



Furthest South



Volume 23 Number 2

Newsletter of the Arthur Ransome Society in Australia and New Zealand

Pigeon Post and some loose links

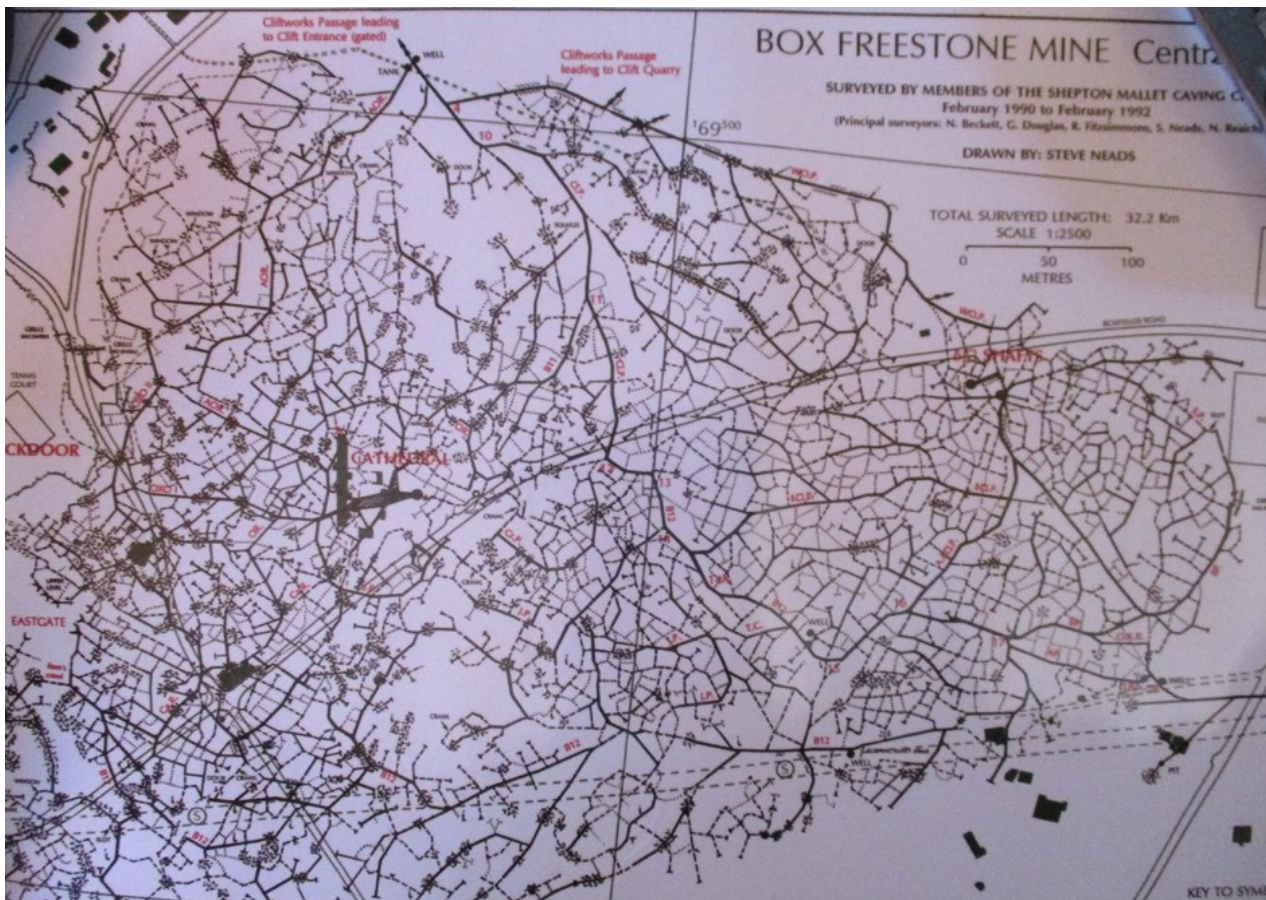
Bob Cuming

Garry Wood's story about Slater Bob and the Cumbrian slate mines in the last issue of *Furthest South* got me thinking of some recent experiences. We residents of Australia and New Zealand are familiar and blessed with caves and underground types of this natural phenomenon. These areas of interest are often piqued by our *S&A* instincts as we relate to the mines of *Pigeon Post* and the adventures in the book of our characters in their search for gold. Those who have been to the Jenolan Caves in Australia or the glow worm caves of Waitomo, NZ, for instance, would be comfortable with the Swallows' and Amazons' experiences in the mines of the English Lake District and the excitement and apprehension of our underground heroes.

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Freestone Mine Central

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Some time ago, when my wife Lyn and I were visiting our daughter at Box Hill near Bath in the UK, she handed me a rolled-up map of the Box Hill tunnels. This is a honeycomb of tunnels and galleries that had previously been used to mine, not copper, tin or slate but the premium Cotswold stone of which the likes of Bath and numerous Cotswold towns and villages were built. The area was mined out before World War II, but is still known widely for its famous Box Hill rail tunnel, one of the United Kingdom's great engineering feats, which links Bristol with London via the Great Western Railway. The somewhat bizarre thing about this maze of tunnels is that you can get a key from the old pub on the top of the hill, unlock a gate and explore this maze by following the map. This is a somewhat daunting-looking exercise, I venture to say. Only the main tunnels appear sign-posted on the map and it looks a challenge for even the best of S&A explorers – fading torches here might lead to disaster!

Suffice it to say, then, that I left the access key safely behind the pub counter, with no urge to emulate Titty and co. Back in New Zealand I researched the 'Hill' further. I found out that some of the big galleries had been used during WWII to store numerous precious exhibits from London museums during the Blitz, and also a huge cache of munitions (presumably well away from the aforementioned precious items). Further research added an interesting NZ flavour, as it emerged that Box Hill stone was shipped far and wide around the colonies in early days, and the NZ Supreme Court in Auckland was built of this material. Dreadful visions of sailing ships turning turtle in mountainous seas off the NZ coast with this heavy stone load came to mind. Lyn and I visited Auckland and sought out this building, which has been the High Court since Wellington became the capital. It's a lovely early NZ edifice; but, alas, only its features and highlights are Cotswold stone, while the rest of the building is Auckland's red clay brick so problem solved. Nevertheless, the link to where our daughter lives with her family in



Bob in front of the High Court Building, Wellington

GENERAL NOTES ON USING THIS SURVEY

The central region of Box Mine is both complex and confusing because, unlike the northern part of the mine (covered by our previous survey), most of the side workings are not filled with waste stone (deads). The best routes are often indistinct and many parts of the mine are a labyrinth of small passages. We have tried to help the explorer using this map by distinguishing between the types of passage (see the key overleaf). However, the distinction between different types is sometimes open to interpretation. These general notes may make understanding the map a little easier:

General notes on using this survey

the UK was established. I wonder if some colonial buildings in Australia had the same type of Cotswold stone additions? I am sure they did: can any AusTARS answer this for me?

Where are we all?

Jan Allen

When we meet via Zoom and talk with members in other states or islands, we become aware of just how geographically widespread are the members in each of our countries. Too far for carrier pigeon flights, in many cases!

Here is a summary of our members' locations.

New Zealand	Australia	
<i>North Island</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>
Auckland 2	Perth 1	Adelaide 1
Wellington 6	Regional 1	Regional 1
Regional 5		
<i>South Island</i>	<i>TAS</i>	<i>NSW</i>
Christchurch 1	Regional 3	Sydney 3
Dunedin 3		Central Coast 3
Regional 3		Regional 3
		Anonymous 1
	<i>QLD</i>	<i>Victoria</i>
	Brisbane 3	Melbourne 11
	Far North Qld 1	Regional 7
	Regional 1	

Profile: Glenn Kuring, QTAR

I was an avid reader from a very young age, even though I have no memory whatsoever of Mum or Dad reading to me. Mum regularly brought home books from the local (Lindfield) library and one day she brought home a book with a long title. The first five or so chapters seemed rather boring but Mum said to stick at it, so I did. Suddenly, the anchor slipped but I was hooked. That book was *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*. Over the next few months she brought home others of the series as they became available, I guess, loosely in order. Since I loved them so much she bought me *Swallows and Amazons* for my ninth birthday. Over the next five to ten years I purchased the rest of the series. By the time I had left home at age eighteen, I'd read the whole series multiple times. Since then I have probably re-read the series approximately every ten years.

Even though I love the whole series I do have a special affinity with the first book, *Swallows and Amazons*, though, because as a pre-teen I was often sick with bronchitis; I would be laid up in bed feeling miserable but would calm down as soon as I started reading it.

During my teenage years it seemed that John, Nancy, Susan, Peggy, Titty, Roger (especially Roger!), and the others, would share my outdoor adventures, not that anybody else would've known - they were just my special friends. I didn't do much sailing except on an end-of-year-twelve sailing camp on Lake Macquarie, but did spend a fair bit of time in my uncle's 20 ft speedboat, hooning around Sydney Harbour. It wasn't quite the same as sailing, but at least I was on the water. I did become fairly proficient at canoeing, though, after going on three canoe camps during my early high school years. That stood me in very good stead some twenty years later when I happened to spend a day kayaking around the Northern Broads (Potter Heigham and beyond).

I was very excited when the *S&A* film came out in 1974. I dragged my mum to the local (Roseville) cinema, where I seemed to be somewhat out of place: a tall 16-year-old in a cinema full of mostly pre-teens and their mums. No matter, as soon as the film started I was engrossed.

Once I had realised that the books were based on real places... sort of... I spent time trying to find/buy maps of 'The Lake', the Broads, etc. Of course, being pre-internet days, it was rather difficult. But by the late 70s I'd worked out what I needed to know.

My next problem was how to get over to Britain to actually go to the various sites.

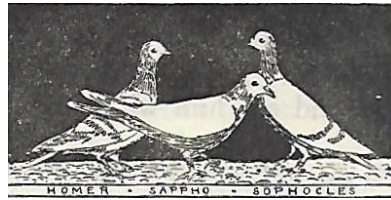
Lord of the Rings came to the rescue. The Tolkien Society, of which I'd been a member for some years, was having a massive week-long celebration in Oxford for Tolkien's 100th birthday in August, 1992, which I went to. I spent a good portion of the rest of my time in Britain (about two months) visiting various *S&A* sites: training, bussing and hiking around Coniston, Windermere, Hamford Water and the Broads. Some highlights: kayaking around the Northern Broads, climbing Kanchenjunga, doing a two-hour sail from Horning, and going on one of the early TARS outings on Hamford Water with about fifteen or so other TARS (including Christina Hardyment). THE highlight, though, was getting onto Wild Cat Island - it was a magical moment and one that I'll remember for the rest of my life. But to get there I had to convince a local ranger that I'd come all the way from Australia just to go to Peel (Wild Cat) Island before he'd let me borrow his dinghy for half an hour. I think he took pity on me standing on the shore, looking wistfully across at the island, wondering if I should swim it. There was one lowlight of my TARS bucket list: with a friend I caught a ferry from Harwich to Holland, hoping to experience the famous North Sea as described in *WDMTGTS*. Not a chance - it was a pond.

I met my now wife Karen in Brisbane not long before leaving for the UK that same year, 1992. She didn't quite understand why, on the list of attributes that my future wife had to have, there was, amongst other things, an item 'to read and like the *Swallows and Amazons* series' - it wasn't optional! She managed to read (and enjoy) at least *Swallows and Amazons* before we were married and the rest in the following few years. Our kids, Olivia, Sophie and Samuel, have all read and somewhat enjoyed some of the books but as they got older their reading preferences have led them elsewhere, mostly YouTube, Instagram, etc. ☹️. However, there's still time, as the saying goes. What they did really enjoy, though, were the regular meetups with other AusTARS from about 2001-2008,

mostly at the Myall Lakes, as well as once at Coochiemudlo Island (Brisbane), where we did canoeing, sailing, exploring, as well as the more sedate activities such as competitions, quizzes and, of course, eating. What was even more important for me was not just having fun in the outdoors, but sharing time with like-minded people who shared my love of the *S&A* books.

For me, reading the series now is like catching up with old friends; we might not climb the mountain or walk the plank any more, but spending time with them does seem to push away the cares of the world, at least for a time.





The Pigeons' Posts

We're introducing a new feature in this issue.

We'd like members to share with all of us anything that they have been doing recently, especially in Tarry activities such as outdoor pursuits, literary discoveries, model and map making, water activities, acquiring new skills, discovering more about Arthur Ransome, creating things, writing, maybe even learning to dowse! The list of stimulating things that AR leads us to engage in is endless... perhaps we should avoid actual piracy, though.

So send off your pigeon to us with a photo or a few lines, and we will post your messages here on our bulletin board while your pigeon flies back to you, ready for its next mission. TARS are folk with diverse interests and we'd love to hear about your adventures and discoveries as you get out and about, prowl the bookshelves or delve into the online world.

We always like to reward our members' efforts, so, at the end of the year, who knows, you just might receive a surprise!

A few messages have already come in so we hope they will inspire you to let fly a pigeon over the coming months, ready for our September issue, so members can enjoy learning more about Tars in action Down Under.

Your pigeon needs to arrive at jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com before 22 August.



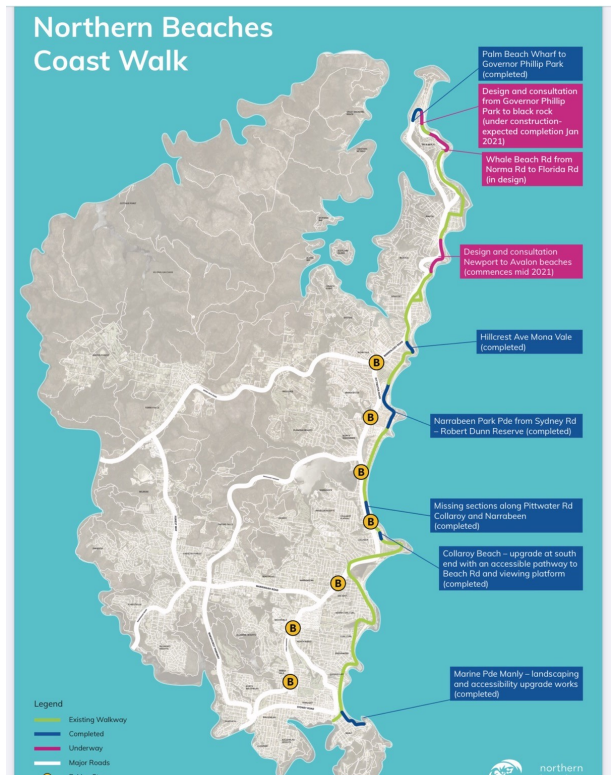
From Gwyn Johnson

Sydney Northern Beaches Coastal Walk

Like all good TARs, I love maps, and this map shows the Coastal Walk from Manly to Palm Beach, which I am currently walking in sections. Much of the walkway was developed to celebrate the Bicentennial in 1988, but there are still several undeveloped sections. There is a plan in place to complete these by mid 2022, and eventually this northern section will link up with the southern section from Bondi to Cronulla, via the walkway round Sydney Harbour and incorporating the Spit Bridge to Manly walk. The Sydney Coastal Walk will be about 200 km long and is destined to become one of the world's great walks.

We have such magnificent beaches and to walk along the cliff top paths, over rocky headlands and down along the beaches, on a beautiful day in May, is very good for the soul.

You can see some of Gwyn's lovely photos on page 14. -Eds.



From Jan and Stuart Allen



Grab a chance... Southern Victoria had an unusually cold snap in April which resulted in snowfalls in the higher country. That was an opportunity not to be missed so we headed to our local mountain for a *Winter Holiday* outing on our skis. No one else was out on the trail except some walkers who took this photo for us. Not enough time to build an igloo, though.

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From Elizabeth and David Stamp

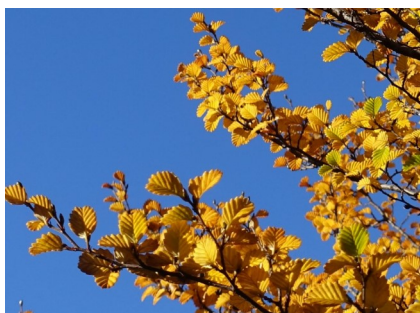
We have a quite a few favourite places we like to visit in Tasmania, and high on the list is the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. Our few earlier visits to the area have been in late summer, but our most recent one was in May this year, a trip originally planned for 2020 to celebrate our eightieth birthdays, but at that time forcibly deferred, due to the pandemic.

Arrival day at the northern end of the park was cold and rainy, but the following day, one of the birthdays, was sunny, windless and cloudless, not too cold, and just right for a walk around Dove Lake. Fortune smiled, as the park is known for its being subject annually to about 250 rainy days, with the likelihood of wind and snow at any time of year.



Our two main aims were to complete the 6 km lake circuit walk, some of it quite steep, before the last walkers' bus departed, and to see some of the deciduous beech (*nothofagus gunnii*) before their colouring leaves fell to the ground. The 'fagus' is peculiar to the Tasmanian highlands, and is the country's only deciduous native tree. The tree is not strictly a beech, hence the 'nothus' part of the name, meaning false, and 'fagus' meaning beech. R C Gunn identified the species in 1847. We were well satisfied with what we found, although we did miss the very best of the yellow-to-orange leaves. Not only were there fagus trees to be seen on the slopes well above lake level, but at times we were walking among them along the track.

We would admit to being tired on completing our circuit just before the second-last bus left, and were glad to get back to our cabin with its wood heater, a real hot bath, a good dinner and some birthday cake made by Elizabeth the evening before.



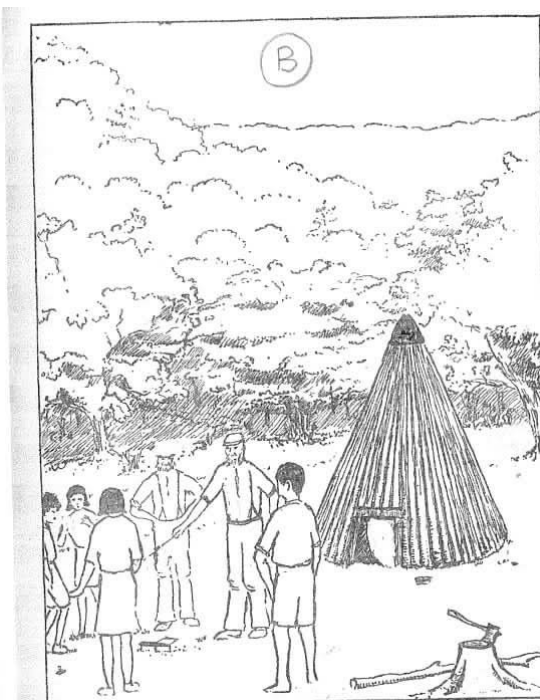
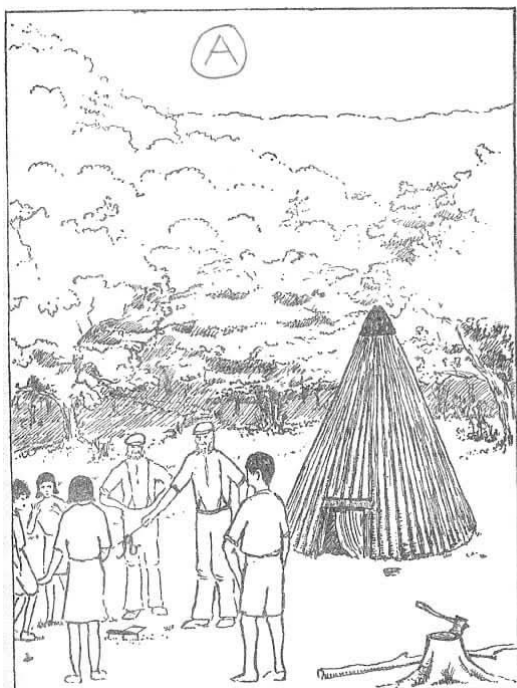
At the end of the vehicular road the views open out to encompass Dove Lake and the surrounding heights, with the imposing bulk of Cradle Mountain rising abruptly from the far end of the lake. The

mountain's grandeur, height and steepness far exceed those of 'Kanchenjunga' of AR's lake country.

Brain teaser!

Spot the differences

Here (A) is an illustration from *Swallows and Amazons*. Beside it (B) is another version with eight things missing from the picture. Can you identify the missing bits? Clue: they are all in the lower half of the picture. Answers on page 20.



Roger's day out — VicTARS in the Yarra Valley

A chocolate devotee

Following weeks of drab, grey weather in southern Victoria, the sunny breaks that showed the Yarra Valley at its autumnal best for our visit on April 25th were very welcome. From the very popular Yarra Valley Chocolaterie, the view included vineyards glowing golden against the wooded hills and green paddocks, with sunlight glancing off the lake at the bottom of the property.

Inside the building was an even more colourful cornucopia of all things chocolate. The eye struggled to take in all of the shapes, designs, flavours and types of attractively-packaged wares, piled on display benches, covering walls, tempting behind glass. And there was also ice cream. It was Roger's paradise - although he would have needed plenty of pocket money to spend!

Through a glazed wall you could watch chocolate goods being created by hand in the big kitchen. The Spiers family arrived and immediately signed up for the 11 am chocolate tasting session (so they will probably have an unbeatable edge at next year's AR Birthday tasting). Larry opted to sample the ice cream, with Jan following suit soon after. Stuart went for coffee and in no time Nancy was seen swinging her little bag of purchases. Chocolate with Indigenous food flavours, anyone? Or chocolate-infused skincare products? Several members

refuelled with hearty brunches at the onsite cafe and, inner TAR thus taken care of, we felt our two hours in the world of chocolate had been well spent.

Next, we drove east, then left the cars in the station yard at Heales-

ville for our trip back in time. Some of us carried those precious chocolate cargoes with us onto the train and did some

sampling en route (well, it all might have melted, if sun were to make the cars hot). The old Walker rail motor carried a full load of passengers up the hill above the river flats that tend to flood in winter, then through the tunnel to the former site of Tarrawarra station, where the line currently ends. Work is proceeding well on the bridges needed to take the line right back to Yarra Glen and in a couple of years' time it will be possible to walk or ride a bike from Lilydale station to Yarra Glen and then catch the train to Healesville (Sundays only).

At our halt, the driver changed ends and on the trip back passengers were allowed to sound the horn. The conductor told us of the history of the train and the area and there was more of this information in the display in the former refreshment room at the station. Jan recalled taking the rail motor from Lilydale in 1963 to do a bushwalk up Mt Monda from Healesville, not long before the line closed.

The station building has survived the intervening years well and there is much railway infrastructure still in situ in the yard. The station master didn't summon Roger to let fly a pigeon but, back on the platform, under its canopy, we could easily envisage that for ourselves. Sitting in the station park later, we tackled some quizzes and discussed future activities. Perhaps we should have taken some pigeons with us to release, to carry their messages to other TARS that Roger's Chocolate, plus Trains, provides a grand day out.

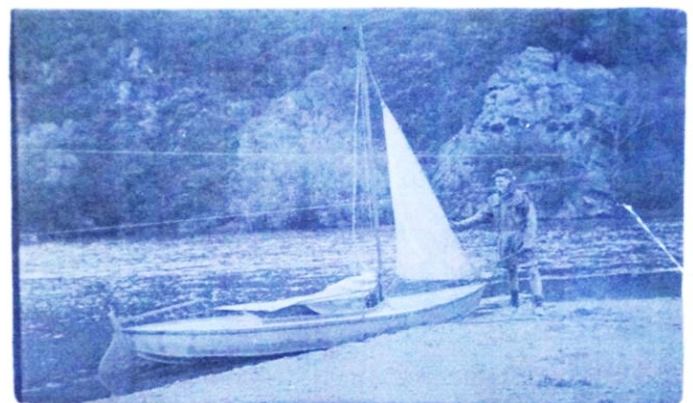


I did mean to go to sea

John Parsloe

By the time I was five I had been on my first sailing adventure. My parents were the custodians of a large old canvas-covered sailing canoe, named *Odyssey*. Well, it seemed large to me at that age, towing our toy boats behind it on strings. I had a younger brother (only three) with me, also sharing the sailing and camping experience for the first time on Lake Waiholo, south of Dunedin.

Odyssey had been found during the War, wrecked, in the Taieri Gorge, by my mother's younger brother and friends while away on a tramping trip. Over a period of time it had been restored on my grandparents' back lawn in Dunedin. My father had become a member of the rebuilding team when on



John's dad with *Odyssey* in the Taieri Gorge (mid 1940s)

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Odyssey's boat hook, with flags banner by Marcia Scott

leave and, after the War, we initially lived with my grandparents.

My parents had married during the War. Their intention had been to marry after it was all over, but circumstances changed. My father was about to be posted overseas on a 'special forces project'. The older of my mother's two brothers, Colin, was about to get married. Naturally my mother was invited to the ceremony, my father had special leave to attend, and so it became a double wedding! Colin's new father-in-law was very accommodating—he was the vicar! It proved a bit more challenging for my mother to explain all this to her parents, being the only daughter!



Canoeing on the Buller

We shifted to Westport, a riverside town on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. *Odyssey* came too, though its canvas again needed renewing. This we did in our Westport back yard. Eventually we went on brief sailing trips on the Westport boat harbour, an inlet off the river where the fishing boats and dredges moored up. But *Odyssey* was big and difficult to trundle along the street to the boat harbour, so she fell into disuse.

Instead, a small single kayak took her place. I named her *Greensleeves*, as the canvas was painted two shades of green—the colour scheme became my trade-mark for future canoes. *Greensleeves* was lighter and much more manageable to get to the water on foot. She was later joined by a double kayak we named *Greenmantle*. With our small fleet, we now started to explore the tidal creeks on the far side of the wide Buller River. Crossing the mighty river from the boat harbour could have been fraught but we were allowed to by our parents— 'Better drowned

than duffers ...'! This you did at slack water on high tide. Here we started practising our chart-making techniques in our secret waters.

The real *Secret Water* was the other Westport river, the Oro-waiti, on the far side of the town. It is a short lowland tidal river, with large mud flats when the tide is out. Little wooded islets dotted this landscape for camping. When the tide was in, there were excellent safe water areas to learn to sail the school's P Class dinghies. When the tide was out, the vast area of mudflats was a playground to slop around in on our home-made splachers, to get from island to island.

Overlooking this Westport river delta area was our 'Kanchenjunga', Mount Rochfort. Initially we called it 'Mount Everest' as Hillary & Tenzing had only a few years before climbed the real Mount Everest. It (Mount Rochfort) is 1040 metres high and similar in height to



Everest memorabilia

the peaks of the Lake District (they a little less than 1000 metres). Our dream was to climb it by ourselves as soon as we were old enough! So, a few years later, we packed our packs, mounted our dromedaries and rode to the Lake Rochfort Hydro Scheme hamlet at the foot of the mountain. Here we started our climb up the rough steep track through the bush to the reservoir lake which supplied the water for the turbines. A pack strap soon broke. We made a pole so we could sling the pack between us to continue the steep ascent. At the lake we erected our Base Camp tent - unfortunately by an ants' nest. We finally reached a minor peak to take our photos. We named it 'Mount P'.

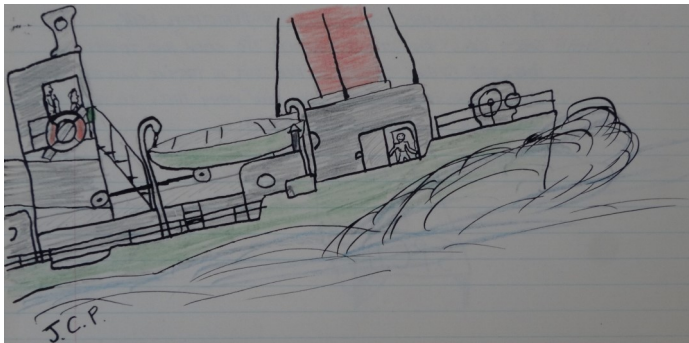


Westport N. Z. SI

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Our parents started reading the Arthur Ransome books to us when we were very young, and this obviously had a lasting effect on me. Other books did too. *The Wooden Horse* by Eric Williams describes the digging of a tunnel to escape from a POW camp during the War. So we too dug a tunnel, from beneath our bedroom to our hut nearby outside. The hut had started out as a wooden ‘tank’ (after *The Otterbury Incident* by Cecil Day-Lewis) but grew instead into a splendidly ugly ‘fort’ sarcastically named Charming Billy. We climbed down to the tunnel through a trapdoor cut in the bedroom floorboards. A flap in the carpet could be flipped back into position, hiding what we had done, when pulled by a piece of string from below. Our parents didn’t discover the tunnel until many years later after we had both left home and they were about to sell the house.

By the age of ten I knew what I wanted to do when I left school—go away to sea. Initially it was to join the Navy (as



The Maui by John Parsloe (aged 14)

John Walker would probably have done) but this changed to the Merchant Service by the time I left school. After reading Joseph Conrad’s books it seemed a more ‘adventurous’ career path to follow. So in the school holidays I started to work on the ancient (1909) coal-burning bucket dredge *Maui* at Westport, as either an assistant stoker or assistant quartermaster. This experience didn’t make me change my mind!

Dredge on the Bar

*She rocks, she rolls, she sways and dips her bow;
Her funnel creaks and sways from side to side.
An ugly swell comes with the rising tide,
But on she ever goes. Her nose looks now
Like a saw which cuts the waves or like a plough,
While overhead the angry seagulls cried,
And through the water a school of porpoises glide.
As she crosses the bar the Captain wipes his brow.
She leaves a wake which stretches from the bar,
And seaward still a mile or two she goes.
The town looks small and smoky from afar.
The rocky blue mountain, large and bleak, now throws
Its shadow over sea and ship. A star
Begins to shine. The ‘Maui’ homeward goes.
John Parsloe (aged 14).*

So, at 16, I packed my bags and started a sea-going life as an apprenticed Cadet with the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand. Although my sea career had started in this orthodox manner, it would prove to be far from a conventional one by the time I retired fifty-four years later.

I *did* mean to go to sea!

AR on Engines

Hedley Thomson

With the increase in interest in the over-use of fossil fuel-based energy and its relationship to climate change I thought I would look at Ransome’s view on engines, in particular their use in ships and road vehicles.

Swallows and Amazons

From the off, it is not hard to adopt a view that AR was not keen on engines in ships; that classic line of John’s from the opening page of *Swallows and Amazons* says it all, setting the scene for so much of what is to come: ‘... John had said only that morning that steamships were just engines in tin boxes. Sail was the thing’ (p. 13). From then on in S&A AR’s descriptions of transport modes with engines are pretty much limited to the Lake steamers, which he generally describes as hazardous for sailors, intrusive on other users of the Lake owing to their size and relative speed of travel, and rather noisy (pp. 82, 142, 186 & 347). But there’s so much more to come...

Swallowdale

In *Swallowdale*, the references to the Lake steamers (pp. 22, 109 & 455) continue in the same vein. However, when the

adventures of the children take a shift to the land, the differences between transport modes – i.e. those with and those without engine – are more strongly highlighted, showing a clear preference for the non-engined types. Ransome repeatedly shows his affinity with the slower, quieter and safer modes, using descriptions that become rather familiar in style as they recur in several of the later stories as well.

He highlights the tendency of motor transport to be noisy (accentuated by their intrusive horns of warning), speedy, smelly and generally unpleasant – viz. ‘the fierce throbbing roar of a motor bicycle’ (p. 57), ‘A motor car flashed across the gap in the wall’ (p. 58), Titty and Roger going under the Lake road in order to avoid the danger of crossing the road, such was the frequency of motor vehicles (pages 60, 61 & 172). This safety risk is highlighted again on the Swallows’ trek to Beckfoot (p 286).

By contrast, AR is more at home with the slower, safer pace of the horse-drawn carriage containing the Great Aunt (p. 165) and that of the woodmen with its load of logs (pages 58 & 287). In describing the two scenes, Ransome very clearly

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makes the distinction that one is better able to take in the surrounding scenery and to interact with people using a horse-drawn conveyance than is possible with a speeding, hurrying motor car. The point is particularly strongly made in the case of the woodmen as they, their horses and their carriage, whistle, clop and rumble along the road, announcing their presence well in advance of their arrival – so very different from the sudden whirr and disappearance of the motor vehicles that are encountered by the Swallows and Amazons, providing no chance for interaction.

On the other hand, AR is happy to interpret the loud and otherwise intrusive horns of the motor cars as natives warning of their presence as they travel along their ‘causeway’ (p. 57) – an example (one of many) of how Ransome uses the imagination and ingenuity of his participants to add excitement and another dimension beyond the familiarity of reality to his stories: “‘What’s that noise?’ said the ship’s boy suddenly. It was the noise of a motor horn. They both knew what it was, but it was far too good a noise to waste.’

Other transport means receive only brief attention: the sound of the Beckfoot launch is described merely as a ‘chug’ (p. 255) whilst Mary Swainson rowing to Rio and being able to drop off a note for Mrs Walker at Holly Howe *en route* is a matter considered of no moment at all (p. 271). Who in this modern age would not be stunned at the mere idea of such a thing: in a *rowing* boat??!!

Peter Duck

The action in *Peter Duck* reinforces AR’s preference for sailing over engined ships. Mr. Duck’s summing up on engines (p. 56) harks back to John’s *Swallows and Amazons* statement. Then AR introduces another angle: it is Roger, the youngest of the group, who breaks the mould, diverging from his elder brother’s stance and becoming infatuated with engines, wanting to use that of the *Wild Cat* whenever the chance arises (p.137). Here, I surmise, AR is subtly saying that engines are for boys/children to play around with, and that sailing – certainly of the ocean variety – is too serious a matter for (young) children. As it is, the ceasing of the engine’s ‘chug, chug’ brings shared, knowing smiles to the faces of Titty and John (p. 61): ‘yes, at last, we’re under sail alone’, is the sort of thought that is transmitted with the smiles. The failure of the engine when needed (pp. 402 & 425) is a cautionary tale that whilst engines might seem exciting and wonders of modern invention, they, too, have their downsides, requiring their own forms of attention.

At the larger end of the engine scale, AR’s descriptions of sea-going steam ships/‘steamers’ and their blundering, smoky ways continues the theme developed in relation to the passenger steamers on the Lake (p. 99). Ransome emphasises his disdain with his description of the *Wild Cat* nearly being run down by a tramp steamer (AR’s oft-used and somewhat dis-

paraging name for a particularly basic type of steam ship), despite the *Wild Cat* having right of way (pp. 167 & 168).

AR is far more interested in the subtlety of sailing, as he sees it, as compared to the comparatively basic operation of a steam ship. This includes the unavoidable need to deal with matters such as the tides and insufficient wind (p. 129). When it comes to not sailing at all, ‘It was as if something had gone out of the ship.’ (p. 130) The *Wild Cat* was no longer alive. His descriptions of different ships (p. 198) and, lovingly, of a four-masted sailing ship (p. 221) further emphasise these subtleties that he does not find in the barging, unsubtle, single-minded nature of the steam ship.

Winter Holiday

In *Winter Holiday*, we have an action adventure with as good as no machines at all. Motor cars make a few brief and insignificant interludes, mostly through the doctor (a necessary adult in this case, due to Nancy’s mumps) being stopped in his car by adventurous means (p. 102), visiting Beckfoot (pp. 169 & 171) and with Uncle Jim (pp. 239-40). Otherwise, there is Mrs Blackett in a hired car. To initiate their adventures, it’s down to the ingenuity of the children and the use of their arms and legs, AR making the very clear point that this is actually possible – something to think about today when so many children sit slumped with their iPads .

Coot Club

Coot Club continues the action, at first without engines, by including boats of all sorts, from *Titmouse* (p. 25 and throughout) to *Sir Garnet* (pp. 22 & 34) to *Dreadnought* (p. 35) as well as the *Teasel* and the *Death & Glory*. Engines are soon introduced, however, very much in a deliberate ‘good’ compared to ‘bad’ mode. What becomes evident is that AR is providing us with an almost moral tale, making the point that it is not so much engines that are the problem but rather the people who use them. There are numerous references throughout *Coot Club* to motor boats having their uses and, in certain circumstances, even having advantages over sail, even if – like some of their operators – they remain noisy and intrusive.

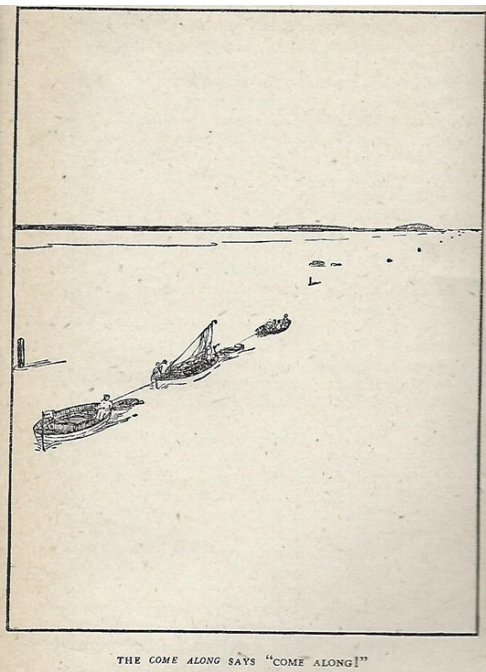
Early on, the Ds and Mrs Barrable find themselves ‘in a little motor-launch, purring down Wroxham Reach’ (p. 23) and later the boatman lets the sailing race containing Port and Starboard pass by (p. 26). Later, during the process of relocating the *Teasel* to Ranworth Broad, the associated collection of boats is met by a small motor cruiser that ‘slowed up on seeing the fleet’ (p 105). In chapter 18, ‘Through Yarmouth’, the *Come Along* – an example of a ‘nice’ motor boat – comes into the story: “‘The *Come Along*,” repeated Mrs Barrable. “What a lovely name for a tug,” said Dorothea. “She’s a lovely tug,” said the old man. “Motor-boat, she is. Take you up no matter how the tide run. When she say come along, they have to come.”” Here Ransome is clearly contrasting the benefit of a boat with an engine, that can cope with the contrary conditions

Continued on page 10

created by the variable combinations of tide and wind and the difficulties of working in a busy, narrow, winding river channel, with the *Teasel* having to cope with these same conditions but subject to the variability of the wind.

On the return journey from Beccles, rather uncharacteristically, Ransome reinforces this value of motor boats. Chapters 25 to 27 set out the *Teasel's* difficulties on Breydon Water, followed by chapter 28, 'Wreck & Salvage', with its description of the veritable flotilla of boats being saved by the *Come Along*, followed by chapter 29, 'Face to Face', and that marvellous long tow behind the *Come Along* all the way to Acle Bridge. All of these events are made possible only by the presence of a boat with a motor.

In chapter 21, 'Come Along and Welcome', Port and Starboard have the same experience. Even here the noise of the *Come Along's* engine is described, in this case as having an adverse



impact that Ransome pretty much accepts as necessary to the boat's achieving its purpose. He can't help, however, contrasting the noise with the peace aboard the *Welcome*. Even early in their trip aboard the tug, Port and Starboard and Old Bob find that they have to shout to make themselves

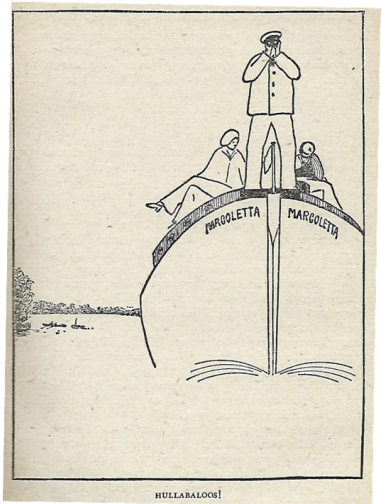
heard over the noise of the *Come Along's* engine: then, 'Old Bob opened the throttle and let her out. It was no use even shouting.' Later, approaching the Breydon Pilots, '[Old Bob] leaned forward and shut down the throttle. The *Come Along* seemed almost quiet.' As they come alongside the *Welcome*, 'With the engine quietening, they could hear the noise of the barge rushing through the water, and the creaking of blocks and gear... The woman was speaking to them, not shouting, and her voice sounded queer to the twins, whose ears were still throbbing from the chug, chug of the *Come Along*.'

Ransome then reinforces his real position on engines, starting with Mrs Whittle's classic description of the *Welcome's* engine as 'Jack's darling' because of all the love and care that her husband puts into it despite so very rarely using it (p. 258). When the wind fails and Port and Starboard ask why not

use the engine to reach Beccles: 'Not 'im,' said Mrs Whittle. 'We ain't due in Beccles till to-morrow, and you won't catch'im wasting owner's petrol.' Besides, says Mr Whittle, Port and Starboard are not expected, so they won't be missed (pp. 263-4).

And then there's the *Margoletta* – or, rather, the Hullabalooos who use her:

'A new lot of people in her, of course. The last lot were quite decent (p. 42)' ... '[The motor cruiser] came roaring past them, leaving a high angry wash that sent the launch tossing' (p. 24) as well as upsetting Tom's dinner in *Titmouse* (p. 25). Later, there is a report of the users causing trouble by keeping people awake in hotels in Wroxham. Thus the reader becomes acquainted with something of the character of these people, an important component of the story as it develops. Page 42 brings the first mention of the users of the *Margoletta* as the Hullabalooos. "We saw them this afternoon, too," said Port. "Real Hullabalooos. They crashed right through the middle of the race, hooting to clear us out of the way." Then the contact gets up close and personal with an altercation between the *Teasel's* and the *Margoletta's* people: 'The engine roared again. The water at the stern of the cruiser was churned to foam. There was a heavy bump as her stern swung in and struck the *Teasel*, and the *Margoletta* went roaring, singing and quarrelling down the reach and out of sight' (pp. 66-67). In another incident, the *Margoletta* nearly swamps Mrs Barrable (p. 92) and in front of the Hullabalooos she complains about it to Mr Tedder, the local policeman (p. 96).



The speed of the *Margoletta*, combined with its ease of getting about the waterways system despite tides and the like, not surprisingly receives a lot of emphasis. In chapter 9, 'The Making of an Outlaw', there is the dodging of the Hullabalooos, thanks to Port. Then in chapter 12, 'Under the Enemy's Nose', the speed of the *Margoletta* proves its dangerous potential, with only quick work by all concerned saving Tom again. In the midst of all the action to save Tom, this chapter contains a favourite AR line of mine: 'time went slowly on at Horning' – there's nothing worse than waiting for news. The speed factor and the difficulties encountered in dealing with it get rather wearing, with Tom musing: 'Who could tell where those beasts were or how fast they could get about?' (p. 162) and in chapter 20, 'While the Wind Holds' – "Of course, they may come tomorrow," said Tom... "Those beasts can get about so fast." And again, in chapter 24, 'Recall', Tom remarks: 'Once they leave Wroxham they can get anywhere in

Continued from page 10

no time. And they'd only have to hang about Breydon to make sure of catching us on our way through.'

Meanwhile, there are some delightful and exquisitely described experiences under sail that include another favourite line: 'The huge black sail climbed up and spread above them, and the wherry, *Sir Garnet*, late with her tide, gathered speed and stood away down the middle of the river' (p. 210). Chapter 19, '*Sir Garnet* obliges friends', makes no reference to the wherry having an engine; if it had had one, it surely would have been used to take the wherry through Yarmouth against the adverse tide. In typical AR style, Ransome makes poor seamanship the cause of the predicament, not the tide. By contrast, though, he is quite happy to have the *Come Along* save Port and Starboard by taking them through Yarmouth against the incoming tide. A bit of a 'horses for courses' approach that we see throughout the narrative.

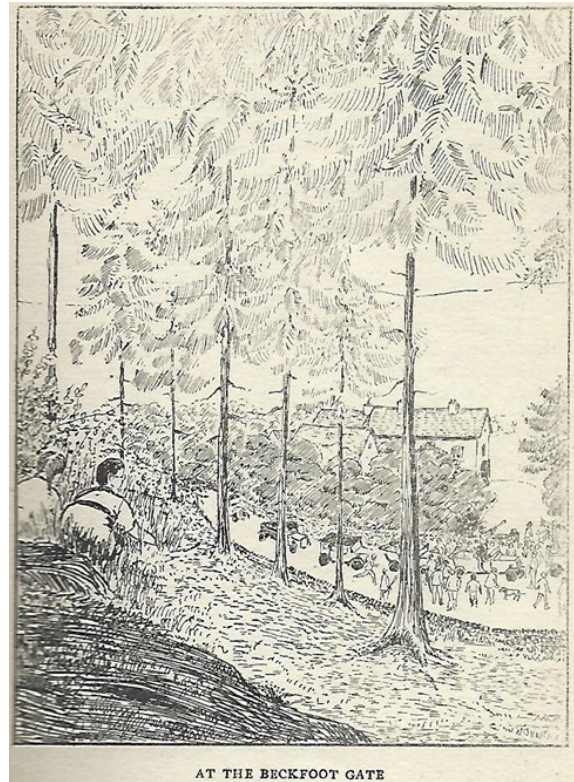
For Tom, too, sail is the thing (and, as with *Sir Garnet*, no mention is made of the *Teasel* having an engine). In chapter 16, 'Southward Bound', it is a case of not wasting a fair wind, and again in chapter 20, 'While the Wind Holds', reliance on the wind necessitates sailing on and on for as long as possible: "You'll be in Beccles to-morrow, Admiral," said Dorothea. "Won't she, Tom?" "Depends on the wind," said Tom.'

Up until now conditions have been fine for the fledgling crew but in chapter 23, 'Storm over Oulton', Ransome reminds the novice of what real sailing can be like with a vivid description of the storm on Oulton Broad, with no relief offered by way of an engine. Chapter 24, 'Recall', then demonstrates a crucial aspect of sailing in these waters when Tom, Port and Starboard have to work out tactics for the return journey. Of course, this means having to deal with the exigencies of tides and wind, in this instance in order to get through Yarmouth before the Hullabaloo, or to catch a train *en route* to avoid them. In the end, of course, everyone is bailed out by that friendly, if noisy, motor boat, the *Come Along*.

So in the end Ransome is – rather surprisingly – quite happy to acknowledge and to even highlight the value of motor boats. However, all in all and despite their acknowledged practicalities, throughout the story I think, underlying all the action and incident, Ransome is saying something to the effect of, 'Any mug can use a boat with a motor; it's altogether different compared to the skills and brains needed to sail a yacht'.

Pigeon Post

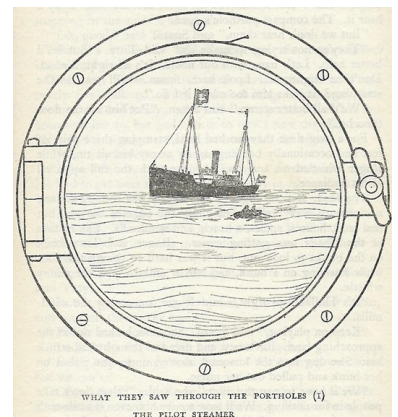
After all the variety of boating activity in *Coot Club*, *Pigeon Post* comes as a complete contrast: There is reference to a 'Big lake steamer' (p. 22) and the Ds crossing the Lake by boat to collect Titty and Roger (pp. 21-23) but that's about it for boats. There is, however, one similarity: motor vehicles have their place, in the same sense as motor boats do. As far as motor vehicles are concerned, 'a motor car rushed past and left



them choking with dust' (p. 299) – along the lines of the group's *Swallowdale* experiences; and there's the use of Rattletrap to bring assistance, and the subsequent arrival of the firefighters in the case of the fell fire, their cars proving their value (p. 374). And that's it as far as engines are concerned. One more thing, though: although we don't know whether the engine itself caused the fire, it is worth noting that the fire was certainly caused by people who came in a car.

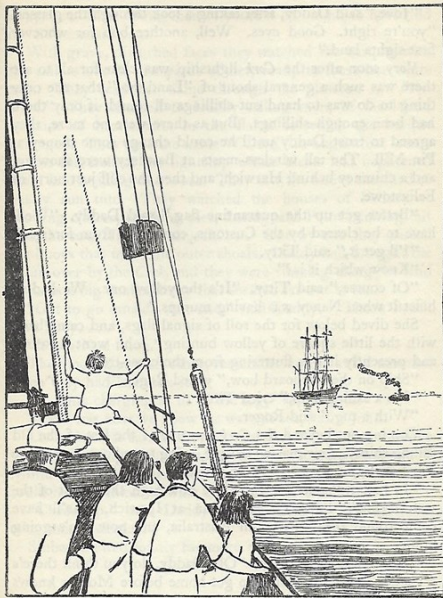
We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea

We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea centres on the drama of the English Channel crossing, but there is also quite a bit of interest involving steamships and yacht engines along the way. In the first instance, there is the cautionary tale of the *Goblin's* engine being out of fuel, with the subsequent events setting up the entire story. Otherwise, there are descriptions of the actions of a



tug (p. 17), a conversation between Titty and Roger re engines (p. 18) and discussion about the value of engines versus sails, including a classic AR comment, spoken by Jim Brading: '...I never use [the engine] if I can use sails instead' (p. 27). Once aboard *Goblin*, though, Roger has to exclaim, 'There's an engine' (p. 26). On the trip around the busy harbour, the crew is anxious, passing a big, threatening steamer, with the worry of the wash

Continued on page 12



MEETING THE SAILING SHIP

and possible collision (pp. 54-58), and there's consternation when the engine fails them – AR again making his point about the risk of putting too much reliance on it (p. 91). In passing a fishing boat, no judgment is passed on its engines (p. 103), whilst more threatening is the near collision with a steamer (p. 181).

But ships with engines are not so bad when John spots Daddy aboard a steamer as they enter Flushing Harbour (p. 263) and they see a tall sailing ship being towed by a tug to sea outside Beach End (p. 314). And finally, *Goblin's* engine shows its value as they use it to get to Pin Mill (p. 341) and to keep clear of other boats nearby (p. 342). Nonetheless, AR raises some of his usual concerns with engines: they don't always work and they need fuel.

Secret Water

After all its adventures crossing the English Channel, in *Secret Water* the *Goblin* achieves almost deity status as the means to enable the Swallows to have a holiday in which their father participates. The holiday is to involve exploration of the Walton Marshes (today's Hamford Water National Nature Reserve); but it has to be called off. Until that wrong is righted, no-one's heart is in boats (p. 25); "Pudding faces," said Roger' of the then unknown Eels.

But then the 'piece of exploration' (p.28) is on again. And again it's to be fun with tides and winds, challenges to any plan for exploring the Marshes by sailing boat. But engines are not discounted altogether; given the tightness of the timetable to get the explorers to their isolated camping place, the *Goblin's* engine is brought into play. Using the engine overcomes any difficulties that might have arisen in dealing with the tides and/or adverse winds (p. 37). The hurrying nature of a boat that has a motor is highlighted during the otherwise restful voyage to the Marshes: 'A motor boat appeared ahead, came to meet them and passed them in a flurry of foam' (p.41).

In this isolated location, there are to be very few opportunities for, or occasions that involve, motorised inventions of any kind; I could identify only two. The joys of sailing are heightened with the arrival of the Amazons, although the means of their arrival, by a motor boat able to intrude into the privacy of

the Marshes even at low tide, draws both the envy of the Mastodon and concern at the ease of the intrusion: "Fishing boat," said the Mastodon, "They draw nothing..." (p. 126). The description of how the departing boat 'shot away' again shows Ransome's dislike and even disdain for the speed at which such craft could travel (p. 127).

When the Swallows finally make it to the nearby town, 'motor cars, roaring past, made them feel that even Bridget's best was very slow' (p. 282). Here, Ransome is emphasising not only the intrusive and unpleasant noise emitted by motor vehicles but the disparity they engender in terms of modes of travel – there is a marked distinction between walking in proximity to, say, a slow-moving horse and cart as compared to a speeding motor car. Echoes of *Swallowdale*...

In *Secret Water*, AR builds the narrative around a desire for and a sense of peacefulness and a dislike for and desire to avoid the likes of noisy, intrusive motor boats and motor vehicles – "no more motor cars and stink of exhaust", said Roger' as they left the road to the seaside town for return to the island camp (p. 288).

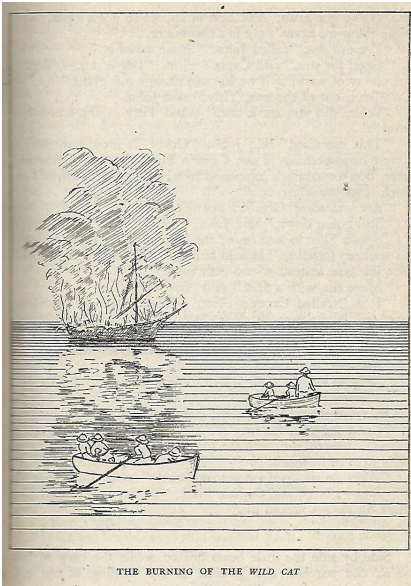
The Big Six

With the return to the Norfolk Broads, as in *Coot Club*, *The Big Six* displays AR's more sanguine attitude towards motor boats. The *Cachalot* fills the role of one of those 'good' motor boats that helps out the heroes of the story, with its skipper (curiously, never named) becoming a valuable ally (p. 76). In AR's eyes, it is also used for a sensible and productive purpose – after all, Arthur was a very keen fisherman himself. The *Cachalot* fits into the same category as the *Come Along* does in *Coot Club*; i.e. a sensible and useful motor boat.

Chapter 6, 'Tow out of Trouble', is an example of the *Cachalot's* usefulness when the circumstances are right: "Full steam ahead!" said Joe gleefully, and Bill laughed, moving his arms backwards and forwards, as much as to say he was glad that for once he wasn't an engine' (p. 91). The downside, though: would there be a wind to get them home from Potter Heigham in the *Death & Glory* the next day? The Death and Glories are in luck; as a result of catching the World's Whopper they get a tow with the *Cachalot* to Thurne Mouth and have an easy sail home to Horning along the Bure River (p.124). Here, again, AR appears to be instructing his readers that motor-boats can be handy, if used in the right way and for the right purpose.

Missee Lee

Early on in *Missee Lee*, Ransome highlights his dislike of noise. First, it's the noise of the harbour (p. 17) and then the relief when the engine, having been used to exit the harbour owing to a lack of wind (p. 19), after several hours is finally able to be dispensed with – 'Bother that chugging engine', thinks Titty – and quiet prevails (p. 24) .



Before leaving the harbour, AR's basic disdain for engine power in boats is made clear in the conversation between the harbourmaster and the *Wild Cat*'s crew about the most favourable way to reach China: 'Go by steamship', says the harbourmaster. 'Where's the fun in that?', comes the reply (p. 18).

Of course, everything changes with the burning of the *Wild Cat* and with it a salutary lesson – one familiar from several of the earlier books – they might have their place, but engines are hazardous and need to be used with considerable care.

The Picts & the Martyrs

The return to the Lake in *The Picts & the Martyrs* not surprisingly sees a return to the themes of the earlier Lake novels, including the attitudes towards engines in vehicles and boats that we have seen in earlier books. It begins early on with Nancy's disdain for the idea that the Ds should be driven around the Lake to Beckfoot rather than crossing the Lake by sailing boat (p. 14). A bus from the railway station to the steamer pier (p. 17) fits with AR's neutral attitude towards public transport; as noted in my analysis of AR's attitude in the Twelve towards railways, he seems quite comfortable with the utility value offered by public transport.

Otherwise, motor vehicles feature in a variety of ways throughout the story, with a variety of attributes being afforded to them. First, when Billy is taking Great Aunt Maria Turner visiting, Rattletrap runs out of petrol (p. 228); not the first occasion on which AR highlights this downside associated with motors. Then a butcher's van that just happens to be coming by provides the opportunity for the GA to continue her journey. When Mary Swainson finds herself diverted from her journey to drop the GA off at nephew James's houseboat, Mary finds herself rowing harder than she would like to beat the Lake steamer to the pier to catch the bus to the station for her train. There is a point being made here, I think, about the unequal effort required between a person rowing harder than she would like and the sheer engine power of the steamer to out-do the rower. Fortunately, Mary gets to the bus in time, but there is something here that implies that engines institute hurry and rush more than we really like.

If we hadn't already grasped his attitude towards motor vehicles, AR's disdain and dislike for them is marvellously de-

scribed and absolutely clear in his representation of 'Rattletrap' – 'clapped-out', as we might say today: '[Cook watched Billy Lewthwaite drive Rattletrap] out of the Beckfoot gateway, changing gears only a little less noisily than Mrs Blackett... and watched the car, with its wobbly back wheel, sway round the corner [and] listened to it rattling and clattering up the little rise, down the other side and away on the road to the foot of the lake' (p. 228). Poor old Rattletrap appears to be neither well maintained nor cared for – but just OK enough to do its job, and for Ransome that's enough. More than any other description in the Twelve, this reference indicates AR's at best ambivalent opinion as to the value and importance he placed on cars – especially when compared with boats.

Great Northern?

Given that *Great Northern?* is the last of the Twelve, it is not surprising that AR's attitude to engines is shown in ways similar to those of the other books, if under different guises. For example, attitudes towards the *Pterodactyl* (p. 17-18) are akin to those displayed by the Coots and the Ds towards the *Margoletta* and the Hullabaloes in *Coot Club*. John's attitude towards the evil craft (p. 122) smacks of his statement about boats with engines made way back in *Swallows and Amazons* (p. 13). The shortage of fuel again rears its plans-altering head (p. 94), whilst there are several references to the attitude that all true sailors should have towards engines, as AR sees it; i.e. that engines should only be used when absolutely necessary (pp. 19, 24, 25 & 160).

In the end, I think this stance pretty well sums up AR's attitude towards the use of engines in boats, though I don't think he was too keen on the noisy, dangerous, intrusive motor vehicle either. After all, **'Sail is the thing'** (*Swallows and Amazons*, p. 13).

Perhaps there's a cautionary tale of a general nature here too; i.e. that we can rely on motorised technology too heavily (think electric toothbrushes, motorised leaf blowers, even bicycles with electric motors – do we leave anything for our bodies to do?).

As for AR's thoughts on the topic, in analysing the Twelve for this article I began to wonder about AR's attitude towards technology in general; as he was not too keen on the use of engines, did he have a generally negative attitude towards technology and innovation? Well, I've come to my own conclusion, which I hope to share with you, perhaps in the next *Furthest South*...

And as for me? Well, I'm with Arthur on engines too. Which raises the question: did AR form my opinion on engines or was I attracted to his books because of his views? Well, I was eight years old, so who knows....

Gwyn Johnson's Sydney coastal walks

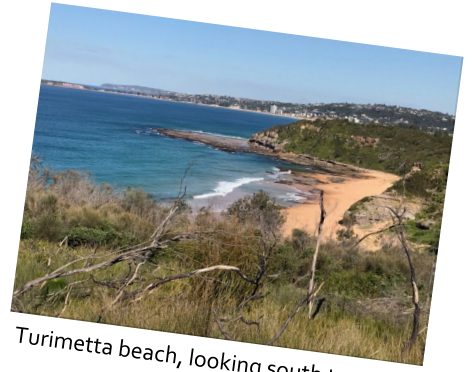
A breath of salty air for those of us stuck indoors
(See page 4)



Bilgola Beach



Turimetta Beach



Turimetta beach, looking south to



South Bilgola Headland looking south



Bilgola Beach



Warriewood Beach



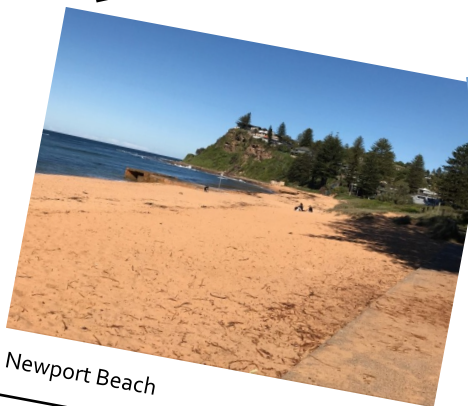
Looking south from North Bilgola



View north from North Bilgola Headland to Avalon Headland and Capt Cook Lookout on the Central Coast in the distance



Mona Vale



Newport Beach



Warriewood Beach



Newport Beach

Brain teasers!

Pairs

Here are two lists of some words that appear together in the books: for example, *Sea Bear*, *High Topps*. Can you find a word from List A that goes with a word from List B and pair up all of the words? There are twenty paired words when completed.

Clue: When you have your pairs of words, one from each list, you may have to adjust the word order!

	List A		List B
1	Camera	A	Vicky
2	Young	B	Barrel
3	Secret	C	Trail
4	Loft	D	Pigeon
5	Tyre	E	Lighthouse
6	Brothers	F	Caps
7	Thames	G	Latin
8	Bottom	H	Billy
9	Fat	I	Sailing
10	Lesson	J	Pattern
11	Hound	K	Flash
12	South	L	Rabbit
13	Tree	M	Boards
14	Red	N	Fat
15	Hand	O	Barge
16	Sledge	P	Breydon
17	Water	Q	Harbour
18	Stew	R	Cone
19	Bacon	S	Print
20	Water	T	Blood

What do you know about AR?

Everyone has significant events in their lives. Here we have some landmark years in AR's life, but both the years and the notable events have become jumbled. Can you put the eighteen years and their significant events back into chronological order?

1922	<i>Swallows and Amazons</i> published.
1897	Evgenia dies.
1939	Daughter Tabitha born.
1991	Russian Revolution.
1910	AR at Rugby. Father dies.
1930	Short trip to China for <i>Manchester Guardian</i> .
1967	Edith Ransome dies.
1902	Cruise on <i>Racundra</i> .
1924	First book published: <i>The Souls of the Streets</i> .
1884	Tabitha dies.
1975	AR born at Headingley, Leeds.
1917	Divorce from Ivy. Marries Evgenia Shelepina.
1901	<i>Secret Water</i> published.
1944	AR dies.
1909	AR at Yorkshire College.
1925	Marries Ivy Walker.
1913	AR leaves England for Russia.
1904	AR becomes office boy in London.

Black swans and petticoats in Captain Flint's trunk: invitation to collaborate in research

Catherine Lamont

The numerous references to Australia (and New Zealand) in the *Swallows and Amazons* novels have puzzled some readers, particularly Dora Altounyan, née Collingwood, who believed she was the model for Mary Walker. Dora certainly did not grow up on an Australian sheep station, presumably one modelled on 'Bergen-op-Zoom', the property owned by AR's grandfather, which is just 'down the road' (60 km) from my house. Geraint Lewis told me of this lucky geographical coincidence in his welcome when I joined both the Arthur Ransome Trust and AusTARS in 2019. My proximity to 'BoZ' seems to have caused quite a bit of excitement amongst the many 'Australiaphiles' I have met in the 'AR world'. *Could 'BoZ' be the impetus for an expansion of AusTARS activity in northern NSW or new research into an Australian corner of Captain Flint's Trunk?*

The opportunity for expanding AusTARS activity initially looked promising, as I found a good deal of interest in AR in the local area (and even inspired the local history columnist to write seven articles about Ransome and EBB in *The Armidale Express*), but the number of AusTARS in New England re-

mains steady at (I think) just one: me. If physical proximity is not a motivator for new members, and distance an obstacle to meeting fellow AusTARS, what other opportunities for connection might be available, I wondered?

Once I realised the impracticality of putting on or attending events, I began to appreciate the TARS publications more, particularly the work done by various editors of *Furthest South* over the years to provide a forum for more distant members to share their ideas and 'meet' one another. I want to thank Jan Allen in particular – not only for setting up *FS* in the first place, but also for supporting interstate activities and for writing to me to explore some of my ideas, particularly when I first joined.

Zoom meetings facilitated very ably by Phoebe Palmieri have, of course, expanded the opportunities to meet one another – the silver lining to our challenging world situation. Immediately after the last Zoom, I had an email from one of the participants about an article they were proposing to write for *Mixed Moss*. This led to more conversations, in which I was able to contribute some of my own research and knowledge of



Bergen-op-Zoom c1850

A painting by Edward Baker Boulton (EBB, AR's grandfather) of 'Bergen-op-Zoom', the sheep station he owned for 40 years, just 60 km from my home in northern NSW (reproduced from *Mixed Moss* 1998).

Continued on page 17

AR resources. Recognising the value of collaboration, I decided to delay publishing my research into the reasons why AR made so many references to Australia and NZ until I find out if anyone else has parts of the picture they would like to contribute.

As a result of all these discoveries, I am inviting anyone who would like to work with me, either on the research I am outlining here, or on a project of their own, to get in touch. But first, a taste of my discoveries so far...

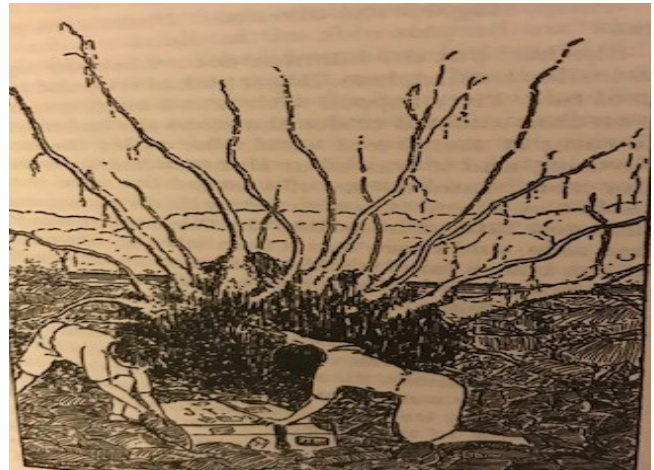
AR's knowledge of Australia has usually been attributed to his maternal grandfather's living and travelling in Australia for more than half his life, accompanied only once (as far as we know) by AR's grandmother, when she was 62. I think that there is more to it than that...

We know AR read *Robbery under Arms*, and Cheryl Paget has given us some clues about his friendship with Ashley Gibson in her 2020 article in *Mixed Moss*. What other books (like *The Swan and her Crew* that Christina Hardyment, (correctly) hypothesised that AR had read because of its similarities to *Coot Club*) might turn out to be 'Black Swans' amongst Mary Walker's petticoats in Captain Flint's Trunk?

But even AR's beliefs about his grandfather raise questions, as John Edwards and Mark Walker have pointed out in their articles. Far from being irresponsible in his artistic endeavours, EBB's artwork was so good that it actually funded many of his travels. The governor of NSW presented one painting as a gift to Queen Victoria. It may still be in Windsor Castle (another point to research in England?). And he seems to have been a successful businessman and sheep farmer who left his family comfortably off, despite the great drought of the 1890s, during which he died. Why did AR think that this grandfather was also too impractical to emulate?

It is intriguing that, in addition to possibly giving some of EBB's personality to Captain Flint (as John Edwards suggested in *Mixed Moss* in 1998), the character that AR gave an Australian childhood to was Mary Walker. Why choose a female character for his 'Australian connection'? Why make her the mother of the Swallows? Why call her Mary, specifically? Furthermore, what was it really like to be an Australian woman at that time? How accurate were the statements and pictures Ransome drew of Australia? Ransome last saw Grandfather Boulton when he was nine. What kept AR's 'Australiophilia' so strong that he automatically included 'that romantic shadowy Australia' in the first draft of Chapter 2 of his most famous book, thirty-six years later?

Do any of these questions intrigue you? Do you already have some answers or questions of your own, or would you be interested in exploring places near you that AR's relatives visited, drew or painted (in nearly every state, as well as New Zealand)? Could there be scope for a joint AusTARS/TARSNZ research project – a collection of independent articles, a small 'Mary Walker Tour Guide' for visitors to our countries or even a book? While I have quite a bit of material already (and

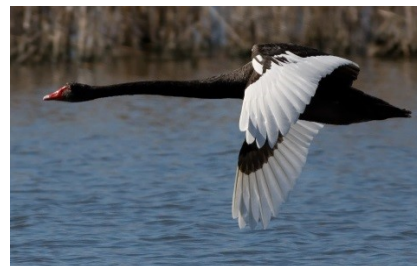


Black swans over Captain Flint's trunk

the promise of a grant from the Red Slipper Fund if I publish it), I'd much prefer to pool resources and collaborate. It could be quite fun! Do email me at cjlcrabapple@bigpond.com if you'd like to have a conversation.

Just for the record, the references to Australia and NZ that I have found so far in AR's writing are:

- SD* Ch 2 – Quotes a saying of old nanny in Australia
- Ch 8 – Capsizing cousin's dinghy in Sydney Harbour
- Ch 15 – Trout, fishing, camping and snakes worse than adders
- PP* Ch 4 'She'd tell us about gold-mining in Australia'
- Ch 16 – Australian bushmen finding water when sheep dying in great drought
- Ch 25 – Cooee
- WD* Ch 2 – Falling asleep on horseback riding home after dance
- Ch 24 - Suggests a ship would be returning from Australia
- GN* Ch 12 – Roger mentions cockatoos
- Ch 21 – Discussion of the death of Captain Cook
- Final drawing – similar structure to last known painting of EBB
- Various: repeated references to things such as corroborees, and 'Melbourne' on CF's trunk.



What's on? Coming events for TARSNZ and AusTARS

We'll be offering a series of Zoom sessions for member participation over the coming months. One of these will be our **Literary Conference** in August. At this forum we'll be asking for your submissions of (very) short presentations on literary-based themes, or topics for wider discussion.

We are now including some quiz activities in *Furthest South* that you can tackle at home. If you wish to devise a quiz or other activity for members to enjoy, please send it in to us for inclusion in the next issue.

You'll see that this issue features a new segment, *The Pigeons' Posts*, where members are invited to post short reports of their activities and discoveries. We will be looking to make some awards at the end of the year for the best contributions to *FS*, so tell us what Ransome-inspired activities are happening in your lives!

We're also keen to include more profiles of our members, and you'll find two of these in this issue. The profiles are a good way to learn about other members and their lives and interests, especially for those members who haven't been able to meet and talk with other TARS via the Zoom sessions.

2021 Zoom sessions dates and times for TARSNZ and AusTAR

Saturday 26 June	International Corroboree with guests from UK and Canada	WA Eastern States NZ UK (Friday 25th) Canada (Friday 25 th) Details will be circulated to members via email.	7 am 9 am 11 am 12 midnight 4 pm and 7 pm
Saturday 7 August	Literary Conference	WA Eastern states NZ	9 am 11 am 1 pm
Sunday 10 October	Quiz Time	WA Queensland Eastern states NZ	2 pm 4 pm 5 pm 7 pm
Saturday 4 December	End of Year Parley	WA Queensland Eastern states NZ	2 pm 4 pm 5 pm 7 pm

The link for all our Zoom sessions is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7937863995> The password (if you are asked for one) is TARS. In case of difficulty contact Phoebe Palmieri phoebe.palmieri@gmail.com

Activity days for AusTARS

Arrangements for these proposed activities will be subject to any current COVID restrictions and limitations and these and possible other factors that arise can result in alterations to the advertised program. As interstate travel is still problematic due to the pandemic, at present events are only scheduled in Victoria, though all TARS are welcome to attend. Events held in any public area require participants to provide some medical information to the organiser, which remains private unless needed. Notify the Secretary/Events Coordinator, Jan Allen, at jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com of your intention to attend an event and you will receive updates and details.

Saturday 19 June, Emerald, Victoria, from 11 am

Holiday Activities at 'High Topps'

This day will include Susan's Campfire Cooking outdoors (weather-dependent) to feed hungry TARS, and also Board Games in the Parlour. After our buttered eggs and cannonballs, competitive instincts will be sharpened as we race our counters around the boards in old favourites such as our *Coot Club* game, the Train Game and some new games, all relating to the books.

Saturday 17 July, Emerald, Victoria, 1 pm

Day of Mysteries and Crimes

Villains to catch and mysteries to solve as we emulate those *Big Six* detectives and revisit crime scenes in the books, with plenty of laughs along the way.

Continued on page 19

Continued from page 18

Saturday 14 August, Tecoma, Victoria, 2 pm:

Arthur Ransome and the Romany Life

Perhaps we will be turning gypsy for the day as Nancy and Larry reveal more about AR's life and involve us in related activities. See more information from Nancy below.

Saturday 11 September, Werribee Treatment Plant, Werribee, Vic., start time TBA: *Dick's Birding Day - Birdwatching for our Avian Migratory Visitors*

This event requires special arrangements for access to the treatment ponds. Details available nearer the date.

Saturday 9 October, Stony Point, Victoria, All day: *French Island/Cowes Expedition*

Saturday 14 November Fairfield, Victoria, 1.30 pm: *Rowing Afternoon*

Friday 10 December East Ivanhoe, Victoria, 6.30 pm: *Christmas Party*

VicTARS coming event: Arthur Ransome and the Romany Life

Nancy Endersby-Harshman

The Lake District was Arthur Ransome's great love since childhood holidays. We know he loved the landscape, but he also valued the local people as friends and because they symbolised to him a countryside of his own. We know of the charcoal burners, as he put them into his stories, but he also made friends with tinkers and travelling showmen, the latter being Romany and some still speaking the language. Ransome had an interest in the Romany language, but mostly enjoyed spending time with his Romany friends listening to their storytelling and learning their games.



Our event will celebrate the Romany gypsy life both in the romantic terms of Arthur Ransome and in the harsher reality of the Romany existence to modern times. Expect Romany words, games, music, fortunes, history and stories. Bring memories of gypsy encounters or stories from childhood. Also bring an object that wouldn't be missed if it ended up in someone else's pocket. The day will culminate in a gypsy tea. Costumes will be welcome.

When: Saturday 14 August 2021 from 2 pm



Where: 11 Brenda Grove, Tecoma, VIC 3160

Brain teasers: answers

Spot the differences (page 5)

1. No serpent.
2. Part of Billy's braces missing. .
3. Billy's cap missing.
4. Wigwam curtain missing.

Pairs (page 15)

Camera Flash
Young Billy
Secret Harbour
Pigeon Loft
Tyre Pattern
Blood Brothers
Thames Barge
Bottom Boards
Fat Vicky
Latin Lesson
Hound Trail
South Cone
Fat Vicky
Lighthouse Tree
Red Caps
Hand Print
Rabbit Stew
Sailing Sledge
Breydon Water
Rabbit Stew
Bacon Fat
Water Barrel

5. Middle of base of stump missing.
6. John is missing a foot.
7. Titty is missing a hand.
8. Some bushes missing near the right-hand edge of picture.

What do you know about AR? (page 15)

1884 AR born at Headingley, Leeds.
1897 AR at Rugby. Father dies.
1901 AR at Yorkshire College.
1902 AR becomes office boy in London.
1904 First book published: *The Souls of the Streets*.
1909 Marries Ivy Walker.
1910 Daughter, Tabitha, born.
1913 AR leaves England for Russia.
1917 Russian Revolution.
1922 Cruise on *Racundra*.
1924 Divorce from Ivy. Marries Evgenia Shelepina.
1925 Short trip to China for *Manchester Guardian*.
1930 *Swallows and Amazons* published.
1939 *Secret Water* published.
1944 Edith Ransome dies.
1967 AR dies.
1975 Evgenia dies.
1991 Tabitha dies.

WANTED! Articles for the next issue of Furthest South

Send your articles to

Jan Allen (jp8fillyjonk@bigpond.com) (Australia) by 22 August, 2021, please.

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