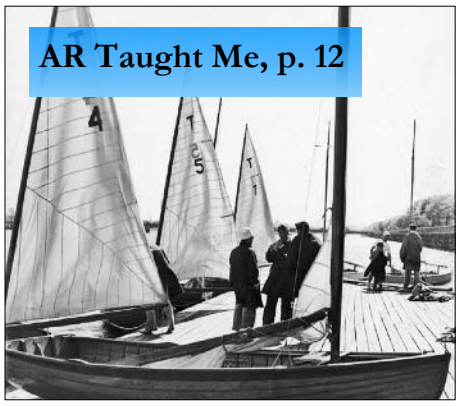
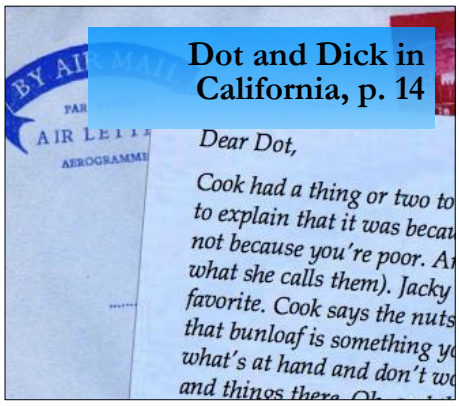
Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News

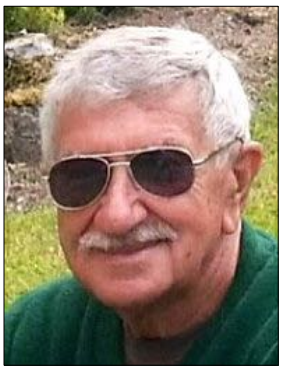
May 2018





Contents

Ship's Papers — Important information for the Crew



A View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall
TARSUS Coordinator
210 N 18th Street W Bradenton, FL 34205
robin@arthur-ransome.org

Summer again or shortly will be. Thanks to all who have renewed, though I am sorry to say so far a few have forgotten. I hope to hear from you soon.

I heard from a mother of one of our junior members that he has been selected as a recipient of the Ships Baby Fund, now called the Junior Adventure Fund. He is using this to help pay for an awesome sailing camp at the amazing Mystic Seaport museum village in Connecticut. They get to sleep on board a historic ship each night!

It is great to hear the Society is helping an overseas member.

You may see in this copy of SFT & NPN about the cost of producing and sending *Signals* three times a year to us overseas members, quite an eye opener. We faced the same problem on a much smaller scale with our own newsletter. This is going to be discussed at the forthcoming IAGM so I will await the results with interest.

I would be quite happy with a digital copy or issues only twice a year as long as we still get *Mixed Moss* in paper. Paul Wilson, the editor of *Signals*, is also concerned with problems filling the magazine with articles, something most editors face.

Looking forward to hearing of any members' activities during the summer as always.

May you all have fair winds and safe sailing, even if you never set foot on a boat.

Robin

Greetings from the North

By Ian Sacré, TARS Canada Coordinator
750 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5
gallivanterthree@telus.net

For most of us winter is slowly disappearing across the country and salt and snow shovels are being put away until the autumn. With the weather improving I hope TARS members are planning expeditions and will have high adventures in true Swallows and Amazons spirit. Simon, our hard-working editor, will, I am sure, welcome accounts of the various escapades members get up to during the summer.

Once again, TARS Canada has been complemented in the way all our members paid their renewal subscription memberships in a timely fashion. Apparently this is not the case in some of the UK Regions. The other good news is that we maintained our numbers and in fact managed to add a member to our roster.

As you will have seen in the last issue of *Signals*, there are two TARS events coming up at the end of May in the UK. From May 21 through 25, TARS will be exploring the origins of *Great Northern* and will be going to Uig in the Isle of Lewis. Apparently Ransome himself stayed at Uig Lodge where the Great Northern Expedition will be based. Then later, the IAGM will be meeting at Coniston from the May 25 through 28. I do hope some of you are planning on going to the events.

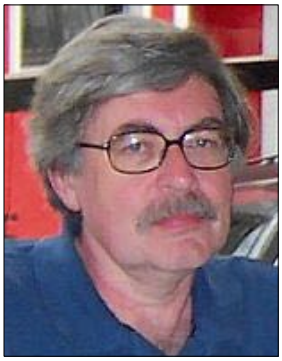
The other news is that Chris Birt, our TARS Chairman for these past few years, will be relinquishing the post later this year. I expect we shall soon hear who will take his place.

Earlier this year I sent out a list of Canadian TARS email addresses in the hope that such a list might encourage informal get togethers or the contact between members sharing similar views and ideas. I did hear from one member a while ago who advised me that they were going to get in touch with two members in their area and invite them for lunch. I have not heard if indeed such a lunch took place. If anyone does meet up with another member it would be nice for if you could let Simon Horn or myself know.

Wishing everyone fair winds and calm seas.

Swallows and Amazons For Ever!

Kind regards,
Ian Sacré



A Note from the Editor

By Simon Horn, sjhorn@gmail.com

Welcome to *Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News* for May 2018.

Recently, Paul Wilson, editor of *Signals* and *The Outlaw*, wrote to TARS coordinators around the world to raise the question of the *Signals* publication schedule and ask for their opinions. Producing a printed magazine three times a year is very expensive, and in a period when the Society's membership is not growing, he asked how long we could afford to continue publication without changes, and how it might be possible to reduce costs. Producing two issues a year would save money, but in that case could the magazine continue to play its role, since it often provides news of upcoming events along with its with reports on recent happenings?

I don't know the answer to the question, though I do wonder if a more intensive use of the Society website might be in order, especially if we hope to attract new members from a generation that has come to take the web for granted. What do you think? If you have an opinion, please share it, either with me, or your national coordinator, or the TARS board.

* * *

In this issue

TARS members have come through once again and, along with stalwart contributors like Ian Sacré and Molly McGinnis, some new voices have appeared.

In "AR Taught Me" Dick Mills tells us how he was one of many who learned to sail thanks to Arthur Ransome's books, so well that in his first time in a sailboat, at the MIT sailing club in 1949, he came second in a race.

In "A Clay Medallion, circa 1954" Marilyn Steele shares an image of a Ransome-inspired medallion that she made as a child.

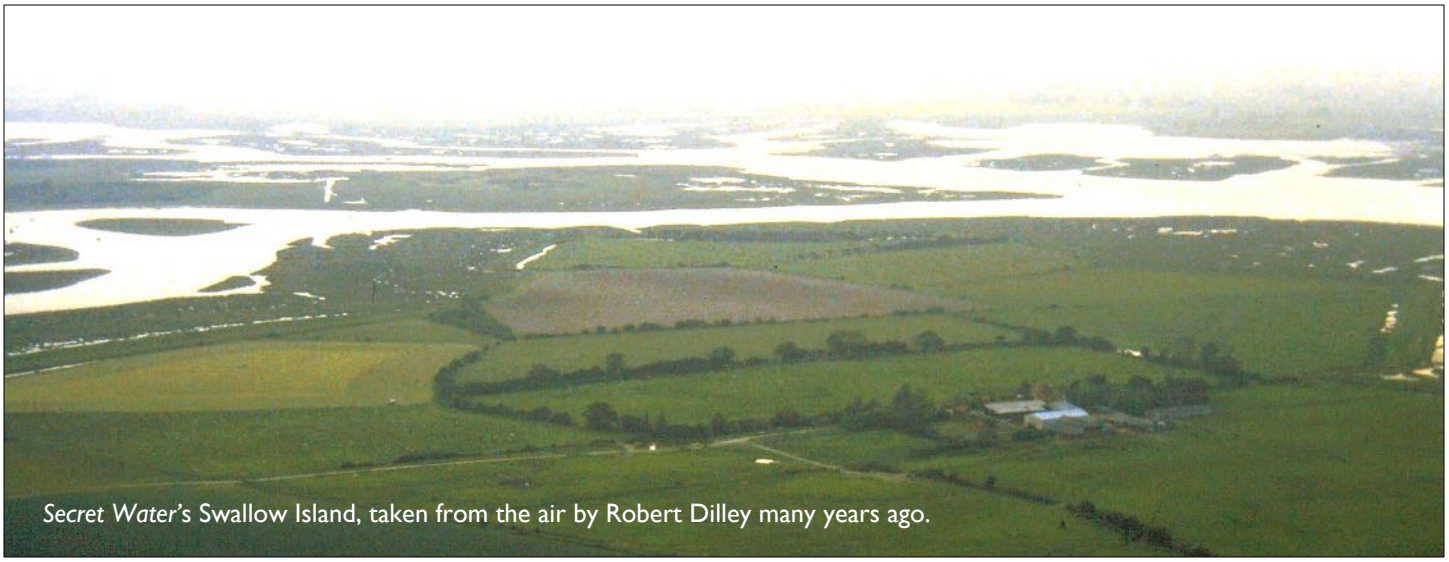
Contributions also came in from overseas members. If this was the UK magazine, that would mean us, among others, but here it means New Zealand coordinator Cheryl Paget's explanation of how she procured a lobster hat while visiting Canada's smallest provice, as well as a tale of climbing Kinder Scout from the Blue Family (who happen to be the edtors of *The Outlaw*).

Ian Sacré tells us all about the Beaufort wind scale in "So What about that Wind in the Willows?", Elizabeth Jolley brings us up to date on the "Tent for Two" expedition with pictures from around the world, and Molly McGinnis unearths a treasure trove of letters (including recipes!) from Dot and Dick's little-known trip to California.

Finally, I give you my review of Alan Kennedy's novel, *The Boat in the Bay*.

* * *

I hope you enjoy the issue, and thanks again to all the contributors. The next issue will come out in September. As always, remember, you don't have to be a writer to contribute, and short items are as welcome as long ones.



Secret Water's Swallow Island, taken from the air by Robert Dilley many years ago.

Kanchenjunga's Cairn — Places we've been and our adventures

Anne of Green Gables meets a Kiwi Amazon Lobster Pirate

By Cheryl Paget, Co-ordinator for The Arthur Ransome Society in New Zealand

In July this year I fulfilled a 35-year dream by visiting Prince Edward Island in Canada. As a young girl, for Christmas I was given a copy of *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery (which is set on the island), and loved it. I rapidly read all the other books in the series, followed by *Emily of New Moon* in my teenage years when the trilogy came back into print. A few years ago I found, lurking in the Hastings library, several of her other stories, some written for adults, which I read for the first time.

A chance conversation with my friend Lauren in late 2016 revealed that although I wanted to visit P.E.I., she had actually booked her holiday to go there – for the same reason – a love of all things L. M. Montgomery. So she invited me to join her, an offer I couldn't refuse.

We travelled to Canada together, separated on arrival, met again on P.E.I., separated, and met again to fly home. So we had two separate holidays, joining up for the shared experience of visiting the real places L. M. Montgomery described, the places where she lived or spent her childhood. To say it was magical is an understatement, helped by beautiful summer weather, good food, an excellent hotel and a laid-back island atmosphere with only the occasional queue of traffic to contend with.

Cheryl wearing her P.E.I. lobster hat.

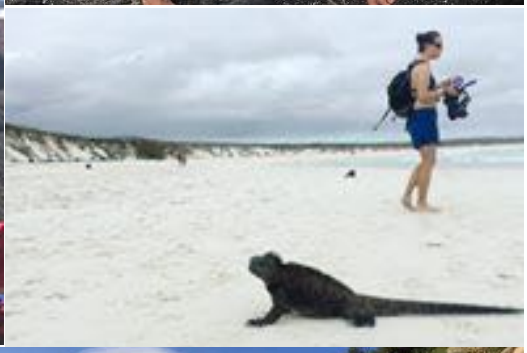
On our first evening in the provincial capital Charlottetown, we walked past a gift/craft shop, where I noticed in the window a rather cunning red knitted hat, with a lobster head at the top and the tail knitted so it would run down the wearer's neck. I had to have it. Lauren couldn't see why, but decided to humour me. Next day, I made a beeline for the shop, and made the rather special purchase, despite a momentary panic when I thought it was only available in child sizes. The shop assistant kindly took me to the adult section of the shop where there was a large pile of various sizes ready for me to try on! After much eye rolling on Lauren's part, I gleefully left the shop with my new hat in a paper bag, vowing to wear it at the Anne of Green Gables Museum when we visited. If she thought a few days distance might make me forget she was wrong, and so on the appointed day, there I was, sporting my red lobster hat outside the museum begging her to take a photo! She obliged, but did think that I was perhaps taking the Montgomery/Ransome mash-up a little too far.

Two of the most influential books on my life are *Swallows and Amazons* and *Anne of Green Gables*. Strong female characters in my reading as a child have undoubtedly shaped the person I am now – I went to university to study English Literature simply because Anne Shirley did, so visiting P.E.I. whilst dressed in a locally made bright red hat makes perfect sense to me. Plus, I now have a rather unusual souvenir of my holiday which no doubt will make appearances at future TARSNZ events!

Tent for Two Roundup

Compiled by Elizabeth Jolley

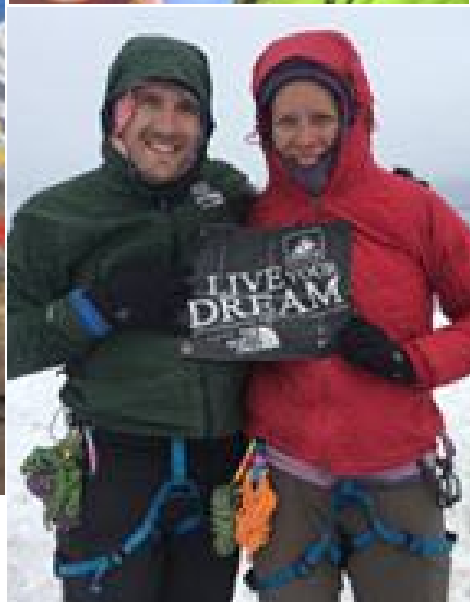
In the middle of last year, TARS member Helen Jolley and partner Mike Dorfman began a year of adventuring around the globe that they call "Tent for Two". Elizabeth Jolley has compiled a medley of photographs from their trip.









If you want to follow Helen and Mike's adventures, visit their Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/TentFor2/

The Professor's Laboratory — Ideas, instructions & fixes

So What about that Wind in the Willows?

By Ian Sacré

Long ago, in the days of only wind-powered sailing vessels, a sailor's description of wind force very much depended on where he or she had grown up and been exposed to the local sea conditions first hand. In usually gentle, mild climes, where stormy weather was a fairly rare thing, a strong breeze might well seem almost like a violent gale. But to a hardy soul growing up in a Newfoundland outport, New Zealand, or an island in the Outer Hebrides such a breeze would be considered perfectly suitable and normal for some peaceful fishing. Thus one person's stiff breeze might be another person's soft breeze and without some form of standardization, formal weather observations regarding the different wind forces and sea states found around the world were very subjective.

This subjective view of wind and sea conditions by a northern sailor was brought home to me while serving as a young officer with an old Newfoundland skipper. One day while I was officer of the watch on the bridge on a bright, beautiful day with a strong breeze of 22 to 27 knots and the sea beginning to form large waves with spray and white foamy crests. The skipper arrived on the bridge for morning coffee. He gazed out at the sea scape and then remarked. "What a day! When I was a lad in salt bankers (schooners) carrying dried salt fish from Newfoundland to the Azores we'd have every stitch of canvas set in this nice little breeze of wind and would be making better than ten or twelve knots!"

At that time I was serving in a ship of about five thousand tons and in the then sea conditions, green water was coming over the bulwark and sweeping aft along the well deck as we rolled our way eastwards. I recall musing that not too many sailors from gentle climes would be carrying such a spread of canvas as the skipper was reminiscing about in the "nice little breeze" we were experiencing just then.

Often in that ship I would take the anemometer out on the bridge wing and ask the skipper what he thought it was blowing. In every case, just looking at the sea state he'd nail the actual wind speed within a knot of the anemometer reading, corrected for the ship's speed. The experience of a lifetime at sea.

In 1806 Francis Beaufort, a commander in the Royal Navy then serving in HMS *Woolwich*, saw a need to do something about standardizing the reporting and recording system of wind forces and went about developing a system.

But it appears he was not the first to do so. In 1704 after he had witnessed the Great Storm of 1703 Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, suggested a scale of winds comprised of eleven increasing levels, using descriptive English words and phrases in common usage at the time. Zero wind being called "Stark calm" and 11 called "A tempest", in between the extremes were:

Beaufort Force 0
Calm
Wind Speed: Less than 1 knot
Sea: Sea like a mirror.

Beaufort Force 1
Light air
Wind Speed: 1 to 3 knots
Sea: Ripples with the appearance of scales are formed, but without foam crests.

Beaufort Force 2
Light breeze
Wind Speed: 4 to 6 knots
Sea: Small wavelets, still short but more pronounced. Crests have a glassy appearance and do not break.

Beaufort Force 3
Gentle breeze
Wind Speed: 7 to 10 knots
Sea: Large wavelets. Crests begin to break. Foam of glassy appearance. Perhaps scattered white horses.

Beaufort Force 4
Moderate breeze
Wind Speed: 11 to 16 knots
Sea: Small waves, becoming longer, fairly frequent white horses.

Beaufort Force 5
Fresh breeze
Wind Speed: 17 to 21 knots
Sea: Moderate waves, taking a more pronounced long form; many white horses are formed. Chance of some spray.

Force 1 – Calm weather
Force 2 – Little wind
Force 3 – A fine breeze
Force 4 – A small gale
Force 5 – A fresh gale
Force 6 – A top sail gale
Force 7 – Blows fresh
Force 8 – A hard gale of wind
Force 9 – A fret of wind
Force 10 – A storm

Even before Defoe, in a book written in 1697, the privateer William Dampier is said to have used similar words to describe wind forces.

It is thought that the anemometer was first invented around 1450 by the Italian, Leon Battista Alberti. But in 1759 British engineer John Smeaton also designed an early anemometer which he used for part of his study of windmill design. He used an eight-point-scale system and described the movement of leaves, branches and trees at each level. Then in about 1780 Alexander Dalrymple, hydrographer for the East India Company, a company with whom Beaufort had served his seagoing apprenticeship, produced a scale of winds to be used by the company's captains.

So when, on 13th. January 1806, Beaufort wrote in his logbook that he would describe wind forces using a zero to thirteen point scale he was only following the custom of the sea at that time. The initial scale of 13 classes, zero to twelve did not reference wind speed numbers at all but related qualitative wind conditions to the effect of wind on the sails of a frigate, then the main ship of the Royal Navy, from "just sufficient to give steerage" to "that which no canvas could withstand".

The original Beaufort Scale of 1806 was as follows.

0 – Calm
1 – Faint breeze or just not calm
2 – Light air
3 – Light breeze
4 – Gentle breeze
5 – Moderate breeze
6 – Fresh breeze
7 – Gentle, steady gale
8 – Moderate gale
9 – Brisk gale
10 – Fresh gale

Beaufort Force 6
Strong breeze
Wind Speed: 22 to 27 knots
Sea: Large waves begin to form; the white foam crests are more extensive everywhere. Probably some spray.

Beaufort Force 7
Near gale
Wind Speed: 28 to 33 knots
Sea: Sea heaps up and white foam from breaking waves begins to be blown in streaks along the direction of the wind.

Beaufort Force 8
Gale
Wind Speed: 34 to 40 knots
Sea: Moderate high waves of greater length; edges of crests begin to break into spindrift. The foam is blown in well-marked streaks along the direction of the wind.

Beaufort's 1838 Scale

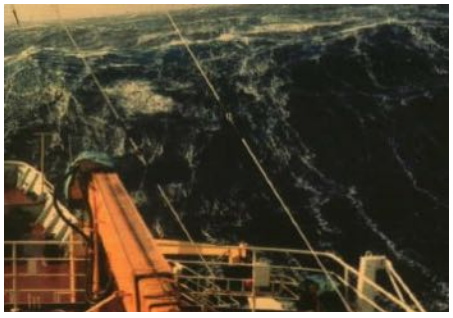
0	Calm		Calm
1	Light air		Just sufficient to give steerage way
2	Light breeze	That in which a well- conditioned	1 - 2 knots
3	Gentle breeze	man-of-war with all sail set and "clean	3 - 4 knots
4	Moderate breeze	full" would go in smooth water from	5 - 6 knots
5	Fresh breeze		Royals etc.
6	Strong breeze	That to which she could just	Single reefed topsails and top-gallant sails
7	Moderate gale	carry in chase "full and by"	Double reefed topsails, jib, etc.
8	Fresh gale		Triple reefed topsails, etc.
9	Strong gale		Close reefed topsails and courses
10	Whole gale		That which she could scarcely bear with close reefed main topsail and reefed foresail
11	Storm		That which would reduce her to storm staysails
12	Hurricane		That which no canvas could stand

11 – Hard gale
12 – Hard gale with heavy gusts
13 – Storm

But the real and very significant contribution of Beaufort came later as he continued to discuss the subject with other notable seamen including Captain Fitzroy of HMS *Beagle*. Beaufort's final reiteration consisted of a twelve-point scale and was submitted to the Admiralty in 1831. It was finally approved in 1838 by their Lordships of the Admiralty to be used by all ships of the Royal Navy. Once again the 1831 Beaufort wind force scale was tied to the impact the various wind velocities had on a well-found Royal Navy frigate.

In 1906 Dr. G. C. Simpson devised a landsman's criteria for the Beaufort Scale. It was not unlike that used by John Smeaton but was more detailed. For example Beaufort's Force 6, "Strong breeze"; in landsman's parlance would be described as "Large branches in motion; whistling heard in telegraph wires, umbrellas used with difficulty". The simple wording used in the original and the further modifications made to the Beaufort Wind Scale over the years allows the impact of wind velocity to be clearly understood and described by people of all walks of life.

In 1939 The International Meteorological Committee agreed upon the actual sea criterion associated with Beaufort's Scale of Wind Force and thus in sea criterion, Beaufort's Force 6 breeze would be described as "Large waves begin to form; the white foam crests are more extensive everywhere. Probably some spray." Again, a beautifully simple description of sea conditions which I am sure most of us have



Beaufort Force 9
Strong gale
Wind Speed: 41 to 47 knots
Sea: High waves. Dense streaks of foam along the direction of the wind. Crests of waves begin to topple, tumble and roll over.
Spray may affect visibility.

Beaufort Force 10
Storm
Wind Speed: 48 to 55 knots
Sea: Very high waves with long over-hanging crests. The resulting foam, in great patches, is blown in dense white streaks along the direction of the wind. On the whole the surface of the sea takes on a white appearance. The 'tumbling' of the sea becomes heavy and shock-like. Visibility affected.

Beaufort Force 11
Violent storm
Wind Speed: 56 to 63 knots
Sea: Exceptionally high waves (small and medium-sized ships might be for a time lost behind the waves). The sea is completely covered with long white patches of foam lying along the direction of the wind. Everywhere the edges of the wave crests are blown into froth. Visibility affected.

witnessed first hand. Just like the sound of whistling telegraph wires is a familiar sound to many of us.

As more scientific measuring methods were developed and made available the Beaufort Wind Scale was further added to. The first addition was the limits of velocities associated with each force. Beaufort Force 6 for example has limits of between 22 and 27 knots. The average velocity would be set at 24 knots and the equivalent pressure in pounds per square foot is 2.3 pounds. Interestingly, a Force 12 or hurricane force wind has a velocity above 65 knots and the pounds per square foot exerted is above 17.0 pounds. The devastation caused by such winds is therefore not surprising. It has been calculated that waves 25 feet high created by a higher velocity wind will transfer energy to a coastline

Beaufort Force 12
Hurricane
Wind Speed: 64 knots and over
Sea: The air is filled with foam and spray. Sea completely white with driving spray; visibility very seriously affected.

of about 230 horsepower per foot length of coast, which explains the destructive power of the sea on cliffs and man made structures.

Because of the geographical limitations effecting fetch and water depth of Coniston Water, the Swallows and Amazons crews sailing on their adventures on the lake would not have experienced the tumultuous sea conditions found in the open ocean. But the landsman's criterion involving trees must have frequently been observed as the wind howled down the valleys to the open water of the lake. Even a two or three foot wave and a big wind is a scary thing in a small boat like Swallow. A double reefed main and the boat in "chase" mode would have been the order of the day!

---

1. I am indebted to Frank Singleton for allowing me to use information contained in his article "Historical and Contemporary Versions of the Beaufort Scale" at www.weather.mailasail.com, which is a lighthearted and serious look at various Beaufort scales.
2. More excellent information can be found at: www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/library/publications/factsheets
3. More technical information can be found in Meteorology for Mariners, HMSO.

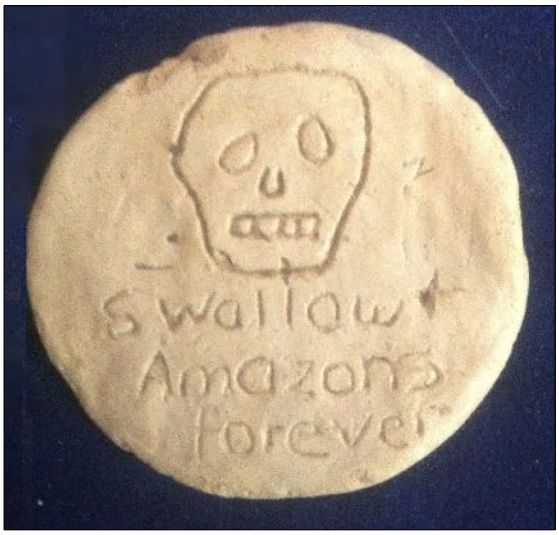
Mrs Barrable's Gallery — Art from our members

A Clay Medallion, circa 1954, by Marilyn Steele

In my neighborhood folks practiced free-range parenting. We grew up outside what later became the beltway in the shadow of Washington, D.C. Our parents knew each other through church, PTA or other community gatherings. Phone numbers were printed in a local phone book which resembled more of a crib sheet and parents kept it handy to their ever-busy rotary-dial plastic telephones.

The neighborhood extended a quarter of a mile and included anyone who lived adjacent to the woods and creek. On any given day, we could hike through fields of hay and wild flowers and with very little trouble find someone engaged in crawdad fishing, building structures out of sticks, or even riding through on horses.

If I ever got stuck and asked Mother what I could do to play, I was handed a bucket and sent out to slay dandelions, or pick up rocks. If it was raining, a reminder to clean out my drawers usually sent me scurrying to a treasured project that had slipped my mind.



On one day when I wasn't interested in any of the proposed suggestions, I went to the creek with my bucket and brought home yellow clay from the creek banks. I strained it through screening and worked it into the medallion which commemorates my love of Arthur Ransome's books about the crews of the ships "Swallow" and "Amazon" and my admiration of their amazing adventures.

Ship's Library — Books (and movies) we've read and want to share

The Boat in the Bay – A novel by Alan Kennedy

By Simon Horn

The story begins with two children, Laura and Stuart, in a train on their way to a great lake in the north. Flooding has delayed everything. They are met at the station by three more children, Poppy and Ian (their sister and brother) and Elizabeth (a friend) and her mother Mrs. Bradley. (The four siblings' mother remains away in the south and their father is a naval officer and of course not there either.)

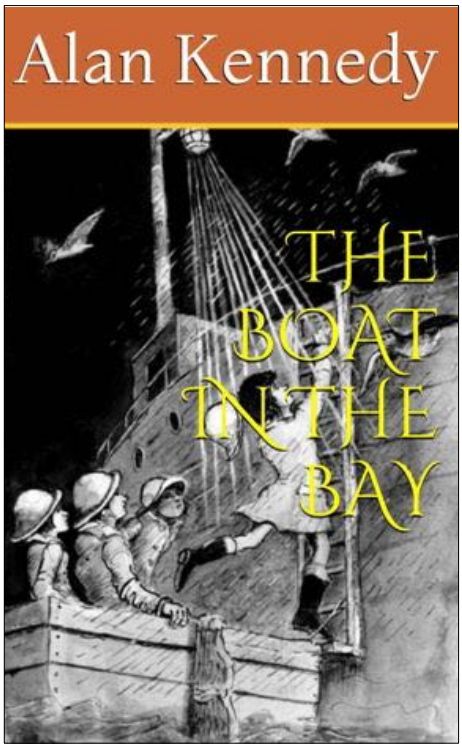
Safe at Elizabeth's house, they watch the water rising and decide that they must rescue Elizabeth's dinghy, *Fairway*, before the boathouse is out of reach. They go out to look. Meanwhile Mrs. Bradley has gone out out and can't get back, since the the road is now blocked, and their cook (named "Cook") has left to help a sick sister, not knowing that Mrs. Bradley can't return. And the electricity is out and the telephone has stopped working. Whew!

The four Swallows and Nancy… oops, I mean the four siblings and Elizabeth, are left alone in the isolated house and must fend for themselves. Now the story can really get going!

I have seen something very like this before. A good start, perhaps, but very derivative. The four siblings are not absolute carbon copies of the Walkers, but close (Roger, I mean Ian, stop fooling about!). And I am afraid that Elizabeth really is Nancy. She's the driving force behind their adventure. (No Peggy, though.)

The Boat in the Bay traces the children's adventures while they remain cut off from the adult world. The "Boat" belongs to Elizabeth's Uncle Jim, sorry, I mean Albert. The rising flood waters mean that the houseboat is no longer safely moored. The children have to save it, and they do. And the adults, Uncle Albert and Daddy, arrive just in time to congratulate them.

Perhaps I should apologize both to you, the reader, and to the author. *The Boat in the Bay* is not a bad book. It is a very good book, and if I could write one that good I would be extremely pleased. It is, however, as hope I have shown, obviously inspired by and extremely derivative from *Swallows and Amazons*. But there are many worse models to follow.



So give it a try. The ebook is available on Amazon, and the author has a website talking about his extensive writing at lasserradepress.weebly.com

The next book in the series is called *The Broken Bell*, and I have just downloaded it. Let's see where he takes his characters. Perhaps I will tell you in a future issue.

Useful Links

The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) website: http://www.arthur-ransome.org.uk

All Things Ransome, a website devoted to keeping articles, artwork, and anything related to Ransome: http://www.allthingsransome.net

The Arthur Ransome Wiki, an encyclopedia on Ransome, his life and works: http://arthur-ransome.wikia.com/wiki/Arthur_Ransome_Wiki

Dipping our Hands — Personal relationships with the books

AR Taught Me!

By Richard G. Mills

My first encounter with AR took place when my mother read *Swallowdale* to me in instalments, as my current bedtime story. The instalments were intended to be chapters, but as I recall, I often begged to know "but what happens next?" and my patient mother would read on. *Swallowdale* was thus a bedtime-story failure. It did the opposite of putting to sleep an already-enthralled, and future lifelong, devotee of the man and his works.

The date of that encounter would have been late 1936 or early 1937, a time when only the first six of the series had been published – or perhaps "had reached the U.S". Whichever, this situation led to some distressing times for me, because it is a fact that readers – even young readers, if they receive parental assistance – can read much faster than authors can write, edit, publish, and place in readers' hands new stories.

Thus it did not take me long to consume all of the first six, soon seven, of the series, and thereafter to become a great annoyance to Elizabeth Agee, proprietress of Agee's Bookshop, at Five Points, in Birmingham, Alabama. Whenever a family shopping expedition took me to that vicinity I would seek out poor Mrs. Agee and demand to know what the publishers (or distributors, or whomever) could tell her about "the next Arthur Ransome book". And as each one finally did come along, I snapped it up and devoured it in a distressingly short time. More than once during those years my mother would suggest that "...perhaps you could manage to stretch the reading out just a bit..."

Those books taught me... a lot. 'Tween-wars English culture and vocabulary: A "torch" is not a flaming stick; "Ginger beer" (beer! beer?) can be had in "stone bottles". The pounds/shillings/pence monetary system is – a mess. Money in that place, and during those years, had very different purchasing power; a half-crown was enough to make John "a rich man". Geography: with hours of poring over the "Atlas" volume of the "Encyclopedia Britannica", I discovered the secret location of The Lake (I was sure it was Windermere; "Bowness" serving for "Rio" was the tipoff). To clinch it, I found a real mountain right there, just where Kanchenjunga had to have been.

And those books taught me to sail. Not on water; not in a boat, but in the pages of *Swallows and Amazons*.

Dick Mill's first sail would be in an MIT "Tech Dinghy".

I now know that many others have learned that same way, and those others have already told their stories in various TARS publications. So please note: if you don't want to hear yet another "AR taught me to sail" tale, you are excused from reading further. Thank you for coming this far, and please don't feel guilty about flipping to something more interesting.

Discovery that one is not unique must be the cause of many moments of disillusionment for the very young. One of my encounters with this truth involved my belief that I had invented the peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich. Then I found instances of my creation on offer in the school cafeteria during my first-grade, first-day lunch period. I was crushed.

I have been somewhat less devastated by the "AR-taught-me-too" discovery, as I was a little older when it happened. So, with my conscience now eased by my above-stated offer to the reader of escape, I am going forward, resolved to tell my version of a story that has perhaps become a cliché.

Back, then, to my tale. Time has passed, and in September 1949 I am an entering freshman at MIT, which sprawls its 100 acres along the banks of the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And residing in MIT's "Sailing Pavilion", a facility constructed on the river directly in front of the school's main buildings, I have discovered a fleet of some 25 beautiful Herreshoff-built, mahogany lap-

strake-hull, centerboard, Marconi/cat-rigged, 12-foot "Tech Dinghies".

And now I, having met very few boats of any kind, and certainly having never set foot in a sailboat, have become also the newest member of the MIT Sailing Club. I have paid my dues, and I hold the special membership card that proves it. This card, I am being told, is the magic key that will give me access to those beautiful little boats.

Or will it? Yes, my tutor continues, BUT FIRST...

And the "but first" involves endless hours of "shore school" – right-of-way rules, racing rules, a glossary of nautical terms, knots, rigging types, a purgatory of apprenticeship in the boats, but only with the lowly rank of "Crew", and endless other impediments to just getting into a boat and going out there on the river.

But he is still speaking. UNLESS...

The "unless" turns out to be "unless you're trying out for the racing team". Well, hurray! Guess who, on the spot, became the most recent MIT freshman to try out for the MIT racing team! My magic card is properly endorsed to show that I am not just a "Skipper," but a "Racing Skipper" – the top rank among experienced Tech-Dinghy sailors!

"OK, there's a race getting started now. Take number 12, there at the dock, grab a Crew for ballast, and see what you can do!"

Right here there's a lot of detail that you're glad I'm leaving out, but – my first time in a sailboat of any kind – I came in second of 12 boats.

Thank you once again, AR! Thank you, this time, for teaching me to sail and for thereby giving me countless hours of pleasure out there on the Charles River Basin during my undergrad years at MIT!

The Sailing Pavilion dock in 1949 showing MIT's "T" class boats – the Tech Dinghies – in action. I might have been standing right behind the photographer!

A very few of these boats – number 5 for sure, and maybe number 4, both shown in the photo – could be sloop-rigged by stepping the mast on the after, rather than the forward, side of that front thwart, and then hoisting a tiny jib on the forestay (which is only barely visible in this photo, but which runs from the 75% point on the mast to the prow).

I used to love to do that, because with the jib helping the flow over the main I could point higher in a close reach, and I just had more canvas up there, so I could run rings around the standard cat-rigged boats. The sloop rig was disqualified for record races, of course.

Ah, memories!

Dick

PS – Two of MIT's four 110s are at the far end of the dock.

Dot's Latest Story — Your S&A-inspired writing

Dot and Dick in California

"Edited" by Molly McGinnis

Dick's First Letter

Dear Captain Flint, I mean, Mr. Blackett,

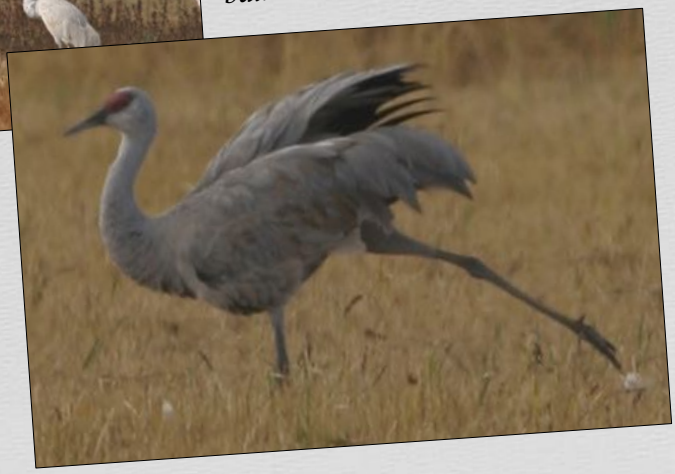
My father got an invitation to be a guest lecturer in California and he decided to do that instead of going back to the old dig for his sabbatical and we left in such a hurry I didn't get a chance to write. We are just settling in at the University of California in Davis, kind of in the middle of the state. We are living in the house of another professor who is on sabbatical somewhere else. It has furniture and kitchen stuff and they even left some food so moving was pretty easy.

Can you send Dot and me the Amazons' address and if you know it, the Walkers' too?

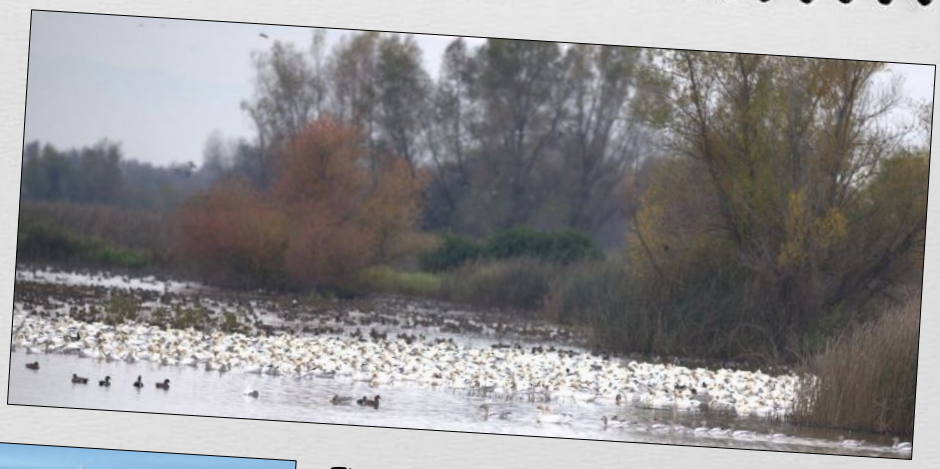
I have to make this quick because we are leaving for a field trip in a few minutes. Da took me to the biology department and introduced me to the Natural History professor right away, because this is the season when millions of waterbirds migrate north, and I get to go along on the field trips! We drive along slowly and stop to look and Dr. Cogswell talks about the birds. The school even has binoculars that students can use – much better than the telescope. Bird books too, and Dr. Cogswell even gave me a copy of the text he wrote for the students. Here are some pictures from the last trip.

These are Sandhill Cranes. They dig around in the corn roots. Dr. Cogswell says they are on their way to Oregon and Washington to nest. The others will go all the way to the Arctic tundra to nest.

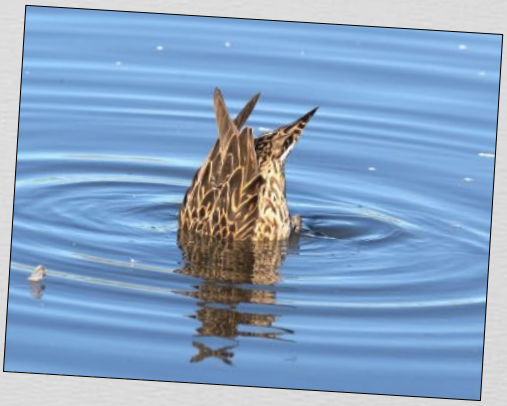
Dot says this one looks like a ballet dancer.



This is a reserve called Gray Lodge. There were acres of birds packed like sardines but we stopped so close I couldn't get a very wide view.



This is a pintail. They dive but not all the way under like this one (I think it was a Baldpate).



These are Snow Geese and White-fronted Geese (the brown ones – the "front" is a little line at the top of the beak. Dr. Cogswell says they always pick the hardest thing to see to name the bird after). The really little white geese with pointy beaks are Ross Geese.

I have to go. Da's honking his horn. The car's nothing like Rattletrap – tell you more next time.

Dick

Dot Makes Bunloaf

Dear Peggy,

We are enjoying our stay in California but there's no bunloaf here and we all miss it. Do you think Cook would send a recipe? I'm the cook a lot of the time now as Mummy is taking anthropology classes about American Indians and lecturing too! Daddy is busy too, he has a big teaching schedule and the anthropologists want to pick his brains (that's something they say here) about Egyptology. Cooking is easy because the kitchen has everything – a great big electric refrigerator and you just turn the knobs on the stove and it lights right up, and the hot water is hot all the time!! Dick says the gas comes out of wells in the ground near here, and people even have gas wells of their own out in the country.

Cook said bunloaf was very easy to make. I saw her rubbing the butter into the flour, when we were getting provisions for the mining camp, and the neighbor here showed me when we made biscuits – oh! They're not thin and crisp here, more like scones. Very good hot with lots of butter and honey. Say hello to Nancy and Uncle Jim, I mean Captain Flint, and your mother, and tell them we like America but we'll be happy to get back to the Lake again.

Love, Dot

PS Da started calling Mother Mummy because when they were in Egypt she got so badly sunburned she started wrapping her head in white veiling. So Dick stopped calling them Pater and Mater which is fine with me. It was just to show off his Latin anyway. They don't have Latin until what they call High School here – Sixth Form, sort of. Dick says he's glad he started Latin at home because it makes scientific names so much easier to understand.

Dear Dot,

Cook had a thing or two to say about your not having a cook! I had to explain that it was because people in America do for themselves, not because you're poor. And she's sending two receipts (that's what she calls them). Jacky brings her the hazelnuts for Uncle Jim's favorite. Cook says the nuts are easy to peel when they're fresh and that bunloaf is something you mostly just throw together with what's at hand and don't worry yourself if they don't have sultanas and things there. Oh, and that golden syrup helps it slice without crumbling, if you can get some. Mother got her receipts from a lady named Lillian Beckwith, who was a boarder in the same cottage in the Hebrides as Mother, only Miss Beckwith liked Bruach so much she decided to live there and moved onto her own croft. Morag, the landlady, had Miss Beckwith to tea one day and she brought some of her bunloaf and they all exchanged recipes.

You can't put any other paper in an Air Letter so the recipes are coming in another one. Cook made me write the recipes down for her because she was sure her pencil would go right through the Air Letter paper. I hope I got them right. She says hello and how do you like America. I told her "very much."

Love,
Peggy

Dear Dot, here is Cook's bunloaf recipe.

Rub 4 oz butter into 4 oz flour (Cook says until it's like breadcrumbs). Take 4 oz brown sugar, 2 oz each sultanas and raisins, 1 tablespoon currants, 2 tablespoons candied peel, 1 tsp mixed spice, pinch of cloves, 1/2 tsp sodium bicarbonate, and mix them into the flour. Add 4 oz milk, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon golden syrup, beaten together. Cook says she often uses buttermilk or sour milk and a pinch more soda. She says there's always sour milk to use up when the weather's warm, and thinks it makes a better bunloaf than baking powder. Cook's "pinch" is first and second fingers and thumb. She showed me.

(Editor's note: Plain kefir or yoghurt, beaten with a fork to thin it, are good substitutes for buttermilk or sour milk. Dot would have found only the buttermilk in her grocery stores.)

Mother says to write out Cook's recipe the way she does hers, with an ingredient list first, to make it easier to follow. And she says to try Mrs. Beckwith's recipe for hazelnut bunloaf, too. You have to skin the nuts but it's easy. (Make Dick do them!) Put the nuts in a medium oven – one layer on a wide pan– in about 10 minutes take one out, blow on it to cool it a little, and rub it between your hands to see if the skins are ready to come off. When the skin rubs off the test nut, fold the rest into a tea towel and rub them between it. It doesn't matter if there are a few bits left. And maybe walnuts or almonds would do. Mother thinks you can leave the skins on almonds and walnuts.

Oh! Mother says, butter the tin really well and shake flour all over the butter. Cook says she lines the pan with baking paper and butters and flours the paper. And if there isn't a bread pan just use a cake pan, a deep one if there is one. Get the tin ready before you start the recipe.

(Editor's note: North American volume measurements and ingredient substitutes shown in parentheses.)

Here are the ingredients for the recipe with hazelnuts:

Skin and chop 6 oz (about 1 1/2 cup before peeling) hazelnuts. Mix with 2 oz (1/4 to 1/3 c) sugar.
8 oz flour (about 3 cups) — 1 tsp baking powder
Pinch salt — pinch mixed spice (pinch each cinnamon & clove or allspice)
3 oz butter (about 1/3 cup; use the markings on the cube)
1 egg — 1 T golden syrup (omit or use honey)
milk — currants or sultanas, if you like

Put the flour, salt, baking powder, and spice in a bowl and mix well with a fork.

Cut the butter into cubes about 1/2" and rub into the flour mixture.

Mix in the hazelnuts and sugar, just toss in lightly with your fingertips.

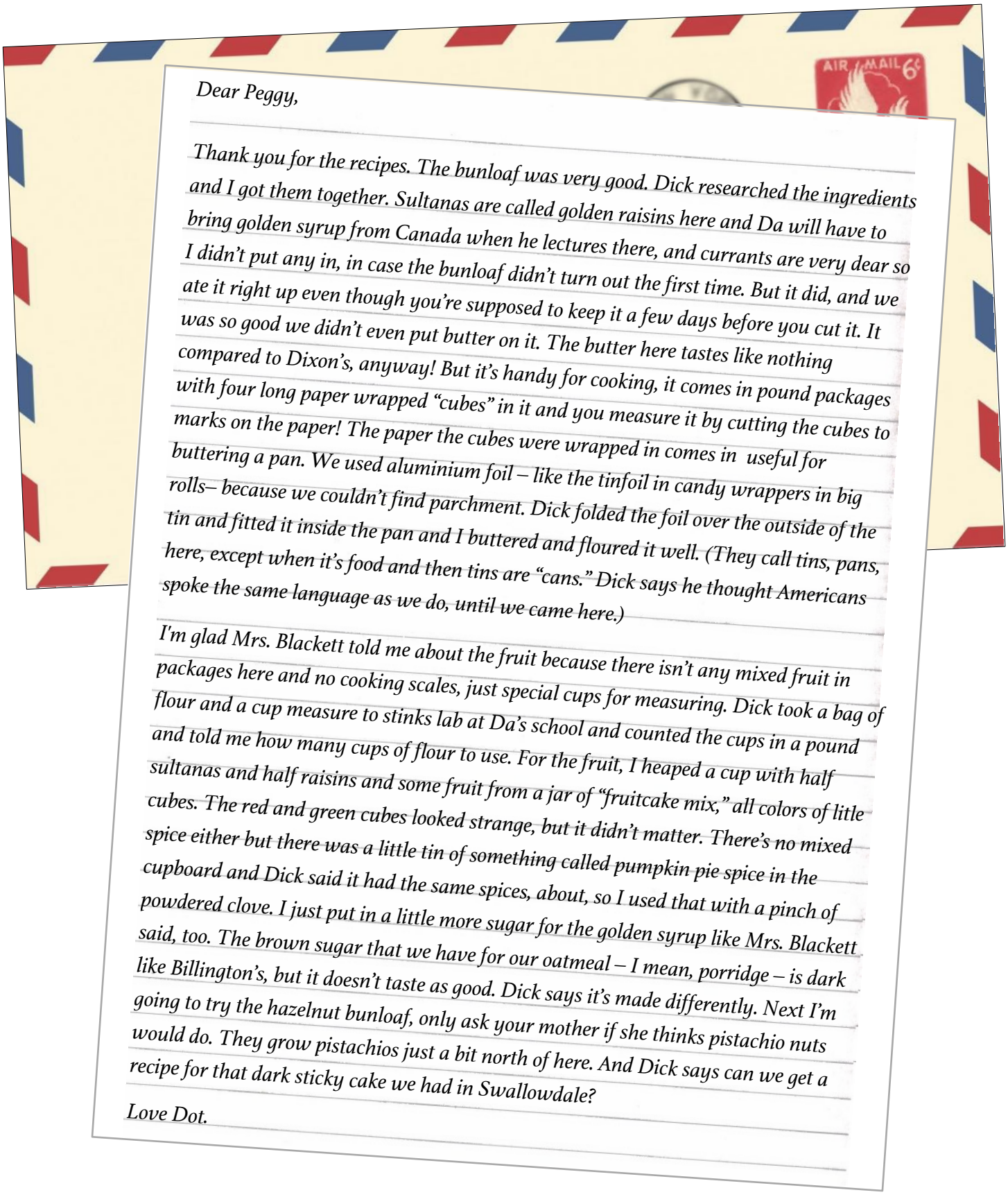
Beat the egg with the golden syrup (warm the syrup) and a little milk (to thin it); add egg mixture with enough more milk to make a soft dough that will slump if you drop some off a spoon.

Pour into prepared tin and bake at gas mark 3 or 4, (325–350°F, 160°C) about 30 minutes.

Mother said I better write down some baking hints for you, too. First, don't worry about the exact kinds or amounts of the fruit for bunloaf, use whatever you have or can get easily. After you make it a few times you don't need to weigh the fruits, you'll know how big a handful to put in. And if she is out of golden syrup she just puts a tablespoon more sugar in. And don't mix the dough too much after you get the liquid in, it makes it tough. Buttermilk makes the best bunloaf (on the farms they use sour milk). If you can get buttermilk there, use it and add about 3/4 tsp baking soda instead of baking powder.

Put a piece of brown paper or baking paper over the top if the loaf gets too brown before it's done. To see if it's done, stick a toothpick into the middle and if it comes out without damp dough on it the bunloaf is done. Usually, the loaf will shrink away from the sides a little and the side of the pan will make kind of a hollow sound if you tap it with a fingernail. Cool the bunloaf in its pan for a few minutes, then put a rack over the top and turn it all upside down, or turn the pan upside down on a tea cloth. If the pan won't lift off right away leave it for a few minutes. If it really doesn't want to come out, run a table knife in between the edges of the loaf and the sides of the pan, then turn the pan upside down and thumpcome out, run a table knife in between the edges of the loaf and the sides of the pan, then turn the pan upside down and thump it.

Mother and Cook say "Good Luck!" Nancy says, 



Dear Peggy,

Thank you for the recipes. The bunloaf was very good. Dick researched the ingredients and I got them together. Sultanas are called golden raisins here and Da will have to bring golden syrup from Canada when he lectures there, and currants are very dear so I didn't put any in, in case the bunloaf didn't turn out the first time. But it did, and we ate it right up even though you're supposed to keep it a few days before you cut it. It was so good we didn't even put butter on it. The butter here tastes like nothing compared to Dixon's, anyway! But it's handy for cooking, it comes in pound packages with four long paper wrapped "cubes" in it and you measure it by cutting the cubes to marks on the paper! The paper the cubes were wrapped in comes in useful for buttering a pan. We used aluminium foil – like the tinfoil in candy wrappers in big rolls– because we couldn't find parchment. Dick folded the foil over the outside of the tin and fitted it inside the pan and I buttered and floured it well. (They call tins, pans, here, except when it's food and then tins are "cans." Dick says he thought Americans spoke the same language as we do, until we came here.)

I'm glad Mrs. Blackett told me about the fruit because there isn't any mixed fruit in packages here and no cooking scales, just special cups for measuring. Dick took a bag of flour and a cup measure to stinks lab at Da's school and counted the cups in a pound and told me how many cups of flour to use. For the fruit, I heaped a cup with half sultanas and half raisins and some fruit from a jar of "fruitcake mix," all colors of litle cubes. The red and green cubes looked strange, but it didn't matter. There's no mixed spice either but there was a little tin of something called pumpkin pie spice in the cupboard and Dick said it had the same spices, about, so I used that with a pinch of powdered clove. I just put in a little more sugar for the golden syrup like Mrs. Blackett said, too. The brown sugar that we have for our oatmeal – I mean, porridge – is dark like Billington's, but it doesn't taste as good. Dick says it's made differently. Next I'm going to try the hazelnut bunloaf, only ask your mother if she thinks pistachio nuts would do. They grow pistachios just a bit north of here. And Dick says can we get a recipe for that dark sticky cake we had in Swallowdale?

Love Dot.

Appendix: Miss Beckwith's Bunloaf

Editor's note: *I measured weighed flour and NEVER got the same amounts as in the conversion charts. Add more or less liquid to adjust. Butter and flour or line the pan as described above. Soda is used instead of baking powder because several ingredients are slightly acid.*

Preheat oven to about 325°F.

Beat together:

1/2 c milk

1 egg

1 T treacle (black treacle, golden syrup...)

Rub to breadcrumb/coarse cornmeal consistency:

1/4 lb butter (1 cube, 1/2 c), cut into 1/2 to 3/4" pieces

1/4 lb flour (~1 1/2 c)

Mix together and stir into flour:

1/4 lb brown sugar (2/3 c, packed)

1/4 lb mixed fruit (1/2 c each sultanas & raisins, 1 T currants, 1-2 T candied peel)

1 tsp mixed spice or pumpkin pie spice

pinch allspice or cloves

1/2 tsp baking soda

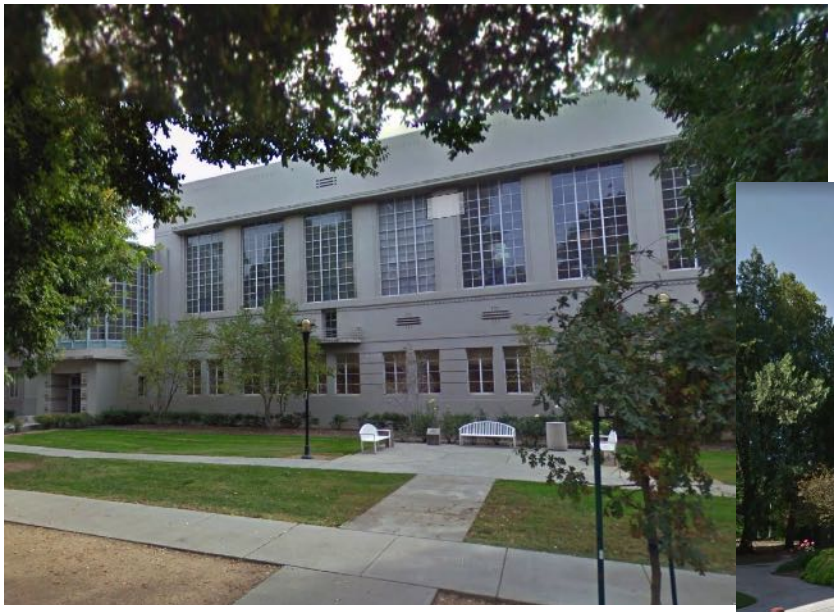
Add egg mixture and enough more milk to make a quite stiff mixture, as if for drop biscuits (scones) or cookies.

Liliane Beckwith was in fact an English author. During WWII she moved to the Isle of Skye and lived on her own croft. She later wrote a series of novels set in Skye.

She also wrote a cookbook called *Lillian Beckwith's Hebridean Cookbook.*

Bake about 1 1/2 hours in a 325° (about 160°C) oven.

It's done when it pulls away from the side of the pan ever so slightly and a skewer stuck in the middle doesn't come out with goopy dough stuck to it. Beckwith would often have used sour milk and a bit more soda, as would Cook, especially in summer when farm milk "turns" very quickly. (I usually use Kefir or yoghurt, beaten to thin it, and a slightly rounded extra 1/2 tsp of soda.)



Buildings on the UC Davis campus

Pieces of Eight — The Junior Pages

Our Climb of Kinder Scout

by the Blue family

The Blue family are the editors of The Outlaw*, the TARS magazine for juniors. They thought that North American members would be interested in this account of one of their adventures.*

Readers of Arthur Ransome's *Swallowdale* will be familiar with the expedition to climb Kanchenjunga (otherwise known as The Old Man of Coniston). Alongside reading his books and having adventures – canoeing, kayaking, wild swimming, wild camping, sailing and other related outdoor activities such as archery – mountaineering is, for us at least, at the heart of being a Ransome enthusiast. We'd like to share this with you by recounting the tale of our most recent jaunt.

In February this year, three brave explorers – Martha aged 10, Aurora aged 8, myself A.P. aged otherwise – of the Blue Family faced such an ascent that it will remain long fixed in our memories. It will stand us in good stead for our next expedition, when we aim to climb up and around Ben Nevis in Scotland.

Living in central-northern England, we are spoilt for choice for rugged or isolated landscapes, being right on the edge of the Peak District National Park. The English Peak District stands on the border between two Britains, where rolling limestone hills stretch away into the fading blue distance. The terrain can be seen as a physical, ancient rampart between highland Britain and the flatter lowlands of southern counties. This is hill country at its most rugged and dramatic. Hedgerows become drystone walls, hills become moors, and corn fields give way to rough, stony pasture. It can get a top-coat colder, too! The change in climate creates the

change in vegetation and wildlife, just as the shape of a river is formed by the land and the shape of the land is formed by the river.

It is a landscape of linguistic contradiction: there really are only a handful of 'peaks', however dramatic and stark, and 'low' signifies a high place ('hlaw' in Old English). There is little by way of summit reach compared to the English Lake District in the north or the Bens of Scotland or the Welsh '14'. 'Peak' derives from Old English 'peac' for hill and the Peak District area was known as 'Peac Lond' as long ago as 924 AD.

Along with Kinder Scout there are a few notable exceptions, such as the distinctive 'pyramids' of Thorpe Cloud in Derbyshire and Shutlingsloe in Cheshire (Scyttel's Hill, or the Cheshire Matterhorn, of 1659 feet, climbed on many a TARS expedition).

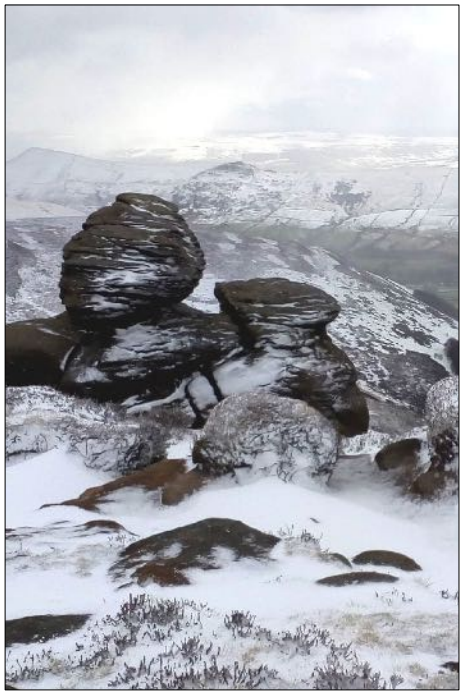
The gritstone moors and edges of this northern Peak District, the 'Dark Peak', seem untamed and wild compared to the wooded dales and rolling contours of the southern (limestone) 'White Peak'. The Peak District as a whole was officially confirmed as the first British National Park on April 17th 1951. It was and remains surrounded by the industrial sprawl of Manchester, Sheffield, Derbyshire, the Potteries of Stoke on Trent, and West Yorkshire and still acts as a lung for those cities, a place to breathe in solitude and stillness.

The name Kinder Scout, from the Saxon 'Kyndwr Scut', or 'water over the edge', is itself a graphic description of the summit escarpments, especially after heavy rainfall, with brooks and waterfalls flowing in torrents from the 2088-foot summit-held black peat bogs, including the 100-foot drop of Kinder Downfall waterfall. The summit plateau, a square-mile morass of peat 'hags' and 'groughs' (banks and gulleys), is a vast desolation of erosion and isolation, of treacle-like peat that steams like manure in sunshine. In winter it is a fearsome place. And so it was.

And so in weather fit for nought but sitting in front of a well-fed fire with a fine book, with gust-driven, torrential blizzarding snowfall, drifts and hidden ice underfoot, we tramped against

sheer gradient with gritty determination, heavying layers of bad-weather clothes, heads filling with rare airs, plumbing the seeming infinite above. A wavering, weary winter light left us no horizon lines – hills and sky were one bright shroud of ice-mist, an invisible spill of white nothingness. Wow! Awesome adventuring at its best; the challenge of reaching ahead into the unknown. Our initial, effervescent enthusiasm fuelled by infectious conversation of former such feats, of being lost on misty mountains or braced against the dying light or indifferent rains, soon ebbed and dampened exponentially as the dramatic diorama compressed an almost-obvious-defined route into a series of intermittently non-panoramic snapshots between featureless horizons: but our way was forward and the path beneath our feet was never lost.

Getting down was really only about getting down quickly to the eventual safety of the car. The expedition lasted for four hours or so but the memories will linger far longer. We left no tin in a cairn to mark our feat and our feet left no marks as driving snow covered our tracks, but the experience surely left its mark on us, preparing us for further such adventures. A fun feat of endurance, exposure and expedition.



Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News **is a joint publication of TARSUS (The Arthur Ransome Society USA) and TARS Canada.**

The TARSUS coordinator is Robin Marshall, robin@arthur-ransome.org

The TARS Canada coordinator is Ian Sacré, gallivanterthree@telus.net

The editor is Simon Horn, sjhorn@gmail.com

Please send contributions, questions and suggestions for the newsletter to the editor.