

THE HENRY WILLIAMSON
SOCIETY JOURNAL

No. 16 September 1987



Editor: Anne Williamson

Assistant Editors: Brian Fullager
Will Harris
John Homan

The editorial committee does not necessarily agree with views and opinions expressed in the *Journal*.

Two copies of material to be submitted for publication should be typed with double line spacing on one side of the paper only, bearing the writer's name and address. Articles, correspondence, etc., should be sent to:

The Editor, Keepers, West Dean Woods,
Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0RU.

Copy date for next issue
1st November 1987

CONTENTS

Editorial	2
From Manuscript to Printed Edition	3
<i>Dr Terence Jones</i>	
A Bibliographical History	7
<i>John Homan</i>	
Tarka—The Wonder and the One-ness	12
<i>Bryan Wake</i>	
Recollections of Tarka First Editions	15
<i>Stephne Francis Clarke</i>	
Tarka's Route	16
<i>Anne Williamson</i>	
A Note on the 'Falcon' Maps	19
<i>Anne Williamson</i>	
The Falcon Maps	20,21
The Tarka Trail Project	22
<i>Dr Graham Wills</i>	
Carving the Otter	23
<i>Jack Whitehead</i>	
Tarka Country Revisited	24
<i>Trevor Beer</i>	
The Making of the Film Tarka	25
<i>David Cobham</i>	
The Ornithology of Tarka the Otter	28
<i>Tim Osborne</i>	
Some Leaves from HW's Own Scrapbook	30
Secretary's Notes	35
<i>John Homan</i>	
Publicity Report	36
<i>Tim Osborne</i>	
Spring Meeting 1987	36
<i>Robert Tierney</i>	
Letters	37
Mystery Quotation	39
Notes on Contributors	39
Aims and Officials	Back cover
Front cover design	Mick Loates
Illustration on p. 19	Ian McGinnes

Permission to use C. F. Tunnicliffe's illustrations for Tarka the Otter on pp. 2, 6, 11, 15, 23, 24, 29, 38, by courtesy of the Trustees of the Tunnicliffe Estate

© The Henry Williamson Society ISSN No. C144-9338

Editorial

This issue is a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the original publication of *Tarka the Otter* in the autumn of 1927, and I hope you like the special treatment we felt it merited.

Henry did not like being known as 'the author of Tarka', as if that was his sole book, or his sole worthwhile book, all the other fifty or so pushed away as if non-existent. But certainly *Tarka* is his most well-known book, and the book which brought him fame.

I wonder how many people have read *Tarka* over the sixty years? You will see from John Homan's excellent bibliography (an extract from his total bibliography on HWW which we hope will be published in full in due course) the number of editions there have been. How many copies does this equal? It is impossible to say; but about 18,000 copies (of various editions including paperback) were sold in 1984 and over 11,000 in 1985, which is the latest information available. Multiply that by various factors over the sixty years, e.g. 75,000 of the Russian edition in 1979, and it represents a great number of readers — a great number of people who have shared in the magic of *Tarka*.

And I would like to share with you a thought that has been germinating in my mind recently; that Henry Williamson is a twentieth century Romantic and further, that *Tarka* is the arch Romantic novel.

What do we mean by 'Romantic'? It is the term used to define the movement in the arts, and particularly in literature, that took place in Europe at the end of the 1700s and continued into the 1830s. It involved composers such as Beethoven, Berlioz and Schumann, writers such as Victor Hugo, George Sand and Walter Scott, and artists such as Delacroix and Turner. In England it particularly applies to the group of poets that we know as the 'Lakeland' or 'Nature' poets — namely, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, and coupled with them but apart, Blake.

Of course, the movement did not come to an abrupt halt at this point; a stone in a pond forms ripples to eternity, and we can look particularly at HW's favourite 'Lightbringers', Delius, Wagner, Francis Thompson and Richard Jefferies from the same viewpoint.

The word romantic has, of course, degenerated in meaning, and today usually implies sentimentality at its worst. But its roots go back to the beginnings of European culture, to the 'romance' (i.e. latin) languages and the tales of chivalrous adventure told in medieval times that spread across Europe.

Its special meaning as applied to the arts began when the german critic, Schlegel, used the term 'romantic' to define the contrast between the freedom of imagination in romances against the restraint and discipline of classical literature. The philosophers and writers of Germany and France, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Madame de Stael, etc., were all involved in discussing the setting out the parameters of the new movement. Heine stated that 'Romantic art represents the infinite and the spiritual, and thus has to be expressed symbolically'.

Particularly, the romantic movement was a return to nature and a retreat from artificiality; a retreat from the city to the countryside. The Romantics cultivated imaginative freedom and looser poetic form, and used language with vividness and informality. They expressed the feelings of man in solitude; the introvert who may be in revolt against society, or in flight from it. They delighted in self-analysis, and intricate examination and exposure of the soul. And in strange contrast to this, in their opposition to established order, there was involvement in politics, particularly the French Revolution.

It seems to me that all these points apply equally to Henry Williamson and to *Tarka* in particular. Henry fled precipitously from the city of London to the wilderness of Devon. Most of his early writing was concerned with nature in some aspect. In *Tarka* he uses language in a vivid and innovative way, and *Tarka* himself is a symbol of the infinitive and spiritual and is in flight against established society.

I am not able within this editorial space to attempt an analysis in detail but I hope having aired this idea, that perhaps some of you will want to expand upon it. Bryan Wake's contribution (p. 12) makes a good starting point.

A.W.

