

South Australia's blooming disaster; an Ancient Roman big-foot; puppy TV preferences; and robo-rabbits to the rescue.

Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what's happening in the world around you.

I'm Christie Kijurina

It's Wednesday July 23 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... South Australia's blooming disaster; an Ancient Roman big-foot; puppy TV preferences; and robo-rabbits to the rescue.

That's what's making news, kid's style ...

THE LOWDOWN

When you think of national disasters, you might picture bushfires or floods. But right now in South Australia, there's a different kind of disaster unfolding... and it's happening underwater.

The South Australian government is calling on the Prime Minister to request that the Governor-General declare an official national disaster because of a massive toxic algal bloom.

For the past four months, this bloom (which happens when tiny ocean plants called algae grow out of control and release chemicals that can poison sea life), has been spreading along the coastline. It's now the size of 72 Sydney Harbours, killing fish and damaging marine ecosystems.

People are feeling the effects too, with fishing, aquaculture and tourism all taking a hit.

Experts say a marine heatwave, with ocean temperatures 2.5 degrees above normal, created the perfect conditions. They were hoping for a cold front to break it up, but it never came.

If the disaster is officially declared, the federal government could provide extra funding to help with clean-up and support for affected communities.

Our thoughts are with you, South Australia.

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day, we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops, and today, we've landed in England, at an ancient Roman military site near the famous ruins of Hadrian's Wall, where archaeologists have made a big discovery. And I mean really big.

They've found an enormous collection of old Roman shoes, and many of them are surprisingly large. At a site called Magna, just south of Hadrian's Wall, one shoe was a whopping 32.5 centimetres long, that's about an Australian men's size 13 or 14!

It's really unusual because most Roman shoes from this region are much smaller... around size 7 or 8. So experts are scratching their heads. Were these soldiers just super tall? Did they wear thick socks or padded boots for winter? Did they just always have really swollen feet from all that marching soldiers did way back then?

No one knows for sure because archaeology can be like solving a jigsaw puzzle with half the pieces missing.

And, if you want to see the huge shoes for yourself, there's a video link in your episode notes.

ANIMAL KINGDOM

Does your dog ever sit down and watch the telly with you? Do they have a favourite show? And more importantly... how can you tell?

According to a new study, your dog's personality might explain what kind of TV they like, and how long they'll sit still for. Researchers surveyed more than 450 dog owners, asking about their pups' personalities and TV-watching habits.

They found that excitable dogs were the most likely to chase things on the screen, or even search the room to find them. Anxious or nervous dogs, on the other hand, seemed to notice things like cars or doorbells on TV, even when there were no real ones around.

Researchers say this kind of study could help improve dogs' lives, especially if they're home alone or living in a shelter. Knowing what kind of shows dogs respond to could help make TV a fun and calming experience.

Now, we just have to teach them to use the remote.

WEIRD SCIENCE

—

We talk a fair bit on Squiz Kids about invasive species, animals that aren't native to an area but take over and cause problems, and one of the biggest culprits? The giant Burmese python in the wetlands of Florida, in the southeast of the USA.

These snakes have gobbled up so much native wildlife that scientists are trying something new and seriously clever. Robo-bunnies.

Yep, researchers at the University of Florida are using 40 toy rabbits. Inside the fluffy bunnies, they've added motors, heaters, and even tiny waterproof cameras, all powered by itty bitty solar panels.

The robotic rabbits move and give off heat, just like real marsh rabbits, one of the python's favourite snacks. The idea is to use the decoys to lure the snakes out of hiding. Then, when the camera spots movement, it alerts a researcher, who sends in a snake expert to remove the python.

If it works, these robo-bunnies could save native animals and help scientists track down snakes faster.

Now that's what I call a hare-brained idea [MUM JOKE BUZZER] Haha... Hare/ rabbit get it? I can't believe I beat Bryce to the buzzer this term....

Q+A CALL OUT

—

Hands up if you've heard of a book called the Thirteen Storey Treehouse? Then you probably also know the 26, 39, 52 and all the way up to 169 Storey Treehouse books ... and you quite possibly know the author, Andy Griffiths.

Well Andy is great friend of Squiz Kids – and on the occasion of the impending release of his new book, *You and Me & The Peanut Butter Beast* - Andy has bravely agreed to take the Squiz Kids hotseat and take part in another Squiz Kids Q+A ...

This is your chance to ask ANYTHING you want of one of the most popular and successful kids' authors in Australia.

How and where does he write? How does he come up with his kooky ideas? Who was his favourite author when he was your age? What's his favourite ever storey in the treehouse? Does he have a pet? What does he do when he's not writing? Anything at all.

And here's the fun part ... The ten best questions will win a copy of Andy's new book .. AND the best question - as judged by Andy - will win a double pass to see Andy in person - like IRL - at his Opera House show in Sydney in September

So - don't just sit there - send in your questions already! Email them to squizkids@thesquiz.com.au - before Tues Aug 5 ...

THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. What type of natural disaster is South Australia experiencing?
2. Which two things did anxious or nervous dogs notice most on TV?
3. What's the name of the invasive snake species scientists are trying to lure out of hiding in Florida?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday July 23 ... Gorgeous Grandma Day. A day to celebrate all the grandmas, nannas, omas, obaasans and nonnas who spoil us with love, hugs, and sometimes sneaky treats! If you've got one, give your grandma a call, a cuddle, or a homemade card and let her know just how gorgeous she is!

Today is also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Clara from Naremburn, Saira from Plumpton, Alana from Doncaster East, Logan from Brigadoon, Aarya from Camberwell and Hugo listening over in Paris, France.

A belated shoutout for yesterday goes to Louis listening over in Lembongan, Bali.

And A LOT of you celebrated a birthday during the recent school holidays whilst the Squiz Kids team were having a well earned rest - and we don't want you to miss out on a shout out so we'll continue to work our way through all of these shoutouts this week... And I reckon we crack out the 'ol birthday reggae tune... hit it!

It's a happy *belated* birthday to... Kevin from Queensland, Shanaya and Apaar from Forest Lake, Evie from Cheltenham, Connor and Josana from Eglington, John from Palmyra, Olympia from Carnegie, Sophia from Bentleigh East, Ben and Chevie from Yass, Jaxon from Fernvale, Gemma from Doncaster East, Frankie from West Albury, Amity from Jerilderie, Sigrid from Sutherland, Isabella from Kurri Kurri, Sebastian from Geelong, Edwin from Wishart, Susie from Dundas Valley, Winston from Newington and Isabelle from Concord West.

Classroom shoutouts will resume next week.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Algal Bloom
2. Cars and Doorbells
3. Burmese Python

Otherwise ... don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after a classroom shout out- drop us a line at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - We'll be back again tomorrow

In the meantime, get out there and have a most excellent day. Over and out.