

## EDITORIAL

*R.B. Russell and Rosalie Parker*

A warm welcome to the very first annual Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society.

From the outset, let us declare our aim of ensuring that this and future journals will be as inclusive as possible, reflecting *all* aspects of the writer's life and work. It goes without saying that we also aim to achieve the highest standards in both content and production. The overall tone of the journal, however, will not be unduly academic, and contributions and suggestions are welcomed from *all* members of the Society, and from other interested parties.

Opening this issue is a transcript of the excellent talk given by John Lucas at the inaugural meeting and launch of the Society, held at the home of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Collection, the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester. Those present that cold January evening will, we are sure, relish the chance to become reacquainted with Professor Lucas's radical appraisal of Warner's poetry.

Readers will be aware that some of Warner's short fiction has yet to be collected and published in book form. Many of these stories, especially those which appeared in the *New Yorker*, are rather weaker than usual, but others are merely somewhat eccentric. "The Jungle Blossom", a story which first appeared in the *New Yorker* in 1948 and which we have reprinted here, falls into the latter category. It is admittedly hard to imagine how it would have sat amongst those broadly contemporary short works collected together in *The Museum of Cheats* and *Winter in the Air*. "The Jungle

Blossom” is perhaps best described as a lively post-holocaust tale in which Warner explores a plethora of cultural and political preoccupations with more than a dash of wry humour.

Perhaps one of the reasons why Sylvia Townsend Warner’s writing retains so much interest is that none of it can be accused of being a “safe” read. One of her most overlooked novels, *The True Heart*, has nevertheless sometimes been described rather dismissively as a light, albeit slightly odd, love story. In order to help refute this over-simplistic pigeon-holing, and to put the novel firmly back in its historical context, we include a timely and illuminating piece on *The True Heart* by Gay Wachman. We are most grateful to Gay for allowing us to publish this essay from her forthcoming book (*Lesbian Empire: Radical Crosswriting in the Twenties*, Rutgers University Press, U.S.)

Next is an excerpt from *Writers at Work*; an interview with Sylvia Townsend Warner carried out at the height of her popularity in 1931. This is an intriguing snapshot of her life and attitudes, although we may be sure that the light and shadow of the photograph were carefully arranged by Warner (and perhaps less carefully edited by the interviewer.) It is in any event a fascinating period piece which we hope will be of much interest to members.

We finish with a bibliographical oddity—a fragment of an article on women as witches written in the 1920s by Warner for a magazine called *Eve*. We are hoping that someone may be able to supply the remainder of the article, which we will then be able to print in a future Journal!

Please do let us know your reaction to this Journal: Your views will affect the look and feel of the next one. Any comments, suggestions, prospective articles or reminiscences can be sent to the editorial address.