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A Merry Hospital Radio Christmas

A 10-minute monologue by Matt Purland

(Props: sound FX ('Do They Know It's Christmas' by Band Aid; 'Lonely This Christmas' by Mud; 'White Christmas' by Bing Crosby; a recording of BBC Radio 2 pips and news at midnight); table; chair; microphone; phone; mixing desk; and a spotlight)

(Scene: the present day. It's nearly ten to midnight on Christmas Eve. A hospital radio studio at a medium-sized community hospital near Wigan. 68 year-old volunteer amateur broadcaster ROLAND GOOLE is finishing his programme before the station frequency switches to BBC Radio 2 at midnight)

(We hear the last minute or so of Band Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?')

ROLAND GOOLE:

(On air) And, of course, that's Band Aid there, singing 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' And I really think that in a real way now that they *do* know that it's Christmas now, but at the time they probably didn't know. Er, something along those lines anyway. It's a lovely song. You're listening to Roland Goole on Northfields Hospital Community Trust Voluntary Radio Services, in Wigan. It's just coming up to ten minutes to midnight on Christmas Eve. And we've been looking at some of your requests. That last song was for a Mrs Marjorie Haworth and she's currently in Ward 11, and suffering from a fractured collar bone. So we'd like to say get well soon to you Marjorie, and hope you enjoyed the track.

OK. We've had another request from a Mrs G Evans and she's also in Ward 11. There's quite a lot of activity there this evening! You should all be tucked up in bed ideally, by now. Er, she's asked me if I can turn it down a bit. Now, it's not possible to do that, to turn down the whole of the hospital radio, I don't

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think that would go down too well with the trustees. But I can tell you that there are individual volume controls for your radio just by your bedside, Mrs G., so if you did want to turn it down, you don't have to listen to us. It is voluntary. I can't stress that enough. Or, by all means, tune into a different radio station if you like. I won't be offended at all. And don't forget that I'm here on a voluntary basis. Everyone else has packed up for the night.

I would like to thank everyone for the lovely Christmas cards that they've sent in to us, to all the volunteers at the hospital radio, and I would like to thank in particular staff nurse Graham over in Ward 9 who has sent me a lovely, lovely card, along with a big bottle of Scotch, which will go down an absolute treat.

Let's keep the music coming then. It's coming up to seven minutes to midnight. Here's a song for all those of you who are sadly spending the entire Christmas break in hospital. We hope it's not too lonely a time for you, but I'm afraid it might be for some of you. This is Mud and they are 'Lonely This Christmas'.

(The track begins. After a few seconds the station phone rings. ROLAND answers it)

(Off air) Oh, hello, Margaret, love. What are you still doing up? Yes. Yes, I'm still on the air. I'm broadcasting as we speak, at the moment. Yes, love. I know you want me to come home. You can't find the coasters. Right. I left them... I took them down from out of the loft didn't I? I left them in the cupboard on the landing. To the right of the bathroom door. Can you have a look in there? Was there three sets? Right. OK. I think they're in that cupboard, Margaret. Alright? No, love. No, I haven't forgotten about your

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mother. No. Yes. Yes, we'll still be going to pick her up. At nine o'clock tomorrow morning. Yes. That's fine. That's fine, love. Stop worrying. OK. OK? OK. OK. OK. OK then. Yes. OK. I will be home soon. I'm nearly finished here. When you hear the pips on Radio 2 for the news... Yes. Probably allow for about half an hour. I'll probably have to de-ice the car. I should be home by about half past. OK. OK? I'm going to have to go. I'm going to have to fade them out. Alright then. Alright. Bye. Love you too. Bye. Bye, love. Bye.

(On air) And that's Mud. They're feeling very cold. Without anyone to hold. And, er, if you do feel cold in the night, as always, contact your ward sister and they will see if they can do anything, anything at all in their power to help you. They may be able to provide an extra blanket, or two. Though I don't want to make any promises on their behalf as they may or may not be able to do that and provide extra services for all of you. It is discretionary.

OK. So, we're coming up to our last track now. I did want to mention the carol concert that we had yesterday evening. A lovely procession through the hospital grounds and of course through the hospital corridors and wards. And I know that many of you - well, *some* of you anyway - have phoned up to express your thanks, that you were able to join in with the carols as they were going round. I would like to thank on behalf of everyone Mr Bennett and Mrs Short, who were the two consultants who were organising everything, along with all their colleagues. And of course to everyone who was able to contribute to the collection. I can reveal that we have been able to raise £15.49 towards the scanner appeal. Really lovely stuff that. Tremendous. Absolutely great. So a big thank you and a big pat on the back to everyone who took part in that.

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It's fast approaching midnight. Of course at that time we'll change frequencies and cross over to BBC Radio 2 for the news on the hour and the remainder of the night. But Bob Perkins will be here at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning, er, 'perking' you all up as he does, ready to celebrate Christmas morning in style, here on Northfields Hospital Community Trust Voluntary Radio Services, in Wigan. So if you are confined to your beds, er, you have got that to look forward to tomorrow morning, in a few hours' time.

(‘White Christmas’ starts. ROLAND talks all over the introduction and first few bars of the first verse)

To take us to the news then. It's Mr Bing Crosby. He's dreaming of a white Christmas. As I think we all do from time to time. Well, from me, Roland Goole, this is me wishing you all - wherever you may be - a lovely, lovely Christmas, and of course an absolutely great New Year. And if you are feeling a little bit down. Just remember, tomorrow's another day. It's Christmas Day, in fact. Er, if you *do* need any help or any assistance at all in the night, please just press your buzzer by your bedside and call the nurse. If you can't sleep, well, try counting the ceiling tiles. You'll soon be off. It's worked for me on occasions. Goodnight. And a very merry Christmas to you all.

(Music fades up. After a few seconds, the phone rings again)

(Off air) Hello? Hello? Oh, hello Margaret, love. You've found the coasters? Oh, that's lovely stuff. Absolutely great. OK? That's great news, love. Really is. Terrific. I'm just putting my coat on now. I'll be home in about half an hour. We're handing over to Radio 2 now. What's that love? You've lost the walnuts now? Oh dear. Well, I'll be home very soon. And I'll be able to help you find

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those walnuts. OK. OK? OK, love. OK. OK. Night, love. Yes, I'll see you in about half an hour. Bye. I'm coming home. I'm coming home now, love.

(As ROLAND packs up and leaves the studio we can hear the pips and the news on Radio 2 starting in the background)