

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

**AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2014
& ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014**



‘On the Barle’, from a drawing by J W North to illustrate Jefferies’ essay
‘Summer in Somerset’ for *The English Illustrated Magazine*, 1887-1888.

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 on our website for Members to join online using our Paypal account that accepts credit/debit cards, but this incurs an additional £1 supplement to cover Paypal charges.

Members receive spring and autumn newsletters, an annual report and summer and winter *Journals*. The Society has an extensive library that is currently in store in West Swindon and our archives are held at the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Chippenham or on display at the Richard Jefferies Museum. Activities include a spring meeting, study day, special outings, events, a Birthday Lecture and an Annual General Meeting.

TRUSTEES AND COUNCIL MEMBERS 2013-14

Peter Bainbridge (Deputy Treasurer), Simon Coleman, Roger Ebbatson, Geoff Hirst (Treasurer), Eric Jones (Vice Chairman), Duncan Pepper, John Price (Chairman), Andrew Rossabi (President), Jean Saunders (Secretary), Richard Stewart, Phyllis Treitel (Vice President), and Rebecca Welshman. Ray Morse is a co-opted member. Sadly, our librarian, John Webb, died on 6 March 2014.

Hon. Sec.

Jean Saunders

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RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM The Richard Jefferies Museum at Coate is open 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. There are activities for children on Mondays.

NEWSLETTER: edited by Jean Saunders. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. The deadline to submit material for the Spring 2015 Newsletter is **1st February 2015**. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary as above.

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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



I have recently finished writing an article about Richard Jefferies for the bimonthly publication ***British Wildlife***. It is launching a new series titled 'Great British Naturalists', and, if all goes according to plan, our author should be the first one to be acknowledged. Seeking a 'peg' on which to hang the article, I decided that the 125th anniversary of the publication of the first posthumous collection of Jefferies' essays might be appropriate. *Field and Hedgerow* was first published on 8th January 1889 in an edition of 1,000, and was followed quickly by two further impressions later the same month and in March; each of a further 1,000 copies. A large paper edition of 102 copies was also produced in February.

Reading through the 28 essays and 1 poem again, I was struck by the comprehensive coverage, and the excellence and sensitivity of these late writings. I say 'late', as most were written in 1886 and 1887, with one as early as 1881, and one, 'House-Martins', of unknown date. I am sure we are all often asked to recommend a book to someone previously unacquainted with Jefferies' work; and I have to confess that I have never recommended *Field and Hedgerow* as a suitable introduction – but I would now. The range of topics covered is such that most readers would find an essay to spark their imagination and admiration. 'Summer in Somerset' was first published in *The English Illustrated Magazine*, and one of the illustrations by North is reproduced on the front cover of this Report. The pathos of 'Hours of Spring', is countered by 'The July Grass', and 'Winds of Heaven', which are both happy and colourful essays. 'The Country Sunday' includes passages of gentle humour; and the poignancy of 'My Old Village' reminds us that Jefferies wrote many of these essays when he was seriously and painfully ill with TB.

The deaths of Mark Daniels and John Webb have been enormous losses to the Society, but also to me personally. For many years I shared the curatorial duties with Mark and John when the Museum was opened on Sundays and staffed entirely by Society volunteers. Mark used to drive up from Brighton to help, and more recently John took over; and since 2000 had been my regular monthly companion. At quiet times, the range of topics and knowledge shared by these two polymaths was amazing, and I learned much about English dialect and the history and manufacture of wind instruments, amongst many other subjects. It was on these Sundays that John and I hatched the plans for the 'Jefferies' Land' film that John later directed, and it is fitting that they both appear in the film – though fleetingly.

I must also at this point pay enormous tribute to Jean Saunders, who helped John unstintingly in his last weeks; and was rewarded by having

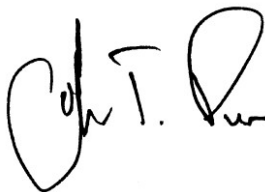
been appointed executor to his Will – for no financial recompense at all. This responsibility is still continuing; for Jean has had to arrange for the auction of the contents of John's house, and of the houses themselves, as well as having had to deal with HMRC and numerous other financial complications. And although John had no living human relatives; Jean has gallantly taken on John's two cats – which have settled in well at Longcot. I mention this to demonstrate how far beyond the call of duty our current Honorary Secretary takes on responsibilities. I am delighted to say, however, that John has recognised the Society in his Will; this in addition to his earlier very generous help towards the Museum, the film, and towards the forthcoming Biography.

Geoff Hirst, our retiring Treasurer, has expressed some very generous views in his *Valete* elsewhere in this Report. He has, however, been the 'perfect' Treasurer, if such a creature can exist. Managing the Society's resources with efficiency, and with a superbly light touch at all times; he continued to keep in touch, and show genuine interest in what we were doing (or trying to do). His advice was always sound, to the point, and delivered in such a reassuring way, that I can recall no heart-stopping moments for Executive Council Members. Always prompt in responding to queries; how fortunate we were that Valerie applied to REACH on Geoff's behalf, and that Blackbird Leys did not offer greater attractions than the RJS! Thank you Geoff.

We are very fortunate that Peter Bainbridge has offered to take over the Treasurer's role, and it is also very good that he has been able to overlap with Geoff, so that the transition should be eased.

We are, however, still seeking a new Secretary-elect; and having written about Jean above; I should emphasise that acting as Executor for deceased members, and adopting members' pets are responsibilities that do not fall into any new Secretary's job description!

I look forward greatly to meeting many of you at our AGM, when our own Professor Patrick Dillon will be speaking on: 'The Presence of the Past: Richard Jefferies, The Middle Ridgeway, and Landscape Change.' As many of you will already know, Patrick Dillon is an exceptionally competent communicator in terms of both oral clarity and comprehensible content and delivery; and his lecture will undoubtedly be a highlight of the year.

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

John Price
Honorary Chairman
25th August 2014

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:

Julia Courtney, Surrey
Pauline and Arthur Illsey, Derbyshire
Enid Lewis, Wiltshire
Rose and John Little, Wiltshire
Miles Richardson, Staffordshire
David Roberts, Hertfordshire
Graham Rowles, Sussex
Dawn Smith, Sussex
Nicholas Thomas, Warwickshire
Andrew Timpson, Bedfordshire

The total membership during the 2013-14 subscription year, that ended on 30th June 2014, numbered 259. Although the majority of our Members live in the United Kingdom, others live in Europe or English-speaking countries.

It is with deep regret that I announce that five treasured Members have died this year. In common with many organisations, we are losing active members, and overall membership numbers continue to decline. For example, in 2007, we had 290 supporters and a healthy core of Members in the Swindon area who could help at the Museum or attend meetings. With this in mind, the Society's Executive Council has discussed how we might best arrange future meetings and events. You will note on p.55 that the Study Day next year will take place in London.

My husband and I still plan to move to Norfolk soon, so we shall be adding to the loss of the Swindon mafia! If anyone in the Swindon area can take on the job of events' organiser and minutes' secretary, we would love to hear from you.

Jean Saunders
28th August 2014

MUSINGS OF A RETIRING TREASURER

It was with much reluctance that about four years ago I expressed my wish to retire from my position as treasurer of the Society at the end of my third five-year term of office. That point has now been reached. I use the word 'retire' advisedly as I always think that 'resigning' often has unfavourable connotations. As regards the Society and me nothing could be further from the truth. I have found the executive to have been the most genuine, civilised and cultured body of people to which I have ever belonged both in my working experience and in the numerous voluntary capacities in which I have served before and after retirement.

There are a number of reasons for my decision. Firstly I think you have had the financial equivalent of an absentee landlord for long enough. Secondly were I to stand for a further period I would be into my mid

seventies and could not guarantee how I might feel about a 550 mile round trip for an Annual General Meeting. (The rail option is not straightforward as we are twenty seven miles from our nearest mainline station). I do think also that the position of treasurer in view of issues of probity should be finite and the recent serious deterioration in family circumstances merely underlines the wisdom of my decision.

As regards contact with the writer himself, I could never in all conscience have contributed to that section of the newsletter where members relate their first experience of Jefferies. There is nothing vaguely poetic about mine.

I retired before my wife and took on the role of, dare we call it 'house husband' whilst simultaneously house training a black Labrador puppy and commencing an Open University humanities degree. This was not enough for my wife who, unbeknownst to me, had written to the organisation REACH giving them my profile 'as she didn't want me sitting around all day listening to Radio 3' to see what voluntary roles they had on file.

Suddenly many job descriptions began to drop on the doormat, and I picked what I thought were the most suitable – one a human resources responsibility on a large community project on the Blackbird Leys estate in Oxford and the other the treasurership of the Richard Jefferies Society. I seem to recall a very gentle interview at the Goddard Arms with Phyllis Treitel and my predecessor, the late Dick Bedwin. They seemed to like me.

One surprising coincidence was that I lived less than a quarter of a mile from Dick himself and in addition we both received our retirement pensions from Barclays Bank. My only work contacts with him had been by telephone – I then a humble advances clerk in Barclays Oxford's Local Head Office and he being one of the senior agricultural branch managers in the District. Up to this point I had never heard of Richard Jefferies.

I had quickly to eliminate my ignorance. We had on our bookshelf the Harvey edition of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. That was a start. Then I began to delve into some of the books of my mother-in-law which we retrieved after her death. There was a copy of Adrian Bell's 'The Open Air' containing four Jefferies extracts, and surprise, surprise, the Looker-edited *Jefferies' England*. Many friends I spoke to had observed that their parents had representative Jefferies' works on their shelves. More and more I found references to Jefferies in other reading and reported these on a number of occasions for insertion in the newsletter. There must have been earlier encounters but they obviously passed me by.

For a number of years whilst still living in Witney I attended the winter monthly meetings of the Society. I was astounded and humbled by the knowledge fellow members had of Jefferies and his writings. I simply sat quietly and absorbed this very special phenomenon. From this point onward I began to read some of the canonical Jefferies' works with great

pleasure, but have still only scratched the surface of his extensive bibliography.

Earlier this year I told Jean Saunders that I wished to disappear quietly and without fuss from being an officer of the Society but if there was a battered edition of *Bevis* with the Shepard illustrations I would very much appreciate it. With the exception of the 'battered' bit she has duly obliged and I take this opportunity to thank all the membership for this kind and splendid gesture.

What do I take personally from Jefferies' writings? I find some of the nature writing overwhelming. Roger Ebbatson came very close in the most recent *Journal* to a thought I have had often in constructing a conversation between Jefferies and Hopkins. I suspect the theological divide would not necessarily have been as great as we might imagine. They had a huge amount of common ground.

In addition I have an amateur's interest in the social and economic history of his time. Jefferies provides for me many jigsaw pieces which fill in my knowledge of that period. It is personally significant as he would be writing only a quarter of a century or so before my maternal grandfather was a farm foreman in Lincolnshire. My mother's own stories and descriptions of farm and country life in her girlhood were not a million miles away from what Jefferies saw and recorded.

I am writing this from Bishopdale, a tributary of Wensleydale, and I often wonder how Jefferies would have reacted to being here had the opportunity fallen his way. I think he would have revelled in it. Dry stone walls would have replaced hedgerows; grouse, partridge, curlew, lapwing and oyster catcher would have constituted the bird life; there is no arable farming but grass for hay and silage, dairying and stock fattening, and sheep without number. I think too that he would have approved of the planning restrictions which are a feature of the National Parks, the creation of which I believe he would have strongly advocated. It could have been an alternative 'Jefferies Land'.

I close by thanking all those Society members for their friendship over the last fifteen years and the sharing of their expertise. I shall seriously miss you and I know that you will give my successor all the help you have given me. I can take no credit for the financial strength of the Society which is due entirely to the generosity and stewardship of others. I know that there are big question marks over both the future of Coate and the museum itself, and the trend in the membership figures is not over encouraging. But I wish you well in overcoming these and other issues. I have been honoured to have served you in a small way for so many happy years.

Geoff Hirst,
June 2014

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER RICHARD JEFFERIES & THE SOCIETY?

John Shortland recounted: 'I discovered Richard Jefferies when I bought a c.1910 copy of *Wild Life in a Southern County* from a bookshop when on holiday in Yorkshire in 1979 and have been hooked by RJ ever since.' Writing in his blog Mr Shortland wrote:

I have always lived in the country and my fascination with the natural world began at a very early age. My kindergarten class was taken on a nature walk and, as our teacher showed us the magical things to be found along the way, I became hooked and wanted to know more. There are many excellent wildlife manuals and handbooks, new and old, that give detailed descriptions more often than not, in a rather dry, analytical way. Wouldn't it be wonderful if there was someone who could give all this information in great detail; who would notice the minutiae of everyday things, whether a flower, a wild creature or even of man, himself? In the late nineteenth century there was one such person, now forgotten by most, and his name is Richard Jefferies – most definitely not a poet but there is poetry in his words. Jefferies still has his devotees, myself included, and he deserves better recognition... his words are of relevance to everyone today, especially those who are passionate about the wonders of nature – not the awe-inspiring world famous creatures or places but the everyday ones, found all around us, that should be equally awe-inspiring. Nothing sums up my feelings towards the natural world better than [Jefferies]. They almost seem to have been written to illustrate this photograph of myself aged four with my father.



John Shortland with his father, 1956

Graham Rowles first became aware of Jefferies' work when reading the novels of Henry Williamson (probably *The Flax of Dream* tetralogy) about forty years ago. He writes:

As I have always spent much of my leisure time in the countryside and decided to have a career in farming I recognised in RJ a kindred spirit. Over the next few years I purchased a number of RJ's books in local second-hand bookshops, reading and re-reading them with great pleasure. Henry Williamson writes of *Wild Life in a Southern County*: 'It is a book to be taken up and dipped into, and kept, and read...all through one's life'. I think that this applies to much of Jefferies' work and I will certainly continue to read his essays and novels throughout my life.

Nick Thomas was drawn to Richard Jefferies whose writing he describes as 'staggering in diversity, of often glittering brilliance, not infrequently troubling'. He writes:

I find his writing always radiant with energy and verve. From the early grim rural vignettes to the sorcery of his most exquisite lyrical writing, to read Jefferies is to be enriched. He seems of me a unique creative force, with seemingly magical gifts in the manner of a character from a D.H. Lawrence or John Cowper Powys novel.

My initiation into the Jefferies' sphere came by way of *After London*; then the essay, scarcely a page in length, 'Orchis Masculina' which seemed to me a thing of miraculous strangeness and beauty. Samuel Looker's biography, with the wonderful cryptic journal entries, gave me a curiously involved intensity of feeling for Jefferies which led to a pilgrimage to Coate; two rain-drenched glorious days of exploration. To ascend Liddington Hill was pure exhilaration.

At the Coate Water Ranger Station I learned of the Society. I am reclusive and never join societies but I've joined this one, magnetized, I suppose, by the Jefferies' 'aura'.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS 2014 held at Coate Farm

Readings from Alfred Williams and Richard Jefferies

1st March 2014 – The first public meeting brought together the Friends of Alfred Williams with the Richard Jefferies Society when members shared readings by and about the two writers. It was the Friends turn to host the meeting. 13 people attended. Kaye Franklin took the Chair.

Phyllis Treitel gave the first reading, which was (appropriately) 'March Notes' published originally in 1883, and reprinted in ***Chronicles of the Hedges***. Graeme Franklin followed with a passage from the final part of ***After London***. Peter Bainbridge's choice was 'The Hillside Hedge' from Chapter 3 of ***Wild Life in a Southern County***; which describes the Ridgeway. The first Alfred Williams reading was by Roy Burton, who chose the poem: 'Monsoon Time'; this was followed by John Price, who read the relevant extracts from Kate Tryon's ***Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse 'Jefferies Land'***, about her encounters with Alfred Williams.

Kaye Franklin chose 'After the Rain' from ***Nature and Other Poems***; and Peter Bainbridge, for his second reading selected the passage about Chiseldon Windmill from ***Villages of the White Horse***.

Rose Little skilfully covered both authors, in reading the Alfred Williams poem, 'Salisbury Cathedral' (Sonnets 3, 4, and 5), which is dedicated to the bust of Richard Jefferies in the Cathedral.

We were next treated to a joint reading of 'The Forgers', written by Alfred Williams, and delivered by Roy Burton and Graeme Franklin.

Kay Franklin had earlier paid tribute to Mervyn Penny, an Honorary member of the FAW, who had died in January at the age of 90. She now read a moving extract from his autobiography. Kathleen Wyatt chose the description of the village shoemaker from ***In a Wiltshire Village***, and Roy Burton gave the final contribution by reading two of Alfred Williams' poems: 'To Edward Slow', and the 'Introductory Sonnet' to ***Nature and other Poems***.

Roy Burton also very kindly distributed an A3 handout containing five poems by Alfred Williams, and a prose extract from the introduction to ***Nature and Other Poems***.

The Architecture of Coate Farm

5th April 2014 – Clive Carter, from the Wiltshire Farmstead Project, spoke about the study of Coate Farm that he had undertaken along with Jean Martin, over a period of months last year, commissioned by the Richard Jefferies Society. The audience of twenty people were treated to historic and architectural information about the evolution of the farm from a single story one-roomed building to what we see today. Of course, Mr Carter could only speculate about the original layout of the buildings but the clues were there that made him suspect that the original thatched house, built in the seventeenth century, consisting of only the room we know today as the sitting room in the Museum (where we sat) and the day room of the cottage (once the Jefferies' kitchen). He suggested that the one room had a central hearth open to the beams that was later enclosed by a huge chimney stack. The original front door still exists inside what is now the cellar – under the sloping thatch – that was used as a chicken coup in the early twentieth century. The cellar was Mark's 'prison' in *Bevis*. Mr Carter described the step up to the front door that had that scooped-out look of a stone that had been well-trodden over the centuries. Unfortunately, Swindon Council bricked over the original doorway into the house in the 1970s, so it can't be seen from the inside.

When the thatched dairy was added to the building, a second floor was also raised. The pentice (the veranda) is a typical feature of a cheese-making dairy farm and reflects activities on land, made up principally of Kimmeridge clay, that was really only suitable for dairying.

Clive Carter discussed the thatched roof and pointed to the evidence that the 20th Century 'extension', built by Richard Jefferies' grandfather, was once thatched and that it had a high pitch. He explained that the pitch needed to be around 50-60 degrees to enable water run-off to take place quickly. Cheap straw thatch should last 30 years, but reed lasts 50 years; water reed, 80. Clive remarked that the cat-slide thatch, nearly reaching the ground, was a particularly nice feature. He also liked the old



The cow-shed and cow yard

cow shed, albeit that only the outside wall of it now remains, and he showed several photographs including the one to the left that indicates how the cow sheds were open to the cow yard. He described the old slated barn with its hayloft above and the trap door in the floor to drop hay into the barn below where milking took place. The wooden cow troughs still exist. There was mention of other farm buildings that were pulled down, such as the open thatched barn that housed the wagon and those that were substantially changed, such as the stone-built thatched building that was also used as a dairy in farmer Herring's time (around 1920).

Clive finished his talk with a walk around the farm to point out some of the features that he had talked about.

Geoffrey Winthrop Young & Bevis

10th May 2014 – It was a wet and blustery day that brought seven Society members to the Richard Jefferies Museum to hear about Geoffrey Winthrop Young's love of mountaineering, writing, teaching, map-making and *Bevis*. The winds had been so strong that day that two very old lime trees had fallen in the back garden near the pond.

Jean Saunders, who presented the illustrated talk, urged Members to read Mark Daniel's article in the Society's *Journal* No 3 (Spring 1994) entitled 'The Bevis Country' as this was based on the correspondence that the late Hugoe Matthews acquired from Young's daughter, Marcia.

A potted biography of Geoffrey Winthrop Young followed: born in London on 25th October 1876 (around the time that Jefferies moved from Swindon). He was the third of four children born to Sir George Young, third baronet, and Alice Eacy Kennedy, daughter of a Dublin physician. Young was educated at Marlborough College – perhaps he was aware that

he was in Jefferies' country at the time. He studied classics at Trinity College, Cambridge and learnt French and German whilst abroad.

Geoffrey Young was one of the most famous British mountaineers before the First World War. He began climbing mountains as an undergraduate at Trinity and wrote *The Roof-Climber's Guide to Trinity*; partly a parody of early alpine guidebooks, but also a helpful work for those, like him, who were keen to clamber up Cambridge's highest spires! In 1902 he was appointed tutor in modern languages at Eton College but was dismissed three years later for a homosexual liaison.

He had an illustrious career in the First World War and was awarded many medals. He was severely wounded in 1917 at the battle of Monte San Gabriele – his left leg was amputated above the knee, but this did not stop his mountaineering. The Younggrat ridge in the Alps was named after him and he organized climbing retreats annually at the Pen y Pass hostel in Snowdonia where his ashes were scattered. He died just before his 88th birthday from stomach cancer. He published many books that inspired the next generation of mountaineers. Most inspirational were his climbs with a custom-designed peg-leg.

Young married in 1918 and had a son and a daughter, Marcia, who drew the map for *Bevis*. Later in life Young referred to himself as an 'elderly celebrity, second-class'. He admired vitality above all else, and contemporaries were impressed by his forceful personality. His personal finances were often precarious.

It was the 'very incorrect' map by the young David Garnett in the 1904 Duckworth edition of *Bevis* that annoyed him (reproduced on the next page from Young's copy of the book) as well as events described in the novel that did not ring true. Young had known the book since a small child aged five. He writes in his copy of *Bevis* that his father had bought the first edition – the old three-decker – 'for us, when it appeared'.

Young's letter to Samuel Looker dated 18th March 1947 explains all:

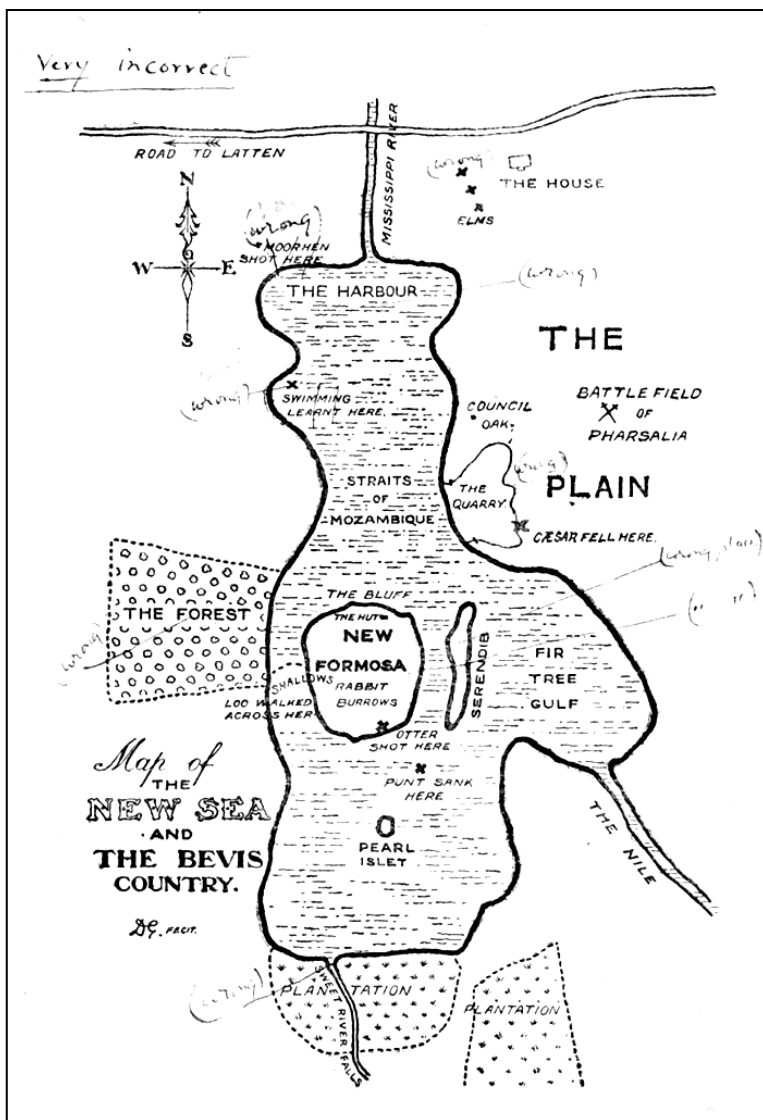
I have read of your special interest in the Jefferies' papers. I made a close study of *Bevis*. And I suggested to E.V. Lucas, soon after he published the second one-volume edition, with the amusing but terribly misleading map, made by a young friend, that there should be a better map. He urged me to make it, when we were together in the first war. I used some leisure during the second, to construct it.

The text, closely examined, is full of indications, even of measurements. From evidences, I am inclined to think that Jefferies, who was fond of making maps, did originally make one in detail, of this half imaginary Bevis country. He had it in mind when he wrote the book. But I think he may have previously destroyed the actual map, since there are one or two very curious blunders, which an actual map would have corrected at once. I have also made a chart of the house; and of the 'Mississippi'; and the Lake, the Battlefield and the Walk [that] fall into three divisions of the main map.

I am only mentioning this, in case there may be a reissue of what E.V.L. called

the 'best boys' book in the world', in the centenary years, and it may be desired to include a map, or maps, for the modern very map-minded younger folk. In this event, my maps would be entirely at your disposal, and I should be glad to present them, in return for all the pleasure the book has given me, and scores of boys; to whom it has been the usual gift.

Yours very truly, G. Winthrop Young



The reply from Looker was, of course, very encouraging. Looker passed on Young's letter to his Lutterworth Press publishers and also put Young in touch with J B Jones 'who probably knows more about Jefferies' topographical problems than anyone in England...He if anyone will be likely to be able to tell you what you want to know regarding a topographical query in *Bevis*. Mr Jones was responsible for placing the monument of a sarsen stone on the Downs near Swindon, to the memory of Jefferies and he is a very knowledgeable person indeed.'

Young must have written straight away to J B Jones who recounts the time in his own book entitled *Words From High Swindon* (published by *The Swindon Press Limited* in 1951). Jones writes on p.76:

The most interesting instance I have met with of the kind [i.e. Jefferies' disguising locations as to the whereabouts of places mentioned in his works] was where a traveller of international reputation asked me recently to correct a map of Coate Water for him. He had never visited Coate, but was mightily attracted by Jefferies' *Bevis*: had been for years. His map based faithfully on the book's text actually showed the Mississippi, that is, Cole, flowing away from the Thames and climbing into the reservoir by the front dam! His other attempts to follow *Bevis* round the lake were hopelessly at variance with reality. When I explained that Jefferies' topography was unreliable, most likely intentionally so, my correspondent was very annoyed. 'Years of scrutiny,' said he, 'never revealed to me that while the Nile and Sweetwater ran into the pond, the Mississippi ran out.'

An intense period of letter writing and an exchange of maps follows between Jones and Young over a few weeks, although Young was slow to send Jones his maps that were totally based on reading *Bevis*. As Jones points out, Young never visited Coate (unless he visited whilst at Marlborough College). Jones first letter is dated 19 April 1947. He writes:

Jefferies' reservoir has fallen upon evil days. As the main dam was condemned about 15 years ago as being unsafe, the Swindon Corporation, whose property the lake now is, lowered the water-level by the insertion of a sill at the N.E. end. The consequence is that the opposite to shallow end of Coate Water is a foul swamp.

Young asks questions about the farm itself as well as Coate Water and is pre-occupied by the double hedge mentioned in *Bevis*. Jones replies that there is no 'such a mound with double hazel hedge all round the water. There is a simple single hedge, and hazel, bordering the south & west side of the water, but none whatever on the eastern side. The hedges referred to in the battle are end-on to the lake.' This news clearly irritates Young who claims that the Battle of Pharsalia couldn't have taken place as described in *Bevis* as the double hedge in the description would have halted the march. However Jones reassures Young that Jefferies places the *Bevis*' home in exactly the position in which it was actually situated and he goes on to try to describe the layout of Coate Farm sending

photographs and diagrams of the interior floor plans. On the ground floor plan an 'office' is indicated in the room where we held our meeting and it seems that the sitting room extended behind the staircase making it L-shaped. Jones also indicates the points where Farmer Iden in *Amaryllis* rested his head by the fire place and left a dent. Jones goes on to explain how Bevis and Mark could have got lost on their walk when they thought that they were circumnavigating the New Sea and ended up at the witch's cottage in Hodson. It all boiled down to mistaking two beech trees at different ends of the Longpond that Jones identified as still growing at Coate.

Young eventually sent maps to Jones. The first was of Coate Farm, or Longcot as it is called in *Bevis*. This has a personal attachment for Jean Saunders as she lives in the village of Longcot – about 12 miles east of Coate Farm – and there is still a Jefferies' farming family in the area who she suspects were related. Jones replies on the 1st May pointing out that many features on Young's map were back to front or upside down. The comment that annoyed Young the most, apart from his pre-occupation with the double hedge that didn't exist in reality, was Jones comment that 'You have reversed the Mississippi. This flows out of the Longpond & under the Latten Road'. Young, who clearly wrote his mountaineering books with very accurate descriptions and maps, could not understand why Jefferies should provide such inaccurate detail in *Bevis*. As Jones points out: 'Jefferies never intended in any of his writings to be topographically accurate... he was always the irresponsible artist, never a photographer'. Slides of Young's maps were then shown.

In 1948, the year after the correspondence, (Young would have been 78 by then) – Eyre and Spottiswoode published an edition of *Bevis* with Young's map of the New Sea. We don't know how this publisher ended up with Young's map and we can only assume that Young wrote to them too.

In her communications with Hugoe Matthews in 1992, there is no indication why Young's daughter Marcia drew the final map for the book. She tells Hugoe that her only involvement was what appeared in the book and she says that it 'wasn't very well done either'.

Obvious features such as the 'Council Oak' and the swimming place have not been identified that Young had marked on his own original map. 'The double hedge' is included on the east despite Jones insisting that no such hedge was there... But it did reveal that Young took Jones' advice to not worry about mixing fiction with reality.

Bevis has inspired many people. Richard Jefferies would have been proud to know that such a famous mountaineer had found his boy's adventure story so compelling.

STUDY DAY: Humour in Jefferies' writing

On the 26th July 2014, sixteen Society members gathered in the Museum wondering if we would find sufficient humour in Jefferies' writing to fill a day's study. However, plenty of material was found but not the 'Christmas-cracker' jokes or *double-entendres* that pervaded the Victorian music hall era or newspapers of that time. Andrew Rossabi gave a brief overview of Victorian humour although Queen Victoria may or may not have been amused. For examples of wit, three characters from Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) were cited. Rachel Poyser in George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) lights up the page in the book when she appears. For sheer laughs, Jerome K Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* (1889), George Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892) and *Punch* (founded in 1841) were cited as a major source of amusement. Then there were the limericks and nonsense verses of Edward Lear, the bizarre situations in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and the wit of Oscar Wilde.

John Price looked at 'Jefferies and Satire' taking us back to the classics and the comic play-write, Aristophanes. Satire exaggerated or ridiculed current events with the hope of bringing about change. John illustrated the satire in Jefferies' writing by reading an extract from Jefferies' 1873 short story 'Jack Brass' (*RJS Journal* No. 8) on using wealth to gain political power. After explaining the historic background to the creation of the Suez Canal, Mr Price read Jefferies' 1876 parody of the situation in 'Suez-Cide!! or how Miss Britannia bought a dirty puddle and lost her sugar-plums,' (this article will be published in the next Society' *Journal*). Finally he read from 'The Country Sunday' (*Field and Hedgerow*) that drew attention to the time when the parish clergyman had a legal right to fine people a shilling if they didn't attend church. Jefferies describes the 'shillings' enjoying life away from church!

Jean Saunders read a sketch of a lawless, reprobate village in the foothills of the downs – called Sarsen – where 'nobody cares for anybody', and 'vicar-baiting' was a pastime (*The Amateur Poacher*, Ch VI); a description of Jim the ditcher and his wife (who had 19 children) in 'John Smith's Shanty' where Jim is resisting attempts by the squire's 'missus' to get his youngest into school; the description of the local squire, MP and buffoon Cornleigh Cornleigh (*The Dewy Morn*, Ch.34) and some one-liners about chess, doctors, work, and MPs from the note-books of Richard Jefferies.

Michael Parrott read from 'The Bathing Season' for his description of life by and on the West Pier at Brighton – the pointless promenading of the ladies who appeared not to notice the beauty of the sea or the beach, the band of people who are washed away by a wave and the elbow-jogger who got in everyone's way, particularly his.

Peter Bainbridge treated us to a description of 'a modern county curate' in *Hodge and his Masters* (Ch.XV), who was determined to get through a deep muddy puddle blocking his path much to the amusement of two

women labourers and boys who watched the curate roll up his trousers and wade through.

Andrew Rossabi read about the people at Woolthorpe who did not care for the Lady Day Fair in *Amaryllis at the Fair* (Ch.XIV) 'all they cared for was to stand still and shove' and drink beer in the Lion and in the Lamb. He also read the description on the memorial of William Noade and his four wives (*Jefferies' Land*) where Jefferies writes:

This Noad, one might imagine, was a Mahomedan at least, since he managed to have the solacement of as many wives as is allowed by the Koran to the followers of the prophet, and a clever fellow, too, to steer clear of bigamy. Four wives—this is the 'Wife of Bath' reversed. If any one understood what matrimonial life is, one would think this Noad must have done so. What a pity he did not write his memoirs for the guidance of future husbands!

Phyllis Treitel was staggered by the questions posed by Ronald Hook (a senior English master at Vardean School, Brighton) in his 1940 selection from Jefferies' writing designed for school-children. After an extract about Oby the poacher (*The Amateur Poacher*), that included conversations of working people that appeared to poke fun at the use of dialect, Hook asks students if they found any humour in this story, to name the humorous parts and to explain why it was funny – a task that students these days would find daunting!

John Price read from an introduction to *Hodge* where Harold (Jefferies' son) comments that his father had a good sense of humour. Eric Jones suggested that Jefferies might not have been a humorous chap because he didn't have close associates with whom to share jokes.

Helen Newman read a timeless piece from *Greene Ferne Farm* where Valentine helps an old lady by carrying her pile of sticks and she has nothing good to say about anything or anyone, including her helper.

John Price read the tragic but amusing stupidity of Miller Bond when Martial tries to rescue Mary from the millpond (*The Dewy Morn*) and is stuck himself in the sheer-walled cavity. Bond is resigned to the fact that they are going to drown and his efforts to help them are sheer farce.

Andrew Rossabi read out what Edward Thomas had to say about Jefferies' use of humour in the biography:

He had not humour according to the largest definition that can be given to the word. It was not twisted inextricably into the strands of his nature; it was often invisible, and let us be thankful for it that yet another man of genius has been denied this heaven descended monkey as a lifelong inseparable companion. Yet humour he had, if humour can be intermittent. It takes several forms. It perceives the minor inconsistencies of life, and can become jocular. The commonest form is archness, a quiet dryness, with a twist in the phrasing peculiar to him — something so personal as to suggest a trick of speech or facial expression.

Thomas's quote summed up the position. It was a most enjoyable Study Day. We laughed more often than ever before at a Richard Jefferies' event.

DID GEORGE ORWELL READ JEFFERIES?

Andrew Rossabi, May 2014

His only direct reference to him, so far as I know, comes in the essay 'Inside the Whale' (1940). The essay focuses on Henry Miller's novel *Tropic of Cancer* but contains a general survey of the literature of the inter-war period, in the course of which Orwell tries to explain the appeal of A.E. Housman's poetry – of *A Shropshire Lad* in particular – to 'the generation born round about 1900'. He observes that Housman was a 'country' poet whose verse was full of place-names like Wenlock Edge and Bredon Hill, and steeped in nostalgia for the 'blue, remembered hills'. He notes that apart from war poetry most poems of the period were about the country:

Just before, just after, and for that matter, during the war was the great age of the 'Nature poet', the heyday of Richard Jefferies and W.H. Hudson. Rupert Brooke's 'Grantchester', the star poem of 1913, is nothing but an enormous gush of 'country' sentiment, a sort of accumulated vomit from a stomach stuffed with place-names.

Considered as a poem 'Grantchester' is something worse than worthless, but as an illustration of what the thinking middle-class young of that period *felt* it is a valuable document. (1)

From the tone of the passage, and the close juxtaposition of his name with that of the contemptuously dismissed Brooke, you might suppose that Orwell did not care for Jefferies. You might further conclude that he was hostile to all forms of nature and country writing. But the latter at least was very far from being the case. In the Autumn Newsletter for 1993/4 I drew attention to Orwell's feeling for the country and interest in natural history, evident both in his novels and in such pieces as 'Some Thoughts on the Common Toad'. There Orwell provided an expert account of the creature's spawning habits, noted the especial beauty of its eye at that season ('a toad has about the most beautiful eye of any living creature'), and celebrated it as a harbinger of spring who 'unlike the skylark and the primrose, has never had much of a boost from the poets'.(2)

Browsing recently through the last volume of Orwell's *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* I came across another piece on the coming of spring. Orwell, let it be said, was most at his ease in his 'As I Please' column for the left-wing *Tribune*, writing as if he were wearing a pair of worn and especially comfortable carpet slippers. The piece dates from 1947, that is, from the depression years after the war when life was grim, make no mistake. The month is March; Orwell is at his desk in his room in 27b Canonbury Square, Islington, N1; and for the past five minutes he's been gazing out the window, 'keeping a sharp look-out for signs of spring':

There is a thinnish patch in the clouds with a faint hint of blue behind it, and on a sycamore tree there are some things that look as if they might be buds. Otherwise it is still winter. But don't worry! Two days ago, after

a careful search in Hyde Park, I came on a hawthorn bush that was definitely in bud, and some birds, though not actually singing, were making noises like an orchestra tuning up. Spring is coming after all, and recent rumours that this was the beginning of another Ice Age were unfounded. In only three weeks' time we shall be listening to the cuckoo, which usually gives tongue about the fourteenth of April. Another three weeks after that, and we shall be basking under blue skies, eating ices off barrows and neglecting to lay up fuel for next winter. (3)

Exclaiming 'how appropriate 'the ancient poems in praise of spring have seemed these last few years', Orwell says his favourite is the first two stanzas of the Robin Hood ballad:

When shaws be sheen and swards full fair,
And leaves both large and long,
It is merry walking in the fair forest
To hear the small birds' song.

The woodwele sang and would not cease,
Sitting upon the spray,
So loud he wakened Robin Hood
In the greenwood where he lay. (4)

You will probably recognise the first stanza because Jefferies used it as the motto or epigraph for *The Gamekeeper at Home*. The stanzas come from 'Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne', one of the ballads published in 1765 by Bishop Thomas Percy in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, which from an early age was one of Jefferies' favourite books.(5)

It is at least possible that Orwell came to the ballad through reading *The Gamekeeper at Home*. But whether he did or not matters less than how well he writes about nature, how close he is in spirit to Jefferies, and how astute are his remarks about nature writing. In the toad article he makes the point that the pleasures of spring are available to everybody and cost nothing. He makes the further key point for a readership largely urban, that nature can be found alive and kicking even in the middle of the city.

Even in the most sordid street the coming of spring will register itself by some sign or other, if it is only a brighter blue between the chimney pots or the vivid green of an elder sprouting on a blitz site. Indeed it is remarkable how Nature goes on existing unofficially, as it were, in the very heart of London. I have seen a kestrel flying over the Deptford gasworks, and I have heard a first-rate performance by a blackbird in the Euston Road. There must be some hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of birds living within the four-mile radius, and it is rather a pleasing thought that none of them pays a halfpenny of rent. (6)

Orwell's remarks have added poignancy because he was writing against a background of bomb-sites, ration-books and deprivation:

As for the spring, not even the narrow and gloomy streets round the Bank of England are quite able to exclude it. It comes seeping in everywhere, like one of those new poison gases which pass through all filters. The spring is commonly referred to as 'a miracle', and during the past five or six years this worn-out figure of speech has taken on a new lease of life. After the sort of winters we have had to endure recently, the spring does seem miraculous, because it has become gradually harder and harder to believe that it is actually going to happen. Every February since 1940 I have found myself thinking that this time winter is going to be permanent. But Persephone, like the toads, always rises from the dead at about the same moment. Suddenly, towards the end of March, the miracle happens and the decaying slum in which I live is transfigured. Down in the square the sooty privets have turned bright green, the leaves are thickening on the chestnut trees, the daffodils are out, the wallflowers are budding, the policeman's tunic looks positively a pleasant shade of blue, the fishmonger greets his customers with a smile, and even the sparrows are quite a different colour, having felt the balminess of the air and nerved themselves to take a bath, their first since last September.(7)

Postscript: Proof positive that Orwell read Jefferies comes thanks to George Miller's exemplary *Discoveries* series. In an addendum to *Discoveries V: 'Among the Greats'* published in the Spring Newsletter 2010 (pp.21-23), Miller notes that although Orwell made a somewhat slighting reference to Jefferies [in 'Inside the Whale'] '...on another occasion, asked what he considered the best books ever written, he came up with a list of 38 titles which included *The Amateur Poacher*.' As reference Miller gives George Orwell, *A Patriot After All, 1940-41*, Secker and Warburg, 1999; and *A Kind of Compulsion, 1903-1936*, Secker and Warburg, 1998.

Sources:

- (1) 'Inside the Whale,' in *Selected Essays* (Penguin Books in association with Secker & Warburg, 1957), p.21. Cited (in part) by Kim Taplin in 'Something that was greater than Jefferies' books,' *Richard Jefferies: A Spirit Illumined, 100 Years of Redemption through Nature, A Centenary Symposium* (Swindon: The Richard Jefferies Society), p.10.
- (2) 'Some Thoughts on the Common Toad,' *Tribune*, 12 April 1946, collected in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, Volume IV, *In Front of Your Nose 1945-1950*, Edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Penguin Books in association with Martin Secker & Warburg, 1970), [pp.171-5], p.173.
- (3) 'As I Please,' *Tribune*, 28 March 1947, *op.cit.*, p.359.
- (4) *ibid.*, p.359. Orwell has modernised the spelling.
- (5) Edward Thomas states he had seen Jefferies' copy inscribed 'with "J.R. Jefferies, 1863," on the fly-leaf'-i.e. when he was aged fifteen. (p.41 of the Faber and Faber 1978 edition)
- (6) Orwell, *op.cit.*, p.173. The phrase about 'Nature... existing unofficially, as it were, in the very heart of London' reminds us that Richard Mabey's excellent book about nature in and around the city (based mainly on his observations on 'the outskirts of London and West Middlesex') was entitled *The Unofficial Countryside* (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1973; Sphere Books, 1978).
- (7) Orwell, *op.cit.*, pp.173-4.

OBITUARIES for five very special Members by *Jean Saunders*, August 2014.

John Webb was born on the 9th April 1935 in East Ham, London. The son of Albert Henry (a famous detective involved in the 'Acid Bath' murder) and Joan. John had one sister – Sally (Vincent) who died on Boxing Day, 2013. She was a regular writer and columnist for the *Guardian*.



John had four main passions: music, Richard Jefferies, his home in Wiltshire and cats. John's interest in brass musical instruments was sparked at an early age when he discovered the bugle in the Boys' Brigade. He went on to study trumpet at Westminster City School where he joined the orchestra and was then a trumpeter in the Royal Air Force during national service. John later became a commercial artist, performing in various jazz bands for recreation. As well as being a musician, John worked in an advertising firm as Creative Director, later forming his own agency producing and directing commercials. On retiring to Wiltshire, with his vast brass instrument collection, John started to build instruments namely 600 natural trumpets, sacbuts and hand horns.

He loved his isolated home at Padbrook where he lived with a succession of cats, those surviving him were the Beast and a stray called Sally. He was an active Member of the Richard Jefferies Society – he was our Librarian and looked after our library collection at his home – and was a regular volunteer at the Richard Jefferies Museum. John was a nature lover and was drawn to Jefferies' articles on wild life. For three years he provided illustrated extracts of Jefferies' writing to the *Swindon Advertiser* as monthly 'Nature Notes' selecting extracts appropriate for the month that reflected the flora and fauna prevalent at the time. John also

published three books reflecting his interests. *Town Cats* is a collection of his photographs with witty and perceptive comments; and the two volumes of *Trombomania* are cartoons reflecting the life of orchestral Brass Players.

I got on well with John – he was a loner that needed his own space – and as a fellow nature and cat lover (they can be compatible), I will miss him. John died at home on the 6th March 2014, after a prolonged period in hospital with prostate cancer. His friend, Kathleen, looked after him until the end. The Beast and Sally have joined my family and are doing fine.

Our President, Andrew Rossabi, added: John Webb was a stalwart of the Society for many years and of course made an enormous contribution to its work by the video he made about Jefferies ('Jefferies Land') with the help of members, by the series of articles he edited for the *Swindon Advertiser*, and not least by his camera. He had a wry down-to-earth outlook on life laced with humour. I always enjoyed his readings on Study Days, his owlish look and deep, slightly breathless voice.

I regularly attend the monthly Bach Cantata series at the Royal Academy of Music, which has a museum of historical instruments. A few years ago John's name appeared in the programme notes for one of the cantatas, where he was acknowledged for supplying one of the brass instruments (I've forgotten which). I rang John to tell him and though he responded in his typically dry way I think he was quietly chuffed.

He will be much missed.

Brian Burrows died at the Great Western Hospital, Swindon on the 20th April 2014, aged 93. He was an environmental campaigner who supported direct action as a means to an end. He was always there to help at the Richard Jefferies Museum and in the gardens, even until recently. He made some very generous donations to the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust that were used to improve the Museum and he donated many books to the Museum library.

A regular letter writer to the *Swindon Advertiser*, he was one of the main volunteers who collected over 52,000 signatures on the Save Coate petition and we spent many days/weeks/years together pushing for a better Swindon.

Brian was co-author of two books published in the 1990s: *Into the 21st Century: A Handbook for a Sustainable Future* and *Food Security in the 21st Century: Safeguarding the World Food Supply through Sustainable Agriculture* (Adamantine Studies on the 21st Century).

Brian lived in Old Town, Swindon. One of his favourite pass-times was walking. Even beyond the age of 90 he would walk to the Museum and even further to Liddington Village Hall for our AGMs. He was an example to us all.

I got to know Brian around 25 years ago. He was new to Swindon,

having lived in Milton Keynes and was part of the development team that oversaw the building of the new town. Brian was always keen to help and was well aware of the failings of Swindon 'new town' – and of Swindon Council's lack of appreciation of culture, history, landscape and nature.



Brian Burrows inspects a damaged sapling after vandals attack the trees at Coate Farm orchard, June 2007

Mark Daniel died on the 9th June 2014 in Strathcarron Hospice, Scotland. It is with joy that we remember Mark and with an enormous amount of gratitude. Mark was a remarkable individual – determined, generous and very kind. He was born on the 10th December 1925. Mark's dedication to Richard Jefferies and, in particular, his love of his favourite book *Bevis* was second to none. When John Fowles died, his wife wrote to the Society to say that John read *Bevis* every year as a special treat to himself. Mark did more. Whether it was mapping out Coate Farm or the 'New Sea'; his guided walks around Coate Water; his nurturing of the Richard Jefferies Russet apple tree; his articles promoting Jefferies; maintaining Jefferies' grave at Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing; his fundraising to save Coate Farm; his help at the Museum; his donations that included a matchlock gun he made as per instructions in *Bevis* (he used a piece of ash from the Coate garden to make the body of the gun) – he undertook all tasks with enthusiasm.

Not long after his move from Brighton to Scotland to live nearer his son, Mark wrote to me in August 2013:

Good to hear that the Russet is doing OK, after all the heartache and tears that went into its creation. My own tree in Brighton had only about half a dozen apples and I'm wondering if, since the Brogdale Nurseries at Faversham couldn't identify the variety, it was allowed to die out in the 19th Century as being a biennial with a rather poor flavour.

I'm not going to ask the new owners what happened to Spider. I'd either get downright untruths or an honest answer which might upset me. Thank you for the particularly appropriate card with the Shepard drawing from *Bevis* – I've never enjoyed a book more.

My husband and I raised many a smile recounting Mark's story about his Spider when he told us that he had saved its life by feeding it flies! He thought that it looked poorly and Spider lived in one of Mark's rooms for years.



Mark repairing Richard Jefferies' grave in 1984



We all know about Mark's extraordinary efforts to save the russet apple tree at Coate Farm mentioned in Jefferies' writing. The tree died but not before Mark had taken cuttings and propagated a tree in his back-garden in Brighton. He then took cuttings from this tree and successfully planted a sapling at Coate Farm a few years ago. As Brogdale could not identify the variety, Mark had the apple registered as the Richard Jefferies Russet. A Memorial Plaque (pictured above) will be placed by the tree soon. We hope that this tree lives another hundred years. It was an honour to have known Mark.

Candida Lycett Green died on the 19th August from pancreatic cancer aged 71. It was a delight to meet her and her little dog at the Richard Jefferies Museum in October 2011. I had given her information before about the Save Coate! campaign that was published in an article for *Country Life* (20 Jan 2005) which started:

My father, John Betjeman, famously loved Swindon, for a long time his local town. On this very day 30 years ago, he fronted a national appeal together with Ronald Blythe, Spike Milligan, Richard Adams, Henry Williamson, Johnny Morris and others to save the farmbuildings round Richard Jefferies' birthplace at Coate. Swindon's rightful heritage, the landscape, whose every field, copse and gateway inspired Jefferies, could be lost for ever under a sodium-lit urban sprawl. Today I take up my cudgel...

I remember her having trouble with her dog as she walked from Coate Water to Coate Farm. Her dog was far more interested in chasing a rabbit in Brook Field than coming into a museum. Candida was writing an article for *The Oldie* as part of her 'Unwrecked England' series. The article entitled 'The Richard Jefferies Museum and Landscape, Swindon', appeared in the December 2011 edition of *The Oldie*. Candida described the expansion of Swindon swallowing up villages, woods and countryside that she remembered as a child and then she wrote about her visit to the Richard Jefferies Museum:

But there is one corner left untouched – the gentle, pastoral landscape which was the inspiration of Swindon's famous son, Richard Jefferies, one of our greatest country writers and visionaries. 'One day the area will be glorified,' Edward Thomas wrote in his biography of Jefferies, 'It will be known as Jefferies' Landscape and it will be as Selborne was to Gilbert White.'

If you take the very smallest road off the Coate roundabout you can park under trees beside Coate Water, the setting for Jefferies' classic children's book *Bevis: The Story of a Boy*. 'So we will,' said Bevis, 'we will find a new sea where no one has ever been before. Look! There it is; is it not wonderful?' And it is...

... A new cinder path leads along the familiar hedgeline to Coate Farmhouse where Jefferies was born in 1848 and which is now looked after by Richard Jefferies Society volunteers. Although the adjacent road has now become a dual carriageway, once you are through the front door you feel calm. It is one the nicest museums you could wish for – well loved, cosy and intimate. From the living room there is a view of the mulberry tree mentioned in a poem and the deep shade of the evergreen oak planted by Richard's father. From his study-cum-teenage-bedroom on the attic floor, his simple drop-leaved writing table stands where it always did, by the window which looks onto the orchard and the Sun Inn beyond...

... It seems unbelievable that despite the large number of brownfield sites in Swindon, Persimmon and Redrow are appealing to build 900 houses here. It will kill Richard Jefferies' landscape stone dead.

After reacquainting herself with the Museum, she joined the Society there and then and has subsequently taken out membership subscriptions for her grandson and friends, including Richard Ingrams. In common with her father, she has championed Richard Jefferies and Jefferies' Land. We are most grateful for her support and very sad to hear of her loss.

Stuart Taylor. As we went to press, we were very sorry to learn that Stuart Taylor died earlier this year. He was Richard Jefferies' great grandson and lived in Canada with his wife Margaret. They have 5 sons and I met their youngest, Corey, and his future wife, Teresa, on a visit to the Richard Jefferies Museum 7 years ago. They were a charming couple and now have two girls of their own named Octavia and Keela. Both Taylor families are Members of the Society. Our condolences for the loss of a husband, father, grand-father and great grand-father. We have invited Corey to write some memories of his father.

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Looe Island Then and Now by Carolyn Clarke (United P.C Publisher, Feb 2014) describes the author's time spent working as a volunteer on Looe Island in the early 1970s. The Island was owned by two sisters who, despite being offered vast sums of money by property developers, later bequeathed the island to Cornwall Wildlife Trust on the death of Babs, the younger sister, in 2004. The book includes Carolyn's experiences of Island living together with the history of the Island including the recent Time Team archaeological dig and tales of pagan worship, Christian practices, a war time bombing, daffodil farming, Island crafts, eccentric and fascinating inhabitants, shipwrecks, buried treasure, smuggling, ghosts, myths and strange examples of synchronicity. Carolyn Clarke said that Jefferies' lyrical style and eye for detail has had a profound influence on her own writing. All profits from the sale of the book, which can be ordered on-line from Amazon or from any bookseller, will be donated to CWT who are committed to retaining Looe Island as a wildlife sanctuary.

Jeremy Hooker, former President of the Society, has written a memoir entitled *Openings: a European Journal* (Shearsman Books, March 2014). In his own words: 'In contrast to my settled life in Wales during the 1970s, covered by *Welsh Journal*, the period represented by this journal was one of movements from place to place and country to country. ... I made numerous journeys between Holland and England, within Holland, and to places in other parts of Europe. After I had spent several weeks as writer in residence on a kibbutz, Mieke joined me and we travelled to Jerusalem and other places in Israel/Palestine. These are the main outward movements, through which my experience of the world was widened, that give one meaning to the title of this selection from my journal.'

CITINGS OF JEFFERIES

An article in the *Times Literary Supplement* dated the 21st February 2014 (pp.14-15) cleared up a mystery for us regarding the recipient of the Katherine Mansfield letter to her publisher that we purchased amongst the Samuel Looker archive in November 2011 (see RJS Annual Report and Autumn Newsletter 2012-13, p.19). How might Looker have acquired the letter? The *TLS* article, entitled 'How vicious I looked! New Katherine Mansfields emerge from Archives' was written by Gerri Kimber, the Chair of the Katherine Mansfield Society. Ms Kimber was supplied with a scan of the letter last year that she included in the article and stresses the importance that Katherine Mansfield attached to the order in which her stories should be published in the last collection of her works before she died. Ms Kimber managed to decipher to whom Katherine Mansfield had addressed her letter – it was Michael Sadleir. We know from correspondence in the Looker file that Sadleir and Looker became good friends as well as work colleagues. Richard Jefferies and the Society were both given a credit in the article, for which we are grateful.

Peter Robins supplied a copy of an article published in the *Antiques Trade Gazette* on the 22nd February 2014 ('Cataloguing the cream of 19th century writing', by Ian McKay, p.36). Mr McKay reported on 'books and manuscripts that touched greatness on offer' at auction houses and included a report of the Richard Jefferies' collection sold by Dominic Winter on December 12 (see Spring newsletter 2014). He reports that 'the collection opened with a £1300 bid on an 1873 first of *Reporting, Editing & Authorship. Practical Hints for Beginners in Literature*. In original morocco-backed boards, this slim volume of just 33pp was Jefferies' first book and a copy that he had inscribed for his "Dear Aunt Ellen..."'. He reports on other items sold and concludes: 'All prices cited are auction records.'

'Hat Etiquette', from the London *Chronicle* circa 1912:

The etiquette of the hat. The lift, the tip, and the tap. And there are other salutes. Richard Jefferies, for instance, noted the case of the country dames who raised their bonnets to the passing stranger, and one recalls the inspiration of the country man who chanced to meet the Prince of Wales in the hunting field. He raised his cap with both hands and 'made good.' But there are catches in this etiquette of the hat. Izaak Walton pictures the sad case of the 'Judicious' Hooker and his clerk. For Hooker was of 'so mild and humble a nature that his poor clerk and he did never talk but with both their hats on or both off at the same time.' Such humility hardly deserves to catch colds!

Michael Ponting reported a page in the *Friendship Book* annual published by Thomsons which contains short thoughts for each day. The entry for the March 1st reads:

The coming of spring seems to raise people's spirits. When that season is in the air we seem happier, freer with our smiles and our steps are lighter.

Well, that's how it often seems to affect humans but the nineteenth century nature writer Richard Jefferies took the thought a little further. 'How happy the trees must be' he wrote 'to hear the song of the birds again in their branches! After the silence and leaflessness, to have the birds back once more and to feel them busy at nest-building; how glad to give them the moss and the fibres and the crutch of the boughs to build in.' Spring doesn't just make us feel better. It is a tonic for the whole world!

Norma Goodwin was browsing in an Oxfam bookshop this year and on the shelf that held books on woodwork, she found **Wood Magic!** She handed the book to the young assistant and explained what the book was about.

Jean Saunders found the following short piece in the 'nostalgia' section of the **Sussex Express** on the 20th April 2014, and entitled 'County Yarns – Hail the humble shepherd':

An 1879 book by Richard Jefferies – *Wild Life in a Southern County* – contains this fulsome tribute to the humble shepherd: 'If any labourer deserve to be paid well, it is the shepherd. Upon their knowledge and fidelity the principal profit of a whole season depends on so many farms.

The shepherd knows every single field in the whole parish, what kind of weather best suits the soil. When the hedges are grubbed and the grass grows where the hawthorn flowered, still the shepherd can point out to you where the trees stood – here an oak and here an ash. On the hills he has often little to do while the sheep graze in the hollow, waiting for hours as they eat their way. Therefore by degrees a habit of observation grows upon him. From this habit and the lapse of years, the shepherds often become local authorities and when a dispute of boundaries or water rights or right of way arises, the question is frequently finally decided by the evidence of such a man.'

On the 22nd April, in the same newspaper, there was a potted biography of Richard Jefferies entitled 'County Yarns – Champion of England's Fields and Woodlands'. This was followed up on the 28th April with an article on W H Hudson:

Last week I related the story of prolific nature writer Richard Jefferies, who is buried in Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing. It so happens that a friend of Jefferies and a contemporary author of nature books, William Henry Hudson, is also interred there. ...Like Jefferies, his life was dogged by ill-health...Hudson was keenly interested in our feathered friends and became a founding member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. As an aside, in the course of my research I was intrigued to discover that the RSPB began life as an all-women movement - the Plumage League - who were against the mass slaughter of birds simply so their feathers could be used as hat decorations. ... Hudson was a frequent visitor to Sussex and a familiar figure in Worthing where he lived out his final years. He claimed to have seen the ghost of Richard Jefferies one day while walking near Goring Church (Jefferies had died in the town in 1887). When William Hudson himself passed away in 1922 he was buried in the same cemetery. Apparently Hudson had wished to be laid to rest beside his friend Jefferies but this was not possible because by the time of his own death that part of the cemetery was full. At the entrance near the Garden of Remembrance, the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB have put up a plaque commemorating the two writers.

Peter Bainbridge supplied a copy of an article entitled 'The presence of resident agents on estates' by Jeremy Hodson in the 23rd April edition of

The Countryman's Weekly. Mr Hodson was recounting his time as a keeper on a large Yorkshire estate and commented:

In my youth I became hooked on anything written by Richard Jefferies; not only, as might be expected given my eventual career, *The Gamekeeper at Home*, but also the likes of *Amaryllis at the Fair* and *Bevis – the Story of a Boy*. To my mind the latter should be compulsive reading for any country person, no matter what their age. However, if hoping to encourage a young teenager who enjoys reading to participate in a parent's interest, one could do no better than give them a copy of *Bevis* as a present. *Bevis* and similar books will encourage youngsters.

Peter Bainbridge also supplied an excellent half-page article that appeared in *The Countryman's Weekly* on the 14th May 2014 by John Pryce. Headed 'Richard Jefferies: one of our finest countryside and sporting writers' he writes that Jefferies 'had the knack of bringing the environment to life, painting pictures with words so that today's reader sees it as it once was'.

The Countryman's Weekly (6th February 2014) launched a monthly short story competition on countryside sports with a first prize of a copy of *The Amateur Poacher* and publication of the winning entry in the magazine.

Eric Jones reported that Richard Jefferies' discussion of transportation in 'Steam on Country Roads' (1884) is given a lot of attention, including use as a heading quote, in I N Gregory and A Geddes (eds), ***Toward Spatial Humanity***, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014). He is taken (over) seriously: 'Concerning the promise of interconnected spatial history, Richard Jefferies, in some sense, showed us the way forward.'

Rebecca Welshman has been working on music (orchestral/celtic/rock mix) which includes lines from Jefferies' works. She performed these lyrics with the band – which is called **Whimwise** – at a June festival held in Wales called the Sonic Rock Solstice, and it was very well received.

David Thackray mentioned a new biography about Flora Thompson ***Dreams of the Good Life*** by Richard Mabey (Allen Lane, £16.99) where, of course, Mabey includes mention of Jefferies.

Jean Saunders came across an article entitled 'Flexible hours won't apply to the working underclass' in the ***Western Morning News*** on the 2nd July 2014 by a regular correspondent. Ron Bendell, who was once a weather reporter on south-west regional news, claims that he is related to Richard Jefferies and that Jefferies 'probably picked up most of his story lines [in pubs] so I am, after all, just keeping up a tradition.'

Andrew Rossabi provided two references to Richard Jefferies in ***A Year of Sport and Natural History*** edited by Oswald Crawford. Crawford (1834-1909) was founder editor of the *New Quarterly Magazine*, to which Richard Jefferies contributed five articles in the middle years of the 1870s. In December 1876 Jefferies wrote Crawford a long letter about some natural history papers he planned to write for his magazine. In the letter, in which

Edward Thomas justly said he expanded more than usual, Jefferies dilated upon the natural history of Coate Reservoir and gave a virtual prospectus of his early country books, *The Amateur Poacher* in particular. Jefferies said he would try to get in some of the glamour of the green world and adopt a chatty rather than learned or laborious style. In the event, however, the papers were written for Frederick Greenwood, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, not for Crawford.

Being based in Portugal, Crawford never met Jefferies but after his death wrote an influential article about him, 'Richard Jefferies: Field-Naturalist and Litterateur', published in *The Idler* in October 1898.

Educated at Eton and Merton College, Oxford, which he left without taking a degree, Crawford in 1867 became Our Man in Oporto, which post he held with distinction for 24 years, showing particular courage during the anti-British riots that took place towards the end of his term. He spent his leisure in field sports and literary pursuits. He wrote two books about his travels in Portugal, still valuable for their pictures of the peasantry and rural customs, and several novels, of which *Sylvia Arden* (1877) was the most successful. A keen sportsman, he compiled and edited an anthology, *A Year of Sport and Natural History*, published by Chapman & Hall (of which he was managing editor) in 1895.

Two pieces by H.H.S. Pearse in the latter work contain references to Jefferies. In 'The Tricks of Poachers' (pp.133-141) Pearse approvingly cites a sentence from *The Amateur Poacher*:

Of the many wise things written by Richard Jefferies, and in the writing of which he showed how keen an observer of nature he was, none contained more truth in ten words than the sentence: 'All poaching is founded upon the habits of wild creatures'. A plain and simple dogmatism of that kind seems so obvious when said, and yet how few of us have the gift to say it. (p.133)

In 'The Habits of the Wild Red Deer' (pp.195-9) Pearse writes:

Richard Jefferies in all his researches did not discover by what means stags get at their favourite apples, higher than a tall man can stretch his arm. If you watch an orchard night after night, however, taking care that deer cannot get scent of your presence, you may, perchance, see a great stag raise himself on his hind legs and then, leaping up, strike at the boughs with his strong antlers, using them as a woodman does a billhook. Thus he gets enough for an ample meal, which he eats so voraciously that he takes no trouble to crunch the apples, but swallows them whole. (pp.197-8)

The frontispiece by Stanley Berkeley shows a herd of red deer in an apple orchard, with the stag on his hind legs acting in the manner described by Pearse.

Margaret Hunt was listening to **BBC Radio 4** on the 1st August 2014 when Will Self referred to Richard Jefferies and *After London* in 'A Point of View' in connection with his talk on the subject of 'The Changing Nature of Utopias'. The late 19th century saw something of a craze in the publication of utopian fiction. Self believes that many novels were

implicitly optimistic in that they imagined better futures, and some even spurred political movements as was the case with Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000-1887*.

Michael Parrott supplied a copy of a **Worthing Heritage Trail** leaflet (No. 6), recently published by the Worthing Heritage Alliance, that illustrates a walk around Broadwater Cemetery indicating notable burials. The Friends of Broadwater Cemetery provided the text for the leaflet which, of course, includes information about Richard Jefferies and W.H. Hudson and the memorial garden to both.

Society member, Dawn Smith, is making a dress based on the one at the Richard Jefferies Museum that once belonged to Lizzie Cox. Lizzie was Richard Jefferies' cousin to whom she was once engaged and who lived across the road from Coate Farm. Ms. Smith's dress is being created for a Worthing Community Play.

Meadowland: The Private Life of an English Field by John Lewis-Stempel (Doubleday, 2014). Peter Bainbridge writes that this is a month by month collection of observations of an ancient meadow near Hay-on-Wye on the author's farm. This was my bedtime book and being less than two pages long for most observations, it was a great way to end the day, reading several pages before nodding off! Lewis-Stempel says Jefferies was correct on watching animals when he stated in *The Gamekeeper at Home*: 'This is the secret of observation; stillness, silence and apparent indifference to some instinctive way these wild creatures learn to distinguish when one is or is not intent upon them in a spirit of enmity; and if very near, it is always the eye they watch. So long as you observe them as it were, from the corner of the eyeball, sideways, or look over their heads at something beyond, it is well.' At the time the author was watching an otter in the river and says he was a 'good student of Jefferies' in his observing. However, his dog Rupert was unaware of 'Jefferies rule of observation'! With a comprehensive bibliography, entitled 'Meadowland Library', it lists *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *The Amateur Poacher* and *The Life of the Fields* as the Jefferies' books to be found on the author's shelves.

Andrew Rossabi came across a review of the book in the ***Spectator***. The reviewer John Akeroyd described it as 'a portrait of one man's meadow... an extended essay in loose diary form, [that] traces across a single year the changing face of John Lewis-Stempel's own working hay-meadow [in Herefordshire]... He joins Adrian Bell, John Stewart Collis, A.G. Street and other literary farmers... and is a worthy successor to the man who is clearly his mentor, the late 19th-century countryside writer Richard Jefferies, while at the same time expressing a truly contemporary voice'.

Pete Bainbridge has discovered a multitude of citations. He writes:

A Moucher's Tale subtitled 'A Lifetime of Rabbit Catching' by Phil Lloyd

(Chalk Warren Books, 2006). This mainly anecdotal book is a collection of tales and advice from many years catching rabbits with dogs and ferrets. I really enjoyed reading it, laughed out loud and was close to tears when he spoke about losing his dogs. Lloyd starts off in his introduction by mentioning Jefferies. 'I've always been a moucher. But just what is a moucher? Frequent references to him are made by Richard Jeffries (*sic*) in his book, *The Gamekeeper at Home* and also in *The Amateur Poacher*. It is curious to note that both of these pieces were first published anonymously in 1878; the author was obviously embarrassed to be associated with such a dodgy kind of character, and who can really blame him. Jeffries (*sic*) was not only a superbly gifted writer, he was also an astute observer of everyday rural life during that period, and his works are rightly acclaimed as being genuine classics'.

The Airgun Hunter's Year by Ian Barnett (Merlin Unwin, 2011). Barnett in his foreword mentions that it is easy to find books on what guns or kit to buy, identifying and shooting quarry and a host of other technical issues. But what is missing 'is the countryside itself. Anyone who has read the passionate, descriptive works of the old country writers will grasp what I mean. The late 'BB' on wildfowling, Richard Jeffries (*sic*) on rural matters in a bygone time, Brian Plummer on lurchers and terriers, Ian Niall, Jones and Woodward... the list is long. Standing behind a gun and knowing how to shoot is one thing. Understanding the natural world in front of the muzzle is another'.

Ian Niall Part of His Life by Andrew McNeillie. Niall famously wrote *The Poacher's Handbook* and an introduction to the 1993 White Lion edition of *The Amateur Poacher*. This Biography by his son has numerous Jefferies' mentions. When talking about writers he liked: '...English ruralist Richard Jefferies... except for *The Story of My Heart* which embarrassed him (as who might it not embarrass?). A reviewer of one of John McNeillie's later books made a comparison with Jefferies, but said there could be no useful analogy between the two: "Jefferies was an ill mystic" while the author under review was "a very healthy and most likeable semi-mystic"'. The following is from an interview he did for *Books of Today*, in January 1949: 'He likes the work of Richard Jefferies because he was a sort of country idler – "I think of him hanging over gates or mooning along lanes".'

Journal of a North Devon Nature Lover by Stewart Beer (Edward Gaskell, 2000). On a similar month by month theme to *Meadowland*, Beer's book covers a much wider area and is a 'meatier' read. This isn't a criticism, as I enjoyed this book too. He quotes freely from many sources. He says of Jefferies in his introduction, that his parents bought him the ten-volume *Pictorial Knowledge*, which inspired his life long interest in nature. In Volume 7 he came across a brief biography of Jefferies. It was many years before he obtained any of his works 'and what a revelation they turned out to be: Jefferies surely is the bright star in the firmament

of nature writers. I have quoted from him freely throughout this book'. When lying in a bed of wild flowers and grasses in June at Branton Burrows he closes his eyes and '...the mind is filled with the exceeding beauty of the things, and their great wondrousness and marvel' and 'the delicacy and beauty of thought or feeling is so extreme that it cannot be inked in...'. My only gripe is that Beer doesn't mention where the quotations are from, just who wrote them.

Pugs and Drummers: Ferrets and Rabbits in Britain by John Marchington (Faber & Faber, 1978). This book covers the historical, natural history of rabbits and ferrets and the practical side of ferreting. Marchington talks about weasels catching and killing adult rabbits and discusses Jefferies' account of a chase from chapter VI in *The Gamekeeper at Home*. He says that Jefferies' account 'whilst obviously fictitious in itself, is equally based on observation.' Poaching is also discussed and he mentions 'The raiders, who came in from gangs armed with guns and shoot in the preserves, are usually the scum of manufacturing towns.' Jefferies' 'mouchers' are mentioned too with their free ranging lurcher dogs who 'sneak about the hedgerows on Sundays... and snap up a rabbit or hare'; both from chapter VII.

I recently acquired two books of walks which include walks that have a Jefferies' connection. ***Nine Downland Walks*** by the North East Wiltshire Group of Ramblers, 2010. As the title suggests nine walks between Swindon and Marlborough – 3 to 7 ½ miles long. Several of the walks have specific Jefferies' mentions. I recently did the Chiseldon and Hodson three mile walk which includes a reference to the Keeper's Cottage at Chiseldon. It was easy to follow the map and directions.

Footsteps 2 The Cream of Walks in North-East Wiltshire by Chris Cole (Hobnob Press, 2008). Twenty walks are described in this 124 page book. However, two are of interest as they specifically deal with Jefferies. *A Seaside Adventure* is a 5 ½ mile walk around Coate Water and Hodson. With references to *Bevis*, *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *Life of the Fields* at relevant points on the walk. Also he recommends visiting the Museum. *To Eternity and Beyond* a 5 ½ mile walk around Liddington Hill and Sugar Hill. With reference to *The Story of my Heart*.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES AGM 30th-31st MAY 20124 HOSTED BY THE CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE SOCIETY

For many of us, including myself, this was our first visit to Canterbury, and like latter day pilgrims, we were naturally curious. Mention Canterbury and three things spring to mind: the Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of Anglicans here and worldwide, the murder of Thomas Becket and *The Canterbury Tales*. That it was the birthplace of the playwright Christopher Marlowe is probably not so well known. Most of our affiliated societies pay tribute to writers of the 18th and 19th

centuries, so Marlowe born in the 16th is something of an exception. Canterbury is much as I imagined it, mainly medieval in character and probably just as busy as it was in the days when pilgrims travelled from far and wide to visit the shrine of Thomas Becket.

We now have approximately 115 member societies, including three new members: S R Crockett, Anna Kavan and the Scottish Writers' Centre. Campaigns are under way to protect a Mary Webb property under threat and potential development in Laurie Lee's Slad Valley. The ALS will do what it can to support these campaigns. Facebook/Twitter are being considered as a means of encouraging new members and the publication of bookmarks has proved to be very successful. The subject chosen for the 2015 edition of ALSo will be 'Literary Houses' (both actual/fictional) and Linda Curry, editor, will be happy to consider articles for inclusion. Next year's AGM will be hosted by the Anthony Trollope Society in York.

The venue for the AGM was the college of the Cathedral, known as the King's School founded by Henry VIII. Peter Metcalfe, Chairman of the Marlowe Society welcomed the 60 or so delegates present, including our president Jenny Uglov and assured us of a splendid weekend. To whet our appetites he introduced Peter Henderson, archivist of the King's School who began by pointing to the tapestry on the wall which commemorated the 1,000 anniversary of St. Augustine's founding of the diocese of Canterbury in 597. Before the foundation of the school the building had often served to lodge pilgrims, the oldest part of it being Norman. As a school, many of its pupils had gone on to achieve recognition, those of more recent times including Somerset Maugham, Hugh Walpole and Michael Morpurgo. Even 'David Copperfield' was educated at King's. But it was not until 1970 that girls were admitted.

The morning continued with two main lectures. The first was given by Valerie Colin-Russ, former Chairman of the Marlowe Society, which she entitled 'The life and mysterious death of Christopher Marlowe'. The superlatives heaped on Marlowe are numerous; George Peele described him as 'The Muses' Darling' and Tennyson as the 'Morning Star'.

Valerie divided her talk into several sections, but the ones of major interest were whether Marlowe was, in fact, the author of Shakespeare and whether his death was fabricated to facilitate his escape to the continent. She began by giving an outline of his somewhat turbulent life. Christopher Marlowe was born in 1564 (the same year as Shakespeare). His father was a shoemaker by trade and a member of a guild; he also officiated as a church clerk and the family was reasonably well to do. Christopher, or Kit as he was known, was the second of nine children, six of whom reached adulthood. Sadly his birthplace in St. George's Street, Canterbury was bombed in the Second World War, as was the church where he was baptised. Contemporary evidence speaks of him as being a particularly bright boy, and on this basis he won a scholarship to King's School in 1578, such scholarships being awarded to boys *endowed with*

minds apt for learning. The routine was rigorous, the school day beginning at 6.00 a.m. and not finishing until 5.00 p.m. The boys had to be good at English, Latin and Greek, but a principal requirement was that they be good at music since they were the Cathedral's choristers. Play acting was also encouraged as a way of improving their fluency in Latin and Greek. Kit Marlowe seemed good at everything expected of him and won a Dr. Matthew Parker scholarship to Corpus Christi, Cambridge in 1580. By way of interest Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury (1559-1575) is responsible for our use of the phrase 'Nosey Parker', a nickname he acquired after Queen Elizabeth asked him to delve into the records of all the dispossessed monasteries, a task in which he was obviously thorough.

Marlowe intended to study for Holy Orders, but other interests intervened. He translated works by Ovid and Lucan and began to write plays. In 1684 he obtained his B.A., but in studying for his Masters he was frequently absent, such absences resulting in rumours that he was a secret Catholic and was being trained for the priesthood at the Jesuit seminary in Rheims. Unsure of his motives, or what he was engaged in, the College refused to grant him his Masters. But, as Valerie Colin-Russ explained, something surprising then happened when on 29 June 1587 Cambridge University received a letter quashing rumours regarding Marlowe's supposed visits to Rheims, for *he had no such intent* and further that *he had done her Majestie good service and deserved to be rewarded for his faithfull dealinge.....Because it was not her Majesties pleasure that anie one employed as he had been in matters touching the benefit of his Countrie should be defamed by those that are ignorant in th' affaires he went about.* On the strength of this letter Marlowe was immediately awarded his Masters. Clearly, Kit Marlowe was being employed in some secret activity by the government, along with a man called Richard Baines. There was no love lost between the two men, however, Baines accusing Marlowe of counterfeiting coins in the Netherlands, whereupon Burghley ordered them back home. This same Baines had managed to get himself ordained into the priesthood at Rheims, only to be later exposed as a spy by the seminarians who imprisoned him and only agreed to his release on condition that he sign a written confession of their own devising. Naturally wishing to save face, they made him confess to having become a lapsed Catholic who had sought to do away with them by poisoning their well. Later Marlowe was to ridicule Baines in his play *The Jew of Malta*, in which his character Barabas not only poisons wells but uses poison to do away with an entire convent.

As Valerie readily admitted, Marlowe was no saint and throughout his life seemed to have been engaged in some nefarious activity of one kind or another: coining, unpaid debts and street skirmishes to name but a few. Nor was he conventionally religious, charges of heresy being frequently levelled against him, but it seems that his work on behalf of the government gave him guaranteed immunity from the kind of punishment

to which lesser men were subjected. Whatever work he was engaged in on behalf of the government, he did not let it interfere with his work as a playwright and as a wordsmith he was exceptional, writing seven plays in all, *Doctor Faustus* and *Edward II* securing his reputation as one of the finest.

As a poet, Marlowe was probably less successful and much of his poetry is now lost. The one most remembered, *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, seems tame by comparison with his plays, and was easily parodied by his friend Walter Raleigh. Marlowe belonged to Raleigh's 'School of the Night' which met secretly to debate on new modes of thinking, especially in regard to science and religion.

Valerie then went on to talk of the mystery surrounding Marlowe's supposed death and why it remains contentious to this day. Marlowe had undoubtedly made enemies, including his erstwhile colleague Richard Baines. Rumours of Marlowe's atheistic activities were growing, and plots were hatched to condemn him as a heretic. A fellow playwright by the name of Thomas Kyd had shared rooms with Marlowe and a search was made of the rooms during Marlowe's absence. Certain documents questioning Christ's divinity were discovered, which Kyd said belonged to Marlowe. Poor Kyd became something of a scapegoat in the affair and was racked. And although Marlowe was arrested at the home of his patron, and some believe lover, Thomas Walsingham, his treatment was very different to that of Thomas Kyd. Granted bail, he merely had to report every day to the Privy Council. Then Richard Baines, eager to get the better of his old adversary, stepped into the equation by submitting a note (now known as 'Baines Note') to the Council which cited Marlowe's heretical practices, a note almost word for word similar to that the seminarians had got Baines himself to sign. The Council were forced to take action, but what action? It is a known fact that Marlowe was never seen alive again after 30th May 1593. Not long afterwards it was said that he had died in a tavern brawl at Deptford. End of story, or was it?

In 1925 the record of an inquest into the death of Christopher Marlowe came to light, which not so much solves the mystery as adds to it. Valerie spoke of this report at some length and notably that it bears the signature of the Queen's coroner, William Danby, as opposed to that of the Kent coroner. The tavern so often referred to was not a tavern at all but a respectable house (possibly a safe house) owned by Eleanor Bull where Marlowe and three fellow conspirators were whiling away their time in the garden when an argument broke out about the bill. This is famously known as 'the reckoning'. The other three protagonists were Robert Poley, Nicholas Skeres and Ingram Frizer. Matters became heated when Marlowe is said to have attacked Frizer with a dagger. In the ensuing fight Marlowe was struck above the eye, from which injury he subsequently died. But as Valerie said, it seems highly unlikely that four professional spies would come to blows over a bill to the extent that one of them was murdered. So

what did happen. We will never really know. What is clear is that Christopher Marlowe was becoming too much of a headache for the Privy Council and that they might have faked his death to facilitate his escape to the continent where he would be able to continue his work for them without fear of being apprehended. Assuming that Marlowe did escape to the continent, is it possible that he continued to write plays under the pseudonym of a certain William Shakespeare? Those more firmly persuaded contend that Shakespeare was virtually unknown before Marlowe's 'death' in 1593. Both in life and death, Kit Marlowe remains a conundrum.

Richard Wilson, Peter Hall Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Kingston University, followed this with a lecture he called 'The work and genius of Christopher Marlowe'. Taking an academic appraisal, he spoke of Marlowe's gift for writing at cross purposes, e.g. what might be and what might have been, also his association with Pembroke's Men, a company sponsored by the Herberts who staged several of his plays. Subtle references to him appear in Shakespeare's plays, but whether they were actual interpolations by Marlowe himself is again open to debate.

Although there is no statue of Marlowe there is a memorial, officially known as 'The Muse of Poetry', but more fondly as Kitty. It is here that we were invited to attend the traditional wreath laying ceremony adjacent to the new Marlowe Theatre. Three wreaths were laid, one by the Mayor, one by the Marlowe Society and the final one on behalf of The King's School. Within the memorial are niches depicting actors in the roles of Marlowe's characters, including Marlowe's own favourite, Edward Alleyn.

After lunch we were granted a rare treat, when Peter Henderson showed us part of the Kings School priceless collection of manuscripts which had been donated by one time pupil, Hugh Walpole. I think this, for many of us, was the highlight of the day. To be given the opportunity of viewing original manuscripts by some of our favourite authors was both exciting and humbling. Among this treasure trove were the writings of the Brontes, Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens and our own Richard Jefferies with his very neatly written *A Snow Story*. I emphasise 'neat,' as compared to some of the scribbles his stood out as one of the most legible.

The remainder of the afternoon was given over to Keith Carabine, who, at very short notice, due to the cancellation of an event, had agreed to give us a talk on his favourite author, Joseph Conrad, who is buried in Canterbury. From the outset, it was apparent that Keith is a very enthusiastic devotee of Joseph Conrad. Conrad was born in 1857 of Polish parents (christened as Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski), but it was a Poland that had been absorbed into the Ukraine. His parents fought avidly for Polish freedom and were imprisoned in St. Petersburg for planning an uprising and for their messianic conviction that Poland would rise from the grave like Christ. Conrad himself had something of a multi cultured upbringing, although his heart and soul remained Polish. As a sailor with

the merchant navy he learned English and eventually settled in England. His travels provided him with an insight into the cultures and beliefs of other peoples which he later expressed in his novels. According to Keith he 'gave voice to the voiceless' and wrote as no Englishman ever could of two irreconcilable truths, altruism and egoism which he outlined in a letter to the *Saturday Review* in 1901. Keith recommended *Heart of Darkness* and *Typhoon* as two of Conrad's most revealing novels.

A very full day and full of memorable events, it was rounded off by dinner at The Parrot, another very old hostelry. A bouquet of roses was presented to Frieda Barker for arranging the weekend.

On Sunday we had a more or less free day, but most of us attended Eucharist amid the magnificent setting of Canterbury Cathedral, an unforgettable experience. Glorious as it is today, one could not imagine what it would have been like when pilgrims from near and far came to worship at the jewel encrusted shrine of Thomas Becket before Henry VIII had it destroyed. The Cathedral is also the last resting place of the Black Prince and Henry IV.

Peter Metcalfe had assured us of a splendid weekend and he certainly kept his word. A big 'thank you' to the Marlowe Society for making the whole occasion so enjoyable and especially to Frieda Barker for planning the event and for ensuring that it all ran so smoothly.

Helen D Newman

26th June 2014

RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM REPORT

The Society has invited David Thackray, Chairman of the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust and Society Member, to write future updates about the Museum. This is his first report.

This has been a year of significant change at the Richard Jefferies Museum. The Trust (RJMT) has finally negotiated a five year, renewable, lease with effect from 1 September from Swindon Borough Council (SBC). Jean Saunders stood down from her direct management on behalf of the Society and I must at the start of this short review record thanks and pay tribute to her enormous contribution to the care of the museum over a number of years.

The Museum has continued to open regularly. We are also now open on Monday afternoons, and are beginning to attract more visitors from the Country Park. We have already had increased numbers of visitors, with a good proportion of children and families attracted by the garden and the offer of cream teas!

An exciting programme of events is developing. These include music and poetry workshops, community events and Society meetings. Schools visits are also being developed.

It is heartening that Society members who have volunteered as Room Stewards in the past continue to want to be involved, and we are looking

for new volunteers as well. A list of volunteer and Trustee tasks and role profiles has been drawn up and we are in regular discussion with Volunteer Action Swindon to fill new roles in the house, office and garden and in the management of the Museum. We would welcome any members of the RJS who might be interested in volunteering, or indeed in becoming a Trustee.

Our links with South West Museums are developing; in particular, we are working with Liz Neathey, our Museum Development Officer, on various streams of work in anticipation of the Accreditation process that begins later on in the year. We have been successful in getting a 'Small grant, big improvement' grant from SW Museums for the purchase of MODES, the Museum data base software, to get all our catalogues on line. This will be accompanied by digital photography of all objects both as a research and a security tool, and will allow visitors to interrogate the collections through a dedicated computer and online. The safety and security of collections is of key importance and we would like to work with the Society to ensure that digital copies of historic archive material are available to visitors and researchers.

We have also had a useful visit from the SW Museums Conservator, Helena Jaeschke. Her report will enable us to develop a prioritised approach to collections conservation. Meanwhile, the RJMT is moving forward on the development of new curatorial arrangements in order to fulfil the terms of the existing Heritage Lottery Fund agreement. We anticipate being able to carry out this work over the coming winter months, so that we have a refreshed offer for the start of the new season next spring.

Our Accreditation programme will be taking place over the winter. An Accreditation Mentor, Roger Vercoe, has been formally appointed to help us with this. We have also been accepted as part of the South West Museums Sustainability Programme, and will be working through that over the autumn. The programme involves a museum self-assessment exercise, and the further development of strategic plans, which contributes to the Museum Accreditation. If we complete both these programmes over the winter we will move into the next full season with our planning structures and processes in place.

There is no doubt that the Richard Jefferies birthplace museum at Coate is an exceptional asset, both for the Society and for the RJMT. We hope that it will continue to provide a place for visitors to come and get to know Richard Jefferies and his writings and where researchers will seek out their interests in his writing, in their local and oral history and in the social, economic, agricultural history of the period. We hope that our two organisations can work closely together to realise the vision of a museum that promotes and celebrates Richard Jefferies, his life, his work and his deep understanding of the countryside and its people.

David Thackray, 13th August 2014

SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

Building work has commenced on the access roads to the housing area off the old Coate Road. Little else about the development is known apart from an alert from the Coate Residents about the high quality of the archaeology that has been found in the field opposite their homes (opposite the Spotted Cow and milestone). A report was circulated by them in June with photographs of dozens of worked flints, axe-heads, post holes etc and their concern that the archaeologists on site were turning a blind eye to the finds and for failing to record artifacts. An official complaint is being lodged about the company undertaking the archaeological watching brief. Concerns were also raised about the proposed closure of a path through the development site that links significant pre-historic features and which is likely to have been a feature through the millennia.

OTHER NEWS

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.

Internet

This is a reminder for those of you with access to the Internet and email. There is a considerable amount of information on our website at richardjefferiessociety.co.uk where a variety of documents can be obtained for free. There is also an electronic mailing group where you can exchange information about Richard Jefferies (register with the Hon. Sec), whilst Rebecca Welshman manages a Facebook page and a Twitter page for Richard Jefferies. These are free to join.

Ben Tubbs' Adventures

There is an undated manuscript in Jefferies' hand at the British Library titled 'Ben Tubbs Adventures', possibly written around the age of 17. It is an extremely immature piece of writing about a spoilt brat of a teenager who, after running away from school and working his passage on a slave ship, ends up in America where he spends most of his time escaping Red Indians! The language used about the slaves is totally unpalatable and unacceptable by today's standards and Jefferies' racial prejudices, at that time, are clearly evident.

Some 68,500 words long, an unknown Jefferies' enthusiast took the trouble to type up the manuscript in the 1970s. Ray Morse has a photocopy of the typescript which he remembers being given by Cyril Wright.

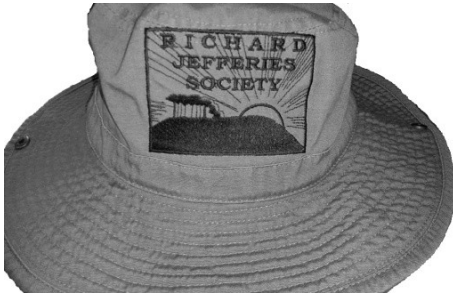
The work doesn't merit publication and Jefferies surely would prefer the 'adventure' to remain buried. However, the text has been roughly re-typed and the work is available in electronic format only (as an Adobe Acrobat Reader document – 1.1Mb pdf. file) in order that it can be made available

to students. Should anyone like an electronic copy to be emailed to them as an attachment, please contact the Hon. Sec.

John Webb Book Draw

Those of you who have bid for one of John Webb's books by Richard Jefferies will be hearing from our Chairman. The draw takes place soon.

Outback floppy hat



Peter Bainbridge has paid for the setting up of a facility to embroider the Society's logo on clothing and materials. It costs £4.20 to add the embroidery to an item – and it can be embroidered on to something of your own.

Mr Bainbridge brought some embroidered samples to the Study Day in July of a polo shirt, hoodie, floppy hat (the Outback hat as illustrated), bag and woolly hat. The floppy hat was the most favoured by those present.

Mr Bainbridge is happy to liaise with the embroiderer and deal with ordering and posting. We shall assess interest by making the outback hat available to Members for £16 including postage (there is no mark up on this price). The hat fits all heads up to 59cm in size and can be tightened with an elasticated cord adjuster. The hat is olive-green in colour, made from 100% washed cotton (machine washable), with mesh eyelets, press stud turn-ups, and chin strap. It offers protection against sunlight UPF50+.

Please contact Mr Bainbridge with your hat order by emailing him on bainbridge-peter@sky.com or write to 95 Hamfield, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9EG. Cheques for £16 should be made payable to the Richard Jefferies Society.

MAIL ORDER BOOKS

Postal sales are dealt with by the Hon. Secretary (see p.2 for contact details). We have a stock of Jefferies' books as well as our own publications (as below), albeit some are in very short supply. If you are looking for a particular book, please ask.

'Essay on Instinct' – Richard Jefferies, 2012 (pamphlet)	£2.50 (incl. Postage)
'A Natural System of Natural Defence – Richard Jefferies, 2014 (pamphlet)	£3.00 (incl. Postage)
<i>Richard Jefferies' letters to Aunt Ellen</i> , 2009 (softback)	£ 4.50
<i>Amaryllys at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Carolyn Clarke (softback)	£ 6.00
<i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009 Introduction by George Miller (softback)	£ 5.00
<i>The Interpreter: a biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008 (softback)	£ 5.00
<i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi. (softback)	£ 5.99
<i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (softback)	£ 7.00
<i>Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land</i> – Kate Tryon, 2010 (limited edition soft-back)	£12.00

(Add UK postage & packing £1.50 extra per copy)

<i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008. (hardback; £20) (Softback version £8)	£20.00 ----- £ 8.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008 (hardback)	£15.00
<i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994 (hardback)	£12.00
<i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)	£ 7.99
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman, 2010 (hardback)	£20.00
<i>The Rise of Maximin</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2012 (hardback – limited edition of 60 copies)	£20.00

(Add UK postage & packing £2.75 extra per copy)

DVD of 'Jefferies Land' – film made in 2002 - £10 includes postage.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BIRTHDAY LECTURE
SATURDAY 25th October 2014
VILLAGE HALL, CHURCH ROAD, LIDDINGTON, SN4 0HB

PROGRAMME

- 10.30 Doors open and refreshments.
- 11.00 AGM (members only) – see Agenda page 46.
- 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: Patrick Dillon
Subject: **The Presence of the Past: Richard Jefferies, the Middle Ridgeway and landscape change**
- 4.00 Tea
- 4.30 Depart

Birthday Lecture



Richard Jefferies' lifetime spans a period of intensification in agriculture, culminating in 'High Farming', followed by one of depression. The ups and downs of farming and the associated impacts on wildlife and the countryside are recurring themes in his writing. Viewed from the perspective of environmental history, Jefferies' works can be seen as a commentary on an ever changing relationship between economy and ecology, land-use and wildlife. In this lecture Patrick Dillon (pictured left) will offer an insight into the downland landscapes of Jefferies' country and the

changes that have taken place subsequently. The agriculturally-dominating influence of the London market, the relationship between ploughland and grassland, land holding, and countryside sports, emerge from the historical record as the chief forces that have created the landscape we see today and the wildlife that inhabits it. In

exploring these themes, he will draw on a book, ‘Middle Ridgeway’, written jointly with Eric Jones, and illustrated with landscape paintings by his daughter Anna Dillon. Publication of the book is anticipated in 2015.

Patrick Dillon is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Exeter. He joined the Richard Jefferies Society in 1982 and was formerly a member of its Council. He gave a presentation on ‘The Ecology of Jefferies Landscapes’ at the Literary Festival in 1998 celebrating the 150th anniversary of Richard Jefferies’ birth.

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. From J15 roundabout, 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 9.36 and arrives at 9.53. 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	17.19
Arrives Swindon Bus Station	16.39	17.36

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's introductory remarks.
A minute's silence in memory of John Webb, Mark Daniel, Brian Burrows, Candida Lycett Green, Stuart Taylor and Chris Jones.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of the last AGM, 2nd November 2013 (see pp.47-50)
- 4 Matters Arising
 - Richard Jefferies House & Museum at Coate
 - The Save Coate campaign
 - The Richard Jefferies Society *Journal*
 - Broadwater Cemetery
 - Storage and archives
- 5 Annual Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report (see pp.51-53)
 - Making best use of recent acquisitions to promote the study of Jefferies.
- 7 Election of Examiner of Accounts. Rob Brailsford, an accountant, has kindly offered his services.
- 8 Elections to Executive Council. The following Members are due to retire: Geoff Hirst, Eric Jones, and Duncan Pepper. Geoff Hirst is standing down from Council and as Treasurer. Election of Treasurer.
- 9 Motions (if any)
- 10 Any Other Business
 - Schedule of future meetings, and events.
 - Secretarial duties

A copy of the minutes of the 2013 AGM should be brought to the AGM.

Any motions or resolutions for debate should be sent to the Hon. Sec. before the 19th October 2014, as should nominations for Executive Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded. We strongly urge Members in the Swindon area to get involved.

MINUTES for the Annual General Meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society held at the Village Hall, Liddington on Saturday 2nd November 2013 starting at 11am

PRESENT:

Peter Bainbridge, Margaret Bathe, Gillian Bromhead, Marie & David Chesham, Peter Faulkner, Norma Goodwin, Ian Hamson, Margaret Hunt, Eric Jones, Ray & Sylvia Morse, Helen Newman, Michael Parrott, Duncan Pepper, Michael Ponting, John Price, Mike Pringle, Jean Saunders, John Shortland, David Thackray, Phyllis Treitel, and John Webb.

1. THE CHAIR

John Price welcomed Members to the Annual General Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Roger Ebbatson, Geoff Hirst, Brian Morris, Andrew Rossabi, and Richard Stewart sent their apologies.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 3rd November 2012 were accepted as a true record of proceedings. Proposed by Michael Parrott, seconded by Peter Bainbridge and carried by Members.

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was taken that matters arising relate to new information received since the Annual Report 2012-13 was published in mid September.

4.1 Richard Jefferies House and Museum at Coate

The Richard Jefferies Museum Trust recently appointed four new Trustees: Karen Barton (Swindon College), Hilda Sheehan (teacher and poet), Andrew Dawes (BBC Natural History Unit at Bristol) and David Thackray (recently retired from a senior role at the National Trust). Dr Thackray was appointed Chair; Mrs Sheehan – Treasurer, Dr Mike Pringle – HLF project leader. In the last few days, Mr Robert Slade has stepped forward as a potential candidate for the secretary's post. Apart from Mrs Barton, all the Trustees are current members of the Society. Alan Greer (Heritage manager for Swindon Council) and Kathy Sherratt, in the Council's 'Properties' department have now met to discuss the formal documentation for handing responsibility for running the museum to the Trust. A meeting between Council, Trust and Society is expected soon. Dr Pringle is preparing six permanent displays for the garden, based on *Wood Magic*, and six more for the museum. Plans for a small cafe are slowly moving on. A 'glossy' brochure about the museum has been written.

Garden work. Thanks to small groups of volunteers from Nationwide, it has been possible to keep on top of the routine gardening jobs this year. Volunteers have helped Justin Davies (Stepping Stones project) establish his raised beds in the vegetable growing area (the old cow-yard). Mr Davies intends to work on some herb beds next year. The fruit trees are doing

well but a couple need props to support them.

The Jefferies Land Conservation Trust has commissioned local builders to restore the old privy in the garden. This Trust will transfer any assets to the Richard Jefferies Society at the end of November when the organization disbands. The Chair offered a vote of thanks to the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust.

4.2 SAVE COATE UPDATE:

There is no further news about the planned development nor is there news of when the Swindon Local Plan 2026 inquiry will take place. There is a meeting called by the Planning Inspector for November 13, but the matters that concern him are strategic. For example he wants Swindon Council to explain why they shouldn't identify land for 28,000 new houses rather than 22,000! Evidently there is a liaison group consisting of the Coate developers, Liddington Parish Council and Chiseldon Parish.

5. ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

The content of the annual report was accepted as a true record of the Society's activities. Proposed — Ray Morse; seconded — Peter Bainbridge and carried by Members.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Geoff Hirst had sent his apologies – his wife is very ill and to whom our best wishes were offered. Mr Hirst had nothing to add to his statement as published on pp 44-46 of the Annual Report. No matters were raised by Members. Norma Goodwin proposed acceptance of the accounts, seconded by Michael Ponting and carried by Members.

The Chairman offered a vote of thanks to the Treasurer who is now entering his last year in office. He was praised for looking after the accounts with diligence and care for 14 years. It was announced that Peter Bainbridge has stepped forward to volunteer to take on the role when Mr Hirst retires. They plan to meet next July in order that Mr Hirst can explain the end of year accounts and three months later to go through the new Gift Aid rebate scheme. Given that our financial year and membership year runs from 1st July, Jean Saunders proposed that Peter Bainbridge should be elected as Deputy Treasurer in an interim capacity to shadow the Treasurer's duties and to take over some of the tasks as from the new financial year in 2014. This was seconded by John Price and carried by Members.

7. EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

Mr Chris Jones examined the accounts and his positive report was published in the Annual Report on page 47. 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. Jean Saunders proposed that Chris Jones be elected to serve next year; seconded by Michael Parrott and carried. A new examiner has agreed

to take over from the 2014-15 accounts: Rob Brailsford, an accountant who lives in Swindon.

8. ELECTIONS TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Helen Newman stood down but was willing to continue to represent the interests of the Society at meetings of the Alliance of Literary Societies – she is a member of their committee. The Chair expressed sincere gratitude and thanks to Miss Newman who has been on the Executive Council since 1995 and has kept us well informed about ALS business and events.

Eric Jones took the Chair for the elections. Five trustees were due to stand down but willing to stand for re-election. In order to meet our Constitution that calls for the retirement of a third of members at the end of each year, Richard Stewart and John Price agreed to stand for 2 years to even out future numbers. Simon Coleman, Roger Ebbatson and Rebecca Welshman have agreed to stand for 3 years. The Secretary had received no other nominations. It was proposed by Norma Goodwin and seconded by Jean Saunders that John Price and Richard Stewart should be re-elected to Council from 2013-2015 and Simon Coleman, Roger Ebbatson and Rebecca Welshman from 2013-2016. This was carried. The Constitution calls for the Chairman of the Society to be elected by the Executive Council, but they had no hesitation to elect John Price again, who could not do more for the Society or the Museum and is the most perfect candidate. A vote of thanks was offered to John Price.

John Price took the Chair again and offered a vote of thanks to all the Members of the Executive Council who have worked so hard behind the scenes.

9. MOTIONS

There were no motions to consider.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 The Samuel Looker Archive.

The Chairman reported that he delivered the Looker archive boxes to the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre based in Chippenham in September. Claire Skinner, at the centre, did not want the box of 47 books dedicated to Looker from various authors. These are stored at the Richard Jefferies Museum at the moment and about 7 books contain cards or letters. It was hoped that the History Centre might accept the books with letters or just the loose letters. Mr Price is awaiting a response from the History Centre about this matter. Various suggestions were made if we do have to dispose of the books separately. Eric Jones proposed and Ray Morse seconded that the fate of the unwanted books should be left to the discretion of the Chairman and Secretary. This was carried.

The Chairman reported that he signed an agreement with the History Centre regarding the loan which, after consultation with other members, was altered to acknowledge the Society should the collection be used for

published research work. The issue of copyright of unpublished letters has also been discussed with Ms Skinner and Steve Hobbs who are used to dealing with such matters. Evidently the law is about to change to make it easier to publish letters but at the moment, the writer (or heir) of the letter owns copyright whilst the recipient is the owner but has no right to copy. As far as copyright of Samuel Looker's own unpublished material is concerned, Mrs Pauline Jacques has been approached and is happy for us to publish her grandfather-in-law's unpublished material. Ms Skinner felt confident that graduate students will come forward and be willing to fully catalogue the Looker Collection with or without a grant.

10.2 The Richard Jefferies Society Journal The Chairman expressed regret that Simon Coleman and Rebecca Welshman had resigned as editors of the *Journal* as of the 31st July but with no prior warning. They had no material in hand for the winter edition. The matter was discussed at our recent Executive Council meeting when members expressed huge disappointment at the news. It was agreed that we would return to publishing one *Journal* a year for the time being and send it out as a summer mailing along with Membership renewals. Jean Saunders has stepped forward in a temporary capacity, but the Executive Council is seeking a permanent solution and asked for volunteers to come forward.

10.3 Broadwater Cemetery Michael Parrott reported that the Jefferies' grave had been kept tidy and in flower. The Friends of Broadwater Cemetery still hold their guided walks in the year but they have now used up their Heritage Lottery Grant. There has been no vandalism at all.

10.4 Graham Walker's book collection John Price reported that Mr Walker's widow had disposed of her husband's book collection and Mr Price had purchased some of the Jefferies' and Alfred Williams' editions. He could offer some of these as a memento to Members.

10.5 Solar Farm proposal Ray Morse drew attention to a planning application for a large solar farm near Barbary Castle.

The business part of the AGM ended at 11.55am.

Jean Saunders
Hon. Secretary
4th November 2013

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT: 2013-14

Financial Statements for the year ending 30th June 2014

Receipts and Payments Account

<u>Receipts</u>	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2014	Total 2013
<u>Subscriptions</u>	2130.52			2130.52	1521.58
<u>Donations:</u> <i>General</i>	1799.50			1799.50	1334.59
<u>Sales:</u> <i>Museum</i>	30.00			30.00	1096.50
<i>Others</i>	637.70			637.70	853.62
<i>Grant</i>					1000.00
<u>Jefferies Land Con Trust</u>			21625.04	21625.04	
<u>Income Tax Reclaim</u>	525.67			525.67	645.73
<u>Interest received</u>	38.41			38.41	38.32
Total receipts	5161.80			26786.84	6490.34

Expenditure

<u>Publications</u>	473.81			473.81	1330.49
<u>Rent/Room Hire</u>	60.00			60.00	54.00
<u>Subscriptions paid</u>	62.50			62.50	62.50
<u>Lecture fees</u>	100.00			100.00	121.60
<u>Administration</u>	2282.53			2282.53	1870.77
<u>Books/ Archive Purchases</u>	9718.68			9718.68	3.99
<u>Insurance</u>	174.86			174.86	174.00
<u>Poetry Prize</u>					100.00
<u>Equipment etc</u>					239.10
<u>House/ Grounds/ Museum</u>	78.74			78.74	1552.64
<u>Gifts</u>					35.98
<u>Memorial</u>					6.00
Total payments	12951.12			12951.12	5551.07

Excess of receipts over payments		13835.72	939.27
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Bank/B.Soc/Paypal/P.Cash

as at 30 th June 2014	33270.34
as at 1 st July 2013	19434.62

Restricted and Designated funds

Statement of Assets

			Biography	6030
			Gen	
1. Cash funds:-	Bank	17576.40	Funds	2000

Paypal	290.56	JLCT	21625
B/Society	15403.38	Gen	
	<u>33270.34</u>	Resve	<u>3615</u>
			<u>33270</u>

Notes to the accounts

1. I have defined the closing balances of the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust as 'restricted' to ensure they are ring fenced and any disposal is at the sole decision of the Society's executive with no reference whatsoever to any third party.
2. We have in excess of £4000 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.

Treasurer's Report for the twelve months ending the 30th June 2014

'Unique' is one of the most over-used and misused words in the English language so I think it wisest to term this year's Richard Jefferies Society accounts as simply 'different'.

The first of the two most striking differences this year is the appearance in the accounts of the closing cash assets of the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust on its winding up and your executive is in the process of forming a strategy on how to most effectively utilise this resource. The other noteworthy element, though the reasons behind it have an element of sadness, was the purchase of many valuable and historically highly significant Jefferies papers for our archives and which came up for auction from Hugoe Matthews' estate. It was the ideal use for the reserves that your Society had built up over the years. Both these areas will be addressed under other headings in the Annual General Meeting and associated reports.

I try to anticipate questions which might arise from the figures themselves and I think the following comments will cover most if not all of such issues. The membership subscription figures have always been affected by the timing of the dispatch of the annual renewal notice and that shows up again. We are trying in the present year to reduce this anomaly, helped partly by the increase in members paying by standing order on July 1st, and also by delaying the banking of renewal cheques until the beginning of the membership year proper.

The donation total includes sales of books which have been given through Gift Aid to the tune of £1425.80 and much of the remaining balance reflects expenses of office waived by members of the executive. This is the main reason why administration costs are up as these

expenses are paid out before they are gifted. The drop in museum sales tells its own story.

As usual the miniscule amount of interest has been split pro rata between the biography fund and the general reserve and in another year this may well need to incorporate also the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust. The executive is aware of the large balances at present accruing minimal interest and approaches to examine and possibly remedy this will be an issue for 2014-2015.

There is no harm in a treasurer departing on a boring note. Believe it or not this has been a marginally more exciting year than most! The finances are in a good state and I wish my successor well and know he will have that total support which you have always given me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Hirst', followed by a large, sweeping circular flourish.

Geoff Hirst
4th August 2014

Chris Jones

It is with extreme sadness that we learnt (on 28th August) that Chris Jones had just died. He was the Treasurer of the Henry Williamson Society and the examiner of our accounts for many years. It was always Mr Jones intention to step down when Geoff Hirst retired this year and we were about to send him a rather splendid copy of *The Story of my Heart* as part of our thank you to him. This small token of our appreciation has been sent to his wife, Margaret.

Geoff Hirst added: 'I cannot sign off my report on the accounts without a short but important note on hearing of Chris Jones' untimely death. Since completing these accounts and receiving them as usual so conscientiously examined for our statutory purposes I had already sent our customary book token as our appreciation. Chris did a necessary and unsung job for our society. I never met him but we had such friendly conversations by phone, letter and email. I underline all our concerns and sympathy for his family at this time and though this year was his last in his official capacity as our examiner we will remember him and the job he did for us for many years.'

Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of the Richard Jefferies Society

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended the 30th June 2014.

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 2013-14 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
17th July 2014

8 Woburn Avenue
Theydon Bois

Essex CM16 7JS

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2014-2015

2014

Sat 25 Oct AGM and Birthday Lecture at Liddington Village Hall.
Birthday Lecture: 'The Presence of the Past: Richard Jefferies, the Middle Ridgeway and landscape change'.
Speaker: Prof. Patrick Dillon

Further details about the event are detailed on pp. 44-54.

2015

Sat 7 March Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams.
Venue: Richard Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road,
Swindon, Coate SN3 6AA
Time: 2-4.30pm

This year it is the Society's turn to host the gathering.
Select a short extract to read to others by or about
Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams or just come along
to listen.

Sat 27 June A Study Day.
Venue: London
Time: 10.30am-4.30pm.
Theme: Richard Jefferies' London.

More information in the Spring 2015 newsletter.

Sat 7 Nov AGM and Birthday Lecture.
Venue: Liddington Village Hall (to be confirmed)
Time: 10.30am-4.30pm
Birthday Lecture: 'History & Rural Affairs with reference
to Richard Jefferies'. Speaker: Prof. Barry Sloan.

More information in the Autumn 2015 newsletter

Meetings are open to the public and free to attend.

RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY BIRTHDAY LECTURE

Liddington Village Hall

Church Road SN4 0HB

Saturday 25 October 2014

2.30-4pm



Patrick Dillon

The Presence of the Past: Richard Jefferies, the Middle Ridgeway and landscape change An illustrated talk by Patrick Dillon

Drawing on 'Middle Ridgeway', written jointly with Eric Jones, and illustrated with landscape paintings by his daughter Anna Dillon. Publication of the book is anticipated in 2015.

All welcome. Admission free
Richardjefferiesociety.co.uk
Tel: 01793 783040

Liddington Climb by Anna Dillon