
THE HIGHLIGHTER NEWS

ACCESSIBLE NEWS FOR EVERYONE

In this issue:

- Northern Ireland Politics Page 2
- 12th of July celebrations Page 4
- Riots in France Page 6
- Artificial Intelligence Page 9
- Titan Submersible Tragedy Page 10
- Update on the War in Ukraine Page 12
- Nature notes Page 14
- Lifestyle News Page 16
- Sports news Page 19



A large bonfire in Belfast

The
Highlighter
News

The Highlighter News aims to help make the news feel more accessible for people, including people with learning disabilities and autism.

CONTENT WARNING

This issue contains stories about war, guns and death. It can be very upsetting to see and hear about violence around the world, like the war in Ukraine, or people getting hurt or sick. It can often be difficult to understand why it is happening, and sometimes we worry about people being harmed. The news might even make us feel unsafe ourselves.

Just remember you can always talk to a friend, carer, or family member you can trust.

NORTHERN IRELAND POLITICS ROUND-UP

Written by Michael Slater

Welcome to the Politics Round-Up where we will be looking at some of the top stories making the headlines in Northern Irish politics this month.

Return to Stormont?

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for the UK governments' work in Northern Ireland. During a recent visit to NI, (NI is short for Northern Ireland), the Secretary of State said that he is 'hopeful' that politicians will return to Stormont and form an Executive by Autumn.

The Executive is the term used to describe the government of NI. The Executive includes the First and deputy First Ministers and eight other ministers e.g., the health minister and the justice minister. There has not been a working Executive since February 2022 as the group of politicians known as the DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) has been unhappy with some of the plans for the Windsor Framework (read our May 2023 issue to learn more about this).

If the DUP agree to go back into the Executive, it means that the Northern Ireland government will be able to work again at Stormont, appoint ministers and get to work to address some of the most important problems currently affecting people in Northern Ireland.

This news story continues on the next page.

NI Covid Inquiry

This month, the UK Covid-19 inquiry has been investigating the impact of the pandemic in Northern Ireland. The Covid-19 Inquiry was set up to think about how the UK responded to the Covid-19 pandemic which started in 2020 and how things could be improved if a similar outbreak were to happen again in the future.

Michelle O'Neill, former deputy First Minister and Vice-President of Sinn Féin gave evidence to the inquiry earlier this month. She said that during the pandemic, she felt that meetings between politicians in Stormont and the UK government were “ad-hoc and tick box.” ‘Ad-hoc’ usually means not planned well, and ‘tick box’ is often used to mean something is done only to say it was done, rather than to actually solve the problem!

Families whose loved ones died have been giving evidence to the inquiry, including the family of the first woman to die in Northern Ireland after contracting the Covid-19 virus. A member of the woman’s family described the emotional pain of not being able to be with her mother when she passed away, due to the strict social distancing regulations which were in place at the time.

A group called Covid-19 Bereaved Families Group said that it is very important for the families of those lost during the pandemic to have their stories and experiences heard.

THE 12TH OF JULY

Written by Saana Taussi

Thousands of people in Northern Ireland gathered to celebrate the 12th of July, across different locations, such as Belfast, Bangor, (London)Derry and Ballymena. Large parades were held by the Orange Order and Ulster loyalist marching bands. The Orange Order (or the Loyal Orange institution) is a Protestant and unionist / loyalist order primarily based in Northern Ireland. People also celebrated the 12th by lighting up large bonfires, mainly in loyalist neighbourhoods.



A large bonfire in Belfast

The 12th of July has been chosen to mark the Battle of Boyne, where King William of Orange won in a battle against King James II in 1690. People gather on the 12th of July every year to celebrate the victory and other aspects of Protestant / unionist / loyalist culture.

Why do people celebrate the Battle of Boyne?

The Battle of Boyne happened on the River Boyne, in what is now the Republic of Ireland. King James II had been forced to give up his position as the King of England, Ireland, and Scotland, and he was trying to become the King again. King William of Orange was the King at the time, and by defeating King James II, he guaranteed the continuation of his position as King.

This news story continues on the next page.

THE 12TH OF JULY CELEBRATIONS (CONTINUED)

Because King William was Protestant and King James was Catholic, the defeat of King James meant there was Protestant leadership in Britain and Ireland. The 12th is celebrated by some members of the Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities in Northern Ireland, who are happy that Protestants gained power over Catholics.

Why do some people not like the celebrations?

The Battle of the Boyne guaranteed that Protestants had more power in society than Catholics, so many people feel that celebrating the battle is also celebrating a divide and conflict between Catholics and Protestants. The Orange Order, who organise the parades, sees itself as defending Protestant civil and religious freedom, but some people feel that they are supremacist. Supremacist means believing that one group, such as a race, religion, or sex, is superior to others. This means there has often been conflict and violence between Catholics / republicans and Protestants / loyalists around the 12th of July.

Incidents that happened this year

This year, the PSNI (Police Service Northern Ireland) confirmed eight arrests in relation to the celebrations. They reported that the parades were mainly peaceful, but there were some incidents around loyalist bonfires.

This news story continues on the next page.

THE 12TH OF JULY CELEBRATIONS (CONTINUED)

The incidents included people burning an effigy / puppet of Michelle O'Neill (the Vice President of nationalist political party Sinn Fein). Loyalists also burnt a picture of Leo Varadkar, who is the leader of Fine Gael, a political party in the Republic of Ireland. The burning of the effigy and the picture is seen by many as harmful and representing violence toward these individuals and Irish communities. Eleven paramedics were also assaulted in relation to the bonfires, with five paramedics being punched, kicked, bitten, and spat at, at a bonfire site in the Carrickfergus area.

RIOTS IN FRANCE

Why are people in France rioting?

Earlier this year in January 2023, Emmanuel Macron (the president of France) forced through laws that raised the pension age (the age at which people can stop working and get financial support from the government) from 62 years old to 64 years old.

The French people were angry about this. To show their unhappiness they went on strike. Bin collectors refused to collect rubbish which piled up along the streets, and bus and train drivers refused to show up for work meaning that public transport was cancelled.

This news story continues on the next page.

RIOTS IN FRANCE (CONTINUED)

People also began marching through the streets to protest the change to the pension age. Because they felt they were not being listened to, events escalated to violence. Protestors fought with police, damaging shops and setting fire to bins.

These protests continued from January 2023 to early June 2023.

The Shooting of Nahel Merzouk

French police are allowed to carry guns. Under French law, police are allowed to shoot drivers who refuse to stop their cars when asked to, especially if the police think that by continuing to drive that person will endanger the lives of passengers in the car or people walking on the pavement.

On June 27th 2023 in Nanterre (which is an area in Paris) police shot and killed 17 year old Nahel Merzouk. French police said that Nahel was driving his car towards them when the police shot at him to try to get him to stop. But a video posted on social media appeared to show the car had stopped and police appeared to shoot Nahel when the car was not moving.

This news story continues on the next page.

RIOTS IN FRANCE (CONTINUED)**What happened next?**

As Nahel was Moroccan and Algerian, many people felt that the police's handling of the traffic stop was due to his race and the fact that he was an immigrant. Because of this and the protests about the pension age in January, people showed their unhappiness by protesting. Residents of Nanterre protested outside the police headquarters on 27th June, which escalated into rioting. Protestors set cars on fire, smashed up bus stops, and shot fireworks at police.

Protests then spread all over the French capital city of Paris and by the 29th of June over 150 people had been arrested for protesting.

By July 1st protests had stopped, and the officer who shot Nahel has been arrested and is currently under investigation for Nahel's death.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Written by Michael Slater

What is Artificial Intelligence?

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence.

Artificial Intelligence is a type of computer software which can be designed to think like the human brain. AI can be used for lots of things including chatbots, which are a type of software which can allow a person to have realistic conversations with a computer program. ChatGPT is an example of an AI chatbot. Users can ask ChatGPT to write text for them, like articles, stories, poems, recipes and almost any sort of writing you can think of!

What is AI used for?

Artificial intelligence is being used for all sorts of things like self-driving cars, which are cars that do not need a human to drive them and instead use AI and sensors to check what is going on around them.

AI can also be used in healthcare. Some studies have shown that using AI is quicker and better at diagnosing people with diseases or other health issues. AI can detect diseases in bloodsamples, or on medical scans, much faster than a doctor can.

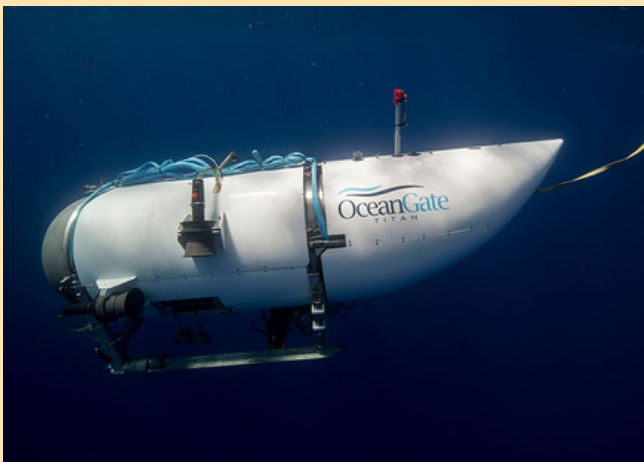
This news story continues on the next page.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (CONTINUED)**Is it good or bad?**

Some people think that AI is a good thing because it will help to do some jobs quicker, make our daily lives easier, and even - when used in healthcare - save lives.

However, some people are worried that AI might not be as good as it seems. Some experts have warned that using AI will make people depend on technology to do things they could easily do on their own. They could even be used by students to do their homework for them! It is also thought that using AI might lead to people losing their jobs because it will be cheaper and faster for companies to use robots and machines instead of people.

THE TITAN SUBMERSIBLE TRAGEDY



**The Titan submersible
(Credit: OceanGate)**

On Sunday 18th June 2023, an underwater vehicle called the Titan Submersible imploded, killing five people who were on board. An implosion is the opposite to an explosion and means that something is destroyed by collapsing in on itself.

This news story continues on the next page.

THE TITAN SUBMERSIBLE TRAGEDY (CONTINUED)

Why was “The Titan” going underwater?

The Titan was owned by a company who took tourists down to the seabed to visit the wreckage of The Titanic, a very famous passenger boat that tragically sank in 1912 when it hit an iceberg. 1,500 passengers on board died. The wreck of The Titanic was discovered in 1985 by an explorer and lots of the things from the ship, like bed frames, unopened wine bottles and its famous staircase are still there.

The cost of the Titan trip meant that only very rich people could afford it. It cost \$250,000 dollars...that's a quarter of a million dollars!

Why did it implode?

The cost of the Titan trip meant that only very rich people could afford it. It cost \$250,000 dollars... that's a quarter of a million dollars!

Why was it on the news so much?

Lots of people, including the media, were particularly interested in the story as the people who were in The Titan died on their tourist trip to see a ship where lots of people also died. There was a large rescue organised and what was left of The Titan was brought back to land to be looked at to see if the reason for the implosion can be learnt.

This news story continues on the next page.

THE TITAN SUBMERSIBLE TRAGEDY (CONTINUED)

The search and rescue cost many millions of dollars. This was very different to another tragedy that happened around the same time. There was a fishing boat in Greece which sank. On board the boat were many hundreds of people who were described as migrants. Only a small number of the bodies have been recovered and many hundreds of people are still missing. People have said that because the migrants who died were not rich and there have been many other similar deaths, their story wasn't as important and wasn't on the news as much as the five rich people who died.

The War in Ukraine and Russia

What is the reason for the war?

The Russia-Ukraine war is the biggest conflict in Europe since the second world war. On the 24th of February 2022, Vladimir Putin (the President of Russia) gave orders to his country's army to invade Ukraine. An invasion is a movement of soldiers from one country to another country with the aim of conquering that place and establishing control. Ukraine, in response to the invading Russian army, started to fight back as part of its self-defence. This was how the war started.

This news story continues on the next page.

THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA (CONTINUED)**Why is Russia trying to invade Ukraine?**

Russia is one of the most powerful countries in the world. NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is a group of countries that support each other with their armies, and protect its member countries if there is a war or crisis. Ukraine has been trying to get NATO membership since 2008. Russia thinks that if Ukraine (which is also Russia's neighbouring country) gets NATO membership, then powerful competitors like the USA will get easy access to Russian borders through Ukraine. This is one of the major reasons why Russia felt threatened and tried to invade Ukraine.

What is happening now?

Both countries have talked to each other to find a way to stop the fighting, but the war is still going on. You might have heard in the news about a mutiny in the Russian military. A mutiny is when members of the military disobey orders and try to take control from someone in charge. The Wagner group is a group of very well-trained soldiers who are paid by the Russian government. The leader of this group is a man called Yevgeny Prigozhin who was once a very close friend of the Russian president Vladimir Putin.

The soldiers of the Wagner group attacked Russian army camps and marched towards Moscow. It seems like the Russian army is not happy with the people who give them their orders. Meanwhile, Ukraine is continuing to defend itself against the Russian invasion by attacking Russian army troops that have set up camps in Ukraine.

This is a situation that changes often and quickly. The Highlighter News will continue to update our readers in future issues.

Nature Notes



**A Small Tortoiseshell that landed
in our volunteer Lisa's garden**

Have you heard of The Big Butterfly Count? It happens from Friday 14th July to Sunday 6th August.

What is The Big Butterfly Count?

The Big Butterfly Count is where people sit outside in a sunny place, or inside looking out at a sunny space. It takes 15 minutes to sit and look at how many butterflies and moths you can see. The information on how many different types of butterflies and moths that are spotted is very important. Scientists who are working hard for our natural world use all the information that we provide to help them understand how our butterflies and moths are coping with all the different types of weather that we have.

This news story continues on the next page.

NATURE NOTES (CONTINUED)

Do I need to know all about butterflies or moths to take part?

No, we don't need to be experts. All we need to give is our time and maybe even have fun identifying the different butterflies and moths that we see. Did you know that being out in nature, or even looking at nature through a window is really good for our health! It can make us feel more relaxed and happier.

What type of plants or flowers do butterflies and moths like?

Butterflies love nettles! So it's a good idea to let a small patch of garden grow wild. They also love lavender, fruit trees and primroses. It's a good idea to grow native plants and flowers, that means plants and flowers that are not brought in from other countries. Buddleia is grown a lot in Northern Ireland and butterflies love it, but it is not native (from here) and can grow very big, taking over space that other plants and flowers need to grow.

What to look out for in August

Berries will start to show on the hedgerows in the countryside and along the sides of the roads. Heather also blooms in August so look out for all the colours!

Lifestyle News

Written by Sally F

A selection of Lifestyle News stories about health, new movie releases, and fashion.

Blue-Green Algae in Northern Ireland Beaches



Blue-Green algae

You may have heard in the news about the blue-green algae which appeared on beaches in Northern Ireland such as Portstewart, Benone and Castlerock beaches.

What is Algae?

Algae is a form of bacteria which grows in water. This type of algae is called blue-green algae as it turns the water a blue-green colour. Algae can be dangerous to people and pets as it contains poisons which can be harmful.

What about the people who use the beaches?

People and pets were not allowed to go into the water or swim at the beaches while the algae was there. The water had to be checked by beach experts for a few days to make sure it was safe and not dangerous. The water at these beaches is now safe to use again but the algae may come back in the future. Beach operators and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) will continue to check the beaches and water for any algae so they are safe to visit.

This news story continues on the next page.

LIFESTYLE NEWS (CONTINUED)

NHS 75 Years



The NHS logo on a blue background

On the 5th of July the NHS celebrated 75 years. The NHS stands for the National Health Service and was created 75 years ago.

What is the NHS?

The NHS means that the government of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland pays for certain medical and health care services. This means they are free for the people who live there. This is different to other countries where people have to pay money for these services when they need them. All the people who work for the NHS in Northern Ireland help to provide health and medical care for many people. It is important to say thank you to all NHS workers!

This news story continues on the next page.

LIFESTYLE NEWS (CONTINUED)

New Movies

Mission Impossible Dead Reckoning Part 1

This new movie includes the famous actor Tom Cruise. He has made many movies and this is the 7th movie called Mission Impossible. It is about a difficult mission. A mission is an important task which a person tries to complete. This movie can be described as action and adventure.

Barbie

Barbie dolls are a popular toy which were created in 1959. This new movie brings barbie dolls to life. The story is about a girl called Barbie who lives in barbie world with other dolls and toys. She goes on an adventure to find out what the real world is like. This movie can be described as adventure and comedy. Comedy movies make people laugh.



**The poster for the movie Barbie
Credit: Warner Bros.**

Accessibility screenings

Cinemas in Northern Ireland have accessibility screenings. This means these new movies can be watched in a more accessible way. Subtitled and sensory friendly screenings are available at local cinemas to book.

SPORTS NEWS

Wimbledon 2023

In July, one of the biggest annual tennis tournaments in the world took place at Wimbledon in London. The winner of the men's trophy was a young man named Carlos Alcaraz who is only 20 years old. He beat Novak Djokovic, who won Wimbledon in 2022. It was a really exciting game!

In the women's trophy, Markéta Vondroušová from the Czech Republic won. She beat Ons Jabeur from Tunisia. What's really special about her win is that she was the first player to win without a 'seed'. 'Seeds' are numbers given to the best players. The lower the number, the better the player. That means no one expected Vondroušová to win from the start of the tournament. This had never happened before in the history of professional tennis.

FIFA Women's World Cup

The FIFA Women's World Cup is currently being played in Australia and New Zealand. Teams were divided into groups where they have to play against each other. The two teams who do the best in their groups will move to the next round where they will play the best teams from the other groups. The World Cup Final will take place on 20 August 2023

You can read more about the competition in July's issue of The Highlighter.

Have you enjoyed reading this month's issue of
The Highlighter News?

Is there a topic or news story you'd like us to write
about in next month's issue?

Let us know by emailing hello@thehighlighter.org or
send us a message or comment on social media:



@NIHighlighter



Search for 'The Highlighter'
on Facebook

Would you prefer to read The Highlighter News in a
different colour or font? You can email us to request
a different version that suits you better.

The Highlighter News is now available in audio version!

You can listen to it on our website:

www.thehighlighter.org.

If you have an event or service you'd like advertised in
The Highlighter News, or if you'd like to order print
copies for your organisation, contact us on:

hello@thehighlighter.org

The
Highlighter
News