

Editorial

"Daddy, there's a Henry Williamson book in the pond," my six year old daughter announced as I stood in the queue waiting to return the library books. This is part of our Saturday morning ritual: a visit to Wallington Library; and while my wife and I heave the books, the children look for fish in the pond just outside. There are fish, sometimes; more often there are empty tins and crisp packets and, most wanton of all, an upturned, broken garden seat. The pleasant fountain was vandalised years ago. And now - what's this? A sodden and torn copy of *The Pathway*. It had been systematically ripped asunder before being dumped in the water. While part of me reeled under the shock of finding *The Pathway* thus treated, another part took stock of possible editorial mileage. This is the library where I first met the work of James Farrar, part of a Local Authors' Exhibition. Henry Williamson was also among the Local Authors: Cross Aulton - Carshalton - is just down the road. I handed the tattered remains of *The Pathway* to the librarian, vaguely expecting him to perform an instant cure on them, or at least send them off to intensive care; and I pondered on a symbolic destruction of Henry meted out by those who don't care, or who can't think, who lack sensitivity or simply have a different point of view. On that Saturday morning, with the tattered *Pathway* lying in the bin, that's as far as I got along editorial lines.

Well, I can't make much of the incident. But one thing leads to another, and my despondency over shabby treatment melts away at the realisation that the tide seems to be turning: there are, so to say, new copies of *The Pathway*. And the rest of *The Flax*. And the *Chronicle*. And Horst Reschke writes to me from America:

In the Feb. 5 New York Times Book Review (p. 36) Anthony Burgess has included the Chronicle in his book Ninety-nine Novels, to be published by Summit Books this spring. He is referring to works which he has singled out as the outstanding achievement of the English language since World War II (1939-1983). I understand that in the book he discusses each novel in a short essay and explains why he has included it.

The thing that is exciting to me is the fact that this event is going to put the spotlight on Henry's writings not only in the British Isles but in the United States. It will accomplish more than I or anyone else could have done over here. I'll try to monitor what is happening.

Yes, please.

More good news: we welcome Anne Williamson (our President's wife) to the Editorial Committee. We already enjoy a working relationship with Anne over matters concerning the HW Literary Estate. We now have a closer link, and the Society will gain immeasurably.

W.H.