

## Our School

### Welcome to The Bridge SEN School Newsletter

Fortnightly News: 18 December 2020

Only a few weeks ago we seemed to be easing out of lockdown and into the relative freedom of Tier 2, yet this week further restrictions were announced. Few will probably recall this year as being amongst their personal favourites, and the hardship has certainly been global, but a new year **is** beginning, and hope is a most valued friend. We have no doubt that 2021 will be a brighter time for all and, with the vaccine in sight, change may not be so far away. For those of you able to be with your families this year, I wish you the best and safest of times; for those forced to isolate, I am sure that normalcy will be glimmering on the horizon very soon and that many, many reunions with loved ones are in store. A Heartfelt Merry Christmas and Better New Year to all!

-Edith Eneanya-Bonito – Principal



## Educational

*This week the learners have been preparing for the festive season by decorating the classroom creating their own Christmas decorations and festive wall display. We have been using Christmas Carols in different activities throughout the curriculum. We have also been using Raymond Brigg's classic animated film The Snowman with picture sequence activities to help our learners understand common activities, sequencing stories, the importance of sharing with others, recognising different emotions and **(spoilers)** dealing with loss.*

### Merry Xmas?

Maybe you hate the word and find it too modern, but did you know the term Xmas dates back to the 1500s? Perhaps you've heard the phrase *Keep Christ in Christmas*, which basically means: let's not ignore the real part of Christmas by getting rid of Christ's name. But in fact the **X** in **Xmas** really means Jesus. How is that so?

In Greek, the language of the New Testament, the word Christos (Christ) begins with the letter X, and looks like this:

Χριστός

So how did the word get abbreviated? In the fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great popularized this shorthand for Christ. According to legend, on the eve of his battle against Maxentius, Constantine had a vision which led him to create a military banner emblazoned with the first two letters of Christ on it: *chi* and *rho*.



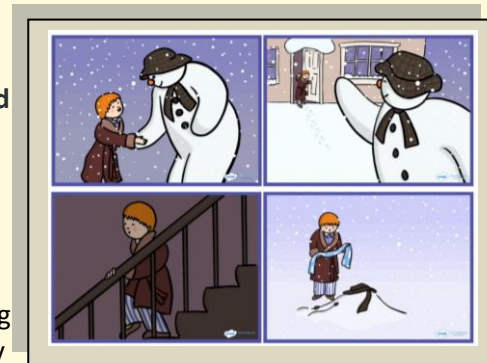
These two letters, then, became a symbol for Christ.

### When did the Greek letter start to be used in the word "Christmas?"

Most scholars agree that the first appearance of this abbreviation for Christmas dates to 1021, "when an Anglo-Saxon scribe saved himself space by writing XPmas,". Parchment was expensive, so any way to saving space were welcome. The abbreviation stuck, and was eventually shortened to **Xmas**.

So, the next time someone chides you for using this word, just tell your keeping tradition alive.

If you're stuck for something to do this Christmas, I mean Xmas, what could be better than to watch Raymond Briggs's cartoon, Father Christmas? Here's the full film: [Merry Bloomin' Xmas!](#)



# Arts&CraftsIdeas

## Is Santa Autistic?

Many adjectives describe Father Christmas: jolly, roly-polly, avuncular, grumpy, red-nosed, drunk, and kindly. But could we say that Santa has in any way a relationship to autism? Is he on the spectrum? Let's see. Can we say that Santa likes routine? Well, he visits our homes at the same time, on the same day, in the same month, every year. What else?

Clothes. Preferring not vary his uniform, Santa only wears red.

Sociable? Santa generally prefers his own company and his personal sanctuary, namely: his grotto. He knows where everything is there.

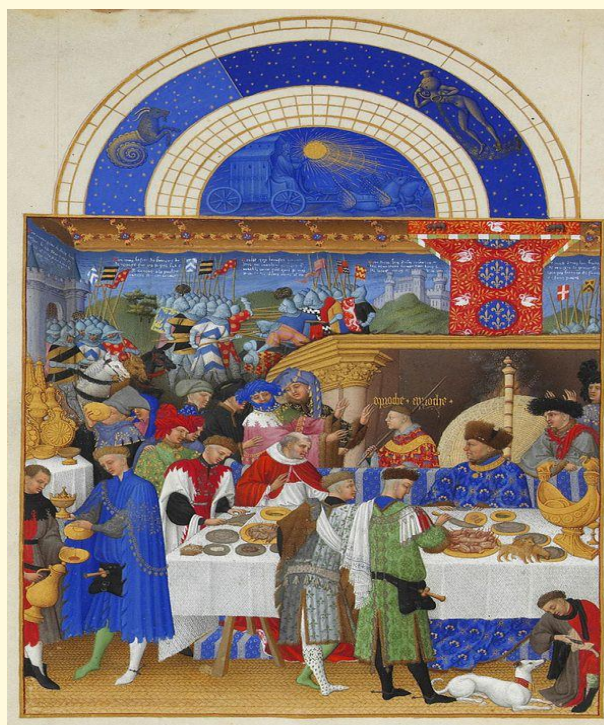
Personal Space. Well, if you think about his snowy house filled with log-fires, all the way up in the North Pole, Santa seems to pretty well enjoy his own personal space, along with his reindeers of course.

Varied diet. Santa eats mince pies and drinks brandy. Enough said.

And of course – he makes lists.

But even before Saint Nicholas became Santa and Coca Cola had been invented, this devout servant of the people was heading towards the spectrum. Saint Nicholas was never seen without his copy of **Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry**, a famous, illustrated book of hours, or book of prayers for set times of the day, which already indicates his love of routine and order.

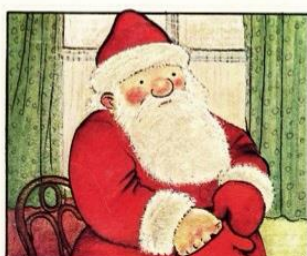
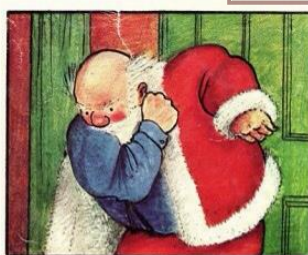
Merry Xmas – again!



## He Comes Down the WHAT!?!

Although Christmas for most people is a wondrous festive time, the idea of Santa, a stranger knowing all about you and entering your home in a way not normally possible (down the chimney!!!), can be a confusing and sometimes alarming idea to young people with autism. The idea of someone breaking both conventional and physical rules can be distressing so the figure of Santa could be a link to people doing strange or confusing things. For many families, it might be better to come clean early on and let them know Santa although he is a benign figure, is not real.

Furthermore as autistic children grow up and discover Santa is not real they may become upset and full of questions about why their parents lied to them (another example of rules that should not be broken). A good article full of useful advice from Pathfinders for Autism about how to handle such conversations can be found [here](#).



Another Raymond Briggs classic is *Father Christmas*. This children's book is another good example of clearly sequenced actions. Like *The Snowman*, It is also very useful for helping to describe routines and actions through visual schedules as this panel shows with Father Christmas wrapping up to face the cold weather.

# Our Activities Centre



This week the clients have been preparing for the festive season by creating their own Christmas decorations and continuing their practice of scheduling their daily activities through visual calendars. They have also been practicing their community skills by shopping in the local shops and improving their motor skills by wrapping presents for their families.

- Geovanna Wedderburn Activity coordinator

*The Bridge SEN School admits students all through the academic year between the ages of 14-25. If you are interested in placing a student at the school or obtaining more information, please contact [admin@thebridge-school.co.uk](mailto:admin@thebridge-school.co.uk)*

## THE BRIDGE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

### EDUCATION

END OF TERM – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

START OF TERM – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 - despite TIER 3

Please visit our website: [www.thebridge-school.co.uk](http://www.thebridge-school.co.uk) for full Academic Year 2020/2021 Calendar)

### ACTIVITY CENTRE

Our activity centre in Thornton Heath is open throughout the year, except on Bank Holidays.

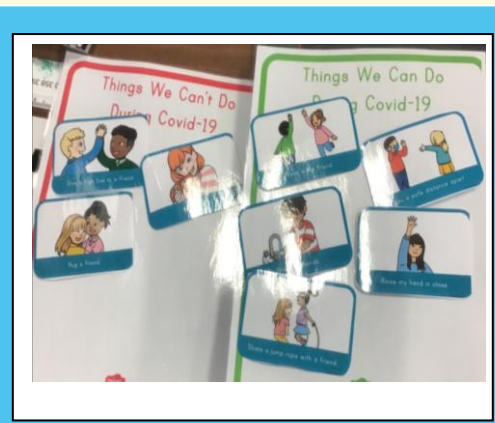
### COVID 19

We are in regular contact with the local authorities to ensure that we react appropriately and in a timely fashion to any development. We observe the most up-to-date rules concerning COVID 19.

- Social Distancing measures are in place
- Regularly handwashing is mandatory
- Tracing apps are in place
- Face masks are worn throughout classes

**Our Full Policy is available on our Website**

## Drawings/Pictures of the month



### OPENING TIMES AT LIRAL VEGET COLLEGE LONDON

Liral Veget College is the sister company of Right Support Management, under which The Bridge SEN School is now operating. We offer a variety of **English language courses**, **After School Club** and **Life in the UK Preparation classes**. Our current opening times are 8.30am – 18.00pm Monday to Friday and 10.00am - 14.00pm on Saturdays. **Academic Manager** - James Nuttall.

### QUOTE OF THE FORTNIGHT

*'Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.'*

—Martin Luther

We publish our newsletter fortnightly. Copies will be emailed to you and made available on the school's website (<https://www.thebridge-school.co.uk/our-school>). Thank you for your feedback. If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, please email me at [admin@thebridge-school.co.uk](mailto:admin@thebridge-school.co.uk) - Maryanne Orakah.