

# HEALTH & LIVING

## Christmas on the ward

FOR nurses and midwives, working the Christmas shift is all part of the job, and while it is tough on family life, it can also be truly rewarding.

During my time at Tullamore General Hospital, I worked on a children's ward. One year, I was put on night duty on Christmas eve. There were only a few children being cared for on the ward that night – they were too ill to go home for Christmas. One of the children, a little boy, had been in an horrific car crash a few months before Christmas.

As luck would have it, I was the nurse sent in the ambulance from the hospital to collect him at the crash scene. He had been helping his parents cut the grass just outside his house at the road side when the collision occurred. I got to know this young boy fairly well in the next few months.

On Christmas eve, everything was quiet in the hospital – the fairy lights were sparkling and there was a nice 'Christmassy' feel in the ward.

The children were asleep in their beds



Kay Garvey, a telephone triage nurse with MIDOC in Athlone, shares her memories of working on a children's ward on Christmas eve

and cots when Santa walked in brandishing toys and goodies for them. It was such a nice surprise and brought the spirit of Christmas to the children and to me! Santa never made a sound!

Our Santa was a local country singer who had wanted to do his bit for the children after a gig. But, he didn't want anyone to know about the surprise! He even brought chocolates for the night nurse!



My own children were teenagers at the time and once I was home for breakfast and the opening of the presents, they were okay about my Christmas shifts. When you work as a nurse or midwife you juggle work, home and family as best as you can.

Working over the Christmas period means that you have to do a lot in advance in order to have everything ready and prepared for the big day. I usually stuffed the turkey before getting to bed after my shift, but I was lucky that my husband enjoyed being in the kitchen, preparing and sorting things for Christmas dinner. He would bring our boys to midnight mass and get the batteries organised for their new toys after they went to bed.

I hope all of you enjoy the festive season whether you are working or not. *Nollaig shona duit* to all in the INMO and to nurses and midwives everywhere!

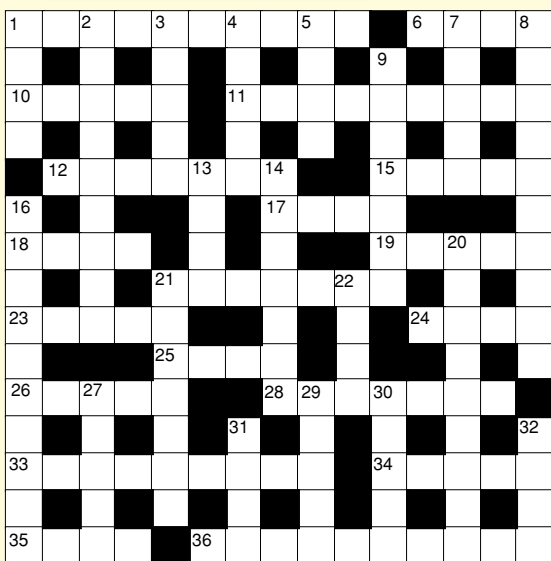
– Kay Garvey  
Telephone triage nurse, MIDOC,  
Athlone

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### Crossword Competition

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#### Across

- Italian ham can derail optic tours. (10)
- Ran away. (4)
- Our wish to all our readers. (5,9)
- Chooses. (7)
- Christmas song or hymn. (5)
- Engrave part of a stretcher. (4)
- Jealousy. (4)
- One picture placed inside another. (5)
- Lips act strangely when synthetic. (7)
- Powerful light beam used in certain types of surgery. (5)
- The longest river entirely in Spain. (4)
- He is found in scattered rice. (4)
- An allergic reaction to bee-houses. (5)
- The patella. (7)
- Diagnostic picture made of Magi argon. (9)
- Banishment. (5)
- Type of sword. (4)
- Such wealthy globetrotters might reconfigure the jester test. (3-7)

#### Down

- It puts air in a tyre. (4)
- It's noone else who gives us resolve! (9)
- This river flows through Glasgow. (5)
- Untouched by the censor. (5)
- Change direction. (4)
- Animal native to Madagascar which may be ring-tailed. (5)
- No isolated form of woe, this. (10)
- Telepathic. (7)
- Visit; telephone conversation. (4)
- When feeling thus, does nausea come in waves? (7)
- Her lace hat is needed for keeping people in good shape. (10)
- Undersea vessel. (9)
- City in Lancashire. (7)
- Doing nothing. (4)
- Imprecise. (5)
- Identifies. (5)
- Throw out. (5)
- Large plant we decorate at Christmas time. (4)
- Casks of potassium samples. (4)

#### Solutions to November crossword:

- Across: 1. Sap 3. Antagonised  
8. Indigo 9. Campaign 10. Alley  
11. Lying 13. Cover 15. Fig leaf  
16. Abandon 20. Titan 21. Agile  
23. Bambi 24. Draughts 25.  
Trauma 26. Cleft palate 27. Exe
- Down: 1. Spina bifida 2. Paddling  
3. Angry 4. Anchovy 5. Nepal  
6. Spirit 7. Din 12. Grand finale  
13. Coast 14. Robin 17. Dormouse  
18. Utensil 19. Pirate 22. Eight  
23. Barge 24. Doc

The winner of the  
November crossword is:  
Mary Brady  
from Carbury,  
County Kildare

Name: .....  
Address: .....  
.....  
.....

The prize will go to the first all correct entry opened.

Closing date: Friday, January 17, 2013

Post your entry to: Crossword Competition,

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