



# Stonehenge Supplement

Newspaper Number 05



Weather-wise, I think we have seen it all this week - sun, rain, wind, thunder and lightning. Fortunately, it has not dampened our spirits nor caused any disruption to the week.

On Tuesday and Thursday, our Year 3 classes were very lucky with the weather during their visits to Stonehenge. Whilst there, they enjoyed workshop activities, further enhancing their learning about the Stone Age.

Reverend Becky led our Tuesday morning Collective Worship, continuing to add to our Big Story Frieze in the hall. The Collective Worship monitors have been busy with their reflections following Collective Worship and have been discussing, with Mrs Connolly, how they would like to have more time to share their thoughts and reflect.

Our lunchtime Music choices this week have been selected to mark Black History Month, and will continue to do so throughout October.

Please remember next week we are marking World Mental Health Day by inviting children to come to school wearing something yellow in support of Young Minds. Also, attached to this Newsletter, is a homework that you may have seen advertised on ITV. It is a great aid to starting a conversation with your child to encourage them to open up about things they may be worried about. Please take a moment to have a look and support your child.

## Good Bye and Thank you

It is with much sadness that we say good-bye and thank you to Catherine, our After-School Club Leader. Catherine has been leading our Harnham Junior School After School Club for the past five years but for twelve years before that she was working at the original Harnham After School Club. We wish to thank Catherine for all that she has done for the children and parents in providing this care with such dedication. She will be greatly missed. Thank you, Catherine.

## This week's House Points

The children have been spotted 'doing the right thing' and earning lots of Green Cards this week.

Each Green Card equates to a House Point and the results for this week are as follows:

**BLUE 131**

**GREEN 157**

**RED 150**

**YELLOW 118**

## Celebration Assembly

In Celebration Assembly on Monday, Certificates were awarded to: Finley, Charlie C, Alfie, Millie, Darcy, Henry, Athena, Lana, Charleigh-Jayne, Avik and Amber in recognition of their learning last week. Well done to you all.

#HelloYellow

## World Mental Health Day 10<sup>th</sup> October

As you will know from the letter we sent out during the week (further copy attached) we will be taking part in #HelloYellow on the 10<sup>th</sup> October – you may have seen the Ads on TV about the simple Homework Task to encourage children to talk to their family adults – more details later in the Newspaper

## Flyers

- Secondary School Application Reminder
  - Spurgeons Wiltshire Children's Centres
  - Picture New and Picture News at Home
    - Downton Half Term Tennis
    - Astrella Football Half Term Camp
    - Christmas at Mompesson House
- What Parents and Carers Need to Know About 'Among Us'
- What Parents and Carers Need to Know About Vaping

## Green Cards

Congratulations to Sycamore Class who earned the most Green Cards last week and therefore had their non-uniform day today.

## Salisbury Schools Football Festival – Week Two

On Wednesday we went to Pembroke Park for the Football Festival. Both Harnham teams were in the Large Schools' League and played matches against: St Peter's, St Mark's A and B, Greentrees and Downton. After the first round of matches, one of our teams (Purple kit) went through to play in the finals while the other team (White kit) played a few friendlies. Following some hard fought matches, the Purple team finished in second place and will now be one of the teams representing Salisbury Schools' in the Wiltshire County Finals. 'The boys organised themselves throughout the tournament and were brilliant to watch' (Mrs Jacobs). They were a real credit to the School - well done boys. Thank you to Mr Williams and Mrs Jacobs for accompanying the children to this event. Do enjoy the photographs of the festival on the following pages.

The next sporting event is the Salisbury Schools' Tri Golf, which takes place next Wednesday.



### Gardening Club Pumpkin Challenge

There are four pumpkins in the Library (one for each Year Group) and the Gardening Club are challenging all the Pupils to guess the weight of their Year Group Pumpkin – closest guess wins the pumpkin – winner announced in School on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

## Online Safety

This week, our What Parents and Carers Need to Know About flyer focuses on 'Among Us'.

Among Us has become one of the gaming world's biggest breakout hits of recent years. In 2020, for example, it was the world's most-downloaded mobile game. Its simplicity helped Among Us to resonate with younger players in particular: the game's second largest audience slice is the 13–18 age bracket.

Please note that all Online Safety Flyers can be found on the School website. Click on the link and scroll down to the bottom of the page.

[E-Safety — Harnham Junior School](#)

## Nasal Flu Vaccinations - Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Don't forget to sign your child up for their Nasal Flu Vaccination via the link below:

<https://schoolimms.hcrgcaregroup.com/flu/2023/wilts>

## Communication

Please note that the communication policy has recently be uploaded to the School website and can be found in the policies section.



### Christmas Box Appeal 2023

The children will have come home today with a flyer from the House of Opportunity in connection with the Christmas Box Appeal this year – this is the same organisation we have supported over the last few years but they have recently had a name change. The deadline for the filled and wrapped shoe boxes is Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – all details are in the flyer. Thank you for your support.

## A message from the Chair of Governors

Things are going well in the process to appoint our new Headteacher. We're really grateful to those who completed our parent survey; it was extremely helpful and gave us a clear picture of the person we're looking for.

The next steps are for the advert to be published shortly, with potential candidates applying by the beginning of November, ready to be interviewed in early December. In the next few weeks you may spot visitors being shown around; they might be candidates!

We're delighted that Miss Fletcher will take over as Acting Headteacher after Christmas, so we're confident that the

school will be in good hands. Beyond that, we hope that our new Head will be able to join us after Easter, but if not, we will aim for next September.

Finally, "thank you" to those of you who have expressed an interest in joining the Governing Body as Parent Governors. We are greatly encouraged and it looks like we shall be able to run an election soon. Thanks for everything you do to support the school, its community and your children's learning. *Revd Michael Camp - Chair of Governors*



*It's Goodbye and a huge thank you to Catherine who is leaving the Harnham School Community after 17 years.*

*We will miss you!*

## **What has been happening in School this week?...**

### **Year 3**

This week, Year 3 visited Stonehenge as part of their Stone Age topic. Each class had a fantastic day learning more about our local, ancient monument. The children were beautifully behaved - really demonstrating our Harnham Values - and learnt a lot. They held real artefacts used to create the stones, learnt about the history of the monument and our local area as well as seeing the beautiful stone circle up close.

Thank you to our wonderful parents, TAs and teachers who helped to make this possible.

### **Year 4**

This Beech Class this week we have been looking at some exciting science experiments, where the children had some thrilling debates over which materials were going to dry the quickest - the one inside or the one outside... We were also really proud to witness our collective worship monitors receive their certificate for the training they participated in last week.

In Cherry Class this week, we have been writing letters from Lila to her father based on 'The Firework Maker's Daughter'. The children used tea bags to stain their paper on which they then wrote their edited letters.

### **Year 5**

In Geography, Ash class have been learning about the different layers of rainforests when making and labeling each section of their rainforest models. You can see some examples from Jude Lewis, Emilia, Janey, Vivaan, Rares and Oliver, on the next pages of the newsletter.

Sycamore have been busy with creating our 3D rainforest – pictures to come when we have finished next week. We have been outside practising netball passes with Monkey Mango Madness games. Inside we really enjoyed ukulele this week learning all the chords need to play our first song.

In Aspen, we have finished our geographical rainforest models and they are looking wonderful, showing the different canopy layers. We have also started growing cuttings in science lessons.

### **Year 6**

In Willow class, we have been finding out about Victorian children that worked in terrible conditions. We are using it to inspire our persuasive writing next week.

This week Larch Class have been writing school reports based on the main character of our book, Cogheart. She attends Miss Octavia Scrimshaw's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies and is not the most diligent pupil. We used formal tone and worked hard to capture the voice of her disapproving teacher, Mrs McKraken.

Birch have been busy writing Victorian school reports. They then read out their favourite paragraphs to the rest of the class, in celebration of their work. We also studied how tinted filters can impact how we see colours, and the different jobs Victorian children may have had.





# HARNHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL

## EVENTS DIARY

### 2023-2024

Date	Event
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> September – Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 5 Non-Swimmers Swimming Lessons
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> September – Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 6 Non-Swimmers Swimming Lessons
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 5 Marwell Zoo Trip
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> October	World Mental Health Day – <b>YELLOW NON UNIFORM DAY</b>
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> October	Last Day of Term 1 – 3.15pm
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	TD Day – School Closed to Pupil
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> October - Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> October	Half Term
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> October	First Day of Term 2
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> October	Year 6 Army Flying Museum Trip
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> October (Midnight)	Deadline to Apply for Year 7 Secondary School Place for Year 6 Parents
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> October – Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 4 Non-Swimmers Swimming Lessons
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	Coffee Afternoon for SEN Parents 2pm-3pm
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November – Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 3 – Oak Class - Swimming Lessons
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> November	Individual School Photographs
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 4 Egyptian Workshop
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> November	Nasal Flu Vaccinations
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> November	BBC Children in Need – Non Uniform Day
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> December	Coffee Morning for SEN Parents 9am-10am
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	Whole School Carol Service at St Thomas' 6:00pm
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> December – Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> February (with break over the Christmas Holidays)	Year 3 – Rowan Class - Swimming Lessons
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Last Day of Term 2 – <b>1.15pm pick up time – No After School Club on this day.</b>
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> December – Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Christmas Holidays
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> January & Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> January	TD Days – School Closed to Pupil
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	First Day of Term 3
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> February	Last Day of Term 3 – 3.15pm
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> February to Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> February	Half Term
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> February	First Day of Term 4
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February – Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 3 – Cedar Class - Swimming Lessons
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> – Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> April	Year 5 Residential to Tile Barn
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Year 6 Residential to PGL Liddington

**Please do not hesitate to get in touch via the School Office:**  
**Telephone: 01722 327218 or Email: [office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:office@harnham-jun.wilts.sch.uk)**

# HSA Chocolate Bingo!

It was great to see the hall packed with all those families who were lucky enough to bag themselves a ticket to the Chocolate Bingo. Thank you to the HSA team for organising such a successful event and thank you to everyone for donating the chocolate prizes the week before. We look forward to the next HSA event - watch this space.





# Salisbury Schools' Football





# YEAR 3 - Stonehenge Trips





# YEAR 3 - Stonehenge Trips



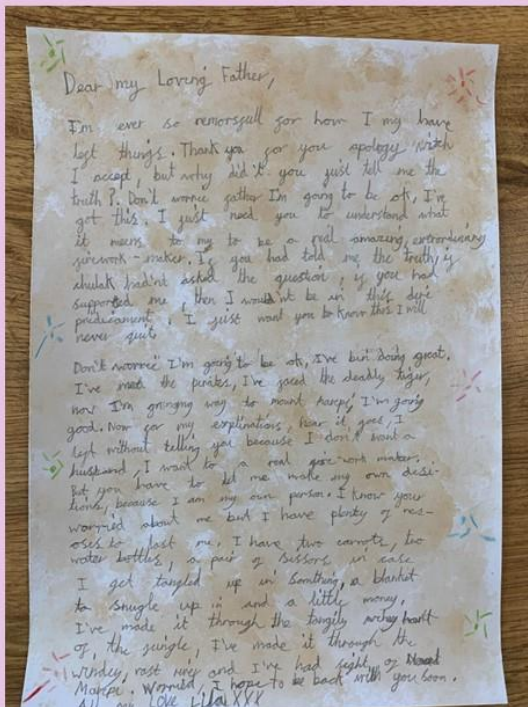
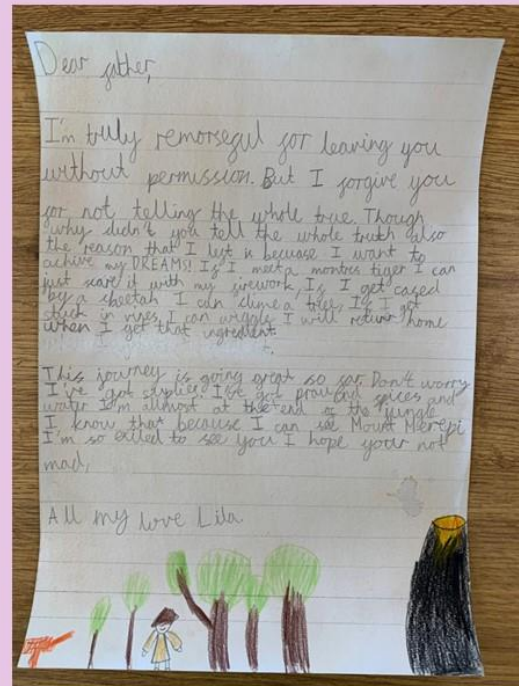
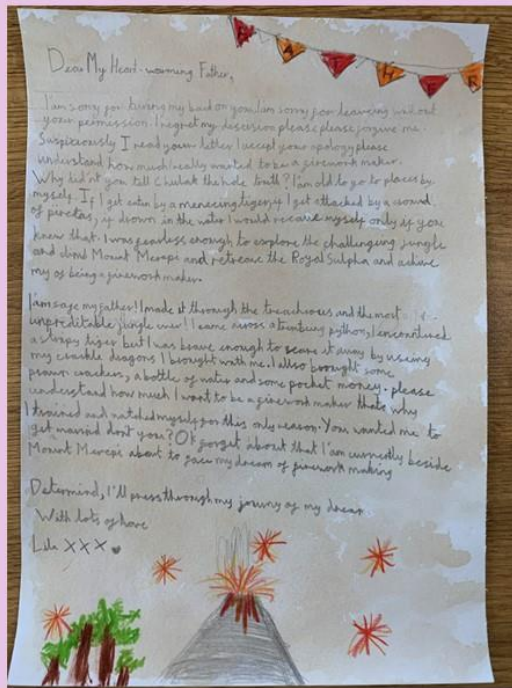


# YEAR 3 - Stonehenge Trips



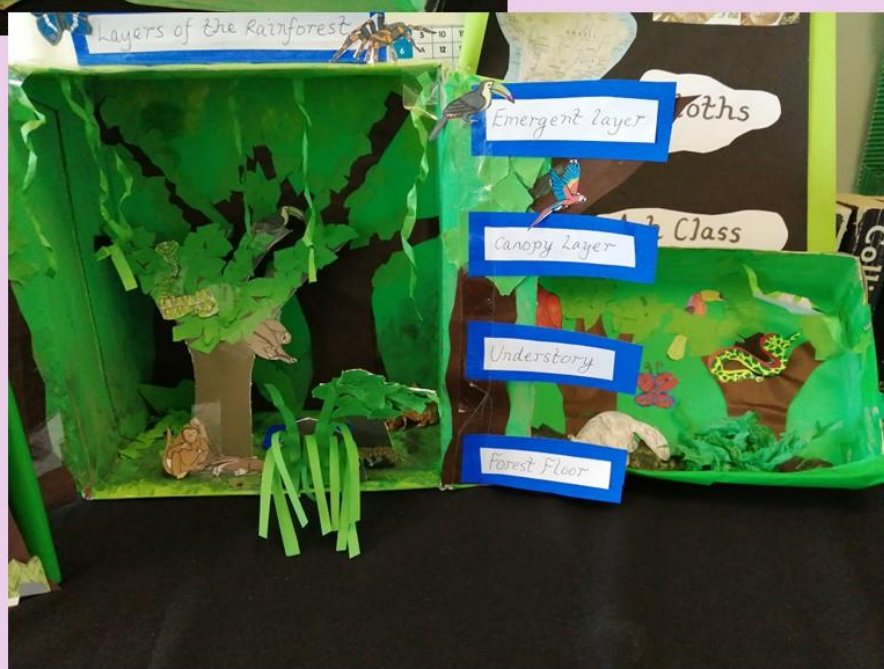


# YEAR 4





# YEAR 5





# YEAR 5





# YEAR 6

Wednesday 14th October 2023

WALT: Write a non-chronological report.

Miss Odavia Scrimshaw's  
Finishing Academy for Young Ladies

## Appearance

Lily is always covered with dirt and grime  
even when she has a bath.  
Her wild ginger hair looks like  
it has been dropped through a hedge.  
Her fingers look like  
the would-be of a horror story.

## Reading

In relation to reading, Lily always has  
a book tucked in a book. She reads  
horrible, gruesome tales of the Penny  
Dreadfuls. She is often found  
reading these terrible tales  
laughing and enjoying at these books.  
I don't have to confiscate them  
anymore!

Wednesday 4th October

WALT: Write a non-chronological report.

Miss Odavia Scrimshaw's Finishing  
Academy for Young Ladies

## Reading

Lily, who loves reading adventure books  
and comics, is always caught reading juvenile  
things! She is often heard using silly voices.  
Most of the time, I have to confiscate all of the  
books while she is outside the classroom.

## Appearance

Lily always arrives at school tarnished,  
messy and dishevelled. Her shirt, that is  
often untucked, is messy. Her ugly, creckled  
forehead is as colossal as a cave. Her nose  
is pierced and hairy; she looks like a wild  
pig.

Wednesday 14th October 2023

WALT: Write a non-chronological report.

Miss Odavia Scrimshaw's  
Finishing Academy for Young Ladies

## Appearance

Each day Lily comes into class  
late, all hair late. She looks grubby,  
stinky and messy, but intelligent. That  
is, after all, she is a shape and colour  
and is always dishevelled. Her hair  
always looks constantly like it's  
greasy as all the greasy  
oil. The main one is the cut that  
is my eye; you could get  
a whole lot of those greasy balls  
which makes me feel distraught.

## Reading

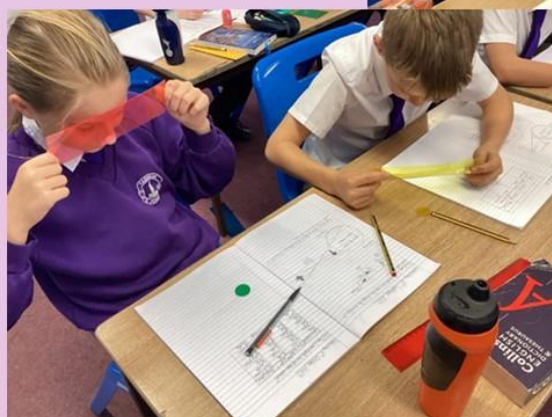
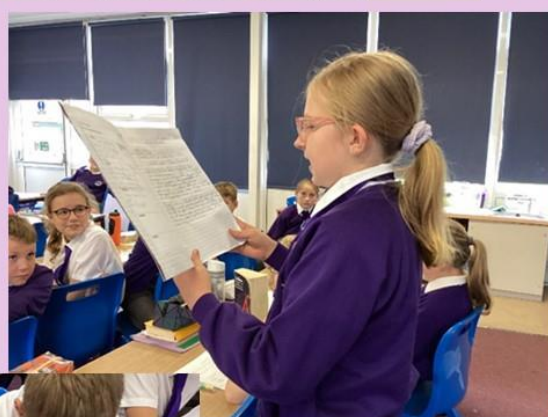
Lily is obsessed with reading  
inappropriate horror stories. She is always  
reading out Americanised words that

## Humourous

This Academic year we have  
been involved by Lily's choices.  
In all honesty, please send her  
back as a proper young  
Victorian lady.



# YEAR 6





National  
Trust

Christmas 2023

# Christmas at Mompesson

23 November to 23 December  
Thursday to Sunday, 11am - 3.30pm

Discover the Dickensian  
world of *A Christmas Carol*  
in an immersive, sensory  
Christmas experience.



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Monday 2nd October 2023

#HelloYellow

Dear Parents and Carers

We are writing to let you know that Harnham Junior School is taking part in **#HelloYellow** on **10<sup>th</sup> October 2023** for **World Mental Health Day**.

We can struggle with how we're feeling, but sometimes things get tough and it can be difficult to cope. For so many young people, when this happens, they don't get the help they need, when they need it. But together we can change this.

That's why we've signed up to take part in #HelloYellow. By taking part and wearing yellow, we're showing young people that we're with them. We're showing them that they matter and deserve the support they need, when they need it, no matter what.

We'll be joining thousands of other schools by wearing yellow to stand out and show up for young people's mental health, and raise vital funds for YoungMinds.

To take part, children can wear yellow to school on 10<sup>th</sup> October, and we ask parents and carers to consider making a donation to **YoungMinds**.

Here is our JustGiving page where you can make a donation or you can send the donation into school if you'd rather.

**[www.justgiving.com/page/harnhamjuniorschool](https://www.justgiving.com/page/harnhamjuniorschool)**

Together, we can create a brighter future for children and young people.

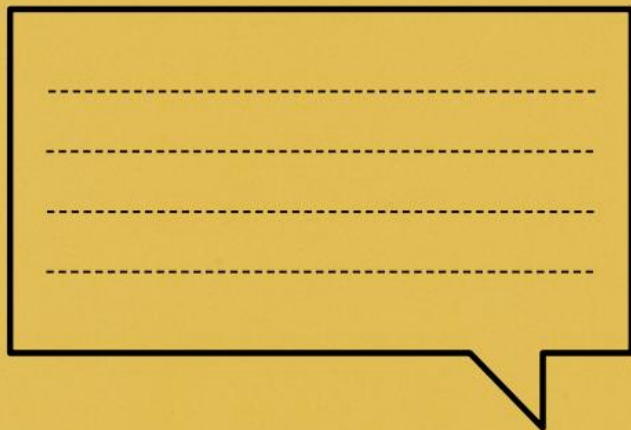
If you have any questions about the day, please just let us know.

Kind regards,

Mrs Trish Winters



M&S | YOUNGMINDS



What's on our minds can  
be the hardest subject.

So what's on yours?



**What's on our minds can  
be the hardest subject.**

**So what's on yours?**

**Sometimes, the world can  
feel like a scary place.**

**That's why this  
World Mental Health Day,  
we've set the nation a  
different kind of homework.**

**Because talking about the  
hardest subjects on our mind  
can help ease our stress,  
and reduce our anxiety.**

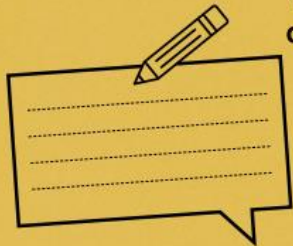
**And working on a shared task  
like this one is a brilliant way  
to start a proper chat if you  
need a hand.**



1

Ask your parent, carer, or an adult you trust if they'll help you with your homework.

Tell them not to worry - nothing will be marked, and they won't even need a calculator!

Get  
talking

2

If you're not sure where to start, try writing or drawing your worries or fears on the front cover of this exercise. You can use the box or go outside the lines. Remember: there are no right or wrong answers.

3

Now, spend time together talking through any worries one by one. Discuss questions such as:

*How does it make you feel?*  
*What are you most afraid might happen?*  
*Would it help if you had more information?*

Get  
listening

Even if we're used to talking together, it can be hard to open up about our worries or fears, particularly the more serious or scary ones. Perhaps you're afraid that talking about them might make you both worry more,

but the reality is the opposite is more likely to be true. When we talk about the hardest subjects, we don't have to have all the answers. The important thing is to listen without judgment, and try not to rush to resolve the problem.

Well done for doing  
your homework ☆

Talking is often the first step in helping us feel better. And it's always easier over a shared activity, whether that's doing homework, cooking dinner together, or even walking the dog.

World Mental Health Day is a great excuse to have a chat, but talking is a tool we can use at any time to improve our mental wellness.

**If you need any more advice, information or support, you can visit [Itv.com/BritainGetTalking](http://Itv.com/BritainGetTalking).**

**And remember - talk to your GP if you're ever seriously concerned.**

Supported by:

itv

BRITAIN GET TALKING

 mind YOUNGMINDS



# TAKEHOME

9 - 15  
October



How does  
change happen?

## In the news this week

October is Black History Month in the UK. This year's theme is 'Saluting our Sisters' - highlighting the role Black women have played in shaping history, inspiring change, and building communities in the UK. Commemorations will feature Black women, who have made outstanding contributions to many areas including music, literature, fashion, sport, business, politics, and health care.

### Things to talk about at home ...

- > Share what you already know and understand about Black History Month in the UK.
- > This year's theme is 'Saluting our Sisters'. What are some of the ways that you think we could do this?

Please note any interesting thoughts or comments

Share your thoughts and read the opinions of others

[www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss](http://www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss)





## Robotic Surgeon



**Pictured:** Da Vinci surgical robot and surgical team celebrating with cake.  
**Source:** Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust Facebook page.

A robotic surgeon celebrates its 10,000th procedure by cutting into a special cake. The robot surgical team at Guy's and St Thomas' hospital has celebrated completing 10,000 operations with the Intuitive da Vinci robot. The robot has been helping patients at the London hospital for over two decades. Surgeons control the machine's four thin arms to conduct operations with higher precision and greater flexibility than can be achieved by the human hand. Ben Challacombe, Head of Robotics at the NHS trust said, 'Da Vinci helps surgeons perform operations and it

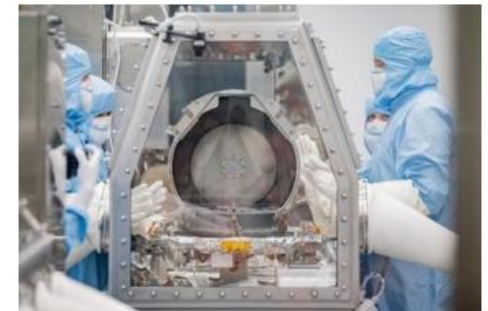


improves outcomes for patients.' He also previously said, 'The benefits of robotic surgery include increased operative precision, leading to less pain, smaller scars and less time in hospital so patients can recover quicker.' Prokar Dasgupta, consultant urological surgeon at Guy's and St Thomas' said, 'When we started robotic surgery 20 years ago, we didn't really know how big the service was going to grow. From one early robotic system to the largest programme in the UK, we have come such a long way and helped so many of our patients.'

## Largest Asteroid Sample on Earth

NASA has announced that the OSIRIS-REx has completed its mission to collect and transport to Earth its largest asteroid sample ever, and that the specimen has landed in the Utah desert! OSIRIS-REx spacecraft, which stands for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer, has been on a 7-year mission to explore and sample an ancient asteroid named Bennu. Scientists believe that this near-Earth asteroid sample could help them understand how planets formed, life began, and improve our knowledge of asteroids that could come into contact with our planet. An asteroid is a small rocky body that orbits the Sun. After travelling for over two billion kilometres, OSIRIS-REx landed on Bennu for a few seconds and used a robotic arm to collect a sample of dust and rocks. The sample was then transported to Earth in a capsule that was released from the spacecraft. It glowed red hot as temperatures inside increased to 2,800°C, when it hit the upper atmosphere. The sample landed safely in the desert, using parachutes deployed at the very end of its journey. Scientists then retrieved the capsule and took it to a clean lab for analysis. The event was described on

NASA Astromaterials X page as, 'A scientific treasure box'. They also stated that 'Scientists gasped as the lid was lifted from the OSIRIS-REx asteroid sample return canister, showing dark powder and sand-sized particles on the inside of the lid and base.'



**Pictured:** The OSIRIS-REx asteroid sample return canister.  
**Source:** NASA Astromaterials @Astromaterials X page.

Share your thoughts and read the opinions of others

[www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss](http://www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss)





# Missing Poster Prompts Return of Lost Lego Man

When 10-year-old Jack Steel from Ulverston in Cumbria realised that he had lost his beloved Lego figure, he wasted no time in starting the search. He produced a 'missing person' poster and asked his mum to spread the word. She posted it on her Facebook page along with an appeal for the Lego man to be returned. The poster (shown above) described the missing toy and how much he meant to Jack, stating, 'Lost: has anyone seen this Lego man? He is very special to me.' The poster also contained an accurate drawing of the minifigure, also named Jack, as Jack created him to look like himself. The poster included a detailed description of what Lego Jack looked like, 'Light brown

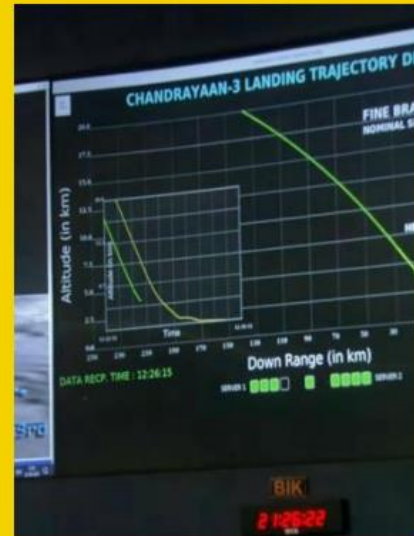


**Pictured:** The 'missing person' poster made by Jack that helped him to find his missing Lego man.  
**Source:** Lorna Walker's Facebook page.

quiff with matching eyebrows. Hawaiian Shirt (blue with palm trees and an orange stripe on the bottom). Dark green pants.' Jack knew that the Lego figure had gone missing whilst he was on his way to school so the search could be narrowed down to a certain route. Joy ensued when the poster Jack had created prompted another mum to contact Jack's when her daughter had found Lego Jack on her way to school, and he could be returned to his owner! The girl received a lovely box of chocolates as a thank-you gift!

Last week's topic:

## How important is space exploration?




Yes, I think it is important because it is good to know what is going on outside of our planet. Without this we would not know about the weather.  
**William**

I think it is very important to explore space and other planets. There is so much that we can learn from the universe that can help us today.  
**AI**

It is important to learn about our universe, but it is very expensive, and it takes a long time. I think we should think about what else we could spend the time and money on if we didn't explore space as much.

**Bashira**

## Let us know what you think about this week's news?

 [www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss](http://www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss)

 [help@picture-news.co.uk](mailto:help@picture-news.co.uk)

 @HelpPicture

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# For the attention of all parents

Will your child be transferring to a secondary school in September 2024?

You must apply for a secondary school place

Apply online at **wiltshire.gov.uk** or complete an application form, available at all Wiltshire Council offices.

The deadline for applications is  
**12 midnight, 31 October 2023**

All forms must be returned to the school admissions team at County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

Contact customer services on **01225 713010**

For more information or to request our guide to finding a secondary school place in Wiltshire.

**Wiltshire Council**

Wiltshire  
Children's Centres  
Keeping in Touch  
Autumn 2023

**Spurgeons**  
Together with families

## Want To Return To Work?

Whatever your reason to return to work, our team are here to support you. Give us a call on 0800 970 4669.

### Volunteering

Volunteering can be an excellent way to build your CV. It can also help you to brush up on some key skills and build your confidence.

### CV & Letter Writing

We can offer you one to one support with your CV and help you towards your next steps.

We can introduce you to some of our partners for further support.

### Knowledge & Skills

Thinking of a new career? What skills do you need to take you there?



Want to stay up to date with our sessions, services and partner events? Be sure to like and follow our Spurgeons Wiltshire Children's Centre Facebook page

Don't forget that you can collect **FREE Healthy Start vitamins** from any Spurgeons Wiltshire children's centre.

To apply for the Healthy start scheme click here



If you'd like support with the application process please give us a call on 0800 9070 4669.

Click here to access our activity packs full of loads of ideas of things to do with your little one.



Find out more about the services we provide by clicking on the buttons

**PROFESSIONALS**

**FAMILIES**  
with children 0 - 5

**FAMILIES**  
with children 6 - 11



# Half-Term Tennis Camp

Wednesday 25th October

10am - 3pm



For children & teenagers aged 5-16 yrs  
Beginners welcome!

**Cost: £40**

Downton Tennis Centre, Wick Lane, SP5 3NF

To book or find out more visit:

[www.mahonytennis.com/tenniscamps](http://www.mahonytennis.com/tenniscamps)

[mahonytennis@gmail.com](mailto:mahonytennis@gmail.com)



**Thursday 19th - Friday 27th October**  
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## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# AMONG US

A multiplayer 'social deduction' game set in outer space, Among Us enjoyed a surge in popularity in 2020, and has since maintained a dedicated fan-base (globally, around 60 million regular players each month) thanks to its unique nature, simple premise and ease of access across numerous platforms. The game's on-screen action revolves around danger, disguise and deception – and there are certain parallels to be drawn with some of the real-life risks that parents and carers of young Among Us players need to be aware of.



### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### SENSITIVE PREMISE

In Among Us, up to three players are secretly assigned to be alien imposters, tasked with murdering their colleagues while the survivors try to unmask them. While the concept's not far removed from traditional games like Wink Murder or TV shows such as The Traitors, some parents may feel uncomfortable about their child playing a video game in which deception and killing are prioritised.

#### VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

The on-screen death of characters may be fundamental to the gameplay of Among Us, but the majority of the animations depicting this are deliberately cartoonish and only appear very briefly. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the game has a PEGI age rating of 7 – meaning that certain elements (however heavily stylised they may be) could still upset some younger players.

#### CHAT BETWEEN PLAYERS

With up to 15 people participating in each game online, a large part of Among Us' appeal is speculating with fellow players who the imposters might be and making accusations. This dialogue through the in-game text chat can occasionally become heated – and could, of course, involve your child being put into contact with people (including adults) who they don't know in real life.

#### GOING OFF PLATFORM

While Among Us provides basic ways to communicate, many gamers prefer to use external services such as Discord: a popular app which offers voice and video chat functions. These undeniably make cooperation easier, but also create a potential route for children to hear inappropriate language – or for strangers to message them privately in an environment which isn't regulated by the game itself.

#### IN-GAME PURCHASES

Among Us is free to download on mobile devices, and costs less than £5 to obtain on console and PC. A related longer-term pitfall, though, is that the game also includes options to pay for upgrades such as removing ads on the mobile version or adding cosmetic touches to characters (such as different costumes). It's certainly possible that a child could spend a significant sum without realising it.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### CONSIDER SOFTER ALTERNATIVES

Although Among Us is hugely popular with young gamers, it's possible that some children might find the murder themes unsettling. If so, plenty of similar social deduction games are available (in both digital and traditional board game formats) which downplay the potentially grislier elements: some centre around undercover spies, for instance, and there's even a Marvel superhero-themed variant.

#### CHAT ABOUT CHATTING

You might feel it's prudent to talk to your child about the risks associated with voice chat while gaming, explaining in particular that strangers online aren't always who they claim to be. Keeping the conversation relaxed will reinforce your child's confidence that they can always come to you with any online concerns – not just about Among Us, but any potential future issues as well.

#### DISCUSS DISCORD

In general, Discord is an excellent app for keeping online communities together because of its use of dedicated individual servers, which allow comprehensive control over who can join – and who can't. Once you're familiar with the platform, you could set up a secure server for your child and their friends to communicate during games of Among Us, with no access for people they don't know.

#### AMONG US, AMONG FRIENDS

When your child and their friends get together, they can enjoy a private game of Among Us by choosing a 'local' lobby – that is, only people connected to the same WiFi (your home network, for example) can enter. This prevents any random online users – who may be total strangers – from joining and removes the need for voice chat, as the players are all physically in the same location.

#### STOP SURPRISE SPENDING

If you're concerned about the possibility of your child racking up an unexpected bill on Among Us' microtransactions, you could consider using a prepaid card with a set limit. Likewise, you could specify in the game's options that adult authorisation is required for every purchase – or you could make sure that no payment methods are enabled on the device that your child plays the game on.

#### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRecon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent who understands the value of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.





# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

## WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be **disposable** (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or **rechargeable** (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

### LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

### POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain 'heavy' metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

### UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

### ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 5 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

### WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

### UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

### SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

### VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term 'natural and artificial flavourings'. Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

## Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



**HEALTHY SCHOOLS**  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
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Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-66809924>



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