

The Arthur Ransome Society

Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the **Literary & Resources Committee**,
at the Station Inn, Oxenholme, on **Wednesday, 12th February 2020**

Present: Julian Lovelock [JL, Chair], Chris Birt [CB], Krysia Clack [KC], Ann Farr [AF],
Christine Rae [CR], Paul Wilson [PDW, Minutes], Winifred Wilson [WW],
Peter Wright [PHW]

1. Apologies: Paul Crisp [PC], John Pearson [JP]

KC

As JL was stepping down as Chair, KC agreed to be Chair, following this meeting.

PDW

PDW agreed to be Minutes Secretary.

2. Minutes of last meeting: 13.3.19

Correction to item **13 (iii)** (KC): delete 'to see if they can be made more easily available to TARS members.'

PDW

AF suggested that corrected minutes be sent to JP, Company Secretary, for forwarding to the TARS website.

JP

3. Matters arising

Karen Babayan had now claimed her Red Slipper Fund grant.

4. Archives

CB said that the situation was slightly more hopeful. The requirement was for a large enough space to sort out which material was to be retained. There may be room at Abbot Hall when the building work is completed in 2 years' time. However, the question of rental had not been discussed.

AF referred her circulated document [attached] on DVDs. There was general agreement to adopt the proposals suggested. CR said that ~110 copies of the 'Encountering the Ransomes' [EtR] DVDs had been sold but sales were now stagnant. CB thought that some of the EtR interviewees had not seen the DVD. It was agreed that interviewees should receive complimentary copies. The Stall would continue full-price [£20] sales, and it would be promoted in *Mixed Moss*. It might be helpful to advertise EtR in the information pack for new members.

5. 2019 & 2021 Literary Weekends

PHW was upbeat about the 2019 event, which took place at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, 13-15 September. Numbers were down to the mid-60s now. Mary Pritchard [MP] had suggested Harrogate as a venue for the 2021 event; although a good location, costs were thought to be high. Investigations were taking place with the Ambleside campus of Cumbria University, which could accommodate up to 80 participants. The target cost was up to £300 per person. A venue would be booked in the next 2–3 months, with a visit to the preferred option in late spring by Nick Brewster [NB], PC, MP and PHW. September 2021 was the preferred date – the last available weekend before the start of term. PHW welcomed suggestions for speakers. WW suggested Philip Mansel, author of *Aleppo*. JL suggested a speaker from the Windermere Jetty museum. Other names mentioned were Vicky Sloe, of the Ruskin Museum in Coniston; and Danny Rurlander, author of *Spylark*. Simon Popple might also be re-invited. Elizabeth Williams had mentioned David Wood, who produced the S&A film. Hazel Sheeky Bird might also be approached.

JP

JL formally thanked the Literary Weekend committee (NB, PC, MP & PHW) for the 2019 Cirencester weekend.

6. TARS Stall and merchandise

CR

CR reported that she thought insurance for the stock at her home was unnecessary and should be discontinued – she was discussing this with JP. It was agreed to discontinue this insurance. Sales from the Stall were declining, especially for books. DVDs/CDs/burgees were the main sellers, followed by T-shirts. However, it was difficult selling clothing online because of sizing issues.

CR/
DM

There was discussion about the possibility of making the EtR DVD downloadable, for a fee of, say, £10. This would be most helpful to overseas members, and might be arranged through the new website.

DM

PHW pointed out that there had been no publicity to members of the availability of Stall merchandise. CR agreed to prepare an article for the next *Signals*. WW suggested that each region of TARS might be supplied with samples of the merchandise. JL thought each region might need a volunteer to co-ordinate this. It might be possible for members to order direct from the supplier.

PDW suggested that the Stall pages in *Signals* would benefit from a revamp, reflecting the change in the type of materials for sale.

It was noted that the recent Publications committee meeting had agreed a budget for competition prizes for *The Outlaw* from the Stall. In addition, it had been suggested that the three Blue girls should receive complimentary TARS T-shirts, for their editorial work with *The Outlaw*. Jules Blue [JB] and CR were in discussion on this.

WW

PHW reported progress on the new TARS website, including its accessibility as the main route to new memberships. A voucher for the Stall might be offered to new members. There was further discussion on initiatives for attracting new members, including a Northern region event on 6 June 2020 aimed at young people. JL suggested that extra copies of *The Outlaw* would be useful for this but PHW noted that David Middleton [DM] had stocks of back-copies of *The Outlaw*. Elizabeth Williams would contact DM on this

7. Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS)

PHW reminded the group that Amanda Ardagh-Walter [AAW] has been invited to be a committee member of ALS, representing TARS. The 2020 annual ALS weekend would be in Robin Hood's Bay from 12 to 14 June, run by the [Leo] Walmsley Society. AAW, and PHW and Christine Wright were all planning to go as self-funded delegates, so there was no need to nominate another TARS member. The informative ALS website [<https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com/>] has useful resources, e.g. on data protection. TARS is scheduled to host the annual meeting in 2024: AAW and Veronica Priest were organizing a sub-committee for this, to be held in the Lake District or East Coast. In discussion about the ALS George Eliot Society (GES) weekend in 2019, it was mentioned that the GES has benefited from a large legacy. Should TARS be suggesting that members consider leaving a legacy to the Society?

8. Library report, including question of postage [see attached report]

WW had raised the question of continuing to fund outward postage from Library resources. It was agreed in principle that this should continue to encourage loans. PHW suggested that a slip be sent out with Library loans, mentioning that small donations would be welcome. However, if the postage costs exceeded £100/year, then the Library budget should be increased.

WW raised the possibility of a formal presentation at Moat Brae (MB) of the AR '12', which it has already been agreed to fund centrally. In addition, Nora Fawcett had funded the purchase of copies of *Spylark*, by Danny Rurlander, in memory of Derek Fawcett, former Vice President, and WW had decided to donate one of these to MB also. A suggested date for this, subject to MB's agreement, was Friday 16 October 2020, preceding the TARS Scotland Literary Day on 17 October. If possible, Nora Fawcett and Danny Rurlander might be invited to attend, with other TARS representatives. WW would liaise with MB on this.

WW

JL

WW reported that Martha Blue (one of the editors of *The Outlaw*) had recently been awarded the Solstice Prize by the East Midlands Poetry Writers' Group. As Martha is home-schooled, she had decided to donate part of the prize, a £50 book token normally given to the recipient's school library, to TARS Library. PHW would write and thank Martha for her generosity. JL was keen to include Martha's poem in the next issue of *Mixed Moss* (MM).

WW

WW reported that a keypad was about to be installed on the TARS Library room at MB, for easier restricted access.

9. Red Slipper Fund (RSF) and Junior Adventure Fund (JAF)

PHW reported that Cathie Lamont (CL), of Armidale, Australia, had applied for an RSF grant, in connection with travel costs incurred in her research. It was agreed to award CL a grant of £150 this year, to fund an article she was writing for MM. She was also proposing to write a book and it was agreed she should be invited to re-apply next year. Following a recent £500 donation, there was a healthy £1000 in the RSF account.

PC had reported [attached] that a £100 JAF grant had been awarded to Nicholas Bradbury.

10. Amazon Publications (AP)

It was noted that Michael Bender of Exeter University was preparing a book for probable publication by AP in June 2020. He had borrowed several books from TARS Library to assist him in this.

11. Publications update and *Mixed Moss* index

PHW reported on the Publications committee meeting on 1 February 2020. Cathie Lamont [see 9. RSF above] had offered her services as *MM* editor from 2021, and this had been accepted. Printing of *MM* would stay with Wilson's in Kendal for 2020/21. The last issue of *The Outlaw* had been successfully printed online by Mixam, and it had been agreed that *Signals* would also be printed in this way from the next issue, with a considerable saving in printing costs. Distribution would revert to the Knaresborough mailing house (HMCA). There had been a healthy uptake of e-copies of journals, particularly by overseas members; however, most of these preferred to receive *MM* in hard-copy format. DM, Distribution Manager, had been invited to attend the Board meeting on 29 February 2020. There had been an issue in producing a low-resolution pdf of *The Outlaw* for electronic distribution, which it was hoped to resolve.

PHW reported that design of the new TARS website was progressing and that Linda Philips had responded to the invitation to join the working group for this. Construction was in progress and would soon be tested, both by non-TARS members and TARS members.

PDW

On the possibility on an updated index for *MM*, which is in printed form for 1990-2000 (Peter Hyland) and online for 1990-2006 (Maurice Rowlandson), PDW agreed to continue the index from 2007 to the present, for uploading to the website.

12. AOB

WW

- i. PHW reported that a new play, *Red skies*, about AR and George Orwell, was being put on at locations in East Anglia between 18 March and 30 May 2020
- ii. KC mentioned that the British Library holds three AR-related theses, only one of which has been scanned for free download. The first person to request a scan for download pays £60, after which subsequent downloads are free of charge. It was suggested that details of these should be given in the TARS Library catalogue.
- iii. Jules Blue has suggested that the 30th anniversary of TARS in 2020 should be marked in some way. Various ideas for this were discussed.

13. Date and venue of next meeting

Thursday 24th September 2020, Station Inn, Oxenholme, 11.00am

PDW 23.2.20

Attachments:

Leeds University & DVDs AF
TARS Library WW
JAF/Amazon Publications PC