

Connect

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FESTIVE EDITION

DECEMBER 2025
ISSUE 160

POD IS ON THE CHARGE

Melanie Lane explains how Pod is helping to shape the future of electric mobility

Dorenell Wind Farm provides £2 million of community support

Career twists and turns with Alexia Graveney at EPR Engineering

Thriving at work with the right support for disabilities

Celebrating 30 years at Doxford



EDITORS' NOTE

This month's **Big Interview** is with Melanie Lane, CEO of Pod, who tells us how they're making electric vehicle ownership easier and cheaper, while outlining Pod's role in driving An Electric Britain.

It's party time as we celebrate **30 years in Doxford**. Kev Munday, who's been there from the start, shares his memories of an amazing 42 years with the company. Meanwhile, **Dorenell Wind Farm** hosts an event with local community groups to mark five years of operation. Over this time, the project has invested more than £2 million in local projects, bringing long-lasting benefits to the area.

We hear from **Alexia Graveney** in EPR Engineering, whose career has taken unexpected twists and turns that have proved both challenging and deeply rewarding. Innovative modular construction helps the **Hinkley Point C** project progress at pace, and to mark **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** on 3 December, Colin Dryden shares his experience of having a disability and working for the company.

Last, but definitely not least – Happy Holidays to those who are able to take a break over the festive period! Enjoy our **festive-themed puzzles** and we hope you have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

JULIA NUTLEY AND KATHY MANSON
The Connect team



HINKLEY POINT B IS FUEL-FREE!

Teams at Hinkley Point B have reached a major milestone, removing all of the nuclear fuel from the site's two reactors.

The station has produced electricity since 1976, generating enough to meet the needs of every home from the tip of Cornwall to the top of Gloucestershire for 33 years.

The site started defueling in September 2022 and removed all the fuel from the reactors in just over three years. Nicola Fauvel, the outgoing Station Director, thanked the team for their "tremendous efforts and support".

The Office for Nuclear Regulation is expected to confirm the site's Fuel Free Verification in the coming weeks and Hinkley Point B will transfer to Nuclear Restoration Services late next year.

SMART CHARGING HITS 1,000 CUSTOMERS

Since the Customers team launched the Smart Charging Bolt-On in May, it's attracted more than a thousand EV drivers on GoElectric and Evolve tariffs. Smart Charging automatically charges electric vehicles when electricity is cheapest – helping customers save money and cut carbon. They can also enjoy an extra £5 off their bill each month for using Smart Charging.

FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER FOR SMART CHARGING



COP30 BRASIL AMAZÔNIA BELÉM 2025

COP30 PUSHES FOR FASTER CLIMATE ACTION

The 30th annual Climate Change Conference, COP30, took place in Belém, Brazil in November.

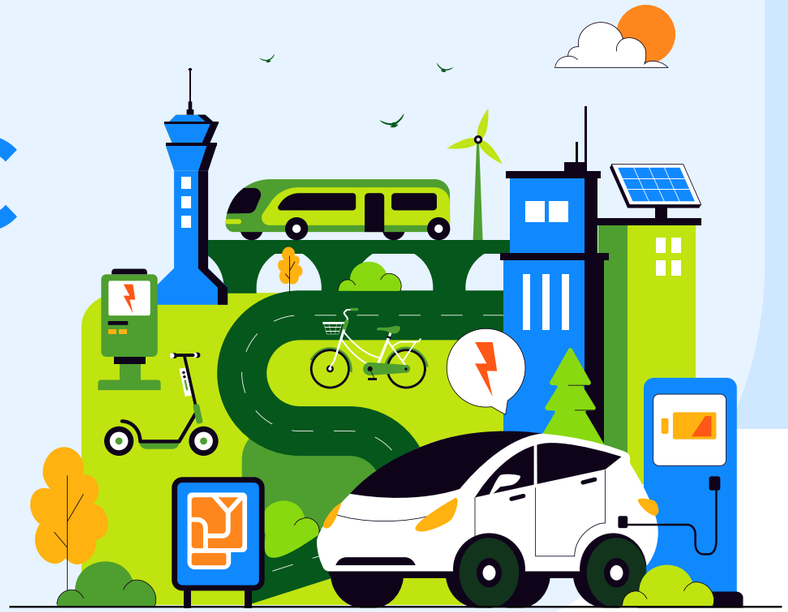
Delegates agreed to triple adaptation finance by 2035, providing vital funding to help communities and ecosystems build resilience against the impacts of climate change. In addition, 120 countries updated their 2035 emissions targets, signalling renewed ambition to cut greenhouse gases.

EDF joined 135,000 businesses in calling for a faster transition away from fossil fuels. While the final agreement stopped short of explicitly naming fossil fuels, the momentum behind clean energy and climate resilience continues to grow.

FIND OUT MORE ON eNZO

DRIVING AN ELECTRIC BRITAIN

Adventure lover **Melanie Lane**, CEO of Pod, shares her vision for the company, the challenges ahead, and how Pod is helping shape the future of electric mobility.



> Our focus is on delivering the right products and propositions to meet customer needs, with a way of working that allows us to deliver at pace.



TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

I live near Cheltenham with my husband and we have three children aged 19, 17 and 12. My husband is Australian and we've lived all over the world – in Sydney, Melbourne, Milan, Amsterdam, Singapore, Johannesburg and London. This global experience has shaped our love for adventure and travel. I also enjoy reading, theatre and entertaining friends – I love a full house.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AS CEO OF POD?

I focus on three core areas. First, I'm accountable for the profitability of the organisation and delivering value to our shareholders. Second, I'm responsible for our people – creating an environment where they can thrive and deliver their best work.

And third, I ensure we are staying true to our mission of making EVs easy, accessible and as cost effective as possible for everyone, through products and service that customers love, choose and recommend.

HOW DOES POD WORK WITH EDF?

EDF has supported Pod for many years as an owner, part-owner and shareholder. In August, we officially became part of the EDF family again. As full owner, EDF provides a level of stability and longevity that's rare in our sector and gives us a strategic edge. The EV market is volatile, but there's strong commitment from the energy industry, mobility sector and government to make it succeed.

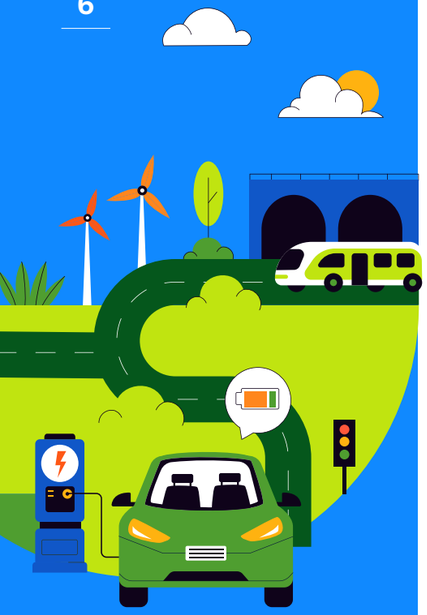
In terms of customers at home, our partnership gives us broader opportunities to meet the key needs of energy cost and charging convenience – both critical when transitioning to an EV. With EDF, we can create propositions that give meaningful value including through competitive tariffs and flexible charging.

EDF already has strong relationships with SMEs and large industrial and commercial customers, who are all going through the electrification transition. Whether it's core to their business – like fleet operators – or part of a broader corporate sustainability strategy, we're able to partner with EDF to help them in their transition.

There's also huge potential to work with EDF's other businesses in heat pumps and solar to provide customers with connected solutions for their homes.

From a people perspective, I love the dynamic of bringing together a large corporate with a smaller, more agile organisation. Pod has a purpose-driven culture with a deep understanding of EV products and tech, while EDF brings structure, resources and multiple capabilities. Together, we can leverage the best of both and create something magical.

Power of the People



WHAT IS POD DRIVE?

Pod Drive helps customers who value cost and simplicity access a charger. For a monthly fee they get a charger, warranty and 7,500 miles covered through cashback.

It doesn't matter who their energy provider is, the value is delivered throughout the year. It's a simple, accessible way to get started with EV charging without worrying about upfront costs or fluctuating energy prices.

SIGN UP TO POD DRIVE ON POD-POINT.COM

> We want to make the transition to **An Electric Britain** convenient, cost-effective and empowering. It's about giving our customers control and confidence as they move towards electrification.

WHAT KEY TRENDS ARE SHAPING THE EV MARKET?

We're seeing a shift from early adopters, who are more tolerant of clunky tech and complex processes, to the mass market, who need solutions that are simple and more effective. The focus is no longer just on the charger's functionality; customers are thinking holistically about the overall ease and cost of EV ownership. Tariffs are now a major consideration, which wasn't the case three years ago.

While the trajectory is clear, the road is bumpy, and media coverage around EVs is mixed. Pod and EDF need to show leadership with a positive, future-focused message that customers can buy into. EDF has a vital role in advocacy and working with government to help shape that narrative.

WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE EV SECTOR FACE, AND HOW IS POD ADDRESSING THEM?

We need to look beyond selling individual chargers and recognise our role in the wider electrification agenda. It's about working with EDF and other partners to deliver solutions across the whole ecosystem – competitive tariffs, support for fleet leasing companies and products that reward flexible energy use.

We're not just competing with hardware providers anymore, utility companies like Octopus are also integrating home energy solutions so the market is more diverse than three years ago. Our focus is on delivering the right products and propositions to meet customer needs, with a way of working that allows us to deliver at pace.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

Firstly, to make sure the business is profitable by ensuring Pod is seen as a compelling choice for all things EV charging in the sales channels that matter most, in a way that complements and leverages the EDF Group. Secondly, to continue to embed our culture to thrive around our values of truth, edge and care. Finally, to up our game on driving customer centred propositions, innovation and excellence in delivery. If we get these three things right, I'm confident we'll hit our financial targets over the next 12 months.

HOW DOES POD WORK WITH WHOLESALE MARKET SERVICES (WMS)?

WMS is our partner in aggregating and flexing energy demand from our chargers. By pooling this demand, we can participate in capacity and wholesale markets, generating value through flexibility. It's essentially like creating a virtual power station across multiple households. The grid pays for this flexibility, and WMS helps us optimise supply and demand, making our assets valuable contributors to grid stability.



HOW ARE YOU HELPING CUSTOMERS TRANSITION TO AN ELECTRIC BRITAIN?

We want to make the transition convenient, cost-effective and empowering. It's about giving our customers control and confidence as they move towards electrification.



MODULAR MAGIC

Pre-casting and lifting key sections with Big Carl boosts progress for Unit 2 at Hinkley Point C.



The innovative use of modular has seen Hinkley Point C make big strides for Unit 2's Safeguard Buildings.

In Unit 1, pouring the complex section of concrete that sits underneath the Main Control Room proved particularly challenging. It was therefore agreed that in Unit 2, this part of the building would be pre-cast and lifted into place by Big Carl, the word's biggest land-based crane.

This approach cut the construction programme by 10 weeks and saved around 5,000 hours of work.

WEATHERING ANY STORM

Meanwhile, over on Unit 1 the first of four Safeguard Buildings is now weatherproof, with the other three buildings soon to follow. It means mechanical, electrical and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) works can accelerate as they meet their challenge to double performance by Christmas.

The Safeguard Buildings play a vital role in nuclear safety, ensuring that nuclear fuel is always cooled and contained. They are designed to withstand external hazards such as flooding and earthquakes.

A BIG DAY IN BURGUNDY

Teams from Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C celebrated the completion of the second reactor pressure vessel (RPV) for Hinkley Point C at Framatome's St Marcel factory in Burgundy.

The RPV is the steel cylinder that contains nuclear fuel, where the chain reaction takes place to generate heat and power the turbine.

The Hinkley Point C delegation also formally received the first two completed Steam Generators for Unit 2, which will be sent later in 2026.



DORENELL DELIVERS £2 MILLION OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Scottish onshore wind farm project has had a hugely positive effect on the local community.

The wind farm's Community Benefit Fund has awarded more than 100 grants over the last five years, supporting residents of all ages from across Dufftown, Auchindoun, Glenrinnes, Glenlivet, Inveravon and the Cabrach in Moray, Scotland. This takes the total amount of grants in that time to more than £2 million

Administered by Foundation Scotland, the benefit fund has supported a broad range of projects with the average grant around £21,000. These have included projects like footpaths, bike trails, tree planting and playparks as well as improvements to several well-loved community facilities such as village halls and community centres.



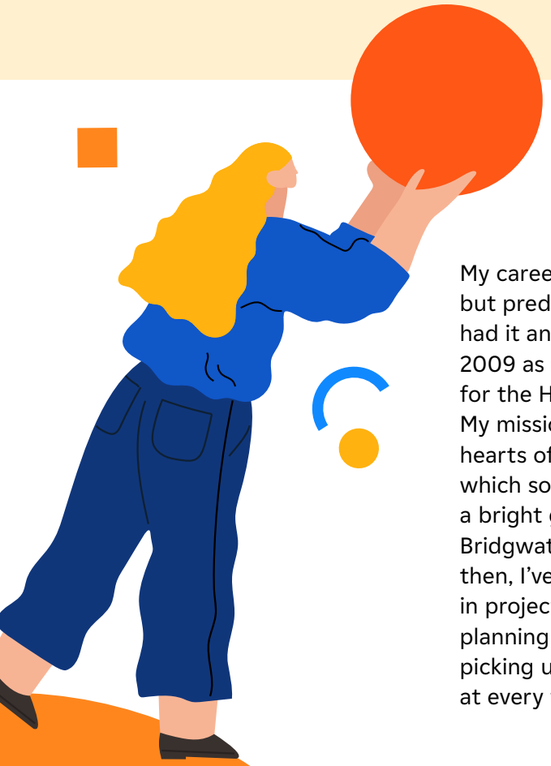
Beyond the Community Benefit Fund, the wind farm's ranger service and visitor centre also contributes greatly to the local economy by employing local people and providing opportunities for communities to enjoy the countryside while learning about wildlife and the environment.

Over the last year, the team has connected with more than a thousand people of all ages through an events programme which has included weekly health walks, bike rides and school visits, and continues to expand its reach every year.

LIFE IS NOT A STRAIGHT LINE



Alexia Graveney, Head of Communications for EPR Engineering, reflects on the twists and turns of her career and why embracing the unexpected has been her greatest reward.



My career at EDF has been anything but predictable and I wouldn't have had it any other way. I started in 2009 as a Communications Officer for the Hinkley Point C project. My mission was to win over the hearts of the local community, which sometimes meant driving a bright green electric car around Bridgwater in Somerset. Since then, I've zigzagged through roles in project management, workforce planning and communications, picking up new skills and friends at every turn.





SUCCESS IS PERSONAL

JUST SAY 'YES'

Saying yes to different and challenging projects has kept me energised. My attitude has been that if the opportunity presents itself, then why not take it? We have a workplace culture that encourages curiosity, and I've been lucky enough to have some brilliant mentors who've supported me every step of the way. I've never followed a straight path, but that's made every day feel like an adventure, not a checklist.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

Never underestimate the power of relationships. All of my sideways moves and promotions happened because of the networks I've built with people. Be brave, ask questions and always deliver on your promises. Variety and a bit of courage are the secret to staying inspired and making a real impact. I wouldn't change a thing!

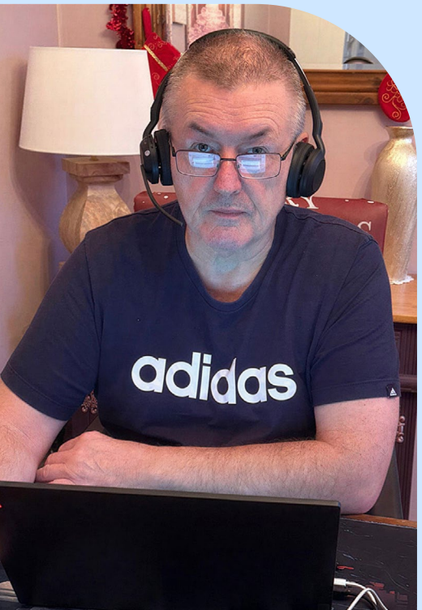


THRIVING AT WORK WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT





To mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December, we spoke to **Colin Dryden**, an Energy Specialist in Retail, about his experience of working at the company with a disability.



TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

I've been married for 42 years and have two grown-up children – one still lives at home, and the other lives just next door! I'm an avid DIY-er and love watching movies.

WHAT ROLE DO YOU HAVE IN THE COMPANY?

I support engineers in the field with any questions or live issues that they have when they're installing or repairing smart meters.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY?

I had septicaemia when I was 10 weeks old, which is when bacteria enters the bloodstream. As a toddler, I couldn't walk properly and developed septic arthritis, which dissolved my hip joint. I've had multiple procedures including three hip replacements, two debridements (removal of dead, damaged or infected tissue), a knee replacement and a tendon release in my calf, which has left me with muscle wastage and mobility struggles.

DO YOU FEEL YOUR DISABILITY AFFECTS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY WORK?

I feel fine in myself, but my reduced mobility means I take longer to do things during work hours such as make a drink or have a toilet break. I work from home full-time now, as I get tired easily when I go out. I couldn't attend immersion training in person recently but was able to join remotely.

HOW HAS THE COMPANY SUPPORTED YOU?

When I was in the office, I had a special seat to make sure I was comfortable, which I purchased through the government's Access to Work scheme. I now have the same setup at home. I don't need anything else – there's no great difference between myself and other people, just my mobility.

My manager understands why I work from home and knows she can contact me any time via Teams or email. During the Covid pandemic, I was hospitalised and was given a direct phone number for my manager and a phased return, which gave me time to adjust and get back to normal. Everyone has been so supportive.

> "There's no great difference between myself and other people, just my mobility. It can feel intrusive to ask for help but by talking you can get the best out of a situation.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE CARERS AND ACCESSIBILITY NETWORK?

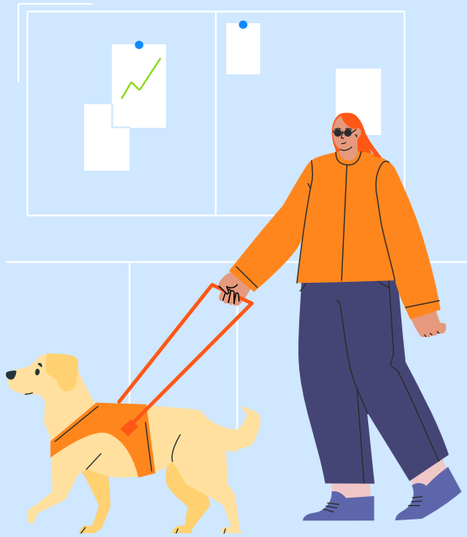
Yes, I join the discussions to hear other people's experiences. I didn't know much about how to get support and the network gives the chance to talk, get ideas and share knowledge. Longer term, it'll help me understand my own needs better and how I might get assistance in the future.

WHAT COULD THE COMPANY DO BETTER TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES?

I've had a good experience over my years with EDF, but I think managers generally should ask more questions and really listen to that individual. By understanding someone's needs and knowing what support is available, they can help them to be productive.

CAN YOU OFFER ANY ADVICE TO OTHERS?

Don't be afraid to reach out. A lot of people with disabilities have an inbuilt mentality to just get on with it. It can feel intrusive to ask for help but by talking you can get the best out of a situation.



NORTH EAST KNEES-UP

November marked a fantastic celebration of 30 years in Doxford, featuring an anniversary lunch, a 90s-themed party and a special Retail family dinner.

We caught up with Retail Team Leader, **Kev Munday**, who's been with the company for four decades, to hear his favourite memories.



Kev Munday (second from right) and some of his team at the celebrations

I started at London Electricity in 1983 when I was 16. When Customer Services relocated to the North East I was asked to train the new starters for six weeks, but I never left! I loved Sunderland straight away, particularly as my first home was a beautiful cottage by the sea in Seaburn.

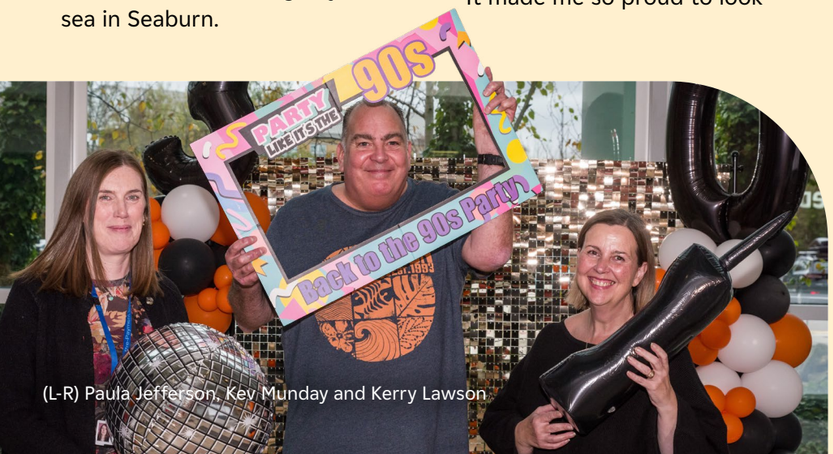
MATTER OF FAX

I have so many wonderful memories, from processing customer payments on paper slips and by fax to wearing a hard hat for my first tour of Endeavour House in 1996, and more recently celebrating the Kraken migration. It made me so proud to look around and see how far we've come, from 24 new starters back then to around 1200 people today.

HIGH ENERGY

Leading my team of 17, I'm continually inspired by their drive and passion. I hope that my enthusiasm and approachable nature encourages and motivates them in return. Doxford feels like home. I love the energy, the people and the sense of family we've built together. Every day brings new challenges, but the company's support and investment in us makes all the difference. That's why I've worked here for 42 years!

READ MORE ON eNZO



(L-R) Paula Jefferson, Kev Munday and Kerry Lawson

SOLAR GAINS IN RAINFOREST TERRAIN



Deep in the Amazon rainforest, two hybrid solar plants are providing clean, sustainable energy and reducing noise pollution.

Since late 2024, the towns of Requena and Tamshiyacu in Peru have been powered by hybrid solar and battery plants, replacing diesel generators. Delivered by Amazonas Energía Solar – a joint venture between EDF and Novum Solar – the installations are part of the INTI project, which aims to bring sustainable energy to remote communities.

The switch to hybrid solar has significantly reduced CO_2 emissions and noise pollution, improving quality of life for residents. In Tamshiyacu, thermal generation (fuel-burning) now accounts for just 10% of electricity production.

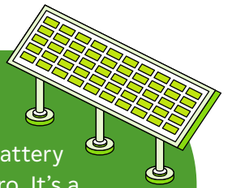
EDF Agregio supplied the Energy Management System and won the battery tenders. Logistics were particularly complex, with equipment travelling by river and road through dense rainforest terrain.

Further projects are underway, including a 100 MW hybrid plant in Iquitos and two hydropower developments. Over 20 years, Requena and Tamshiyacu are expected to avoid 150,000 tonnes of CO_2 – a major step forward for low-carbon energy in challenging environments.



Tamshiyacu, Peru

READ MORE ON VIVRE ONLINE



WHAT IS A HYBRID SOLAR PLANT?

A hybrid solar plant combines solar panels with battery storage and often has a backup like diesel or hydro. It's a smart and reliable way to bring clean energy to more remote places, like the rainforest, that aren't connected to the grid.

CELEBRATING A DECADE AT CANNINGTON COURT

Cannington Court has marked its 10-year anniversary with a dinner for staff and guests from the local community.

Fully refurbished in 2015, it was rebuilt as a state-of-the-art training centre where teams from across the company could meet, collaborate and learn.

Over the last decade, Cannington Court has supported the launch of Hinkley Point Visitors' Centre and assisted with Hinkley Point C's operations, including hosting cutting-edge European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) simulators.

In 2020, Cannington opened its doors to external businesses, generating a valuable income stream to support its operation.

The site has a strong presence within the local community, offering support to local groups and initiatives and has hosted many VIP guests.









DOUBLE DONATIONS AND £1000 DRAW THIS GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is a global celebration of generosity, inspiring us all to make a positive impact. To mark the occasion and thank our amazing Payroll Giving donors, Hands On Payroll Giving will match your donations for the week of 1-7 December (up to £30 per person). Plus, everyone who donates can take part in a £1,000 prize draw.

Nearly 700 colleagues already give over £36,000 each month to more than 300 charities. You can set up or adjust your Payroll Giving via MyBenefits.

ENTER THE PRIZE DRAW ON THE HANDS ON WEBSITE

QUIZMAS WITH THE NETWORKS

The festive quiz sees our Employee Networks collaborating on one last hurrah for 2025. This year there'll be questions on music, pop culture and our networks – plus a picture round.

It's a celebration of all of us, no matter our age, faith, background, the job we do, or where we work.

Join us on 23 December to celebrate together just before the holiday season!

SIGN UP ON eNZO OR USE THE QR CODE

WMS WINS BIG AT ENERGY STORAGE AWARDS

Wholesale Market Services (WMS) celebrated a double win at the Energy Storage Awards in November. **The team were declared the Trading and Optimisation Team of the Year**, having surpassed 1GW of operational battery storage and secured 4.3GW* under contract.

They also bagged the Breakthrough R&D and Innovation of the Year award, by delivering a 2.5MW 'behind the meter' battery at a major UK sporting venue and integrating Pod EV charging into the PowerShift Virtual Power Plant – both firsts of their kind.

*Correct at time of award entry in August 2025





"These wins belong to every team working with ambition, expertise and collaboration to deliver commercial excellence, customer value and a more flexible and resilient energy system for the UK.



CHRISTOPHER DALLEY
DIRECTOR WMS

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT THIS CHRISTMAS

It's a heartbreaking fact that for many people living with dementia, Christmas is a dark time, with 65% of carers saying dementia has "robbed" them of a carefree and joyful festive season, and one in four (24%) people with dementia no longer able to take part in any Christmas activities.

If you need support this Christmas, Alzheimer's Society can provide expert advice through its helpline, one-to-one practical support from a Dementia Adviser, and a kind voice on the phone through Companion Calls.

Visit the **Alzheimer's Society website** for advice on how to support someone living with dementia at Christmas.



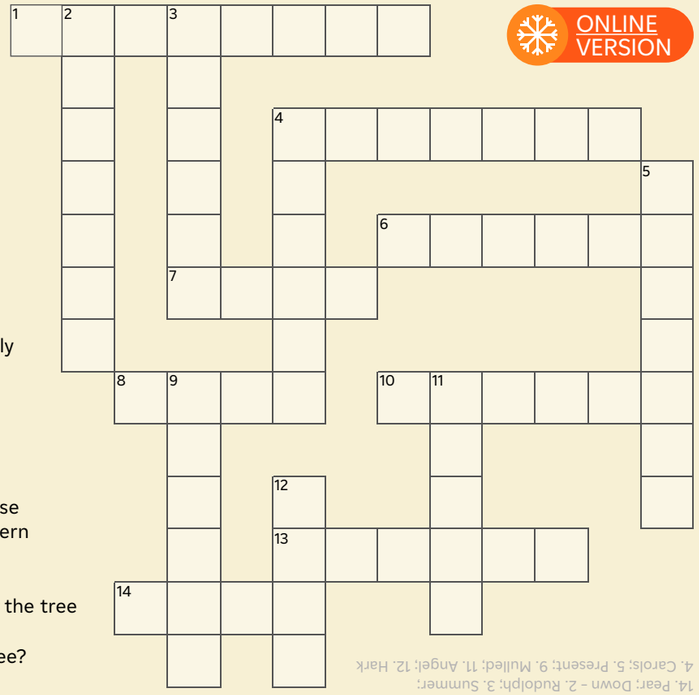
2025 FESTIVE PUZZLES

Hang up your stockings, put the turkey in the oven and settle in with our festive brainteasers.

CROSSWORD

Answer the clues to solve our December crossword.

ONLINE VERSION



ACROSS

1. Type of sprout 'enjoyed' at Christmas
4. Pulled with a bang
6. Worn for warmth, often festive themed
7. Santa's landing pad
8. December 25th, in short
10. Tree decoration that's sparkly and round
13. Countdown calendar with chocolate
14. 'And a partridge in a _tree'

DOWN

2. Reindeer with a glowing nose
3. Festive season in the Southern Hemisphere
4. Often sung door-to-door
5. Wrapped and placed under the tree
9. Festive hot wine
11. Heavenly figure atop the tree?
12. '_ the Herald Angels Sing'

Answers: Across – 1. Brussels; 4. Cracker; 6. Jumper; 7. Roof; 8. Xmas; 10. Bauble; 13. Advent; 14. Pear; Down – 2. Rudolph; 3. Summer; 4. Carols; 5. Present; 9. Mulled; 11. Angel; 12. Hark

QUIZ

1. Which city has been donating Trafalgar Square's Christmas tree to London every year since 1947?
A. Oslo
B. Geneva
C. Stockholm

2. What band had the hit single 'Last Christmas', which originally went to number two in 1984?
A. Duran Duran
B. Erasure
C. Wham!

3. In the song The Twelve Days of Christmas, what is given on the fifth day?
A. Golden geese
B. Gold rings
C. Golden bells

4. If you're born on Christmas day, what's your star sign?
A. Scorpio
B. Sagittarius
C. Capricorn

5. In Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol, what was the first name of Scrooge?
A. Ebenezer
B. Edward
C. Edgar

6. Which of these is one of Santa's reindeer?
A. Prancer
B. Glitter
C. Leaper

7. Which British monarch made the first Christmas broadcast in 1932?
A. Queen Victoria
B. King George V
C. King Edward VIII

8. Which of the following is NOT a name for the 26th of December?
A. Boxing Day
B. Saint Stephen's Day
C. Little Christmas

9. What do children traditionally get from Santa if they're on the 'Naughty List'?
A. Lump of coal
B. Tangerine
C. Nuts

10. Which country is credited with starting the tradition of sending Christmas cards?
A. Germany
B. United Kingdom
C. United States

Answers: 1A; 2C; 3B; 4C; 5A; 6A; 7B; 8C; 9A; 10B

WORD SEARCH

Answer our crossword clues then see if you can find the answers in our word search.

ONLINE VERSION





CONNECT'S PHOTO COMPETITION

George Mendham, a Digital Data Project Lead in Retail, reflects on a moment that mattered to him, the inspiration behind this year's photo competition. He said: "We hadn't seen anything all day. As we were driving out of the reserve, this owl suddenly flew right across the front of the car and perched on the fence. It stayed on the fence for a good 5-10 minutes allowing us to see it in all its glory."

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