

The Arthur Ransome Society

Note of the 76th meeting of the Board of Trustees, held on 30 September 2017 at Bishopsthorpe, near York

Present: Chris Birt (in the chair)
Amanda Ardagh-Walter
Stephen Benham
Paul Crisp
Ted Evans
Ann Farr
Michael Glover
Barry Gouldbourne
Susan Gouldbourne
Linda Hendry
John Pearson
Veronica Priest
Paul Wilson
Peter Wright

Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Peter Aitchison, Brian Key and Julian Lovelock.

Minutes of the Board's 74th meeting, held on 11 March 2017 at Bowness-on-Windermere

These were adopted as a true record.

Minutes of the Board's 75th meeting, held on 28 May 2017 at Hemel Hempstead

These were adopted as a true record.

Matters arising from the minutes of the 11 March 2017 meeting

-TARS 2018 visit to the Isle of Lewis: one booking had been made so far. Chris reminded the meeting that rooms at Baile na Cille and Uig Lodge would be held for TARS until 30 November only.

-TARS as a charity: the Board considered Ted's draft application to the Charity Commissioners and supplied the personal details required for this. It was noted that if TARS acquired charity status it would remain a limited company.

-IAGM, May 2017: the Board considered that this meeting had been a great success and warmly thanked the Midland region organisers. The event had

ACTION

realised a modest surplus of £615, of which the Board agreed on a proposal from Michael that £215 should be retained by the region and the balance of £400 transferred to central funds.

Matters arising from the minutes of the May 2017 meeting

-Austars Cup: the Board confirmed that the Australia region committee was responsible for managing the annual process of awarding the cup, with the winner to come alternately from the UK and elsewhere. The committee should if necessary be reminded to propose a winner for 2018 by 30 April next.

JP

-possible day membership of TARS, especially for the Literary Weekends: the Board agreed after discussion that day rates should be permitted provided that they properly reflected the costs of the event other than the overnight accommodation costs.

-TARS Stall manager: the Board noted with satisfaction that Christine Rae had assumed responsibility for the stall as from the recent Literary Weekend. Paul W was in touch with her about the transfer of the stock to its new home; the cost of this transfer should be met from central funds. Ted was encouraging Christine to present the stall on the TARS website.

-security procedures: Susan reported on the work so far of the working group set up at the Board's previous meeting. The group should prepare an item for 'Signals' asking members for their permission for their names to appear on the online directory. The group would prepare its report and recommendations in time for the Board's next meeting.

SG

Secretary's report

John asked the Board to let him know of any necessary amendments to the personal information appearing in the latest edition of 'Signals' on the inside front cover and on page 10, the Regional Gateway page.

All

Treasurer's report

Susan presented the TARS income and expenditure account for the period January - June 2017. It seemed possible that the 2017 expenditure budget might be exceeded. The Society's income was gradually declining; an examination was desirable of the scope for increasing membership, possibly by greater use of the social media. The overall budget for the next quinquennium required preparation: Susan and Ted would report on this subject to the Board's next meeting.

SG,TE

Do we need two 'major' committees in TARS?

The Board discussed Chris's note on this subject. Attributing the remits of the Publications and the Literary and Resources Committee to a single new committee might facilitate consideration in particular of the budgetary implications of the two committees' work. On the other hand the work-load of such a single committee might be too heavy, and each committee's work

had a distinctive character. The Board concluded that the two committees should not be fused at present. It was important however that the publications' editors should have easy access to the Board, particularly on the financial aspects of their work. Additionally, the Publications Committee should consider how links with the regional reporters might be strengthened.

BG

Literary Weekend, 1 - 3 September 2017

The Board thanked and congratulated all those who had contributed to the success of the weekend, including not only the organising committees but also the Scotland regional committee and in particular Kirstie Taylor, whose literary guide to Edinburgh might be placed on the TARS website and/or be published in 'Signals'.

The number of members coming to the Literary Weekends continued to fall. The Literary and Resources Committee would consider whether the programme and format of the weekends could be made more attractive to younger members, for whom a reduced registration fee might be considered.

PWr

'Encountering the Ransomes' (DVDs)

The Board congratulated Ann and Chris on the successful completion of this major project. TARS held the copyright in the DVDs and the original recordings. Chris had raised with the Literary Executors the question of the circumstances in which the DVDs might be shown to non-members of TARS; it appeared that problems might arise if the people concerned were asked to make a payment.

The question arose of how the original recordings and the content of the DVDs could be securely conserved for the future while remaining accessible for example to researchers. As a first step Chris would ask Ged Yeates to place five copies on a 'superior hard drive', as Ged himself had recommended. Places where this material might be held included the Brotherton collection at Leeds university, Abbot Hall (with possible arrangements for playing the DVDs to visitors) or a bank. Ann, Chris and Susan would make preliminary enquiries at the Brotherton, Abbot Hall and a bank respectively.

AF, CB, SG

2018 IAGM, Coniston

Veronica reported that preparations were well advanced. Group activities involving many Ransomian sites were being arranged and individual access to these sites would also be possible. Veronica would explore the possibility of having 'Swallow' available. She reminded the Board that participants would have to make their own accommodation arrangements, that the camp site would need to be vacated on the Monday morning and that there would be no central provision of breakfast.

Reports

-Publications committee: the Board took note of the record of the

committee's meeting on 3 September 2017 and of Julian's and Paul W's notes on 'Mixed Moss' and 'Signals' respectively.

-Literary and Resources committee: Peter reported on the committee's meeting on 2 September 2017, of which the record had been distributed. The Board noted that Peter had informed the recent AGM of the Association of Literary Societies that TARS was ready to host one of its future AGMs, probably in 2020 or 2022. These meetings lasted from Friday evening until Sunday morning, attracted a good number of literary society representatives and would offer TARS an opportunity of making itself known. The meetings were usually held in early June; participants organised their own accommodation.

The Committee was considering where the Petrograd map might be kept securely while remaining accessible; Ann would enquire whether the Leeds Russian Archive might be suitable and interested.

AF

A Red Slipper Fund grant of £300 had been made to Peter Willis to help cover costs associated with his forthcoming book on the story of 'Nancy Blackett'.

-Juniors: there was currently no Junior Co-ordinator, but Amanda said that 'captains', the oldest sixteen, were emerging from the Midland region training programme; one of these might possibly be a suitable co-ordinator.

-Ship's Baby Fund: there had been no grant application this year so far. Since the name of the fund might lead older children, boys in particular, to believe that the fund was not for them, the Board decided to rename it as the 'Junior Adventure Fund (in memory of Bridget)'.

-regional and overseas matters: Stephen said that two overseas regions had expressed interest in having articles published in 'Signals'. The Board confirmed that such articles could appear in the magazine with the editor's approval.

PC

It should be explored whether it would be better to send out TARS publications to overseas members as a single package per country, for distribution on the spot, rather than sending them directly to the individual members.

The Board noted with thanks the four written regional reports which had been circulated (Eastern, Midland, Northern and Scotland) and the information provided orally by the other regional representatives.

BG

It was reported that Abbot Hall was still distributing the old rather than the more recent TARS information folder. Veronica would look into the situation with Malcolm Morrison.

VP

Other Business

Ted reported that the stuffed pike once presented at an Eastern region meeting and held in the Museum of the Broads had now been well restored to the satisfaction of the museum at a cost of £50 donated by the region.

Following the observations made about TARS ties, snoods and other items at the Members' Forum after the 2017 IAGM, the Board noted that the Literary and Resources Committee would discuss at its next meeting the general question of TARS merchandising.

PWr

Date and place of next meeting

Saturday 10 March 2018 in Birmingham; Peter would propose a location.

PWr

John Pearson
Secretary

18 October 2017