



Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News--January 2015

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Ship's Papers--Important Information for the crew



View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall, TARSUS Coordinator
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I hope you all had a Happy Christmas! Very best wishes for 2015, I hope the New Year will be good for everyone.

Once again, this year there is a notice in this newsletter and in Signals with a plea from Alan Harkin regarding Amazon Publications; I urge you to take note of his plea, several TARSUS members have already subscribed to the 2015 publication. Alan really appreciates their help. So please think about doing the same. I will accept checks and pass the proceeds to Alan. It is \$33.50 to subscribe to this year's undertaking, Collecting Our Thoughts, an anthology of Introductory Essays from the TARS Library Catalogues and New Essays on Library/S&A/AR Themes.

A year has passed and I am still looking for someone to take over from me as coordinator. So think about having a go! Contact me if you would like more information about the duties you would take on.

I hope some of you are thinking of attending the 2015 IAGM, a chance to become Coots and see all the places mentioned in the stories, the Norfolk Broads is a great place to visit if you have not been there. It is not often one gets a chance to mix with other TARS. More info here:

[TARS IAGM: Coots Ahoy on the Norfolk Broads](#)

I am very pleased that there has been a good response to the request for renewals, so if you have not got round to it yet, grab that checkbook. I would remind you to contact me first if you are unsure if have already paid, before mailing a check. I had a few members last year who forgot and paid twice. Like last year, I am getting a prompt notice of any who pay by PayPal, so I hope I will not be sending reminders again to ones already paid. Please note new link if you wish to pay online:

[http://arthur-ransome.org.uk/TARS Subscriptions.html](http://arthur-ransome.org.uk/TARS_Subscriptions.html)

I am sad to say I learnt that Carol Jones a longtime member had passed away; I shall miss her calls regarding prospective purchases from the TARS Stall.

Have a great winter!
Keep warm and have fun,
Robin



Greetings From the North

By Ian Sacré, TARSCanada Coordinator

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Well, the Christmas Season is behind us for another year and we are anxiously waiting to see what the New Year will bring. Many across the country have already had a good dose of winter weather: storm force winds, torrential rain or many inches of snow. But like other years, I am sure we shall get through it one way or another.

I would like to thank everyone for keeping me advised of their address changes whether they be postal or email. I forward such changes on to Headquarters immediately upon receipt, which should ensure that the various publications are sent to members without interruption.

For all those who have already sent in their TARS subscription renewals for 2015 thank you very much. For those that have so far not been able to renew theirs please be reminded that subscriptions are valid for

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for one calendar year ending on December 31st. It would be very much appreciated if you could take care of your expired membership as soon as possible.

Our TARS Canada subscription membership remains at 29 as of the 31st of December 2014 with one member having resigned and one family renewing their association with the Society. Regrettably, I seldom hear from any Canadian TARS members so am unable to determine if members' expectations are being met by the Society or if they have any ideas for making things more relevant and interesting. As we all know, any society is only as satisfying and fulfilling as its members make it.

A few years ago a list of Canadian TARS members with their postal and email addresses was circulated to Canadian TARS. I would like to send out an up-dated list again. If any of you object to your name and address being given to other members would you please let me know in the near future so that I can remove your name from the roster before the list is sent out.

The request in early November for outdoor activity recipes suitable for adventuring resulted in a number of recipes being sent in to me. Our fellow TARS members in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Japan are also being invited to send in favourite recipes they have had personal experience preparing while engaged in outdoor pursuits. There is further information regarding your submission of recipes in this newsletter. We want to make a great booklet or book, so please let me hear from more of you with your favourite outdoor fare. Surely this would be a great thing to do on a cold winter's day!

One of the pleasant tasks I set for myself over the Christmas Holidays was to re-read Winter Holiday. Not having opened the tome for goodness knows how many years I became intrigued with his frequent references to Nansen's Arctic and Greenland adventures. After reading Winter Holiday and excerpts of Nansen's narratives it was interesting to note how closely Arthur Ransome followed Nansen's account of his experience with sailing sleds.

Nansen realized early on that a sled rigged with a fore-and-aft sail would not work except directly downwind and also could not be steered very well. More importantly it lacked lateral stability. In the story, AR gave John and Peggy similar problems with Swallow's old sail, rigged on the sled upon which they capsized during trials because of that lack of stability, so much so that they finally abandoned their sailing sled idea.

Nansen had four sledges for his Traverse of Greenland expedition and for sailing placed them in pairs lashed side-by-side using skis for cross members and bamboo poles for a mast and yard. Transverse stability was thus greatly improved. The square sail for one pair of sleds utilized the ground sheet from the expedition's tent (the ground sheet soon ripped in two and had to be sewn back together!), while the other pair of sleds used a couple of tarps. Nansen had two Laplanders on his Greenland expedition and they were totally horrified at the whole idea of sailing a sled! Professor "Dick" meanwhile, after careful study of Nansen's book, decided to quietly go with a square-sail rig using an old bed sheet that Mrs. Dixon happened to have. He followed Nansen's description very closely.

Nansen initially had great difficulty in steering the sleds until he hit on the idea of rigging a sort of long bowsprit to the forward end of the paired sleds which one of his expedition members hung on to while on skis, at the same time steering the sleds from their bows, so to speak, using the bowsprit as a fixed tiller. As Nansen said, it was a dangerous place to be because if the front skier lost his balance and fell, two heavily laden sleds would pass over him and the result would not be pretty! The other expedition members initially hung onto the back of each pair of sleds and were pulled along on their skis, but they later hung onto ropes trailed behind and were towed on their skis. When Dick and Dot got under way and headed for the North Pole at the end of the lake, they too soon found that steering was out of the question. All they could do was grab hold and hang on for dear life as they flew downwind.

It will also be recalled that the D's lost a fur mitten and a knapsack full of food on their wild ride. At one stage Nansen, too, lost cases of pemmican and other stores, including a fur coat and ice axe which fell off the sleds as they bounced over rough spots at tremendous speeds at the beginning of their sailing experience. Nansen let go of his tow-rope in order to gather the scattered tin boxes and other equipment, and finally had collected so much lost gear from his lead sleds that he had to wait until the following paired sleds coming up with the rest of the expedition could be flagged down, so that the recovered equipment and stores could be loaded aboard. From then on the stores were really lashed down well. Nansen also found that the only way to stop the sleds was to steer them off the wind.

At a point early on, Sverdrup, Nansen's second in command, lost his two expedition companions off the back of the sleds he was happily steering without knowing they'd gone because he couldn't see behind the square sail. He finally realized they were not there when he failed to get answers to his shouts. Dick, too, was almost lost from their speeding sled and had to be dragged back on board by Dorothea.

It would thus seem evident that parallels can be drawn between Nansen's adventure in real life and Dick and Dorothea's in Winter Holiday as they each flew across the ice and snow at break-neck speed. By weaving his story around true facts, AR had his sailing sled voyage to the North Pole!

As an aside, for those interested in the speeds achieved in modern times by ice and land yachts, I am led to believe the world record for a **Skeeter** Class ice yacht as determined by GPS is 84 mph or 135 kph, and for a land yacht the record is held by **Greenbird** at 126.2 mph or 203 kph. I am sure both Nansen and Ransome's Captain Nancy would have been impressed! Other speed records have been claimed over prior years but were not verified by third parties or timed using reliable methods.

Wishing you all fair winds and calm seas,

Ian Sacré
TARS Canada Coordinator

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

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

Photos of Trips to the Lake District

I have resurrected some color slides of 3 trips to the Lake District in the 1990's, searching for AR locations (with mixed success) and have put them in a Picasa album on the internet. Includes some photos of Captain Flint's houseboat (exterior and interior) at the Windermere Steamboat Museum (which has been closed now for a few years). If you are interested in looking, go to:

picasaweb.google.com/SqHatt

You will be looking for an album entitled "Swallows and Amazons in the English Lake District".

Charles Preston

Introducing "Fish Tales"--your stories of fishing experiences

Arthur Ransome loved to fish! Do you? If you have any "Fish Tales" to share with us, with photos if you have them, please send them to Elizabeth: erjolley8@gmail.com
This will be a regular feature whenever I receive any stories! Thanks to member Molly McGinnis for the idea and our first story. Look for it on page . And find out where your editor caught her first fish in the 2nd story on that page!

Membership Information:

Subscriptions for the calendar year fall due on 1 January of that year

Please pay now while you remember! This will save the work of having to track you down to determine your subscription intentions and will ensure that you will not miss any publications.

New Members Exempt: If you joined TARS in October, November or December, your subscription covers the next calendar year as well, and there is no need for further payment until the following January.

Senior or Pensioner status: If you are 65 or over then you are eligible for the Senior rate.

Additional Voluntary Contribution: The 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: 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/NORTH POLE NEWS are also welcome to help with the newsletter and prizes for competitions or promotions.

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/North Pole News, and pay their local equivalent of the UK prices.

FAMILY Member: \$62.75 (Must register the names of all members of the family)

Family Members receive:

Mixed Moss, the yearly Literary Magazine.

Signals, the news from UK Regions and headquarters and some overseas groups, 3/year.

Outlaw, the newsletter for Junior members.

Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News, 3/year.

ADULT Member: \$52.50

Adult Members receive Mixed Moss, Signals and Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News.

SENIOR Member: \$44.00

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, receive Signals and Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News, plus Outlaw.

US MEMBERS: Please make cheques (in US Dollars) payable to "The Arthur Ransome Society" and send with this sheet to:
Robin Marshall Phone (941) 896-9169
210 - 18th St NW.
Bradenton, FL 34205-6845
E-mail: robin@arthur-ransome.org.uk

CANADA MEMBERS: Please make cheques (in Canadian Dollars) payable to "Ian Sacré", and send with this sheet to:
Ian Sacré Phone (604) 984-2295
750 Donegal Place,
North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5
E-mail: gallivanterthree@telus.net

Or pay by **PayPal** with a **credit card** at: http://arthur-ransome.org.uk/TARS_Subscriptions.html
Be sure to have your **member number** ready, and click on the appropriate "**Overseas Member**" box.
If you have any questions please contact Robin Marshall for assistance.



(Announcing a New Project!)


TARSUS & TARSCanada are putting together a cookbook titled **Recipes for Hungry Explorers**. We have invited members who live in Australia, New Zealand & Japan to submit their recipes. **Join in! Send us favorite recipes** you have enjoyed while camping, sailing, hiking, backpacking, bicycling, kayaking, canoeing, cross-country skiing or on other outdoor adventures. Please tell us:

1. When & where you have used your recipe
2. Whether you prepare any portion ahead of time
3. How you keep it safely until you use it (do any ingredients need refrigeration?)
4. What gear you use for cooking it (pots & pans, Dutch oven, type of stove, or fire)
5. Whether you have served it to children!

These should be recipes that reflect who we are as TARS members--current & past adventurers, people who love the outdoors and who can almost feel themselves holding the tiller along with John, lifting the boiling kettle off the fire and pouring the tea with Susan, bringing back the fresh farm milk with Titty & Roger, tying boats together for a mid-river picnic lunch with Tom & the D's, and doggedly learning to ice skate with Nancy & Peggy on that frozen tarn. Tell us a little story about self and your recipes!

We will also include a "Top Ten" camp cooking gear list--what can you not live without and why? Send in your responses, with photos if possible!

Recipe sections will include: Quick and Easy
More Work Involved
Requires Base Camp Preparation

Ian Sacre, TARSCanada Coordinator, has offered to find us a set of really nice sailing/camping artwork. Here's a sample: 

We are not certain yet how we will print the book, nor whether we will give it out or sell it to raise funds. Elizabeth Jolley will gratefully accept all ideas, and decisions will be made at a later date.

Please send your recipes to: **Elizabeth Jolley**
675 NW 114th Ave.
Portland, OR 97229
erjolley8@gmail.com



The Professor's Laboratory—ideas, instructions & fixes

A Swallows & Amazons Shelf

By Charles Preston

If you have a shelf, or shelves, not being used, you might want to make a display of Swallows & Amazons articles - "artifacts"- if you will. It is fun to do, and will fill up otherwise empty space. You will find that you have some items and can scrounge for others, but you probably will have to spend a few bucks for some. Below are some pictures of what I did. You will easily recognize some of the items, but I will give you an explanation anyway:

- ❖ The Swallows and Amazons pennants were purchased from the TARS stall. The Scarab pennant is homemade.
- ❖ I made the white tea mugs on a web site called Zazzle.com.



Shelf #1:

- A bosun's pipe (which AR should have given to Susan instead of a whistle)
- The Swallows' spyglass
- John's compass for sailing
- The Amazons' sailor's knife



Shelf #2:

- A bottle of ginger beer
- "The " Noon-Tide Owl"
- A red watch cap
- Nancy's pocket knife "with lots of tweaks in it"



Shelf #3:

- Dick's pocket notebook
- A geologist's pick (for obtaining ore samples)
- A "star wheel" (Dick did not have one for his observatory, but he could have, as similar instruments had been in existence for many years)
- What I call a "prospector's compass" (This is a WWII Government Issue specimen, but the same type had been available for a decade or more before PP)
- A Great Northern Diver
- A small magnifier for close inspection of ore samples
- My personal "Squashy Hat" mug, made for me by some Coots long ago
- A copper nugget!!

The Return of Missie Lee: the TARS 2014 IAGM

By Don Rice

TARS International Annual General Meetings resemble Tolstoy's happy families in that they're all alike. This isn't to say that if you've been to one IAGM you've been to them all, but only that the nature of the happy gathering remains constant through the years. And as with any happy family your mere presence is proof enough of your belonging there.

So it was with the 2014 IAGM in Barnstaple on the northern coast of Devon in southwest England. (TARSUS folks in New England, familiar with Barnstable, Massachusetts, might think the "p" in Barnstaple is a typo; nope, that's the way it's spelled.) In all, there were 102 Tars registered, aged 9 to 90 (literally). I didn't happen to witness any of the Junior Tars activities, but I'm assuming they followed the planned schedule. No doubt you'll be able to read an authoritative account in *The Outlaw*.

Our conference center was the Barnstaple Hotel, and many members booked rooms there. It was a little pricey for me, even at the special TARS rate of £70 for a single room. The exchange rate as I write this is \$1.70 per pound, so that would make a three-night stay \$357. Had I been willing and had I been able to find someone else who was willing, I could have shared a room for £50 per person per night. That still would have cost me \$255. Instead, I chose to stay at another hotel – The Yeo Dale – about a ten-minute walk away. My single room was small, but the place was bright, clean, and friendly. The total cost was \$229, including a huge breakfast each morning, and I have to say this about that: it was the first time I've ever seen a traditional English breakfast arranged artfully on a plate. I almost hated to disturb it.

Here's something to remember when you're traveling in Great Britain. If you stay at a B&B or hotel where breakfast is included in the price, be prepared to eat a lot. In a "traditional English breakfast" you'll get tea or coffee, a couple of eggs, tomatoes, beans, mushrooms, hash browns, toast, bacon, and sausage. Sometimes you'll be offered black pudding, which is a kind of sausage made from blood and fat. Makes me glad I'm a vegetarian. If you want you can also have cold cereal, orange juice, and fruit. I'd recommend the full breakfast, which for me was plenty even without the eggs, sausage, bacon, and, in particular, the black pudding.

At the Barnstaple Hotel I was duly registered by David Middleton, a thoroughly organized gentleman who keeps track of many of the details involved in putting on something as complicated as a TARS conference. David was situated in the Ashford Room. This was also the location of the various 'stalls', as the Brits call tables covered with things for sale, in this case books and other Ransome-related items. I picked up an Amazon reprint of Hugh Shelley's monograph on Ransome, first published by the Bodley Head in 1960; a bargain for £2. This is a nice book to read and to own and was something of a precursor to the raft of Ransomiana that followed. It also appealed to me because it weighed less than a pound, important when traveling with just a small pack.

At 6:30 many of us who arrived on Friday met for dinner in the hotel's main dining room, and I'm going to have to talk about food again. Here are our choices for the entree: Roast leg of lamb with mint sauce, red current jelly, and wine jus; Grilled fillet of salmon topped with melted tomato and paprika butter; Char-grilled minute steak, with a green peppercorn sauce laced with brandy and double cream; Pan-fried breast of chicken set on a thyme-flavoured sauce garnished with smoked bacon; Oven-baked aubergine (eggplant) & tomato topped with mozzarella, with caramelized shallot jus. Served family-style were bowls of various roasted vegetables, delicious enough to make a meal of themselves. For dessert we chose among the following: fruit salad; apricot and almond sponge cake served with custard; fruits-of-the-forest cheesecake with spiced plums; and white chocolate and blueberry tart with a mixed berry compote. Here we were, sixty or so people, ordering various combinations of entrees, desserts, and drinks, and everything was delivered to our tables quickly and with professional adroitness by an excellently trained wait staff, all of whom, when they spoke, sounded like the downstairs folks on Downton Abbey. And I guess I have to mention that the Tars pretty much sounded like the Crawley family and friends. I can't recall hearing a single glottal stop (look it up). Anyway, it was a great meal and a bargain at £15 (\$25) with no need to add tax and tip.

Later, sated and relaxed, we gathered in a large meeting room where we were officially welcomed by our incoming president, Sophie Neville (whom many of you will recall played Titty in the 1973 *Swallows and*

Amazons movie) and Christopher Kirwin, chairman of the Southwest TARS, our hosts for this event. Also on the schedule that night was a contest involving previously baked cakes, the entries being judged by the hotel's pastry chef. The winner was awarded the *Susan Cup*. Our main speaker for the evening was Simon Dell, author of the book *Lundy Island Through Time*. He gave a talk preparing us for the next day's adventure on the island, a granite mass situated in the Bristol Channel twelve miles off the Devon coast.



Barnstaple Hotel



Sophie Neville



Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Station

On Saturday morning those of us who were making the trip departed at 8:30 by coach for Ilfracombe, a resort town on the coast and the present site of *Verity*, a 67-foot high steel and bronze statue created by Damien Hirst – easily the most startling statue I've ever seen. The pictures I took don't do it justice, so you might want to Google it. The statue overlooks the harbor where the 142-foot *MS Oldenburg* was docked, which was to be our transportation to the island.

We had perfect sailing conditions on water that could hardly have been smoother. (To be honest, I would have preferred a bit of bouncing around.) We embarked on the two-hour journey at 10:00 and many of us ate our bag lunches on the way over. The island, which is three miles long and a mile wide, is some 350 feet high, the equivalent of a 35-story building. Thank goodness there was a long, gradually ascending road to the tiny village rather than a set of stairs.

We had a choice of activities: a walk to see puffins at Jenny's Cove, a south end historical stroll, or an east side flora and fauna stroll. Never having seen puffins in the wild I chose to go to Jenny's Cove, which is halfway up the island on the west coast. It's named for a schooner carrying a load of ivory and (maybe) bags of gold dust that wrecked there in 1797. The rocky cliffs and splashing waves with a few hundred sea birds circling, landing, and circling again are a dramatic sight. Among the birds was, as promised, a flock of puffins.



Damien Hirst's "Verity"



Jenny's Cove



Juniors clambering above

You've seen photos of puffins with small herring and sand eels hanging from their beaks, but those photos must have been taken with telescopic lenses. Puffins are somewhat shy birds and see no need to stand nearby posing for photographs. They tend to gather on ledges far from, and inaccessible to, humans. We saw

them, all right, but not so close that even with good binoculars any of us could discern fish dangling from their beaks. As soon as we arrived at Jenny's Cove, the junior Tars among us immediately began climbing the pinnacles that soared above the crashing seas below. The adult Tars present paid little attention, and certainly no one told them to be careful before they fell and broke their necks. "If not duffers, won't fall."

We also came upon some Soay sheep. This ancient breed was introduced to Lundy in the 1920s by Martin Coles Harman, one of the previous owners of the island and its self-proclaimed king. He went so far as to issue bronze coins with his royal portrait on one side and a puffin's head on the other. The British government didn't take kindly to this alternative coinage system, even though they were the equivalent of only half-penny and penny coins. Harman was prosecuted and the coins taken out of circulation. Today the one-puffin coin sells for around \$35. But to get back to the Soay sheep – they're named for an island in the St. Kilda group, the remotest part of the British Isles, situated 40 or so miles west of the Outer Hebrides. This is where they were first discovered. I happen to have a particular interest in that archipelago, but never thought I'd have the opportunity to see these sheep – and here they were.

We had been given a stern warning about being at the dock in time to get on the *Oldenburg* before it was scheduled to leave at 4:00. Everyone took the warning seriously, and we left no one behind. Not all of us had taken the trip, and the Tars who remained at Barnstaple, in keeping with the Missie Lee theme, were able to participate in a Latin class. At 7:15 we settled down in the Arlington Suite for a Chinese buffet.



Looking for puffins



MS Oldenburg awaiting our return



Doug Faunt

Dinner was followed by a talk by Sophie Neville and the presentation of some awards, including one to the only other American there, Doug Faunt from San Diego. He was given a STARS award (South West Super TARS) "for outstanding achievement in the Field of Adventure in the name of Arthur Ransome." Some of you will have known about this, but I didn't. Doug was one of the fourteen surviving crew members of the *HMS Bounty* when it sank off North Carolina on October 30, 2012, after having had the bad luck to meet up with Hurricane Sandy. Unfortunately, the captain and one other crew member drowned. The ship was built in 1962 for the movie *Mutiny on the Bounty* starring Marlon Brando. It later appeared in some of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. Doug is well-known among Tars, and everyone was pleased to see him alive and well.

There were a number of activities scheduled for Sunday, many of which involved walking, cycling, and sailing. I chose the lazy way out and went by car with friends to the Lynton and Barnstaple narrow gauge steam railway. The train ride is only a two-mile round trip, but it was fun, and afterwards we had a personal tour of the engine house. From there we set off for the town of Lynton itself, had lunch, and rode the funicular railway down the cliff to Lynmouth, a town on the Lyn River very close to the coast. Fifty-two years ago it was mostly destroyed and many people killed when the river overflowed as a violent storm raged through the vicinity. Little evidence is left of the damage today. While there we happened on a rally of MG owners happy to discuss their cars, after which we rode the funicular railway back up the cliff for a teashop break; a pleasant day.

For dinner that night we were back in the hotel dining room to partake in a carvery – roast beef and turkey, I think, but I'm not sure because I had the vegetarian alternative. It was another excellently prepared and served meal. The evening program was the annual *Dick Callum Cup* quiz, a highlight of every AGM. People gather around tables in teams of five or six. Sometimes they even assume names, such as "The Swallowing

Amazons", and so on. The idea of the contest is to answer obscure questions regarding things that occur in the books, e.g. who applied the black rings around John's eyes in *Great Northern?* (Answer: John himself.) It seemed to me the number of questions was in the many dozens. I have to admit that I could have answered only one of them, and I can't remember now what it was. After each round, the filled-in answer sheets are passed to another table for toting up correct answers, and a running score is kept for each team. The winning team becomes the owner of the *Dick Callum Cup* until the following year, sort of like the *America's Cup*. My team was not the winner.



The Annual General Meeting



Devon countryside from aboard the train

Monday mornings at these gatherings are reserved for the Annual General Meeting. This always involves some housekeeping duties such as committee reports, voting on minor changes in the by-laws, acknowledging the stellar work of those who keep the organization going, and that sort of thing. Following that there's a forum in which various topics can be discussed at length. I knew there was going to be some talk about *Mixed Moss* – specifically, about changing the current amateurishly designed, hard-to-read, and boringly illustrated format back to what it had been in the past, a handsome literary journal. Unfortunately, I had a train to catch to my next destination and was unable to stay for the discussion.

I have another hope – that I've whetted your appetite sufficiently to make you travel to next year's IAGM, which will be held in the Broads, May 22-25 at Belsey Bridge Conference Centre, Ditchingham. It appears that it might be a bit cheaper than Barnstaple. Children five and under are always free, and there'll be a 50% discount for those six to fifteen. And if you can somehow arrange it, you can save money by camping out.

I truly regretted not making it to the bi-annual Literary Weekend last year in York, but I had a previous commitment. Maybe next year I can arrange to find the time and money to attend the September 2015 meeting.

There's talk of its being held in Winchester, but as of now it's not definite. The Literary Weekends, I should probably remind you, are pretty much adult affairs. I suppose kids would be welcome, but they'd be bored stiff. Anyway, it's something for you to think about.



Village of Lynmouth....from the Funicular Railway

Editor's Note: Some older teens might not be "bored stiff" by the Literary Weekends!

Dipping our Hands—personal relationships with the books

Nostalgic Swallows & Amazons Newspaper Clipping

By Pam Massey

When Pam Massey renewed her 2015 TARS subscription she sent the Canadian Coordinator the 1989 clipping shown on the next page. Asked for details as to how her interests in Arthur Ransome's books began she wrote the following:

"How many other TARS members like me learned to appreciate A.R. without ever 'messaging about in boats'? Even though I grew up a few miles south of Manchester, England, and, therefore not so very far from the Lake District, I met up with *Swallows and Amazons* at my local library. It was a book in great demand and a kindly librarian allowed me to sit in a corner and read it until the person who had asked for it to be 'saved' came to pick it up. It always seemed to be the same and I was so far down the list that I never managed to read it all through! Money was rather tight after the War but somehow my Mother managed to save her precious pennies and bought me my own copy, which I 'devoured' over and over again!

In 1967, my husband and I and our two little girls immigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba. My childhood books came with us so that the girls could read them too. At a later date, my Mum found some paperback versions of AR books and sent them to me. Much later, on a trip across 'The Pond', my niece told me of a little bookstore in Southport that was reputed to have many of the hard cover books. Many of them were originals and far too pricey, but they did have new editions of all of the S & A books. That was a chance I couldn't miss! Now I have a full set and every once in a while I go back to my childhood and reread them. One strange thing I didn't notice at the time was that the end papers in Pigeon Post and Peter Duck each belong in the other's book (a bit of a nuisance if one wants to follow the journeys). I once thought of tracing them and putting them in their rightful places but it never got done. (Now with my poor vision it wouldn't be possible.) I wonder if anyone else ever came across such a thing?

I am sure folks won't agree with me, but I have never cared for *Peter Duck* nor *Missee Lee*! They're interesting 'stories' I suppose but too far-fetched for my taste! So far, I haven't been able to convert my Grandchildren into AR fans but the books are there if they want them!"

Editor's Note: The article was a double-page spread, and thus rather too wide to get a good readable replication onto our page size, so I cut it apart & put the pieces on the page in order for you:

Swallows on a Return Flight of Nostalgia--from the Daily Mail, Thursday, May 18th, 1989



IT IS the stuff that a million childhood dreams were made of.

Once upon a time, almost 60 years ago, four children set sail across the placid water of Lake Coniston below a cloudless sky and landed on Wildcat Island.

Here, Captain John, Mate Susan, A.B. Titty and the Boy Roger met the Amazons, Master Nancy Blackett and Mate Peggy Blackett, and together, in their fertile imaginations, created a world of pirates and mysterious sea captains.

The series of books, of course, began with Arthur Ransome's children's classic *Swallows and Amazons*.

The inspiration was an Anglo-Irish Armenian family, Taqui, Susan, Titty, Roger and Brigit

By FRANCES HARDY

Altounyan, who had been holidaying in the Lake District in 1929 with their boat *The Swallow* and called on their 'uncle' Arthur.

In a peaceful Suffolk garden yesterday, the characters came together again to re-discover their childhood adventures.

They sat — grey-haired now, and some of them grandmothers — yards from the stately red-brick Broke Hall, Ransome's home in the 1930s. They had come to see the yacht, *The Nancy Blackett*, that Ransome once owned, resurrected from the sludge off Scarborough by PR consultant Mike Rines and now lovingly restored.

Ransome christened the boat after the popular tomboy in *Swallows and Amazons*. And

Nancy, alias Taqui Stephens, Master of the Amazons, had come to see her and relive a childhood idyll.

'Like Nancy I was — and still am — a tomboy,' says Taqui, now 72.

Her sisters — the youngest, Brigit Sanders, baby Vicky in the book, and Susan Villard, Mate Susan — were there too.

Taqui recalled how they lived with her parents in Syria but spent their holidays on Coniston.

'We were all very keen sailors but we were never obedient in the Boy Scout way they were in the book.'

Brigit so loves Lakeland that she lives there now, near Coniston, almost within sight of Peel Island, which became Wildcat in the book.

Titty could not make it yesterday, but Brigit recalls: 'She was always the one with the fertile imagination. I remember her making fairy food out of leaves.'



Illustration from the book
(published by Jonathan Cape)



1926: The real Swallows, Susan, Taqui, Titty and Roger

Fish Tales--Our fishing stories

*****NEW SECTION!*****

My First Fish

By Molly McGinnis

I remember my first wild fish very well, even though I was only about 5 years old at the time, but I can't say I exactly caught it. We were staying in a little cabin on a stream in the highest hills of southern Ohio. Every morning my dad and I went down to the stream and pulled in the trotline — a rope across the stream with short baited lines hanging from it. The line must have been set up with a pulley on the other side, because my father wouldn't have waded across to untie the other end. Probably Uncle Ralph set it up — it was his friend's cabin, and that would be just the kind of thing he would think of. He was kind of like Dick that way, very good at thinking up good ways to do things. The trotline caught catfish and snapping turtles, and we ate them both. My dad knocked the catfish on the head to kill them and then we skinned them. You skin a catfish by cutting through the skin just below the head and pulling the skin off with pliers. I got to "help" — I could hold the pliers and pull on the skin once Dad got it started. Then my mom rolled them in cornmeal and pan-fried them. Catfish from cold, clear water like the water in that spring-fed stream are great eating. We collected watercress from

the spring to eat with them, and pennyroyal for the most lovely tea you ever smelled.

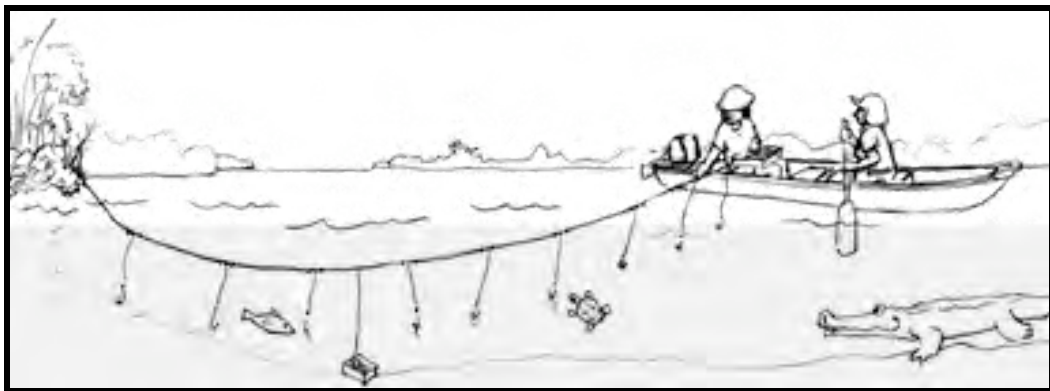
My parents loved to fish and stayed near water on every vacation, but they never caught any fish. We would sit for hours in little rowboats on little lakes, being chewed on by mosquitoes and deerflies, and hoping to see a bobber dip. Occasionally there would be a nibble – great excitement! – but never a fish. You can't learn too much about catching fish in one week a year.



Bluegill

Later, we lived on a citrus ranch in South Texas where there were irrigation canals all around, and that was where I caught my first fish. I don't think there was a fishing pole left by then. I would get a small worm and a small hook and dangle a line into the canal. Sometimes I'd pull up a beautiful golden-sided fish – no doubt the Red-eared Sunfish native to that part of Texas. Sunfishes and their close relatives in the Centrarchid family, Bluegills, Crappies, and Pumpkinseeds, are great kid fish – they're good eating for man and fish alike and they've been introduced all over North America. They are firm and tasty to eat even where the water is warm, because they feed on things like worms, bugs, snails, and smaller fish, and they're efficient reproducers who make lots of little fish for the big predator fish. This group reproduces so fast that the fish get overcrowded and stunted, but that just means you catch a whole lot of tiny Bluegills, and they taste just as good as big ones. Most places, when you fish in public waters you can catch as many of any fish in this group as you want, or sometimes 25 a day, any time of year and any size, but check your state's fishing rules. Pond owners will usually thank you for taking all the Centrarchids you can catch.

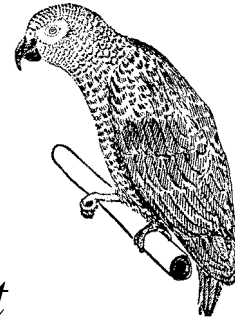
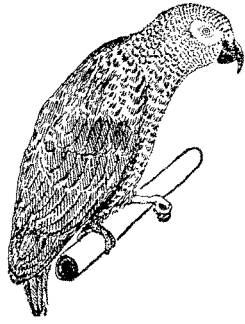
Note on trotlines: many anglers think trotlines are illegal, but I looked at regulations in a dozen states and they all allow trotlines for certain fish – and not the little 5-hook trotline we put across that stream, either. Usually a trotline can have up to 70 or up to 125 hooked lines (these are the trots) on it. Texas doesn't even count 5 hooks or less as a trotline. Here is a picture of a trotline ([Trotline](#)), and the site has very good instructions for making one:



My First Fish

By Elizabeth Jolley

It started with a boy. He was tall, from my perspective as a petite 7-year-old. He had come to stay at the Bachelors' Quarters, where his father lived while working for the Forest Service. We had this huge, long pipeline which carried water down through the meadow across the road. There were horses & mules grazing in the meadow--we often fed them long pieces of green grass through the fence. Robbie, the boy, was my first crush. I would have done anything, as long as we could hang around together. I didn't really like fish, either to eat or to touch, but Robbie invited me to go fishing in the creek up the pipeline. So of course I went! We climbed through the horse fence strands and set out, walking along the top of the pipeline. You had to watch out for the rims that stood up where each piece was joined to the next, and you had to be careful to stay right in the middle, so you wouldn't fall off. We reached the stream, Robbie helped me climb down, and we fished. I don't really remember the passing of time, but I do remember proudly bearing home a tiny Rainbow Trout, probably not a legal-sized one. Mom cleaned it & cooked it for dinner, and we all had a bit of a taste. I still didn't like fish...



Pieces of Eight

The Junior Pages

Edited by Elizabeth Jolley, guest editor this issue!

Wanted: first mate or co-owner for Pieces of Eight. Position not limited to junior members - retired pirates very welcome. The current captain is very busy (barely stopping work even for stray roman candles), and would like some help. Please contact deirdre@oro.net or erjolley8@gmail.com.

LINKS TO SOME PLAYFUL ENJOYMENT

from www.allthingsransome.net

www.allthingsransome.net/quizzes

If you haven't tried these quizzes yet, you should! You can choose from:

"Arthur Ransome Quotations Quizzes and Games"

"Quiz on Life and Times of Arthur Ransome"

"Quizzes on individual books"

"The Centreboard TARS Hangman Game"

and finally, a "Picture Question", in which you attempt to answer a question based on the picture shown. Loads of fun for when you really aren't in the mood for that homework, anyway :-). (Don't show this to your parents!)

Also on www.allthingsransome.net:

"Boats and Dinghies--

both real and fictional, owned or created by Arthur Ransome."

"Downloads--

of Ransome-related tools and software, such as semaphore alphabets, a Ship's Bell program, etc." I love having the Semaphore Alphabet font in my list to choose from. You may notice I used it in the Cookbook announcement. (BTW, if you missed that one, we are going to put together a TARS Cookbook called "Recipes for Hungry Explorers", and we want YOU, juniors, to send in your family's favorite outdoor recipes--food you love when you camp, hike, backpack, sail, bike, ski, etc. Just send them to Elizabeth anytime: erjolley8@gmail.com You could get YOUR recipe published in a real cookbook!)

"Locations--

pictures of locations featured in Ransome's books." Take a peek at these, and if you have good photos of you in any of these spots, send them to Deirdre for future Pieces of Eight sections: deirdre@oro.net

Maps--

of Arthur Ransome areas described in his books, viewable or downloadable." You can print your own copies to decorate binders, walls, etc!

Ransome Readers Recommend--

short reviews and recommendations by Ransome readers of book which they feel other Ransome readers will enjoy." Some pretty great books are listed here. I just stumbled on one I think many of you would enjoy: The Bellamy Bird, by Clare Havens.

Here's the Amazon.com listing for it: www.amazon.com/The-Bellamy-Bird
and here's a description:

"When Freddie and Jamie Bellamy find themselves having travelled back in time, they discover they must solve the mystery that has cursed their family for years. How Freddie, her brother Jamie and their parents protect the Bellamy Bird, a fabled, jewelled statue, with the help of some mischievous schoolboys and some sailing-mad children, makes for an exciting and special mixture of vintage children's adventure and whodunnit.

'Time travel, sailing and a mystery solved make for an entertaining tale!' AusTARS - The Arthur Ransome Society, Australia

Amazon Fans of Arthur Ransome, Enid Blyton, Richmal Crompton and Agatha Christie will enjoy The Bellamy Bird."

P.S. I totally loved it! There are some great Ransome references that you will get if you've read "Swallows and Amazons"; more if you've read the rest of the series! -Elizabeth

Tea Brack Recipe

"There was a hunk, the sort of hunk that really is a hunk, a hunk big enough for twelve indoor people and just right for six sailors, of the blackest and juiciest and stickiest fruit cake."
-SD Ch. XXV

Tea Brack, or "Barm Brack", is a sticky cake of deliciousness, lightly sweetened and studded with raisins galore, fragrant with spices, with a hint of lemon peel. Mmmmm...I am drooling just thinking about it. Once I finish with this newsletter, I think it's time to bake a batch!

Note for younger juniors--

This recipe requires using an oven. Be sure to ask you parents for permission, as oven burns are not nice!

Ingredients

3 cups golden raisins
3 cups dark (regular) raisins
2 cups firmly-packed brown sugar
1 1/2 cups cold strong breakfast tea
4 cups flour (you can use all white or mix half white/half wheat)
4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon grated allspice
3 eggs
Grated rind of 1 lemon (use the lemon for juice for another recipe!)

Directions

Soak overnight: golden & dark raisins, brown sugar and cold tea

Next day preheat oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit
(Directions, continued)

-Pg. 16-

Sift together: flour, baking powder, salt, spices

Add to raisin mixture with: eggs (lightly beaten first) and lemon rind

Pour into greased pan (I use a springform pan, which creates a deep round cake).

Bake for 1 ½ hours. Let cool at least 5 minutes. Remove from pan and cool completely on rack. This cake lasts quite well on the counter. Enjoy!



This is the shape & size I make



and this is what it look like inside!

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



Elizabeth Jolley, Editor
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This has been an exciting month or two in my editor's chair! First Ian Sacre suggested we put together a Cookbook. Plans soon solidified into a book titled, "Recipes for Hungry Explorers", with a nod to Ransome's books--remember all the food he described?! Following some outreach, we've decided to collaborate with TARSUS, TARS Canada, AUSTARS (Australia), NZTARS (New Zealand) and possibly JapanTARS! This little cookbook idea now spans the globe :-). Next, member Molly McGinnis suggested a new section, "Fish Tales", fishing being a huge interest of Ransome. We will be collecting & sharing your fish tales in future issues! I like that feeling of connectedness, as I sit here in my home in Portland, Oregon. I like to think that my interests may be mirrored by people near or far away, who also grew up reading and re-reading those wonderful books. Staying in contact with TARS members worldwide is fun! Here are a few ways you can do the same:

1. On Facebook, try "The Arthur Ransome Group"--type it into the FB search line.
2. Join TarBoard--"Most Recent Messages" page here: <http://www.tarboard.net/tarboard/tarboard.html>
3. Read books written with a Ransome-related plot, style, etc. Here are a few authors to try:
Julia Jones The Strong Winds Trilogy and The Lion of Sole Bay
Jon Tucker Those Snake Island Kids and Those Eco-Pirate Kids (and just for a fun armchair adventure, try Tucker's tale of a sailing trip from NZ to the Antarctic, Snow Petrel)
Duncan Hall Brambleholme Summer and Brambleholme Autumn

4. Submit an article a story, a recipe, a photo--ANYTHING that has to do with the S&A books in any way--to your favorite newsletter. That's this one, in case you weren't quite sure! Thanks to all of our contributors!

-Pg. 17-