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SIGNALS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY



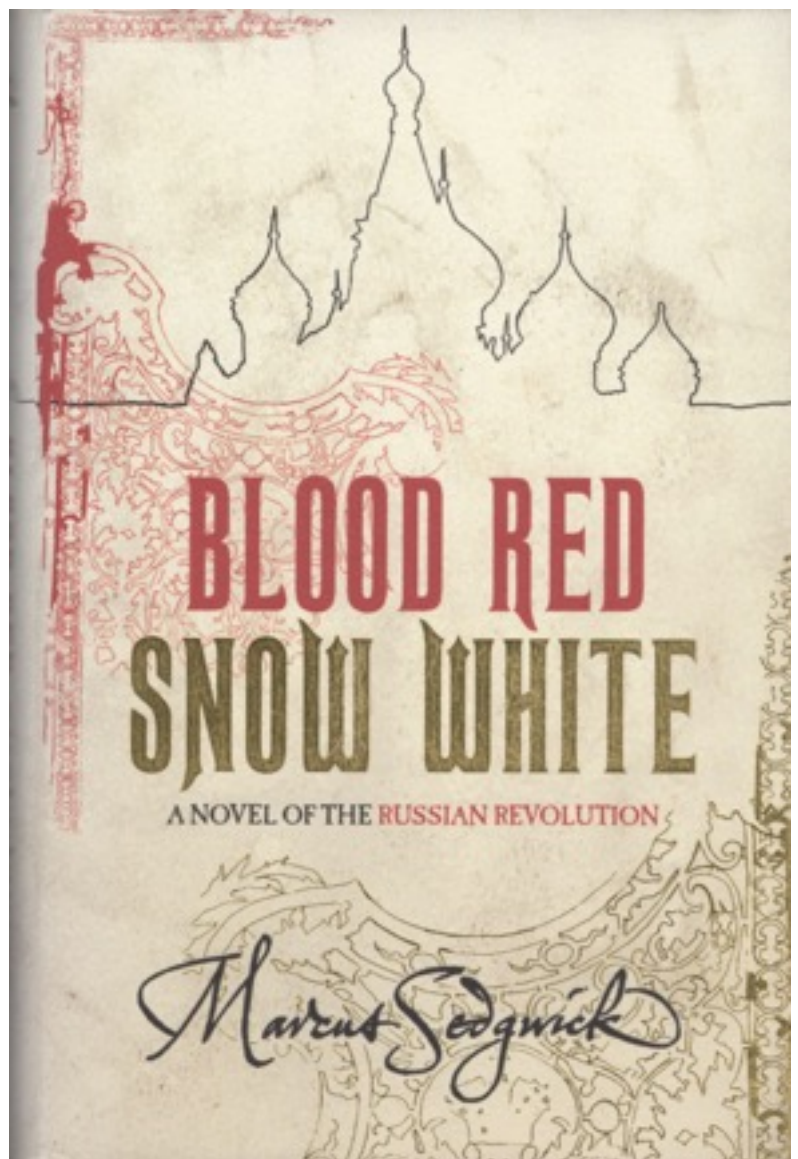
IAGM 2022
Arthur Ransome's
East Coast explored

IAGM 2023
Time to
discover Dundee

Meet the master
of the *Gondola*

Plus: Book now
for Holly Howe!

...and what's going on
in your Region



JANUARY-APRIL 2023 with SHIP'S LOG & DESPATCHES

The Arthur Ransome Society

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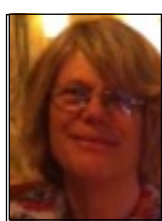


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SIGNALS



THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY JANUARY-APRIL 2023

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From the Editor

In the Red

“There were no actual bodies in need of burying,” we are assured by its author at the start of the new biography of Terry Pratchett (another of my literary heroes). It got me thinking about the relative dearth of deaths and internments in the S&A series. The “poor sheep” in *Winter Holiday* didn’t need its supposed coffin. The pike in *The Big Six* was put in a glass case. Sundry other fish got eaten.

It had been very different in real life, at least in the Russian years. In Moscow, Ransome, and probably Evgenia too, were no strangers to death, and the sight of corpses, as Alan Kennedy reminds us in the current *Mixed Moss*. (South-West Region have booked him for a Zoom talk in February. Others can tune in.)

It’s also come up for me through recent encounters with its treatment in two works of fiction. One was a re-read, inspired by the sad and untimely death of its author, Marcus Sedgwick, of his brilliant retelling in *Rose Red Snow White*. (It will be up for discussion at the next Book Group Zoom meeting). The other, Ivan Cutting’s play *Red Skies*, shown at the IAGM, is all about avoiding discussion of the actual events, but this silence speaks volumes. Metaphorical bodies buried indeed.

It’s often assumed that the summer-holiday cheeriness of the Swallows and Amazons series is an intentional antidote to these traumatic experiences, but I’m not so sure. There’s an underlying seriousness to the escapades, a determination to do things properly, the right way, the better to be able to cope with real peril when it comes along. This, it seems to me, is something that comes from a lived experience filled not only with day-to-day mortal danger but also on a tightrope of moral dilemmas strung across an abyss of calamitous consequences.



This issue’s cover: The first in this series of *Signals* not to feature one of Ransome’s own books, but rather one about him, and here as a mark of respect for its author, Marcus Sedgwick who died on 15 November, aged only 54: more about him on page 44. The book itself is a work of art. Printed in dark red ink on heavy, deckle-edged paper it’s the perfect vehicle for Sedgwick’s elegant, sophisticated storytelling.

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

from Peter Wright



There can't be many authors who have such a well-known brand as Arthur Ransome. *Swallows and Amazons* is not just his most popular and best-known book, it has become a catch phrase in its own right. You'll often see references in newspapers or publicity material referring to *Swallows and Amazon* style adventures, effectively promoting outdoor fun, particularly for children and families.

Ransome and *the Swallows and Amazons* lifestyle appeals; it's used in marketing and clearly helps sell not just the promise of fun and excitement, but real products too. For example, the Coppermines and Lakes Cottage company has as one of its strap lines, "Have a *Swallows and Amazons* inspired Summer Holiday".

Well, you might expect that in the Lake District, but what about in the New Forest? A company there says, "*Swallows and Amazons* doesn't just have to be a wonderful book of our past. It is possible to live those water-y, exploring, wild-swimming, tree climbing summers. Here's our guide for you to pull it off in the New Forest". Even the National Trust gets in on the act, promoting "The top 14 places for a *Swallows and Amazons* Adventure".

And a member recently sent me a clipping from *The Observer* promoting the 10 best floating hotels. At number 4 was an entry headed *Secret Water, Suffolk*, from Hippersons, a boatyard in Beccles with floating glamping pods. In addition to *Secret Water* a second pod is to be called *Wild Cat Island*.

Clearly Ransome sells! Interestingly, in the same paper was a list of the 20 best waterside pubs and inns and sure enough, The Butt and Oyster at Pin Mill was listed. (I can heartily recommend it!)

'Never ignore a possible'

Another part of the Ransome brand are his well-known sayings and quotes. The *Duffers* telegram has been described as the most famous telegram in children's literature and his saying, "Grab a chance and you won't be sorry for a-might-have-been" has popular appeal. Interestingly, I was recently reading *Rooftoppers* a children's book by Katherine Rundell, and she introduced a similar phrase several times throughout the book – "Never ignore a possible". It's so similar to Ransome's phrase, I wonder if she'd read the S&A books and is a fan?

Whilst on holiday in Wales I was able to "grab a chance" as Christine and I saw an advert for a

youth theatre production of *The Boy Whose Mother Was a Pirate*, based on the book by Margaret Mahy. It was lovely evening out and for the final pirate party scene, the audience were given pirate hats and asked to join in! To quote (well, probably misquote) the play, "a right rollicking rumbustious piratical time was had by all!"

Moving times

It's been an incredibly busy last few weeks with a great deal happening within the society. Notably an unexpected letter from Moat Brae setting out new terms for the library to remain there. These were totally unacceptable to us resulting in the need to urgently find a new home (and librarian). Thanks to a generous offer from Christine Rae (who also runs the TARS stall) we now have a way ahead, although transporting the library from Dumfries to Hampshire remains to be sorted.

Alongside this, work has progressed on finding a home for the TARS archives – the end of what has been a 20-year search! A suitable venue has been found in Birmingham. See the note in News from the Board, and further details on this will follow in the next edition of *Signals*.

King Charles also caused us some concern when arranging his Coronation without first informing us, but following a flurry of phone calls and emails we have decided to continue with our IAGM weekend in Dundee (and what a fantastic weekend that looks like being).

There have also been negotiations with Lakeland Arts concerning *Coch-y-Bonddhu*, AR's medicine chest and the 50th anniversary of the 1974 *Swallows and Amazons* film, and we have been exploring our insurance policy and risk assessments. Finally, I am looking forward to the new musical play based on *Winter Holiday* (details on the back cover) and we will take the opportunity to promote TARS with adverts in the programme and the presence of our banner and leaflets.

Have a wonderful festive season and let's hope 2023 will be a great year for you and for TARS.

2022 IAGM report

The 24th International Annual General Meeting of the Arthur Ransome Society took place on Sunday 28 August 2022 at the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook, Suffolk. A Zoom link enabled ten memberships, of which five in Australia, to participate from a distance. There were six votes by proxy.



At the IAGM: John Pearson at the lectern, with Peter Wright

Welcome

Chairman **Peter Wright** welcomed the participants, before presenting the Dick Callum Cup to the Titmouse team, winner of the quiz contest on the previous evening.

Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Stephen Benham, Elizabeth Drury, Ann Farr, Phil Forsyth, Brian Hopton, Michael Glover, Iain Khan-Gilchrist, Mary Pritchard and Kirstie Taylor.

Minutes of the 23rd IAGM, held via Zoom on 29 May 2021

Adopted as a true record; there were no matters arising.

Chairman's report

Peter presented his report, which had been circulated. Linda Hendry said that in addition to the points covered, it could be added that Facebook and Twitter groups played a significant part in the life of TARS. She also reminded the meeting that TARS was to organise the 2024 AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies. Peter added that the Arthur Ransome Trust had recently produced a useful phone app on Ransome and the Lake District.

Secretary's report

John Pearson gave a brief oral report, in which he thanked the many members who had helped him with information and advice in the course of the year.

Treasurer's report

Treasurer **Susan Gouldbourne**, participating by Zoom, presented the TARS accounts for the year 2021, which showed a surplus of £2,045 on the income and

expenditure account. **Proposal 1**, to receive the accounts, was approved unanimously.

Appointment of Examiner

Proposal 2 – to appoint Sally-Ann Balment as independent examiner of the accounts for twelve months from the date of the meeting – was approved unanimously.

AusTARS Cup 2022 winner

The Chairman announced **Alan Hakim** as the winner and presented him with the cup.

Date and place of next IAGM weekend: 5-8 May 2023 in Dundee.

2022 MEMBERS' FORUM

A lively Forum was held immediately after the IAGM; here is a summary of the main points raised. It was agreed that:

- TARS members without access to the internet should be able to request a printed copy of items held on the new *Mixed Moss* online supplement.
- More information about upcoming TARS events should be held on the public section of the TARS website. There could be scope also for including on the site more reports on past events. In some cases publicity for TARS could be arranged at events organised by other entities.
- Nicola Wilberforce (member no. 20) said that in the context of downsizing she had brought to the meeting a box of TARS

documentation, including early editions of *Mixed Moss*.

- The Board would react to a report that on a recent National Trust trip on the *Gondola* on Coniston, the commentary had been sadly ignorant about the S&A books. Conversely, another launch trip continued to benefit from the excellent commentary by TARS member Robert Thompson, but he was likely to retire from this activity in the foreseeable future.
- Peter Wright congratulated the editors of the Society's three journals, whose exceptional quality was widely recognised.
- It was felt that 'hybrid' meetings, with a Zoom link as well as physical presence, could allow increased participation, in spite of the relative complexity of organising them.
- A good article on Ransome's books had appeared recently in *'Slightly Foxed'*, a quarterly literary magazine.
- Alan Hakim warned that current postal strikes in the UK could increase the time for Amazon Publications' new book to reach overseas members.
- Liz Haworth asked members to let her know of items which they thought should form part of TARS' archives.
- Peter Wright said the Board would be considering at its imminent meeting the question of the succession to the TARS presidency.

News from the Board

90th meeting held on Saturday 12th November at Peterborough

Chairman's introductory remarks:

The sad news of the death of long-time member **Jeremy Gibson** was announced.

Three Board members will have to step down under the 6-year rule in May 2023. This includes Susan Gouldbourne our treasurer. Agreed Susan would remain as treasurer and invited back to future board meetings in this specialist role.

The wording on the TARS facebook site: it was agreed to amend this to give a more welcoming message.

A request had been received from a member asking if TARS might like to promote a short holiday for interested members on a schooner or other sailing boat. This was felt to be a good idea and would be explored further. (See also page 7).

A £1,000 bequest had been left to the society by **Frances Hill**. A note of thanks had been sent to her executors.

Literary and Resources Committee report:

This updated the board on: the success of the Oxford Literary Weekend and plans for the 2024 one, possibly to be held in Carlisle, the indexing of *Mixed Moss*, the book club, website, the stall, Amazon publications and the Red Slipper Fund. The **TARS Library** was the subject of detailed discussion: In late October, the Chairman was informed by a newly appointed 'Transformation Officer' at Moat Brae that as a result of financial difficulties, they wished to review the rental agreement for the library, doubling the rent, moving the books to a smaller room (to be shared with Moat Brae staff),

discontinuing members' access and instead charging them £15 per hour to view any books through an ordering/request process. The Board felt these arrangements were totally unsuitable and costly, and has decided to remove the books from Moat Brae.

In some ways the timing is apposite as **Winifred Wilson** has been encouraging TARS to seek a new librarian. Fortunately, Christine Rae has volunteered to house the Library and the books will now be relocated to Hampshire.

Publications Committee:

Marc Grimston has had to step down as Chairman of the committee. **Julian Lovelock**, with help from Peter Wright, has once again agreed to edit the 2023 *Mixed Moss*, but this will not appear until the December circulation. *Signals* and *Outlaw* continue to be edited by Peter Willis and the Blue family respectively. The legal requirement to publish IAGM papers well ahead of the meeting means the publication dates for the spring editions will be brought forward by a fortnight. TARS will be assisting with programme notes for the forthcoming *Winter Holiday* productions in Shrewsbury and Windermere, placing an advert for TARS (including a competition for juniors) and distributing leaflets.

TARS Presidency:

The Board has offered a fourth year of service to Libby Purves, but is seeking a new President for 2023 onwards. A number of names were considered and discussed and following a vote, a list of three candidates to be approached was agreed.

TARS Budget:

An update on this year's expenditure to date was received (we are on target to break even) along with a budget for 2023. There are

likely to be significant additional one-off expenditures during 2023 given the need to move the library and secure a home for the archives.

Amazon and Swallow:

TARS has been invited to purchase the dinghy *Amazon* (used in the 1974 film) and encourage her use. In exploring all the implications; notably operational management, maintenance and insurance, this is not a straightforward matter. The most likely way forward would be to partner with an existing outdoor activity/sailing centre and this is being explored. There may also be an opportunity to bring *Swallow* and 'Sail Ransome' on board. It was agreed that a survey and valuation of *Amazon* should be undertaken along with further explorations of the practicalities and options.

TARS Archives:

Following quotes from four possible locations, a home for the TARS archives has finally been found: a church in Birmingham. The board agreed that from January onwards all archive material should be brought together there for sorting, pruning out duplicates and indexing (some of this has already been done). The option is being kept open for an alternative long-term home should better premises be found, once the full extent of the archive is known.

Lakeland Arts and Cochy:

A new 5-year loan agreement has been signed with Lakeland Arts for *Coch-y-Bonddhu* to be on display at Windermere Jetty. TARS has offered to loan AR's medicine chest to Lakeland Arts for display and whilst they are interested, they currently cannot accept it as the Museum of Lakeland life is closed and awaiting refurbishment. Plans to jointly celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1974 S&A film are being progressed.

Alliance of Literary Societies: (ALS):

The ALS, of which TARS is a member, offers a number of possibilities to promote ourselves, includes the opportunity to advertise our events on the ALS Diary web pages and being selected as 'Society of the Month'. There is also on offer a series of Zoom workshops on key issues such as copyright and intellectual property rights, which it was agreed we should take advantage of.

TARS is to host the **ALS AGM weekend in 2024** and the board approved the hire of a room at Windermere Jetty on 18th May as the main venue. The ALS has chosen as its theme for its journal this year *Better Drowned than Duffers*, and articles of 1,000 words about adventure are welcomed.

TARS Insurance:

Following discussions with our insurers we have been reminded that it is essential that all TARS events and activities must have a detailed Risk Assessment. A pro forma is to be made available. It should also be noted our insurance does not mean TARS members are individually insured at our events.

IAGMs: The 2023 IAGM in Dundee is progressing as planned, despite it clashing with the King's Coronation. An allowance is being made in the programme for those who would prefer to watch the Coronation. The 2024 IAGM is provisionally booked to be held in August in the Peak District.

Reports were also received from each region and the overseas co-ordinator; the AusTARS Cup was also discussed and a recommended name for the 2023 will be forwarded to AusTARS.

Next Board Meeting:
25 February by Zoom

DATE	CALENDAR OF EVENTS	REGION
29 December Thursday	Inn-Formal Red Lion Lowick. (Helen Lewis)	Northern
21 January Saturday	Birthday Lunch & AGM Butt & Oyster, Pin Mill	East
21 January Saturday	Potteries Potter and AGM Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent	Midland
21 January Saturday	AGM on Zoom	South-West
21 January Saturday	AGM and Birthday Lunch Hawes Inn Queensferry	Scotland
21 January Saturday	Birthday Lunch Winchester	Southern
21 January Saturday	Birthday Party Goosnargh, Preston	Northern
11 February Saturday	Alan Kennedy talk on Zoom 'The Debacle at Durham'	South-West
15-18 February 4-5 March	WINTER HOLIDAY on stage Shrewesbury & Bowness	Midland North
26 February	TARS BOOK GROUP 7pm	ZOOM See page 44
18 March	Dymock Poetry Walk	Midland
18 March	Herschel Museum of Astronomy, Bath	South-West
13 April	Coldharbour Woollen Mill	South-West
22 April	Rugby (School) Day	Midland
5-8 May	TARS IAGM Dundee	Scotland
7-13 August	TARS SUMMER CAMP Bank Ground Farm Coniston see pages 6 & 45	Midland/North
18-19 May 2024	Alliance of Literary Societies AGM, hosted by TARS Windermere Jetty	TARS

CONISTON CAMPING

Farewell Hoathwaite, hello Holly Howe!

The National Trust's decision to close down its popular Hoathwaite campsite on the western bank of Coniston Water has been greeted with shock and disappointment by Tars, particularly the Midland Region who organised the successful 2021 summer camp and were hoping to do the same this year.

However, there is good – very good – news: Bank Ground Farm, on the east side, the original of Holly Howe, has stepped up and offered a site for a week this summer.

Paul Green of Midland TARS reports: “An ideal location with all the S&A associations! And they would get in trailer showers and loos; we would have the lakeside field to ourselves; they have fire pits and we could bring our event shelter; boats can be launched there and left on their beach.”

Dates are August 7th-13th (including Kanchenjunga Day).

An £800 deposit to secure rent of showers and toilets, required by the end of November, has been paid. Total cost is £2,400. TARS charges to campers have been worked out on the basis of expected bookings, and could come down if more members come.

See page 45 for the booking form



Ben joins the website team

Welcome to Ben Hambleton of Midland Region who has joined the team running the TARS website, taking over the management of the content side of the website pages.

So if you spot something which needs changing on your own page, or you need help with your page, or have suggestions for improvements, please contact him.

Contributors who do not have editorial permissions and who currently send Diana their pieces for upload should now send them to Ben. He'll also be helping out with other aspects that keep the website running. Ben's email address is

**asstwebmaster@
arthur-ransome.org**

Ben, aged 16, is studying Maths, Physics and Computer Science at sixth form. He's been a member of Midland Tars for several years and his dad, David Hambleton, will be well-known to many TARS as the owner of the 'Rattletrap' type Trojan vintage car.

Ben's appointment will give webmaster Diana Wright more time to work on the membership side of things with David Middleton.

TARS Library on the move

The TARS Library, currently located at Moat Brae in Dumfries, and run by Dumfries resident Winifred Wilson, has found itself confronted with two challenges within the last few months.

First, Winifred announced she would like to retire, eventually, and could the society start seeking a new Librarian.

Then, within the last few weeks, Moat Brae (full title, The National Centre for Children's Literature and Storytelling) which is having to cope with a decline in income due to the Covid restrictions, told us that it needed to reclaim the room occupied by the Library – but could offer us use of a smaller room, on a shared basis, at double the current rental.

This would also involve withdrawing reader access to the Library; instead, TARS members wishing to access it would need to book a reading room (at £12 an hour), all of which was unacceptable to the Trustees.

Happily Christine Rae, who runs the TARS Stall, has some redundant farm buildings attached to her home, and has offered to take the Library, and handle requests and returns.

It has to be packed up and out of Moat Brae by January 18, and the books, and shelves, transported to Christine's home in Hampshire, where they will need to be unpacked and shelved – hopefully normal service will be resumed by the end of January.

For contact details, please see page 49 (inside back cover)

Do YOU mean to go to sea?

Following the enjoyable sailing-barge trip during the IAGM, a TARS member got in touch to ask if it might be possible to arrange for a group of Tars to go on a sailing holiday together.

As an example she'd seen a website for schooner *Trinovante* (www.schoonersail.com) pictured below, which has eight 'guest berths' and offers a schedule of 7-day or 14-day sails around the UK coast.

The recent Board Meeting ground to a pleasurable halt at this escape from the more burdensome matters of running TARS while we considered the idea, and decided that - although not without complications it's certainly worth a try.

'Clearing house'

Marc Grimston has offered to act as a 'clearing house' to try to match people, dates and boats.

There are many options for sailing cruises on larger or small ships, all around the UK.

classic-sailing.com is a good place to start - it lists over a dozen ships, large and small, in the UK and elsewhere with details of their schedules for the 2024 season. Of course there are many other ships and voyages but it gives a good idea of what to expect in terms of costs, facilities and so on.

If you're interested, contact **Marc Grimston** on marcgrimston@gmail.com or 07961 454896. Says Marc: "Once we know who might be interested we can discuss dates, prices, locations, boats etc."



Swallows and Armenians last summer - photo by Azadour Guzelian

'Armenians' opera has plans for 2024 UK tour

The latest version of Karen Babayan's *Swallows and Armenians* phenomenon - the opera - made its open-air debut last summer in a Cumbria Opera Group festival at a historic house near Appleby. Now she's planning to take a full-length version on tour this summer, possibly including the Edinburgh Fringe.

Described as 'a fascinating story of friendship and family, love and jealousy, with a good measure of sailing thrown in' and already a book, play and exhibition, *Swallows and Armenians* reflects the multicultural heritage of the Altounyan family.

This new production, with original music by Persia Babayan-Taylor and a professional cast of actor-musicians will be applying for Arts Council and other support,

Karen is also seeking to raise funds via just-giving. If you'd like to help, just go to www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/swallows-and-armenians-touring-theatre to make a donation.

Winter Holiday heads North with extra dates

Winter Holiday, Chris Eldon-Lee's adaptation that was covid-postponed last year is back at Theatre Severn Shrewsbury, 16-18 February, but is also transferring to Bowness-on-Winderme's Old Laundry Theatre for two performances, 4th March at 7.30 and 5th March at 2.30. See our back cover for more details.



Dawn Lake as Peggy

Master of the *Gondola*

Linda Murray meets a present-day Peter Duck

I am sitting in the passenger lounge of SY *Gondola*, a beautiful rebuilt Victorian steam-powered passenger yacht, currently moored at her winter quarters, on Coniston Water in the Lake District. I am with the Manager, and sometimes, the Master, of the yacht – a modern day Peter Duck, a.k.a. Julian Blatchley.

Gondola operates as a passenger boat in the summer months, offering trips to tourists around Coniston Lake. She is currently owned by the National Trust (NT), and the crew provide a commentary on the many points of interest connected to the Lake – Brantwood and John Ruskin; Donald Campbell's attempt on the world speed record – and of course the Ransome associations: the Heald where AR lived and wrote, and Peel Island, the basis for Wild Cat Island.

Taking a trip on the boat with friends this summer and listening to the commentary, I realised that the AR parts had drifted some distance from

reality, certainly in the naming of one of the books, and the timing of its production. As a devoted AR fan, I'd raised this with TARS, who wrote to the NT.

This reached Julian, who, raising his hands straight away, confirmed he had already spotted and corrected the error, and then in further correspondence with TARS, confessed to being an AR devotee himself.

A meeting with Arthur himself

And this leads me to meeting Julian in this iconic setting, and hearing his story. His mother was born in Bowness on Windermere (Rio, in *Swallow and Amazons*), and her family have lived in the area for centuries. His maternal grandfather, Stan Metcalfe, was a plumber and could lay claim to knowing many of the people in the valley. Julian reveals that Beatrix Potter had once been a

customer. He also has a faint recollection of being introduced to Arthur Ransome, in the Coniston graveyard, by his grandfather, when he was a very young boy.

But all of this was to change for his mother, when she met Julian's father, a Yorkshireman, who was on a walking holiday in the Lake District. The family moved to Yorkshire and Julian was born in Harrogate – ensuring from his father's point of view, that "should the boy play cricket" it would be for Yorkshire.

He does not have happy memories of his schooling; constantly changing school as his father moved with his work as a travelling salesman.

In his own words, he was a chubby boy, and although he had a keen enthusiasm for history and English, he did not fit in.

He loved rugby and cricket, and this was frowned upon, where scholastic

achievement was the sole expectation.

However, every school holiday he returned to live with his maternal grandparents in the Lake District where he spent a happy childhood, roaming freely over the Lakes and Fells, often in the company of his many cousins.

A parallel can be drawn here with AR's own early life. He too suffered a miserable school life, and sought solace in his holiday trips to the shore of Coniston.

During his early years in the Lake District, Julian discovered the Arthur Ransome books. His favourite was *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*.

However Julian did mean to go to sea.

He did not let the absence of a boat, or the lack of any training, stand in his way in his determination to learn to sail. He "borrowed" a clinker-built dinghy, and set off down Lake Windermere, guided only by his reading of the AR



books. All went well on his outward journey, (wind behind him?) but he was unable to sail back, and had to resort to the oars. On his return, he was met by the furious owner, who turned out to be the local Policeman. Having admonished Julian severely, he then relented when he found out that his grandfather was Stan Metcalfe, and over the next two weekends, taught Julian the basics of sailing.

At school, he joined the Sea Cadets, and at a young age took up off-shore sea racing. He was part of a team that came 6th at the Quarter Ton Cup at Deauville in 1975.

His family had moved back to the Lake District in the 1970s, and he completed his A Levels at a local school. He had long since determined that he would go to sea, and before he had even received his A Level results, he joined the Merchant Navy.

“He was an old sailor with a fringe of a white beard round a face that was as brown and wrinkled as a walnut. He had sailed in clipper ships racing home with tea from China. He had sailed in the wool ships from Australia. He had been round the Horn again and again....” (Peter Duck, chapter 1)

The cargoes have changed, but Julian’s life in the Merchant Navy followed a similar pattern to Peter Duck’s – logs in Borneo, copra in Australia, phosphate in the Pacific, journeys to South America, San Salvador and Africa. (Julian has written two books about his life at sea.)

Julian eventually became a Master of Supertankers, and then, from 2005, was a pilot for these large vessels at off-shore oil-rigs in Africa and South America.

But life at sea was brought to an abrupt end when Brazilian President Bolsonaro cancelled all foreign work permits. Julian returned home to his family in the Lake District. It was here, at a school event for his daughter that another parent asked him if he knew anybody who might take over as Manager of the *Gondola*. Julian thought he did.

The prospect of sailing a heritage vessel, in an area of the world he loved, and had spent happy childhood days in, was an enormous attraction to Julian. It also meant he could be closer to his family.



Julian in charge at *Gondola*'s helm. Opposite page: *Gondola* at the Brantwood Jetty, with Coniston Old Man and Weatherlam opposite. Photos courtesy of the National Trust

He has now been the Master of *Gondola* for four seasons, but has retained his ties with the sea; he is still an active mentor for seamen and women.

SY Gondola was originally built in Liverpool and was first launched on Coniston in 1859. She had been the idea of a local man, Sir James Ramsden, a railway engineer and the first Mayor of Barrow. He was a Director of both the Coniston Railway Co (the Foxfield to Coniston line) and the Furness Railway Co (Barrow to Windermere).

The design of the boat was influenced by Ramsden’s visits to Venice, and his encounter with a type of Venetian boat (a Burchiello) that was used to carry wealthy passengers.

Victorian tourism

Ramsden’s idea was to expand the railway business from simply carrying freight, and a modest number of local people, to carrying tourists. The Victorian leisure market was growing rapidly, and in particular, the popularity of the Lake District as a tourist destination. In its hey-day before the First World War the steam yacht carried upwards of 25,000 passengers a year.

Gondola was in commercial service until 1936, before being converted to a houseboat and going into a steady decline.

She was purchased by the National Trust at the end of the 1970s, and with the help of Vickers shipyard at Barrow and other skilled craftsmen and women, was restored to full glory, and relaunched in 1980.

A particular mention must go to Sid, the serpent who usually sits on the bowsprit of the yacht. His forked tongue, according to maritime myth, is said to ward off bad weather. [/overleaf >>>](#)

>>> Returning to the AR connection, it is believed that *Gondola* was one of the models for Captain Flint's houseboat. In Coniston's Ruskin museum, there is a black-and-white postcard of *Gondola* that AR sent to his illustrator, with changes to the outline in ink to show how he wanted the houseboat to look. The other (smaller) model, *Esperance* (a steam yacht built in 1869 for a rich industrialist) is at the Windermere Jetty Museum.

Valley rivalries

Julian advises me that in his childhood, there was a deep rivalry between the Windermere and Coniston valleys, about the locations in the *Swallows and Amazons* series of books. Whereas there was consensus about the location of the Secret Harbour on Peel Island, Coniston, views diverged about other parts of Wild Cat Island, with serious voting being for Blake Holme or Ramp Holme on Windermere, by those located in the Windermere valley!

Finally, I must mention that Pier Cottage, (winter quarters for *Gondola*), was once the home of Captain Felix Hamill, who served as *Gondola's* Master from 1863 to 1913. Julian tells me that AR sailed on *Gondola* with Captain Hamill.

We have finished the interview, and head off for a drink to the Red Lion Inn near Lowick Bridge. This used to be one of AR's watering holes. Sure enough there is a photo of AR in the back room. Just as I'm finishing my drink, Julian says "did I tell you about when I played in a band with Mike Harding (the former comedian)?"

That will have to be another story for another day. *Peter Duck 2?*



'One mile from the original Wild Cat Island'

The Ransomes, The Heald and the *Gondola*

Ransome purchased The Heald in October 1940 and moved in, from Suffolk, a fortnight later. He and Evgenia lived there from 1940-1945.

During this time, he wrote *Missee Lee*, published 1941, and *The Picts and the Martyrs*,

published in 1943. He also started two other books, both of which did not progress far: *The River Comes First* and *Coots in the North*, and did much of the preparatory work for *Great Northern?*.

In a letter to his publisher, Wren Howard, 26th Sept 1940, he writes: "The house is stone built (about 18 or 20 years old)... The actual ground happens to be a bit that I have been a bit in love with since the age of nine. It has a view across the lake to the mountains better even than the view from Brantwood. It is property that can never go down in value and must eventually go up... The place has its own electric light, central heating, and, Gosh, that bit of land going right up from the lake (one mile from the original Wild Cat island) to the sky-line of the fells; grouse, pheasant, blackcock. One thing certain is that it will mean a fresh lot of lake country Swallows and Amazons."

In a letter to his mother he writes, "I have bought 17 acres, with half a mile of lake frontage at the bottom of the Heald Wood... It has its own boat harbour, and a small wooden pier." In another letter to her he states, "I caught four perch and a minnow just to show that it could be done, in our own bay. There is good trout ground all along our half mile."

Christina Hardyment, in *The World of Arthur Ransome*, says, "Evgenia, who had not seen the house, immediately criticised it. The rooms were much smaller than those in their East Coast homes, and their furniture and their large selves filled them to capacity... It was not long before she began to complain in earnest."

Of particular interest she goes on to state, "Ransome could not, sadly, run to acquiring the small stone cottage close behind The Heald, which was also for sale, and would have made an excellent workroom and given them breathing space from each other. It is possible that for a time he rented a houseboat, perhaps even *Gondola*, which was decommissioned in 1938."

She reproduces this picture in the book with the caption, "Did Ransome ever work here?" "Converted to a houseboat after being decommissioned, *Gondola* was moored close to the Heald in the early 1940's." **Peter Wright**



DESPATCHES

“Dundee is a jolly place to live I am told”

Cyril Ransome to Edith Boulton, quoted in Margaret Ratcliffe's *Genetic Building Blocks*



DUNDEE HERITAGE TRUST

DUNDEE Tars 2023

Our Arthur might have been a Dundonian! (Thanks, Winifred)

And it's not the only AR connection Dundee has: Polar Exploration, Journalism, Astronomy, Ships – including a *lightship* – and Amazons galore. The city offers for our exploration the stunning new V&A Museum, the historic RRS *Discovery* (what *does* RRS stand for, and what did it discover?). Walk across the famous Tay Bridge (not the one immortalised by the poet McGonagall) And more...

TARS IAGM 5-8 May 2023

Malmaison Hotel Dundee

Discover Dundee in '23

Discover Dundee in '23



Malmaison Dundee Our base for the IAGM Weekend

Our base camp is the Malmaison Dundee – a former (we stress *former!*) Temperance Hotel, a mixture of elegant 19th-century building and fully modern facilities.

TARS will occupy the Tay Suite on the First floor (there are lifts).

This has a flexible space for meals, talks, bar, the Library & Stalls and a Junior Den.

There are glorious views over the River Tay, the striking new V&A Dundee and the beautiful RRS *Discovery*.

Evening meals (including the Saturday-Night Gala Dinner) and Sunday lunch in the Malmaison should be booked on the Loose Booking Form.

Your Accommodation (where to stay)

There's a wide choice of options in Dundee, - hotels, B'n'B (Air or otherwise) plus **local campsites**- – for a list of available sites, see Despatches page 6.

The **Malmaison** itself is just a few minutes walk from the Railway station - bus-stops and (charging) car-parks are near by...the airport's a bit farther away (luckily!); staying here will put you at the heart of the action from morning til night, and Tars staying at the hotel qualify for a discount - if booking remember to quote your **TARS IAGM Discount Code: 0505AR_001** to book your room and breakfast. For other meals use and pay via the TARS Booking Form.

For Malmaison contact details, please see Despatches page 7

*Discover Dundee in '23***The Coronation of King Charles III**

This is an unexpected added attraction to our weekend; we don't yet have a full picture of its impact on the Programme. Members who wish to watch the service on TV should be able to do so at the Malmaison. Some of the attractions may choose to close for part or all of the the day. We will have up-to-date information available at the TARS desk.

OUR PROGRAMME

On the Friday the Library and Stalls will have access to set up from noon, and registration will start at 4.30pm.

There will be a hot buffet meal followed by the Official Welcome.

Then our Blue Badge Guide, Andrew Thackrey will give an introduction to the City of Jam, Jute & Journalism:

“There's lots to see In Dundee”

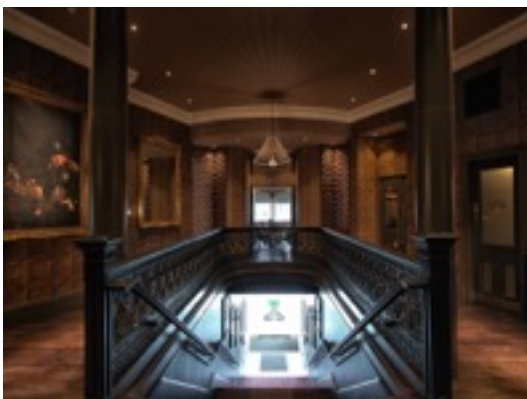
Then conviviality with fellow TARS til your eyelids droop.

Saturday evening is the traditional Gala Dinner, a served 3-course meal, followed by an illustrated talk on **Antarctic Exploration** by **Mary Pritchard**.

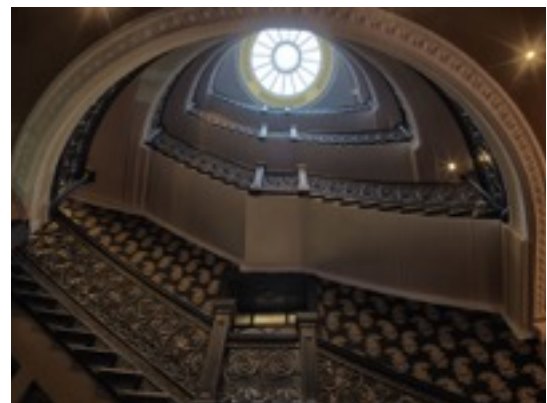
Sunday starts with a short ecumenical **kirk service** led by Elsie M. Miller, D.C.S. and this is followed by the IAGM with zoom connection for those who can't be with us – or, for Juniors there will be activities in the Den. Refreshments are provided before the Members' Forum, and Lunch afterward. The afternoon is taken up with visits – RRS *Discovery* or Broughty Ferry or...? Whatever takes *your* fancy.

The evening buffet meal is followed by **The Dick Callum Cup** with Andrew Jones as Quizmaster. This year is another *very* different competition. EVERYone has a chance. Junior Teams especially welcome. After the Presentation to the Winners and the Wind-Up, it's Bar and Bed.

Monday has the **Hand-over of the Flag** to the **Midland Region** in front of the *Discovery*, followed by visits to some of the attractions you might have missed.



Two more views of the Malmaison's splendid interior



*Discover Dundee in '23***V&A Dundee**

The latest addition to Dundee's attractions, the V&A Dundee projects out into the Tay like a half-built ship in one of the docks and shipyards that previously occupied this area. Entrance to the temporary exhibition – May '23 will be 'Tartan', everything from George IV to Vivienne Westwood – is by paid ticket, but the rest of the building (including the re-built Charles Rennie Macintosh room) is free. www.vam.ac.uk/dundee



DUNDEE HERITAGE TRUST

RRS Discovery GROUP VISIT PLANNED

A group visit to the fascinating RRS (Royal Research Ship) *Discovery* with a volunteer guide telling us about the vessel that sailed to the Antarctic with Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton on board. She was built in Dundee because of the city's shipyards' experience in producing whalers for the Arctic – and returned to Dundee in 1986 after three voyages to Antarctica, running munitions to Russia during WWI, and a spell in London as a training ship. Plenty of opportunities for AR to have seen her!

Paid admission www.rsdisccovery.co.uk

HMS Unicorn GROUP VISIT PLANNED

A group visit to HMS *Unicorn*, a nearly 200-year-old Royal Navy warship with four decks to explore. The access ramp varies in steepness according to the tide – and frigates in the early nineteenth century were *not* built with disabled access in mind! Even Nancy had trouble with cannon: *She crashed into something, almost fell, tripped over a rope, saved herself and stumbled on* [ML].

If in doubt, please check the website. Again, we would have the inside story from one of the volunteer guides. **Paid admission** www.frigateunicorn.org

Left: *Unicorn's* gun deck

(PHOTOS UNICORN PRESERVATION SOCIETY)

Also berthed in the Victoria Dock is the **North Carr Lightship**. It's currently in process of restoration, so it's unlikely we'd be able to board – just now her innards have been stripped out – but one of her volunteers would give a short talk about the ship, the sort that *Goblin* encountered on her North Sea voyage.

Discover Dundee in '23



Broughty Ferry and Broughty Castle Gallery

Travel to Broughty Ferry where many of Dundee's Jute Barons built their grand homes. Broughty Castle – a very “conspicuous” building – juts out into the Tay and houses a museum and art gallery (free, unless Dundee has run out of money). The local Nature Reserve lies between the Esplanade and the railway line to Aberdeen and has many varieties of wildlife, including Tawny Owls and Roe Deer. Part of the reserve is the track bed of the disused railway line to Forfar. In May the wildflowers will be at their best.

Verdant Works Jute Mill

Hear Dundee's industrial past at The Verdant Works, a former jute mill with a beam engine still working. Juteopolis provided the world with sacks, sailcloth, ropes and tents. Most of the workforce was female... and they acquired a fearsome Amazonian reputation. **Paid admission** www.verdantworks.co.uk



DUNDEE HERITAGE TRUST

The McManus: Dundee Art Gallery and Museum

Explore 400 million years' worth of displays in Dundee's art gallery & museum, The McManus: Pictish Stones; the Whaling Collection; paintings that vary from Dante Gabriel Rossetti to the Scottish Colourists by way of James Macintosh Patrick; and the skeleton of the famous Tay Whale – *'Twas in the month of December, and in the year 1883/That a monster whale came to Dundee*, W. McGonagall.

WALKS

A spectacular walk **across the Tay Road Bridge** with views up and down the River Tay, its wildlife and its scenery. Sandy Allan will lead you across the Bridge to the Kingdom of Fife, where there are facilities at the picnic site for a break and a nibble. Then he'll bring you back – 4 miles in total, approximately 2-2½ hours. This is however *highly* weather dependant – no views if horizontal rain; bad publicity if a TAR is blown off the Bridge! But we will *try*.



An informative and fun **walking tour of Dundee** with Andrew Thackrey, who is a highly qualified Blue Badge Guide and able to give us the background to the sights. This should last 1½ to 2 hours and has a maximum of 20 (First Come, First Served) *but* if there are a lot of disappointed TARS Andrew has kindly offered to repeat the event.

Discover Dundee in '23

More to explore

We encourage you to *explore* Dundee – as a Family, with like-minded TARS, or on your own. Discoveries are to be made round every corner.

25 bronze plaques highlight some of the City's famous women – from a shipyard welder to the Marmalade business-woman and one on board HMS *Victory* at Trafalgar.

Search out the Street Art – from maps with monkeys to Minnie the Minx & Oor Wullie...not to mention the penguins...or the Dragon.

Stroll by the riverside looking for dolphins or a rainforest and be sure to follow the McGonagall Walk celebrating the one and only William Topaz McGonagall, the Dundee-based Poet and Tragedian. Climb Dundee Law, an extinct (we hope!) volcano, for different views of the *Beautiful Silvery Tay* – the longest river in Scotland.

Juniors: Nearly all these events could gain you a Challenge for your Ship's Log.

Campsites near Dundee

1. **Greenacres** CL Site. Dronley Rd, Birkhill, Muirhead, Dundee DD2 5QR

Two miles from Dundee City Centre and 2 miles off the A90

Tel: 07740 506076 <https://www.caravanclub.co.uk/certificated-locations/scotland/perthshire--kinross/Dundee/Greenacres/>

Small site, very rural, surrounded by horses. 9 minute walk to buses 59/57a/51

2. **Larick Campsite**, Shanwell Rd, Tayport DD6 9EA four miles from the centre of Dundee on the south side of the Tay. Tel: 07859952172

<https://larickcampsite.org.uk>

Has sea view and a cafe.

The 42 bus to Malmaison takes 23 minutes.

3. **Tayview Caravan Park** South Union St, Monifieth, Dundee DD5

4GH Tel: 01382 532837 <https://tayview.co.uk/> "Standard holiday home hire unit is 6 berth, 2 bedroom. We supply all bedding and gas and electric is included in the cost. We do not supply towels." 73 bus from Tesco 40 minutes. Its quicker by train as the station is very near ie visible! Nice cafe. Not for tents, right beside the sea.

4. **Douglaswood Scout Centre**, Monikie: Broughty Ferry, Dundee; DD5 3QH Tel 0300 121 1572 A lovely place to stay 9 miles away. The site can accommodate 200 campers, with toilet, shower block, shared fridge and freezer.

Sites were all visited in October thanks to a campervan-owning friend who drove me around them. *Linda Hendry*.

*Discover Dundee in '23***Malmaison Dundee****44 Whitehall Crescent, Dundee, DD1 4AY**

TEL: +44 (0)1382 339715 (Dundee) / Malmaison Central reservations 0330 016 0380

EMAIL: events.dundee@malmaison.comWEBSITE: <https://www.malmaison.com/locations/dundee>**When Booking Quote the TARS IAGM Discount Code 0505AR_001**

A member of the Frasers Hospitality Group

For other accommodation options, go to www.visitscotland.com

Travelling to Dundee

By Air

You can fly direct to Dundee with Loganair from London City, Belfast City, and Sumburgh. The airport is adjacent to the River Tay a few miles from the city centre.

By Rail

By direct train to Dundee via the East Coast route that runs to Aberdeen from London and Cross Country from Plymouth & Birmingham. Or you can get a train to Edinburgh and change for Dundee. If you take the West Coast route to Glasgow Central you need to switch to Glasgow Queen Street (a 5 minute walk) for the Scotrail service that runs to Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen.

By Road

By road coming from England via the A1 East Coast route to Edinburgh and the fabulous **Queensferry Crossing** over the **River Forth** and then either the M90 to Perth and A90 to Dundee, following the city centre route along the river past the Airport into Dundee city centre, or take the A92 route once over the Queensferry Crossing and see some of Fife before arriving in Dundee city centre via the Tay Road Bridge. If you take the West Coast M6 route north to Carlisle and on to Scotland to join the M74 through the Borders, taking the M73 around the East of Glasgow before joining the M80 to Stirling and on to the M9/A9 to Perth and from there the M90/A90 to Dundee as with those coming via Edinburgh.

By Sea

Any adventurous TARS coming by sea, the nearest large marina is at Arbroath (15 miles north east of Dundee) and a smaller one at Tayport in Fife and further afield at Anstruther at mouth of the Firth of Forth.

Discover Dundee in '23

The TARS 2023 IAGM 5-8 May at the Malmaison Hotel, Dundee

When completed, please post the **IAGM Booking Form** to
Mr D.Y.Middleton, 9 Merrow Avenue, POOLE BH12 1PY.
Overseas members using PayPal can (if they wish)
scan and email it to: davidymiddleton@waitrose.com

Please insert your Name and Postal Address

for your booking confirmation and receipt.

Please read all of *Despatches* before completing the loose white copy of the form. Please make a copy of your choices on this page in *Despatches*. A receipt will be sent by return. Your actual tickets will be in your arrival Welcome Pack.

A: Name (for badge) of member booking:	Diet?
Membership Number:	First IAGM? Yes / No
Landline:	
Mobile:	
Email:	
Other Names (for badges) with Date of Birth for Juniors	Diet?
B:	
C:	
D:	
E:	
F:	

Diet: Use V for Vegetarian. For anything else, use "below" and add the details in the section below.

Please also use the space below for disability issues.

Late arrival Friday? What is your e.t.a? _____

INDICATION OF INTEREST			
Day	Activity	Adults	U18
Friday	Dundee Talk by Andrew Thackrey		
Saturday	Guided Walking Tour of Dundee		
Saturday	V&A Dundee		
Saturday	Group Visit to HMS Unicorn		
Saturday	Tay Road Bridge Walk		
Saturday	Antarctic Exploration Talk		
Sunday	Service of Worship		
Sunday	IAGM & Open Forum		n/a
Sunday	Coming just for the AGM		n/a
Sunday	Group Visit to RRS Discovery		
Sunday	Broughty Ferry Castle Museum		
Sunday	<i>Dick Callum</i> Cup		
Monday	Flag Handover		
Monday	Guided Walking Tour of Dundee		
Monday	McManus Art Gallery & Museum		
Monday	Tay Road Bridge Walk		
Monday	Verdant Works & Jute Mill Museum		

All activities are correct at the time of going to press but may be subject to change due to external circumstances.

MALMAISON HOTEL MEALS					
Day	Meals	Type	Rate	Nos.	£ Total
Friday	Hot Buffet Dinner	Ad	£25		£
Friday	Hot Buffet Dinner	U12	£20		£
Saturday	Gala Dinner	Ad	£35		£
Saturday	Gala Dinner	U12	£15		£
Sunday	Buffet Lunch	Ad	£5		£
Sunday	Buffet Lunch	U12	£nil		n/a
Sunday	Cold Buffet Supper	Ad	£18		£
Sunday	Cold Buffet Supper	U12	£13		£
HOTEL MEALS SUB-TOTAL					£

REGISTRATION FEES		Rate	Nos.	£ Total
Adult for whole weekend		£45		£
or Adult Friday		£10		£
and/or Adult Saturday		£25		£
and/or Adult Sunday		£30		£
and/or Adult Monday		£10		£
U18 registration (w/e or per day)		£nil		n/a
HOTEL MEALS SUB-TOTAL (from above)				£
Late Booking (Apr 1st) + £20 per booking				£

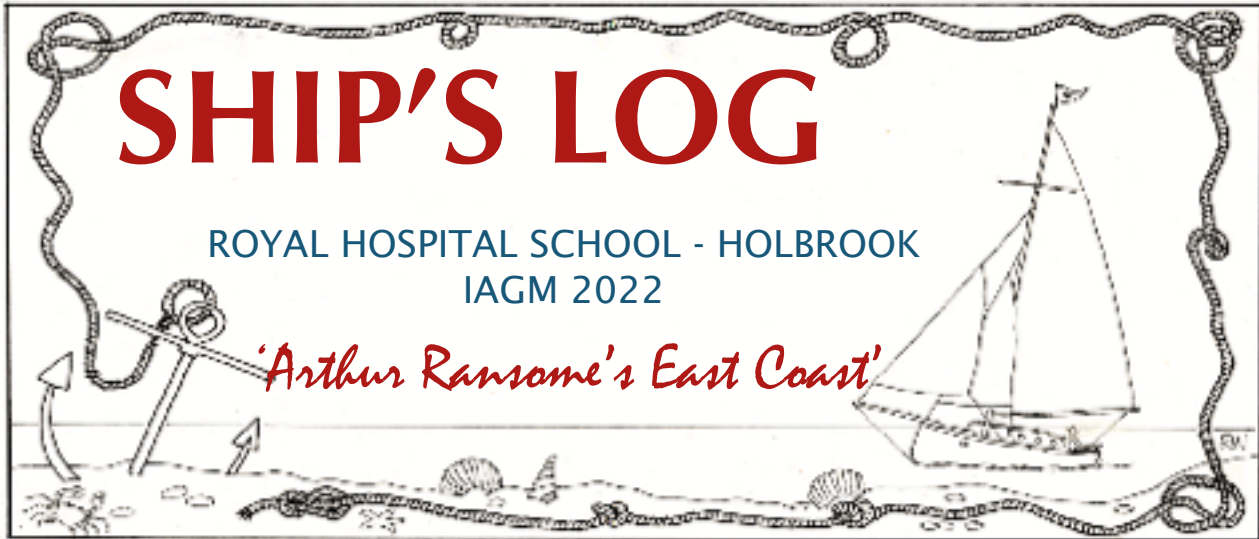
PAYMENT METHODS	Grand Total Payable: £
Tick here ____ for your payment by pound (£) sterling cheque payable to <i>The Arthur Ransome Society</i>	
Please initial here ____ for payment by direct bank transfer, using Sort Code 40 26 02, Account No 61245775 with IAGM23 + your surname as the reference.	
Please initial here ____ for payment by PayPal via the website. Please use the Donation Box marking it IAGM.	

If renewing your membership at the same time, it is OK to use one envelope but please use separate cheques/transfers.

SHIP'S LOG

ROYAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL - HOLBROOK
IAGM 2022

'Arthur Ransome's East Coast'



Eastward Ho!

It was our secretary John Pearson in his opening remarks to the Sunday-morning IAGM who summed up the impact that 'Arthur Ransome's East Coast' can have. "It's taken my breath away" he told us. "I've visited the Broads, having adventures on small rivers, and was expecting something along the same lines, but I've been taken aback by the sheer scale of the area."

Those of us who had joined the sailing barge for the trip down the River Orwell, could only nod in total agreement. Big rivers, big skies, open countryside with sweeping views. We did mean to go to sea - and did! Past Pin Mill and the Beach End Buoy and along to the outskirts of 'Secret Water'

And the majestic Royal Hospital School (*above*), our home for the weekend, reflected this grand scale in its architecture.

We had about a quarter, if that, of the magnificent Dining Hall (shared for a while with an exuberant party of French schoolchildren), plus - all to ourselves - the adjacent Jellicoe Room which was big enough to swallow all our 60-plus seating

requirements for the talks, films and the IAGM, as well as the two stalls - TARS and Nancy Blackett Trust - plus exhibitions and generous strolling space. And a handy pop-up licensed bar.

Both rooms gave onto a broad terrace with views across the Parade Ground (aka car park) to the River Stour and, to one side, in the distance, the halls of residence.

Nelson House, our accommodation for the weekend, was a good quarter-mile away - five minutes' walk, or ten by car round the one-way system.

The kitchen at Nelson house, with unlimited cups of the and coffee and ginger biscuits became the centre for those late-night natters which are a feature of any IAGM weekend.





Zooming International AGM

The IAGM, on Sunday morning, proved to be genuinely international, with members Zooming in from as far away as Australia where it was mid-evening. The Agenda was briskly dealt with (Minutes elsewhere in this Signals) and, then as ever, it was the Chairman's pleasant duty to award the **AusTARS Cup**. This year's recipient was **Alan Hakim** (right), for any number of reasons, not least as a past TARS Treasurer, but chiefly for his work in starting and running the Literary Weekends and his long

trick at the helm of Amazon Publications, from which he has just retired.

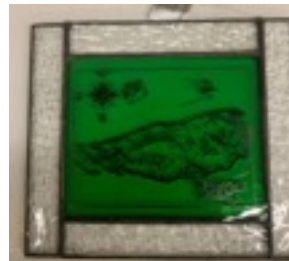


Another cup - the legendary **Dick Callum Cup** was also presented, following the quiz itself which had taken place the previous evening. Organised by Marc Grimston it took place 'in camera' rather than as the spectator sport of previous years. Six teams gathered round tables in the dining hall, playing to a new rule introduced by Quizmaster Marc - Jokers (double points on a round) were issued at random by the Quizmaster, rather than chosen to play to their strengths by the teams themselves. This was not universally popular! The cup was presented by Chairman Peter to the winning team, *Titmouse*: Paul Rodwell, Barbara Flower, Naomi Hemingway and Diana Wright.



All the fun of the stalls

The TARS Stall, top photo, managed by Christine Rae, did brisk business, and so did the Nancy Blakett Trust's, where much interest was focused on books from the late Brian Hammett's library. The bar, just visible at the far end of the TARS stall was also much appreciated - see page 3, opposite.



Glass engravings (TARS) and wooden bookmarks (NBT) photos by Arthur Herbertson

Ted Alexander wasn't able to attend, alas, but he did send his extensive collection of photos, maps and assorted memorabilia (below) for us to enjoy. Other members brought along their exhibits too.



Margaret and Evgenia - and an unexpected bonus

It's an IAGM tradition that after arriving, settling in, sampling the catering and being welcomed (this time by Chairman Peter Wright), we should be entertained on Friday evening by Margaret Ratcliffe with a fascinating and amusing talk. This year, she pulled off a double act with none other than Evgenia Ransome.

'The Unexpected Bonus of Evgenia's Diaries', as she described them, arose following her mountain of research in transcribing all of Arthur's diaries, which then led her to become intrigued with Evgenia's rarer diaries.

These were far fewer than Arthur's, written between, 1928 and the early 30s, eventually petering out in 1934. They reveal the couple's compatibility, or otherwise, on likes and dislikes. Occasionally Evgenia records an event on which Arthur doesn't comment at all - the major example being the hitherto unknown visit to Ireland in September 1929, where they spent a week with Sr William Peters, a St Petersburg contacts of Arthur's.

From this research Margaret produced her book *No Holds Barred*, this year's Amazon Publications title. In her talk, as in the book she explored Arthur and Evgenia's compatibility concerning their likes and dislikes.

Margaret, and Amazon, also provided a sample of Evgenia's style in the form of a booklet in everyone's Welcome Pack containing, with map and photographs, her account of their three-week Norfolk Broads Cruise in May 1933. published especially for the IAGM by Amazon Publications.



The Temperate Tarsbar and the Team. (and the Mastodon)

**Now, committee. What will please
and make our weekend one of ease?**

A Thames barge day long sailing trip'll.
Warm wind waft, and river ripple.

Nancy, our own Good Little Ship'll.
Rooms, and baths, to kip and dip'll

Roast and burger, fish 'n' chip'll.
But what's a Tar without a tippie?

**Now, crew, here's Three Million Cheers
for our doughty volunteers!**

So, signed on, we kept up our chins
Nothing ceased our sunny grins

as, swift and nifty on our pins
we poured the wine and ginless gins
and beer, in glasses; – took the tins
and bottles, to recycling bins.

**Now, team, bravely breach the puncheon,
Three long evenings, Sunday luncheon!**

So, undaunted, though hard pressed
to wet the bosuns' whistles best,

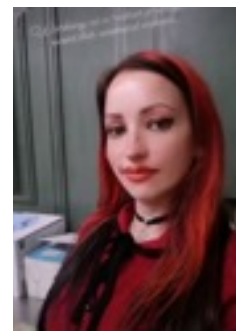
Mainbrace splice for every guest,
Make conversation, joke and jest; –

Wearily we thanked and blessed
reinforcements from the West.

**Now, here's a Toast! When done is done.
The Easts were great. The Wests were won!**

Jackie Snowman

*Thanks to Jackie,
her daughter Xenia
(right) and Chris
Kirwin for keeping
us all refreshed!*





VOYAGE ON THE VICTOR

Mr Whittle might not have approved of the amount the engine was used aboard the Thames Barge *Victor*; but we were travelling down the River Orwell from the centre of Ipswich on a bank holiday weekend with a limited amount of time so that is how it had to be. After leaving Ipswich lock the sails began to be set at last.

Passing down by Pin Mill it was glorious to see King's boatyard, the hard and the *Butt & Oyster* from the river, just as the Swallows would have done at the start of their voyage aboard *Goblin*.

Many more landmarks that would have been known to Ransome were passed, but he would not have recognised Felixstowe docks with its huge container ships and cranes. Several of us were allowed a trick at the wheel, with the three Junior members aboard steering first.

We then turned out to sea and cruised along the coast past Harwich until we reached Secret Water (of course it has another name that natives use). *Victor* stuck her bows into the entrance, but time and tide dictated that then we must turn. We headed out a little further and enjoyed a brief period under sail alone, getting sight of the Beach End Buoy, but nowhere near enough to need fending off.

The return journey allowed us to view the river once again. Approaching the Orwell bridge that carries the A14 over the river it looked as though the mast would not go under until the bridge was almost upon us. Pass through we did although it looked very close, but the mate told us that in fact the Bridge was twice the height of the mast — the prospect of hitting it was just an optical illusion.

Jane Wilson.



From top: Passing under the Orwell Bridge; Roo Koch at the wheel; Jane Wilson at the wheel with Wes (skipper and owner) and Peter Wright; Out at sea, beyond the Beach End Buoy

Seals Ahoy!

Tars take to the shallows to seek seals (and splatchers) in Secret Water

In bright sunshine twelve Tars and Liz Howarth's dog met at a quiet unhurried Titchmarsh Marina for a trip to Secret Water on Tony Haggis's boat *Karina*. Secret Water (Hamford Water on all ordinary maps) lies between Harwich and Walton-on-the-Naze and covers some nine square miles. It remains still somewhat remote and mysterious as it was when Arthur chose it as the setting for his eighth book, *Secret Water*.

Seeing this archipelago is an opportunity relatively few Tars will have experienced and – as Christina Hardyment explained in her seminal book *Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint's Trunk* – being on the water gives a much better sense of the mystery of the place than seeing it from the land.



The Wade at low tide

Tony Haggis proved to be an enthusiastic and very knowledgeable guide to the wildlife and flora of the area acquired during his 20 years of taking visitors there. He identified all the islands that we passed, readily quoting both their local and fictional names.



Basking seals

As expected some Tars had thoughtfully brought their own maps or had purchased them from Christine Rae's stall.

Swallow Island was always prominent with the stand of trees that surround the kraal visible virtually all the time. Twenty years ago, a significant number of old Thames barges were deliberately sunk close to the island to prevent further erosion. As proof of their effectiveness, a small sandy beach is well established; according to Elizabeth and Paul Crisp, friends of the owners, it now provides a fine barbecuing spot.

Tony, whose boat is mainly used as a seal-watching vessel, did his utmost to spot a seal at the location described in the book, but without success. We did however see a good many of them basking on the mud and displaying their distinctive ginger-brown spots, attributable to the iron ore traces in the mud itself.

When passing over the Wade at high tide both its landward and island ends are visible, an unusual experience for those of us who have crossed its muddy and uneven track at low tide.

And yes they did use splatchers for crossing the mud at low tide all those years ago. There used to be examples on display at the Walton Museum, surprisingly made of leather, but sadly they're not available to view now as the museum has recently closed.

A most enjoyable and fascinating trip with an excellent guide – well worth considering when next you are in the area. *Brian Key*



The row of sunken barges



Red Skies first appeared in 2016 at a book festival in Ipswich, as a three-act script-in-hand 'literary pub crawl', one act in each of three pubs. I was thoroughly intrigued by it and persuaded its author Ivan Cutting to let us do the first act at the Nancy Blackett Trust AGM in 2019. Marc Grimston read Ransome, Jenny Wedick was Evgenia and I played Orwell.

Its next outing, restored to the fully-dramatised four-act format Ivan Cutting had originally intended, was intended to tour in 2020, but managed just one performance before the covid lockdown.

The tour finally took place in July 2021, filmed for future release, and, with thanks to Ivan and Eastern Angles, this is the version we screened at our IAGM, in serial form - with acts 1 and 2 on Friday and Saturday evenings, and the acts 3 and 4 together on Sunday. PW

Secrets and Spies

Peter Willis writes: *Red Skies* is essentially an attempt by its author Ivan Cutting, director of the Ipswich-based Eastern Angles theatre company, at unpicking the abiding enigma of Arthur and Evgenia Ransome's relationship – what actually happened in Russia and why they were so reluctant to talk about it. He says the idea originally came to him while directing their stage adaptation of *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* back in 2008.

The lever that tries to prise open this pact of silence is George Orwell, who could perhaps have met the Ransomes in Southwold in 1939 but in real life almost certainly didn't.

He was there for his father's funeral; Arthur (but not Evgenia) called in on *Selina King* on the way to Lowestoft to have her laid up for the duration of the war. Onto this fragile near-coincidence Cutting grafts a series of increasingly revealing conversations between these literary giants.

Love of fishing

In the first act, aboard *Selina King*, Orwell learns little and antagonises Evgenia, but bonds with Arthur when they discover a shared love of fishing - both real and, in Orwell's case, metaphorical.

In the second act, he is staying overnight with the Ransomes when there's an air raid; Arthur sleeps through it but George and Evgenia, awake and anxious, begin to open up to each other. His verdict on their escape from Russia though is damning. "Each of you thinks the other left for love. Yet each of you knows there is a distinct possibility the other had an ulterior motive."

The third act finds Orwell visiting the Ransomes at The Heald, continuing to probe Arthur's status with the Bolsheviks; then in the fourth, by this time seriously ill with TB, he is being visited by them in a sanatorium, where the soon-to-be Mrs Orwell, Sonia Brownwell, is in attendance. Even on his sickbed, Orwell manages to open up, at least for a moment, a rift between Arthur and Evgenia. She

more or less confesses to the price she had to pay to be allowed to leave Russia: smuggling diamonds on behalf of the Bolshevik government (a fact only confirmed in real life half a century later). Did Arthur know? At Orwell's bedside he seems more bothered about being left off a list Orwell has been compiling of left-wing writers who are suspected communist fellow-travellers.

Guesses and revelations

The guesses and revelations continue via sharply-controlled dialogue like a three-way tennis match until the very end.

Ivan Cutting visited the Sunday evening showing for a Q and A session, in which he revealed that the play had originally been intended for the National Theatre.

All the cast deliver strong performances, nuanced to match the writing: Philip Gill as Arthur, Sally Ann Burnett who has played Evgenia in every version, Laurie Coldwell as Orwell and Bronte Tadman as Sonia.

Audio conditions in the school hall were not ideal, so hopefully the DVD, which does have good sound, will become available soon; better still **Amazon Publications** is intending to make the script of *Red Skies* its next book, due in time for the 2024 Literary Weekend.



In the room where Arthur wrote *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*

Rachel Chalmers visited Broke House

On Monday morning, some of us were lucky enough to visit Broke House at Levington, Arthur and Evgenia's home from 1935 to 1939. We were graciously hosted by Dr Elizabeth Courtauld, her daughter and her young family, who ensured we had refreshments of fruit juice and the right sort of biscuits (digestives).

Downstairs there hangs a portrait of Arthur as a memento of his past occupancy of the house, but the first floor held perhaps the most evocative setting for visiting Tars. It was a beautiful day and we were in the upstairs room where Arthur wrote all of *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea*, much of *Secret Water* and part of *Pigeon Post*. From the window were views over farmland to the River Orwell and beyond.

The setting clearly inspired him; maybe it was the thought of *Nancy Blackett* moored at Pin Mill just across the river.

Arthur's desk had been in the bay window; we heard how he informed the children next door that he was in writing mode by hanging a little white flag from the window to warn them not to make too much noise and disturb him.

This chance to visit and explore one of Arthur and Evgenia's homes was very much appreciated and our sincere thanks go to Dr Courtauld and her family for their very engaging hospitality.

Aboard *Nancy Blackett*

Nick Liggitt wants to go to sea

On the Monday after the AGM a few of us had the opportunity to visit *Nancy Blackett* on her moorings in Woolverstone Marina where she sat bobbing quietly amongst a crowd of mostly larger and more modern plastic yachts.

She looked in beautiful condition, fully recovered from her unfortunate submarine adventure in the spring – she had sunk at her moorings on relaunch after her planking had dried out, leaving a few leaky seams.

The immersion had necessitated amongst other things a new engine and much rewiring. Most of 2022's sailing season had been lost to this unfortunate mishap.



Once aboard, we went below and we first-time visitors found her to have a neat, well designed and beautiful period interior, much as we had imagined from descriptions in WDMTGTS.

Although we weren't going sailing, a few of us had come prepared for a mini adventure and brought along packed lunches. We spent a very enjoyable hour in the saloon swapping and sharing our picnic delicacies around, working out which bunks had belonged to whom, admiring the mostly original fixtures and fittings, and imagining accidentally sailing to Flushing... Roger Sturge, Peter Wright and Peter Willis gave us many fascinating insights into *Nancy* and her history.

There is something irresistibly romantic and evocative about a wooden boat, especially one with such a fascinating history. Maintaining a 91-year-old yacht in first class condition is a constant and expensive task; a labour of love. The Nancy Blackett Trust do a wonderful job, but they need as much support as they can get; if you haven't sailed on *Nancy*, you really should. It's the best kind of support and I know it's firmly on my list!

Above: Alan Hakim, Naomi Hemingway, Rachel Chalmers and Nick Liggitt in Arthur's writing room at Broke House. **Below,** Peter Wright relaxes aboard *Nancy Blackett*





Pin Mill, with the Butt and Oyster and Alma Cottage, photo by Diana Dicker



Arthur's eye view

Arthur Herbertson, above at Pin Mill, has an eye, and a camera, for quirky detail in and around the IAGM weekend – below (and he walked the Arthur Ransome Trail)



Monday morning visitors to Broke House with owner Elizabeth Courtauld (sixth from right) and family (left, in front of window and trellis) pic PW

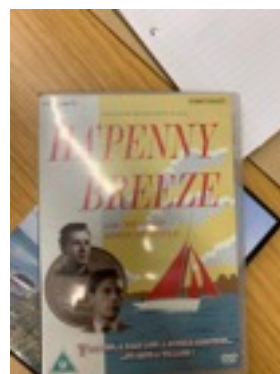


The Koch boys discover Nancy Blackett pic DD



The Amazon Publications team help retiring leader Alan Hakim drink the Champagne they've just given him. From left, Paul Crisp, Christine Rae, who is taking over Alan's role, Alan, and Margaret Ratcliffe.

This Ship's Log was produced by Robert Welham and Peter Willis with help from contributors



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ON RUDYARD LAKE

My trip to Rudyard Lake began with a long and scenic train ride from Oxford to Staffordshire where I was greeted by the Blues, who took care of me for the weekend. Later in the day we set up camp beside the lake and prepared a few boats for a proper launch the next day. As dusk fell, I cooked myself up an appetising meal of boiled potatoes and meatballs (all from a tin) and tucked myself away for the night in my little ridge tent.

The next day was an assortment of sailing, canoeing and more sailing which all built up to our huge voyage down the lake. Against the advice of experienced sailors in the group, Martha and I dared to take Baby Bridget (boat not child) to the end of the lake. The journey to the foot of the lake was fast (though much more for others) as the wind was behind us, however the journey back was not smooth sailing. The wind was strong and fought us the entire time, but we persisted and in the short time of 3 hours we made it back missing dinner time by merely an hour or so. The wait as my food cooked was agonising but I was soon satisfied by a warm meal.

The final day was slower as the strong, consistent winds of the weekend lulled, but we enjoyed a few hours in the boats before taking down camp. My ride home was hot, tiring and long (due to rail disruptions) but, I eventually made it home... a few hours after dinner time. I slept well that night having thoroughly enjoyed my weekend away.

Ben Hambleton



DOVEDALE DIPS

We had a long, enjoyable, dreamy walk along the River Dove, spotting hiding sheep, bees, damselflies, butterflies, fish, caves, bridges, wildflowers, cows with calves. I had a few dips into the cool slow-moving water. Dad asked fishy questions every now and then and added interesting snippets about Arthur Ransome and fishing. It was a fun day.

Esme Blue



COOKING LIKE MATE SUSAN

On a sunny autumnal morning, we went to Jane's house in Wellingborough for a fun cooking event. There were 11 of us in total and Bonnie the little dog.

We began our day by drinking tea made on the campfire. Tea leaves were put into the water as it boiled on the fire, like Susan must have done in the books. Whilst drinking delicious tea, we attempted a challenging quiz about foods mentioned in the 'Swallows and Amazons' books. Luckily, I remembered that Dorothea cooked a rabbit in *The Picts and the Martyrs*, though we weren't sure about the Swallows eating porridge and sardines put together!

We soon set to work making curried eggs for lunch. First, we boiled the eggs, then made the sauce. We used a camping tin opener to open the tomatoes. It wasn't easy and my brother Ben had to open the tins for us, as he picked up the technique really fast. Meanwhile we chopped up onions and garlic to go with it. Then we put it on the fire to cook. We all felt like Susans and both my mum and my sister actually were as they have the middle name Susan. When it had finished cooking, we ate the curried eggs with rice. It was really yummy, and it was just like the meal Peggy cooked at the beginning of *Missee Lee*.

In the afternoon, we had more delicious courses to enjoy. We hotted up pemmican on the fire, however some fell into the flames. It surprisingly tasted like bacon! We also cooked apples, filled with dates, which exploded in the tin, and we had to guess whose was whose.

Before our final meal of the day, we had a quiz about Gibber, where the questions were on bananas hung from trees. Mixing together mashed bananas and blackberries, we made blackberry and banana mash. It looked really gross, but fortunately it tasted much better.

To end our culinary day, we fired canons at Bonnie, as they contained small treats for her to chase. Then we gathered round to eat chocolate (mum's favourite part!) to keep all the Rogers happy.

We set off home with tummies full of delicious food! A big thank you to Sarah, Jane and Bobbie to arranging such a wonderful day.

Franny Hambleton



A MINIATURE WORLD

Some 86 years after a visit to Bekonscot Model Village by Princess Elizabeth and her sister, Midlands TARS followed suit. Nine of us thoroughly enjoyed this, the world's oldest model village. Indeed, such is the variety and complexity of the models, scenes and characters, we took three trips around, each time finding more to marvel at. Apart from excellent models, recreating all sorts of urban and rural scenes, the overriding experience is one of fun. One reason is that the models, which predominantly depict life in the 1930s, are full of humour - the boy with a pan stuck on his head in the hospital, the man falling off his ladder as his distracted mate embraces a lady, the huntsman not realising the fox is sitting behind him etc. Nowhere is this seen more than in the names of the shops - Sam and Ella's the butchers, Stan Still photographers, Mack & Tosh the tailors, Chris P Lettuce the greengrocer and Ivan Huvan the baker, to name but a few.



Our visit was enhanced by two quizzes, one about Bekonscot, the other related to S&A references that might be found throughout the village. So, for example, who might pay a visit to J Bellows? (Dick and Mr Dixon - it's the blacksmiths) or where could Rattletrap go to be mended? (AJ Dunlop - Car repairs, servicing and MOTs). We found plenty of other scenes and characters that could be Ransome inspired and I'm sure the fisherman casting his line must have been modelled on AR himself!

If you've never been to Bekonscot, we can thoroughly recommend it.

Peter Wright



FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN MIDLAND REGION

We hope that these events will be able to take place as programmed, but do keep an eye on the TARS website and contact the event organiser in case changes have had to be made.

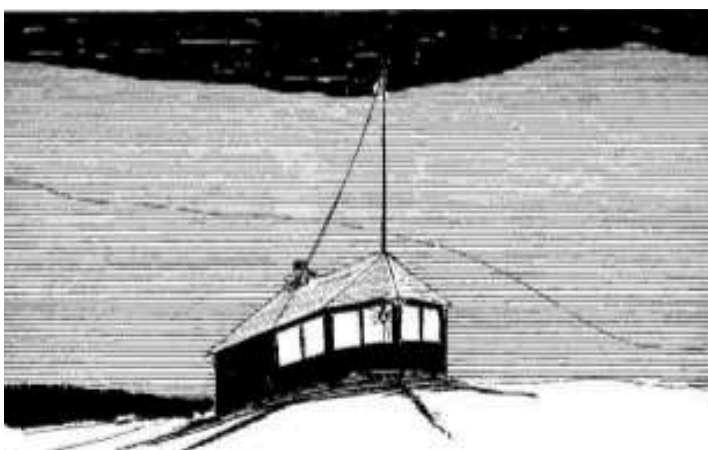
AGM & POTTER ABOUT THE POTTERIES

Saturday 21 January

The AGM and Junior Parley will be held in the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Hanley, Stoke on Trent., starting promptly at 11.30. Meet in the museum entrance at 10.30 if you would like a quick tour first.. After the meeting have lunch in the museum café or bring your own.

At 2pm we will move on to the Etruria Museum for an illustrated talk and tour of the mill. It will not be in steam, but projected images show the engine and machinery in operation. The cost will be £10 per adult. Juniors between 6 and 15 are £5.00, but Midland Region will pay for our Junior members, and under 6s go in free.

For further information and to book please contact Jules Blue on julesbluerachel@btinternet.com



WINTER HOLIDAY ON STAGE

Saturday 18 February

TARS member Chris Eldon Lee has adapted AR's book into a play. It runs from 15-18 February at the Severn Theatre in Shrewsbury (www.theatresevern.co.uk). All the TARS tickets booked for the matinee on Saturday 18 February have now been claimed, but you can buy your own and join up with other TARS. Please contact Paul Green on paulmidtars@gmx.co.uk / 01654 791256 / 075639624961 for more information about the day.

Meet up for lunch and a walk from 12 noon in Shrewsbury and for a pre-show gathering with Chris Eldon Lee and cast at the theatre at 2.15pm before the matinee begins at 3pm.

DYMOCK POETRY WALK AND TALK

Saturday 18 March

Come and join a guided local walk of up to 8 miles. Enjoy the daffodils which were once an important crop in the area as well as the literary locations of friends of Ransome's, the Dymock Poets. Bring along a poem to share along the way. If you do well there might be the opportunity for a pint in the Beauchamp Arms!

The walk will start at 11am from the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Dymock. For further information please contact Jules Blue on julesbluerachel@btinternet.com

A DAY AT RUGBY

Saturday 22 April

Join a special tour of Rugby School to learn about Ransome's time there. Meet outside the school just before 11am.

Afterwards we will eat our lunch (bring your own picnic or buy something in the town) in the park, then explore more about Ransome's time in the town and his feelings about school.

For further information and to book please contact Paul Green on paulmidtars@gmx.co.uk

DROMEDARY ADVENTURES

Saturday 20 May

Meet at 11am in Llandrindod Wells to explore the super national museum of bicycles dating back to the early 1800s. Tricycles, bone shakers, police bikes, electric bikes, roadsters, penny farthings are among the things to be seen and there is much to learn about the development of cycling. £5 per adult. One child can enter free per paying adult or £1 each thereafter.

Then hire bikes nearby in the Elan valley, near Rhayader, 13 miles (half-an-hour drive) away. Here, as well as cycle hire, there is a Victorian dam, reservoirs, walks, café, etc. Parking £3. Cycle hire: children £15; adults £20; electric bikes £35; tandems, £35 (adults only) - all 3 hours. Last hire is 1:30.

Please send copy for the next issue of *The Gulch* to jane.pippinfort@googlemail.com by 1 February

The icons shown by events above indicate which categories they cover for the Junior Log Book scheme:



Adventure Event



Nautical Event



Discovery Event



Titty's Challenge
(Able Seaman Log Book)



Susan's Challenge
(Mate Log Book)



John's Challenge
(Captain Log Book)



Northern Despatches

We consider ourselves lucky to have in our area not only Ransome sites in the Lake District but also AR's birthplace of Leeds. Northern members warmly welcome Tars from all UK regions and particularly overseas members to any of our events.

Tanfield Railway

Despite gloomy forecasts that it was going to be a wet weekend, Sunday dawned clear and sunny. It was so perfect that even the journey up the A1 to Gateshead was pleasurable with clear views of the hills across the Dales.

Tanfield Railway is just outside Gateshead and very near Beamish. It was once a colliery railway taking coal to the Tyne but is now a small heritage line run by volunteers, among whom is our own Elizabeth Williams. Elizabeth had planned the day very thoroughly for us.

We met up at East Tanfield and started off with bacon butties and coffee. Well, we had to fill in the time before the first train somehow. This was 'Horden' and we travelled third class on the hard seats to Andrew's House where we disembarked to look round the Engine Shed. This took longer than Elizabeth anticipated as there were lots of interesting things to look at and you could get really close up to the engines. Elizabeth showed us her favourite engine 'Sir Cecil A Cochrane'. After we had had our fill we joined the train to travel to the end



of the line at Sunnyside and then returned to get off at Causey to visit Causey Arch, the oldest railway bridge in the world. After so much sitting we finished the journey by walking back to East Tanfield through the woods. Many thanks to Elizabeth. *Kryisia Clack*

Below: Kryisia, Elizabeth and Nina Coad at Tanfield



Swallows and Amazons Sailing Day on Coniston Water

by Margi Dallas

Even though I had completed the requirements for my Journey of Discovery, Silver, of four days with six hours of activity each day, there was still one more day to look forward to. A Swallows and Amazons Sailing Day on Coniston Water had been arranged by TARS. When I first received notification of this event, I didn't really take much notice as I knew I couldn't attend. However, when the date was changed to



Saturday 13th August, I looked into it a bit more. This was actually the last day of my holiday in the Lake District and even better the event was at Bank Ground Farm. The day was to consist of sailing on Coniston Water and a walk to the Dogs' Home, which was somewhere I was keen to visit. As it happened, I did manage to find the Dogs' Home earlier on in the week.

I had no idea what to expect, as I don't sail – would I just be hanging around all day by the jetty at the lakeshore? I imagined about thirty like-minded Arthur Ransome fans sailing on the lake. I needn't have worried. I had already met Helen Lewis and Paul Flint at the Arthur Ransome exhibition at Brantwood earlier in the week and they were here today, Helen with her dinghy *Peggy Blackett* and Paul with his dinghy *Captain Flint*. I was introduced to other TARS members, Krysia and her husband, and Veronica, her daughter and two grandchildren.

It was at this point something rather amusing and fortuitous happened. I had chosen to wear

my new Swallows and Amazons polo shirt, and it was this shirt that a lady, who sounded American, stopped me and asked about Swallows and Amazons. As I didn't really know what the day was going to entail, I called over to Veronica who came over to explain. It turned out the lady was called Melissa and was here with her husband and three children. They were here on holiday, from America, as the children are



absolutely mad on Swallows and Amazons. Jonathan, of Bank Ground Farm, had given them permission to set up camp at the lakeshore and it was purely by chance they had landed right in the middle of the Swallows and Amazons sailing day. One very happy family! Aiden and his younger brother were even kitted out in red Nancy and Peggy Blackett caps.

Shortly after this, I was asked if I wanted to go out in *Captain Flint*. I shall admit I was reluctant to go. I wasn't worried about sailing on the lake but I was very worried about getting into and out of the dinghy. For a while, I have had a lot of pain in my back and hips and this concerned me. How would I get in? How would I get out?

'BETTER DROWNED THAN DUFFERS IF NOT DUFFERS WON'T DROWN'

Part of me was keen to go but part of me was still apprehensive. Eventually, I said I would go, a decision I definitely did not regret. The men helped me and I sat in the middle of the *Captain Flint*. When a friend from back home saw my

photos later on Facebook, he was rather amused that the sailing dinghy was called *Captain Flint*. I think he had a picture of Captain Flint's houseboat in his mind. I explained that the owner of the boat is Paul Flint, who served in the Navy and when he married, his wife who served in the Army, really did become Captain Flint. When this was explained to him a "wow" emoji appeared on my Facebook post.

It was a very still day, hardly a breath of wind to speak of so we did sit in the middle of the lake for short periods while we waited for just a little breeze to send us on our way again. I reckon the true sailors were probably a bit frustrated by the lack of any wind but I was quite happy. I was just enjoying the whole experience.

And when there was any breeze at all we were on the move again. I was surprised how little breeze was needed to get us sailing.

While the others were out on the lake, I walked back up to the main house, beside Roger's field



and ate a late lunch. It was very tasty, I might add. Before too long, Melissa and her family arrived for ice creams. Shortly after this, the event came to an end and I was able to see Krysia and her husband before they drove off. It was lovely to meet them. What a brilliant day and a super way to finish my Arthur Ransome and Swallows and Amazons adventure.



TARS Northern Region events December 2022 – spring 2023

Tuesday Dec 29th Inn-Formal The ever popular Post-Christmas get together may go ahead if numbers indicate interest – Ideally we need 12, please contact Helen Lewis if interested.

Saturday Jan 21st 2023 – Our Birthday party this year will be held in Goosnargh Village Hall, Church Lane Goosnargh Preston PR3 2BH, so an opportunity for those who live in that area to attend. Theme – *Picts and Martyrs*. Games; Den Making; Trout tickling talk; 'Hunt the Great Aunt!'; book stall; bring and share related food – eg rabbit, trout, eggs, apple pie, cake;

Saturday March 18th NR AGM via Zoom so as many members as possible can attend. Contact Elizabeth Williams for the link. Guest Speaker after the meeting will be Kirsty Nichol-Findlay with her fascinating analysis of AR's Literature.

Saturday April 15th Kilhope Mine and museum. A great day out with walks and mining activities. Contact Elizabeth Williams.

Saturday June 3rd Ransome at Rusland A full day event as it is on a Saturday, ending at **Rusland**

Southern Region



Cobnor Summer Camp August 19-21



August can often be a risky month, weather wise, for camping, but the sun shone on this year's Cobnor camp. Most importantly for a camp focusing on water activities, there was wind – gentle as times and quite challengingly brisk at others. The numbers camping were as modest as usual, but there was good sailing to be had in Chichester Harbour and the Bosham channel and time to catch up with old friends

As well as the usual pottering about in boats of various sizes and kayaks there were the sea trails of a recently restored 1991 Duffin MK2 GP14. You can get a real feel of the pre-voyage preparation and the maiden voyages by watching another of Corin Nelson-Smith's excellent video's at <https://youtu.be/awZ83vALnj4>. There is also a YouTube video showing all the work he put into restoring this boat, renamed The Mastodon. Like any mud-covered Mastodon, it needed washing down after coming off the water!

The fleet sailed across the channel to Itchenor Marina on the Saturday, with passengers enjoying the experience of being ferried on the 'Wild Cat' under power with others following in a sailing boat, two kayaks and a land lubber arriving in a car - a five-pronged attack by 10 TARS.

At least one of the group had never been to Itchenor before, and described it as a place of definite charm and a clear nautical flavour with its old cottages side by side with boat repair sheds. Approaching by boat, especially for the first time, gave a real feeling of being an explorer discovering an unknown land, with interesting surprises in store.



'Wildcat' alongside in Itchenor Marina - not quite 'Roger being left in charge of Swallow', but almost.

The Selina surprise

The surprise was a visit to one of the boat sheds to see Ransome's boat *Selina King* nearing the end of a 10 year restoration programme. Ransome commissioned Selina King from Harry King's boatyard at Pin Mill and had just one year's sailing, from her launch in 1938 before the boat had to be mothballed for the duration of WW2. By the time the war had



ended, Ransome was no longer fit enough to sail the rather heavy, 35ft double-ended Bermudan sloop, and he had to sell her. *Selina King* ended up as a charter yacht in Bermuda which was where her present owner, Martin Pollard, a former TARS member, found her. He started the restoration work there but, after 6 years, needed to return to the UK. He managed to hitch a lift for *Selina* with the America's Cup team returning from Bermuda in 2017 and she has been in the workshop at Itchenor since then. As with all such projects there is always more work than you think once you scratch the surface and much has been replaced and restored.



There are also pictures of work in progress on the Nancy Blackett Trust website (nancyblackett.org) and of the mast making in progress at Pin Mill on Harry King's boatyard site (kingsboatyard.co.uk).



Shortly after our visit, *Selina King* was taken back to Pin Mill to be reunited with her new mast and boom and have the final touches put to her restoration. Unfortunately, 10 years takes its toll on people and, like Ransome, Martin feels he may not now be able to sail her.

Left: Iain in conversation with Selina's owner Martin Pollard.

Right: Selina King with her new mast alongside her at King's boatyard.



Birthday Lunch Saturday 21st January 2023 Winchester

Just a reminder to Southern region members to dig out the email or flyer you received in November and decide whether you are going to come along to the lunch. **Please let the Secretary know by Sat 7th January as numbers must be confirmed to the venue.**

After a successful lunch by the busy Thames in January 2022, we are trying a venue by the River Itchen in Winchester for our Birthday Lunch in 2023. The 'Bishop on the Bridge' pub sits beside the oldest bridge into Winchester and across the road from the restored and working City Mill. We have reserved tables from 12 noon and you will be able to order from their wide ranging menu – samples can be seen on their website. www.bishoponthebridge.co.uk

Should you feel the need for a walk after lunch, there is a pleasant path running beside the pub, between the city walls and the river, which takes you to Wolvesey Castle and on past the Pilgrim's School, Jane Austen's last residence, the medieval Cheyney Court and finally the Cathedral. You can complete the loop by walking through the pedestrianised High Street to the statue of King Alfred.

Secretary and Signals compiler Rosemary Beal 01243 605889 rebeltars@gmail.com



Sou'westers and Seaboats

News from the South West

ROADFORD LAKE CAMPING WEEKEND IN SEPTEMBER

Being a generous sort I let Diana have first go on the paddleboard that we had hired to share. Unfortunately, when she attempted to get on from the shore she immediately sunk up to mid-calf in thick, clinging mud. After extricating herself, nearly losing her beach shoe in the process, and having had a bit of a wash in the lake, the instructor suggested that we get on from the pontoon instead. This was cleaner, but easier said than done, however, we both managed to have several goes without falling in the water. Neither of us were nimble/brave enough to stand up but it was quite enjoyable paddling around in a kneeling position. Other SUP users had dogs or children on the boards with them. The lake was very low after the summer drought but it is a beautiful

spot, with camping at the activity centre and good facilities, although it was advisable to take a torch if you needed them in the night, as the lights went out after quite a short time and you were plunged into darkness. The afternoon was taken up with kayaking for Susan, Diana and Jake – again there were muddy feet as they tried to get in from the shore, but it was much enjoyed.



We rounded off the day with a very delicious barbecue, which everyone contributed to. Thanks to Liz and Paul for providing the meat and a cob barbecue to cook on.
Barbara Flower

Signalling and Maps 16th July 2022

We had an enjoyable zoom get together answering questions on maps and trying to convert Morse into English.

Barbara started us off - we had to study a map and then answer questions of varying difficulties. It seems even though I thought I was observant, I couldn't find all the places on the map but it was great fun trying.

It was my job to set the signalling part, and I thought it would be fun to hide morse code in a piece of writing from one of the books, and let people work out what code it was and where it was. Luckily Barbara was there as she quickly worked out what to do - hiding a dash in tea-clipper is dastardly I'm told. *Susan Gouldbourne*

Forthcoming events in the South West

Members from other regions are always welcome to join us at any of our events - email Barbara (souwesters@gmail.com) for further information.

Saturday 21st January 2023 - SW TARS AGM and Birthday toast to AR will be via Zoom, starting at 4 pm and followed by chat.

Saturday 11th February at 4 pm - We are delighted that **Alan Kennedy** has agreed to give us a talk via Zoom entitled "**Arthur Ransome and the debacle at Durham**" Members from other regions are welcome to participate.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85439225212?pwd=M0UxYy9nejA2RnpEUUnBUdTRaMmRUUT09>

Meeting ID: 854 3922 5212 Passcode: 117538

Why was AR's Honorary Degree ceremony in Durham University such a disaster? The talk will involve posing some hard questions about his Russian years (and will cover, in passing, his correspondence with PG Wodehouse). It includes some specific references to the novels, but does not assume that everybody has read everything.

Alan is the author of *A Thoroughly Mischievous Person: The Other Arthur Ransome* (The Lutterworth Press, 2021) and has written several articles for Mixed Moss, including "Who is the Great Aunt" (MM 2020) and "Ransome, Radek and 'Beautiful Untrue Things'" (MM 2022).

Saturday 18th March - "Dick's Astronomical Outing and Martyrs' Musical" - we will meet in Bath to visit the Herschel Museum of Astronomy, (which also has musical instruments). There is plenty to do in Bath, so either make a day of it or meet at the Museum at 2 pm for a look round.

Thursday 13th April - "Tea cosies and Pompoms" - there are references to both in AR's books! We will meet at 11 am at the Coldharbour Woollen Mill at Uffculme, EX15 3EE on one of their production days. The mill is Grade 11* listed set in 12 acres with millponds and wildlife. There is a café, museum, boilers, steam engines and working and static exhibits.

EBB & FLOW

The Eastern Pages



NENE VALLEY RAILWAY 1st October 2022

Five TARS East members had a day on the Nene Valley Railway on Saturday the 1st of October. meeting at Stibbington north of Peterborough for the 10am train. The whole trip is seven miles long ending in Peterborough where we alighted and went into the city centre to visit the Cathedral and visited the resting place of the former queen of England, Henry VIII first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

After an interesting walk around the Cathedral we had lunch before returning to the train. We travelled a few stops down the line and got off at Orton Mere for a stroll around the lake and then returned to the station for tea and cake, as usual TARS events involved food and drink!

We got the last train back before heading off to our various homes. A good day was had by all and the only problem was that we didn't have time for everything we wanted to see and do, (probably more cake). Maybe next time!

Marc Grimston.



Next year the Eastern Region will be holding another train outing, this time in Norfolk, on the Holt to Sheringham Railway.

RW.

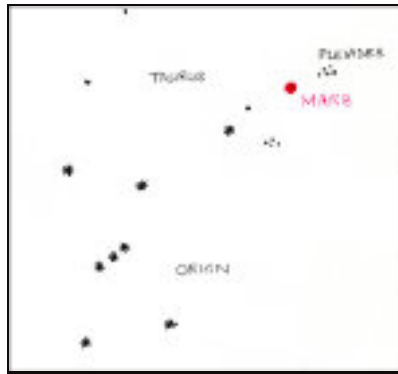
SIGNALLING to MARS

We may not all go on holiday in January like Dick and Dorothea in *Winter Holiday* but it doesn't stop us gazing at the heavens under dark winter skies.

I don't think we are told how old Dick is but I must have been interested in astronomy at his age but I would never have written down 'Mars is the red one'. Still, he did turn his telescope on various constellations and with Dorothea signal to Mars, even if it was the Swallows and Amazons, so he knew what he was doing. The one object he didn't look at was Mars itself. I have attempted to find out if Mars was visible in January 1932/1933 but have had no luck.

This January, Mars is quite conspicuous high up towards the South and is well worth finding.

mRobert Robert Welham.



THE MARTIANS IN SIGHT

EASTERN REGION PROGRAMME

January 21st (Saturday): Arthur Ransome's Birthday Lunch and Eastern Region AGM. Meet at *Butt & Oyster*, Pin Mill, Suffolk. 12.30pm for lunch at 1pm.

Guest speaker, Sarah Curtis of Kings boatyard, on 'Kings of Pin Mill: The 1930's - the Boatbuilding Years'. Book for lunch Nicholas Hinde on 01371 820054 secretary.east@arthur-ransome.org.uk.

Events to be Arranged.

Visit to the Garrick Club in London.

Guided tour of Cambridge.

Literary Half Day, Bury St Edmunds. Illustrated talk by Ted Alexander on *Ransome in Russia*

Railway Train Trip - Holt to Sheringham, Norfolk. Where the filming of *Coot Club* took place.

Broads Sailing Day, Norfolk

Seal Watching on Secret Water from Titchmarsh Marina, Essex.

All Day Reading of *Coot Club* at Horning, Norfolk Broads

Visit to Sutton Hoo. Anglo Saxon burial site, Suffolk.



NEWS FROM THE GAELS

TARS Scotland



Gòbhlanan-gaoithe 's Bana-gaisgich gu sìorraidh!

Exhibition in memory of Jim Henderson

In the last issue of *Signals* we had a piece about our late member Jim Henderson, who did so much to promote the work of his mother and grandmother, the well known Scottish artists Nan Henderson and Chris J. Fergusson. At the end of August, Jim's siblings organised a lovely exhibition of their paintings, many of which had been kept in Jim's Edinburgh flat.



Paul and I went along to the small but picturesque Harbour Gallery in Kirkcudbright and, not only saw the paintings, but also met three of Jim's four siblings, including his twin sister Rosemary. Some members may recall meeting her at the TARS Scotland IAGM in Oban in 2010, which she attended along with Jim.

While we were on the upper floor of the gallery, I heard a man's voice from below, and said 'that's Jim!' Of course, it was his elder brother Hugh, who sounded just like him. We had a nice conversation about the time when Hugh took some Scottish Tars sailing in his dinghy at North Berwick, and I was able to tell him that a photo of that occasion graces the Scottish version of the TARS banner, which is on display outside the Library room at Moat Brae.



The fourth sibling, David, was at that moment giving a talk about the two artists elsewhere, so we didn't meet him, but Hugh told me that a few days later, they were all going to bury Jim's ashes in the family grave in the High Cemetery



in Dumfries – 5 minutes' walk from where Paul and I live. We hadn't realised that the artists and their husbands were buried there, but the following week I walked round and found the grave. Jim had come home to Dumfries!

Winifred Wilson



Swallows and Amazons step, Moat Brae garden

In the footsteps of literary genius – recap and what next?

Kirsty Nichol Findlay shares the results of her research so far ...

Our Literary Day this year attracted a small number of Scottish Tars, and two Northerners, one of whom was the speaker. We met as before in the Garden Room at Moat Brae, where a buffet lunch was served, followed by Kirsty's – I have to say – seminar!

Provisional events programme 2023

TARS Scotland AGM and Birthday Lunch 2023

Celebrate Ransome's 139th birthday at the Hawes Inn, South Queensferry, on Saturday 21 January 2023. More details in the post later.

VOYAGE TO THE ISLAND (THIS TIME FOR REAL)

After 37 years in the dreaming, and three in the planning (Covid got in the way), my friend Wendy and I finally got to sleep on Wild Cat Island. You may remember my article in *The Gulch* during lockdown describing how we visited Wild Cat Island 'virtually' by parking our rowing machines in front of our televisions and watching the 1974 film of *Swallows and Amazons* simultaneously, whilst on a WhatsApp chat. This time, two years later, on 21 June 2022, we did it for real.

We left Hoathwaite campsite in kayaks at 8.30pm, with sleeping bags, hammocks and a few essentials stuffed into dry bags. We timed the voyage to arrive after any day visitors had left the island, and were pleased to find it deserted. The southerly breeze was hard work to paddle against, but kept the worst of the midges at bay. We landed in the harbour (it really is just like the books) and hid the kayaks so as not to advertise our presence. Then we had a quick explore and watched the sunset over the lake, but our priority was getting the hammocks up before it got too dark. The trees in the campsite were ideal for supporting hammocks, and it was amazing to lie there, snuggled in a sleeping bag, looking up through the branches watching the stars come out. I didn't sleep very much, but didn't really want to – I just wanted to savour the moment and enjoy being on the island at last.



We awoke to a pearly dawn, which was followed by a radiant golden glow when the sun rose over the horizon to the east. This was the moment to explore the island and to stand and look out over the lake, soaking up the beauty and stillness of the surroundings. I'm not sure what Susan would have made of our breakfast of instant porridge pots made with water boiled over a tiny camping stove, but we found it convenient, delicious and just what we needed after a night under the stars. After breakfast we struck camp and put the kayaks back in the harbour, in case any early visitors or natives from the National Trust should appear. Wendy (a keen open water swimmer) emulated John's swim around the island, while I combined being Dick and Susan – taking photos whilst keeping an eye on the cocoa!

We decided to leave the island before anyone else arrived and broke the spell, so climbed into our kayaks and headed back to Hoathwaite. We were careful not to leave any traces of our visit, and also took away the few pieces of litter we had found on the island. We both felt a wonderful glow of satisfaction, adventure, and privilege at having been able to spend 11 hours in such a magical place. It was worth the wait.

Fiona Fyfe

Please note, this adventure was undertaken independently and not as part of an organised TARS activity. TARS cannot condone any rule-breaking or risks involved (although it does seem to have been good fun, hence reporting it here).

IAGM (AGAIN)

The contents of the **RED CRATE**

Peter Willis is handed a boxful of TARS history

I was standing out on the terrace enjoying the sunshine just before the start of the IAGM meeting when a woman approached carrying an evidently heavy red plastic crate. She turned out to be Nicola Wilberforce, an old friend from my Southern Region days and – significantly – TARS member No 20.

She had been having a clear-out and the red crate contained all the TARS publications she'd received since the Society began. Indeed, as I was to find out, since *before it began*. There was a complete set of *Mixed Moss* (including the now-elusive No 1) and stacks of *Signals*, *Ship's Logs* and *Despatches*.

We parked it under a table and as nobody else seemed to want to take it home at the end of the weekend, I did. I could give it a safe home in my little spare-bedroom office until the Archives Repository was sorted out and I thought it would be interesting to look through, when I had the odd moment, as well as providing 'fillers' for *Signals*.

'It's beginning already'

Everything is in date order, and the very first item was an issue of *Despatches*, dated February 1990 – ie four months *before* TARS' official launch on 30 June that year at the Windermere Steamboat Museum (now Windermere Jetty). It is subtitled, not surprisingly 'It's Beginning Already', and includes a lovely account by Brigit Sanders of the history of *Amazon* (aka *Mavis*).

It was Christina Hardyment's appeal for contributions towards the restoration of *Amazon* – standing at £5,000 at this stage - that led to the setting-up of the Society. It also includes an application form for the launch event, though, oddly, not for joining the society. (Perhaps there was a loose-leaf form?).

There are also a couple of Newsletters: No 1, dated 21 September 1990, designed to answer hypothetical

questions like "Well, what happens now?" "What is our Committee doing?" and "Did the Society take off?" It mentions that Christina Hardyment has agreed to act as Editor of the Society's as-yet unnamed Journal and gives would-be contributors a little over a month to come up with something.

The second Newsletter, dated July 1991, reported on the first AGM, held at Ipswich's more than ample Corn Exchange, with around 150 members present. It focused solely on the business aspects of the event, while coverage of the social side, which included a trip to Secret Water on the ferry *Brightlingsea*, was shared between *Despatches*, Easter 1991, which did what

Despatches still does, complete with booking form, and the second issue of *Mixed Moss*.

When we were here before

I also hooked out the *Ship's Log* for the last time the IAGM was held at the Royal Hospital School, back in 2003, and rather wished I hadn't. I remember something of the event - the trudge across the *very* muddy Wade to Horsey (Swallow) Island, with President Norman Willis riding in a Land-Rover which had to tow the 'honey wagon' (improvised porta-loo) on the way back.

But what I'd forgotten was the long and bitterly argumentative IAGM, reported in detail, about the decision of Tarpaulin (the then literary and publications committee) to reduce *Signals* from three to two issues a year (unhelpful to the Regions in advertising events) while increasing *Mixed Moss* from one issue a year to two.

This eventually led to a 'President's Working Party' to review the society's publications which I was asked to chair, and which produced something like the present arrangements, and *Signals*' present format. And which, I might as well admit, paved the way for my present love-affair with *Signals*.



TARS BOOK GROUP

READ - ZOOM - CHAT

We're a small, friendly group who meet every few months to chat about books from a short list of titles suggested at the end of the previous Zoom get-together. New members always welcome!

Next meeting: Sunday 26 February 7pm
Zoom Meeting ID: 813 7605 8904
Passcode: 934802
(any queries, contact Elizabeth Williams)

These are the titles on the list - you don't have to have read all of them!

Alone on a Wide, Wide Sea

by Michael Morpurgo
Moving and much-loved saga inspired by postwar child transportation to Australia

Starboard

by Nicola Skinner
Surreal fantasy in which 11-year-old schoolgirl finds herself in command of the SS *Great Britain*

Escape to the Moon Islands, part one: Quest of the Sunfish

by Mardi McConnachie
Compared with Ransome and Blyton, yet post-apocalyptic and grittier. Contains sailing

Mountains of the Mind

by Robert MacFarlane
'A history of a fascination' with climbing by the author of 'The Old Ways'

PLUS: following the untimely death of Marcus Sedgwick a chance to revisit **Blood Red Snow White**



Marcus Sedgwick

who has died at the age of 54 (the cause has not been disclosed) was a prolific and generous-spirited children's author. His 2007 novel *Blood Red Snow White*



provides a unique and imaginative portrayal of Arthur Ransome's Russian experiences.

Speaking at the TARS Literary Weekend in that year he revealed how he had been initially inspired by the 2005 release of Ransome's MI 5 files but threw out his initial version - 80,000 words of 'dull... linear biography' - and, inspired by *Old Peter's Russian Tales*, recast it in three 'novella' sections, starting with a Russian fairy tale (featuring a young man with a 'closed wooden box'), then a spy thriller and finally a love story, as if recounted by Ransome himself.

Sedgwick included the files as an appendix, but they sit oddly prosaically against the imaginative perception and fluency of his lucid, elegant literary style. *Blood Red Snow White* is an interpretation that full deserves a place in the core canon of Ransome commentary. *PW*

Voyage North

by Julia Jones
pub Golden-Duck £9.99

Voyage North

JULIA JONES



More Russia, as it happens, and oddly topical, though it's set in 2012. The seventh and last of Julia Jones's *Strong Winds* series, it finds Donny, along with a canister of low-level radioactive material, heading for Norway aboard a superyacht owned by a Russian oligarch and ex-friend of the President (readers of *Pebble* will understand how).

It's all a long way from a Mirror dinghy on the Orwell but the plot hooks around to the original 'salt-stained book' of the first of the series, and answer Donny's questions about his heritage.

There's also a new cast of juvenile characters including a Greta Thunberg-inspired Russian teenage ballerina, but some of the old Allies turn up, notably Anna who still manages to play a suitably Anna-ish role, using PR power to 'spoil the summer' of the President, and Maggi gets a chance to prove her prowess at sailing.

It's a fitting end to a series that, though it's come a long way from its Ransome-related roots, deserves to be recognised as a classic of grown-up children's literature. *PW*

TARS in North America

USA: Time for a rethink?

Overseas Co-ordinator **Kryisia Clack** writes:

We have been very lucky for many years to have had Robin Marshall acting as co-ordinator for the USA.

However, he is now looking to retire. The TARS Board thank him for his hard work and wish him all the best for the future.

This creates a vacancy for a new volunteer to take over (so far no one has come forward) but also provides an opportunity for a review of this role in the light of new automated arrangements for TARS membership payments.

Simon Horn, who edits the lively combined USA/ Canadian Newsletter, *Signals from Tarsus/North Pole News*, writes:

“Traditionally, the two Regional Co-ordinators for the United States (Robin Marshall), and Canada (Ian Sacré) have organized membership payments and renewals on behalf of their TARS members. With the new centralization of the payment system for TARS memberships this role is no longer needed in the way it was before.

“In the UK, the regions have enough members that local activities can be and are regularly organized. Unfortunately, here in North America we are just too few and too widely spread out to support face-to-face activities.

“However, if the pandemic has done one thing that can be considered positive, it has led people to start using remote forms of communication such as Zoom to get together, even if they cannot meet face to face. Perhaps here in North America we could consider organizing such activities.

“In any case, although the payments role may now be unnecessary, a contact is still needed to maintain the connection between the USA membership and TARS central in the UK. And someone is needed to field queries from the membership and perhaps to look into occasional Zoom sessions that would allow us to chat despite the distances.”

So, is anyone prepared to volunteer to help TARSUS move into the future?

Contact Robin or Kryisia to let us know.

USA: Robin Marshall +1 941 726 1974 45
tarsus@gmail.com

Overseas Co-ordinator: Kryisia Clack
steve@ksclack.plus.com

TARS Holly Howe (aka Bank Ground Farm) Camp August 7-13th 2023

Fixed duration, Monday (early) to Sunday. More details, please see page 6

Bank Ground Farm, East of the Lake, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8AA

6 nights: Adult £130; First child (6-18yrs) £55; Subsequent children £40

(We are being charged £2400 for the week. We are basing our charges on covering this with expected bookings. If more people come we can reduce the prices. **Please book as early as you can**)

Non-returnable deposit – Single Adult £50, Couple £75, Junior £25 on booking

Initially, priority is given to people who can come for the whole week; there will be a reserve list for others.

To webmaster@arthur-ransome.org or

Diana Wright, 9 Doves Terrace, Kington Langley, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 5NX

Names of all participants with ages for Juniors:

..... **No of tents?** **Dog?**.....

Amount of your deposit BACS/Cheque? Email

Camp mobile phone number..... Boats being brought

Pay by Cheque to ‘The Arthur Ransome Society’ or BACS Sort Code 40-26-02, A/c 61245775 with ‘HHC’, **your TARS membership number** and **surname** as the reference.

AMAZON

PUBLICATIONS

NEW for 2022

No Holds Barred

Evgenia's diaries 1927-1933, Ed Margaret Ratcliffe £14 (+£3.50 p+p)

Ransome Centre Stage

TARS amateur dramatics (2021) £14 (+ £3.50)

Sunlight and Shadows (2020)

Mike Bender £14 (+ £3.50)

The Twilight Years, Vol II - London

ed. Margaret Ratcliffe £20 (+ £3.50) Ransome's diary 1950-1963, introduction by Griff Rhys-Jones.

The Twilight Years, Vol I - Hill Top,

ed. Margaret Ratcliffe £15 (+ £3.50) Ransome's diary entries at Hill Top, 1956 to 1964.

Robert Louis Stevenson, Arthur Ransome's study, ed Kirsty Nichol Findlay. £8.50 (+ £3.50)

Ransome the Artist, by Roger Wardale, Sketches paintings etc by Arthur Ransome. £5 (+ £3.50)

Ransome on Blue Water Sailing, ed Christina Hardyment. Writings about sailing. £5 (+ £3.50)

A Ransome Book-case, by John Cowen Illustrated guide to Ransome's books. £10 (+ £3)

Bohemia in London, Ransome's 'first real book' with the original 1907 illustrations. £7.50 (+ £3.50)

From our Special Correspondent - the Journalism of Arthur Ransome in Egypt, by Nancy M Endersby-Harshman. £25 (+ £3.50)

Ransome in China, 1927, special correspondent to the Manchester Guardian and the Baltimore Sun, by David Jones. £7.50 (+ £3.50)

Arthur Ransome, a Bodley Head Monograph, Hugh Shelley. £2 (+ £2.50)

Before a Peak in Darien, ed Paul Crisp. From Arthur Ransome's early writings. £7.50 (+ £3.50)

Fair Cops and Glowworms, ed Paul Crisp An anthology AR's fishing articles. £10 (+ £3)

Genetic Building Blocks, Arthur Ransome's forebears, by Margaret Ratcliffe. £10 (+ £3)

Collecting our Thoughts, Essays from TARS Library catalogues, 2000-2009 £15 (+ £3.50)

The TARS Stall

PUBLICATIONS FROM TARS

Literary Weekend Transcripts

Report and talks from **Edinburgh, 2017** £6 (+ 2.50) Previous events, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2015, also available.

Encountering the Ransomes: DVD set

Personal memories of Arthur & Evgenia Presented by Sophie Neville, recorded interviews filmed 1996-2010. **2-DVD set £20 (+ £1.50)**

Mixed Moss

The TARS Journal since 1990
Most previous issues available. £4 (+£1.50)

BOOKS ABOUT ARTHUR RANSOME

A Thoroughly Mischievous Person

The other Arthur Ransome

by Alan Kennedy £15 (+£2.50) **NEW**

The Life of Arthur Ransome, by Hugh

Brogan £12 (+ £3) The definitive biography.

Good Little Ship: Arthur Ransome, Nancy

Blackett and the Goblin, by Peter Willis
The story of *Nancy Blackett*, inspiration for *Goblin* in *WDMTGTS*, her restoration by Mike Rines and the Nancy Blackett Trust. £14 (+ £3.50)

Swallows, Amazons and Coots

a reading of Arthur Ransome by Julian Lovelock A literary overview of all 'the 12' by the former editor of *Mixed Moss*. £17 (+ £1.80)

Arthur Ransome on the Broads

by **Roger Wardale** Beautifully illustrated and draws on diary entries from the Ransomes' Broads trips, linked to the relevant books. £15 (+ £3.50)

Arthur Ransome Afloat in Lakeland

W. R. Mitchell Attractively illustrated account of AR's haunts by a local author. £10 (+ £1.80)

Arthur Ransome, a Bibliography

by **Wayne Hammond** A comprehensive guide to all Ransome's published writing. £20 (+ £3)

Ransome in Russia, by Ted Alexander &

Tatiana Verizhnikova £18 (+ £3.50)

The TARS Stall

UK postage and packing shown for individual items.
To order, or for multiple-item or overseas costs, or any queries please contact **Christine Rae**,
e-mail: tarsstall@arthur-ransome.org
Phone +44 (0)7881 505390, preferably 6-8pm
(but *not* to make card payments, can't be done);
or SAE: The Manor House, Church Lane,
Houghton, STOCKBRIDGE, Hampshire SO20 6LJ;
Payment may be made by PayPal to:
tarsstall@arthur-ransome.org or by cheque to
TARS Stall. BACS payment details on request.

BOOKS BY ARTHUR RANSOME



Racundra's First Cruise
Arthur Ransome's first 'proper' boat, built and sail in Baltic in the 1920s re-edited by **Brian Hammett**, with additional material. Hardback £10 (+ £3.50)



Racundra's Third Cruise
Previously unpublished account of Ransome's honeymoon cruise in Latvia in 1924, (includes his draft of *Racundra's* Second Cruise) edited by **Brian Hammett**. Hardback £10 (+ £3.00)

The 12 Swallows and Amazons books
Vintage Classics paperback edition. Set of 12 £75 (+ £17) Single copies £7 each (+ £3.50)

Audio CDs of 'the 12'

Read by Gabriel Woolf
All 12 titles available. £14 (+ £3.50) each.

Old Peter's Russian Tales

Introduction by Christina Hardyment, with illustrations by Faith Jaques. £7 (+ £3.50)

Swallows and Amazons musical

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The TARS Library

contains around 1,000 books written by Ransome, read by him, written about him or in some other way connected with him.

Browse the complete list on the TARS website, or request a paper copy for a small charge.

To borrow a book, contact our Librarian, Winifred Wilson, who will send it post-free in the UK (you pay only the return postage).

Contact Winifred Wilson on 01387 252696
tarslib@arthur-ransome.org

TARS Library, Moat Brae
101 George Street, Dumfries DG1 1EA

TARS Committees

Literary & Resources:

Krysia Clack (Chair), Elizabeth Williams (Secretary), Chris Birt, Paul Crisp, Ann Farr, John Pearson, Christine Rae, Winifred Wilson, Diana Wright, Peter Wright

Publications:

Marc Grimston (Chair), Mike Glover (Secretary), The Blue Family, Catherine Lamont, David Middleton, Peter Willis

Contribute!

Letters, articles, reviews, news, photos always welcome. Send them to the Editor at peterwillis1144@gmail.com or Creek View, School Lane, Martlesham, Woodbridge IP12 4RR tel 01394 387907

Advertise!

We accept advertisements in Signals, included in the magazine or as loose inserts. Half-page £100, quarter page £50, eighth page £25. Insert your own flyer £100. Contact David Middleton, memsec@arthur-ransome.org

TARS Subscriptions

2022 rates

(renewals due 1st January)

Adult (now including Seniors) £25

Family/Group £35

Junior or Student £15

Overseas as UK, with Signals/Outlaw online (otherwise + £5 postage surcharge)

Corporate rate £60

RED SLIPPER FUND

Research and publishing grants available with new grant criteria

The **Red Slipper Fund** exists to encourage research into all aspects of Arthur Ransome's life and writings. This is one of the five objectives of the Society and we believe there is still much to discover!

To encourage more of you to undertake research, whether for a small article, pamphlet or book, for pleasure or academic study, grants may now be used towards travel costs, incidental expenditure or the costs of publication.

All we ask is that the TARS contribution is acknowledged in your work and that a copy is forwarded to the TARS Library.

For an application form and more details please contact: **Peter Wright**, peterwright180@btinternet.com
17 Chesterwood Road, King's Heath
Birmingham B13 0QG Tel: 0121 443 2910

Junior Adventure Fund

Calling all young TARS aged 13 to 19

If you are planning to take part in a Ransome inspired outdoor activity, the TARS Junior Adventure Fund (formerly the Ship's Baby Fund) may be able to help with the costs.

The range is enormous – sailing, climbing, archaeological events, walking and camping, Scouting etc to name just a few. There are a few rules: School trips and GCSE field studies, or trips with parents are not eligible; Only one award per person.

Please see the TARS website for further details or contact Paul Crisp,
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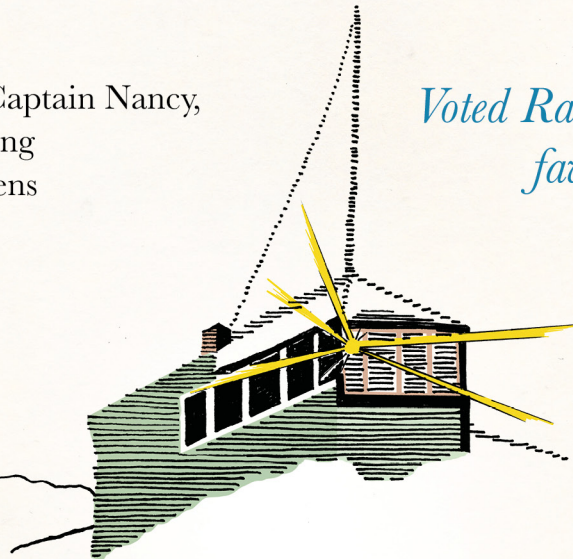
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