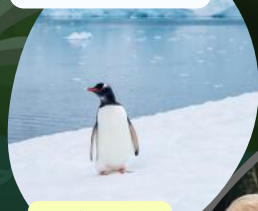


MAY, 2026

THE LIGHTER SIDE

MORE THAN JUST STORIES

WILDLIFE



EMPEROR
PENGUINS
ENDANGERED

NERD ZONE

HOW BIG A MESSI
FAN ARE
YOU?



DAVID ATTENBOROUGH'S
GRAND CENTURY!

SPACE



ARTEMIS II'S
MOON MISSION



WORLD EVENTS

THE RAT THAT BECAME
A SUPERHERO

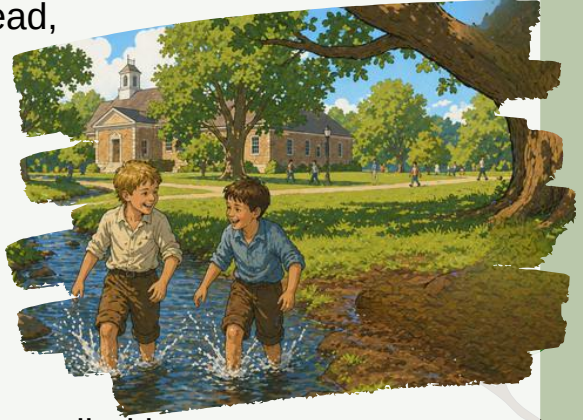
FOR

7 to 10 year olds

David Attenborough

turns 100

In 1926, a young boy called David Attenborough popped into this world. Later, when it was time to go to school, he did not go to one with dusty walls and wooden benches. Instead, most of his learning took place in a wide and woody university campus. It had ancient oak trees that he could climb, a gurgling brook of water that he waded into and acres of mud he rolled in.



His dad was the principal of the Leicester University in England. So David and his two brothers roamed the grounds happily.

David was someone with an unusual interest in collecting fossils. He also loved whispering secrets with spiders.



David staring at a spider

David, you've
been staring at
that spider for
three hours.



David and his brother

It hasn't
moved.
Neither will I.

Father, check
this new
fossil I found



Nice. But David, a
specimen without a
context is just a curio.
Where did you find it?

The limestone bed by
the brook, Father. I
have already dated
and recorded it in my
notebook.

Then you have
not a stone, but
a letter from the
ancient past.



By age ten, his room was a miniature museum.
Drawers were organized by **phylum***:

“Birds” (feathers, eggs),

“Geology” (fossils, stones),

“Insects” (in pinned boxes).

He had a second-hand microscope on his table, a gift for his birthday.

**In biology, a phylum is a major group used to classify living things. It's like a big folder where scientists put organisms that share a basic body plan or are closely related through evolution. For example, spiders and beetles belong to the Phylum Arthropoda.*

He would spend hours drawing what he saw - honeybee wings; the compound eye of a fly.



At age eleven, David Attenborough made a discovery more thrilling than any fossil. Not of a creature, but of money.

The zoology department in his father's college needed specimens. Live newts. And they were willing to pay three pence per newt.

And that was a **FORTUNE** for a boy with empty pockets and a pond nearby.



The pond was a murky green, no more than ten minutes from David's back door. It teemed with newts (he even knew their Latin name - *Triturus vulgaris*).

They were absurdly easy to catch. All you needed was a jam jar and lots of patience.

The creatures, with their orange bellies and drowsy eyes, seemed almost willing to be captured.





Every Saturday morning a 11-year-old David Attenborough sat for hours by the pond fishing for newts.



Tadpoles? Back you go into the pond.

Ah. There you are. A newt. Perfect.



Hello boy, am I here for an interview?

David collected 6 newts in a jar and first showed them to his friends, and then took them to the lab assistant

Person of the Month

Look, six fine specimens. All *Triturus vulgaris*. I counted



Here's your eighteen pence David.



Remember, these are for observation only. You can't hurt them. Hand them back to me next week same time. I will send them back to the pond.



You're a bit of a pest, boy, but lovely doing business with you



Years later, Sir David would tell this story with a twinkle in his eye. Not because of the money he made, but because of what the newts had taught him.



First: that nature was both beautiful and valuable. A pond could be a bank vault if you knew the password.

Second: that grown-ups KNEW STUFF but had no patience to lie down in the mud and wait for an hour to find newts.

Third and most important: negotiate what you really want. For him, the safety of newts was paramount. So he had negotiated the safe return of every newt to the pond.

26-year old David

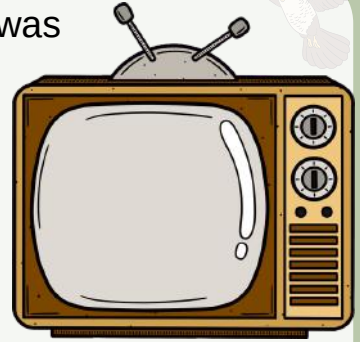
David now needed a job. So he walked into the offices of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and said

I would like to make programmes for this magical glowing box that sits in people's living rooms.



And then he went home and realised: he hadn't the foggiest idea what actually came out of this thing called TV. He had never owned one. He had never seen a single program that came on it. (*The year was 1952!*)

David Attenborough got the job. It was mainly because he did *NOT* own a television. The BBC executives wanted someone fresh, someone who had spent his life looking at things wondrously; rather than looking through a screen at other people's ideas.



Within three years, David Attenborough had invented a new form of television program. It was called the NATURE documentary. He sent a cameraman to a zoo to film a live pangolin. This was a creature most viewers had never even heard of.

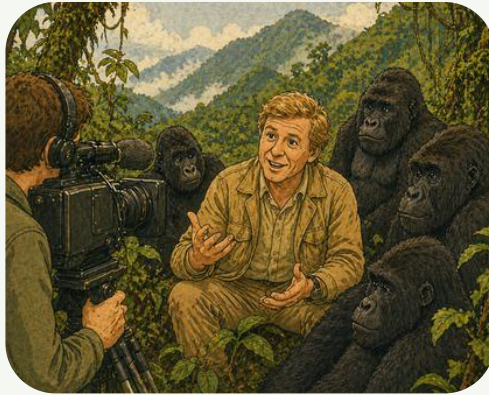


He commissioned a programme called Zoo Quest, and he went out into the wild himself, holding animals up to the camera like a mischievous uncle showing off his garden treasures.



Fifty year old David. The year was 1976. David had become the most popular face of natural history on television. About this time, he was filming '*Life on Earth*', his grand masterpiece.

He was in Rwanda, in the muddy mountain jungles of Africa. He was sitting on damp ground, waiting for a gorilla called Pablo.



The BBC cameramen had a simple plan. David would sit quietly among Pablo and his friends. He would explain how these magnificent creatures share ninety-eight percent of our DNA. Then he would stand up, brush off his trousers, and move to the next location.

Pablo, however, had not read the script.

What happened next has become the stuff of television legend.

Pablo walked directly up to David Attenborough. He sniffed the air. He tilted his head. He looked David up and down with the slow, deliberate curiosity of a creature who has never seen anything quite like this before.

Then Pablo did something utterly extraordinary. He turned around. And he sat down on David Attenborough's lap.

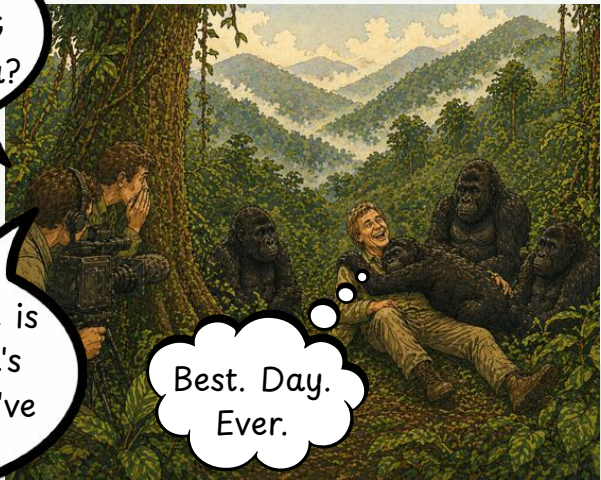
Like... a man settling into a favourite armchair after a long day. Pablo wiggled slightly, found a comfortable position, and let out a deep, rumbling sigh of contentment.

David Attenborough, the most famous naturalist in the world, had become a gorilla sofa.

Are you... are you **GETTING** this on camera?

The microphone is under a gorilla's bottom, mate. I've got nothing.

Best. Day. Ever.





For over seven decades, he continued to present masterpieces on BBC.

Life on Earth (1979) was the one that started it all, tracing evolution from the first slimy cell to the upright ape.

Then came **The Living Planet** (1984),

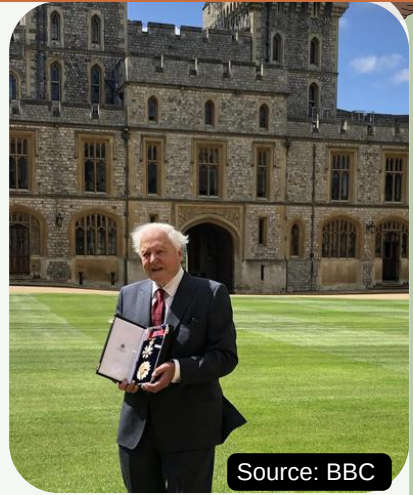
The Trials of Life (1990), and

The Blue Planet (2001), which revealed that we knew more about the Moon than our own oceans.

Planet Earth (2006) brought high-definition wonders into living rooms, while

Frozen Planet (2011) captured polar magic before the ice began to vanish.

Along the way he won multiple awards. At least 20 species and genera have been named in his honor, including a lizard, a frog, a tree, a marsupial lion, a fish species, and a 560 million year old fossil.



The Queen of England knighted him. Which means, from here-on, we shall refer to him as SIR David Attenborough.

The year is 1986. Sir David was sixty years old. So far, he had knelt in the mud with newts. He had been sat upon by gorillas. He had watched birds do their dances in jungles. He thought the world as he knew it, would last forever.

It did not.

The year was 1998. Sir David was diving under the sea to see the Great Barrier Reef. He had swum there a few decades earlier. Back then, the coral had been a riot of purples and oranges and pinks, like a garden that had gone completely mad with joy.

Now he descended again. Mask on. Flippers ready. Childhood excitement fizzing in his old bones.

And then he saw it.

White. Everywhere. Bone-white. Ghost-white. The colour of something that had given up.



At first, Sir David told himself it was a temporary thing. Maybe the sea had a fever and then it would recover.

But then he went to the Arctic. And the Antarctic. And the mountains in between.

The ice, you see, was also vanishing.

So far, Sir David had never spoken about climate change and politics. He believed his job was to show the world, not to lecture people. After watching the coral bleach and the ice caps melt, he broke his own rule. He was over ninety years by then.

He was filming Blue Planet II. in the year 2017. It was to be the final episode.

His script said: "The reef is under threat from rising temperatures."

Sir David spoke into his mic: "This is happening to the reef because WE have warmed the world."



The producers gasped. Sir David Attenborough, the man who never preached, had just pointed a finger.

"I am nearly a hundred years old," he said. "If I do not say it now, when will I?"

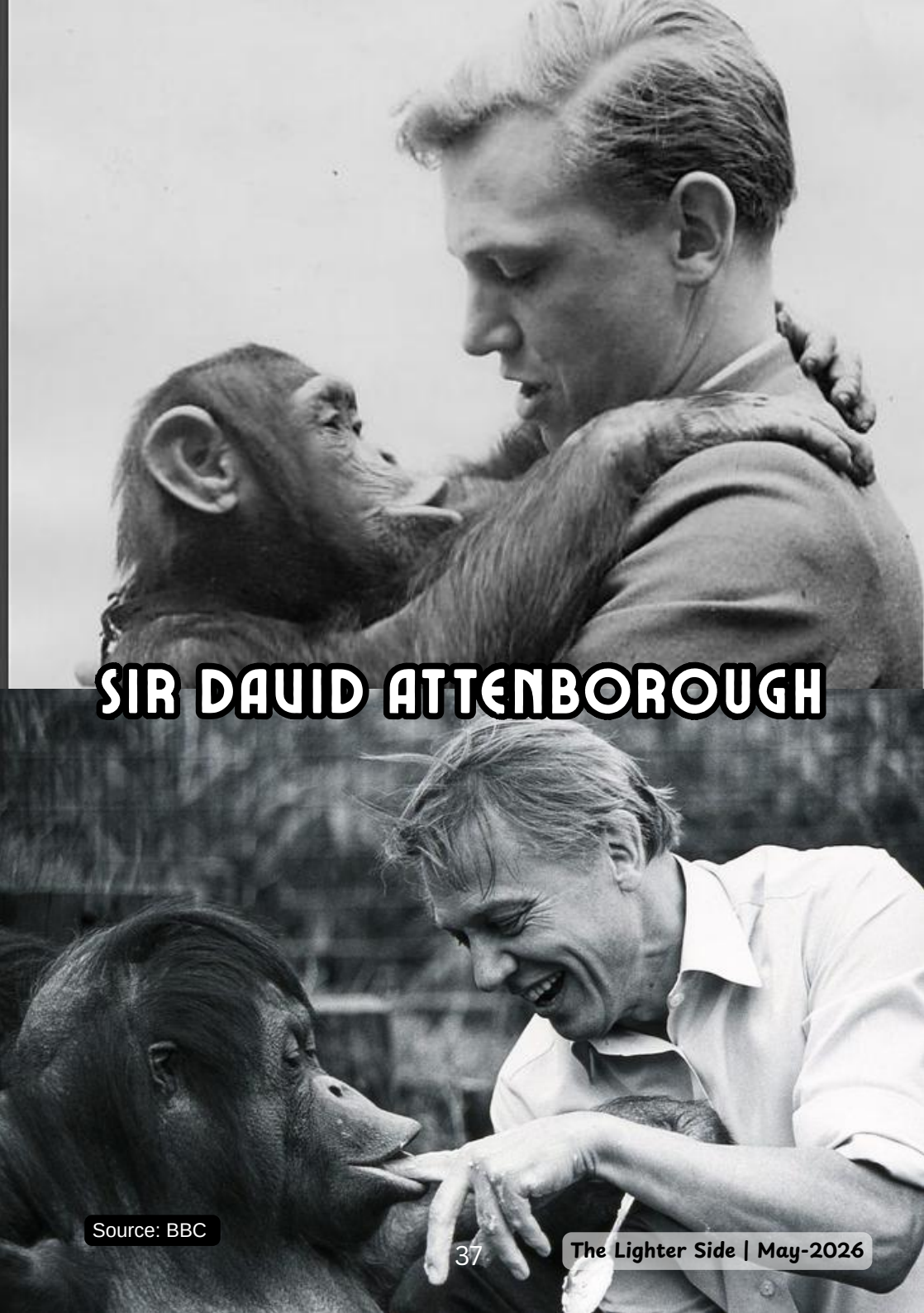
Roald Dahl once wrote that a little magic can take you a long way. Sir David spent a lifetime showing us the magic of nature. ***As he quietly approaches his one hundredth birthday (he turns 100 on May 8, 2026),*** he is still curious and still kneeling beside some muddy pond in his imagination.

Happy century, old man. You have warmed the hearts of grandparents, parents, and children all at once. You have taught us that a beetle is as beautiful as a bear, that a newt is worth three pence of anyone's time, and that the world is worth saving simply because it exists.

You made us all look up from our screens and into the wild, and for that, the planet will be forever grateful.



BIRTHDAY



SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

Source: BBC

Match the Moment

Story sequencing puzzle

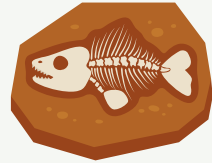
Arrange them in the correct timeline as per the story



a



b



c



d



e



f



g



h



i

Solution g, h, b, e, d, i, a, c, f

The Lighter Side

monthly Children's magazine



SUBSCRIBE



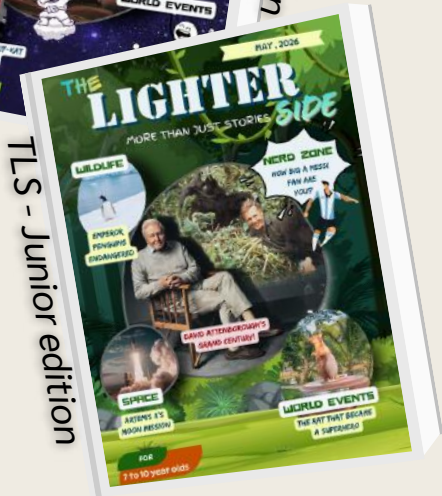
to our monthly kids
magazine to read:

**Book
recommendations**

**International
events**

**Age appropriate
news**

**Stories, Puzzles,
Games, Trivia**



SUBSCRIBE



thecronica.com

It's very funny. I loved every topic, especially America and Israel attacking Iran (that was my favourite). I enjoyed reading about the balloon guy who took off from his friend's backyard. Please add more animal stories in your next magazine.

-Myra Chakravarty (9-year old, Dubai)

I really enjoyed the masterclass you had on the Iran war. It was fun talking to other children about what they feel about the two sides fighting.

- Jahnvi (7-year old, Bengaluru)

Lighter Side is a monthly publication dedicated to making general knowledge and science accessible and engaging for young minds. Our child-friendly content includes a podcast and a newsletter that cover a wide range of topics. We also help children become better writers through our Writing Courses. Scan the QR codes below to find out more. You can also reach us at hello@wsnt.in



GIFT THE MAGAZINE



**READ THE
NEWSLETTER**