



# Newsletter

No 23

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Dear Students,

The **Recovery in Mind Team** would like to welcome you to the latest **Newsletter** entitled '**Winter**'. The temperatures are now lower, and we've not seen so much of the sun, so managing to keep cheerful in these days of continuing lockdown can be challenging to anyone! We hope that some of our thoughts and articles in this month's Newsletter can offer you 'new hope' with coping or bring a smile to your face! Here are some general ideas for starters.....

**Create a Warm Space.** The word 'hygge' is a Danish and Norwegian word that essentially translates to a mood or feeling of cosiness and comfort. This can be translated to many situations in life, but most often, it's used to describe a space. When you spend time in a room or home that feels cluttered and disorganized, it can make your brain feel the same way. By making the space tidy, warm, and inviting, it will help your mind feel the same way. This winter, with coping with Covid in mind, try adding 'soothing' things to your home, like candles, plants, blankets, music or artwork that brings about a sense of peace. If you want to be truly *hygge*, just remember to appreciate the simple things that bring joy to you. Instead of complaining about the bad weather this winter, light some candles and hunker down with a cup of tea and that book you've been meaning to read for months! Why not research *hygge* and see what you find?

**Maintain a set schedule.** Habit and routine are extremely important. Humans are creatures of habit, and they can cope with difficult situations if they can just focus on their routines. Even when you're tempted to stay in bed all day and watch TV, force yourself to get out of bed and do *something*. It can be difficult to stay positive in winter without setting some goals, so defining a clear schedule is one of the best ways to encourage this. If you can get into the habit of following your schedule or plan (maybe you could start each day with some indoor exercises, then have a healthy breakfast and complete a crossword, then work on your hobby, then speak to some friends, etc.), you can find that the days go by more easily, the darkness and coldness of the winter don't bother you so much, and you feel better in general.

**Work on something practical.** The fact that you can't really go outside in foul weather doesn't mean that you can't work on some practical projects. There are plenty of things you can do indoors to stay occupied. You could take up baking or knitting, try origami,

dabble in electronics, or even try carpentry or picture-framing. The point is to do something that allows you to work with your hands, because that's highly rewarding. Maybe you have an old hobby you could return to, or maybe you could pick something totally unfamiliar to try for the first time. This might even be the perfect time to learn an instrument you've been thinking about trying for quite a while. Before you know it, you could have mastered the basics.

Trying to look after your physical health when you're stuck in a local lockdown and during winter can seem difficult, but there are some simple exercises you can do from home or online to make things easier and more manageable. Even a short brisk walk wearing loads of warm clothes can make a difference and improve your mood.

**Sharpen your mind with puzzles.** Your body needs physical activity and challenges to stay in good condition. Therefore, it's so important to get exercise and eat healthily. What often gets overlooked, though, is that the same is true of your **mind**. The more you use your cognitive faculties, the sharper they'll get — and when you don't tax your mind for a long period, you'll notice a decline. Due to this, finding some time to solve some puzzles will really help you stay sharp. You can solve a Rubik's Cube, fill in some crosswords, or complete some sudoku squares or wordsearches or even a jigsaw. And even if you're not interested in video games, you could play online solitaire (computer versions of traditional games can be excellent).

**The winter presents some major challenges, but you can still enjoy the winter months if you manage to stay positive and engaged — and the tips we've looked at here can help with that. Good luck!**

Best wishes The Recovery in Mind Team

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## Winter Reflections by Angela

It seems the perfect afternoon to be putting some thoughts down for our Mid-Winter Newsletter. Tiny flakes of snow dance through the air, a cold North East wind is blowing outside, and the fire is on. Working from home isn't always easy but today it seems like a good compromise in addition to Lockdown measures.

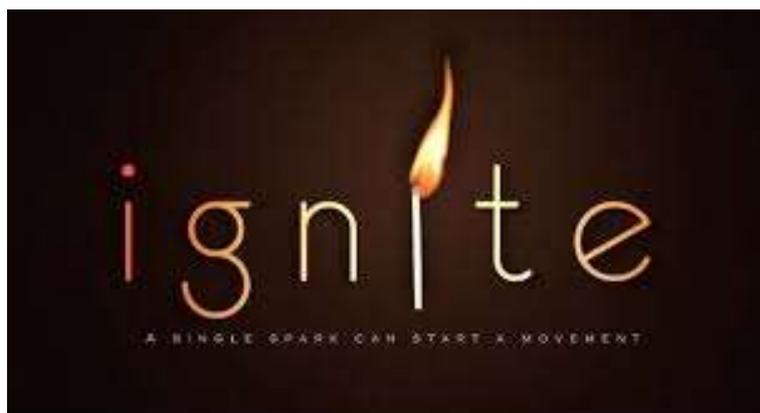
For the past few days, I have been reflecting upon the past 5 years since I started Recovery in Mind. Prior to my ad(venture) I often thought that people who started and ran successful businesses or organisations had some kind of magical ability or secret. What do they know that I don't? How do they learn all the stuff they need to know? I don't have a degree or even my Maths 'O' Level. When I went to Sixth Form College I was put into the 'Maths for Everyday Life' group, which actually was a whole lot more useful than anything I had learnt before!

I suppose 'Entrepreneurs' like Richard Branson or Elon Musk have that aura or 'something' special about them. But, hold on a minute, there are millions of people around the world who build businesses, develop new ideas or invent things. My fear of failure or being 'found out' held me back. 'I'm not clever enough', 'I don't have a degree' or 'I'm missing that magical thing' was what I told myself. I was the one who was holding me back. No-one ever said to me, had I thought of running my own venture, or that I had the skills to do so, but they aren't the everyday conversations. So, it was probably the same for all those others like me who take the step to 'do their own thing'. Many people like me find themselves at a crossroads in life and they can finally see the road ahead.

For a long time, I had secretly wanted to run a training company, but I didn't have a clue what I could 'teach' people. So, following my two episodes of severe mental illness I came across the Recovery College model and knew that it was my way ahead. It shone like a beacon at me and drew me into a world of discovery, curiosity, and a desire to learn and use both my lived experience of mental health, but also much of the skills that I had but didn't realise how useful they could be. In fact, most of the time I had dismissed them as just stuff I knew rather than skills or knowledge.

So, when you have a flicker of an idea, a goal or a desire to make something happen, then follow that light. It's there for you, for you to make something of and to help you to find a new purpose in life. It doesn't have to be big or grand, but it's yours. You owe it to yourself to see if you can strike the match that ignites the flicker that grows into a flame and spreads like a fire, providing a warm glow for yourself and a light for others.

So, don't let others (or yourself!) tell you whether you can try a new job, or a new hobby, a sport, or start volunteering. Whatever it may be that gives you purpose, get up and follow that flicker.



# Light in Winter and how it affects our mental health.

The light levels we experience within our home and at our workplace can affect our health and wellbeing. Natural light has so many benefits, but it can be hard to get enough of it when it is winter, or you spend much of your day at work indoors.

Artificial light decreases levels of melatonin, a hormone that is created in the brain by the pineal gland. Melatonin is critical for our body's health due to its control over our circadian rhythms. This natural process is often referred to as our body clock. When interrupted it can impact our mental and psychological functioning, including our ability to sleep well, think clearly, timing and release of hormones, and the regulation of blood pressure. Continuous disruption and interruption of our circadian rhythms can increase our risk of developing illnesses and disorders such as depression and diabetes.

## What is it about Natural Sunlight that makes us feel good?

*"The human body thrives when the weather is warmer. According to research, the main reason for mood changes comes down to longer days and thus, exposure to more light,"* says L Dowthwaite from the University of Central Lancashire.



Increased hours of sunlight heighten the brain's production of the mood-enhancing chemical serotonin. Studies have discovered that the more sunlight we are exposed to, the more serotonin we produce. There are medications that our Doctors can prescribe which help us to keep our serotonin at optimum levels.

## How to get More Light and be Happier

If you're struggling to fit natural light into your busy schedule, you may need to make some adjustments in your daily routine. Something as small as taking a walk during your lunch hour will help. In fact, even a walk beneath the winter sun will benefit you and your intake of Vitamin D will be increased.

If you're spending too many hours indoors during the winter and can't get outside, light therapy can help. There are two types you can buy - light boxes and daylight simulation lights (which you use when you're asleep). These products wake you up naturally with a gradual increase in light, which in turn prompts biological responses that make you feel more energetic and alert on waking. This is great for times when you feel lethargic and suffer from the winter blues or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). You can also make very small home improvements that can make a huge difference. We all appreciate the natural beauty of allowing increased light to shine through our windows at home. This is something everyone can do! There are many home improvement methods you can use to let more light into your home. You may choose to clean your windows, open curtains or blinds properly, brighten up your interior with a fresh coat of paint to reflect the light, or move your furniture to allow more light through windows. You'll begin to feel the benefits right away as the warmth of the sun hits your skin.



"Light control is different for every room. The light control within your bedroom is essential for a healthy body clock. You can use blackout blinds in a bedroom, as your body needs to sleep in total darkness for optimum health," - Jennifer Barrett in her article "Sleep Oasis." However, you should open these blinds up in the morning and welcome the rays of sunshine into your bedroom to help you feel energised and motivated. Your living room and kitchen are areas of the house that need the most natural lighting. Adding more sunlight to these areas can make the space seem bigger too. For maximum results, make the most of your window space and keep the area clear to allow maximum natural light to enter.

## Making a walk in a town interesting

Sometimes a challenge can motivate us to get out of the house. Take this list with you on your next urban walk and see how many you can tick off. Good luck!

### Graffiti

Historic or modern art or writing added onto a structure - how have people near you left their mark on a place?



### Animal as decoration & Plant / flower as decoration

Maybe carved or painted - try a pub sign or a flag! These have historically been some of the most popular ways to add decoration to built places.

### Name and location of a manufacturer

Some manufacturers add their branding onto what they make. Try a brick or a manhole cover - you'd be surprised how much you can find out about the history of the different elements which make up places.

### Evidence of repair work or patching

Can you find signs that something has been maintained over time?

### Building with structural timbers

Historically, a lot of buildings used wooden frames to hold their walls in place. Can you spot one?



### Ghost sign

Old adverts and shop signs - these are a great way to find out about historic businesses and the products people used to buy. Some have survived by chance and faded over time, while others are preserved and re-painted for preservation.

### War memorial

Lots of communities remember the local impact of conflict by memorialising their dead. Where is your local memorial?



### Unusual shape or size of window

Windows are often called the "eyes of a building" and can give it loads of character. Can you find a window which is much larger or smaller than usual, or a different shape to those around it? Can you spot an interesting one?

### Water fountain / drinking fountains

Who needs single use plastic bottles? Look out for historic and modern places where anyone could come to quench their thirst.

### Accessibility alterations

Old places were not always built in a way which is easy for people with disabilities to access. Can you spot a change, like a wheelchair ramp or braille sign, which makes a place more accessible?

### **Structure connected to water**

Rivers and seas were historically ways to transport people and goods more easily than badly maintained roads! Can you find a bridge, pier or dock which connects people to the water?

### **Bench with a memorial plaque on it**

Benches in public spaces have become a popular way for people to leave a positive legacy in their favourite places.

### **Built-in boot scraper**

Before streets were paved and when animals were used to pull carts and carriages, streets in towns changed into a muddy mess in bad weather, and especially in winter. These scrapers let people scrape the mud off the bottom of their shoes before entering the house. They went out of use when flag-stoned pavement was introduced.

### **Cobbled surface**

"Cobbles" are stones which have usually been rounded by water, so they don't have sharp edges. Before tarmac, these stones were set into the surface of roads to provide a hard-wearing surface. Later on, bricks and flattened stones were also used to give a less bumpy surface!



### **Hopper at the top of a downpipe with a date on it**

"Hoppers" are the wider part at the top of a drainpipe, letting lots of water flow in during heavy rain. These were a popular place for adding extra decoration - can you spot one which has the date it was made on?

### **Building with a construction date on it**

There's nothing buildings archaeologists love better than a building which tells you when parts were built! How old are the buildings near you?



### **Horse mounting steps**

People used to travel on horseback. You might not think there's much evidence of that around now, but if you can find a wall which has a little set of steps by the road, chances are they were built to let people climb onto their horses!

### **Benchmark**

Builders need to make sure that they're building in a straight line! They used "benchmarks" as a point of reference, so everything else they built would stay in line. These usually look like an arrow with a horizontal line. Sometimes they could be a cast iron or bronze plate set into stone or concrete, but also chiselled into stones.

### **Damaged building**

Places change over time, through deterioration, fire or bomb damage, or flooding. Can you see signs of the way buildings near you have been damaged?

### **Unusual house/building name**

The names of buildings can give really interesting clues to their history. Find a named building, and see if you can guess where the name comes from!

### **Water trough**

When horses were used as a form of transport, a lot of towns and cities had water troughs where the horses could drink after their journeys. Since there aren't so many horses in cities these days, some troughs now have plants in, so you'll have to look carefully to spot the long thin shape!

You can also find them on farms for other animals to use.

### **Scaffolding**

Places are always changing - either through damage, repair or new additions. Find the metal framework of scaffolding near you, and discover what's going on!

### **Stained glass**

Adding extra materials into glass as it's made can result in beautiful colours. It's often been used to decorate churches, but you can also spot it in historic houses, public buildings, and as a decoration in modern houses!

(Source: Council for British Archaeology)

We would love to see any photos you take.

### *Birds at Winter Nightfall*

*Around the house the flakes fly faster,  
And all the berries now are gone  
From holly and cotoneaster  
Around the house. The flakes fly! - faster  
Shutting indoors that crumb-outcaster  
We used to see upon the lawn  
Around the house. The flakes fly faster,  
And all the berries now are gone!*

*Thomas Hardy*



# Winter activities during coronavirus

As the coronavirus pandemic stretches into nearly a full year of impacting our daily lives, it can feel like it's hard to find any fun in your day-to-day routine. Finding winter activities that bring you joy may be even more of a challenge as temperatures drop, especially when we are not allowed to get together with family and friends because of lockdown. Here are some ideas that you might like to try to give you some enjoyment.

## Enjoy the outdoors (socially distanced)

- Have an epic snowball fight (if it snows)
- Go stargazing
- Take a wintry walk and set yourself a task eg try to find a snowdrop.



## Get a taste of winter

- Load up a cup of cocoa with whipped cream or marshmallows
- Bake a pie
- Make baked apples
- Try making sourdough bread



- Make homemade caramel popcorn
- Roast root vegetables
- Make a pot of homemade soup
- Have a little fondue
- Bake and ice biscuits

## Try some wintry crafts

- Build a gingerbread house
- Cut paper snowflakes
- Make a birdfeeder out of pinecones, peanut butter, and birdseed—and place it near your window for a show

- Create handmade valentines
- Knit a scarf



## Enjoy some much-needed self-care

- Cosy up by a roaring fire (indoors or out!)
- Burn your favourite scented candle
- Light candles and enjoy a bubble bath
- Do a jigsaw puzzle



- Cuddle up with a blanket, a cup of tea, and a good book
- Work on a challenging crossword or word game
- Splurge on a pair of fuzzy slippers
- Watch a box-set

## Reconnect with loved ones

- Bake cookies to share with your neighbours
- Enjoy a living room picnic
- Host a movie marathon of all your favourites
- Eat dinner by candlelight
- Write a love letter
- Plan a virtual game night
- Try something new
- Take an online cooking class
- Pick up a new hobby



- Encourage an amaryllis bulb or other flowering plant to bloom
- Start some seedlings
- Join a virtual book club
- Have a family games night (on Zoom if they don't live in the same house.)
- Arrange your photos



## Pooh and Piglet Go Hunting and Nearly Catch a Woozle.

One fine winter's day when Piglet was brushing away the snow in front of his house, he happened to look up, and there was Winnie-the-Pooh. Pooh was walking round and round in a circle, thinking of something else, and when Piglet called to him, he just went on walking. "Hallo!" said Piglet, "what are you doing?" ... "Tracking something," said Winnie-the-Pooh very mysteriously. "Tracking what?" said Piglet, coming closer. "That's just what I ask myself. I ask myself, What? ... Now, look there." He pointed to the ground in front of him. "What do you see there?"



"Tracks," said Piglet. "Paw-marks." He gave a little squeak of excitement. "Oh, Pooh! Do you think it's a—a—a Woozle?"



"I may be," said Pooh. "Sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn't. You never can tell with paw-marks."

With these few words he went on tracking and Piglet, after watching him for a minute or two, ran after him. Winnie-the-Pooh had come to a sudden stop and was bending over the tracks in a puzzled sort of way.

"What's the matter?" asked Piglet.

"It's a very funny thing," said Bear, "but there seem to be two animals now. This—whatever-it-was—has been joined by another—whatever-it-is—and the two of them are now proceeding in company. Would you mind

coming with me, Piglet, in case they turn out to be Hostile Animals?" ...

There was a small spinney of larch trees just here, and it seemed as if the two Woozles, if that is what they were, had been going round this spinney; so round this spinney went Pooh and Piglet after them ... And still the tracks went on in front of them. . . .

Suddenly Winnie-the-Pooh stopped and pointed excitedly in front of him. "*Look! ... A third animal has joined the other two!*" ...

So they went on, feeling just a little anxious now, in case the three animals in front of them were of Hostile Intent. ... And then, all of a sudden, Winnie-the-Pooh stopped again, and licked the tip of his nose in a cooling manner, for he was feeling more hot and anxious than ever in his life before. *There were four animals in front of them!*

"Do you see, Piglet? Look at their tracks! Three, as it were, Woozles, and one, as it was, Wizzle. *Another Woozle has joined them!*"

And so it seemed to be. There were the tracks; crossing over each other here, getting muddled up with each other there; but, quite plainly every now and then, the tracks of four sets of paws. ...

Pooh looked up at the sky, and then, as he heard the whistle again, he looked up into the branches of a big oak-tree, and then he saw a friend of his.

"It's Christopher Robin," he said. ...

Christopher Robin came slowly down his tree.

"Silly old Bear," he said, "what were you doing? First you went round the spinney twice by yourself, and then Piglet ran after you and you went round again together, and then you were just going round a fourth time—"



"Wait a moment," said Winnie-the-Pooh, holding up his paw.

He sat down and thought, in the most thoughtful way he could think. Then he fitted his paw into one of the Tracks . . . and then he scratched his nose twice and stood up.

"Yes," said Winnie-the-Pooh.

"I see now," said Winnie-the-Pooh.

"I have been Foolish and Deluded," said he, "and I am a Bear of No Brain at All."

"You're the Best Bear in All the World," said Christopher Robin soothingly.

"Am I?" said Pooh hopefully. And then he brightened up suddenly.

"Anyhow," he said, "it is nearly Luncheon Time."

So he went home for it.

*(Quotation from Winnie-the-Pooh by A. A. Milne, Chapter III - In Which Pooh and Piglet Go Hunting and Nearly Catch a Woozle. Drawing below by E. H. Shepard.)*



On reflection this excerpt has several 'lessons' to teach us, all quite poignant currently.....

- Don't jump to unfounded conclusions- that's just negative thinking!
- Catastrophising doesn't get you very far!
- There's no point in over-thinking or worrying about things 'around the corner'- they might never happen!
- Don't 'go off the track' when you are trying to achieve something
- Keep calm and re-assess things from time to time.... you might see things more positively!
- A little support from a good friend can go a long way!
- Treating yourself to a good lunch can be a positive thing (and take your mind off the bad things!)



## Clean Out the Fridge Frittata.

Don't you hate waste?.....food waste in particular, upsets me.... sometimes you have leftover vegetables that just didn't get finished with the Sunday roast or a few mushrooms left from a box or part of a sweet pepper.... in these cases, I like to whip up a veggie frittata to use up the leftovers. Making a frittata is a very useful skill in the kitchen that you will want to master. Frittatas can be served warm or cold, for breakfast, lunch, or supper. You can easily pair the frittata with a salad or soup and bread for a satisfying meal. Frittatas travel well for picnics and make fabulous starters or finger food cut into small cubes. Have I convinced you that you should start making frittatas? I hope so.

I have used leftover broccoli, roasted cauliflower, and asparagus in frittatas. You can also use mushrooms, potatoes, herbs, or whatever other vegetables you like or find in the fridge or defrost from the freezer (even small amounts). This frittata will serve to 2-3 but if you need to feed more people just use a few more eggs and use a larger frying pan. You can even sprinkle grated cheese on top before you grill it for a golden crispy topping! Eggs are so nutritious and cheap too, so great to keep a box in the house during these winter months, plus they're a good source of protein/Vitamin D!



Prep time 15 mins      Cooking time 15 mins      Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 red pepper chopped
- 1 tbs olive oil
- 1 courgette thinly sliced
- 1 tsp herbs of your choice
- Salt and pepper
- 1 handful cherry tomatoes (halved)
- 2-3 cups fresh spinach or (frozen & thawed)
- 6 eggs (beaten).

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sauté onion and red pepper in an ovenproof frying pan with 1 tbs of olive oil over medium heat until softened, about five minutes.
2. Add courgette to sauté pan and cook for three more minutes. Then, add herbs, salt, and pepper and cook for another minute.
3. Add cherry tomatoes and cook for 1 minute and then add spinach and stir until wilted.
4. Beat 6 eggs in a bowl and season with another pinch of salt and pepper.
5. Pour eggs into the pan with veggies. Tilt pan so eggs are evenly distributed around it.
6. While frittata is cooking, preheat the grill.
7. Cook over medium heat on the stove until the bottom is set. You will see bubbles forming on the surface of the frittata.
8. Remove pan from heat and place under grill and watch it closely. Remove from grill when top of frittata is golden and puffed up.

Yum!



## 'Winter' Wordsearch

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

Gloves and mittens

Frosty mornings

Film nights

Woollen jumpers

Tobogganing

Indoor craft projects

Porridge

Thick PJs

Crackling fire

Slippers

New RIM online courses

Skiing

Crisp cold mornings

Dark

Hot water bottles

Fire

Fog

Crafts

Thermal underwear

Hot chocolate

Hearty soup and pies

Cold temperatures

Comfort Food

Keeping cosy

Wrap up warmly

Thick winter duvet

Snowdrops

Stews

Slow cooker meals

Icicle

Snow

Throwing snowballs

Scarf

Logs



# HOLIDAY COLLAGE

Blow away the winter weather and immerse yourself in creative sunshine!

It may still be winter but perhaps now is a good time to remember a holiday that you have enjoyed, or one that you are looking forward to after lockdown, or perhaps you have an imaginary fantasy holiday.

You may have a photograph that you would like to work from, or make your own drawing to work with.



As well as your image, you will need:

- A piece of thick paper / card
- Old magazines
- Glue
- Scissors or a sharp knife like a Stanley knife ..... and some time



Draw your image on to the paper/card



Cut strips/squares/circles/any other shape of paper from magazines as thin as you want and build up lots of layers to give depth of colour.

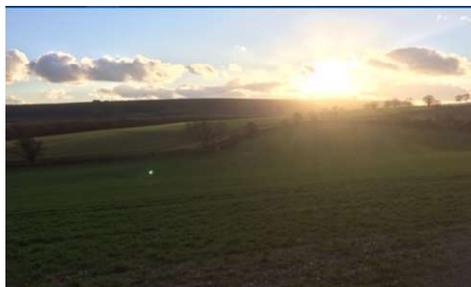
Keep on adding until you are happy with your holiday collage!



**Enjoy your holiday dreams!**



# Winter Photos by Cath



## Students' Corner

Lovely to hear from a few of you this week and thank you for sharing what you have been up to.

Amanda come across a new Australian poet, Erin Hanson, and loved the following poem:-

*Life is unpredictable,  
It changes with the seasons,  
Even your coldest winter,  
Happens for the best of reasons,  
And though it feels eternal,  
Like all you'll ever do is freeze,  
I promise spring is coming,  
And with it, brand new leaves.*



Sue discovered a 'Triceratops' in a neighbour's garden and took a picture before it melted. The rest of the snow had thawed but the dinosaur was still intact. Someone has been very artistic.



Elaine has been busy with lots of crafts to keep her mind occupied. These include felting, quilling, wreath making, embroidery, button making. Some fabulous pieces of work!



Jayne sent in a poem aptly called....  
A poem to cheer you up

Just when I think I cannot bear the sight  
Of one more drift or crusted bank of snow.  
When all the world is camouflaged in white.  
And clouds pour shadows on the earth below.  
When winter's stillness muffles every sound,  
And winter's cold has gripped me to the bone,  
I stop to catch my breath and look around:  
It seems that winter's all I've ever known.  
But there, beneath a clump of leafless trees,  
Nestled in a niche the wind swept bare,  
Rising up like hopeful memories,  
Snowdrops dance on gusts of frosty air,  
Reminding me that winter's end is near  
And sweet green spring will once again appear.

By JoAnn Early Macken

## Students' Corner Continued

John has recently spent some time on the Yorkshire coast and as a keen birdwatcher notes the birds and other wildlife he sees whilst on his daily walk. Each day is different and he recalls one of his walks. "It was still cold with some weak sunshine but it was less windy and this was enough to change the atmosphere of my walk. Several skylarks (of lark ascending fame) had taken to the air singing their joyful songs as they hovered high above my head. Not to be out down 2 to 3 pairs of oystercatchers appeared on the nearby lagoons and dashed around in pre-breeding displays, all the while making their high piping calls. A short-eared owl busied itself hunting for small mammals, occasionally hovering, stopping and dropping to the ground. It was truly uplifting to witness these events, and a timely reminder that spring is on its way." Here are some wildlife pictures he sent in of a short-eared owl, fox and roe deer.



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## The Communal Defrost by Gary Smith

Jack frost had paid a call,  
The morn was all a-glitter.  
Icicles dangled from frozen gutters,  
The day was cold and bitter.

Greetings of "good morning "  
Came from here and there  
As the hardy left their houses,  
To face the freezing air.

I heard familiar sounds  
Echoing around our street,  
Neighbours scraping windscreens  
And stamping frozen feet.

Clouds of exhaled breath  
Rose up to the sky,

As if ghostly, silent steam trains  
Were slowly drifting by.

The sound of engines running,  
As people warmed their cars.  
It was the communal defrost,  
Beneath early morning stars.



## External Links

While looking for some information about vaccines I came across the Edward Jenner Museum website. I found this article about lockdown diaries interesting.

<https://jennermuseum.com/project-home/our-lockdown>

This link is to the BBC "Winter-watch" list of things to look for

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/31CFvfxBVJDLJy7kkkVmTNg/winter-watchlist>

A selection of activities to do outside in winter

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2021/01/lockdown-activities-kids-winter/>

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/take-part/try-this-at-home.html>

Lockdown activity ideas from The Guardian

[https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/27/lockdown-cabin-fever-here-are-56-tried-tested-and-terrific-ways-to-beat-the-boredom?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/27/lockdown-cabin-fever-here-are-56-tried-tested-and-terrific-ways-to-beat-the-boredom?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

[https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/29/still-bored-in-lockdown-here-are-57-more-activities-to-keep-you-going?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jan/29/still-bored-in-lockdown-here-are-57-more-activities-to-keep-you-going?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Classical music for winter

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBL4reaM\\_hY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBL4reaM_hY)

Songs inspired by winter

<https://www.ranker.com/list/songs-about-winter/ranker-music>

The Beatles- 'Here comes the sun'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQetemT1sWc>

Mamas and the Papas- 'California Dreaming' (On such a winter's day)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NJayW1kOeM>

Vivaldi - 'Winter' by Mari Samuelsen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu6Hr9kd-U0>

Idina Menzel & Michael Bublé - Baby It's Cold Outside\_ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bbuBubZ1yE>



## Further Help and Support

If you are struggling with your mental health and feel that you need further help & support here are some contact numbers for you:

**West Berkshire Community Mental Health Team**- 01635 292020

**CRHTT (Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team)**- 0300 365 9999

**Samaritans** - 116 123

**NHS** - 111 (number to call should you feel you are physically unwell with Coronavirus or indeed any other physical health condition which is deteriorating.

**West Berkshire Community Hub** is where you can find out information and support locally for a variety of matters relating to Coronavirus - look at their website (cut and paste this into your internet browser) <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-communityhub>

**The Age UK Berkshire Befriending and Buddying scheme** is now open for referrals. Enquiries should be made directly to Age UK Berkshire by emailing [info@ageukberkshire.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukberkshire.org.uk) or calling 0118 959 4242

999 is for **EMERGENCY** calls only.