

THE CHRISTMAS COLUMN

Taking deadlinitis too far, I proudly present my Christmas column. Either that or I'm ten months early. Events since the festive season have put many things into perspective and I'm finding it hard to re-ignite the rage I need to fuel this particular piece. It's an ill wind so they say.

Many of us are now looking at life rather differently since Boxing day. I even sensed it among the cricket commentators in South Africa. Cricket - that most cocooned of sports with its caravan of experts, analysts and ex players all, who wander the world watching former British colonies trying to beat us at the game we invented. "I can't believe there's no third man" says Bob Willis, his voice betraying just a hint of well maybe it's not that important really.

Someone once asked a famous cricketer what effect an earthquake would have on a test match and he expressed the opinion that it would probably help the spinners. This kind of blinkered obsessiveness has surely been loosened at least.

So what of the bad-lyric awareness society? Do we turn our thoughts away to something more useful? Should we learn to tolerate Spandau Ballet? On the grounds that in the end it doesn't really matter that much? And I am asking myself the question: Why do I find it hard to write the next line?

Pre Boxing Day, the reason for the rage was my annual exposure via supermarket muzak to the hoary old perennial "When a Child is Born". Written by Zaccar/ Jay (that's all I know of them, or want to know) who, judging by their avid mixing of metaphors, must have had previous careers in football management.

We have the Robsonesque "wish sailing the seven seas" and a real turkey of a line in words "for a spell or two no-one seems forlorn". This is desperate stuff and if I ever heard it while browsing in the drill aisle at B&Q, there could be a serious incident. "Bad lyrics blamed for Drill rampage in local Hyperstore" would be the banner headline - "Zaccar/Jay admit responsibility. I wish.

On from Christmas, into a New Year, resolutions no doubt influenced by the Boxing Day disaster, I decide that maybe I can chill a bit, get real, not get so het up about something as inconsequential as a song lyric. I'm told that most people don't listen to lyrics. When you hear "A child is born", you can understand why