



Furthest South



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Riding the ferry boats: Historical harbour ferries of Harwich and Auckland

Garry Wood

Arthur Ransome's novels frequently mention items which may not be directly associated with the story, but which can be of interest to the reader in their own right. An example in *We didn't mean to go to sea (WD)*, is the ferry boats, one of which the character Jim Brading used on Harwich Harbour when looking for his missing yacht *Goblin*.

As towns developed into cities around the world, those being built on harbours or rivers usually found it necessary to establish ferry services for contact with their opposite shores. Such well-known services developed in cities such as New York and San Francisco in the USA, Sydney in Australia and Auckland in New Zealand.

In this article we look at the ferries and ferry services which were in use on Harwich Harbour at the time AR based his novel, in the 1930s, and also investigate the fate of associated dockside buildings and structures that he mentioned. Then, as a comparison, a second part of the article details the most well-known ferry of that time to provide a similar service on the other side of the world in Auckland.

Part One: Harwich Harbour

When in *WD* (p. 56) *Goblin* sails down the Orwell River, Jim Brading points out to the Swallows, far ahead of them, the little grey town of Harwich with its church spire and lighthouse tower. This light tower was probably the taller of the two known as Harwich High and Low lighthouses (Fig. 1), built in 1818. Though usually referred to as lighthouses their actual purpose was to act as guiding lights so as to lead ships safely through the shoals and into the harbour. However, by 1863 they were declared redundant because the shifting sands had changed the position of the ship channel. Both towers are still present today and have been restored as maritime museums (Anon. 2018).

As the *Goblin* proceeded downriver, to her left was the town of Felixstowe with its tall waterside mills, and, further on, the seaplane sheds and gantry. Aircraft enthusiasts, watching off the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment at Felixstowe in the 1930s, would have been fascinated with

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Fig. 1. The high and low Leading Light Towers of Harwich.

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We've made you a bumper issue this time. We asked for some more 'literary' articles as well as our usual personal stories and amusements. We certainly received all of these! You will find some substantial reading, which may be especially valued by those of us still under Covid-19 restrictions. Thank you to all our contributors. -Ed.



Fig. 2. The ferry *Brightlingsea* heads for the Harwich Terminal

the many flying boats, float planes and amphibians being tested for their ability to take off and alight on the water (London 2018). Passing the Shotley Spit buoy, *Goblin* sailed on up the Stour River and it is here that she met a passenger ferry which had just left one of the Harwich jetties.

Ferry services on Harwich Harbour in one sort or another had been present for decades, but in the 1920s the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) decided to become involved, and in 1925 had the motor vessel *Brightlingsea* (Fig. 2) built and introduced to the service between Harwich and Felixstowe (Anon. 2019). A somewhat unusual looking vessel, she was built by Rowhedge Ironworks, surprisingly with a wooden hull, to a length of 20.6 m, and having a 152-passenger capacity. However, the upper deck, both ahead and aft of the wheelhouse was initially without cover, so that most passengers unless the weather was particularly good, would travel in the below-deck saloons. In more recent years the after-deck has acquired an overhead canopy. She remained in service till the 1980s, and is now included in the National Register of Historic vessels. Because of her largish size, *Brightlingsea* would be unlikely to be the ferry AR referred to in the novel.

Three smaller motor vessels from earlier in the 20th century were retained in ferry service by the LNER (Clegg &



Fig. 3. On the River Stour the ferry *Pin Mill* passes lightships brought in from the North Sea for servicing.

Styring 1969), and were probably used in off-peak hours when there were not many passengers to be carried. The motor vessel *Pin Mill* (13.4 m), with a two-cylinder paraffin-oil engine, was built in 1910 by the Whitstable Barge Co. (Anon. 2005). In ferry service from 1912, her engine was later replaced by a Diesel, and so powered was subsequently also used as a work boat around Parkeston Quay. She is still present today as an historic vessel (Fig. 3). Both the *Pin Mill* and the *Brightlingsea* had dark blue painted hulls, white and brown upper works, and yellow funnels, the colour scheme probably chosen by the LNER for their ferry fleet.

In *WD AR* describes the ferry that *Goblin* passed as a ‘small dumpy steamboat’ (p. 63). This ferry was most likely to have been one of the two other wooden-hulled ferries, either *Epping* or *Hainault*, their ultimate fates now unknown. AR may have been in error here, as all four ferries were motor vessels, not steam driven as he suggests.

The building of the Orwell Bridge in 1982 reduced the need for ferries, and today only a skeleton service operates with two rather odd-looking vessels. One of these, the *Explorer 12*, was built as a landing craft with a bow-end ramp for loading and landing passengers off the beach. The other, the *Harwich Harbour Ferry*, was converted from a former life boat of the liner *Canberra*.

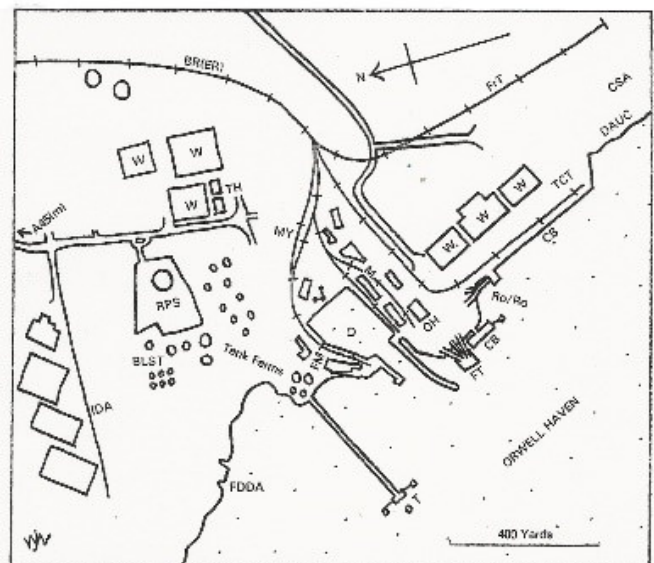


Fig. 4. Felixstowe dock area in 1973 with the Pier Hotel marked ‘OH’, for old hotel, ‘D’ for dock, ‘M’ for railway marshalling yard, and ‘FT’ for ferry terminal.

When, in *WD*, the injured Jim Brading managed to escape from the Felixstowe Hospital he caught the bus back to the dockside and pier, and found the ferry to Harwich about to cast off from the pontoon below. Staggering aboard, he asked the ferry mate and skipper, the former of whom he knew, if they knew the whereabouts of the *Goblin*, but they did not. Up to the 1960s, the dock area as shown on a 1973 map (Fig. 4) in a book of that time (Wren, 1976, p. 167), was very much the same as described by AR in the 1930s. The square on the waterfront was the same, as were the railway sidings, dock, pier, ferry terminal, and the hotel.

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Fig. 5. The Pier Hotel, Felixstowe, early 1900s.

The pier had, however, been shortened somewhat during World War 2 for security purposes.

The Pier Hotel as AR described it was a three-story stone building (Fig. 5), completed in 1875 for local landowner Colonel Tomline,

whose visions of a Continental ferry service from Felixstowe were in time thwarted by the LNER building their own International ferry terminal at Parkeston Quay, Harwich. The Pier Hotel of Felixstowe became the headquarters of HMS *Beehive*, a Coastal Forces base, during WW2. After the War, the hotel was renamed 'The Little Ships' in their honour, but was demolished by the Dock Company in 1990 (Tod 2019). The hotel did have a large signboard name which AR said the Swallows were able to read (p. 90) while the *Goblin* was about to cruise past in the Felixstowe deep water channel.

Another building mentioned by AR was the Old Dock Office which was about 100 metres from the Pier Hotel. The Dock Office (Fig. 6) was an ornate and gabled weatherboard building acquired from Norway and reconstructed alongside the Dock Basin in 1888. It was unfortunately



Fig. 6. The Dock Office, Felixstowe, c. 1900, with the heap of coal as described.

destroyed by fire while being renovated in 1997 (Tod 2019).

Also mentioned by AR was the heap of coal which can be seen on the lower right side of the photograph.

At Harwich on the other (Essex) side of the harbour, the ferries in the 1930s berthed at a jetty known as the Half Penny (or Ha'penny) Pier (Fig. 7). The little ferry, with Jim aboard, 'throbbed her way across the harbour' (AR's words), and then

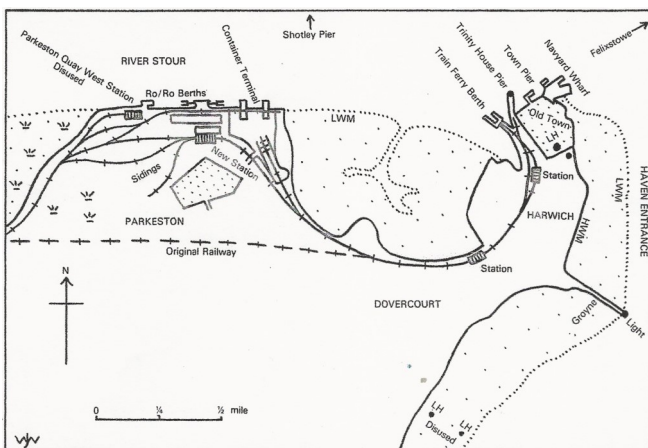


Fig. 7. Parkeston and Harwich Quays in 1972 with the L-shaped Ha'penny Pier marked as 'Town Pier' at the top right of the map.

'steamed into the camber at Harwich'. A marine camber was an enclosed dock in a dockyard which was used to provide shelter for small boats (Kemp 1976, p. 132). Jim climbed up the wooden steps from it to the top of the pier and so to the harbourmaster's office. This office really existed (Fig. 8), but was situated about 100 metres away from the Ha'penny Pier in King's Quay Street, which leads into the old Harwich Town. As the illustrated photograph is dated 1902 the office was probably built at that time, but was knocked down in the early 1960s to make way for the Navyard Wharf (Whittle 2019). The harbourmaster told Jim he had seen *Goblin* both anchored off Shotley Pier, and also on the Felixstowe Shelf two days previously, though whether she was visible from his office in the 1930s can only be conjectured.

The ticket office adjacent to the Ha'penny Pier is where in the novel the mate of the ferry told Jim to buy his ticket. The office, an ornate wooden building is still present and is now a harbourside visitor centre.



Fig. 8. The Harwich Harbourmaster and his assistant at the door of their office in King's Quay Street, c. 1902.

Harbourside hotels with the name Pier seem to have been popular then, as there is one called the Harwich Pier Hotel near the jetty. AR does not mention this in the novel and it is perhaps surprising he did not do so as it was present there in the 1930s. A striking building of three stories, it is today festively painted with white walls and blue facings. It has an octagonal belvedere perched on the top slope of the roof. Despite objections from other publicans the Pier Hotel was built for James Brice in 1860. Originally regarded as unnecessary and a failure, Harwich Pier Hotel has been transformed into a building of international repute, is now classified as 'an eye-catching building of merit' (Anon. 2016), and has a popular harbourside restaurant.

Jim returned to the harbour ferry, which usually worked a triangular course, stopping briefly at Shotley Pier before returning to Felixstowe. He followed the harbourmaster's suggestion that the *Goblin* might be in the Felixstowe dock. She was not, but his dinghy *Imp* was there. As Jim rowed the *Imp* out from the dock the passing Customs launch hailed him telling that a small cutter was coming in from the *Cork* lightship, and looking seaward there was *Goblin* just passing the moored seaplanes, and bringing his search to an end.

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Riding the ferry boats

Part Two: Auckland's Waitemata Harbour

When in 1769 Captain James Cook, in his first visit to New Zealand, sailed around an area of the North Island now known as the Hauraki Gulf, he came across a number of off-shore islands. Probably noting the strong tidal flow between these islands, he would have guessed there was a large area of water behind, but, with strong south-westerly winds blowing out from the land making access under sail difficult, decided not to investigate further (Maddock & Whyte 1966).

In 1842 Captain William Hobson RN explored the area and found a deep-water harbour, still known today by its Maori name of Waitemata. Upon his recommendation a town, now known as Auckland City, was established on the south-western side of the harbour. The peninsula lying on the north-eastern side of the harbour had a number of pleasant beaches on its seaward side, and these soon attracted settlers from Britain as a residential area. The settlers, no doubt thinking of their home country which they were unlikely to see again, used well-known town names from their past. Thus, we had promontories with names of Northcote, Birkenhead, Bayswater, and beaches of Cheltenham, Milford and so on, with a small naval base built for servicing visiting Royal Navy ships, named Devonport.

On the peninsula there was an extinct volcanic cone which they named Mount Victoria. On this cone a signal station with a tall signal mast was built so as to monitor ships arriving and departing the harbour. It also provided marine pilots when required. Signalling was by flags on the flagstaff and then, when wireless was invented, by radio. During scares of a Russian invasion of Auckland in the late 19th century, an eight-inch Armstrong disappearing gun for port protection was installed on the mount's summit. This gun is still present, and pivots to below ground level when not in use. It was apparently only fired once as the concussion from the firing broke so many house windows in Devonport.

Victoria Road in Devonport winds down past the volcanic cone to where a ferry terminal was established in the early days of settlement. The terminal, which is still in use, is similar to that

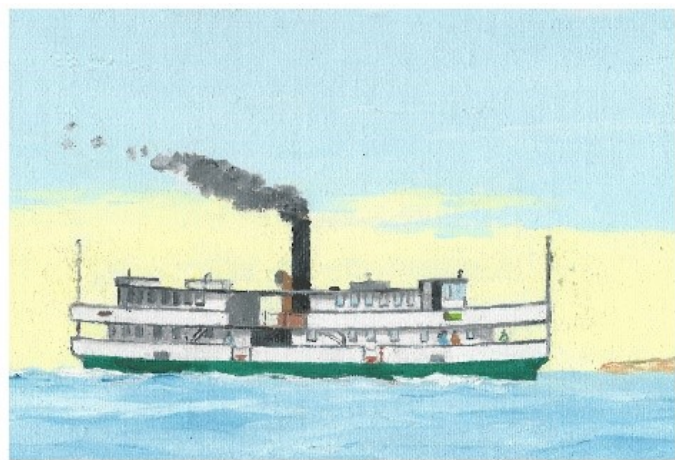


Fig. 9. The ferry *Toroa* on Auckland's Waitemata Harbour in the 1930s.

of Felixstowe with a level square used for buses to offload and

pick up passengers to and from the ferry. As at Felixstowe, a hotel named the 'Esplanade' was built on the landward side of the square and this also is still present there today.

The ferry service between Devonport and Auckland City commenced in the 19th century and has continued under various guises to this day. The history of ferry services on the Waitemata Harbour is too large a subject for this article, so we will concentrate on just one ferry, probably the most well-known of those which were in service on the harbour in the 1930s, at the time when *WD* was written and published.

This ferry was the steam ferry *Toroa* (Fig. 9) (Maori for *Albatross*), owned by the Devonport Steam Ferry Company (Anon. 1988). She was built and launched from the shipyard of Charles Bailey & Co in Auckland in 1925 with a hull of Kauri timber planking on steel frames, and with a length of 39.93 m. To avoid the need for reversing and turning after each trip the ferry was built double ended, with two wheelhouses, one at either end of the vessel, and each having a large wooden steering wheel. The motive power of *Toroa* was a steam engine fired by coal. The engine was of the triple expansion type with steam from the boiler being led first to a high pressure cylinder, the exhaust steam from that cylinder being led to an intermediate pressure cylinder, and then to a low pressure cylinder before being converted by a condenser back into boiler feed water (Kemp, 1976, P. 889). This engine gave *Toroa* a speed of 12 knots driving one of the two propellers being used for the direction the vessel was using when under way. Unlike the colourfully painted Felixstowe ferries, *Toroa* had a more utilitarian black and white woodwork and a black funnel. Four crew were the norm, captain, mate, engineer and fireman. In her heyday she could carry 1200 passengers.

As a commuter in the 1940s and 1950s I travelled many times on *Toroa* between Devonport and Auckland City. At Devonport *Toroa* berthed at an L-shaped wharf, covered to give passengers protection from the weather. A single large electrical-powered gangway was used for passengers to embark and disembark. At departure time the gangway was raised, and chains supported by stanchions were placed across the open part of the ferry deck. With a short hoot from the ferry siren the mate cast off the mooring lines from the lower deck, and the captain in the wheelhouse rang the engine-room bells to give the order to proceed.

Reaching the city side of the harbour *Toroa* would steam into her berth below the Ferry Building. Based on a similar terminal building to that in San Francisco, the Auckland Ferry Building was in a handy position for passengers, as when leaving they had only to pass through it, cross Quay Street, and be in the Auckland CBD. As the ferry slowed toward her berth the mate on the lower deck prepared two mooring lines with loops in their ends, and at the right moment lassoed two bollards on the wharf-side, hauling in any slack so the ferry was held tightly to the wharf. When all was secure he would blow a whistle to inform the captain. Hearing this, the captain made his way to the gangway area and removed the safety chains on the deck.

He would then haul down the two side-by-side wooden gangways and make them fast so the passengers could disembark.

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Some young men were too impatient for this and as soon as the ferry arrived at the wharf would make pier-head jumps from the lower deck. The ferry company frowned on this but were not able to stop it. I can still recall a morning when an unfortunate man missed his footing and fell into the harbour. He was quickly hauled out by his mates, and I can still see him standing on the wharf with sea water pouring out of his suit, but still holding on to his satchel.

On cold mornings a group of commuters would gather around the funnel where it passed through the upper deck and enjoy the warmth radiating from it. Later in the day, in off-peak periods, a man and a woman would entertain passengers in the upper deck cabins with music played on an accordion and a violin. An early form of busking? Foggy mornings on the harbour produced bells, hooting and sirens from moving and anchored vessels and wharf ends, much the same as those the Swallows heard when anchored in the fog off Felixstowe. On the *Toroa*, the mate would move to the bow of the upper deck as an extra pair of eyes for the captain in the wheelhouse, and the ferry proceeded through the fog at a reduced speed. No radar on the ferry in those days. On fine days, passengers on the open part of the upper deck needed to be aware of the direction in which the funnel smoke was heading, so as to avoid a sprinkling of fine funnel soot on their clothes.

After the Auckland Harbour Bridge opened in 1959 there was a marked drop in patronage on the ferries, and most were withdrawn for scrapping. Some were replaced with smaller, metal-hulled and diesel-powered vessels, more economical to run and maintain. For some years *Toroa* served as an excursion vessel, and she was then laid up in 1980 when her certificate of survey expired. She narrowly escaped being cut up with chainsaws, but a group of old ship-lovers who had formed the *Toroa* Preservation Society stepped in and purchased her for a small sum, just in time. The volunteer group perhaps did not realise what a big job they had taken on. Over the years she was shifted around the harbour as the preservation group tried to maintain her with their limited finances.

Eventually the decision was made to shift her ashore where restoration would be an easier job. She was towed to a disused slipway on the upper harbour and hauled up the ramp and out of the water. Here it was found that much work, particularly on the hull, was needed to return her to an authentic, seaworthy condition. Much of the steel of the framing has subsequently been replaced, together with the parts of the planking and wooden superstructure which had deteriorated. Both the original Scottish-built boiler and steam engine were in good condition, and have been further restored. As more restoration funds have now been obtained, it is hoped that before long we will see the *Toroa* back in the harbour and carrying passengers once again.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks TARS New Zealand Co-ordinator, Cheryl Paget, and her Dad, Colin Butler, for information on the Harwich Harbour ferries. Also, Felixstowe Museum Volunteer Colin Tod for data on Felixstowe Dock buildings, and for the use of photographs from the Felixstowe Museum Collection. Further thanks to David Whittle of The Harwich Society Archive for data and photograph of the Harwich Harbour Master's Office, and to Wilfred Wren author of the book *Ports of the Eastern Counties*, for the use of his Harwich Harbour maps.

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Book review: Sunlight and Shadows: Arthur Ransome's Hidden Narratives by Mike Bender

Reviewed by Ralph Seccombe

I have just read, with pleasure and profit, Mike Bender's *Sunlight and Shadows: Arthur Ransome's Hidden Narratives*.

For the price of one book, the reader gets two, the first being a study of aspects of Ransome indicated by the title, the second a study of literary legacy and actions which Ransome fans should take to promote his survival as a posthumous member of the society of authors who are still read.

Bender provides a lot of information new to me about Arthur Ransome's life, especially his childhood, the period of creation of the S&A series and the long decline when he no longer wrote fiction. Much of this is not pleasant reading, but it is important to understanding the series.

Bender helpfully places *Swallows and Amazons* (1930) in the context of interwar literature, when England—like much of the world—was mourning its war dead and wounded, while anxious about the next round of hostilities in the not-too-distant future. Bender notes the many absent family members, especially Bob Blackett, father of Nancy and Peggy, whose death he attributes to the First World War or the subsequent flu pandemic: so the family is said to be in grief, while Captain Flint suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, then called shell-shock. Ransome is said to be incapable of portraying a happy family in the initial Lake novels of the series. The children's sailing and woodcraft, with their constant lurking to avoid detection, are a handbook for a guerrilla war of resistance against a future German occupation (thus anticipating the young adult book *Tomorrow When the War Began*).

Bender draws a close connection between Ransome's relationship with his father and John Walker's equivalent. Ransome clearly fell short of his father's expectations. Bender interprets Commander Walker's praise, 'You'll be a seaman yet, my son,' as meaning 'you aren't one yet,' and he focuses rather on the Commander's comment, 'A lot of things were lucky,' meaning that John failed in important ways and was saved from his incompetence by luck. Drawing on his experience as a

qualified mariner, Bender provides a table setting out John's failings, including omitting to replenish the navigation lights of the *Goblin*.

There is an article 'How many children had Lady Macbeth?' Its point is that one cannot decide on biographical data or anything else which is outside the scope of the literary work. So we don't know what caused Bob Blackett's absence. In short, I find Bender's arguments above unconvincing. He is nearer the mark when, late in his book, he characterises Ransome's achievement:

an encapsulated world in which children learned to get on with each other and solve problems presented by living in the great outdoors with minimal adult help; ... for the reader, allowing them, whether adult or child, to escape from the grief and loss resulting from the First World War and anxiety about the increasing likelihood of second conflagration. (page 241).

I take the point that John and others in adventures in the series were indeed lucky, not least Titty, Roger, Brigit and Sinbad, to escape drowning by the rising tide in *Secret Water*, after very poor decisions by John and Susan, but I am not persuaded that Ransome depicted John as uniquely incompetent, an heir to Ransome himself in his relationship with his own father. And surely the Walkers and the Blacketts are happy families, whose biggest problems stem from the First Lord of the Admiralty and a domineering great aunt. And, as Bender points out, it hardly ever rains. I take Commander Walker's praise of John at face value, as the lad does.

Bender's book moves to an analysis of what makes a work a classic, with a focus on Ransome and Enid Blyton among children's authors. In reference to the latter, he cruelly points out that rats fed on a diet of processed bread die of starvation: yet according to Bender, Blyton's popularity is growing and seems

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Hello all,

I have recently purchased (yes, I actually paid money for it) a nice coffee mug with watercolor maps of Windermere on it. I think that these were painted by Sophie/Titty. I found them on a website for a mob called [Redbubble](#). They are not too difficult to find on Gurgle. The cost is about \$25, plus the usual p&p, etc. Redbubble have an office in Collins St. making ordering easy for us.

Cheers, **David Bamford**.



assured. What of Ransome? Bender provides challenging and valuable comments on the Arthur Ransome Society, suggesting greater outreach. I would like to see the suggestions considered.

Bender makes helpful suggestions for sequels, including about Captain Flint and his lover Timothy (not an armadillo). A further proposal (originator Arwen Seccombe) concerns Peggy, who worries me as utterly overshadowed by Mate Susan, who is constantly praised as the enabler of adventures. Did Peggy, outclassed, ignored and without even the energy to achieve duffer status, end up in thrall to laudanum, hating her sister, the rival mate and most of all herself? No, fortunately she cast off her natal surname and her childhood lack of self-esteem and achieved a career as Agent Peggy Carter, some of whose exploits are revealed in Marvell movies and her own TV show.

The author makes reference to these days of coronavirus. In my case, it has limited my sailing to my boat, *Dorothea Cal-lum*, whose home is a mooring on Lake Macquarie, New South Wales. My most recent passage was earlier this year, in the

barque *James Craig* as a mate, back to Sydney from Melbourne (my cousin Roger paddled there on the Yarra, not in South Australia—page 212). Coronavirus has at least ensured that I have time for editing documents including a *James Craig Crew Handbook*, which is adorned with quotes from celebrated seamen including Dr Stephen Maturin and Alan Villiers (born in Melbourne). Included is the best-known quote by Commander Edward Walker: *Grab a chance and you won't be sorry for a might-have-been.*

Sunlight and Shadows—thoughtful and thought-provoking: recommended.

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Folk songs

David Bamford

In the land of my youth,
Ah! my glorious youth!
A land that time's passed by,
We would sing us songs,
Ah! What glorious songs!
Round a fire, 'neath a summer sky.

We would sing, then, of maids,
Ah! What glorious maids!
And the men who would win them o'er,
Of the climbers and walkers
Who'd been there before us,
And the horsemen we all held in awe/

We would sing, too, of ships
And of sailormen bold,
Who would fight with the cruel, restless sea,
And would fish for a living
In wild waters so cold
Before age caught them like you and me.
But now we are the bards

Who must pass on the words,
You and I, with our silver-grey mane,
We must tell of the heroes
Who once gave their all,
And who won over hardship and pain.

For the young folk will hear
Only talking machines,
While there's glitter and noise close at hand,
So take them to where there are stars in the sky,
And the river and trees are the band.

Or the waves on the rocks
Lull them slowly to sleep,
While the ship gently nods to the swell,
And a sailormen's song
Softly bids them goodnight,
To be summoned next day by the bell.

There's too much of our heritage wasted,
For a culture that's shallow and trite.
So fill your heart with a song

Lockdown map-making

In the last issue of *Furthest South* we were set a map-making challenge (with prizes).

A reminder of what we were asked to do:

Map-making is a feature of the books. You are probably out exercising in your local area at this time. Our Competition for you is to draw a map of your local area and its landmarks (probably the local cafe not among them at present) as imaginatively (or inaccurately) as you like and send it in to the Secretary.

Thanks and congratulations go to Paul Rodwell, Glenn Kuring, David Goodwin and Peter Radue, and Jan Allen, for sending in their lockdown maps. The mapmakers have chosen their prizes from the TARS Stall, and these are now on their way to them.

Map-making: My journey map

Paul Rodwell

I have sent maps to *Furthest South* in the past, one of 'My childhood world' and one of Lake Tinaroo on which I go boating now (well, not now as the coronavirus restrictions forbid it!). What should the map be this time?

I decided on 'My journey from my home to my boat'.

This journey not only connects two parts of 'my world' but also crosses a part of Australia to which I have grown attached over more than thirty years. In describing the journey I am doing one of the activities I enjoy—sharing the beautiful Atherton Tableland with others. This plateau was once covered with rainforest but is now intensive farming; the more rugged parts are grazing for dairy and beef cattle but the lower flatter parts

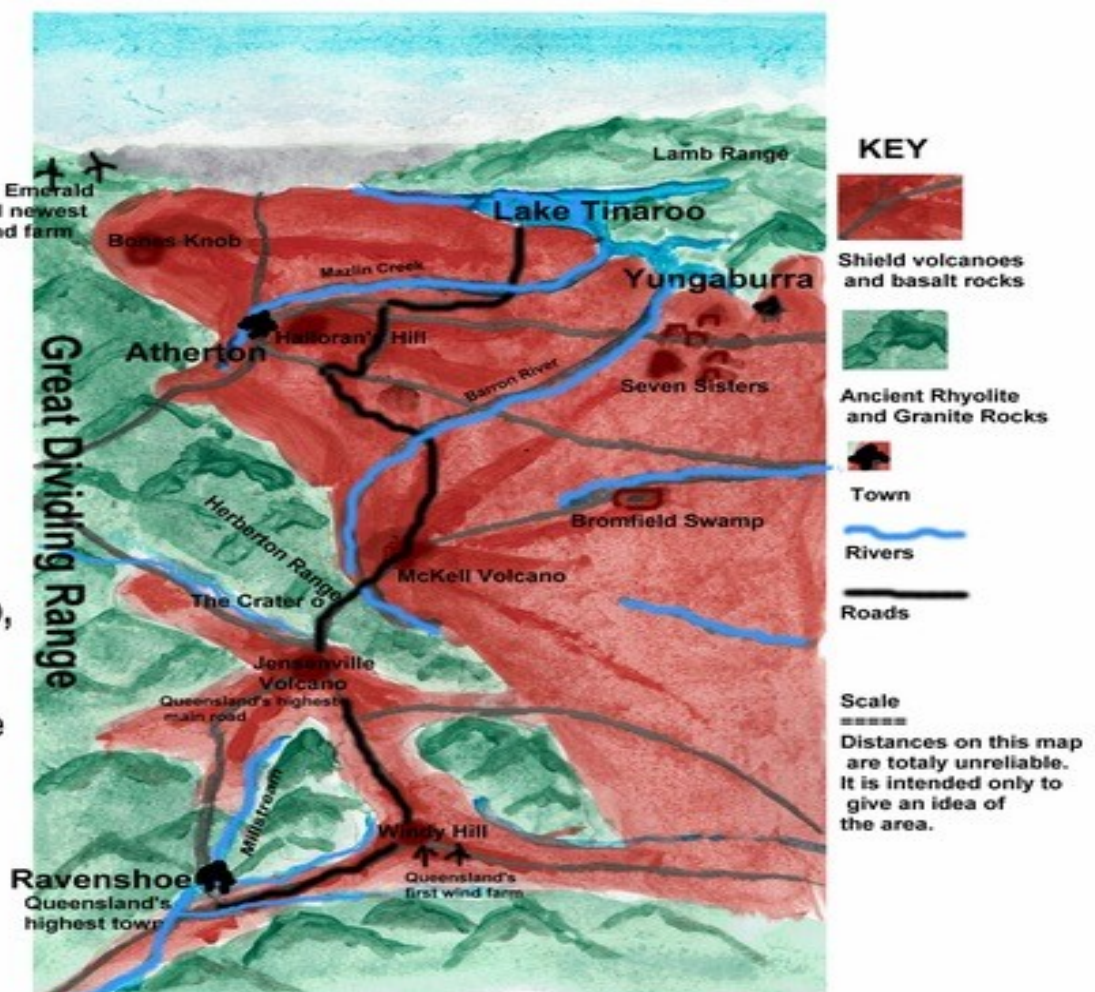
are covered with maize, peanuts, potatoes and many other crops. The flattest area to the north and east of Atherton is known as the 'Golden Triangle'.

From Ravenshoe in the south west of the area to Lake Tinaroo in the north east is about sixty-five kilometres. It goes from one of the highest points of the Tableland to one of the lowest. The scenery is amazing, with vistas that include views of Queensland's highest mountains, Bartle Frere and Bellenden Ker, and the route goes over or around five shield volcanoes and past many other volcanic features and is an object lesson of volcanism. The Atherton Tableland was created by volcanoes; it was one of the last active areas in Australia and some of that activity is so recent it appears in Aboriginal stories.

The five volcanoes I travel over on my journey are not like the

The Road between Ravenshoe, My Home, and Lake Tinaroo, My Boat

It goes over three and round two volcanoes!



Continued on page 9

popular idea of a volcano; unlike like those active ones across the Tasman, these are shield volcanoes. From a distance they don't look much, just a rounded bump on the landscape, but they cover a large area. Liquid basalt came out of their vents and spread across the surrounding land. They filled the valley between the Great Dividing Range and the mountain ranges nearer the coast with a sea of lava, and when that space was full the basalt continued to flow through gaps in those ranges, eventually solidifying and weathering to long fingers of rich red soil; some even flowed the 60 km down to the coast.

On my map I have tried to combine a map with an aerial view. The very old rocks that shaped the Tableland and are mostly granite or rhyolite are shown in green because those areas are still mostly forest and rugged. The brown areas are the rich red soil from the weathered basalt. Apart from the shield volcanoes there are other younger examples of volcanic activity. There are a number of explosion craters with either lakes or peat swamps in them; numerous cinder cones (one group is known as the Seven Sisters), some with craters in the top, and a rarity, a diatreme called 'The Crater'. This is a hole 60 metres across and 140 metres down to water. A long way beyond that some massive explosion blasted through the granite ridge next to the McKell Volcano. Examples of all of these are just a short diversion from my journey, so if I have passengers they can be treated to a 'Volcanic Tour'.

Ravenshoe is Queensland's highest town (so it has nearly all the highest urban things in the state.). From there I go up Windy Hill on whose summit is the first wind farm in the state (I believe it was the largest in Australia when it was built). The road goes down the other side along a ridge and joins a spur of the Jenvenville Volcano. Here it is joined by another route from Ravenshoe which has ascended another spur, marginally higher than Windy Hill. The road goes through the end of the Herberton Range, which just managed to stand above the molten sea of lava, and passes 'The Crater' to the McKell Volcano (also known as the Malanda Volcano).

From each of these summits there are long views across farm-

land to distant mountains, but that from the McKell is one of the greatest anywhere. On the left is the rugged, angular, still-forested Herberton Range that ends in the distance at Mount Emerald and its big new wind farm. Directly ahead is a long ridge leading from pastures down to the Golden Triangle east of Atherton. Halloran's Hill, and beyond it Bone's Knob, stand out and the lines of lava flow from them are obvious. To the right the land is mostly pasture that fed the cows that supplied Malanda Milk Dairy way down in the distance. Beyond Malanda there are the masses of Bartle Frere and Bellenden Ker.

The McKell Volcano lava covers a very large area and its lava flowed over the eastern rim of the Tableland towards the sea. Four roads leave this hill; the one we come up splits into three each going down a long ridge with a narrow valley on each side. The one heading east passes the large explosion crater or maar named Bromfield Swamp, as that is what fills the bottom. Our road goes north to Atherton.

Gradually the ridge levels out and the road crosses the Barron River on to the lower slopes of Halloran's Hill, and apart from a couple of cones surrounded by basalt bombs (and of course the summit of the Hill) the land is now fairly flat. The route to Tinaroo turns off the main road just short of Atherton, goes round the base of Halloran's Hill and joins the Atherton to Tinaroo road on the Golden Triangle. Over to the right there are the little rounded hills of the Seven Sisters (there are more like nine!). Ahead the mountains of the Lamb Range, which now dominate the scene, long ago turned the lava flow from Bone's Knob and Halloran's Hill towards the north. The Barron River, flowing off the lava of the McKell Volcano, followed the junction between the Lamb Range and this flow eroding the valley that is now filled by Lake Tinaroo. And so the road arrives at the Lake where *Rosie Lee* is moored at Black Gully Road near the Environmental Education Centre.

I have gone from home to my boat, but in doing so have passed through this varied and interesting landscape; I hope you enjoyed the trip as much as I enjoyed telling about it.



View across Ravenshoe towards Windy Hill and its windmills showing the rounded shape of a shield volcano.

Map-making: The adventures of Samuel & Glenn

Glen Kuring







Samuel and Glenn have been exploring their local area on their bikes during the COVID-19 lockdown but they seem to have got the locations on their map wrong. Can you help them?

Hint: They have also seen that the nearby main roads have numbers: M1, 2, 21 & 30.

Location	Place	Significance / Hint
1	Local hilltop	Where the Eagles Soar
2	Soccer team home ground	Where it all started for Samuel's parents
3	High school	Where the band nearly got washed away
4	Local church	Samuel said goodbye to here over 2 years ago
5	Aunty Lesley's	Where Samuel will be going again soon
6	Home	Where you can see for miles
7	Cricket team home ground	Where Samuel had his accident
8	Bridge that was officially opened	Why the barbed wire? Is this a secret Govt agency?
9	APL/APA/APGL ...??	Where the Buccaneers roam
10	Bike jumps	The way to good food and good fellowship
11	Primary school	Return here before it's dark

Space for your answers is on the next page.

Map key

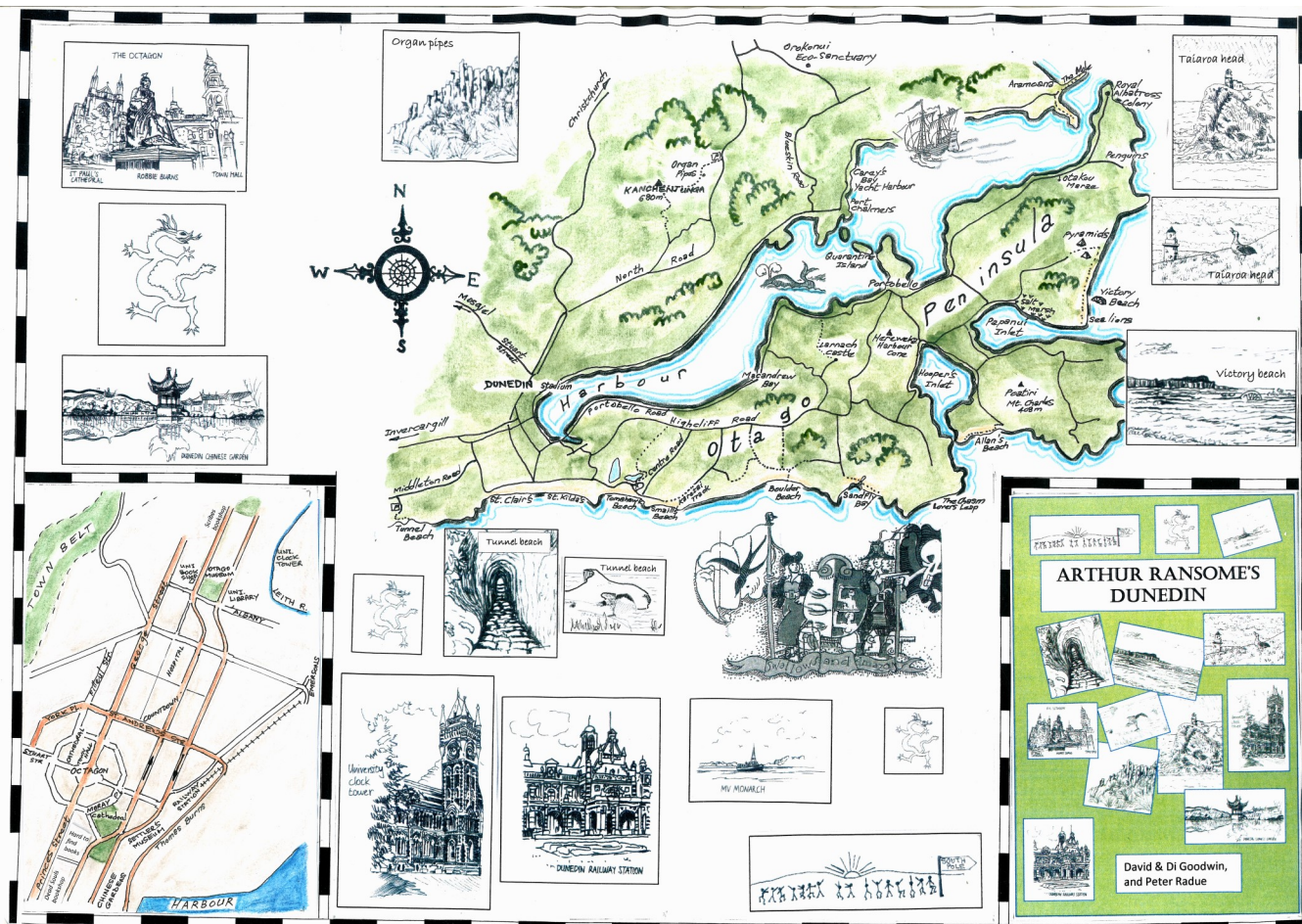
	Main road
	Secondary road
	Event / place
	Raging torrent
	Bushland / Parkland
	Sam & Glenn's routes



Location	Place	Significance / Hint
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

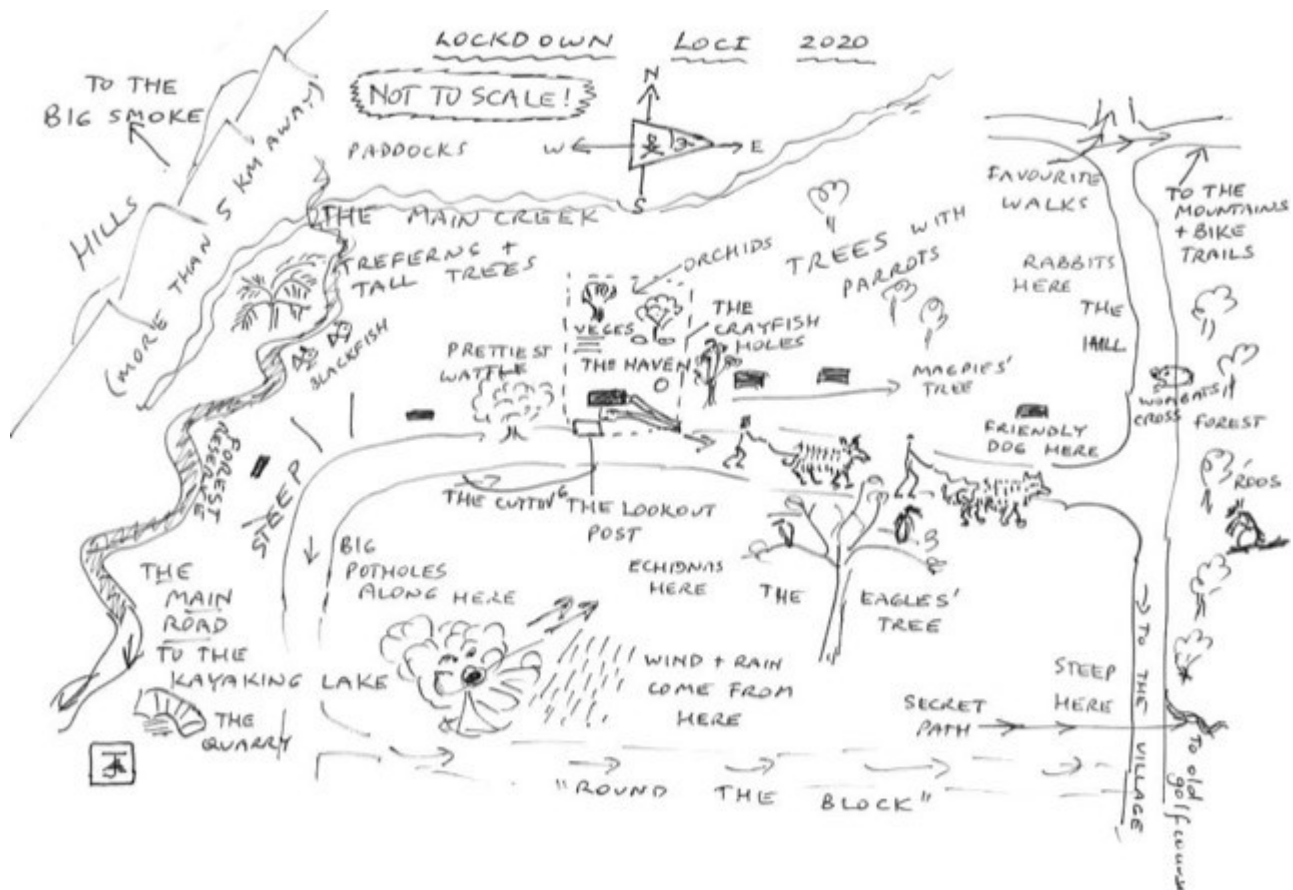
Map-making: Dunedin

David Goodwin and Paul Radue



Map-making: Lockdown loci

Jan Allen



Obituary: Richard Edward Callum, OBE, DPhil

Richard Callum, 'Dick', came from a noted academic family. His father was Professor Edward Callum, Professor of Egyptian Archaeology at the School of Oriental and Africa Studies (SOAS) in the University of London: his sister Dorothea ('Dot') was a distinguished novelist who eventually left the UK for Hollywood, where she became a scriptwriter.

He was born on 10 October 1916, and after attending an independent grammar school in London proceeded to London University (Kings College) to read science, majoring in zoology. After taking first class honours, he transferred to Oxford (New College) where he worked for a DPhil at the Bureau of Animal Population with Charles Elton, the pioneer ecologist. Dick's doctoral thesis was a remarkable comparative study of the ecological structure and dynamics of two ecological communities: those of Lake District moorland and Norfolk wetland-reedbed: it employed fundamental ecological concepts that were just being developed. Interestingly, however, his first publication was a short note in *British Birds*, illustrated by his own photographs, confirming the first proven breeding of the great northern diver (*Gavia immer*) in the Scottish Western Isles. The article, and the observations upon which it was based, proved to be extremely prescient [see *Furthest South*, 21 (2), pp 3-4].

Dick completed his doctoral research just before the outbreak of the Second World War, and immediately applied to join the RAF; he was rejected on the basis of his deficient eyesight and his wearing spectacles. A similar rejection came from the Royal Navy. However, in due course he was commissioned into

the Royal Artillery: he had studied mathematics and physics, as well as biology in the sixth form at school and at London University. This knowledge proved extremely useful in estimating projectile velocity and distance during his service in Europe, North Africa and the Pacific.

After the War, he briefly returned to Oxford where he married Mavis ('Titty') Walker, who had spent part of the war as a 'Bletchley girl', assisting with codebreaking at Bletchley Park. Titty's mother had spent part of her childhood in Sydney, and the couple had connections in Australia, so when Dick successfully applied for a lecturing post at the University of Sydney, the couple made their home 'down under'. Dick continued his ecological research, working on tropical ecosystems in northern Australia and the Pacific islands – an interest developed partly during his wartime service. In the 1960s he received an OBE 'for services to Australian ecology and conservation'.

Dick and Titty had two children, Ruth and Margaret, always referred to as Nancy and Peggy.

He listed his recreations as including photography, birdwatching (both of which he saw as extensions of his work), bushwalking and sailing.

(Discovered by AusTAR **Patrick Armstrong** in a very old edition of the *Ecological Newsletter*.)

(We suspect that this journal may only ever have had one subscriber – Ed.)

Weather, Arthur Ransome?

Hedley Thomson

Weather is one of those topics that tends to get thrown around a bit when discussing children's literature, often (if not usually) on the premise that the kiddies get to run around in blissful, warm sunshiny conditions most of the time. In his recent publication, *Sunlight & shadows*, in analysing AR and the influences on his life and writings, Mike Bender rather takes this approach—though he doesn't consider whether or not it holds up. For example, he states (p. 210):

And the key to this competence excitement [imagining other people's worlds, if I'm interpreting the phrase correctly] is Pettigrew's (2009) sarcastic remark that one of the ridiculous things about Ransome's Lakeland novels is that the sun is always shining; which seems to have validity, as the only bad weather I can immediately think of is the storm at the end of *Swallows and Amazons* (Actually, there is a thunderstorm in *The Picts and the Martyrs*).

So I thought I'd have a look for myself—in fact, a look at how AR makes use of the weather in five of the Twelve.

First, I think it's fair to expect that in such stories the weather will generally be fair to fine; after all, if the summer holidays are going to be beset with rain and cold, a storyline limited to what the children are able to concoct indoors to keep them amused isn't likely to get very far.

As for the actuality of how AR weaves weather conditions into the story, the reality is one of diversity, with the weather often dictating and even determining outcomes. And I think this is quite deliberate. As is the hallmark of Ransome's writing in the Twelve, the weather is used to teach behaviours and hone skills and to show that the weather isn't always going to be fine or do what you want it to do. As such, it is entirely unfair and unfounded to state that 'one of the ridiculous things about Ransome's Lakeland novels is that the sun is always shining'. A reasonable reading of or reference to the books themselves will tell you that.

In summary, AR uses all manner of wild weather, fog, rain, drought, wind and no wind at all, as well as benign and pleasant weather, to shape his stories.

So, here goes. Note that in carrying out my analysis I did a fairly swift swot, so won't have picked up all the references to weather, but certainly enough to back up my conclusions. Sometimes assumptions or extrapolations are made where specific information about the weather conditions is either limited or non-existent, usually based on the activities being undertaken.

Swallows and Amazons

As far as I can tell, across its thirty-one chapters the book covers a period of fifteen days. During this period, the weather is

certainly generally fine, but with experiences of very varying wind conditions, fog and the memorable storm leading into the final day on Wild Cat Island. Day by day, this is how things panned out, with my interpretations as required.

Day 1 (chapter 1): *calm*.

Day 2 (chapter 2): *calm; breeze late* in the day.

Day 3 (chapters 3 to 5): *wind steady though light* for the sail to Wild Cat Island; *calm & sunshine* when Mrs Walker comes to the island.

Day 4 (chapter 6): morning – *sunshine, rustling leaves, noise of rippling water*; sailing to Holly Howe: '*wind was really hard*'. Afternoon – *wind light* again.

Day 5 (chapter 7): presumably *warm* as they had a morning swim; otherwise *calm*.

Day 6 (chapter 8): *enough wind* for Amazon to sail nicely to Houseboat Bay.

Day 7 (chapters 9 to 12): *fine* – more swimming.

Day 8 (chapters 13 & 14): '*dead calm*' – thus, no war possible.

Day 9 (chapters 15 & 16): 'another day of *absolute calm*' – John rows to houseboat; Mrs Walker rows to Island.

Day 10 (chapters 17 – 20): early morning – *fog*; later morning – *ripples* on the water (a 'fair wind' for the battle).

Day 11 (chapters 21 – 23): 'the *wind was fresh*' but only enough for the Amazons' white flag (admittedly a blanket) to flap; afternoon – '*a good wind blowing*'.

Day 12 (chapters 24 – 26): no indication of conditions but rowing involved ('tipping the black spot') so presumably *calm/mild*.

Day 13 (chapter 27): *decent breeze* – sailing to houseboat for battle.

Day 14 (chapters 28 – 30): day time - *calm* – discovering Captain Flint's trunk; night – the storm: **rain, lightning, wind, thunder**.

Day 15 (chapter 31): still windy – 'Though the *wind* had gone down there were still *waves* on the lake'; later – *OK for sailing* to Horseshoe Cove; and heading for home: 'The *wind was dropping*.... Slowly the fleet slipped past Wild Cat Island.'

Summary: mostly pleasant, even benign weather but with the storm and a variety of testing conditions for sailing with either none or variable winds, the abilities of the children are tested.

Swallowdale

Another fifteen days, this time across thirty-six chapters. During this period the weather is again generally fine—it is summer, after all (even if an English one)—with experiences similar to those in *Swallows & Amazons* of very varying wind conditions including a strong wind for the end-of-story race, plus memorable fog on the moor and lake, and an overnight downpour that washes away the pool dam in Swallowdale (a detail

Continued on page 14

not mentioned by Bender or Pettigrew). Day by day, this is how conditions varied:

Day 1 (chapters 1 & 2): sailing to Wild Cat Island in the morning is via a 'southerly wind' creating a 'bubbling ribbon of *Swallow's* wake'; thence the weather conditions are not mentioned – presumably no change; i.e.: *windy but fine*.

Day 2 (chapters 3 & 4): the Swallows sailed readily to Horse-shoe Cove and '... looked at the waves breaking on a sharp-pointed rock [Pike Rock]', suggesting a *firm breeze*. This is the day Titty and Roger discovered Swallowdale. There are no other explicit mentions of the weather (a tendency of AR when his charges are on land), so, again, assume *breezy but fine*.

Day 3 (chapters 5 to 10): a **strong, flukey wind** encountered – the day of the shipwreck; chapter 5: 'Captain John had seen what a good wind [Nancy] had out there; ... that there were pretty big waves on that side of the lake.... It was never the same strength for long together.' And later, in the Cove; chapter 6: 'The wind was veering to the south now, and not as hard as it had been.... But there was still a good ripple on the water and the morning sun was in the eyes of the watchers on the point...' Here, AR **explicitly uses the weather conditions** to set up the story of *Swallowdale* (Mike Bender theorises that it is Captain John's ineptitude that actually sets the story—a theme he wades into with vehemence in *Sunlight and Shadows*; poor John, just a 12-year-old boy... anyway, that's a theme for another time.) The weather doesn't rate a mention in the remaining chapters (after all, the Swallows are now on land) but presumably the *wind eased and conditions were fine*.

Day 4 (chapters 11 & 12): 'sunlight' and swimming; i.e. conditions *fine*.

Days 5 to 7 (chapters 13 to 18): no mention of weather, so presumably, again, *fine, fine, fine...*

Day 8 (chapter 19) – **the downpour**: afternoon—Roger: '... Mr Swainson said it was no wonder I was catching no fish

because rain was coming and the fish knew it.'.... The first drops fell as they were tidying up after supper, but that was *no more than a shower*. It was not until after 'lights Out' that it *settled down to rain in earnest*. There was *very little wind* with it, just a **steady, tremendous downpour**.... For a long time the explorers lay awake listening to the rain on their tents and the rushing noise of the stream and the roaring of the waterfall. But *the rain was softer now*. The noise was a steady noise and, in the end, even Titty fell asleep.' I.e. a pretty significant weather event, I'd say.

Days 9 & 10 (chapter 19): after the downpour, back to *fine* weather, with jobs such as repairing the washed away pool dam.

Days 11 to 13 (chapters 20 to 27): pretty much all on land – the trek to the Amazon River, climbing Kanchenjunga and beginning to the return to Swallowdale. As such, with no mentions of weather conditions, assume *fine* throughout. *But* then the weather, with its vicissitudes, plays a significant role again....

Day 13 (chapters 28 to 33): p. 341 - 'Besides,' said Roger, 'there's *hardly any wind*.' And p. 348 - the **fog** comes on... And later, after they have become lost in the fog and Roger has injured his ankle – p. 358: 'Listen,' said Titty. '*Wind's coming* at last.... Look, the whole fog's lifting. I told you it would.' Meanwhile, on the lake, in the **fog**: 'There's *precious little wind*,' [Nancy] said, looking up at the black flag idly dangling against the mast.

Day 14 (chapter 34): no mention of weather; again, assume *fine*.

Day 15 (chapters 35 & 36) – the race: p. 425 - 'That's more like it,' said Titty a little later as *the wind strengthened* and a murmur of water came from under Swallow's forefoot. 'You can hear she's pleased with it.' (p. 429) – 'A black patch of *wind-combed water* was sweeping down the lake marking the track of a *squall* down from the mountains.'

Continued on page 15

Cheryl Paget found this item which may be of interest to TARS required to wear masks



Swallows and Amazons map of Coniston Water Mask by Sophie Neville

A hand drawn map by Sophie Neville showing locations around Coniston Water in the Lake District that relate to Arthur Ransome's book 'Swallows and Amazons' and the film adaptations made on location in Cumbria

<https://www.redbubble.com/>

Summary: so, three out of fifteen days we have significant, ‘game-changing’ weather events, with a mixture of conditions, mainly courtesy of the wind, thrown in. Not what I’d call continuous sunshine and balmy weather. And get ready for much more divergence from anything like the same.

Winter Holiday

Well, for a start, it’s *not* the summer holidays, so for the entire time it’s COLD, if not freezing, in order for the lake to freeze; and, yes, it’s calm most of the time to enable the freezing process to occur—but then there’s the blizzard... As for the number of days the story covers, it’s not clear, as the period when they are in quarantine is not specified exactly.

Day 1 (chapters 1 & 2) - a few indicators of **how cold** it was to set the scene: ‘There’ll be *ice* in the jugs this morning,’ Mrs Dixon had said... And at the lake shore: ‘It’s *awfully cold*,’ said Dorothea at last. ‘Standing about like this.’

Day 2 (chapters 3 & 4) – more scene setting: Nancy, ‘Ow, *my feet are cold*. What about yours, Peggy?’ ‘*Iceicles*.’ The two of them had gone through the ice on the tarn. And later: ‘And with that the whole lot of them poured out of the hot farm kitchen into the *cold* air.’ The igloo – ‘Well you should have seen this one last week,’ said Titty, ‘before the *snow* melted.’ No wind indicated.

Day 3 (chapter 5): morning - ‘... *ice* on the tarn was bearing properly at last.’ Night – ‘The sky was *clouded over*’; *snow began to fall*. No wind indicated.

Day 4 (chapter 6): *snow; calm*.

Day 5 (chapters 7 to 9): *lake starting to freeze; calm* (Peggy in cat ice).

Days 6 to 9 (chapter 10): ‘... folk had been skating clean across the lake by the islands’ – day 9.

Day 10 (chapters 11 & 12): no indications of weather.

Day 11 (chapter 13): ‘It was *far too cold* to do much sitting about.’

Days 12 & 13 (chapter 14): the doctor – ‘Chains on both back wheels... but it’s grand weather for all that.’ (p. 171) – doctor refers to people in ‘cold countries’ dealing with *frostbite* as something of a warning to look out for it here. ‘Day after day ...’ (chapter 15): ‘... there was less open water in the middle of the lake.... Once or twice, in the middle of the day, there seemed to be *half a promise of a thaw*.’ A restart of the days – Days 1 & 2 (chapter 16): development/use of sailing sledges, so *evidence of breeze*.

Days 3 to 5+ (chapters 16 to 23): no indications of weather; presume *calm and cold, sufficient to freeze the lake*.

To the Pole (chapters 24 to 29): Dick has a sense of the weather changing, then there’s the ‘Start for Pole’ message (flag at Beckfoot), then progressively as the Ds are ‘sailing’: *wind, snow coming..., wind stronger..., blowing up the lake in the snow storm/blizzard*, capsizing into the snow drifts, arriving through the snow and wind to the North Pole and shelter. Others in the *Fram*, *sitting out the storm*; after the storm in the *ensuing calm*; the night time rescue and the gathering at The Pole.

Summary: the underlying influence and the basis for the story is the weather; the underlying influence is that it is always cold—if not very cold—and there are consequences in dealing or not with this condition. The freezing of the lake—because of the constant and essential cold—is what makes the story. There are perils in handling this period of prolonged cold, and not just during the storm/blizzard; e.g.: testing the ice, boating, using the unfamiliar sailing sledges and avoiding frostbite and hyperthermia. Again, AR at his typical best in teaching the practicalities of surviving and thriving in the outdoors and in daring to have a go.

Pigeon Post

And now for something completely different—drought! This is an easy one to analyse for a change. The sense of *heat, dryness and danger* is set up in the opening chapter with references to fires beside the railway line, dry paddocks and the farmer’s wife’s memorable line: ‘Losh! the heat. This weather’s enough to maze a body’s brains.’ From then on, the unremitting heat, the dryness and the sense of danger due to uncontrolled fires on the fells permeate and overarch the narrative—arguably more so than the cold of *Winter Holiday* in view of the ever-present and largely uncontrollable danger factor with respect to potential wild fires.

Summary: there are no specific references to variations in weather conditions (at least, not that I could find in my scan of the text), such is the pervasive dominance of the drought conditions that AR has invoked—deliberately, I have no doubt—throughout the narrative. It doesn’t have to be relentless rain or roaring gales for the weather to provide a challenge to us mere mortals—as *PP* so well establishes. My favourite of the Twelve.

The Picts & the Martyrs

The shortest of the Twelve with thirty chapters covering twelve days rather than the more usual fortnight-plus. Nonetheless, the weather features with its typical degree of variability and influence on the narrative and the events that occur, starting anticlimactically.

Day 1 (chapter 1): no mention of the weather.

Day 2 (chapter 2): sailing *Amazon* – ‘With... a southerly wind, the *Amazon* ran swiftly back across Rio Bay...’ So there was a *nice breeze*.

Day 3 (chapters 3 to 6): ‘Above the noise ... of rustling leaves, ... they could hear a motor car coming along the road.’ Later – ‘In the quiet evening they could hear the faint tinkling of the Beckfoot piano.’ More ‘*nice breezes*’ seems to be the implication.

Day 4 (chapters 7 to 10): no mentions of weather.

Day 5 (chapters 11 to 13): ‘glassy water’ – thus, *calm*.

Day 6 (chapters 14 to 16): *Amazon* is rowed across the lake to collect *Scarab*, thus indicating more *calm* conditions. After the collection – ‘There was a *little more wind* and the boom swung gently to and fro...’ Then, after the Ds had sailed up

Continued on page 17

the lake, ‘It’s going to take us a long time to get home. *Not much wind.* It’s *going to rain*, too. Look at those clouds... I wonder if it’ll mean less wind or more’ – Dick. ‘Tack after tack, to and fro across the lake, they beat against the wind... It must have been about midnight when *the rain began.*’

Day 7 (chapters 17 & 18): ‘The rain had turned to a steady drizzle... There was a lot of water in [Scarab].’ Night time – picture of Nancy ‘wet and piebald in the doorway.’ ‘The pattering of the rain had stopped for a few minutes. Suddenly they were startled by the *crash and roll of thunder*... There was another distant rumble and *heavy rain drops beat on the roof*... *A flash of lightning* lit up the clearing outside. Nancy was gone.’

Day 8 (chapter 19): ‘They woke to find *bright sunshine*...’ Interestingly, AR rarely uses this type of phrase; it’s usually left up to us to decide how bright the sun is shining. That night (of the burglary): moon coming up – *a clear night sky*.

Days 9 & 10 (chapters 20 to 22): ‘The *wind’s just right*,’ [Dick] said... And just then, *the wind failed them*... ‘*There’s wind coming*,’ said Dick. Eventually, *a good breeze*. Shows how fickle the wind can be and how AR uses such a device to affect and enhance the plot.

Day 11 (chapters 23 to 25): *dead calm* – trip to High Topps. ‘It’s *a warm night*,’ [Nancy] said. ‘That’s a good thing’ – looking for the GA.

Day 12 (chapters 26 to 30): ‘How long will it take?’ asked the Great Aunt. ‘Not very long if the wind keeps like this,’ said

Dorothea. Thence, a ‘*southerly wind.*’ And a nice light moment to complete the sense of relief: ‘And you should NOT be lying on that *damp grass* even if *the sun is shining*’ – Cook to Timothy.

Summary: certainly, the weather is not so great a factor as in the other Lakeland novels, but the storm certainly comes at a climactic point in the tale, as does the correspondingly opposite clear night sky, in again affecting, in material ways, the composition of the story.

Conclusion

All in all, it’s hard to come to the view that AR treats the factor of weather in a benign and irrelevant manner; quite the opposite—his use of weather in a variety of forms often materially affects events and even outcomes of these novels.

And now to tackle the other seven, which, I expect, will reinforce this conclusion.

References

Bender, M. (2020). *Sunlight and shadows: Arthur Ransome’s hidden narratives*. Kendal, Cumbria: Amazon Publications.

Pettigrew, D. (2009). *Swallows and Amazons* explored: a reassessment of Arthur Ransome’s books for children, *New Review of Children’s Literature and Librarianship*.

What’s new in the AusTARS library?

Jan Allen

Some great new books have joined the AusTARS Library! If you would like to borrow items from the library, contact our Co-ordinator, David Stamp, at <destamp@optusnet.com.au>. David will post you the items and tell you what postage you need to pay, and you also pay the return postage.

The Amazon Publications 2020 title is now in the library: *Sunlight and Shadows: Arthur Ransome’s Hidden Narratives*, by Mike Bender. It examines the writing of the books in the light of AR’s life and times. You may find it controversial! Ralph Seccombe reviews it in this issue of *FS*.

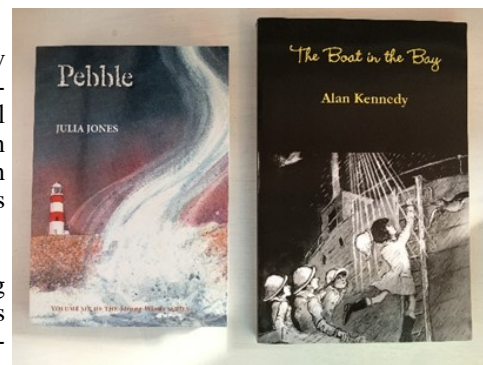
The latest book in Julia Jones’ *Strong Winds* series, *Pebble*, is now in the library. These young adult books are set in East Anglia and utilise elements of AR’s canon.

A children’s novel by Alan Kennedy, *The Boat in the Bay*, also inspired by AR’s books, has been donated by Alan Symons. Thank you, Alan.

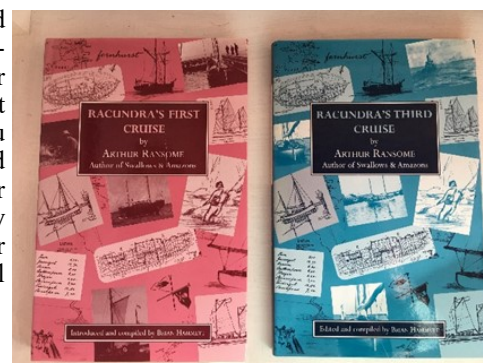
ble. These new editions both feature additional material which throws light on this part of AR’s life.

After reading Hedley Thomson’s discussion of Julian Lovelock’s *Swallows, Amazons and Coots* in this issue, you may be interested in borrowing this from the library.

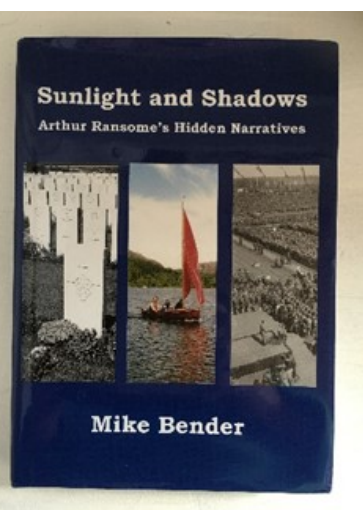
And there is plenty of other good reading in the Library, just right for hibernating at home! If you haven’t received or don’t have your AusTARS Library List from earlier this year, email David for a copy.



These two new editions both feature additional material which throws light on this part of AR’s life.



New copies of AR’s *Racundra’s First Cruise* and *Racundra’s Third Cruise*, both edited by Brian Hammett, are now available.



New copies of AR’s *Racundra’s First Cruise* and *Racundra’s Third Cruise*, both edited by Brian Hammett, are now available.

Make a bird list

Patrick Armstrong

Jan suggested in the recent *Susan's Whistle* that one of the things that might be done during lockdown was to make 'a list of birds seen', just as Dick had done aboard the *Teasel* and *Sea Bear*.

Always rather identifying with Dick, I have made such lists since my earliest teenage days on camping holidays on the Suffolk coast—not so very far from the landscapes immortalised in *Coot Club*, *The Big Six* and *Secret Water*. The habit has remained with me throughout my life, and, nearly seventy years after writing 'marsh harrier, heron, bearded tit, coot and moorhen' (all species Dick knew well) in a tiny blue notebook, I now have lists from holidays and field-trips to many parts of the world. King penguins (Falkland Islands), brolgas (northern Australia), lilac-breasted rollers (South Africa), spot-billed pelicans (Mekong valley), giant condors (flying over the mountains of Ecuador) are all among the species that I have 'listed' with a chewed ball-point or stub of a pencil over the decades since I first read about the Coots and the Ds. In the few days of a sea-side holiday, or on a major expedition to a distant part of the globe the bird list has often provided a focus.

It was a simple matter to extend the concept to 'a list of birds seen within 500 metres of home' during the Covinterval, while more adventurous excursions are impossible, just as Jan suggested. The idea of a local list has an excellent scientific pedigree. The Revd Gilbert White, often regarded as the Father of English natural history, emphasised, in 1788, in the Preface to his immortal *Natural History of Selbourne*, that '[S]tationary men [sh]ould pay some attention to the districts in which they live, and... publish their thoughts respecting the objects that surround them.' (There is little doubt that both AR and Dick Callum would have been familiar with *Selbourne*.)

Just before the latest *Whistle* arrived I had reminded a few natural history friends around the world, who, like me, were 'stationary' for the Covid period, of Gilbert White's words, and circulated my tentative list of species seen on my brief morning exercise walks to two nearby parks. I had listed 28 species (now extended to 32), including New Holland honeyeater, rainbow rosella, western corella, Australasian grebe (nesting on a small solar panel floating in the pool!) wood duck and Aussie shelduck.



New Holland honeyeater
Photo: The Australian Museum

Back came lists from North Wales (including a report of '2 buzzards climbing ever higher as they circle in the rising thermals'), Pennsylvania (a pair of cardinals, and the occasional blue jay), and Connecticut (a red-headed woodpecker). From Essex came: 'Back yard has hedge sparrows. Coal tits. A pair of blue tits seems to have given up after filling a nesting box with moss and twigs. Blackbirds. Too many pigeons. Occasional magpies. Brown owls heard at night'.

And from a keen naturalist's garden in north-west England in late April: 'My observation is that birdsong is more noticeable, and that wrens seem to be more evident in both garden and woods. It may be that it is the time of year that they skitter about for nesting material. I am pretty sure I saw a mistle-thrush this morning. The garden bird-box which we have a camera inside was well occupied by this time last year. I did see a blue tit have a cursory examination yesterday, so we may get a late occupancy.'

But the list from a family member in central Paris, who had been subjected to most severe lockdown of us all (8 weeks in a tiny 5th floor flat), read as follows: 1 pigeon—dead.

Stay safe!

How 'explorers' should treat their 'discovery' of other people's country

Thanks to Hedley Thomson for this thought (from *Great Northern?* p. 262):

'All right. I won't,' said Susan. 'But Roger is so awfully cheeky and after all we are on someone else's land.'

'Explorers always are,' said Titty. 'Except the ones that go into the Arctic and places like that, and even bits of the Arctic belong to Eskimos and Lapps. Roger'll remember Captain Cook. He'll keep on the right side of the natives.'

'Captain Cook got on the wrong side of them,' said Dorothea.

'The inside,' said Peggy. 'I hope Roger does too. If he gets eaten he deserves it.'

The writing style of Arthur Ransome

Linda Phillips

As a writer myself, in a fair to middling way, I sometimes use a writer's eye in assessing the Arthur Ransome canon and have views which you may or may not agree with. What credentials do I have to be a critic? I've written a dozen books of varying content, through science, science fiction, and new adult LGBT romance. Two books were best sellers in their categories; many more sank like the *Swallow* on their first outing.

After a lifetime of writing dry-as-dust articles on commercial real estate and economics, I decided about 20 years ago to take up writing fiction, which remains a hobby more than a business. To learn creative writing, I studied at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Writing fiction is easy. I discovered that writing fiction that someone else will enjoy reading, be captivated by, is much harder.

That Ransome captivated his audience is clear, yet, through modern eyes, he broke most of the rules of creative writing. He succeeded, not because he was trained in writing fiction, but because of his unique style. Few writers manage to do the same; J. K. Rowling is one of the few.

What is the unique, defining feature of AR's writing style?

Nothing happens

Reading the *S&A* canon, one thing is apparent, which is: *nothing happens*.

Before you retort 'of course it does', let me explain, as in terms of plot development, I argue that nothing happens, or at least nothing of significance.

Take the first book, *SA*:

- Some kids get to camp on an island.
- They have a boat.
- They meet other kids who have a boat.
- They have a sailing competition or 'war' and *Swallow* wins.
- It ends with a celebration on Captain Flint's houseboat.

That is the story. Yes, there is an aside about thieves robbing the houseboat, but the story could have survived without it. The ending is improbable and I assume AR felt the need to add some excitement at the end. Two thieves raid the houseboat, but instead of doing the obvious, taking the loot to a car and driving a long way away, they row to Cormorant Island in the dark and dig a hole to put the loot in. Why? So that Titty can witness it of course, Titty who is conveniently floating nearby.

Compare this with the other well-known children's author, Enid Blyton and her 1950s *Famous Five* series. Blyton approached plot development in typical fashion, which is to say, in my terminology here, *something happens*.

The rationale of every *Famous Five* book is that *something happens*. They follow a formula: the Five go off to camp, to caravan, to the sea, to Kirrin Island... to anywhere really. They have bicycles. They camp. Then the antagonists appear, the baddies. They are up to something bad, be it smuggling, stealing, or whatever, and it's done in caves, down mines, on remote islands. The children stumble across the secret of the baddies, almost get into real trouble but manage to defeat the baddies and come out victorious. The stories are not really about the Five but about what happens to them.

For the reader of any *Famous Five* novel, you know three things in advance. One, the story will follow the usual formula. Two, something will happen involving baddies and danger. Three, the children will solve the mystery and come out victorious.

Now, I'm not decrying the writing style of Enid Blyton. Stories obeying these rules were popular, the staple of children's fiction. As a kid, I read them many times, just like my contemporaries.

However, AR was not one to follow the rules. Nowadays, with formulaic writing *de rigueur*, he would struggle to find a publisher willing to take him on. So we can be thankful he was writing in the 1920s and 1930s, when being fresh and unique was a selling point. If we look at the *S&A* books in terms of plot development by comparison with Enid Blyton we can make a number of observations.

Formula writing

AR was not a formula writer, that is, the content of each book was not predictable.

If he was writing today and had a successful first book in *SA*, I could imagine his agent advising him:

'Arthur, the market loves *Swallows & Amazons*, it's a hit! Now we have to think about outlines for the next books. Yes, that's right, we are picturing a whole series here. From our feedback, we see the *Swallows* returning to Wild Cat Island to camp, each school holidays. In the next book, maybe they have another war with the *Amazons*, only this time the *Amazons* win.'

That would be predictable and would set the ground rules for the entire series: every book would be set in and around the lake. The six children are the main characters. Indeed, AR wrote of receiving a letter from a young girl saying exactly that. She wanted the next book to be one in which the children go back to the lake in the next holidays, get into their boats, go to Wild Cat Island and do exactly the same things.

Understandable. As a youngster of 8 years old I agreed totally, and when John managed to sink *Swallow* in *SD* I was

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so angry! How dare he! I wanted to revisit Wild Cat Island, to follow along as they did lots of sailing. How could John ruin the second book! While I have loved the *S&A* series all my life, it was decades before I could bring myself to read *SD* again.

Yet many members will say that *SA* is their favourite book. Now, I can understand that. It is a good book. But the point is that AR did not follow the general convention that a book series should be based on a formula. In fact, he seemed to take delight in confusing his readers. *CC* abandons the lake for the Norfolk Broads and new characters. *SW* does the same again, taking us to Essex. As for *ML*, what can you say?

Comparing writing styles

By and large, in the novels, nothing happens, nothing of great import. For example, in *SA* (unlike the 2016 film adaptation) the children do not get involved with German spies or strafed by fighter planes. Nor, for that matter, do they discover secret underground passages, crazed scientists or smugglers. We don't go into any fantasy world of witches, wizards or talking animals.

The 2016 adaptation of *Swallows & Amazons* illustrates how things have changed. The film producers presumably thought the movie would not be a hit without adding spies, danger and excitement to the plot. Put another way, the world of the 1930s would not sell to a young audience today.

So, why do so many readers love the *S&A* series so much, reading them time and again?

The answer in this context lies in the fact that AR did write in a fresh and unique way.

Nothing happened. That is, things do happen, but have two characteristics:

- The things that happen are minor, low key.
- These things are realistic, for the most part. They could happen to anyone, any reader in particular (perhaps leaving out the tornado in *PD* and the whole of *ML*).

A book about children camping on an island could have been a failure, had it not been for AR injecting his own style into it, in two ways: his great attention to detail, to the point where the reader can picture themselves being there; and secondly, from the moment the Amazons appear, we leave the world of natives behind and enter the children's own invented world, a device used ever more explicitly in modern fiction.

First, the attention to detail. The Swallows don't just sail from A to B. No detail is left out. They discuss what must be packed into the boat. We learn vicariously how to sail a wooden dinghy. The direction of the wind, tacking, luffing, whistling for a wind, the incredible detail has the reader sit-

ting invisibly in their midst. I might have been only 8 years old but after reading *SA* I was convinced I could sail a wooden dinghy, if only I could get my hands on one!

It's the same with setting up camp, stringing the lines between trees to hold up the tents, Susan heating up dinner over the open fire. With this attention to detail, the books are more like a historical narrative than a work of fiction. As the reader, we know they are fiction, of course, but, immersing ourselves into the story, for a while we are transported into this world.

It extends to the visits we make to the lakes. Paddling or sailing out to Wild Cat Island, which natives know as Peel Island, I still get transported back into that magical world created by AR. Setting foot on Wild Cat Island feels like setting foot on sacred ground, no less than visiting Westminster Abbey or the Vatican. Such is the power of the incredible detail contained within the visual narrative of AR.

Writing of natives brings us to the second point, the children's own magical world. This is a delightful twist. *SA* could have been written without it, but the entry of Nancy into the plot and her view of the world is what takes us from the 'lakes' and into the 'lake' of the *S&A*.

According to AR, to the children, their world is the real world. As Nancy puts it in *PP* while packing tents on the lawn at Beckfoot, when the native offered to let them sleep in the bedrooms at Beckfoot for their first night, Nancy was determined not a moment was to be wasted in getting 'into the real world', their own world.

So we have the magic of a lake that exists only in the minds of AR and his readers, even if Windermere and Coniston contain actual elements of it. The story is about the children. Adults are natives, tolerated at best. Natives live in Rio. Captain Flint is a pirate on a houseboat. Wild Cat Island is their island, no natives go there, and Nancy is a bit of a pirate herself, shooting arrows at the Swallows.

This imaginary world, not quite existing, yet fully believable, was a key feature in attracting a loyal readership and even in our old age (for some) we get misty-eyed at the thought of visiting it. The idea has of course been taken many steps further in modern times, as in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, and the magical world of Harry Potter by J. K. Rowling. Like those two authors, AR takes the reader into another world, but in a gentler and more believable way.

This only applies to some of the books in the series, however. Later books maintained the detail and the realism but not the magical world, these including *CC*, *BS*, *SW*, *WDMTGTS*, *GN*.

Why not? This question takes us into a whole new area of discussion about the characters and settings.

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Never base a fictional story on real people

AR's idea for *SA* came out of real children. The Altounyans morphed into the Swallows, while the Amazons were based on two girls in red caps sailing a boat.

There is a general rule about fictional characters: never base them on real people. Or at least, if characters are based on real people, change the characters enough that they don't recognise themselves.

Plenty has been written, not least by AR himself, about whether the Altounyans were the basis of the Swallows. The Altounyan children did believe the Swallows were based on them. The problem when this happens is that the real children start to take some ownership of the characters. They want a say in what the characters do in the next book; they want themselves portrayed in a better light; the author feels constrained about what to write. My own theory is that this is why AR distanced the Swallows from the Altounyans later on. It may also explain why AR introduced new characters, perhaps wanting to move away from the Swallows completely.

So, in *WH*, we are introduced to Dick and Dot. The Swallows and Amazons are still there but Dick and Dot take centre stage. In *CC*, AR retains Dick and Dot but the Swallows and Amazons disappear entirely. Writing today, AR would earn a stiff reprimand from his agent for dropping the Swallows and Amazons, popular characters as they were.

My theory is that it also explains how Wild Cat Island fades away in the series, since the Altounyans had ownership of the lake and Wild Cat Island memes. Any reader of the first book, *SA*, me included, would fully expect camping on Wild Cat Island to feature in every story, but it doesn't.

Never again do they spend the holidays camping on the island apart from a couple of brief visits. The sinking of the *Swallow* in *SD* can be seen as a metaphor for the sinking of any hopes of repeat *SA*-style holidays.

If there are arguments about the source of the Swallows and Amazons, then the characters added in subsequent books come complete from AR's imagination and by the time we get to *WH* and *CC*, AR displays his great writing abilities in producing new and believable characters.

Freed from the original *SA* meme AR displays his wonderful imagination in coming up with stories which surprise the reader. Moving away from sailing as the core story, the Swallows and Amazons search for gold in *PP*. The account of Dick and Dot having to hide from the Great Aunt in *PM* is arguably the best book of the series. Who else would have made such a gripping story out of this?

As AR moved house, the books moved with him, enabling him to write the scenery of the new location with the same attention to detail and realism. The Broads? Bill, Joe, Pete, Tom Dudgeon, Port and Starboard are all believable characters and we get to live in the Broads of the 1930s.

Perhaps this was the great skill of AR. With a couple of exceptions, it is easy to believe these were real people and we find ourselves living in the setting, in the 1920s and 1930s, a world now lost to us. That is the enduring legacy of AR, as we get propelled through a rapidly changing modern world, that when we feel wistful for olden days, we can read the canon again and be transported back into their world.

Antipodean TARS virtual social event

Phoebe Palmieri

Australian and New Zealand TARS gathered via Zoom on a wintry (or not, depending on location) August morning/afternoon/evening for an inaugural antipodean virtual social meeting. Twenty-four of us took part, and after such a long time of no visual contact it was great fun to see the friends we already knew, and to meet some new friends, including a couple of new members. After introductions and a pleasingly small number of technical hitches, we got cracking with some activities prepared by Jan Allen. Her semaphore test earned a FAIL for most of us, but we fared better in a quiz which covered *Coot Club* illustrations, identification of minor characters, and AR-related anagrams.

We've had some suggestions of topics that might be interesting to discuss next time. Some possibilities are:

How might our heroes cope in lockdown?

What other books did we read as children?

How does Ransome depict landscapes and seascapes?

Some members have visited these places; how did they meet your expectations?

What *S&A*-inspired books of modern days have we read?

We had a lot of fun—well, I did, anyway—and decided that we'd like to meet again. So we will, on **Saturday 12 September**.

See you then!

Strang's Piano

Playing the piano was an unwelcome chore for Nancy and Peggy. Here Sylvia tells us about a different sort of family.



Sylvia aged 6 (her sisters also faintly visible)

The couple married during The Great Depression. His parents gave them the family crib at the beach to live in, for it was down South, and that is what they are called there.

His father was a builder so together the father and son built on a wide veranda, and extended the sitting room giving it a beautiful jarrah floor. The son was very proud of that beautiful floor and it was never allowed to be fully covered. It wore a large dark blue Persian rug, and a matching hearth rug in front of the brick fireplace. The room was only used for visitors, on Sundays, and for music practice; for the couple eventually had three daughters, and the woman was determined they would play the piano. It was what women did.

By now it was just after the war, and, with money painfully saved, the woman went to Begg's in Dunedin and chose a Fritz Kuhla piano. It had a gorgeous tone. It was a beautiful thing, and caused great pride.

The three girls were taught to revere it, and always to wash their hands before playing to keep the ivories white. The woman played the new/old piano often. She had a soft touch; she always played quietly because her father had been a tyrant, and punished her by not allowing her to touch the piano. She quietly did, while he was down in the paddock.

A Dutch couple moved in opposite the family home. They

had no piano, could see this one through the window and before very long Bill was ensconced in the sitting room thundering out music hall melodies by ear.

The two older girls had music lessons before they went to school in the morning and the much younger child had to sit like a mouse and wait. The teacher smelled of cigarettes and stew, the child thought, and rapped the big girls over the knuckles with a ruler often when they made mistakes.

The youngest child nagged to learn. She sat up on the bench in the kitchen, swung her legs, and nagged for three years.

Her piano teacher was a kindly, comfortable soul who recognised early on the girl's lack of potential, but noticed that what she was really good at was listening. The teacher played a lot, and the wee girl loved listening. These were the days when folk sang as they gathered round the piano. The woman or Bill played the piano, while the aunt with her strong contralto and the uncle with his tenor voice led the singing. There was no such thing as not joining in!

The middle child was the truly musical one, and she really practised. She went on to play the double bass in the High School Orchestra, and the guitar for fun. The elder child was a bookworm, she could read and play endless scales at the same time. The mother asked 'Have you done your practice?' 'Yes Mum!' came the reply.

That beautiful piano is quiet these days, except when someone can be coerced into playing. The piano tuners appreciate it and give it a good work-out. They keep it at concert pitch because a grandson used to tune his violin from it. It moved to Christchurch, while wall-to-wall carpet has been swapped for the jarrah boards in the sitting room by the sea. The crib is on a reserve now, still there on the backside of a sand hill.

Great hulking pianos are worthless these days, but this one is sacred. Built in 1909, it says inside it, and in spite of the years it is still beautiful.

I am the youngest daughter.

Sylvia Strang-Parsloe

This piece was entered in Radio NZ Concert's Piano Competition, Mon 27 April 2020.

The winner, announced on Daybreak at 0815 on 1 May, was Steven Ellis of Christchurch.



My S&A life

Katy Cox

When I was a little girl, my dad would read a bedtime story to me every night. I would often request *Milly Molly Mandy*, to which he vociferously objected. He was much more of an A A Milne man and would put on the voices for all of Rabbit's Friends and Relations. That was until my birthday in January 1985 when, aged seven, but always the youngest in my family, he gave me my first copy of *Swallows and Amazons*.

It was still a year before Christina Hardyment's *Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint's Trunk* was published and three years before Roger Wardale's *Arthur Ransome's Lakeland* appeared. *The Life of Arthur Ransome* by Hugh Brogan had come out the previous year, but to be perfectly honest, it wasn't particularly interesting to a seven-year-old Nancy Blackett wannabee. I just wanted boats!

I was no stranger to the Lake District, having already spent a few half-term breaks in Bowness-on-Windermere with my mum's old college friend, and could picture the locations perfectly. Needless to say, I was immediately hooked! We read a chapter a night, and given the number of chapters in the first



Katy with Christina Hardyment

few books, I reckon we would have been just finishing up *Winter Holiday* by the time we went to the Lakes for Spring Bank Holiday that year.

In those early years we hired motorboats from the Pitlochry pier at Bowness and pootled around Long Island and Rio Bay. Back home in Eastbourne, I was taught the basics of sailing by a doctor who was a member of my dad's congregation. He would take me out in his Mirror dinghy on Sunday afternoons.

I still remember the day one of our shrouds snapped and we got stranded (in my mind, at least) half way to France. We came across a drifting windsurfer, who was also in difficulties, and made a catamaran between the two vessels, using his sail to bring us both back to shore.

In 1987 we were gearing up to leave Eastbourne and head for Scarborough. Dad wasn't at home for my ninth birthday but I remember talking with him on the phone and telling him that the tent I'd been given was the best present ever! I spent the first half of that summer camped out in our back garden in Eastbourne and the rest of it in our much bigger garden in Scarborough.

Unbeknownst to us at the time, the *Nancy Blackett* had been moored for many years in Scarborough Harbour. Within a few

weeks of our move, in October 1987, gale force winds struck the UK and a car was washed from the outer harbour wall, landing on top of her and causing severe damage. Soon after, my dad spotted an article in *The Guardian* stating that a former Scarborough by the name of Michael Rines, by then residing near Pin Mill, wanted to purchase her with a view to restoring her and sailing her across the North Sea with a crew of children, true to *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea*. It didn't take much for my dad to persuade me to write to Mike and beg to be included in that crew.

As I was told at the time, and as Roger Wardale later reaffirmed, it was my letter that tipped Mike over the edge and finally persuaded him to go ahead with the purchase, despite the ever-increasing cost of salvage.

Some time around this point, Roger Wardale and Mike Rines got in contact. They both later recounted to us their first phone conversation that was cut short by an omen—the entrance of a swallow through Mike's open window. My name must somehow have been brought up in conversation not long after and I can only assume that Roger contacted my dad to know whether we would soon be back in Sussex again. In the lead up to the summer of 1988 I received a letter from Roger Wardale reminiscent of his own correspondence with Arthur Ransome. Once I had decoded the semaphore, it read 'NFFU NF PO EJU-DIMJOH CFBDO BU ... PO...'. During our ensuing meeting Roger asked us to help him research the Scarborough chapter of his proposed new book, Nancy Blackett: *Under Sail with Arthur Ransome*.

As it turned out, there was a lovely old gentleman in my dad's new congregation who was the former Harbour Master in Scarborough. Along with regaling us with a few old yarns, Sydney Smith was able to point us in the right direction with regard to more recent contacts for *Nancy*. Through him, we tried to visit William Bentley, her owner at the time, who lived just out of Scarborough in Eastfield. Roger subsequently wrote a succinct account of Bentley and the *Nancy Blackett*:

Ransome had owned her for a mere three of her fifty-odd years while she had remained Bentley's for a good twenty years longer. Bentley became impatient with people who were interested only in that brief period of her life and had even sent away an elderly cleric with a flea in his ear for enquiring politely if she was Ransome's old boat.

That was precisely the response my dad received when he phoned up to ask if Bentley would be willing to be interviewed for the book. Looking back, I wonder if my dad was Roger Wardale's 'elderly cleric'!

One Sunday afternoon we all went for a walk along the harbour wall to visit *Nancy*. All I saw was an old wreck that the borough council was planning to turn into a planting box and display on Marine Drive. I was distinctly unimpressed! However,

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Mike persisted and personally funded her transfer from the harbour to Scarborough Marine Engineers. Dad and I would drop in there occasionally to check on her progress. Their huge navy-blue doors were always wheeled back and for months *Nancy* stood tall in the doorway for all to see. I remember my disappointment at being told that they were unsure as to whether or not they would be proceeding with the restoration, because of escalating costs.

It must also have been in the summer of 1988 that Mike, now



Katy with Brigit Sanders at the re-christening of *Mavis* as *Amazon* at the Windermere Steamboat Museum

derburn, sojourned at Bank Ground Farm, visited the small display at Abbot Hall, cruised on the *Gondola*, visited *Esperance* at the Windermere Steamboat Museum, and finally set foot on Peel Island.

In May 1989 dad and I were invited to attend the East Coast Boat Show, where *Nancy* was finally in a good enough state of repair to be put on public display, although still not in the water. Also in attendance were Brigit Sanders, Susie Villard, Taqui Stephens, Dick Kelsall, Roger Wardale and Christina Hardymont, amongst many others. Mike Rines had arranged a dinner at the Butt and Oyster for all the 'originals' and those involved in the salvage of *Nancy*. Whilst I don't remember being present for that dinner, I was definitely in Pin Mill at the time. It could have been on that occasion that I was hosted by Hetty Watts next door at Alma Cottage where I enjoyed a bowl of pea and ham soup in the bay window overlooking the hard, while the grown ups were in the pub.

Later that year I went away to boarding school, which seemed to me to fit in perfectly with all the characters in the books. My school trunk was painted dark blue and proudly displayed the crossed *Swallow* and *Amazon* flags. Probably because I only returned home at the weekends, I don't recall much about Christina Hardymont's efforts to fundraise for the restoration of *Mavis* or the run-up to the inauguration of TARS. However, I was extremely privileged to be asked to play a central role at the inaugural AGM and the renaming ceremony. In June 1990 more than 200 guests gathered at the Windermere Steamboat Museum for the occasion. The Jennings family proudly boasted membership card number 13. A small cannon was fired and a flag raised in celebration. *Esperance* was moored nearby and sported a green parrot on her railings. I wore a *Swallows and Amazons* t-shirt that had been hand painted by my mum. According to Roger Wardale (p. 250):

Katy Jennings, representing the newest and youngest generation of Ransome fans, swung the bottle of grog and Brigit declared at the crash of breaking glass, 'I name you *Amazon*. May you inspire with the spirit of adventure all those who visit you'.

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Dick Kelsall, Peter Carter and John Sanders (Brigit's husband)

unsure of the financial viability of purchasing *Nancy* and therefore the promised voyage across the North Sea, instead invited me to explore *Secret Water* aboard his catamaran, *Moonshine*. Of course, I jumped at the chance and my mum and I were chauffeured down to Ipswich by a family friend. I remember the three of us driving around the estate of Broke Hall, coincidentally near Arthur Ransome's former home, Broke Farm. That weekend we sailed from Pin Mill to Walton Backwaters and visited Nancy Backhouse at the Native Kraal on Horsey Island.



Katy ready for the christening

Roger also put us in touch with Brigit and John Sanders and in the years before TARS we visited them on various occasions in their beautiful home at Nibthwaite. By this time, more literature was available regarding the locations in the books, so for many holidays we would search out Swallowdale, the Dogs' Home, Slater Bob's mine and the North Pole. We also pilgrimaged to Lanehead and Low Lud-



Brigit Sanders

I can firmly attest that the sound of breaking glass was not readily forthcoming. *Amazon's* bow was in no fit state to be hit with a bottle of champagne that was dangling from a long rope. I had been given a small steel block to aim for, but missed repeatedly. Brigit came to the rescue and we eventually got the job done together.

In March 1991 I finally received my long-awaited copy of *Nancy Blackett: Under Sail with Arthur Ransome*. The title page is signed by Roger Wardale with the inscription, 'Katy—with thanks for "your" chapter. Best Wishes Roger Wardale. Swallows and Amazons forever!!' The acknowledgements read 'I am grateful to my researchers in Scarborough, Gwyneth, Derek and Katy Jennings for their help with "Salvage"' (my mum suffered the lifelong affliction of having her name spelt incorrectly!) In the introduction, Roger talks of using the *Nancy Blackett* in a television film of *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea*. Only recently was I told that my dad had received a phone call from the TV company asking whether or not I had a clear enough voice (which apparently I did) and if he would be willing to let me have a year off school to appear in the film (which he said he would). Unfortunately the funding never eventuated and, unbeknownst to me for the next thirty-odd years, my chance at stardom slipped silently away.

Sadly our time with the society in the 1990s was short-lived as, not long after the inauguration, my dad became ill. We attended the 1991 AGM in Ipswich, where once again I was fortunate

enough to be invited to be part of the two-man guinea pig crew of *Swallow II* at Pin Mill. Roger Wardale had acquired her a year earlier on the 60th anniversary of the publication of *Swallows and Amazons*, and had spent that year meticulously restoring her with the help of some of his students. One of these students was also a society member by the name of Jonathon Ross. Jon and I were let loose in her, at the end of a long painter, below the Butt and Oyster.

My dad passed away in July 1994. The following year we returned to Coniston and hired a motorboat to take us to Peel Island. There we scattered his ashes as the wind blew them towards the mouth of the secret harbour.

I immigrated to Australia in November 2001. I've often been asked why I chose to come here. It wasn't until the last couple of years, when my eldest son turned seven and I gave him a copy of *Swallows and Amazons*, that I discovered that the mentions of 'natives', sheep stations and learning to sail on Sydney Harbour had undoubtedly planted a seed that grew into my love of Australia. Since 2009, my husband and I have been active members of the All Wheel Drive Club of Sydney and this has seen us explore more than 250,000km of this wonderful country. We especially love the western deserts and Len Beadell Country. It's tough during these times of Covid to feel so restricted in our movements (not least because, as I write, we should be touring in a campervan around the Balkans) but there's plenty of NSW that is still begging to be explored!

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Katy with her husband and sons

An Analysis of Julian Lovelock's Analysis of Swallows, Amazons & Coots

Hedley Thomson

I recently read (well, re-read actually) Julian Lovelock's *Swallows, Amazons and Coots: A Reading of Arthur Ransome*, and whilst I understand he is regarded as something of a Ransome aficionado, my opinion differs from Julian's on a number of points.

My own introduction to Ransome was simple, as it would have been for many AR fans, I think; I received *Swallows and Amazons* as a Christmas present. That would have been about 1964. I was immediately hooked and had the whole series, it would appear, before 14 February 1966, that being the date on which decimal currency was introduced into Australia, its jingle to the tune of 'Click Go the Shears' firmly in my head. All the books were priced on the inside of their dust jackets, neatly in pencil, at between 19 shillings and 22/6. However, I can't see how it was possible to have received all the books by that date, even at the rate of two a year (one for birthday and one for Christmas, which I recall as pretty much being the procedure); I imagine that certain of the books had been priced earlier. As a side note, it's interesting to see which books are priced at which price—no rhyme or reason in terms of when bought, size of book or order in the series.

None of my four siblings was introduced to the books and none ever showed any interest in them; in fact, my sister disparaged them as fantasy and as quite unrealistic (how she knew this, having not read them, I don't know; by reference, I suppose). So how come I was the beneficiary, the target for these books? I think it had a fair bit to do with Winifred Young and her bookshop in Burke Road, Camberwell. My father frequented this shop and I reckon he must have asked Winifred what sort of books would interest a boy who clearly enjoyed the outdoors. My father himself enjoyed the outdoors to the extent of believing that walking was good for you and that caring for the environment, in a very broad sense, was also good and sensible. He instilled these views in his children but that's where his outdoor interests ended; he certainly didn't care for hiking, camping or sailing or any of the other pursuits that enliven and are the subject matter of the *S&A* books. It intrigues me still that he went to the trouble of asking Ms Young about suitable books for me, because he was otherwise reluctant to encourage me in any of my interests.

Notwithstanding, in buying the *S&A* books for me, he did me one of the best turns of my life, as I became immediately engrossed in and enraptured with the settings of the books and the pursuits of the protagonists, with which—contrary to the views of my sister—I saw myself readily being a participant.

All of the above is by way of providing a background to my own views of the *S&A* series and Ransome's influence therefrom. Those views, unlike Lovelock's analysis, were and remain simple: (1) the books are set in the outdoors; (2) they teach good behaviours and life skills. In the latter respect, I've always liked the comment (one of 12—one for each book—provided on the back of the dust jackets of the Jonathan Cape

editions) from Eric Linklater, writing in *The Observer* about *Great Northern?*: 'It is, perhaps, Mr. Ransome's happiest gift to dress all his invention in good, workmanlike clothes. He makes a tale of adventure a handbook to adventure': an excellent summation of the books' attraction. With my father's Brethren Christian upbringing, I have no doubt that point 2 would have been a part of the conversation with Ms Young about suitable books for a young, growing, impressionable lad...

Nuances of personalities, family background and life experiences – including shades of Empire - from Ransome's own life have never affected my intimate enjoyment of the books, and still don't. Perhaps that's ignorance on my part, being a mere Colonial (*PP* is my favourite, with its heat and wildfire), whereas Lovelock's closer acquaintance with English culture and norms has perhaps led to his more intricate analysis of the books, their characters and behind-the-scenes influences.

So whilst Lovelock makes many, in my view, sound and perceptive comments, I do take issue with him in terms of what I see as his 'over-analysis' *vis a vis* my simple 'two point' approach, combined with Linklater's neat summation; viz:

First, I think he reads too much into children being children; e.g., John's 'overconfidence' and risk-taking being the means of trying to prove a point in terms of acceptance by his father, rather than seeing the tales as teaching responsible behaviour, or even morals for living. In my view Ransome uses his creativity to guide and provide instruction concerning proper behaviour. To me, through the experiences that they have and the mistakes that they make, this is Ransome showing how children learn—by practice, example and experimentation—and that it is OK to have a go even if you get it wrong (I wish my own childhood had had more of this approach, which is another part of the puzzle as to why my father bought these books for me; of course, he never read them either, as far as I can tell, relying on Ms Young's judgment). All the characters find out about life by doing, whether it's Tom Dudgeon, the D's, Roger, Titty and Susan every bit as much as John, or the Blackett girls. I don't sense the psychology going deeper than that; it's Ransome instructing young people about the vicissitudes of life and how to survive them and learn from them.

Secondly, I think there is too much emphasis on the effects of and comparisons with 'Empire', as compared to 'exploring' as a natural thing for children to do, as distinct from being instructed by historical events. It is true that reference is often made to 'explorers', to 'natives' and to 'savages' but I don't get the paternal superiority expressed in terms of 'Empire'. Of course the children give their own names to places that they 'discover' as they play-act 'exploring' (which, to me, they clearly understand is what they are doing), but they soon have to accept that there have been people before them, whilst a term like 'native' in particular is used in reference to all manner of

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people, including close family and people who live in houses (e.g., Swainson's, Dixon's farms) and 'savage' is used in often mischievous ways, in the case of *Secret Water* through role play, it being easy to swap guises without there being any sense of cultural superiority from the explorers—probably the reverse, given the success of the Eels in overcoming the explorers. Again, I think this is Ransome teaching us about equality amongst people.

Similarly, Lovelock points out class distinctions—I don't see it: whilst Ransome aims to write dialogue in colloquial fashion for the 'local' characters, these characters are never treated as less than the Londoners/middle class characters; to me he honours them for their skill and nous, whether it's the D&G's, Peter Duck or Jacky from 'Low Farm' at Watersmeet, often—deliberately, it seems to me—highlighting their abilities over those of the relatively uneducated and inept southerners who have much to learn about life.

The word 'comedy' is frequently repeated, when other terms, such as 'light-hearted', 'amusing', 'awkward' or 'quirky' would better describe the wide range of moments selected for analysis.

His concern about poor plots seems misplaced, especially with *PP*, where I find the plot/storyline very clear. If my perception of his view on plots is correct, in that he feels that the plots must be very clear and self-evident from the start, then I, as reader, do not want plots that resemble simple 'whodunnits' and telegraph the process, if not the actual conclusion, from the start. AR was a far more fastidious plotter than that.

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News from HQ

The AusTARS Committee

Events as planned for this year have not taken place due to COVID restrictions, but we hope to be able to offer a full calendar for 2021. Meanwhile, we have held our first Trans-Tasman Zoom gathering of members (see report) and the second one is scheduled for September. Further meetings may follow, depending on conditions around Australia and New Zealand.

Members have been strongly supporting *Furthest South*, with a steady flow of contributions leading to a full and interesting September issue, with a special literary focus. Thanks, everyone, for your varied and interesting articles.

Congratulations to Simon Horn, Canadian TAR, on winning the AusTARS Cup for 2019, for his years of work on the combined North American newsletter, *Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News*. Simon continues to maintain a high standard in his role as editor and his award is well-deserved. Whilst the Cup is a perpetual trophy, held for one year by the recipient, the AusTARS Committee has also sent Simon his Slater Bob Lakeland slate drink coaster as a permanent memento of his win. The AusTARS Cup and Slater Bob awards are sponsored by long-time AusTAR, Dr Jim Hawkins. Henceforward, it is anticipated that TARS UK will bring the award in line with the current year, with the announcement of the 2020 winner expected later this year.

Members reading their *Signals* will have noticed that the membership categories for TARS will be changing for 2021. The Senior category will be discontinued and will be absorbed into Adult; the Family category will become Group, allowing for more flexibility within family and other groups; and the Junior and Student categories will be replaced by Youth, young people in full-time education. The Corporate category will remain unchanged. Our subscription rates for the new categories will be set later in the year.

Thanks to Paul Rodwell, QTAR, who has recently donated a very interesting selection of books and other items to the AusTARS Library. An updated Library Catalogue will be sent to members soon.

The Kurings Finally Visit Victoria

Glenn Kuring

It had been over 10 years since the Kurings (from Queensland) had been to an AUSTARS event, so we took the opportunity to ask Jan to create one for us while we - wife Karen, kids Olivia, Sophie & Samuel, and myself - were having a few weeks' holiday in Victoria late Dec last year.

Jan duly obliged and before we knew it we were whisked off our feet by Martin Spiers who picked us up in his somewhat upgraded Rattletrap from our inner Melbourne hotel and took us back to his place to enjoy a scrumptious feast with his wife Alison, their kids, Jan and Stuart Allen and Nancy Endersby-Harshman and Larry Harshman.

The next few hours were spent catching up on all things TARS-ish, especially past holidays away together, where we camped, sailed, canoed, explored, feasted, played games, answered quizzes, got nearly washed away, etc. ... all good memories. (Note that after the first half-hour or so of polite chit-chat, my kids retreated back into the safety of their iPhones!!)

Thank you all but especially Martin & Alison for opening your home to us. Hopefully we can catch up again at another AUSTARS event, impromptu or otherwise, in the not-too-distant future.

When Arthur Ransome met Arthur Ransom

Cheryl Paget, TARSNZ Coordinator

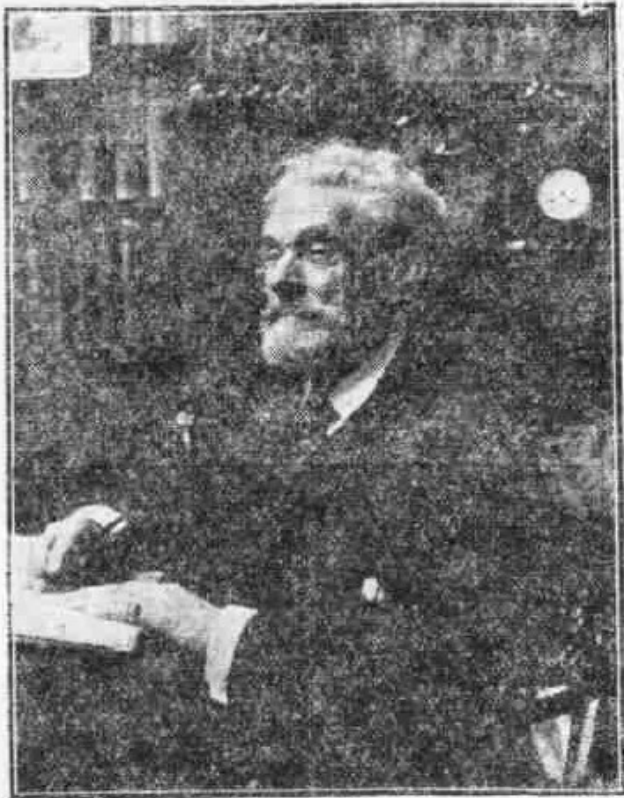


Image of Arthur Ransom in his study from *Bedfordshire Mercury* Friday July 5 1912

On February 10th 1912 a publisher going by the name of Charles Granville and the 27-year-old author Arthur Ransome went together to Bedford to meet the 80-year-old author and retired newspaper columnist Arthur Ransom. These three remarkable men met together only once. By October 1912, Ransom had died, and Granville had been arrested for bigamy and fraud.

Charles Granville had set up his own publishing business, called Stephen Swift & Co. Ltd, in early 1911 and had published several authors including Hillaire Belloc and Cecil Chesterton when he met Ransome in mid-July.

Ransome had made a name for himself as a literary critic. *Edgar Allan Poe* (1910) and *Oscar Wilde* (1912), critical studies of the authors' works, were commissioned after his successful *A History of Story-Telling* (1909). An article about literary criticism called 'Kinetic and Potential Speech' was published in the *Oxford and Cambridge Review*, which was also one of Granville's publications in October 1911. Granville was '...full of large ideas for Arthur Ransome's future' (Brogan 1992, 77).

By 1911 Ransome had already published fifteen books and was a well-established author. Granville laid out for him '...a grand design whereby he should become the publisher of all my books, past present and to come, paying me a regular income on account of royalties' (Ransome 1985, p. 146).

Ransome called Granville 'A remarkable man...he had a magnificent way with him' (Ransome 1985, 145) and of his offer, Ransome said 'This carrot looked very good to the donkey, and

I still think it was meant to be good' (Ransome 1985, 146). Ransome 'listened appreciatively to Granville's schemes while enjoying Granville's hospitality' (Brogan 1992, 77).

Granville invited him to Bedford, presumably as part of an effort to win the already well-known author to his own company and away from publisher Martin Secker, to meet one of his other soon-to-be-published authors, Arthur Ransom, 'who held that in the distant past our families must have been related' (Ransome 1985, 145-146).

Ransome described Ransom as a 'Modest and kindly old man [who] spoke with enthusiasm of Granville's generosity' (Ransome 1985, 146).

Granville had indeed been very kind to Ransom. Upon learning that he was '...in straitened circumstances, and that a fund was to be promoted by a few friends to assist Mr Ransom, Mr Granville took upon himself the entire responsibility and remained Mr Ransom's benefactor until the end' (*Bedfordshire Mercury* 1912).

Ransom had delighted Granville by having a high opinion of his poems. Ransome said 'I could not much admire Granville's poetry but naturally was pleased by his anxiety to publish my prose' (Ransome 1985, p. 145).

Ransom was possibly one of the few who did have a high opinion of Granville's writing. Critics were less than kind about Granville's novel *The Indissoluble Knot* (1908). The *Manchester Courier* said 'The book is not pleasant reading,' and The *Times* called it 'A rather feeble tale' (Holland 2018).

Granville did rather better with his last book, *The Gift of St Anthony* (1909). It was received enthusiastically by the *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, as was his first book of poetry *Some Emotions* (1908); and although the reviewer isn't named, we can guess it is the same reviewer as that of his play *The Race Spirit* (1910). This was warmly reviewed by 'A.R.' in the *Bedfordshire Times and Independent* in January 1910, where Granville is referred to as 'our townsman.' Granville must have moved to Bedford some time after 1908 when he married Caroline Fawcett, living there until the summer of 1912. Granville must have first met Ransom as a neighbour and local newspaperman.

Granville published Ransom's first novel *The Rector of St Jacob's* under the pseudonym Senex Rusticanus in May 1911, just before Ransom's 80th birthday. Ransom's second novel, *The Bosbury People*, was published in October 1911 under his own name. So when Ransom and Ransome met with Granville in February 1911, the octogenarian was a new author about to be published, albeit with many years experience of writing and printing under his belt.

Ransom had not set out to be a writer. He was born in Hastings, Sussex, on 18 June 1832 and was destined to join the family

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printing business along with his father and brothers. He said that he derived a good physical constitution from both his parents, and all his life he was very fond of country walks and

took regular exercise. He said the outdoors environment, and especially the sea, filled half his young life. He and his siblings were allowed to choose their own recreation and associates, and were brought up under a regime of what he called 'philosophical liberty.' The home atmosphere included a lot of books, and the boys had the run of a literary and scientific institution which was associated with a museum that had a herbarium stored in large drawers. He often said this fed his imagination and awoke in him a passion for the study of nature. Until he was twelve he attended a small private school where he was taught only English subjects, but he was thankful when upon changing school he was able to study Greek, Latin and French.

His parents were sincere but undemonstrative members of the Church of England, and never preached to their children but ruled by fine example rather than by precept. When an evangelical revival filled the churches it meant there were few seats at the parish church, so his father took seats at the Wesleyan chapel for the younger children, which seems to have been Ransom's introduction to Wesleyan Methodism. After teaching Sunday School and working as a local preacher he was ordained as a Wesleyan Minister in 1858, and he ministered in circuits around the country until 1869, when a change in his views on doctrine led him to relinquish his ministry and he became a Pastor of the Independent Church in Lynn, Norfolk (presumably King's Lynn) and later the Unitarian Church before leaving the ministry altogether in 1873 and adopting Rationalist views.

In the 1861 census he is recorded as a Minister in Bury, Huntingdonshire. In 1862 he married Frances Ann Coleman in Walmer, Kent. They had a daughter, Amy, born in 1863, but she died in Abingdon, Berkshire (now Oxfordshire) in 1864. His wife died in 1865. Ransom was the Minister in Abingdon until 1866 when he left for Wales 'and... leaves with the good opinion of all parties here.' (Berkshire Chronicle 1866). He said of his life as a Minister that it was enriched by some of the most intimate friendships with the poor as well as the rich in agricultural, manufacturing, mining and seafaring populations.

On leaving the Unitarian church, aged 41, he went to Germany to study German Science at the University of Geissen for nearly two years. He decided not to study for a degree, as at the time a German PhD carried little weight in England, and rather than cramming for a degree he preferred to spend his time attending 20-30 lectures a week, and perfecting the German language. He eventually translated Keim's *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara* and Hertzka's *Frieland*, and reviewed German philosophical and theological publications for the Westminster Review and other publications.

On his return in 1875 he became the managing editor of the Leicester Chronicle and Mercury, and in January 1879 left the paper 'with the best wishes for his future success' from his colleagues, and was presented with 'a valuable floral album and a handsome writing case' (Leicestershire Chronicle 1879). He moved to Bedford and went into business with Joshua Hawkins (later five times the Mayor of Bedford) as printer and writ-

er at the Bedfordshire Times and Independent, retiring in 1893. Hawkins had also been a Wesleyan minister, but left the ministry in 1879 to move to Bedford to go into business with Ransom. Writing as 'A.R.' Ransom began his column 'Round the County' when he started at the paper, providing descriptions and the history of the villages in Bedfordshire, of which 99 articles appeared in 33 years, and he continued writing the column long after his retirement and right up until his death. In 1908 he contributed several articles to the mammoth and important Victoria County Series, writing for *A History of the County of Bedford Volume Two* several articles on historic Bedfordshire industries, agriculture, hunting, foxhounds, harriers and beagles, cricket, football and aquatics. Ransom was known as 'a man of the widest reading, accomplished in theology, philosophy, literature, languages and natural sciences and a profound believer in the virtues of education' (Bedfordshire Times and Independent 1912).

He married his second wife, Maria Burr, in 1880, though she died in 1903 of cancer aged 64. He lived quietly, but busied himself with town life. In 1904 he was a founding member, and first president, of the Bedford Esperanto Group and for many years was one of the honorary secretaries of the local branch of the RSPCA. He was a great lover of nature and animals, his companions being his dog and cat and a couple of geese, one of whom, named Sappho, used to sit at table.

He was a ready and interesting lecturer, who gave numerous lectures and lantern talks locally to several societies such as the Bedford Camera Club, Literary and Scientific Society, the Arts Club, the Natural History Society and the Teachers' Association, at the Adult School, and at the schools in the town, on a wide range of topics including archaeology, church architecture, the French Revolution, 'a study of summer flowers,' 'on the study of history' and the teachings of Karl Marx, of which he was an advocate. '... [H]e foresaw and predicted the spread of the socialistic thought... and in later years he detached himself from his old political allegiances avowing himself a member of the school which seeks to bring about the reconstruction of society' (Bedfordshire Times and Independent 1912). Political events in his youth such as the Irish famine and the anti Corn Law agitation and the Chartist movement had inspired him and his brothers to become politically active. His brother William was the founder and first editor of the Hastings and St Leonard's News in 1848, and was a strong liberal, greatly helping the local Liberal Party in Hastings until his death in 1906. Ransom was for some years the Chairman of the Bedford branch of the Independent Labour Party.

Ransom was also a teetotaler, having joined the temperance movement when very young. Although at times an active temperance propagandist, he never endorsed total abolition, believing that the only way to diminish drunkenness was to improve the economic and social conditions of people.

He would walk for six miles a day, had beautiful white hair and wouldn't wear a hat, so was a familiar sight around town and country. However, he had a doppelganger. As if being mistaken for Mr Arthur Ransome of London didn't cause enough confusion, Mr George Tuohy, 23 years younger also, white haired

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and hatless, and similarly ‘habitually [going] about in cycle dress,’ was frequently mistaken for Ransom, often with hilarious or frustrating consequences for both men and their wives. For a time they would wander about together to try and put a stop to the numerous cases of mistaken identity. ‘I was always being complimented on articles Mr Ransom wrote and he used to be praised for my swimming’ (Bedfordshire Mercury 1912). The only way to tell them apart was that Ransom smoked a pipe and Tuohy didn’t.

Ransom would open up his home and extensive library, where many gatherings were held for readings and discussions, out of which grew the Bedford Arts Club, which he effectively founded. He would lend his books freely. His reception room opened onto a pretty lawn, the floor had many interesting skins and rugs and plants hung from the ceiling, the room seemed ‘peaceful and bright,’ especially in the presence of Mr and Mrs Ransom, and in the evening the lamps ‘showed the backs of thousands of books’ (Bedfordshire Mercury 1912). ‘His great library occupied the long passages of his house and covered the walls and swarmed the desks and floors of the rooms where he lived and wrote was the collection of years of devotion to literature. It was a rare sight to watch him handle a volume he loved. You could see that it was a thing of light and reverence’ (Bedfordshire Mercury 1912).

His obituary in the Bedfordshire Mercury reads:

As we think of Mr Ransom as we have so often seen him, in his magnificent library, sitting by the soft lamplight at his desk on a winter’s evening or on a style in Clapham Park, or in the lane which he loved because he so often walked there with his late wife, it is hard to write about his end’ (Bedfordshire Mercury 1912).

It was Ransom’s inveterate pipe smoking that brought about his end, with a tumour developing on his lip, and doctors advised him to give up smoking for twelve months. He had a portion of his chin removed 16 months before his death, but in the end, cancer took his life in his eightieth year, on 4 July 1912 at 3 am. He was nursed by his housekeeper, Mrs Lucy Batby, who no doubt had also nursed his wife through her death nine years before. His will prescribed how he wanted his unconventional funeral performed at Bedford cemetery. He had expressed that no religious ceremony was to be held as he had disassociated himself from all forms of dogmatic religion. There were no flowers, save for one tribute of wild flowers, and no one was to be dressed in black. His publisher Charles Granville officiated, saying:

He was a man of great moral character and high intellectual achievement, and he (Granville) believed him to be a great man whose like he would never meet again. Arthur Ransom was at one with the sunrise and at one with the sunset: with every bird in the air, every plant of the field. But above all his intellectual achievement was his character. Nobody could cast a stone at the character of Arthur Ransom. He lived and died a noble man’ (Bedfordshire Mercury 1912).

Having no living children, it appears that the magnificent ‘Arthur Ransom library’ passed complete into the hands of Charles Granville, his publisher and benefactor, who by now was living in Epsom, Surrey.

It was just as well that Ransom passed away when he did, for he would no doubt have been shocked when, in October 1912, Granville went bankrupt and fled to Tangier with his secretary. He was brought back by police to face justice. The resulting publicity brought to light the abandonment of his legitimate wife Charlotte Hosken in Brussels in 1907, and his bigamous marriages, not only to Caroline Fawcett but also, previously, to a Mrs Emily Parker. Granville—real name Charles Hosken—was convicted in July 1913 of bigamy and fraud. On two charges of bigamy he was sentenced to six months’ hard labour, and on the charge of fraud 15 months’ hard labour, the sentences to run concurrently. The fate of the Arthur Ransom library is unknown.

It is unfortunate that Ransome and Ransom did not have the opportunity to get to know each other better, as they had much in common. Both pipe smokers, inveterate readers, book collectors with interests in a wide and diverse range of subjects, eventually Ransome would also pursue a career in journalism and an interest in the left side of the political spectrum. For one brief moment in 1912 the enigmatic Charles Granville brought together the two Arthurs at different points in their literary careers for a small ‘might-have-been’ of literary history.

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WANTED! Articles for the next issue of Furthest South

Send your articles to

Jan Allen (jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com) or **Phoebe Palmieri** (phoebe.palmieri@gmail.com)

by 30 October 2020, please

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