

Letters

Your correspondent Paul Roper refers to Nicholas Mosley, now Lord Revelstoke, I fancy?, and his biography of his father, Sir Oswald Mosley, a book which a reviewer in a national paper described as virtually an act of parricide. A more objective assessment of Mosley will be found in the biography by Robert Skidelsky.

Brocard Sewell
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I was most interested in the two articles, 'The Genius of Friendship' in Journals 27 and 28. They were extremely well fashioned but, more importantly, to me, at any rate, they corrected two illusory attitudes by which I'd long been bound.

Firstly, although I possess, and long ago read, 'Genius of Friendship', I always suspected that HW contrived a larger relationship with T.E. Lawrence than truly obtained. It seemed to me that HW wanted to be seen as a close confidant of Lawrence and, on the basis of a few contacts right at the end of Lawrence's life, and the historical serendipity of the last telegram, established and unwarranted and undeserved rôle.

I hope I may be forgiven for this mistaken belief for which Henry only has himself to blame as he was not above manipulating the facts and, it seems, hopped nimbly between fact and fiction.

The second revelation concerns Richard Aldington. As have been so many other Lawrence aficionados, I was incensed by the 'biographical enquiry' which, it appeared, was nothing more nor less than character assassination for gain. Your articles make it quite clear that Aldington suffered greatly from his discoveries and that his motives were entirely honourable. Lawrence's regard for accuracy and truth was just as fluid and impish as Henry's.

Poor Aldington, I now realize, was damned by his own despairing honesty. I have now revised my opinions about both Aldington and HW!

Thank you for the continuing quality of the Journal through which I feel close to home – though so far away.

Don Donovan
Box 136 Albany, New Zealand

I recently bought a book by John Bailey the top angling writer *The Great Anglers* (David & Charles '91). I was delighted to find Chapter 11 'The Great Writers' is extremely kind and praiseworthy to HW, A full five page critique fairly written. To quote Bailey, 'To Read Jefferies, Hughes, and Williamson is to extend our Humanity. To study them is to increase our stature as selfless naturalists'. True words, indeed from a fine writer, who obviously appreciates the unique magic of the finest writers of the 20th century

Phillip Melling
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Kenneth Allsop wrote an article called *Hawks and Falcons in The Saturday Book* (No. 19, 1959). He says "... it is from the sight of hawks that I obtain a particular sensual and aesthetic excitement." Episodes that "have a fiery glow in my memory" include "sprawling on dreamy summer evenings in Spreacombe Valley in North Devon while mewing buzzards rode the thermals above their pine-wood home...", and "chasing a tiny jack marlin along an Exmoor lane in an Aston Martin driven by Henry Williamson."

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his article 'Adventure Lit His Star' (Journal No. 28, p. 34) Peter Robins captures something of what birds meant to Kenneth Allsop but fails to make the crucial connection: that the plight of one particular species could have pushed him to oblivion.

The Allsop Memorial Trust and its Steep Holm island nature reserve have a Peregrine falcon logo, drawn by Paul Heath in 1978, because that was the bird with which Allsop was obsessed as he typed his tragic farewell letter on the night of 22 May 1973 and proceeded to take his life.

In it Ken enthuses about the exhilaration of his magical day in Pembrokeshire, on 20 May, and the supreme thrill of watching Peregrine stoops. The tragedy was that these birds were losing their eggs and young because of agricultural toxins.

'They are finished', he told me over the phone a few hours earlier. He had just

written up their plight in his final, posthumous, feature for the Sunday Times. Then he went on to agonise in his suicide letter how that was predation at its most magnificent but that man, the contemptible species, was the ugly predator killing this planet.

Ironically, the Peregrine would turn into one of the conservation success stories of the century, recovering its lost numbers and territories within a few years of the harmful chemiclas being withdrawn. The double irony was that it returned to Steep Holm, now Allsop's memorial, within weeks of us adopting it as our badge.

We now see Peregrines almost every week, as I have outlined in my book on Steep Holm Wildlife.

Rodney Legg,
Warden of Steep Holm, Wincanton Press
North Street, Wincanton,
Somerset, BA9 9AT

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KENNETH ALLSOP MEMORIAL TRUST

Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Limited was incorporated on 24 September 1975, and is registered in Wales, number 1227940.

It was founded in memory of the naturalist and broadcaster Kenneth Allsop, who died in 1973. Registered charity number 270059.



if no other address is given below, kindly reply to the Trust's mainland office which is: **Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Limited**
via Wincanton Press, National School, North Street,
WINCANTON, Somerset BA9 9AT Telephone 0963 32583

I found this in a second hand copy of All quiet on the Western Front which I purchased recently and thought other members might like to see it. Ironically HW hadn't much time for 'All Quiet', which is still in print, and felt deeply about 'Revelation', long out of print, but not unobtainable second hand. I found some passages of 'All Quiet' very convincing but much of it mish-mash

*Ian Walker
45 Robyns Way, Sevenoaks,
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ED. I am informed by Brian Fullagar that Alan Sutton published a new p/b edition of Way of Revelation a year or two ago.

The original advertising slip is 5" x 7", with Press Criticisms on the reverse side.

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