

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER & ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009



Visit to the Gamekeepers Cottage, Hodson – May 2009

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY (Registered Charity No 1042838) was founded in 1950 to promote appreciation and study of the writings of Richard Jefferies (1848-1887).

Membership is open to all on payment of the current annual subscription of £7 single or £8 couple. New overseas Members should add £1.50 towards additional postage costs. There is an online facility for Members to join using Paypal or credit/debit cards at richardjefferiessociety.co.uk (with an additional £1 supplement to cover charges incurred).

Members receive spring and autumn newsletters, an annual report and a *Journal* and can take advantage of the Society's extensive library. Activities include winter meetings, a study day, special outings, events, a Birthday Lecture and an Annual General Meeting.

TRUSTEES AND COUNCIL MEMBERS 2008-9

Margaret Evans (Membership Secretary), Norma Goodwin (Sales), Geoff Hirst (Treasurer), Eric Jones, Hugoe Matthews (President), Helen Newman (ALS Representative), Duncan Pepper, John Price (Chairman), Jean Saunders (Secretary), Richard Stewart, Phyllis Treitel (Vice President) and John Webb (Librarian).

Co-opted members: Stan Hickerton, Ray Morse and Rebecca Welshman.

Hon. Sec.

Jean Saunders

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COATE FARM MUSEUM The Richard Jefferies Society provides the volunteers to open the Jefferies' Museum at Coate to the public on the second Wednesday of the month throughout the year from 10am to 4pm. The Sunday open day season runs from May to September from 2-5pm. The "Footsteps" writers' group meet on the same Wednesdays. Admission is free. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED FOR STRUCTURAL REPAIRS FROM 14 SEPTEMBER 2009 TO THE END OF THE YEAR.

NEWSLETTER The Autumn Newsletter and Annual Report was edited by Jean Saunders, proof-read by John Price and despatched by Margaret Evans.

The deadline set to submit material for the Spring 2010 Newsletter is **1st February 2010**. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary.

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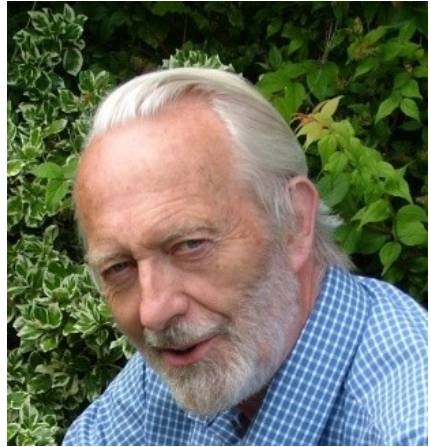
DATA PROTECTION ACT

Members' names and addresses are held on a computer data base. We are required by the Data Protection Act 1998 to inform members that they have the right to object to information being held in this way.



FROM THE CHAIR

To those closely involved with the operation of your Society, this year has produced a roller coaster of emotions. On the positive side, we have had some excellent and most enjoyable meetings and outings, about which you can read in this Newsletter. The number of visitors to the Museum, and the sales of books generated there, and by post, have been most heartening. It is always a pleasure to do “duty” at the Museum and meet visitors; some of whom are old friends; some of whom are local, and have been “meaning to visit” for years; and others, who have come from much further afield, and surprisingly often have some links with the Jefferies family – or with Coate.



The other remarkable achievement is the success our Secretary, Jean Saunders, has had in adding to the Society’s list of publications. Producing new editions of *Greene Ferne Farm*, *The Scarlet Shawl*, *Restless Human Hearts*, and *World’s End*; to which will be soon added, *Amaryllis at the Fair* and *The Dewy Morn*, means that not only our members, but anyone now can obtain and read the long out of print titles that it has required major effort (and/or money) to source and access until now.

The saga of the Museum continues. The latest, and most hopeful sign, has been the involvement of Mike Pringle of the Swindon Cultural Partnership (yes – such an organisation really does exist!). He is not employed by Swindon Borough Council, but is trying to persuade that body that it has a real asset in the Museum. We are waiting to meet again with him this autumn to assess progress.

And the result of the Public Inquiry? Definitely a Curate’s Egg. As you will read elsewhere, the initial reaction on scanning the report was relief – but on further study, it becomes clear that the area is not safe from development. True, the views to Liddington Hill are protected, and there will not be University Halls of Residence near Coate, but the door seems to be open now for even more houses.

It is important to remember that Swindon since the 1940s, had been against any development on the site, and it was only Bath University’s offer, six years ago, to bring a University presence to Swindon and insisting it had to be at Coate, that led the effectively blackmailed Swindon Borough Council to agree to the Bath proposal, and the housing and industry needed to finance the University development. The University “tail” having waved the development “dog”; the “tail” has now disappeared, but we are left with the docked “dog” – and a very ugly one it threatens to be.

We were much better prepared for this Appeal than for the Examination in Public five years ago, and the Inspector was much fuller in giving his reasons for rejecting the “Associations with Richard Jefferies” as grounds for refusal. I am going to quote these in full, because I believe they demonstrate a fundamental weakness that all Literary Associations face.

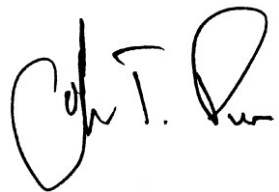
He wrote:

“I recognise the importance of the literary associations of the area with the life and work of Richard Jefferies. Mr Price’s evidence showed that his work has a devoted following with a national and international reach. The works, which are rooted in his experience of the lives and landscapes around Coate, have had a profound influence on the literature of the countryside and the natural world.

I accept that the scheme would change the landscape and rural ambience in a way that Jefferies and his contemporaries would have had difficulty imagining, but this is true of many landscapes known and frequented by writers of the 19th and earlier centuries, and even of the 20th century. The literature remains intact however, and the imaginative response of the reader to the text is not dependent on the knowledge that nothing has changed or will change.

I understand the strong feelings and responses that this issue generates. It is invidious to make judgements on the relative value of individual writers and the physical heritage associated with them. However, these matters need to be balanced against other needs in a changing society. If I were satisfied that the proposed development complied with planning policy in all other respects, I concur with the Local Plan Inspector in finding that the literary associations of the area would not justify standing in the way of development.”

I believe this statement deserves full consideration and analysis, and would welcome considered responses to it, as I think it needs to be challenged in a constructive way, with a view to taking it further with MPs, and asking for a possible change in Planning considerations and law. It is not just Jefferies’ Land that is threatened by this statement, but any literary landscape.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Price', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Price
September 2010

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2008-9

A warm welcome is extended to the new members who have joined the Society since last August:

Mr M Tonson-Ward, Grantham, Lincs
Mr & Mrs B Davey, Swindon, Wilts
Mr E S Wood, Backwell, Bristol
Mr & Mrs G Franklin, Swindon, Wilts
Mr J M Wood, Lee, London
Mr & Mrs M Welshman, Crewkerne, Somerset
Mr T Hillier, Swindon, Wilts
Ms M Beal, Cranbourne, South Victoria, Australia
Miss D R Ladd, Leominster, Herefordshire

The total membership during the 2008/09 subscription year numbered 274, being made up of 171 single, 27 joint (54 members), 30 Life, 5 Joint Life (10 members), 2 Hon Life, 2 Joint Hon Life (4 members) and 3 Corporate memberships. 6, (including 3 joint, giving a total of 9), of the above mentioned new members joined in the 2008/09 membership year, 3 in the 2009/10 membership year.

At the time of writing the 2009/10 membership is 277 (of which 25 are joint).

Although the majority of members live in England, other countries are represented: Australia 4, Belgium 1, Canada 3 (1 joint), Channel Islands 1, China 1, Eire 1, France 1, Germany 2, New Zealand 1, Northern Ireland 1 (joint), Scotland 5, USA 2, Wales 4 (1 joint).

At present 69 members (13 of whom are Joint, i.e. 81) and 1 Corporate) have not paid their subscriptions for the 2009/10 membership year. Gentle reminders will accompany their mailing of the Annual Report in the hope that they will bring their membership up-to-date. In anticipation, many thanks.

Margaret Evans
2 September 2009

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER RICHARD JEFFERIES & THE SOCIETY?

We are delighted that Kaye and Graeme Franklin have joined the Society after many years of association with it. Kaye and Graeme were the mainstay of the Friends of Alfred Williams with whom we share many members. Kaye writes that in the 1950s she read Jefferies at school and her grandmother loved his work. Her mother and father were equally fond of Coate Water. She first heard about the Society around 1970 when invited to one of our meetings by two other Members of both the Friends and the Society.

A BIG READ

Swindon Libraries took part in a big read promotion to encourage all Swindon residents to read the same book. The book that was chosen was *The Lost World* by Arthur Conan Doyle. The natural history connection through Richard Jefferies' work inspired Swindon Libraries to contact the Society to provide a speaker to further explore the links with Conan Doyle's themes of discovery, evolution, geology and environmentalism. John Price was invited to give a talk at Swindon Central Library on "Richard Jefferies; Swindon's own Pioneer Ecologist & Science Fiction Writer" on 19 March 2009. Free copies of *The Lost World* were given to everyone who attended.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS AND OUTINGS 2009

Readings from Alfred Williams and Richard Jefferies

The snowdrops were just starting to go over in the Jefferies' garden at Coate on the day that Members of the Society met with the Friends of Alfred Williams for our annual joint meeting. It was held on 7 March and attended by 15 enthusiasts. John Price took the Chair.

It is always a joyous occasion to listen to the extracts of poetry and prose selected. Favourite subjects regularly crop up. This year the themes can be classified as nature readings, the decline in the canals as the railways took hold, the humour in life at the GWR factory, farming in the Draycot Foliat area, travelling by horse and trap, and a consideration of whether Jefferies ever read Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*.

How did Richard Jefferies get about? A talk by Phyllis Treitel

The daffodils in the Jefferies' garden at Coate were in full bloom on this beautiful spring day; work on patching the thatch to the old house was nearing completion and, all in all, the thirteen people who attended the talk on 4 April entered the Jefferies' house at Coate with some optimism for the future of the Museum and the land under threat from development at Coate.

Phyllis's lecture title was lengthened to include "And did it make a difference?" To answer this question, which means putting Jefferies' travel needs into mid-19th century conditions, she considered both his main means of getting from a. to b., which were walking, omnibus and train travel, and his leisure activities such as skating, rowing and sailing.

Evidence for how he travelled was taken from his letters to his aunt, and from his articles and stories. Stan Hickerton supplied maps and details of the plethora of rail lines radiating from Swindon in mid-century.

Examples ranged from Nora's sailing exploit in *The Scarlet Shawl* and Florence's skating elopement in "A Midnight Skate", to criticism of Brighton's omnibus conductors in *Worthing Calvacade* 1948, the mice in Clapham Junction in "Trees in and around London", and peering into people's back bedrooms in "Red Roofs of London".

No evidence could be found that Jefferies rode a horse or a bicycle.

In essentials, his walking was his work, and made his observations of the

natural world possible, the railway network enabled him to live in places that suited him.

Phyllis Treitel

Visit to the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre – two reports

On the 25th April nine Society Members met up at 11a.m. at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham.

Parking (on a Saturday) was easy and *free*. We were met and given a guided tour by a charming, knowledgeable and enthusiastic young man, Terry Bracher. Yes, they exist in Wiltshire. (Terry admitted that he sometimes comes in secretly on Sundays to spray weedkiller on errant plants coming up between the paving of the courtyard.) He loves the place, as does everyone else we met there. The building is magnificent and has won major architectural awards; all the appointments and furnishings are of the highest quality, in the reading rooms, the laboratories, the reception area.

We were shown temperature-controlled rooms of records (7 miles of shelves!) from the manuscripts relating to the Stanley Abbey charter of 1151 to boxes of letters, diaries, maps, registers, minute books and deeds. They also have newspapers dating from 1736, over 40,000 photographs and the Wiltshire Buildings Record. And, of course, the books, manuscripts and papers of Richard Jefferies.

It was hard not to feel glad that the History Centre was situated in Chippenham rather than Swindon.

John Webb

* * *

The Wiltshire and Swindon History centre, built in Chippenham in 2007, is accessible from Chippenham's mainline railway station on Cocklebury Road, and affords a safe, state of the art depository for Wiltshire's records. Not only does the centre house the county's records, but also on site are the local studies library, archaeology service, Wiltshire buildings record, museum service and a conservation service. Advice from professionals working within these fields can be obtained upon request and in advance of a visit. Membership and use of the Centre is free and requires photographic ID and a document such as a utilities bill.

The centre houses the Richard Jefferies Society archives, dating back to the formation of the society in 1950. The Society's material includes photographs of Jefferies and his family, letters about Jefferies, and records of events relating to Jefferies and his life. Reflecting Wiltshire's wealth of social, cultural and archaeological history, the Centre offers readers the opportunity to study Jefferies' work in the context not only of his native Wiltshire but also affords wide ranging historical perspectives on subjects which Jefferies was interested in. These subjects include genealogy, archaeology, history, geology, and journalism.

There are three collections of Jefferies material. In the main room, arranged alphabetically, is a substantial selection of Jefferies' work and work about Jefferies. These include titles such as *Bevis*, *The Story of My Heart*, *The Open Air*, Edward Thomas' biography of Jefferies, and a dissertation from the University of Canterbury (1982) on Jefferies. Further, more specialised material, including the Society's archives, is held in the strong rooms, which Society members were allowed to see during their visit. The strong rooms are kept at low temperatures in order to conserve the material, and are separated from the rest of the building by air locked chambers. To access this material visitors need to speak to a member of staff and request permission by filling out a small form. The wait to see material is generally no more than 5-15 minutes, depending on the location of the material. One of the books held in the strong rooms is George Miller's and Hugoe Matthews' *Richard Jefferies: A Bibliographical Study*. This is a large volume, listing all known works by Jefferies, and is one of the few copies available to the public in the country.

The centre is well organised and spacious. There are plenty of computer terminals where visitors can research the Centre's catalogue and use the Internet free of charge. The Centre has also just launched its new website (<http://www.wshc.eu/>) which contains further information about the centre, a map, and free access to the online catalogue. There is plenty of car parking at the Centre, and a small selection of refreshments is available from dispensing machines. Being a ten-minute walk from Chippenham town centre the archive is uniquely accessible, and affords the opportunity for anyone interested in Jefferies to access one of the largest collections of his work in a calm and peaceful environment.

Rebecca Welshman

Visit to Burderop, Hodson and Barbury Castle.

On 9 May, a group of fourteen Society Members set out from the Museum to tour the grounds of Burderop House and visit the Gamekeeper's Cottage. This time of the year was chosen for the visit in the hope that the bluebells in Hodson woods would make a spectacular show, and we weren't disappointed. The beautiful old trees that Jefferies would have known surrounding Burderop House are all in splendid condition and well-cared for by Halcrow, the engineering company that owns the property. We looked at the main house, compared it with the 1910 oil painting of it by Kate Tryon in an effort to spot any changes (there were very few) and listened to Jefferies' descriptions of the Great Estate. We peered into the walled garden, marvelled at the espalier fruit trees growing along the perimeter and stopped to have a photo taken outside the old granary building supported by the staddle stones to stop the rats getting at the grain (see picture next page). Our next stop was to visit the gardens of the Gamekeeper's Cottage at Hodson. The "mighty Spanish chestnut... a noble tree" mentioned in the opening paragraph of *The Gamekeeper at Home* is even mightier, whilst the setting of the little thatched cottage in the coombe needs to be seen from all angles to fully appreciate the beauty of the place. John Price read extracts from the *Gamekeeper* and from Helen Thomas's account of staying there with Edward. Bryan Hanlon, the current tenant, keeps

chickens that were wandering about not knowing what lucky birds they are to live in such a peaceful spot. The large pond, the garden seats made out of fallen trees, the bluebells and red campion all added to the picture and, of course, we had to regroup for another photograph (see front cover). We had the added bonus that Michael Ponting pointed out his grand-parents' old house opposite the keeper's cottage where his grandmother used to take in washing for the estate. Michael had many happy hours playing there as a child. We are most grateful to Mr Hanlon and Halcrow for letting us wander around at our leisure. The rain kept off so we finished the visit with a picnic near Barbury Castle on Burderop Down.

Jean Saunders



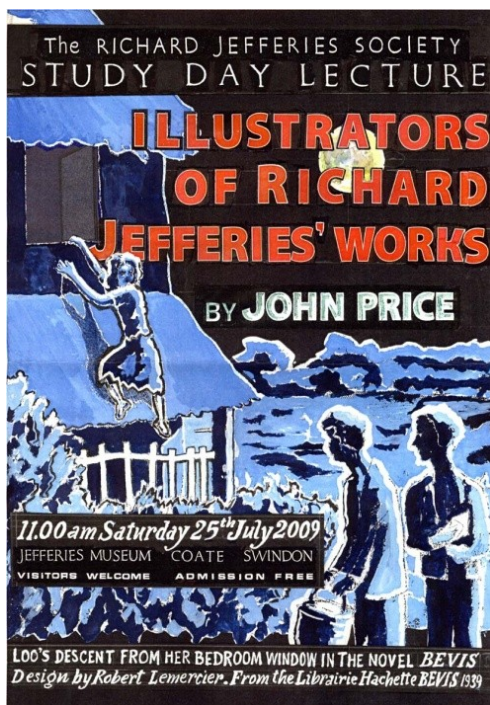
Marie & David Chesham, Angela & John Price, Roy Burton, Michael Ponting, Rebecca Welshman, Gill Bromhead, Ray Morse, Phyllis Treitel, Margaret Hunt and Margaret Bathe (John Webb & Jean Saunders taking photographs).

Swindon Festival of Literature

As part of the Swindon Festival of Literature, and for the third year in succession, an event was held at the Museum on 10 May. Ros Barber & Paul Stones ran a workshop "From Page to Stage" that was well attended.

STUDY DAY AT JEFFERIES MUSEUM 25 JULY 2009

SUBJECT: Illustrators of Richard Jefferies' works



There was a good turn out for this event with twenty two Members nestled into the old sitting room at Coate Farm along with a digital projector, kindly on loan and operated by Ray Evans.

In the morning session, John Price provided an over-view of the situation – not an easy task with about one hundred illustrators to choose from. The presentation was limited to a consideration of essays and books first published during Jefferies' lifetime, including subsequent editions, and covered: integral illustrations (including frontispieces and maps), jacket illustrations, decorated boards/bindings, and "one-off" illustrations added by book-owners. A distinction was drawn between commissioned artwork, and illustrators who chose themselves to republish a book or essay illustrated with their own artwork. There was also a clear difference between artists who had

actually visited the Coate area, and those who obviously had not. A particular topic explored in more detail was the evolution of the David Garnett map in *Bevis* in the hands of subsequent interpreters. Methods of illustration were also briefly touched on.

In the afternoon, contributions were made by Members that included:

Margaret Evans chose one of Charles Whymper's sketches of the Game-keeper's Cottage and noted that, whilst it was an excellently executed drawing, it was nothing like the keeper's cottage in Hodson.

Jean Saunders focused on Maud Umfreville Clarke (born in Devon in 1863) and a true Jefferies' fan – she wrote and illustrated a book entitled *Nature's Own Garden* in 1907 and quotes from *The Story of My Heart* and 'Wild Flowers'. She was the illustrator of a 1908 edition of *Life of the Fields* that contains 12 colour pictures. Although she herself was obviously familiar with the Downs, her painting of the Old House at Coate demonstrated that she had not visited the house.

Eric Jones spoke about Charles Tunnicliffe, usually regarded as the leading bird painter in mid-20th century England. He was an art-school trained farmer's son from Cheshire and illustrated many rural and natural history books. *Wild Life in a Southern County* (ed. Samuel Looker, 1949) was his only shot at Jefferies. The surmise is that most of the illustrations were general ones though it is possible he had visited Coate.

Rebecca Welshman's first Jefferies' book was the Penguin edition of *The Story of My Heart* and it was the wood engravings by Gertrude Hermes that she wished to commend that added so much value to this edition.

John Webb enjoyed the delicate paintings by Benjamin Perkins that illustrated five of Jefferies' nature writing essays in a volume entitled *The Life of the Fields* published in 1997 by Brockhampton Press.

Andrew Rossabi recalled fishing for carp as a boy in the 1950s, when Richard Walker caused a sensation with his record-breaking 44-pounder. A member of the elite Carpcatchers' Club was the country writer "BB", nom-de-plume of Denys Watkins-Pitchford, who illustrated his books with delightful black-and-white scraperboard designs. Andrew passed round a selection that included one from *The Fisherman's Bedside Book*, of Jefferies on the bridge in "A London Trout", raising his stick to send the fish back under the arch.

Stan Hickerton tabled a series of illustrations by Robert Lemerrier that were published in the French edition of *Bevis*. Stan had coloured them in to add to their attraction and used one as the poster for our meeting.

Raymond Roys read the first chapter of *The Old House at Coate*, which illustrated how a pair of farm doors, on the surface commonplace, could be transformed into something much more significant when observed over time. They had singularity by being *blue*; and were a focal point for the activities of numerous animal and bird life. The layout and characteristics of the vicinity were described in relation to the blue doors. The vagaries of the weather were demonstrated by its affect on the north and side faces of the doors. The daily and seasonal progression of the sun marked them, thereby charting nature's yearly cycle of events.

Phyllis Treitel brought along the first Jefferies' book ever to be illustrated – namely *The Gamekeeper at Home*, with drawings by Charles Whympster that she didn't, particularly, like. Phyllis noted that Jefferies illustrated with his words and, on the whole, she believed, the illustrations do not improve his books.

John Price showed some items falling outside the limits of his self-imposed brief for the morning lecture. These were: George Miller's bindings for *By The Brook* and *Birth of a Naturalist*; a limited edition of *Meadow Thoughts* by the LCC Central School of Arts and Crafts from July 1950, with a remarkable binding and wood-engravings by Jenefer Peter; and *Summer in the Woods* from 1947 with four drawings and two type-faces designed by S H de Roos.

DISCOVERIES IV. Two illustrators

Charles Edmund Brock (born 1870) was a popular and prolific illustrator from 1890 until his death in 1938. Many of the best known classics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were published with his line illustrations, which combine accuracy and spontaneity, and delicate Regency refinement with robust rustic character. It was a style particularly suited for children's books, titles like *The Railway Children*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *English Fairy Tales* being among his most successful, as well as making adult works more accessible to the young. He would have been an ideal illustrator for Jefferies, especially *Bevis*, and I was pleased to discover that he did in fact produce a group of four line drawings and a watercolour sketch for an extract from the first chapter, "Bevis at Work" (reproduced below).



My source for these is an obscure, undated anthology:

"Alice's Champion, by Mary Cowden Clarke, and other stories and verses by Richard Jefferies [and a string of other Victorian and Edwardian authors]. Profusely illustrated. James Askew and Son, Ltd. Corporation Street, Preston."

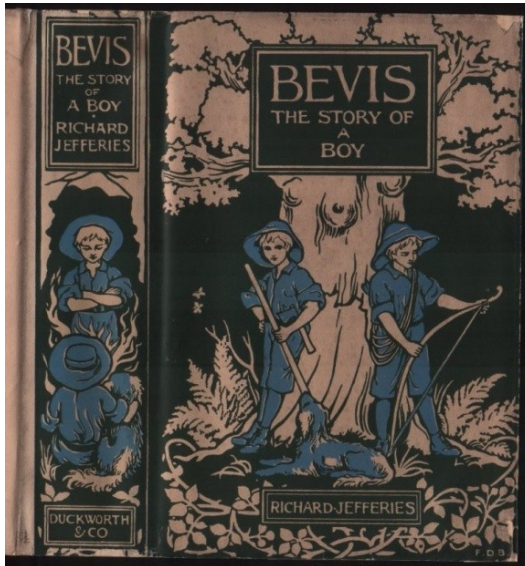


The profuse illustrations, in colour and monochrome plates as well as black and white text blocks, are by an array of artists, including some distinguished names like Arthur Rackham, W. Heath Robinson, and Charles's younger brother H.M. Brock, also a notable illustrator. It is unlikely that the Preston publisher edited the work or commissioned such a distinguished cast of illustrators. No doubt it was re-issued with the first publisher's permission, a supposition confirmed by the fact that the title page is a cancel, or replacement, of the one printed with the rest of the sheets. But I have yet to discover the identity of the original publisher. The Bevis illustrations are all signed "C.E. Brock 1908", which from other clues would probably be the date the anthology first appeared.



Bevis had been previously illustrated by A.V Poncy in an edition, published by Sampson Low and abridged by G.A. Henty, that circulated during the 1890s. In blazer and cap Poncy's *Bevis* is a public schoolboy, but the weakness of execution gives us little more than a stereotype. In Brock's drawings *Bevis* is cutely childish, but determined as well, and the carter's lad, Pan, the horse and the farm background detail are delightful. The colour plates in the 1913 Duckworth edition are also accomplished, and richly atmospheric. *Bevis* is a more manly figure, if not the noble youth portrayed in the unsigned frontispiece to the Herbert Strang abridgement of 1939. In E.H. Shepard's illustrations to the Cape edition, 1932-1972, we have what is likely to remain the most skilful and sensitive interpretation, but these examples of Brock's work suggest that a full text illustrated by him might have been a rival to it.

The Duckworth edition of *Bevis*, first published in 1904, has a splendid pictorial binding showing *Bevis* and Mark beneath the boughs of the mighty "Council Oak," armed with flintlock, axe and bow, Pan lying at their feet and two butterflies hovering mid-air. In their floppy hats and baggy clothes they look more like desert island castaways than school prefects. As usual with book covers the image is unsigned, but we can now identify it as the work of another significant and celebrated Edwardian, F.D. Bedford. We know this because when the seventh and last impression was printed thirty years later the publisher re-used the original art work, clearly signed F.D.B., for the dust jacket.



There can be little doubt that Bedford also designed the covers of the two companion volumes published by Duckworth, *Amaryllis at the Fair* (1904) and *After London* (1905).

George Miller

Joint Study Day with the Edward Thomas Fellowship, 2010.

Please note that our study day next year will take place on Saturday 8 May at Liddington Village Hall and we shall be joined by the Edward Thomas Fellowship. We shall examine various relationships between Richard Jefferies and Edward Thomas. These might include their interest in wildlife, rural traditions and landscape and the extent to which Jefferies influenced Thomas as a writer along with Thomas's biography of Jefferies. Martin Haggerty has already secured Jem Poster as our key speaker. Jem Poster is a distinguished poet, novelist and literary scholar who is, currently, preparing a new edition of *Richard Jefferies Life and Work* by Edward Thomas for the Oxford University Press. On Sunday 9 May there will be a guided walk from Coate Farm to the Gamekeeper's Cottage. There will be more information in the next newsletter, but please keep that weekend free.

COATE FARM AND MUSEUM REPORT

We thank all new and old Members who volunteered to act as guides at the Museum. In addition to the usual days, the Museum was also open on the fourth Sunday of the month thanks to Rebecca Welshman and her partner Simon. A special thank you goes to Margaret Hunt who has not only helped at all the Wednesday sessions but has also worked in the garden. There have been various special openings of the Museum that included those for the Blue Gate writers' group, the Swindon Festival of Literature, the Director of the Swindon Cultural Partnership, the Highworth Historical Society, the Wroughton History Group and the Nailsea Wine Group! Visitor numbers have been good this year and well-up on the 2008 season. This year was cut short by the need to clear the Museum in mid-September for structural repair work to the building. It is hoped that the Museum will be back to normal for the 2010 season. The Society's December public meeting has been postponed.

Book donations.

Thanks to everyone (too many to mention) who has donated books to the Jefferies' Library, the Hudson' Library or the Reference Library at the Museum. Thanks also to people, Duncan Pepper in particular, who have donated books for sale, boosting our funds. Most of the Jefferies' books on sale have been purchased by us to sell on, so gifts are always most welcome.

Museum additions

Andrew Lewis and his family came armed with Jefferies' family memorabilia when they visited the Museum on 5 April. Some of the material had been seen before by Members when Clodagh Kilminster previously revealed various objects in the collection. The list of items on loan to the Museum includes first edition copies of *Bevis*, *The Open Air* and *The Life of the Fields* signed by Richard to his mother; John Luckett Jefferies' (Richard's uncle) sketchbook plus various watercolours of Holyrood church, the old Jefferies' mill and the Coate area plus a model John Luckett made of Holy Rood Church; Mary Cox's (Richard's cousin) private journal covering 1887-9; a collection of poems by Fanny

Catherine Hall (Richard's cousin) and a lovely old book titled *Nelson's Festivals* 1773 that had belonged to Fanny (Ridger) Jefferies (Richard's great grandmother) that John Jefferies (Richard's grandfather) had used to note significant family dates. The most interesting date noted was 1 May 1835 when "James left for America". This has cleared up a mystery about Richard's father's age when he left Coate Farm for overseas. Edward Thomas noted in the biography that the year of departure was 1837 whilst, in his old age, James Luckett Jefferies (1816-1896) recounted that he was only about 16 years of age when he went abroad. As James was born in December, we can now conclude that he was actually 18 when he left home. The Lewis family collection also included some lovely old sepia photographs of the Hall family (Martha Hall was Richard's aunt) who lived in Old Town, Swindon along with pictures of Richard's cousins and some of their children. Finally of note is a scrap of blue writing paper tucked inside *Nelson's Festivals*. On it is penned a short poem by John Jefferies at the age of 80 that reveals his humour. It reads:

Self Examination

Thou art growing old, Thy head is gray,
Life, like a spectre, glides away;
The evening shades are gathering fast,
Thy floating day will soon be past.
Then on the verge of life's decline,
Be solemn recollection mine.
Review the hours for ever gone,
The hour of death comes hastening on.
Ah! Has improvement, conscience, say,
Kept pace with life's advancing day?
How all the hours thou hast enjoy'd,
To the best purpose been employ'd?
How much has pass'd in airy dreams,
In idle visionary schemes?
But tho' this time was spent amiss,
Also much was spent much worse than this.

Sheila Povey added to the booklets of information about the Coate area and the Jefferies' family by donating some of her historic research work illustrated with photographs taken by John Povey. These include a photographic walk to and from Coate Farm across the fields to Old Town before the Lawns estate was built, copies of John Luckett Jefferies' sketches (we now have the originals on display at the Museum, thanks to Andrew Lewis) and a transcript of some of the pages from Mary Cox's diary.

Trees

We have been asked by Swindon Borough Council to remove the espalier pear planted against the gable end wall of the house. We suspect that removing the original tree was the main reason for the movement of the house. It was traditional to plant a fruit tree against houses built on clay in order to help reduce water-logging of the soil. We cannot convince the borough council that the tree will help and not hinder the structure of the building.

The fruit trees planted three years ago are all doing well apart from the two

apple trees pulled up by vandals and a small Jefferies' Russet that died last year. There is still one small Russet in the orchard. Mark Daniel is in two minds whether to move his larger Russet tree from his garden in Brighton.

The sapling yew tree that was planted to replace the ancient one felled last year is doing well and is now four inches high!

Vandalism

Apart from one incident when three windows and the sun-dial were smashed, the vandals have stayed away. We have super pictures of the perpetrators of the damage on CCTV footage but the police have done little, if anything, with the evidence.

Sale of the House & Museum

Thanks to the intervention of Mike Pringle, the Director of the Swindon Cultural Partnership and Cllr. Phil Young, the new Swindon Borough Council cabinet member for culture, we have about two years to come up with a package of ideas to make the Museum economically sustainable. Many of the ideas that we have suggested in the past might be part of the long-term plan and we are reassured that the council is not in a rush to sell-off the farmhouse. Ideas such as a display of Victorian farming equipment in the out-buildings; creating a small tea-room/book shop; installing a foot-path and signage from Coate Water are being considered again. The Swindon Cultural Partnership is taking the lead in this exercise.

JEFFERIES GRAVE AT BROADWATER CEMETERY, WORTHING

The work on the restoration of the lettering on Richard Jefferies' grave is underway at the time of writing. Mark Daniel has worked with Paul Binstead, the stone-mason, in detailing our requirements and he has also made a record of the wording on the tomb-stones. Members might be interested to read the dedications – over 500 letters need to be restored!

West side of plinth	East	South	North
ALSO OF THEIR DAUGHTER JESSIE PHYLLIS HARGRAVE DIED NOV. 28 TH 1958 BURIED AT SEAFORD ** (cap-stone of plinth, engraved 2002) RICHARD JEFFERIES 1848 - 1887	In ever loving memory of JOHN RICHARD JEFFERIES WHO DIED AT GORING AUGUST 14 th 1887 AGED 38 YEARS ALSO IN MEMORY OF RICHARD OLIVER LAUNCELOT HIS BELOVED YOUNGEST CHILD WHO DIED MARCH 16 TH 1885, AGED 1 YEAR AND 8 MONTHS <i>AND WAS INTERRED AT ELTHAM</i>	ALSO OF RICHARD HAROLD THEIR ELDEST SON WHO PASSED AWAY NOV. 3 RD 1942 BURIED AT LACHINE, CANADA	ALSO OF JESSIE HIS BELOVED WIFE WHO PASSED AWAY JULY 12 th 1926 BURIED AT PERRANPORTH, CORNWALL
To the honoured memory of the Prose Poet of Englands Fields and Woodlands			

Due to the loss of our key contact at Worthing Borough Council, the restoration work will be paid for by the Society, the Eltham Society and various kind individual donations from our Members. We are most grateful, in particular, to Mark Daniel who made up the shortfall that we had anticipated that Worthing Borough Council would contribute. Mark has left enough money to be able to buy some spring flowering bulbs. Our Member, Michael Parrott, has been busy tidying up the grave for a cemetery open day that was reported in *The Argus* on 4 August. The article mentions that the Society "has vowed to restore" the Jefferies' memorial and highlights the other restoration work proposed by the Friends of Broadwater Cemetery. Michael has agreed to keep an eye on the grave and he will be planting up the grave with daffodils, snowdrops and wild flowers at the appropriate time of the year.

The Society is still planning a visit to Sussex, possibly 24 July 2010. Details of the event will be provided in the next newsletter.

SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

Never has any other issue generated so much publicity in the local media. There is good news and bad news to report. The last newsletter announced that a local planning inquiry was underway at which John Price valiantly represented the interests of Richard Jefferies. On 6 August the long-awaited decision was published and the news was good. It was announced that both the Planning Inspector and John Denham, the Secretary of State for Communities ruled that planning permission for 1800 houses, 23 hectares of employment land, a university etc. should be refused. The decision was made on three grounds: the first related to the visual impact of the development from Coate Water's northern end. The other two were related to the lack of links between the proposed offices and university and the fact that no site had been identified by the developers for a teaching facility in the town centre. Other than that all our other environmental concerns were not accepted. Richard Jefferies was mentioned in the report but the inspector believed that it was Jefferies books that were more important (see page 4). The Inspector was satisfied that the archaeological interest of the area would not be jeopardised by the development even if Neolithic structures were surrounded by buildings. As a result of English Nature, the Environment Agency & Wiltshire Wildlife Trust withdrawing their objections to the planning application at the eleventh hour, the inspector was happy that the mitigation measures proposed to protect key species and to prevent flooding were enough so as not to preclude development. Essentially the report paved the way for other development of the area.

In the meantime, Swindon Borough Council has proposed a new policy to allocate land mainly east of Day House Lane for 750 houses, 15 hectares of employment land, a school and shops. Albeit that this proposal is on a smaller scale to that promoted by the developers, and that a buffer around Coate Water will be protected (the policy doesn't state how) from development, we fear that the Inspector's report will lead to the creation of a larger housing/office development on the land originally proposed for the university campus. The war is not won.

MEMORIAL TO RICHARD JEFFERIES

Sheila Povey has resolved part of a mystery about a large plaque in the garden of the Jefferies' house at Coate. The memorial relates to a tree-planting event that took place on 21 September 1921 when the children of the Swindon branch of the Workers Educational Association planted a tree in honour of "Richard Jefferies – nature's great prose writer" that was dedicated by the Rt Rev. The Lord Bishop of Madras. The plaque is placed underneath a box tree that, whilst very old, is not an obvious species to plant in the circumstances. Sheila has supplied an extract from the Evening Advertiser dated 26 September 1921 that records the planting of an oak tree (grown from an acorn collected on the Jefferies farm) "in a field adjoining Coate Reservoir, within a stone's throw of Jefferies' old home". However the headline reads "Birds' Sanctuary as Poet's Memorial" (the bird sanctuary is across the lane to Hodson at the southern end of Coate Water and is more than a stone's throw away!). So at some stage the plaque was moved from under the oak tree and placed in the Jefferies' garden. We don't know when the plaque was moved or where the oak tree was planted. Is it still there? Does anyone know? John Price noted an oak tree, aged around 80 years, growing near the children's playground that is "a stone's throw" from Coate Farm (and near the "Council Oak") – could this be the tree?

Incidentally, Sheila commented that the plaque might have been made at the GWR works as it is of similar construction to others placed around Swindon associated with the railway.



THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

Publications Order Form



The Richard Jefferies Society publishes books, pamphlets, leaflets, a *Journal*, postcards, an autumn and spring newsletter and an annual report. There is also a DVD and video film available of 'Jefferies Land' centred around Coate.

If you would like any of the following, please indicate your order in the boxes below. Some of the publications can be bought on the Internet at richardjefferiessociety.co.uk.

All sales help support the charity and its objectives.

Postcards 25p each or any 3 for 65p

No.

Watercolour of Liddington Hill & quotation		£
'Wild flowers' quotation with grasses		£
Portrait of Richard Jefferies aged around 30		£

Set of 5 cards Jefferies' birthplace at Coate circa 1910 @ £1 £ ☐

Leaflets

No.

Richard Jefferies Farmhouse and Museum	free		
Richard Jefferies in Surbiton	25p		£
Richard Jefferies in Sussex	25p		£
Coate Farm and 'Bevis Country'	50p		£
Richard Jefferies & Coate Water (guided walk)	free		
Richard Jefferies & Old Town (guided walk)	25p		£
Jefferies Land Direction Indicator/Frances Gay Memorial	50p		£

Booklets

No.

Tour of Jefferies Land (North Wilts & Oxon)	50p		£
Richard Jefferies in Eltham (published by The Eltham Society)	£1.00		£
Richard Jefferies House & Museum Guide at Coate	£1.00		£
<i>Richard Jefferies: A Spirit Illumined</i>	£1.00		£
<i>The Jefferies Canon</i> by W J Keith	£1.00		£
Back numbers of the <i>Journal</i>	£1.00		£
<i>Coate and Richard Jefferies</i> by John Chandler	£1.00		£
<i>The Cunning Spider</i> by Hilda Sheehan (an extract from <i>Wood Magic</i>) – cartoon format for children.	£1.00		£

UK Postage rates for postcards, leaflets & booklets

Second class: add 30p for orders up to £1; add 76p for orders up to £2; add £1.04 for orders £2 and over (not including book orders).

Books

<i>Amaryllis at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies (Nov 2009) (softback) Introduction by Carolyn Clarke	£ 6.00	
<i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies (softback) Introduction by George Miller	£ 5.00	
<i>The Interpreter: a biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008 (softback)	£ 5.00	
<i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, (softback) Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2009	£ 5.99	

(Add UK postage & packing £1.04 extra per copy)

<i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies (Nov 2009) (softback) Introduction by Rebecca Welshman	£ 7.00	
<i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies (hardback) Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008 Softback version	£20.00 ----- £ 8.00	-----
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008 (hardback)	£15.00	
<i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994 (hardback)	£12.00	
<i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, (softback) Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008	£ 7.99	

(Add UK postage & packing £2.24 extra per copy)

DVD or video

‘Jefferies Land’ – 25 minute film that shows places in the Coate area associated with the writer.

£10 including postage. DVD ☐ Video ☐

TOTAL COST OF PUBLICATIONS ORDER	£
TOTAL COST OF POSTAGE	£
TOTAL	£

Please note that we do not seek to make profit out of postal charges and we use recycled packaging where possible. Please ensure that you include sufficient funding to cover postal costs.

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The Richard Jefferies Society.

Small orders can be paid for with postage stamps.

Send to Mrs Norma Goodwin
The Richard Jefferies Society
Wildings
3a Momford Road
Oliver's Battery
Winchester SO22 4LE.

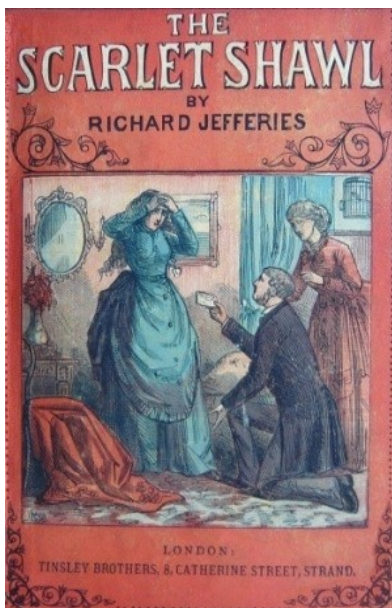
For more information or for details of postal rates overseas or for large orders, contact Mrs Goodwin by telephone 01962 864684 or e-mail norma.goodwin@btinternet.com.

Second hand books by and about Richard Jefferies are also available from the Society. Do ask if there is a Jefferies' book that you need.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Given the growth in the print-on-demand industry for supplying Jefferies' books at exorbitant prices and in plain covers, it seemed prudent that the Society should make more books available. To add to the early fiction published last year under the Petton Books imprint (i.e. *Restless Human Hearts* and *World's End*), a new edition of *The Scarlet Shawl* is now available with an introduction by Andrew Rossabi. We are most grateful to Mr Rossabi for all the time and effort that he has put into writing masterful insights into the Tinsley' volumes.

The Scarlet Shawl



Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9522813-7-5, Petton Books, £5.99 available from the Society.

The Scarlet Shawl (1874) is the first of the three novels published under the commercial imprint of Tinsley Brothers and it is the slightest of the three, but in some ways the most charming. It is a tale of how the young and likeable Nora loses her admirer and would-be lover, Percival. She nearly drifts into a loveless marriage, only to be rescued by luck and her own last remnants of common sense.

There is humour, too, in the character of the hopeless, conceited Wootton who fancies that he will win Nora in marriage, but fears her reaction when she sees him without his cosmetic aids that maintain his youthful appearance.

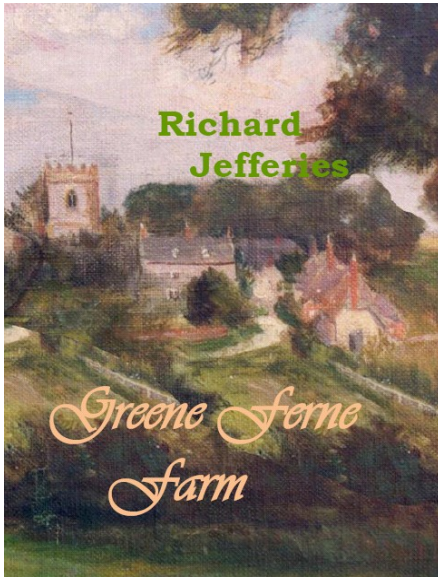
The novel gathers strength as it proceeds and Jefferies shakes off the awkward self-consciousness that mars the early chapters, and his personality begins to dominate. There are several passages of power and beauty. One can see Jefferies preparing himself to be the great countryside writer that he later becomes.

The illustration on the front page (reproduced above) is taken from a second imprint of the book by Tinsley from the yellowback series. We thank George Miller for supplying a photograph of his copy to use in this new edition.

Andrew Rossabi has updated and improved his introduction to *The Scarlet Shawl* that was published in the ill-fated Ariel Books edition. The introduction is about 28 pages long and, unlike the Ariel Books version, free from printing

errors! The book is worth buying for the introduction alone.

Greene Ferne Farm



Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9522813-6-8, Petton Books, UK price: £5.00 available from the Society.

This new paper-back includes the introduction to *Greene Ferne Farm* published in *Richard Jefferies: A Bibliographical Study* by George Miller and Hugoe Matthews (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993).

The front cover illustration is taken from Kate Tryon's oil painting of Chiseldon church that is on display at the Jefferies Museum.

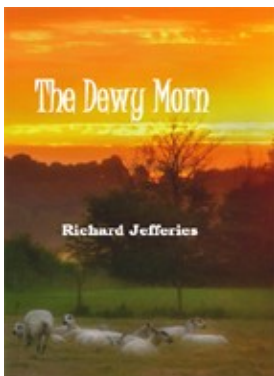
Richard Jefferies based many of his scenes in the book on the people and places that he knew around Coate. He wrote to a publisher about an early version of this novel as follows:

"If the plot be subtracted I think I may say that nine tenths of my novel is the results of experience. Even the drunkard – Augustus Basset – is a sketch from life, and the original (now poor fellow deceased) was a member of a 'county' family which fell by degrees to the unhappy state described. The country folk are all also from life, the farmers, labourers etc. and if you wished I could even mention names in some cases: of course in confidence. The scenery is that of the Wiltshire Downs – from Ashdown (in Berks) to Salisbury Plain; they are my native hills and I know them well. The ancient dolmen which plays a part in the story actually exists. The second volume especially is drawn from nature: I have myself spent more than one summer night on the Downs, you would scarcely believe how beautiful the morning is just before the sun rises. I have tried to describe it: but the colours are not to be put on paper. I would rather like to take your attention to the second volume. The old farmer and miller Andrew Fisher was also a living character – he is not forgotten even now, and his house was ransacked when he died. Of course I have disguised the characters sufficiently that they should not be recognized too easily: but the substance is accurately portrayed."

Please note: all the Society's publications can be purchased using the order form in the newsletter, at the Annual General Meeting or on the Internet. It is hoped that a new edition of *Amaryllis at the Fair*, with an introduction by Carolyn Clarke, and *The Dewy Morn*, with an introduction by Rebecca Welshman,

will be available in time for November 7. There is also a proposal to publish Jefferies' letters to his Aunt Ellen in their entirety. See the next page.

To be published soon



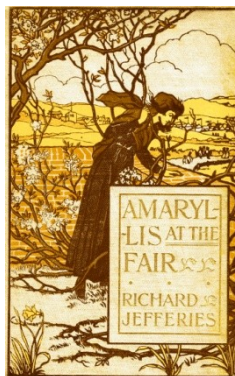
Petton Books
Softback

ISBN: 978-0-9522813-8-2

Introduction: Rebecca Welshman

Pages: about 320

UK Price: £7.00

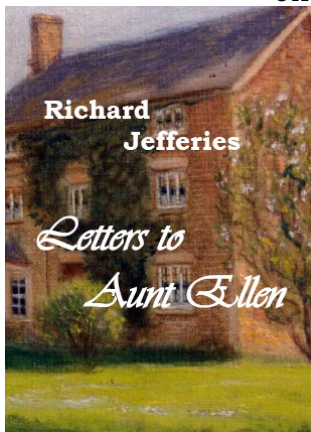


ISBN: 978-0-9522813-9-9

Introduction: Carolyn Clarke

Pages: about 206

UK Price: £6.00



The Story of My Heart

Chen Ying has completed the translation of *The Story* into Chinese. The manuscript is with her publisher who hopes to release the book in May next year. She will be sending the Society a copy. Many of you met Chen Ying at our Study Day in 2005 when it was first made known that she was working on a translation of the book (See Annual Report & Autumn Newsletter 2004-5, p.7). It made a news item in the *Swindon Advertiser*. Once the book is pub-

lished it is sure to make another excellent news story.

Walks in the Wheat-fields

On 4 April Penguin published a new title: *Walks in the Wheat-fields* – a selection of essays by Richard Jefferies. ISBN: 9780141190990; 128 pp. UK price: £4.99.

After London

A talking book of *After London* has been recorded on Librivox in its entirety. The novel is read by Ruth Golding and is available as a free download from their Internet address: <http://librivox.org/after-london-or-wild-england-by-richard-jefferies/>. Ruth hopes to record other Jefferies' works.

The April 2009 issue of ***Rural History*** vol 20 no.1[pp.51-66], contains an article (that can be downloaded from the Internet) by Prof Eric Jones entitled, "The Environmental Effects of Blood Sports in Lowland England since 1750." There are several quotes from Jefferies. The cover of the journal makes use of a photograph of John Jones, keeper at Hodson, described by Alfred Williams and mentioned by Kate Tryon. John was Eric Jones' grandfather's cousin.

Abstract: This paper considers the effects of blood sports on the landscape, wildlife and farming, and assesses the implications of the topic for some matters of historical interpretation. Histories of individual sports written by practitioners are rarely candid about the environmental costs and even descriptions by professional historians tend to neglect the dynamic ecological consequences. Ritualised foxhunting supplanted more effective control and encouraged pests. Any benign consequences were incidental. Thanks to commercial money, shooting intensities held up well even during agricultural depressions. Game preservation, notably of pheasants, meant heavy pressure on birds of prey and other wild species; planting woodland was the main benign effect, although this simultaneously fostered so-called pests. Killing species that competed with game eliminated some wildlife but often proved self-defeating in the long term. Angling had mixed implications for waterside wildlife, although riverine habitats were lastingly modified when sportfishing replaced fishing for food. Hunting and shooting meant some withdrawal of land from farming and interference with rotations: these activities reduced productivity. That the national economy could 'afford' to divert so many resources to elite sports contradicts the dominant view that England came up against a resources barrier.

Rebecca Welshman presented her paper "**Hardy, Jefferies, and the Imaginative Reading of Nature**", at a conference titled "Reading and the Age of Gladstone," at St. Deiniol's Library in association with the University of Liverpool, 23-25 January 2009.

On 16 May 2009, Rebecca Welshman presented her paper "**Travelling in an Instant Across the Distant Sea: Coast as Setting in the Work of Richard Jefferies and Thomas Hardy**", at a conference titled "Land and Identity", University of Derby.

Rebecca Welshman had another paper published in *The Thomas Hardy Journal* this Spring (XXIV (2008) pp 34-42). The paper was titled "**Imagining Archaeology: Hardy and the Bronze Age**". With reference to Hardy's novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, in which Henry Knight is clinging to a cliff, Rebecca writes:

the context of Knight being about to plummet to his death is suddenly transformed into a visionary moment where Knight, gazing at the trilobite, contemplates the eras of earth's history that "knew nothing of the dignity of man" – an instance of what Richard Jefferies was to term in 1880 the "crooked sequence of life." (from *The Story of my Heart*, London (1930) p.19).

In *Writing Technologies*, vol. 2.2. (2009) pp.35-54 there is an article by Prof. Roger Ebbatson on "**Landscape and machine: Hardy, Jefferies and the question of technology**". The article can be downloaded at ntu.ac.uk/writing_technologies/index.html.

Rob Alton, one of our Members, has written a splendid article about a sun-dial in his garden that was published in the September bulletin of the **British Sundial Society**. Entitled "A roller in a cottage garden", Mr Alton quotes from Jefferies' *The Dewy Morn*: "Upon the green and tarnished face of the ancient sundial there was written in worn letters 'Nihil nisi umbra' – Nothing without shadow; no, not even love".



CITINGS OF JEFFERIES

Sharley McLean recently read Sebastian Faulkes' *The Fatal Englishmen* (Vintage Books, 1996) about the lives of three men who died young. One of these is Jeremy Wolfenden (born in 1936, the son of Jack, later Lord Wolfenden) described as "charming, generous and witty; he was the cleverest Englishman of his generation, but left All Souls to become a hack reporter. At the height of the Cold War, he was sent to Moscow where his louche private life made him the plaything of the intelligence services. A terrifying sequence of events ended in Washington where he died at the age of 31." Wolfenden said his formative books were Mann's *Dr Faustus*, Hemingway's short stories, *To the Finland Station* by Edmund Wilson, *Bevis* by Richard Jefferies, Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, *The Quest for Covo* by A J Symons and Tolkein.

Jean Saunders came across this extract from a feature in the **Northern Echo** (22 April 2009):

We are being urged to keep a special eye out for bumble bees. Three of Britain's 25 native species are already extinct and a further six of the remaining 22 are endangered.

One of my favourite passages of country writing is a homage to the bumble bee by Richard Jefferies. "He hums to himself as he goes, so happy is he. No artificial saccharine aids him, there is no step to his house that he may alight in comfort. No one cares for the bumble bee."

Yes we do. Let's watch for him, and help him all we can.

Dan Walwin found the following quote in an essay by **George Orwell** titled "Inside the Whale" (from his *Selected Essays*, Penguin, 1960, pg. 21). Orwell is discussing Housman's *The Shropshire Lad*:

England at that time was hardly more an agricultural country than it is now, but before the light industries began to spread themselves it was easier to think of it as one. Most middle-class boys grew up within sight of a farm, and naturally it was the pic-

turesque side of farm life that appealed to them– the ploughing, harvesting, stack-thrashing and so forth. Unless he has to do it himself a boy is not likely to notice the horrible drudgery of hoeing turnips, milking cows with chapped teats at four o'clock in the morning, etc., etc. Just before, just after and for that matter, during the war was the great age of the 'Nature poet', the heyday of Richard Jefferies and W.H. Hudson.

Rebecca Welshman reported that Monty Don was on the **Radio 4** "Open Book" programme on 4 June talking from the Hay on Wye Book Festival. He listed his top 6 books, one of which was *The Story of My Heart*. He said he has been reading Jefferies since the seventies, having first found him while he was studying at Cambridge.

John Price noted an obscure mention of Jefferies in the 1 August edition of **The Times** magazine. In a column dedicated to food there was a letter referring to Richard Jefferies.

Recently, Phyllis Treitel was reading a biography of **Charlotte Mew** (1869-1928) by Penelope Fitzgerald. Evidently, Charlotte was very impressed with *Field and Hedgerow* that she read in 1889 and commented "It set my own heart beating for I felt I discovered in it an undreamed-of universe." Charlotte wrote a poem about the felling of trees ("The Trees are Down") and, Phyllis believes, that the poet was inspired by "My Old Village" – the poem has a similar rhythm. Alas, Charlotte Mew committed suicide.



BOOKS BY MEMBERS

The West Country: A Cultural History by John Payne

Signal Books, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-904955-61-0. Paperback, 256 pages with 30 black and white illustrations. £12. John Payne explores this culturally rich and varied region, revealing many facets of its distinctiveness and much loved identity. A review in *The Independent* described the book as 'charming, learned and a little old-fashioned'. The nature writing of Richard Jefferies is one element of the study. There will be a review of the book in the next *Journal*. John has been invited to speak to the Society at their meeting dated 10 April 2010 (postponed from December 2009) on the subject: "Richard Jefferies; footnote or central character in the West Country's cultural history?" In particular John will explore why Jefferies' is treated as a "footnote" compared with, for example Thomas, Williamson, Hardy, and whether this is justified. John thinks not.

Inappropriate Happiness by Tom Saunders

Reuben Books, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-9562828-1-1. Paperback, 260 pages. £7.49. Available at reubenbooks.co.uk. Our narrator is Edward. Edward is surely his father's son. When Edward inherits the deserted water mill, he must make plans for the old man's white elephant and see them through. After the two young artists Belle and Kitto arrive, Edward's life changes forever. What he sees one evening leaves him with a secret he does not want or know how to

share. *Inappropriate Happiness* is a novel about what was, what is, and what can never be.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

The Alliance of Literary Societies

There is no report of this year's AGM held in Dublin. Helen Newman was unable to attend. It is with much sadness that the ALS announced the death of their President of six years' standing, Aeronwy Thomas. Aeronwy was a good supporter of the Alliance and she will be missed. She was diagnosed with myeloid leukaemia in May and had to undertake a course of chemotherapy. Sadly she passed away in her sleep on 27 July. Her funeral took place on 6 August at Holy Cross Church, Motpur Park. Her ashes are planned to be scattered at her father's (Dylan Thomas) the boathouse.

Wilts Archaeological & Natural History Society.

We have tickets which enable our members to visit, and make use of the facilities of the Museum at Devizes. If you would like to borrow a ticket, please apply to John Price. ☎ 01672 515150.

The Edward Thomas Fellowship

Richard Emeny has retired as the editor of the Fellowship's newsletter but he reports that he has plenty of projects in mind to contribute in other ways. The editor is now Guy Cuthbertson based at the University of St Andrews. There is a transcript of the Birthday Tribute readings given by Terry and Cynthia Lloyd with Tom Durham at Steep Church on 1st March. The theme of the talk related to Edward Thomas's connections with Wiltshire and, in particular, Swindon.

Henry Williamson Society

The HWS Journal is no longer edited by Ann Williamson: her place has been taken by Michael Coultas. Ann is in charge of the Literary Estate and, in Issue No 45, has supplied articles and useful lists of information dealing with Henry's two visits to the United States (1930 and 1934).

Walter Burns' article on the 1930 visit to New York is full of interesting detail and comment. Tony Jowett writes about the 1934 visit to Augusta, Georgia. Both articles are greatly enriched by quotations from Henry's letters. There is also an article about Henry's controversial book *The Golden Falcon* 1933.

Phyllis Treitel 2/7/09

Friends of the Ridgeway

Court Hill, near Wantage, is a beautiful place at any time; on 15 March 2009. A lovely Spring day, it was hard to have to go indoor for the AGM. All the Ridgeway MPs (including Anne Snelgrove) are Vice-Presidents. One of them, David Howell, the new MP for Henley in place of Boris Johnson, gave much pleasure by being present.

Our main piece of business was to agree a change to our constitution so that

the aims of the friends could be amended to include that of extending the reach of the Ridgeway from Avebury as far as Stonehenge, to be called The Great Stones Way.

After the business, Sarah Simmons, an officer of the World Heritage Site (Avebury) spoke fluently and knowledgeably (with slides) about new moves to increase access to Avebury and its treasures without at the same time damaging them. Since the present Ridgeway Trail ends at Avebury, the Ridgeway is affected and its surface has presented new interesting problems.

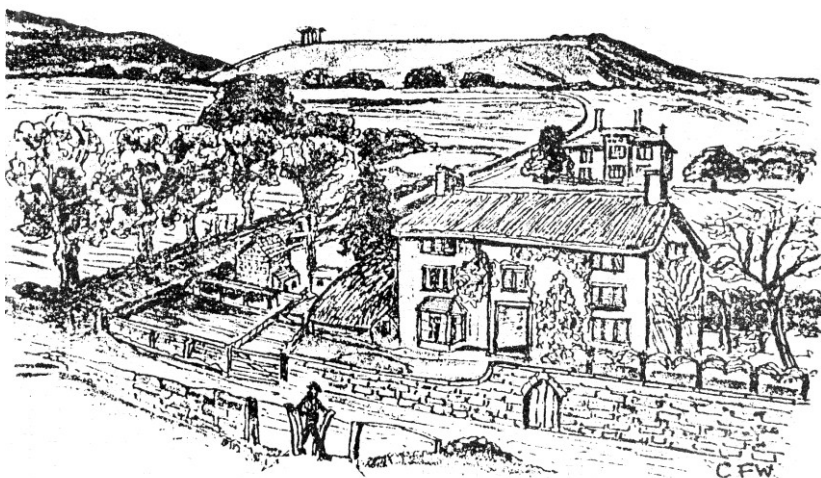
It you find yourself at Court Hill, lunches and teas can be bought there.

Phyllis Treitel 25/3/09

The Friends of Alfred Williams

Following the retirement of Chris Bowles over 12 months ago, the Friends had been unable to find a volunteer for the post. The future of the Society was in serious doubt when our own Members Roy Burton volunteered to take on a new role as communications link, dealing only with communications with members and answering enquiries from the general public. All officers continue to remain in post. Subscriptions remain at £3 per annum single and £4 a couple. Contact Roy Burton for further information at 228, Broadway, Didcot OX11 8RS or telephone 01235 816763.

Roy Burton 30/7/09



*Cyril Wright
March 1981.*

Coate & the Downs by Cyril Wright

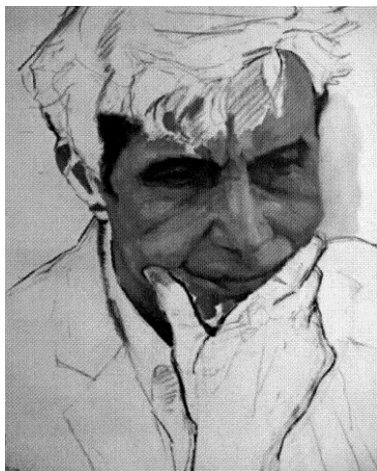
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BIRTHDAY LECTURE
SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2009
VILLAGE HALL, LIDDINGTON

PROGRAMME

- 10.30 Doors open and refreshments.
- 11.00 AGM (members only) – see Agenda next page.
- 1.00 Lunch break. Bring a packed lunch. Local pubs serve food.
The hall is next to Liddington church with views across to
Liddington Hill.
- 2.30 The Birthday Lecture
Speaker: Andrew Rossabi
Subject: Richard Jefferies' Hastings Adventure
- 4.00 Tea
- 4.30 Depart

Birthday Lecture

Andrew Rossabi is currently undertaking new research about Richard Jefferies in preparation for a new biography about the writer. As it will be some time before the new publication will be ready – a glimpse into a new aspect of Jefferies' life, that he has discovered will form the basis of the lecture. Andrew will highlight Jefferies' 1870 Hastings Adventure; he will discuss the research in progress and read a short extract from the new biography.



Andrew Rossabi (pictured left) was born at Looe in 1941. He was a scholar of St Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge, where he read classics. He has worked both in publishing and as a part-time classics teacher at Highgate School. He has written introductions to several works by Jefferies, most recently to the editions of the early novels published by Petton Books. He was President of the Society between 1991 and 1996. His interests include watercolour painting, walking, Venice, and the music of J S Bach. He is married with two grown-up children and lives in Highgate, North London.

Portrait by Nicola Taylor

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2009 AT LIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL
CHURCH ROAD, LIDDINGTON**

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's introductory remarks.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the last AGM 11 October 2008 [see pages 31-33]
- 4 Matters Arising
Richard Jefferies House & Museum at Coate
The Save Coate campaign
- 5 Annual Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report [see page 34-36]
- 7 Election of Examiner of Accounts
- 8 Elections to Council; the following are due to retire:
Margaret Evans, Norma Goodwin, Geoff Hirst and Hugoe Matthews.
Margaret Evans and Norma Goodwin are proposed for re-election for
the years 2009 to 2012, Geoff Hirst, as Treasurer from 2009 to 2014.
Hugoe Matthews, as President from 2009-2010.
- 9 Motions (if any)
- 10 Any Other Business

A copy of the minutes of the 2008 AGM should be brought to the AGM.

Any motions or resolutions for debate should be sent to the Hon. Sec. (Jean Saunders) before 19 October, as should nominations for Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society held at the Village Hall, Liddington on Saturday 11 October 2008

PRESENT: Gillian Bromhead, Brian Burrows, David Chesham, Marie Chesham, Roger Ebbatson, Eltham Society (two members), Margaret Evans, Wendy MacLeod Gilford, Norma Goodwin, Stan Hickerton, Geoff Hirst, Margaret Hunt, John Kennett, Hugoe Matthews, George & Sue Miller, Ray & Sylvia Morse, Helen Newman, Duncan Pepper, Michael Ponting, Andrew Rossabi, Raymond Roys, John Sanders, Jean Saunders, Phyllis Treitel, John Webb and Rebecca Welshman.

1. THE CHAIR

Lady Treitel, Vice-President, welcomed Members to the AGM and wished John Price, our Chairman, a speedy recovery.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were given in respect of Margaret Bathe, Eric Birch, David & Sue Birley, Mark Daniel, Gill Davis, Valerie Haworth, Eric Jones, Michael Parrott, John Price, Sheila Povey, Richard Stewart & Graham Walker.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2007 at Liddington Village Hall were signed as correct although the Annual Report incorrectly referred to the AGM taking place at Chiseldon instead of Liddington Village Hall. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Norma Goodwin and seconded by Wendy MacLeod-Gilford.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was taken as read that Members had noted relevant updates in the Annual Report 2007-8 and in the autumn newsletter. Matters arising relate to new information since the report was written in August.

4.1 Richard Jefferies House and Museum at Coate

4.1.1 Coate Farm lease: There was still no progress to report on the lease negotiations with Swindon Borough Council. The Society has made clear the terms under which we might be prepared to take on a lease of the cottage in order to assist the council to find an appropriate tenant but there has been no response from them. A meeting organised for 7 October was cancelled by the council.

4.1.2 Purchase of Coate farm: Bill Cotton, the borough council's Director of Economic and Cultural Development (who holds overall responsibility for the Richard Jefferies Museum) recently asked us whether the Society had ever been approached to buy Coate Farm and if we might be interested in acquiring the property. The matter was discussed briefly by Members given that a considerable amount of research and more information would be required along with a change in constitution that requires the support of Members and the Charity Commission. Hugoe Matthews suggested that the Executive Council should set up a working group and prepare a paper that could be considered by Members once information had been gathered. The National Trust might be approached again and the Bronte Society and John Clare Trust might offer advice about taking on a major long-term commitment.

4.1.3 Trees: It was reported that Mark Daniel had decided against moving the Jefferies Russet from his garden in Brighton to Coate last winter and he is proposing to move it this winter instead.

Research is in hand with regard to finding another way to successfully rear cuttings from the mulberry tree. Despite the Society's strong objections to felling the ancient yew tree in the back garden (that Jefferies mentions in *Restless Human Hearts*), Swindon Borough Council went ahead with the work on 25th September and drilled out the stump and roots on 3rd October. The incident gained much publicity and generated general outrage. George Miller suggested erecting a memorial plaque in place of the tree that will be considered by the Executive Committee.

4.1.4 Museum activity is still good and visitor figures are approaching the record high for 2007. An additional poetry group – 'Blue Gate Poets' held their inaugural meeting at the Museum in September and hope to meet there twice a month for evening sessions.

4.2 Publications: along with the *Index*, *The Interpreter* and *Restless Human Hearts* the Society has now published *World's End* in soft-back with a new introduction by Andrew Rossabi. Sales of the books have been good so far.

4.3 The Save Coate campaign: 50,000 people have now signed the Save Coate petition. Per-simmon Homes and Redrow Homes have lodged an appeal with the Secretary of State (Hazel Blears) in order that she makes a decision about one of the planning applications for houses, offices, university campus etc. A local planning inquiry overseen by a government planning inspector will be held and those who have objected in writing have been invited to make further comments known to the Planning Inspectorate. Swindon Borough Council's planning case officer is likely to recommend that if the council's planning committee had arrived at a decision, they would have refused planning permission. Jean Saunders will send out a briefing sheet to those interested on how to make further comment, albeit that the deadline is 4 November.

5. ANNUAL REPORT

The content of the report was accepted as a true record of the Society's activities. Proposed – Wendy MacLeod-Gilford; Seconded – Ray Morse. It was carried.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Geoff Hirst pointed to the small excess of income over expenditure and the dramatic increase in sales that would only improve with the investment in new publications for sale. Geoff mentioned the changes in Gift Aid that would result in an overall loss of about 3% of tax rebate on previous levels. Jean Saunders proposed acceptance of the accounts; Margaret Evans seconded the proposal. It was carried.

7. EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

Mr Chris Jones had examined the accounts and his positive report was published in the Annual Report. The Society is most grateful for his assistance in these matters. Geoff Hirst proposed that he be elected to serve next year. Phyllis Treitel seconded the proposal. It was carried.

8. ELECTIONS TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Secretary had received no further nominations other than those from the Executive Council for the re-election of retiring members Eric Jones and John Webb along with proposing Duncan Pepper, a new nominee. The Chair offered a vote of thanks to the members of the Executive Council and to John Savage who had stepped down. There was a unanimous vote of support for the appointment of Eric Jones, Duncan Pepper and John Webb who will serve from 2008 to 2011.

9. MOTIONS

Donation towards restoration of lettering on Richard Jefferies' Grave at Broadwater cemetery: Jean Saunders proposed that:

"In gratitude and appreciation for the work undertaken by Worthing Borough Council this year, the Society should consider a contribution of up to £500 towards the total cost (£1500 estimate) to replace the lead lettering on Richard Jefferies grave."

The motion had been seconded by John Price. The only matter raised related to the legal ownership of the grave, believed to be the family. The Eltham Society had discussed the matter of restoration and wished to make a contribution of £200 towards the work. Individuals had also been invited to make contributions that would be used to reduce the Society's final contribution. Hugoe Matthews proposed acceptance of the motion; Norma Goodwin seconded and the vote was carried unanimously. Jean Saunders will progress the matter further with Martin Perryman from Worthing Borough Council.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Improving access to information and establishing a student forum. Rebecca Welshman, a new Member, said that she was willing to set up a dedicated web site for the Richard Jefferies Society that would link to all the diverse existing strands of information about Jefferies and the Society on the Internet. The new site might also include a Student Forum where academic and non-academic queries about Jefferies might be answered by Society Members. Members were supportive of the idea in principle. The Executive Council will give the matter further consideration at the next meeting in two weeks time.

10.2 It was announced that Honorary Life Member Roger Frith died earlier this year. His friend Arnold Wesker will be writing an obituary for our next newsletter. By coincidence there is mention of Roger on page 25 of the annual report in relationship to the Paul Schofield obituary.

10.3 The Eltham Society offered a box of 100 of their updated leaflets and suggested that we might sell it to raise funds for the Society/Museum. Their kind gesture was thanked and the gift gratefully accepted.

10.4 Brian Burrows mentioned that the new Swindon central library will be open later this month and urged Members to recommend that the towns' Library Services should include Jefferies' books for loan rather than just keeping books them in their reference section.

The business part of the AGM ended at 12.30 pm.

Jean Saunders
Hon. Secretary
12 October 2008

Treasurer's Annual Report to the Richard Jefferies Society 2008-9

There is simply no such thing as a typical year for the Treasurer of this Society as new and different elements and emphases seem to occur with increasingly regularity.

Some of the trends, however, that I identified last year have continued. Receipts from sales now exceed membership subscriptions and even the latter figure is inflated a little by the inclusion of one life membership. I had thought that the investment in publications last year would be something of a one-off but the society has seen fit to develop this area of its work to widen the knowledge and appeal of Jefferies. I believe this to be a sound decision both as regards the spreading of the Jefferies gospel and also from a financial standpoint. We were, however, extremely fortunate to be given a substantial donation towards reprinting certain Jefferies works and for this the Society is grateful.

Reduced museum availability has had an impact on this source of sales, and administration show a large increase, partly because of increasing postage rates but more importantly it reflects the huge increase in the dispatch of our publications to both individuals and book wholesalers. As in previous years I have taken the total publication costs as an expense in the year of invoice. We are holding revenue generating stock for future years which a balance sheet would show were our accounts to be produced on this basis.

The increase in the Tax Reclaim reflects the donations made in the previous year for the Rossabi biography project and I have accordingly allocated £897 of the reclaim to the project. The average deposit account rate over the financial year was 2.5% gross, (not tremendous), and it will be less next year. We can take comfort from the fact that unlike some charities we had not acted as so-called "rate tarts" and now find ourselves trapped in the Icelandic banking collapse, unprotected by any government scheme. Low risks may equal low rewards but at least we can sleep at night.

If there are other issues on which you wish to comment not covered above, please raise them at the AGM or through whatever channels are most convenient and I will try to get back to you. I can assure you that I shall not be in Nepal on the Society's income!

I have as usual allocated the interest income between Coate and the general reserves but in addition have added the biography reserve as a recipient of this apportionment also. The breakdown of our funds is as follows:

General Funds	£ 2000
Coate	£738
Harold Adams	£ 155
Biography Reserve	£ 5581
Grave repair	£542
General Reserve	£10679

G.W.Hirst
Honorary Treasurer
11 August 2009

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Published accounts

RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS for the year ending 30 June 2009

2008	Receipts	2009	2008	Payments	2009
	Balances brought down		1133	Publications	3803
5937	Bank	2289	98	Rents	54
	Adjustment	4			
25	Petty Cash	15	53	Subs	55
9941	Cov. B/Soc	15590		Lecture fees	56
		<u>17898</u>			
1696	Subs	1304	528	Administration	901
	Donations:		160	Book purchase	
4570	Biography	158			
158	General	1662			
	Grave	<u>41</u>	1703		
553	Sales: Mus	431	194	Insurance	194
450	Other	<u>1932</u>	215	House/grounds	
		2363	3737	A4A Project	
534	Tax Reclaim	1162			
448	Interest:B/Soc	392	2289	Bank	2865
			15	Petty Cash	66
			15590	Cov. B/Soc	16828
					<u>19759</u>
		<u>24822</u>			<u>24822</u>

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 2009.

The respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner are as follows:

The Trustees of the Richard Jefferies Society are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The 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.

As Independent Examiner 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 any 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. Such an examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by a charity – in this case the Richard Jefferies Society – and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes the consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the Trustees via the Society's Treasurer 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

I have now undertaken these required actions in respect of the 2008-09 accounts; in connection with this examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(i) 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

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



C E I Jones
Retired Museum Administrator
26 July 2009

8 Woburn Avenue
Theydon Bois
Essex CM16 7JS

Directions to Liddington Village Hall (see map on the next page)

Liddington Village Hall is next to Liddington Church, Church Road, just off the main B4192 road from Commonhead Roundabout, at Swindon, to Aldbourne. There is ample parking space at the hall and the Village Inn (that serves food from 12am to 2pm – ☎ 01793 790314) is a short walk away.

Liddington can be approached by road from the A419 trunk and M4 motorway Junction 15. Note that there is now a fly-over at Commonhead Roundabout on the A419 next to the new Great Western Hospital. From the old Commonhead roundabout, take the B4192 to Liddington. Progress up the hill passing a staggered cross-roads. Church Road is a few yards further up the hill on the right hand side.

Buses (Routes 46 to Hungerford & 48 to Marlborough) run between Swindon Bus station (it should leave from Bay 9, but watch out for changes) and through Liddington village. There is only one bus available that is of use to members on Saturday morning: **the 48 service to Marlborough leaves Swindon Bus Station at 10.35am and arrives at Liddington at 10.52am. If possible, ask to get off at the Liddington Turn before the bus goes through the village past the Village Inn pub.**

Regular and frequent buses run from Fleming Way in Swindon town centre to the Great Western Hospital (including numbers 11 and 16). For the brave and fit, there is a stiff 2km walk from the hospital up the hill to Liddington. We could arrange to collect people from the hospital bus stop by prior arrangement: contact the Hon. Sec if you think that you might need help.

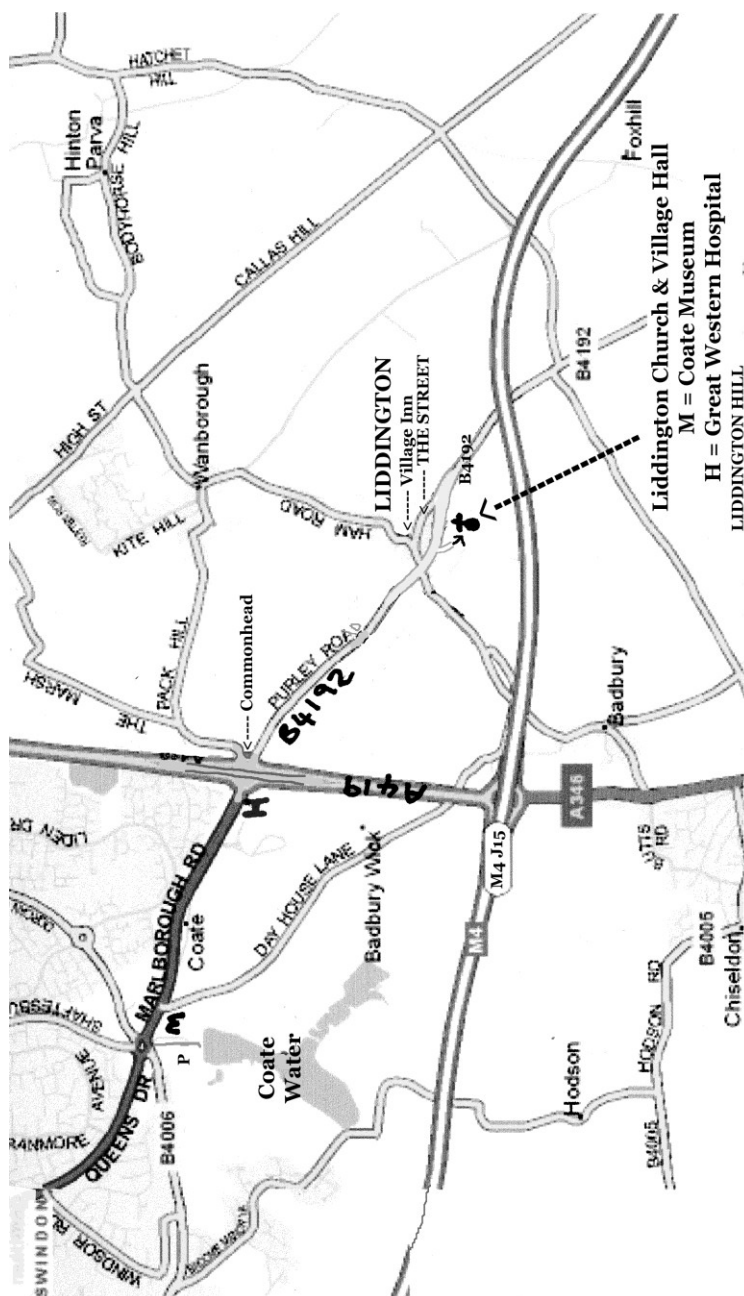
Return buses from Liddington (near the Village Inn) to Swindon Bus Station:

Bus Service	48	46
Departs Liddington (Spinney Close)	16.12	17.11
Arrives Swindon Bus Station	16.30	17.29

Bed and breakfast

Should anyone require overnight accommodation or information about Bed and Breakfast facilities in the area, contact the Hon. Sec. Mr & Mrs Michael Dixon run a small B&B at Street House Farm (near the Village Inn, Liddington). Contact them on 01793 790243 for more information.

In an emergency, on the day, you can contact Jean Saunders on mobile phone number 07709 524787. Please note that this phone is not normally switched on!



Publications

Once again we have used the middle pages of the newsletter to add an order form for our publications. Members might like to know that some of these can now be purchased by credit/debit card using links on our web-site richardjefferiessociety.co.uk. At the moment the links available online are for UK postage rates only but Members overseas can apply for books on offer by e-mailing sales@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk and requesting a price for over-seas mailing.

Electronic mailing group.

If you would like to be better informed about the Society's activities or you would like to share information with other Members, you can subscribe to a free e-mail group run by Yahoo. Contact the Hon. Sec. for details or send your e-mail address to info@RichardJefferiesSociety.co.uk.

Richardjefferiessociety.co.uk

For those of you on the Internet, many facilities are now available through our new web-site that include a forum for discussion, various photographs of people and places associated with Jefferies, information about the Museum and a selection of favourite quotes from his works. The web-site has generated much interest and is invaluable these days for promoting the Society and Richard Jefferies.



LIDDINGTON CHURCH

Barbara Greg

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2009-2010

2009

Please note that the Richard Jefferies Museum is closed for repairs from 14 September 2009 to the end of the year.

- Saturday 7 November AGM & Birthday Lecture. More information see pages 29f.
Birthday Lecture: Andrew Rossabi – Richard Jefferies' 1870 Hastings Adventure.
- Saturday 5 December - meeting postponed until 10 April 2010

2010

- Saturday 6 March* Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams. Select a short extract by or about Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams or just come along and listen.
- Saturday 10 April* "Richard Jefferies; footnote or central character in the West Country's cultural history?" A lecture by John Payne. (See p.26) In particular John will explore why Jefferies' is treated as a 'footnote' compared with other west country writers, and whether this is justified.
- Saturday 8 May Joint Study Day with the Edward Thomas Fellowship
Liddington Village Hall (10.30-4.30)
- Sunday 9 May Walk from Coate Farm to Gamekeepers Cottage
- Saturday 24 July Sussex outing.
- Saturday 6 November AGM and Birthday Lecture.

*Meetings begin at 2.00pm in the Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon. Doors open at 1.00pm. See map on page 38. Park free at Coate Water, only 5 minutes walk away. Those with a disability can park at the Museum; space is limited but when the ground is firm there is plenty of room. Parking is also available in Day House Lane and at the Sun Inn. Meetings are open to the public and free to attend.

From Swindon town centre (Fleming Way), there are several bus services that stop next to Coate roundabout. These include: Monday to Saturday - daytime: Numbers 10, 12, 13, 14 and 21. Monday to Saturday - evenings: Numbers 12, 13 and 14.