



SIGNALS FROM T•A•R•S•U•S

August 1998

Late Summer Greetings!

“*Need brooks no delay, yet late is better than never.*” It always sounds a bit like a lame excuse, but lame or not, it’s the one I have. The shipment from England arrived just as I left on the first of two back-to-back trips and so had to sit in my office – glowering at me during my brief visit between trips – until today. But I have high hopes that finally I can finish the newsletter and get your *Mixed Moss*, *Signals*, and *Signals from TARSUS* out to you (and don’t have to feel guilty every time I go into my office).

Important: Membership Changes for 1999

In the accompanying *Mixed Moss* (Page 63) there is a note about membership changes approved at the recent AGM to take effect next year. TARS has been losing money on some types of membership, so these changes were unavoidable. Note that the subscriptions (membership rates) shown below are for overseas members (which we all are).

Junior Membership will go through age 16 rather than age 18. Juniors will receive *The Outlaw* but **not** *Mixed Moss*. Subscription remains \$8.25 (£5).

Student Membership is for full-time students above the age of 16. Students will receive *Mixed Moss* but **not** *The Outlaw*. Subscription remains \$16.50 (£10).

Adult Membership (generally for adults and couples without young children) will receive *Mixed Moss* but **not** *The Outlaw*. Subscription remains \$33.00 (£20)

Family Membership (generally for adults who have children under 16) will receive **both** *Mixed Moss* **and** *The Outlaw*. Subscription will be \$41.25 (£25) to cover the cost of both publications.

Pensioner Membership will be restricted to those 65 and over who have been members of TARS for at least three years (but existing Pensioners will not be affected) and will receive *Mixed Moss* and **not** *The Outlaw*. Subscription remains \$24.75 (£15).

Members of all types receive *Despatches*, *Signals*, and *Signals from TARSUS*. We continue to use the ratio of £1.00 = US\$1.65 unless there is a significant change in the exchange rates. Please write or call me if you have additional questions. And now back to our regular program....

Welcome

Welcome to new members: Peter, Susan, Ainsley, Kelly, Julia and Celine Gill; Llewellyn Howland; Peter and Colleen Ingerman; Captain Dan, Kathy, Joe and Billy Pease; Doris Skalstad; Charles Sullivan; Roger & June Sykes; Caroline Turner; Mary Walker; and Larry, Marianne, Laurie and Peter Wood.

A special welcome to Tohru (Coot), Eriko (Erika), Kaede (Pretty Polly) and Daiju (Four Fir Trees) Mori, who moved to New York State from Japan.

For those of us who haven't come in contact with our Japanese colleagues' Ransome nicknames, it is customary in Japan for members of the Arthur Ransome Club to adopt ARC middle names (we would think of them as nicknames) which are somehow connected to their particular interests, points of view or characteristics. These aren't always "people" names as we would think of them in English, but then, many people names in English were not originally people names either ("Fawn" or "June" for example).

Mavis Guzelian (Altounyan)

Mavis Altounyan, the third of the Altounyan children made famous by Arthur Ransome as the dedicatees for *Swallows and Amazons*, and generally regarded as the models for the Walker children, passed away in England on July 3rd. Mavis was known as Titty both in the Altounyan and Walker families.

Ted Schuchat, a TARSUS from Washington, sent me copies of articles about her from the *London Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent* which I will copy and send to any who are interested for \$1.00 each as I generally do with Ransome-related articles sent to me by TARSUS. Unfortunately, when the articles were copied for Ted they were cut off on the sides and are therefore hard to read, but if you really want them anyhow let me know.

A TARS Event in 1999? Status...

We have some good news and some bad news. On the Good News front, a number of you wrote or e-mailed me to indicate that Maine was your preferred choice (as opposed to an event in Wisconsin) for a TARSUS event next summer in July or August, and a few suggested possible activities or venues for the event.

On the Bad News front, Barbara Burt, who had proposed the Maine venue and volunteered to be the chief coordinator, has had to withdraw her offer: her family will probably be overseas most of the summer and she won't be available. She is still willing to help as possible, for example in working with the Maine Maritime Museum (if that is the venue we want) but cannot assume overall responsibility.

Sooo, and you can see what's coming next, I am looking for a volunteer who would be willing to be the primary coordinator for an event in Maine next summer, especially if several other volunteers can be determined. The March *Signals from TARSUS* contained a general description of what the event might be like, but we are certainly open to other suggestions.

The general notion was of a long weekend event, possibly centered on the Maine Maritime Museum or other nautical venue, with plenty of opportunities for folks to meet and talk, hopefully some nautical activities including perhaps a windjammer cruise, and perhaps presentations on AR themes such as often grace the AGMs in England.

If you would like to know more or think you might be available as coordinator or to volunteer in some other capacity, please write, e-mail or call me (contact information on Page 4). While we still have a year to go now, we very soon won't have a year at all, and the arrangements (to say nothing of travel plans) are going to become more and more difficult.

What about Regional Gatherings?

The map included with the March Signals from TARSUS clearly indicated that our primary concentrations of members were in the Northeast and Northwest, with a smaller group in the Midwest. There are certainly enough TARSUS members in these areas to hold a regional gathering, such as the TARSCanada Corroboree which just happened, especially if it is held and advertised to draw potential in addition to existing members.

Several Junior members have written to ask if we have such get-togethers in the U.S. and I've had to say "not yet" – so what about it? I think there are a growing number of members, especially perhaps Juniors, who would really enjoy a TARSUS gathering, perhaps modeled on the Canadian Corroborees, and a small regional one-day event would be lots easier to put together (and pull off) than a big national one.

A Voyage with Nancy Blackett

The Society Stall offers copies of this 25-minute video, sales of which benefit the Nancy Blackett Trust. Recently the NBT ran a competition in the Juniors magazine, *The Outlaw* – which probably inevitably was won by a U.S. TARS. Peter Willis, head of the NBT, has arranged with us to convert the film to U.S. format. At the same time, he has also authorized us to offer this video to members of TARSUS and make additional copies to that purpose.

If any TARSUS members would like copies of this video (description can be found on the last page of *Mixed Moss*) please order from me as soon as possible. We will charge \$25 including postage (they're charging £16 in the U.K.). All proceeds will go to the Nancy Blackett Trust. We won't be doing this on a repeated basis, so get your orders in to me as quickly as possible. Make checks out to Dave Thewlis, indicate what they are for, and send to me at my address below.

Resumes

I haven't received any more resumes, so this packet does not have any additions to the RESUMES OF U.S. MEMBERS of the Arthur Ransome Society. Needless to say, I'd like to encourage all those who haven't contributed your resume to do so.

Amazon Publications – *Ransome the Artist*

Those of us who subscribed to this year's Amazon Publication, *Ransome the Artist*, have been wondering what happened to it. The answer is that very nearly everything that could have delayed it did delay it, but it is finally (I understand) at the printers so there is hope that we will receive it before too much longer. Everyone involved apologizes for the delay.

Nancy Blackett Trust Raffle

The Nancy Blackett Trust is having a raffle to raise funds for the refurbishing and keeping of *Nancy*. I asked Peter Willis if overseas TARS could be involved and received the following comments:

Dave, yes there is a raffle. Draw on September 20, so plenty of time. Nice prizes, too. Norfolk Broads yachting holiday, courtesy of Bakes (spring/autumn short break) Digital camera, TV/video recorder, 2 air tickets to Amsterdam (from UK, sadly for you), week holiday in the Lakes (self-catering mobile home on Ullswater for 4-6), Complete set of AR hardbacks, Classic Boat Mag subscription, Dinner for 2 at the Butt & Oyster, Set of framed prints, Signed copy of the latest Sam Llewellyn novel (a sort of new take on the Riddle of the Sands) and other stuff. I hadn't thought of selling tickets abroad for various reasons (eg the TV wouldn't work in the US) and the shipping costs or general difficulty of taking up some of the prizes. Still, if participants can put up with perhaps accepting delivery to a UK address should they win, I see no reason why not.

For those of you interested in supporting Nancy and entering the raffle, the tickets are 20p each and £1 per book, so that means \$1.65 per book of five. Decide how many you want and send me a check for the amount in U.S. dollars and I'll notify the folks in the U.K. Rather than mailing the tickets, all tickets ordered by U.S. TARS will be held for them and the

numbers recorded. If any of us win anything, we'll be notified immediately – and can then figure out how to take possession of or use our prize! All proceeds from the raffle will go to *Nancy Blackett*.

Since the drawing is September 20th. I am setting the cutoff date at **September 14th** – if I haven't received your request – and money – by then I won't be able to relay it on to the U.K.

A Visit to Japan

Earlier this summer I spent a short week in northern Japan. At the end of the week, I was able to stay overnight in Tokyo, and had the opportunity to meet and visit with several Arthur Ransome Club members. They had said they wanted to take me to a “traditional Japanese evening with a Ransome flavor” which caused me to speculate a lot on what that might turn out to be

Last, but Not Least

Please, please, call, drop me a note or e-mail me if you feel you can help with or coordinate the proposed TARSUS event in Maine next year – or perhaps a regional event near you. I'll be publishing more about this in the next newsletter, and with any luck at all, many of us will get a chance to meet for the first time in the Summer of 1999. And for heaven's sake send me contributions to this newsletter so it's not just me!

Three cheers for TARS and TARSUS!

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