

Merry Christmas

From Denton Art Group

This year Denton Art Group decided to make a collage of their images of Christmas to wish the village a Merry Christmas. With barely a modicum of nudging and hinting what each of us has included are images that represent a familiar aspect of our Christmases.

The Nativity - Maureen Coe - acrylic on canvas.

Our centre piece shows the essence of Christmas in a superb picture that displays the birth of Jesus in a manger surrounded by Mary, Joseph, the Three Wise Men and Shepherds with a lamb. A very familiar scene painted in a very traditional way. This beautiful painting is finely detailed with vibrant colour. It takes us to the very heart and soul of Christmas.

The Three Kings (aka Wise Men aka Magi) - Peter Smith - mixed media

This gritty picture finds the Three Kings on their journey to Bethlehem with Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh for the new born king. They are travel weary and their bemused camels are tired and thirsty but they have the Bright Star in sight and are determined to welcome Jesus into the world.

Gold - to crown the king; Frankincense - a symbol of holiness and righteousness; Myrrh - burned in places of worship to help purify the air and prevent the spread of contagious diseases,

Sheep in Snow - Helen Knowles - watercolour

This is another lovely winter scene, again showing detail and depth in the superb overcast sky and the falling snow. The sheep seem to be waiting for the shepherds to finish washing their socks so they can go down to the byre to welcome the new born baby Jesus.

The Donkey - Deb Buckton - water brush pen and black ink

This endearing "wonky donkey" represents the donkey that is said to have carried Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Donkeys are commonly depicted in the nativity scene during the birth of Christ.

Wreath, Seasons Greetings - Maureen Coe - acrylic on canvas.

Wreath, Merry Christmas - Margaret Tuck - pencil and pen

These impressive portrayals contain our Seasons Greetings to you all for a Merry Christmas. The wreath became a symbolic emblem of Jesus; the colours red, green, white or purple were often used in wreaths to represent the blood, life, joy, sacrifice

or forgiveness in Jesus. Evergreens represent longevity and the shape the continuance of the circle of life.

The Holly and the Ivy - Deb Buckton - water brush pen and black ink

Finely detailed and faithfully coloured to give a natural true to life presentation. Since medieval times these plants have carried a Christian symbolism, as expressed in the popular Christmas carol "The Holly and the Ivy", in which the holly represents Jesus and the ivy represents His mother, the Virgin Mary.

Victorian Carol Singers - Maureen Coe - acrylic on canvas.

This is another superb picture that is finely detailed with vibrant colours that encapsulates the crisp cold fervent atmosphere and the celebration of a Victorian Christmas. While carols were not invented by the Victorians, it was a tradition that they actively revived.

Scrooge - Peter Smith - mixed media

This depiction of Scrooge represents the miserly side of his personality. In the first stage of Dickens Christmas Carol, Scrooge is presented as being universally bad. He is anti-social, anti-charity, and anti-Christmas. However, his redemption by three spirits transforms him back into a kind, generous man, a supportive employer to Bob Cratchet and the saviour of Tiny Tim.

Robin on Garden Fork - Robin Limmer - watercolour and pencil

This lovely, quizzical Robin, drawn so well, perched typically on a garden fork, is surrounded by holly in familiar festive pose. This picture typifies our view of this familiar and well loved bird at Christmas time. One of several explanations why we associate Robins with Christmas is that postmen in Victorian Britain were nicknamed "Robins" because of their red-breasted coloured uniforms. So the Robin on the Christmas card came to represent the postman who delivered the cards.

The Pillar box - Shelagh Limmer - watercolour

This striking picture of a pillar box and sack of presents conveys the traditional Christmas spirit of exchanging Christmas cards and presents. Pillar boxes began appearing in 1853. In 1856, Richard Redgrave of the Department of Science and Art designed an ornate pillar box for use in London and other large cities. In 1859 the design was improved, and this became the first National Standard pillar box. Green was adopted as the standard colour for the early Victorian post boxes but repainted the famous 'pillar box red' by 1884 to increase visibility.

Robin on fence - Helen Knowles watercolour

This is another lovely winter scene, again showing detail and depth with the perky Robin perched on a fence with snow falling all around. One strand of folklore indicates that when the baby Jesus was in his manger in the stable, the fire, which had been lit to keep him warm, started to blaze up very strongly. A brown Robin, noticing that Mary had been distracted by the inn-keeper's wife, placed himself between the fire and the face of baby Jesus. The Robin fluffed out its feathers to protect the baby, but in so-

doing its breast was scorched by the fire. This red plumage was then passed onto future generations of Robins.

Rudolph the red-nosed Reindeer - Lynne Peet - pencil and pastel on paper

This grand drawing of Rudolph catches his expression of eagerness and determination as he flies, guiding Santa and the other reindeers, over the rooftops of the houses on their way to deliver presents to the excited, hopefully fast asleep, children.

Rudolph first appeared in a 1939 booklet written by Robert L. May and published by Montgomery Ward. In many countries, Rudolph has become a figure of Christmas folklore inseparable from Father Christmas.

Christmas Stockings and Elf -Deb Buckton - water brush pen and black ink

According to tradition, the original Saint Nicholas put gold coins in the stockings of three poor sisters. Since then, children have hung up their Christmas stockings on Christmas Eve, hoping to find them filled with gifts in the morning. The Elf is a Christmas tradition where a special scout is sent from the North Pole to encourage children to behave. Santa's little helper watches the children and returns to the North Pole to report on whether they were naughty or nice.

Goose - Helen Knowles - watercolour

This lovely winter scene shows beautiful detail and depth which is emphasised by the falling snow. It is set off seasonally with red berried holly and features a fat goose bravely showing off its Christmas red scarf. The tradition of eating Goose on Christmas dates back to the ancient Greeks. As geese hatch in the spring, they tend to achieve their largest size just after the harvest period, when the spoils from the harvest would have been left on the ground by the farmers just in time for the coming holiday celebrations.

Turkey - Deb Buckton - water brush pen and black ink

This bootiful picture of a turkey is mouth watering. British merchants bought turkeys from Spanish conquistadors who brought the birds back from Mexico but it wasn't until the 19th century that turkey became the standard Christmas dinner fare.

Apple - Anne Carden - watercolour wash and pen

The tradition of decorating a tree around Christmas time goes back to pagan times. At that time, a tree was decorated with paper, candles, fruit and nuts. The most common fruit used was the apple. As paganism gave way to Christianity, this tradition was adopted as a part of Christmas.

Joyeux Noel 1914 / Froehlich Weihnachten - Peter Smith - print

The Christmas truce was a series of widespread unofficial ceasefires along the Western Front of the First World War around Christmas. This picture depicts German and British soldiers playing soccer and exchanging gifts during a brief truce on Christmas Day. This is a print of a watercolour and pen study by Peter, inspired by the film Joyeux Noel and an original painting by Angus McBride.

