



Furthest South



Volume 22 Number 4



Newsletter of the Arthur Ransome Society in Australia and New Zealand



Melbourne's peregrine falcons

David Stamp

You will remember how, in *Pigeon Post*, the good news of the finding of 'gold' is sent to Beckfoot by pigeon (Homer). The beginning of his journey was one to rouse the adrenaline in both the pigeon and the human watchers.

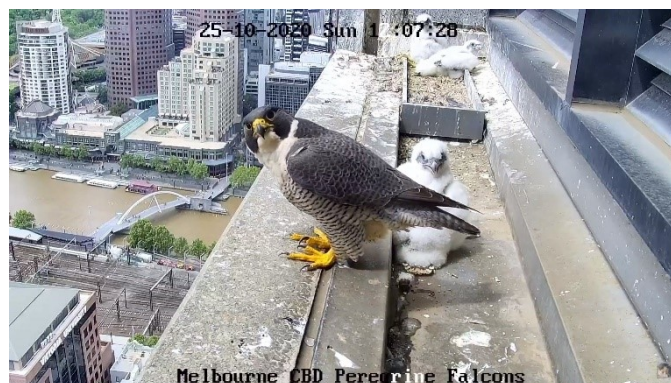
The pigeon flew far across the Topps, before beginning to rise. Then, making a wide circle in the air, he came back high over their heads, higher, higher... Far, far above the soaring Homer, they could all see a tiny speck in that brilliant sky that almost blinded them. A tiny black speck, dropping, dropping, nearer... hovering... dropping again, while Homer the pigeon climbed through the air to meet it...

But now it seemed that Homer had seen his danger. He was climbing no longer, but coming down again, in queer zigzag flights. The hawk suddenly dropped like a stone...

The hawk was rising again, flying above the pigeon who was now not far above the ground. The two birds were close together. The hawk swooped. Homer seemed to slip sideways in the air and, a second later, had plunged into the green tops of the trees.

To smaller animals and birds, the peregrine falcons are the terror of the skies; if Homer had been near 367 Collins Street, Melbourne, he might not have been so lucky. But to us humans they are beings of beauty, worthy of our admiration and understanding.

In common with most birds of prey (raptors) the falcons nest



Melbourne CBD Peregrine Falcons

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/367collinsfalcons/photos>

well above the ground, and in Melbourne's case a falcon pair has been nesting in a gutter near the top of the 38-storey building at 367 Collins Street since 1991, and possibly longer (I am not sure when No 367 was built). The birds chose their nesting

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/367collinsfalcons/media>

site well, as, facing south-east it collects early morning sun and avoids afternoon heat. In that year a volunteer watching group, the Victorian Peregrine Project, was formed, and in 1992 its members installed a wooden nesting box, after having noted that there was no hatching in the previous year. It has been observed that peregrines appreciate good nests, such as in cliff face recesses, tree hollows and other birds' abandoned nests, but are not good at building them. They have to learn the hard way that found nests are not all suitable, particularly if not well drained. If nesting on gravel or debris, they seem to be happy with settling on a scraped depression.

Since 2017 cameras have been installed for live streaming of nesting activity at No 367, and this year (2020) the watching group has installed a new nesting box, filled with gravel and with improved drainage, to replace the 1992 one which was disintegrating. The birds nested once more, producing three eggs, from which three healthy chicks hatched on Friday 2 October. Six weeks later, on Friday 13 November, the chicks departed. A live stream video link has been maintained by volunteers and enabled around the clock observation of the birds as the eggs hatched and the chicks were fed by the male, while the female protected the young from wind and rain. The fluffy white chicks grew very quickly and finally developed dark feathers with extra large area to help with early flight. As the birds age these feathers will soon moult, to be replaced by smaller and stronger ones, suitable for faster flight.

When mature, peregrines have been recorded diving (known as

stooping) at more than 300 km/h - useful when on the hunt for prey. The falcons are exemplars of pretty nifty design: to allow breathing and seeing at high speeds the bird's nostrils and eyes are well adapted to suit the conditions. The velocity air pressure when stooping is very high, and the nostrils are shaped to slow down air entering the lungs, and the eyes can resist the air pressure whilst still providing sharp and continuous vision. The bird's shape and plumage suit high speeds and manoeuvrability, and whilst it has some enemies, they are few.

I am preparing these notes as a non-ornithologist, with access to a whole host of web-based sources, in not all of which I have total faith, although there is a lot of good information; please excuse any errors and the many omissions.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/367collinsfalcons/photos>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/367collinsfalcons/>

There are many falcon projects with webcams; here are a few of them.

Orange campus, Charles Sturt University

<http://www.csu.edu.au/special/falconcam/Streams/camera-one.htm>

The Wakefield Project, York, UK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sDVUK5xxTY>

University of Illinois, Chicago

<https://today.uic.edu/uic-falconcam>

Further thoughts on Dick's camera

Linda Phillips

I very much enjoyed the article 'Dick's Camera' in the latest *Signals*. It brought to mind a few thoughts about films in those days which, if I may, I'd like to share.

The featured camera in the article, the Voigtlander Bessa, used 120 film. The article also mentions, as a possible alternative, the Kodak Junior 620 (not 6 twenty). I remember my uncle having one of these, brought back from Germany where he served in British Forces, and I always imagined Dick's camera to be this. The 'Junior' was, despite its name, a good camera with an aperture range, manual focus and a T setting to keep the shutter open, which Dick used.

One of my first cameras as a child used 620 film. From 1901 to the 1960s 120 was the norm, while 620 film is the same size, but wound onto a tighter and hence smaller spool. This enabled a smaller camera to be made: 620 was introduced in 1932 with the 'Junior' being one of the first cameras



Photo: <http://www.optiksammlung.de/Kodak/Junior620.html>

to use it. Despite the convenient size, it never replaced 120 in popularity.

Other possibilities include a camera with 127 film; this film was introduced in 1912 though it really took off in the 1960s. In turn it was replaced with the ubiquitous 35 mm, which was around in the 1930s but became the de facto standard in the 1970s.

Dick certainly used 120 or 620 film, as he developed what was called a 'contact print', where the negative was pressed against a sheet of photographic paper and exposed to light, then to developer and fixer. The film shows the correct way of doing this, with the sheets clamped together and Dick exposing it to the sun by the window. It was post-war before photographic enlargers became widespread. Dick would be unlikely to have had access to one, and this is also why most old photographs are contact print size 6x9 cm.

In the 60s as a young kid I was treated to a camera (620 film, then a 127 camera and much later, 35 mm) and a darkroom developing set including an enlarger. It was all black and white, of course, but Dick would have shared the thrill of working in a darkroom in very dim red light, stirring the developing photo in the developer solution and watching the photograph appear!

If you've read this far, thanks for indulging me with some memories (assisted by Wikipedia for some of the detail!).

Book review: *Swallows and Armenians* by Karen Babayan

Reviewed by Fran Kell

It is to be expected that readers of the *Swallows and Amazons* books would assume that all the children in the books are English. After all, they live and go to school in England, do English sorts of activities, and, in most of the books, do these activities in England. However, the Altounyan family on which Ransome based the Walker children was of mixed English and Armenian heritage, and in their early lives the children lived mainly among Armenians in Aleppo, in Syria.

Karen Babayan is herself of mixed Armenian and English heritage. She draws on her personal knowledge of Armenian culture, as well as a range of resources to offer new perspectives to our understanding of the background of the Altounyan children, in five stories. These stories are fiction, but use real people as their characters. They are set at different times over a period of 90 years.

In these stories Babayan explores being 'other' in terms of the obvious, such as food, appearance, language, or mispronunciation of people's personal names, as well as more subtle differences in cultural knowledge and understanding or simply a sense of being out of place.

The first two stories include family outings, the first in 1928, when the Altounyan family were staying with the children's English grandfather at Lanehead, Coniston Water, for the summer holidays, the second in 1932, when Arthur and Evgenia Ransome were staying with the Altounyans in Aleppo. Over



the years, many people have sought a reason for the falling-out of Arthur Ransome and Ernest Altounyan. It certainly seems to stem from that visit to Aleppo. The explanations most commonly put forward are that the Ransomes wanted to adopt Titty, or that Arthur thought the children should be in English boarding schools rather than home-schooled in Aleppo. In this story, Babayan offers another possible reason for the falling-out which is based on Armenian history and the political situation in Syria at the time.

The stories are preceded by a Foreword and a Preface, each written by an academic, plus a justification by the author. The book ends with a Glossary; Author's notes about Armenia and Armenians; the Altounyans in Aleppo; and Arthur Ransome and the Altounyans; a List of Works, which are monochrome photographs through the book; Bibliography and Acknowledgements.

I enjoyed reading this book, and, rereading it while preparing this review, I found the stories very thought-provoking; so much so that this review had got itself well on the way to being a full-length article before I remembered that my job here is to encourage others to read it without giving away very much.

Reference

Babayan, K. (2019). *Swallows and Armenians*. Leeds: Wild Pansy Press.

The importance of fairy tales

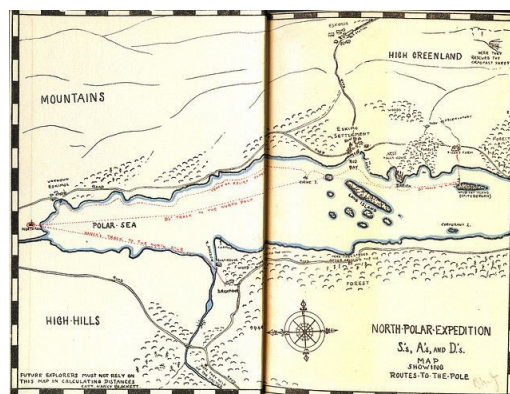
Glenn Kuring

This subject was introduced briefly at a recent southern hemisphere TARS Zoom session. I'm sure other readers have opinions about it. Your thoughts will be welcome for the next issue of Furthest South. -Ed.

I think that fairy tales are a very important aspect of growing up. Fairy tales get children to step out of their environment and dream about other places, peoples, occurrences, etc. This can activate their imaginations which, especially as they get older, can stimulate their creative thought processes as well as providing them with a wider world view. All this helps them to 'think outside the box'.

However, I would suggest that it is not just fairy tales that give this but any well-constructed fiction, designed to transport the reader to another place, to put them in someone else's shoes and to be inside someone else's head. It is these sorts of books that really help children grow, not just their 'brain power' intelligence but also their emotional intelligence. Further, it is

not just fairy tales or well-constructed fiction novels that help children grow in this way, it is also some films and even some non-fiction books. However, none do as good a job of letting the imagination roam as a good fiction novel does, especially those that are based in real places like the *S&A* series.



From the Co-ordinators

Welcome to new members

Membership numbers have risen recently in both New Zealand and Australia!

We extend a warm welcome to new TARS Bill Dashfield, from Wellington, NZ, Gill Metz and Dawn Ciechomski, from central Victoria, and Cam Cowled, from northern Victoria, Australia. You can read about their interests and backgrounds in this issue. Our recruits have already commenced their active involvement with our program.

New VicTAR Cam Cowled, a retired secondary teacher from northern Victoria, describes himself as a retired yachting and maker of model boats and yachts. He is planning to build a Pacer dinghy in 2021. We hope Lake Eppalock and Cairn Curran Reservoirs continue to fill up for him as they are both currently at only half their capacity.

2020 AusTARS cup winner announced

TARS UK has agreed with our suggestion to bring the awarding of the AusTARS Cup in line with the current year. Thus, for 2020, two awards have been made. Simon Horn has already been awarded the Cup for 2019, whilst the winner for 2020 has just been announced and awarded the Cup. Congratulations to Paul Wilson, from Scotland! Paul's work for TARS in various roles, including as editor of *Signals* in recent years, has been recognised by TARS. Paul will hold the Cup for six months, until the 2021 winner is announced, and he also receives from AusTARS his Slater Bob Lakeland slate memento coaster to keep.

Furthest South back copies available

Some printed issues of our newsletter from previous years are available for distribution. Issues available are: 2014, issues 1,3,4; 2015, issues 1-4; 2017, issues 2,3; 2018, issues 1,2.

If you are interested, contact Jan Allen, AusTARS Secretary.

Trans-Tasman zoom sessions to continue

With these video gatherings being well-supported by members in both countries, it is planned that these will continue into 2021. We hope to continue to invite guest TARS from overseas regions join us at times. You can find a report on our sessions so far on page 9.

Life members

Did you know that in our history AusTARS has two members who have been awarded Life Membership of AusTARS for their untiring work on behalf of members over many years? In 2006, AusTARS recognised the contribution made since AusTARS' inception by Janet (Jan) Allen in awarding her Life

Membership, whilst in 2015 David Bamford, who had also served in several roles for AusTARS, was similarly honoured.

AusTARS charter

Our mission statement/operating system is included for your information on page 26.

TARS (UK) data protection and privacy policy

This document is now incorporated within AusTARS Policies as an adjunct to our Privacy Policy.

Subscription renewals: AusTARS

Yes, these are just about due again! January 1st is the due date for renewing your membership for 2021. There is a renewal form for AusTARS included at the end of this issue which you can fill out and return by post or by email, after scanning it.

Note that TARS UK has recently altered the Membership Categories (see *Signals*), with the Senior category now being integrated with Adult and youth categories also changing, and that again there is an option to pay less to receive electronic versions of *Signals* and *Mixed Moss*. We also need to update and record some permissions from you, relating to privacy and child and data protection, so there is additional information on the form.

Subscription renewals: TARSNZ

Payments can currently be made and received by cheques (but these are being phased out in NZ banking circles), as well as by electronic banking.

The latter is clearly the way of the future, so the necessary details are:

Internet Banking to BNZ a/c 02 0500 0207956-00 (NM & BM Robertson). Be sure to include your name in the identifier field, otherwise we won't know who the payment is from.

Cheques to NM & BM Robertson, sent to TARSNZ c/o Neil Robertson, 10B/19 Cottleville Terrace, Thorndon, Wellington 6011.

Overseas Youth	(All Paper)	\$40
Overseas Youth	(All Electronic)	\$30
Overseas Adult	(All Paper)	\$60
Overseas Adult	(All Electronic)	\$50
Overseas Family	(All Paper)	\$80
Overseas Family	(All Electronic)	\$70

In conversation with... Sophie Neville

Recently Sophie Neville was interviewed in a live streaming event by the Lakeland Arts Trust. They manage what used to be called the Windermere Steamboat Museum (now Windermere Jetty), where the boats Mavis (Amazon) and Coch-y-Bonddu are exhibited. They are currently holding an exhibition on *Swallows & Amazons* to celebrate its 90th anniversary. The interview was part of this celebration. It's well worth a watch.

The event has been recorded and it's free to watch at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Corz8BmwrG4&feature=youtu.be>

Member profile: Gill Metz, VicTAR

I grew up in England and immigrated to Australia in 1996. As a child I loved all things outdoors. This included sport, sport and more sport, as well as Guiding, Scouting and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. In the course of my activities I achieved Queen's Guide and Queen's Scout awards and a gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

I always wanted to go to boarding school, so read all the Enid Blyton books until my dad introduced me to 'real children's books', *Swallows and Amazons*. From that moment I was hooked. My favourite UK destination is the Lake District. I have been to Wild Cat Island by canoe, been on the boat used as Captain Flint's houseboat, had lunch at Holly Howe and been to the Dogs' Home. In Norfolk I have followed the *Coot Club* story on a houseboat.

Community service is a mainstay in my life. In the UK I was a volunteer lifeguard on the River Thames and a swimming coach. This included working with able-bodied and disabled swimmers alike. Once we arrived in Australia, I became the local Brownie Leader within a month of arrival, and then a



Guide Leader. These activities continued for around seven years before I joined the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and became a volunteer firefighter. This I have done for the last 21 years and have been deployed all over Victoria, and interstate to NSW.

I met Dawn through CFA and, during a chance discussion on books we liked, we discovered our love of the Arthur Ransome stories.

Since being in Australia I have worked for local government, Neighbourhood Watch, CFA and Forest Fire Management. Semi-retiring from my role as Deputy Chief Fire Officer in 2018, I now work part-time for the CFA managing volunteer leadership development.

My main interests outside my volunteer work are grandchildren, gardening, the environment and travel (including being a novice caravanner!). *Winter Holiday* is my favourite book... 'Flag at Beckfoot = Start for Pole'.

Member profile: Dawn Ciechomski, VicTAR

I'm a Victorian born and bred and despite all the Covid lockdowns I have no desire to live elsewhere, although Wild Cat Island would be tempting.

In stark contrast to my friend Gill, I have absolutely no interest in sport whatsoever. However, I did join the Army as a Reservist, and this kept me busy and very active.

I came to read the *Swallows and Amazons* stories after watching the movie when my kids were young. Having enjoyed the movie, I wanted to know more. The local library only had a couple of the books, so I decided to buy some myself. I was hooked and now have a whole shelf on the bookcase filled with various editions, not to mention a full set of audiobooks and copies of both



S&A movies. *We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea* was the first book I bought and is still my favourite.

I did learn to sail on Albert Park Lake, in a little boat named the *Swallow*. This was long before I had ever read Arthur Ran-

some's books. I have always had an interest in things nautical. My interest in ships has always run to big ships such as the *Cutty Sark* and the *Thermopylae*, and this led me to volunteer with the *Polly Woodside*.

I have been a member of the Country Fire Authority for 37 years, both as a firefighter and now as a non-operational member. I am also a member of a number of ex-Service associations. My association with the military has continued to this day, through my interest in military history, including tours of the battlefields of Gallipoli and Europe, and more recently when I developed the Anzac Dawn Service for Riddells Creek and have since delivered it for the past five years.

When the weather is good, I will be found gardening and when the weather is cold, I will be found researching family history. I have always been interested in birds and given half a chance I will be escaping with Gill in our caravan, bird book at the ready.

Gill and I have had the good fortune to be able to visit Wild Cat Island, the Dogs' Home and Holly Howe, where we have enjoyed several delicious lunches. We have also sailed on the Norfolk Broads following in the wake of Dick, Dorothea and the Coots, during one of our most relaxing holidays.

I love being part of TARS, so what else can I say but 'Three million cheers'?

Interview: Peter Wright, Chair, The Arthur Ransome Society

Peter is a staunch supporter of AusTARS and TARSNZ, and has helped to facilitate interactions between the southern and northern hemisphere branches of the Society. Many of us were delighted to 'meet' him and hear about his work with the Society in a Zoom session recently. Jan Allen approached Peter for a long-distance 'interview', and here are Peter's responses to her questions:



When did you join TARS and at what point did you become more actively involved in the Society?

I joined TARS towards the end of 1999, having discovered Christina Hardyment's book, *Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint's Trunk* at what was then called The Windermere Steamboat Museum, where I also picked up a TARS leaflet. I read the book while on holiday and was thrilled to learn more about my favourite author and his books and it answered a lot of questions that had always puzzled me. I joined TARS shortly afterwards.

The Midlands region was not very active at the time so the first event I went to was to the 2001 Literary Weekend in Durham. On the rail journey home, I was asked by Joy Wotton (editor) if, being a first-time attendee, I would write up my experience of the weekend for *Mixed Moss*. Foolishly, I said I would. A few months later I received a phone call from Ann Farr saying how much the organisers of the Literary Weekend had enjoyed my article and would I like to join the small committee arranging the next one? Foolishly, I again said yes and have never been able to escape from this Committee. In 2004 I was asked if I would stand as a trustee on the Board and was duly elected at the May IAGM. I served for six years, taking on the role of overseas co-ordinator.

Did you read AR when you were a child, or did other authors take your interest?

My earliest memories are of borrowing *Little Tim* and *Captain Pugwash* books from the local library. I graduated on to Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* and *Secret Seven* books and had noticed the much larger Ransome books on the shelf. Although they had jolly covers, at the time I thought they looked too long and difficult in comparison to most other books. What changed my mind was watching the BBC TV serialisation of *Swallows and Amazons* in 1963, which I thoroughly enjoyed. A little later I discovered that one of those large, brightly-covered books in the library was also called *Swallows and Amazons* – the very same story - and so I took it out, read it and loved it. I was eight at the time. All eleven others soon followed, although I had to trawl three libraries to achieve this feat. Another outdoor adventure book I particularly enjoyed at this time was BB's *Brendon Chase* about three boys living alone in a wood one summer. I have always loved humour and the *Just William, Jennings & Darbishire* and *Professor Branestawm* books were also great favourites.

Do you have a favourite from the twelve?

I've always loved *Winter Holiday* and I would definitely say this is my favourite. I have a soft spot for *The Picts and the Martyrs* and *Swallowdale*. One of my favourite passages in the canon is the episode of extracting Pete's tooth with the brick in *The Big Six*.

Do you think your reading of AR has influenced any of your life decisions, for example, your employment, or hobbies/interests?

I spent 39 years as a town planning and local government officer in Birmingham, so no, AR cannot be said to have influenced my career. I have always enjoyed camping, hiking and cooking over an open fire, but the influence for this came from my parents (both Scout leaders) and Scouting. One of the reasons I so enjoyed AR's books is that they were about similar activities to those I loved.

Did your employment allow you sufficient time to participate in TARS activities?

Yes, working in Local Government I enjoyed a more generous holiday entitlement than those in the private sector. I was also able to build up flexitime hours so if I needed an extra day off to accommodate ease of travel to a Literary Weekend or IAGM, then this was easily achievable.

Sometimes a love of AR books does not seem to pass on within families. Have you been able to involve your family in reading AR and joining TARS?

I had always known that if I was lucky enough to have children, I would want to read them the *S&A* books as bedtime stories. I was able to do this with both my daughter, Emma, and son, Matthew. Emma, in particular, liked them and went

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on to read many of them herself. Matt, whilst enjoying the stories, was never a great reader, although he was happy to come to events and IAGMs. When my daughter got married, I was very pleasantly surprised to hear that she and her partner enjoyed reading the stories aloud to each other in bed! Her partner worked in youth drama and subsequently went on to produce a version of the Helen Edmundson/Neil Hannon musical play version of *Swallows and Amazons*. They now have two daughters, Liberty and Imogen, and in 2019 went on their first TARS family camp with the Midlands region. My wife, Christine, regularly attends events with me and has many friends in TARS but still proudly boast she has never read any of the books – so I’ve failed there!

Has membership of TARS led you to new interests, experiences or accomplishments?

Whilst attending my first event – the Literary Weekend at Durham – one speaker, Victor Watson, spoke about the genre of camping and tramping series fiction that Ransome effectively spawned. He mentioned long-forgotten authors such as David Severn, Aubrey De Selincourt, M. E. Atkinson, Peter Dawlish etc. This inspired my enthusiasm to read more of these stories and since then I have taken up the hobby of collecting these books. I have also increasingly become interested in AR’s life, especially since learning that he was born less than 800 metres from where I was brought up, in Leeds. I am now trying to collect all the rare Ransome early books – but it’s a long, at times expensive and probably in the end a hopeless task! TARS has also given me the opportunity to go sailing and canoeing – opportunities for which were previously few and far between, and I’ve rekindled my love of backpacking and camping.

You now very ably fill an important position within TARS. What other administrative involvement have you had in the Society?

I have been on the Literary Weekend committee since 2001, been a constant member of the Literary & Resources committee since its inception, chairing it for most of its years, and this is my second stint on the Board – I must be a glutton for punishment.

Reading books is becoming rarer among today’s youth. This presents a recruiting challenge to the Society. Do you have ideas on strategies to attract children and new members to TARS and thus ensure the continuation of the Society?

One of my aims upon becoming Chairman of the Society has been to try to stem the decline in membership, if not grow it, as I am a firm believer that there are still many more Ransome enthusiasts out there who do not know about TARS. I see promotion and advertising as activities we can and need to do more of. Revamping our website was an obvious first step and Diana Wright has done a magnificent job in making it much more family-oriented and friendly. We’ve also updated our membership leaflet and have plans to ‘target’ certain groups as part of a promotions push. Had it not been for Covid, I would by now have written to most sailing clubs in the UK with posters and leaflets encouraging families and youngsters to read the books and join the Society. We also need to embrace social media as this is the most likely ‘route in’ for many young peo-

ple. It’s also essential that if we do get new families and youngsters in, that each region provides an interesting programme of meetings and activities for them. The Midlands group in recent years has been excellent at this and many friendships among young folk have arisen through attending family TARS events.



Do you feel TARS is able to embrace the digital age to assist its survival?

I see this as essential, although personally I’m hopeless with it and don’t use it much. Others in TARS do and I’m extremely grateful to those who have arranged for TARS to have both Facebook and Twitter accounts and the website has been designed to download and be easily used on phones and tablets. We have held worldwide Ransome reading days and many of us have learnt of the ease and benefits of being able to meet together using Zoom or similar link-up sites. These are definitely here to stay and the Board will certainly want to discuss how we can maximise the opportunities they offer. As it happens, yesterday the Midlands organized a Zoom activity event based around mapping and Google Street View with about 25 participants – it was amazing. As you know, I’ve also enjoyed participating in an Aus/NZ TARS Zoom meeting, which was a first, and hopefully to be repeated, enjoyable experience.

Have you a vision for the future of TARS?

My vision would simply be to ensure that the Society remains relevant and provides for the needs of all our members. This means it must ensure there is plenty for those who prefer the literary side and for those who enjoy the activities side. I have always said that TARS is that rarest of organisations – one that caters for all ages, whether you are seven or ninety-seven! Obviously, it would be wonderful if we could grow our numbers and the Board and I will be striving for this, but I think it is unrealistic to think we’ll regain the numbers of yesteryear, since so many of the original members – those who waited patiently each year for Ransome’s latest book – are no longer with us. Ultimately, all I can hope for is that people want to be in TARS and enjoy all that membership offers.

You have just completed your marathon reading of all of the Carnegie Prize-winning books from the TARS Library. Which books or writers stood out for you?

I have promised Catherine Lamont [editor] that I will write an article for *Mixed Moss*, so I don’t want to give too much away

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now, but Richard Adams' *Watership Down* came as a real surprise. I'd always resisted reading this as stories about rabbits never really appealed to me, but I thought it was a remarkable book. The other one that I felt set a new standard was Gene Kemp's *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tyler* – not so much for its novel and surprising ending, but more for being the first book that used the street language kids use and got behind how children really think.

Are there any writers for children who you feel may have been overlooked during the years of the Carnegie awards?

I'm not an authority on all children's authors so am not really qualified but there do appear to be some striking omissions: Tolkien and Roald Dahl are two authors that immediately spring to mind. It's absolutely apparent that 'popular' books are unlikely to win the Carnegie, as I will expand upon in my *Mixed Moss* article – I suspect the judges feel they are either too lightweight or not 'worthy' enough!

Series fiction, especially fantasy, has made a comeback in children's literature. Do you enjoy reading other series fiction for children, and do you have particular favourites?

I'm not sure I can answer this one. I'm not a great fan of fantasy, (although I do collect Marcus Sedgwick's novels) nor have I read many of the more recent series fiction. Clearly J K Rowling has been a huge influence (I'll say more about her in *Mixed Moss*) and Philip Pullman (a Carnegie winner) and Malorie Blackman are very well-respected. For modern writers following in Ransome's footsteps, I've enjoyed the Julia Jones *Strong Winds* series.

Reflecting on your time as National Chair, what do you consider have been the highlights of your tenure?

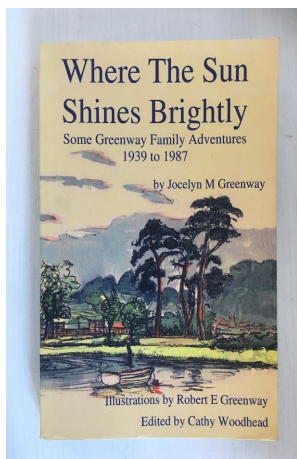
I greatly enjoyed working with our Immediate Past President, Sophie Neville, in my first year; she's such an enthusiast for Ransome and full of energy and ideas. Securing a new home for the TARS library, at Moat Brae – Scotland's Centre for Children's Literature - was certainly a major highlight as has been the new website. Working with the Board has also been a pleasure and I have been keen to see we remain 'fit for purpose'. To this end we've put in place relevant and up-to-date Equalities statements and Data Protection/Privacy policies and updated Leading Lights – the society's rules - as these are all important. The greatest benefit of TARS continues to be the opportunity for meeting so many like-minded and enthusiastic people and making new friends – but you don't have to be Chairman to do that!



Book Review: Where the Sun Shines Brightly: More Greenway Family Adventures, 1939 to 1987 by Jocelyn M. Greenway

Reviewed by Jan Allen

Now there's the kind of adventurous-spirited mother any TAR would be glad to have! UK-born Jocelyn Greenway and her husband, Robert, raised six children in different places around the world, and took them on fascinating low-cost expeditions and camping trips throughout their childhoods. She recorded the family's adventures in journals, articles and photographs, while Robert drew and painted his own record of their trips. These writings and illustrations have been compiled and edited by their second child, Cathy Woodhead, and the result is an unpretentious but utterly charming book, new in the AusTARS Library!



Ever thought of touring Europe, including the Alps, with three offspring and all your camping gear loaded on to three motor scooters? These parents did. Or bivouacking (with children) in a dinghy around the Solent, minus any sailing experience? Throw in a pre-marriage skiing trip to the high mountains of Norway just before the outbreak of WWII, migration to Australia, a

'holiday' minding a sheep station on an island in Spencer Gulf, camping trips around Australia and also in Natal, sailing holidays, a 'second family' of three boys after the first three children grew up, a move back to the UK, then again to Australia after the death of Robert - there was just no stopping this intrepid family. Even if they may not always have thought it at the time, sometimes having to endure discomfort and frights, how lucky were those children to have such a childhood! And it was all done on shoestring budgets. In her eighties, Jocelyn was still adventuring in Central Australia and Queensland. A real Nancy!

More of the family's adventures have been recorded in *Puffin's Log*, detailing the voyages around the UK and to France made in their 22ft Hillyard. Both books are in our AusTARS Library, thanks to the generosity of Paul Rodwell, QTAR, and are highly recommended for armchair sailors.

References

Greenway, J. (2011). *Where the Sun Shines Brightly: More Greenway Family Adventures, 1939 to 1987*. Porthmadog, UK: Delfryn Publications.

Greenway, J. (2009). *Puffin's Log*. Porthmadog, UK: Delfryn Publications.

From the AusTARS library - one not to miss!

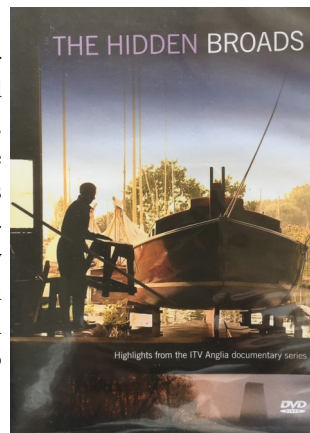
DVD Review: The Hidden Broads

Reviewed by Jan Allen

If you have never visited the Norfolk Broads, viewing this enjoyable DVD will both inform and delight, and it will also marry perfectly with your mind's eye pictures of the places AR describes with such immediacy in *CC* and *BS*. For those fortunate enough to have memories of visits, you will straightaway be transported back in time to the scenes of your adventures, as though you had never been away.

With an emphasis on the conservation and protection of this unique environment, the various segments take the viewer through different aspects of Broads life and history, and show the people who work to maintain and protect the land, waterways, boats, proven rural practices, crafts and wildlife of the area.

The work undertaken by the various bodies responsible for the management of the Broads and its assets, such as The Norfolk Wherry Trust, The Broads Authority, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Norfolk Windmills Trust and The Museum of the Broads is displayed and explained. The Broads Authority launch, without need of the required pilot, is seen passing safely under Potter Heigham bridge, with due warning given that you and I are best not to attempt that illegal feat!



If all that sounds a little dry, it is not. At St Benet's Abbey, an archaeologist brings to life for us the teeming and productive activity of the abbey population in medieval times. How did those windpumps, that we think of as windmills, work, and can they still be useful? We learn. We see that the work of our *CC* children in the 1930s to protect the Broads birdlife continues, that need now being fully appreciated, with many wildlife reserves set aside.

Perhaps best of all, an extended segment takes us to Hunter's Yard, at Ludham, to see the unchanged processes and infinite pains taken to maintain and preserve the Hunter heritage fleet, all still sailing and very much in demand in the season. (See

one of these lovely craft playing a role as *Teasel* in the *CC/BS* TV series, *Swallows and Amazons for Ever!*) The boatyard is now managed as a charitable trust to ensure its survival. Archival footage of these boats sailing the Broads before WWII is included. After a gap of many decades, a new boat joined the Hunter's fleet and we see the creation and eventual launching of *Lucent*, lovingly crafted by her boatbuilders, upholding another Broads tradition.

Watching this DVD, I relived my glorious week spent under the huge skies of this memorable place.

TARS trans-Tasman Zoom meetings

Phoebe Palmieri

As we all suffered the social deprivation of this year, it was suggested that we might remedy this in part by means of social get-togethers via Zoom. Three meetings have been held so far, with a fourth scheduled for 5 December. TARSNZ and AusTARS took up the idea with enthusiasm, and we've had about twenty participants each time. The idea was just to chat and

exchange thoughts about anything Ransome-related. In fact, we achieved more than we had expected: it proved exciting and heartening to meet members we had only known by name so far, and the discussions ranged over people's experiences visiting *S&A*-related places, with photos, favourite children's books, and Ransome's writing style and ability to create word pictures.



Enjoying the discussion: 5 December

Peter Wright, the TARS Chair, and Krysia Clack, the new overseas members' representative joined our second session, and they kindly stayed up till midnight UK time to tell us about their work. We are lucky to have such hard-working and sympathetic people supporting us in so many ways.

On 5 December we were joined by two winners of the AusTARS Cup, Winifred Wilson, current librarian of The Arthur Ransome Society and Paul Wilson, former editor of *Signals*. This time instead of making our guests stay up late we made them get up before dawn!

Proposed AusTARS Events Calendar 2021

Note: Whilst dates for events are generally set in advance, changing circumstances or member availability may necessitate changes nearer the time. If you are planning to attend a scheduled event, contact the Secretary/Events Organiser, Jan Allen, <jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com>, to receive final details of events.

Victoria

(At present, this state has the largest group of members and the most active)

Saturday, January 16th	AR Birthday Party 1.30-5.00 pm	Emerald
Saturday, February 20th	AusTARS Annual General Meeting and Beach Picnic	Bayside area
Saturday, March 20th	Lake Wendouree Day	Ballarat
Saturday, April 24th	Heritage Train Day	Castlemaine/Maldon
Saturday, May 8th	Clunes Booktown Day	Clunes
Sunday, June 20th	Roger's Chocolate and Trains Afternoon	Yarra Valley
Saturday, July 17th	Literary and Fun Afternoon	Emerald/?
Saturday, August 14th	Tecoma Day, Theme TBA	Tecoma
Saturday, September 11th	Birdwatching Day	Werribee
Saturday, October 9th	French Island/Cowes Expedition	Stony Point
Sunday, November 14th	Rowing Afternoon	Fairfield
Friday, December 10th	Christmas Party	East Ivanhoe

New South Wales/Queensland

A day on or around Lake Macquarie is planned for early autumn, plus a picnic and kayaking day at Manly Reservoir in spring.

A Moreton Bay Island Day is planned for early winter.

Dates will be set early in 2021.

Weather, Ransome? Part 2

Hedley Thomson

In the previous issue of *Furthest South* I discussed how AR uses weather in the lake novels. Here is presented my analysis and assessment of how he uses weather in the other seven of the twelve; in summary: lots of fine weather but plenty of variations and some powerful challenges.

Peter Duck

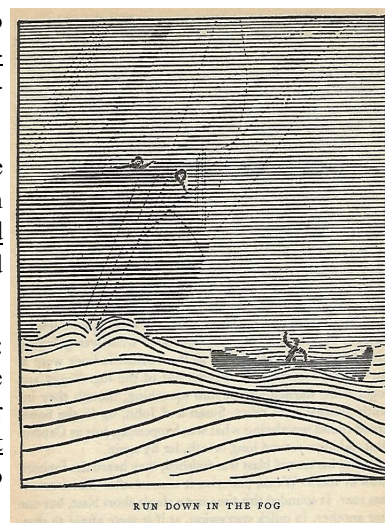
Being a fantasy story, arguably, dear reader, one need not take the use of weather as a component of the story too seriously: a hurricane and a waterspout are pretty extreme but suit the nature of the narrative. Otherwise, there are throughout the usual variations on weather conditions used by AR, especially during the voyages to and from Crab Island, whilst with the assistance of Mr. Duck and Bill, the crew are taught various seaman's skills, including how to repair sails (of use following damage caused during the hurricane-force winds), as well as tricks with rope and a dubious cure for sea-sickness. Let's see how they fared. Words and phrases underlined summarise the weather conditions.

Day 1 (chapter 1): no mention of weather; pre-sumably fine (in Lowestoft Harbour).

Day 2 (chapter 2): 'The wind was coming down from Oulton...The wind freshened a little, and *Swallow* felt it.'

Day 3 (chapters 3 to 6): chapter 3 - 'There was the beginning of a noise under the forefoot' i.e., light breeze. Otherwise no mention of weather.

Day 4 (chapters 7 & 8): '...sunshine and a strong north-easterly breeze clearing away the light morning mist.' Captain Nancy



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seasick – an indication of a strengthening wind. And later: ‘... north-east wind driving them southwards.’

Day 5 (chapter 9): ‘The evening was just an ordinary summer evening...when suddenly the burgee dropped...the sheets slackened and the *Wild Cat* began to lose her speed’; i.e., little/no wind.

Day 6 (chapters 10 & 11): morning – ‘...a gentle breeze came out of the north-east, strengthening to a steady sailing wind.’ Afternoon: ‘...the wind suddenly freshened... After two or three fierce squalls, it had had settled down to blow much harder than they had yet known it...The sky had clouded, the waves were dark...’ Then wind dropped to nothing. So, considerable variation in wind conditions but some of it pretty fierce.

Day 7 (chapters 12 to 14): morning—fog and no wind continues. Later, Peter Duck says wind will: ‘...blow from the north west.’ Night: ‘...the sea was growing steadily worse and the wind blew harder and harder.’

Days 8 & 9 (chapters 14 & 15): ‘...sun was showing now and then through scurrying patches of grey cloud...and though the wind was still strong ...it was no longer lifting whole tops of waves.’

Day 10 (chapter 16): ‘There had been a good deal of mist after the storm... Found the good weather again.’ Appears to be four days crossing the Bay of Biscay with no further mention of weather.

Days unspecified sailing across the Atlantic Ocean to Crab Island (chapter 17): ‘The steady trade wind from the north-east hurried [the *Wild Cat*] on her way.’

Day arriving at Crab Island (chapter 18): no comment on weather.

Day 1 after arrival (chapters 19 to 22): ‘...Bill, stopping short and just saving his hat from being blown away by the wind off the Atlantic’; i.e., a fair sort of a breeze.

Day 2 (chapters 22 to 24): ‘The sun was dropping down behind the island when, suddenly, there was no wind. *Swallow* lost way.’ There had been a reasonable wind.

Day 3 (chapter 25): no mention of the weather.

Day 4 (chapters 26 & 27) – ‘Threatening Weather’: ‘The trouble’s coming at once, whatever it is.’ ‘...another of those strange hot breaths from the south, and a lull in the trade wind from the Atlantic.’ Then the hurricane. And earthquake. And rain!

Days 4 & 5 (chapter 30): ‘...savage squalls hitting the *Wild Cat*...’

Day 5 (chapters 28 & 29 & 31 to 33): discovery of the treasure, on the island – ‘What wind there was was off shore... The schooner disappeared in a bank of haze... The sea was somehow slack and sulky... There was something wrong. This was not the end of last night’s storm, but a lull in it... There was something in the weather that was not to be trusted. Aboard the *Wild Cat*: ‘The wind was still from the west, but there was little of it. It came in short puffs that heeled the *Wild Cat* suddenly over.’ Peter Duck: ‘There’s something gone clean wrong with

the weather in these parts’... ‘Susan heard the faint slap-slap of the water on the bows of the *Swallow* towing astern.’

Day 6 (chapter 34): ‘there had been hardly any wind during the night.’ Then the waterspout: ‘The thing was now loud enough to hear. A wild, shrill, rustling noise swept over the sea.’ Then follow five pages of graphic description of the waterspout and the loss of the *Viper*.

Sailing home (chapters 35 & 36): ‘the strange, violent weather had come to an end... A good passage they had, too: one of those passages that come once in a hundred...’ Calm in the Sargasso Sea, ‘And soon after the wind came again...’, with variations...

Summary: aside from the extremes of the hurricane and waterspout and attendant violent winds and seas, AR cannot resist throwing in some other wild and testing weather, especially *en route* to Crab Island. Nonetheless, conditions are largely favourable, due principally to the trade wind that prevails during the course of the ‘in’ and ‘out’ voyages, an approach that enables AR to get us to Crab Island without, I think, having to taking up too much more space in the narrative on the subject of the weather.

Coot Club

Although for a fair part of the story little is mentioned of the weather conditions, there are a number of graphic descriptions of significant weather incidents. Much of the rest of the time conditions can be reasonably assumed on the basis of the activities undertaken—especially boating ones, of course; i.e., breezy, fine and cool to mild (as we’re talking an English Spring).

Day 1 (chapters 1 to 6): there are only some indicators as to wind conditions throughout these chapters—provided principally by descriptions of various boating activities—thus denoting generally fine and pleasant conditions; viz: Port and Starboard sailing with Mr. Farland indicating decent breeze; Tom comes sailing home; Tom using *Dreadnought*.

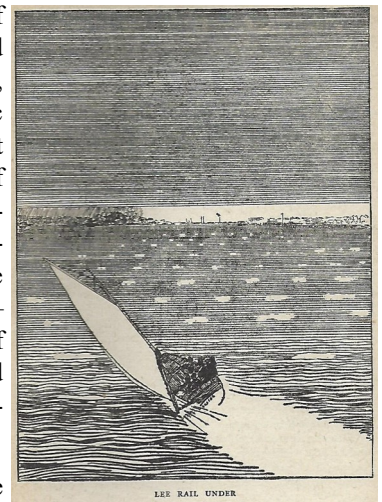
Day 2 (chapters 7 to 9): nothing mentioned until chapter 9, when: ‘That afternoon there was not wind enough to stir the flame of a candle’; leads to quanting the *Teasel*. Otherwise assume fine and pleasant conditions.

Day 3 (chapter 10): ‘Sunshine, a crisp air, and a wind not strong enough to be dangerous, but quite strong enough to send the *Teasel* flying through the water...’

Day 4 (chapter 10): sailing on Ranworth Broad – assume fine and breezy.

Day 5 (chapter 10): raining solidly on Ranworth.

Day 6 (chapters 11 & 12): Tom sails *Titmouse* to Wroxham and return – pleasant breeze.



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Days 6 to 8 (chapters 13 & 14): sailing the *Teasel*—no indication other than above.

Day 9 (chapters 14 & 15): shifting the *Teasel* away from the *Margoletta*—calm conditions; later: ‘The south-easterly wind was freshening up again.’

Day 10 (chapters 16 to 21) to Yarmouth & beyond: morning—‘[The wind] was heading north-west. There could not be a better wind for the voyage.’ Towards evening: ‘[The wind] died altogether. The boom swung in.’

Day 11 (chapter 22): ‘...the wind was just right.’

Day 12 (chapter 23) – **storm over Oulton**: ‘There was a sulky feeling in the air, and the sky was dark in the east... The squall was gone as suddenly as it came...’ ‘A Roger coming...’ ‘Down came the first large spots of rain.’ **Hail, thunder, lightning** (whoops! Other way round!). ‘[The hail stopped suddenly and a moment later the wind was upon them again.’

Day 13 (chapter 24): light south-easterly, then, ‘...**not wind enough to carry them through Reedham Bridge...**’ and later, ‘...**Hardly wind enough to stir [the *Teasel*].**’ Opposite conditions, with their own implications...

Day 14 (chapters 25 to 29) – the wreck of the *Margoletta* & after: **a contrary wind, then heavy fog** on Breydon Water followed by a wind too light for the *Teasel* and *D&G* to sail against; rescued by the *Come Along*.

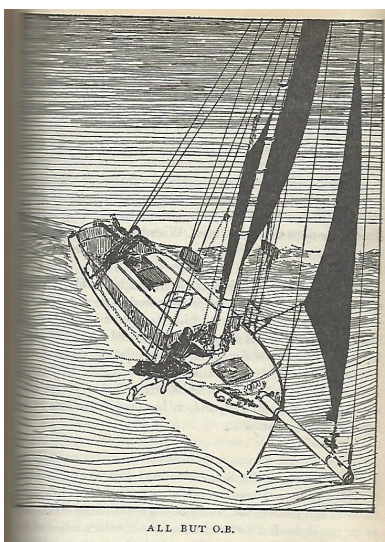
Summary: on the whole, pleasant conditions for sailing and being in the outdoors generally, but also significantly testing at times, as well as the use of contrary and unpleasant conditions on a number of occasions. On the whole, pretty realistic, I reckon, as well as varied.

We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea

Well, there's definitely weather in this one! My main issue with this story is the capability of a roughly 14-year-old boy to sail a quite large boat across the English Channel virtually single-handed. But that's a topic for another time. The descriptions of the weather, once it gets going, meanwhile, are intense.

Day 1 (chapters 1 & 2): mild conditions, as far as one can tell.

Day 2 (chapters 3 to 5): same as above until evening; then, ‘The wind had dropped to nothing...The night was so calm that it was hard to believe that the *Goblin* was afloat.’



Day 3 (chapters 6 to 15) – **how conditions changed – from calm to storm**: morning – a swim first up. ‘A misty sun was climbing over Felixstowe...The smoke climbed almost straight up and drifted idly away.’ A little later, the *Cork* lightship starts sounding its fog signal out at sea. A settled calm: ‘It

doesn't look as if it could ever turn into waves,’ said Titty. Change begins: Roger – ‘And it really is foggy now. It's getting foggy even here'... And then, suddenly, the fog that had been coming with the tide closed over them.’ Barometer dropping, wind coming. Then the fog lifts, replaced by rain: ‘It came, a **white wall of rain beating down into the sea... One rain squall followed another...** The *Goblin* was utterly alone, **racing along, up and down, up and down', blown along by very strong wind.** The attempt to turn back: ‘**It was as if, suddenly, the strong wind had risen to a hurricane.**’ **Cold** sets in, as John reefs *Goblin*. Finally, late: ‘It's clearing up. Bits of the sky are quite prickly with stars, [said Titty.]’

Day 4 (chapters 16 to 24): from dawn - **cold**. ‘Waves everywhere, but waves somehow kindlier than they had been... The white crests were not roaring after each other... **For the time being he had all the wind he wanted.**’ John: ‘It's perfectly clear. No fog.’ Then later, in the shelter of Flushing harbour: ‘The wind blew soft over the roofs of the old Dutch town. The windmills were turning slowly.’ And as they left ‘Holland’ (The Netherlands): ‘The wind blew harder as they left the land behind them...’ Day 5 (chapters 24 to 27): Daddy: ‘The wind's dropping a little.’ And upon arrival, back at Pin Mill: ‘There was hardly wind enough to stir the reflections.’

Summary: the weather is the big player, and not just because of the storm. The doubt and stress created by the eerie calm and foggy conditions enhance the abrupt changes that occur, not only in terms of the arrival of the storm, but in terms of the change from the safety of being quietly anchored to the loss of control in the totally unfamiliar circumstances and in terms of the challenges that AR creates for the Walkers, John in particular.

Secret Water

In competition with the explorers' anxieties about the isolation of the location, the desire to get all the mapping done to satisfy Daddy and the intrusion of the local savages (the Eels), the weather plays a largely passive role, even frustratingly so with winds frequently being light to non-existent. The heat, however, actually and figuratively, is turned up on the penultimate day of the expedition.

Day 1 (chapter 1): no indication of weather but the Eels sailing.

Day 2 (chapters 2 to 5): again, the Eels sailing. Daddy: ‘I'm going to turn the engine on to get us quickly down over the tide.’ Boats going slowly down river under sail. ‘The sea was smooth; the wind was light.’

Day 3 (chapters 6 to 11): ‘Meanwhile John was getting up the *Wizard's* sail... “Good enough wind,” said the Mastodon...’ ‘...as the [*Firefly*] heeled to a sudden puff and came sailing in towards the mouth of *Goblin Creek*.’

Day 4 (chapters 12 to 15): ‘There was little more than enough wind to fill the sails as the two boats drifted up *Goblin Creek*.’

Later, sailing away from *Witch's Quay*.

Day 5 (chapter 16): ‘...a good south-west wind soon blew them out of the creek into the *Secret Water*... The wind had dropped, and though the sail was set, somebody was using the oars [in *Firefly*]. Awoken during the night – ‘...now to the stir of wind in the reeds’ and other distant sounds, so not a strong wind.

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Day 6 (chapters 17 to 20): sailing. ‘...the flags flew above the camp.’ Rowing down Secret Water.

Day 7 (chapters 21 & 22): ‘A little patch of ripples showed on the glassy water, and then another. “Cat’s paws,” said Daisy. “Wind coming,” said John...one after another the little sailing boats hoisted sail and blew down the canal... With tide and wind to help them, the savages were already nearing the mouth of Goblin Creek.

Day 8 (chapters 23 to 28): ‘It was a broiling hot day’: the opening sentence of chapter 23 to set the scene and to provide no doubt that *today* the weather was going to be different and definitely *not* benign. The opening continues with, ‘The hard, sharp shadow of the meal-dial was moving towards the dinner peg.’—to reinforce the intensity of conditions. In town it was, ‘Beautiful and warm for the time of year, Miss.’ [The grocer.] The heat was to be on, this day, in more ways than one...

Day 9 (chapters 29 to 31): ‘The two small boats were coming at a great pace... A light wind was blowing from the west.’

Summary: with the exception of the hot day 8, the weather is similar and basically benign throughout; viz: light winds and presumed sunny, warm weather. Rather more straightforward than typical Ransome. Perhaps the tides are a substitute for changes in the weather, their variability commonly affecting the explorers’ and savages’ movements and thus testing their organising and quick-thinking skills.

The Big Six

As in *Secret Water*, the weather takes rather a back seat in terms of its effect on the narrative. As AR describes it from the outset, the weather appears to maintain its pleasantness throughout; that is, except for the usual day of rain (even occurring again, as in *Coot Club*, on Ranworth Broad) and the specific use of fog to add mystery to the personage of the unwanted visitor to the *Death & Glory*.

Day 1 (chapter 1): ‘The day had been warm and sunny, one of those pleasant days that so often come towards the end of the summer holidays.’ Looks like a deliberate underscore from AR about the weather conditions and what is likely to follow.

Day 2 (chapters 2 & 3): ‘...late in the afternoon when a stranger, coming from somewhere down the river, sailed up to the staithe...’ That night: ‘Stars not bright enough,’ said Joe’. Indications of a breeze and clear, sunny conditions.

Day 3 (chapters 4 & 5): ‘They rowed steadily down the river’; i.e., no breeze. No other indications.

Day 4 (chapter 6): “‘Anyways, we’ll be out of this tonight,” [said Joe]. “Come a bit of wind,” said Bill...’ The water was as smooth as glass, there was not a cloud in the sky... ‘Lots of hard work to-morrow if there don’t come an easterly.’

Day 5 (chapters 7 to 9): ‘The morning mist was heavy on the river. Fisherman: ‘There’ll be nothing much doing till this fog lifts off the water...’ Later: ‘The mist had been lifted and driven away by a light easterly wind, that was shivering the willow leaves and rustling the tall reeds.’

Day 6 (chapters 10 & 11): a nice mixture of conditions: *Sir Garnet* sailing. The whole crew sailing to Ranworth Broad in *Timouse* and the *D&G* and - would you believe it - **rain**: ‘A

steady wind... they were startled by the first drops of rain. “Don’t fare to be more’n a drizzle,” shouted Bill... “It’ll blow over,” called Tom. “But it’s going to pelt in a minute” watching through the open door a thin mizzle of rain... It stopped at last, and they climbed out through the wet cockpit that shimmered in the sun.’

Day 7 (chapters 12 & 13): ‘The wind was much less than it had been in the night, but was still blowing freshly off the staithe towards the reeds...’

Days 8 to 13 (chapters 14 to 32): all action occurs on land: all seems still or lightly breezy and fine, barring some **fog**, crucial in obscuring the villain from Dorothea’s view. And at the very end, when all has turned out well: “Come on,” said Tom. “Let’s all go sailing.” So there must have been a reasonable breeze.

Summary: we have thirteen days of chiefly fine and balmy weather, with a solid rain shower, fog and mist at various times, and mainly light breezes thrown in: varied, but certainly not as challenging as the usual range of conditions offered by AR as a test for his various players.

Missee Lee

Oriental hot, dry and possibly humid weather is assumed here, on occasion actually being spelt out – at least the hot and dry bit, which in itself would have been a challenge for AR’s relatively soft English types.

Day 1 (chapter 1): ‘There was a gentle breeze.’

Days 2 to 5 (chapters 2 & 3): ‘For four days they had seen [no land]. They had seen nothing at all but a burning sun by day and blazing stars by night...’ After the fire, loss of the *Wild Cat*: Captain Flint: ‘More wind coming... If it blows really hard, keep right down in the bottom of the boat...’

Day 6 (chapters 3 to 5): ‘There was a fierce wind in [John’s] face.’ Hours later: ‘The wind dropped suddenly, so suddenly that it was like coming indoors out of a gale. The sea eased.’... “‘Couldn’t we sail?” said Titty. “Not enough wind,” said John.’

Undefined number of days (chapters 6 to 18): all action on land - no mention of weather.

Chapter 19: reference to rain in the hills from Missee Lee.

Chapter 20: Missee Lee: ‘The *Shining Moon* must go back now, before the wind dlop.’

Chapter 27: ‘The wind was slackening more and more as the glow in the sky grew brighter... Suddenly the great main sail of the *Shining Moon* flapped, flapped again and hung limp.’ Captain Flint: ‘We’ll be getting wind again as soon as the sun’s... higher’... ‘Wind’s coming,’ said John.’

Summary: there is mostly no mention of weather, with most of the action occurring on land, with AR following his usual formula (whether deliberate or not) of not mentioning the weather when not on the water. Wind conditions vary from calm to fierce when on the waters. Otherwise, from all appearances, we can assume **largely hot and dry conditions**.

Great Northern?

Day 1 (chapters 1 & 2): ‘The Minch can be a stormy sea, but they had been lucky in their weather...’

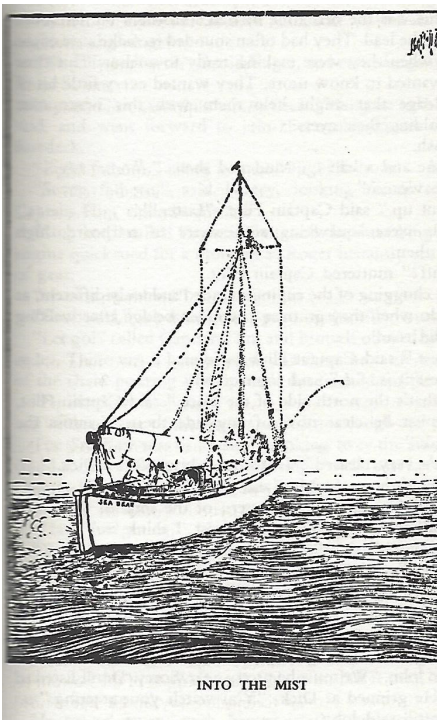
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It was a good deal easier to write lying on your stomach in a bunk than sitting at the cabin table whilst the *Sea Bear* was crashing her way to windward (Not that she was crashing very hard at the moment, with only a failing wind to drive her).’ Later, “‘Wind’s changed,” said Nancy. “Mist or fog coming...” Still a decent wind at this point, though. ‘This was no longer careless summer sailing. The wall of mist was moving to meet them...’ [The mist] won’t last. The wind’s coming off the land. It’ll be clear in the morning, [said Captain Flint].’

Day 2 (chapters 3 to 7): ‘...in the early morning, the mist had blown away... The sun poured down on the little bay. There was blue sky overhead. Little clouds flying across it were like scattered flecks of cotton wool... “A grand drying day,” said Captain Flint... “You’d never think it was blowing like this when you’re down in our creek,” said Titty, leaning against a gust of wind that blew her hair past her cheeks. “Dot’s lucky to have pigtails”... There had come a lull in the wind. Smooth water spread out over the loch from the shore... “I’d start now if there was any wind, but there isn’t,” [said Captain Flint.]’

Day 3 (chapters 8 to 12): ‘There isn’t wind to stir a candle flame’... The *Sea Bear* was sailing, though there was so little wind that the mainsheet never properly hardened, but hung... But the wind was no more than a promise. It kept dying



down and then raising false hopes...’ Then the wind picks up in the afternoon. And later – rain.

Day 4 (chapters 13 to 18): early morning—stopped raining but no stars showing (i.e., still overcast), very cold; north-west wind but using engine owing to lack of wind. Back at Scrubber’s Cove—action on shore; Dick on the loch island: ‘Lucky there’s a bit of wind,’ said John [enough for the birds not to notice ripples from the folding boat]... Dick saw waving reeds.’

Day 5 (chapters 19 to 29): “‘Good,” [said *Dick*]. “It’s going to be a fine day. It wouldn’t be any good without sunshine”... The surface of the loch, smooth in the windless, early morning, was broken by row upon row of long ripples [from the boat].’ It is presumed the conditions remained the same for the rest of the day – no mention of weather

during the action.

Summary we conclude the 12 with a nice range of weather conditions, from varying wind conditions, cold to warm, dry to wet and foggy to sunny. On that basis: it’s hard to criticise AR for his use of the weather as a significant factor in the bulk – if not all – of the stories.

Member profile: Graham and Joy Morrell, WaraTARS

We joined AusTARs in 2006 and wish we had joined sooner.

I (Graham) found AR in fifth class and, finally, discovered that reading was interesting. Joy had never come across the twelve and tolerated my interest. It was only after attending our first AusTARs event at a very soggy Smiths Lake that she began to read the series. Like many others I gained my basic sailing knowledge from the books, and started sailing in a Snark, a polystyrene boat named *Amazon*. We currently have an 18ft trailer-sailer, *Teasel*, that, unfortunately, very rarely gets wet these days.

‘Jack of all trades’ is probably the best description of my working career. I started in retail, then moved to transport, horticulture and finally maintenance for twenty years before retiring to become Joy’s carer. Joy spent many years as a bookkeeper, and also worked as a nurse’s aide and in horticulture, besides caring for our five daughters. None of these has any Ransome leanings, despite my efforts. But there may be hope in the grandchildren.

We finally managed our first trip to the UK in 2015, spending time on the Norfolk Broads and in the Lake District. Although disappointed in not being able to set foot on Wild Cat Island (Peel Island) we did manage to climb Kanchenjunga (Coniston

Old Man). We left the main track early on a misunderstanding and took a path that petered out, leaving us to climb to the top alone except for a few sheep and a fell runner who was gone almost as soon as we saw him.



At the cairn on Kanchenjunga

Member profile: Phoebe Palmieri, VicTAR

Arthur Ransome has been my companion since childhood, and I reread my favourites every year. I was given my father's and aunt's copies of the Twelve when I was about ten. I quickly came to love them, first for the stories and then for the evocation of place and of nature. In AusTARS I've found kindred spirits with common interests, who have become an important part of my life, and it was thanks to TARS that I've learned about Ransome's extraordinary journalistic life.

I'm probably not a typical Ransome lover, though, as I am by no means an outdoor girl. Even though I enjoyed several camping holidays in France as a child and teenager I really don't like the discomforts of camping (finding we'd put up our tent on a bullants' nest in the Flinders Ranges only added to the misery of no proper bathroom). Bushwalking, too, is not for me: too many snakes, too much uphill, too many scratches and bites. And to my regret, and in spite of numerous attempts to change, I find sailing terrifying—being on one of those wobbly things with all that dark water underneath takes my breath away, and not in a good way. *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* is the only S&A story that I've never reread as it's the stuff of nightmares for me.



found myself living in St Kilda in the summer I loved it—the warmth, the beach, the freedom. I spent a year as a nanny/secretary in South Australia, a job for which I was completely unfitted, but which quickly taught me the alluring beauty of the country. And I also learned to identify merino wool, and to dance a Viennese waltz; these skills also have remained unused.



Trying to enjoy it...

So I've had to make do with vicarious sailing via S&A, Hornblower, Masefield et al. But, thanks to a challenge from a friend, I can boast that I was for a time knowledgeable about Nelson's navy and able to list the battle stations at the Battle of Aboukir Bay (though I can't recite *Casabian-*

Following this I got a temporary job at RMIT—where I remained in various roles for nearly twenty years. In my first year there I met Santo, a student architect with curly brown hair and sparkling brown eyes, and we have now been married for nearly 47 years, during which time he has provided me with five beautiful houses (consecutively, not concurrently). We have also survived six months of 24/7 togetherness during lockdown, and I'm happy to say the cross words have been remarkably few.

As I moved from administrative to academic work, I became interested in online and flexible learning, and spent the remaining years until my retirement researching and teaching in this area and was lucky enough to visit people and institutions all over Australia.

ca, sorry Nancy and Peggy), and able to name all the sails of a full-rigged ship.

I do have a Ransome connection, however: I am a Norfolk dumpling by birth (and, alas, girth) and spent much time in and around Norwich and the Broads. Norfolk has some marvellous beaches, and I remember many holidays shivering in my bathers and thick sweaters while I waited for my father to get the Primus going for tea. I also spent one holiday pretending to enjoy sailing on Secret Water (Hamford Water).

Since retiring I have spent a good deal of my time learning Italian, to communicate better with my mother-in-law, and volunteering with the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project. I teach English and provide general support to an Iranian Kurdish family who are suffering severe stress after seven years of not knowing what the future holds for them, and with whom I have become very good friends, all the more so since I discovered what an excellent cook the mother, Mrs K, is. During our long lockdown I have very much missed my TARS friends.

After growing up in London I read Classics at the University of Bristol. There I learned to love archaeology and took part in various excavations. I spent my summer vacations in Winchester where there were extensive works finding out about the city in Roman, Saxon and mediaeval times. I worked on the Cathedral Green, seeking the Anglo-Saxon Old Minster and the abbey church of New Minster. Here I learned to identify a leper's bones, a skill which, however, has seldom been of use.

And finally, which are my favourites among the Twelve? Hard to say, but perhaps *Winter Holiday* (for some cool relief in the summer), *Pigeon Post* (to warm up a winter day), *The Big Six*, where Dorothea shines with her organising and detective abilities and *The Picts and the Martyrs*, again because of Dorothea's courage and resourcefulness, as well as the delight of watching Nancy and the GA outwitting each other.

Immediately after graduating I migrated to Australia with my family. I was strongly against the idea, but from the moment I

Des Kelsall: A New Zealand link to Arthur Ransome

Cheryl Paget has been looking at the TARSNZ archives

Rummaging through the TARSNZ archives, I found some letters and an old newsletter (*FS* vol 14 no 2, April, 2012) that TARSNZ member Bob Cuming had given me a few years back for safe keeping. I thought *Furthest South* members would be interested in reading them, so I asked Bob for a quick summary of how he tracked down Des Kelsall, a tangible link to Ransome, to Havelock North, New Zealand.

Incidentally, after Bob told me this story, I noticed that there was a bench outside the parish church in Havelock North donated by the Kelsalls, so there is still a permanent reminder in the village of this little link to Ransome.

We learn from the *All Things Ransome* website that:

As a boy, Des Kelsall lived at Barkbooth across the Winter Valley from the Ransomes at Low Ludderburn. Ransome would come and read Des and his brother Dick the latest sections of *Swallows and Amazons* as the book was written. Their father devised the 'shape signalling system' to communicate with Ransome concerning fishing trips, and which Ransome later incorporated in *Winter Holiday*. Des was also one of the children who posed for photographs from which Ransome later made his drawings (the pictures he termed 'Hollywoods').

In the early 2000s Des moved to New Zealand, where he became the New Zealand Overseas Coordinator for TARS (The Arthur Ransome Society) and a subscriber to the U.S. newsletter *Signals from TARSUS*. In 2003 Des began a series of articles for *SJT* concerning his experiences as a Fisheries Officer on Lake Victoria in Tanzania, but was forced to leave off the series after the first few pieces. (<https://www.allthingsransome.net/connections/index.html>)

Bob writes:

Reference to letters from Des Kelsall to me brought back a few memories about their origins. I became aware sometime in early 2005 (from a lovely article in *Signals*) that Des was domiciled in NZ with his New Zealand bride. It was about his backstory decision to immigrate to the bottom of the world with his new soul mate later in his life.

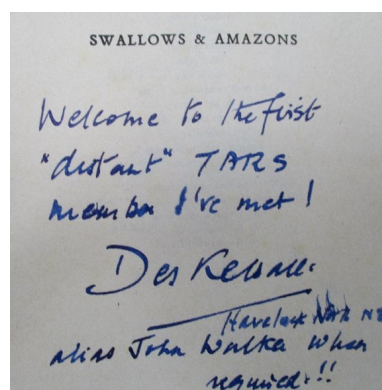
Our NZ news was modest then and raised little fanfare about a 'Kelsall Boy' being on our shores. But this was a direct link to Arthur Ransome and a chance not to be missed. A little research, and with contacts made in June 2005, my wife and I travelled from Hamilton to Havelock North, a North Island journey of a few hours, full of anticipation and armed with older copies of *S&A* and *Swallowdale*... guess what for?

Des and his wife were delighted to see us, as no other contact had been made with any TARS in NZ, and we had a wonderful time reminiscing over a delicious afternoon tea. I took a number of photos of our meeting, with books being signed and a promise to keep in touch. We did for some time and then I received the news that he had passed away, bringing an end to the connection to AR.

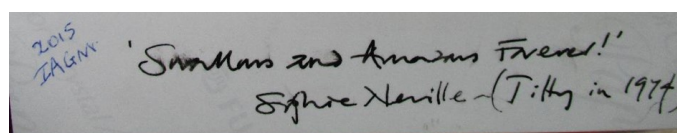
As a footnote, I can add that in 2015 I attended the 25th IAGM in Norfolk and took with me a picture of Des to



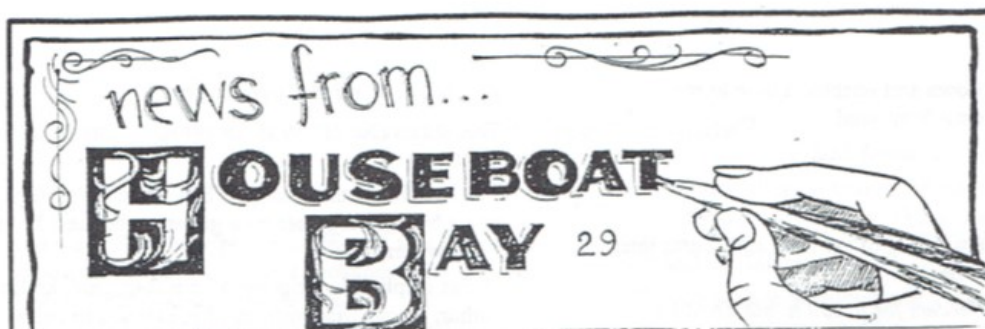
Des signing *Swallows & Amazons* and *Swallowdale* books at his home at Havelock North, NZ



give to his brother Dick Kelsall, who I expected would be there. Alas, I was to find he had passed away in the recent past. I covered my disappointment by getting Sophie Neville to sign the back of the photo for me and bring it back to NZ.



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TARNZ

Last year we sent a couple of issues of *Furthest South* to Janet Dick for circulation to TARS in New Zealand. We plan to continue doing this. Janet took over the role of New Zealand coordinator and editor of *News from Houseboat Bay* when her father, Roger Dick, died in 1998.

In NFHB Issue 28 Janet said tar-tar when she handed over these jobs to Des Kelsall. We would like to thank the youthful Janet who continued her father's work.

Des told us something about himself in *Furthest South*, May 2000. As a child he helped Arthur Ransome prepare the ship's papers for *Swallowdale*, an enviable claim to fame. We are hoping to combine *Furthest South* and *News from Houseboat Bay* for the time being to facilitate production of the 40 newsletters for AusTars and 20 for TARNZ. [Eds]

Desmond Kelsall, TARNZ liaison officer and editor, 6 Glenpark Place, Havelock North, New Zealand.

I had a letter from Janet Allen a few days ago, in reply to one of mine and was a bit shaken to learn that the deadline for February's *News from Houseboat Bay* was the last day of January. I hadn't even begun to think of what to say. Like many people who are not journalists, I am quite unable to write to order - the spirit has to move me. So, here goes.

While Margaret (my wife) and I were in U.K. for three months during last so-called summer, I was able to take her, courtesy of Helen Caldwell, to Ludderburn and to show her AR's old barn. This is where he did so much of his early S&A writing. We also saw the cottage itself. She was thrilled and I found it rather nostalgic visiting these places so closely tied to my youth, 70-plus years ago. There has been remarkably little change over the years.

We were also able, courtesy of John & Jean Caldwell, to visit *Barkbooth* across the valley, my old family home of the 1920s and early 1930s, and to see the Barkbooth/Ludderburn signalling, equipment, immortalised in *Winter Holiday* and still in remarkably good shape. Growth of the wood in the valley bottom over the years has, however, virtually blanked off the direct line of sight to Ludderburn.

I have just been re-reading (for the umpteenth time) *The Picts and the Martyrs* and *Great Northern?*, both favourites of mine and found them as enjoyable as ever. That, I think, is one of the beauties of AR's writing. They never pall and if, at times, they seem a little dated, one can forgive him. After all, he was writing about 70 years ago so it is rather like the work of Dickens to the post WWI generation.

One silly thought has long intrigued me, starting with S&A. On an island where the rock must be only inches

below the surface, what did the Swallows do about providing latrines? The requirement for sanitary facilities must have existed, but in those days such things were not mentioned with the freedom which rules today. I wonder how the problem was actually dealt with - anyone got any ideas?

On another topic, does anyone remember (I certainly don't!) what the prices of basic foodstuffs such as pemmican, bread, baked beans, marmalade, etc. were in those days? My father was then running a poultry farm and I fancy that eggs were then about 10 to 12 pence (old pence) per dozen.



Desmond and Margaret Kelsall at their wedding

6 Glenpark Place,
HAVELOCK NORTH.

5th.May 2001.

Dear Bob,

I was delighted to get your letter of 2nd. May – many thanks for taking the trouble to write and also for being so honest about your feelings about the A.R. world! Having known A.R. myself when I was a boy in the 1930s, I sometimes feel that the Society sometimes tends to go overboard a bit in dealing with his memory. However, I do NOT voice such thoughts lest the “true believers” should be offended! You should certainly not have any worries about reading the AR books; I still read –and enjoy – them, and I am now over 81. Anyhow, welcome to the Society at the ripe old age of 56!

I feel that AR belongs to the group of writers which includes Nevil Shute, Arthur Hailey and others (even if they did not write children’s books) who were just darned good storytellers. I remember when we lived at “Barkbooth” in the Winster valley and had the signalling arrangement with AR at “Ludderburn” across the valley, AR used to come over from time to time to get my brother and I plus three girls from a family we knew in Bowness to perform sundry activities which he photographed and then used the photos to work out the pen & ink drawings for the books when he was doing the illustrations himself. In the early days, when S&A had just been published, he came over one afternoon for tea. I went down to meet him, walking across from Ludderburn, at Hartbarrow Bridge over the river Winster. Walking across the fields from there, he asked if I had enjoyed S & A. At 10 or so years old one has no inhibitions and I told him how much I and my brother had enjoyed the book. I asked if he was going to write another. He said: “If I did, what do you think ought to happen in it?” I replied that I thought John should be overconfident in sailing “Swallow” and should run her on the rocks, so that the Swallows would have to be confined to dry land in some way. AR gave a great shout of laughter, in the way he sometimes did, and told me: “That’s exactly what I was thinking of doing.” And, in due course, out came “Swallowdale”. If you look at the beginning of this book, you will find “the Ship’s Papers”. These were written out by me and I signed them as “John Walker”. I can’t remember now who the other signatories were, but I think my brother signed as “Roger”.

You can sometimes pick up the books in a second-hand bookshop, but if not you will find Ted Alexander’s address in the back of “Mixed Moss”. He can usually supply any book required.

I was interested to hear that you had spent 23 years in the aviation industry, though you do not say in what capacity. I myself was a Fleet Air Arm pilot through nearly six years in WW II and flew most of the aircraft types which the Navy had, including Seafires, Hurricanes and Fireflies, plus a fair bit of time on Ansons & Oxfords. I missed out on the later U.S. types, except for a little time on Grumman Wildcats.

You really ought to persuade your wife (? And the young) at least to sample an AR book. It just might catch on, even though it was a different world when the books were written.

I am a late-come Kiwi, having spent most of my life in Britain and in East Africa (post war) where I worked for 12 years as a Fisheries Officer on Lake Victoria, where I used to do all my safari work in a 45 ft. MFV, being away, usually, for 2 – 3 weeks at a time, accompanied by my wife. A wonderful job and very interesting. She died in 1993 and I lived in retirement in Northumberland for about 14 years. Then a lady, the widow of a close friend at University (St. Andrews) who had known of me for many years but had never met me,

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called in to see me and stayed for a couple of days. With her husband, she had lived in N.Z. for about 30 years, teaching, and she finally persuaded me to go out and visit her there. I stayed with her for three months and liked the country so much that, a year later, I went back again, this time for 4 months. I stayed with her in 1997/98 when she visited U.K. and the long and short of it was that we got engaged. I had come to the conclusion that N.Z. was a far better place (esp. climatewise) to live than Northumberland, so I sold up everything in UK, we came out together in Sept. 1998 and were married here in H.N. on 31st. October 1998 and I aim to stay here until I drop. We did have 3 months in UK last year to visit relations and friends, but after even a 2-year absence UK appalled us! We have no intention of going back again. I have two grown-up boys there and the younger is coming out with his girlfriend to visit us in December.

Yes, AR's lake is a combination of Windermere and Coniston. I think the farms where they stayed are real but the Amazons are a bit fictitious. AR had a lively imagination! I'm afraid that, being so far spread out, there is virtually no direct contact between TARS members in N.Z., but if you should ever be in these parts, you would be most welcome to call in and even spend a night with us. I am usually at home, when not fishing or golfing.

Well, I think I'll print this off before I lose it through some stupidity. (Actually I've got it saved, I think!)

Hope this arrives ok. - I couldn't decipher the name of your road!
Good to hear from you. If its ok with you, I may embody bits of your letter in the "News from Houseboat Bay" that I write for "Furthest South".
Incidentally, you are only the second TARS member who has given me some feedback.
Warmest regards to yourself & the family!

Aye -
Des.

6 Glenpark Place..
HAVELOCK NORTH

25TH. July 2001.

Dear Bob,

I was so pleased to get your letter of 21st. July - thanks for writing. I had not realised, until I looked in the file, that it was so long since I heard from you. Unfortunately I carelessly failed to run off a copy of my reply to you to put on file, so I honestly cannot recall exactly what I said. I know that I had it in mind to draw on the experiences of your youth when I wrote my next instalment of "News from Houseboat Bay", which is something that I shall be doing shortly.

I suppose that all of us, when we look back on our experiences of life, think that they cannot possibly be of any interest to anyone else. I certainly have that feeling, yet people often tell me that I have had a fascinating life and I ought to write a book about it - something that I am, in any case, just too lazy to do!

You do not say exactly what you were doing as an aircraft engineer, but I should not be surprised if it were quite as interesting as flying the things. I have always had an interest in the engineering side of aircraft; indeed, when I was for a period Squadron Maintenance Officer for 748 Naval Air Squadron (No. 10 NOTU), I became so interested in the engineering side that I wangled for myself something to which, as a pilot & instructor with that unit, I was in no way entitled – namely a fortnight’s course in “Merlin Maintenance” at the Rolls-Royce Technical School in Nightingale Road, Derby. The Chief Instructor there was a little man called Tony Rodocanacci, always known as “Tony da Greek”, although actually he hailed, I believe, from Crete. Whatever, he was a superb instructor who knew the Merlin inside out. In a fortnight there I learnt more high-quality basic mechanical engineering than I have learnt in the rest of my life.

You obviously enjoyed your time in U.K. We were there for 3 months last year but foolishly tried to do too much in the time, visiting relations & friends, and by the time we got back here we were absolutely exhausted and have no intention of going back for another dose! I used to know London fairly well through going up there for meetings. I always used to think that the best view of it was from the train pulling out of Euston Station! For some reason (which obviously neither you nor I can understand) the young seem to love the place.
* Maybe a couple of winters will cure your daughter!

* I don’t know the Red Fox series of AR books. Mine are all Jonathan Cape, mainly hardbacks . As to your query about AR books available from the Society, you should get into touch with:

Ted Alexander,
7 Camelot Crescent,
* Portchester,
FAREHAM, Hants. PO16 8ER. U.K.

* Ted handles all AR books that are in print and he could tell you what is available at the moment, and, if you ask him nicely, he could probably summarise the contents of the various books, or he may have a leaflet which does so. For AR’s biography try “The Life of Arthur Ransome” by Hugh Brogan, ISBN 0-224-02010-2. “Arthur Ransome & Captain Flint’s trunk” by Christina Hardyment, ISBN 0-224-02989-4 might also be worth reading. You might be able to get them from your local library. Anyhow, good hunting and keep in touch!

Regards!

Aye - Des.

14th. January 2002.

Bob Cuming,
82 Morrisville Road,
Hillcrest,
HAMILTON.

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter of 9th. January, which I was delighted to receive. (By the way, the rather "business – letter- like" format of this letter is simply a shortcut on the word processor so that I can address the envelope without having to type in your address! It's NOT intended to be a very formal letter.)

Glad you were able to find in your local library the two books I suggested as being worth reading. For myself, I think Hugh Brogan paints A.R. as disliking children, something I never encountered with him many years ago now. Christina Hardyment's book I thought was much easier reading. AR certainly had an interesting background and at one time was the British Government's only reliable link with the Bolshevik government. In view of the service which he did the country, I am sometimes surprised that he was not subsequently honoured by the British Government I only wish that you could have heard him relating one of his "Anansi" (I think that's the right word) Jamaican stories; for kids and grownups alike they were superb.

We had my younger son, Pete, and his girl Rosie out for Christmas. They arrived on Dec. 4th., spent 6 days with us and then took off in a hired car to explore South Island. While there, they did just about everything it is possible to do down there, from whale watching at Kaikoura to bungee jumping at Kawarau Gorge to climbing Fox Glacier to glow-worm caves and more also. They came back for a week over Christmas and then went slowly up to Auckland by car, visiting Rotorua and other places on the way, before flying out to the Cook Islands for a final week before returning to ice and snow in U.K., which I think would be a shock to them. They enjoyed their visit enormously and left talking of coming back as soon as poss., but as working folk it is not easy to amass enough leave to make the trip worthwhile. The house seems very empty without their cheerful presence. I expect it has been much the same with your daughter. and you will be missing her.

My name crops up in connection with AR simply because we were neighbours in the Winster Valley. He and my father used to fish together in various places, mainly the River Lune, and AR used to come over for tea and try out chunks of his latest book on my brother and I to get our reactions as kids the same kind of age as his characters. He was a great chap for a bit of fun with kids and really entered into anything that Dick and I were doing.

You mention a feature film on AR but I don't think I have ever seen this. Perhaps it came out after I left UK. The only thing of that kind that I have seen is the video of Brigit Sanders interviewing my brother and I to record our recollections of AR. I say it myself, but this was extremely well done and I fancy it has been used on T.V. Dick & I seemed to dovetail effortlessly into the interview.

I'm afraid that I have not read many of the books on AR which have been published. This favourite, perhaps because I myself drafted out the "Ship's Papers" at the beginning and signed as Captain John, so I feel a part of the book!

Must stop now and put this in the post. Best wishes for 2002. I can't see me coming near Hamilton, but many thanks for the invite, which I shall certainly take up if I should be anywhere near you.

TARS Greetings to you - Ss As & Ds forever!

Des.



Interview: Cheryl Paget, TARSNZ Co-ordinator

Most of us are aware of the fine job Cheryl has done for TARSNZ, but **Jan Allen** decided to find out more about her relationship with AR's books.

How long have you been a member of TARS?

I first joined in 1994, then left in 1998 and rejoined in 2003, and I've been a member ever since.

Did you read AR when you were a child, and if so, did the books make an impression?

I first received a copy of *Swallows & Amazons* just after Christmas when I was ten or eleven, from my Aunt, who had gone shopping with my Mum in the Boxing Day sales, leaving my Dad and my Uncle in charge of the house and five young children—an activity never repeated, I think, judging by the state of the house when they returned.

I can clearly remember lying on the floor, and my Aunt handing me the book, saying, 'I got you this, I think you'll like it. It's set in the Lake District,' which is where my mother's family are from, and where my Aunt and Uncle still live.

I was hooked, and imagine my delight on my next visit to the library to find there were eleven more books for me to read, just like that one, and, even better, there were books set in the Norfolk Broads, which I knew, and *Peter Duck*, which starts off in Lowestoft, where I lived.

Have your sons also been readers of AR?

They grew up listening to the Gabriel Woolf versions on CD, which means their recollection of the books is different from mine. They usually do well in quizzes as they remember the details that you often skim over in the books.

You came to New Zealand from the UK. What was your involvement with TARS while in the UK?

I used to go along to the events, and eventually got 'volunteered' to organise the junior activities for the IAGM to be held in the Eastern region in 2009. I didn't make myself popular when I announced I couldn't be there that weekend as I would be immigrating to New Zealand on the Monday! I handed over the planned activities in a big box and said, 'Good luck!'

You are a keen and knowledgeable reader of children's literature. Which authors do you recommend, and do you have some favourite books?

Read anything that you enjoy, fiction or non-fiction, graphic novels, comics or plain text. There is an idea that there are right or wrong books for children—it's not as straightforward as that, and for boys, particularly, anything that gets them reading is good.

Anne of Green Gables really resonated with me, and I ended up doing a degree in English Language and Literature simply because Anne Shirley did a degree in English. I often wonder what I would have done instead if I hadn't read that book!

TARS worldwide have read with interest the results of your research into areas of AR's literary life. Are there still aspects of AR and his work that intrigue you?

I have a long list of areas of interest I'd like to research! Primarily I'm interested in whether Ransome had left-wing political view before he went to Russia, formed in his Bohemian years. I'd also like to find out more about Aleister Crowley, and the Bloomsbury set, and whether Ransome had any contacts there, and if, through Crowley, Ransome met R H Bruce Lockhart before he went to Russia.

I'd also like to research the Arts and Crafts Movement, and whether Ransome was influenced by Collingwood/Ruskin and if that's why he wrote such detailed explanations of things like charcoal burning.

I also recently found out that Basil Thomson (head of CID who interviewed Ransome ('What's your politics?' 'Fishing') worked in the Colonial Office and served in Fiji before returning to London, which I thought might make an article for *FS* readers.

I would like to explore whether Ransome was affected by the deaths of so many of his friends during the war, especially the Dymock Poets. When he returned to England, so long after the war ended, few of his old comrades were around, so did that play a part in his change of direction from journalism to children's author?

You have recently stepped down as Co-ordinator for New Zealand. Members in NZ have appreciated your untiring efforts on their behalf. When did you begin in this role, and have you enjoyed it?

I took over as NZ Co-ordinator from Peter Summers in 2012, after I'd organised the first birthday weekend. On the whole, yes, I have enjoyed the role; there are times when it isn't fun but I wouldn't do it if it wasn't mainly interesting and fun!

You were awarded the AusTARS Cup for 2017 for your work as NZ Co-ordinator. What have been the highlights of your time in this role?

Organising the birthday weekends, when my inner Nancy can be let loose. Normally I'm a bit of a Susan, a total organiser, but after I've organised everything within an inch of its life, I can enjoy being with everyone and taking part in the activities!



Continued on page 23

I have also derived a lot of pleasure researching and writing articles for *Mixed Moss* and *Furthest South* and so on, and giving presentations about Ransome. My dream job would be to be paid to write about children's books, so TARS has enabled me to do that as a hobby, the next best thing.

You initiated and undertook the large task of the organisation of numbers AR Birthday Weekends for TARSNZ. Would you like to reflect on the success of these weekends and the benefit to your members?

The benefit is that members have been able to get together and meet one another, which they had never been able to do before the weekends were organised, and some great friendships have been made, which makes the weekends a success. We have even been able to travel to Australia and join in events there, and Jan came to NZ to take part in our last weekend; how fantastic is that?!

Have you a vision for TARSNZ for the future?

If everything can carry on as it has been that would be brilliant, and of course, with some new members. The one thing we

haven't been able to do is small boat sailing; if that can be managed, I think some of our members will be happy to try it.

What do you value most about being a TAR?

The opportunity to meet people and make friends with others who have the same interests in literature and love of the same author. If you run out of things to say you can always talk about the books! I've met some wonderful people, grown deep friendships and visited some great places around the world that I would never have gone to without TARS. Also, as the boys grew up with TARS, we have been able to do things as a family over the years. I can honestly say I have had so much fun and fulfilment, both intellectually and personally, from TARS over the years.

My favourite quote is by Katherine Graham (publisher of the *Washington Post*): 'to love what you do and feel that it matters—how could anything be more fun?' This definitely applies to TARSNZ!

VicTARS Christmas festivities

Phoebe Palmieri

This year, for reasons with which we are all only too familiar, we decided to play it safe and meet outdoors. Woodlands Historic Park was the venue, and very lovely it was. We picnicked at the northern end of the park, surrounded by massive, ancient red gums (which we were careful not to sit beneath). On inspection of its bark, one of them showed distinct evidence of having been used as a knickerbockerbreaker.

As you can see from the photograph (and as is usual among VicTARS), the occasion centred on food. But in another break from tradition we resolved not to share food but each brought our own. But Jan, as always, had some activities planned for us. The first was a treasure hunt, which was able to be done without leaving our chairs. But though it was sedentary our brains got a good work-out. All the clues were cryptic, and were written in semaphore or morse; when these mysteries had been unravelled we were left with an anagram to solve. Nancy completed the task first and found that the prize was within arm's reach—a most unusual treasure hunt.

I was unable to make my usual pinata this year, but Jan, with her usual resourcefulness, had managed to find one, and this was attacked with gusto until finally smashed by Martin.

Santa had managed to find us in our unaccustomed location, and distributed presents which were received enthusiastically, and plenty of chocolate was distributed in the form of pirate gold and the contents of the pinata.



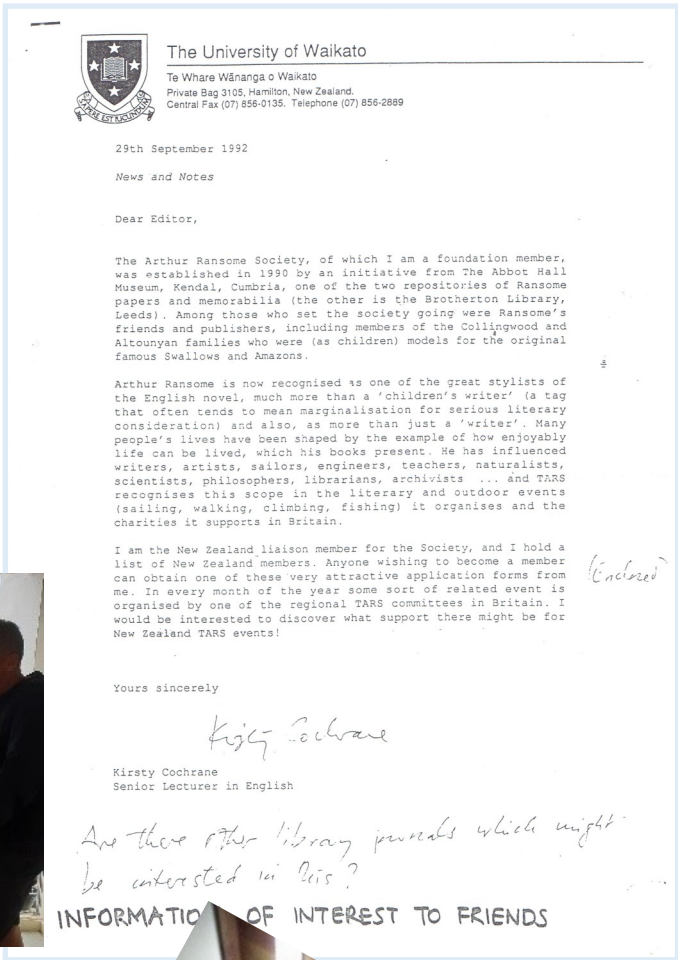
From the NZ archives

Cheryl Paget

Bob Cuming gave me this letter for the TARSNZ archives from Kirsty Cochrane dated 1992. To my knowledge, no event was held to commemorate Ransome by TARS members in New Zealand until 2012, when I sent out a very similar letter inviting members to Havelock North for a birthday weekend of events, and we have managed to hold a get-together every year since. Maybe TARSNZ members can correct me on that?

TARSNZ members - do you have any old newsletters or letters from past co-ordinators that you can scan, so we can create something of an archive?

Here is a selection of photos from our events since 2012 to remind TARSNZ members of our annual birthday weekends, or other get-togethers!



2020 Wellington



2012 Hawkes Bay



2014 Auckland



2019 Wellington Tuia flotilla



2019 Wellington

Continued on page 25



2016 Alan Hakim visit



2013 Wellington



2017 Hamilton



2015 Geraldine



2016 Hawkes Bay Art Deco Weekend talk at Napier library



2018 Dunedin

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARTER OF THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA, INC.

No: A0048606E

RATIFIED BY THE AUSTARS COMMITTEE, FEBRUARY 6TH, 2020

* This document replaces earlier Role Statements of the Society (AusTARS)


General Information

1. The AusTARS Committee is responsible for the administration of all aspects of the Society's activities and is the decision-making body of the Society.
2. The Society is referred to herein as 'AusTARS'.
3. AusTARS operates under its official rules as an Incorporated, not-for-profit association, as registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria; also with additional reference to the Constitution of the parent body, The Arthur Ransome Society, and that organisation's Memorandum and Rules of Association under the United Kingdom's companies Acts 1985 and 1989.
4. The Common Seal of AusTARS, as referred to in the Rules, is the official AusTARS stamp, held by the Secretary.
5. The office bearers of AusTARS, constituting the Committee, may hold a particular office for a maximum period of six years, according to the Rules of Incorporation and also of UK TARS, after which time individual office bearers may not hold that office again until a minimum period of one year has elapsed.
6. Members of AusTARS may be co-opted by the Committee or accepted as volunteers to assist with tasks as assigned by the Committee; or the Committee may employ paid staff to undertake tasks. Under the Rules, AusTARS has the power to initiate or terminate the period during which any volunteer member or paid staff is appointed to assist with any activity of AusTARS. [see Rules, Part 5, Division 1, No. 42 (3)].

Overview of Committee Duties

(expanded from generalities of Association Rules of Incorporation)

1. Collect membership subscriptions. Forward to UK TARS. Maintain membership records.
2. Manage the financial affairs of AusTARS.
3. Implement the Policies and Guidelines of AusTARS as appropriate within all areas of AusTARS activity.
4. Utilise the AusTARS Protocols as appropriate for relevant areas of AusTARS administration.
5. Produce and distribute items of interest to members, via newsletters, bulletins, website or social media to facilitate and promote contact between members, including TARSNZ members, according to the Privacy and Equality Policies.
6. Implement and oversee newsletter style and content planning and the organisation of its production, according to AusTARS Policies and Protocols.
7. Liaise and co-operate with UK TARS initiatives, including joint website links, Trustee requirements and requested input to UK publications.
8. Administer the AusTARS Cup annual award, according to the award provisions; administer the AusTARS occasional award, the Jan Allen Award, according to its criteria.
9. Report annually to the UK TARS Board and to the AusTARS Annual General Meeting on all aspects of the Society's activities (including membership, newsletter, events program, library, website/social media, publicity/development, archive, etc.) and periodically report to members on the Society's activities via newsletters and/or bulletins.
10. Supervise the instigation, planning and administration of any AusTARS events which have been scheduled in response to member demand, according to AusTARS Policies. minister all aspects of AusTARS activities, as listed above, to the benefit of all members.



Whether you're having a Winter Holiday or
a Summer one, we wish a very happy
Christmas and festive season to all
southern hemisphere TARS, and a safe and
satisfying year in 2021!

I'm sure you will agree that this issue contains plenty of in-
teresting reading. Please keep up the flow in the new year,
and send your articles and pictures to

Jan Allen (jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com)

by 28 February 2021

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

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