



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER CHRISTMAS CRACKER....

SchNEWS

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Bah, Humbug!

"If it is true that the UK is being asked to pay at tomorrows prices for yesterdays technology, at the same time as lone parents are losing yesterdays benefits and paying tomorrows impoverishment there has to be something wrong with our sense of priorities."
Alan Simpson Labour MP

With the TUC's Bad Bosses Hotline receiving 5,000 phone calls in two days while New Labour announced child benefit cuts, with more to follow for the disabled and anyone else on the poverty line, it's looking like another penny pinching Christmas for millions of Britons. That's if you're allowed one. One company in the North East have "cancelled" Christmas according to one hotline caller. The factory bosses have told staff if they take Xmas or Boxing Day off, they have to take it as annual leave. Meanwhile, security guards rang the hotline from across the country complaining of 12 hour shifts where they get as little as £2.25 an hour. But even at the 'top' people aren't having much festive fun - one in four callers were professionals and managers complaining of individual bully bosses as well as exploitative corporate policies. And down at the bottom if you've not had your benefit stopped thanks to the Job Seekers Allowance then what are you going to spend your £40 a week income support on this Xmas? With so much choice and the economy 'booming' surely the United Nations report describing poverty levels in Britain as "unacceptable" must be mistaken? *Still it'll be a Champagne Christmas for some.*

George Barnes, head of a project team considering the merger of two Yorkshire hospitals, recently got a "golden handshake" of £372,000. Shame about the hospitals tho', who have a spending deficit of £1.5 million meaning operations have been cancelled. And City dealers are really listening to the Chancellors who told the nation that wage restraint was essential. They've given themselves a record £1 billion in bonuses this Xmas, 30% up on last year.

Still at least as we enter the Christmas spirit we can do so in the knowledge that we are safe. Ok, not from the gas

man, the bailiffs or a social security means test, but from those who would invade our country. And what better way to make sure of that, than by spending £16,000,000,000 (sixteen billion) on 230 Euro-fighters.

So this Christmas when you're cashing your wages/giro and opening the last tin of Tesco's value baked beans just remember that now we have a Labour government we should stop complaining and thank our lucky stars that Welfare to Work is just around the corner....

*Faux Pas! Cuts in benefit to the disabled? Tony Blair spelled it out to GMTV viewers last Sunday "Look, if we're going to get this country back on its feet again."

* The Energy Savings Trust, which help's thousands of poor pensioners and disabled people to buy energy efficient boilers and so cut their fuel bills, this week had its budget cut by £5 million by John Prescott, the Environment Secretary. * Need an idea for another Christmas present? ABC Asia Pacific are selling spy cameras for only \$2,200 each - and if you buy now you get a 2nd free. Bragging "Productivity really does go up with this system" their sales blurb says that the spy kits will not only act as a deterrent to thieves but also "help managers see if employees are really working... It's a helpful tool for people who want to stay in control."

APEC CRAP ARRESTS OF THE WEEK

For talking too loud. One of the leaders of the APEC ALERT group in Canada, was nicked because at a demo a couple of weeks previous "be had spoken to loudly into a mega phone, and damaged a police officer's hearing."

For holding up signs. A director of the British Columbian Civil Liberties Union was nicked and held for 14 hours after standing on his front lawn, holding signs that said 'democracy and free speech'. The police said that the signs were dangerous because they could be thrown in front of cars and hurt someone.

For leafleting. A woman was arrested while she was handing out leaflets. She was detained and questioned for several hours by plain clothes cops who told her she was being held for "conspiracy to protest"

HUNT SABS IN CIA HOWARD FRIEND

HELICOPTER INTRIGUE

Hunt sabs in Suffolk have encountered a millionaire landowner making a convincing bid to be a prime all-round hate figure. On December 3 at Mildenhall Magistrates court in Suffolk, saboteurs Melissa Vardy and Joe Wilkins were acquitted of aggravated trespass, a charge stemming from a day of action against the Suffolk fox hunt, during which they were flown at by landowner David Hart in his private helicopter. So while Hart had acted recklessly contravening the Rules of the Air Regulations, the sabs were the ones who ended up under arrest that day. Yet it was the fact of Hart's mad flying coming out in court that led to the sabs' acquittal - the stipendiary magistrate accepted that, far from trying to intervene with the hunt at the time of their arrest, the sabs were in fact preoccupied with trying to evade the helicopter, as well as a tractor and quad bike being driven at them, and various members of the mounted field riding at them on their horses.

'My friend Michael'

Hart swore during the trial that he flew the chopper merely to observe and photograph the sabs, and never took it below 500 feet. But in a bizarre twist, his claims were contradicted by the notes of a police officer present at the scene who confirmed from the witness box that he had seen Hart's helicopter 'buzz' the wood the sabs had taken refuge in. Apparently Hart landed his craft several times to demand the police arrest saboteurs, and in a brash reference to well-loved ex-minister Michael Howard, declared "my friend Michael passed laws to stop this sort of thing!" For the man Hart is no stranger to controversy: he is a former Cabinet adviser to then Defence Secretary Michael Portillo, and in 1985 had a Commons motion tabled against him calling him a "CIA conduit" and decrying his "clandestine operations against the '84-'85 miners' strike". No charges have been brought against him for his reckless airborne escapades; so when out walking through the

P.T.O. 

Sat 20th Dec - SchNEWSNight @ Lift, Queens Rd, £1 (B4 9) £3.50/£2.50

