



# The U3A Crier

NEWSLETTER OF NATURALISTE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE INC

Volume 1, Number 4, November 2013

## HEAR YE, HEAR YE, OUR FOURTH NEWSLETTER

Hello and welcome to this edition of our Naturaliste U3A newsletter in which this edition is flavoured with one of our courses – Darwin's Legacy. Darwin of course was the naturalist who initiated the theory of evolution.

All of our second semester courses are well under way with reports that everyone is enjoying the learning that comes from each of them.

It is with some disappointment that the efforts to encourage the membership to not only own but actively participate in the newsletter have at this time failed and there maybe many reasons for that. For any newsletter to exist it either has to have only member contributions or written entirely by the Editor or a combination of both – it has been the third option which has been favoured. Until your Executive Committee is able to determine as to why member contributions are not forthcoming, 'The U3A Crier' will contain basic news and articles produced mainly by the Editor.

As with every edition, member contributions are most welcome and it is hoped that this edition brings all its readers encouragement to contribute, a few smiles, a little news and enjoyable reading.

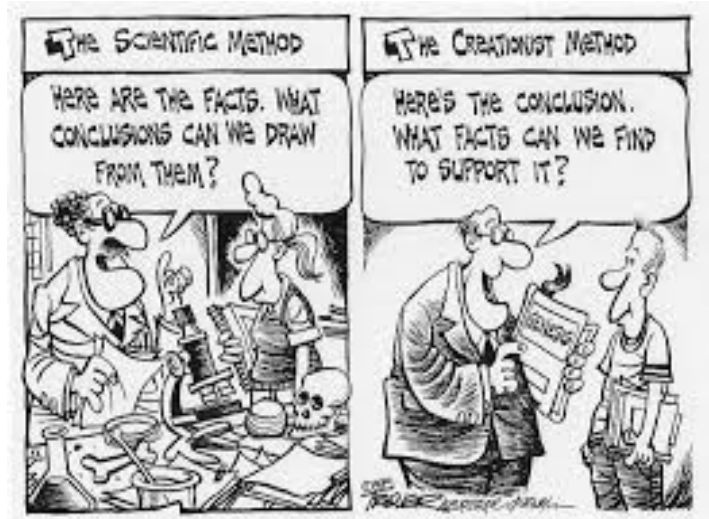


### The Mellowness of Life

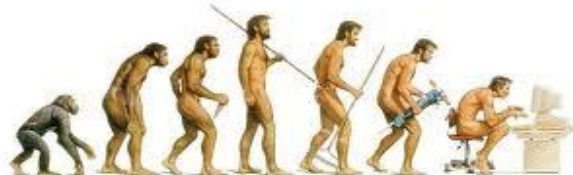
I like spring, but it's too young  
I like summer, but it's too proud  
So I like best of all autumn:  
because its leaves are a little yellow,  
Its tone mellower, its colours richer.  
and its tinged with a little sorrow.  
Its golden richness speaks not of the  
innocence of spring, nor the power of summer.  
But of the mellowness and kindly  
wisdom of approaching age,  
It knows the limitations of life and is content.  
Anon

### Did You Know?

'L'Universite du Troisieme Age' was born in 1972 in Toulouse, France. Now, in many countries, it is called University of the Third Age – U3A. To quote from the U3A-UWA first decade booklet, U3A is a concept of learning for the sheer joy of acquiring knowledge – be it in academic, artistic or recreational subjects.



## Evolution





## A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

2013 Chairman Don McDonald's 2012-2013 Annual Report

Hello to all,

Election of Committee members: at the 2012 AGM two new members, Joan Parke and Gwyn Cracknell, were elected. Ken Jack, a foundation member, was re-elected, but it was subsequently pointed out that Ken's nomination was not received in writing before the meeting as required by the Constitution. As this may have invalidated Ken's election, the Committee in November resolved that Ken's election be regarded as invalid, and then resolved, acting under Section 9.5, to appoint Ken to the resultant vacant position. Christine McDonald was subsequently co-opted under section 9.2 as an additional member. In April 2013 Ken Jack unfortunately had to resign from the Committee for health reasons, and that vacancy was not filled.

General Meetings: Two well attended "GMs" were held during the year, the respective guest speakers being U3A member John Slee asking "Can Journalists Tell the Truth?", and Linda Jackson, Aged Care Manager for South-west Community Health.

The Committee: I thank all the committee members for their work and their support. In particular I thank Creena Holly, who is retiring from the Committee, for her unceasing efforts and initiative as Secretary over the last two years.

Membership: on 1st August 2013, our membership of U3A stood at 170. This compares with 174 and 187 in 2012 and 2011 respectively, a loss of 9% in membership over two years. The Committee is considering new activities, for example more social functions, which may assist in reversing this trend.

Courses and Enrolments: We ran a total of 33 courses this calendar year, counting the two semesters separately, compared with 29 in 2012 and 32 in 2011. Some additional courses were offered but there were insufficient enrolment requests for the courses to start. Enrolments totalled 376 for the year, about 25 more than in the two previous years. On average our members enrolled in 2.2 courses this year.

Course Leaders: Again, we thank our leaders for their work during the year – they are the lifeblood of our U3A, and I ask every member to consider whether they themselves would consider running a course. There are more ways of doing this than you may think: for example, U3A has access to ready-made course material which leaders can use to conduct courses in particular subjects. Or if you know of another person, whether U3A member or not, who may be interested in conducting a course, please tell a committee member. As well as the leaders who conducted courses, we thank those who offered courses that did not proceed, and we hope some of them may offer a course again in future.

Newsletter: Early in the 2012-13 year, the Committee accepted John Wilkins' offer to edit a newsletter for Naturalist U3A, and "**The U3A Crier**" has been well received by our members, and by many U3A people beyond our branch, especially in WA. We thank John for his good work on this newsletter, and we remind all members that John, like every newsletter editor, is constantly looking for items, stories, letters, and suggestions from members.

Naturaliste U3A Website: Our website will be demonstrated to members at the AGM. Unfortunately there have been some delays for personal reasons beyond the control of the committee and our contractor, but the website is now very close to completion, and we are sure our internet users will like it.

U3A Network WA: Established in 2012, eight member groups comprising about 1400 individual members now belong to the Network. We recently hosted a successful meeting, chaired by Peter Flanigan from Perth, of representatives of the South-West groups, namely Bunbury, Manjimup, Margaret River and Naturaliste.

*Don McDonald*

### For "E's" a Jolly Good Fellow

The most unfortunate letter in the alphabet, it is said, is the letter "e" because it is always out of "cash", forever in "debt" and never out of "danger". That is all true, Still it is never in "war", always in "peace" and always in something to "eat". It is the beginning of "existence" and the end of "trouble". Without it, there could be no "life", no "heaven". It is the centre of "honesty" and always in "love". It is the beginning of "encouragement" and "endeavour" and the end of "failure".

**NEGATIVITY Vs POSITIVITY**

Ponder for a moment. In general, how do you view life with all its ups and down? Are you fundamentally negative or fundamentally positive in how you address life. How do you view these two items.

As I sat musing one day  
 Sad and lonely without a friend  
 From out of the gloom  
 A voice came to me saying,  
 "Cheer up, things could be worse"  
 So I cheered up and sure enough  
 Things got worse.

.....

Is the glass half empty or half full?

**Brain Teaser**




Arrange all the numbers 1 – 9 in the squares so that they add up to 15 vertically, horizontally and diagonally.

Answer is on Page 7



**WHAT IS THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
 THE CALF-PATH?**



In our last issue of *'The U3A Crier'*, opinions were sought as to what the author was thinking when he penned the poem. What is the psychology of the message? Sadly, no one provided an opinion so an opinion is provided by the Editor.

"The same path, although changing in size and quality, was utilised without considering different options by every generation. One message that could be taken is don't always try to do as others do... use your intellectual and talent to solve a task/problem. For instance, the calf path may not be the shorter distance. There may be some other route which is shorter and efficient way to reach the destination. Find out that route. Or make a new path of your own. Think out of box. I always believe that there is more than one solution for every problem, we just need to see it from different view and we need to tackle it in our own way.

Just because something has been done a certain way for years or generations, doesn't mean that it should continue to be done so. Apply this thinking to your business or your holidays and even the current state of your finances. The Calf path is about scenario thinking.

*From the Editors Desk*



Mark Twain was quoted as saying 'that ageing was all about mind over matter – if you don't mind then it doesn't matter.'

The scientific and medical world offers many reasons for human beings ageing including trying to define what aging actually is. Most of us measure aging chronologically and by our physical appearances and abilities.

For all of us, we want to have what could be defined as " *successful ageing*" which consists of three components. A low probability of disease or disability; a high cognitive and physical function capacity and an active engagement with life.

I am of the opinion that being part of U3A can assist in "*successful ageing*" in that we the older and ageing community are challenging and stimulating our cognitive function and our engagement with life. Making a physical effort to attend courses is also beneficial not only to ourselves but to other members to whom we share our thoughts and opinions.



## MAKES YOU THINK

No person can be a great leader unless he takes genuine joy in the successes of those under him.

.....  
A committee is a group that keeps minutes and loses hours.

Man's fear of ideas is probably the greatest dyke holding back included in human knowledge development and happiness.



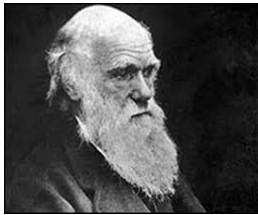
## This n' That

Annual U3A fees remain at only \$25

The Executive Committee have not met for some time so no report is available for this issue of *'The U3A Crier'*.

Your Executive Committee will be discussing whether or not to include items such as members birthdays and anniversaries in *'The U3A Crier'*.

## CHARLES DARWIN



Naturalist Charles Robert Darwin was born on February 12, 1809, in the tiny merchant town of Shrewsbury, England. He was the second youngest of six children. Darwin came from a long line of scientists. His father, Dr. R.W. Darwin, was as a medical doctor, and his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, was a renowned botanist. Darwin's mother, Susanna, died when he was only 8 years old. Darwin was a child of wealth and privilege who loved to explore nature.

In October 1825, at age 16, Darwin enrolled at Edinburgh University along with his brother Erasmus. Two years later, Charles Darwin became a student at Christ's College in Cambridge. His father hoped he would follow in his footsteps and become a medical doctor, but the sight of blood made Darwin queasy. His father suggested he study to become a parson instead, but Darwin was far more inclined to study natural history.

While Darwin was at Christ's College, botany professor John Stevens Henslow became his mentor. After Darwin graduated Christ's College with a bachelor of arts degree in 1831, Henslow recommended him for a naturalist's position aboard the HMS Beagle. The ship, commanded by Captain Robert Fitzroy, was to take a five-year survey trip around the world. The voyage would prove the opportunity of a lifetime for the budding young naturalist.

On December 27, 1831, the HMS Beagle launched its voyage around the world with Darwin in tow. Over the course of the trip, Darwin collected a variety of natural specimens, including birds, plants and fossils. Through hands-on research and experimentation, he had the unique opportunity to closely observe principles of botany, geology and zoology. The Pacific Islands and Galapagos Archipelago were of particular interest to Darwin, as was South America.

Upon his return to England in 1836, Darwin began to write up his findings in the Journal of Researches, published as part of Captain Fitzroy's larger narrative and later edited into the Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle. The trip had a monumental affect on Darwin's view of natural history. He began to develop a revolutionary theory about the origin of living beings that was contrary to the popular view of other naturalists at the time.

Darwin's exposure to specimens all over the globe raised important questions. Other naturalists believed that all species either came into being at the start of the world, or were created over the course of natural history. In either case, the species were believed to remain much the same throughout time. Darwin, however, noticed similarities among species all over the globe, along with variations based on specific locations, leading him to believe that they had gradually evolved from common ancestors. He came to believe that species survived through a process called "natural selection," where species that successfully adapted to meet the changing requirements of their natural habitat thrived, while those that failed to evolve and reproduce died off.

In 1858, after years of further scientific investigation, Darwin publically introduced his revolutionary theory of evolution in a letter read at a meeting of the Linnean Society. On November 24, 1859, he published a detailed explanation of his theory in his best-known work, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

Following a lifetime of devout research, Charles Darwin died at his family home, Down House, in London, on April 19, 1882, and was buried at Westminster Abbey. During the next century, DNA studies revealed evidence of his theory of evolution, although controversy surrounding its conflict with Creationism—the religious view that all of nature was born of God—still abounds today. Anon - Internet





# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

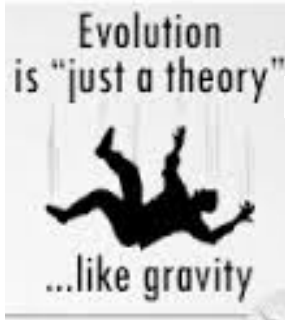
The idea mentioned at the AGM regarding the possibility of some social activities through the year seems a worthwhile idea.

Rod Wheeler

Dear Editor

I am interested in what appears to be a taboo subject that gets no traction with our politicians – voluntary euthanasia. John Wilkins included this subject within one of his courses which, due to lack of member interest in those courses, resulted in the topic not being examined. This subject should be more widely discussed.

Rod Wheeler



## CHARLES DARWIN QUOTES

*"A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life."*

*"How great the difference between savage and civilized man is—it is greater than between a wild and a domesticated animal."*

*"Multiply, vary, let the strongest live and the weakest die."*

*"A grain in the balance may determine which individuals shall live and which shall die—which variety or species shall increase in number, and which shall decrease, or finally become extinct."*

## FIRST TIME READER

If you are glancing through this newsletter for the first time, thank you. Perhaps your cursory glance has whetted your appetite to perhaps join with many other community members not unlike yourself with an interest in learning and exploring new knowledge. We would love you to consider joining the Naturaliste U3A learning community for to be part of a group is enlightening and fun but best of all it keeps the brain active.

## *Our 2012 – 2013 Annual General Meeting*

Attended by 46 members, the Naturaliste U3A AGM was conducted at the Busselton Family Centre on 25<sup>th</sup> October with the usual AGM business, details of which can be found in the Chairman's and Treasurer's Reports on pages 2 and 6. It was an enjoyable time with stimulating presentations by four of our course leaders shown below, a demonstration of our new website and a scrumptious afternoon tea provided by our hard working and dedicated lady members. See page 6 for details of the 2013-4 elected Executive Committee.

John Watt

Joan Parke

Ted Witham

Pat Holyoake



## Matters financial with our Treasurer



I promised to enlighten you as to where your membership subscriptions end up, so let the revelation commence!

Of course a variety of fiscal pictures could be presented to you (as in “lies, damned lies and statistics”!!), but this will be a simple outline of the regular expenses we incur.

**Advertising** is one of the bigger expenses. We advertise the courses being offered for each of the two semesters; notice of General Meetings (GMs) and of the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The situation where we have two local papers servicing our catchment area unfortunately doubles our expenditure in that regard. In 2012-2013 we spent \$1,019 on this.

Another major expense is classified as **Meeting Expenses**. This relates only to GMs and the AGM – not courses. Costs there are room hire, catering and gifts for speakers. \$833 in 2012-13.

**Insurance** is another “biggie”. Our Group has Public Liability insurance to provide cover for all members in the event of injury (or worse) as a result of neglect. A more detailed explanation of our insurance cover will be the subject of a future report. Cost in 2012-13 was \$455.

**Stationery and Postage** expenses always arise. Some of our members do not have email but always receive the same notifications as email recipients. As well, some reimbursement to Committee members for printing costs is provided. Last year this totalled \$273.

The other regular expenses are Post Office Box rental; U3A affiliation fees and auditor costs. Together, these added up to just under \$300 for 2012-13.

Next time: The “One-off” type income and expenditure.

*Richard Liston*

## YOUR 2013-14 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



From left to right: Trish Robinson – Secretary, Richard Liston – Treasurer, Joan Parke – Committee Member, Don Mc Donald – Chairman, David Mc Donald – Vice Chairman, Christine Mc Donald – Committee Member, Gwyn Cracknell – Committee Member (not shown)

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

With a present membership of 172, at our last General Meeting there were 44 members present with 45 apologies and our AGM saw 46 members present and only 37 apologies. It would be fantastic to have greater member support at our meetings for they provide an opportunity to share opinion and enjoy the clubs camaraderie.

## Brain Teaser



6	1	8
7	5	3
2	9	4

The solution was simple! Wasn't it?

## A BIG THANK YOU



For some two years, very hard and long two years, Creena Holly has been the Secretary of this emerging U3A club. Her dedication, love and commitment to U3A has been shown in so many ways and her efforts have benefited us all. Creena has stepped down from her secretarial role for a hard earned rest but she will still be part of this club which she has helped to build. Her friendly manner, her lovely smile and her helping attitude to all is what U3A is founded on.

Thank you Creena

## Pen Portraits



We often see pictures of people who we do not know and away goes our imagination and perception steps in. Our perceptions of that person is usually very wrong when we perhaps get to know them. There are so many people in U3A that each of us does not know and there will be many new ones. As a way of getting to know some of our members, this section, Pen Portraits, will provide all of us with a little about someone in each edition.

### *John Watt*

*'John was born in Bridgetown, spent the first three years in Mornington, a long-defunct mill town in the hills above Harvey, but grew up in Mt Lawley where his parents ran the local newsagency and where they lived above and behind the shop. He went to the local Catholic schools for whatever education they offered in those primitive times, and on to a seminary devoted to recruiting and training potential Catholic priests. So he has something in common with Tony Abbott, though he hopes not much more. After two and a half years of that he must have seen a faint glimmer of the light, and relocated to the University of W.A. instead for a conventional Arts degree. There he picked up an interest in philosophy, which he pursued part-time while teaching in high schools, then took up a doctoral scholarship at the Australian National University, followed by university teaching jobs at Monash and Murdoch for 25 or 30 years (he forgets how many.) Then early retirement to a country property outside Balingup for a few years, followed by a shift to Busselton made necessary by his first wife Wendy's declining health..*

John is conducting the U3A course 'Darwin's Legacy'

## WHAT'S HOLDING THEIR ATTENTION

### **'The U3A Crier' wants to hear from you**



Can you guess what would be causing members at the AGM to be so focused?

The answer is on page 9.

Let me again encourage all members to consider a contribution for your next newsletter which will have the Christmas flavour. No matter how small or how big, send it to me for consideration. It could be a poem, a story, a joke, a photograph or just an opinion on a subject you think the membership may be interested in.

We are all friends in U3A and sharing is the foundation of what U3A is founded upon. **Editor**

# From the Courses

## Darwin's Legacy with John Watt

I've been involved in the Naturalists U3A since its formation. The activities and the network of friends I found in it helped me to get through a very difficult period of my life, and emerge from it sane enough and optimistic enough to persuade Lesley to marry me – something I would never have foreseen doing at 75. My U3A courses have followed from interests formed as a student and teacher of philosophy. I'm fascinated by the ways in which people think, or fail to think, or obstinately refuse to think. And by the ways people have thought at different stages of history. So I started by offering a course focussed on straight and crooked thinking in general. I thought this might look pretty dry at first glance, and there might be three or four people interested. However I was surprised by the number who were, and had to run it several times, because I don't work with groups bigger than about ten. I have to say that there are some people who see my ideas about the principles and the limits of straight thinking as seriously narrow-minded. One such is a person quite closely connected to me who didn't think that 'narrow-minded' does me justice, and suggested adding 'dogmatic' and 'bigoted'. Oddly, I don't altogether share this point of view.

I went on to offer a course on straight and crooked thinking about controversial social issues like euthanasia, same-sex marriage, etc., which was fun. (My offspring think I have a peculiar idea of fun). This year I've been running discussions about Charles Darwin and some of his mates, and the influence they have had on the way later generations think (or, in some groups, still obstinately refuse to think). I don't do lectures. My courses run by group discussion, which leads me to suggest homework of one sort or another, so that we all come with something to contribute. There may be a feeling creeping around that my homework suggestions are getting more ruthless as the years go by. (I may be using the word 'suggestion' in a slightly loose sense.)

In the future I'm not offering a course for the first semester of next year. This is partly because Lesley and I are doing a bit more travelling before we get too decrepit. But also because I can't decide what comes next. I'm considering one on the ideas and influence of Sigmund Freud, another of my heroes, or one on Karl Marx, or a broader series on the influence of the thinkers of the 18th century Enlightenment (Lesley's suggestion). I need a fair amount of time exploring sources and their availability on the internet, to make up my mind. But there should be something on offer for the second half of 2014.

This all probably sounds rather ambitious on my part. So I should add that I don't embark on projects like these imagining that I know all about them, or even a lot. They're topics I know only a bit about, and would like to know more. Leading a group adds to my own education, through the discipline of outlining and preparing for discussions myself, and through the contributions of the other members, which I always enjoy and learn from.

*John Watt - Course Leader*

## ***Mum's Old Clothesline - another form of evolution***

In 2015, the **Hills Hoist** height-adjustable rotary clothes line, manufactured in Adelaide, South Australia by Lance Hill attains its seventieth birthday. The majority of our present society would not have seen, let alone used the clothes lines used prior to the hoist.

Remember – two wires strung between two posts. A long wooden pole (clothes pole) that was used to push the clotheslines up so that longer items didn't brush the ground and get dirty. Here is a little poem that may bring back memories...

A clothesline was a news forecast, to neighbours passing by,  
There were no secrets you could keep, when clothes were hung  
to dry.

It also was a friendly link, for neighbours always knew  
If company had stopped on by, to spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the "fancy sheets", and towels upon the line;  
You'd see the "company table cloths", with intricate designs.  
The line announced a baby's birth, from folks who lived inside,  
As brand new infant clothes were hung, so carefully with pride!

The ages of the children could, so readily be known  
By watching how the sizes changed, you'd know how much they'd  
grown!

It also told when illness struck, as extra sheets were hung;  
Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe too, haphazardly were strung.

It also said, "On vacation now", when lines hung limp and bare.  
It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged, with not an inch to spare!  
New folks in town were scorned upon, if wash was dingy and gray,  
As neighbours carefully raised their brows, and looked the other way.

But clotheslines now are of the past, for dryers make work much less.  
Now what goes on inside a home, is anybody's guess!  
I really miss that way of life, it was a friendly sign  
When neighbours knew each other best... by what hung on that line.





## WHAT HELD THEIR ATTENTION?



You guessed it! The scrumptious afternoon tea.

## *Our New Website*

For those members who have a computer or access to one, you can now go on line to use all the facilities offered by our new website. Our address is:

[u3anaturaliste.com.au](http://u3anaturaliste.com.au)



## For Your Information

### Contributions to the Newsletter

Contributions to '*The U3A Crier*' must be provided in writing – mail, facsimile or e-mail on or before the closing date advertised in each preceding newsletter. It is the author's responsibility to ensure the contribution reaches the Editor. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of providing a contribution or make any constructive suggestion as to how to improve '*The U3A Crier*', please call the 'Editor' John Wilkins on 0447 237 695.

Mail; The Editor, 182 Kalgup Road, KALGUP 6280  
Facsimile; (08) 9753 1273  
e-mail; [swpc1@bigpond.com.au](mailto:swpc1@bigpond.com.au)

### The Next Edition

The next edition of '*The U3A Crier*' will be December 19th and all contributions need to be in the hands of the Editor by: **Monday 10 December 2013**

It should be noted that production of '*The U3A Crier*' is severely affected if contributions arrive after the due date or not at all as it drastically affects the setting out, proofreading and of course the printing and distribution of your newsletter. Please assist the Editorial staff to meet edition time frames.

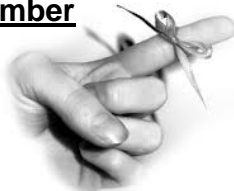
### Privacy Concerns

If any U3A member feels that they do not want their photograph or name to appear in the newsletter except perhaps by accident, please advise the Editor in writing who will take every possible step to fulfill your wishes.

### Complaints

Any complaint that members wish to make regarding any aspect of '*The U3A Crier*' must be made in writing and signed to Trish Robinson, Secretary, Naturaliste U3A, PO Box 1792, BUSSELTON 6280.

### Dates to Remember



**Next Executive Meeting** – 11<sup>th</sup> November  
**Executive Meetings** – Usually the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month  
**General Meetings** – Quarterly ( to be advised in '*The U3A Crier*' )  
**Annual General Meeting** – October ( to be advised in '*The U3A Crier*' )

Readers of '*The U3A Crier*' need to be aware that advertised dates in this edition may, due to circumstances beyond the scope of the newsletter, change so attention should be given to future e-mails or correspondence.

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