

FURTHEST SOUTH

VOLUME 19 NO 1

JOURNAL OF THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

ARTHUR RANSOME IN SYRIA

DICK AND DOROTHEA IN NEW ZEALAND

ON AND OFF THE RAILS IN MALDON

CHRISTMAS CHEER IN VICTORIA

THE AMAZING ARCHER FISH

ARTHUR'S BIRTHDAY - NZ

WERRIBEE WANDER

NZ NEWS & EVENTS

ARTHUR
RANSOME
1884-1967

50th Anniversary

Co-ordinators' Reports - Events Calendar - Book Club

Quiz - Campfire Cooking - News - Event Reports



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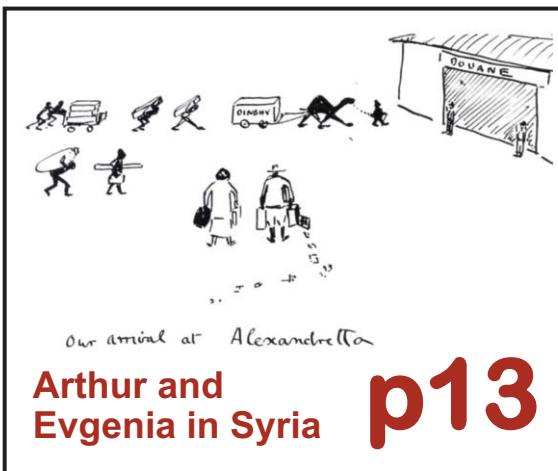
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Cover photo: Asia Minor, Syria & Mesopotamia. *The Edinburgh Geographical Institute, John Bartholomew & Son, Ltd. 'The Times' atlas. (London: The Times, 1922) © David Rumsey Collection*



Arthur and Evgenia in Syria **p13**



Missee Lee celebrations in Camblidge, NZ **p20**



On and Off The Rails in Maldon, VIC **p26**

EDITORIAL

Looks like another bumper issue - and that's not a 'train pun' - we have in fact reached a new 36pp milestone of content for *Furthest South*. Up from 24pp two years ago, and 32pp last year.

Having a major lead article in each issue helps push the page count up, so if anyone feels like researching or writing anything at all, even vaguely AR-related, please get in touch. Reminiscences of your first AR experience; how the books have influenced your life, or any thoughts and ideas you may have had as a result of reading *The Twelve*.

But in the meantime, we have a big

speculative article from Garry Wood on what might have happened had Dick and Dot travelled to NZ in the fifties after graduating (we assume) from university. Garry speculates Dick would have been dead keen on getting to where there were more unknown birds than in the northern hemisphere. NZ, of course!

For those of us who missed UKTAR Alan Hakim's lecture on Arthur's time in Syria, and the Altounyans' various locations in the region that both he and archaeologist (and UKTAR) Jill Goulder have re-discovered and identified, there's a fascinating article on these with

a bit of additional research by yours truly to highlight aspects of Alan's story.

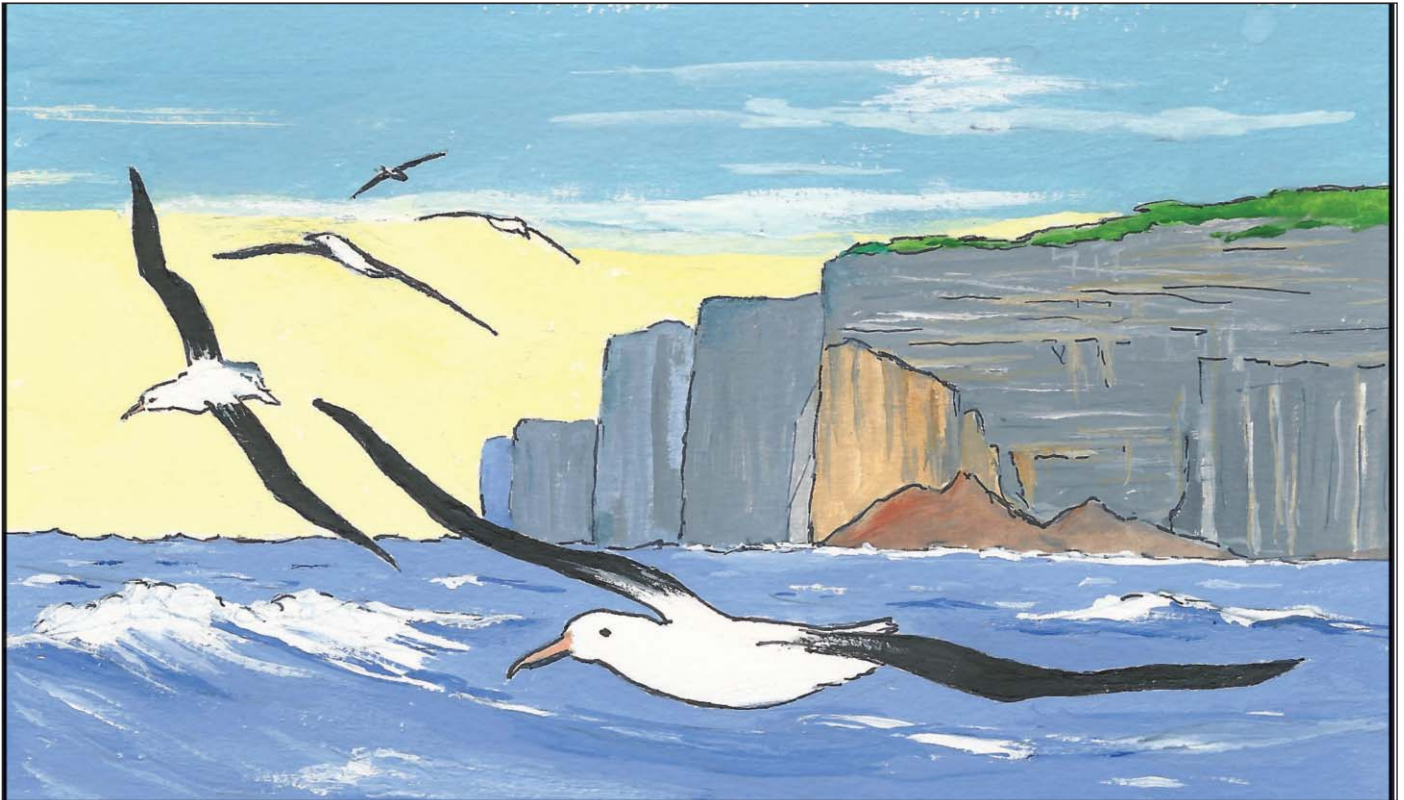
As well as the 'Dick and Dot in NZ' story, we have a bumper collection of NZ News, with six pages given over to our Kiwi brethren. They beat us at rugby, they beat us at cricket, and they have damn good TARS events as well!

We've also got reports on various VIC TARS activities, including a steam-driven trip to Maldon, and a wander along the river and bay at Werribee.

And don't forget those Letters, people! We need to know you are reading and, hopefully, enjoying it all..!

DICK AND DOT DOWN UNDER?

Just imagine, for a moment, a grown-up Dick and Dot, following their dreams - the one into birds, the other into writing - and imagine a post-war sojourn in New Zealand for this purpose. **Garry Wood** has, and here's the intriguing result.



Near the towering basalt ramparts of the main Auckland Island, southern royal albatrosses skim the waves

In an article in *Furthest South* (2009) the writer Michael Round made the interesting suggestion that Arthur Ransome's *Great Northern?* could have been set in Australia, rather than in Scotland. Instead of the Great Northern diver, Michael's suggested replacement was the musk duck, a fairly large bird which occurs in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia. Like the diver, musk ducks are primarily water birds spending their days on rivers, lakes and estuaries, and on occasion flying out to sea.

If Michael's idea were carried a step further into the 1950s, the characters of Dick and Dorothea Callum would by then have been adult, and, rather than

Australia, might well have visited New Zealand for ornithological purposes. If we speculate that Dick, with his interest in birds, would most probably have studied science at university in England (specialising in ornithology of course!), he could then have obtained employment in ornithological research, perhaps specialising in ocean-going seabirds that visit Britain, particularly migratory species like the diver. Dorothea would very likely have embarked on a career in freelance journalism, with the writing of novels as a sideline.

However, the number and the variety of seabirds in British waters are relatively restricted, and Dick would soon have become aware how

different was the Great Southern Ocean, where the sea predominates, and where the few wind-blown specks of islands are separated across the southern part of the globe by enormous distances.

In this southern ocean, to the south of New Zealand, are several groups of subantarctic islands. These islands are the realm of vast numbers of breeding seabirds, with some species spending the greater part of their lives at sea, soaring in the wind across the often stormy ocean (Fig. 1). Dick might well have sensed that there was an opportunity there to develop a book on southern hemisphere oceanic sea birds, perhaps in conjunction with New Zealand ornithologists, and could

Some of the birds endemic to the Auckland islands



Left: Southern Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*); Above: White-capped mollymawk (*Thalassarche steadi*); Below left: Antarctic prion (*Pachyptila desolata*); Below right: Buller's Albatross (*Thalassarche bulleri*); Bottom left: Moseley's Rockhopper penguin (*Eudyptes chrysocome moseleyi*); Bottom right: Antarctic petrel (*Thalassoica antarctica*)



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The model for Happy Feet's 'Lovelace'



Left: New Zealand Storm Petrel (*Fregetta maoriana*)



Right: Northern Giant Petrel (*Macronectes halli*)

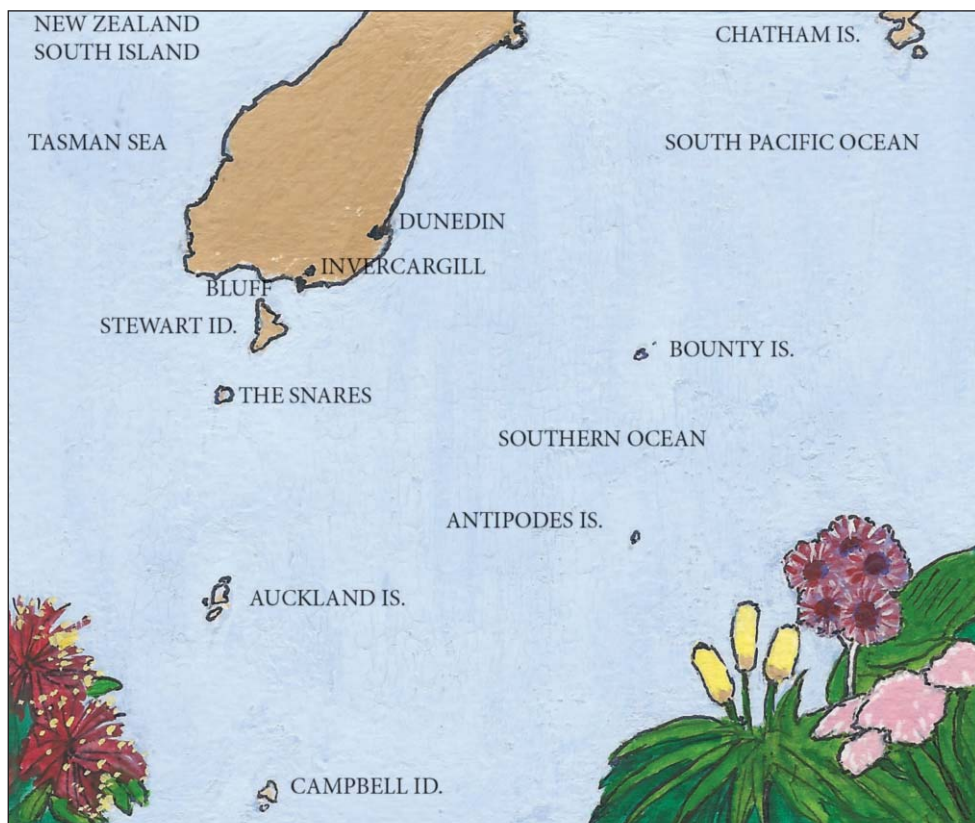
well have flown from England to New Zealand for this purpose, leaving Dorothea to follow later when he had gathered the relevant information that she could then work up for him into a book.

New Zealand would have been the starting point for study in the subantarctic islands as they were accessible, though with difficulty, from Bluff, the port for Invercargill in the southern part of the South Island. There were no landing strips for aircraft on any of the islands in the 1950s, so travel to and from them would have had to be by sea. During the summer months, expeditions to assess flora and fauna of these islands were organised, usually by the New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and also by universities and museums. As a visiting scientist, Dick might well have been invited to join one of the expeditions. Transport to the islands would have been by the chartered motor vessel *Alert*, or on occasion by Royal New Zealand Navy ships during fishery protection patrols. From 1971 the purpose-built *MV Acheron*, larger and more suitable than the *Alert*, was used for these expeditions through the turbulent

seas of the Great Southern Ocean.

Of the five subantarctic island groups (Fig. 2), the Auckland and Campbell islands are the most frequently visited by scientific expeditions. The largest of these is the Auckland Islands, which were formed from the remains of two enormous, adjacent and now long

extinct volcanoes, half of which have subsided into the sea. The western side of the main island has sheer towering cliffs rising to almost 600 metres, against which the prevailing westerly wind and waves beat constantly. The more sheltered eastern side of these islands is covered mainly

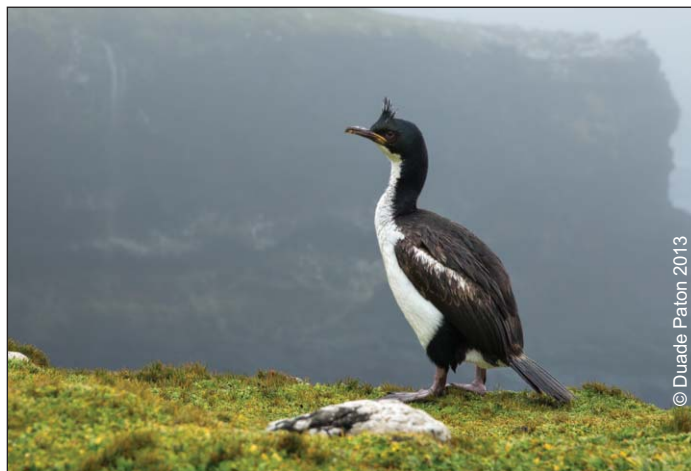


Map showing the location of the subantarctic islands, and also flowers of the southern red rata tree, and the flowers of the yellow Ross lily, the magenta megaherb daisy, and pink carrot herb

Some of the birds endemic to the Auckland islands



© Kirk Zureit 2011



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Left: Auckland Island Snipe (*Coenocorypha aucklandica aucklandica*); Above: Auckland Shag (*Phalacrocorax colensoi*); Below left: Auckland Island Rail (*Lewinia muelleri*); Below right: Auckland Island Teal (*Anas Aucklandica*); Bottom left: Auckland Island Tomtit (*Petroica macrocephala marrineri*); Bottom right: Banded dotterell (*Charadrius bicinctus*)



© Rod Morris 1975



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Left: Auckland Island Red-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*)



© Kirk Zieff 2011

Right: Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*)

in thick forest. In the early 19th century, the main island's ecology suffered from the introduction of livestock, and though the farms were eventually abandoned, remnant descendants of the livestock survive there today. In addition, pigs, goats and rabbits were introduced as food for shipwrecked seamen. Cats, rats and

mice inevitably got ashore and their attacks on some vulnerable bird species led to their extinction.

The Campbell Group, of tussock and scrub, and further to the south than the Aucklands, consists of a single large island, rising to 500m and surrounded by numerous rock stacks and islets. Sheep farming, which

commenced in 1896, was rather more successful than cattle farming, and continued to the 1930s when it was abandoned after becoming a casualty of the economic depression of the time. A solitary Sitka spruce tree (a native of NW Canada) growing on Campbell Island is believed to be the most remote living tree in the world. Planting of the tree is usually attributed to Lord Ranfurly in 1907, but there is some doubt about this, and it could have been planted there by shepherds at a later date. A coastwatcher's station was established on Campbell early in the Second World War as a lookout for German surface raiders which had been sinking merchant ships in the South Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. The former coastwatcher's station was turned into a meteorological station after the War. A new station was later established at nearby Beeman Cove in 1958, and automated in 1995 after which its staff were withdrawn.

An expedition in the 1950s would have been based on Enderby Island in the Auckland Islands' group. Enderby has somewhat warmer and better weather than the rest of the Auckland Islands. When in flower, its southern red rata trees are spectacular to see. On the offshore Disappointment Island, white-capped mollymawks



White-capped mollymawk nesting among subantarctic daisy megaherbs and tussock on Disappointment Island

Some of the flora endemic to the Auckland, Campbell and Snares islands



Left: Understorey of southern rata forest (*Metrosideros umbellata*), showing near horizontal branches, extremely difficult to forge a path through and, Right: a southern rata tree in full flower, providing nectar for birds such as tui and bellbirds



Left: *Anisotome latifolia* - a member of the carrot family

Right: Campbell Island Daisy (*Pleurophyllum speciosum*)



Left: Macquarie Island Cabbage (*Stilbocarpa polaris*)

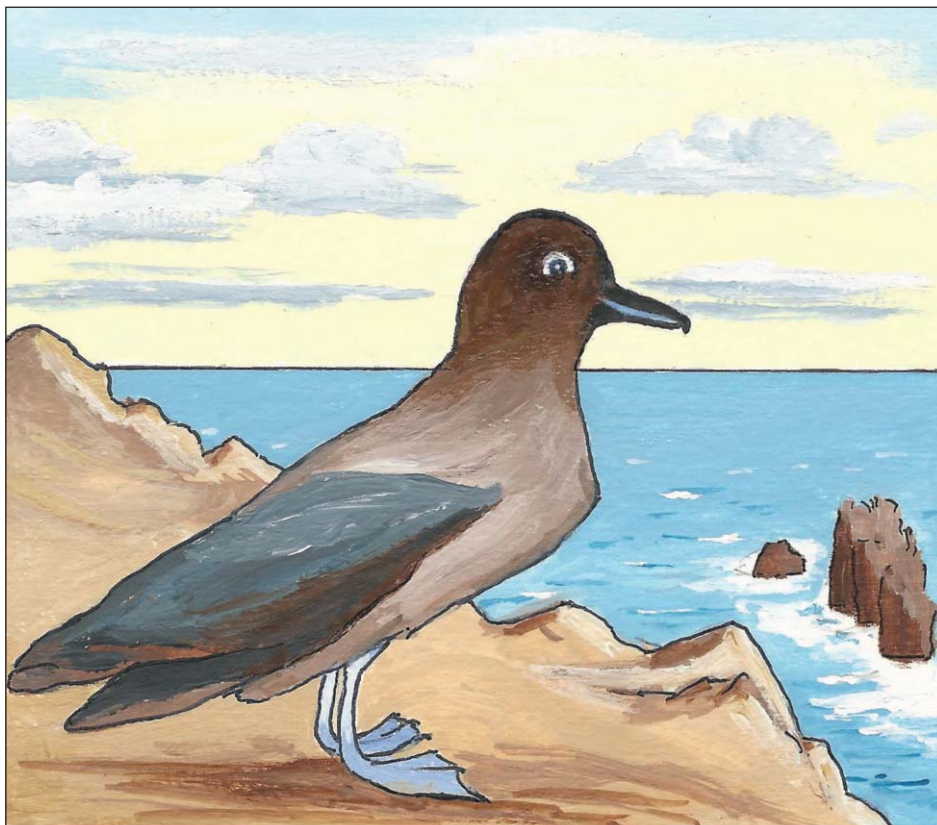
Right: Dragon leaf (*Dracophyllum longifolium*)

nest among tussock grasses and the strange megaherbs which have adapted themselves to the cold wet climate (Fig. 3). One of these megaherbs, the Campbell Island daisy, occurs on both the Auckland and Campbell Islands. It has broad fan-shaped leaves and in summer produces large magenta-coloured daisy-like flowers. Campbell Island also has the Ross lily megaherb with its golden yellow flower spikes, and the so-called Campbell Island carrot with its closely grouped pink flower heads up to 50cm across.

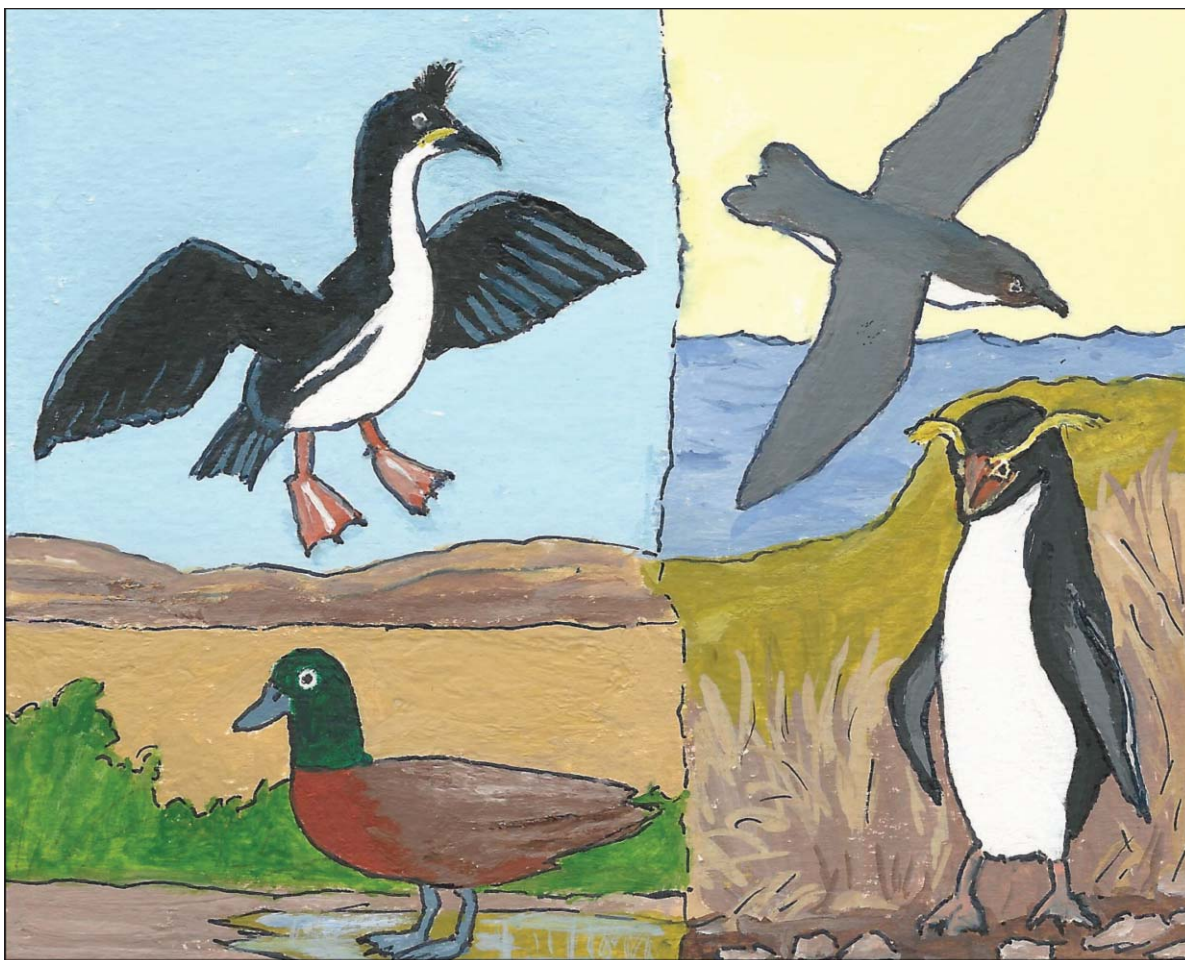
But it would have been the bird population that Dick would have come to see. And what birds they are! Supreme amongst them are the wandering albatrosses (*Diomedea*), four species of which inhabit the New Zealand subantarctic islands: the wandering, antipodean, northern royal and southern royal. Also present is the light-mantled sooty albatross (*Phoebastria*),

and three species of mollymawk (*Thalassarche*): the Campbell, Buller's, and white-capped. Mollymawks have a more pronounced dark eyebrow or line from beak to eye than albatrosses.

On the ground, albatrosses make short take-off runs into the usually fresh westerly wind, unfolding their wings to soar gracefully into the sky. Once clear of the land and over the sea they skim the rolling Great Southern



A beautiful light-mantled sooty albatross as occurs on Campbell Island



Montage of endemic birds of the subantarctic and Chatham islands. Clockwise from top left; Auckland Is. shag, Chatham Is. taiko petrel, Snares crested penguin, Campbell Island flightless teal



© Graeme Taylor 2006

Taiko or Magenta petrel in a nesting burrow

considerable number migrate to the subantarctic islands in summer. The Auckland Islands shag, an endemic species, lives on the Aucklands, and feeds and roosts in flocks there. One of the world's rarest flightless ducks, the Campbell Island teal, was captive-bred in New Zealand to save it from

debris has been taken to line the burrows of the estimated six million sooty shearwaters living there. A number of land birds have naturally colonised the Snares from the New Zealand mainland, and there are three species of land bird endemic to the Snares which occur nowhere else in the world. Also present are roughly 70,000 Snares crested penguins, also unique to the Snares, and who live in colonies well away from the sea which they reach along well trodden pathways.

On his return to the New Zealand mainland, Dick would have met up with Dorothea, who would have flown in from England to Auckland and thence to Dunedin. There they would probably also have visited the mainland colony of breeding northern royal albatrosses at Taiaroa Head, where the South Pacific Ocean meets the Great Southern Ocean. This albatross colony, not far from Dunedin

Ocean swells. By heading into the wind they can utilise the turbulent updraft air ahead of the ocean swell to gain altitude until they soar above the wave crest, gliding along this before diving down into the following wave trough to repeat the cycle, all without any visible flapping of wings. The wingspan of the larger albatross species can be up to three metres, and this allows them to stay aloft for long periods while circumnavigating the lower part of the globe.

The plumage of the albatrosses and mollymawks is usually a sleek white or black. In contrast, the light mantled sooty albatross is quite different having an attractive dark chocolate-brown face, paling to light grey on the body, with charcoal-grey to brownish wings. There is a white crescent around part of the eye and a light blue stripe on the lower mandible (Fig. 4). When observing their breeding areas on Campbell Island, Dick would have heard their eerie ahoy-like cry which drifts on the wind down the valleys of the island.

The rockhopper, erect-crested and yellow-eyed penguins that breed in the Auckland and Campbell Islands are entrancing; there can also be stragglers of other species up from the Antarctic continent. Then there are shearwater, petrel and prion birds. Numerous species of these birds are present in the South Pacific, and a

extinction. It was later successfully re-introduced to the island after its rat predator had been completely eliminated, and the island declared rat-free.

We can be sure that Dick would have spent some of his time with photography and taking notes, and probably assisting other members of the expedition in their study of the subantarctic bird life.

As a bonus stop on the return journey, the *Alert* would probably have called briefly at the Snares, the subantarctic islands nearest to the New Zealand mainland. Though the main island is extensively forested, the ground beneath the trees is generally bare, as leaf fall and



© Christian Mehlführer 2008

Yellow-eyed Penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*)

City, became naturally established in 1920, and has continued there ever since. One of the female royals regularly breeding at Tiaroa Head was given the name 'Grandma', and was estimated to be at least 61 years old when she failed to return after 1989.

The general public are not permitted to get too close to the birds so as to avoid disturbing them, but if Dick was an ornithologist, he, with Dorothea and conservation staff, would have been taken near to them, where they would no doubt have marvelled at the enormous size of the albatrosses (Fig. 6). Nowadays a grass runway, sloping down hill and into the prevailing wind is kept trimmed to help the albatrosses when running to get airborne.



Dick and Dorothea admire a nesting northern royal albatross at the Tiaroa Head colony

They might also have travelled to Cape Kidnappers in New Zealand's North Island where Dick and Dorothea would have seen a bird colony where thousands of Australasian gannets breed. Inland, they would have seen the native songbirds tui, bellbird and kokako, and perhaps might had a glimpse of the ground-dwelling kiwi.

One might wonder whether Dick could have repeated in New Zealand his triumphant discovery of the nesting divers in Scotland. Other researchers have made similar discoveries in New Zealand. Two species of petrel have recently been discovered alive and well here after long being thought extinct.

In 1867, an example of the taiko petrel was captured by researchers from the Italian Research Ship *Magenta* when it was cruising to the east of the Chatham Islands. Following the taiko's discovery, no further examples were

found until 1978 when several were rediscovered on the southern Chatham Island (Fig. 5) by researcher David Crockett. It took nearly ten years to find its breeding burrows there. With the birds being rare, a predator-proof fence has been built around a newly established breeding colony on the island.

Similarly, the New Zealand storm petrel, again thought extinct for nearly 100 years, was rediscovered in 2005 when one flew onto a fishing boat in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf and was captured and, after being studied, photographed and leg banded, was released. It took a further eight years before other storm petrels which had been found were fitted with radio transmitters and tracked to nesting sites on rugged and bush covered Little Barrier Island, 50 km north of Auckland city. Shortly afterwards a hatched chick was found.

The largest of the petrel species, the giant northern, is commonly found in New Zealand coastal waters, but its breeding sites are restricted to the subantarctic islands. Australian pelicans sometimes cross the Tasman Sea, and a group of 13 was recently established near the town of Dargaville north of Auckland, but as yet there have been no reports of them breeding there. Then there are stragglers from warmer climates probably blown in by storms, such as the white and red tailed tropic birds, frigate birds, noddies and others, but they are only temporary residents, and don't settle here. So if Dick had spent a longer time in mainland New Zealand it could just have been possible that he was in the right place at the right time to repeat his discovery in finding one of these usually transient birds breeding here.

No doubt Dick, assisted by Dorothea, would have written an account - that

would almost certainly have been sought after by both professional and amateur ornithologists - of the seabirds of the southern ocean. On their return to England we can imagine he would have called on Dorothea to help unscramble his notes, often hastily written and marked by the wind, rain, salt spray and dirt in the inhospitable climate of the subantarctic islands. The many photographs he took would have to have been catalogued to illustrate his account. They might then have worked together on a natural history book of their travels for a wider audience.

At that time, the often senseless destruction of wildlife was not given much thought by the population in general. A book based on observations such as Dick could well have made might have helped to bring about the introduction of wild life conservation as we know it today. Even so, in recent years, conservators have had great concerns over the large number of oceanic seabirds being caught on hooks and drowned by long lines from commercial fishing vessels. Because of this, attempts have been made to introduce less harmful fishing methods to prevent the extinction of slow-breeding sea bird species. In addition, since 1954 the subantarctic islands have been gazetted as nature reserves, programmes to eradicate grazing animals and predators such as rats initiated, and restrictions made on fishing in surrounding seas.

It would no doubt have pleased Dick and Dot to learn that the islands have, since 1998, been collectively designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, safe from future exploitation, providing a safe haven for his beloved birds.

Garry Wood

Artworks by Garry Wood

Photographs by various: Both the author and the editor thank the various photographers for the use of their excellent photographs.

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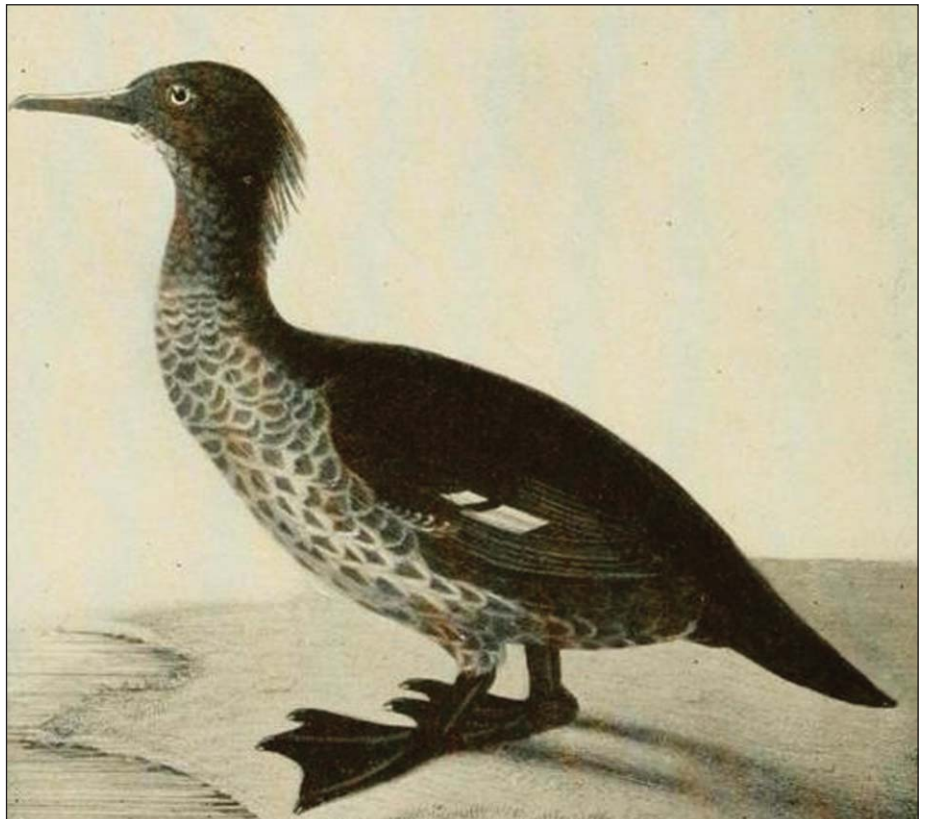
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Kiwi 'Great Northern diver'?

Extrapolating from both Michael Round's and Garry Wood's research, a further possibility for the candidate of 'Kiwi great northern diver' has emerged in the shape of the (now extinct) Auckland Islands Merganser (*Mergus australis*).

A type of duck, the adult male had a dark reddish-brown head, crest and neck, with bluish black mantle and tail and slate grey wings. The female was slightly smaller with a shorter crest.

The last specimen captured was in 1902, and its taxidermied remains are now in the Te Papa museum. A 1909 search failed to find a single example, as did a later search in 1972/73.

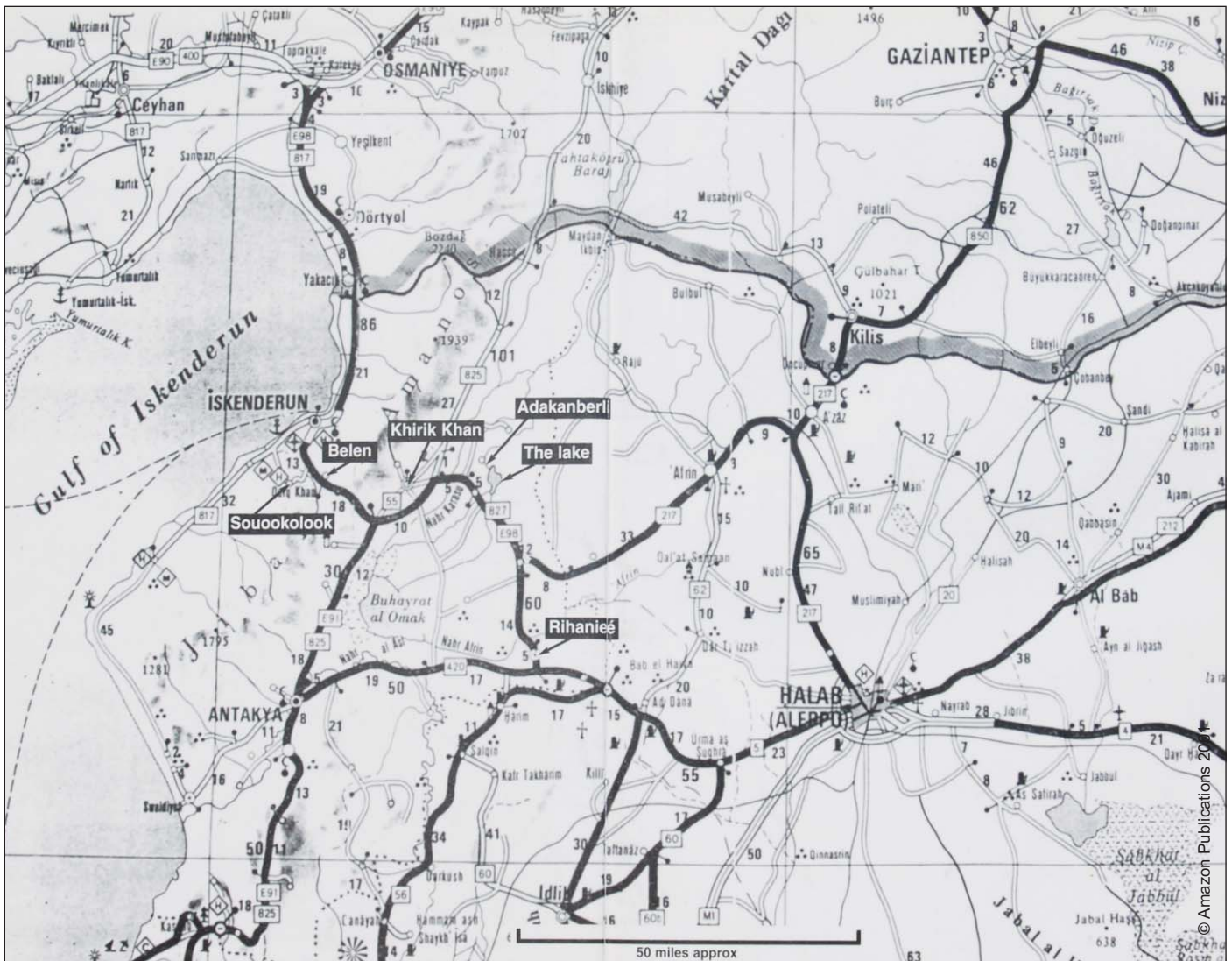
But it is perfectly feasible that Dick might have hoped to find a living example of the Auckland Islands merganser on Garry's imagined expedition to the subantarctic islands in the fifties.

As we can be pretty sure the lake on Adams Island (now called Lake Turbott after its WWII discovery by coastwatcher Graham Turbott) was not seen on the 1902 or 1909 expeditions, or any other visits to the islands up until the Cape Expedition survey party stumbled upon it in 1944, it is certainly possible that a pair or two of mergansers could have remained unseen in the reeds or scrub at the lake's edge.

Imagine Dick's subsequent fame had he returned to Bluff with photos of a bird thought to have been extinct! Definitely one-up on the discovery of a nesting diver!

ARTHUR RANSOME IN SYRIA

Amazon publisher and intrepid UK TAR, **Alan Hakim**, on a recent visit to Australia and New Zealand, gave us a lecture on his 1994 trip to Syria with Jill Goulder, to track down the Ransome sites there - in particular the lake where Arthur and the Altounyans sailed the dinghy he brought with him, named for the book he was writing, *Peter Duck*



The map from the endpapers of *In Aleppo Once* by Taqui Altounyan, showing the location of the Altounyan's house at Soğukoluk (Sououkolook) in the Jebel Amanus (Amanus Mountains) and the lake east of Khirik Khan where the now ruined boathouse is located, both in Turkey. Iskenderun was then known as Alexandretta. Halab/Aleppo is visible further to the east, in Syria

VicTARS were delighted to have the opportunity of once again meeting noted UK TAR and Amazon Books publisher Alan Hakim during his recent visit to Australia. Alan had suggested he might give us his illustrated talk on the fascinating and adventurous trip he made to Turkey (formerly part of Syria under the

French Mandate) with Jill Goulder in 1994 and we took up his offer with alacrity, meeting him in Warrandyte on Sunday, October 23rd.

Alan showed us a sequence of slides which illustrated the journey taken by Arthur and Evgenia, who were visiting the Altounyan family in Syria and bringing with them the crated dinghy

ordered by Ernest Altounyan, *Peter Duck*. From their disembarkation point at Alexandretta (today's Iskenderun), the Ransomes went to Aleppo, the home of the Altounyans and the place where Ernest worked in the hospital established by his family, and then on to their holiday destinations of Soğukoluk, and the lake where they



The site of the Altounyan's summer house in the Nur Dağları ('mountains of holy light', formerly the Jebel Amanus in period) above Iskenderun (Alexandretta), on the edge of Güzelyayla Köyü (beautiful plateau village), formerly Soğukoluk (cool rivulet) which in recent times gained something of a bad reputation, hence the name change. Nothing is left except the remains of the tennis court (used by locals as a dump, see area inside dotted line, inset left) and some footings of the old house. The white blob to the left of the dotted area (inset left) is another building, not part of the original Altounyan house site

sailed the dinghies. The lake is much smaller now and the larger one further south does not exist at all, having been drained for irrigation.

Jill and Alan only had very

rudimentary maps to guide them on their quest to follow in AR's footsteps but locals helped them and offered them hospitality as well. They found the location of the Altounyan hill retreat at Soğukoluk, sadly only its

overgrown foundations remaining, and also its tennis court, now a dump(!), and the site of the swimming hole constructed and used by the family.



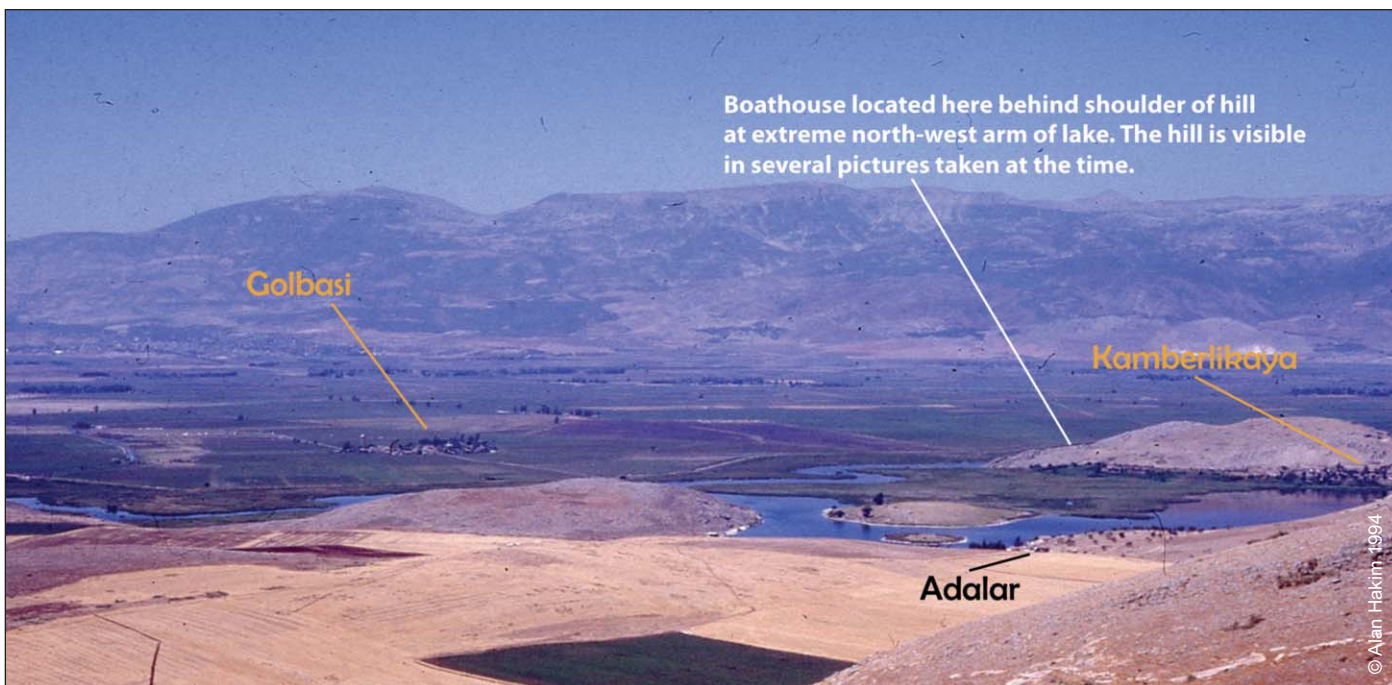
If you look on Google maps (satellite view) approx. 20km almost due east of Iskenderun you will see the lake of Balık Gölü (Fish Lake), with its towns of Gölbaşı (Lake Head) and Adalar (The Islands). At the top of the lake the village of Kamberlikaya, referred to on the *In Aleppo Once* map (previous page) as Adakanberli, is clearly the Ada Cumbelii referred to in handwritten notes by Taqui Altounyan (inset). On their '94, trip Jill and Alan missed the upper reaches of the NW-arm of the lake which Jill was able to search on her 2006 visit when a chance encounter with a fisherman, Ali, led to the eventual finding of the boathouse



Alan Hakim loading slides into the projector for his lecture



A sample of the assembled and appreciative throng



Boathouse located here behind shoulder of hill at extreme north-west arm of lake. The hill is visible in several pictures taken at the time.

Golbasi

Kamberlikaya

Adalar

© Alan Hakim, 1994

A 1994 photo of the lake from the hills to the east, showing the location of the boathouse and the nearby villages

Eventually, further journeying over rough roads led the intrepid explorers to the lake where AR and the Altounyan family sailed in *Peter Duck*. They (inadvertently but wrongly) identified the rocky island as the rocky hillside in period photographs. They could clearly identify the winding reedy waterways, as exulted over by Ernest Altounyan in his letters to AR, and look SE towards *Peter Duck's* launching site next to the road bridge across the waterway leading to the lake at Muratpaşa (Mouradpasha). Then Jill took up the offer of a local boatman and was quanted around the lake, trying to find the boathouse

where the Altounyan dinghies were kept, as seen in the photographic record from the time. This eluded both land and water searches in 1994, but on a second, later trip to the area in 2006, Jill explored an area not investigated on the former trip, and found the ruins of the boathouse there, thanks to a chance encounter with a boatman, Ali, who was able to give her a lift in his boat, just as she'd almost given up and was about to abandon the search.

Alan also showed us a film of their 1994 trip, which gave us a very good idea of the country where the

Altounyans holidayed and sailed. It was fascinating to see the exact places where AR had been in this exotic land. Thank you, Alan, for this opportunity to learn about another episode in AR's rich and adventurous life.

After this feast of information and vicarious adventures, we turned to a feast of a different kind and enjoyed afternoon tea and chat. We were also able to give Alan advance subscriptions for the forthcoming 2017 Amazon publication.

Thanks, also, to Pamela and Tony Copley, for hosting us for this very worthwhile bonus TARS gathering.



© Susie Altounyan (family archive)

The boathouse as it was in the '30s. Beetle II being rigged in front



© Jill Goulder 2006

The boathouse as it was in 2006 when Jill rediscovered it



© Taqui Altounyan (family archive)

'Hassan raising the ladder' in the 1930s. The distinctive rocks near the water on the opposite bank are clearly recognisable in Jill's 2006 photo from inside the ruined boathouse (see circled rock formations for comparison)



© Jill Goulder 2006



© Taqui Altounyan, family archive (photo now in Brotherton Collection)

Taqui's photo of the family sailing, northern side of the boathouse



© Jill Goulder 2006

Jill's photo of the same view today, with the same hill in the background



© Jill Coulter 2006



© Jill Coulter 2006

Top: The boathouse (circled) from the north, on the western side of the hill above Kamberlikaya, looking south-west towards Gölbaşı;
Above: The boathouse (circled) from the south, taken from the road that borders the lake, north-east of Gölbaşı



© British Journal of Surgery, Volume 26, Issue 102, October 1938, p4-12-417

The Altounyan Hospital in Aleppo, on Yousef al-Azmeh St, with the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church behind it, containing the grave of the hospital's founder, Assadour Aram Altounyan, Ernest's father and the children's grandfather, who died Jan 12th 1950. The building was pulled down some time after 1994 and no longer exists on the site. A shame for what was a small but highly regarded hospital

THE FASCINATING ARCHER FISH



1. Lining up...



2. Taking aim...

Have I told you about Archer fish? Well I am going to now and with information I didn't have before.

Archer fish live in Australia (!) and SE Asia. They shoot insects from vegetation growing over water by spitting a jet of water. Most of them are under nine inches, but some get to over a foot. The smallest I see are around an inch. The smallest look the smartest, they are fishy grey with dark vertical bands. As they get bigger, the bands are less definite so their appearance is scruffy and worn.

I had heard about them long ago and understood they lived in Asia. Now I know they live in Northern Australia too. I had even seen them in the water and had no idea of their name or capabilities.

There's nothing like them in the Lake of the North!

I first had them brought to notice when I spent time with the FAGS (Friday Afternoon Gentlemen Sailors). These guys are mostly retired or almost retired professionals (there are three doctors and a dentist that I know of!) and sail out after work on Friday afternoons from Tinaroo, (where several live and all keep their boats),

round a part of the lake called Fong On Bay and end up in a little bay on the way home where they raft up and enjoy drinks and nibbles as the sun sets. Then they drift or sail back home. Very pleasant and civilized. Archer fish come to see what food might 'fall' out of the boats. One very big fish had learnt, or been taught, if it 'shot' at the things that move on the boats, crumbs would fall!

You only have to wave your hand over the side of the boat and it is hit! One guy who was smoking even had his cigarette extinguished – was it mistaken for a shiny insect?

I had heard about 'Archie', then I saw him in action, now I believe.

This last trip I realized that Archer fish are like birds at a picnic area, they just hang around till crumbs appear then chase after them and, if the taste is OK,



3. Fire...!!

eat them. (If the taste isn't OK they spit them out). If they get fed, all their friends join them and hang about long after the food is gone!

In nature they can see their prey above the water and shoot it down. So they can see what is on the boats. On this last trip I moored in a bay about a kilometer from FAGS' bay and saw, hanging around a couple of AF, a big one and a bigger one. I wondered, it looks like Archie, so I waved and got a wet hand! I gave it breadcrumbs but they weren't accepted and the fish

swam off.

Next night over 10km away there were Archer fish hanging around (like birds at a picnic area)!

I tried waving my hand about a foot above the water. This intrigued them. You can see when they are looking out of the water – their body language changes. Then one spat at my hand! Unfortunately there was no insect to wash off. What could I give them? I had tried bread on the others; I tried cake – no good; cheese – no good; bits from my minestrone – no good. Oh dear!

Then I realized – march flies. (They are large flies – like horse flies – that frequent rainforest, they sit on you and bite. They are fairly easy to swot. There were dead ones all over the cockpit floor that I had swotted during the day). Success! They were very acceptable. Soon I had a collection of AF goggling at me. They could see the fly on my finger but they waited till it hit the water. On the very last fly, a fish washed it off and ate it. I'm sure if I had had more flies I could have trained another 'Archie'!

It is said that their archery ability is

learned behaviour, if that is so it is possible that all the big AF in Tinaroo could learn to spit at boats! A frightening thought. It's a good thing the cockpit is self-draining!

A month later I was moored in the same little bay and was looking at the amazing patterns you get on the surface of water when a large Archer fish appeared, it lined itself up and I got a wet face!

I had intended bringing some insect type fish food but had forgotten so what could I give to this beggar?

All I had in store that might do was a tin of chicken soup! I dug out some of the meaty bits and dropped one overboard. It was eaten with relish as was another. There's not much 'meat' in chicken soup so I tried a lump of the solid soup. That was accepted too!

I'm not sure this was wise as whenever I got near the edge of the boat so I could be seen from the water 'Archie' (I assume it was him) fired at me. This was too good an opportunity to miss. I got out the camera, put it on 'continuous' and aimed it at the fish. I got a shot and got the camera wet too.

How to get him to fire at something else to get a sideways picture?

Camera in one hand and waving the other is just about OK.

I wondered how brave he was so put a dollop of soup on my finger and held it close to the water. He came for it, no worries, mate! I think I was more apprehensive – do archer fish have teeth?

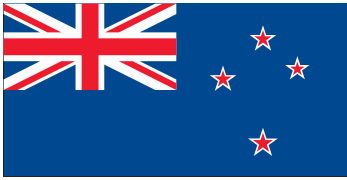
Archie continued to hang around till later when I sailed away. He was very persistent and continued to remind me of his presence whenever he could!

As I wrote before, perish the thought that more of his friends learn his tricks! Most times I anchor, the little ones appear, dozens of them. They must be one of the most numerous fish in the lake, and so easy to attract (and thus catch) but you never hear of anyone catching one. They are so interesting to watch and make friends with I am glad I am not a fisherman.

Paul Rodwell



Size comparison with a tin of Campbells Soup!

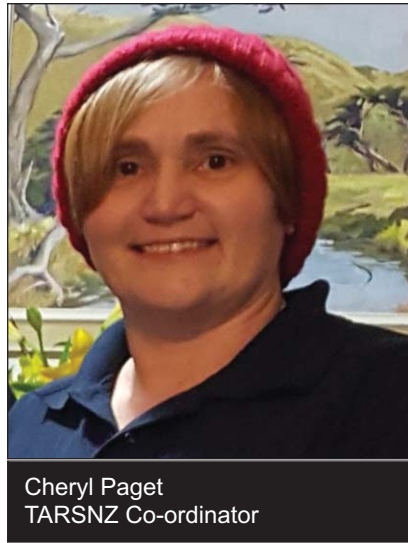


NEW ZEALAND CO-ORDINATOR: CHERYL PAGET

The past year turned out to be a bumper year for TARSNZ events, with three events and a book launch – TARSNZ members went along to lend support to Susan Price as she published her first picture book for children.

This year has started well too, with our successful and sixth (the Big Six!) birthday weekend in January, well organised by Bob Cuming, and yours truly giving a presentation about Ransome at the first CHOCS conference (Collectors and Hoarders of Old Fashioned Children’s Stories) in Wellington, again attended by TARSNZ members.

Our birthday weekend was great fun, the weather only turning bad on one day, but it didn’t deter us from taking part in Ransome inspired activities. That day we walked across the wade, only we got wet from water coming down rather than a rising tide coming up!



Cheryl Paget
TARSNZ Co-ordinator

We are delighted to welcome a new member, Peter Radue from Dunedin. He says his occupation is a medical doctor and academic, mostly involved in the training of doctors. Crucially he says he has been a Ransome devotee since the age of 6, which goes to show that notwithstanding any formal qualifications you may have, this is the

only qualification that matters to be a member! Interestingly, Peter brings the number of doctors who are members of TARSNZ to 5, and the number of Dunedin members to 4, equalling the number of Wellington based members.

Thank you to everyone for paying your subscriptions on time, this has now been paid over to the society. On a personal note, TARSNZ HQ is on the move again as I start a new job at Kapiti Coast District Council in February. My mobile number and email remains the same if you need to get hold of me, but I will contact you with an updated address when this has been confirmed.

Our next birthday weekend will be in Dunedin 12-15 January 2018 where I hope to meet the native TARSNZ members for the first time.

Three million cheers for new and old TARSNZ members!

Cheryl Paget
NZ TARS Co-ordinator

TARSNZ SIXTH ANNUAL BIRTHDAY WEEKEND (THE BIG SIX!)

CAMLIDGE, WAIKATO 13 – 16 JANUARY 2017

Our weekend started off on the Friday afternoon, with a refreshing drink and a catch up at Bob and Lyn’s house in Hamilton. Bob took us for a walk in his garden, taking us across their neatly clipped lawn, through a gate in the fence down into a gully, the path wending its way through bush to an abandoned *Swallowdale* camp! What a surprise, to see the camp looking very authentic indeed with the sunlight trickling through the trees.

We then headed off to Book for Kids in Hamilton, one of only three children’s bookshops in the country. The proprietors, ex teachers Helen and Anne explained to us the history of the bookshop, how they came to buy the business, and their passion for reading and selling children’s books. It was a

fascinating evening, and many of us left having bought books to read or as gifts. Retailing in the online environment is hard, and their staple custom comes from the local schools. They do sell online through their website

www.booksforkids.co.nz

so do try them out.

We headed over the road to the Turkish restaurant Babaganush for dinner, and enjoyed a great meal and the chance for more chatting and



Swallowdale camp



Part of the collection of railway ceramics



Railway collection with our hosts John & Cath

catching up. As we went to pay, we spotted a map of Turkey on the wall, so we had a good look trying to find the places Alan Hakim talked about when we met him in Wellington.

On Saturday we met at the Hamilton Gardens, where Bob showed us around. The gardens are divided into different sections, with an Indian Garden, an English Arts and Crafts Garden, a Chinese Missee Lee garden and many others. All the different areas are interlinked and laid out around a central courtyard which had a huge solar clock to tell the time by. We all had a good look and then realised it was just like the clock in *Secret Water!* Michael decided to check the clock for accuracy, and realising it was 12 o'clock and lunchtime, we all headed off to the café. Already waiting for us was TARSNZ member Garry and his wife, who had travelled from Auckland to spend time with us. We had a very leisurely lunch, before heading back out to see more of the gardens. Our new arrivals headed off with Bob and the rest of us waited by the solar clock, not realising that Garry, anxious not to get stuck in traffic had decided to leave by another route, and Bob returned alone. We had a collective slapping of heads moment when we realised we hadn't taken a photo of us all together!

Leaving the garden we headed over to Lake Rotoroa where we fed the ducks and the coots. We were excited to see the Australasian Coot, and we counted at least a dozen and some baby coots as

well. We were surprised they had managed to thrive given that the coots were continually outwitted by the ducks in grabbing the bread we threw! We walked part way around the lake, as the day was pretty hot and we had been out in the sun all day. We saw a few octopus lagoons, one with a heron, one with native pukekos and another area where a mother duck patrolled the edges while her ducklings rested on the lily pads. We had another drink in the café before heading back to our various accommodations.

On Sunday the weather turned against us. We started off visiting the private railway memorabilia collection belonging to John and Cath, friends of Bob. Their basement is an absolute

treasure trove of New Zealand rail artefacts, ranging from lamps, bells, caps, cups, number plates and so on. John knew the story behind every item, where it came from, what it was used for and how he got it. We spent about half an hour poking about in the basement before he said 'come this way' and through a door was another room chock full of well displayed material. It is always a pleasure spending time with a truly enthusiastic collector, and John didn't disappoint. What he has managed to salvage is a big slice of New Zealand's history. Passenger rail transport has all but gone, confined to Wellington and Auckland and a few tourist rail routes, but TARSNZ members of a certain age can well remember the



A very small part of their magnificent railway memorabilia collection



Feeding the ducks and coots

steam trains and the cups of tea served in NZR china which was collected up in an empty kerosene can and sent back to the station from which it originated.

After leaving John and Cath, we drove over to Raglan in convoy. Raglan is on the west coast, and is known as a surfer's paradise. However the weather was too inclement for surfing so we didn't get to see anyone riding the waves. We did find a secondhand bookshop, where Neil advised the owner that a particular

copy of a *Biggles* book was not actually a first edition as stated. We headed off for lunch and to dry out a bit, before returning to the cars to find Bob's was partly submerged in a huge puddle! He managed to get in and drive out to a bit of dry road so his passengers could get in. He took us to a place where the road is submerged at high tide, leaving a somewhat rickety wooden walkway across to a small island. As it was very much like the wade in *Secret Water*, we just had to walk across and back, getting

soaked in the process with water coming down as rain rather than water coming up with the rising tide!

We met up again in the evening for the birthday tea. Bob and Lyn were wonderful hosts, and spoiled us with a lovely beef salad, trifle and pavlova. After eating, we had a quick quiz, but as it was late we didn't play the games that had been prepared – we'll keep those for next time! We moved into the lounge where we watched the much



Hamilton Gardens solar clock



Michael checking the time



Lyn's magnificent cake



TARSNZ at the Missee Lee garden in Hamilton



Crossing the Wade in Raglan



TARS at the Avantidrome

anticipated DVD of the new *Swallows and Amazons* film. Bob had his DVD player specially converted to a multi zone player so we could watch the DVD shipped from England. We started off by cutting into the huge chocolate birthday cake Lyn had made, and sat eating it while we watched the film, mainly in silence – only the odd interjection at the bits that surprised/horrified us most. We gave the film 4/10 for accuracy to the book, but 7/10 for a thumping good adventure story. The trick is to put aside what you know and love about the book and watch it as a film to be enjoyed by itself. The main elements of the story were there, but there were additions for a modern audience fed on a diet of intrigue and action, such as Uncle Jim being a spy chased by the Russians. I don't think Ransome would have approved of the "Russians as baddies" theme, much less the rest of the plot, watch it as a film to be enjoyed by itself. We left very late leaving our grateful thanks for a very splendid birthday tea.

Monday morning, before taking rattraps home we met at the Avantidrome, a huge indoor cycling track. We did see a couple of



women racing their dromedaries around the track, and marvelled at the sheer size and steepness of it. As we were looking down on the track, a young employee called Jarrod started chatting to us, explaining that the track was constructed from Siberian pine, as trees in the frozen north grow slowly and hard, whereas New Zealand pine grows in a warmer climate much more quickly

and is a softer wood and therefore unsuitable for a track. He chatted for a while, took a photo for us and then wandered off. As we were leaving we saw a huge cardboard cut-out of Jarrod in the reception – he wasn't just an ordinary employee, but a Special Olympics snowboarder!

We made our farewells and all headed off home, after a truly fantastic, well

organised weekend. Our huge thanks to Bob for making such a magnificent effort to put on a range of Ransome and book themed activities for us. Photos of the weekend and other TARSNZ events can be found here:

www.flickr.com/photos/kiwipagets/collections/72157644939746512/

Next year's birthday weekend will be in Dunedin in the South Island.

A VISITOR FROM THE NORTH

On Monday 24 October 2016, TARSNZ Co-ordinator Cheryl Paget and I went to Wellington Airport to meet Alan Hakim off a plane from Melbourne. He was out our way from England to visit friends and family in New Zealand and Australia, and wanted to meet TARS in both countries.

Having not met him before, we made ourselves as conspicuous as possible among the throngs meeting people from the various flights from Australia that arrive at Wellington in a mid-afternoon bunch. It was a bit cool for knickerbockers, so we chose dark blue trousers with dark blue polo shirts and our red knitted hats (beanies), and I held up a TARS pennant. This worked, and we soon had Alan out of the building, into the car, and off to his accommodation. Then, it was time for him to meet other Wellington TARS.

It was fortuitous that this particular day was a public holiday in New Zealand, and all the Wellington members of TARSNZ were able to gather at the home of Beverley and Susan Price. We started with a splendidly Ransomish afternoon tea, prepared by Beverley and her friend and neighbour Judy Siers. Over the years, most of us had corresponded with Alan about Amazon Publications' books and we enjoyed the opportunity to meet him in person. We also gave him a good supply of New Zealand cash in the form of our subscriptions for the 2017 book.

When first making contact with Cheryl, Alan had offered

to talk to us about an expedition he and Jill Goulder made in the early 1990s to a corner of Turkey which used to be in Syria. So, when everyone had finished afternoon tea, we managed to stop talking and settled down for

Alan's talk. The object of the expedition was to find the Altounyans' summer house, which had been suggested a year or so previously by Taqui Altounyan, and also the lake where the children sailed their dinghy *Peter Duck* that Arthur and Evgenia had brought from England for them. Alan had given the same talk to VicTARS the day before, and had also given the talk, with Jill, at the Southern



Beverley's afternoon tea for Alan

[England] Region's Autumn Gathering in November 2015 (TARS Signals, April – August 2016, p. 24).

Alan's account of his and Jill's detective work was fascinating and superbly illustrated by many photographs. He led us through the general scenery and then the evidence for the tennis court below the house, and old and current photos of the distinctive hillside by the arm of



TARSNZ with Alan Hakim

the lake where *Peter Duck* was sailed, as well as their adventures on the trip. Although they were unable to find the remains of the family's boathouse on the lake, where *Peter Duck* was kept, Jill found its remains on a subsequent trip to the area in 2006. Alan's talk was a most interesting insight to a small piece of Altounyan and Ransome history.

We all thanked Alan most heartily for his talk, and Cheryl presented him with the Furthest South Award for 2016. This Award is given to the visitor from

furthest away from New Zealand who has visited TARSNZ members in a calendar year.

Following this ceremony we learned that Susan had written a book for children which was to be launched a couple of weeks later. This book, *The Viaduct Postcard*, was written by Susan and illustrated by Judith Trevelyan, and Beverley's friend Judy was involved in publication (by Millwood-Heritage Productions). Susan was congratulated on a lovely book, and some of us bought

copies immediately, which Susan kindly inscribed for us.

Four of us plus Alan then finished the evening with a meal at a local Italian restaurant, where the talking continued until we were the last to leave. Alan's journey continued the next day, to relatives in the South Island. We were all appreciative of the time and the story he shared with us on his brief stop in Wellington.

Fran Kell

SUSAN PRICE'S VIADUCT POSTCARD

In 2013, the New Zealand members of the Arthur Ransome Society chose Wellington as the venue for their second annual gathering. One of the early events on the weekend programme was a visit to the home of Susan Price, a passionate collector of children's literature. The large home she shares with her mother Beverley near the Kelburn campus of the University resembled a well-stocked library. Just about every room and passageway had shelves from floor to ceiling, packed with children's books of every kind.

In Susan Price's world, Arthur Ransome occupies an honoured place, and so it was rather appropriate that when Alan Hakim of TARS HQ came on a visit to New Zealand in October 2016, we gathered at Susan's house to meet him and listen to his tales of discovering the Syrian back-story of the Altounyan family. During an afternoon tea worthy of Houseboat Bay, Susan told us about her new venture, writing a children's book of her own. She passed around copies for us to look at. Some of us bought one on the spot. She also mentioned that the book would be launched a couple of weeks later at a bookshop in nearby Karori, and we were cordially invited.

The choice of Karori for the launch was apt, as the story takes place in that very suburb in the year 1910. Beautifully

illustrated with watercolours by Judith Trevelyan, the book introduces us to two children, Jack and Bessie, who are sent by train



from their home in Levin to spend the school holidays with their uncle and aunt in Wellington. The tale is a simple one, with only low-key action and adventure. What makes it fascinating is the amount of period detail, explaining to a 21st Century child the reality of trams, outside toilets, the novelty of both hot and cold running water, and sending a postcard home to report one's safe arrival.

In addition to giving attention to historical detail, Susan also brings together fact and fiction. While her main characters are fictional, they meet Karori children who were real. In fact one of them was Susan's own grandfather. At the back of the book, she provides some illustrated detail on the children, even telling us what happened to them during World War I. She also describes the old Kelburn Viaduct, under which the children pass on their tram journey to Karori. The viaduct appears on the postcard which Bessie sends home. In a unique bonus, the book includes a free copy of a reproduction of a genuine 1910 postcard showing a tram about to pass under the viaduct.

The launch of the book on 3rd November was well-attended. There was standing room only in the bookshop. Susan had invited descendants of the people who appeared in her story. The book was

formally launched by Kate de Goldi, a distinguished children's author in her own right and also a fan of Arthur Ransome. Indeed one senses that Arthur Ransome would have approved of Susan's book, as it begins with a significant railway journey, demonstrates an interest in technology and, above all, interprets the world from a child's perspective.

Michael McBryde

OFF AND ON THE RAILS AT MALDON

A hardy group of VicTARS headed for Castlemaine on a very cold day in September for a day of railway memories and heritage experiences. After David and Elizabeth almost made a pierhead jump, or certainly did a very good imitation of Tom Dudgeon at Norwich station, dashing up the platform and scrambling on board just before the train left Southern Cross, the journey proceeded smoothly through wet green



The steam train appeared stealthily, ghosting out of its own mist, almost as if it didn't mean to...

countryside to historic Castlemaine. Meanwhile, Stuart and collie Tassa travelled north by car, to meet us at the station.

Goldfields group member and Castlemaine local resident Stephen joined us in the queue for tickets for the Goldfields Railway, the steam train which runs to the amazingly well-

preserved old mining town of Maldon. Unfortunately, partner Robyn could not accompany Stephen as planned, having sustained a bad leg injury overnight.

In due course, the big oil-burning loco puffed into the platform and we chose a 'dogbox' carriage and boarded, while Stuart waved us off, prior to driving to

meet us at Maldon. The train rattled along at a good pace through grazing land and bush, where the wildflowers and wattle were prolific alongside the track. It is a lovely journey. Maldon was quite busy with its tourist visitors, considering the un-spring-like weather (grey, with a biting wind) and we walked into the township and saw some of the old shops and impressive



Fabulous carriage's interior



The station platform at Maldon, refreshingly antiquated

public buildings before deciding lunch was really overdue.

Bravely (for we are tough TARSI!), we picnicked in the park, as planned, all layers on and extra ones found for Phoebe, who felt she had somewhat under-dressed for the weather. Only Tassa, in her thick furry coat, was warm. We had imagined a mild, sunny day... We ate as quickly as we could and drank from hot thermoses, then went back into the town to finish looking at the lovely streetscape and interesting shops. Stephen and Jan chose to freeze their insides as well as their outsides by buying ice creams.

Soon it was time to head to the station for the return journey and we were glad to be out of the wind on the train. Back at Castlemaine, we farewelled Stephen and made sure David and Elizabeth were on the platform with time to spare for their train back to

Melbourne. Then Nancy, Jan, Phoebe and Tassa were chauffeured back home in warmth and comfort by Stuart after a most enjoyable day

spent going back in time.

Jan Allen



The historic township of Maldon features many older buildings

WERRIBEE WANDER

THE SHIP'S NATURALISTS EXPLORE UP-RIVER

A group of VicTARS gathered in early November to investigate a region hitherto unexplored by our group. Jan and Stuart had cycled through the region about six years earlier and deemed it a place worthy of an expedition for ship's naturalists. The strong and gusty wind, with a little Antarctic sting, motivated our departure. Leaving patterans for Hedley, who was due to arrive by bicycle and not long afterwards overtook us on the path, we set off along the banks of the Werribee River. Here we found a strange juxtaposition of mansions with exotic gardens, manicured lawns, parkland with vast swathes of mown weeds, spectacular old river red gums, competently revegetated river banks and huge market garden plantings of broccoli.

We wandered, we ambled, we sauntered and, in doing so, were able to examine, identify and discuss the landscape, its history

and flora and fauna. An early settler and modifier of the region had been George Chaffey, a name we had only associated with Mildura until we visited Werribee. Chaffey was a Canadian who migrated, first to California where he observed and then worked, establishing irrigation

systems for horticulture. The Prime Minister of Australia, Alfred Deakin, was keen for our country to benefit from Chaffey's expertise, which led to the migration of George and his brother, William Chaffey, to our sunny and sometimes drought-stricken shores. While the Chaffeyes had some



Revegetated area along the banks of the Werribee River

success in establishing irrigation systems in Renmark, South Australia and Mildura in Victoria, the Werribee project was one of their failures. Starting in 1888, they had planned to subdivide the land, install irrigation and then sell the plots to farmers. Some work went ahead, but the full plan was never completed and investors were disappointed. It was not until after the wars that European migrants developed Werribee South into the intensive horticultural production region that it is today.

We saw peppercorn trees around the district which are likely to have descended from those the Chaffey's planted and an old bluestone building, now without a roof, that probably dated from the same era. Sprinkler irrigation of crops was in progress across the river which is still a water source for the surrounding horticultural district. The plantings of indigenous flora, which included groundcover grasses, a complex understorey and local tree species, was quite extensive and will be a boon to the local populations of fauna. Unfortunately, the area of bush that Jan remembered had been obliterated to make a public open space. Even so, we made a substantial list of birds in Dick Callum's notebook and even saw some reptiles, at least one of which was not imaginary.

After our riverine expedition, we headed, by procession of Rattletraps, to the mouth of the Werribee River where it enters Port Phillip. A detour for warm drinks took us to the newly-constructed Wyndham Harbour marina, complete with groomed date palms, which seemed very out of place in the midst of the market gardens. The potential for urban/rural conflict here is immense, as modern, multi-storey apartments are built immediately next to (and on top of) the vegetable production paddocks. Down at the river mouth, the wind had not abated and we had trouble standing upright. A large flock of birds, rowing boats, dinghies and reeds gave a Ransome-like flavour to the end of our day. We all enjoyed the pleasant walk and left with much food for



TARS off on a Werribee nature wander



Much flora was spotted, and even some fauna (see list)



A patteran was left for Hedley Thomson to discover...



Somewhat windblown TARS at the mouth of the Werribee River

Bird and reptile list

Werribee River (near Tarneit):

⇒ Native species: white-faced heron, New Holland honeyeater, white-naped honeyeater, superb blue wren, Australian magpie, crested pigeon, mudlark, red wattlebird, willy wagtail, little raven, dusky moorhen, white ibis, red-rumped parrot, wood duck, pied cormorant (or little pied – it flew overhead and we couldn't see its eye), reed warbler (heard, but not seen as is usually the case).

⇒ Introduced species: house sparrow, starling, Indian myna, spotted dove, domestic duck

⇒ Reptiles: blue-tongue lizard, crocodile (spotted by Elizabeth) [*Que?? - bit far south for crocodiles, surely? - Ed*]

Werribee River mouth:

⇒ Native species: silver gull, pied cormorant, little black cormorant, crested tern, pied oystercatcher

⇒ Reptiles (introduced species): Loch Ness Monster [*not another croc? - Ed*]

On the way home:

⇒ flock of concrete birds by the Geelong motorway (near Kororoit Road) observed by David Stamp - and they didn't fly away

thought about human influences on the landscape, the swelling tide of urbanisation, the fate of the flora and fauna of Victoria and the effect of development on food production regions. We wonder what AR would

have thought about it all.

Nancy M. Endersby-Harshman

From Dick's notebook (note that he uses some old common names that have now been changed):

THREE MILLION [CHRISTMAS] CHEERS!

This report has come in from one of Santa's elves, now relaxing in the Caribbean after a hardworking festive season.

The boss and I had an early job on, in Melbourne, on December 9th, and when we dropped by with a delivery it was no quiet chimney job, for we found a merry party in full swing. The people had put snowflakes and other typical seasonal decorations around the room where we left our load and outside the house we could see someone bashing very hard at a strange coloured object out on the terrace. There were good smells coming from the kitchen and an odd display of photos of the people, in a variety of places and costumes, showing on the TV.

It looked like fun, compared with

some other gigs we've done, so we decided to hang round for a bit, quite unobtrusively, and next saw them messing around with some whistles they had pulled out of bonbons, blowing them in turn and trying to make some semblance of a tune under the guidance of one of their number. Not very musical, but it gave us a good laugh, watching them make fools of themselves.

They did a bit better when some of them got up to sing carols. They sang the Aussie versions enthusiastically and seemed to hit the right mood with the traditional ones. They did two brackets of those, while the others

listened. We haven't always got time to stop and listen to carol-singing so we were happy to linger. Earlier, someone had managed to split open that coloured thing with their bashing and there were still chocolates everywhere.

They really hopped into the food when it came out and the hosts did a terrific job with keeping up the flow of drinks and eats. We sneaked a few snacks, and nobody noticed, especially when the desserts appeared, which seemed to be a speciality with this lot. It was better than some of the stuff that we find left out for us. The mob had some folk from interstate there,



The carolers, L to R: Nancy, Elizabeth (obscured), Jan, Alison, Bradley (obscured), Hedley, Christine, Joy from NSW



Tables filled with Christmas cheer! And lollies!!



The flute playing session. Keep in tune, everyone!

who hadn't met all of the others, but everyone was yakking to them and finding plenty to talk about. Our delivery included stuff for these two as well as the locals, naturally. We stayed long enough for another quick swig

and to see them all open their presents, as that's always a good moment and something we don't get to see much. Then the boss said we needed to be off, before the team left a telltale dump.

I think I'll sign on for that job again next year, if it comes up, just to see what that lot get up to; they certainly know how to enjoy themselves.

Elf #561



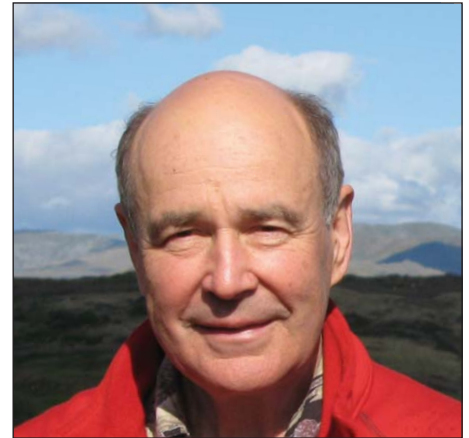
AUSTRALIAN CO-ORDINATOR: LARRY HARSHMAN

On 3rd June this year, fifty years will have passed since the death of Arthur Ransome. He is remembered and celebrated by the international society of which we are all members as well as by others introduced to his works by relatives and friends. Scholars and enthusiasts continue to dissect and analyse his fascinating life and work. One wonders what he would have thought of this attention and how he would best have liked to have been remembered. Though he excelled at languages, political analysis and philosophy, he is known to have felt that he had found his professional focus when he came to write *Swallows and Amazons*. Therefore, this June, we celebrate Arthur Ransome, the great storyteller and enjoy the legacy he has left to us!

All three issues of *Furthest South* this year will celebrate Arthur Ransome's anniversary in a different way. In this issue we consider how far his influence has reached and feature some extra material from TARS members in New

Zealand. Future issues will look at some events in Ransome's life as well as stories from members about how they discovered his writings and the influence he has had on aspects of their own lives. We would love to hear from any of you who would like to contribute some writing, artwork or other form of memorial, to the journal during this year of celebration.

This year provides a good opportunity to introduce other people to Arthur Ransome to spread the enjoyment of his writing and increase the membership of our society. In Victoria, Jan Allen is encouraging specialist children's bookshops to promote Arthur Ransome's books. Our parent body in the UK has produced an attractive banner which has been distributed to each region in the UK for purposes of publicity. They are soon to send the associated artwork to AusTARS and we will print a banner for use by members. If you are attending an event which might provide an opportunity for promotion of the



Larry Harshman
AusTARS Co-ordinator

Arthur Ransome Society, please contact the Secretary for the loan of the banner and other promotional materials.

We look forward to hearing from you as we celebrate the life of Arthur Ransome.

Larry Harshman

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 4th April 2017, 11 Brenda Grove,
Iecoma,
Victoria 3160, 8.00pm

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Business Arising from 2016 Minutes
4. Reports
 - a. Co-ordinator's Report
 - b. Secretary's Report
 - c. Events Report
 - d. Treasurer's Report and 2017 Budget
 - e. Furthest South Report
 - f. Library Report
5. Correspondence
6. Election of Office bearers
7. General Business
 - a. Ratification of membership fees for 2017
8. Any Other Business

The meeting will be followed by supper

SUSAN'S WHISTLE - UPDATE

Exciting Purchases for our Library! Some great viewing ahead!

Last year, members were extremely generous with their donations to the Society and we are using that money to purchase two DVDs for the AusTARS library - one, a copy of *Rod and Line*, the series of programs made for UK TV from AR's fishing columns (this replaces the videotape version originally held by the library but since vanished); and the second, *Swallows and Amazons*, the 2016 film. We are trying to find out through Sophie Neville whether the film will have an Australian cinema release, but the DVD is already available. These should be available for borrowing from January.

These extra funds will also assist with the production of our new colour publicity brochures and display banner.

A Bit of History - The AusTARS Cup

Much earlier in the days of the Society, AusTAR Dr Jim Hawkins, current long-term member, who was then our region's representative to the UK, donated a cup to UK TARS, to be awarded to a hardworking and worthy recipient of their choice. Over the years, it was presented at the AGM weekends but this lapsed in recent years. UKTARS are reviving this award and asked Jim for criteria for the award. The UK and AusTARS committees are in the process of liaising to determine the criteria upon which this award should be determined. It has been suggested that it should be awarded to the organiser of the IAGM each year. What do you think of that idea? Does anyone have any alternate suggestions for the Committee to consider? Please let Nancy know via the address on the back page.



TRANS-TASMAN TARS QUIZ

A PRIZE is offered to the first correct entry pulled out of a hat after all entries have been received by 20th June, 2017, and all entries will receive minor prizes! Solutions, with name and address, to Quizmaster Jan, address below.

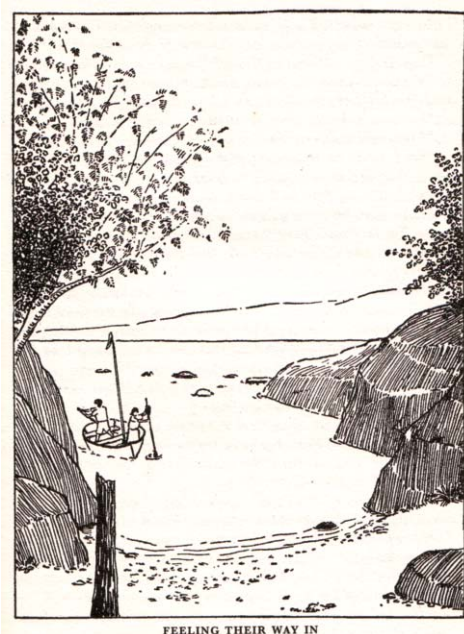
Send your entries to Jan Allen, email jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com or 28 Sunnyside Terrace, Emerald, Victoria, 3782, Australia.

Winter Holiday Quiz

1. While in Dick's hillside observatory, Dorothea said that the children in the farmhouse below might as well be in a different world. What world did Dick suggest?
2. Where did Dick and Dorothea learn to skate?
3. In what sort of ice did Peggy, in the Beckfoot rowing boat, get caught?
4. When Nancy learned that the houseboat was frozen in the ice, what did she send for the expedition?
5. Why did John's sailing sledge capsize so readily?
6. What did Ringman the dog howl at, the night Peggy and the Swallows returned from the houseboat?
7. Who did Dorothea pretend Captain Flint was when she first saw him?
8. When the wind came over the ice, Dick's square sail sent their little sledge roaring over the ice in which direction?
9. When Dick and Dot's sledge hit something and capsized, how did Dick find the North Pole building?
10. Before Nancy set off alone for the North Pole, what had she seen that told her Dick and Dorothea were there?

Picture Puzzle

Can you identify the books from which these illustrations were taken?



1. _____

2. _____

Coot Club Quiz

1. When Tom Dudgeon ran along the Norwich railway station he stumbled and dropped something which rolled along the platform. What was it?
2. Mr Farland's type of yacht still races on the Broads today. What are these yachts called?
3. When the Hullabaloos chased Tom in the *Margoletta*, how did he hide the *Dreadnought*?
4. When sailing on the Bure River, *Teasel* passed an old ruin with the remains of a windmill in it. What is its name?
5. Two birds which Tom said were 'jolly rare' were seen above Horsey Mere. What were they?
6. Why did Dick fall overboard in Heigham Sounds?
7. How did the now demolished Breydon rail bridge open and close?
8. The *Welcome of Rochester* barge, in which the twins had a ride, had a rig distinctive to London barges. What is it called?
9. In AR's sketch 'Lee Rail Under' he omitted something important. What was it?
10. Why did the Death and Glories insist on towing the sinking *Margoletta* out of the Fairway, and anchoring her in shallow water with the mudweight, before taking off the ungrateful Hullabaloos?

LETTERS

Dear Nancy,

Many thanks indeed for the copy of the latest *Furthest South*. As ever it's a most beautiful production - it puts *Signals* to shame!

Having just returned from holiday I have only read a couple of the articles so far, but look forward to enjoying the rest. There's a great deal of good stuff in there. I have to say, however, a 'pinko Leftie greenie' is a new one on me - you antipodeans do have a fair turn of phrase!

The Literary Transcriptions from York are due to be published on 4th September, as soon as I'm back from the Literary Weekend in Winchester I will post a copy to you.

Best wishes
Peter Wright

Dear Mark

I have just received the hard copy of *Furthest South* with my article in it that you had sent me and I have to say I was impressed by the issue!

Cheers
Rob Boden, UK

Hello Mark,

Many thanks for *Furthest South*. I had heard about the Cairo day, [party to launch Nancy's book - Ed] but had not seen all those pictures. I am slightly miffed you say the book hadn't arrived yet on April 23rd. I don't think it had even been bound then! When it was ready, the following Friday, I had it couriered to Nancy, and she got it even before I could post the British copies.

In fact the only thing I have against *FS* is that it's far too interesting! And it's 34 pages! [36pp this issue! - Ed] I need to set aside time to read the rest of it.

I see you live in Kempsey. Never been there, though I went through in a train in 1997. Too far away for us to meet while I'm in Sydney at the end of October.

Very useful, though, to have a picture of Cheryl Paget, who is entertaining me to a TARSNZ gathering the week before. Now I know who to look for. And Jan and the VicTARS the day before that [see elsewhere this issue - Ed]. They are a more compact group than in NSW, I gather.

Regards
Alan Hakim, UK
Amazon Publications

Book Club

What do *you* recommend to your fellow TARS – of all ages? It is equally possible to review an author, rather than a single book, and so cover the entire *oeuvre* of that writer, or to write just a single Book Review. What was the book about and why did you like it? Was it a fun story? Was it an adventure? Did it involve boats as Ransome's books do? Or was it about somewhere you knew and recognised? Did you like the people in the book and did they remind you of anyone? So get to it, one and all, and let's see those reviews coming in!

JT

Junior TARS: Suitable for 8-12s

F

Fiction book

OT

Older TARS: Suitable for Under 18s

NF

Non-Fiction book

AP

Aged parents: Suitable for Adult TARS

BOOK REVIEWS

SAILING: A dictionary for landlubbers.

Henry Beard and Roy McKie, Workman Publishing, New York, USA, 1981

Reviewed by David Bamford

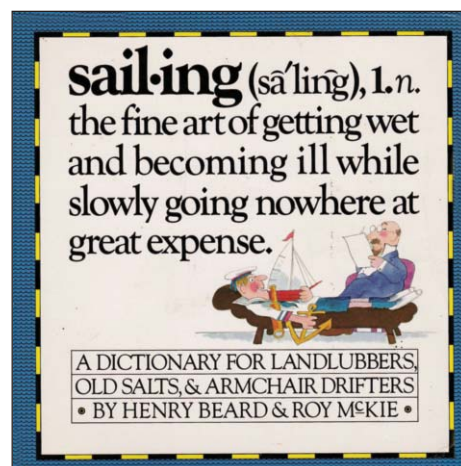
It is actually a misnomer to say that this book is for landlubbers, because you would have to be an experienced sailor to appreciate the irony of it. However, the definition on the cover shows what is in store inside. It defines 'sailing' as the fine art of getting wet and becoming ill while going nowhere at great expense. So we must

NF

OT

AP

definitely classify this book in the 'Humour' section of the library. So what you read in these pages should definitely be taken with tongue firmly in cheek. Typically, it defines 'Deviation' (actually an error of the compass) as 'An unnatural love of the sea.' I could pad this out by quoting other entries, but it is better for you to borrow it and get your mirth first-hand.



East Coast Rivers

Jack Coote, Yachting Monthly, UK, 1981

Reviewed by David Bamford

This slim volume of charts is an absolute goldmine of information for British Yachtsmen. It has become a classic of its kind, and continuously in print since its introduction in 1956. It covers the coastlines of Essex, Suffolk and the north coast of Kent. More than just charts, it also contains the necessary pilotage notes for the various estuaries and reaches of rivers. Because natural coastlines can change, sometimes dramatically, as can man-made developments, the books have been continuously updated since Jack's death by his daughters. This copy is the nineteenth edition, published in 1996. If you are actually going to sail those waters, I recommend that you purchase an up-

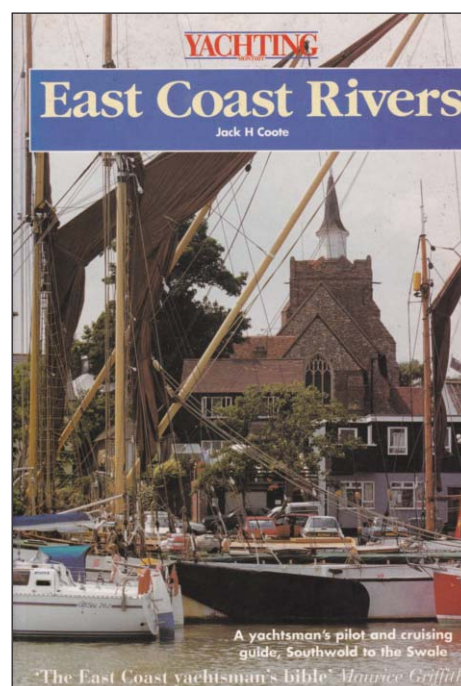
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to-date copy before you set off; it will make your experience so much the better.

I am one of those strange folk who are entranced by maps, so this volume has been a delight to pore over. I have read often of the places covered in this book, and many conundrums are enlightened by the charts and notes herein. If you are an Australasian yachtsman/woman who intends to borrow the books by Maurice Griffiths about his sailing in these waters, (and I recommend them highly, for he is a gifted writer) this book is an essential companion.

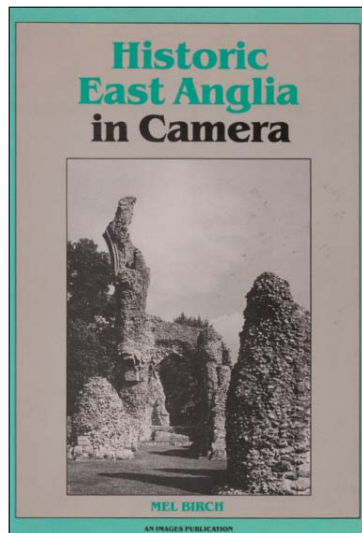


Historic East Anglia: In Camera

Mel Birch, Castell Publishing, UK, 1988

Reviewed by David Bamford

The South-East corner of Britain has a rich history going back to before the Saxons invaded the land. Each wave of settlement has left either buildings or the earthworks upon which buildings had stood. What is remarkable is how much of this historical fabric remains, despite the depredations of Henry VIII, Oliver Cromwell and Adolf Hitler. This book is an illustrated guide to Suffolk and Norfolk's pre- and historic monuments, ruins, churches, cathedrals and liveable buildings, with notes on the history of each. The earliest site described is Broome Heath



Long Barrow, which dates from the

NF

OT

↔

AP

Neolithic (i.e., Stone Age) period.

Typically, I was intrigued to read that Helmingham Hall, which dates from 1512, still has a moat around it. Consequently, access to the house is by a bridge. The part of that bridge nearest the house is a drawbridge. Believe it or not, this is still raised each evening!

I have often said that Britain is the world's largest museum, and this book is a guide to just two counties. I commend it to you, especially if, like me, you are a history buff.

LIBRARY REPORT

Normally I have very little to report on, but this time we have had a flurry of excitement.

We have completed our first trans-Tasman borrowing, thank you, Cheryl. I am sure that you will have enjoyed those books.

I would like to encourage other Kiwi members to take advantage of the library to read other books which you may not have come across elsewhere,

or would like to read but don't actually want to buy.

The library has benefited from some donations from the library of the late Col Pratt.

East Coast Rivers; a detailed guide to estuaries a lower reaches of the rivers of Essex, Suffolk and Kent, and Old Father Thames.

Historic East Anglia in Camera. A guide

to the ancient monuments and significant old buildings, both whole and ruined.

Sailing; a dictionary for landlubbers. A very sardonic view of nautical terminology.

I have provided the Editor with reviews of these books, which you will find elsewhere in this journal.

David Bamford

CALENDAR 2017

2017

Victoria

- May 6th** Dogs' Home Day - Making things, campfire cookery and literary activities - Flinders
- June 23rd** Midwinter Takeaway at Home Dinner - Location tba
- July tba** Fishing with Arthur Ransome in Tecoma
- August 12th** Book/Literary Day - Emerald
- September tba** Goldfields area: Slater Bob and Heritage Day - Stieglitz
- October tba** Spring walk
- November tba** Yarra Valley Railway and picnic - Healesville
- December 8th** Christmas Party

Dates and arrangements are usually finalised nearer the time, after expressions of interest, so be sure to check with the Secretary in advance. Parents of juniors attending events must complete an Activity Form. Organisers must complete a Risk Assessment form. These are available from the Secretary. Contact me if you have an idea for an event or would like to run one in your state and we can provide assistance. jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com

Jan Allen
Events Co-ordinator

SUSAN'S CAMPFIRE CUISINE

Buttered Eggs & Bacon Ducks

Buttered Eggs. – Beat up thoroughly, with a little salt and pepper, two eggs per person, and then add gently half a tablespoonful of milk per person. Melt a large golf-ball of butter in a saucepan and into the melting butter drop the egg mixture. Cook slowly over a slow flame, stirring with a spoon all the time and keeping the thickening egg off the bottom of the pan. When the mixture is stiff (but still moist) take it away from the stove for it will still go on cooking. Incidentally this recipe can be converted into anchovy eggs with the addition of a few drops of anchovy essence, the result being served on squares of bacon duck.

Bacon Ducks. – Called 'squab' in some parts of the west country this consists merely of pieces of bread fried in bacon fat. On the menu, however, it

looks better dubbed Bacon Duck. In a pan, with hot bacon fat in it, increase the heat until the fat is smoking – blue smoke – then put a half-inch doorstep of bread in it. If each side is fried for one minute the result is a crisp golden-brown: if the fat was not fairly smoking, however, the answer will be a soggy, greasy mess.

David Stamp



© Vicky Wasik 2015

Excerpts from Irving, John and Service, Douglas; *The Yachtsman's Week-end Book*, Seeley Service & Co Ltd, London, 1963

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SYRIA QUICK QUIZ

1. What was the former name of the Turkish town of Iskenderun?
2. In what mountain range did the Altounyans have their summer holiday house?
3. What line of work were the family involved in?
4. In what town/city was their place of business?
5. Which of the Altounyan children was the model for John Walker in S&A?
6. For what is the real Roger most widely regarded?
7. What were the names of the two sailing dinghies originally kept in the Altounyan's Syrian boathouse?
8. The Turkish name of the lake on which they sailed means what in English?
9. The territory that is now Turkish was, at the time of AR and Genia's visit controlled by what other nation?
10. When AR and Genia arrived, they brought something with them in a crate? What was it?

Answers: 1. Alexandria 2. Nur or Armanus Mtns 3. They owned and ran a hospital 4. Aleppo 5. Taqui // and Peter Duck 6. He isolated the asthma medication disodium chromoglycate and invented the intal 'spin-haler' 7. Beetle 8. Fish Lake 9. France, under the French Mandate 10. A sailing dinghy, Peter Duck

FURTHEST SOUTH
Submission Deadline for Next Issue (August 2017):

JUNE 30th