

Live and Learn

Number 8, September 2013

mood indigo



The Happy Snappers visited Tolga on an atmospheric night in June. After dinner at the hotel, they set about capturing the dark moody clouds and full moon. For more on the Snappers' activities, see inside. Picture: Bev Massasso

powering ahead



From your vice-president, Glyn Davies

It seems a little strange after an absence of some fifteen months to once again be writing to you from the President's Chair. I do so at the request of our real President, Jane Duncanson, who has been away looking after two small grandchildren – just what grandmothers are for. So, I am filling in the gaps for what happened in the time she was away – and, truth to tell, there was a fair bit – as there always is at U3AAT. The last thing you could say is that we are a static, much less lacklustre organisation.

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Make your day

Important announcement re the USA

During the past month we have completed a Policy and Procedures Manual (now stored in our Room 6 filing cabinet). This means that any incoming office-bearer will have a clear description of the expectations that go with the job, and the management committee will not have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to policy decisions such as how to acknowledge our gratitude to presenters (and do forth). A propos of that we now have a Presenters' Manual on our website that tells presenters what support we can give them and what administrative functions they need to fulfil on our behalf.

Our new membership secretary, replacing Maralyn Keller (many thanks to her) is now Janet Mensinga. Maureen Slocum, who was elected to that position at our recent AGM, is now our Social Secretary. We give both of them a hearty welcome and wish them well for the year to come. Which reminds me, we keep hearing of members who are not receiving information via email, or who are unaware of a particular notice such as a request to renew membership. Janet is only too aware of the possibility that members may "drop off the list" for some gremlin-inspired reason and is doing her very best to remedy such lapses. Our general advice to members who seem to have been "dropped" as it were, is to check on our website for the latest courses and membership information.

Go to athtablands.u3anet.org.au (you don't need to type www in front) and there you will find a list of activities for the month and a set of office bearers with their phone numbers and email addresses. Phone or email one of them to check if you are on the mailing list or to have your name reinstated. Do it as soon as the thought strikes you! I assure you we will welcome your enquiry with pleasure.

So, what else remains to be said about the times just passed? Let me tally it for you. Carmel Pacey (our Publicity Officer) has had new U3AAT brochures and posters printed. Look out for them in a venue near you. If you don't find any, email her and she will get some to you for placement in such sites as doctors' surgeries, chemist shops, community noticeboards and the like. We want to spread the word far and wide. We have several new courses in the pipeline, including more of Ken Cotterill's political scandals, David Turnbull's ethics and environment sessions, Jane's Savvy Travel in its latest version, and a fascinating talk on "the Other Hong Kong". And that's not the end of the list. So – why am I telling you this? I'll save myself some time by advising you to go to the website NOW. (You know you want to – to coin a phrase!). You'll be well rewarded. Glyn

meet your committee



Publicity Officer Carmel Pacey

To be honest, even at 71 I still don't feel old enough to be a third-ager, senior citizen or pensioner. Yet here I am, white haired, stiff-jointed and wrinkly, with a 50-year-old daughter and two and a half great-grandchildren. In fact I have five children, and several grandchildren as well.

I trained as a teacher in 1960 and found myself in front of my first class at the age of 18. At 21 I married and spent the next several years reproducing. My first husband was a customs officer and we were transferred to several Queensland ports over the years, finishing up in Cairns.

I moved to the Tablelands when that marriage ended, and there I met and married my second husband and went to live on his farm in the rainforest at Topaz. We established an organic ginger farm and supplied wholesalers in all major Australian markets. During those Topaz years I also returned to university, studying psychology by distance education from USQ. A prerequisite of that was to learn how to use a computer, and that was

my introduction to something that has become a major part of my life for the past 20-plus years – graphic design.

I used those skills to establish my own business, My Habitat Products, based on toxin-free household products with pure essential oils as active ingredients. I formulated these products myself and tested them at my home and the homes of friends for several years before marketing them.

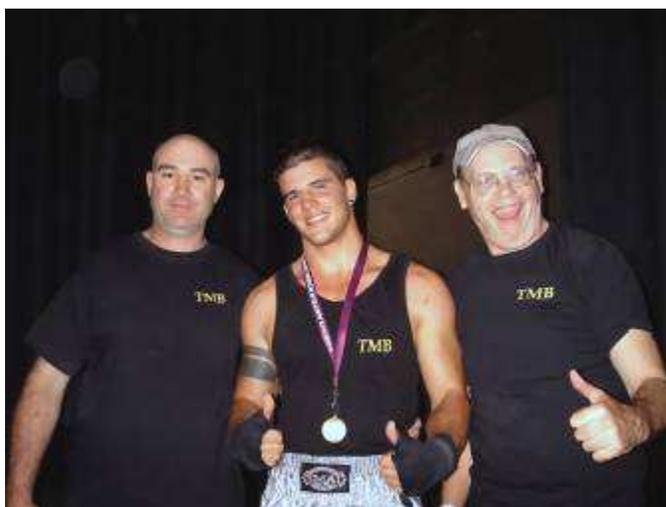
I became passionate about educating young mothers about the dangers household products can present

to them and their children and offering viable solutions. I have made many young friends in the process and I enjoy that immensely.

One of my interests as a consequence is LETS – Local Energy Transfer System – a bartering system in which the overwhelming ethos is self-sufficiency and conservation, and which is enjoying considerable local success.

During all of this time, I have been painting, drawing, photographing and doing computer graphics. I had a solo exhibition entitled *Blossoming* at Cairns Regional Gallery in 1996 and produced some prints and cards from that series. I've done a lot of rainforest work and portraits too. Now, after a hiatus of several years, I plan to return to my painting as soon as the My Habitat business is sold. Meanwhile U3A and the job of publicity officer is keeping me off the streets. Well, mostly anyway. . .

meet your presenters



Ken Cotterill, right, celebrates a win with his boxing protégé Jason Ivanov, centre, and trainer Neil Brunja.

ing and run about 30km a week. Currently I am training for a half-marathon. I also enjoy chess, soccer and helping coach my youngest son, who is a very promising middle distance runner.

History buff Ken Cotterill

So far, I have had the pleasure of presenting two sets of lectures for U3AAT members. In 2012 I did a series on Australian history from 1788 to the present. This year I presented a series of crime lectures in which the convicted person of the crime may not have been the actual culprit. Later this year (October/November) I will be giving a series of talks on political scandals.

Apart from my U3AAT activities I am also involved in theatre as an actor, director and playwright. I have had numerous plays produced in Australia, the United States and in England. I am also involved with the Tropical Writers group in Cairns. I have written two novels and had short stories and poetry published. I also write a weekly arts column in *The Tablelander*.

On the more active side of life I still coach box-

out and about

. . . with the Happy Snappers

Workshop

Four Snappers attended a master class conducted by Jurgen Freund, renowned wildlife photographer, in August.

The weekend class included excursions to Granite Gorge and Mt Hypipamee. The Granite Gorge excursion focused on taking blurred photos—a technique correspondent Bev Massasso reckoned might have come naturally!

During the Mt Hypipamee excursion, Bev provided a marvellous photo op when she fled a large cassowary — unfortunately none of the Snappers was quick enough to capture the event!

In keeping with their monthly theme of Architecture, the group also had a day out at Herberton Historical Village. After the shoot, they retired to the Bakerville Hotel.



A Granite Gorge wallaby undergoes the blurred technique. Picture: Bev Massasso

. . with an old Africa hand

Ian Parker and his wife Chris recently came to live at Oakey Creek, leaving behind a family history of 300 years in Africa. In his talk Ian brought to U3AAT the results of an enormous volume of family history tracing and was able to recount many interesting, sometime humorous, stories of his ancestors. One particularly amusing account involved a woman with an Italian name, who married into his family, having told all and sundry in South Africa that she was from an aristocratic family and was previously married to an Italian count. Ian was brought up with this story, but more recently it was revealed that all was a lie! An early branch of Ian's family moved to Kenya, where he was born, worked with wildlife and later started up a business running tourist safaris. He and Chris undertook an epic journey, sailing a small boat around Lake Turkana – the Jade Sea – the largest desert lake in the world and the book Ian wrote afterwards details the lake's history and its people, as well as the everyday adventures of the trip. U3AAT members attending this talk were particularly absorbed in the family history aspects, as many had researched their own families, but also intrigued to know about life in Kenya today. Beth Smythe talked a little about her two recent trips to Kenya and that added another dimension to the discussion. Ian presented a vivid picture of life in Africa, in days gone by and today. **Helen Myles**

. . . with the Thursday Book Club

The club is so named to differentiate it from Jennifer Byrne's Tuesday Book Club on ABC television! On August 1, members of this newly formed U3AAT group met at Room 6 to discuss our first book and met again early in September for the next one, having decided at the first meeting to give ourselves four weeks to read and digest each book.



Wheels within wheels . . . Peter Larkin records the Snappers' visit to Herberton Historical Village.

The Club can only have 10 members, as the sets of books issued by the Tableland Regional Council library contain 10 books in each box. The club was issued with a list of 50 books available under this system and at each meeting one of these is selected for the next month's discussion. We decided that the choice of which book to read should rotate each month, using the alphabetical order of our given names. I have undertaken to organise the books and lead the discussion each session, using a small list of points to get us going. So far, we have all been engrossed in our discussion about the plot, the characters, etc and have agreed to go round the group and rank each book out of 10 at the end of each session. A discussion like this highlights how subjective reading is, be-

cause some may really like a book whilst others may have not enjoyed it at all and this all comes out in discussion.

Belonging to the Thursday Book Club means that you might sometimes read a book you otherwise wouldn't have chosen, so there can be surprises as well as enjoyment. Reading novels and short stories involves 'artful reading' which is less about reading for specific information and more about reading 'to revel in the literary experience'. **Helen Myles**

. . . in our environment

Glider spotting

John Winter, with volunteers Amanda Kaiwi and Terry Barnes, hosted a group from U3AAT which included Helen Myles, Wendy Phillips, Frances Herriott, Bruce Herriott, Sandi Oswald and David Turnbull on a glider spotting excursion. John gave a lecture to U3A on the gliders of far north Queensland in May



Night trees at Tolga. Picture: Bev Massasso

and this was a follow-up to that lecture. Join them via John's account of the excursion below.

Extract from Tumoulin Forest Log

19 July 2013, Friday - Tumoulin Forest, Spirit Tree

Den Watching

Amanda had checked tree TF-F068-RC the previous evening and confirmed the gliders were coming to it to feed on the sap – three were on the tree. John, Terry, Helen and Wendy arrived at the sap-feed tree at about 2:30pm to clear a walk-way around the tree and determine how we would handle the group.

4:00pm we met the rest of the group at the Ravenshoe Bakery and then headed out in a convoy of four cars. We introduced the group to Spirit Tree, the large *Eucalyptus grandis* which we know the gliders coming to TF-F068-RC use as their den tree. Then to the feed tree, explaining the gliders' use of their habitat and the background of the Yellow-bellied Glider project conducted by the Threatened Species Unit of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) and the Tablelands National Park Volunteers (TNPV).



What am I? Picture: Bev Massasso

5:30pm we set up chairs on the road at the base of Spirit Tree and had our picnic tea. The day had been a beautiful sunny day, but just after 4:00pm the cloud came in and a very light misty drizzle started; just enough to make the atmosphere damp, but not our spirits.

Soon after 6:00pm the small insectivorous bats, microbats, began to fly and Amanda, who had watched

the gliders emerge from Spirit Tree on several occasions, asked everyone to concentrate on the tree, pointing out where she knew the gliders emerged. Although there was a near full moon overhead, we could not see it because of the continuous cloud cover: A very still evening.

6:23 pm Amanda suddenly said 'there's one' as it emerged from its den and climbed rapidly higher up the tree, followed very quickly by two others.



6:24 they launched from the tree, one after the other within a space of minute. All three headed in a NW direction, directly towards TF-F068-RC, in glides of at least 50 m. It was perfect viewing for us as they went almost overhead and silhouetted against sky not interrupted by tree crowns.

Terry was positioned at F068 by 6:06 pm to watch for the gliders arriving. His notes:

6:25 a short call from the direction of Spirit Tree

6:26 one glided onto the trunk from Spirit Tree di-

Shadow at Granite Gorge. Picture: Bev Massasso

rection and moved to bite marks on northeast side of the tree

6:27 a second one landed from the same direction and moved up to the feeding cuts

6:30 the third came round onto the same side of the trunk as the other two – not seen gliding in

6:35 all out of sight round on southwest side of tree

6:40 all three back on northeast side. Could hear people walking from Spirit Tree and one car

6:45 one YBG feeding on northeast side, one moved round north side of tree out of sight, third one out of sight

6:50 U3A group in position at the tree

6:55 a YBG call from the north, only two seen on the tree so not sure whether it is a fourth glider

7:00 two seen on feed tree, one of them climbing higher and soon after one seen gliding to SW

7:05 all three gliders appear to have left the feed tree and a call heard to the north

We stopped watching.

Confirmed was a total of three Yellow-bellied Gliders seen at one time, leaving the den tree and on the feed tree, with a possibility of a fourth glider calling from the north. Within two minutes of leaving their den tree the gliders were on the feed tree, probably making two, at the most three, glides to cover the 170 metres between the two trees.

Amanda commented on the fact that the gliders left the feed tree earlier than on previous occasions she has watched it and wondered whether the size of our watching group – 10 people – was a factor. Possibly a more ideal size for a watching group would be no more than five people.

news and views

good news for bookworms

Among the August GEMS (sign up for the GEMS newsletter at U3A Online) was this article from *Science Daily* (sciencedaily.com).

Does being a bookworm boost your brainpower in old age?

July 4, 2013 — New research suggests that reading books, writing and participating in brain-stimulating activities at any age may preserve memory. The study is published in the July 3, 2013, online issue of *Neurology*®, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

"Our study suggests that exercising your brain by taking part in activities such as these across a person's lifetime, from childhood through old age, is important for brain health in old age," said study author Robert S. Wilson, PhD, with Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

For the study, 294 people were given tests that measured memory and thinking every year for about six years before their deaths at an average age of 89. They also answered a questionnaire about whether they read books, wrote and participated in other mentally stimulating activities during childhood, adolescence, middle age and at their current age.

After they died, their brains were examined at autopsy for evidence of the physical signs of dementia, such as lesions, brain plaques and tangles.

The research found that people who participated in mentally stimulating activities both early and late in life had a slower rate of decline in memory com-

pared to those who did not participate in such activities across their lifetime, after adjusting for differing levels of plaques and tangles in the brain. Mental activity accounted for nearly 15 percent of the difference in decline beyond what is explained by plaques and tangles in the brain.

"Based on this, we shouldn't underestimate the effects of everyday activities, such as reading and writing, on our children, ourselves and our parents or grandparents," said Wilson.

The study found that the rate of decline was reduced by 32 percent in people with frequent mental activity in late life, compared to people with average mental activity, while the rate of decline of those with infrequent activity was 48 percent faster than those with average activity.

The study was supported by the National Institute on Aging and the Illinois Dept of Public Health.



The crossing . . . Herberton.

Picture: Peter Larkin

pointers on picture files

This article appeared in *Gizmo's Freeware* which can be found at Sciencedaily.com

Reduce the size of image files

Updated 14 July 2013

By Rob Schifreen

I wrote earlier today about tidying up your hard disk by zipping large files. If your problem is not so much large data files but large images, and if you want to keep those images in jpg format rather than zipping them (perhaps so that they still work with your favourite image viewer or slideshow utility), then you'll need to take a different approach.

JpegMini, for example, is a free program and web site (choose either - personally I find the web site easiest) to reduce the size of images. In the example shown in the screen shot below, the site managed to reduce this photo from 3.1 MB to 0.7 MB. Which makes the file much quicker to email or print, and smaller to store.

Remember, however, that with image file sizes there's no such thing as a free lunch. If you reduce the size of an image file you're removing data from the image, even if that missing data doesn't affect your view of the file at the time. If you subsequently decide to zoom or crop the photo, for example, and only use a part of it, you may find that the amount of detail available to you has been lost forever. Therefore, if you reduce a photo in order to email it or perhaps to make it suitable for uploading to a social media site, you may want to consider keeping both the original and the reduced file on your PC.

To try out jpegmini, head to www.jpegmini.com. The web site works well and is free to use. And if you sign up, you can upload and shrink multiple files at a time. ■

(You might find the comments below the article interesting as well.)

in the pipeline

Tablelands U3A is entering the social media age. Committee members are busy learning about Facebook in preparation for presenting a series of sessions to members later in the semester and perhaps continuing into 2014. A training session at the Atherton Learning Centre was followed up with a demonstration on how the site can be used by organisations. Given by Andrea Chamberlain, a representative of the Tableland's bartering organisation, LETS,

Publicity officer Carmel Pacey has prepared two Facebook pages for U3AAT, a Public Page which anybody on Facebook can access, and a Forum Group Page which is limited to U3AAT members who are members of Facebook. Links to both pages can be found on the Website.

The program committee advises that **ukelele** lessons from Helen Snelling may be offered in November, and they still hope to establish a **mah jong** group.

Glyn Davies and Carmel Pacey recently attended a meeting of the **Tablelands Garden Club**, which was most interesting for a number of reasons. They were expecting that there would be a positive response to an invitation from U3AAT to open their gardens for a visit as part of a new Gardening activity for the Semester 2 program. In the event, only one member, Mrs Margie Collins, seemed willing to open her garden to U3A members, possibly in September or October. The reason? It seems that the experience of some members is that their gardens have been trampled, plants snatched and litter left behind after an Open Garden event. Amazing! We are certain that U3AAT members would not be so uncouth.

Finally— a date claimer. U3AAT is looking to have a **Christmas function in the last week of November or the first week of December**. Your social secretary is currently engaged in negotiations for a buffet luncheon or dinner, to be held at a local restaurant or hotel. So keep your eyes peeled for more information and for an invitation via email when booking details are available.

other ways to learn

U3A Online

To check on other U3A Online courses please go to www.u3aonline.org.au and click on '**Courses**' in the left-hand panel and then on '**Looking Ahead**' from the drop-down list.

U3A Cairns

Financial members of U3AAT have reciprocal rights with any other U3A group in Queensland. For example, Tableland members can attend Cairns courses. You'll find all the information you need about U3A in Cairns at www.u3acairnsinc.org.au, or phone Cairns Course Coordinator Frederika Hatley (4036 4263).

James Cook University

Members are entitled to sit in on JCU courses. There is no charge and no awards are given. Details about JCU subjects can be obtained from the JCU website. When you know the name, subject code and course co-ordinator's name contact JCU's U3A coordinator, Judith Woods, at judith@ruello.com or on 4059 0836.

keep in touch

General Inquiries

Email info@athtablends@u3anet.org.au or write to U3AAT, PO box 928, Atherton, Qld 4883. You can also contact us via the website, athtablends.u3anet.org.au.

Course inquiries and enrolment:

Jane Duncanson, email courses@athtablends.u3anet.org.au or 4096 6693

make your day

An Important Announcement: Regarding the USA

To the citizens of the United States of America from Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

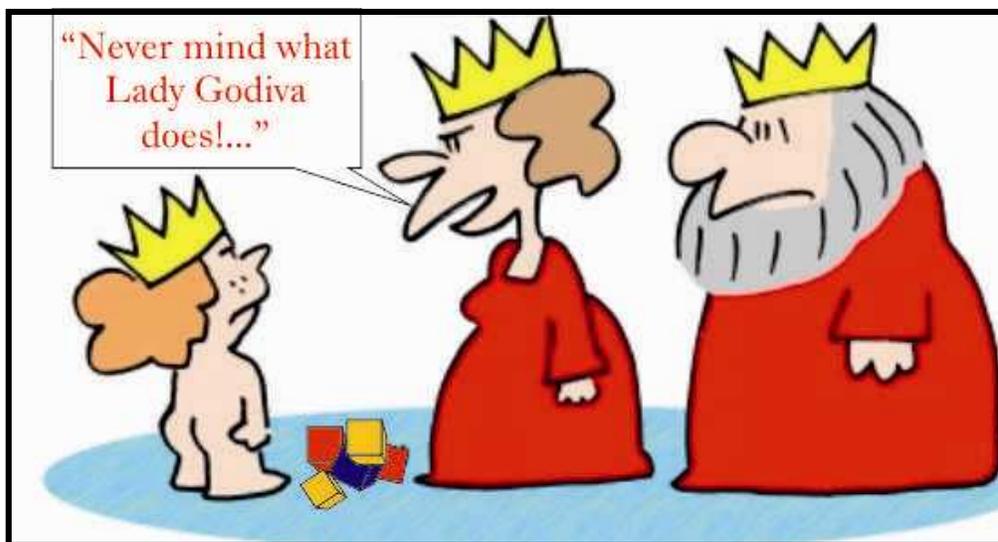
In light of your immediate failure to financially manage yourselves and also in recent years your tendency to elect incompetent Presidents of the USA and therefore not able to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective immediately. (You should look up 'revocation' in the Oxford English Dictionary.)

Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths, and territories (except Kansas, which she does not fancy).

Your new Prime Minister, David Cameron, will appoint a Governor for America without the need for further elections.

Congress and the Senate will be disbanded. A questionnaire may be circulated sometime next year to determine whether any of you noticed. To aid in the transition to a British Crown dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect:

1. The letter 'U' will be reinstated in words such as 'colour,' 'favour,' 'labour' and 'neighbour.' Likewise, you will learn to spell 'doughnut' without skipping half the letters, and the suffix '-ize' will be replaced by the suffix '-ise.' Generally, you will be expected to raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels. (look up 'vocabulary').



PS: Only share this with friends who have a good sense of humour (NOT humor)!

2. Using the same twenty-seven words interspersed with filler noises such as "like" and "you know" is an unacceptable and inefficient form of communication. There is no such thing as U.S. English. We will let Microsoft know on your behalf. The Microsoft spell-checker will be adjusted to take into account the reinstated letter 'u' and the elimination of '-ize.'

3. July 4th will no longer be celebrated as a holiday. It will be replaced by Empire Day
4. You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers, or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not quite ready to be independent. Guns should only be used for shooting grouse. If you can't sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist, then you're not ready to shoot grouse.
5. Therefore, you will no longer be allowed to own or carry anything more dangerous than a vegetable peeler. Although a permit will be required if you wish to carry a vegetable peeler in public.
6. All intersections will be replaced with roundabouts, and you will start driving on the left side with immediate effect. At the same time, you will go metric with immediate effect and without the benefit of conversion tables. Both roundabouts and metrication will help you understand the British sense of humour.
7. The former USA will adopt UK prices on petrol (which you have been calling gasoline) of roughly \$10/US gallon. Get used to it.
8. You will learn to make real chips. Those things you call French fries are not real chips, and those things you insist on calling potato chips are properly called crisps. Real chips are thick cut, fried in animal fat, and dressed not with catsup but with salt and vinegar.
9. The cold, tasteless stuff you insist on calling beer is not actually beer at all. Henceforth, only proper British Bitter will be referred to as beer, and European brews of known and accepted provenance will be referred to as Lager. New Zealand beer is also acceptable, as New Zealand is pound for pound the greatest sporting nation on earth and it can only be due to the beer. They are also part of the British Commonwealth - see what it did for them. American brands will be referred to as Near-Frozen Gnat's Urine, so that all can be sold without risk of further confusion.
10. Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as good guys. Hollywood will also be required to cast English actors to play English characters. Watching Andie Macdowell attempt English dialogue in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* was an experience akin to having one's ears removed with a cheese grater.
11. You will cease playing American football. There are only two kinds of proper football; one you call soccer, and rugby (dominated by the New Zealanders). Those of you brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby (which has some similarities to American football, but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full kevlar body armour like a bunch of nancies).
12. Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the World Series for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 2.1% of you are aware there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable. You will learn cricket, and we will let you face the Australians first to take the sting out of their deliveries.
13. You must tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us mad.
14. An internal revenue agent (i.e. tax collector) from Her Majesty's Government will be with you shortly to ensure the acquisition of all monies due (backdated to 1776).
15. Daily Tea Time begins promptly at 4 p.m. with proper cups, with saucers, and never mugs, with high quality biscuits (not cookies) and cakes; plus strawberries (with cream) when in season.

God Save the Queen!

——ooOoo——