

The Arthur Ransome Society

Note of the 77th meeting of the Board of Trustees, held in Birmingham on 10 March 2018

Present: Chris Birt (in the chair) (CB)
Amanda Ardagh-Walter (AAW)
Stephen Benham (SB)
Paul Crisp (PC)
Ted Evans (TE)
Ann Farr (AF)
Michael Glover (MG)
Barry Gouldbourne (BG)
Susan Gouldbourne (SG)
Linda Hendry (LH)
Brian Key (BK)
Julian Lovelock (JL)
John Pearson (JP)
Veronica Priest (VP)
Paul Wilson (PWi)
Peter Wright (PWr)

Action

Chair's introductory remarks

CB thanked PWr for arranging the venue of the meeting. He referred to the recent deaths of Peter Aitchison and Malcolm Temple and their notable contributions to the work of TARS. At his invitation the meeting stood for a minute's silence in their memory.

Minutes of the 76th meeting, held at Bishopthorpe near York on 30. 09. 2017

These were adopted as a true record.

Matters arising from those minutes

-Petrograd map: the Board agreed after discussion that after confirmation of Ted Alexander's agreement the map should be housed in the Special Collections at Leeds university.
-stock of TARS publicity leaflet at Abbot Hall: the Board was informed that Abbot Hall was now distributing the latest leaflet.
-it had been established that it would not reduce postage costs to send TARS publications to overseas members as a single package per country, for distribution on the spot. They would therefore continue to be sent directly to the individual members.
-TARS as a charity: TE reported that the Society's formal application for charity status had been submitted to the Charity Commissioners on 7 January 2018.

AF

Chair's report

CB said that he had signed and returned to Lakeland Arts the contract under which the boat Coch-y-Bonddhu (Cochy) would be held and exhibited at Windermere Jetty. The Board agreed that a request from Arnside Sailing Club for information about the boat should be referred to the Cochy Trustees.

JP

Secretary's report

JP thanked the meeting for the help he had received from them and other TARS members in his initial months as Secretary.

Treasurer's report

SG presented to the meeting for discussion the draft TARS accounts for 2017 and the proposed budget for 2018. In the light of the discussion she would finalise these and let JP have as soon as possible the 2017 accounts for inclusion in the IAGM insert to be sent out with the next 'Signals'.

SG

Preparations for 2018 AGM

VP reported that there were no current significant problems; there were good bookings for many of the proposed visits, etc. It should be established rapidly whether Hilary Weston would be able to take charge of the Juniors' programme.

VP

TARS visit to the Isle of Lewis

CB said that 12 TARS members had registered for the visit, to take place immediately before the IAGM. There would be three clear days for Ransome-related expeditions.

Aide-mémoire from the AR Literary Estate on use of its intellectual property within TARS

Geraint Lewis had stated that this aide-mémoire, circulated to the Board on 2 February 2018, was not to be interpreted as a criticism of TARS; the Literary Executors had decided to review and restate all such arrangements following a minor issue elsewhere.

The Board took formal note of the aide-mémoire, observing in particular that nothing on the public access part of the TARS website should contain quotes from the books, photographs, etc. without permission, and that proposals by TARS members to give AR-related talks to gatherings of non-members should be cleared in advance with Geraint by email.

Digital archiving for 'Mixed Moss' etc.

JL presented a note on this subject. The Board agreed after discussion that as a first step TARS should purchase from the printers Titus Wilson pdfs on disc of 'Mixed Moss' from 2005 onwards (13 volumes) for a total cost of some £260. The Board requested the Literary and Resources Committee to examine and report to the Board on whether other TARS publications should

also be digitally archived, what the cost would be, where such archives should be held, access arrangements, etc.

PWr, L&R

'Signals' periodicity

On the question, raised in PWi's note, whether the number of issues of 'Signals' per year should be reduced from three to two, the Board considered that more information was required on the range of issues which such a possibility raised. The subject should be discussed at the Members' Forum following the forthcoming IAGM; the Publications Committee should address it too, preferably before the Forum, and PWi should attempt a financial projection of the two options. Consideration would also be useful of the case for making 'Signals' available as an emailed pdf for overseas and perhaps other members.

PWi,
Pub

Other points concerning the publications

The Board noted that JL would be retiring from the editorship of 'Mixed Moss' after the 2018 edition. The Publications Committee should look for a possible successor.

Pub

Relations between TARS and Amazon Publications

The Board considered PWi's note on this subject. PC regretted that the note contained a criticism of a TARS member who had not seen the document. More generally, the Board was aware that relations between TARS and Amazon Publications had sometimes been delicate, largely perhaps because of problems of communication. It decided that the Publications Committee, PC and PWi should prepare for it a note reviewing the situation and proposing any desirable changes. The Board also decided that PWi should be reimbursed the cost of his settling an invoice mentioned in his note.

Pub
PC
PWi
SG

Quinquennial budgeting

TE reported that it had not yet been possible to devise a realistic algorithm for the next five years. 2018 totals for new memberships and failures to renew membership were currently fairly normal. However, the growing proportion of Seniors was not paying its way; their subscription rate should probably be raised to the Adult level. The obtaining of charity status would be helpful as subscriptions could then be gift-aided. The Board decided to consider at its autumn meeting possible subscription changes to apply as from 2019.

AusTARSCup

The Board considered the AusTARS proposal for a memorandum of understanding governing the award and management of the cup. They approved it, subject to one or two minor points about which JP would write to them, raising also the point that their proposal that a member from New Zealand should receive the cup for 2018 was inconsistent with the principle that someone from the UK should be proposed in 2018 following its award to an Australian in 2017.

JP

'Encountering the Ransomes' DVDs

The Board decided that it would be sufficient to order four rather than five 'hard drives' containing the DVDs and the original recordings. CB would so inform Ged Yeates. AF, CB and SG respectively would continue their exploration of whether hard drives could be held at the Brotherton Collection, Abbot Hall and a bank.

AF
CB
SG

Security measures

Arrangements had already been made to prevent the disclosure of particulars relating to TARS Junior members. The Board continued to discuss what other changes, if any, were required to TARS procedures in order to ensure respect of the latest data protection legislation. TE would prepare a note for 'Signals' and the working group already in existence would prepare a more general review of requirements and propose any further necessary action.

TE
JP
SG

Reports

-Literary and Resources Committee: PWr commented on his written report. Christine Rae was managing the Stall with enthusiasm; the 'Encountering the Ransomes' DVDs were selling well. PWr had invited Christine to join the committee. TARS should be represented for part at least of the AGM weekend (19/20 May) of the Association of Literary Societies: AAW would probably be able to be present.

AAW

-Merchandising: PWr commented on his separate written report on this subject. The Board agreed that appropriate merchandising should be approved, restricted of course to TARS members. Christine should be asked to take the lead in proposing what might be stocked, advertised etc.

PWr

-Publications Committee: BG said that he hoped to continue to chair the committee after retiring from the Board in May at the end of his six year period - which he had much enjoyed.

-TARS Scotland: LH commented on her written report proposing that TARS regions organise 'virtual' meetings and events. The Board considered the idea interesting and innovative. As an initial step LH would prepare a piece for 'Signals'.

LH

-Other regions: their representatives gave brief oral reports. For Southern Region PC said that the 2019 IAGM would probably be held at Lyndhurst. The Board agreed that the region's 'stipend' should be restored.

-Junior Adventure Fund: PC reported that two requests for support had been received, both from boys.

-TARS website: some members of the Board had had difficulty in accessing the members' section. TE would look into this.

TE

Other business

-Subscriptions: TE said that TARS Canada had renewed all their 36 subscriptions simultaneously following prior pursuit by telephone. The Board agreed that this would be worth trying in the regions; TE would send each region a current membership list.

TE

-Collingwood Collection at Cardiff university: JP would obtain and send to the regional representatives information for members on the forthcoming symposium and exhibition on this subject.

JP

-Kirstie Taylor's literary booklet on Edinburgh, produced for the 2017 Literary

Weekend: PWr would send TE a pdf of the booklet for the website and publication in 'Signals' should be considered. Spare copies could be sent to the Stall.

-MG showed the meeting a Japanese fan thought to have been presented to Northern region in 2000. It was handed to Veronica for safe keeping.

-IAGM 2020: BG reported that science would be the theme of this meeting.

Date and place of next Board meetings

The next meeting would be held on Sunday 27 May as soon as possible after the IAGM and Members' Forum. The autumn meeting would be held at Bishopthorpe near York on Saturday 6 October.

John Pearson

Secretary

21 March 2018