



Signals from TARSUS & North Pole News--Sept. 2013

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Ship's Papers--Important Information for the crew



View from the Helm

By Robin Marshall, TARSUS Coordinator

My goodness another summer is almost past, I hope everyone had a wonderful time. I have been able to keep up with some of our member' exploits via Facebook, and it seems they have been very busy having adventurous fun!

I was able to visit my son and grand children this June in Cheyenne, Wyoming, an area of the States I had not seen before. It is somewhere in my childhood I had dreamed of seeing, being brought up on movies of cowboys and Indians and wagon trains. It certainly must have been a real challenge and rigorous adventure to have gone on the Oregon trail with none of today's luxuries. A sort of extreme camping. They must have been very tough and hardy individuals.

When one travels the country it makes one realize how different the vastness of the landscape is from life in the English lakes of the 1930s. Of course Arthur had many adventures in many parts of the world which were very strange compared to his favorite places in England. So good he went on to bring a piece of them to us. I hope we shall hear from some of you about things you did this summer; it makes such interesting reading.

I hope some of you will look at two Facebook pages: "Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons in North America" and "The Arthur Ransome Group", and contribute something. Do not forget TARBoard either: www.tarboard.net/tarboard/tarboard.html I know most lead busy lives and there is so much online to follow. It is a great way to relate to other Ransome fans if you have the time.

So far no one has come forward to take on TARSUS, so if you had thoughts of doing so there is still time, otherwise I am happy to continue for a while.

Please welcome our new members: The MacMillan Family, Portsmouth, RI
Isaiah and Arbutus Wuest, West Union, OH
William Eggana, Rockport, ME

We hope they will all enjoy their time with TARSUS!

One last note: it has been pointed out that the current Signals (UK) had a form to set up a Standing Order for subscriptions. This really only applies to UK TARS unless you have a British bank account. When they put together Signals they put any extra pieces in every copy regardless of its destination so unless you meet the criteria ignore it.

Have a wonderful fall! Robin



Greetings From the North

By Ian Sacre, TARSCanada Coordinator

After talking to TARS Headquarters we are making one small administrative change regarding new memberships and annual renewal of memberships.

The problem has been that a small handful of Canadian members have continued to renew their memberships directly with TARS in the United Kingdom, and thus they have to be individually contacted in the New Year to see if they have in fact renewed or intend renewing or are resigning. This causes tracking problems and delays in advising the TARS Membership Secretary about a member's status. Updates of membership lists often take months to accomplish.

So with the blessing of HQ, **all Canadian renewal subscriptions for 2014 are to be sent to me by cheque in Canadian Funds, made payable to me** and I will then send HQ an accumulated lump sum payment.

Brand new members will be asked to submit their initial subscription in pounds sterling along with their pertinent data to TARS HQ (UK). This will then allow a one-time record of their data to be made and added to the membership lists, which I receive every month. In the following renewal years they will be asked to send a cheque to me in Canadian Funds like everyone else. This method is used in Australia and apparently works well.

I would like to encourage Canadian members to read the Australia/New Zealand TARS issue of **Furthest South**, at <http://www.allthingsransome.net/archives/fs/index.html>

Whilst they have a similar number of members to TARS Canada, they seem to be a very active group and have had some very worthwhile get-togethers.

Member Robert Brewer sent me the following note, with a question about dust jackets. If you have any information, ideas or other input, please e-mail him directly:

Hello:

I am working on a project concerning Arthur Ransome books "printed" in Canada.

Two of the titles that I have ("Swallows and Amazons" and "Swallowdale") are in Clarke Irwin (Toronto) dust jackets, but the books themselves are identical to the Jonathan Cape (London) books, including the Jonathan Cape name to the title pages, and the Jonathan Cape name to the gilt spines.

The National Library of Canada's AMICUS does not list any Ransome titles published by Clarke Irwin.

*Could it be that only the dust jackets were printed **in** Canada, or that the dust jackets were printed **for** Canada?*

Do you have information, insight, ideas or opinions concerning this, or when the practice first occurred?

Any assistance, response, or referral would be appreciated. Thanking you in advance for any consideration,

arobertbrewer@hotmail.com

Warm regards, Ian Sacré

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/North Pole News, and pay their local equivalent of the UK prices.

FAMILY Member: **\$62.75** (Must register the names of all members of the family)

Family Members receive:

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/North Pole News, the quarterly newsletter of TARSUS & TARS Canada.

ADULT Member: **\$52.50**

Adult Members receive Mixed Moss, Signals and Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News.

SENIOR Member: **\$44.00** *****Please note this is a new rate for 2014*****

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

STUDENT Member: **\$35.00**

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

JUNIOR Member: **\$17.50**

Junior members, under 17 years, receive Signals and Signals from TARSUS/North Pole News, plus Outlaw.

To apply for TARSUS or TARS Canada membership, please complete the correct Application Form -- (next two pages)

Renewal of Membership
THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY
TARS US (United States) MEMBERS ONLY

Subscriptions for the calendar year 2014 fall due on **1 January 2014**

Please pay now while you remember! This will save the work of having to track you down to determine your subscription intentions and will ensure that you will not miss any publications in 2014!

New Members Exempt

If you joined TARS in October, November or December 2013 then your subscription covers calendar year 2014 as well, and there is no need for further payment until January 2015.

Senior or Pensioner status: If you are 65 or over then you are eligible for the Senior rate.

Additional Voluntary Contribution:

The subscription, payable by all members, covers the basic operation of the Society, including all the benefits that each member can expect to receive. Any additional donations will be reserved for spending on additional activities or projects. This *may* include, for example: the TARS Library; the Ship's Baby Fund; making donations to outside bodies (such as the Nancy Blackett Trust or Horstead Centre); or helping to increase funding for regional "Books for Schools" schemes. Donations to TARSUS/NORTH POLE NEWS are also welcome to help with the newsletter and prizes for competitions or promotions.

Name:				Membership No:	
*Type of Membership:					
Junior (overseas up to 16)	\$17.50	<input type="checkbox"/>		Family (overseas)	\$67.25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Student (any age in full-time education)	\$35.00	<input type="checkbox"/>		Senior (overseas 65+)	\$44.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Adult (overseas)	\$52.50	<input type="checkbox"/>		Corporate (overseas)	\$105.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Additional <u>Voluntary</u> Contribution \$ _____	Please use my contribution as follows: _____ (You may indicate more than one use; if you do please advise the proportion to go to each. If you leave this blank the Trustees will decide how to allocate your contribution.)				
TOTAL Subscription + Voluntary Contribution \$					

Please make cheques (in US Dollars) payable to **The Arthur Ransome Society** and send with this sheet to:

Robin Marshall, 210 18th St NW. Bradenton, FL 34205-6845

Phone (941) 896-9169

E-mail: robin@arthur-ransome.org

IMPORTANT: For those who prefer you can now pay by **PayPal** with a **credit card** at

http://tarseast.co.uk/TARS_Subscription_Renewals.html Be sure to have your **member number** ready, and remember to check the **overseas member** box. If you have any questions please contact Robin Marshall.

Renewal of Membership
THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY
TARS CANADA MEMBERS ONLY

Subscriptions for the calendar year 2014 fall due on **1 January 2014**

Please pay now while you remember! This will save the work of having to track you down to determine your subscription intentions and will ensure that you will not miss any publications in 2014!

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Additional <u>Voluntary</u> Contribution \$ _____	Please use my contribution as follows: _____ (You may indicate more than one use; if you do please advise the proportion to go to each. If you leave this blank the Trustees will decide how to allocate your contribution.)			
TOTAL Subscription + Voluntary Contribution \$				

Please make cheques (in Canadian Dollars) payable to **Ian Sacre**, and send with this sheet to:

Ian Sacre, 750 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5
Phone (604) 984-2295
E-mail: gallivanterthree@telus.net

TARSUS, TARS Canada & TARS Leadership Information

TARSUS Coordinator: **Robin Marshall** robin@arthur-ransome.org
210 18th Street NW 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: **Ian Sacre** gallivanterthree@telus.net
750 Donegal Place, North Vancouver, BC V7N 2X5

Canada Members, please contact Ian Sacre 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
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:

President-Elect: Sophie Neville
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Signals Editor: David Middleton
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Mixed Moss Editor: Nick Hancox

Other Overseas Coordinators:

Australia: Janet Allen
New Zealand: Cheryl Paget
Japan: Mikako Tarashima

TARS Website has a new address: <http://www.arthur-ransome.org.uk>

Check it out!

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

You can find the full archives of *Signals from TARSUS/Canada* on this site--fun reading!

EDITOR'S NOTE--Time to Renew & Two Volunteer Opportunities

NOW is the time to make your renewal payment! **ACT NOW** to ease the jobs of the volunteers who happily serve you in TARSUS and TARS Canada!

Speaking of volunteers, please consider taking on the role of TARSUS Coordinator. Robin Marshall has done this job for quite a few years now, and he's ready to help someone else take over the reins :-). He has offered to work alongside anyone who is willing to step in, so you will have the advice & support of an expert!

JUNIORS: Please step forward to put together a Juniors section for each issue! Jessika & Hannah Hodgson have worked hard on some pretty great [Pieces of Eight](#) sections for our Juniors. Now they are ready to take their creativity to other projects. You can find a TARSUS friend to work with you, and the format, name & content is up to you. I will write a recommendation for anyone who takes on this job for at least one year--this is a good chance to show some leadership!

The Professor's Laboratory--ideas, instructions and fixes

Two En-ABLE-ing Weeks Before the Mast

By Chris Cory

“Steer a straight course.”

That very Ransomesque imperative is one of 13 “Qualifications for Able Bodied Seaman” that two seagoing parents in our family recently developed for their children. The parents are Annemarie, who holds a U.S. Captain's license, and her husband David, who not only is a good mate for Annemarie, but is licensed as a Mate by the U.S. Coast Guard. They met when both were paid crew on the windjammers that ply the Maine coast every summer. Thanks to their tutelage, we now have two well-fledged ABs -- Rebecca, age 12, and Daniel, 9. We thought other TARS might find the checklist useful. It's below.

The parents came up with the curriculum in the summer of 2012 when the children's non-licensed grandfather, Chris, chartered a cruising sailboat, the 40-foot *Odin*, which was big enough for himself, his wife Helen, David and Annemarie and their family. The children had previously been introduced to seafaring on their parents' daysailer. Our week of overnight cruising on Buzzard's Bay in Massachusetts whetted the family's appetite for a week this year by themselves on a 28-footer, *Kebka*, on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island.



AB Rebecca Cory

The first summer, days at sea ended at anchor when Grandpa Chris, dubbed “the admiral,” ascended to the cockpit bearing the list and rations of junior and senior grog. He then quizzed the kids and checked off their progress as a prelude to a jolly Ransome read-aloud from “Coot Club.”

On the last night, both children were duly certified Able. Each was presented with a trophy-- a Swiss Army knife like the admiral's, with a home-made lanyard tied on with, of course, a bowline, so it can be clipped to an AB's belt to keep it from falling overboard.

For this summer's cruise, the captain reports that the kids' skills were “rusty” for the first few days, but soon Rebecca and Daniel were taking the helm and hauling the sheets when tacking and the family rowed ashore to explore a beach. By the end, both were steering straight.

Here's the checklist:

Qualifications for Able Bodied Seaman

By David Cory and Annemarie Cory

For Rebecca, Daniel Cory and grandfather Christopher all TARSUS

First used summer, 2012

Rebecca		Daniel
	Correctly identify the parts of a boat: Bow, Stern, Port, Starboard, Main and Mizzen Mast, Lifeline, Cockpit, Helm, Head, Galley, Hatch, Companionway	
	Identify the sails: Main, Jib, Mizzen	
	Correctly identify the main and jib halyards	
	Correctly identify the main sheet and jib sheets	
	Identify the main points of sail: Beating, Reaching, Running	
	Assist with raising and lowering sail	
	Steer a straight course	
	Tie a square knot and a half-hitch (extra credit: tie a bowline knot)	
	Correctly operate the marine head	
	Be able to explain coming about and jibing	
	Demonstrate proper boating safety: Lifejackets, Holding on, Deck awareness	
	Help keep the boat clean by stowing all personal gear, swab decks, assist in galley as requested	
	Take a compass bearing	



AB Daniel Cory

Dick's Electronic Notebook

By Charles Preston

We are all familiar with Dick's Notebook, in which he recorded matters of importance relative to the adventures of the S,A & D's. In his day, his pocket notebook would have had paper pages, with a cardboard cover, subject to rain and dirt, and the notes would not have been easy to neatly revise. An improvement would be the water-repellant pocket notebooks available today, but the ultimate would be the electronic notebook. Here are some thoughts on what Dick would carry in his.

Since this is written for TARSUS, we will assume that Dick is visiting the United States, and is expecting many adventures including hiking, camping and sailing. He has stocked the notebook with apps designed for use in the U.S., although most will be usable when he returns to the U.K. (There are some, such as Birds of Britain, which he will download when he returns home).

We will further assume that he is using an Apple iPhone for his notebook, both because of the large number of apps available, and most importantly because in the modern world his AP's will insist that he keep in touch while adventuring by swifter means than by carrier pigeons. And he will find the camera very useful.

Dot is also on the trip, and she has her own iPad, well stocked with e-book novels. She is also carrying a small portable keyboard, very handy for finishing her own novels.

Here are some apps that I think Dick might carry on his trip:

- Evernote, to keep and file notes that he has made (or use Apple Notes, although less flexible)
- Semaphore!--needed until he becomes more expert
- Army Survival --lots of good stuff, possibly needed on adventures
- Audubon Birds--very comprehensive, with color pictures and bird calls (Dick might also be unable to resist other Audubon Guides, although outside his main field of interest)
- Distant Suns--one of many guides for astronomy
- iTopo Maps--topographic maps of the U.S., which might come in handy
- Grid Nav 2--another navigation aide
- My Position--and still another
- Kindle--in which to download a few important books, such as "Farthest North"
- National Park Maps--in case he will visit any
- Spyglass--includes a compass which seems to work; some others don't
- Trekker's Altimeter--useful if climbing any peaks, such as Kanchenjunga
- The Weather Channel--will be needed if the weather is anything like in England
- Alarm Clock Pro--to get up early so as not to miss anything
- Common Rocks Reference
- Nautical Glossary
- Sailing Knots
- Pocket First Aid & CPR--just in case

He might also wish to download a little music from iTunes, such as "Spanish Ladies", to remind him of home. Most of Dick's apps would be free, but he would have to spend a bit of his pocket money for some.

THE OLD →



← THE NEW

Dipping our Hands—personal relationships with the books

Lakescapes of the Mind

By Peter Calamai

Like the young adventurers in many of the Swallows and Amazons stories, I spent the bulk of the summer holidays with a lake as my daily companion. One difference was that mine was a really big lake.

Georgian Bay has been called the Sixth Great Lake; it appears cartographically as a carbuncle on the eastern side of Lake Huron and covers just under 5,800 square miles – making it more than six times the size of the entire Lake District in England.

From our family cottage on the Georgian Bay shores of Tiny Township (named after a lapdog of the surveyor's wife) the aquatic activities on view at first seem to little resemble those in the Swallows and Amazons stories. Small sailboats are a rarity. Instead growling motor cruisers carve white frothy trails across the surface, although none emulate the rowdy Hullabaloo on the *Margoletta*.

Yet a closer look reveals young people eagerly exploring along the shoreline in canoes, paddleboats and kayaks. Often there are spontaneous races and, regularly, dunkings. Fortunately one of the unanticipated benefits of the recent record low water levels in Lakes Huron and Superior is that the bottom is quite shallow a long way out from shore, thus making it more difficult for youngsters to be in over their heads, figuratively or literally.

Another relatively new phenomenon in Canadian lakes is the explosion of stand-up paddle boarding. Providing an experience close to standing on water, the concept was born in Hawaii when surfing instructors balanced on long boards to keep an eye on their students.

One of the summer's magical sights was young people using seemingly effortless strokes of the long paddles to glide on their boards across glassy water, as a sunset painted the sky behind them.

Watching this one evening I was reminded of a line in *Secret Water*, which I had been reading at the cottage. Ransome wrote about the cheerful lap-lap under a boat's forefoot which meant no one can stay grim for long.

I'll wager that those young people in their canoes, paddleboats, kayaks – and especially on the paddle boards – experienced the same cheerful lap-lap. Lakescapes aren't primarily a matter of physical geography. They're creations of our mind, a kind of virtual reality. And Georgian Bay can be just as much Swallows and Amazons country as the Lake District ... when you have the proper mental lakescape.



Photo credit: Rod McIvor

New Ransome Work Discovered!

By Donald Tunnicliff Rice

I was recently startled to learn that Arthur Ransome had written a previously unknown book.

First, some background: For some years I've owned a copy of Robert M. Cooper's *The Literary Guide and Companion to Southern England* (Ohio University Press, 1986). After a friend recently gave me a copy of Cooper's guide to Middle England (1992) I decided to purchase the third and final book in the series, his guide to Northern England (1995).

The first thing I did on receiving the book was to look up Arthur Ransome in the index. Sure enough, he was mentioned on pages 313 and 315. I quickly turned to page 313, and imagine my surprise when I read that Ransome "stayed at the Newby Bridge Hotel while writing *Scallions and Amazons*."

Scallions and Amazons! Where might I obtain a copy?

A Google search revealed that the only reference to this title was in the very book I had just examined. Could it be that Ransome had originally intended to refer to the Walker children as "Scallions"? And that only Robert M. Cooper knew about it?

A little further digging revealed, I'm sad to say, that Cooper died in 1988. According to an article in the Rhodes College quarterly, where Cooper taught, before passing away he had written the manuscripts for the final two volumes, which lacked only prefaces, maps, and indices -- work that was completed by his widow, Polly, and a colleague, Charles Wilkinson.

I think there must have been more to it than that. Cooper was born to a middle-class family in Manchester, and there can be little doubt that he knew all about Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* books. My guess is that the manuscript was handwritten and that "Scallions" was a careless translation of a scribbled "Swallows." To someone unfamiliar with the book, either word in combination with "Amazons" makes as much sense as the other. Cooper doesn't *precisely* say that Ransome wrote anything while at the hotel, only that he stayed at the hotel during the period he was writing S&A. I'll leave it to someone else to settle that question. Okay, so there is no newly discovered Ransome work. Sorry I misled you. But wouldn't it have been great if there had been? Particularly with that title.

Modern-Day Egg Collecting, By Avi Lank

"It seems that Mr. Jemmerling lives, and that the Coot Club are now paid by the Queen."

Read this article from the *New Yorker* magazine of July 22, about modern-day egg collectors to see what he is talking about: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2013/07/22/130722fa_fact_rubinstein

Little Free Libraries, By Avi Lank

"Little Free Libraries are popping up all around the Milwaukee area, where I live. They are attractive boxes on a pole with glass doors, filled with books for neighbors to take and leave as donations. My wife and I recently installed one in our front yard. Among the books we started with was a copy of *Swallows & Amazons*. We live across from a middle school, and hope S&A will catch the fancy of students there when they return in the fall."



Kanchenjunga's Cairn--places we've been and our adventures

The Kombi Dinghy

By Alistair Bryden

One day when I was about Five or Six years old in Scotland, I came home from School to find the most enormous cardboard box I had ever seen, leaning against the Garage Door. It was more than twice my height and about four and a half feet wide. When my father unpacked the box (with my eager assistance), it turned out to be a small wooden sailing dinghy with oars and a sail and a mast. We always called it the Kombi Dinghy and for many years it was a constant companion on family holidays and trips.

The Kombi was a beautiful 10' dinghy made of dark smooth heat or steam-moulded mahogany and although very strong was light enough for a man to pick up (with a little effort), so it was very easy to row and to sail. My father was able to transport it upside down on the roof of our car. Size-wise it was very similar to the popular Mirror Dinghy, but it was far superior in strength and quality of construction. It had a single blue sail with a simple gaff rig. I first learned to row and then to sail in this little boat on a Scottish loch and I loved it. I can only think of two flaws. The first was that the Kombi was very round and smooth, so if not carefully handled could feel quite tippy; the second was a more immediate problem in that the centreboard case was open, and when rowing you sat right on the case and so tended to quickly get a very wet and rather embarrassing rear end. After a couple of outings my Dad quickly made up a suitable plug for the top of the case, which effectively solved that problem.

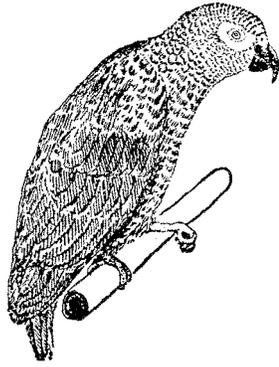
The Kombi was always unique; we never saw another one and although the original boat is still in the family in the UK with my brother, I never knew where it came from other than a vague idea that it was Scandinavian (there was a plate with a Scandinavian wording attached to the transom). A few years ago in an idle moment, I decided to try to research the boat on the internet. I had little to go on apart from the name Kombi and a recollection that the sail had a peanut logo. Through the wonders of Google, I relatively quickly tracked down a fascinating history. It turned out that another Kombi owner from Nashville had done some research and had tracked down the Norwegian ambassador to South Africa, who as a young man had worked to produce these boats, and sent a long letter describing the history.



The Kombi (or Combi-Jolle) was made from 1961 to 1965 in Norway, on the Oslo Fjord, by the Nobel Company, in a disused Dynamite factory that was kept open to provide local employment. Apparently after some work and experimentation they managed to successfully solve the problems of a unique construction style that involved gluing strips of fine Honduran mahogany over a mould and then heating it in an autoclave (which made a very beautiful and strong product), but they struggled with marketing and sales; a problem that ultimately led to the final closure of the factory. Not surprisingly, there used to be a number of these boats in Norway, and some made their way to the UK and the US, but now they are rare.

The same internet research has turned up one of these little boats for sale relatively near to where I live and I may be able to buy it, though I have a suspicion that the handling may be a little different than it was 50 years ago when I probably weighed about 150 lbs. less, and I suspect that the price will be many multiples of what my father originally paid. Keeping my fingers crossed.

Photos taken from <http://www.peanutboat.com>



Pieces of Eight

The Junior Pages

Edited by Jessika Hodgson and Hannah Hodgson

Dot's Journal: Summer...

A Note from Jessika

I spent my summer rock-climbing, going down zip-lines, going up mountains, sleeping in tents, picking wildflowers, watching birds and foxes, staying up late, and waking up early. And I finished it off with a bang, spending three weeks in Oregon on a farm with some friends... There was pioneer history involved, and pie, and exploring, and fresh milk, and bunking in a wall-tent, and newly-harvested honey, and a donkey, and lots and lots of chocolate. The S&As would be proud. I know I am.

And now comes the time when farewells and adieus are said to well-loved places, the Swallows board trains to take them home, and everyone goes back to school terms to cram numbers and grammar into their heads (except me, but don't tell anyone!). Is it possible to have adventures in the fall? During this time, I tend to bury my head in books (besides my annual re-reading of *Winter Holiday* in preparation for December, you can also find me reading N. D. Wilson's, Megan Whalen Turner's, and Lloyd Alexander's books as if my life depended on it). But this year I'm looking for an autumn-tide adventure, just to prove that it's possible to be an explorer, pirate, scientist, writer, or detective even in what tend to be the dull and dreary months.

The funny thing is, I have no idea where to start. When the days get shorter and colder, and school and work get in the way of the vast endeavors we might undertake in the summertime, where does a Swallow/Amazon/Coot/Death and Glory go to find adventure? Something to sleep on, I suppose. But I have a feeling the searching is going to turn out to be half the fun. I'll report back and let you know if, when, and how I uncover hidden treasure as golden as autumn leaves—unless I die trying, in which case I'm sure Hannah will be more than happy to spin the yarn and relate my heroic deeds.

P.S. POE is still looking for a new editor... If you're a Junior or perhaps a Captain Flintish AP and you're interested, shoot me an email. SailistheThing@yahoo.com

The Nightfire Pirates

Part 5

By Hannah Hodgson

Jeremiah's mind whirled. Everything seemed to be going in slow motion. John had gently untied his hands and took the gag off. Then he had hurried to another room. Jeremiah had followed him. Then, as John told his guests what had happened, chaos seemed to ensue. A pretty woman that looked just like the woman in the locket fainted. John and two other men and then the servant girl leaped to catch her at the same time,

resulting in them all falling in a heap, which would be comical if it were a different situation entirely.

When the men had pulled themselves together, they rushed to grab their firearms and went on a search and rescue mission for Williams. Jeremiah was left with Margaret, John's sister and Williams' betrothed, who had just recovered from her faint, and a few servants.

Margaret began to fuss over Jeremiah. She rubbed salve onto his chaffed wrists, and asked him if he had eaten. Jeremiah told her that he hadn't, and Margaret called the servants to set a place for him. It was after he had stomached the meal that Jeremiah's mind seemed to calm down and he began to think clearly.

"Captain Steel said Williams and Weaver busted his ship. Who is Weaver?" he asked Margaret.

Margaret gave a pained expression, then said, "Don't worry yourself over it, dear."

"No. Tell me," Jeremiah insisted. He had to know.

Margaret smiled a little. "You are a brave boy, and you have been through much. 'Weaver' would be a reference to Robert Weaver, Fred's captain on the *Lady Marie*."

"What would they have done with Captain Steel's treasure?"

"Handed it over to the government, I'd imagine."

"But they didn't. Not all of it. Otherwise Captain Steel wouldn't be sore over it."

"Fred wouldn't...Fred wouldn't keep pirate's plunder!"

"Would Captain Weaver?"

Margaret's expression turned thoughtful, then she lowered her eyebrows. "I don't know."

"Then we have to go to Captain Weaver! We have to go talk to him! If we can find out if there's still treasure, we can find Williams!"

Margaret bit her lip.

Then the men came back. They had not found Captain Steel. They hadn't even found the *Nightfire*.

"Fast ship," one of the men muttered under his breath, "It's a wonder Weaver even caught up in the first place."

Jeremiah ran up to John. "We have to go find Captain Weaver! He'll know...I'm sure he'll know where to look!"

John cocked an eyebrow, then looked at Margaret, who just nodded.

Captain Weaver was not at all like Captain Steel. He had a lopsided gray wig, a wrinkly, saggy face, and was wearing a dressing gown. Granted, it was late at night and he had just woken up.

"John? What is it at this hour?"

John looked at Jeremiah. So, Jeremiah stepped forward and told the events of the past few days to the old captain.

Captain Weaver grunted, then said, "Come in."

John and Jeremiah entered the sitting room.

"I suppose you had better know the entire story," Captain Weaver said. And he proceeded to tell John and Jeremiah how the *Lady Marie* had stumbled, quite by accident, on the *Nightfire*. Of course, the *Nightfire's* reputation was well known, so the *Lady Marie* attacked. The pirates were surprised, but fought well. Finally, the pirates surrendered. But when the crew of the *Lady Marie* boarded her, she was empty. The crew got the creeps and said it was a ghost ship, but Captain Weaver and the first mate Williams quickly set to emptying the *Nightfire* of its cargo, which included the plunder of several merchant ships coming from the Indies. The crew of the *Lady Marie*, still convinced that the ship was haunted, refused to man it back to port, so they shot a few more cannonballs at the ship and left it to sink.

"Apparently it didn't," Captain Weaver said.

"I don't think that the cargo was only spices and cloth from the Indies," Jeremiah said, narrowing his eyes at the captain. John and the Captain both looked startled at this comment. "There must have been something else. Gold. Jewels."

"When a merchant ship returns from the Indies, it has spent its gold and jewels, boy, and bought spices and cloth to sell here," Captain Weaver said testily.

"I think you're lying."

"I'm sure the boy means no offense, sir—" John said quickly.

"But I still think you're lying. Where's the treasure?"

Captain Weaver stood and began to pace. Then he turned resolutely back to John and Jeremiah. “The life of my first mate means more to me than my honor. Yes, there was something else. There was a treasure. The merchant ships *were* carrying several thousand dollars worth of spices and cloth, but among them was a small, intricate box. The box itself would have been worth hundreds, but of course, what was inside was even more valuable.”

“What was it?” Jeremiah breathed.

“We don’t know.”

“What?”

“I sent the box to a locksmith on our arrival in Boston. I didn’t want to damage the box, you see, in trying to pry it open. But the locksmith sent it back unopened, claiming it was cursed.”

“So you have it?”

“No. The box *was* cursed. Every moment it was in my house brought me bad luck after bad luck. It killed my daughter and drove my wife insane.”

“So what did you do with it?”

“I did what any man would do after losing his daughter and wife. I tossed it into the harbor.”

“It’s in the *harbor*? Does Williams know?” Jeremiah said incredulously.

Captain Weaver shook his head. “No one knew that I kept it. I didn’t tell a soul.”

“But that must be what Captain Steel is after!”

“Why would he be after a cursed box?”

Jeremiah bit his lip. “He must be after the contents.”

Captain Weaver shook his head again, miserably.

“Or he cursed it himself,” John said.

“Or both,” Captain Weaver agreed.

“We have to go get the box!” Jeremiah exclaimed. “That’s the only thing that will save Williams. We *have* to go to the harbor!”

“But even if we *do* find it,” John said, “Which is, unlikely at best, how on earth will we find the *Nightfire*?”

Jeremiah’s eyes twinkled. “If they know we have the box—if we *make* it known—they won’t hesitate to come to us. Be there, tomorrow, Captain and John. We’ll find it. I’m sure of it. I’m *sure* of it.”

“Where are you going?” John asked, startled.

“To see my parents. They’re probably dead with worry.”

And with that, Jeremiah saluted, then trotted through the streets of Boston, which he had walked so many times that he could navigate them with his eyes closed, to go home.

And tomorrow, he’d go fishing for a cursed box.

To Be Continued...

Replacing Your Usual Puzzle This Issue:

Try your skills & knowledge on a variety of puzzles & games offered on the website "All Things Ransome"! Here's the link:

www.allthingsransome.net/quizzes/index.html

Some of these puzzles & games are similar to the Dick Callum Cup Quiz, a difficult but fun trivia game in which teams at the IAGM (International Annual Group Meeting) compete, and the winning team is awarded the Annual Dick Callum Cup as a prize! Try your skills--maybe you can go compete one year :-)

Fall Photo Contest: Juniors!

One way to pursue adventure this fall is to look for that perfect snapshot opportunity. The rules are simple:

1. Only Juniors allowed (i.e. TARS members under 17)
2. Take pictures! They can be of anything that is Autumn and/or Swallows and Amazons themed.
3. Then send them to me (SailistheThing@yahoo.com). You can send me up to three pictures that you've taken.
4. My sister Hannah and I will be judging.

If your picture is chosen to be the winner, I will either: make you a **red knitted hat** (I am a good knitter, don't worry ;-)) or send you a copy of the **S&A book of your choosing**.

All the pictures I get will be published in the next POE (if I get lots, I'll make a collage).

And anyone who takes a picture of George Owdon and Ralph Strakey pushing off a boat in the middle of the night gets extra extra-extra credit.

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

Thanks once again to our members who share their skills and time to offer us some great reading! I hope you all had wonderful summer and are looking forward to spending days aboard The Fram while we are figuratively iced in! (Hot cocoa, anyone?)

Cheers!

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