

## The Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society

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### Editorial

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# Editorial

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We are very pleased to lead off this issue of the Journal with a memoir of Warner by Susanna Pinney. She figures in Warner's *Diaries* as somebody who had an important place in the last decade of Sylvia's life, for instance restoratively – 'She left me a renewed being, and I walked smelling spring in the garden. What she bestows is *trust*' – and stylishly – 'Soo – in her winter plumage of black velveteen trousers, black jersey, shiny black boots' (entries for 10 January 1971 and 15 November 1970). Along with William Maxwell, Soo Pinney was one of the two literary executors who brought out an important, influential, and well-judged sequence of posthumous Warner publications. First there were the two gatherings of uncollected short stories, *Scenes of Childhood* (1981) and *One Thing Leading to Another* (1984), followed by the publication of Valentine Ackland's *For Sylvia: An Honest Account* in 1985. These were followed by a generous volume of *Selected Stories* for Virago (1989), with Maxwell and Pinney collaborating on the enviable but almost impossible task of deciding what to include. And in 1998 Pinney was the editor of *I'll Stand By You: The Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland*, for which she had to edit the 400,000 words of their correspondence into a book roughly one third of that length, an extraordinarily original volume charged with Warner's magnanimity and an unusual breadth of perspectives over time.

Beyond this the Journal is dedicated mainly to contributions prompted by the Society's gratitude to the Warner scholar, Mary Jacobs. 'Admired, Belittled, Beloved: The Critical Reception of Sylvia Townsend Warner' is a version of the Mary Jacobs Memorial Lecture given by Jan Montefiore, Mary's PhD examiner as well as one of her friends. And then we have three essays submitted for the 2017 Mary Jacobs Essay

Competition. The initial plan had been to publish only the winning essay, Harry Daniels's piece on 'Holy and Profane Love in Sylvia Townsend Warner's Mr Fortune Fictions', but the excellence of the submissions has led us also to include the two runner-up essays, Harriet Baker's 'Landscape and Embodiment in Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes* and *The True Heart*' and Cornelia-Catrinel Dunca's 'The Politics of Reorientation in *Summer Will Show*'. A further sign of the healthy levels of interest in Warner's work from younger scholars comes in Lucy Haenlein's essay on 'History and Fantasy in *The True Heart*'.

The 2017 Journal included Sara Hudston's article on her meetings with Colin House, 'The Gardener's Story', together with seven letters written by Warner to Colin. One of Judith Stinton's two poems in this issue also reflects on Colin House, through his story of the strange treatment of Sylvia's grave, while the other remembers May Pitman, Sylvia's tenant at Miss Green's Cottage in Chaldon.

This is the first year in which the Society will be publishing two issues of the Journal. The focus of the next issue will be a gathering of essays from the conference on Warner's work held in April 2018 in Manchester University, and organized by Howard Booth and Gemma Moss.