

Happy Christmas

I wish you a happy Christmas. I am having the day off, but send me thoughts if you wish.

Mental health at Christmas

On my way to parliament this morning I heard a report on the radio that the number of calls to Childline had increased last Christmas; now the charity claims that there is a positive way to look at this as it shows that more children are aware of the service and feel like it's reassuring that children know they have someone to talk to.

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Tories forced into fox hunting U-turn – Sue Hayman

Sue

Hayman MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, commenting on a Tory U-turn on fox hunting, said:

“After backing fox hunting at the last election and promising a free vote in the Tory manifesto Theresa May has been forced to U-turn on this cruel policy. Under pressure from Labour, the Conservatives are finally rethinking their abysmal record on animal welfare.

“The government must now move to halt their poorly regulated and unscientific badger cull across England.

“The Tories have taken rural areas for granted. While they continue to focus on fox hunting, rural poverty remains a huge issue and infrastructure and services in rural areas have been run into the ground.

“It’s time this Government started taking action to tackle the real issues facing rural communities.”

Show people love this Christmas – Corbyn

In his Christmas message, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, calls for people to show each other care and love. He says Britain is a “compassionate” country with people thinking of others at this time of year, as well as enjoying themselves.

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

“At Christmas we spend time at home with family and friends.

“It’s a time of the year when we think about others. Like those who have no home to call their own or who are sleeping rough on our streets.

“We think about those who feel cut off and lonely. Many older citizens to whom we owe so much will be spending what should be a time of joy alone.

“We think of others such as carers who look after loved ones, people with disabilities or dementia.

“And abroad we think of those living in nations like Yemen, Syria and Libya in fear of bombs and bullets, of injury and death.

“None of this is inevitable. We pride ourselves on being a compassionate nation.

"My Christmas wish is that we all do
more to help bring about the kind of society and world we want to live in.

"Whenever you can show people love,
show them you care and enjoy your Christmas."

Christmas eve

(Here's one I prepared earlier)

WILL SANTA COME TONIGHT?

"Will Santa come? Will Santa come tonight?"

"He might. He might.

If you are good, he might."

"Can I stay up and see?"

"No. He will not come for you or me

If we do not sleep .

He's too busy to meet us all."

"And will he come for us?

If you go to sleep – he does not like fuss."

Tonight, by the lights of the tree

There is, at last, some grown up time for me.

The cake is iced

The wine is spiced

The carrots diced.

The pudding's steamed

The brandy butter creamed.

The turkey prepared awaits

And yes, I did clean the plates.

The tree is up, the table laid,

the cards are out , though the credit card's unpaid!

So shall I soon with gifts a plenty

Mount the stairs to deliver twenty?

Do I dare to tread the stair?

And will it creak?

And will it creak?

When can I take a peek?

I need to know if they slumber

Before I arrive with my lumber.

If they are still awake

what dreams will go?

What heart might break?

Or do they know?

And is their belief just all for show?

So tonight by the magic tree

There is need of more time just for me

I will wait – and struggle to keep open my eyes

And wrestle with the morality of eating Santa's mince pies.

My adult mind is full of Christmas chores

The cooking times, and the cards through neighbours' doors

The parties with do not drink and drive in my ears
So the night does not end in tears
Drinks that might have been – but not that cheap red
Which would give me a headache as soon as I got to bed

I was once a child too excited to sleep
with a torrent of thoughts about what I might be given
Hoping that it was a toy beneath the wrapping – should I peep? –
Not more socks or hankies, preferably something to be driven

So could Santa still come for me?
Drowsily I dream as if I were eight
Hoping that Santa would not be late
Like every little boy
There is of course a much wanted toy

So will Santa come tonight?
He might, He might.
If you sleep well
and if you believe

Only if you believe.

And only if in your family
Love fills the hours you will be spending.
It could be the true Santa on the stair
Or it could be someone from an empty chair.

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So will Santa come?

He will. He will.