

---

# Publicity Report

## *Tim Osborne*

---

As publicity officer I see my role as one of drawing attention to the society and to the work of Henry Williamson and doing this by taking advantage of any opportunity offered. In the end this means, to put it rather baldly, seeking out and recruiting new members, for the more of us there are, the louder our voice. How else are we to fulfil the aims of the Society. I have tried various methods but by far the most successful has been the printed notice published in, I hope, all the new editions. This has resulted in some 12 or so enquiries per month which is clearly very encouraging but it seems that in the event only a small percentage actually join. To remedy this I have updated and enlarged the Society's information sheet stating our achievements so far together with the range of things we have to offer members and this is now enclosed with the membership application form. At present the membership stands at something approaching 450 but it would be nice to see it go over 500.

The press releases I send out prior to our meetings can also be useful and this year eleven were dispatched to the Norfolk media including TV, radio and the press. I had assurances from two papers that they would publish something about us and I hope some of the others may have done so too. For the AGM, which I hope everyone knows is rather special this year being the diamond jubilee of *Tarka*, I have plenty of attractive material for the press. To name but a few there are the 'Tarka Trail' footpath which is to be linked with the Devon Coastal Path, the Williamson Room in the new Library at Barnstaple and, of course, the AGM itself. Here I hope to put on an exhibition of Tarka memorabilia and also something on otter conservation. On this last subject Philip Wayre of the Otter Trust at Earsham, Suffolk has agreed to send his conservation officer down to show us the valuable work they do in releasing otters into the wild.

On a different note it was decided last

year to see if we could persuade libraries throughout the country to join the Society. We hoped to have a fair response and that this would be a good and continuous way of making ourselves known. Unhappily only five have taken membership so far, a poor showing which some predicted but it was felt that this was something that we must at least attempt.

I usually end my report with a plea for distribution of the Society leaflets and this is no exception. However, I think now that with the printed notice in most of the books the libraries are quite well covered and that secondhand bookshops are a better bet. In my experience bookshop owners are more than willing to display the leaflets and I've yet to meet a Williamson reader who has never bought a second hand copy. Please write and ask if you need any more leaflets and indeed let me know if you have any ideas regarding publicity.