

Editorial

Anniversaries seem to be very much the flavour of this issue. Your President recalls his recent renewal of acquaintance with HW's Silver Eagle Alvis, now well over sixty years old. Henry's relationship with all his cars seems to have been very difficult. Difficult cars need very patient owners. Patience with mechanical things was an attribute that possibly HW was lacking?

We also have a reminder that the centenary of HW's birth is fast approaching and that organisation for events to celebrate that occasion is already under way. The centenary will be a very important time. Apart from the actual celebrations of HW's life and work, it is a major opportunity for the Society itself to become better known. For the time being I particularly draw your attention to the proposed raffle, as your committee are hoping it will raise considerable funds to help finance some of the projects.

But of most immediate import is the occasion of the ninetieth birthday on the 4th February 1991 of Mrs Loetitia Williamson, whose life is celebrated by Bryan Wake's sensitive poem. Loetitia is respected and loved by everyone in the Society, many express their gratitude for her interest and all who meet her say what a privilege it is to know her. What warmth of spirit is generated by this relationship!

We must also be grateful for her existence in so many of the books as a major character. Consider the pillar upon which much of *The Pathway* structure is built — that of Mary Ogilvy, around whom the wandering spirit of Willie is finally able to find equilibrium. Think of the major part she plays in *The Children of Shallowford*, *Goodbye West Country*, and *The Story of a Norfolk Farm*, considered by many to be his most readable books. She is present in *Tarka* and in *The Phasian Bird*, and particularly as Lucy in many of the *Chronicle* novels. Without her stabilising influence and the family that she came from, the whole literary output would have been totally different.

The Society is indeed very lucky to have such a gracious figurehead. Our Chairman sent flowers and a card on your behalf and although it is now a little late let us all say, with love and best wishes:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LOETITIA

Whilst thinking of anniversaries it occurs to me that seventy years have passed since the publication of the first book, *The Beautiful Years*, in 1921; sixty years since *The Wild Red Deer of Exmoor* in 1931; and as John Homan also reminds us in his notes, fifty years since the publication of *The Story of a Norfolk Farm*, whilst the first volume of *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* appeared in 1951, a mere forty years ago. Although in some ways dates and anniversaries are meaningless, they do mark out a rhythm and serve as a focal point. It isn't always possible to fit such pointers into the Journal nor do I necessarily remember far enough in advance, so if any of you are aware of something important that you feel should be marked, then please let me know well in time — preferably accompanied by your own contribution!

Entries to the Mastermind challenge from the last issue were minimal; three only. Each got one wrong answer. On drawing names Mick Loates came out and the usual voucher has been sent. I thank the three for their effort (and wonder what happened to the rest of you) and hope to resume Mystery Quotation in future issues.

When reading the proofs I was suddenly struck by the numerous cross-references there are between the various articles — which are entirely fortuitous. I leave you to find them for yourselves.

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