

The Network

Issue 12

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Welcome to Issue 12 of The Network

Editor's Note

Welcome back to The Network. In this edition we focus on the important and varied work of the Environment Agency. We highlight their work in the community through their visit to St. Barnabus CE Primary school in Darwen.

Read about how Blackburn won the prestigious Britain's Best High Street Award and learn more about this town.

Rachel Leah from the Department for Education talks about what she gained from attending the 'Leadership: Overcoming Barriers Event.'

Civil Service Local bring us up to date with all their news and events, in particular the Changing Horizons Event, their work on a new Autism Wide project and the Going Digital-'Friend or Foe' event in March.

As usual we emphasise the charitable work of our colleagues and in this edition we look at how HMRC's Donna Greenwood and Debbie Wainwright supported the work of Liverpool's Scouse Kitchen collecting much needed clothing and toiletries for the city's homeless.

Your comments and views on our features are always much appreciated, or if you have ideas about what you would like to see in future editions get in touch with the Editorial team and let us know. In the meantime- enjoy!

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The forever popular feature

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Civil Service Local is committed to ensuring that wherever possible our events are accessible to all participants. If you have any specific requirements that will enable you to fully participate, please let us know and we will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments.

Welcome to...

Your Voice

Thank you for all your comments since issue 11. We have collected some of our favourites below, and even responded to one!

As always, we take all comments on board so feel free to continue to send them in as we look to constantly improve The Network for your reading pleasure.

Erm... do we get an email with it attached now and then? **Olivia (Sheffield)**

You truly are the gift that keeps on giving. **Steve (Wigan)**

Can I have the answers for the Christmas quiz early? I want to nick it for my family do. **Steve (Wigan)**

It's great to see this prosper and grow, great work by everyone involved **Andy (Liverpool)**

I understand these may be useful ways of communicating and making emails tidier but I'm unlikely to ever click a link to a *bit.ly* address at work or send anything to a gmail address that's work related. **Dave (Manchester)**

*Thanks Dave, as a result of your feedback we have decommissioned the gmail account. The bit.ly prefix is used for evaluation purposes to understand how many of you are interacting with the mag. It is safe to click. **The Network***

Focus On... Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) work to create better places for people and wildlife, and support sustainable development.

Their priorities are to:

- work with businesses and other organisations to manage the use of resources
- increase the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion
- protect and improve water, land and biodiversity
- improve the way they work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth.



*The Environment Agency is an **executive non-departmental public body**, sponsored by **Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**.*



Within England EA is responsible for:

- regulating major industry and waste
- treatment of contaminated land
- water quality and resources
- fisheries
- inland river, estuary and harbour navigations
- conservation and ecology

EA are also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.

EA were established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment. There are c.10,600 employees. The head office is in Bristol, a large office in London and further offices across England, divided across 14 regions. EA delivers its work across England in operational boundaries. **In the North West they have offices in Penrith, Preston and Warrington.**

The Environment Agency's remit covers the whole of England, about **13 million hectares of land, 22,000 miles (35,000 km) of river and 3,100 miles (5,000 km) of coastline seawards to the three-mile limit which includes 2 million hectares of coastal waters.**

There are two "policy and process" directorates. One deals with Flood and Coastal Risk Management and the other with Environment and Business. These are backed up by the Evidence directorate. The fourth directorate is a single Operations "delivery" unit, responsible for national services, and line management of all the Regional and Area staff.

The remaining directorates are central shared service groups for Finance, Legal Services, Resources and Communications.

Environment Agency in the community

Iesha Thomas talks about Jacks Key unlocking interest in Darwen



When pupils from St Barnabas CE Primary School in Darwen found out about how Jacks Key reservoir reduces flood risk, they were keen to get involved with the scheme. The children were excited to hear about species such as newts frogs and toads, whose populations have reduced drastically over the last few decades, and one of the country's most threatened mammals, the water vole.

This was when we (Environment Agency) arranged a competition for pupils to produce wildlife themed short stories, poems and drawings which saw some of those who took part presented with certificates and small prizes. We also had a competition for pupils to design a bench which would be made using wood from one of the trees that

was felled from area.

Joint winners Tom Mayoh, Darcey Devitt and William Earnshaw were presented with certificates and Waterstones vouchers for their winning designs and the bench was installed in the school. We didn't want to leave out those who got involved so as a thank you we gave everyone who took part some chocolates too.

We're currently working to manage flood risk from the reservoir which is near to the school and previously told the pupils about how we've improved the reservoir and how it will help local wildlife. The work to improve Jacks Key will ensure that the reservoir continues to store water during periods of heavy rainfall. The works have involved digging out both the main (primary) dam and a smaller secondary dam a short distance downstream.



Paul Robertshaw, Project Manager for Jacks Key reservoir, said: "Whilst fulfilling our duties in managing flood risk and reservoir safety, it is important that we protect the environment and help local wildlife. By engaging local school children we hope to build a legacy for the site and see it flourish as a haven for wildlife for years to come."

Environment Agency in the community



Helen Thomas, Head teacher for St Barnabas CE Primary School who helped this all come together added: “All the members of the EA have been totally committed to developing the children’s understanding and have gone over and beyond to ensure that the school has felt involved in the redevelopment of Jack’s Key,



giving their time and engaging thoughtfully with the children in ways that are meaningful to them, and that will leave a lasting memory in the oak bench. This essentially binds our school to the locality and gives our children a feeling of belonging and pride in their local environment. As a school we will build on this legacy.”



Jacks Key is in Darwen, a small town near Blackburn in Lancashire. It is a market town locally known as ‘Darren’ with it’s inhabitants known as ‘Darreners’. Darwen is a quintessential town located amid the West Pennine Moors.

The TV series Hetty Wainthrop investigates was filmed in Darwen and The Beatles played in January 1963. They have a non-league football team AFC Darwen.



The area around Jacks Key has been empty for some years, with the water being drained from the reservoir a long time ago, but the land itself now belongs to the Queen’s estate. Two years ago, the Environment Agency unveiled plans to transform and partly refill the reservoir, turning it into a wetland habitat.

The iconic Darwen tower, created to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee and opened in 1898





After four weeks of campaigning, 27 judges' visits, over 500,000 votes, the results of the Great British High Street competition are now in!

THE WINNERS ARE...



BLACKBURN



The Great British High Street awards is a contest set up by the government's Future High Street Awards forum in 2014 to celebrate our best, most innovative high streets. This year over 900 high streets were put forward by local residents with 27 shortlisted in the final. The votes count for 50% whilst the other half is determined by judges from the competitions sponsors including Wilko and the Post Office. The prize for the winner is £100,000 pot and digital training from Twitter and Google.

Other areas in the North West

- Hoole in Cheshire won best street
- Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria were shortlisted for best village
- Most social media savvy shop went to Fleetwood beach kiosk which is a little kiosk on the beachfront who have been uploading videos of the sunrise on their social media account

The Great British High Street supports those working to revive, adapt and diversify high streets. Not for profit and government funded, we aim to provide resources for high street regeneration and celebrate innovative work going on in high streets across Britain.





Blackburn is a large town in Lancashire. It lies to the North of the West Pennine Moors and the Southern edge of the Ribble Valley. It has a population of just over 100,000.

Interesting fact:

Blackburn became the first town to undertake mass fingerprinting after the murder of June Anne Devaney in 1948.

Blackburn is home to Blackburn Rovers Football Club, currently in the Championship. Rovers won the Premier League in 1995.

Civil Service presence in Blackburn

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to over 22 million claimants and customers.

There are 2 DWP offices in Blackburn, a jobcentre and a service centre.

Blackburn jobcentre is a universal credit live site. Universal credit is a new flagship benefit supporting people who are on a low income or out of work, and helps ensure that they are better off in work than on benefits.

Blackburn JC has a screened environment so customers from neighbouring towns who have unacceptable behaviour markers required interviewing in a screened environment are sent here.

There are also staff from operational excellence directorate—change and implementation and performance measurement on site.

Blackburn Service Centre is a telephony environment with agents taking new claims to employment support allowance (ESA). Telephony agents also take ESA Enquiries calls and do a mixture of telephony work and benefit processing. It is a fast paced environment!



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Helping the Homeless in Liverpool

HMRC's Debbie Wainwright and Donna Greenwood explain their involvement

Recent figures showed that 'rough sleeping' in Liverpool had almost doubled. You only have to go into Liverpool shopping to notice the increase of people sleeping in shop doorways. With more and more Charitable groups appearing on social media asking for help it seemed only natural to do what we could.

At a team meeting I explained Donna and I would be collecting items over the coming weeks that would benefit local homeless people.

Sure enough the donations came in bag loads. Colleagues kindly donated warm clothes, hats, scarfs, coats, sleeping bags and toiletries, with some of the team even knitting hats and glove sets.

'Scouse Kitchen' is a local group of volunteers who every Wednesday meet at the same location in Liverpool city centre and hand out food, drinks and donations. After contacting them we arranged to deliver our donations, they were extremely grateful for our efforts and much needed contributions especially with winter approaching.

For anyone wishing to donate they have a Facebook page including a direct link to Amazon where you can purchase items that are sent directly to Scouse Kitchen.

Going forward we will continue to collect donations, handing them to the numerous local help the homeless groups.



Getting to know...

Debbie and Donna

1. What is your favourite food?

Debbie—Chinese

Donna—Italian

2. What is your favourite sports team?

Debbie—Everton FC

Donna—Team GB

3. What was the last film you watched?

Debbie—Jack Reacher

Donna—Christmas movies

4. What books would be found on your bookshelf?

Debbie—Autobiography/Crime

Donna—Autobiographies

5. Who would be your 5 ideal dinner guests?

Debbie—Duncan Ferguson, Robbie Williams, Charlie Hunnam, Bear Grylls, and Simon Cowell

Donna—Gok Wan, Judge Rinder, Ant & Dec, Gino D'Campo

Leadership: Overcoming Barriers Event

DfE's Rachael Leah informs The Network about an event she was a part of

On Monday 31st October, a North West Gender Networking all-day event took place at the Manchester Civil Justice Centre, focusing on the theme of '**Leadership: Overcoming Barriers**'.

Colleagues from HMRC, DWP, DfE, MOJ and DfT, amongst others, came together to hear engaging and motivating talks and take part in group discussions and panel question and answer session.

Arfan Sayed, Head of Innovation Hub and Performance Management &



Reporting at DWP, gave an inspiring and uplifting talk about his leadership journey, the various experiences that have helped to shape his idea of leadership and the tools he uses to stay focused; Baljeet Kaur, Assistant Director Risk & Intelligence Service at HMRC, gave us a personal account of her experiences at work and starting a family, describing the barriers and pressures she felt throughout her journey; Lynn Rigby, HRBP Business Transformation and Change at DWP, facilitated a thought-provoking group discussion session about identifying and overcoming barriers to progression at work, and Gail Coenen, Assistant Director Large Businesses North West at HMRC, gave an inspiring talk detailing her leadership journey and the things she has learnt about becoming a more effective leader and having to balance work and family along the way.

The event had a fantastic turnout and received excellent feedback. It was great to see so many different government departments represented in one room, sharing their experiences and discussing how to move forward on our own paths to leadership and we would like to thank all of our speakers and audience members for contributing towards such an enjoyable day.

The team behind the event had put the day together as a response to the International Women's Day event they delivered earlier this year and are planning another event for **International Women's Day 2017**, which takes place on **Wednesday 8th March**. Mark the date in your diaries and keep an eye out for further information if you are interested.



Message from Kathie Bates – NW Co-ordinator

The transition from one year to the next is a time for reflection and phrases like 'out with the old in with the new' bandied about.

In CS Local one of our constant challenges is creating the right balance, especially across the programme and offer lots of variety in terms of activities, locations and departments.

2017 is already shaping up to be a good balance of old and new. We'll be offering lots of old favourites - citizen volunteering opportunities, discovery sessions and our flagship academies.

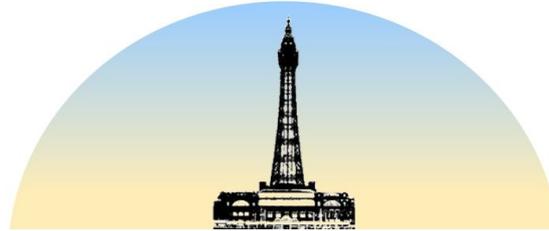
Our new ventures will include a new changing horizons event for 700 young people in Blackpool, new volunteering opportunities in Liverpool and Burnley and....from April move of department as we officially become part of Cabinet Office.

In the world of John Manzoni when asked about getting involved in CS Local 'don't hesitate'.

Exciting times ahead! If you like to get involve please contact us on Facebook or Twitter @CSLocalNW

Kathie

Changing Horizons Event



Changing Horizons Blackpool

We are really excited to be hosting our new Changing Horizons event at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool on March 29th.

We are currently designing the fast-paced, interactive event which will help inspire 700 children to develop key skills for life and work and help them raise their aspirations. There will be a number of local employers; Civil Service departments, Senior Civil Servants and maybe even a celebrity or two.

We need lots of help to deliver the event and are looking for volunteers to help make it a huge success. There are lots of different roles including receptionist; guides for the pupils; car park attendants; first aiders; people to set up rooms and refreshments and many more! We will be holding a briefing session at the Winter Gardens w/c 20th March where we will share the running order and provide full details of all the roles. If you are interested in helping please contact [Jo Nunnerley](#).



Seeing the WIDER Picture

– Glyn Ellis Hughes



There's no better way for Civil Service Local to welcome in a new year than by looking at a potential new project to its programme, so I'm delighted to be able to share some exciting news about our plans to support autistic colleagues and citizens here in the north west, stemming out of Liverpool's ambition to become an autism friendly city.

For the last quarter of 2016 whilst on secondment to Civil Service Local I undertook a research and scoping piece of work to look at how we could support people living with autism and it was an enlightening experience. It's not a topic I knew a lot about previously and there was a lot to learn. For me, this was an opportunity to focus on a different set of skills and learn more about project planning. I started off by asking three questions about how the Civil Service:

- supports autistic citizens;
- supports and develops autistic colleagues in the workplace; and,
- promotes awareness of autism.

The level of interest in the work I was undertaking was overwhelming and I would like to take opportunity again to thank everyone who got involved by responding to surveys, sharing their personal experience and providing or signposting me to expert advice. It was very clear that there is a huge appetite amongst our workforce to learn and understand more about autism, offer better services to autistic citizens, and help make the workplace an environment that welcomes and recognises the talents of autistic colleagues.



I made connections with a local organisation that works with autistic people. During visits to their Step In To Work programme, the group of young job-seekers I got to know really helped me get a better appreciation for some of the challenges they face. I also came to realise how very specific autism is for each individual. Listening and responding to individual needs helps make life easier, especially in the workplace and whilst looking for work.

Our Workforce Plan makes a commitment to identifying and developing talent. I was keen to find out what was being done to develop autistic colleagues. A colleague from HMRC shared both positive and negative experiences with me. Past managers had made some ill-informed decisions which were very challenging for him. However, since being diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome and with the help of a very supportive colleague whose son has autism, he has been able to work with his manager to ensure that the work he undertakes, his routine and environment are all suitable and help him perform well at work and make the best use of his skills. Small simple adjustments can make a huge difference.

Some of the positive attitudes, behaviours and practices required are present and visible in the Civil Service but there is plenty of scope for building on that and raising awareness. There is also plenty that can be done to support citizens by making the process of accessing services more user friendly.

So, now that I've finished my research and scoping work, we're looking at how we can make some of this happen and create a new Civil Service Local project. It's not an easy task to take on when we already have such a crammed and diverse programme. Watch this space though, we'll keep you updated on our progress and let you know how you may be able to get involved in future. Keep reading The Network and checking the Civil Service Local blog for details.

The autism spectrum is wide and varied and the range of recommendations for activities that could make a positive difference in this project reflect that. Hence the name: Autism WIDE – Working in Diverse Environments.

You can help us get this project off the ground by volunteering to support a fundraising opportunity. We need people to help us raise money for an Autism charity during Grand National weekend. If you live in Merseyside and can help us raise money for a good cause by giving us some of your time on either the 7th, 8th or 9th of April, then we'd love to hear from you. [Please contact me for more information.](#)

Connecting whilst Building Capability

– Steve Field



The Discovery Sessions within the Civil Service Local programme are just one of the ways we offer you the chance to connect with other NW Civil Servants, whilst building your personal capability. So just what are Discovery Sessions?

Discovery Sessions are bite size learning interventions that we host in towns and cities in the NW. The key principle is that we take the learning to the location, rather than staff having to travel great distances to access it! We book the venue, organise and advertise the event, provide a CS Local introduction, do an overview of opportunities in the region and introduce a guest speaker to talk to a cross government and public sector audience for up to 90 minutes. The audience size varies from less than 20 to more than 100, and is tailored to the messages and style of the event. As a minimum we seek representatives from at least four departments to help build networks.



Discovery Sessions have been a crucial, front-facing part of CS Local since its inception more than five years ago. They have made CS Local – and through it, Government policy – real for thousands of civil servants, helping build their capability and skills.

That certainly doesn't mean they have stood still! From the Reform Plan to Digital By Default and now the "Brilliant Civil Service" vision, the sessions have evolved to offer enormous diversity in terms of both subject matter and audience.

In the last few months we have delivered (among others) sessions on Project Management, Personal Impact, Counter Terrorism, and Operational Delivery, as well as "Discover Locality" sessions in Cumbria and Liverpool. The locality sessions are particularly valuable for people who may be contemplating a change of location or department, as they give departments the chance to "showcase" their activities in a snappy, informal environment. We will soon be advertising a "Discover Lancashire" event on 13 February.

Other sessions soon to be advertised or at the planning stage include ODP, Business Continuity, “Data for Dummies”, Stakeholder Engagement, Attendance Management, Accessibility and a further round of Personal Impact sessions – along with a “Discover Manchester” event. At present we regularly visit Manchester, Liverpool, Cumbria, Cheshire, Preston and Southport – but we are always on the lookout for new venues where we can engage people from all over our region, so if you can offer one please get in touch!

We are a small team and we need resource (and favours) from a wide range of helpers in a great many departments to maintain this high standard. So if you like what you hear and would be able to assist, let us know. You don’t necessarily need to be a presenter (although if you are, good!) – we also need people who “do” administration, booking, general organisation and “meet and greet”.

We know that we need feedback to keep making our events better and better, and this is something we are working on – we have just started using Survey Monkey to give us information on how delegates apply their knowledge back in the workplace. Five years on, we remain dedicated to “making policy real” by giving our people the tools to deliver it. As one recent delegate put it:

“Sometimes it needs somebody from ‘outside the business’ to give us a level of knowledge and belief that a ‘safe’ environment can't prepare us for.”

Brilliant Civil Service? We can do that.



Current Opportunities/classified



After some very successful pilots in 2016, we are expanding our Do Digital offering throughout 2017. This means we need a pool of people to call upon to make these successful.

We are looking for people who can help and support vulnerable citizens to enable them to interact with society & do more online whether it's to help their lifestyle or to engage with government/public services.

We have events planned to run in Blackpool and Oldham, and during the coming months at new locations in Lancashire & Greater Manchester.

If you can spare a few days to support us and your manager will support the commitment then [get in touch](#) - it's all quite flexible around you.

Going Digital – ‘Friend or Foe’

A North West Continuous Improvement Learning Day



The Venue: Manchester Fire & Training Centre

The Date: 8th March 2017

Removing the Taboo of using Digital Tools and Methodology in Continuous Improvement

We have all come across Digital changes within work and our personal life. Come and join colleagues from a number of Government departments to share your success stories, views, experiences, challenges and solutions. Digitalisation will continue to knock on your door and Continuous Improvement opportunities will exist as there is always the need for improvement so we need to make sure we are ready. Enjoy our varied agenda of Continuous Improvement guest speakers, interactive workshops and networking.

To sign up for the event please use the Eventbrite link:

[Continuous Improvement—Digital Friend or Foe](#)

We are looking for different skills, new and previous attendees from mixed departments so please highlight this event to colleagues in your and other Civil Service departments if you think they will be interested in this opportunity.

Attendance is limited to 80 so don't delay, sign up today!

If you are unable to attend but would like to follow the event on the day there will be regular updates on Twitter as the days unfolds.



Civil Service
Local



**** PLEASE JOIN** CS Local Social Media**

You may not be aware as well as our blog CS Local North West also have our own [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) page. You will find out lots of information about our current projects and we regularly share stories and details of what is coming up, all at your fingertips. This will be one of our main communication channels moving forward for all things CS Local so **don't miss out—follow us today!** [@CSLocalNW](#)

www.facebook.com/CSLocalNW/



CS Live

CS Live 2017 will take place at Manchester Central on 15th June, keep your eyes open for further information. You can also check the CS Live website for details on when registration is open and details of events in other regions.



Looking for Development Opportunities in the North West?

Take a look at the Civil Service Local blog [here](#). You will find advertisements to get involved in various projects they are promoting and job opportunities available. Check it out...

Keep up to date with CS local North West on their [blog](#) for news, opportunities and more...

The Network *Cross-Department Quiz*

Get into the Romantic mood with our Valentine's Day themed quiz, and test your knowledge of love!

1. In which film do Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks meet at the top of the Empire State Building on Valentine's Day?
2. Who is the Roman God of Love?
3. Who is the Greek Goddess of Love?
4. Which Poet Laureate wrote the poem Valentine?
5. On which date is Valentine's Day celebrated?
6. What is widely regarded as 'the most beautiful monument to love ever made'?
7. Which fruit is sometimes called the love apple?
8. Who wrote 'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all'?
9. What is your star sign if your birthday is on Valentine's Day?
10. In 1537, which English King declared the holiday of Valentine's Day?
11. In which Italian city can you post Letters to Juliet?
12. Which famous building in New York lights up a red heart each Valentine's Day?
13. What does the word Valentine actually mean?
14. Where do you 'wear your heart' if you are quick to show your feelings?
15. Do Doves mate for life?



See answers in the next issue



Just for Fun *YOU*

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

		9	5					4
	8			3	9	7	2	
	5			7				
	2	7					4	6
			3	5	7			
8	1						5	7
				6				9
	4	5	7	8				6
3					2	8		

Answers from last editions Sudoku puzzle

1	5	4	8	2	6	9	3	7
3	9	6	4	7	5	1	2	8
8	2	7	3	9	1	4	6	5
9	6	1	2	5	8	3	7	4
5	4	8	6	3	7	2	1	9
2	7	3	1	4	9	5	8	6
7	1	5	9	6	3	8	4	2
6	8	2	5	1	4	7	9	3
4	3	9	7	8	2	6	5	1

The Network Back Catalogue

Click on a front cover to see a previous edition



WORDSEARCH

Can you find these words: VALENTINE, FLOWERS, HEART, LOVE, CHOCOLATES

Z	M	B	A	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	A	S	D
H	Y	U	I	O	P	D	F	V	B	N	M	S	A	F
L	K	J	N	B	V	C	X	S	E	R	T	Y	U	G
Q	S	D	F	S	H	W	E	R	V	B	N	M	A	B
Z	X	V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E	A	S	Z	X
C	V	B	N	M	A	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	S
Q	W	E	R	T	R	Y	U	I	O	P	G	H	J	E
A	S	D	F	G	T	F	F	G	B	N	M	C	A	T
E	F	S	D	G	H	T	Y	U	I	O	K	L	A	A
Q	E	L	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	O	E	V	O	L
Z	X	C	O	V	B	N	M	J	K	L	I	O	P	O
Q	W	E	R	W	A	S	F	G	B	N	M	C	V	C
Q	Z	X	X	C	E	E	R	G	H	F	D	S	A	O
M	M	N	B	V	C	R	Z	X	S	F	R	T	Y	H
W	R	F	G	B	H	I	S	I	Y	U	I	O	P	C

Answers from last editions Quiz

- France
- Charles Dickens
- 1957
- Greece
- Tchaikovsky
- Little snowflake (Snugurochka) and Grandfather Frost (Dedushka Moriz)
- It's a Wonderful Life
- Norway
- Spanish
- 10
- The Goose
- Cupid
- Sandringham
- Mr Tummus
- Turbo Man

Answers for the Cross-Department Quiz and Sudoku will feature in Issue 13 of The Network