

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

**AUTUMN NEWSLETTER
& ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010**



Earliest known photograph of Richard Jefferies
(see p. 25)

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 runs from 1st July and 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 a 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 spring meetings, a study day, special outings, events, a Birthday Lecture and an Annual General Meeting.

TRUSTEES AND COUNCIL MEMBERS 2009-10

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

Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Faringdon, Oxon
SN7 7SS

☎ 01793 783040

Email: info@RichardJefferiesSociety.co.uk

Website: <http://richardjefferiessociety.co.uk>



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.

NEWSLETTER The Autumn Newsletter and Annual Report was edited by Jean Saunders.

The deadline set to submit material for the Spring 2011 Newsletter is **1st March 2011**. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary.

CONTENTS

Page	
4	From the Chair
6	From the Membership Secretary
7	How did you discover Richard Jefferies?
Reports of meetings, events and outings 2010	
7	Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams
8	Richard Jefferies: footnote or central character?
8	Joint event with the Edward Thomas Fellowship
11	Sussex Adventures
14	ALS weekend hosted by the Gaskell Society
Articles by members	
18	Discoveries VI – Was Richard Jefferies a Racist?
21	A Recovery in English Nature Books?
22	Adrian Bell and Richard Jefferies
23	Coate Farm and Museum Report
25	Save Coate campaign
25	Earliest known photo of Richard Jefferies
25	Books & articles by and about Jefferies
27	1948 Tribute film
28	Those who have departed
28	Talks about Richard Jefferies
30	Prof. Roger Ebbatson
30	Citings of Jefferies
32	Books by Society Members
34	News from other Societies
36	Tribute to Edward Cawston Thomas
AGM and Birthday Lecture	
38	AGM and Birthday Lecture
40	- Minutes of 2009 AGM
43	- Treasurer's Annual Report
45	- Independent Examiner's Report
46	Directions to find Liddington Village Hall
46	Publications
47	richardjefferiessociety.co.uk
48	Meetings 2010-11

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

Planning the July visit to Broadwater and Goring, and at the same time producing a guide for those who wished to visit the other Sussex Jefferies residences, made me realise just how frequent were the moves in the last five years of Richard Jefferies' life. For those of us who can appreciate only too well the stresses and problems associated with house-moves, it can be quite salutary to realise just how much disruption must have occurred during this period.

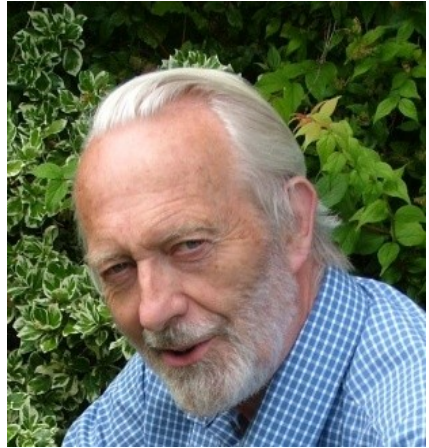
After the settled and very productive five and a half years at Surbiton, the family moved to "Savernake" Lorna Road Brighton, in July 1882. The house bears a plaque, but is now divided into flats. The original sea-views from here are now completely obscured by subsequent development. They stayed here for 2 years, during which time, Jefferies recovered from his fistula operation, and visited Exmoor.

Almost exactly two years later, in June or July 1884, the Jefferies moved back inland to Eltham. This would have been for health reasons, but whether because the best doctors were in London, or whether the suburban air was felt to be healthier is not clear. Even here, it seems the move was not straightforward, as they almost certainly took lodgings in the High Street before moving to their rented accommodation at 14 Victoria Road. The suggested reason was that their "furniture had been delayed on the Railway".

Less than a year later, and following the sudden and unexpected death of Oliver Lancelot, the Jefferies' 18 month old son, the next move took place to Rotherfield in Sussex. This was on medical advice. Here they stayed at Reheboth Villa, next to the Baptist Chapel at Jarvis Brook. This move took place in about April 1885. The house is now called Brook View House, and although there is no plaque on the outside of the house, an unconfirmed report suggests there may be a plaque in one of the bedrooms of the house. According to a letter to Scott, this residence was temporary "till a cottage can be found for me near Tunbridge Wells".

Some time between the end of July and October in 1885 the next move took place to the other (north) side of Crowborough to The Downs. This is well south of Tunbridge Wells and is 700 feet up; bracing in summer, but bitterly cold in winter. Even here there may well have been an intermediate rental at Cook's Corner, just north of The Downs. The Downs still has the original name, and has a plaque recording the Jefferies occupancy over the front door. It is now, however, surrounded by other properties.

The penultimate move took place in November 1886, to Peacock Hall in Goring, where the Jefferies were paying guests at the Hides' (or Hydes')



establishment. Later that month, the final move was made to Sea View – just round the corner.

So in a period of four years, from 1882 – 1886, the Jefferies family moved at least 6 times, and possibly 8 times. All these properties were rented, so there were none of the problems associated with buying and selling; but it is not clear how many were furnished, and how much furniture (as opposed to personal belongings) had to be moved each time.

When we consider that Richard Jefferies was seriously unwell for much of this time, and that Jessie had to cope with an invalid husband, and a growing family as well as the social disruption of trying to establish new bases in quite new surroundings, it has to be a great tribute to her that so much productive writing was produced during this period.

For those who have not undertaken it, a pilgrimage around the Jefferies sites in Sussex is well worthwhile. This should include not just the houses and the grave, but, of course, also take in Pevensey Castle; the stimulus that finally produced *The Story of my Heart*; and Brighton, and Beachy Head at Eastbourne.

Details and maps of how to locate the various sites are now available, and I can happily provide anyone interested with the necessary information.

Moving to the immediate future, two exciting events are due to take place this autumn. The first is the Birthday Lecture, when John Carey will speak on “After London and other Victorian Utopias and Dystopias”. Professor Carey edited the Faber Book of Utopias and Dystopias, so he is well placed to put this remarkable Jefferies work into a contemporary context. The second is the impending publication by the Society of a new Richard Jefferies Anthology. This has been selected by our President, Hugoe Matthews, with the help of Rebecca Welshman, and will be the first such venture for decades.

Finally, I must again thank our superwoman Secretary, Jean Saunders, for all the work she does in running the Museum, keeping us all informed of Planning Applications; Jefferies’ references in a range of publications; and still finding time to edit and get published and printed the Society’s stream of new (and reprint) titles.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Price', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a flourish at the end.

John Price
September 2010

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2009-10

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

Mr C Archer, Town Yetholm, Roxburghshire
Mr P Bainbridge, Wantage, Oxon
Mr A M Binks, Swindon, Wiltshire
Ms D Edmonds, Oakhurst, Wiltshire
Ms J Farmery, Walpole, Suffolk
Mrs S Fitzpatrick, South Marston, Wiltshire
Ms H Hawkins, Wroughton, Wiltshire
Mr R Jeffery, London
Mrs S M Larkin, Little Bookham, Surrey
Mr P L Meiners, Crowborough, East Sussex
Ms M M Parrish, Tonypany, Mid Glamorgan
Mr J Parry, Gayton, Norfolk
Mr M Pringle, Swindon, Wiltshire
Mr A Ross, Thornbury, Avon
Mr D J Shaw, Eltham, London
Mr L Skillman, Weald, Kent
Mr M Theobald, Swindon, Wiltshire
Mr D J Wadey, Cheddar, Somerset
Mr I Wright & Mrs W L Howe, Swindon, Wiltshire

The total membership during the 2009/10 subscription year numbered 266, being made up of 161 single, 25 joint (50 members), 30 Life, 9 Joint Life (18 members), 2 Hon Life, 1 Joint Hon Life (2 members) and 3 Corporate memberships. 13 of the above mentioned new members joined in the 2009/10 membership year, and 7 in the 2010/11 membership year (this includes 1 joint member).

During the 2009/10 membership year 2 members sadly died and 2 members resigned. A joint membership also resigned at the end of the 2009/10 subscription year.

At the time of writing the 2010/11 membership is 219. Of these 28 are joint, *i.e.* 56 members.

Although the majority of members live in England, other countries are represented: Australia 5, Belgium 1, Canada 3 (1 joint), Channel Islands 1, Eire 1, Germany 2, New Zealand 1, Northern Ireland 2 (joint), Scotland 6, USA 2, Wales 2.

At present 48 members (6 of whom are Joint, *i.e.* 12 members, and 1 Corporate) have not paid their subscriptions for the 2010/11 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
30 August 2010

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER RICHARD JEFFERIES & THE SOCIETY?

Chris Archer from Kelso was introduced to Richard Jefferies as a result of receiving two of his works: The first, a slim volume of essays, was given to me when I was a boy by a kindly neighbour, Mr C Emden. At that time we lived in the village of Combe, near Witney. Much later my wife took possession of her father's copy of *Bevis*. This along with the essays then sat side by side in my bookcase for a number of years. I was inspired to read them when I came across a *Guardian* reference to *After London*. Intrigued and unaware of the other works awaiting my attention I set about reading all three. The result was my essay [published on the RJS web-site] and further investigations on the Internet. These latter led me to your society. Since then I have ordered *The Story of My Heart*. Looking ahead, when my wife and I are retired, we hope to come south and explore Jefferies' much loved haunts.'

Professor R W Beachey was asked how he learnt about Jefferies on the day that he was forced to resign as a Member of the Society through ill health. He had been a Member since May 1995 but a devotee of Richard Jefferies since the time he picked up a book by him whilst lecturing at Uganda University. Prof Beachey was educated in Edinburgh, and lectured on East African History at the University of London. He was born in 1915 and in 1976 wrote about the slave trade of East Africa.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS AND OUTINGS 2010

Readings from Alfred Williams and Richard Jefferies

The cold winter meant that the snowdrops were still looking lovely 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 the 6th March and attended by 19 enthusiasts. Kaye Franklin and Roy Burton took the Chair.

Graeme Franklin opened the session by reading an extract from *Life in a Railway Factory* where Alfred Williams describes, with some humour, some of his fellow workers. There was 'double-stoppage Charley' who kept his wife short of money blaming the company for double deductions; Jimmy 'Useless' (Eustace) who talked about poaching expeditions in the Uffington area. He recounted the tale of a young man who yawned so widely on the morning of his wedding that he dislocated his jaw.

Roy Burton read extracts from W J Keith's *Richard Jefferies: a Critical Study* (Toronto, 1965). Keith described the writing in the essay 'A Roman Brook' as 'Jefferies at his greatest'. He contrasts the guide-book description of the brook at Wanborough Nythe, within two miles of Coate, in *Jefferies Land* and *The Gamekeeper at Home* with the lines from the essay: 'the brook has forgotten me, but I have not forgotten the brook...'

Paul Smith chose an Alfred Williams' poem about the village where Paul was born and raised – 'Hinton Parva' – a village in the Downs.

Michael Ponting read from Jefferies' *Red Deer* and selected a passage from it that described the little narrow lanes over Exmoor and the very high hedges

and loose stone walls that can still be visited today.

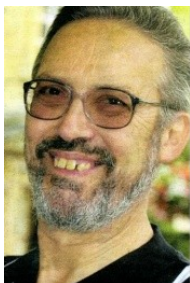
Kaye Franklin read the middle passage from Williams' poem 'Home Land' where places on the Downs are visited. The extract began with a reference to Jefferies and Liddington Hill, on to Savernake Forest, returning to Ashdown Wood, Wayland Smith's Cave, the Uffington White Horse Hill and Dragon Hill, finishing at Seven Barrows and the Blowing Stone, hence covering much ancient history of and myths from the area.

Gillian Bromhead chose the opening paragraph of 'T. T. T.' (see *RJS Journal*, 1992) that Jefferies wrote when he was only nineteen years of age. Jefferies describes mother and daughter, the two main characters in this curious short story, most vividly and affectionately.

Roy Burton read two short Williams' poems of local interest about the church at 'Stanton Fitzwarren' and 'On the Road to Baydon' along with a third about the hopes at the start of a new year entitled 'The Passing: 31st December 1910'.

Eric Jones introduced a fifteen minute film that was shown to the audience entitled 'A Tribute to Jefferies' that had recently been sent to the Society, albeit that we were still piecing together information about it at the time. There is a full description of the film on page 27.

Richard Jefferies; footnote or central character in the West Country's cultural history? A talk by John Payne



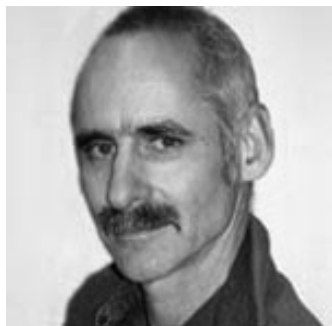
The late spring start meant that the daffodils were at their best in the Jefferies' garden at Coate on the 10th April. The flowers along with a beautiful sunny day were much appreciated by the audience of sixteen Members who listened to John Payne (pictured left) speak about writers of literary note associated with the West Country. It was an inter-active talk and the literary heavy-weights mentioned in passing included the obvious: Hardy, Austen, Coleridge and the Wordsworths. John read passages from his book *The West Country: a Cultural History* published in 2009 and reflected on the reasons why Jefferies didn't receive the

recognition he rightly deserves and why he didn't write poetry.

FIELDS OF VISION: an informal study day devoted to Richard Jefferies and Edward Thomas

Hosted jointly by the Edward Thomas Fellowship and the Richard Jefferies Society at Liddington Village Hall, Saturday 8 May 2010.

It was a cold, gloomy day, there was no heating in the hall, but the audience of over sixty people kept ourselves warm with lively debate interspersed with hot tea, lovely home-made cakes, and visits to the village pub and church. Martin Haggerty had organised the event 'at a distance' from Scarborough and at the end of the day there was praise for his efforts, thanks to the speakers who had shared their knowledge and insights with us, and to our own Jean Saunders and her helpers who had been the local team on the ground.



The Keynote Lecture was by Professor Jem Poster (pictured left), a poet and novelist of note. He took as his theme the title of a Thomas poem 'First Known When Lost', emphasising that both Jefferies and Thomas belong to a long tradition of writing about the loss of the natural world, as in Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village'. More accurately, 'the remembered background to present loss'. There are of course other kinds of loss, and in a fine dissection of Thomas's 'As the Team's Head-Brass', Poster showed how the mechanisation that marked the loss of

traditional agriculture had also transformed war into the mechanised slaughter of the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. And that loss is also a premonition of future loss, of a world that is slipping from between our grasp. Coate Water, if the developers have their way, may not always be there. On the other hand, Poster also emphasised how the sense of transcendence in the tradition of Blake's 'eternity in a grain of sand', which is there so strongly in Jefferies, can act as a consolation for not only the loss of aspects of the natural world but also our own mortality. Thomas, the biographer of Jefferies, wrote of Jefferies' 'mystic consciousness.'

One important point that came up in discussion was that not all change in the rural world is bad – we would not want to revive activities such as bear-baiting and cock-fighting. And of course the rural world of Jefferies is also the rural world of the Swing riots and the Tolpuddle Martyrs, of impoverished families migrating from the land to the cities or to the new fields of Canada or Australia.

In the afternoon, we had two talks. In 'Under the Sign of the Sun and the Spotted Cow', Terry Lloyd discussed Coate and its area in the work of Jefferies – these were the names of Coate's two pubs. 'Jefferies country' was 'a landscape of failure', of poverty and sickness. Lloyd pointed out the prevalence of water-born disease in Swindon in the nineteenth century and that Jefferies himself was scarred by TB. He contrasted the health centre established by the Great Western Railway for its workers. 'Jefferies country' is also a landscape of change, with the origins of Coate Water being to provide water for the Wilts and Berks Canal which was used to bring stone to Swindon to build the railway works, which then made the canal redundant.

Richard Emeny's talk was on Jefferies and Thomas as 'brothers or neighbours'. The conference took place only two days after a General Election, and Emeny contrasted the news-rich environment in which we live with the nineteenth century world in which politics happened 'somewhere else'. There is some politics in Jefferies, for example his discussion of the Primrose League, but very little in Thomas. Both men experienced the 'quiet of the English countryside and its rich biodiversity'. Both were Londoners (Thomas by birth; Jefferies by adoption) yet Jefferies is much closer to the rural in all its real, palpable life. Emeny looked again at the 'Head-Brass' poem, commenting that 'Thomas writes beautifully about the countryside but is not an authority.' By

implication, Jefferies, countryman and journalist, is.

We revived ourselves with tea and cakes and settled down for a final half-hour of discussion and reflection. Richard Emeny commented that Thomas's reputation is quite recent. Only in 1980 was 'poet' (rather than 'writer') added to his tombstone. Jem contrasted T S Eliot, a 'professional self-publicist', or Owen, more explicitly a 'war poet' than Thomas. He added that Jefferies' best prose shows an awareness of language, and its possibilities, very close to poetry. I think I wondered aloud in my own talk to the Richard Jefferies Society in April why Jefferies had never written poetry.

Did I learn anything? Lots and lots, some of it anecdotal, some real insights into the work of both men. And something called 'eco-criticism' which seems to be about the centrality of the relationship between human beings and the natural environment in writers like Jefferies and Thomas. Jem Poster did admit at the end of the day that Thomas is 'bigger in the academy' than Jefferies, and I am still unclear why. Perhaps because we 'know' what a poem is, or should be, and Thomas wrote some of the finest in the language. Whereas there is still a debate about the genre to which Jefferies' unique *The Story of My Heart* might belong. There is renewed interest, too, in Jefferies the novelist. I myself have come to him late, and I suspect there may well be further re-evaluation in the years to come of his true position in the pantheon of great English writers.

John Payne

Following the talks, about 15 participants sped over to Eastbury Church to view the engraved window by Laurence Whistler dedicated to Edward and Helen Thomas (see RJS Spring newsletter 2010, p.14). It was an opportunity to follow the old Roman road to west Berkshire and enjoy what are some of the best downland views in the area. A visit to the church window was followed by a search for the graves where Helen and her children are buried. A beautiful drooping cherry tree, in full blossom, acted like an umbrella over the grave-stones and the setting could not have looked better. There was a pause for thought for Edward Thomas's grandson and namesake who died very suddenly in February this year (see p.36).



Some of the party pictured by Stephen Turner at the 'Council Oak'

Sunday the 9th May was equally busy with a guided walk from Jefferies' house at Coate to the Gamekeeper's Cottage at Hodson that attracted twenty walkers. Andrew Rossabi led the stroll along Coate Water, over Cicely's Bridge to Hodson and gave appropriate readings from Edward Thomas's biography of Jefferies and from Jefferies' writing. Despite the lack of sun, the bluebells in Hodson Woods looked splendid and the keeper's cottage, in its beautiful coombe of bluebells and red campion, was seen at its best. At the end of the return journey to Coate, the Jefferies Museum was open and more of Gillian Bromhead's excellent home-made cakes were scoffed! It was a most memorable weekend, much enjoyed by all and thanks were given to all who made the event such a success.

Jean Saunders

THE SUSSEX ADVENTURES



Michael Parrott, Jean Saunders, Gill Bromhead, John and Angela Price, Duncan Pepper, John Webb, Rebecca Welshman, Phyllis Treitel's nose!, Mark Daniel, Andrew Rossabi, Stan Hickerton and Simon Coleman – photograph by Don Bromhead.

On 10th July, 17 members, with family and friends, met at the entrance to Broadwater Cemetery at 11 am on a fine sunny morning. The entrance, from South Farm Road, is through iron gates leading to a large flint-faced entrance Chapel block, through which a gothic archway gives glimpses of the trees and memorials beyond. There are rooms within this building, and we were informed by Paul Holden, one of the "Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery Group", that it is planned to have a small museum in one of the flanking rooms.

Once through the arch, it is now much easier to locate the more important graves, as the Friends have erected signs to indicate the paths to follow to the graves of Richard Jefferies, W. H. Hudson, and Mary Hughes. The latter is better known as the heroine of the nursery rhyme: *Mary had a Little Lamb*. In

the absence of signs, however, it is easy to find Jefferies' grave by going through the arch, and then following an imaginary line projected from the right-hand end face of the entrance building into the cemetery.

Richard Jefferies' grave stands out very clearly in comparison to those around it, because of the bright white marble of which it is constructed. The recent repairs and re-lettering have made it an impressive memorial to, not just Richard, but the other members of his family recorded on the marble surround. The grave itself has been planted with a wild-flower mix by the local branch of the RSPB, and the grass around the grave has been left as a meadow, which had recently been cut at the time of our visit. Many of the surrounding graves are now unmarked, either having lost their stones, or perhaps only originally having been marked in an ephemeral way; so that there is room for a group to stand around the Jefferies grave, without obviously encroaching on others' domain.

We spend some time at the grave, reflecting, hearing readings by members of the Society, and enjoying the peaceful atmosphere, which prevailed amidst the mature trees, shrubs, and the healthily lichenized memorials to others.

We then moved on to Hudson's grave, which lies against the wall on the southern boundary of the cemetery. This is modelled on the Jefferies' grave, but is wider, as it also accommodates Hudson's wife. This grave is inscribed: "He loved birds and green places, and the wind on the heath; and saw the brightness of the skirts of God." Originally Hudson had wished to be buried near to Richard Jefferies, but 35 years elapsed between their deaths, and the spaces near Jefferies' grave had all been taken.

We then explored other parts of the cemetery, with the help of the excellent guide produced by The Friends, titled: *The A to Z of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery*.

We paused by the Cross of Sacrifice, by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and noted the two benches with memorial plates inscribed to Jefferies and Hudson. Apparently these had been on seats in the Memorial Garden (see later), which had been vandalised and removed – but then had happily reappeared at a later date to be replaced on new seats.

We then moved back out through the archway, and visited the Memorial Garden. This lies on the left, immediately inside the gates, and outside the gateway Chapel building. It celebrates both Jefferies and Hudson, and has a mulberry tree provided by our Society. It contains an elaborate bird-bath with inscription, unveiled by the Council in 1991; though sadly, there seems to be no regular method of filling the shallow container. We also felt that it would be very appropriate to replace the vandalised bench that once was there, to allow visitors to rest and reflect.

One final reminder, if it were needed, that this is the last resting place of both Jefferies and Hudson, is the presence of two plaques on the outer wall of the Chapel; one to Hudson, by his Argentinean admirers; and one to Jefferies and Hudson, by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB.

After this morning of contemplation and fellowship, most of the party moved on to Goring. Several of us had lunch at a Pub now called the Mulberry Inn, but which stands on the site of Peacock Hall, where the Jefferies lived briefly

before moving just round the corner to Sea View. I had been surprised to discover on a previous visit that this fact is recorded at some length in a plaque on the outside wall of the Pub, and is itself a direct quotation from a locally published book about Worthing and Goring. Sadly, the Mulberry trees, after which the Pub is now named, and which used to be common in the area, have now all disappeared.

At 2 o'clock, the party reassembled, and we walked down Jefferies Lane to Jefferies House, where we were welcomed most warmly by Mrs Paula Griffiths and members of her family and neighbours. When Richard Jefferies moved into the house in late 1886, the house was called "Sea View", and the lane "Bottom-of-the Sack"; presumably an anglicised version of cul-de-sac. Now, the name of the house has been appropriately changed – as there has been no sea-view for years because of subsequent development; and the lane name now pays tribute to its most famous past inhabitant. We also noted the many Ilex trees bordering Sea Lane; these were referred to in Jefferies' writings at the time.

A splendid tea had been laid on in the garden, with gazebos, tables and chairs to provide comfort where we could sit and enjoy the garden and the view of the house familiar to many from earlier photographs. The garden remains the same shape that it was in the Jefferies time, and most of the original walls are still extant. The arbour has gone but a well still exists, and later, some of us were excited to find an old pump against the house wall, which must have provided the Jefferies household with at least some of their water. A pond in one corner of the garden provides a new habitat that Richard would surely have been overjoyed to see. The highlight for many, however, was an invitation to visit the upstairs room in which Richard Jefferies died. It would have had magnificent views down towards the sea; and whilst such a location should be inevitably sad with all its implications, we felt that of all the houses in which the Jefferies had lived, this had a particularly warm and happy feel, which is not just a product of the current decoration and use, exceptional though that is, and must have alleviated to some extent the misery of those final weeks.

In organising this visit, I must thank particularly Mark Daniel and Michael Parrott, who in turn have taken responsibility for keeping an eye on the grave, and who assisted enormously in planning the day; and Paula Griffiths, whose kindness and generosity made our day so rewarding.

My final thoughts relate to how well the local authorities and other local organisations in Sussex have worked together to keep the memory and spirit of Richard Jefferies alive; in contrast to the pitiful efforts of the Swindon District and Borough Councils in recent years to commemorate their own son.

John Price

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOST THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES AT KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE 15/16 MAY 2010

This being the bi-centenary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth, it was only appropriate that the Gaskell Society should be our hosts for this year's AGM at Knutsford, the town where Elizabeth Gaskell grew up and which she made known to thousands of readers as "Cranford". A lovely spring morning, the kind which Mrs. Gaskell was so good at describing, saw representatives of the following societies meet for registration and coffee at the Methodist Church Hall: Jane Austen; Arnold Bennett; John Betjeman; William Blake; The Bronte; Lewis Carroll; John Clare; Charles Dickens; Dubliners Literary Circle; Elizabeth Gaskell; Kenneth Grahame; Richard Jefferies; Samuel Johnson (Lichfield); Charles Lamb; Leamington Spa Literary Society; Wyndham Lewis; Christopher Marlowe; Edith Nesbit; Anthony Powell; Barbara Pym; Arthur Ransome; Romany Society; Siegfried Sassoon; Shropshire Literary Society; Edward Thomas; Leo Walmsley; Mary Webb; Virginia Woolf. We then assembled in the main body of the church where we were warmly greeted by Alan Shelston, President and Janet Kennerley on behalf of the Gaskell Society.

Linda Curry, ALS Chairman opened the AGM by thanking the Gaskell Society for hosting the event. She pointed out that the Events Section/Newsletter is now circulated to all societies via the website. She was also happy to announce that Jenny Uglow had agreed to become president of the ALS. Jenny Uglow is noted for her biographies, including that on Elizabeth Gaskell.

Anita Fernandez Young, Secretary said that she was very pleased to report that we now have 119 societies affiliated to the ALS and that she will be issuing three annual Newsletters. She has also issued a series of "Quick Guides" entitled *Forming a Literary Society*, *Marketing your Literary Society* and *Organising Conferences for Literary Societies*. On a more serious note, she spoke of the ongoing threat to Coate, restricted opening times at Newstead Abbey (Byron's home) and the D H Lawrence Heritage Centre; the George Borrow Society had also expressed concern regarding an ageing membership, a problem common to most societies, which the ALS will do what it can to redress.

Linda Curry is now sole Editor of the ALS journal ALS*o*, Robin Healey having stood down as co-editor. Next year's theme will be "Lost in Translation" which put me in mind of our own Chen Ying who has recently translated *The Story of My Heart* into Chinese.

Funds have been allocated to the ALG which is based in Berlin and receives funding from the German Government and the EU. Its aim is to act as an exchange network for literary societies throughout Europe. Linda Curry has attended two such events, one in Berlin and another in Budapest. The ALG Newsletter is printed in English, French and German.

At the conclusion of the business side of things we were more than ready for the delicious buffet waiting for us; the opportunity to chat to friends, swap notes on our favourite authors and browse through the bookstall. It was really nice to have the company of Margaret (Evans) over the weekend; both of us were obviously thinking alike in providing *The Scarlet Shawl* for the raffle which raised welcome funds for the ALS.

There then followed a most interesting and entertaining talk on Elizabeth Gaskell's life and works by Elizabeth Williams, Chairwoman of the Gaskell Society; it was the kind of talk that certainly made one want to find out more about the somewhat contradictory personality of Elizabeth Gaskell. As Elizabeth Williams pointed out, even her very name has undergone various transformations, but the Mrs. Gaskell tag is what most of us have come to know. She was actually born Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson in Chelsea in 1810; her mother (née Holland) died when she was a baby and she was sent to live with her mother's sister Aunt Lumb at Heathwaite in Knutsford. The Hollands were an old and well established family in Cheshire, one of her Holland cousins

becoming doctor to several prime ministers. Heathwaite derived its name from The Heath which is still a feature of Knutsford and lay directly opposite the house. Elizabeth seemed to enjoy a very happy childhood and referred to Aunt Lumb as "more than a mother". She delighted in the Cheshire countryside and soon became acquainted with the neighbouring gentry and the local inhabitants; she writes of donkey rides, sketching and books, all of which she was later to fondly recall in her writings. On leaving boarding school she lived with her father and his second wife until his death in 1829. In 1832 she was to marry the Rev. William Gaskell, from all accounts a gentle and kindly man, who officiated at Cross Street Unitarian Chapel in Manchester; Elizabeth herself was a Unitarian. Centring their faith on one God alone, Unitarians do not accept the Trinity; neither were non-conformist chapels licensed for marriages until 1836, which meant that William and Elizabeth were obliged to have their marriage solemnised in Knutsford Parish Church. Concern for others is very much at the heart of Unitarianism and William and Elizabeth proved excellent practitioners of the principle.

After her marriage, Elizabeth settled with William in Manchester, although she continued to make frequent visits to her beloved Knutsford. As Elizabeth Williams went on to say, descriptions of Elizabeth at this time can be a little contradictory. For instance, what are we to deduce from allusions to Elizabeth as a saintly wife and mother and the remark made by Dickens that "If I were Mr. G. Oh heaven how I would beat her."!! Clearly it is these facets of her nature that made her such an interesting personality as well as a first rate story teller. Life with William appeared to be happy and contented, but like most women of those times she was to suffer loss and heartache in pregnancy. However, she had four healthy daughters, before giving birth to a son who tragically died of scarlet fever when he was a baby. It was this loss, almost unendurable, that prompted William to suggest that she try and write a novel to occupy her mind. The result was *Mary Barton*, published in 1848.

Having been brought into contact with the worst deprivation and poverty suffered by the millworkers in Manchester, the novel was a clear indictment against their employers. With its sympathy for the poor and its use of the Lancashire dialect, it was the first social novel of its kind and caused something of a sensation, particularly with the mill-owners who were outraged at their portrayal. In the novel John Barton loses a son to scarlet fever, imaging the loss of Elizabeth's own son. Reviews were mixed, many accusing her of prejudice against the mill-owners, but social reformers welcomed its honest realism. Dickens, Carlyle and Thackeray all approved, and Charles Kingsley said it ought to be read from every pulpit. Other novels followed, *Cranford*, a very observant and often wry account of the everyday mores and social distinctions upheld by the ladies of Knutsford, all of which, of course, Elizabeth had first hand knowledge.

Ruth (1853) was to cause even more controversy than *Mary Barton* as it told the story of a young girl who bore an illegitimate child and was not so much fallen as rescued and redeemed. Once again Elizabeth was to incur wrath and indignation. Mothers forbade their daughters from reading it and others saw it as only fit for the bonfire. Even Elizabeth herself insisted that her daughters only read it in her presence. *North and South* (1855) was an attempt to redress the perceived bias in *Mary Barton* by portraying a far more enlightened mill-owner in the character of John Thornton. By this time Elizabeth Gaskell or Mrs. Gaskell as she was known was a best selling novelist, Charles Dickens often serialising her books in *Household Words*. With four daughters to raise, a husband to support in his humanitarian work and a constant round of visitors, it is amazing how Elizabeth managed to juggle so many balls in the air. But she seemed nothing short of tireless and wrote when and where she could. William also allowed her a great deal of freedom, too much some were to say; while she liked to travel abroad, he preferred to stay at home.

She was to court even more controversy with her account of the life of Charlotte Bronte. The two women had first met in the Lake District at the holiday home of James

Kay-Shuttleworth in 1850. They soon became close friends, and when Charlotte died in 1855 her father asked her if she would write a life of his famous daughter. Her one biography, it was to embroil her in such bitter acrimony that for a time she fled to the Continent, even though she maintained that she only wrote what she perceived to be the truth. Threats of libel followed, one from Lady Scott (formerly Mrs. Robinson) over the account of her supposed seduction of a young Branwell Bronte; it was to result in a letter of retraction to *The Times*. In the third edition various offending passages were removed. But not those relating to poor Mr. Bronte who had the good grace to say, "Well, she is a novelist you know." Despite its many faults and inaccuracies, it is still regarded as one of the finest biographies ever written.

In 1863 she wrote *Sylvia's Lovers*, a seafaring tale set in Whitby. In 1865 she had nearly completed what is regarded as her masterpiece *Wives and Daughters* when she suddenly collapsed and died in the home she had secretly purchased for William and herself in Hampshire. Aside from the novels, she was also an consummate writer of short stories and novellas, *Cousin Phyllis* being considered one of her best.

After this excellent talk, Joan Leach, MBE and Hon. Sec. spoke about Mrs. Gaskell and Knutsford, another very entertaining talk serving as a prelude to her taking us on a "Cranford Walk around Knutsford". We began at Heathwaite, the attractive Regency home of Aunt Lumb where the young Elizabeth was brought up; the wonderful deodar cedar at the back of the house would probably have sheltered Elizabeth while she was sketching or writing. Opposite the house lies the Heath which has been such a feature of Knutsford for hundreds of years. Only a few yards away from Heathwaite lies Heath House or Higgins House, the one time home of Edward Higgins or Highwayman Higgins as he is sometimes called. Edward Higgins was a con man who posed as a gentleman in order to gain entrance to the establishments of the best country houses where he made an inventory of their possessions prior to robbing them. His luck eventually ran out when he was hanged in 1767. Among other places Joan showed us was the black and white building which features as the grocer's and draper's shop in *Cranford* where Miss Matty was to learn of the failure of her bank. It was also noted for advertising a variety of fine blends of tea. Moving on to the Royal George, once famed for its assembly rooms built exclusively for the use of the gentry, it was here that Mrs. Gaskell set the scene for the ladies of Cranford to witness the wonders of Signor Brunoni's magic tricks. In *Wives and Daughters* she used it again for the setting of a ball. We also saw what is referred to as Miss Matty's teashop. It was, in fact, the home of a Miss Harker who was the model for Betsy Barker whose cow slipped fell into the lime pit and was attired in flannel waistcoat and drawers (incidentally Mrs. Gaskell claimed that the story was true). One of the most interesting buildings to be viewed on the walk is the Gaskell Memorial Tower built in 1907 by Richard Harding Watt who favoured a distinctly Italianate style, a little flamboyant and a little out of character with the genteel image of Knutsford. Its tower contains a bust of Mrs. Gaskell and inscribed on the side of the wall is a list of her works. Alongside is the Belle Epoque, again having a distinctly Continental style. I think Mrs. Gaskell would have approved of this piece of showy extravagance, such a striking and unusual edifice would have been bound to ruffle the fine sensibilities of the ladies. The tour ended appropriately at Brook Street Chapel, the Unitarian chapel where William and Elizabeth are buried along with other members of their family. It was especially loved by Elizabeth and serves as the model for the chapel described in *Ruth*. Courtesy of the Knutsford and District Flower Club, the church was holding a flower festival in honour of its famous author, each lovely arrangement sensitively illustrating one of the novels. In the gallery we were also able to read of the chapel's history and its ministers. Outside a lovely Memorial Wreath had been laid on the Gaskell grave; later on this year there will be another wreath laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey when the name of Mrs. Gaskell will be recorded in Poets Corner, a proud moment for all members of the Society.

The tradition of after dinner readings took place at Cottons Hotel, and there was no shortage of readers. Julie Shorland read from Jane Austen, Janet Kennerley from Mrs. Gaskell, Deborah Fisher from Barbara Pym and Seigfried Sassoon; Michael Murray of the Dubliners Literary Society gave off by heart recitations from the writings of James Joyce and W B Yeats while Julian Barnard read some of his own poems on William Blake. And last, but certainly not least, our secretary Anita Fernandez Young dressed as Queen Victoria gave her usual bravura performance with readings from *Pickwick Papers*; it will be interesting to see how she tops this performance next year!

On Sunday we heard another informal and light-hearted talk by Joan Leach on Mrs. Gaskell's Cheshire, after which we split into two groups, one attending morning service at Brook Street Chapel and another going to visit the former home of the Gaskells at Plymouth Grove.

A Grade II listed building, 84 Plymouth Grove is literally under wraps, being encased in a cocoon of corrugated iron, as it undergoes major renovation. The house has been acquired by Manchester Historic Buildings Trust, who are hoping to raise over £2M to complete the project. Even in its somewhat dilapidated state, we could see the tremendous potential for bringing the house back to the condition it was in when the Gaskells lived there. It really must have been the most wonderful place to live in. Structurally, it has been found to be in better condition than many modern houses; the pitch pine woodwork is mainly intact, as is the elaborate cornice decoration, and the large and airy sash windows are now working smoothly. We gathered in the Gaskells' former drawing room where Janet Allan, Chairman of the MHBT gave us a lively and interesting account of the history of the house, both in the time of the Gaskells and in subsequent years. Like many old houses that have survived the years, its history is somewhat chequered; its last tenants being University students. It was built in 1838, the Gaskells taking up residence in 1850, and to quote Mrs. Gaskell "It certainly is a beauty." Janet showed us slides of the house as it was in the Gaskells' time; a photograph of the drawing room in 1897 will serve as a valuable guide when it comes to restoring the room to how it once was. The last Gaskell to live in the house was Meta, one of the Gaskells two unmarried daughters, who died in 1913. Meta was an artist of considerable talent judging by the sensitive profile of her mother. What times and people the house must have seen; the Gaskells were fine hosts and entertained on a regular basis. William Makepeace Thackeray, Harriet Beecher Stowe, John Ruskin, Charles Dickens and Charlotte Bronte were just some of their guests. In keeping with their Unitarian ethos of service and education the Gaskells were instrumental in the building of a new library and their daughters in founding the Manchester High School for Girls. We wish the MHBT well in this tremendous undertaking and look forward to seeing 84 Plymouth Grove returned to the magnificent house it must have been when William and Elizabeth were in residence.

It had been a most enjoyable weekend. The weather had been kind, our hosts even more so; if only William and Elizabeth could have joined us, but who knows, perhaps they just did.

Special thanks to Alan Shelston, Joan Leach, MBE and Janet Kennerley for making all the arrangements and for ensuring that our visit was a happy one. Thanks also to Elizabeth Williams, and Janet Allan, and indeed to all those who worked very hard behind the scenes.

Helen D Newman
July 2010

DISCOVERIES VI. Was Richard Jefferies a racist?

The accusation is a just one, but perhaps the most damaging, in a litany of detraction delivered by the late Alain Delattre, a French academic who had studied Jefferies for 25 years (his research including a spell as a labourer on a Wiltshire farm) on no less an occasion than the centenary lecture given to the Society in September 1987:

He never ceased to be a racist... I know that racism was rampant in his times, blatantly expressed by many writers, Cobbett, Lamb for instance, but this is no excuse.

He instances a character describing negro slaves as “cockroaches” in ‘Ben Tubbs’ Adventures’ and two references to “the Jewish grip” in ‘My Old Village’, and states that Jefferies “disliked – that is feared – the gypsies.” Allied to his “Caesarism” (leader worship) and sadism (“Why is it so pleasant to strike... the fury of striking with a keen blade...” – though in fairness Jefferies is referring to cutting trees, not people), the shadowy outlines of a proto-Nazi begin to emerge from Delattre’s portrayal. Though few would recognise this as the true Jefferies a passage about gypsies in ‘Just before Winter’ is disturbing. He deploras mixed marriages between gypsies and native Anglo Saxon stock in English villages, and opines that Jews and Gypsies would have died out were it not for widespread interbreeding. “It is, in fact, the intermarriages that have kept the pure races of these human parasites alive. The mixing is continually going on.”

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the development of anthropology as a science, coinciding with the greatest moment of colonial expansion and largely as a means of proving the inferiority of the subjugated races. In 1853-5 a French ethnologist, Arthur Comte de Gobineau, published a key work in four volumes, his *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*. The importance of racial purity became an established dogma. Even Disraeli, much admired by Jefferies in his youth, has a character proclaim: “Race is everything; there is no other truth. Any race must fall that carelessly suffers its blood to be mixed.” Another influential writer, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, made the link with “Caesarism”:

Race lifts a man above himself: it endows him with extraordinary – I might almost say supernatural – powers, so entirely does it distinguish him from the chaotic jumble of peoples drawn from all parts of the world; and should this man of pure origin be gifted above his fellows, then the fact of race strengthens and elevates him on every hand, and he becomes a genius towering over the rest of mankind.

The pseudo sciences of social Darwinism and eugenics, combined with popular prejudice, further strengthened the movement in the early 20th century. The “Jewish problem” was much canvassed, Zionism promoted as a solution, and beyond expulsion even the elimination of the inferior races mooted, notably by H G Wells. The German sociologist Hans Friedrich Günther defined degeneracy in racial terms, and proclaimed the error of philanthropy and social measures when devoted to those of “inferior hereditary qualities”. He wrote: “The question put to us is whether we have courage enough to make ready for future generations a world cleansing itself racially

and eugenically.” Günther cites Jefferies in his work *Religious Attitudes of Indo-Europeans* as an example of Indo-European mysticism, which was not dissolution or intoxication as in other cultures but “self-assertion and confrontation of destiny” and “the inner contemplation of high minded men”.

It can fairly be said that the blueprint for the European genocide had been drafted well before the man with the necessary “courage” arrived on the scene. When the horrific consequences of ideas formulated in book-lined Victorian studies were exposed to the light of day in 1945 racism vanished from the political and scientific consensus, and earlier writers who had asserted or merely accepted it were tainted. Henry Williamson had allied himself closely with national socialist ideology. In a passage comparing Hitler’s autobiography with Jefferies’ Williamson reaffirms his faith while rejecting its practical consequences. He sees:

...many similarities in these two men. Both grew up as solitaires, unaffected by schooling, learning only from the natural intuitional self. I am sure that such genius or power should be used only in the creation of art: never applied DIRECTLY to the actions of ordinary men. Yet both Hitler and Jefferies were prophets crying, and perishing, in the industrial wilderness of the gold-god civilisation.



My delving into obscurities recently uncovered a publication entitled *Yesterday & Tomorrow: Roots of the National Revolution*, undated but production and ISBN suggesting 1980s or '90s. For its editors and readers nothing much had changed since the 1930s. The twenty five points of the original National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) manifesto are printed in full, along with the prescriptions of leading theorists like Joseph Goebbels, Gottfried Feder and Gregor Strasser. A number of English writers, deemed sympathetic witnesses, are also quoted at length: Robert Blatchford, Viscount Lymington, G K Chesterton, William Morris and Richard Jefferies. The latter is represented by the first chapter of *The Story of My Heart*,

with a short introduction accompanied by an illustration (above) showing a rugged countryman (Nordic type) gazing over a fence at an ordered and productive rural landscape:

Jefferies’ work reflects a profound love of his native land. His affinity with nature and his enthusiasm for Life are a valuable antidote to the artificial, soul-deadening values of the rootless cosmopolitan Coca-Cola culture which threatens our sense of national identity today.

Although not ‘political’ as such, Jefferies’ writings were a source of inspiration

for early patriotic British socialists such as William Morris. The value of his visionary contribution to the spiritual aspect of the Movement has not declined with the passage of time.

In the general editorial Jefferies is elevated even beyond membership of the blood and soil fraternity to the status of martyr for the cause, who “overworked and exhausted, died of tuberculosis, the disease of the dark, irresponsible industrial Capitalism which he hated so much.” There is no mention anywhere of the fate of the European Jews, other than side swipes at “the lies and smears of wartime propaganda” and the “distorted fantasies of Jewish Hollywood.”

Undoubtedly there are some resemblances between Jefferies’ ideas about money, mechanisation, distribution, civilisation, nature, the land etc. and the more idealistic elements in National Socialism, but to align him with the full programme, and racism in particular, is absurd. The “cockroach” slur comes from a character in a very early story. Speaking for himself in maturity there is no discrimination in his desire “to be loved by every beautiful woman on earth, from the swart Nubian to the white and divine Greek.” And in context “parasites” must surely have been intended as a neutral scientific term, however mistaken the science in question, rather than, as now, an expression of racial hatred. He admires the uncomplaining fortitude of the gypsies surviving on the common during severe winter weather in ‘Hours of Spring’. Like most country people he preferred honest, hard working, plain speaking and respectable folk to their opposites, regardless of who or what they were. As for the Jews, perhaps this little anecdote recalled by Jefferies’ son is all that need be added. During the family’s residence at Lorna Road, Brighton:

A very pleasant family of Jews lived next door, and, finding us friendly, they used to send in little gifts to father, such as Passover bread, which we all enjoyed very much.

References

Allain A Delattre. *John Richard Jefferies: his Worst and his Best*. The Centenary lecture delivered August 2nd, 1987. Richard Jefferies Society Talks and Articles 62.

Arthur Comte de Gobineau. *Essai sue l’Inegalite des Races Humaines*. Paris, Didot, 1853-5.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain. *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. John Lane, 1910.

Hans F K Günther. *The Racial Elements of European History*. Methuen, 1927.

Hans F K Günther. *The Religious Attitudes of the Indo-Europeans*. Historical Review Press, 2001 (reprint).

Henry Williamson (ed.) *Richard Jefferies: Selections of his Work...* Faber & Faber, second edition, 1947.

Yesterday & Tomorrow: Roots of the National-Revolution. London, Rising Press, n.d.

Concerning Richard Jefferies by Various Writers. Worthing Art Development Scheme, 1944.

George Miller

A RECOVERY IN ENGLISH NATURE BOOKS?

On my first visit to the States 45 years ago, an English friend and I were stopped in the middle of the Indiana cornfields by a sheriff who could not find it in his heart to believe we were watching birds. He found our accents too difficult to cope with and sent us on our way. I was also told at the time not to expect a 'cosy' rustic culture like that exemplified by The Archers – not a great loss that, but promising an unappealingly urban society.

It wasn't wholly true. A higher proportion of Americans than Brits lived and worked on the land (although admittedly the share has since been dropping there as well as here). My economist colleagues used rural imagery far more than the English. Field Guides for birds had been invented in the States in the 1930s and were imitated here only in the fifties. Birding and other forms of natural history seemed less widespread than in the UK but were on the up and up in the sixties.

More to the point, highly enjoyable books on the landscape, nature and rural topics were starting to come off American presses. Some of them were directly inspired by the decline of agricultural employment. Later on, 'green' memoirs began to stream out, not quite all of them childishly anti-people or anti-growth. Some truly excellent bird and hunting (shooting) volumes emerged. James Kilgo's awkwardly titled, *Deep Enough for Ivorybills* derived from a writers' group at the University of Georgia. It bids fair to be the one bedside book I would request from Desert Island Disks – although coming from Fairford I should probably ask for the same luxury as John Betjeman, the lower half of the West Window in our church.

The list of books goes on. A writer for the New Yorker, John McPhee, produced a steady output of books about all sorts of pertinent topics, notably a string of geological studies based on first-hand field experience. His sort of reportage generated its clones. The prose is enjoyable as well as knowledgeable, and in my view compares favourably with Cirencester's own nineteenth-century reporter, Richard Jefferies of the *Standard*.

Wait, though. Aren't we the ones who are supposed to do this sort of thing best, even if it does include The Archers? Nevertheless I was increasingly unable to find modern English equivalents of Kilgo or McPhee. Asking around back here, only the earlier works of Richard Mabey were suggested as meeting my criteria of landscape-history-mixed-with-natural-history, supported by delectable writing and describing personal activity in the field.

The judgement is bound to be subjective, and so very many books do keep appearing that something is certain to be missed, but I found it to be more or less correct. The Brits had lost the plot. Ever more books on rural topics were mere manuals or were decidedly thin or alternatively were designed to break the legs of a coffee table. No-one could explain why we had turned away from lyrical realism and ceased to write books that could draw one into the field through sheer envy or excitement. In the States I asked writers up to and including Ted Hoagland why they had moved in on 'the environment' and Hoagland, at least, said they just got lucky in the brief dawn of American environmentalism. On the other hand, none of them could explain why the

English tradition, handed down right from Gilbert White, seemed to have dried up.

It was as if writers here wanted to tell us about Africa or some such far-off place, merely because the wildlife there is more profuse. They seemed not to realise that less is more, and as White said, 'that district that is most examined produces the most variety.' My complaint is an old one. Thomas Hughes made it in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, telling his undergraduate readers that they might hare off down the Rhine by steam boat each vacation but could not find the flowers or birds in their own woods and fields. Fortunately subsequent generations of writers did concentrate on things English, yet it looked as though Hughes's indictment had eventually come back to haunt us.

I would not have bothered you with this bleat, however, if I did not feel there was good news at the end of it. During the past few weeks I have read two books which have restored my faith in English writing about nature, even if one of them does lament species loss and the other is entirely concerned with this dire fact. As prose, though, they hit the spot, grip the reader, leave even someone as jaded as me exclaiming at the freshness of their findings and imagery. They are Mark Cocker, *Crow Country* (all about Rook roosts and rookeries), and Michael McCarthy, *Say Goodbye to the Cuckoo* (whose title is self-explanatory). Enjoy the writing.

Eric Jones

February 2010

BELL AND RICHARD JEFFERIES

Reprinted from the Adrian Bell Society Journal, April 2010, with their permission.

Richard Jefferies, the Victorian naturalist, gets an occasional mention in the Society's *Journal*. Adrian Bell was conversant with his work and on page 20 of the last issue he quotes the gamekeeper as saying 'You get inside a wood, and it's as warm as a house'. The keeper goes on to talk of the benefits of the outdoor life and the therapeutic effects of pine woods. *The Gamekeeper at Home* was one of Jefferies' earlier books and has many passages about conservation, including leaving dead wood to form a specialised habitat for wildlife.

Then on page 22, in 'A Mile of England' Adrian Bell remarks 'I have found that it is only by walking the same path again and again that love for any bit of unspoiled England is to be found'. Jefferies felt similarly, and in his essay 'Wild Flowers' answered a friend who asked why he walked along the same road each day by writing 'I do not want change: I want the same old and lovely things the same wild flowers, the same trees and soft ash-green; the turtle doves, the blackbirds, the coloured yellowhammer sing, sing, singing so long as there is light to cast a shadow on the dial'. Most poignant were Adrian Bell's words further down the same page when he wrote 'By taking just a daily walk for exercise I had no idea how much I was storing of every season in just a mile. Should the body fail these are still to dream of, so clear they stand out in memory'. Jefferies short life from 1848 to 1887 encompassed in its final months of agony some of his most celebrated essays. By then he was bedridden, too weak to write, having to dictate to his wife, remarking with

sorrow that 'I hear the lark through the window singing, and each note falls into my heart like a knife'. His body was weak but his vision was strong and in essays such as 'The Hours of Spring' and 'My Old Village' he returned with his memories intact to the old farmhouse and adjacent Coate Water on the edge of Swindon, a 'storing of every season' from his younger and healthier days.

These final essays were collected by his widow and published under the title *Field and Hedgerow*.

Richard Stewart

COATE FARM AND MUSEUM REPORT

We thank all Members who volunteered to act as guides at the Museum. There have been various special openings of the Museum that included those for the Blue Gate Writers' group, the Breverton Fringe Show, the Swindon Film Festival, the Swindon Festival of Literature, the Highworth Historical Society, the Edward Thomas Fellowship and Swindon Web TV (who made a promotional film about the Museum that can be seen on their website). We were privileged that three groups of volunteers from Intel chose to work in the Coate Farm gardens – the first two groups came in March and the third in late July. The main target was the 'the brambles, which grew very fast, [that] had pushed forward their prickly runners farther and farther from the hedges till they had now reached ten or fifteen yards,' (*After London*, Ch.1). Intel have promised to return for more sessions. BP also sent a group of volunteers to work in the garden in July. The ha-ha wall can now be seen again along with its square drain.

Visitor numbers got off to a bad start early in the year (bad weather and uncertainty as to whether the Museum was open again) but are slowly building up again. The opening times are not conducive to generating good attendance and it is only a lack of volunteers that prevents us from opening every Sunday from May to September. Could anyone help?

Donations and additions to the Museum.

Sheila Povey has been a major source of information about Jefferies, not least of all she has helped identify the origins of many of the exhibits at the Museum that were not labelled. Sheila has now donated hundreds of slides and negatives of people and places associated with Jefferies and the Society.

There are more Kate Tryon' paintings of 'Jefferies Land' now on show. The oil-paintings were mainly produced in 1910 when she first visited the Coate area. Her daughter donated about 30 paintings to the Richard Jefferies Museum in 1960 but many of these have been hidden away by Swindon Borough Council and have been kept in storage for years. There are now 22 paintings adorning the walls of the Museum but we are still trying to track down the one used on the front cover of *Richard Jefferies' Letters to Aunt Ellen* (Petton Books, 2009) and another of Dayhouse Farm, the home of Jessie Baden. Many of the paintings have been reproduced in *Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land* (see p.26).

Society Members Anne and Michael Ponting donated two items to the Society for display at the Museum. The first is a charming wooden baby's

high-chair circa 1935 that folds into two to create a chair on metal wheels and a tray with an abacus. It was Anne's chair as a baby and it makes a splendid addition to the display in the attic. The second object is a 1930s wall mirror that belonged to Michael's parents. Of Art Deco design and in excellent condition, it now hangs over the mantel-piece in the Jefferies' parlour.

Mrs Sheila Hill kindly gift-aided her husband's (see p.28) collection of Jefferies' books. Mrs Joan James of Wroughton also donated her Jefferies' books in the hope that they would find good homes.

Trees

On Saturday 27 February, Mark Daniel dug up the Jefferies' Russet apple tree that he had been carefully nurturing in his garden in Brighton for the last six years. With the help of Michael Parrott, the six foot sapling was then planted in the back garden of Coate Farm on the same day (and in the rain), near to the ha-ha. The sapling could not be planted in the original position of the Jefferies' Russet – this area is now over-shadowed by a massive Holm Oak that was planted by James Luckett Jefferies. The little apple tree is growing between the Cyril Wright Memorial plum and the remains of the great ash tree that came down in the wind two years ago. Every care was taken to give the sapling a good chance of survival. We are eternally grateful to Mr Daniel. Without his dedication, so many items associated with Richard Jefferies would have been lost forever. Thank you, Mark.

The other fruit trees, planted about four years ago in the orchard and in the gardens, are all doing well and most bear fruits now. The old mulberry tree has recovered from the loss of a large branch in the storms of September 2007 and the berries are always delicious. We had to move the espalier pear tree, donated by Andrew Rossabi, that we planted alongside the west wall of the house to replace the one that Jefferies' admired. Swindon Borough Council threatened to dig it up and discard it if we didn't move it. Hence it is now growing in the main orchard for the time-being.

Vandalism

The lead flashing on the pig-sty roof was crudely hacked off some time around July 27th. Three youths were captured on CCTV footage hanging around the property for about three hours in the middle of the night and the incident and evidence is now in the hands of the police.

Sale of the House & Museum

There is little to report regarding the possible sale of the Museum. Mike Pringle is in the process of setting up a dedicated development trust although the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust might be used as a vehicle to speed up the process. An application was made to re-register the Museum for full accreditation that would indicate that it has achieved certain standards. As a result, all objects on display at the Museum, that belong to the Society or our Members, are now fully catalogued and labelled. A new five year loan agreement between the Society and Swindon Borough Council has been signed that gives us more protection for our precious items. We have introduced even better security of the items (more doors to rooms are kept locked) whilst there

has been more attention to reducing light pollution to protect the displays. It takes twice as long to open and close the Museum to the public, but it is worth the trouble!

SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

As anticipated, Redrow Homes and Persimmon Homes finally submitted a new planning application for Coate/Badbury Wick in June. The proposed development consists of 960 houses, 13.5 hectares of employment land and land for shops, a primary school and hospital expansion along with two new access roads to a site area mainly east of Day House Lane. Whilst the plans are not as offensive as the previous ones, the views from Liddington Hill will be compromised and there is no guarantee that the building work will not set a precedent for more house-building to expand west of Day House Lane and next to Coate Water Country Park. Based on the recommendations of the planning inspector with regard to the previous planning application, it is highly unlikely that the latest plans will be turned down. It is hoped that the rural quality of Day House Lane will be retained as far as Badbury Wick. It goes without saying that the Society remains firmly committed in its objection to the proposals.

The only glimmer of hope came in a statement from the Rt Hon Eric Pickles (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) who said on 4 June 'It will no longer be possible to concrete over large swathes of the country without any regard to what local people want.' Given that 52,000 people signed the Save Coate petition, let's hope that the people will win.

There is still time for you to write once more to Swindon Borough Council and object to the latest planning application. Please send your letter to Ian Halsall, Planning Officer, Wat Tyler House, Beckhampton Street, Swindon SN1 2JH and quote planning reference number: S/10/0842.

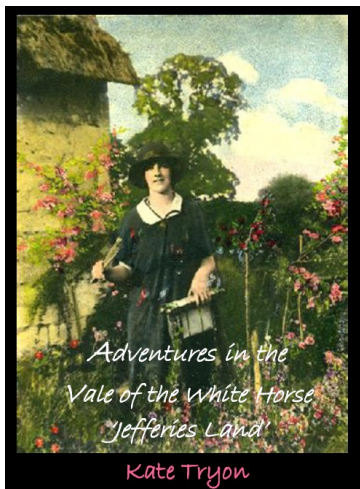
EARLIEST KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

Thanks to an amazing collection of photographs and slides put together by Sheila Povey over many years, an early photograph of Richard Jefferies, aged around seven, can be published for the first time (see front cover). Sheila remembers that the original photograph was among the family collection held by Clodagh Kilminster (grand-daughter of Richard's Aunt Martha [Jefferies] Hall).

There is no mistaking the eyes and the ears as those of Richard, the author, and we suspect that the photograph might have been taken when he was living with Aunt Ellen and Uncle Thomas Harrild in Sydenham.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES BY OR ABOUT JEFFERIES

"The Great Earth Speaking": Richard Jefferies and the transcendentalists' – is the title of an article by Roger Ebbatson published in a volume entitled *Literary Utopias of Cultural Communities* (Rodopi, 2010, pp.129-139). Professor Ebbatson is happy for the article to be circulated to Society Members. Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you would like a copy – it can be sent electronically as a pdf file by e-mail.



Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land by Kate Tryon, (Faringdon: Petton Books, 14 August 2010), 240 pp, softback, with 28 colour pictures and over 70 black and white photographs. ISBN: 978-0-9563751-1-7. Price £12, postage £1.11 (UK), £5.19 (overseas).

Please note that this is a limited edition of only 100 copies.

This is the latest publication produced by the Richard Jefferies Society (see the Spring 2010 newsletter for full list and order form) under the Petton Book imprint. Copies will be available at the Society's AGM or can be purchased on our web-site or by contacting the Hon. Sec.

Kate Tryon (1864-1952) was born in the small village of Naples in Maine, USA. She was a popular lecturer on the birds of New England and England. She studied art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and painted over two hundred scenes during her visits to Wiltshire where she followed in the footsteps of Richard Jefferies. In 1963, thirty five of these oil paintings were donated to the Richard Jefferies Museum where most of them can still be seen. She visited 'Jefferies Land' six times in the early 1900s – an ardent admirer of Jefferies' nature writing and followed his philosophy of life. Having re-read his works many times, she wanted to capture scenes on canvas that had inspired the author's words set around Coate. Her first visit to north Wiltshire took place in 1910. She wrote: 'The lark, the nightingale and Richard Jefferies – those are the three things that brought me to England.' Her 'adventures' are told through the third person of Eleanor Hale of Boston, albeit that some of the events relate to Kate's later visits to the area.

Andrew Rossabi described the book as 'a charming memoir – the writing is fluent, relaxed and often amusing. She knows her Jefferies thoroughly and her quotes and allusions are always apposite. As an American she takes a wry, oblique but deeply affectionate look at English rural society just before the outbreak of the First World War and dispenses much valuable information about the people and places she meets.'

The artist's grand-daughter, Kate Schneider, visited Coate in September 1997. She donated her grandmother's manuscript. Sheila & John Povey showed the American visitor around the Richard Jefferies Museum. Mrs Povey documented the memoir and added photographs and pictures that only enhance this delightful tale.

It is fitting that the manuscript has been published for the first time since the author's first visit to Jefferies' Land, exactly 100 years ago.

At the time of writing the newsletter Stan Hickerton and Jean Saunders were working on another manuscript by Kate Tryon. This one the author entitled 'Walks in Jefferies-Land, 1912' – but it is only half-finished and more a selection of short quotes from Jefferies' writing to illustrate the places she painted. As the text only runs to 48 pages, it has been decided to publish it in the same format as our *Journal*.

1948 TRIBUTE FILM FOR RICHARD JEFFERIES

A cine film, made by the Film Production Unit of the Swindon Public Library Film Society in 1948, found its way back to Swindon in February this year. Mr Mansbridge came across the film, produced as a tribute to Richard Jefferies one hundred years after his birth, along with others about trains, in his loft at his home in Essex. Mr Mansbridge had the Jefferies' tribute transferred onto DVD and sent us both the DVD and the cine film. He had no idea where the film came from but it is possible that it originated from Albert Mansbridge (no relation, evidently) who was the founder of the Swindon branch of the Workers' Educational Association. The film runs for fifteen minutes and has no sound-track. It shows shots of Richard Jefferies' birthplace and home at Coate and places that were special to the writer such as Liddington Hill, the Gamekeeper's Cottage at Hodson along with keeper Jones and Coate Water. There is a charming re-enactment of the scene from *Bevis*, where local boys wield hand-made wooden swords at Coate Water in their mock battle. Those children would now be in their seventies and may still be living in Swindon and remember making the film.

The film was last shown at the Swindon Arts Centre on Monday 21st June 1948 as part of the programme of events connected with 'The Richard Jefferies Centenary Exhibition'. In the *Swindon Review*, December 1948 (No. 4, pp.30-34) there is an article entitled 'Tribute to Jefferies. Notes on the making of a film'. It is most illuminating as the author of the article (probably Norman Liddiard) reveals that it was only the result of a Jefferies Committee Council meeting (held on 22 January 1948, to consider what might be done to celebrate Jefferies' centenary year) that 5 days later he 'half-jokingly' suggested to the Home Movie Club to make a Jefferies' film. It was a new club and to embark on such an ambitious project in such a short space of time was too great to contemplate but with the assistance of volunteers and a donation of £20 from the Council (my how things have changed!) they worked hard and produced the film on time. Interesting to note in the article, it states (p.33) that 'The Gamekeeper himself (not to mention his dog) entered wholeheartedly into the fun of film-making... The shot of the gamekeeper walking away from his cottage and the camera was one of the loveliest we achieved.' It seems that this gamekeeper must have been Jack Jones about whom Prof Eric Jones described in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* (2008, number 17, pp. 7-16) as living at the Gamekeeper's cottage at this time. Jack Jones was the nephew of Eric Jones great-grandfather and, by coincidence, the Mansbridge in Essex is also part of Eric's family tree.

The credits in the film are given as follows:

Script	Norman G Liddiard
Producer	Victor H Gardiner
Photography	CFR Simpson, DE Bowles, Joan Roberts, Winifred L Pomeroy (assistant)
Production Manager	H W Catton
Continuity	May Bowles
Art Director	NA Herbert
Effects & Properties	Elsie M & RJ Reeves

The short film would benefit from the addition of a soundtrack and the Society is exploring how this might be achieved.

THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED

It is always sad to receive news of the death of one of our Members and never more so when it is someone who has been a supporter of the Society and Jefferies' writing for a long time. We have been informed of the death of four Members who joined the Society over thirty years ago. Unfortunately we know nothing about Mr H R M Ross of Thornbury who died in July 2009 and Mr A E G Wright of London who died this year apart from the fact that they both joined the Society around the same time – May 1977.

When Mrs Eve Carroll's husband notified our Membership Secretary, that his wife died last year, Margaret Evans wrote to Mr Carroll to express our condolences and to ask if he knew how his wife came to know about Jefferies and what she particularly liked in his writing. All we knew was that Mrs Carroll had been a member since August 1978 and lived in Aldershot. Mr Carroll replied in a letter dated 11 May that his wife was also interested in John Clare but that he didn't share in her interest of Jefferies and Clare to any great extent; something that he now regretted. He expressed surprise that Eve had been a Member for 31 years and could only offer the suggestion that they had both lived in Surbiton before they married in 1950 and he remembered his wife mentioning the Jefferies' memorial plaque in Surbiton library. She might have attended the unveiling of the plaque or made a contribution to it. Mr Carroll was kind enough to send his wife's collection of Jefferies' books to the Society along with a kind donation of £50.

Sheila Hill of Reading informed the Society that her husband David died on 26 July 2008. It is only recently that Mrs Hill has been able to cope with matters related to his memories. Mr Hill left instructions that he wanted his collection of Jefferies' books to be donated to the Society. On 8 July 2010, Mrs Hill delivered a collection of about 50 books to the Jefferies' Museum. She said that David had been a follower of Richard Jefferies since he was a boy. One of his books bears this out – he was awarded a copy of *Richard Jefferies London* as a fifth form school-prize at Caterham School in 1944.

TALKS ABOUT JEFFERIES BY REBECCA WELSHMAN

The name of Rebecca Welshman is becoming increasingly associated with Richard Jefferies as she discovers more about the writer as part of her PhD studies. The following talks were given this year --

At a conference on 28th January, called "Crossing the Line: Affinities before and after 1900," held at the University of Liverpool, Rebecca presented a paper entitled: "Literature and the Ecological Imagination: Richard Jefferies and D.H. Lawrence". This was followed on 6th February by the presentation of another paper entitled "Imagining Archaeology during the Great Agricultural Depression" about Jefferies and Hardy. This conference was entitled "Nature and the Long Nineteenth Century," and took place at the University of Edinburgh.

Rebecca also gave a talk in Vienna (at the UN headquarters) on 7th April at the World Archaeological Congress titled “Hillforts in Times of War: Lost cultural spaces” in which she mentioned Liddington Hill and Richard Jefferies. She said about Jefferies:

In contrast to former prehistoric eras, which witnessed battles between the Celts and Saxons, and between the Saxons and the Danes, ending with King Alfred's victory at Edington in 878 AD, Wiltshire is now a quiet rural area. Until the nineteenth century Wiltshire remained the scene of conflict, being involved in the Swing Riots as agricultural workers attempted to defend their jobs by damaging newly introduced farming equipment. Since the Second World War, war has had far less impact on the landscape, not only in Wiltshire but in the rest of Britain too. The prominence of hillforts and their proximity to main roads, gives these features – perhaps more so than any other archaeological monument – the potential to achieve greater public recognition and appreciation. In the case of Liddington Castle, the Iron Age hillfort in Wiltshire, immortalised by the Victorian author, Richard Jefferies, motorists pass the hill, which is clearly visible for miles, on the M4 motorway between London and south west England. How many of these passing motorists recognise the hillfort, or are aware of its prehistoric function?

The abstract for the article has been published in the online journal *Forum Archaeologie*:

<http://homepage.univie.ac.at/elisabeth.trinkl/forum/forum0610/55welshman.htm>

Rebecca Welshman also gave a talk about Richard Jefferies at the Swindon Festival of Literature on 6th May along with an interview for BBC Radio Wiltshire. About 50 people attended including the director of the Birmingham Festival of Literature, and in the audience was a lady who was a family friend of Agnes Miller Parker - she was interested to see an illustration of the *Story of My Heart* by Gertrude Hermes as Gertrude and Agnes had been good friends ... she said she would like to join the Society. A few membership forms were taken on the day.

The *Swindon Advertiser* reported the talk focussing on the fact that Ms. Welshman had discovered previously lost letters from Richard Jefferies that were sent to a national journal devoted to the study of astronomy. In the letters, published in 1870 and 1871, Jefferies demonstrates his early interest in science describing a ‘meteor’ and ‘spots on the sun’ that he had observed from his house at Coate 140 years before the UK Space Agency arrived in Swindon. Written during his time as a reporter for the *Swindon Advertiser* and the *Wiltshire and Glos. Standard*, the letters to the editor of the *Astronomical Register* are the earliest known works by Jefferies in a national magazine. They pre-date Jefferies’ letters to *The Times* on the agricultural labourer in 1872, which gave him significant national coverage and developed his literary career.

Rebecca was quoted as saying: ‘The finds are particularly significant for the study of Jefferies’ early life and work when he was living at Coate in the years before his marriage to Jessie Baden in 1874, a period for which scholars have very little material.’

By a bizarre coincidence, the day Rebecca made her amazing discovery was April 3 this year, 140 years to the day after one of the letters was published.

Although Richard Jefferies hints at his interests in science in his

correspondence with his Aunt Ellen, these early letters on astronomy show that Jefferies was thinking seriously about and observing scientific phenomena in his local area. The letters offer an insight into the accessibility and popularity of science during the late Victorian era, and demonstrate Richard Jefferies' passion for ideas and the workings of the world around him.

The letters will be published with a comment from Rebecca Welshman in the Society's next *Journal*. Since then she has found another previously undocumented letter to the Editor of the *Standard* (1872) about taxes on personal property. Amazing!

Prof Roger Ebbatson – Fellow of the English Association

Prof Roger Ebbatson has received a well-deserved honour. He has been elected to be a Fellow of the English Association, at least in part in recognition for his work on Hardy and Jefferies. The aim of the English Association is to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the English language and its literature and to foster good practice in its teaching and learning at all levels. The English Association was founded in 1906 by a small group of English teachers and scholars, including F.S. Boas, A.C. Bradley and Sir Israel Gollancz. It took a leading part in the movement to develop English studies in schools, while encouraging advanced studies in further education. Past Presidents of the Association have included John Galsworthy, Harley Granville-Barker, Sir Kenneth Clark and George Steiner. The Association today is an international organisation. It is a registered charity (1124890) and in December 2006 was incorporated by Royal Charter. The Association has been based at the University of Leicester since December 1993.

CITINGS OF JEFFERIES

In the episode of **'Lark Rise to Candleford'** broadcast on BBC1 television on 21st February, a young boy read out a few lines from *Bevis* to his mother about the raft and the willow tree from the first chapter of the book.

As part of her research work for her PhD Heather Hawkins found several references to Jefferies in ***Hardy's Geography Wessex and the Regional Novel*** by Ralph Pite (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.)

pp 88-89 Pite cites Jefferies' *After London; or Wild England* (1885) in a general discussion of the association of the landscape of the southern counties of England with Arthurian legend. Pite asserts that following the flooding of the Thames Valley in the novel, Jefferies' hero gradually re-establishes the English nation as a federation of city states. The Arthurian connections figure 'Jefferies's hostility to Victorian England's London-centred centralization'.

p 200 – Note 2 – Ref to use of maps in childrens (particularly boys) literature. Jefferies' *Bevis* is among the works cited.

p 209 – Note 19 – Ref to WJ Keith's work on Jefferies and regional fiction in *Regions of the Imagination: The Development of British Rural Fiction* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1988)

p 223 – Note 68 – citation of Jefferies' *After London* – p 16 – 'Hitherto the stream of human life had directed itself to the westward, but when this reversal of magnetism occurred, a general desire arose to return to the east'.

Pite employs this reference in a discussion of the use of maps and representations of spatiality in Victorian fiction, particularly Hardy's *Return of the Native*.

Giles Wood had a letter published in the **Daily Telegraph** on 4 March in response to some RSPB 'Nature Notes' that were published in February 26. That article advised gardeners to put up nest boxes in time for the breeding season. Mr Wood replied: 'While for most birds, boxes should be faced between north and east, this does not apply to house sparrows. From my own observations, backed up by those of the 19th-century nature writer Richard Jefferies, house sparrows are like humans: they prefer the sun. We should position their nest boxes high up under the eaves of a south-facing wall.'

The **Swindon Advertiser** has excelled itself this year with two good features encouraging the public to visit the Museum. The monthly 'Nature Notes' feature has now been replaced with a page devoted to local places about which Jefferies describes along with appropriate text and photographs that John Webb spends many days putting together to make life easy for the newspaper. *Jefferies Land* has been an invaluable source of places for John to visit in and around Swindon. The local paper and **BBC Radio Swindon** have also publicised all the events that have taken place at the Museum or related to Jefferies that include the Swindon Festival of Literature and the Swindon Film Festival. On 25th August, there was a feature about Emma Alley Hull (née Alley), a suffragette who lived in Swindon before moving to London. She served more than one term of imprisonment for her political activities and returned to Swindon in 1951 where she was active in the Richard Jefferies Society and the WEA. She was said to have worn a badge carrying an engraving of Holloway prison pinned to her dress. She died aged one hundred in 1967.

Stan Hickerton came across several references to Jefferies in ***The Land is Yours*** by C. Henry Warren (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1943). The first reference on page 31 describes 'a man as William Sexty that Richard Jefferies had in mind when he created the memorable figure of Iden in his *Amaryllis at the Fair*: a man who cared above all for things of quality ... he thought no material sacrifice too great'. On page 32 Warren says that 'as I grow older, I appreciate the depth of experience indicated by Richard Jefferies' preference for following the same "plain old road", with its same wild flowers, yet never the same...' On page 56, Warren drew attention to Jefferies thoughts on 'the inappropriateness of the epithet "flaming June" since the predominant wild flowers of this month ... are all white.' On page 80 Warren says 'I do not know the names of many of these grasses, although, unlike Richard Jefferies, I wish I did.' Finally on page 128 he quotes Jefferies: 'No one could stand the harvest-field as a reaper except he had been born and cradled in a cottage, and passed his childhood bare-headed in July heats and January snows.'

As a result of a visit in January by the Breverton Fringe Show, an hour long episode, filmed at the Richard Jefferies Museum, was broadcast by **Strawberry Green TV**. It included a tribute to Jefferies and a walk up to Liddington Castle along with interviews, poetry readings and music. **Swindon**

Web TV also visited the Jefferies' Museum in May and made a promotional film that can be viewed on their website.

In an advertising feature in March for the **BBC's Countryfile Magazine**, an article on 'Henges and hillforts' by Fergus Collins, the editor, included mention of the Marlborough Downs as being 'alive with the dead' by quoting Jefferies.

In his maiden speech to the House of Commons on 7 June, Robert Buckland (Conservative, Swindon South) mentioned the asset of 'Coate Water country park, much loved by local residents, home of a miniature railway and, on the edge, home to the museum of the 19th century writer and naturalist, Richard Jefferies.'

Eric Jones came across a review in the 24th June 2010 edition of the **Economist** of Ferdinand Mount's *Full Circle: How the Classical World Came Back to Us* (Simon & Schuster) which says, 'Richard Jefferies, a Victorian naturalist, and a German philosopher, Hans Vaihinger, are other heroes who provide grounds for optimism that a return to a concern for Mother Earth and adoption of an "as if" (the Christian religion were true) philosophy can enable us to rediscover Cicero's vision of immortality, "Scipio's Dream".'

Rebecca Welshman discovered that Jefferies makes an appearance in the *Continuum Encyclopedia of British Philosophy* by Diana Morrow, published 2006, Vol. 2, p1660-1661. ISBN: 9781843711414.

Abstract: An encyclopedia entry for the late author Richard Jefferies is presented.

His career background is presented including his work as a country reporter and a freelance journalist. Some of the country books he published were *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *The Amateur Poacher* and *Wild Life in a Southern County*.

Information on the illness that he contracted in 1881 is also presented.

Eric Jones said that according to **Time at War** (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2006) Nicholas Mosley took a book by Jefferies (doesn't say which) with him on the Italian campaign and had to claw it back from another officer who was reading it.

Eric Jones visited Deerhurst Saxon church in July. It has a remarkable modern lecture series, all published, where Prof. Jones found John S Moore, **'From Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman: North Gloucestershire in Domesday Book'** (Deerhurst Lecture, 1998), p.6, saying that he is concerned with the doings of Hodge and his Masters, 'as Richard Jefferies put it expressively'.

Did you know that in 1913 **T S Elliot** got his first type-writer and read Jefferies' *The Story of my Heart?* – not that the two facts are connected (Akroyd, Peter. *T.S. Eliot*. Penguin Books. London, 1984).

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

The Buzzards of Zinn: a Story of War and Peace by George Miller, (Medlar Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-1-907110-08-5. 350pp, hardback with dustjacket, £15 + £3 postage available from Medlar Press, The Grange, Ellesmere, SY12 9DE. It can be ordered by post, online (www.medlarpress.com) or by phone (01691 623225). If anyone wants a signed copy, order from George Miller direct, payment by cheque, on the same terms (10 Upper Church St., Oswestry, SY11 2AE).

This is George Miller's first book of fiction and a far cry from the bibliographical study of Richard Jefferies that he co-wrote with Hugoe Matthews (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993). *The Buzzards of Zinn* is a compelling read and the story unfolds through the narration of an adventurer, Jason. The description on the dustcover reads:

As Jason approaches the city of Zinn he is aware that something very strange lies ahead, though in the end just another adventure in his restless travels around the globe. But Zinn is not a place for passing through. Against both his will and better judgement he becomes inextricably caught up in Zinnian affairs and the battle to save its outcasts from the dark forces within. It is a journey which tests his strength and endurance to the limit but one that, more than any other in his life, helps him to understand the fragility of life on Earth, the meaning of friendship, and the part he can no longer avoid playing if his own life is to have any validity.

Richard Jefferies does not go un-noticed and is mentioned many times in the novel. Jefferies is revealed as a favourite writer by Scottie's father; a philosopher whose books are banned by the oppressive regime. Miller quotes from *Wild Life in a Southern County* to reflect on the joy of life that can be witnessed in animals and birds that are, relatively, free. He also quotes these chilling lines from Chapter IX *The Story of my Heart* on how human beings are born into the world as innocents and corrupted by their environment:

The truth is we are murdered by our ancestors. Their dead hands stretch forth from the tombs and drag us down.



Locating the Industrial Revolution: inducement and response by E L Jones (Singapore and London: World Scientific, 2010). Hardcover, 250 pp ISBN: 978-9814295253.

This is the first comprehensive economic history of southern England, 17th-19thC, and contains half-a-dozen short quotes from Jefferies, as well as chapters on his countryside. The familiar industrialisation of northern England and less familiar de-industrialisation of the south are shown to have depended on a common process. Neither rise nor decline resulted from differences in natural resource endowments, since they began before the use of coal and steam in manufacturing. Instead, political certainty, competitive ideology and Enlightenment optimism encouraged investment in transport and communications. This integrated the national market, intensifying competition between regions and altering economic distributions. Despite a dysfunctional landed system, agricultural innovation meant that the south's comparative advantage shifted towards the farm sector. Meanwhile its manufactures slowly declined. Once industry clustered in the less-benign northern environment, technological changes in manufacturing accumulated there. This book portrays the Industrial Revolution as deriving from economic competition within unique political arrangements.



Dark Sky Dancing: The Four Seasons in Haiku by Richard Stewart, (Faringdon: Reuben Books, August 2010). ISBN: 978-0-9562828-2-8.

Softback, 36 pp, four art-quilt illustrations in full colour by Anne-Marie Stewart, £4 (postage included).

Each of the four sections has twenty eight haiku, covering the seasons of the year and roughly following the day from dawn and early morning to dusk and night. The vast majority are wedded to the natural cycle of the year. A few, deliberately and conversely, comment on that other more urban world, often divorced from nature.

The book can be bought online at Reuben Books (reubenbooks.co.uk) or Amazon or send a cheque made payable to Richard Stewart, 112 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XW.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

The Friends of Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery: Regular tours of the cemetery take place along with work parties to improve the grounds. The group has plans to improve the Hudson/Jefferies Memorial Garden and they hope to open a visitor's centre. The Richard Jefferies Society has proposed that a new bench might be donated to replace the one damaged in the Memorial Garden.

On 7 August there was a special open day attracting large groups on the guided tours that included Jefferies grave. Michael Parrott reports that the event was a great success and he was able to talk to some of the visitors about Jefferies' writing; all the Richard Jefferies Society membership forms and the "Sussex" leaflet were taken. The "Sussex" leaflet has also been added to the Friends display case in Worthing Museum.

Worthing Downlanders: Chris Hare, the chairman of a recently established 'Worthing Downlanders' (www.worthingdownlanders.org) got in touch with the Society in June. The group was set up to protect the downland around Worthing and to encourage greater access. They are also interested in promoting the history, folklore and literature of the downs; and it is with this in mind that they held a Richard Jefferies Day on Saturday 14th August – the anniversary of Jefferies death. Michael Parrott reports that "Paul Cudenac, a radical free-thinker, gave a balanced and well researched talk on the various aspects of Jefferies' writings. Special attention was given to *Uptill a Thorn* as an indication of Jefferies' social conscience. Chris Hare, a local historian of note, followed with a summary of Jefferies' life in Sussex and read quotes, which are mainly taken from the Worthing Calvacade publications. The meeting then made its way to the grave at Broadwater Cemetery with more readings and general conversation on the man and his work. In the evening there was a tour of Jefferies' House".

The Eltham Society: The Richard Jefferies Society has a reciprocal membership arrangement with the Eltham Society by which we exchange newsletters and mailings. The Eltham Society produce a newsletter every three months – most impressive and packed with local information. There has been no further news about the proposed memorial for Jefferies' baby son, Oliver, who is buried in an unmarked grave in Eltham churchyard. We have set aside £100 that will be donated to the Eltham Society for this use.

The Henry Williamson Society: The Henry Williamson Society's AGM weekend is from the 1st–3rd of October at Barnstaple. On Saturday, there is a tour of Williamson haunts around Georgeham, Baggy Point and the writing hut with lunch at the village hall. The theme of the Southern Area Meeting in November is *The Beautiful Years*, Henry's first published novel, and *Dandelion Days*.

The Alfred Williams Heritage Festival: The new group is organising a musical event in memory of Alfred Williams that will be held at the STEAM Museum in Swindon on November 12th & 13th. Supported by the heritage lottery grant, the event will reconstruct Williams' life in words and music. More information at alfredwilliams.org.uk.

Pete Meiners is a member of the Richard Jefferies Society and lives in Crowborough, just around the corner from one of Jefferies' former homes at Jarvis Brook. He undertakes bird recording for the **Ashdown Bird Group**. He is also active in **Crowborough Conservation** – a new independent group of local residents who aim to promote the conservation of green spaces in the town, e.g. by carrying out practical conservation work on nature reserves owned and managed by Crowborough Town Council. They have close connections with the town council and were encouraged informally by a councillor to submit a proposal for recognition of RJ's association with the town. The group has submitted a proposal to the council to place a memorial at the entrance to a new council-owned nature reserve, called The Ghyll, which is an area of ghyll woodland and meadow, a few hundred metres from Jarvis Brook. One suggestion is to include a plaque bearing a short quote by Jefferies written about or whilst living in Crowborough.

The Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society: The Richard Jefferies Society has been a member of WANHS for some twenty years now. It entitles us to three tickets to visit and make use of the facilities at the Devizes Museum and a copy of their yearly *Magazine* that is issued in January. The library for the *Magazine*, going back to the 1990 issue, can be read at or borrowed from the Jefferies' Museum. Copies numbered 94 (2001) and 96 (2003) are missing – have you borrowed these and forgotten to return them?

Jefferies' name is often mentioned even if querying why he didn't write about certain Wiltshire features in his essays (e.g. dovecots). Issues numbered 97 (2004) and 102 (2009) contain very interesting articles about the stone circles and Bronze Age activity in the Coate area. Prehistoric stone circles continue to surprise and multiply. In 1894 A. D. Passmore recorded 'a hitherto unnoticed circle of stones' at Coate near Swindon (Passmore was mistaken – Jefferies was the first to document the Day House Lane sarsens), and the following year he described it and the remains of a second ring nearby. In two notebooks, unpublished until 2004, more details about them and of a possible four more in the same area were reported in *WANHM* 97. His fieldwork transformed previous beliefs about the number of megalithic rings in Wiltshire. In 2005, excavations carried out at Commonhead Roundabout near to the new Swindon hospital found activity from the Middle Bronze Age and Medieval periods rather than the anticipated Roman Road surface. The results

suggested that the modern A419 follows a more ancient alignment than previously documented.

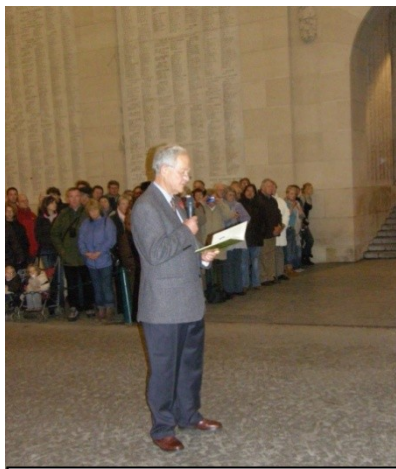
If you want to borrow the tickets for Devizes Museum, please apply to John Price. ☎ 01672 515150.

The Edward Thomas Fellowship

Edward Thomas: Words Into Wood The ETF takes pleasure in announcing a fine art limited edition of the successful series of notecards. The Book has been printed by John Grice at The Evergreen Press and uses the artists' original wood blocks. It is published as a limited edition of 250 copies, comprising of 50 special editions (£135) and 200 standard editions (£85). There is an introduction by Edward C. Thomas, accompanying notes to the poems edited by Richard Emeny from Edna Longley's recent publication and a biography by Colin G. Thornton.

The ETF were saddened at the sudden death of Edward Thomas's grandson earlier this year. Margaret Evans was moved to write an obituary that follows.

Edward Cawston Thomas (21 November 1934 – 28 February 2010)



Edward Cawston Thomas
giving a reading at The Last
Post Ceremony at the Menin
Gate, Ypres

It was with shock and sadness that I received the news of the death of Edward Cawston Thomas. Shock because, although he was 76 he appeared, and had the outlook of being, younger, and sadness because he was such a pleasant person. He was the grandson of Edward Thomas (1878-1917), the writer and poet, who was an admirer, and biographer, of Richard Jefferies.

I met him in late October 2007 when I, and my husband, Ray, joined The Edward Thomas Fellowship, of which he was Chairman, on their Edward Thomas World War I Battlefield Tour. I had seen the trip advertised in The Richard Jefferies Society Spring 2007 Newsletter. It was a significant year for the event as it commemorated the 90th year of the death of his grandfather.

We had several conversations. On first meeting he asked how we had come to be on the tour. When I mentioned it was through the advertisement in the RJS Newsletter, and explained that I had for many years wanted to undertake such a visit to pay my respects on behalf of my paternal grandmother, whose first husband had been posted as 'missing believed killed' during the Battle of Arras in May 1917, shortly after Edward Thomas, who was killed a month earlier; and as there was the link between Edward Thomas and Richard Jefferies, it would be even more meaningful, he expressed pleasure that the

advertisement of the event had had some success.

One day on the coach Edward noticed Ray looking through the photographs he had taken on his digital camera and asked him if he had the expertise to upload them on to a computer. If so, could he send him a copy of the images electronically. A selection of them could then be included in the next copy of The Fellowship's Newsletter, of which we would receive a copy! Ray confirmed that he could, and would, do so. Various exchanges took place between Edward and Ray on our return, the upshot being that seven of the images were chosen for publication. Among them were the ones taken at The Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate at Ypres, where Edward had given a reading, after which he and his wife, Jennifer, laid a wreath, and another taken at the Tribute and Readings, which took place at his grandfather's grave at Agny CWGC. These two images are shown.



From left to right: Richard Emeny, Larry Skillman, Edward Cawston Thomas, Jill Day-Lewis and Jennifer Thomas giving tributes and readings at the graveside of Edward Thomas, Agny CWGC

Prior to the news of his death, I was expecting to see Edward again at the Joint Edward Thomas Fellowship and Richard Jefferies Study Day which was held in May, but, unfortunately it was not to be. He had been Chairman of the Fellowship for 19 years when he died and I am sure that he will be sadly missed by them, his wife, family and other friends.

*Margaret Evans
27 August 2010*

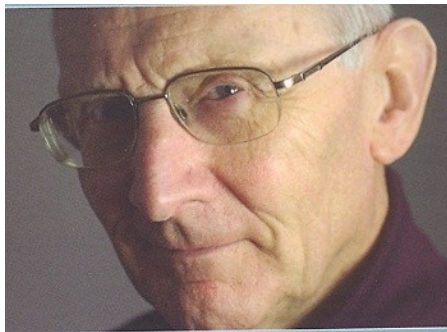
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BIRTHDAY LECTURE
SATURDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2010
VILLAGE HALL, LIDDINGTON**

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: Prof. John Carey
Subject: ‘ <i>After London</i> and other Utopias and Dystopias.’ |
| 4.00 | Tea |
| 4.30 | Depart |

Birthday Lecture

Prof. John Carey will give this year’s Birthday Lecture based on the *Faber Book of Utopias* that he edited.



John Carey is Emeritus Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford University, a Fellow of the British Academy, and Chief Book Reviewer for The Sunday Times. His books include studies of Donne, Thackeray, Milton and Dickens; and his most recent publication; *William Golding, the Man who Wrote Lord of the Flies*, has been widely acclaimed.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2010 AT LIDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL
CHURCH ROAD, LIDDINGTON**

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's introductory remarks.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the last AGM 7 November 2009 [see pp. 40-42]
- 4 Matters Arising
Richard Jefferies House & Museum at Coate
The Save Coate campaign
- 5 Annual Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report [see pp. 43-45]
- 7 Election of Examiner of Accounts
- 8 Elections to Executive Council; the following are due to retire: Hugoe Matthews (President), Helen Newman, John Price (Chairman), Jean Saunders (Secretary) & Richard Stewart.
- 9 Motions (if any)
- 10 Any Other Business

A copy of the minutes of the 2009 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 Executive Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded.

The Society's Executive Council is extremely sorry to announce that, for reasons of ill-health, Hugoe Matthews is standing down as our President. He has served the Society admirably for the last 6 years and his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Jefferies has led to a volume of publications that he has produced to help promote the author and make research work easier for any student.

The Executive Council proposes Andrew Rossabi as a nominee for a 5 year term as President. Mr Rossabi needs little introduction and served as our President from 1991-6.

The Council also nominates Rebecca Welshman for a 3 year term as a full Council Member – for the last 2 years, she has attended meetings by invitation. The remaining Council members due to stand down are all willing to stand again and continue to serve in their respective roles within the Society. Any other nominations should be sent to the Hon. Sec.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society held at the Village Hall, Liddington on Saturday 7 November 2009

PRESENT: Margaret Bathe, Eric Birch, Gillian Bromhead, Roy Burton, David & Marie Chesham, Simon Coleman, Gill Davis, Roger Ebbatson, Norma Goodwin, Stan Hickerton, Margaret Hunt, Eric Jones, Brian Morris, Ray & Sylvia Morse, Helen Newman, Michael Parrott, Michael Ponting, John Price, Andrew Rossabi, Jean Saunders, Phyllis Treitel, John Webb, Maxeen Welshman and Rebecca Welshman.

1. THE CHAIR

John Price welcomed Members to the AGM.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were given in respect of Brian Burrows, Mark Daniel, Margaret Evans, Geoff Hirst, Hugoe Matthews, Duncan Pepper, Sheila Povey, Hilary & Peter Saw, Richard Stewart and Graham Walker.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2008 at Liddington Village Hall were signed as correct apart from the correction of a typographical error in paragraph 10.4: the final reference to 'books' should be deleted. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Ray Morse and seconded by Phyllis Treitel.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was taken as read that Members had noted relevant updates in the Annual Report 2008-9 and in the autumn newsletter. Matters arising relate to new information since the report was written in early September.

4.1 Richard Jefferies House and Museum at Coate

4.1.1 Future of the Museum: Mike Pringle, the Director of the Swindon Cultural Partnership, in consultation with the Society, has been taking forward ideas to present to Swindon Borough Council as part of a potential take-over bid for the property on behalf of a 'Trust'. He is exploring the Community Asset Grant that allows publicly owned buildings to be refurbished and transferred to an appropriate body for community ownership and has identified a PR agency, a fund-raiser, a teacher, and someone from English Heritage and the National Trust to take ideas forward. He hopes to organise a high-profile event at the Museum that might attract national publicity. Mr Pringle is independent of Swindon Borough Council and has the full backing of Cllr. Rod Bluh (the Leader of the council) and Cllr. Phil Young (Cabinet member for culture) to look for viable options that would keep the Museum alive and not put the Society's future in jeopardy. The outlook for the Museum is favourable.

4.1.2 Museum repairs: The Society moved its belongings from the Museum on 14 September into two rooms of the thatched cottage but building work was delayed for a month. The builders have embedded external wires around the 1820s house and tied these into floor joists. Internal cracks in the plaster still need to be made good and some re-decorating is proposed. It is doubtful that the Museum will be ready in time for the first Wednesday open day in January.

4.1.3 Trees: Mark Daniel will be moving the Jefferies' Russet apple tree from his garden in Brighton to the back garden at Coate Farm this winter.

4.2 The Save Coate campaign: Given that the Secretary of State has not ruled out development of

the area and that the planning inspector believes that there is nothing in planning law that safeguards literary landscapes, Swindon Borough Council is taking forward the Swindon Core Strategy policy for 'Commonhead' that will include provision for 750 dwellings, 15 hectares of employment land, a school and shops, on countryside mainly to the east of Day House Lane. The draft policy may be considered by a planning inspector next year. Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Environment Agency are drawing up a management proposal for the proposed buffer land next to Coate Water.

5. ANNUAL REPORT

The content of the report was accepted as a true record of the Society's activities. Proposed — Michael Parrott; Seconded — Phyllis Treitel. It was carried.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Geoff Hirst relayed his sincere apologies that he was unable to attend this year's AGM. He wished to emphasise the fact that our income from book sales has more than doubled and whilst expenditure on printing has also increased, much of the stock remains as an asset. He clarified that the receipts reported as 'other' on p.35 of the Annual Report refer to other sales outside the Museum and that the increase in administration is largely the result of increased postal charges and mail-order book sales. The Chairman drew attention to the increasing opportunities to reclaim Gift-Aid from donated books and a system has been put in place to take advantage of the scheme. It was suggested that a Gift-Aid declaration might be included with membership renewal letters as many Members, who pay income tax, do not realise that we can reclaim tax on their subscription at no additional cost to them. Eric Jones proposed acceptance of the accounts; Michael Ponting 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 and he had expressed a willingness to look at next year's accounts. John Price proposed that he be elected to serve next year. Ray Morse 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 Margaret Evans (our Membership Secretary), Norma Goodwin (responsible for postal sales) and our Treasurer Geoff Hirst as well as our President, Hugoe Matthews. All were willing to stand again but Hugoe Matthews had asked if it would be acceptable to Members to serve on a yearly basis rather than for five years; his health is somewhat unpredictable. There was unanimous support from Members that Hugoe should be re-elected on this basis and the proposal was carried. Geoff Hirst is prepared to give his services as Treasurer for a further 5 year period but requested that we seek another Treasurer in 2014. Norma Goodwin proposed and Phyllis Treitel seconded Geoff Hirst's re-election and this was carried. Jean Saunders proposed and Michael Parrott seconded that Margaret Evans and Norma Goodwin should be re-elected for a further 3 year appointment until 2012. It was carried. The Chair offered a vote of thanks to all the members of the Executive Council who have worked so hard behind the scenes to raise the profile of Richard Jefferies and the Society.

9. MOTIONS

No motions had been submitted.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Restoration of Richard Jefferies' Grave at Broadwater Cemetery. The stone-mason will complete the restoration by the end of next week. Michael Parrott has joined the Friends of

Broadwater Cemetery and is ready to plant the grave with spring bulbs as soon as possible. He brought photos of how the grave looked when last visited by the Society in 1987.

A visit to Broadwater cemetery is now proposed for Saturday 10 July 2010. For those wishing to visit other significant places in Sussex, overnight stays on Friday or Saturday night are proposed. There will be further information in the Spring newsletter.

10.2 The Eltham Society has consulted us about possible wording for a proposed memorial for baby Oliver buried in St John's Churchyard, Eltham. The grave was once marked by a wooden cross, and the position of the grave is known but not marked. John Kennet of the Eltham Society suggested a memorial similar to a cremation-burial stone when he wrote to the Church Committee in May. He has only recently received a reply from them and they wish to consider the wording, size and nature of the memorial. The Society's Executive Council discussed possible wording last Saturday; Members suggested other alterations and agreed the following:

Richard Oliver Launcelot Jefferies
18th July 1883 - 16th March 1885
Beloved son of the author Richard Jefferies
& his wife Jessie

David Chesham proposed and Norma Goodwin seconded that the Society should make a donation of up to £100 towards the memorial. This was carried.

10.3 Publications: *The Scarlet Shawl* and *Greene Ferne Farm* were published by the Society, under the Petton Books imprint, on 24 August 2009. *Amaryllis at the Fair* (with an introduction by Carolyn Clarke) and *The Dewy Mom* (with an introduction by Rebecca Welshman) along with *Richard Jefferies' Letters to Aunt Ellen* were all published on 6 November — Richard Jefferies' birthday. All the new books have been printed locally in small numbers — book printing is priced by unit rather than by quantity.

Andrew Rossabi is making progress on the new biography of Richard Jefferies as we learnt later in the Birthday Lecture.

Rebecca Welshman and Hugoe Matthews are working on a new anthology of extracts from Jefferies' writing that are topic based.

10.4 The Chairman announced that Liddington Church would be open specially for Members at lunchtime thanks to Mark Gillingham, the curator of the church, and Mrs Archer, a key-holder. Andrew Rossabi highlighted Richard Jefferies' articles on 'Chapters on Churches' and a section in *Jefferies Land* where activities in the church are mentioned along with specific tombs and features in the church.

The business part of the AGM ended at 12.40pm.

Jean Saunders
Hon. Sec.
8 November 2009

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT: 2009-10

I am pleased to report that, at least for the Treasurer and the finances of the Society, 2009-2010 has been pretty boring. We are finishing the year for the first time for many with less in cash assets than heretofore. This gives me very few concerns, particularly as we are holding stock for sale at a valuation well into four figures and which is already paid for within publication costs.

The repairs to the Jefferies grave in terms of commitments on our part, donations, and Gift Aid recovery, made the exercise almost cost neutral. We did go into reserves for a fully justified expenditure of £1500 on the Coate flooring so you can see that were it not for this single item we would have had a very healthy year again.

Noteworthy, and welcome, is the increase in subscriptions, the first for many years. I am not aware of any life memberships in this figure, but I do know that there have been a number of joiners filling in Gift Aid forms. It could also reflect a degree of success for the Membership Secretary in kicking a few doors of late payers.

Administration is up, primarily driven by increases in postal rates and despite noble efforts to reduce the size and weight of material sent to members. The freeze in insurance premiums we had enjoyed for a number of years sadly thawed in 2009. More competitive tenders for insurance are hard to find. Sales, both museum and other (and see below), were down but the previous year was somewhat exceptional. Gift Aid produced a lower yield but this was because most of that eligible through the biography donations had already been received in earlier years. Nevertheless we were able to add a final £375 to the biography reserve from this source.

I must explain a slight anomaly in the accounts regarding donations and book sales. From time to time the Society receives donations of books and these are sold under the Gift Aid scheme. It is easier to account to HM Customs and Revenue when reclaiming tax simply from donations and subscriptions rather than attempting to explain why sales of books should qualify (were we ever to be inspected). For this accounting year a total of £149.50 within donations is in fact for book sales under this particular scheme.

I have, as usual, apportioned the derisory Building Society interest between Coate, the Biography Reserve, and the General Reserve. The resulting individual balances are as follows:-

General Funds	2000
Coate	740
Harold Adams	155
Biography Reserve	5970
Other reserves	150
General Reserve	10546

As you see, boring.

G.W.Hirst
Honorary Treasurer
5 August 2010

Published accounts

RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS for the year ending 30 June 2010

2009	Receipts	2010	2009	Payments	2010
	Balances brought down	1.7.09			
			3803	Publications	1360
2289	Bank	2865	54	Rents	54
4	Adjustment				
15	Petty Cash	66	55	Subs	56
15589	Cov. B/Soc	16828	56	Lecture fees	20
		19759			
1304	Subs	1592	901	Administration	967
	Donations:			Book purchase	16
	Biography				
1662	General	705	194	Insurance	229
42	Grave	<u>470</u>		Grave	1150
				House/grounds	1577
		2767			
431	Sales: Mus	129			
1932	Other	<u>1402</u>	2865	Bank	2246
		1531		Paypal	85
1162	Tax Reclaim	957	66	Petty Cash	51
393	Interest: B/Soc	42	16828	Cov. B/Soc	<u>17245</u>
					19627
		<u>25056</u>			<u>25056</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 2010.

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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view'. This report is thus limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

I have now undertaken the required actions in respect of the 2009-10 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
5 August 2010

8 Woburn Avenue
Theydon Bois
Essex CM16 7JS

Directions to Liddington Village Hall

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 (the bus should leave from Bay 9, but watch out for changes) and through Liddington village. There are two possibilities available for use on Saturday morning: one that arrives too early and one a little late. **The 46 leaves Swindon Bus Station at 10.45am and arrives at Liddington at 11.02am.** The earlier bus (48) leaves at 9.45 and arrives at 10.02.

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 to Swindon Bus Station:

Bus Service	48	46
Departs Liddington (Spinney Close)	16.12	17.12
Arrives Swindon Bus Station	16.30	17.30

* * *

Publications

The Society's Spring Newsletter 2010 included an order form for our publications. The only addition to the list is Kate Tryon's *Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse* (see p. 26). Most of the books can be purchased by credit/debit card using links on our web-site richardjefferiessociety.co.uk. Overseas Members can apply for books on offer by e-mailing sales@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk and requesting a price for postage before making an order. As well as our own editions of books, we stock many others by and about Jefferies or we can find a book for you. In addition to Kate Tryon's *Adventures*, Stan Hickerton has come across another typescript by the same author. Entitled "Walks in Jefferies-Land", the book is only half-finished on Mrs Tryon's own admission, and is more an anthology of quotes from Jefferies that illustrate places that she visited. The Society intends to publish

the “Walks” book in pamphlet style (similar to the Society’s *Journal*) and anyone who has purchased a copy of the *Adventures* will receive a free copy.

Please note that Hugoe Matthews is in the process of compiling a new anthology of Jefferies’ works with the help of Rebecca Welshman. The collection of writing will be topic-based.

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 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. You can also download some of our publications including some editions of the Society’s *Journal*, newsletters and booklets. There is also a Jefferies page on Facebook.



Wood engraving by Eric Fitch Daglish

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2010-2011

2010

Sat 6 Nov AGM and Birthday Lecture at Liddington Village Hall. Prof. John Carey will give this year's Birthday Lecture based on the *Faber Book of Utopias* that he edited. The title of his talk will be 'After London and other Utopias and Dystopias.'

Further details about the event on pp. 38-44.

2011 – please note the following dates in your diary. The next newsletter will not be circulated until late March.

Sat 5 March* Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams. This year it is the Society's turn to host the gathering. Select a short extract to read to others by or about Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams (no longer than 5 minutes, please) or just come along to listen.

Sat 2 April* 'Halcyon Days: Richard Jefferies' *Wood Magic* and Henry Williamson's *Dandelion Days* – a comparison,' a talk by Margaret Evans.

Sat 7 May* 'Richard Jefferies' visit to Paris – 1883,' a talk by Phyllis Treitel.

Sat 30 July A Study Day on the theme of 'Richard Jefferies and Sport.' The key speaker will be Rebecca Welshman who has studied this subject as part of her PhD thesis. More information in the Spring 2011 newsletter. Venue: Jefferies' Museum.

Sat 5 Nov AGM and Birthday Lecture

* Meetings begin at 2.00pm in the Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon. Doors open at 1.00pm. 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.