

The Arthur Ransome Society

Note of the 83rd meeting of the Board of Trustees, held in Birmingham on 29 February 2020

Present: Peter Wright (in the chair)
Amanda Ardagh-Walter
Stephen Benham
Chris Birt
Krysia Clack
Ann Farr
Michael Glover
Susan Gouldbourne
Linda Hendry
Brian Key
Iain Khan-Gilchrist
David Middleton
John Pearson
Kirstie Taylor
Peter Willis
Diana Wright

Action

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Veronica Priest.

2. Chair's introductory remarks

Peter gave a special welcome to the meeting to Iain Khan-Gilchrist, representing Southern Region in the temporary absence of a Representative Trustee for the region, and David Middleton, Membership Secretary, who had been invited in view of his special knowledge of several matters on the agenda.

Peter said that a number of TARS members had recently died, including John Berry, Susie Cattley and Roger Parkinson. The Board observed a minute's silence in their memory and honour.

Peter expressed the Society's warm thanks for the work of Board members Ann, Chris, Stephen and Veronica, who under the six year rule would be standing down from the Board at the 2020 IAGM.

Abbot Hall, Kendal: the Hall, the Society's official address, had recently closed for two years for major improvement works. TARS had raised with Lakeland Arts, responsible for Abbot Hall, how best to ensure during the closure period the redirection of mail for TARS addressed to the Hall. The Board took the view, in agreement with David, that at all events it would for the future be preferable for membership applications to be addressed directly to him as membership secretary. This change would need to be reflected in the TARS information leaflet and on the website and announced in *Signals*. Peter had already thanked TARS member Elaine Pyrke, who had over a long period collected TARS mail from the Hall and redirected it to several destinations.

Diana
Peter Wi

The Board considered that Abbot Hall should remain TARS' official address, and that it might be possible to strengthen the Society's relations with the Hall when

it reopened.

Peter recalled that 2020 was the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of TARS. Peter Wi had asked Christina Hardyment for a piece for *Signals* on this milestone. The anniversary should be used for maximising publicity about TARS; it should be mentioned at TARS events throughout the year and on the new website. There were also proposals for writing competitions for both adult and junior members.

3. Note of Board meeting of 28 October 2019

The Board adopted the note as a true record of that meeting.

4. Report from Publications Committee

The Board took note of the minutes of the Committee's meeting of 1 February 2020. It was pleased to confirm the appointment of Cathie Lamont of AusTARS as the new editor of *Mixed Moss*.

5. Report from Literary and Resources Committee

The Board took note of the minutes of the committee's meeting of 12 February 2020. It was pleased to confirm Kryisia as the committee's new Chair. Kryisia drew the Board's special attention to the following points in the minutes:

-it might be possible for Abbot Hall to find space, on its reopening, for examining and sorting TARS' historical archives;

-the arrangements proposed at Leeds University for conserving and making use of the source material and master copy of the 'Encountering the Ransomes' DVDs seemed satisfactory;

-TARS stall: the Board agreed that the decision to add a range of garments to the items offered by the Stall should be notified to the Society's insurers, though John given the modest quantity stocked at any one time there should be no significant increase of the premium. It was also agreed that more publicity should be given to the availability of the garments;

-the presentation of a set of the S&A books to Moat Brae would probably take place on 16 October 2020;

-Paul Wilson had kindly agreed to bring up to date the historical index of *Mixed Moss* articles.

During further discussion the Board reviewed aspects of TARS' public liability insurance arrangements. It considered that it need not extend the existing policy to cover IT problems such as hacking, but that, given the complexity of the situations covered by this type of insurance, Michael and John should prepare a summary of the current coverage and make any necessary proposals for modification.

6. TARS Finances

Susan presented to the meeting the income and expenditure accounts for 2019 and the first two months of 2020, the 2019 balance sheet and a proposed 2020 budget. The Board took note with satisfaction that the 2019 result and the budget proposal suggested that the overall financial situation was reasonably favourable. Subject to minor adjustments agreed at the meeting, the accounts should be

Susan

prepared for presentation to the IAGM. Paul Crisp should be pressed to provide an up-to-date statement of the finances of the Junior Adventure Fund. Within the regions, it would be wise not to reduce transfers from the centre but to employ these in such a way as to reduce the cost of Juniors' participation in TARS events. After the IAGM it should be examined which locations for Board meetings were likely to be the least expensive in terms of travel, accommodation and other costs. Meanwhile, the mileage rate for members' cars should be raised from 15 to 16 pence per mile. Peter Wr

7. Composition of the Board

The Board noted and approved the candidatures of Diana Wright and Marc Grimston for election to the Board at the 2020 IAGM. It noted also that Elizabeth Williams, Iain Khan-Gilchrist and Barry Gouldbourne would probably be nominated as Regional Trustees for the Northern, Southern and South Western Regions respectively.

8. Proposal to adjust membership categories and subscriptions, for a later subscription payment deadline and for consequential amendments to 'Leading Lights'

Following discussion of this subject at its previous meeting and after examination of a note reflecting the orientations of that meeting, the Board decided to propose to the 2020 IAGM to replace the current membership categories by the following:

- Junior or Student (under 25 and in full time education)
- Adult (all individual adults)
- Family/Group (couples at the same address, families including children, grandparents and grandchildren)
- Corporate (unchanged category)

The Board adopted the following subscriptions for these new categories: Junior or Student £15, Adult £25, Family/Group £35, Corporate £60.

The surcharge of £5 for overseas postage had already been dropped for those overseas members who elected to receive the TARS magazines electronically and no longer as a hard copy.

The Board decided in addition to inform members that they would be able in practice to postpone paying their subscriptions for a given year until the last day of February, notwithstanding the official due date of 1 January.

These changes would be explained in *Signals* in advance of the IAGM.

Finally, the Board would propose to the IAGM for approval the amendments to 'Leading Lights' made necessary by these changes, together with the following other desirable minor amendments:

- point 6.5: read 'Stall' instead of 'Shop';
- point 7: delete the list of committees.

John

9. Modernisation of TARS website

Diana presented to the Board a mock-up of the new website which she was designing and developing with the help of a small team. The Board congratulated her on the new design, which was easy of access and attractive and was inspired by the need to attract new and younger members by the offer of immediate activities. The Board also commented on a number of queries raised by Diana. It was now necessary for the pages to be scrutinised for accuracy and ease

of use; a number of Board members offered to help with this and a number of other names were also suggested.

It was hoped that the new site could be launched at or shortly after the IAGM. The Board noted in further discussion of this subject that TARS needed to formulate a clear statement of its privacy policy. This should be simple, clear and as brief as possible consistently with meeting legal requirements; the text used by the Nancy Blackett Trust could be a useful model. Linda would draft a proposed text.

Linda

10. Ransome blue plaque at 1 Gunter Grove, Chelsea

English Heritage had invited TARS to participate in the unveiling of such a plaque, though the date of the event had had to be postponed pending the completion of maintenance work on the property. The Board decided that TARS should participate as fully as possible in the event; the President should be invited, together with Christina Hardyment and Ted Alexander; Peter Wr, Peter Wi and Iain should centralise preparations.

11. Data Protection

Peter Wr reminded the Board that current legislation required TARS to adopt procedures designed to prevent abuse of members' personal information. It should, for example, probably take more care to keep as private as possible members' email addresses. The Board was aware of a number of such procedural statements used by other associations, including literary societies. Peter would draft a proposed text for TARS.

Peter Wr

12. AusTARS Cup

The Board endorsed a proposal from AusTARS that the cup should be awarded for 2019 to Simon Horn, editor of Tarsus/North Pole News, and for 2020 to Paul Wilson. Following queries from AusTARS, the Board decided that in future the award would reflect the winner's contribution to TARS over the years and not just in the preceding year. This would require minor amendment to the agreement on procedures for the cup; John would propose such amendments to AusTARS.

John

13. Relations with other AR entities

Peter reported that he had proposed to the Nancy Blackett Trust the text previously approved by the Board and clarifying TARS' relations with the Trust. The Trust had replied positively and the Board looked forward to close working relations with them. The similar approved text concerning links with the Arthur Ransome Trust (ART) had been forwarded to Geraint Lewis, who would present it to ART's Board. Peter intended to consult Christina Hardyment about relations with Amazon Publications.

14. Visit to Eastern Europe, autumn 2020

Chris reported that there were still only six candidates for this visit. The deadline for participating was approaching; a reminder would be published in the next *Signals*.

15. Regional and overseas reports

A report from AusTARS was noted with thanks by the Board. [The New Zealand report was emailed to the Board immediately after the meeting.] Stephen would inform the overseas co-ordinators that space could be found in *Signals* for material from them. Eastern Region knew of the availability of a rowing boat understood to be the boat used by Captain Flint in the 1974 S&A film; this should be mentioned in *Signals*. South West Region would email its former members who were no longer receiving TARS publications because their standing orders were for too small an amount. Stephen Peter Wi

16. Date and place of next Board meeting

31 May 2020, after the Members' Forum at the IAGM, Lechlade on Thames.

John Pearson
Secretary
12 March 2020