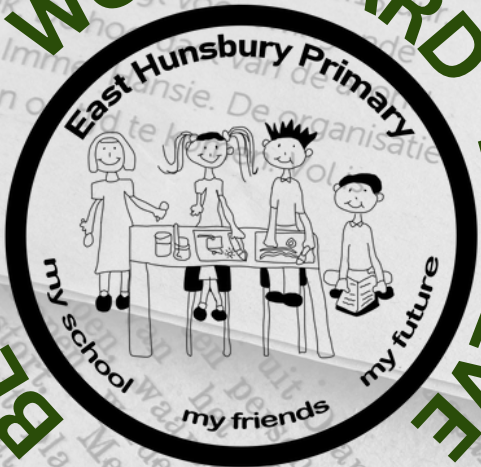


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IN THE

SPOTLIGHT

YOUR WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

The weekly newspaper for children

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK?

What do you think about this week's news?

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Space Junk!

The Otero family in America received an out-of-this-world surprise when a piece of space debris fell through the roof of their Florida home! The metal object was a small cylinder, about 10cm long and weighed less than a kilogram, which has left a hole in the roof. Dad, Alejandro Otero, said, 'I was shaking. I was completely in



Pictured: International Space Station.
Source: Canva.

disbelief.' Luckily, nobody was hurt, the noise of the impact just scared Alejandro's son. NASA has since identified the metal object as a piece of equipment that was discarded from the International Space Station (ISS). Since our first explorations of space, humans have left behind quite a collection of rubbish; including old satellites, parts of rockets and other space equipment. This is known as space debris, or space junk, and it can be problematic for spacecraft. The ISS, for example, has had to alter its course 30 times in the past to avoid colliding with a variety of space debris. Researchers are currently looking into solutions for this problem, including possibly using a giant net or magnet to collect space rubbish!

Star Dunes

Sand dunes are large bodies of sand that are moulded and shaped by the wind. They can be found across the world and even on Mars! The largest sand dune on Earth is the Lala Lallia in Morocco, Africa. It is nearly as tall as Big Ben and is the width of about seven football pitches. Scientists believe this sand dune is about 13,000 years old. This particular sand dune is known as a star dune. This is because, as the fierce wind changes direction often, the dune forms different branching ridges, giving it the appearance of a star. While



Pictured: Star dunes. **Source:** Canva.

scientists understand the basics of sand dunes, exactly how and why dunes form in the way they do remains a mystery. Sand dunes are currently an area of interest for researchers as many parts of the world become hotter due to climate change. Scientists wish to understand more about their formation and hopefully be able to predict patterns of shifting sands.

What does art mean to you?



I love art because it can tell a story and it inspires me.
Eva, 9

Siren Birdsong

A bird who lives outside a police station in Oxfordshire has learnt to mimic the sound of a police siren. Thames Valley Police, at a base in Bicester, released a video of the bird singing, and the copycat call sounds just like a police siren going off. Officers at the base admitted that they were initially confused and thought that their cars may have developed a fault! Further investigation revealed that the cars' sirens were in full working order. The bird was tracked down and its 'siren song' was recorded. Thames Valley Police posted about the incident on their social media platforms, 'Before you read on... this is 100% real and NOT a late April Fools joke! 🚫' Officers at our Roads Policing base in Bicester have been left a little confused this week, after finding out one of their resident birds has learnt to mimic the sound of a police siren! 🚓'



Pictured: Emergency lights.
Source: Canva.

The video posted shows the bird sitting in a tree chirping before replicating the sound of a two-tone siren. Thames Valley Police added, 'It's so accurate, they've been left thinking the sirens were faulty on the cars! From our workshops that test out the two tone-tune to officers deploying to jobs, this little fella has been sat patiently observing the noise to recreate it.' **Did you know that starlings are able to accurately mimic man-made noises? Have you heard any other birds replicating sounds they hear in the world around them?**

Shining like the Sun

A new Guinness World Record has been set at Niagara Falls for the 'largest gathering of people dressed as the Sun!' Niagara Falls Canada excitedly made the announcement on social media, posting, 'IT'S OFFICIAL! The City of #NiagaraFalls has broken the Guinness World Record for 'Largest gathering of people dressed as the Sun' with 309 participants! The previous record was held by China Life Insurance Company Limited, which achieved the record in 2020 with 287 participants. Congratulations to everyone involved, making this special day even more memorable!'

To celebrate the recent solar eclipse, hundreds of people, wearing sun costumes, gathered on a boat with the falls behind them. The 309 people were

wearing red ponchos with yellow suns hanging over their chests. **Do you enjoy getting dressed up for occasions? Do you think it helps to make them more special?**



Pictured: People dressed as the Sun at Niagara Falls.
Source: Niagara Falls Canada @NiagaraFalls X page.

What does art mean to you?



I like art that shows something I recognise - like a landscape or building. That's what helps me see the beauty in the world.

Jim

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Spring has Sprung!

Trees and hedgerows are currently adorned with colourful blossom. Plants and trees that will go on to produce fruit, grow buds at first, which flower once warmer weather arrives in the spring. This is the blossom that we are seeing now. The flowers attract bees



Pictured: Cherry blossom. **Source:** Canva.

and other insects, which pollinate them by transferring pollen between different flowers. After pollination, the flowers will fall away, making space for fruit to form. Blossom trees are very special in some countries. In Japan, Hanami is a special festival held to celebrate its much-loved cherry blossom trees, known as Sakura, and the arrival of spring. Every year, around the end of March and beginning of April, crowds flock to enjoy the canopies of delicate pink blossom. In the UK, a number of common trees produce blossom at this time of year, including hawthorn, blackthorn, and apple trees. There is also a huge range of kept gardens and parks containing diverse collections of fruit trees.

Island Rescue

Three sailors have been rescued from a remote Pacific island after being stranded there for a week following an accident involving their fishing boat. The fishermen's boat was struck by a large wave, damaging the outboard motor. When the mariners attempted to make contact with coastguards, they found their radio had run out of battery. Luckily, the men managed to swim to a small, nearby island called Pikelot Atoll, where they cleverly fashioned a 'help' sign using palm fronds. The search for the sailors began in early



Pictured: Desert island. **Source:** Canva.

April after they had been reported missing but rescue efforts were initially hindered due to bad weather. Guam rescuers were later joined by a US Navy team and one other coastguard crew to search an area of over 100,000 miles! Navy aircraft spotted the mariners' huge 'help' sign, and the men were rescued shortly after and returned safely to their families.

Can you learn to persevere?



I think that if you keep being positive and if you don't give up, you can learn to persevere.

Ava

World's biggest 3D printer

The Advanced Structures and Composites Center (ASCC), at the University of Maine, in Orono, USA, has unveiled the world's biggest 3D printer! The printer is able to print entire homes and make completely recyclable neighbourhoods. Called 'Factory of the Future 1.0' (FoF 1.0), it is four times larger than the previous Guinness World Record holder, which is also located at the university. The FoF 1.0 is able to print objects up to 30 metres long, by about 10 metres wide, by 5 metres high, and has an impressive



production speed of 227 kilograms of material an hour. 'This new technology allows UMaine-ASCC to scale-up its research and production of its innovative biobased 3D printed home technology,' said MaineHousing's Development Director Mark Wiesendanger. 'This effort creates another means of producing quality affordable housing, while further driving costs down, and using abundant wood residuals from Maine's sawmills.'

Would you like to live in a home that has been created by a 3D printer?



Pictured (Right): Factory of the Future 1.0.
Pictured (Left): A home produced by the world's previous largest 3D printer.
Source: UMaine Advanced Structures and Composites Center Facebook page.

Sapphire Tower

Puya alpestris, commonly known as Sapphire Tower because of its turquoise-blue flowers, is a rare plant that only blooms once every 20 years! Horticulturists at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, UK, have released pictures of their plant flowering. As there were no hummingbirds around, scientists at the gardens have been trying to help the plant to reproduce by carefully hand pollinating with a paint brush. Horticulturist, Alberto Trinco said, 'Each flower only lasts a few days, giving us a limited window of time to give nature a helping hand. In the absence of its natural pollinators, we will attempt some hand pollination instead. It is very slow-growing, so to witness its spectacular blooms is both exciting and rare. Hopefully pollinating the flowers with the brush to obtain seeds will allow us to secure the

presence of this amazing species in our collection for future generations to come admire.'

Did you know that some plants only flower once every 20 years?



Pictured: The *Puya alpestris* and Alberto Trinco.
Source: Birmingham Botanical Gardens Facebook page.

Can you learn to persevere?



I think persevering is really important and if you try hard, you can reach your goals.

Patrick

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