

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY



Engraving of Upper Upham House, Wiltshire from *The Abbess of Shaftesbury* {1846} by Mrs. May which may have been the book founded on A local legend sought for by Richard Jefferies on a fifty mile walk to ten different houses
[letter to Aunt Ellen 21st July 1867]

SPRING NEWSLETTER

2001

Registered Charity No. 1042838

Hon. Sec. Lady Treitel, Eidsvoll, Bedwells Heath, Boars Hill,
Oxford OX1 5JE (Tel. 01865 735678.

FROM THE CHAIR

Virginia Woolf told her friends that the birds spoke to her in Greek. This encouraged some of them to doubt her sanity but of course birds talked to her in a language she could understand. Birds use tongues the humans know - or else why bother to say anything at all?

In my part of woodland Surrey birds jabber at me in the summer, when I attempt gardening. I receive their utterances in an absent-minded, elderly aural haze and what I hear reflects what I am - a Woolf-like stream of consciousness leaning on two legs with a fork. From the fir tree I am commanded to "Reserve Two" and then to "Go down a plane". After a pause I must "send him in, then!" Among the laurels lurks some compassion, for "Sophia is sick" apparently "in Aylesbury". Some messages are enigmatic, such as "Georgina Loft" and "Great Prison Street" but there is one which always reaches me clear, loud and patronising: "We'll teach you how to live!" Understandably, my gardening progress is limited by all this communication. I will not risk the effort of trying to identify the species of birds which offer it (and much more) except to confirm the noisy ones hereabouts are wood pigeons, collar doves, magpies and woodpeckers.

Richard Jefferies pursued realism even when allegedly 'mystical' but, masquerading as Little Sir Bevis in *Wood Magic*, he was pleased to ascribe complex thoughts and speeches to the wild folk. Bevis naturally understood them because he was the 'one human being' allowed to do so. The rules of nature's game permitted one such choice and the animals were dumb in the presence of more than one human being at a time. Is this anthropomorphic? And if it is, does it matter? (Literary pundits have been known to condemn it.) Jefferies' words were directed to children who gladly and casually invest dolls, teddies and fictional animals with human characteristics. The potent success of these times is a boy magician, young Potter, for children relish magic even in disbelief. They cope with Batman and so the two leaders of bird armies led by King Kapchack and Emperor Choo Hoo present no difficulty. (They even have a war-cry of "Koos-takke!" or, as we might say, "Heil, Fuhrer!") Incidentally, the names of their followers also echo out of the woodland: Cloktaw, Ki-ki, Kauc, Te-te, Tchink. The bird armies menace each other but present no threat to human kind. Cries of "Koos-takke!" rend the skies but are unheeded below, although this slogan had originated in the Enchanted Forest of Savernake. ('Savernake' sounds like another Jefferies invention but is probably the only 'real' name in the book.) It took eighty years and Daphne du Maurier to harden our delight in birdlife into terror. Alfred Hitchcock took it to the extreme: significantly, the commercial videotape of this film, *The Birds*, is "suitable only for persons of 15 years and over", thus leaving Jefferies' world for children far behind. The film opens at a Pet Shop in San Francisco. Hitchcock is seen leaving with two dogs while birds circle benign overhead. By the end of the film you recall that scene with alarm for you have witnessed the birds turning against people, wrecking a small coastal town with the implication that this is only a beginning. Clearly our civilisation is doomed.

But it is "only a story", just as *Wood Magic* is "only a story" and meanwhile we have floods, eruptions, earthquakes, tidal waves, global warming and the threat of asteroid impacts as an almost daily donation. Confident that summer will

come again, the birds will call "We'll teach you how to live" and maybe some of us will take them seriously. "Nouxia, Virginia Woolf". No need to be afraid?

Len Grugeon

COUNCIL MEMBERS 2001

President: Professor Jeremy Hooker (elected 1999 for 5 years)

Treasurer: Geoffrey Hirst (elected 2000 for 5 years) 91A Woodstock Road, Witney, Oxon. OX28 1ED (Tel. 01993 703958)

Secretary: Phyllis Treitel (re-elected 2000 for 5 years) Eidsvoll, Bedwells Heath, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5JE

Vice Presidents: Brian Fullagar, Robert McCloy

Members of Council: (with duties)

Leonard Grugeon, Chairman (re-elected 2000 for 3 years) 31 Poplar Road, Shalford, Guildford GU4 SDH (Tel. 01483 535377)

Margaret Evans, Membership Secretary (re-elected for 3 years) 23 Hardwell Close, Grove, Nr. Wantage, Oxon OX12 OBN (Tel. 012357 65360)

John Price, Vice-Chairman (elected 2000 for 3 years) (Tel. 01672 515150)

Ray Morse, Meetings Secretary (re-elected 2000 for 3 years) 28 Tismeads Crescent, Swindon SN1 4DR (Tel. 01793 530520)

Margaret Gould, Librarian (re-elected 1999 for 3 years) (Tel. 01793 520431)

Patrick Dillon (re-elected 1999 for 3 years) Ethelwyn Gregory (re-elected 1998 for 3 years) Helen Newman (re-elected 1998 for 3 years) John Webb (elected 1999 for 3 years)

Co-opted A.S. Hickerton

GIFT AID - A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

As I promised, in last year's Annual Report (p.2), I am now enclosing a Gift Aid Declaration slip. If you give money to charity you will already be familiar with the procedure.

Thanks to the new Gift Aid legislation, the Society can now reclaim the tax element from your subscriptions or any donations, provided you pay tax, or one of you does if you have joint membership. If you pay tax at a higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your tax return. If you are joint members and both are tax payers, then both should complete a form.

Please help to boost the Society's funds by completing and returning the enclosed form to me, or, if you prefer, to the Membership Secretary, or the Hon. Secretary.

Geoff Hirst

REPORT ON THE AGM & BIRTHDAY LECTURE

This was the first time the Society had met in the Church Hall at Chiseldon, though not the first time the AGM has been held in the village. The Church Hall turned out to be an excellent choice, it was just the right size, warm and attractive, easy to find and placed conveniently near the church.

By 10.00 the earliest of us were arriving, grateful because of the rain for the capacious car park. Not that everyone came by car. One member cycled (in the rain) from Bishopstone and another got the coach to Coate and walked (in the rain) from there.

By 11.00 we had had our coffee (or tea) and Len Grugeon was opening the meeting. There were some noticeable absentees (either not well, or caring for grandchildren at half term) but business was lively. We elected our new Treasurer, Geoff Hirst, who has been hard at work on our behalf since last November, we re-elected Phyllis Treitel for a second 5 years, and persuaded Margaret Evans, our Membership Secretary, to stay on for a while. Ray Morse changed his mind about stepping down and was re-elected. John Price is back on Council, (see p.2 for full list). Geoff announced that Harold Adams had bequeathed to the Society £1,000. The proposed memorial to Harold is discussed below. We gathered members' responses to the suggestion that the marble cross on Richard Jefferies' grave at Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing (damaged by vandals) should not be re-erected. (See p.6). Minutes of the whole meeting will be circulated with the Autumn Newsletter.

During the lunch break, the Rev'd. Dr. Railton, Rector of Chiseldon, kindly opened the church (where Richard and Jessie were married) and showed us round. He is rightly proud of the imposing, well-kept church and we were glad to take advantage of this chance to see it.

By now the rain had stopped, a few more visitors joined us, and we reassembled for the Birthday Lecture given by our member John Savage, which he has kindly allowed us to publish in the Journal.

We plan to meet again for this year's AGM at Chiseldon, since it suited us so well. Do come, and as you drive away at about 4.45 along Butts Road, rejoice in the view of Liddington Hill, straight ahead.

MEMORIAL TO HAROLD ADAMS, FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY

As soon as it was known that Harold Adams had died, members asked if they could contribute to a memorial to him. With this in mind, there was a 'sounding' at the AGM to see what sort of memorial was favoured. During the Jubilee celebrations a member commented that it was a pity there was nowhere to sit in the back garden at Coate. He thought a seat would aid contemplation. This idea appealed to those at the AGM and Ray Morse has obtained quotations for a seat from a Swindon firm: Rain or Shine Garden Furniture.

We have in mind either a 5 foot bench with arms and a back which would cost £209 or a 5 foot backless/armless bench (so that you can face either way) for £129. Both are in Iroko. A plaque and fixing would be extra. If you would like to contribute, send your cheque to the Hon. Sec. (made out to the Richard Jefferies Society). Small sums will be very welcome.

COATE MUSEUM OPENING DATES 2001

Richard Jefferies' birthplace at Coate will be open (no charge) on the following Sundays in 2001:

6 May; 20 May; 3 June; 17 June; 1 July; 15 July; 5 August; 19 August; 2 September; 16 September.

As usual, John and Sheila Povey, Ray and Sylvia Morse, Mark Daniel and John Price, Phyllis Treitel and Margaret Gould, Chris Bowles and Pam Smith,

Ethelwyn and Nigel Gregory and Jean Bone, will take it in turns to be in charge. The house stairs are steep and younger legs are needed. Ring the Hon. Sec. if you would like to be a helper.

The house and garden are open from 2.00 to 5.00 on the days listed. There is parking in Coate Water Country Park, next door, 50p for 2 hours.

Swindon Borough, who own and maintain the property, propose to re-thatch the older part of the house. It is just possible that your visit will coincide with this work.

If you wish to make enquiries, please first try Ray Morse (01793 530520) and then the Hon. Sec. (01865 735678).

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2001 5 May Eltham's Writers

Our member, John Kennett, is one of the organisers of this literary event, presented by the Eltham Society in conjunction with the Edith Nesbit Society. It will take place on Saturday 5 May at St. Mary's Community Centre, Eltham High Street, from 10.30 to 4.00. Phyllis Treitel (trains permitting) will be there to provide information about Richard Jefferies and to support John Kennett.

On Sunday, 6 May, he will lead a literary walk (which will, of course, include Jefferies) starting from the lych gate of St. John's Church (junction of Well Hall Road and Eltham High Street) at 2.00.

Visits to the event by members of this Society will be most welcome.

14 May 'Trees, Woods, and Richard Jefferies': talk by John Price. The Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Swindon. 7.30 pm.

9 June Half-day outing to Savernake Forest, near Marlborough. A coach will leave The Square, Old Town, Swindon, at 2.00 pm. We shall make stops at various popular spots in the Forest, look at some very, very old oak trees, walk about, and read passages from Jefferies' writings. We shall have tea locally and return to Swindon by 6.00 pm. Leave your car behind, it will only get broken into, and join us. Names and telephone numbers, please, to the Hon. Sec. by 21 May. Postponement likely - Foot & Mouth.

30 June 'Books and Papers for Jefferies Lovers' Study Day - see separate item.

5 July (Thursday) Swindon Festival.

We propose to offer guided walks of Old Town, perhaps 3 tours, pointing out to Swindon residents the places associated with Jefferies. Leaflets will be on sale. Phyllis Treitel, Ray Morse, and (possibly) Sheila Povey will take part. Join us. Ring nearer the time for rendez-vous details.

27-31 'The Countryside in Literature'. Study break at Urchfont Manor, August Devizes. This short residential course, with talks, readings, or daily excursions, is organised by our member Roy Burton and two other leaders. Six writers will be studied: Edward Thomas, W.H. Hudson, Richard Jefferies, Gilbert White, Alfred Williams, and Ida Gandy. Enquiries to 01380 840495. The Hon.Sec. has a programme.

13 October AGM and Birthday Lecture. (See p.13).

STUDY DAY IN ALDBOURNE, SATURDAY 30 JUNE, 'BOOKS & PAPERS FOR JEFFERIES LOVERS'

Place: Memorial Hall

Time: Doors open at 10.30 to allow for preparation.

Begins 11.00

Ends 4.00

Meals: Hot drinks provided. Lunch in the village or bring a picnic. Programme
11.00 to 11.30 Look around.

11.30 to 12.30 Contributions by participants lasting no more than 5 minutes. Bring an interesting item and talk about it. We are especially interested in cuttings and other items found pasted or tucked into books by or about Jefferies. If you have any please bring them or write to us about them.

12.30 to 2.00 Lunch break and visit, if fine, to Upper Upham.

2.00 to 4.00 Talk by John Price on Collecting Richard Jefferies followed (approx.) by individual contributions.

4.00 Cup of tea and pack up. On Display

Free: Back numbers of Newsletters, bookmarks, leaflets.

To buy: John Price will have books for sale. The Society will have books for sale including copies of *The Story of My Heart* at £2.00. A selection of Talks and Articles. Cards and leaflets. Back numbers of the Journal.

Display only: Papers collected by Harold Adams. Interesting items (books and journals) from the Society's own collection; journals of other literary societies; a Jefferies ms recently given to the Society; copies of letters by Jefferies; original newspaper items; theses on Jefferies by several scholars; texts of talks; early newsletters; privately-owned rarities; scrap books.

It would help the Hon. Sec. if those who would like to give a 5-minute talk would let her know in advance. A more detailed programme will be drawn up nearer the time and will be sent to anyone sending a stamped envelope. Non-members of the Society are welcome.

If you have something special you want to show or ask about - please bring it.

If this Study Day is a success we shall repeat it next year with a different topic, perhaps Pictures & Illustrations. Suggestions welcome.

New Year Honour for Paul Scofield

Members may have spotted, in the New Year's Honours List, the name of an honorary and much loved member of this Society - Paul Scofield - whose readings of Jefferies' works have provided such inspiration.

The Hon. Sec. wrote and congratulated Mr. Scofield on being made a Companion of Honour. His charming, handwritten, reply will be on display at Aldbourne on 30 June.

Interim Report on Richard Jefferies' Grave at Worthing

The subject of Jefferies' grave at Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing was briefly discussed at the AGM. Once again, the cross had been damaged and thrown down and the proposal from Mark Daniel, who cares for the grave, was that the cross

should not be re-erected. This proposal was agreed, on condition that the broken-off cross was preserved as part of the grave.

Work on the restoration has not yet begun but has been ordered, and will be carried out shortly. The cost will be borne in part by the cemetery and in part by the Society. A further report will be made when the work is completed.

HOW I DISCOVERED RICHARD JEFFERIES

[It is always a pleasure to be able to publish items by Bill Keith, who was the Society's President from 1974 to 1991. In the Autumn Newsletter we shall, as usual, publish new members' accounts of how they discovered Jefferies: this rather special account is being included now.]

My first encounter with the name of Richard Jefferies occurred in 1944 when my paternal grandparents gave me a copy of *Bevis*, with the E.H. Shepard illustrations, for my tenth birthday. I still possess that copy, now much battered, but have to confess that, though I liked the drawings, the mass of text was too much for me at that age; indeed I didn't read through it from cover to cover until fourteen years later when I was making the ocean-crossing from England to Canada and about to embark on my doctoral thesis.

The crucial discovery came, however, in the centenary year of 1948. I was already keen on natural history (watching birds, identifying plants), and my parents had bought a copy of Samuel J. Looker's anthology *Jefferies' England*, possibly for me, the year before. But 1948 was the year when a coincidence occurred that changed my life. I was due to take "School Certificate" at the end of the 1948-9 school-year, and the "English Literature" paper involved study of a Shakespeare play, a novel, a book of poetry, and a work of non-fiction. Various choices were possible, and my English master (doubtless bored by the old "war-horses" that appeared with monotonous regularity) decided that, for the non-fiction text, we should study Ronald Hook's *Readings from Richard Jefferies*, obviously designated in honour of the centenary.

This is not, I think now, a very distinguished anthology, but then it came as a revelation. Since we lived in Essex in an area that was fast becoming, practically if not politically, a London suburb, most of my schoolfellows showed little interest in rural life. I suspect I was the only one in the class who had seen a high percentage of the birds and animals and flowers that Jefferies described. Gradually, though, I found myself revelling in Jefferies' prose - especially in "A Roman Brook" and the extracts from "My Old Village". In earlier days, when all my boyhood contemporaries wanted to be engine-drivers or air-pilots, I had hoped to become a naturalist. But it was Jefferies¹ prose that altered my focus from natural things to the literary representation of natural things. I went on to get distinctions in both the "English Language" and "English Literature" papers, one of only two members of the class to do so. From then on, "English" became the subject that I knew I must pursue.

Five years later, destiny nudged again. During my two years of compulsory military service, I was posted to a Royal Army Service Corps depot at Crowborough, Sussex, and remember experiencing a sense of converging courses when I found, at the fork of the road leading down to the camp, the cottage called "The Downs", complete with plaque, where Jefferies lived between 1885 and 1886. Then I went to Cambridge, where, like John Savage (who recorded his memories in the Autumn 2000 *Newsletter*), I wrote a voluntary mini-thesis, on *The Story of My*

Heart, for Part II of the English Tripos. By this time, the opportunity was opening for graduate study at Toronto, and, casting round for a viable topic for my doctoral dissertation, Jefferies inevitably came to mind. And that is why I was reading *Bevis* in mid-Atlantic on the *Batory* in August 1958!

W.J. Keith

EDWARD VERRALL LUCAS (1868-1938), RICHARD JEFFERIES AND SUSSEX

Bevis was published in 1882, and again (abridged) in 1891. Then, in 1904, an unabridged edition came out with an introduction by E.V. Lucas, mostly praising the book but here and there finding fault:

"Did boys ever play quoits with pleasure? One would prefer to see *Bevis* hitting balls out of the field, and Mark fielding them in a bad temper."

Lucas had not enjoyed much freedom as a boy, his childhood certainly was not idyllic like that of the fictional *Bevis*, but his enthusiasm for cricket began early on. His father needed accomplices to bowl and to field when he indulged in batting practice, so he made Lucas and his brother Alfred "when only very small boys, members of the Sussex County Cricket Club", entitling them to enter the County Ground at Hove, not only to practise, but also to spectate at any match. (Lucas's book *The Hambledon Men*, a compilation of cricketing history, came out in 1907 and is possibly his most popular work).

Lucas wrote many books, mostly novels, essays and travel guides. One book, *The Old Contemporaries*, describes his Quaker upbringing; another, *Reading Writing and Remembering* deals with his literary career.

Another book, *Highways and Byways in Sussex* (as notable for its illustrations by Frederick L. Griggs, R.A. as for its text by E.V. Lucas) was published in 1904. In it, Richard Jefferies crops up nine times where Lucas revisits topics previously appearing in Jefferies, whose "shepherd friend" -unlisted in the index - turns up in Chapter XIX. Jefferies tells us about this "shepherd friend" who is proud of his locally made crook in 'The Southdown Shepherd' (*Nature Near London*), and there we learn about the practice of making a crook from the barrel of an old single barrel shot gun. The best days of the famous Pyecombe crook, as well as its gifted blacksmith creator, had already passed away when Jefferies, living then in Brighton, wrote, in 'Clematis Lane'¹ (*The Life of the Fields*) of the relative merits of different iron heads of crooks and of ash versus hazel rods for handles, as expounded by the young shepherd on the Sussex earthwork near Patcham.

Using the index we can find quotations from 'Sunny Brighton' (*The Open Air*) and extensive extracts from 'The Breeze on Beachy Head' (*Nature Near London*). Lucas, in Chapter XVII, has a paragraph on the Brighton Museum's intriguing collection of domestic crockery: but Jefferies gave a livelier description, quoting an ingenious puzzle and some quaint inscriptions to be found on teapot, jug, cup and mug, in his essay 'To Brighton' (*Nature Near London*).

The early nineteen thirties, although generally a quiet time for Jefferies studies, saw in 1933, the launch of one biography - Reginald Arkell's *Richard Jefferies*, and the publication, by Methuen, of a travelogue, *English Leaves* by Lucas, which carries a description of the Jefferies bust in Salisbury Cathedral, together with three pages of tribute to this "idealist, pantheist and rhapsodist". About Coate, Lucas has this to say: "When I visited his birthplace, a modest farmhouse behind a high wall at Coate, I noticed that the sign of the neighbouring

inn was the 'Sun'. Could anything be more appropriate to the author of *The Story of My Heart* with its insatiable craving for heat and life? The 'Sun'."

Lucas justifies his inclusion of Richard Jefferies in these words: "Though I may seem to be digressing in my account of him, it is not so: in any book about England this lover of England should be extolled."

A.S. Hickerton

E.H. SHEPARD (1879-1976)

In December Stan Hickerton spotted news about E.H. Shepard, who drew the much-admired black and white illustrations to *Bevis*. Arthur J. Chandler has written a book about Shepard: *The Man Who Drew Pooh; The story of E.H. Shepard* (Jaydeir Books; £19.99), and its publication coincided with the announcement that the British Library has acquired some Shepard letters, also that Dulwich Picture Gallery was mounting an exhibition of Shepard's original drawings. (The main Shepard archive is at the University of Surrey).

Andrew Rossabi, with a keen Pooh-fan granddaughter, visited the Dulwich exhibition and, though there were no 'Bevis' drawings, found much of interest. He writes:

"Shepard had 'loved it' (i.e. the book *Bevis*) and visited the Swindon area to get a sense of the place. Clearly the Shepard Archive is the place to go for information on how he came to illustrate *Bevis*.

However, one could see from Shepard's other work why he was an apt choice for illustrator of *Bevis*. First Shepard clearly enjoyed drawing children. He made many studies of them, which showed sympathy but were free of sentimentality or cuteness. Some of the best drawings were of his own children and I was particularly taken with a ravishing portrait of his four-year-old son Graham (c. 1911) which conveyed all the angelic freshness of extreme youth and was worthy of a French C18 portrait by Watteau, Boucher or Fragonard. Graham (b. 1907) was killed in action when he went down with his ship in 1943.

Second Shepard had a genuine feel for landscape and was especially good at rendering trees (e.g. Mole's nightmare journey through the Wild Wood in *Wind in the Willows*, which Shepard also illustrated, the obstinate willow athwart the stream in *Bevis*, and the trees passim in the Pooh stories). Third the values of self-reliance, courage, adventure and initiative celebrated in *Bevis* must have appealed to a man who served as an officer in World War One where he was at the Battles of Somme, Arras and 3rd Ypres and who was awarded the Military Cross. An indirect and tenuous link with RJ can be drawn from the fact that Shepard was educated at St. Paul's School in Hammersmith where he was a contemporary of Jefferies future biographer Edward Thomas, who was to be killed at Arras in 1917. Another Pauline (who served with Thomas in the Artists' Rifles) was Paul Nash, perhaps the finest painter of the English downland."

In the meantime, Stan Hickerton had located an autobiography by Shepard - *All Drawn from Memory* - and a book about Shepard by Rawle Knox - *The Work of E.H. Shepard* - from which he extracted the chapter written by the art historian Bevis Hillier. From him we learn that the *Bevis* drawings were sold years ago. When one learns that a Pooh drawing went for £1,200 in 1968 (and to Quaritch) one can imagine what the *Bevis* drawings would fetch now. Hillier's favourite *Bevis* drawing is 'The Willow was obstinate'. (The chapter will be on show at the Study Day.)

WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

In last year's Spring Newsletter (page 8) there is a brief item about WANHS. This year the Society is bringing to completion its change from being a Society to being a Company (with charitable status). It is clear that the old WANHS is taking on a new lease of life. For example, the WANHS Magazine (vol. 92) which used to be dark green, is now called *Wiltshire Heritage Studies*, is even fatter, and coloured chocolate brown. The latest issue (vol. 94) has a superb article about the ancient oaks in Savernake and another about the Rev'd Meyrick of Chiseldon (Jefferies would have known him).

The Society (? Company) runs an amazing programme centred of course in Wiltshire, and all its papers at present come to the Hon. Sec. Would any member like to be our rep., receive all mailings, attend meetings or not as desired, and compose a brief annual report for our Newsletter? If you are interested, please write to the Hon. Sec.

BOOKS

Books for Sale

John Price has for sale a selection of books by Richard Jefferies. Anyone interested should write to him at Granham West, Granham Hill, Marlborough, Wilts. SN8 4DN, or e-mail him at jtprice@waitrose.com. His website will soon be ready: www.jtprice.co.uk.

Bookmarks

As part of the Society's drive to recruit more Swindon members, John Webb has designed and had printed a quantity of bookmarks which are being distributed, free, in Swindon libraries and some libraries near Swindon. A few bookmarks will be available free to members at the Study Day.

Poetry by R.S. Woodroffe

Bob Woodroffe has sent a copy of his latest book of poems which will be on show on 30 June. It contains 25 poems from nature and life in the Vale of Evesham, where Bob lives. Copies can be obtained from him, price £3.00 plus 50p postage at: Greenwood Press, 14 Greenhill Gardens, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 4ND. The title of the book is *Spirit of the Vale* and all profits will go to Vale Landscape Heritage Trust, and Cleeve Prior Heritage Trust.

Kent Today

John Kennett has sent an extract from this book (no date but pre-World War Two). A brief article by Arthur Mee on 'Roads' contains the following: 'We may think of the terror that has come into country life with these powerful engines (he means cars) for ever rushing past, and indeed the deaths of children on our roads has become a tragedy too deep for words ... No more are our children brought up to love the quiet ways in intimate touch with nature and all her softening influences. No more is it true of a country girl, as in the days of Richard Jefferies, that the very earth smiles beneath her feet, that she draws into her life enchanted things of earth and air, from rose-leaved hedges and quiet river banks, and the growing grasses in a country land. The famous picture of a country girl that Richard Jefferies drew will soon be known no more.'

Gillian Piper, of Floreat, Western Australia, interested in genealogy has found two references to Jefferies in *Finding Out about Victorian Country Life* by Michael Rawcliffe. The first is an extract from *Hodge and his Masters* describing a

large landowner, identified by the editor as the Earl of Bathurst. The second is an extract from *Field and Hedgerow* about the rigours of harvesting.

The Story of My Heart - out-of-print but not out of reach

New on the Society's list of publications for sale is *The Story of My Heart*. It had been out of print for some years and several publishers made moves towards a new edition without success. At last we are able to supply copies (see list on page 11).

Our President, Jeremy Hooker, in the basement of a bookshop in Wales, spotted a big pile of new copies of Jefferies' book - the Quartet edition with Andrew Rossabi's Introduction. He wrote to the Hon. Sec. who quickly arranged for the Society to buy the lot.

We are selling them at £2 per copy (quite new) and they will be on sale at the Study Day, in the Museum, at meetings, and by post from Mrs. Gregory. Buy one to give away. It is said that an admirer of Jefferies bought 1,000 copies when the edition came out in 1979 and planned to give them away. He died before they were all gone.

RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

If you would like any of the following, please write to Ethelwyn Gregory, 40 Stratton Road, Princes Risborough, Bucks. HP27 9AX.

The Story of My Heart, paperback Quartet edition

£2.00 Picture postcard (quotation and picture) 20p or 3 for 50p

Richard Jefferies & Old Town (guided walk) 20p

Richard Jefferies in Eltham 25p

Richard Jefferies in Surbiton 50p

New A Jefferies Land itinerary 20p

Back numbers of the Journal £1.00

Postage Add 20p for orders up to £1.00, 40p for orders up to £2.00 and 60p for orders over £2.00. Very small orders can be paid in postage stamps.

'Richard Jefferies in Sussex' is in preparation.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Members' names and addresses are held on a computer data base. We are required by the Data Protection Act 1984 to inform members that they have the right to object to information being held in this way.

The Newsletter has been compiled and edited by Phyllis Treitel, Robert McCloy and Andrew Rossabi. It has been typed by Helen Newman. Printing and despatch has been undertaken by Margaret Evans and Phyllis Treitel. The cover design is by Stan Hickerton.

An Update on Iden's 'Fortyolds'

Dr. Duncan Pepper, of Edinburgh, has written to say that he has tracked down the place where Waitrose's Fortyolds are being grown. It is near St. Andrews in Scotland. Dr. Pepper was hoping to grow his own crop but no seed is available at present. He has suggested Waitrose make use of the 'Amaryllis' endorsement of the variety. (See SNL 2000 p.7)

OTHER SOCIETIES

Edward Thomas Fellowship

Newsletter 44, like its fellows, is full of fascinating reading: a poem for Myfanwy Thomas - 'At Steep' - she is 90; a children's story by Helen Thomas; a fine paper by David Thomas - 'Moments of Everlastingness'. Adlestrop, the poem and the railway station, have been very much in the news. Although the area in which Adlestrop stands is listed as environmentally sensitive, and on the edge of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the station has become a dump for waste. The local Council has served an enforcement order; the owner of the dump has appealed to the Secretary of State. This year's Autumn Walk will be on the Isle of Wight.

The George Eliot Fellowship

The Hon. Sec. has copies of this year's Events Diary leaflet (send s.a.e. if you would like one) giving details of guided tours, talks, discussions and wreath-laying ceremonies. The programme is organised by Bedworth & Nuneaton in association with the George Eliot Fellowship.

Surbiton & District Bird Watching Society

The Society has once again published its *Annual Bird Report* (1999) with financial assistance from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. This 80-page book is available on request. The Society was founded in 1954 by Hockley Clarke.

The Alliance of Literary Societies

The Alliance's Secretary is still working hard, putting the current activities of all the member literary societies on to her website. Now she wants to expand and list, for each Society, all the geographical information that the enquirer could possibly want. To this end, the Hon. Sec. has sent her copies of all our leaflets plus a list of places where Jefferies lived, where there are plaques, where he died and is buried, where busts of him are to be found, his museum, and where most of his mss are kept. This website is at: www.sndc.demon.co.uk.

The ALS big day (i.e. AGM) this year is to be held at Ledbury, Herefordshire, on Saturday 28 April. The day begins at 9.45 and ends at 5.00 with the AGM jammed into the middle. If you would like to attend, or would like more information, ring the Hon. Sec., who has a programme, or Helen Newman, our representative - 0121 423 2100.

The William Morris Society

Once again there is an impressive list of events for members of this Society including a lecture about late 19th century Socialism (Tony Carr; 21 April), a Morris family tree workshop (9 June) and a weekend in Paris (18-21 May). Indeed for the adventurous there is to be a 9-day tour of Iceland in July. The Society's website is www.ccny.cuny.edu/wmorris/morris.html