

I know *some* people will say that cakes and biscuits are okay as a treat now and again, especially if eaten with meals, and these people will maintain that limits not bans are the most effective and realistic way to approach our sugar addiction, but I think they should be outlawed. I say make the nation go cold turkey on fun... I mean cake.

With this in mind, I propose that Paul Hollywood and Mary Berry be stripped of their titles as the King and Queen of Bakers respectively. Calling them so is an affront to our Royal Family. They are cake-peddling hacks stripping joy from the people and replacing it with adipose and decay.

B. T. H. E. Grincher, Hooille, Rantshire

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Working conditions

Elfless hard labour

Sir, I write to convey my utter dismay at the quite frankly abhorrent working conditions we elves are subjected to in the North Pole; conditions I believe you may also experience in the dental profession on occasion.



Composite. ©lumpyneedles/DigitalVision Vectors/Getty

On arrival at the Central North Pole workshop, I was greeted by the sight of 400-500 small men and women crushed into a space that isn't big enough to perform a scale and polish in. They were all expected to work in a monotonous yet happy manner, which deeply disturbed me. Expectations are set incredibly high – they are expected to make 1,000 Jack-in-the-boxes in a day – yet there is no fee per toy made system here, so I'm struggling to work out how these people

are making a living. There are rumours that a secondary workshop down the road is paying twice as much for the same work, so if things do not improve I shall be forced to seek alternate employment.

The workforce is mostly made up of associate elves struggling to make a living. A number of my friends work in multiple locations throughout the year and don't have the same employment rights as the staff elves. Many more are twiddling their elvish thumbs as they refuse to work under such lamentable conditions. This is fundamentally wrong.

What dismays me the most is that the boss – a rather large chap with what I can only describe as an 'off white' beard – expects the younger members of staff to work seven days a week due to 'high demand'. I have spoken with the local trade representative who informs me these workers did not have a choice in the matter. I find the notion of working under the imposed conditions rather distasteful.

I hope by bringing this matter to the attention of your profession and others more workers will feel supported to come forward and register their displeasure at these working conditions.

B. Elf, New York, via magic sleigh

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Dental trauma

Ho, ho, hospitalised

Sir, I write to you regarding the significant increase of dental trauma over the Christmas period. Our emergency dental clinic is pushed to the limit at this time and patterns of causes have begun to emerge.

1. Yuletide stress leading to tooth wear

Last year a patient presented with a cracked molar caused by excessive grinding of her teeth. She explained that the arrival of her in-laws and their insistence on listening to Cliff Richard's '*Mistletoe and Wine*' on repeat was just the beginning of a tricky Christmas. The stress was exacerbated by burning the turkey, running out of brandy and having to sit through the Queen's speech. The patient noted that she heard the tooth crack during a particularly frustrating (and tedious) game of Trivial Pursuit

2. Misuse of toys

I am frequently perplexed by children's insistence on biting toys and/or placing them in their mouths. A few years ago I had the unfortunate pleasure of removing a Lego figure's head from a tooth. It looked like a novelty crown

3. TV arguments

Two years ago a patient had reportedly lost a tooth during a heated debate over the quality of that year's John Lewis advert. I assured the patient that she was correct, Monty the Penguin is annoying and The Beatles' version of *Real Love* is far superior.

D. Kay, by email

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Infection control

Mistletoe threat

Sir, I would like to bring to your attention a hidden danger of the festive period.

2016 has been a terrible year. We have mourned the loss of Bowie, Rickman and Harambe; a cartoon villain will soon be leader of the most powerful nation on earth; and last but not least the sacred shape of the Toblerone has been changed. Therefore, I urge your readers to not make it any worse and avoid cross infection during this disease-heavy time of year. Obviously I'm not saying you should refrain from giving your partner their annual Christmas day hug, but I would strongly warn against any sub-mistletoe promiscuity.

Such incidents occur frequently at Christmas parties. I have therefore decided to ban them from our practice get-together. Mistletoe is neither appropriate nor hygienic for such an environment.

Unless you asked Father Christmas for mononucleosis, herpes or even just a common cold, mistletoe and this harmful tradition are best avoided.

I am hopeful that this information is old news for much of the population. For the past few years I have conducted my own study and have stood under many a mistletoe without being approached for a kiss once! I'm happy that so many of my colleagues are considerate of cross-infection even after a few mulled wines.

A. Bore, by email

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Note to readers: These letters have been created for the entertainment of readers in the spirit of seasonal good humour and, on the whole, are entirely fictional.