

Next Meeting**Wednesday 21st December****Carol Service at Great Oakley Village Hall**

This year we are holding a new event for Great Oakley & District u3a and the chair has invited a Choir to entertain us with Christmas Carols and for you to enjoy some eats and a drink,

Wednesday 28th December 2022**Tea, Coffee and a natter at the Village Hall**

Come and join us for a quiz, a cup of Tea or coffee and a chat.

Message from the Chair

Good afternoon to all our members

Well, here we are in December, how quickly this year has gone!!!!

It's always good to reflect, especially at this time of year, fun things that have happened, the spontaneous laughter that fills moments of our busy lives, sometimes a little sadness too, but we look forward to embracing what 2023 has to offer.

So this newsletter is a little different to one past, I set the writing group a challenge to write a profile of Santa Clause, goodness what a wonderful outpouring of unique writing content, it was simply impossible to choose, so after much deliberation, we have decided to include them all, I'm sure when you read through you will understand what I mean.

We are moments away from our Christmas Carol Event on the 21st of December, which will certainly set the mood for the Festive Period, do remember that you are able to bring friends and Family, warm Mulled Wine and Mince Pies, and the best bit, is it's totally free, I have seen the Raffle Prizes that Sue has organised, and I know that you will have a desire to take one home with you. Just in case you missed the Picnic in the Park, Sue has a very unique place for keeping her raffle tickets safe!!!!

Don't forget, we have a post-Christmas get-together on the 28th of December for those who would like a Tea/Coffee biscuit and a chat.

So for Me..... Have a most wonderful Christmas, enjoy your time with friends and family, raise a glass to absent friends.

Stay safe, and Warm

Apology

Last month's Newsletter had a bit more text than usual and I left out contact details for Chief Inspector Scott Little : Scott.Little@northants.police.uk and for John Kinloch : John.kinloch@NorthNorthants.gov.uk That I had promised to forward when they visited us at our October meeting.

Christmas

As we are close to Christmas the Chair has let me do my own thing so there will be less of the normal news and more from Members. Suggestions are really welcome as it will not be long before we have a new Committee so if you want change tell me.

It has always been thought that we needed all the Committee details in the newsletter but there is no reason why the content cannot change and we could Group and Meeting Updates with a sprinkle of stories, pictures Etc. and welcome suggestions.

Our u3a Facebook page

The Great Oakley and District Facebook page is well worth looking at. For those who would like to join the group, the easiest way is to follow this link [Great Oakley and District U3A | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GreatOakleyandDistrictU3A) and ask to join the Group that already has over 34 Members.

And on the Web site

You can normally gain access to our web site which like the Facebook page has a lot of information on it and links to other groups and sites. Via the following link:

<https://www.u3asites.org.uk/great-oakley/welcome>

Preparations for the 2023 Annual General Meeting

Just a formal note to advise you all that Great Oakley & District u3a will be holding there 2023 Annual General Meeting at 2:00 p.m. on March 22nd 2023. This is the same date as for our normal monthly meeting which will follow the A.G.M and include a presentation from Doreen & Damian Tracey.

Now for the Seasonal Bit
We would like to thank the Writing Group who have worked extremely hard to provide almost all of the following 5 pages.

“Santa’s Merry Christmas”

It’s that time of the year again and “Father Christmas”! known also as “Santa Clause” is now preparing to leave his workshop and the army of Elves who have helped him all year to prepare all the presents for the children and their parents worldwide. He loves this time of year as it gives him the opportunity to go and meet his friends and spread a little happiness around the world, uniting everyone in the space of a single day and night and once done he can again relax and prepare for the next time.

As we all know Santa lives in the frozen wastes of Lapland! It is I am told possible to visit him and see the Elves at work and maybe have a sleigh ride, but that’s another tale as today he is really very busy getting ready to deliver Christmas to the world. It’s very cold outside and he must wrap up warm, so he takes his trademark red fur lined coat, along with red trousers and his fur lined boots and heads outside to round up the reindeer to pull the heavily laden sleigh. Rudolph, Dancer, Prancer, and Vixen with any other reindeer he can find are harnessed ready for the task.

Time to go and he sets off to start in the southern hemisphere time zones as Christmas starts early down there, calling first to Australia and then New Zealand, the South Pole Chili Columbia and Brazil continuing north to arrive back in Lapland for a pitstop and load the sleigh for the next trip for the folk of the Northern hemisphere. The first important part of the stop is for Santa to get a rest and revitalise himself, so many mince pies and glasses of sherry all the kind people leave for him have taken their toll. Let’s face it he would be seen as impolite were he not to eat and drink all that was left out for him.

Final preparations are almost complete when he notices that Rudolph’s red nose has lost its distinctive glow, the Elves are consulted and it is suggested that maybe he is hungry or just a bit under the weather, fresh moss and some extra lichens are fed to him but to no avail. Santa suddenly remembers this has happened before, got it he shouts! the bulb must be blown, so the

elves quickly find a new one and once fitted he is back to being Rudolph the red nosed reindeer. All ready to go they set off on the final part of making Christmas a happy time for everyone.

Santa works all night and so many calls are made, he is really now so full of mince pies and sherry you could say he is getting drunk. So much so that the chimney deliveries are now slowing him down, he decides to leave presents in a sack outside each house with a note asking mum and dad to please sort them out for the children. While writing the note he decides also to ask that in future would you please leave an unopened miniature of whisky that he might take away and drink at leisure throughout the year. Heading home travel is becoming very precarious and he has several crashes along the way.

These don’t go unnoticed and that’s why you will find that in many places you can now find the remains of crashed sleighs, some with toys on board with an appropriately dressed helper of Santa, usually at garden centres or large stores waiting for children to get their parents to spend a shedload of cash to meet Santa and order up their next year’s presents. This of course helps the elves prepare for next year and allows Santa to drink his miniatures at leisure and delegate a lot of the work.

Oh! And by the way!

“A Happy Christmas”

Ted Holmes u3a Writing Group



PC Christmas

Before PC we said he was fat
But now we say he is jolly.
Before PC we said he was old
But now we say that is folly –

For fear of raising ageism's ugly head
And accused of not being inclusive.
But do the kids care? Of course, they don't
Dissing the giver of gifts is abusive!

By Lynne Bradshaw u3a Writing Group

WANTED



A heavily disguised man wearing a red hoodie has been reportedly seen leading a gang and committing several BURGLARIES

The suspect has been described as being male; mature; well nourished; with a ruddy complexion; of medium height; sporting a false wig and beard; frequently voicing "Ho ho ho" in a deep voice.

The suspect is also likely to be charged with a drink/driving offence as he appears to be well over the limit for driving a sleigh and, in fact, does not hold a license to drive at all. A reward of a case of Irn Bru is offered for information. PLEASE report to Corby police.

A local reporter commented "He's in for a long stretch".

By Cath Arnold with the help of Kate Carnie

High Flyer: CG.

Concise Oxford Dictionary definition: A person with ambition or extravagant notions, a person with the capacity for great achievements.

A more specific (& closer to Earth) definition follows: It is an downright disgrace that he has never been recognised by the Nobel Prize committee (or any other global organization); as the person that in a single night, by default, unites a huge proportion of our world to one wonderful end; that of love, peace, hope, optimism and co-operation (the list of good things is seemingly endless). Who else can be responsible for the huge annual boost in the sales of Mince Pies and Carrots? Plus, maybe milk? There just HAS to be a Nobel category. The 'Peace Prize' springs to mind.

Maybe, they should invent a prize...?

Never has one man been responsible for so many films and TV programmes. Indeed the 'Christmas Film' is virtually a massive franchise in itself. The absolute best of feel-good movies (Some corny – especially the romantic ones). There are films about his Elf's, impostors, Shop Wars, his so-called 'Toy Factory'; family reunions, romances, the list goes on.

Unless you're on the production team (or a script-writer) for BBC TV's Eastenders! Where nastiness and murder can (often) prevail.

Certainly not so feel-good'.

Not forgetting the go-to Christmas advertisements for supermarkets. Think how we are always drawn to see what John Lewis, Sainsbury et al, are offering each year. All those businesses striving to have everyone speaking of their message – the happy twist in their 'lovely' story. The Christmas messages. The disguised commercialism is to us secondary.

Of course, it mustn't be forgotten (the answer is in the question); who was Christmas about originally? The person who (in a roundabout way) gave us Santa Claus – Christ, the even greater 'high-flyer'.

If anyone was going to collect HIS Nobel Prize, it would have to be Santa. Only he, the titular 'High-flyer' is up to the momentous job.

All this from an overweight, bearded man, in a red attire.

By Colin Gibbs u3a Writing Group

Who am I?

I only work one night a year,
My many gifts to share,
My means of transport is a sleigh,
It takes me everywhere.

My beard is long and snowy white,
My coat, it is bright red,
It has a hood to keep me warm,
With fur around my head.

My sleigh is pulled by eight reindeer,
I know them all by name,
I haven't got a favourite one,
I treat them all the same.

No-one must see me come or go,
But you may hear the noise,
Of bells that jingle merrily,
As I deliver toys.

It is a most exhausting night,
And when I've done my job,
My feet are nearly killing me,
My head begins to throb.

Can't wait to get into my bed,
To sleep all Christmas Day,
I'll have to do it all again,
But that's twelve months away!

By Kate Carnie u3a Writing Group



Annual Polish

Man in Red

The man in red
Is very well fed
His beard is white
Keeps him warm all night

His sleigh he rides
From side to side
Across the land
Presents at hand

Gifts for girls and boys
An array of exciting toys
To make them smile
All of the while.

His jolly ho ho ho
Can be heard where ever he goes
His reindeer fast
Before he's home at last.

By Carolyn Reynolds of the u3a Writing Group

Santa's Helpers

Helpers and Elves think that all the work they do
getting ready for Christmas is just
like a day at the office.

They do all the work but the fat guy in the suit
gets all the credit.

Not only that, but anytime he wants to, Santa
could
give them the sack.

By someone else

Elf Industrial Dispute

A group of elves have just banded together and
formed a Staff Union.

The Elves are wanting to start a strike to protest
the working conditions.

They call themselves the Santanistas.

And

They

just want higher elf esteem.

By the Chief Elf

Santa Claus

Full Name: Nicolas aka St. Nicholas, Sinter Klaas (Dutch), Santa Claus, Kris Kringle, and Father Christmas.

Date and Place of Birth: Circa 280 AD near Myra, modern day Demre in Turkey, being at that time part of the Roman Empire.

Nationality: Greek Ancestry

Early Life: Nothing is known of Nicholas' upbringing but after his parents died, he is said to have inherited substantial wealth, and travelled around helping the poor and needy, a popular story relates him as having paid the dowry for three poor sisters whose father was about to sell them into prostitution or slavery. He acquired a reputation for piousness and secret gift giving and became the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, prostitutes, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, unmarried people, and students in various cities and countries around Europe.

Canonised: St. Nicholas died on 6 December 343. He was canonized by Pope Eugene IV on 5th June 1446. At this canonization St. Nicholas was credited with three hundred miracles, including three resurrections.

Legacy: In large parts of Europe, the **companions of Saint Nicholas** were a group of figures who accompany Saint Nicholas. These characters acted as a contrast to the benevolent gift bringer, accompanying him to family homes and threatening to whip or abduct disobedient children. Jacob Grimm (one of the Grimm brothers) associated these characters with the pre-Christian house spirit or elf. The association of the Christmas gift bringer with elves has parallels in English and Scandinavian folklore, and is the first antecedent of the idea of modern slaves as Santa's helpers.

The Reindeer came in later in 1821 with an anonymous children's poem called "Old Santa Claus with Much Delight". It's in this poem and its illustrations that Santa is first seen flying a sleigh being pulled by a single, unnamed reindeer. It's also the first time Santa's arrival is described as being on Christmas Eve rather than the Feast Day of St. Nicholas on December 6th. The poem begins *"Old Santeclaus withy much delight / His reindeers drive this frosty night / O'r chimney tops, and tracts of snow / To bring these yearly gifts to you"*

Two years later in 1823 Santa's lone reindeer got some much-needed company—the poem "A visit from St. Nicholas", also known as "The Night Before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore introduced Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, and Blitzen to the world. In 1939, Robert Lewis May wrote Rudolph's story in a booklet for a department store that had been giving out free colouring books at Christmas. The department store realised that they could save money by creating a booklet themselves, and so whilst staring out of the window on a foggy evening, inspiration struck May and the rest is history. The original Rudolph story is the same one we know – he's a social outcast until Santa realises his red, glowing nose could be used as a makeshift lantern to help guide his way through the fog. Then ten years later in 1949, May's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, turned the story into the famous song "Rudolph the red nose reindeer" – a song which we still love, play, and sing over Christmas to this day.

The Future: Thanks to Quantum Mechanics and more recent discoveries we now know that it is possible to travel back in time, so that it is no longer a mystery as to how Santa can reach every house in one night. Obviously, Rudolf's glowing nose is the source of some as yet not understood form of energy. And you thought it was all a fairy story?

By Stella Herbert of the u3a Writing Group

Christmas Moaning

Prancer looked up and through a mouthful of snow and moss muttered "Look at him preening himself. It must be nearly bloody Christmas again. We drag that damned sledge about in all weathers for years, wind, rain, snow, the lot; then just one foggy night he gets out front and suddenly he's everyone's favourite!"

"God, I hate this time of year. His nibs is putting on more and more weight- too many mince pies and far too much sherry. It's just as well nearly everyone's got central heating- he's too frickin' fat to fit down chimneys any longer- unless they're on a power station," he smirked, "and it's embarrassing towing that damned inflatable snowman whilst he sings 'Walking in the Air' all the while."

"He's still using it as his chat up line though," announced Dancer distantly.

"What 'Old Whiskers'?"

"No." she retorted scornfully as if it were he who hadn't been listening, "Rudi! Not that it does him any good now- all the girls know he's not up to it these days."

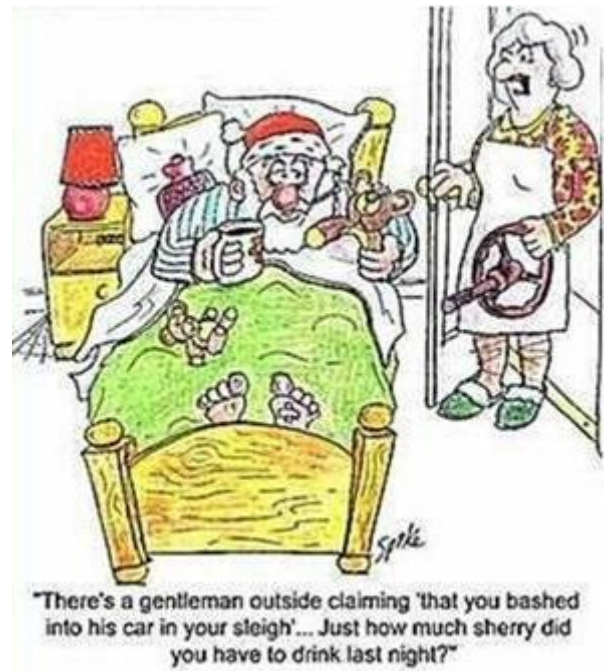
"Good job too, otherwise we'd be up to our baubles in little stuck-up, red nosed Bambi's," Prancer continued to grumble. "

At that moment a dishevelled angel hobbled by, her face paint cracked and her balding, tinsel halo twisted and lopsided. "I don't see what you lot have got to moan about; just one evening's work a year. I have to perch on those ruddy trees for days on end with a prickly twig stuck up my... skirt- gives me piles for months.

They were joined by a sour faced elf dragging a large sack. "Huh! All we get is one day off a year and this year they've made nearly half of us redundant. The rest have got to retrain in soldering and digital electronics AND they'll still expect the same output. One more 'Ho, Ho, Ho' and I swear I'll hit him!"

"Uh, oh! Look out; here he comes. Smile everybody!"

By David Ball of the u3a Writing Group



Sleigh Rescue

Santa's sleigh broke down on Christmas Eve. He flagged down a passing motorist and asked, 'Can you help me fix my Sleigh, please?'

'Sorry,' the car driver replied, 'I'm not a mechanic - I'm a chiropodist.'

'In that case,' said Santa, 'Please can you give me a tow?'

By Another person

We look forward to meeting you all on Wednesday 21st December at 2:00p. m. in the Village Hall and wish you a Happy Christmas and Merry New Year.

Great Oakley & District U3A Executive Committee.