



Signals from TARSUS

MAY 2009

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Ship's Papers—folks in charge



ELIZABETH JOLLEY, editor

Hello from sunny but chilly Portland, Oregon! I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your new *Signals from TARSUS* editor. I have been an avid fan of the *Swallows & Amazons* series since the day I came across the first book in my new school library. I could not find all of the books in school or my town at that time, but on a trip to Charlotte, North Carolina to visit my grandmother, my mother and sisters and I found the rest of them in my mother's old childhood public library. You can imagine how I spent the rest of that vacation!

The year I was in 8th grade, our class had a trip to Canada to learn about their parliamentary government, but my personal focus was on how to get to the bookstore with the money we had saved up so I could buy THE WHOLE SERIES for us to have at home. Since that time, I have read and re-read the series many times, and shared them with my four children.

In 2000, we took a family trip, with my mother along for the fun, to England to see the spots in the books. We stayed at Holly Howe Farm (Bank Ground Farm in real life), dipped our hands in the lake, climbed Kanchenjunga (The Old Man of Coniston), boated to Wildcat (Peel) Island, climbed to Trout (Beacon) Tarn through one possible Swallowdale, and rode the ferries on Coniston & Windermere lakes.

From London later in our vacation, we took a day trip to the Broads where we had a boat tour of the river from Wroxham to Horning, seeing Dick's birds of all sorts everywhere and imagining ourselves quanting along upriver.

On another trip in 2004 (who can go only once?) we found the igloo, climbed Kanchenjunga another way, sailed on the lake, visited the island again (now an old friend) and tried out another cottage at Holly Howe farm. Tons of fun and everyone who can get to England should go see the real places!



A View from the Helm

ROBIN MARSHALL, TARSUS Coordinator

I am pleased to start my first full year at the helm of TARSUS, and greatly appreciate the kind responses to my last view from the helm.

Many thanks to Elizabeth Jolley and Jessika Hodgson for coming to my rescue as editors of *Signals from TARSUS* I am sure they will do a great job and be a great

improvement on my effort. Thanks also to those that offered help, articles and donations so that we can continue.

I would also like to thank those that made the effort to fill in the survey with the last issue of SFT. The results say a lot for the work of my predecessor Dave Thewlis, in that the vast majority of you were happy with TARSUS as it is and would not like to see any major changes. Some of you expressed the wish for a chance at some events in which to meet other members, and offered to try to arrange these. I think this would be great, the biggest problem being the scattered locations of our members. I would be pleased to furnish lists to those interested of members in their state or neighboring states with a view to arranging something. I know this has been tried in the past with limited success, however even if they contact other members to exchange views and perhaps talk Ransome it would be nice.

With get-togethers in mind, I had a suggestion from Rob Boden editor of Outlaw that he had heard from a number of TARSUS members of a wish to go to the lakes and see the places in the books. He suggested that if we could get a group together he might be able to find accommodation and guides from members living there. The 2012 IAGM will be there again, however it is a very busy holiday period and he felt another time would be better. If there is enough interest perhaps something could be arranged.

In other news: last year a gentleman by the name of Clint Heitman contacted me about some of Arthur Ransome's very rare nature books he had unearthed. He had made very good digital images of every page and illustration and asked what he should do to get them to the Society. I directed him to Dave Thewlis and they together with permission of the literary estate have come up with a presentation of pdf's of all three books at All things Ransome: <http://www.allthingsransome.net/literary/naturebooks.html> I strongly urge you to take a look.

Another important thing of note is you will be able soon to pay your dues online. There is to be a PayPal account available at our website: <http://arthur-ransome.org> and new members and those renewing will be able to do so without the need of sending checks. This will also mean members can get the current exchange rate \$ to £ instead of paying the fixed rate as it is at present. It can be used for IAGM and Literary weekend bookings or donations. Several members expressed concern as the currencies are fluctuating considerably at the moment and feel the current system was a little unfair, so this should make it more even.

Renewals are my other concern: There are still a number of members who have not yet renewed and I would remind them that the rolls will be purged in May so this could be your last Signals from TARSUS together with the other publications. Let it not be Farewell and Adieu.

We welcome new members: Mr. R Logan of Austin, TX; Vincent Tornatore of Geneva, IL; Ruby Elbert of Baltimore, MD and returning member Charlotte Michel-Brown and family of Redding CA.

Wishing you all a wonderful spring and summer, with a chance of some Ransome-like adventures.

Swallows and Amazons Forever,
Robin

Friendly Natives—Short bios from our membership

GERARD MITTELSTAEDT:

I have been a member of TARSUS for a comparatively short time (only a few years.) Actually I should introduce myself....

I am Gerard Mittelstaedt, 60 years old, married father of 2 children, one grown (35 yrs) the other now 14 and in Boy Scouts. With mixed success I have taught both to sail in small dinghies (actually Winnard Sabot hulls with home-made Optimist-style sprit rigs). Down through the ages I have built several small boats, and enjoy doing so almost as much as sailing them. My wife, Mona, sometimes sails with me, but prefers sailing in Laguna Madre as she is prone to seasickness when offshore.

I was introduced to 'The Swallows and Amazons' when I was a child, by a librarian in San Antonio, Texas where the family lived 1958-1963. (Dad was in US Air Force and we moved a lot.) I read as many books from Ransome's series as I could get my hands on. I convinced my dad to buy a small sailboat (an 8ft. pram) and we learned to sail together. Later moves took us to Keesler AFB, which is in Biloxi, MS. Dad and I finished building a 16ft Prout catamaran there. I really enjoyed sailing on the back bay there, using the recreational dock facilities at the air base.

After graduating from University of Texas, Austin I worked for Western Geophysical on a survey boat in the Gulf of Mexico for a year. It was mostly great fun, but not a way of life for me. I went back to University, took some courses in Library Science and a basic computer course (programs written on punch cards!) and got a job at the Rosenberg Library, the Public Library in Galveston, where I bought and lived on a 30 ft. Tahiti ketch. Then after a year and a half shifted to McAllen, TX (where my parents lived) to the Public Library there. After a few years went back to University for the needful Masters Degree in Library Science. I wandered about for a few months, mostly the length of the east coast of USA from Maine to Florida visiting most of the maritime museums on the way having a big vacation before becoming employed again. I found my way home to Texas and a job back at the McAllen Memorial Library. Over time I worked my way up to the Directorship where I worked for some 27 more years and retired 2 years ago.

So there you have it. I am a retired librarian with a great feeling for sailing small boats, and building small boats, who happens to be a Scoutmaster for Troop 583. I find that TARSUS has members widely scattered, and that is a little frustrating. I would like to meet and talk Ransome and small sailboats some time with like-minded people. I maintain a website at <http://www.stexboat.com> which is a hobby website of mine. Here I put my ramblings about small boats, etc. One part which may be of more interest is at http://www.stexboat.com/mini_voyages/mini_voyages.htm which describes some of my wanderings in small boats.

Kanchenjunga's Cairn—Places We've Been & Our Adventures While There

I Did Mean to Go to Sea, Chapter 2 **By Pete O'Neill**

Editor's Note: This is the second installment of a true sea tale that began in the Dec./Jan. 2009 issue of Signals from TARSUS.

After Alan's big toe was punctured by the conch shell, the skipper began applying Neosporin and bandages. We couldn't be too careful.

Reinforced trade winds of 25-30 knots kept us hunkered down behind the dodger. At least we were dry. But the autopilot broke for the second time -- seemed to have the nasty habit of shearing off a particular pin. We had no spares as they didn't arrive before we left Hawaii, but we had some brass rod that with some filing and sanding could be made to work, at least temporarily.

I changed the lure on the troll line and within minutes we had pulled a nice mahi mahi on deck. I was the cook, so I put on some brown rice with raisins to boil, put some butter and garlic in a pan, and eagerly took the filets as they were passed down to me. That was some meal.

Day four dawned cloudy and windy as we continued our thousand-mile beat to weather. The day passed uneventfully, almost, with most of us doing some reading. I was just about to start preparing our second fish dinner provided by the unlucky mahi mahi, when a loud bang resonated through the boat. Tom yelled, "Skipper, the furling jib broke!"

We raced on deck to see the bottom end with the drum flailing around madly. "Turn down wind!" the skipper ordered while we tackled the end of the furling jib. The main and mizzen were eased out, and the pressure was off the headstay. A quarter-inch-thick stainless steel tang had snapped off right above the deck. Fortunately, the tang for the original headstay was still in place, so we pulled the spinnaker halyard into that position, put some tension on it and checked the mast as best we could in the fading light.

Firing up the little Yanmar diesel barely above an idle, we brought her into the wind again and dropped the main and mizzen. Falling off the wind we cut the motor, and to our surprise found ourselves sailing along at two knots (in the wrong direction). We pulled another halyard into service not wanting to rely on just the one, and as it was now fully dark, I returned to the galley to finish preparing the fish dinner I had started hours earlier. Morning would bring a reassessment and a big decision.

After dinner we dragged out all the spare parts boxes. We knew the headstay was intact, but would need to be lengthened to reach the original tangs attachment point. We had an additional turnbuckle and shackles of every size and description. So we set aside the most likely candidates for the task at hand and turned in for the night. I doubt the skipper slept very well; I know I didn't.

First light found us checking things out, and not finding any particular damage, other than the bow pulpit had just about been torn out of the deck, we ate breakfast and the skipper and I began the puzzle of jury-rigging the headstay attachment. We finally assembled the right combination of shackles in a chain, and with both turnbuckles extended all the way, made the attachment and tightened both.

On checking our parts book to see the strength of our weakest link, we determined it was 3,500 pounds breaking strength. The skipper estimated the tang that broke was something over 8,000 pounds, so we were considerably under-gunned. I thought the skipper would want to return to Hawaii for a proper repair; we were only three days away and it was all downwind. I was wrong.

We raised a single-reefed main, the mizzen, and a small jib on a somewhat sagging headstay and resumed our beat northward. It had taken all day, and it was late afternoon when I went below to take stock of supplies for dinner preparation. I didn't know what Captain Flint would have done, but I knew I was not happy. I couldn't even have imagined how much more interesting the trip was to become. Stay tuned.

Wouldn't Nancy Have Loved it?

By Kate Crosby

“Thunder and lightning,” said Nancy Blackett, “what a chance we missed. If we'd only known we'd have given you broadside for broadside till one of us sank, even if it had made us late for lunch.”

Well, here at the Ocean Cruising Club's June cruise we are at war all right. Eleven yachts are steaming up the Patuxent River in Southern Maryland* to re-create the Battle of St Leonard's Creek, originally fought in June 1814 – a small skirmish in the War of 1812. Then Royal Navy Captain Robert Barrie, aboard HMS *St Lawrence*, a captured and renamed schooner, took on U.S. Commodore Joshua Barney with his flotilla of specially-built shallow draft barges.

Today at 13.00 hours the horn blows, the Q flags zip to the crosstrees and 'British' yachts *Fabula*, *Lucky Star*, *Catspaw*, *Havsvind* and *Ru'Ah* head into the creek at the statutory 1200 rpms.**

A Brit for real, I am aboard *Lucky Star*, a Bavaria 36, Captain Andrew Gantt, Mate Digna Gantt, in the lead as we advance. (As a bit of psychological warfare Andrew has ordered us to hang out every last fender on both sides – collisions likely? Some of these yachts have many cherished coats of varnish that they won't want to get scratched!) Immediately American *Bramare* shoots up on our starboard side. I'm singing loudly: “What Shall We Do With the Drunken Sailor?”, the only battle cry I can think of. Digna and I are on the foredeck with slingshots and a bucket of ammo. Onions and potatoes fly in all directions. “There's your dinner on the deck, Yves,” Digna shouts rudely as she scores a good potato hit on *Bramare*'s midships. This engagement with *Bramare* has enabled the rest of our lot to slip past and up the creek in battle line. American Tom Kenney singlehanded *Cherie* skilfully scores a few hits with a loaded sawn-off plastic

funnel and a length of surgical hose. Other Americans swirl around and Tony and Liz Jones aboard MV *Nonesuch* are meant to be refereeing, but admit later that they can't see much. Then before we know it, the VHF hisses and it's all over. The Brits have captured the flag! Hurray! Sneaky Wolfgang from Ru'Ah slipped through the blockade in his dinghy right under the American noses! Nothing in the rules about not using the dinghy.

"In naval warfare," said John, remembering a well-known book, "two things are important. To know exactly what you want to do and to do it in the manner that your enemy least expects." Precisely. And we weren't even that late for lunch.

Our cruise has been punctuated by briefings from OCC Rear Commodore and naval historian Fred Hallett. The real battle of St Leonard's Creek took several days and pretty much ended in a draw.

Commodore Joshua Barney later reported the *St. Lawrence* "was nearly destroyed, having several shot through her at the water's edge; her deck torn up, gun dismantled, and mainmast nearly cut off about half way up, and rendered unserviceable."



Barrie's armed gig "was cut in two; a shot went through the rocket boat; one of the small schooners carrying the thirty two pounders had a shot which raked her from aft foreward." However despite his naval triumph Barney was still bottled up in the creek .

He later had to empty, burn and scuttle his barges and head inland to defend Washington. Barney was wounded in the leg and died (probably as a result) 4 years later. He was a real Nancy Blackett hero. Went to sea at 12, had to assume command at 14 when his captain died in Mid Atlantic, commissioned as a Lieutenant at 17, captured 3 times, escaped twice, paroled once, volunteered again at 53. Giminy!

Battle over, we rejoin forces and head across the river to a native settlement. Sotterly Plantation stands on a hill looking down across hayfields to the Patuxent. It's a beguiling house in a stunning position. It has a long and interesting history, and somehow escaped being raided by the British in the Chesapeake during the War of 1812. At that time the house was painted red – thought to be a secret message to the invaders that the inhabitants were British sympathizers.

Now Digna and I look at the neat houses, peaceful lawns running down to the waterside, stars and stripes on every flagpole. How different it must have been for those combatants nearly 200 years ago. And yet: "Capt. Harry Smith felt awed at the passage of the British ships up the tortuous Patuxent, which he described as being lined with "immense forest trees. The appearance was that of a large fleet stalking through a wood."*** So at least they'd recognize the deep green woods, the herons and ospreys wheeling in and out of the tree tops, the occasional ray spurting along the surface of the water. And to close the loop, it was the dredging of the river for just such private house docks that brought up the timbers of Barney's scuttled barges and started asking questions about the forgotten Battle of St Leonard's Creek.

"All the best sea fights end in a banquet", said Captain Flint.

Ours did too.



*38 23.1 N 76 30.17W. NOAA chart # 12264, Maryland, Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River & vicinity.

** Rules of Engagement (thanks to Fred Hallett and Andrew Gantt)

Ordnance: To keep injuries repairable by normal first aid, and to be politically correct from an environmental point of view, all ammunition will be biodegradable and such that you would not mind having hit your own ship or person. (e.g., pretzel nuggets, small potatoes, small onions, dog biscuits, etc.). Propellant devices will be non-explosive (e.g. slingshots, catapults, pitching arms, etc). Mercenaries may be stationed in the rigging.

Rules: The goal of the battle will be: 1) for the English to be able to capture the American battle flag, located on a dinghy anchored upstream of the entrance to St. Leonard's Creek in a location easily visible from the main channel; 2) for the Americans to prevent this from occurring.

Consistent with the circumstances of the original battle, all vessels may be maneuvered either under sail, by rowing, or by using any other propulsive devices which may be installed thereon. British vessels will limit engine rpms to 1200.

When an attacking ("British") boat is hit on any part of the hull, sails, standing rigging or crew thereof it must immediately cease firing and execute a 360 degree turn in a safe direction, not resuming firing until it has returned to its original heading. When a defending ("American") boat is hit on any part of the hull, sails or standing rigging or crew thereof it must cease firing for one minute, timed by the senior officer aboard.

Collisions between vessels will immediately disqualify both and are to be studiously avoided. During this battle, American participants may shout taunts, make threatening gestures, speculate on the parentage of British forces, etc. provided only that such communications are not obscene as defined by the U.S. Supreme Court. British forces, on the other hand, must keep a stiff upper lip.

Boarding opposing vessels is not permitted. The attacking vessel capturing the flag will announce this on Ch 72, and this will end the battle. If no attacker has succeeded one hour after the first shot, all vessels will cease fire and the opposing Admirals will decide the matter by an arm wrestling match at Vera's. If either Admiral declines to arm wrestle, he may buy his opponent a drink and propose, (and his counterpart must accept) as an alternate settlement method a best two out of three "Rock, Paper, Scissors."

*** Terror on the Chesapeake The War of 1812 on the Bay Christopher T. George
White Mane Books Shippensburg, PA. 2000.

Dear Elizabeth Jolley,

I am a member of TARS from America. I want to send you an article to put in the next SIGNALS magazine. It is an article about when my sister and I came over to England to go to the Lake District with our grandfather (Gdad) and our grandmother (Nooey).

My grandfather and I decided that today we were going to climb The Old Man of Coniston (Kanchenjunga).



Our author, her sister & grandfather below "Kanchenjunga"

My grandmother didn't want to climb it so she waited in the car as we started to walk up. For a while we walked on a small and hilly area but then it became steeper and steeper. Finally we came to where Goat's Water was in sight. When we walked up right next to the water we found out we had to climb over very slippery rocks to get to the steep, slate steps. We fumbled and slipped on the rocks until finally we came to the steps. When we had climbed half way up we had to take a rest for my little sister. Then when we had finished our 5 minute rest we started up again. We went into a cloud and my hair got very, very wet. In the cloud we couldn't see a thing and we had to hold on to each other while we passed through a very narrow area. We were near the top now as we followed the huge lumps of slats that my grandfather told me were there to lead lost climbers to the top.

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Finally we reached the top, Lunchtime. We called my mom (who was in London with my 2 other sisters) from the top as we ate our lunches.

My grandfather had been there earlier in the season with his friend (who we call Captain Flint) and they had left a message up there for us to find. We found it and then headed back down the mountain and the cloud was too thick to see anything. We tried following the map back down but ended up almost rock climbing. We finally got down in one piece.



Calling London from the top!

I hope you pick this article to be in the next SIGNALS.

*Thank you,
Isabel Aey, Age 10,
Ohio, USA*

Ship's Library—Other books we've read and wish to share

The Green Knowe Books, by L. M. Boston

From member **MOLLY MCGINNIS**

Green Knowe is a house – or more of an estate really—on a river. A great-grandmother lives there, and Tolly, the youngest of the family that built Green Knowe many hundreds of years ago, and boys and girls who drift in and out of their time through a few hundred years. Sometimes they bring their tame animals and pets, and sometimes there is very strange company.

You don't need to read the books in order, really, though it might be more fun that way. The third book, *The River at Green Knowe*, is all about adventures on the river that runs by Green Knowe. The children explore in a canoe and make a map – it's rather like *Secret Water* in that way—and the places and people they find are quite extraordinary!

Amazon.com has all the books in softcover at about \$7 apiece, and the unabridged audiobooks (CD and download), read by Simon Knowles, are lovely too. The print books are illustrated by Boston's son Peter. Maybe the stories started out being written for him, the way *Swallows and Amazons* started out being for the Altounyan children.

1. The Children of Green Knowe

Tolly comes to Green Knowe in a rowboat – the river has come over its banks all the way to the house! It's his first time in the house that will be his one day. His great-grandmother Oldknow tells him stories... or are they stories... they seem to come alive sometimes... have the children in the picture slipped through time to Tolly, or has he slipped into their time?

2. The Treasure of Green Knowe

Granny is running out of money to keep Green Knowe in repair – indeed, to keep Green Knowe. Some very bad happenings a few hundred years ago left a hoard of coins and jewels ... somewhere... did the fire that took the addition burn up the treasure? Or...

3. The River at Green Knowe

Granny and Tolly are off voyaging, and an archaeologist and her friend are renting the house for the summer, and write for two refugee children (from the wars of that time – they could as well be from wars of this time). They get them, Ping and Oscar and Ida, not a refugee but a niece to take care of them all, and turn the three loose on the river. Their exploring finds the most extraordinary and possibly, sometimes, magical, places and people.

4. A Stranger at Green Knowe

And such a stranger! It's Ping's story, and it starts with Ping making a friend in the London Zoo...

5. An Enemy at Green Knowe

She's looking for something... something hidden at Green Knowe... and you know that anyone named Melanie Powers is up to no good! Tolly and Ping's wits are tested at every turn as plagues and destruction are set upon Green Knowe in the witch's search.

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6. The Stones of Green Knowe

The story of the building of the oldest part of the house, more than 800 years ago – but as always at Green Knowe, time folds and drifts upon itself (we find out why... sort of...), and all the children of the house – Tolly and Ping, Toby, Alexander and Linnet, Susan and Jacob, -- come into the story too.

Note for parents: children who read the Ransome books by themselves (or partly read to and partly on their own) are probably ready for these, and they are very good to read aloud to children who aren't quite ready to handle the English richness and complexities of the stories. The subtexts of the books after the first are very dark in places, and the satire of the academic and her fluffy friend in *River* is sharp and (like the hints about the Lady of *Treasure*) a bit racy. Some characters (and sometimes animals and things) are evil and bad in complex and all too believable ways – plenty to hold your interest as you read them aloud, and if you still reread the Ransome books you most likely will have to read Boston for yourself too. The vignettes of villagers and the hired help are very reminiscent of Ransome's vivid pictures of farm people and miners and eelers and charcoal burners, and the satires upon the academic are – to anyone who's been one—rib-splitting.

There are two fairly well-known books for younger children, too: *Castle of Yew* and *The Sea Egg*, and two (at least?) memoirs by Lucy Maria Boston, which tell of herself and her affair with the house she wrote of as Green Knowe: *Perverse and Foolish* and *Memory in a House*. Out of print but worth looking for. Miss Boston lived nearly a hundred years and made the most of them.

Sea Bear's Galley—Puddings, Biscuits & more

Squashed Fly Biscuits (Garibaldi Currant Cookies)

Take these on a hike or camping expedition this summer!



“...One tin of biscuits...”

“Can I tear the paper off?” said Roger. “Good. Garibaldi. That’s squashed flies. What about opening this box? We’re bound to want to....”

Counting stores, Secret Water, Chapter Five

Squashed Fly Biscuits recipe

Ingredients: 1/3 cup dried currants or chopped raisins
1 cup plain flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup butter, softened
1/4 cup white sugar
1/8 to 1/4 cup milk

Stir flour, baking powder and salt in a mixing bowl. Rub butter in lightly until no lumps remain. Stir in sugar. Add milk to make a stiff dough, then turn onto a floured board. Pat it down and roll into a rectangular shape 1/8 inch thick. Cut rectangle in half.

Sprinkle on half evenly with the fruit, then cover with the other piece of dough. Roll the layered dough again until 1/8 inch thick, keeping it as rectangular as possible. Cut into even squares and bake on a greased pan at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for about 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes about 1 dozen. Best with a large mug of steaming tea!

Written out and tested (yum!) by Jane Rondthaler, Portland, Oregon

Captain Flint's Trunk—items of interest members are willing to sell, share or lend

Books in very good condition for sale:

Arthur Ransome and the world of Swallows and Amazons

The Best of Childhood

Bohemia in London

Chimes from a wooden bell

In Aleppo Once

Jibbooms and Bobstays

Ransome- Blue Water Sailing

Ransome in China 1927

Racundra's first Cruise

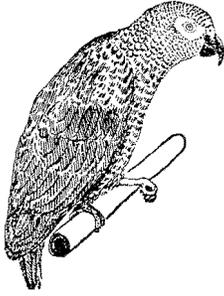
Ransome the Artist

Mixed Moss volume 1

All \$8.50 each; contact Carol Jones (386) 734 4043

Answers from the Winter Holiday Quiz in the last issue— How did YOU do?

- 1—12
- 2—Silas
- 3—The paper wrapper from Dicks star book
- 4—Mars
- 5—“I don’t believe they are in distress at all”
- 6—A Black Diamond
- 7—Diamond over a North Cone
- 8—To go and stop the Doctor
- 9—The fourth day
- 10—Yellow and Black squares
- 11—A Buzzards nest
- 12—The sheep had died and Mr. Dixon and Silas were making a coffin
- 13—Spitzbergen
- 14—The Doctor
- 15—A Key
- 16—The Fram
- 17—Nansen
- 18—Farthest North
- 19—The S&A’s sailing their sledge
- 20—“Who is sleeping in the Fram?”
- 21—Ringman
- 22—A Dutchman
- 23—Tulip Bulbs
- 24—Two figures resembling Dick and Dot signaling D
- 25—A pint of that night’s milk and a dozen eggs
- 26—“TRESPASSERS will be hanged like the last”
- 27—So that it would sail
- 28—The flag at Beckfoot—Nancy had told Dick that was the signal and he had put it in his notebook
- 29—The wind came up, and started sailing
- 30—“Passed cache island going north February 10th D.D.”
- 31—The D’s signaling NP
- 32—To be opened by the first to reach the pole
- 33—Captain Flint and Mrs. Blackett



Pieces of Eight



The Junior Pages

Edited by Jessika Hodgson, Mackenzie Reid, and Mikaela Springsteen

Introductions



Jessika:

Hi! I'm Jessika Hodgson, and I'm going to be co-editor of Pieces of Eight with Mikaela and Mackenzie. Here's a bit about myself:

I'm thirteen; my birthday is August 7th (near Bridgie's in the books). I have one sister and three brothers. I like to read, write, camp, explore, and travel (and a lot of other things, too). My favorite *Swallows and Amazons* character is Titty.

I live in Palmer Lake, Colorado, right in the foothills. Yes, there is a lake here, but no boating or swimming is allowed. There is fishing, though. And lots of hiking.

I first read *Swallows and Amazons* when I was eleven. My aunt had given us the first two books, and my mom finally convinced me to read them. I actually thought they were the only books in the series; when I finished *Swallowdale*, thinking there were no more, I yelled and hit my pillow on the floor so hard it ripped in half (I have the temper of Nancy Blackett). I sure was glad when I figured out there were more adventures!

If you'd like to contact me, my email address is: creativejessika@msn.com
and my mailing address is: PO Box 803
Palmer Lake, CO 80133

I hope you enjoy Pieces of Eight! ☺

Mikaela:

Hi! My name is Mikaela. I am 12 years old and live in NJ. I have an older sister and a Portuguese Water Dog. My grandpa got me started on Swallows and Amazons and is also in TARSUS. I enjoy doing many different things including boating, sailing, fishing, water tubing, hiking, camping and exploring in the summer. In the winter I like to go skiing and sledging. My dad and I built the sledge and christened her *Wildcat*. Year round I enjoy writing, reading, woodworking, and doing synchronized swimming. I hope you all like the first edition of Pieces of Eight and hope to hear from you!

Mackenzie:

Hello! My name is Mackenzie Reid and I am 14. Previous to 2007 I lived in the UK and was part of TARS. My family and I moved to Wilton, CT and instantly became members of TARSUS. I have been (I think it was 2006?) to the IAGM at Coniston, in the Lake District, where my sister and I had immense fun exploring Wild Cat Island, drinking grog, and visiting Holly Howe Farm. My mom introduced me to the books when I was about seven, and my favorite is definitely *Swallows and Amazons*. My Grandad used to teach in England, and then my Mom acquired the set of books. When she got a little older, she decided she didn't want them anymore; the school took them for use in the Library. After a while though, Mom decided she wanted the books back! Some had been ripped or even destroyed, but she took them all back. Our books are very special to our whole family, as they hold thousands of stories; by Ransome, and by lots of children and adults who have read them over the years. I cannot wait for the next issue of Signals to arrive! Remember; please conserve trees and energy by having it emailed to you!

Signals from Mars

(From Jessika)

I've always loved codes. They are fun, versatile, and have really interesting histories. Plus, they are really Swallows-and-Amazons-ish! I started collecting codes when I first read *Winter Holiday*, and now I have quite a few in my code book. Some of them I found in Swallows and Amazons books, some in Nancy Drew books and computer games, and some I made up myself. Some are really well-known and are everywhere, like Morse code. I think I'll start with Morse, in fact, so you don't have to end up like those poor earthlings, Dick and Dot.

Morse Code (Martian)

A .- B -... C -.-. D -.. E . F ..-. G --. H I .. J .---
K -.- L ... M -- N -. O --- P .--- Q ---. R .. S ... T -
U ..- V ...- W --- X -.- Y -.- Z ---
1 .---- 2 ..--- 3 ...-- 4- 5 6 -.... 7 -... 8 ---.. 9 ----. 0 -----

A dash should last the time of three dots, a space between letters should last the time of a dash, and a space between words should last the time of eight dots. To signal an error, do eight dots. When writing it, use a space or two between letters and a forward slash (/) between words. I know a lot more about Morse, so if you want more info you can email me.-- .- .-. .-. --- .-- .../ .- -. -./

Word Search

(Made by Mikaela)

J J Q P T P Z N B J R Q A
C N N G O I E J Z X S T M
A F A N O Y Q G F M W R A
P U S A F T Z O G M O E Z
T M U N K T J D I Y L G O
A I S C C I C R B B L O N
I J X Y E T R U B G A R S
N Y R D B D G M E B W Y F
F H J H C E W D R I S Y L
L B I K E W O H Y L L O H
I U R I A S C C E F H P F
N H H P H M Q J O H N A K
T M Y W Q E Y L L O P P E

Amazons
Beckfoot
Captain Flint
Gibber
Holly Howe
John
Nancy

Peggy
Polly
Roger
Susan
Swallows
Titty

From the Beckfoot Kitchen: Jamaica Rum

Well, I think you all probably know how to make common lemonade, or at least can get a recipe for very easily. However, you probably haven't tried *this* kind. It's a bit harder to make than normal lemonade, but it tastes AMAZING! Be careful with the stove or ask an AP to help, of course.

Sherbat

Ingredients:

2/3-3/4 cup honey

6 cups water

1 cup of lemon juice (about 5 lemons)

2 tablespoons rose water (found at Indian markets or health food stores)

1 tablespoon fresh grated ginger (optional)

Ice

Directions:

Squeeze juice from the 5 lemons and reserve juice.

In a saucepan, combine honey, lemon juice, 1 cup of the water, and the grated ginger. Heat until honey is dissolved.

Strain into pitcher, and mix in the remaining 5 cups of water, and the rose water.

Makes about 8 servings. Serve over ice.

For the Coot Club Log Book

(Jessika)

Lately I've been watching a little bird couple building a nest and laying eggs in our woodshed. I don't know what type of bird they are (I'm no Coot, sorry!); I think they might be finches. Anyway, for about a week I watched the male carry twigs and turn them into a nest inside a tube of flashing (window tape). I peeked inside the tube and saw it grow from a few twigs to a spiraled up basket with dryer lint for padding. I just had to take a picture! I kept putting it off until yesterday, when I looked into the nest and found... eggs! Two little pearly white eggs! I took a picture. Now today, I watched the female sitting on her nest. Our woodshed is right by our back screen door. Every time I moved, she saw me and flew away. I anxiously awaited her return, and she would take a while, and either come back on her own, or her mate would come in, see she was gone, leave, and come back a minute later chasing her. I had to hold my laughter in when that happened, or I would have scared them both away! I tried to get pictures of them, but they flew away if I opened the door, and I couldn't get a clear view through the door. I do have a picture of the eggs, though, and I'll put them in. I'll try to figure out what kind of birds they are. Maybe one of you knows. They are about 3 1/2 inches tall; the female is light brown, with a sort of tree bark pattern (like with darker speckles and dashes); the male is the same color background with a red head and breast. Do contact me if you know!



My photograph of the eggs in the nest ☺

Native Post—links to stuff you might want to know about

From member Molly McGinnis: Golden Bough, a splendid Celtic (British, etc) music group, has a CD called Pirate Gold. Available from:

www.goldenboughmusic.com

Pirate Gold Page:

www.goldenboughmusic.com/music/Pirate%20Gold/Pirate.htm

Real Piracy is much too gory to be approved by Ransome or, one hopes, young Ransome readers' parents, so I was happy to find this. Alas, no Spanish Ladies (wonder if they'd consider requests), but a wonderful Pirate Flag on the CD cover. Lyrics available by click for most of the songs, too.

Finally, here are some sections for future submissions—the next Signals from TARSUS will be published in September 2009. I look forward to your input! Elizabeth Jolley erjolley@aol.com

Dipping our Hands in the Lake—our personal relationships with the books

The Professor's Laboratory—ideas, instructions & fixes

Scotland Yard—members' explanations of the aspects of the books—coming in September, **Claire Barnett's** essay about the origins of the Houseboat!