The Relative

7 OCTOBER 2026

BIRTH EDITION · THE FAMILY DISPATCH

THE BIGGEST NEWS IN OUR LITTLE WORLD

Florence Rose is here

A new arrival. A family full of stories. A lifetime ahead.



THE FIRST AFTERNOON HOME · Sophie and James with Florence Rose.

THE BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

TIME

7.42 am

WEIGHT

7 lb 4 oz

DATE

7 October 2026

PARENTS

Sophie & James

One little arrival. A whole family with news to share.

The day everything changed

At 7:42 on Wednesday morning, you arrived weighing 7lb 4oz. By breakfast, the family chat had forgotten every other subject. There was just you, a photograph and an extraordinary number of heart emojis.

Dad cried, then tried to take a photograph with his phone the wrong way round. Grandma Jean never finished her toast. Auntie Alice announced the news to a stranger at the paint counter.

The biggest news in our little world had finally arrived, and everybody wanted to meet you.

Mabel keeps watch

Mabel inspected Ben’s bag, found nothing for her and returned to bed. The family dog continues to take an interest in every new visitor.

The world at home

Home is a two-bedroom terrace with a squeaky front gate and a nursery that was a spare room until August. Mum chose the green kitchen cupboards. Dad built the shelves and insists they are level.

Mabel is suspicious of the new noises and delighted by the visitors. The Sunday lunch crowd is already discussing where your highchair will go.

Before you arrived, an ordinary Sunday meant a walk along the canal and a stop for coffee. We keep imagining you coming too, first asleep in a pram.

The freezer forecast

Jean delivered two lasagnes and six tiny cardigans. Friends offered more food, filling the freezer and keeping the new parents very well supplied.

From the proud parents

Dear Florence,

This is the world you arrived into. We asked the people around you for a photograph, a snapshot of their lives and a message for you at eighteen.

Here are their new homes, small triumphs and familiar routines: green paint tins, running shoes, a birthday cake and a tomato that deserves its own headline.

These are the faces before you knew them and the days you might never remember. One day, we hope these pages help you know the people who were here, and how much love was waiting for you.

Keep turning the pages. Everybody has been waiting to meet you.

All our love, Mum and Dad

INSIDE THIS EDITION



A new flat. A new niece.

Auntie Alice’s first flat takes shape between school days, paint tins and baby news.

PAGE 4



Four generations together

A birthday, runner beans and words of wisdom from the family’s oldest correspondent.

PAGE 6



Your coastal correspondents

Ella and Rob on coastal walks, coffee-shop news and being there for Florence.

PAGE 7

FICTIONAL SAMPLE FAMILY · AI-GENERATED PHOTOGRAPHS

New parents. Same untidy kitchen. A completely different world.

Sophie and James on green cupboards, sleepless nights and the little person who changed everything.

BY MUM & DAD / Sophie and James · Your parents



THE FIRST AFTERNOON HOME · Sophie and James with Florence Rose.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

“You do not owe us a particular career, a perfect set of results or a life that looks like ours.”

Mum & Dad

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Sophie, thirty, is a graphic designer; James, thirty-two, manages building projects. Their home has green kitchen cupboards, carefully built nursery shelves and Mabel, a dog learning to share the attention.

Life at the time

I am thirty and your dad is thirty-two. Until this week I worked as a graphic designer, usually with four mugs on my desk, and Dad managed projects for a local building company. Now we are trying to understand someone whose only feedback is crying.

We moved into this house two years ago. The kitchen cupboards are green because I won that argument. Your dad built the shelves in your room and insists they are level. We have a dog called Mabel, who is deeply suspicious of the new noises and delighted by all the visitors.

On ordinary Sundays we walk along the canal and stop for coffee. We keep imagining you coming with us, first asleep in a pram and eventually complaining that it is too far.

The news reached us

You arrived after a very long night. There was a moment when the room seemed to go quiet and all I could see was your face. Dad cried, then tried to take a photograph with his phone the wrong way round.

The picture on this page is from our first afternoon at home. That is not a special outfit. It was simply the only clean jumper within reach.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

Today you are eighteen. As we write this, we cannot picture your voice, your favourite music or the way you will roll your eyes at us. We only know that we are going to love finding out.

We hope home has been somewhere you could be yourself, including on the days when being yourself was a bit complicated. We hope you have laughed a lot and found things that make you forget to check the time.

You do not owe us a particular career, a perfect set of results or a life that looks like ours. We want you to be kind, to be curious and to know that asking for help is allowed.

Whatever comes next, there is a place for you here. Even if we have turned your bedroom into an office, we will move the desk.

All our love,
Mum and Dad

Our prediction

You will inherit Dad’s determination, Mum’s untidy desk and Mabel’s ability to persuade anyone to share a snack.

There is a place waiting at the kitchen table

Jean and Martin have lasagne in the freezer, six tiny cardigans and a lifetime of stories to share.

BY GRANDMA & GRANDAD / Jean and Martin · Mum's parents



AT HOME · Jean and Martin, at the table where Florence's mum grew up.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

"The ordinary afternoons are often the ones you remember."

Grandma & Grandad

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Jean still works two mornings a week at the library. Martin has retired from engineering into allotment jobs, neighbourly repairs, Tuesday swimming and cricket appointments that apparently cannot be moved.

Life at the time

We are sixty-three and sixty-five, and we still live in the house where your mum grew up. The kitchen table in this photograph has survived homework, birthday cakes, a sewing machine and one very ambitious school volcano. It has a place waiting for you.

Grandad retired from engineering last spring and has immediately become busier. He repairs things for neighbours, tends the allotment and claims that watching cricket is an important appointment. I still work two mornings a week at the library. I tell everyone it keeps me out of trouble.

We have started swimming on Tuesdays. Grandad says twenty lengths counts as an expedition, so we usually celebrate with breakfast afterwards. Our next big plan is to work out how to fold your pram without a demonstration.

The news reached us

Your mum rang at eight in the morning. I was holding a piece of toast and never finished it. We looked at the first photograph together at this table, zooming in on your nose and deciding you resembled absolutely everyone.

We came round that afternoon with two lasagnes and a bag containing six tiny cardigans. Grandad held you so carefully that his shoulders ached afterwards.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

Eighteen years from now, we hope you know this kitchen as well as we do. Perhaps you are taller than both of us. Perhaps you have already borrowed the car and learned that Grandad asks about the petrol.

Our advice is to make time for people. Send the message, take the photograph and stay for the extra cup of tea when you can. The ordinary afternoons are often the ones you remember.

You will make mistakes. We have made quite a collection ourselves. Try to put things right, learn what you can and resist the temptation to carry every small embarrassment around forever.

We loved you before your first visit, before your first word and before we knew what sort of person you would become. We cannot wait for all the stories in between.

With all our love,
Grandma and Grandad

Our prediction

Grandad thinks you will enjoy making things. I think you will enjoy telling Grandad how they should be made.

Family traditions

Sunday tea means sandwiches, a cake and somebody saying they only want a small slice. Nobody believes them.

One new flat. One new niece. Rather a lot of green paint.

Auntie Alice is making a home of her own, with room for pancakes, sleepovers and a very small visitor.

BY AUNTIE ALICE / Your auntie · Mum's younger sister



WORK IN PROGRESS · Alice decorating her first flat, aged twenty-seven.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

"You are allowed to begin something without being good at it."

Auntie Alice

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Alice, twenty-seven, teaches seven-year-olds and is decorating her first flat. Twenty minutes from Florence's parents, she is preparing for babysitting alongside spelling lists, pancakes and DIY projects of uncertain duration.

Life at the time

I am twenty-seven, living in my first flat and teaching a class of seven-year-olds. On weekdays I seem to carry a permanent collection of glue sticks, spelling lists and somebody else's pencil.

The flat is still a work in progress. In this photograph I am painting the sitting room, having spent three weeks choosing a colour that everyone describes as green. I have paint in my hair, a chair instead of a stepladder and considerable faith in a video I watched online.

I live twenty minutes from your parents. Your mum has already checked that the journey is short enough for emergency babysitting. I have checked that she understands my experience mostly involves children who can explain what is wrong.

The news reached us

Your dad called while I was at the paint counter. I said, rather loudly, "She's here!" and the woman serving me applauded. I bought the wrong finish and did not notice until the next day.

At our first meeting you slept through my entire introduction. I have decided to take this as a sign that you find me reassuring.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

By eighteen you will probably know that I talk too much, make excellent pancakes and am not a reliable judge of how long a DIY job will take. Here are a few things I hope you know as well.

You are allowed to begin something without being good at it. That is how almost everything starts. You can leave a situation that makes you feel small, and you can change your mind without writing a defence of the decision.

I hope you find friends who make room for all of you: the funny bits, the quiet bits and the bits you are still working out. Be that sort of friend in return.

I am looking forward to our first trip to the cinema, your first sleepover and the day you tell me something you think your mum must never know. We will discuss the terms when we get there.

There is always a seat for you at my table, even if it still has paint on it.

Love, Auntie Alice

Our prediction

You will be better at DIY than me. This is less a prediction than a very modest target.

The family's newest arrival already has running shoes

Uncle Tom on half-marathon hopes, a cat called Bert and why every big distance starts small.

BY UNCLE TOM / Your uncle · Dad's older brother



PERSONAL BEST · Tom, thirty-five, at the end of a Saturday run.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

"You do not have to feel ready for the whole journey before taking the first one."

Uncle Tom

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Tom works in IT, lives with Liv and rescue cat Bert, and hopes to run a half marathon. The next ambition is a house with a garden beyond the window boxes.

Life at the time

I am thirty-five, work in IT and have recently become the sort of person who talks about running shoes. This is a development the family is tolerating with mixed enthusiasm.

The photograph is from a Saturday run in the park. I am smiling because it is finished. My current ambition is a half marathon, although I have discovered that signing up and actually training are two separate activities.

I live with my partner Liv and our rescue cat, Bert, who considers my work laptop a heated bed. We are saving for a house with a garden. For now, we have two window boxes and a basil plant that has survived longer than expected.

Your dad and I grew up sharing a bedroom. He will tell you he was the tidy one. You are welcome to seek a second opinion.

The news reached us

I found out you had arrived just before a work meeting. I announced it to twelve colleagues, most of whom had never met your parents. The meeting started late because everyone wanted to see your picture.

I bought you a tiny pair of trainers. Your mum gently explained that walking was not an immediate priority.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

Happy eighteenth birthday. If you are reading this on a screen, I hope you have also kept the ridiculous photograph of me above. It will help you remember that adults have always been works in progress.

The thing running has taught me is fairly simple: most big distances are covered in unremarkable little steps. You do not have to feel ready for the whole journey before taking the first one.

That said, you also do not have to turn everything into a challenge. Some things are worth doing because they are fun. Play the game, take the detour and occasionally eat the chips.

If you ever need a lift, help moving house or someone to pretend they understand your computer problem, call me. I would like to be useful in your life, not just noisy at family meals.

Lots of love, Uncle Tom

Our prediction

You will overtake me on a run before I am emotionally prepared for it.

Four generations. One very welcome little girl.

At eighty-four, Great-Grandad Frank has some advice about a good life, a proper apology and the biscuits.

BY GREAT-GRANDAD FRANK / Your great-grandad · Grandma Jean's dad



MANY HAPPY RETURNS · Frank at his eighty-fourth birthday celebration.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

"Do not mistake being busy for having a good life."

Great-Grandad Frank

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Frank, eighty-four, grows runner beans, listens to the radio and tackles the crossword. The retired electrician lives near the village shop and enjoys Thursday shopping trips with Jean, especially choosing biscuits.

Life at the time

I am eighty-four. This photograph was taken on my birthday, shortly before everyone told me I was blowing the candles out too slowly. I maintain there were too many candles.

I live in the little bungalow near the village shop. The garden is smaller than the one we used to have, which is a relief to everybody except me. I grow runner beans, listen to the radio and do the crossword with a pencil that is always disappearing.

I worked as an electrician for most of my life. I met your great-grandma at a dance, where I apparently made a terrible first impression and recovered just enough to be invited to another one. We had many ordinary, happy years together.

On Thursdays your grandma takes me shopping. I pretend this is mainly a practical arrangement. In fact, I enjoy the company and the chance to choose my own biscuits.

The news reached us

Jean brought your photograph round and placed her phone very close to my face. Once we had established which way was up, I had a proper look at you. Four generations in one small picture: that is quite something.

When I held you, you opened one eye and examined me. I hope I passed.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

It is a peculiar privilege to write to someone at the beginning of a life from this far along my own. I cannot tell you what your world will look like at eighteen. I can tell you a few things that have mattered in mine.

Keep your word where you can. Apologise properly when you should. Learn to make one meal well and to ask somebody about themselves without looking over their shoulder.

Do not mistake being busy for having a good life. Some of my best days have involved very little that would impress anyone: a walk, a familiar voice, your grandma arriving with the shopping.

I hope you have a photograph of us together. I hope somebody has told you that I was funny, although I understand this depends on who is telling the story.

You were very welcome here, little one. Carry that knowledge with you.

With love, Great-Grandad Frank

Our prediction

You will have strong opinions. It runs in the family.

Family traditions

On birthdays we all sing, even the people who should probably just clap.

Sea air, pastries and a promise to show up

For Ella and Rob, being godparents means birthdays, ordinary days and a familiar place by the coast.

BY ELLA & ROB / Your godparents · Friends since university



THE COASTAL CORRESPONDENTS · Ella and Rob on a windswept weekend walk.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

“You do not need to choose the one that makes the neatest photograph.”

Ella & Rob

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Ella is a physiotherapist and Rob runs a coffee shop. Both thirty-one, they live near the coast, walk the headland and have promised to clear a spare room for Florence.

Life at the time

We are both thirty-one and live near the coast. Ella works as a physiotherapist and Rob runs a small coffee shop, which means one of us is always reminding the other to stand up properly.

This photograph is from a windswept weekend walk. The plan was a long route over the headland. The weather persuaded us to make it a shorter route to a bakery instead. We are comfortable with that decision.

We met your parents at university. At the time, your dad owned one saucepan and your mum could fit everything she needed into a very small car. Their lives now contain a mortgage, a dog and you. We are still slightly amazed.

Our spare room is currently full of camping equipment. We have promised to clear it before your first visit. We are making the promise here in writing so that somebody can hold us to it.

The news reached us

Your parents sent the news while we were opening the shop. The first customer of the day learned your name before he received his coffee. We put a little note behind the counter saying “Florence has arrived” and explained it to people all morning.

We drove over on Sunday with pastries, which seemed more useful than advice.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

Happy eighteenth birthday. When we agreed to be your godparents, we talked about what that should mean. We decided it meant showing up: for birthdays, for ordinary days and for the moments when an extra pair of adults might come in handy.

We hope we have done that. We hope our house feels familiar and that you know where the good biscuits are kept.

Our advice is to be interested. Ask how things work. Listen to someone whose life is different from yours. Travel if you can, but remember that curiosity does not require an expensive ticket.

There are a lot of possible ways to build a happy life. You do not need to choose the one that makes the neatest photograph. Choose people and habits that make your days feel like your own.

Come and see us when you need some sea air. We will bring the pastries.

Love, Ella and Rob

Our prediction

You will learn that an ice cream is entirely reasonable in October.

A first tomato. A new job. And news worth missing a stop for.

Dad's oldest friend Ben has stories to tell, gardening lessons to learn and a place in Florence's corner.

BY BEN / Dad's friend · Almost part of the furniture



GROWING AMBITIONS · Ben, thirty-two, in his much-discussed garden.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

"Be kind to the person who is new in the room."

Ben

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Ben, thirty-two, has started at an architecture practice and lives two streets away. Between Thursday football and learning to cook, he is celebrating a first tomato after three disappointing gardening years.

Life at the time

I am thirty-two, have just started a job at an architecture practice and live two streets from your parents. The photograph records my first successful tomato. It has received more attention than several important professional achievements.

Your dad and I have been friends since school. We still play football on Thursdays and still think the other one should pass more often. The match is followed by a discussion of our performance that lasts considerably longer than the match deserves.

I have spent this year trying to make the garden useful. So far it has produced the tomato, some enthusiastic mint and an expensive lesson about slugs. Your mum says it is good to have a hobby that teaches patience.

I am also learning to cook. Your parents have been kind enough to test the results and sensible enough to keep a takeaway menu nearby.

The news reached us

I was on the bus when the message arrived. I spent the rest of the journey grinning at your photograph and accidentally missed my stop. It seemed a fair reason to be late.

I met you two days later. Mabel inspected the bag I brought, decided it contained nothing for her and went back to bed.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

By the time you open this I will be fifty. I have read that sentence several times and it has not become less surprising.

You will know your dad as your dad. I knew him when he was a boy who forgot his PE kit and a young man trying to work out what to do next. One day you may enjoy hearing those stories. I have kept an unreasonable number of them.

Be kind to the person who is new in the room. Learn the names of the people who help you. If you say you will bring the pudding, bring the pudding. Small things tell people whether they can rely on you.

And do not let a bad first attempt convince you that something is not for you. I am writing this beside a tomato grown after three years of disappointment.

You have a lot of people in your corner. I am very pleased to be one of them.

With love, Ben

Our prediction

You will be the only person who can persuade your dad to sing in public.

Make room for one more

Nina and Sam’s Sunday lunch crowd is getting bigger. They are already discussing the highchair.

BY NINA & SAM / Family friends · The Sunday lunch crowd



THE SUNDAY LUNCH CROWD · Family friends together in the garden.

A MESSAGE FOR EIGHTEEN

“The ordinary meals become the history, almost without anybody noticing.”

Nina & Sam

THEIR WORLD TODAY

Nina manages a bookshop and Sam is a surveyor. Their home outside town hosts Sunday lunches, muddy walks and a growing circle of friends, with room promised for Florence’s highchair.

Life at the time

We are thirty-eight and forty, live just outside town and have become the people who insist there is room for one more at lunch. Usually there is, although sometimes it requires a garden chair and a willingness to share the gravy.

Nina manages a bookshop and Sam is a surveyor. Our weeks involve school runs, work bags and deciding what to cook. Our weekends usually involve friends, a muddy walk and somebody leaving a coat behind.

The photograph is from a lunch in the garden earlier this year. Your parents are part of this wonderfully untidy collection of people. There are old friends, new partners, children growing at different speeds and several competing views about how to roast a potato.

You are the latest arrival. We have already argued affectionately about where your highchair will go.

The news reached us

We found out in the group chat. Nina cried, Sam put the kettle on and everyone began offering food. We now understand why your freezer was full before you came home.

When we first visited, the grown-ups spoke in whispers while Mabel snored loudly in the corner. You seemed completely untroubled by both.

To you at eighteen

Dear Florence,

We hope that when you read this, these faces feel like a familiar crowd. We hope you have eaten at our table, borrowed our books and realised that the adults telling the loudest stories are not necessarily telling the most accurate ones.

Families come with relatives, of course. They can also come with people who choose, year after year, to be part of each other’s lives. We are grateful to have been chosen by yours.

Find your people, and make an effort for them. Invite someone even if the house is untidy. Cook something simple. Remember the thing they were worried about and ask how it went.

You do not need a perfect occasion to bring people together. The ordinary meals become the history, almost without anybody noticing.

There will be room for you at Sunday lunch. Bring whoever matters to you. We will find another chair.

With love, Nina and Sam

Our prediction

You will develop a firm opinion about the roast potatoes.

Family traditions

Everybody brings something, nobody leaves hungry, and the washing-up is a group negotiation.

Your first circle

Our faces then. Your people, always.



Mum & Dad

Sophie and James · Your parents

Home for the first afternoon, with Florence wrapped in a blanket and a clean jumper chosen for practical reasons.



Grandma & Grandad

Jean and Martin · Mum's parents

The kitchen table where Sophie grew up has hosted homework, birthday cakes and a school volcano. Florence's place is waiting.



Auntie Alice

Your auntie · Mum's younger sister

Green paint, a chair for reaching the walls and the first flat taking shape, twenty minutes from Florence's front door.



Uncle Tom

Your uncle · Dad's older brother

A Saturday park run completed, with half-marathon plans ahead and an early pair of tiny trainers already bought for Florence.



Great-Grandad Frank

Your great-grandad · Grandma Jean's dad

An eighty-fourth birthday celebration, family singing and a cake: another photograph for an album that now spans four generations.



Ella & Rob

Your godparents · Friends since university

A windswept coastal walk became a shorter route to the bakery. Future visits come with sea air and promises of pastries.



Ben

Dad's friend · Almost part of the furniture

One hard-won tomato receives its moment in the sun, alongside enthusiastic mint and lessons learned from a determined local slug population.



Nina & Sam

Family friends · The Sunday lunch crowd

A lunch in the garden brings friends together, with spare chairs, shared food and several opinions about roast potatoes.

LIFE ON YOUR FIRST DAY

A world waiting for you

These photographs bring together the people around Florence at the very beginning of her own story. There are newly decorated first homes and well-loved old kitchen tables, an eighty-fourth birthday cake, a park run and a garden lunch. Some relatives live twenty minutes away; others bring news from the coast. Between them are the everyday places, small ambitions and familiar faces that made up her family's world in October 2026.

OPEN ON 7 OCTOBER 2044

All these people. All this love. The next chapter is yours.