

SECRET WATER

Song for Arthur Ransome (1884 – 1967) – Creator of the Swallows and Amazons

Words & Music by Bob Watson

Moderato

Verse



Ar - thur's been and - Ar - thur's gone Spin us a yarn be -

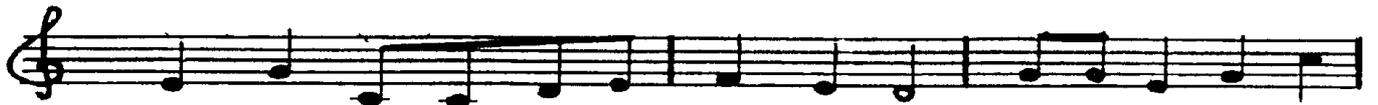


fore - you go, Ar - thur's ship it goes sai - ling on, all

Chorus



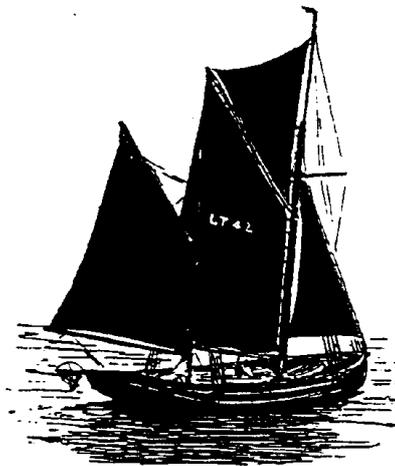
bound for a Se - cret Wa - ter. So Spin us a yarn & weave us a dream,



Fleed tide run - ning and a - way - we go, Spin us a yarn and



weave us a dream, we're bound for a Se - cret Wa - ter. -



SECRET WATER Song for Arthur Ransome (1884 –1967)

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1. Arthur's been and Arthur's gone,
* ***Spin us a yarn before you go;***
Arthur's ship it goes sailing on,
** ***All bound for a secret water.***

Chorus: **So spin us a yarn and weave us a dream,
Floodtide's running and away we go;
Spin us a yarn and weave us a dream,
We're bound for a secret water.**

2. Sailed his ketch on the Baltic Sea,
* ***Spin us a yarn before you go;***
Home to berth by a Latvian quay,
** ***All bound for a secret water.***

Chorus

3. Pages turn in a story book, *
Sing like a ripple in Lakeland brook, All **

Chorus

4. Armchair, slippers and a pipe alight *
Fireside sailor will sail tonight, All . . . **

Chorus

5. Wide world's waiting and it calls to you, *
With Captain Flint and his youthful crew, We're . . . **

Chorus

6. (Your) jib-boom's jutting and your bobstay's real, *
With Peter Duck stood at the wheel, We're . . . **

Chorus

7. (The) yarn's been spun and the tale's been told, *
Forever young and never old, We're . . . **

Chorus

8. Arthur's been and Arthur's gone, *
Arthur's ship it goes sailing on, **

ARTHUR RANSOME -- BIOG NOTES

Arthur Ransome (1884 -1967) is best known as the creator of the "Swallows and Amazons", but he wrote a lot else besides, including much about pre- and post- imperial Russia and the Baltic States, where he worked as foreign correspondent for the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN before and after the Great War . . . which in some parts of Northern Europe went on a bit longer.

Great sailor and a great story teller. Cult figure today in some circles. This song – named after one of Arthur's books -- has been sung at the AGMs of The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) and the Nancy Blackett Trust, which has lovingly preserved one of the many sail craft that Arthur owned in his lifetime.

Recent attention has focussed on the possibility that Mr Ransome may have been a spy – either for Britain or for the (then) newly formed Soviet Union. Or possibly even a double agent, working for both at the same time. Such assertions sit rather at odds with Arthur's later life image as an archetypal tweedy, pipe-smoking Englishman -- but as a younger man he was considered to be more than somewhat left wing – though perhaps more in a liberal than a revolutionary sense – and there were some areas of the establishment where he was viewed with extreme suspicion and hostility.

And during his time in Russia and the Baltic, he was certainly on very cordial terms with Lenin, and other members of the new soviet elite. Particularly so with Trotsky, whose secretary, Evgenia Petrovna Shelepina, became his mistress and later his second wife. . . . to share with him the literary life made possible by the success from 1930 onwards of his "Swallows and Amazons" books – set first in the Lake District, and later in areas further afield..

Arthur Ransome is often pictured as a most reluctant singer, who was however not averse to doing a turn on the button accordion or penny whistle quite skilfully by some accounts.

For all the assertions regarding well-to-do children effectively playing pirates there is no denying that Arthur was a story-teller supreme. His situations and his characters are beautifully drawn, and it is on this angle that the song is focussed. It has often been said that you could learn to handle a small sailing boat just from reading his books, and this I once found to be true