



Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News--May 2011

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Ship's Papers--Important Information for the crew



View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall, TARSUS Coordinator

Hooray summer is near!

For some of us that is a chance to get out and enjoy the outdoors again; I hope you all get a chance to do something in the style of AR.

A couple of things of significance since the last issue: Dave Thewlis contacted me as he wanted to include on the website "All Things Ransome" more of the past issues of 'Signals from TARSUS', which are in an older format than is used today. In going over the files (which Dave had passed onto me when I took over) I found not only previous SftUS newsletters but also its predecessor, which were typed by our TARSUS founder Ellen Tillinghast. These were more in the form of a personal letter as compared with SftUS today. When Ellen found she could not continue and retired in 1994, the reins were taken up by Betty Jo Baerg (Ellen and Betty founded TARSUS). Betty Jo also came up with the title of 'Signals from TARSUS' and a logo, which was then refined by Richard Evans and is still the one we use today. In August 1996 Dave Thewlis took on the task of editor together with TARSUS coordinator, and I have to thank him for putting all these past documents into 'All Things Ransome' archives. I urge you all to go to ATR to see a part of our history:

<http://www.allthingsransome.net/archives/sft/index.html>

Some of you were here from the formation of TARSUS and know the history but others, including myself, are more recent members and should find them interesting reading.

Whilst at 'All Things Ransome' take a look in the Literary pages for "Tea with Mr. and Mrs. Ransome":

<http://www.allthingsransome.net/archives/sft/index.html>

This is a delightful account by Ellen Tillinghast of a visit she made with her daughters to the Ransomes for tea at their flat in London. This has been around a while so some of us have read it before but well worth reading again.

Dave also set up an archive of TARSUS member resumes, bios or introductions, which gives one the chance to read about one's fellow members. This gives me the opportunity to remind any of you who have not submitted something on yourself and how you got interested in Ransome-ish stuff to please do so. It need only be a few lines but it gives other members a more personal contact with you.

Another thing of interest was the launching of the 1974 movie's 'Swallow' at Coniston on April 24. I know many of you have seen the YouTube videos of this and there are further pictures in this issue. The videos really make it feel that one was there in person--a great event for TARS and for those of us who contributed to a tiny piece of 'Swallow'. May we all get to sail her one day.

Swallows and Amazons forever!

Robin

We are pleased to welcome the following new members

Richard Mills, Arlington, Massachusetts

Ryan McCann, Boxford, Massachusetts

Joseph Gallanar, Indiana, Pennsylvania

Joyce Pettijohn, San Diego, CA

Sandy McGinnis Family, Oakdale CA

William Michel Family, Anderson CA

We hope you find enjoyment in TARSUS and TARS!



Greetings from the North!

By Harry Miller, TARS Canada Coordinator

I hope this finds you well and ready for the summer's activities be they Ransome-related or otherwise.

My next paragraph was to gently push you toward making a contribution to "Signals From TARSUS." However Elizabeth informs me that she already has several Canadian contributions, so thank you very much and I am looking forward to reading them.

When I read Signals from the UK I become envious of all those Tars living so close to each other. The names, places and content usually wash over my head without registering much like Roger's night spent in the wigwam listening to the Billie's wrestling stories. However, in the last but one issue I spotted something of personal interest in The Eastern Pages. Specifically that the yacht "Jasmine", now owned by Richard and Pat Reid participated in the Broads Sailing Day. Now in 1988 my family hired a Teasel-like yacht called "Jasmine" for a week of sailing, exploring Coot Club haunts. I had heard that she might now be in private hands and wondered if this was the same "Jasmine". Luckily Richard and Pat are TARS and I found them in the directory provided to coordinators. I sent them a letter with a couple of scanned photos and in return received a nice letter saying that they indeed had "our" yacht which they had found in rather derelict condition and had restored. When we hired her there was a plaque stating that she had been "Continuously offered for hire since 1903", so she is at least 108 years old! Richard also said that he is writing up the story of her history and restoration. I hope to see this soon. I have included two photos, one of mine with Jasmine moored in the cut by the Horsey Wind pump and one of Richard's with Jasmine under sail 20 years later.



"Jasmine" moored at Horsey Windmill long ago...



and restored & under sail recently!

In response to a great groundswell - well one request - I will be sending out an address list and email address where applicable for our 28 members. If you don't want to be included, please let me know at: harryandmarymiller@rogers.com or by phoning me at: 416-694-6301. My own information has been public for the last 6 years and I have had only welcome contact.

TARS Canadians--if you are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter and could receive an electronic copy by email could you please let me know so we can save some money, time & trees.

Cheers,
Harry

TARSUS, TARS Canada & TARS Leadership Information

TARSUS Coordinator: **Robin Marshall** robin@arthur-ransome.org
210 18th Street Bradenton, FL 34205

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

TARS Canada Coordinator: **Harry Miller**
harryandmarymiller@rogers.com
234 Kingswood Rd. Toronto, ON M4E 3N7

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

Signals from TARSUS editor: **Elizabeth Jolley** erjolley8@gmail.com
***** NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS! *****
675 NW 114th Ave. Portland, OR 97229

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

TARS--The Arthur Ransome Society--Board:

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New Zealand:	Dr. Peter Summers
Japan:	Tamami Nakayama

Just for your enjoyment:

All Things Ransome, a website devoted to keeping articles, artwork, and anything related to Ransome and his 12 books, at:

<http://www.allthingsransome.net>

Kanchenjunga's Cairn--Places We've Been & What We've Done



Being a Narrative of the Columbia River Expedition of Discovery

By Ian Sacre, TARS Canada

The idea of paddling the upper reaches of the Columbia River had been in my mind from the day I first saw river many years ago. As the years passed and I infrequently drove along parts of its length, both in Canada and the United States, the attraction of the river became stronger until I finally broached the possibility to a canoeing friend that I would like to canoe at least part of it, and we agreed there and then to give it a go and try to paddle the first 150 miles (240 km).

For those who are unfamiliar with the river perhaps a few details will be helpful. The Columbia River is approximately 1,210 miles long (1,950 km) and rises in Columbia Lake located in southeast British Columbia. It first flows northwest in the Rocky Mountain Trench then hooks sharply about the Selkirk Mountains to flow south through Upper Arrow Lake and Lower Arrow Lake, where it receives the Kootenay River before entering the United States after a course of 465 miles (748 km) in Canada. From the border it continues south through Washington State, and just below the Spokane River it is forced by lava beds to make a great bend westward before veering south again, running the while entrenched in a narrow valley through the Columbia Plateau. Its chief tributary, the Snake River, joins it just before it turns west again. The Columbia then forms part of the Washington-Oregon border before entering the Pacific Ocean through a wide estuary west of Portland, Oregon at Astoria.

As we planned the expedition, other canoeing friends, nearly all in their sixties or older, started to ask if they could join us. I was delighted at this development because it is not particularly smart to undertake a long canoe trip alone on cold, unexplored waters. A group makes for a much safer expedition. So as the year wore on, our party grew to nine souls, crewing three canoes and three solo ocean kayaks. As plans firmed up the decision was made was to paddle from Canal Flats, BC, a small hamlet at the south end of Columbia Lake, all the way to Donald, an old disused railway depot about twenty miles north of Golden and immediately south of and before the first set of serious rapids; a distance of some 150 miles.

The plan called for us to leave Canal Flats on the 8th of September and arrive at Donald nine days later. We waited to undertake the expedition until September to give the glacial melt water a chance to make its way downriver, thus exposing gravel and sand bars on which we planned to camp. Additionally, in July, the river is often a raging, torrent of floodwater, a mile wide in some places, without properly defined containment banks. Paddling across a farmer's flooded field did not seem like a good idea!

As part of the planning process, I had asked the Canal Flats Town Council for permission to camp in their lovely day-use-only park situated right at the head of the lake. We wished to depart early in the morning before the frequent head wind got up, which often occurs at about noon on Columbia Lake. The nearest alternative campground was twenty miles away.



Canal Flats Park--First Camp



Making ready for departure

This would have made an early start much more difficult. The lake is about ten miles long, and a strong head wind would have made it untenable in canoes; we would have likely become weather-bound. The Canal Flats Town Clerk prepared a special order paper seeking approval of our camping request and the Council graciously gave us their permission to camp. We were impressed with the delightfully dignified and old-fashioned approach the Council took in dealing with our camping request.

By the early afternoon on the 7th of September all the expedition members had arrived at the campground rendezvous by cars with their craft and gear. By late afternoon eight or nine tents graced the area. Tents pitched, the empty cars with only the drivers left for Invermere to park the vehicles where it was safe to leave them for a week or more. The drivers were then collectively driven back to camp by a most obliging outfitter with whom we had made prior arrangements. We then got busy cooking supper. Early in the evening, after I had informed the expedition members that reveille would be at 0630 for an 0830 launch, everyone seemed to suddenly disappear for an early night in preparation for the adventure beginning in the morning.

Dawn on the 8th broke calm and perfectly clear and by 0830 we were all fed and watered, the tents had been struck, gear loaded, and we were ready to start with each boat carrying provisions and water for ten days. We had agreed in advance to keep the fleet close together, with the eastern shore of the lake close aboard to starboard in case the wind did come up suddenly as it is prone to do in that area and we had to seek shelter. It is not unusual for the wind to go from nothing to Force 5 (20 knots) in less than an hour with accompanying short steep waves. After an hour's travel we had all developed the paddling rhythm, which is so important to establish on a long trip. Not too fast, nor too slow, but a stroke pace that can be kept up all day. I think we all felt like the old fur trader voyageurs of long ago.

By 1130 we had reached the north end of the lake, after one brief stop for a half hour's stretch, hard tack, drinks and visits to the bushes! We found the entrance to the Columbia River very shallow and heavily braided to the extent that we had to clamber out of our craft and walk them through the shallows. Some of the crew were worried about crocodiles but our expedition geologist (a real life one as well), David, assured us that it had probably been several million years since they had inhabited the area. Not to worry.

Once through the shallows we found the river to be thirty or forty feet wide, and while shallow, the water was deep enough to float us and move us fast down stream through a series of tricky hairpin bends. We stopped for lunch on a sand bar a mile or so down river from the lake, and were all sitting in a row on a long driftwood log eating when one of the party noticed a black bear a few yards away ambling along the opposite shore towards us. As we watched, the bear nonchalantly strolled along and stopping right opposite, sat down to watch us while it scratched itself and sniffed the air for lunch! Ten minutes later it moved on much to the relief of some party members. We were after all in bear country!

The meandering river carried us past Radium Hot Springs where we stopped for a council of war. Should we stop for the night or continue? Everyone agreed that it was too early to stop and we should carry on. Mike and Janet, paddling a lovely old canvas covered cedar canoe, broke the news that they had sustained significant bottom damage in the shallow, stony waters through which we had just passed. Removing their gear from the boat we discovered five cracked ribs and seven cracked planks but no leaks! The continual groundings had taken their toll. Mike elected to continue with care and the rest of us checked our supplies of duck tape! An hour after re-launching we were dumped without ceremony into the seemingly endless reed beds at the south end of Windermere Lake. The water was low and the reeds were so high that we could not see over them. The main river channel disappeared and we found ourselves searching for an open route through the almost impregnable mess. At one point one of the kayakers became separated from the main party, and there were some anxious moments as we made sound signals to guide the errant kayaker through the reeds to regroup with the main party. Finally, after over an hour and a half searching, one of the kayakers found what looked like a possible opening. It turned out to be a beaver path through the swamp, which finally led us to open water. An hour later we arrived at our one pre-arranged campsite. We had paddled for nearly ten hours, so there was little talk as we quickly unloaded the gear, pitched the tents and cooked supper. Tents and sleeping bags felt good that night.



A perfect lunch break spot



Lost in the reeds!

Another early departure was scheduled for the morning because we had to paddle the ten-mile length of Lake Windermere, and wanted to do so before lunch and again the possibility of rising headwinds. The morning broke dead calm but a cold wet mist lay over the reed beds and lake as we pushed our way out onto Windermere. By mid morning the mist had burnt off, and the town of Invermere, which lay to the north, was visible at the end of the lake. Then the dreaded headwind came up as we approached the town, forcing us close inshore and bucking a stiff breeze with white caps on the surface of the lake. We stopped at Invermere for an hour for lunch before starting northward again, now on the river proper. Rain and wind beset us all afternoon until finally at about 1500 we found what looked like a suitable campsite beside the river on a three foot raised and rather wet-looking grass covered bench. The approach was difficult, with boot-sucking mud all along the shore, but we were all tired and it had to do.



Mud Camp

Tents were pitched in the rain and supper was cooked and wood gathered for a campfire. Mud-covered but cheerful, we sat around the camp fire until dark, ducking under tarps every time a rain squall hit the camp. Another early night was indicated and we all disappeared into our respective tents. In the morning bear scat was noticed on a game trail right behind one of the tents. Fortunately no one reported nocturnal visitors into the tents themselves! It was at this campsite that Martin, an expert kayaker, announced that he seemed to have a leak in the after compartment of his kayak. He nonchalantly told us that he was only making a cup or two of water an hour, and while his bread and biscuits were wet they were not too bad once you got used to them! Duck tape was proffered and appropriate patching was carried out. A mere leak was not stopping us!

Dawn on the third day broke calm and clear. The rain of the day before had passed, and once again the sun came out. At dawn the river was covered in a dense cold wet mist, but directly overhead the sky was blue and the early morning sun warmed us. With the help of large scale maps of the river we made our way through deep waters and shallow, braided gravel and sandy channels, some of which threatened to be dead ends terminating in driftwood log jams. Choosing the right channel in heavy dense mist proved a real challenge.

On clear deep stretches of the river all six boats would raft up and we would drift lazily down river with the strong current eating pemmican and ships' biscuits and telling tall stories. During the whole expedition we saw only two other boats and about six people.

Day followed day, and the same pattern of weather settled in. Dense wet mists with temperatures about 38 degrees F for the first two or three hours in the morning, then beautiful warm sunny days with picture blue skies. Bird life filled the wilderness: geese, ducks and eagles, kingfishers, falcons and kestrels entertained us. We sighted a bear swimming across the river, and evidence of otters and beaver did not disappoint us. Our routine consisted of leaving early and stopping early, paddling for five or six hours a day, finding a suitable campsite on a gravel bar, pitching tents and cooking, then building a roaring driftwood campfire around which we sat until the day's hard exercise caught up with us and sent us early to our sleeping bags.

The 7th day saw us approaching the town of Golden. The river showed evidence of past activities when the paddle steamers plied the river in the late 1800's and early 1900's. As we paddled we often came across rows of old training wall pilings. We camped that night on a large gravel bar a mile below Golden, and some of our party walked into town to beg showers at a local hotel. The rest of us were content to wash in the river. Our spotlessly clean-showered voyageurs were welcomed back bearing gifts of chocolate bars and other goodies!

The 8th and what turned out to be the final day saw us leave Golden in the early morning. Helped by the swift current we made good time to our haul-out objective at Donald, stopping only for a long lunch on a lovely sand bar where a little stream joined the Columbia amid a grove of huge black cottonwood trees.



Lunch break



Typical sunset

We arrived at the haul-out at about three in the afternoon, some fifteen hours earlier than intended, due to the obliging current. We were able to contact our ever-helpful shuttle outfitter by cell phone. He agreed to find a driver and come to pick up the boats, gear and us that evening instead of the next day, and drive us back to our cars at Invermere. While we waited we had a huge feast and ate all the last of our provisions. It was almost ten in the evening before we got back to our vehicles, so we pitched our tents on the grass car park and slept beside our boats and cars!



Packing up for the shuttle



Last of the rations!

And so the expedition ended. Tired, dirty, sun- and wind-burnt, we were a very happy group as we packed up and went our separate ways to face the long drive back to Vancouver.

One final footnote: A trip is currently being planned for an expedition to on the Kootenay River late this summer!

[Native Post](#)—links to stuff you might want to know about

Swallow's Restoration: A Photo Journal

For those of you who may not have heard this exciting news--'Swallow', one of the five actual dinghies used in the 1974 film of 'Swallows and Amazons', was discovered in sad shape, a group formed to purchase her at auction, she has been completely refurbished, and had her "New Maiden Voyage" in April!

Here are photos of her transformation:



The condition she was in when found



Stripped and ready for varnishing



Bow repaired and varnishing begun



All the fittings were with the boat

'Swallow' at the London Boat Show

By Peter Calamai

I was in London the Jan 15-16 weekend and by chance saw that TARS was exhibiting the restored "Swallow" from the 1974 BBC show at the London International Boat Show. It was a 90-minute trek by public transit from where I was staying but I'd sent money for the auction bid so wanted to see it. The fellow in charge was Iain Khan-Gilchrist, the overseas members rep.



'Swallow' on display



'Swallow' full-length



Iain Khan-Gilchrist at bow



Peter & 'Swallow'

April 10th, Coniston Water:



Sophie Neville "Titty" christening 'Swallow' with ginger wine!



The refinished transome with newly-painted name



Re-enactment of the Swallows sailing off to the island; Sophie acting as Mother, waving farewell!



"Titty" sails again :-)

And finally, the most recent newsletter from the website www.sailransome.org:

A year after the auction where Swallow was delivered into the hands of the fans, she was finally able to sail on April 10th at Coniston Water. We expected to see 20 people there...then had about 50 people tell us they were coming...and then met 90+ on the day! The event organiser, Rob Boden, welcomed everyone and thanked Patterson Boatworks, International Marine and the Nancy Blackett Trust

for their help with the project. Sophie Neville, who played Titty in the film, re-enacted the launch scene from 'The Picts and the Martyrs' by pouring the Great Aunt's ginger wine over Swallow's bow, and wished her fair winds. Indeed, we were lucky that a light wind arrived instead of the forecast calm, and we were able to get many groups of people sailing in the lovely sunshine that afternoon. Our thanks go to all those who helped or skippered on the day.

We are very grateful to everyone who drove all the way to Coniston to see Swallow, and now it is time to reciprocate! Swallow begins her 'tour' in May, visiting 2 sailing clubs on her way down to Wales for the AGM of The Arthur Ransome Society. June sees her race at Secret Water on the east coast, and we even have an interview with BBC Radio 4 booked in before we visit Chichester down south at the end of the month. July and August see more activity on the south and east coasts, plus in London, but not every weekend is booked up yet, so you have a chance to arrange for Swallow to visit a stretch of water near you! Please get in touch if you are eager to go sailing, and we will try to match you up with a volunteer skipper in your area (by the way, we could do with a few more volunteers on that front - please reply if you're an experienced sailor!). The plan for later in the summer is to visit Norfolk and end up in the Lake District by September. This project was always about getting lots of Ransome fans on the water, to enjoy sailing 'just like in the books', so we hope to welcome you aboard this year. Please bear in mind our limited resource (particularly in petrol - towing Swallow around the country). Do email or phone to find out how things stand, with regard to your area of the country.

We are forced to end the newsletter with the usual 'three shorts and a long' (require assistance). We've mentioned the need for skippers and towbar owners, but please also consider if you are able to make a donation to the project. We have to confess that the current need is not very exciting; we have to pay a beastly insurance premium, but that enables us to take absolutely anyone afloat, legally. If you can help keep Swallow sailing we would be so very grateful.

Magnus Smith, Rob Boden & a new recruit soon,

<http://www.sailransome.org> -- to read her story in more detail, view more photos, make donations

01252 337554 (Magnus) -- to arrange your own sailing experience in 'Swallow'

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

Editor's Note: This isn't specifically a book, but the Literary Pages on this website are a collection of members' reviews of many books--enjoy!

All Things Ransome

By Dave Thewlis

“All Things Ransome” (<http://www.allthingsransome.net>) started as a restoration of the former TARS Literary Pages and other Ransome-related material from the original Arthur Ransome website. The Literary Pages were a collection of essays, related articles, links and excerpts from Ransome-related books, and so forth, and became a major resource for Ransome researchers and enthusiasts.

When TARS redesigned the site, there seemed no place for the Literary Pages. Fortunately, archives existed, and the TARS Board of Trustees and Ransome's Literary Executors were supportive of hosting this material on a separate website. “All Things Ransome” is independent of TARS, although we maintain a close relationship with TARS.

What are “All Things Ransome”?

“This website is intended as research tool for those interested in discovering more about the works and life of Arthur Ransome, and the sources and influences relevant to his work. In particular, the goal is to provide a permanent home for Ransome-related materials, especially for non-ephemeral works such as the literary pages, essays, articles, and the like. All Things Ransome also provides links to other Arthur Ransome resources available on the world wide web.”

All Things Ransome now includes much new material which was not from the original Literary Pages and it is intended to be a living and growing repository for any material that fits as "All Things Ransome". We are always looking for new contributions of material or articles to develop the site.

More specifically, the site offers:

Announcements of Ransome-related events, performances, etc.

Archives for journals, newsletters, and other such material created by Ransome enthusiasts
(including *Signals from TARSUS* & the *TARSUS Introductory Biographies!*)

Boats and Dinghies real and fictional, owned by Ransome or Ransome enthusiasts
(including Stuart Wier’s “The Boats of Swallows and Amazons”)

Literary Pages from the original website, constantly being enhanced with new material
(including PDFs of Ransome’s “Child’s Book of the Seasons” from 1906)

Maps of Ransome areas such as Wildcat Island, The Lake, and Secret Water

Media vault of links to video and audio clips of or related to Ransome

Quizzes and games

Ransome Readers Recommend: book reviews of other books Ransome lovers would enjoy, **Slide Show** of images of people, places, and things from the original website

Plus links to other Ransome and Ransome-related websites

In other words, “All Things Ransome” are pretty much anything and everything we can find related to Ransome and his works which are available or for which we have permission to include, on the theory that anything and everything is likely to be of interest to researchers and enthusiasts. The links to other resources are also intended to help make “All Things Ransome” as useful as possible when looking for information Ransome.

And we’re not done. We are planning on new sections, such as a **Nautical Dictionary** specifically focused on nautical terms used in the S&A books; a longer article on *Esperance* expanded from the article by Claire Barnett in *Signals from TARSUS* in 2009; bringing back **Dick’s Pocket Book** from the original website; and so forth.

And finally, we are always interested in new material. “All Things Ransome” has material originally published in *Signals from TARSUS*, in addition to other material contributed by TARSUS members and many others. If you’ve got something you might like to contribute, an article you think others would enjoy, let us know!

Dave Thewlis
All Things Ransome

Editor's Note: Take a few minutes to browse the website--there is a lot of interesting stuff there. Three million cheers to Dave for setting up and continuing to oversee this great website!

Mrs. Barrable's Gallery--Artwork by Members

Garth Hutton, cartoonist



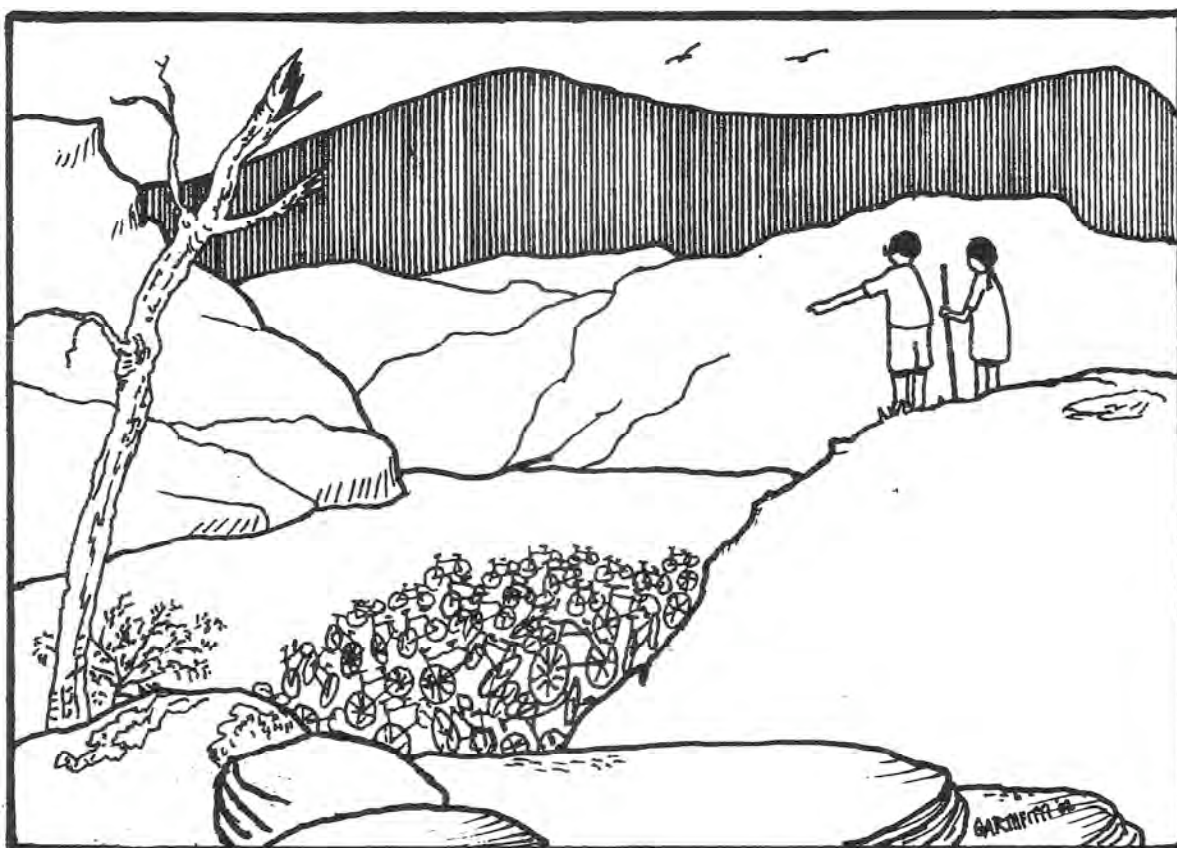
I am retired and live with my wife Doreen on a small lake approximately 100 miles north of Toronto Ontario in a vacation area called Muskoka. The lake is just like the one in the Henry Fonda movie "On Golden Pond" and is complete with its own Wildcat Island and is home to a family of Common Loons each summer.

We bought the property in 1963 and had

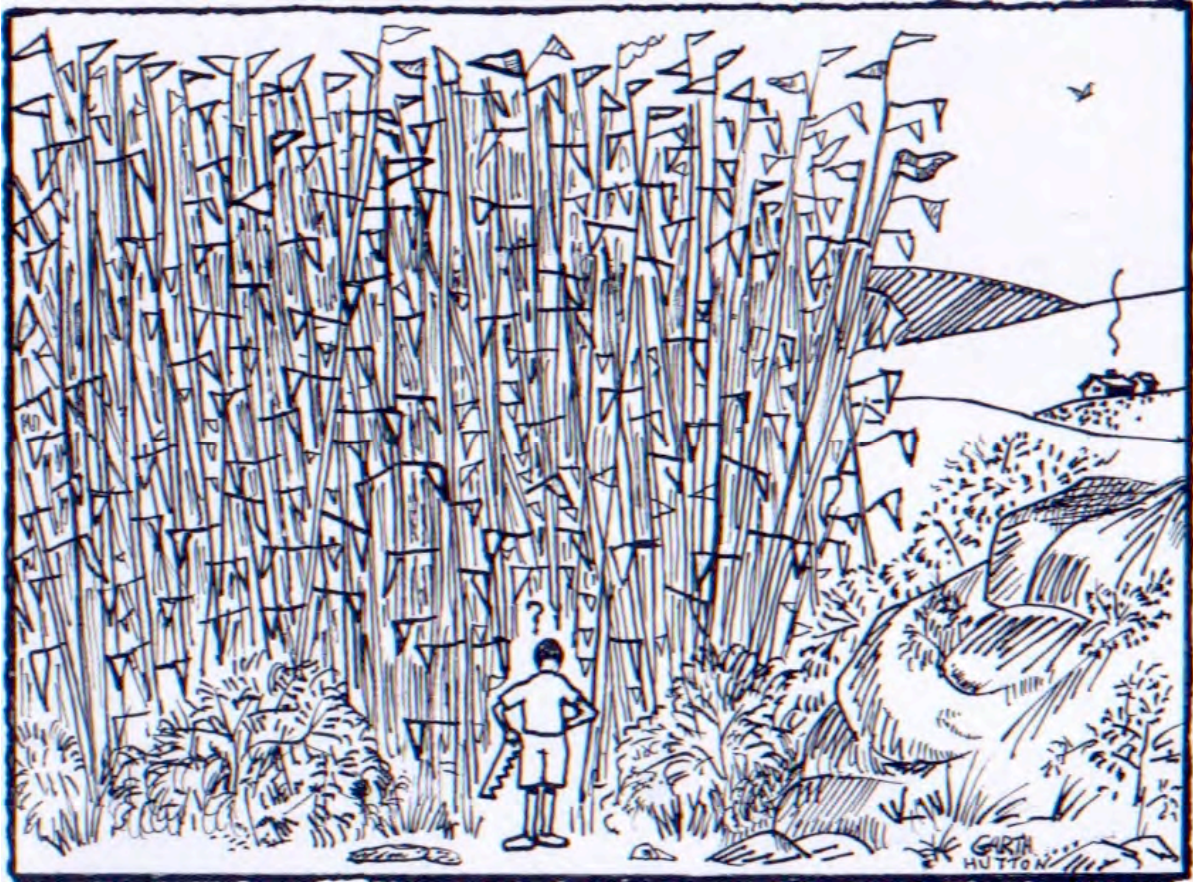
always planned to move here from Toronto after we retired. This May will be our 10th year as permanent residents at Clearwater Lake and we love it. We have three children and seven grandchildren who live in Toronto, which is about an hour and forty minutes away. Summer is a busy time here when all the kids visit for weekends or extended holiday stays.



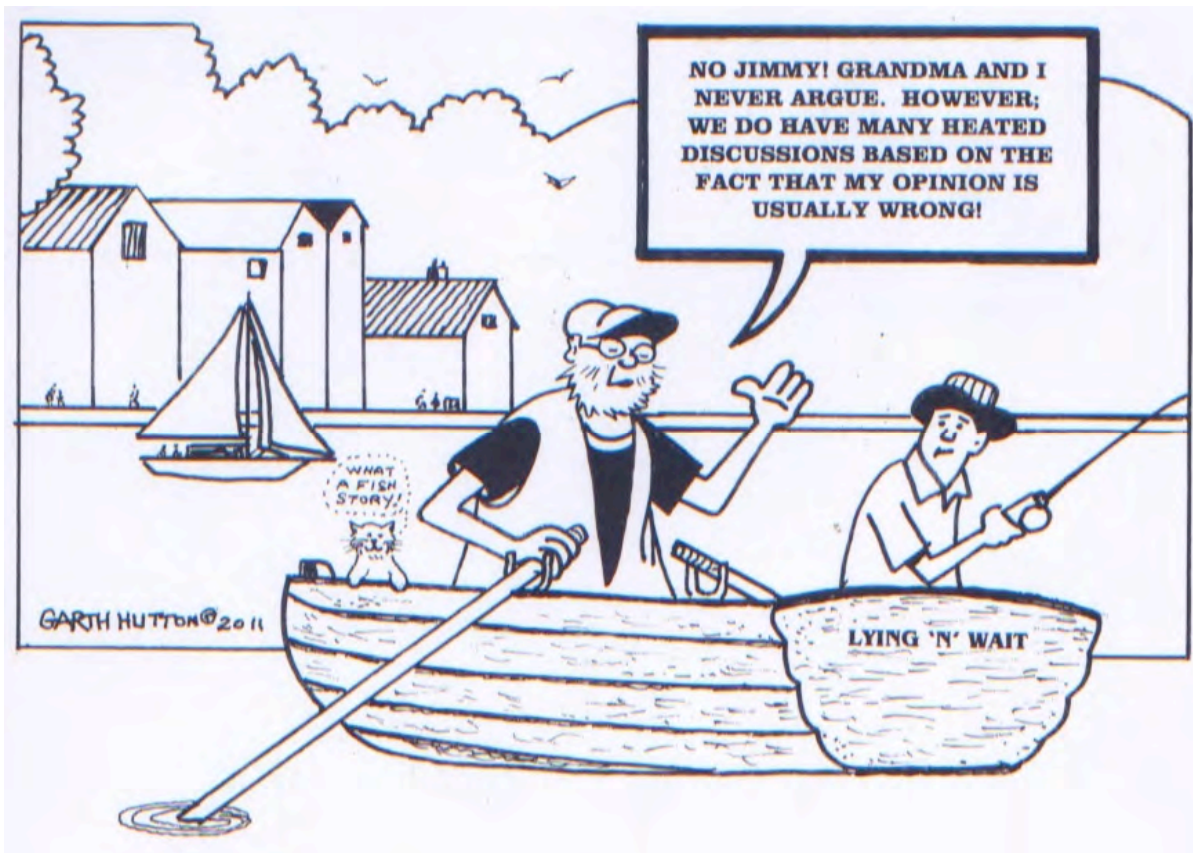
A Few of Garth's cartoons:



Dick and Dorothea find the Lost Valley of the Dromedaries



In the forest of a thousand burgees, John had to decide which mast would best suit Swallow



"The following may be of interest to you and other TARS members:

They Really Meant To Go To Sea!

We have retired friends who recently sailed across the Atlantic in their 35 foot sailboat which is called Blacksheep II. Ann is in her late fifties and Glenn is just past sixty. Their permanent home is just north of us here in Muskoka. They have created a wonderful website/blog outlining their crossing and adventures to date. Check out their blog at: <http://www.blacksheepii.com>.

Kindest regards,
Garth Hutton"

Friendly Natives—short bios of members



Becoming a Sailor

By Maida Follini

When I first read *Swallows & Amazons*, I was filled with the ambition to become a sailor. But at age 9, without access to a boat, this was rather difficult. Then my older brothers bought – for \$5.00 – not a sailboat, but a small scow about 7 feet long, square-ended, and about 4 feet wide. Something like Tom Dudgeon's 'Dreadnought'. We took the scow to our pond, a dark pool perhaps 300 feet long and 200 feet wide, created by damming up a flowing stream in the woods near our house in Connecticut. The scow had oarlocks and a pair of small oars. Here we learned to row over the dark waters, under the trees, and around small islands of moss and brush that fringed the pond. In nesting season we could silently float up to a mallard duck's nest on an island without startling her. (These ducks were used to being fed, and were not easily startled.)

We progressed from this tiny puddle of a pond to a large salt-water millpond near my grandparents' home on Long Island Sound, N.Y. Here my grandfather had built several rowboats, and we were allowed to take them out. The Millpond was about a mile long, and half a mile wide. It had three islands in it – one all of grass, one with stunted trees and flowers, and a third, slightly larger, with a shale landing place, trees, and place for a campfire. Here for many summers we rowed, taught by our grandfather to feather the oars in a wind, learning to scull with one oar over the stern. We could picnic on the islands, and swim (wearing life-belts) in the rushing water as the tide came in through the opening tidal gates. A visit to the old mill building showed us the wooden gears still in place that had been used to move the grindstones while grinding wheat in pre-revolutionary days.

Outside the tidal gates was the real harbour where sailboats were moored, and where my grandfather kept his 23-foot sailing dory. The greatest treat was to go out with him on a weekend, as my grandfather hoisted the mains'l and jib, told us to watch out for the boom, and steered the dory down the winding harbour channel out to the open Sound. Here the seas ranged from calm to fierce. Multitudes of small craft, sail and motor, were alive on the surface, and Granpa cautioned us to be alert in all directions. When far out on the Sound, large steamers and barges proceeded on their stately way toward New York City, not swerving out of their channel for any small boats - it was up to us to look out for them! (Although none of them called us 'Fish Mongers' like the steamer in *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*).

My first job as a ship's girl was to bail – it would mostly be rainwater, but my grandfather's pride always stopped me bailing when in sight of other boats, lest they think his vessel was leaky! I next graduated to manning the jib sheet – and soon learned at Granpa's commands to "Hold on till it brings the bow around!" rather than letting it flap too soon. At last, when the winds were light, he let me actually

hold the tiller, and showed me how to steer up to the wind, until the mains'l just quivered lightly, and then bear off. Still, I never had the skill to be allowed to take his precious boat out by myself. I had to wait for years until I actually became a sailor. College, jobs, and raising a family intervened.

Then one summer, while visiting my grown daughter, Beth, in England, I had the chance to visit Lake Windermere for the first time. Beth and I rented a motorboat at Ambleside. All right, but noisy and full of fumes. Then I found sailboat rentals at 'Rio'. The rental seemed an arm and a leg. But it was my only chance to follow in the Swallows' boot steps. I paid. I was given a single-sailed boat with an extended tiller. I was jittery, but determined. The wind was mild. I could swim: I would not drown! Out I went, just me and the boat – down beyond the island off Rio – then back on the far side of the islands. I could do it! I could steer the boat myself! South of the islands I turned to go back to the rental dock, only having paid for an hour. The wind had now dropped! The boat lagged leisurely back towards its home; I was met by the marina operator and an impatient would-be sailor as I came in to shore! But I didn't care. I could sail! I was a real sailor!

And that experience gave me the confidence, a few years later, to buy a small boat of my own and sail her - and I still take her out every summer, although I am now 80 years old. She is my Delight and that is her name.

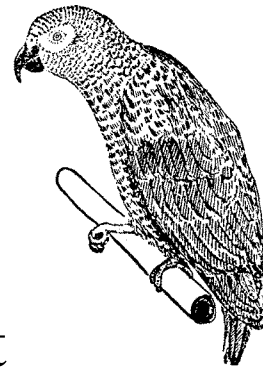
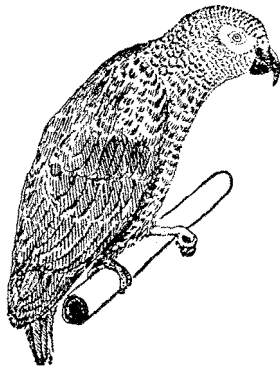


Maida Follini and her Drascombe Open Longboat, 'The Delight'
Bedford Basin, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Editor's Note: Maida has another story for us; this one made me chuckle:

"By the way, I read in the June, 2008 issue that there was some question about hot pots melting the ice and disappearing. This is exactly what happened in Rye, N.Y. when my mother was a girl, skating on the millpond with others - a big pot of chowder was brought out and left on the ice, and when they stopped skating to have refreshments, there was nothing but a hole in the ice! This happened around 1912, before Ransome had written his books."

Which makes me wonder, did Ransome get his story from this one, or did he know of another hot pot that made a hole through the ice? --Elizabeth :-)

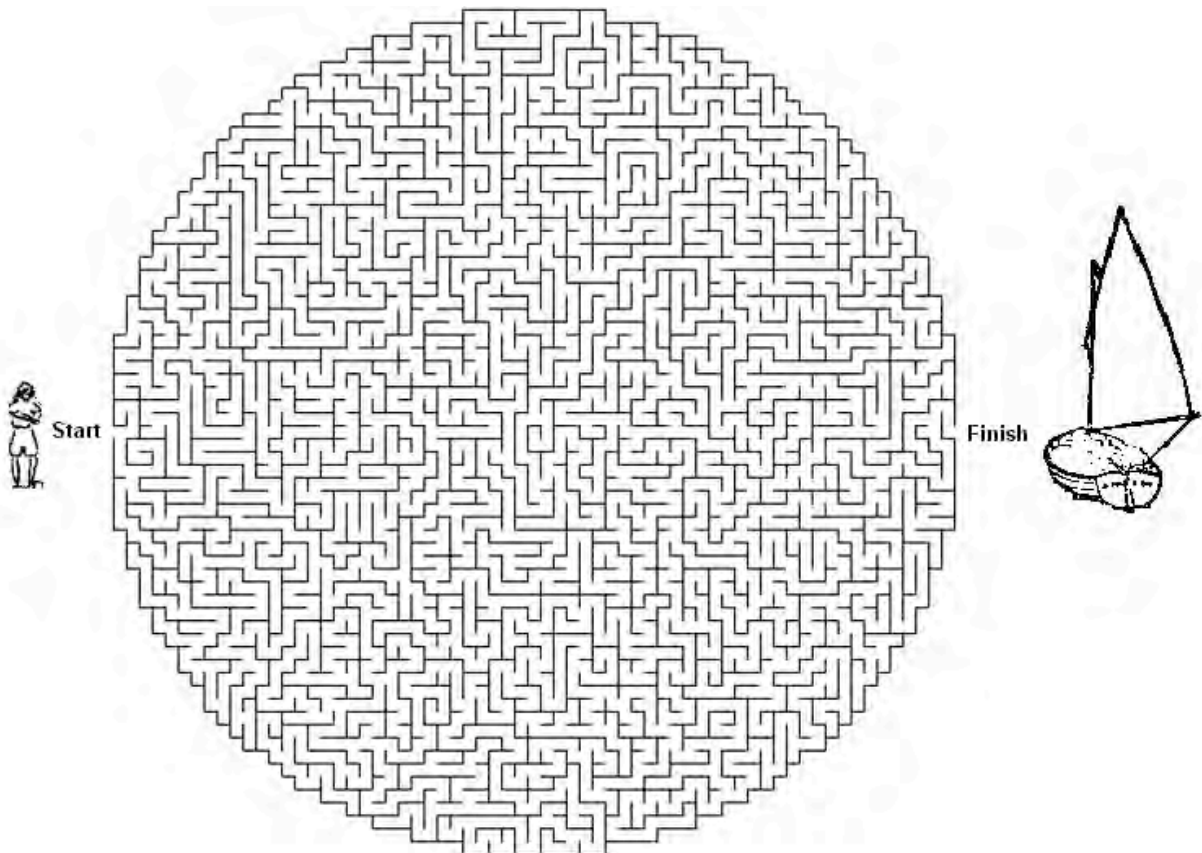


Pieces of Eight

The Junior Pages

Edited by Jessika Hodgson and Hannah Hodgson

Help Captain Nancy Get to Amazon!



Books

(A rather long note from Jessika)

Well, I've been busy lately. At the end of the semester, school gets crazy with all the projects and miscellaneous assignments that you have to turn in before finals week (which, for me, is next week). And besides writing essays and working out Algebra problems and conducting lab experiments, I've been catching up on my reading. To take a break from the difficult and deep books that have been my main literary diet for a couple of months (for example, I finished *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* just two weeks ago), I decided to reread the *Swallows and Amazons* series.

I finished the first book over the weekend and am now about halfway into *Swallowdale*. This is, I believe, my fourth reading of it. And after so many times poring over the adventures, I've begun to notice and feel a lot of things that I never did before; things that have more to do with the stuff *inside* the characters, especially the *Swallows*, than the stuff *around* them. Instead of writing a long piece on each of the characters, I just wanted to mention some of the stuff inside of John, because that is what mostly affected me this time around.

One of my favorite scenes in *Swallows and Amazons* is right after John attempts to give a message to Captain Flint and instead is turned away and called a liar. Something that happens inside of John then always makes me ready to face my own aggravations that are sure to turn up everywhere I turn in life.

"...The big hills up the lake helped to make him feel that the houseboat man did not matter. The hills had been there before Captain Flint. They would be there forever. That, somehow, was comforting."

And then, John decides to swim around the island. I have always thought that this was the best thing John could possibly do. To declare war on Captain Flint or to talk to Mother would have been all very well and good, but to swim around the island was perfect. There is nothing like the image of John determinedly crossing the finish line, "coughing, spitting, shivering, spluttering, and triumphant," to make everything feel all right. John thought so, too:

"Well, I thought I could do it," he said at last. The day was a good day after all, in spite of Captain Flint."

And in *Swallowdale*, I've never felt so heartsick as when John loses *Swallow*. Every sentence after the shipwreck seems to throb with poor John's guilt and sadness. Even his simple statement before he and Susan decide to go have a look at *Swallowdale*, "It'll be beastly being on the edge of the lake and having no boat," had me wiping my eyes and telling myself (with a little smile), "Duffer. That's for looking too hard. Try the other eye."

All of this to say, I never noticed before how good a writer Arthur Ransome really is. Of course, I always thought he could spin a swimming good yarn, and ever since I first read the books he has been one of my favorite authors, but I never saw exactly what he did in his writing. Words are one thing, but those small-yet-so-big things inside of the characters are what really make a book. The things that are realer than anything else. The subtle things that make it obvious that the author really loves his characters. I really appreciate that Mr. Ransome loved his characters enough to let who they are shine through and become real. That's what will keep me reading his books until I'm an AP or even a great-aunt.



POEtry

Here you can read (and write!) POEtry—poems inspired by the Swallows and Amazons and other Ransome-ish things, made especially for Pieces of Eight!

Alone

(Although Jessika says it could very well
be named

“Better Drowned than Duffers”☺)

By Hannah Hodgson

Watch the water, softly swell
Reflection stares back
Salty seawater smell
Change direction, tack
No sailor am I, but I sail in my little boat
Alone

Waves pick up, boat jostling
Reflection jumbled, broken
Whole sea tossing
Body cold, soaking
No sailor am I, but here I am
Alone

Angry sea’s rabid waves
Reflection gone, never again seen
Reaching the end of days
Under the raging green
No sailor am I, sunk under the sea
Alone

Walking Song

By Helen Jolley

Grab your pack
Head out the door
Don’t stop to look behind
The path winds on
Beneath your feet
No knowing what you’ll find

Flecks of gold
Fall down like rain
The wind blows in your face
Clouds above
Sweet grass below
A border of ferns and lace

Mountains you’ll pass
And lakes so blue
A traveler weary and cold
Trees so high
They touch the sky
Like giants, grand and old

Grit in your hair
And your life in your pack
You’ve traveled so long and so far
But though your bed
Is miles behind,
Your home lies under the stars.

Ship Terms Word Search

Find each of the words listed below. Words can be written upward, downward, forward, backward, and diagonally.

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

BALLAST
 BOW
 BUOY
 GUNWALE
 JIBE
 KEEL
 LUFF
 MOORING

OARS
 PAINTER
 REEF
 ROWLOCKS
 SAILING
 STERN
 TACK
 TILLER



NEW PUZZLE PRIZE!!! Complete the puzzle above & send your answers to: Elizabeth Jolley erjolley@mail.com or 675 NW 114th Ave. Portland, OR 97229. One lucky person wins a hand-knit red cap to use in your own Amazon adventures :-)
 Winner's name will be randomly drawn on February 25th, so send your answers right away! ALL AGES OF PUZZLERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO WIN :-)

Calling All Junior TARS!



Hey, all Swallows, Amazons, D's, Eels, Death and Glories, and any other Junior TARSUS members! Please send in your writings, drawings, puzzles or photos to be included in Pieces of Eight! Everything counts towards making Pieces of Eight the best it can be.

You can send contributions to Mrs. Jolley erjolley@mail.com and she will forward it to me, or you can send them straight to Jessika at creativejessika@msn.com.





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



Some final notes by Elizabeth Jolley, Editor

As always, I have been enchanted by the wonderful articles, artwork, and information you have sent me to publish in this issue! May 2011 might go down as having the largest proportion of photos to writing--I hope you all enjoyed your picture tours of a Canadian canoeing trip, the special voyage of 'Swallow' from battered and alone to brightly refurbished and loved, an 80-year old still sailing her 'Delight', plus several funny and well-drawn comics.



As a final note, here's a photo of two young scalawags, grandchildren of a TARSUS member. On the left, William is wearing the red cap his grandfather won by answering the puzzle correctly & having his name drawn for the prize. On the right, his brother Nelson is sporting his own cap knitted by his grandmother to ensure that no pirate head go bare!

Think ahead as you enjoy your summer, and write a note or two that you can share with us in the upcoming September 2011 issue. You may send submissions at any time, and I always appreciate your work!

Have a wonderful summer filled with adventures & relaxation, sunshine & beautiful views!

Elizabeth :-)

-Pg.22-