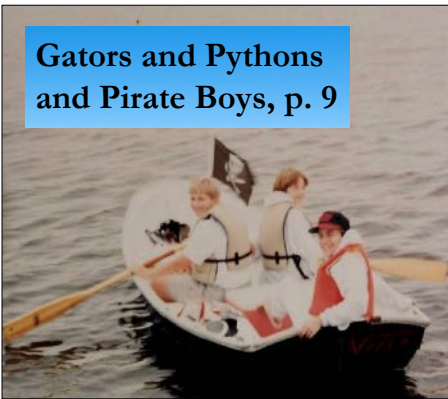




Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News

January 2018

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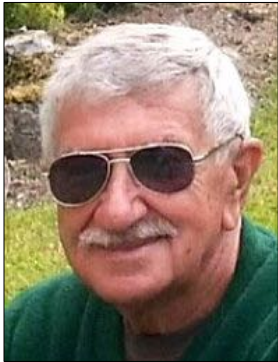
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Ship's Papers — Important information for the Crew



A View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall
TARSUS Coordinator
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Let me wish everyone a very happy 2018. I hope the holidays brought you good celebrations and joy. There used to be a time when one received a copy or copies

of Ransome's books. Now new books of any kind that follow your interests are welcome.

It is also a time to plan tasks and pleasures for the coming year, I have already heard from our member Andrew Fisher that he has booked a 13-day hike from coast to coast in England; we will be thrilled to hear how this went in a future *Signals*.

I also hear that our past editor Elizabeth Jolley plans to attend the Conistan AGM. Do we have anyone else going? The location is really exciting

as all the locations imagined in the northern books can be visited, and so many knowledgeable members will be attending. I am looking forward to Elizabeth's details of the trip.

The next thing for TARSUS is member renewals. I have received quite a few but there are many more to come, I hope. I must apologize for putting 2017 instead of 2018 on the form I sent out – another of my senior moments. I hope most realized it was a typo.

As the British pound has fallen since the referendum I have adjusted dues to a more realistic level, at the same time allowing for further fluctuations.

The new rates are:

Junior \$16 – Student \$30

Adult \$46 – Family \$53

Senior \$38 – Corporate \$90

You still have the option to pay directly on the Arthur Ransome site, either using PayPal or by credit card. Depending on the daily exchange rate the amount may be slightly less or more. Be sure to have your member # handy, and select the overseas category in the pull-down menu.

http://www.arthur-ransome.org.uk/TARS_Subscription_Renewals.html

Smooth sailing and fair winds.

Robin

Tent for Two update

Last issue we reported on the "Tent for Two" adventure of Helen Jolley and Mike Dorfman. The pair have now reached South America.

After a month in Quito, Ecuador that included a week-long cruise to the Galapagos, they prepared for the next stage — mountaineering in the Andes — with a two-day backpacking trip.

As the picture to the right shows, they are now in the Ecuadorean mountains going through the acclimatization needed to prepare them to operate at the high altitudes.

–SH



To follow their adventures, check out their blog:

<https://tentfortwoblog.wordpress.com/>

and their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/tentfor2/>



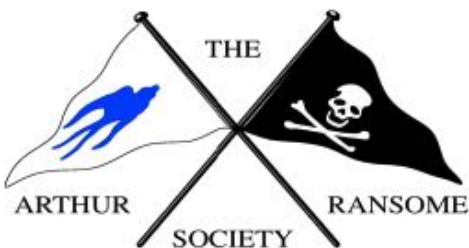
Greetings from the North

By Ian Sacré, TARS Canada Coordinator
750 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5
gallivanterthree@telus.net

Once again, ably prompted by Simon, our efficient and organized editor, I find myself writing this winter message for the *North Pole News*.

Winter has certainly come our northern landscape. News reports speak of snow-covered mountain passes in this part of the world, and for the past number of days dense sea fog has blanketed the southern coast of this province, fortunately burning off a bit as the day warms a trifle. I live about three-quarters of a mile from the sea and yet I can plainly hear the foghorns of vessels under weigh in English Bay. The fog carries other old familiar sounds as well. The rattling clatter of heavy anchor chain as it flies down the hawse pipe of a large freighter as the ship comes to anchor. Or the crashing and banging of cargo hatches being opened for loading or discharge. But enough trivia.

It has been suggested that it would be nice if notepaper printed with the Swallows and Amazons burgees was made available to Canadian TARS members. The sheets would measure about 5-1/2" X 8-1/2" The burgees would look like this:



Preliminary costs would appear to be roughly between five and ten dollars per hundred-sheet pad depending on paper quality and the size of the printing. There would also be some postage involved. If individual members are interested, would you be kind enough to send me an email to the email address at the top of this page.

In the last newsletter I asked if members would like to receive a list of email addresses of other Canadian TARS members or if they would rather not have their email address circulated to other members, to please let me know your wishes. On the off chance that not everyone read the last newsletter asking members to advise me as to their wishes, once again, please let me know if you do NOT wish other members to have your email address.

Membership Renewal for 2018

At the end of this year our Canadian membership was down to 24 paid memberships. But I am delighted to report that we now have a new member to swell our ranks.

As of December 10, 2017 well over half of our Canadian members have renewed their memberships. Thank you, and to those who have yet to do

so, please do get your cheques off to me. 2018 Memberships fell due on the 1st. January 2018. We have a very sterling reputation with TARS headquarters for timely subscription renewals and we would very much like to keep it that way. Canadian Overseas subscriptions are:

Junior: \$17.00 Student: \$33.00
Senior: \$41.00 Adult: \$49.00,
Family: \$57.00 Corporate: \$97.00

Please make your cheques payable to me, Ian Sacré, and send them to:

750 Donegal Place
North Vancouver
British Columbia, V7N 2X5

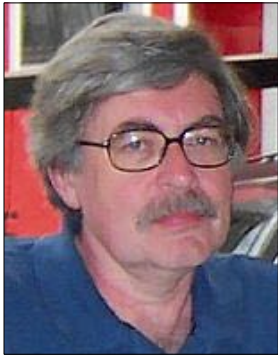
For those of you who wish to pay their subscriptions directly to TARS UK Headquarters please be kind enough to let me know when you have done so, so I can then 'tick you off' my membership list.

* * *

I do hope many of you continue to respond to Simon's appeal for material to publish in *Signals from TARSUS/ North Pole News*. There must surely be more stories out there which you would like to share with the rest of us. If we do not keep Simon supplied with new material our little publication will surely die.

Once again, wishing everyone fair winds and calm seas for the coming year.

Kind regards,
Ian Sacré
TARS Canada Co-ordinator



A Note from the Editor

By Simon Horn, sjhorn@gmail.com

Welcome to *Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News* for January 2018, and Happy New Year to all.

A few months ago, I'm told the TARS Board discussed the possibilities of getting regular material from overseas TARS branches to be published in the UK *Signals*,

which now has almost exclusively British content. It was remarked, however, that both our newsletter, *Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News*, and *Furthest South*, from Australia and New Zealand, don't often have the kind of items that appear in the UK-based *Signals*.

The problem, I think, is that, while the UK TARS has enough members that regular activities can be carried out and reported on, here in North America, at least, our membership is too small and, more to the point, too spread out for common activities to occur very often.

I wondered if any areas had enough members to even consider joint activities, so I took a look at my database of North American TARS memberships.

I first tried sorting by city, but it soon became clear that aside from Toronto, with five memberships listed, virtually no cities had more than one member. (This may be misleading, because my lists does not include "metropolitan area".) Sorted by state or province, however, things seemed a bit more hopeful.

The table shows the results.

Of course, this is very approximate, since it does not take into account family memberships, how many of

Canada	
Ontario	13
BC	7
Nova Scotia	3
United States	
California	11
Washington	5
Massachusetts	5
Maine	4
Maryland	4
New Hampshire	3
New York	3
Wisconsin	3

North American TARS members

our members are elderly, and how interested particular members may be in taking part in Ransomite activities.

Looked at regionally, perhaps things are more encouraging: the Pacific Northwest (WA, OR, BC) has 13 members, while the New York region (NY, NJ, CT) has 7.

What about it? In areas where we have several members, are any of you interested in organizing local activities? Perhaps you already have, but have not reported on them. Perhaps you have others planned. Your fellow members would be interested, so please let me know.

In this issue

I think have have discovered the secret to putting out this newsletter: take the right mournful tone when calling for articles for the next issue. As Alistair Bryden put it in an email: "The woeful call of an Editor. Ok, you have shamed me into action." And act he did, as you will see on the Contents page, as did several others.

After the usual *Ship's Papers* section, *Kanchenjunga's Cairn* reports on no less than four different adventures, including another voyage in UK waters by Ian Sacré, a tale of a kit-built boat, gators, camping and pirate boys from Paul Nelson, and two west-coast nautical adventures from Alistair. *Dipping My Hands* includes articles from Peter Calamai, Alistair (again!) and Maida Follini from Halifax. *Pieces of Eight* follows with a tough word search puzzle from Elizabeth Jolley.

With that out of the way, we move on to the meat of the issue: food! The *Beckfoot Kitchen* is overflowing, with Elizabeth Jolley's detailed plans for building an "Edible Igloo", and with Molly McGinnis's examination of feasting in *Winter Holiday*, with recipes, including a fascinating transcription of previously unknown conversation between Susan and Mrs. Jackson about how to make a hot-pot. It all concludes with Robert Dilley's explanation of how to get bacon cooked properly.

I hope you enjoy the issue, and sincere thanks again to all the contributors. For all of you who have yet to send something in for the newsletter, the next issue will come out in May. As always, you don't have to be a writer, and items can be short as well as long.

Kanchenjunga's Cairn — Places we've been and our adventures

Cruise of the Sandhawk

By Ian Sacré

It all started with the reading of Arthur Ransome's *Coot Club* and *The Big Six* so many years ago when I must have been about nine or ten years old. My imagination then, as it is still, was very wild, and I was easily able to immerse myself in each of AR's yarns without difficulty as a unseen, imaginative crew member. Each story seemed so real and doable to me that I thought it only required a few tweaks on my part to actually embark on a parallel adventure of my own. And I have for the most part been fortunate in that my life to date has indeed been filled with adventures and I hope there are many more to come.

Like many of us I have a bit of a bucket list of things I would like to do. My list never seems to get any shorter or stay in the order in which it appeared a day or week or more ago. The list is continually shuffled as interests and opportunities come and go. On the list are such things as following the Oregon Trail from St. Louis, Missouri to Astoria, Oregon. Apparently the ruts



The Sandhawk

caused by the wagon wheels are still visible in some places even today. Another item on the list is to follow the route of the First Crusades from northern France to Jerusalem. This adventure keeps being pushed to the right due to the continual unrest in the Middle East and the Balkans countries through which the Crusaders passed.

But also on my list was to cruise the Norfolk Broads in search of the Big Six! As it turned out events did not

unfold quite as I had hoped but I did manage a cruise of the Broads this past summer, albeit not the Northern Broads which was the venue for much of the two books, but I did manage to voyage on the Southern Broads.

Having already spent nearly three weeks in England the plan called for me to make my way to Gatwick and meet a friend and then, together, make our way to Reedham where I had rented an old 1960's era traditional Broads motor cruiser called the *Sandhawk* for two weeks.

The journey by bus from Gatwick to Norwich was rather long but the scenery was interesting and our hotel in Norwich on the banks of the river Yare was the perfect spot from which to explore the lovely old city with its stories of bygone years. I did not know for instance that the cream coloured limestone used to build the Norwich Cathedral beginning in 1096 had come from Caen, France by way



The river Yare at Norwich



The Station B&B (in the former Lingwood railway station building)

of the English Channel, through the Dover Strait, around to Great Yarmouth and up the Yare River to the building site. And all of this transportation was carried out using the medieval cargo vessels of the eleven hundreds! Perhaps in flatish bottomed vessels known as Cogs. The following afternoon we made our way by train to Lingwood, to the Station B & B (literally in an old railway station right beside the tracks!) then on again the following day by train to Reedham. We had arrived!

Our trusty craft was ready for us but sadly showing her age. Peeling paint and torn deck head liners, worn rub rails and some rather odd looking pots and pans in the galley. But whatever the craft's shortcomings was made up by the very kind and helpful owners for whom nothing appeared to be too much trouble. Typical old school Broads waterman, when asked if there was any sort of paperwork they wished me to complete the owner smiled and said no, don't much like paperwork. We were off to a good

start!

By the time we had got our gear on board and were given a short briefing on the boat's essential systems the weather had started to look decidedly ominous so we decided to stay alongside the home staith for the night and depart after breakfast in the morning, heading west up the river Yare as far as the river Chet and then up the narrow Chet River, WSW to the town of Loddon which we had been advised was the best place to take on provisions. It was a good decision to stay in Reed-

ham for our first night because there was a horrendous thunder storm in the night with strong gusty winds and lots of lightening which apparently caused some local damage. I could not help but wonder as to the adequacy of the boat's grounding system should we be struck by lightening as I lay in my bunk that night listening to the storm as it passed overhead.

The morning departure was uneventful except for a few anxious moments as we approached the Reedham chain ferry, crossing the river on the flooding tide. Knowing the ferry had the right of way we fully expected to see it start to cross the river immediately in front of us. We were fortunately spared such excitement. The voyage up river on a bright sunny morning was magical. While were occasionally passed by a huge fifty or sixty foot chrome and glitter 'gin palace' my crew made the comment that with our shabby old craft we certainly would never be classed as hullabaloo! I thought we fitted more into the 'Death and Glory' category except for the fact we had an engine. We found a good mooring on the Loddon Staith about ten minutes walk from the centre of town. From the staith, shoulder-

The Death and Glory, perhaps?





The swing bridge at Reedham

ing our back packs, we walked to the grocery and bought a week's worth of provisions which included iron rations in the form of milk chocolate bars of course.

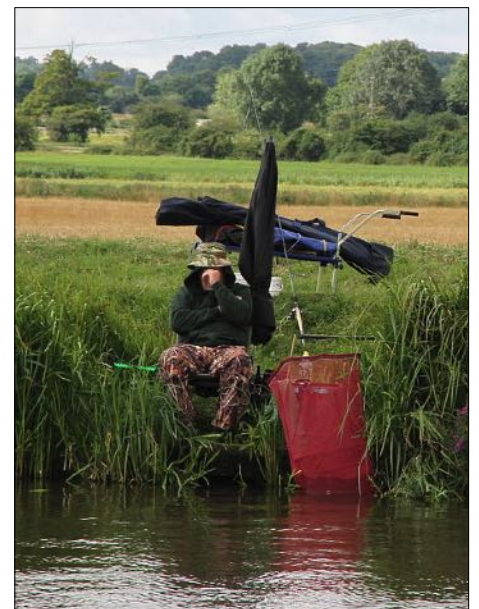
We were a little surprised at the amount of tide-generated current on the Yare and Chet rivers, but upon reflection realized there were no locks or other barriers linking the Yare River directly to the North Sea at Great Yarmouth, so of course the river was tidal. At the Reedham railway swing bridge during spring tides the current fairly whistles through the narrows and was certainly a force to be reckoned with when docking anywhere on the Yare and Chet rivers. I noted that a number of the large modern boats we met had bow thrusters, an aid which would have done nothing to help their crews develop their simple boat handling seamanship skills.

After spending some time exploring footpaths around Loddon with the aid of an Ordnance Survey map (The

Broads OL 40), we returned to the Yare River to make our way slowly up to Norwich. Despite being late July we found marine river traffic fairly light. We saw numerous fisher men and women snuggled up in little hollowed out spaces along the reed banked river. Some seemed to have an enormous amount of gear, each fisher we saw had one of a variety of purpose built carts with which they trundled their fishing paraphernalia along the river bank dike to what was obviously their favourite spot. Their lack of movement in many cases brought us to the conclusion that fishing was just an excuse to have a nice undisturbed river bank nap!

Despite the fact that our boat's engine room appeared like something out of a horror picture, with wiring and hoses looking very Rube Goldsteinish, our engine ran flawlessly. The problem lay with the refrigerator. It was a simple domestic fridge designed to run on mains power but wired to run off the boat's house battery bank.

During our briefing we had been advised that we would have to run our engine at 1,500 RPMs for at least five hours a day to keep the battery bank charged for the fridge to operate. This was frankly not practical for us to do. Some of our voyages were only of short duration and the noise of running an engine just to charge batteries is simply not on. Such activities would have tended to move us towards the





Donkey rides on the Yarmouth sands

hullabaloo camp, which was somewhere we did not wish to go. *Sandhawk* had neither a shore power cable or battery charger on board so after a delightful cruise up to Norwich we decided to return to our home port of Reedham for a shore-based boost to our battery bank.

The return voyage was on the weekend and we were entertained en-route with numerous rowers out on the river. Singles, Doubles, Cox and Coxless Fours and of course the glorious Big Eights! These sights were particularly rewarding for me because both my daughter Pam and granddaughter Clara are competitive rowers. Watching the flawless rhythm of a Big Eight moving at speed down river was a magnificent sight to see.

While our batteries were being fully charged we left the *Sandhawk* and jumped on the train for a visit to Great Yarmouth half an hour away. The city of Great Yarmouth dates from Roman times, and for centuries was a flourishing herring fishery port. Sadly the fishery

largely died in the middle of the last century and now the city appears to be struggling economically. But the beach was as busy as ever. There were even donkeys for children to ride. The hotels close to the beach appeared full. And the promenade was lined by the ever present amusement arcades while out to sea in the distance, one

could see the large wind farm.

Returning to Reedham and *Sandhawk* we found our batteries fully charged and the fresh water supply topped off so we got under way once again. We had so enjoyed the voyage to Loddon up the meandering river Chet that we decided to return and spend more time in the little country town and to explore more of the surrounding countryside on foot. We even managed a quick trip to Beccles.

On our return voyage to Reedham, while making the final approach to the staithe we were thrilled to see several traditional Broads gaff-rigged sailing craft busily short tacking up the river Yare in the stiff westerly breeze. A memorable sight and a fitting end to our adventure. Dear old bedraggled *Sandhawk* was not much to look at but she had been our home for nearly two weeks and had served us well.

Traditional Broads gaff sloop



Gators and Pythons and Pirate Boys! Oh, My!

By Paul Nelson

Hmm... some where, some when... in 1992ish a few of my long-dormant boating brain cells regenerated themselves. I was soon back into boating and, of course, all sorts of boating magazines came marching into our mail box. In one of them I noticed an advertisement for a book with a catchy title: *Swallows and Amazons*. Of course this brought up visions of large women deep in the Brazilian jungle. Naturally I ordered the book. Alas, no large jungle women, but much much better... the start of a wonderful new chapter of my life. Soon, Ellen Tillingham and I were in regular contact with each other via... the United States Post Office. Zow! Yup! No E stuff back then! The complete set of books were soon ordered and have since been read many times.

In 1992 my son had just turned 11 years old... just the perfect age for S&A adventures. Alas, no boat for him. But wait... *Wooden Boat Magazine* had potential: a 9-foot 6-inch, gaff rig sailing skiff, that came as a kit. How hard could it be? A father and son team job... In three weeks we were complete! No fingers lost, just a few band aids, several new required tools, of course. Most of the epoxy carcinogens left me after a few weeks, I hope. The launching party included grog, cake, music by 10 friends with tin kazooes and lots of waving of American and Swallows & Amazons flags.

Soon, my son and two of his pirate friends were planning an adventure into the dark Louisiana swamps. Oh dear... I can still hear the mothers mumbling something about alligators

and pythons and lost boys headlined in the local newspapers. Yet they had to grow up some time, and if the Swallows and Amazons could do it, certainly our boys could do it. (I wonder if the English lakes have 12-foot-long man and boy eating reptiles?) Anyway with appropriate camping gear loaded into the newly christened *Viper*, we said a prayer and sent the boys off to the wilds: a local Louisiana river, the Tchefuncte. The attached Kodaks shows the intrepid campers heading toward the unknown and then pulling up to the beach for a time they remember to



attached Kodaks shows the intrepid campers heading toward the unknown and then pulling up to the beach for a time they remember to

this day. And yes, I did spend much of the night watching from my boat just anchored 100 yards from their campsite.



“Catch-a-little” (or “Some very expensive fish and a little history”)

By Alistair Bryden

As a boy, reading *The Big Six*, I totally missed the joke in the name of the fishing boat, the *Cachalot*, that played a key part in the climactic scheme to catch the miscreants unmooring boats on the Broads, but I was reminded of it on a recent fishing trip to Nootka Sound. Although many of Ransome’s stories are about sailing, he was a very keen fisherman and wrote widely on this subject.

Some friends came to visit this summer towing a nice, tough 18-foot welded aluminum open boat with a 90 hp outboard. This is ideal for the fairly sheltered sounds and channels of western Vancouver Island although going offshore needs something a bit bigger with decking and a cabin. They were heading for Nootka Sound which is a deep inlet on the west coast of Vancouver Island, a famous fishing location. They asked if I wanted to come along.

We grabbed some camping gear and the dog and headed off... but we were headed for a famous fishing location

with a great boat but no fishing gear and very little experience. When we passed a fishing outfitters, we wandered in like lambs ready to be shorn. \$600 later, we were duly shorn but now equipped with rods, licences, hooks, downriggers, lures... everything we needed for a fishing trip, except experience.

Nootka Sound is today a remote place, visited mainly by fishermen. But for a brief period 230 years ago, this remote place loomed large in the Chancelleries of Europe. Captain Cook first landed there in 1778; 12 years later, in 1790, Nootka was a centre for the fur trade. The Spanish at that time had claims to the entire west coast of North America (which explains all of the Spanish names on the west coast, from San Francisco to the Juan de Fuca Strait). Flexing their muscles, Spanish arrested some British ships in Nootka Sound. The British of course, with the largest fleet in the world, were having none of this and threatened war, which was only

narrowly averted by Prussian mediation. Ironically a few years later the British and Spanish were allies against Napoleon.

Today Nootka is a peaceful, unbelievably beautiful West Coast location in the temperate rain forest with unique vegetation and wildlife. Getting there involves a remote road and an hour or two on logging trails. Once on the water, we camped and visited Friendly Cove, where Cook first made landfall and met friendly locals. They were equally friendly to us. We also visited Resolution Cove, where Cook refitted his ship after the long journey from England. The location where he must have moored was obvious, as it is the only deep water spot right beside a small cliff where he could easily have shipped new masts. A bear wandered into our camp one night to be driven off with loud yells and banging of pots, but we had made sure the food was stored on the boat in sealed lockers that night.

And the fish? Well sadly, although we had all the needed equipment and nearby fishermen were brandishing huge salmon, we lacked the expertise, patience and perhaps willingness to get on the water at 5 am. We finally abandoned our trolling rigs and simply jigged our hooks on the bottom where we caught a red snapper and two fairly small rock cod which we duly fried for dinner (well, appetizers). We estimated that, after factoring in fishing equipment, licences and gasoline, each fish cost well over \$250. Only one thing for it, we need to go back next year and amortize our investment.



Connecting Vancouver Island, Sri Lanka and Hartlepool

By Alistair Bryden

This summer I was sailing in the Gulf Islands off Vancouver Island. One of the major channels in the Islands is named the Trincomali Channel. Those of you with memory of geography classes at school, or maybe some travel experience, may recall that Trincomali or Trincomalee is one of the world's great ports, set on the north coast of Sri Lanka. Trincomalee is a long way from Vancouver Island, so how are they connected? and where does Hartlepool (a small rather depressed town on the north-east coast of England) enter into the picture?

Well the answer involves some history, some geography and some personal travel.

HMS *Trincomalee*, a classic 38-gun square-rigged frigate, was ordered on 30 October 1812 and launched in 1817 just after the end of the Napoleonic wars. *Trincomalee* was built in Bombay, India in teak, due to oak shortages in Britain as a result of shipbuilding drives for the Napoleonic Wars. The ship was named Trincomalee after the 1782 Battle of Trincomalee* off the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) port of that name. She was sailed to England and



HMS *Trincomalee*, preserved at Hartlepool

then basically laid up for 30 years.

The whole of the coast of Vancouver Island and in fact the whole west coast of Canada was mapped by the British Admiralty. Starting with Captain Cook in the 1780s (unless you believe the stories that Francis Drake got there first), British survey ships were frequent visitors to the Pacific Northwest. In the 1840s one of those ships was the 30-year-old HMS *Trincomalee*,

taken out of storage and sent round Cape Horn to map the Gulf Islands. (Many Gulf Island features are named after crew members).

So far, ho hum, a rather obscure channel named after an old ship. But the really interesting detail is that, 200 years after being launched, *Trincomalee* is still with us. She is one of only two Napoleonic frigates still afloat. She has been restored and is moored at the Royal Navy museum located in the rather unlikely location of Hartlepool and in May I went to see her. If you are passing by Hartlepool (unlikely I admit), the museum is a fascinating place to visit for any sailing enthusiast, it is dedicated to the age of fighting sail. Hornblower and Jack Aubrey would feel at home.

Finally to bring it all together, I'm writing this article in December in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately not in Trincomalee but at a very nice beach on the south coast. So there you have it. Hartlepool, the Gulf Islands and Sri Lanka tied together by a wonderful old sailing ship.

*Learn more about the Battle of Trincomalee on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Trincomalee

Useful Links

The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) website: <http://www.arthur-ransome.org.uk>

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

The Arthur Ransome Wiki, an encyclopedia on Ransome, his life and works: http://arthur-ransome.wikia.com/wiki/Arthur_Ransome_Wiki

Dipping our Hands — Personal relationships with the books

Our Private Films

By Peter Calamai

In his remarks to the society's Annual General Meeting, Geraint Lewis touched on how reactions can differ to the newest *Swallows and Amazons* film depending on whether the movie-goer was already familiar with the story. Those who see it as an adaptation from the book do so "after decades getting to know and imagine the book as a private film in our minds," he said.

A private film in our minds is a very apt phrase that applies broadly. For instance people who read Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* before seeing the movies had very often already created their own mental images of the main characters. In some cases those images are so firmly rooted that they can resist being supplanted even by Ian McKellen's scene-stealing Gandalf. (My private film included a university days jibe that Gandalf rides side-saddle on Shadowfax.)

But for *Swallows and Amazons* the pri-

vate film is often also a reality show. This goes well beyond that English Lit staple of "a willing suspension of disbelief." In a ground-breaking book Michael Saler calls this "virtual reality" – imaginary worlds which readers transform into virtual worlds.*

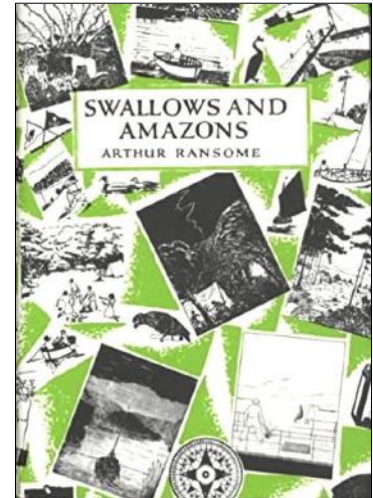
Saler proposes that the first such was the world created by Arthur Conan Doyle in the stories featuring Holmes and Dr. Watson. He writes: "Sherlock Holmes was the first fictional creation that adults openly embraced as real. . . . The cult of Holmes focuses not just on a singular character, but on his entire world."

Couldn't it also be argued that the whole world of the Ransome books has been embraced as real, by children of course, but also by adults.

Shirley is an Englishwoman living in my new abode of Stratford, a city of 32,000 celebrated as being the centre of Canadian pork production and also for the largest repertory theatre company in North America. After discovering I was a Ransome devotee, Shirley reminisced about a teacher named Mr. Warne reading *Swallows and Amazons* to her class in a London school "as a Friday afternoon treat". That was 70 years ago, when she would have been 10 years old.

I loaned Shirley one of my copies of *Swallows and Amazons* (Jonathan Cape, 1938, Twelfth impression) and she retreated to her favourite chair to read. Afterwards she commented:

"I put my adult self aside. I didn't



wonder exactly where the book was set or how old the children were."

Shirley was especially moved by some of the prose passages, such as the description of the storm: "I think that writing might have been why I continued to enjoy literature so much."

The storm was part of Shirley's private film. One of the chief reasons many people have a private film of *Swallows and Amazons* (and the other books as well) is that Ransome deliberately never drew portraits of the characters but only facial outlines so readers filled in their own details. Similarly he said just enough about Wild Cat Island and other locales for readers to create vivid images, often different but all true.

And the best things about our private films is that we can view them anytime.

*Saler, Michael. *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality*. Oxford: OUP, 2012



Fulfilling a Long Held Ambition!

By Alistair Bryden

I learned to sail aged 6 or 7 on a small Scottish Loch in a small 10' dinghy. Dad loved sailing and grew up on the Clyde and owned a 21' day sailer which we sailed from a Scottish east coast port. And of course I grew up reading Arthur Ransome. So I had every opportunity to develop a passion for sailing. Unfortunately, a career and life based in Calgary – on the prairies, in the middle of Canada, 800 km from the coast – offered few opportunities for sailing, although I stayed close to water in canoes, rafts and kayaks.

But I'd always promised myself I would someday treat myself to a proper sailing course and this year, with rather more time on my hands, I managed it. This June, four of us plus our instructor set off from Nanaimo on Vancouver Island for a week long In-



termediate Sailing Certificate course.

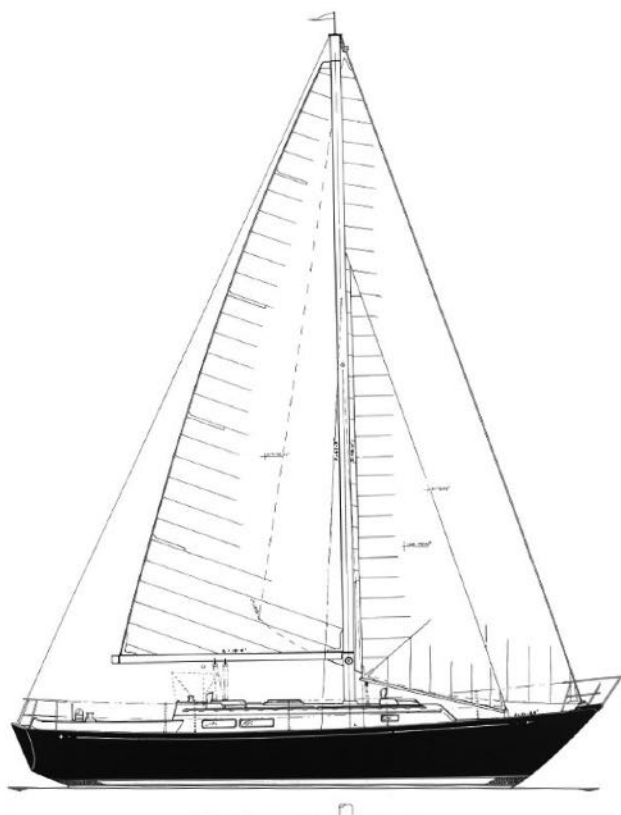
We were aboard a 44' C&C yacht. The C&C boats built in the 1980s were legendary fast boats and this one was no exception. We were sailing in the Canadian Gulf Islands, a large archipelago off the south east coast of Vancouver Island. I've been to a number of spots on Vancouver Island but I'd never seen this area and it's stunning. With more than 200 islands, sheltered channels, and dozens of marinas and anchorages, it's a world-class cruising ground. Great for learning.

We were very lucky. Our instructor was outstanding, with many years of offshore racing experience; he was a wealth of knowledge, loved to get

the engine off and the sails up and was happy to endlessly trim the sails and share his knowledge. We had mainly light winds until our last day when a good stiff breeze blew up and we sailed out of the very sheltered Gulf Islands into the Strait of Georgia beating up to Nanaimo.

The intermediate course wasn't easy. We were working and learning for five days, learning all of the tasks and skills needed to sail a sizeable boat. At the end of the course there was a two-hour written exam. It's been a long time since my last written exam and there was a fair amount of head scratching as we tried to remember what our instructor had said in passing four nights previously. But we all passed and it felt like a real achievement. And we'd had a lot of fun and made new friends.

Now the question is what next? A boat? What size? What cost? Where to put it...



Skimming Over the Ice

By Maida Follini

The winter months are the season to re-read *Winter Holiday* and relate once again to the joys and discomforts of living in a northern climate. The excitement of whirling down a hill on a toboggan and skimming over the ice on skates is balanced by the shock of snow down the back of one's neck, wet socks and wet mittens, and the shivers brought on by blasting icy winds.

Children of all ages with differing winter sports skills can identify either with

count that our large dog would chase the puck and bring it back to us, before we ever achieved a goal.

One memorable day, when the large river near our home froze over, my father took me on a several-mile trip down the river between wooded banks, to come out to a lake formed by a power dam, where hundreds of skaters along with several ice boats skimmed over the expanse. Coming back up the river in the dusk was like returning from the expedition to the

and again when something happened to make her feel that even standing still was a fairly dangerous adventure... Roger was being pulled along by Dick.”

We need to make opportunities for children to get comfortable on skates. Halifax has achieved this with the Emera Skating Oval on the Common in the middle of the city.

Here all ages may borrow skates and safety helmets for free, and go



Halifax's Emera Skating Oval

Titty and Roger, novices on skates or with Dick and Dorothea, who, though outclassed in boats or building fires, are way ahead of the Swallows and Amazons in gliding over the ice.

Being brought up in New England, I learned to skate on a tiny pond a few feet deep (if the ice broke I wouldn't drown!). My father showed us how to make figures in the ice by skating on an "outside edge" or an "inside edge" of the skate. We played a form of hockey which had to take into ac-

North Pole, planned by the Ss, As and Ds of *Winter Holiday*.

The Ds were really in their element on the ice. They had had the advantage of a skating rink near their home in a University town. Dick "went flying up the little tarn, spun suddenly round and flew backwards, spun round once more, and came flying back to Dorothea."

"Titty and Roger were skating for the first time... Titty was standing on her skates but moving just an arm now

whirling around the Oval. Special frames are used to help novice skaters keep their balance, just as wooden chairs used to be used in New England, pushed ahead of the skaters while they leaned on them so as not to fall. The photo shows how popular the skating oval is, for people of all ages from preschool to senior citizens. Given this start, some young explorers will feel comfortable in going on ponds and rivers, and even exploring their own North Poles.



Pieces of Eight — The Junior Pages



Winter Holiday

Word Search Challenge

by Elizabeth Jolley

(Only for intrepid puzzle-solvers :-)

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

BECKFOOTFLAG
CACHE
CAPSIZED
CAPTAINFLINT
CRAGFASTSHEEP
DICK
DIXONSFARM

DOCTOR
DOROTHEA
GREENLAND
HOTPOT
ICESAILING
IGLOO
LANTERN

MRSBLACKETT
MUMPS
NANCY
NORTHPOLE
PUMPKINFACE
QUARANTINEFLAG
RIOBAY

SEMAPHORE
SIGNALS
SKATERS
SLEDGE
TARN
WILDCATISLAND

Finally, the only puzzle where you'll find this "word" to search--sorry I couldn't make it work in semaphore! **WHOISSLEEPINGINTHEFRAM**

Beckfoot Kitchen — Eating with the Swallows and Amazons

Edible Igloo

By Elizabeth Jolley

Ingredients

Waffle Pretzels

Thick Stick Pretzels

Royal Icing:

Powdered Sugar

Powdered Egg Whites

Water

(Pasteurized Egg Whites optional)

Recipe

1. Cover a piece of thick cardboard with aluminum foil, taping down edges on the back side.
2. Turn a cereal bowl upside-down on the top side of the foil. Trace the outside to make a nice round circle for your igloo shape. Mark a space for the door, the width of one waffle pretzel.
3. Prepare Royal Icing, asking for help with the mixer from your friendly natives. There are two recipe options. You can make this icing with a good hand mixer if you are willing to hold it while it runs for 5-7 minutes; it is easier to use a stand mixer if you have one!



Using Powdered Egg White

- 1 1/2 tablespoons powdered egg white
- 1/4 cup warm water
- 2 cups powdered sugar

In large bowl combine powdered egg whites and water; beat until frothy.

Using Liquid Pasteurized Egg Whites

- 1 1/2 oz. liquid pasteurized egg whites
- Pinch cream of tartar
- 2 cups powdered sugar

In large bowl beat egg whites until



Tracing the cereal bowl



Small corner opening in bag for icing



Waffle and stick pretzels

frothy. Mix cream of tartar into powdered sugar.

(Both recipes) Add powdered sugar gradually and beat on low speed until sugar is incorporated and mixture is shiny. Turn speed up to high and beat until mixture forms stiff, glossy peaks. This should take approximately 5 to 7 minutes. For immediate use, transfer icing to pastry bag or heavy-duty storage bag. If using storage bag, clip a small hole in one corner. Store in airtight container in refrigerator for up to 3 days.



4. Building the Igloo. Lay dry pretzels around the circle you drew, except where you drew the door. Add or subtract one piece to make them fit the circle as closely as you can. Now, pipe a good dab of icing onto the bottom of each piece, then lay it back into its space. Next, lay dry pretzels around the circle on top of your first layer, overlapping them like a brick wall, and slightly towards the center of the igloo. You can break pretzels in half for the edges of the doorway. Once you have a number that fits, pipe a good dab of icing onto the bottom of each piece, then lay it back into its space. Continue to build your igloo

the same way, making each row a little smaller in diameter, until the walls are leaning inwards a bit. At this point, you should let the icing set until it is hard, so that when you add the roof, your igloo won't collapse in the middle.

Once the icing is firm, pipe a line around the top. Use this to attach stick pretzels, laid in rows, to look like the log roof. Put a dab of icing on two more rectangular pretzels and stack them together at one side as the chimney base. Cut three stick pretzels in half to make the chimney.

Use icing to glue them together lengthwise, to make a "round" chimney. Let the icing set until firm. Pipe a glob of icing on top of the chimney base. Stand the chimney on end in the glob. Let icing set.

5. Decorating. Using your pastry bag or storage bag, pipe drizzles of icing over the walls of the igloo, to look like snow. Sift powdered sugar over the top until the pretzels are covered with a light "snowfall". Get creative with drawing on stiff paper or thin cardboard, coloring & scissors, and you can make a set of all the Swallows, Amazons & D's, perhaps with a sledge or two, or maybe a kettle for tea! You can use small dabs of royal icing to glue your figures onto the foil around the igloo.

Best of all, once you've admired your handiwork, you can eat the igloo as a treat (although the icing is rather hard!)

Finished creation, with powdered sugar as fresh snow. Note the quarantine flag at the left, and someone has left a mitten on the sledge. That's Roger wriggling through the door, making sure he gets his fair share of chocolate!



First three rows of building, leaving doorway open.



Almost high enough for the roof!



Roof and chimney in place, with Royal Icing snow drizzled & spread!



A Winter's Feast

By Molly McGinnis

Every meal in *Winter Holiday* is something of a feast. Some years later, the Second World War will begin in Europe, and I can imagine the nostalgia of parents reading *Winter Holiday* to their children for many years after that. Rationing in Britain didn't end in 1945 with the end of the war in Europe, but continued for almost another 10 years. Candy and sugar among the last to be un-rationed (1953) and meat (and any other food still rationed) was at last taken off rationing in 1954. Some foods were in short supply long after that.

But in 1931 and '32, when *WH* was being written, food and feasts abounded in the lake country. Dixon's farm, where Dot and Dick are staying, has sheep, ducks and geese, milk cows and hens and pigs. There's milk for tea and for baking even in the dead of winter. Mrs. Dixon is a great baker – she's especially known for her pork pies and she has a “rare baking of cakes” for the sheep rescue party. Cook and the farm wives probably made bread about every other day, so there was dough handy for beef roll and Swiss buns and other goodies.

For their first breakfast, the D's have

porridge and bacon (I wonder if the oats were grown on the farm), and Mrs. Dixon sends them off with a pork pie and a bag of toffee, so there must have been milk enough for butter – and buttermilk both for baking and for the hens and pigs.

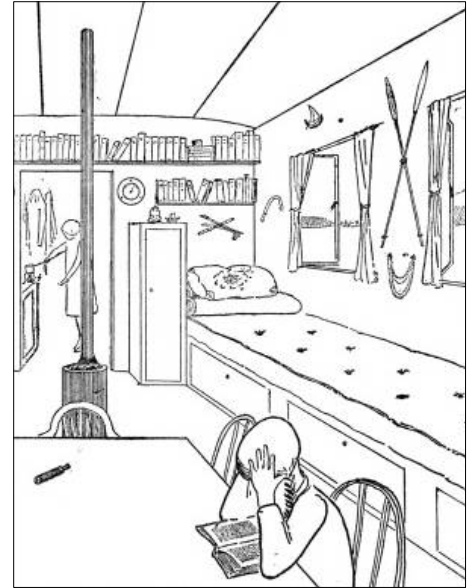
When the D's first meet with the Walkers and Peggy in the igloo, they have cake from Holly Howe with the D's pork pie and, later, Susan and Peggy are “busy with a basket of carrots & potatoes”.

When Peggy's mother arrives she asks: “What is it? Hot-pot? It smells very good,” and then adds, “You're not taking it out on the tarn...” and she tells a tale of a long ago lost hot pot – one of two lost dinners in the story.

(To find out how to make your own hot-pot, see “Susan Learns to Make Hot-pot” on page 21.)

The famous sinking hot pot might have been a bit fancier, with a bit of added celery (a storage vegetable in those times) and cooked with mutton or maybe sausages, which would have been perfect out on the ice. The evidence says the Beckfoot hot pot was simmered in an iron pot like Peggy and Dot's, not baked in a ceramic

casserole, because hot pottery would have shattered violently when it was set on the ice.



Airing the Fram

And there is always... chocolate. Chocolate sustains the sheep rescuing ambulance party, and Dorothea offers Uncle Jim “milk chocolate with nuts in it” when he finds them in the *Fram*. And they have cake saved from the D's dinner and “a loaf from Beckfoot” — with no butter or jam because the crews feasting in the *Fram* have eaten it all. They had also found and eaten loganberry jam, pemmican, sardines, and Uncle Jim's entire tin of biscuits, which I like to think was a very large one, like those used in Trinidad (then British) to make the first steel drums. The morning after Uncle Jim's arrival, and after the disastrous attempt at a sleep-in, Peggy brings “a lot of sausages, and some butter to fry them in”, Mrs D sends “some rashers of bacon” and Uncle Jim had brought eggs and a big bag of oranges.



Basic hot-pot construction tool: a classic swivel peeler. They were invented in the 19th century so we can hope Peggy brought one.

A few days later, as the D's make their way north through the blizzard unbeknownst to the others, there is a terrific feast for Nancy's release in the *Fram*, with potatoes peeled by Peggy and Titty, cold turkey, roast chestnuts, oranges, chocolates, "a huge cake covered with white icing", and a huge plum pudding (set afire by Captain Flint).

The D's start out the trip to the Pole well supplied. Mrs Dixon has given them a beef roll "instead of sandwiches", which makes me think it's the kind with the beef wrapped in dough rather than pure meat, seasoned beef rolled and tied and cooked. This is the kind we used to have in my college, but maybe the D's beef roll had a solid filling baked in bread dough, with the day before's bread. We'll never know, because the beef roll came to a bad end when the sledge overturned. The the D's didn't go entirely hungry: while they were making their way up the lake among the skaters, Dick and Dorothea found that "a man had fixed a sort of coffee-stall on the top



The D's beef roll!

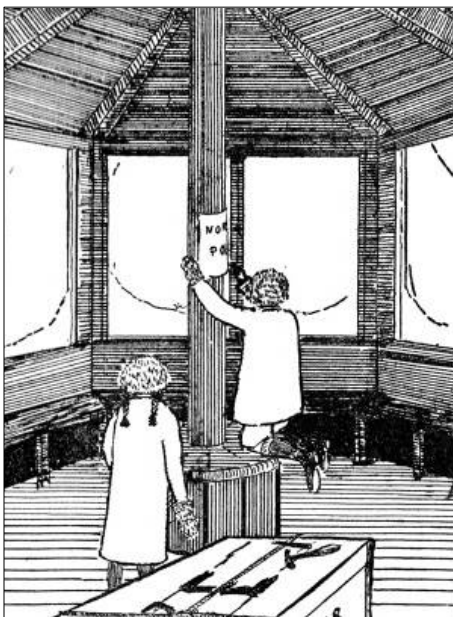
of a sledge" and "passed near enough to him to see that he was selling cups of hot coffee and small, steaming pies", and buy two meat pies to eat on the way.

And finally, when they reach the North Pole, Dot and Dick find the packing-case "to be opened by the first to reach the Pole". Dot wants to wait for the others, but they open it, make a fire, make tea, help themselves to a tin of condensed milk and one of meat paste and "a few biscuits to eat it with". As the minutes waiting for the others stretch to hours, they give themselves "an allowance of two Swiss buns apiece (afterwards increased to four)".

My Swiss Buns (see the recipe on the next page) were soft inside, light and delicious, and I feel certain that Dot and Dick's Swiss buns were the best tasting thing that ever was, eaten by two very tired travelers just getting warm and sleepy... and then, as the

rescue parties straggle in, they all have a real feast of the "food enough to last a dozen people for a whole day..." — the cake Nancy swiped, the cold chickens, Christmas pudding, and "what not", and all but fall asleep over their plates.

Every meal in *Winter Holiday* is something of a feast.



At the North Pole



Your editor makes a lamb hot-pot from a 40-year old recipe in a Marks and Spencers cookbook. For some reason it never looks quite as good as it does in the book, but it tastes fine. — SH

Swiss Bun Recipe

Often called “Iced Buns”, Swiss buns are small but long yeast rolls, made from a slightly sweetened dough. Once a popular item in bakeries, they are very easy to make. Rubbing the butter into the flour and sugar makes a lovely tender roll. This is a very small recipe because my Swiss Buns rose so high they overfilled the pan and the buns were too large to bite into comfortably. You may want to add more sugar if you make them more than once.

Stir together and proof in a large bowl while you rub the butter into the flour & sugar:

- 1 1/2 tsp dry baking yeast
- 1/3 c (5 T) lukewarm milk
- sprinkle of sugar
- pinch of salt

Mix flour and sugar and rub in shortening (toss and rub between fingers, or spin briefly with cutting blade of food processor) to a fine crumb texture:

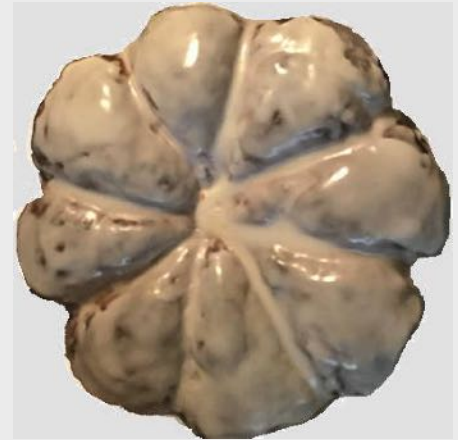
- 1 heaped cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 T sugar
- 2 T butter (1 oz)

Beat the flour/butter mix into the liquid and add enough more flour to make a soft dough that cleans the side of the bowl. Knead until smooth. Rub butter on your hands, make a ball of the dough, return to bowl, cover and let rise in a warm place, covered, until doubled (about an hour). Shaping takes only a few moments: turn the dough out onto a flat surface, flatten with your palms to make a piece you can easily mark off 8 equal pieces with the side of your

hand. Pinch or cut each piece off and make it into a ball. Roll it between your palms to seal the surface. Butter a 9“ cake or piepan while the dough relaxes for a minute or so, then roll the dough balls between your palms

to make a sort of pear-shaped sausage, narrower at one end. Arrange in the pan with narrow ends to the center. There should be space between the pieces. Cover lightly (bubble wrap with smooth side down is good), let rise until the dent a touch with a finger makes recovers only slowly, and bake (remove the wrap!) in a preheated 400°F (200°C) oven about 15 minutes. The rolls will be browned and very slightly pulled away from the sides of the pan (assuming they touched the sides after rising) when done.

I had no trouble keeping the slightly cooled buns together when I held the pan with a potholder to turn the buns onto my spread hand and put them right-side up on a plate. Ice when cool, with a rather thick icing of powdered sugar and a dribble of boiling water. It took two heaping cupfuls of powdered sugar to cover the surface well. Break the buns apart at serving time.



Susan Learns to Make Hot-pot

Transcribed by Molly McGinnis

And then, when they had just got well started with dinner, they heard steps outside the door. “Polar bear,” said Roger. “Smelt the food.” But if it was a bear it was too much out of breath to be a fierce one. “It’s mother!” cried Nancy, looking out. “Come on in. We’ve got room for one Eskimo, and you’re the one.” “Thank you for that,” said a voice, and through the low doorway Mrs Blackett came crawling into the igloo.

Winter Holiday

“Where did you learn to make a hot pot, Susan?” asked Mrs. Blackett.

“Oh, Mrs. Jackson said it would be a good thing to make in this cold weather and with the good fireplace in the igloo. She gave us the vegetables and showed me how.”

...

“Potatoes, onions, and carrots, that’s all you need for a hotpot, Susan,” said

Mrs. Jackson. “But for a dinner, better put in some meat.”

“There’s Pemmican, I mean corned beef, and bully beef in our stores up there.”

“Best use the bully beef, it’s cut up already. Here, you’ll need a peeler for the potatoes. You can peel the carrots, too, faster than scraping.”

“How many potatoes will we need? It’ll be all of us and Peggy and Nancy and the D’s – eight people!”

“Put your coat on and come with me to the cellar. Best put your gumboots on, too, the path’s right slushy with the trampling. Here, take this basket.”

The “Cellar” is not a concrete-lined underground room under the house but a sort of shed partly built into the side of the hill, with shelves for preserves and tins of lard and cheeses. Bins set into the hill are partly filled with potatoes and onions – and beets and turnips and cabbages and heads of celery carefully wrapped in paper and even a few tomato plants with ripening tomatoes still on them, hung upside down from the beams with the hams and sides of bacon.

“Do you have carrots? I don’t see any.”

“Lord, yes, we always have carrots. Parsnips, too. Dig a few at a time right out of the ground all winter long – pile leaves over them. And snow, this year. Right here.”

The big round basket has hessian sacks (burlap gunny sacks to Americans) laid over the top to keep the carrots from withering. “One apiece of these big ones, I reckon.” Mrs. Jackson gives her a big sack like the one over the carrots.

“Potatoes in the bin here. Pick out the middling ones, and mind you rub off the sprouts! About 16, I reckon, two apiece. Roger counts for two and Dot’s about a half from what I’ve seen. And onions? In the bins there.”

“Golly, those are big!”

“Jackson’s Ailsa Craigs, those not big enough to show – he does pride



himself on his onions. But these are what you want.” She puts half a dozen tennis-ball-sized yellow-skinned onions in with the carrots.

“This should be about right. You want about half as much cut-up onion as either of the rest.”

Mrs. Jackson takes the bag with the potatoes and Susan takes the basket with the carrots and onions and they trudge back along the path to the kitchen.

“Now, you know what to do? Best put the water to boil first, it’ll be that cold in this weather. Be sure and put the lid on so it will boil faster!”

Mrs. Jackson puts a handful of salt and a little heap of pepper in twists of paper. “Go easy on the salt, now, the bully beef will be salty. Now, let me show you what to do. I’ve a mind to make a hot-pot for our supper so it’s no loss.”

Quickly, she peels a potato and a carrot and slices the top and bottom off an onion and peels off the skin and a layer of flesh.

“Cut the potato in about four pieces – and the carrot about the same size. Do the onion last so it won’t be sitting around cut and making you cry. Everything about the same size – or cut the onions smaller if you like. When the water boils, put in a little salt and then drop the onions in slowly, so the pot stays on the boil, and then the carrots and potatoes. Not too much salt, the beef will salt it too.”

“How do I know how much water?”

“A bit over halfway up, and if doesn’t cover the vegetables add some more, slowly. You want to keep the water boiling for a bit. Then, move the pan off the fire so there’s only a bubble now and then, and mind it doesn’t scorch.”

The Recipe

Ingredients:

Water, enough to cover, have boiling.
Potatoes and carrots (1 per prson)
Onions
Pemmican
Peel first layer of onion with skin, cut half as big pieces as the others.
Do last.

Peel and cut potatoes into 4 - 6 pieces, carrots same size.
Add onion first, slowly, keep pot boiling. Then carrots & potatoes.
Move to side when boiled a bit, barely on the boil. Stir veg off bottom. Not too much salt.
Add pemmican last.
Boil water off if necessary.

Susan smiles. “I’ll make Roger turn the pot around every few minutes. He’s very trustworthy when it’s his dinner.”

“You can stir it off the bottom too, but be careful, you don’t want it to go to slush. Like this.”

Mrs. Jackson gets a big spoon. “Slide it down the edge of the pot—“ she pushes the spoon, upright, along the edge of an imaginary pot— “and just push the end along the bottom and lift a little.”

“Why do I have to have the water boiling? Dick’s sure to ask what the science is.”

“I don’t know what the science is, but the carrots won’t turn spongy and the potatoes will hold together better than if you start them cold. Now, do you think you can remember all that?”

Susan is writing in a little notebook. She looks up. “When do we put in the bully beef?”

“A few minutes before you eat, it only needs heating up. Empty the tin over the top and let it warm before you stir it in – stir gently. The water should be about gone – let it boil up for a few minutes if it’s swimmy. Mmmm—better let it sit a bit to soften up anything that caught to the bottom of the pan.”

Susan writes, looks up, grins. “I learned that trick a long time ago.”

Mrs. Jackson smiles back.

“Cooking over a campfire’s not so easy. Not like on the big stove there where there’s hot and warm and you can pop it in the oven to finish. You do your crew very well, Miss Susan. Now let’s get this load out to the sledge and you’ll be off.”

Transcriber’s note:

Ailsa Craig is one of the famous British onions, popular for 130 years. A favorite show onion; seed is widely available in the U.S. and Canada. http://www.dixondalefarms.com/product/ailsa_craig/long_day_onions

The potatoes were probably King Edward, popular since their commercial introduction in 1902, King Edward VII’s coronation year, but grown in the North long before that. In the U. S., Seed Savers’ Exchange members can get seed potatoes from a Wisconsin member.

Topweight carrot was, and remains, one of the most popular home garden carrots ever – in Britain and Down Under. A large carrot and a good keeper so quite likely to have been the *Winter Holiday* hot-pot carrot. I found no seed source in the U.S.

Bacon and Eggs!

By Robert Dilley

The (fast-food) restaurant where I frequently go for breakfast (retired and living alone, I can’t be bothered cooking bacon and eggs in the morning) had been having trouble meeting my order for soft bacon. After politely pointing out several times that bacon that crumbled when you poked it with a fork did not qualify as “soft”, I finally copied pp 234-5 of *Coot Club*. I outlined Old Simon’s tirade about “stuff crackin’ and fiddlin’ down to nothin’” and gave it to the friendly young lady at the counter. She seemed most interested and suggested that she had seen something of AR’s writing. I would have followed up and encouraged her to start reading; but I did not want to seem to be coming on like an American politician to someone 50 years younger than me. Anyway, I looked around and found, to my dismay, that Thunder Bay libraries no longer have any of the SA series in their collection (nor are they for sale in any bookstore).

Even so, since then I have not had a problem getting my bacon soft at that place. The moral is that ideas in AR are still applicable in the modern world.

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