

Letter

AS THE SUN SEES...

Daniel Farson, in his excellent book *Henry - an appreciation of Henry Williamson*, defends him against the slur that he was grudging to aspiring writers. This reminded me of the time I sent Henry a copy of *Freelance Writing Magazine* (Winter Issue 1971) which contained a two-page article, written by myself, entitled "The Vanished World of Henry Williamson". Shortly afterwards I received a 250 word letter from Henry in which he replied: "I regret to have to tell you that 'The Vanished World' is a poor piece of writing. In places it is libellous. And in one paragraph it is contrary to facts. I did not try hard to write the stuff the paper wanted...etc. I wrote what I saw and heard and it was printed." (This was with regard to my comments about the time he worked on a newspaper.) "I elected to go 'on space' rather than receive staff pay of £7/7 a week. On space meant £3/3/- a column of what was finally published. The first week brought me £12/12/- and Falk the Editor said, 'We have a star'. The star departed after 3 months, after his first novel had been accepted by Collins...The Beautiful Years". Henry ended his letter thus: "'You should avoid

cliches' said a London editor when I showed him my first article. Having discovered what the word meant, one saw with horror that all my writing was cliché ridden: the first lesson all aspirants should take to heart, suffer mortification...and see through their own eyes, 'as the sun sees them, without shadows'. I hope you will find my criticisms of us Yours, Henry Williamson". Then, in his own handwriting, he added the words, "With good wishes, HW". On an earlier occasion I sent him a carbon copy of an article I had written entitled "A Modern Day Tolstoy". It came back annotated in pencil and he remarked, "Your essay is admirably brief, and to the point of your own vision. You may certainly quote what I sent you on a postcard if you wish. But I doubt if an Editor would accept it, brief as it be, in case there is at the moment no 'news aspect' in my existence as writer alive".

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EXTRACTS FROM 'THE COLFEIAN' - HWS JOURNAL No. 5

These extracts were in fact taken from the collection of George Heath, not Stephen Clarke. The Editor offers his apologies to both gentlemen for the error.