



SIGNALS FROM T•A•R•S•U•S

August 1999

Summer Greetings!

I don't know about the rest of TARSUS, but our summer has been one of too little or too much. Specifically here in Eureka we haven't had much of a summer at all (lots of fog, some rain, low temperatures). And when we went to the U.K. in July (more on that anon) it was rather the other way around: hot to the point of unreason, the sort of hot which keeps you from doing anything. Still, we did get to the U.K. after it was looking increasingly as though we wouldn't.

New Members

Welcome to Kelly-Joy Brown-Lewis, Alexander Dent, Rosalie Keegan, Leah Dickens, Sam Papke, Jr., Tom Webster and Christine Hoff, and Brendan Woo. I'm not going to list your address entries separately as I'm distributing the full membership list with this newsletter. Speaking of which, ...

Membership List

Enclosed with this mailing is the complete membership list for TARSUS as of the beginning of August. Those former members who had not renewed by the beginning of July have regretfully been removed from the list as resigned.

Resumes

I haven't received any addition to the Resumes file so none are included with this newsletter. That's a broad hint for those who haven't sent theirs in yet!

TARS AGM at Rudyard Lake

I wasn't able to attend the AGM this year due to schedule conflicts, but I gather it was a great success even though the weather was a bit drippy. Apparently the "dtagon" was highly appreciated. See the writeups on the AGM in *Mixed Moss* and other references in *Signals*. (If you are a Junior member you didn't get *Mixed Moss* as you receive *The Outlaw* instead, and the next *Outlaw* isn't due until Fall. So find somebody who has a copy of *Mixed Moss* or convince your Aged Parents that the family should have a Family Membership thus giving you both *Mixed Moss* and *The Outlaw*!)

Alas, no Juniors' Corroboree

The April, 1999 Signals from TARSUS reported on a planned Juniors' event in Massachusetts in June, hosted by the Furth family. Unfortunately the event was canceled due to lack of response from other Junior TARSUS in the Northeast. I still hope we can get TARSUS events going but it's being an uphill battle!

Other Overseas Newsletters

Charlotte Ryton, the compiler of *Signals*, has begun printing the Overseas newsletters in *Signals*. You will therefore find newsletters from TARS Australia and TARS Canada (in addition to TARSUS) in the Summer 1999 *Signals* which is in this packet. I note with some envy the articles which both editors have been able to extract solicit from TARS members in their countries (to say nothing of the events which both countries have started to put together!) Needless to say, the Editor of *Signals from TARSUS* would welcome with glad cries articles and submissions from other AR enthusiasts in the U.S. (another broad hint...)

(The sharp-eyed will note some odd formatting changes in the *Signals from TARSUS* printed in *Signals*. This is due to my sending an electronic version. Everywhere but the U.S. people use the A4 format for paper which is slightly narrower and longer than our standard 8-1/2 x 11, and when it was reformatted to print in the U.K. some odd things happened.)

Availability of the Swallows & Amazons Books

Ted Alexander, who runs the TARS Society Bookstall from which many of us have ordered, tells me that there are some difficulties with getting all of the hardbounds in new editions. Specifically two or three of the hardbounds are now supposed to be out of print, and he doesn't have firm dates for reprinting. However, if you order a book currently out of print, he will place you on a "backorder" list and ship your book when it does become available.

For those who would like paperbacks, though, there is another possibility. Several years ago the entire set of S&A books were brought out in a uniform paperback edition in the U.K. under the "Red Fox" label (Random House Children's Books). These books can be found all over the U.K., so the Society Stall has not bothered to carry them. However, Ted is willing to obtain them for Overseas members on special request, as they are not available in the U.S. (I'm not sure about other countries).

If you are interested let me know and I can get a quote from Ted for the titles you would like.

Advance Notice for TARSUS!

The year 2000 will be a very special year for TARS – it's 70 years since *Swallows & Amazons* was first published, 60 years for *The Big Six*, and of course, TARS' 10th birthday.

The English Lake District has been chosen as the setting for the special celebratory International AGM, which is expected to attract members from all over the world. Full details will be in *Despatches* (which will come out early in 2000), but to whet your appetite, there will be sailing on the lake, expeditions to Horseshoe Cove and Kanchenjunga, a search for Swallowdale, and that's just the beginning of the activities...

The event will be held on 26th – 29th May at YMCA Lakeside, a place with more than a whisper of Ransome in the air. A wide variety of on-site accommodation from bedrooms to tents will be available in this wonderful setting on the shores of Windermere, which has been reserved exclusively for TARS throughout the whole weekend; so you can be assured that you will be among friends. A real north country welcome awaits you beside the lake where Ransome sailed, and we hope a goodly number of TARS will be making the trip from the USA.

Full details of the weekend will appear in *Despatches*, however if you are hoping to be there and need some advance information, Bill and Diane Janes (who are members of the organising committee) will be happy to help you, if they can. They are on [<ohsc@provider.co.uk>](mailto:ohsc@provider.co.uk) or you can find Bill's address under "Secretary" on the inside front cover of *Mixed Moss*.

[Personally I have every intention of being there – Ed.]

B&B in the Norfolk Broads

Lynn and Henry Ferguson, long-time TARS members, are offering Bed & Breakfast at their home halfway between Horning & Potter Heigham. They also hire out small (2 & 4 berth) yachts from Horning (based in the dyke opposite the No. 7 nest). Advertisements for their Malthouse B&B and Norfolk Broads Sailing can be found on Page 36 of the current *Mixed Moss*, and you can find them on the following websites:

<http://www.whiteswan.u-net.com/malthouse/>
<http://www.whiteswan.u-net.com/sailing/>

You can find their address and telephone number on the advertisements or website, or by e-mailing

<lynn@fergs.demon.co.uk>

Amazon Publications

About 18 TARSUS received *Ransome on Blue Water Sailing*, the eighth in the Amazon Publications series. Martin Creegan (Slovenia) has reviewed the book on Page 58 of the current *Mixed Moss*. There are still some copies available from Ted Alexander at the TARS Society Bookstall for interested TARSUS who didn't subscribe in advance (send me a query or look at

<http://www.arthur-ransome.org/ar/tarsstall.html>

The May 2000 Amazon Publication will be *A Ransome Bookshelf*, described as "a detailed and profusely illustrated description of John Cowan's unrivalled collection of books and Ransomiana dating from AR's early writings in the 1890s through to his last in the 1950s. Many of the books have personal messages and sketches by AR on their preliminary pages. All will be printed in large format hardback, with we hope a few millennial trimmings. There will be pictures of covers, title pages and illustrations from inside the books. Where appropriate, illustrations will be in colour; and a coloured dustjacket is planned."

You can subscribe in advance for \$25.00 to cover the cost of the book plus air postage to the United States; make your check out to "The Arthur Ransome Society" and send it to me with a note indicating that it is for the next Amazon Publication.

Amazon, the publishing arm of TARS, does not make a profit – all proceeds go to the next publication so its quality is dependent on the size of the subscription kitty. I strongly encourage you to subscribe – the Amazon Publication offerings have been a wonderful addition to the available information and materials about AR and his books.

Job Opening: U.S. Publications Coordinator

I've been producing *Signals from TARSUS* and handling the U.S. mailings for three years now, and handling the U.S. finances, bookstall orders, etc. for two, and I am interested in finding someone to succeed me as *Signals from TARSUS* editor. The job requires:

- Receiving the boxes of U.K. publications periodically (about 4 times a year)
- Putting together the newsletter
- Having it printed at a local copy shop
- Stuffing mailing envelopes with U.K. publications and the U.S. newsletter
- Labeling, stamping and mailing

My intent is to continue doing membership and financial coordination myself, at least for the present time, so the work involved in publications coordinator would not require a lot of ongoing involvement; it does however mean a few days of mild hysteria when the boxes arrive and you have to write yet another newsletter.

If you're interested please contact me at the address, phone number, or e-mail address listed at the back of this newsletter.

Please consider helping – and it's a great way to get more involved in TARS!

Secret Water and the Nancy Blackett AGM

Having had schedule problems in getting either to the Ruyard AGM in May, or the upcoming Literary Weekend in Cambridge this September, we were fortunate enough to visit the U.K. for a couple of weeks in July, and had two highlights well worth reporting to TARSUS. The first was a day's sail from Ipswich to the Secret Water, arranged by Dave Sewart (the TARS Membership Secretary). Our host was Graham Ritchie, and we sailed on his wooden ketch *Merribelle*. The crew included Graham's son Alastair, Dave and Elizabeth Sewart (Elizabeth is also known as "Dorothy" for those who follow *The Outlaw*), Susan and I, and Hannah Hawksley, the Chief Magpie (Hannah and the Magpies are also familiar to those who follow *The Outlaw*, as the adventures of the Magpies are frequently reported therein).



Less ominous by day...



Leaving it behind

We sailed from Ipswich at about 10:30 in the morning on Friday, July 16th (actually, we ran on the engine as there was little wind; what there was, was directly against us; and the time was coming in) and proceeded down the Orwell and under the Orwell Bridge. We passed Woolverstone Marina (on the right), which is *Nancy Blackett's* home, and Levington Marina, (on the left), where the Nancy Blackett Trust AGM was going to be the following day, but didn't see *Nancy* in either place. When we got to Shotley Gate and Harwich Harbor, sail was set, and we sailed out past the "infamous" Beach End Buoy (unfortunately the buoy no longer seems to have a big bell, but instead some form of foghorn), and then turned southwest towards Hamford Water (Secret Water). About halfway there, we did encounter *Nancy*; she was sailing the other way. (I found out afterwards that a party had sailed over early in the morning in order to walk The Wade across the Red Sea between Swallow Island (Horsey Island) and the mainland – low tide was about 8 a.m. that morning).

We arrived in Secret Water about 2 p.m., at high tide. There had been an idea of putting people ashore via an inflatable raft about where the Swallows alighted on the first day, but we found that much of the area was now oyster beds and anchoring was prohibited. So we sailed back out Goblin Creek and Secret Water, around past Flint Island and down Amazon Creek, and into the Red Sea. Returning, we even saw a seal, who might have been the 63rd grandchild of George! We arrived back in Ipswich about 8 p.m. after a very slow sail back up the Orwell (the tide was of course going out) and encountering *Nancy* once again, on her way downriver to Levington in preparation for the AGM the following day.



Nancy Blackett headed back to port

The following day, Susan and I returned to Levington Marina for the Nancy Blackett Trust AGM and (I hoped) a chance to sail on *Nancy* herself. *Nancy Blackett* was there, of course, and short sails (30 to 45 minutes by intent) were available on her by previous arrangement. *Coch-y-bonddhu* (*Scarab*) was also present and a number of Junior members (and others) were sailing on her, as was *Rosie*, a new large dinghy much in the Swallow-

Amazon-Cochy model recently acquired by the NBT, possibly to serve as *Nancy's Imp* (although she's a bit big for that).

The meeting was prefaced with a talk by Mike Rines, the man who actually purchased and restored Nancy back in the early 1990s before the NBT was formed to buy and maintain her. His talk was fascinating – especially the part about the fellow who owned Nancy before him, and who kept refusing to sell her but was letting her rot in harbor – and who resented anybody referring to her as “Arthur Ransome’s boat.” Finally he relented, and sold her for about 100 times what she was worth considering her condition (in fact, it’s not clear he ever went and looked at her rotting away).



I missed the actual (30 or 45 minute) formal meeting itself at Peter Willis’ suggestion, because I did get a chance to sail on *Nancy* – but the only good opportunity was right when the AGM was scheduled. (Peter’s comment was, “if I had a choice between sitting in a stuffy meeting and sailing, I know what I’d do!” Since he is the organizer of the NBT I figured he should know....) So, I played pirate (hookey?) and went sailing, and it was certainly more fun than any meeting I’ve ever been in. It was pretty lively also: instead of the wind abating as predicted, it was increasing, and we had a fairly exhilarating sail, especially when we couldn’t get the jib in because of a snarl in some crossed lines.

Not only was sailing on *Nancy* a wonderful experience, simply seeing her inside and out reminded me of how accurate Ransome’s portrayals are (except of course when he deliberately mixes things up, as he did with *The Lake*). *Nancy* is *Goblin* through and through, right down to the bunks, the table, and the little alcove where the primus stove sits.

Nancy flying the TARS burgee

Thrashing along in *Nancy* flying the TARS burgee from the masthead (and the Jolly Roger from the crosstrees, but on the other side of the sail) will remain one of the highlights not only of the trip, but of my involvement in TARS. I even had a chance to sail her (well, hold her tiller while under sail) for a few minutes. It certainly brought home to me how much TARS can offer as an active Society.

Three cheers for TARS and TARSUS – and the *Nancy Blackett*! Let’s put together a good showing at the Y2000 AGM at Lake Windermere.

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