

Issue 28 18th December 2020



Bringing people, wildlife and wellbeing together

Hi there everyone, just like the seasonal TV guides this edition of TEaM

Up! is a bumper one, with extra articles, bonus puzzles and ideas for ways to connect with nature over the wintry festive period. We hope you enjoy it!

So here we are, the last TEaM Up of 2020 and what a year it has been! We could never have dreamed up the things that have happened this year! I never in my life thought I would live through something like this – being told not to leave the house, empty roads and town centres, empty supermarket shelves and an eerie sense of silence in the air, followed by litres of hand sanitiser, face masks, Perspex screens and stickers everywhere marking out 2m distances! There are so many things I have missed during this time – hugs from friends and

family, celebrating birthdays with others and being able to pop to the local café for a coffee and cake, but amongst all of the chaos there is a little bit of me that has enjoyed the less frenetic pace of life, the moments of peace and quiet when out for walks and the little bit of head space that those walks allowed.

Many people will be happy to see the Christmas holiday approaching and 2020 ending and it can be an exciting and uplifting time for lots of people but Christmas can also be very difficult and even more so in these strange times. Some people may not be able to see family and friends like they would normally, some people will be missing loved ones lost this year, some people will be struggling to put food on the table and buy their children Christmas



presents as they haven't been able to work during the pandemic. It can be a very lonely and isolating time but as



I am writing this I can hear the birds singing in the garden, (I am not good enough at identifying bird song to know which ones!) and it reminds me that nature will still be there and we can still spend time in nature and share quiet times connecting and taking notice to help us to feel well during the Christmas period.

We are very lucky here in the Health & Skills team at WWT, along with colleagues at Mind, and have an amazing team of people who all keep each other going. One of the things we started during the pandemic was 'Tracks of our years' where each day one of us shares a piece of music that they like. We have had a fantastic, varied and eclectic mix of tunes and it has been wonderful to listen to everyone's choices. It reminds me that, alongside nature, music is another thing that has kept us going during this difficult year so I would encourage you to try and listen to a piece of music you enjoy each day and take a few moments just to listen and relax.

The team have also come up with our own take on the 12 days of Christmas with some nice ideas to keep us busy and keep our minds occupied over the Christmas break and we'd love to see some photos of you joining us in doing some of these things!

So, as we reach the end of the year, I want to thank you all for your patience, help and support this year, to say 'thank you' for bearing with us as we put new systems in place to help keep everyone safe at plot and for sticking with them and always giving us your feedback. One of the things that I am also missing right now is seeing smiles – when I go out to the supermarket I smile at the old lady in the queue, the checkout staff working so hard and yet the smile and the sentiment behind it is hidden behind the face mask – I just hope that somehow they can feel it and hope that you too all understand how much we appreciate your support for the project. I love to talk about the TEaM project to my



colleagues and friends as I am so proud of everything that the project, and you, as individuals achieve. Hopefully in the New Year we will be able to resume some of the other activities that we have had to put on pause, such as the walks and conservation days, that I know you all enjoyed.

So, for now, I hope that you have a safe and healthy Christmas and New Year and we look forward to seeing you in 2021,

Amanda (Health and Skills Director, WWT)

Down the plot...

The TEaM allotment continues to buzz with activity and busy-ness through the winter months with maintenance and repairs, preparing beds for sowing and growing in the spring and Christmas activities - the Christmas wreaths are beautiful! The autumn

sown veg is growing well and the garlic is in! As it's grown from a bulb, garlic can be planted throughout the winter months, from October - March for a spring or summer harvest. You could even stagger planting it to keep you going all the way through the summer months! Our garlic goes straight into the ground but it can also be grown in containers if you don't have much space or a patch of ground.

Here's our allotment volunteers 'How To' guide to growing garlic...

- Dig your bed over. Give it a good weed and loosen up the soil. 1.
- Using a trowel, or even just with your hands create a 'ridge' by 2. mounding up the soil, just like in the photo. By creating a mound to plant your garlic in with a mini valley either side, you'll be creating better drainage as the rain water will be able to soak away and will hopefully save your garlic from rotting.
- 3. Insert one garlic clove into the top of the ridge roughly every 6 inches. You should get 10 cloves to approximately five feet of mound! Remember to plant individual cloves! One clove will grow to produce a whole bulb!
- 4. Make sure each clove is about 2cm deep and covered with soil.
- If you want to apply a fertilizer, now's the time. Scatter it on top of the mound and the rain will 5. break it down and wash it into the soil. At the plot we use a chemical fish bone mix!
- 6. Cover with mesh if you want to help stop the birds and squirrels digging up your tasty summer cooking ingredients!!



TEaM does

Unscramble the letters to discover animals that spend the winter months

in hibernation

Christmas Celebration at the allotment!

Instead of the usual Christmas lunch at the pub, the team's

festivities happened around a fire at the plot this year, with delicious squash soup made by Jackie and all kinds of tasty treats.







Next?









Ever wondered what you need to be doing, when in your own garden? This is what the TEaM team will be up to over the next couple of months at the allotment...



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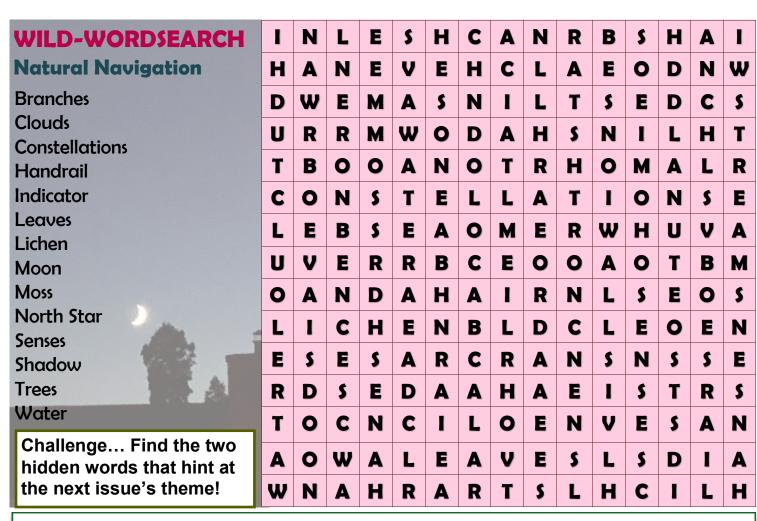
Issue 27 answers... delaffeir-fieldfare nokt-knot grinwed—redwing thosr-raede low—short-eared owl aawnwix-waxwina



Winter is all about repairs and preparation. December has the last of the digging and soil turning. Keep bird feeders clean and topped up and remember to provide wildlife with fresh water each day. When the ground and ponds are frozen, birds and animals can struggle to find enough water to drink!



Now's the time for pruning any apple and pear trees. Get planning your crops for the spring and order seeds. Remember to keep putting food and water out for the birds!



"In the depth of Winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer" **Albert Camus**

Can you identify the wildlife in the photos?







Issue 27 answers...

1. Ash 2. Alder 3. hawthorn





1. Hedgehogs are the

True or False?

- only UK mammals that hibernate.
- 2. Fieldfares and redwings migrate to the UK from Scandinavia and Russia.
- 3. Some birds stand on one leg to keep warm.
- 4. Spring is the mating season for foxes.
- 5. Only queen wasps survive the winter.

Answers on back page

You can also follow TEaM on social media for a Daily Dose of Nature...







Bird Migration

As many of you may know I am a keen birder. I have found that bird watching is really good for my mental wellbeing, it gets me out and about and learning new things. One of my favourite birds is the Atlantic Puffin (Fratercula arctica). I fell in love with them the first time I saw one on a boat trip to the Farne islands. They are so comical and colourful that they always bring a smile to my face. Did you know when they are in the air, they flap their wings up to 400 times per minute and reach a speed of 55 miles per hour. When they come to land on a tiny square on a dangerously high cliff edge, you have to hold your breath, will they make it?!







Puffins are small seabirds with brightly coloured bills and orange legs. Each one is 18-20cm tall and 26-29cm long from the tip of its bill to the end of its short pointed tail. They are sometimes referred to as 'sea parrots'. Their colourful beak fades to a dull grey during winter and blooms with colour in the spring to attract potential mates. Puffin couples tend to reunite at the same burrow site each year.

To see puffins, you have to go their breeding sites because they are only in the UK from March to Mid-August. Believe or not I have been to almost all the breeding colonies to see them – RSPB Bempton Cliffs in Yorkshire, South Stack in Anglesey, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island in Northumberland, Isle of May in Scotland and Skomer in Pembrokeshire. The only place I have not yet been to is the Shetland and Orkney Islands, hopefully one day!

Puffins are declining and are on the UK conservation red list. Their diet is mainly fish, especially sand eels, which they use to feed their young. Unfortunately climate change has impacted the sand eel population.



Puffins spend most of their lives at sea and only come on land to breed. They rest on the waves when not swimming. In winter some remain in the North Sea, others move further south to the Bay of Biscay. This made me think of bird migration because puffins are migrating birds.

Migration is the journey or movement of people or wildlife from one area to another. Since UK is an island surrounded by water the most common migration is of birds. Some species come here for the winter and others arrive in the spring like the

puffins. Bats, butterflies, fish, dolphins and whales also migrate.

Birds migrate to the UK in the spring to breed and in the winter to find food to survive.



In the spring North American and European birds tend to migrate northward to take advantage of the increased insect population and daylight. When winter approaches and the availability of insects and other food sources drops, the birds move south again.

It is believed that birds use the sun and stars as well as landmarks to navigate their route. Scientists have found that birds have tiny bits of magnetic material in their brains, kind of like an internal compass. However some birds do still lose their way especially during bad weather and get blown off course.

We can all look out for migrating birds because even blackbirds are migratory despite most of them being resident in the UK. Some blackbirds come from northern Europe, eg Scandinavian countries, to spend winter here due to the milder winter and food sources. It is difficult to distinguish between resident and migratory blackbirds. However keep your eyes open for blackbirds in your garden or in parks this winter, you could be looking at a bird that has travelled hundreds of miles from Scandinavia.

Take care, stay safe and Happy Christmas, Man Lan

Wreath Making Using Silver Birch Twigs

1) Things you need

Three or four long lengths of silver birch twigs and two or three pieces of willow or other soft green wood. This will still work if you only have silver birch twigs. Try to collect from fallen branches already on the ground.



4) Add more

Add a couple more willow to the wreath by weaving them into the



2) Make the circle

Start by holding the bunch of twigs and twist into a circle. Weave the rest of the length into the circle until all the length is twisted in.

The structure is pliable so you can just shape it into a wreath.



birch twigs.



5) Add greenery

Pick up some greenery such as ivy, berries, pine sprigs or anything that you want to decorate your wreath with.

You just need to push the greenery into the gaps in the wreath, no need for string or wires.



3) Add willow Next add the willow if you have any, otherwise you can just

leave it as it is and go to 5) Add greenery. If adding willow, just weave it round the wreath.



6) Be creative

Be creative, no right or wrong, just add as much or as little onto the wreath as you like. Then tie a string on the top and hang it up.







Festive Brain-Teasers

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Deck the Halls	R	G	N	A	T	S	н	K	I	T	Н	V	0	Y	I	T
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Little Donkey	Т	L	S	L	E	ı	G	н	R	1	D	E	ı	A	0	K
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Christmas Quiz

- 1. What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
- 2. What has been given to the people of Britain by the city of Oslo in Norway each year since 1947?
- 3. Which bird do you often see on Christmas cards?
- 4. In the original version of the song 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer', how many times does the word 'Rudolph' appear?
- 5. Although damaged, what is the best Christmas present in the world?
- 6. 'Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh' is the opening line to which Christmas song?
- 7. How many of Santa's reindeer have names beginning with the letter D?
- 8. Which member of the Royal Family was responsible for starting the tradition in England of displaying a Christmas tree?
- 9. In 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', what gift was sent on the sixth day?
- 10. When did we first start to eat turkeys for Christmas lunch?

Answers on back page

Missing Links...

Your task is to find the missing word that follows the first clue and precedes the second. For example, the answer to Rain-String could be 'Bow' giving Rainbow and Bowstring.

Christmas - top

tinsel - council

yule - jam

Christmas - basin

frost - sized

mince - crust

snow - wood

Christmas - lea

wrapping - clip

church - station

Answers on back page

You can also follow TEaM on social media for a Daily Dose of Nature...









In this new series, Martin explores snow and ice - its beauty, science and impact on the natural world.

I love snow! I love the way it stops everything from traffic to school days, the way it can turn grown-ups into children, how you can read the tracks of bird and fox in the virgin-snow and finally how beautifully it transforms our landscape into a silent white fantasy world.....if only for a day. As we move into winter the presence of snow and ice in our daily lives becomes ever more likely. It is written into our traditions, whether it is 'dreaming of a white Christmas' or seeing what beautiful landscape 'Jack Frost' has created for us but what exactly is going on?

First of all, when water freezes it turns from being a liquid into a solid, but it also increases dramatically in volume and consequently it becomes less dense. These three properties allow snow and ice to change our environment in ways we do not always appreciate. In the next few issues we are going to explore how snow and ice forms, the various forms it can take and look at the impacts that this may have on our environment and our lives.

SNOW

Snow forms when water vapour in the atmosphere freezes in such a way as to allow ice crystals to grow on tiny pollen or dust particles suspended in the air. These ice crystals often amalgamate with others before falling to earth as snowflakes. Although many different forms of snow may have different properties (e.g. sticky, wet or powdery snow) they generally form hexagonal shaped crystals with no two flakes being of the same design due to the slightly different paths they take in the atmosphere.



Snowflake crystals (image: Justfunfacts)

Although weather fronts containing snow may blow into the UK from the northern polar regions or from Russia to the east, snow clouds can also form over the UK when warmer moist air from the south and west meets cold air from the north or east. Where these two air masses collide the moisture in the warmer air becomes cooled and snowflakes may form. In mountainous areas, warm moist air may be forced upwards by the land and so cool to freezing point and produce snow. This is why snow may form on mountain tops whilst in the valleys below it may fall as rain.

In Canada, 15-foot poles mark the sides of some roads, indicating that snow falls of 10 feet or more are common, whereas in the UK any accumulation of 6 inches or more may bring our normal lives to a halt. In windy conditions larger snow drifts may also form. This occurs when strong winds move snow over the ground where they then form deep drifts in the leeward shelter of objects such as cars, hedges or houses. Where large accumulations or drifts form on trees or the roofs of houses, the combined weight of the snow can cause branches to snap or roofs to collapse. This is why conifers are conically shaped with flexible downward sloping branches and roofs in areas subject to high snowfall are often reinforced and steeply inclined in order to shed the snow.





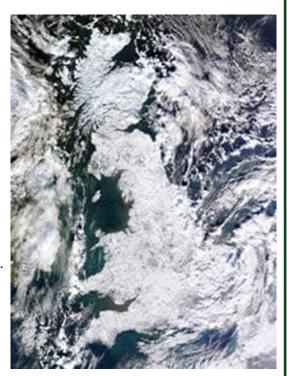
House buried in a snowdrift (image from Cooperative Institute for Meteorological Satellite Studies)

Snow-laden conifers (image from Fine Art America)

Snow and Ice continued ...

When large areas become covered in snow the whiteness of the environment reflects sunlight thereby causing the surface temperature to drop further. In 2010 the entire UK became snow-covered and this higher reflectivity (called albedo) created a period of lowering temperatures as reflected sunlight failed to warm the ground.

Snowfall in the far northern and southern polar regions can accumulate year upon year building up multiple layers that then become squeezed and change into ice. When scientists drill down into the accumulated layers of ice-sheets (some of which may be over a mile in depth) they can take samples, known as ice-cores, which represent snow that fell thousands of years ago. This is a vital part of science that allows us to examine the thickness of annual snow fall and the chemical make-up of the snow, and hence the atmosphere, at the time that it fell. This information forms a major part of building up a long-term picture of our climate, how it is has changed over time and how human development is changing the earth.



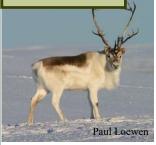
Snow-covered UK 2010 (image form Daily Telegraph)

In the next issue we will explore the 'cool' subject of marine ice.



Reindeer (Rangifer tarandus)

This issue we explore a festive animal species: the Reindeer!!



Reindeer, or caribou as they are know in North America, are native to the Arctic and sub-arctic regions right up at the 'top' of the globe. They inhabit the Arctic Tundra as well as boreal forests in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Scandinavia and Russia. Reindeer are pretty huge. Males can be up to 1.2m tall at the shoulder and weigh over 250kg!! In comparison, UK's red deer can grow to about 1.3m tall, yet are much lighter at between 90kg and 190kg. Reindeer have a much thicker layer of fat and a thick coat of special

hairs which are hollow but also heavy - both of these features help to insulate them in such dramatically cold conditions. Another feature that helps reindeer succeed in a difficult environment are their deeply cloven hooves which spread out as they walk. This enables them to walk on snow and very soft ground. Their antlers are enormous! They can grow up to 1.4m tall with perhaps 44 different points; I wonder how many points Rudolph has? They are also the only species of deer where females have antlers too; females keep their antlers all year to defend feeding grounds where as males shed theirs after the rut! The rutting seasons for reindeer, like red deer, happens in the Autumn. However, unlike our red deer which rut for around two months, reindeer only have 11 days in October! In the summer, reindeer feed on a wide range of vegetation from grasses to tree foliage. In winter when their metabolism slows, they feed on lichen called reindeer moss, which they find by digging down

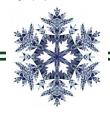
into the snow. Reindeer are important to human populations throughout the sub arctic for meat, milk and hides for clothes and home warmth! In Europe herds have been domesticated and used to pull the Nordic sled—although not all sleds are as fancy as Santa's!

There are two types of reindeer: Tundra reindeer and forest reindeer

Tundra Reindeer are migratory and each Autumn move from the Arctic Tundra to the forests further south. They travel in HUGE herds of up to half a million deer and can cover over 3,000 miles! Because there are so many tundra reindeer in one herd, the rut tends to be far less fierce than for forest re

million deer and can cover over 3,000 miles! Because there are so many tundra reindeer in one herd, the rut tends to be far less fierce than for forest reindeer. Males size up each others antlers and, sensibly, opt not to fight those with bigger antlers than them.

Forest Reindeer spend all their year in the sub-arctic forests and live in far smaller family groups of around 10. Behaviourally, they are much more like red deer with males defending their harem with more ferocious clashes.



12 Wild Days of Christmas

Here are some ideas for things you might try during the 12 days of Christmas! Switch them around, add your own or maybe pick one that you want to repeat each day. We always love to hear about the time you spend in nature so please do share any photographs with us!!



Day 1 - make your own journey stick and add something to it on each day of Christmas.

Day 2 - wrap up warm and take a walk, seeing if you can spot something beginning with each letter of the word 'SPARKLE' on your route.

Day 3 - Sometimes it's just not possible to get outside for time in nature or the weather isn't kind. Spend some time by a window, whether its watching the patterns the rain makes on the glass, birds being busy or trees blowing in the wind.

Day 4 - Put out a shallow dish of water for the birds. Top it up every so often and on very cold days check that it hasn't frozen.

Day 5 - Don't let a cold morning put you off ... go for an early walk and remember the childhood joy of bejewelled spiders' webs, ice puddles and 'dragon breath'. Come back in and enjoy a warm drink!

Day 6 - Create a piece of artwork in nature, using natural materials such as leaves, twigs, holly and berries. When finished take a photo and send it in to us.

Day 7 - Challenge yourself to learn about something in nature during 2021—perhaps you'll choose to learn to identify one bird, wild flower or tree each month of the year.

Day 8 - Notice the patterns made by frost on natural objects - perhaps a teasel, cobweb, tree or pile of fallen leaves. If you have a



camera take a photo, if not then take a mindful few moments - what shapes can you see?

Day 9 - Make fat balls for the birds using lard (or solid vegetable fat but never butter), seeds and a pine cone. If you don't have a pine cone, wrap the mixture onto a stick. Hang it out for the birds to enjoy!

Tony Hisgett

Day 10 - Try a 12 days of Christmas treasure hunt - go out and find 12 autumnal leaves, 11 pine cones, 10 evergreen leaves, 9 pieces of holly, 8 acorns, 7 funny shaped twigs ...

Day 11 - On your walk or in the garden, look for animal or bird tracks in the mud or maybe even snow! Can you identify the creature that left them?

Day 12 - Take time for yourself when the pressures and expectations of everyone else can feel overwhelming. Take a dusk / dawn walk and be still with nature.





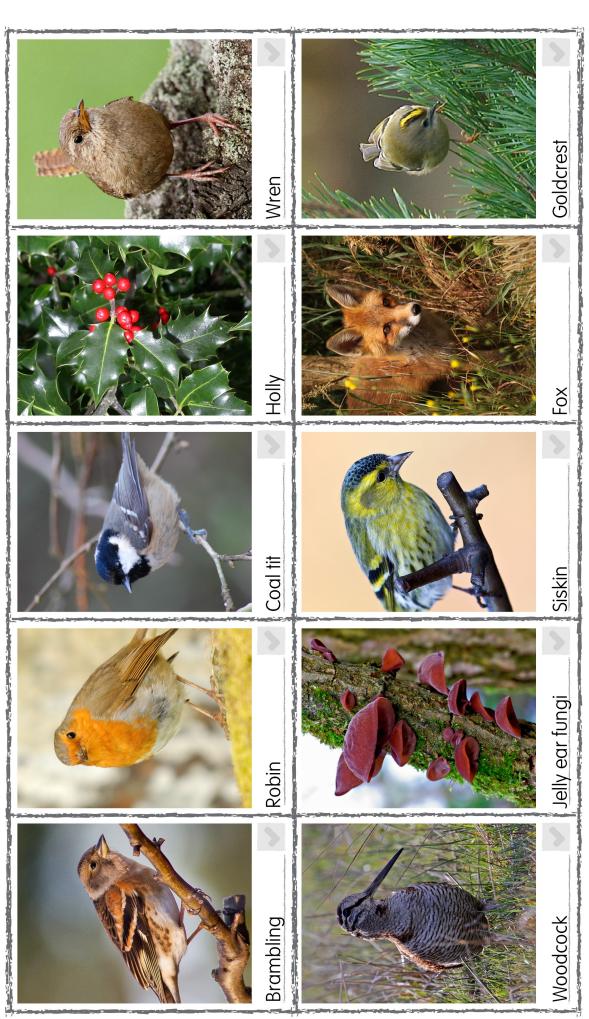
What NOT to feed birds:

Anything with salt on or in it (take care when using peanut butter)
Butter/dairy

Cooked fat from meat - stick to lard!

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www.wildlifewatch.org.uk Credits.

Credits: Brambling and Siskin (c) Harry Hogg / Robin (c) Amy Lewis / Coal tit (c) Scott Petrek / Holly (c) Philip Precey / Wren and Woodcock (c) Margaret Holland / Jelly ear fungi (c) Les Binns / Fox (c) Jon Hawkins / Goldcrest (c) David Longshaw



Suggested Links and Reading

You can find a whole host of really good blogs, podcasts and articles online full of information about taking care of mental health and wellbeing during winter and at Christmas. We have picked out a few that we thought you might like:

This is good blog about taking care of wellbeing at Christmas:

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/christmas/blog/you-and-your-mental-health-still-matter-christmas

Mind have a lot of online support:

https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/christmas-and-mental-health/ christmas-and-mental-health/

Recovery Academy have a great timetable of online courses running from January to March, why not grab a cuppa and have a look over the Christmas break to see if there's anything you fancy... https://www.recoveryandwellbeing.co.uk/

This book was recommended to a team staff member recently and it's now on her Christmas list:

Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times by Katherine May

"Wintering is a poignant and comforting meditation on the fallow periods of life, times when we must retreat to care for and repair ourselves. Katherine May thoughtfully shows us how to come through these times with the wisdom of knowing that, like the seasons, our winters and summers are the ebb and flow of life." Waterstones



'True or False' answers:

- False there are 20 other mammal species that hibernate (18 of them are bats). 1.
- 2. *True* - they like rowan and hawthorn berries. They fly back north to breed in the spring.
- *True* without feathers on their legs they are vulnerable to the cold. To keep warm many 3. species stand on one leg, allowing the other one to be tucked up against body feathers. Switching legs will help distribute heat evenly.
- False foxes mate in January with young born in the spring. In winter, foxes are vocally loud as they 4. search for a mate and fend off rivals; they make an eerie screeching sound.
- 5. *True* - having mated in the summer, females find a place to hibernate until spring. They then build a next and produce a new colony that will raise the next generation of gueens.

'Christmas quiz' answers:

- 1. A Christmas quacker (ha ha!).
- Christmas tree (displayed in Trafalgar Square). 2.
- 3. Robin redbreast.
- 4. Four times excluding the title.
- A broken drum you can't beat it! 5.
- 6. Jingle Bells.
- 7. Three - Dasher, Dancer and Donner.
- 8. Prince Albert in the 1840s.
- 9. Six geese a-laying
- Turkeys were first introduced to Britain in the 1520s and to the 10. Christmas dinner table soon afterwards.



'Missing Links' answers:

Christmas - top (tree)

tinsel - council (town)

Christmas - basin (pudding)

mince - crust (pie)

Christmas - leg (turkey)









yule - jam (log)

frost - sized (bite)

snow - wood (drift)

wrapping - clip (paper)

church - station (service)