

60/103.

CHRISTMAS CHEER EVERYWHERE.

The lights are on. Everybody's gay, the old magic has returned, it's Christmas again. Money flows like water, and this is no time for thinking about those January bills.

For days past London's West End, like shopping centres all over the country, has been jammed with buyers and sightseers, all getting that Christmas feeling.

Maybe it was Blackpool that first had the idea of illuminations on the great scale, but the idea's caught on. And what a grand idea it is. It would take a stony parent not to splash on toys under all this gay light.

Clever little girls make sure of getting the toys they want by having a word with Santa himself.

If you've never quite associated Christmas with Bobbies it's because they've never before had a special visit from Santa Claus all to themselves. A few days ago they were briefed for operation big bonus (in Manchester and other big towns). It wasn't manna from Heaven, but the result of the thanks of grateful countrymen, who've at last come to the conclusion that if we don't pay the police adequately, there soon won't be a Bobby on the beat. How nice for them to pick up arrears in time for Christmas. Their fingers are quite stiff from counting.

It isn't only the police who are in the money. Anybody would have thought they'd run into a Treble Chance-winner, at Hammersmith, where there was a colossal share-out; 150,000 pounds distributed to nearly 8,000 members who've been putting a bit by every week.

The extraordinary thing is that these thrifty folk didn't seem to all excited at the prospect of the golden harvest. That almost seems like carrying British calmness too far. You'd think all that lolly would make them jelly.

You know, these Hammersmith girls are worth knowing.

The Army has always made a big thing of Christmas. The Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Signals, sat down to a slap-up dinner, waited on by officers! They're youngsters of 15-to-17½, and after training they'll be non-coms, maybe W.O.s in Royal Signals regulars. Soldiering - it's a piece of cake. If the Army were always like this, there wouldn't be a civilian left in Britain.

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While these Southern Command chaps were enjoying themselves some Dr. Barnados' children had a party given to them by men of the American Air Force. The warm hearted Yanks went to Kelvedon House, with their wives, with typical generosity all kinds of things guaranteed to give the youngsters a grand time.

There was a wonderful Christmas Tree; plenty of presents all round.

It doesn't take a girl long to fall for that American charm.

Let's take a look further afield. The Berlin Deutsche Land Halle staged the famous revue, "Holiday on Ice", making its tenth appearance on Europe; bags of comedy laid on.

Fancy, after all this warning. If you skate, don't drink. If you drink, don't skate.

I've been hit...They've hit me!

Merry Christmas and exit, 1960.