

## “A Peaceful Christmass Tale”

By Harry Matlay

It all began as a bit of a joke: all that stress and what followed, turned him into a Father Christmas lookalike. Only the red costume and hat were missing, but not for long. Daisy, the manageress of a High Street charity shop approached him with an offer. He accepted, of course. Impersonating Father Christmas would not be a great deal for a imposing man like him. A hive of activities began from November. Loads of gifts and toys arrived, and teams of busy volunteers sorted these into various boxes and containers, kept in storage sheds. By mid December, plans were in place for food and soft drinks to be prepared, and rehearsals to begin. Everyone knew their roles and places. The cumulative age of his of five Elves added up to over four hundred years. A large, rickety armchair, wrapped in red and gold, dominated the the middle of the charity shop, next to a richly decorated Christmas tree, surrounded by piles of beautifully wrapped gifts, of every shape and colour. The week long Christmas celebrations, became legendary and it looked like all the people in the town, young and old, came to visit and enjoy the event. Just before the closing hour, on Christmas Eve, the place emptied of gifts, food and drinks. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress arrived bearing gifts for the exhausted team, and a large, beautifully decorated Christmas card: “Have a Well Deserved, Peaceful Christmas”.