Camping and Tramping, Swallows and Amazons: Interwar Children's Fiction and the Search for England

Hazel Sheeky

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School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Newcastle University
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Abstract

For many in Britain, the interwar period was a time of significant social, political and cultural anxiety. In the aftermath of the First World War, with British imperial power apparently waning, and with the politics of class becoming increasingly pressing, many came to perceive that traditional notions of British, and particularly English, identity were under challenge. The interwar years saw many cultural responses to the concerns these perceived challenges raised, as seen in H. V. Morton's *In Search of England* (1927) and J. B. Priestley's *English Journey* (1934). The sense of socio-cultural crisis was also registered in children's literature. This thesis will examine one significant and under-researched aspect of the responses to the cultural anxieties of the inter-war years: the 'camping and tramping' novel.

The term 'camping and tramping' refers to a sub-genre of children's adventure stories that emerged in the 1930s. These novels focused on the holiday leisure activities – generally sailing, camping and hiking - of largely middle-class children in the British (and most often English) countryside. Little known beyond Arthur Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' novels (1930-1947), this thesis undertakes a full survey of camping and tramping fiction, developing for the first time a taxonomy of this sub-genre (chapter one). It also investigates the cultural meanings of the principal activities that quickly became characteristic of camping and tramping novels (chapter two).

Besides this survey and accompanying analysis, this thesis also undertakes a thorough examination of the contexts of camping and tramping fiction. It firmly situates camping and tramping novels within the socio-cultural debates and anxieties from which they emerged and with which they continually engaged. Chapter three concentrates on how camping and tramping fiction responded to the challenges posed by the democratisation of leisure and particularly demands for more open access to the countryside. Chapter four is also focused on exploration of the land, but examines the novels through the lens of contemporary colonial and cartographic discourses. Chapter five turns to consider more specifically the maritime traditions with which camping and tramping fiction engaged, in particular Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' series.

It is argued throughout this thesis that camping and tramping fiction responded to perceived challenges to Britishness by creating a powerful myth of nationhood as rooted in rural and, maritime traditions. This reformulation sought to manage changes to national identity by endorsing largely middle-class social and cultural agendas and validating middle-class values. This thesis argues for the cultural significance of camping and tramping fiction, something previously largely unnoticed. These novels were fully engaged in the social, cultural and political debates of the time and, as such, can be viewed as both reflecting contemporary cultural anxieties and as helping to construct new narratives of national identity.

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Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 An Overview of Camping and Tramping Fiction

The general consensus is that camping and tramping fiction first appeared in 1930 when, with the publication of *Swallows and Amazons*, Arthur Ransome 'created' the genre.[1] The invention of the Walker and Blackett children, with their imaginative expeditions during long summer holidays, breathed new life into Britain's rather tired children's publishing industry. As such, Ransome is widely credited with creating something distinctly original and exciting. Writing in 1949, Geoffrey Trease commented that Ransome had 'created a new genre' and in 1952 Frank Eyre observed that *Swallows and Amazons* was 'something completely new'.[2] The cultural and literary significance of Ransome's work has also been acknowledged by modern critics. Peter Hunt notes in *Approaching Arthur Ransome* (1992) that 'Almost every version of British children's-book history sees Ransome as a landmark figure'.[3] Today, camping and tramping writing is primarily understood in terms of stereotypes and clichés with little known about the genre as a whole, beyond the work of Arthur Ransome. In fact, although camping and tramping fiction dates from the early twentieth century, the moniker 'camping and tramping' is an invention of the late-twentieth century and children's literature critic, Victor Watson.[4] To date, Watson is the only critic to have addressed camping and tramping writing as a discrete genre and consequently it still requires nuanced definition. There remains some confusion about these stories which typifies responses to camping and tramping fiction. It is because of this that as late as 2010, Roland Chambers still felt it fitting to describe Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* as 'An

[1] Although details about the Ransome novels are provided throughout this thesis, a basic knowledge of the series has been assumed, given the amount of critical work that has been undertaken on Ransome. There has, for example, been no attempt made to replicate the comprehensive survey of the entire series undertaken by Peter Hunt. See, Peter Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992).
[2] Geoffrey Trease, *Tales Out Of School*, 2nd edn (1949; London: Heinemann Educational, 1964), p. 141 and Frank Eyre, *20th Century Children's Books* (London: The British Council, 1952), p. 56. These comments are by no means the only ones to attribute this position to Arthur Ransome. See also Sheila G. Ray, *Children's Fiction. A Handbook for Librarians* (1970; Leicester: Brockhampton Press, 1972), p. 57Marcus Crouch, *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers*, (1962; London: The Library Association, 1963), p. 72.
[3] Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome*, p. 13.
[4] Victor Watson, 'Camping and Tramping Fiction, 1920 – 1960' in *Reading Series Fiction: from Arthur Ransome to Gene Kemp* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 73-83 and 'Camping and Tramping Fiction' in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English,* ed. by Victor Watson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 124-5.

Edwardian idyll of bun loaf and pemmican, of butter and marmalade sandwiches, of cotton tents and grog and tea at four, and children who say "ripping"'.[5] Chambers' description is not only factually incorrect but it is also a crude oversimplification of camping and tramping fiction, made possible by its strong generic features, motifs and codes. These features – such as campfires, the open-road, gypsy caravans, an apparent absence of adult supervision and slow and seemingly carefree journeys - are all prominent, and therefore open to caricature or parody.

Before some of the elements of camping and tramping fiction are drawn out in this introduction it might be useful to define what it was as simply as possible. Camping and tramping novels were realistic stories, which described the extended holidays of groups of middle-class children, mostly in the English countryside. The genre is now most associated with the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels of Arthur Ransome, whose work is discussed throughout this thesis, but there were many other writers producing camping and tramping fiction. It is more accurate to discuss camping and tramping texts rather than authors as no writer ever solely produced camping and tramping novels. As will be discussed in this introduction, most writers, including Arthur Ransome and Garry Hogg sometimes veered into other types of writing such as fantasy and mystery stories. There were many different types of camping and tramping fiction, such as boating, caravanning, farming, sailing and camping and tramping stories. It is therefore useful to consider the term camping and tramping as referring to a flexible, overarching genre which allowed authors to incorporate many different types of outdoor interests and activities into their narratives. These narratives were always based in reality in that they described country holidays which, although not financially possible for all children, were, none the less, physically possible. As John Rowe Townsend observes, Ransome's novels, indicative of all camping and tramping fiction, was characterised by real practical detail which 'convinced' the reader that 'it actually happened'.[6] Commenting on Arthur Ransome's *Pigeon Post* (1936) Berwick Sayers observed that it had 'the "*Robinson Crusoe"* realism with 'everything in it

[5] Roland Chambers, *The Last Englishman: The Double Life of Arthur Ransome* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 7.
[6] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children. An Outline of English Children's Literature* (London: Grant Miller, 1965), p. 108.

[being] done for the reader'.[7] The result was, as Berwick Sayers also remarks, holidays that were 'in themselves common place'; they were gently episodic, based around small, believable discoveries in the local area and described excitements and adventures which reasonably came from the natural surroundings.

Given comments such as those of Berwick Sayers and John Rowe Townsend it is surprising how often camping and tramping novels have been considered to be escapist or unrealistic texts. Some critical opinion suggests that along with the works of writers such as A. A. Milne and Kenneth Grahame, Ransome's camping and tramping novels are survivors or remnants of the Arcadianism or 'ruralist fantasy' associated, by some, with classic Edwardian children's literature.[8] It has been argued that by rights it belongs to a time before the First World War; to a time of innocence, when shell shock and the League of Nations did not exist, not even as aspects of the cultural imagination.[9] Peter Hunt acknowledges the possibility of this interpretation writing that 'it could be argued that, in the 'Swallows and Amazons' series, Ransome pictures a world even earlier than [1929]' in which year it was 'set precisely'.[10] Victor Watson's response is more emphatic describing the series as presenting a 'fellowship of innocence'.[11] For some, camping and tramping fiction suggested that the golden summer of 1914 extended far beyond the August of that year when Britain declared war on Germany, as children continued to explore a seemingly untroubled world. It presented the world as it should be, from the perspective of conservative middle classes, rather than as it really was for the majority of British people. Certainly, Humphrey Carpenter's assertion that '[a]ll children's books are about ideals' pervades many critical responses to camping and tramping fiction in general, the *Swallows and Amazons* novels in particular.[12]

Although positively reviewed at the time of publication, overall, camping and tramping

[7] W. C. Berwick Sayers, 'Swallows and Amazons For Ever!' *The Junior* Bookshelf, 1, 4 (July 1937), 6-8 (p. 7).
[8] See for example Humphrey Carpenter, *Secret Gardens: A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (London: Unwin, 1987), p. 210.
[9] See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Dan Todman, *The Great War, Myth and Memory* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2005).
[10] Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome,* p. 99.
[11] See, Victor Watson, 'A Fellowship of Innocence' in *Reading Series Fiction,* pp. 13-32.
[12] Carpenter, *Secret Gardens,* p.1.

fiction has become submerged in what might be summed up as the 'ocean of trash' attitude towards children's publishing of the 20s and 30s.[13] This negative opinion of early twentieth century children's literature has a long history, for example, in 1937 Harvey Darton complained that 'three-fifths of the children's books now published are merest rubbish'.[14] Camping and tramping fiction was seen as 'escapist' and, as Marcus Crouch put it more recently, 'remote from everyday life.'[15] For critics such as these, camping and tramping was a short-lived literary vogue, happily displaced in the 1950s with better, more realistic or socially aware books which thankfully, they appear to have thought, marked the close of an era of second-rate children's literature, sometimes derogatively labelled an 'Age of Brass'.[16] While the novels of Arthur Ransome have remained in circulation, and continue to grow in popularity, by comparison, the majority of camping and tramping fiction is now largely neglected. This thesis will reappraise these assumptions about camping and tramping writing and in doing so will make a significant contribution to knowledge of early twentieth-century children's literature. Setting questions of quality to one side for the moment, giving these books sustained consideration is a valuable undertaking itself, for there is little known about a great deal of early and mid twentieth-century children's literature, beyond those writers thought to be canonical, such as Eleanor Farjeon, Hugh Lofting, Alison Uttley and Edward Ardizzone.[17]

The central argument of this thesis is that the insistence on the innocence of camping and tramping fiction is entirely misleading. It is the result of accepting motifs such as Arcadianism as simple rather than problematic ideas and failing to recognise that camping and tramping novels are about ideals and escapism rather than being ideal and escapist. Once this shift in perspective is acknowledged then camping and tramping fiction reveals itself to be a fascinating and complex body of work, as would be expected of literature

[13] According to the Library Association Review children's book publishing in the 1930s was characterised by a 'few good books' in an 'ocean of trash'. Quoted in Peter Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.107.
[14] Darton's comments appeared in a letter he wrote to W. C. Berwick Sayers, quoted in, W. C. Berwick Sayers, 'An Appreciation', *The Junior Bookshelf*, 1, 2 (February, 1937), p. 4.
[15] Crouch, *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers*, p. 38, see also Owen Dudley Edwards, who describes the novels of Arthur Ransome as having an appeal that was both 'escapist' and nostalgic'. See Owen Dudley Edwards, *British Children's Fiction of the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 44.
[16] On the 'Age of Brass' in children's literature see Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature,* p. 31, and *Approaching Arthur Ransome,* p. 15.
[17] For a comprehensive and representative list of early twentieth-century children's authors see Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome*, p. 164.

produced by writers of Arthur Ransome's calibre during turbulent years in British and world history. This thesis therefore addresses camping and tramping novels as 'national fictions', as defined by Raphael Samuel. In other words, as fictions actively engaged in the process of nation-building, creating myths of national character; not simply 'reflections of ideology' but rather 'components in it, an imaginative underpinning, or disguise for precepts which are the common currency of political debate'.[18] To be precise, this thesis examines the subject of British national identity, character and heritage, as it was conceived, constructed and questioned in children's camping and tramping fiction, during the first half of the twentieth century. Specifically, it interrogates three main sites of the construction of national identity; firstly England's landscape and countryside; secondly, imperial cartographic exploration, and thirdly, Britain's maritime heritage. It is this idea of national fictions which underpins the subsequent analysis of all camping and tramping texts, from the work of Arthur Ransome, to neglected authors such as Garry Hogg, David Severn, M. E. Atkinson, E. H. Young, Carol Forrest, and Norman Ellison to the family sailing stories of Aubrey de Sélincourt and Gilbert Hackforth-Jones. By adopting this position, the thesis will demonstrate the active role played by children's literature in constructing myths of British national identity at the start of the twentieth century.

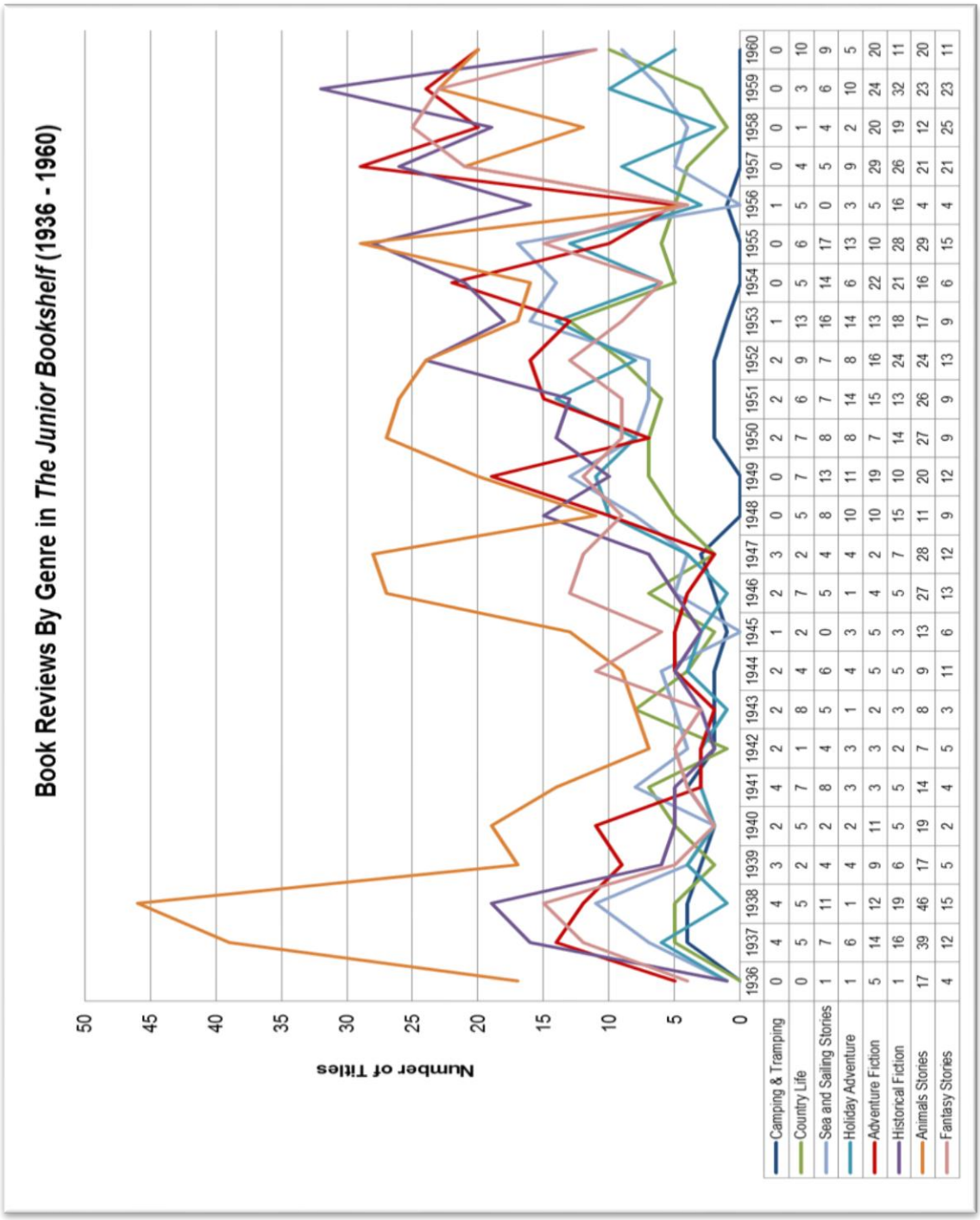
It is very difficult to ascertain the exact number of camping and tramping novels that were published between the years 1930 and 1960 - dates which Victor Watson has suggested, are the chronological parameters of the genre.[19] 1930, of course, marked the publication of Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* and, in 1960, Marjorie Lloyd drew her 'Fell Farm' series of camping and tramping novels to a close with the publication of *Fell Farm Campers* for Puffin. Writing in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English* (2001) Watson comments that the term camping and tramping denotes 'a popular kind of British novel' produced throughout these years, which included 'popular individual novels'

[18] Raphael Samuel, 'Introduction: the figures of national myth' in *Patriotism. The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 3: National Fictions*, ed. by Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. xi – xxxvi (p. xix).

[19] Victor Watson has written two pieces of criticism on camping and tramping fiction, which appears to contradict each other. His earlier work in *Reading Series Fiction: from Arthur Ransome to Gene Kemp*, includes a specific chapter on camping and tramping fiction, which encompasses the dates 1920 – 1960. His later entry on the genre, in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English*, modifies this to 1930-1960. See, Victor Watson, 'Camping and Tramping Fiction, 1920 – 1960' in *Reading Series Fiction,* pp. 73-83 and 'Camping and Tramping Fiction' in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English*, pp. 124-5.

and 'major series'.[20] Furthermore, when writing about the genre specifically as series fiction he again refers to it as being 'enormously popular.'[21] Watson rightly demonstrates the popularity of series fiction as a whole during this period. However the idea that camping and tramping fiction was enormously popular requires some clarification. There were in fact only 100 camping and tramping novels published in Britain, though there were many more novels published which shared resemblances with them. Examining the bibliographical sources produced during the same period allows us to form a more nuanced picture of the genre's popularity. *The Junior Bookshelf* - a publication which is discussed in more detail towards the end of this introduction - began reviewing children's books in 1936, and continued to do so over the next thirty years and more. It reviewed both good and bad books, and surveying the publication across these years provides an interesting insight into changing tastes and trends in children's literature during this time. As Figure 1.1 demonstrates, when every review, in every edition from 1936 to 1960 is considered, camping and tramping fiction only ever accounted for a small percentage of the overall books reviewed. This needs qualifying in that the number of books reviewed does not equate to the number of books published. Nevertheless, these figures do reveal trends in camping and tramping publishing, such as its decline from 1948 onwards. This finding is supported on examination of other bibliographical sources.

[20] Watson, 'Camping and Tramping Fiction' in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English*, p. 124.
[21] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction*, p. 76.



	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
Camping & Tramping	0	4	4	3	2	4	2	2	2	1	2	3	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Country Life	0	5	5	2	5	7	1	8	4	2	7	2	5	7	7	6	9	13	5	6	5	4	1	3	10
Sea and Sailing Stories	1	7	11	4	2	8	4	5	6	0	5	4	8	13	8	7	7	16	14	17	0	5	4	6	9
Holiday Adventure	1	6	1	4	2	3	3	1	4	3	1	4	10	11	8	14	8	14	6	13	3	9	2	10	5
Adventure Fiction	5	14	12	9	11	3	3	2	5	5	4	2	10	19	7	15	16	13	22	10	5	29	20	24	20
Historical Fiction	1	16	19	6	5	5	2	3	5	3	5	7	15	10	14	13	24	18	21	28	16	26	19	32	11
Animals Stories	17	39	46	17	19	14	7	8	9	13	27	28	11	20	27	26	24	17	16	29	4	21	12	23	20
Fantasy Stories	4	12	15	5	2	4	5	3	11	6	13	12	9	12	9	9	13	9	6	15	4	21	25	23	11

Figure 1.1: Graph showing the number of book reviews per genre in *The Junior Bookshelf* between the years, 1936-1960.

Examining contemporary publications, aimed at teachers and librarians, also confirms that camping and tramping fiction was rather a niche genre, when positioned within children's publishing overall. For example, in 1934, Mrs Charles Bridges included only five camping and tramping novels in *The Catalogue of the Circulating Library of the Children's Book Club,* which ran to 1300 works of fiction.[22] This number had increased somewhat when, looking back at children's books from the years 1926 to 1937, J.G. Faraday included thirteen camping and tramping novels in his list of best books, which featured 867 works of fiction.[23] This had improved by 1950, when Kathleen Lines included twenty eight camping and tramping novels, out of 375 fiction titles, in *Four to Fourteen, A Library of Books for Children*.[24] These figures are unsurprising when compared with the data presented in Appendix 1, which shows camping and tramping fiction as a steady presence in children's publishing up to the year 1948. After 1948, although some camping and tramping novels were published, the genre was already in decline with only Hackforth-Jones' 'Green Sailor' novels being reviewed in *The Junior Bookshelf*, from this point. This is why, only five years later, Nerina Shute would include just four camping and tramping novels in *Favourite Books for Boys and Girls, A Book for Parent, Teacher and Children* (1955).[25] This shift in fortune really marks the beginning of a trend that characterises the limited and brief canonical position of camping and tramping fiction in twentieth-century children's

[22] Bridges included Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons, Swallowdale, Winter Holiday, Coot Club* and E. V. Lucas' *The Slowcoach* (1910). See Mrs Charles Bridges, ed., *The Catalogue of the Circulating Library of the Children's Book Club* (London: The Children's Book Club, 1934).

[23] Faraday's thirteen titles were M.E. Atkinson's *August Adventure* (1936) and *Mystery Manor* (1937), Lucy W. Bellhouse's *The Caravan Children* (1935), Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock's *The Far Distant Oxus* (1937), Joanna Canan's *We Met Our Cousins* (1937), Conor O'Brien's *Two Boys Go Sailing* (1936) and Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), *Swallowdale* (1931), *Winter Holiday* (1933), *Pigeon Post* (1936) and *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea* (1937) and V.S and A. M. W.Wigmore's *Adventures Underground* (1935). See J.G. Faraday, *Twelve years of Children's Books. A Selection of the Best Books for Children Published during the Years 1926 – 1937* (Birmingham: Combridge, 1939).

[24] In addition to those texts already recommended by Bridges and Faraday, Lines also included Esther Boumphrey and Barbara Euphan Todd's *The House that Ran Behind* (1943), Aubrey de Sélincourt's *One More Summer* (1944), *One Good Tern* (1943), *Family Afloat* (1940), *Calicut Lends a Hand* and *Three Green Bottles***,** Garry Hogg's *Explorers Awheel* (1938), *Explorers on the Wall* (1939) and *Houseboat Holiday* (1944); Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock's *The Far Distant Oxus* (1937), *Escape to Persia* (1938) and *Oxus in Summer* (1939)*;* Arthur Ransome's *The Big Six* (1940) *The Picts and the Martyrs* (1943) and *Great Northern?* (1947); David Severn's *Rick Afire* (1942), *A Cabin for Crusoe* (1943), *Waggon for Five* (1944), *Hermit in the Hills* (1945) and *Forest Holiday* (1946) and finally, E. H. Young's *Caravan Island.* See Kathleen. M, Lines, *Four to Fourteen. A Library of Books for Children* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

[25] Shute includes three novels that appeared on other lists which were, *Swallows and Amazons*, *A Cabin for Cruose*, and *The Far Distant Oxus*. For the first time a G. Bramwell Evens book is included *Out With Romany* (1937). See Nerina Shute, *Favourite Books for Boys and Girls*, illus., by Daphne Peirce (London: Jarrolds, 1955).

literature. Indeed, in Line's second edition of *Four to Fourteen*, published in 1956, the number of camping and tramping novels fell to just twenty two titles, with the authors Garry Hogg, E. H. Young, M. E. Atkinson, and Barbara Euphan Todd disappearing altogether.[26] Drawing all of these sources together therefore begins to reveal a more nuanced picture of camping and tramping publishing. What emerges is a genre that although a consistent presence in children's publishing from 1930 to 1948 began to wane in popularity far earlier than has previously been thought.

1.2 Who were campers and trampers?

Arthur Ransome's Walker family provides the clearest model of a camping and tramping family. Like most campers and trampers they belonged to the professional middle classes with children mostly attending boarding school during term-time and with one or both parents working away, often overseas. Mr and Mrs Walker are the archetypal camping and tramping parents. While Mr Walker, a captain in the Royal Navy, is away on service in Malta and the China Seas, Mrs Walker accompanies her children on holiday but maintains a distance that gives her children a managed degree of autonomy. Service families were popular throughout camping and tramping novels, appearing in Marjorie Lloyd's 'Fell Farm' novels which sees the Brown parents in India, as did Joanna Cannan's *We Met Our Cousins* (1937) which refers to the protagonists' father as a major in the Indian Army. Similarly in Barbara Euphan Todd and Klaxon's *South Country Secrets* (1935) the Robinsons' parents remain in South Africa when their children return to England. The Second World War would see a rise in parents in service - Malcolm Saville's *Mystery at Witchend* (1943) begins with the Mortons' father going off to war and Carol Forrest's *Caravan School* (1946) refers to fathers 'out East' or in Italy, and mothers overseas, in the Wrens or with the A.T.S. [27] By the time of the Second World War camping and tramping fiction had already depicted the division of service families for a number of years. The prevalence of naval service families in camping and tramping fiction is examined in detail in chapter five of this thesis but the general geographic mobility of camping and tramping families, or, in other words families that moved according to the demands of various

[26] Other changes that Lines made were to cut the number of David Severn texts to three, omitting *Hermit in the Hills* and *A Cabin for Crusoe* and to remove Ernest Thompson Seton's *Two Little Savages* (1903).
[27] Carol Forrest, *Caravan School* (London: Arthur Pearson, 1946), p.13.

professional occupations, is noteworthy. Ross McKibbin writes that such mobility was a defining feature of 'non-traditional' middle-class families who were sometimes referred to as 'immigrants' or 'newcomers' by the 'traditional' middle classes. It was thought that the non-traditional middle-classes would not be 'much interested in their host community or its institutions' because they knew that they were going to move on.[28] McKibbin's comments raise some interesting questions in relation to camping and tramping texts which are examined throughout this thesis. Chapters three and four in particular examine the ways in which camping and tramping novels constantly depicted campers and trampers trying to connect with the countryside and avoid being perceived as newcomers.

The geographical mobility of many camping and tramping families, and the prevalence of fathers in service, accounts both for the closeness of camping and tramping families and the presence of father-figures rather than fathers. Throughout the novels there is a wealth of energetic aunts and uncles who often accompany the children on their holidays. Ransome's Captain Flint – Nancy and Peggy Blackett's Uncle Jim – is an unusual figure given that, although he is a willing participant in the children's play, he is old, overweight and bald.[29] Other camping and tramping uncles and aunts tended to be young, vigorous, slightly older versions of the children. Relatives like this appeared repeatedly in camping and tramping novels such as Uncle Guy in Garry Hogg's 'Explorer' novels, Uncle George in Hackforth-Jones' 'Green Sailor' stories and Aunty Judy in Elizabeth Young's *Caravan Island* (1940). Aunt Judy is a typical example camping and tramping relative in that she sets a good example by bathing in cold water every morning, passes on skills by teaching the children how to climb and encourages them to be self-reliant by learning to cook for themselves. In some camping and tramping novels older siblings took on the role of supervising younger brothers and sisters. One such novel is Barbara Euphan Todd and Esther Boumphrey's *The House that Ran Behind* (1943) which centres on a caravan holiday of the Richards family and features two older siblings, Anthony who is seventeen and Bridget who is fifteen. Here though, the elder brother and sister very evidently become surrogate parents and, in consequence, the younger children never really develop the kind of self-reliance that is at

[28] Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918 – 1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 92.
[29] It is widely thought that Captain Flint is a self-portrait of Ransome. Peter Hunt, for example, observes that 'The element of self-portrait here is surprisingly astringent.' Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome*, p. 72.

the core of much camping and tramping writing. The same can be said of Bridget Mackenzie's *Six in a Caravan* (1945) which also features an older brother caring for his siblings. Once again though, the children's independence is stunted by this arrangement.

Camping and tramping families were actually very flexible social groups as is demonstrated in David Severn's 'Waggoner' novels which drew upon a less literal idea of the family. Severn's Waggoners consist of at least four actual families, namely Bill Crusoe, Brian and Pamela Sanville, Derek and Diana Longmore and Jean, Titch, Michael Crosbie, occasionally accompanied by Mr Crosbie, fulfils the same role as camping and tramping aunts and uncles and the children becoming a single unit or quasi family as their relationships develop. The extended camping and tramping family would also be seen in the later family sailing stories of Aubrey de Sélincourt, joining together the Rutherfords and the Chales, while Garry Hogg's 'Explorer' novels joined together the Armitages and the Brennans.

Although camping and tramping families were not always based on blood relations they were usually organised along traditionally gendered lines. On surveying the whole of the camping and tramping genre what emerges is a type of writing that, whilst presenting scenarios based on mutual cooperation and understanding, largely endorsed traditional social hierarchies and gender roles. The privileging of male authority over female was one of the defining features of sailing fiction, a subject that is examined in detail in chapter five. In camping and tramping fiction in general, these traditional gendered roles were established through the creation of quasi-familial groups among the children, with the creation of surrogate mothers and fathers. This fact was not lost upon W. Berwick Sayers who praised this aspect of Arthur Ransome's novels, writing 'what a fine family are the resourceful John, the practical house-wifely Susan and the jolly boy Roger'.[30] In Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, this is achieved through the adoption of a naval familial hierarchy, the significance of which is accounted for in chapter five of this thesis. Generally the division that Ransome draws between John as the eldest male and leader of the party and Susan, the eldest girl, as 'chief cook and bottle-washer' establishes a pattern that recurs across many texts. The challenging figure of Nancy Blackett is largely absent

[30] Berwick Sayers, 'Swallows and Amazons For Ever!', p. 7.

from other camping and tramping novels.

Overall, camping and tramping girls usually defer to boys, even when he is not the eldest child of the party. In Atkinson's 'Lockett' books for example, Jane Lockett always abides by the decisions of her younger brother Oliver. Jane Lockett is also typical of camping and tramping girls who frequently assume the domestic responsibilities for their parties. This is overtly discussed in Garry's Hogg's Explorer novels, which depicts the girls of the party, Dinah and Tess, volunteering to do the cooking because it is a good opportunity to put their cookery lessons into practice. However, when a leader and 'pioneer' is called for, Dinah's brother David immediately puts himself forward as the 'strong man of the party'.[31] It is certainly difficult to imagine Nancy Blackett agreeing to such a division of labour. This division characterises the majority of camping and tramping novels which, whilst seeming to offer girls opportunities to explore physical freedoms, often reinforces traditional gender roles, though there are occasional exceptions to this. In *Caravan School*, Carol Forrest deliberately makes the eldest brother of the party, Christopher, cook dinner for his siblings, including his younger sister and their female travelling companion, Miss England. This is despite, or more likely because of, Christopher's belief that it is 'sissy' for him to cook.[32] Moreover, by the time Marjorie Lloyd's *Fell Farm Campers* appeared in 1960, the eldest daughter Kay, whilst still being dominated by her elder brother Pat, is more interested in walking than cooking, and all the siblings share the domestic duties of camping.

It has been argued that the relationships between camping and tramping siblings, particularly the Walkers, are unnaturally benign. For Geoffrey Trease the relationships between the Walkers were characterised by 'a breezy healthiness' that was 'at times […] suspiciously suggestive of antiseptic' and that Ransome 'plumb[s] no emotional depth'.[33] Similarly John Rowe Townsend argued that Ransome seems to have 'deliberately avoided any serious approach to problems of personal relationship'.[34] In fact Ransome's wife Evgenia, always highly critical of his work, raised similar concerns about *The Picts and the*

[31] This discussion occurs in two of the Explorer novels in each instance adoption of traditional gender roles is maintained. See Garry Hogg, *Explorers Awheel*, illus., by Mollie Haigh (1938; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946), p. 25 and *Explorers Afloat*, illus., by Bruce Roberts (London: Thomas Nelson, 1940), p. 50.
[32] Forrest, *Caravan School*, p. 71.
[33] Trease, *Tales out of School*, p. 140.
[34] Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children*, p. 109.

Martyrs writing, '[i]f the Swallows & Co are not allowed to grow up, if they are put back in the same background with the same means of enjoying themselves as they have done holiday after holiday - they can't help repeating themselves'.[35] Victor Watson's reading of Susan Walker in *Secret Water* (1939) ably demonstrates the tension and developing relationship between Susan and John, challenging the opinions of Trease and Rowe Townsend.[36]

In general the idea of campers and trampers existing in an ideal world free from the personal tensions and conflicts arising from growing up is a simplistic one. Undoubtedly, in the 'Swallows and Amazons' books there is little sense of growing up in terms of physical appearance and age but as is argued in both chapters four and chapter five, Ransome uses relationships between his characters to interrogate multiple problems surrounding power, control, responsibility, loyalty and service. Some camping and tramping writers did begin to incorporate personal tensions that were perhaps more to do with growing up. In Aubrey de Sélincourt's *Calicut Lends a Hand* (1946), for example, Anne Rutherford and Anthony Chale's constant squabbling is set within the framework of their developing relationship. In his 1944 novel *Waggon for Five*, David Severn explores the jealousies and rivalries that could occur between girls who feel their position within their social groups is being challenged. Moreover, in *Caravan Island,* Elizabeth Young also depicts the way in which groups of estranged cousins could gradually grow to like each other, through sharing experiences. This is also true for Cannan's *We Met Our Cousins,* which again features two sets of estranged cousins from England and Scotland.

1.3 The Open-Air

It is no coincidence that camping and tramping stories really emerged in the 1930s, a time when there was a surge of interest in healthy outdoor leisure pursuits. As James Walvin writes, with the lifting of restrictions on leisure that had been brought in during the First World War, leisure came to be 'regarded as a right of all the people.'[37] This was

[35] Letter to Arthur Ransome from Evgenia Ransome, dated August 8 1942.Quoted in Hugh Brogan (ed), *Signalling From Mars. The Letters of Arthur Ransome* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), p. 294.
[36] See Watson *Reading Series Fiction*, pp. 33-45.
[37] James Walvin, *Leisure and Society, 1830-1950* (London and New York: Longman, 1978), p. 135.

consolidated in the Holidays with Pay Act of 1938 which resulted in many more people being able to take holidays than ever before. The open-air movement was partly a result of these demands for universal rights to leisure and in some instances was coupled with often highly politicized demands for open-access or the right to roam in the countryside.[38] For many though spending time in the open air - camping, hiking, climbing, caving, bird watching, sailing and cycling- was all part of a new healthy outdoor life, of which holidays were a vital element.

Camper and trampers clearly conformed to interwar ideas of what an open-air type of person should look like. This is beautifully captured in Harold Jones' illustration for M. E. Atkinson's *Mystery Manor* (1937) (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: original artwork by Harold Jones for M. E. Atkinson's *Mystery Manor*, from the Harold Jones Collection, c. 1937, Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle, HJ-01-02-02 A.

The girls' appearance is not only typical of campers and trampers but the open-air type in general. According to Robert Graves hikers and open-air types were 'adopting a special

[38] On the politicisation of the open-access movement see Nigel Curry, *Countryside Recreation, Access and Land Use Planning* (London: E & FN Spon, 1994) and John Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside' in *Class, Culture and Social Change. A New View of the 1930s* by F. Gloversmith, ed., (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 258-280.

dress that was almost a uniform'. [39] He described both sexes wearing a beret that 'an untasselled Basque tam-o'- shanter…above the same open-necked shirts, washable shorts, and waterproof rucksack'. This practical unisex clothing was suitable for running, hiking, sailing and climbing and so references to children wearing shorts, bathers, open-necked shirts, deck shoes, jumpers and occasional mackintoshes recur throughout the genre. While such clothing served a clear practical purpose it also served and concealed ideological messages. As chapter three argues, this camping and tramping uniform not only revealed children's physical fitness, but also affirmed that they were the 'right sort' to be holidaying in the countryside at all. Furthermore, while such unisex or androgynous clothing might suggest that camping and tramping novels depict equality amongst the sexes camping and tramping children were usually organised along traditionally gendered lines. As such, the presentation of girls throughout camping and tramping fiction confirms John Stevenson's contention that despite the obvious changes in dress and appearance, 'many traditional attitudes remained' about female opportunities, and that even in 1945, women remained 'something of a sub-class'.[40] Chapter five of this thesis argues that camping and tramping novels frequently undermined the authority of girls in mixed sex groups.

On surveying a wide range of camping and tramping novels it becomes evident that they provide a comprehensive picture of healthy open-air pursuits. A brief survey of the 'Swallows and Amazons' series demonstrates this. Ransome's series is often associated with sailing – the title *Swallows and Amazons* not only alludes to the assumed names of the Walker and Blackett children, but also to the names of their dinghies. Across the entire series though the children take part in a far wider range of activities. They also camp, cook, swim, fish and make maps (*Swallows and Amazons*, 1930); they hike and climb mountains (*Swallowdale*, 1931) and conduct regional surveys (*Secret Water*, 1939). With the introduction of Dick and Dorothea Callum, more scientific activities appear which are often linked with the open-air. Ransome's protagonists now also practised astronomy (*Winter Holiday*, 1933); bird-watching (*Coot Club*, 1934 and *Great Northern* 1947); geology (*Pigeon Post*, 1936) and photography (*The Big Six*, 1940, *Great Northern?*). Subsequent camping and tramping authors would often come to favour particular varieties of activity

[39] Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-End. A Social History of Great Britain 1918- 1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), p. 276.
[40] John Stevenson, *British Society 1914 – 45* (1984; London: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 177 and 174.

and so variations in camping and tramping fiction began to emerge.

Popular open-air pastimes often gave a focus to individual novels such as Garry Hogg's *Explorers Awheel* (1938) which began his three novel 'Explorer' series (1938-1939). Hogg's novel draws upon the contemporary popularity of cycling and describes the cycling holiday of the Brennan and Armitage children, along with Uncle Guy, or Skipper who enjoy an extended cycling trip in the south of England.[41] In his later novels Hogg would also feature new activities such as archaeological digs, rowing and motor-boating, alongside activities that readers were already familiar with from Ransome's novels, such as walking, swimming and mapping.

Many authors such as Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock would also incorporate horse and pony riding into their stories. Their first novel *The Far Distant Oxus* (1937), inspired by *Swallows and Amazons*, included pony riding alongside building hideaways and sailing rafts.[42] This interest followed through into their two sequels, *Escape to Persia* (1938) and *Oxus in Summer* (1939), which sees their protagonists return to Exmoor and Cloud Farm. Pony riding would become a particularly popular activity that many other writers would incorporate into wider camping and tramping novels. Ruth How's *The Friendly Farm* (1947) and *Adventures at Friendly Farm* (1948), also set on Exmoor, features children who go to stay on a farm for a holiday and who are interested in horses. M.E. Atkinson, ever adept at identifying trends in camping and tramping fiction would incorporate ponies and riding into her long running series. For example, *Hunter's Moon* (1952), part of her 'Fricka' series, centres on the secret desire of a little boy called Tony to ride horses. Elizabeth Young's *Caravan Island* (1942), also set around a farm, features a single child within a group of four, who wanted to ride a horse. Horse riding was therefore presented alongside other activities, in the case of *Caravan Island*, this also included rock climbing. Other novels such as V.S and A.M.W. Wigmore's *Adventures Underground* (1935) offered

[41] According to John Stevenson 28, 000 people joined the Cyclists' Touring Club between the wars. Stevenson, *British Society 1914 – 45*, p. 392.

[42] It is well known that Hull and Whitlock wrote their novel whilst still at school, sending their manuscript to Arthur Ransome, who championed their work with his own publisher Jonathan Cape. For a full account of this see Ransome's own introduction to the novel.,Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock, *The Far Distant Oxus*, illus., by Pamela Whitlock (1937; Edinburgh: Fidra, 2008), p. i – x.

a more unusual camping and tramping experience; *Adventures Underground* describes the caving holiday of a group of school friends staying on a farm in the Mendips. What this extensive list of activities reveals is just how enmeshed camping and tramping fiction was with the development of leisure pursuits in the inter-war years. Whether in a caravan, on foot, or a boat, underground or camping out, the activities of camping and tramping children often seem quite exhausting, though they never appear to think of them in this way. The strenuous nature of camping and tramping is suitably illustrated by M. E. Atkinson, in her third novel, *The Compass Points North* (1938), set in the Scottish Borders. The novel features Atkinson's Lockett children, who by the third novel have established a reputation for being heroic and adventurous campers and trampers. In *The Compass Points North* they are joined by two sisters, Morwenna and Esmè, the latter of whom is desperate to be part of the Lockett tribe. Atkinson seems gently to satirise the idea of campers and trampers, and their unceasing physical activity, when she describes Esmè's holiday preparations:

> If they were to take her along with them, then they must be made to realize that she could weather what they weathered. To this end she managed to get her breakfast porridge ration increased to nearly double its original size. She washed in cold water; performed violent exercises; ran round the tennis court (daily increasing the number of 'laps'), climbed trees, slept with her windows thrown open to their widest extent, and horrified Mademoiselle by asking in a village boy to give her lessons in boxing.[43]

There is an element of satire here, but it is manifestly the case that camping and tramping novels encouraged lots of physical activity. They were holiday stories, but the holidays were by no means dedicated to relaxation. Decadence, indolence and lassitude were the real enemies. As such, camping and tramping writing was part of the response to fears about the physical decrepitude of the population, anxieties that had been at their height in the early years of the twentieth century, recruitment problems during the Boer Wars having exposed

[43] M. E. Atkinson, *The Compass Points North* (London: The Bodley head, 1938), p. 28.

what was seen as the degeneration of large sections of the population. Baden Powell's establishment of the scout movement was a response to fears such as these and his 1908 manual, *Scouting for Boys*, had a clear influence on camping and tramping writing. According to *Scouting for Boys*, there were four principle areas of a scout's training namely, individual character, handicrafts, physical health and service for the state, all of which are evident in camping and tramping fiction. [44] Chapter five demonstrates the way in which principles of service were still integrated into camping and tramping fiction but in a far more subtle manner than *Scouting for Boys*. Camping and tramping novels encouraged self-reliance, physical endurance, the development of skill and building of character in way that was not associated with militarism or militaristic organisations such as the scouts and the Boys' Brigade which some parents were uncomfortable with after 1918.[45]

1.4 Key Motifs: Sailing

The prevalence of sailing throughout much camping and tramping fiction reflects the fact that there was still a strong maritime tradition in early twentieth-century children's writing. Many sailing stories were either written by amateur yachtsmen such as Ransome himself, or by men who had served in the Royal Navy, both of whom were responsible for the renewed interest in sailing that occurred in the years following 1918.[46] According to Frank Eyre, writing in 1952, Ransome 'launched a whole fleet of sailing adventures stories; some of which […] have attained a popularity approaching his own'.[47] As Eyre observed, one captain sailing in Ransome's fleet was Aubrey de Sélincourt, a keen amateur sailor who, though little known today, wrote series of what might best be described as family sailing stories which included *Family Afloat* (1940), *One Good Tern* (1943), *One More Summer* (1944) and *The Raven's Nest* (1949). A later, long-running series which began as sailing camping and tramping fiction was the 'Green Sailor' series written by Gilbert Hackforth Jones, formerly of the Royal Navy. Beginning in 1951 with *The Green Sailors*, followed by

[44] Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys. A handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship Through Woodcraft*, 12th edn, (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1926), p. 16.
[45] On the desire to avoid militarising children post 1918 see, Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-End. A Social History of Great Britain 1918- 1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), p. 269.
[46] See Mike Stammers, 'Shiplovers, a Cultural Phenomenon of the Interwar Years,' *Mariner's Mirror*, 82, 2 (1996), 213-16.
[47] Eyre, *20th Century Children's Books*, p. 58.

Green Sailors on Holiday (1952), the initial stories are based around the realistic holidays of four siblings aboard the *Rag Doll* – a yacht belonging to their Uncle George. Later stories would see the Green Sailors re-locate to more exotic seas, with novels such as *Green Sailors in the Caribbean* (1958) and *Green Sailors in the Galapagos* (1960) introducing more far-fetched story lines involving diamond smugglers. Stories such as these sought to encourage children's interest in sailing, thus bolstering maritime skills that many had feared were waning - a subject discussed in chapter five.[48]

While the extended, almost professional cruising featured in the 'Green Sailors' and Aubrey de Sélincourt's novels was undoubtedly beyond the means and abilities of many readers, other camping and tramping writers were less nautically ambitious or elitist. Many other camping and tramping novels would show children often ineptly, 'messing about in boats' such as Elizabeth Young's *River Holiday* (1942), Garry Hogg's *Houseboat Holiday* (1944) and M. E. Atkinson's *Castaway Camp* (1951) and *The Monster of Widgeon Weir* (1943). Some campers and trampers, such as Antonia and John in Joanna Cannan's *We Met Our Cousins* (1937), were simply hopeless with boats, failing to tie their rowing boat up properly and becoming stuck in the middle of a loch. Similarly in Elinor Lyon's *The House in Hiding* (1950) Ian and Sovra Kennedy, who later prove themselves adept rowers, initially sink their borrowed rowing boat by pulling a bung out of the bottom of it. Both Atkinson's and Hogg's boating stories took readers to the banks of the River Thames, presenting busy riverside scenes. This was testimony to the wider continued interest in more casual boating than Ransome's series allowed for, and was clearly set in the tradition of Kenneth Grahame's River Bank. An alternative form of sailing, or boating, was depicted in David Severn's *The Cruise of the "Maiden Castle"* (1948) which describes the holiday of siblings Alan, Joan and Christopher Warner, who join Alan's school friend, David Grantham, on his Uncle Lionel's narrowboat for the holiday (Figure 1.3).

[48] Joseph Conrad was not an admirer of modern pleasure yachting but he thought that it helped to keep sailing skills alive. The character Davies makes a similar though more ideologically driven point in Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1913) and this attitude can be traced through to the interwar 'Sea Scout' novels of writers such as Percy Westerman. See Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea* (1913; London: Methuen and Co, 1950), pp. 27-35, Erskine Childers Erskine Childers, *The Riddle of the Sands* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 97 and Percy F. Westerman, *The Percy F. Westerman Omnibus* (London and Glasgow: Blackie & Son Ltd, [1935]).

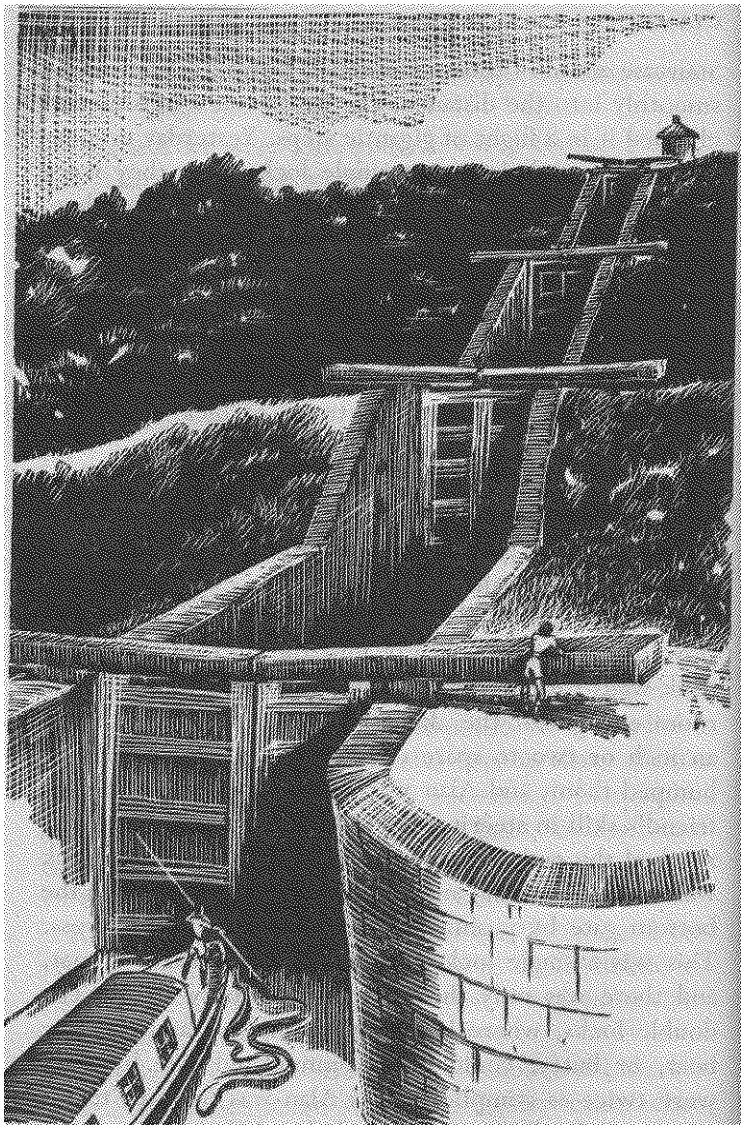


Figure 1.3: 'The Staircase' by J. Kiddell- Monroe for David Severn, *The Cruise of the "Maiden Castle"* (London: Bodley Head, 1948), p. 52.

1.5 Key Motifs: The Gypsy Vardo

Part of the allure of sailing was the ability it offered campers and trampers to literally go off the beaten track and sail in pathless waters, going wherever they chose. This allure also accounts for the depiction of the gypsy vardo, or caravan, in many camping and tramping texts. As chapter two argues, the popularity of the caravan story had its roots in the radical back-to-the-land movement of the 1890s and early twentieth-century British socialism. The

gypsy vardo came to encapsulate the idea of a wayfaring life, free of physical and societal restraints. This evolved into a wider romantic interest in caravanning and gypsy life, which was popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Key examples, discussed at length in chapter two, are David Severn's 'Waggoner' novels which ran to five titles, *Rick Afire* (1942), *A Cabin for Crusoe* (1943), *Waggon for Five* (1944), *Hermit in the Hills* (1945) and *Forest Holiday* (1946). Many camping and tramping novels drew upon this theme although not all would sustain the realism of Severn's novels. There were numerous stand-alone novels such as Lucy Bellhouse's *The Caravan Children* (1935) and Ursula Bloom's *Caravan for Three* (1947), and M. E. Atkinson began her 'Lockett' series with the caravan novel *August Adventure* (1936). There were some unusual variations of the caravan novel, such as Dale Collins' *The Voyage of the Landship* (1947) which describes a holiday on a ship that has been converted into a caravan. Whilst Collins' hybrid vehicle is unique, both the ship and the caravan symbolised the possibility of physical freedom, that, as chapter two argues was one of the key features of all camping and tramping novels.

The work of G. Bramwell Evens provides a useful example of the way in which camping and tramping motifs extended beyond works of fiction. Bramwell Evens drew upon his own Romany heritage when he created the persona of 'Romany,' broadcasting on the BBC Children's Hour and producing a series of books that were concerned with nature observation but which shared many resemblances with camping and tramping fiction (Figure 1.4). Bramwell Evens wrote many such books, all of which featured his dog Raq, who sometimes appeared in the title and frontis photographs. Titles included *A Romany and Raq* (1933), *Out With Romany Again* (1938), *Out With Romany by Meadow and Stream* (1943) and *Out with Romany by the Sea* (1941), all of which followed the same pattern. Features include gentle observation of the countryside and a backdrop of local figures with each book covering the duration of a single stay in the countryside. Although little known today Bramwell Evens was a popular children's writer and broadcaster. Brian Doyle writes that by 1934, Bramwell Evens' radio programme was 'the most popular Children's Hour feature in the North of England' and by 1938 it was broadcast in all regions in the British Isles and was one of the listeners' 'top favourites'.[49] The cross over between camping and

[49] Brian Doyle, *The Who's Who of Children's Literature* (London: Hugh Evelyn, 1968), p. 89. According to Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Pritchard, the 'London for its part was suspicious of northern contributions'

tramping motifs, nature observation and children's broadcasting was clearly thought to be successful as Norman Ellison or 'Nomad the Naturalist.' replaced Bramwell Evens after his death, also broadcasting on the BBC Children's Hour and producing a similar series of books with titles such as *Wandering with Nomad* (1946), *Out of Doors with Nomad, Further adventures among the wild life of the countryside* (1947) and *Roving with Nomad* (1949). Like Bramwell Evens, Ellison was also published by the University of London Press but this time illustrations were provided by C. F. Tunnicliffe, rather than the author.

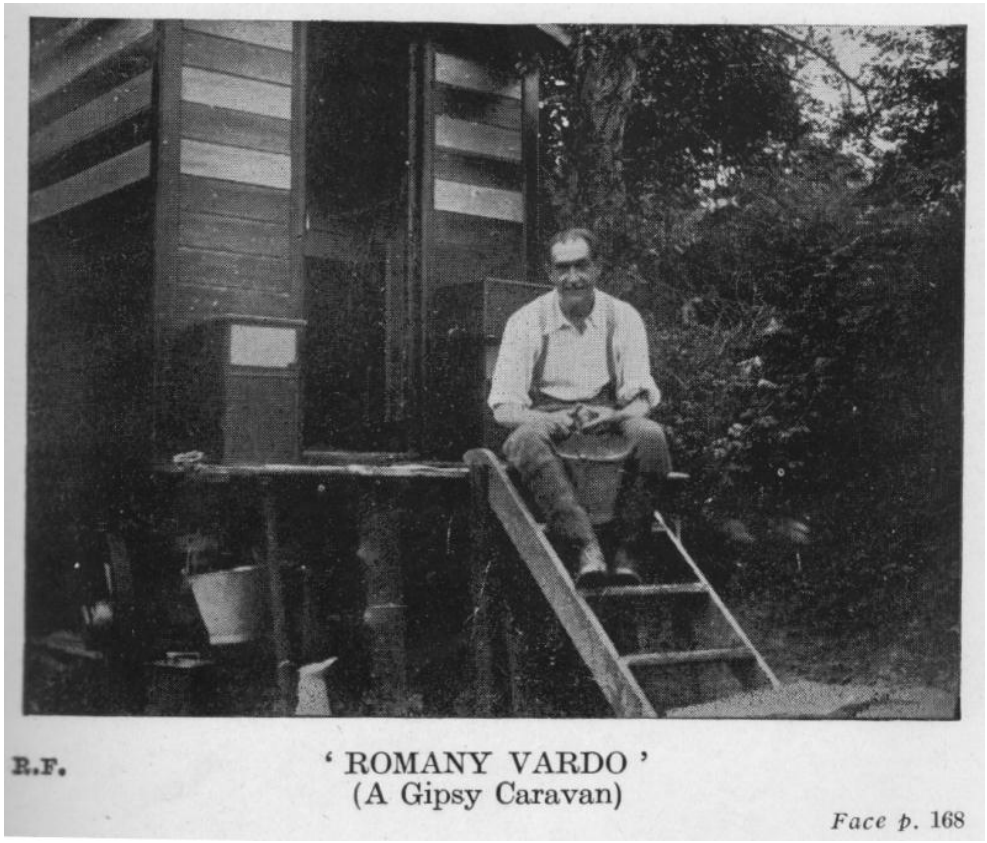


Figure 1.4: 'Romany Vardo' in G. Bramwell Evens, *A Romany in the Fields*, illus., Bramwell Evens (1929; London: Epworth Press, 1938), plate facing p. 168.

and would not broadcast Bramwell Evens' show nationally for years because 'they were too far from BBC English'. Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Pritchard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1984), p.113.

1.6 The Farm

As might be expected of stories set in the countryside camping and tramping novels were full of farms. Victor Watson accurately observes that camping and tramping novels generally depict children enjoying 'free entry to friendly farm-houses' where there is sure to be 'a stereotypical farmer's wife fussily providing huge meals'.[50] Almost all camping and tramping stories, apart from the sailing stories of de Selincourt and Hackforth-Jones include episodes either on or around farms. Even the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels which are perhaps more associated with Wild Cat Island are surrounded by farms which supply the children with the food they need. Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock's 'Oxus' novels were set in Exmoor around Cloud Farm, Ruth How's *The Friendly Farm* (1947) and *Adventures at Friendly Farm* (1948), Elizabeth Young's *Caravan Island* (1942) are also set around a farm and Marjorie Lloyd's 'Fell Farm' series set in the Lake District. The image of the hill or fell farm was particularly popular, featuring prominently in illustrations and book covers, represented as physically nestled in the countryside (Figure 1.5). It is useful to dwell for a moment on Figure 1.5 as it visually encapsulates the two sides of camping and tramping that are examined in the next chapter of this thesis; namely, stasis and movement. The very path that runs alongside the farm also leads the eye, and the protagonists, out and away, towards the map and the rucksack, and toward the exploration of the hills in the distance. The line formed between the farm and the map symbolises the balance that camping and tramping fiction created between the desire for the homeliness of domestic stories and the classic home-away-home pattern of adventure stories. In Figure 1.5 a perfect blend of the two is depicted with the homely safety of the farm house, nestled between the hills forming a home away from home for campers and trampers

Across the novels farms are generally depicted as being relatively small with few signs of mechanisation or the adoption of large-scale agricultural methods. Most farms favour cattle and livestock over arable farming, of which there is hardly a mention. Instead camping and tramping writing is full of descriptions of livestock, specifically the milking of cows and the making of butter, sheep-dipping, shearing and usually feeding animals. The advantage

[50] Victor Watson, *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English*, p. 124.

of livestock over arable farming was twofold; in the first instance, children could help feed small animals and in the second, it allowed little physical labour to actually take place. As chapter three argues, camping and tramping novels sought to depict the countryside as a pastoral space which was challenged by signs of of labour and industry.

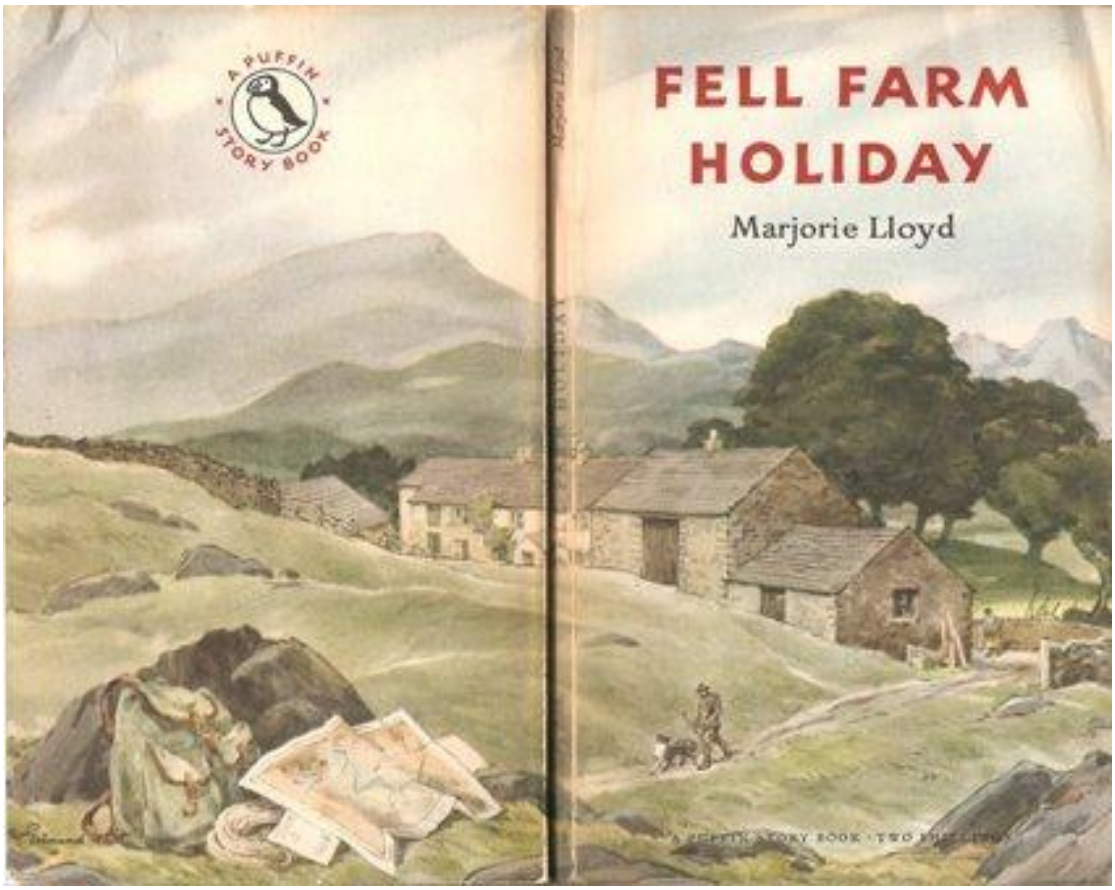


Figure 1.5: Front cover by William Grimmond for Marjorie Lloyd, *Fell Farm Holiday* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951).

There is a distinction to be made between camping and tramping novels that were about people holidaying in the countryside and those that attempted to root readers in the realities of rural life. It was felt by some that, despite more people than ever spending time in the country, modern Britons were increasingly remote from the actual countryside. This belief was the catalyst for F. Fraser Darling's *The Seasons and the Farmer* (1939) which opened with a note saying:

> In an increasingly mechanical age there are many of us who deplore the rift between urban and rural life, a rift which is as much intellectual as physical. Improved transport and more humane consideration for the leisure of children have enabled the town child to see more of the country. But for most children, and all too many grown-up people as well, the country is a three-dimensional picture or a mere playground.[51]

Fraser Darling's final comment here is striking when compared with Victor Watson's observation that part of the appeal of the interwar countryside to the middle-classes was that they 'could see it as a lovely playground full of mystery […] suitable for hiking, boating and all manner of adventures for children'.[52] Although sustained realism was a defining characteristic of camping and tramping fiction this really was limited to its depiction of leisure, and the realities of rural life were often glossed over. Other writers besides Fraser Darling wanted to engage children in the realities of farming life. Malcolm Saville's *Jane's Country Year* (1946) for example charts a year in the life of Jane Norris who is sent to convalesce on her aunt and uncle's farm. Like much camping and tramping fiction there is little plot to the book. Instead the focus here is on life on the farm throughout the year and the reader is presented with a realistic picture of rural working life. The many other similar books published at this time include Arthur Davenport's *A Country Holiday* (1933), which tells the story of Noel Steele who goes to spend the summer on the farm belonging to the family of his friend Anthony Carr. Throughout the novel Noel learns about the country, discovering the realities behind the management of animals and land. A book with a similar aim was Eleanor Helme's *Furlong Farm* (1938). Reviewed by *The Junior Bookshelf*, it was described it as 'propaganda on behalf of Young Farmer's Clubs' but that 'it is none the less welcome for that. There are very few books that have farm life for a background'.[53] Similarly Hilary Fitzgerald's *The Home Farm* (1952) featured 'no jolly farmyard in the background of an 'adventure' but real life on a farm'.[54] Likewise a reviewer of Syd Carter's *Down on the Farm* (1952) observed that 'through the story of

[51] F. Fraser Darling, *The Seasons and the Farmer. A Book for Children*, illus., by C. F. Tunnicliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939) note, unpaginated.
[52] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction*, p. 82.
[53] Review of Eleanor Helme's *Furlong Farm* in *The Junior Bookshelf*, 3, 2 (December 1938), p. 112.
[54] Review of Hilary Fitzgerald's *The Home Farm* in *The Junior Bookshelf*, 16 (July, 1952), p. 113.

Bill's year on the farm children will learn about the crops and harvesting'.[55] Marjorie Lloyd would also choose to write realistically about farming life in her novel *The Farm at Mallerstang* (1956) which followed a year in the life of the Tyson family and was once again set in the Lake District.

1.7 Realism and Reception

This introduction to camping and tramping fiction began by stating that they were realistic stories that described probable or likely events**.** It is useful to pause and consider Garry Hogg's 'Explorer' series in more detail here as, taken together, the books represent what was valued and criticised in camping and tramping fiction. Writing in 1968 Brian Doyle commented that *Explorers Awheel* was 'written from first-hand experience of the authors' own boyhood cycling tours and met with an enthusiastic reception from critics and young readers, most of whom were cycle-riders themselves'.[56] He makes a similar comment on the last 'Explorer' novel *Explorers Afloat* (1940) writing that Hogg charted a cabin-cruiser and took a group of young people on a Thames and canal trip, and observed that 'the book benefitted from authentic first-hand knowledge and descriptions'. What Doyle does not mention though is Hogg's second 'Explorer' novel *Explorers on the Wall* which opens as a camping and tramping novel but ends as something different.

[55] Review of Syd Carter's, *Down in the Farm* in *The Junior Bookshelf*, 16, (November 1952), p. 243.
[56] Doyle, *The Who's Who of Children's Literature* , p. 146.

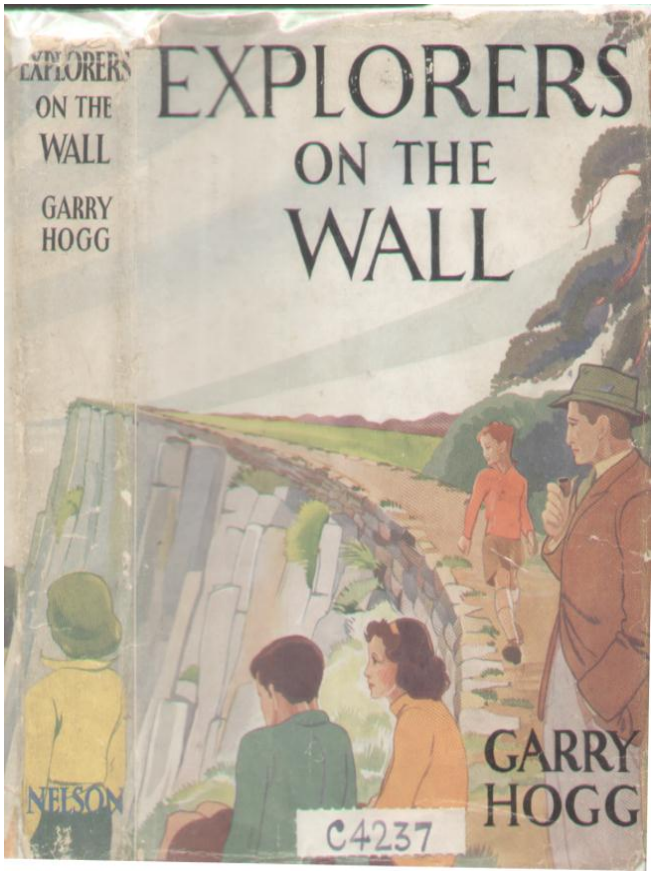


Figure 1.6: Front cover by Mollie Haigh for Garry Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall* (1939; London: Thomas Nelson, 1948).

Explorers on the Wall is an interesting text as it demonstrates both the inconsistency that sometimes occurred within one author's work and the negative response that contemporary critics had to far-fetched adventures. For the majority of the novel *Explorers on the Wall* appears to be a typical camping and tramping text. Set on Hadrian's Wall in the North of England it gives the same prominence to healthy, outdoor activities and includes plenty of realistic details. The dust jacket (Figure 1.6) conveys a down–to-earth realism, establishing the open-air feel and the pragmatism of the exploration, conveyed through the sensible clothing and the use of an earthy colour palette. There are long descriptions of the children exploring the wall, excavating ruins, route planning, and the book is filled with realistic sketch maps, some of which are discussed in chapter four, and which contribute to Hogg's reputation for realism. Marcus Crouch, for example, observed that Hogg was particularly concerned with the realism of his novels, walking and cycling routes to test their

accuracy.[57]

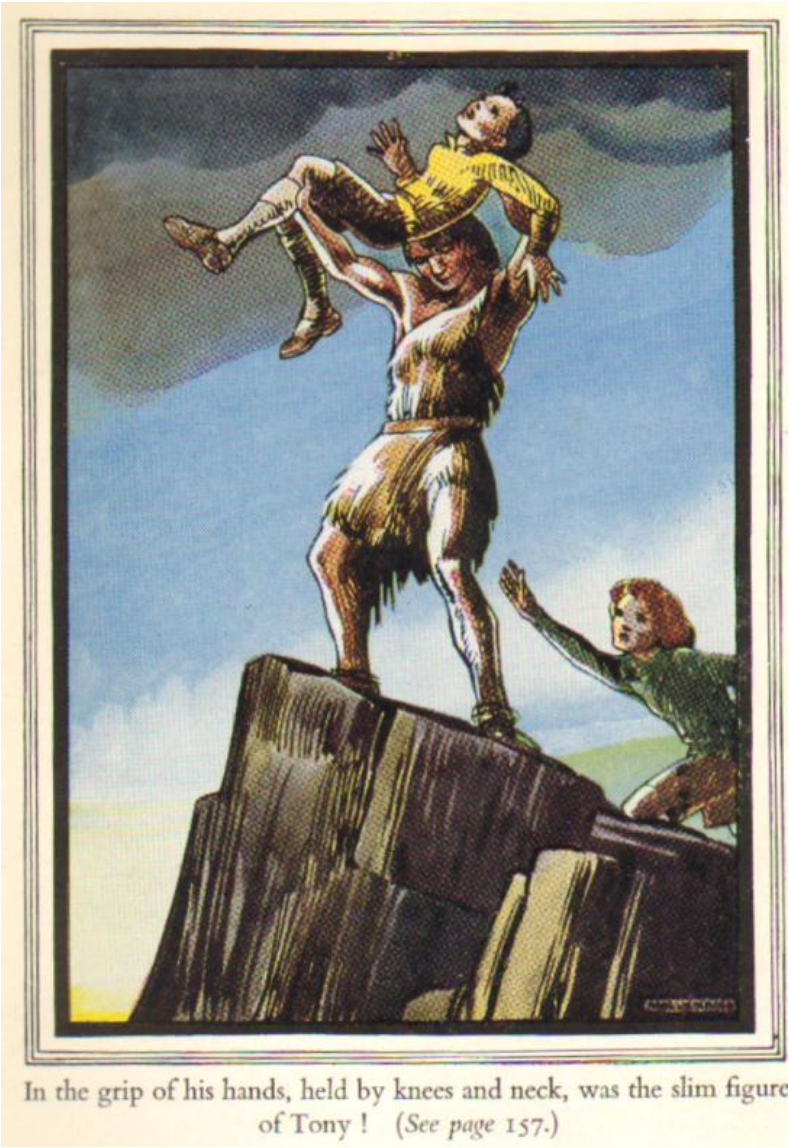


Figure 1.7**:** Frontis illustration by Molly Haigh for Garry Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall* (1939; London: Thomas Nelson, 1948).

It is therefore unexpected when Hogg suddenly changes tack, introducing a secondary narrative about a mysterious and threatening figure, hiding out on the wall. The children receive messages warning them to stay away from the wall, and return to where they came from. This scenario culminates in the children rescuing a kidnapped walker from the clutches of a lunatic who believes he is a Pict. The contrast in the two elements of the

[57] Crouch, *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers,* p. 72.

narrative can be clearly seen on comparing the novel's dust jacket (Figure 1.6) with the frontis illustration (Figure 1.7). What was a realistic and convincing story about an interesting summer holiday quickly becomes less credible. One reviewer was led to comment 'if you can swallow the idea of an escaped lunatic, dressed in a sheep-skin, who thinks he is an ancient Pict and tries to murder all who come exploring the walls, then the mystery part of the book will pass muster'.[58] After reading this review it is perhaps unsurprising to note that Hogg's next novel, *Explorers Afloat* (1940), which sees the same group of children on a boating holiday, travelling from the Midlands to Oxford, was entirely believable. This book resembles other camping and tramping texts in that it has little dramatic narrative but sustains interest through vivid detailed descriptions of believable events.

If the prerequisite for sustained realism and achievable adventure is applied to the work of many authors, including Arthur Ransome, it becomes clear that it is more accurate to refer to individual camping and tramping texts, rather than authors. Ransome is the most consistent camping and tramping author but his novels *Peter Duck* (1932) and *Missee Lee* (1941) despite forming part of the series as a whole, are usually classed as fantasies. The first is Ransome's homage to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883) and the second sees the children taken captive by pirates whilst sailing the China Sea.[59] We see the same inconsistency in the work of M. E. Atkinson, who is generally considered to be a camping and tramping writer.[60] Atkinson's first Lockett novel, *August Adventure* (1936), describes a realistic caravan holiday in the South of England but her 1940 novel, *Going Gangster*, which sees Jane and Bill Lockett trying to smuggle a schoolgirl back to her family is perhaps less so. It is for this same reason that David Severn's *Crusoe* novels are camping and tramping texts, as they sustain a sense of realism and credibility throughout; however his 1948 novel *The Cruise of the "Maiden Castle*" is more problematic. Initially

[58] Review of Garry Hogg's, *Explorers on the Wall'* in *The Junior Bookshelf,* 3, 3 (May, 1939), p. 158.
[59] This positioning of *Peter Duck* and *Missee Lee* has been challenged by Sarah Spooner who argues that the alignment of these novels as exotic fantasies, in contrast with the realistic novels set at home, is problematic. For Spooner, this implies that there is 'something intrinsically non-real about Japan or China that makes any novel set there into a non-real, a fantasy text.' See Sarah Spooner, 'Landscapes: 'Going Foreign' in Arthur Ransome's *Peter Duck'* in *Children's Literature. New Approaches,* ed., Karin Lesnik- Oberstein (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), pp. 206 - 228 (p. 208).
[60] Atkinson is included in Watson's definition of camping and tramping fiction. See Watson, *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English*, p. 124.

describing a sedate and believable canal holiday, the story veers into the holiday detective genre as Severn's protagonists uncover a warehouse full of stolen goods. After this brief interlude, the novel resumes its focus on realistic events and details, thus reverting more overtly back to camping and tramping writing.

1.8 Critical Reception and the Holiday Adventure Story

Whilst contemporary reviewers would not have recognised the term camping and tramping fiction they were quick to criticise novels that included implausible storylines in otherwise realistic novels. This was clearly the main criticism of Garry Hogg's *Explorers Awheel* discussed earlier. A brief survey of the reviews in *The Junior Bookshelf*, reveals reviewers repeatedly applauding plausible holiday stories which were rooted in detailed observation of nature and country life and displaying frustration with far-fetched holiday adventure stories. For example, one reviewer of Garry Hogg's 1944 novel, *Houseboat Holiday*, very much a text that crosses between camping and tramping writing and more sensational narratives, commented that:

> I do not intend to be disparaging to Mr. Hogg's latest book when I say I am disappointed that it has a mystery in it. Almost all 'holiday' stories for children introduce something similar and it always seems to me as though the author doubts his ability to sustain the interest through the normal holiday events and activities**.**[61]

It is clear from the review that Garry Hogg was not alone in diverting camping and tramping narratives towards a mysterious holiday adventure. Moreover, in every instance, such moves were denounced as detracting from the quality of the writing. This is why the reviewer of Anne Barrett's 1952 novel, *The Dark Island,* lamented her exchange of 'the spirited scene' of a 'holiday adventure set in Irish lochs and fells' for a 'cardboard one that offers a tired old story of foreign spies and secret agents'.[62] Similarly reviewing Agnes Booth's *The Secret of the Harvest Camp* (1948) the reviewer was moved to comment:

[61] Review of Garry Hogg's *House Boat Holiday*' in *The Junior Bookshelf,* 9, 1, (March 1945), p. 28.
[62] Review of Anne Barrett's, *The Dark Island'* in *The Junior Bookshelf*, 17, 1, (January 1953), p. 14.

> A harvest camp would seem a promising setting for a story of useful effort and well earned leisure in rural surroundings; it could be enlivened, perhaps with a neat plot to hold the young reader's attention to the very end. It is most disappointing, therefore, to open this book, scan the grotesque black and white illustrations and plunge into a story which is false, unconvincing and impossibly complicated. A school mistress (really a German spy, of course) who can disguise herself well enough to deceive six of her sharp eyed pupils must surely be a phenomenon; add a pot-hole, a secret workshop, a helicopter, a German prisoner - who turns out to be the long lost brother of one of the girls, and many coincidences and you have the gist of this story - or have you? So much print and so much paper wasted - and such a promising idea too.[63]

When texts sustained detailed realism, as camping and tramping writing did, it was always reviewed favourably. So, Ruth How's *Adventures at Friendly Farm* (1948) was described as 'a fascinating and original holiday story' and that 'with holiday stories in general falling into a tiresomely repetitive pattern it is a pleasure to be able to recommend this as offering something fresh and interesting, full of country and gipsy lore'.[64] Similarly, a review of Garry Hogg's later novel *Norwegian Holiday* (1952) observed that 'no contrived brushes with Bad men, are dragged into make Adventure, but dramatic moments are added to a very jolly sight seeing, camping holiday by two rescues from drowning [and] a ghastly fight for life on the edge of a precipice.[65] There is therefore a striking discrepancy between critical responses to camping and tramping fiction at the time of publication and those of today. For example, Victor Watson, writes that 'as if they sensed their own narrowness, camping and tramping narratives were constantly having to turn into other kinds of story- PONY STORIES (such as *Five Proud Riders* by Ann Stafford), natural history books, and

[63] Review of Agnes Booth's, *The Secret of the Harvest Camp'* in *The Junior Bookshelf*, 12, 4, (December 1948), p. 189.
[64] Review of Ruth How's, *Adventures at Friendly Farm*' in *The Junior Bookshelf* , 13, 1, (March 1949) , p. 51.
[65] Review of Garry Hogg's, *Norwegian Holiday*' in *The Junior Bookshelf* , 16, (March 1952), p. 49.

especially ADVENTURE STORIES'.[66] Continuing in this vein he comments that M. E. Atkinson, Arthur Ransome and Malcolm Saville 'rose above the limitations of subject matter.' Yet it was perhaps these limitations which formed the distinct character of camping and tramping writing; a character which was praised by reviewers at the time.

1.9 Malcolm Saville and Enid Blyton

It is this distinction between realism and improbability that creates some difficulties when examining the work of Malcolm Saville and Enid Blyton. This is pronounced with Saville's *Lone Pine* series, beginning with *Mystery at Witchend* in 1943. The novel begins with the Morton family - David, twins Dickie and Mary and their mother - being evacuated to Witchend in Shropshire. On arriving at Witchend, the children decide that they will explore and set up camp under a particularly large pine tree, from which their secret group, and the series, derives its name. Whilst doing so, they meet other children such as Tom, a fellow evacuee now working on a farm, and Petronella Sterling, or Peter, who is a fond of riding her horse and loves the countryside. The children quickly become embroiled in mystery and intrigue, which sets the pattern for the entire series, uncovering a German spy who is staying on a nearby farm. Other novels were set, amongst other places, in Hereford (*The Secret of the Gorge*, 1958), London (*Lone Pine London*, 1957), Paris (*The Elusive Grasshopper*, 1951) and North Yorkshire (*Mystery Mine*, 1959) and involved the thwarting of criminals in various ways, such as hunting for missing diamonds (*The Secret of the Gorge*), catching a set of Christmas tree thieves (*Wings over Witchend*, 1943) and unravelling mysteries, such as those surrounding flying saucers and secret air bases (*Saucers over the Moor*, 1955). Such plot devices highlight the differences between the novels of Malcolm Saville and those of Arthur Ransome. As Geoffrey Trease commented 'Ransome does not need to "bring in the police", because he can manage without that element of crime which so many authors (or perhaps, so many publishers) believe to be an essential ingredient of an enjoyable fictional holiday'.[67] The need to 'bring in the police' was clearly evident in Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' stories, which once again share

[66] Watson, *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English,* p. 125.
[67] Trease, *Tales Out of School,* p. 140.

resemblances with camping and tramping stories but are ultimately very different types of books.

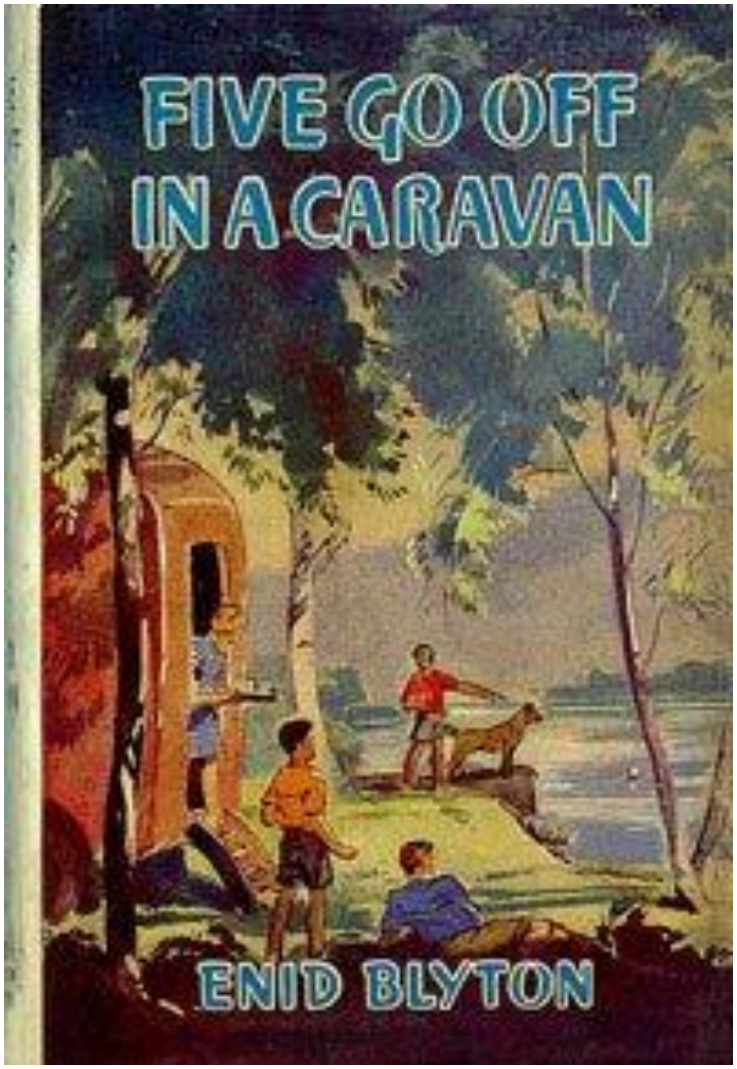


Figure 1.8: Front cover for 1st edition, Enid Blyton, *Five Go Off in a Caravan*, illus., by Eileen Soper (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951).

Only a brief consideration of both the titles and the cover art of these novels explains why Enid Blyton might be considered a writer of camping and tramping novels. *Five Go Off in a Caravan* (1946), *Five Go Off to Camp* (1948), *Five on a Hike Together* (1951) and *Five on Finniston Farm* (1960) all specifically refer to key camping and tramping motifs in their titles, but none of the texts belong to the genre. *Five on Finniston Farm*, a typical example, is actually about the protagonists stopping an unscrupulous rich American cheating a poor

farming family out of valuable artefacts, buried on their land. The book covers of the first editions are equally misleading as they too drew upon key camping and tramping motifs, which belie the true focus of the narratives. *Five go off in a Caravan* (Figure 1.8) sees Blyton's children embark upon a caravan holiday where they quickly fall into the company of a travelling circus, encounter unsavoury characters, secret passages and vicious attempts to poison Timmy. None of this is reflected in Eileen Soper's design which conveys a peaceful, idyllic camp on the banks of a river and which could, once again, easily belong to a camping and tramping text. Not only does this illustrate the difficulty in identifying camping and tramping texts it also demonstrates the reason why, despite first appearances, the works of Enid Blyton do not appear in this thesis.

1.10 Identifying the Canon: Methodology

In conducting research for this thesis I have read approximately 250 'likely' camping and tramping texts, including works of fiction and non-fiction, ranging across the years from around 1890 to 1960. A significantly smaller number of these books were actually camping and tramping texts and these form the primary material of this thesis. Identifying camping and tramping novels has proven to be a problematic task, and so a range of methods were employed in order to identify camping and tramping texts and to try to refine the parameters of the genre as a whole. Two main sources have proven to be invaluable in this, though they are not without their limitations. *The Junior Bookshelf* has been an important bibliographical source; launched in 1936, it ran continuously throughout the period with which this thesis is concerned. It was a periodical publication which reviewed children's books and sought to create an open forum for the discussion of children's books. Its stated aims were to 'giv[e] prominence to what seem to us to be the best children's books' principally published in Britain' and it is very much a product of its time.[68] The 1930s marked a surge of interest in children's writing, manifested in the blossoming of the children's public library and a desire to improve standards of children's literature. *The Junior Bookshelf* was very much at the forefront of this movement and I have examined every issue of the publication from 1936 to 1960, which is the chronological limit of my survey. These dates were chosen because 1930 marked the first publication of *Swallows*

[68] 'What do we Represent?' *The Junior Bookshelf*, 1. 3, (May 1937), p. 22.

and Amazons and 1960 saw the publication of Marjorie Lloyd's last camping and tramping novel, *Fell Farm Campers*. I particularly concentrated on mapping the use of advertisements and the type of books reviewed, in order to try to gain some understanding of the fluctuation in popularity of camping and tramping writing. Reading reviews also allowed me to quickly realise when the words 'holiday adventure' did not actually mean camping and tramping. The interest in children's writing, which sparked the creation of *The Junior Bookshelf,* was also responsible for my second main bibliographical resource.

From the 1930s to the 1960s there was a wealth of bibliographical and critical material produced which was intended to advise librarians and teachers about children's books. Bibliographies such as these have been of great importance to my preliminary searches for camping and tramping writers.[69] The currently uncatalogued fiction collection held in Newcastle by Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, has also proven to be an important collection. Created from numerous donations, from many children's libraries from around the country, in addition to the personal donations of people such as author Geoffrey Trease and author and editor Kathleen Lines, it forms a rich resource for research into children's literature from around the 1940s onwards.

Despite the wealth of information provided by these sources, difficulties still remain. Bibliographies, such as those referred to above, are lists of recommended books, books that were thought to be of good quality and fit for children to read. As a result, there are many camping and tramping books that I have discovered, sometimes rather haphazardly when browsing second-hand books shops that never appeared on lists designed to encourage quality in children's reading. This same problem also applies to the critical writing of the period, which once again concentrates on, what were considered to be books of literary merit. This also applies to *The Junior Bookshelf* which actively sought to promote good writing for children. The idiosyncratic nature of this is indicated in their aims, stated above,

[69] In addition to those sources already referred to in this introduction, I have used the following sources: W. C. Berwick Sayers, *A Manual of Children's Libraries* (London: George Allen and Unwin and the Library Association, 1932), and *Books for Youth. A Classified and Annotated Guide for Young Readers* (1930;London: The Library Association, 1936); Patricia M. Frend, *Junior Fiction Index*, 2nd edn (1964; London: Association of Assistant Librarians, 1971), W. H. Shercliff, *Morality to Adventure: Manchester Polytechnic's Collection of Children's Books 1840 – 1939* (Manchester: Manchester Polytechnic Library, 1988) and D. L. Kirkpatrick, ed., *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978) .

when they referred to books that 'seem to us' to be good. With both of these resources there is also the difficulty of language, as holiday adventure was the generic, overarching term applied to any novel, which was set during the school holidays, in contrast with school stories. There is no doubt that there will be many camping and tramping books, produced by more ephemeral authors, that I have not identified and read. This process of identification is therefore on going and will extend well beyond this thesis. However, through combining these sources, it is possible to say with certainty that the most important camping and tramping writers all feature in the analysis and discussion that follows. Moreover, through using sources contemporary to the period, rather than relying on the few current critics of the period, the result is a reassessment of authors who, despite being well-known at the time, have now faded into relative obscurity. Though this, too, is not a fool-proof method, there being a high degree of personal choice in the authors discussed.

1.11 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is divided into four major chapters all of which interrogate the different ways in which camping and tramping fiction engaged with and examined, dominant components of British identity in the interwar years. These components arose directly arise from Britain's geographical position, and perception of itself, as an imperial island nation and maritime power; thus, this thesis is dominated by the two motifs of the land and the sea. Throughout, there is a tension between the use of the terms British and English, which is difficult to resolve and partly the result of the interchangeable use of the words in the interwar years. For modern academics working on interwar identity and national character this does create difficulties and to that end I have adopted the approach of art historian Andrew Causey. Causey argues that the terms English and British and Englishness and Britishness, are interchangeable when 'the role of Britain's constituent parts in the formation of national identity' are not at issue.[70] In doing so I recognise that this is a problematic stance to take. However it does best reflect the way in which the two terms were used in the literature and wider cultural discourses of the time. Furthermore, the reading of camping and tramping fiction constructed in this thesis demonstrates the ways in which it exposed the weaknesses

[70]Andrew Causey, 'English Art and 'The National Character', 1933-34' in *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past 1880- 1940*, ed., David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt and Fiona Russell (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 275-302 (p. 296).

and fragility of the types of identity myths that were dominant in the interwar years. The very fact that the myth of homogenous and unifying national identity had such cultural currency suggests a lack of actual belief in it, rather than confidence.

Chapter two interrogates the seemingly oppositional desires to camp and tramp, arguing that camping and tramping fiction used these activities to engage with two influential antecedents. The first Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), described by Martin Green as 'the energizing myth of English imperialism,' was also the energizing myth of camping and tramping fiction.[71] The second major influence that is examined is the late-Victorian Back-to-the-Land Movement and the resurgence of interest in the gypsy lifestyle. In doing so this chapter forms previously unrecognised connections with the American Romantic tradition and the British progressive schools movement. This chapter argues that camping and tramping novels radically challenge the romantic assumptions that surround both of these antecedents, problematising the romance of the secluded desert island and life on the open road.

Chapter three examines the landscape of camping and tramping literature, first considering it within the pastoral mode and then challenging readings of the landscape as ideal or Arcadian. It then argues that rather than seeing the landscape, and then the countryside, as an immutable repository of tradition and heritage, camping and tramping novels consistently undermine this impression demonstrating how tension and conflict is injected into the novels. This conflict is then examined through the issue of leisure and tourism and ultimately argues that the countryside in camping and tramping fiction reveals itself to be an undemocratic and elitist space.

Chapter four examines the uses of maps and mapping in camping and tramping fiction and argues that the novels should be read as a discourse on the history of exploration. In particular, camping and tramping novels problematise and challenge the assumptions upon which imperial geographical exploration and discovery were based. It argues that camping and tramping novels expose the problematic ideological assumptions underpinning the model of exploration, discovery and acquisition, upon which maritime exploration was

[71] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 3.

based. In doing so, this chapter draws upon previously unseen material from the Elinor Lyon archive, held at Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books.

Chapter five maintains the focus on the sea and, in particular Arthur Ransome's Walker family which offered readers a model of a naval family. This has been remarked upon by critics before. However, this chapter creates a wholly new argument by positioning the portrayal of the Walker family within a far wider interwar discourse on the subject of service to the British Empire. In doing so it draws specifically on the subject of character, leadership and Britain's identity as an imperial maritime power. It incorporates archival research at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and brings to light neglected children's books about sailing.

Chapter Two – Camping and Tramping

2.1 Camping and Tramping

While it has been established that camping and tramping is a relatively recent term, it is also a highly fitting one. These two seemingly dichotomous activities; camping being essentially static, while tramping is mobile, encapsulate two primary impulses that shape camping and tramping fiction. Rather than setting camping and tramping in simple opposition the task of this chapter is to draw connections between the two, interrogating key camping and tramping motifs, some of which have already been introduced in the previous chapter. This chapter will demonstrate how the motifs of the camp and campfire, the open road and the Romany caravan or vardo were used to explore issues of personal freedom and comradeship.[1] Ultimately the acts of camping and tramping are represented as having the potential to foster comradeship between disparate groups of people, overcoming social divisions and tensions. Consequently, it will be made clear that camping and tramping should not be considered as an arbitrary term, despite its relatively recent provenance. Instead, it should be viewed as a key to understanding these issues of personal freedom, many of which position camping and tramping fiction as far more radical than has previously been acknowledged.

Watson's choice of the term tramping is a highly relevant one to camping and tramping writing given the contemporary use of the word to denote either a long walk or a more itinerant and wayfaring lifestyle. The OED defines 'tramp' in a number of ways including, a colloquial reference to a 'walking expedition,' 'to tread or walk with a firm heavy step,' or 'to go about or travel as a tramp'.[2] In the first part of the twentieth century all three uses

[1] Throughout this thesis I have used either the term gypsy or Romany to refer to the travelling people that campers and trampers encounter. This is because this is the term used throughout camping and tramping fiction to refer to people of historic Romany descent, as opposed to other types of travellers and wayfarers. Overall, the term gypsy was used to denote culture and race and was not used in a negative way by the majority of camping and tramping authors. Exceptions to this are discussed later in this chapter.

[2] See definition of tramp, v.1in the *OED*, online version. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/204519 [accessed

were recognised and all are relevant to camping and tramping writing, either as an activity to pursue or a lifestyle to romanticise. Both of these positions are apparent in Norman Ellison's 1951 book, *Northwards with Nomad*. Ellison's book is useful because it demonstrates attitudes to both tramps and tramping that were replicated throughout camping and tramping fiction. Whilst driving over Kirkstone Pass in the Lake District, Ellison and his nephew Dick observe, 'a small party of hikers toiling uphill under the burden of bulging ruck sacks'. [3] Dick comments that one young man in particular appears to have 'a chest of drawers on his back,' leading Ellison to note that the youth who was 'sweating under an enormous pack […] had yet to learn the secret of travelling light'. The young hikers are then compared with an example of a 'genuine tramp' of whom Ellison observes, 'true, he wore a ragged raincoat despite the warmth of the day and obviously did not carry any shaving tackle, yet he had reduced his worldly possessions to a small bundle slung across his shoulders.' It is clear which of the two figures is approved of; one is a figure of derision and the other is to be admired, if not quite respected.

In camping and tramping writing, tramping was usually set in opposition to hiking, which was generally depicted as hard work. Instead, tramping requires a lightness that is actually attained by few campers, and in reality, is desired by very few. As such, camping and tramping writing presented a form of tramping that would not have been recognised by the late-Victorian walking group, the Sunday Tramps. Led by Leslie Stephen, this group of walkers would set out, at speed, on twenty or twenty-five mile walks in the countryside around London.[4] As a younger man working at Trinity College, Cambridge, Stephen – described in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*) as a 'walker of rare endurance' - was famed for walking fifty miles to London, in twelve hours, on a hot day.[5] In contrast, tramping in camping and tramping novels should not be understood in a very literal sense, as in to travel on foot, nor should it be associated with actual tramps or vagrants. It should also be set in contradistinction to hiking which implies a physical

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10 August 2011]

[3] Norman Ellison, *Northwards with Nomad*, illus., by C. F. Tunnicliffe (London: London University Press, 1951), p. 44.

[4] William Whyte, 'Sunday Tramps (*act.* 1879–1895)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, (Jan 2011) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/96363>[accessed 18 Aug 2011]

[5] Alan Bell, 'Stephen, Sir Leslie (1832–1904)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, (May 2007) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36271 [accessed 18 Aug 2011]

vigorousness that is absent from tramping; the difference between the two being encapsulated in contemporary titles such as Stephen Graham's, *The Gentle Art of Tramping* (1926). Instead, it needs to be regarded as an attitude or desire to wander freely and unhurriedly which, perhaps, explains why in 1932 Cathlyn Edbrooke was able to describe John Masefield as 'that tramp of countryside and sea'.[6] According to Edbrooke, 'it matters not to the true vagrant where or whither he travels, he journeys for the pleasure of journeying, never to "get there"'.[7] It will become clear that this 'pleasure of journeying' is a key aspiration of trampers, though for the majority, it is an aspiration that is never fully realised. Ultimately, what connects the acts of camping and tramping is that both activities lead the participants away from home and into free and open outdoor spaces.

It is vital to recognise the relationship between open space and freedom, which is central to all camping and tramping writing. This is graphically illustrated in Harold Jones' artwork for M. E. Atkinson's, *Going Gangster* (1940). The Harold Jones Collection held at Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, contains much of Jones' original artwork for Atkinson's novels and consistently reveals the dominant visual motif of open, inviting spaces. Figure 2.1 is a typical example of work from this collection.

[6] Cathlyn Edbrooke, 'The Poets of the Open Road' *The Irish Monthly*, 60 (Feb 1932), 79-84 (p. 81).
[7] Edbrooke, 'The Poets of the Open Road', p. 83.

Figure 2.1: Original artwork by Harold Jones for M. E. Atkinson's *Going Gangster*, from the Harold Jones Collection, c. 1937, held at Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle, HJ/ 01/ 04/ 14.

Jones's illustration here is laden with meaning; tunnel-like it draws us - the reader and the protagonists - over the stile and encourages us to roam and explore the land beyond. Rather than a gate, which bars the way, the stile is an open invitation to wander freely; there is even a step to help climb over it. We can see through and beyond it, our eyes ranging widely, stretching into the far distance and the vanishing point on the horizon. The rolling hills suggest unseen, hidden valleys, yet the landscape simultaneously appears safe, bordered by thick grass and cosy foliage. It is a view that is at once intriguing and familiar, safe and challenging; one which calls us to explore the potential freedom which it embodies.

2.2 Taming the Wilds: Domesticated Camping

The sense of physical freedom and possibility inherent in Jones' illustration is radically undercut by the realities of life camping out, as might be expected of writing that was praised for its realism. Some writers, such as Geoffrey Trease, overtly drew attention to the discomforts of camping. In *Mystery on the Moor* (1937) for example, his campers and trampers experience 'throbbing feet and aching shoulders' legs that 'lag' and one of them complains he feels 'about as free as a pack-mule'.[8] Trease's portrayal of such discomforts is unusual though because in general there is a marked absence of heavily burdened people, carrying provisions round the countryside. Writing in 1930, Gilcraft told readers that 'it is one of the blessings of wilderness life that it shows us how few things we need in order to be perfectly happy'.[9] However, on examining many camping and tramping novels, the distinct impression is formed that camping often equated to relocating the trappings of domesticity into the wilderness, rather than leaving them behind. When Arthur Ransome first sends the Walker children to Wild Cat Island they have so many things to take with them that an entire chapter is devoted to the task of 'Making Ready'.[10] It is quickly apparent that Susan is in charge of camping and her preparatory list is reminiscent of a newly-wed's bottom drawer as she wants a kettle, a saucepan, a frying pan, knives, forks, plates, tins, rugs, blankets, and the list continues.[11] Moreover, when they finally finish packing their dinghy, *Swallow,* they realise that there is 'no room for anything else big except the crew' and so they need help with their remaining gear. There is, of course, the additional matter of daily supplies of milk, bread and the occasional meal from home, which bolsters their initial supplies. It is impossible to imagine the Walkers tramping – as in, to cover a significant distance on foot – with such a burden. Camping out is clearly at odds with travelling light and Ransome realistically depicts the sheer amount of equipment and food needed to support four active children, camping away from home. Essentially we see the Walkers setting up house together, from which point they are then able to tramp around the area, always returning to their base camp.[12]

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[8] Geoffrey Trease, *Mystery on the Moor* (London: A & C Black, 1937), pp. 56, 54 and 49.
[9] "Gilcraft," *Exploring*, (London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, 1930), p. 67.
[10] Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp. 25-34.
[11] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 32.
[12] Ransome essentially repeats this opening depiction of camping preparations at the start of his second novel *Swallowdale* (1931) and *Secret Water* (1939) both of which feature the extended camping of the Walker

Far from 'roughing it' the Walkers' experience of camping is homely and domesticated which perhaps explains Berwick Sayers' earlier description of Susan Walker as 'practical [and] house-wifely'.[13] It is established from the beginning of *Swallows and Amazons* that Susan is in charge of the Walkers' camping and that Susan functions in loco parentis. It is only because Mrs Walker has complete faith in Susan's ability to look after her siblings, that any of the children are allowed to camp on the island. Whereas it is John's responsibility to see that they 'are not duffers,' it is Susan's responsibility to ensure that they are all cared for.[14] Ransome demonstrates this throughout the series by consistently presenting Susan as a provider and carer. For example, when John gets out of the water, after swimming around Wild Cat Island, Susan immediately hands him a towel that she has 'hotted by the fire'.[15] As such, the Walkers' campsite is a domestic and homely space, resulting from, what child psychiatrist Margaret Lowenfeld would call, Susan's 'impulse towards imitation'.[16] This impulse is illustrated through her decision to take *Simple Cookery for Small Households* to the island and through descriptions such as that below:

> The camp now began to really look like a camp. There were the two tents slung between the two pairs of trees. The mate and the able-seaman were to sleep in one, and the captain and the boy in the other. Then in the open space under the trees the fire was burning merrily. The kettle had boiled, and was standing steaming on the ground. Susan was melting a big pat of butter in the frying-pan. In a pudding-basin beside her she had six raw eggs. She had cracked the eggs on the edge of a mug and broken them into the basin. Their empty shells were crackling in the fire. Four mugs stood in a row on the ground.[17]

The imagery of the crackling egg shells, the smell of the melting butter and the four mugs waiting to be filled, creates a cosy, inviting atmosphere. We are meant to understand that

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family.

[13] W. C. Berwick Sayers, 'Swallows and Amazons For Ever!' *The Junior* Bookshelf, 1, 4 (July 1937), 6-8 (p. 7).

[14] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 17.

[15] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 180.

[16] Margaret Lowenfeld, *Play in Childhood* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935), p. 188.

[17] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, pp. 33 and 56.

Susan has made the island their home (Figure 2.2).

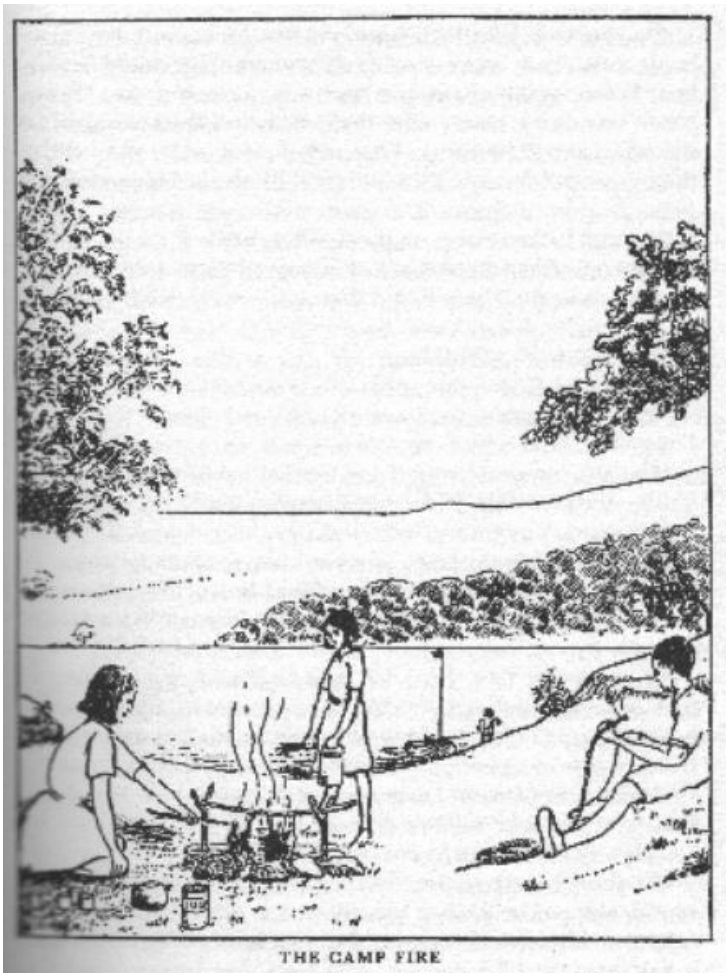

Figure 2.2: 'The Campfire' illustration by Arthur Ransome in Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 71.

The same pattern of laborious preparation recurs in other camping stories, such as Marjorie Lloyd's *Fell Farm Holiday* (1951) which also includes specific chapters outlining the large amount of preparation and equipment needed when camping out. For example, despite cutting out many 'non-essentials' from their lists the Browne children still need a horse and cart to take their things to their base camp.[18] A notable exception to this division between camping and tramping can be seen in Garry Hogg's 1938 novel, *Explorers Awheel*, which

[18] See Marjorie Lloyd, 'Preparation' and 'Pitching Camp' in *Fell Farm Holiday* (1951; Harmondsworth: Puffin, 1976), pp. 77–96 (p.80).

describes a three-week cycling and camping holiday. Hogg stresses that the children are bivouacking, or sleeping out without tents, rather than camping and as such they need less equipment. Nonetheless, they still require large amounts of equipment which they are only able to carry due to the panniers on their tandems (Figure 2.3).[19] Overall, it is clear that whilst a camp provides only temporary accommodation, it requires almost all the accoutrements of an average family home.

THINGS WE HAVE

5 ground-sheets (all good).
5 sleeping-bags (fleece).
4 small air-pillows.

4 cycling-capes (oilskin).

3 collapsible drinking-cups.
4 sets knives, spoons, forks.

1 camp kettle with whistle.
5 bathing-dresses and towels.
5 tooth brushes, sponges, etc.
Small cans for tea, etc.
Billycans (plenty).
Plates (enamel) (enough).
Compass (test this).
3 mirrors (polished steel).
Scissors.
Maps. (? Contour book.)
Teapot.

THINGS TO BUY

3 pairs of pannier bags.
Lightweight Primus outfit.
1 small air-pillow. (David's is punctured.)
1 cycling-cape. (Tony's torn badly.)
2 collapsible drinking-cups.
1 set knife, spoon, fork. (For the Skipper.)
1 frying-pan.
1 canvas bucket (s.s. rot-proof).
1 First Aid outfit.
Flask for milk.
Shoe-cleaning outfit.
Dish-cloths.
Tin-opener or two.
Torch batteries (two kinds).
Tweezers (for thorns).
Light haversack (for shopping).
Thin wire and twine.
2 (at least!) Log books.
Bowls (for cereals, etc.).
IRON RATIONS!!!

It certainly looked an exciting list. Having it all down on paper, too, made the expedition seem much nearer. In

Figure 2.3: Provision list from Garry Hogg's *Explorers Awheel* (1938; London: Thomas Nelson, 1946), p. 31.

In fact, across camping and tramping fiction, camping was always portrayed as a cumbersome, highly domesticated and labour-intensive business. The following two examples, Marjorie Lloyd's *Fell Farm Campers* (1960) and E. H. Young's *Caravan Island* (1940), demonstrate both the consistency of this portrayal and some of its variations. *Fell Farm Campers* is the third and final instalment of Lloyd's camping and tramping series, which describes the Lakeland holidays of the Browne children. This novel sees the older children camping out a short distance from the farm and, despite the fact that they are not

[19] See Garry Hogg, *Explorers Awheel* (1938; London: Thomas Nelson, 1946), p. 31.

planning to cook all of their own meals, we are told that it takes multiple trips to transfer everything to the camp. It also takes almost a whole day to set up camp, as they arrive at the farm in the morning and do not finish all the 'essential jobs', such as building their campfire, until half past five.[20] It is the eldest brother, Pat, who has the largest influence on the camp; he is cast in the role of a Scout or camp leader teaching his younger siblings. Lloyd's careful descriptions of the organisation of the camp not only mirror Ransome's attention to detail, but are typical of the majority of camping stories. E. H. Young's *Caravan Island* (1940) similarly describes the holiday of two sets of cousins, Stephen and Cicily, and Hugh and Laura, with their Aunt Judith. When setting off Young refers to the children's 'mound of bags, boxes and bundles' which take up so much room in the car that they have to squeeze themselves in.[21] What is most unusual about Young's campers, however, is the association between the eldest cousin, Stephen, and the domestic arrangements of the camp. It is Stephen who, like Susan Walker, makes lists of things to take with them, and it is he who worries that he does not 'know what to do with [his] groceries'.[22] The domestic concerns of Stephen are an interesting anomaly in these camping stories, which reflects Young's wider intention to present more challenging gender roles.[23]

The dominance of domesticated camping is so pervasive that it circumscribes the imaginative freedom of other campers. This becomes evident the night Titty spends alone on Wild Cat Island in *Swallows and Amazons*. With her siblings away trying to capture the Blackett's dinghy, Titty experiences physical and imaginative freedom for the first time. She immediately takes the opportunity to re-define the space for herself. She watches until 'the brown sail disappeared behind the Peak of Darien' and then 'became Robinson Crusoe' going 'down into the camp to take command of her island'.[24] It is Titty's romanticised reading of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) that results in her expectations of island life which seemingly contradict Susan's domestication of the space.

[20] Marjorie Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), pp. 32 and 39.
[21] E. H. Young, *Caravan Island*, illus., by J. J. Haley (1940; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1942), p. 31.
[22] Young, *Caravan Island*, p. 49.
[23] This can also be seen through the Aunt's physically active character shown through her rock climbing and the role reversal between the elder cousins Stephen and Cicely. As discussed above, Stephen is interested in the domestic arrangements of the camp and is repeatedly shown reading historical fiction and is scared of swimming. His sister, on the other hand, is far more independent – she takes herself away from the others in the group- and is more physically active, learning to horse ride in the novel.
[24] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 198.

Titty chooses to take *Robinson Crusoe* with her to the island because 'it tells you just what to do on an island'.[25] For Titty, this means that she has to transform the island for herself, which involves the immediate removal of Susan's presence, both physically and imaginatively. So Titty removes the physical traces of Susan from their tent and 'at once the tent became hers and hers alone.' There is subsequently a shift in atmosphere on the island and Titty observes that '[n]obody was clattering tins. Nobody was washing up plates' and, as a result, she is able to imagine herself to be 'the only person in the world.' Clearly, Titty feels imaginatively stifled by the overt domestication of Wild Cat Island. After the night sailing though Susan insists that 'washing up had to be done at once […]. And when that was done there were buttons to sew on' thus reclaiming the island as a domestic space.

For Titty then, the Walkers' homely camping out on Wild Cat Island is at odds with her imaginative expectations of living an isolated island life. It is too reminiscent of ordinary daily life, where things like missing buttons take precedence over exploring. Yet, Susan's civilisation of the island shows that she too has read and understood *Robinson Crusoe*, though in a different manner to Titty. For, as Virginia Woolf observed of *Robinson Crusoe*, it 'thwarts us and flouts us at every turn' when 'comparing it with our preconceptions'.[26] Titty's preconceptions lead her to expect her real experience of camping on the island to mirror the survivalist aspects of Crusoe's literary experience. Titty's expectations are not unreasonable when *Robinson Crusoe* is set amongst other navigational narratives of the 1700s which, Mary Louise Pratt argues, were conventionally complete with 'storms, sickness, brackish water, and the threat of attack on the high seas'.[27] As Woolf also observes, 'the mere suggestion — peril and solitude and a desert island — is enough to rouse in us the expectation of some far land on the limits of the world'.[28] Clearly this is the adventurous suggestion that Titty draws upon when she reinvents the island in Susan's absence and which inspires Richard Jefferies *Bevis* (1882) which is discussed in chapter four. However, as Woolf rightly observes, 'before we open [*Robinson Crusoe*] we have

[25] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 33, subsequent quotations from, pp. 199, 200 and 263.
[26] Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader. Second Series* (1932; London: The Hogarth Press, 1986), p. 54.
[27] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 43.
[28] Woolf, *The Common Reader*, p. 54.

perhaps vaguely sketched out the kind of pleasure we expect it to give us. We read; and we are rudely contradicted on every page. There are no sunsets and no sunrises; there is no solitude and no soul. There is, on the contrary, staring us full in the face nothing but a large earthenware pot'.[29] What we read in *Robinson Crusoe*, as we do in camping stories, reveals the necessity for, and the romance of, practicality and efficiency. This perhaps accounts for Berwick Sayers' earlier description of Ransome's novels as having 'the "*Robinson Crusoe"* realism'.[30] To return to Woolf for the last time, we may pose the same question of *Swallows and Amazons*, as Woolf does of Defoe; namely, 'is there any reason […] why the perspective that a plain earthenware pot exacts should not satisfy us as completely, once we grasp it, as man himself in all his sublimity standing against a background of broken mountains and tumbling oceans with stars flaming in the sky?' For Ransome, there is clearly no reason why Susan's unadventurous and efficient camp should not excite enthusiasm; nor should it fail to be recognised as a crucial aspect of the romance of their holiday and an important component of camping and tramping writing. It is just such practical efficiency which firmly connects Susan with the important symbol of the fire.

2.3 Susan Walker, the Campfire and Communalism

A key function of Susan's campfire is to define the outdoors as a domesticated space. The connection between Susan, fire and domesticity is formed at the start of the novel when Mrs Walker hands Susan the family's supply of matches and in doing so, symbolically hands domestic responsibility onto her daughter.[31] For some critics of folklore and woodcraft, the fires that Susan lights should be classed as cooking fires, rather than campfires. Jay Mechling, for example, distinguishes between functional fires, such as Susan's, and ceremonial fires, such as those used by Ernest Seton Thompson's Woodcraft Indians. [32] Mechling argues that 'cooking fires are not campfires', and that the lighting of a

[29] Woolf, *The Common Reader*, p. 58
[30] Berwick Sayers, 'Swallows and Amazons For Ever!,' p. 7.
[31] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 36.
[32] See Jay Mechling, 'The Magic of the Boy Scout Campfire', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 93 (1980), 35-56. Mechling's essay is based on a study of American boy scout troups however, as the scouts were an international organisation, and indeed Baden Powell was heavily influenced by Ernest Thompson Seton when setting up the scouts in Britain, the analysis of American campfires is relevant to that of British campfires.

campfire is a 'sacred ritual'.[33] He continues, writing that 'magic' is invested through the selection of the campfire site 'with an eye to the grandeur of the scenery' and the lighting of the fire 'in some ancient or magical way'. For Mechling, these elements combine to establish the campfire as 'something sacred'. Yet the distinction that Mechling makes between cooking fires and campfires is challenged in the second novel, *Swallowdale* (1931). The following description from the opening of *Swallowdale* combines both the functional fire with ceremonial significance of the campfire:

> No one was so good at starting a fire as Mate Susan. In a moment she had a flame licking up her handful of dry leaves, and setting light to the little wigwam of dead reeds and twigs she had built over it. A moment later the fire was taking hold of the larger sticks she had built round it, with every stick pointing in towards the middle. There was a pleasant crackling of burning wood, and a stream of clean blue smoke from the dry fuel poured away through the green trees. Wild Cat Island was once more inhabited.[34]

We can read Susan's lighting of this first campfire as a highly ritualised and ceremonial act, even though it employs a box of matches. Although Susan's method of lighting a fire is practical and efficient rather than dramatic, there is nevertheless, something magical about it. Susan always lights her fires in exactly this manner, never deviating from this method. Ransome makes a point of repeatedly describing this method and it literally never fails. Susan's campfire is also ceremonial and symbolic as it enables the children to re-establish their temporary home on the island by purifying it on their arrival. This is shown in the reference to the 'clean blue smoke,' emphasising the cleansing nature of the campfire. As James Frazer writes in *The Golden Bough* (1890; 1922) the purificatory properties of fire were one of the essential elements of the many fire rituals which took place all over Europe for hundreds of years. Where many festivals used fires to ward off specific superstitious forms of threat, such as witches, Frazer writes that fire also protected against the 'impersonal form' of threat, such as 'a sort of pervading taint or corruption of the air'.[35]

[33]Mechling, 'The Magic of the Boy Scout Campfire,' pp. 38-39.
[34] Arthur Ransome, *Swallowdale* (1931; London: Jonathan Cape, 1944), pp. 28-29.
[35] All references are to Frazer's 1922, abridged version of the twelve volumes which comprise *The Golden Bough*, first published in 1890. Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion* (London:

This was because ritual fire was thought to consume all 'noxious elements' and thus have a cleansing or purifying effect. In essence, through the lighting of the fire Susan symbolically purges the island of any possible traces of other visitors, thus leaving the island cleansed and untainted after their long absence. This symbolic link between Susan, the campfire and the creation of a home away from home is re-affirmed at the end of the novel when the children finally return to Wild Cat Island, after having spent the majority of the holiday camping on land. The last line of the novel is given to Susan, 'raking the sticks together in the fire-place' and asking the others 'isn't it a blessing to get home?'[36]

Ransome develops the symbolic function of Susan's fire further by presenting its ability to avert 'dangers and calamities'.[37] This second novel sees the Walker children spend far less time sailing than usual, as John accidentally sinks their dingy *Swallow*, almost at the very beginning. While trying to catch up with Nancy and Peggy Blackett, John crashes *Swallow* onto submerged rocks and the children are forced to swim to shore as the dinghy sinks to the bottom of the lake. Whilst John and all the other children are busy salvaging *Swallow* and its cargo, Susan calmly builds a fire on shore. Ransome writes:

> Mate Susan always knew the right thing to do, and she knew now that even if it were the end of the world nobody who could help it ought to hang about in wet clothes. The right thing to do was to make a fire and to make it at once […] There were dry, charred sticks left there from yesterday's fire, and she gathered a few dead leaves and built her usual wigwam over them of dry twigs and scraps of reed as if this had been a picnic instead of a ship wreck.[38]

Susan's initial fire is a distress signal, which simultaneously marks their position on shore and symbolises that, like many other before them, they are now shipwrecked. Yet we see in this episode how Susan's usual fire ritual has the ability to transform their distress into comfort and reassurance. From her small wigwam of twigs and reed, Susan builds a 'great

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Macmillan, 1922; repr. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), p. 642.
[36] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 453.
[37] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 642.
[38] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 82.

fire' which would not have looked out of place on Juan Fernandez.[39] As such, the Walkers claim kinship with many real and literary shipwrecked figures of the past, such as Crusoe and Alexander Selkirk, demonstrating what Abigail Van Slyck refers to as the 'temporal aspect' of the campfire. [40] In other words, the fire has the ability to connect with the past, disconnecting the children from the 'modern moment' which is exactly what Titty desired from camping out.

By the time Mrs Walker arrives to survey the damage, Susan's fire has transformed not only itself, but also the situation of the shipwrecked Walkers. When she arrives 'the huge fire had been allowed to die down, and a kettle was simmering on the neat stone fire place on the beach where this morning there had been the sort of tremendous blaze on which savages might roast long pig'.[41] The reassuring image of the simmering kettle on the tame fire conveys a message, once again of domestic harmony and reassurance. Rather than being used to cook long pig, this fire is making a pot of tea and as a result, 'no one looking at that cheerful scene would have guessed that a ship had that very morning been wrecked'. Susan's calm and efficient fire ritual transforms the fortune of the Walkers, who are allowed to remain camping out for the remainder of the novel. This is because Susan recognises the importance of the camp site and the campfire, as conveyers of reassurance. Susan is extremely astute in this, as her actions deflect the very real danger that their mother may have made them spend the rest of the holiday with her.

Time and again, camping and tramping novels depicted the campfire as holding the power to bring disparate groups of people together resulting in mutual understanding and friendship. The first encounter between the Walkers and the Blacketts is hostile as the Blacketts claim that the island and the fireplace belong to them. Susan encourages them to sit around the 'still smouldering' fire, because she understands that everyone looks less

[39] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 103. The Juan Fernandez archipelago is in the South Pacific and is well known as the site of Alexander Selkirk's real and Robinson Crusoe's literary marooning. Two of the three islands which make up the archipelago are named after Robinson Crusoe and Alexander Selkirk.
[40] Abigail A. Van Slyck, 'Connecting with the Landscape. Campfires and Youth Culture at American Summer Camps, 1890-1950,' in *Designing Modern Childhood. History, Space and the Material Culture of Childhood*, ed. by Marta Gutman and Ning de Coninck-Smith (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press,2008), pp. 23 – 41 (p. 24).
[41] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, pp. 131, 130 and 120.

fierce when they are sitting down.[42] It is an effective tactic as the children hold a parley which effectively marks the beginning of their friendship. Susan's campfire here arguably functions in a similar manner to those used on Girl Scout camps which, according to Mechling represents 'communal love'. This idea of the gendered campfire is also supported by Van Slyck who, when discussing the American Campfire Girls movement, refers to the fire as 'the flame of the domestic hearth'.[43] A similar episode occurs in Ransome's later book *Secret Water* (1939), a novel that is discussed later in this thesis, which sets the Walkers and Blacketts in Hamford Water, Essex. Here they meet a rival tribe, the Eels, and their friendship is cemented by a corroboree, which involves dancing around a great campfire. One further incident, from a different writer, serves to illustrate how campfires not only fostered friendship between equals but also encouraged communalism between people from different social backgrounds.

David Severn's 'Waggoner' novels are discussed in detail later in this chapter. However, one episode that is relevant here occurs in the second novel *A Cabin for Crusoe* (1943). In this book, Severn demonstrates the potential of the campfire to encourage friendships and understanding between people from different social backgrounds. More than any other camping and tramping novels, the 'Waggoner' stories engage with Romany-gypsy traditions, in a sympathetic and realistic way. When Severn's protagonists first come into contact with an extended gypsy family, there is a degree of animosity between the two groups. The gypsy boys interfere with Bill Robinson's camp, where he is trying to build a log cabin. Bill then discovers that he has been tricked by a farmer into building his cabin on a site where gypsies have camped for generations. The tensions between the two groups are finally smoothed over when the gypsies invite the children and Bill to come to their camp and eat with them. The significance of the event is clear:

[42] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 118.
[43] Van Slyck, 'Connecting with the Landscape,' p. 31.

> The red dance and flicker of the fire threw queer shadows and the light caught faces from below, distorting familiar features, so that Diana, looking across the flames, could scarcely recognise her own brother, sitting there between Brian and one of the bigger gypsy boys. His face was flushed […] and he was leaning forwards, watching Red-Necktie and Reuben Hearne, who had just finished singing […] The plates and dishes and remains of the food were scattered on the grass behind them; reminders of the feast they had eaten a short while ago. A large kettle was heating over the fire, and Mrs. Hearne's feet were almost buried under a cluster of tin mugs and cups.[44]

Sitting around the fire removes barriers between the two groups to such an extent that Diana struggles to distinguish her brother from the gypsy boy. This impression is confirmed by J Kiddell-Monroe's illustration of the scene which depicts a group of figures that are indistinguishable from each other, apart from one male playing a fiddle (Figure 2.4). They are all, equally, seated on the floor and the signs of the shared meal and the heating kettle in the description create the same sense of domestic harmony, albeit far more untidily, than Susan Walker's effort. Yet, there is here another element of campfire ritual which is absent from the Walkers', namely competition.

[44] David Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, illus., by J. Kiddell-Monroe (London: John Lane, 1943), pp. 139-140.

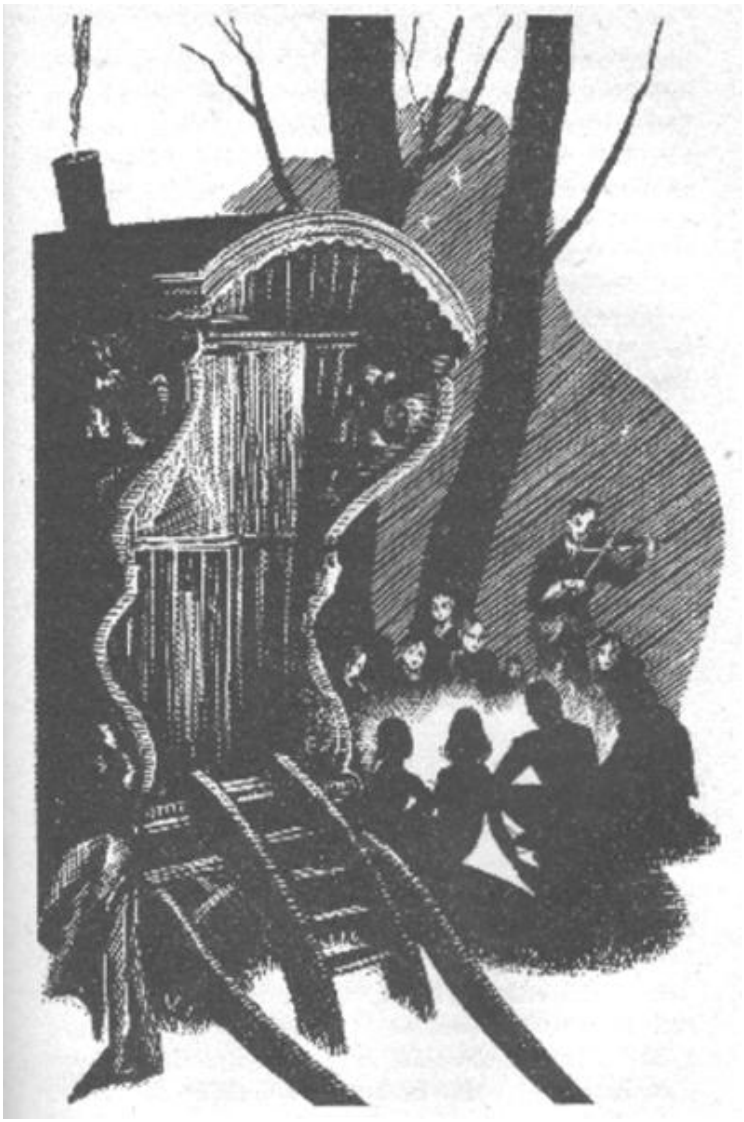


Figure 2 4: Illustration by J. Kiddell- Monroe for David Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe* (London: John Lane, 1943), p. 143.

The gypsies are keen to demonstrate their prowess at singing and dancing in order to impress their guests and to compete with each other. As this scene develops, a competition emerges between Reuben Hearne, the leader of the gypsies, and Patch Cooper, the old gypsy whom the children befriend, and the performance shifts from one created for the guests, to one between the hosts. Reuben Hearne and Patch Cooper have a mouth organ contest with Cooper being described as a 'formidable opponent'.[45] However, after passing various tunes back and forth between them 'at a nod and a wink from the gypsy chief,' they

[45] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, pp. 141 and 142.

finish simultaneously and it is clear that this competition is far friendlier than had been supposed. Strikingly, neither Bill, nor any of the children, have anything to bring to the event other than their interest and admiration and they are aware that they have been privileged to have shared the fire with the gypsies. Moreover, through providing the audience for the performance they have bonded with the group of travellers thus bridging a significant social and cultural divide.

2.4 The Romance of Wayfaring

Severn's romantic description of the gypsy camp above indicates the fascination that camping and tramping texts had with wayfaring life. The culmination of this romance with gypsy culture can be seen in the fascination with travelling in a gypsy caravan or vardo as discussed in the introduction. This fascination, appearing in the late-Victorian period, but still very much evident in the early twentieth century, is described by Jan March as a pastoral impulse. In *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in Victorian England from 1880 to 1914* (1982), Marsh writes that there was in some circles an 'anti-industrial impulse' and that 'the 'simplicity' and 'freedom' of travelling people was contrasted with the restricted conventional habits of the average citizen.[46] The gypsy became an icon of the 'alternative' way of living which awaited those 'courageous enough to cast off the shackles of house-dwelling civilization.' It was for this reason that poems such as W. H. Davies' 'Leisure', had resonance with both Norman Ellison and Malcolm Saville quoting 'Leisure' in their own writing, in its entirety.[47] Davies' contrast of a life 'full of care' suggesting a lack of time and space, with one, not of idleness but of freedom from demands and restraints, was a central motif in tramping stories.

Yet, camping and tramping stories did not accept unproblematic romantic notions about life on the open road. Instead camping and tramping writers challenged their readers to question and explore the realities and challenges that such a life would bring. As such, children's

[46] Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land. The Pastoral Impulse in Victorian England from 1880 to 1914* (London: Quarter Books, 1982), p. 88.
[47] Norman Ellison, *Over the Hills with Nomad*, illus., C. F. Tunnicliffe (London: University of London Press, 1948), pp. 182-183 and Malcolm Saville, *Country Scrap-Book for Boys and* Girls (1944; London: Gramol, 1946), p. 7.

tramping stories should be acknowledged as more challenging than some texts for adults, which often opted for unproblematic, romanticised impressions of life on the open road – after all W. H. Davies did lose a leg whilst trying to jump on a train. Comparing two works by writer and essayist Edward Verrall Lucas, provides a clear illustration of this willingness to challenge the romance of life on the road.

E. V. Lucas's children's book *The Slowcoach* (1910) is an early, if not the first, example of camping and tramping fiction. *The Slowcoach* describes the tramping holiday of the Avory children, in a gypsy vardo that is given to them by a mystery benefactor. Mrs Avory gives the children permission to go on a two week holiday, accompanied by their gardener Kinks, who is to drive the caravan, care for the horse and look after the children. Kinks' other role, however, is to be on–hand in case of 'gypsies and tramps,' who are generally disliked and certainly not trusted.[48] Lucas' characters consistently make negative references to gypsies so that although 'gypsies might have lived in' the caravan they are given, it is said to have belonged to a lady artist and so it is not 'dirty.' Moreover, when the children are tramping along in their caravan, people are often unfriendly towards them until realise who they are; the Avories are quick to tell people that 'we are not gypsies, vagabonds or suspicious characters.' When gypsies do appear in the novel they are friendly towards the Avories because the children rescue their baby, described as a 'swarthy mite' who has fallen from the back of their caravan. When they part ways with the gypsy family, Kinks checks the entire caravan in case anything has been stolen telling the children, 'gipsies is gipsies. They were gipsies before they were grateful, and I reckon they'll be gipsies after.' The gypsies have not taken anything and so, by presenting Kinks' unfounded suspicions, and by showing the hostility with which they are often greeted, Lucas challenges his readers to think about the social repercussions of choosing a truly itinerant lifestyle.

Lucas also challenged the romanticism with which the Avory children, and perhaps the reader, viewed gypsy life. For example, when the gypsies thank the Avories for finding their baby the father invites them to supper saying 'I bet you've talked about playing at

[48] E. V. Lucas, *The Slow Coach: A Story of Roadside Adventure* (London: Wells Gardner Dartons & Co Ltd, 1910), p. 30 subsequent quotations from, pp. 18, 15, 27, 207 and 218.

gipsies often enough' and offers to give them a real gipsy supper' of baked hedgehog.[49] The idea that campers and trampers such as the Avories were playing at being gypsies is returned to when Horace tells the man that he would rather live in a caravan than a house. The man laughs saying that he is a 'young gent out for a spree'. asking him how he thinks he would like it when it is raining and 'we're huddling in the van and can't get any dry sticks for the fire, and our feet are soaked'. There is no sense of animosity on the part of the gypsy man throughout this incident, rather he wants Horace to understand that playing at being a gypsy for a few weeks in the summer bears little resemblance to the realities of gypsy life.

Lucas issued no such challenge to his adult readers when choosing texts to include in his anthology, *The Open Road* (1899). *The Open Road,* subtitled *A Little Book for Wayfarers*; first published in 1899 it was in its 42nd edition by 1937. One of the most interesting features of this collection, besides its consistently romanticised portrayal of life on the open road, is Lucas' argument that it is for 'city-dwellers who make holiday'.[50] In other words it was intended to 'urge folk into the open air' by drawing upon, sometimes pastoral but always romantic, depictions of various aspects of the open air. Lucas' anthology demonstrates the continued urban demand for depictions of rural life. As Jan Marsh writes, at the turn of the twentieth century, there was a 'demand for access to the country when people were in town' and camping and tramping fiction in general should be positioned as emerging from this armchair interest in the outdoors.[51] Lucas' anthology is one of many texts that aimed to fulfil this demand. This continued into the twentieth century and accounts for the publication of J. M. Dent's Open-Air library, including titles such as W. H. Hudson's *Afoot in England* (1933) and Edward Thomas' *The Heart of England* (1932) and the renewed interest in the work of Richard Jefferies. For Lucas, meeting this demand called for the inclusion of numerous poems which, in contrast to *The Slowcoach*, unproblematically drew upon romanticised and unchallenging ideas about what life on the road was really like. It is for this reason that Lucas includes poems such as Bliss Corman's 'The Joys of the Road' from *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894), which describes 'the joys of

[49] Lucas, *The Slow Coach*, pp. 211 and 213.
[50] 'Argument' in E. V. Lucas, ed., *The Open Road. A Little Book for Wayfarers* (1899; London: Methuen & Co, 1937,p. ix.
[51] Marsh, *Back to the Land*, p. 33.

the open road - For him who travels without a load'.[52] Even Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Vagabond' from *Songs of Travel and Other Verses* (1896) appears. Moreover, in contrast with his portrayal of the anti-gypsy sentiment for his young readers, here Lucas' epigraph to the anthology is the oft quoted lines from George Borrow's *Lavengro* (1851), 'Life is sweet, brother'.[53] Clearly, with this anthology, Lucas is content to celebrate a lifestyle that his urban readers would never actually want, though they may be happy to fantasise about. Such an unproblematic celebration never occurs in children's tramping novels which, in contrast, explore the implications of this life style choice, simultaneously celebrating its romance while acknowledging its consequences. This willingness of children's literature to depict the realities of life on the open road is clear on reading Kenneth Grahame's classic, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908).

While *The Wind in the Willows* is not a camping and tramping text, it demonstrates the consistent willingness of children's literature to criticise the romanticism of the open road. This is evident in one of the most well-known episodes from the novel that occurs in chapter two, actually entitled 'The Open Road'. The chapter sees Toad, Mole and Ratty take up the road in Toad's gypsy caravan but their time on it is incredibly brief. They remain only for one night and Grahame makes it clear that this is because Toad's understanding of life on the road is romanticised and idealised. To begin, Toad explains to the impressionable Mole just what the open road is. In a description that is redolent with romance and, perhaps, tinged with hyperbole, or even parody, Graeme writes:

> The open road, the dusty highway, the heath, the common, the hedgerows, the rolling downs! Camps, villages, towns, cities! Here to-day, up and off somewhere else tomorrow! Travel, change, interest, excitement! The whole world before you, and a horizon that's always changing.[54]

[52] Bliss Corman, 'The Joys of the Road' in Lucas, *The Open Road*, pp. 19-22 (p.22).
[53] Lucas, *The Open Road*, p. v.
[54] Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908; London: Methuen, 1933), p. 19.

With the 'whole world' before them there is a wealth of possibility and opportunity invested in the road which stretches beyond any particular path or byway, and far beyond the pages of the book. Everything is constantly moving, constantly interesting and exciting, as is the perspective of the traveller looking at a horizon that is also, 'always changing'.

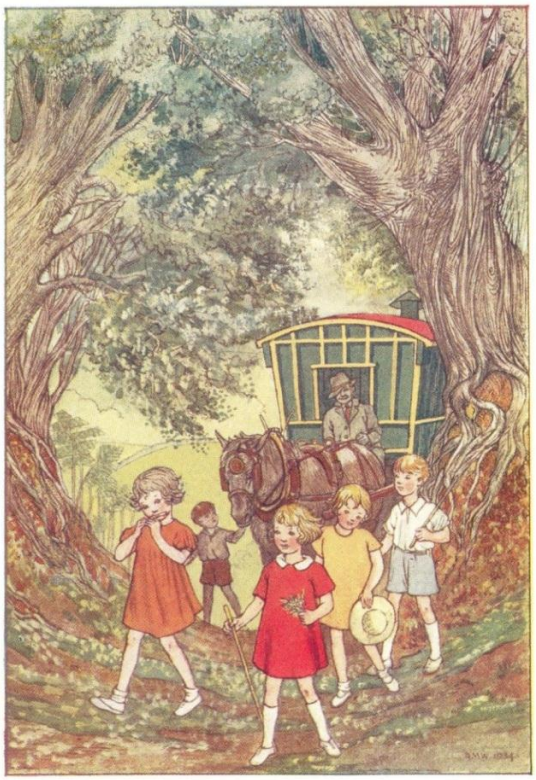
To take up the road is to choose a dynamic, active life, free of restraints and limitations. By describing the road in this way, Grahame encapsulates, and parodies, a romanticised impression of the road that was popularised for adults at this time by literary figures, such as children's author and ex-naval man, Gordon Stables.[55] On retiring in the 1890s, Stables re-invented himself as a 'gentleman gypsy', travelling in a custom built caravan called *Wanderer*, needing two horses to pull it, and accompanied by a valet and a coachman.. It is not difficult to view Stables as a model for Toad, the main difference is that, unlike Toad, Stables' belief in an idealised wayfaring life is never shaken. He remains convinced that travelling in his 'land-yacht' means 'care and worry are buried for a season' and that 'the scenery is ever-varying, ever strange and beautiful, each turn of the road brings you to something new, something worth looking at, or smiling at'.[56] Although the similarities with Grahame's description are striking, Grahame presents his episode, largely from the perspective of Mole and Rat, who have to do all the work, whereas Stables' servants are silent. Consequently, the impression that lingers is of Stables on the veranda of *Wanderer* admiring the view, as his valet and coachman do everything. In one typical passage, Stables greets Wells in the morning to be told that 'I've been up for over an hour, and breakfast is all ready,' as is his shaving water. Stables writes that in fifteen minutes he is shaved and sat down to breakfast, while Wells is 'busy doing up the beds, and stowing them away'. [57] After that, while Stables enjoys his morning stroll, the coachman 'brings the horses' and they are finally ready for a hard day's tramp. Grahame, however, is unwilling to let such an unrealistic view of travelling pass without comment.

[55] Stables was an ex-Naval officer who also wrote many works of children's historical fiction that was initially serialised in the *Boys' Own Paper* in the 1890s and was published in book format in the 1930s by Dean & Son. He was also a popular caravanning figure who was elected vice-president of the Caravan Club on its formation in 1907. See G. S. Woods, 'Stables, William Gordon (1837x40–1910)', rev. Guy Arnold, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36229, accessed 18 Aug 2011]

[56] Stables had published an earlier book about his travels in 1886, called *The Cruise of the Land-Yacht "Wanderer"; or, thirteen hundred miles in my caravan*. Gordon Stables, *Leaves from the Log of a Gentleman Gypsy: in Wayside Camp and Caravan* (1891; London: Jarrold & Sons, 1931), pp. 13-14.

[57] Stables, *Leaves from the Log of a Gentleman Gypsy*, pp. 52 and 53.

For Toad, Mole and Ratty, the road holds false promises. Instead of excitement, Mole and Rat experience drudgery and hard work looking after Toad. Once he is made to do some work by Mole and Rat, Toad is also immediately unimpressed with the 'simplicity of the primitive life'.[58] The promise of the open road is rather like that of the River which, as Sarah Gilead rightly argues, initially appears as a symbol of 'Mole's desire for freedom of movement' and 'the bold flight from duty and work' but actually becomes a 'bounded' space, a 'domestic and bourgeois version' of its original self.[59] Ironically, although travelling the open road initially offered seemingly limitless possibilities and opportunities, Grahame turns the initially romantic, expansive point-of-view of Toad into one focussed on domestic arrangements, reminiscent of Susan Walker's camp. This inwards shift of perspective can also be seen in the illustrations in camping and tramping novels. This is demonstrated on examining Barbara Moray Williams' frontispiece illustration for Lucy Bellhouse's *The Caravan Children* (1935) and Harold Jones' line drawing for M.E. Atkinson's *August Adventure* (1936) (Figures 2.5 and 2.6).



[58] Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*, p. 28.
[59] Sarah Gilead, 'Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows,' Explicator*, 46:1 (1987), 33-36 (pp. 33-34).

Figures 2.5 and 2.6: Frontis illustration by Barbara Moray Williams for Lucy W. Bellhouse, *The Caravan Children* (1935; London: George Harrap, 1961) and illustration by Harold Jones for M. E. Atkinson *August Adventure* (1936; London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), p. 80.

It is striking that both Moray Williams and Jones depict the open road as a physically bound space which appears more as enclosed tunnels than open, expansive environments. For Moray Williams in particular (Figure 2.5) it seems almost claustrophobically enclosed as the road is hemmed in between dense tree trunks and foliage, which merge seamlessly with the road. The road itself is also narrow, tunnel-like, pressing tightly upon the children and is perhaps more evocative of a path that Hansel and Gretel might become lost upon. It is only the brightness and cleanliness of the children's clothes which turns this potentially threatening space into one of security, supported by the domestic presence of the caravan. Similarly, in Harold Jones' illustration for M. E. Atkinson's *August Adventure* (1936), the road is equally bound – we cannot see where the children are going as they disappear around the bend. It is also difficult to imagine that Oliver Lockett, sitting on the tailboard, would have much sense of changing scenery. In fact, taken together, one caravan advancing out of the frame and the other retreating into it, there is a marked consistency of viewpoint which is characterised by obstruction; this is in sharp contrast to the expansive 'horizon

that's always changing' which Toad romantically envisioned. Moreover, the centrality of the caravan, in both illustrations, foregrounds the importance placed on the comforts of the gypsy vardo thus domesticating depictions of the open road in camping and tramping writing.

These two strands, the naturalisation or domestication of the open road, and the constrained or limited perspective, are combined in Ursula Bloom's 1947 novel, *Caravan for Three*. The book describes the holiday of Michael, Diana and Jane Peters who, due to their father's car accident, find themselves facing the prospect of another summer without a holiday. Their holiday is saved though by the arrival of a caravan, complete with driver, which has been sent to them by their Aunt Clarice. On entering the caravan, the eldest sister Diana immediately starts to worry about the lack of a larder and inevitably, the description of the inside of the vardo makes reference to 'a tiny cupboard full of china, and a stove of polished steel'.[60] Attention to such homely features was consistent across tramping stories. For example in Carol Forrest's *Caravan School* (1946) there are references to the 'check curtains on the windows' and 'the knitted checked kettle-holder by the stove'.[61] Similarly, in *The Caravan Children* (1935) Lucy Bellhouse refers to the 'stove' and 'cupboard for cups and saucers' and the 'drawers for their clothes and shelves for their books.'[62] The younger sister Jane is captivated by the romance of tramping the road in a caravan, as she declares, 'we can go anywhere we like'.[63] The importance of this message is reflected in its use as a strapline to the frontis illustration of the novel (Figure 2.7).

[60] Ursula Bloom, *Caravan for Three*, illus., by Lunt Roberts (London: University of London Press, 1947), p. 29.
[61] Carol Forrest, *Caravan School* (London: Arthur Pearson, 1946), p. 21.
[62] Lucy W. Bellhouse, *The Caravan Children* (1935; London: George Harrap, 1961), p. 12.
[63] Bloom, *Caravan for Three*, p. 27.

Figure 2.7: Frontispiece by Lunt Roberts for Ursula Bloom, *Caravan for Three* (London: University of London Press, 1947).

However, the narrative immediately follows this exclamation with the statement that her mother had 'something to say about that' and in fact, they are able to go only fifteen miles away. This may suggest that the sensation of freedom desired by Jane is actually quite false and that she is in fact sheltered and cosseted. Passages such as that below, which describes Jane leaning out of the caravan window, could be read in a highly ironic light:

> [S]eeing the road uncurling before them, with the green trees, and the bend ahead, and always a new view coming into sight. That was the joy of it. The horizon was theirs. There was no limit to possibility.[64]

Obviously there is a limit to possibility – a fifteen mile limit to be exact - yet, for Jane, the experience is far from ironic and, despite knowing that she is not travelling a great distance, she is still excited by the prospect of what might happen along the way. Jane's actual physical freedom has been constrained by the anxieties of her mother. However, as Atkinson's Lockett children quickly discover in *August Adventure*, looking at the distances travelled in a caravan may not appear to be 'very much to boast about' but there were other, more important things than speed and distance.[65] It is the fact that Jane's view *is* obscured by the bends and the trees, which keeps her guessing as to what might await her around the corner. Even if there are limits to possibility, the romance of the road makes Jane think that there are none, and as such, travelling the open road, while actually being bounded remains a powerful motif, full of freshness and vibrancy. Not all tramping stories, however, sought to remind readers of the limitations of life on the open road, choosing instead, to explore the personal and societal implications of adopting such a life style. This is evident throughout David Severn's 'Waggoner' series.

Written between 1942 and 1946, Severn's tramping series of stories, consistently draws upon a far more radical idea of life on the road than has been discussed so far, specifically exploring the complexities of personal and physical freedom. In doing so, Severn engaged with the work of American Romantics, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman, in particular Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854) and Whitman's 'The Song of the Open Road,' from the 1856 version of *Leaves of Grass*. In the writing of all three, there is a definite desire to explore the possibilities of a life suffused with agency and self-determination. For Thoreau, this meant trying to lead a life of economy and self-reliance at Waldon Pond; for Whitman, it meant challenging societal restraints and prejudices, epitomised in the perceived freedoms of the open road. Both desires are examined in Severn's Waggoner novels, principally through the character of Bill Robinson and as such

[64] Bloom, *Caravan for Three*, p. 30.
[65] Atkinson, *August Adventure*, p. 163.

Severn's series explores the two diverging impulses to both camp and tramp.

2.5 The 'Waggonner' Novels

Bill Robinson appears in the first novel *Rick Afire* (1942) when friends Derek Longmore and the significantly named Brian Sanville - a name which suggests that he can do without (sans) the town (ville) - notice smoke rising up from Gibbet Wood, near to the Sanville's farm. Derek and Brian track Bill to his camp site and are intrigued as to why a young man is camping out in the woods on his own. The boys are soon joined by their respective sisters, Diana and Pamela and they proceed to follow Bill around the local area. Bill's credentials as an experienced camper, though an untidy one, are one conveyed through images of campfire domesticity. Severn describes Bill's camp writing, 'a fire burnt cheerfully below […] in a ring of stones and a small black kettle perched over the flames'.[66] The children are also surprised by how permanent the camp appears as there is 'a canvas chair and a light wooden table piled with books and papers' which 'campers don't usually bother about.' These combine to convince the children that he 'isn't camping for the first time' and if he is not an 'escaped lunatic' then he must be a 'poet' or 'some sort of naturalist.' Bill's appearance also contributes to their impression of him as mysterious for he appears 'a tall, thin man, hands in the pockets of dirty grey trousers, the sleeves of a red check shirt rolled up over his elbows' looking 'for all the world like a pirate; like some corsair, wrecked on a desert island and impatiently awaiting his rescuers'.

Despite all of these signs that Bill is a romantic and intriguing figure, the reality is far more mundane. The children's disappointment is palpable when he tells them that he is only on a month's holiday and that he does 'the usual sort of thing' in the city of nine to five office work. In many ways, the children's desire to romanticise Bill is reflected in their choice of nickname for him; Crusoe. However, Bill disabuses them of this idea telling them that 'I really have nothing in common with the chap. After all, he was given no choice in the matter, he didn't *want* to live on his island, he just made the best of it. I'm quite different; you see, I like camping out here all by myself.' It is at this point in the narrative that Bill

[66] David Severn, *Rick Afire,* illus., by J. Kiddell-Monroe (London: John Lane, 1942), pp. 44, 45, 52 -53, 45, 101, 98, 98, 99 and 100.

asks the boys if they have heard of Thoreau, in a passage which both reveals the influence of Thoreau on Severn, and shows Severn's desire to inform his readers about Thoreau and his work. Bill tells Derek and Brian that Thoreau 'lived over in America […] but he's a man I really do admire. You see, he went and lived out in the woods, quite alone, for much longer than I've ever done. He stayed there for two years or so and built himself his own wooden hut […] he just wanted to see if he could live away from everyone and grow his own food, be quite independent.' The conversation between Bill and the boys is essentially a puff for *Walden*, as Bill finishes by saying that Thoreau 'wrote a book about it, which you should read some time, when you're older. You'll enjoy it, especially if you like being out-of-doors in the country'. For Bill, a life in the woods would present a degree of personal freedom that his nine-to-five life denies him. He tells the boys, he is 'not half as free' now he is an adult than when he was at school. It is striking that the conversation discussed here takes place around the campfire that had established the camp as an inhabited and domesticated space. Moreover, it is also evidence of the way in which some camping and tramping novels offer a more flexible understanding of gender. For example, there is no element of competition between the males around the fire, rather it has the effect of forming a bond of friendship between the young man and the two boys. Bill also does not see this as an opportunity to impress the boys, rather he gains their sympathy through being honest about the short-comings of his everyday life.

The conversation outlined above is an important one as it marks the beginning of Bill's journey towards personal freedom, which Severn depicts in the first two novels of the series. This journey could be described as experimentation with different modes of living, and it is clear at this early stage that camping out only provides a very limited escape from the realities of life. Bill's obvious admiration of Thoreau's longer attempts to live independently and alone mark his disenchantment with the temporary liberation that camping out affords him. The children's initial guess that Bill is a poet is not completely off the mark as it is revealed at the start of the second novel, *A Cabin for Crusoe* (1943), that in the interim between the novels, Bill has published a book of essays about the countryside that enable him to pay for the timber to build his cabin. Although Bill admits that he is not a carpenter, he is keen to build his own cabin, thus starting his life of self-sufficiency. It seems that, like Thoreau, Bill has now worked out how to 'get [his] living

honestly, with freedom left for [his] proper pursuits'.[67] Bill hopes that if the second book is well received, he will earn enough 'to be able to live in the country all the time' and states that he will be 'faithful' to his cabin.[68] Essentially, Bill wants to pursue the type of simplified lifestyle advocated by both Thoreau and influential, British socialist figures such as Edward Carpenter. Commenting on the links between Thoreau and late-Victorian British socialists, Mark Bevir writes that they both worked to 'simplify their lives' because in doing so 'people could clear away the debris of convention, thereby creating the space needed for personal expression'.[69] Bill's personal desire for a simple life in the woods places Severn's novel within wider socialist discourses. However, Bill's enthusiasm for his cabin in the woods is extremely short-lived and he is quickly and easily drawn to a different way of life. This shift is reflected in Bill's later reference to Thoreau in his second novel simply as 'a chap I've read about,' in contrast with his enthusiasm depicted in the first.[70]

Through various misunderstandings between Bill, a tribe of gypsies and the farmer whose land he wants to build on, Bill's planned cabin cannot be built and this marks the end of Thoreau's overt influence on Bill. Instead, Bill is quickly lured by the promise of freedom of gypsy life. Severn describes gypsies as arousing 'deep-seated longings' in Bill, due to a lifestyle 'full of movement […] changes of scenery […] days lived with the sun and wind and rain, out on the open heath or in the shelter of the hedgerow'.[71] This impression of openness and beauty of the countryside is sustained throughout the novels and was reflected in J. Kiddell-Monroe's illustrations (Figure 2.8) – whose rolling hills share a striking resemblance to that of Harold Jones', at the start of this chapter.

67 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854: repr. Mineloa: Dover, 1995), p. 18.
[68] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 44.
[69] Mark Bevir, 'British Socialism and American Romanticism,' *The English Historical Review*, 110, 438 (September 1995), 878-901 (p. 891).
[70]Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 198.
[71] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 50.

Figure 2.8: Illustration by J. Kiddell Monroe, for David Severn, *Hermit in the Hills* (London: John Lane, 1945), p. 13.

In this second novel, Bill and the children are befriended by Patch Cooper who is instrumental in persuading Bill that he should become a wayfarer, which he does by depicting a life full of spontaneity. This is conveyed through images of change and variety in the landscape and the natural world, which is reminiscent of Toad's description to Mole. Patch asks Bill:

> Have you ever thought to yourself: to-day now, I'll look out on to a wood […] to-morrow I'll see a pond afore me, or a stream maybe, with trout for the ticklin' […] Or you'll feel the hills speakin; […] maybe you wants to stay awhile in the corn country[….] an' watch the gold turn red in the sun, crisp and whisperin' […] fields and fields I've seen harvers [sic] time, whisperin' to each other […] or is it the breath o' cattle you'll see, all white in the early morning.

He continues and tells Bill that taking up such a life will mean that 'you'll choose as I've chosen […] freedom!'[72] Despite the emphasis, through both description and illustration, on physical freedom, there is also a sense of the personal, or spiritual, freedom that such a life appears to offer. As Bill reflects when first considering becoming a traveller, such a life would give free rein to 'all those little wants and urges never allowed to come to the surface in the ordinary way'.[73] Severn echoes Whitman's declaration in 'Song of the Road', '[f]rom this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines/ Going where I list, my own master, total and absolute. [74] Whitman's declaration of the open road as a site of self-consecration is mirrored by David Severn, setting both Whitman and Bill Robinson free from the limitations imposed upon the self and from society's constraints. As Edbrooke comments, sometimes a person can conquer the desire to take up the road and 'drive an unwilling pen in a city office' and at others they accept their urge to 'wande[r] the world over'.[75] Although close parallels between author and text are often tenuous, there was clearly a personal sympathy felt by Severn with exactly this desire. Looking back on his life before writing also made him financially independent, Severn wrote that he was 'developing a hatred of cities and of London in particular. On sunny, blue-sky days I found it a physical agony to be shackled to my desk. I lived for the weekends and my escape into the countryside'.[76] Although, unlike Thoreau, Whitman is never directly referred to by Severn, there is a clear sense of shared imagery between Severn's camping and tramping novel and Whitman's 'Song of the Road'. This is clear when Bill echoes Whitman,

[72] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 197.
[73] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 50.
[74] Walt Whitman, 'The Song of the Open Road', in Lucas, *The Open Road*, pp. 24-39 (p. 28).
[75] Edbrooke, 'The Poets of the Open Road,' p. 83.
[76] David Severn, *Fifty Years with Father. A Relationship* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 98.

declaring that on the road 'You can be your own master and enjoy the freedom of the road anywhere'.[77] For, as Edbrooke writes, the secret of the open road is that 'he who takes it is answerable to no man'.[78] What is striking in the Waggoner novels is that Bill chooses a life among fellow wayfarers, rejecting a life of isolation and becoming part of a community of wayfarers, set outside of societal norms.

Far from simply romanticising the gypsy life, Severn's novels also emphasised the difficulties and prejudices that gypsies face. The whole reason that Bill Robinson meets the gypsies in the first place is because an unscrupulous farmer has given him permission to build on land that the gypsies believe is their 'rightful camping ground' as they have been coming there for many generations.[79] In this instance Bill and the gypsies reconcile their differences but the leader of the gypsies, Reuben Hearne, paints a picture of a life full of rejection and prejudice. He says:

> There be few we meet that aren't against us […] The gentry in the big houses […] the gardeners and gamekeepers in the parks and woods . . . the p'lice on the roadways […] the farmers in the fields […] none of them wants the Romanies. Move along, they says. Git out of here, they shouts. Stop another minute and I'll unload my gun into you! That's all the greeting we ever gets.[80]

Certainly on examining other camping and tramping stories in which gypsies appear, there is an overall impression of gypsies often being unwelcome. In Bridget Mackenzie's *Six in a Caravan* (1945) for example, the caravanning campers and trampers are initially met with distrust from a farmer on whose land they want to stay. Mackenzie writes that '[i]t appears some gypsies passed this way yesterday, and in the night they broke into his poultry yard and stole two of his finest hens. So I suppose it's natural that now he can't bear the sight of a caravan'.[81] Mackenzie's novel is very different to those of David Severn's however as it

[77] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 198.
[78] Edbrooke, 'The Poets of the Open Road,' p. 83.
[79] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 106.
[80] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 106.
[81] Bridget Mackenzie, *Six in a Caravan*, illus., Eileen Soper (London: George Newnes, 1945), p. 16.

perpetuates a stereotype of gypsies being little more than thugs who make their children steal for them. Although few camping and tramping novels were as crude as Mackenzie's the use of the derogative 'gyppo' recurs in many camping and tramping novels. Even Severn's Bill Robinson refers at one point to 'gyppo kids' and novels such as Ruth How's *The Friendly Farm* (1947) and *The Friendly Farm Again* (1948), which describe the friendship between a gypsy boy, a farmer's son and two visiting children, also use the word 'gyppo' freely.[82]

The challenging nature of Severn's sympathy with gypsy and itinerant culture should not be undervalued and it arguably reflects the radical traditions from which Severn's writing emerged. As one in a long line of family members to attend Abbotsholme, the first progressive school in England which emerged from the Victorian Back-to-the-Land Movement, Severn would have been well versed in the radical discourses not only of the American Romantics but also the wider discourses of British socialism.[83] Although a connection between the American Romantics and British socialism may seem unlikely, as Bevir explains, whilst British socialism differed from American Romanticism through its lack of divine or spiritual purpose, there is 'a definite line of historical influence' between the two 'the evidence for which is both textual […] and biographical'.[84] These two strands of evidence converge in the tramping novels of David Severn. Cecil Reddie, the founder of the school, was highly influenced by Edward Carpenter and in turn Walt Whitman, who was greatly admired by Carpenter. Jan Marsh makes this connection explicit when she writes that Abbotsholme's school song was 'adapted from Whitman's *The Love of Comrades*, which had also inspired Carpenter'.[85] Severn's 'Waggoner' novels need to be understood as stemming from this progressive and radical tradition that in many ways drew upon the socialist fellowship ideal of simplicity and comradeship. As Bevir writes, following Carpenter's understanding of socialism meant that 'Socialism is love or

[82] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 131 and Ruth Howe, *The Friendly Farm* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1948), p. 40.
[83] So many other members of the Unwin family, besides David Severn, attended Abbotsholme, to the extent that they were known by number rather than name. Stanley Unwin for example was known as Unwin 6. Stanley's brother Sidney was Unwin 3 and worked at Abbotsholme as a master. See Stanley Unwin, *The Truth About a Publisher. An Autobiographical record* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 47. David Severn was Unwin 9. Severn, *Fifty Years with Father*, pp. 33-37.
[84] Bevir, 'British Socialism and American Romanticism', p. 882.
[85] Marsh, *Back to the Land*, p. 212.

comradeship, fellowship, or democracy', all of which are celebrated in Severn's Waggoner novels.[86]

It is important to return once more to the idea of reality versus romanticism, discussed in the first part of this chapter. Severn, like Whitman, illustrates the implications of choosing to take up a truly wayfaring life. To a large extent, trampers such as Bill, are shielded from the majority of difficulties that such a life actually entails because they are not really gypsies though Patch Cooper tells him that 'you learn what hardship means'.[87] Whitman, too, confirms the cost of claiming the freedom of the open road, writing 'I must be honest with you: I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes'.[88] This impression is confirmed at the end of the novel when Patch Cooper arrives at the Sanville's Farm and Mrs Sanville is shocked that the children have brought gypsies to the farm. She immediately thinks that all the chickens will be stolen but quickly changes her mind when she realises the caravan belongs to Bill, calling him Mr Toad. Clearly, Bill will always be a gentleman gypsy in spite of all the bonding campfire rituals and the shared desire for personal freedom and the companionship of the road.

To conclude then, while initially appearing to be contrasting desires, the acts of camping and tramping were used to explore both the realties and romance of life in the open in surprisingly challenging ways. Ultimately, the novels discussed here suggested that embracing the realities of both would lead to a greater sense of personal freedom and a better understanding of different ways of living. But, as the 'Waggonner' novels made clear, life on the road was changing. Looking back to his father's time Patch Cooper remembered days when Wandsworth Common was covered with 'tents as far as the eye could reach' and laments the fact that 'things are changed to-day'.[89] He continues, 'I reckon we Romanies […] we of the true blood […] I do reckon we be a dyin' people […] There be fewer of us each generation.' According to Cooper, it isn't only the fact that the Romany language is dying out but that the pattern of gypsy life is being slowly eroded, a fact that he also puts down to the increased use of cars rather than horses among gypsies. He concludes,

[86] Bevir, 'British Socialism and American Romanticism', p. 890.
[87] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, p. 172.
[88] Whitman, 'Song of the Open Road', p. 33.
[89] Severn, *A Cabin for Crusoe*, pp. 176-7.

‘the day of the motor car was a bad day for us, as indeed it was for many. No man can say they’ve brought peace to the countryside’. It is impossible to know from camping and tramping fiction what real Romany gypsies thought about the impact of the car on their traditions– perhaps unsurprisingly there are no examples of camping and tramping novels written by anyone who actually belonged to a gypsy tribe. It is significant though that Severn depicts the car as undermining a life style that for many epitomised the freedom of the open road. During the interwar years the rise of the popularity and affordability of the motor car resulted in more people than ever before experiencing the freedom of the countryside. While Patch lamented the impact the motor car had on Romany traditions, for many others, it was the very nature and character of the countryside that was changing.

Chapter Three – The Search for England

3.1 The Search for England in the Interwar Years.

During the interwar years the British countryside was a politicised and contested space for many people. Multiple social and personal agendas collided as different interested parties sought to define the countryside in their own terms. Preservationists, such as William Clough-Ellis, sought to halt development of the countryside, which was disappearing at a rate of 60,000 acres a year in the 1930s.[1] Divisions between land owners and the public became increasingly acute as walkers calling for open-access to the countryside joined forces, staging mass trespasses across the country. As the countryside's economic significance diminished, resulting in 'economic and social stagnation,' for many its value rose as a conveyer of national culture and identity, and as a site of leisure and recreation.[2] For some, the countryside was a symbolic space; it was a landscape of the mind, encapsulated in what Patrick Wright refers to as the idea of 'Deep England' - the values and traditions so intrinsic to national identity, encoded in what was fought for in the First and Second World Wars.[3] Others held a very different view of the countryside, believing it to be, as John Baxendale puts it: 'a national resource, not a national symbol'.[4] It was perceived as a democratic space, there for the use and recreation of all. These different understandings of the countryside – as either a public and recreational space, a destination for a drive on a sunny Sunday afternoon, or a private, symbolic space – jockeyed for dominance within British society. At the heart of either position was the desire to reimagine and re-negotiate a relationship with a countryside from which many Britons felt

[1] John Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside' in *Class, Culture and Social Change. A New View of the 1930s,* ed. by F. Glover Smith (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 258-280 (p. 259).
[2] Victor Watson, *Reading Series Fiction: from Arthur Ransome to Gene Kemp* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 82. According to Lawrence James, the agricultural depression of the 1920s saw 2300 farms go bankrupt and over 200 farmers take their own lives. See, Lawrence James, *The Middle Class. A History* (London: Little Brown, 2006; repr. London: Abacus, 2008), p. 398.
[3] Patrick Wright**,** *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* **(**[London?]:Verso, 1985; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 77-83 and Alan Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England' in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920,* ed. by Robert Colls and Philip Dodds, pp. 61-89 (p. 78).
[4] John Baxendale, '"I had Seen a Lot of Englands": J. B. Priestley, Englishness and the People,' *History Workshop Journal*, 51 (Spring, 2001) 87-111 (94).

increasingly estranged. While many camping and tramping novels seemed to advocate an understanding of the countryside as an exclusive space, a site of individual exploration and personal reflection, this position was often problematised. Instead, competing claims to the countryside were juxtaposed in order to highlight not only the problems inherent in each, but to examine the right of outsiders and visitors to define the countryside in their own terms and explore the problems in both attitudes.

Following the publication of Martin Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (1981) a new critical paradigm emerged, in which British national identity at the beginning of the twentieth century was characterised by looking backwards toward the rural and pastoral, rather than forward to the urban or industrial.[5] Frequently, the symbolic importance of the interwar countryside has been situated in its ability to offer a conservative, nostalgic antidote to modernity. This paradigm however has been challenged by critics, such as Peter Mandler and David Matless.[6] Furthermore, Alastair Bonnett's recent book, *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia* (2010) problematises the equation of nostalgia with conservatism. It is not the task of this chapter to either dispute or confirm the merits of Englishness as a subject of study but to examine how camping and tramping novels engaged with the discourses on Englishness, heritage and national identity that were taking place at the time.

3.2 A Pastoral Arcadia?

The propensity of many camping and tramping novels to imagine the countryside as a private space is evident in the frequency with which the genre has been associated with both Arcadianism and pastoralism. Victor Watson for example has described the 'Waggoner' novels (1942-1946) of David Severn, as 'reclusive' and 'elegiac' in tone and

[5] See *Englishness, Politics and Culture 1880-1920,* ed. by Robert Colls and Philip Dodds **;** David Lowenthal, 'British National Identity and the English Landscape,' *Rural History*, 2 (1991), 205-230.
[6] See Peter Mandler, 'Against Englishness': English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 7 (1997),155-175. David Matless, and more recently Ysanne Holt and David Corbett, have examined how calls for preservation position some interwar attitudes to the countryside within discourses of modernity rather than against them. See David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1998) and *Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past 1880- 1940*, eds., David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt and Fiona Russell (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002).

argues that Arthur Ransome was not interested in creating a realistic depiction of the Lake District but 'Arcadia'.[7] Just what 'Arcadia' means in relation to camping and tramping fiction requires some consideration. The Arcadia of camping and tramping fiction, whilst also drawing upon the pastoral tradition of Theocritus, bears close resemblance to what Patricia Rae describes as English Arcadia. Rae describes this as 'a green and pleasant land' that was 'socially harmonious, that provided for solitude and for the individual, and that was associated, above all, with peace'.[8] This sense of English Arcadianism is implicit in Peter Hunt's observation that the landscape of camping and tramping was always 'enviably empty'.[9] If camping and tramping novels are viewed as examples of English Arcadianism it should be recognised that this was an increasingly problematic concept. Rae argues that, with the approach of the Second World War, there was a rejection of English Arcadianism as it was thought to embody a desire to revive an elitist Golden Age.

As Raymond Williams writes in *The Country and the City* (1973), just when and where this Golden Age was is a matter of shifting perspective. Williams traces this in English literature back to the 1750s and from there, back to the pastorals of Hesiod, Theocritus and Virgil.[10] Williams' point is that successive generations of people had lamented the passing of successive Golden Ages rooted in the landscape. According to Rae the movement towards the Second World War brought a new perspective, whereby the countryside was viewed through the lens of collectivism rather than individualism, becoming associated with a Utopian vision that was 'forward looking' and based upon 'a vision of a collectivist society'.[11] It is perhaps for this reason that in *British Children's Fiction in the Second World War* (2007) Owen Dudley Edwards describes Arthur Ransome's novels as 'escapist', 'nostalgic' and 'celebratory of an endangered Britain'.[12] Dudley Edwards' reference to Britain rather than England is appropriate here for, despite Rae's reference to

[7] Victor Watson, 'Camping and Tramping Fiction' in *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English,* ed. by Victor Watson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 165; Victor Watson, in R*eading Series Fiction*, p. 28.
[8] Patricia Rae, 'Double Sorrow: Proleptic Elegy and the End of Arcadianism in 1930s Britain,' *Twentieth Century Literature*, 49, 2 (Summer, 2003), 246-275 (p.249).
[9] Peter Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 122.
[10] See 'A Problem of Perspective' in Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973; repr., London: The Hogarth Press, 1993), pp. 9-12.
[11] Rae, 'Double Sorrow', p. 264.
[12] Owen Dudley Edwards, *British Children's Fiction in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 44.

English Arcadianism, camping and tramping novels drew upon this model and extended it across the countryside of Britain, rather than just England.

This positioning of camping and tramping fiction within pastoral Arcadianism aligns it with dominant criticism on early twentieth-century children's literature in general. Victor Watson, for example, has argued that 'for about thirty years children's literature was for the most part a version of pastoral, a sustained and essentially *adult* elegy on a massive scale for dearly loved and vanishing ways of rural life'.[13] According to Roger Sales, the pastoral mode is characterized by five key elements: 'refuge, reflection, rescue, requiem, and reconstruction'.[14] Sales' definition is echoed by Terry Gifford who argues that at times the pastoral mode has been viewed in a pejorative sense, and thought to idealise the realities of country life, offering a site of escape from the modern world.[15] This understanding of pastoralism perhaps explains the critical tone that accompanies some of the comment on children's literature of this time. For example, in *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers* (1962) Marcus Crouch argues that throughout the 1920s, children's literature was 'escapist' and 'remote from everyday life.'[16]

In some ways it is easy to see why camping and tramping novels are perceived as offering escape into a pastoral Arcadia. On examining both descriptions and illustrations of the countryside, across the genre, what emerges is a vision of the British countryside that is unspoilt, tranquil, and empty. For example, in his fourth 'Waggoner' novel, *Hermit in the Hills* (1945), set along the Welsh-English border, David Severn described his Waggoners pausing at one point on a journey to admire the view. He describes them:

> gazing down the flinty track; the narrow roadway that dipped gently behind them, winding along the valley between the enclosing trough of hills. In the distance, where steeply wooded slopes met the smooth arm of the moorland sweeping bare and green and high, rose a single, sharply

[13] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction*, p. 79.
[14] Roger Sales, *English Literature in History, 1780-1830: Pastoral and Politics* (London: Hutchinson, 1983), p. 17.
[15] Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.
[16] Marcus Crouch, *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers* (1962; London: The Library Association, 1963), p. 38.

> pointed peak; a grassy pyramid guarding the valley entrance.[17]

Elinor Lyon's unpublished piece of juvenilia 'Island Adventures' (c.1939) tells the story of a group of siblings from Edinburgh who come to stay on a small island off the west coast of Scotland. Lyon describes the landscape in detail, writing:

> Beyond was another stretch of sand, flat and white. Several oyster catchers that had been wading in the shallow ripples rose at the sight of her, and skimmed away. Rocks and heather and scrubby birch trees covered the slopes of the hill to the right, and beyond it towered the mountain, more fantastic than ever.[18]

Geoffrey Trease's *Detectives of the Dales* (1938), a story of camping and sheep stealing, was set in the Pennines. Rooting his readers in the landscape he described his campers and trampers:

> looking down, they saw the moon falling away from under their feet, tumbling down like a Niagara of rock and grass, to the broad green Vale of Eden at the bottom. The Vale, in turn, stretched away westwards, and there, just as dramatically, the Lake Mountains sprang up to close the horizon - higher, more jagged, and even savager than the Pennines. [19]

There are clear geographical differences across all three novels, with Trease's Pennines and Lake Mountains contrasting with Lyon's flat sands and heather and Severn's undulating hills and moorland. However there is a striking degree of similarity across all three descriptions, and which is typical of the majority of camping and tramping novels. There is a marked absence of roads, the closest reference to one being the 'flinty track' that Severn's Waggoners have travelled on. There are no cars, no clusters of bungalows, no tea shops, in fact there are no signs that anything about this landscape has changed for hundreds, if not

[17] David Severn, *Hermit in the Hills* (London: The Bodley Head 1945), p. 7.
[18] Elinor Lyon, 'Island Adventures,' c. 1939, Elinor Lyon Archive, Seven Stories, The Centre for Children's Books, EL/ 01/ 01/ 04, F31r.
[19] Geoffrey Trease, *Detectives of the Dales* (London: A & C Black, 1938), p. 36.

thousands of years. There is also a conspicuous absence of agricultural work taking place which is surprising for a group of novels so frequently set either on or around farms. To a certain extent, this is a landscape characterised by *otium*, or leisure, suggesting that its importance is symbolic rather than economic. It is for this reason that the landscape of camping and tramping novels is more accurately examined within the pastoral mode rather than the Georgic. While camping and tramping novels frequently depict the industriousness of campers and trampers, incorporating clear didactic passages of instruction and advice, the landscape is markedly still, peaceful and mostly unproductive. As John Chalker observes of Virgil's *Georgics* (c.29 BC) 'the poet contrasts the indolence of the Golden Age with the laborious existence which is necessary in life as we know it'.[20] While campers and trampers are frequently industrious in their leisure, rural labour and industry provides the background to camping and tramping fiction, but is not its main concern.

It is the national and cultural symbolism of the countryside that is of utmost importance and which is discussed by Peter Hunt in his *Introduction to Children's Literature* (1994). According to Hunt in British children's literature generally, 'places in Britain carry resonances' and 'British places *mean*'.[21] He continues distinguishing between different places and links this to perceived nationalistic differences, writing, 'if we regard the River Bank as being quintessentially English, Wales is frequently seen as resisting Englishness; similarly, the Scottish highlands are spiritually unconquered'. Siân Nicholas has argued that the elision of English and British landscapes was common in the years leading up to the Second World War due to the belief that this would draw disparate communities together, creating national harmony and identity. In camping and tramping fiction national differences and tensions have been removed and replaced with a vision of a timeless and tranquil British landscape, only for other tensions and differences to emerge.

According to art historian Ysanne Holt the emptying of the countryside can be traced back to landscape painting of the 1900s. Holt argues that aesthetic emptying prepared the countryside 'to be that place of private middle-class contemplation, unhindered by the

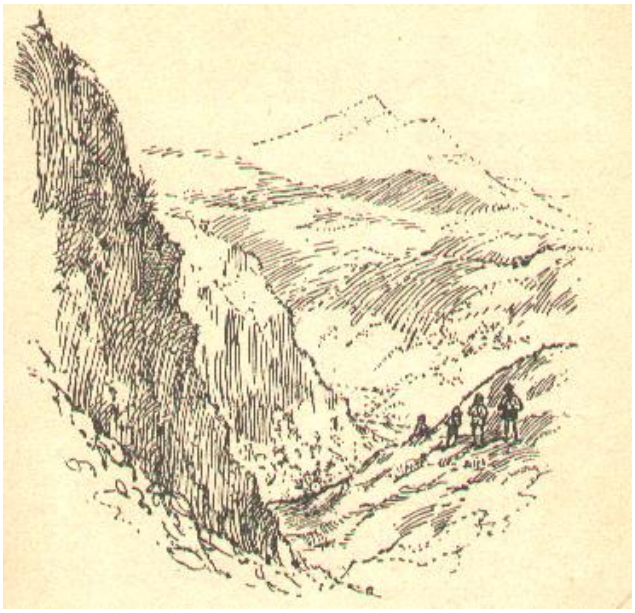
[20] John Chalker, *The English Georgic. A Study in the Development of a Form* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 26.
[21] Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature,* pp. 180 and 182 [emphasis in original].

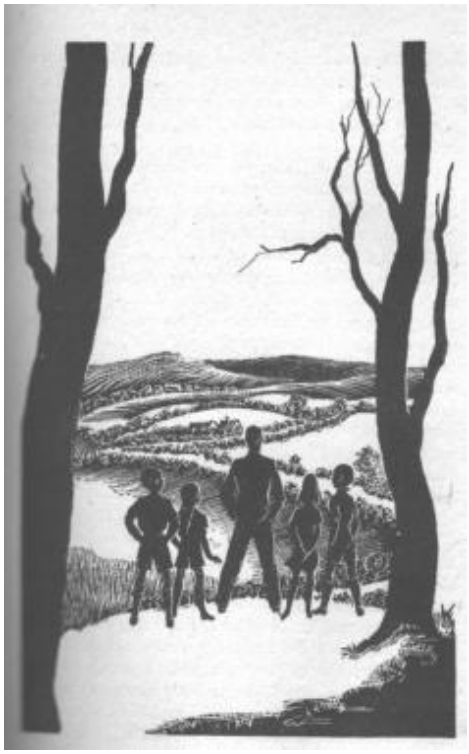
presence of others, natives or otherwise'.[22] Rather than this process being backwards-looking, Holt goes on to argue that this resulted in the creation of a controlled, modern landscape. She argues that 'the modern landscape could only ever be an ideal landscape once it had been pictorially and metaphorically emptied out, only then could order, harmony and control be maintained'. The empty landscape of camping and tramping fiction similarly attempts to aesthetically define the countryside as an exclusive and private space rather than a public one.[23] In effect, camping and tramping novels can be considered as examples of English Arcadia re-imagining it as a British one in which harmony and tranquillity are maintained through the absence of competing claims upon it. This process of adapting the Arcadian myth is tellingly described by Simon Schama as 'aesthetic colonisation'.[24] Where the Classical myth was characterised as a place of 'primitive panic', a wild and harsh landscape presided over by Pan, Theocritus and Virgil made it one of 'bucolic leisure'. The elements thought to be 'unsightly or disturbing' were eliminated, resulting in a landscape of tranquillity. The key tension within the Arcadian landscape of camping and tramping fiction rests upon the desire of campers and trampers to aesthetically colonise the countryside as an empty, tranquil space, whilst simultaneously justifying their presence within it.

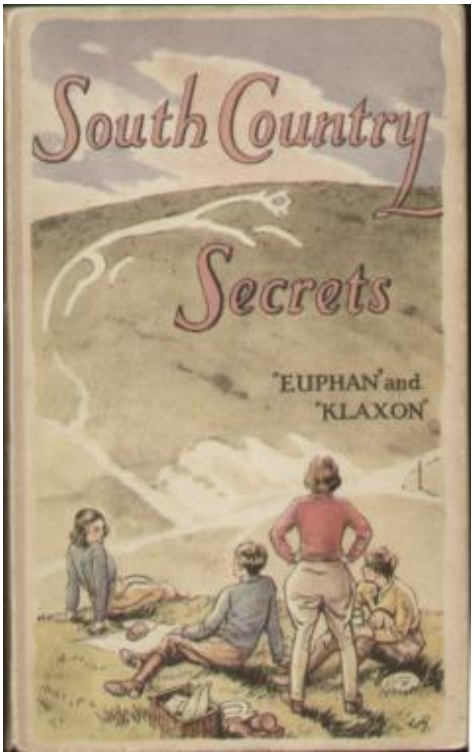
3.3 Blots on the Landscape

Turning to examine illustrations from camping and tramping novels demonstrates how this tension was embedded within them. Where descriptions of the countryside usually stressed its emptiness, illustrations were sometimes problematic, revealing the tensions created by the presence of campers and trampers. These tensions are evident in the illustrations below:

[22] Ysanne Holt, 'An Ideal Modernity: Spencer Gore at Letchworth' in *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past 1880-1940* ed. by David Peters, Ysanne Holt and Fiona Russell (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 91-113 (p. 110 and p. 107).
[23] Holt, 'An Ideal Modernity: Spencer Gore at Letchworth', p. 98.
[24] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995; repr. New York: Vintage, 1996), pp. 17 and 530.







Figures 3.1 to 3.3 starting from top: illustration by Shirley Hughes for Marjorie Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 209**;** illustration of Bill Robinson and children by Joan Kiddell-Monroe in David Severn's *A Cabin for Crusoe* (1943), p. 27; front cover by William Grimmond for Penguin edition of 'Euphan' and 'Klaxon's *South Country Secrets* (1947).

Figure 3.1 from Marjorie Lloyd's late camping and tramping novel, *Fell Farm Campers* (1960) places the Browne children – visitors to the Lake District - within the landscape**.** They are receding into the land and so their figures are diminutive, particularly in comparison with the scale of the mountains around them. They are an innocuous presence in the countryside, soon to disappear. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 however are far more problematic, introducing notions of power and domination into the landscape. Both Joan Kiddell-Monroe's illustration for *A Cabin for Crusoe* (1943) and William Grimmond's book cover for *South Country Secrets* (1947) depict the campers and trampers as outsiders, passive observers of the landscape, physically distanced from it. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 utilise what Mary Louise Pratt describes as a 'Monarch-of-all-I-Survey' or 'seeing-man' position.[25] Referring to travel narratives on South Africa in the 1800s, Pratt's definition of the 'seeing-man' is equally illuminating for camping and tramping narratives. According to Pratt, the position refers to 'the European male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess'.[26] The position adopted here by the campers and trampers, whilst appearing to be a 'passive, open stance' connotes a 'fantasy of dominance' over both the land and everything within it.

The ability of campers and trampers to have power and control over the countryside is complicated in Figures 3.2 and 3.3, through the implicit suggestion that they are experiencing the countryside as landscape rather than land. This is conveyed through a combination of their apparent lack of purpose or industry, their positioning outside of the frame of the landscape, and the direction of their gaze which, for all but one of the figures, suggests a conscious desire to take in the view. This suggests that perhaps this is a new experience. For Steven Bourassa in *The Aesthetics of Landscape* (1991), it is only through being an outsider that land can be viewed as landscape. This is because to experience landscape as land a form of 'insiderness is necessary' where 'a place is experienced without deliberate and self-conscious reflection,' in the same way a person would experience their home town or region. In contrast, landscape is produced by those who are distanced from the land, yet whose outsider's view of it attempts to impose their consciousness both onto

[25] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 7.
[26] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 60.

the land and those inside it.[27] Whilst it may be tempting to assume that the more humble position of Lloyd's 'Fell Farmers' connotes shifting attitudes from the interwar years to the 1960s, this assumption can, and will be challenged, on examining the text in detail. The contradictions embodied in these illustrations are examples of the 'multiple frames' that Lawrence Buell views as characterising American pastoral and which are present in camping and tramping landscapes.[28]

These multiple frames often surfaced in narratives at points when the visitor status of campers and trampers was directly addressed. Campers and trampers were frequently depicted as responding uneasily to suggestions that they were tourists. Across many novels there is a clear sense that campers and trampers often suffered from what Paul Fussell describes as 'tourist angst'. Fussell defines this as 'a gnawing suspicion that after all…you are still a tourist like every other tourist'.[29] In camping and tramping novels, this angst demonstrated itself in the desire to be perceived as something other than a tourist, who was usually associated with conspicuous entertainment. This desire is evident in David Severn's *Hermit in the Hills* when Bill Robinson and the children ask a farmer for permission to stay on his farm. The farmer, Mr Lloyd, is bemused by their request saying, 'We don't see many young people up this way, and you're very welcome…But I'm afraid you'll be finding it too lonely altogether. Indeed there's little enough amusement in these parts for *holiday makers*'.[30] Mr Lloyd views Bill and the children as tourists but Bill is quick to distinguish them from 'holiday makers', looking for amusement, telling Mr Lloyd that they 'like quiet places'. This is an uncomfortable moment in the narrative as Bill and the children are forced to recognise that, unlike Mr Lloyd, they are outsiders or tourists.

Severn introduces a further frame or perspective during this episode which demonstrates the simultaneous presence of contrasting views of the countryside. Following on from the conversation above, the children say that they cannot understand why Mr Lloyd thinks that the area is too quiet and remote to be of interest to them. Bill's response highlights the fact

[27] Steven Bourassa, *The Aesthetics of Landscape* (London and New York: Belhaven Press, 1991), pp. 3-4.
[28] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 44.
[29] Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travelling between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 49.
[30] Severn, *Hermit in the Hills*, p. 14 [emphasis in original].

that their perception of the countryside around them is very different to Mr Lloyd's. Bill tells them 'It's understandable […] after all, his work *is* this valley, the farm and the sheep on the hills. It's not the change for him that it is for us. If he wanted to take a holiday he'd go to the seaside I suppose, if he ever travelled that far'.[31] A similar episode occurs in Garry Hogg's *Explorers Afloat* (1939) which contrasts the campers' and trampers' perception of their boating holiday with that of a local lock keeper. When the children ask the lock keeper for advice on the route to Oxford, he advises them on the quickest route. When they tell him that they want to take their time and go the long way round, he responds, 'Holiday-making like? Well it ain't my choice for a holiday, I must say. Give me Blackpool'.[32] Both episodes demonstrate the way in which camping and tramping novels acknowledged the differences between insider and outsider perspectives. This multiple viewpoint is interesting as it suggests that the two views can co-exist, one need not exclude the other.

3.4 Modern Culture and Mass Tourism

While Severn's *Hermit in the Hills* demonstrates the way in which camping and tramping novels often included differing perspectives of the countryside, subtle hierarchies emerged between them. These hierarchies were often focused on different attitudes to leisure, and can be clearly charted in the writing that centered on the Lake District. From the moment that the Lakes were first perceived as being attractive to visitors, anxieties were raised regarding both the character of the new people that were likely to come, and the impact this would have on others' enjoyment of the Lakes. For Wordsworth, the Lakes were 'a sort of national property', but only for those who had a 'right and interest' in the area and who had 'an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy'.[33] Turning to A. G. Bradley's *Highways and Byways in the Lake District*, (1908) we gain a clearer sense of who such people were. Bradley writes that the Lakes are 'in high degree the holiday resort of busy people of culture and education' who through becoming **'**habitual visitors' to the area, or as 'villa and property owners', developed 'a feeling of identification with the country, and part

[31] Severn, *Hermit in the Hills*, p. 26.
[32] Garry Hogg, *Explorers Afloat*, illus. by Bruce Roberts (London: Thomas Nelson, 1939), p. 98.
[33] From William Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, quoted in Curry, *Countryside Recreation, Access and Land Use Planning*, p. 3.

ownership'.[34] This exclusive vision of the Lakes was increasingly challenged in the interwar years by the presence of many new visitors to the area. Children's writer and broadcaster G. Bramwell Evens, for example, wrote in 1929 that 'the Lake District, beautiful as it is, is not for me. It has become a "professional beauty". No part of it is sacrosanct. The "charas" have invaded its serene ghylls, and trippers sully its loveliness with untidy litter. My choice lies in its untrodden ways, and those ways usually lead me on to the Fells'.[35] Charabancs, usually large open vehicles, transported significant numbers of tourists to the countryside who were unable to afford their own car, hence they were mostly associated with urban working-class visitors. The anxieties that surrounded the increased presence of 'trippers' in the Lakes intensified as the campaign to designate the area a national park grew. Writing in 1946, B. L. Thompson captures the anxiety shared by many that one of 'the chief disadvantages [to being] a national park would be the propaganda, which would bring more visitors than ever to the area'. It was not only the number of visitors that Thompson feared but the type. For example, he explained whom he meant by 'more visitors' saying, 'at present people who come here come chiefly because they want to; propaganda would tend to bring people who would be equally satisfied with Morecambe or Blackpool'.[36]

This issue of mass leisure is the crux of the division between the inclusive and exclusive depictions of tourism in much camping and tramping fictions. Any signs of the mass organisation of people and leisure were either avoided outright, through seeking quiet secluded spaces, or subtly criticised through negative depictions of large groups of people. Examining camping and tramping novels set in the Lake District demonstrates the desire of campers and trampers to distinguish themselves from new visitors, often dismissively referred to as 'holiday makers' or 'trippers'. The desire to be perceived as something other than holiday makers is clearly evident in Marjorie Lloyd's 'Fell Farm' novels. Written between 1951 and 1960 the novels focus on the Lakes holidays of the Browne children, who spend their holidays on the Jenks' farm. The children are frequent visitors to the Lakes, a fact that is emphasised in *Fell Farm at Christmas* (1954), when the local ticket

[34] A G. Bradley, *Highways and Byways in the Lake District* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1908), p. 3.
[35] G. Bramwell Evens, *A Romany in the Fields*, illus., Bramwell Evens, 10th edn (1929; London: Epworth Press, 1938), p. 55.
[36] B. L. Thompson, The *Lake District and the National Trust* (Kendal: Titus Wilson & Sons, 1946), p. 33.

collector on the train recognises them, saying he has 'seen you five before'.[37] The children feel as though they are returning to a home-from-home, a point that Lloyd stresses in Chapter Three entitled 'Old Friends Mostly.' There is a sense of familiarity established which undercuts the Brownes' status as outsiders. Despite this familiarity there is a sense that the children are playing at being local. For example, Lloyd writes that the Brownes know how to respond to the postman's greeting 'correctly in broad dialect,' but this is only because Mr Jenks has taught them how to reply. Consequently, when they reply saying 'Ee, thanks, wur champion' the impression is that the children are playing at insiderness, rather than actually being insiders.

Lloyd's later novel *Fell Farm Campers* (1960) also depicts the children's understanding of themselves as different from tourists in the area. On the Bank Holiday, Lloyd writes that it was 'Easter Monday, a day when all the well known places would be full of holiday makers,' and so the Browne children 'decided to spend it themselves somewhere off the beaten track'.[38] Jan Browne complains about visitors who come to the area 'hogging up in cars and crowds swarming all round the view points.' The children want to perceive themselves as being different to these 'holiday makers' which is why they decide to avoid them altogether. The Lakes function here as a 'contact zone' defined by Mary Louise Pratt as a 'social space where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other'.[39] To understand just what cultures are clashing in this episode it is necessary to look back to the interwar years, and the arguments about modern culture that emerged from the Leavises. Books such as F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson's *Culture and the Environment* (1933) and Q. D. Leavis' *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932) expounded the belief that modern culture was increasingly characterised by passivity and unconscious consumption, rather than stimulation and discrimination. Nowhere was this more evident than in people's choices in leisure, including reading which, according to Q. D. Leavis, was too often focused on pleasure rather than enrichment, and which reflected the general tendency towards unchallenging and communal pastimes. Seen within this context, the Fell Farmers desire to seek peace and silence is culturally loaded given Q. D. Leavis' argument that 'it is only the exceptional character than can tolerate solitude and silence, distressing to the

[39] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 6.

modern nerves'.[40] The children's decision to take themselves away from the crowds of trippers, does not avoid this culture clash but is symbolic of it.

Nowhere is this cultural clash more evident than in the language used to distinguish 'trippers' from campers and trampers. Other visitors were referred to through collective nouns such as 'crowds', and employing animalistic verbs such as 'swarming' and 'hogging' creates an unflattering impression of these others. Certainly, by the time of the interwar years, there was nothing new in using such negative collective nouns to describe unwanted visitors to the Lakes. For example, writing in the 1840s, James Payne used remarkably similar language to Lloyd when he complained about 'excursion trains bring[ing] thousands of curious, vulgar people' to the Lakes and saw the hills of Ambleside being 'darkened by swarms of tourists'.[41] In the interwar years the idea of the herd, and herd mentality, was employed by the Leavises to refer to people who partook in what they perceived to be mindless forms of activity. It is particularly apt that the trippers described by Lloyd arrive by car. Quoting Stuart Chase's *Men and Machines* (1929) Leavis and Thompson also singled out the car as encapsulating what had been gained and lost in the modern age. Referring to America, Chase described the car as 'the leading national plaything' responsible for the 'desolation of the countryside'.[42] In Britain, for Leavis and Thompson, the development of motoring, epitomised in the Sunday drive, was evidence that, even when ostensibly free, people were increasingly, as Chase claimed, 'clamped to the machine.' Arriving by car en masse not only signalled the visitors' alienness in the countryside but also connoted their status as part of the herd; they were satisfied with a culture that was, according to Leavis and Thompson, characterised by 'standardisation and levelling-down'.[43]

Despite Chase and Leavis' criticism of the motor car, their argument is more complex than two legs good – four wheels bad. As Chase acknowledged, automobile camping lured

[40]Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), p. 55.
[41] Quoted in Stella Margetson, *Leisure and Pleasure in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Cassell, 1969), p. 82.
[42] Stuart Chase, *Men and Machines* (1929; New York: Macmillan, 1930), both quotations from p. 257.
[43] F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934), p. 3.

people to 'spend a night or two under the stars, and the habit may grow'.[44] Where an initial visitor may be content to view the countryside through the window, the hope was that they would be inspired to stride out, leave the machine behind and engage in active recreation. The tension between using a car to get into the country, whilst desiring to minimise the impact of mass modern culture on it, was acknowledged by H. V. Morton in *In Search of England* (1927) (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Dust jacket by Alfred Taylor for the first edition of H.V. Morton, *In Search of England* (London: Methuen, 1927).

The first in a series of books, *In Search of England* encapsulates both concerns about the vulgarisation of modern life and the essential roots of Englishness in rural tradition. Morton's 'search' is more than simply a travelogue, rather it is an attempt to connect with

[44] Chase, *Men and Machines*, p. 262.

what Leavis and Chase refer to as the 'organic communities' that were disappearing as a result of modern culture. Morton sought these communities in the English rural villages trying to reconfirm his relationship to his country and its past. Yet Morton's journey was based upon a contradiction that would also preoccupy a great deal of camping and tramping fiction. Morton's search is essentially a rejection of the modern in favour of the past, yet it is the motor-car, a symbol of modernity and, for some, troublesome freedom, which allows him to undertake his quest. It is a characteristic problem of the time and one that Morton was aware of. He summed up the problem as follows:

> The remarkable system of motor coach services which now penetrates every part of the country has thrown open to ordinary people regions which even after the coming of the railway were remote and inaccessible. The popularity of the cheap motor-car is also greatly responsible for this long over-due interest in English history, antiquities, and topography. More people than in any previous generation are seeing the real country for the first time. Many hundreds of such explorers return home with a new enthusiasm […] The danger of this, as every lover of England knows, is the vulgarisation of the country-side.[45]

For Morton, as for many camping and tramping authors, this vulgarisation was epitomised in the growth of mass leisure pursuits, typified by the rowdy charabanc party or the herd massing around beauty spots, transposing the values of the machine age on to the countryside.

While many interwar camping and tramping novels drew upon this idea of the herd to distinguish between campers and trampers and crowds of visitors, they also undermined the sense of righteousness that frequently characterises the writing of the Leavises. This is evident in Arthur Ransome's Lakes novel *The Picts and the Martyrs* (1943), which also uses multiple frames in order to highlight some of the problems embedded in the 'them and us' attitude**.** *The Picts and the Martyrs* sees Dick and Dorothea Callum return to the Lakes on holiday, this time without the company of the Walkers. The Callums are latecomers to

[45] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England,* (1927; London: Methuen, 1954), p. xii.

the 'Swallows and Amazons' series, and first appear in *Winter Holiday* (1933), in a chapter aptly titled 'Strangers'. By the time they appear in *The Picts and the Martyrs* though, they no longer consider themselves to be visitors to the area. Ransome demonstrates this through their attitudes to other visitors to the Lakes. While sailing on the Lake, Dick is 'cut up' by a party of men in a rowing boat who shout at him and are described as, 'wind milling about in hired rowing boats'.[46] The reference to the boats being 'hired' indicates that they are tourists, whereas the Callums sail their own dinghy, *Scarab*, built for them by local boat builders. The presence of others encroaches upon the Callums' private enjoyment of the lake and so they take themselves away to the very far side of the lake, to escape other people. When Dick is looking for a place to moor their boat 'one glance towards the crowded bay, with its trippers wind milling about in rowing boats, and a big steamer just leaving the pier, decided Dick [against stopping there]'. As with *Fell Farm Campers* there is a desire to physically disassociate themselves from the 'trippers'. Once again, the use of the plural 'trippers' in conjunction with 'crowded bay' and the 'big steamer', presumably full of people, establishes a collective sense of the tourists in the area, with which the Callums private enjoyment is contrasted. There is a faceless mass of people who seem brash and loud in contrast with the campers and trampers' quiet dignity; Dick's decision not to stop at the pier clearly marks him and Dorothea as separate from the hordes. While Dick's behaviour does not completely affirm Dean MacCannell's argument that 'tourists hate tourists,' it certainly suggests an unwillingness to be associated with them. However while Dick and Dorothea perceive the 'trippers' as separate from themselves, Ransome reminds the reader, and the Callums, that they are also perceived as newcomers to the area. Viewed through the eyes of local boy Jacky, the Callums are still strangers and he asks them if they are 'visitors'. Dorothea's uncomfortable answer, 'in a way' demonstrates the unwillingness of campers and trampers to be seen either as part of the hoi polloi or outsiders, which, of course, they are.[47]

Time and again campers and trampers were presented as unwilling to be associated with both crowds and trippers. Winifred Finlay's *Cotswold Holiday* (1954) depicted both the poor reputation of trippers and the unwillingness of children to be perceived as such. The

[46] Arthur Ransome, *The Picts and the Martyrs: or Not Welcome at all* (1943; London: Jonathan Cape, 1951), pp. 145 and 153.
[47] Ransome, *The Picts and the Martyrs*, p. 109.

novel sees siblings, Richard, Paul and Sheila on holiday in the Cotswolds for the first time. While there, they enter what turns out to be a private wood, disturbing a girl who is painting there. She shouts at them, telling that it is private property, saying 'It's bad enough having trippers down here spoiling the place with their litter and damaging the crops'.[48] The children hate being seen in this way, not considering themselves to be trippers. Similarly in Garry Hogg's *Explorers Awheel* (1938) the Explorers want to steer clear of crowds so they avoid Sussex because 'the trouble with Sussex was that you could hardly help slipping off the Downs to one of the seaside resorts where every one goes in the summer'.[49]

One explanation for the unwillingness of campers and trampers to be perceived as tourists resides in the suspicion that mass tourism was a modern and superficial phenomenon. This suspicion is evident in Ransome's 1939 novel, *Secret Water.* The novel sees the Walkers, who now include their youngest sister Bridget in their numbers, transplanted into the Hamford Water area around Essex. Here, accompanied by the Blacketts and four new children, they set about exploring and mapping a series of small islands where they are marooned by their father.[50] At one point in the novel, the rudder on the Walkers' boat is damaged and so they are forced to leave their islands and venture into 'civilization' in order to have it fixed. When the Walkers enter what is clearly a small seaside town there is an immediate sense of conflict and tension, as the Walkers compare themselves with the other visitors. Ransome writes:

> Quite suddenly they felt that they were indeed explorers from the wilds visiting for a moment the haunts of the sedate and stay-at-home. The pavements were crowded with people dressed for a seaside holiday. Some of the younger ones carried spades and buckets. Others had model boats. Others had shrimping nets and fishing rods. Some were in bathing things, and very sunburnt in the arms and legs, others were evidently new-

[48] Winifred Finlay, *Cotswold Holiday*, illus. by Sheila MacGregor (London: George Harrap, 1954), p. 31.
[49] Garry Hogg, *Explorers Awheel* (1938; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946), p. 27.
[50] The four characters only appear in this novel and are barely developed. Their names are Don, nicknamed, the Mastodon, Daisy and her identical twin brothers, who are invariably known as Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee. All four form the Eel tribe.

> comers, proper pale faces, with their skins a dreadful white. But not one of them had a spot of mud. Sand? Yes […] But no mud, not at all. And the explorers, who had splashed across the Wade, were spotted with mud all over and were suddenly conscious of their muddy sea boots. They strode sturdily on. What did it matter if these people did stare, these people with their buckets and toy boats? What did these people know of the real thing, of islands unexplored, of savages who that very night would be dancing in corroboree? [51]

Arguably, in passages such as this Ransome undermines the confidence that the Walkers have in the countryside as their private space; it reminds them of the physical limitations and boundaries of their imagined territory. However, such a reading is only partially convincing due to the consistent unattractiveness of the 'Others' – a telling choice of collective noun. The Walkers' obvious discomfort at seeing these people serves as a reminder that they too are holiday makers, and one of the conflicts that is occurring within this contact zone centres on the Walkers' desire to perceive themselves as different to these trippers or 'stay-at-homes'. Throughout the entire incident there is an emphasis on mass participation with the 'crowded' pavements full of people who are described in unattractive terms; their skin is either 'dreadfully white' or 'very sunburnt' because they are 'stay-at-home' people, unused to having leisure time, or knowing how to use it. Moreover, the failure to single out any one person signals a lack of recognition that any of the people forming the crowd are individuals. They are a faceless, seething mass of separate body parts which culminates in the repeated and dismissive reference to the tourists as 'these people'.

Consequently, the 'Others' are subtly criticized not for being tourists, given the actual status of the Walkers this would be impossible, but for being satisfied with what MacCannell also describes as the 'superficial experiences of other people and places'.[52] One of the ways that Ransome depicts this is through the 'Others' willingness to be part of the crowd rather than striking out boldly on their own. There is a shamness about the

[51] Arthur Ransome, *Secret Water* (1939; London: Jonathan Cape, 1942), pp. 282-283.
[52] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist. A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: Macmillan, 1976; repr. Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999), p. 10.

'Others' satisfaction with 'model' and 'toy boats' rather than the real boats sailed by the Walkers. The 'buckets and spades' and 'shrimping nets' compare unfavorably with the real fishing and mining that Ransome's children undertake in their leisure time. Whereas the Walkers experience the 'real thing' the 'Others' are content playing sedately in the sand. Just whose perspective this passage reveals is difficult to say, certainly, it cannot be assumed that the prejudice felt by the Walkers is shared by Ransome. Given the way that Ransome consistently challenges the Walkers' assumptions of rights in the countryside, a subject examined in detail in Chapter 4, it is more likely that Ransome is highlighting the divisions and tensions that existed between individual users of the countryside and new participants in mass leisure pursuits. However Ransome's decision to present tourists, other than campers and trampers, as satisfied with a pale, manufactured imitation of exploration, echoes the rhetoric of the Leavises on the superficial nature of modern mass culture.

It is important to emphasise that in camping and tramping fiction criticism of mass culture did not necessarily equate with criticism of the working classes. Ransome never perceived himself as a social elitist and firmly rebuffed any suggestions that his novels perpetuated any divisions between people of different social backgrounds, or different parts of the country. In fact, according to Arthur Ransome, he believed that the countryside was a democratic space that was there for anyone with a mind to use it. After all Ransome had famously rebuffed Hugh Shelley's suggestion that the Lakes books are characterised by 'an almost feudal atmosphere' in which 'the lower orders play their part'.[53] Ransome responded saying that there were no 'lower orders' in the Lakes.[54] Ransome's comments here are not strictly accurate for, as has been demonstrated so far, hierarchies did exist in Ransome's Lakes, though not between locals and visitors. Close reading of his fiction challenges Ransome's claims further, something that was commented on in reviews of his books. A review of *The Picts and the Martyrs* in 1943 suggested social divisions were to be found in Ransome's novels and speculated as to whether the same line could be drawn between 'Ransome readers and non-readers' as it could between 'town and country-minded children'. Ransome's rebuttal observed that:

[53] Hugh Shelley, *Arthur Ransome: A Bodley Head Monograph.* (London: The Bodley Head, 1960), p. 59.
[54] Ransome noted this in his own copy of the monograph and it is reproduced in the Amazon edition. See Hugh Shelley, *Arthur Ransome: A Bodley Head Monograph*. 1960. Kendal: Amazon Publications, 2007.

> it is cheaper to take lodgings in a farmhouse than to take lodgings at Blackpool, that boats are much cheaper than, for example motor bicycles, that books cost less than legs of mutton and last longer, and that the children in my books are the children of naval officers, boatbuilders' workmen, doctors, farmers, teachers etc […] I should be very sorry indeed to think that only children of one particular background can share the fun of open air doings, and the feelings that have been common to all young human beings from the beginning of time.[55]

The distinction made here between town- and country-minded people is important as it leads into one of the difficulties that arises when trying to examine attitudes to the working classes in Ransome's novels. Looking back at Ransome's list only 'boatbuilders' workmen' would qualify as a working-class occupation and there is an absence of equivalent urban or industrial working-class jobs. Ransome may have felt that there were no lower orders in the Lakes perhaps because he felt that it was a genuinely organic community based on recognition of skill and labour. Urban working-class tourists, such as those depicted as trippers, were not from the Lakes though and a clear distinction should be drawn between Ransome's depiction of local working people, and his depiction of urban working-class visitors.

This issue of the rights of access for everyone to the countryside is highly relevant to the distinctions that are drawn in camping and tramping novels between different groups of visitors. Certainly, camping and tramping novels never sought to deny the rights of anyone to venture into the countryside. While figures such as B. L. Thompson worried about the effect of creating National Parks, camping and tramping writers usually welcomed this development. In *Northwards with Nomad* (1951) for example, Norman Ellison described the National Forest Park established by the Forestry Commission as 'open and free to you and me'.[56] He explained that it was, 'Nearly twenty square miles of the grandest

[55]Letter to librarian Mary E. C. Fletcher dated July 29 1943 in response to her letter responding to Janet Adam-Smith's review of *The Picts and the Martyrs* in *Spectator*, 9 July 1943. Reproduced in *Signalling From Mars. The Letters of Arthur Ransome*, ed. by Hugh Brogan (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), p. 303.
[56] Norman Ellison, *Northwards with Nomad*, illus., by C. F. Tunnicliffe, (London: London University Press,

countryside in Scotland, for you and me and thousands of others, where we can walk or climb or camp or do almost anything else in the open air, provided we behave ourselves and cause no damage.' Ellison's observations here echo John Dower's 1945 governmental report on open access to the countryside. Dower argued that it 'should be for all people, and especially the young of every class and kind, from every part of the country and for the public at large and not just some privileged section of the community'. However he would later qualify this saying that although 'the Countryside is for all' it was only for those who used it 'in a way which suits our perceptions of the countryside in its beauty and its quietitude'.[57] While Dower calls for the countryside to be a democratic or collectivist space, his reference to 'quietitude' contradicts with this and alludes to the Arcadian and pastoral aesthetic of the countryside.

According to historian Nigel Curry, the open-access movement was supported by both middle- and working-class walkers, but came to be associated with a more left-wing working-class agenda. Curry writes that 'it was the northern working-class groups that escalated the pressure for access reform' due to 'mass unemployment in the 1920s and 1930s' which created 'enforced leisure time,' placing an even greater demand on the countryside for recreational use'.[58] Similarly, Alun Howkins writes that there was a direct link between socialism and the countryside; going out into the countryside was a key symbol of a socialist future and was overtly associated with the open-air movement — a progressive and inclusive movement that sought to establish the rights of access and leisure for all.[59]

There is very little evidence of support for the left-wing agenda that Curry refers to here but Geoffrey Trease's 1937 novel *Mystery on the Moor*, demonstrates the willingness of some authors to present the argument for open-access in an overtly positive light. Like most camping and tramping novels, the protagonists of *Mystery on the Moor* are a small group of middle-class children. In this instance, they consist of two school friends, Brian and

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1951), pp. 81 and 82.
[57] Quoted in Nigel Curry, *Countryside Recreation, Access and Land Use Planning* (London: E & FN Spon, 1994), pp. 12 and 13.
[58] Curry, *Countryside Recreation, Access and Land Use Planning*, p. 8.
[59] Alan Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England,' in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, ed. by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd, (London: Croom Helm, 1986) pp. 62-89 (p. 73).

Vincent, who are accompanied on a treasure hunt in the Peak District by Vincent's sister Dorothy and a French girl, Ariel. The premise of the novel is that Brian's Uncle Andrew sets the children a series of clues leading them around the Peaks, requiring them to read maps, camp and hike. At one point in the novel the children set up camp on private land and in the morning a gamekeeper tells them to clear off. Ariel responds saying that this is a scandal and launches into a speech that connotes Trease's desire to inject left wing political argument into his fiction. Ariel says 'I am told that England is a country of freedom. But what do I find? [...] a whole massif [sic] of mountain, the whole course of a river - and no one may walk to see them, no one pass over. All that a few rich *gentlemen* may shoot some little birds during a few weeks of the year […] There are some things no one has a right to buy [...] The hills and the rivers, they must be free to all'.[60]

According to Karen Welberry, Arthur Ransome's novels display a pragmatic and populist attitude towards tourism in the Lakes of the 1930s, rather than an elitist one. Welberry argues that Ransome acknowledged the changes brought to the area through increased tourism but that 'Ransome does not judge' tourists to the Lakes, 'preferring simply to leave some things to other tastes and take his elsewhere'.[61] The issue of taste however is more complex than Welberry allows for. For the Leavises,' taste, particularly the taste for solitary and challenging pursuits, rather than mass entertaining ones, was a sign of a discriminating mind rejecting the shallow offerings of modern mass culture. Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984), Stefan Szczelkun has argued that differences of taste were used to draw distinctions between the working and middle classes, resulting in dominant cultural values which effectively excluded working-class culture from the realms of 'good taste'. For Szczelkun 'good taste is the framework which the dominant group uses to keep itself on top' and, whilst Szczelkun's argument is undoubtedly personal and polemic, there is some measure of truth

[60] Geoffrey Trease, *Mystery on the Moor* (London: A & C Black, 1937), pp.192 and 193 [emphasis in original].
[61] Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside,' p. 270.
[61] Karen Welberry, 'Arthur Ransome and the Conservation of the English Lakes,' in *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Eco-Criticism*, ed. by Sidney Dobrin and Kenneth. B. Kidd (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), pp. 82-100 (89 and 93).
[61] Ransome, *The Picts and the Martyrs*, p. 133.

in it with relation to camping and tramping fiction.[62] If, as Thorstein Veblen argues 'leisure reflects social structure,' a social hierarchy emerges in camping and tramping fiction as a consequence of the preference for individual over mass leisure pursuits.[63]

3.5 The Open-Air and the Anti-Citizen

Szczelkun's desire to read distinctions of taste as class repression becomes problematic in relation to camping and tramping novels, once the idea of the open-air body is examined. According to Matless, the open-air body was typified by 'discipline, exposure, healthy regularity and choreography'.[64] The two images below depict the standard open-air type and present a figure that was likely to be familiar to readers of camping and tramping fiction (Figure 3.5).

Figures 3.5: 'Hike for Health' by unknown artist, for Southern railway, 1931, NRM, 10305955.

[62] Stefan Szczelkun, *The Conspiracy of Good Taste. William Morris, Cecil Sharp, Clough Williams-Ellis and the Repression of Working-Class Culture in the 20th Century* (London: Working Press, 1993), p. 83.
[63] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1899; repr. London: Constable, 1994), p. 11.
[64] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 87.

The open-air body was indicative of a particular mindset, one connected to the idea of active-citizenship, and in some camping and tramping novels it was used as a means by which to distinguish between different types of visitors. Malcolm Saville's *Mystery at Witchend* (1943) provides a useful and typical example of how appearance was used to convey messages about who was the right sort to be in the countryside. The novel introduces Petronella Sterling, also known as 'Peter' as 'a girl of between fourteen and fifteen with a brown laughing face, clear blue eyes and two long fair pigtails [who] was wearing old brown jodhpurs and a bright blue shirt open at the neck'.[65] In the later novel *Lone Pine Five* (1949) Saville repeats the reference to her 'clear brown skin' adding that she loved 'everything in the open air'.[66] The novel is useful as it presents a clear example of how appearance, like rowdy and respectful behaviour, could be contrasted in order to convey messages about who should and should not be in the countryside.

Drawing upon David Matless' idea of the active and anti-citizen of the countryside further complicates the issue of class within the countryside. In *Landscape and Englishness* (1998), he argues that during the interwar years a 'moral geography of landscape' emerged based upon this idea of active and anti-citizenship:

> A moral landscape emerges wherein structures are to embody moral principles and offenders are to be cleared out. Loudness, vulgarity, impertinence on the one side, dignity, composure and fitness on the other, provide a lexicon of architectural (and human) conduct for English landscape. [67]

The distinctions that Matless draws here are useful, as close textual analysis of camping and tramping fiction reveals that this distinction not only forms a moral landscape but also a moral hierarchy. *Lone Pine Five* sees the Lone Pine children at odds with the Smithson family, who are on holiday in the area in their modern caravan. The Smithson's brash behaviour instantly marks them out as being anti-citizens; Mr Smithson's driving is aggressively dangerous and they leave litter lying around their camp site. Mr Smithson is

[65] Malcolm Saville, *Mystery at Witchend* (London: George Newnes Ltd, 1943), p. 44.
[66] Malcolm Saville, *Lone Pine Five* (London: George Newnes Ltd, 1949), p. 9.
[67] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 47.

also described as wearing a gaudily checked suit but it is their son, Percy, who provides the clearest comparison with the other children, particularly the leading male, David Morton. Percy is described in some detail by Peter who observes the following, and wherever the phrase 'normal boy' is used, this can be applied to active citizen David Morton:

> Any normal boy on holiday in the country would be wearing corduroy shorts, an open necked shirt and some sort of sweater if it was cold enough. This boy was wearing a double breasted flannel suit with trousers, brown shoes and a light brown felt hat. His face was white.[68]

Percy's suit is entirely impractical for outdoor pursuits and his wearing of a 'light brown felt hat' also implies that he has no intention of actually getting out of their car and wandering in the woods or hills. What is most interesting is Peter's use of the word 'normal' in that it overtly indicates a norm of dress, and that dress in turn suggests a norm of behaviour in the countryside. The Smithsons are conspicuously out of place in this environment, they are not citizens of the countryside and they lack the basic interests and outlook that would allow them to be so. This unfavourable first impression is confirmed by their behaviour throughout the novel as they attempt to bully and intimidate the children in order to find a lost Roman site in the area. Yet there is a sense that the Smithsons are no better than they are expected to be, a sentiment that extends far beyond their dress. For example, Saville observes that the mess they leave behind them was only 'what people like that might be expected to leave - empty broken bottles, old tins, a chocolate box, three newspapers, cigarette cartons and some pieces of a torn-up letter', though he never specifies just what he means by 'people like that'.[69] The Smithsons are an alien presence in the countryside, demonstrated through their conspicuous consumerism and wastefulness. They really belong to what J. B. Priestley described as a third England: a consumer-driven land that was physically and spiritually scarred by soulless greed and materialism, characterised by greyhound tracks, Woolworths and 'factory girls who looked like actresses'.[70] Saville provides us, once again, with a moment of slippage, as different Englands collide and co-exist problematically in the same space and moment. Although

[68] Saville, *Lone Pine Five*, p. 80.
[69] Saville, *Lone Pine Five*, p. 142.
[70] J. B. Priestley, *English Journey* (1934; London: Heinemann, 1949) p. 401.

there is no suggestion that the Smithsons should not be allowed the freedom of the countryside, their vulgarity positions them as an anomaly within it. The overriding impression is perhaps bewilderment as to what the Smithsons gain through their time in the countryside, as it is neither physical nor spiritual enrichment.

The same distinction between citizens and anti-citizens characterizes Marjorie Lloyd's *Fell Farm Campers* which is an interesting novel given its date of composition. The novel sees the Browne children return to the Jenks' farm and, whilst camping out, they have a series of initially unfriendly encounters with two working-class boys, Bert and Carrots. Bert and Carrots are on a cycling and camping holiday in the Lakes and are a conspicuous presence in the area wearing 'drill shorts and cotton jerseys with almost dazzlingly vivid stripes' with bicycles that have 'bright chromium lamps and numerous gadgets all very flashy and unpractical-looking' and which are 'as vividly coloured as their jerseys'.[71] Not only are the bicycles showy and vulgar, the boys are both physically unattractive. The larger of the two, Bert, is always described as 'surly' and the smaller, 'Carrots' is wearing a magenta coloured jersey of which Lloyd comments, 'he could hardly have chosen a worse colour, for his hair was carroty and his thin, pale face a mass of freckles.' Unlike the Browne children there is a physical unattractiveness about the boys; for example, when the two groups meet later that same day, Carrots has acquired a 'painful-looking' sunburn and they notice that he has a 'slight squint in one eye which certainly didn't add to the attractiveness of [his] grin'. Moreover, when the two groups of children pass each other, the Browne children stare 'in surprise' but the two working-class boys stare 'in a rather unfriendly, sneering way'. The response to this encounter is that Hyacinth exclaims, 'Whatever are they doing here?' and Kay decides that the boys are '[c]ertainly not Lakers', implying that, by comparison, they themselves are. Quite what Hyacinth means by 'they' is left ambiguous, as was Saville's reference to 'people like that'. They also assume that the two boys would prefer cycling somewhere far easier than the Lakes and so Pat doesn't suppose that 'they'll stay longer than they can help'. When the Brownes do encounter Bert and Carrots again, offering advice on where to pitch their tent, Bert tells them to go away and mind their own business; Lloyd comments in parentheses '[t]hey had forgotten how

[71]Marjorie Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin), p. 90.

unfriendly and unpleasant his voice could be'.[72] It is not difficult to imagine that Bert's Barrow -in-Furness accent has something to do with their belief that he is unpleasant. Unsurprisingly, Bert and Carrots' behaviour mirrors their unattractive appearance as they disturb the Brownes' camp, turning it into a 'shambles,' though stopping short of damaging anything. There is a later suggestion that they have damaged dry stone walls and dropped litter. The Brownes feel superior to Bert and Carrots whom they decide are an alien presence in the countryside.

Lloyd's presentation of Bert and Carrots is not entirely negative and when the children make friends the Brownes realise that the boys were probably protective of their bikes as they would have had to save for them for some time. As a result they understand why the boys were initially hostile and protective. Towards the end of the novel, we learn that Bert and Carrots are about to leave school, Bert to go into the ship yards, but Carrots to become a farmer, the ultimate sign of good taste. Overall, their differences are reconciled because Bert and Carrots become more like the Browne children and the Brownes become more empathetic to Bert and Carrots. In other words, they start to become active rather than anti-citizens. For example, when they attend the campfire which closes the novel, Lloyd writes that they get over the wall 'carefully, without dislodging any stones'.[73] In this way, Lloyd echoes the concerns of people such as C. E. M. Joad whose book *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country* (1945) typifies the kind of writing that sometimes surrounded incomers to the countryside. It is telling though that the townsmen who need to be tutored are the working-class boys and not the middle-class campers and trampers, despite the fact that they too are not country children.

Even when working-class visitors are presented positively Lloyd portrays a sense of deferment to the middle-class ones. This is demonstrated in the episode where the children meet an old couple 'Mr. and Mrs Fred 'Arrison,' – a dropped H being the recognised symbol of the working classes. The children like the Harrisons' 'nice, friendly faces' and observe that they are 'dressed sensibly enough in tweeds and heavy shoes'. In other words, the Harrisons look like the Brownes. There is a definite sense that the elderly couple are

[72] Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers*, pp. 90, 91, 93 and 169.
[73] Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers*, p. 220.

approved of by the Browne children so when Hyacinth describes them to her brother Jan, he patronisingly confirms that they '[s]ound like the right sort', as though it is his prerogative to determine who is and who is not the 'right sort' to be in the Lakes.[74] This presumption of power is then extended as the children invite the Harrisons, who are tired from their walk, back to their camp for tea, so they can magnanimously play hosts to this like-minded couple. It is clear that despite Lloyd's desire to present positive examples of working-class visitors, and to challenge some of the assumptions about them, she perpetuates stereotypes of working-class tourists who are in turn deferential, vulgar, sullen, ill-educated in the Countryside Code or ready to be taken in hand by their middle-class counterparts.

Examining the depiction of anti-citizens in Ransome's *Coot Club* (1934) immediately challenges Szczelkun's argument that distinctions of taste were used to suppress working-class culture. In this novel it is clear that the anti-citizen transcended class boundaries and that middle-class people were equally capable of loud, vulgar and alien behaviour. Set on the Norfolk Broads *Coot Club* sees Dick and Dorothea on holiday with Mrs Barrable, an old family friend. The novel features a disruptive group of pleasure trippers or tourists, who terrorise the Broads in their hired motor boat. Their loud and tasteless clothes, their disregard for the courtesies of the rivers and their anti-social behaviour in keeping people awake at night mark them out as being anti-citizens, and unwelcome visitors to the area. The tourists are named the Hullabaloos by the children, an apt name for people who cause such disturbance for everyone else. They are perfect examples of the troublesome tourists that were thought to be ruining the countryside through their selfish pleasure-seeking. They are introduced when Mrs Barrable and the Callums hear 'the deep, booming roar of a motor being run at full speed' and only a moment later they see a 'motor-cruiser that was roaring down towards them'.[75] This encapsulates the way that the cruisers tear around the Broads, disturbing everyone with their loudness, bad manners and their general vulgarity. This is demonstrated in the following description:

[74] Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers*, p. 132.
[75] Arthur Ransome, *Coot Club* (1934; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp. 65 and 91.

> A big motor-cruiser had turned the corner above the Ferry and was thundering up the river with a huge gramophone open and playing in the fore-cabin. Two gaudily dressed women were lying beside it, and three men were standing in the well between the cabins. All three were wearing yachting-caps.[76]

The Hullabaloos are not working-class people - their hiring of the boat, their gramophone and attire would all have been relatively expensive - but they are nonetheless anti-citizens. There is a sense of shamness to the Hullabaloos, who are playing at being sailors. They sail a motor-cruiser that requires no skill to sail and all three men are 'wearing yachting-caps', as though they are dressing the part. This is in sharp contrast with the Callums' methodical acquisition of sailing skill, through practice and effort. Effectively, the Hullabaloos' undemanding holiday is an example of decreation, lamented and defined by Stuart Chase as 'unrewarding forms of play,' in contrast to recreation which was non-mechanical and created 'again in play the balance that has been lost in work'.[77] In other words, recreation should be based on the need for effort, which Chase argued was negated by machines, and which 'by utterly abandon[ing] machines in our hours of leisure' would restore independence and self-reliance. Ransome is quick to distance the text from criticizing tourists per se, for example Tom Dudgeon remarks that not all tourists are 'like the Hullabaloos'.[78]

3.6 Camping and Tramping Fiction and the Search for England

If campers and trampers were not trippers, in search of entertainment and distraction, the question naturally arises as to what they were actually doing in the countryside. To a certain extent this can be answered on reading Malcolm Saville's *Country Scrap-Book for Boys and Girls*, published in 1944. According to the book's blurb:

[76] Ransome, *Coot Club*, p. 91.
[77] Chase, *Men and Machines*, pp. 256 and 264.
[78] Ransome, *Coot Club*, p. 106.

> The spirit of this book is England – not the England of slag-heaps, slovenly ribbon-building and forgotten towns, but the England of little dimpled hills and winding lanes; of village greens with rooks cawing in the elms: of bluebell woods, of pale primrose-spangled copses and of weathered churches and friendly farmsteads […] This England is our children's heritage and needs to be guarded with love and vigilance today.[79]

In 1934, J. B. Priestley had famously written that there were three Englands: the Old England of rural villages, cathedrals and the Cotswolds, the nineteenth-century England of mill towns and terraced houses and the modern England of arterial roads, cinemas and bungalows. According to John Baxendale, while H. V. Morton searched for England by 'skirt[ing] around industrial districts and modern conurbations,' Priestley recognised the blurred boundaries between these Englands.[80] Baxendale cites Priestley's *The Beauty of Britain* (1935) which told readers to 'forget ruralist fantasies' and become 'more mentally urban, more ready to identify themselves with the life of the city.' This identification with 'the life of the city' was problematic when, as quoted above, the spirit of England was thought to be found in the 'little dimpled hills', 'village greens' and 'friendly farmsteads' of the countryside. References to 'the life of the city' were extremely rare in camping and tramping novels and when they did occur they were generally unfavourable. In Garry Hogg's *Explorers on the Wall* (1939) for example Tony Armitage explains that the route he has planned to Northumberland is a few miles longer than it could have been 'but it would have meant going through some pretty ghastly places in Lancashire, so I've worked out a course that hardly takes in any big towns'.[81] As they travel past Manchester they find themselves running into 'miles and miles of house-lined cobbled streets' to which Tess

[79] Malcolm Saville, *Country Scrap- Book for Boys and Girls*, 3rd edn (1944; London: Gramol Publications, 1946), blurb on the front inside sleeve of dust jacket.
[80] Baxendale, 'I had Seen a Lot of Englands', p. 94. Baxendales's opinion of Morton is challenged by Michael Bartholomew who argues that Morton sometimes presents a 'clashing vision of a troubled, depressed England.' See Michael Bartholomew, 'Englishness: The Case of H. V. Morton (1892-1979),' in *The Representation and the Reality of War. The British Experience*, ed. by Keith Dockray and Keith Laybourn (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp. 203-216 (p.204).
[81] Garry Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall* (1939; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1948), pp. 35, 250 and 251.

comments ‘What a grim place!’ Tony responds ‘Manchester…Couldn’t help it, I’m afraid.’ A similar incident, and a similar dislike of industrial landscapes occurs in M. E. Atkinson’s *The Compass Points North* (1938) which sees the Locketts journey north by train, on their way to the Scottish borders. As the train moves through the North East, Jane observes that ‘[t]he character of the countryside had changed. She could see slag heaps and factory chimneys – the industrial north, she supposed.’ She reflects that ‘[t]he south is kinder looking […] soft and friendly and sort of welcoming’.[82] Nevertheless, Jane does find it interesting to see ‘these cities of the north – even if only from the train.’ While ‘Durham had fascinated Jane […] Newcastle, she did not find so intriguing.’

In camping and tramping novels then, industrial England was to be either avoided or ignored altogether. The reasons for this can be traced to two main factors, firstly, what Martin Wiener has identified as a rejection of industrialism in Britain from 1850 onwards and secondly what Victor Watson has described as the elegiac nature of early twentieth-century children’s literature. According to Wiener’s argument, in *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980,* from 1850 English culture was characterised by a rejection of the industrialism of the nineteenth century which was thought to be anomalous to English character and traditions. The argument follows that these traditions really stemmed from rural traditions that were temporarily overpowered by the industrial drive. While Wiener’s thesis has increasingly come under scrutiny, certainly there is evidence that some camping and tramping authors overtly sought to reconfigure or imagine England as being essentially sited in the traditions of the countryside.

Carol Forrest’s 1945 novel, *Caravan School,* is an example of a camping and tramping novel that overtly linked the idea of England not only to the countryside but the people in it. The novel describes the holiday of Jocelyn, with her brothers Christopher and Stephen, and her cousin Bobby, who are newly returned to England from America, after the war. The children are taken on a caravan holiday by the aptly named Miss Elizabeth English. Miss English is travelling around England conducting research into traditional crafts, and the figures she introduces the children to are reminiscent of those that H. V. Morton met on his journey in search of England. The children meet Mr Starling, a carpenter, who is described

[82] M. E. Atkinson, *The Compass Points North* (London: Bodley Head, 1938), p. 38.

as ‘a square, bent old man with cheeks like a russet apple, fringed with grey cotton-wool.’[83] Mr Starling is an almost beatific figure who bears a striking resemblance to the wood turner that Morton describes in *In Search of England*, who has a ‘red’ and ‘healthy country face’ and looks like a ‘faun’.[84] Forrest’s rather didactic motivations for writing the novel are evident when she has Miss English explain why she is doing the research. In a passage that would not be out of place in *Culture and Environment,* Miss England says she wants to:

> get people to understand the difference and take an interest in the work the real craftsmen do. When you know how things like this chair began, hundreds of years ago, and how they’ve gone on, getting more and more beautiful; when you meet some of the people who make them, and hear the stories of how they were made, and why they are the shape they are - then you begin to get excited about this sort of work and nothing that comes from a factory will ever do for you again.[85]

The work that Miss England describes here, undertaken by Mr Starling, is that of a craftsman and has not undergone any significant change for a few hundred years. In essence, Miss England’s search for traditional crafts is really a search for the organic community that Leavis and Thompson feared was gone. The obvious symbolism of both these traditions and this community is made explicit at the end of the novel when Jocelyn tells Miss English that she is grateful to her for ‘introducing me to England’.

Other camping and tramping novels shared this belief that through skills and craftsmanship a direct link could be formed between the pre-industrialised past and modern Britain. This is plainly the case with the charcoal burners, Old and Young Billy, in Arthur Ransome’s Lake District novels. The charcoal burners, father and son, Old and Young Billy, are introduced in the first novel in the series, *Swallows and Amazons*. The charcoal burners are perhaps an embodiment of P. H. Ditchfield’s belief that ‘nothing changes in country life’.[86] When the Walkers meet with them, it signals the beginning of their education in the

[83] Carol Forrest, *Caravan School* (London: Arthur Pearson, 1946), pp. 134, 28-29 and 192.
[84] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England*, p. 9.
[85] Forrest, *Caravan School*, pp. 28 and 192.
[86] P. H. Ditchfield, *The Charm of the English Village* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1908), p. 2.

traditions and ways of the Lake District. Young Billy is described as an 'old man, but not quite so old as the first' who in turn is introduced as 'a little bent old man, as wrinkled as a walnut'.[87] Old Billy tells the Walkers that his dad 'was burning on these fells a hundred years ago'. Like Morton's wood turner, the charcoal burners present the Walkers with a glimpse into a tradition that is hundreds of years old. The result is a sense of stability and constancy that reflects the timelessness depicted in the illustrations of camping and tramping landscapes. Titty acknowledges the stability that the charcoal burners bring to the area when she realizes that 'they'll still be here when we've gone'. Titty clearly means when they have returned to school and this brings consolation to her; they are an immutable feature of the area that she will be able to imagine when she has left the Lakes to return to school. However, there is also an implied sense that men will still be burning charcoal in this way for many more generations to come.

There is an undercurrent to this scene which diminishes the sense of reassurance in the assumed continuity of such traditions, and which repositions these traditions as remote from the present. In the first instance, this sense of remoteness is conveyed through the Walkers' perception of the charcoal burners as other-worldly. This impression is partly forged by the farmer's wife, Mrs Dixon who tells them that 'some people' would say that they were savages who 'live in huts they make themselves' and that they 'keep a serpent in a box'.[88] Clearly the charcoal burners have a reputation as a curiosity in the area which is perhaps why they are unsurprised to have complete strangers walk into their camp and want to be shown around. Furthermore, when the children first visit, Old Billy asks them if they would 'Like to look inside' their wigwam adding, 'almost to himself' that 'Folk generally what do [sic]'. It is as though the charcoal burners have become a tourist attraction and the strangeness of the burners emphasises how removed the Walkers are from these local traditions and customs. It is through engagement with local people such as the charcoal burners that the children, and hence the reader, are able to start to understand the lives of these people; lives rooted deep in the land and therefore in the country itself. However this continuity is problematic in that it sets the countryside as distinctly separate from the modern world. Perhaps J. B. Priestley would have recognised the charcoal burners as

[87] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 150 subsequent quotations from pp. 148, 153 and 372.
[88] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, pp. 144 and 149.

belonging to 'the lovely country our forefathers knew' which he describes as that 'fairy-tale place'.[89] There is an aura of unreality to the charcoal burners, depicted in their great ages, their way of life and their memories which, stretching back so many years must, to young children such as the Walkers, surely have made them appear almost immortal, so removed are they from the modern world. The attraction that Titty feels for the lives of the charcoal burners reflects what David Gervais refers to as 'the attractiveness of the pastoral, and country life generally'.[90] According to Gervais, this attraction is based on the fact that it is 'unlike ours' and is 'marginal and exclusive.' As such it becomes an object of fascination, reminding how far it is removed from modern life. Ransome's novel and that of Carol Forrest, offer reassurance, that all children need to do to re-connect with their heritage is to go out into the country and meet people such as the wood turners and the charcoal burners. Whether they are actually considered as tourist attractions or not is not the important point; instead, there is a clear message that such a connection is there to be made, keeping faith with the past. Yet for some authors such connections were unsustainable and served not to create a sense of timelessness but that of remoteness and disconnection.

Other camping and tramping novels, such as M. E. Atkinson's *August Adventure* (1936) would instead connect the idea of England with the physical countryside, re-imagined as a pastoral Arcadia. As established in the previous chapter, *August Adventure* sees caravanning in the south of England, in a Romany caravan. Atkinson overtly explores the connection between the land and ideas of England in the episode when the Locketts meet two older boys who are rover scouts. The Locketts attend a church service with the scouts where they see a stained glass window in memory of the men who had died in the War. Atkinson describes the window in some detail, writing:

> Here, again, the colours were quiet and restful. The window was carried out almost entirely in the shade of brown that artists call 'sepia' - the brown that reminds one of ploughed fields. And from ploughed fields it is easy to let one's thoughts wander to other good things- to the strong, rough scent of the soil - to primroses on a hedge-row damp from the rain -

[89] J. B. Priestley,ed., *Our Nation's Heritage*, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1939), p. 166.
[90] David Gervais, *Literary Englands. Versions of 'Englishness' in Modern Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1 and 4.

> the crust on a loaf, hot from the oven—the strength of young, growing things when spring is pushing them up out of the ground - the blue-green haze spread like a carpet under the trees when April comes to England.[91]

Atkinson's description of the window is interesting in that it recognises the artificial and constructed nature of this vision of England. Not only do the references to 'artists' and 'sepia' suggests an act of image creation but the passage is largely an associated description that is suggested to Jane's mind through the colour of the glass. This calls to her mind an image of ploughed fields. This image that is so potent to Jane's imagination that she immediately recalls Rupert Brooke's First World War poem, 'The Soldier' which prompts her to ask the other children 'when you just *think* of England, what do you see?'[92] They respond in various ways but each one of them visualises England through natural imagery. Oliver sees 'a wood […] but perhaps not a beech wood because there ought to be primroses'. Anna sees '[h]eather and gorse' while Bill sees '[w]hite cliffs and the sea' and Jane see the 'Downs […] Downs and great white clouds and a road that winds and winds until it reaches the sky'. Arguably, what the children visualise is a pastoral ideal but, as David Gervais observes of Brooke's 'Grantchester', and which is equally applicable here, the unreality of the ideal is not in itself problematic. Rather it 'answered an emotional need and the emotion itself was real even if its embodiment was precious'.[93] The emotional need expressed throughout this episode is that of belief in the possibility of growth, renewal and regeneration.

To return to Atkinson's stained glass window, the plethora of natural images encourages the reader to visualise a country that is at once wholesome and vital, full of growth from the 'ploughed' fields providing food for the country which ultimately will result in the 'crust on a loaf', the freshness of which is emphasised by the heat of the oven, which will fuel the 'growing things' like the young explorers who are now free to roam this thriving country. It is an important link. These children, in their innocence and enthusiasm, are part of that renewal, a re-forging of the bonds between England and its people. Moreover, Jane specifically pictures 'when April comes to England' thus concentrating on the point in the

[91] M. E. Atkinson, *August Adventure* (1936; London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), p. 260.
[92] Atkinson, *August Adventure*, pp. 261- 262.
[93] Gervais, *Literary Englands*, p. 4.

year when new life returns to the earth. The renewal of England, physically embodied in children such as Jane, offered a link between the ideals of pre-war and inter-war England. This image of England, which Georgian poets such as Rupert Brooke encapsulated in his poetry, is revitalised through the children's physical exploration of this land that is not in 'sepia' but is in fact alive and free. This renewal is firmly embedded in the cycles of nature thus this ideal countryside is the only possible site of regeneration as it is the unchanging nature of the land that makes it possible.

This idea of renewal takes us back to the beginning of this chapter and to Victor Watson's argument that camping and tramping fiction, like much children's literature at this time was 'a version of pastoral, a sustained and essentially *adult* elegy on a massive scale for dearly loved and vanishing ways of rural ways of life'.[94] Watson's reference here to elegy is interesting as the elegiac form is associated with loss, mourning and death. The further reference to 'vanishing ways of rural life' positions camping and tramping novelists alongside writers such as Edmund Blunden who, in 1932 mourned the fact that he said could not be avoided, namely, 'how much that we loved is going or gone'.[95] Reading David Severn's *The Cruise of the Maiden Castle* (1948), set on canal ways that were 'deserted - and a little derelict' certainly supports Watson's argument that the camping and tramping countryside was 'a beautiful and rather run-down landscape'.[96] It is possible however to construct a different, positive reading of the camping and tramping countryside for, while the elegy was undoubtedly a song of mourning, it was also one of renewal. To consider the pastoral for a moment, one of Roger Sales' five elements of the pastoral, quoted earlier in this chapter was reconstruction. It is these ideas of renewal and reconstruction that also shaped the depiction of the countryside in camping and tramping fiction and which, ultimately, make camping and tramping fiction a forward- rather than a backwards- looking genre.

Returning to examine descriptions of the countryside once more, it is striking just how often the reader is presented with natural imagery that creates an overriding impression of

[94] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction,* p. 79.
[95] Edmund Blunden, '*The Face of England, in a series of occasional sketches,'* quoted in Giles and Middleton, eds., *Writing Englishness*, pp. 83-87 (p.83).
[96] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction,* p. 82.

growth, optimism and possibility.[97] Back in the Lake District, Lloyd's Fell Farmers might see snow on the tops of distant mountains, but 'underfoot as they walked, the almost white fronds were just pushing through, and all about was a froth of delicate green where the trees had begun to burst into tiny leaf'.[98] For Carol Forrest's Jocelyn, being in the countryside conjured a feeling of optimism. As she looks out of their caravan, she 'thought she saw the pale glint of primroses. There was a light wind fluttering her hair - a wind that smelt vaguely sweet and promising, a scent that had no name'.[99] In *Adventuring with Nomad* (1950) Norman Ellison noted all around him, 'signs of an early spring' and 'here and there violets peep[ing] from a cluster of heart-shaped leaves' as 'the earth itself was awake and stirring'.[100]

The awareness of the earth stirring was not confined to images of new growth, as David Severn repeatedly drew upon the image of the sun to create a similar optimistic mood. For example, in *Waggon for Five* (1944), describing Brian Sanville watching the sunrise, he writes:

> As he crouched by the reeds, motionless, watching, Brian felt the sky behind him grow brighter. Slowly, imperceptibly, a shadow crept from his wet shoes, a thin, dark line taking gradual shape upon the grass; the dew sparkled with a fresh brilliance and pinpoints of light glittered on the surface of the lake. He forgot the heron and turned his head to the east, drawn by the power of the new day. Sunshine had come into the world again.[101]

The combination of the freshness of the sparking dew, the 'fresh brilliance' of the light on the lake and the 'power of the new day' infuse this passage with a sense of renewal and life. In his final 'Waggoner' novel, *Hermit in the Hills* (1945), Severn would extend his use of the sun to create a forward-looking vision. In a moment of almost transcendental joy, Diana

[97] Ellison, *Adventuring with Nomad*, pp. 13-14.
[98] Lloyd, *Fell Farm Campers*, p. 111.
[99] Forrest, *Caravan School*, p. 73.
[100] Ellison, *Adventuring with Nomad*, pp. 13-14.
[101] David Severn, *Waggon forFive* (London: Bodley Head, 1944), p. 93.

Longmore witnesses the sunrise on top of a Welsh mountain. Severn writes:

> '*This is the most wonderful thing I've ever seen.*' Diana whispered the words to herself feeling suddenly full of happiness; so full that she wanted to dance and sing. She knew that she was part of this sunrise; yes, really a part, for she had *seen* it. Seeing linked you so closely: made you feel so completely one with whatever you were watching[…]All this was hers; the restless motion of the clouds, twisting and dissolving in the rosy-golden brilliance of the sun; all the beauty of colour, beauty of movement. A sunrise like this kindled your whole body to a flame. You burned and were ten times as alive and a thousand times as happy as you had ever been before.[102]

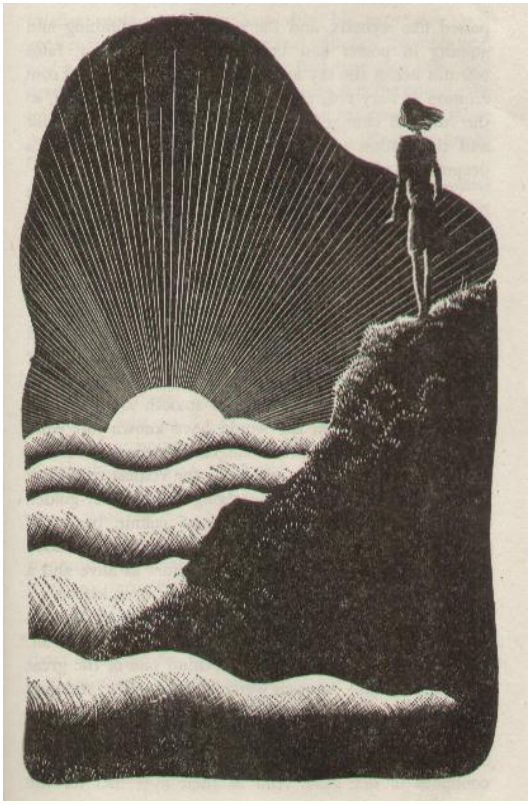

Figure 3.6: Illustration by Joan Kiddell-Monroe for David Severn's, *Hermit in the Hills*, (London: The Bodley Head 1945), p. 195.

[102] David Severn, *Hermit in the Hills*, pp. 195-6.

On reading passages such as these, and after looking at Joan Kiddell-Monroe's accompanying illustration (Figure 3.6), it becomes increasingly impossible to associate camping and tramping countryside solely with a sense of decline or mourning. Certainly, camping and tramping novels often shared concerns over the impact of mass popular culture on the countryside but they also usually avoided simplistic depictions of both trippers and campers and trampers. They frequently challenged the rights of campers and trampers to imagine the countryside in a way that suited them and highlighted multiple perspectives and experiences of this shared and contested space. Whilst camping and tramping fiction was certainly shaped by interwar discourses, on both the development of the countryside and mass popular culture, they never simply reiterated any one particular argument. Rather than depicting the countryside as a site of decline and decay, it emerged as a vibrant space, full of people having fun in various ways that suited them. Despite the fact that these various ways sometimes converged problematically, ultimately, the countryside was large enough to accommodate the needs of the many, not just the few.

Chapter Four – Mapping the Exploratory Geographical Imagination

4.1 Imperial Geographic Imaginations

The previous chapter argued that camping and tramping novels often sought to control the use of the countryside by creating hierarchies of behaviour – favouring individual rather than mass participation - and by imagining the countryside as an empty, tranquil space. This chapter now turns to examine another means of negotiating control in camping and tramping fiction, namely the map. Across many books campers and trampers were depicted as both map makers and users. Novels were full of maps; some were used as dust jackets or endpapers, some were clearly denoted as the work of illustrators whereas others were presented as being produced by the campers and trampers themselves. This chapter will interrogate these different types of maps, drawing upon the many illustrated examples that were reproduced in the texts, it will interrogate camping and tramping maps as documents in their own right. It will demonstrate that these maps were not simply illustrations but were, as Christian Jacob argues of maps in general, 'visual artefacts' which conveyed a 'complex architecture of signs' and performed a range of imaginative and ideological functions.[1] Often positioning themselves as geographical imperial explorers, campers and trampers frequently sought to stake their claims to the countryside through maps and mapping. This enterprise was often inspired by their own reading material which had taught them to assume that exploration led to discovery and that this led to possession. Imagining themselves to be imperial explorers however, positioned campers and trampers as outsiders or newcomers in the area which undercut their desire to be seen as insiders who belonged in the countryside. This chapter examines how camping and tramping novels explored the dichotomy of belonging and mapping, arguing that while many novels drew upon the romance of imperial geographic exploration, they ultimately offered a critique of it.

Throughout this chapter two key strategies of conquest used in imperial exploratory narratives are examined in camping and tramping texts. One is the 'seeing man' or monarch-of-all-I-survey scene, and the other is the map. According to Mary Louise Pratt,

[1] Christian Jacob, 'Toward a Cultural History of Cartography' *Imago Mundi*, 48 (1996), 191- 198 **(**p. 192).

the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene resulted in a 'fantasy of dominance' and was the product of a specifically European imperial attitude to land.[2] As was argued in chapter three, this gaze was instrumental in imagining the landscape of the countryside as a *terra nullius,* ripe for exploration and possession. It was the map that legitimised explorers' claims to new found lands. By inscribing their discoveries in maps, overwriting local and existing place names with their own, explorers sought to convince themselves and the world of their power and control over the land. As such, exploratory maps have been described as persuasive or rhetorical documents that, far from being objective depictions of reality, serve to manufacture a sense of power for the maker. [3] Functioning together, the explorer's land scanning eye opened up new territories to the possibilities of exploration but the act of mapping closed them off from the eyes of others. According to Barbara Mundy, the map came to be the symbol and tool of imperial exploration and contributed to the 'rhetorical conquest' of the new worlds, legitimising both discovery and conquest.[4] In other words, the act of mapping persuaded imperial explorers that they possessed not only the land they explored but everything and everyone contained within it.

The seeing-man was a figure that British interwar children were likely to be familiar with. Monarch-of-all-I-Survey scenes had been popularised in exploration and adventure stories since Robinson Crusoe first climbed to the top of his island and claimed possession of it. Moreover, no book of discovery or exploration would be complete without its own stirring description of fifteenth-century explorer Balboa crossing the Isthmus of Panama, climbing the Peak of Darien, and setting eyes on the Pacific Ocean for the first time in European history. Leonard Outhwaite's *Unrolling the Map* (1935) is typical of texts recommended to children who described the triumphant moment in romantic and moving terms:

[2] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p.60.
[3] There is a substantial body of criticism examining the persuasive nature of exploratory maps. For indicative readings see J. B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed., Paul Laxton (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001) and J. S. Keates, *Understanding Maps* (1982; Harlow: Longman Limited, 1996).
[4] See for example Barbara Mundy, 'Mapping the Aztec Capital: The 1524 Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan, It's Sources and Meanings,' in *Imago Mundi*, 50 (1998), 11-33.

> At the top he stood still for a moment and then dropped on his knees in prayer. The men rushed forward and wept and shouted, for below them lay the bay of San Miguel and beyond that stretched the body of water that Balboa named the 'Great South Sea' [...] There was no doubt in their minds that they had in truth made a great discovery and that magnificent countries and conquests lay before them.[5]

It is perhaps understandable that children might be caught by the romanticism of such moments given the fact that, by the 20s and 30s it may have seemed as though there were no more actual new worlds to be discovered. There was however a significant output of books on the subjects of exploration, geography and mapping that were recommended to children, throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Outhwaite's book was recommended to children by Kathleen Lines in her 1950 guide to children's reading, *Four to Fourteen. A Library of Books for Children* (1950). To place Outhwaite's book in context, Lines included an entire section headed 'Exploration', also recommending Joseph Cotter and Haym Jaffe's, *Map-Makers* (1936), Roger Duvoisin's, *They Put Out To Sea: The Story of Maps* (1947), C.E. Key's, *A Book of Recent Exploration* (1946), Mary S. Lucas', *Vast Horizons: A Story of True Adventure and Discovery* (1948) and A.S. Mott's, *Hakluyt's Voyages* (1929). Lines' list is modest when compared with an earlier but similar volume, W.C. Berwick Sayers' *Books for Youth* (1936) which included 42 books in its section on 'Travel and Adventure'. These included J.N.L. Baker's, *A History of Geographical Discovery and Exploration* (1931), Arthur. B. Archer's, *Stories of Exploration and Discovery* (1931), Stella Benson's, *The Little World* (1926), Frederick. A. Blossom's, *Told at the Explorer's Club* (1932), Arthur L Hayward's, *The Boy's Book of Explorers* (1929), Sven Hedin's, *From Pole to Pole: a book for young people* (1928) and G. Gibbard Jackson's, *The Romance of Exploration* (1930). Taken together, Lines and Sayers' lists demonstrate that throughout the 1920s and 30s there was a significant body of children's publishing on both maps and exploration.

Lists of recommended books such as Lines and Sayers' are useful in that they are evidence

[5] Leonard Outhwaite, *Unrolling the Map: the story of exploration* (London: Constable, 1935), p. 77.

of the way in which stories of exploration and discovery were a recognised part of children's culture during the interwar years. However, attitudes towards exploration had not been set in aspic. Leonard Outhwaite signals the change in attitudes and knowledge writing, '[i]n 1492 Columbus discovered America' only to comment that '[w]hen I was in school I was allowed to say that' but that 'there are not many sentences of so few words which contain so many misleading ideas'.[6] By the interwar years the nature of exploration and discovery had changed. According to Outhwaite '[t]here are no surprises left for the general explorer' but it is perhaps Joseph Conrad's observation that the 'glamour's off' exploration which most reveals the change that had taken place.[7] Grand narratives of great feats of discovery bringing glory and riches to the explorer seemed to belong to an increasingly remote past. Romantic and heroic exploration had been exchanged for that which was 'comprehensive and scientific' in manner.[8] It is this sense of glamour that campers and trampers usually sought in both their exploration and mapping and which was frequently problematised and challenged by writers.

4.2 The Use and Abuse of Maps in Camping and Tramping Novels

Until recently maps in children's fiction, when they have been discussed at all, have often either been considered as either a type of illustration, or of ancillary importance to the text.[9] In her 1996 essay 'Cartography and Children's Literature', Clare Ranson argued that maps were a 'useful branch of illustration' because they set the tone of the book and helped children to manage the geography of the text.[10] Clearly, to a certain extent Ranson is right that maps in children's literature can serve a practical purpose, helping children to orientate themselves within the geography of the narrative. This is particularly true for camping and tramping novels, which are concerned with travel and movement around the country. Many camping and tramping novels used maps in this practical sense, presenting maps that were

[6] Outhwaite, *Unrolling the Map*, p. 67.
[7] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902; London: Penguin, 1985), p. 33.
[8] Outhwaite, *Unrolling the Map*, p. 329.
[9] There are signs that this is changing, see for example Julia Pond, 'The Rub between Fact and Fiction: ideology in Lois Lenski's Regional Maps,' *Children's Literature in Education*, 43(2011) 44-55 and Anthony Pavlik, 'A Special Kind of Reading Game: Maps in Children's Literature' *International Research in Children's Literature* 3.1 (2010): 28–43.
[10] Clare Ranson, 'Cartography and Children's Literature,' in *Sustaining the Vision: 24th Annual Conference, International Association of School Librarianship, Selected Papers* (Seattle: International Association of School Librarianship, 1996), pp. 164-66 (p. 164).

useful to the reader and depicting campers and trampers using maps to navigate . Both of these functions are evident in Harold Jones' map for M. E. Atkinson's *August Adventure* (1936) which sees the Locketts children embark on a caravan holiday in the south of England.

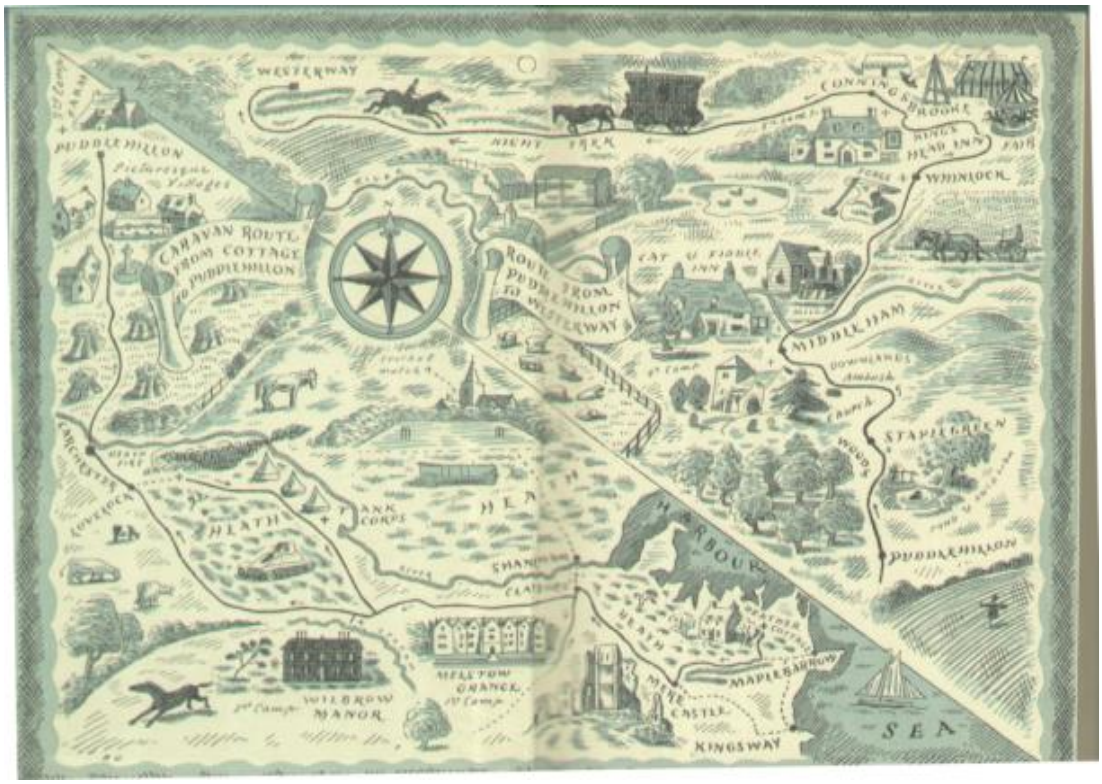

Figure 4.1: Endpapers by Harold Jones for M. E. Atkinson's *August Adventure* (1936; London: Bodley Head, 1946).

Jones' map shown above (Figure 4.1) forms the end papers of *August Adventure* and whilst it does not situate the Locketts' journey within the wider geography of England, it charts the route of the journey for the reader. Readers could manage the geography of the text more easily by following the sequence of events on the map, which both includes illustrative references to major episodes in the novel and conveys the unspoilt, rural topography of the setting. What becomes apparent on examining Jones' map is its lack of conventional symbols. Although a compass has been included, there is no scale and so no information can be gained about the distances the Locketts travel. The inclusion of small illustrations relating to events in the novel suggests that this is a map of a specific journey,

thus it is a temporal map just as much as it is a geographical one. Whilst the illustrated map serves a practical purpose for the reader, the novel also presents maps as indispensable to the Locketts' journey. Throughout the book there are repeated references to the children studying, discussing and checking their progress against an Ordnance Survey map. So, on the way to their first camp at Melstow Grange, Oliver passes the map to his sister Jane in order to show her the route he has planned. There are also multiple references to Oliver 'consulting the map', 'stud[ying] the road-map' and descriptions of the children 'spreading out the map' so they can consult it together. [11] It is their ability to read the map correctly that ultimately results in their finding their Aunt Lavinia.

The ease with which the Locketts use maps reflects the prevalence of maps and mapping in British interwar education. As David Matless explains in 'The Uses of Cartographic Literacy: Mapping, Survey and Citizenship in Twentieth Century Britain' (1999), the interwar years saw the emergence of regional survey in the British educational system. According to Matless, this marked the reclamation of the map from military use 'for the education of pupils in knowledge and command of their region'.[12] The ability of children to both read and make maps resulted in what Matless describes as 'cartographic literacy' which was the basis for a type of citizenship formed around a 'geographical self, whereby people could know their place - in all senses of that term'. The map was key to establishing this geographical self but, as James Fairgrieve argued in *Geography in School* (1926), **'**[a] vast part of so-called geography is merely map knowledge not retranslated. This is not geography'.[13] For Fairgrieve maps 'mean more' when they become experiences and that 'the essential thing that the children must learn is that the map deals with realities'. The desire to teach children that maps 'mean more' when translated into experience was clearly the motivating factor behind H. J. Deverson's *The Map That Came to Life* (1948). This book featured two children, John and Joanna, who go to stay on their Uncle George's farm for the holiday. Having told them that they should walk from the farm to a local fair two miles away, he proceeds to set them small challenges to see if they can read the Ordnance Survey map he gives them. The map 'comes to life' as the children see the 'real places that

[11] M. E. Atkinson, *August Adventure* (1936; London: The Bodley Head, 1946), pp. 165, 115 and 236.
[12] David Matless, 'The Uses of Cartographic Literacy: mapping, Survey and Citizenship in Twentieth century Britain in *Mappings* ed. by Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), pp.193 – 212 (p. 197 and 193).
[13] James Fairgrieve, *Geography in School* (London: University Press, 1926), pp. 110, 113 and 118.

are represented by the map' and so conventional cartographic symbols assume greater significance for them.[14]

Garry Hogg's 'Explorer' novels (1938-1940) presents one of the clearest example of camping and tramping texts that overtly encouraged the idea of cartographic literacy. Aimed at 'Map-minded readers of any age' the 'Explorer' novels are not only filled with many maps but often placed mapping at the forefront of the narrative.[15] Both *Explorers Awheel* (1938) and *Explorers on the Wall* (1939) feature extensive accounts of mapping as 'Explorer' Tony Armitage plans, draws and discusses the routes that the Explorers will follow on their journeys from Winchester to Exmoor in the first novel and then to Northumberland in the second. It is 'Tony's' maps that appear throughout the novels and many of them do help manage the geography of the text in a way that Jones' map for *August Adventure* did not. Multiple strip maps positioned throughout the novel effectively chart the Explorers steady progress across the country (Figure 4.2). These maps are accompanied by many passages depicting Tony struggling to reconcile his maps with the real geography they survey. In *Explorers Awheel* he wonders how he can produce a map 'so that when I take it home people will get the idea of what it really was like'.[16] This is coupled with discussion of the relative merits of using colour and contour lines 'to show actual heights at certain spots on the map' with Tony deciding to 'be content with contour lines, marked at intervals with figures.'

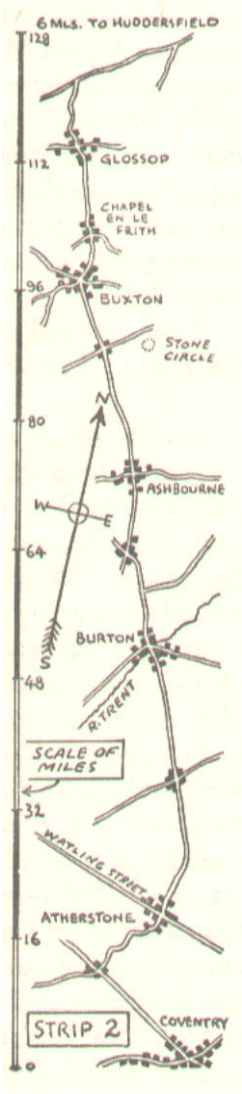

Figure 4.2: Route Planning in Garry Hogg's *Explorers on the Wall*, illus., by Mollie Haigh (1939; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1948), p. 45.

[14] H. J. Deverson, *The Map That Came to Life* (1948; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), [p2].
[15] Garry Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall* (1939; London: Thomas Nelson, 1948), blurb on inside cover.
[16] Garry Hogg, *Explorers Awheel* (1938; London: Thomas Nelson, 1946), pp. 78 and 79.

Hogg's use of maps becomes more problematic in his second novel, *Explorers on the Wall*. It initially appears as though Tony aims for verisimilitude with his maps. Hogg elucidates this through more detailed descriptions of Tony's mapping, writing that:

> [h]e was not too well satisfied with his handiwork. For one thing it was impossible to show how really precarious the crags were above Crag Lough, and eastwards, at the point marked 1,069. He wrote in the word Crags there to remind them later; but it was not the same thing at all. It looked far too flat, and yet he knew that if he put in the contour lines the map would be such a muddle that it would be useless, so he contended himself with a few, two at the highest points.[17]

Tony's difficulty centres on his ability to cartographically represent the knowledge they have gained surveying the area, whilst maintaining the accuracy and usefulness of his map. Problems with the veracity of Tony's maps arise when the issue of scale is discussed, revealing that even the most practical and objective seeming of maps are actually subjective and symbolic. When discussing his maps with fellow 'Explorer' David Brennan and David's Uncle Guy, Tony says that he has varied the scale of his strip maps. He explains 'I've made it slightly larger scale in the third strip. That's because the country has become a bit more worthy. There's nothing very exciting up till then'.[18] Tony's manipulation of scale is significant given that it has a similar function to Mercator's influential projection of 1569.[19] Both manipulate scale in order to confer greater significance upon particular geographical areas. It is surprising that in a series of novels so concerned with maps and mapping, Tony's change of scale is presented unproblematically. J Paul Goode's Equal Area Projection had appeared in America in 1923 but writers in Britain had also highlighted the impact of manipulating scale on attitudes towards place. [20] For example, in *Geography in School*, Fairgrieve warned that:

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[17] Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall*, p. 82.
[18] Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall*, p. 40.
[19] On the ideological impact of geographical projections see Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 29-45
[20] Technically Goode's projection is called the Goode Interrupted Homolosine projection but it is commonly known as the Equal Area projection. It was first published in America in 1923 as *Goode's School Atlas* which is now in its 21st edition.

> The temptation to the map-maker to draw the map of England on a different scale from that of Scotland is often too great, and we have already pointed out that the representation of Scotland and England separately has resulted in a mental habit on the part of many people of thinking of these lands as in some way separate physically. [21]

Despite the apparent realism of the 'Explorer' maps they are actually examples of what John Pickles, amongst others, refers to as rhetorical rather than objective cartography.[22] In other words, maps that seek to persuade the map reader into adopting a particular view point though the deliberate selection, omission and distortion of information. Tony's maps seeks to persuade his map-readers that the land following on from Huddersfield and leading to Kirkby Stephens in the Yorkshire Dales is more 'worthy' than that between Oxford and Coventry This impression is reinforced in the text through observations such as David's that there is '[n]o point messing about in places like Coventry'. [23] Tony also writes that he 'won't spoil' his Log by saying 'what [they] thought' of 'towns like Huddersfield and Halifax' and that while Coventry 'wasn't as bad as [they] expected […] it was bad enough all the same'. In fact they have to travel 240 miles northwards from home before 'things began to be more interesting again.' Hogg clearly uses Tony's cartography to attempt to persuade the reader that industrial landscapes are of limited importance when compared with rural ones. Thus Tony's mapping also reflects the desire to avoid industrial landscapes, as was discussed in the previous chapter.

Although Atkinson's Locketts were able to use official maps to successfully plan their caravan journey, other camping and tramping novels questioned their usefulness.. One of the very first camping and tramping novels, E. V. Lucas' *The Slowcoach* (1910) raised doubts about the reliability of, and faith placed in, official maps in comparison with local, or insider knowledge of the land. As outlined in chapter three, *The Slowcoach* recounts the adventures of the Avory children who, mistakenly, believe that they have been sent a gypsy

[21] Fairgrieve, *Geography in School*, p. 196-7.
[22] John Pickles, *History of Spaces: Mapping Cartographic Reason, and the Over Coded World* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 37.
[23] Hogg, *Explorers on the Wall*, pp. 40, 47 and 46.

caravan as a gift. The four Avory children, whose passions, we are told, are geography, history, literature and engineering - good camping and tramping passions - are accompanied by their gardener, Kinks, on a tour of the south of England, taking in places of cultural and historical interest, such as Salisbury and Stratford upon Avon.[24] Kinks is sent on ahead and given an ancient map of the road, from London to Oxford, to guide his way. Not only is the map completely out of date - it is from 1753 and entitled 'Britannia Depicta; or Ogilby' Improved' - but Kinks cannot read it, and has no intention of trying. He has difficulty reading the print of the morning paper and so, once out of sight, he 'folded it up and placed it in his pocket, and when he was in any doubt as to the way, asked the first person he met'.[25] As a result of ignoring the map, Kinks has no difficulty finding his way by relying, instead, on the accurate information provided by local people he encounters. Overall, the fact that Kinks is given a map at all indicates that he is a stranger, or visitor to the area he passes through; of course, as the last chapter demonstrated, this was a position that campers and trampers always avoided acknowledging.[26]

4.3 Cartography and Power: Elinor Lyon's *The House in Hiding* (1950) and 'Island Adventures' c. 1939.

Elinor Lyon's 1950 novel, *The House in Hiding*, highlights the difficulty of knowing land through maps and emphasises the outsider status of the map user. Set on Skye, Lyon's second published novel was her first to feature brother and sister, Ian and Sovra Kennedy. [27] The novels begins at the start of the summer holidays when Ian and Sovra learn that their holiday plans are to be curtailed due to the arrival of the Pagets, friends of Dr Kennedy. Ian and Sovra are forced to play with Ann Paget and they resent her presence, trying to avoid her whenever they can. For her part, Ann immediately feels superior to Ian and Sovra, who

[24] E. V. Lucas, *The Slowcoach: A Story of Roadside Adventure*, illus. by M. V. Wheelhouse, (London: Wells Gardner Dartons, 1910), p. 2.
[25] Lucas, *The Slowcoach*, p. 50
[26] The later school edition of *The Slowcoach*, published in 1955 by Edward Arnold completely removes the entire incident with the map. In the original version the book is illustrated with what appears to be a facsimile of a county map from 1753, and specific reference is made to it by the narrator. It is however not possible to say why this change has been made.
[27] Lyons' two subsequent novels *We Daren't Go A-Hunting* (1951) and *Run Away Home* (1953) both feature Ian and Sovra Kennedy.

are scruffy and uncouth in comparison to her.[28] It is a map though which gives Ann, the incomer, her greatest sense of superiority over the two local children. Her possession of an official map of the area convinces her that she knows the area better than Ian and Sovra. when Ian and Sovra's question Ann about the map asking her 'what's that?' she replies patronisingly, 'this is a map' and asks whether their father has one. It is not that the children have never seen a map before, but rather that they associate maps with school and far-away places that are strange to them. As Sovra says to Ann, 'What would [father] want one for? He's lived here long enough to know where everything is'. Their knowledge exceeds that contained in Ann's map and while she is telling Ian and Sovra how to climb Ben Shian, they glance at each other:

> They had climbed Ben Shian more times than they could remember, and knew at least four ways up it, but they were trying to be nice to Ann, so they let her go on telling them about the path on the map.

Ian and Sovra may be less-cartographically literate but their actual experience translates Ann's outsider cartographic knowledge into geographical knowledge.

Lyon's unpublished manuscript 'Island Adventures' (ca. 1939-1940), written when she was a teenager, depicted mapping as a means by which newcomers could negotiate both a sense of belonging to, and control over land.[29] 'Island Adventures' begins when six siblings make their way to the island of Lios, off the west coast of Scotland. The children, Gabriel who is a girl, Fiona, Roy, Gilbert and twins, Helen and Robin, travel from their private schools in Edinburgh to the island, which their parents have recently inherited. The story, a blend of realism and fantasy, combines detailed exploration of the children and an obvious love of the land with a secondary story line that reincarnates the legendary line of Riach kings who had supposedly ruled the island for hundreds of years. Upon arriving on the island, the children conduct a series of exploratory trips around it, thereby discovering its secrets which they document for themselves in a series of maps.

[28] Elinor Lyon, *The House in Hiding* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950; repr. Edinburgh: Cannongate, 1991), pp. 10, 125 and 126.
[29] Elinor Lyon, 'Island Adventures,' c. 1939-40, Elinor Lyon Collection, Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle, EL/01/ 01/ 04.

The children's status as outsiders is established at the beginning of the story on their arrival at the nearest mainland town, Melvick. The local bus driver and an old shepherd take them to be southerners or lowlanders and they discuss the children in Gaelic, assuming they will not understand. The girls quickly disabuse them of this idea, saying that they are 'only a quarter English' but it still marks them out as newcomers to the area.[30] The fact that their ancestors had lived on Riach for generations makes them instantly feel that they belong on Lios. This is despite the fact that they are going to 'a house they had never seen before, on an island nobody ever visited […] and nearly a hundred miles away from where they used to live'. When they arrive on Lios they ask the housekeeper whether she has been all over the island, to which she replies that she has not and 'nobody else has either'. It appears to be a blank, uncharted space ripe for exploration. They turn to official maps to help them understand the geography of the island but these are of little use. The atlas they consult so they 'can at least find out the size and shape of [the island]' does not 'show any detail' and while there is a map of the north of Scotland, Lios only appears 'very small on it'. The children duly work their way all over the island, successfully climbing a daunting rock formation that has effectively cut off the eastern side of the island for generations. It is their subsequent mapping of their discoveries which allows them to imaginatively possess Lios and in doing so reveals the imperial subtext to their exploration.

The children decide to make their own maps after being kept inside due to bad weather and they produce a series of five in total, all of which are hand drawn by Lyon, appearing either at the beginning and the end of the manuscript. Like many explorers before them, the Riachs try to legitimise their discoveries about the island by drawing maps, which confirm their possession of the island, through claiming the right to name its features. This desire to map and thus control Lios conflicts directly with their desire to be seen as belonging to it. As Denis Wood notes in *The Power of Maps* (1992), the act of mapping establishes the maker as a stranger because it is an acquisition of knowledge that an insider would not need.[31]

[30] Lyon, 'Island Adventures,' f.12v, f.8r and f.16r.
[31] Denis Wood, *The Power of Maps* (London and New York: The Guildford Press, 1992), p. 18.

Examining the first map in the series clearly demonstrates the children's understanding of their exploration in the context of not only the wider culture of geographical exploration but particularly imperial exploration (Figure 4.3).

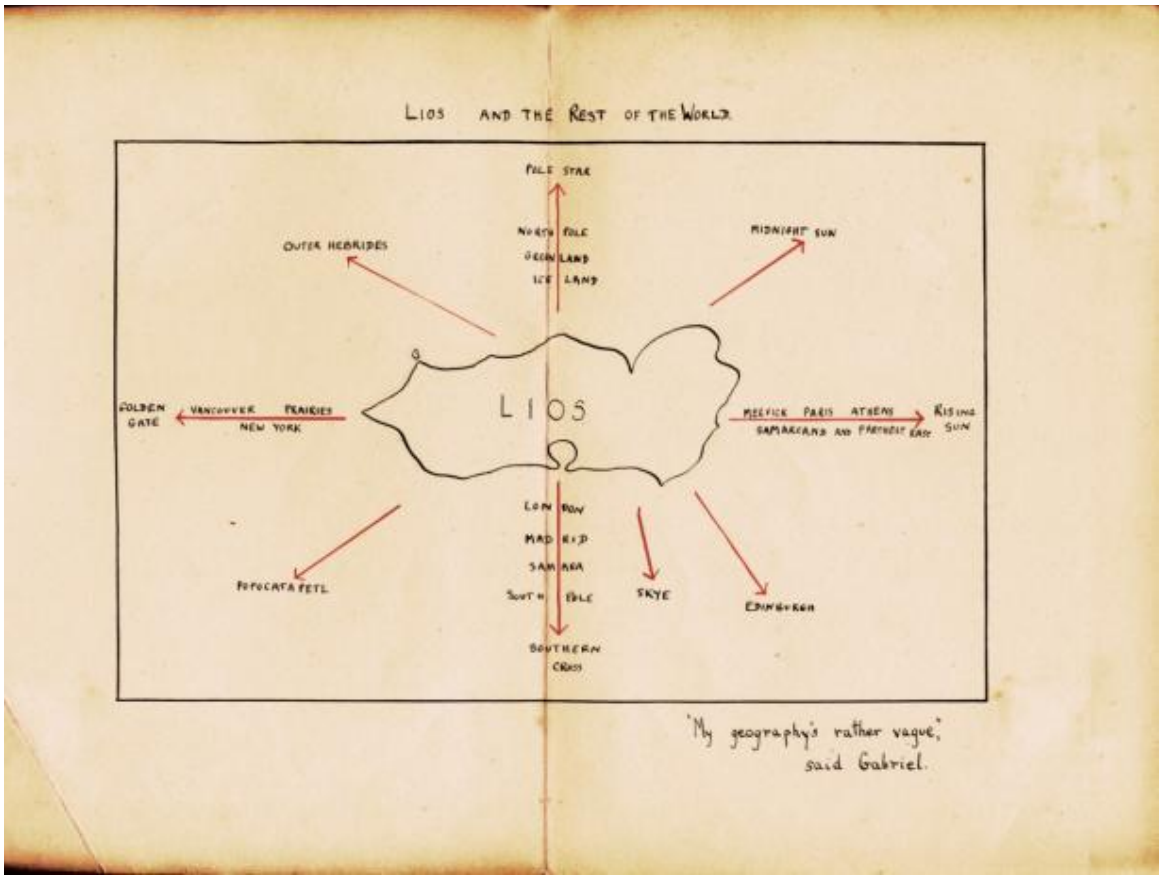


Figure 4.3: Frontis map, 'Lios and the Rest of the World' by Elinor Lyon in 'Island Adventures', c. 1939, Elinor Lyon Collection, Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, EL/ 01/ 01/ 04**.**

Despite Gabriel's claim that her 'geography's rather vague' nothing could be further from the truth; her geography is highly specific. She understands both their exploration of Lios and their position in the world, in relation to the possibilities of exploration. Gabriel also believes that the map shows all the 'important' places which in fact are all suggestive of key events in the history of European exploration.[32] For example, one arrow points East, to Samarcand suggesting Marco Polo's thirteenth-century stories of travel and trade along the Silk Road. A second arrow points West towards America, suggestive of the New World and

[32] Lyon, 'Island Adventures,' f.119v.

the great Age of Discovery, when navigators such as Columbus set sail into the unknown. Another points South-West, to the Mexican volcano Popocatapetl, associated with numerous Aztec myths, and with fifteenth-century conquistador Hernan Cortes whose journey around Popocatapetl ultimately led to the deposing of the Aztec ruler, Montezuma and the fall of the Aztecs. The icy regions of the North Pole and the land of the midnight sun border the north of the map, calling to mind the late nineteenth-century genius of Arctic exploration, Fridtjof Nansen, the search for the North-West passage and the whole tradition of Arctic exploration, which dominated the British exploratory imagination for so long.[33] To the south, the expansive open spaces of the Sahara, followed by the South Pole, brings us finally to the twentieth century and Captain Scott's ill-fated but heroic race to the pole. Gabriel's geography *is* exploration.

It is highly significant that once the Riach children have made their maps of Lios they immediately decide to keep them secret. While they were content to survey and open Lios to their own exploratory gaze they subsequently seek to make Lios their private possession. This is a decision that is met with approval by a friend who tells them that they are 'quite right to hide it,' though no explanation is given as to why.[34] This is an example of the way in which children's writers, Lyon was herself only nineteen when she wrote this story, still understood exploration through the lens of imperialism. The Riachs' behaviour here mirrors what Brian Harley refers to as the desire of Englishmen to open 'empty spaces' for themselves, only to subsequently close them to others'.[35] For Harley this was a 'symptom of a deeply ingrained colonial mentality.' While Lyon presents this desire quite unproblematically other children's writers would challenge it directly.

4.4 Imperial Imaginations in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Richard Jefferies' *Bevis* (1882).

Richard Jefferies' *Bevis* (1882), a precursor of the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels, tells the story of Bevis and Mark's attempts to colonise the Governor's, or Bevis' father's land.

[33] Outhwaite, *Unrolling the Map*, p. 287.
[34] Lyon, 'Island Adventures,'f88r.
[35] Brian Harley, 'Victims of a Map: New England Cartography and the Native Americans' quoted in Wood, *The Power of Maps,* p.45.

The novel depicts one summer in the lives of Bevis and Mark as they explore the Governor's farm, build rafts, hold battles with other boys and eventually shipwreck themselves. Jefferies uses their shipwreck in order to demonstrate that the boys' understanding of exploration has been shaped by their reading. This is evident throughout the shipwreck episode where, in the manner of Robinson Crusoe, the boys demonstrate their self-sufficiency by building a shelter, hunting and playing house for almost two weeks, unbeknownst to either of their parents. The introduction of the little poor girl, Loo, provides the boys with their Friday, necessary to complete their reimagining and appropriation of Defoe's novel.

The influence of Defoe's narrative on depictions of camping has already been discussed in chapter two, however it is particularly important to the depiction of exploration and imperial geography in both *Bevis* and the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels. It epitomises the blending of fact and fiction which combines to form Bevis', Mark's and the Walkers' exploratory understanding. This is especially true for Jefferies' two boys and Titty Walker who absolutely encapsulates Ian Watt's belief that the book is '[a]lmost universally known [and] almost universally thought of as at least half real'.[36] As the introduction to this thesis stated, according to Martin Green, *Robinson Crusoe* epitomised the adventure narrative and was the 'energizing myth of imperialism,' which 'charged England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule'.[37]

There is a clear intertextual dialogue that takes place between *Robinson Crusoe, Bevis* and Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' novels. This is evident when Crusoe's attitude to, and actions on, his island is compared with that of Bevis and Mark. One of the first things Crusoe does on being shipwrecked is to conduct a cursory survey of the island by climbing a hill which 'rose up very steep and high, and which seemed to over-top some other hills'.[38]From this vantage point he concludes that the island is uninhabited. Crusoe explores his island in its entirety only after salvaging goods from his wrecked ship and building himself a shelter. This time Crusoe is described walking around the island, both climbing and descending valleys confirming Crusoe's sense of ownership. As Crusoe narrates '[I]

[36] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, p. 96.
[37] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 3.
[38] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* ([1719]; London: The Folio Society, 1972; repr. 2008), pp, 58 and 99.

descended a little on the side of that delicious vale, surveying it with a secret kind of pleasure, though mixed with my other afflicting thoughts, to think that this was all my own; that I was king and lord of all this country indefensibly, and had a right of possession'. Crusoe's knowledge that the island is empty means that he instantly assumes control and power over it; he feels that it is his 'right' to claim and possess the island. As the narrative subsequently demonstrates, although the island is uninhabited it is used by various tribes who have rival claims to the island. Crusoe, of course, never acknowledges this and when other people do arrive, Crusoe takes the opportunity to capture a servant for himself, as do Bevis and Mark, thus becoming a ruler of people as well as land. Like Crusoe, Bevis considers himself to be the absolute ruler of his territory for example, Bevis has a piece of land which is his 'own peculiar property, over which he [is] autocrat and king'. The language Jefferies uses here, echoing Crusoe's demonstrates that Bevis sees himself as a descendent of Crusoe.

It is the boys' mapping that fully reveals the impact of their reading on their understanding of exploration. Essentially, the map that Bevis and Mark produce is one of the imagination rather than geography confirming Raymond Craib's argument that 'a map is often an expression of desire rather than a summation of reality'.[39] In other words, their map reflects what they expect exploration to be like based on their reading as it attempts to persuade Bevis of the reality of his ownership and authority over his father's land. Through its impossibility and arbitrariness E. H. Shepard's map of Bevis Country (Figure 4.4) demonstrates the imaginative basis of Bevis and Mark's exploration. Bevis and Mark decide to call the island in the middle of the lake 'New Formosa' despite Bevis admitting that he has no idea where Formosa is. As it is a good name though it still goes down on their map.[40] The New Sea feeds into both the Nile and the Mississippi and contains the islands of New Formosa (Taiwan), Serendib (Sri Lanka) and the Straits of Mozambique. The narrative reveals the many other possibilities that they ultimately choose from. The Nile is chosen instead of the Congo or the Amazon, and the New Sea is chosen instead of the Atlantic, Pacific or the South Sea. Other key intertexts are alluded to through the boys' choice of place names. For example, they chose 'Serendib', sometimes referred to as

[39] Raymond B. Craib,'Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain,' *Latin American Research Review*, 35, 1 (2000), 7 -36 (p. 29).
[40]Richard Jefferies, *Bevis*, illus., by E. H. Shepard (1882; London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), p. 260.

'Sinbad's Island', over the 'Unknown Island' because Sinbad went there on one of his seven voyages. Although it does not appear on the map, they also name a small channel in the New Sea, Scylla and Charybdis.[41]

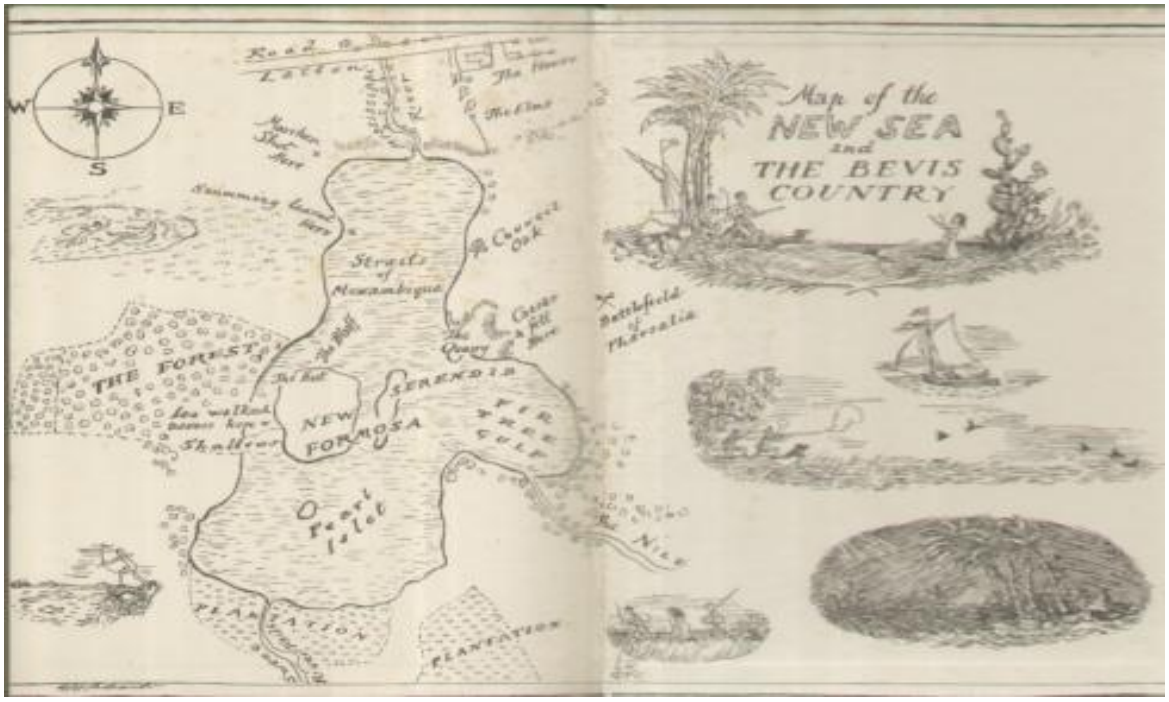


Figure 4.4: 'Map of Bevis Country' by E. H. Shepard in Richard Jefferies, *Bevis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932).

The fact that exploration is an imaginative process for Bevis and Mark is further emphasised in Shepherd's illustration of the two boys mapping (Figure 4.5). The boys are shown looking down towards the map rather than surveying the land; they are drawing the map from their imaginations which are central to this process. This is why the inset of Bevis and Mark dominates and overlays the actual map. It does not matter what the reality of the land is; what is important is their power to shape it. It is for this reason that their island could be called 'New Formosa or the Magic Land'.[42]

[41]Jefferies, *Bevis*, pp. 65 and 59.
[42] Jefferies, *Bevis*, p 260.

Figure 4.5: 'Making the Map' by E. H. Shepard in *Bevis* (1932), p. 60.

Through a subtle use of bathos and humour Jefferies undermines Mark and Bevis' colonial project in a way that the Lyon manuscript does not and that Ransome will also do. Bevis' confident authority over Bevis Country is beautifully undermined when he and Mark become lost and ask for directions from an old woman and her granddaughter. Jefferies then constructs a contact zone, between the two boys and the women which gently and humorously undermines the grand exploration narrative that Bevis and Mark have constructed. Bevis begins by saying:

> ‘Tell me the way round the- the,’ he was going to say ‘sea’ but recollected that they would not be able to understand how he and Mark were on an expedition, nor would he say pond – ‘round the water,’ he said.
>
> ‘The Longpond?’ said the girl. ‘You can’t go round, there’s the marsh – not unless you goes back to Wood Lane.’[43]

The girl’s use of the name ‘Longpond’ is the first in the novel and indicates the inability of Bevis’ map to replace and redefine existing understanding of the land. Moreover, the parochialism of ‘Wood Lane’ is a complete contrast to the exotic imaginative naming of places by Bevis and Mark. The name ‘Longpond’ in particular seems apt given the shape of the lake shown in Figure 4.4, and it reflects the distinction that Paul Carter makes in *The Road to Botany Bay* (1987) between local names, based on observation of the environment and those, like Captain Cook’s and Bevis’ which need to be understood within the context of their exploratory narrative.[44] Carter refers to Thomas de Quincey’s *Essay On Style* (1840) in order to demonstrate the stylistic privileging of such local naming. According to de Quincey, names that are the result of ‘ambitious principles’, akin to Mark and Bevis’, are invariably ‘monstrous and fanciful’, whereas, local names based on ‘the general good sense of a country’ are instead ‘faithful to the local truth, grave, and unaffected’.[45] Bevis quickly reverts to the use of local names, saving face with the excuse that the women would not ‘understand’ his expedition. Perhaps this is due to their gender, or perhaps, as working-class people, the narrative of conquest and exploration does not belong to them. Craib writes that the re-imagining and determining of place through naming results in the ‘pre-existing places and alternative conceptions of space that preceded the colonist enterprise vanish[ing] from view’.[46] Here, they reappear, provocatively; therefore, as an exercise in

[43] Jefferies, *Bevis*, p 92.
[44] Carter’s argument is that the names Cook chose for Australia were not either arbitrary, or a means to court favour with those at home, but rather a record of Cook’s voyage which encapsulate both space and time. See Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987).
[45]Thomas de Quincey, ‘Essay on Style, Rhetoric and Language,’ in *The Collected Writings of Thomas de Quincey*,, vol. x, Literary Theory and Criticism, ed. by David Masson (Edinburgh; Adam and Charles Black, 1890), p. 143.
[46] Craib, **‘**Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain,’ p. 10.

imaginative colonialism, Bevis' exploratory venture is limited. This limitation is finalised when Bevis and Mark realise that they cannot continue their journey around the pond and the girl shows them the path home. She, unlike Bevis and Mark, does not need a map to do this.

4.5 Negotiated Territories in *The Far Distant Oxus* (1937)

Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock's *The Far Distant Oxus* (1937) featured would-be colonists who were more willing to negotiate their claims over new found lands. Already discussed in the introduction to this thesis Hull and Whitlock's camping and tramping novels feature a group of siblings Bridget, Frances and Anthony Hunterly who stay on an Exmoor farm during the holidays. There they make friends with the Clevertons, who live nearby and Maurice who is something of a mysterious figure. They spend the holiday building a hut and raft, sleeping out over-night, riding ponies and they also make a map of the area they are staying in, which is presented as the frontis to the novel (Figure 4.6). This map is interesting as it is characterised by negotiation between the imagined geographies of the children and the established local or native understanding of the area.[47] Once again, the children's imaginative geography is based on their reading, in this case Matthew Arnold's narrative poem *Sohab and Rustum* (1853). Set on the banks of the River Oxus, Arnold's poem describes the tragic battle between father and son, Sohab the young Tartar and Rustum, the aged Persian warrior. Drawing upon the poem, the children re-imagine Exmoor as the Persia of Arnold's poem, choosing names such as Siestan, Bokhara, Azerbaijan, the Aral Sea, Peran-Wisa and the river Oxus. They attempt to consolidate this re-imagining through mapping the area, but what emerges from this process is a hybridised document.

[47] Hull and Whitlock's novels were inspired by those of Arthur Ransome and the following two novels were *Escape to Persia* (1938) and *Oxus in Summer* (1939). For further details about the novels see the introduction to this thesis.

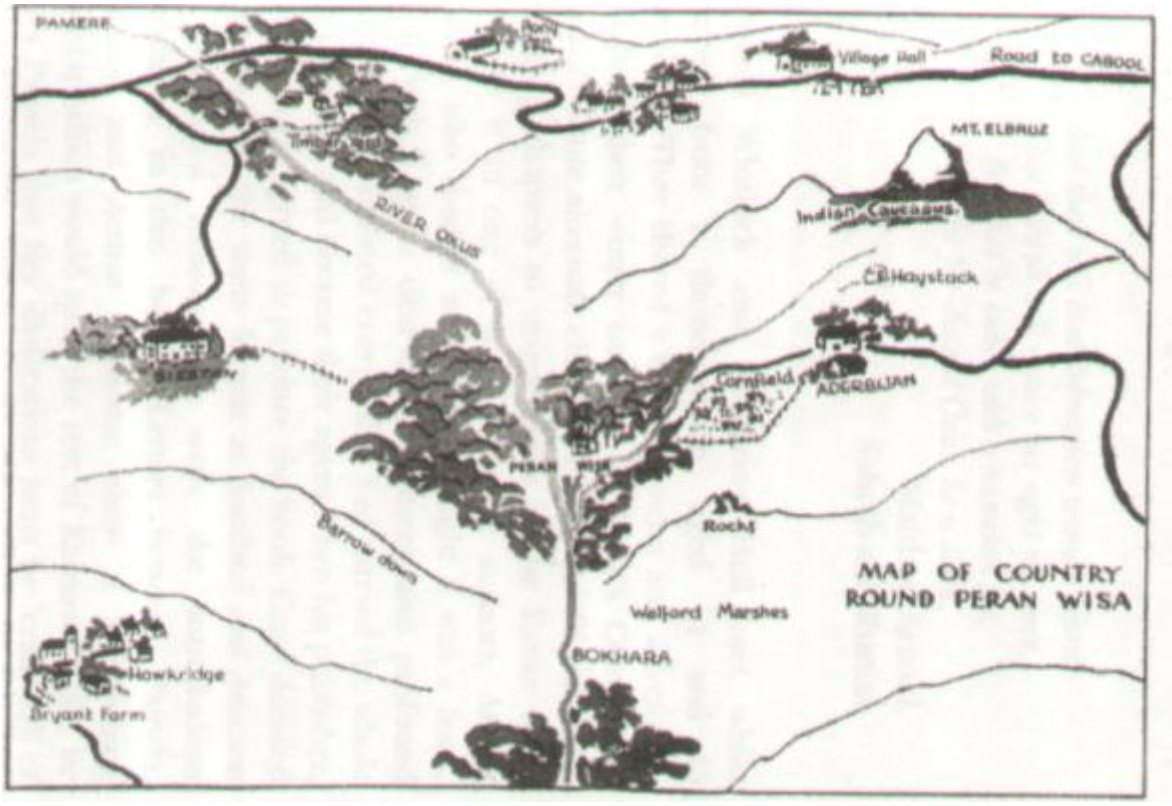


Figure 4.6: Frontis map in Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock, *The Far Distant Oxus* illus., by Pamela Whitlock (1937; Edinburgh: Fidra, 2008).

The children's desire to imaginatively possess the area is established in *The Far Distant Oxus* when Jennifer Cleverton asks Maurice why they 'pretend that this is Persia?'[48] The use of the word 'pretend' here is particularly striking when compared with the attitudes of Ransome's Walker children who often avoid openly acknowledging the imaginative nature of their exploration and discovery.[49] Hull and Whitlock are readier to concede this fact which is demonstrated when Maurice explains that they chose Persia because it is a 'marvellous country' full of 'magic beliefs in stars' and 'mystery'. To the children, Persia *is* the land of Arnold's *Sohab and Rustum*, thus reinforcing the imaginative nature of their exploration. Once again it is the act of naming that persuades the children that they have control over the land. When Peter Cleverton says that they can call 'all the places round here' after Persia, his sister Jennifer says 'no one else knows about it'. Maurice's response,

[48] Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock, *The Far Distant Oxus* illus., by Pamela Whitlock (1937; Edinburgh: Fidra, 2008), p. 135.
[49] The only aspect of their imaginative world that is ever referred to as such is Peter Duck. See Arthur Ransome, *Swallowdale* (1931; London: Jonathan Cape, 1944) pp. 64 and 157-8.

'[i]t's really ours' is interesting as it is said in response to Jennifer, perhaps suggesting that it is only theirs so long as it is secret. It creates a form of insider knowledge.

Like Bevis and Mark, the children's choice of place name is incongruous to the area and demonstrates de Quincey's observations regarding the imposition of monstrous and fanciful names associated with sailors and explorers. For example, while on their raft looking for the source of the Oxus, the children pause on a small 'rocky islet' which Jennifer names Kai Kashroo 'because it had a sound when said quickly similar to the Oxus creaming against its rocky shores'.[50] Similarly when sailing past a small village, Maurice re-names it 'Orgunge' simply because it is a name from *Sohrab and Rustum*, not because the two places have anything in common. When they do finally reach 'the Aral Sea' Jennifer immediately claims it saying 'it belongs to us because we've discovered it'. The confidence with which they go about claiming the land is however problematised by their map which actually depicts a negotiated, rather than completely colonised landscape. The children's imagined geography is integrated into the existing space and culture, and the two combine to form the 'Map of Country Round Peran Wisa'. There is a discrepancy between the confidence which the narrative conveys in the children's new geography and that of the map. For example, in the third novel, *Oxus in Summer*, the children still maintain that 'they had called all the places round about strange Persian names so that they could rule a country unknown to anyone else and unexplored'.[51] Clearly the country is not unknown to others as the children have failed to overwrite many local places such as 'Bryant Farm', 'Welford Marshes' and the 'Village Farm' which share the surrounding country. The implication is that the names have been chosen primarily because they are strange rather than because they hold any significant meaning. Therefore, their re-imagining is motivated more by a desire to negate local custom and places rather than to impose a careful re-conceptualisation of the space. It is an exercise in power more than anything else. Yet the maps undermine their assumptions of power, control and autonomy.

[50] Hull and Whitlock, *The Far Distant Oxus*, pp. 216, 201 and 221.
[51] Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock, *Oxus in Summer*, illus. Pamela Whitlock, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 12.

4.6 M. E. Atkinson and the Seeing Man Position.

M. E. Atkinson also challenged campers and trampers assumption of power and importance over land by drawing upon and then undermining the seeing-man. This is demonstrated in Atkinson's second Lockett book, *Mystery Manor* (1937). The novel sees the Lockett children re-visiting Wilbrow Manor, a supposedly haunted house, where the children had spent an uncomfortable night in the previous novel, *August Adventure* (1936). Unlike many other campers and trampers, the Locketts are happy to use official maps in order to find their way round. Despite never being a map maker, Atkinson presents Oliver Lockett's physical exploration resulting in the same sense of power and control felt by cartographers. In an early chapter of *Mystery Manor* Oliver, orientates himself by climbing a large mound in order to 'get a great view'.[52] When Oliver reaches the top, he feels that he is 'king of the castle' because 'his exalted position made him feel owner of all that he could see […] With his hands in his pockets - a veritable monarch of all that he surveyed'.[53] This, of course, mirrors the language of both *Bevis* and *The Far Distant* Oxus where, in both cases, the children felt like rulers. Although it seems a rather strange aside, the phrase 'hands in his pockets' is actually crucial to the scene, for Oliver's glance is all that is required for him to establish a sense of ownership because his position and gaze place him within the rhetoric of conquest, echoing imperial exploration narratives.

The map, which forms the endpapers to the novel, further confirms Oliver's seeing-man position (Figure 4.7). Oliver, stood in the top right-hand corner of the map, appears to look out and across the map reflecting his 'fantasy of dominance' over not only the land, but also his brother, sister and their friend Anna.

[52] M. E. Atkinson, *Mystery Manor*, illus. by Harold Jones, (London: Bodley Head, 1937), p. 68.
[53] Atkinson, *Mystery Manor*, p. 70.

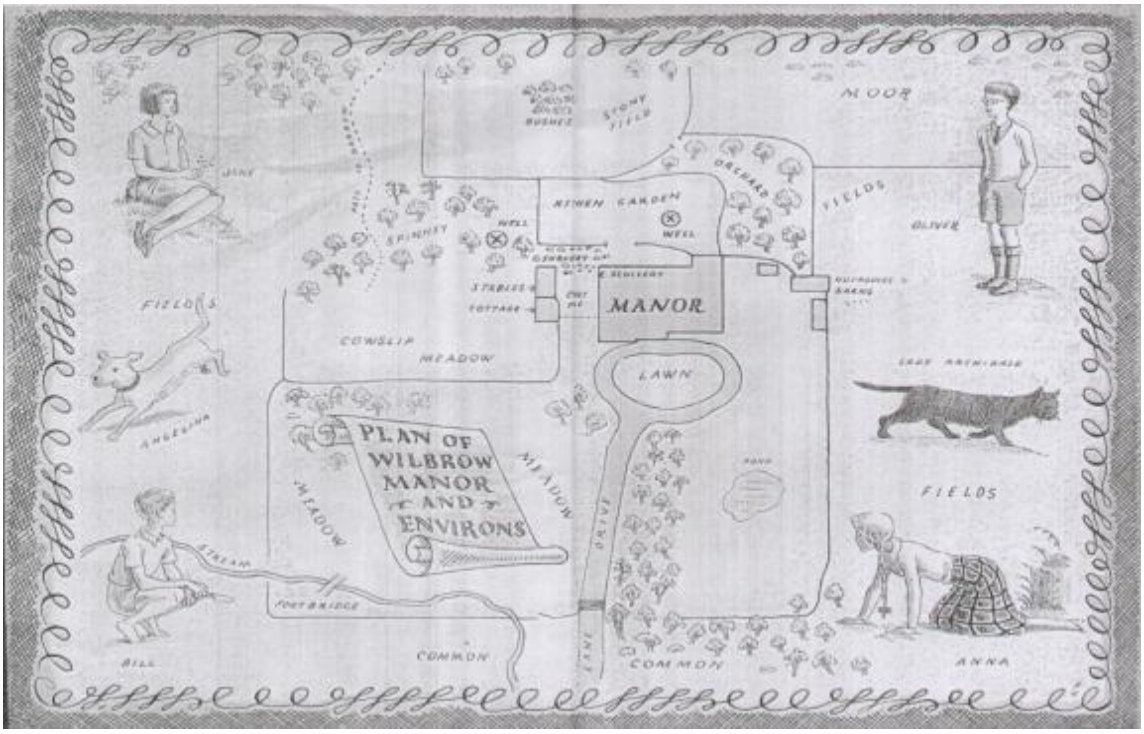


Figure 4.7: Endpapers by Harold Jones for M. E. Atkinson's, *Mystery Manor* (London: The Bodley Head1937).

Although Jane's head is level with Oliver's, she is seated and in fact all the other children are either seated, crouched or crawling. Moreover, all the children are looking down onto the map from each corner, as is the reader, thereby establishing a form of shared dominance over the terrain of the novel, both physically and symbolically. The bird's-eye map also reduces its size and therefore its relative importance to the children. This dominance is further confirmed through the composition of the map, particularly with regards to scale. All the children are disproportionately large, in comparison with the plan of 'Wilbrow Manor and the Environs'. Thus, the map works to persuade the reader of the children's power and control over the environment.

Yet, even Atkinson, not usually a particularly challenging author, draws attention to the limitations of the children's imagined exploratory conquest as conveyed through the summit scene. According to Pratt, the fantasy of dominance and the 'solemnity' of such monarch-of-all-I-survey scenes make them 'a virtual invitation to satire and

demystification'.[54] This is also evident in *Mystery Manor* for, on heading back down the mound, Oliver's field of vision narrows; he loses his expansive geographic gaze and is suddenly 'no longer a king but a normal, hungry boy' who 'took to his heels […] and ran'.[55] Oliver's 'moment of domination' is fleeting and, ultimately, a trick of perspective. Instead of presenting this summit scene as a moment of absolute triumph and power, Atkinson demonstrates its instability, drawing attention to how easily it can be undermined and how, at the very least, it needs contextualising with other perspectives and positions.

4.7 The 'Swallows and Amazons' novels and the Imperial Geographic Imagination.

More than any other camping and tramping writer, it is Arthur Ransome who engages with and interrogates campers and trampers' desire to colonise the land they explore. Drawing together all of the elements of both cartography and exploration discussed throughout this chapter, Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' series, taken as a whole, presents children with a comprehensive critique of the imperial exploratory project. One of the key ways in which he does this is through the creation of the Walker family; comprised of would-be, and actual, colonialists, the children display an instinctual imperial attitude to exploration and discovery.[56] Ransome establishes this through two key passages, which occur at the very beginning of *Swallows and Amazons*. Both passages describe the Walkers' acts of discovery on first arriving in the Lakes:

> it was then, when they first stood on the cliff and looked out over mile upon mile of water, that Titty had given the place its name. She had heard the sonnet read aloud at school, and forgotten everything in it except the picture of the explorers looking at the Pacific Ocean for the first time. She had called the promontory Darien.

[54] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 208.
[55] Atkinson, *Mystery Manor*, p. 71.
[56] Not all of Ransome's novels which engage overtly with exploration are set in the Lake District, those which are, and which are discussed here are *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), and *Swallowdale* (1931). The novels which are set outside of the Lakes, in Essex and the Hebrides respectively, and which are also discussed in this chapter are, *Secret Water* (1939) and *Great Northern?* (1947). Three subsequent novels, *Winter Holiday* (1933), *Pigeon Post* (1936), and *The Picts and the Martyrs* (1943) are also set in the Lakes but they are less overtly concerned with the issues discussed in this chapter.

> Looking down from Titty's Peak in the evening of the day on which they had come to the farmhouse where their mother had taken lodgings, they had seen the lake and inland sea. And on the lake they had seen the island. All four of them and been filled at once with the same idea. It was not just an island. It was *the* island, waiting for them. It was their island.[57]

These passages are instrumental in confirming the Walkers' status as would-be imperialists. They are described in a typical promontory scene that immediately creates a 'relation of *mastery* predicated between the seer and the seen'.[58] The Walkers are also placed in the seeing-man position which simultaneously establishes their land-scanning, exploratory gaze, and which firstly functions spatially and temporally, and secondly asserts their rights of possession. We see this clearly when the children are filled 'at once' with the belief that the island is theirs, thus they claim it spatially. Moreover, they also claim it temporally as it is 'waiting' for them therefore they claim all future possibilities which might result from their initial act of discovery. Thus, the Walkers are immediately cast in the position of the imperial geographic explorer; their discovery of new lands identifies them as incomers, all that remains is for them to document their discoveries to legitimise their claims.

It is not only their elevation which positions the Walkers as imperialist explorers, but they also name the peak 'Darien'. This naming resonates with the novel's epigraph, a quotation from John Keats' sonnet, 'On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer' (1816). It reads:

> Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
> He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
> Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien.[59]

The volta of Keats' sonnet captures an epiphany of discovery, making reference to what

[57] Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp.17 and 20.
[58] See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 204.
[59] *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 15.

Peter Whitfield describes as 'one of the legendary moments in the history of exploration' in what has been described as 'perhaps the most wonderful' period in the history of discovery.[60] Ransome chooses to begin his novel with the legendary episode of discovery from the Age of Discovery. In Keats' sonnet Cortes' 'eagle eyes' penetrate, not only the landscape, but also the world of possibility and opportunity that exploration brought to fifteenth-century Spain and Portugal.

Like Keats, the Walkers' understanding of this moment of exploration history is based on their reading. Keats' sonnet is a response to reading George Chapman's *Homer* (1616) which perhaps accounts for its factual inaccuracy.[61] Titty's understanding is also based on her reading, in this case, Keats' factually inaccurate sonnet. This sonnet is then inaccurately remembered by Titty, for, to return to the first passage quoted above, we are told that Titty had forgotten everything about the sonnet 'except the picture of the explorers looking at the Pacific Ocean for the first time'.[62] Titty's selective memory first suggests that she, like others, remembers the parts of exploratory history that suit her, but most importantly it shows that her understanding of exploratory history is fundamentally literary. Her geographic imagination, represented here through her poetic and romantic understanding of the crossing of the Isthmus of Panama, is the product of her reading. This results in an inaccurate and highly selective blend of factual knowledge and romanticism.

The immediate sense of power that the Walkers' felt on the promontory is extended by Ransome through their equally instinctual desire to survey, name and map the area. At the beginning of the novel, Mrs Jackson, their host for the holiday, lends them a map of the lake from a guide book but Titty rejects this saying that 'there could not be any charts' as they were going into unexplored territory. [63] Although John is happy to take the map because they 'ought to have a chart of some kind,' he is also adamant that this one will 'probably be all wrong, and it won't have the right names'. John's reference to the chart not bearing the 'right names' reveals the importance of naming to the process of their

[60] Peter Whitfield, *New Found Lands Maps in the History of Exploration* (London: British Library, 1998), p. 67 and M. D. Synge, *A Book of Discovery: the history of the world's exploration from the earliest times to the finding of the South Pole* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939), p. 138.
[61] It was Balboa, not Cortes, who first crossed the Isthmus of Panama.
[62] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 17.
[63] All quotations from Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 33.

orientation in a strange environment. As J. S Keates observes, 'the names of places in the immediate environment are an important element in a person's consciousness of self-location' and re-naming demonstrates the Walkers' attempts to locate themselves in the environment.[64] However, John continues saying that 'We'll make our own names, of course', the additional comment 'of course' conveying the instinctual imperial assumptions of the Walker children. The Walkers' preoccupation with naming serves to confirm their authority by closing and claiming the territory which their expansive gaze initially opened but it also reveals their naivety.

The scene of the children's 'parley' in chapter ten forms an unusual contact zone between the 'explorers', namely the Walkers, and the 'discovered', the Blackett girls. Unlike the cowed and easily subjugated natives, the Blacketts forcefully argue the case for their own, prior claim. Nancy asks them when they had first come 'to these seas' and 'to this island?'[65] She refutes the Walkers' assertion that they have been there for 'days and days' with the counter claim, which, unlike the Walkers' is true, that '[w]e were born on the shores of the Amazon River, which flows into this ocean. We have been coming to this island for years and years'. Nancy's language firstly mirrors and then extends the scale of the Walkers' experience and knowledge of the island and the wider geography of the area. This encounter is very different from that which Titty would recognise from any number of novels, including *Robinson Crusoe.* The Blackett girls certainly do not lie on the floor and place the Walkers' feet on their heads.

In addition, Nancy quickly disabuses the Walkers of both the concept of the island as empty and their belief in their rights, as explorers, to claim it through naming. When she asks what the name of the island is, John responds:

[64] J. S. Keates, *Understanding Maps* (1982; Harlow: Longman Limited, 1996), p. 81.
[65] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 118.

> ‘We haven’t yet given it a name,’ said John.
> ‘It is called Wild Cat Island, Uncle Jim called it that, because it belonged to us. That shows you whose island it is.’
> ‘But it’s our island now,’ said John. ‘It was uninhabited when we came and put our tents up here, and you can’t turn us out.[66]

Even when the children have become firm friends, Ransome still returns to the difficulties inherent in re-imagining and overwriting existing cultures, a process which Raymond Craib associates directly with the colonialist enterprise.[67] The night before the Blacketts are due to camp on the island, John tells Titty that they must make their chart today because ‘[t]he Amazons will be here tomorrow, and they’ve got their own names for everywhere’.[68] John clearly feels anxious that the process of re-naming has to be legitimised in their map if they are to successfully re-imagine the Lakes as they choose. John’s insistence of logging their discoveries on the map shows his understanding of what Pratt refers to as the ‘ideology of discovery’ meaning that discovery has no existence until it is recorded and made real through ‘a name on a map, a report to the Royal Geographical Society, the Foreign Office, the London Mission Society, a diary a lecture, a travel book’.[69]

At the end of the novel Titty’s suggestion that they rename Cormorant Island as Treasure Island is firmly rejected by Peggy, who tells her to ‘Look here’ and points out that ‘We call it Cormorant Island too’. [70] The result is a negotiated agreement that the island will keep its original name, but that a cross will be marked on the map with a note saying ‘Treasure found here’. In this way, Ransome suggests that there is a great deal of vulnerability surrounding the Walkers’ imperial project; firstly, their authority must be fragile if it has to be immediately legitimised and secondly, because it is successfully challenged. This raises doubts as to the stability and sustainability of the project altogether.

[66] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 118.
[67] Craib, ‘Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain,’ p. 10.
[68] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 269.
[69] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 204.
[70] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 342.

Ransome also challenges the authority of the Walkers' map by indicating its limitations; it is a map produced by newcomers to the area and, as such, it reflects their limited knowledge. This is clear when, at the end of the novel, Nancy admires their map saying that they have made a 'jolly good chart,' but that there are 'lots of names you haven't got'.[71] Thus, the instrument of their integration into the Lakes also confirms their status as outsiders and raises doubts as to the strength of their claims. Therefore, despite the Walkers' initial confidence in their exploratory and imperial authority, Ransome suggests by the end of the novel that beyond the borders of exploration history and narratives, rights to land must be negotiated rather than assumed. This lesson is also reflected in the complete map in *Secret Water* (Figure 4.9), which integrates the Walkers' re-imagining of the area with 'native' details such as 'Mastodon Island'. Significantly, the legend on the map also reads 'The Secret Swallows Amazons and Eels Archipelago Expedition,' which reflects the negotiated presence of the imperial explorers (Walkers), the Amazonian pirates (Blacketts), and the 'natives' (Mastodon and the Eels). The 'Mastodon' is a boy called Don who lives temporarily on the island in the remains of an old boat. Titty initially thinks he is a mastodon due to the footprints his 'splatchers' leave in the mud and, as his name is Don, the nickname stays. The Eels are three siblings, Daisy and twins, 'Dum and Dee' who are regular visitors to the island. They initially resent the presence of the Walkers and Blacketts and try to drive them away before they become friends. Significantly the map is the product of co-operation between all of these groups, for the Walkers cannot complete it on their own.

Ransome further problematises the imperial exploratory attitudes of the Walkers by making them understand how it feels to have their land explored by others. For the duration of the second novel, *Swallowdale* (1931), the children camp in the valley which they name Swallowdale as they are without a boat for the majority of the story. When the *Swallow* is finally returned to the Walkers, they sail triumphantly back to Wild Cat Island to camp there for the remainder of the holiday. Both the Walkers and the Blacketts are aghast to see smoke rising: someone else is on their island. Nancy says that they have 'got to drive them

[71] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 343.

out' and that 'if we don't it'll never be our island anymore'.[72] On landing, Titty is also bitter that 'they've put their tents in our very camp.' A reader does not need a very long memory to recall the Walkers doing the same thing in the previous book. The stranger is actually Captain Flint, who has transferred their belongings and lit a welcome fire for them. As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, the novel closes with Susan Walker feeding sticks into the fire, symbolically claiming the space as their own. However, the moment of shock and fear when the children thought their ownership had been usurped is an uncomfortable reminder that their possession of the island is vulnerable.

This sense of vulnerability is not resolved for the Walkers and, as a result, the Walkers continue to feel a sense of rivalry with the Blacketts, although Nancy and Peggy remain oblivious to this. This is particularly true for Titty, the most exploratory minded child, who constantly wants to 'discover' something that the Blacketts do not already know about. For example, in *Swallowdale* Titty is eager to keep her discovery of the new valley a secret from the Blackett girls. She says that:

> They can't say it's their valley. And no one knows about the cave. In a way it's even better than Wild Cat Island. There's not even a fireplace to show anyone's been here before. We discovered it for ourselves.[73]

The anxiety that Titty displays here reveals that her exploratory understanding is based on competition, making the *first* claim and the withholding of knowledge to acquire power. This is a position that any fifteenth-century Spanish or Portuguese explorer would have understood well. As Harley observes: '[f]or the cautious monarchy determined to preserve its power, map secrecy came to be regarded as a prudent policy of good government'.[74] This desire was clearly evident in Lyon's Riach children and it also there in Titty. Titty's desire to keep the discovery of the valley secret betrays the fact that she views the Amazons, at this point her friends, as rivals for power and control over the land.

[72]Ransome, *Swallowdale*, pp. 450 and 449.
[73] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 157.
[74] Harley, 'Silences and Secrecy. The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe,' in J. B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography* ed. by Paul Laxton (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp 84-107(p. 91).

Even at this stage in their friendship, as local children with local knowledge, the Blacketts are still a challenge to Titty's rights to geographic discovery. This is plainly shown in the following conversation in *Swallowdale* when Titty says that she and Roger are going to explore:

> 'Where are you going to explore?' asked Nancy.
> 'We're going up the beck,' said Titty.
> 'You'll only come to the road,' said Peggy.[75]

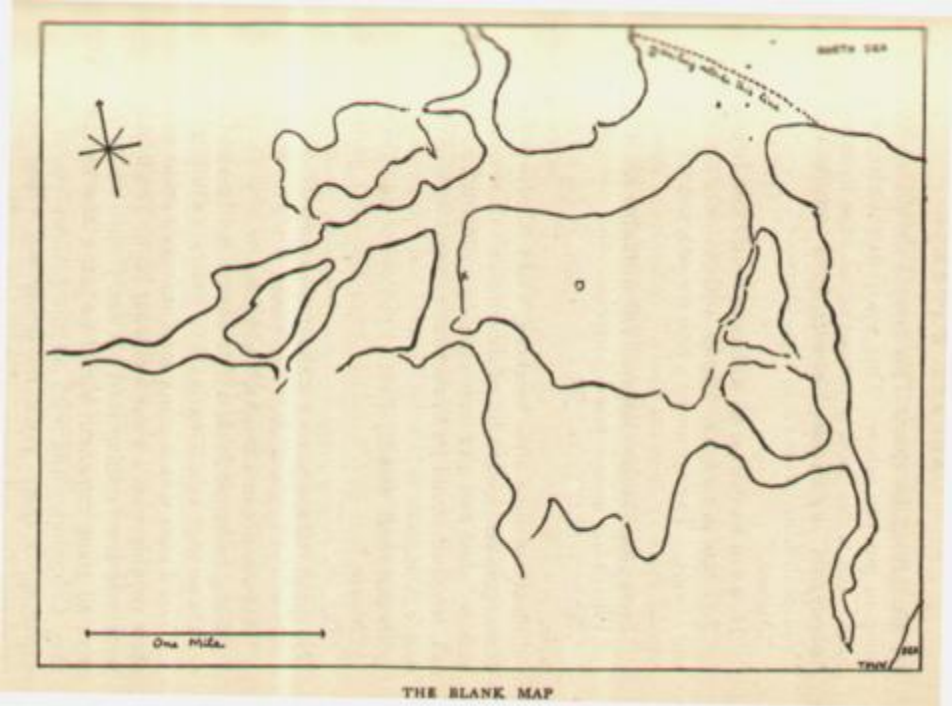
The local, insider knowledge of Nancy and Peggy creates a barrier for Titty's imaginative exploration, physically symbolised in the road. Peggy's superior, local knowledge also negates Titty's expansive exploratory gaze; it is a physical barrier to Titty's imaginative geographical exploration. Titty, the most romantically minded of the Walkers, often falls foul of such barriers and she bitterly regrets the fact that it seems as though everything in the world has already been discovered. As such she perfectly embodies Peter Turchi's observation in *Maps of the Imagination* (2004) that **'**[w]e strike out for what we believe to be uncharted waters, only to find ourselves sailing in someone else's bathtub'.[76] Ransome repeatedly plunges Titty in this bathtub, forcing her to realise, as Turchi argues, that there is nothing new to discover 'but the limitations of our own experience and understanding'. This is most evident at her moment of greatest triumph, when she proudly shows Jim Blackett Peter Duck's cave. He then tells her that he used the cave when he was a boy, which is proved through the inscription of 'Ben Gunn' in the rock face thus undermining her celebration of what is still a personal discovery.

In contrast, the Blackett girls have a far more fluid understanding of exploration and discovery. They are excited by Titty's discovery and display no signs of envy or disappointment that they had not found it. Moreover, while Titty is lamenting the fact that 'all the discoveries in the world had already been made,' Nancy tells her that '[t]here's nothing you can't do'.[77] Titty can 'discover the sources of the Amazon River' and she can

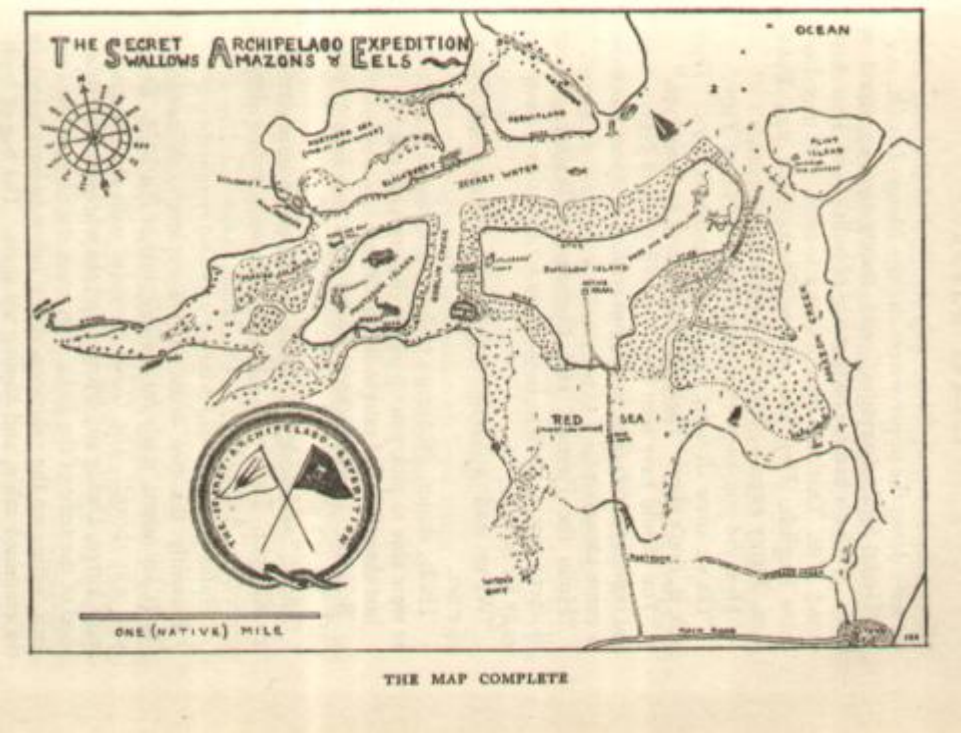
[75] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 54.
[76] Peter Turchi, *Maps of the Imagination: the Writer as Cartographer* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2004) p. 13.
[77] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, pp. 169 , 139, 139, 193 and 338 .

'discover us', meaning the Blacketts. There is a sense that multiple and repeated acts of exploration and discovery are possible, all of which are equally meaningful. Ransome emphasises this fact during the episode when the children finally climb Kanchenjunga, on reaching the summit they find a note written in 1901 signed by the Blackett's mother, father and uncle saying 'We climbed the Matterhorn'. Though, rather than this being a disappointment, this shared act of exploration, separated by almost thirty years, suggests that the possibilities of exploration are endless. The Blacketts' climbing of Kanchenjunga has the same significance as that of their parents.

Turning to examine the presentation of maps in Ransome's *Secret Water* (1939) it is clear that their father has also influenced their attitudes to exploration. The novel describes in detail their exploration and charting of an uninhabited island in Hamford Water, Essex, where they are 'marooned' by their father. Whilst charting the island, they find mysterious footprints in the mud and encounter the 'native' Mastodon and the Eels. Their father has given them the task of mapping the islands, and the book is filled with eleven maps in total, illustrating this process. It is worth considering though the first and last maps in this sequence (Figures 4.8 and 4.9).



THE BLANK MAP



Figures 4.8 and 4.9: 'The Blank Map' and 'The Map Complete' by Arthur Ransome for *Secret Water* (1939; London: Jonathan Cape, 1942),pp. 28 and 375.

The first map (Figure 4.8) confirms the fact that the Walkers' geographical exploratory imagination is founded upon the idea of the blank space on the map; This imagination is significantly shared by their father, a captain in the Royal Navy, who initially draws the blank map for them, saying 'it's the sort of map people might have of a place that had never been explored,' and that they will be just a 'wee bit better off than Columbus'.[78] The vague outline and 'empty' space on the map presents endless possibilities for the children and is in stark contrast to the named, defined and claimed territory, depicted in 'The Map Complete' (Figure 4.9). It is surprising that the Walkers are still so willing to accept the idea of an empty space, given the way in which this assumption was challenged in *Swallows and Amazons*. This episode, and this map is interesting in that it does signal a development in the Walkers' geographical and exploratory imaginations, graphically represented through the differences between 'The Map Complete' in *Secret Water* and Steven Spurrier's map for the first novel *Swallows and Amazons* (Figure 4.10).

[78] Arthur Ransome, *Secret Water* (1939; London: Jonathan Cape, 1942), pp. 28 and 30.

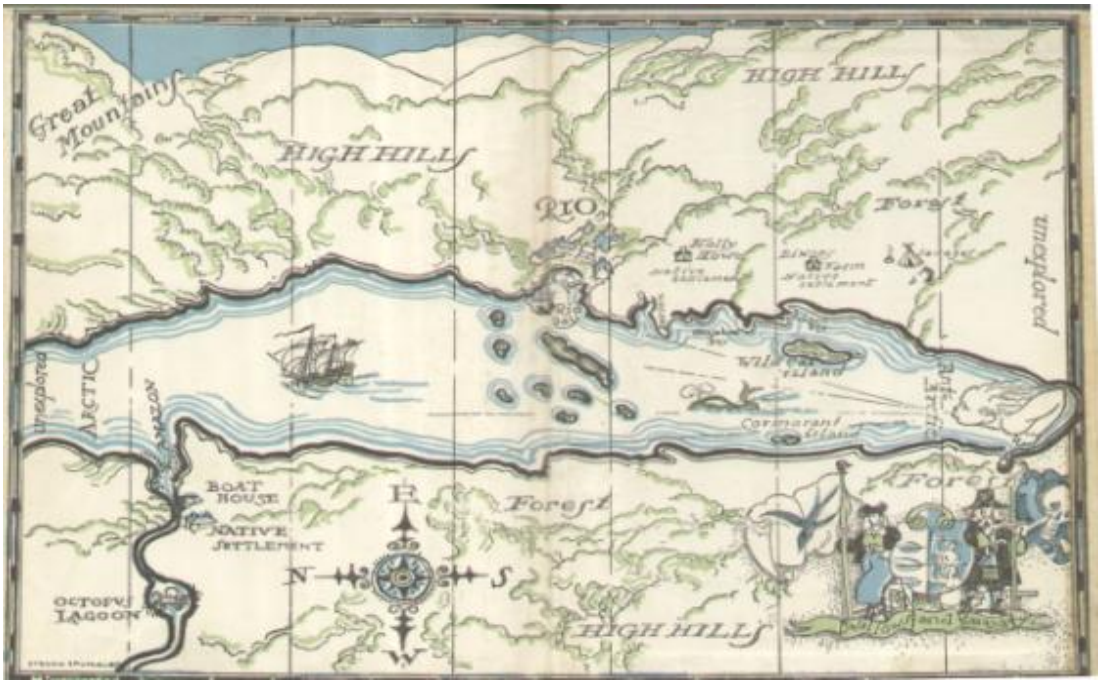


Figure 4.10: Endpaper by Stephen Spurrier for Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007).

With its skull and crossbones, pirate ships, blowing whale and personified southerly wind, Spurrier's map literally maps the imagination of the Swallows and Amazons, and to a lesser extent, the narrative of Ransome's first novel. In comparison, 'The Map Complete' is a far more professional looking document which is unsurprising given the influence of Mr Walker on the whole expedition. The overall impression is that this is a far more scientific map, which signals a shift within the novels from overtly imperial exploration and discovery to the scientific. According to John Pickles, 'mapping codes and skills have to be culturally reproduced' and so we can read Mr Walker's influence in this novel as representing the desire to integrate his children into the codes and skills associated historically with his service.[79] It is Mr Walker who has 'put together' the equipment for their map-making, which includes 'a drawing board, lots of paper, pencils, a bottle of Indian ink, parallel rulers, drawing compasses, a protractor, a box of drawing pins'.[80] R. A. Skelton's observation of Captain James Cook's voyages, that they may 'without exaggeration be called the first scientific voyages of discovery,' signals the developing movement in Ransome's novels towards scientific discovery. This forms the basis of his

[79] Pickles, *History of Spaces*, p. 61.
[80] Ransome, *Secret Water*, p. 55.

final novel *Great Northern?* (1947). [81]

It is unsurprising that Ransome signals this shift in exploration from the acquisitive to the scientific as it reflects wider attitudes towards exploration of the time. It is debatable whether the Walker children ever really embrace this shift; after all Cook's voyages were still based on the assumption that the people and places he discovered, however scientifically recorded, could still be named and claimed for Britain. It is telling that in his last novel, Ransome not only changes narrative perspective from that of the Walkers, the imperial outsiders, to the native insiders, in this instance Scottish Highlanders, but also places Dick Callum at the centre of the narrative and its exploration.

Ransome's shift towards scientific rather than imperial and maritime exploration is subtly developed across a number of novels, beginning with the introduction of Dick Callum in *Winter Holiday* (1933). Dorothea's introduction of her brother as an 'astronomer' marks a new phase of the 'Swallows and Amazons' series, and the fact that the next novel *Coot Club* (1934) describes the adventures of the Callums, and not the Walkers and Blacketts, has been interpreted as evidence that Ransome's interest in the Swallows and Amazons and waned and transferred to the Callums. Although the next novel *Pigeon Post* (1936) saw all the children re-united in the Lakes, it is difficult to disagree with Peter Hunt when he says 'the book really belongs to Dick'. [82] When all three novels are considered together, that is *Winter Holiday*, *Coot Club*, and *Pigeon Post*, there is a clear movement away from the imperial and maritime paradigms, epitomised in figures such as Columbus and Balboa, that dominate the earlier novels. In *Winter Holiday*, it is Dick and his sister, not the Walkers, who stay on Uncle Jim's ice-bound houseboat, renamed after Fridtjof Nansen's boat, the *Fram*. Nansen's classic work on scientific polar exploration, *Farthest North* (1897) is the foundational text of this novel. In *Coot Club* the narrative focus is on wildlife preservation, a subject that none of the Walkers expresses any interest in, and which establishes Dick's keen interest in bird watching. In *Pigeon Post*, it is Dick Callum that the others rely on to direct their excavating and mining.

[81] R. A. Skelton, *Explorers' Maps Chapters in the Cartographic Record of Geographical Discovery* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 243.
[82] Peter Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), p. 113.

This movement from the imperial and maritime to the scientific is fully realized in the final novel of the series *Great Northern?* (1947). The final 'Swallows and Amazons' novel is fascinating because at first glance it appears to repeat many of the exploratory assumptions present in the first two novels. This time all of the children are transported to the Scottish Highlands during a voyage with Captain Flint aboard the *Sea Bear*. The children once again cast themselves in the role of explorers, at least the younger ones do; the older children, John, Susan, Nancy and Peggy are initially only interested in the ship and sailing. However, by removing the children to a new environment, Ransome is able to engage in problems of imperial exploration more directly. Ultimately he suggests that it is simply no longer acceptable to adopt an imperialist attitude to geographic exploration, where the 'natives' are there to be dominated and land is there to be discovered and claimed. The relocation from the Lakes to the Scottish Highlands is vital as, by the final novel in the series, it is difficult to still view the children as imperial incomers.

The Walkers are immediately positioned as outsiders by shifting the novel's perspective away from the explorers and encouraging the reader to view their 'discovery' from the perspective of the Highlanders. Ransome signals this new perspective from the very beginning of the novel, which acts in parallel with the opening to *Swallows and Amazons*:

> On a hill above the cliff a boy in Highland dress turned from watching the deer in the valley to look out over the sea. He saw a sail far away. It was no more than a white speck in the distance and presently he turned his back on it and settled down again to watch the deer.[83]

This time it is the Swallows and Amazons who are caught in the Ian's gaze from high on the promontory; they are subject to him. In a complete reversal of the sense of importance bestowed on them in the opening to *Swallows and Amazons*, here the great explorers are merely a 'speck in the distance,' from which the unimpressed boy turns away.

Ransome also extends this changing impression of the children through his description of their actual arrival on land. The *Sea Bear* is caught in a fog with the result that '[n]o one on

[83] Arthur Ransome, *Great Northern?* (1947: London: Jonathan Cape, 2009), p. 11.

land saw the *Sea Bear* lower her sails. No one heard the quiet throb of her engine as she crept slowly on towards the cliff'.[84] The result of this is disquieting; it is as though they have masked their arrival and consequently the reader's impression of their subsequent exploration is completely different. Their outsider status is firmly established as the land is already associated with the boy; therefore the reader is aware that all subsequent references to the area as uninhabited are mistaken. Ransome makes it quite clear that the idea that they are in an 'uninhabited' valley is complete nonsense. For example, when walking around they leave a cart track because it reminds them that they 'were not the first to discover the valley'.[85] Once again this marks Ransome's subtle blend of imagination and reality as Roger is disgruntled to find that a local dog keeps barking, which he says will 'stir everybody up [and] they'll come pouring out to see what it's barking at'. The result will be that 'our valley won't be uninhabited anymore'. Throughout the novel Roger persists in trying to sustain the fantasy of the discovery of new lands when after finding Ian's lookout post, Roger constantly refers to it as '[m]y Pict House' despite finding things such as Ian's stash of chocolate there. The consequence of the children's insistence that they are in uninhabited lands means that they unwittingly disturb the grazing deer which are in season. To the local people this seems 'the very meanest of tricks'. The children are frankly a menace; they scare the deer whilst 'stalking' them because Roger dangerously dislodges rocks and whilst using a stone as a hammer, which he beats 'loudly on every rock, he passes,' he causes the deer to panic and run.

4.8 A New Perspective on Discovery: *Great Northern?* (1947)

It is clear that the children's imperial exploratory behaviour, which dominates the earlier books of the series, is not only unsustainable but damaging. As discussed earlier in relation to *Swallows and Amazons*, this behaviour was shown to be based on a blend of historical fact and literature, neither of which was always recalled very accurately. Ransome approaches this inaccuracy directly through Roger's disappearance towards the end of the novel. Susan worries whether he will get into trouble with the local people, because he is so cheeky and hopes that he will be alright. Titty responds that:

[84] Arthur Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 25.
[85] Ransome, *Great Northern?*, pp. 69, 67, 199, 71, 73 and 75.

> ‘Explorers always are […] except the ones that go into the Arctic and places like that, and even bits of the Arctic belong to Eskimos and Lapp. Roger’ll remember Captain Cook. He’ll keep to the right side of the natives.’
>
> ‘Captain Cook got on the wrong side of the natives,’ said Dorothea.[86]

Whereas, in earlier novels, Ransome probed and challenged the assumptions upon which the Walkers based their exploration, here they are presented as misguided, possessing a narrow and ultimately flawed understanding of exploration. The narrowness of this understanding is depicted through Roger’s refusal to recognise the validity of Dick’s exploration, a fact which the other children also take some time to recognise. As already stated, Dick’s status within the series, and within Ransome’s probing of exploration and discovery, develops across the novels as Dick’s influence upon the children’s exploration increases. Where he was introduced as an astronomer in *Winter Holiday,* in this book he is now ‘Professor’ and ‘ship’s Naturalist’.[87] At an early stage in the novel, Roger is amused by Dick’s preoccupation with bird watching and Ransome writes that:

> Roger had said something about exploration being wasted on Dick, and Dorothea was explaining that there were more kinds of exploration than one and that birds, for Dick, were a part of exploration that really mattered, and that anyway Dick was as good an explorer as Roger.

Indeed, the remainder of the novel sets about demonstrating this because, in fact, Dick is the only character who ever makes a discovery that is a genuine first.[88]

It is Nancy who is the first to recognise the significance of Dick’s spotting a pair of nesting

[86] Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 263.
[87] It is initially Nancy who calls Dick by these names, and it is she who immediately credits Dick with making the real discoveries of the voyage, an acknowledgement which completely changes Dick’s position within the group, *Great Northern?*,p. 127 subsequent quotations from p. 69.
[88] Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 69.

Great Northern Divers which are not supposed to be found in Britain at that time of year. The importance of Dick's findings need to be explained to the other children and it is Nancy who does this in a passage which begins to bridge the divide between their earlier imperial exploration and Dick's scientific exploration and discovery. Nancy says:

> Suppose Columbus had sailed to within sight of America and then came tamely home with nothing to show it was there! Of course he must get his photographs. Jibbooms and bobstays! We were just cruising. This makes it a voyage of discovery. Dick's made the discovery. The cruise of the *Sea Bear* will go down in history. It'll be remembered forever and ever, just because she had the Professor aboard. Good for the Ship's naturalist. It's like the Voyage of the Beagle. Dick's a sort of Darwin.[89]

The repetition of 'discovery' conveys the surprise and excitement that Nancy feels. Until now, the children have needed to take determined measures to sustain their imaginative discoveries, such as the re-drawing of maps. None of this is necessary now as Dick's scientific exploration has resulted in a genuine discovery which their imperial exploration failed to do. At this point in the novel Ransome has completed his shift towards scientific exploration and discovery which is sustained throughout the rest of the novel. Ransome completes this shift in perspective writing that '[a] miracle had happened. For the first time not Nancy, nor John, nor even Captain Flint was the leader of the expedition'.[90] It is Dick, the scientist, who leads the rest of the exploration and the novel assuming what Pratt describes as the role of the 'naturalist-hero'- a figure of 'conspicuous innocence' who was motivated to explore for the disinterested 'pursuit of knowledge' in opposition to the interested 'pursuit of wealth'.[91] This however appears to be far too simple a distinction to be made and Ransome does spend the rest of the novel probing and testing the innocence and disinterested nature of Dick's discovery.

There is no doubt that Dick's discovery of the divers threatens the bird's safety and this is a direct result of Dick's desire to satisfy his own longing for knowledge. On first discovering

[89]Ransome, *Great Northern?*, pp. 127 and 165.
[90] Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 165.
[91] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.56.

the birds, Dick makes an illustration of them, which he later compares with the picture in his *Pocket Book of Birds*. He is still unsure if he has identified the birds correctly and so goes to visit Mr Jemmerling, who Dick thinks is also an ornithologist and who is cruising around the area in his hi-tech boat which is fitted out for this purpose. When Dick goes to see him though he is shocked to discover that Jemmerling is actually an egg collector, who is looking for eggs to complete his collection, the Jemmerling Collection which he claims is the largest private collection in England. Crucially, Dick realises that Jemmerling is a collector before he tells him about the Great Northern divers. Ransome writes that Dick 'was a scientist first of all' and that '[h]e had to know'.[92] The result of this is that Dick places the birds in real danger, as Jemmerling sets off to kill them and to collect the eggs. The consequences of Dick's actions are made clear when Dick later tries to persuade Captain Flint to postpone going home in order to stay and protect the birds as Jennerling is going to kill them. Captain Flint replies quite rightly that Jemmerling can't kill them 'if you haven't told him where they are,' which, of course, he has; this is despite Jennerling having shown him a dead bird. The novel unsurprisingly ends with Jemmerling's plans thwarted and Dick and Titty rowing the rescued eggs back to their parents. Dick succeeds in taking a photograph which proves that the Great Northern divers are nesting in the UK, and it is his name, not Jemmerling's that will now be associated with this new discovery. However without Dick's blind determination to prove a new scientific fact though the birds would never have been threatened in the first place.

Discussing Ransome's first novel *Swallows and Amazons,* Victor Watson writes that the theme of the novel is newness and that 'Every island, every river, every inlet and bay, is a discovery. Eden lies within this story' and that the children 'are like Adam and Eve naming the beasts and the flowers'. Continuing, he describes the novel as 'a very gentle book - a book relating the two themes of innocence and discovery'.[93] Watson is absolutely right to connect the themes of innocence and discovery but we should not for a moment think that they are synonymous. Acts of discovery and the desire to make them and map them cannot be removed from their literary, historical and ideological contexts, which, in fact, Ransome's Walker children never try to do. Ultimately it is that fact that their exploration

[92] Ransome, *Great Northern?,* pp.117 and 129.
[93] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction,* pp. 13 and 15.

and discovery is not innocent but romantic, imperialistic and scientific in equal measures which makes the series a fascinating and sustained discourse on the development and history of exploration and discovery. In all the novels discussed in this chapter, what is apparent is that the desire to explore and map in camping and tramping fiction is deeply rooted in the children's desire to negotiate a relationship with the land. There is a connection to be drawn here between the re-imagining of the countryside as an empty, tranquil space which was discussed in the previous chapter and the exploration and mapping discussed here. Both were attempts by campers and trampers to gain power over the countryside they were exploring. As was argued in chapter two, the frame within which campers and trampers attempted to do this, namely the Arcadian pastoral mode, often served to problematise their desire for authority and control. It frequently emphasised campers and trampers' own strangeness within the countryside which was a fact that they usually tried to avoid recognizing. When camping and tramping exploration and mapping are interrogated as they have been here a dialogue begins to appear between the quest for power and the desire to belong. It is significant that Ransome ultimately undermines the overtly imperial exploration of the Walker children. It has been argued by some that the interwar preoccupation with the countryside was a response to the demise of the British Empire which was seen, in some quarters, as costly and problematic.[94] What camping and tramping novels did was to examine the imperial project from within the British countryside. If Britons did indeed want to re-connect with the land, it is clear that the possessive controlling attitude encapsulated in imperial exploration would prove unhelpful.

[94] While this is not Andrew Thompson's argument he presents a useful summary of attitudes to empire after 1918. See Andrew S .Thompson, *Imperial Britain: the Empire in British politics, c. 1880- 1932*.(Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), pp. 161-177.

Chapter Five – Service, Sexism and Class Relations in the Family Sailing Story

5.1 The Sailing Family

The focus of the final chapter of this thesis is the family sailing story, of which Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* (1930) is the key example. Although Ransome's novels have been discussed throughout this thesis, this chapter offers a different reading of his novels alongside other examples of similar stories. While acknowledging the inclusive aspects of the sailing story, this chapter argues that these stories were still divisive, both in terms of class and gender. Although girls and working-class figures appeared in family sailing stories, the novels often and subtly naturalised models of middle-class male authority. The first part of this chapter examines and challenges the inclusiveness of the family sailing story through close readings of Arthur Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' novels (1930-1947), and the now less well known stories of Aubrey de Sélincourt (1940-1949) and Gilbert Hackforth-Jones (1951-1961).

The second section of this chapter examines the relationship between the sailing family and the Royal Navy. While some critics of Ransome's novels have identified the importance of the Royal Navy to the Walker family, its centrality has never been interrogated. It will be argued that this type of story drew upon the model of leadership that was mythologised in the Nelson Tradition from the late 1890s onwards. This chapter examines the sailing family and the Royal Navy as institutions with common values from within which, as Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjur write in *Language and Control in Children's Literature* (1996), authors were able to explore their 'world view.'[1] According to Adam Nicholson navies 'reflect the societies from which they come' and it is well documented that at the beginning of the twentieth century the Royal Navy was still organised along rigid hierarchical class lines with regard to authority and command. Life aboard a ship in the

[1]Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjur, *Language and Control in Children's Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 31.

Royal Navy appeared to offer the model of an ideal class-based British society.[2] With its emphasis on character and selflessness, thought by some to be lacking in the working classes, the Nelson Tradition provided the perfect means by which both the Royal Navy and some children's writers could promote models of authority within a class system.[3]

It could easily be argued that family sailing stories are essentially inclusive narratives. As the name implies, these were stories that were usually inter-generational, frequently depicting parents and children sailing together, or alluding to nautical parents who did not feature in the narrative directly. Often, though not always, the family sailing story was set in the school holidays and blended technical sailing information with narratives that showed children sailing dinghies on their own, or cruising in larger vessels under adult supervision. They featured a wide range of characters, including those local to the area. Consequently, the stories are populated with many different types of figures; from middle-class children on extended sailing holidays to local children from working-class sailing backgrounds; from active and retired fishermen to absent fathers serving in the Royal Navy, uncles retired from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), and mothers who would sail if they were not busy looking after their youngest child.

Sailing was not only a familial hobby; whole families living on boats were increasingly depicted as both economically prudent and respectable. Looking back to 1918, writers such as Cyril Ionides, in *A Floating Home* (1918), suggested that living aboard a boat was an economically sound decision for hard-pressed middle-class families struggling to meet the demands of school fees.[4] This reflected the desire of many middle-class families, post-1918 to keep up the appearance of being middle-class, in spite of an initial post-war reduction in real income. Ross McKibbin writes that this was often centred on the twin issues of school fees and home ownership.[5] These twin preoccupations also materialised after the Second World War, as is evident in Frank Knight's, *The Family on the Tide* (1956). In this novel

[2] Adam Nicholson, *Men of Honour :Trafalgar and the Making of the English Hero* (London: Harper Collins, 2005), p. 15.
[3] See Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918 – 1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 69.
[4] Cyril Ionides, J. B. Atkins, *A Floating Home*, illus., by Arnold Bennet (1918; London: Chatto and Windus, 1919), p. ix.
[5] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 53.

the Collis family buy an old holiday yacht to live on, as it is a more affordable option than a house. Knight and Ionides each stress that life on a boat was both respectable and affordable, negating the idea that boats and sailing were the playthings of the rich. Two further texts, one intended originally for adults but recommended to children and the second written for children but re-published for adults reflects the cross generational appeal of the sailing family. The first, *The Cruise of the Teddy* (1933), was written by Norwegian, Erling Tambs and described Tambs' decision to buy and provision the *Teddy* for £500 and to sail it to the South Seas with his wife, and subsequently their children. In his introduction to Tambs' book, Ransome observed that one of its 'chief merits' was that 'it does not take a sailor to enjoy it' and that it is really 'a chronicle of domestic life'.[6] His wife is a supportive figure willing, according to Tambs, to '[stand] by my side in the cockpit, helping me to handle the sheets, her nails all torn and bleeding' and who, despite seeing the dangers they faced 'uttered no word of complaint'. Their son Tony, brought up on the *Teddy* becomes a 'regular sailor' who 'even in his sleep kept hold of the sides of his cot' which 'developed his muscles' (Figure 5.1).

The Mate

Figure 5.1: Tony, the Mate of the *Teddy* from Erling Tambs, *The Cruise of the Teddy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933), p. 68.

[6] Erling Tambs, *The Cruise of the Teddy*, introduction by Arthur Ransome (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933), pp. 9, 10, 37 and 76.

The second book, *Lis Sails the Atlantic* (1935) was written by eleven-year-old Lis Andersen and described in *Junior Bookshelf* as 'an account of a voyage made by herself and her family in her father's old fishing-smack'. [7] Published initially for children in 1935, Andersen's book was republished as part of Rupert Hart-Davies' Mariners' Library in 1953, as was *The Cruise of the Teddy* in 1949, suggesting that the sailing family continued to be of interest to both children and adults.

5.2 Communities of Sailors

Family sailing stories depicted sailing as affordable for all, through its combination of working, middle and upper-class sailors. Aubrey de Sélincourt's sailing stories and Arthur Ransome's *Coot Club* (1934), and later *The Big Six* (1940) all depicted sailors from different economic backgrounds. Although little read today, Frank Eyre observed in 1952 that Aubrey de Sélincourt's family sailing stories 'attained a popularity approaching [Arthur Ransome's]'.[8] The first novel in the series, *Family Afloat* (1940), introduced the Rutherfords as a family of sailors. Anne and Elizabeth Rutherford, described as having 'nautical parents', are taught to sail by their father on board their yacht, *Tessa*, accompanied on their cruise from the Isle of Wight to France, by their mother, and a distant cousin, nicknamed 'the Bosun'.[9] The novels clearly depict the Rutherfords as middle-, rather than upper-middle-class. De Sélincourt indicates that the family have to manage their money carefully in order to sail. For example, the seventh novel, *Kestrel* (1949) opens with the statement that, as a school master, Mr Rutherford was 'always poor' and the novel concentrates on their efforts to earn money in order to buy a new boat.[10] The second novel *Three Green Bottles* (1941) set at Creeksea, on the south-east coast of England introduces a second family, the Chales. De Sélincourt indicates the different economic and social status of the two families through their boats. Whereas Mr Rutherford's first boat, *Tessa*, is a twelve-foot yacht, Mr Chale owns a thirty ton yacht, the *Ianthe* – a boat so large it requires a permanent crew member. In spite of the economic differences between them the novels

[7] Quoted from a review of Lis Andersen's *Lis sails to Tenerife* (1936) in *The Junior Bookshelf*, 1, 1, (November 1936), 35.
[8] Frank Eyre, *20th Century Children's Books* (London: The British Council, 1952), p. 58.
[9] Aubrey de Sélincourt, *One More Summer*, illus., by Guy de Sélincourt (London: George Routledge, 1944), p. 32.
[10] Aubrey de Sélincourt, *Kestrel*, illus., by Guy de Sélincourt (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 8.

chart the progression of their friendship, presented as the result of their shared love of sailing.

Many family sailing stories also depicted sailing friendships between people from middle- and working-class backgrounds. De Sélincourt's novels for example feature working-class sailors such as Joe Clinch, a working lobster-fisherman introduced in the fourth novel in the series, *One More Summer* (1944) set at Salthead in Devon. By the fifth novel, *Calicut Lends a Hand* (1946) Joe is described as 'a friend of theirs' likewise, Old Wilkinson is described as 'a friend of Robin's who used to teach him splicing in the winter' and from whose 'oyster-smack' the children now practice diving.[11] De Sélincourt uses these friendships to introduce working-class figures which serve to create a sense of authentic context to the families' sailing. This authenticity, coupled with the sense that sailing drew across members of all classes is also reflected in De Sélincourt's description of the boat yard at Creeksea. He writes:

> There were boats of all kinds and of all sizes in the anchorage: dinghies, half-decked sloops, little one-design racing boats, motor yachts, and cruising yachts of from three to fifty tons - some shabby, some shining; some modest and workman-like, some grand and spruce and polished; yawls, cutters, ketches; white sails and brown sails, or sails old and patched and grey; houseboats, converted whalers, smacks; odd-shaped, top-heavy, hybrid craft that only their owners thought beautiful, and here and there a twelve-metre almost too delicate and proud for a workaday world.[12]

Here the combination of 'grand' and 'simple' vessels, some designed for work and others for pleasure, functions as a metaphor for the combination of grand and simple people joined by a shared passion for sailing. In addition, the description of the busy boat yard, full of 'hybrid craft', 'converted whalers' and 'one-design racing boats,' neatly alludes to what

[11] Aubrey de Sélincourt, *Calicut Lends a Hand*, illus., by Guy de Sélincourt (London: George Routledge, 1946), pp. 159, 13 and 159.
[12] Aubrey de Sélincourt, *Three Green Bottles*, illus., by Guy de Sélincourt (London: George Routledge, 1941), p. 26.

Kevin Littlewood and Beverley Butler refer to as the 'resurgence of interest in sail after World War One'.[13] Mike Stammer has argued that this was responsible for 'the emerging body of lay enthusiasts' – an apt description of Arthur Ransome - that appeared in the interwar years and whose sustained interest can be traced through to later yacht racing at Cowes.[14] De Sélincourt chose the Isle of Wight as the home of the Rutherford family and went so far as to include episodes in Merton's yacht agency in Cowes.[15] Similarly Hackforth-Jones' 'Green Sailors' stories are based around the Isle of Wight where Uncle George lives and many scenes of yacht racing were incorporated into the narratives.[16] Descriptions of boatyards such as this are a useful indicator of the wider sailing culture of which the family sailing story was a part.

M. E. Atkinson's 1939, 'Lockett' novel *Smuggler's Gap* also demonstrates the extent to which wider maritime culture was integrated into children's literature. Set in the Scilly isles, Atkinson portrays not only a specific community that relies on sailing in order to survive but alludes to Britain's wider reliance on the sea. This maritime culture is brilliantly portrayed in Harold Jones' original artwork for the novels which clearly connotes the individual and national significance of the sea and sailing. The novel is full of scenes of local maritime life, such as trade between the islands, steamers bring visitors from the main land and local sailors, such as William who takes Bill across to Smuggler's Gap in his yawl. This local maritime culture is depicted in Jones' evocative illustrations of the busy harbour (Figure 5.2).

[13] Kevin Littlewood and Beverley Butler, *Of Ships and Stars. Maritime Heritage and the Founding of the National Maritime Museum* (London and New Brunswick NJ: The Althone Press, 1998), p. 34.
[14] Mike Stammers, 'Shiplovers, a Cultural Phenomenon of the Interwar Years', in *Mariner's Mirror*, 82, 2, (1996) 213-16 (p. 214).
[15] de Sélincourt, *Kestrel*, p. 18.
[16] See Gilbert Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors and Blue Water*, illus., by Jean Main and David Cobb (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955), pp. 92-115 and Gilbert Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors, Ahoy!, or Wanted: A Crew*, illus., by Jean Main and David Cobb (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), p. 21.

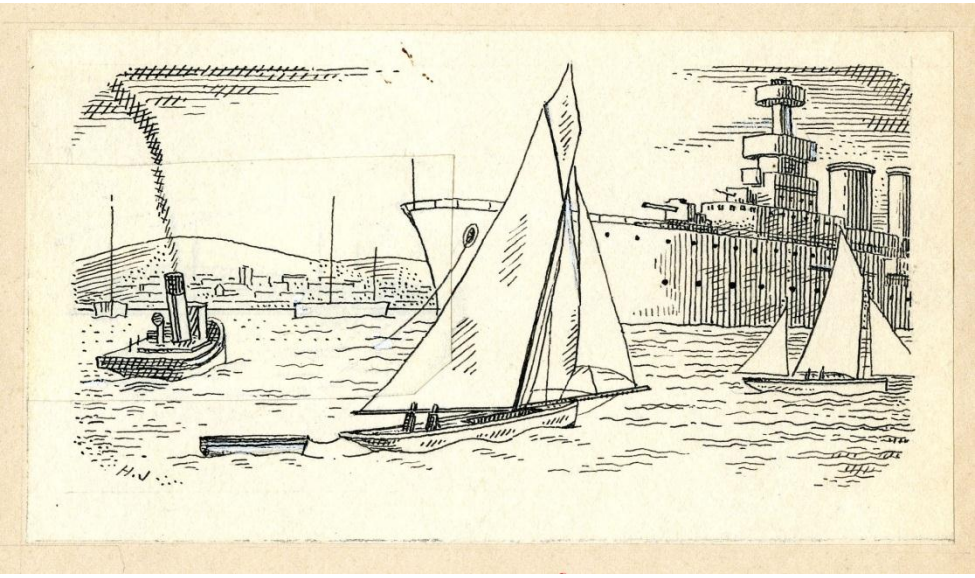


Figure 5.2: Original artwork by Harold Jones for M. E. Atkinson's *Smuggler's Gap*, from the Harold Jones Collection, c. 1939, HJ-01-05-08 A, Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle.

The arrival of a battleship in the islands, replete in Jones' illustration with prominent guns, is a potent reminder to the reader of the presence of the Royal Navy, policing the waters around Britain. From the mighty battleship to the steadfast tug going into harbour, the pleasure yacht to the small local rowing boat, the daily realities of life on an island are captured by Jones.

Arthur Ransome's *Coot Club* and *The Big Six* (1940) both set in the Norfolk Broads suggested to readers that working and middle-class characters were united by this sailing culture. *Coot Club* focuses on Dick and Dorothea Callum who go to stay aboard the hired yacht, *Teasel*, with Mrs Callum's old teacher, Mrs Barrable. Mrs Barrable, nicknamed the Admiral, enlists the help of local children to sail *Teasel* from Horning to Beccles. While the main local character, Tom Dudgeon, is the son of a doctor, the Death and Glory boys, Pete, Bert and Joe, named after the boat they sail, are sons of local boat builders.[17] Many local sailing characters appear in the novel such as Jim Wooddall, skipper of the wherry, *Sir Garnett*, Mr and Mrs Whittle, skipper and his wife aboard the Thames barge, *Welcome*, and Old Bob, owner of the tug, *Come Along*, creating a sense of the community of the Broads.

[17] Arthur Ransome, *Coot Club* (1934; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp. 30 and 187.

Moreover throughout the course of the novel figures of both sexes are depicted as enjoying sailing, so characters Nell and Bess, known as Port and Starboard, are adept sailors who crew for their father, another amateur yachtsman, and help Tom to teach Dick and Dorothea to sail aboard *Teasel*. Ransome emphasises the inclusive nature of this group of children of different genders and backgrounds. For example, describing the closing of a day's sailing, Ransome writes 'Tea was made in the *Teasel*, and drunk in the well, and on the cabin roof, by apprentices, teachers of seamanship and thirsty pirates. Then, with everybody helping, the awning was put up for the night'.[18]

To a certain extent Ransome's Norfolk Broads novels suggest that the ability to sail was affected more by geography than finances. This is conveyed through the idea that any child from the Broads, seemed 'able to sail a boat as soon as it could walk' implying that sailing was not only affordable to all but somehow innate.[19] The idea that sailing was an innate skill was not solely confined to people who lived close to water. It had long been suggested to British children that, as members of an island race, sailing was their national and familial heritage. For example, W. H. Gordon's *A Chat About the Navy* (1891), told readers that 'sailoring runs in the family' and in 1917, Percival Hislam told readers that 'the love of the sea is borne in us.'[20] Miss Ione Reid's 1921 entry for the Navy League's school essay competition told readers that, 'Our bays and gulfs have made us a race of sea kings and masters of a world-wide trade. The experience of sea life gained near home has encouraged adventurous spirits to seek service abroad. Thus we have grown into a nation of sailors'.[21] While it is impossible to gauge just how successfully this idea was communicated to British children, it is none the less, evident that it was to some.

In most family sailing stories, children are depicted as sailing dinghies; relatively inexpensive, using only one sail and no motor, and easy to sail single-handed, they were ideal for learners. Ransome emphasises this in *Coot Club* writing that sailing Tom's

[18] Ransome, *Coot Club*, p. 187.
[19] Ransome, *Coot Club*, pp. 24 and 155.
[20] W. J. Gordon, *A Chat About the Navy* (London: Day & Son, 1891), p. 15 and Percival A. Hislam, *The Navy Shown to the Children* (London & Edinburgh: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1917), p.127 and John Leyland, *The Royal Navy. It's Influence in English History and in the Growth of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. v.
[21] Newspaper clipping of Miss Ione Reid's prize winning essay, dated 1921, papers of Arnold White (1848-1925) National Maritime Museum (NMM), NMM/ WHI/ 136.

dinghy, *Titmouse*, 'had taught them [Dick and Dorothea] a lot.' While Tom Dudgeon owns his own dinghy with an awning, the Death and Glories sail 'an old black ship's boat, with a stumpy little mast.' Dinghy or small boat sailing appeared throughout family sailing stories. De Sélincourt's Anne and Elizabeth Rutherford sail the dinghy from *Tessa* and Anthony and Robin Chale own the dinghy, *Puffin*. Gilbert Hackforth-Jones' 'Green Sailors' also sail dinghies on their own and many more novels featured boys and girls "messing about" in small boats. Novels such Elinor Lyon's *The House in Hiding* (1940) and Joanna Cannan's *We Met Our Cousins* (1937) depict children playing in rowing boats on local lakes. Prudence Hill's *Wind and Weather Permitting* (1946) features a group of siblings sailing their dinghy *Silent* and Ransome's Callum children eventually have their own dinghy, *Scarab*, built for them too.

5.3: Constructing Exclusivity: The Implications of Cruising

It becomes more difficult to sustain the argument that family sailing stories presented sailing as truly egalitarian when the issue of cruising is considered. Although children often sailed dinghies on their own, families were usually depicted as cruising. Cruising, which took place over a number of days, required larger boats with sleeping berths, and so was beyond the means of most. Certainly, in the course of this research project, no family sailing stories have come to light which depict working-class families enjoying the type of extended pleasure cruising undertaken by middle-class families. A number of novels in Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' series, set his children cruising on substantial boats; such as Jim Brading's cutter, *Goblin*, in *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea* (1937) with its berths for four people, the schooner *Wild Cat*, destroyed by Roger's monkey in *Missee Lee* (1941), and the *Sea Bear*, an 'old Norwegian pilot cutter' used in *Great Northern?* (1947). In *Coot Club* Tom Dudgeon also refers to the larger boat he sails with Port and Starboard when his Uncle Frank is on holiday. [22] Overall, although the large vessels in Ransome's novels are either borrowed or hired, the fact that the families have the financial means to go on extended cruises, places this type of sailing beyond the means, and possibly aspirations, of many working-class readers.

[22]Arthur Ransome, *Great Northern?* (1947; London: Jonathan Cape, 2009), p. 11 and Ransome, *Coot Club*, p. 72.

Boats suitable for cruising appeared throughout family sailing stories. As already mentioned, de Sélincourt's Rutherford and Chale families, own two substantial yachts between them, the *Tessa* and *Ianthe*, and the very first novel depicts the Rutherfords' cruising to France. The Rutherford's later boat *Kestrel* is a cutter, a former working vessel with many berths. Hackforth-Jones' 'Green Sailor' novels frequently depicted the cruising of Mary, Mark, Ben and Binnie Green aboard their Uncle George's twelve-foot yacht, *Rag Doll*. Early novels usually focused on cruising in and around the Isle of Wight, the south coast of England and northern France. The second novel *The Green Sailors on Holiday* (1952) for example took the children to harbours at Weymouth, Bournemouth, Yarmouth and through to South Hampton. *Green Sailors Ahoy* (1953) saw the Greens cruising over to France and the short story 'A Quiet Night in Harbour' sees the Greens' plans to sail to St. Malo thwarted and safe harbour is found on the Devon coast. Over the course of the series the Greens would range further afield, for example, in *Green Sailors to Gibraltar* (1957), *Green Sailors in the Caribbean* (1958), *Green Sailors in the Galapagos* (1960) *and Green Sailors in the South Seas* (1961).

Family sailing stories also risked alienating readers who, unlike the protagonists, were not already sailors, through their incorporation of technical sailing language. This was a common feature across the novels and it could be argued that using technical or maritime language made the experience of sailing available to anyone who could read the books. This argument is certainly acknowledged in the *Junior Bookshelf's* review of Hackforth-Jones' *Green Sailors Ahoy!* (1952). The reviewer identified the likely appeal of the novel as being '[f]or those who desire a sailing holiday but alas, are never likely to have one in fact, here is all the feel of it, down to the smallest detail.'[23] At the start of the novel the children are keen to get on with the first sail of the holiday and Hackforth-Jones provides enough detail for children to learn the rudiments of what sailing entailed, even if they had no practical knowledge of it. The following extract demonstrates the way in which the technical vocabulary of the family sailing story seemingly introduced children to the practice of sailing:

[23] Review of Gilbert Hackforth-Jones' *Green Sailors Ahoy!* in *Junior Bookshelf*, 18, (December, 1953), p. 299.

> It didn't take long to uncover the mainsail and stow the canvas case below, or to hank on the stay-sail—shackle on the halliards and reeve the sheets. As for the dinghy, on such a calm day it could tow behind the *Rag Doll.* It was a tremendous thrill to clip on the main halliards and watch the snowy white canvas flapping idly as it rose from a lumpy sausage and became transformed into a beautiful white wing. In a very few moments Mark touched his hat solemnly to Uncle George and reported: 'Ready for sea', and Uncle reached out a hand for the tiller, unlashed the tiller lines and said: 'Up stay-sail, let go forward.' With a splash the mooring buoy fell clear into the water; the stay-sail billowed out and was sheeted home and a moment later *Rag Doll* heeled gently to the afternoon breeze and began to pick her way delicately down the crowded river, close hauled against a head wind which entailed constant tacking.[24]

Hackforth-Jones would sometimes go so far as to draw attention to this assumed shared knowledge. For example, in the short story 'Captain Mark Green' he includes passages that combine instruction and inclusion. For example, he writes, 'The first thing to do, as no doubt you already know, when preparing for a voyage in waters affected by the ebb and flow of the tide, is to find out which way the current will be running when you set out.'[25] The effect of passages such as both those above is open to debate. It could be argued that technical language familiarised children with parts of a boat and the processes undertaken to set sail. In this way a connection can be made between the family sailing story and the many non-fictional texts that were published for children which also taught them facts about sailing. C E. Tyrrell Lewis' *Coastal Cruising for Landsmen* (1932) for example explained how to be comfortable aboard ship at night in (Figure 5.3); a technique that Tom Dudgeon employs throughout *Coot Club.* Technical advice on sailing was also integrated into general books about hobbies. A typical example is the Williams-Ellis family's *In and Out of Doors* (1937). Here children were told about everything from what clothing to wear, what words such as leeward and halyard meant (often left unexplained in these stories) how

[24] Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors, Ahoy!,* p. 21.
[25] Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors and Blue Water*, pp. 11-52 (p. 14).

to tack, and the rudiments of reading charts.

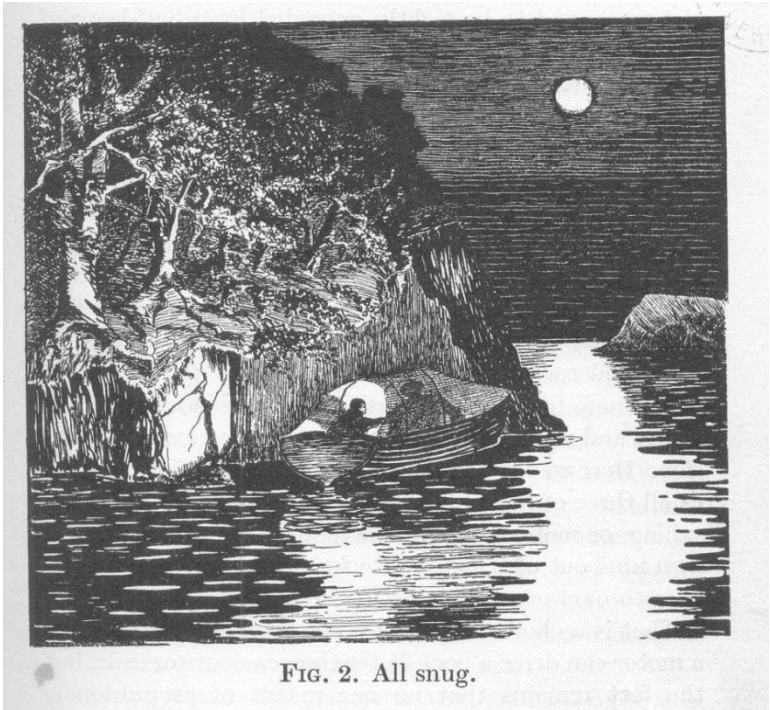


Figure 5.3: Illustration for C E. Tyrrell Lewis' *Coastal Cruising for Landsmen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 7.

Passages such as Hackforth-Jones', full of technical language, may well have appealed to children's love of new terminology; the exotic sounding words conferring a sense of authority on the reader. As historian Greg Dening observes, though, 'to borrow a nautical phrase is not to become nautical,' and passages such as that from *Green Sailors, Ahoy!* may have emphasised how separate the world of sailing was from the majority of children.[26] Nautical detail, such as that above, may have had the effect of linguistically alienating many readers who, as *Junior Bookshelf* rightly pointed out, would probably never go on sailing holidays. While anecdotal evidence suggests that family sailing stories encouraged people to both go sailing and to feel as though they already knew how to do so, it is equally possible that some felt like Captain Marryat's Peter Simple, 'so puzzled with what [he]

[26] Greg Dening, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language. Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 56.

heard' aboard ship that he nearly left 'the deck in absolute despair.'[27] The fact that such language may have been off-putting for some was remarked upon by a reviewer of Kathleen Mackenzie's *Monster Creek* (1951). They observed that while it did not have 'the gusto and detailed boating and river-life characteristics of an Arthur Ransome book' it would appeal to those who 'found Ransome too specialised'.[28]

5.4: Social Division: Language, Space, Ratings and Officers

Further problems arise when the friendships and exchanges between middle- and working-class characters are examined relationally. Although family sailing stories always acknowledged and respected the skill and experience of working seamen they were often portrayed as socially and professionally set before the mast. To work before the mast of a ship not only indicated that a person was an Ordinary or Able Seaman, it also excluded them from the quarter-deck, the area at the rear of the ship reserved for the captain and his executive officers. As Greg Dening writes, the quarter-deck, was not only a space but a 'social group' which at various times in history embodied 'sovereign power in displays of etiquette and privilege'.[29] Anyone set before the mast was, realistically, permanently excluded from the social group of the quarterdeck and from the power and privilege which was associated with it. The absence of working-class characters on the quarter-deck of family sailing vessels carried an ideological message about the place of the working class, in relation to that of the middle classes.

Language and space were frequently used in many family sailings story to instantly create relationships that confirmed middle-class authority. Take for example de Sélincourt's *Calicut Lends a Hand* which reintroduces Sam Calicut, whom the Rutherford and Chale children had met in the previous novel, *One More Summer*. Then, Calicut was a mysterious figure living on the wreck of the *Star of Asia*, run aground off the Devonshire coast. In *Calicut Lends a Hand*, Robin Chale and Binnie Rutherford persuade Sam to act as crew on

[27] Captain Marryat, *Peter Simple* (1896; London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1915), p. 32. Michelle Landsberg writes that when she sat at a tiller, thirty years after reading Ransome for the first time, she felt that she had long inhabited this nautical world. See Michelle Landsberg, *The World of Children's Books* (London and New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p. 123.
[28] Review of Kathleen Mackenzie's *Monster Creek* in *Junior Bookshelf*, 15, (November 1951), p.224.
[29] Dening, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language*, p. 19.

Tessa, sailing from Salthead in Devon to Creeksea in Essex. Sam is a far more experienced sailor than Mr Rutherford, owner of *Tessa*, however when boarding Sam instinctively 'pulled his forelock to Mr. Rutherford', and when on board he immediately occupies the ship's fo'c'sle; being the part of the ship set before the mast used to house the ships' crew rather than its officers.[30] Another example occurs in Hackforth-Jones' *Green Sailors Ahoy!* when the family sail from the Isle of Wight to Trouville, in France. On arriving they meet Sidney, who had been a 'mast-head-man in the *Westward*' and had 'crewed in a six-metre, one season,' both experiences that set Sidney before the mast.[31] Instinctively, Sidney calls the ship's owner, George Firebrace, 'capting', a pronouncement which at one recognises his own position in relation to Firebrace and which, in conjunction with his colloquial diction, establishes that he himself is not middle-class. Arguably, Sidney has his own reasons for deferring to Firebrace, namely that he wants passage back to England; however, his address of the children as 'Mr' and 'Miss' positions Sidney at the very bottom of the ship's hierarchy. Despite their lowly positions, Sam and Sidney both prove themselves to be vital crew members, effecting repairs at sea that no one else on board can do. Thus the family sailing story simultaneously acknowledged the skills and experience of these able seamen but presented them as being more than willing to accept their position in the hierarchy of the ship. This willingness serves to naturalise class relations conferring authority on middle-class figures and so handily sidesteps any of the class antagonism that, some have argued, prevailed in the interwar years and continued into the middle of the twentieth century.[32]

5.5: Mates Not Captains: Sailing Girls

It was not only the working class characters who were literally kept in their place in the family sailing story. When family sailing stories are considered in more detail, what becomes evident is the way that male authority and power was frequently constructed, at the expense of female. The Rutherford and Chale families illustrate how female authority was often undermined in family sailing stories. Although the entire Rutherford family can sail, divisions soon appear between them. The reader learns that Mrs Rutherford prefers to

[30] de Sélincourt, *Calicut Lends a Hand*, p. 18.
[31] Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors, Ahoy!*, pp. 100 and 99.
[32] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 50.

drive, leaving Mr Rutherford free to be the 'captain' of the family. This means that the only other figure of authority within this sailing family is the Bosun, tellingly the figure aboard ship who was responsible for maintaining discipline. Although sailing is a shared activity for the Rutherfords, it is dominated by the men. This impression is developed in the second novel of the series, *Three Green Bottles* (1941), which undermines Anne and Elizabeth Rutherford through the issue of prowess in sailing. The first impression that Anne and Elizabeth gain of the boys is when they see the youngest brother, Robin, at the wheel of his father's yacht, *Ianthe*. A local fisherman observes that both 'young gentlemen' are good sailors but that Robin is 'born to it' with no such statement ever being made about either girl.[33] Whereas the opening of *Three Green Bottles* establishes the skill of Anthony and Robin, the first time the girls sail in front of the boys they make fools of themselves, forgetting to put the centre board down and struggling with the sails. Although Anthony and Robin are far too polite to comment on their inadequacies, Anne is cross that she appears a 'fool of a girl who can't manage a boat.' Despite readers of *Family Afloat* already knowing that both girls are competent sailors, the initial impression here is that the Chale brothers are superior to the Rutherford sisters. This impression is consolidated in the following novel *One More Summer* when Anne is more interested in reading Jane Austen's *Emma* than paying attention to sailing. Anne's eagerness to read whilst sailing is disapproved of by Anthony who thinks that she spends 'too much time *reading*' instead of paying attention to their sailing.[34] Their different attitudes to sailing are consolidated in *Calicut Lends a Hand*, when Anne is more excited about a weekend in London and playing Britannia in a local pageant than with sailing (Figure 5.4).

[33] de Sélincourt, *Three Green Bottles*, pp. 30 and 43 [Emphasis in original].
[34] de Sélincourt, *One More Summer*, p. 30.

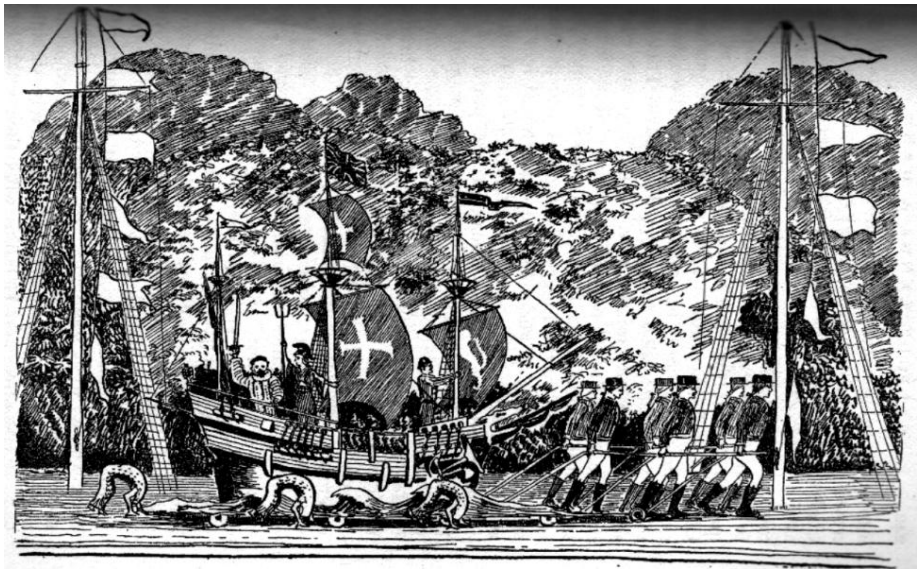


Figure 5.4: illustration by Guy de Selincourt for Aubrey de Sélincourt's *Calicut Lends a Hand,* (London: Routledge, 1946), p. 240.

There were of course some exceptions to this depiction of superior male sailing skill and Hackforth-Jones overtly addressed the prejudices and assumptions that surrounded female sailors. The fifth 'Green Sailors' novel *Green Sailors and Blue Water* (1955) is actually a collection of four short stories rather than a novel, the second of which 'A New Angle on Uncle George' introduces Canadian, Debby Lomas. To begin, Uncle George is adamant that he will not have a woman aboard his boat, insisting that they are a liability. Circumstances conspire to force Uncle George to change his mind when Debby is instrumental in rescuing the Green Sailors from an isolated cove with a rising tide. Debby is clearly a highly skilled sailor and Uncle George quickly changes his mind and recognises this. This is emphasised when Uncle George leaves *Rag Doll*, '*in the sole charge of a woman!*' with Hackforth-Jones adding, *'*And what a woman.' [35] Debby is a consummate sailor whose 'eyes and hands were everywhere' and 'whose powers of helmsmanship were those of an expert!' The close of the story reveals that Debby is '*the* Deborah Lomas: the woman who sailed single-handed around the world, and who wrote *Alone, I Did It.*' Hackforth-Jones' portrayal of Debby reflects both the emerging professionalism of yachtswomen and the prejudices they faced. Debby certainly bears a striking resemblance

[35] Hackforth-Jones, 'A New Angle on Uncle George' in *Green Sailors and Blue Water,* pp. 53-91 (pp.89, 88 and 91). [Emphasis in original]

to figures such as Ella Maillart who had a successful career as a yachtswoman and maritime writer with books such as her 1942 work, *Gypsy Afloat*. *Gypsy Afloat* recounts Maillart's experiences crewing aboard the barge, *Volunteer*. Tellingly, Maillart compares her adeptness with men's, stating that she can 'work like a man on board' and that she usually appeared with 'nails broken, hair unkempt, smelling of …turpentine'. So, while illustrations such as Figure 5.5 could be viewed as promoting the sailing abilities of girls, it does so by presenting them as physically similar to boys.

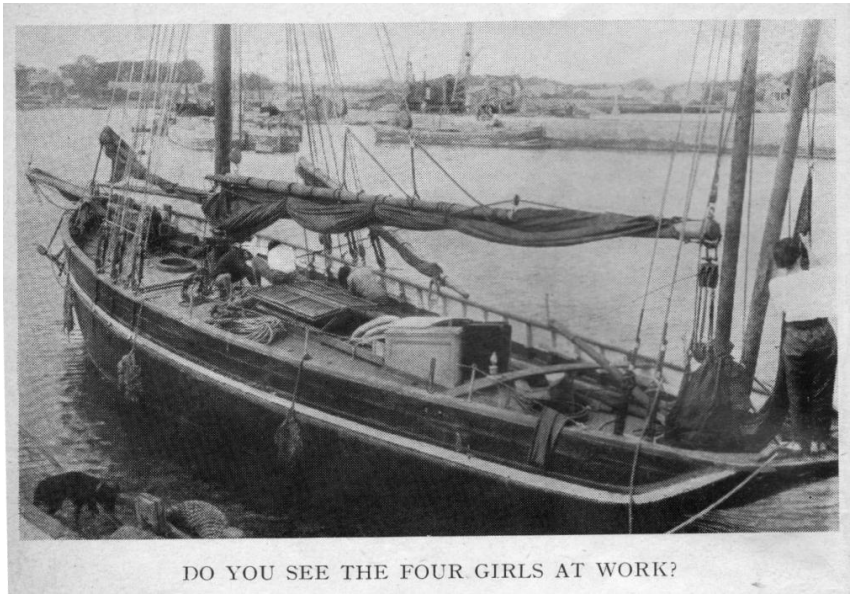


Figure 5.5: Photograph from *Gypsy Afloat*, by Ella K. Maillart (London: Heinemann, 1942), p. 10

5.6 Undermining Captain Nancy Blackett

The complicated relationship between sex and sailing is also explored by Arthur Ransome in the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels. Sheila G. Ray, for example, argues that 'Nancy Blackett, Captain of the Amazons, is clearly the dominant character in all the books in which she appears.'[36] However while Nancy Blackett, may be a dominant personality within the series she does not ultimately emerge as the figure of authority in relation to

[36] Sheila G. Ray, *Children's Fiction. A Handbook for Librarians* (1970; Leicester: Brockhampton Press, 1972), p. 57.

sailing. It is worth briefly considering how her authority is subtly undermined throughout the novels and how she is sometimes drawn away from the maritime world towards the domestic. At the start of the series Nancy is easily John Walker's equal and, when sailing on the lake to which she is accustomed, she is occasionally his better. When John first sights the Amazons sailing in the distance, he admires the line they leave in their wake which is as straight 'as if it had been laid off with a ruler' and John concedes that '[t]hey know how to steer'.[37] This impression of sailing prowess is continued in the second novel *Swallowdale* (1931) when John hits submerged rocks and sinks *Swallow* while racing to catch up with Nancy and Peggy. Further, it is Nancy's advice that helps John to salvage the *Swallow*. Within the same novel though, it becomes clear that Nancy's familial duties lead her away from the world of sailing and towards home. When her Great Aunt Maria comes to stay, Nancy is forced to assume the role of the demure daughter, symbolized by the swapping of her red knitted cap for a white dress and gloves. Once again in *The Picts and the Martyrs; or Not Welcome at All* (1943) Nancy and Peggy are forced to sacrifice their desire to sail in order to entertain their Great Aunt Maria. The novel sees Mrs Blackett away from Beckfoot recovering from an illness, and Nancy is determined to keep the presence of the Callums secret from her Aunt, fearing that it would cause difficulties for her mother. The development of the Blackett family story therefore sees Nancy accept familial responsibilities that take her away from sailing. It is significant that Nancy's sense of responsibility only really materializes within the world of the home.

Ransome's eleventh book in the series, *Missee Lee* (1941), both confirms John's respect for Nancy's sailing abilities but also demonstrates why John emerges as the dominant child in the series. *Missee Lee*, described by Peter Hunt as 'an exuberant farrago' is often positioned within the 'Swallows and Amazons' series as belonging to the small group of fantasies, or as Roger Lancelyn Green puts it 'improbable adventures', which are separate from the main, or realistic sequence of novels.[38] *Missee Lee* sees the Walkers and Blacketts captured

[37] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 94.
[38] Peter Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992). p. 80 and Roger Lancelyn Green, *Tellers of Tales. Children's Books and their Authors from 1800 to 1964* (1946; London: Edmund Ward, 1965), p. 263. This division between Ransome's 'realistic' and 'fantasy' novels has been challenged recently by Sarah Spooner. However it is still a widely accepted means of distinguishing between certain of Ransome's novels. See, Sarah Spooner, 'Landscapes: 'Going foreign' in Arthur Ransome's Peter Duck' in

by Chinese pirates after their ship, *Wild Cat*, is accidentally destroyed by Roger's pet monkey, Gibber. Along with Captain Flint, the children are taken captive by the notorious pirate, Miss Lee, who at the end of the novel succumbs to her dead father's wishes and, rather than returning to England with the children, stays in order keep the peace within the three islands. At first, it may appear as though Nancy were the dominant child. For example, when they first meet Miss Lee, Nancy says to John 'Look here, John. She's a she-pirate. Let me do the talking.'[39] Yet, the fact that Nancy says this suggests that within the dynamics of their group, John would naturally take charge. Further, Nancy's attitude to the entire scenario is marked by a failure to recognise the seriousness of their situation. Her response to being captured is focussed on adventure, shown when she observes to Peggy, 'I do hope those others are all right […] But, I say, they'll be pretty sick at being picked up by a liner when they hear what's happened to us.' Victor Watson's description of Nancy in relation to the novel *Pigeon Post* (1936) is useful here. Watson argues that in this novel Nancy 'ceases to be a character if in fact she's ever been one' and becomes a 'child-demon, a spirit of the determined and benevolent craziness of children in the holidays.'[40] This wildness or craziness in Nancy reveals itself through her persona as Captain of the Amazon Pirates. Yet, while her captaincy confirms her excellent sailing skills it also frequently reveals her recklessness. Ultimately this recklessness undermines Nancy's leadership and John emerges as the most authoritative figure in the group.

Nancy's refusal to recognise the need to be responsible in *Missee Lee* is linguistically mirrored in the novel when the Walkers become separated from the Blacketts, after being ship-wrecked. John and Susan row desperately in order to try to catch the Blacketts, as they are alone in a dinghy, in the middle of the China Seas. Ransome writes:

Children's Literature. New Approaches, ed. by Karin Lesnik- Oberstein (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), pp. 206 - 228.

[39] Arthur Ransome, Missee Lee (1941; London: Jonathan Cape, 2008), pp. 162 and 61.

[40] Victor Watson, *Reading Series Fiction: from Arthur Ransome to Gene Kemp* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 35.

> ‘Perhaps they haven’t seen us yet,’ said Titty. ‘What’ll they say when they do?’
> ‘I know what Nancy’ll say,’ Roger grinned.
> ‘What?’
> ‘Barbecued billygoats,’ said Roger.
> ‘Oh, do shut up,’ said John, and even Roger looking at the sweat pouring down John’s face, was silent for a long time. He looked at Susan. She was rowing with her eyes shut, pulling, pulling with all her weight.[41]

It is telling that it is the youngest brother Roger, increasingly a source of irritation in the novels, who highlights the irresponsibility of Nancy. This is in sharp contrast to the figure of John Walker, a boy whose quiet acceptance of his familial responsibilities also prepares him for his future responsibilities as an officer in the Royal Navy.

5.7 ‘Swallows and Amazons’ and the Nelson Tradition

The awareness and acceptance of duty and responsibility that is such a key feature of John Walker’s character, brings with it significant ideological implications that are well worth exploring. Critics such as Victor Watson and Michelle Landsberg have begun to explore these links. For example, Watson writes that the structure of loyalty and morality in Arthur Ransome’s Walker family ‘derives from naval discipline’ and in *The World of Children’s Books* (1988) Michelle Landsberg observes, that John Walker’s sense of obligation is to a moral code that was ‘part naval and part familial’ but this connection needs further investigation. John Walker’s familial responsibilities effectively prepare John for those he will face in the Royal Navy and position him within a long line of fictional naval officer cadets. Further, the issue of responsibility links John Walker to a specific maritime tradition that emerged from high naval maritime discourses that stemmed from the 1890s.[42] Well into the interwar years, high navalists, fearing that Britain was losing its ‘sea sense’, continued to link Britain’s imperial and economic successes to its historic command of the

[41] Ransome, *Missee Lee*, p. 103.
[42] See Victor Watson, *Reading Series Fiction: from Arthur Ransome to Gene Kemp* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 14 and Landsberg, *The World of Children’s Books*, p. 123.

seas and encouraged boys to view service at sea, as both their birthright and their duty.[43] Focusing on the figure of Horatio Nelson, this invented maritime tradition simultaneously promoted the idea of service at sea and sought to perpetuate a divisive social model which excluded working-class boys from aspiring to positions of leadership. This chapter now situates John and Roger Walker, within this tradition.[44]

Rehabilitated by naval historians, such as Sir John Knox Laughton, and populist organizations such as the Navy League and the Imperial Maritime League, Nelson was made into the perfect hero of imperial daring, embodying the 'virtues' of duty, efficiency foresight and leadership. The Nelson Tradition was created and his life and character was used to promote to children a potent combination of national and imperial pride, admiration of devotion to duty and a fundamental belief that character and training would produce effective leaders. The October 1910 issue of the Imperial Maritime League's Junior Branch magazine, now held in the archives of the National Maritime Museum, told subscribers that:

> If we were asked to explain in one word how the British Empire came into existence we could do it by – 'Service.' If we were asked, what has all these years upheld the safety, honour and welfare of our Sovereign, and our dominions there is still one word – 'Service'.
> If ever this goodly heritage which was won and bequeathed to us by men like Nelson, in the "sure and certain hope" that what they had worked to give us, we would work to keep, should pass away from us, it will be the fault of those who have forgotten one word – 'Service'.[45]

[43] Aston, *The Navy of To-day* , p. 3.
[44] The emergence of high navalist discourses and the rehabilitation of Nelson began in 1890 with the publication of Alfred Thayer Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783* in which Mahan used historiography to form the link between national prosperity and maritime strength. Andrew Lambert has argued that Sir John Knox Laughton's revisionist biography of Nelson began the process of rehabilitating Nelson's character and reputation particularly in light of Robert Southey's influential and damaging *Life of Nelson* (1810). See Andrew Lambert, *The Foundation of Naval History. John Knox Laughton, the Royal Navy and the Historical Profession* (London: Chatham Publishing, 1998), p. 173.While J. A. Mangan has examined the role of the public school in disseminating imperial ideology, and which he rightly links to the tradition of service his observations are centred on militarism in general and he does not offer any critique of specific traditions. See J. A. Mangan, 'The Grit of our Forefathers: Invented Traditions, Propaganda and Imperialism' in *Imperialism and Popular Culture,* e. d., by J. M. Mackenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 113 - 140.
[45] Issue 20. October, 1910, 'The Battle of Trafalgar 21st October, 1805, 'Imperial Maritime League, Junior Branch, 1910, p. 6. Volume of pamphlets and/or newspaper cuttings: Imperial Maritime League - Junior

Within the Nelson Tradition, service specifically equated to the embracing of responsibilities and duties that were burdensome, but necessary for the good of the country.

John Walker's positioning within the Nelson Tradition carries two significant ideological implications that need to be recognised. The first was this service ethos, deeply embedded within the Nelson Tradition. This no doubt appealed to members of middle class families who, as both Andrew Thompson and Ross McKibbin argue, often perceived themselves as being defined by public service.[46] Secondly, it constructed a service model where leadership resided historically with the upper, but increasingly with the professional middle-class people. A parallel can be drawn here between the divisive social groupings depicted in some family sailing stories and those inherent in the Nelson Tradition. As Quintin Colville has convincingly demonstrated, the Nelson Tradition was deliberately embedded into the material culture of Royal Naval uniforms and training establishments, creating a model of leadership from which working-class ratings were permanently excluded.[47] This is the subtext for the naval recruitment poster shown here, (Figure 5.6) now held in the Admiralty archives. The message of the poster is clear; it is the duty of ratings – ordinary and able seamen rather than officers- identified by his iconic square-rig uniform to 'follow' leaders such as Drake and Nelson. There was a subtext to this message given the fact that historically, ratings were drawn from the working classes and officers from the middle and upper classes.

Branch, 1909-12, NMM/HSM/16.

[46] Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Pearson , 2005), p. 10 and McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 58.

[47] See Quintin Colville, 'Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer: the Role of Uniform in Shaping the Class and Gender Related identities of British naval personnel, 1930-1939: the Alexander Prize Lecture' *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 13, (2003), 105-129.

Figure 5.6: Royal Naval recruitment poster circa 1937, Folder of correspondence and minutes on the Recruitment into the Navy of Suitable Characters, National Archives, Kew, ADM 178/179/002.

It was quite a simple matter for officer cadet stories to distinguish between trainee officers and ratings through uniform; this performed a similar function to the difference in boats seen in the family sailing stories. For example in the first of John Irving's 'Dick Valliant' novels *Dick Valliant Naval Cadet* (1928) Irving describes Dick's visits to the naval outfitters illustrating the cost of embarking upon officer naval training. He writes that in addition to a huge sea chest Dick needs, amongst many other items, 'uniforms [and] oil skin coats.'[48] The issue of uniform should not be overlooked given Colville's argument that its expense was deliberately used 'to exclude the sons of the poorest sections of society' from the gentlemanly spheres of the officer class of the Royal Navy.[49] Added to this divisive use of material culture, the issue of character was also used to make thinly disguised divisions along class lines. For example, in a chapter entitled 'The Training of

[48] John Irving, *Dick Valliant, Naval Cadet* (London: Seeley, Service & Co. Limited, 1928), p. 25.
[49] Colville, 'Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer,' p. 107.

Naval Officers' *The Wonder Book of the Navy for Boys and Girls* (1920) told children that:

> Nelson is still the inspiration, as he is in many respects, the father of the modern naval officer, and his advice to his midshipmen holds good […]recollect, he said, 'that you must be a seaman to be an officer; and also that you cannot be a good officer without being a gentleman.' [50]

5.8 Keeping it in the Family: The Naval Tradition of Service

Family sailing stories could not make such obvious distinctions between officers and ratings via such overt material culture and so connections were made between class and leadership in more subtle ways. One way in which this was achieved was through the connection of sailing families with the executive branch of the Royal Navy. Although family sailing stories did not always feature naval fathers, when they did they were invariably officers.[51] Ransome emphasises many times that Mr Walker is a captain in the navy and in *Missee Lee* John says that he 'will be an Admiral when he retires.'[52] Hackforth-Jones similarly made the father of his *Green Sailor* series a naval captain. Captain Green works at the Admiralty in London and is described as a 'distinguished naval officer.' [53] Further, Uncle George is actually 'the famous Commander Firebrace', formerly of the Royal Navy; he is a 'true submariner' who landed troops in France on D-Day.[54] Coupled with this is a sense that sons will automatically follow their fathers into the Royal Navy. John Walker's assertion, 'I'm going into the Navy […] Like Father' also contains the suggestion that following in his father's footsteps means becoming an officer. [55] Certainly, few if any examples of family sailing fiction exist that depicted working-class fathers in executive positions in the Navy. This is perhaps unsurprising given that in 1940 Winston Churchill, ex-Sea Lord of the Admiralty, complained that boys were being rejected for

[50] Harry Golding, ed., *The Wonder Book of the Navy for Boys and Girls*, 4th edn (London and Melbourne: Ward, Lock, 1920), p. 137.
[51] Aubrey de Sélincourt's Mr Rutherford and Mr Chale are, respectively, a school master and a business man.
[52] Ransome, *Missee Lee*, p. 217.
[53] Gilbert Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors, Ahoy!, or Wanted: A Crew*, p. 127.
[54] Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors and Blue Water*, p. 100.
[55] Ransome, *Missee Lee*, p. 217.

officer training on spurious grounds that betrayed clear class bias.[56] There is sense of inevitability about John joining this 'family business' mirroring the actual experience of Commander Stephen King-Hall, later to become 'Uncle Steve' of the B.B.C's Children's Hour. King-Hall came from a family of naval officers and, looking back on his childhood, he wrote of the 'inevitability' of his entry into the Royal Navy stating that 'No other possibility was ever discussed.'[57] Hackforth-Jones similarly suggested that Ben Green's entry into the service was certain with reference to 'when', rather than if, Ben joins the Navy.[58]

The naval credentials of fathers and uncles is significant as it was thought by some that such men would transfer the values and ethos of the Royal Navy into their family. Writing in 1927, Sir George Aston emphasised the links between naval families and wider service to society. Describing naval officers he wrote:

> A large proportion are married, leading a steady family life and forming excellent households. They take a great pride in their homes, usually in or near the naval ports, and many have purchased these homes out of their savings. They are the best of citizens, having a stake in the country, and they apply on shore the lessons in social service, and consideration of common interests, which they have learned at sea in H.M. ships.[59]

Certainly, the opening of Ransome's *Secret Water* (1939) confirms not only that Mr Walker models the principles of service and duty but that these principles encompass his entire family. The novel follows directly as *We Didn't Mean to Go To Sea* (1937) finishes and so

[56] The incident referred to involved Churchill's overturning of the decision to fail three candidates' entry to Dartmouth 'on the grounds that one had a slightly Cockney accent and the other two were sons of a chief petty officer and a merchant navy engineer.' L J. Collins, *Cadet. The Impact of War on the Cadet Movement* (Oldham: Jade Publishing Ltd, 2001), p. 81. On this subject see also Brian Lavery, *Empire of the Seas* (London: Conway, 2009), p. 246.
[57] Stephen King-Hall, *My Naval Life* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), p. 24. Stephen King-Hall came from a long line of naval officers. In his broadcasts for the BBC Children's Hour, as 'Uncle Steve' King-Hall sometimes featured conversations with his father, Admiral George King-Hall, talking about naval life at the end of the previous century. See Derek McCulloch, *The Children's Hour Annual* (London: Hutchinson, 1936), p 33-35 and Commander Stephen King-Hall, *Here and There Broadcast Talks for Children* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1932).
[58] Hackforth-Jones, *Green Sailors Ahoy*, p. 102.
[59] Aston, *The Navy of To-day*, pp. 12–13.

it begins with the whole family at Pin Mill, Shotley. The influence of the Royal Navy looms large in this novel, not least due to the fact that from 1905 Shotley was the site of the Royal Naval training ship *H.M.S. Ganges*. Ransome actually draws attention to this in his description of the place referring to 'the buildings on Shotley Point, houses, a water tower, and a flagstaff on the naval school as tall as the mast of a sailing ship.'[60]

The opening line of the novel immediately positions the narrative within the demands of the Royal Navy with the statement that the 'First Lord of the Admiralty was unpopular at Pin Mill.'[61] A telegram arrives calling Mr Walker to the Admiralty in London requiring him to cancel his planned family holiday and leave immediately. His response - 'Orders is orders' - demonstrates his service ethos to his family and an acceptance of his national responsibilities. Similarly, Mrs Walker, cast in the role of the naval wife never voices her disappointment. Instead there is simply recognition of a duty to performed, similar to other fictional wives, such as those in Bartimeus' *The Long Trick* (1919), who support their husbands, patiently awaiting their return. In this way both parents model the importance of following orders and sacrificing personal preference for national service. Although Titty and Roger complain about this situation, John is disappointed but silent and vents his frustration by working hard. Just like his father, John never questions the authority of the Royal Navy to command their actions.

It is primarily through the issue of responsibility that we can see a correlation between the Nelson Tradition, naval training and John Walker's preparation for naval leadership within his own family. Writing in the *Who's Who of Children's Books,* Margery Fisher observed that John Walker was such a 'sturdy and dependable' sort of boy that one would think Ransome intended him as a 'type.'[62] Fisher is absolutely correct in this and the 'type' she acknowledges but cannot identify is defined in *The Wonder Book of the Navy*. Writing about responsibility, Lord Charles Beresford, observed that a boy's naval training 'was so arranged as to give him a man's responsibility while yet a boy'; the result being, a 'man-boy – the finest working animal alive.'[63] The result of this 'man's responsibility' was that

[60] Ransome, *We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea,* p. 64.
[61] Ransome, *Secret Water*, p. 17.
[62] Margery Fisher, *Who's Who of Children's Books* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1975), p. 159.
[63] Harry Golding, *The Wonder Book of the Navy for Boys and Girls*, p. 142.

boys were essentially being prepared for the time when they would assume their place at the head of a ship in the Royal Navy. The development of John's familial responsibilities mirrors the national responsibilities faced by officer cadets, with which John can be compared.

5.9: Naval Cadets: The 'Dick Valliant' and 'Peter Clayton' Novels

John Irving's 'Dick Valliant' novels illustrate how cadet novels are often in the tradition of the bildungsroman, showing how the life of a young naval officer developed around the idea of duty and responsibility. The first novel, *Dick Valliant Naval Cadet* (1928) charts Dick's entry into the navy and his days on the training ship, *Britannia*. Set on the eve of war, the novel ends with Dick deployed on active service as a midshipman despite not having completed his training - an experience that many naval cadets faced on the outbreak of the First World War.[64] The second novel, *Dick Valliant in the Dardanelles* (1929), overtly explores the issue of leadership. At the end of the first novel war breaks out with Germany and Dick is posted to the North Sea. Not seeing sufficient action here means that at the start of the second novel, Dick uses his family connections in the Admiralty to gain transfer for himself and his friend, O'Malley, onto a ship in the Mediterranean. They are transported from Scapa Flow to Gibraltar by a Newcastle trawler with a burly skipper who has worked at sea for many years. Whilst in transit the trawler is attacked by a German U-boat, which Dick and O'Malley manage to sink, due to their training and practice with the one gun onboard; it being already established that no one else on the ship knew how to work the gun. It is not this prowess at gunnery which dominates this episode, though this had long been used as a symbol of Britain's superiority at sea, but rather the leadership skills that the boys instinctively show.[65] After sinking the U-boat, O'Malley takes charge of the rescue boat and is observed by the seasoned skipper 'with complete confidence taking

[64] Collins writes that in 1914 Royal Naval Dartmouth Cadets were sent to finish their training at sea. When the cruiser H.M.S *Aboukir* was torpedoed and sunk off the Dutch coast, on 22 September 1914, 13 teenage cadets were lost, along with the 1,500 crew members. Collins, *Cadet*, p. 34.

[65] Jackie Bratton comments that in imperial naval stories, British sailors are always shown to be superior and that the emblem of this superiority in the men is the working of the guns, 'which is normally allowed to be at least twice as fast on any English ship.' See J. S. Bratton, 'Of England, Home, and Duty: the image of England in Victorian and Edwardian Juvenile Fiction,' in *Imperialism and Popular Culture,* e.d., J. M. Mackenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 73-84 (p. 83).

charge - and being obeyed without hesitation.'[66]

This one episode encapsulates the idea of leadership and efficiency that had been popularised through the Nelson Tradition. It is the boys' training at gunnery which allows them to counterattack the U-boat, catching it unawares and sinking it. The speed and efficiency with which O'Malley then takes command of the rescue boat leaves the ordinary sailors, all grown men, no opportunity to question O'Malley's right to command. In fact, it is his example of efficiency which leads them to follow unquestionably; it simply does not occur to the men not to obey this confident, decisive and capable boy. For O'Malley is a boy despite the skipper's reference to him being an 'Irishman.' Neither Dick nor O'Malley has at this point actually finished their training because of the outbreak of war. Due to their membership of the Royal Navy officer class, the boys are fundamentally able to bring with them a maritime tradition that was otherwise absent from the trawler. The skipper acknowledges this when he thanks the two boys in front of the entire crew by saying, 'Forty years I have been at sea, but all my years of seamanship could not have saved us - these boys have only been a few months afloat yet they were able to do what none of the rest of us could.'[67] It is not seamanship that saves the ship and the men but leadership, a skill that was usually associated exclusively with officers.

Throughout the early twentieth century there was a consistent production of naval stories in this vein. While the more overt imperial discourses wane in these narratives, what remains is a focus on responsibility and leadership that stems directly from the Nelson Tradition. Part of this tradition was the idea that with leadership came many burdens and sacrifices. This was a recurring motif in cadet stories, such as Dempster Heming's, 'Peter Clayton' novels. Beginning in 1938 with *Peter Clayton, Midshipman,* the novels recount Peter's training in the Royal Navy and are interesting examples of the way in which naval stories post-1918, frequently sought to position the Royal Navy as an international peace-keeping force. Consequently, the novels are set in the Middle-East with Peter undertaking peacekeeping missions with his mentor Lieutenant Arkwell. From the first novel, Peter is depicted as a thoughtful midshipman who embraces his responsibilities. For example, on

[66] John Irving, *Dick Valliant in the Dardanelles* (London: Seeley, Service & Co. Limited, 1929), p. 84.
[67] Irving, *Dick Valliant, in the Dardanelles*, p. 65.

being left in command of a ship for the first time Heming writes that, 'From earliest days at Dartmouth the habit of responsibility had been bred into him, and the thought that he was now in full command of the ship did not awe him at all. But it did increase his watchfulness'.[68] Heming makes it clear that this responsibility brings significant consequences. For example, in *Sub-Lieutenant Peter Clayton* (1939) Heming comments that Peter is very much changed from the previous books and that 'War had come, and with it increased responsibilities.'[69] Dempster describes Peter's eyes looking 'tired with the constant peering into the grey distance' and comments 'to tell the truth, he was looking forward to a few hours sleep.' It is clear that the responsibilities of service during a time of war take a physical and mental toll on Peter.

Although more commonly associated with the Royal Navy, children's writers also incorporated elements of the Nelson Tradition into stories about the Merchant Navy. A similar portrayal of the burdens of early responsibility can be seen in Douglas Duff's *The Sea Whelps* (1939). The novel tells the story of two boys, Roger Samways and Bill Margrie, from the merchant training vessel *H.M.S Conway* during their year as midshipmen on board the cruiser *Thotmes.*[70] The two boys accompany their lieutenant in transporting a deserted Spanish destroyer toward port. However while being attacked by other Spanish vessels their lieutenant is injured and Roger is forced to assume command. It is his *Conway* training and his maritime heritage which allows him to take command, however daunting the task may be. While under attack for the first time Roger is scared but he recalls 'the training of the *Conway* and a hundred generations of Island blood' and tells himself not to 'let the men know how much afraid you are. You are an officer, it is up to you to show an example.'[71] The fact that Roger is scared is presented as human and understandable, but, the significant fact is that he masters his fear, through his acceptance of the responsibility of leadership. Further, the process of transformation from cadet to leader is illustrated when, after a moment's hesitation, he clears his head and becomes 'master of himself' and '[n]o

[68] Dempster Heming, *Peter Clayton, Midshipman* (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), p. 37.
[69] Dempster Heming, *Sub-Lieutenant Peter Clayton* (London: The Epworth Press, nd), pp. 8 and 9.
[70] The *Conway* was a training ship which appeared in many stories for children. Douglas Duff himself entered into training on board the *Conway* in 1914 before seeing active service in the First World War. See James Mackenzie 'Douglas V. Duff' *Collecting Books and Magazines* <http://www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com/duff.html> [accessed 27 February 2012].
[71] Douglas Duff, *The Sea Whelps* (London: Blackie and Son, 1939), pp. 55, 63, 62 and 65.

longer a lad of seventeen-and-a-half, but an officer in command of a ship-of-war in battle.' This transformation is possible because of his training but it is motivated by his realisation that it is up to him to '[b]ring the men out safely.' Similar to the Newcastle skipper's response to Dick Valliant, the gunner on board tells Roger that he's 'doing as well as a man three times your age' and shows no reluctance to follow the command of a boy.

It would take the experiences of the Second World War for the Merchant Navy to gain the wide recognition that it deserved with regards to service to Britain. Until that time, significant divisions existed between the two navies, with prejudice on both sides. The result was often a stereotype of the upper-class Royal Naval officer in his pristine white uniform contrasted with the rough and ready officer, associated with the Merchant Service - a subject that was explored by James Lennox Kerr writing as, Peter Dawlish in his 'Captain Peg-Leg' stories (1939-1940).[72] Ultimately, stories about both Royal and Merchant Navy officer cadets told boys that if they trained as officers they too could take up the commendable burden of responsibility and command. Just like Royal Naval stories though, Merchant Navy fiction, such as Percy Westerman's 'Alan Carr' novels, distinguished between middle-class boys like Alan, a grammar school boy destined to become an officer, and figures such as lower-class Mush Herring whom Alan meets on his first ship. *His First Ship* (1936) sees Alan ship as crew aboard the *Mary Rumbold* in a bid eventually to be taken on as an officer cadet by the firm of Whatmough, Duvant & Co. On joining the *Mary Rumbold* Mush Herring observes 'Seems you ain't one of us […] 'Cause you don't talk like us.'[73] Equally, officers recognise that Alan is 'a cut above' his present position. Alan is welcomed into the seamen's mess but there is an immediate recognition that Alan's place is ultimately on the quarter-deck with the officers.

When the issue of responsibility is considered, parallels begin to emerge between Ransome's depiction of John Walker and naval cadets, specifically set within the Nelson Tradition. From the beginning of *Swallows and Amazons* it is clear that John Walker is a boy who is already entrenched in the tradition of service. Throughout the novels Ransome

[72] Kerr wrote four stories about Captain Peg-Leg Johnston under the pseudonym Peter Dawlish: *Captain Peg-Leg's War*, (1939), *Peg-Leg and the Fur Pirates*, (1939), *Peg-Leg Sweeps the Sea* (1940) and *Peg-Leg and the Invaders* (1940).
[73] Percy. F. Westerman, *His First Ship* (1936; London and Glasgow: Blackie, 1945), pp. 35 and 47.

depicts John as a boy whose acceptance of responsibility for his siblings mirrors that which cadet officers would undertake on enrolment, demonstrating shared values between the Royal Navy and the Walker family. The responsibility placed on John as the eldest son is apparent from the beginning of *Swallows and Amazons* when Mrs. Walker instructs Roger to give the telegram from their father to John. She adds that it is John who will 'have to see that [they] are not duffers.'[74] This sense of early responsibility accounts for John, and to a certain extent Susan, being described as two of the most 'prematurely middle-aged' children that one might encounter in fiction.[75]

5.10: The Embryo Nelson: John Walker

John's awareness of his responsibilities as captain is developed in *Swallowdale* when he sinks the *Swallow*. It is clear on the morning the incident occurs that John is impatient to be off sailing but Susan insists on tidying the camp before they leave. Where Susan's preoccupation is with cleaning, John's mind is firmly set on planning their coming sailing. Ransome writes that as John watches Nancy and Peggy sail in the distance 'he was planning, of course.' John meticulously plans the way they will sail to Horseshoe Cove:

> [he] made up his mind that he would run down wind to the cove with the sail out on the port side. By doing that, he thought, he would be able to turn into the cove without having to jibe in the rough water and harder wind that he could see that he would find there. [76]

His preparation mirrors that of a slightly later figure also set in the Nelson Tradition, namely C. S. Forester's Hornblower. First appearing in *The Happy Return* in 1937, Forester's series, later published in edited cadet editions, followed the career of Horatio Hornblower from his entry in the Royal Navy of the Napoleonic era, through to his position as Admiral.[77] Consistently across the novels, Hornblower is described as an officer whose

[74] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 17.
[75] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children.* (London: Garnet Miller, 1965), p. 109.
[76] Arthur Ransome, *Swallowdale* (1931; London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), p. 73.
[77] Four cadet editions were published by Michael Joseph between 1954 and 1955 which reflects the demand for originally adult works of fiction, edited for a juvenile audience. The editions were *Hornblower Goes to Sea* (1954), *Hornblower in Captivity* (1955), *Hornblower Takes Command* (1954), *Hornblower's Triumph*

mind becomes 'like a machine' when planning action at sea.[78] The problem that John encounters is that the sailing conditions change and he does not adapt quickly enough. The result being that he is 'not quite so careful as usual.'[79] Through misjudging the strength of the wind, his unwillingness to listen to Susan who asks him if they should reef, and his desire not to lose face with the Amazons, he ends up crashing against the Pike Rock.

Like many fictional naval cadets, John makes a mistake; however, it is his response to this mistake which demonstrates his efficiency in an emergency. He is instinctively controlled. Telling the others to make for the shore, he is the last to leave, remaining onboard long enough to ensure that the *Swallow* can be salvaged. John's symbolic captaincy is encapsulated in the later description of John being seen to 'throw the anchor shorewards at the last moment' and having just got clear 'as the ship sank beneath him.'[80] He goes onshore to remonstrate with himself:

> Captain John knew all the bitterness of a captain who has lost his ship. Now that it was too late he was telling himself that he ought to have guessed that the wind would be so much stronger. Yes, it was clear that he ought to have reefed […] What was it his father said had said about duffers? Better drowned. John thought so too.[81]

John's sense of failure again mirrors the self-criticism that Hornblower constantly levels at himself. A rather extreme case of which occurs in *The Happy Return* when Hornblower berates himself for 'his weakness and folly' for becoming upset on seeing a former enemy beaten and tortured.[82] John's sense of failure is compounded as he has not only failed to captain the *Swallow* well, but he has also broken a family tradition and shown himself to be a duffer; at least in his own eyes. Added to this is John's sense that he has broken the trust his parents placed in him to look after this brothers and sisters; he has failed sufficiently to

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(1955). Although Forester's novels chart Hornblower's career they are not chronological as Hornblower is a captain in the first novel.

[78] Forester, *The Happy Return*, (1937; London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1965), p. 299.
[79] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 74.
[80] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 104.
[81] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, pp. 80 –81.
[82] Forester, *The Happy Return*, p. 404.

care for his crew or his ship.

The mark of John's leadership abilities is that he takes immediate responsibility for the consequences of his decisions. When Captain Flint arrives he assumes the ship needs salvaging and is more impressed that this has been done than he is surprised that John has sunk the ship. He simply comments that the Pike Rock has caught out many sailors and that everyone makes mistakes. When Captain Flint is alone with John he also points out that 'you didn't lose a man, and you salvaged nearly all your cargo, and you raised your ship and are bringing her into port under her sail'.[83] After the accident John has been a model captain, a fact which Captain Flint emphasises. He concludes that 'if a thing's not done right, do it differently next time. Worrying never made a sailor.' John's other worry at breaking a family tradition and becoming a duffer is also allayed when his mother tells him that she 'capsized [her] cousin's dinghy in Sydney Harbour' and that she 'shouldn't be surprised' if Mr. Walker had done something similar in his youth. Within the context of other stories about the Royal Navy, John's error of judgment becomes one of the rites of passage that literary cadets were forced to pass through. The opening chapters of *Swallowdale* therefore represent an early but crucial stage in John's presentation as a future leader in the Royal Navy.

The burden of John's responsibility is finally and fully explored in *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea*. In this novel the Walker children accidentally drift into the North Sea whilst aboard Jim Brading's schooner, *Goblin*. The children have been allowed to sail with Jim on the strict understanding that they are not to go out to sea and which they promise not to do. However, circumstances contrive to see that this is exactly what happens, and the Walkers find themselves caught on the North Sea during a night of ferocious wind and rain. The Walker children are placed in real danger and John's heightened sense of responsibility is explored throughout. John is doubly responsible for the safety of his family and for the safety of Jim's ship. The result of this is John's decision to head out to sea, away from land, as Jim has been very clear about the danger of shoals in the area. Further, following the motto that in a storm, with land so close, the best thing to do in a ship is to get out to sea and to stay there, John decides to sail further and further away from England, much to the

[83] Ransome, *Swallowdale*, p. 109.

terror of Susan.

It is in this novel that John begins to understand the performative aspects of leadership, evident in his constant determination to appear calm, even when he isn't. This is evident when they first start to drift out to sea. They hear the grinding of the anchor shifting and John's eyes 'suddenly widen' however he quickly controls himself for 'what ever happened he must not show Susan that he was getting worried.'[84] This is not from a sense of male bravado but rather the consciousness that as the most experienced sailor he needs to project an image of being in control so Susan does not panic. John is forced to reef due to the strong winds and he is rightly scared. He thinks that he 'had never felt so lonely in his life' as he precariously and dangerously works his way forward to the sail, succeeding in reefing, though nearly falling overboard at one point. On working his way back to the cockpit 'his hands shook a little' nevertheless he 'untied the rope he had knotted round his middle, coiled it carefully and put it away in the locker.' Despite the fact that John is a young boy sailing with his brothers and sisters his understanding of leadership is remarkable here. There is an acute understanding that he needs to appear a leader and his consequent feelings of loneliness positions John within a long-standing tradition.

The motif of the loneliness of command, often tied to the Nelson Tradition, was prevalent in much maritime writing. John Masefield's historical maritime romance *Sard Harker* (1924), for example, describes the principal character Harker as being 'weary of loneliness'.[85] Harker realises that his responsibility sets him apart from other members of the crew. Likewise, in *The Secret Sea*, published in 1966, Richard Armstrong emphasised this association of leadership with loneliness in the context of whaling ships. The novel's protagonist Thor Krogan, taken as ship's boy aboard his uncle's whaling ship, is happy to spend a private hour in the evening with him because for 'one wonderful hour after supper each night he unbent, stepped down from his lofty, lonely pinnacle of command and became [his] uncle again.'[86]

To return to John Walker, this is a crucial voyage and a vital stage in his development as a

[84] Ransome, *We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea, p*p. 107, 165 and 172.
[85]John Masefield, *Sard Harker* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1924), p. 36.
[86] Richard Armstrong, *The Secret Sea* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1966), p. 14.

captain and a leader. He has mastered his ability to face, and meet, real dangers while keeping a calm and collected head. He remains cool under pressure and presents an air of confidence and capability to his crew, which allows them to continue their own duties. Even Susan, who is desperately unhappy and sick for the majority of the voyage, reconfirms her faith in her brother and in his position as captain. She has literally learnt her place within the hierarchy of the ship and recognised that despite being First Mate the quarter-deck is, as Dening puts it, 'the captain's territory'.[87] Ransome makes this transformation explicit when John finds himself at the helm alone, his brothers and sisters all asleep below deck:

> He was back at the tiller, leaning on it again. He took another look at the compass card under that dim yellow glow, wedged himself against the cockpit coaming with a foot against the opposite seat, looked up at the part of the sky that was full of stars, and a little ashamedly admitted to himself that he was happy […] if anybody had seen his face in the faint glimmer from the compass window, he would have seen that there was a grin on it. John was alone in the dark with his ship, and everybody else was asleep. He, for that night, was the Master of the *Goblin*, and even the lurches of the cockpit beneath him as the *Goblin* rushed through the dark filled him with a serious kind of joy. He and the *Goblin* together. On and on. On and on. Years and years hence, when he was grown up, he would have a ship of his own and sail her out into wider seas than this. But he would always and always remember this night when for the first time ship and crew were in his charge, his alone.[88]

For the first time John has truly embraced the idea that leadership is marked by the contrast of separateness and belonging; separateness from the crew and union with the ship. The responsibility of leadership is 'his alone' which comes at the cost of closeness to others but brings with it a communion with the *Goblin* that could not otherwise be realised. This combination of authority and separateness is aptly depicted in Ransome's illustration that

[87] Dening, *Bligh's Bad Language*, p. 19.
[88] Ransome, *We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea*, p. 200.

follows this scene (Figure 5.7). With John firmly at the tiller and Susan in the cockpit, Ransome visually depicts the new power relations that define John and Susan, confirming John's command.

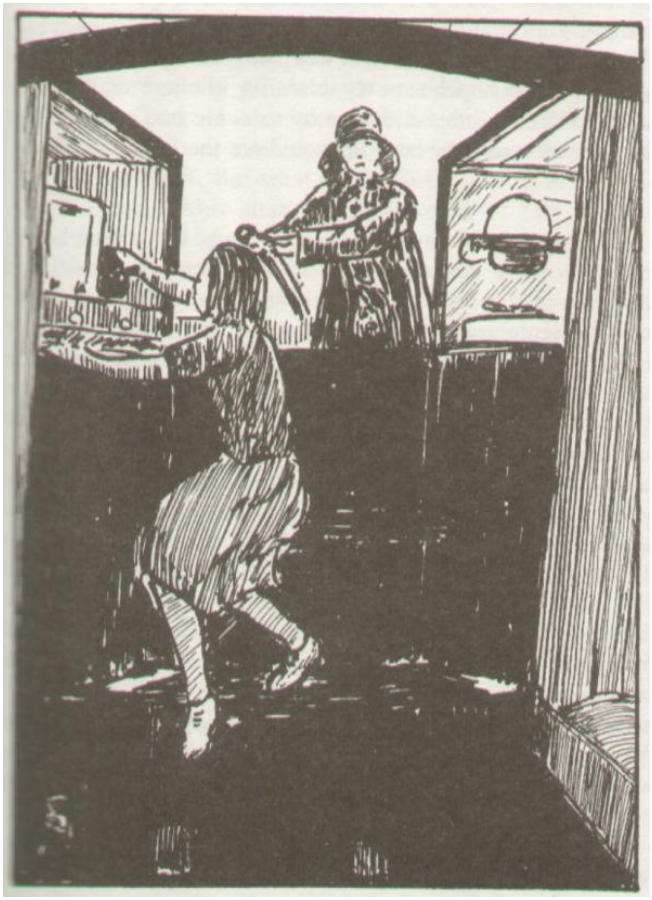

Figure 5.7: 'Cooking and Steering' illustration by Arthur Ransome for *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea* (1937; London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 215.

This sense of being set apart from the crew is also evident in *Missee Lee* when the Walkers become separated from the Blacketts after *Wild Cat* has been set on fire by Roger's monkey. Finding themselves drifting in the China Seas John's mind is engaged with planning their next move and keeping his crew under control. A division is formed between John and his crew, evident in the following passage:

> John thought hard. Was there a single other thing he could do? There was not. He thought for a moment of putting the sail and spars overboard and

> lying to them at the end of a rope. He decided against that. If the rope broke again, the sail would be lost, and they might come to need it badly. If only he had had any idea how fast they were moving and how long it was since the sea-anchor went. Titty and Roger could bale a bit to keep them quiet. He would start baling himself if much more water came in.[89]

John is concerned with the morale of his crew deciding that Roger and Titty can bail 'to keep them quiet' as this will occupy them physically, so they are less likely to worry about their predicament.

5.11: The Rebellion of Roger Walker

Examining the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels through the Nelson Tradition also reveals the complex ideological functions of Roger Walker. Often focused on demands of his stomach, Roger's increasingly selfish behaviour could lead to the assumption that he belongs outside of a tradition based on principles of responsibility and duty. Roger's selfishness could actually position him at an early stage of a cadet's career, one which was not incompatible with the Nelson Tradition. This is clear from the first 'Dick Valliant' novel, *Dick Valliant, Naval Cadet*, which begins with Dick being expelled from yet another school. The novel begins with his father lamenting that Dick seems to have the idea in his head that 'rules and regulation were made solely for [him] to defy and break' and he threatens to send Dick to school in the North if he doesn't mend his ways.[90] Dick's counter threat that he will run away to sea is seized upon by his father who conspires with Dick's uncle, an Admiral in the navy, to have Dick enlist as a cadet officer. It is from this point that Dick begins to realise that he has very few defences against the future that is now in store for him. For example, on going to the Admiralty board for his examination he begins to feel qualms about his father's plans for him:

[89] Ransome, *Missee Lee*, p. 45.
[90] Irving, R. N., *Dick Valliant Naval cadet*, pp. 13, 19 and 38.

> Now that it was evident that his uncle, the Admiral, was in league with his father, and that his uncle was also part and parcel of this grim, disciplined, machine-like Admiralty, it seemed as though Dick was in a fair way to be competing against forces too strong altogether for him.

Further, when he embarks upon his first training ship he is 'dressed down' by his cadet captain within about ten minutes of being aboard ship. He tells Dick that he had 'better get back to the nursery' if he can't cope and that he has 'acted like an utter little worm.' What is striking is the ease with which Dick accepts the regime and discipline of life aboard a Royal Naval training ship:

> Dick wondered at the ease with which he had dropped into it. He, who had never done a day's drill in his life, had found himself moving to the command with the others. At the time it did not strike him; but before long he learnt to value the fact that personality and the man behind the order are the thing that count. It seemed strange to him that here he was in one of Britain's old wooden walls, learning to be a naval officer and yet forming part of the ship's company, for in the Navy it is a golden maxim that, 'He who would command must first learn to obey;' it is useless giving an order unless a man knows how to carry it out himself.[91]

Roger's unwillingness to accept orders, and to suppress his own desires, positions Roger at a very particular stage of the cadet's development, namely the rebellious phase. This phase of a cadet's development into officer material has precedence in both fact and fiction. For example, Commander Stephen King-Hall, recalled:

> I tremble to think what would have become of me had my unruly spirit, self-conceit, and general uppishness not been submitted to the restraint of naval discipline, and still more important, influenced by the naval tradition of service, of self-less devotion to duty, and the general

[91] Irving, *Dick Valliant, Naval Cadet*, p. 47.

> conception that privileges arise as a result of duties adequately performed - and not as a right. [92]

In one sense Roger Walker can be placed at the very early stages of this process and it is not unreasonable to assume that, like King-Hall, Roger would learn to embrace naval discipline on entering officer training. Placing Roger within this established narrative of rebellion followed by willing submission suggests that within the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels, the process of teaching Roger naval discipline is still on-going; certainly it is not resolved by the end of the final novel *Great Northern?* Therefore, even though Roger has not yet accepted the naval tradition of service, there is nothing to suggest that this process would not be completed through his own service as a cadet and an officer. Positioning Roger at this early stage in a cadet's education explains the correlation between naval training and that undertaken within the Walker family.

The tensions created by social divisions inherent in the Nelson Tradition emerge in the 'Swallows and Amazons' novels through the conflicts between Roger, John and the other children. The first of these surrounds Roger's position within the Walker's own sailing hierarchy, namely, Roger's status as an ordinary seaman or rating. Ransome establishes that Roger is set before the mast when the children sign Ship's Articles, at the beginning of *Swallows and Amazons*. Ship's Articles were important documents that not only bound a sailor to a ship but also to the structures of discipline within it. Roger's lowly position within this structure is evident when Ransome reproduces the Articles as follows:

> Master: John Walker.
> Mate: Susan Walker.
> Able-seaman: Titty Walker.
> Ship's Boy: Roger.[93]

[92] King-Hall, *My Naval Life*, p. 24.
[93] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 22.

In the first novel, Roger is simply content to be included in his brother's and sisters' plans and he has no objection to this hierarchy. The same is true for the second novel, *Swallowdale* (1931) with Susan's reference to Roger and Titty as 'fo'c'sle hands' creating no tension within the group. As the novels progress though, it is the lack of opportunity for progression that frames Roger's increasingly selfish behaviour.

This lack of opportunity for progression is established at the very beginning of *Swallows and Amazons* when Ransome first introduces Roger's love of engines. It is clear that Roger's values are slightly at odds with the rest of his family, or to be precise, his older brother's. Ransome quickly establishes this in the opening description of Roger pretending to be the clipper *Cutty Sark*. Ransome writes that '[his] elder brother had said only that morning that steamships were just engines in tin boxes. Sail was the thing, and so, though it took rather longer, Roger made his way up the field in broad tacks.'[94] The *Cutty Sark* was described by Arthur O'Cooke as one of 'the last of our fine British sailing ships'. [95] With a 'spread of sail' and 'decks…white as snow,' it represented both the romance of the days, and 'the wild and exulting voice of the world's soul of sail' and its eventual demise due to the rise of steam vessels.[96] As Commander Geoffrey Penn writes in *Snotty, The Story of the Midshipman* (1957), there was consequently an historic bias against engineers within the navy. Engineers were thought to have 'brought coal, smoke, oil and dirt into a way of life devoted to cleanliness, smartness and the beauty of white sails and raking masts' and, it was thought, they should be 'contemplated with something very close to horror.' They were 'representative to the naval officer of all that he detested…The old type of naval officer saw in the engineer the antithesis of all that he himself represented, the ruin of his professions; and he vented upon the engineer all that spite that he felt. Engineers were treated with contempt and were made to suffer every indignity that could be heaped upon them.'[97] Roger's obvious awareness of the contempt in which his brother and sisters hold the use of the engine is clear in *Great Northern?* when he looks 'gratefully' at Captain Flint for saying that he will need to draw upon Roger and his engine.[98] Ransome in fact draws attention to the usefulness of Roger and his engine when Captain Flint agrees with Roger

[94] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, p. 15.
[95] Arthur O. Cooke, *Ships and Sea-faring Shown to the Children* (London: T.C & E.C Jack, 1917), p. 12.
[96] Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea* (1913; London: Methuen and Co, 1950), p. 45.
[97] Commander Geoffrey Penn, R.N., *Snotty. The Story of the Midshipman* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1957), p. 54.
[98] Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 158.

that they needed the engine to leave harbour. He says abruptly to Nancy, 'Roger's right. . . and you're wrong,' rejecting the idea that using canvas was the only way to sail.[99]

Roger's growing resentment throughout the series can only be explained when the position of Ship's Engineer is examined more closely. Although the Articles set Roger before the mast, as an engineer he actually occupies a far more liminal space set, as Brian Lavery puts it, 'on the fringes of the navy.'[100] Alan Ereira also writes that engineers 'did not fit easily into the Navy's class structure' and that they were both 'more ambitious than the normal lower-deck inhabitants' and 'acutely conscious of the demoralising bottle-necks to promotion.'[101] The position of the engineer within the Royal Navy was always a problematic one, residing somewhere between the mess and the quarterdeck. Engineers were also drawn from the increasingly educated and ambitious interwar working classes, and were perhaps more likely to challenge restrictions on lower-deck promotion. Should a cadet officer choose to specialise in engineering they also chose to forgo their rights or ambitions to command. This same message was conveyed by Percival Hislam in *The Navy, Shown to the Children* writing that 'Engineering is a special branch as an officer who chooses to remain in it will never command a ship or a fleet.'[102] The marginalisation of the naval engineer is reflected in Roger's separateness from the rest of the group.

As the series progresses and Roger's resentment grows, Ransome engages more directly with the effect of Roger's realisation that his authority and autonomy is stifled. This resentment often manifests itself as cheekiness or naughtiness, perhaps the only means for asserting himself that is available. This culminates in his behaviour throughout *Great Northern?* where Roger's behaviour, as Watson rightly described it, establishes him as 'disagreeable and disgruntled.'[103] Just why Roger is disgruntled becomes apparent through his desire to make his own decisions rather than take orders. At one point in the novel Roger reflects that 'as a ship's boy, and even now . . . rated as Engineer, he had far too few

[99] Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 95.
[100] Lavery, *Empire of the Seas*, p. 247.
[101] Alan Ereira, *The Invergordon Mutiny* : *a narrative history of the last great mutiny in the Royal Navy and how it forced Britain off the gold standard in 1931* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 16 and 17.
[102] Hislam, *The Navy, Shown to the Children* , p. 9.
[103] Watson, *Reading Series Fiction*, p. 67.

chances of planning his own day. There was always a captain somewhere, or a mate, to tell him what to do next.'[104] The result of this is Roger's increasing willingness to assert his own desires in conflict with that of the group, and Ransome contrasts Roger's individualism with the mutuality of the other children. According to Ross McKibbin, selfishness or a lack of social responsibility was a quality that the interwar middle-classes associated with the working class.[105] To a degree, it could be argued that Ransome uses Roger to illustrate the resentment that barriers to social mobility could cause in the working classes. Such barriers were certainly keenly felt by ratings in the Royal Navy, as is evident from the bitterness characterising many respondents in Hannen Swaffer's 1946 investigation into social divisions within the navy. Tellingly entitled *What Would Nelson Do?*, Swaffer's book revealed a world in which:

> A lower-deck rating [has] no right to aspire to wardroom rank and so have his feet under the table. I discovered it was the right of a certain class to officer the Navy. It was their mess of pottage, their heritage. They were leaders of men.[106]

On the other hand, Roger's challenging behaviour and preference for steam over sail can be read as indicators that Ransome, albeit unconsciously, rehearsed within the Walker family social conflicts and tensions affecting wider society. While it is very possible that Ransome sought to show the negative effects that barriers to social and professional mobility could have, it cannot be denied that the series closes with Roger Walker depicted as a disagreeable character with few admirable qualities.

Looking across a range of family sailing stories it becomes clear that they were often engaged with negotiations of power and authority. What is extremely interesting about Ransome's depictions of both John and Roger Walker is the way he offered simultaneously a celebration and a critique of the Nelson Tradition. In particular, Ransome's subtle examining of the rigid social divisiveness integral to the Nelson Tradition could be considered as a challenge to a major cultural system by which working-class boys had long

[104] Arthur Ransome, *Great Northern?*, p. 194.
[105] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918* – 1951, p. 58.
[106] Hannen Swaffer, *What Would Nelson Do?* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946), p. 54.

been denied access to leadership positions. This challenge should not be overstated though. When family sailing stories, including Arthur Ransome's, are considered as a whole, there was always a propensity to favour the authority of middle-class boys. While the idea of mixed groups of children sailing together was unifying, to a certain degree, ultimately the family sailing story reflected the desire of the middle-class public to distinguish between themselves and the working classes. Such divisions were not necessarily antagonistic; indeed they never were in family sailing stories. Nevertheless, they did still exist. Ultimately, the family sailing story was concerned with the relations between the classes just as much as it was with sailing. Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' novels simply reflect the many complexities that were inherent in this thorny issue of interwar class relations.

Chapter Six- Conclusion

This thesis has had two tasks. The first was to provide a detailed survey of British camping and tramping fiction between the years approximately 1930–1960. The second has been to interrogate how camping and tramping texts engaged with and were a constituent of some of the social, political and cultural debates that were prevalent at the time they were published. As the introduction to this thesis showed there were many more camping and tramping novels published than has been recognised in modern children's literature criticism. This is not because this thesis has radically reappraised what the features of camping and tramping novels are. The work of Victor Watson in both *Reading Series Fiction* (2000) and *The Cambridge Guide to Children's Books in English* (2001) has already established an accurate and useful summary of the main features of camping and tramping fiction. What this thesis has done is to refine Watson's definition through undertaking a far wider survey of camping and tramping fiction. By drawing upon a range of neglected, as well as better-known camping and tramping novels, this thesis has clarified the trends and motifs that characterised camping and tramping fiction; caravanning emerges as a highly popular motif no longer limited to the 'Waggoner' novels of David Severn; Arthur Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' novels merge into the family sailing stories of Aubrey de Selincourt and Gilbert Hackforth Jones' 'Green Sailor' series. Moreover the range of camping and tramping activities has proven to be surprisingly diverse, incorporating caving and climbing and the archaeology and cycling of Garry Hogg's 'Explorer' novels. Across this thesis there is perhaps a larger proportion of space given to this survey than would have been expected. However, as so little camping and tramping fiction is now widely known, this survey provides the first comprehensive introduction to this type of children's literature.

There has been no space within this thesis to fully situate camping and tramping fiction within children's interwar publishing in a wider sense. This is unfortunate as early twentieth-century children's publishing is an under-studied area that is ripe for further attention. What this thesis has done though is to establish how critics at the time, such as

the anonymous reviewers in *The Junior Bookshelf*, responded to camping and tramping fiction. These findings have produced some interesting results when compared with modern comment on camping and tramping fiction. Overall, what these responses reveal is just how fresh and new camping and tramping novels were when they first appeared. This fact has been alluded to by modern critics who recognised that, with the publication of *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), a new type of children's fiction had appeared. But perhaps what comment such as this fails to convey to today's reader is just how modern they were. How the gentleness and lack of sensationalism that typifies camping and tramping novels was prized by contemporary reviewers who would come to lament the turn to the more far-fetched adventure story. Above all, a picture emerges of the contemporary debates that surrounded not only camping and tramping fiction but children's publishing in general. As children's interwar publishing is not the main focus of this thesis it has only been possible to begin the process of uncovering contemporary attitudes to children's literature. The work that has been undertaken on camping and tramping fiction here provides a useful insight into this aspect of the children's literature history.

One of the main aims of this thesis has been to test how accurate current critical comment on camping and tramping is. The introduction to this thesis set out the main critical responses to camping and tramping fiction and demonstrated that words and phrases such as nostalgic, escapist, backwards-looking and conservative are often used. This thesis has interrogated these interpretations which imply that camping and tramping fiction was somehow anti-modern. It is the argument of this thesis that camping and tramping novels were absolutely modern. Chapter three clearly demonstrated that camping and tramping novels were a part of the wider cultural responses to changes that were taking place in modern Britain that focused on the countryside. Even if some of these responses, such as H. V. Morton's *In Search of England* (1927) and F.R. Leavis' *Culture and the Environment* (1934) tended to idealise the 'organic communities' of the countryside, or threaten to turn rural traditions into heritage attractions, these were contemporary responses to change. If camping and tramping fiction was nostalgic for the organic communities of the past, this positions it alongside other contemporary responses rather than set against or outside of them. Often, camping and tramping fiction problematised the idea that exploration of the countryside would result in re-connection with traditional skills and values and emphasised

how estranged visitors were from the actual countryside. Furthermore, as was argued in chapter one, camping and tramping fiction often challenged romanticised notions about escaping the demands of the modern world for life on the open road, to a degree that texts for adults failed to do. Overall then, it is far more accurate to describe camping and tramping texts as responding to notions of escapism that were prevalent at the time, rather than being escapist.

Further evidence of the contemporary nature of camping and tramping fiction is the fact that they are novels about leisure. From a distance of almost a hundred years, it is difficult to appreciate how radically the demands and provisions for leisure changed in Britain during the 1930s and how patterns of leisure were linked to the politics of class. The open-air activities that were a key feature of all camping and tramping novels mirrored the interest in healthy, active pursuits that flourished in the 1930s. This interest transcended class divisions but, as was argued in chapter three, subtle distinctions in taste, such as the preference for enjoying the open air individually rather than en masse, revealed prejudices that were both cultural and social. The close readings undertaken in chapter three demonstrate the way in which consumption of leisure and the politics of class intersected in camping and tramping fiction. The result was complex; while camping and tramping fiction was certainly not anti-working class, their prejudice against rowdy groups of incomers was clear. It is hard to believe that it was simply a matter of coincidence that it was the working classes who were largely associated at the time with mass participation in leisure.

The interplay between the middle and working classes is complex in camping and tramping fiction. One of the key criticisms of early twentieth-century children's publishing is that it failed to acknowledge or address the implications of class politics. As Nicholas Tucker argues of children's publishing in general, there were not 'many criticisms of Britain heard in terms of its still existing class barriers and the economic inequality that accompanied them.'[1] Certainly, many camping and tramping novels depicted class relations founded upon a natural deference on the part of working classes toward the middle classes. This was evident in the willingness of rural working-class people to facilitate the holidays of middle-

[1] Nicholas Tucker, 'Setting the Scene' in *Children's Book Publishing in Britain Since 1945*, eds., Kimberley Reynolds and Nicholas Tucker (Ashgate: Scholar Press, 1998), pp. 1- 19 (p.1).

class campers and trampers whilst never appearing to have time for a holiday themselves. This willingness was sometimes rendered unnecessary by campers and trampers' expectation that these people were there to serve their needs. This accounts for some discomforting episodes in Pamela Hull and Katherine Whitlock's 'Oxus' novels, such as the incident in *Escape to Persia* (1938) which sees Mr Cleverton conspire with the Hunterleys in order to convince Mrs Fradd that it is she who has made an error and forgotten that the children are coming to stay. In actual fact the children have taken it upon themselves to turn up at the farm, foisting themselves unannounced on the Fradds.[2] Incidents such as these are rare in camping and tramping novels but the fact that Hull and Whitlock were girls when they wrote these books, inspired by the novels of Arthur Ransome, reveals the way that some readers understood class relations in camping and tramping novels, whatever their authors may have intended to convey. Overall, what camping and tramping novels demonstrate are the complicated nuances of class relations in Britain during the first part of the twentieth century.

Although I did not realise it when this project began, my research has clearly been influenced by what John Baxendale refers to as the 'cultural turn' in historical study of the thirties and the shift towards a narrative of the thirties based around consumption and the nation rather than Slump and Appeasement.[3] This perhaps accounts for the fact that this thesis began by stating that camping and tramping novels were examples of what Raphael Samuel refers to as 'national fictions.'[4] In other words, fiction that creates myths about national character in order to engage in nation–building. This is a particularly important task for studies of children's literature, if we agree with Paul Hazard's argument in *Books, Children and Men* (1944) that 'we can disregard the literature of childhood only if we consider unimportant the way in which a national soul is formed and sustained.'[5] According to Hazard, 'England could be reconstructed entirely from its children's books'. It appeared to him that children's fiction taught English children to 'love your country, strive to

[2] Katherine Hull and Pamela Whitlock, *Escape to Persia* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), pp. 110-114.
[3] Baxendale, 'Re-narrating the Thirties,' (para 4).
[4] Raphael Samuel, 'Introduction: the figures of national myth' in *Patriotism. The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. 3: National Fictions*, ed. by Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. xi – xxxvi (p. xix).
[5] Paul Hazard, *Books, Children and Men*, trans., by M. Mitchell. (1944; Boston: Horn Book, 1960), p. 111, 128, 141.

maintain the strength and grandeur of England' and that 'its absolute superiority over all other nations of the world is indisputable.' Writing in 1944, Hazard suggested that this was changing, it is perhaps useful here to consider how far camping and tramping fiction was trying to do this.

In the first instance, camping and tramping fiction could be read as an expression of the desire to take control of the British countryside and in doing so seize control of what had, for some, become a key symbol of national identity. It was no longer possible to set sail, conquering new found lands so would-be imperialists settled for staking a claim in the British countryside. The problem with this interpretation is that it is not supported by careful reading of the texts. As has been argued throughout chapters three and four, campers and trampers were frequently positioned as outsiders, alien within the landscape, despite all of their efforts to deny this. As chapter four demonstrated, many camping and tramping texts used the act of mapping in order to problematise and challenge the children's perceptions of themselves as would-be colonists - a perception that was presented as a result of their own reading. Thus, despite George Orwell, and Geoffrey Trease's repeated refrain that early twentieth-century children's literature was 'sodden in the worst illusions of the 1890s' camping and tramping novels often reflected and interrogated these illusions.[6] Rather than simply building national fictions, some camping and tramping novels deconstructed earlier national myths simultaneously exposing the role that was played by children's literature in their construction.

When camping and tramping fiction was not interrogating the myths of the past it was engaged with those of the present. If we assume for the minute that Hazard's argument is correct, namely that 'England could be reconstructed entirely from its children's books' it is interesting to consider what this means in relation to camping and tramping fiction. There are two significant national fictions with which camping and tramping fiction engaged and which are loosely divided across the chapters of this thesis. The first was the national

[6] The Geoffrey Trease archive held at Seven Stories includes Trease's notes for the many lectures and talks he gave on children's literature. These notes clearly show him either quoting or paraphrasing Orwell. For an indicative example see 'Cut copy of speech delivered to the Welsh College of Librarianship, Aberystwyth, 25 May, ~~1971~~', Geoffrey Trease Archive Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, GT/ 07/ 01/ 07, f5.

identity myth constructed mostly after the First World War, which sought to root national identity within the English countryside and rural traditions. The second is the myth of Britain as a maritime nation, an island race whose geographical reliance on the sea resulted in its historic command of the seas.

Looking back on the novels discussed in this thesis what is clear is that they did not present the English as a rural people who had temporarily become dissociated with the land. It may seem a strange thing to say but the majority of camping and tramping novels were hardly about the countryside at all. Campers and trampers are rarely country people; they are visitors, either urbanites, such as Hull and Whitlock's Hunterleys, children from the corners of the empire, such as the Robinsons of *South Country Secrets* (1935) or children of the Royal Navy like the Walkers who, when not in school, live in whatever port their father has been assigned to. If anything, camping and tramping novels often emphasised just how few people actually belonged in the countryside. Farmers are few, rural children are rare and farm hands are virtually unheard of. Readers were given occasional glimpses into wider rural communities but as visitors, campers and trampers were usually outside of these communities occupying a more ambivalent role in the countryside. This distance between the working life of the countryside and that largely experienced by campers and trampers resulted in the argument that it is the pastoral rather than the georgic mode that is most relevant to camping and tramping texts.

It is unfortunate that there has been so little room in this thesis to address maritime traditions in greater detail, as interwar children's maritime writing is a greatly understudied area. This is probably due to two factors, the first being the lack of critical attention on children's literature of the period in general. The second is due to the assumption that post-1918, the cultural significance of maritime fiction dwindled along with that of the Royal Navy and the idea of Britain as an island race. Even Glen O'Hara, in a recent essay reviewing the state of British maritime history argues that 'Britain's twentieth-century experience of mass armies, the novelty of war in the air, European engagement and Frank Newbould's rural wartime vision of 'deep England' was not conducive to a recognition of

the importance of Britain's maritime history.[7] What camping and tramping sailing stories reveal is the vibrant maritime culture that prevailed in early-twentieth-century Britain and which was partly inspired by men who had served in the First World War and wanted to encourage British children not to lose their sea sense. At this time there were countless books published for children about virtually all aspects of British maritime culture and history. Taken as a whole, it is accurate to say that a British child in the interwar years, particularly a middle-class one, could consistently be reading material telling them that Britain's economic and imperial successes, their national security and their essential national character had always been, and would always be predicated on Britain's dominant relationship with the sea.

This thesis has really only begun the process of examining camping and tramping fiction. There are many avenues of research that I have started but have been unable to incorporate into this thesis. During the course of this project I have collected original material sufficient to write numerous chapters on children's interwar maritime publishing. There is also a wealth of non-fictional material for children on both the sea and the countryside that barely appears in these pages but deserves further study. Added to this is the publishing about farming and rural life that began to appear more frequently from the late 1930s, providing a useful comparison with camping and tramping fiction. If more were currently known about camping and tramping fiction the need to provide a comprehensive survey would not have been so great and more time could have been given to pursuing some of these areas here. Despite these limitations this thesis demonstrates two things. The first is the complex and challenging nature of camping and tramping novels. The second is that labelling interwar children's publishing as an Age of Brass is entirely unhelpful, it encourages us to skim read, to accept that it is of little critical interest and to look for 'better' books elsewhere. This thesis is offered in refutation of this

[7] Glen O'Hara, 'The Sea is Swinging into View': Modern British Maritime History in a Globalised World.' *English Historical Review*, 124 (October 2006), 1109 -1134 (p. 183).

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