

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY SPRING NEWSLETTER 2003

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 1042838

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

FROM THE CHAIR

It is heartening to know that this Society, constantly though gradually, attracts new members. In the engulfing world of Information Technology a record of all of our past activities will doubtless become available at the click of a mouse. Then the great names of long past and more recent members will appear on the screen - Frances Gay, Harold Adams, Cyril Wright up to the likes of Mark Daniel, ., Hugoe Matthews, the Poveys and onward. Although Richard Jefferies was born in Wiltshire and evoked its landscape in his writings the Society attracts recruits from all parts of the country. Indeed, there are Jefferies enthusiasts resident in every continent except Antarctica. Remedially, expeditions to the South Pole would do well to include a copy of *The Life of the Fields* in their mobile libraries.

These thoughts in mind, I recall with affection and admiration the above-mentioned Cyril Wright, honorary Secretary of the Society from 1974 until 1995. Now there was the basic and essential Wiltshire-man - or so you thought as you encountered him monthly at the Society meetings or read the evocative words in his endearingly amateur newsletters, But was this so? There were views of Cyril not often glimpsed by the Society's members. He had been active in the pacifist movement, greatly honoured and sincerely mourned by the Peace Pledge Union. He was an informed supporter of Swindon Town Football Club and a keen cyclist, a dashing figure on his lightweight machine, crowned by a baseball cap worn the right way round. For me the true surprise of Cyril surfaced by accident. For a decade or so my wife and I spent Saturday afternoons looking after the small but fascinating museum in Godalming. To our pleased surprise one day Cyril came in to sample the delights on offer. He was visiting relatives nearby, for he still had family links with Surrey, where he had been born in 1909. "I'm really a Surrey man" he told me, "not Wiltshire at ail". He never confided to me how he had been turned into a man of Wilts. Photographs show Cyril as a bronzed young man, with the bearing and attire of a countryman although he came from this so-called county of suburbs. But in that time it had been noted as wooded and rural. Even today there are more farms than factories grouped round the artificial town of Woking, a creation of London's rail commuters and its main necropolis.

Cyril explored our museum thoroughly, being the sole visitor at the time. He was interested in its association with the RMS Titanic disaster, the architecture of Edwin Landseer Lutyens, the pioneering horticulture of Gertrude Jekyll and the ideas of Aldous Huxley, following Jefferies' *After London* with *Brave New World*. (The genre arguably continued with George Orwell's *1984*.) Cyril the pacifist enthused less about our local hero, General James Edward Oglethorpe, who helped Prince Eugene to save Europe from Ottoman domination at the siege of Vienna in 1717. The museum owns life-size mannequins of the General and of

Gertrude Jekyll. The lady has been recreated in gardening mode, with appropriate apron, daisy fork and wooden trug to hand. Artful jokers one day secreted this model behind a hedge, just where visitors to a garden party would come upon it, suddenly, unsuspecting, quickly reviewing their wine intake. Gertrude Jekyll flourished in these parts until 1932; she died twelve years before Lutyens, with whom she collaborated in designing gardens for his rich clients' country houses. RJS readers would enjoy her famous book *Old West Surrey*. This was published in 1904, describing people and places doubtless known to Jefferies.

So now, new member, you will see some connections with our admired author. He lived in Surbiton from 1877, beginning the period of his nature writing. The Society is even now planning to mark this association by visits and the erection of a celebratory plaque. A man born within earshot of steam trains must surely have taken the London and South Western Railway's well-publicised 'cheap day excursions' from Surbiton Station to the 'Valley of the Nightingales', marketing parlance for the River Wey between Guildford and Godalming. There is little hard evidence for this pleasure, except perhaps *Nature Near London* published in 1883, but the Jefferies spirit may be sensed in wooded Jekyll-land as well as on the windy chalk uplands. 'Having Cyril Wright walk in upon us seemed to clinch the matter. He stayed for a Museum cup of tea and did not complain.

Len Grugeon

PS Tim Woolley, newly-appointed Methodist Minister to our village of Shalford, confessed to me that he had never heard of Richard Jefferies, although he is a member of the George Eliot Society and therefore literary as well as literate. I pressed upon him my dog-enhanced copy of the 'Everyman' edition of *After London* and hope in time to report his reactions, I warned him of this intention to ensure that he reads the book! L.G.



Mr Ray Morse



Miss Helen Newman

COUNCIL MEMBERS 2003

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) Helen Newman (re-elected 2001 for 3 years) John Webb (elected 1999 for 3 years) Richard Stewart (elected 2001 for 3 years)

Co-opted A.S. Hickerton and E.S. Jones



Back row: Geoff Hirst, Ray Morse, John Price, Margaret Evans, Phyllis Treitel, Stan Hickerton
Front row: John Webb and Helen Newman

REPORT ON THE AGM AND BIRTHDAY LECTURE 2002

We met, for the first time, in the Lawn Community Centre, Swindon, on 12 October. The Centre is named after the Goddards' house (now demolished) and grounds (now a park), so, although Richard Jefferies would not have recognised it, it was home ground to him. Everything in the Centre is up-to-date and there was plenty of parking. For the AGM we were 26.

We elected John Savage to Council, and re-elected John Webb and Patrick Dillon. Margaret Gould is too valuable to be spared completely, and is still librarian, but she wished to retire from Council.

The Chairman thanked everyone, but especially the Treasurer and Hon. Sec. Margaret Bathe and Pam Smith took charge of refreshments in a completely strange kitchen with their usual aplomb. The weather was quite beautiful, and a photograph of as many Council members as could be mustered was taken outside.

Birthday Lecture: The Video 'Jefferies' Land'

After lunch, joined by many more, we heard John Webb's account of how he had set about making the video. He had two aims: to record as many as possible of the places known to Jefferies in North Wiltshire as still existed; to have a video that could be made available to members living too far away to visit. He hoped to interest Commercial TV as well. The wonders of modern camera technology were explained in detail.

And then came the video, still not quite perfect - more work needs to be done - but delightful to those watching - and listening (it was too dark to count but there were over 40 of us). Below is the list of those taking part. Their names are recorded here so that no one may say of John Webb's film, as was said of an earlier privately-made film of Jefferies, that no one could name the participants.

JEFFERIES' LAND

Made with the support of Kim Wright and students from the Richard Jefferies Building of New College, Swindon

Richard Jefferies
Bevis and RJ as a boy
Amaryllis and Cecily
Dog owner
Silly dog
Couple at Chiseldon church
Boy and girl at Holy Rood Church

John Price
George Barker
Laura Williams
Andrew Newton
Ben
Sheila & John Povey
Chloe & Hugo Hall

Voices - Phyllis Treitel, Mark Daniel, Walter Ineson, John Price, John Webb

Camera - New College students, Merlina Singh, Gurch Singh

Original Jefferies Land music - John Wallace

Editors - Merlina and Gurch Singh
Sound Editor - Gurch Singh
Technical services/facilities - Francis Hall of Brightwater

Systems Devised, produced and directed by John Webb (right)



Video: Latest News. A few more sequences need to be added to the video to make it the ideal length. John Webb hopes to capture some winter scenes (and readings); so far this winter, Wiltshire has not had the right amount of snow.

NOTE FROM TREASURER

Members will be pleased to know that in the current year we are reclaiming over £200 for the Society, thanks to members who have completed the Gift Aid form. Those who have already returned forms do not need to resubmit on an annual basis but, if you are liable to tax and have not yet filled in the Gift Aid form, kindly contact the Treasurer, Geoff Hirst (01993 703958) or Secretary (01865 735678) who will send you a form. With 87 members already Gift Aiding it is more cost effective for the Society to work this way than do a general mail shot.

COATE MUSEUM; OPENING DATES

The Museum will be open on the following Sundays in 2003:-

4 May, 18 May, 1 June, 15 June, 6 July, 20 July, 3 August, 17 August, 7 September, 21 September.

The following members will, in turn, be there to show visitors round and sell souvenirs, leaflets and books: John and Sheila Povey, Ray and Sylvia Morse, Mark Daniel, John Price, John Webb, Ethelwyn and Nigel Gregory and Jean Bone, Chris Bowles and Pam Smith, Margaret Gould and Phyllis Treitel.

The house and garden are open from 2.00 to 5.00 (no charge). There is parking in Coate Water Country Park and meals at the Sun Inn, next door.

RONALD WILLIAM STOW BOOK DRAW

As members will remember, Ronald Stow died in August 2001, and generously left his collection of books to the Society. A list was published in the Newsletter, and members were invited to submit expressions of interest for the books.

30 books were advertised, and 21 members submitted their "bids". It is pleasing to report that 18 of those writing in were successful. By far the most popular selection was the rare (we did not realise how rare at the time of listing!) *Words from High Swindon* by J B Jones. The next most popular choices were *Field and Farm*, *The Spring of the Year* and *Villages of the White Horse*.

The sale of the books raised just over £200 - a very welcome addition to the Society's funds - as well as providing members with some stimulating Christmas or New Year reading. The draw took place early in December, with John Webb assisting me to ensure fair play!

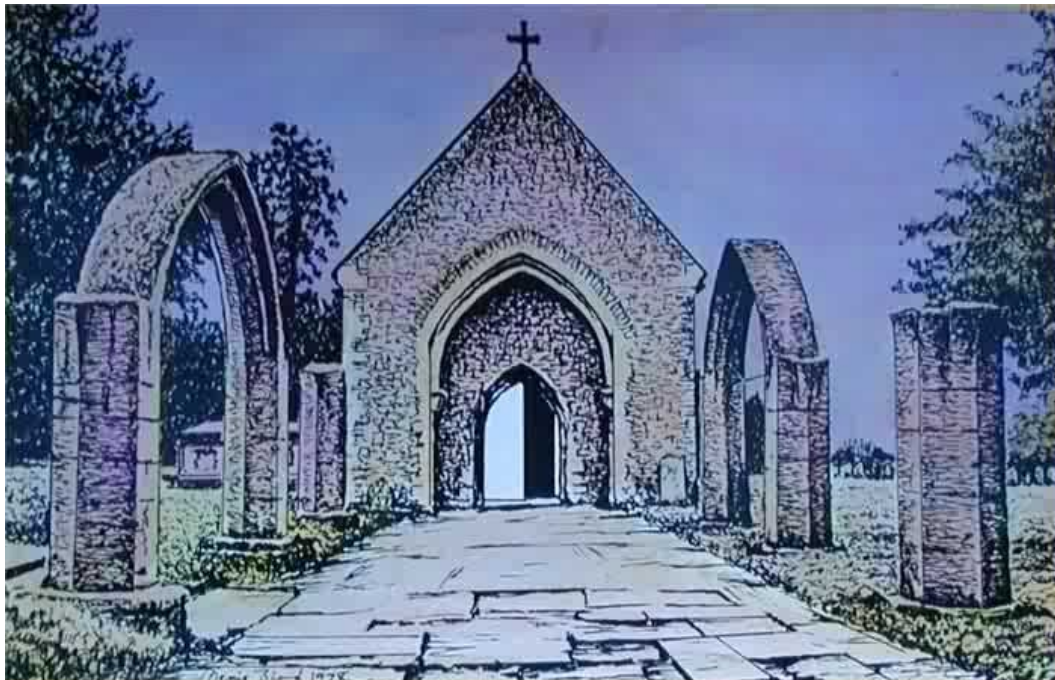
7 books remain unsold from the original list. They are: No. 2 *The Amateur Poacher*; No. 4 *Chronicles of the Hedges*, No. 7 *Field and Hedgerow*, No. 9 *Greene Feme Farm*, No. 11 *Jefferies' England*; No. 16 *The Open Air*, and No. 20 *The Story of My Heart*. Full details can be found in the last Newsletter, and if anyone is still interested in purchasing any of these, please contact me as soon as possible.

John Price

HOLY ROOD PLAQUE

In the Annual Report for 2002 (p.19) an account was given of a memorial plaque, placed in 1961 by the Society on a bench at Holy Rood. The bench disappeared. The Swindon Services Department of the Borough was approached; the Director Mr. Short, and the officer dealing with the matter, David Hoar, have both been

most helpful. As a result Mr. Ray Morse, who has taken charge, is able to report that a seat (not new but decent) has been provided by the Borough, the plaque affixed, and the seat placed in Holy Rood. It will be placed outside in the summer. Holy Rood Church (now an attractive ruin) is in Lawn Woods Park. The church is in a locked enclosure; please enquire from Ray Morse 01793 530520 if you wish to see it.



Remains of Holy Rood Church at The Lawn.

TOLWORTH PLAQUE

From 1877 to 1882 Richard Jefferies and his little family lived at 2 Woodside, Tolworth, Surbiton. The house is still there but numbering has changed; it is now 296 Ewell Road. To the house and its neighbours, shops have been added at ground floor level.

Number 296 (but not the shop) is occupied by a firm of estate agents. Last year, our Vice-chairman, John Price, approached the owner of number 296, Mr. John Stack, and asked him whether he would agree to a plaque being fixed to the house. It would say that Jefferies had lived there; the Society would pay for the plaque. To the delight of the Council Mr. Stack agreed.

The plaque has now been made, and it is planned to hold an unveiling ceremony in May to which all members are invited. It is possible that the date in May, may not have been fixed when this Newsletter goes to the printer. If a date is supplied please let John Price know, 10 days before, if you would like to be present. If a date is not supplied, ring or write to the Hon. Sec. or John Price, after Easter, for information, times, etc.

Members will be expected to make their own way to Surbiton, but if cars are going from Swindon it may be possible to offer lifts. The nearest rail station is Surbiton. From there you can catch bus number 281 or 406 (at the corner of Claremont Road) and ask for Surbiton Police Station, Map on application to Hon. Sec.

OUTING TO FAIRFORD: 28 JUNE 2003

Professor Eric Jones will be our guide; Mrs. Jones has kindly invited us to tea. We shall rendez-vous after lunch in Fairford, but most of us will gather first in Swindon. The mode of transport will depend on numbers wishing to take part. For details please ring or write to the Hon. Sec. All are welcome including non-members.

STUDY DAY, CHURCH HALL, CHISELDOH SATURDAY 26 JULY 2003 RICHARD JEFFERIES AND HIS CRITICS

The programme will follow its usual pattern:-

10.30 Doors open and refreshments

11.00 Individual contributions by members (see below)

12.30 to 2.00 Lunch break

2.00 Lecture by Richard Emeny, Editor of the Edward Thomas Fellowship Newsletter, and previously the Fellowship's Hon. Sec.

Title: 'Edward Thomas's View of Richard Jefferies and Thomas's contribution to our knowledge of Jefferies'

2.45 Lecture by Richard Stewart, Council Member of the Richard Jefferies Society

Title: 'Henry Williamson's Debt to Richard Jefferies' 4.00

Tea

For directions to Chiseldon see Annual Report for 2001 or apply to Hon. Sec. 01865 735678.

Contributions by Members: There are plenty of names to choose from (plus 'anon') Fowles, Keith, Looker, Pearson, Rossabi, Delattre, Grigson, Leavis, D.H. Lawrence earlier writers: Crawford, Greenwood, Gissing, Quiller Couch, W.E. Henley. A good source for reviews is *Richard Jefferies: A Bibliographical Study* 1993 by Miller and Matthews; also *The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies* 1994 by Matthews and Treitel.

The Hon. Sec. has copies of many reviews, and will supply one, on application, plus sae. If you cannot come but would like to contribute, please send your chosen extract to the Hon. Sec. The comments of your critic can be 'for' or 'against' or a bit of both. Keep it short: 5 to 10 minutes only.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2003

Monday 3 March Members' Evening. Joint meeting with Friends of Alfred Williams*

Monday 14 April Roy Burton will lead 'Three dramatic sequences for voices' based on Richard Jefferies' novels. Devised by Mark Daniel.*

Saturday/Sunday 26/27 April AGM of Alliance of Literary Societies, Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea. For details see "Other Societies".

Monday 12 May 'Stories in Stones: Masons' marks in Swindon'. Slides* Sheila Povey.

May (no date) Unveiling of plaque, 296 Ewell Road.

Saturday 28 June Outing to Fairford.

First week in July Old Town Walk (Swindon) led by Ray Morse.

Saturday 26 July Study Day at Chiseldon. See separate notice.

Saturday 4 October Lecture by John Price at Devizes.

***7.30 Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Swindon.**

Saturday 18 October AGM at Memorial Hall, Aldbourne. Birthday Lecture: Professor Richard Coates. Subject: 'Word Life in a Southern County'. (Details in Autumn Newsletter).

If you wish to come to one of these meetings, but find it difficult to get to the village in question, please inform the Hon. Sec. who will try to arrange lifts. She invites those with cars who plan to attend meetings to give her their names if they are willing to give a lift. There is already a considerable amount of car-sharing but more is possible.

For advice about buses from Swindon ring 01793 522243 (Stagecoach) or 01793 428428 (Thamesdown Transport). Swindon Information Centre 01793 530328.

'STILL ON THE EDGE?'

As I am a member of the RSPB I was also aware of the reference to Richard Jefferies quoted by Neil Underwood in the last newsletter (page 18). I was even more impressed at the ability to locate references to Jefferies when the Hon. Sec., at a recent council meeting, produced an article I had written for an East Anglian magazine in which I included the words from his study of Kew: 'the peace of green things reigns'. It also took me on to contemplating recent encounters with Jefferies in unusual places.

First was one of the natural history museums in Oxford. After a national Butterfly Conservation meeting we had the chance to go 'behind the scenes' to view the butterfly collections and on my way out a cursory glance at the sales items revealed an attractive postcard, mainly of a butterfly surrounded by vegetation and animals, but also having words of different shapes and sizes artistically framed within the wings. It wasn't until I got home that I realised all were Jefferies quotes: 'A butterfly comes and stays on a leaf —'. The artist was acknowledged on the back but no mention of Jefferies. This is why I used my title.

Despite all our efforts Richard Jefferies is still a name unknown to many who are well versed in literature. When my wife and I were updating our will recently, we included the Jefferies quote 'The hours when the mind is absorbed by beauty are the only hours when we really live' on our gravestone (we usually get these morbid thoughts before long-distance holiday flights). Our solicitor asked who he was. The same question was recently asked by two other friends, who are in many conservation groups and are widely read. In their case they were soon appraised of his work since a recently formed literary society, that promoting the

work of Adrian Bell, has all three of us as members and has made reference to Jefferies several times in recent newsletters. I was also delighted to hear several references to Jefferies on the recent Edward Thomas Fellowship tour of the areas closely associated with the First World War poets - but of the forty one in the party I think just one other was in our society.

Perhaps we ought to cultivate closer links with other literary societies having obvious Jefferies associations - perhaps as a first move the proposal for a joint study day i.e. Thomas/Jefferies or Williamson/Jefferies.

Jefferies does, however, continue to appear, even if it is 'on the edge', in unusual locations. As my wife and I were passing through the South Terminal at Gatwick, on our way to Mexico, we ended up on a 'moving pavement' that slowly takes you to the relevant boarding gate and allows plenty of time to look around. Along the whole of the facing wall was a very attractive display about West Sussex, covering topics such as gardens, churches, coast, lakes, downs, fields, flight. Each panel had a large colour photo with quotes to accompany it, from celebrated authors. There were more from Richard Jefferies than anyone else - four in total.

Hopefully, such publicity - and the two recent Jefferies works published by Green Books - will help to remove Jefferies from this 'edge of perception' and make his work known to many who already recognise the work of Hardy, Williamson, Edward Thomas and Gilbert White. There is, as a postscript, a follow-up to the Gatwick display. One of our Mexico party, a well-travelled lady of seventy-two, happened to be next to me as I was paddling a canoe back across a peaceful lake at Punta Laguna, in Mexico, after a very hot walk in the nearby jungle. We got talking and as she lives near Reading I mentioned Swindon and Jefferies. She then remarked that she had read all the quotes on the Gatwick boards, had been particularly impressed by those of Jefferies, who she had not encountered before, and would 'look him up' on her return home. It was quite a long canoe journey and by the end I had been able to suggest some introductory reading.

Richard Stewart

JEFFERIES SET TO MUSIC

Browsing through the new computerized catalogue at the University of Toronto Library the other day, I came across two peripheral Jefferies items that are not, I think, generally known. Both are musical scores set to Jefferies' words, and both happen to be composed for soprano and musical accompaniment.

The first is entitled "'By all these ___' for soprano and guitar" by Elizabeth Lutyens (b.1906), and is described as "op.120 (1977)." The score was published by Olivan Press (no place given) in the same year. It sets to music an abbreviated version of the fourth paragraph from the first chapter of *The Story of My Heart* ("I was alone with the sun and the earth ___ By all these I prayed").

The second, by Christopher Fox (b.1955) is part of a cycle, "Whitman-Jeff eries-Thoreau," written in the autumn of 1982 and performed on 23 February 1983 at the Arts Centre, York. The score was published by Guitar in Ensemble, St. Michaels Chambers, Spurriergate, York YO1 1QR in 1987. Here the text is adapted from the fourth and fifth sentences of "Hours of Spring" from *Field and Hedgerow* ("The bird upon the tree ... open bud").

My own musical training is totally insufficient to judge the quality of these compositions, but I record the basic information in the hope that interested members of the Society will look up the items for themselves.

W.J. Keith

CITINGS OF JEFFERIES (with a nod to 'On the Edge'¹)

Mrs. Margaret Hunt (daughter of Cyril Wright) has sent an extract from the 2002 house magazine of the Avon Wildlife Trust. It contains an attributed quotation from Jefferies:

'For of all things there is none so sweet as sweet air - one great flower it is, as if the dome of the sky were a bell flower drooping down over us, and the magical essence of it filling all the room of the earth. Sweetest of all things is wild-flower air.' 1878.

Professor Eric Jones has found references to Jefferies in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*. Vol. VII. Edited by E J T Collins. CUP 2000. He says that extensive use is made of five books by Jefferies by Kent and Norma Townsend in *The Convicts of the Eleanor: Protest in Rural England, New Lives in Australia*. The Merlin Press 2002; especially of memories of the 1830 riots.

Dr. Michael Taylor, recently dipping into Stephen Potter's *One-Upmanship*, first published in 1952, came across the following passage in the chapter on Bird Gamesmanship:

In response to layman's question, to Birdsman, 'Do tell me, is this a good place for birds?' Answer 'Well, no place is bad for birds really, is it?' This said in an anti-plonking or softly sympathetic voice with a touch of substitute Richard Jefferies,* or at any rate a 'Let me be your Fabre' hint, always annoying.

*Potter's footnote reads "Hence the term "Jefferiesship" for this put-off.'

John Price is a regular reader of Peter Marren's Twitcher column in *British Wildlife*. Marren lives locally and had visited 'the corner of Wiltshire where Richard Jefferies was brought up'. What interested him was the sound of bees murmuring in a hollow tree. Was it the Council Oak? It is not clear, but Marren claims that the bees were electronic. [Ed. Perhaps one of those inexplicable noises we all hear occasionally.]

Possibly most significant is the article in *The Ecologist* (Jan. 2003) sent in by George Miller. It is by Nicols Fox who has written *Against the Machine: the hidden Luddite tradition in literature, art and individual lives*. The article examines Jefferies' *After London*, Morris's *News from Nowhere*, E.M. Forster's 'The Machine Stops', and Graves' *Seven Days in New Crete*. There are photographs of each author and an examination of each work. Mr. Fox is an American.

BOOK REVIEW

Understanding Cottages: the Dream and the Reality. John Constable 2002. Capall Bann Publishing. Sales: Tel. 01823 401528. 230 pages. Price £12.95. ISBN 1861 631782,

The writer of this most unusual book is a member of the Richard Jefferies Society. He has a most unusual interest - old cottages, and the book is 'a journey of discovery into the architectural and social structure of cottage living.'

Mr. Constable begins with a historical and literary overview of cottages, endeavouring to reconcile the romantic image the English have of cottages with the sometimes sordid reality such as that presented, on occasions, by Jefferies -

the picturesque work of artists Birkett Foster and Helen Allingham with the insanitary, inconvenient dwellings of rural labourers over centuries.

The author's main skill, however, is a profound understanding of types of cottage, how they were made and used, and what they were made of. In order to embody his knowledge, he has made miniatures of actual cottages, providing a permanent record of structure and design. These he has photographed (and all the photographs and diagrams in the book are excellent) and only on close examination is it plain that one is not looking at a photograph of a real house. For many years a Swindon man, of course his first example is what he calls Hodson Cottage. This is not the Gamekeeper's Cottage but one near it, and of course he quotes Jefferies and mentions this Society. His next is Teapot Hall and then Cruck Cottage - each example typifying a distinct cottage architecture. A Wealden House is bigger, more complicated. After this there is an Irish cottier house (on which he was invited to advise) then Thomas Hardy's Cottage, and finally Willy Lett's Farmhouse, made famous by John Constable, the painter.

If you are interested in old, small houses you will find this book informative - full of technical detail. It has a few small errors: the chapters do not begin as stated in the Contents, and there is no index, but the painstaking research has been recorded, and is available here. One fact I did not find: where does Mr. Constable keep his miniatures?

Phyllis Treitel

BOOK NEKS

In Pursuit of Spring. Mr. Patrick Ingram has a new Edward Thomas reprint which members may wish to buy: *In Pursuit of Spring*. It is paperback with a foreword by Mr. Ingram. First published in 1913, it gives an account of a solo journey by Thomas, by bicycle, from London to the Quantocks and the sea at Kilve. He goes via Guildford, Winchester, Salisbury (and the Cathedral), Glastonbury, and Hoiford. Then he detours to North/Jefferies Country: Bicknoller, Crowcombe and West Bagborough,

The 240-page edition with six small maps to show the way is an attractive production. Order from Laurel Books, 282 The Common, Holt, Wilts. BA14 6QJ. Price £9.99 plus £1 p&p. Cheques to 'Laurel Books'. ISBN 1-873390-04-1. Copies of *Light and Twilight* are still available at £6.99 plus £1 p&p or £1.75 p&p if you buy both.

Swindon: An Illustrated History. The author of this new book, Mark Child, has good credentials: it is his eleventh book, one of which is *The Shire Guide to Wiltshire* and another, the Swindon volume of the *Victoria History of Wiltshire*. It has 150 photographs, several of which will be familiar to Jefferies lovers. In fact several pages are directly or indirectly concerned with Jefferies and, as far as can be ascertained, the facts stated are correct. The *Evening Advertiser* of 14 October 2002 is probably right in saying that the history is 'full of jewels' but probably incorrect in saying that a photograph of Coate farmhouse was taken 'around 1800' - probably 1900.

Publisher: Breedon Books. Price £14.99 but discounts can be found.

SWINDON NEWS

Barbury Castle Country Park. Swindon Borough have, after representations, decided to leave the Park as it is. The business arrangement with the people at

Ridgeway Farm, who ran the cafe as well as farming the land, will be changed so that the two functions are separate.

Arts Centre Restoration. Our December meeting, booked for the Arts Centre, had to take place nearby as there was a time over-run on the work at the Centre. All is now done. Ray Morse and John Webb represented the Society at the re-opening ceremony. We look forward to the improved facilities, including wheelchair access. Members who have not been in Devizes Road lately should be aware that a great many new houses now stand on what used to be the car park. The new car park is approached from Newport Street.

Old Town Renovation. For our outings and other gatherings we have been accustomed to meet in The Square: it was easy to find and had several Jefferies associations. A complicated renewal project for slabs and a piazza has been drawn up by Countryside properties, and the Locarno bingo hall cum corn exchange will go.

Where shall we gather in future? Probably in the entrance to what was The Lawn (between the pillars). It is close to The Square.

The Day House Lane Sarsen Stones. An article in the *Evening Advertiser* (9 Jan) reveals that Bath University wishes to put an 8,000-student campus on the green fields between the new hospital and Day House Lane. Inevitably, it will be accompanied by housing and a science park. Concern has been expressed for the safety of the five sarsen stones which are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The article elaborates on the importance of the stones but does not mention the fact that they were discovered by Richard Jefferies and mentioned by him in his article in the North Wilts Herald of 9 November 1867 and repeated in *Jefferies' Land*. Mrs. Sheila Povey has written to the *Evening Advertiser* putting the record straight. Thanks are due to Stan Hickerton for keeping the Hon. Sec. informed of these matters.

Library Displays. John Webb's library displays have now reached Swindon itself as follows: Central Swindon, 3-24 Feb; West Swindon 25 Feb-11 March; Park Library 11-25 March, Upper Stratton 25 March-8 April; Wroughton 6-20 May.

OTHER SOCIETIES

The Edward Thomas Fellowship. We have made a start with joint meetings: members of our Society joined in the ETF Autumn Walk, led by Ken Watts, on 22 September; this year, on 26 July, Richard Emeny has kindly agreed to give a talk as part of our Study Day (see p 7).

The highlight of 2002 was the visit to the First World War battlefields and cemeteries; there was a visit to the Imperial War Museum for an exhibition in memory of First World War poets; the Newsletter (No. 48) has an article by Robert Gomme on military cemeteries.

We shall be pleased to welcome ETF members at Chiseldon on 26 July.

The Henry Williamson Society. By now, the February Study Day in Norfolk will have taken place. The HWS Journal No. 38 arrived just too late for our Autumn Newsletter; with 96 pages there is much to interest: Part IV of an article on A

Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight by Dr. Blench; HW's own photographs of the Lynmouth disaster; 8 pages of an early Williamson diary (1913); 4 pages of early photographs, and 4 other articles. On page 13 is a photograph of Jefferies' grave, the young HW seated beside it. This is excellent but, to prevent confusion, it should be said that the grave is at Worthing (not Goring).

The Surbiton and District Birdwatching Society www.sdbws.ndo.co.uk Extremes of weather have meant gains and losses: fewer cuckoos and (perhaps because) their primary hosts were in short supply. The Hogsmill continues to attract birds: a female mallard with young in December; 6 shovelers; 837 wood pigeons on 4 November; 10 stockdoves; a single firecrest seen with goldcrests and tits; 15 house sparrows in Surbiton and 19 in New Maiden on 21 November.

The William Morris Society. The programme for 2003 is, as usual, full and varied. The problem of how to look after The Red House (built for WM on his marriage) has been solved: the National Trust, with help from the WMS, has offered to buy it and run it as a Morris/Webb study centre.

The WMS has 4 Newsletters per year (as well as a Journal) and the editor for 6 years has been RJS member Martin Haggerty. He plans to hand over to a new editor at the end of this year. He has been invited to give a talk to the RJS before long.

Alliance of Literary Societies. 26/27 April. This year the AGM is being hosted by the Dylan Thomas Society in Swansea to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the poet's death. A full weekend of events has been planned, including visits to the Boat House at Laugharne and Rhossili Bay, as well as poetry readings and talks. For further details please phone Helen Newman 0121 423 2100.

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The Newsletter has been compiled and edited by Phyllis Treitel, Robert McCloy and Andrew Rossabi. Drawings are by Stan Hickerton. Photographs by Len Gurgeon, Stan Hickerton, Peter Robins and others. Helen Newman has done the typing. Printing and despatch by Margaret Evans and Phyllis Treitel.



*Holy Rood Churchyard wall seen
from where Old Town Mill once stood.*