

Wednesday.

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Goodies

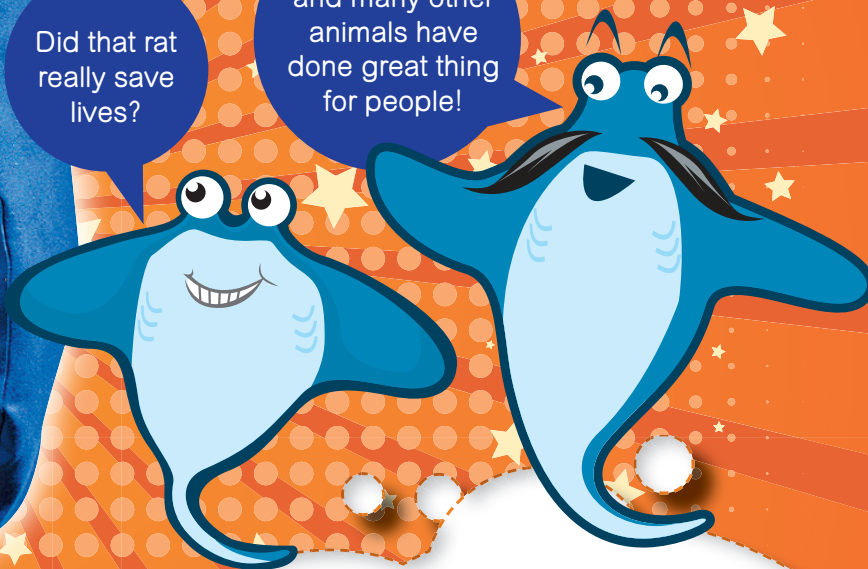


Heroic rodents



Did that rat really save lives?

Indeed! He and many other animals have done great things for people!



Editor's Note

Animals can be such helpful creatures. Take guide dogs for example. I like them because they help the visually impaired get around the city. It is a shame we do not see many of them in Hong Kong, though. But sometimes, I think people use animals too much. I once saw a dog in Sai Kung that carried things for its owner like it was a donkey. It had these bags on its back filled with things like bottles of water. Dogs are pets, and not our servants! Read more about helpful animals on G02. On G03 is news of Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife telling everyone they will give 99 percent of their fortune to charity. That is so generous. Let us call on Li Ka Shing and other Chinese billionaires to do the same thing. After all, we enter this world with nothing and leave it with nothing.



Simon

PESTS are wild creatures that enter our homes, eat our food and cause nothing but trouble. Probably the worst vermin you can see on the streets are big, dirty rats. But in some countries, instead of causing problems, rats are saving lives. With a sense of smell that is as good as a dog's, trained rats are being used to sniff out hidden bombs called landmines that are buried in the ground. Since 1975, more than 1 million people around the world have been killed or injured by landmines. But once the rats find them, experts can safely defuse them. Turn to the next page to learn more about nature's little helpers.



Clearing the way

RATS are great at **detecting** **landmines** because of their **sensitive** noses and high intelligence, as well as an average weight of 1kg that is too light to **set off** a landmine.

The best rodents for the job are giant pouched rats from the wild plains of sub-Saharan Africa, where they often eat farm crops. But after a period of training in Tanzania, these animals become the best landmine detectors in the world – they can search 200 square metres of land in just 20 minutes, which would normally take five days for a human.

The rats have already helped to clear landmines in Angola and Mozambique, and are being prepared for work in Asia.



Other great animal heroes

Simon the cat

THIS legendary mouser once killed an entire **infestation** of mice on board the Royal Navy ship HMS Amethyst, which earned him a Dickin Medal.



Togo the sledge dog

AFTER an outbreak of **diphtheria** threatened a remote Alaskan village, dog sledges were used to transport a lifesaving cure. Togo ran 322 kilometres across frozen plains, and swam in icy water to complete the mission.



Cher Ami the pigeon

DURING World War I, the US Army used Cher Ami to deliver 13 important messages. In his last mission, the bird was shot in the breast and leg but still managed to deliver his message.



Magic the miniature mare

THIS blue-eyed mare regularly visits hospitals, hospices and care homes, providing comfort to patients and residents.



Animal idioms

An idiom is a phrase that has a meaning that is unrelated to the words that make it up. Here are some animal-based idioms.

Horseplay – play that is rough, loud and messy

- The teacher quickly stopped the boys' horseplay in the classroom.

Dog's dinner – a piece of work that is a mess

- Your story has bad handwriting and mistakes everywhere. It's a dog's dinner!

Catnap – a short sleep during the day

- Mary had worked hard all morning, so she had a catnap after lunch.

Busy bee – a hardworking person

- My mother is a busy bee. She takes me to school, goes to work, cooks our dinner and cleans the house.

