

# Tango the ginger cat gatecrashes David Dimbleby's Question Time

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A ginger tom cat called Tango has become a television celebrity after wandering on to the set of the BBC's *Question Time*.

The first that Tango's owner, Jackie Ellery, knew of his appearance on TV screens across the nation was when a neighbour called to ask her: "Have you seen your cat on the telly?".

Tango strolled on stage during the recording of last week's programme at a community college in Newquay, Cornwall, in full view of the cameras.

Sitting alongside the host David Dimbleby were Jim Knight, the Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform, Pauline Neville-Jones, the Tory security spokeswoman, and the former *Sun* editor and outspoken columnist Kelvin MacKenzie.

As the panel discussed topics as diverse as the wearing of burkhas by Muslim women, the situation in Iran and MPs' expenses, Tango walked in through the rear door, ducked under a mixing desk and under the seating to take a place on the podium.

As he strolled around only Julia Goldworthy, the Liberal Democrat MP, appeared to notice him.

Mrs Ellery, who lives near the school, recorded the programme and spotted Tango when she played it back. She said: "I thought, 'how did he get in there? Trust him, he's so mischievous.' Julia Goldworthy looked at him and mimed 'cat', then the audience got involved."

*Question Time* was visiting Newquay to broadcast its weekly mix of topical analysis from the specially assembled stage at Treviglas community college where Mrs Ellery works as a dinner lady.

The programme was recorded two hours before its 10.30pm broadcast slot and Mrs Ellery had no idea Tango was anywhere near the school.

Tango's moment in the spotlight was brief as a stage manager bundled him up and put him outside before he could upstage the panel any further.

Mrs Ellery said: "It's lovely, he's a mischievous cat anyway and because we live so close to the school he's often in school grounds.

"He is just nosy. He must have seen lots of people in the car park and gone to look."

Since his fleeting appearance on national television Tango has become a local star, appearing on the internet and becoming the subject of discussion on Twitter.

Mrs Ellery said: "Everyone is coming up to me and telling me about Tango's appearance. I've even been asked to get his paw-tograph."

She and her two children, Josh, 16, and Katie, 15, have had the one-year-old cat since he was eight weeks old. As their garden adjoins the college car park, Tango regards its grounds as his own back yard.

He also makes regular appearances at assembly and in the classrooms. Mrs Ellery said: "He had black eyebrows once, where kids painted on him and the tops of his ears were black. He just lets them do it."