



\* Ok, 100-ish!

**Our School Council set a fiendishly tricky task – to write an original Christmas story in just 100 words. Here is the pick of our festive favourites...**

### A Christmas Mix Up

By Oliver Burton, Year 2

Long ago, I wanted a kangaroo for Christmas. It was all I ever wanted. Nothing else! It's my favourite animal. I would look after him, feed him every day and keep in my garage. I was a bit worried that Father Christmas wouldn't be able to squeeze a kangaroo down the chimney or that it might knock over the decorations! But when he came, Santa got in a terrible muddle and mixed up the labels with my sister's presents. So on Christmas morning, I felt awful when I opened my sister's Barbie doll! Yuk! Quick as a flash, I swapped the labels and the day was saved.

### The Broken Toy

By Jake Robb, Year 3

It was Christmas Eve and Santa was zooming around the world on his sleigh delivering presents when suddenly, he thought he heard a faint crraacck! 'Oh no!' cried Santa to Rudolph. 'I can't deliver a broken toy – it will ruin a child's Christmas.' So he slapped his reigns and his reindeers raced back to the workshop at the North Pole. The elves opened every single parcel, but no broken toy was found. As they reached the very last toy they had almost given up hope. Holding his breath, the chief elf shook the present. 'Yes!' he punched the air as he heard a rattling sound coming from inside. 'Here it is!' Quickly they unwrapped the shiny paper – it was only Lego! 'Phew!' sighed Santa. 'Quick! We don't have much time left.' At lightning speed, the elves wrapped all the presents again and Santa flew off into the night. This time he had to drop the presents down the chimneys – there was no time for sherry and mince pies, and the reindeers missed their carrots. Luckily, they had extra hay on Christmas night – and a well-deserved lie-in on Boxing Day!

### A Christmas Carol

By Sadie Brooks, Year 4

It was Christmas Eve and Scrooge was stomping home from work, growling at anyone in his path. As he unlocked his front door, the face of his deceased partner Jacob Marley appeared in the frosty window. In a fright, Scrooge searched in every nook and cranny of the house. Jacob's

ghost returned and warned him about a spirit who would teach him a lesson. Later that night, when the spirit arrived, he dragged Scrooge out of the window, into the past. Scrooge saw how nasty he had been as a boy – he didn't care about Christmas. Scrooge dropped to his knees and begged for forgiveness – promising to change his ways. He kept his word. From that night on, Scrooge loved Christmas. He joined in all the celebrations and threw a huge feast for all his friends and neighbours.

### The Naughty Bauble

By Zofia Blood, Year 5

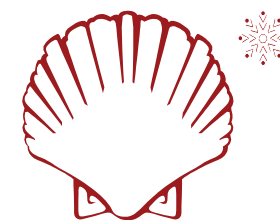
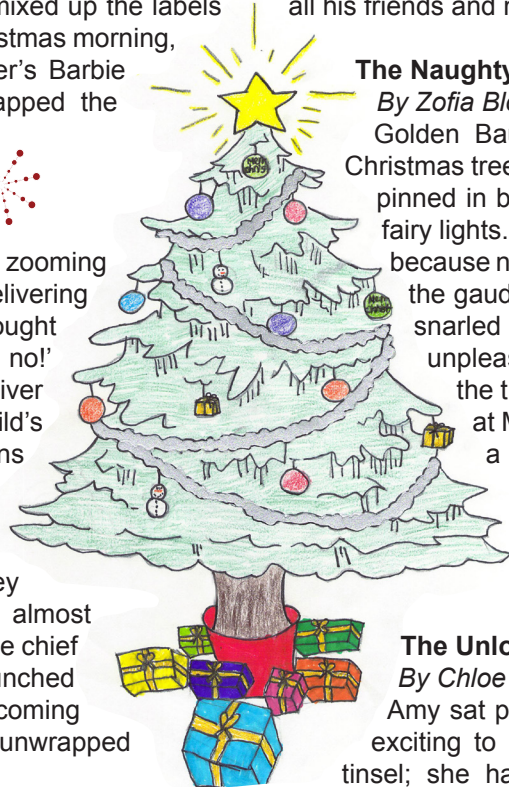
Golden Bauble, who hung near the top of the Christmas tree, smirked smugly at Mistletoe who was pinned in between some flickering red and green fairy lights. Mistletoe was simmering with jealousy because no one noticed him buried deep amongst the gaudy tinsel. "What are you looking at?" he snarled at Golden Bauble who returned an unpleasant grin before clambering down off the tree to launch a red candy cane straight at Mistletoe. Furious now, Mistletoe hurled a delicate glass icicle at Golden Bauble which pierced a hole right through the middle of him. "AAAAHHHHHH!" he screamed as he shattered into a thousand pieces on the floor.

### The Unloved Angel

By Chloe Thick, Year 6

Amy sat proudly at the top of the tree. It was so exciting to see the colourful lights and sparkling tinsel; she had never felt so beautiful! For years she had stood, alone and unloved, on the top shelf of a charity shop – thrown away by her previous owners who had replaced her with a glittering new angel. But then one happy Christmas Eve, a little girl called Holly picked her up. 'Not that tatty old thing!' her mother sniffed. But Holly loved her. She took her home and put her right at the top of the tree. Later that night, a boisterous puppy burst into the room and playfully tugged at the bottom branches of the tree. To Amy's horror, it crashed to the floor and she landed in the waste paper bin. She was so upset – cast aside again! Holly hurried into the room and picked up the tree, but she couldn't find Amy anywhere. Then she spotted her peeping out of the bin. She gently lifted her out, smoothed down her dress and put her back on the tree where she belonged.

Illustration by Lucy Hayes



# CHATTER!

Issue 2 - Dec 2014

CRADLEY PUPILS' END-OF-TERM MAGAZINE

10p



### Term Times

Phew, what a busy term we've had! It kicked off with the Key Stage 2 residential to JCA, finished with Key Stage 1 Nativity – and was jam-packed with heaps of exciting activities in between. Here is a small taste of a term at our school...

### All I Want For Christmas is...

... 17 days with my daughter and a trip on the Severn Valley railway with my family.

Miss Guy

... a size 10 dress that actually fits!

Mrs Gleaves

... well, an Aston Martin would be nice – but unlikely. So all I want is 12 leisurely get-ups and to be snow-bound for (no more than) three days with a good book, plenty of festive food and a sledge. Simple pleasures!

Mrs Paton

... a machine that gets me out of bed in the morning, dresses me, makes my breakfast, brushes my teeth and then transports me to wherever I want to go! Is that too much to ask for?

Mr Pusharski

... some snow, some sunshine – and a sledge!

Ms George

... is a stockingful of fun, a sackful of happiness – and a sleighful of time!

Mrs Jones

... is a day with all my family around me. Although, if I have to eat everyone's sprouts like last year, that might change!

Mrs Robb

... a decent lie-in!

Mr Greaves



Words by Adam Dudley and Theo Taylor-George





## Heart of the Matter

**There are proposals for a new community development in Cradley. James Kenny looks at the plans and finds out what local residents think of them**

### The Plans

For some time now, residents have complained that the closure of the Post Office means that there is no longer a 'heart' to the village – a place

where people can meet, share information or simply have a chat. But Chatter has investigated a proposal for an exciting new development. Nothing is set in stone but there is speculation that it will include a shop, café, football pitch and tennis courts, linked to all parts of the village by footpaths and cycle lanes. There is also talk of car parking, landscaping, bridges over the brook - and maybe even the possibility of retirement cottages. It is hoped that it will serve the entire community of Cradley, Mathon and Storridge.

"We're not talking about Portakabins," commented Parish Councillor Alan Eldridge. "We are aiming for an impressive architectural feature that will enhance the beauty of the village and leave a legacy for years to come."

### Why we need it

There is no doubt that the Post Office's closure was a huge blow and many agree that Cradley village needs a new hub. At the moment, community facilities – the butcher's shop, the church, the surgery, the Legion and the pub – are dotted around all over the place. Those in favour of the development argue that it makes sense to bring these amenities together and make them accessible to the whole community.

Also, the village is growing rapidly. In 1960 the population of Cradley was 340, but today, incredibly, the figure stands at 1750. In addition, there are large new housing developments in the pipeline; these will attract new residents who will need improved facilities.

### Where will it be?

Again, there is no concrete decision yet. Cradley resident Heather Morgan has donated four acres of land near the old school. A developer has also mentioned the possibility of using a 16-acre site adjacent to it.

### Who will pay for it?

There are various community-based funds which can help with the project. One option for funding is that we will work in partnership with local developers. In effect this means that a developer would be given permission to build houses in exchange for contributing to this fascinating community project. House building is set to go ahead anyway, but this would at least ensure that the developers contribute to the whole community.

### Running costs

"We have investigated the likely turnover in the shop," says Mr Eldridge, "And we're confident that it would support one full-time member of staff." Obviously one member of staff would not be enough - they would be run off their feet - so it's likely they would be supported by volunteers running shifts. "It is much like the café/shop at Alfrick- which has been such a roaring success there are plans for it to move out of a Portakabin into a permanent structure." he adds.

### Youth opinion

We think that all of this is being decided by adults so we asked Cradley Primary School children to suggest some ideas...

"I think a local farm so the kids could get some fresh air would be great."  
*Archie Roberts*

"A café that sells slush puppies, iPads and candy floss - or maybe a KFC."  
*Jack Dandy*

"I think we should have a football pitch that we can actually play on! The one we use at the moment is uneven and the goals are far too big."  
*Zac Bruton*

"I'd love an adventure playground."  
*Millie Price*

"An outdoor swimming pool with lots of slides and diving boards would be great. We could use it at any time and it would be absolutely free!"  
*Adam Brooksbank*

### What next?

'I was told this would never get off the ground in my lifetime,' says Councillor Eldridge. 'There are still many hurdles to overcome, but I am hopeful. In this centenary year, we have set a target of completion in the duration of the First World War. Our first meeting was in the summer; our goal is to complete by 2018.'

If you would like to be involved, or have your opinions - for or against - heard, you can look at the website, [heartofthevillage.co.uk](http://heartofthevillage.co.uk), or follow the campaign on Facebook or Twitter

### Divided opinion

Not all Cradley villagers support these proposals, however. One local resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, stated: "Cradley has always been a quaint and quiet village. All of these developments could potentially change this. There would be lots of extra traffic and it is already difficult to walk around safely. But my main concern is that the naturally beautiful areas of our village are reducing more and more and I think it will be sad if they are built upon."



## Word Scramble

Can you work out the message from our editorial team?  
oyu almyfi rtiCsmha nda ryerm nhgiwsi eyvr a oryu



Magazine editorial team: Theo Taylor-George, James Kenny, Owen Boniface, Adam Dudley, Jake Robb, Molly Eldridge, Lily Brown-Goode, Claudia Norbury.

## Mini Chocolatey Christmas Puddings

Recipe instructions by Molly Eldridge. Photos by Lily Brown-Goode.  
Santa's Little Helpers: Molly Eldridge and Jake Robb

**These easy-to-make Christmas puddings look good and taste even better! They're the perfect gift; everyone loves a home-made pressie. And the best thing is - they don't need any cooking or waiting around.**

Makes 30

### You will need:

Icing sugar, to dust  
30g each green and red sugar paste  
300g dark chocolate, roughly chopped  
200g plain digestive biscuits  
2 x 40g bars honeycomb-centre chocolate bars  
2 tbsp Golden Syrup  
100g red glacé cherries, rinsed and dried  
150g white chocolate, roughly chopped

### Special equipment:

Small holly cutter approx 2cm  
Polythene food bags  
Petit four cases



1 Sprinkle icing sugar on a work surface and roll out the green sugarpaste to approx 3mm thick. Cut out 60 'holly leaves' and score a line down the middle. Roll out the red sugarpaste in the same way and use to make 60 red berries.



2 Then melt the dark chocolate in a bowl over a pan of gently simmering water. (Be careful not to let the bowl touch the water!) Take it off the heat and leave it to cool slightly.



3 Meanwhile, put the biscuits in a polythene bag and use a rolling pin to crush them to rubble. Do the same with the honeycomb but make larger chunks.



4 Next, cut the cherries in half and stir into the melted chocolate with the biscuits, honeycomb and syrup. Roll into balls and place in the petit four cases.



5 Lastly, melt the white chocolate as before. Using a teaspoon, drizzle a little over each pudding and top with holly leaves and berries (2 each per pudding.)

## HO HO HO!

Compiled by Owen Boniface and Claudia Norbury

Why did Santa have three gardens?  
Because he needed to go ho, ho, ho.  
*Maisey Morgan*

What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck up the chimney?  
Claustrophobia.  
*Mrs Booth*

What goes 'oh, oh, oh'?  
Santa Claus walking backwards.  
*Jake Robb*

Who delivers presents to dogs?  
Santa Paws.  
*Mrs Jones*

What's big, round and blue?  
Santa holding his breath.  
*Lily Brown-Goode (Lily Collop)*

Knock, knock.  
Who's there.  
Arthur.  
Arthur who?  
Arthur any mince pies left?  
*Mrs Huckerby*

What do they sing at the snowmen's party?  
Freeze a jolly good fellow!  
*Mrs Crane*

