

## In the news

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October

### Good news or bad?

Police carried out over 5,000 spot checks on motorists in Lower Austria on Saturday night, and charged 700 of them with an offence. Ninety were found to be driving under the influence of alcohol, and 40 had their driving licenses taken away from them on the spot. What do you think of these figures? Do they surprise you? (700 from 5,000 is 14%)

### Lucky to have survived – a close shave

Four German schoolgirls on a skiing trip were staying at a guesthouse in Finkenberg, Zillertal, when their balcony broke as they were posing for a photograph. They fell onto the grass below and suffered concussion. As well as an ambulance with paramedics, a helicopter was called out.

### Old people's homes – opening their doors

Should old people's homes be used as a centre for more services, such as providing food to pensioners or children? It is being done in Salzburg. What does your local old people's home do?

### 30-year European weather cycles

Scientists have concluded that the Atlantic Ocean is in the middle of a warm cycle, which typically brings milder, wetter weather to northern European countries and drier weather to southern European countries. It is thought that the ocean affects the location of the jet stream, although it is not understood which factors drive the change in the ocean. However, if the melting polar ice cap starts to lead to warmer oceans... Or perhaps everything will switch again in 15 years' time!

### Unusual garden plants

An elderly couple in Bedford, England, bought a nice-looking pot plant from a car-boot sale, and planted it in their garden. It grew well, becoming a large bush. So large, in fact, that it was the largest cannabis plant that the police had ever seen! The bush was removed to be disposed of, and the couple are not going to face any charges.

### 23 miles up...and down again!

Austrian Felix Baumgartner is preparing to jump out of a balloon at an altitude/height of 36.5km and skydive/freefall for five-and-a-half minutes, breaking the sound barrier as he does so, before opening a parachute. Quite apart from the dangers of the jump, the balloon is 50 storeys high and as wide as a football field, but only as thick as a plastic bag, and nobody has ever flown such a balloon so high before. Truly a daredevil stunt!