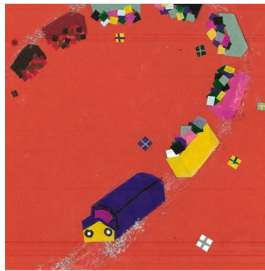


On Corporate Christmas Cards

December 30th 2015

For Christmas this year I prepared a PowerPoint presentation that contained photos and other materials from 2015 that I played on the television in the living room when there wasn't anything worth watching i.e. most of the time. This turned out to be quite a nice way to reflect on the last twelve months, and also allowed me to display some of the corporate Christmas cards I have received, the large majority of them coming by email. Clearly in general, these have a different rationale from those sent by families and friends, and are intended to remind the recipient of the organisations that them, the services they offer and the products they sell, wrapped up in best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Their presence on the TV screen led to some family discussions as to which were the "best" and which were the "worst", and here I draw on the assembled wisdom of my family and my own prejudices to award some notional prizes for those cards I have received.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Rail Delivery Group

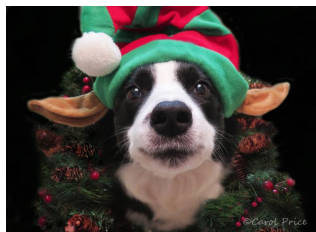
I start at the bottom end. There was universal agreement that last place should go to the communication from the Rail Delivery Group, because of the quite appalling artwork, and the lack of any sort of artistic presentation. Much more could be said, but it is probably best for all concerned to pass on as quickly as possible. The RDG was however challenged by a stunningly inappropriate communication from the Von Karman Institute for Fluid Mechanics, which as far as I can tell, seems to show some flow visualisation of flame experiments in a combustion chamber, although I could well be wrong about this, and any clarifications would be appreciated. It is difficult to see how this is related to the Christmas season, unless it be a veiled reference to cooking the goose.



Moving towards the other end of the scale, there were a number of cards that I would put into the "commended category" – a rather nice animation from Abelio Greater Anglia (although it is something of a mystery why they sent one to me), and a rather jolly one from the Transport Systems



Catapult showing Santa riding in a Milton Keynes Autonomous pod. On the whole however, I think I prefer reindeer.



beneath cities and it is difficult how to think how they could make their product look festive in any way – moles pulling sleighs perhaps? However they have really tried, and produced a



Now moving onto the prizewinners. My fourth place prize would be to the card from the GB Border Collie

Trust at Rugeley, which is pleasantly tacky and silly. The third place prize goes, surprisingly one might think, to the card from Mole Solutions. That firm is developing freight containers that will move in small tunnels,



picture of their freight containers in suitably snowy weather. They primarily owe their third place to their inventiveness in Christmas card production as well as in underground freight networks. Moving on, second place goes to an extremely classy card from the British Geological Survey, showing surprisingly little geology, other than that seen poking through the surface of a river.

And that brings us to first place. Unfortunately I can't show it here, as it came in an envelope. With a stamp. It was from Flint and Neil. No doubt over the last year, that excellent firm has designed many complex and beautiful structures, but they told me nothing about them at all. Just a simple greeting and the signatures of two colleagues. And, joy of joys, there were picture of camels and wise men on the front. It gave the impression of actually wanting to wish me a Happy Christmas rather than selling me something. So thank you to David and John. The effect was only slightly spoilt by an included note saying that the office at Stone in Staffordshire was shutting and relociting to Gloucestershire, which was probably not wholly appropriate to send to someone who has lived in Staffordshire for the majority of his life time. But you can't have everything!