



Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News--September 2011

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Until next issue

By Elizabeth Jolley

Ship's Papers--Important Information for the crew



View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall, TARSUS Coordinator

It was only the other day I was writing how welcome the forthcoming summer was going to be; now it is almost past again. I am hoping TARSUS members were able to do some things they have always hoped for.

One member who always seems to get the most out of summer is Doug Faunt. This year he served as crew on the replica of HMS Bounty, in fact at the time of writing he had returned to her in Norway. Not content with the Bounty he crossed the North Sea to Holland in Nancy Blackett as well. He is a great adventurer in true Ransome style. I am sure we all would like to follow in his footsteps. Doug and the Bounty can be followed on Facebook. Through Facebook I can also learn of the sailing adventures of Kristin White and Gerard Mittelstaedt, two more of our nautical members.

All of which makes my own summer seem very mundane though enjoyable. In June, I went camping in the Florida Keys with my three Florida grandchildren together with my wife, my daughter and my son-in-law. Whilst not quite camping in the style of AR and the characters in his books, it was more Margolleta style, but not complete with Hullabaloo's, in what is more of a land yacht. Last September I purchased an elderly motor home and now being somewhat older I wanted something more like a bath chair, as AR wanted in his later vessels. My daughter also has a large camping trailer so I thought it fun to be able to go together.

Another member of great note but in a very different manner is Edward Carson who was able to put an Arthur Ransome display in his local library. Nice work Edward! It was very well received and something we might all consider doing. ****Editor's Note: Read Edward's description of his display on page _____*

Whilst on books, just a reminder that Arthur Ransome's long-lost study of Robert Louis Stevenson will be out on September 9. If you have not ordered one from Alan Harkin it will be available through the TARS stall at £18 plus shipping. The stall is available online at <http://arthur-ransome.org/tars-stall>. This work by AR had long been lost.

Please welcome new members Jeanette Dutton in San Diego CA, Jodie Hough in Madison WI and Carl Nord in Bainbridge Island, WA. Carl is an author of young adult fiction. Among his works are *The Skagway Kids: Alaska Christmas* (1994) and the sequel *The Skagway Kids: Alaska Snowstorm* (1996). Both books draw on Carl's childhood experiences and capture the fun, the excitement, and the hardship of growing up in Alaska in the 1940's. Regrettably, these are now out of print.

Other News: Take a look at the new Arthur Ransome Trust website:

<http://www.arthur-ransome-trust.org.uk/>

Have a Great autumn (fall)! Robin



Greetings from the North!

By Harry Miller, TARS Canada Coordinator

I was very pleased to read all the Canadian submissions to our last edition. Thank you very much Ian, Garth, Maida and Peter. I'm sure Elizabeth would welcome more from us.

I hope you have received your address list as I "e and otherwise" mailed it yesterday (Actually that would be tomorrow's yesterday). Thanks also to Ross who let me know he could receive Signals by email.

I hope your summer has been enjoyable. I have spent mine mostly at the cottage (no loon chicks this year) and looking after grandchildren with a bit of time on my Windsor chair -making hobby.

I will send out my annual dues request letter a bit earlier this year near the end of Oct. so it might not become lost among Christmas cards.

There are several ways to make your payment: Paypal, UK banker's draught or by cheque to me. If you don't pay to me the reporting to me from the UK is a bit hit or miss. To keep my records in order so I know to whom this publication should be sent, please let me know when you have paid either by email:

harryandmarymiller@rogers.com

or by phone: 416-694-6301.

****Editor's Note: Yes, I certainly would welcome more submission from our friends up north! I've enjoyed getting to know some of you through e-mails back & forth and by reading your articles :-)*

Membership Information:

Member Benefits

The descriptions below apply to **TARSUS** and **TARS Canada**** only. Members in other countries receive the publications listed, with the exception of Signals from TARSUS, and pay their local equivalent of the UK prices. Subscription prices quoted below were correct at January 2011, and will apply for this year.

FAMILY Member: \$44.00

Family Members receive the following publications:

Mixed Moss, the yearly Literary Magazine

Signals, the news from UK Regions and headquarters, and some overseas groups, three times per year

Outlaw, the newsletter for Junior members

Signals from TARSUS, the quarterly newsletter of TARSUS & TARS Canada.

With a Family Membership, it is necessary to register the names of all members of the family.

ADULT Member: \$35.00

Adult Members receive Mixed Moss, Signals and Signals from TARSUS.

SENIOR Member: \$26.50

Over 65 years of age you are eligible for Senior Membership & receive the same publications as Adult Members.

STUDENT Member: \$17.50

Student members must be engaged in full-time study. They receive the same publications as Adult Members.

JUNIOR Member: \$9.00

Junior members, under 17 years of age, receive Signals and Signals from TARSUS, plus Outlaw.

To apply for membership, please complete the Application Form.

Send it with your remittance to your Coordinator:

US: Robin Marshall 210 18th St NW Bradenton FL 34205-6845
robin@arthur-ransome.org

Canada: Harry Miller 284 Kingswood Road, Toronto, ONT M4E 3N7

You may also join online and pay with Pay Pal at <http://arthur-ransome.org/join/index>

THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY in the USA

-APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP-

Surname (Mr. / Mrs. / Miss / Ms / Dr): _____

First Name(s): _____

Birth date (**Mandatory if applying for Junior Membership**): _____

Names and birth dates of junior Family Members (if you wish to receive birthday cards!):

Postal Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

E- Mail address: _____

Subscription amounts are current as of January 2011 for US residents and based on an average exchange rate with UK.

Please clearly mark below the type of membership desired:

[] JUNIOR (up to 16th birthday), \$9.00

[] SENIOR (Over 65 Years of age), \$26.50

[] STUDENT (In full-time education), \$17.50

[] ADULT, \$35.00

[] FAMILY, \$44.00

Signature: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Do you wish to be included on a membership list that is sent to other members? Circle: **YES** **NO**

Optional details: your age, occupation and a brief profile that we can publish in our newsletter: _____

If you have any qualifications, experience, skills or interests you might like to contribute to TARS, please mention them here:

For renewals please add your membership number: _____ Cheque/Money Order enclosed

When complete, send this form with your remittance to:

Robin Marshall 210 18th St NW Bradenton FL 34205-6845 robin@arthur-ransome.org

-or- You may join online and pay with Pay Pal at <http://arthur-ransome.org/join/index>

TARSUS, TARS Canada & TARS Leadership Information

TARSUS Coordinator: **Robin Marshall** robin@arthur-ransome.org
210 18th Street Bradenton, FL 34205

US Members, please contact Robin Marshall with your questions, concerns or ideas--he will forward your e-mail or letter to the appropriate board member.

TARS Canada Coordinator: **Harry Miller** harryandmarymiller@rogers.com
234 Kingswood Rd. Toronto, ON M4E 3N7

Canada Members, please contact Harry Miller with your questions, concerns or ideas--he will forward your e-mail or letter to the appropriate board member.

Signals from TARSUS editor: **Elizabeth Jolley** erjolley8@gmail.com ***NEW!!!***
675 NW 114th Ave. Portland, OR 97229

All Members--Please send your articles & ideas for articles for Signals from TARSUS to Elizabeth any time--she will publish articles when there is space.

TARS--The Arthur Ransome Society--Board:

National Chairman:	Elizabeth Haywood
Secretary:	Mike Glover
Treasurer:	Ted Evans
Literary Chair:	Geraint & Helen Lewis
TARS Stall:	Linden Burke
Library:	Margaret Ratcliffe
Amazon Publications:	Alan Hakim
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Outlaw Editor:	Peter Aitchison
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Overseas Coordinators:

Australia:	David Bamford
New Zealand:	Dr. Peter Summers
Japan:	Tamami Nakayama

All Things Ransome, a website devoted to keeping articles, artwork, and anything related to Ransome and his 12 books, is online at: <http://www.allthingsransome.net>

THE TARS Stall--An online store for TARS members

The Stall website is <http://arthur-ransome.org/tars-stall>. A nice feature it now has is a pull-down menu in the top left hand corner, which allows one to select prices in dollars, and will give you a total of the final cart, including shipping, in dollars.

Please note they no longer ship by surface mail via sea. All purchases go by air.

For those of you who do not have the internet, Robin can carry out the transaction for you.

Swallows and Amazons Movie (the 70's):

Sophie Neville, who played Titty in the movie and was involved with the purchase of movie Swallow, now has a blog at <http://sophieneville.net/>. It gives details of the making of the movie and lots of other things regarding her life and interest in Ransome. It is well worth a visit.

Ship's Library—books we've read and want to share

Sailing in the Caribbean--*Companion Books to Peter Duck?*

An Embarrassment of Mangoes and The Spice Necklace

Books by Ann Vanderhoof (Paperback, Kindle, and hardcover); Review by Molly McGinnis

I got An Embarrassment of Mangoes for a gift and had no thought of sailing in mind – but reading Ann Vanderhoof's accounts turned out to be the closest I've ever been to a real-time ocean voyage by sailboat. Realer time than Sailing Around the World Alone and The Venturesome Voyages of Captain Voss and all the others like that too, even We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea, because the Vanderhoofs are people like us, just a couple who sail, and who dream of taking a big ocean voyage. Ann's dream quickly became that of eating and cooking her way through the Caribbean. That's exactly what would happen to me (but it wouldn't have been such a surprise to me, because my son is a steel drum, or pan or steel pan, player and teacher and came back from his first time playing in Trinidad's Panorama festival with a Trinidadian cookbook and a yen for Trinidadian rotis. Now I have a whole shelf of books about Caribbean cooking and Ann's just about beats them all – anyone who wants to plan a Peter Duck feast need look no further than these two books. Almost all the recipes were designed in and cooked in the tiny galley of *Receta*, just the thing for TARS sailors, and Ann really knows how to write a recipe that works.

Receta is a 42-foot sloop – click on “About Receta” for the plan and technical details. She's 12' 3" wide at her brief widest point--not much space to live and cook in. An Embarrassment of Mangoes takes you from the dream to the search for the boat to the first sail, hopping from *Receta*'s home in Maine down the East Coast of the USA... to the first big voyage... to the first *really* big voyage – it's all here. The Spice Necklace continues the story with even more joyful depth as the Vanderhoofs learn their way around the Islands and make more and more friends among the Island people.

And those people! Ransome and Vanderhoof have a lot more than sailing in common – Ann's sympathetic and never condescending portraits of her Caribbean friend and her acute ear for their variations on the English language are very much like the little pictures Ransome gives us of the locals in the S&A's books – the farmer's son Jacky in The Picts and the Martyrs, with his offhand remarks illuminating a whole way of life and of speaking, “old Mr. Swainson” and his songs, Slater Bob with his great store of knowledge and local myth, Cook with her willing contributions to the feasts and her care for the children – all, and more, have their counterparts in An Embarrassment of Mangoes and The Spice Necklace.

There's something almost better to go with Ann's books – a lavish gallery of photos of Islander friends and Island places, and an enthralling blog, all on the Spice Necklace website. Sailboat specs, blog, recipes, and photo galleries on Ann's Website: www.spicenecklace.com!!

Ransome's Swallows & Amazons books make top 100 poll of best children's books!

Librarian Elizabeth Bird, in New York City, has created a list of the top 100 children's books from a poll. The complete list of all 100 books, with reviews & other information about each book, is in her blog at this address: www.blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/afuse8production/2010/04/13/the-top-100-childrens-novels-poll-1-100/

Here is what she & several reviewers had to say about the Swallows & Amazons canon:

#94 Swallows and Amazons by Arthur Ransome (1930)

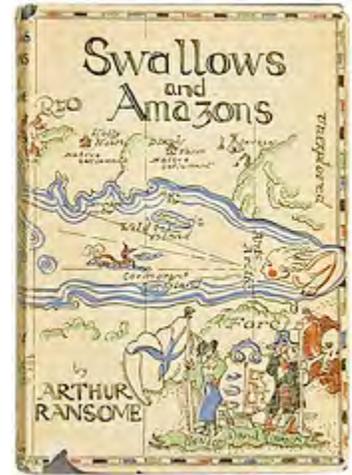
This is such a great adventure book. It probably should be introduced as a read aloud book for even the most advanced of middle readers as the vocabulary is often old-fashioned and the sailing terminology could be off putting. But once the children have sailed off on their island adventure (without adult supervision I might add) the fun begins. They meet two sailing sisters from a nearby community and the sailing competitions and

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exploring commences. What is great about these stories is that they are idyllic, but also perfectly possible. The characters are operating in a very real place (England's Lake District) and a very real time (between the two World Wars) but what colors the stories even more so is the love of sailing and of the natural world. Living in a rather rural area, I can actually see current day children recreating some of these kinds of adventures. – Christine Sealock Kelly

It makes number one because it influenced [my daughter] strongly for years and really changed the course of her life; I am certain as an adult she will look back and pinpoint this book as her greatest influence. – Sarah Haliwell

“BETTER DROWNED THAN DUFFERS IF NOT DUFFERS WON'T DROWN” I spent years wondering why I couldn't find friends who were like the children in these books. – Greg Holch



Maybe some of you are surprised to see the appearance of Arthur Ransome on this list. Honestly the thing I knew him best for was his marriage to Trotsky's secretary (and the fact he was almost **prosecuted for treason**, but that's neither here nor there). Yet he was considered, according to *The Guardian*, "the 1930s equivalent of JK Rowling." Prolific and fun all at once.

The description from (sorry) Wikipedia reads: "The story follows the Walker children (John, Susan, Titty and Roger), who sail a borrowed dinghy named *Swallow*, and the Blackett children (Nancy and Peggy), who sail a dinghy named *Amazon*. The Walkers are staying at a farm near a lake during the school holidays and want to camp on an island in the lake; the Blacketts live in a house nearby. The children meet on the island which they call Wild Cat Island, and have a series of adventures, involving sailing, camping, fishing, exploration and piracy."

In these books (*Swallows and Amazons* was one of twelve altogether) Ransome took his memories of the English Lake District and used those recollections to conjure up, in Silvey's words, "endless summer vacation." Eventually he would settle in that same Lake District, finding time to grumble at tiny tot and future author Diana Wynne Jones (but that is **a story** for another day, my children).

Fans of this book are found far and wide. In Anita Silvey's *Everything I Need to Know I Learned from a Children's Book*, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Anthony Lewis selected this book as the one that had the greatest impact on his life. Says he, "How I got into Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* books I cannot imagine . . . But the books had a charm and fascination that captured me despite my lack of acquaintance with many of the subjects."

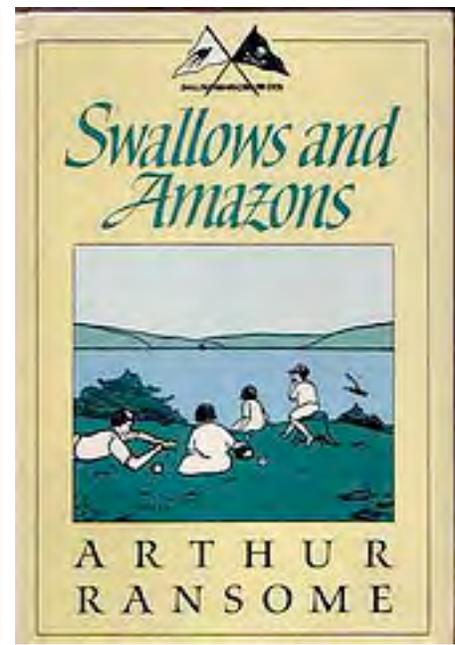
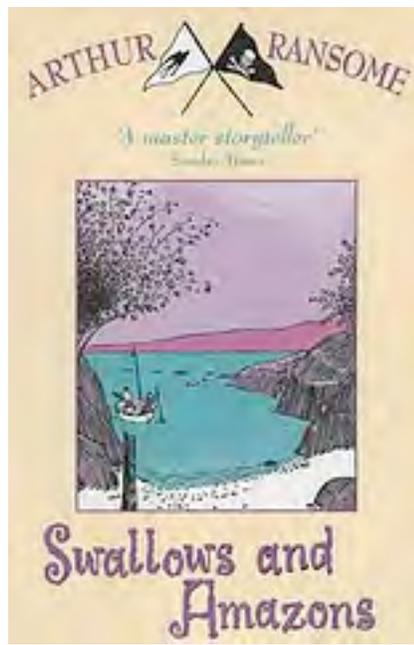
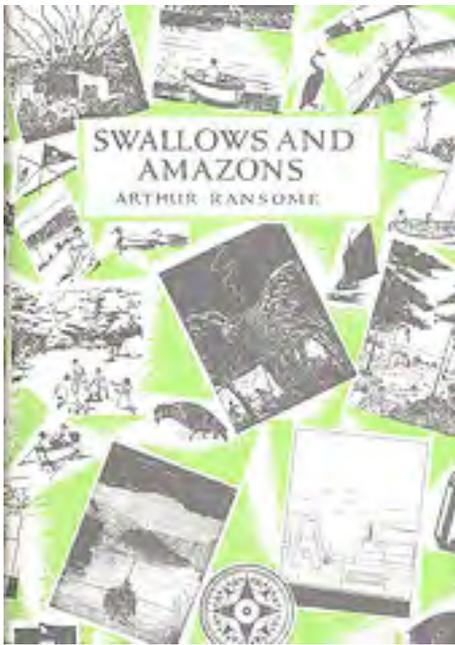
- Read some of the book [here](#).
- Boat crazy? Find out what the boats from the books **would have looked like**.
- Gotta say, though. It's odd how folks make money off of this book. Would you believe that there's a **Swallows and Amazons River and Jungle Tour Company**?

The Guardian said of it, "Mr. Ransome has the same magical power that Lewis Carroll had of being the child in terms of himself. He never talks down; never finds it necessary to be patronising or sentimental. And sentimentality is the most terrible pitfall that besets those who venture into the world of play."

A television program version (1963) and a movie version of the book (1974) did both indeed appear in England. Also, if you've ever been curious about this Lake District, Channel 4 took a trip there as part of their "The Great Outdoors" program, to see the places Ransome mentioned in the book.

Elizabeth Bird's blog home address is: <http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/afuse8production>

A couple of the covers it has seen over the years (I think it's in desperate need of a cover revival, myself):



Arthur Ransome Library Display

By Edward Carson

Every year in May the Cape May County Lower Cape Branch sets up displays to celebrate National Maritime Day (22 May). This year, being a recent member of TARSUS and Branch Head, I decided to share with our patrons our collection of Arthur Ransome books and information about TARS and TARSUS.

The display was enjoyed by both young and old. Several of the books have been checked out, new copies have been ordered, and many took the pamphlets sent by Mr. Robin Marshall. He sent about 10 and I photocopied about 50. At the end of the month there were only about four copies left.

I was pleased when I overheard an elderly couple talking: The wife thought the display was beautiful and wanted to read the books. The husband said, "You know they're kid's books?" She said, "Yes and it doesn't matter." I am not sure which two she checked out along with a copy of the TARSUS information.

Edward N. Carson, Branch Head; CMC Library Lower Cape Branch; TARSUS Member 4746

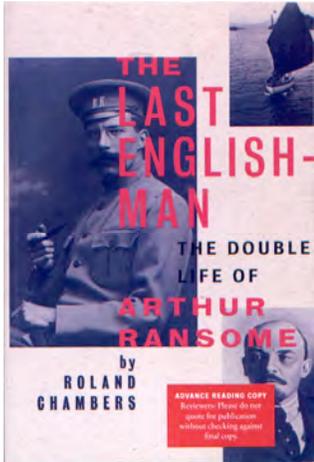


****Editor's Note: This is a project any of us could take on. Simply talk to the children's librarian at your local library to arrange a show space. Be sure to ask Robin Marshall for informative materials, including pamphlets, TARS enrollment forms, and extra copies of Signals and/or Signals from TARSUS. Thanks, Edward, for stepping out on your own to encourage new AR readers!*

Dipping our Hands—personal relationships with the books & Ransome

The Last Englishman: The Double Life of Arthur Ransome, by Roland Chambers, soon to be published by Godine Publishers

Reviewed by Elizabeth Jolley



Imagine my surprise and pleasure when I recently received a package from David Godine Publishers with an advance galley of this soon-to-be-published book! I must be a "real" editor now :-)

It seems only fair that if you are sent a book to try out, you read it as soon as possible, so in I delved. I have read bits and pieces about Ransome's life prior to his writing of the twelve S&A books, but nothing as complete as this. I must admit a bit of dread as I opened the book, due to a lack of interest in study of the Russian Revolution, but I was very pleasantly surprised as I read further into this history of Ransome and how he fit into the ups and downs of the governmental changes of that time.

Chambers keeps the book going at a comfortable pace, tying together what was happening in Europe and the US during the time of WWI and the Russian Revolution, but always with Ransome as the focus. I learned in much more detail about his early life, presented in the first five chapters of the book, including the beginnings of his desire to create imaginative works. The rest of the book, devoted to his years in and out of Russia, and his marriage to Evgenia after years of asking Ivy Walker for a divorce, gave me a deeper and more detailed understanding of the older Ransome: children's author who didn't really enjoy children themselves, but loved the make-believe games they play.

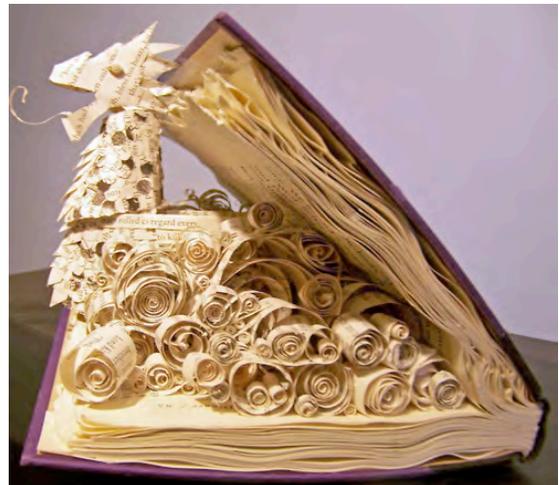
This book is appropriate for adults and older teens who want more information about Ransome's life, with all of its ups and downs.

NOTE: Godine Publishers expects to have this book available online and in bookstores by early November--look for it then & enjoy!

Check out this sculpture of **The Dawn Treader**, from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, by C.S. Lewis!

Molly McGinnis found it at this website:

<http://www.bookshelvesofdoom.tumblr.com>



The Name Game

By Ed Kiser

In the course of following our childhood friends through their many adventures that we have been privileged to follow, there have been those "bit players" that briefly came up on the scene. These names are perhaps mentioned only once and then we never crossed their paths again, but did we really know them and understand that small role they played as part of these adventures? Just who were they?

I'm sure this is not ALL the bit players, so maybe somebody can find some other dark shadows hiding in the wings--send names you find to Elizabeth Jolley: erjolley8@gmail.com. Test your knowledge by finding the last names of everyone listed here, as well as the book they were in.

***NOTE: THIS LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY OF THE MAIN-CHARACTER CHILDREN (Swallows, Amazon, D's, D&G's, TomDudgeon, or the twins). ALL NAMES EXCEPT ONE ARE FIRST NAMES, AND THERE MAY BE SOME SURPRISES INCLUDED!

First Name Last Name Book

Bill 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Billy 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Bob 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Carrotty _____

Dick _____

Ella _____

Fanny _____

Frank 1. _____

2. _____

George 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Harry _____

First Name Last Name Book

Hawkins _____

Helen _____

Ian _____

Jack 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Jacky 1. _____

2. _____

James _____

Jemmy _____

Jim 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Jimmy _____

Livy _____

Maria _____

Mary 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Book</u>
Melody		
Mogandy		
Neddy	1.	
	2.	
Pelorus Jack		
Phil		
Ralph		
Richard		
Ringman		
Robin	1.	
	2.	
Robert	1.	
	2.	
Rob		
Ronald		
Roy	1.	
	2.	

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Book</u>
Sam		
Sammy		
Silas		
Simeon		
Simon		
Ted		
Timothy		

Editor's Note: EVERYONE who completes this puzzle & sends the answers to:

Elizabeth Jolley 675 NW 114th Ave. Portland, OR 97229 -or- erjolley8@gmail.com

will receive a unique prize! This may require some re-reading of the series of twelve books, so grab your mug of tea, and read, read, read.....**GOOD LUCK!**

P.S. Your hard-working editor spent many very difficult hours over this summer, relaxing in her new reclining deck chair, iced tea at hand, re-reading the entire series, searching for names :-)

Sea Bear’s Galley—Puddings, Biscuits & more

Skills for the Shipwrecked: Coconut Cracking

By Molly McGinnis

Method from Euell Gibbons’ Beachcomber’s Handbook

Hawaiian TARSUS members have cracked lots of coconuts, I hope! Please tell us how *you* do it. Oh, my, here you are on a desert island with a stove-in ship and not a thing on the island but some coconut palms. You’ve shaken fallen nuts until you find one with a good slosh from the liquid inside, showing that it’s in good eating condition. But how to get into the thing? You’re going to need a bit of salvage from the ship’s toolboxes and kitchen, or at the very least a nice fist-sized rock. The coconut will be surrounded by an enormous fibrous husk, so I hope you salvaged your pirate sword and have a shirt to tear up for bandages.

Oh well, let’s skip that scene. With the nut out of the hull, find a nice flat hard place – a log or a rock or a piece of deck from the shipwreck—and tap the coconut all over, to bong the meat away from the shell a little bit. You can drive a nail or a marlinspike into the eyes of the coconut and drain out the water so it doesn’t make a mess when the coconut cracks, if you want. The water isn’t all that tasty at this point but might come in handy for cooking.

Next, lay the coconut on a hard surface, on its equator (taking the eyes as the north pole). Tap all around the equator with the rock. Or the hammer. Keep turning the coconut and tap pretty sharply but not so hard the coconut smashes open. The shell will crack around the middle in a bit and probably fall open. If it doesn't, tap one half and then the other some more and see if you can get some more cracks started. The looser you can get the meat, the better.

Now take a big heavy knife, preferably a very dull one (a chisel works pretty well too), and start levering the meat out in as big pieces as you can. Pass the pieces out to the crew and let them pass the potato peeler and take the brown peel off their pieces. Coconut always seems to taste especially good just eaten out of the shell, but you can grate it and make things with it, or make thin slices with the peeler (you don't have to take off the peel for this, Gibbons says) and toast them.

If you can figure out a way to get them, green coconuts make a wonderful drink. Maybe you'll find a tree that leans enough so you can ooch up the trunk with your sword and cut some off. They're easy to get into – slice or saw off the pointed end of the husk, drill into the coconut, and stick in a straw. Sometimes the big supermarkets and Asian groceries have drinking nuts, though I've never gotten a good one yet. They're the light colored ones with flat sides where the husk was sawed off.

Here's a fresh-coconut candy recipe for not-too-marooned pirates. It's nothing like coconut candy from a store. You need a heavy saucepan and a big mug for cold water and something to put the candy balls on – a buttered cookie sheet, for instance. Young pirates should have a Native to supervise: hot candy can be dangerous. This fresh coconut candy is nothing like anything you get in a store.

Grate the peeled meat of a coconut. Boil 3 cups of sugar and a cup of water together until the syrup gathers together into a soft ball when you drop a bit from a teaspoon into a big cup of cold water. Stir in the coconut and cook it on low heat for about 15 minutes. Take it off the fire and let it cool for a while, then stir it until it starts to stiffen (this is just like making fudge or fondant, for those who've done that). Spread it on a buttered cookie sheet and cut it in little squares. Gibbons says make marble-sized balls and let them dry for an hour – too much work. I did push the squares apart to dry with one soft batch.

Great-Aunt Ambrosia

By Molly McGinnis

My great-aunt Louise, always called "Auntie," raised my father and his sister while their mother, a coloratura soprano, was out singing for their supper. My father made this delicious dessert of hers all his life. It might be more the kind of thing Cook would make and send over, though Mother might well have brought oranges with the bunch of bananas.

You will need: Bananas, Oranges, Sugar

Peel some bananas. Peel some oranges. Slice the bananas (a thick ¼"). Slice the oranges and pick out any seeds with the point of the knife. Cut the slices across bite-size. Mix. Taste and add sugar if you think it's necessary. I'm guessing two bananas and an orange for every three people.

Ambrosia can have all kinds of other ingredients. My father occasionally added quartered marshmallows (we'd use mini-marshmallows now) or drained canned pineapple chunks (frozen would be better if making at home). Blackberries, that great standby of the S's, A's, and D's, come to mind...

Blood oranges as well as the common kind were shipped to Britain from Spain and are now becoming available again, so would be quite true to the period. (A little risky though – the more naïve eaters in a group tend to think they're poisonous, or something, and explaining seems to put everyone off.)

Coconut is a fairly common addition but I don't like it in this whether fresh grated or packaged, and I notice people don't eat as much Ambrosia if it has coconut in it.

NOTE: this is absolutely a **DESSERT**, not a salad! (Good for breakfast, too, though) It is only in the last decade or so that we started including heavily sweetened dishes in every course of the meal.

Plantain Fry-Up Kwablah

By Molly McGinnis

Whenever our Ghanaian colleague Kwablah is invited to dinner, he is begged to make his plantain dish. It's not quite a dessert but we don't seem to feel like we need dessert when we have a big skilletful of sauteed plantains with dinner. Quite useful for stalling off hunger while waiting for dinner, too.

I've given proportions for 4 people, but quantities are not exact. Ethnic markets of all kinds have plantains. Pick out big fat ones with a hint of give while the skins are still yellowish – some plantains are picked too green to ever ripen and will never taste good. Buy the plantains well ahead and keep wherever you would ripen kiwis or avocados – a north windowsill, for instance. When at their best, the skins will be almost black all over and there will be some give (think ripe avocado). Bananas will work too, but you have to find very firm ones and add them at the last.

You will need:

- 1 big onion or 2 medium (to make a cup or more of dice)**
- Fresh ginger root – at least 2 inches (more to taste)**
- (garlic)**
- 4 to 6 big fat plantains**
- Cayenne or fresh hot chili peppers (start with a pinch of cayenne)**
- Limes or lemons, halved, and some orange juice is good too**
- Very good cooking oil (Spectrum Naturals sunflower or peanut oil is great)**
- Sugar (white or brown) – 2 -4 tablespoons**

Cut onion into rough dice (or give about 2 whirls in processor). Peel ginger, slice crossways and cut into sticks, or grate it over the plantains & onions as they cook. I like lots of slices and some grated ginger. Peel, smash, and chop the garlic (Sometimes Kwablah puts in garlic, sometimes not).

Split fresh hot peppers lengthways and scrape white stuff and seeds from insides. The rounded end of a table knife is good for this job.

Add a thin layer of oil to the pan (1/4" or less) and immediately add the onions. Turn the heat down and let them wilt a bit while you prepare the plantains.

Slice plantain skins lengthways, cut off the ends and peel skins away. Slice crossways, thickly (3/8"?), adding to the pan as you go. Turn with spatula as you add. Add the ginger and garlic and cayenne, if using, and sprinkle with sugar. Turn the heat to medium and keep turning so all the slices have some yummy caramelized brown on them. Some plantains turn starchy and hard – you may want to add a tablespoon or two of water. This is where some orange juice comes in handy.

If you need more oil, push the fry-up to the side of the pan, tilt it, add oil and heat before tilting it over the bottom of the pan.

When the plantains are done, or as done as you think they'll get, add a good squeeze of lime or lemon juice, and some orange juice if you like. This is partly for flavor and partly to make the dish moist.

If you have only bananas, slice thickly and add at the very last moment. Turn gently and serve in frying pan. This is far faster to make than to tell about making, and only uses one pan.

Grilled Bananas Peter Duck

By Molly McGinnis

(From The Rasta Cookbook, Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ, 1992)

This recipe would be especially good with plantains – perhaps some came back from the Peter Duck voyage. The rest of us have to look for them in ethnic markets (Asian, Caribbean, African, Fijian are common in my California Central Valley) or large supermarkets. Plantains are often picked too unripe to ever taste good – look for nice fat ones. They are ready to cook when the skins begin to blacken (and are good for quite some time after the skins are entirely black).

You will need: Bananas
Limes (or lemons), halved or wedged.
Sweetening (maple syrup, golden syrup, brown sugar syrup, or honey)
Campfire coals and a barbecue grill
A sharp knife

Use 1 banana per camper. Half a large plantain per person might do. Keep the skins on. Slit each banana or plantain through the skin lengthways, just down to the flesh.

Put on the grill and cook until skins are soft and charred (it takes a very efficient toasting fork to impale a banana for cooking over bare coals, but if you have the 3-pronged kind available you can try it). Turn carefully to cook all sides. Remove to a plate and let cool a bit.

From here you can lay the skins open and cut bites with the side of a fork, or peel and eat daintily with knife and fork, or even (with firmer kinds) cut an end off and eat from the end down, turning the slit skin away as you go.

In either case squeeze some lime or lemon on, and some syrup – or dip each bite in a common dish of sugar – the big-crystalled brown kinds like turbinado add a nice crunch.

Trader Joe here sells a delicious (if pricey) ginger syrup, which would be quite appropriate. The Caribbean Islands grow quantities of ginger. Bananas are Asian, so a banana and dessert would be equally accurate for a Missee Lee commemorative feast.

And here's another way to make bananas delicious over a campfire!

Banana Boats

By "Captain Jasper" (David Forman)

One banana (in skin)

Optional:

Chocolate chips

Marshmallows

Directions:

Make a slit in the banana and add the chocolate, marshmallow bits, etc. Then wrap in aluminum foil and roast in coals for a few minutes. Take out the banana without getting burned, and enjoy. (This is very sloppy; perhaps use a spoon.)

Kanchenjunga's Cairn--Places We've Been & Our Adventures

****Editor's Note: While on a camping trip over Labor Day weekend, both my daughter & I had AR-ish adventures--hers much more adventuresome than mine!*

A Heron Says "Fraaank"

By Elizabeth Jolley

Well, it finally happened! Years after my first reading of the Swallows & Amazons series, and after seeing many, many Great Blue Herons and a few Green Herons, at age 52 ³/₄ I finally heard a heron say "Fraaank", just as described by Ransome in The Big Six, chapter XI:

"Is buttle another name for a bittern?" asked Dick and pulled out his pocket-book.

Joe laughed as he watched him write down "Buttle = Bittern".

"And Harnsey's a heron," he said, "and Frank's a heron..."

"Hear him go 'Fraaaank' when you stop his fishing," said Pete.

I was on a camping trip with my family, staying at an old summer camp where I once worked as an assistant cook. The camp is on a long peninsula in south-western Washington, but it's on the bay side of the land. The bay empties and fills with the change of the tides, and there is a long shallow beach visible at low tide, with a grassy point sticking out. Herons like to fish along the edge of the water, often standing in the low grasses to hunt for frogs and fish.

One early morning, I walked down the sandy road in the middle of camp, heading toward the bay. It was beautiful in the early morning sunshine, deep blue water leading the eye to a fir-covered island in the bay, then further to the smoky blue hills on the far other side of the huge inlet.

As I turned to walk to the old lodge, thinking mostly of a hot mug of coffee, I heard "Fraaaank", in a deep growly loud voice. I turned right away to see where that had come from, and saw the distinctive profile of a heron on flight, its long neck twisted up atop its body.

I laughed to myself. Finally, a heron had said "Fraaaank" in my hearing! Now I know exactly why the D&G's said a heron is called "Fraaaank".



<http://mikelynychcartoons.blogspot.com/2011/04/seven-birds-week.html>

Willapa Bay Rescue

By Helen Jolley

"HELP!" I yelled towards shore. I waved my arms a little too frantically. Facing the shore, the wind blew directly into my face and smothered my attempts to get their attention. I could easily pick out my dad, the tallest of the little group of people standing on the bluff. Could they even hear me? They had to be watching. They had to see that something was wrong. Why were they just standing there?

"HELP!" What was the right way to signal for help? Something about SOS, but how do you signal that without flags or a light? What would the Swallows and the Amazons have done? Oh, right. They actually knew how to sail. John and Nancy would never have let them get into a situation like this. Forget proper signaling.

"HELP!" Sitting up on my knees, I waved my arms again. A strong gust of wind made the sail whip around and I sat down very quickly. Lasers are infamous for tipping over easily. "I'm not going swimming, I'm not going swimming," I repeated to myself as I tried to use the tiller to turn the little boat into the wind. Nothing. With no wind in the sail, I had very little control of where the boat went. I stopped trying to steer and tried to assess the situation calmly. It really wasn't so bad. I hadn't tipped over yet. I had my life jacket on. I had one canoe paddle. The only problem was that one corner of the sail, the clew, was no longer attached to the end of the boom, and the boom had fallen off of the mast. I didn't think I would be able to get it back on without tipping the boat over.

Back in the little bay near camp, the wind had been so calm I had worried that there wouldn't be enough for sailing. But out here, in the channel, the wind was strong and gusty. The sail was flapping too much to try to tie the clew back onto the boom. In a different boat, it would have been easy to bring the sail down, tie the clew back onto the boom, attach the boom to the mast, and hoist the sail back up again. But I was in a Laser, and the mast fit into a sleeve in the sail. It was impossible to let the sail down without taking the mast down, and I certainly wasn't going to try that out in the channel. It didn't seem like there was anything I could do.

"HELP!" I yelled again. When I looked back to shore, I was shocked to see how far I was from the camp. The little boat was already drifting up the channel with the incoming tide. How much longer would the tide come in? Long enough to push the boat to shore? Or would the tide turn while I was still out in the channel? I pulled out the canoe paddle. "Don't drop it in the water, now," I reminded myself. I tried to paddle towards shore. The boat was amazingly heavy for something that could fly across the water with just a bit of wind. After several strong strokes I had to admit that the paddle was not getting me anywhere. I felt so useless.



Helen holding on to the poles; canoe to the rescue!

"HELP!" I looked to shore again. Were there fewer people on the bluff? I heard the faint sound of a foghorn. That had to be a signal. There was a bit of movement down by the water, a canoe and two tiny people paddling out to meet me. At that moment my little boat swept past two tall sticks emerging from the water. Those poles marked the oyster beds, which meant I wasn't really into the channel yet. I had to catch those poles before I got into the channel where the current was even stronger. I dropped the paddle on the side of the boat, and grabbed onto the poles. I hoped they wouldn't break free of the mud below. At low tide, the poles stuck up out of the mud at least fifteen feet. I wondered how deep the water was now. I heard a sliding noise and a splash, and the paddle was in the water on the other side of the boat, floating away. Bother. Even Dick and Dot wouldn't have lost a paddle.

I looked up again, tightened my grip around the poles, and saw that the canoe was much closer now. The two paddlers were David and Michael, brothers who had grown up here, and were back for a visit. I couldn't let them see how much I had panicked. They'd never let me help if I appeared too distressed to be useful. I took several deep breaths and calmly shouted, "Hello!"

"Keep holding on to those poles," Michael shouted back. "You're doing a great job."

The rest of the rescue was a blur of shouting back and forth between the two boats and trying to face the boat into the wind. Attempts were made to tow the sailboat back into shore, but the canoe and its paddlers were no match against the current. At last, David climbed into the sailboat while I scrambled into the canoe. I sat in the back of the canoe, holding onto the side of the sailboat while David fixed the boom back onto the mast and attached the clew to

the end of the boom. When Gordon and Susie, the owners of the camp, arrived in their motorboat, I felt relieved and guilty at the same time. The words of the Swallows echoed in my head.

“Hadn’t we better row?” said Roger.

“You want a motor boat,” said Captain John.

“No I don’t,” said Roger. “Sail is the thing.”

Like John, David seemed to be full of that stuff that some people have, the stuff that makes them want to be independent and capable, even in a situation when everyone would understand if they yelled, “HELP!” David was determined to return to the bay under sail. The wind was even more determined not to let him. The boat tipped over twice before David would agree to be towed back in by the motorboat. By then the canoe had reached the calm waters of the bay and Michael was giving me a lesson on steering strokes. We spent the rest of the afternoon laughing over the adventure and trying to make sense of what had happened.

“I guess it was a good learning experience,” I said at last.

“That was the best thing about this place,” Michael said, referring to the old summer camp. “At camp, there was no way to avoid adventures like that. You had to learn from them. But there was always someone looking out for you, there to offer help if you needed it. Those adventures can be the most important lessons.”

The Professor’s Laboratory—how-to's, instructions & fixes

Letterboxing

By David Gilles-Thomas

What is Letterboxing? A combination of treasure hunting and puzzle solving, letterboxing is fun for all ages! Participants get clues on the internet, then follow them to hidden letterboxes placed in inconspicuous, scenic locations, containing a log book and (often hand-carved) rubber stamps.

Where can I find letterboxes? There are about 20,000 letterboxes hidden in North America alone, but there are others worldwide. They are hidden in publicly accessible places (such as parks) and there are probably some in your area or perhaps where you will be traveling. Visit letterboxing.org or atlasquest.com to get started. Find a clue in your area, then go to the starting point. Some clues are straightforward and will be easy to locate, while other are more difficult.

How do I get started? Once you've targeted a letterbox from one of the websites mentioned above, check your gear, using the checklist below. Then, follow the clues and find your letterbox! Be discreet--you don't want to ruin the surprise for other letterboxers in the area, or to attract attention from others who might vandalize the letterbox. Once you find it and stamp in, make sure you follow the code of the letterboxer and Leave No Trace--don't disturb nature, and re-hide the letterbox the way you found it.

Is there more to it? There can be! The websites have discussion groups and tutorials, so you can learn more about stamp carving, log book making, hiding letterboxes and more.

LETTERBOXING CHECKLIST

Rubber Stamp: There are millions of rubber stamps out there to choose from, or you can make your own! *

Inkpad: Sometimes letterboxes have their own inkpads, but many don't.

Pen: Carry one to leave a funny story with your stamp!

Personal Journal: The source of a letterboxer's pride--a book in which the images of stamps they have found are kept. Some families use separate journals for each person, while others use a "team" journal. Make sure your journal has thick pages so the ink doesn't bleed through, and a durable waterproof cover is nice for rainy weather!

Extras: Water, snacks, bug repellent, flashlights, tissues, comfortable shoes--anything to make an adventure hike easier. It's also nice to have a paper towel to wipe ink off the stamps (don't use baby wipes or wet wipes!).

Compass and/or GPS (optional): A few letterboxes are located with direction and degree readings that must be found by compass or GPS system.

* MAKE YOUR OWN RUBBER STAMP!

1. Find a black & white image you like.
 2. Color the solid parts of the image with a #2 pencil.
 3. Turn the picture over onto a flat rubber eraser and rub the back of the image with something smooth--like the back end of a Sharpie marker. This will transfer the reverse image to the eraser. Reinforce the drawing with a Sharpie if you need to.
 4. Using a craft knife, cut away the light areas of the eraser (children, please ask an adult for help with this!)
 5. Glue a plastic bottle cap, small piece of wood, or a cork to the un-inked side of the eraser to use as a handle.
-

LETTER BOX LEXICON

Trail Name: The nickname a letterboxer chooses to sign in to logs.

Log Book: A book found inside the letterbox for finders to stamp in, sometimes containing greetings or stories for other letterboxers.

Personal Journal: Books kept by letterboxers to collect images made by stamps found in letterboxes.

Stamp In: On finding a letterbox, the finder inks his/her personal stamp and stamps it in the log book, then puts the image of the letterbox stamp in his/her personal journal.

Hitchhiker: A surprise letterbox found inside a letterbox. The finder must move it to another letterbox.

The Origins of Letterboxing

While hiking in Dartmoor, James Perrott decided to put some of his personal calling cards in a bottle and hide it on the bank of Cranmere Pool. Anyone finding the bottle could use the cards to contact Perrott and let him know his bottle was found. People began to put their own calling cards in the bottle as proof of their find, and the only way to learn about the bottle was by word of mouth. Few found the bottle, but the number of search attempts increased steadily as time passed.



A few decades later, someone decided to replace the original bottle with a tin box, and the hobby finally got a name. Visitors began to include a self-addressed, stamped postcard in the box that the next person could take home and mail. The receiver could then show the postcard as proof that he found the box. Since mailboxes are called letterboxes in England, everyone started to call the hobby letterboxing.

The game continued to evolve. Eventually, someone put a logbook into the box to let people record their find. In 1907, a man named James H. Strother suggested including a small stamp and inkpad in the box so that visitors could stamp their own personal logbooks as proof of their discovery. Today, almost every letterbox has a unique stamp inside it. In turn, letterboxers carry their own stamps to mark letterbox logbooks.

People began to hide other letterboxes in Dartmoor, using the ox on Cranmere Pool as a model, but the hobby grew very slowly. This was probably because letterboxing enthusiasts in England were (and still are) very secretive. In English letterboxing, being tight-lipped is all part of the art.

First letterbox at Cranmere Pool, Dartmoor

Most of the time, a letterboxer in England would keep his identity secret. You might see the same stamps in logbooks around Dartmoor, but you aren't likely to figure out to whom the stamp belongs.

At first, clues about the various letterbox locations circulated by word of mouth -- later, enterprising letterboxers would collect clues and publish them in guides. Despite a short span of time when officials worried that letterboxers were damaging historic sites and park lands, letterboxing exploded from a rare activity to a regional craze. Today, Dartmoor National Park is home to more than 10,000 letterboxes.

****Editor's Note: David created his own letterbox, in honor of Swallows & Amazons! Check it out at:*

<http://www.atlasquest.com/showinfo.html?gBoxId=148783>

And here's the stamp he created for the letterbox

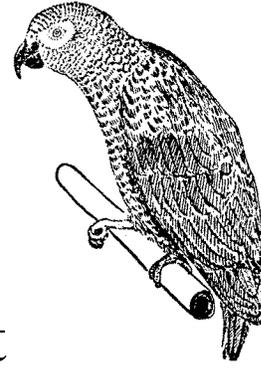
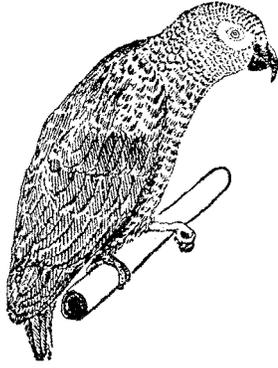


Who's going to create the next letterbox? Maybe you!

Resources

- Letterboxing in America FAQ: <http://www.letterboxing.org/faq/faq.html>
- Letterboxing article at Wikipedia.com: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letterboxing>
- Letterboxing information: <http://www.letterboxing.info/Official>
- Dartmoor Letterboxing Club: <http://www.letterboxingondartmoor.co.uk/>
- The Letterboxer's Companion, a book by Randy Hill
- Making a Stamp from Foam: <http://www.letterboxing.info/articles/00000022.php>
- Letterboxing Kids! <http://www.letterboxing.org/kids/>





Pieces of Eight

The Junior Pages

Edited by Jessika Hodgson and Hannah Hodgson

Real Pirates

Hannah Hodgson

This summer, our museum had an exhibit that we were itching to go to. The exhibit was called, “Real Pirates,” so *of course* we wanted to go. Who *doesn't* want to see real *pirates*?

Finally, for Jessika's sweet-sixteen birthday, during the last days of the exhibit before it moved on, we went. And boy, am I glad we did.

In front of the door leading into the exhibit, there were posters of four men—pirates, of course. Well, three (if you count a sixteen-year-old a man) and one nine-year-old boy, also a pirate. The fun began with me and Jessika choosing pirates to ‘be.’ I was John Julian, sixteen-year-old Indian navigator of the sailing vessel, *Whydah*. Jessika was Hendrick something or other. In any case, he was bald, with a big hoop earring in his right ear.

We excitedly filed into the darkly lit room with a projector in the front and sat down on benches. There was a short video introducing us to the *Whydah* and her crew. The *Whydah* had been a slave ship before it was captured by Captain Sam Bellamy's men and turned into a pirate vessel. Legend has it that Sam Bellamy was trying to make his fortune so that he could marry his true love...but that's the least interesting bit.

When the clip was over, we hurried into another room adjoining and found a single case right in the middle. In it, floating in water, or some preservative, I'm not sure, was the *Whydah's* bell, cold and lifeless. But yet, in all that coldness and lifelessness, I could almost hear it ringing as I walked around it with wide eyes (and probably a wide mouth).

We then entered another room, or should I say another world? That's exactly how it felt...stepping into the world of real pirates for a while. There were real guns and ammunition from the wreck—even *real* cannons, cannonballs, and hand grenades. The muskets were beautifully wrought with dragons and other designs etched onto their barrels. There were ropes—huge ropes, as thick as my leg. There were real pieces of eight in a glass case that said “This is the only real pirate treasure ever recovered.” There was even eating material—cracked pots, warped spoons, and dented plates. All of it was recovered from the wreck of the *Whydah*.

At one point, there was a model ship, with all the riggings, masts, sails, lights on the port and starboard sides, and even the tiny steering wheel. At other points, there were lifelike wax figures...pirates signing the articles, barmaids looking on, as well as others. There were things to read in every room: interesting things about women pirates, such as Anne Bonny; the story of nine-year-old John King's quest to becoming a pirate; and also histories on the slave trade and other bits of information. There was even a British woman dressed in the attire of the times, who stopped Jessika and me and asked first if we were twins (“No.”), second where our husbands were (splutter...“Uh, we aren't married.”), and third what we would do with ourselves if we *didn't* marry (grin slightly, “We'll become *pirates!*” Her response: “Oh, you don't want to do that...think of all the nasty men...they never *bathe!*”).

Then we walked into a ship. Of course, it wasn't the real *Whydah*, but it sure did feel like it at the time, with the lifelike wax figures sitting atop crates and the cargo stacked neatly to one side. Further on, we found the captain's

cabin, with the wax Sam Bellamy hard at work plotting courses on his map. Even further in, walking downward into the hold, we found someone making bunks, another man getting his battered leg cut off, another testing a gun, and a final one writing a letter. It had the feel, if not the smell, of a real boat.

Reluctantly, we walked out of the boat and into another room that felt like we were underwater. The lights were blue, and fell onto the ground just like waves. The *Whydah* was caught in a storm outside of Cape Town, and sunk. On the wall were the four pictures we had seen before we walked into the exhibit.

Captain Sam Bellamy: LOST

John Julian: SURVIVED

Hendrick: SURVIVED

John King: LOST

Well, despite the bad news of the deaths of the rest of the crew, Jessika and I were still alive! We went on to read that the whole crew of the *Whydah* was lost, except for two.

The sign before entering the next hallway said:

WARNING!

The next exhibit contains

HUMAN REMAINS

Sure enough, in a case hanging on the wall, there was the shoe, stocking, and leg bone of nine-year-old John King who met his early death on the high seas. The next room showed pictures of judges, nooses, and other things like that. We gulped. They even had the sound effect of a judge pounding his gavel on the counter.

Hendrick was convicted of piracy and hanged. So much for surviving. John Julian, though not hanged, was sold into slavery. Nuts. In the final room of the exhibit, the man who recovered the *Whydah* was on a screen, talking about the recovery, and what he wanted to do with it. There were some more artifacts in cases to look at. Taking a deep breath, we pushed the last door open and were a bit shell shocked to find ourselves in the “Real Pirates” Gift Shop. It was all over, but the ride was magnificent. To be able to not only get a glimpse of the life of pirates, but to live out a bit of their lives. To sail the seas as a pirate, if only for a fleeting day.

Another Page from the Coot Club Log Book

Jessika Hodgson

For the birthday Hannah mentioned, I got a beautiful new Canon G12 camera. Since cameras weren't allowed at the pirate exhibit, I decided to try it out on a walk around our little lake. I got lucky and was able to get a couple of great shots of the resident Great Blue Heron (one of the pitiful five birds I can actually identify on sight—the other four are ducks, Canadian geese, European starlings, and seagulls). It's a magnificent bird, and I would have spent two hours watching it if it hadn't decided that two minutes was enough and flown to the other end of the lake. Perhaps I need to practice my lurking.

Here are the pictures. Ignore the weeds.



Great Blue Heron behind the "weeds"



Great Blue Heron in flight



POEtry

Here you can read (and write!) POEtry—poems inspired by the Swallows and Amazons and other Ransome-ish things, made especially for Pieces of Eight!

Summer Sea

By Hannah Hodgson

Take me away, bring me wind in my face
I ache for adventure, to leave this place
My heart longs for the sea, my ears the slap
My eyes yearn for the white when the sails flap
My mouth asks for 'to starboard' instead of 'to right'
My hands want to feel the ropes pull tight

Ask me not where we're going, for I do not know
I climb up the mast as the sun sinks low
Feeling the wind as it rips through my hair
Breathing a breath of the salty sea-air
Hearing the waves as they grab the wood
And knowing why God called the ocean 'good'

Can the ship that took me away take me back again?
I ache for dry land, no more this ocean
My heart longs for home, my ears the quiet
My eyes yearn to close, to forget the fight
My mouth asks for silence, to only whisper
My hands want to rest, to lose their blisters

At home I will sleep, and content I will be
Until the summer calls me back to the sea.

Final Note-- "Farewell and adieu to you fair Spanish ladies"--until next issue! 

As always, I have enjoyed receiving your notes & articles. One of the great perks of being the Editor is that you always get first peek! Please keep this newsletter in mind as you work your way toward the dark days of winter—perhaps it's time for a new saga to be written around the wood stove in your 'Fram'. Maybe one of your favorite recipes is just the thing for warming up when you come in after ice-skating partway to the North Pole. Possibly you love to knit or felt or create something from toasty warm fabrics. Please share!

In the meantime, I hope you can find time to enjoy the beautiful colors of fall, the peace of a cozy chair, and some good reading!

Best fall wishes,

Elizabeth Jolley
Signals from TARSUS Editor