



# A Note on the 'Falcon' Maps

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In I. Waveney Girvan's *A Bibliography and a critical survey of the works of Henry Williamson* (Alcuin Press, 1931) you will find under the entry for *Tarka the Otter* the following rather mysterious reference to maps prepared by T. A. Falcon:

*End-paper maps by T. A. Falcon of Branton, of North Devon were commissioned by the publishers and sent to the author. The maps were printed and then ignored by the publishers, but three copies of the first issue are in existence with black and white reduced facsimiles of the maps serving as end-papers.*

and again under the section headed 'Prospectus pamphlet'

*A proof copy exists and contains on p.3 the additional information under the heading Format and Style concerning the existence of end-papers decorated with two maps in colours, designed and drawn by T. A. Falcon, R.B.A.; the first, of the Estuary of the Two Rivers; the second, of Tarka's native river from the Dark Pool to Half-penny Bridge, the water of the last long hunt.*

In a bound copy of *Tarka Second Proof Draft* (property of the Henry Williamson Literary Estate), HWW has written:

*There are also end-paper maps in 3 colours of*  
1) *Estuary of Two Rivers*  
2) *Last Hunt*

*I think they are lovely maps — so exact and faithful and original. Done by a Branton artist called Falcon.*

Nothing seemed to be known about the two maps or the artist; mention of them in conversations with various people revealed no more than his name and domicile, information presumably gleaned from the *Bibliography* as above.

Feeling that they would make an interesting and useful item in this special *Tarka* issue of the Journal, I decided to try and track down some information. They could not be used in print unless permission to do so was granted by the holder of the Copyright. So, to the reference books, in the hope that Mr Falcon had been important enough to merit an entry; luckily, he had.

THOMAS ADOLPHUS FALCON, MA,  
RBA, Landscape Painter b. Pudsey near Leeds,  
24th July 1872, died 28 Jan, 1944 Hill Close,  
Branton, North Devon.

At least this was the person involved although it wasn't very useful for getting Copyright permission but even more luckily, his son also merits an entry in *Who's Who*, for his work in the field of geology, and thus I had a name and address to apply to.

Mr Norman Falcon, himself in his eighties, answered my letter by return and most courteously provided me with the permission to use the maps and also with some background information about his father. He remembers Henry going to the house in

Branton, but again little is known about these actual maps.

*My father left no correspondence or useful papers about his artistic work. He was an accomplished but not well known artist.*

*He was born in 1872 at Pudsey near Leeds, the son of an elderly medical GP who died in 1878, leaving him and his sister as orphans, responsibility for them being assumed by a lawyer guardian. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School and Trinity College, Cambridge where he read Classics and Modern Languages.*

*He had private means and thus was able to devote himself to landscape painting, being devoted to Dartmoor and Skye and quiet country living. He was, I believe, at the Royal School of Art in London for several years and was interested primarily in colours in landscapes. His pictures were often accepted by the Royal Academy. He loved sunsets and painted many.*

*He married about 1898 and at that time moved to Branton where he built a very attractive family house, Hill Close, in a splendid situation overlooking Branton Great Field and the Taw/Torridge estuary. He died at Branton in 1944. He was a shy unsociable man with a social conscience and never made any effort to make money out of his art.*

So the maps, which you will find overleaf on the centre pages, are at last in print after sixty years and I hope you will agree that they are, indeed, 'lovely, exact, faithful and original'.





