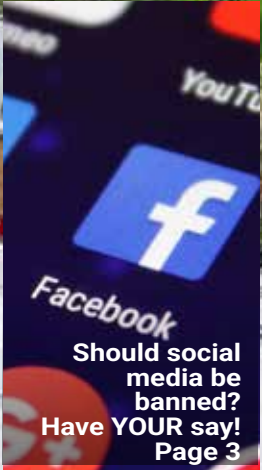


THE HUMMERSKNOTT ACADEMICAL

APRIL 26

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OFSTED

Did Hummersknott make the grade?

Find out on Page 9



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Special Thanks
Mr Webber

Editor's Comment



There is something slightly surreal about writing a final editor's comment — largely because it forces one to confront how much of their time has been spent chasing deadlines, trimming other people's adjectives, and occasionally wondering whether anyone would notice if we quietly missed one issue (for the record, they would).

My own journey with The Hummersknott Academeal began as a political reporter in the 15th edition, progressed — somehow — to Deputy Editor for the 16th and 17th, and culminated in the privilege of serving as Editor for the 18th through to this, our 20th edition. That number alone feels worth pausing on. Twenty editions represents not just longevity, but a sustained commitment from a community of students willing to write, edit, design, and debate — often all at once.

If I have contributed anything meaningful during my time, it has perhaps been a willingness to occasionally inject a note of realism into proceedings.

Every good newspaper needs enthusiasm, but it also needs someone prepared to ask whether a piece quite works, whether a headline quite

lands, or whether an idea — however exciting — needs refining. It is not always the most glamorous role, but it is, I think, a necessary one.

What has always made this paper special, however, is not any one editor, but the team around them.

This edition alone demonstrates that brilliantly: from thoughtful explorations of music and sharp commentary on fashion, to more hard-edged reporting — including our coverage of the downfall of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor.

The range, confidence, and quality on display speak far more eloquently than I can about the talent within this group.

I would also like to pay tribute to two individuals without whom this newspaper simply would not exist in its current form: Mr Webber and Chris Barron. Their consistent support, guidance, and belief in the value of student journalism have underpinned every edition, including this one.

As I step aside, I am genuinely pleased to hand the paper over to Holly Cherrie and Hannah Smith as co-editors. They bring energy, judgement, and a clear sense of direction, and I have no doubt the Academeal will continue to grow under their leadership.

More than anything, I leave with a sense of gratitude—for the conversations, the collaboration, and the small but significant community that has formed around this newspaper. It has been a privilege to be a part of it.

Clubs and activities

A WEEK

DAY	TIME	CLUB
MON	Before School	School Orchestra / Band
	Lunch	School Nurse
	Lunch	Science Revision
	After School	Badminton
TUE	Lunch	Hockey / Rounders
	Lunch	Gardening
	Lunch	Dance Club
	After School	Swimming
WED	Lunch	Chess
	Lunch	Athletics
	Lunch	Science Revision
	After School	Newspaper Club
	After School	STEM Club (Lego Masters)
	After School	KS3 Reading Club
THU	Lunch	English Literature Revision
	After School	GCSE Art & Photography booster
	Lunch	Athletics
	After School	All Things English
FRI	After School	Debating Club
	After School	Swimming
	Lunch	Calm Club
	After School	Maths Homework Help Club
	After School	Computer Science booster

B WEEK

DAY	TIME	CLUB
MON	Before School	School Orchestra / Band
	Lunch	School Nurse
	Lunch	KS3 Chess
	After School	Badminton
TUE	Lunch	Hockey / Rounders
	Lunch	Gardening
	Lunch	Dance Club
	After School	Swimming
WED	Lunch	Chess
	Lunch	Athletics
	Lunch	Creative Writing
	After School	Newspaper Club
	After School	STEM Club (Lego Masters)
	After School	KS3 Reading Club
THU	After School	English Literature Revision
	After School	GCSE Art & Photography booster
	Lunch	Athletics
	Lunch	Spanish Film Club
FRI	After School	All Things English
	After School	Debating Club
	After School	Swimming
	Lunch	Calm Club
	Lunch	BreakOUT
	Lunch	History Club
	After School	Maths Homework Help Club
	After School	Computer Science booster



We're always looking to recruit aspiring journalists to join The Academeal. If you'd like to be part of our team, email Mr Webber at ewb@hummersknott.org.uk

Term and holiday dates

Holiday
Easter 2026
May Day 2026
Summer Half Term 2026

Closing Date
Thursday 2 April 2026
Friday 1 May 2026
Friday 22 May 2026

Re-opening for teaching
Monday 20 April 2026
Tuesday 5 May 2026
Monday 1 June 2026



Have your say: should we ban social media?



by **Holly Cherrie**

BE honest, what's your screen time? How often would you say you use social media in your daily life?

What would you do if that privilege was taken away from you?

In December 2025, the Australian government put a ban on all social media for those under the age of 16, and controversially caused many young teens to speak up about the freedom taken from their daily life.

You may think this does not affect the teens of the UK, but prime minister Keir Starmer has proposed a blanket ban on social media use for under 16s, which has been backed by the House of Lords.

However, this may not be the end of the controversial subject.

The government subsequently launched an online safety consultation exploring several themes including social media platforms having minimum age requirements and addictive features such as auto play being banned.

This is good news for those against the ban, as this means the government is pushing for a more adaptable ban, including allowing the blocking of children from "specified internet services", rather than such a strict limit for under 16s.

We want to know how you feel about the potential blocking of social media for under 16s. How would that affect you personally?

Do you see the ban as an opportunity for exploration or a limitation of your freedom online?

By scanning the QR code beneath this article, you can submit your opinion on the controversial topic!

Should social media be banned for under 16s in the UK – yes or no?



Heat wreaks havoc down under

by **Esther Schilbach**

AUSTRALIA received a heatwave that experts labeled as "Catastrophic", posing a threat of wildfires this January.

Severe heatwaves were declared in every state except Queensland.

450 schools and childcare centers were closed while fire fighters fought off multiple blazes in Victoria and New South Wales.

Australia has a four-tier ranking system for the severity of their fires, catastrophic being the highest level of threat, followed up by extreme, high and moderate.

Children's hospital suspends surgeon

by **Matthew Sanderson**

DISTURBING results have emerged from a review into the actions of a children's surgeon.

Yaser Jabbar, a doctor at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, in London, is under investigation for allegedly botching 100 children's surgery on purpose during surgery.

Jabbar, who has worked at the hospital for five years, performed surgery on approximately 789 children.

It has been revealed that 94 of his young patients had to have more surgery resulting from the effects of his unauthorized experimental procedures.

For 91 of these surgeries, Jabbar operated alone without professional oversight.

A review has uncovered that something was done wrong in every surgery.

When the BBC tried to reach Jabbar, the hospital issued a statement saying how they are "deeply sorry for the harm caused."

Boxer survives fatal car crash

by **Sophie Hodge**

A FATAL car crash involving former boxing heavyweight champion, Anthony Joshua, resulted in the death of Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele.

The car that contained the three men and their driver collided with a stationary truck on a major motorway in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The policeman working on

the scene, Mr. Akinbiyi, stated that Joshua and the driver were immediately rushed to the hospital.

Joshua sustained only minor injuries, but his friends were pronounced dead at the scene.

Driver Adeniyi Kayode later faced four charges, including negligent driving, driving without due care and attention, and driving without

a valid national license. In court, he claimed the brakes failed and that he was innocent.

The court was also told that Kayode made Anthony move seats before the crash - a move that likely saved his life.

However, he was granted £2600 bail and was immediately rushed away from the courtroom.

Alysa Liu makes history



Photo: YantsImages

by **Hannah Smith**

FIGURE skater Alysa Liu ended the USA's 24-year gold medal drought in the sport with a new, bold style, stunning figure skating fans worldwide.

The 20-year-old competed at the Olympics in Milan Cortina, Italy for the USA where she scored 150.20 in her free skate and 226.79 total, placing her above the two other medallists, Kaori Sakamoto, who secured a silver medal for Japan, and Ami Nakai in third place, bringing another medal to Japan.

The champion's performance displayed creative artistry and immense athleticism, which clearly showed her limitless determination and hard work that went into her skating performance to "promise" by Laufey which evoked emotion and passion to many skating fans worldwide.

Liu first stepped onto the ice at the age of 5 when her immense talent swiftly became apparent. By the age of 13, Alysa Liu became the youngest US women's champion in 2019.

She also made history at a

junior grand prix event where she became the first woman to land a quadruple lutz and a triple axel in the same program which secured her another gold medal at the age of 14.

Early in her career, she was closely monitored by the adults surrounding her and went through an intense daily training structure which was designed primarily by her father, Arthur Liu, who was very involved in the management of her skating.

However, Alysa recently revealed that the intensity of the training extended to being told what to wear and even what to eat which was heavily influenced by her parents and coaches at a young age which drove her to an early retirement.

She retired at just 16 due to the enormous pressure and burnout and a desire for a chance to experience a normal teenage life in 2022.

During her break, she gained many new skills and memories but after a skiing trip with friends, she was reminded of her love of figure skating which inspired her to return to training in 2024.

However, she made it clear to her parents and coach that her return to figure skating was completely on her own terms, and that she chooses the music she performs to, her costumes and her diet after stating in an interview: "No one is gonna starve me or tell me what I can and can't eat."

She also highlighted that she returned to skating through love of the sport, not desire to win when she declared: "Medaling doesn't fulfil me. I skate because I like to skate", which showed her new carefree approach to skating and that she prioritizes joy and self-expression over medals.

Will new Lego brick be a game-changer?



Photo: LEGO

by **Matthew Sanderson**

IS Lego's new smart brick revolutionary or a failed dream?

The point of the smart brick is to make a sound based on the motion of the brick when you play with it.

One positive is that it makes sense, as one of the biggest problems of Lego is how fewer children play because it may not be as fun as video games. This solves it.

However, there are only a few problems with the new smart bricks.

For example, they are very expensive and they leave only a few minifigures.

Those can be overlooked as it could be worth the price of over one hundred pounds, but something that cannot be overlooked is the fact that they leave a massive hole in the middle of the biggest set.

This has led Lego fans to not buy them and be mad at how it is for children but almost two hundred pounds without a cover for the brick to make it look nicer than it is.

Two shot and killed in Minneapolis

by **Emily Marquiss**
and **Alex Gilbert**

RENEE Nicole Good was fatally shot by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Minneapolis on January 7.

Good, a 37-year-old mother of three and an award-winning poet, had recently moved to the city.

Originally from Colorado Springs, was acting as a legal observer at an ICE raid,

according to state leaders.

Good's mother told the Minnesota Star Tribune her daughter was 'not part of anything' that would involve antagonising ICE agents.

While at the raid, an ICE agent shot her through her car window and she died soon after.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem claimed Good had been "Stalking and impeding their work" by

blocking them in with her car and "shouting at them."

After her shooting, there were many protests for her.

There were signs made about the lies of ICE and some signs read: "Be Good".

After Good's shooting, there was a similar incident involving a man called Alex Pretti.

The 37-year-old ICU nurse, who worked at Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Hospital, was a US citizen understood to

have been apart of the Renee Good protests.

The officers who shot him were placed on administrative leave while the investigation was in place for the shooting.

These deaths have sparked fresh demonstrations in the state, and motivated public outcry across the US, as well as criticism from lawmakers for both parties.

Winter Olympics wrap-up in Italy



Millions tuned in for The Winter Olympics opening ceremony

by Holly Cherrie

THE 2026 Winter Olympic Games took place in Milano, Cortina, Italy, throughout February.

The professional sporting event occurs every four years, attracting more than two billion viewers across television to tune in for the long-awaited competition.

Unlike the Summer Olympics, the Winter events include many snow and ice sports, such as skiing, snowboarding, curling, figure and speed skating, and sledging,

among many others.

The increased popularity appears to have influenced younger generations to get involved in supporting athletes and sharing their love for the sport events taking place.

Trends such as Olympic fashion or equipment, unboxing videos, and athletes taking part in Tik-Tok dances have dominated social media, allowing many fans to get a glimpse of the athlete's daily life as an Olympian.

Linear television and social

media apps show fifty-seven percent of viewers aged thirteen to nineteen, have openly expressed a desire to watch more Olympic coverage in the future.

Could this spike in interest be due to the younger generation now being able to take part in the events?

This could mean an even brighter future for the competitive event as the rising fame of sports could bring even more inspired athletes wanting to take part in all the fun.

15 dead in Australia's worst mass-shooting in 30 years

by Anna Dryden

TWO gunmen shot and killed 15 people whilst also harming many others in Australia's Bondi Beach.

The victims were attending an event on Bondi to celebrate Hanukkah.

This tragedy happened on the December 14 2025, shortly after the two gunmen had arrived in Sydney on November 29 after they had reportedly been staying in the Philippines.

Police have declared this attack as the biggest mass shooting in Australia since 1996.

At time of writing, there was no evidence to suggest that the two offenders acted as part as a broader terrorist cell, so the attack was entirely independent.

The two men were named as father and son Naveed Akram and Sajid Akram, aged 50 and 24.

The Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, said it appeared both gunmen were: "motivated by Islamic State ideology" and the attack might possibly be related to the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

Naveed Akram was shot dead by police, while Sajid Akram was hospitalised straight after.

Preparations underway across North America for World Cup



2022 World Cup winners Argentina
Photo: Hossein Zohrevand Tasnim News Agency

by Nivedh Nishad

THE FIFA World Cup will return this summer.

This is the 23rd FIFA World Cup, with the tournament held every four years since the inaugural tournament in the 1930s.

The reigning champions are Argentina, who won the tournament in 2022 after beating France in the finals.

This match was remarkably close as Argentina scored two goals in the first half followed by France scoring two goals in the second half.

The match eventually led to

penalties and Argentina ended up taking the victory.

A total of 48 countries will compete for the trophy this year, and the FIFA World Cup is being held in three countries for the first time since the 2002 FIFA World Cup: the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The first match of the tournament is between Mexico and South Africa.

However, some have argued that too many games have been scheduled in too short a space of time, as there are 104 games being played over just 39 days.

War in Middle East rages on after failed ceasefire



Devastation in central Tehran following airstrikes
Photo: Hossein Zohrevand, Tasnim News Agency

by Esther Schilbach

FOLLOWING growing tensions, Israel, the United States, Iran, and other countries in the Middle East have been engaging in attacks on each other's territory.

The reason that US President Donald Trump ordered these attacks was allegedly to targets Iran's missile infrastructure, and to prevent the country's construction of nuclear weapons.

The conflict started on February 28 when the US and Israel attacked one of Iran's military bases, killing Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran issued a counter-attack, launching drones and missiles at Israeli and American military bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE and Qatar.

A missile landed on an Iranian all-girls school, killing 165 young children. While evidence suggests the attack was part of a US-Israeli offensive, both countries have denied responsibility.

Trump took this as an opportunity to make a statement to the Iranian people, saying: "When we are finished, take over your government."

He went on to say: "It will be yours to take. This will probably be your only chance

for generations."

On March 1, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer got involved by giving Trump permission to use UK RAF bases for "defensive actions".

However the Prime Minister has stated that the UK will not take part in any air-strikes or blockades.

Nevertheless, the UK does reportedly have jets in the air for purely defensive reasons.

Washington has stated that the conflict is only intended to last a couple of weeks however experts beg to differ, especially if Iran proves to be more resilient than expected.

Return of extinct possums



Photo: Carlos Bocos

by George Billington and George Harris

TWO species of possum which were deemed extinct has been re-discovered in west Papua New Guinea.

The species are the pygmy long-fingered possum and the ring-tailed glider possum.

However, the humans that live nearby view the animals as sacred, and therefore they will not hunt it or even mention its name.

One of the most noticeable features that makes the Pygmy long-fingered possum species recognisable is its fourth finger on each hand.

However, it was believed that it went extinct in Australia during the ice age.

Upon this discovery scientists and wildlife groups are attempting to make sure that no one can use the forest for logging.

This incredibly rare phenomenon is called a "Lazarus taxon" which links to a term used for a biblical figure being brought back from the dead.

Bigger, better, bolder – BGT is back



by Isla Pocklington

WE are live, back, and ready for this unique new season of Britain's Got Talent which is available on ITV1 and STV.

Presenters Ant and Dec are ready to present the Judges - KSI, Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, and Alesha Dixon.

This is the 19th series of the popular talent show.

Two golden buzzers were pressed early - the first by Simon Cowell for Paul Nunnari, whose act involved him climbing up a silk in his wheelchair before swing-

ing from it by his neck.

The second was pressed by KSI, who awarded it to the 16-year-old magician Rafferty Coope.

Coope's trick involved making a coin pass through solid glass, making a phone levitate, and a card trick that led to him playing the song Don't Stop Believing on the piano.

A few other performances include boyband SOS, 17-year-old harpist and singer Niamh Noade, magician Craig Roe, and Fraser Penman, a contestant who used a rare condition to create a magical act.

Britain's Got Talent airs on Saturday evenings at 7pm.



Eurovision faces boycott as global tensions rise



by Luke Price

INTERNATIONAL relations are being tested as the 70th Anniversary of the Eurovision Song Contest approaches.

The international musical extravaganza will take place in Vienna, Austria, in May, following Austrian artist JJ's win last year with the song 'Wasted Love'.

However, five countries

have announced that they will not participate in this year's event due to Israel being allowed to participate.

The Middle Eastern nation has drawn condemnation for its actions and attacks in Gaza, leading to Slovenia, Ireland, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Spain refusing to take part.

There will be 35 countries in this year's contest, and 25

will make it to the grand final on May 16.

The United Kingdom has picked its entry for the contest: Look Mum No Computer with the song 'Eins, Zwei Drei.'

Despite the divisiveness of this year's contest it is still set to be one of the biggest musical extravaganzas of the year.

Bullied monkey finds comfort with IKEA teddy



Photo: Daiei Onoguchi

by Wren Lilico

AN adorable monkey stole millions of hearts around the world after a rough start in life.

Punch is a seven-month-old macaque from Ichikawa Zoo, Tokyo. After being mistreated by his family, he carried around an Ikea Djungelskog teddy everywhere he went.

At birth, Punch was abandoned by his mother, so the zookeepers all nursed and took care of him to give him that comfort he needed.

Unfortunately, there are video clips of him getting chased by the older monkeys and older clips of him showing him holding his toy tight whilst being bullied.

Zookeeper Alison Behie explained that Punches' mum was a first time mother and that he was born during a heatwave.

She also added that it would have been a "high stress environment" and that it's an "environment where survival is threatened from outside stress."

Surgeon performs operation from 1500 miles away



by Sam Johnson

A LEADING robotic surgeon has made history by conducting the first long-distance robotic operation.

Professor Proka Dasgupta treated prostate cancer in 62-year-old Paul Buxton.

Paul lives on the British territory of Gibraltar, a place with only one hospital that can't perform complex operations.

If he was going to get surgery, he would need to fly to the London and wait in the NHS's long waiting list.

Instead, Buxton agreed to

make history by being operated from London while he was in Gibraltar.

The operation went smoothly with Buxton claiming he felt "fantastic", and Professor Poka saying that it was "almost as if I was there."

The professor believes that a better use of this machine will "allow us to treat patients from smaller communities with the best surgeon from anywhere."

A second operation was planned March in front of 20,000 urological surgeons to help revolutionize healthcare across the world.

India reclaims T20 World Cup with dominant win over New Zealand

by Akshadha Jindal

INDIA has reclaimed the T20 World Cup title by beating New Zealand.

The team emerged triumphant in the finals that were held in Ahmedabad, where more than 130,000 fans created a truly deafening atmosphere.

The mood was one of pure celebration as the crowd watched India gain victory by 96 runs on their home soil.

New Zealand won the toss and chose to bowl, putting

India in to bat first.

India began with a lot of aggression by hitting boundaries from the very first over.

Their batting was led by their two star players: where Ishan Kishan's powerful start provided platform, Sanju Samson's middle order hitting was the catalyst for a huge score, building a massive partnership.

Teamwork pushed the score higher, eventually setting a giant total of 255 runs for New Zealand to chase.

The momentum shifted

completely toward India in the first six overs, leaving New Zealand fielders looking helpless.

The chase began with New Zealand's tough start but the bowling attack by India was too relentless to overcome.

The pressure of chasing a big score meant risks had to be taken, which led to devastating, regular wickets.

The use of Ahmedabad's conditions perfectly by the Indian bowlers with a stifling run rate, forced New Zealand batting into mistakes.

On the final ball, the last wicket was taken by a perfect catch to dismiss New Zealand for a 159 run score, sealing the 96-run win and sparking celebrations across India.

Although New Zealand's effort and resilience were amazing, they were outclassed by the Indian team that was led by Samson.

The tenth edition was kinked off to India, and now a wait remains on the next edition which will be held in 2028, with Australia and New Zealand to set co-host.

Rare grey whale spotted



by Emily Marquiss

A RARE ocean species, whose numbers were catastrophically depleted by human activity, has been spotted in American waters.

A grey whale was spotted off the coast of New England, USA, on March 1, 2024.

What makes this so rare is the fact that this type of whale has been locally extinct in Atlantic waters for centuries, after the animals were hunted to near extinction.

The whale was spotted by

a group of scientists from the New England Aquarium while it was swimming 30 miles from the shore.

It was seen continuously diving and resurfacing while searching for food.

According to the New England Aquarium, grey whales are easy to spot due to their lack of a dorsal fin, and their mottled grey and white skin.

These beautiful creatures also have two blowholes on the top of their head which creates a heart-shaped spray.

Their only predators are

humans and orcas.

The orca, also called the 'killer whale' is their main predator, but humans played a far more devastating role through whaling.

Europeans hunted the animals from 1845-1846, until Americans took over.

Scientists have said their spotting have been tied to climate change, from ocean temperatures rising the Northern Passage has been ice-free so they are now able to travel through the oceans more freely.

Adaptation of popular anime hits new heights with second series

by Matthew Sanderson

One Piece is known for being the longest and most popular anime on the planet.

The thing we are looking at today is the second season of live action.

Every island it is own arc as the goes into the highest ranked live-action for its amazing detail and storyline.

The story takes place from Loge Town all the way to Drum Island, where the crew meets Tony Tony Chopper, the sweetest little human reindeer out there.

It has eight episodes - same as the last season - but the ratings are off the roof.

The second season of the live action has already beaten the reviews of the last season and is the fastest TV show to achieve a 100 percent review score on Rotten Tomatoes, with many calling it "a masterpiece."

The reason it has been done so well is because creator Eiichiro Oda himself approves every small detail.

Fans around the world have praised its faithfulness to the original story, its strong performances, and its ability to bring beloved characters to life in a fresh and exciting way.

Is ghostly rocker making contact in son's dreams?



by Emily Marquiss

JACK Osbourne has claimed that his late father has been visiting family members in their dreams.

Heavy metal icon Ozzy Osbourne tragically passed away due to a heart attack last year, aged 76, suffering from Parkinson's Disease and coronary artery disease.

But Jack Osbourne has come forward to claim Ozzy has made contact from the afterlife.

He said that he, his wife, and children have seen Ozzy Osbourne in their dreams laughing and telling them: "Just to stop crying".

Ozzy Osbourne has also apparently come to his close friend Billy Morrison to say he is in a good place now and no longer in pain.

His youngest daughter, Kelly Osbourne, shared an emotional comment after the death of her father.

She was thanking people on social media for their love and support, saying: "Grief is a strange thing-it sneaks up on you in waves - I will not be ok for a while but knowing my family are not alone in our pain makes a difference. I'm holding on tight to the love, the light and the legacy left behind."

Stronger than ever – inspectors praise Hummersknott Academy



by Benji Tait

HUMMERSKNOTT Academy has been recognised for its continued improvement and strong school culture in its latest Ofsted report, reinforcing its position as a school on a clear upward trajectory.

Inspectors highlighted several key areas of strength, particularly awarding strong judgements for Behaviour and Attendance, as well as Personal Development and Wellbeing. These areas reflect what many within the school community already experience daily: a calm, inclusive, and ambitious learning environment.

The report praised the academy's "robust and responsive systems" that effectively address barriers to attendance and behaviour. Inspectors noted that pupils have developed a genuine sense of belonging, contributing to a calm and orderly atmosphere that is "highly conducive to learning." Students themselves spoke positively about improvements in behaviour,

while the school's firm stance that bullying is not tolerated underpins a wider culture of respect and tolerance.

Headteacher Mr Sowerby welcomed the report, describing himself as "really proud," and emphasised the collective effort behind the outcome.

He pointed to the hard work of staff and students as central to the school's success, adding that his greatest pride lies in the sense of belonging fostered across the academy.

He described the school community as "one family," stressing the importance of staff and students working "as part of the same team."

For Mr Sowerby, the report validates sustained efforts to improve outcomes and "give better chances for our students."

Personal Development and Wellbeing emerged as another standout area. Inspectors described provision as highly effective, particularly in supporting students with SEND and other needs to develop confidence, resilience, and strong moral awareness.

The report also commended the school's success in ensuring all pupils gain a deep understanding of equality, cultural diversity, and British values.

A key driver behind this success is the school's extensive enrichment programme. Assistant Headteacher Miss Egan expressed pride in the breadth of opportunities available, noting that "we offer more than 30 clubs so there is something for everyone," ranging from chess and politics to sports such as hockey, swimming, dance, and even darts. She also highlighted the innovative KS3 enrichment drop-down days, designed to maximise participation.

Looking ahead, she hinted at further expansion, promising "more exciting things coming next year."

In terms of Achievement, the school was judged to be meeting expected standards, with inspectors recognising strong progress. Knowledge gaps are identified quickly and addressed effectively, while outcomes at Key Stage 4 are particularly strong in English and Maths. SEND provision was also singled out as a strength.

Subject leaders echoed this positive momentum. Head of English Mrs Millward described the recognition as "wonderful," noting that results are "going from strength to strength" with a clear focus on securing the best outcomes for pupils.

Meanwhile, Head of Maths Mr McNeil highlighted consistent improvement, stating that results are rising year on year, with ambitions "to be the best in Darlington."

The academy's Curriculum

and Teaching were also rated as expected, with inspectors praising an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum alongside a strong emphasis on literacy.

Assistant Headteacher Mrs Raine, who leads Raising Achievement, pointed to a structured programme that enhances both classroom learning and independent study at home. She stressed that its success is built on collaboration, acknowledging "the support of our staff, our students and their families."

Inclusion remains a core priority at Hummersknott, beginning from Year 7 and supported by regularly reviewed systems that ensure disadvantaged students receive targeted support. This early and consistent intervention helps ensure that all pupils can access the full breadth of opportunities the school provides.

Leadership and Governance were also recognised as areas of solid performance, with inspectors noting significant improvements.

School leaders were described as professional role models with high ambitions and a clear, strategic vision. Crucially, the report concludes that the school is firmly "on an upward journey."

Taken together, the findings present a picture of a school that not only meets expectations in key academic areas but exceeds them in culture, wellbeing, and student experience.

With strong leadership, a united community, and clear momentum, Hummersknott Academy is demonstrating that sustained improvement is not just possible, but already well underway.

Plans unveiled for new covered padel courts at Hummersknott Academy

by Benji Tait

HUMMERSKNOTT Academy could soon become home to four new covered padel courts under proposals aimed at expanding both student sport and community access.

The scheme, developed in partnership with specialist provider TopTier Padel Ltd,

would see a canopy structure installed over the courts, allowing year-round play regardless of weather conditions. School leaders say the move reflects the rapid rise in popularity of padel across the UK.

If approved, the facility would not be limited to school use. Community access

would be managed by ALP Active, which would oversee bookings, operations and on-site security. The academy has confirmed that safeguarding measures would remain in place at all times to protect students and visitors.

The courts are expected to be located on existing space adjacent to current sports fa-

cilities, minimising disruption while enhancing provision.

Supporters argue the development represents a significant investment in both student wellbeing and local engagement, offering a modern sporting resource that can be used during evenings, weekends and school holidays.

Local unicyclist rides onto telly



by Ben Hardy

UNICYCLIST Alfie Brown was featured in the Northern Echo and has now appeared on BBC Look North.

What started as a school newspaper story - broken by the Academical - has now

became a well-known news report.

The Hummersknott Academical first broke the story about Alfie unicycling to school in December 2025.

The Northern Echo also picked up the story, and now

BBC News has taken notice.

Alfie appeared on the Look North news programme on January 22.

Due to his growing fame I wouldn't be surprised if there is a billboard with him on by the end of the year.

Railway station upgrade nears completion

by Bailey Stainthorpe

AFTER 200 years of operation, Darlington's train station is nearing the end of its long-awaited revamp.

With £140 million invested into the project, the train station will finally include the necessities to make navigating the rail system a better experience for everybody.

Two new platforms are to be introduced into the building, bringing more convenience to the building.

A new multi-storey car park is to be built, which will hold more than 650 cars, allowing convenient parking for commuters and travellers.

This change is sure to make travelling a more friendly experience for those looking to use the train, including both first-time users and regular travellers.

Recent progress includes the successful installation of the new bridge and ongoing fit-out of the Eastern Gateway building.

The project as originally planned to finish in late 2025, but National Rail announced the redevelopment is to be completed in May.

Have you spotted any of these famous faces around town?

There are some famous faces and voices from around Darlington that you might not know grew up here.

Ernie Chapman selected a few of these local luminaries that you may recognise.



Simon Farnaby

Actor from Horrible Histories, Ghosts, Paddington and Paddington 2. Author of The Wizard in my Shed and The Warrior in my Wardrobe. He also co-wrote Wonka.

Simon Farnaby was born in Darlington on 2nd April 1973. He attended Richmond School in Richmond, North Yorkshire.

In 2023, he won a BAFTA award for Platinum Party at the Palace.



James Morrison

Footballer who made 66 appearances for Middlesbrough (2004-2007) and 309 for West Bromwich Albion (2007-2019). He was also a Scottish international.

James Morrison was born in Darlington on 25th May 1986.

Believe it or not, this midfielder even attended Hummersknott Academy!

He scored a total of 375 goals throughout his career.



Philippa Langley MBE

Writer and Historian, famous for digging up King Richard III's remains in a Leicester car park. She wrote The Princess in the Tower - a book about King Richard.

Philippa Langley was born in British Kenya on 29th June 1962. She attended Hummersknott Academy and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form. She was played by actress Sally Collins in 2022 film The Lost King.

Mr. Goodchild flies between lessons



by **Sophie Clark**

MR Goodchild aims high not just in the classroom, but also in the sky.

The Hummersknott teacher has high ambitions for himself as well as his pupils, as he flies gliders in his spare time.

Mr Goodchild started flying gliders at age 16, and he was sponsored by the RAF.

He paid for his own flying lessons and he got his flying license.

He still helps as a flying instructor, and even has a small plane he shares with four others, and he has

his own glider that he uses for competitions.

His favorite place to fly is New Zealand, and loves to fly through the Southern Alps mountain range.

The fastest he has flown in a glider was 150mph, and the fastest in a plane is 600mph.

The furthest he's been in a glider is to London and back, which took 8 hours.

In a small plane has flown from the top to the bottom of the country.

The highest he flew was 15,000 feet in a glider and 60,000 in an RAF plane.

Behind the paper



eat while working (which normally vanish mysteriously without a trace after about ten minutes.)

To keep track on what the team has and has not written we have a to do list in which we can record what articles we are doing and track when they are done.

Once a reporter has been assigned to an article, they need to write it up.

Topics range from politics, to reviews, to local affairs, and international happenings.

Meanwhile, the art team assemble and begin to do all our amazing artwork for our articles, and our photographers will set off gathering photos.

Finally, we end with another meeting talking about the work we have done before heading home.

If you are a Hummersknott student looking to join the Newspaper Club, talk to Editor Benji or Mr Webber to join.

by **George Billington, Sam Johnson and Charlie Jones**

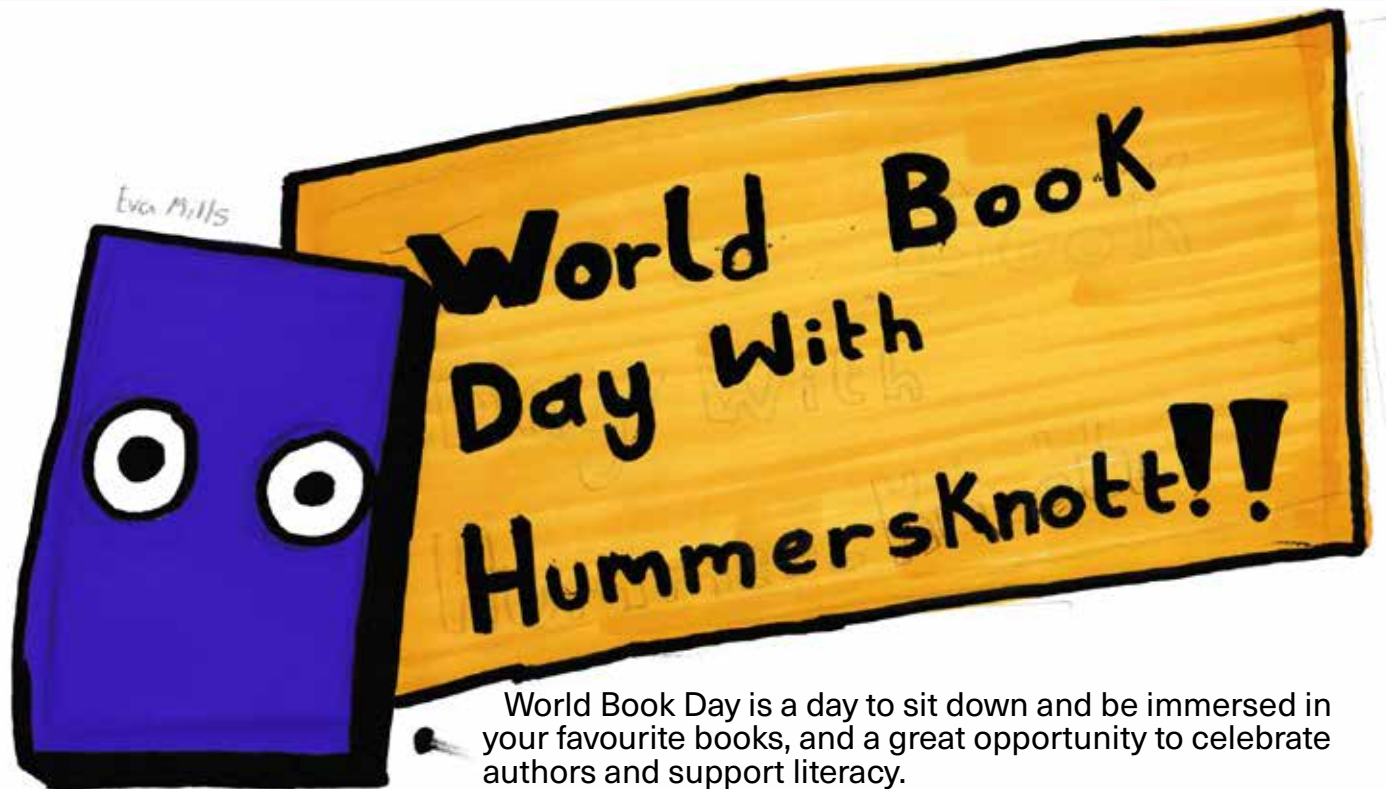
HAVE you ever wondered how the Hummersknott Aca-demical comes together?

First, newspaper reporters gather together for a meeting with editor Benji Tate.

We will discuss how to write an effective article and review the To Do list.

On a Deadline Line, there are occasionally doughnuts for the team to share and





World Book Day is a day to sit down and be immersed in your favourite books, and a great opportunity to celebrate authors and support literacy.



These were Mrs Schweitzer as Coraline, Mrs Fern as Pennywise, Mrs Briggs as The Woman in Black, Mr Webber as Doctor Jekyll, and Mrs Millward as Miss Havisham.

The Science department went with childhood favourite 'Where's Wally?'

All science staff dressed up in red and white stripy tops - but were they all the real Wally? No, only one member of staff was dressed with the full outfit, complete with real Wally hat and glasses.

Nevertheless, we think they all looked like a bunch of Wallies.

This made the day extra fun for students who were trying to figure out who the really Wally was.

By the end, students concluded that Mrs Thompson-Hawes was the real Wally of the Science department.

Other department themes included Humanity's as fantasy characters, Design and Technology as Mystery characters, while PE also went with Horror.

Art teacher Mr Webster also shocked pupils with his outstanding outfit: The Headless Horseman from The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

Rumours that 'Sleepy Hollow' is what pupils call his classroom are unconfirmed.

On top of these wonderful costumes, there were a multitude of different and interesting things to do.

Students took part in an array of activities throughout the day, including a school-wide scavenger hunt, a second-hand book sale at break time to raise money for charity.



**by Emmie Todd, Eva Mills
and Ayden Smith**

"THE more you read, the more you will know. The more you know, the more places you will go!"

World Book Day is always an exciting time at Hummersknott Academy.

Sometimes we think the teachers have just been waiting all year for an excuse to crack open their fancy dress cupboards...

On Thursday, March 5, each subject department came together to dress up in different themes.

The English decided to dress up as Horror-themed characters, somehow managing to look even scarier than when they dress as teachers.

Easter celebrations at Hummersknott



by **Wren Lilico**

EASTER is one of many holidays we celebrate at Hummersknott, but there's plenty that makes it unique.

For example, Easter is on a different day each year, and there are many ways to

celebrate.

Easter is a big part of the Christian calendar as it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the story of the week he died and rose from the dead.

Some significant days in the Easter story are Palm Sunday

- when Jesus entered Jerusalem - and Good Friday, which is the day Jesus was crucified then buried in a tomb.

Easter also represents new life and rebirth, this is why it is usually celebrated with chocolate eggs or just eggs.

How to celebrate Easter

by **Ben Hardy**

DURING the Easter period people of diverse backgrounds enjoy the season.

Christians may focus on the religious aspect, and the Resurrection of Christ, while schoolchildren around the UK may prefer the well-earned two-week rest.

This might just be one person's opinion, but the best part of Easter is chocolate eggs!

There are many types of Easter eggs, including Creme Egg, Milky Bar, and even Fruit Pastilles.

However, there has been a big argument on whether Easter eggs are appearing too early in many shops, where the shelves are stocked high with chocolate that may be melted by the time someone buys them.

If chocolate's not your thing, you could go to the closest hill and hold an egg-rolling competition - which is cracking fun!

Step one: hard boil an egg and design with paints.

Step 2: go to the hill and run to the top. Wait for any exhausted adults to catch up and get their breath back.

Step 3: roll the egg down the hill!

Whichever one does not crack and reaches the bottom first wins.

Best beaches in the local area



Photo: Stacey Kirton

by **Alfred Chapman and Wren Lilico**

THE first on this list is Whitby.

We love Whitby because of how beautiful the views are, and how vibrant and colorful the high streets are.

You can visit Whitby Abbey after conquering the 199

Steps, where you can find an amazing pizza shop and a brewery.

You can go to dozens of dog-friendly restaurants and chippies, and play on the beautiful beach.

Second up is Bamburgh

beach.

Although the village is quite small, you can find a great fish and chip shop, with an awesome ice cream store just up the road.

But Bamburgh Castle is the true star of the show. Even if you do not go into the building, the view of the ancient castle from the beach is a magnificent sight to see.

If you are looking for a popular tourist destination, then go to Seaton Carew beach.

The beach is great, with a lovely view of the Hartlepool headland, plus excellent chippies!

There are amusements, play areas, and even crazy golf, as well as many activities to do, such as eating ice cream and visiting Seaton Carew golf club, which is one of the world's first 50 golf courses.

The resort is only a 40-minute drive from Darlington, which makes it a good option.

To others it may look like a mediocre beach town, but I would strongly recommend giving it a visit for a day.

However, some parts of the beach have dog restrictions, so if you are looking for a place to go with your dog, this might not be the best choice.

On the other hand, Saltburn is definitely dog friendly! But your dog must not disturb others.

The Spa Hotel is a place to stay if you are planning on staying overnight.

If you're feeling hungry, Saltburn Seaview Restaurant is a beautiful place to eat.

It offers a pan roast halibut (£26) with crushed potato, curried cauliflower and mussel velouté, as well as a butternut squash pithivier (£22) with winter vegetables, celeriac puree and sauce.

They also have a variation of children's meals and many more main meals.

FEATURES

Former prince arrested as police launch misconduct investigation



Disclaimer: This image is AI-generated for illustrative purposes only and does not depict a real-life moment

by Anna Dryden

THE former Prince of the United Kingdom was placed under custody for the suspicion of public misconduct in February.

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor was arrested and taken into custody on suspicion of misconduct in public office, in relation to his recent appearance in the Epstein files.

Whilst he was being placed in custody, Thames Valley Police searched the Royal Lodge, his former home, in connection with the arrest.

The arrest was carried out because Andrew was suspected of the crime of Misconduct in Public Office.

Andrew was the given the role of the UK trade envoy, starting from 2001 and leaving in 2011.

Whilst he held this position, he did not receive any salary.

The role is described as promoting UK business internationally, marketing the UK to potential inward investors, building relationships in support of UK business interest.

It involved having privileged access to senior government and business contracts.

However, Andrew stood down in 2011 due to criticism over his links to trafficker Jeffrey Epstein.

During his time in this role, he was referred to as a trade envoy although his actual title was, 'UK special representative for international trade and investment.'

He was not operating under the current rules for the trade envoy.

Misconduct in Public Office is an allegation that someone who was doing a job on behalf of the British public did something seriously wrong,

knowing it to be wrong.

To figure out if they should be charged, it would go to court.

Police have to focus on four things when conducting this investigation.

First, the police must establish whether the person was actually a public officer. If the answer is yes, then they move onto the second stage.

Secondly, detectives will look for evidence that the incident saw the suspect willfully neglecting to perform their duty or willfully misconducting themselves somehow.

Thirdly, they must question whether what the suspect did was so bad that it was an abuse of the public's trust.

And finally, police need to examine whether the person under investigation acted without reasonable excuse or justification.

Then the suspect would give their side of the story.

Currently, we do not know the specifics on the allegations of the Mountbatten-Windsor case, but previously, the disgraced royal has been accused of sharing official documents whilst serving as trade envoy, including with Epstein.

Throughout all the investigations, Andrew has denied any wrongdoing.

The Metropolitan Police stated that they are: "identifying and contacting former and serving officers who may have worked closely, in a protection capacity, with Andrew."

In July 2011, Mountbatten-Windsor stepped down as UK trade envoy over his suspected friendship with Epstein. Who, at this point, had been in jail for 18 months for soliciting a minor for prostitution.

Once again, Andrew denies any sort of connection.

In November 2019, Andrew stepped away from all royal duties because of an interview in which he sensationally claimed he does not regret his friendship with Epstein, but they did cut contact from late 2006 to 2010. This was later shown to be untrue.

During this same interview, Andrew challenges accusations from Virginia Giuffrè who claims to have been trafficked by Epstein's operation, and forced to have sex with Andrew.

In October 2025, he was stripped of his 'Prince' title and told to leave the Royal Lodge.

The Royal Family made a statement at the time admittedly serious lapses of judgement.

By January 2026, millions of Epstein files were released, including some documenting contact between Epstein and 'The Duke', believed to have been Andrew, two years after Epstein pleaded guilty for soliciting a minor.

Andrew is currently free to go about his daily life. But the matters appears to still be under active investigation.

From Hummersknott to the Premier League



Neil Maddison is a former Premier League football player who once attended Hummersknott! Before retiring, he mainly played for Southampton and Middlesbrough FC. The Academical's own **Anna Dryden** went along to find out more...

When did you attend Hummersknott?

I believe I was at Hummersknott from maybe 1982 to 1986. I had 4 brilliant years there.

Hummersknott was a school which was big on sport, which is why I went there,

even though Eastbourne was the closest school to me.

What GCSEs did you take and what has come in useful since then?

Back then it was just exams we took, there were no

GCSEs and I sort of knew I was going to Southampton as an apprentice.

When you left school back then it was just about getting a job.

Were you always interested in football?

Football was all I ever did. If you had a bike or a football you were very lucky.

I had a ball at my feet 24/7. I played football at school and out of school until it was dark.

I found I was good at it and played for local teams and did well. I played county football also.

What has been your favourite football-related job you have had?

My favourite job was being a professional footballer.

I was lucky enough to play at all the big stadiums in the Premier League.

I also played in a Cup Final at Wembley, which was amazing. It was the best job in the world.

How did you manage to get into this industry?

I got into football as I was scouted by a Southampton Scout playing for Darlington District.

Then I signed associated school boy forms at 14-years-old, and then at 16 I signed a

two-year apprentice form, and then my first pro contract was a three-year deal at Southampton at 17 yr old.

My first pro wage was £600 per week, and I got £20,000 per year as a signing fee, which at 17 was good.

As you got older and played more, you signed more contracts and your money got a lot better.

What is your current job and how would you describe it?

My current job now is at Middlesbrough FC in which I am Loans Manager and Player Care Manager.

It is long hours and really hard work, but I do love it.

All I can say is I wish I was still playing.

I also work for BBC Radio Tees and do the commentary for our 1st team games which I absolutely love

Finally, what advice would you give to current Hummersknott students who might want to take the same career path?

My advice to the students would be... be kind, and respectful.

Do your very best to achieve what you want to achieve. Enjoy life and live your life.

Just try and be a good person.

Our top picks for a worldwide holiday

by **Nivedh Nishad**

HOLIDAYS are the best time of the year.

It's an exciting time as we get to relax and do what we want to do.

The first place on my list is Bangkok, Thailand.

Bangkok is world-renowned as a top tourist destination famed for its unique culture, vibrant street life, exceptional street food, and its blend of ancient and modern buildings and their very welcoming people.

Bangkok is also filled with some of the world's most famous tourist destinations-

such as the Grand Palace.

Built for the King of Siam, this landmark spans more than 218,000 square meters.

Secondly, Bangkok has some mouthwatering food. Thailand's most famous dish is called Pad Thai, featuring stirred fried rice noodles with egg, tofu, bean sprouts and peanuts in a tangy tamarind sauce.

Lastly, the people of Thailand are just wonderful as they are really welcoming and kind.

A bit closer to home but no less enjoyable for it is Paris, France.

Paris is one of the most visited places in the world, welcoming between 45 to 50 million tourists every year.

Paris is known for its amazing landmarks and history, like Notre Dame cathedral, attracting more than 11 million visitors every year.

Another iconic landmark is the Eiffel Tower, which is one of the most famous monuments in the world.

Paris is also known for its famous artwork, including Da Vinci's masterpiece, The Mona Lisa.

Even though it was painted in Florence, Italy, it is today

displayed at the Louvre art gallery in Paris.

Paris also has some world-famous foods like baguettes, pastries, and croissants.

But if you feel like staying local, the city of Durham is just down the road.

Filled with history and famous landmarks, Durham is known for Durham Cathedral.

Built between 1093 and 1133, it houses the relics of St Cuthbert and the Tomb of the Venerable Bede.

It was also one of the film locations for Harry Potter.

POLITICS

Bad Bunny's Super Bowl show sparks presidential backlash



by Ernie Chapman

SINGER Bad Bunny drew criticism from President Donald Trump following the rap artist's controversial Super Bowl performance.

The Super Bowl LX was held on Sunday February 8 at Santa Clara Stadium, in California, where the Seattle Seahawks beat the New England Patriots 29-13.

Bad Bunny delivered the first ever Super Bowl Halftime

Show entirely in Spanish, with surprise appearances from Ricky Martin, Lady Gaga, Cardi B, and Pablo Pascal.

An entire wedding ceremony took place during his performance and he gave a child a Grammy award which he won for Album of the Year the previous week.

However, US President Donald Trump posted on X (formerly Twitter): "Absolutely terrible, one of the worst, EVER!"

Many people believe that Bad Bunny is being targeted by Trump and his supporters – rumours abounded that the rapper wore a bulletproof vest to the Grammys and Super Bowl.

However, Bad Bunny refuted these claims in interviews.

The Puerto Rican rapper – whose real name is Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio – won Album of the Year and Musica Urbana Album of the

Year at the 2026 Grammy awards.

He also received nominations for Global Music Performance of the Year and Record of the Year.

Videos circulated on social media of televisions at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club being tuned to Bad Bunny's performance, rather than a competing show by artist Kid Rock, appearing to be a humiliating snub to the outspoken Trump supporter.

The fight for Greenland

by Sophie Hodge

IN a sudden twist of events, Donald Trump decided earlier this year that he wants to seize Greenland for himself from Denmark.

In 2019, Trump first expressed interest in purchasing Greenland however, he was immediately turned down by the Danish prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, who went as far as to call the idea "absurd".

After going quiet for a while, the idea resurfaced

again in January 2026, and Trump decided to try again to claim the territory.

When he was rejected for the second time, he began to get more serious.

There is only one main reason that Trump wants Greenland: this reason is that in WWII, the USA defended Greenland's territory after Denmark was invaded.

"We already had it, but we returned it to Denmark," he said, adding that the US "should have kept it."

Despite the efforts Trump

is going to in order to get Greenland, Denmark is doing everything in its power to keep its land.

Should they be attacked, they have promised to invoke Article 5 of NATO, which states that all allied nations will come to the defense of a member.

What this would mean for the alliance and for the United States – as one of its most prominent members and largest financial contributor – remains to be seen.



Ballots, battles, and brinkmanship

Local elections that could make or break Britain's political class



The local elections represent a challenging time for senior party members including, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Darlington MP Lola McEvoy

by Benji Tait

AS campaigning intensifies ahead of the 2026 local elections across England, Scotland and Wales, a contest typically viewed as a mid-cycle temperature check has instead assumed the character of a national reckoning.

For party leaders at every level — local, devolved and national — these elections are no longer peripheral. They are pivotal. And for Prime Minister Keir Starmer, they may prove defining his political future.

Across England's counties and metropolitan boroughs, Labour's local leaders have adopted a dual-track strategy: defend incumbency while nationalising the contest around delivery.

Council leaders in urban strongholds such as Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds are foregrounding tangible policy outcomes, including housing starts, transport upgrades, and cost-of-living relief, while quietly bracing for voter fatigue.

The message is disciplined: Labour governs competently at every tier. Yet beneath that surface lies unease.

Internal briefings suggest that even modest seat losses could be interpreted as a repudiation of Starmer's premiership, given the expectations that accompanied Labour's return to power.

In Scotland, the dynamics are more fragmented but no less consequential. Labour's resurgent Scottish leadership is attempting to translate Westminster momentum into local authority gains, particularly in the Central Belt.

Their campaign emphasises fiscal pragmatism and public service restoration, contrasting with what they frame as

administrative drift under the SNP.

Meanwhile, the SNP's local figures are leaning heavily on community identity and devolved competence, seeking to insulate themselves from broader constitutional fatigue.

The Conservatives, though diminished, are targeting rural councils with a message of stability and resistance to centralisation.

Wales presents a subtler but equally telling battleground. Welsh Labour, long dominant, faces a test of durability rather than expansion.

Local leaders are campaigning on continuity and protecting devolved gains in health and education, while cautiously aligning with the UK government's broader agenda.

Plaid Cymru is pressing hardest in culturally resonant areas, sharpening its critique of Labour's perceived managerialism.

Here, the elections are less about dramatic swings and more about erosion or entrenchment.

Hovering above these regional contests are the national leaders, whose presence has become unusually pronounced for local elections.

Starmer's campaign schedule is dense and deliberate: targeted visits to marginal councils, tightly controlled media appearances, and repeated emphasis on "delivery over ideology."

Yet this very centralisation of the campaign has raised the stakes. By placing himself at the forefront, Starmer has implicitly tied local outcomes to his leadership. A strong performance would validate his governing approach; a weak one could embolden critics

within his own party, many of whom remain sceptical of his cautious, technocratic style.

In stark contrast, Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch has run a campaign defined by clarity and ideological sharpness.

Her messaging, focused on tax restraint, local autonomy, and a critique of what she terms "Labour overreach", has resonated with a base eager for conviction politics.

Notably, Badenoch has avoided overexposure, opting instead for high-impact appearances and a disciplined media strategy.

The result has been a perceptible shift in public sentiment. Recent polling and qualitative feedback from campaign trails indicate that Badenoch has emerged as the most popular party leader in the country, a development that has re-energised Conservative activists and reframed the elections as a genuine contest rather than a referendum on Labour alone.

Liberal Democrat and Green leaders, while less central to the national narrative, have pursued targeted strategies aimed at incremental gains. The Liberal Democrats are focusing on affluent, traditionally Conservative areas where local dissatisfaction with service provision is acute.

The Greens, meanwhile, are capitalising on environmental concerns at the Municipal level, particularly in university towns and progressive enclaves.

Both parties understand that even modest seat increases can translate into disproportionate influence in hung councils.

At the local level, party leaders have adapted their tactics to the granular realities of council politics. Doorstep campaigning has regained prominence, with candidates emphasising hyper-local issues — bin collections, planning decisions, road maintenance — while subtly linking them to national competence.

Digital campaigning, though still significant, has been recalibrated to support rather than supplant ground operations. There is a recognition across parties that voter trust is increasingly mediated through direct, personal engagement.

What distinguishes this election cycle is the convergence of local and national stakes.

Traditionally, local elections allow voters to express dissatisfaction without immediate consequences for national governance. This time, that buffer appears diminished.

The electorate is acutely aware of the broader implications, and party leaders have reinforced that awareness through their own rhetoric and campaign choices.

For Starmer, the calculus is unforgiving. His premiership, still in its formative phase, lacks the cushion of entrenched goodwill.

A strong showing could consolidate his authority, quiet internal dissent, and provide a mandate for more ambitious reforms.

Conversely, a disappointing result — particularly in key English councils — would raise immediate questions about his strategic direction and electoral appeal.

In a political environment characterised by volatility and shortened patience cycles, such questions can escalate quickly into leadership challenges.

Badenoch, by contrast, enters the elections with momentum and comparatively low expectations. Success would not only validate her leadership but also position the Conservatives as a credible alternative government sooner than many anticipated. Even a respectable performance could be spun as evidence of recovery, reinforcing her growing popularity and strengthening her internal standing.

As polling day approaches, the campaigns have taken on an intensity rarely seen in local contests. Every leaflet, every doorstep conversation, every leader visit is imbued with a sense of consequence. These elections are not merely about who controls councils; they are about who controls the narrative of British politics in the years ahead.

In that sense, the aphorism often applied to local elections — that they are "second-order" contests — feels increasingly outdated. In 2026, they are anything but.

They are, instead, a crucible in which the fortunes of parties and the futures of their leaders will be tested with unusual clarity.

And for Keir Starmer, the outcome may well determine whether his premiership is remembered as a fleeting interlude, or the foundation of a lasting political realignment.

CULTURE

Appetite for new singles



Guns n Roses perform at Glastonbury 2023
Photo: Raph_PH

by **George Billington**

THE hard rock band Guns N Roses have released two new singles called: Atlas and Nothin'

Guns N Roses are a well-known hard rock band known for hits like Sweet Child o' Mine, Paradise City, Welcome to the Jungle, November Rain, and more.

The band's original lineup consisted of Axl Rose (Piano and vocals), Slash (aka Saul Hudson on lead and acoustic guitar), Duff McKagen (on

bass guitar and backing vocals), Izzy Stradlin (on rhythm guitar and backing vocals), and Steven Adler (drums), but over the years the lineup has changed time and time again with the current line now featuring Dizzy Reed and Mellisa Reese on keyboard, Richard Fortus on rhythm guitar, and Issac Carpenter on drums.

But what about Guns N Roses' latest music, Atlas and Nothin'?

Personally, I found both singles to be a very enjoyable listen, but unfortunately, they didn't reach the quality of some of their older music.

But to be fair, that's a very high bar.

I think that it is a shame that they don't sound as good as they used to, but hey, that's probably what 40 years of rock and roll do to you - and I'm sure we wouldn't have it any other way.

KATSEYE tour takes the world by storm



KATSEYE perform in Seattle
Photo: David Lee

by **Wren Lilico**

KATSEYE is a global girl group made up of six inter-

national members: Sophia, Lara, Yoonchae, Megan, Daniela and Manon. They debuted in 2024

through the Dream Academy, where only six contestants were selected to form a group under HYBE and Geffen Records.

KATSEYE enjoyed a successful 2025, highlighted by their popular track "Gnarly" and their Beautiful Chaos tour

The tour attracted millions of fans across the United States, with performances in cities such as Minneapolis and New York City.

During these shows, the group performed their full catalogue, combining strong vocals with impressive choreography. They also introduced a new song, "Internet Girl", which explores themes of digital awareness and

self-identity, highlighting how online content can influence people's lives.

The performances featured playful references to the group's viral moments, including Lara's well-known "yes!" quote and Megan's candid "I'm dyslexic" comment from a livestream.

More recently, KATSEYE were nominated for Best New Artist at the Grammy Awards 2026.

They performed "Gnarly", complete with a new dance break.

Although they lost the award to Olivia Dean, their performance demonstrated their talent and growing global presence.

GAMING

Nintendo celebrates 30 years of Pokémon - and looks to the future



by **Matthew Sanderson and Sam Johnson**

POKÉMON has reached its 30th anniversary.

The monster-catching franchise took over the world shortly after launching in 1996, with videos games, toys, TV shows, and more becoming regular fixtures of childhood culture.

Now parent company Nintendo is looking to the future, with a raft of new offerings for fans.

This includes Pokopia, a new Pokémon game set in a

wasteland, where you must build and live together with your Pokémon to restore the barren land.

Pokémon has also just released a game sure to invoke some serious nostalgia.

This is all because of the reveals of Pokémon Fire Red and Leaf Green coming to Nintendo Switch.

These games were originally remasters of Pokémon's debut - Blue and Red - and hold a special place in fans' hearts.

Another game coming is Pokémon XD: Dare of Darkness, which will be on the Switch, and will have better graphics than the original games.

But finally, the newly-developed Pokémon Wind and Waves received its first trailer.

From the first looks of this game, the graphics have evolved.

On top of that, players will now get to search depths with the new diving feature, which will let players search

for water-type Pokémon above and below the sea.

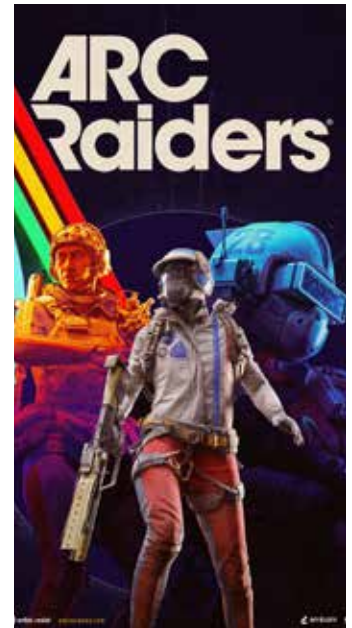
For those who love to battle, Pokémon has just revealed how Pokémon champion will work and more about it like how it will be free and, on every device, how you can customize your trainer.

How it will work is you can use Pokémon home to transport your Pokémon for other games or use the pre-installed Pokémon and compete in ranch or private battles.

You can play on any device, but Android and iOS versions will be out later than the Switch release.



The shooter that attracts four million players 🌟



by **Charlie Jones**

ARC Raiders is a multiplayer extraction shooter where the main objective is to complete quests and obtain the best loot possible to supply the city of Speranza.

This game has been unusually popular for an extraction shooter, peaking at almost four million players online at one time.

You start as a person on the surface, scrounging for loot and materials. You go through multiple areas collecting loot from drawers until you reach a lift.

When you go down, a voice talks to you telling you to take your mask off, and you are introduced to an underground city known as Speranza.

They give you a spare room where you upgrade benches that can get you a lot of weapons, and you can craft from them to make good items.

But you may be thinking, why is it so popular compared to other extraction shooters like tarkov and DMZ? Well, this is because of its fast take on the extraction style.

The game has been also been updating frequently, constantly offering players new content to explore.

Are retro video games better?



by **Alfred Chapman**

A DEBATE is raging started in the gaming community about the quality of retro gaming.

Some say that classic games are much more entertaining to play because of simpler plots, easier controls, and often cheap prices.

But on the other hand, modern games are argued to be better as there's nicer graphics, and better multi-player support.

Moreover, modern gamers claim that older games are only more enjoyable because of nostalgia.

They say people who grew up with consoles in the 80s, 90s, and 2000s often look back more fondly on the games they grew up with as it reminds them of their childhood.

Some argue that retro games have less 'Messing around', with those older games having more of a 'Pick up and play' attitude, with fewer tutorials and less bonus content.

Modern gamers argue that newer games have more content, which stretches out playing time and makes games last longer, meaning better value for money.

Modern games have obviously better graphics, and plenty of new games have better ideas than older games because of fewer hardware limitations.

However, game companies such as Nintendo and Sony constantly bring back older games with HD graphics or even as full remakes.

For example, Super Mario 3D Allstars combines the first three 3D Mario games into one £60 game.

Crash Bandicoot N'Sane trilogy, which came out on several consoles, brought back the first three games of that series.

EA Games sold to Saudi Arabia

by **Ayden Smith**

GAMING company Electronic Arts (EA) has recently been purchased for £55 Billion by Saudi-Arabia, and concerns are arising about why.

EA is known for publishing popular games such as FIFA (now FC), Titanfall, and many other titles that have cemented their legacy in gaming.

Though many of their games appeared to be backed by greed more than passion - often featuring aggressively marketed microtransactions - their most recent release Skate has become exceedingly popular and is free-to-play.

However, in the past they have been notorious for developing and cutting corners in their games, often adding no features in newer versions or adding the minimum to keep their player base happy.

This hasn't stopped the second largest buyout in industry history happening though, with a department of the Saudi Arabian government now holding stakes within the company.

What this means is that Saudi-Arabia now holds a level of control over EA and their projects.

Considering current highly conservative and controversial views held in Saudi Arabia, many are concerned that this may have a large effect on future games, and could even serve as a means of spreading biased media.

The return to Vice City



by **George Harris**
and **Charlie Jones**

FOR decades, Grand Theft Auto has been an exceedingly popular video game franchise.

In November 1997, the first Grand Theft Auto was released, but developer Rockstar continued to release new games in the series until 2013, with the release of GTA V.

Rockstar continued to update GTA V and was expected to release the sixth installment in Autumn 2025.

However, this game faces constant delays as Rockstar polishes the game to perfection.

On January 19, a boiler exploded at Rockstar North in Scotland and set the studio

on fire. Luckily no one was harmed and all the files were safe, and the game should be now finished in time for its 2026 release date.

But all GTA VI news isn't about delays and explosions. A child with a terminal illness got to experience the wonders of Vice City - originally featured in GTA: Vice City - before he sadly passed away, after his parents reached out over X and Rockstar listened.

Sad news aside, the new game is expected to feature two new protagonists: Jason Duval, a former soldier, now drawn into a life of crime, and Lucia Caminos, Jason's girlfriend who has been released from prison after participating

in street fights.

She will be the first major female protagonist in the GTA series.

The game takes place in the US state of Leonida, a fictional Florida, returning to the iconic Vice City, which is based on Miami, complete with the Everglades, the Florida Keys, and many more.

The game is set in a modern world filled with crime and chaos.

After a score gone wrong, Jason and Lucia delve deeper into the criminal world of vice city.

The question is, will players be returning to Vice City as planned, or will this homecoming be delayed again?

20 years of Nintendo Wii Sony cuts

Playstation exclusives from PC



by Alfred Chapman

THIS year marks the 20th anniversary of one of the world's best-selling video-game consoles.

The Wii was released in October 2006 with 21 release titles.

One of the reasons the console sold well was because the console was built for anyone - children as young as 6 and adults in their 80s could all use the console because of the simple controllers, appealing games, and family friendly design.

Nintendo admittedly have a history of making consoles appealing for all ages.

1989 saw the release of the Game Boy, a portable console known for introducing Pokémon games and another of the most sold games of all time, Tetris, which was a simple, but fun puzzle game that anyone could enjoy.

The Game Boy series was still releasing consoles in 2001, 12 years later!

2004 saw the release of the Nintendo DS, another handheld console that sold remarkably well, which was known for having two

screens and a stylus, as well as having lots of puzzle games for older fans and multiplayer games for younger players.

Nintendo's next big console after the Wiis release was the 3DS, a handheld console that could handle big 3d games and could also play regular DS games.

Later, the WiiU was released, but became Nintendo's second to least sold console, just ahead of the Virtual Boy in 1995.

2017 brought us the Nintendo Switch, which finally outsold the Wii only two years ago, and in late 2025 the Switch 2 was released.

People still have a soft spot for Wii games; Nintendo has released multiple remasters and remakes of the games, and fans still love the console even though it is almost 20 years old.

Although there are much better consoles with better graphics and better controllers, the Wii's legacy still lives on to this day, and the console has most definitely changed gaming forever.



by Charlie Jones

THE battle between consoles and computers has raged for a long time.

But given consoles are so underpowered compared to computers, how do they keep up with PCs? The answer is exclusives.

An exclusive is a game that is only playable on one platform, so for PlayStation it would be the Spider-Man series, or on Xbox: Halo.

These are the key reasons people own these devices; they are fairly entry level and have a competitive price to performance ratio.

The problem with this is that publishers are now releasing them to PC too, meaning that the console team is getting less traction.

Players can now simply buy the same game on PC and enjoy much better performance.

To combat this, Sony has announced it will stop releasing PlayStation exclusives to PC.

The last Sony-published game to release on PC will be Death Stranding 2.

Can Marathon go the distance?

by Ayden Smith

MARATHON, a sequel to the original game from 1994, has just been released. Its first reviews have largely been very positive.

Yet there has been much discourse on if it is truly the game it's been made out to be online.

The original Marathon was one of the 'Founding Fathers' of gaming.

It was one of the first titles to introduce deeper themes and gameplay, such as introducing a deeper narrative and the concept of being able to look up and down.

Other games at the time, such as Doom (releasing a year earlier), all had the same elements, yet Marathon was one of the first to move away from the mindless shooting and killing that was Doom (1993).

Marathon is set in a dystopian future in which humanity has been forced to settle on new planets like Mars, with large colony ships heading away to distant 'Exoplanets'.

The first game involved you the player defending a colony ship, the U.E.S.C Marathon, travelling to Mars, fighting off an unknown alien force called the Pthor.

It's simple, easy to understand in terms of its story.

This is where the new title differs from its predecessor.

Whilst it retains the same theme of exoplanet exploration, it has a much deeper and exploration-based narrative through a mix of 2D and Y2K elements.

Its art style is known as graphical realism, featuring clean and simple aspects.

From the buildings to the very characters, its entire aesthetic is based around this art style, and for the most part it works well, but it does seem as though there is a growing dissatisfaction with it.

Many have gone online and complained about its gameplay being "too difficult", and with its free 'server slam' gone; it now costs £35 to play.

Complaints are building up, even if it's often without any backing or reason.

Even with this in the way, the concurrent player base for the game has remained at 90,000 since its release.

RAM costs rocket

by Charlie Jones

COMPUTERS need lot of components to function, but RAM - or Random Access Memory - is becoming increasingly important.

If you have been on social media in the past two years, you have probably heard about or seen pictures or videos that are generated by a robot, better known as AI (Artificial Intelligence).

It can be accessed on many different applications and websites such as ChatGPT, Sora, Grok and Claude.

AI is growing bigger and

bigger, day by day, and companies need servers to keep up with this demand.

One of the main components of servers is RAM. Now, AI developers are buying increased amounts of RAM, meaning manufacturers cannot meet the demand, so they have raised the prices.

Now, prices have risen so much that in some cases the cost of essential RAM components has increased 500 per cent.

Before the crisis, a kit of 32GB DDR5 RAM was £80, now it has risen to over £300.

As expected, this has made computers (especially gaming ones) much more expensive.

A lot of people have said to not buy RAM and computers right now due to this, but the question everyone has been wondering is: when will RAM prices fall?

It has been predicted to go down in mid-June, but now prices are expected to rise.

If you are looking to buy a PC in the next five months, now is the best option.

But any longer? You are best off waiting.

REVIEWS



GOAT

Sony's latest movie, *Goat*, follows a small goat in a world of big animals, and he gets a play for his dream team that has been losing a lot.

The goat movie has shocked people with its amazing story line and graphics leading to getting an 83 per cent approval rating with critics, and a 93 per cent

with everyday families.

It has also made over 180 million in the box office showing its popularity.

The team consists off Caleb McLaughlin who plays Will Harris, David Harbour playing Archie Everhard, Stephen Curry playing Lenny Williamson, Gabriell Union as Jett Fillmore, Nicola Coughlan plays Olivia Burke, Nick Kroll plays Modo Lomachenko and the antagonist Mane Attraction is played by Aaron Pierre

What makes the movie unique is the fact how the whole team is an underdog and trying to bond as we learn their personality. The animation is related to spiderman across the spider verse, comic style animation which looks clean and stunning.

Will's motive is clear he is playing to make his mother proud; she is a figure that believed in him when no one else did inspiring him to reach for the stars.

Will douse it to prove that anyone can play and we should not play for the money or fame but for the love of the game.

The rest of the team had their own challenges; however, some of these struggles seemed forced. For example, Archie Everhart, who is the strong rhino in the team, lacks depth. It was not shown that he had any problem on the court until the manager said he did. This is also shown in Lenny the giraffe with him "being used for his height" even though we do not see this in any of the games he played.

Over than that the movie was funny and engaging a good watch for the family however not the best sports movie of all time



By Sam Johnson and Matthew Sanderson



Wicked: For Good

The second part of the movie adaptation for the hit Broadway musical, *Wicked*, hit cinemas in late November last year.

It starred Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, Ariana Grande as Glinda, Jonathan Bailey as Fiyero and Jeff Goldblum as the wizard.

There were two never-heard-before songs featured in the second part of this movie - "No Place Like Home" sung by Cnythia Erivo and "Girl in the bubble" sung by Ariana Grande.

These two songs were a nice addition to the other songs that were featured in the Broadway musical.

The story follows Elphaba and Glinda after they parted ways, Glinda has become Glinda the Good and Elphaba is now known as the Wicked Witch of West.

It shows the pairschanging relationship

as they grow older. Elphaba is trying to expose the wizard and his lies, but no one is believing her while Glinda try's to keep the citizens of Oz calm.

A lovetriangle starts to unfold before Elphaba, Glinda and Fiyero leaving tensions high.

This sequel is more emotional than the first part with more heartfelt moments and an overall message of friendship.

Both parts of this film have been a great adaptation with amazing acting, singing and dancing.

It has done justice to the original Broadway show while adding the right amount of new content for fans to enjoy.



By Esther Schilbach



Satisfactory

Have you ever searched for a relaxed Sci-Fi game which revolves around making factories in space? If so, then this is the game for you.

Satisfactory is a game which takes place in the future, and you are placed on an uninhabited planet. On this planet, you are tasked with making an ever expanding factory, but this isn't just a game which gets boring after 10 minutes, no in this game there's all sorts of bumps in the road for you to manage, such as running out of power, meeting your objectives, and more.

However, this game doesn't just stick to one cycle of gathering materials to upgrade, the world is endlessly open and there are always things that are out there to get you. The spawns are varied, meaning the way you can find water will have to change depending on where you are. If this game wasn't already good, it hasmultiplayer! Therefore, you can pioneer with your friends, build machines and conquer the solar system.

However, personally I really enjoyed this game, (and I still am). It is unlike anything I've ever played before. Despite the game's limited map choices, the game is never repetitive, which makes it great to play with friends as well as on your own. Whether you prefer efficiency and ground conveyors, or you prefer looks and cool factories, FICSIT is calling you, Pioneer.



By Charlie Jones and George Billington



Traitors Season 4

If you've watched this amazing show, you'll know that this is a great show, but if you haven't, then sit back and we'll fill you in.

This season Claudia picked three Traitors, but also picked a Secret Traitor, which put all the viewers into deep thought and confusion as not even those watching from home knew who it was.

Hugo, a traitor, was banished from a round table after being told his entrance was over-reactive and unusual.

This banishment got the Faithfuls up and running, wanting more traitors banished.

The 'secret traitor' was later revealed as Fiona.

Fiona brought an argument between her and Rachel into the traitor's tower and after little time, at the round table, she was voted out.

Yet after all, Rachel helped the Faithfuls

banish a unwanted Traitor.

The Faithful's included Ellie Buckley, Jessie Stride, Sam Little, Adam Waughman, Harriet Tyce, Reece Ward, Amanda Collier, Maz Bana, Ross Garshong, Ben, Judy Wilson, Netty Österberg, Faraaz Noor, Jack Butler, Jade Scott, James Baker, Roxy Wilson, and Matthew Hyndman

They were put through pain of banishing their best friends just to find the Traitors, and with most murdered or banished, only few were left in the finals.

In the final vote, Traitor Stephen Libby is given the choice between breaking a promise or eliminating Jack Butler. "I couldn't go back on my word to you," Stephen told Rachel after voting for Jack.

Rachel's alliance with Stephen had its troubles towards the end, but they kept their promise never to vote for each other.

They are the first pair of traitors to win, and she's also the first female Traitor to win the game.

Host Claudia Winkleman remarked: "Two Traitors, but totally faithful to each other."

They shared the £95,750 prize and now Rachel will be remembered for her calm, cool and collected game play.

She said she would use the prize money to go on holiday and with her children and mother.

"I'm just a wee boy from the Isle of Lewis, this kind of stuff doesn't happen to me," Stephen exclaimed after winning.

By Isla Pocklington



Jurassic World Evolution 3

Frontier has released the latest, highly anticipated game in the Jurassic World Evolution series, and it has got fans of the Jurassic World franchise and tycoon game fans all over the world extremely excited.

Jurassic World Evolution is a game about building your own theme park with dinosaurs and making the vision of John Hammond a reality. However, this game is not for the faint hearted as you must balance: troublesome tornados; every dinosaur's needs; and money. If you believe you are up for the challenge, then this could be the game for you.

However, is the game worth buying, costing between £40 and £60? It seems like a hefty price. But this game brings many changes compared to Jurassic World Evolution 2 such as adding juvenile dinosaurs; you can use individual building pieces such as walls, roofs and more, and even adding new species such as: Lokiceratops, Guanlong, and more. Even most dinosaurs can swim in deep water (which is probably my favorite feature).

This game was great to play. The amount of customization is incredible, which means your park feels like it is yours.

The dinosaurs feel like they are actually alive, which I think is an excellent feature.

I also thought the island generator in sandbox is incredible; it makes every new sandbox feel new and not repetitive, which was something I did not know I wanted until I used it in the game.

With new dinosaurs and DLCs being added all the time, your park almost never runs out of customization.

A downside is that more territorial dinosaurs are much harder to manage, but that makes it more realistic.

I also really like the amount of customization of the dinosaur's looks and traits, which means that if you desire it then every dinosaur is slightly different.



By George Billington



IT: Welcome to Derry

It: Welcome to Derry is the thrilling prequel to the 2017 horror film IT, about a group of misfit kids being hunted and killed by the malicious being, also known as Pennywise the Dancing Clown.

The story follows Lily Baimbridge (a 13-year-old girl with a past of being sent to a mental asylum) and her group of friends all trying to figure out the mystery of what IT is and why it is hunting them.

There is also a subplot of the military trying to capture IT and use Pennywise and its many demonic forms to help America win the Cold War.

This eight-episode TV series on HBO

Max is not for the faint-hearted, as it is more gruesome and terrifying than the original IT movies.

A big drawback of this show is that Pennywise does not appear until episode five, but the entity is present in other forms, such as a demonic bat baby, a sliced-up man in a pickle jar, and more.

Bill Skarsgard gives a phenomenal performance in his dual-roles as Bob Gray and Pennywise, with non-stop fear and terror as he stalks the kids, 'marinating them in fear' before he devours them.

One of the most haunting things about this show is that episodes will always start with the most disturbing and brutal events, only to then start playing the opening credits full of childlike wonder and a song about looking your best.

Overall, this show is a must watch for any fan of horror, Stephen king, and killer clowns.



By George Harris

Have you read something lately? Or seen watched a film?

We want to hear about the books, movies, games, and music that you want to talk about!

Was it good? Was it terrible?

Send your review to Mr Webber

for the chance to see it our next issue!

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EASTER

Wordsearch

E X N F R I Y P A C O S V Z R T X K M K C Y X
T E X T R L F H J O A Q V B U M J U Q B Y W P
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HOTCROSSBUNS
CHOCOLATE
DAFFODILS
EASTER

SPRING
CHICKS
BUNNY
EGGS



Who is the MYSTERY TEACHER?

by Sophie Clark and Heidi Scotchbrooke

My favourite hobby is running. I've done a few half marathons.

I like chicken parmo with chips and salad.

I love mayo because it goes with everything!

My sport is gymnastics because my kids do gymnastics.

My fave film is Bridget Jones's Diary - the first one.

The best festival I ever went to was Glastonbury, but it was muddy.

If I was to add a holiday to the school calendar, it would be a day mid-December for Christmas shopping.

I went island hopping around islands in Greece and started in Athens and there were historical venues like the acropolis and the Panathenaic stadium, but it was really overrated because it did not feel very safe and it was extremely hot.

If I was to add a subject to school, it would be Gymnastics.

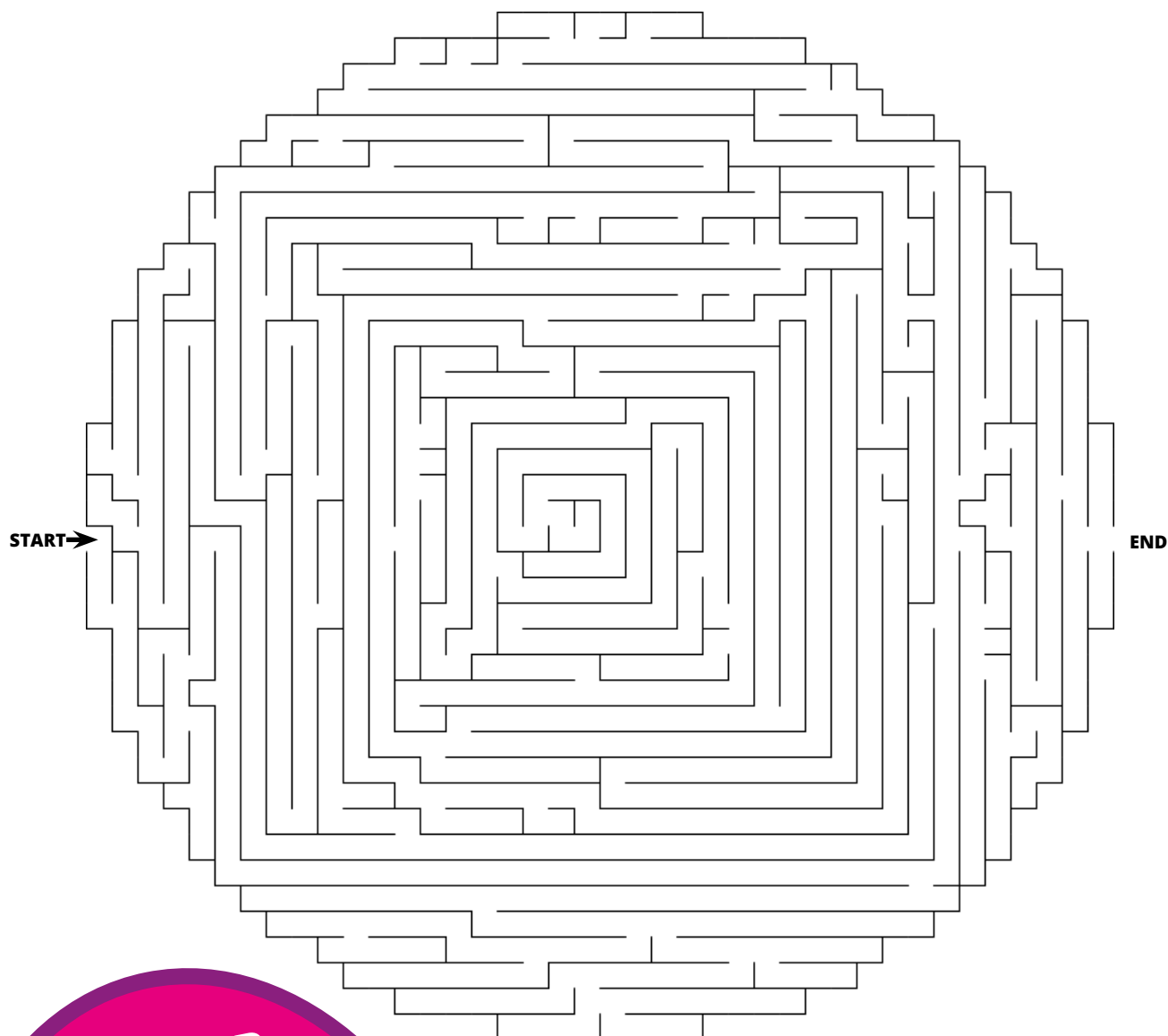
If I was to take one away, it would be...
MATHS!

WHO IS IT?!

Scan and
tell us for
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AMAZING MAZE



EASTER EGG HUNT

Since we were putting this paper together around Easter, we've hidden **16** Easter Eggs throughout this issue - see if you can find them all!

SUPER SUDOKU

4			7			8
	7		3		4	
6			5		9	3
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Girls cricket team goes unbeaten



by Heidi Scotchbrook

THE Hummersknott Years 9 and 10 Girls Cricket team played in the Under 15 Girls' School Indoor Cricket Competition at Newton Aycliffe sports Centre.

They were unbeaten on the day, winning all four of their games in their

group which meant they progressed into the finals against Northfield.

This was a tough game, with Hummersknott winning due to their excellent batting, bowling, and fielding skills.

The girls then went on to the next round at the Beacon of Light in Sunderland.

They had three games against very strong opponents, with one being extremely close.

Mrs Millar said: "Amazing teamwork and play by the whole team.

"They were a credit to the school.

"Mollie M captained the team and showed great leader-

ship, while Chloe M opened the batting and bowling each game giving us a very strong start.

"Accurate bowling from Chloe, Mollie, Emelia, Orla and Mia. Great batting and fielding by Imogen, Indie, Bella and Darcy."

Hummersknott secure narrow win over Polam

by Heidi Scotchbrook

HUMMERSKNOTT Year 8 netball team beat Polam in a friendly match.

They played against an intense team, but their determination and resilience showed as they managed to secure a narrow 3-2 victory.

One of the players, Eleanor M, said: "It was a good game.

"There was lots of pressure and intensity which made it more challenging.

"We plan on working on our passes to make them more accurate and stop small mistakes.

"We have another match against Polam soon so hopefully we will win the game."

Hummersknott runners shine

by Sophie Clark

A HUMMERSKNOTT runner took second place in the Inter-Counties Cross Country competition, which took place at Sedburgh School, in Cumbria.

It was a challenging course, and the weather was not ideal, but the runners pushed through and still came out with outstanding results.

Students Ella Harcourt, Rowan Steel, and Finn Abblett-Tate were selected to compete in Liverpool in the English School Championship.

Ben Appleyard came second for County Durham, and seventh overall. Rowan placed tenth, while Finn came 15th, and Ella came in 17th.

Ella said: "I was very happy about it, as it was my main aim to complete, it's a very nice feeling.

"It's an amazing achievement to represent the county, but to represent the country is even better."

Notably, as a Year 8 she was competing against older against Year 9s.

Mathew Foster was a reserve, but did not qualify due to an illness.

Hummersknott footballers trounce Wyvern Academy to reach semis

by Heidi Scotchbrook

HUMMERSKNOTT footballers went through to the semi-finals of the Town Cup after a decisive win against Wyvern Academy.

Playing away at Wyvern, the Hummersknott Year 7 football team dominated the game to

end with a 3-0 result.

Despite playing on difficult grounds for passing, Hummersknott took the lead against a resilient side in the first half through a goal from Ted Gooding.

Ted said: "It felt good to score. It was a very nice feeling."

In the second, half Hummersknott continued to pile on the pressure and Harley L scored 2 goals to complete the win.

Ted added: "I am very excited about the next game. I feel confident that we're going to win."

Futsal team advance



by Isabelle Pounds

HUMMERSKNOTT futsal team have made it to the next round at the Beacon of Light.

The team of Year 10 girls went to Durham Johnston School for a futsal competition, where they played against Durham Johnston and St Bede's, beating both schools.

The team was captained by Izzy K, and the player of the match was Beth J.

The girls came home after beating the other two schools.

This happened on Tuesday March 3.

The PE teachers were very proud of this success, and said they hope their success continues to the next match.

Miss Mooney said: "The girls were an absolute credit to Hummersknott."

"They showed lots of resilience and teamwork throughout all the games."

"They are looking forward to the finals as it is an amazing opportunity."

Jack smashes through to national table tennis finals

by Ayden Smith

YEAR 11 student Jack Buckley has received the opportunity to represent the County Durham area in the English school table tennis championships.

Jack entered the Under 16 event and competed against nine other top players from the County Durham region.

After flawless 2-0 victories for most of his games, Jack was confronted with a difficult final.

Pulling through a tough game, Jack secured the win 3-0.

With this achievement comes the opportunity to compete on a national level.

Now he is set to go to Wolverhampton to compete against schools across the country.

Jack said: "I'm excited to go down to the nationals and just see if I can win a game or two."

Netball talent Elle balances sport and GCSEs



by Heidi Scotchbrook

ELLE Robson in Year 11 was selected for the Leeds Rhinos Under 17 pathway for netball last year.

She has now announced she will take a break from the sport to concentrate on her GCSEs.

She trained two hours a week on a Thursday, plus strength and conditioning on a Monday.

Elle still currently plays for Headlanders Netball Club, competing in Division 1 on a Monday night in the Eston League, in Senior Regionals on a Saturday, and Under 16 Regionals on a Saturday and Sunday social league. As well as her Under 16

and adult training, she also coaches the Under 5s at Headlanders.

At Hummersknott Elle helps Miss Mooney coach all year and plays for the U16 team.

Miss Mooney said: "Elle has been nothing short of exceptional in her support and commitment to supporting the school team."

"Her enthusiasm, reliability, and genuine care for every player have made a remarkable difference."

"She constantly goes above and beyond for each player and stepping in whenever help is needed."

"I truly believe this is the only the start to great success in the future."

Girls secure third in cricket tournament

by Sophie Clark

HUMMERSKNOTT cricketers took part and came third in the Under 13s Girls Tournament at Newton Aycliffe.

The competition, held on

February 4, saw the team go up against Barnard Castle, Teasdale, and Sedgfield.

Despite gaining momentum early on, luck was against Hummersknott team as they lost few games and tied

others.

Nevertheless, the team held on to secure third place.

Player Loveleen said: "I believe I played alright, but as the games continued, I saw improvements."

"We progressed the more games we played."

"To improve they will make a permanent club to practice, but it was a really good experience."

Hummersknott hosts Darlington's inaugural trampolining competition



by **Emmie Todd**

HUMMERKNOTT School proudly hosted its first town trampolining competition on Tuesday, March 17, marking a memorable milestone for the school's sports programme.

The event was expertly organised by Miss Mooney and Miss Millar, with support from Miss Norris from The Education Village, and judges

from Hartlepool Trampolining Club, whose expertise helped ensure the competition ran smoothly.

Mrs Miller said: "Despite this being their first competition, the students demonstrated impressive confidence, skill, and determination in all their routines."

Team Hummersknott delivered exceptional performances throughout the evening

and achieved an incredible result, winning 12 medals.

Miss Mooney praised the team's efforts, saying she was "extremely proud of every student who took part in their first competition."

Special recognition was given to two outstanding athletes on the night.

Miss Mooney's Performer of the Night was Anya R, while Miss Millar's Performer of

the Night was Ella W, both of whom impressed with their poise and technical skill.

Miss Millar also congratulated the team, highlighting their hard work and dedication in preparing for the competition.

With such a strong performance at their first event, the future of trampolining at Hummersknott is sure to reach new heights.

Pupils make waves at swimming gala

by **Sophie Hodge and Sophie Clark**

COLLEGE pupils made a splash during an exciting school-wide swimming event. Boys and girls from every Hummersknott college competed to find the school's fastest swimmers on March 3.

In Year 7, Cuthbert College took the win with 53 points, while Wyvern College brought up the rear with 26 points.

In Year 8, Wyvern regained ground by picking up the lead with 51 points, while Stephenson came last with 30 points.

But in Year 9, Stephenson won with 57 points, and Ketton ended up at the bottom with 18 points.

Swimming teacher Mrs Stokell said: "There was great team spirit throughout the gala and loads of personal achievements."

Young powerchair footballer shines in North East triumph

by **Luke Price and Emmie Todd**

THE powerchair football league has a rising star in its ranks.

Robbie Bayles, a Year 8 Hummersknott student, has delivered a series of "outstanding" performances recently, proving to be a force on the pitch and a vital asset to his team.

The first team they played, Newcastle, was "an intense

game but we all played well" said Robbie, and they won with 7-0, followed by a 5-1 victory over Leeds.

Each match lasted 40 minutes, requiring intense focus and technical precision.

Robbie rose to the occasion, showcasing his skills by scoring two goals per game.

Robbie's coach said: "We are all really proud of him and how the team played."