

## Reports from Trustees for the PCS AGM 2020

We would normally stand up, show our faces and give a quick run down of how the year has gone in our particular areas. However, in lieu of that much more friendly style, circumstances dictate that we will have to make do with a series of written reports.

We are all looking forward to getting together properly in 2021.

The **Chairman's Letter** was included with your Notice of AGM and can be found **here**.

### Membership Report

The Society's total membership is currently 487, of which 446 are subscribing members. This calendar year to date has brought 41 new members, the highest total since 2010. Nine of these are former members who have rejoined, and of the others, 22 are from the UK and 10 from overseas. This represents an increase over the number of members who either died last year or did not renew their membership of 21, so membership of the Society remains healthy.

*Tim Graham*

### Treasurer's Report

Nothing untoward has occurred in the six months since 30 April 2020. We have spent nearly £12,000 in printing and distributing publications (importantly *Companion to the Study of Penguin Books*), as well as £500 acquiring five artist signed proofs of David Gentleman's covers for the New Penguin Shakespeare series – these are to be given to Bristol University Special Collections. We spent £1,500 in other costs. We have received about £1,000 in subscriptions and about £2,000 in publication sales less postage. Consequently, our cash resources now are about £11,000 less than at the year-end – but in January our cash will be rebuilt when we receive most of the year's subscription income.

*Michael Fowle*

### Website and Social Media

The website traffic remains steady and revolves, unsurprisingly, around the membership and publications pages. Our Social Media continues to grow and there are often interesting Penguinary discussions on both instagram and twitter. The latter tends to be ephemeral but a search on instagram using the hashtags, #penguincollectors, #tribandtuesday or #penguincollectorsociety will open up some interesting posts.

*Caroline Maddison*

## Editor's Report

The Annual Report summarised the Society's output in the year to April. This note updates members on what has happened since, and briefly mentions future possibilities.

*Penguin Collector 94* was published in June, with another special cover designed by Tom Etherington. It echoes the layout of one of the first cover designs made by Romek Marber for Penguin in 1961. Romek died in March at the age of 94, and the *Collector* included his obituary. It also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Allen Lane in July 1970 with articles about his leadership of the company and its subsequent evolution, leading to its present ownership by Bertelsmann. An overview of the 1960s Science surveys and another of Penguin books on cookery were accompanied by extracts from the dissertations of both of the Master's students awarded bursaries by the Society in 2019. Two members provided illumination on their own collecting experience, and the satisfaction that they get from it, one bravely setting out to answer the question, 'How many Penguin firsts must I find to have a complete collection?' And there were reviews, of an exhibition of Pelican design at the University of Reading, of contemporary Penguin design in the USA, and on the completion of the new translations of Maigret. Finally, there was a bagful of shorter pieces, some of them originating from places as far from each other as Japan, Saskatchewan, New Zealand and the London Underground.

In October, the fourth edition of the *Companion to the Study of Penguin Books* was despatched to members all round the world. It reached those in the UK quickly, and was well received; and most members in other countries have by now taken delivery, albeit in some cases delayed by the disruption caused to international air mail by the virus reducing passenger flights. Tim Graham rightly says that it was a team effort, starting with the members who produced earlier editions, benefitting from all the other work put into the Society's publications to which the '*Companion*' refers, and with specific help from a select band of members this year; but it was Tim who saw the handsome volume through production and printing. On behalf of everyone, I thank him.

*Penguin Collector 95* will be published in December, with another broad range of articles, stretching from Berlin before 1920 to George Orwell in the 1930s and 1940s, 'The Spectator' in 1950, Leicester in 1960, and a gallery in London in 2020, and many other places and times between. Again, members have contributed the majority of the contents, and it is on their willingness to report on what they have learned about Penguin books that we all depend: more thanks.

For 2021, we plan again to publish two issues of the *Collector*, and, I hope, another 'special publication'. *Collector 95* mentions some of the possibilities for future years; they include another 'lost' Puffin Picture Book, material from the Bristol Archive, and reviews of Penguin's production in the 1950s and its pictorial covers of the 1960s and 1970s; which, and when, is not yet decided.

I will be very happy to receive more comments on what we have published, and any questions that members have, best by email to [editor@penguincollectorsociety.org](mailto:editor@penguincollectorsociety.org). Do recognise that I will probably turn your question into a request that you write a *Collector* article about its subject!

This report is not quite the same as being in a room together, but I hope that it, and the email discussion which can follow, will be a good substitute for a 'real' meeting.

James Mackay

## PCS Bursary Report

Last academic year (2019-20) the 'Terms' document relating to our Post Graduate Bursary Scheme was circulated to 15 affiliated Universities/Colleges and Course Directors of 23 Approved Courses on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019. Reminders of Terms and Deadlines were re-circulated on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

I received six expressions of interest and five full submissions by the closing date (31<sup>st</sup> March 2020). The five applications were forwarded to our Panel of Readers on 1st April and they provided independent feedback and judgements by 4<sup>th</sup> April.

There was a consensus that this year we should make two £500 awards to:

Stephen Hickson who is an MA Communication Design (Book Design pathway) student at the University of Reading. His proposed dissertation title is *Jan Tschichold's influence on the Typography of Penguin Books*, and

Anna Richardson who is an MA Publishing student at University College London. Her proposed dissertation title is *John Lehmann and 'the voice of a literature at war'*.

All candidates received constructive feedback based on the Readers comments and warm thanks for what had been the best response to our call since the inception of our award in 2014. Stephen and Anna received their bursaries in the second week of April, and we wished them well in their research and hoped that they would be able to access materials and reference sources at this difficult time.

Last year's winners both published extracts of their research in *The Penguin Collector* 94 which came out in June. Megan Dennis has a piece entitled *Kaye Webb's Publishing Ethos Endures, 'There's Nuffin Like a Puffin'*. Megan is now Editorial Assistant at David Fickling Books. Charisa Gunasekera's extract is entitled *Marketing the Modern Classics*; Charisa is now Sales and Marketing Executive at Yale University Press. It is good to see our bursary winners moving onwards and upwards in the world of publishing.

The 'Terms' of the 2020-2021 Bursary Scheme were launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. Once again, we have tried to whet student appetites with reference to notable Penguin related anniversaries including the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poets, Editions Penguin and Puffin Story Books; and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Handbooks, Parnassus, Russian Review and Classics. It is also 100 years since the birth of Tony Godwin, who became Chief Editor at Penguin and introduced many new series including Modern Classics, Modern Poets and African Library.

*Jeff Lucas*