

the  
**SUNDAY  
TIMES**

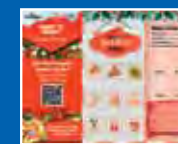
SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 28, 2025

# FUN DAY TIMES



**Top Ten Kekulu Art Winners**

Pic. by M. A. Pushpa Kumara



**New**

**COMPETITIONS**  
PAGES 2 & 4



**LANDMARKS**  
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**ONLINE**



**FAMOUS PEOPLE**  
PAGE 5

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**Bizzy Minds Publishing**

**FUNDAY TIMES**

**'READY TO ORDER?'**  
*Holiday Challenge*

**Can You Prepare Santa's Order?**  
*Scan the code to listen and play*

**Stand a Chance to Win 'The Ready To Order?' Sticker Book**

**SANTA'S TREAT HOUSE MENU**

<b>Apple Pie</b> 	<b>Cookie Plate</b> 	<b>Love Cake</b> 
<b>Reindeer Carrot Sticks</b> 	<b>The Elf Slice Mini Pizza</b> 	<b>Kringle Lasagne</b> 
<b>Candy Cane Shake</b> 	<b>Mug of Milk</b> 	<b>Hot Milo</b> 

**Waiter's Order Sheet**

Restaurant: .....

Customer: .....

Order Taken By.....

Paste the items below & write the quantity

Quantity.....	Quantity.....
Quantity.....	Quantity.....

Please include your Full Name, Date of Birth, Home Address, Telephone Number and Email when sending in the Order Sheet clipping to enter the competition. Send the completed cut-out by post to: Funday Times, 'Ready to Order, Holiday Challenge', No. 8, Hunupitiya Cross Road, Colombo 2 or scan and email the clipping to [fundaytimes1@gmail.com](mailto:fundaytimes1@gmail.com) Send your entries by Dec. 31, 2025

**Kekulu Punchi Siththaru 2025**

**Siddhalepa SINCE 1934**

**කෙකුළු පුඤ්ච සිත්තරු - 2025**

**Winners of the 11th Siddhalepa Kekulu Punchi Siththaru Art Competition were felicitated at a colourful awards ceremony held on December 14, 2025 at the J.R. Jayewardene Centre in Colombo.**

**1st Place - Dahami Vibhavi**

**First, Second & Third Place Winners**

**1st Place Dahami Vibhavi**

**2nd Place Nethum Nemsara**

**3rd Place Sanuli Thanya Liyanage**

**Winners of the 11th Siddhalepa Kekulu Punchi Siththaru Art Competition were felicitated at a colourful awards ceremony held on December 14, 2025 at the J.R. Jayewardene Centre in Colombo.**

**Pix by M. A. Pushpa Kumara**

# Cologne Cathedral

**Cologne Cathedral (also known as Kölner Dom) is a famous church in Cologne, Germany. It is the main Catholic church for the Archbishop of Cologne.**

**It's a huge example of Gothic architecture. The cathedral was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. This cathedral is Germany's most visited landmark, with about 6 million visitors every year. Standing at 157 m (515 feet) tall, it is the tallest church in the world with two spires.**

The site of Cologne Cathedral has been occupied by Christian churches since about the 4<sup>th</sup> century. An older cathedral was destroyed by fire in 1248, and immediately thereafter work began on the present cathedral, which was designed in the Gothic style in emulation of French church architecture.

The project then stalled for centuries. Restoration work began in the 1820s.

In 1842, a new cornerstone was laid by King Frederick William IV of Prussia, and work to complete the cathedral resumed in earnest.

## Architects

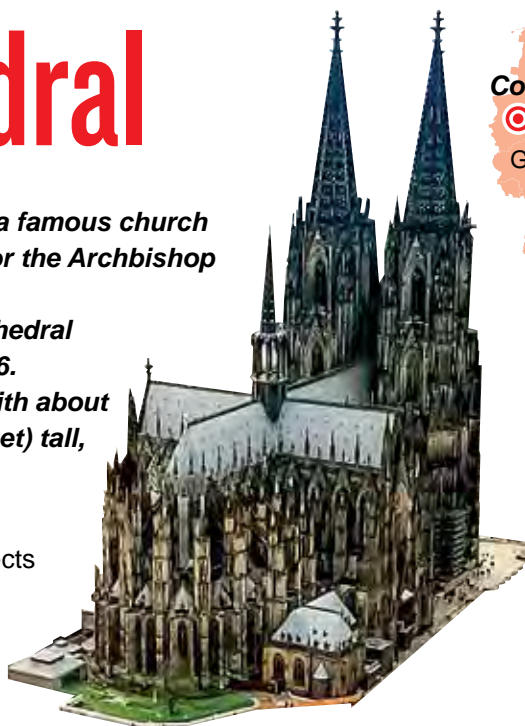
Ernst  
Friedrich  
Zwirner  
and  
Richard

Voigtel carried out the enterprise, guided by architectural drawings made in about 1300. Construction finally ended in 1880.

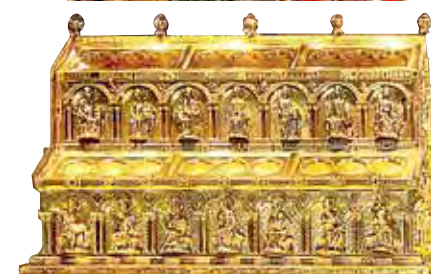
At the time of its completion, Cologne Cathedral was believed to be the world's tallest structure, a distinction it held until 1884, when the Washington Monument was finished. It continued to be the world's tallest building until it was exceeded by Ulm (Germany) Cathedral in 1890.

Cologne Cathedral was badly damaged by Allied air raids in 1944, but the medieval windows had been removed beforehand.

By 1948, the choir had been restored and was again in regular use, as was the rest of the interior by 1956. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century work began to repair the effects of acid rain on the stonework.



Cologne  
GERMANY



**The Shrine of the Magi.**

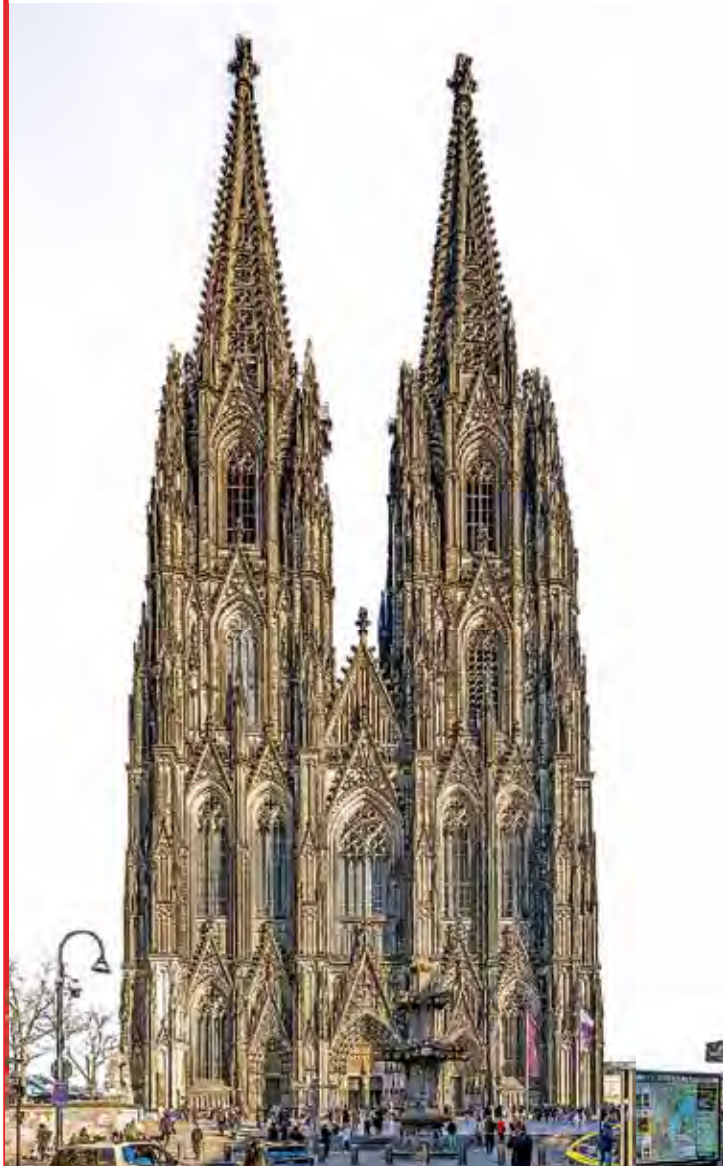
The art treasures of Cologne Cathedral are many and varied. Near the high altar is the massive gold Shrine of the Three Kings, containing what are said to be relics of the Magi who attended the infant Jesus.

The shrine, a masterpiece of medieval goldwork, was begun by the noted goldsmith Nicholas of Verdun in 1182, completed in about 1220, and originally installed in the predecessor cathedral.

The altarpiece in the Lady Chapel (on the south wall of the choir) is a triptych entitled 'The Adoration of the Magi' (c. 1445), which was made by Stefan Lochner, one of the outstanding painters of the Cologne school.

The cathedral's oldest stained-glass windows were crafted in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. More modern in style is an immense stained-glass window by the Cologne-based artist Gerhard Richter, completed in 2007 as a permanent replacement for 19<sup>th</sup> century glass that was destroyed in World War II. Richter's window consists of more than 11,000 square panes in 72 solid colours, arrayed seemingly at random within the many-mullioned window.

Source: Britannica.com



**Cathedral Window**

## Famous Landmarks Quiz 67

**Q:** Who laid the cornerstone for the restoration for the present Cologne Cathedral after the older one was destroyed by fire?



## Famous Landmarks Quiz 66

Ovinu Karunathillaka, Galle

DECEMBER 28, 2025

# Quentin Blake



**Sir Quentin Saxby Blake**  
is a famous English artist.  
He is known for his amazing  
drawings in children's books.  
He has illustrated over  
300 books, and many of them

were written by the well-known author Roald Dahl.  
His drawings for Dahl's books are some of his  
most popular works.

In 2002, Quentin Blake won the international  
Hans Christian Andersen Award, a very important award  
for people who create children's books.

From 1999 to 2001, he was the first British  
Children's Laureate, a special role for a children's author  
or illustrator.

## Early Life

Quentin Blake was born on December 16, 1932, in Sidcup, Kent, England. He had a happy childhood and loved to spend hours drawing. When he was 16 years old a humour magazine called 'Punch' published some of his cartoons.

Blake studied English at the University of Cambridge. He then attended Chelsea Art School. He continued to draw for 'Punch' and also drew for 'The Spectator'. He taught at the Royal College of Art starting in 1965. He was head of the illustration department there from 1978 to 1986.



## Career

Blake's first drawings for a children's book appeared in 'A Drink of Water, and Other Stories' (1960), by John Yeoman. He went on

to illustrate books by many popular children's authors, including Russell Hoban, Michael Rosen and Joan Aiken.

Blake's first book with Dahl, 'The Enormous Crocodile', was published in 1978. Other books soon followed, including 'The Twits' (1980), 'The BFG' (1982) and 'Matilda' (1988).

Their partnership continued until Dahl's death in 1990.

Blake received many honours during his career. He won the Kate Greenaway Medal in 1980 for 'Mister Magnolia'.



Quentin Blake

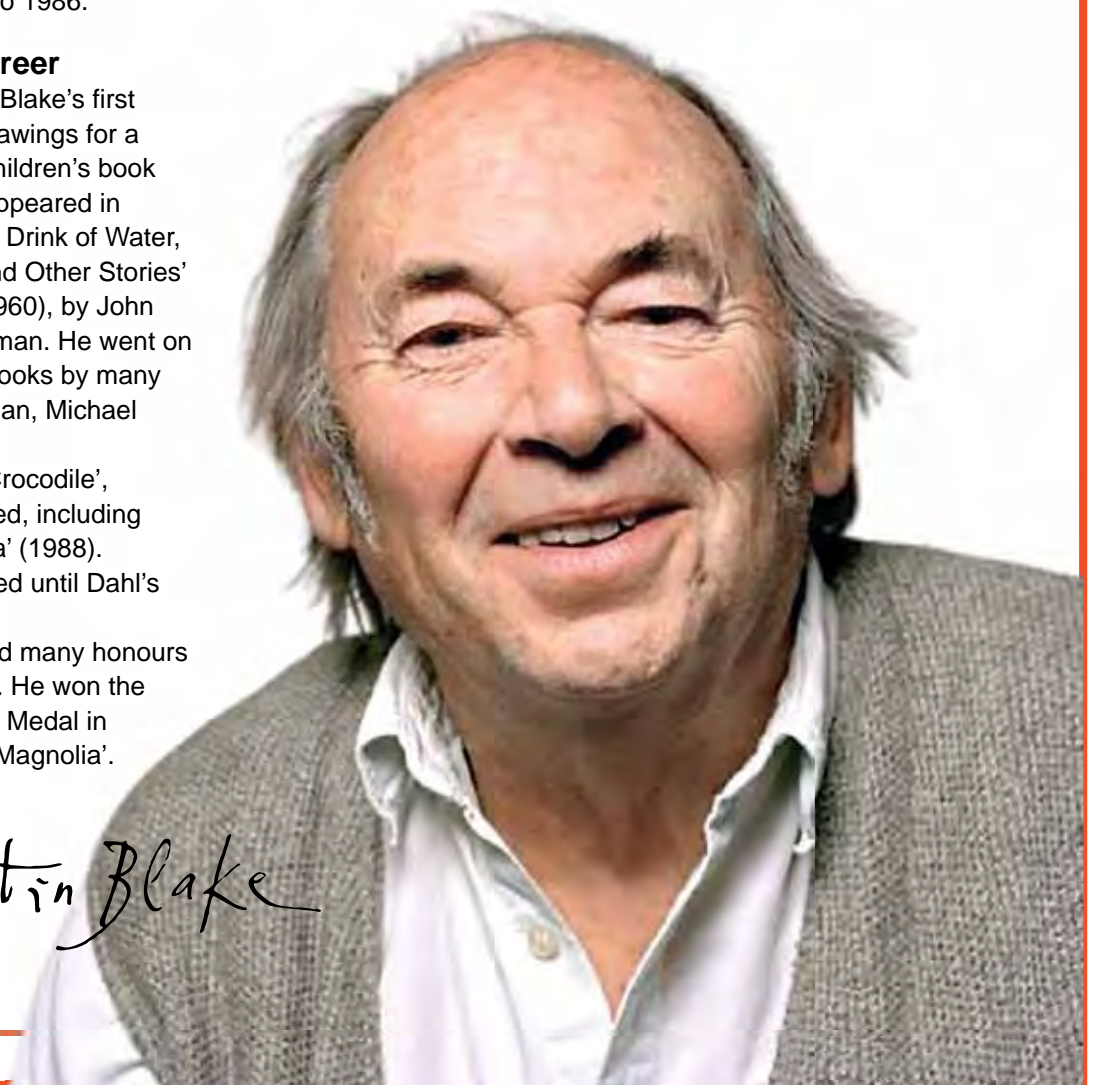


In 2002, he received the Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration.

This is the highest honour that a children's illustrator can win.

Blake also was appointed the first Children's Laureate in the United Kingdom. The laureate's job is to promote children's literature. Blake served in this post from 1999 to 2001.

In 2013, the British Crown awarded Blake a Knighthood.





# New Year 2026

Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

*This year is coming to an end, although it feels like it began only a few months ago. With 2026 only a few days away, here's a peek at how the New Year is greeted by a few cultures around the world.*

## Las Doce Uvas



Puerta del Sol, Madrid (spain.info)

A tradition in Spain is to eat twelve grapes ('las doce uvas') in time with each chime at midnight, to bring good luck for each month of the New Year. One of the most famous places to carry out this tradition is in Puerta del Sol, a public square in Madrid, Spain.

## Ball Drop in Times Square



The Times Square Ball (RW/MediaPunch/IPx/AP)

Every year, since the dawn of 1908, a giant ball covered in lights, is dropped at midnight in Times Square, New York City, USA, to signal the arrival of a new year. This event is witnessed by thousands of people who gather in Times Square.



The Times Square Ball to be dropped on December 31, 2025. (Alexi Rosenfeld/Getty Images)



## Joya no Kane

'Joya no Kane', which translates to 'midnight bell', is a Japanese New Year's Eve tradition. At midnight on December 31, Buddhist temples across Japan ring their bells 108 times (107 before midnight and once after midnight) to rid the sins in the passing year.

The bells are rung 108 times to symbolise the 108 worldly desires.



Joya no Kane (edomono.xsrv.jp)

And last, but not least..

## Fireworks

The tradition that is common across the globe is celebrating the New Year with elaborate and colourful firework displays. This tradition is believed to have originated in China over 2,000 years ago, spreading to other parts of the world over the centuries.



Fireworks (Unsplash/Roven Images).

## Winners of RSPCA Young Photographer Awards 2025

December 19, 2025

*This year's winners of the RSPCA Young Photographer Awards have been announced, and Thomas Durrant aged 17 was crowned the overall winner for his image Golden Stag.*

***Below you can see some of the winners and runners-up from the different age groups.***

### ***Under 12 years***



**Winner - 'My world' - a hare sprinting  
along the path in the woods'  
by Flynn Thaitanunbe-Lobb.**



**Runner-up - 'Motherly Love - two baboons taking a nap' by Jamie Smart.**



**Commended - 'Open wide - a corn bunting from the car window' by Jamie Smart.**

## 12 - 15 years



**Winner - 'Leaping into the golden wild - photo of a badger' by Shelby Grant.**



**Runner-up - 'Illuminated - a shot of a fox' by Jack Crockford.**



**Commended - 'A blossom perch - robin on a tree' by Sam Morris.**

## 16 - 18 years



***A stag by Thomas Durrant won the overall prize.***



**Runner-up - 'Lovers in the mist - two grebes'**  
**by Thomas Durrant.**



**Commended - 'Splash of survival - a cormorant hunting under a bridge' by Ben Lucas.**



December 22

## News in Pictures



## Ochopee, USA

A nativity scene depicting the Birth of Jesus and featuring Mary and Joseph in cages near the entrance to 'Alligator Alcatraz' in Florida. Activists said the display represented a family separated from their baby. They have called for the detention camp to be shut down, for those detained be freed and for an end to ICE raids.



## Johannesburg, South Africa

An aerial photo shows cars with Christmas-themed decorations.



## Seoul, South Korea

Climbers in Santa Claus outfits prepare for a climbing event on Bukhansan Mountain.

**Lviv, Ukraine**  
Teenagers attend military training. They receive lessons in parachute operation, communications, engineering and flying drones.



## London, UK

Choristers light candles during a rehearsal for Christmas services at St. Paul's Cathedral. Carol services will take place throughout the week.



## Siem Reap, Cambodia

People watch a painter work on a mural depicting displaced Cambodian civilians, soldiers and monks as a special ministerial meeting of the Asean bloc, where south-east Asian countries will discuss the Thai-Cambodian border conflict, takes place in Malaysia. The conflict that erupted this month has so far killed about 60 people and displaced tens of thousands more.



## Thessaloniki, Greece

Paddleboarders wearing Santa Claus costumes off the seafront of Thessaloniki.

## Pompeii, Italy

Torchbearers Maria Marinella Biacca, actor Jackie Chan, former Olympic gold medallist in fencing Sandro Cuomo and former Paralympian Immacolata Cerasuolo during the Olympic torch relay in Pompeii, Italy.



December 21

## Washington D.C., USA

A person dressed as Pennywise and three Abraham Lincoln impersonators attend the 'funeral for the penny' at the Lincoln Memorial after the government halted production of the coin.



## Manyang Cut Village, Indonesia

Children displaced by floods play among donated clothes at an evacuation centre.

Sources: The Guardian &amp; Reuters