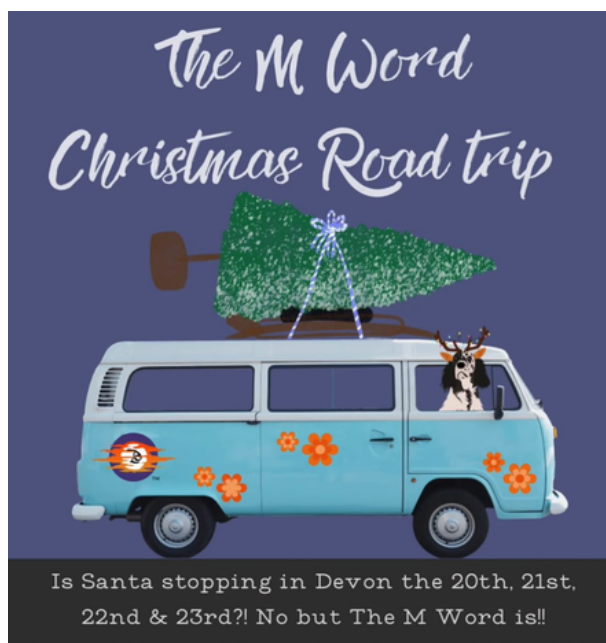


# SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2023

*With Lavinia Ponling*

## CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

I love November, but, honestly, the month just flew by and I recall very little of it, other than making plans for December in and around Christmas. Why does Asda relish the anticipation where they have a countdown monitor of how many sleeps till Christmas by the door? Our plans this month, if you have not been following Yasmin's adverts, is our Christmas trip down to the south west of the UK, which, in theory, should be much quicker than last year (dependent on weather and volume of traffic), as well as two Christmas fayres and a Christmas tree festival!



Next weekend is very busy. It is technically a long weekend. We kick off being in Snowdonia as of Wednesday evening. This is so that Yasmin can attend an event at Bangor University which will be showcasing her and her peers short films - you may have seen her mini blog highlighting her name in the credits. Friday I will be visiting Bangor University, and then we will return home to Leicestershire. On Saturday, we will be in Colsterworth for the afternoon Christmas fayre, and the following day in Swayfield. It is an opportunity of raising awareness around mental health and Autism, as well as being part of our communities.





We will be promoting TMW at our local Christmas Tree festival the following week. This will be our first one, but we wish to find interesting ways of promoting TMW, and this I thought would be a fun way. Trying to get your tree to stand out from the others will be a challenge, although we know that we can be colourful and creative with the decorations. I have succumbed to the Tesco deal of a potted Christmas tree 4ft bargain deal of 25 or with a club card down to 12.50. (I love a bargain, if you didn't know). Yasmin has been very busy with putting out coloured candy canes along the front of the house with a few stars that line the pathway. She has put a huge red bow over the front door, which looks fab against the black door. We have dressed the other doors as well as the windows up and downstairs with more Christmas wreaths, sten-

cil winter scenes, and candles. Tomorrow is our switching on the Christmas lights in the village with an opportunity to meet fellow villagers. We are a small village, so it will be easier than a town, to get to know people. Having lived on the Isle of Anglesey for the last 5 years, it has been somewhat of a culture shock to see the sky darkening and waking in the morning to white snow everywhere in Leicestershire. We thought we would be bereft at leaving Anglesey, but we are learning that Leicestershire is more like a best kept secret. Driving around the county in snow scenes takes on a similarity of Anglesey facing Snowdonia, but even prettier with all the painted outlined trees, the hedges dusted with icing, whilst the frozen grass looks like scattered diamonds.

One parent advised me that their child is very happy as Christmas approaches with all the lights, the smells, and the anticipation, but not so happy once January surfaces. Another parent advised of stark contrast where anything to do with Christmas is too much pressure, too overwhelming, and anxiety with not knowing what they might get as gifts that everything has to be played down. Another yet stated that there is no point dealing with extended family members till after Christmas as the demands on all are just not tolerated well causing considerable anxiety and fall out.

So, have a good week everyone!

*Lavinia*