

The Arthur Ransome Society

Literary and Resources Committee

Note of the Committee's 23rd meeting, held on 7 July 2018, Bishopthorpe, York

Present: Peter Wright (Chair) (PWr), Julian Lovelock (JL), Chris Birt (CB), Paul Wilson (PW), Winifred Wilson (WW), Krysia Clack (KC), Paul Crisp (PC), Ann Farr (note taker) (AF)

Krysia Clack and Paul Crisp were welcomed to this meeting. Krysia is a newly elected Trustee and also the Board's official representative on this committee. Paul chairs the Literary Weekend Sub-Committee and is currently Southern Region Chair.

1. Apologies: John Pearson, Christine Rae

2. Minutes of the meeting 2nd Sept 2017

The minutes were accepted.

The Committee noted that Nick Brewster wished to step down and that he will continue to serve on the Literary Weekend Committee. PWr thanked him on behalf of the Committee for all that he had done.

3. Report of L&R Committee to TARS Board 10 March 2018

Noted.

4. Chair's opening remarks

TARS Committees

PWr explained that he regards both L&RC and Publications Committee as valuable contributors to TARS. He will arrange a meeting with Publications to discuss a number of matters including finance, (with input from the TARS Treasurer towards setting a budget for publications), to ensure all editors are agreed on policy and practice. Hopefully this would mean editors no longer felt the need to attend Board Meetings as guests. The budget would need the Board's approval before it can be agreed.

TARS President

Consideration needs to be given to a successor to Sophie Neville, who wishes to step down in 12 months' time. The role of President needs defining in order to inform any possible candidate. One or two names have been mentioned and PWr will follow up one in particular, in consultation with Board members.

Membership

The Society needs to be more pro-active given our falling numbers. The availability of membership leaflets was questioned, there being some confusion about who holds them and how to get hold of a supply. Social media needs to be embraced to have an appeal to the younger generation. Committee members felt they did not have the expertise themselves. PWr has received a number of comments from the general membership with suggestions including that a change in the way major meetings (IAGMs and Literary Weekends) are held is needed, also whether regional committees are functioning in the best way. Clarification of the relationship with other bodies such as the Nancy Blackett Trust and ART is needed and should be more formally defined.

5. Matters arising

Sales figures for the DVDs were queried. It seems some sets are held by those regions which asked for them, so Stall stock figures cannot be accurate. The PayPal system seems to be a cause of some confusion as to whether the income goes back to the Stall, as it should, or into central funds.

Talks which are included in the Literary Weekend transactions will carry a disclaimer about any factual inaccuracies being the speaker's responsibility, not TARS'.

6. Alliance of Literary Societies

PWr reported that Amanda Ardagh-Walter attended the meeting in Birmingham as the official TARS representative and that he attended in a personal capacity. The ALS agreed that TARS should host its 2024 AGM, which the ALS would like to be held in the Lake District, over a weekend in late May/early June. AF and KC pointed out on behalf of Northern Region that finding a suitable venue in the Lakes and accommodation is extremely difficult. Early reservation is essential in any case. PWr has notes on how the meetings are usually structured: first full day for formal meeting, talks and a gala evening; the rest is for more informal activities. Accommodation might be local B&Bs with a venue for the actual meetings for c70 people. Rydal Hall, a hotel in Bowness, and travel lodges were mentioned for possible investigation. Organising the meeting would be a national TARS responsibility, not Northern's, although its local knowledge would be helpful.

7. Petrograd map

PWr had corresponded with Ted Alexander about where the map should live. It was clear that TA wished it to remain within TARS. WW expressed concern, endorsed by AF, that the current TARS Library storage conditions were not ideal, with unregulated temperature and humidity and possible contamination from the cafe kitchen downstairs. AF agreed to investigate archival "boxing" possibilities for this very large item which needs to be kept flat.

8. Library report

The Library's presence at the Coniston IAGM was noted as a good thing. With the proceeds from the sale of a number of items which had belonged to the late Bill Johnson WW had been able to buy a number of items from her wish list. These included books by McKail, Stanley Morrison, Guy Chapman and Lascelles Abercrombie. The present offer of free outward postage should become a permanent

arrangement, since it is not deemed to be a burden on library funds. The meeting thanked Winifred for all her splendid work keeping the Library going.

9. Red Slipper Grant application

One very suitable (UK) application had been received, from Karen Babayan, requesting the full amount, to assist with travel for research purposes, copyright/reproduction fees etc. The meeting unanimously agreed to support the application. The outcome is to be a book, exploring the relationship between AR and the Altounyan children through fictionalised short stories, to be published in 2019.

10. Publicity update

JL wished to step down from this role, and feels in any case that publicity needs to be handled differently, e.g. harnessing social media to try to reach more/younger people, and redesigning the webpages, possibly using a professional designer. He asked if/how people were using the TARS banners which were made 3 years ago. There was some discussion about the relevance of the current printed membership leaflets.

JL agreed to edit one more *Mixed Moss* and will remain a member of this committee for the time being. The meeting expressed its appreciation to Julian for all his work.

PWr suggested that TARS needed better two-way communications with the literary executors, and also to clarify relationships with other associated organisations which use our IAGM and literary weekend facilities for their displays and sales. There are financial implications for the host region.

It was agreed that Northern Region would send notes on its IAGM experiences to Paul Crisp to aid and inform Southern Region as the next host.

Archives

The members of the sub-group charged with sorting out the TARS archive are CB, AF and Veronica Priest. It reports to this committee. The most immediate problem is finding a suitable, large, secure space in which to examine and sort everything. Suggestions included redundant school premises, church spaces or any members' homes. It was agreed that a short advert would appear in the next *Signals*.

2019 Literary Weekend

PWr had been investigating venues in the Midlands. Some were clearly too expensive and too upmarket, while others did not allow alcohol. Other possible places were suggested to add to the list. The organising sub-committee would make the final decision as appropriate.

TARS Stall

Christine Rae sent apologies but will attend future meetings of this committee. All seems to be going well, with occasional help on financial matters and on what to buy. She was surprised by the amount of business when she took over but this was predominantly due to the then newly available DVD.

Merchandising continues to be a matter for discussion and is to be managed by a small sub-group, who will communicate by email under PWr's direction.

New L&RC chair

There were no immediate volunteers but JL said he would take over for the coming year, with KC as a possible successor. It is believed John Pearson will remain a member of the committee but would like to step down as note taker. AF volunteered to cover this meeting and the next. The meeting wished to record its huge thanks to PWr for chairing 20 meetings over a 12-year period.

DONMs

1. Wednesday 14th November (Midlands)
2. Wednesday 13th March (second choice Saturday 16th March) at Abbot Hall, Kendal.

AOB

None.

AF

22.07.2018