



SIGNALS FROM T•A•R•S•U•S

August 2001

Summer Salutations!

This newsletter accompanies *Ship's Log*, which contains information about the recent Annual General Meeting in Southampton, and also the Summer 2001 *Signals*. Among the things in *Ship's Log* (I am told; I haven't seen it as of writing this newsletter) is a summary of the recommendations from the TARS Development Committee. This committee was established in January 1999 to do an overall review of TARS and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees as to possible future initiatives. The report was presented to the Board in January 2001, and the Board is in the process of receiving comments on the recommendations. Due to length, only the summary of recommendations was printed in *Ship's Log*; however, the entire report has been put up on the internet. If you are interested you can find an HTML (browser) version of the report at <http://www.arthur-ransome.org/ar/DCReport.html> or you can find a downloadable version at <http://www.arthur-ransome.org/ar/DCReport.pdf>.

If you wish to comment upon the report or the recommendations (which include such things as reducing the number of Trustees dramatically, but having a Board member representing the overseas groups, although admittedly nobody is quite sure how to make that work) you should write to Bill Jane, the Secretary of TARS; his address is published in *Mixed Moss*. Or you can post comments on the Club Hut discussion board (like Tarboard but limited to members of the Society).

Welcome

Welcome to Eric Abraham; Naomi Danzig; Diane, Ian, Sally and Tom Pickard; Aran Teeling; and Ann Townsend. As this is the first *Signals from TARSUS* since the 2001 membership renewal cutoff, a complete membership list is also included in this packet, so I haven't listed their contact information separately. Special thanks to Eric for sending in his résumé, which you will find included with this *Signals from TARSUS*. If you have not sent a résumé please consider doing so. They make wonderful reading and tell us a lot about how our fellow U.S. TARS have found Ransome (and TARS).

The Coordinator Has Moved

In early June, we moved about 35 miles north of our previous home in Eureka; we are now about 10 miles north of the village of Trinidad, on the Pacific Ocean. New contact information is:

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Publications and Contacting TARSUS

Beginning last year, Anne LeVeque took over the responsibility for publications distribution. She has the masters of Signals from TARSUS printed, receives the U.K. publications from the U.K., and repackages and mails the pubs to TARSUS members.

This has prompted several members to send Changes of Address and Renewals directly to Anne. While you can do that, she will simply send them directly on to me, so it is more efficient to send such things directly to me at the address or e-mail shown above and at the end of the newsletter.

Cancelled: TARS on the Great Lakes

In the last newsletter we announced the Third Annual TARS sailing day on the Great Lakes. Unfortunately, Mary Wessel Walker, our 10-gong contributing editor and coordinator of this event, has had to cancel the event for this year. She hopes that the Third Occasional TARS sailing day on the Great Lakes will happen next year.

Articles of Interest

Periodically TARSUS members send me copies of articles about Ransome or Ransome-related areas or activities. If they appear to be of general interest I offer to make copies for individual TARSUS members for the cost of postage and copying.

Dorothy Hill, recently returned from a trip to the U.K., sent me a copy of "Queen of Windermere" from the Lilliput-Lane Collectors' Club magazine (which she observes that probably not too many TARSUS receive). This article is about Lake steamboats, including the *Esperance*, and recommends the reader to the Windermere Steamboat Museum (well-known to TARS members as the location of *Amazon* and *Coch-y-bondhu* (*Scarab*)). The article is rather short but has several nice pictures, which unfortunately probably won't copy very well. The whole thing is only 2

pages. If you want a copy send me \$1 to cover copying, envelope and postage.

Georgia TARSUS Event 2001

The Georgia TARSUS Event 2001 was a splendid corroboree with wonderful adventures. Morning councils at 10:00 gave us a chance to start the day with rousing song, make boasts of the previous day's adventures, and plan for the day to come. Allatoona Lake was filled with water and welcomed us. Some adventurers who came last year were back, and the crew of Sam Finlay from Virginia came for the first time. The weather was good in general. Saturday, especially, was an excellent day for sailing.

We sailed, rowed, and paddled several fine vessels, and many new geographic features were identified on or entering the Sea of Ransome... the Amazon River... what appeared to be the Nile River and Cairo... a number of coves were explored and named. Old Billy and the Young Billies made charcoal and cooked with it. We watched the three videos made of Ransome's books. Several young pirates became very proficient at blowing the conch shell horns.

A downpour of summer rain resulted in the younger crew members banding together to fight an impending flood of the TARSUS campsite. Dredging, bailing, and the use of bilge pumps resulted in the campsite being saved from "possibly" being swept into the lake.

Of our activities, the extensive battle on the Sea of Ransome was perhaps most exciting and demanding. Water-filled cannon balls made from balloons were fired from the participating ships, and there were several "casualties". The two most severely "wounded" received CD's of sea songs and shanties to speed their recovery. By virtue of their valor and sense for adventure, crews were inducted into the IPDE's,,,Intrepid PuddleDuck Explorers with all of the rights and priviledges appertaining thereunto.

Photographs of this Outstanding Corroboree will be posted on the GA TARSUS website eventually and notification will appear in the next *Signals from TARSUS*. At the moment there's too much good weather and wind for sailing *TARKA*, rowing *The Otter*, and having other summer expeditions.

We all look forward to the GA TARSUS 2002 Corroboree on Lake Allatoona next year.

Jim Satterfield
aka Admiral G. Flint

Amazon Publications

Amazon Publications is the “publishing arm” of TARS. It produces one volume per year, by advance subscription, of interest to TARS members. Information about Amazon Publications can be found in the back of *Signals*.

Those of you who subscribed to the 2001 Amazon Publication, a re-issue of *In Aleppo Once* by Taqui Altounyan, will have received it by now. This is not a reprint, but a new edition, with many photographs and an update on Aleppo in 2000 by Jill Goulder and Alan Hakim. The few copies which were printed over the subscription list are available from the TARS Society Bookstall, but probably won't last long.

The 2002 Amazon Publication will be a reissue of Arthur Ransome's *Bohemia in London*, hopefully enhanced with period photographs and drawings. TARSUS who wish to subscribe to the 2002 publication should send \$25 (this also

covers air postage from the U.K.) to the TARSUS Coordinator (and newsletter editor).

I cannot too highly recommend subscribing to these publications to TARSUS members. The books are of high quality and quite beautiful; the content is always interesting and relevant to Ransome enthusiasts. (Unpaid adv. – Editor.)

Racundra's Third Cruise

Next spring, Fernhurst Books (in the U.K.) will publish this “new, unpublished Arthur Ransome story which has been collated by Brian Hammett from Ransome's own manuscript.” I am told that the TARS Society Bookstall will carry this work once it is available. Meantime, they have sent me a 2-page announcement of the book. TARSUS members who would like to see it in advance can get a copy of this from me via mail by sending me their address, or in PDF format by sending me an e-mail requesting it.



Feature Column: Ransome Readers Recommend

In November of last year, we started this column of short reviews of books which Ransome readers want to recommend to others, especially Juniors. Mary Wessel Walker, our 10-Gong Contributing Editor, initiated the column, writing : “Sometimes we stumble across books that, for one reason or another, remind us of Ransome. Maybe characters remind us of Ransome characters, or maybe they go sailing or camping. Sometimes a book reminds us of Ransome because it just FEELS right. In this column of *Signals from TARSUS* we invite all TARS, especially Juniors, to write short book recommendations for other Ransome lovers. Be sure to include a mention of the general age group and reading level you think the book is best suited for. Send your recommendations to Mary Wessel Walker at 3007 Geddes Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (jcgw@umich.edu) or to Dave Thewlis (dthewlis@arthur-ransome.org).”

The following contribution is from Admiral Taylor Rhodes. (For those who are new to TARSUS, you can the story of Arthur Ransome making Admiral Rhodes “Admiral of the U.S. Branch of the Swallows, Amazons and D's” in the Résumés of TARSUS members (Page 14).)

“I read AR – at least the books about the Swallows, Amazons, and D's, which had been published by then – when I was 9 and 10. That would be 1938 and 1939 – long enough ago that I have forgotten most of the titles and the authors of many other wonderful books that I read during the same period when I read AR. But a few of those “other” books will never leave me any more than AR's will. Three are listed, below:

“First, there was an author and illustrator named Kate Seredy who wrote a charming book entitled *Listening*. It is the story of a small house, a Colonial home as I recall, and the reasons why it “grew” over the years into the big, rambling beauty that it is today. The book was published in 1936, but your town may have one of those libraries which holds onto everything, and you will find this quite volume tucked away in the stacks.

“Next, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Booth Tarkington’s humorous stories of midwestern childhood, *Penrod* (1914) and *Penrod and Sam* (1960) are of an era before I was born, but they have such timeless warmth that, I suspect, they are as enjoyable to read today as they were for me some 62 years ago. Both books have seen reissues, so there is a decent chance you will find copies in your library. I hope that time and advancing values have not made these old books too politically incorrect.

“Perhaps some of our Junior TARSUS will read these stories and report their up-to-date reactions in future issues of *Signals*.”



From our 10-Gong Contributing Editor:

In Which we Explore Ransome Country

This June my family and I traveled to England. We visited many places, but most importantly we spent a week in the heart of Ransome country: the Lake District. I am sure that most of you have heard about the outbreak of foot and mouth disease that is going on in the Lake District right now, which made visiting the Lake District especially interesting. It meant that many footpaths were closed, as well as Hill Top, Beatrix Potter's home. Fortunately, these closings did not mean that we couldn't do everything we wanted to do. It was actually an advantage, because the place was a lot less crowded than in other years, so we got to enjoy the Lakes more as the Swallows and Amazons would have known them.



Mary and her sister Margaret at the Windermere Steamboat Museum

We arrived by train at the train station the Swallows must have arrived at and took a bus down to Bowness (Rio). When we arrived at the pier we learned that the car ferry we planned to take to our cottage was actually a bit of a walk from where the other ferries were, and that the footpath was closed because it crossed a farm! Still, the natives informed us that it was a 10-minute walk and we couldn't get lost. Not a chance. We were dragging our luggage around for half an hour and we were definitely lost. We asked several other natives for directions and ended up taking an unlikely shortcut across a muddy field. Some of us were convinced we were in the wrong place! "10-minute walk and you can't get lost" became something of a joke with us on this trip; it seemed to apply to everything! Once we found the car ferry, we crossed the lake and found our way (eventually) to where we were staying. We stayed in a National Trust cottage called Restharrow, located on the shores of Lake Windermere. It was a lovely cottage, and fairly convenient to public transportation (once we stopped getting lost).

One of the many Ransome-y highlights on our trip was a visit to the Windermere Steamboat Museum. This museum has a large display devoted to Arthur Ransome because it owns the *Amazon* (formerly known as *Mavis*) and also the *Scarab* (formerly known as *Coch-y-bondhu*). These boats, as I'm sure you know, were owned by Ransome and the Altounyan family and were the inspiration for the boats in the books.



Mary, Margaret and *Scarab*



Margaret, Mary and Amazon

The display was clearly the work of TARS and was very well put together and quite informative. In addition to the *Amazon* and the *Scarab* there was a rowing boat similar to the "native war canoe" in *Swallowdale*. All of these boats were very beautiful, with glossy wood and real canvas sails. We also got to take a tour of the steamboat *Esperance*, which was one of the inspirations for Captain Flint's houseboat. It too had been set up

by TARS and was complete with a typewriter, Swallows and Amazons feast, Nancy's black spot note, a cannon donated by TARS, and a plank! This museum is a great place for any Ransome fans to visit, and it also has many interesting non-Ransome related exhibits.



Margaret, and Mary's Father and Mother, at the Feast Table in the houseboat (*Esperance*)

About the Author: Mary Wessel Walker, 10-Gong contributing editor, is going into her senior year of high school in Ann Arbor, MI. She plans to write a whole series of articles about her recent trip to England!



And that's pretty much it for this time. The next *Signals from TARSUS* should be out in November, along with *Mixed Moss* and other publications. (Note that I incorrectly said in the last newsletter that there would be a *Mixed Moss* in August. That's not true; TARS reverted to one edition of *Mixed Moss* a year, and I was probably the only person in the Society who didn't remember that when I wrote the newsletter! On the other hand, *Ship's Log* has been resurrected with more space to devote to the AGM and other matters of interest to the Society.)

Please send me information about TARS events, trip reports, articles for *Signals from TARSUS* and *Ransome Readers Recommend*, and have a wonderful Fall and Winter.

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