

French jewel thieves busted; a huge hurricane hits Jamaica; a message in a bottle; and a chunky Squirrel King

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, October 29-

In Squiz Kids Today ... French jewel thieves busted; a huge hurricane hits Jamaica; a message in a bottle; and a chunky Squirrel King

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

THE LOWDOWN

Remember that daring jewel heist at the Louvre Museum in Paris we told you about last week? Well, there's been a big update.

As they were trying to flee the country, French police arrested two men accused of pulling off the seven-minute robbery that saw eight historic royal jewels taken from the famous museum.

And in case you missed it, here's what happened: the thieves disguised themselves as tradies, used a construction crane to reach a high balcony, cut through a window, grabbed the jewels, and sped away on motorbikes through the streets of Paris. The jewels — including sparkling crowns and brooches once worn by French kings and queens — are worth about \$160 million dollars!

Detectives tracked the men down using CC TV footage, fingerprints, and DNA left at the scene. The jewels are still missing — but police say the arrests are a major breakthrough.

And just like when the Mona Lisa was stolen in 1911 — a theft that actually made her world-famous — this modern-day mystery has sent visitor numbers at the Louvre soaring. Even the crane company involved is cashing in, cheekily advertising “the most famous crane in France.” Talk about stealing the spotlight!

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 Jamaica, an island nation in the Caribbean Sea, where, as we publish this morning's podcast, a Category Five hurricane — the most powerful there is — is pummelling the country.

Meteorologists say Hurricane Melissa is the strongest storm to hit Jamaica since records began 174 years ago, and the most powerful seen anywhere on Earth this year. With wind gusts of up to 300 kilometres an hour, torrential rain and huge ocean surges, the system has already left a trail of destruction across Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Scientists say warmer ocean waters are fuelling the hurricane's intensity — a worrying sign of how rising global temperatures can supercharge severe weather.

People in Jamaica have spent the past week preparing — boarding up windows, gathering supplies and seeking shelter in schools and community centres. Hundreds of thousands of homes are now without power, and the country's 2.8 million residents are waiting out the storm.

We're thinking of you, Jamaica. Stay safe.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

The ocean's lost and found department really needs to get its act together ... a message in a bottle has turned up in Western Australia more than a century after it went into the sea.

A family collecting rubbish on Wharton Beach near Esperance found a glass bottle half-buried in the dunes. Inside was a note written in 1916 by Malcolm Alexander Neville, an Australian soldier sailing to World War I aboard the HMAS Ballarat. His letter asked whoever found it to contact his mother back in South Australia.

Despite the bottle having some water inside, the paper dried perfectly, revealing his name, and after some online detective work, the finder, Ms Brown, tracked down some of Malcolm's relatives, including a 104-year-old aunt.

Even more incredibly, there was a second note inside — from another soldier, Private William Kirk Harley, who served in WWI and survived to have a family of his own.

Over a century later, two soldiers' voices have finally been heard.

ANIMAL KINGDOM

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With Fat Bear Week over for another year, we didn't think we'd be reporting on any other pudgy critters piling on the pounds — but over in Texas, the Parks and Wildlife Department has launched its first-ever Fat Squirrel Week!

It's a nutty celebration of squirrels who've munched enough in the lead-up to winter to star in their very own competition.

Sixteen state parks nominated their roundest rodents for an online vote, and the champ? The one and only Chunkosaurus Rex from Dinosaur Valley State Park — who beat rivals Chunk Norris, The Texas Tank, and Nutella to take out the title.

And if too many cute animal pics is never enough for you, the finalists in the Nikon Comedy Wildlife Awards have just been revealed. My picks? The kung fu eagles and the face-planting fox — but there are more than 40 to explore. The link's in the episode notes. You can thank me later.

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. What is the value of the jewels stolen from the Louvre?
2. Name the strong winds that blow across the Tasman between Tasmania and New Zealand?
2. ALT Name the ship that Malcom Alexander Neville was on when he threw that glass bottle into the ocean?
3. What is the name of the Squirrel who won the inaugural Fat Squirrel Week competition in Texas?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, October 29 ... On this day, 80 years ago — way back in 1945 — the very first ballpoint pen went on sale, made by the Biro company.

Before that, people had to use fountain pens, which held ink in a tiny reservoir that flowed out through a nib... when you wanted it to — and sometimes when you didn't!

Or they had to dip their pens into an ink pot every few words. My handwriting is pretty untidy now... image...!

Today's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Reena from Forest Lake, Macy from Kurri Kurri, Elliot from Narrabundah, Axel from Chinchilla, Bella from Murrarie and Landon listening over in Toronto, Canada.

And a belated shoutout goes to Naira from North Parramatta.

Classroom shoutouts go to... Grades 4, 5 and 6 with Miss Mirabito and Ms Wendy at Goornong Primary School, class 6A with Mrs Sutton at Ripley Valley State School, class 6M with Miss Murray at Rainbow Street Public School in Randwick and class 5A with Miss Laidlaw at Brookfield State School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. \$160 million
2. ALT HMAS Ballarat
3. Chunkosaurus Rex

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.