



Furthest South



Volume 24 Number 2

Newsletter of the Arthur Ransome Society in Australia and New Zealand

The fisherman and his motor cruiser Cachalot

Garry Wood



The *Cachalot*, with *Death and Glory* in tow, cruises up the winding River Thurne

Arthur Ransome introduced his fisherman character to his readers in *The Big Six*. Fishing was a great interest of AR's, and he brought it in as a side-story to the main story of the casting off of boats on the Norfolk Broads. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, AR chose to not give the fisherman a name, so that throughout the novel this was his only identity.

The fisherman first meets the younger Coot Club members when his motor cruiser *Cachalot* passes Horning Staithe, and he sees Pete sitting on the roof of the *Death and Glory* fishing for perch, while Bill and Joe attempt to smoke eels in the cabin. Incidentally, the boys' full names were Joe Southgate, Bill Jenkins, and Pete Woods, although these surnames never appear in the stories (Wardale, 1988). The fisherman called out asking Pete if he could save for him some of the roach he was catching for use as pike baits. After some difficulty in catching more roach, Pete had enough in a keep net ready for the fisherman to come back next day. Then on his return, hearing the Coots were about to make a sailing cruise to Potter Heigham in their *Death and Glory*, he offered to tow them – an offer which, as there was no wind, they gratefully accepted.

Continued on page 2

In this issue

The fisherman and his motor cruiser Cachalot	1
Cheryl Paget Memorial Award	5
Inaugural winner	5
East coast scientific expedition	5
VicTARS boating on the Yarra.....	7
Sharpening our wits—QUIZ.....	8
Bob Cuming.....	9
A tale of two trailers.....	9
The Pigeons' Posts.....	11
Great auks, guillemots...and great northern divers ..	12
A trip to the Broads.....	13
Discovery's first cruise.....	14
If there had been a thirteenth novel.....	17
A letter from TARS UK's Overseas Coordinator.....	21
The AusTARS Cup: a letter from Brian Hopton.....	22
A trip to Bendigo	23
'Red slippers and black swans' update	25
Sharpening our wits—QUIZ answers	25
Amazon publication: <i>No holds barred</i>	26

In the text and sketches in *The Big Six*, AR gives the reader some details of the fisherman. He appears to be a tall, slim man, probably in his thirties or early forties. For his dress he wore the usual sports coat or jacket normally used by men in the 1930s, matching flannel trousers (no jeans in those days), and a soft felt hat. Up till the time of World War II, men invariably wore either a hat or cap while outdoors. Catching fish can be hard on clothes, so the fisherman probably wore old clothes while fishing, and kept clean, better clothes in the cabin for going ashore.

With his custom-made fishing boat, and expensive rods and reels, he would appear to be fairly wealthy. We don't know his occupation, but he may have accumulated wealth through businesses. Those businesses may have run independently, with only occasional supervision from the fisherman, giving him time for his fishing recreation.

As he explained to Pete, he came from the southern waters of the Norfolk Broads but visited the northern waters because of the better fishing. His boat, especially designed for this fishing, was built in Beccles, which may have been his home town. This type of boat was known on the Norfolk Broads as a motor cruiser. This is unusual as the term cruiser usually refers to a class of naval vessel. In other parts of the world, it would be referred to as a powered cabin boat or similar.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was a boat builder named George Wright, whose yard was located in Beccles (Malster, 1971). The Wright family built mainly wherries, which were sail-driven cargo vessels peculiar to the Norfolk Broads. In the 20th century, with competition from rail and road increasing, demand for wherries dwindled, and Wright's turned to building pleasure craft. If descendants still ran the boat building business in the 1930s, it is speculated that they could have built the *Cachalot*. Some people there declared that timber from trees growing in the Beccles district was the best of all for boat building (Malster, 1971), so if this had been used for the *Cachalot* it would have resulted in a high-quality boat.

When the fisherman decided he wanted a boat specifically for fishing, he contracted a marine designer to produce plans for the boat he wanted. As the fisherman had requested a vessel a sole person could manage, it turned out to be a smallish cruiser. Sketches by AR in *The Big Six* give a considerable impression of what the boat was like. The *Cachalot* rode fairly high out of the water, and had a square stern. Immediately ahead of this was the cockpit, which was large enough to cater for fishing activities.

Next was the cabin which extended the full width of the vessel without any footrest on the exterior sides. This seemed to be a common feature of Norfolk

Broads' cruisers as AR's sketches on pp. 7 and 30 (Cape edition) of *The Big Six* show. The cabin with several portholes either side continued right to the bow, without any reduction in height for a foredeck, as shown on page 77. Being a tall man, the fisherman would appreciate a cabin with full head-room. The name *Cachalot*, as well as its official Norfolk Broads' number, was written on bow and stern.

The steering wheel and cabin doorway were on the rear wall of the cabin. The wheel would probably be on the port side, to make it easier when steering to follow international 'rules of the road at sea'. These state that 'To avoid collisions when vessels are approaching each other head on, both must alter course to starboard, so that they pass each other port side to port side' (Kemp, 1976). In southern waters (Breydon Water, River Yare, and River Waveney), where there was commercial ship traffic, the rule was rigidly enforced. However, in northern waters, e.g. the River Bure, with learners in hired yachts milling about, it was difficult to comply with, and it may have been necessary to thread a course through them at slow speeds.

On the outer sides of the cabin, the *Cachalot* had red and green navigation lights. These, and also the interior cabin lights, were electrically powered from a battery, just as lights in the *Teasel* in *Coot Club* had been. In *Coot Club* it is said 'all hired cruisers are supposed to be moored for the night,' (p. 173), but this apparently did not apply to privately owned vessels such as *Cachalot*.

Through the cabin doorway, steps led down to the cabin floor. The cabin doors may have been twin side-by-side, as these take up less room in the cockpit when open. The steps were removable for access to the engine, which was partly under them, and to the cockpit deck. Being the 1930s, the engine was likely to be petrol-driven, but these engines were dangerous because



Cabin of the *Cachalot*

vapour from petrol leaks could cause explosions, with fatal results to the occupants. After World War II, the danger of enclosed petrol engines was realised, and small diesel engines were developed for small boats. Mechanical improvements over the years have made these diesels safe, smoother running and quieter, so that the old internally-housed petrol engines for boats have almost vanished. If *Cachalot* survived to the present time, she would almost certainly have been re-engined with a diesel.

A fo'c'sle (p. 114) was mentioned in the novel, so this was probably separated from the main cabin by a partition with a door in it. The fisherman's bunk aboard the *Cachalot* was on the starboard side taking up most of the length of the cabin. On the port side, at the bow end, was the neat enamelled stove that Joe so admired (p. 101). Also on that side was a settee (p. 111), and a small table, a small bench and sink, and a position for a primus.

In the fo'c'sle on the port side there was a wash basin and marine toilet, and on the starboard, storage cupboards. In the very bow the mud weight and its rope was stored. AR does not mention this in the novel but there was a forehatch for lifting the mud weight out when required, similar to that on the *Teasel*. Rond anchors for mooring to the river bank were kept on deck with their coiled ropes.

The fisherman thus had a boat in which he could cruise the Norfolk Broads year-round seeking the best fishing spots. One can imagine him at Beccles getting ready for another of these fishing cruises. In previous times he would not have had to travel very far, as much of his home area between Yarmouth and Norwich was under water in winter, particularly around the River Yare (Malster, 2003) and was said to teem with fish.

Though there were some complaints of over-fishing, landowners helped, as conservationists, to restrict fishing adjacent to

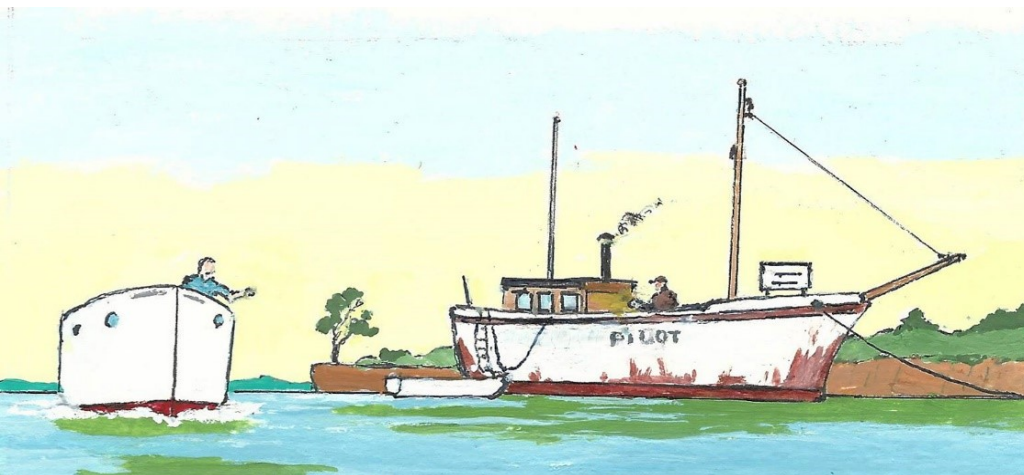
the land they owned. In later years the controversial draining of some of the swamps and marshy areas destroyed much of the general wildlife there (Malster, 2003). By the 1930s, then, the fisherman would have had to head for northern waters to attain the fishing resources he required.

The *Cachalot* would cruise her way down the River Waveney, then around to the section where the Breydon Pilot was located. From there, once out on Breydon Water with nobody to annoy, it was 'open the throttle and let her rip', and the *Cachalot's* bow lifted and she surged through the water leaving a long wake behind. All too soon it seemed Breydon railway bridge was passed, and the *Cachalot* slowed to enter the River Bure. Then it was a case of following the Bure at a legal speed till the River Thurne was reached. *Cachalot* cruised up the river, through Potter Heigham, till finally mooring at the bank near the Roaring Donkey Inn dyke.

It was here that, while the fisherman was getting stores from the inn, Joe, Bill and Pete hooked, played and helped land 'The World's Whopper' on to the *Cachalot*. This was of course a Northern Pike, scientific name being *Esox lucins* (Angling buddies, 2020). At thirty and a half pounds, the pike certainly was considered to be a large fish. However, the current record for a British pike is considerably larger at forty-six and a half pounds. Northern pike can easily grow to over a metre, and the longer they are the heavier they will be. Pike is a predatory fish which preys on smaller fish, and even eats juveniles of its own species, when other fish are not around. It is found throughout Britain and also in Continental Europe and North America. The skin colour varies between individual fishes, though generally they are a green-olive colour, with creamy yellow or white blotches (Angling buddies, 2020).

At the time 'The Worlds Whopper' was caught, little thought was given to killing the fish so it could be skinned and mounted for display. Times have changed, and nowadays if a pike is

caught, unless exceptionally large and worth mounting, it is put back into the river or lake to continue its life. This applies particularly to the Norfolk Broads where pike are in decline (Anonymous, 2022). The flesh of caught fish can be eaten, but it is an extremely bony fish, being difficult to separate flesh and bone, and that is why cooking and eating it is not often attempted (Angling buddies, 2020). Removing tackle from the pike's jaw can be difficult without specialised equipment, because of its razor-



The fisherman aboard the *Cachalot* gets a return wave from the Breydon Pilot's white painted hulk

sharp teeth. When this has been done care must be taken not to damage the mucus or slime that covers its skin, as doing so can adversely affect its survival when put back in the water. This natural layer enables the fish to swim faster and protects them from bacteria and parasites (Anonymous, 2022).

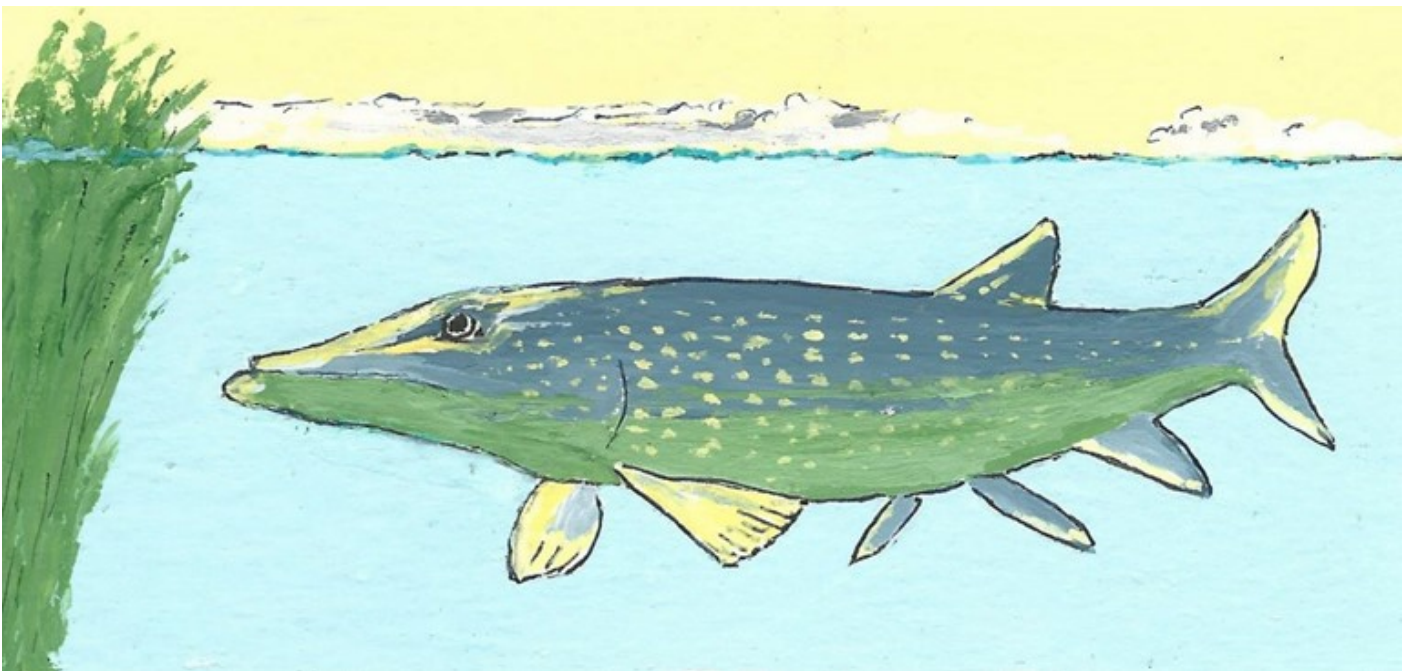
The fisherman had the one big pike rod and its reel, as well as other rods and reels all being carried on a roof rack of the cabin. While away from the *Cachalot* for any length of time he probably locked them in the cabin so as not to tempt thieves. He does not mention fishing for other fish species, but it was probable that he did so. A surprising number of fish species inhabits the Norfolk Broads (Anonymous, 2022). This is in spite of disturbance by boats, reed harvesting for thatching, and fertiliser run-off from farms. Besides pike, the freshwater fish most commonly fished are roach, bream, rudd, tench, perch, and carp. As well, estuarine species such as flounder, sea bass, grey mullet, goby and sea trout occur where the rivers meet seawater. So the fisherman should have had plenty of choice to keep him occupied!

There was no sequel to *The Big Six*, so we did not meet the fisherman, or Joe, Bill, and ‘young’ Pete again. However, AR did write several chapters of a new novel involving Joe, Bill, and Pete, and the Swallows, Amazons and D’s, before evidently deciding that the concept was not going to work, and stopped writing it. The writer Hugh Brogan published these chapters in a book of AR’s unpublished works (Ransome and Brogan, 1988). It is a pity, therefore, that AR was not able to formulate a new novel with just the Coots, the fisherman, and perhaps Dick and Dorothea as characters.

One could speculate that in a new novel the fisherman’s fishing was just a cover, and he really worked for the government on counter-espionage, and had the Coots and D’s brought in to help with some detective work tracking spies. That was why in *The Big Six* the fisherman had to disappear so often. Just a thought!

References

- Angling Buddies. 2020. *Northern Pike*. Wikipedia. <https://anglingbuddies.com/uk-coarse-fish/northern-pike/>
- Anonymous. 2022. *Fishing Guide for the Norfolk Broads*. Wikipedia. <https://www.norfolkbroads.com/story/fishing-guide-1150/>
- Kemp, Peter (Editor). 1976. *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*. (p. 733). Oxford University Press, Ely House, London.
- Malster, Robert. 1971. *Wherries and Waterways*. (pp. 112, 123). Terence Dalton Limited, Lavenham, Suffolk.
- Malster, Robert. 2003. *The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads*. (pp. 136-7). Phillimore and Co. Ltd, Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex.
- Ransome, Arthur, and Brogan, Hugh. 1988. *Coots in the North and other stories*. (pp. 103-144). Jonathan Cape, Bedford Square, London.
- Wardale, Roger. 1988. *Arthur Ransome’s East Anglia*. (p. 19). Poppyland Publishing, North Walsham, Norfolk.



Northern Pike on the prowl

Cheryl Paget Memorial Award

During 2022, the AusTARS Committee decided to establish an award which would be available to members in New Zealand and Australia and which would be named after the late Cheryl Paget, former TARSNZ Coordinator, whose dedication and contribution to TARS was outstanding. The terms of the award, developed and approved by the Committee, appear below.

The AusTARS Committee initially felt that the costs of administering the award could be met from funds held in the AusTARS account, and that this would be a worthy use of our resources, since TARSNZ, being a smaller body of members, did not have a developed structure or accrued funds, as AusTARS has.

Since then, the Committee has been delighted to receive two extremely generous donations to our Cheryl Paget Award Fund, from Neil and Barbara Robertson and Susan Price, TARSNZ stalwarts and close associates of Cheryl. These donations will enable award recipients to receive a substantial remuneration as part of their honour and will provide a sound financial basis for the operation of the award. Thank you, Neil, Barbara and Susan!

A further donation has also been received from Jan and Stuart Allen. If any member would like to contribute to the award fund, please contact the AusTARS Treasurer, Stuart Allen, who is maintaining the award budget as part of the AusTARS account (jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com).

Inaugural winner - Cheryl Paget Memorial Award

TARSNZ Coordinators, Neil and Barbara Robertson, and AusTARS Coordinator, Dawn Ciechowski, are pleased to announce that the inaugural winner of the Cheryl Paget Memorial Award is:

GARRY WOOD, of Auckland, NZ

Garry has been a tireless researcher and producer of original, fascinating and beautifully illustrated articles which he has contributed to *Furthest South* over a very long period. Several of Garry's articles have been included in *Signals* and *Mixed Moss* as well. TARS Down Under are indebted to Garry for his knowledge, research skills and artistic prowess in providing us with new insights on many Ransome-related and nautical matters. Garry is a worthy recipient of the Cheryl Paget Award, with his efforts reflecting the enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity and devotion we continually saw in Cheryl. Garry will receive a framed certificate and monetary gift to use as he chooses.

CONGRATULATIONS, GARRY!

East coast scientific expedition – Ship's Naturalist heads forth

Nancy Endersby-Harshman

VicTAR Larry Harshman is making his way up the east coast of Australia on a scientific expedition collecting flies for a study in progress at Monash University and the University of Melbourne. We have a lot of flies in Australia, but those in Larry's sights are known as vinegar flies (*Drosophila* species). These are the flies that hover around the fruit bowl or home in on your glass of wine at an outdoor restaurant. They lay their eggs in fermenting fruit as a food source for their larvae. Larry's aim is to catch live flies and send them back to the universities where they will be reared in captivity before being subjected to genetic analysis. The project is looking at adaptation to heat stress and Larry's expedition is the latest in a long-term study which has already shown that the warming climate has changed the distribution of flies with particular temperature-related genotypes along Australia's east coast. Some of Larry's flies will be used in a selection experiment to identify the genetic basis of adaptation to climate change. The study results have implications for other species including ourselves.



Packing the truck for the expedition – note buckets, bananas and a dromedary

Continued on page 6

So how does a Ship's Naturalist collect flies? Larry is luring them to buckets baited with banana mash and yeast. The yeast helps the fermentation process. The smellier the better... The flies are then encouraged to go into a net with a vial on the end. Larry collects the vials and takes them back to his expedition hut where he anaesthetises the flies with carbon dioxide while he sorts males from females and identifies species. Larry started collecting near Tathra, NSW, and has now reached Byron Bay. He has already sent back hundreds of flies and expects to send hundreds more as he continues to his ultimate destination of Cairns, Qld. Mostly Larry walks to set up his long lines of buckets, but in Bateman's Bay, friendly golf course employees lent him a golf buggy to help him traverse the edge of the course!



Larry with the fly buggy, Bateman's Bay



Harry Potter's stag patronus and unicorn with collecting bucket and net.

Another highlight of the expedition has been the discovery of Harry Potter's Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry at a Scout Camp at Mount Keira. The Scout Camp was recommended by people at the Botanic Garden in Wollongong as a site with rainforest.

Larry is collecting in rainforest, coastal vegetation, golf courses and residential areas, seeking a variety of *Drosophila*



Fly collecting hazards no one tells you about: 'You want to check that bucket, mate? Think again.'

Looks like Nancy Blackett is in residence at Smuggler's Cove Holiday Village, Forster. Hope she doesn't want to start a war. Larry has to concentrate on collecting.

species. It's a great way to get to see some of the east coast as well as furthering an important scientific study. It's intensive work in all weathers, but there are a few minutes for recreation, especially when a hard to resist, happy puppy turns up with his stick!

Larry is certainly getting to know the locals along the way.



Rainforest path



'Want to play, Mister?'

Stark beauty of Tacking Point Lighthouse (1879), Port Macquarie.

VicTARS Boating on the Yarra

Dawn Ciechomski



On Sunday 1 May a group of VicTARS got together to enjoy a pleasant autumn afternoon boating on the Yarra from the historic Fairfield Boathouse. We were only a small group, supplemented by Gill's daughter Jo and by Gill's twin granddaughters Kaley and Scarlett, who were quickly nicknamed 'Port and Starboard' (Kaley being left-handed and Scarlett right-handed).

We all sat together, exchanging introductions and greetings while keeping a very close eye on the activity on the river, especially the rowing styles and techniques, a little voice in our heads saying, 'That looks easy'... Lesson One: Don't listen to little voices in your head.

So off we went and hired some boats. Nancy and Larry in one boat, Gill, Dawn and the twins in another and David at that stage on his own... Lesson Two: Getting into a boat is not as easy as David makes it look. After negotiating the perils of boarding the boat and the startled looks of concern on the twins' faces, we put our oars into the rowlocks and with a push-off from the boat attendant we were finally loose on the Yarra.



David, of course, made rowing look easy, while the rest of us embarked on Lesson Three: Coordination. We have a new respect for Dick and Dorothea and the challenges they overcame while learning to row, especially in what appeared to us to be a crowded waterway populated by other boaters who had no more experience at rowing than we did. Once we were away from the milling throng, we steadied ourselves, and, adopting Dick's scientific method of counting, we settled down and started to make some headway on the river. We even figured out how to turn round and head back up the river.



At about this point Kaley thought she would like to try rowing... Lesson Four: Changing places is not so easy. We managed the changeover, however and Kaley enjoyed having a go at rowing with Grandma and she did a good job. Needless to say, Scarlett also wanted to row. It was a lot easier to trim the boat the second time around. Shortly after, Scarlett learned... Lesson 5: How to catch a crab. The look on her face was priceless. We explained what had happened and we all enjoyed a good laugh.

Scarlett and Gill rowed up the river, passing Nancy and Larry along the way; they, like Gill and Dawn, were channelling

Continued on page 8

their inner Dick and Dorothea, with smiles on their faces. David, meanwhile, had been joined by Jan and was emulating Captain John as they rowed gracefully by, oars in perfect harmony. Our time was about up, so Gill and Scarlett headed for the river stage and did a great job of bringing us alongside... Lesson 6: Getting out of a rocking boat is, if anything, harder than getting in.

Back on dry land we rejoined the others, Stuart, Elizabeth, Alison, Martin, Nancy, Larry and Jo. Hot chocolate and coffee were procured from the Boathouse and with Jan and David back from their adventures, we all enjoyed a very satisfying afternoon tea of scones, cake, slices and, of course, chocolate in the autumn sunshine.



Of course, all good things come to an end. Some of us said our goodbyes and headed for home, while others stayed on, enjoying the TARS camaraderie in the sun. It was another great TARS day out and we are all looking forward to our next get-together.

Sharpening our wits—quiz

The Dick Callum Quiz will again be held at this year's IAGM in August and it is anticipated that the quiz session will be Zoomed at a suitable hour for members worldwide to have the opportunity to take part. Last year, David Stamp flew the flag for AusTARS and was game to tackle the challenging quiz questions. Perhaps this year an AusTARS or TARSNZ team could be fielded!

Try yourself out on these practice questions and if you want to continue your training and join a team, contact the Secretary and Jan will then send you more practice material. We will try some at our next trans-Tasman zoom as well.

- 1... *BS*. What was the weight of the Death and Glories' pike?
2. *PD*. Where was Peter Duck living at the beginning of the book?
3. *SW*. How did the Eels write their messages?
4. *WD*. What was the fog signal for a sailing ship with the wind aft?

5. *WD*. What was the name of the lightship to which John steered from the Cork Lightship?
6. *PM*. When Timothy offered Slater Bob a bottle of beer to have with his lunch at the mine, what did Bob say he usually had at that time?
7. *PM*. On the day she had been stranded in Rattletrap, why did the Great Aunt get out of the butcher's van that had given her a lift, before it reached her destination of Swainson's Farm?
8. ? In which book does Bob Curten appear?
9. ? Name a work by AR, other than *The Big Six*, with the word 'Six' in its title.
10. ? Evgenia made sure AR was not given food cooked in what?
11. *ML*. What were Nancy's first words when she saw the Swallows in Chang's yamen?
12. *ML*. What was the name of the dog at Dixon's Farm?

(Answers on p. X)

Bob Cuming

In what is turning out to be a very sad year for TARSNZ, Coordinators Neil and Barbara Robertson have advised that one of TARSNZ's oldest and most active members, Bob Cuming, died in May, after suffering skin cancers for many years. Here is their tribute to Bob.

Bob will be especially well remembered by those TARS fortunate enough to have attended the Sixth Annual Arthur Ransome Birthday Weekend in Waikato, in January 2017. Bob and his wife Lyn helped plan and organise the weekend, which began at their property in Hamilton on the Friday afternoon, with a surprise visit to an abandoned Swallowdale camp in a gully behind their house! It culminated in a Birthday Tea at their home on Sunday evening, in which Bob and Lyn were the perfect hosts, and we watched the then new *Swallows and Amazons* film on their DVD player. In between we made visits to various places that had been arranged by Bob and Lyn, including the Hamilton Gardens, a private railway memorabilia collection, a children's bookshop, Lake Rotoroa, Raglan, and the Avantidrome cycling track in Cambridge. It was a very busy and enjoyable weekend, and participants were particularly grateful for the enormous contribution made by Bob and Lyn. It is how and why Bob will always be well-remembered in TARSNZ.

Another member, Michael McBryde, told us that he was very sorry to hear of Bob's death, and reminded us that he and Bob had formed the winning Quiz Team at the very first Ransome Birthday gathering of TARSNZ at Havelock North., organised by Cheryl Paget. And that he also had pleasant memories of the weekend in and around Hamilton that Bob and Lyn had organised for us.



A tale of two trailers (last time it was two cameras)

David Stamp

Here is a tale of two trailers, built just over fifty years apart, both to fulfil the need to move boats from their land residences to the water and back again.

In the late 1960s I bought a fibreglass hull for a 5m long 'Fireball' sailing dinghy, and spent too long in completing the woodwork, rigging and so on. Along with building this boat I designed, had the chassis built, and fitted out a trailer that would carry the boat and as well be suitable for general duties. In the event, general duties demanded more than boat transport, so when we sold the boat, the trailer remained, and has proved its worth to us many times over. Among other things in the design I included smallish Mini Minor wheels and soft leaf spring suspension, so that lightly-built boats should not get shaken to bits on the road. On the other hand, with the large tray, care must be taken against overloading with such things as firewood, as the capacity of the springs is a limiting factor. When the springs are seen to take up a reverse curve, then is the time to start shedding a bit of load.



Glencoe on old trailer

Now, the twenty-first century is here. In 2013 I started building another 5m long boat, this time a rowing/sailing skiff designed by Iain Oughtred, a talented Australian designer working from the Isle of Skye. I had considered one of his larger designs, but our already having the trailer determined a maximum length of boat. Like many things made at home, we saw an evolution of ideas and solutions as the boat was built and used. The boat, in rowing form, was completed at the end of 2014, and for a couple of years we used the original trailer, relying on helpers to load and unload, with the car and trailer parked as close as possible to the water. Lifting and carrying the boat, even over short distances, had little appeal for mid-seventy year olds and younger folk when available, so a better way had to be found.

Thoughts turned to a launching trolley, onto which the boat could be loaded from the trailer at a distance from the water, even though there was a degree of lifting and pully-hauling to and from the road trailer. The main parts of the trolley are of stainless steel (don't look too closely at the welding!),

Continued on page 10



Boat at arrival on new trailer

and the wheels, two large ones at about the midship point, and a third smaller one at the bow, are plastic, with pneumatic tyres. Finding suitable wheels took ages of internet time, and in the end I found what I needed (wide tyres for load-bearing in sand, no rustable components, not too expensive) reasonably locally. The trolley is demountable into pieces for ease of transporting on the road trailer and in the car.

Whilst the trolley made getting the boat to the water easier, there were still the matters of getting the boat from its storage at home onto the road trailer, collecting all the bits and pieces together, assembling the trolley at the destination, and then transferring the boat to the launching trolley. All good fun, one might say, until becoming aware of the need to do all of this in reverse at day's end. Along the way I developed a few wrinkles to make the processes easier, but total success was eluding me. So about a year ago it became evident that the time had come to think of making a specialised road trailer which would carry the boat, already on its launching trolley, ready for hooking up to the car and driving away.

I mused and sketched, all the time trying to rationalise several competing requirements. My aims included light weight (the old trailer, by nature of its multi-purpose design, size and construction is quite heavy); narrow width to allow it to fit into our old carport, which was most likely designed to suit an Austin 7; simple to build; suited to the existing launching trolley; and the ability to allow the trolley chassis to be jacked up a little to relieve the loads from its plastic wheels during towing and storage. The launching trolley has a cranked main axle, so that the boat is close to the ground for floating off and back on in shallow water, but this worked against me in the trailer design; ramps are needed for the trolley to run off the road trailer, and due to the overhang of the boat on the trolley and the slope of the ramps, the stern of the boat is at risk of grazing the road as it departs the road trailer. To avoid this, I aimed as nearly as possible to keep the boat level fore-and-aft as it comes off the trailer. I achieved this by having a very short steep ramp for the small bow wheel, and long ramps for the two large wheels; in practice, the stern of the boat comes to within about 100mm of the ground during loading and unloading.

In building the launching trolley I thought I had had enough grief in finding the right wheels, but it started all over again with the new trailer. I wanted to have similar wheels and tyres for the old and new trailers, and the benefit of a common spare wheel. Fifty years ago every man and his dog seemed able to

supply Mini bits and pieces off the shelf, but now it's different. One recycler kept promising that he could get me what I needed ('I'll be starting to wreck another Mini in a coupla days, mate'), but after a coupla weeks and many phone calls I searched out two other suppliers, one for wheels, hubs, stub-shafts, studs and nuts, and another for bearings and seals. Then I needed adaptor sleeves to mate the skinny stub-shafts to the larger diameter axle-tube. After much fruitless shopping around, I made them myself. A few breaks in Covid lockdown permitted shopping expeditions, the local steel supplier has a delivery service, other bits got held up in Covid transport delays, and gradually under our carport there was something to see.

The trailer will not be going into the water, and with luck it will be possible to wash salt off the boat before running it up onto the road trailer, so I did not see a need to investigate galvanising the completed steelwork. Where possible I used pre-galvanised steel, but with only a light coating, and I touched up welds (again, don't look too closely!) and so on with cold galvanising paint. I reluctantly bought two folding aluminium ramps for the large wheels, the ramp for the small wheel is of



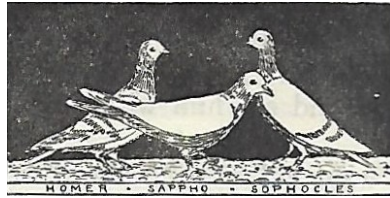
Boat and trolley part-way down ramp...



...and ready to go to water

treated pine board, and the trolley is pulled up onto the trailer with a small hand-operated boat winch. Importantly, the trailer with launching trolley and boat in place is light and easy to manoeuvre by hand.

Well, the trailer is registered, fitted with lights, reflectors and a pristine numberplate, the boat and launching trolley are sitting atop it in the narrow Austin 7-sized carport, it has had a 150km road test without any bits falling off, a trial unloading and re-loading of trolley and boat, and all it is waiting for now is a bit of decent weather for a proper trial and maybe another tuning-up session with the sliding rowing seat given to me last winter and fitted soon after.



The Pigeons' Posts



Make sure you don't miss out on what promises to be the read of the year, **Amazon Publications' No Holds Barred**, being selections from the diaries of Evgenia Ransome. It is being offered at the bargain price of only \$30.00 for TARS Down Under and should be ordered pre-publication to ensure your copy. Enquiries to the AusTARS Secretary, Gill Metz. You don't have to order from the UK as orders and payment can be taken here. See page X for more details.



Winter Holiday time: VicTARS **David and Elizabeth Stamp** fitted in a trip to Mt Hotham to complete some maintenance on their ski club's lodge just before the early June Great Winter Chill descended on Victoria and the Australian Alps, bringing with it enough snow to enable the official ski season to commence a week early.



Jan and Stuart Allen have also been taking advantage of the early snow dump to ski and snowshoe at Lake Mountain, well layered-up and wearing foul weather outer garments, but still enjoying the experience.

Stuart braves the elements



WaraTAR **Gwyn Johnson** is exploring her local area on foot and by kayak. She has completed some coastal walks and is now exploring nature reserves on the sandstone of Gadigal country, where winter wildflowers are blooming. Jan Allen joined her recently for a kayak outing on Narrabeen Lagoon. Gwyn has been visited recently by a green tree snake, which took to stretching along her window sill and peering in, before recently deciding that Gwyn's garage would be the perfect place in which to spend the colder winter months. Gwyn writes: 'Here is a photo of my Yellow Garage Snake. It's taken up residence in my garage, and I'm pretty sure it is a harmless Green Tree Snake. It's at least 1.2 metres long, olive green above and quite a bright yellow underneath, long slender tail, and it hangs about in the rafters and close under the tiles during the warmth of the day. I'm not that happy about it being straight above my head when I get in and out of my car!'



Gwyn's garage snake



WATAR **Linda Phillips** has recently returned from a visit to the UK, visiting the Lake District. Before away, she wrote: 'While in the UK May onwards I will in particular be exploring the rivers from the lakes to Morecombe Bay. There's a guided walk across the Bay at low tide...' Linda has sent an account, with photographs, of a part of her visit (see page 13).



AusTARS Secretary **Gill Metz** is delighted that her daughter, Jo, has recently qualified as an Ambulance Victoria paramedic, making a switch from the family calling of firefighting. Ambos are currently in short supply in the state, so she will be a welcome addition to the ranks.



AusTARS Committee member and former State player VicTAR **Martin Spiers** has no trouble filling his leisure time, with basketball coaching and playing commitments almost every day of the week, as well as his TARS involvement.

Great auks, guillemots... and great northern divers

Patrick Armstrong

‘Great auks and guillemots! I never thought birds could be half such fun’, exclaimed Nancy as the crew of the *Sea Bear* were ‘Waiting for a Chance’ to outwit the egg-collector and the crew of the *Pterodactyl* (chapter xii of *Great Northern?*).

Nancy seems to be preoccupied with great auks, perhaps getting the name a bit tangled up in her mind with great northern divers. ‘Great Auks for ever!’, she shouted (Chapter XVIII) as they realised they had to outwit both Mr Jemmerling and the Gaels. And then: ‘One... two...three... Great auks!’, she shouted (Chapter XX) when they suddenly spun round to see one of the egg-collector’s men drop into the heather as the decoys attempted to lead the enemy away from the divers’ loch.

Perhaps Nancy, after talking to Dick about the evils of egg-collecting and the manner in which it brought rare birds closer to extinction, fixed the extinct creature in her mind.

But in the Minch, around the northern Hebrides the *Sea Bear* was cruising in waters formerly inhabited by numbers of great auks. The great auk (*Pinguinus impennis*) was a large, flightless diving bird thought to have once had a population of several millions breeding around the North Atlantic. A member of the family Alcidae (the auks), its closest extant relative is the razorbill (*Alca torda*) but it was closely related also to the guillemot (*Uria aalge*) – also seen frequently in Hebridean waters. Breeding colonies of the great auk were found along the east coast of North America, particularly on islands off Newfoundland, and also on islets around Iceland and Scotland, and in Scandinavian waters. Archaeologists have found bones of this

bird in pre-historic settlements in Northern Ireland, and they were apparently still breeding on St Kilda – the most remote Hebridean island – in the 1690s.

The great auk, garefowl or garfowl was large – about 90cm (3ft) high and weighed 4.5kg (10lb). They were slaughtered at their breeding colonies for their meat, eggs and feathers. Tens of thousands were killed by seamen on Funk Island, off Newfoundland, from



‘The last of gairfowl’ [sic] as envisaged by Walter Goble (1862-1943), illustrator of a 1920s edition of *The Water Babies*



Great auks, after John James Audubon (1785-1851).

the 1500s onward. Once the species was close to extinction, skins and eggs had a certain rarity value, and in the 1830s and 1840s, expeditions went to Iceland to secure specimens for institutional and private collections. Although it has been suggested that the early decline was due to climatic change, there is little doubt that it was human pressure that exterminated the great auk.

Arthur Ransome was not the only children’s author to be fascinated by the this strange extinct creature: so, too, was Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875 (a fine and observant naturalist, by the way) who in *The Water Babies* (1863) had young Tom venture to ‘a great codbank...’

And there he saw the last of the Gairfowl. Standing up on the Allalonestone, all alone. And a very grand old lady she was, full three feet high, and bolt upright, like some old Highland chieftainess. She had on a black velvet gown. And a white pinner and apron, and a very high bridge to her nose (which is a sure sign of high breeding), and a large pair of white spectacles on it, which made her look rather odd: but it was the ancient fashion of her house. And instead of wings, she had two little feathery arms... she could not fly...

Although there are some reputed records in the late 1840s and even 1850s, there is a tale that ‘the last of the garefowl’ were seen about 200 miles south of where the *Sea Bear* sailed that summer just before WWII (and, incidentally, about 100 miles due west of ‘The Lake’). It is told that on 23rd September 1845, a Mr H Bell, wildfowler, was standing on the shores of Belfast Lough, when he noticed two large birds. At first he thought they were great northern divers, for they swam underwater for appreciable distances. But Mr Bell noticed that they had short, stubby wings, and much larger and clumsier heads than those of the elegant divers. In due course they passed out of sight, and out of human ken. Thus, it is said, were the last living great auks seen by human eyes.

Nancy was not the only one to confuse the two species!

A trip to the Broads

Linda Phillips

After a couple of years of lockdown, I finally made it to England in May 2022.

It seemed strange to be flying again, even stranger for my luggage, which Qantas left behind in Darwin, but never mind, it was nice to be back in the old country. This time, I have travelled around quite a bit but in this report I focus on the Norfolk Broads. Now, TARS has a week-long Coot Club camp in the Broads as I write (31 May) but I wasn't able to get to it as my visit was a couple of weeks ago.

In past visits, I have always headed to the Lakes; my brother and I did so again, staying in Keswick, but a change in the weather outlook saw us head to Norfolk, a good choice as it happened. I had never been to the Broads and was pleasantly surprised. Indeed, we agreed this was the best week of the holiday. Staying in a chalet near Yarmouth, we drove around most of the Coot Club references and even took out a motor boat between Wroxham and Horning Staithe.

At St Olaves the New Cut meets the River Waveney, where Port and Starboard just missed the Teasel. It looks nothing on the map, but it is well worth the visit; we enjoyed long walks along the river and the Cut, on a warm sunny morning. Next we drove on to Beccles, which was less interesting. The old Post Office is long gone and a network of narrow one-way roads makes visiting awkward.

In the afternoon we decided to walk alongside Breydon Water. This was magic; something I'll long remember. In the morning it was high tide, and the Water looked like a large lake.

There is one train a day (midweek) to Berney Arms which is at the head of Breydon Water. We took the train –no choice now but to walk back! It's a trek in itself to get from the train station to the Water but the result is a magnificent view. Berney Arms itself is no longer operating; neither is the adjacent windmill though it is impressive and twice the size I imagined it to be. The path adjacent to Breydon Water is on a bank designed to prevent flooding. In places it is severely overgrown and at one point we got lost, though some local natives (bird watchers) appeared and pointed us in the right direction.



Breydon Water at low tide

The rivers Yare and Waveney meet at this point. The tide was already well out, but we did see natives in motor boats trying to fight the tide, moving at less than walking pace. A little further



Linda by the Berney Arms windmill

down, we could see the port and starboard posts and the spot where, so I guess, the Teasel and tender ran aground and William came to the rescue. Seeing how quickly the tide goes out, and imagining thick fog, it is easy to imagine how the scene happened. As the sun was setting we got back to Great Yarmouth train station having walked 24 km that day, a record for me!

Next day was the turn of the northern Broads. The weather was sunny and warm, the best day of my holiday. We started at Potter Heigham and saw the famous bridge which really is low. Any sailing boat having to lower its mast would have a tight fit indeed. In fact, boats have to stop and take on the bridge pilot these days. With lots of native shops and cafes now it is worth a visit.

On to Horning and a long walk through the town, past Tudor buildings and to the Staithe. It is a very pretty town, well worth a visit. I found myself wishing I had a bicycle to tour the local (flat) lanes.

Then on to Wroxham. Here we decided to hire a motor boat for the afternoon and headed off down stream to Horning. The afternoon was now hot – and even I used the word! We weren't sailing, but even so, to be on the water in any kind of craft was a delight. We entered Wroxham Broad, thinking of Tom hiding in another Broad. I had imagined the Broad to be a quiet, isolated spot, so I was disappointed to find it full of craft and yacht clubs and dotted around with houses. Well, it is 90 years later.

On reaching Horning Staithe (I was back at the helm) I faced a challenge I have not had since Sydney Harbour: how to pull up and moor! It was busy, with boats everywhere, but there was a space in front of the pub, just big enough for our little craft. Calmly sending my brother ashore and giving him instructions (Tie it to the bollard! What? That round metal thing!) we safely moored up and stopped for lunch, before returning to Wroxham.

Seeing the Broads for the first time was a wonderful experience. AR was more accurate in his location descriptions in *CC* and *BS*, so we were able to visualise many scenes.

Discovery's first cruise

John Parsloe



MV Discovery, Paradise Harbour.

'Oh, Mr Ice Master...!' – a little posse of American women was lying in wait.

In December 2003 I joined a 20,000 tonne British passenger ship in Buenos Aires for six weeks of Antarctic cruising. The vessel was on its first worldwide cruise under a new name and new owner, an eccentric 83-year-old Englishman. He was dedicated to 'destination cruising' rather than the normal continuous 'floating party' where the entertainment and facilities on board are the main attraction. Visiting the Antarctic was the hot favourite destination spot at that time and the elderly English owner wanted to go there. But not on a small expedition passenger vessel that could be tossed around in the infamous Drake Passage; instead, on a larger, steadier vessel. So he bought a suitable ship. He renamed it *Discovery*.

This adventure had started a few months earlier. Originally I was to join the ship as a mature zodiac driver so as to have a break from my normal summer Antarctic work of Ice Piloting duties. However, two weeks before sailing, I received a phone call at home at 3.40 in the morning. The call was from the shipping company's Senior Vice President who lived in Madrid, Spain. He was now offering me the Ice Master position! They were suddenly short. The Company's usual Swedish Ice Master had defected to a similar-sized Antarctic vessel (the *Marco Polo*) as Master and there was no one else available at such short notice.

He had no idea of the time of the day here in New Zealand. I had to try and sound conscious, make sense and ignore my Business Manager prodding me in the ribs and hissing, 'Get my airfare included!'

Instead of being responsible for fourteen people in a zodiac, the inflatable rubber boat that ferries passengers ashore where there's no wharf, I was now to be up all night and responsible for the ship and all passengers and crew. Suddenly I had need for clothing I seldom ever wear. The dress code on board this type of vessel is part of cruising. So, a quick trip into Timaru

(our nearest large town) on Christmas Eve to 'do' the gents' outfitters. It was 5.30 pm when we found Mac Shaw's on the main street. Actually he was across the road doing his own last-minute Christmas shopping, and had to be retrieved by his assistant.

In moments Mac had me measured and trying on one of his hire suits which was entirely suitable and fitted. To my amazement, no one had booked it for the holiday season. He was also prepared to sell it to me at a very fair price. My wife couldn't believe any of this (even though she was there!). In half an hour in Timaru I could now rub shoulders with the best-dressed cruisers on board.

I flew out on Boxing Day. Unfortunately, it wasn't a direct flight from Auckland to Buenos Aires. To save money, the Company tiki-toured as many staff as possible, the oddest routes, for best deals. Eventually, via LA and Miami, I ended up in BA. A mere 52 hours! (It has only been bettered by my return flights home at the end of that season – 62 hours.)

MV Discovery proved to be a very attractive vessel. She could carry 600 passengers and had a crew of 345. But she was not ice-strengthened. Hence the legal requirement for an Ice Master. In fact, I had seen her many years earlier in Fremantle in 1987 at the America's Cup under her original name of *Island Princess*. In that guise she had appeared as the backup vessel in the 'Love Boat' television series and the Norwegian captain, 6ft 6in and aged 73, had been the first Captain of the *Love Boat*, a sister-ship to the *Island Princess*. He was very popular with the passengers, broadcasting several times during the day with news updates and always ending with a recommendation that: '... today's sausages are particularly delicious!' This always got a laugh because of the exotic food selection available.

Up till then, my normal work in Antarctic waters had been mainly on small expedition ships and research vessels. No one dressed for dinner, the entertainment was homemade, and the meals were presented without a performance. In *CRUISING*, everything is a performance, even the appearance of the Ice Master. Anyone of any rank got 'mobbed' when they appeared on public decks. 'Oh, Mr Ice Master...!'

For *Discovery's* first Antarctic cruise, we left **Buenos Aires** and sailed down the Argentinean Coast to **Port Desire** (*Puerto Deseado*). Although Charles Darwin on board the *Beagle* had called in there many years before (1832), no cruise ship had been there for fifteen years. We were given a grand welcome – car horns honking and every vantage point crammed with people waving. This was not a tourist town and our arrival meant dollars to them. For our passengers, this was to be their first experience in an inflatable boat. These were the craft the local farmers used to get up-river to their farm stations. They

Continued on page 15

were not smart up-market boats but functional working craft with their local professional boatmen. The passengers loved it. The next ports-of-call were in the Falkland Islands – we arrived in **Stanley** on New Year's Day (2004). Already at anchor in the outer harbour was *The World*, the huge 'floating apartments' ship. I had last seen her in New Zealand in early 2003 at the America's Cup regatta in Auckland.

Can you picture this? The little wee jetty at Stanley, 9 am. Breezy summer morning, passengers from the *Discovery* waiting for their tour bus to go sightseeing. Tender from *The World* approaches jetty and ties up. Two women step ashore, wearing white dressing gowns and sporting rollers in their hair. They cross the road to the store to buy bacon and eggs. Apparently they didn't want to go to their restaurants on board - they were self-catering. Our passengers were totally amazed. The apartments on *The World* at that time started at a million and a quarter US dollars. But there is no grocery shop on board. They were obviously rich enough not to care what they looked like first thing in the morning!

A New Year's Day festivity on the Falklands was raft racing on Stanley inner harbour. The rafts were homemade affairs, from bathtubs to professional-looking Army entries. At that time there were still many pet seals in the harbour, left over from the conflict days when they were mascots for various army units.

We then sailed to **West Point Island**. This island lies off the most north-westerly point of West Falkland. Here, after viewing black-browed albatross and rockhopper penguins on the spectacular western cliffs on the far side of the island, the passengers were invited ashore to 'take tea' with the local farming family (Roddy and Lily Napier) in their modest windswept farmhouse. For the zodiac drivers, this was an opportunity to test all the inflatables and to sharpen up boat-handling skills. I joined in - my one and only time in what would have been my original role on board!

While the vessel sailed down the Argentinean coast and across to the Falklands I spent much of my time on the bridge, observing the watchkeeping officers and seamen. Over the years I had found this just as important as familiarising myself with the vessel's various pieces of navigation equipment required for safe navigation in icy waters.

Although a British ship, the crew were from the Philippines, Bulgaria, Greece, Russia, Croatia, United Kingdom, Poland, Romania, China, ex-Ghurkas from Nepal (who were the security men), America and one token New Zealander. English was the official language on board, as required by the American permit granter for sailing south of 60 degrees south and the reason I was on board as Ice Master. Their permit required an 'awake' Master on the bridge 24 hours a day, one of whom must have ice experience. As Ice Master, I did the 'night' shift and moved the ship from one beautiful location to the next, while the Ship's Master did the day shift. If the ship was engaged in 'cruising' during the day, I was on call if sea ice

conditions required my presence on the bridge with the Captain. My official work started at 60 degrees south. This is where the Antarctic Treaty commences. It is about halfway across the notorious **Drake Passage**, the narrow gap of water of about 500 nautical miles between Cape Horn and the Antarctic Peninsula.

Although a cruise ship, the *Discovery* had been built as a *passenger* ship for the North Atlantic. This meant it was deeper in the water and more stable than a *cruise* ship, which is built with a shallow draught to enable it to go into the many shallow ports of the relatively calm Caribbean Sea. A deep-draught vessel like the *Discovery* with stabilizers was fairly steady, even in places like the Drake Passage. Where the Southern Ocean meets the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans is what is known as a convergence zone with a huge mixing effect. Warm air can hold more moisture in it than cold and this causes vast areas of fog. This is where the first icebergs are likely to be met.

While the passengers were wine and dining, the bridge team would be on full alert. Present was the Ice Master and the Officer-of-the-Watch, both watching separate radars. Also two ratings, one on the wheel and the other on lookout duties. All sounds made were recorded into a black box recorder, similar to those on aeroplanes, also all helm and engine movements. If the ship should sink, the black box was designed to float clear.



Welcoming crowd, Port Desire

Our first destination was a brief visit to **Deception Island** in the South Shetland Islands. Here the *Discovery* sailed into the caldera through the narrow entrance, known as Neptune's Bellows. It is dramatic - sheer cliffs on one side and a shoal patch on the other. Once inside, the vessel turned round in the small Whaler's Bay immediately to the right and then steamed back out again. The remains of a Norwegian whaling station and a British base could be seen on the shoreline.

The day was then spent slowly steaming through the Bransfield and Gerlache Straits to the second destination, **Cuvernville Island**. For whale lovers, humpback whales were frequently seen. The vessel arrived late afternoon at the small dome-

shaped island. But not too late to launch the inflatables to take passengers on trips to get closer views of the wildlife and the many species of colourful mosses and lichens that covered the island. There were large colonies of gentoo penguins on the northern shores, while breeding kelp gulls and Antarctic shags were nesting along the eastern coast.

We then spent the night slowing steaming down to the northern approaches of the **Lemaire Channel**, probably the best-known fiord in Antarctica because of its spectacular scenery. It is a narrow channel (approx 150m wide) nearly 11km long, with near-vertical peaks rising on both sides – one peak is around 980m high. It's a grand landscape, with two distinctive pointy peaks at its northern entrance.

If a ship can get through the channel, so can an iceberg! The current through it is strong enough to occasionally drag them in and block it. However, any floating ice also provides excellent platforms for leopard seals and crabeater seals to rest on. We steamed cautiously in and steamed through only small floating ice pieces, before turning at the far end and retracing our track.

We then steamed on to cruise down the **Neumeyer Channel** to call at **Port Lockroy**. This is another popular destination, for yachts as well. Two were already anchored there. It is the site of an old British base that has been restored by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust. Today, this is a museum, gift shop and post office. However, passenger numbers restrict what vessels can visit the facility and ours was too large. So we anchored off in the sheltered bay to allow the zodiacs to relay passengers to nearby Jougla Point to view the penguin colony and a reconstructed whale skeleton.

Paradise Harbour is not far away. So we up anchored early morning and made a slow passage to visit the Chilean summer base at Waterboat Point at the northern entrance and allow the passengers to be able to say they had stepped ashore on the Antarctica mainland. The Chileans were very hospitable – the first passengers ashore were welcomed with a glass of wine and allowed to inspect their very basic accommodation. That



The Norwegian Captain – turning the ship around, Lemaire Channel



Landing area, Stanley, Falkland Islands

was after they had walked through the resident gentoo penguin colony (it included two or three very rare 'white' specimens) and the liberal coating of guano outside the buildings!

We then steamed overnight to our final destination, **Half Moon Island**, tucked in close to the towering shores of Livingston Island in the South Shetland Islands. The day was spent visiting chinstrap penguin colonies and watching the nesting activities of Antarctic terns, skuas and kelp gulls, before departing that evening on the return voyage across the Drake Passage to Ushuaia and the end of *Discovery's* first Antarctic cruise.

During every night, instead of 'musical chairs', 'musical ships' took place! In fact there were 27 other passenger ships down there when we were, plus 24 yachts, and many Government resupply ships and vessels purporting to be 'survey' vessels, but which were really warships policing it all. This nocturnal repositioning was so the passengers would be unaware of all the other vessels around. Part of the appeal of the trip is the idea that you are going where few have gone before. This would be spoiled if all these vessels were jostling for the same vantage points. At that time, we arranged who would go where by email among the respective captains and only spoke by radio when we could actually see each other. We also had a piece of equipment on the bridge which showed the position and name of every vessel within 64 miles of us; also its course, speed, distance and bearing from us.

A cruise ship is a very unreal world. Every evening a ship's newspaper was put under your cabin door so you could plan your next day's activities - also the dress code for dinner that night! Every waking moment there was entertainment. A Polish orchestra/brass band, a Romanian string trio, four American singers/dancers, and a British resident pianist. The 'Gentleman Host' was a professional dancing partner. The Cruise Director, who was MC at every public occasion, also sang and had an endless supply of jokes. Added to this there were daily lectures from 'the professors'. These were mostly New Zealand scientists who were world experts in glaciology, ornithology, zoology and polar history.

Continued on page 17



MV Discovery at Ushuaia

The main entertainment for many on board is dining – everything is turned into an occasion. The Filipino crew were genuine in their enthusiasm in singing ‘Happy Birthday’ many, many times, all ‘ten’ verses. There were two dining areas, and a covered deck was used for breakfast, lunch and BBQs. Passengers took morning tea, afternoon tea and supper in different areas, wearing the correct clothing and with musical accompaniment.

Discovery did two more cruises that season. On the final cruise my wife joined me for her first Antarctic experience. Having travelled to the ‘uttermost part of the earth’ (to Ushuaia, just round the corner from Cape Horn), I forgot to look over the side when we docked. So she stood on the wharf for three-quarters of an hour (she said, ‘two hours’) waiting (terribly pleased with herself for getting there), but had to re-

treat because the armed Argentinean policewoman obviously thought Sylvia might start swinging her handbag any minute (Sylvia was quite flattered as she was over sixty at the time)! When I found her three hours later she had already made herself at home in my cabin and was thoroughly ‘peeved’. The only solution was to allow myself to be dragged up the road to buy curtain material (it arrived in New Zealand about six months later).

It proved a very successful season for *Discovery*. Since I didn’t hit anything, I was employed again the following summer on the same ship. In fact, I was employed on *MV Discovery* until it was withdrawn from Antarctic cruising after a total of six seasons. So Mac Shaw’s suit got many more airings and proved an excellent investment.



Mac Shaw’s suit and my Business Manager, MV Discovery

If there had been a thirteenth novel...

Linda Phillips

Introduction

After *The Picts and the Martyrs (PM)* in 1943, Arthur Ran- some only published one more book, *Great Northern (GN)*, in 1947. A further book appeared in 1988. This was *Coots in the North (CN)*, based on AR’s working notes for a story to follow on from *PM* (plus some additional short stories), and edited by the esteemed Hugh Brogan, who had a good pedigree for the task, being the biographer of AR.

It is frustrating to know that AR had in mind a thirteenth novel in the series, but didn’t succeed in finishing it.. *CN* contains what could be the first five chapters, but it is not necessarily what AR would have ended up writing. Indeed, we know from AR’s notes that he struggled with the plot line, and so the book remains unfinished. So while *CN* is the best insight we have into his mind, if the book had been completed it might have been completely different. However, it is interesting to see

what clues we can find in *PM* to indicate how the book might have developed.

Besides *CN*, many attempts have been made to write a thirteenth novel. They include *Swallows & Co.* by Dennis Bird (Amazon Publications 2006), a synopsis, ‘Ship’s Girl’, published in *Mixed Moss* (2009), and entries to a competition to finish *CN* held in 2011. In addition, some fan fiction entries can be found. These are mostly fairly predictable; missing is AR’s ability to go off at a tangent, surprising his readers with unexpected events or settings. No entries to the competition were deemed suitable to be the definitive completion of *CN*.

What we know about AR’s plans

Can we really figure out how *CN* should have finished? For the purposes of this article I’ll refer to the suggested book as *No.13*. We have AR’s notes, as edited by Brogan, to guide us,

Continued on page 18

and they do suggest he was working on a continuation of *PM*, with the *Swallow*, *Amazon* and *Scarab* on the lake.

We see in *CN* that he intended to bring most of his characters together in one book. The setting is still pre-war, as with all of the series. Dick and Dorothea and *Scarab* (not named but clearly inferred) are to be part of the story. I am grateful to Peter Willis for this extract: ‘In the last draft chapter, “One way of meeting Nancy” there is a short reference to *Scarab*, but without its being named. It is just before Nancy capsizes *Amazon* to show the Ds (and Swallows) how to right a capsized boat: “Three sailing boats under sail had come out from behind the island with the tall tree.” And that’s all there is.’ As Peter notes, it’s a case of ‘might have been’.

Building the case for the No.13 plot arc

When reading *PM*, it’s easy to concentrate on the Dogs’ Home and the Great Aunt, the core of the story, and to pass over the side stories as extraneous. Read it again, ignoring the main narrative of the Dogs’ Home and the Great Aunt, and clues to other stories emerge. We need to reflect on these to tease out the possible story of *No.13*.

But a warning is due: how would we continue *PM* if we only had the first two chapters?

‘No one could have guessed from the way the day began how differently it was going to end’ (*PM* Ch. 3 intro). That could well be AR warning us against thinking we could guess how *No.13* should read!

The Swallows

We are aware right from the beginning of *PM* that the Swallows are due to arrive after the story concludes. At the start, Nancy and Peggy are talking of *Scarab* ‘and were hoping it was ready so that its crew could get the hang of it before the Swallows turned up, who were coming in a fortnight’s time’ (*PM* Ch. 1). In the last chapter, Timothy, hoping for a quiet life, is told by Nancy ‘Well, you won’t exactly have one, not yet. You can’t expect it. Not with the Swallows coming, and Uncle Jim, and five whole weeks of the holidays still to go’ (*PM* Ch. 30).

This gives us a clue that *No.13* will follow. There are still five weeks of the summer holiday and the Swallows are coming.

Or are they?

An alternative reading is that AR didn’t want to write about the Swallows, instead concentrating on his favourite characters the Ds; but to avoid upsetting readers who wanted the Swallows, he explained their absence by saying they were coming later. The Swallows, Amazons and Ds had been heading in different directions for a while. As Julian Lovelock notes, ‘Nancy’s game-playing begins to pall for the Swallows, especially for John and Susan’.

Dick and Dot

We first meet Dick and Dot, the Ds, in *Winter Holiday (WH, 1933)*, the first book set in winter. They become the lead characters, the first to stay in the houseboat, *Fram*, the first to sail a sledge to the North Pole. They subsequently appear in *CC, BS, PP, PM* and *GN*.

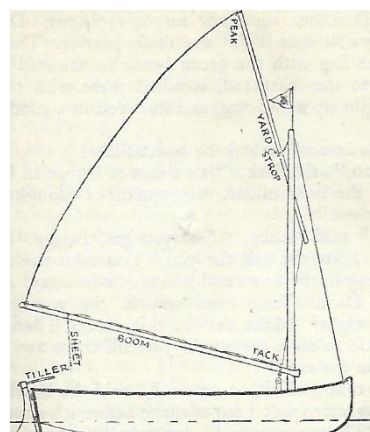
At the start of *PM*, the Ds expect this holiday to be all about learning to sail in *Scarab*, their new boat. ‘You really ought to read the sailing book, too,’ said Dick. ‘Perhaps we’ll be launching *Scarab* tonight, and it’ll be awful to make mistakes with Nancy and Peggy watching’ (*PM* Ch. 1). But that’s not all. Dick knows that mining is taking place in a big way and expects to be involved with the assays. ‘How are you getting on with the mine?’ asked Dick. ‘Not so bad. We’ve cut into the vein at eleven places now, and got a lot of samples. Jim tells me you’re going to give me a hand with the assays’ (*PM* Ch. 2).

But, although we are primed to expect a story of sailing and mining, it is all upended, and the appearance of the Great Aunt changes the story to the one we know, with the Ds living in the Dogs’ Home.

Professor Callum

In a first read of the books, Professor Callum, the father of Dick and Dot, seems almost a footnote. He is a university professor, an archaeologist. He and his wife live in London, it seems (Dot was seen off from Euston). The Ds cannot stay at Dixon’s Farm ‘because it was full up with other visitors, and Professor Callum had to be busy for a fortnight in London correcting examination papers’ (*PM* Ch. 1).

Then, also in chapter 1, ‘Visitors Expected’, comes a very important sentence, when Nancy and Peggy ‘were talking of the boat which Professor Callum had asked their uncle [Jim] to order for Dick and Dorothea...’ The inference is that Professor Callum knows Uncle Jim well enough to write and ask him to



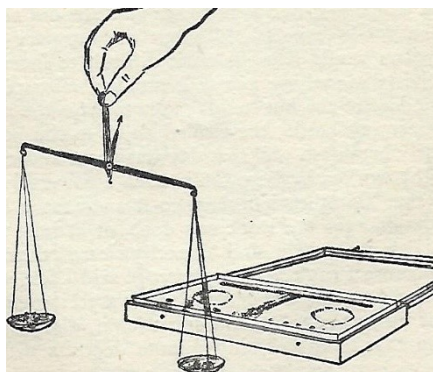
order a boat to be made. Equally, Uncle Jim trusts Professor Callum to pay for the boat, as he has gone ahead with the order. But is AR planning on bringing the Callum parents to the lake? In a letter from Mrs Callum we read that: ‘...their father was nearly through with his examination papers and looking

forward to coming north and being given sailing lessons by the captain and mate of the *Scarab*' (*PM* Ch. 26). So, in addition to the Swallows, Uncle Jim and Mrs Blackett, we have Professor and Mrs Callum coming north and expecting to learn to sail.

The S, A and Ds mining company

The mining company first appears in *PP* with an attempt to find gold (which turns out to be copper). In *PM*, AR picks up the mining theme. Whilst no mining takes place in this book there are plenty of hints of mining to come.

Once we have established that Dick is there not just to sail *Scarab*, but to help with the mining assays, we learn that he is keen to get started. 'When are we going to start the assays?' asked Dick. 'Working in the houseboat tomorrow,' said Timothy. 'The day after tomorrow I'm going up to the mine. We might get at the assays the day after that' (*PM* Ch. 2). We learn that Uncle Jim, Timothy and Slater Bob have teamed up to mine for copper, and also that Dick is knowledgeable enough to contribute in his own right. 'You've forgotten the main thing you're here for. What about the mine? What about the stinks that have got to be done? Timothy and Dick were to get them done before Uncle Jim came back...' says Nancy (*PM* Ch. 9).



When Timothy needs supplies from Uncle Jim's study, the crucial information for the reader in Timothy's message is that Dick understands what everything is. 'Read it aloud,' said Dorothea. He read: 'Ready for Dick any time he can come. But I can't get on without some things from Jim's study. Acids: hydrochloric, nitric and sulphuric. Tincture of ammonia. Test-tubes. Two small crucibles. Pipette (two if he's got them). Spirit lamp. Couldn't get one in the village, but if Jim hasn't got one I think I can manage with the Primus. Filter. Filter papers. Litmus. Chemical scales. Volume II of Duncan's *Quantitative Analysis*. Dick'll know where they are...' 'Good,' said Dick' (*PM* Ch. 18). Dick will probably want to spend more time in the mine, in the company of the adult natives, than sailing with the others.

The appearance of *Scarab*

Scarab makes its first appearance in *PM*, and is still there in *CN*, with Nancy teaching the Ds how to capsize and right the boat. Introducing a third boat to the plot is a big thing. After

all, with the Swallows away, the Ds could simply have borrowed *Swallow* to sail in. But AR chose to add *Scarab*. Building a new boat is not something done for just one sailing holiday. Surely AR had in mind adding another book, maybe several more books, in which the Ds sail in *Scarab*? Well, the importance of *Scarab* to the story is set out straight away: 'They were talking of the boat which Professor Callum had asked their uncle to order for Dick and Dorothea, and were hoping it was ready so that its crew could get the hang of it before the Swallows turned up, who were coming in a fortnight's time to stay at Holly Howe on the other side of the lake' (*PM* Ch.1).

Apart from the trip to the houseboat, where the Great Aunt is 'rescued', the Ds do little sailing on the lake, a contrast to the promise held out at the start of the book.

The weather

Easily missed is an obscure clue to what AR might have had in mind for *No. 13*, which is the weather. In *PP*, the summer is hot and dry. There is a drought which leads to the events of the fires. In *PM*, however, the summer is wet, with lots of rain, so that the water level in the lake will be high, good for sailing. Nancy notes that there will be 'nothing for [Colonel Jolys] to do this year,' she said. 'Too much rain...' (*PM* Ch. 2). 'Just look at the floor. If it goes on raining we may be forced to go back to Beckfoot...' says Dot (*PM* Ch. 27). 'Then [Dick] remembered that after all that rain *Scarab* would need baling' (*PM* Ch. 25). In all there are 38 references to the rain.

The legacy of the Norfolk Broads

The *PM* plot has nothing to do with the stories in *CC* and *BS*, yet AR makes several references to the Ds' experiences in the Broads, suggesting he really loved his stories and time there. So it is consistent that in *CN* he brings Joe and Pete to the lake.

The relevant passages are:

- 'They had often sailed before, both on the lake and on the Broads,' (*PM* Ch. 1).
- 'He could row very well with two oars, but sculling over the stern with one ... Well, he had seen Tom do it in Titmouse ...' (*PM* Ch. 9).
- 'Dorothea knew the signs. "It'll be all right," she whispered. "You've sailed Titmouse. And Teasel. It'll be just the same."' (*PM* Ch. 14).
- 'She thought of her old story of the Outlaw of the Broads...' (*PM* Ch. 14).
- 'He remembered the quick swinging motion with which he had seen Tom Dudgeon bale his punt.' (*PM* Ch. 17)
- 'Though perhaps Nancy or Tom Dudgeon would have done a little better at the tiller, Dick was doing pretty well' (*PM* Ch. 20).

The clues for the *No.13* plot

So, what can we learn from all this of AR's intent for *No.13*?

It will commence 'next week', when the Swallows arrive. (But will it be all of the Swallows?)

Dick and Dot will be the lead characters.

Joe and Pete will be there (but not just as tourists to be shown the places everyone knows).

The 'natives' will play a larger part in the story: Professor and Mrs Callum, Mrs Walker, Uncle Jim, Mrs Blackett, Timothy and Slater Bob. Will the mine be successful? Uncle Jim has been unlucky with mining so far.

Dick, although joining in some sailing, will likely be more involved with the mine, so maybe Dot takes *Scarab* out with Joe and Pete joining her?

We will get to see *Swallow*, *Amazon* and *Scarab* in the water for at least one race or maybe even a war.

The lake water is high due to the very wet summer. Where does all this water flow to? In the novels, we've never been to the south of the lake where presumably a river flows out, towards Morecombe Bay and the sea.

Predicting the unpredictable

We can predict a lot, but let's not forget AR's penchant for going off at a tangent, of introducing something totally unpredictable into the plot. Can we predict the unpredictable? Of course not, but, armed with the above research, and a bit of guesswork, we could come up with plot arcs in the manner of AR.

What follows are my thoughts on potential unpredictable elements to add to *CN*.

Take the first five chapters of *CN* as read, except that John and Susan are not there. How might the story run?

'But where is John?' asks Dick.

Nancy's face turns glum. 'John has gone to join his father, as his ship is in port. You know how he wants to join the Navy.' 'And what of Susan, I can't see her?' asks Dorothea. Peggy jumps in. 'Susan's gone native. Says she's too old to play at camping and cooking.' 'She's with Mrs Walker', adds Nancy. 'She says Mother needs her help with Bridget who is growing up, and anyway she'll join us for tea on the island some time.' 'For tea?' adds Roger. 'So how are we supposed to manage on the island, even if the natives will let us go there? Someone else will have to do the cooking.' Roger always thought of his food.

Dick, Uncle Jim, Timothy and Slater Bob spend lots of time at the mine, but something goes wrong. 'The bell rang loudly and Peggy rushed to switch it off. 'It's Sappho,' she shouts, forgetting she can be heard now the bell wasn't ringing. After unfurl-

ing the message, she continues: 'It's from Dick, trouble with natives, so they're coming back.'

Grim-faced natives sit in the parlour. 'We've been jumped,' says Uncle Jim. 'We were attacked by a group of men telling us to cease mining as it is now their mine.' 'But they can't do that,' exclaims Nancy. 'Jib-booms and bobstays, we'll jolly well go and claim it back!' 'Not that easy,' replies Timothy, 'it seems we had a problem with our mine registration. Their document looks valid.' Eventually, the natives decide they have to go to London to file a challenge to the jumpers' claim. Uncle Jim, Timothy and Dick set off to London, while Professor Callum lets them stay at his home. The last thing Dick had expected was to be home for the holidays.

The lake overflows. For this plot, let's add a river from our lake to Morecombe Bay, one that is navigable in high water, with stretches of white water.

Dot, Titty, Roger, Joe and Pete are sailing, in a strong wind, in *Scarab*. Checking out the lake to the south, they are in danger of being dragged into the river.



'We'd better turn back,' says Titty, 'the current is taking us toward the river.' Dorothea, who is at the tiller, shouts 'ready about!' and turns *Scarab* onto the starboard tack, but the wind is in an awkward direction and they struggle to make any headway against the flow of the water, which is running faster the closer they get to the outflow from the lake. *Scarab* slips down into the river, losing some of the wind near Bigland. 'We're going backwards,' shouts Joe. 'Dot, move, let me take the helm.' Joe and Pete are more used to sailing in moving water. Joe deftly manages to turn *Scarab* around. At least she is now facing downstream, where they were moving at speed.

The mainsail is stowed, while Joe and Pete take command, taking them safely over the small rapids of white water ('look out, it's Victoria Falls!' yells Titty) and onward until they hit tidal water. 'We're moving even faster,' says Dorothea, looking at the land rushing by. 'The tide must be ebbing,' says Joe, 'it's taking us out to sea!' 'Bigland is over there,' says Titty, 'if only one of us could get there and phone the others. Joe, can we tie up *Scarab*?' Joe looks stern, though at the same time he is pleased to be in charge of the boat. 'No chance,' he says, 'current's too strong and we can't see a safe harbour.'

'I'll go', says Roger, and before anyone can stop him he dives into the water, drifting until he manages to reach the shore, where he can stand up. 'Roger, you reckless AB, what do you

Continued on page 21

think you're doing? Susan will be angry', shouts Titty. But Roger is having the time of his life. 'Don't worry', he yells, as he wades out of the water and into the field, to the astonished look of the sheep there. 'I'll find some help, phone the others.' And with that, he disappears out of sight as the boat careers on, round a bend.

Titty thinks of the time the Swallows went to sea, all the way to Holland. Are they about to repeat that? Where will they end up? Ireland?

But no. As the bay widens into what seems like a massive sea, Joe orders the mainsail up again. 'We can take a starboard tack,' he says, 'I'm going to try and take us to land.'

What Joe doesn't know is that Morecombe Bay has a fairly narrow channel surrounded by shallow water that become flats at low tide, just like Breydon Water. Within a hundred yards of land, *Scarab* suddenly halts, throwing everyone forward, the wind on the sail pushing the bows into the sand. 'Quick, get the mainsail down,' orders Joe. As the tide ebbs, they soon see they are beached and can walk on the sand. Joe and Pete stay with *Scarab*, while Titty and Dorothea wade, then walk, to the

land, find a house with a phone and call Beckfoot to ask for help. It is late evening, and at Beckfoot everyone was wondering what has happened to *Scarab*. After the phone calls from Roger and Joe, Mrs Blackett, Timothy, Nancy and Peggy set off in Rattletrap to fetch them.

Have we unearthed clues to *No.13*? After the exit of the Great Aunt, there are five whole weeks of summer holiday still to enjoy. Captain Flint is coming home and the Swallows are about to arrive. 'We'll get things moving without wasting a minute', says Nancy.'



(Illustrations from *PM*, *PP* and *CN*.)

A letter from TARS UK's overseas coordinator

Kryisia Clack is the Overseas Coordinator for TARS, with the task of maintaining links between the various parts of TARS. Some of us 'met' her last year at Zoom sessions. Our new Secretary, Gill Metz, recently received this letter from her, and shares it with us here.

Hi All,

Firstly, I do apologise for my long silence. COVID finally caught up with me which was not too bad but the brain fog or 'brain frog' as I mistakenly called it one time and the fatigue have taken a bit longer to recover from.

You will by now have read *Signals* and seen the report on the Literary Weekend. It was touch and go whether I would test negative in time but I made it to Oxford and largely survived on adrenaline. We had impressive speakers right through but, for me, David Wood who had worked on the first production of *Swallows and Amazons* stole the show. He had us entranced with his memories of the filming and the conversations he had with Evgenia. It was fascinating to hear how he had negotiated with her and developed a working relationship. Danny Rurlander, author of *Spylark*, also proved to be very interesting with his knowledge of the Lake District, his knowledge of the *S&A* books and how they had both inspired his writing. I hadn't even read his book at that point! It was disappointing that we could not have you join us on Zoom but we do not seem to have reached that technical stage yet for a number of reasons.

I was pleased to see that the latest issue of *Signals* included instructions on how to complete the online renewals. I hope these are helpful. I know a lot of TARS have found it difficult.

It is good to know that you can restart activities again and meet together again a little more frequently. Northern Region have not held an event in person yet but our committee was able to meet last week. The business side got sorted very quickly and we enjoyed the social side very much. We were sorry to set off for home but as we had met near Windermere, I took the opportunity to drive through the length of the Lakes and took the long way home. The hills were beautiful and the woods by the roadside were full of bluebells. The Board and the national sub-committees will also be getting together for real in the coming months. In a few weeks a group of TARS will be camping in Norfolk and then the IAGM is to take place in Suffolk in August. It is so uplifting to have events happening again and I hope nothing else develops to stop them taking place.

Please let me know if there are any issues you need addressing, representing or if there is anything you might like me to know. I always enjoy hearing from all of you.

Kryisia

The AusTARS Cup: a letter from Brian Hopton

Last year's AusTARS Cup recipient, Brian Hopton, wrote to David Stamp to thank him for the Slater Bob coaster which he had received from AusTARS as the permanent memento of his award. We reproduce his letter here.

David, whose sense of humour is always active, replied in kind. Brian also sent a package of material for AusTARS to use, consisting of some of his original playscripts written for past Southern region and IAGM meetings and a DVD of performances of his plays. These items are now included in the AusTARS Library and are available for borrowing by members. VicTARS will be viewing the DVD and investigating the plays at their coming July gathering.

DEAR DAVID

THANK YOU AND AUSTRALIA FOR THE ENTIRELY SURPRISING ARRIVAL OF 'SLATER BOB', I CAN NOT THINK OF A MORE SUITABLE GIFT OR AWARD, I THINK OF IT AS BOTH.

MY WIFE'S BROTHER WAS A 'TEN POUND POM IN 1968 AND STILL LIVES THERE HAPPILY.

YEARS AGO, WATCHING A TEST MATCH ON TELEVISION, I SAW IN A CROWD OF AUSSIES, PLACARDS BEING WAVED WITH THE DEPICTION 'CONVICTS ONE POMS NIL', SHOWING THE ABILITY TO LAUGH AT EACH OTHER WITHOUT RANCOUR.

I LEARNT A LOT THAT DAY.

I THOUGHT IT A GOOD IDEA TO GIVE SOMETHING IN RETURN, SO WITH ENORMOUS HELP FROM MY OLD ARMY BUDDY ALAN HAKIM, HERE IS A DVD OF OUR FIRST PLAY (1998) PLUS UP-TO-DATE ADDITIONS, APOLOGIES FOR SOME POOR QUALITY. ODDLY THE PLAY OPENS WITH THE S&A'S AND SQUASHY HAT ON THE WAY TO SEE 'SLATER BOB. ASSUMING YOU NOW HAVE ELECTRICITY IN OZ, 'BRITISH HUMOUR', PLEASE USE IT FOR ALL MEMBERS, AS YOU WISH.

THAT IS THE DVD, NOT THE ELECTRICITY!

YOURS IN TARS

BRIAN HOPTON

A trip to Bendigo on behalf of VicTARS and Misse Lee

Nancy Endersby-Harshman

A winter trip to Bendigo was mooted by VicTARS just before the big cold front hit southern Australia in June. Sensible VicTARS cancelled the outing, but as I had already booked some accommodation, I decided to brave it out. If too cold to venture out, I could at least have a solo knitting retreat at my motel. Luck, however, was on my side and the Saturday in question was fairly dry and temperatures felt marginally warmer than at home. I stayed near Lake Weeroona which is a man-made, ornamental lake constructed near the old market garden region established by the Chinese people who arrived in Bendigo during the Gold Rush. Lake Weeroona is a stop on the route of the vintage talking tram, so I was able to use this wonderful mode of transport to visit the attractions of Bendigo.



Ingredients from around the Bendigo region: Newbridge Honey, Killiecrankie Shiraz, Lake Tyrell Sea Salt and Castlemaine Rock! Being the sole representative of TARS there on the day, I was obliged to sample the wares thoroughly on behalf of Roger and the organisation. I also emulated Arthur Ransome who liked to visit the bookstalls along the Seine in Paris. Bendigo has at least two second-hand bookshops which can fulfil this function. They both have an extensive range, part of which made it home in my luggage.

An unexpected point of interest and something completely alien to Ransome's world was the Elvis Presley exhibition (*Elvis Direct from Graceland*) that is currently showing at the Bendigo Art Gallery until 17 July. While I didn't attend the exhibition, it was fun to see representations of Elvis in many of the shop windows around the town. One of the vintage trams had been converted to the *Shake Rattle and Roll* tram in which patrons can drink cocktails and dance to the music of Elvis throughout the journey!



Pilgrimage to the culture of *Misse Lee* was the first item on the agenda as I visited the Chinese Gardens and Kuan Yin temple of the Golden Dragon Museum. The museum houses the oldest imperial dragon in the world, Sun Loong, who danced in a parade in 1901 for Australia's Federation and in the Centenary of Federation Parade in 2001 as well as participating in many Easter Festivals over the years. Sun Loong has now retired from dancing to rest in the museum and a younger dragon, Dai Gum Loong, has taken over for active service. Dai Gum Loong is 125 metres long and is the longest imperial dragon in the world; a much bigger boy than the tiny dragon made by the Swallows and Amazons at Misse Lee's yamen.

Roger would have had to run fast with the pearl to lure Dai Gum Loong through the streets of Dragon Town.

Speaking of Roger, my second pilgrimage was to *Indulge*, a Belgian chocolaterie, famous for its chocolates flavoured with local in-

Time soon ran out on Saturday and I caught the tram back to the motel in time for a Zoom session with the stay-at-home TARS. Jan entertained us all with *Misse Lee* activities and it was fun to report on my adventures to those who preferred to stay warm. On Sunday, the weather closed in, but not before I had enjoyed a walk around the Bendigo Botanic Gardens and a tour of the historic Bendigo Pottery. There is so much to see and do in Bendigo. Maybe we'll get there together on a TARS outing when the weather gets warmer.

On the next page are some more photos I took as I walked around Bendigo.

Continued on page 24





'Red Slippers and Black Swans' Update from New England

Catherine Lamont

You may remember the research on 'the Australian corner of Captain Flint's Trunk' I mentioned in an earlier article ('Black swans and petticoats in Captain Flint's trunk: invitation to collaborate in research', *FS* vol. 23 no. 2). Well, it is (or rather they are, because a number of articles have resulted) about to be published... two and a half years after I started. As the research was supported by the Red Slipper Grant, and I can only receive the grant once I've published it, I will be doubly relieved to see it in print.

I eventually called the *Mixed Moss* article 'Swallow Down Under'. It provides a sort of backdrop for the back story of Mary Walker based on what Ransome and his grandparents actually said about this 'romantic, shadowy' country we are so privileged to live on. An article for *Signals* ('Ransome Down Under') will essentially be an updated version of the list of the Australian/NZ references; however, the biggest (and most demanding) publication is a 32-page A5 'Mary Walker Tour Guide', which will be uploaded to the Online Supplement at the same time.

I would love someone to write a little article on the Australian/NZ background for *The Outlaw*, but I'm not sure that I will have the time. I've recommended the *Billabong* books of one of Australia's own writers, Mary Grant Bruce, for those interested in what it might have been like for a girl to grow up on an Australian sheep station at the turn of the century, as Mary Walker may have done. Perhaps someone would like to write a review of those books for *The Outlaw*? I would be very happy to share the TARS articles with anyone interested in checking

them before publication or adapting them for the juniors' magazine.

While Covid certainly curtailed some of my research activities, the main reason for my delay was exploring the question 'is it possible to edit *Mixed Moss* from Australia?' As you'll know if you've read *Signals*, it was only possible for a person like me to do this for one and a half editions (essentially, while I was technically unemployed!). It was an amazing experience, and I learned many important things about both my strengths and limitations (especially a difficulty in asking for help), and I hope I will always be grateful for it.

Ironically, I've been reconnected both with my passion for writing and with a topic I describe as 'the art and science of being human' (which some people call psychology) as a result of editing *Mixed Moss*. I've been given government support to start a 'creative bibliotherapy' business that will be based on the stories I am writing about my 'adventures in psychology' (as a student, client, admin assistant, researcher and 'psychobabbler' in TARS). All I have to do is write them in a publishable form. Do I have what it takes? I'm not really sure that I do, but – just as Ransome (and Evgenia) did in 1928 – I think it's worth giving it a try. Wish me 'bon courage', as I wish for all of you.

Over and out for now (and Swallows and Amazons – and Black Swans – for ever!)

Answers to quiz questions (page 8)

1. Thirty and a half pounds.
2. On an old wherry at Oulton Broad.
3. They wrote backwards, so the message needed to be read in a mirror.
4. Three blasts on the foghorn.
5. The Sunk Lightship.
6. Cold tea.
7. The butcher was going to Craig Gill. Miss Thornton, with whom the GA had a long-standing feud, lived there.
8. *The Big Six*. Bob witnessed George Owden in Potter Heigham.
9. *Six Weeks in Russia* (1919).
10. Aluminium pots or pans.
11. 'Barbecued billygoats!' Also: 'Jibbooms and bobstays. Ten thousand million cheers! Shiver my timbers! KEEP STILL, PEGGY! It's the Swallows. Here.'
12. Roy.

NO HOLDS BARRED

Evgenia Ransome's diaries

1927-1933



Edited by Margaret Ratcliffe



Payments for *No Holds Barred* can be made (preferably) by cheque, or by direct bank transfer, as before.

(1) Send your subscription cheque, drawn on a UK bank, to Alan Hakim, 7 Elm Road, Havant, Hants PO9 2SZ, payable to *Amazon Publications*, using the slip overleaf. This is the most reliable method.

(2) Some members say they never write cheques nowadays. For them we can accept a BACS payment to the Amazon Publications account at Santander Bank, Sort Code 09-01-55 Account Number 85772088. It is vital that you put your name and TARS membership number on your payment, and notify me (preferably by the slip overleaf) that you have done this. We should also greatly appreciate a slightly higher contribution to cover our extra handling cost.

(3) Overseas Tars can send a direct payment to the bank, but will need extra references – BIC: ABBYGB2LXXX IBAN:GB20ABBY09015585772088. However, this may incur disproportionate bank charges. In countries with TARS Co-ordinators, they will accept payments in local currency, to consolidate subscriptions into a single transaction.

(4) Finally, overseas Tars with no co-ordinator can use the PayPal facility on the TARS web site. <https://payment.arthur-ransome.org/> but bear in mind that they charge a small extra fee. Also you need to be registered to use this Members' Area of the site.

Above all, don't forget that if you use any method other than (1) you still need to send me all the details on the slip overleaf.



AMAZON PUBLICATIONS

April 2022

Amazon Publications has, if anything, been busier than ever during the pandemic. Working from home is our default method. *Ransome Centre Stage* was a major item in 2021 and in 2022 we are working on several publications. Don't panic! Only one is a full-length book for subscribers. *No Holds Barred* is described in the latest *Signals* (p.16) and you are now invited to subscribe below. Evgenia holds nothing back!

Amazon Publications have always used the motto "To each according to their love of Ransome, from each according to their means and enthusiasm." The more subscriptions we receive before publication, the better the book we can produce. Regrettably, nowadays the uncontrollable element of our costs is postage, which keeps going up. This year, we suggest a contribution of £12 for UK members, and sadly £16 for those overseas. Just a few sample diary entries from Evgenia to whet your appetite:

From **Manchester Misery**: 5thFeb, 1930. "... looked at a house for sale in Mauldeth Road. Went home more depressed and undecided than before about moving to Manchester."

From **In Sickness...** 3rdMarch, 1930: "Finished a fortnight thyroid gland treatment."

From **Pastoral Life...** 22ndJan, 1931: "Much enjoyed the Italian marionettes."

From **The Scribes...** 29thMarch, 1932 "stand up row with Ernest because, exhausted by hanging about waiting, we got into the car he meant Dora to go back to Aleppo in..."

First Broads Cruise, 1931 The contrast between Arthur's log entries (extracts included) and Evgenia's diary is fascinating.

Across the sea to Ireland is supplemented by Will Peters (Jnr.)'s memories of his childhood in Dublin, his father's relationship with Arthur and Evgenia's call for him to visit Arthur in hospital in 1966, hoping to stimulate his Russian memories.

So much more; so little space...

We intend to launch *No Holds Barred* at Shotley so do, please, subscribe now so that we have an idea of numbers for the print run. This will be limited; it has to be: Amazon Publications doesn't carry excess baggage. We exist solely for you. Use us!

To end on a rather pessimistic note. This could well be the last ever Amazon Publication. Surely that would be a shame! Unless someone comes forward to fill the not-too-onerous admin role. Everything else is in place and works well, but we need someone to deal directly with subscribers and administer the finances and banking etc. Can you make us optimistic?

✂ *For payment methods, see overleaf* AP.Hakim@btinternet.com

TO: Alan Hakim, 7 Elm Road, Havant, Hants. PO9 2SZ

Either I enclose a subscription cheque of £..... (payable to *Amazon Publications*)

or I have transferred direct to the bank £.....

towards the publication of **No Holds Barred**

Name as you wish it to appear in the List of Subscribers:

.....

Address to which the book should be sent:

.....

.....

Membership No.....

E-mail and/or telephone (essential, so that we can notify you if the project changes in any way):

.....

4/22

We apologise for the late appearance of this issue, caused by illness and other matters beyond our control.

WANTED! Articles for the next issue of Furthest South

Send your articles to

Jan Allen (jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com) (Australia) by 30 September, please.

Furthest South is prepared and produced for AusTARS and TARSNZ by the AusTARS Committee

Editing: Jan Allen and Phoebe Palmieri

Desktop publishing: Phoebe Palmieri