

Happy Christmas

I'm taking the day off. Feel free to write in if you wish.

Christmas Eve

Will Santa come for me?

May you all feel the excitement of Christmas.

(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.
So will Santa come? He will. He will.

[More money for social care](#)

The government is now consulting on its draft local authority finance settlement for 2020-21.

An important part of this is £1bn of additional social care grant, and up to an extra £500m of social care money from increased Council tax.

Both Wokingham and West Berkshire have received poor social care grant settlements in recent years, so I look forward to some of this proposed increase coming our way.

[The Government's Response to the Independent Loan Charge Review](#)

The Government has now published its response to the Loan Charge Review.

It is changing its treatment of pre-December 2010 loans and pre-2016 where full disclosure was made and no HMRC Enquiry launched. The position remains complex and each person involved still needs to sort their affairs out with the Revenue on a case by case basis. I suggest constituents affected should read the detailed Review and response and if necessary take professional advice on it. The Government also clarifies its position on terms and timings of payments, to seek to avoid anyone's home being at risk.

The link to the Government's full response is below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/854490/20191219_Government_response.pdf

[Our Union](#)

I would like the Union of the United Kingdom to stay together. I only want volunteers in our Union.

I thought it right for the UK Parliament to grant Scotland an Independence referendum given the strength of feeling for independence in Scotland in 2014 and the successful political campaigning of the SNP. Before the vote I pledged that I would respect the result whichever way it went, and would in good faith have worked with my colleagues to secure as smooth an exit as possible for Scotland from the UK if they wanted to leave. The SNP for their part said they too would accept the verdict. All bought into the phrase the vote would be a once in a generation opportunity to decide Scotland's future. We also all agreed only Scottish voters would vote.

Today the SNP are trying to renege on all those promises. They now say they

want an early second referendum on the same subject. They see no need to accept the last verdict as they claim there has been a material change of circumstance.

Their immediate argument is that as they won a majority of seats from Scotland in the UK Parliament on a ticket for independence it means opinion has shifted in Scotland so they should be able to try again.

Yet in the last General election the SNP, the one party proposing independence, got 45% of the vote. This is exactly the same percentage as voted to leave the UK in the referendum. This is scarcely evidence of a major shift in Scottish opinion.

Their other argument is Scotland voted to remain in the EU, so it should be allowed a vote to leave the UK to try and rejoin the EU. This is a curious argument, as Scotland voted to stay in the UK and part of staying in the UK was the acceptance that a decision like membership of the EU was clearly a decision for the whole UK, not a decision for parts of the UK to make differently.

It is also difficult to understand how they think it would work. The EU under Spanish influence would not be keen to foster independence movements within member states by offering Scotland, Catalonia, Padania and others easy entry into the EU as they left the UK, Spain, Italy and others. Presumably it would entail joining the Euro which the SNP have always been reluctant to propose.

The SNP are not believers in full independence. In the referendum they wished to stay in the UK currency union and remain with the Queen. The muddle at the heart of their campaign remains. Are they really just wanting devo max or do they eventually want to be properly independent? How does that square with being a small member of the EU if the EU would have them?

If I were a Scottish or English campaigner for independence I would want my country to have its own currency and not to be locked into the EU and Euro. That after all was what the UK referendum was all about, where I did campaign for my country, the UK, to be properly independent.