

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER & ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013



Benny Haylock & his family: the 'gamekeeper at home' (see p.8)
THIS IS NOT HAYLOCK -- see RJS Spring newsletter 2016 pp.26-9.

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).

Annual Membership runs from the 1st July and is open to all on payment of the current subscription of £12 single or £14 couple (£8 students). Overseas Members should add £1.50 towards additional surface mail postage costs whilst there is an option to pay an extra £5 for airmail carriage. There is a facility for Members to join online using our Paypal account that accepts credit/debit cards at <http://richardjefferiessociety.co.uk>. There is an additional £1 supplement to cover Paypal charges incurred.

Members receive spring and autumn newsletters, an annual report and two *Journals*. They 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. Please note: overseas Members will receive the *Journal* with their newsletters.

TRUSTEES AND COUNCIL MEMBERS 2012-13

Peter Bainbridge, Simon Coleman, Roger Ebbatson, Geoff Hirst (Treasurer), Eric Jones, Helen Newman (ALS Representative), Duncan Pepper, John Price (Chairman), Andrew Rossabi (President), Jean Saunders (Secretary), Richard Stewart, Phyllis Treitel (Vice President), John Webb (Librarian) and Rebecca Welshman (Student Representative). Ray Morse is a co-opted member.

Hon. Sec.

Jean Saunders

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RICHARD JEFFERIES 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: edited by Jean Saunders. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. The deadline set to submit material for the Spring 2014 Newsletter is **1 February 2014**. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary.

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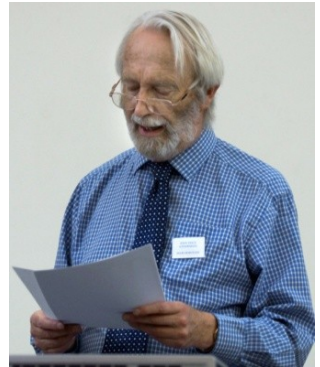
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DATA PROTECTION ACT

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

FROM THE CHAIR

In the last Newsletter I outlined the discussions that were taking place over the future of the Samuel Looker archive. At our last Executive Council Meeting, however, we reached the decision that they should be placed at the Wiltshire Local History Centre at Chippenham. This recently completed resource is a purpose-built establishment, open to the general public, and with very good transport links to all parts of the country. The advantages to this placement from the Society's point of view are as follows:



1. The History Centre is local, and relatively near to the Richard Jefferies Museum, so that material can comparatively easily be transferred for display purposes.
2. The archive remains the property of the Society and is stored in optimum conditions at no cost to us.
3. All material at the Centre has to be made available to members of the public.
4. Staff at the Centre are experts at applying for grants from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund – which could be very useful if we wish to catalogue/research the archive further.
5. Study facilities at the Centre are excellent.
6. Much of the Society's archive material is already housed there, including some sensitive Henry Williamson correspondence.

I believe that the papers offer an unusual opportunity for members of the Society (and any others interested), to pursue research on Samuel Looker, and there is certainly scope for discoveries to be made about the man and his work.

The second major development in progress is Mike Pringle's effort to set up a Richard Jefferies Museum Trust, that will take over responsibility for managing and running the Museum from Swindon Borough Council and our Society. Our members would still be fully involved as guides (as at present), if they so wish, but the onerous duty of unlocking and locking-up would be transferred to a resident key holder/caretaker. At a very recent meeting, at which several new Trustees were appointed, David Thackray was elected Chairman. He has had a distinguished career with the National Trust, and has been Deputy Chair of the Swindon Heritage Committee, so is fully aware of the issues involving Swindon Borough Council. The main problem at present is that SBC have still failed to produce documentation concerned with the transfer and management of the Museum. This documentation was promised in March last year.

As several members discovered with delight, Richard Jefferies was celebrated at the Promenade Concerts this year. Not only was he

mentioned, but he formed the inspiration for the specially commissioned composition that opened the First Night of the Proms in July. This was a piece titled “Harmony” by the British Composer Julian Anderson, which was composed to reflect the timelessness and harmony brought on when listening to music. The choral elements were based on the “It is eternity now” passages, from *The Story of my Heart*.

Giles Wood, one of our local members, is mentioned elsewhere in this report as the author of an article in *The Oldie* citing Richard Jefferies. I must add, however, that when I receive my regular copy of that publication; it is Giles’ column that I turn to first, as he so often manages to bring RJ into his musings - a constant drip-feed of references that one hopes might encourage some readers unfamiliar with Jefferies’ work to seek enlightenment.

Members may remember that I waxed lyrical about the paintings of Alfred Parsons last year, having visited the Broadway Festival in June and seen some of his paintings for the first time. He was known to me at that stage only as a black and white illustrator of some of Jefferies’ essays in Victorian Periodicals, but his garden and botanical oil and water-colour paintings were a revelation. By chance I discovered that a Parsons’ painting was coming up for auction at a local saleroom, and I was fortunate enough to get to the sale and acquire the painting at a reasonable price. It then became apparent (I arrived while the sale was in full swing), that the auction was being filmed for one of the many televised antiques shows; in this case, “Flog It”. Furthermore, the picture was one of the submitted items, so having bought it; I was then interviewed about my interest in Parsons. I duly obliged with reference to RJ – but whether this will be shown or not, I have no idea at this stage.

Finally, I am just about to undertake my last Museum duty of 2013. It is always most enjoyable to open up the House, and to await the arrival of visitors. These range from people who happen to be passing on a wet day, and seek temporary shelter for a few minutes until the weather improves; to individuals, couples and families who spend a long time looking round, and often reveal some unexpected link with the Jefferies family, or the neighbourhood. It is always a fascinating experience to engage with our visitors, and much has been learned from such occasions. It is also enormously helpful to have a range of Jefferies titles available for sale, and we are enormously indebted to those members who donate books for this purpose. It spreads the word – and raises revenue; both very desirable outcomes.

John Price
Honorary Chairman
1 September 2013

FROM THE SECRETARY

A warm welcome is extended to new members who have joined the Society since the last annual report was published. These include:

Daniel Abbott, Gloucestershire
Malcolm Addison, Berkshire
Andrew Dawes, Somerset
James Deboo, Wiltshire/Hampshire borders
Jonathan Ellington, Scotland
John Hyde, Wiltshire
Richard Ingrams, Berkshire
Caroline Irwin, Birmingham
Duncan McLaughlan, Northern Ireland
Sharley McLean, Oxfordshire
James Mitchard, Oxfordshire
Sean Street, Dorset
Stephan Takkides, Germany
David Thackray, Gloucestershire
Annie & Adam Vickers, Wiltshire
Michael Watts, Middlesex
Sandy Wilkie. Scotland

The total membership during the 2012-13 subscription year numbered 274 and ended on 30 June 2013. Although the majority of members live in England, other countries are represented: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Channel Islands, Germany, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, USA and Wales.

Thank you to members who opted to renew their membership by taking out an annual standing order with their bank. This has saved both me and our Treasurer a considerable amount of work, as have members who renew promptly! We are very grateful.

Jean Saunders
6 September 2013

DR REBECCA WELSHMAN

Our congratulations go to Rebecca who was awarded her doctorate by Exeter University this summer. Her thesis was based on the works of Richard Jefferies and Thomas Hardy with a focus on archaeology in their landscape writings. Her Birthday Lecture to the Society last year, transcribed in our *Journals* 24 and 25, was drawn from her studies of Jefferies. The Society would also like to record grateful thanks to Rebecca for all her hard work promoting Jefferies at conferences and in lectures. In late August she presented a paper about Jefferies at an international conference of the Royal Geographical Society.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER RICHARD JEFFERIES & THE SOCIETY?

Duncan McLaughlan has returned to the fold. He was a former member over 20 years ago and writes:

My introduction to Jefferies occurred in the public library probably at the age of twelve years, nearly sixty years ago. Despite living in a city in the North of England I had a love of the countryside and one day sneaked into the adult section of the library looking for a book on life in the country. I came across a combined edition of the 'Gamekeeper' and 'Poacher' books published by the Oxford University Press and about 6"x 4", definitely smaller in surface area than a modern paperback. It had a dark blue cover and in recent years I have tried without success to find a copy. Some years later I was grateful to Jefferies as I was able to write about him for my 'O' level English Literature exam.

Andrew Dawes recounts:

In truth I cannot really say as I have known about Jefferies and the Society for a few years albeit without much knowledge except that it existed. However the reason for my now joining came after meeting Rebecca Welshman, first as a visitor to the Museum in 2011; latterly after making a BBC Radio 4 programme on Edward Thomas which included Rebecca talking to the presenter Matthew Oates. Rebecca kindly gave up a day of her time to discuss Jefferies and allowed us access to the museum and then took us over to Liddington Village... Understanding more about Jefferies the man and his importance to other nature writers had finally spurred me on.

As for Richard Jefferies the writer, I have known about his works for decades, although not in any real detail, as I am a casual reader of many nature writing authors. As a child I became absorbed by the works of 'BB' especially, as an adolescent the novels of Thomas Hardy, but also have a soft spot for the likes of Fred Archer, John Moore and Ralph Wightman amongst many others. Somehow Jefferies became part of that group. Why this should be for a child living in Northumberland, reading about wildlife and nature of southern England, is possibly a mystery. However something must have drawn me down here as in 1993 I joined the BBC Natural History Unit on a 6 month contract – 20 years later I'm still there making wildlife radio programmes!

My first Jefferies book? *The Life of the Fields* purchased new as a paperback in 1989. It has taken me rather too long a time to join I'd say!!

Malcolm Addison ordered a copy of *The Rise of Maximin* and decided to join the Society as a Life Member. He wrote:

I was first 'hooked' on Richard Jefferies almost 50 years ago when a dear and elderly family friend gave me his copy of Duckworth's very fine 1912 edition of *The Story of my Heart* with the E W Waite illustrations. The next was *After London*; its first few pages captivated me more than anything I'd read before. In the fullness of time my wife and I chanced to find ourselves living remarkably close to places that Jefferies

knew and had described (the Sussex Downs, Crowborough, Cricklade and the Swindon environs) and I slowly managed to pick up copies of every book published in his lifetime, and some of the others that came along later. But now technology is recovering precious gems. On Amazon I found *World's End* (one of yours) and its first chapter seems to me to be an extension of the start of *After London* in a different key and played backwards! I still have a lot to explore and that pleasure would not lie ahead without all that the Richard Jefferies Society has achieved.

Jonathan Ellington learnt of Jefferies by chance when *After London* intrigued him a couple of years ago. Jefferies became an inspiration in Mr Ellington's native tree growing and planting project undertaken for nature conservation reasons and he is sorry that it has taken him so long to discover Jefferies. However he reports that he is slowly reading his way through Jefferies' works.

BENNY HAYLOCK

I have often wondered about the Haylock family picture on the front cover and when it might have been taken. According to the 1871 census (when Jefferies would have been around 22 years of age), Edward (Benny) Haylock was recorded as aged 50 years old and born in Hildersham, Cambridgeshire. His wife, Emma, was 43 and hailed from Ford in Shropshire. There were 5 sons at that time also living at the keeper's cottage at Hodson Bottom – Edward 12, Samuel 10, Charles 9, Edwin 7, and Joseph 6. If the photograph shows Emma and Benny in later years with perhaps one of their sons, his wife and children, this might put the date at around 1890? Can anyone help?

Jean Saunders

REPORTS OF MEETINGS 2013

Readings from Alfred Williams and Richard Jefferies: 2 March 2013

The Society's first public meeting of the year is a welcome occasion when the Friends of Alfred Williams meet with Society members in order to share readings by and about the two writers. Many of the participants are members of both organisations. These joint meetings have taken place for decades now; the last seven of these have been held at the Richard Jefferies Museum when the snowdrops in the garden are at their best. This year was no exception. It was the Society's turn to host the meeting and Eric Jones took the chair. Despite sickness, that afflicted several regulars, twelve people participated.

We were delighted to be joined by two of our overseas members from Ohio: Freda and Norman Chaney. Freda has written a book about George Eliot and was doing further research in the UK; Norman is a Professor of English at Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio and is writing a book on several nature writers, including Jefferies. Prof Chaney took his readings from 'Walks in the Wheatfields' describing a

grain of wheat and from 'The Country Sunday' with the folk going to church. He commented that, in spite of a biblically-influenced upbringing, Jefferies was drawn to a Darwinian and anti-biblical view of nature. John Webb read from Samuel Looker's introduction to *Jefferies Countryside*. Roy Burton read from chapter 2 of Williams' *A Wiltshire Village*. Eric Jones also read from the same William's book where he writes about Aldbourne. Peter Bainbridge selected 'The Haunt of the Hare' from *The Open Air*. Gillian Bromhead read Amal El-Mohtar's winning poem for the Society's Poetry Competition entitled 'Phase Shifting'. Eric Jones read from 'Birds of Spring' (*Jefferies England*). Kathleen Wyatt read two sonnets by Alfred Williams: 'The River Cole in Flood' (most appropriate at that time!) and 'The Cottager's Evening'. Roy Burton rounded off the afternoon with William's poem 'The Valley of the White Horse' and read out an article in the *Swindon Advertiser* (12.11.2013) where Graham Carter writes of his visit to Alfred's tree by Acorn Bridge.

The London experience and how it affected Richard Jefferies:

6 April 2013 – the first decent day of sunshine for months brought 13 people to the Museum to listen to Simon Coleman (pictured right) give an expertly researched and interestingly presented talk that explored Jefferies' feelings, imaginative responses and creative output during his time in and around London in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Beginning with the passage about the Coate milestone in 'Meadow Thoughts', which describes his youthful musings on the distance between the hamlet and the metropolis, Simon focused on various London and Surrey scenes which appear in his later works. We see Jefferies' finely-tuned powers of observation at work, just as effectively as in his rural writing. In the streets, by the docks, in fields just outside the city, he not only paints vivid and complete scenes but allows his imagination to travel back through the human past. Thinking ahead towards a future society, he hopes for a lighter burden of repetitive labour and a proper recognition of the principle of beauty in human life, as revealed by nature. These ideas are well illustrated by essays such as 'Sunlight in a London Square', 'The Pigeons in the British Museum' and the London passages of *The Story of My Heart*. In



'The Lions in Trafalgar Square' and his musings in the Greek sculpture galleries (*The Story of My Heart*), Jefferies expresses the passion and spiritual elevation that he receives from works of art that are true to nature. Returning finally to Coate, Simon analysed the London influences in Jefferies' last novel, *Amaryllis at the Fair*. These centre on the character, Alere Flamma, the bohemian artist and engraver who appears late in the book. A man at home in both city and country, Flamma links the hamlet with the wider world of human experience, reinforcing the view that Jefferies' felt that he himself belonged to both these worlds. While the rhythms of life in city and country are radically different, Jefferies shows us, again and again, that his true interest lies in the elevation of human life as a whole to a greater and happier level of being.

'BB' 11 May 2013

Ray (Badger) Walker spoke to sixteen members of the Society about his friendship with Denys James Watkins-Pitchford (BB).

They first met when BB was in his seventies, and Badger regarded him as a father-figure thereafter. They shared the same literary tastes (including the works of Jefferies) and a passion for fishing and shooting.

BB was an authority on the breeding habits of the Purple Emperor and had already published about 30 books, many for children, all reflecting every mood of our countryside, with titles like *The Sportsman's Bedside Book* (1937), *Confessions of a Carp Fisher* (1950), *The Sky Gypsy* (1939), *Ramblings of a Sportsman Naturalist* (1979), *Indian Summer* (1984) and, most famously, *Brendan Chase*. *The Best of BB* was published to mark his 85th birthday. And he had shot his last goose at 83.

Their close relationship involved Badger in various errands to, for instance, the Royal Academy where BB was highly-regarded as a leading illustrator, and his *alma mater*, Rugby School, for the award of the Carnegie Medal.

Toward the end of a fascinating talk, Badger was asked about the health of the BB Society. With a membership approaching 400, he said, like similar literary societies (Hardy, Hudson, Thomas), they still had great difficulty recruiting younger members. The future of such organisations seemed less than secure. At this point he looked around at his far-from-youthful RJS audience... and abruptly changed the subject.

John Webb

Richard Jefferies Mentions/Citings in BB's works

Badger Walker's talk on BB was a treat, and it was great to be able to hear stories about the writer. I first remember BB from *A Summer on The Nene* – a travelogue about BB's trip in a cabin cruiser on the River Nene through Northamptonshire, which my dad read in the late 1970s after we had undertaken a similar trip on holiday. I spent a year at polytechnic in Northampton and cycled around BB country although didn't realise it at the time. I picked up *The Best of BB* quite a number of years ago and started my collection from there, and now have most of his books although I don't collect the children's books.

I have since gone through my books by BB to look for Jefferies' mentions and citings. It took me longer than I thought as I really enjoyed re-reading them and felt a tad guilty about spending time reading when I should be paying attention to my young son!

The books I haven't checked for Jefferies' mentions are the wildfowling titles: *Tide's Ending*, *Dark Estuary* and *Recollections of a Longshore Gunner*; the Road/travelogue books: *Autumn Road to the Isles*, *The White Road Westwards*, *The September Road to Caithness*, *The Summer Road to Wales* and *A Summer on The Nene* and the children's books and the animal stories. Books are first editions. A quote about BB in the *Shooting Times* used on the dust covers of his later books claimed: 'Here we have a writer who can stand alongside Williamson, Hudson and Jefferies'.

The Sportman's Bedside Book (1937) from the chapter entitled 'Where Badgers Roll' (p.144) BB says that the 'intimate wild life of the woods' holds him in a spell and Richard Jefferies knew it. 'Do you remember how Richard Jefferies concludes one of his books? ... "There alone in the depths of the woods where wild doves drink, there alone thought can be found".'

The Countryman's Bedside Book (1941) (Chapter VIII, p.153) BB writes about 'hunter-naturalists' and how people question why he shoots when he has such a love of nature. He refers to Jefferies as 'one of the greatest nature writers of all time'.

Idle Countryman (1943)

BB talks about hedges that are 'luxuriant and thick'. He met a man who disliked this 'wonderful richness of Nature' and that same person disliked Jefferies writings to which BB says Jefferies, like him, 'could never have enough leaves and grass'. (p.24)

When talking about thirsty labourers who drink cold tea, he mentions ale is not carried in any great quantity to the fields at harvest time as it was in Jefferies' day. (p.45)

Jefferies remarks on the 'delight of watching plants and trees growing' which BB says is 'part of summers joy'. (p.84)

Fisherman's Bedside Book (1945) an anthology that BB collected. The Jefferies extracts he uses are:

'A London Trout' from *Nature Near London* which BB re-titles as 'The Bridge',

'A Roman Brook' and 'By The Exe' from *Life of The Fields*,

'Richard Jefferies Fishing Expedition' (BB's title) extract from *The Amateur Poacher* where Jefferies and Orion have a fishing trip using an old punt,

'Snaring Pike' also from *The Amateur Poacher* describing poaching pike from around Coate Water.

The Wayfaring Tree (1945)

As Jefferies says there is a 'silence' in pine woods and little sunlight gets through. BB was in the New Forest and had just walked into a fir wood. (p.30)

BB talks about his 'three smells' of the countryside and that Jefferies referred to the scent of the dog rose as 'sweetbriar wind'. (p.67)

BB says the most poignant of Jefferies' writing is in *The Life of the Fields* and 'Meadow Thoughts'. (p.107)

BB says he looks forward to be free to visit 'haunts of the great naturalists... Jefferies Country'. (p.115)

Shooting Man's Bedside Book (1948)

Another anthology collected by BB where he uses extracts from *The Amateur Poacher*:

'First Gun'

'A Rabbit Hunter' – Jefferies rabbiting with Little John

'A Something the Ancients Called Divine' – an extract from the last chapter.

Letters From Compton Deverell (1950)

BB mentions that both Jefferies and Hudson were both town dwellers in their later years but he never ceases to be amazed at 'that inconsistency in their natures'. (p.2)

People are denied the simple pleasure of enjoying the countryside. Jefferies in *The Story of My Heart* looked forward to the time when the countryside was 'the rightful heritage of everyone'. (p.94)

BB talks about making the most of a warm day and mankind will 'reach the golden era Richard Jefferies dreamt of'. (p.136)

BB is pleased he is free and not 'condemned to eight hours' at the desk or workplace 'How fervently I echo the words of Richard Jefferies.

(p.175)

BB writes about a ruined cottage 'that would have delighted Jefferies'. (p.270)

BB says the essays by Llewelyn Powys make the work of Jefferies seem 'trivial'. (p.272)

Child Alone (1978) – BB's autobiography.

BB's father read to him *Wild Life in a Southern County*, *The Amateur Poacher*, *Life of the Fields* and *Bevis*. (p.36)

Wild Life in A Southern County was his favourite and he could '...smell the chalk downs' from his writings.

He remembers reading *Life of the Fields* on a summer's day with his brother Roger. (p.136)

Punch said *Brendon Chase* 'was the finest thing since Richard Jefferies *Bevis*'. (p.164)

Ramblings of a Sportsman-Naturalist (1979)

Referring to fields of buttercups, Jefferies described them perfectly as 'gold nails driven into a green ground'. (p.122)

I was brought up on the writings of Richard Jefferies and the chapter in *Wild Life in a Southern County*, where he shoots over farmer Willum's farm is a joy'. (p.140)

The description of the old farmer eating his midday meal in *Amaryllys at the Fair* 'almost makes one's mouth water'.

The Naturalists Bedside Book (1980)

BB says Jefferies description of the old farmer eating potatoes washed down with Goliath Ale is 'Jefferies at his best'. (p.18)

Quiet Fields (1981)

BB says that we are so used to the creature comforts of modern life, along with crowded cities and the fast pace of modern life, that a 'primitive "outdoor" feeling' can only be felt by a true countryman '... a sportsman-naturalist'; Richard Jefferies 'felt it'. (p.177)

Indian Summer (1984)

Remembering his younger days in Gordon Hill, Hertfordshire with his brother Roger: 'On Sundays we used to wander away into the lanes and read Richard Jefferies to one another'. (p.131)

Letters From The Round House 1965-1970 (2006)

Letter dated July 25 1965 (p.29): 'You will like Richard Jefferies – his *Wild Life in a Southern County* is an old favourite of mine.' BB goes on to mention that although things have changed since Jefferies' day the 'bare bones' are still there.

Peter Bainbridge
27 August 2013

STUDY DAY: Food and drink in Jefferies' world

On 27 July 2013, seventeen Society members gathered in the Museum for a memorable day to share information about Victorian food, diet and health and how to mill flour followed by relevant readings from Richard Jefferies' works. There was tea and lardy cake available to end the occasion.

John Price opened the study day with a broad introduction to what people were eating between 1850-1880 – a very stable time in diet and health – and quoted from a paper written by Judith Rowbotham (social historian) and Paul Clayton (a nutritionist and former pupil of John's). Contrary to expectations, after trawling through Victorian novels, magazines, recipe books, workhouse records, and assorted literature, it was discovered that the mid-Victorian working-class diet was far more nutritious than ours. Food items that were cheap and plentiful were also very good for health. Due to their high levels of physical activity, the Victorians ate two to three times as much as we do, but their diet was largely plant-based, seasonal and organic. Root vegetables, such as potatoes, Jerusalem artichokes, turnips and carrots, were high on the menu along with onions, watercress, beetroot, and cabbage. For most of the year, apples were a staple too and later cherries (the poor man's fruit). In summer, lettuces, radishes, fresh peas and beans were abundant while gooseberries, plums, greengages, and strawberries, added more nutrients. The Victorians also consumed more oily fish and seafood than we do. Herrings – soured, dried, pickled or smoked – sprats, eels and oysters, mussels, cockles and whelks, were popular as were white fish such as cod, haddock and John Dory. The whole fish was eaten; head, roes and all. Nuts such as hazelnuts, chestnuts and walnuts were favourites. Pease pudding was popular too. Many families kept a few hens in their backyard for fresh eggs and rabbits were a favourite backyard resource. Beer was very weak (1%) whilst coriander in beer got rid of worms. So once allowing for the high baby and child mortality rate, Victorian life expectancy after about five years of age, was much the same as ours.

Eric Jones talked about sources of protein available to country people. Free trade had brought a greater variety of foods to Britain for those who could afford it. Yet little butcher's meat was consumed – usually on Sunday only. There might be a pig in the back-yard sty but it would have to last as much of the year as possible. Well before Jefferies' time the great estates had kept doves for pigeons' eggs and squabs and had more orchards than flower beds. Agricultural improvement

changed things for the rich – their fish ponds and moats had started to disappear, being filled in or turned into ornamental lakes, while rabbit warrens were ploughed up. Of course rabbits escaped the warrens and started to do well where fodder crops were grown. There was an abundance of gamekeepers to keep country folk away from sources of protein, even rabbits! Admittedly sheep stealing was less common by Jefferies' day and mantraps had been made illegal in 1828. But acquiring rabbits and river fish was made very difficult and poaching was often the only option for the poor. Taking wild birds eggs was common; lapwings in particular had their nests devastated by egg-takers (40 nests were destroyed in one week on the edge of Salisbury Plain). The poor had only 'vermin pie' to fall back on – house sparrows and rooks – which meant that farmers got their pest control for free.

Peter Bainbridge read a short passage from *Round About a Great Estate* that demonstrated Jefferies' thorough knowledge of how water mills operated. He describes Tibbald, the miller, dressing the mill stones and how the mill pick was used. Pete added an illustrated and informative talk about windmills and watermills; how they operate, how the stones were dressed and how grain was milled. Evidently Pete had harboured a passion for windmills for 30 years.

Mike Parrott read from 'Sunny Brighton' describing the working life of the fishermen followed by an account of the different prices paid for fish according to their sources.

Gill Bromhead read about the double wedding feast in the final chapter of *Greene Ferne Farm*. It was a joyous celebration described beautifully by Jefferies.

Duncan Pepper read out some brief extracts from *Bevis* where Mark and Bevis show their complete lack of skills in cooking and bad planning for their adventures as ship-wrecked sailors living on an island. Even Pan, the dog, turned his nose up at their efforts to boil some bacon. It was inedible.

Jean Saunders read out an old sing-song about sheep-stealing followed by a medicinal use of baked powdered mouse in 'Cottage Ideas'. She also chose an extract from *Hodge and his Masters* that described old Harry Hodson and his wife's moans that eating mutton was a waste. What was wrong with fatty bacon?

David Chesham recounted the difficulties experienced by some villagers in acquiring drinking water as described in 'Village Organisation'.

Phyllis Treitel described the poor diet of 'Fieldfaring Women' that consisted mainly of tea and dry bread with, perhaps, a bit of lard or treacle and strong cabbage. This awful diet had to sustain them through exhausting daily chores.

Peter Bainbridge read from 'The Haunt of the Hare' (*The Open Air*) where the land owner leaves alcohol at strategic places for use when out on shooting parties, much to the amazement of his colleagues who felt that he was teasing them with his offers of wine, spirits or ale in, what appeared to be, the middle of nowhere!

Andrew Rossabi highlighted the passage in 'Meadow Thoughts' when nature is described as profligate with a surfeit of seeds and fruits. So why then, Jefferies asks, is there any need for man to go hungry? He also described Jefferies' joy of drinking from the stream near Medbourne.

John Price rounded up the afternoon with the description in *Amaryllis at the Fair* of farmer Iden enjoying his meal of fortyfolds and waxing lyrical, in dialect, on the delights of this potato.

Note: there will be an article in the next Society *Journal* based on the talk by Eric Jones.



Jefferies' Mill, Swindon
(note Holyrood Church above)
From a watercolour by John Luckett Jefferies (Richard's uncle)

DID JEFFERIES DIE A CHRISTIAN – a last parry

I had not intended to respond to George Miller's reassertion of Richard Jefferies' death-bed conversion ('Discoveries 7', *RJS Spring Newsletter* 2013), but the accusation of perversity is so novel to me that I felt I had to clarify why I still think he is wrong.

Firstly I have to concede that it was possibly ill-considered of me to assert that Christianity was a creed that Richard Jefferies 'abhorred'. This is partly because I failed to specify the context. What Jefferies rejected and opposed was the narrow-minded cant and self-deception of Christianity as it was known in the later 19th century. It would be hard to imagine that he could object to a creed that projected love, compassion and tolerance. And before anyone objects that this is the eternal essence of Christianity, let us face that fact that history provides many examples to the contrary.

Indeed it is the question of context that is missing in Mr Miller's assertions. He states his very clear opinion that 'the balance of evidence "suggests" to me, that Jefferies did return to an acceptance of Christian teaching', but the problem is that the word 'balance' implies that some sort of weighing or evaluation of the evidence has taken place. This, I think, is where Mr Miller and I part company. Unlike Mr Miller I am less ready to accept the testimony of so-called witnesses without assessing their value as witnesses. In the case of the claims of Richard Jefferies death-bed conversion, a consideration of the reliability of the witnesses and their motives ought to be a very high priority. As far as we know, there were only four individuals who were involved in the story and, even then, it was possible that only Jessie Jefferies was an actual witness.

Walter Besant not only later retracted his support for the conversion story – he went further by stating that he had, on the contrary, been informed that 'his views never changed from the time that he wrote *The Story of my Heart*.'

J W North simply passed on the story that had been told to him by Jessie Jefferies. I did not suggest – as Mr Miller states in his response to my article – that 'North worked up the conversion story to help raise funds for Jefferies' family'. What I did suggest was that 'North was canny enough to see that playing-down his old friend's more controversial philosophy would do this no harm.' Given the historical context, there were certainly those (as there still are) who would have been unsympathetic to someone as openly atheistic as Richard Jefferies. We can see clear evidence of this in the correspondence of William B Fotheringham, the correspondent to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in

September 1891.

The third witness was Jessie Jefferies herself, although we only hear her evidence through other parties – parties with a clear ulterior motive which I outlined previously. This is especially pertinent in the case of the evidence of Catherine Mackintosh. Mr Miller builds his case for Richard Jefferies conversion to Christianity on her evidence and argues that I produced ‘no valid reason’ for striking her evidence from the record. However, there is of course a fourth person involved – Richard Jefferies himself. Ultimately the issue comes down to who we believe is the most credible witness to the sincerity of Richard Jefferies atheism – the evangelical Catherine Mackintosh, or Richard Jefferies.

I remain, however, dismayed by Mr Miller’s support for the views of Edward Ingram Watkin. In his response to my article, Mr Miller suggests that Jefferies exploration of ‘Sun Life’ ‘is entirely in line with Christian mysticism. This was the point of my citing Watkin’. The problem is that the extract from Watkin’s work that Mr Miller invites us to take ‘more seriously’ is actually a rather patronising – even insulting – reinterpretation of Jefferies deepest and most sincere thoughts: an interpretation which, as I said in my previous article, attempts to appropriate Jefferies on behalf of Christianity and undermine *The Story of my Heart*.

Tom Wareham

April 2013

A MAP OF JEFFERIES’ COUNTRY?

Has anyone attempted to map out the inland sea for *After London* or identify and list other fictional places that Jefferies wrote about?

Malcolm Addison was pondering over places mentioned in *The Rise of Maximin*. Where might the following places be: Tcheddah [Cheddar?]; Alps; Roumania [described as ‘close to the edge’]; Sandover [could this be Sandgate > Dover?]; and the Blue Mountains?

In other works, Mr Addison asks if the Deer Park (*Field and Hedgerow*) is the one that lies west of Cirencester? He is sure that the great forest is most definitely Savernake near Marlborough with its impenetrable bracken and ancient oaks, but are nearby Silbury Hill and Avebury ever mentioned? Jefferies must have visited Avebury.

Your thoughts on these matters would make an interesting addition to future newsletters.

THE LOOKER ARCHIVE

On 29 June 2013, the Society's Executive Council voted to keep the Looker papers intact and to take up the offer to add it to our collection at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. Many of you will have visited our archives at the custom-made Chippenham facility (see RJS Annual Report and Newsletter 2008-9, pp. 8-9). At the time of writing John Price was in the process of delivering the archive and discussing with them the possibility of applying for grants to catalogue the archive fully – a proposal that the curators had suggested to Mr Price some time ago, but which wasn't taken up at the time in order to consider the Exeter University proposal to store the papers there.

There are some fascinating letters to explore from other writers. The two that stand out the most are from Katherine Mansfield, addressed to her publishers, and from Christina Rossetti to Mrs Ford Madox Brown. The Society has notified the Katherine Mansfield Society in New Zealand and the Alexander Turnbull Library (in Wellington and Mansfield's birthplace) that stores her papers. Both have been sent a digital copy of the letter for their records for which they are most grateful. The Mansfield Society has used the letter in an article recently submitted to the *Times Literary Supplement*. Thanks to Helen Newman, the Pre-Raphaelite Society has been investigating the Rossetti letter. Dr Serena Trowbridge at Birmingham University is still researching it and is thankful to the Society for sending her a digital image of a very interesting letter.

All the other letters in the archive are addressed to Samuel Looker – some are very personal and sent by members of his family; some are related to his time as a local councillor but many are from people in the literary world. An example of one of John Moore's letters follows.



Samuel J Looker 1948

LETTER FROM JOHN MOORE TO LOOKER

Amongst the many letters in the Samuel J Looker collection, there is one from John Moore. The hand-writing is minute and extremely difficult to read. But thanks to our Society member Valerie Haworth and Ray Walton of the John Moore Society we can share their transcript of the letter, although one word has defeated everyone! The John Moore Society owns copyright of Moore's letters. We thank them for permitting us to reproduce the content. We have no clue as to whether Moore read the essays Looker recommended, presumably by Jefferies, and if Moore changed his view as a result.

From JOHN MOORE

ORCHARDS
BREDON
Nr TEWKESBURY
Glos.

14 Feb 1948

Dear Mr Looker,

Thank you for your friendly letter. I think you probably hit the nail on the head when you speak of antipathy. "I do not like thee, Doctor Fell" is bound, unless we are exceptionally objective, to colour some of our criticisms and I'm quite ready to confess that one of my reasons for disliking Jefferies' work is a feeling that I should have disliked or at any rate have been embarrassed by him as a person. But in one respect we are all square: it startles me that you dislike Hardy whom I put as the greatest poet of our time, — 1. Hardy 2. Yeats 3. Houseman, like that — which in turn will startle you, so where are we?

But if one criticises publicly one must be prepared to say why. What puts my back up in Jefferies, (.....), is (a) what seems to me a streak of intellectual softness, in eg *The Story of my Heart* (b) woolly approach to nature (c) in the actual writing what seems to me an occasional lapse into sentimentality and/or vulgarity.

But many better men admire him.

Yours sincerely,

John Moore

PS. "The Book Nook" sounds like a bookshop. If so we have something in common, for my wife is an Antiquarian Bookseller with a shop in Tewkesbury: Lucile Moore. I think it a handy lending library.

I'll take the first opportunity of reading the essays you mention again.

FROM IPSWICH TO COATE

My attendance at the Richard Jefferies Council meetings necessitates an early start from Ipswich, usually around 8am, and returning after 10pm. The journey to the meeting room at Coate Farm includes the Underground across London and a bus from Fleming Way in Swindon. However, the vast majority of my journey is by train, my favourite mode of travel. Jefferies was of course familiar with trains and they feature in many essays, including the last paragraph of 'Sunny Brighton'.

I always try to get a window seat from Paddington, south side preferably, first to enjoy the Thames Valley then, after Reading, to spot the increased wildlife. Numbers of red kite can be into double figures on this half hour journey, outnumbering buzzards. On my last trip in February 2013 I also saw two small groups of roe deer, close to the line and barely looking up as the train passed. The second group was in line with the ancient abstract White Horse at Uffington, clearly viewed from the train and a feature Jefferies would have known well. I try to eat my packed lunch on the train so I can have at least an hour following in the footsteps of Bevis and Mark around Coate Water, before the meeting begins in the early afternoon. Usually great crested grebes are on the water and there is activity at the heronry. On my last visit Jean Saunders had told me of a rare Great White Egret, best viewed from the second hide in the nature reserve. In fact I had only to walk about a hundred yards into Paddy's Copse, close to the first hide, when I saw it distantly, size and bright white plumage indicative as it perched on branches just above the water.

In summer I try to get an earlier set of trains so I can cross the motorway and head towards Hodson. I can then explore paths, meadows and hedgerows that Jefferies knew, between Stockbridge and Cowleaze Copses. At this time of year they are rich in nectar sources and in the limited time I have identified more than a dozen butterfly species, the marbled white very welcome as we don't get it in Suffolk. I also try to visit a sunlit meadow about halfway between Cicely's Bridge and the motorway, again full of nectar sources and visiting insects. Just standing still here, for a few minutes, you can understand what prompted Jefferies to write that memorable passage in 'Wild Flowers', beginning 'If we had never before looked upon the earth, but suddenly come to it man or woman grown, set down in the midst of a summer mead, would it not seem to us a radiant vision?'

There was an unexpected bonus last February. Jefferies in many essays wrote about the varied wildlife of the town and the city: Looker

edited a whole book of 'Richard Jefferies' London'. As I approached Swindon railway station at about six pm I was aware of small groups nearby, looking upwards. These included police officers relaxing after seeing football supporters back onto trains and a mother determined to ignore the pleadings of her teenage daughter, who wanted to move on. The lady next to me was perplexed so I explained to her the basic elements of what must be one of the most spectacular of British wildlife events. In front of us, silhouetted against a darkening sky, thousands of starlings were moving in a relatively tight but constantly changing formation, the majority in a roughly oval shape, a smaller group like a constantly moving tail. Then at an incredible speed the whole group would be transformed, swinging round so that the tail was suddenly a long thrusting head. Finally, groups started to dive down into scrubland on the far side of the station. Here there may be reedbeds, their preferred roosting habitat. Suddenly the sky was empty and I realised that this was the best such roosting flight I had ever seen.

I was left wondering if Richard Jefferies ever witnessed such vast murmurations. I cannot recollect reading anything in his writings but no doubt those more knowledgeable about his writings will be able to answer this.

Richard Stewart
April 2013



RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM REPORT

Arkells Brewery was granted planning permission by Swindon Council to erect a detached two storey hotel next to the garden of the Museum in March 2013 in the Sun Inn garden. None of our concerns were taken into account regarding the negative impact of the proposed building on the setting of Coate Farm and the Museum (Grade II listed) and no mitigation was been put in place to soften the look of what will be a bland rendered featureless building. The hotel's exterior is nearly finished and we will be writing to Arkells to request that they might put trellis on the wall and grow clematis and honeysuckle up it.

The miniature railway line, mentioned in the Spring 2013 newsletter (pp.27-28) that is being extended to the Coate Farm back-garden, has also had a negative effect on the views from the garden and house. The track has been built on an embankment alongside the Jefferies' garden making it a very obvious feature. However, the North Wilts Model Engineering Society were kind enough to lay some hoggins in the entrance to the Dayhouse Lane gate to the Museum. A couple of cars have been stuck in the mud at the gate in the past!

Thanks to a generous donation from Andrew Rossabi in April 2013, there is now a framed print from the National Gallery of Turner's oil painting 'Rain, Steam & Speed – the Great Western Railway'. The original oil-painting went on show at the Royal Academy in 1844 and was much admired by Richard Jefferies who referred to it in his essay 'Walks in the Wheatfields'. This was first published July 1887 in the *English Illustrated Magazine* and later in the *Field and Hedgerow* collection. He wrote:

Turner painted the railway train and made it at once ideal, poetical, and classical. His 'Rain, Steam, and Speed,' which displays a modern subject, is a most wonderful picture. If a man chose his hour rightly, the steam-plough under certain atmospheric conditions would give him as good a subject as a Great Western train. He who has got the sense of beauty in his eye can find it in things as they really are...

The scene of the train in the picture has been identified as Maidenhead railway-bridge across the Thames between Taplow and Maidenhead. The building of Brunel's bridge was commenced in 1837 and finished in 1839: it has two main arches of brick, very wide and flat. The view is to the east, towards London. The copy of Joseph Mallord William Turner's train is now hanging next to Jefferies' writing table in the attic. With his love of the railways, perhaps Richard Jefferies wouldn't take offence at the miniature railway line that is being extended in Coate Farm's Home Field.

We also acquired a Victorian grain measure made of wood with iron hoops and handles that measures an official Bushel. It was donated by Denis Gardner, a retired farmer from Wales.

More volunteers from Intel and Nationwide have helped in the gardens this year painting fences, doors and walls, varnishing garden furniture, digging and mowing and whatever else...

Very little use was made of the new ride-on mower mentioned in the Spring newsletter. It took the suppliers many months to replace the original battery that would not hold any charge. The fruit trees are all doing well but there is little fruit this year. The lack of a decent mower forced us to leave the orchards as a hay meadow for the third year running. We cut a path around the edge of the orchard to gain access and it did look beautiful, although the final mow was hard work.

Mike Pringle was commissioned by the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust to do some jobs that included making some splendid new bookcases for the Parlour. The shelves are well-stocked with reference books on countryside related matters. The transformation of the old cow yard into an area with raised beds for growing veggies and herbs is coming on a treat (it's all proper organic management too), again with financial support from the land trust.

The new pond is coming on a treat and it is already attracting new wildlife such as dragonflies and damselflies to the garden. The water plants are colonising well although we could do with some ducks to eat the duck weed! The toads have got a new damp place to hide.

Clive Carter and Jean Martin have completed their fascinating study of the architecture and history of Coate Farm as part of the Wiltshire Buildings Record Farmstead Project. It has revealed new information about the farm buildings and farmhouse. Clive Carter will be presenting the results of the study in a talk to the Society in April next year and will walk us around the farm to point out his findings. We hope to publish some of the information in a future edition of the Society's *Journal*.

The Richard Jefferies Museum Trust received an award of £30,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help move the Museum toward self-sufficiency. One of the HLF projects took place on 5 August – a storytelling/picnic/crafts event for children, based on an extract from *Wood Magic*. Hilda Sheehan, Jill Carter and Mike Pringle ran the project that attracted 37 children & adults. For those with Internet access, there is more information about it along with some splendid photographs of the day at <http://woodmagicstorytrail.blogspot.co.uk/>. The Trust is still waiting to see a draft lease if it is going to take over the management of the museum from Swindon Council.



Hilda Sheehan, story-teller

The Jefferies Land Conservation Trust (the respectable face of the Save Coate campaign) voted to dissolve the charity at a special meeting held in June 2013 and to transfer all assets to the Richard Jefferies Society. When the group was set up in 2005 the long-term aim was to persuade the Horton family, who own Dayhouse Farm, to sell the Plain (the large field immediately abutting Coate Water Country Park and the setting of 'The Battle of Pharsalia' in *Bevis*) to the Trust in order to put it into conservation use. After several approaches to the owners over the last ten years, all attempts have failed. The Trust has decided to cease operations in December but it has had a spending flurry of over £4000 at Coate Farm this year before it disbands. Nearly £30,000 will be transferred to the Society and ring-fenced to support Coate Farm and the Save Coate campaign, for which we are most grateful.

SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

The builders haven't moved in yet, but there is nothing to stop them!

There will be an Inquiry held into the emerging Swindon Borough Local Plan this year. We are still lobbying to ensure that the so-called buffer zone between the Coate development area and Coate Water remains protected from development in perpetuity rather than only until 2026 – the end-date of the buffer policy. We have asked also that the buffer is extended to include land to the south of Coate Water.

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Hilda Sheehan's first book of poetry was published by Cultured Llama in Spring 2013 (ISBN: 978-0-9568921-8-8). Entitled ***The Night my Sister went to Hollywood***, it is a mixture of surreal and humorous poems based on the normal and the bizarre.

Literature & Landscape 1830-1914, by Prof. Roger Ebbatson was published in June (ISBN: 978-1137330437). The book explores literary text of the period on the subject of nature. It offers the reader seminal re-readings of a variety of texts, notably by Tennyson, Hardy, Jefferies and Edward Thomas, and places their work in an original and illuminating cultural context.

CITINGS OF JEFFERIES

Geoff Hirst came across a copy of the winter 2011 edition of ***London Library Magazines***. There is an interesting article by Christopher Woodward exploring why writers love swimming, and how he came, through his own testing feats of endurance in the sea, to be suspicious of writers' tales of heroic and reckless feats in the water. He wrote the article when he was about to swim from Gibraltar to the North African coast. The Jefferies' quotation used from *Bevis* describes swimming in Coate Water where 'the water did not seem to resist him, it parted to let him through...' Mr Woodward took issue that water does none of these things and comments that Jefferies is describing his memory of the occasion not water. However, the swimming chapter in *Bevis* does go into details of how difficult it was to learn to swim and the quote was taken out of context.

In the centenary month [March] of the finding of the bodies of the Scott Polar expedition Nick Holmes was re-reading ***I May be Some Time*** by Francis Spufford (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), and was drawn to the following extract from Chapter II 'The Sublime':

Whatever force of nature the author chose, it invaded; it overwhelmed the familiar with a logic against which no appeal was possible. Often, though not always, the destruction conformed silently to the old rules of the sublime, and snow was certainly represented among the chosen agents of catastrophe. Richard Jeffries' [sic] *After London* (1885) was eventually published with a curious ecological catastrophe at its opening, in which a demoralised humanity is simply displaced by the tireless growth of plants. Grass eats the roads; hedges converge on the centre of cornfields. Jeffries, however, had flirted with a snowy catastrophe first, before deciding that a green doom would better suit his gifts for pastoral. In his draft of 'The Great Snow' he humbles the metropolis with a three-week

blizzard. 'Where now', asks a mad preacher of the ragged mob hunting for fuel and food, 'Where now is your mighty city that defied nature and despised the conquered elements - where now is your pride when so simple and contemptible an agent as a few flakes of snow can utterly destroy it? Where are your steam-engine, your telegraphs, and your printing-press - all powerless and against what - only a little snow! Of what use is your Bank Reserve of £20,000,000 sterling against the soft noiseless snow!' The fragment ends two sentences later. It is already evident, however, that Jeffries [*sic*] in no sense intends a religious moral to be drawn from the chastising of London's worldly achievements. His snow has smothered the spiritual symbols of the capital as much as the icons of financial or technological order. Like Darwin's recasting of Europe, like the Dublin flood, it both erases familiar signs and substitutes an intractable landscape of its own.

On the 29th the gale moderated, but meantime snow had fallen unceasingly, and it had now reached a uniform depth of ten feet. With slight variations it continued at this depth but the drifts of course were of enormous height. The National Gallery was wholly hidden under a mound of snow. The dome of St Paul's was alone visible, rising up like the roof of a huge Esquimoux hut. The great gilt cross on the top had been torn off by the violence of the wind.

Nick Holmes mentioned the fascinating film by Patrick Keiller '**Robinson in Space**' 1997 that finds the eponymous, unseen, researcher undertaking a series of explorations through the new, the derelict, and the bizarre of contemporary England, accompanied by an unseen narrator whose idiosyncratic commentary combines literature, history, economics and politics. The narrator's role is taken by Paul Scofield. Accompanying a shot of the tide out and the bed of the Severn below the Clifton Suspension Bridge, he narrates:

In Richard Jefferies' *After London* the red rocks of Bristol are the western extremity of the lake which now covered southern England and the Severn is silted up. Robinson was most affected by the book which we'd heard being read on the radio and had mistaken for a documentary.

And of course that reading was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in July 1995 by Paul Scofield in fifteen 5 minutes slots. Mr Holmes recounts:

Paul Scofield had a holiday house on Mull, and could occasionally be seen taking a lunchtime pint and reading his paper in a Tobermory hostellery. Once, I had the temerity to interrupt him to thank him for the pleasure given by his Jefferies radio readings, especially 'The Man On The Hill'. He thanked me, in that marvellous mellifluous voice, with a courteous inclination of the head, and returned to his paper!

In three **BBC Radio 4** programmes over Easter, naturalist Matthew Oates pursued his own personal homage to Edward Thomas by following in the literacy cycle tracks of Thomas's cycle-ride across Southern England that informed his 1914 book *In Pursuit of Spring*.

Robert Macfarlane read passages from Thomas's work. Rather than faithfully recreating the earlier journey, Mr Oates travelled through Steep in Hampshire, where Thomas lived, Jefferies Land at Coate (where Rebecca Welshman was interviewed at the Richard Jefferies Museum) and Dymock Poets' country where Robert Frost convinced Thomas that he should focus on his poetry.

Peter Bainbridge recently acquired ***Unto The Hills: The History and Wildlife of The South Downs*** by Patrick Coulcher (Book Guild, 2001) that has a foreword by Denis Healey (MP) who refers to the Downs which 'have inspired some of our greatest literature – the prose of Richard Jefferies and Virginia Woolf'. Coulcher makes one reference to Jefferies where he writes about the Sussex Plough pulled by oxen: 'That great Sussex writer on nature, Richard Jefferies (1848-87) described them thus: "There was hardly a more imposing spectacle than of those quiet beasts of burden stepping slowly forward before the plough against a background of grey sea and sky, their huge horns sweeping forward in generous curves".' Does anyone recognise the origin of the quote?

Andrew Rossabi mentioned a passage from ***A Year at Bottengoms Farm*** (2006) by Ronald Blythe, best known for his earlier *Akenfield* (1969) which was discussed by W.J. Keith in the concluding pages (257-8) of *The Rural Tradition* (1974). In a discussion of writers who found in nature a cure for depression Blythe cites William Cowper, A.C. Benson and Richard Mabey, and concludes:

My third nature cure seeker has to be Richard Jefferies who is young but consumptive and far from depressive. He died aged thirty-eight in 1887, a Wiltshire farmer's son who, whilst not a Christian, possessed a vision of nature--which included his own body--which the poet Elizabeth Jennings believed matched that of Thomas Traherne. Richard Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart* is an exultant, unhidden paean to nature and one which accepts the naturalness of death. It is a hymn to joy and a dismissal of Time. Christ taught the disciples to live in the Now, to step out without a penny, to be alive--really alive. As does Richard Jefferies.

Pete Bainbridge picked up Richard Mabey's latest offering ***Turned Out Nice Again: On Living With the Weather*** (Profile Books, 2013). It is about a preoccupation with the weather and it is a quick read of less than 100 pages. Mabey refers to Jefferies' *Wild Life in a Southern County* and the Wiltshire haymakers who often heard mysterious, distant booms 'Noises in the Air'. The labourers were convinced it was supernatural. Jefferies was convinced it was Naval gunnery. Mabey also mentions that Jefferies could tell the species of tree by hearing the wind rustle through its leaves!

Whilst on Mabey his ***In a Green Shade: Essays on Landscape*** Hutchinson & Co 1983 includes his introduction to *Landscape with Figures: An anthology of Richard Jefferies Prose*. Penguin Classics has also reissued ***Landscape with Figures*** this year. A review of the anthology by Boyd Tonkin in the *Independent* on 23 August 2013 described Jefferies as ‘a visionary cross between Thomas Hardy and William Morris, but with an unsettling edge to his prose.’

Mr Bainbridge also purchased ***The Wind on The Heath: A Gypsy Anthology*** by John Sampson (Chatto & Windus, 1930). It is a 362 page anthology with extracts from authors that include Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats, Borrow, Edward Thomas, John Clare and W H Hudson. Sampson also quotes from Jefferies’ *Field & Hedgerow* and uses the essay ‘Just before Winter’ for three extracts.

1) ‘The gypsy loves the crescent moon, the evening star, the clatter of the fern-owl, the beetle’s hum.’ To as far as ‘...the gypsy sleeps in his tent on mother earth: it is, you see, primeval man with primeval nature’.

2) ‘It is the nature of the oak to be still, it is the nature of the hawk to roam with the wind’ to ‘Nor has their nature changed any more than the nature of the trees’.

3) ‘Lines of bluish smoke ascend from among the bracken of the wild open ground, where a tribe of gipsies have pitched their camp.’ to ‘...their children rolling about like foals in the grass, a bit out of the distant Orient under Western oaks.’

And finally from the essay ‘Country Places’ from *Field & Hedgerow*: ‘High up and facing every one who enters the village there still remains an old notice-board...’ to ‘...man is the only creature that punishes his fellow for daring to lie down and sleep.’

Hugh Thomson, who will be delivering the Society’s Birthday Lecture this year used Jefferies’ quote (‘Moving up the sweet, short turf, at every step my heart seemed to obtain a wider horizon ...’) in his review of ***Four Fields*** by Tim Dee for the *Independent* on 23 August 2013.

Andrew Rossabi found on p.15 of the ***Times Literary Supplement*** (17 May 2013) a poem entitled ‘Round About a Great Estate’ by Andrew McNeillie. It makes no direct reference to Richard Jefferies (apart from the title) but McNeillie presumably had our author at least partly in mind. The poem begins:

Eat your heart out in cavernous envy
Capability. Fold up the Estate map and put away
The plantation, the marsh, the bridle way...

and continues with a diatribe against the neatly ordered landscape. It ends by contrasting that world of the Big House and the landscaped grounds with the wildness of the sea (‘Hear the wintry roar of its eternal battery’).

Margaret Hunt reports that on 17 April 2013, the Cricklade Historical Society evening event speaker was Michael Marshman from Bradford on Avon (a cousin of the late Stan Hickerton). The title of his talk was **'Wiltshire Writers and Literary Figures of the 20th Century'**. Toward the end of his address, he mentioned that the poet Charles Hamilton Sorley (1895 - 1915) had been much influenced in his thinking about the countryside of the Marlborough area by Richard Jefferies' writings.

John Price came across the following description of a photograph by **Bill Brandt** on sale at an auction house:

Literary Britain: Barbary Castle, Marlborough Downs; after Richard Jefferies. 1948. Later gelatin silver print. Original backing card. Mat. 34.5 x 29.1cm (card: 51 x 40.8cm). Signed in black felt pen to the right beneath the image. In very good condition. Published in: **Bill Brandt**. *Behind the Camera*. Exhib. cat. Philadelphia Museum of Art. New York: Aperture, 1985. illus. pg. 54. Brandt, Bill.

An image of the photograph is copied in below. It was used along with others in an article by Richard Church entitled 'The Horizon of Richard Jefferies' published in the *Picture Post* (6 November 1948).



Brian Morris has provided information about Jim Perrin's ***Shipton and Tilman: the Great Decade of Himalayan Exploration*** [London: Hutchinson, 2013] Mr Perrin writes:

In this joint biography of the British mountaineers-explorers Eric Shipton and H.W. Tilman (who were prominent Himalayan climbers in the 1930's, with attempts on Mount Everest), the author Jim Perrin mentions Richard Jefferies. He points to Jefferies' 'rich lexis and rapturous prose' as the 'single most important literary influence on Shipton, ubiquitous and pervasive in his writing'. (pp.29-30) *Bevis* and *The Story of my Heart* were particularly important to the climber. Shipton wrote such books as *Nanda Devi* (1939) and *Upon that Mountain* (1943).

Geoff Hirst sent in two articles by Richard Shephard of Fakenham that were published in the ***Eastern Daily Press*** dated 15 May 2013. The first drew attention to Jefferies' observations of the behaviour of rooks and crows and commended Jefferies' accuracy of descriptions in books such as *Wild Life in a Southern County* and *The Gamekeeper at Home*. The second was about 'strange' coincidences when he was trying to find his way to Jefferies' birthplace and was lost on the Downs about 7 miles from Coate in the early 1980s. He was making his way to a bus stop when the rain came down 'in stair-rods' and another man dashed into the bus shelter. The other man happened to be none other than Cyril Wright, a former secretary of the Society. Mr Shephard knew his name and address (he had memorised these from a *Countryman* magazine), and they had a long chat!

Peter Robins provided an article from *The New York Review* (25 April 2013) announcing the launch of the **Digital Public Library of America**. The project will make the holdings of America's research libraries, archives, and museums available via their website <http://dp.la/>. If you key in 'Richard Jefferies' at the moment, you will mainly find texts of his works.

Harmony (2013). Both George Miller and Roger Ebbatson mentioned that the opening composition for the first night of the BBC Proms (12 July 2013) featured a new work entitled 'Harmony for choir and orchestra' by Julian Anderson, a young British composer. The 5 minute piece, commissioned by the BBC and performed by the BBC Symphony Chorus, was based on the 'It is eternity now...' passage from *The Story of My Heart*. Lines taken include:

The clock may make time for itself; there is none for me...The shadow goes on upon the dial, the index moves round upon the clock, and what is the difference? None whatever. If the clock had never been set going, what would have been the difference?

In the introduction, broadcast on Radio 4, Anderson was quoted as saying that you can launch a concert opening with two approaches: a 'loud fanfare' or 'calm and meditative'. He preferred the latter and described Jefferies as a mystic author who had visions on the Wiltshire downs of time standing still and of eternity. Harmony was a celebration of Jefferies' vivid nature writing. Tibetan bowls and rain-sticks were played as part of the instrumentation - they have a hypnotic sound that Jefferies would have enjoyed.

In a review in *The Telegraph* on 13 July 2013, Ivan Hewitt wrote that 'it was a nice conceit, to begin the world's largest music festival with something called *Harmony*, and the piece caught with delicate precision the idea that music stopped the ordinary clock time.'

The Society has written to Julian Anderson at the Guildhall School of Music to express our appreciation of his composition. We asked how he first learnt about Richard Jefferies and enquired whether 'Harmony' will be recorded. The BBC radio recording can be heard here: <http://richardjefferiessociety.co.uk//Harmony.mp3>

John Halsall mentioned a new book: ***The Old Ways: a journey on foot*** by Robert Macfarlane. Richard Jefferies is mentioned and the book has been submitted for the Samuel Johnson Prize. More importantly it seems to be a bit of a best seller. Waterstones are seriously promoting it as such. Mr Halsall wondered when was the last time Richard Jefferies featured in a best seller?

Both John Price and Gillian Bromhead mentioned an article in the August 2013 edition of ***The Oldie***. Giles Wood was berating a neighbour's use of pesticides in her garden. The lady of the manor had effectively sterilised the grounds of any wildlife and Mr Wood was keen to lecture her on the evils of her ways. He was given short shrift by the lady of the manor, so Mr Wood writes that 'as an alcoholic reaches for the bottle to assuage the pain of life, I reach for the works of Richard Jefferies...'

A Londoner on a visit to the Museum in July, on the strength that his grandmother was a Henrietta Jefferies (unrelated as far as we can see), recounted that he had recently looked at **Richard Jefferies' grave** at Broadwater Cemetery. He remarked that it was the best kept and prettiest grave in the place. We are most grateful to Michael Parrott for making it so.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

The Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society: If you want to borrow the tickets for the Devizes or the Salisbury Museums, please apply to John Price. ☎ 01672 515150. The Wiltshire Museum (Devizes) has undergone considerable change. New Prehistoric Wiltshire Galleries will open on 14 October 2013 that record the story of the time when the first people came to Wiltshire to the end of the Bronze Age.

Alliance of Literary Societies A.G.M. hosted by the Barbra Pym Society on 1st - 2nd June 2013

On a beautiful spring day, St. Hilda's College, Oxford provided a perfect setting for the Annual General Meeting of the Alliance of Literary Societies. With Magdalen College clearly visible, punts being handled with variable skill on the River Cherwell and students lounging on the lawns, many of us were reluctant to go indoors. But the aroma of tea and coffee in the Jacqueline du Pre Building was not to be ignored. Also it gave us the opportunity of renewing old acquaintance, making new ones and browsing the book stalls.

Elizabeth Llewellyn-Smith, Former Principal of St. Hilda's College and lover of Burmese cats gave the welcome address. She spoke of her own time at St. Hilda's when it was exclusively an all ladies college; it was only in 2008 that it became a mixed one. She considered the Alliance an ideal platform for bringing people with a passion for books and literature together; it was, to use her own words, like a 'sea without a shore'. She referred to the books she remembered as a child, in particular a lovely leather bound copy of Richard Jefferies' *Wood Magic*, also a copy of *Bevis* which, in her opinion, is a classic book for boys. Were they still in print, she asked? She also hoped the time would never come when the e-book would take precedence over the pleasure of turning the page of a real book. Biographies she saw as essential to the understanding of a writer and their background, citing James Boswell's biography of Samuel Johnson as a perfect example. She herself was a member of two societies, the Anthony Trollope and the Charlotte M. Yonge, both of whom are members of the Alliance.

The AGM then followed. It is 40 years since Bill and Kathleen Adams of the George Eliot Society founded the Alliance, and it goes from strength to strength; it recently featured in an article in *Country Life*. Anita Fernandez Young, Secretary of the Alliance, has produced a short history of its formation, etc., copies of which will be sent to each member society in due course. A special vote of thanks was given to Kenn Oultram, who after many years has resigned from the committee. It was Kenn who edited Chapter One, the first newsletter of the Alliance. The subject for next year's issue of ALSo, our current journal, will be *Fictional Fantastic*, which offers a wide range of themes from gothic horror to the supernatural and

the ghostly. In 2014 the Christopher Marlowe Society will be our hosts in Canterbury between 31st May and 1st June.

Dr. Clemence Schultze, Chair of the Barbara Pym Society, then gave a very lively introduction to the life and works of Barbara Pym, quoting extensively from the novels to give us a real flavour of her work. Her talk was entitled *Barbara Pym: an 'Unashamed Reader'*, which was exactly how Barbara Pym described herself.

This year marks the centenary of Barbara Pym's birth on 2nd June 1913. She was born in Oswestry and from an early age developed a passion for literature, poetry in particular. Her other abiding love was the High Anglican Church, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* being a great favourite. She also liked cookery and always included a book of recipes alongside her more serious bedside reading. After a boarding school education, she entered St. Hilda's College in 1931 where she read English and fully immersed herself in university life.

She wrote her first novel at the age of 16, being greatly influenced by Aldous Huxley's novel *Chrome Yellow*. After leaving St. Hilda's with a second-class degree in 1934 she went into secretarial work and continued to concentrate on her writing. After substantial revision, her first novel *Some Tame Gazelle* was published by Jonathan Cape in 1950, followed by five others in a similar vein; witty, self parodying and sharply perceptive.

She wrote mainly of what she knew. Her novels are the acute observations of a single woman on the everyday life she witnessed within her small circle. As a High Anglican, she was well versed in the workings of the church, the daily gossip, the pecking order that seems to prevail over who does what, the bazaars, the jumble sales and the endless cups of tea. Of course, the vicar, or Father as he was termed in her High Church environment has a crucial role to play; is he approved of by the congregation, are his sermons tolerable, is he appreciative of the 'excellent women', of whom naturally Barbara is one, who help to support him. Woe betide if he falls from favour, upsets one of his female acolytes or, if single, forms an unsuitable attachment. Barbara certainly knows about such things and, although there are no plots to speak of, she makes us interested in her characters because they reflect human nature so well, its foibles, its failings, its goodness, its idiosyncrasies. Naturally, Barbara herself is revealed to us through her characterizations. She is delightfully honest about every facet of her life, mostly mundane and routine but piquant because of her excellent use of the English language. Even kitchen sinks get a mention, far too low for a tall person like Barbara who gets back ache from having to continually stoop over them. We care about the ordinary lives of her characters because through them we recognise ourselves. And, of course, as in everyday life there are frissons of excitement, e.g. the little bits of tittle tattle that make the grapevine eternally thrive. In her High Church environment, for instance, there is always the possibility of someone going 'over to Rome'.

Her personal life was often fraught. The 'love of her life' was an undergraduate called Henry Harvey who she would romantically dub Lorenzo and gaze at rapturously in the Bodleian Library. She had a tendency to project her romantic longings on to rather unsuitable men, and suffered the pangs of unrequited love on what seemed to be a regular basis. Julian Amery and the broadcaster C. Gordon Glover were two other men on whom she had crushes. Unrequited they might be, but she wittily satirized them in her novels, and unrequited love was somehow more exciting for a woman of Barbara's temperament. She often referred to the 'vexatious difference between men and women' and had a lifelong fear of commitment.

During the war she worked as a postal censor in Bristol before joining the Women's Royal Naval Service where she reached the rank of third officer. After the war she worked for the International African Institute becoming assistant editor of its journal *Africa*. It was here that she was to meet Hazel Holt who became her lifelong friend and literary executor. It was also at the Institute that she became intrigued not so much with anthropology as anthropologists themselves. In *Excellent Women* they form an integral role in the novel as does the so called Learned Society which they regularly address. Barbara obviously had first hand knowledge of such over inflated proceedings which she deftly lampoons.

Her novels were very well received at Boots Lending Library and over the years she built up a devoted following of readers, but the 1960s saw a new wave of writers, modern and earthy, and when Barbara submitted her latest novel to Jonathan Cape in 1963 it was firmly rejected on the grounds of not being sufficiently in keeping with modern trends. It must have been a devastating blow to Barbara who could have had no inkling of the years of rejection lying ahead of her. She tried to adapt her writing to what the publishers demanded, but time after time her books were rejected. Her health also suffered, but she gamely wrote on. In 1972 she and her sister Hilary went to live at Finstock in Oxfordshire, and after another health scare Barbara retired from the Institute. She cooked, read and wrote and like any good spinster, took care of her cats. The possibility of being published again must have looked very remote until a survey was conducted in the *Times Literary Supplement* considering the most over-rated and under-rated writers of the 20th century. Barbara Pym was the only writer to be nominated twice in the under-rated category by Philip Larkin and Lord David Cecil. This prompted Macmillan to accept *Quartet in Autumn* for publication. It centres around four people, all single, two men, one a widower, and two spinsters, and how they cope, or not, with their imminent retirement. The wit is still there, but there is an underlying sadness prevailing in the novel, but as ever Barbara is acutely observant. Letty is the character in the novel who is described as an 'unashamed reader of novels'. The book was well received and went on to be shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and although it did not win it brought Barbara out of

the wilderness.

Following lunch Professor James Booth's talk was entitled *Philip Larkin and Barbara Pym: an Elective Affinity*. The friendship between Larkin and Pym seemed an unlikely one; a major difference being the atheism of Larkin and the strong Anglicanism of Barbara, but Larkin had written to Barbara as early as 1961 in praise of her writing and their friendship, largely conducted through letters, continued throughout the wilderness years. She was like an old brand spinster to his bachelor of Hull; he admired the way in which she was able to transfigure the mundane and make the everyday engaging. He had tried to do something similar in his own novel *Trouble at Willow Gables*, but without success. Like Barbara, Larkin found it impossible to commit to any long term relationship; both of them seeming to have a genuine fear that marriage would compromise their art. His letters were witty and amusing; they were also full of the kind of constructive criticism that Barbara gratefully accepted. He advised her to be more lyrical and to employ fewer characters which she did to great effect in *Quartet in Autumn*.

They only met twice, and on the first occasion Larkin said she reminded him of Joyce Grenfell, but Philip Larkin must be credited with re-establishing Barbara Pym as one of Britain's leading 20th century novelists. Barbara died in 1980 and her books are now as popular as they once were in her lifetime.

On a warm sunny day, the opportunity to wander round the grounds was very welcome. A group of us later joined Triona Adams, former graduate of St. Hilda's, for a conducted tour of the college. St. Hilda's was founded by the redoubtable Dorothea Beale on similar principles to those she had employed during her time as headmistress at Cheltenham Ladies College. The college was named St. Hilda's in honour of the foundress of Whitby Abbey and there is a small chapel dedicated to St. Hilda within the university. What interested me was the beautiful Pre-Raphaelite painting on the staircase by George Frederic Watts called *Una and the Red Cross Knight*, but apparently it was not so lovely to the students who had to pass it on their way to testing examinations. She told us of the tradition of wearing carnations throughout the various stages of sitting exams, white for the first, pink for the intermediate and red for completion. She also told us some of the things that the young ladies got up to when she was a student, but best not to tell tales.

We thank the Barbara Pym Society and all those who so warmly participated in introducing us to the work of the very unique Barbara Pym.

Helen D Newman
21 June 2013

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BIRTHDAY LECTURE
SATURDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2013
VILLAGE HALL, CHURCH ROAD, LIDDINGTON

PROGRAMME

- 10.30 Doors open and refreshments.
- 11.00 AGM (members only) – see Agenda page 39.
- 1.00 Lunch break. Bring a packed lunch. Local pub serves food. The hall is next to Liddington Church with views across to Liddington Hill.
- 2.30 The Birthday Lecture
 Speaker: Hugh Thomson
 Subject: Walking the Icknield Way
- 4.00 Tea
- 4.30 Depart



The Birthday Lecture will be given this year by Hugh Thomson – writer and film-maker. His illustrated talk will be based on his book *The Green Road into the Trees* which charts his adventures walking the Icknield Way.

Mr Thomson has spent many years travelling through and writing about Peru, Mexico and the Indian Himalaya but turned his attention, this time, closer to home. Travelling along the Icknield Way, he passed the great prehistoric monuments of Maiden Castle, Stonehenge and Avebury, before ending at the Wash

near Seahenge. His journey took him through Jefferies Land and Liddington Castle. Hugh will take us on an exploration of our local ancient landscape along a 400 mile journey from coast to coast. In his book, Hugh casts unexpected light – and humour – on the way we live now. Copies of the book will be available to buy on the day that Mr Thomson will be pleased to sign.

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, on the Aldbourne road. There is ample parking space at the hall. 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 road and M4 motorway Junction 15. Take the first exit north on the A419 next to the Great Western Hospital and turn right at Commonhead Roundabout taking the B4192 to Liddington. There is a staggered cross-roads at Liddington. 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 early and the other just on time. **The 46 leaves Swindon Bus Station at 10.40am and arrives at Liddington at 10.57am.** 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.

Return buses from Liddington to Swindon Bus Station:

Bus Service	48	46
Departs Liddington (Spinney Close)	16.21	17.15
Arrives Swindon Bus Station	16.39	17.33



Liddington Church

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's introductory remarks.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the last AGM, 3rd November 2012 (see pp.40-43)
- 4 Matters Arising
Richard Jefferies House & Museum at Coate
The Save Coate campaign
- 5 Annual Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report (see pp.44-46)
- 7 Election of Examiner of Accounts
- 8 Elections to Executive Council. The following Members are due to retire: Simon Coleman, Roger Ebbatson, Helen Newman, Richard Stewart, John Price and Rebecca Welshman. Regrettably Miss Newman is standing down but will continue as our representative for the Alliance of Literary Societies. In order to meet constitutional requirements Mr Price and Mr Stewart are willing to be re-elected for 2 years; the remainder for a 3 year term of office.
- 9 Motions (if any)
- 10 Any Other Business

A copy of the minutes of the 2012 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 2013, as should nominations for Executive Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded.

**Minutes for the Annual General Meeting of the Richard Jefferies
Society held at the Village Hall, Liddington
on Saturday 3 November 2012 starting at 11am**

PRESENT:

Peter Bainbridge, Gillian Bromhead, David Chesham, Roger Ebbatson, Peter Faulkner, Norma Goodwin, Ian Hamson, Geoff Hirst, Margaret Hunt, Eric Jones, Brian Morris, Ray & Sylvia Morse, Helen Newman, Michael Parrott, Michael Ponting, John Price, Mike Pringle, Jean Saunders, Phyllis Treitel, Rod Wirdnam, and Rebecca Welshman.

1. THE CHAIR

John Price welcomed Members to the Annual General Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Robert Albright, Margaret Bathe, Henke Beentje, Marie Chesham, Simon Coleman, Mark Daniel, Margaret Evans, Kaye & Graeme Franklin, Valerie Haworth, John Monks, Duncan Pepper, Sheila Povey, Andrew Rossabi, Richard Stewart, Richard Tattersall and John Webb.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 5 November 2011 were accepted as a true record of proceedings. Proposed by Rod Wirdnam and seconded by Michael Parrott.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was taken that matters arising relate to new information received since the Annual Report 2011-12 was published in early September.

4.1 Richard Jefferies House and Museum at Coate

Mike Pringle was invited to provide the latest update on the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust and the progress on negotiating a contract with Swindon Borough Council to take over the management of the Museum. He reported that the Heritage Lottery Fund was extremely supportive of the move and can part-fund a part-time development officer for 2 years in order to get through the initial problems created by a lack of “staff” to move the transfer along.

From September, there have been huge advances made in the gardens. Four small groups from local companies have donated a day or half-day for volunteers to cut hedges, mow lawns, clear nettles and generally tidy up the gardens. Groundwork started work on 29 October to level paths, dig out a pond and erect a fence using a grant of £2000 to spend on the gardens. Another fence has been added that separates the Museum ground from the proposed “railway track” extension in Home Field. The stable and workshop are being tidied up and will provide a useful addition to the Museum to place information about life on a dairy farm in Victorian times. Living & Learning, another charity in Swindon, is proposing to take over the cow-yard area for vegetable and herb growing as part of a project to help train people with disabilities. Recently Swindon Council removed a very large, healthy ash tree on the corner of Dayhouse Lane and Marlborough Road that overhung the Jefferies’ wall. This had the good effect of screening the massive road sign that is now very visible and another blot on Coate Farm’s setting.

It was noted that there have been over 1000 visitors to the Museum this year whilst volunteers have donated the equivalent of 250 full days of work in the gardens and museum. The Chair cast a vote of thanks to everyone in the Society who had helped at the Museum – without whom the Museum would not open.

4.2 The Save Coate campaign:

It was reported that the draft Swindon Core Strategy was being replaced by a draft Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 that is likely to be published for public consultation next month. The proposed development policy for “Commonhead” (NC2) pledges that “an area between Coate Water and the new development will be protected from development, and the function of Day House Lane as a green corridor will be safeguarded.” This was considered by the Society to be a weak short-term policy that can be removed in 2026 when Redrow Homes and Persimmon Homes may be ready to extend their housing estate. Redrow Homes still have legal options to buy more fields next to Coate Water on Dayhouse Farm. The buffer land is identified on the draft Local Plan map as a non-coalescence area rather than safe-guarded land required for its intrinsic ecological, landscape or historic importance. The fields to the south of Coate Water to the M4 are not included in the buffer area. The draft plan will be subject to an 8 week consultation period when the Society will make its views known.

5. ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

The content of the annual report was accepted as a true record of the Society’s activities. Proposed — Michael Parrott; Seconded — David Chesham.

6. TREASURER’S REPORT

Geoff Hirst had nothing to add to his statement as published on pp 41-42 of the Annual Report 2011-12. No matters were raised by members.

Phyllis Treitel proposed acceptance of the accounts, seconded by Ray Morse.

The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to the Treasurer and reminded members that only 2 years now remained to find a new treasurer when Geoff steps down. He asked all members to consider taking on the post or to let him know if they knew someone suitable who might.

7. EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

Mr Chris Jones examined the accounts and his positive report was published in the Annual Report on page 43. The Society is most grateful for his assistance in these matters and he has expressed a willingness to look at next year’s accounts but will ‘retire’ when our Treasurer retires in 2014. Geoff Hirst proposed that Chris Jones be elected to serve next year; seconded by John Price. The Chairman also mentioned the need to find a new examiner but cautioned that this person should not be a Society member.

8. ELECTIONS TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Margaret Evans and Norma Goodwin were thanked by the Chairman for their dedicated service and time as members of the Executive Council but they did not wish to stand for re-election. Norma had managed our mail-order sales whilst Margaret’s methodical and pains-taking work as membership secretary for 15 years was much appreciated. Mrs Evans will be presented with a

bouquet of flowers.

The Executive Council proposed that Peter Bainbridge be elected to Council from 2012 to 2015. This was formerly seconded by Phyllis Treitel and unanimously carried by Members. The Secretary had received no other nominations.

A vote of thanks was offered 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.

The Chairman pointed out that since 2006, when Ray Morse stood down as Vice-chairman of the Society, the post has been unfilled. However our constitution requires that the Executive Council should appoint from amongst their members a Vice-chairman. As such, the Chairman was pleased to announce that Prof Eric Jones was duly elected for the post at the Executive Council meeting held on 20th October 2012 and that he will be able and willing to stand in for the Chair as needs arise.

9. MOTIONS

Only one motion had been duly submitted and had been circulated to members for consideration that related to the annual subscription rate for corporate bodies in order to reflect whether they were profit-making or non-profit making and for a reduced rate for full-time students to be introduced. The wording of the motion was considered and discussed and no amendments were made. The motion was formally moved by Roger Ebbatson, seconded by Norma Goodwin and carried by members.

The following subscription rate will be introduced in July 2013:

- the rate for organisations (non-profit making) shall be set at the couples' subscription level
- the rate for corporate bodies (profit-making) shall be set at £50.
- a special two-thirds membership rate shall be set for full-time students.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 The North Wilts. Model Engineering Society submitted a planning application in September for change of use of the woodland in Home Field to extend the miniature railway track to run close to the Museum. A revised drawing was submitted recently that has removed the proposed halt at the Museum (our main objection) but the track is unacceptably close to the gardens, set on an embankment, and there needs to be an archaeological assessment of the area given the proximity to bronze age burial grounds and stone circles. The main concern, should planning permission be granted, is that the change of use and current proposal can only act as a precedent for more development. The Society has lodged a formal objection to the planning application.

10.2 The Samuel Looker Archive. A permanent home for the archive is still being sought albeit that some of the Jefferies' documents (mainly letters, photographs and original manuscripts) have been retained and are on display or stored at the Richard Jefferies Museum. There are two candidate homes to archive the documents: the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre at Chippenham that houses Society archives and Exeter University. The former

has looked at the material and would be happy to accommodate our wishes albeit that they would prefer to just store the Jefferies' related material. Rebecca Welshman invited a colleague (Christine Faunch) at Exeter University to inspect the Looker archive, that is currently stored in her mother's house in Crewkerne. As a result of this inspection on 25 October, Rebecca reported that Ms Faunch believed that the Looker material would sit very comfortably with the current collection at Exeter University that includes archives for Henry Williamson. A project proposal will be drawn up for consideration by the Executive Council before any decisions are made. Simon Coleman and Rebecca Welshman are keen to pursue a project that would cover cataloguing fully the Jefferies' archive at the British Library, the Looker archive and that located at other places.

10.3 Society Mailings The Executive Council agreed at their meeting held on 20 October that future membership renewal notices shall be sent out with the Summer *Journal* in July to better reflect the time of the year when subs are due. Overseas members will still receive their renewal notices with the Spring newsletter. The use of a standing order for payments will be promoted that should save your Secretary and Treasurer a considerable amount of work.

10.4 Broadwater Cemetery Michael Parrott tabled a booklet produced by the Friends of Broadwater Cemetery as part of their guided tours events; there is an article in it about Richard Jefferies. The Jefferies' grave has been in flower most of the year. The Hudson' grave has been tidied up but no shade-tolerant planting has been carried out yet. As a result of security measures now in place, Michael was pleased to report that vandalism has been reduced to zero.

10.5 Poetry Competition Norma Goodwin asked when the winning poems of the competition might be published and was told that these will be printed in the winter 2012 edition of the *Journal*. Helen Newman wondered whether a booklet might be produced of all entries. Rebecca Welshman said that copyright remains with the poets and that whilst this might be possible, it would mean writing to all entrants to obtain their permission.

10.6 Man on the Hill Peter Faulkner mentioned that he knew Barry Gavin who produced the 1987 HTV film about Richard Jefferies entitled 'Man on the Hill'. Mr Faulkner believed that he could be a useful contact.

10.7 Peter Faulkner asked if Swindon Council was a corporate member of the Society and if not, why not?

The business part of the AGM ended at 12.32pm

Jean Saunders
Honorary Secretary
4 November 2012

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT: 2012-13

Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2013

Receipts and Payments Account

<u>Receipts</u>	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2013	Total 2012
<i><u>Subscriptions</u></i>	1521.58			1521.58	1879.38
<i><u>Donations:</u></i> <i>General</i>	1334.59			1334.59	1638.00
<i><u>Sales:</u></i> <i>Museum</i>	1096.50			1096.50	144.74
<i>Others</i>	853.62			853.62	636.83
<i>Grant</i>			1000.00	1000.00	
<i><u>Poetry Competiton</u></i>					86.38
<i><u>Raffle</u></i>					93.00
<i><u>Income Tax Reclaim</u></i>	645.73			645.73	498.45
<i><u>Interest received</u></i>	38.32			38.32	38.22
Total receipts	5490.34		1000.00	6490.34	5015.00
<u>Expenditure</u>					
<i><u>Publications</u></i>	1330.49			1330.49	954.79
<i><u>Rent/Room Hire</u></i>	54.00			54.00	54.00
<i><u>Subscriptions paid</u></i>	62.50			62.50	59.50
<i><u>Lecture fees</u></i>	121.60			121.60	139.00
<i><u>Administration</u></i>	1870.77			1870.77	1166.25
<i><u>Books/ Archive</u></i>					
<i><u>Purchases</u></i>	3.99			3.99	1330.00
<i><u>Insurance</u></i>	174.00			174.00	174.00
<i><u>Poetry Prize</u></i>	100.00			100.00	
<i><u>Equipment etc</u></i>	239.10			239.10	
<i><u>House/ Grounds/</u></i>					
<i><u>Museum</u></i>	1117.64	435.00		1552.64	460.66
<i><u>Gifts</u></i>	35.98			35.98	
<i><u>Memorial</u></i>	6.00			6.00	126.00
Total payments	5116.07	435.00		5551.07	4464.20

Excess of receipts over payments

939.27

Bank/B.Soc/Paypal/P.Cash

as at 1 July 2012	18495.35
as at 30 June 2013	19434.62

Statement of Assets1. Cash
funds:-

Bank	3789.96
Paypal	279.69
B/Society	<u>15364.97</u>
	<u>19434.62</u>

Restricted and Designated funds

Biography	<u>6006</u>
	6006
Gen	
Funds	2000
Gen	
Resve	<u>11429</u>
	<u>19435</u>

Notes to the accounts

1. We have used the full balance of the Coate fund (£280) to defray further museum expenditure at Mark Daniel's request during this financial year (2012-2013). In addition the Adams fund has been utilised as originally intended in the purchase of the seat. These two items of expenditure comprise the total of £435 under "designated funds" above.

2. We have in excess of £8000 in publications and other saleable stock which is an asset of the society but which does not appear in the society's receipts and expenditure accounts.

The Treasurer's Report to the Richard Jefferies Society year ending 30 June 2013

There is nothing particularly dramatic to report in this my penultimate year as your treasurer. A few explanatory comments might well help elucidate certain items within the financial statements. I apologise for not being with you at this year's Annual General Meeting and any points which my fellow trustees are not able to handle will be dealt with by me on my return from holiday.

Firstly please relax because there has been no drastic reduction in membership. The subscription renewal notices for the past year were dispatched well before June 30th 2012 and many would appear in the 2012 accounts. This year the notice more nearly coincided with the end of the financial year and many subscriptions were not received until the 2013-14 year had commenced. This will have a knock on effect next year when Gift

Aid relief is claimed on a lower subscription total. (Your treasurer, for one, appears to have paid nothing in 2012-13!).

It is difficult accurately to differentiate donations and sales. The change in the general sales arrangements after radically changing the former library facility appears to channel far more through the museum. In addition sales of donated books eligible for Gift Aid relief are classed as “donations” in order that the donation total more closely matches the return to HMRC to obviate the possibility of unnecessary questions from them. It’s almost more sensible to bulk the three items in the accounts under a simple title “sales and donations”.

As regards expenditure, the grant of £1000 towards the mower for the museum, when spent, should have been entered more accurately as “restricted funds” and the house/grounds entry reduced to £117.64. We can confirm that the Coate fund has been completely exhausted in purchases for museum and garden, and together with the awarding of the poetry prize and, at last, the purchase and installation of the Harold Adams seat have meant that the three small restricted funds from previous years’ accounts are closed. This means you see a much simpler statement of our reserves.

We purchased a good second hand multimedia projector for £200 (see equipment) and our printing expenditure includes the runs for “Essay on Instinct” and *The Rise of Maximin*, which account for that particular increase. Finally, as regards individual items, administration appears to have undergone “lift-off”. The reality of the situation is that at least three members of your executive have claimed expenses this year and returned them under Gift Aid to the society and which then appear within “donations” on the income side.

I have allocated the miniscule building society interest on a pro rata basis between the biography fund and the general reserve. Our overall position remains healthy and would be the envy of many societies.

G. W. Hirst
Honorary Treasurer
8 August 2013

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 2013.

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 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

As Independent Examiner it is my responsibility to:

- * examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- * follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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 2012-13 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 130 of the 2011 Act and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 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
23 July 2013

8 Woburn Avenue
Theydon Bois

Essex CM16 7JS

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2013-2014

2013

Sat 2 Nov AGM and Birthday Lecture at Liddington Village Hall. Further details about the event are detailed on pp. 37-47.

2014 – Please note the following dates in your diary. The next newsletter will not be circulated until March.

Sat 1 March* Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams. This year it is the Friend's turn to host the gathering. Select a short extract to read to others by or about Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams or just come along to listen.

Sat 5 April* Guided walk and talk around Coate Farm by Clive Carter as a result of his discoveries about the buildings as part of an architectural and historical survey and study.

Sat 10 May* Talk on Sir Bevis of Hampton. Unconfirmed.

Sat 26 July A Study Day. Jefferies' Museum: 10.30am-4.30pm. Theme: Humour in Richard Jefferies' writing. More information in the Spring 2014 newsletter.

Sat 1 Nov AGM and Birthday Lecture.
More information in the Spring 2014 newsletter

* Meetings begin at 2.00pm in the Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon, SN3 6AA. Doors open at 1.00pm – an opportunity to look around the Museum. Park free at Coate Water, only 5 minutes walk away. Those with a disability can park at the Museum; space is limited – when the ground is firm there is plenty of room. Parking is also available in Dayhouse Lane. 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 Water roundabout. These include: Monday to Saturday - daytime: Numbers 13, 14, and 20.