

The Arthur Ransome Society

Note of the 82nd meeting of the Board of Trustees, held at Bishopthorpe near York
on

26 October 2019

Present: Peter Wright (in the chair)
Amanda Ardagh-Walter
Chris Birt
Kryisia Clack
Ann Farr
Michael Glover
Susan Gouldbourne
Linda Hendry
Brian Key
John Pearson
Veronica Priest
Andrew Silk
Kirstie Taylor
Peter Willis
Diana Wright

Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies had been received from Board members Stephen Benham and Paul Crisp, as also from publications editors Julian Lovelock and Paul Wilson, who had also been invited to the meeting.

Chair's introductory remarks

Peter welcomed to the meeting Andrew Silk, present as a substitute for Paul Crisp.

Peter thanked Kryisia for organising the meeting at Bishopthorpe after it had proved difficult to find a suitable venue in Manchester.

On Peter's proposal the Board observed a minute's silence in memory and honour of Yvonne Varley and Hugh Brogan, who had recently died.

TARS had been represented at Hugh's funeral and would be represented at Yvonne's memorial service. Peter would approach Margaret Ratcliffe about an article about Yvonne for *Signals*.

Peter

TARS member Robin Selby had strongly criticised inaccuracies in an article by Sophie Neville in the recent *Mixed Moss*. Despite email correspondence from Julian and Peter and a personal apology from Sophie he had maintained his concerns and had suggested inter alia that the article should be withdrawn. The Board agreed that Peter should now send him a final letter regretting again any inaccuracies and proposing to include an erratum in a future issue of one of the magazines, while confirming that the article would not be withdrawn.

Peter

Alan Ellsworth, though not yet a TARS member, had expressed his readiness to offer sailing cruises to members in western Scottish waters. Peter would advise him to join TARS then contact the Scotland region

directly about the cruises.

Peter

Minutes of Board meeting of 26 May 2019

These were approved as a true record of the meeting.

TARS finances

Susan presented a table showing the Society's income and expenditure over the year to the end of September. In the end the 2019 IAGM had produced a surplus rather than a loss, and for that and other reasons it appeared that income would be fairly close to expenditure for the year as a whole.

It was noted that procedures for chasing up non-renewers of subscriptions probably required strengthening. David Middleton should be invited to the Board's next meeting for a discussion of this question.

John

TARS membership categories and subscription levels

Peter presented a paper on this subject. After discussion the Board concluded that the membership categories should be simplified and certain subscription levels should be modified along the following lines:

- the Senior category would cease to exist; the Adult category would cover all individual adults, subscription £25;
- the Junior and Student categories would be amalgamated into a single new category for people under 25 in full-time education, subscription £15;
- the Family category would be renamed the Group category, defined as two adults and up to two children or grandchildren under 19, subscription £35;
- the Corporate category and its subscription of £60 would remain unchanged.

On this basis a modest increase of subscription income could be hoped for, as a result especially of the suppression of the Senior category, whose members had not been 'paying their way'.

Proposals along these lines should be confirmed at the March Board meeting and presented to the 2020 IAGM, whose approval was needed for change of the membership categories but not of the subscription levels. Peter would prepare an advance item for the December *Signals* to forewarn members of potential changes, and a fuller set of proposals and explanations would be provided in the April 2020 *Signals*; this might include pie charts showing the sources and employment of the Society's funds.

John

Peter

In further discussion of Peter's paper the Board agreed that as from next year members should be able to opt to receive the Society's publications by electronic means alone and no longer as hard copies. The surcharge for overseas postage should be dropped for the members concerned. Subscriptions for UK members opting for e-copies only would initially remain the same and be reviewed after the first year's operation. The means of implementation of this arrangement would need to be discussed with David Middleton.

Peter

The Board agreed to propose to the next IAGM that subscriptions for a given year need not be paid before the end of February. This should

remove the disincentive of having to find the subscription at an expensive time late in the previous year.

John

Promoting TARS

The Board took note with satisfaction of a note by Peter recording plans for a promotional campaign involving sailing clubs. (This might need to await the modernisation of the TARS website; see the following point.)

TARS website

The Board took the view that the website now required substantial modernisation and simplification. It was agreed that Diana should form a group to prepare for the Board's next meeting a draft revised site layout. Peter would advertise in *Signals* for any other volunteer who was familiar with WordPress, the content management system currently employed for the site.

Diana

Peter

Mixed Moss

Peter had approached three potential new editors, but without success. It was agreed that he should approach Margaret Ratcliffe and Marc Grimston.

Peter

Literary Weekends

The Board was pleased to note the success of the 2019 Weekend, which had also produced a useful surplus.

IAGMs

The Board noted that Ann, Veronica, Stephen and Chris would be standing down at the next IAGM under the six year rule. Possible new members included Marc Grimston, Elizabeth Williams, Barry Gouldbourne and Alan Hakim. Informal contact should be made with these and a note prepared for the next *Signals*.

Peter

The Board discussed possible changes to the format and dates of the IAGMs, the order in which the regions should organise them, possible combination with Literary Weekends and greater use of areas with links to Ransome.

It was provisionally agreed that in order to avoid undue concentration of IAGMs in one particular region, responsibility for the 2024 meeting should pass from Northern to Southern region, with Northern taking on the 2025 meeting. This should be cleared with the two regional committees and confirmed at the Board's next meeting.

N and S
regions

It was agreed that a sub-committee consisting of Diana, Susan, Michael and David Middleton should be established with a view to giving technical assistance to the organising regions.

Diana

Peter would check with AusTARS their intentions in respect of proposing the 2019 winner of the AusTARS Cup to be announced at the 2020 IAGM.

Peter

TARS' relations with associated entities

The Board considered a note from Peter proposing texts designed to clarify TARS' relations with the Nancy Blackett Trust, the Arthur Ransome Trust and Amazon Publications. The Board was in general agreement with the texts, but considered that in so far as in them TARS was making certain undertakings designed to improve inter-entity cooperation, the other entities should be expected to offer appropriate reciprocal undertakings. Peter would forward the texts, as so revised, to the two Trusts, requesting their cooperation in producing agreed documents. As for Amazon Publications, he would consult Christina Hardyment on the best way forward.

Peter

Report from the Publications Committee

The Committee had met on 22 June 2019. It appeared that significant savings on the production cost of the publications could be obtained by the use of on-line printers. The next edition of *The Outlaw* would be produced by that method, which, if the result was satisfactory, could be extended to *Mixed Moss* and *Signals*.

It appeared also that a minor reduction in the weight of *Signals* might qualify it for a reduced postage cost.

Alliance of Literary Societies

The Board congratulated Amanda on her appointment to the board of the Alliance, with which useful synergies should be possible.

It was noted that at the ALS AGM which TARS was to organise in 2024, participants would arrange their own accommodation.

TARS Library

The Board adopted a proposal from Northern region to present a set of the S & A books to Moat Brae. Northern and Scotland regions would make contact with Moat Brae about the edition to be chosen and about the presentation of the set.

N and Sc
regions

TARS archives

The group working on assembling and sorting the archives was still searching for suitable premises in which the various known sets of potential archive material could be brought together and examined. It could be helpful for summaries to be made of certain sets of potential archives. Elizabeth Haworth's ongoing role in holding a large volume of archive material and providing material for display at the IAGM and Literary Weekend was recognised.

Proposed trip to Eastern Europe in 2020

Chris presented a note on the trip prepared for the next *Signals*. Six members had so far said they would take part. Tatiana Bogrdanova would be present as interpreter and expert.

Historical note for new members

Peter showed the Board a prototype of the document which Kirstie and he were preparing.

Kirstie,
Peter

Regional reports

Veronica reported on the increasingly active Northern region. The region attached particular importance to cross-regional activities, which were working well with Scotland region.

Brian said that Eastern region had provided Peter Wi with material about Hugh Brogan for use in *Signals*. Planning was proceeding for the 2021 IAGM.

Andrew reported that the Southern region AGM had been very poorly supported. The Board decided to discuss such problems at its next meeting.

Susan said that preparations for the 2020 IAGM were well in hand.

John

Other business

Peter said that a paper on data protection needed to be prepared.

Date and place of next meeting

7 March 2020, probably in the Midland region, which would look for a venue.

Moat Brae could be an excellent venue for a later Board meeting, but might be expensive in terms of overnight accommodation.

M region

John Pearson
Secretary
20 November 2019