
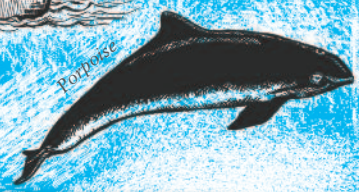
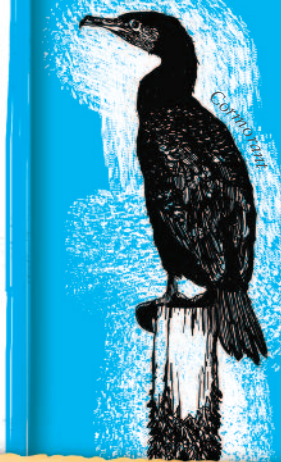


ALL BUT O.E.

Design and cover illustration: wearedrab.co.uk




80th
anniversary
MARATHON READING
of
We Didn't Mean
To Go To Sea
by
ARTHUR RANSOME



Book reading
Saturday 21st October
starting at 9am
Pin Mill Sailing Club, Ipswich IP9 1JP

**Book reading,
chapter by chapter!**

We'll be reading the book aloud, from beginning to end, in one continuous session, over about eight hours, with each chapter, or part-chapter taken by a different reader.

Come and listen.



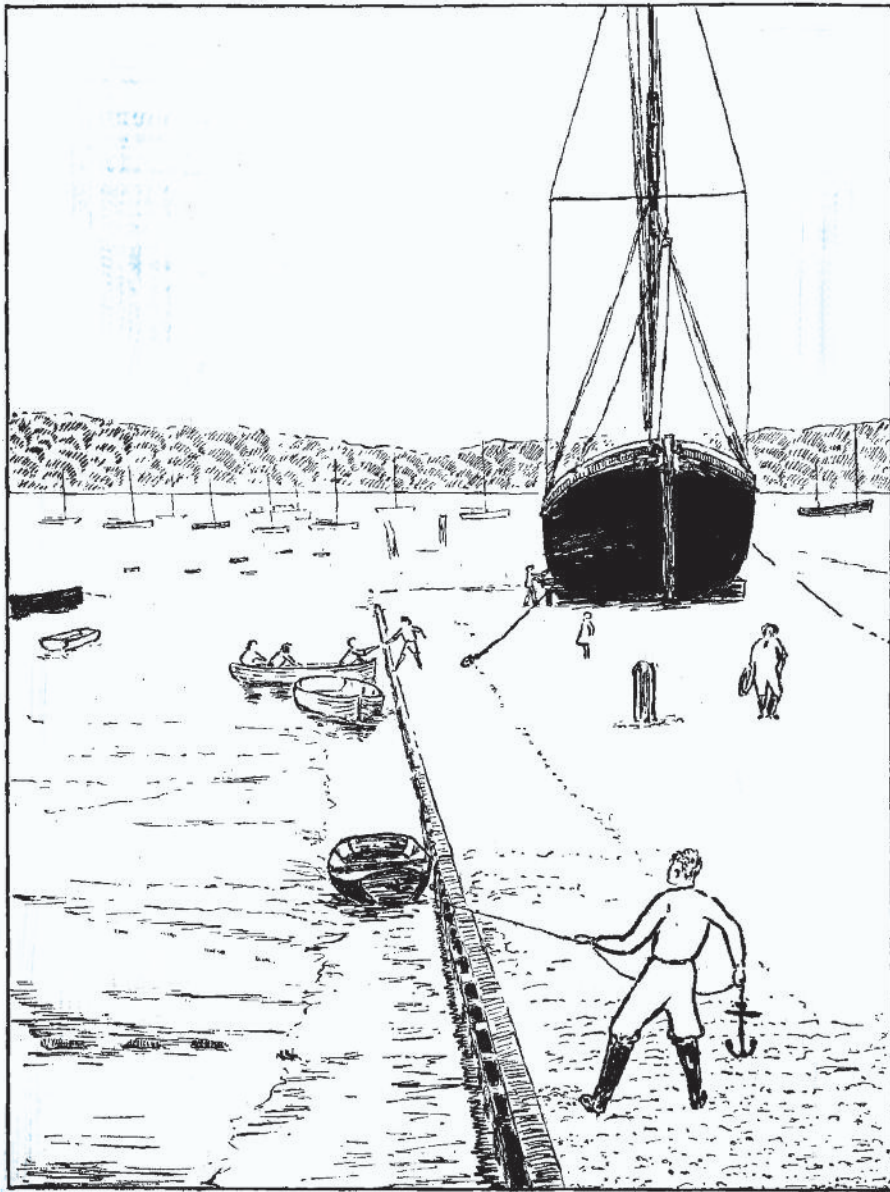
The 80th Anniversary Marathon Reading project features as part of a series of events in 2017 to mark 50 years since Arthur Ransome died and 80 years since his book, "We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea", was published.



Other events include walking and cycle trails, geo-caching and photography exhibitions.

Visit the project's Facebook page to find out more
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/ArthurRansomesEastCoast>





LANDING ON THE HARD



80th
anniversary
MARATHON READING
of
We Didn't Mean
To Go To Sea
by
ARTHUR RANSOME

First published November 1937

21 October 2017
starting at 9.00am
at
Pin Mill Sailing Club



Organised by Peter Willis
on behalf of
The Nancy Blackett Trust
and

Shotley Peninsula Tourism Action Group

Illustrations from We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea courtesy of
the Arthur Ransome Literary Estate

WE DIDN'T MEAN TO GO TO SEA

Published November 1937



The origins of *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* are more obvious than those of any of Arthur Ransome's children's adventures except perhaps *Swallows and Amazons* itself.

In 1935, Arthur decided he'd like to rediscover the joys of sea-sailing, after a decade or so living in the Lake District and sailing dinghies in its inland waters. Accordingly they decided to move to the coast, and having earmarked Suffolk as a likely area, they reputedly chose the Shotley Peninsula, and Pin Mill itself, by means of sticking a pin in a map. In the event their first home was on the other side of the River Orwell, a rented former farmhouse in Levington, but Pin Mill became the epicentre of Arthur's yachting life.

His search for a suitable boat was quickly rewarded, with the help of a fellow member of the Cruising Association, in the shape of a 28ft yacht with the improbable name of *Electron*, lying in Poole Harbour.

Ransome bought the boat, immediately renamed her Nancy Blckett, after his *Swallows and Amazons* heroine, and set about sailing her home up the Channel and across the Thames Estuary, with a young crewman to help. On their first day they ran into a major gale and sought refuge in Yarmouth Harbour. The weather continued to be atrocious throughout the voyage. The yacht's navigation lights proved unreliable – "I used a red Woolworth bakelite plate with a



strong torch behind it to frighten off the Flushing-Harwich steamer!"

After the voyage, he wrote: "After ten years with none, I've had a little 'yachting'. It made me feel horribly old but in a way very young and inexperienced."

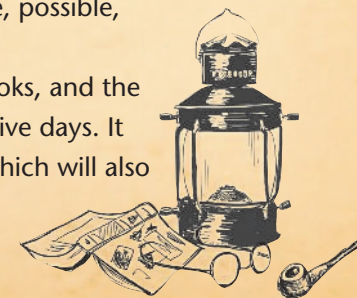
All of it – the Pin Mill location, the boat, the weather, even the red Woolworth plate, and especially that sense of youth and inexperience – was to find its way into the book, though it took a little while to digest. It wasn't until the following January, two days before his 52nd birthday that he wrote to his publisher: "During the last four days I have seen, grabbed, clutched and pinioned a really gorgeous idea for another book... Swallows only... No Nancy or Peggy or Captain Flint ... but a GORGEOUS idea with a first class climax inevitable and handed out on a plate... lovely new angle of technical approach and everything else I could wish... so I breathe again... I really was afraid I'd done for myself or rather these stories by uprooting, but I haven't This new idea is the best since *Swallows and Amazons*..."

Before starting on it, though, he had to check out the voyage for himself, and the destination. In June that year, he set out from Harwich in Nancy Blckett to cross the North Sea to Flushing, as the Dutch port of Vlissingen was then more widely known to British yachtsmen. The voyage, around 100 miles, took 25 hours. The result, once he got down to write it was a strikingly different book from the others in the *Swallows and Amazons* series.

As Libby Purves, one of our readers, has written: "The novel was for me, and countless others, the spark of a love affair... *We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea* is different: neither children's play on calm waters in reach of rescue, nor a piratical fantasy either. It stands alone because every stage of the *Goblin's* accidental voyage to Vlissingen is deliberate, possible, thrillingly solid. It could happen."

It's also one of the shortest of these Ransome books, and the most dramatic. The action takes place over a mere five days. It certainly merits the salute of a marathon reading, which will also reward listeners with an intense and immersive experience. Enjoy!

Peter Willis





WE DIDN'T MEAN TO GO TO SEA

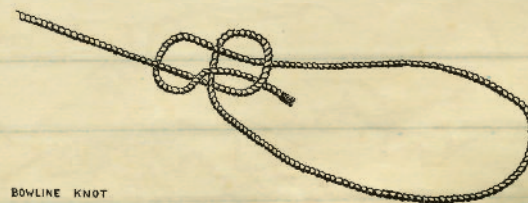
Chapter reading times

Chapter	Approx. time
1. A Bowline Knot <i>read by Romy Blackburn</i>	9.00
2. Sleepy Skipper <i>read by Susanna Bishop</i>	9.18
3. We've All Promised <i>read by Robert Mawson</i>	9.30
4. Down the River <i>read by Derek Davis and Gary Richens</i>	9.49
5. Sleeping Afloat <i>read by Marc Grimston and Margaret Maybury</i>	10.07
6. Nothing can Possibly Happen <i>read by Eric</i>	10.25
7. He's Been an Awfully Long Time <i>read by David Henshall and David Wood</i>	10.47
8. The Beach End Buoy <i>read by Griff Rhys Jones</i>	11.08
9. Drifting Blind <i>read by Nigel Tomlinson and Jonathan Gornall</i>	11.28
10. Out to Sea <i>read by Charlie Drane and Madeleine Young</i>	11.46
11. Whose Fault Now? <i>read by Dan Houston</i>	12.06
12. A Cure for Seasickness <i>read by Martin Fisher and David Collison</i>	12.26
13. Woolworth Plate <i>read by Heidi Elks</i>	12.45
14. At Pin Mill <i>read by Janet King</i>	1.02

Chapter

Approx. time

15. Keeping Awake <i>read by Ivan Cutting</i>	1.10
16. Dawn at Sea <i>read by Nicola Farr</i>	1.27
17. Shipwrecked Sailor <i>read by Bob Hull</i>	1.46
18. Land Ho! What Land? <i>read by Christina Hardyment</i>	2.06
19. Signal for a Pilot <i>read by Libby Purves</i>	2.24
20. Grown up Noses Below <i>read by Paul Crisp</i>	2.40
21. Surprises All Round <i>read by Julia Jones with Frances Wheen</i>	2.57
22. In a Foreign Port <i>read by Jane Challener</i>	3.12
23. Dutch Afternoon <i>read by Carla Searle and Rachel Barford</i>	3.27
24. Happier Voyage <i>read by Clare Thompson and Richard Roberts</i>	3.48
25. Lost – Two Days and a Boat <i>read by Cathy Shelbourne and Chris Brown</i>	4.05
26. Nothing to Declare <i>read by Holly Shields and Daniel Dahl</i>	4.23
27. Coil Down <i>read by Sophie Neville</i>	4.40



BOWLINE KNOT

all timings approximate; readers subject to change on the day

Background to our readers of
**WE DIDN'T MEAN
TO GO TO SEA**

Rachel Barford From Essex, read at the Marathon Reading of Swallows and Amazons in Coniston, 3 September

Susanna Bishop Actor, director and workshop leader; directed Holbrook Academy's promenade presentation of We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea for the Ransome Jamboree

Romy Blackburn Commodore, Pin Mill Sailing Club

Jane Challener From Dorset, sailed Nancy Blackett round the Isle of Wight

Charlie Drane and Maddie Young, two young performers who impressed in 'Shanties on the Shore' this summer

David Collison a vice-president of the Nancy Blackett Trust

Paul Crisp Founder member of NBT, Trustee of the Arthur Ransome Society

Ivan Cutting Artistic Director of Easter Angles, and director of last year's; production of We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea; born and raised on the Shotley Peninsula

Daniel Dahl Artist

Derek Davis Shotley district councillor and chairman of HMS Ganges Museum

Heidi Elks From Derbyshire, read at the Marathon Reading of Swallows and Amazons in Coniston, 3 September

Nicola Farr From Lincoln

Martin Fisher Orwell yachtsman and Ransome fan

Jonathan Gornall Journalist, author and boatbuilder

Marc Grimston Author of children's fantasy books and canal dweller

Christina Hardyment Author, Ransome biographer and founder of the Arthur Ransome Society

David Henshall, 88, former managing editor of the London Evening Standard and editor of the Ipswich Evening Star, still writing for the East Anglian Daily Times

Dan Houston Editor of Classic Sailor magazine

Bob Hull From Hexham, Nancy Blackett skipper and NBT vice-president

Julia Jones and Francis Wheen Co-owners of Ransome's Peter Duck; Julia writes east coast based children's novels. Francis is a journalist (Private Eye) and broadcaster (The News Quiz)

Janet King (nee Clay) Granddaughter of Mrs Henry Clay, to whom Ransome dedicated the book

Eric and Manako Maddison

Robert Mawson Writing as Robert Radcliffe a bestselling author of military fiction, who sails on the Orwell

Margaret Maybury District councillor

Sophie Neville President of the Arthur Ransome Society; as a child played Titty in the 1974 film of Swallows and Amazons

Libby Purves Journalist, broadcaster, sailor and author of two yachting classics – the autobiographical One Summer's Grace and the novel Regatta

Griff Rhys Jones was brought up with the books and first sailed in these rivers in search of 'Secret Water' when he was aged eight in the sixties. He lives overlooking the Stour estuary today partly as a result of reading these books. Griff is patron of the Stour and Orwell Society and Vice President of the Stour River Association.

Gary Richens Helped establish the Arthur Ransome Trail, Pin Mill-Shotley

Richard Roberts Historian of the *Swallow*-like Orford 10-Footers

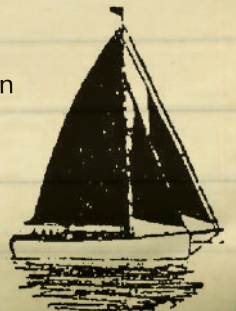
Cathy Shelbourne and Christopher Brown From Ipswich Electrifiers public speaking group

Holly Shields

Claire Thompson School nurse and lifelong Ransome fan

David Wood County councillor, chairman Suffolk Coast AONB

Many thanks to all our readers



PIN MILL SAILING CLUB

The Pin Mill Sailing Club was from the start our preferred choice as the venue for this historic event, and we're grateful for the enthusiasm,

co-operation and support it's extended to the project.

Arthur Ransome himself was a member. The club's formation, in September 1935 dates from the same time as his arrival in Suffolk, and he joined in March 1936, seconded by Harry King.

The club's headquarters at that time was the Butt and Oyster (the present clubhouse is post-war), and it's quite likely that when Ransome records arriving back at Pin Mill after his 1937 week-long cruise to Portsmouth "in time for the tail end of a sausage and shanty party" this was a PMSC event.

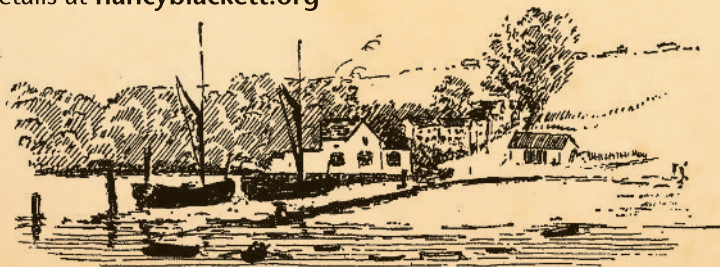
THE NANCY BLACKETT TRUST

2017 also marks the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Nancy Blackett Trust, and its purchase of the newly-restored *Nancy Blackett*. An appeal had been launched a year earlier when *Nancy Blackett* was put

up for sale, and some 400 people contributed, and went on to become members, supporting her ongoing maintenance.

Sailing her is an integral part of keeping her in good condition – faults are soon spotted and corrected – as well as providing the 'Goblin experience' for anyone who chooses to join the Trust (membership is £25 a year). She is frequently seen sailing on the Orwell from her base at Woolverstone, and has crossed the North Sea to Flushing in the wake of the Goblin a number of times, including this summer.

More details at nancyblackett.org



PIN MILL



Arthur Ransome's photos of Selina King at the Pin Mill Studio

A series of photos taken by Ransome himself chronicling the building of his yacht Selina King at Harry King's Boatyard in 1938 processed and enlarged by Anthony Cullen

Presented by the
Nancy Blackett Trust
with support from the
Heritage Lottery Fund

