



View from the sidelines

Clive Chamberlain, chair of Dorset Police Federation

Boxing clever?

During the run up to Christmas I always have great expectations and high hopes of a happy family time – you know, the sort that they used to enjoy on Walton's Mountain (that's if any of you are old enough to remember watching John-Boy and his wholesome near-perfect folks). I don't recall them having arguments about whose turn it was to use the PlayStation, or what needs to be deleted in order to be able to record anything else on the 'digibox'.

In reality, the Chamberlain family Christmas is more Munster's than Walton's and particularly stressful as, notwithstanding the fact that it falls on December 25 each year, it does tend to take Mrs C and I by surprise. Perhaps in the same way that when it comes to operational planning it doesn't seem to register with some senior managers, marooned in the command suites of various police forces, that New Year's Eve really does take place on December 31 every year.

So there we were, at three o'clock on Christmas morning with a pile of presents that still needed wrapping – when I made the grave mistake of suggesting that perhaps next year we could aspire to be more organised. Which is how I found myself being frogmarched out of the house on Boxing Day to join the masses of other unfortunates queuing for 'bargains' so that we could buy next year's presents.

Sales are something that I have always managed to avoid and with good reason. This shopping experience confirmed my long held belief that other people are awful. I particularly hated the sports stores as these did not appear to be places frequented by sportsmen and

women, but were full of people my size and larger swigging from energy drink cans and buying trolley loads of elasticated trousers and XXL football shirts. However, on a positive note, we did manage to buy some 'bargains' for 2012. My New Year's resolution is to be more organised and the extra large tracksuit bottoms are very comfortable.

I wonder if the Prime Minister has made any resolutions? If he has they do not seem to include being supportive of the police service. According to a report in the *Daily Mirror* on January 2 the PM issued a New Year message declaring that too many crooks were not being brought to justice and that he would "do the bold things that it will take to sort out the public services". Mr Cameron said: "Too often our schools aren't up to scratch, our hospitals aren't always clean enough and our police don't catch criminals."

"Our police don't catch criminals"? I do wonder what planet the PM may be on? Prisons are over-crowded to bursting point, so much so that courts are in some cases not giving offenders custodial sentences and prisoners are being released early to free up space – so we must be getting something right.

"Our police don't catch criminals"? I do wonder what planet the PM may be on? Prisons are over-crowded to bursting point, so much so that courts are in some cases not giving offenders custodial sentences and prisoners are being released early to free up space – so we must be getting something right. One would have hoped that the PM could have at least acknowledged facts, rather than used his New Year message to take a swipe at police officers, but sadly we have reached a point where we have almost come to expect it from him.

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2012 – it's certainly going to be challenging!

The sales proved once again that people are awful



We hoped for better from the PM, but we've learnt not to expect it

