



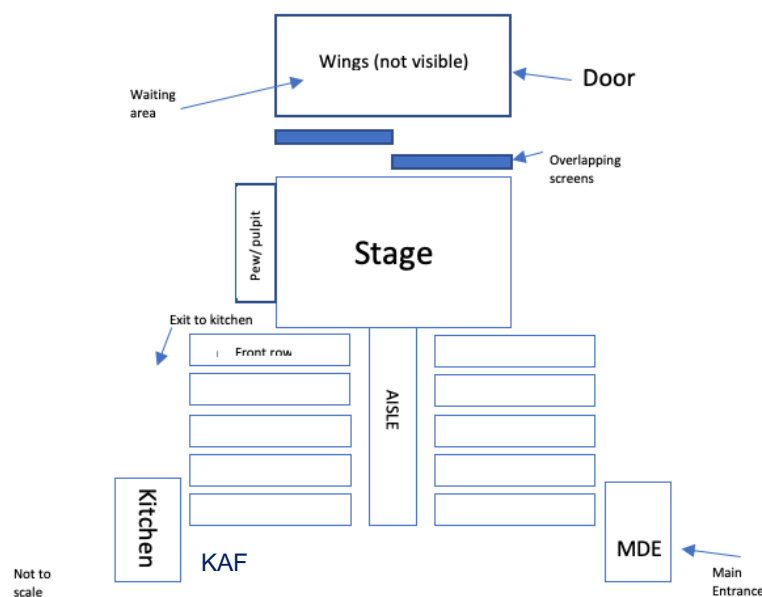
The Old Groynes Theatre Company, Huntingfield.

Oops... someone's stolen Santa's sleigh! And Rudolph!

A 15-minute playlet, no interval. MDE = main door entry. KAF = kitchen area, front.

Scenario.

The children are all seated. Anticipation is high. Sitting at a table just before the screens, dressed as burglars with masks and swag, are Burglar Betty and Burglar Bill, having their tea. Waiting in the Wings (behind two screens in front of altar) are the Police, Santa + Rudolph.



Narrator: Welcome one and all, and especially all you children, to this special Christmas play – *Oops, someone's stolen Santa's sleigh! and Rudolph!* **Pause** Now, you may be wondering, who in Huntingfield would steal Santa's sleigh, hmm? Or dear old Rudolph, hmm? So, you need to meet some of Huntingfield's new residents. This pair, dear children, – **the Narrator points to the seated burglars** – is Burglar Bill and his wife, Burglar Betty. They're burglars.

Up to no good! Burglar Bill and Burglar Betty live in a tall house in Huntingfield full of stolen property. They sleep all day in a stolen bed and go out in the evening and late at night, burgling. Now they're eating their stolen afternoon tea – stolen chicken McNuggets, stolen chips, stolen toast and marmalade. They sit on stolen chairs and eat off stolen plates and drink out of stolen cups, before setting out on even more stealing. So many burglaries in the village has attracted the attention of the Police. That's right! The local guardians of Law and Order, the Fuzz. Here they come now... Burglar Betty and Burglar Bill had better watch out!

Bill and Betty are at the table. They eat and drink very politely and chat wordlessly/ silently.

Dixon of Dock Green music plays. Bill and Betty move to the Wings. Sgt Wilkes and PC Harris make their way from the Wings to MDE.

Sgt Wilkes: Hello, hello, hello! What 'ave we ere then? You young shavers, better beware! There's burglars about in this 'ere willage ov 'Untin'field, yes there is. Burglars. Watch out. Hold onto yer sweets and pocket money, I say.

PC Harris: Yeah, Burglars. You behave then, you young people. We don't want no trouble, right! (waggles baton menacingly at the audience). You behave!

Sgt Wilkes: Evening all. Merry Christmas.

Narrator: T'is the night before

Christmas...Christmas Eve... all the children of Huntingfield, Ubbeston and Heveningham are sleeping, excited about their presents and dreaming of what Father Christmas will bring them. Look children! – here comes Santa. Santa moves down central aisle with Rudolph and sleigh. Narrator continues Santa has dropped in to the pub in Huntingfield because he's heard there are very special children in this village and he wants to get their presents just right.

Santa: Oo, me drinkin elbow's givin' me jip, so'tis. You stay here, me ol' boi, safe 'n soun'. Santa shan't be more'n foive minutes. Roight? Oi'll see yer 'amara. Oh, sawrry. I mean, Oi'll see yer layter. *Aside to audience.* 'Well, oi likes a bibble, oi do, so maybe just a wee bitsy longer eh? An Rudolph ere, well, e's got a long night o' d'liverin' ahead, so a wee rest now (an maybe a wee wee) on this bitta grass 'ere (points to grass outside pub sign), 'e'll love it, ee'll love it, so 'e will.

Santa goes into the pub (via pew). Sfx as if he's entering a jolly, noisy bar. Rudolph is left behind out in the cold. He eats the flowers and grass. He wanders over to the audience, nuzzles and hi-fives them, has fun. Then goes to sit on the grass, with head in hands. Looks at his watch. Is a bit fed up. Gambols around a bit. (JT to improvise/ play this up shamelessly)

Narrator: Alas, Santa enjoys the hospitality of the place a bit too much, so lingers a bit longer than he should have. But who's this coming now? Not everyone's being well-behaved in Huntingfield this Christmas Eve. Here are Burglar Bill and Burglar Betty, having just had their tea, setting out on some after-supper burglarizing...

From MDE, shining their torches around, Betty and Bill make their way through the pews to where Santa's sleigh is parked. The kids boo. As they pass the kids, they speak.

Bill and Betty stop at the sleigh.

Burglar Bill: Shhhh! I'm Burglar Bill. 'ere! You ain't seen me, right? An you ain't seen 'er neither, gettit!

Burglar Betty: Mums the word, eh? You ain't seen us.

Narrator: Suddenly...Burglar Bill sees something strange...

Burglar Bill: Blimey, Betty my love, my little hunny bunny. Look what's 'ere!

Burglar Betty: Coo,... it's a sleigh. Full o' stuff, pulled by... an 'orse! No, not an 'orse. it's a donkey.... No...Yon's not an 'orse, nor a donkey! What is it?

They enter MDE swaggeringly and march up the aisle, talking to the kids.

The police exit to Wings, wait there before going to MDE on cue (when Santa shouts for HELP!). When Narrator says. 'Look - here comes Santa', Santa enters at MDE, with Rudolph pulling the sleigh.

Meanwhile Bill and Betty wait in the Wings, then on cue (when Rudolf is showing off outside Pub) they go to MDE.

Narrator: Silly Burglar Betty doesn't know what it is! 'Course it's not a horse, nor a donkey! What is it children?

Children: It's a reindeer! **Shouts, hulloos etc.**

Narrator: That's right. It's Rudolph, Santa's reindeer.

Burglar Bill: Eh, what? 'oo cares what t'is? Time you wis 'ome, my lovely, getting me my dinner. I got lots o' burglin' to do yet, tonight.

Burglar Betty: Keep yer hair on, Bill, you old rascal. What's in yon sleigh, d'ye reckon?

Burglar Bill: (**rummages around in Santa's sleigh. Betty rummages too**). 'Coo Betty my flower, we've done struck lucky. T'is full o' presents! Hoo hoo hoo! Yeah!! All our Christmases 'ave come at once. Lovely stuff! I'll 'ave that!

Burglar Betty: (**points to Rudolph**) That's a nice reindeer Bill – I'll have that. We can't leave him out here in the cold, can we children?

Burglar Bill: Yeah! 'course we can!

Children: Nooo! **Shouts, hulloos etc.**

Leading Rudolph and the sleigh, B&B disappear behind the screen that leads to the Wings.

Santa comes out of the pub (beneath pulpit, via the pew) hiccupping and swaying, well the worse for wear.

Burglar Bill: An'...look! – lots o' carrots and mince pies! We'll have them too! Let's get 'im 'ome!

Narrator: Burglar Bill and Burglar Betty take Rudolph home to eat carrots and mince pies and watch the telly before Bill goes out for more night burgling. Wait though now. Who's this, coming out of the pub? That's right! It's Santa!

Santa: Roight Rudolph ol' boi, me ol' mate, me ol' pal. Let's be off eh? We's got a roight busy night ahead've us t'noight, 'ant we? No mistake.

PAUSE Santa looks around for a while, puzzled. Something's missing... PAUSE

Santa calls out, still puzzled.

Err... What... Rudolph! Rudolph?

Rooo-dolph! Where *are* you? **He turns to the audience.** Where's 'e gone, eh, children? Where's Rudolf? An' where's my sleigh? An **your** presents? **Then – as children shout out – it sinks in.** Oh Crikey! Jings, crivens an help ma boob! Ee's gawn. Vanish'd. – poof! – 'ELP! 'ELP! Rudolph's bin nicked. HEEELLPP! HEEELLLL!

Santa runs about a bit, waving his arms. Looks under pews, gets kids to stand up... Shrugs despairingly.

Santa: Ee's gorn!

Dixon of Dock Green music plays. The police come sauntering in from MDE.

Sgt Wilkes: Hello, hello, hello. What 'ave we 'ere then, mmm? Evenin all!

Santa: Oh thankee sooperatendent. M'i glad ter see yer. Thankee. Summun's legged it with me sleigh an' nicked me Rudolph, me reindeer. We 'as to gettem back, General, we 'as to.

Cos t'noight's the noight. Innit? **Waves his arm in sweeping gesture** All young-uns all over t'world gonna be proper dis'pointid, if'n we don't get my sleigh back an' rescue ol' Rudolf.

Sgt Wilkes: Let's go 'Arris! **Police exit via Wings. Santa steps forward, addresses audience.**

Santa: You know what that means, boys an' girls?

Children: No. What?

Narrator: What do you think he means, children?

Narrator encourages kids .

Santa: No presents! No toys. No games. No presents fer you nor fer anyone else. Tha's roight! In them sacks what the burglars nicked there wiz a lov'ly present, one fer each of youse. Now – poof! – they've gone. Disappeared. Vanished. Who knows where?

But we've gotta find 'em. All the children all over the world're dependin' on us!



SFX Sirens sound, spotlights sweep the audience. Wilkes and Harris enter MDE blowing their whistles. The police move among the audience, the kids, interrogating them, occasionally whacking the air above their heads with their truncheons.

Sgt Wilkes: Right, you little oiks. This is now a full-blown p'lice in-wes-tigation. **Scratches his head.** What 'appened to Santa's sleigh then? You lot musta seen it all, I reckon...

PC Harris: What've you done with Santa's sleigh then? 'Ave you nicked the presents then?

Sgt Wilkes: Steady on 'Arris, steady on. Gently does it, yeah! **(turns to audience)** Alright you young un's. Who wassit what took Santa's sleigh then, an' legged it with our Rudolph, eh?

This is the cue for Burglar Bill and Burglar Betty's heads to appear round the screen, behind the backs of the police. They stick their tongues out/ blow raspberries. The children spot them and shout out (prompted by narrator). It's them. Behind you! Bill and Betty withdraw. The police look around but don't see anyone. They get a bit jumpy.

Sgt Wilkes: Eh? There's no one there. Who wossit then? **(he picks a child in the front row)** Weren't you, wossit? 'ave you hijacked Rudy and the presents then?

PC Harris: Shall I nab 'em sarge? Nab em? I'll nab the lotta 'em, so ah will!

The police move among the audience, truncheons swinging.

Sgt Wilkes: Harrumph! Look at their innocent li'l faces, 'Arris, look at their li'l faces...

PC Harris: Huh! Guilty li'l faces if y'asks me. They know more'n they're lettin' on, I reckons.

Sgt Wilkes: We'll 'ave to interrogate 'em – Question 'em, eh! No pop an' mince pies for you lot, eh, till one o'youse cracks an' spills the beans!

Children groan (encouraged by Narrator)

Santa: Sarge, ...'ere Sarge, don't you think it'd make sense to sweep search the village first? After all, a sleigh full of presents is a big thing to hide, ain't it not? Not to mention my Rudi!

Grumpily, grudgingly, Sgt Wilkes and PC Harris exit behind altar screen into Wings in hot pursuit. Santa turns to follow them.

Sgt Wilkes: Best we get on with it then 'Arris. Let's go!

Just before the screen Santa stops and comes back to address the audience.

Santa: Oh dear, children. Mehbee shoon'tve parked where oi did. But ow wiz oi spuz t'know? We have to go and look fer Rudolf. Can you kids all sit quietly, till we return? Can you? Course you can! You're good little nippers in't you? I can tell. (taps his nose). The children are left alone. PAUSE/ QUIET.

Silence...SFX offstage. Suddenly, a single breaking of wind. Then two more. Then noisy belch, more wind...

From KAF Betty and Bill lead Rudolf, fanning Rudolph's hind quarters – too many carrots and mince pies... They don't see the police. Rudolph lifts his leg to break wind again.

Santa: (holds his hand to his ear as if listening) Can you hear that children? I'd recognise those windy-pops anywhere! It's Rudolph... He allus gets the windy-pops if he eats too many mince pies an' drinks too much pop. Santa sees Bill and Betty, plus Rudolph. Blimey!!

Bill: Ph-ooo-er! Mince pies an' carrots! That's 'orrible! **Betty:** Ph-oo-er! Yeah!

Cue for Police enter from Wings

Sgt Wilkes: Right you pair. Les B avenue!

Bill: Eh? Blimey! We've been rumbled Betty. Run for it!

Betty: Oh crikey. I was just getting' to like it here.

Sgt Wilkes moves forward to nab Bill and Betty. PC Harris meanwhile has crept round passage to KFA and come in behind them, cutting off their escape. Dejected, Burglars Bill and Betty are led to back of centre stage, in handcuffs, behind Santa.

Sgt Wilkes: You're nicked, the pair o'you.

PC Harris: Yeah. Come quietly now.

Sgt Wilkes: Book 'em 'Arris.

As the cops congratulate themselves, Santa takes centre stage.

Santa: Well children, all's well that ends well, I say. Rudolf is saved, we've got all the presents back, unopened, intact. So me an' Rudolf can now set off to visit all the chimneys in all the world what's got a deserving little boy or girl at the bottom of them, so we can make sure *every child* gets the present he or she deserves. An' you can all get your presents, too. Who's this for then...

Santa invites the kids up to get their presents. Rudolph and others join in. Police and burglars help too handing out presents. Kids mill around, open their presents where they are.

