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Secretary's Notes

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1986

Pencil this into your Diary now. Date: 11/12 October
Venue: Putsborough Sands Hotel

Programme and Booking Forms will reach you at the end of August

VISIT TO KINGLEY VALE: 28 July.

A depressingly wet and windy dawn at the height of the holiday season resulted in a very small gathering of members in the West Stoke car park below Kingly Vale and Bow Hill where we were joined by the Reserve Warden, your President, Richard Williamson and his wife Anne. Thankfully the weather relented and by the time the Reserve boundary was reached there were bursts of sun which continued for the rest of the walk.

Our path led through a valley densely set with oak, ash, thorn and other trees growing strongly in the rich soil known as 'coombe rock' - chalk rubble washed down from the slopes above over the ages. Here and there West facing arbours had been cut into the wood beside the path and wild honeysuckle encouraged to grow especially on the oaks, both being vital to the most striking butterfly found here - the White Admiral. By great good luck a fine specimen of this insect emerged and was watched for several minutes. A little further, and the path suddenly dived into a dim and silent world, the grove of the largest and most ancient yews for which the Vale is justly famous. Perhaps five hundred years old, these massive trees create a habitat beneath their canopies where little else can grow. Fantastically gnarled branches; some broken by storm or battle practice during the last war, lay around in decay. Others had subsided through weight to the ground and where they touched soil had thrown down roots to create a new tree which was also fed by the old branch acting as an umbilical from the main tree until such time as the branch broke free and the 'new' became autonomous. Propagation by seed is the more common however, and the ripe seeds are spread far and wide mainly by birds who love the bright red fleshy pulp surrounding the seed. The fruit, from the female trees, and looking like miniature Chinese lanterns, will be familiar to all those who have seen churchyard yews.

Emerging once more into the open Richard pointed out how much of the more open land that climbs increasingly steeply to the summit plateau above the Vale, has been divided by fences into 'paddocks'. The paddocks have for some years been subject to periodic grazing by donkeys, ponies and sheep, initially to clear down the scrub spreading over the grassland (since the demise of the rabbit, post 1954, and removal of earlier free-ranging sheep) and allow free growth for many varieties of flowers, herbs and grasses. The result of grazing or non-grazing is assessed annually by making detailed records of species and their frequency, both of plant and animal life, and form an essential part in the plan of how best to manage such areas. On the slopes too are groves of younger yews, gradually spreading upwards and outwards, those on the western side of the Vale being considerably older than those on the east. Yew saplings need protection from grazing animals, said Richard, and although several species of trees and shrubs did act as 'mothers'

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juniper was the most successful and there was a plan to encourage its spread especially in those areas where propagation of yews was most successful.

Continuing to climb the eastern edge of the Vale proper we passed through yew and other trees until the path began to swing west around the rim of the Vale. On the way up many late summer flowers and herbs were seen including harebells, presagers of summer's end. There were a number of the stemless thistle, for which the Reserve is well known and, in one small spot, a handful of the Pyramid Orchid - twelve species of orchid have been recorded in all - to delight our eyes.

Pausing below the Tansley Stone - set up to the memory of Sir Arthur Tansley, first chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council - we were able to enjoy in good visibility the view he loved dearly. Stretched out in the middle distance was the coastal plain and the various winding channels and fingers of Chichester Harbour that could be traced back to its entrance to the open sea marked by foam-bars, and beyond, across the eastern Solent in the distance and lying like a stranded whale, the Isle of Wight.

At last we were on the summit plateau, a most important part of the Reserve where a thin layer of clay-with-flints overlies the chalk giving rise to a geological area known as chalk heath, an increasingly rare phenomenon in its undisturbed state. It is unique in that not only acid loving plants can flourish here, but also many of those of the chalk grassland. It was here that Richard was able to show us the only example at present known on the Reserve of that exceptional bellflower, the round-headed rampion.

Pausing by the Bronze Age barrows - each showing the scars of past 'antiquarian' treasure-hunters - on the plateau summit other interesting flowers and grasses were identified before we set off down the steep path bounding the western edge of the reserve back to the valley bottom. After some fair exertions and a buffeting wind above, the walk down through quiet and cool woodland was delightful. As we neared the bottom of the valley a favourite habitat of the Frog Orchid was passed. A little spike of greeny-brown it is so inconspicuous that if Anne had not pointed it out we should not have noticed it at all. Yet surprisingly perhaps to the 'layman' this is *the* orchid that the specialists and trained botanists come to see.

And so back to our starting point. By cruelly overloading Richard's Landrover the party was saved the last mile or so back to the car park, but not sheer idleness this, as tea of scones and cakes was being served by the good ladies of the local W.I. in the village hall a short distance away - as part of a fund-raising exercise - until 5 o'clock. We just made it.

Alas, the visit was all too brief and certainly not enough to see more than a very little of all Kingley Vale has to offer the observant visitor, but with the expert guidance of Richard and Anne we were able to see and understand the most important aspects of the Reserve and some of its greatest rarities. It would be nice to think that an annual walk - a little earlier in the summer - might be arranged on a very informal basis.

NOTE: The N.C.C. have published a very good pamphlet *Kingley Vale - National Nature Reserve - Nature Trail.* This is available from a self-serve box by the main entrance at 20p., or from the N.C.C. South East Region, Zealds, Church St. Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5BW at 20p., but enclose *at least* 9 x 5 in. return S.A.E.

For the definitive work on Kingley Vale, see: *The Great Yew Forest; The natural history of Kingley Vale* by Richard Williamson. (Macmillan, 1978, £5.95).

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DEVON 1985 - A HALCYON WEEKEND

Our autumn pilgrimage to Georgeham has coincided with much turbulence of weather over the last year or two, so this year there were some fair hopes as Friday dawned cloudless. Hopes stayed high to Exeter and beyond and then a faint gray bar rising to a wall of solid cloud appeared ahead, and for a while the land was dull and a spiteful rain fell, but after Barnstaple the roads were dry, and by the time the hotel was reached there was a distinct warmth to the air, and a misty sun. Mindful of the time of year - and indeed how easily guests can complain - a thoughtful hotel management had turned the heating on. TOO MUCH by far; windows open full, heat OFF. Relief. New faces, old friends; a good dinner, talk at ease for a change, then bed.

Through the open bedroom window the crash and roar of the surf below increased until just before dawn when the tide started to slip down the sands. Quiet; pastel sea and sand emerged, eggshell sky; a lovely soft dawn. And so it lasted for our weekend.

Breakfast done, the good show of Friday night arrivals dispersed to follow their own plans. Busy Barnstaple of Saturday shoppers. Could not resist a sneak preview of the 'Tarka's World' exhibition set up in the North Devon Tourist Centre by Trevor Beer. A snack and then back nearer the 2 o'clock opening advised to us. Mrs. Loetitia Williamson and Robert arrived and generally approved of the many and varied pictures and models of otters; otters in oils and watercolours, gouache, ink; in clay wood and bronze. Even a real otter stuffed. Lots of other animals and birds were depicted as well. Mrs. Williamson was most pleased with the new edition of *Tarka*, with superb photographs by Simon McBride. (*The Illustrated Tarka the Otter* Webb and Bower, £12.95). There certainly was a good deal to see of exhibits of a generally high standard, and almost all for sale, and there was a splendid hospitality of wine and nibbles for members to enjoy.

Off to Ox's Cross, and the Writing Hut. How good and solid it looked, but after just two years the exterior wood has already bleached grey-white, and the new wood gutters are showing green growth. My thought that some good soul with a can of preservative and a brush (supplied at the Society's expense of course) and a few hours to spare once a year might be no bad idea resulted in the immediate offer from Tony Evans to do this work, for which our grateful thanks. Despite the warmth of the day a fire seemed obligatory in the corner hearth and soon some logs from Henry's last stacking in the lee of the Studio were ablaze. Once more the cabinet gramphone of Shallowford days was brought down, the opening front doors looking as though they had recently received a blast of No.6 shot from twenty-five yards; woodworm in such dry old wood? (treatment is in hand, Ed.). A thick album of records; *Tristan*, Act 3. The reverse of each protective envelope with the libretto in English and German; Notes by Ernest Newman. I had forgotten the speed with which 78 r.p.m. records ran out, and hand-wound turntables ran down; a sore trial to serious listening, but we persevered to the final disc, played almost to extinction, but most moving.

Following the A.G.M. Fr. Brocard Sewell gave a most illuminating history of how and why *The Aylesford Review* came into being, how it changed direction from its original conception, its progression, Henry Williamson's involvement and its final demise. I need say no more as a transcription of the talk is included elsewhere in this issue, except to thank Fr. Brocard once again for the great pleasure his live performance gave, and for his ready agreement to a reprint, less, I should add, the asides and ad-libs.

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Buffet done, Richard Williamson proceeded to his talk illustrated by a feast of slides made from original photographs, and with many new and interesting additions to those used in 1981.

Informality; authority; humour, sound fact and purely personal view; all were combined in a verbal biography that in the latter stages I should not omit to say was clearly difficult for the speaker to express, but none the less done supremely well and understood by his audience who were enthralled throughout. It is quite beyond your scribe to summarise an hour and a half's talk in a few lines. It would need many, many pages, and the talent as well. One can only say that the final biography when it appears on the printed page will surely have been worth all the very understandable waiting time needed to conceive and slowly, honestly, fairly and lovingly bring it to completion.

Afterwards members talked over a glass, some until the early hours. I looked out from the bedroom window; a mellow night, the brilliant white light of an angler's Tilley lamp on the beach below; three others in an arc towards Woolacombe. I hope they found some of the big autumn bass working a quietening surf. A row of pinprick lights flickered far out as a ship crawled slowly across the nightline of sea and sky.

A goodly number of members were present on Sunday morning to listen to panel members Richard Williamson, Fr. Brocard Sewell, Wheatley Blench and Brian Fullagar consider questions sent in by members put by chairman for the day, Tim Morley.

Although he could not personally come to terms with the book - and indeed it had many detractors as well as champions, Williamson's last novel continues to command attention, said Tim Osborne. He felt that *The Gale of the World* was a flawed novel; it lacked credibility and the characters were unsympathetic. It was also self-pitying and self-justifying. Was this only a quasi-literary novel, strangely surrealistic. Had the author come to the end of his tether? In reply Richard recalled how chapters of the book had been sent to him for comment, as they were written. Henry had been chided by some younger writers for being 'old-fashioned' and indeed attempted here and there to introduce a 'modern' approach with ghastly results. Certainly he repeated too much and was losing his grasp of detail, although these flaws did not seem to worry him personally. He was also under some pressure at that time re-writing a film script for *Tarka*, but still believed, or at least hoped that *The Gale* would be recognised as his last great novel.

In turn, Wheatley Blench said that he was not irritated by the book. It was certainly strange and at times unreal in the context of the preceding books, although he did feel that it was true to the times it portrayed, especially London at the end of the last war. There was development of characters, Laura Wissilcraft for example, and Brigadier Tarr. Essentially he saw the book as a coda - a chromatic to previous harmonies, and the theme was indeed one of striving for harmony, of reconciliation and love. The Lynmouth flood at the climax of the book was analagous to the many swept away in war, English, German, et al. It also symbolically swept away the neuroses from which he, the writer had been suffering. Many readers were bewildered by the book felt Brian Fullagar; they complained that it was below the 'standard' they had come to expect in the series, and he was inclined to agree with this view. Fr. Sewell recalled that authors as diverse as Dickens and Sabine Baring Gould had suffered long trying to end specific books. For the latter, the end as published for *In the Roar of the Sea* had been absolutely terrible. He did not see *Gale* in the same light, but clearly it had been difficult to end such an enormous sequence. It has flaws, certainly,

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but moving in the extreme is the post script.

From the floor John Millar asked if perhaps the book was an attempt to portray what was new in a society changed irrevocably by the war, for example, the approach to women and sexual explicitness. Certainly there was some truth in this said Richard. Henry had been chided for the lack of sex in his books by young writers such as the talented Ann Quin. He had actually sent such 'scenes' for inclusion in *Gale*, but they were bad and in any case totally irrelevant and out of context and Henry did not complain when they were 'dropped'. He tried to come to grips with the modern shock culture but it was too late for him.

In reply to Margaret Clarke's query as to why Henry first visited this particular part of North Devon, was it chance or design, Wheatley Blench recalled that Henry had an Aunt living in Lynmouth, which was not too far away. Brian Fullagar had always been fascinated by this question, and there was no doubt, from evidence, that Henry had stayed in Georgeham before the Great War. Richard confirmed this. He has a diary for 1909 which includes details of a cycling holiday in the area, but could not say more on this at the moment.

Bill Bax asked if the comment in E.J. Rogers article, *The Power of the Dead*, (Journal No.10) that in fact Henry did not take part in the Xmas 1914 Truce was true, when for so long the belief was that he had taken part. There was much evidence, said Richard, such as letters home, to his school, and so on, to prove that he had been present at the Front and taken part in the fraternisation. There was no reason to disbelieve his account, (although it could have easily created as a fiction), all the historical evidence, troop movements, confirmed this. There is also no doubt that Henry was with the London Rifle Brigade 'Terriers' at that time. The rest of the panel concurred with these comments.

The next question, from Mr. P. Lewis, asked if the death of Willie Maddison at the end of *The Pathway* was deliberately arranged so that the author might start again, in more depth as it were, with his look-alike cousin Phillip?

Wheatley Blench recalled that by his own admission Williamson's original intent was that Willie should survive when trapped by the tide in the estuary of the two rivers and eventually be washed ashore alive having seen in his struggles how his true aim of revealing the truth of God that underlies all creation had become subordinate to his arrogance. (See: Some notes on *The Flax of Dream* and *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* by Henry Williamson. (Henry Williamson: The Man the Writings; A Symposium. Ed. Brocard Sewell. Tabb House, Padstow. 1980). That was the reason why the *Flax* had come to be written in the first place. There were doubts however, that the work, largely subjective, was basically true and hence the London cousin, Phillip, was introduced as a possible escape route as early on it was clear that Willie, suffering the lack of a father-love, (from a father who had known love) and knowing no other, would become a tragic figure. Over the long gestation of this book the feeling grew that death would be the only solution; the only way in which Willie could find serenity for his restless spirit and thus leave the way clear for a new objective version to be written seen through the eyes of Phillip.

Brian Fullgar concurred and felt the book was more believeable with a tragic end than if Willie had survived. Richard agreed and commented that in any case Henry liked tragic endings - as he does too! The general feeling was further endorsed by Brocard Sewell who felt that it was the right and only ending.

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In the past few years events have occured that Henry might have had strong views about; the Falklands crisis, other troubles in Latin America, Ethiopia, the rise of Green politics. If he had lived a hundred years later, and was starting *A Chronicle* at the turn of the 21st Century, how might he have commented? asked Will Harris. Richard felt certain that his father would have been in the forefront of Green Peace and things concerned with the eco-system, such as the spread of deserts. How many realised that in a few years we will see no more swallows; the depth of desert will be beyond their ability to overfly. He would have seen the Falklands affair as the final thundering of a dying Empire, and unlike us, he would have understood modern youth. That he would have been supportive of ecological parties, Brocard Sewell was sure, and such as the Distributist League, so loudly supported by figures as Chesterton and Belloc. A sad thing about the League was its lack of suitable real leaders. Perhaps if Mosley had not gone to Mussolini he might have made an ideal leader. Many of the aims of the Distributists are of leading interest today.

In his turn Wheatley felt that Henry would have projected passionately the natural side of life that is still inborn in Man, and how this might be used to create a true Harmony of Man amongst cousin nations. As for the Falklands; surely he would have seen the heroism and pity of it all, and the bravery on *both* sides of those once more called upon to fight a politicians' war.

Did Henry ever stay in Dorset and Wiltshire, asked Paul Martin of Shaftesbury, as these counties are featured in the later novels? From the floor Mrs. Loetitia Williamson said that indeed Henry visited Dorset in particular when writing *Chronicle*, most place names were only thinly disguised, and made many notes for the novels.

Unfortunately lack of time precluded further discussion on this point, and in a succinct winding-up Tim Morley thanked all for making an absorbing morning.

Well, that was almost it; farewell to most, then lunch with a few at the 'Higher House', and goodbye to them outside the Inn, the perfume of the honeysuckle by the door heavy in warm sun-filled air. As Carole and I did not have to leave until the next morning, so down to the Toll road and to the Burrows, and parked rows of Sunday afternoon cars freshly polished and gleaming. A long walk round the point where gravel barges lay like stranded whales, and almost doubling back along the seaward side, on and on, past the scattered remnants of the old light; to Aery Point and beyond. No tide had crossed the upper sands for weeks and myriad footmarks crossed and merged into chaos. I was dismayed; the sanctity and emptiness of the place, as by chance it had always been before - was destroyed. Henry would have been quite desolate I thought at the loss of his sands of emptiness. But that was an unfair thought as happy people sat or walked in the warm sun. The tide had turned and was moving in; it is possible to tell almost to the second when this happens without looking. The sound is quite different from the lapsing, or resting pause of low water. Suddenly there is a purpose, a definite murmer of activity, and on shallow coasts a rapid and almost vindictive encroachment landward; a bustling and fretting of waves which suddenly foam as they encircle lone rocks and low scaurs until they are gone and the last seagull has to take flight. Soon a golden light filled sky and sea as the sun slowly sank and it was time to turn to the track back across the dunes and find our accommodation for the night in Georgeham. Where we found Richard who had had a lone and invigorating swim in the Atlantic Rollers off Putsborough beach and climbed back up Pickwell in company with memories of his father.

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CHEZ HENRY - OR GEORGEHAM FINALLY PAYS A TRIBUTE

Standing in the car park of the Village Institute or Hall in Georgeham, two years ago I pondered on the likely fate of a parcel of land adjoining on the Croyde side, unkempt, seemingly derelict, and sloping down to the village stream. Today a large roadside sign proclaims:

COTTAGE STYLE NEW HOMES
WILLIAMSON CLOSE
GEORGEHAM

Calling in upon the selling Agents, I asked if they could tell me how or by whom the name had been chosen, but drew a blank. A copy of the Prospectus was thrust upon me, however, and I can tell you that the development will be select; of just eight three and four-bedroomed houses, to the edge of this much sought after village. There are several different designs and, from the architect's impression the layout seems attractive and some effort has been made to blend, through use of appropriate materials, the exteriors with existing village houses. If you want one, to call TARKA'S RETREAT or whatever, you must be quick as four are gone already.

The Writing Hut apart - which is a very special case, and could never of course be open to the public - the name of Williamson is at last tangibly linked with Georgeham. Is it enough, I wonder? There have been various ideas - a bench on Baggy seemed a good one, but the National Trust could not allow it; re-naming the local school, or one of the Inns? Perhaps not really any chance here. A plaque? But where, Skirr or Crowberry Cottage? This is purely *personal*, but I feel that *if* another 'memento' is apt for the village, that Skirr and a plaque go together. After all it was here that it *really* all began, (if we leave aside the tremulous starts in London). It is here that *Flax* took shape and was largely published, and here that some of the finest Nature essays and stories were written.

HENRY WILLIAMSON, THE NEW EUROPEAN, by Padraig Cullen. My attention was drawn to this in The Richard Jefferies Society's Annual Report & Bulletin. The above is contained in the issue No.8 Spring 1985, edition of the quarterly magazine, THE SCORPION, ed. Michael Walker, and is available from: BCM 5766, London WC1N 3XX at £1.50.

THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP

This was founded in 1980, under the Presidency of Myfanwy Thomas, with the aims of perpetuating his name and fostering interest in his life and work. Also, to conserve the countryside he knew and recorded in his writings, to help with the preservation of associated places and things, to arrange events and keep people in touch with relevant happenings. There is a bi-annual Newsletter, advice on significant publications, a Birthway Walk annually in Hampshire, and an Autumn walk in another county associated with Edward Thomas.

The annual subscription is £4.00 due 1 January; for those joining after 1 October, membership lasts to the end of the following year.

For a form write to:

Hon. Secretary, Alan A. Martin,
20A Waldgrave Gardens,
Strawberry Hill, Twickenham TW1 4PG.

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A SMALL DISCOVERY

Entering my local bookshop one day in 1962 I saw displayed a copy of the recently published *It was the Nightingale,* number ten in the sequent *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight.* This caused a dilemma; I had only just over £2 to last until payday, but in the event this was soon solved and I came out of the shop 18s. the poorer in pocket.

For those unfamiliar with this book I will merely reveal that the early chapters tell of the blissful but brief marriage of Phillip Maddison and Barley - the perfect companion always sought - and how, after less than a year she presents him with a fine son. But complications develop and compounded by some negligence, Barley dies. Phillip is distraught, blaming himself, and he decides to go away leaving the baby in care, but before he does so:

> 'He ordered a small stone of white marble, with her name on it, *Teresa Jane Maddison, aged 19 years,* and below, carved from the stone, a device of reaping hook severing a rose bud from the stem.' (p.71)

(This device is depicted on the dust jacket of the book)

I recently acquired a handful of the many books written by Mr. S.P.B. Mais (of whom more anon) and in a chapter on Devonshire in the book *See England First,* first published in 1927. He describes a visit to Exeter Cathedral:

> '... the first glimpse of the interior, with those thirty vast clustered Purbeck columns of bluish grey always holds me spellbound ... As I look up I get a sense of perpetual perfect symmetrical motion. Then as one's eyes get accustomed to the beauty of the stone they rove to the monuments on the wall, the most affecting being the highly coloured sledge-flag of Captain Scott, which juts out from the southern wall close to a strangely moving marble carving of a rose and a sickle, commemorating the death of Saccharissa Hibbert at the age of twenty-one.'

The fictional marriage to Barley was from late 1923 to 1924, but of course in 1925, Henry did marry Loetitia Hibbert of the old and respected Devon family living at Landcross.

Surely poor Saccharissa was related? Did Henry see the memorial, or was he told about it, and it would be interesting to know when she died. Perhaps the biography will reveal in due time?

... AND ANOTHER

Although Henry cited Richard de la Mare as the person who first told him about the place described below, is it *just* possible that he read about it? After all, he and the author were friends, and the book was published in 1933 well ante-dating his first recorded visit?

S.P.B.Mais again, but this time from his book, *This Unknown Island* - a tour of Britain - which includes a chapter, 'Norfolk: The Borrow Country and the Broads.'

Moving north through Norfolk from Norwich, Mr. Mais comments on Burnham Thorpe, then close by Holkham, finally coming to Wells where he writes:

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At Wells I got my first view of the sea, far away over miles of sands. First there is a tiny creek and quay where the barge 'Rosalyne' of London was lying up, then I walked out along the sea-wall for a mile, with the winding creek below, and miles of bird-haunted marshes and sand-dunes on either side. In front of me I could hear the roar of the breakers, but could see only miles of sand and a few stray cockle-gatherers.... A mile or two further on in a protected valley I found a pure gem of a village. Its name is Stiffkey, but I believe it is pronounced Stewky. From all its long line of red cottage-chimneys above the tidal river rose a column of blue smoke. It was just tea-time. The old Hall, built by Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1579, has six circular towers and two embrasured towers - even in this country a house of exceptional beauty. It was for sale. If I had £4,000 I should buy this Hall at live at Stiffkey. I have seldom seen a village to which I have so quickly lost my heart.

(A year or two later it was of course Henry's unique offer to buy the 235 acre farm - which he wanted - without the Hall - which he did not - the opposite of all previous offers, that finally closed the deal and opened a new chapter in his life.)

'PEREGRINE'S' ON TAPE

Following a lead given to me in Devon, I can now confirm that an audio cassette tape of *The Peregrine's Saga* read by Sir Michael Hordern is on offer from the RSNC. My copy has not yet arrived but I am sure that the tape cannot be other than first class, being read by a fine actor who is also a country gent and understanding fisherman.

The tape costs £2.75 post paid, and may be obtained from:

The Sales Department
Royal Society for Nature Conservation
The Green, Nettleham,
LINCOLN LN2 2NR (Tel: 0522 752326)

P.S. If you want to help towards the purchase of threatened sites, etc., £10m target over the next five years, send a donation, however small, to BRITISH WILDLIFE APPEAL, Royal Society for Nature Conservation, 21 Bury St. London EC3A 5AU.

BOOKS

The last volumes of the *Chronicle* appeared fast on the heels of those previously published, and all fifteen are now gracing library shelves. Make sure YOUR public library has bought the complete set. It is a very good way to publicise your Society and to ensure that HW is seen, and hopefully read, by a wider public.

A new paperback ed. of *Salar the Salmon* will be printed by Faber sometime in 1986. Sadly, a planned 'de luxe' version has been turned down by Faber, so a new publisher is being sought.

ALONG THE SOUTH WEST WAY - Part 1 - Minehead to Bude
A.G.Collings (Tabb House. Price: Limp £3.50, Hardback £8.50)

This volume covers North Devon - Henry Williamson country. Although the actual references to Henry are slight, it is certainly a 'background' guide to the area that HW loved, and which is, for us, Williamson country. The

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Introduction illustrates the background of the battle to secure a right to walk along the coast; thank goodness there are people who care enough to fight and work for our heritage. A very interesting documentation of the coastal path and all the details, historical, botanical and sociological that are associated with it. A worthwhile companion volume to your HWW collections.

TWELVE LITERARY WALKS
Christopher Somerville (W.H.Allen & Co. March 1986)

One walk will cover 'Tarka' country - particular the Torrington area. Permission has been granted for use of quotations and information. Society members may also find of interest the other walks.

SPRING RETURNING
James Farrar - new ed. edited by Christopher Palmer (Thames Pub. April 86, price about £8.50)

I draw your attention to the separate leaflet which gives the details of this new edition. As you will all know, Henry was instrumental in arranging the original volume, *Unreturning Spring*. Many of you will have heard Christopher's stimulating talk either on the radio, or at the Lewisham meeting, about Delius. We await this new edition with great interest, both for the opportunity to see further, previously unpublished, work of the young airman so tragically cut off from developing his talent to full maturity, and also for Christopher Palmer's examination of the relationship between James Farrar and Henry (who never met) and their common love of the music of Delius.

J.H.