

## **The Arthur Ransome Society**

Notes from the 25th Meeting of the Literary & Resources Committee, at Abbot Hall, Kendal, on Wednesday, 13th March 2019

**Present:** Julian Lovelock (JL, chair), Chris Birt (CB), Krysia Clack (KC), Ann Farr (AF, notetaker), Paul Wilson (PW), Winifred Wilson (WW), Peter Wright (PW<sub>r</sub>)

**1. Apologies:** Paul Crisp, John Pearson, Christine Rae

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

Correction to item 9; Junior Adventure Fund: Paul Crisp not Peter Wright (PW<sub>r</sub>).

### **3. Matters arising**

Nothing further to report on the Petrograd map.

On item 9, Karen Babayan had not yet claimed her Red Slipper grant. It had been observed that there was no acknowledgement to TARS in her book (this later shown to be incorrect). Questions were raised about a copy of the book for the Library and for review. JL will contact Veronica Priest about the acknowledgement and PW<sub>r</sub> will contact Karen about a Library copy.

### **4. Archives**

CB presented a short report on the Archives situation, following a meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. He handed a master tape copy of *Encountering the Ransomes* to WW for the Library, as agreed. There were some actions to be pursued to identify any possible sorting/storage locations for the archives; meanwhile, the Signals notice is to be repeated and a request put at the IAGM in May. It is an ongoing concern that items of some value are held variously in members' homes and outbuildings. Committee members are urged to keep thinking about a suitable location, ideally in the northern half of the UK.

### **5. 2019 Literary Weekend**

PW<sub>r</sub> confirmed that this is to take place at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September. The booking form with programme details etc. is almost ready. 10 speakers have been selected, offering a wide range of topics. Sophie Neville, current TARS President, will be the after-dinner speaker. Others include Winifred Wilson, Kirsty Nichol Findlay, Julian Lovelock, Elizabeth Williams, Hazel Sheeky Bird, Karen Babayan, Peter Calamai (overseas, Canada), Simon Popple (University of Leeds), and a representative from Moat Brae, the new home of the TARS Library. Organisers have held

the cost below £300, to £290 for the full weekend or £245 for part thereof, for an anticipated attendance of c60, although more could be accommodated.

## **6. TARS stall and merchandise**

PWr had received a draft license from Geraint Lewis. Even when signed, the literary executors would still need to approve the designs for the new range of clothing. A promising, flexible deal had been arranged with a supplier in Birmingham, with good discounts on follow-on runs. Samples of new polo shirts for adults and t-shirts for juniors were shown to the meeting, and were thought excellent in quality and design.

## **7. Alliance of Literary Societies**

2019 AGM is being held in Nuneaton (17-19 May), hosted by the George Eliot Fellowship, for her bicentenary. The committee proposed that WW should be our representative, subject to the Board's approval, but any other TARS member who wished to could attend at their own cost. It is not too early to think about our own hosting of this event in the Lake District in 2024, for which a whole day venue with dinner is needed. We should aim for a shortlist of three for consideration at our next meeting. PWr has the ALS guidelines for holding the event. At a previous committee meeting a sub-group was appointed to work on this.

## **8. Library report and second-hand books**

Winifred's written report covered the Library's move to Moat Brae, which had gone extremely well. PW had drawn up a scale plan to ensure everything would fit and end up in the right place. The rent to TARS is £1200 p.a. including VAT, very similar to that at the previous accommodation in the community centre. Moat Brae will open to the public in May this year and will be open every day. WW and PW showed press articles on the building and its aims, which can be displayed at our IAGM. TARS membership leaflets must be made available to Moat Brae visitors. PWr explained that the leaflet pdf could be made available for 'local' printing if required.

Disposal of second-hand books is a frequent question for the TARS Secretary and the TARS librarian, who would like some guidance on responding. KC recommended the British Library's policy, available on its website, which covers the main issues, including obtaining valuations from reputable antiquarian booksellers. WW would develop a suitable policy for TARS.

WW sought advice from the meeting about any failure to return items borrowed from the Library. An appropriate course of action was agreed. Since the Library has been re-housed it is thought that now would be the right time to do a full inventory.

## **9. Red Slipper Fund and Junior Adventure Fund**

No further applications for either at present. There had been a good take-up for the JFA last year. Both will be re-advertised in the next *Signals*.

#### **10. Amazon Publications**

There are no publications planned at present.

#### **11. Publications and vacancies**

Strictly-speaking, these are matters for the Publications Committee which may meet in early summer, although there is inevitably an overlap with L&RC. L&RC will recommend again to the Board that support for editors should be provided, if need be, in the form of a laptop and/or suitable software, as it recognises that individuals should not have to rely on their own equipment, and that lack of resources might put someone off becoming an editor. The advertisements for editors will be repeated and the website notice amended. It could be possible for a new editor to work alongside an existing editor in the first instance. Questions arose concerning frequency and size of publications, given the imminent rise in postage prices, and whether delivering electronically to any part of the membership would make significant savings. There may be savings to be made by using a single printing firm which would also handle distribution.

#### **12. Publicity vacancy**

PWR believes publicity could be managed by a small team, rather than a single individual. This might make it a less daunting task for anyone potentially interested in this activity. Ideas for further outreach include approaches to sailing clubs, especially any with junior sections, and youth groups.

#### **13. AOB**

- i. It was suggested that Moat Brae might be offered honorary corporate membership, to be reviewed after the first year, in recognition of its willing co-operation in housing the Library.
- ii. One-day attendance for £1.00 at events such as Literary Weekends was raised following a query from Northern Region. The concern was that such temporary members were able to buy books from stalls, such as Amazon Publications, which were normally only available to members who pay full subscription rates. The message to one-day attenders should always be a recommendation to join TARS as full members which would give them access to all materials available from the TARS Stall. There is nothing to stop them from looking on Amazon or e-Bay in any case.
- iii. There are audio recordings of Ransome held in the British Library which Krysia intends to investigate.
- iv. PWR suggested developing closer links with Abbot Hall, and also with Moat Brae.

v. AF will cease to act as note-taker for L&RC meetings, having acted in this capacity for one year following John Pearson's appointment to TARS Secretary.

#### **14. DONM**

*To be decided.* PWr will liaise with John Pearson to schedule all meetings in an appropriate sequence, with dates set well in advance.

AF 05/04/2019