

Editorial

Tarka had so absorbed my thoughts for the past year that it was almost a shock to take my mind off that tack and to look up and see the more general view once more, but one last word before leaving our water-wanderer. I hope most of you did look out for the reading of *Tarka* on 'Book at Bedtime' on Radio 4 from 19–30 October.

I had set this in motion back in the spring and Graham Gauld, the producer, had promised it for October; unfortunately I was unable to ascertain the exact date *before* leaving for the momentous 'Tarka' AGM. David Davis's voice was a very sympathetic choice as reader; his control of the material superb, particularly his handling of HWW's phonetic bird calls, and the 'Tally-Ho' calls. The timbre of his voice reminded me of HWW's own voice very strongly. Of course, much had to be left out, but I personally felt that a strong storyline had been taken and that it would be meaningful to all those people listening who had never heard of or read the book.

Incidentally, we had to listen by candlelight and on a 'battery' radio with all its attendant ills, as the eye of the hurricane had passed over us felling many huge oaks and beeches across both electricity and telephone wires — 'The Gale of the World' — it really brought home what excellent use Henry had made of his experience of *that* particular storm, which was perfect copy for the climax of the *Chronicle* sequence.

Still looking back, August last year marked the tenth anniversary of Henry's death. A great deal has been achieved in those ten years. The first tentative seeds sown by George and Mary Heath have flowered into a sturdy and flourishing Society. How well Richard and I remember the first visit that unassuming pair made to our cottage in the woods to discuss the beginnings of this quite tremendous project. Apart from providing a nucleus for members to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings, the Society is doing sterling work to promote Henry's writings, which is of course our main aim. In particular, we do this through our publications; the *Journal* is our main vehicle but Henry's journalistic output was considerable and it is most important that this ephemeral writing should be captured in book form as the Society is doing, as it is certainly not available other than to the most ardent researcher and could otherwise be lost for ever.

Incidentally, in that ten years, in my capacity as Manager of the Literary Estate, I have instigated new editions of thirty-three titles of Henry's work. That is two-thirds of his published work re-issued within ten years of his death. That says a great deal about the breadth and depth of HWW's reputation.

Finally, family and friends, including members of the Society, joined together in a moving service in the church of St Martin's In The Field in London, so sensitively organised by his daughter Margaret, to celebrate the lives and work of all artists but particularly that of Henry Williamson, on December 1st, the date of his birth day. A prayer for artists had been especially written for the occasion; Brian Sanders read 'London Children and Wild Flowers' from *The Lone Swallows*; a small choir sang unaccompanied music of Delius and Elgar; a chance for us all to pause, reflect, and to give thanks for the achievement of Henry Williamson.

By then this issue of the *Journal* was well under way. As you can see its contents are many and varied. It never ceases to amaze me how many tracks and sideroads one can wander down in the company of HW, stopping to ponder this or to wonder at that. Let me detain you no longer — Happy Wandering . . .

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