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NEWS 2013

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After last year's globetrotting, 2013 has turned out to be an unusually sedentary year, as I have not ventured outside Europe. Despite this, it's been a hectic year, as only hinted at in the following pictures...



Christmas 2012 was, as usual, spent in Islip at my parents' place, including groaning along to Paul and Alison's guitar playing.



The early part of 2013 was pretty cold, including one morning when the inside of the car windscreen was filled with stars.



In early May, Camilla, the daughter of Jane's friend Charlotte had her confirmation, which not only allowed me to experience a new Danish tradition, but also to visit Sorø academy and try out a chair built for Danish royalty.



For my birthday this year, Jane decked out the house in unsuitably patriotic fashion. I would never dream of displaying union flags around the place in the U.K., but in Denmark they seem to have become quite popular, and flags in general are used for celebration rather than jingoism.





Later in the day we went to Gilleleje on the north Sjælland coast – a town I’ve been meaning to visit for years – and had a very pleasant lunch and afternoon with Jane’s mum Inga and Birger.



At the beginning of July, Jane and I took a day-trip to Oslo – another town (and indeed country) that I’d not visited before. It was also rather damp.



The late spring an early summer was very pleasant, and there was more blossom on the apple trees in our back garden than I’ve seen before.



Generally, ‘though the summer was rather dry, if not that hot, and the day in Oslo was the last time it rained for three weeks – so the next shower at the end of July was much appreciated.



Midsummer saw me participating in a workshop on Heathlands in northern Jutland – which was a little damp at times.





My most exotic trip of 2013 was to Lisbon for the European Society of Evolutionary Biology meeting – another new town and country. It's a pity that the 43° C daytime temperatures (oh yes, and the conference) restricted most of my exploration of this great city to the evening hours.



For Jane's birthday in August, Birger and Inga met us for a very pleasant meal at the "Traktorstedet" in near Stevns, followed by a fascinating visit to the "Stevns fort" museum, which is in one of the old cold-war command centres carved out of the chalk in eastern Sjælland.



On the night of the 18-19th October we stayed up into the early hours to watch a partial lunar eclipse. In the end it wasn't very spectacular, but still more so than comet ISON.

David



During 2013, Jane and I managed to take in some great concerts in Copenhagen, including Steve Hackett, Roger Waters, Ian Anderson and Fish. It was also great to see Mauro Patricelli's video opera "Syng for fremtiden, Ingeborg!"



The saddest events of the year were the deaths of my parents' two cats. Jody (top left) died in late June, after apparently eating something poisonous, while Jester (top right) had to be put down in October as a result of cancer. Happily, they have now been replaced by Misty and Katie (lower picture), who were adopted in November, and who we got to meet on a brief visit to the U.K. in December, when I also attended the annual meeting of the North West European section of the *International Union for the Study of Social Insects* (IUSSI) at Royal Holloway University.

Other highlights of 2013 were a visit from my old friend Andy Green, who I'd not seen for some 20 years, and visiting St. Giles fair in Oxford with Robert, Iris and Aidan. There was also far too much teaching and applying for grants (which is why this newsletter is being written on Christmas day this year). 2014 looks like it will be an exciting year – I hope to get to Australia again, for the next international meeting of the IUSSI, and I'm also looking forward to attending the next International Puzzle Party in London with Jane. Last, but not least, I will be turning 50 in May – I'm not sure yet how and where I'll celebrate this, but it happens that *Amnesty International's* Danish chapter was founded on the day that I was born, so if you'd like to celebrate my birthday, please make a donation to AI!

Have a very Happy Christmas, and all best wishes for 2014!