

NO KIDDING!

For boys and girls aged 7 to 11

Number 1 ● September 1996



there's
a new
magazine just
for us
at our
school...

Asterix ● Brain twister ● Competitions ● Day of the Dead ● Earthquakes ● Films ● Grommets ● Halloween ● Information ● Jam-packed! ● Kabul ● Loos ● Mayors ● Nature ● Outings ● Plague ● Quiz ● Rats ● Story ● TV star ● Ugandan schools ● Violins ● Wordsearch ● Xtraordinary dogs ● Your magazine! ● Zoom in!



Maia Thomas (Canonbury Juniors, Islington) and James Bunton (Colveston Juniors, Hackney). Thanks for being on our front cover!

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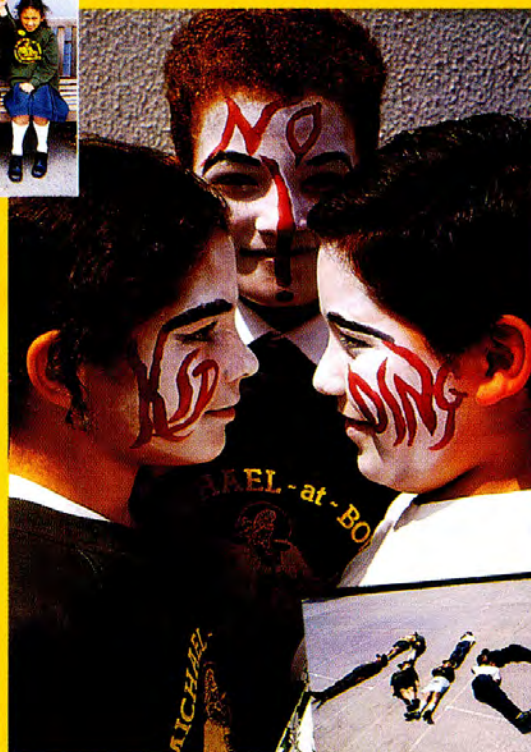
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Competitions are only open to junior school pupils. Winners of all competitions will be notified by post, and their names may be used in future issues of No Kidding! Competitions are not open to children of directors of GJO/S or contributors to No Kidding!

When we visited St Michael At Bowes CE Juniors in Palmers Green, Enfield, year 6 children made the words No Kidding! in unusual ways. Some also designed a front cover for the first issue.



Front cover designs by Shady Crystal, Yeliz and Sharban, Mike Parsons, Dorothea Antonio and Duncan Longstaff.

The second issue of No Kidding! will be sent to your school on 18, 19 and 20 November.

Welcome to the first ever issue of **No Kidding!**, a new magazine just for boys and girls at junior school in London. You'll receive a free copy of No Kidding! every half term to take home with you.

We want to know if you like this first issue, so write to us at:

No Kidding!, FREEPOST LON6868, PO Box 10427, London N8 8BR, and tell us what you think.

We're also visiting junior schools to talk to children about No Kidding! – and about how magazines are made.

If you would like us to come to your school, ask your teacher to call us on 0171 354 5040.

Hope you enjoy the magazine!

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Asterix competition

**On Thursday 10 October, a new book
about Asterix will be on sale.**

**On Wednesday 9 October,
300 people will travel
to Parc Asterix in France
on a special
Asterix Express Eurostar!**

**You too can be on the Asterix
Express**

**Spend a day at the
theme park**

**Meet Asterix creator
Albert Uderzo**



**and come home with a copy of the new book
and a bag full of Asterix goodies!**

**We've got two tickets for
the Asterix Express
to give away –
and two more
tickets so
each winner
can take an
adult with
them.
Just send
the answers
to the
three
questions
to Asterix
Competition,**

**No Kidding!, FREEPOST
LON6868, PO Box 10427,
N8 8BR by Friday 27
September. The first two
correct answers drawn
out of the hat on that day
are the winners!**

Make sure your parent or
carer knows you're entering
the competition and that they
will let you go to France with
an adult of their choice on
Wednesday 9 October. Both
you and the adult who goes
with you must have a

passport. We'll telephone to
let you know you're a winner
on Saturday 28 September
so there'll be time to
organise an adult – and a
day off school.

Winners of the
competition will travel to and
from Paris by Eurostar. The
prize includes transport to
and from Parc Asterix, free
entry to the theme park,
breakfast and a first edition
of the new book. Winners
will also receive a bag of
Asterix goodies.

**The Asterix Express will
leave Waterloo Station
at 7.23am on Wednesday
9 October and
passengers must arrive
there by 6.30am, ready
for boarding at 7am. The
Asterix Express leaves
Gare du Nord in Paris at
5.30pm and arrives at
Waterloo at 8.20pm.**

Travellers
on the Asterix
Express will
be the first
people in the
world to see a
copy of the
new book, the
first new
adventure
written for five
years. The
special train
has been
organised by
publishers
Hodder
Children's
Books.

What is the name of
Asterix's dog?

What is the Bard's
name?

What is the name of
the Druid?

Name

.....

Address

.....

.....

.....

Phone

.....

Age.....

School.....

.....

**Ask your parent or carer to sign
here:**

I give permission for

.....
to travel to France on the Asterix
Eurostar on 9 October if he or she is a
winner of the No Kidding! competition. I
will arrange for an adult to accompany
him or her, free of charge. I understand
that valid passports are needed for the
trip.

Signed.....
(parent/guardian)

This is the
35th book
in the cartoon
series about
the Gauls and
their
adventures
around the
world at the
time of the
Romans.

© Les Additions Albert René/Goscinny Uderzo

TERMS: 1. Winners must have valid passports and be able to travel on 9 October 1996. Their names will appear in the November 1996 issue of No Kidding! 2. There are no cash alternatives 3. One entry per child, no photocopies of entry form 4. For a full list of winners send an SAE to No Kidding! Asterix PO Box 10427, London N8 8UP

All of us need to use the loo several times a day. A quick pull of a chain or a handle flushes away our waste which then disappears into the drains underneath our homes.

But what happened before you were able to flush?

People used "chamber pots" – like potties for grown-ups. Before homes in London had their own supply of water, and before proper drains and sewers were built, our waste was carried out of the house in bucketfuls to "cesspits", large holes dug in the ground. Cesspits were smelly and could cause all sorts of nasty diseases.

WHAT WOULD LIFE BE LIKE WITHOUT A TOILET?



Until the 1700s, people emptied the contents of their chamber pots into the road from their windows. They thought it was polite to shout out “Gardy-loo!” as they did so to warn people walking below. This is from the French “gardez l’eau” – look out for water. “The centre of the street became a sewer and they had to rely on heavy rain to wash away the heavier bits,” says Dave Woodcock who works at the Science Museum.



INTO THE MOAT

People who lived in medieval castles sat over a hole in the castle walls. Their waste fell straight down into the moat, into a pit or into a barrel which could be taken away and emptied. These toilets were called “garderobes”.

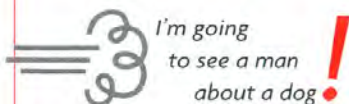
Being polite

For years people have thought of ways of talking about the toilet – and what they do there – politely.

Some people say “I’m going to the little girl’s room”, or, “I’m going to the little boy’s room”. People talk about “going to see a man about a dog”, “going to powder their noses”, “being caught short”, “sitting on the throne”, and “spending a penny”. Other toilet language includes “tinkle”, “number ones”, “number twos”, and “call of nature”.

Does today’s Queen of England, Elizabeth II, and her family, use special toilets?

“They have perfectly ordinary toilets the same as anybody else’s,” says a spokeswoman for Buckingham Palace.



The first toilet like the ones we use today was designed by Sir John Harington and built in 1589 when Queen Elizabeth I ruled England. Sir John was a poet, the Queen’s godson – and very keen on being clean. In those days, people didn’t wash themselves or their clothes very often, but Sir John is said to have had a bath every day! His water closet, or WC, cost 30s 6d to build (just over £1.50 in today’s money) and included a seat on top of a pan and a handle to flush its contents into a cesspit below.

Only two of his WCs were built – one at his home near Bath, and another at Richmond Palace. This toilet is thought to have been used by Queen Elizabeth. She too is said to have been unusually enthusiastic about being clean, taking a bath about once a month!

Sir John’s invention probably didn’t catch on because there were no drains or sewers. Most homes didn’t have their own water supply and most people took water in buckets from a pump in the road.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Thomas Crapper is one of the most famous people in the history



of the loo. He was born in 1837 and lived until he was 73 years old. When he was just 11 years old, he walked from Yorkshire to London in search of work. Many people think the flushing toilet was Crapper’s invention. “But he didn’t invent the flush toilet – he was just a good sanitary engineer,” says Dave Woodcock from the Science Museum. Perhaps it’s this engineer’s name which has led people to believe he invented the loo!

What Crapper did invent was the modern flush system which we all know and use every day. His “Valveless Water Waste Preventer” meant that water was sucked upwards very quickly when the toilet was flushed, cleaning the bowl in one go. His company, Thomas Crapper and Co., made toilets for more than 50 years.

GOING TOGETHER

The Romans were the first people to build public toilets in British towns with underground sewers linking them to the city’s cesspits. In Roman Britain, soldiers probably had the best toilets available and were able to chat while sitting there. “There were usually two rows of seats facing each other, flushed out with water underneath,” says Chris Saunders who works for the Verulamium Museum in St Albans. The soldiers used sponges on sticks, dipped into water between the seats, to wipe their bottoms.

LIVING WITHOUT A FLUSH

In some parts of the world, people still live without water and flush toilets in their homes.

In parts of Angola in Africa, for example, people are building “dry-pit latrines” to help stop the spread of disease through dirty water.

These are holes in the ground which fill up slowly without any water. When they’re full, people can cover them up and dig a new latrine.

AFTER THE FLUSH

Sewers are the pipes under the ground which take away our waste which is called sewage. The content of our toilet ends up at sewage treatment works where it is cleaned and put back into our rivers.

Before our sewer system was built, our waste spilled over into rivers, causing many diseases. People became ill by drinking the polluted water: London only became a healthier place to live when our sewer system was opened in 1865.

After you have flushed the toilet, its content travels through the drains underneath your home, out into the street where it joins the sewers. Some of these sewers are as big as tube train tunnels, and many were dug out by Victorian workers without the help of machines.

The content of your toilet can travel up to 20 miles until it reaches a sewage treatment works. Sewer workers often go underground to check the pipes and make sure they are not blocked up. Workers have to be very careful because some sewage gives off poison gases as it rots.

At the sewage works, our waste water is cleaned and then pumped back into the rivers. Three-quarters of the water we use in our homes in London is taken from the River Thames and the River Lee – and is cleaned again before it is piped to our taps.

The larger, solid bits of sewage are called sludge and are used to help make electricity.

AMAZING LOOS

The Japanese have invented a machine which makes a flushing noise while you are sitting doing your business to cover up any toilet noises! They have also made a musical loo roll holder which plays a tune when you take some paper.

In 1884, at a Health

Exhibition in London, a gold medal was given to a toilet which could flush away ten apples, one flat sponge and four pieces of paper in one go!

SPACE LOOS

It's very difficult going to the toilet in space where there's no gravity to keep things on the ground! America's first woman astronaut, Sally Ride, described how she floated in the bathroom and had to wee into a long tube where it was sucked into the waste tank. For more serious visits to the toilet, she strapped herself to the seat to stop herself floating away!

DOG LOOS

People no longer empty chamber pots from their windows, but the streets and parks in London are full of dogs' mess which can give children serious diseases. In most parts of London, there are bins where owners can put their dog's mess. The Tidy Britain Group did a test to find out the best way of picking it up. They used porridge turned brown with food colouring and found that a plastic or carrier bag, used like a glove, was the best way of carrying dog poo from the street to the bin.



ROYAL LOOS

Kings and queens and other rich people hid their chamber pots inside boxes called "close stools". These boxes had fancy padded seats. The French King Louis XIV is said to have spoken to his visitors while sitting on his!

I'm going to sit on the throne!



You can meet Thomas Crapper – actor Aidan Dooley – at the Science Museum in the Secret Life of the Home gallery. He'll show you how a toilet works.

Are you the right person to look after a pet rat?



Do you have enough money to look after me?

It will cost between £10 and £75 to buy me as a pet and a large cage where I can live. The cage needs to be big enough for me – at least 75cm x 50cm x 45cm. You need to have sticks in the cage for me to climb and gnaw, and places for me to hide in. The floor of the cage should be covered with sawdust or wood shavings, and clean paper which I can shred and make into a bed for myself.

It will cost up to £2 a week to keep me. You need to feed me about 30gm of

food every evening – and I eat anything, including left overs from your dinner. You can feed me oats and seeds, nuts, vegetables, fruit, bread and a little cooked meat, but not cheese. If you give me too much to eat I can get too fat and become ill.

Can you look after me properly?

You have to clean out my cage and change my litter at least twice a week, and wash the whole cage properly every month. You should wash my food and water containers each night. I will only live with other rats if I

meet them when I'm young and if they're the same sex as me. If you go on holiday, you need to leave me with someone who will feed and clean me properly.

Even though I'm tame, I may still bite if you frighten me. Let me know you're going to pick me up and use two hands around my body. Please do not lift me up by my tail!

The good things about keeping me as a pet are:

I'm cheap and easy to care for;
If I'm your only rat, I can be a good friend to you;

If I'm with other rats, I can be fun to watch.

The bad things about keeping me as a pet are:

I'm smelly;
I need to be cleaned regularly;
You may not find anyone who wants to look after me when you go on holiday!

Thanks to London Zoo for supplying information. Pet care leaflets are available from The Education Department, London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY, and cost 50p each.

DOGZILLA THE MONSTER PUP



OK, Dogzilla, let's start with an easy one. See the stick.....



FETCH!



There's no such thing as

Ghosts

It was raining and a fierce wind rattled all the windows and doors on the first night Jack stayed over at his friend Martin's house. Martin lived with his mum and dad in the last cottage in the village, about ten minutes' walk from their nearest neighbours and surrounded by fields on three sides. Jack and Martin were the only children who lived in the village. Their mums took it in turns to drive them to the junior school in the nearest town and, at weekends, the two boys played together, roaming the quiet lanes around the village on foot or on bikes, picking blackberries in season, kicking ball in Jack's garden or climbing trees by the old ford.

It was at the ford that Martin had first told Jack about the ghost. "There's no such things as ghosts, my mum told me," Jack had said.

"There are," said Martin. "I've seen one."

"Where?"



"In my bedroom – often. It's always very dark, in the middle of the night. I wake up because I hear a creak outside my door as if someone is walking along the hallway outside and then the handle turns and the door swings open and there he is."

"Who?"

"Mr Farnborough, the ghost."

"How do you know what his name is?" Jack had asked.

"He told me, of course. He used to live in my house many years ago."

"Aren't you scared?"

"Course not. Mr Farnborough's nice. He comes to see me quite a lot. He's always trying to tell me something but he can't speak properly and I can't understand everything he says."

"What's he look like then, this Mr Farnborough?" Jack had inquired, beginning to think his friend was making up the whole story to frighten him on this cold and gloomy autumn afternoon.

"Just like an old man, but a bit see-through," said Martin.

"You're fibbing!"

"Am not!"

"Are!"

"Am not!"

"Are!"

"I'll prove it."

"How?"

"Come and stay at my house and meet him."

"When?"

"Next Saturday. Ask your mum – but don't tell her about Mr Farnborough."

And so it was arranged. During the day it rained and both boys had tea at Martin's house and played board games in front of the fire until Martin's mum told them it was time for bed.

Jack had never slept at his friend's house before, but he had been there plenty of times to play and knew both Martin's parents and the cottage quite well. It was a rambling old building with a large garden and little rooms tucked round corners or down a couple of unexpected stairs. An underground stream emerged in the back garden and there was a large cellar in which you could stand. Martin's dad worked at home a lot and had turned this cellar into a study. He was often sitting down there when Jack came to play.

After Martin's mum had turned the lights out, the two boys lay in silence for a while. Outside, the rain pounded down and the trees creaked as the ferocious wind whipped around their branches. A flash of lightning suddenly lit the room.

"Can we have the light on?" whispered Jack.

"You're not scared of an old storm, are you?" asked Martin. "Anyway, if we turn the light on, Mr Farnborough won't come."

Jack was beginning to wish he hadn't stayed over. Deep down inside he didn't believe in ghosts, but he



couldn't help feeling nervous in the dark with the storm outside. He forced himself to breathe regularly against an urge to hold his breath every time he heard a creak or a bang. Just a few years ago, when he used to be very scared of the dark, his mother had stroked his hair at bedtime and told him she was tidying up his head so he wouldn't have scary dreams. Inside his brain, she used to say, there were chests of drawers. She used to tell him how she picked up all his thoughts which were scattered around – and tucked them away inside the drawers so they wouldn't bother him in the night. Now Jack concentrated very hard, tried to picture the drawers and scoop up his thoughts about ghosts and ghouls and shut them all away...

The next thing he knew, Martin was shaking him and whispering, "Jack! Jack! Wake up! Mr Farnborough's here."

Jack sat upright, immediately awake. The rain was still thudding against the cottage. He found it hard to see anything in the dark room.

"Listen," said Martin. Jack grabbed his friend's arm as he heard the door handle turn. Slowly the door swung open and there, framed in the door, he could quite clearly see a very old man. In the dark, the figure was glowing. Jack moaned and Martin pinched him. "Ssssh!" said Martin. "He won't hurt us. I told you he was real," he added triumphantly.

Mr Farnborough had white hair and old-fashioned clothes. He just stood there looking at them. Then he opened his mouth as if to speak and the boys heard what they recognised as speech but couldn't understand.

The noise from Mr Farnborough's mouth was alternatively strong, then faint, and sounded as if a tape was being played at too slow a speed.

"What's he saying?" said Jack.

"You have to listen really carefully," said Martin. "Then you can make out some words."

Everything about Mr Farnborough seemed to be in slow motion, yet it was obvious there was some urgency in the message he was trying to communicate. He lifted his hand and beckoned the boys towards him.

"He's never done that before," said Martin. "He

normally just stands there and tries to talk."

"What should we do?"

asked Jack. After the initial shock of seeing Mr Farnborough, he now felt surprisingly calm and safe in the old man's presence.

Mr Farnborough beckoned again and then turned. "Let's follow him," said Jack, jumping out of bed and pulling Martin up.

As soon as Mr Farnborough saw the two friends stand, he turned and disappeared from their sight. Jack and Martin held hands and then followed to the door. Out in the hallway, they could see a faint



light and both knew he was waiting for them there.

"Are you scared?" asked Jack.

"No," said Martin. "I told you, he just wants to tell us something."

Mr Farnborough sort of hovered outside Martin's parents' room and then beckoned to them again. He made for the stairs.

"Where's he going?" whispered Jack.

"Sshh!" Martin hissed back. "We have to be quiet or we'll wake up mum and dad."

They tiptoed along the hall to the top of the stairs. Mr Farnborough had paused at the bottom and then glided through the kitchen door. The boys followed quickly but quietly.

When they arrived in the kitchen, the glowing figure was standing in front of the closed door leading to the cellar. Mr Farnborough raised his hand and beckoned one more time before melting through the door.

"Wow, did you see that!" said Martin. "Just like a ghost!"

It was now incredibly dark in the kitchen and faintly, through the rain and wind of the storm still raging outside, the two boys heard another noise, the noise of water rushing and roaring.

"Where's that coming from?" asked Jack, reaching for the light switch.

"Don't turn the light on, or he won't come back," said Martin.

"He's gone," said Jack, flicking the switch. Nothing happened. Jack tried the switch a couple more times, the old fear of the dark which he had successfully conquered earlier rising once again in the pit of his stomach.

"There must have been a power cut because of the storm. There's a torch just by that cupboard," said Martin, feeling his way through his familiar kitchen.

With the beam of the torch, Martin lit up the doorway to his father's study. "I wonder why Mr Farnborough went down there. Shall we have a look?" he suggested.

The noise of streaming water was louder at the cellar door. Yet when Martin tried to turn the handle, he found that the door was locked.

"That's strange. Dad never locks the door at night," said Martin.

"Do you know where the key is?" asked Jack. A strange feeling of panic and urgency was welling up inside him.

Martin moved to the board in the kitchen where his



mother kept all the keys for the house and reached up to take one. "Here it is."

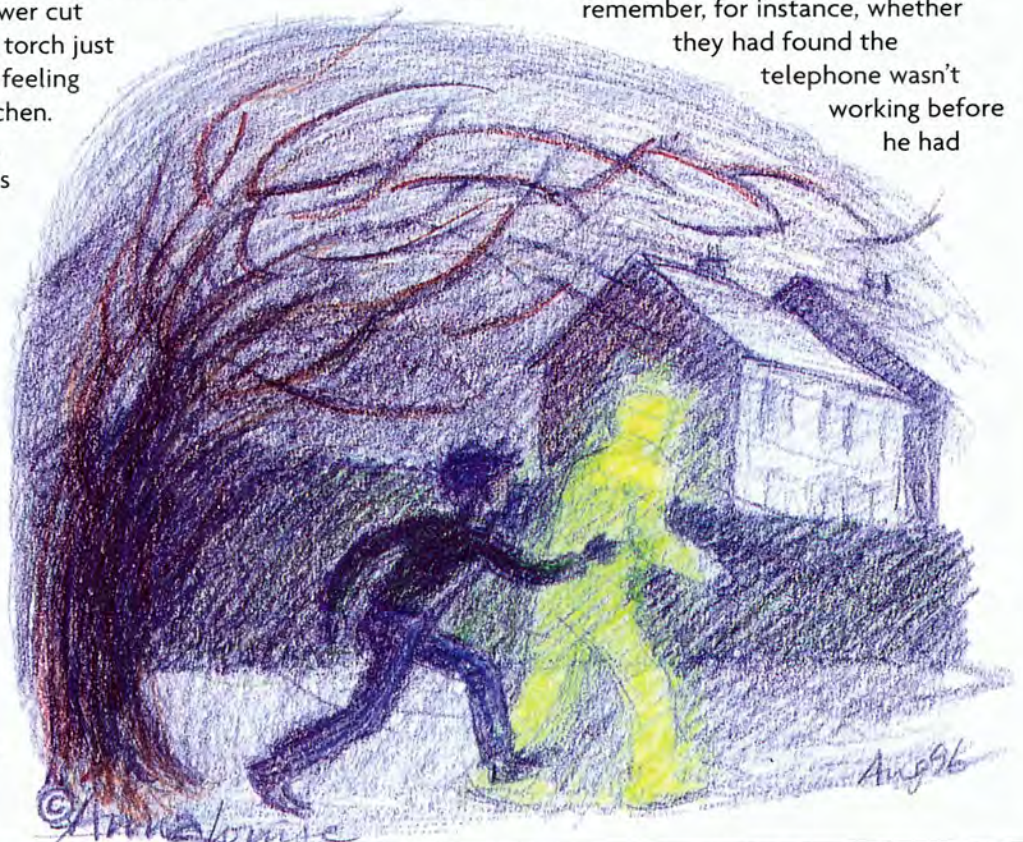
Jack stepped to one side as Martin unlocked and pulled open the door. Shining the torch down the stairs, they saw at once where the noise of running water was coming from. The boys realised in an instant that the cellar was flooded. "The heavy rain must have done this," said Martin. "The stream runs under our house, you know."

He shone the beam of the torch around his father's study, onto water lapping at the top of the desk. And then suddenly, the light fell on Martin's father, lying, quite still, at the bottom of the stairs. There was blood oozing from a large gash across his forehead.

"What's wrong with him?" whispered Jack. And then suddenly Martin was shouting "Mum! Mum!" and running down the stairs to reach his father. He grabbed his arms and tried to pull him up, but the man was too heavy for the little boy to move. Then Martin's mum appeared, clutching a torch which she kept by her bed. "What's happened?" she said. And then she looked through the cellar door. "Oh, Andrew!" she cried and rushed to join Martin on the stairs.

Between them, mother and son pulled and heaved the seemingly lifeless body to the top of the stairs. Martin's dad groaned and his eyelids flickered. "Oh, thank goodness he's alive!" said his mum. "Thank goodness you boys found him!"

Later, some of the details of that night became slightly blurred in Jack's memory. He couldn't remember, for instance, whether they had found the telephone wasn't working before he had



volunteered to go and get help from the neighbour's house. He would never forget his journey along the familiar lanes in the blinding rain though, his fear of the dark pushed aside by the comforting, glowing figure which floated ahead of him, lighting the way to guide a stumbling child.

It turned out that Martin's dad had had a freak accident before the water had started flooding the cellar. He'd been working late and had locked himself in so the boys wouldn't bother him. On his way to bed, he had tripped on the bottom stair and knocked himself out. There he had stayed until the boys discovered him, just in time. By the next morning, the cellar had been full of water. After one night in hospital and a dressing to his head wound, Martin's dad was back at home, calculating the cost of the damage to the cottage.

The rain had continued to fall all through the next day

and the water rose and rose, eventually flooding the ground floor of the cottage as well as the cellar.

During the next week at school, the boys' teacher had talked about floods and underground streams. The class went to the library to research their work and it was there that Jack and Martin discovered the stream had last flooded houses in the village about 100 years ago. There had been one death on that November evening a century before – the resident of Martin's cottage, an elderly gentleman named Thomas Farnborough, whose body had been discovered in the cellar by neighbours a few days later.

"Thanks to Mr Farnborough, there were no deaths this time," said Martin. "Do you still not believe in ghosts Jack?"

His friend laughed. "I don't know," he said. "But I'll never be afraid of the dark again."

THE END

Can you write
a story about

ghosts?

It could be a scary story or a happy story. It could be about children who live now, or about children who lived a long time ago. It could be set in London, in another part of England or somewhere else in the world. It doesn't have to be very long – and you can write it with a friend, if you want.

The best story
will be printed
in the November
issue of
No Kidding!

Send your
entries to
Ghost Story,
No Kidding!,
Freepost
LON6868,
PO Box 10427,
London N8 8BR

by
Friday 11
October
1996

Include your
name, address,
school – and tell
us which talking
book you'd like to

receive if
you're one
of the
winners.

**Choose
from:**

- ★ Alice's
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in Wonderland
- ★ Tom Sawyer
- ★ Peter Pan
- ★ Journey to
the Centre of
the Earth
- ★ Treasure
Island

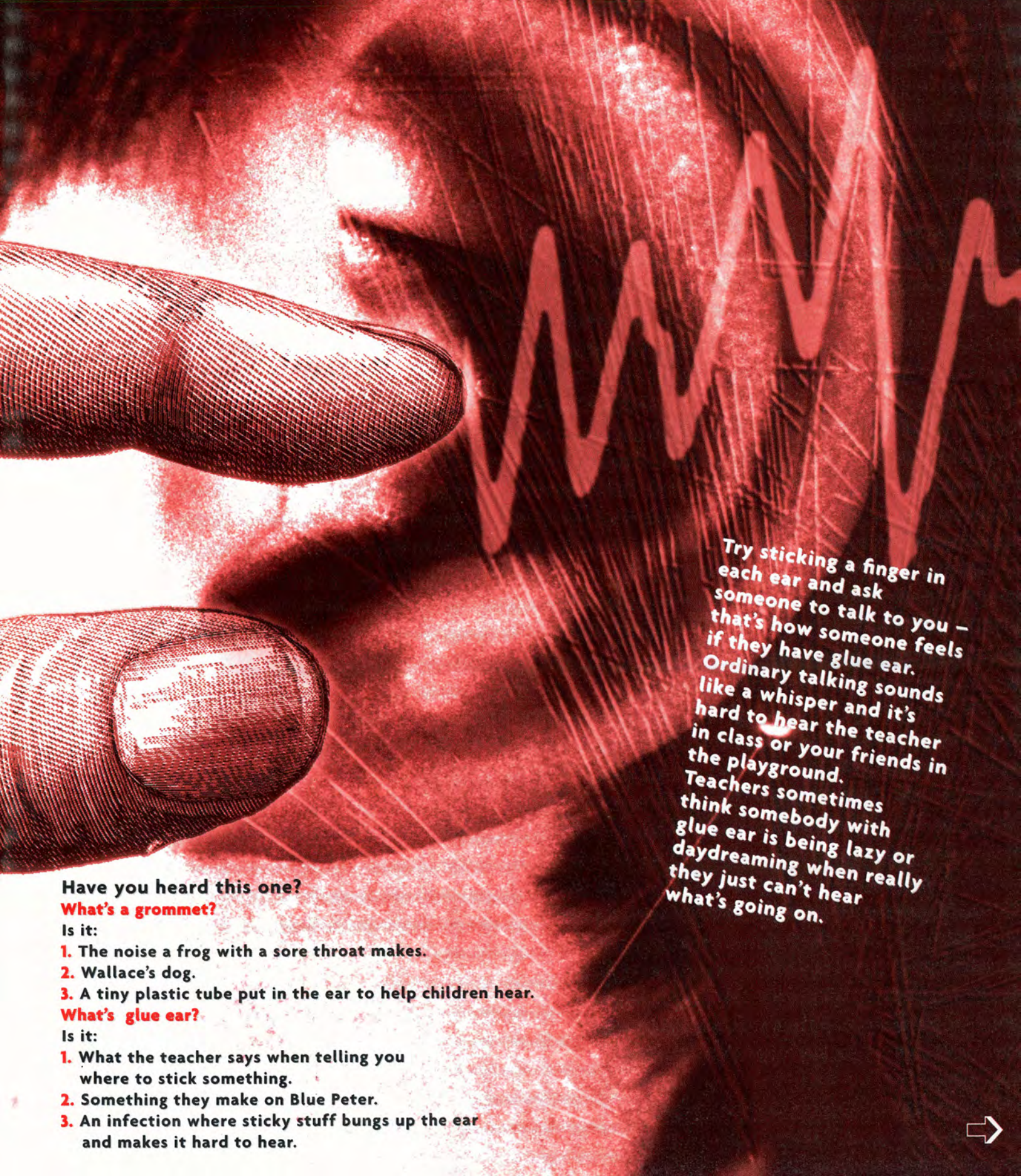


These can
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the book's
main
characters for
you to play.
The talking
books can be
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cover to
cover, a
chapter at a
time – or you
can just play
the games.

TERMS: 1. Closing date 11 October 1996 2. There are no cash alternative 3. The "best stories" will be chosen on the basis of originality and readability. Entries cannot be returned and No Kidding! assumes the copyright of all entries. The editor's decision is final 4. Winners will be sent their talking book by post 5. For a full list of winners, send an SAE to No Kidding! Ghost Story, PO Box 10427, London N8 8UP

EAR EAR!



Try sticking a finger in each ear and ask someone to talk to you – that's how someone feels if they have glue ear. Ordinary talking sounds like a whisper and it's hard to hear the teacher in class or your friends in the playground. Teachers sometimes think somebody with glue ear is being lazy or daydreaming when really they just can't hear what's going on.

Have you heard this one?

What's a grommet?

Is it:

1. The noise a frog with a sore throat makes.
2. Wallace's dog.
3. A tiny plastic tube put in the ear to help children hear.

What's glue ear?

Is it:

1. What the teacher says when telling you where to stick something.
2. Something they make on Blue Peter.
3. An infection where sticky stuff bungs up the ear and makes it hard to hear.



So what is glue ear?

The ear has three parts: the outer ear, the middle ear and the inner ear. Glue ear is when a sticky fluid like snot blocks the middle ear and makes it hard to hear.

Rachel Moss is 10 and goes to Rokesly School in Haringey.

She had glue ear last year and says: "It was horrible because I couldn't hear anything."

The National Deaf Children's Society reckons one in four children have glue ear at sometime.

If you, your parents, or your teachers want to know more about glue ear and grommets, send off for a fact sheet to The National Deaf Children's Society, 15 Dufferin Street, London EC1Y 8PD. There is also a family freephone between 1pm and 5pm, Mondays to Fridays, on 0800 252 380.

Science Photo Library



A grommet in the ear. This picture is magnified: a grommet is really the size of a grain of rice.

The middle ear needs to be full of air to work properly and be healthy. This air comes through the "Eustachian tubes" which join your ears to your throat. If the Eustachian tubes become infected, they may stick together. This stops the air getting in and the sticky liquid known as "glue" is then made and fills up the middle ear. Sometimes there is also an infection inside the ear which may give you earache and a temperature.



Your doctor will probably give you antibiotics to treat an ear infection – and most of the time, glue ear either goes away or children stop getting it as their Eustachian tubes grow bigger. But if you've got glue ear that does not go away, or is stopping you hearing in the classroom and at home, your doctor may send you to hospital where they might suggest an operation to put "grommets" in your ears. A grommet is a tiny plastic tube about the size of a grain of rice. The doctors put you to sleep and make a small cut in your ear drum to drain the glue out. The grommet is put into the hole to let the air into your middle ear to keep it healthy and stop glue building up again.



Rachel had the operation at the Whittington Hospital in Highgate last year, when she was 8. She says she felt scared before she went to hospital, but the nurses told her what was going to happen, so she wasn't frightened.

"They put me to sleep with anaesthetic and then they took me into a room and put grommets in my ears. When I woke up, I felt tired and grumpy, but I could hear better. It was great."

Sometimes grommets fall out after a few months and the small holes heal up quickly. If the glue ear comes back, the doctors may suggest they put more grommets in.



Doctors don't always know what is the best medicine or the best treatment for different diseases – and they are always trying to find out more about illnesses and infections and find out about new drugs or different ways of treating their patients. Some have different ideas about the best way to help children with glue ear.

Lots of children do have operations to put grommets in their ears. Some people believe it's best to do nothing and wait until you grow out of glue ear. Others may suggest taking your adenoids out to help get more air into your ears. Your adenoids are small pieces of tissue between your throat and nose which can swell up and stop the air from getting to the Eustachian tubes. Some people treat glue ear with "homeopathic" remedies. Homeopaths treat "like with like" – so, for example, if you had a fever and a rash, they would give you a tiny dose of something that gives you a fever and a rash to help your body fight the illness.



The Medical Research Council's Institute of Hearing Research is one of many organisations looking at different treatments to help doctors decide how best to treat glue ear. They are looking at how well children can hear after different sorts of treatment, and how their loss of hearing affects them at school and at home. They are looking at the causes of glue ear too – the germs that cause the infection – and trying to find out whether some children are more likely to catch them.

NATURE SPY



What to look out for in September and October

TREES

Look out for nuts – conkers on horse chestnuts, hazel nuts on hazel trees, acorns on oak trees.

Look out for berries – rosehips on dog rose,

elderberries on elder trees, berries on ivy.

Look out for seeds – flying helicopters from sycamore trees.

Watch the leaves on “deciduous” trees turn from green to yellow to orange and then brown before they fall off.

Spy “evergreen” trees like holly and ivy which keep their leaves all winter.

FUNGI



Why not get up early and go on a “fungus foray” on a damp and dewy morning. Search among the dead leaves for fungi – but

don’t touch as some are poisonous! See if you can find any “fly agaric”, the sort of toadstool you see in storybooks which is

red with white spots. See too if you can find any “bracket fungus” growing on dead trees.

MINIBEASTS

Hunt among the dead leaves for minibeasts like woodlice, centipedes, millipedes, ground beetles and soil mites. See if you can find any spiders’ webs – the best time to look is early in the morning. Look out for different shaped webs.

BIRDS

As the trees lose their leaves, you may be able to see birds flying south for the winter. Look out for birds like swifts which “migrate” every year. Look too for birds like robins, sparrows, thrushes, blackbirds and starlings in the bare woods.

Nature Spy is compiled by Rob Eager from Mudchute Park and Farm on the Isle of Dogs which is open to the public (0171 515 5901).



A PROBLEM SHARED

“I love playing football but I’m not very good at it. When I want to play in the playground at lunch times, the others say I can’t because I’m such a bad player. They let me play if they need someone to make up a team, but then they shout at me and say I’m rubbish. It’s making me really unhappy.”

Tom (name changed), aged 9

Does this happen to you? What would you do if you were Tom? Do you have any ideas which could help him? Why not talk about Tom’s problems with your friends, or even your class teacher, to find out what they think. Write to **No Kidding!** at FREEPOST LON6868, PO Box 10427, London N8 8BR, and we’ll print your advice next time.

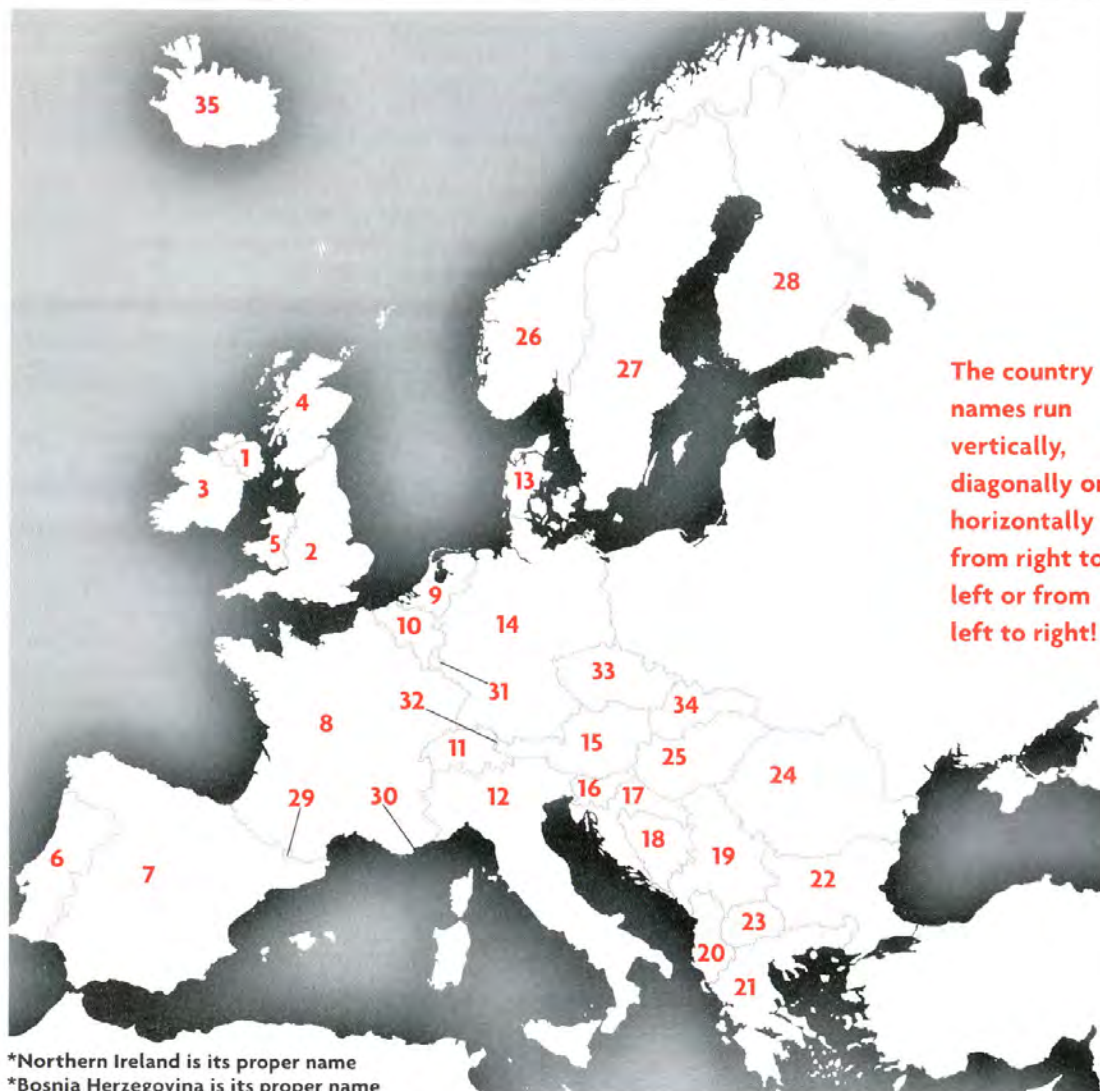
Is there anything you’re worried about, either in or outside school? Write to **No Kidding!** and we’ll print your letter – without your name – and ask our readers to write with advice about how to deal with your problem.

1 SEPTEMBER
1988



A report said that 8,064 people in New York had been bitten by dogs in the last year, 1,587 people had been bitten by other people and one person had been attacked by a penguin!

- 1 IRELAND*
- 2 ENGLAND
- 3 EIRE
- 4 SCOTLAND
- 5 WALES
- 6 PORTUGAL
- 7 SPAIN
- 8 FRANCE
- 9 NETHERLANDS
- 10 BELGIUM
- 11 SWITZERLAND
- 12 ITALY
- 13 DENMARK
- 14 GERMANY
- 15 AUSTRIA
- 16 SLOVENIA
- 17 CROATIA
- 18 BOSNIA*
- 19 YUGOSLAVIA
- 20 ALBANIA
- 21 GREECE
- 22 BULGARIA
- 23 MACEDONIA
- 24 ROMANIA
- 25 HUNGARY
- 26 NORWAY
- 27 SWEDEN
- 28 FINLAND
- 29 ANDORRA
- 30 MONACO
- 31 LUXEMBOURG
- 32 LIECHTENSTEIN
- 33 CZECH REPUBLIC
- 34 SLOVAK REPUBLIC
- 35 ICELAND



*Northern Ireland is its proper name
 *Bosnia Herzegovina is its proper name

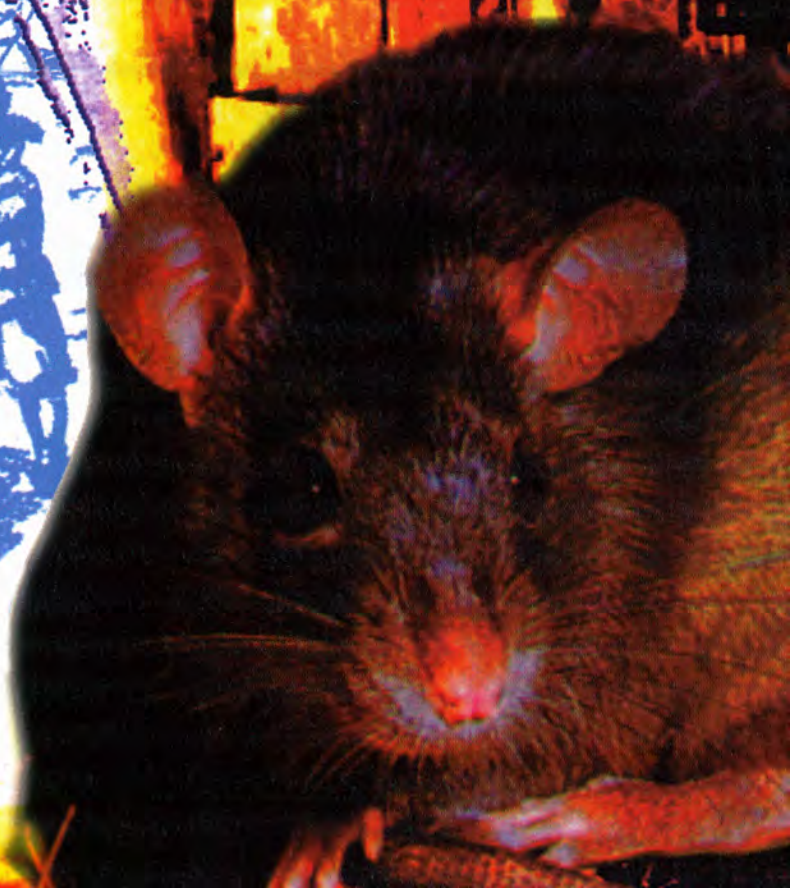
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THE PLAGUE

Can you imagine what it would be like to be shut up in your home because someone living with you was seriously ill? To have a red cross painted on your front door to warn all your friends and neighbours to stay away?



In 1665, thousands of families were kept prisoners in their own homes to try to stop the spread of the Great Plague of London. Many people caught the plague and then died just because they were shut up with someone who was infected.



No-one knew what caused the terrible illness and doctors at the time did not know how to help because they knew very little about the causes of diseases or how to cure them. Leeches were often used to suck the blood of patients, and medicines were made of horrible things like toads, snakes, blood or powdered bones. Doctors were called "physicians" and, at the time of the plague, were kept busy with rich patients who were able to pay them for their advice. In fact, many physicians moved out of London to the countryside to escape the risk of catching the plague, along with many of their wealthy patients. The King, Charles II, left London too, going first to Richmond and then further away to Oxford.

The doctors who did stay wore long clothes and a mask to try to protect themselves when

visiting patients.

A man called Samuel Pepys lived in London during the Great Plague and we can find out a lot about life more than 300 years ago by reading his diary.

"Lord how empty the streets and melancholy, so many poor sick people full of sores..."

people were desperate for help and tried all sorts of strange cures: one was to press a living chicken against their skin to draw out the plague poison. Some people wore lucky charms to try to stop catching the plague, and one doctor wore a dead toad around his neck while working with sick people because he believed it would protect him.

Some people thought the plague had been sent by God to punish them and started to go to church more often. Others thought it was caused by London's "bad air" – London smelt disgusting at the time because the streets were filled with rubbish and there were no sewers or drains. People carried sweet-smelling flowers and smoked tobacco to try to stop breathing in the bad air.

The plague was not a new disease. In 1349, hundreds of thousands of people were killed across Europe in the "Black Death". Within a year, about one third of people in England had died.

The killer disease was the bubonic plague and was passed to humans by the fleas living in the fur of black rats who had come to London on ships from other countries. These rats found plenty to eat and plenty of places to live in a city which was dirty and overcrowded.



A rat with the plague has hundreds of thousands of germs in its blood which are swallowed by the fleas every time they take a feed. As the rats die from the plague, the fleas look for other warm blood to suck and jump onto humans. As the flea bites into the skin, the plague germs are given to humans.

But it wasn't until 1894, more than 200 years later, that scientists found out how the plague was carried. In 1665, no-one knew the disease had started with the rats. What's more, some 40,000 dogs and 20,000 cats are thought to have been killed in London in case they had anything to do with the dreadful disease – making it easier for the rats to go about their deadly business.



The Lord Mayor of London was called Sir William Lawrence and he tried to stop the plague spreading in his "Orders for Health" which started on 1 July 1665. These orders included shutting up houses when someone living there had caught the plague and painting the red cross on the door. Watchmen then guarded the house day and night to make sure no-one went in and no-one came out – until the "corpse-bearers" came. They were the people who collected the bodies in large carts, ringing a bell as they travelled the streets and calling out "Bring out your dead!"



The black rat's proper name is Rattus Rattus

Today, there are probably more rats living in London than at any other time. But it is the brown rat that now lives beneath our feet in sewers and drains. Some people say there is one rat for every person living in Britain.



PLAGUE FACTS

The plague that killed thousands of people in 1665 was the bubonic plague, a rodent disease which can be passed on to humans through flea bites. In some countries, the germs are carried by wild guinea pigs, prairie dogs and marmots.

The first signs of the plague in people are swellings, sometimes as large as an apple, under the arms, at the top of the legs or in the neck. These swellings are called "buboes". A person with the plague has a very high temperature, pains all over, and is often sick. Bleeding under the skin brings black spots, and red spots also appear. If the lungs become infected, the plague germs can be passed on by sneezing and coughing. This is called pneumonic plague.

In 1666, the numbers of people catching and dying from the plague began to go down. Later that year, the Great Fire of London burnt many of the germs and destroyed much of the dirty and overcrowded city.

Today doctors can cure the plague and the black rats have been driven away from Britain by brown rats, which came to this country in the 1720s on ships from China and Siberia. In Britain today, the only places where colonies of black rats are known to exist are on Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel and Garbh Eilean, an island in Scotland. "The rats on Lundy Island are not a threat and are contained on the island," says Martin Tither of English Nature. "It is thought they originally arrived on Lundy as a result of a shipwreck."

The last recorded deaths from plague in England were in the late 1600s. However, in 1984, there were reports of plague spread by fleas on rats in India.

These orders did not stop the plague from spreading. In September 1665, 7,165 people were recorded to have died from the plague in just one week. In total, an estimated 100,000 people in London died from the plague during the last six months of 1665 and the beginning of 1666. Before the plague started, there had been 460,000 people living in London.

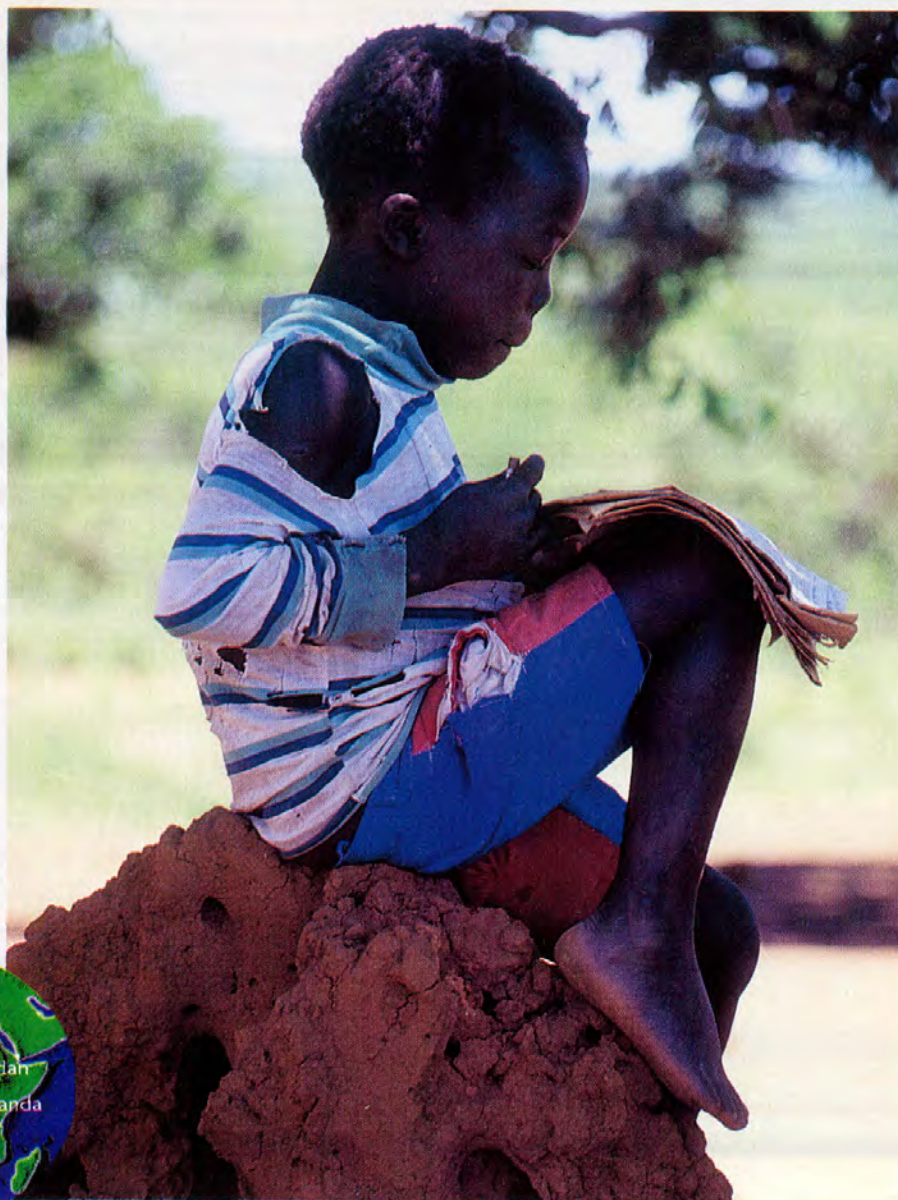


People leave out poisons and set traps, but brown rats just keep scampering back. They have between three and five litters of babies each year, with up to 15 babies in each litter. They are very clever animals too – they can find their way about in the dark, walk a tightrope and jump long distances. They are also good swimmers. Rats mostly come out at night to find food in dustbins, or on the streets.



AROUND
THE
WORLD

UGANDA



This 8 year-old boy is sitting on a termite hill doing his end of term exams in Uganda. He and his family come from the south of Sudan but have fled their home because of war over religion. In Uganda, his home is made by his parents out of branches, grass and mud. His daily school is in the open air. In Sudan, he learnt in Arabic, but in Uganda, he is learning in English because all children living there do. He is sitting on the termite hill to get a good view of the blackboard where the questions are written. It's also cooler there because it's in the shade – and it's out of reach of the ants on the floor. Children in Ugandan schools have to sit exams at the end of each school year – and only go up a year if they pass them.

His family and friends are trying to make a new home for themselves – but they have not escaped the war in Sudan, which is now spilling over into Uganda.

See if you can
work this one
out...

BRAIN



TWISTER

Three friends were walking down the street when they passed a bicycle shop. There was a large sign in the window saying

**Closing Down Sale –
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There was an old bike in the window which looked as if it shouldn't cost too much, but it didn't have a price ticket, so they went inside to ask how much it would cost.

The manager wasn't there, but the assistant said he thought it cost **£10**. The friends put their pocket money together and bought the bike

– and started pushing it away down the road.

Just then, the manager returned to the shop and noticed the bike had gone. He asked the assistant about it, who said it had been sold for **£10**.

The manager said that it was really meant to be only **£5**, so he took **£5** out of the till and told the assistant to run after the boys and give them the money.

The assistant started running down the road but suddenly stopped, thinking that it would be a bit hard to divide **£5** between 3 children. He decided to keep **£2** and

give them back just **£3**, and take the **£2** back to the shop. He caught up with the three friends and handed over **£3**.

The boys were really pleased because that meant they had paid not **£10**, but **£7** for the bike. The **£7** they had paid, together with the **£2** in the assistant's pocket, makes **£9**. What happened to the missing **£1**?



TIPS: Where is the money now? How much is in the shop, how much in the assistant's pocket and how much with the three friends?

18 September

1981

France
abolished
the
guillotine



Here are a few ideas for places to visit and things to do outside school. We haven't visited all of them ourselves – so if you go, write to us to tell us what you think at No Kidding!

**Freepost
LON6868,
PO Box 10427,
London N8 8BR**

You can raise Tower Bridge!

– if you're the winner of a quiz for visitors to the Museum from Monday 21 to Friday 25 October. Entry to the quiz is included in admission prices, £3.75 for children, £5.50 for adults, family tickets £14, and group rates available. The Museum is on Tower Bridge, SE1 (0171 403 3761).
⊕ Tower Hill

Try out different disguises and find camouflaged objects

– at the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth Road, SE1 (0171 416 5320), from

Saturday 19 to Sunday 27 October. You must book a place on The Art of Disguise at 11am, 12 noon, 1pm, 2pm every day – get an adult to call 0171 416 5311. Price is included in admission to the Museum, £2.25 children, £4.50 adults, £12 family ticket, and group rates available. While you're there, check out the exhibition about spies and find out what it was like in the Blitz!
⊕ Lambeth North

Make a magic lantern!

– at the Geffrye Museum in Kingsland Road, E2 (0171 739 9893). There's a half term

week of activities for children about Victorian Illusions, including magic lanterns and shadow puppets. The free activities start on Tuesday 22 October and run until Friday 25 October, 10.30am to 12.45pm and 2pm to 4pm.
⊕ Liverpool Street or Old Street

Playground and nature trail, exhibitions and special events

– at Gunnersbury Park Museum in Popes Lane, W3 (0181 992 1612). Open 1pm to 5pm every day, admission free.
⊕ Acton Town

Chinese Autumn



Chinese Autumn is a festival celebrating the full moon: families enjoy moon cakes, children carry lanterns and adults tell stories about the lady, the rabbit and the

three-legged toad who live on the moon. If you visit the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington (0171 938 8638) on the afternoon of Saturday 21 September,



Sunday 22 September, Saturday 28 September, Sunday 6 October, Saturday 12 October or Sunday 13 October, you can learn how to make a paper lantern, a moon rabbit or a flower basket for the Moon goddess. You can take part in a northern lion dance or have a lesson in tai chi, listen to traditional music and songs and find out more about the legends of the moon. There'll also be acrobatics to watch and fan dancing. The Museum is open from 10am to 5.50pm

from Tuesday to Sunday, and from 12 noon to 5.50pm on Mondays. Admission is free to kids and £5 for adults, from 1 October.

There's also a family activity cart which tours the different galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum, with lots of things for visitors to do. On Saturday 19 October, the cart will be in the Dress Gallery; on Sunday 20 and Monday 21, in the Medieval Gallery; on Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23, in the Islamic Gallery; on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 in the Japanese Gallery; and on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 in the Cast Courts. The cost of these activities is included in the admission price to the Museum.
⊕ South Kensington

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Open: Wed – Sun 1 – 5pm
Free

Free art and craft activities:
Sundays from Sept.15, 1996
0181 808 8772

Volcanoes and Earthquakes

It's definitely worth a visit to the new **Earth Galleries** at the Natural History Museum in Exhibition Road. There are three new exhibitions there, the best being **The Power Within** where you can "experience" an earthquake and find out how "volcanoes let the heat out" of the earth.

The facts about both volcanoes and earthquakes are easy to understand and presented with the help of videos. The earthquake experience is in a model of a supermarket in Kobe in Japan and you can hear and feel what people in the supermarket heard and felt in January 1995 during a real earthquake – and see film of



the real supermarket taken on security cameras.

Opened in July, the new galleries are on the site of the former Geological Museum which is linked to the main building. Some £6 million raised by the sale of National Lottery tickets, and another £6 million raised by the Museum and private companies, has been spent on the galleries. You travel to the second floor on an escalator through the inside of a revolving model of the earth, and can see on the walls a map of the planets and stars. The other new exhibition is called **Restless Surface** and explains how wind, rain, sea and ice change the "skin of the earth".

The new Earth Galleries are not yet

complete – more exhibitions are planned for 1997 and 1998, including one which will look at how our planet began.

The Natural History Museum (0171 938 9123) is open every day from 10am to 5.50pm on Mondays to Saturdays, and from 11am to 5.50pm on Sundays. It costs £2.80 for children, £5.50 for adults or £15 for a family ticket. You can see all the different parts of the Museum for the entry price.

⊕ South Kensington

On the computer at home

Kid's Kit

(Sierra £44.99. Windows 95 & 3.1 compatible)

Kid's Kit is for 8 to 12 year olds and has three different types of games: one to help with work at school with a cartoon alien child called ADI (ADI); a construction and puzzle game (Professor Tim's Incredible Machines) and an adventure game (Woodruff). Our tester team said:

"Professor Tim's Incredible Machines was really good fun and a real challenge. I

like it a lot because you use your common sense and it's not too educational." (aged 11)

"Professor Tim's Incredible Machines is fun and challenging on level 2. It's very clever and I enjoyed it very much. I like the music." (aged 9)

"I enjoy Woodruff because I like the music and I think it's funny." (aged 7)

"Woodruff is good but quite slow moving." (aged 11)

"ADI is a super game, it allows you to use a calculator, do some painting and even make your own animation. Best of all are the games to play if you answer the questions correctly." (aged 8)



Pablo Picasso, the Spanish artist was born. He held his first exhibition when he was just 16.

Fireworks



* There'll be displays organised all over London for Bonfire Night. The blockbuster **show at Alexandra Palace** in Wood Green (0181 365 2121) takes place on Saturday 2 November at 7.30pm. There's a suggested voluntary contribution of £1 for children, £1.50 for adults.
 ☎ Wood Green

* Thorpe Park in Surrey (01932 569393) closes on 3 November until next Easter. But there are **firework spectacles** (above) on the evenings of weekends 19/20 October, 26/27 October and 2/3 November. Pay for the day (£11.25 for children, £13.25 for adults) and stay until late or get there at 4pm and pay a flat rate of £5.25 for the rides and the fireworks.
 ☎ Hatton Cross plus 950 bus

* Fireworks on the Thames end the day on Saturday 9 November at the **Lord Mayor's Show** in the City of London which starts and finishes at the Guildhall. There are **carnival floats and a traditional fair** in Paternoster Square from 12 noon until early evening. The fireworks display starts at 5pm – the best view will be from Victoria Embankment.

See the sun through special telescopes – during National Astronomy Week at the National Maritime Museum in Romney Road, Greenwich, SE10 (0181 858 4422), from Saturday 21 to Saturday 28 September. There's a planetarium and astronomers talk about the stars every day from 10am to 5pm. It costs £3 for children, £5.50 for adults and £16 for a family ticket, and these prices include a visit to the Museum, the Old Royal Observatory – and include two return visits within 12 months!
 BR Maze Hill

Punch and Judy performers – will be out and about at the Piazza in Covent Garden WC2 on Sunday 6 October from 10.30am.
 ☎ Covent Garden

See where the Queen holds her parties – the bits of Buckingham Palace (0171 930 4832) which are open to the public close at the end of September, so if you want to see the Throne Room and the garden where the Queen holds her parties, visit before then. It's open 9.30am to 4.30pm every day, but it's not a cheap visit – £4.50 for children, £8.50 for adults.
 ☎ Green Park

Behind the scenes at the Unicorn

On Sunday 20 October, you can look **behind the scenes at the Unicorn children's theatre** in Great Newport Street, London WC2 (0171 836 3334). From 3.45pm to 6pm, there will be workshops, a treasure trail and a chance to meet the cast of **Happy Families**. Admission to the open afternoon is free.
 ☎ Leicester Square

Performances of **Happy Families** by Allan Ahlberg are at the Unicorn on Sunday 22 September at 2.30pm, Saturday 28 September at 11am and 2.30pm, Sunday 29 September at 2.30pm.

In October, you can see it on Saturday 12 at 11am and 2.30pm, Saturday 19 at 11am and 2.30pm, Sunday 20 at 2.30pm, and during half term on Thursday 24 at 11am and 2.30pm, Friday 25 at 2.30pm, Saturday 26 at 11am and 2.30pm. The final performances are Saturday 9 November at 11am and 2.30pm.

There's also a special version of Shakespeare's **Twelfth Night** for children in October. It's a comedy about girls pretending to be boys, brothers lost at sea and people falling in love! You can see it on Saturday 5 October at 11am and

2.30pm, Sunday 6 October at 2.30pm, Sunday 13 at 2.30pm and during half term on Tuesday 22 at 2.30pm, Wednesday 23 at 2.30pm and Sunday 27 at 2.30pm. The last performances are Saturday 2 November at 11am and 2.30pm, Sunday 3 November at 2.30pm.

Tickets for performances cost £5, £7 or £8.75 – book in advance.

There are performances of both **Happy Families** and **Twelfth Night** for school visits during term time weekdays, at a cost of £4.50 per child.
 ☎ Leicester Square



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Other shows

Peter Pan opens at the Polka Theatre at 240 The Broadway, London SW19 (0181 543 4888), on 3 October and runs until 16 November.

In north London, there are **shows for kids at 3pm every Sunday** at the Old Bull Arts Centre, 68 High Street, Barnet (0181 449 0048). Tickets cost £3.25 or £2.95 in advance.

Leaving London?

For a day out of town, why not try **Bekonscot Model Village** in Warwick Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks (01494 672919). It's a miniature village showing rural England in the 1930s with houses, castles, churches, shops, model railway and play area. It's open 10am to 5pm seven days a week until 3 November. It costs £1.60 for children, £3.20 for adults. The train station is Beaconsfield, or drive up the M40 and turn off at junction 2.

Ship Ahoy!

Combine a trip to London Zoo with a boat trip on the Regent's Canal (0171 482 2660). There are trips between Little Venice and Camden Lock, stopping at the Zoo every hour, on the hour, every day until the end of October, and then at weekends in November. Get an adult to phone for winter times.

Out and about

Camley Street Natural Park in Camley Street, King's Cross (0171 833 2311), is a nature reserve run by London Wildlife Trust open 11am to 5pm on weekends, and 9am to 5pm, Mondays to Thursdays. Admission free.

☎ Kings Cross

See 100 drawings by Leonardo da Vinci – at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, (0171 839 1377), open from 9.30am every day. You can buy a ticket to see the drawings, owned by the Queen, and also to visit the Royal Mews, two minutes away, where you can see carriages and coaches used by the royal family.

☎ Victoria

Meet a Native American artist

The native American people of Arizona and New Mexico can only survive in their deserts by making the most of the seasonal rains. At Rain at the Museum of Mankind in Burlington Gardens, off Regent Street W1, (0171 323 8043), from 26 September until 6 October, you can meet a Native American artist who will show you how to make jewellery, painting, pottery, woodcarvings and more.

Admission is free,

☎ Piccadilly Circus or Green Park

Clubs

The Boys' Brigade runs **weekly clubs throughout London for boys** aged 5 upwards, with games and a chance to learn football, gym, music and much more. There's normally a weekly sub of about 50p – ring 0171 735 9935 for details of your local group.

At Lee Valley Leisure Centre in Picketts Lock

Lane, Edmonton (0181 345 6666), there's a **weekend and school holiday club** with arts and crafts, sports and cinema visits. Bizzi Kids meets from 10am to 2pm on Saturdays and from 2pm to 6pm on Sundays. During school holidays, the club is open from 8am to 5pm. It costs £3.40 at the weekend, or £2.20 if you're a member. School holidays cost £11 or £8.50 for members.

Try climbing..

The **Castle Climbing Centre** in Green Lanes, Stoke Newington (0181 211 7000), offers children aged 8 to 16 the chance to climb! There's a Junior Climbing Club at weekends from 10am to 12 noon, and on Tuesdays from 4.30pm to 6.30pm, and you should ask an adult to ring and book in advance. It costs £8 or £6 for members.

☎ Manor House

You can also climb – as well as **canoe, abseil, trampoline or mountain bike** at the Jubilee Centre in Camley Street, Elm Village, NW1 (0171 387 2367). If you're aged between 8 and 10, you'll need to go in a group with friends, or if you are over 10, you can go by yourself. It's open during the day in school holidays and after school during term times. Wednesdays is girls only, and it only costs £1 per session (£5 a day for mountain biking).

☎ King's Cross or Camden

There are lots of small museums in London

– full of interesting things to see and do. **The Jewish Museum** has two sites – one in East End Road, Finchley, and one in Albert Street, Camden. There are exhibitions about Jewish Festivals, Yiddish Theatre (until 10 November) and personal experiences of Jewish people who escaped the Holocaust. Ask an adult to ring for details of opening times – 0181 349 1143 for Finchley, 0171 284 1997 for Camden.

Find out about Florence Nightingale

– perhaps the most famous nurse of all, at the **Florence Nightingale Museum** in Lambeth Palace Road, SE12 (0171 620 0374) – and what the Crimean War was like. It's open 10am to 5pm, Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holidays, and costs £1.50 for children, £2.50 for adults.

☎ Waterloo

See an operation

Get your friends together and ask an adult to book you in at **The Old Operating Theatre, Museum and Herb Garret** at St Thomas Hospital in Southwark (0171 955 4791) for a demonstration of an amputation in the days before anaesthetics! Ring for more information and details of half term events.

☎ London Bridge

Tell us where you go!

Write to No Kidding! to tell us the best places you go to outside school so we can tell other kids about them! The address is No Kidding! FREEPOST LON6868, PO Box 10427, London N8 8BR

FOOTBALL

CRAZY

Paul Wright, who is 11, was spotted by talent scouts and now trains with Norwich. He also lives next door to Arsenal – but supports Spurs. His dad used to play for Orient juniors – and his sister's called Chelsea!

Paul Wright has been training with Norwich for a year at a special ground in Potters Bar. Paul, who left Drayton Park junior school in Islington in the summer, was spotted playing for Ridgeway Rovers in a junior Sunday league in Essex. The top Essex junior leagues attract talent scouts from football clubs from all over the country who are on the lookout for tomorrow's soccer stars.

Another way to be spotted is to star for your

school team and then play for your district, like Islington or Haringey. Arsenal's young sides start with the under-10s and, like all the other big clubs, they find new talent from either district teams or the Sunday junior leagues.

"Our scout will go along to a game and, if he sees a player he likes, we'll go back and look at him again," says Steve Rowley, who is in charge of youth football at Arsenal.

"Obviously talent is important, but more than anything nowadays we look for a good attitude. If boys aren't enthusiastic and don't show good character, they are not going to make it."

Arsenal did show an interest in Paul but decided not to chase him when they found out he was already playing with Norwich.

Why not ask one of your teachers if they would like to learn how to teach football at school? The FA is running a new course for teachers who should ring 01707 662211 to find out more.

"Norwich is a great club," says Paul, who plays left back. "I'd love to play for the first team one day."

Paul has already met some of the stars through playing for both Norwich and Islington's under-11s. Mixing with the great players gives kids who are talent-spotted some great stories to tell at school and some wonderful memories – even if they never make the big time.

There are all sorts of chances for girls to play football too!

There are no professional women football players in this country, but there are many top amateur teams.

Amateur means the players don't get paid to play football so can't play the game as a full-time job, as the professional men players do.

There is a Football Association Women's Premier League and there are 10 regional leagues, including one based in London. This year, there

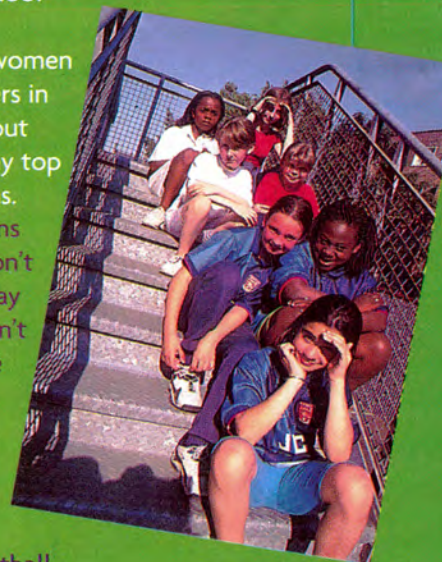
was a women's FA Cup played for the first time.

There's also a women's England team and a women's World Cup.

Girls who are under 11 can play football alongside boys but after that, an FA ruling says they can only play against other women.

Kelly Simmons is regional director for Women's Football at the Football Association and says lots of help is available for girls who want to start their own team. "There are some brilliant girl players," she says, "and there are already lots of junior girls' leagues." Most of the big professional clubs have women's teams, and in Italy and Japan, women have a chance to become professional players.

If you want to set up a girls' football team, ask an adult if you can ring up the Football Association. If you leave your name and address on their special answerphone, they'll send you information about how to set up a girls team. Ring 01707 647250.



These girls train every Friday after school at Arsenal. Get an adult to call 0171 704 4140 to find out about the club.



How Morgan became a

TV STAR

Morgan had never acted before, or even been to a drama class. Since she was nearly 6, though, she's been going to Circus Space, an after-school class in Hackney, where children are taught how to fly the trapeze, juggle, walk the tightrope and be an acrobat.

10-year-old Morgan Bell didn't go to school during May, June and July. Instead, she travelled around the country, making a brand new television series called **True Tilda**, which will be on your screen after Christmas.



In the story, Tilda is a circus girl – so when the company who have made the series wanted a star, they visited Circus Space. “They came along and told us about the series and took our pictures. Then I met the director and then I did a screen test. I really wanted the part,” said Morgan.

Just after Christmas, she heard the part was hers. She read the script, had costumes fitted and then started a week of rehearsals before filming.

So what's True Tilda about? “Tilda falls off her horse in the circus and has to go to hospital,” explained Morgan. “While she's there, a woman in hospital asks her to go and rescue her son from an orphanage. Tilda gets the boy, takes him back to the hospital, but by the time they get there, his mum is dead. So they then go on a quest to find his father, but a man from the orphanage is always chasing them.”

The “quest” takes them all over England and there are lots of adventures on the way for Tilda, the boy, Arthur, and Tilda's dog.

“My favourite scene was on the cliffs in Weston-super-Mare. I had

to climb down a ladder wearing a safety harness and pretending the ladder wasn't there – that I was climbing down the cliff by myself,” she says.

But most of the daring stunts and acrobatics you'll see on screen weren't really done by Morgan. “I had a stunt double most of the time in case I hurt myself.”

The months away from Drayton Park school and home in Islington were hard work. Travelling by either car or train, she started at 9am every day and carried on till about 7pm, mostly filming on Saturdays as well as weekdays. Every evening, she spent time learning lines.

During the filming, Morgan carried on with her school studies with a tutor. “I think I learnt about the same as I would have done at school in a lot less time. In school you can't ask the teacher a question whenever you like because there are lots of people and you have to line up. If you keep doing something wrong, a tutor can spend half an hour with you to help you get it right.”

Morgan thoroughly enjoyed making the series – and is now hoping to find more work in television. “At first I found it a bit strange, making myself be a different person, pretending to be someone else, but then it became easier. I've always liked doing dance shows, I like the lights shining on me and I'm always a bit sad when they're over and want to do them again! The best bit is seeing myself on TV – it's strange looking at another person who is me!”



There are wars in many countries in the world which destroy people, towns and cities. This picture was taken in the centre of Kabul in Afghanistan where people who live there are fighting for power.



Getting ready for work



Kleet with his handler



Rico sniffing for mines



Using a mine detector



Digging out the mine

Landmines are buried during wars in many countries around the world. Even when wars are over, people cannot begin their normal lives again until landmines are cleared.

In Afghanistan, there are millions of landmines buried in the earth which, if trodden on, explode. About half of the people who are hurt in explosions die because there are not enough doctors and hospitals to help them.

More than 100 dogs have been trained to find different kinds of buried mines so they can be dug up and destroyed. The dogs have travelled to Afghanistan from the Netherlands, and from Thailand, and answer commands given in Dutch.

DOGS ARE HELPING TO SAVE LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

Stephanie Zenonos is 9 and has been learning to play for 3 years. She began to learn because her sister plays the violin, and because she "liked the look of it and the sound of it." "When I first started, it was really hard," she says.



Anthony Jagopat is 10 and doesn't really enjoy playing. He started 3 years ago and says he is going to give up.



Carly Twyne is 11 and also plays the clarinet. She wants to carry on playing the violin at secondary school and says she really admires Vanessa-Mae. "I don't do this for fun, I really want to go far."



Annie Kouttis is 9 and sometimes practises for 20 minutes during her lunch time. "The violin wouldn't suit everyone because you need to be patient to practise."

Soley Sami is 11 and chose to learn the violin because her sister was learning and all her friends were too. "I like playing in the orchestra."



Alex Kemal is 11. "You've got to get your fingers in the right place – if you don't, it makes the wrong sound and sounds horrible."

WHO STRETCHES THE GUT OF A CAT OVER A WOODEN BAR— AND THEN RUBS THE GUT WITH THE TAIL OF A HORSE? **A VIOLINIST!**



Vanessa-Mae had her first piano lesson when she was 3, and her first violin lesson when she was 5. She is now 17 and has already released successful discs, including "The Violin Player" – and toured around the world.

The violin's four strings are nowadays mostly made of nylon, but they used to be made, and sometimes still are made, from cat's gut or lamb's intestines. Violinists make their music by either plucking the strings (this is called **pizzicato**), or by making them vibrate with their bow. The bow is made of a stick and hairs which come from a horse's tail.



Martha Ferguson using "pizzicato" technique

The four strings play the notes G, D, A and E. By pressing any of the strings down on the finger board, violinists can make higher notes because they are shortening the part of the string that is vibrating.

Violins came from Italy. In the early 1500s, they were used to play music when people wanted to dance. Posh people thought the instrument was common! Just 100 years later though, they were being used in operas and were given a royal thumbs-up when the French King Louis XIII's band of musicians, the 24 "violins du roi", was formed in 1626. By the mid-1700s, the violin had become one of the most popular instruments in Europe.

The violin is a member of the string family – its sisters and brothers are the viola, the cello and the double bass.

The violin is one of the most popular instruments learnt at school. At Highfield Junior School in Enfield (which until last July was called Winchmore Juniors), the violinists play to the rest of the school in assembly every week.



They are among the 250 children in Enfield learning to play the violin through their junior school. The teaching of instruments at Enfield's local authority schools is organised by Enfield Arts Support Service. Musicians visit schools to teach kids either by themselves or in groups – or children can go to Aylward School in

Edmonton, where the Arts Support Service is based, at the end of the day. And if you're learning to play at school, you can also hire your instrument from the Arts Support Service.



The violin is the second most popular instrument taught in Enfield (the keyboard is first!). "Children normally start learning in year 2," says Susan Granger who is in charge of the Service. "You can start to learn on a baby violin, then move up to a bigger size as you get older – there are four main sizes altogether. "It is quite a hard

One of the most famous violin-makers was Antonio Stradivari. He was born in Italy in 1644 and died when he was 93. His violins nowadays costs tens of thousands of pounds to buy.

instrument to learn, and you won't get it all right straight away. You need to practise for 10 to 15 minutes every day and it's much better if you think of it as being fun, rather than a task."



Altogether, some 1,500 children are learning to play an instrument in Enfield's local authority junior schools – from violin to saxophone, from trumpet to tabla (an Indian drum), from bouzouki to xylophone.



If you want to learn how to play the violin, or any other instrument, through your school, ask the adult

A fiddle is another word for the violin. Lots of words used in music are Italian. A composer called Percy Aldridge Grainger tried to use English words instead. For example, "crescendo" means make the music louder – Grainger wanted to say "louden". He called the viola a "middle-fiddle" and the cello a "bass fiddle".

who looks after you to ask your headteacher for an application form, a term before you want to start. You have to pay for lessons, but you can apply for free lessons if your family can't afford them.

Enfield, like most other boroughs, also runs music clubs and orchestras which aren't based in schools.

For more information, get an adult to contact:

Enfield Arts Support Service,
Aylward School, Windmill Road,
London N18
0181 807 8881

Barnet Music Office, Education Services,
Friern Barnet Lane, London N11
0181 359 3110 or 0181 359 3111

Haringey Music Centre,
Downhills Park Road, London N17
0181 829 5033

Islington Education Authority
(Music Inspector),
Laycock Street, London N1
0171 457 5566

The leader of a large orchestra is the first violinist who plays an "A" note for every musician to match before playing together.

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Telephone: 0181 883 5631

BREWSTERS THEATRICAL AGENCY

Children's Auditions
to be held at
The Theatre Dance
School of London
on 28 September at 2pm
for TV, stage and modelling directory
No experience necessary.
All adults must be accompanied by a child.
59 Park Road, London N8
0181 348 5455

Violinists often play chamber music. This music was written to be played in a room, or a "chamber" instead of a theatre or church, by a small number of musicians.



**Win a CD of
The Violin Player,
Vanessa-Mae's best-selling disc..**

Send the answers to these questions to No Kidding!, FREEPOST LON6868, PO Box 10427, London N8 8BR, by Friday 11 October. If your entry is correct and one of the first 10 to be drawn out of a hat on that day, we'll send you a CD of The Violin Player.

- 1. How often do you need to practise the violin when you're learning to play?
- 2. What is pizzicato?
- 3. How old was Antonio Stradivari when he died?
- 4. What does crescendo mean in music?
- 5. What are the notes played by the violin's four strings?
- 6. How old was Vanessa-Mae when she had her first violin lesson?
- 7. Which king had a band of musicians called the "violins du roi"?
- 8. Where is chamber music played?
- 9. Name the other members of the string family.
- 10. How many children are learning to play the violin at junior schools in Enfield?

TERMS: 1. There are no cash alternatives 2. One entry per child 3. For a full list of winners send an SAE to No Kidding! Violin, PO Box 10427, London N8 8UP

Where would you rather see a film...

AT HOME ON VIDEO? OR ON A BIG SCREEN? AT A CINEMA

And if you could choose to see a film about anything you liked, what would it be about?

Channel Four Television and the British Film Institute are looking for six children aged between 7 and 11 to talk to people working in cinema and television about what they think of films.

This "jury" will talk on stage in front of an audience during a conference at the National Film Theatre and be asked to say what they like – and what they don't like.

The jury's job will be to watch and talk about four unusual films that can't normally be seen in this country on the big screen, to watch and talk about the latest films showing at cinemas for the October half term holiday – and to talk about their own favourite films they watch on video at home.

There will be auditions for the jury at the National Film Theatre on the South Bank, near Waterloo train station, on Sunday 13 October from 10.30am to 1pm. If you'd like to be considered for an audition, fill in the form opposite and send it to Children and the Big Screen, British Film Institute Education Department, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 2LN.

You must send your form in by Friday 4 October and you must get a parent or guardian to sign it. If you are chosen to be a member of the jury, you'll be able to watch the films for free – and the cost of your travel to and from central London will be paid for – but an adult must bring you to the cinema.

Everyone who is invited to the auditions will be given a voucher for two free tickets to the National Film Theatre.

At the National Film Theatre at Half Term

No Worries

Sunday 20 October 4pm
Matilda and her family live in the Australian outback where a terrifying tornado forces them to move to Sydney. Matilda is so miserable that she runs away from home.

The Railway Children

Monday 21 October 3pm
The adventures of an Edwardian family trying to get used to being poor in a Yorkshire village with a steam railway.

The Boy Who Stopped Talking

Tuesday 22 October 3pm
Memo and his family go to Holland to flee war in Kurdistan in south-eastern Turkey. Memo stops talking until one day he finds his voice is needed.

Kiki's Delivery Service

Wednesday 23 October 3pm
Young witch Kiki is 12 and has to leave home for a year to live in a strange city with her kitten Jiji and her flying broomstick. She is soon mixed up in thrilling adventures.

Even if you don't want to apply to join the jury, you might like to see one of the films at the National Film Theatre during half term. Ticket prices are £3.10 for children, £4.50 for adults, and you can ask an adult to ring 0171 928 3232 to book in advance.



Children and the Big Screen

Auditions for the jury will be held at the National Film Theatre, South Bank, London SE1 (nearest tube Waterloo), on Sunday 13 October between 10.30am and 1pm. If you are invited to the auditions, you will be interviewed for about 6 minutes on stage, sitting at a table with a microphone. There will be a few people in the cinema.

Invitations to the auditions will be sent out in the week beginning 7 October.

Admission to the audition will be by invitation only.



Please fill in this form in capital letters and return it by **October 4** to: Children and the Big Screen, British Film Institute Education Department, 21 Stephen Street London W1P 2LN

Name

Girl ☐

Boy ☐

Age

Date Of Birth

Full Address

Phone no

What's your favourite film?

Tell us about a film you have really enjoyed and why you liked it. Don't tell us the story – just write about one or two really good bits and tell us whether you saw it at the cinema, on video or on TV. Use another piece of paper, and if you're not very good at writing, ask someone else to write your words down.

What film would you make?

If you could make a film, what would it be about? Would it be a cartoon or actors? Would it be funny or sad? Would it be like real life or would all sorts of strange and weird things happen? Tell us about it – or draw a picture to show what it would be like. Use another piece of paper, and if you're not very good at writing, ask someone else to write your words down.

Ask your parent or guardian to fill in this part of the form.

Parent or guardian's name

I confirm that these comments and ideas are by

(please enter your child's name)

If my child is invited to attend the auditions, I will be available, or will arrange for a carer, to bring my child to The National Film Theatre on Sunday 13 October at 10.30am, and, if my child is selected to join the jury, to screenings at the National Film Theatre on Sunday 20 October at 4pm, on Monday 21 October at 3pm, on Tuesday 22 October at 3pm, on Wednesday 23 October at 3pm, and to the conference Children On Screen on Thursday 24 October at 3pm.

If he or she is selected to join the jury, I also agree to bring my child, or arrange for a carer to bring my child, to at least one other West End screening during half term week (time and date to be confirmed later). If my child is selected for the jury, I understand that tickets for all these screenings will be free for me, or for the carer I nominate, and for my child, and that reasonable transport costs to and from the screenings and the conference (but not the auditions) will be reimbursed.

Signed

Address
(if different from above)

Phone (home)

Phone (work)

The British Film Institute reserves the right to alter or cancel these arrangements, if necessary. Decisions about audition invitations and jury membership will be final and the BFI cannot enter into correspondence about them.

Who
meets the
Queen?

Who
opens
shops?

Who
opens
school
fairs?

?

MAYOÖRS!

In London today there are more than 30 mayors – but who are they, and what do they do?

London is split up into different areas called boroughs. Each borough has a “council” or “local authority” which helps to run schools, looks after roads, makes sure dustbins are collected each week, runs libraries and swimming pools. Each borough has money to spend on its area,

and the people who decide how the money is spent are called “councillors”. People aged over 18 who live in London have the chance to decide who the councillors are going to be by voting for them once every 4 years.

**Meet
Islington's
mayor –
Sandy
Marks**

Sandy Marks (opposite) became mayor of Islington on 2 May this year and, within the first 6 weeks, she was invited to 50 events – sometimes 4 in one day!

She has opened shops and been asked to meet a couple who have been married for 50 years. She has opened a clown festival and newly built homes. She was invited to the Queen's Garden Party in the summer and to have dinner with the Queen and Nelson Mandela, president of South Africa, when he visited England in July.

For official duties, mayors wear a sort of uniform called “mayoral robes” – and a heavy gold chain. Sandy's robes include a long red coat with ribbons on the

And each year, the councillors choose one of themselves to become the mayor.

The mayor is called the borough's “first citizen” and represents the council and the people living in the borough. He or she is also in charge of council meetings. Mayors don't get paid, but they are given money to pay for food and drink for people they entertain because they are mayor. They also have a secretary to organise their diary and a driver to take them to events.

THE MAYOR'S CHARITY

During their mayoral year, most mayors also raise money for a charity of their choice. Sandy Marks' charity is called “Raise a Roof” and she wants to raise money to help people who don't have a home.

There are many people sleeping on London's streets or in unsafe places because they don't have enough money to buy or rent a decent home, and there is no law to say councils must find single people somewhere to live. People have nowhere to live for all sorts of different reasons, but if you don't have a home or an address, you can't get a job, and if you don't have a job, you can't earn money to have a home.

shoulders to tie on the chain, lace at her wrists and around her neck and a black hat. “The robes are very hot!” she says.

Sometimes mayors just wear a chain, saving the full robes for really special occasions. “If I am meeting a member of the royal family, for example, I wear them, and I also wear them whenever I meet young people,” says Sandy.



Crisis is a charity working across the country to help single people who do not have a home. Crisis can also give your school more information about homelessness – if your teacher is interested, ask them to ring Crisis on 0171 377 0489.

The Lord Mayor of London

The Lord Mayor of London is the head of



the Corporation of London, the local authority in charge of the "City", the oldest part of the capital. Not many people live in the "Square Mile", but more than a quarter of a million people go there every day to work in banks and other businesses. As head of the

Corporation, the Lord Mayor meets leaders of government and businesses from other countries.

The Corporation also runs its own police force, the City of London Police, and the Old Bailey, the central court where people who are accused of breaking the law appear before judges. It looks after 94 miles

of the Thames, and 4 of the bridges that cross the river.

The Corporation runs open spaces outside the Square Mile, like Epping Forest, Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood.

This year's new Lord Mayor of London will tour the city in a golden coach in a special parade on Saturday 9 November.



Helping the mayor

Harriet Simpson's grandmother, Anne Gilman, became mayor of Islington in May 1993. Harriet was 3 – and became her grandmother's "deputy consort". A mayor's consort is the person chosen by the mayor to go with them to events. Harriet's aunt Sara was the consort, but as deputy, Harriet, now nearly 7 and a pupil at North Haringay Infants School, joined her grandmother about 50 times.

Harriet had a special chain to wear – and many late nights! One of the mayor's jobs is to meet members of the royal family when they come

to the borough. Princess Diana was at an opening of a children's home – and Harriet ended up sitting on the royal lap!

"I opened her bag and found lots of make-up and money.

"I took her lipstick and put it on my lips and I found her powder and put it on my face!" she says.

She also tried on the royal ring!

Who's the mayor of your borough?

- **Enfield's mayor** this year is Patrick Cuneen and he plans to raise money for Sight or Sound (SOS), a charity which helps people who have visual disabilities or hearing disabilities.
- **Barnet's mayor** is Pam Coleman and her charity is Homeless Action Barnet, helping homeless people.
- **Haringey's mayor** this year is Ron Blanchard and his appeal is to raise money for four charities helping people with learning and physical disabilities.

If your school wants to find out more about raising money for your mayor's charity, or would like to invite your mayor to visit your school, ask your teacher to contact your council offices.



FESTIVALS

HALLOWEEN

What will you be doing on **31 October**? The Druids, who lived in Britain before the Romans came, used to light huge fires to keep evil spirits away. They believed that on this night, Saman, who ruled their dead, called evil spirits back to earth.

1 November was a Roman harvest festival held in honor of Pomona, the goddess of the fruits of the trees, and that is why pumpkins are part of the modern Halloween custom – along with apple dipping.

Halloween takes its name from another festival – it is the “eve” before All Hallows, or All Saints Day, on 1 November, when Christian churches celebrate God and all the saints.

Nowadays more and more children dress up as ghouls and witches or wear other gruesome garb to “trick or treat” their neighbours on Halloween. This custom comes from the United States of America.



If you're having a Halloween party or seeing friends that night, why not make a “Dare you feel!” game. Find two or three boxes and fill them with things that feel revolting – some cold jelly perhaps, or mud made with earth and water, or flour and water, or cold pasta shapes. Cover the box with a lid or with a tea towel, turn the lights off and ask your friends if they dare to feel and guess what's inside!

DAY OF THE DEAD

Just two days after Halloween, Mexican people celebrate Day of the Dead, El día de los Muertos. Mexicans believe that on this day, **2 November**, souls of the dead return to earth to visit their families.

Many people make decorations and paint pictures for the Festival which celebrates death, rather than fears it. Colourful paper banners are hung up in the streets and in homes. Mexican school teacher Maria Antoinette Sanchez de Escamilla says: “I tell my pupils to live each day as if it were their last. If we followed this rule, we would all behave better than we do. I don't want children to fear death: I want them to respect life.”

Some of the Day of the Dead celebrations come from the customs of people who lived long ago in Mexico, like the Aztecs and the Maya. You can see some of the beautiful objects they made in the Mexican Gallery at the British Museum in Great Russell Street (nearest tube Holborn or Tottenham Court Road). There is a free Aztec Alphabet activity sheet available from the information desk at the Museum, which is open 10am to 4.50pm, Mondays to Saturdays, except Wednesdays (open until 7.50pm), 2.30pm to 5.50pm, Sundays.

DIWALI

Diwali is a Hindu festival which this year will be held on **10 November**. Homes in India are decorated with lights to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, who comes to visit. Homes that are not lit may be overlooked! Celebrations include fireworks and people wear colourful and shimmering clothes when they visit friends and family.

Diwali marks the approach of winter and winter crops are sown. It is also the beginning of the business year and business people open their new account books.

BONFIRE NIGHT

“Remember, remember, the fifth of November, Gunpowder, treason and plot.” On **5 November**, people in Britain burn “guys” on bonfires and let off fireworks made of gunpowder. The guys remember Guy Fawkes who in 1605 committed treason by plotting against the King, James I, and tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament with gunpowder. Fawkes was part of a gang who were angry about laws which treated Roman Catholics unfairly. On the night of 5 November, he was captured in a cellar underneath the House of Lords and arrested. He was tortured, told on his mates – and was then hung in 1606.

31 OCTOBER
1926

Harry Houdini, the world's most famous escapologist, died from a burst appendix after someone punched him in the stomach.

31 OCTOBER
1951

The first zebra crossings were introduced in Britain.



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