the cricket and football seasons did not overlap as much as they do today, it was a different story on the football field. Both brothers played for Arsenal, winning the League together in 1948 and FA Cup in 1950. Leslie went on to win two England caps.

THE BEDSERS

Alec Bedser held the world record for most Test wickets for 10 years, taking 236 in 51 Tests for England between 1946 and 1955.

In county cricket, the fast bowler represented Surrey for 22 years, playing alongside identical twin brother Eric, an all-rounder who bowled off-spin.

The twins were inseparable throughout their lives, often dressing identically, sharing a home and even the same bank account.

THE CURRANS

Fast-bowling brothers Tom and Sam Curran have both represented England at Test level but have become Twenty20 experts in recent years for Surrey, England and many franchise teams around the world.

Earlier this year, they were both in the crowd at Trent Bridge to see middle brother Ben open the batting for Zimbabwe in the one-off Test match against England. Their father, Kevin, also played cricket for Zimbabwe.

We go Down Under next week in the fourth and final part of our series on sporting siblings.

THE COMPTONS

Denis Compton is remembered as one of England cricket's best and most popular batsmen – but he and brother Leslie were real sporting all-rounders.

Denis played for Middlesex for 22 years and in 78 Test matches for

Ukrainian brothers Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko won a record 40 world heavyweight title fights between them.

The peak of their careers, between 2004 and 2015, is known in the sport simply as 'the Klitschko era' and at one point they held all four versions of the world heavyweight title between them.

Vitali, the older brother, retired from boxing in 2013

and became a politician. He is now mayor of Kyiv, the capital of war-torn Ukraine.

Leon Spinks won the world heavyweight title in only his eighth professional fight when he beat an ageing Muhammad Ali in 1978. Ali gained revenge seven months later. Spinks' younger brother, Michael, held a disputed version of the title in the mid 1980s.