



HENRY WILLIAMSON SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
MARCH 1995



NEWS AND VIEWS

This year we celebrate the Centenary of Henry Williamson's birth and, to mark such a special occasion Anne Williamson is producing a commemorative issue of the Society's journal. Originally this was scheduled to be mailed to members in July, but unfortunately, due to the fact that not all of the material will be available for the printer in time, release date has been extended to September. Having had an opportunity to see the list of contents page I am sure that it is indeed going to be an issue worth waiting for.

In the meantime, to help 'fill the gap' we are putting out this newsletter to inform and keep us all in touch with the special features and events taking place throughout the year. There is plenty to look forward to, in addition to the 'bumper' journal and Centenary celebrations listed later in these pages. A particular treat will be the long-awaited illustrated biography on Henry that Anne Williamson has been working so hard to complete. This is to be entitled *Henry Williamson, Dreamer of Devon* and will be published in August (details in the September mailing). Then there is John Gregory's Centenary publication, *Green Fields And Pavements*. Full details of this excellent collection of Henry's Norfolk farming essays are enclosed with this newsletter. Lois Lamplugh has also got a new book coming out soon, a history of Georcham.

BRIAN FULLAGAR

ALAN SUTTON PUBLISHING

One of the most encouraging items of news I've heard recently is that the first two novels, *Dark Lantern* and *Donkey Boy* released as part of the new 'Chronicle' series have delighted the publishers with their sales. I am sure that this must in part be due to your own efforts to purchase and publicise the novels to ensure that the complete series is published. So far it is working, *Young Philip Maddison* and *How Dear is Life* will be available in May so, keep up the good work: this is the best way we have to further the aims of the Henry Williamson Society! (An order leaflet for both books is enclosed).

'MUSICAL MAPS' PERFORMANCE AT QUEEN'S THEATRE, BARNSTAPLE FEBRUARY 9 1995

This event appears to have been an outstanding success. Elizabeth Welch, who assisted with this unique production involving young people from North Devon, has kindly sent me a short report on the evening: "... Students and schoolchildren in the Barnstaple area had worked since early January to produce banners for the backdrop, photography on display in the foyer, poetry inspired by Tarka's journey through rivers, coast and moorland. The audience, consisting mainly of parents, teachers and students were treated to musical pictures with an innovative use of percussion and solo instruments invoking the sounds of running streams, the sea, and the pursuit of the otter hunt. The whole evening, bringing together young people and professional musicians from the Bournemouth Sinfonietta, was a fitting tribute to Henry Williamson's nature writing".

SONGS OF PRAISE SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 1995 (BBC1)

On this occasion "Songs of Praise" came from Creddon Parish Church. The presenter, Pam Rhodes during the programme made mention of Henry Williamson's close association with the area and, how this is commemorated by the "Tarka" Project. There was also an abundance of Otters, large, small, and in and out of the water.

HENRY WILLIAMSON SOCIETY SPRING MEETING

BROMLEY COURT HOTEL BROMLEY MAY 5-7 1995

This is our next major event, a nostalgic return to "Randswell" and Keston. Fred has worked hard and long to make this a memorable occasion, let us therefore give him the support he deserves for all his efforts on our behalf. (Full details of the weekend are included with this newsletter.)

THE EXMOOR SOCIETY

On the 22nd February at the Hawkstone Hall, North Lambeth, Brian Fullagar gave a slide-illustrated talk to members of the London Branch of the Exmoor Society. This is a lively group of enthusiasts who share a love of the Moor and a deep concern for the continued preservation of its wildlife and countryside traditions. Brian's talk on the Life and Times of Henry Williamson was warmly received and considerable interest was expressed in HW and the Society.

The Edward Seago Portrait

Fred Shepherd confirms that Seago's famous portrait of Henry is now on display in the National Portrait Gallery. At present it hangs in the Gallery Shop, flanked most appropriately by two of HW's literary heroes Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad. Fred advises that the painting may be moved elsewhere in the Gallery later in the year. This is a rare opportunity to view this fine portrait so, go prepared to seek it out!

South Eastern Area Local Meeting - Redhill Saturday, 12 November 1994

HENRY WILLIAMSON - a man for all seasons

What is there about the writings of Henry Williamson which makes them appeal to so many different people? Each of us is interested in a different facet of his work - for some the war novels, for others the nature writings, or the Devon or Norfolk books. And what keeps us reading and rereading his work?

Our local Redhill meeting tried to answer these questions through the experiences of six Society members. George Parker had been brought up on the writings of Richard Jeffries and WH Hudson, but had come across Henry's nature writings by accident in the late 60's when he had picked up an anthology containing Tarka and Sola - and had found a very different form of animal stories, seen through the eyes of the animals themselves. Nothing else happened for several years, till again in the library, browsing among the W's looking for Denis Wheatley, he came across the *Dark Lantern*, remembered the animal stories, and set off through the *Chronicle*. He admitted that for several years he had not enjoyed the five volumes covering the War, but gradually, after visits to the battlefields with the Society, he began to realise that without the war years the *Chronicle* would not have been written. Later books had led him to think of Henry's own life, but he felt that one mustn't dwell too much on HW's personal life as this might overpower the novels themselves.

Personal connections, being brought up in Lewisham and through friendship between her family and Henry's, had lead Barbara Stuart into reading the novels - starting with *Dovey Boy*, picked up in Holloway Road library when she was first married. She realised it was her own childhood home area being described, and that her friend Brian, and his mother Biddy, who had moved back to the area when she was a child, were Henry's sister and nephew. Mrs. Feene, or 'Feene' was the connecting link between the two families, 'doing' for them both. Her aunt had particularly fond memories of Feene, with records of bringing her back sticks of rock from holiday - and it had been Feene who had arranged her 21st birthday party after the death of her mother.

A general interest in the First World War, reading diaries and memoirs on the Western Front, had led Pam Waugh eventually to the *Chronicle*. A friend lent her *How Dear is Life* and she became immediately besotted with Phillip, who she found a totally endearing person. She knew nothing about Henry or his war service, but the picture painted was so vivid and Phillip such a real person, his characterisation of Phillip and his environment so real especially in his fear, to which she related most. The incident with the faulty gun, and the description of his fears in the night behind the lines, were poignant examples.

Eileen Hayward had written her story for Brian Fullagar to read. She had been born and brought up in Brockley, one of seven children, and her childhood had been spent very much in the same area Philip knew so well - Cutlers Pond, the little sweet-shop, fireworks from Crystal Palace, the 'Randiswell', and recreation grounds. She had gone to work in the city and met her future husband, and together they had gone for long walks. He had thought Henry a wonderful writer. Then their first holiday had been in Salcombe, again HW connections, and after their marriage in 1941 she had read and enjoyed the Devon books. Sadly, he had been killed shortly afterwards at the Anzio beach-head. He had written wonderful letters home which Eileen still reads - perhaps he too would have been a writer. Six years ago she had discovered the Chronicle which had brought back so many memories of her childhood and her early married life.

Peter Morris's whole life had been affected by Henry Williamson, even, rather tongue in cheek, perhaps in the womb, as he had been born in 1924 very close to the Feathers at Merstham at the very time Henry was there. He had always read a great deal, and enjoyed walking, but he had to go to India to discover HW. A treasured possession was a copy of *As the Sun Shines* which he had bought in Rawalpindi in 1944 while in the services. This had certainly affected the style of his letters home, all kept by his parents. Reading the Norfolk farm books inspired him to be a farmer - but his family were paper-makers, so, farming seemed an impossible dream. Reluctantly, he went into the paper industry. Hours spent watching birds in the local churchyard lead to the sack, a career rethink, and the decision in 1950 to go into farming after all. Eventually he was able to buy a farm on Dartmoor with a partner and was now retired in Devon. One of Peter's interests had been gliding, and it was through this that he met Anne Welch (later Douglas), the woman pilot who some think was the original 'Barleybright' of the *Chronicle*.

Brian Fullagar had met Tacka in an air-raid shelter during the war. During doodlebug raids, his teacher at Croydon Poly would bring down to the shelter a pile of books to read, and one was *Tarka*. Two old boys from Colfe's had varying experiences. Malcom Stuart felt HW or his books were not spoken of, while another felt that the books were mentioned, but not the author. Paul Reed had picked up a copy of *Love and the Loveless* at a car boot sale and had gone on to read the other war writings. If he had to choose a book to take on a desert island, however, he would take *Patriot's Progress*, rather than the *Chronicle*. Peter Felix had been interested in aviation, graduating from Biggles and other boyhood writers to Henry. Another member had bought a copy of *The Beautiful Years* in the early 50's and had been entranced by it.

It seemed everyone had had a different route to Henry's writings. But why carry on reading the books? Peter Felix summed it up - Reading Henry was like picking up a pair of old slippers!

MARGARET WHITE

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A few years ago before the inaugural meeting of the Henry Williamson Society, I met Henry at a weekend for aspiring writers, held near Farnham in Surrey. He was the guest of honour and key speaker, supporting his friend William Kean Seymour, to whom he had dedicated *The Innocent Moon*. The other aspiring writers, I was sure, did not appreciate Henry's work as much as I did, and yet they hung around him and gushed and trifled while I tried to summon up the courage to speak to him. In the end I did speak to him, but only because another admirer attending the weekend course led the way, and asked Henry for his autograph. That admirer, John Glanfield, was also to attend the inaugural meeting, and became the first Chairman of the Henry Williamson Society.

How many of the founder members of the Henry Williamson Society at their first meeting in Barnstaple had any thoughts about celebrating Henry's centenary? I, for one, certainly did not; and nor did I entertain any thoughts about becoming Chairman. I simply felt honoured to be asked to attend the inaugural meeting, and I was excited by what we planned on that occasion. I can remember driving home feeling elated that I had signed up to serve the interests of a writer I had admired for the previous twenty years, easing me from adolescence to adulthood. Now, perhaps, I could pay something back to the man who had given me so much.

I am honoured to be Chairman of the Henry Williamson Society at any time, let alone during this centenary year. I am honoured to be able to serve the Society which has meant so much to me throughout its existence, working with and meeting like-minded people, trying to fulfil the aim of the Society, "to encourage an interest in and a deeper understanding of the life and work of the writer Henry Williamson". Much work has been done to prepare for the centenary, some of it proving fruitless, but all of it in the end worthwhile because it has resulted in a varied programme of events. Our grateful thanks are due to all the members of the centenary committee, past and present: Terry Russell, the first convener, who did so much to prepare the ground, but who, like Tony Brown, had to step down because of other pressures; Kenneth Syme, Ron Slater and Mick Leates who have constituted the centenary committee for most of its existence, and still do; and Fred Shepherd, not actually a member of that committee, but a key operator in fixing up the spring and autumn weekends.

There are of course, others who help the society in a variety of ways. Those who write for the *Journal*, or talk to friends and acquaintances about Henry and his work, are all helping the Society, as are those who attend the meetings. But the brunt of the formal, organised work falls on the members of the Executive Committee, all hard-working and loyal people who carry out their duties efficiently and conscientiously, and without whom the Society would cease to exist. On behalf of the membership I offer grateful thanks to the members of the committee, past and present. I am also pleased to offer thanks and special greetings to the Williamson family, whose partnership with the Society has been such benefit over the years.

I have again been reading the first three novels of the *Chronicle*, and again I marvel at Henry's achievements. It is strangely moving to read of the birth of *Donkey Boy* one hundred years after it happened, and I can only hope this centenary year will bring greater appreciation of all those achievements and the life that brought them about.

Will Harris

EVENTS SECRETARY

The position of Events Secretary falls vacant this year, and the current holder of the office, Fred Shepherd, has indicated his firm intention of standing down at the 1995 Annual General Meeting. Fred has been our Events Secretary for several years, having taken on the job pro tem because no one was prepared to stand for nomination. He has given outstanding service to the Society by arranging our weekends with much aplomb, providing all the necessary arrangements such as booking hotels and speakers. His will be a hard act to follow, but I do not, of course, say that to put people off. Anyone doing the job would have the full support of the Committee, and would never be working totally in isolation. What we need is a person with ideas, and the time and energy to bring them to reality. The role of Events Secretary is absolutely crucial to the Society, and the results ensuing from not having our weekends organised can I suggest, be readily imagined. The Committee feels there must be someone, perhaps more than one who could work as a team, able and willing to take on Fred's job, and I ask members to give this matter very careful consideration.

It is important to remember that Fred has done this work as well as being the Society's Treasurer. He is not alone on the committee in holding down more than one position. As we step forward into the second century following Henry's birth, I appeal in the strongest terms at my disposal for people to come forward to offer themselves for nomination as vacancies arise. Everyone currently in office will step down at some stage, and it would be encouraging to feel that there are members willing to support the management of the Society by offering themselves for nominations whenever a vacancy arises.

We owe Fred Shepherd a very great debt for all he has done for the Society in organising so many splendid events. The proportion of the total membership attending our various weekend gatherings is quite small, but for those who do attend, the weekends are precious times for renewing and making new contacts and sharing ideas, which, in the long run, benefit the Society as a whole. I know that all those who have attended any of Fred's events, organised with such precision and panache, would wish to join me in thanking him very warmly for all he has done.

Will Harris
Chairman and General Secretary

3 Lavington Road,
Beddington,
Surrey,
CR0 4PQ

February 1995

TO ALL SOCIETY MEMBERS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, OCTOBER 1995

In accordance with the Constitution of the Society, those members of the Committee who have completed three years of service at the date of the AGM, to be held on 8 October 1995, must retire, though they may, if they wish, offer themselves for re-election at the AGM.

Any paid-up member of the Society may seek election to any of the offices listed below, provided that he or she does so in writing to me personally or via a nominator.

All nominations must reach me not later than 8 July 1995. No reminders will be sent. Should more than one nomination be received for any one office, a vote will be taken.

Vacant Office

Vice Chairman
Publications Manager
Mailing Manager
Editorial Assistant
Editorial Assistant
Events Secretary

Retiring Officer

George Heath
John Gregory
Brian Fullagar
Brian Fullagar
Paul Reed
Fred Shephard

Will Harris
Chairman and General Secretary

A SAD FAREWELL

Members will be greatly saddened to learn of the recent loss of two good friends of the Society. Our thanks go to both Bob Tierney and Mick Loates for their sincere tributes.

OBITUARY

CHRISTOPHER PALMER 1946-1995

Robert Tierney writes: The death of Christopher Palmer at 48 was reported on 10th February 1995. An account of his career appeared in the Daily Telegraph for that day. Although quite a full report, it made no reference to an aspect of his work which would have been of special interest to HW Society members.

Christopher Palmer was never, I believe, a Society member himself, but I feel he merits an honoured place in our memory nonetheless.

Most people will know how, in the late 1940's, Henry Williamson learned of the work of the young airman James Farrar, who had been lost over the North Sea at the age of 20 in July 1944. Henry had been instrumental in arranging for the publication in 1950 of *The Unreturning Spring*, in which Farrar's poems and his writings were published for the first time. Many will also know that the character of the young American airman-poet in *The Phasian Bird* is based on James Farrar, with whom Henry had an intuitive sympathy. The two never met, though James had read many of Henry's books. He wrote, in 1940, that he "had often wondered whether" the 'Ham' in Henry's stories "was a real village or not, but had looked it up on several maps but never found it, so concluded it wasn't". (How very sad that is!). Both men loved the poetry of Shelley, the writings of Jeffries, and the music of Delius.

Christopher Palmer too knew and loved the work of all three. His own account of his discovery, in 1982, of the writings of James Farrar is not unlike HW's discovery of the work of Richard Jeffries in the Folkestone bookshop years earlier. Palmer's was the basis for a BBC Bristol radio programme in May 1983. The Delius Society Journal (they were all Delians) in its issue No.81 in January 1984 printed an adapted text of the programme. And now our own Society comes in at last. On 19th May 1984, (the day of the plaque unveiling ceremony at No.11 Eastern Road) the evening meeting of the HW Society took place in the hall of Brockley Primary School, which, of course, is on the site of the school Henry himself had attended as a child, as recounted in *Donkey Boy*. Christopher Palmer was the final speaker that evening, re-creating his broadcast, with many ad libs and additions concerning Dowson, Jeffries and others. His most permanent contribution to the Williamson canon appeared in 1986, when his book *Spring Returning* - A selection from the works of James Farrar made and introduced by Christopher Palmer, was published.

Perhaps because it was the first Society meeting I attended, my recollections of that evening have grown in memory. Generally it is impossible to re-create, in my mind, the tones and timbres of a speaker delivering the lovingly-spoken words of a text full of (to the hearer) new and previously undreamed-of beauties and insights. As with any performance, the immediacy of the words begins to fade as soon as they are spoken. But I have never forgotten the effect that the words I heard that night had on me. From the magical opening "I believe that lines of force exist between people as between the poles of a magnet" to the conclusion (and the tribute of the decent pause that followed) "Back in Spring, in Spring!" I was held rapt. It expressed for me, that evening, so much that I had always known, but had never found words for.

I followed Christopher Palmer's career on and off ever afterwards. He did some wonderful stuff. I have often thought of that confident note that Farrar and he ended on that evening, - "Back in Spring, in Spring!"

But, of course, neither of them will be !!

OBITUARY PETER HORSBURGH MORRIS 1924 - 1995

It was with shock and great sadness that news of Peter Morris's death reached me. Over the years I knew him, he had become a close and much valued friend with whom I spent many happy hours on this South Devon coast.

Peter was educated at Kings School, Canterbury. On leaving he moved into the paper making industry in which his family was involved. He later served with the Air force being stationed in Canada and Northern India. It was whilst in Canada, during the second World War, that he met Geoff Baines who was to become not only a very close friend but partner in a farming business spanning 30 years at Boreston in the Devonshire South Hams. That time lapse saw his marriage, the birth of his four children and the development of a highly successful dairy farm. Family and leisure hours were spent sailing, picnicking on the moors, by the River Dart, and on nearby beaches with the occasional holiday abroad. It was a time of much hard work, orderliness and dedication to both family and farm. On retirement in 1989 Peter moved to Bidwell Cottage, Dartington, providing a nucleus for his grown-up family.

Together with Geoff Baines, they kept on an acreage of woodland, meadow and ponds (and of course, a hut), rather akin to Henry's Ox's Cross. This became a place of serenity and happiness shared with family and friends and (now in a family trust) is managed as a habitat for wildlife.

Peter had achieved much in his lifetime, travelling extensively with an inexhaustible quest for knowledge. He was an excellent and avid skier, an active member of many Trusts and Societies and a dedicated amateur naturalist, with a particular passion for butterflies.

Peter Morris died of a heart attack in Torbay Hospital on Saturday, January 14, 1995. I understand from the family that he thankfully, did not suffer. A funeral took place at Herbertonford Church which was packed to bursting, bearing testimony to his popularity. At the Family's request and as a tribute, not only from myself but from absent friends within the H.W. Society, I read an appropriate passage from *'The Crane', Tales of Moorland and Estuary*. There followed a reception in The Great Hall Dartington.

Peter was always generous with his friendship, an entertainer, a patient and careful listener, a positive adviser if called upon: I think therein lay his genius. A true 'Gentleman', his cheerful personality will be sadly missed within the Society.

Mick Loates, Kingsbridge

PLEASE NOTE:-

Mick Loates will be contacting Peter's family to determine to which charity contributions to Peter's memory may be sent. (Details will be advised in the September mailing regarding a collection).

On behalf of the South Eastern Area local group I feel that I must add a short postscript to Mick Loates fine epitaph. Peter Morris was such a loyal supporter of all the society's events and activities. Each November he made the long journey up from South Devon to attend the Rodhill meetings where he contributed regularly to the evening's programme. Peter was such a kind and generous-hearted man, courteous and modest to the extreme. Always amongst the first to welcome a new member or, offer assistance to an old one.

My particular memory of Peter comes from one of our recent battlefield tours to the Ypres Salient. We had halted at Vancouver Corner near St. Julien, in order to visit Henry's much-loved Canadian Memorial, '...the most beautiful thing in the Salient'. Surrounding this fine monument are planted many large Buddleia bushes and on that July afternoon of great heat the flowers on these bushes were thronged with a host of lustrous butterflies, a remarkable sight. Peter, his eyes bright with pleasure at this spectacle, then proceeded to give me (in his quiet, unassuming way) the most enthralling guide to butterfly identification I have ever had. That memory of *'Ancient Sunlight'* will long remain, as will my regard for this kind and gentle man.

Brian Fullagar

"BOOKS FOR LIFE - THE LIBRARIANS' CHOICE"

As part of Surrey's County Libraries and Leisure Service's celebration of National Library Week, well known Surrey people have contributed their choice of "desert island book" to a booklist called *Books for Life*. To compliment their choice, some of Surrey's Librarians and Managers added their selection of indispensable books.

JOHN SAUNDERS, COUNTY DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES AND LEISURE
FOX UNDER MY CLOAK WILLIAMSON, H

"It is impossible (especially for a Librarian!) to choose just one book, so I would like to cheat by choosing a series of novels by Henry Williamson entitled "A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight" which covers three generations from the mid 1890's until the 2nd World War and is strongly auto-biographical. The directness of the writing, the powerful evocation of contemporary events and portrayal of English society make for compelling and enthralling reading. Four of the novels cover the First World War: *Fox Under My Cloak*, *The Golden Virgin*, *Love and the Loveless* and *A Test of Destruction*; they formed the most moving and convincing account of this period that I have read and give readers of a later generation some idea of the enormous social change wrought by that traumatic event. If I really had to choose only one it would be "Fox Under My Cloak" because, it is complete in itself and provides enough thought provoking references to irritate and disturb".

We are indebted to Peter Felix for drawing our attention to the above quotation. What a pleasure it is to read an unbiased assessment of Henry's literary worth! This has prompted me to offer a further selection of my own for your consideration.

WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST - The Fiction of Two World Wars

Mary Cadogan &
Patricia Craig

Victor Gollancz 1978

"Henry Williamson cannot be classed with any other English writer about war, or women. He appears to see the two world wars of this century in terms of men's and women's evolution. Even when there is repudiation of his political and social interpretations one is impressed by his perceptiveness and enticed by his compelling images. Like Jefferies, whom he admires, Williamson has the capacity to look into 'the unseen world, which is the true world': And there is his word magic, that inexorably links the reader's consciousness with the characters of his saga, the sexual complexities, the sacrifices of the Messines Ridge and the Somme, the animal symbolism, the interaction of past, present and future."

Events scheduled to date (14 February 1995):

JANUARY

- January 10 Free showing of "Tarka the Otter" at the Plough Arts Centre, Torrington.
- January 21 National Portrait Gallery, London, puts Edward Seago portrait of Henry Williamson on display (in Gallery Shop near front entrance) for Centenary Year.

FEBRUARY

- February 9 "Musical Maps" performance at Queens Theatre, Barnstaple at 7.30pm. The Bournemouth Sinfonietta and Beaford Arts Centre, in collaboration with students from local schools and colleges provide a unique performance inspired by Tarka's journey through rivers, coast, and woodland, interpreting North Devon past and present.

MAY

- May 5-7 Henry Williamson Society Spring Meeting, Bromley Court Hotel, Bromley.

- May 9 The Devon Wildlife Trust are planning guided walks (4 or 5 days in duration) on the Tarka Trail. May 9th and 20th are the current likely start dates for these walks.¹

JUNE

- June 11 Two Devon Cruises organised by the National Trust (1995 is their Centenary year as well as HW's!) The MV Oldenburg will depart from Ilfracombe Pier at 11.00am and return 1.00pm (A second voyage is planned for the same day which it is understood will depart at 3.00pm). The 'Oldenburg' will cruise along the North Devon coast to Lynmouth and back (Our own Peter Lewis will be one of the commentary team and will speak about 'The Henry Williamson Connection'). For further details contact the National Trust.

¹ The DWT would welcome the involvement of HW Society members prepared to act as guides or give readings from Williamson's work: as this is a commercial venture, there will be financial remuneration. Members interested in participating (as guides or simply walkers) may contact Chris Salisbury at the following address:

Devon Wildlife Trust,
188 Sidwell Street,
Exeter,
EX4 6RD

Throughout June and July a "Tarka Festival" is being organised by the Dartington North Devon Trust. Details available at the time of writing are given below:

June 11-17

Barnstaple Tarka Festival

Timed to coincide with "Wildlife Week" promoted nationwide by Wildlife Trusts as part of European Nature Conservation Year, the festival features a number of different events, details of some of which are given below.

Anne Williamson is putting together an exhibition using many of the photographs featured in her forthcoming biography of Henry Williamson.

Lois Lamplugh, local author and Williamson Society member, is working closely with the Museum of North Devon on an exhibition taking its inspiration from Henry Williamson's Village books as a unique source of local history. This exhibition will be linked with the Museum's Tarka Room, where the display is scheduled for revision at the end of April.

The Orchard Youth Theatre is working on an outdoor performance based on "Tarka the Otter": this may be performed as part of the Devon Wildlife Trust Fayre on 17 June (see later).

Members of the Orchard Theatre will be giving daily readings from Henry Williamson at 1.15pm on 12, 13, and 14 June, probably in the Museum. There will also be 3 readings (12, 15, and 17 June) in the Children's Library, organised by Sharon Burgess.

Jamie Campbell of the Record Office is working on a booklist and bookmark for the Festival.

June 17

Devon Wildlife Trust Fayre
(Castle Green, Barnstaple 10am - 4pm)

The Fayre has as its theme "Putting Wildlife on the map", celebrating in particular the growth in the number of otters now found in Devon's rivers. Richard Williamson is to be present, and the Fayre will bring together a wide range of conservation and environmental organisations, charities and arts and crafts stalls from all over Devon.

June 17-24

Lynton (Exmoor) Tarka Festival

Among the events here will be a maskmaking competition on the Tarka theme. Andrew Mulligan, the independent theatre director, is working with the Young Persons' Performing Arts Group on a script based on Tarka the Otter, to be performed on 22 June (date to be confirmed).

June 25 - July 1

Braunton/Georgeham Tarka Festival

Braunton Countryside Centre already has a Tarka display; other events are still being finalised.

OCTOBER

October 6-8 Henry Williamson Society A.G.M., Woolacombe Bay Hotel, Woolacombe, to include Memorial Service at Georgeham.

DECEMBER

Broadcast of Nigel Brooks's composition based on "Tarka the Otter". Date to be confirmed.

Events to run throughout the year or still to be finalised:

TARKA PROJECT

The Tarka Project is to run a series of Wild Walks throughout Devon: dates and details will be supplied when available.

RADIO

Radio 4 is to re-broadcast "The Perfect Stranger", which deals with Henry Williamson's Norfolk period. Details of other radio and TV broadcasts throughout the year will be advised when known.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES

Commemorative Plaques are to be installed on Crowberry Cottage, Georgeham, and Williamson's cottage on Norfolk. Negotiations for installation of a plaque on Baggy Point continue.

Magazine features on Williamson:

BBC WILDLIFE MAGAZINE

The BBC Wildlife Magazine is to run a painting competition taking its inspiration from the Williamson Centenary. Brian Jackman is contributing an article to the BBC Wildlife Magazine to launch the competition, which it is anticipated will be held in mid-summer.

RSPB

The RSPB are to include an article in their magazine (probably the November issue), illustrated by Mick Loates and with photographs of Henry Williamson.

HOME AND COUNTRY

Dr June Chatfield is to contribute a piece on the countryside writings and centenary celebrations.

COUNTRY-SIDE

The British Naturalists' Association magazine will also include details of Centenary events.

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SCHOOLS WRITING COMPETITION

To celebrate the centenary of the birth of Henry Williamson, author of "Tarka the Otter".

SCHOOL PRIZE - £400.

3 PUPIL PRIZES - totalling £100.

Open to pupils in years 6-9.

For further information please send an a/c to:

The Henry Williamson Society
PO Box No 4
Easingwold
York YO6 2YR

12286

This advertisement appeared in the Times Educational Supplement on 10 March.

Individuals or organisations wishing to participate in the Henry Williamson Centenary celebrations, or provide details of relevant events not listed here, should contact the Centenary Committee at the following address:

Kenneth Syme,
21 Calverley Mews,
Up Hatherley,
Cheltenham,
GL51 5RL