



Cog in the Tree

West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes

February 2021

February is time to Show the Love



It can't have escaped your notice that February has been overtaken by green hearts. The Climate Coalition teamed up with the WI several years ago and ever since we have been making green hearts to [#showthelove](#).

Craftivism is the new buzzword on the street. A gentle form of protesting through crafts.

We are asked to make green hearts to send a message to our MPs with the postcard we receive in WI Life magazine. We ask our MPs to sign the Climate Coalition to protect us from the Climate Crisis. The hearts are meant to be symbolically worn on the sleeve.

We can take our crafting in all sorts of directions, as long as we are still sharing the message.

Victory Belles WI received a Climate Change talk and slide show from Liz Galloway this month. Their monthly competition was to design and make a green heart using any media. The hearts were then shared on social media with the hashtag [#showthelove](#).

Liz Galloway is available to all WIs for talks on Climate Change.



Top left: **Tracy Maynard** 1st Place, Paper Quilling

Top right: **Sue White** 2nd Place, Twisted wire, beads, and buttons

Bottom right: **Julie Turner** 3rd Place, Still life

All from **Victory Belles WI**

The Cog in the Tree Newsletter is growing and changing each month with more input from members and trustees. Sub-group committees are working harder to find new ways of connecting with the membership. You will find extra crafts, articles, leisure activities and online entertainment featuring here each month.

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Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for regular posts and updates.

<https://www.facebook.com/WMFVI>



200 Club Winner £10

84 – Kim Slivinski, Yardley WI



Chairman's Address



Hello all WI members, As I write this it is snowing again, BUT there are plenty of indications that Spring is on its way. On my daily walks I am cheered by the snowdrops and crocuses that are in full bloom, the daffodils and hyacinths in my garden are all up with buds already apparent and even the tulips are beginning to push through the earth.

The days are getting longer and we have had some relatively warm, sunny days when the birdsong has been positively deafening. The resident heron has been posing photogenically on the small island in the middle of the lake in my local park and it amuses me to watch his disdainful regard of the seagulls, ducks and even the Canada geese as they swim round him. The lake is full of large fish (according to the anglers) and though I have occasionally seen them being reeled in and carefully weighed before being returned to the water, I have never seen the heron catch one!



During this 3rd lockdown I have thought about spring cleaning, but I simply cannot summon up the same enthusiasm for tackling deep cleaning every room as I did this time last year. I expect I shall eventually get round to doing something more than the desultory dusting and Hoovering that I do each week but I'm not holding my breath in anticipation of moving the furniture to clean behind everything!



My grandchildren are hooked on a computer game which involves figures that I have termed aliens and I was persuaded to knit one in different colours for each of them. Now I find that word has gone out to their friends and I am inundated with requests to knit them all one. Fortunately, I enjoy knitting and most often do it to occupy my

hands whilst I am watching television in the evenings, otherwise I can very easily find myself bored to tears with the general run of programmes. I have never been a fan of soap operas and hospital dramas leave me cold so I am more likely to watch a nature programme or a film which doesn't need too much attention and I can concentrate on my pattern.

The Board of Trustees is intending to hold a Business meeting on March 9th and we are hoping that a Zoom conversant member from each WI will join us to meet the Trustees and discuss such matters as Zoom Annual meetings and collection of subscriptions which we know are items that are concerning all WI's.

Looking forward, many of us will have had both vaccinations by Easter and life will seem just that little bit safer and brighter although I doubt that we shall want to get together to meet in person for some time yet. Perhaps the weather will be kind to us again and we can hold summer gatherings in local parks if regulations allow us to do so. In the meantime, I trust you will all keep safe and well and I look forward to seeing you as soon as possible.

Lynn

Nominations open for Pride of Birmingham Awards 2021

Birmingham Live, Pride of Birmingham Awards 2021, in association with TSB will be celebrating the region's unsung heroes this March, with a glitzy virtual awards ceremony hosted by actress Kym Marsh to honour their selfless spirit.

Every winner will also be put forward to judging for the prestigious national TSB Pride of Britain Awards 2021, run by the Daily Mirror and broadcast on ITV with a star-studded team of guests and presenters.

Could you put forward anyone you believe deserves recognition? It may be an inspirational fundraiser, an adult or child who has displayed incredible courage or someone from Birmingham who has transformed the lives of the people around them. There is a full list of award categories below.

If you could give a brief overview about the nominee and why you're nominating them, that would be a big help.

For more information about the Awards, visit

prideofbritain.com/birmingham/nominate-2020-pride-of-birmingham

Alex Lloyd, Research Team, Pride of Birmingham Awards 2021

Award Categories

Child/Teenager of Courage

For battling against the odds to help others.

Young Fundraiser of the Year

A young person aged 15 and under for inspirational charity work.

Outstanding Bravery

For adults who risk their own safety to help others in danger

Emergency Services Award

For those who have gone beyond the call of duty to help others.

TSB Community Hero

For an individual or group of people who have worked together in partnership as a force for good in their local community, improving the lives of people around them.

Fundraiser of the Year

For tireless and inspirational charity fundraising, aged 16 and over.

Lifetime Achievement

To recognise far-reaching achievement, possibly on a national or international scale.

Special Recognition

For achievements not covered in other categories, such as inspiring carers, campaigners, and members of armed forces.

Over to you



At last month's ZOOM meeting our chairman Lynn Smith showed us her knitted 'Among Us' character that she had been knitting for her grandson during lockdown.

Among Us

<https://innersloth.com/game/AmongUs.php> is a game kids play online about communication and deception. The game splits players into two camps: crewmates and impostors. For crewmates, the objective of the game is to complete a series of tasks and survive. It's a bit like a murder, mystery game.

The characters are simply an A shape so quite easy to crochet or knit. Anyway, I thought what a good idea, so I crocheted one for Millie (9) in purple, but now she tells me she doesn't like purple...so I've had to make a pink one instead. Now Poppy wants a red one, Ruby wants green and Belle wants yellow. Oh, and by the way, they all need a hat!



Here are some of the crewmates but can you tell which one is the imposter?

Kim Slivinski, Yardley WI

Like most people during the first lockdown, members of Heart of England Women's Institute managed to keep themselves occupied. Gardening, baking, and going for walks around the countryside. We managed to keep in touch with most members by organising Zoom meetings from June onwards.



In their spare time members made scrubs and bags for front line workers, hearts for the bereaved and their relatives, and 44 bead bags for children suffering with cancer.



Members were set a challenge to write their own 'lockdown story' relating their thoughts on how it affected them and how they occupied their time. They sent them in for us to produce a 'Lockdown Booklet' which we printed complete with photos.

Just before Christmas, the Committee organised 'Goody Bags' for members, which included the Lockdown booklet, climate change leaflet, sweets, home-made biscuits, a charm, quizzes, puzzles, and a Christmas card. These were all delivered personally by the Committee with the aim of having a face to face chat on the doorstep!

For our Christmas 'Zoom' meeting we dressed up in festive gear, enjoyed mince pies and a glass or two! We were entertained by Cathy Morris, who sang a brilliant selection of Christmas songs. Joined by members of Temple Balsall and Berkswell WIs, the evening finished with a rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' which was quite hilarious!

Many of our members have also enthusiastically embraced the WI Wanderers talks and Denman online. Also, a huge 'Thank you' to all the County Officers for their sterling efforts in keeping us all informed and up to date during this pandemic.

Kathryn Shayler (Secretary), Heart of England WI



The knitted items of blankets, matinee jackets and bonnets were made for premature baby units at our local hospital, but due to Covid restrictions I have been unable to deliver them. I am hoping to contact the hospitals again soon. We donate to Walsall Manor Hospital and City Hospital baby units. The knitted bears I hope will go to the children's ward to give comfort to the children when needed.



I'm still busy knitting bears as I keep getting requests from friends and family.

Melanie Wisler, Newton WI

Eastern Green WI delivered a bag, chocolates, a letter, and Valentine card to all our members on Valentine's day.



Pat Sullivan one of our very kind, talented members made the cards and delivered the parcels. We hope we will soon be able to meet.

Kath Spare, Eastern Green WI



February is 'Show the Love' Month and you'll have found one of the post cards in your copy of WI Life magazine. Don't forget to send it off to your MP, asking for their support in signing the Climate Coalition's declaration for a Healthy, Green and Fair Tomorrow. You can even attach a green heart you have made to the card, and just maybe your MP will wear it in public or even in parliament. It has been seen before!

There are two Zoom events being organized to Show the Love.



In Conservation: A Discussion with the National Trust and RSPB - ZOOM

Friday 12th February 1-2pm - Email pa@nfwi.org.uk to register

Show the Love week runs from 6-14 February across the UK. Over 25 RSPB reserves are showing the love, from talking about signs of climate change and giving out Show the Love stickers, to running reserve trails, crafted heart workshops and selling special #showthelove cakes and biscuits. Check out our website to see where activities are happening rspb.org.uk/showthelove



Craftivism and Climate Action – the power of gentle protest - ZOOM

Friday 19th February 1-2pm - Email pa@nfwi.org.uk to register

There's also a new Campaigns Project, 'WI Women in Activism' in support of International Women's Day – go to the Crafts pages on thewi.org.uk for more information or follow the link on our Federation Facebook page facebook.com/WMFWI/



ASSOCIATED COUNTRY
WOMEN OF THE WORLD

The Associated Country Women of the World exists to amplify the voices of rural women, so that the problems they face are heard and acknowledged by policy-makers. They bear the burden of conflict, they go unheard in legislation, and they remain unprotected and unsupported. ACWW exists to change that.

Your Pennies for Friendship have now been sent to the ACWW head office. Pamela Griffiths, your representative has received a letter thanking everyone for their contributions.

Pamela is very pleased with the collection of £777.04 considering the difficulties members have had without meetings in lockdown.

Thank you everyone who contributed.

Why not take a stroll in the Botanical Gardens now that spring is just around the corner!

The tea room is open for takeaways – coffee and a sweet treat!



There's an excellent gift shop as well...Just ring and book an arrival time, you can stay as long as you like.

Opens at 10am, last entry 4.30pm, Closes 5pm.

Entrance: Adults £6.75 - Concessions £4.72

www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk



Some environmental ideas for February; Plan your veg plot, raised bed or containers for seed sowing. Buy some flower seeds to sow for pollinating insects, focus on drought resistant ones when choosing plants.

Put out water bowls/trays for wildlife and check they don't freeze. Plant a tree once danger of frost is past. Dig a small pond or make a damp, marshy area in your garden

Make (or buy) a feeder to help nesting birds later. Don't cut hedges between March - August to avoid disturbing nests. If replacing paving, ensure that new surfaces are porous, e.g. Gravel

Create a wild area, however small, or just let lawn edges go wild!

Liz



Crafts

PROJECT LINUS UK



There are 3 sizes of blankets/quilts that the project need, they are: - baby, approx. 36" square, child: - approx. 45" x 60", and teen: - 50" x 72". You need to use 100% acrylic yarn, please no wool because some children are allergic to wool and acrylic is easily washable. If you wish to create patchwork blankets, 100% cotton is to be used, they must be lined and all bindings to have no raw edges. This information is taken from - projectlinusuk.org.uk

Blanket Block of the Month

Crochet Bobble Diamond from the book 200 crochet blocks for blankets by Jan Eaton Special abbreviation MB = make bobble (work 4 open trebles in same stitch leaving 5 loops on hook, draw through all 5 loops at once).

Foundation Chain: work 28 ch
Foundation Row: (wrong side)
Work 1dc into 2 nd ch from hook, 1 dc into each ch to end, turn (27dc)

Row 1: 1ch, 1dc into each dc (27dc)
Rows 2 to 7: Repeat row 1
Row 8: 1ch, 1dc into each of next 13dc, MB, 1dc into each on next 13dc, turn.
Rows 9 to 11: repeat row 1
Row 12: 1ch, 1dc into each of next 10dc, [MB, 1dc into each of next 2 dc] twice, MB, 1dc into each of next 10 dc, turn.
Rows 13 to 15: repeat row 1
continued....

Row 16: 1ch, 1dc into each of next 7dc, [MB 1dc into each of next 2dc] 4times, MB 1dc into each of next 7dc, turn.

Rows 17 to 19: as row 1
Row 20: repeat row 12
Rows 21 to 23; as row
Row 24: Repeat row 8
Rows 25 to 32: as row 1
Fasten off yarn.

Hello crafters,

As I sit here writing and wondering what to include in this month's edition of the crafts page, I'm looking out at a slightly snowy back garden, but when I venture out, the snowdrops are beginning to flower, so Spring is not far away. Barbara Evans from Kings Norton WI has kindly supplied the craft activity, which is on an Easter theme. We look forward to seeing photos of your creations.

Trustees Trophy competition entries are in the process of being judged, many thanks to all three members who have taken part. The next set of criteria for this year's Trustees Trophy will be published in next month's COG.

Don't forget that there are two **Trustees Challenges** that members have been set. They are Project Linus and The Shropshire Way, knitted scarf project.

We would love to display your craft creations here in the COG. If you have any crafts that you would like to introduce us to, please send them in.

Next month, we shall be showing you how to make bowls out of paper.

Keep on crafting!

Debbie Arkinstall

Montgomery Shield

The outgoing Chairman Iris Montgomery has kindly donated a shield to the federation trophy cabinet. An annual competition will be held for Best in Craft to be awarded at the Federation Annual Meeting each year.



2021 members are invited to design and make A Thistle

Using any media: knitted, quilted, embroidered, painted, beaded, sculpted etc (excluding photographic) A4 size

Crafts Online

There will be a Zoom coffee and chat meeting for crafters, this is where we can share our lockdown projects, chat about new skills learnt and sort out craft queries.

Tuesday 16th March from 10:30 am – 12:00pm

Meeting ID: 856 6525 4501
Passcode: 656186

We look forward to meeting up with you.



The Shropshire Way Scarf Challenge

Shropshire Federation WI are setting a challenge to make scarves equivalent to the length of the Shropshire way and donate to homeless people. We are asking WIs, communities, groups and individuals to join us. West Midlands Federation have been asked to join in.

Useful Books



Available at The Works
£4.00

Denman at Home

If you have access to the internet you can participate in dozens of courses, demos, craft-alongs, and talks via zoom.

Visit Denman website for details. www.denman.org.uk

If you have craft items for collection contact Debbie Arkinstall 0121 382 7401 email arkinstall.mama@outlook.com alternatively drop offs can be made to Country markets by prior arrangement.



Barbara Evans Easter Egg Bunting

These eggs also look pretty when hung up individually on branches of a mini tree if you have one. They may be used for an Easter Egg Hunt game or added to the front of handmade Easter Greeting cards.

Materials

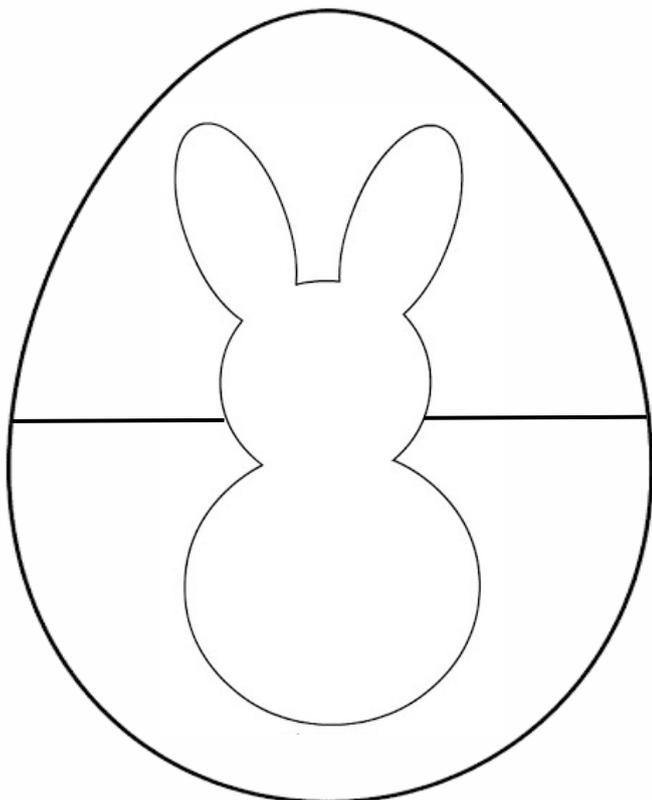
Scraps of felt in various colours
Fabric glue or UHU
Needle and thread
Ribbon and trimmings
Wadding/stuffing



Trace your templates onto felt fabric and cut out. Sew around the edges of your egg, joining the front and back pieces together, leaving a small gap to place your stuffing inside. Don't overstuff, sew the gap closed.

If you are not comfortable with sewing, glue the pieces together instead. Use UHU or fabric glue -not PVA. Decorate your Easter Eggs with felt shapes, sequins, buttons, pom poms, lace, or anything else you have available. Add some embroidery, crochet flowers etc. Let your creativity flow! Add a pocket to the front piece to put in a rabbit or some easter chocolates.

Add a piece of ribbon to hang if required or stick onto a card.



A St David's Day Project

In honour of St David's Day, I thought it would be nice if members could make a daffodil, **Debbie**

Materials:-

Oddments of pale yellow and deeper yellow yarn, green for the stem and either 3.25mm or 3.5mm knitting needles.

Abbreviations:-

Inc – increase, SKPO – slip one stitch knitwise, knit one, pass slip stitch over, K2tog – knit 2 together, SSK – slip 2 stitches one at a time knitwise, insert point of left hand needle into the fronts of these two stitches and knit together (this is interchangeable with SKPO).

Method: -

Petals; Cast on 24 stitches (using the cable method – 2 needles),

Row 1: knit, **Row 2:** purl.

Row 3: K1, inc in next 3 sts, turn (7stitches)

Rows 4,6,8, and 10 are purl rows.

Row 5: K1, inc in each stitch (5 sts) until the last st. K1.

Row 7: knit

Row 9: skpo, knit to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1.

Repeat rows 9 and 10 until there are 4sts left.

Next row: skpo, knit 1

Next row: cast off remaining 3 stitches.



Repeat until you have 6 petals.

Trumpet:

Cast on 23 stitches cable method.

Next row: k2, inc 1, repeat until last 2 sts, k2 – 30 stitches.

Work the next 7 rows in stocking stitch starting with a purl row.

Next row: inc 1 in every stitch knitwise - 60 sts

Next row: cast off knitwise.

To make up: gather cast on edge of the trumpet and wrap into shape. Gather the cast on edge of the petals and join to make a circle, attach the trumpet to the petals and secure firmly.

Stem for flowers – this is a useful way of making stems or a round cord. You will need green yarn and a pair of double pointed needles (dnp's)

Cast on 3 sts - or required number of stitches and knit one row in the usual way, *without turning, slide the stitches to the opposite end of the needle. Take the yarn firmly across the back of the row from left to right and knit one row. Repeat from * for the required length.

Entertainment

With so much of the entertainments industry closed to us at the moment, we have turned our attentions to what's available online.

Here are details of a few local venues offering virtual tours and bookable online events

THE BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME -
tickets@curvetheatre.co.uk

THE MAC THEATRE CANNON HILL PARK -
macbirmingham.co.uk

BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERIES FOR
 ONLINE LECTURES, VIDEOS AND VIRTUAL TOURS -
birminghammuseums.org.uk

Each month we hope to bring you 2 books that have been recommended as good reads by our members

We would love you to give us your own reviews. (no more than 10 lines please) We hope to publish 2 reviews each month.

Do you have a recommendation for good a good read?

If you do please send them to us together with the title, genre, writer and a short summary of what the books about. (See an example in this month's recommendations.)

Julie

Online Entertainment



TUESDAY 16TH FEB – 7TH MARCH

TICKETS@CURVETHEATRE.CO.UK

COST- £20 PERHOUSEHOLD



**FAREWELL MARY
 QUANT AT THE VICTORIA
 AND ALBERT MUSEUM
 DUNDEE**

FREE AT - VAM.AC.UK

PETER'S TALK ON CANARY WALK & THE ISLE OF DOGS



**THURSDAY 11TH MARCH
 1.30 – 2.30
DENMAN.CO.UK COST £5**



BOOK BY 28TH FEBRUARY

**STANDARD EARLY BIRD
 TICKET COST £15**

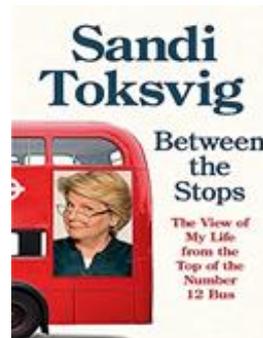
ORIGINALTHEATREONLINE.COM

**WATCH BETWEEN 15TH
 APRIL – 31ST JULY AS MANY
 TIMES AS YOU LIKE**

Dates for your Diary 2021

09.03.2021	WMFWI Virtual Annual Business Meeting
16.03.2021	Crafts and Coffee Zoom - Debbie Arkinstall
09.09.2021	ACWW Walk – Barston Lake
21.09.2021	Let's Get Digital Workshop - BMI
12.10.2021	WMFWI Annual Meeting – Carr's Lane
04.12.2021	Carol Service – St Martin's in the Bullring

Locked into Reading



Our first book selection. Chosen by our Chairman, comes highly recommended from the Yardley WI Committee. An autobiography

Between the Stops – The View of My Life from the Top of the Number 12 Bus
 by Sandi Toksvig

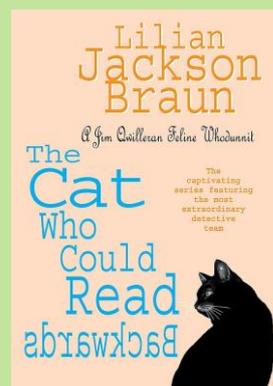
This is a series of often moving sometimes humorous reminiscences uniquely driven by the route she usually takes on the number 12 bus to the Beeb. It jumps around randomly using bus stops and sightings along the route, for 'memory association memoir writing'. Sandi opens up about her political stance and ideology, the homophobic behaviour she has experienced and the haphazard nature of her career path.

Customer reviews 4.6 out of 5 stars

This month's second book is also Lynn Smith's Choice.

The Cat Who Could Read Backwards – by Lilian Jackson Braun

The first cosy mystery in the New York Times bestselling Cat Who Series by the late Lilian Jackson Braun.



Central character James Qwilleran a divorced, recovering alcoholic, and newspaper reporter finds himself unexpectedly drawn to a pair of Siamese cats - and uses their unexpected insights to unravel the murders he encounters in his work. The notion of a cat who helps solve murders may be far-fetched, but in this particular title she carries it off, and the cast of characters, story, and atmosphere are extremely entertaining.

Customer reviews 4.6 out of 5 stars

To contribute contact Julie at : jtafridi@hotmail.co.uk or
 28, Vicarage Road, Yardley B33 8PH - 0121 784 7010

Puzzle Page

Say what you see

HAHANDND	ALL ↓ ↑ PULL	WHAT MUST	R(O)AI)
GET IT GET IT GET IT GET IT	CAKE	PICTURE END	
AGE AGE ← AGE	LEMADE	WI DE	COSTS
BAR ↑↑↑	MOON	SKIING	SPEAK BOXING KARATE JUDO SPEAK

FEBRUARY WORDSEARCH

N	N	E	C	H	H	C	N	I	F	D	L	O	G
E	E	Q	U	W	I	S	U	I	R	A	U	Q	A
N	W	E	W	O	O	D	P	E	C	K	E	R	Q
R	R	F	R	O	G	S	P	T	K	C	E	K	U
R	O	G	R	G	U	V	I	O	L	E	T	U	E
E	O	S	S	H	I	V	I	A	L	R	S	N	V
T	C	E	E	P	O	W	W	D	A	W	E	E	O
N	A	E	N	N	P	F	H	S	A	W	C	M	L
I	M	I	I	L	L	N	H	V	S	S	S	A	E
W	P	P	T	I	E	T	C	O	L	D	I	L	H
F	A	F	N	U	Q	E	V	L	E	A	P	C	T
O	I	E	E	N	E	R	W	D	X	A	B	Y	W
D	G	L	L	M	E	U	U	D	C	M	B	C	O
N	N	A	A	M	E	T	H	Y	S	T	J	L	H
E	G	S	V	V	S	P	O	R	D	W	O	N	S

Amethyst, Aquarius, Campaign, Cold, Cyclamen,
End of winter, Frogs, Goldfinch, Green, Heart, Leap,
Pisces, Show the love, Snowdrops,
Toads, Valentines, Violet, Winter,
Woodpecker, Wren



Answers in March Newsletter!

Riddle me this

1. What can you catch but never throw?
2. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?
3. What is brown, has a head, a tail, and no legs?
4. What belongs to you, but is used by others more than you?
5. The more there is the less you see. What am I?
6. You bury me when I'm alive and dig me up when I am dead. What Am I?
7. If you drop me I'm sure to crack. If you smile at me, I will smile back. What am I?
8. You answer me without me asking a question. What am I?
9. I can be cracked, I can be made, I can be told, I can be played. What am I?
10. What has an eye but cannot see?

January Puzzle Page Answers

Say what you see

Last straw, Arctic circle, Upset Tummy, Dark Matter, Post Man, Open road, Wave goodbye, Jack in the box, Cross breed, Red hot, Double agent, Growing pains, Big bad wolf, Long overdue, Tit for tat, Me and my shadow

Riddle me this

A promise, Your age, An Echo, Your right elbow, Chalkboard, A Window, Staircase, Seven, Nine, Envelope, Noon, Few

We want to hear from you. Send us your WI news, photographs, stories, events, and activities. Contact the Media Team at WMFWI.media@gmail.com

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