

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT & AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2003-2004

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 1042838

TRUSTEES AND COUNCIL MEMBERS 2003-2004

Hon. Sec. Lady Treitel, Eidsvoll, Bedwells Heath, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5JE Tel. 01865 735678 (Best before 7.00 pm or Saturdays)

Margaret Evans, Brian Fullagar, Len Grugeon, Geoff Hirst, Jeremy Hooker, Eric Jones, Robert McCloy, Ray Morse, Helen Newman, John Price, John Savage, Richard Stewart, Phyllis Treitel, John Webb. Co-opted: Stan Hickerton.

FROM THE CHAIR

Not long before he died in 1995, Cyril Wright wandered into Godalming Museum, where my wife and I were on volunteer duties. New members need to know that Cyril served this Society, first as treasurer then as secretary for thirty-three years. We all regarded him as essential Wiltshire Man, but on that afternoon he confessed to being very much a Surrey man. He looked at our exhibits with interest, especially the many items relating to Gertrude Jekyll. She had been a Surrey Woman, born five years before Jefferies and surviving nearly a half-century after him. She has been called the 'mother of English gardening' because her designs were based on structured informality — although she would have detested the phrase. Her collaboration with the architect, Edwin Lutyens produced great country houses with splendid country gardens, mainly in what we may call 'Jekyll Land'. This tract of country lies south of the Hog's Back chalk Down, taking in parts of south-west Surrey, northern Sussex and Hampshire. There are Jekyll gardens outside this area; there is even a protectively walled garden at Lindisfarne Castle, which Lutyens made his home after giving it what is now known as a 'make-over'.

Cyril's visit provided a symbolic link between Jefferies and Jekyll. Although they had shared the planet it is unlikely that they met or that either was aware of the other's work. The main interest of Jekyll for Jefferies readers lies in her book *Old West Surrey*. This was published in 1904 but it described the English countryside of Jekyll's childhood — contemporaneous with that of Jefferies. Both authors came to know about electricity, the telegraph, gaslight, express trains and farm mechanisation but the country ways and scenes evoked in their writings came from a rural civilisation technically at its end. Its legacy of artefacts, from tankards to thatched cottages, cutlery to clothing, was carefully described by Miss Jekyll and generously illustrated by her photographs. *Old West Surrey* is a fascinating social history.

There are instances of self-contradiction in the views of both writers, as if they held, not to the middle of the road but to both sides of it at once. This was understandable when the times they were a-changing.

Although clearly loved by her friends, the Godalming consensus is that Jekyll must have been a formidable lady. A life-size effigy is normally at the museum

showing her in full gardening mode and a determined expression. One day some mischievous members of the Museum 'Friends' installed this replica at the strategic junction of two tall clipped hedges alongside a path through one of the Jekyll gardens. It was the day and venue for the Friends' annual summer lunch, noted for food and wine. After the meal, small genial groups of Friends strolled through the garden. The effect of their suddenly coming across Miss Jekyll regarding them severely through her pince-nez was quite unsettling, and the experiment has not been repeated.

So what will you find in *Old West Surrey*? First, the heavier stuff—cupboards, chests, dressers — which will enable a Jefferies imagination to furnish a cottage. Second, the small items which are no longer seen - rushlights, candle-snuffers, flat-irons. Third, old patterns of pieces for which we still use later designs, such as chairs, table ware, kitchen utensils. There are many curiosities, like old clocks, mouse traps, warming pans and something called a 'bed-wagon'. Then there are the country people, usually elderly, engaged either in work such as bricklaying or dressed in their best clothes for photography. Every reader will discover favourite treasures, a process to be repeated with each re-reading. Country life in the nineteenth century was not like a camping holiday in the twenty-first: you undressed by the light of a taper, woke to the chores of fetching water and lighting fires. The merit of *Old West Surrey* is to draw the background into the foreground, so that you may imagine what life was really like at the gamekeeper's home.

Len Grugeon

PS John Savage and I sensed that our Study Day contributions did not meet our audience's expectation of 'an overview of Jefferies' works'. Unlike Hugo Matthew s neither of us claims to have read every word that Jefferies wrote, so we selected some typicalities for attention. We had hoped to stimulate more discussion but this may have to wait upon a really over-viewing overview when the Society mounts a week-long Conference, perhaps ...

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

A warm welcome is extended to the new members who have joined the Society since last September—Mr & Mrs D Birley, Wanborough, Wilts. Mrs J A D
Saunders, Ldngcot, Oxon. Mr R Bloor, Newcastle, Staffs. Mrs S A
Stacy, Crawley, West Sussex Mr G Cuthbertson, Hampton-in-Arden, Mrs
V J Stebbing, Pillaton, Cornwall
West Midlands Mr J Sykes & Mrs G Ford, Totnor,
Herefordshire
Mr J Lacey, London Mr G Walker, Tilehurst, Berks
Mr S Lewis, Pontesbury, Salop. Mr J B Monks, Carshalton, Surrey Mr C
Moughton, Southrop, Glos. Mr P Rivers, Godalming, Surrey

The total membership during the 2003/04 subscription year numbered 284 being made up of 172 single, 34 joint, 28 Life, 4 Joint Life, 3 Hon Life (1 Joint), and 4 Corporate memberships.

At the time of writing the 2004/05 membership is 282. This takes account of 9 members (1 joint) having resigned at the end of^and 5 paid-up members having sadly passed away (2 being joint memberships and their spouses no longer wishing to remain members) during, the 2003/04 membership year, and 15 new members.

Although most members live in England, other countries are represented: Australia 5, Belgium 1, Canada 3(1 Joint), the Channel Islands 1, Eire 1, Germany 2, Mexico 1, New Zealand 1, Northern Ireland 2 (1 joint), Scotland 7 (1 joint), Spain 1, the USA 3 (1 Joint), Wales 7 (1 joint).

At present 44 members (6 of whom are Joint) have not yet paid their 2004/05 subscriptions. Gentle reminders will accompany their mailing of the Annual Report in the hope that they will now bring their membership up-to-date. In anticipation many thanks.

Margaret Evans

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS - SOME CHANGES

Librarian By the time this Newsletter reaches members, Margaret Gould will have moved away from Swindon, to live in London near her son Graham. She will have resigned from the Council where she has been a most valued member, and from being the Society's librarian.

John Webb has kindly agreed to take over the post of librarian. All future enquiries can be addressed to him at Padbrook, Bincknoll Lane, Wootton Bassett, Wilts. N4 8QR (Tel. 01793 853171). Please note that it will not be possible to send any of the Society's books by post.

Secretary Phyllis Treitel took over the duties of the Hon. Sec. when Cyril Wright died in 1995. In 2005 she will have served two 5-year terms and does not wish to stand for election a third time. A new Hon. Sec. must be elected in October 2005. This announcement is being made ahead of time so that nominations can be considered, and questions asked and answered. The Society is in good shape, there is no sign that interest in Jefferies is waning, the job is full of interest, and can be wholeheartedly recommended. Offers and suggestions to John Price please. (Tel. 01672 515150).

Sales of Society Publications Mrs. Norma Goodwin has kindly offered to take over this duty from Mrs. Ethelwyn Gregory. We are very grateful to her for volunteering: her name and address, with a list of things for sale, is at page 17.

REPORTS OF WINTER MEETINGS

The Painter, J.W. North

Friend to Jefferies

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December 2003

by Steve Milton

The chairman, John Price, introduced the speaker; he was already familiar to some, having been our host when the Society visited the Council offices in Salisbury on 6 November 1998 to view the plaster bust of Jefferies which is kept there. In addition, Mr Milton has made a thorough study of the life and work of John William North (1842-1924) from his position as one of North's direct descendants.

North's parents were not well-off, so his formal training as an artist was slight; however, he showed an early aptitude, and at the age of 16 was apprenticed to the wood-engraver J W Whymper. North had earlier spent time with a farming great-uncle where he must have developed both his familiarity with nature and his sympathy with farm labourers. The years spent with Whymper equipped him as an artist but he also made friends there with Fred Walker and George Pinwell.

All three became successful illustrators of such books as *Round of Days* and *Wayside Posies*, but by 1868 North gave up book illustration to do more creative

(and lucrative) painting. He had a studio in London and was involved with galleries and art critics, in particular Joseph Comyns Carr. Carr was art critic of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and it is surmised that he came across Jefferies' writing there, and proposed him for an article on Somerset, to be illustrated by North. From hints, we gather that Jefferies stayed with North at Bicknoller in 1883, and explored Exmoor and the Quantocks. His essay 'Summer in Somerset' was a result; also the book *Red Deer* (1884).

Mr Milton showed us images of some of North's paintings: Halsway Court (BM), A Gypsy-Encampment (V&A), the Pear Tree (Southampton Art Gallery), Sir Bevis and the Woodwoman (Private Collection) dedicated to Jefferies, and several others. These paintings, now so prized, took months to do, Mr Milton explained, and were the result of a search for a deeper truth; though so agreeable to look at, they are not chocolate-boxy, but reveal his intense love of nature and his concern to preserve the best in life.

The story of North's generosity to Jessie and the children after Jefferies' death is well known to most of us, though Mr Milton's recent researches have revealed much more, and it is hoped, in the future, to publish his discoveries and those of Kedrun Laurie. In 1884 North married Selina Weetch, at Bicknoller, and they had several children. Fifteen years later she died, but is remembered for the home-made wreath she sent to Jefferies' funeral at Worthing. North had a second family, and it is from this branch that Mr Milton is descended.

This summary barely deals with what was a fascinating and very full account of J W North as far as his story illuminates that of Jefferies. His kindness to others and his public-spirited activities must be left to another day. Lovers of Jefferies are glad to remember what a good friend North was in Jefferies' lifetime and what a help he was to the family after Jefferies' death. His generosity and his telling of the story leave us in his debt.

Members' Evening jointly with The Friends of Alfred Williams March 2004

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The readers and their choice of text:

PHYLLIS TREITEL read from 'Locality and Nature' in *Field and Hedgerow*. Jefferies surveys the highest part of the Forest Ridge in Sussex, and notes how many birds, plants, and snakes are absent, and tries to decide why.

KAYE FRANKLIN gave a brief extract from *Centre Adventure* by Harold Jolliffe, once Chief Librarian of Swindon, extolling the 1948 Richard Jefferies exhibition in general, and the film Tribute to Jefferies' in particular.

RAY MORSE read from 'A Barn' in *Nature Near London*. Jefferies notices the groups of travelling workers, some of them Irish, who arrive, presumably near Tolworth and then pass on. This is a fascinating extract, worthy of greater attention.

GRAEME FRANKLIN read from .4 *Wiltshire Village*, where Alfred Williams deals with the so-called monotony of village life. Having had experience of both, he goes on to itemise the greater monotony of town, especially factory, life. Town people, he says, talk of 'rotten' weather; no countryman ever calls weather 'rotten'.

JOHN PRICE. The placing of the plaque on what was Jefferies' house at 296 Ewell Road, Surbiton in 2003, led John to read from Chapter VIE, in 'London and me Suburbs' of Edward Thomas's book on Jefferies. Thomas describes the area as it

was some 30 years after Jefferies' time, but still very rural, so that he can hazard an identification of many of Jefferies' walks there.

SHEILA POVEY sporting her Alfred Williams credentials, read a passage about canals from *A Wiltshire Village*. After comparing canals in Babylon and on Mars, Williams homes in on the North Wilts and Berks Canal, and describes the difficulties of their making, their traffic, and finally the catching (often the poaching) of their copious fish.

ERIC JONES's extracts were so brief as to be barely noted. From *A Wiltshire Village* he gave details of a man ruined by a milking contract which turned out to be a swindle. From *Hodge and His Masters* he read from Jefferies' essay 'Leaving His Farm', and describing the serious attention given to the white poster advertising the departure of Farmer Smith. Realism is provided by the mention of two boys surreptitiously pelting the poster with flints.

SHEILA SUTTON (FAW) read from *A Swindon History 1840-1901* by J Silto (1981). She chose a trader's stock list; the very range of the stock was amazing, but the whole thing was composed in verse, to the great amusement of the listeners.

MICHAEL PONTING read from 'A Winter's Morning' (*Hodge and His Masters*), complete with the candle, the frost, the ice, the cold boots, and the hay for the animals. It reminded him of his grandparents' cottage in Hodson, with candles in the bedrooms and a single oil lamp downstairs.

GRAEME FRANKLIN, for his encore, read the poem 'I am happy tonight' from *Cor Cordium*. This is, apparently, a great favourite.

KAYE FRANKLIN (Chair of the Friends, whose guests we were) rounded off a rewarding evening with an extract from Frances Gay's portrayal of Jefferies as a young man, engaged in 'creative idleness' (see *Memories of Another Age*, collated by Ethelwyn Gregory). She asked whether the facts were historically correct, and we agreed that they were, except that we thought Richard had run away with James, not Willie, Cox.

The Wildlife of the Barbury Castle area, Past, Present and Future

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April 2004

by Neil Pullen

Mr Pullen, who was brought up in Swindon, and has recently returned as a professional, has been interested in wildlife since he was a child, hi his day, there were plenty of opportunities for small boys to 'discover' wild things, and he feels strongly that those opportunities should be available now.

It was inevitable that his slides, which were many and varied, would not show us what was on Barbury in Jefferies' day. Instead, Neil used Barbury as a vantage point from which to overlook Swindon, by time and by place, and introduced us to the changes that are taking place. He described the efforts of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, and the Swindon Wildlife Group in particular, to protect wildlife and the environment by buying or leasing reserves, and managing them for the benefit of the people.

To examine after we got home, Neil supplied us with a plan of Barbury Castle showing the occurrence of horseshoe vetch, and an account of how essential this flower is to the life-cycle of the Chalkhill blue butterfly. We were also given a list of Barbury Castle wild flowers (51) and a list of its birds (25). He used a slide of Porton Down (unchanged for many years) to show us what Barbury Castle

probably looked like in Jefferies' day - perfect for children. Meadows in Jefferies' day would not have been just grass, but full of flowers; as illustration he showed us a modern - preserved - flower meadow.

The future is a mixture: fields and streams are being swallowed up for development, or so closely surrounded by buildings as to lose their qualities; on the other hand, there is a determination to cherish and add to the Great Western Community Forest - Neil is a great believer in 'corridors of wildlife'. One man's ambition is to make Swindon the butterfly capital of Europe. We saw a slide which would have enchanted Jefferies - a goldfinch on a teasel (goldfinches are thriving), and a slide of something that would have puzzled him as it puzzled us, a bee 'mansion'. It had nesting boxes for at least four different kinds of bee: the midsummer hum in fact.

Women in Richard Jefferies' Novels and Essays **May 2004**

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by Margaret Evans MA

Rather than survey all Jefferies' fiction, Mrs Evans chose to examine in detail three of the early stories of Jefferies that were published in the *North Wilts Herald* in July, August, September and October 1866, that is, before he was 18 years old. The stories were republished in *The Early Fiction of Richard Jefferies* by Grace Toplis (1896); Mrs Evans brought along a copy of the book, but also photocopies of the newspapers, so that the Toplis editing (removing oaths and sexual references) could be revealed.

It must be said that the action in these stories mainly concerns males. In 'Henrique Beaumont', two men, Beaumont, the hero, and Austin, the villain, both wish to marry the squire's daughter, Ellen Meremont. Ellen is beautiful, acquiescent, innocent, filial. She is not a lump. Jefferies writes that she 'sprang lightly into her saddle'; nor is she stupid - 'together she and Beaumont had studied Greek and the Greeks'. But she was not able to give evidence in court: 'she is a woman and only thinks; she knows nothing, and won't swear'.

'Who Will Win', is longer, and is set in the America of the Civil War. Reginald Bourton is the hero, reckless yet shrewd, looking for adventure. He espies Isabel Montgomery and falls in love. After a series of escapades he rescues her and they live happily ever after. She is wholly passive.

There were so few openings for women in Victorian England, mostly as servants, that few unmarried women could earn a living. In 'Masked', Mademoiselle Tostino is a highly successful actress. Jefferies describes her charms with great gusto (mostly removed by Toplis). Dr. Kinkelman, a popular doctor, wants her for himself. She is no shrinking violet however, and sends him about his business: 'Double-dyed scoundrel... I scorn thee'. She unmasks the villain but retires from the stage, remembered for her noble conduct, and not 'depreciated by her contact with the "boards"'.

Jefferies, in *The Dewy Mom* and *Amaryllis*, succeeds in making a female the focus of the story. In these tales he restricts himself to the conventions of the time: gentle, virtuous maidens who do nothing; older women, foreigners and servants; or the bold vigorous woman whom society allows to be assertive - the actress. There is much to mock in these stories but, like all Jefferies' early works, they give us clues to his aims as a writer. This must be the very first time the stories have been

subjected to the deconstructive analysis provided by Margaret Evans, and she is to be applauded.

STUDY PAY AT CHISELDON 24 JULY 2004 Subject: 'Jefferies, a many-sided genius'

We met, as is usual now, in the Church Hall, and, once again, we had perfect weather, and were able to picnic out of doors. The church is kept locked but we borrowed the key and looked inside.

Several familiar faces were missing but we welcomed two new members. Margaret Bathe, Margaret Evans and Helen Newman served teas and coffees. John Price provided a welcome book stall. A chart showing the range of Jefferies' 'sides' was completed as we progressed and, although there had been no collusion, there were no duplicates.

The Morning (alphabetical order)

Margaret Evans selected Wild Flowers, reading a passage from 'Nightingale Road' (NNL) beginning 'There are about sixty wild flowers ...'. She analysed Jefferies' skill in using the flow of words to convey an impression of what was being described. Stan Hickerton chose Ships, quoting Harold Jefferies in *Worthing Cavalcade* (1944) to prove Jefferies' knowledge. Members submitted other instances. Eric Jones found Jefferies' mentions of, and frequent use of, footpaths important, especially as historians now mine his books for information. Brian Morris favoured Jefferies' knowledge of Birds, and frequent mention of them. He read Jefferies' comment, that nightingales 'will not pass their limits' as evidence of his being a serious naturalist, though only a moderate birdwatcher compared with the very best (see 'Haunts of the Lapwing'.)

Jefferies appreciation of Sculpture (as demonstrated in 'Nature in the Louvre' - *Field and Hedgerow*) was Helen Newman's choice. It was an example of Jefferies' ability to make up his own mind and not follow the crowd. John Price identified the importance of Jefferies' Prose, and its closeness to poetry, as a factor in our enjoyment of him. He read from Colin Blundell's book with its settings of passages of Jefferies' prose in poetic form. He also singled out Jefferies' efforts to envisage the future. Inevitably, we heard a quotation from *The Story of My Heart* but, surprisingly, it was to illustrate Jefferies' life-long concern with the Sea. Andrew Rossabi read from near the end of Chapter 6, four very moving paragraphs. Phyllis Treitel read from Jefferies' 1872 letter to the *Times*, about the Agricultural Labourer. While not his most loveable writing, it introduced him, at the time, to a wider public, as an expert on agricultural matters. Graham Walker finds many poetic insights in Jefferies' writings, which inspire him in his own Poetry. He read a short poem. John Webb's quotation was from 'The Spring of the Year' (*The Hills and the Vale*) to express his surprise that at Tolworth in 1881 Jefferies found 'the shrikes are numerous here...' (they are now rare) but he esteems Jefferies especially for his attempts to say the unsayable about his feelings and about the significance of the things he observes.

The Afternoon

Our Chairman, Len Grugeon, and our Council member, John Savage (both from Surrey) kindly agreed to give an overview. Not knowing what the 10 of us, listed above, would say, they each chose half of Jefferies' output: John, who came first, taking Jefferies' spirituality, Len his factual side.

Concentrating mostly on Jefferies' fiction, John was nevertheless aware of echoes there of *The Story of My Heart*, where we read of Jefferies climbing Liddington Hill to reach a rapturous state at the top. In the first chapter of *The Dewy Morn*, Felise also climbs a hill, and the walk is described in sensuous detail. Her beauty is offered to us as something spiritual; awareness of the beauty of nature is virtue; Godwin, the 'villain', is immune to nature. The hills purify those who walk on them. Amaryllis does no hill-climbing but still 'loved beauty for its own sake' and represents Jefferies himself thereby.

Len felt there was no problem over the two sides of Jefferies, the emotion fed the factual side and vice versa. We gain from the contrast. To illustrate Jefferies' great skill in portraying the factual, Len read from *The Amateur Poacher*, the account of Oby's day in court. He read the passage from *The Gamekeeper at Home* about the healthiness of living and working in the woods, and from *Hodge and His Masters* the superb account of 'The Gig and the Four-in-Hand'. Having read these passages and asked himself to sum up he felt he couldn't - there was too much diversity.

In the discussion that followed, we were told that *Hodge* is now a set book in a course at Reading University. As to whether Jefferies gained from being so 'many-sided', one view was that the fact that he was mainly free-lance meant that great variety, as well as contradictions, were inevitable. One drawback, pointed out by Brian Morris, was that whatever Jefferies did, he would always be compared with some one who was the best at that skill, and that only, whereas Jefferies, as we had shown, was very good on a great number of topics. As to how to answer the layman's question - 'Jefferies, what is he famous for?' - we felt that there was no short answer.

COATE MUSEUM REPORT

The Museum has been open as usual and visitors welcomed by volunteer members of the Society. At the time of writing, the new tenant had not been installed but security and fire alarms have been fitted to the thatched (inhabited) part of the house in readiness. The security system to the Museum part has been up-graded. The house still attracts vandals, but the garden has been more thoroughly trimmed than previously with the happy result that a large metal plaque was revealed. It bore the following message:

This tree was planted by the children of the Swindon Branch of the Workers Educational Association and dedicated by the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Madras to

Richard Jefferies

Nature's great prose writer

September 21st 1921

A.T. Dicks
President

H. Whiting
Hon. Sec.

J.J. Ward
Hon. Fin. Sec.

R. George
Rambles Sec..

The tree was (and is) a box tree and stands near the corner of the house closest to the orchard.

The russet apple tree recently planted, and doing well, is now rather sick, having been ring-barked by something. Mark Daniel, who grew it, and planted it, has not accepted defeat.

THE SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

This matter has dominated events since March, involving the Society's officers, *The Evening Advertiser*., Swindon's MPs (Julia Drown and Michael Wills), local societies, and numerous citizens of Swindon. There was a 'march' (well attended) and a petition is open for objectors to sign. Already, 9,000 signatures have been obtained; other literary societies have joined in at our request, via the Alliance of Literary Societies. A form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please sign it (if you have not already signed) and persuade your supporters to sign it too. It should be sent to Jean Saunders (now an RJS member) at the address on the form. The sooner the better.

A book would be needed to set out all that has been done, and learned, since March. The University of Bath in Swindon (Oh, yes; it was already here) has distributed a *Newsletter* which states that the University 'wants to site its major campus next to the new Great Western Hospital, where its [Bath's] School for Health will work with the hospital on joint research, teaching, and continual professional development.' So, that's clear.

Many people in Swindon welcome the idea of a university. So do we. We do not want it at the price of seeing Coate's green fields and the environs of Coate Water disappear under 2,000 houses and other developments.

On 14 June Ray Morse and John Webb represented the Society at a meeting in Liddington attended by a deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Bath and other officers, as well as members of the Parish Councils of Chiseldon, Liddington and Wanborough. Swindon Civic Trust, Swindon Strategic Partnership, and other groups were also represented. The vice-chancellor said that coming to Coate (I am quoting Ray's report) was not for the beauty of the area but a matter of financial expediency: the land was being offered free of charge. They would be happy to go elsewhere.

In view of the revelation that the university had been invited to come to Coate by the Borough Council it was decided to meet with the Council. At this meeting, on 19 July, Mike Bawden, Council Leader, made it clear that Swindon would give the developers, Persimmon/Redrow, permission to build on the land (land that was once Day House Farm) in return for land free of charge for the university.

No plans have yet been approved. Funding from the Department of Higher Education has not yet been approved. Michael Wills MP is vehemently in favour of building at Coate; Julia Drown, the MP for the area, is not vehement but, more importantly, she is not in his favour. She sees problems involving infrastructure.

John Webb's own reactions to these two meetings are set out next.

Proposed Developments at Coate

On 14 June a meeting took place in Liddington Village Hall between representatives of Bath University and members of Chiseldon, Liddington and Wanborough Councils, Swindon Civic Trust, Swindon Strategic Partnership, one or two local residents and the Richard Jefferies Society.

Bath's position was that they wanted the 150 acres that had been offered to them for their university to be between the Great Western Hospital and Coate, and nowhere else. They were sorry that bringing this about meant getting into bed with developers (who would go on to fill the rest of the space with 1,800 houses and a couple of commercial developments) *but they needed the money*. Never mind the feelings of the people of Swindon. Their main message was that they were doing

Swindon a favour by accepting the gift of 150 acres. We should be grateful to them.

They continued to patronise us, unworthy Wiltshire peasants that we were, for 2 hours, hinting darkly at the disaster it meant for Swindon were they to pull out.

On 19 July another meeting took place between the same people and, instead of Bath University, the leader of Swindon Borough Council. He began the meeting by distancing himself from the arguments. He had had little to do with any of it, apparently; other people had conducted negotiations and come to accommodations, and he couldn't be responsible for everything. (Why was he there?) When asked who ultimately was making the decisions he clearly felt his leadership was being impugned and became angry and red and loud. He was a forceful and tough leader, he told us So that was all right then. Everyone he'd spoken to in the borough *wanted* the University. We continued to point out that that the meeting was not about whether it was a good idea or not to have a bit of someone else's university in Swindon, but the potential siting of it at Coate. That's where they *want* it. But over 9,000 signatures so far say that the council-tax payers of Swindon *don't* want it there. Why all this deference to Bath? And what about the assurances given by council officers that, after the inappropriate building of the new hospital in the middle of the foreground to the AONB of Liddington Hill, there would be no other development in the area? (Here he spreads his hands and adopts a 'reasonable' tone.) Circumstances change, don't they, new priorities emerge, eye on the future, world developing, opportunities beckon, decisions to be made, leadership vital, etc. A convenient philosophy. We can all now say one thing and do another.

The future of the countryside between Coate and the motorway is being planned by an alliance of the landowner, the developer, Bath University and Swindon Borough Council. The poor old Swindon resident who will pay for it all through the loss of the only attractive amenity in the borough is ignored. If this vandalism goes ahead, Coate Water will have as much relationship with the countryside as does Hyde Park.

The Council Leader seemed to believe that, by building all over the land between the hospital and Coate, a transformation would begin to take place whereby Swindon would become a cultural Utopia along the lines of renaissance Florence. Desperate measures are clearly required from someone who presides over a council which, in turn, presides over one of Europe's ugliest towns, boasting not a single distinguished modern building, has the worst education record in the country, and is defaced by graffiti and drifts of litter. This dynamic leader confessed he didn't know who owned the land under discussion nor what studies were planned for the campus by Bath University.

Two encouraging recent developments though lift the fatalistic gloom a little. The new Ibis Hotel at J16 of the M4 had their application for a gigantic mobile hoarding at J15 refused by Council on the grounds that it would be inappropriate in the foreground to the Liddington AONB. Then, plans for a football stadium and sports village at Shaw Community Forest were overwhelmingly defeated with no votes in favour. Unfortunately, since then, Swindon Town Football Club have reported that they would 'consider building their new stadium at Coate'. The developers, Redrew and Persimmon, who had offered 150 acres for free to the

University in exchange for planning consent to build on the rest of the land, would now offer their largesse to Swindon Town instead.

A planning inspector will open a public enquiry in November.

John Webb

In the meantime, another meeting was held in Chippenham. John Price attended, vice Len Grugeon whose doctors had advised him not to take part. John's report follows:

Development of the Coate Site - Examination in Public

An examination in Public was held in June and July to consider the new Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan. The examination was held before David Asher, the Inspector appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister, and was chaired by Jim Parke.

On the final day of the Examination, Friday July 2nd, the matter under consideration was "University Campus Provision and Location." Two questions were to be addressed here; (a) Should the Plan make provision for a University Campus? and (b) Is Coate an appropriate location for a University Campus?

I attended on behalf of the Richard Jefferies Society, and was provided with the written responses submitted by the Chairman and Secretary of the Society.

The Chairman opened the meeting by outlining the proposed order of events. He would invite Bath University and their developers to speak first, and then the local planning authority and English Nature. After that any of the other participants could speak on any relevant issues.

Professor Breakwell (the Vice-Chancellor of Bath University) spoke first and outlined her proposals for a 150 acre campus at Coate, with complementary town centre developments. It transpired from subsequent questions that Bath University has to expand to maintain viability, but that the area round Bath City is "too environmentally sensitive" to allow further development there!

Mark Rose of Lovejoy's spoke next, acting as development agents for the University project. He was followed by Les Durrant of DPDS Consulting, on behalf of the housing developers; Persimmon Homes and Redrew Homes, who wish to build 2,500 houses on the site, and an industrial estate. When pressed on details of the scheme, Durrant simply replied, "We mustn't be too hung up about detail at present". There followed a response by the local planners, who seemed in favour of the scheme, and finally the English Nature Representatives, who put the ecological case against the proposals - but very unforcefully. This finished the formal presentations, but most surprisingly, I was then asked to speak on behalf of the Society, as "having a real interest in the area under consideration." I tried to speak with some feeling on behalf not only of local members of the Society, but also those living in far parts of the world who have, or might wish to travel to Swindon to visit "Jefferies Land".

Other speakers who argued cogently and forcefully against the development were Jean Saunders of "Friends of the Earth", the representative of Liddington and Chiseldon Parish Councils, and (perhaps surprisingly), Hunter Page planning on behalf of David Wilson Homes. Although this was done as a "spiking" exercise (David Wilson Homes wish to build to the east of Swindon and perhaps incorporate the University there), the evidence they presented on aquifers, ancient hedgerows, archaeological sites, and Richard Jefferies, made some of the other objectors' cases seem relatively unresearched.

We have to wait for the Inspector's findings - possibly not until November - but meanwhile, a very encouraging development is that the Leader of Swindon Council has been defeated on the proposal to rebuild the Swindon Town Football Club Stadium on the Shaw Community Forest Site. There is a considerable political backlash against apparent "promises" that have been made to developers, and it may well turn out that the Coate development proposals could be caught up in this reappraisal.

John Price

We are all extremely grateful to John Price, Ray Morse, and John Webb for attending these meetings on our behalf. A box full of newspaper cuttings has been assembled. It is clear that the citizens of Swindon care greatly about Coate Water, and do not want their beloved park spoiled. A petition list is kept at the Museum for visitors to sign. Letters have been sent to influential people. Please play your part.

Hon. Sec.



Jean Saunders

HOW I DISCOVERED JEFFERIES

Eamonn Franks who lives in Essex, 'became acquainted with Richard Jefferies' work several years ago when, by chance, he read *The Story of My Heart*. Just recently his interest was renewed when he came across a copy of Walter Besant's *The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies*, which encouraged him to find out more about Jefferies' life and work.'

He found the Society by consulting, through the efforts of a computer literate friend, the Society's website (Eamonn declares himself a Luddite who is still on pen and paper.) He finds Jefferies' work interesting from a literary and a spiritual point of view.

Jean Saunders. She writes: 'My husband read and enjoyed *Bevis* as a boy. He encouraged me to read it (along with other children's books - Arthur Ransome's

Swallows and Amazons books, for example) when I was about 30 years old. Ten years later we moved to a village near Swindon. Coate Water and the RJ museum was one of our first stops. I bought the Little House at Coate and later acquired *The Story of My Heart*. As an active environmentalist for 18 years, the opening pages of the autobiography pulled at my own heart strings as, by then, I knew the landscape and felt exactly the same sense of well-being that it provoked. I fell in love with Coate Water for all manner of reasons and have done nothing but fight to protect it as a member of Swindon Friends of the Earth. Indeed, I don't think that one person could have done more.

I have a friend who was a member as was her father. I guess this goes back to the times when the Society was set up. I have been reluctant to join the Society as I do have some serious qualms about Richard Jefferies as a person - very non PC! As to shooting sports, I am vehemently opposed. However, I do believe that it is tragic that such an influential writer who was born and lived near Swindon for so long, is given so little prominence in the town by Swindon Borough Council. With the latest threats to Coate, it was time to join and to encourage Swindonians to do the same.'

John Sykes lives in Herefordshire. He recalls vividly the event which sparked off an interest in Jefferies: 'I was doing a year at Nottingham University for my Certificate of Education, and, like all members of the Education Department, received an invitation to be interviewed by the lecturer in Biology concerning a survey he was carrying out on religious experience. (I have not looked any further into this survey, but I have supposed that it was part of a larger examination of religious experience which Sir Alister Hardy helped initiate). The lecturer's name was Hey, David Hey, I think, and year was 1973.

I duly appeared before him, and I mentioned that, on a small number of occasions, while out walking certain combinations of moon, hill, river, light, sky, tree, had struck me as having a deep significance, had perhaps bored through the veneer of intellectuality and convention and made me aware of something primordial in me, a recognition of an order which in everyday life doesn't reveal itself. Basically, the feeling was impossible to describe, and how I have just defined it may be mere wishful thinking.

Anyway, after what I had said, David Hey said, "You should read *The Story of My Heart* by Richard Jefferies."

I didn't rush out immediately to a bookshop, library or elsewhere, but the name of Jefferies must have stuck, because I think I bought a tatty second-hand copy of *Jefferies' England* and read it, and enjoyed it, though I couldn't, and still can't, read a lot of Jefferies at one time.

Eventually, I found a copy of *The Story of My Heart* and read it, I started well but I found it difficult going after a while.

I think I discovered that the Society existed because it is listed in the *Directory of Antiquarian and Secondhand Booksellers* published by the Provincial Booksellers Fairs Association.'

Graham Walker who lives in Reading found out about the Society through the Edward Thomas Fellowship, of which he is a member. He writes: 'I first became acquainted with the writing of Richard Jefferies in my twenties, enjoying "his way with words". Along with W H Hudson, he has a very special affinity with English landscape which makes his writing something special. I recently acquired a very old copy of *The Life of the Fields* (1908) illustrated by M U Clarke, and, together

with a copy of your recently produced video 'Jefferies Land', I thought it was about time I joined.

I know the poetry of Sorley and Williams too who make this part of Wiltshire come alive for me.'

CITINGS OF JEFFERIES

Geoff Hirst has found a reference to Jefferies' article on the railway works in a nostalgic monthly that he sees called *Steam Days*.

In *The Calling of a Cuckoo* he found a reference by David Jenkins, former Bishop of Durham. In a chapter entitled 'The Sevenfold Cord of Faith', the sixth is the ongoing elation he gets when presiding at the Eucharist. He says: 'Then there are moments of wonder and stillness which would require poetry to express if I could write about them at all. I find them resonating with nature's mystics such as the atheist Richard Jefferies when he describes the transfiguration of a field as he was watching it in the spring.'

Susan King now edits a magazine, *Aspect County*. In Number 78 she mentions Jefferies on page 14, and in Number 72 she reviews Jeremy Hooker's two new publications. On page 4 she includes a quotation from a poem by Edward Thomas.

BILL BRANDT AND RICHARD JEFFERIES

This summer saw centenary exhibitions of work by the photographer BUI Brandt at the National Portrait Gallery and V&A. While leafing through Paul Delany's monograph in the V&A bookshop I came across a photograph of Barbury Castle and was intrigued to discover that it was one of a series Brandt took for 'The Horizon of Richard Jefferies', an article published in *Picture Post* on the very day of Jefferies' centenary in 1948 (6 Nov). The text was by Richard Church.

I looked up Church's *Picture Post* article in the BL and found it a crisp yet sympathetic and sensitive summary of Jefferies' life and ideals. Brandt's photographs were of Barbury Castle (with the two beech clumps to the s.w. against the skyline); the downs near Aldbourne; Coate Water; an unidentified expanse of downland; the memorial sarsen on Burderop Down; and the gamekeeper's cottage at Hodson Bottom, wrongly captioned 'Richard Jefferies' birthplace, Coate Farm'.

The photographs of Barbury Castle and the gamekeeper's cottage reappeared in *Literary Britain*, a book of photographs by Brandt of famous authors' 'homes and 'aunts', published by Cassell in 1951. The book carried an introduction by John Hayward (1905-1965), the anthologist and bibliophile whom his friend T S Eliot acknowledged in his *Four Quartets* 'for improvements of phrase and construction'. The two beech clumps near Barbury — in Edward Thomas's fine simile, like conspirators huddled together — make a splendidly atmospheric, drama-filled composition.

Brandt was a German-Jewish refugee who like the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner and so many others made a new home in England and immeasurably enriched her cultural life. Like the composer Gerald Finzi he became in some ways more English than the English and it was fitting that one of the 20th century's finest photographers should depict the favourite landscapes of one of the most quintessentially English writers.

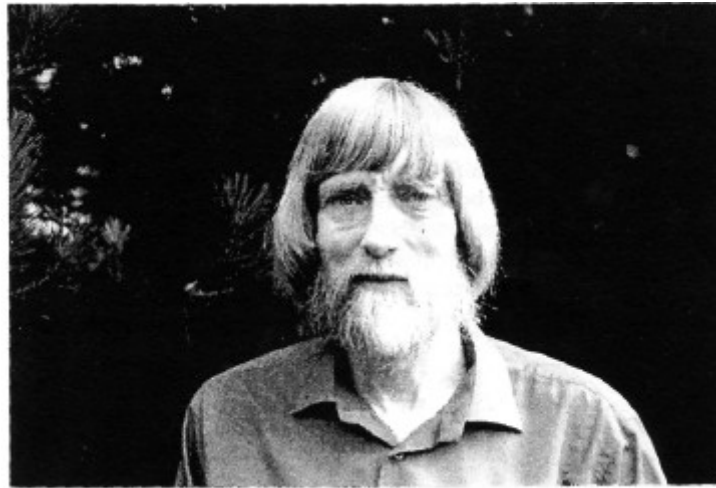
Andrew Rossabi

HENRY WILLIAMSON AND THE INFLUENCE OF HIS FELLOW NATURE WRITERS

This Henry Williamson Society Study Day was held on 21 February 2004 in the spacious Swedenborg Hall, close to Bloomsbury Square and the British Museum. Richard Jefferies Society Council member Brian Fullagar opened the day and I then gave a revised and extended version of 'Henry Williamson's Debt to Richard Jefferies', first read at our Society's Study Day last summer at Chiseldon, the content being summarised in the Autumn 2003 RJ Journal. The full text of this extended talk will be included in a future edition of the HW Journal.

After a short follow-up question session Brian Fullagar then continued with 'Further Thoughts on Richard Jefferies and Henry Williamson'. He chronicled his own introduction to Jefferies with *Bevis* and added that 'the magic does not depart with the last page'. His childhood included sudden evacuations to air raid shelters where their teacher, Miss Bell, read to them, on one occasion from *Tarka the Otter* which introduced him to Williamson. Several readings followed, including a long letter to the RJ Society from Henry Williamson, dated Easter Day 1971. Brian talked of Jefferies' 'sublime enjoyment of the natural world' and as an example read first the 'Spirit Land' passage from 'Wild Flowers' and then an extract from *The Story of My Heart* to stress the importance of this book in Williamson's early literary career. He also examined the controversial updating and revising by Williamson of *Hodge and His Masters*. In the question session that followed a possible joint study day between the two societies was suggested. My own thoughts on this are positive and if the same venue could be used it would be interesting to examine how both writers reacted in their writings to both central and the more urban parts of London.

There was ample time in the lunch break to visit the book stall and the library items about the Jefferies/Williamson links, including correspondence and photos of Henry Williamson's Presidency of our society. Anne Williamson gave the first talk in the afternoon, titled 'A Purple Thread-Looking at W H Hudson and Edward Thomas' though almost all was about Hudson. Although I have read several of Hudson's books, Anne's detailed chronology of his life gave me much fresh detail, particularly as she interlinked her comments with references to both Jefferies and Williamson. Her talk's title reflected Hudson's *The Purple Land* and she later noted that Henry Williamson had included Hudson's *Far Away and Long Ago* in the preface to the first edition of *The Beautiful Years*, showing how the writer was conversant with Hudson from the start of his literary career. Anne quoted *A Hind in Richmond Park* as one of many examples of Hudson's mystical writing, something which is often overlooked. She chronicled his arrival in our country, his early problems and eventual success as a writer, and the fact that his first book wasn't published until a few years before Richard Jefferies' death. Hudson, described as a 'half-tamed hawk' had like Williamson, connections with many well-known writers and was pivotal in the early years of what is now the RSPB. In the question session that followed there was a suggestion that, because of recent vandalism, it might be beneficial to have Jefferies and Hudson buried together in Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing, Hudson having initially requested that he be buried as close to Jefferies as possible.



Richard Stewart

Finally, Henry's son Richard gave a very passionate talk on 'The Nature Writings of Henry Williamson', explaining that there was a long list of nature writers and then another much shorter one, embracing both Jefferies and Williamson. He compared the two types of writing to the difference between a photo of a sunflower and the multi-layered responses you could get by studying Van Gogh's portrait of the same subject. He extended this analogy by comparing a detailed monograph on the peregrine falcon, which was fine for 'those who think in straight lines', with his father's descriptions of the bird. He did add that Henry's knowledge of natural history, though obviously superb in respect of otters, salmon and other much-featured animals, was somewhat sketchy on occasions, with many small wading birds ending up as 'stints'. He also examined the 'humbug' factor that prevents some readers from enjoying the works of a writer because of something they know about his private life and find objectionable. This might of course apply to Williamson's politics, which are well described in many of the *Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* books. My own personal reservation here was a very dismissive comment about Hemingway, who is admittedly one of my favourite writers; a re-reading of books like *The Old Man and the Sea* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* would reveal that Hemingway also is a writer of great depth, both lyrical and passionate in his work, which includes some of the most sensuous and beautiful descriptions of human passion that I have ever read. The many readings from Williamson's works were well chosen to demonstrate how the various animals were partly Williamson himself, whose own life was echoed in the different stages of, for example, Tarka's own birth, life and eventual death. These passages particularly exemplified the mystical and religious elements in Williamson's work, especially poignant being the extract from the last chapter of *Tarka the Otter*. Williamson was adept at powerful writing in his novels, particularly at the end, a skill which regrettably Jefferies never fully mastered.

Those present were asked to complete a 'reaction' form at the end of what had been a long but very stimulating and enjoyable day.

Richard Stewart

OBITUARIES

JOYCE AVES. We inform our readers of the death of one of our Life Members. Joyce Audrey Aves, a sister of Gordon Stow (see below) and of Ronald William Stow who died in August 2001 leaving a legacy of books to our Society. She was born on

31 December 1922 in Swindon and died on 29 February 2004 in Honiton, Devon where she had lived for the past two to three years. Her funeral service took place at Swindon Crematorium conducted by the Revd Anthony Barnes the present Methodist Minister (until August 2004) of her old church in Bath Road, Swindon. There as a child she attended Sunday School and afterwards led a drama and youth group, and was married there in the 1950s.

On leaving school she first worked in the offices of a local coal merchant, then on the staff of Vickers-Armstrong - an aircraft factory - and later at the local Inland Revenue Offices. Following this she trained in Birmingham as a teacher, and began her teaching career at Sunninghill, Ascot where she continued as such for the remainder of her working life.

She joined the Richard Jefferies Society in 1981 and attended several special events including the Centenary Commemorations in 1987, and once enjoyed going on an organised nature walk around the grounds and fields surrounding Lydiard Mansion. She held a strong interest in Swindon's history and expressed pride and joy that the Museum at Coate is remembered in Richard Jefferies' name. (When a house, it was once threatened with being demolished and two houses being built in its place because of decay and neglect, but with some persuasion of John Betjeman and others, Swindon Officials decided that it would be a good idea to make it into a museum). Mrs. Aves greatly admired Richard Jefferies' writings and was keen to introduce him to friends and acquaintances, and always regretted that she had not become a member sooner. Her love of the countryside was conveyed in her teaching to her pupils.

She leaves two sons and grandchildren, and last Christmas purchased a copy of the "Jefferies Land" video, trying to ensure that her family would establish an interest and liking for the writer she held in such high regard.

GORDON NOEL STOW Born 18 December 1921. Died at Great Western Hospital Swindon 23 April 2004. A service of Thanksgiving for his life was held at Bath Road Methodist Church, Swindon where he had been a life long member, a door steward and gardener. After leaving school he was apprenticed in the GWR works, then spent several years working for Marine Mountings an engineering firm which made engines for ships.

He served three years as a Royal Engineer in the Army in Palestine.

Returning to civilian life he spent the remainder of his working days at Garrards an electrical engineering company in Swindon.

He joined the RJS in 1978 and had a fond affection for Jefferies' nature essays and *Hodge and His Masters*. Other interests included visiting churches and cathedrals, sacred music, poetry and drawing. Each summer he visited Coate Water and the Town Gardens to relax and enjoy the scene. He lived quietly, simply and contentedly never craving for modern appliances or possessions. He loved his garden and home which was a time warp of the 1940s and 1950s except for a TV set.

He will be missed at our meetings having attended regularly and loyally.

INVITATION

Roger Ebbatson, who gave the Birthday Lecture in 2001, is now Professor at the University of Loughborough.

On 10 November 2004, at 6.00 pm, he will deliver his inaugural lecture in the Martin Theatre. Members of the Society are welcome to attend and hear the lecture. The title will be:

'Sensations of Earth: Hardy/Marx, Jefferies/Heidegger'

This may be the best place to announce that Chen Ying, from the University of Beijing, is coming to Loughborough in February to study Jefferies under Professor Ebbatson. We hope to meet her and help her during her year in England.

BOOK NEWS

HOBNOB PRESS. John Chandler (RJS member and Birthday lecturer) is both writer and publisher. His new book, *Devizes and Central Wiltshire*, covers 42 parishes centred on Devizes plus Devizes itself; it has illustrations and a map of each parish. £20. ISBN 0-946418-16-0. He has also just published a new book, *Beyond a Cottage Window*, by our member Mary Roberts, who lives at Rockley. ISBN 0-946418-18-7. £5.95. Enquiries to Hobnob Press, PO Box 1838, East Knoyle, Salisbury SP3 6FA.

ROGER EBBATSON is about to publish *An Imaginary England*. It will be out in 2005 and will cost about £40. ISBN 0-7546 5092 8. The sub-title is: 'Nation, Landscape and Literature, 1840-1920', and the book will include 'Jefferies, being and history', and *The Dewy Morn*. Orders to Ashgate Publishing Direct Sales, Bookpoint Ltd., 130 Milton Park, Abingdon OX14 4SB.

RICHARD MABEY, whose *Food for Free* and *Flora Britannica* attracted so much praise, will publish his memoir, *Nature Cure*, next January. *The Times* of 18 May 2004 included 2 pages about him and about the new book.

Reviews of any of the titles listed would be welcomed.

GREEN BOOKS' mail order catalogue is with the Hon. Sec. Members may like *Creating a Flower Meadow*, *Discovering Green Lanes*, or *Building with Straw Bales*.

JOHN PRICE is a dealer in books by Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams.

Enquiries to John Price, Granham West, Granham Hill, Marlborough, Wilts SN8 4DN. Tel. 01672 515150.

CLEAR WATER BOOKS Members, and book buyers, will be saddened to hear of the death of Stephen Clarke, well known to most attendees at book fairs as a first-rate dealer in books by Jefferies and Williamson.

HUGOE MATTHEWS' bibliography of the works of Henry Williamson is just out. The Hon. Sec. has a copy which will be available to members and on show at the AGM. Deliberately made pocket-size it has 232 pages, hardback, with jacket. We hope to review it in the spring. ISBN 1 84114 364 2 published by Halsgrove, Halsgrove House, Lower Moor Way, Tiverton EX16 6SS. Price £19.95.

OTHER SOCIETIES

The Friends of Alfred Williams The Friends' Newsletter goes from strength to strength. Number 6 contains copies of 2 letters from Williams to M A Goddard (1915); an account of the Civil List Pension which arrived just too late; and news of Chris Bowies' most successful sponsored walk from Swindon to Devizes in Williams' footsteps.

The Edward Thomas Fellowship Newsletters 50 and 51 went astray but are now with the Hon. Sec. (and, as always, available to members on application). Number 50 contains photographs of all the committee members, news of a Study Day and

walks, and an excellent article by our member, Susan King, devoted to one poem by Thomas - 'Home'. Number 51 announces that the old OUP edition of Collected Poems has been taken over by Faber; it should be ready in October. Meanwhile an American edition - *The Poems of Edward Thomas* - has appeared, published by Handsel Books. The Newsletter also has an article by Ian Brinton entitled 'Edward Thomas and Nympholepsy'.

WANHS The Journal, *Wiltshire Studies* Vol. 97 is a bumper one (326 pages). This time, 2 articles were right on our doorstep, or Jessie Baden's since they dealt with the work of a Swindon amateur archaeologist A D Passmore (by Laura Phillips) and the Stone Circles of North Wiltshire, (Aubrey Burl). Passmore claimed to have discovered the remains of a stone circle near Day House Farm. In fact, Jefferies had found them, and published his findings in the *North Wilts Herald* 9 November 1867, as the editor points out.

Friends of the Ridgeway At a packed AGM in March, attended by Alun Michael, Minister for Rural Affairs, and the new President, Lord Bradshaw, Ian Ritchie was pleased to set out the new Constitution for the Friends. The seasonal ban on recreational vehicles, despite objections, came into operation: results will be closely monitored.

The Henry Williamson Society We have received the Society's *Newsletter* number 10 and congratulate the members on securing Chris Jones as their new Treasurer to replace Dr. Boakes. Richard Stewart has written an account (see p. 13) of the Study Day in which he took part. The commentator in the *Newsletter* describes Richard as 'an easy-to-know person, a practising poet who is full of knowledge and friendliness.'

The Alliance of Literary Societies

Unfortunately I was unable to attend this year's AGM on 24 April which was hosted by the Graham Greene Birthplace Trust at Berkhamstead. According to the Newsletter it was a most enjoyable occasion. The Richard Jefferies Society features more than once in the Newsletter re the video "Jefferies Land", the 4 CDs of the novels which is seen as an "excellent idea", and lastly, but certainly not least, a special spread on the "Save Coate Campaign" which the Alliance is ardently backing. Helen Newman, ALS representative.

RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

If you would like any of the following, please write to Mrs. Norma Goodwin, Wildings, 3a Momford Road, Oliver's Battery, Winchester SO22 4LE.

Postcards:	now 25p or any 3 for	65p
Watercolour of Liddington Hill & quotation	Wild flowers & quotation	Portrait of Richard Jefferies
Richard Jefferies & Old Town (guided walk)		25p
Richard Jefferies in Eltham		25p
Richard Jefferies in Surbiton		50p
Richard Jefferies & Coate Water (guided walk)		50p
A Jefferies Land itinerary		20p
Back numbers of the Journal		f 1.00
<i>The Story of My Heart</i> (paperback)		£2.00

Postage Add 20p for orders up to £1, 40p for orders up to £2 and 60p for orders £2 and over. Very small orders can be paid in postage stamps.

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. Helen Newman has done the typing. Printing and despatch by Margaret Evans and Phyllis Treitel. Website:
www.bath.ac.uk/~lissmc/rjeffs.htm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BIRTHDAY LECTURE

SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER 2004 THE VILLAGE HALL, LIDDINGTON. WILTS.

PROGRAMME

- 10.30 Reception and refreshments
11.00 AGM (members only)
1.00 Break for lunch and walks. We have asked for the church to be opened.
2.30 The Birthday Lecture (visitors welcome)
Speaker: Professor Eric Jones. D.Litt. Oxon.
Subject: "The Land that Jefferies Inherited"
4.00 Refreshments

Directions

From Swindon: Leave A419 on B4192, signposted Liddington. Ignore sign to Badbury, on right. Take next turn on right marked 'Village Hall'. Plenty of free parking behind the hall.

From Aldbourne: On B4192, shortly after crossing the M4, turn left at sign to 'Village Hall'

Note: The B4192 is a fast road.

Meals: The Sun Inn serves pub lunches, The Village Inn is more formal. Or bring a picnic; beverages supplied.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER 2004 AT LIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

AGENDA

1. Chairman's introductory remarks.
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of the last AGM 18 October 2003.
4. Matters arising: a The Museum at Coate b. The Society's Archives
5. Annual Report.
6. Treasurer's Report.
7. Election of Examiner of Accounts.
8. Elections to Council; the following are due to retire:

Jeremy Hooker (President) Geoff Hirst (Treasurer) Helen Newman Richard Stewart

Explanation:

President. We are very sorry to report that Professor Jeremy Hooker, who is due for re-election in 2004, has decided, for health reasons, that he does not wish to stand.

Mr. Hugoe Matthews has agreed to stand for election as President 2004-2009.

Proposer: Andrew Rossabi

Seconder: John Webb

Treasurer. Although Mr. Hirst took up his duties in early 2004, he was deemed to have begun his 5-year term in late 1999, as that was the operative year for his predecessor, the late Dick Bedwin. Geoff Hirst is therefore due to retire. Since he joined the Society he has lived in Witney. He plans to move back to the north of England but is willing to continue as Treasurer, provided he can limit the number of meetings he attends in person. Since much of his work is done by post and by e-mail, Council members would like him to remain as Treasurer on this basis, and therefore propose him for re-election for the years 2004 to 2009.

Helen Newman and Richard Stewart are also proposed for re-election for the years 2004 to 2007.

9. The Save Coate Campaign.

10. Any Other Business.

A copy of the minutes of the 2003 AGM is circulated with this Agenda, and should be brought to the AGM. Any motions or resolutions for debate should be sent to the Hon. Sec. (Phyllis Treitel) before 27 September, as should nominations for Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded. Nominations are not limited to those listed above.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society held at the Memorial Hall, Aldbourne.. Wilts, on Saturday 18 October 2003.

PRESENT: Margaret Bathe, Jean Bone, Marie Chesham, David Chesham, Pat. Clark, Margaret Evans, Norma Goodwin, Margaret Gould, Lisl Grugeon, Len Grugeon, Stan Hickerton, Geoff Hirst, Eric Jones, Howard Kensett, Sylvia Morse, Ray Morse, Sheila Povey, John Povey, John Price, Andrew Rossabi, John Savage, Phyllis Treitel; Eileen Voce, Alan Voce, John Wabb.

1. THE CHAIR

Mr Grugeon was in the chair; he held up photographs *he* had taken at the recent, successful Study Day.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were given in respect of Mr and Mrs Albright, Chris Bowles, Nancie Cator, Mark Daniel, Professor-Dillon, Mr and Mrs Gregory, Phyl Gyde, Professor Hooker, Helen Newman, Michael Parrott, Pain Smith, Gordon Stow.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2002 were approved and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a. The Museum at Coate. The Hon. Sec. read out a letter dated 14 October from Robert Dickinson, Swindon's Heritage Manager, first thanking the volunteers for their good work this year, and confirming Council's impression that this had been a successful year; second, describing the new security and fire alarms which have been installed. Mr Dickinson invited members to comment. It was agreed that, we might repeat our request for a good fence between the Museum's garden and that of the Sun **Inn**.

b. The Society's Archives, This subject had arisen last year, and some action promised. No decision had been taken however as new ways of opening up access to archives on-line had been suggested and these needed to be considered. The Society would still like to deposit the records, minute books etc. relating to its early days, and some files of correspondence, ideally in a university.

The Society's collection of photographs is now quite large and could be put on display if an opportunity presented itself.

5. ANNUAL REPORT

The Report was accepted

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Mr Hirst, explained that the accounts, when printed, had not been examined. They have now been examined by Mr Michael Steel C.A. and he is happy to continue as examiner. The signed copy of the accounts was put on file, Mr Hirst thanked the Museum volunteers for making their payments to him so simple to deal with.

He explained the inclusion of a sum of £2,000 as General Funds (see Treasurer's Report: para. 3). This represented an average year's expenditure and was a useful guide to managing reserves.

Mrs Gould queried the large items under Miscellaneous and Administration; Mr Hirst explained that the latter covered the Hon. Sec.'s and other Petty Cash; he was happy to show the books to anyone who wished to examine them.

Public Liability Insurance is an increasing burden as a result of the rise in claims. The Society has had no alternative to paying this year but will continue, as have other literary societies, to try to find a better bargain. One member suggested that we might rely on a disclaimer but the Treasurer doubted the reliability of that resource.

Mr Grugeon proposed the acceptance of the accounts; Mr Savage seconded the proposal. It was carried.

7. ELECTION OF EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

Mr Michael Steel C.A. was proposed as examiner by Mr Grugeon and seconded by Ldsr Grugeon. This was approved unanimously. Thanks would be conveyed to Mr Steel.

8. ELECTIONS

The following four members were re-elected to the Council for the years 2003 to 2006:

Mr Len Grugeon

Mrs Margaret Evans

Mr John Price

Mr Ray Morse.

Professor Patrick Dillon, who finds it increasingly difficult, to attend meetings, has stepped down? having served one year of his 3-year term. Professor Eric Jones, who was co-opted to Council in 2002, was proposed by Len Grugeon, seconded by Ray Morse, to serve the remaining 2 years. This was accepted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS There was no other business

The meeting ended at 12.00.

*Phyllis Treitel, Hon. Sec.
October 2003*

The Richard Jefferies Society

Receipts and Payments account for the year ending 30 June 2004

2003	Receipts	2004	2003	Payments	2004
	Balances brought down		776	Publications	1061
603	Bank	1068		Marketing	
45	Petty Cash	67	103	Rents	209
8365	Cov. B/Soc	8860	34	Subs	64
			66	Lecture fees	30
		9994		Donations	8
2055	Subs	1481	597	Administration	588
40	Donations	21	200	Miscellaneous	19
68	Sales:Mus	57	128	Insurance	194
67	Other	92			
219	Books				
		150			
203	Tax Reclaim	218			
194	Interest: B/Soc	188			
4	Bank	3			
		191			
				Bank	653
33	Miscellaneous			Petty Cash	31
				Cov. B/Soc	9198
					9883
		12056			12056

Treasurer's report to the Richard Jefferies Society 2003-4

My exuberance over the increase in subscriptions in 2002-3 proved to be premature as an element (£190) had been included in those figures but which should have been part of 2003-4. The double error (£380) accounts for most of the apparent dramatic fall in this area. However, even accounting for this and the life memberships subscribed in 2002-3, we are seeing a gradual downward trend in subscriptions which are our prime source of income.

Housekeeping has again been exemplary, and the increase in publication costs is due entirely to the replacement printing of our promotional leaflet. Room rents are entirely outside our control, and postal charges have also increased. I have taken the liberty to separately itemise insurance as it is a significant and growing burden on the society.

We have continued our practice of stating where our resources are placed and note the following breakdown. An element of investment income has been apportioned to Coate on the usual formula. There has been a small reduction in the General Reserve.

General Funds (excluding petty cash)	£2000
Coate	£597
Harold Adams	£155
General Reserve	<u>£7100</u>
	£9852

G.W.Hirst Honorary Treasure

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

' I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 30 June 2004.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 43(3)(a) of the 1993 Act);
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention. **Basis of**

Independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by a charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: Michael L. Steel
Chartered Accountant

' Highcroft
11 Minster Road
Godalming
Surrey GU7 1SP

Date: 2 August 2004

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2004-2005

2004

Saturday 2 October 11.00 AGM at The Church Hall, Liddington, Wilts.

2.30 Birthday Lecture: Professor Eric Jones. D.Litt. (Oxon) 'The Land that Jefferies Inherited'.

For details, see page 18.

Monday 6 December

* Jean Saunders of Friends of the Earth:

'Planning from an Environmental Perspective, with a focus on Coate'

2005

Monday 7 March* Joint Meeting with The Friends of Alfred Williams; Members' Evening.

Monday 4 April* Mark Daniel: 'Richard Jefferies' Use of Dialect'.

Monday 9 May* Jon Cannon: 'Along Chalk: On Walking the Downs in the Spirit of Richard Jefferies'.

Jon Cannon is a Wiltshire-based author and lecturer with a strong interest in his local landscape. He has worked for English Heritage. Among his other work is 'Swindon: a town built on steam'. He teaches at the University of Bristol.

* Meetings begin at 7.30 at the Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Swindon. Visitors welcome; no charge. Pay and display car park close by.