

Holiday Greetings 2025 and Best Wishes for 2026



Here's my living room at Rivermead. The *Qashqai* rug I bought in Isfahan, Iran, many years ago. The rubber plant was a house warming present from my brother & sister-in-law back in 2000. It keeps growing.

After many false starts over the years, Jaffrey finally has a new Town



Hall, the former TD Bank on Main Street with the police station on one side and the Library on the other—a perfect solution!

I've excused myself from lots of Jaffrey activities but I'm still an alternate *Trustee of Trust Funds* (below) and a member of the *Cemetery Committee*. And, of course, active with the *Historical Society*.



In October I returned yet again to Athy, Co. Kildare, for the annual *Shackleton Autumn School*.

I've been every year since 2006; this might be my last visit—we'll see. I gave a talk on the *Aurora Australis*, the book produced on Shackleton's *Nimrod* expedition. (A copy just fetched \$185,800 at a Norwegian auction!)

Why Athy, you ask. Shackleton was born a few miles away in Killea.



Here I am with a copy of the book at the Huntington Library in California. I've been tracking down copies around the world since 1978. See <https://rs4l.smugmug.com/Antarctic/Aurora-Australis>



NOTE MY ADDRESS

Rob Stephenson, Apt. 243, 150 Rivermead Road, Peterborough, NH 03458
603-933-2471

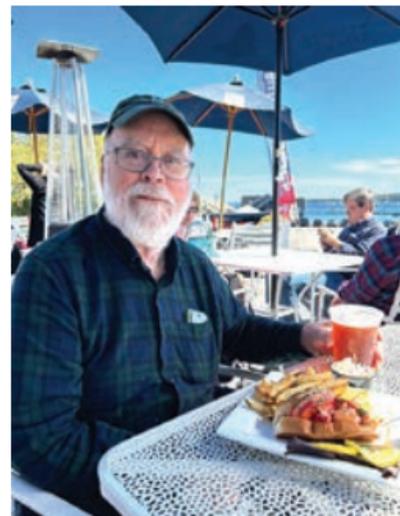
rob@rs4l.org • www.antarctic-circle.org • www.rs4l.org

This year's cartoons: <http://www.rs4l.org/cartoons2025.pdf>

FOR ME nothing particularly exciting has happened in the past year. Much of what I've reported in previous holiday e-mails remains unchanged: my typical schedule is to sit far too long in the mornings staring at my computer, going through 20-year old e-mails (and tossing most of them); writing off a letter to the two newspapers I still subscribe to; working on Jaffrey Historical Society projects; *et al.* Then I pick up my lunch here at Rivermead around 11:30 and head for my library in Jaffrey where I enjoy the lunch, smoke my one pipe a day, read a bit, then perhaps a 20 minute nap. That's followed by more computer time but in this case related to Antarctic activities. Come the end of



The Jaffrey Meetinghouse (1775) which I've been caretaking for 30 or so years. I'm now retired and Sean Driscoll has ably taken over. See my recent meetinghouse show at <https://www.rs41.org/meetinghouse.pdf>



Enjoying a lobster roll in Rockland, Maine, and later clam chowder in Southwest Harbor. Karen Carlson and I spent a few days touring the coast of Maine and far north to Aroostook County in September. You can see a few photos at <https://rs41.smugmug.com/Travel/137-Maine-with-Karen-Carlson-August-2025>



My great grandfather Reuben Stephenson's marker (1831-1879) in East Hodgdon, Maine. He was a potato farmer. His fields are still there (above). New Brunswick is a mile or so away where the previous generation of Stephensons (Collins 1786-?) settled. Why, who knows? The next generation (Milton 1861-1929) moved back to the Boston area.



Sally & Steve's table in Providence, RI. This has been my venue for Thanksgiving for some years now. This time there were only five of us but we enjoyed the gathering nonetheless.



After Athy I travelled up to Mullagh to stay with the Shackletons. Second year in a row we enjoyed dinner at Cabra Castle, Co. Cavan. L to R: Shane Murphy, Daphne & Jonathan Shackleton, myself and Jane Shackleton. Most of us had fish 'n chips. See more at <https://rs41.smugmug.com/Travel/Athy-2025>

the day I head back to Rivermead. Many queue up for dinner at 5:30! I seldom go, mostly because I like to relax with a drink and read the paper. Seven or later is my time for dinner so typically I either skip dinner or make it myself, often using left-overs from lunch. ¶ I've devoted a lot of time over the past year or so deaccessioning and decluttering both at Rivermead and in Jaffrey. My Antarctic collection is getting smaller. Nearly all of my penguin-related items have gone to the *Fram Museum*

in Norway. All my books on printing, lettering and graphics I've donated to the *Museum of Printing* in Haverhill, Massachusetts, a museum worth visiting. (See <https://museumofprinting.org>) I keep trying to give my professional books (planning, architecture) to my *alma mater* Harvard Graduate School of Design. And I keep failing. Same with MIT. Institutions don't seem to want books anymore even when they're free and destined mostly for the "free shelf." ¶ The Buxton

Family Association annual reunion was held at the Keene (NH) Country Club. I attended and also announced my retirement as newsletter editor. Fortunately Jeremy Brigham has agreed to take over. I've been doing the newsletter for over 10 years. You can see my last issue (and others) at <https://www.rs41.org/BFA/bfa.htm> ¶ Travels over the past year have been limited. I headed for Athy, Ireland, yet again (every October since 2006) for the annual *Shackleton Autumn School*. This year I gave a talk on the *Aurora Australis*, the only book written, edited, printed, bound and issued in the Antarctic during Shackleton's *Nimrod* Expedition. (I repeated the talk earlier this month at Rivermead.) ¶ In September I enjoyed a trip up the Maine coast with my friend of longstanding Karen Carlson from California who was attending a gathering in Portland. She e-mailed me to ask "I'll be in Portland in September and have never been to Maine. Do you want to give me a tour?" So we did. Visited lots of places I've known in the past plus some genealogical snooping further north. ¶ One overnight excursion took me north to the White Mountains for a rapid-fire tour of various projects supported by the NH Preservation Alliance. There was snow on Mt. Washington. ¶ My Antarctic travels are long over but I get together with other Antarcticans via Zoom when we convene every other Friday at 12:31pm my time. This gathering is known as the *17:31 Club*, moderated by Bob Headland in Cambridge, UK. We typically spend an hour or so talking about the Antarctic but also a myriad of other subjects, mostly nonsense. ¶ I spent Thanksgiving at Sally & Steve's in Providence, RI. And I'll be heading to Hingham, MA, for Christmas at Bob & Sandy's. Suzy will be coming over from London. Last year was very mild. Before arriving in Hingham I went to the cemetery in nearby Cohasset to visit some Stephenson gravesites. As it's been cold over the past week or two my guess I won't be repeating that this year. ¶ A cemetery project I'm doing in Jaffrey, inspired by the Cohasset cemetery, is a series of small metal signs for graves of "Jaffrey Worthies." These will include QR codes that will link to further information. ¶ Finally, some news on health. I'm slowing down a lot these days as far as balance & mobility are concerned. Using a cane all the time now. I had a bout of Achilles tendon pain which was eventually solved after wearing an orthopaedic boot for three weeks. And then in November I underwent carpal tunnel surgery. For a couple of years I had been experiencing pins & needles and numbness in my hands, particularly the right hand. I finally had an EMG test (not fun) which resulted in the CPT diagnosis. A local doctor is one of the few around that specializes in ultrasound-guided hand surgery which only took about 20 minutes. Seems to have helped but not 100% yet. The left hand is set for surgery next month. More seriously my right knee is acting up after many years of being helped by Euflexxa shots ever six months. A second knee replacement might be in the works in the months ahead—not something to look forward too. Enjoy winter and the Holidays! ❤️