

## The Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society

---

### Editorial

Peter Swaab<sup>1,\*</sup>

**How to cite:** Swaab, P. 'Editorial.' *The Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, 2015, 16(1), pp. ix–xi. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.stw.2015.01>

Published: 01 June 2015

---

### Copyright:

© 2015, Peter Swaab. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY) 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.stw.2015.01>.

### Open Access:

*The Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society* is a peer-reviewed open access journal.

\*Correspondence: [p.swaab@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:p.swaab@ucl.ac.uk)

<sup>1</sup> UCL, UK

## EDITORIAL

*Peter Swaab*

The first thing for a new editor to do is to acknowledge the work of editorial predecessors, in this case Ray Russell, Peter Tolhurst and Helen Sutherland. I am inheriting a journal in very good health and with already a distinguished history. Reviewing the contents of previous volumes, as I've been doing in preparing this one, I am struck by how much material there has been of enduring interest.

It has been an elegant publication, too. The fifteen booklets so far published, with their front-cover engravings and back-cover poems from *Boxwood*, make a handsome line of slim volumes for the bookshelf. The twenty-one poems in *Boxwood* might have furnished us with six more covers, but I thought it best to change this aspect of the design before we were forced to, especially as Warner's long life and huge cultural range offer plenty of opportunity for other kinds of interesting cover. So the front and back covers for the print version of this Journal show her in one of her less-known creative guises, but still a rather dazzling one, as a Sonia Delaunay-style maker of garments. 'I have finished Valentine's patchwork coat of many colours,' Warner wrote in 1937, 'and she looks most beautiful in it, and I gaze on it with quite as much pride as ever Anne Bradstreet on her bed-hangings.' Understandably so, as we can see from the photos. The coat has been preserved well, and its patterns are still sharp and clear, the colours strong, bright and fresh to this day.

The Journal will continue to be published in print form for members of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society, but it will now also have a freely available online presence, giving it the opportunity to reach many more readers in the UK, the USA and beyond. It is now published and hosted electronically by UCL Press. We hope that this

new accessibility of the Journal will extend its power to stimulate appreciation and knowledge of Warner's work, and also attract further readers and contributors. There are plans to digitise the entire run of the Journal since 2000, and I hope to report progress in the next issue. One further development is the setting up of an editorial board of distinguished scholars and critics from Britain, Europe and the USA.

These developments mean that the Journal has fallen a little behind its calendar due date, but we are catching up. The current issue is the 2015 one, and the 2016 volume will be published later this year. From 2017 onward we will be publishing two Journals each year, scheduled to appear in April and November.

The Journal aims for a crossover readership of generalists and specialists, both ordinary readers and fans, and those working in academia. That seems very much in the spirit of Warner. Above all, it will continue to focus on the printing of fugitive and unpublished pieces by Warner herself, even more of these, in fact, than in past years. One reason for this is that the Dorset County Museum has been given a large lottery fund award; in the longer term this is excellent news for readers of this Journal, in that the Warner-Ackland collection can now be housed there permanently, with resources to make it far more readily accessible to readers and researchers than has been possible up to now. However, in the short to medium term, it means that the collection will not be accessible. It should nonetheless still be possible for the Journal to publish some of the manuscripts from its extensive holdings.

The current issue includes four pieces written or spoken by Warner, spanning her long writing life. First, there is a 1927 article on 'The Kingdom of Elfin', anticipating Warner's final collection of stories, published fifty years later with the slightly different title *Kingdoms of Elfin*. The article is also discussed in this issue in an essay by Vike Martina Plock. Second, there is the 'Note on the Historical Background' of *The Corner that Held Them* (1948), available only in American printings of the book, pointing toward the question of Warner's comparative reception and marketing in the USA and the UK. Third, we are printing from manuscript her libretto for the opera *The Sea-Change*, written in 1949. Fourth, we are reprinting a brief interview in the *Dorset Evening Echo*, marking the publication in 1971 of *The Innocent and the Guilty*.

One of the most important forms of a writer's afterlife lies in her influence on the creativity of successors. In future issues of the Journal I hope to include pieces by some of the many writers who have expressed their admiration for Warner. In this issue the artist writing about Warner is not a writer but a multi-disciplinary visual artist, Amanda

Chambers. She writes here an interview-style question-and-answer discussion about her current works in ceramics and video inspired by the relationship between Warner and Ackland.

The Journal concludes with Tinch Minter's vivid and deeply-felt memoir remembering Sylvia in the 1970s, and with two book reviews, both raising the question of outsiderliness – one on David Garnett, 'Bloomsbury's Outsider' according to the subtitle to Sarah Knights's biography, and the other on John Craske, the 'outsider artist' supported and championed by Warner and Ackland.