

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

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ON AUGUST 8th about 45 Buxtons, Barkers, Baileys and Stephenson—plus collateral kin and a few assorted friends—gathered in Jaffrey to catch-up, eat and drink and wish Agnes a Happy 99th Birthday. You can see a lot more photographs at <https://www.me.com/gallery/#100324>



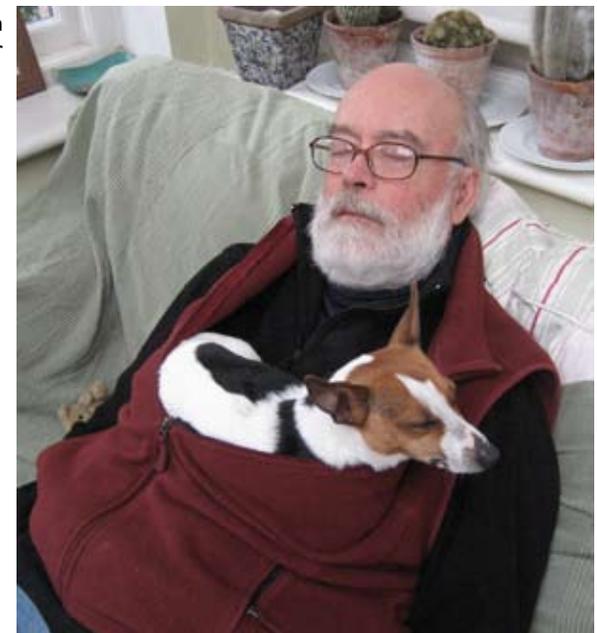
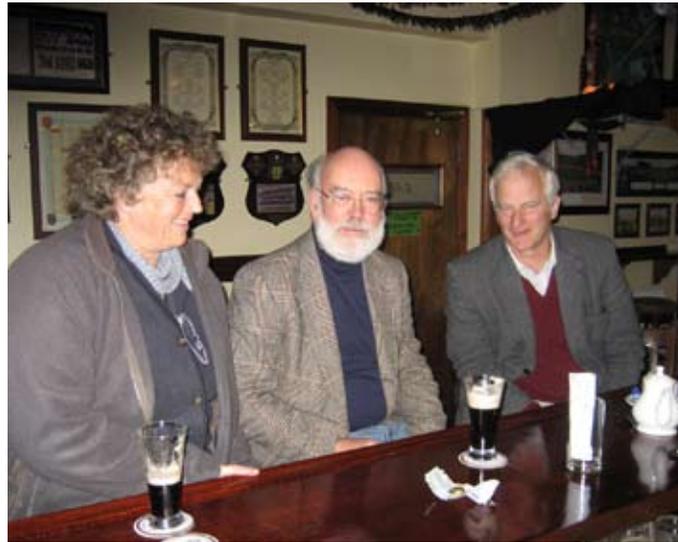
THE ICE is forming on the pond out back as I write this, a good crisp December evening—23° (-5°C). No snow as yet. The village tree was switched on at 4:30PM last Sunday, the new LED lights looking pretty good (we're very energy PC here). ¶ Thanksgiving saw a pleasant change from past years: those nearby gathered in Stratham, at Matt & Olya's—relocated here last year from Washington, D.C., with their three kids. We had a very pleasant day with super food and hospitality. ¶ Enjoying it all was Aunt Agnes—now in her 100th year—she's seen and done it all. Earlier in the year, she was the inspiration for an August (in both senses of the word) FAMILY GATHERING in Jaffrey, drawing about 45 people from near and far to celebrate her and us, all together. ¶ My year has been a busy one with no crises that I can recall...well, there's that one: I seem not to recall much these days, but many of you know this condition. When I returned from two months in New Zealand and Australia, I reported that it was a good trip: I didn't fall down, I didn't lose anything (or at least nothing that I didn't eventually find) and I made it home again. ¶ Well, it *was* a good trip! Although I was last in New Zealand in 1991, I hadn't been back to Australia since a Fulbright year there in 1965-66. I started out on the West Coast visiting family and friends in California—Sacramento, Oakland, Carpinteria and Santa Monica—flew to Auckland, travelled south as far as Dunedin, then on to Brisbane. ¶ Soon I was a hundred miles or so north in Noosa, quite an upscale place on the Queensland coast. Here I am in early June—their winter—and the weather is great. Why am I here? It's the venue for the 4th SIAFU reunion. Many years ago 52 of us (under the tutelage of an unbusiness-like business called SIAFU—Swahili for a kind of ant that can't be stopped) set off from London in six Landrovers and a Bedford truck and headed for Nairobi. Some, myself included, got as far as Cape Town about six months later. What an experience...and we're now at the age when it's fun to relive it all, and increasingly more frequently. Next get-together: Calgary in 2012. ¶ Once we wrapped up our week there, I was off to Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne and Hobart, via a variety of transport: car, train, ferry and plane. Re-visited Sydney University and my old college, spent hours at numerous libraries and museums studying Antarcticana, and visiting places I had seen many years ago. And enjoyed the hospitality of scores of friends, especially the Kubbingas and the Hablas (and earlier the Packers). Have a look at <http://home.comcast.net/~rs41/nzaus.htm> to see some photos and commentary. ¶ Ended up at an Antarctic conference in Hobart, staying with my very hospitable hosts, the Bains. ¶ It took an amazing amount of time to recover once I returned home. Nearly 2,000 photos to go through, and on and on. ¶ Since then, I've been once again—for the 5th time—to Athy in Ireland for the annual SHACKLETON AUTUMN SCHOOL, followed by a few relaxing days at both *Fruitlawn* and *Lakeview House*, the homes of Arthur & Carol and Jonathan & Daphne Shackleton, respectively. The week before I was in London and Cambridge doing mostly Antarctic things plus a weekend at Martin & Margaret Henderson's lovely *Mill House* near Winchester. Martin and I built a bridge! ¶ And earlier, in September, I found myself in Syracuse and then New York City, hosted by the Stams and the Rumelys. Again, more library and museum work. ¶ I keep plugging away in local affairs (the Meetinghouse, Cemetery, Energy & Design Committees; Jaffrey Historical Society; Village Improvement Society; and lots more. Why aren't there salaries involved!) ¶ Coming up next year, if all goes well: June in the UK for an Antarctic conference in Plymouth, followed by a Landmark Trust house for a week in the Cotswolds and an Antarctic dinner in Cardiff, and perhaps a 'Naked Table' in Ireland; then back to Athy in October; maybe Arizona in March. I'm almost tired thinking about it! ¶ And how about you?

BEST WISHES for 2011!

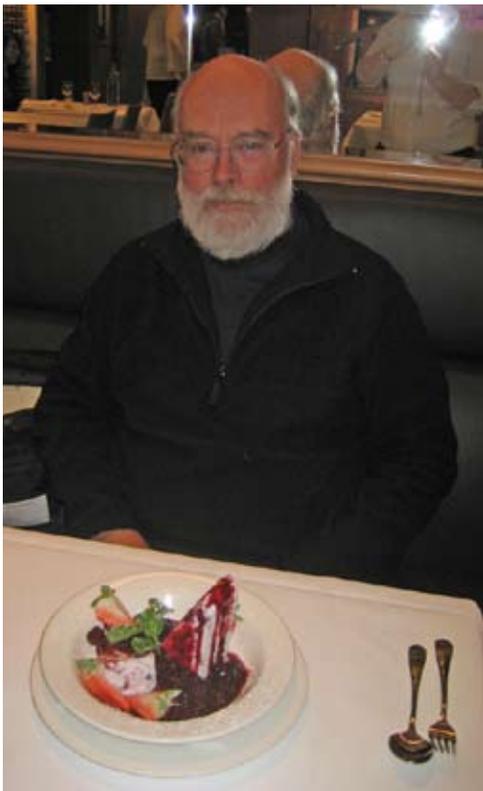


Thanksgiving at Matt and Olya's in Stratham, NH. Left to right, back row: Rebecca Foreman Janjic, Vera & Ranko Janjic, Aleks Janjic, Matt Quitkin. In the center: Agnes Barker. Front row: Olya Quitkin holding Leli, Sam & Zachary Quitkin, Rob Stephenson.

I enjoy a pint with Daphne and Jonathan Shackleton at *The Wishing Well* in Kingscourt on the way to dinner in Ardee. Ireland's a little under the weather at the moment but it remains a great place to tour around.



Back at the Shackleton's *Lakeview House*, friend Tinker and I enjoy a nap. Maybe I should get a dog.

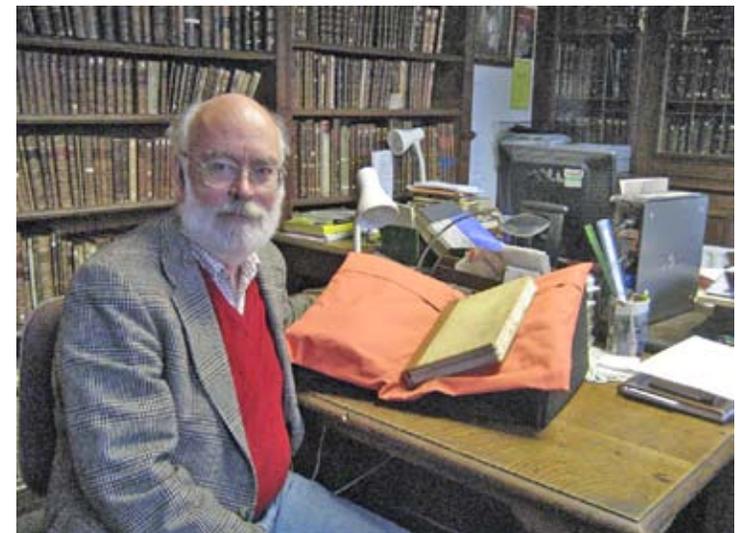


On the overnight ferry from Melbourne to Tasmania I decided to treat myself to a decadent

Here are the happy reunioners at Noosa in Queensland. These are just some of the 52 who drove together from London to Nairobi back in 1972. Our next gathering is in Calgary in 2012. Our week's stay here was very relaxing and proved a good venue for catching up. (I did up the reunion T-shirt.)



Sydney Harbour and the Opera House. Some amazing changes since I was last there in 1965-66.



I've been looking at copies of the *Aurora Australis* around the world for years. This is the first book written, illustrated, printed, bound and issued in the Antarctic (during Shackleton's 1907-09 *Nimrod* expedition). I've found 63 so far and have seen most of them. Here I am in the Old Library at Christ's College, Cambridge, spending time with its copy. The book is bound in the wood from the expedition's packing cases; no two copies the same.