

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Our President

It is with regret I report that following a motor accident suffered some weeks ago, Richard Williamson will be unable to attend the forthcoming first Annual General Meeting in Georgeham. His absence will be a disappointment indeed, but there will be future occasions when he will be able to join us. In the meantime we all wish him steady and complete recovery.

A Gift to the Society

An important function of a literary society must be to build over the years a library of books, pamphlets, recordings, slides and perhaps film amongst other material, relevant to the subject of the Society. The Society Library has had a wonderful start with a splendid gift offered to us by Father Brocard Sewell of his comprehensive collection of the works of Henry Williamson, including inscribed and autographed copies, together with a number of associated items.

The housing of these books in a secure environment that will allow ready access for examination and study has been carefully considered by the Committee, and with the agreement of Fr Sewell, Exeter University Library, which already holds a number of very important MSS and TSS donated by Henry Williamson, has agreed to house the collection, although of course the ownership will remain with the Society.

In addition, the gift includes an extensive collection of personal letters from Henry Williamson, both holograph and typescript, with annotated transcriptions of each. However, the expressed wish of Fr Sewell is that the letters should not be released for publication for a period of thirty years, and thus the letters will be deposited with the Society's bank.

We obviously wish to thank Fr Sewell in a personal way for his generosity and for the faith he has expressed in the Society in making this gift. It seems appropriate, both in time and place, to do this at the forthcoming

meeting in Georgeham.

General Meeting - Programme Amendment

With the indisposition of Richard Williamson, the talk on his father that he was to have given is cancelled. This will be doubly sad since he was to have spoken on the same subject to the Cheltenham Literary Festival the previous weekend. However, with great kindness Father Brocard Sewell will step into the breach on both occasions, and will give a talk surveying the works of Henry Williamson and covering the span of his writing life. We are indebted to Fr Sewell for this further gesture of goodwill to the Society.

Spreading the Society Abroad

The response to our young society from quite a small original mailing list has proved beyond doubt that despite neglect in some quarters Henry Williamson has a strong following here and overseas. I believe that we have only just touched the tip of an iceberg, and that there are many, many more who, if they knew of its existence, would wish to join the Society.

Whilst our Publicity Officers are working hard to promote the Society, members can help in a variety of ways. For example, simple but appropriate posters are being produced that will draw attention to the Society's existence, and a quantity will soon be sent to all members. Please consider asking your local bookseller, library, school or any place considered suitable to display a copy. This is not designed to be a 'hard sell' advertising medium, but rather a simple way of telling others who have admired HW perhaps in isolation that there is now an active and growing Society that they may wish to join.

List of Members

A list of current members of the Society, with their addresses, is enclosed with this Journal; and this will be updated annually hereafter. From this members will be able to note fellow members living within a reasonable

distance of each other, and with whom they might make contact and perhaps in due course arrange small and informal local or regional meetings, or even local groups. This might appeal particularly to those who may seldom, if ever, be able to attend General Meetings.

John Homan
General Secretary
