

EDITORIAL

Helen Sutherland

My first duty as incoming editor is to thank the outgoing editor, Peter Tolhurst, for his work in furthering the aims of *The Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, which was founded in 2000 under the aegis of Ray Russell and Rosalie Parker. Peter took over in 2003, since when he has maintained a high level of intellectual engagement with Sylvia Townsend Warner's own writings as well as with emergent Warner criticism. On a personal note, I would also like to thank Peter for his willingness to answer my questions on the art of editing, and for his general helpfulness which has done much to ensure a smooth editorial transition.

Change in editor does not mean a change in direction, although a change in emphasis may be noticed, with rather fewer reprinted articles on Sylvia Townsend Warner and more original critical work by a new generation of academics as well as by established scholars.

For example, the main article in this year's *Journal* is 'Something Understood' by Jan Montefiore. This began life as a paper given at the 2006 colloquium on Warner held at Anglia Ruskin University, but has been developed significantly to engage with the work of other scholars, especially David Ellis and Margaretta Jolly.

This is followed by 'Memories of Sylvia Townsend Warner' by Clive Robbins, who with Paul Nordoff

established the Nordoff-Robbins movement in music therapy. While Robbins' memories are to be valued for the picture they create of Warner late in life after the death of Valentine Ackland, they also offer a sidelight on her friendship with Nordoff, with whom she corresponded for many years. This article has more detail on music and music therapy than might be thought desirable in a literary journal, but it is this detail which shows the extent to which Warner could engage in an unfamiliar use of music many years after her professional involvement as a composer and editor, and acts as a warning against any chronological compartmentalisation of her life and work.

Judith Stinton's article, 'Some Chaldon Witches', explores the writing of both Warner and her partner, Valentine Ackland, on the role of village witches, before fielding the notion that Warner herself was regarded as a witch by some at least of her neighbours.

Of Warner's own work I have included only two short pieces; one, a poem which has escaped collection, and the other a Foreword contributed to a pamphlet, 'The Fall of France' by Ilya Ehrenburg. As Ehrenburg was a high profile figure in his own time, the invitation to Warner to contribute in this way suggests her value to the international Communist movement as surely as it warns against sidelining her own political engagement.

The *Journal* concludes with a number of book reviews, and although none is specifically on Warner herself, they each offer extensive discussions of her work – an indication, perhaps, of a more general re-appraisal of her life and writings.