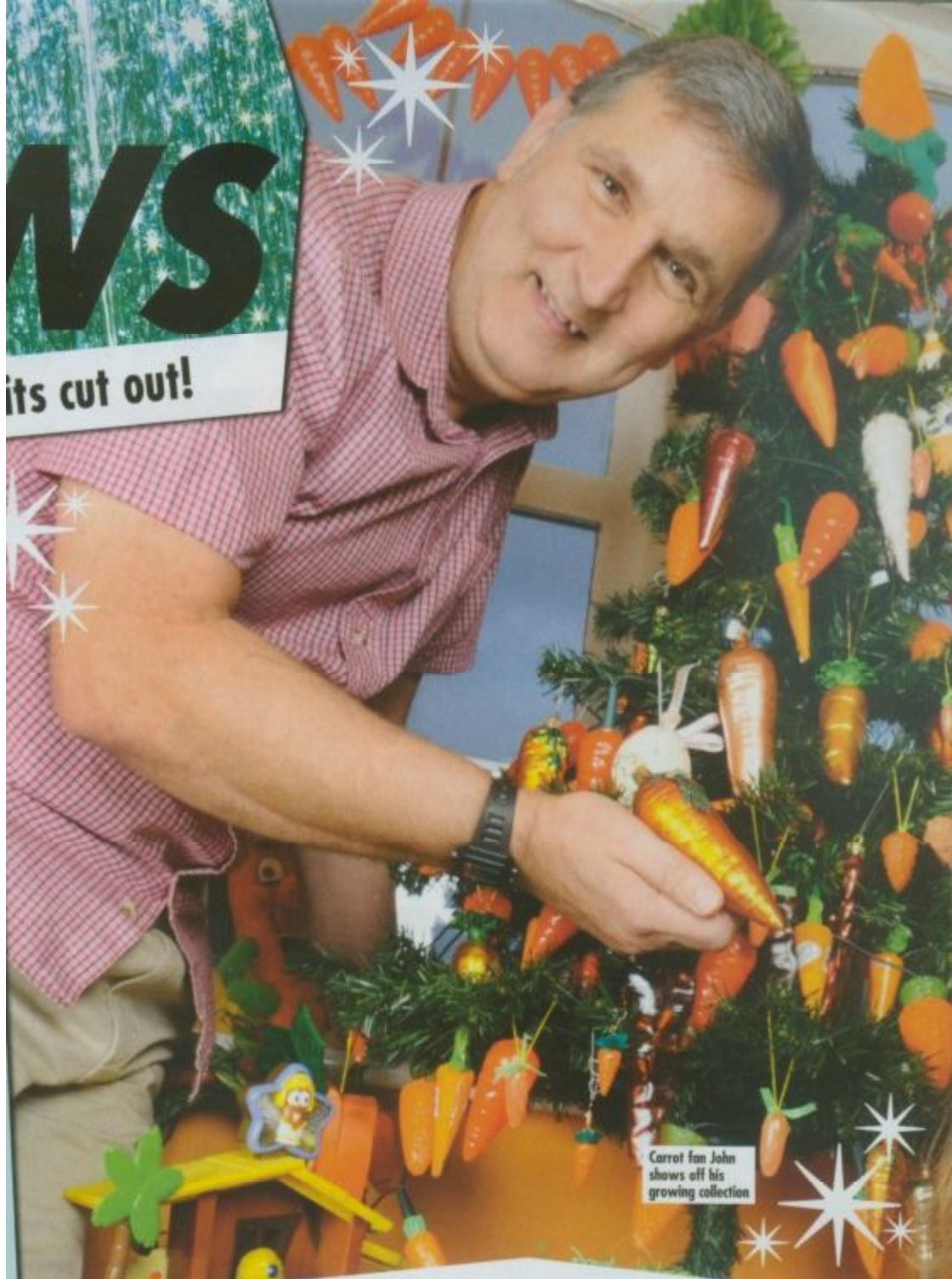


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Carrot fan John shows off his growing collection

MERRY CARROTMAS!

Forget jingle bells, carrots are the name of the day in one household where a family has turned their house into a shrine to the vegetable.

For the last five years John Stolarcysk, 58, has indulged his obsession, festooning the family Christmas tree with carrots.

And it's not just the tree that gets 'carrotted' - every surface of their North Yorkshire home is filled with carrot paraphernalia - carrots dressed up in a nativity scene, a blow-up carrot leaning against a chair, tissue paper carrots draped from the windows.

'You have to admit they're eye catching,' says wife Sharon, 58. 'I can't imagine anyone having anything like it.' John began

a love affair with the common garden vegetable in 1996 when he decided to create a website. It had to be dedicated to something nobody else had thought of, so their daughter Elizabeth, 24, came up with the idea of carrots.

At first, green-fingered John, a retired local government officer, created a couple of pages explaining the history of the carrot, and his fascination grew.

Soon he was spending all his spare time visiting carrot growers and taking over the garden to grow his own collection. He has also travelled the world visiting carrot exhibitions and meeting other enthusiasts.

This year the family will try to keep some normality to the festivities, with a traditional Christmas meal and a helping of... carrots.