

CanDo Magazine

Scotland's favourite health and disability publication



Christmas and New Year Special

ISSUE 27 WINTER 2009

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smalley talk

Welcome to our festive edition for 2009. I was just looking back at some of our previous editions and realised that this is the sixth festive special we've published.... how time flies!

In this issue, as we take a look at many of the different facets of the Christmas season; we make a journey back to Christmas in the Victorian era and there are a couple of seasonal recipes you might like to try, as well having a go at this year's popular Prize Christmas Quiz.

There are - as usual - articles relating to disability matters and the final part of our story about Prestwick schoolboy Ross Granger as told by his mum, Eileen.

As we were going to press with this issue we learned that Eileen's efforts helping CLIC Sargent have been rewarded with a well deserved nomination for 'Scotswoman of the Year' and we wish her well when the judging takes place next year.

All that remains is to wish all our readers and supporters a very happy and safe festive season.

Best wishes

Nick Smalley FMA
Editor
CanDo Magazine



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A Merry Christmas to all our Readers & Advertisers

the search is on for snowboarding santas!

A charity, which works with disabled and socially excluded people across Scotland, is now recruiting skiers and snowboarders for its annual festive fundraising event. Momentum's Santa Ski & Board Challenge will take place at SNO!zone, Xscape Braehead, Glasgow on Sunday December 13th, 2009.

Up to 100 people will dress as Father Christmas and attempt the challenge of skiing or snowboarding 25 runs of the indoor real snow slope in under two hours, and this year the event is also open to complete beginners who will get a group skiing lesson.

The event will raise vital funds for Momentum, which provides a range of services across the country, assisting disabled and socially excluded people to achieve their goals and lead independent lives, including those with spinal injury, brain injury, learning disability, and mental health problems.

Lucy Wilson, Momentum Fundraiser, said: "This is our third year running this spectacular event and it's a great kick start to the festive season for big-hearted skiers and snowboarders. People travel from across the country to take part and families, friends and colleagues come together to have a laugh and raise funds.

To register for the Santa Ski and Board Challenge contact Lucy Wilson at lucy.wilson@momentumscotland.org, by phoning 0141 419 5281 or visiting www.momentumscotland.org.

Registration is £10 for adults and £5 for children (aged 8-12) which includes the cost of the Santa suit and ski/board and boot hire. Every participant also receives a Momentum T-shirt, goodie bag, and hot chocolate to warm up after coming off the slope.

The minimum sponsorship or donation is £100 for adults and £50 for children.



Able Community Care

30 YEARS OF CARING

Able Community Care is a provider of long term, live-in, care services to people with high dependency care needs who wish to remain living in their own homes.



The company was founded by Angela Gifford in 1980 and provides services nationwide from its office near Norwich.

The success of the company is based on the trust and confidence that they generate with their clients, and their aim is to create an environment where clients have choice, respect, independence and a secure service delivery.

The live-in service is an alternative to moving into a residential care home for many older people and used as a way to remain living in the community for many younger disabled people.

Able Community Care provides care to people from all age groups and backgrounds. Their needs may originate from old age, birth disability, road or sports accident, or from a wide range of health problems, e.g. MS, stroke, heart attack, Parkinson's disease, cancer, mental illness or physical disability.

New clients come to the company by recommendation from previous or existing clients, or via Social Services or Health referral. Each prospective client is visited to ascertain their individual situation and requirements on a domestic, personal and social care level. Many of the company's current clients have been with them for periods in excess of ten years. The company operates a rotational system of live-in carers, with the objective that every individual client finds two or three carers whom they prefer, who return on a fortnightly, rotational basis.

All carers are personally interviewed, two references written for and telephone verified. All carers have a CRB (Enhanced Disclosure). A large number of carers have NVQ 2 and many of our carers have been with us for several years.

The company is under the remit of the Care Quality Commission (formerly CSCI) and the Scottish Care Commission.

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It is better to know us and not need us, rather than need us and not know us

reader's true story

by Duncan Tait

In March, 1941, the German air force unleashed a devastating attack that became known as the Clydebank Blitz. My family - mum, dad, my older brother and myself - lived in Glasgow. It was decided that every evening we would go and spend the night at my Aunt Peggy's house in Busby, which is south of Glasgow. My father and my uncle Willie were veterans of the World War I. The house was on top of a hill and when the sirens sounded they would go out the front door and could see the search lights scanning the night sky. They saw the bomb explosions, and on one occasion saw a parachute drift down. This was a land mine which exploded not too far away.

One night in May, as they stood outside the house having a smoke before bedtime, they heard the noise of a plane with its engine spluttering. They came into the house and told us that the plane had crashed a mile or two away. I remember them saying that they hoped it was not one of the R.A.F. The next morning, a Sunday, a neighbour called Lyons, who drove a platform lorry, let it be known that at 10am he was to drive the lorry to try and find the crashed plane. Anyone wanting to go with him should climb aboard. The lorry was full including my family and uncle and we set off on our exciting journey. We travelled to a small village called Waterfoot, and as we journeyed up a side road we found the crash site. It was very exciting with everyone asking questions but getting no answers. I found a piece of metal and showed it to my dad. He said it looked like a piece of the plane, so I put it in my pocket. After a time we were hungry so we all returned to Busby.

My aunt's house had a large back garden and the authorities took over an area at the bottom of the garden and built a brick building there. I don't know what it was used for, maybe a home guard post or an Air Raid Precaution (ARP) post. Sometime after the crash it was announced that it had been a German plane and that the pilot had been Rudolph Hess, Hitler's deputy. There was a lot of talk about this but no further information was given.

In 1955, I joined the Renfrew and Bute Constabulary and I was stationed at Giffnock Sub Division which covered the area bounded by Glasgow, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. My first shift sergeant was Neil Carmichael, known to the men as 'Hoagy'. On the second half of each night shift, Sgt. Carmichael would take a police vehicle and pick up one of the walking officers and made a tour of all the other beat men. We each got a turn. One night he lifted me in the vehicle and together we toured the area and he signed the notebook of each officer.

As we drove between Newton Mearns and Waterfoot we passed the field where Hess had crashed. I informed him that it was a famous field and he asked what I knew about it. I told him the above story. He told me that he was on the night shift covering the area that night. He was told to go towards Waterfoot, where in a field nearby, a German pilot was being held by the farmer. He set off on the police bicycle, eventually arriving at the farm. He said that he was the first to arrive on the scene and stayed there until the army arrived and took Hess away. He further told me that Hess was taken under escort to a brick building in a house garden in Busby.

I was astounded, as this was my aunt's garden and unbeknown to our family, we had slept that night about ten yards from where Hess was held.

What a coincidence!

taxi victory heralds way forward for disability rights

A High Court victory for wheelchair users in Liverpool is set to have wide-ranging benefits for people with all types of disability, throughout the UK.

The high-profile case was the first in the UK to test the Disability Discrimination Act's prohibition against discrimination in the exercise of public functions. It also significantly clarifies public bodies' obligations under the 'positive duty', introduced by government in 2006.

Mr. Justice Blake found Liverpool City Council guilty of discrimination by failing to make reasonable adjustments to help local wheelchair users, sending a clear message to all public bodies that they must take their disability obligations seriously.

The case was brought by wheelchair user Alma Lunt, from Liverpool, who claimed that she and many other users of larger wheelchairs could not travel safely in the city's current public-hire taxi fleet. Backed by several local disability associations, Mrs. Lunt asked Liverpool City Council to license an alternative, more wheelchair-friendly cab so that she can travel safely.

Mrs. Lunt and others repeatedly explained to the Council's licensing officer and licensing committee that vehicle constraints prevented her being properly positioned and safely secured in the existing London-style taxis. The Council also heard evidence that 96% of wheelchair users travel unsafely in London-style cabs, facing sideways, with their chair unsecured and with no seat belt. The Council had unlawfully ignored this evidence, Mr Justice Blake held.

Stressing that a 'one-size fits all' approach would not meet the needs of all travellers, campaigners had pointed to a ready-made solution, in the form of the more accessible E7 taxi, which is manufactured jointly by Peugeot and accessible vehicle specialist Allied Vehicles.

Despite the wishes expressed by Mrs. Lunt and the powerful evidence put forward to support a change in licensing policy, Liverpool City Council preferred to keep the status quo. The licensing committee refused to license the new-style taxi, because it has sliding doors and doesn't meet a 28 foot turning circle requirement, originating in the days of the horse-drawn hackney carriage in London.

At the High Court Liverpool's barrister argued that the Council's licensing policy should not be subject to judicial review on disability discrimination grounds; that they hadn't properly understood Mrs. Lunt's difficulty; and that they were justified in rejecting the E7 on the basis of Councillors' 'local knowledge' of Liverpool's streets.

Mr. Justice Blake, however, ruled emphatically that the Council's policies and practices do fall within the Disability Discrimination Act; that they had received plentiful evidence of the problems faced by wheelchair users; and that there was no meaningful evidence to justify their refusal to undertake a 'reasonable adjustment' to their policy, by licensing the E7 taxi. He also noted that the average size of wheelchairs is increasing and that the E7 already operates safely across 95% of the UK's 400 licensing authorities.

Claimant Alma Lunt was accompanied during the three-day hearing at the High Court in London by fellow Liverpool campaigner and wheelchair-user Jean Price and assistant Kim Rawlinson. Both Alma and Jean say they found the travel and hearing tiring and stressful but that they are now delighted to have achieved something so significant for Liverpool's 12,000 wheelchair users. They also hope the ruling will help prevent discrimination against people with other disabilities throughout the UK.

Delighted with the verdict, Alma said "We're used to facing many barriers and challenges in daily life so we were very determined to press on, to get our voices listened to and see action taken."

The trio are pictured outside the High Court following their victory.



project ability

Project Ability, a charity that promotes contemporary artwork by artists with disabilities and mental health issues from the UK and overseas, are holding 'The Xmas Show' featuring a selection of new work on canvas by Project Ability artists. The show will run from 3rd to 23rd December at the organisation's gallery at 103 Trongate in Glasgow.

Admission is free and the gallery opening times are Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm. For information call 0141 552 2822, or visit the website www.project-ability.co.uk

marathon girls' £13,000 gift

The New York Marathon has become an increasingly popular event for British fundraisers and over the last three years the Ayrshire and Arran Branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society has been the real winner with over £23,000 going to local funds. Due to the assistance of the Branch's supporters, the 2Lauras - Laura James and Laura Robertson of Mauchline - have raised over £13,000 for Branch funds; a tremendous effort well in excess of their original target of £7,000. Add in the £10,000 raised by James Kyle of Kilmarnock in 2007 and Andrew Sinclair and Stephen Wilkie of Ayr in 2008 and you can see just how much their personal achievements brings practical benefits to people with MS in Ayrshire.

Donald McNeill, chairman of the Branch, said: "We cannot thank the participants and their many supporters enough. As an independent charity run by volunteers and with no paid staff, we do not receive any Government grants. All money raised locally stays locally to benefit people affected by MS and their families. Clearly, our aims strike a chord with the Ayrshire public. In our 40 years existence they have never let us down. If anyone wants to 'go for it' in 2010 the Branch would be delighted to help." If you wish to boost the 2Lauras final total visit their website which can be found at www.justgiving.com/the2Lauras



the miracle continues

the concluding part of a mother's diary

Ross Granger of Prestwick survived after being diagnosed with cancer at an early age. Next year, Ross will be five years in remission. After living through any parent's nightmare, his mum Eileen put her feelings in print in the form of a diary. The first part of this appeared in our last issue and here Eileen continues telling her story.

Ross' Diary, Part 2

August 2006

Ross starts his ante-pre school year at Heathfield Nursery. He cries every day, but I just have to walk away and leave him. It's not long until the phone rings. Ross is still crying and I go and pick him up. This goes on for three weeks. Then he finally settles in.

March 2007

I feel it's time to try and get Ross out of nappies, at least through the day. It takes a while. He is still having huge floods.

April 2007

Two years in remission. This is a good stage to reach. His check-up's are now four-monthly.

March 2008

Ross has a bad asthma attack and is taken into Crosshouse hospital. He is put on a nebuliser and given multi doses of his inhaler, which makes him very sick. He is kept in over night for observation. The next morning, he is breathing better and has stopped being sick. He is allowed home.

The following week, Ross develops impetigo. The infection starts eating away at the skin on his chin. Trying to stop him touching it is difficult and soon the skin starts coming off his fingers. I buy him little white gloves to stop it spreading any further.

April 2008

Ross has yet another bad cold. The doctor is concerned that his cough could bring on another asthma attack, and prescribes antibiotics. The doctor says Ross' immune system should be back to normal by now, but I'm not convinced. He seems to pick up infections all the time... more than most kids do.



June 2008

Ross has a routine eye test at nursery. He is referred to the Eye Clinic at Ayr Hospital. Ross is long-sighted and is prescribed glasses, which he has to wear all the time. He copes well with this change.

August 2008

Ross starts P1 at Heathfield Primary School - a day we never thought we would see. It's a very emotional day for most parents, but more so for us. The teachers know Ross' medical history and they are very understanding. They look after him very well. They are aware that he still wets his pants from time to time, but they make sure he goes to the toilet often. The P7 monitors look after him well too - ensuring that he drinks his juice.

December 2008

Ross has a regular check up at Yorkhill Hospital. He has an ultrasound to check the growth of his wee half kidney. His kidney's doing well, But.....there's a shadow in his lymph nodes. We are told that it could be a blockage from an infection. He's has just finished a course of antibiotics. My mind starts racing. Could the cancer be returning? It will be another 3 months before we find out. Shaun and I decide not to tell anyone - what's the point in everyone worrying?

January 2009

I'm trying not to think too much about what might be.

February 2009

Ross has sickness and diahorroea. I hope it's a bug, but my gut feeling is telling me that it's not. He's not eating very much. He's tired. All these signs are telling me Ross has another tumour.

March 2009

The day of Ross' ultrasound has arrived. It's been snowing heavily, so Shaun's taking the day off work to drive us up to the hospital. Ross still isn't eating. During the ultrasound, the sonographer is explaining what she sees. This isn't normal procedure, but we know the sonograhper well, as she saw Ross almost every day for five months. She explains that the shadow is enlarged glands - because of the sickness and diahorroea bug. It's NOT a tumour. Oh My God, Relief. Back at home I call my mum and Shaun's mum and tell them all about the last three months. I am not a popular person, but I'd do the same again. I don't regret not telling them.

April 2009

It's Ross' Parent's Night at school. Let's find out how he is getting on. It's a very good report. Ross has his own wee fan club of girls within the classroom. If there is a task that he can't do or doesn't want to do, then all the girls flock round to help him. He rewards each one of them with a cuddle. What a charmer.

May 2009

Ross has an appointment at Yorkhill Hospital for a kidney function test. On arrival at Shiehallion Daycare, the nurses can't believe how much he's grown.

The nurse tries to find a vein to insert a canula. Eventually she finds a small vein in his right arm and puts the needle in. It bleeds back well. She takes a sample of blood. Next the nurse inserts a butterfly needle into Ross' right hand to inject radio-active dye through his veins. Then we're off to ultrasound. This scan shows that the glands are still slightly enlarged, but I'm not concerned as Ross picks up infections very easily. Two hours later, back at daycare, it's time for another blood sample to be taken, but Ross' canula has moved and it is not bleeding back. It is removed and the nurse tries to find another vein. This proves to be very difficult because of all the abuse his wee veins suffered when he was on treatment. The nurse inserts a second canula in Ross' left arm and takes another sample. Off to the canteen this time. We only have an hour this time before more blood is due to be taken.

After this sample, Ross plays in the playroom for an hour and then his fourth and final blood sample is taken. We can go home now after six hours at Yorkhill Hospital. If there's anything untoward, the doctor will phone us.

Footnote: Since Ross was diagnosed with cancer, his family have raised around £100,000 for the childrens' cancer charity CLIC Sargent by writing a book about his illness and staging various fundraising events. As we went to print, we learned that Eileen has been nominated for the prestigious Glasgow Evening Times 'Scottswoman of the Year' award the winner of which will be announced in late January.

Editor's Note: We will of course keep readers updated on Ross' future progress.

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It's Christmas!



Our popular Christmas feature once again brings you a mixture of seasonal fun and information. Over the next few pages we bring you our seasonal prize quiz, festive recipes, personal glimpses and a nostalgic look back at Christmas in the past.

So without further ado, let's make a start!

We asked a few CanDo readers for their thoughts on Christmas and received some interesting replies:



Timothy Fredriksz of Hoorn in the Netherlands likes the cosy feeling of being with family at Christmas and says people are so busy trying to make Christmas extra special they don't see that enjoying each other's company is the most valuable thing. Timothy tells us that he will be 'spending Christmas under a palm tree in Surinam... lucky guy!

Penny Heeley of Keyworth in Nottinghamshire works in Public Relations for a hotel. Christmas is the only time she can get together with extended family when around 20 of them turn up for Penny's customary "Boxing Day Bash" of which this year's will be the 21st. She says that she wishes Christmas wasn't so commercialised.



Steve Moran of Edinburgh is a paramedic who will be working as part of an ambulance crew over the festive period. Steve told CanDo, "I love Christmas but I hate it when I'm on duty and need to help someone who has been hurt because of drugs or drinking too much. Some people seem to think that because it's Christmas, it's okay to binge drink".

Marge Marsh is a Real Estate Agent who lives near Adelaide in South Australia. She and her husband John will be spending the holiday touring Tasmania. Marge says. "I like to see the wonder in kids' faces and all the sparkles and spangles, the lights, the Christmas colours - red, gold, silver and green - everywhere. I just wish the rampant commercialism could be removed.



CanDo Christmas Quiz 2009

First Prize: 10,000 Puzzles on CD

Second Prize: A Bottle of Whisky

Fifteen Runner Up Prizes of Books (randomly selected) to be won

1. Who was the first British monarch to broadcast a Christmas message to the nation?
2. Child star Jimmy Boyd sang which hugely popular 1950's Christmas song, which was initially banned by the Catholic Church in Boston, USA, because it supposedly mixed sex and Christmas?
3. Who banned Christmas in England between 1647 and 1660?
4. On which date is Epiphany celebrated in the west?
5. Who are the four ghosts in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol?
6. What liqueur goes into making a 'snowball' cocktail?
7. What is the English title of the carol written in 1818 by Austrian priest Josef Mohr originally called Stille Nacht?
8. The 1954 movie White Christmas was the first to be made using what new Paramount film format?
9. What changed in 1752 which caused Britain to have a White Christmas less frequently thereafter?
10. Traditional in Germany at Christmas, what sort of food is stollen?
11. The Christmas period of 1813-14 saw the last what in London?
12. How many gifts are given in total in the song The Twelve Days of Christmas?
13. Which diarist noted on Christmas Day 1662, "Had a pleasant walk to White Hall, where I intended to have received the communion with the family, but I have come too late..." ?
14. John Callcott Horsley designed what first commercial item in 1843?
15. In Victorian England what people were popularly called robins because of their red uniforms?

Free to enter - answers by email to cando.magazine@btinternet.com or enter by post using the address on page 3. Closing date 20 January 2010.



Winter Treats

Recipes for two easy to make, tasty treats. One, from Austria, is for biscuits that will grace any table, whilst the other is a tasty winter soup that will warm you up on a cold day.

Creamy Vegetable Soup

Makes about 6 servings

Ingredients:

400 ml (half a pint) of stock

300 ml (half a pint) of milk

25 g (1oz) butter

25 g (1oz) plain flour

1 medium sized carrot

1 small onion

1 leek

100g (4 oz) mushrooms

salt & pepper

Prepare the vegetables by chopping them finely and fast boiling them for 5 minutes. Drain away the water and leave the vegetables to stand.

Place stock, milk, butter and flour in a large pan and heat, stirring until it thickens and boils.

Season lightly, add vegetables and leave to simmer for 15 minutes, stirring frequently.

Serve with crusty bread and butter.

This recipe is very adaptable and is also ideal to use up leftover vegetables from a meal, sweetcorn kernels, parsley and broccoli give a particularly good result too.

Vanillekipferl (Vanilla Crescents)

Makes about 36

Ingredients:

150 g butter

150 g ground almonds

150 g plain flour

150 g icing sugar

2 egg yolks

110 g icing sugar (sifted with

1 tablespoon vanilla sugar)

Butter and flour for baking sheet

Mix together the dry ingredients, then crumble the butter into them.

Add egg yolks and work quickly to a smooth dough. Cover and set aside in a cool place for half an hour.

Take small pieces of the dough and roll them between your hands into lengths of about 6cm. Bend into crescents and set them on a buttered and floured baking sheet and flatten them slightly.

Bake at Gas Mark 5, 190 Degrees C, until they are a deep golden brown. Lift the crescents carefully off the baking sheet and whilst still hot roll them in the icing sugar sifted with vanilla sugar.

Gently shake off any surplus sugar and leave to cool.

Our thanks to Barbara Graham of Think & Heal for this recipe.

A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

No era in history has influenced the way in which we celebrate Christmas, quite as much as the Victorians.

Before Victoria's reign started in 1837 nobody in Britain had heard of Santa Claus or Christmas Crackers. No Christmas cards were sent and most people did not have holidays from work. The wealth and technologies generated by the industrial revolution of the Victorian era changed the face of Christmas forever. In 1843, Charles Dickens wrote "A Christmas Carol", which actually encouraged rich Victorians to redistribute their wealth by giving to the poor.

The wealth generated by the new industries of the Victorian age allowed middle class families in England and Wales to take time off work and celebrate over two days, Christmas Day and Boxing Day (so-called as this was the day servants and working people opened the boxes in which they had collected gifts of money from the "rich folk").

Those new inventions, the railways, allowed the country folk who had moved into the towns and cities in search of work to return home for a family Christmas.

The Scots have always preferred to postpone the celebrations for a few days to welcome in the New Year, in the style that is Hogmanay. Christmas Day itself did not become a holiday in Scotland until many years after Victoria's reign and it has only relatively recently that this has been extended to include Boxing Day.

At the start of Victoria's reign, children's toys tended to be handmade and hence expensive, generally restricting availability to those "rich folk" again. With factories however came mass production, which brought with it games, dolls, books and clockwork toys all at a more affordable price. Affordable that is to "middle class" children. In a "poor child's" Christmas stocking, which first became popular from around 1870, only an apple, orange and a few nuts could be found. Normally associated with the bringer of these gifts, is Father Christmas or Santa Claus.

The two are in fact two entirely separate stories. Father Christmas was originally part of an old English midwinter festival, normally dressed in green, a sign of the returning spring. The stories of St. Nicholas (Sinter Klaas in Holland) came via Dutch settlers to America in the 17th Century. From the 1870's Sinter Klass became known in Britain as Santa Claus and with him came his unique gift and toy distribution system - reindeer and sleigh.

Poultry has long been the traditional Christmas fayre. When Victoria first came to the throne however, both chicken and turkey were too expensive for most people to enjoy. In northern England roast beef was the traditional fayre for Christmas dinner while in London and the south, goose was favourite, whilst many poorer people made do with rabbit. On the other hand, the Christmas Day menu for Queen Victoria and family in 1840 included both beef and of course a royal roast swan or two.

By the end of the century, though, most people feasted on turkey for their Christmas dinner.

The great journey to London started for the turkey sometime in October. With their feet clad in hardwearing leather the unsuspecting birds would have set out on the 80-mile hike from the Norfolk farms. Arriving obviously a little tired and on the scrawny side they must have thought London hospitality unbeatable as they feasted and fattened on the last few weeks before Christmas!

The "Penny Post" was first introduced in Britain in 1840 by Rowland Hill. The idea was simple, a penny stamp paid for the postage of a letter or card to anywhere in Britain. This simple idea paved the way for the sending of the first Christmas cards. Sir Henry Cole tested the water in 1843 by printing a thousand cards for sale in his art shop in London at one shilling each. The popularity of sending cards was helped along when in 1870 a halfpenny postage rate was introduced as a result of the efficiencies brought about by those new fangled railways.

Queen Victoria's German husband Prince Albert helped to make the Christmas tree as popular in Britain as they were in his native Germany, when he brought one to Windsor Castle in the 1840's.

The Christmas Cracker was Invented by Tom Smith, a London sweet maker in 1846. The original idea was to wrap a few of his sweets in a twist of fancy coloured paper, but this developed and sold much better when he added love notes , paper hats, small toys and made them go off with a bang.



Travelling bands of Carol Singers known as 'Waits' visited homes singing and playing the new popular carols such as 'O Come All Ye Faithful'.

These groups were led by town officials who had the power to receive money from the public, because if others did so they could be charged with begging and end up spending the whole festive season in jail!

Spot the Dog

Our cartoon dog Spot is hidden somewhere in this magazine. Find him and you could win a Games CD.

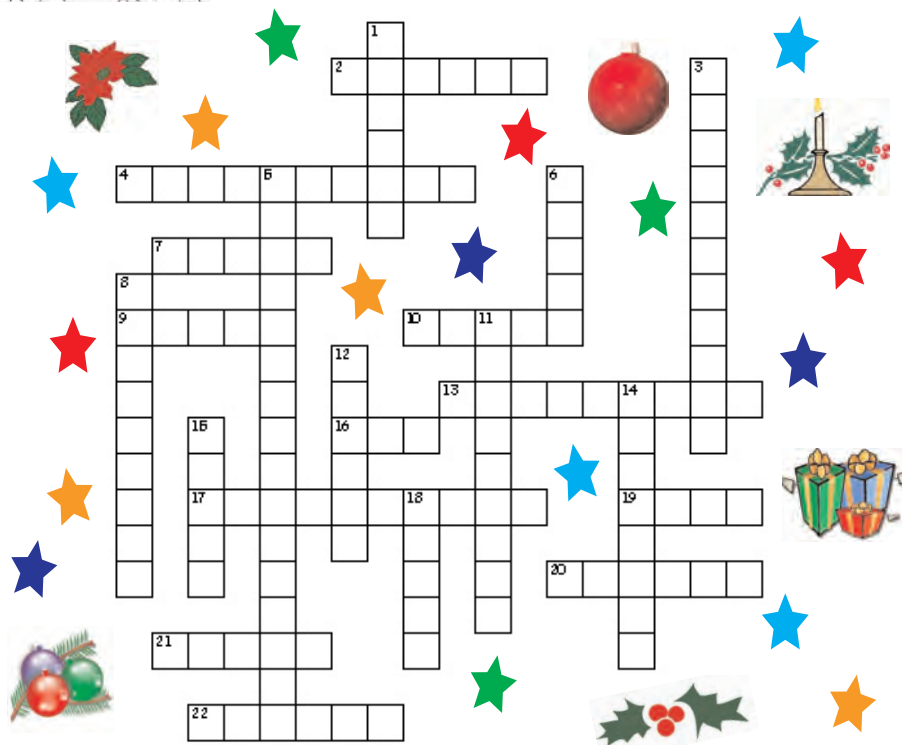
Entries to the address on page 3 or by emailing us at:

cando.magazine@btinternet.com
Closing date 20 January 2010.





Christmas Criss-Cross



Across

2. Decorative ball found on Christmas trees.
4. The Christmas time Saint.
7. Sometimes found on the top of a Christmas tree.
9. Group of workers who make toys for at Christmas.
10. Important baby born at Christmas time.
13. Where does Santa live?
16. Mince filled and Yummy.
17. A Victorian Christmas trimming.
19. It guided the shepherds to Jesus'
20. Baby Jesus' bed or crib.
21. A festive bird with some red feathers.
22. Heavenly messengers of god.

Down

1. Christmas time songs often sung at house doors.
3. A lighted candle, an orange, red ribbon and four cocktail sticks bearing dried fruit or sweets.
5. A traditional dessert on Christmas day.
6. Visitors to the Nativity.
8. The birthplace of Jesus.
11. A special place that Santa hides small Christmas presents.
12. What was brought on the eleventh day of Christmas.
14. Surprises wrapped in paper & ribbons.
15. One of Santa's reindeer.
18. Festive evergreen used for decoration.

The solution will appear in our next issue

Cartoon Corner



"No, Frank won't be playing poker tonight with the guys. He's agreed to stay home with me and drink eggnog and watch Christmas movies."



what happened to the traditional christmas?

By John Killick

(Honorary Secretary of the Disabled Motorists Federation)

When I was a kid down in Suffolk, just after the war, things were done a bit differently, and I think a lot better. No, I am not one of those who crave to put the clock back! But I do think that with progress we have in some cases thrown out the baby with the bath water. Let me explain how it used to be done for the sake of those who haven't experienced a *proper* Christmas.

Firstly, we never decorated our homes before Christmas Eve; we couldn't go out and buy our Christmas decorations either, we made our own! OK, paper strips coloured with crayon and glued together with flour and water paste to make a paper chain would never look as good as the manufactured streamers of today; but they gave us a lot of satisfaction that today's kids can never have.

If we walked into the woods to cut down our Christmas tree nowadays and collect our own holly we would probably get arrested - and quite rightly too - but that was the customary thing for dad and the kids to do on Christmas Eve when I was a kid. Dad could spend the morning of Christmas Eve putting up the decorations with the help (or should that be hindrance) of the kids. Decorating on Christmas Eve instead of at the beginning of December, if some modern parents can bear to wait that long, would mean that on Christmas Day those decorations are new and bright, not looking dowdy and tired. Wouldn't that be an improvement?

Well, that's taken care of dad and the boys on Christmas Eve, so what are mum and the girls doing? Well, in my day they would have been preparing the Christmas dinner, 'but surely you do that on Christmas morning?' I hear you say. No, you can't be preparing the dinner at any other time. You see, on Christmas Eve evening you will be out singing carols round the village with the church choir, and Christmas morning is spent at the morning service in church!

What! I can see your stunned expressions from here! Yes, after all, Christmas is supposed to be a celebration of the birth of Christ, not an excuse for a booze up! That comes a few days later, as every good Scot should know, at Hogmanay!

Now, I will admit that not having to spend every evening of the last three months on the run up to Christmas, making the presents, while trying to ensure that the kids didn't get to know what you are up to, just has to be an improvement, but my parents didn't have to find the best part of a thousand quid per child for presents that many parents do today either.

Then there is Christmas dinner! These days I am very patriotic, my family all being grown up and doing their own thing, my wife and I head for the pub, thus allowing the publican to employ the chef for another year! Well, that's my excuse anyway!

One seldom had turkey, rationing wouldn't run to it; but there would probably be one less duck on our pond on Christmas morning! Alternatively, with my old man being the local pastor, if the squire (yes we still had them in those days) had been out shooting, sometimes a goose would appear on the back doorstep a couple of days before Christmas. Somehow, in spite of rationing, our mothers always managed mince pies and Christmas pudding, though I could never find out how they did it.

So there you go, leave your decorating until Christmas Eve, join the church choir and go carol singing, (watch out for the ginger wine, it can be rocket fuel) attend morning service, and see the pleasure on the kids faces when they sit round the Christmas tree afterwards, and before dinner, opening the presents they have had to wait for.

Honestly, my daughter used to moan, and my grandkids still do, but now you have brought the magic back to Christmas.

The Town Hall Clock

The staff at Candon Town Hall have been to their Christmas Party and unfortunately Jimmy - who looks after the historic timepiece on the building's tower - has once again ended up a bit the worse for wear and forgotten to wind up the Town Hall Clock before he went home for the holidays. This means that the clock will slowly wind down and will stop at some point on Christmas Day.



What we want you to do is guess the time that the clock will stop (remembering to say if it's AM or PM) and email your entry to arrive by 20th January 2010 to us at cando.magazine@btinternet.com. This is a free to enter competition, but do remember to include your name and address. The nearest correct guess wins a mystery prize.





What else happened on Christmas Day?

25th December, a never-to-be-forgotten date marked by millions of people all over the world each year. A celebration of the birth of Christ although - without moving into theological debate territory - the dates don't really fit.

However, back in the year 352AD, the 25th December was settled on as the definitive date of Christmas Day. A day of celebration it certainly is, but what else has occurred on that date?

In 390 the French King Clovis 1st baptised himself on 25th December and numerous Monarchs and Popes have been crowned on Christmas Day including 1066 when William the Conqueror was crowned King of England.

In 1223, St Francis of Assisi assembled the first ever Nativity scene in Greccio, Italy.

Massachusetts Court ordered a five shilling (25p in today's money) fine for anyone observing Christmas in 1651 and on Christmas Day 1741 the Centigrade temperature scale was introduced.

Halley's comet was sighted for the first time in 1758 and sixty years later, in 1818, Handel's Messiah premiered in Boston USA. Charles Darwin spent Christmas Day in four different ports between 1832 and 1835.

The legendary unofficial truce of World War I took place on Christmas Day 1914 with soldiers from Britain and Germany leaving their trenches to play football in no-man's land before returning to fighting each other.

In 1932 King George V got a shock when his chair collapsed during his Christmas Day speech. In 1938 there's a surprise Christmas present for actress Vivien Leigh when she's announced as the leading lady to appear as Scarlett O'Hara in the film 'Gone with the Wind' alongside Clark Gable.

Jumping forward a few years, in 1950, the Coronation Stone was taken from Westminster and smuggled back to Scotland. Ringo Starr (then Richard Starkey) received his first drum kit for Christmas 1959. Other Beatles had memorable Christmas Days too; in 1965 George Harrison's girlfriend Patti Boyd was attacked by jealous female fans and in 1967 Paul McCartney got engaged to Jane Asher.

It was on Christmas Day 2003 that the ill-fated Beagle 2 probe disappeared shortly before it was due to land on Mars, but, more successfully in 2004, the Cassini Orbiter released a probe on Christmas Day which landed safely on Saturn's moon Titan in January.

A Ghost Story for Christmas

'Ghost Hunt' by Jim Rooke

"This is the place," said Malcolm confidently.

"Are you sure?" David was dubious.

"Yes. It must be. Look you can see where the old doorway was. The bricks are newer there than in the rest of the wall."

David looked around and shivered. "A lonely place, isn't it?"

"It's busy enough during the day. You can't really expect to see many people around here at this time of night." He opened his bag. "Come on. Let's get the equipment set up."

He produced a ball of twine and handed it to David.

"Find somewhere to tie that."

"Where do you want it?"

"The ghost passes through the wall at the point where the door used to be, so we want to tie the twine on either side of it."

David found a rusty nail protruding from the wall on one side of the bricked up doorway. He obediently tied the twine to it. He wondered what the point of it was. After all, if the ghost could pass through solid bricks, a piece of string could hardly be expected to give it any problems. He kept his doubts to himself, however. Once Malcolm got an idea into his head it took a lot to convince him otherwise.

"What's on the other side of the wall?" David asked, as he tied the other end of the twine to a convenient drainpipe.

"A warehouse. I don't think that it's used anymore. It used to be a garage before they bricked up the door here. I think that it was a stable before that."

"And who is the ghost? One of the stable hands?"

Malcolm shook his head and began to scatter flour on the pavement in front of the wall.

"No one knows. He's been seen walking through the wall on at least three occasions, but each time the witnesses were too far away to get good descriptions."



He finished spreading the flour and unpacked an old Kodak camera complete with flash gun.

“What happens now?”

“Now we wait.”

David turned up his coat collar. A chill, damp mist was beginning to spring up and he was regretting his rash decision to accompany Malcolm on this fool’s errand. It had seemed quite a good idea when Malcolm had turned up in the pub with his ghost hunting equipment, to help him catch the Mile End phantom. But now the effect of the scotch was beginning to wear off and the night was dark and cold, and David was wishing that he was home in bed. Malcolm crossed the street and leaned against a lamp post.

“Come over here and keep quiet,” he commanded. “We don’t want to scare the ghost off.”

“Us scare him?” thought David. Aloud he said, “How will we know the ghost? Will he be dressed in a white nightshirt?”

Malcolm sniffed contemptuously. “He wears a long grey overcoat. Don’t worry, you’ll know it’s him when he walks through the wall.”

“What do we do then?”

“I shall take a photograph of him. Now stop walking around and keep quiet.”

Half an hour later the mist was decidedly thicker. Both Malcolm and David were shivering uncontrollably. “Sh.. sh.. shall we come back tomorrow?” asked David, hopefully. “It m..m..may be warmer.”

Malcolm would have liked to say “yes” to this suggestion, but being obstinate by nature, he had to disagree, more out of principle than because he believed his reply: “The last time the ghost was seen it was a night just like this.”

The minutes passed. Both men were now pacing to and fro. “We should have driven here,” said Malcolm at last. “We could have sat in the car and been much more comfortable. That’s what we’ll do next time.”

As far as David was concerned “next time” would never happen. This was his first and last attempt at investigating the supernatural. From now on, he was determined that the only spirits that he would have any dealings with were the sort that came from a bottle.

A yellow glow split the mist and an elderly taxi came rattling around the corner. David caught hold of Malcolm’s arm.

“Shall we hire it?” he said. “We can sit in it as you suggested.”

Malcolm nodded and waved to the cab. The driver seemed surprised when they explained that they didn’t want to go anywhere, but he agreed to park by the lamp post with his lights turned off, though he insisted on keeping his engine running.

“Are you a local man?” asked Malcolm.

The driver gave an affirmative answer.

“Have you ever seen the ghost?”

The driver chuckled. “So that’s what you’re after. Well now, you can ask anybody around here and they’ll all tell you the same thing. They’ve not seen him themselves but they all know somebody, who knows somebody, who’s seen him.”

“You mean he’s a sort of local legend,” said David.

“That sounds like quite a good description of him,” replied the driver who produced a large meerschaum pipe and a tobacco pouch, and proceeded to light up.

They waited for an hour. David and Malcolm sat shivering in the back while the driver puffed contentedly on his pipe, seemingly oblivious to the cold. At last even Malcolm was ready to give up.

“Come on,” he said. “It’s too foggy now to take any photographs even if the ghost does show up.”

David readily agreed. “Can you take us home driver?” he asked.

The driver shook his head. “Sorry I had actually finished work when you stopped me. It was quite pleasant sitting here with you, but I can’t take you anywhere.”

David failed to see what had been pleasant about it.

“How are we going to get home?” he demanded of Malcolm. They had come on the tube, but that had now closed down for the night.

“You go round that corner and take the second turning on the left,” the cab driver told them. “About a hundred yards down the road you’ll find a late night club. There’s usually a couple of taxis waiting there.”

Malcolm got out of the cab. “Thanks very much. How much do we owe you?”

“Nothing son. Like I said, I’ve finished work and I enjoyed your company.”

They thanked their friendly host for his generosity and set off at a brisk pace.

The driver watched them turn the corner. Then he put his cab into gear, released the handbrake and drove silently through the bricked up doorway.

The next edition of CanDo Magazine will be published in February 2010. We wish our readers, advertisers, colleagues and supporters a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The logo for Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland, featuring the letters 'MS' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

Multiple Sclerosis
Society Scotland

Seasons Greetings

from

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If you think we can help you - or if you can help us - contact our Kilwinning office on **01294 558866** or visit our local website at **www.msayrshire.com**

We are located at **84 Main Street, Kilwinning KA13 6AA** and we are open from 11am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

For the holidays, our office will close on Friday 18th December and re-open on Monday 11th January, but non-urgent messages may be left on our answering machine which will be checked regularly.

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