



## Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News--May 2013

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## Ship's Papers--Important Information for the crew



### View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall, TARSUS Coordinator

First I would like to set members' minds at rest regarding membership issues: the current Signals from the UK had some out of date information about who had renewed and who had not: some members contacted me because they were not sure if they had renewed; some even sent checks again. Below I list members that according my records have not renewed yet; if your name is not on the list you have paid and are renewed until 2014:

Paula Jo Bauer	Julia Bishop	Alan Contreras	David Cory	Jeanette M. Dutton
Lisa Glade	Chip Hines	Alice Evans Tsen	Rosalie Keegan	William Michel
Richard Mills	Alene Patterson	Richard Preston	Nathaniel Schildbach	Theodor Schuchat
Shanty Slater	Janet Snow	Charles Sullivan	Katharine Torrey	

If your name is on the list but you have renewed via pay/pal or some other way let me know ASAP. There has been some confusion and delays in the UK, hence the problem. Some members who renewed online omitted to put their member number, so they have been in limbo while searches were made. I hope that a better system will be in place for next year.

By now most of you will know that production is about to start on the new movie "Swallows and Amazons", and that casting has started. Dan Stevens, who played Matthew Crawley in Downturn Abbey, is reported to play Uncle Jim (Captain Flint) in this new production. I think most of us have a picture in our minds from AR's writing and illustrations of a somewhat different looking character to Dan. We shall see. As the movie will be seen, we hope, by huge numbers of people who have never read the books it probably does not matter, as long as the movie is exciting and holds the audience's attention.

I would like to retire as TARSUS coordinator. I feel I have run out of wind to steer us on a new course. If someone has a desire to bring a new direction to TARSUS I would be pleased to hear from you. Currently it is a simple operation and does not take up much time. I am hoping that a fresh face and ideas will help TARSUS move ahead; with the movie on the horizon, it is a chance to promote TARSUS and gain new members. The other overseas regions seem to have been able to get their members more involved than we have; no doubt their geography has meant closer contact with each other. Maybe it is something a new helmsman could work on.

Finally please welcome new member Samuel Warner of St Paul, MN.

Have a great and enjoyable summer.

Robin



### Greetings From the North

By Ian Sacre, TARSCanada Coordinator

When Harry Miller told Canadian TARS members in the newsletter last autumn that he would like to be relieved as 'Officer of the Watch' after ten years in his role as the dedicated TARS Canada Coordinator, I hoped that the task would be rapidly snapped up by someone far more knowledgeable about Arthur Ransome than I. So it was somewhat capriciously that I wrote to Harry and mentioned that I might be able 'help' if no one else should come forward in the near future wanting the job. But for the life of me I never really thought I'd have to jump in with both feet when the signal came rapidly back from Harry saying there were No Takers! Thus here I am the new, floundering TARS Canada Coordinator at your service hoping I will not end up a duffer! Please bear with me as I struggle to learn all the ropes. Harry has done such a magnificent job over the years that his steady hand on the helm will be a very hard for me to copy.

First a little personal history: I received my first Arthur Ransome book, *Swallows and Amazons*, when I

was about ten, though I rather think I may have purloined it from my brother if the truth be told. I was immediately enthralled and captivated with the book, and remember reading it by flashlight under the bedclothes in the dormitory at boarding school when I was supposed to be asleep! Over the years the rest of the series followed as birthdays and Christmases came and went until I finally had the whole set. I think what appealed to me most about the stories, and still does, was their almost total realism; the fact that it would be possible for me to do all the things that the characters in the books were doing. Though Peter Duck and Misse Lee are two in the series that lack a certain plausible realism, my dislike for Latin at school allowed me to share at least that in common with the Walkers and Blacketts in China. And of course in the late 1930`s real pirates still did operate in the China Sea, as they also do today off the Horn of Africa.

After school, my rather wild imagination and thirst for adventure (influenced I am sure by the Arthur Ransome tales) led me to join the Merchant Navy, a serious childhood accident having prevented me from a career in the Royal Navy. After serving my time, I became a deck officer and finally a captain of foreign-going merchant ships. This was thankfully before the invention of the computer chip, when one had to establish one's position either by celestial observations, compass bearings or dead reckoning, etc. Electronic GPS simply could not be imagined. We communicated with other ships with an Aldis Lamp and radio traffic with shore stations was in Morse code. No faxes or emails to ruin one's day! We were left in peace to simply get on with it. Just prior to the start of my sea-going life, my family emigrated to Canada from Britain.

The years passed, all exciting, long voyages, good weather and bad, far away places with funny names, delivering cargoes of everything under the sun. Marriage, children and then after many years along came an offer to come ashore and join the Canadian Coast Guard, who were looking for people with commercial marine-seagoing experience. And so a change of tack took place, but one that still allowed me to play with ships and boats! What more could one ask? Coming ashore also allowed me more time to enjoy my various hobbies, which included sailing and building a number of small craft, camping and canoeing and then finally acquiring my own little ship, Gallivanter 111, an old 1964 dearly-loved ketch which I still have. She is as slow as molasses unless the wind is over 15 knots! Family and friends tease me and say that my garden looks a bit like a boat yard with its collection of dinghies, canoes and kayaks etc. So if any TARS members find themselves in Vancouver and needing to borrow a canoe I can certainly help.

Now on to TARS matters. I thought Canadian TARS members might be interested in knowing how our membership breaks down by Province and Territory:

Alberta	2	Newfound./Lab.	0	Nunavut	0	Quebec	2
British Columbia	5	North West Terr.	0	Ontario	15	Saskatchewan	1
Manitoba	1	Nova Scotia	2	Prince Edward Is.	0	Yukon	0
New Brunswick	1						

The member count is from the January 2013 list of members, and assumes everyone on the list has or intends renewing their membership. As can be seen we are rather few, but it seems our numbers have held fairly steady over the years. More importantly our enthusiasm for all things Tarry appears as strong as ever. It seems to me that there may be opportunities from time to time for some gamming or get-togethers when we find ourselves in each other's home waters. I echo the views of Robin Marshall, TARSUS Coordinator, on this subject, which he discussed in the January issue. Swapping yarns of personal S & A-like adventures over a meal would be delightful! I would like to extend a personal invitation to any Tarry friends planning a visit to my homeport to get in touch with me ahead of time so that we can plan something. Perhaps even sailing! In the same vein, if any one is planning an S & A-type adventure this year and would like company or assistance please let me know so that a signal can be sent to our crew. Who knows, there may be a pirate in hiding just waiting for the opportunity to swarm aboard and join the fray!

Wishing everyone fair winds and calm seas,  
Ian Sacré,

## Membership Information:

### **Member Benefits**

The descriptions below apply to **TARSUS** and **TARS Canada\*\*** only. Members in other countries receive the publications listed, with the exception of Signals from TARSUS, and pay their local equivalent of the UK prices. **Subscription prices will change to the higher amount listed under each category as of January 1, 2013:**

**FAMILY Member:**                **\$44.00 (2012)**                **\$62.75 (2013)**

Family Members receive the following publications:

Mixed Moss, the yearly Literary Magazine

Signals, the news from UK Regions and headquarters, and some overseas groups, three times per year

Outlaw, the newsletter for Junior members

Signals from TARSUS, the quarterly newsletter of TARSUS & TARS Canada.

With a Family Membership, it is necessary to register the names of all members of the family.

**ADULT Member:**                **\$52.50**

Adult Members receive Mixed Moss, Signals and Signals from TARSUS.

**SENIOR Member:**                **\$35.00**

Over 65 years of age you are eligible for Senior Membership & receive the same publications as Adult Members.

**STUDENT Member:**                **\$35.00**

Student members must be engaged in full-time study. They receive the same publications as Adult Members.

**JUNIOR Member:**                **\$17.50**

Junior members, under 17 years of age, receive Signals and Signals from TARSUS, plus Outlaw.

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**To apply for TARSUS membership, please complete the Application Form (next page).**

**Send it with your remittance to:**

**Robin Marshall 210 18th St NW Bradenton FL 34205-6845**

[robin@arthur-ransome.org](mailto:robin@arthur-ransome.org)

or join online at: <http://arthur-ransome.org/join/index>

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**To apply for TARS Canada membership, contact:**

**Ian Sacre 750 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5**

[gallivanterthree@telus.net](mailto:gallivanterthree@telus.net)

or join online at: <http://arthur-ransome.org/join/index>

**Renewal of Membership of  
THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY  
TARS US (United States) MEMBERS ONLY**

Subscriptions for the calendar year 2013 fall due on **1 January 2013**

**Please pay now while you remember** - and before we have to spend a lot of time and postage chasing you up, and **you** miss publications!

**Newcomers Exempt**

If you joined in October, November or December 2012 then your subscription covers 2013 and there is no need for further payment until January 2014.

**Pensioner/Senior status:** If you are 65 or over then you are eligible for the pensioner/Senior rates.

**Additional Voluntary Contribution**

The basic subscription, payable by all members, covers the basic operation of the Society, including all the benefits that each member can expect to receive. Any additional donations will be reserved for spending on additional activities or projects. This *may* include, for example: the TARS Library; the Ship's Baby Fund; making donations to outside bodies (such as the Nancy Blackett Trust or Horstead Centre); or helping to increase funding for regional "Books for Schools" schemes. Donations to TARSUS are also welcome to help with the newsletter and prizes for competitions or promotions.

Name:		Membership No:			
<b>*Types of Membership:</b>					
Junior (overseas up to age 16)	\$17.50	<input type="checkbox"/>		Family (overseas)	\$67.25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Student (any age in full-time education)	\$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/>		Pensioner (overseas 65+)	\$35.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Adult (overseas)	\$52.50	<input type="checkbox"/>		Corporate (overseas)	\$105.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Additional Voluntary Contribution</u></b>		Please use my contribution as follows:			
\$		_____ (You may indicate more than one use; if you do please advise the proportion to go to each. If you leave this blank the Trustees will decide how to allocate your contribution.)			
<b>TOTAL</b> Subscription + Additional <u>Voluntary</u> Contribution (if any) \$					

Please make cheques (in US Dollars) payable to **The Arthur Ransome Society** and send with this sheet to: **Robin Marshall**  
**210 18<sup>th</sup> St NW**  
**Bradenton, FL 34205-6845 phone (941)896-9169**  
**email: robin@arthur-ransome.org**

**IMPORTANT:** For those who prefer you can now pay by **PayPal** with a **credit card** at [http://tarseast.co.uk/TARS\\_Subscription\\_Renewals.html](http://tarseast.co.uk/TARS_Subscription_Renewals.html) Be sure to have your **member number** ready, and remember to check the **overseas member** box. If you have any questions please contact Robin Marshall.

If you have made arrangements to pay by **BANK STANDING ORDER**, please ensure that the amount of the order corresponds to the appropriate subscription rate shown here. If your membership status has changed (e.g.: from Junior to Student on reaching age 16) during the past year, please let Robin Marshall know the details. Otherwise no action is needed on your part to renew your membership and there is no need to return this sheet. However should you wish to make a voluntary contribution in addition to your regular membership payment please use this form and return as above.

## **TARSUS, TARS Canada & TARS Leadership Information**

TARSUS Coordinator: **Robin Marshall** [robin@arthur-ransome.org](mailto:robin@arthur-ransome.org)  
210 18th Street NW Bradenton, FL 34205

*US Members, please contact Robin Marshall with your questions, concerns or ideas--he will forward your e-mail or letter to the appropriate board member.*

TARS Canada Coordinator: **Ian Sacre** [gallivanterthree@telus.net](mailto:gallivanterthree@telus.net)  
750 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5

*Canada Members, please contact Ian Sacre with your questions, concerns or ideas--he will forward your e-mail or letter to the appropriate board member.*

Signals from TARSUS Editor: **Elizabeth Jolley** [erjolley8@gmail.com](mailto:erjolley8@gmail.com)  
675 NW 114th Ave. Portland, OR 97229

*All Members--Please send your articles & ideas for articles for Signals from TARSUS to Elizabeth any time--she will publish articles when there is space.*

### **TARS--The Arthur Ransome Society:**

President: Gabriel Woolf  
Chairperson: Elizabeth Haworth  
Deputy-Chairperson: Bill Johnson  
Company Secretary: Mike Glover  
Membership Secretary: David Middleton  
Asst. Membership Secretary:  
Treasurer & NBT liaison: Ted Evans  
TARS Library: Winifred Wilson  
TARS Stall: (in progress)  
Signals Editor: David Middleton  
Outlaw Editor: Peter Aitchison  
Mixed Moss Editor: Nick Hancox  
Overseas Member Rep: Iain Khan-Gilchrist  
Trustee: Roger James  
Trustee: Doug Faunt  
Trustee: Christopher Kirwin

### **Other Overseas Coordinators:**

Australia: Janet Allen  
New Zealand: Cheryl Paget  
Japan: Mikako Tarashima

**TARS Website has a new address:** <http://www.arthur-ransome.org.uk>

Check it out!

**All Things Ransome**, a website devoted to keeping articles, artwork, and anything related to Ransome, is online at: <http://www.allthingsransome.net>

You can find the full archives of *Signals from TARSUS/Canada* on this site--fun reading!



**Response to the letters (in previous issue) about the difficulty in reading AR's books aloud, due to British usage and especially Titty's name:**

Hello from a junior member in California!

I saw the letter from the grade 3 (I think that's about the same age as here?) teacher in *Signals from TARS US/Canada* yesterday, and thought if she'd like to read the stories to her class she could change 'Titty' to 'Tatty' from the Titty Mouse and Tatty Mouse story where the real Mavis got her nickname:

[http://www.allthingsransome.net/literary/tit\\_tat.htm](http://www.allthingsransome.net/literary/tit_tat.htm)

As for the language differences, I never thought there was anything really confusing about them, though I'm not sure I would have made it past a certain illustration in *Peter Duck* if I hadn't known what 'squashed flies' were! The picture was of a shoebox size container marked 'squashed flies'--gross if you don't know! Of course, the differences provide a perfect excuse for mass quantity squashed fly buying! ;-) I think a simple explanation of 'tins = cans' whenever something comes up would be enough! I've always enjoyed learning the British versions of words, and I thought it was especially fun at elementary school age.

About a 'Canadian-ized' edition, that would make me very sad. Watering things down for younger/foreign people is a bit insulting--I'm still not over The Sorcerer's Stone--and changing a few things would feel clumsy and take away from the original charm. American editions for me have always really hurt; not only do they imply 'you don't know this,' they also have a feel of 'you are incapable of ever knowing this' and I think limiting people in that way almost does the opposite of its intention by never bringing it to attention that there *are* differences at all. Swallows and Amazons is about adventuring, so why limit readers by giving them an edition that has had a few changes to make it 'easier' for them to comprehend?

- Deirdre Iams-McGuire, junior member from California

**Editor's Note:** *Please always feel free to send in your responses to articles/stories/pictures--I will be happy to publish them in the next issue!*

## **Ship's Library--books we've read and want to share**

**Editor's Note:** *This 'yarn', as the author describes it, is in rough draft version so far, but plans are lined up to create a final draft and publish the story. We are privileged to be able to read the beginning of the story here, and you may use this link to read the rest of the rough draft:*

<http://www.dcta.com/probono/mysteryofthegreyhorse.html>

*The author sends this summary, so you can get a feel for the completed story:*

Out on the calm harbor floats the abandoned hull of a beautiful and mysterious ship. For Roe, Davie and their friends of the fishing village of Horrowith Head it proves to be an irresistible playground full of the remnants of romantic voyages and distant countries. Roe's determination to save the wreck from imminent destruction triggers a chain of events that quickly embroil her family, friends and the people of the village in an international intrigue.

Roe's life is rich with the comfort of the familiar. She has watched the people of the town solve their problems over the Saturday card game, helped her mother make thousands of apple pies and caught rides home on the immortal farm machine "The non-running tractor" but all of this has to be left behind when she realizes that she has to own up to and correct a selfish act. Roe must make the leap to responsibility in a dangerous and frightening situation and find the friends, family and total strangers who can help her.

Here is a yarn of a girl in love with a ship, a dark mystery, kidnappings, lost treasure and foreign princes, all set in a world so close to ours that we could almost sail there ourselves.

# The Mystery of the Grey Horse

By Michael Greiner

## Part 1: Of Names and Claims

The small ship had lovely lines, there was no denying it, but wind, weather and weeds had taken hold of her and now neglected and at anchor she was fast becoming a rotting wreck. The state of her mainsail and staysail, the only canvas on her spars, told much about her past and predicted with a degree of certainty her future. The storms had left mere rags and there were no supplies of sail or timber within a thousand miles that were not bespoke by the navy. She was certainly not a navy ship. Small and low, she had a single deck that could never be fitted with enough cannon to make her a serious threat. White streaks down the masts and standing rigging showed she had been a perch for seagulls ever since she had come to shelter behind the tall cliffs of the harbor. A closer look would reveal that she had been stripped of all portable salvage. Guns, belaying pins and even her nameplates were gone where patches of wood less faded showed on her bow and stern. The carved figurehead of a horse, once brightly painted, now weathered and grey, sat low under the bowsprit and disarrayed ends of rope rigging and tackle hung over it like cobwebs. Still, there was something about her, like the profile of a sea bird, which spoke of speed and grace. A shipwright would have known her lines in an instant for she was the daughter of generations of craftsmanship. Once fast and agile, now she wallowed slightly in the swell of the harbor and perch and bracken snails fed in the long beard of seaweed growing from her bottom. As the tide turned she shifted away from the land, swinging around on her green anchor cables to come to a halt at the position she would occupy for the next six hours. High up the shadow of the mainmast moved around the little platform as slanting sunlight passed briefly over the maintop.

Roe ran the trail, bare feet that had often taken the cliff path in the dark needing no caution, slowed only a little by the climb, panting and slightly dizzy. 'Fish or clams, in the sack, grab the dinner, come on back.' Mother was the rhymer of the family, had the memory for it. Roe could do it a little. The trail came out on the headland before dropping back down to the gully where Homehouse sheltered from the south winds. The view was best from here and the smell of sun warmed rock and yarrow made time slow to where your pulse could call up eternity. The natural shelter of the head was the whole reason for the little town, the fishing boats anchored, docked or pulled up on the stony beach were safe from all but the worst storms. Down the sheer cliff of the head and almost below her now, back toward the town was the ship, her ship, the ship that nobody wanted.

The card game was one of the long-standing traditions of Horrowith Head. Nobody knew when the game was first played but as traditions go it was as regular as church, and the rules were strange and changeable. One needed a sense of humor and a measure of humility to play, as jokes and good-natured traps were often enacted and were in keeping with the spirit of the game. Odd new rules were sometimes agreed to prior to play, though some rules were strictly held traditions. For instance the winner was required to pay for the drinks. If the game was a long one with many thirsty contestants the tab might well wipe out the winnings and sometimes people did play badly to avoid being stuck with the bar bill. One day the ante was a bottle cap and although the entire pot was fifty-three bottle caps the players went at it as though there were lives depending on the outcome. By tradition the looser always put up the first bet of the game the following Saturday and this set the ante and the amount any player was allowed to bet during the game. The rest of the players had to match the value of the ante to play. Anything the group agreed upon could be put up as ante, except paper money. Although once Billybee did bring in fifty pounds in fifty pence coins in an attempt to get Gene Hecker to put in one of his litter of Marsh Hound pups. Poor Gene reluctantly agreed in order to stay in the game. The pups represented a large part of his income and everybody knew it. There was a good crowd that day and as usual people watched, helped, cheated, gave bad advice, drank and flirted. The game ran into the afternoon and in the end, with a bit of help from nearly everybody, Gene came out the winner. This more than paid for a pup so out of goodwill Gene gave one to Billybee. Billybee gratefully bought all the drinks. It was often like that; the game had a way of bringing out the gossip, tensions and problems of the town. Sometimes it even solved them.



Ever since the previous winter, through the spring, summer and now fall the ship had been a part of her world. Together with her brother Davie and their friends Jim and Tim they had looked down on her from the headlands every day as they walked to and from school. On weekends and even some evenings they rowed out to her to explore. When the ship had first arrived it had been exciting. The Navy ship towed her in and then stayed in the harbor for three days. The faces of the men were hard, they had strange words and accents like travelers. There were large piles of rope and salvage at the quayside. Bob Hastings and Goso and some of the other fishermen had worked beside Captains Stedman and Jameson and the Navy men and were well paid and were also given gear in exchange for their labor. Doc Thomas had given Roes mother Mazzie a good raincoat, taken in trade for “splintering” the arm of a sailor, though she was a bit mystified as to why this needed to be done. The Pub had been busy and Mother had forbidden her to go for a whole week. That was almost a year ago now and things were back to normal. Roe had a wooden letterbox with a heart on the top that a sailor had carved. She had filled it and a fish crate with loot from the ship. For the longest time nobody called the ship by her real name except her, her brother and the Facker boys. Everyone just called her “The Ship” but Roe had heard a couple of the sailors laughing outside the Crown and Cup and they had called her “the old Grey Horse”.

\* \* \*

*The Powers are in a breath of air, the quiet shift of the tide, the flight of a gull. Fragile as a petal on a pool, the passing backwards glance of a girl or the time it takes a stone to skip. Rant, rave and toil, all our plans and efforts are nothing to them. Those who have been in love know their whimsy and caprice and indeed something of their strength. Like staring too long at the sea or looking too long at the stars, they have lost themselves, found themselves, and moved in and out of time and place.*

\* \* \*

Roe came up short at the great boulder which had served as a landmark in so many games and glared down at the sea where the Grey Horse sat like a miniature model on the glassy water. The fact that the exciting bits like cannon and lanterns and sailors pipes were gone did not detract from the allure of the ship, or her feelings. That first day they had rowed the skiff out to her and climbed the ladder, wooden board rungs banging the side of the ship as they had climbed to emerge onto the tangled wreckage of the deck. Tim had said, “Look at all this treasure!” and with that any thought of how nasty and disarrayed it had been, or how it stank, had been banished.

“I claim the salvage rights to this abandoned vessel and as its new owner do hereby state my intent to captain her myself!” Roe had said with bravado. She had gotten up the ladder first and felt she really ought to assert her advantage.

“I am impressing the lot of you, and will not tolerate insubordination”. Tim, Jim and Davie had looked at her and then one another with a mixture of amusement and tolerance born of long suffering a girl to be in the group, and went about their way, ignoring her in favor of the wonder of unexplored loot. They failed to notice that she was dead serious, and in some way that even she had not clearly known, had changed.

Captain Deevie Bosworth opened the door to the Port of Horrowith Head Municipal Office Building and noted as he often did that this was the last place on earth he had expected to end up. His grey moustache was full and curled into a permanent smile so that even when he was frowning or angry people took a liking to him. His hair had gradually retreated from his bald pate and now fringed his bill cap. The frown he gave was to his mind, returned, as if out of long suffering and mutual respect, the old stone building didn’t like him either. It was fitting, he supposed, that it should feel ill used, he was neither fit for, nor did he perform as expected the tasks for which this particular building had been erected. Also there was the small matter of the remodel.

Captain Bosworth was the only man in Horrowith Head who had served in Their Majesties Navy and as such was rated highest by the Crown. In consequence the unwanted job of harbormaster had fallen to him. The size of the Crowns miserably small fee for this service was due to the fact that the job came with the power to, and the expectation that he would, extort money from all users of the port. His required duties were few, mostly filling out the paperwork of commerce and rendering to the Crown the appropriate taxes, tariffs and fees, but his unpaid jobs were many. He was Policeman, Judge, Taxman, and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

(whatever that meant) and whatever else her sainted Majesties' government in its infinite wisdom deemed he ought to do. For a man with no conscience or ethics, the opportunities for abuse of his position were endless. A little increase in fee here, a little (or big) extra charge there and he could have lived quite comfortably as a minor civil servant. However this was not the cut of the jib of Captain Bosworth, or "Harbormaster", as he was respectfully and affectionately called. He now served in this position more for the convenience of his neighbors than at the discretion of the crown. He had quit the post his first year on the job. He tried to quit every year of his first three, and had finally given up or given in. The truth was there was nobody else to do it. He had, in time helped every person who lived in or passed through Horrowith Head. He sometimes thought as he faked the quarterly books, '*Powers* help this town if they ever see fit to replace me.' Once an ambitious young man petitioned the crown to relieve Captain Bosworth of the role of policeman, generously offering to take on the job himself. The letter never got out of the post office. After suffering a number of strange fishing "accidents" junior trooper packed up and left town without explanation. The town also, evidently, protected its Harbormaster.

Captain Bosworth's newest problem was a paper problem, or looking at it another way his problem was floating in the harbor. The "sea horse", as he called her, had fallen into his lap unexpectedly. As Crown property in his harbor it was his to account for, which was all well and good, only the crown thought she was a seaworthy ship, and therefore worth eight hundred thousand pounds. The Crown was not interested in keeping a ship of her small size and had asked him sell her. His letters to the Central Office of the Royal Navy, describing the ship as unsound, unfurnished, distressed and in otherwise unseaworthy condition had received no response. To make matters worse they had gone so far as to insinuate that he would be held personally responsible if the ship were to be inspected and found lacking in any way. They ignored the fact that nobody local was looking to buy a small ship, there being no call or need for one in fishing town. They also failed to consider the shortage of travelers, seagoing or otherwise who had eight hundred thousand pounds to spend on a wreck. That the Navy had, at the discretion of two of their captains, stripped her of armament, gear and everything but the standing rigging they seemed to be able to ignore as well. Their reply made it clear that they considered the whole thing his problem.

He closed and locked the ancient oak and cut glass door behind him and walked down the row of offices with the gold numbers hand painted on the glass, doors which in some cases had remained locked since before he took office. The ones he had keys to had become storage for boxes of documents and in two the props and parts of sets for school plays. There were three furnished offices which were, frankly, dummies. These contained the original uncomfortable chairs, heavy oak desks and all the other paraphernalia of official governance. The front offices were only used to entertain official persons, one of the unavoidable hazards of his job. It was a challenge to keep the front offices clean enough to be convincing on the rare occasions when they were used. The main office where he and his staff, Bob and Jeena Corbin, worked was at the very back of the building on the second story. He had discovered that the rear windows gave an unexpectedly good view of the harbor and the North Point. In his third year he had done some remodeling. A huge vertical wall ventilator had become a third central window. He had cemented the friendship with the Corbins by removing (with the help of several workmen) the walls of three offices and a large storage room to form one huge well-lit room with a view. Three desks had gotten longer legs and near the windows a low table and comfortable chairs made a comfortable informal space with the best view of the harbor. A rear wall of shelves, cabinets and files stretching the full width of the building stored the necessary machinery of governance. Keeping the entire building heated when the staff now consisted of three people was unpractical, the three worked in coats spring, winter and fall and briefly in summer wore shorts when it was too hot.

"We could take her out and sink her," Kelly said. Kelly looked every bit of what he was. A lifetime of fishing had made his face a permanent grimace of grinning wrinkles. White hair stuck out of a watch cap when he was ashore and a knit cap when he was on the water but the rest of his clothing only changed for church. A bright yellow slicker was his concession to weather. The red and black flannel checkered shirt and the dark canvas oilskin pants looked the same as when he was photographed for the paper when at twenty-one he and five young men had risked their lives to bring passengers off of the wreck of the Queen of Denmark. A print of

the picture was framed beside the door in the Crown and Cup. Once on a lark Randy the barkeep had set up a date for a cute twenty -something with the handsome hero in the picture. She discovered when he walked in the door that she was about forty years too late.

Roe felt like her world was ending. She almost ran out and shouted, “I want this ship, don’t sink my ship,” She felt that somehow this would be enough and it would all work out. She could see the town pulling together to paint her and clean up all the garbage and she would be the hero in the story, her story, her ship. But the game which had solved so many problems was still a mystery to her. The quick glances and laughter, which held the great occult power wielded by adults, solved the biggest problems in the world, not the problems of a girl.

“You could tell them she were taken by pirates or summat,” said Mrs. Stover. She had raised two kids on canning fish, a boy and a girl. They both left town as soon as they could and didn’t look back. She never blamed them.

“Eight hundred thousand pounds,” said Captain Bosworth shaking his head. “It would take all that just to refit her.”

“Has anybody inspected her hull?” said Doc Thomas with a strange expression on his face.

“Why, are you afraid she’ll sink in the harbor?” said Captain Bosworth with a level look.

“No,” he said. “I get by her about every other day and she has no more than the expected settling. She’ll need pumping again, but I’m thinking about worms, though how to see through the weeds I really don’t know, she has a lot more to inspect than a fishing boat.”

This impromptu town meeting was the result of people gathering for the Saturday morning card game and Captain Bosworth was grateful for the chance to talk his mind. As yet he had no idea of how to come to terms with the problem of the “sea horse.”

“It’s just not fair!” She screamed and almost kicked a rock with her bare foot, tears, frustration and anger mixing. She couldn’t even tell her mother. Amazandia Bette Folger was “Mazzie” to everybody except Roe and her brother. To them she was “Mother” and carried the authority of an empress. If she had known about their trips out to the Grey Horse, their picking through the tangled rigging and flotsam, their candlelit exploration of its furthest reeking corners things would not have gone well. She would never understand her wanting the ship.

## Dipping our Hands—personal relationships with the books

### The Old Man Hangs On

By Maida Follini

“There’s quite a lot of wind,” said the mate... ..“Oughtn’t we to have reefed?”...

“The Amazons hadn’t,” said the captain, with his teeth tight clenched,...

“I was telling Roger the bit about the old man who meant to hang on,” said Titty;...

The old man said, "I mean to hang on  
Till her canvas busts or her sticks are gone"---  
Which the blushing looney did, till at last  
Overboard went her mizzen mast.

Hear the yarn of a sailor,  
An old yarn learned at sea.'

*-Masefield, 'The Yarn of the Loch Achray',  
quoted in Swallowdale, Ch. 5*

John was not the only Old Man who wrecked his ship by hanging on. Luckily for the Swallow, it was on Pike Rock, within swimming distance to shore. And all the Swallows suffered was a soaking, and being land-bound till their ship was repaired.

A greater tragedy, and far less excusable, was when the experienced Captain Robin Walbridge, age 63, sailed into the path of a hurricane in October, 2012, resulting in the loss of the *H.M.S. Bounty* replica, a crewmember, and the Captain himself. Ironically, the lost crew member, Claudene Christian, was a 5 times great-granddaughter of the original mutineer Fletcher Christian, who led a party of disaffected seamen in taking over the original *H.M.S. Bounty* and sailing it to Pitcairn's Island.

A report of the tragedy suggests Captain Walbridge overestimated himself and his ship, and felt invincible after his many decades at sea.

Sailors everywhere will share some compassion for both John, and Captain Walbridge. How often have we been tempted to put on too much sail, to resist the bother of reefing, to sail out into winds and waves which are too strong for our boat? Luck may have been with us – we may have escaped capsizing, swimming for our lives, or losing our ships. But it only takes one mistake, plus one dose of bad luck for dire consequences to occur.

It was a miracle that the U.S. Coast Guard helicopters and crew were able to go into those raging seas and rescue the remaining 14 crew members.

A tragic and sad day. The *Bounty* herself was a symbol of the old fashioned days of sail, depending on wind-power and the skill of mariners to adjust the sails and carry on in calm and storm. I saw the *Bounty* last summer in 2012 when she participated in the Parade of Sail in Halifax Harbour. With her sleek hull and tanned sails, she was, to me, the most beautiful vessel there.

From my own little Drascombe sailboat, our party watched the tall ships go past, were almost deafened when the *Bounty* fired its cannon, and admired the sure-footed crews as they climbed up the rigging to wave to the spectators.



Rest in peace, *Bounty*! And be a warning for all sailors, no matter how experienced, that the sea and the wind are, in the end, more powerful than you.

Oh, Lord, thy seas are so great, and my boat is so small!

**H.M.S. Bounty replica**

**in the Parade of Sail**

**Tall Ships Festival**

**Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia**

**Summer, 2012**

*Photo by Maida Follini*



## Captain Flint's Trunk—news from abroad

### VicTARS AR Birthday Party & AusTARS Annual General Meeting, 2013

("Victoria" TARS)

("Australia" TARS)

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January VicTARS gathered at the home of the Spiers family. There were 14 members and two visitors, Uncle Bill from England and Mia from Brisbane, present. After making inroads into the nibbles, the Committee held the Annual General Meeting around the dining room table while others socialised. Once the business was completed, Martin fired up the barbeque and we began our celebrations for Arthur Ransome's birthday. Perfectly grilled meat was accompanied by a fine array of salads. Then followed the highlight of the day. Along with a tantalising selection of sweets, we were once again in awe of Elizabeth and David's birthday cake for AR. This year's cake depicted the camp from *Secret Water*, complete with sleeping bags in the tents and a kettle over the campfire.



Feasting over, we turned our attention to Jan's quizzes and games. The swimming pool proved a challenging environment for many of the games. The day ended with the chocolate tasting, which was won by Mai, and the lucky dip presided over by Captain Flint.

By Barb Grove, AusTARS

*Editor's Note: I am sharing this as an idea for TARSUS/Canada members--why not have your own AR's Birthday Party & invite any TARS members who live nearby? Have fun!*

### Photos of my Area--Western Oregon--Elizabeth Jolley



*Me picking huckleberries at 5500' elev.*



*Our farmhouse*



*Beach nearby*



*Mountains also nearby!*



# Coots Word Jumble

*Unjumble each of the words then use the boxed letters to form the final Jumble word:*

## Jumble Words

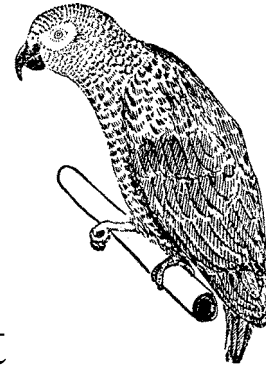
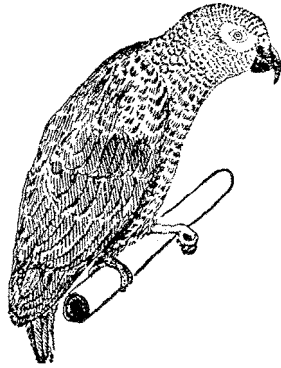
1. DOGTANRHDUE      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_  \_
2. LTATAMRGOE      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
3. EABLARRB      \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_
4. TSCPBOAENO      \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
5. ORADRBTAS      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
6. WIIMLLA      \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
7. TMHYOOUR      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_
8. UDNORAG      \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_
9. ETESLA      \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_

**Solution:**     

(From Furthest South--thanks AusTARS!)

*Editor's Note: E-mail me if you need a hint or would like the solution!*

[erjolley8@gmail.com](mailto:erjolley8@gmail.com)



# Pieces of Eight

The Junior Pages

Edited by Jessika Hodgson and Hannah Hodgson

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## *The Nightfire Pirates*

### *Part 4*

*A treasure map! It must be!* Jeremiah traced his finger over the lines on the page, ending on the big black X that must tell of the spot where treasure was buried! *But why did Williams have a treasure map? He was a navy man, wasn't he? Jeremiah's head swam with questions. And how on earth did Captain Steel know him? And what should he do? He had just given Williams away...he had told Captain Steel the name of his ship. But surely the Lady Marie was far off now. Perhaps they were...*

The door slammed open again as Captain Steel reentered. His face was set in an ugly grin, and his eyes glittered. He sat down and looked at Jeremiah, toying with the knife that Jeremiah himself had packed in his bag.

There was a moment of tense silence, before Captain Steel said, "I knew you were trouble."

Jeremiah squirmed.

"But what I did not realize, is that you can be of great service to me," Captain Steel continued. "And if you are of great service to me, I will return you home....*unhurt.*"

Jeremiah gulped now, glancing toward the glimmering knife. *Be brave, he told himself, like...like Robin Hood...like Pa. Like....Williams. I'm sure Williams is brave.*

"Do you have any idea where the *Lady Marie* is headed?"

"No! I don't know at all! I swear I don't!" He was glad for the fact that he didn't have to lie. He had already proved that he wasn't very good at keeping secrets.

Captain Steel looked hard at him. Then he got up abruptly and grabbed Jeremiah by the collar. He swung him around and tied his hands behind his back, before turning him again to face him eye to eye. Jeremiah's feet dangled limply with fear.

"I *don't* know!" Jeremiah squeaked.

Captain Steel dropped him. "Well, we'll find out soon enough, eh? The *Nightfire* is a fast ship. I'm sure we can beat him to his prize." He grabbed the treasure map, then walked out. He soon returned, however, and gagged Jeremiah.

Jeremiah felt miserable. His wrists hurt from the tight ropes, and his mouth hurt from the tight gag. Not to mention he was caught up in something quite difficult, and had obviously let out secrets that never should have come to Captain Steel's attention. He hoped that Williams wasn't going to find his treasure just yet. If Captain Steel found it, he might just let Williams alone.

They sailed for so many days that Jeremiah lost count. Every day, Willy came in with some scraps left over from the sailors' meals, and Jeremiah ate them quickly. Finally, Jeremiah realized by the shouts and bustle on deck, they had docked.

Captain Steel appeared, his face looking confused, but firm. "You're coming with me," he said, grabbing Jeremiah and hauling him forward.

The firm ground was strange to Jeremiah after so many days in a rocking ship. He stumbled about, but Captain Steel gave him no time to find his land legs. He shoved him forward. Jeremiah realized that they were not on some deserted island with palm trees and coconuts. They were in a darkened port that looked familiar...

*It was the port that he had first met Williams...this was Boston!*

"Why are we here again?" a sailor said quietly Captain Steel, "We're right back to the beginning. I thought you said we were going treasure hunting!"

"Shut your mouth," Captain Steel growled, "We are. The treasure map led here."

"How are we going to find treasure in the middle of Boston?"

"We're going to find ourselves a jail cell if you keep making such a racket. Shut up!"

But Captain Steel knew where he was going. He could read maps, and the treasure map wasn't exactly...well, secret. Apparently it had pointed straight to a certain house. Captain Steel smiled when he arrived.

It was a beautiful townhouse. The lights inside were lit, and people were laughing and talking inside, even though it was quite late.

To Jeremiah's surprise, Captain Steel walked straight up to the door and pounded on it. There was a pattering of feet, and then the door opened on a servant girl. The girl stepped back as she saw Captain Steel with Jeremiah in tow, still bound and gagged.

"I'm...Sir...I..." she fumbled over her words.

"Tell the master of the house that a Captain Steel has arrived and will speak with him."

The girl hesitated.

"NOW!"

The girl burst into a run.

A man rushed in soon after. He was wearing a confused expression. He had dark brown hair and kind looking brown eyes.

"I am the master of the house, sir. You wished to speak with me?"

He looked from Captain Steel to Jeremiah, and then back to Captain Steel.

"Yes," Captain Steel said. "Your treasure. I want it."

"Treasure, sir? I'm...afraid I don't understand. If you are here to rob me, why on earth would you...knock on the door?"

Captain Steel tossed the man the box with the treasure map in it. The man caught it, and, bewildered, opened it. His eyes widened, then his eyebrows lowered. "Where did you get this?"

Captain Steel shoved Jeremiah forward. "A little bird gave it to me. The treasure. Where is it? The map leads straight to this house."

The man gave a nervous laugh. "I am afraid, sir, that you are mistaken. There is no treasure here. At least...not of the sort that you are looking for. Unless you fancy silverware."

Captain Steel was not amused. "Tell me where it is, or I will torch the house."

The man shook his head. "Somehow, your boy got this from a man called Frederick Williams, am I correct? Well, Fred is a very good friend of mine. He is also engaged to my sister. Hence the locket. The treasure is...er...my sister. Margaret."

"Do NOT lie to me!" Captain Steel roared. He dropped Jeremiah, and, rushing over, grabbed the man and pinned him up against the wall. He put his face close to the man's. "I know Frederick Williams. He and Weaver busted my ship two years ago. My cargo was spoils from ten wealthy merchant ships on their way back from the Indies."

"Fred works for the navy, you can't expect that he kept your...treasure!" the man's face had gone pale.

"Tell me the truth or I will slit your throat." A knife had appeared in Captain Steel's hand, and it was now pushed up against the man's throat.

"I'd prefer you didn't," said a voice from the doorway. Fred Williams grinned and walked in. "I'd also prefer you didn't," he knelt down in front of Jeremiah, putting his arm around him, "hurt my dear little friends. You aren't hurt are you? Jeremiah isn't it?" He turned back to Captain Steel, "You overstep your welcome in my friend John's house. How about we settle this matter outside like decent men?"

Jeremiah frantically grunted a warning, but Williams didn't understand before the blow fell. Muskrat smirked, standing over Williams' limp, unconscious body, holding a thick club. Blood trickled from where the club had contacted Williams' head.

"Take him," Captain Steel said. "I have no use of anything else."

The *Nightfire* pirates hauled Williams out the door, leaving Jeremiah McDougal with a fierce fire lit in his heart. He *would* get Williams back. Captain Steel would regret this.

*To Be Continued...*

### Swallows & Amazons Word Search

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

ABLESEAMAN	CODE	MORSE	SUSAN
AMAZON	DEATHANDGLORY	NANCY	SWALLOW
BILL	DICK	PEGGY	TITMOUSE
BLACKETT	DOT	PETE	TITTY
CABINBOY	GOBLIN	PORT	TOM
CAMP	JOE	ROGER	WALKER
CAPTAIN	JOHN	SEMAPHORE	WILDCATISLAND
CAPTAINFLINT	MATE	STARBOARD	

## Dot's Journal: Spring is Coming

A Note from Jessika

Spring is late this year. Winter lingered until the end of April and only then did the snow stop pelting down for days and nights on end. By the time the sun finally came out for good, I was bursting with cabin fever, ready to give anything to spend a day outside.

This time last year, the buds on the trees had already broken open to become leaves and were darkening to their summer colors. The blossoms on the fruit trees had run their course and were starting to turn into tiny apples or plums. Flowers were blooming, the grass was growing, and I was spending every extra minute out in the sunshine.



This May, the buds are still biding their time, there are no fruit trees covered with pink and white, and just a few dandelions are brave enough to take the leap of faith and spread their petals. The weather is glorious—fragrant rain one day, warm sun the next—but I'm getting a little antsy for spring to really show its face before summer overtakes it. Things are changing in my life that my poetic soul wants reflected in nature through new leaves and waking flowers.

One of those changes is... I'm graduating this month! I'm slowly realizing that the rest of my life is unfolding before me, and I admit I'm a little scared. But I'm also excited to try out new things, see new views, be a nuisance to new people—you know, the simple joys of young adulthood. Which brings me, I suppose, to the point of this meandering note. I'd like to find one (or two or three) of you Juniors that would like to take over the editorship (and authorship, more often than not) of Pieces of Eight for me. I won't even count as a Junior in less than a year (my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is coming up fast!) and I'd like to keep this a Junior-edited section if there's anyone willing. I'm going to be doing at least one or two more issues myself, but I'd like to use those times to show the ropes to an Ableseaman or two so that I can retire and enjoy my old age knowing that I have capable hands at the wheel of this leaky vessel. Please, contact me if you are interested! And if some of the Aged Parents reading this would spread the word to any pirates, explorers, scientists, or novelists that you know, I'd be greatly obliged.

It may be late, but spring is coming, me hearties! And I don't know about you, but for me spring is a time to explore new waters. :-)

--Jessika

(I have a new email address! Contact me at [SailistheThing@yahoo.com](mailto:SailistheThing@yahoo.com) if you're interested in helping me out.)

Final Note-- "Farewell and adieu to you fair Spanish ladies" --until next issue!

Spring sprung for a few delightful weeks here, with weather more like our late summer. Highs in the upper 70's and low 80's, with an occasional peek at a high 80 and sun, sun, sun, made us all happy around here, where spring is often rainy and chilly. We're back to our usual weather now. I sit at the computer with cold hands and hot mug of tea nearby. Not the Igloo, but a bit chilly today. I could complain about being cold. Well, actually, I have complained already today about being cold, but that's just between you and me and my husband! On the plus side, this cooler weather came with much-needed rain, soaking our spring gardens and keeping Oregon green. That's a motto from a long time back--Keep Oregon Green--and I have to remind myself of the importance of the rain that falls on my head because I forgot my raincoat, and that keeps me inside with the active 2 ½ year old I care for every afternoon. The chilly weather and the rain are what keep my lawn and trees green all summer, create a beautiful system of streams & rivers pouring down out of our high Cascade mountains, and make our quality of life possible here. I shared photos of my area with you--your turn next! Send in your photos & stories about your area. Let's get to know each other better :-)

Cheers!

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