

The Arthur Ransome Society
Literary and Resources Committee

Note of the Committee's 20th meeting, held on 1 October 2016 in Kendal

Present: Peter Wright (in the chair)
Chris Birt
Nick Brewster
Ann Farr
Julian Lovelock
John Pearson
Paul Wilson
Winifred Wilson

Note of the previous meeting (16 January 2016 in Leeds)

This was adopted as a true record.

Report from the Trustees' meetings of the current year

The Committee noted with satisfaction the Trustees' agreement that an annual sum of £250 should be budgeted and transferred to the Committee's account for the purposes of the Red Slipper Fund, subject to the proviso that payments would be suspended if the amount transferred but not yet allocated should exceed £1500.

The literary executors' discussions with a consultancy about possible further commercialisation of the Ransome heritage had not led to specific action proposals.

The Trustees and the publishers did not intend to give special notice to the 50th anniversary of AR's death in 2017.

The Committee would find it useful for the literary executors to prepare for one of its future meetings a note on their main orientations and activities.

Julian would contact Geraint Lewis about the possible intention of the Arthur Ransome Trust to arrange a combined edition of 'Old Peter's Russian Tales' and 'Coots in the North'. English Heritage proposed to place a blue plaque at the Ransomes' Hurlingham Court address in London.

The Alliance of Literary Societies

The Trustees had asked the Committee to take on delegated responsibility for TARS' relations with this society. TARS had long been one of its members and had been represented at some of its annual meetings: Chris had gone to this year's meeting, hosted by the Brontë Society in Haworth. The Committee considered that it could be in TARS' interest to be represented regularly at these meetings. The 2017 meeting would be in Edinburgh and the Committee agreed that TARS should be represented by Peter. The possibility for TARS to host such a meeting in due course should be kept in mind.

2017 Literary Weekend

The Literary Weekend sub-group had visited the John McIntyre Conference Centre at

Edinburgh university. There was agreement that it would make an excellent venue and it had been booked for the first weekend of September. The Committee briefly reviewed a number of possible names for speakers, including Jeff Cooper, grandson of Lascelles Abercrombie, Mary Pritchard, Philip Mansel, Richard Davies and Tatiana Bogrdanova. Prof. Stuart Murray, who had had to give backword in 2015, and Anne Gaelan of the Lancaster Film Makers' Cooperative, who had volunteered to speak after the 2015 programme had been completed, should be approached again. The Literary Weekend sub-group would follow these up and should also enquire whether the Alliance of Literary Societies might wish to propose a speaker or representative. Chris and Peter respectively would enquire into the possible availability of Alexander McCall Smith or Ian McMillan as after-dinner speaker.

TARS library report

Winifred presented her written report. The plan of Petrograd or an image of it might be lent to the Leeds university or London libraries for centenary exhibitions next year on the Russian revolution. The Ruskin museum, also planning an exhibition for next year, should be informed that the library could probably lend it relevant books.

Tars stall

In discussion of Paul's written report the Committee returned to the question of the future of Amazon Publications and its relations with TARS. It decided to come back to this subject at its next meeting on the basis of a note on the options available.

No successor had yet been found for Paul as manager of the stall. Paul would prepare for 'Signals' and the TARS website a piece on the rôle of the stall with an appeal for candidates for manager. If none were identified the stall would have to shut down temporarily at the end of 2016.

The Committee expressed its warm thanks to Paul for his work on the stall and invited him to continue as a Committee member.

Red Slipper Research Fund

There had been no recent grant applications. Peter Willis had however confirmed that his project including photographs of 'Selina King' would go ahead.

Report of Publicity Officer

The Committee congratulated Julian on his newly-published book 'Swallows, Amazons and Coots'. He had recently prepared an article on AR in the Lakes for an Ambleside publication for visitors. Each region now had a pull-up display stand.

The TARS secretary frequently received requests for help or information. Those relating to publicity or promotion should be forwarded to Julian for action (Peter W to inform Peter A).

Filmed Reminiscences Project

Chris reported that a complete final draft of the DVDs had been promised for 1 October and a firm to produce the finished product had been approached. The Committee considered that it would be prudent to obtain one or two additional quotations for this work. The DVDs should be ready in time for the 2017 IAGM and an article should be prepared for next year's 'Mixed Moss'.

Anniversary edition of 'Mixed Moss', 2017

Julian presented a list of articles from early issues of the journal proposed for inclusion in the anniversary edition. Nick suggested adding Denise Deegan's article 'Swallows and Amazons on the stage'. Consideration should be given to the format and appearance of the edition (type-face, paper...).

The Committee noted that no 'Mixed Moss' index had been compiled since 1998. An item seeking a volunteer to update the index should be prepared for 'Signals'.

TARS archives

Chris, Ann and Veronica Priest were continuing to investigate what archive material was held where. In deciding what to retain and where and how to keep it, policy and cost issues were likely to arise, in relation for example to the distinction to be made between 'historical' and 'administrative' material, or the case for converting old videos into a modern format. The Committee should return to this subject at an appropriate moment.

Next meeting

Saturday 28 January 2016 in Birmingham.

John Pearson

Meeting secretary