



**MILTON KEYNES  
STOMA SUPPORT GROUP  
(MKSSG)**



**Newsletter number 12  
December 2020**

Dear Member

The end of the year is often a time to reflect. In 2020 the coronavirus has dominated our lives in one way or another, and more so for some than for others. Let's hope the vaccination roll-out goes smoothly so we can all look forward to better times next year – and finally get together again.

You may not be aware that Milton Keynes University Hospital (MKUH) is asking local people aged 80 years and over to go for a COVID-19 vaccination at MKUH. The hospital is currently contacting the over 80s but, if you are over 80 and have not heard, we provide here briefly the details we have. To be eligible: you must not have coronavirus, and must not be displaying symptoms or self isolating; you must have had your flu vaccination more than 7 days ago; and you do not require hospital transport. The number to call is 01908 997878 (if possible, have your NHS number to hand) between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday to book. Online: search on 'www.mkuh.nhs.uk over 80s vaccination'.

These newsletters are our way of keeping in touch. So, as always, we are asking for your support by sending in to us any thoughts, tips, serious or funny experiences, anecdotes, jokes, sporting passions or fishermen's' tall tales – we welcome them all!

For those of you online, don't forget our Zoom meeting on Monday, 21 December.

Meanwhile, we hope this Christmas newsletter will bring a smile to your face and help get you in the mood for Christmas cheer. Enjoy!

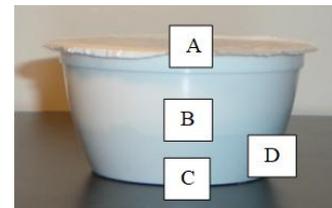


**One for the weight watchers**

With only three for Christmas this year, Lynne decided to buy as part of her online deliveries a smaller than usual Christmas pudding. Pictures online are clearly no indicator of size!

*I was surprised when it arrived. It is very small. Looking at the photo:*

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <i>diameter of top of pot</i>            | <i>A is 3ins (approx 76mm)</i>  |
| <i>diameter of top of actual pudding</i> | <i>B is 2½ins (approx 64mm)</i> |
| <i>diameter of bottom of pot</i>         | <i>C is 2¼ins (approx 57mm)</i> |
| <i>depth of actual pudding</i>           | <i>D is ¾ins (approx 19mm)</i>  |



*Before choosing, how I wish I had given proper thought to the implications of the low price, but in particular I wish I had noticed the weight in the small print, 100g! Well, we won't get fat on that!*

**TV Review**

At a time he said he was re-evaluating his life, Frank Gardner (BBC security correspondent) recently presented a programme (*Being Frank: The Frank Gardner Story*) about his experiences after being shot in the course of his work. He now has a colostomy and a catheter for urine. Many of you will have seen the programme but if you haven't it is well worth watching (BBC iPlayer) to see how positive he is about the dreadful injuries he received and how open he is to discussing his life now. With regard to his having a stoma, although it typically is noisy, fortunately for him he has a flat body and a pristine skin around the stoma and when shown changing his bag we may perhaps see it as a little more straightforward than many colostomates experience!



## A memorable Christmas

Jenny tells us about a Christmas she would not want to repeat in a hurry.

*Some years ago my then husband and I were invited to spend Christmas with some friends in Germany. We had visited our friends on many occasions over the years: Tony was English, the buyer for a major German tea company, and Heidi, his wife, was German. We booked our passage and on the 23rd December caught the Dover to Calais ferry and began the drive across to Dusseldorf, looking forward to celebrating Christmas in a different tradition.*

*Little did we know that, as we were beginning our journey, Tony had retired to bed with symptoms of flu and Heidi had taken a nasty fall indoors. By the time we arrived it was to a very subdued household as Tony had stayed in bed and Heidi was feeling rather battered and sore, so a quiet evening and an early night followed.*

*The next morning was Christmas Eve – the day in Germany when the family all gather in the evening for the main meal of Christmas. Heidi had told us that in that part of Germany everyone had goose for Christmas, but that she managed to find a local farmer who had promised her a turkey. So we drove her out to the farm to collect the bird.*

*When we got back Heidi was clearly suffering from the exertions so we suggested that she went to bed for a rest and that we would prep the food ready for the evening meal later. Had we known what awaited us we might not have been as benevolent! Cooking in someone else's kitchen is daunting enough, but nothing prepared us for what we found when we took the turkey out of the bag.*

*When you purchase a bird in England it usually comes trussed and oven ready – this bird was anything but! For a start it had only been decapitated just below the head so that it still had a long neck attached and its legs and wings were all over the place.*



*We struggled to find some string to attempt trussing it – it was like something out of the 'Generation Game' but without anyone showing you how to start! One ball of string later we eventually managed to get it into the oven to cook and prepared the accompanying vegetables. The family arrived for the meal but there were no ingredients for gravy – so it was a rather dry feast.*

*Later that evening we opened all the presents, again a German custom to do so on Christmas Eve, and then had the delight of sharing the customary Christmas Eve television programme featuring a German comedian and a large Oompah band.*

*When Christmas Day dawned it was a real anti-climax. Everything had been crammed into the Christmas Eve festivities, but we had a relaxing day and settled down in the evening with a few drinks to chat and reminisce.*

*After a while there was a strange smell and when we investigated we found that the candles lit earlier had set fire to the antique mahogany dresser in the corner of the room. That stirred us all into action and we managed to quell the flames before it got too out of hand – but it was clear that the dresser had been significantly damaged.*

*Boxing Day was even quieter as our hosts were still feeling under the weather, so we took the dog for a long walk and enjoyed a raclette (see photo) together in the evening. Fortunately this time we avoided setting fire to anything!*

*Next day it was time to come home and I admit I was very glad to get back to England!!*

*It was a Christmas I will never forget!*



## Raclette

When we read Jenny's piece we all asked what a raclette was, hence we decided to include the image of one in case any of you were also unaware. A raclette consists of two layers of heaters/grills with individual servers. Usually a section of cheese is placed on the lower individual servers (you can just make out their wooden handles). It looks quite fun to use and a sociable way to share a meal. It may also solve a Christmas gift next year for the person 'who has everything'!



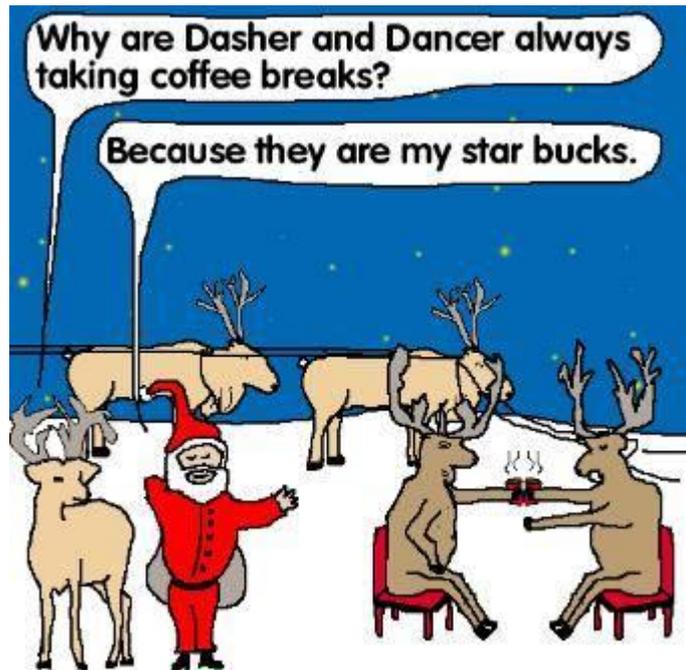
## Reindeer humour

I was looking out of my window this morning and I said 'It looks like rain dear'.

### Help Wanted

*Santa needs new reindeer.  
 The first bunch has grown old.  
 Dasher has arthritis;  
 Comet hates the cold.  
 Prancer's sick of staring  
 at Dancer's big behind.  
 Cupid married Blitzen  
 and Donder lost his mind.  
 Dancer's mad at Vixen  
 for stepping on his toes.  
 Vixen's being thrown out —  
 she laughed at Rudolph's nose.  
 If you are a reindeer  
 we hope you will apply.  
 There is just one tricky part:  
 You must know how to fly.*

Verse by Timothy Tocher



... and the rest of the humour from Jenny and Morag

## Tip of the month

If your supply of postage stamps has been diminished from Christmas postings, then we recommend you top up now. On January 1st, the prices go up: first class stamps from 76p to 85p and second class stamps from 65p to 66p.

## Book review

Lynne reviews *Village Christmas And Other Notes on the English Year* by Laurie Lee.

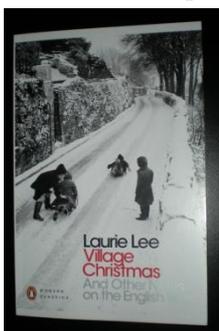


*This is a gem of a book It is full of Lee's reminiscences of his childhood and love of his home village of Slad in Gloucestershire, of his time in London in the 1950s and of his later life. The magical accounts of the seasons relate loosely to a gently nostalgic picture of life's journey. The book has beautifully written descriptions of the countryside – too long to include here. It is packed with imagery where Lee describes in a new way (and probably how we will now remember!) things we've all seen: 'an old lady totters by, bent double like a tyre round a dartboard'; 'beer on the bar was now standing in regiments'; and in Chelsea he would see 'Dylan Thomas, like a plump furry mole, pop up from his basement'. There is so much gentle humour: Lee writes of his early life in Slad when he knew of no other place, 'I thought Tewkesbury was in Poland'; he uses a pencil to write, 'I don't write like Jeffrey Archer on a word processor called Priscilla'; and in Slad a girl (who was perhaps studying one of his books in school) went up to him and asked 'Excuse me, sir, can you tell me where Laurie Lee is buried?'*

*This short book is in four 'seasonal' sections (it is not just about winter and Christmas). Most of the 'notes' within the sections range from 1 to 6 pages, with a few a little longer and one of 11 pages.*

*The author is more famous for his other books, such as Cider with Rosie. I'm not sure but Village Christmas probably consists of pieces he had written over the years and it exhibits just as much of his superb craftsmanship as any of his other work. It is a book to buy, read and dip into again and again.*

Published in 2015; 152 pages; paperback £7.99



## News from the suppliers

Rachel Smith has been coming to our meetings for some years representing Salts, but changes are afoot and we now welcome Oliver Eagle as our new Salts representative.



*At Salts Healthcare, we have developed our most exciting and innovative product range yet.*

**Confidence BE®** has a range of clever features to help you feel comfortable in your own skin, have confidence in your abilities and be free to live your life.

**BE Coordinated:** It is the first product range that is available in black, white and stone, offering choice for the first time.

**BE Confident:** Unlike other stoma products, Confidence BE® is designed to look less like a medical device with its premium water-repellent fabric and sleek profile so you can always be confident.

**BE Discreet:** The Intelligent Active Chamber Filter System helps to prevent ballooning, pancaking and odour to give you more freedom to enjoy life.

*For samples or more information on the Confidence BE® range, please speak to your Stoma Care Nurse or contact Salts Healthcare:  
Freephone 0800 028 2144 (UK);  
email [samples@salts.co.uk](mailto:samples@salts.co.uk) or visit [www.salts.co.uk](http://www.salts.co.uk)*

**CONFIDENCE BE®**  
For all you want to be



## Stoma Care Team greetings

(The photo of the team shows Karen in the centre, Grainne on the left, and Elena on the right.)



*We would like to add our greetings to you in this Christmas newsletter. We are all keeping busy as you might expect but the department is still here for you should you need us.*

*Contact details are as usual: Stoma Care Direct Line 01908 996951, or you can email [stomateammkuh@mkuh.nhs.u](mailto:stomateammkuh@mkuh.nhs.u)*

*We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and very best wishes for the new year. Karen, Grainne and Elena*

We know all members would like us to take this opportunity to express our thanks for your work and commitment, both in maintaining stoma care support and in helping in the huge effort needed in the hospital generally to contain the coronavirus. We appreciate all you are doing. Stay safe!



On the page that follows, we have provided a Christmas wordsearch for you to try when you are relaxing with a cup of coffee or glass of wine. Remember to send in your contributions for our next newsletter – preferably by email or text, or you can use our phone number (when you may be asked to leave a message for us to call back). The deadline is by/on Wednesday, 20 January, latest.

All that remains for us to say is that we wish you all the very best for Christmas and the new year and: 'If you are putting out an alcoholic drink for Father Christmas this year, don't forget to leave out a substantial meal as well!'

Best wishes

Jenny, Lynne, Morag, Tim, Tony

MKSSG Committee

**Contact details:** [www.mkssg.org.uk](http://www.mkssg.org.uk) • [mkssg.sec@gmail.com](mailto:mkssg.sec@gmail.com) • 07843-768386 (leave a number for us to call you back) • a closed Face book page (search for the group and request to join)



## CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH



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| E | N | U | Y | F | I | A | R | N | A | E | R | O | I | L |
| W | O | K | X | P | F | K | V | T | R | E | E | S | M | F |
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|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|
| Bauble    | Crackers    | Mistletoe | Stocking |
| Bells     | Decorations | Parcel    | Tinsel   |
| Cake      | Fairy       | Reindeer  | Tree     |
| Cards     | Games       | Santa     | Turkey   |
| Carols    | Kings       | Sleigh    |          |
| Christmas | Lights      | Snow      |          |
| Crib      | Manger      | Star      |          |

