



TAW THIRD AGE GROUP

NeWSletter 382

1st December 2023

Website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/taw/home>

Registered Charity No 1026238



Welcome to our December 2023 Newsletter

COFFEE MORNINGS



The December Coffee Morning will be our Christmas Coffee Morning and is on **Monday 4th December**, hosted by the **Trustees**, in the **Roundswell Community Centre** at **10:30am**. There will be a short input by **Age Concern** about what they have to offer, followed by a Christmas Quiz and then Carols. Mince pies for all. Admission £1 for coffee/tea, biscuits and a raffle ticket. If you would like to wear your Christmas outfit, feel free, **but** it is not compulsory.

The first Coffee Morning in the New Year will be on **Monday 22nd January 2024** and will be hosted by the **Cribbage Group**. **Remember - our Coffee Mornings for 2024 have been moved to the 4th Monday.**

NOTE: We are unable to pay other Charities so at the back of the room there will be a Donation Box where members can donate if they wish. Thank you to those of you that attended the November Coffee Morning who gave so generously to the Calvert Trust. Nearly £200 was donated.

Please Welcome our New Members:

Mr Peter Andrew
Mrs Shirley Baker
Mr Rod Ball
Mrs Liz Craft

Mrs Tracy Csecs (Affiliated)
Dr John Gulliver (Affiliated)
Mr Paul Holland
Mrs Georgina King

Mrs Sylvia Norton
Ms Margaret Sheldon
Mrs Cynthia Whelan



PROPOSED NEW GROUPS

Theatre Group: If you are interested in a possible Theatre Group please could you let me know, and if there is enough interest I will call a meeting to discuss the way forward. The idea is to go by coach to either Plymouth or Bristol and hopefully to see an afternoon performance. If there is something of interest at the Queens Hall, Barnstaple or the Landmark Theatre, Ilfracombe we could go there that month by our own means. If you are interested please let me know by **28th December**.

~David

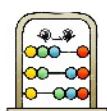


Sing-Along Group: A recently joined member is proposing to start a Sing-Along Group which will be singing for pleasure whatever your level. Please contact me if you are interested in joining this group and I will forward your details on to the proposed leader. No date or venue is yet confirmed and will be finalised once the number of interested people is known.

~John Wardle

Dining Experience Group: I announced this proposed new group at the November Coffee Morning and a healthy number of members have already registered their interest. This aims to be a monthly group (no set day yet) which, depending on restaurant choice that month, could be lunch time or evening. We aim to visit a variety of cuisines e.g. Indian, Chinese, Italian, of course English, etc etc. If you are at all interested please get in touch with me and I will add you on to the mailing list.

~John Wardle



Maths Group: Is anyone interested in a Maths Group? It has been suggested that the group will look further than NVQ level 2 or GCSE Grade C (now Grade 4 or 5). Please contact me if you are interested in joining this group and I will forward your details on to the proposed group leader.

~John Wardle

Short Tennis Group No. 2: A recently joined member is proposing to start a second Short Tennis Group. They plan to play on the Wednesday morning in the hour before the current group play; ie, 9:30am to 10:30am, or 10:00am to 11:00am. They are proposing to book twelve sessions (12 weeks), and would need the money up front. Each person would also have to purchase a short tennis racquet too (maybe only just over £10). Please contact me if you are interested in joining this group and I will forward your details on to the proposed group leader.

~John Wardle, Group Coordinator



HELP NEEDED

ILLNESS AND BEREAVEMENTS CONTACT

We are in need of someone to take over from Carol Griffiths as our point of contact for illness and bereavements. Carol will shortly be standing down, so if any member would like to take up the baton please contact her for information about what the role involves (see Contacts List for contact details).



A TALK BY ANN WIDDECOMBE - MARCH 25TH 2024

Tickets for this hotly anticipated talk will be available to purchase at the **January 22nd 2024 Coffee Morning**. Please note that this will be a **ticket only** event limited to 140.

The price per ticket will be £2 (to include entry, refreshments and raffle). Payment to be in cash or cheque please. No BACS. Tickets will be sold on a first-come-first-served basis.

Full Members will be given priority. Membership Cards **MUST** be shown at the time of purchase and there will be an enforcement of one ticket per member. **Entry to this event will be strictly by ticket only.**



STOP PRESS

Holiday 18th to 22nd May 2024

Shanklin, Isle of Wight - £375 per person

We have a few rooms available for this holiday. If you are interested please let me know. A £50 per person non-refundable deposit is required to secure your booking. Cheques payable to Blakes Coaches, but with NO date on it. If single occupancy, there is an additional supplement. Please contact **Lynden Davies** (see Contacts List for contact details).

Our Groups

Members are encouraged to contact the Group Leaders of groups they are interested in joining and have their names added to any waiting lists.

REMEMBER - Contact details are in the tables on the last two pages of this newsletter.

Those two pages are not available on our Website!

AFTERNOON TEA - Jill Chappell. Please note there will be **no Afternoon Tea meeting in December**. Our next meeting will be on **January 23rd at 2:30pm** in **Queen Anne's Cafe** on **The Strand, Barnstaple**. Until then have a happy, peaceful and healthy Christmas. ~Jill

ALLOTMENT 21 - **NEW LEADER:** Patrick Byrne. No report this month. ~Patrick

AMBLERS - Trish Lilley, Lyn Bonewell. Our 2024 Planning Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 12th December** in the lounge at **The Imperial Hotel** and we look forward to seeing as many of our members as possible. For the members who are joining us for our Christmas lunch this will follow at **12:00 noon**. ~Trish

ART - Derek Seymour. The Art Group meets on the **1st and 3rd Thursday** each month from **9:30am to 12:00 noon** at the **Rhododendron Methodist Church Hall**. ~Derek

BADMINTON - Alex Ferguson, Carol Griffiths. **Tarka Leisure Centre 9:30am to 10:30am TUESDAY** and **2:00pm to 3:00pm THURSDAY** except during school holidays. Please note that our Autumn term finishes on **December 7th** and we resume in the New Year on **January 2nd 2024**. Our

festive lunch this year is on **14th December** at **The Williams Arms** at **1:00pm**. We still have vacancies for players to join us on our Thursday afternoon session. Why not come along and take advantage of a free taster session before making a decision on joining. We are a friendly group of mixed abilities so why not give it a try. For further information just call Alex or Carol. ~Alex & Carol

BOOK CLUB - Barbara Vercoe. From **January 2024** the Book Club will take place on the **4th Thursday of the month at 10:30am** at the **Bike Shed in Barnstaple**. At present this group is fully subscribed. ~Barbara

BOOKWORMS - Linda Tyrrell. We meet at the **Library** on the **last Tuesday of each month at 10:00am**. We still have space for two more members. ~Linda

BREAKFAST CLUB - Wendy Walmsley. This group is usually held on the **1st Wednesday of the month at 9:15am**. The **December 6th** meeting is at **Queen Anne's Cafe, Barnstaple**, and the **3rd January** meeting is at **Watergate, on The Strand (Wetherspoons)**. Hopefully we'll have time to discuss next year's breakfast venues, bring your ideas. If you are **UNABLE** to attend please let Wendy know. If you

would like to join this friendly group for a chat over breakfast, please contact me. ~Wendy

BUS PASS - David and Jill Baker. No report this month. ~David

CANASTA - Linda Lee, Yvonne Geary. The next meeting of the Canasta Group will be on **Monday December 18th at 2:00pm** in the **Annexe of Fremington Parish Hall**. The group is full at the moment, but the waiting list is only short so do get in touch if you would like to play. ~Linda & Yvonne

CHAIR PILATES - Susie McCrum. Unfortunately Cheryl, the instructor for this class, is still in America, detained due to a personal family situation. Due to this the Chair Pilates will not start until the New Year. ~Susie

CHATTERBOX - Sheila Jennings. We meet on the **3rd Monday of each month at 11:00am to 1:00pm** in the **Barnstaple Museum**. Please come and join us. ~Sheila

COFFEE MUGS AND TEAPOTS - Jackie Ward. Meeting on the **3rd Wednesday morning of the month. 20th December, 10:30am to 12:00 noon** in **Arti's Too! Cafe, 20 Cross Street, Barnstaple**. We hope you can join this happy group for a chat and a laugh, you are very welcome. Contact Jackie. ~Jackie

CREATIVE WRITING - Sue Boyd. Our group is producing another collection of our stories and poems for Christmas. They will be on the Web page in December. We are having our next meeting on the **14th December** when we are having a free choice on what we write about. ~Sue

CRIBBAGE - Richard Taylor. We meet at the **Fox Inn, Fremington at 3:00pm** for a couple of hours. There is no charge for this, but drinks and food are available to purchase at the pub. We have spaces for more people but I would need to know in advance if anyone else will be attending to ensure that we have sufficient equipment and space at the venue. ~Richard

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT - Jane Bellworthy. The topic for our November meeting was Miscarriage of Justice. Two members of the group gave excellent presentations which enabled all members to have a lively discussion. We all learned what a devastating effect miscarriages of justice have on people and their families, and the long wait to be compensated for their years of suffering in the criminal justice system. At our next meeting on **12th December** we will be having a Christmas Quiz. We meet on the **2nd Tuesday of the month at Fremington Parish Hall Annexe**. ~Ann

CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION 1 - Paul Bate. The next meeting will be on **Thursday 7th December at 10:15am** at **The Fox Inn in Fremington**. The group meets on the **1st Thursday in the month**. We will be discussing interesting topics which are currently in the news. Refreshments are available at the pub. ~Paul

CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION 2 - Paul Bate. The Fox Inn will be closing on December 21st so the 2nd Current Affairs

Group will now meet at the **Fox** on the **14th December at 10:15am**, which is the **2nd Thursday in the month**. We will revert back to the **3rd Thursday for January**. We will be discussing interesting topics which are currently in the news. Refreshments are available at the pub. ~Paul

CYCLING - Steve Coppel. Winter is almost here, but while we remain a group of fair weather cyclists, we intend to continue cycling through the winter when the weather gods look kindly upon us. We meet at **10:30am on Wednesdays** in **Barnstaple** (we no longer cycle from Bideford), for a gentle and approximately 12 mile ride (6 miles each way) on the Tarka Trail to a cafe for brunch. New members are always welcome. ~Steve

DANCERSIZE - Hilary Newing, Sue Fogarty. No report this month. ~Hilary & Sue

DAY TRIPS BY COACH - David Baker. There will be **no trips until April 2024**. The following are the trips for 2024:

- April 18th** - Darts Farm Shop, Topsham and Sidmouth
- May 16th** - Tavistock and returning across Dartmoor with stop in Moretonhampstead
- July 18th** - Mevagissey
- August 22nd** - Swindon Designer Outlet Centre with option to visit Museum of Great Western Railway
- September 19th** - Day in Weymouth
- November 21st** - Cardiff Christmas Market

Details on booking arrangements nearer the time. ~David

DESIGN & MAKE I & II - Jim Pinn. There will be **no meetings in December**, New Year gets in the way!!! So **January 26th** will be next. Wishing all of you a Happy Christmas, keep the sawdust flowing!! ~Jim

DEVON HISTORY - Ken Bonewell. After having to cancel the November meeting due to the extreme weather warnings, we can look forward on **7th December** to welcoming Diane Yendell from the Appledore Maritime Museum to hear her talk on the Cod Trade. **Castle Centre** starting **2:30pm**. ~Ken

FOOD, FARM, ENVIRONMENT - David Baker. There is **no December meeting** due to Christmas. The **January** meeting has moved to a new venue which is **The Beechfield Centre, Fremington**. This has plenty of parking and full details in the January Newsletter. New members welcome. ~David

GARDEN DAYS - Roxanne and Graham King. **Wednesday 13th, December Tudor Frost Fayre at Buckland Abbey**. This trip is only available to those who have travelled with the group this year, it being subsidised from balances built up during this year, and is now fully booked.

Pick-up times: Chilpark **9:30am**, New Inn **c.9:35am**, Ellerslie Road **c.9:40am**, P&R **c.9:45am**.

January: no visit this month.

February: Wednesday 28th, Country Cousins, Westward Ho!, post-Christmas lunch being kindly arranged by Lynn Folland. Details to follow. ~Graham & Roxanne

HOLIDAYS - Lynden Davies. See the 'Stop Press' Notice on Page 2 of this Newsletter. ~Lynden

ITALIAN FOR BEGINNERS - *Italiano per i principianti* - Graham King. Which is now 'Italian for beyond immediate beginners'. Couple of places available for anyone who has done some Italian before, or has a very good grounding in another romance language - and is prepared to work to catch up! Please email me if interested. Le prossime sessioni sempre mercoledì alle **11.00: dicembre il 6** (venue to be confirmed to members by email) e il **27** alla Volpe.

~Graham

KNITTING - Sheila Jennings. Both groups meet at **10:30am** on the **2nd Thursday** and **4th Friday** of **every month** in the **Museum**. Please come along and bring your knitting. Gentlemen would be welcome.

~Sheila

PRACTICAL GARDENING - Jackie Ward. Meeting in **The Annexe, Fremington Parish Hall**, the **2nd Thursday of the month. 14th December, 10:30am to 12:30pm**. We start with a cuppa, mince pie and biscuits then offer advice on how to keep that Poinsettia alive over Christmas and other gardening problems, then we hope to hear Chapter 2 on the life and times of George. Contact Jackie.

~Jackie

PSYCHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE - Jane Bellworthy. At our October meeting we looked at Aspergers Syndrome and other differences in ways of thinking. Our November topic was how emails can go horribly wrong! We meet on the **4th Tuesday of the month** at **Fremington Parish Hall Annexe**.

~Jane

RAILWAY - David and Jill Baker. There is **no Railway trip in December** due to clash with revised Garden Days Trip. The next get together will be in **January** with details in the January Newsletter. New members welcomed.

~David & Jill

RAMBLING - Pauline Newbound, Barbara Hewis. **Monday December 11th**, a pre Christmas walk with mince pies from **Marine Drive at Woolacombe** starting at **10:30am**. Parking along Marine Drive is £2. Walk footpaths to Putsborough and return to Woolacombe along the beach. Distance 4 miles. Footpaths could be muddy and the beach could be windy. Fairly level walking. BYOFAD.

~Pauline & Barbara

READING SHAKESPEARE ALLOWED - Bob Godfrey. An ALERT! If you are reading this and are interested please don't hesitate to contact me any time. Reading together is a most rewarding and supportive activity. No special knowledge of Shakespeare is necessary. All necessary reading material is fully provided. We meet on the **3rd Wednesday of the month 2:00pm to 3:30pm** at **Fremington Methodist Church, Old School Lane, Fremington**.

~Bob

ROAMERS - Harriet Croft. There will be **no walk in December** but have a Happy Christmas with a walk later in the week if you have enjoyed your festive eating. I hope that a new Group Leader will have been chosen for the start of 2024. It has been a pleasure to lead you for 6 years.

~Harriet

SHORT TENNIS - Yvonne Geary, Sue Morley. We play **every Wednesday morning** at the **Tarka Tennis Centre** at the new time of **11:00am until 12:00 noon**. Our last session was on

29th November, and we restart on **10th January**. Our group is now full, but please let us know if you would like to go on our short waiting list.

~Yvonne & Sue

SIGHT SUPPORT - Jill Baker. The next meeting is on **Monday 11th December** in **The Shambles, High Street, Barnstaple** at **10:30am**. New members with a sight problem are very welcome. Contact Jill.

~Jill

SKITTLES - Julie and Patrick Kift. Another enjoyable evening was held in November at the Plough Inn. We had two new winners, the highest gent was Mick Conibear after an entertaining battle with Brian Tilbury, and the highest lady was Maureen Wilson who was very surprised! The booby went to Pauline Jordan. The Killer game was won by Patrick. Thank you for all the lovely raffle prizes given and for setting up the skittles. The next skittle evening is on **15th December** which will be our Christmas skittles. Please let us know if you can come. Take care.

~Patrick & Julie

STROLLERS - Maureen and Peter Penfold. There will be **no walk in December** as all our lovely Strollers members will be meeting at the **Imperial Hotel** for our Christmas lunch. Meeting **12:30pm** in the bar for **1:00pm** lunch. Looking forward to our time together. **No walk in January**.

~Peter & Maureen

SUNDAY LUNCH - Susan Covington. The Christmas lunch for Sunday Lunch members will be at the **Portmore Golf Club, Landkey**, at **12:30pm** on **Sunday 3rd December**. The venue for **January 14th** will be at the **Williams Arms, Wrafton** at the earlier time of **12:00 noon** due to availability. Please let me know if you cannot attend. Group full with a short waiting list. Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

~Susan

TABLE TENNIS - Janice and Bob Godfrey. We meet **every Thursday morning, 9:30am to 12:00 noon** at the **Tarka Centre**. The group is full at the moment. However people do move on from time to time and anyone wishing to be on a short waiting list please ring Janice and Bob. Some experience of playing is desirable.

~Janice & Bob

TEN PIN BOWLING - Brian Tilbury, Jan Hartshorne. We now meet **every Wednesday at 1:15pm** inside the **Bowling Alley** on the **Braunton Road**, except during the school holidays. In the past few weeks, Jayne Hartshorne was again top scorer for the ladies and Jan Hartshorne was the top scorer for the men, with 312, the highest score in the last 6 months. Brian Williams came close with 300, his best for a long time and is congratulated for getting another 'Turkey'. Brian Tilbury and Jan Hartshorne also achieved 'Turkeys'. Richard Taylor gets a special mention for a vastly improved, new PB of 266!

~Brian & Jan

TUESDAY LUNCHEON GROUP - Trish Lilley. The December Christmas lunch at **The Williams Arms** will be on **Tuesday 19th December**. To book please contact me by email or telephone by the **17th December** as numbers could be limited during this holiday season.

~Trish

WANDERERS - Chris and Lesley Wade. **No walk this month** but a chance to get together on **Tuesday December 12th**

for a Christmas meal at the **Williams Arms, Wrafton** at **12:00 midday** for a 12:30pm lunch, the cost of which is £15.50 for the Christmas Carvery plus an additional £7.00 for a dessert. We will have a short meeting beforehand to plan for next year's walks. If you are planning to join us please let us know by either phone or email by **Monday December 4th** so that we can advise the pub of numbers. And just to remind everyone that Lesley and I will be

stepping down as group leaders at this meeting so we will need new leaders if the group is to continue. ~Chris & Lesley

WINE APPRECIATION - David Rowe. The Wine Group continues to meet on the **1st Friday of each month**, in **Room 3B** of the **Barnstaple Library**. ~David

WOODCARVING - Marion Choules. **Weekly, Wednesday mornings 10:00am to 12:00 noon**. ~Marion

REMINDER: If you **move house** or your **email or telephone number changes** *please* let **Veronica McLaughlin**, the **Membership Secretary**, know so that we can continue to keep in contact. It will also ensure you continue to receive the Newsletter by email.



ILLNESSES and BEREAVEMENTS: Carol Griffiths is responsible for keeping in touch with members who become ill or are taken into hospital. If you become aware of any such cases please contact her. Would Group Leaders please take responsibility for informing Carol of illnesses of their group members. Would the family, Group Leader or any other member please inform Carol of the details of names and dates of deaths. **A single line announcement will be included in the Newsletter unless the family do not want any acknowledgment. It is for the Group Leader to notify Carol who will notify the Newsletter Editor.**

EQUIPMENT MANAGER: Gordon Gregory.

CALENDAR - December 2023/January 2024

Coffee Mornings:

Monday 4th December (Trustees) - 10:30am - Roundswell Community Hall
Monday 22nd January 2024 (Cribbage Group) - 10:30am - Roundswell Community Hall

January 2024 Newsletter Deadline: Deadline for entry of events occurring **after Monday 1st January 2024 - MONDAY 11th DECEMBER to enable distribution before Christmas.**

Group	Day	Date		Time	Venue/Information
		December 2023	January 2024 (Subject to Change)		
Afternoon Tea	Tuesday	No Meeting	23	2:30pm	Queen Anne's Cafe, The Strand
Allotment 21	Friday	TBN	TBN	2:30pm	Barnstaple Coffee Shop
Amblers	Tuesday	12		11:00am	Imperial Hotel
			9		TBN
Art	Thursday	7; 21	4; 18	9:30am	Methodist Church Hall, Rhododendron Avenue
Badminton	Tuesday	5	2; 9; 16; 23; 30	9:30am	Tarka Leisure Centre
	Thursday	7	4; 11; 18; 25	2:00pm	
		14		1:00pm	
Book Club	Thursday	No Meeting	25	10:30am	The Bike Shed, Barnstaple
Bookworms	Tuesday	No meeting	30	10:00am	Barnstaple Library
Breakfast Club	Wednesday	6		9:15am	Queen Anne's Cafe, The Strand
			3		Watergate (Weatherspoons)
Bus Pass	Thursday	No Meeting	25	TBN	TBN
Canasta	Monday	18	15	2:00pm	Fremington Parish Hall Annexe
Chair Pilates	TBN	No Meeting	TBN	TBN	TBN
Chatterbox	Monday	18	15	11:00am	Museum Tea Rooms
Coffee Mugs and Teapots	Wednesday	20		10:30am	Arti's Too! Cafe, 20 Cross Street, Barnstaple
			17		TBN
Creative Writing	Thursday	14	11	10:30am	TBN
Cribbage	Friday	8; 22	5; 19	3:00pm	The Fox Inn, Fremington
Crime and Punishment	Tuesday	12	9	2:00pm	Fremington Parish Hall Annexe
Current Affairs Discussion 1	Thursday	7	4	10:15am	The Fox Inn, Fremington
Current Affairs Discussion 2		14	18		
Cycling	Wednesday	TBN	TBN	10:30am	TBN
Dancersize	Tuesday	5; 12; 19	TBN	10:00am	Church Hall, Fremington
Day Trips By Coach	Thursday	No Meeting	No Meeting	TBN	TBN
Design & Make I - Ladies	Friday	No Meetings	26	9:30am	Group members know venue
Design & Make II - Gents				2:00pm	
Devon History	Thursday	7	4	2:30pm	Castle Centre, Barnstaple
Food, Farm, Environment	Monday	No Meeting	22	2:30pm	Beechfield Centre, Fremington
Garden Days	Wednesday	13	No Meeting	9:30am	Buckland Abbey

CALENDAR - December 2023/January 2024 (Continued)

Group	Day	Date		Time	Venue/Information
		December 2023	January 2024		
		(Subject to Change)			
Holidays	See 'Stop Press' Notice on Page 2 of this Newsletter				
Italian for Beginners	Wednesday	6; 27	3; 17	11:00am	TBN
		20		TBN	The Fox Inn, Fremington
Knitting	Thursday	14	11	10:30am	The Museum, The Square, Barnstaple
	Friday	22	26		
Practical Gardening	Thursday	14	11	10:30am	The Annexe, Fremington Parish Hall
Psychology of Everyday Life	Tuesday	No Meeting	23	2:00pm	The Annexe, Fremington Parish Hall
Railway	Wednesday	No Meeting	10	TBN	TBN
Rambling	Monday	11		10:30am	Marine Parade, Woolacombe
			8	TBN	TBN
Reading Shakespeare Allowed	Wednesday	20	17	2:00pm	Fremington Methodist Church, Old School Lane
Roamers	Monday	No Meeting	22	10:30am	TBN
Short Tennis	Wednesday	No Meetings	10; 17; 24; 31	11:00am	Tarka Leisure Centre
Sight Support	Monday	11	8	10:30am	The Shambles, High Street, Barnstaple
Skittles	Friday	15	TBN	7:30pm	Plough Inn, Bickington
Strollers	Tuesday	5	No Meeting	12:30pm	Imperial Hotel
Sunday Lunch	Sunday	3		12:30pm	Portmore Golf Club
			14	12:00nn	Williams Arms, Wrafton
Table Tennis	Thursday	7; 14; 21; 28(?)	4; 11; 18; 25	9:30am	Tarka Tennis Centre, Barnstaple
Ten Pin Bowling	Wednesday	6; 13	3; 10; 17; 24; 31	1:15pm	Bowling Alley, Braunton Road, Barnstaple
Tuesday Luncheon Group	Tuesday	19	16	12:30pm	The Williams Arms
Wanderers	Tuesday	12		12:00nn	Williams Arms, Wrafton
			9	TBN	TBN
Wine Appreciation	Friday	1	5	2:00pm	Room 3B, Barnstaple Library
Woodcarving	Wednesday	6; 13; 20; 27(?)	3; 10; 17; 24; 31	10:00am	Fremington

The Ugly Christmas Tree

The cat had an obsession with the sparkling, twinkling Christmas tree. The entire holiday season, it was an endless job to keep the cat from climbing the tree and the family from climbing the wall. Thankfully, it was Christmas Eve, and the tree would be coming down soon. However, it was then that the oversized barn cat decided it was time to wage war. Unfortunately, the tree stand wasn't up to the added weight of the pudgy, treat-happy tomcat. With one single leap like a reindeer landing on a roof, the cat launched into the tree, and it came crashing to the ground with a thunderous boom.

Upon hearing the resounding crash, the entire family sprang from their bed. The living room looked like a Christmas wasteland, with ornaments rolling under the couch and the tree crushing presents. The cat slunk away under the radar to pick needles out of his fur. Bobby, the youngest, looked up at his mother in wonder, and with the keen eye of a kid, he said, "Dad was right, Mum. Santa thought your Christmas tree was ugly, too."

Did You Know?

A cold spell which brought chaos to parts of the UK had its funny side. Heard on BBC Radio was an announcement which said, 'The Open Air Winter Wonderland Show in Cardiff, Wales, has been closed because of the snow.' (You couldn't make it up!)

Yarn of the Seat in the Stand

Freddie and John were fortunate enough to have a season ticket to watch Chelsea. They could not help noticing that there was always a spare seat (B14) next to them and they had a friend who would love to buy a season ticket, especially if all three could have seats together. One half-time Freddie went to the ticket office and asked if they could buy the season ticket for B14. The official said that unfortunately the ticket had been sold. Nevertheless, week after week the seat was still empty.

Then on Boxing day, much to Freddie and Eddie's amazement the seat was taken for the first time that season. John could not resist asking the newcomer, "Where have you been all season."

"Don't ask" he said, "the wife bought the season ticket back last summer, and kept it for a surprise Christmas present."

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL