

Spiky Blue Christmas: Janne Seletto

In the year before COVID started we all went to my sister-in-law Jacky's for Christmas. She's a great cook and we were relishing the thought of lunch.

This was in the North of England, so we started with a hearty soup. It was delicious, but towards the bottom of our bowls, we all noticed something that shouldn't have been there. There were small blue jagged things at the bottom of the bowl. On closer inspection these proved to be spiky bits of enamel!

Someone mentioned Monty Python and the toxic salmon mousse skit. You know, the one where "Mr Death" knocks on the door and everybody dies. With that in mind Jacky told her son, who had skipped the soup course, to call the ambulance if we all fell to the floor clutching our stomachs. And if the gastric perforation knocked us all off, to call the police instead.

To start with everyone, including Jacky's children Kate and Charlie, denied all knowledge of how the enamel got into the bowls. But as the afternoon wore on and we all looked increasingly likely to survive Charlie eventually fessed up. It turns out the soup had been stored in an enamel bowl in the fridge. Last night Charlie came down for a midnight snack and accidentally knocked the whole thing onto the flagstone floor. Amazingly the bowl stayed upright and the cling film remained in place. So Charlie put the soup back in the fridge and got back into bed.

The rest of Christmas was great. There were no more culinary surprises, no medical episodes, just good food and a group of people bonding over the fact that we were all still alive and kicking.

The blue enamel bowl went straight into the bin.