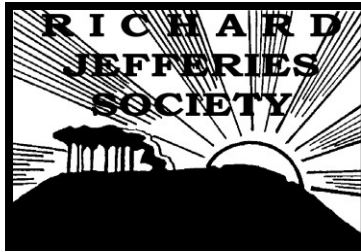


THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2014



Bevis's 'Council Oak'
(foreground right)
Coate Water, 1956



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

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

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

NEWSLETTER

The spring newsletter has been edited and despatched by Jean Saunders.

The deadline for submitting material for the autumn 2014 Newsletter is **September 1st 2014**. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary preferably by e-mail (info@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk), or by post to Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Oxon SN7 7SS.

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.



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Dr Duncan Pepper 0777 1656047 dr.duncan.pepper@gmail.com	Member Re-elected 2011-14	Between homes!
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Mrs Jean Saunders 01793 783040 jeanadsaunders@tiscali.co.uk	Secretary Re-elected 2010-15	Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 7SS
Mr Richard Stewart 01473 216518	Member Re-elected 2013-15	Valezina, 112 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XW
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Mr John Webb 01793 853171 WWWebbrass@aol.com	Librarian Re-elected 2011-14	Padbrook, Bincknoll Lane, Wootton Bassett, Wilts SN4 8QR
Dr Rebecca Welshman 01460 75008 rw296@exeter.ac.uk	Member Re-elected 2013-2016	The Coach House, Mainscombe, Roundham, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7TL
Mr Ray Morse is a co-opted Council Member		

FROM THE CHAIR

The past six month period has been one of unprecedented and unanticipated developments from the Society's point of view. The most unexpected was the arrival on the auction market of the cream of Hugoe Matthew's collection of Jefferiesiana. We learned quite late in the day that these were to be sold by Dominic Winter on December 12th 2013. The 65 lots included 46 lots of books, and 19 lots of manuscript letters. A decision was made to leave the book lots, and concentrate (from the Society's point of view) on trying to acquire the letters. As you will see in an article elsewhere in this publication, we were fortunate in acquiring the bulk of the letters, and I can also report that the remaining letters were bought by members of the Society who had a particular interest in the contents of the correspondence. In addition, Dominic Winter was very kind in sending us scans of all the manuscripts, so that we have a full record of all the items in manuscript, and (thanks to Jean Saunders' efforts) in transcription.



Many of the books were bought by Society members, and the day of the auction was memorable for the assemblage of Jefferies collectors (including several Greybeards) gathering together, bidding, and attempting to enhance their collections. Richard Jefferies would, I am sure, have chosen an apposite metaphor from the natural world to describe such an occasion. Most of the books were inscribed and dedicated to family members, which meant that they were association copies, handled and signed by RJ himself – though he often modestly referred to himself simply as “The Author”.

Although nothing has yet been signed formally, the new Museum Trust has had several meetings about the future of the Old House at Coate, and seems to be moving constructively forward. It has identified that changes will have to be made to the layout of the present museum, and so we are faced with the issue of where those artefacts owned by our Society should be stored if not needed for the new displays.

At the same time, we are coming to terms with the fact that, following the sad loss of her mother, Jean Saunders will be moving at some time in the not-too-distant future to the wilds of Norfolk, and

consequently we shall have to find storage for the past Minutes of the Society and many other publications and papers at present stored in her cottage.

By one of those quirks of fate; just as we were considering what on earth could be done, a National Charity of which we had never heard, approached us out of the blue and offered the Society unused office space in Swindon. Jean Saunders and I have visited the available premises twice now, and have identified a secure room-within-a-room which would accommodate our needs very well. Furthermore, we have been told that we can use several metal cupboards and storage units left by a previous occupant. There is no cost to the Richard Jefferies Society, but the leases only run for six month periods, and are subject to two months notice on either side. We know, however, that the previous charity using the space was there for three years, and only moved on when they found their own permanent accommodation. The premises are modern, secure; and there is no cost to us for heating and lighting. A further advantage is that there is a table and chairs and plenty of power points in the room, so laptops could be plugged in, and study undertaken on the premises. This is one occasion when we may hope that the recession as it affects Swindon is not over too soon, so that unused office space is not in demand by business!

Finally, with the new visitor centre at Stonehenge having opened just before Christmas, it may be an appropriate time to remind members that we are corporate members of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. This membership entitles us to free entry to the Devizes and Salisbury Museums. Devizes, in particular, has a current exhibition to coincide with the new developments at Stonehenge, and is well worth visiting. I hold our membership ticket which allows three members of the Society to visit the Museums at any one time. Unfortunately, the ticket cannot be split, but it can be used for up to three members to visit either Museum at the same time. If you would like to borrow the ticket, please let me know (by post, email or phone) with the date(s), and I will be pleased to post the membership card to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John T. Price'.

John Price
31 January 2014

FROM THE SECRETARY

Apologies for the delay in sending out the Society's *Journal*. The editors of the publication stepped down after the last newsletter was sent out and we were unable to inform you. At our AGM, the matter was discussed by Members, and we decided that we would issue a summer edition of the *Journal* and not a winter one. The *Journal* will be distributed in June along with Membership renewal slips for the 2014-15 membership year that commences on 1st July. Please would you let me know should you not want to renew your membership.

On a more personal note, I should like to thank everyone who expressed regrets at the death of my mother at the end of October. Sharley McLean was a Member of the Society and spent many happy hours at the Richard Jefferies Museum with me. I inherited her campaigning spirit; she was my hero and a friend. In addition to this, I lost the Richard Jefferies Museum, where I have spent nearly ten years nurturing it and loving it. However, this gives me more time to devote to the Society. I am embarking on an ambitious project to make electronic copies of the Society's archive material currently stored at my home as well as transcribing the new material acquired from the Hugoe Matthews' Collection (see following article). My husband and I are planning to move to North Norfolk. Whilst I shall be happy to do all I can for the Society, I won't be in a position to organise meetings in the Swindon area or take minutes. If anyone can help, please let me know.

Jean Saunders
31 January 2014

HUGOE MATTHEWS' COLLECTION

Part of Hugoe Matthews' collection of Richard Jefferies' books and letters came up for auction on 12th December 2013 at Dominic Winter's auction house. The Society had just received a donation of just over £20,000 from the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust, so we were in a strong position to bid for items of special interest to the Society. The following lots were purchased:

Lot 185: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to an unknown publisher, written from Coate, dated June 23rd 1871, 4pp., signed Richard Jefferies, offering a new work 'Fortune', "I have a work on hand which I have the honour of offering to you. The title is 'Fortune: How to Obtain.' As expressed in the introduction there are hundreds of works upon almost every subject it is possible to think of but not one upon that which lies nearest everyone's heart - Fortune & success in life... Should that succeed I propose to follow it up with a

manual devoted entirely to the acquisition: & I cannot but think that both subjects would be found very popular." An important letter containing most of the known information on 'Fortune', which was unpublished and is now lost.

£493.60

Lot 188: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to the editor of Chambers Journal, written from West Brighton, dated August 1st [1883], 2 pp. on folded sheet, signed Richard Jefferies, offering another article (for 'A King of Acres'). "I have sufficient material to furnish it & I think myself that it would complete if published & make a better, more thorough contribution than as it stands. I did not add 'to be continued' as I was not aware whether you would prefer my papers to end in one number or not. The paper is complete as it stands, yet it would be more complete (if you will excuse the awkwardness of the expression) if one more paper were added." £246.80

Lot 91: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to his mother, written from The Downs, Crowborough, dated Sept 16th [1885], 2pp., signed Richard, discussing family matters and a possible German translation of one of his books, "How is the governor? Never hear of him. People seem to think nothing of him. But I do. I hope he is well and strong at all events... I had a letter from Germany the other day - they talk of translating one of my books into German... I am so tired I cannot sit up to write any more. With much love always, your affectionate son Richard." £357.86

Lot 193: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to his mother, written from The Downs [Crowborough], dated Feb 8th [1886], 4pp., signed Richard, discussing his deteriorating health and family, "... I am so fearfully weak I can with difficulty sit & the torture I go through every day & often all night long is indescribable... the doctor here says he has no idea what is the matter & has given me up sometime. I am now trying to get a physician down from London but the expense is very great... Phyllis has grown such a big girl & is very busy & happy, she knows her letters now. Toby is all go & much like a wild March wind... I have managed to write a letter somehow but it causes me much distress & pain to do anything. With much love to yourself & the governor always, your affectionate son Richard" This is a poignant and moving letter, written a year and a half before his death, and one of only two known letters written to his mother. £691.04

Lot 195: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to his publisher Sampson Low & Co., written from Goring, Sussex, dated Nov 21st [1886], 1p., signed Richard Jefferies, accepting an advance for Amaryllis, "I am glad to find that you think so highly of "Amaryllis" as to consider it too good for the multitude, I should fancy it must be rare for a book to be too good. I will accept £50 paid in advance + 10. p.cent royalty on sales after the first edition." £345.52

Lot 196: Richard Jefferies. Two incomplete autograph letters, one to his father from Woodside, Surbiton, dated May 31st, 2pp., is incomplete and unsigned, discussing a picture in the Grosvenor Gallery, "The picture is called The Wise Woman's Briar, & is painted by Louisa Marchioness of Waterford. The catalogue quotes the book to explain it - see page 198 of *Wild Life* at the top. It represents the wise woman passing a child under a briar. The book has been re-printed in the United States: but I am afraid that I shall not get any of

the dollars on account of the copyright laws there.” The other letter 4pp. is to his parents, incomplete, discussing a family holiday in Cornwall. £246.80

Lot 197: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to his father, dated Dec 10th (no year or address), 1p., signed Richard, “There is a text in the Bible which runs thus - “Surely the net is spread in vain in the sight of any bird”. I think you will understand what I mean: I thought that I must just remind you of it.” £185.10

Lot 198: Richard Jefferies. Autograph letter to unknown recipient, written from Coate, undated, 1p., signed Rich. Jefferies, “Please send me 25 more forms of Instruction to Conservative Voters (not the cards) - I have not enough”, together with a single leaf of manuscript annotation by Jefferies, with a later note by Samuel Looker, plus a typed 2pp. letter from Looker to a Mr. A.P Whitaker, dated 27.12.44 presenting him with the above note. £104.89

Lot 199: Richard Jefferies & family photos. A pair of rare oval albumen print carte-de-visite portraits of Richard Jefferies by Elliott & Fry, London & J. Hubert Newman, Sydney, the first showing Jefferies with arms folded on a lectern and head turned slightly to the right, the second head and shoulders only, together with Matthew’s own album containing twenty-one corner-mounted reproduction photo portraits of Jefferies and his circle. £271.48

Lot 201: Jefferies Family. A small group of manuscript ephemera relating to Jefferies and his circle, including an autograph letter signed from Jefferies’ widow Jessie, to Walter Besant, 20 September 1887, concerning Besant’s biography of Jefferies and the possibility of publishing a volume of Jefferies’ essays, 3pp., blackedged mourning paper. An autograph letter signed from C.C. Osborne to Lieutenant F.H. Davies, 3 September 1887, acknowledging a donation of one guinea to the Richard Jefferies Memorial Fund, 2 pp. Three autograph letters signed from Walter Besant to Charles Jefferies, 1887/1888, one with signature excised. An autograph letter signed from Elizabeth Jefferies to Charles Jefferies, 10 September 1880, concerning family bibles, 1p. An autograph letter signed from William Jefferies to his brother, Draycott, 21 December 1788, concerning the purchase and price of flour. A scrap of paper with family names. The manuscript journal of Robert Billing [married to Jefferies’ sister Sarah], 1872, concerning the printing trade. A letter from Samuel Looker handwritten, 1948. Letter from Looker’s son Basil, 31 August 1974, giving information on Samuel Looker’s life and activities, with reference to Jefferies, etc. £134.46

Lot 203: Geoffrey Winthrop Young, 1876-1958. *Bevis, The Story of a Boy*, by Richard Jefferies, 1904, Geoffrey Winthrop Young’s copy with his bookplate to front pastedown, numerous pen and pencil marginal annotations by Young to text and map frontis., plus three related items enclosed in pocket pasted to rear pastedown, two of these letters to Young from the publishers’ Duckworth and Lutterworth, 1946/47, together with a folder of related ephemera including six draft maps and fragments by Young, two letters from Samuel J. Looker to Young, nine letters and postcards from J.B. Jones to Young, all c. 1947 and relating to the revised map of the Bevis territory that Young supplied for the 1948 edition by Eyre & Spottiswoode. £86.38

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG

One of the lots acquired by the Society from the Matthews' collection (see Lot 203) relates to the mountaineer and writer Geoffrey Winthrop Young (1876-1958) and his involvement in preparing a map of the 'New Sea' for a 1948 edition of *Bevis* published by Eyre and Spottiswoode. Young was concerned that the map in his 1904 copy of *Bevis* was "very wrong" and that some of Jefferies' topographical descriptions of the area did not add up. Several draft maps later and, after intensive correspondence with Swindon scholar J B Jones, who supplied important local information (including the map on p.27 of this newsletter), Young's daughter Marcia drew the final map that was published. Hugoe Matthews acquired the archive from Marcia, and it is full of fascinating snippets of information as well as Winthrop Young's original draft maps. This archive formed the basis for a very interesting article by Mark Daniel that was published in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*, No. 3, Spring 1994. Mr Daniel was limited by space to write a full account of it. As such Jean Saunders plans to give an illustrated talk about Geoffrey Winthrop Young, the man, and will explore the papers in more detail at our meeting that will be held on May 10th 2014.



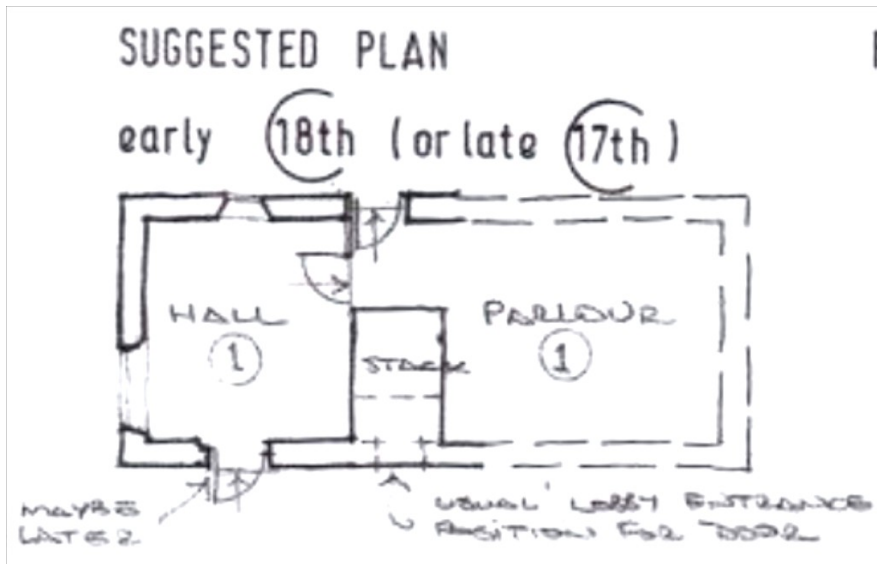
Geoffrey Winthrop Young 1898

ARCHITECTURE OF COATE FARM

At our meeting to be held on 5th April 2014 we are delighted that Clive Carter will take us on a guided tour of Coate Farm in order to point out features that indicate the original layout of the buildings. His extensive study, as part of the Wiltshire Farmstead Project, revealed some unexpected findings about how the buildings might have changed from the late 17th century along with some historic information researched about the area.

An Abstract of Title, dated 1868, describes the property as formerly part of Badbury Manor. Until the mid-sixteenth century the estate was owned by Glastonbury Abbey then it passed into secular ownership. By 1700 the Manor had passed into the hands of the Mellish family of London. They sold the Manor to John Stone, before 1718. A Deed of 1719 indicates the holding that became the Jefferies' family farm was already detached from the Manor.

The original thatched cottage may have consisted of two ground floor rooms, one of which (the parlour) was later to become rebuilt and incorporated into the brick-built extension (now the Museum and the Jefferies' family sitting room) by Richard Jefferies' grandfather. The thatched dairy may have been added in the mid eighteenth century at right angles to the hall (the kitchen in Richard Jefferies' time).



BIRTHDAY LECTURE

HUGH THOMSON: WALKING THE ICKNIELD WAY

Nearly forty people attended the Richard Jefferies Society Birthday Lecture held at Liddington Village Hall on Saturday 2nd November 2013.

Hugh Thomson, a travel writer and film maker, has published accounts of his adventures in Peru, Mexico and India. His interest in Richard Jefferies was acquired through reading a copy of *The Gamekeeper at Home*, but his new book *The Green Road into the Trees* is an account of his walk along the Icknield Way, well known to both Richard Jefferies and Edward Thomas. He has also read Edward Thomas's own account of walking the Way in his book *The Icknield Way*, which was published exactly 100 years ago. He described Thomas as a 'pathway enthusiast', who could never find the path's beginning or end. And he doubted whether Jefferies ever walked the entire Way. Hugh Thomson himself lives close to the Way, and with his twifold interests in Jefferies and Thomas he wanted the challenge of undertaking a walk closer to home. He is also not afraid of speaking his mind, as we quickly discovered.



Maiden Castle, viewed from the west, 1937

The Icknield Way stretches in a diagonal line from Dorset in the south to Norfolk in the north. 400 miles in length and at least 3000 years old, it is one of the oldest known trade routes and is rich in archaeological remains, including Maiden Castle, Stonehenge, Avebury and many other lesser known hill forts and barrows. White horses cut into the chalklands are also a well known feature as is the Ridgeway and Jefferies beloved Liddington Hill. Notebook in hand to recount his daily adventures, Hugh Thomson set out along the hollow ways of Dorset and on to what he lovingly described as the green ribboned road, and with his excellent and amusing commentary, plus slides, we were able to walk in his tracks. The derivation of Icknield is difficult to determine, but Hugh thought it roughly meant Old Way to the Icení (Boudicca's people). The following are just some of the places he mentioned:

Poundbury Village in Dorset comes under the Duchy of Cornwall and is the visionary experiment of the Prince of Wales, but Hugh Thomson was not enthusiastic, likening it to the village in Shrek! Cadbury Camp, with its associations to King Arthur, he described as a mystical place. He even found a lake which he convinced himself was that on which King Arthur was rowed across to Avalon, only to be told that it had formerly been an old gravel pit until it was flooded. However, the real and actual King Alfred has a monument on Salisbury Plain recording his last stand against the Vikings, suitably emblazoned with the Wessex dragon. By way of contrast, Hugh then mentioned a woman he came across who insists on walking across a firing range so that she can be completely alone! And no, she didn't have a dog.

It was interesting to be told that Red Lion pubs are always to be found on drovers' tracks, the red lion being the device of John of Gaunt who was a loyal supporter of drovers.

Hugh resented the fact that Stonehenge is cordoned off to the public, who are obliged to skirt round it without ever touching the stones. Heading to Avebury for the Summer Solstice he found one solitary pagan leaning on his staff and lamenting the fact that pagans are bad at communicating or getting together as pagans should, even those within a few miles' radius. He also met a group of Rainbow Travellers, with whom he stayed for two days.

At Wallington, he pointed out George Orwell's house, which was much less grand when Orwell lived there and began his outline of *Animal Farm* based on a farm nearby.

On Liddington Hill he heard the skylarks which reminded him of Richard Jefferies quotation: 'Lark's song like a waterfall in the sky'.

Nearing journey's end in the Fens, he showed us photographs of a Bronze Age discovery known as Seahenge, when it was first revealed by the sea. Seahenge comprised an upturned oak tree surrounded by the remains of a wooden palisade. The central oak was bound in honeysuckle, which led Hugh to think that it might have been used for a burial. It looked breathtakingly beautiful resting on the sea shore. Sadly, however, Seahenge (see photo below) had to be dismantled in order to preserve it, and has now been moved to King's Lynn Museum.



Seahenge, Norfolk

This had been a hugely informative and entertaining lecture, Hugh Thomson being happy to sign copies of his book at its conclusion.

Helen D Newman
12 November 2013

JEFFERIES AND CHRISTIANITY

In his “last parry” Tom Wareham says he still thinks I’m wrong about Jefferies’ conversion to Christianity, and felt a need to clarify his position as my accusation of perversity was so novel to him.¹ If I may also be allowed a last word on the subject I would begin by pointing out that he is perversely wrong about what I think. My brief in these “Discoveries” was simply to report odd snippets of information from many years research and collecting that throw light on aspects of Jefferies’ life and works. In this case the discoveries were first that the death-bed conversion theory lingered in a debased form a decade or more after serious biographers and critics had dismissed it. Secondly that it also reappeared in a scholarly work on the history of Christian mysticism which hadn’t, to my knowledge, been noted previously, and Watkin gives a fuller account of Jefferies than Bucke, James or others on his mysticism. Moreover he was a passionate admirer of *The Story of my Heart*, comparing J’s vividness of style with Homer’s – hence my suggestion he be taken more seriously. To describe him as “patronising” is absurd, but Watkin nevertheless also appropriated Jefferies to his own belief system. Thirdly there was the first hand witness of CW Mackintosh, indicating that Jefferies’ re-engagement with Christian belief was more considered and over a much longer period than the notion of a “death-bed conversion” suggests.

In my first piece I suggested “re-conversion” would be a more appropriate term, but even this barely fits the circumstances. Jefferies was baptised and brought up in the Christian faith, with conventionally devout parents and relatives, and espoused it with enthusiasm in youth. To my recollection he never renounced it or declared himself an atheist, and there is no entry on atheism in the Matthews/Treitel index of his total known output. Among references to God the most important is of course the idea of an existence higher than God put forward in *The Story*. Logically you would have to believe in something to conceive something beyond it, and the problem for Jefferies was not that God did not exist, but did not exist enough – certainly not the “God” reverberating from the church and chapel pulpits of his day. That God fell far short of the wonder and fullness of life envisioned in his states of heightened consciousness, approaching a mystic’s apprehension of universal truth. A creed based on denial and rejection was foreign to Jefferies’ thought and nature, and in claiming him for it Tom Wareham falls into the same error as Watkin – and “the Hull evangelist”.

¹ See RJS Autumn Newsletter and Annual Report 2012-13 pp. 17-18.

But my point, as I said, was simply biographical: did Jefferies or did he not say the things reported, if not quite in those words or as understood by the witnesses? There is some evidence that he did, but no evidence that he didn't. Tom Wareham's discrediting of witnesses is based on pure conjecture, and takes us only so far as discounting any formal conversion involving priest and creed, no "sacerdotalism" as Besant put it, and none was called for. He is supposed simply to have read and assented to passages from St Luke. By that measure he might have questioned some of his more sweeping assertions, and perhaps would have agreed with the Anglican bishop who said that the words of Jesus were not true because he was divine, but it was his total apprehension of the truth that made him divine – or indeed with Ghandi who said all the world would be Christian, were not Christians so unlike their Christ. In fact it could hardly be said to be a matter of religion at all, more a communion of two spirits who dared to believe in a peaceful world and fuller life of the soul. But in the end it's the human rather than divine implications of those final words that make them credible. The full extent of Jefferies' suffering is rarely taken into account, and that he wrote some of the most wonderful celebrations of the life around him in all its forms while wasting slowly away in the prime of life is surely one of the most remarkable triumphs of the human spirit. His public writings give barely a hint of his condition, and that his last private utterance should be a prayer that his children be spared such pain seems to me entirely characteristic, entirely human and believable.

And again none of this has any critical bearing – it does not "undermine" his autobiography any more than T S Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism undermines *The Wasteland*, or John Donne's shroud draped portrait of himself as Dean of St Paul's diminishes the reputation of his love poetry. It is only if a work has or is given a didactic or creedal significance that the subsequent views of its author have any bearing on it, and *The Story of my Heart* is a work of literature, not an atheist tract.

George Miller

29 December 2103

Editor's note: This correspondence is now closed.

Andrew Rossabi thought a passage from Chapter XI ('Aurora') of *After London* relevant to the debate. The extract seemed the clearest expression of Jefferies' attitude to Christianity, and of Jessie's 'clear and bright' faith. First a few words to put the piece in context.

After London (1885) is a futurist novel in which southern England lies flooded beneath a pure freshwater sea known as the Great Lake. The novel has strong autobiographical elements. The hero, Felix Aquila, is clearly a younger version of Jefferies himself, while for Aurora Thyma read Jessie Baden.

The scholarly Felix is passionately in love with Aurora but though she returns his love, he feels unworthy of her and determines to accomplish some heroic deed to prove himself. He decides to set off on a voyage of exploration of the Great Lake. First, however, he attends a feast at Thyma Castle, where he has the lowest seat. He feels humiliated, and, worse, neglected by Aurora. When they meet clandestinely he pours out his heart. Aurora explains the reason for her apparent indifference. Her father, Baron Thyma (i.e. Andrew Baden), disapproves of their engagement. He would prefer a wealthier and more powerful suitor, and has threatened to eject Felix if Aurora gives any sign of her feelings for him. Felix is calmed and reassured by Aurora's explanation.

Now read on:

Passage from *AFTER LONDON*, Chapter XI – AURORA

Yet it was not so much the explanation itself, nor even the love she poured upon him, as the mere fact of her presence so near that brought him to himself. The influence of her steadfast nature, of her clear, broad, straightforward view of things, the decision of her character, the high unselfish motives which animated her, all together supplied that which was wanting in himself. His indecision, his too impressionable disposition, which checked and stayed the force of his talent, and counteracted the determination of a naturally iron will; these, as it were, were relieved; in a word, with her he became himself.

How many times he had told her as much! How many times she had replied that it was not herself, but that in which she believed, that was the real cause of this feeling! It was that ancient and true religion; the religion of the primitive church, as she found it in the fragments of the Scriptures that had come down from the ancients.

Aurora had learnt this faith from childhood; it was, indeed, a tradition of the house preserved unbroken these hundred years in the midst of the jarring creeds, whose disciples threatened and destroyed each other. On the one hand, the gorgeous rite of the Vice-Pope, with the priests and the monks, claimed dominion, and really held a large share, both over the body and the soul; on the other, the Leaguers,² with their bold, harsh, and flowerless creed, were equally over-bearing and equally bigoted. Around them the Bushmen wandered without a god; the Romany called upon the full moon. Within courts and cities

² The Leaguers refers to the non-Conformists, i.e. 'Chapel', which had such influence among the labourers.

the gay and the learned alike mocked at all faith, and believed in gold alone.

Cruelty reigned everywhere; mercy, except in the name of honour, there was none; humanity was unknown. A few, a very few only, had knowledge of or held to the leading tenets, which, in the time of the ancients, were assented to by everyone, such as the duty of humanity to all, the duty of saving and protecting life, of kindness and gentleness. These few, with their pastors, simple and unassuming, had no power or influence; yet they existed here and there, a living protest against the lawlessness and brutality of the time.

Among these the house of Thyma had in former days been conspicuous, but of late years the barons of Thyma had, more from policy than from aught else, rather ignored their ancestral faith, leaning towards the League, which was then powerful in that kingdom. To have acted otherwise would have been to exclude himself from all appointments. But Aurora, learning the old faith at her mother's knee, had become too deeply imbued with its moral beauty to consent to this course. By degrees, as she grew up, it became in her a passion; more than a faith, a passion; the object of her life.

A girl, indeed, can do but little in our iron days, but that little she did. The chapel beside the castle, long since fallen to decay, was, at her earnest request, repaired; a pastor came and remained as chaplain, and services, of the simplest kind, but serious and full of meaning, took place twice a week. To these she drew as many as possible of the inhabitants of the enclosure; some even came from afar once now and then to attend them. Correspondence was carried on with the remnant of the faith.

That no one might plead ignorance (for there was up to the date no written record) Aurora set herself the task of reducing the traditions which had been handed down to writing. When the manuscript was at last completed it occupied her months to transcribe copies of it for circulation; and she still continued to make copies, which were sent by messengers and by the travelling merchants to the markets, and even across the sea. Apart from its intrinsically elevating character, the mere mental labour expended on this work had undoubtedly strengthened a naturally fine intellect. As she said, it was the faith, the hope that that faith would one day be recognized, which gave her so much influence over others.

Upon this one thing only they differed; Felix did not oppose, did not even argue, he was simply untouched. It was not that he believed in anything else, nor that he doubted; he was merely indifferent. He had too great a natural aptitude for the physical sciences, and too clear a

mind, to accept that which was taught by the one or the other of the two chief opposing parties. Nor could he join in the ridicule and derision of the gay courtiers, for the mystery of existence had impressed him deeply while wandering alone in the forest. But he stood aloof; he smiled and listened, unconvinced; like the wild creatures of the forest, he had no ears for these matters. He loved Aurora, that was all.

But he felt the influence just the same; with all his powers of mind and contempt of superstitions in others, he could not at times shake off the apprehensions aroused by untoward omens, as when he stepped upon the adder in the woods. Aurora knew nothing of such things; her faith was clear and bright like a star; nothing could alarm her, or bring uneasiness of mind. This beautiful calm, not cold, but glowing with hope and love, soothed him.

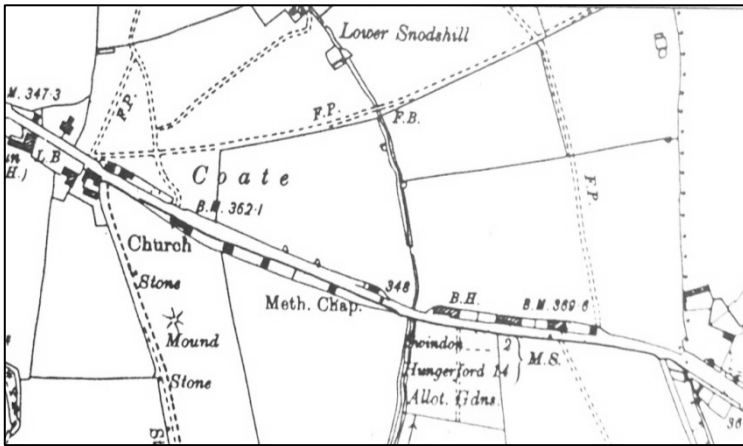
That evening, with her hope and love, with her message of trust, she almost persuaded him. He almost turned to what she had so long taught. He almost repented of that hardness of heart, that unutterable distance, as it were, between him and other men, which lay at the bottom of his proposed expedition. He opened his lips to confess to her his purpose, and had he done so assuredly she would have persuaded him from it. But in the very act to speak, he hesitated. It was characteristic of him to do so. Whether she instinctively felt that there was something concealed from her, or guessed that the discontent she knew he had so long endured was coming to a point, or feared lest what she had told him might drive him to some ill-considered act, she begged him with all the power of her love to do nothing hasty, or in despair, nothing that would separate them. He threw his arms around her, he pressed her closely to him, he trembled with the passion and the struggle within him.



A detail from the book cover of *After London*
(London: Duckworth & Co., 1905)
Illustration by F D Bedford

THE COATE MISSION HOUSE

Visitors to Coate Farm often ask about the church that Jefferies mentions which also appears in maps of that time. There is no sign of the building now and it should not be confused with the former Methodist Chapel close to the Spotted Cow. The church was built on land that was part of Dayhouse Farm, in the field opposite Coate Farm (the other side of Dayhouse Lane) next to the Marlborough Road. The Church was demolished in the late 1960s and was in a sorry state. The only existing photograph of the building is reproduced on the next page and, judging by the design of the bicycle pictured, was probably taken just before the building was demolished.



Coate circa 1884

An interesting letter (see p.24) was brought to light recently by Mr John Macclay who lives near Coate Farm. The letter is dated 2 September 1865 and was sent by the vicar of Chiseldon (Edwin Meyrick) to the Bishop of Salisbury with a request for a licence to use 'a Schoolroom recently erected and used by me for the education therein of the children of the poor of the said Hamlet' for religious services. According to the estimate and receipt for building 'The Coate Mission House', that Mr Macclay also supplied, the cost was £141.14s.6d. On 5 September 1865 a 'Licence for performance of Divine Service & occasional administration of the Holy Communion in the Schoolroom in the Hamlet of Coate' was issued.

Before this date, for the Coate hamlet residents, it was a long walk to the nearest church. Richard Jefferies wrote to his Aunt Ellen on 4 November 1861 to let her know that:



Coate Mission House: c.1966. Then known as the former Chapel of the Ascension.

We are going to have a prayer meeting at our house every Tuesday as we cannot manage to have it on Sundays for a week or two. It is to be held in the brewhouse which is going to be whitewashed, some ugly old stairs took away and I don't [know] what else isn't going to be done to it. The preacher is going to stand in the doorway and along the beam in the dairy a curtain will be hung to keep the people's eyes from going much further than the preacher and in the dairy a few stools and chairs for ourselves and a few of the ladies and gentlemen who do not like to mix with the work people or our own friends.

Three years later he wrote to his aunt on 27 October 1864 to tell her about a proposed church in Coate:

the proposed Church which it seems is true – Father has offered the land and £10 in money, nobody else coming higher than £5. The entire sum promised is I believe £115, £40 of which comes from the Dean & Chapter of Westminster who own large property (600 acres) here.

Jefferies next mentions the Coate church in the first of his 'Chapters on Churches' article³ when it was used for services. Jefferies was in attendance under the guise of the 'Peripatetic Philosopher' who had stumbled across the service. He comments:

I afterwards made enquiries concerning this place of worship, and the few facts which I have discovered may not be uninteresting. The great

³ *North Wilts. Herald*, 24 November 1866. Also published in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No 3, Spring 1994, pp8-10.

distance of the village – spelt Coate, pronounced kaaut, from any consecrated church had long been subject of comment, occasioning in wet weather especially great inconvenience. A gentleman at length threw open his home for divine service, which was performed by the curate of the parish, but this being found somewhat incommodious after some agitation a sufficient sum was raised, partly by subscription of the neighbouring farmers and others partly by the munificence of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's⁴ who own considerable property near, and the building of the present edifice was entrusted to the late Mr. T. Wheeler, of Chiseldon, who has certainly carried out the plan of the architect. That plan has, however, in practice been found open to several objections. The windows at the side being low it has been found impossible to open them without subjecting the occupants of a whole pew to a serious draught; to open the door is to incommode a still greater number, and the only remedy would seem to be to enlarge the window over the door, make it to open, and construct a window high over the clergyman's head at the other extremity, and thus ensure a continuous supply of pure air without danger to health, or inconvenience to any. It being cold, however, on the evening of my visit, the door and windows were kept shut, and I found no other inconvenience than that of want of light – the candelabra suspended from the roof being scarcely sufficient. That discomfort, I am told, will be shortly removed by the addition of lamps. To return. The building was opened on the 5th of September, 1865, there being four clergymen present, *viz.*, Rev. E. Meyrick (Chiseldon), Rev. H. Munn (Liddington), Rev. W. Wells, and the Rev. J. Saulsbury. Service has been performed in rotation by the ministers, or their curates, of Liddington and Chiseldon. At present the arrangement is the Rev. H. Munn in the summer half, the Rev. R. Rolph of Chiseldon the winter half. It was feared that Mr. Rolph, on account of the distance and his advanced age, would scarcely be able to attend, but hitherto he has done so to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants of the district. It only remains to be mentioned that the lights, &c., are provided for by subscription, which by division falls evenly upon all the principal members, and is cheerfully borne by them.

It seems that the Church was only used for four years. In the *North Wilts Herald* dated 7 November 1870 there is a letter⁵, signed by 'The Raven', that is likely to have been written by Jefferies; the content, some words and phrases echo those in his original 'Chapters on Churches' article. The Raven was not surprised by the outcry (expressed in two earlier letters to the *Herald*) over the closure of the Coate Church. The writer alluded to many of the problems reported in the article; the difficulties of serving communities under two Parishes

⁴ This should read the Dean & Chapter of Westminster.

⁵ A cutting of the letter is in the Canon Jackson Collection (817/11 f58 verso) in the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly. Thanks to Andrew Rossabi, the contents of the letter can be revealed.

and finding an appropriate site when the land in Coate itself was in the hands of three proprietors. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster was the largest land-owner; next was Mr Stone, Lord of Badbury Manor in which Dayhouse Farm was built; the third was Mr Jefferies. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster donated £40 to the subscription but refused to grant an inch of land. Mr Stone being a minor, his trustees were unable to make a grant of land in perpetuity. The letter continues:

The only other gentleman possessed of freehold land in Coate⁶ was willing to grant a site in perpetuity, provided that a substantial and commodious building should be erected suitable to a growing population, and one to which a school might be added--which last was much needed. But when the proposed plans were submitted to him, he entirely refused to forward in any manner the erection of a building such as there designed, which he considered ill-suited for the purpose and totally inadequate for the future. The promoters of the scheme, however, clung to their plan, which had been prepared by a village builder without the least experience in ecclesiastical architecture.

The matter was pushed by the clerical promoters and a small plot of waste ground was provided on Dayhouse Farm land. However, the church was built under 'a great oak tree' whose boughs would smash the roof if they came down in a gale. The original clerical promoters left and their successors were less interested in the church; curates did not stay long in the area and the additional services were an encumbrance for them. The wife of the Liddington clergyman fell ill and needed a change of air. As a result, he was often absent. The Rev. Mr Thomas Rolph of Chiseldon was growing old. For these reasons, the Raven reported that the church had been shut up 'since the beginning of last summer'. He added that the building was an eyesore; and by manorial law the Lord of the Manor could order its instant demolition should it remained unused for three months.

However, as we know now, the building was not demolished until the late 1960s and was used as an Anglican Chapel. Evidently, from 1956 the Church was known as the Chapel of the Ascension. In 1958 it was so dilapidated that it was closed but was still standing in 1967.⁷

Jean Saunders

⁶ John Jefferies (Richard Jefferies' grandfather) was the land-owner of Coate Farm at the time. James Luckett Jefferies was merely a tenant.

⁷ *Victoria County History of Wiltshire* Vol.IX, p.22, where a footnote gives the 'Chiseldon Church Guide' as the source of information.

To the Right Reverend Walter Kerr Lord
Bishop of Salisbury

I Edwin Meyrick, Clerk, near of
the vicarage and parish church of Christleton in the
county of Wilt and your Lordship's Diocese of Salisbury
Do hereby state to your Lordship that the parish of
Christleton aforesaid contains a population of about one
thousand two hundred persons of whom about ^{one} ~~one~~
hundred reside in the Hamlet of Boate at a distance
of about three miles from the parish church and
who are thereby in a great measure prevented from
attending on Divine Service celebrated in the said Church

only at
my more
Parish
Addington

That in the said Hamlet is a
Schoolroom recently erected and used by me for the
education therein of the children of the poor of the
said Hamlet in the principles of the United Church
of England and Ireland and that it would be of
great convenience and advantage to the Inhabitants of
of the same Hamlet if your Lordship's license was
granted for the performance of Divine Service and
the occasional administration of the Sacrament of
the Holy Communion in the aforesaid Building
and I therefore request that your Lordship will be
pleased to grant your license authorizing me or my
Curate or Curates lawfully appointed and licensed
to perform Divine Service and administer the Holy
Communion therein accordingly.

As witness my Hand this Second
Monday of September in the year of our Lord
One thousand eight hundred and sixty five.

Edwin Meyrick
Vicar of Christleton

COATE WATER DIVING BOARD GAINS GRADE II LISTED STATUS



It was announced in November 2013 that the derelict diving platform at Coate Water has been listed by English Heritage as a Grade II structure. It is only one of four of its type in the country and is in a unique location and of historic interest, albeit post Jefferies' time. It is now a favourite landing stage for ducks and geese.

The board was first constructed out of wood in 1922 (see picture below). The platform was later replaced with the current concrete diving stage, designed by JBL Thompson in 1935. It was officially opened by Mayor Reuben George, who took the first dive from the board. He took so long to resurface onlookers feared he had drowned.



COATE WATER: the brook

Andrew Rossabi was recently re-reading Jefferies' 'Chapters on Churches'⁸ and noted that the stream that leaves Coate Reservoir and which runs along the bottom of Brook Field at Coate Farm was known as 'Coate water' in Jefferies' time. Now we know the stream as the Dorcan Brook, that feeds the River Cole. This water-way was Jefferies' 'Mississippi' in *Bevis*. J B Jones produced the map on the next page of the Coate Reservoir system in his 1944 booklet that described the construction of the canal's reservoir.



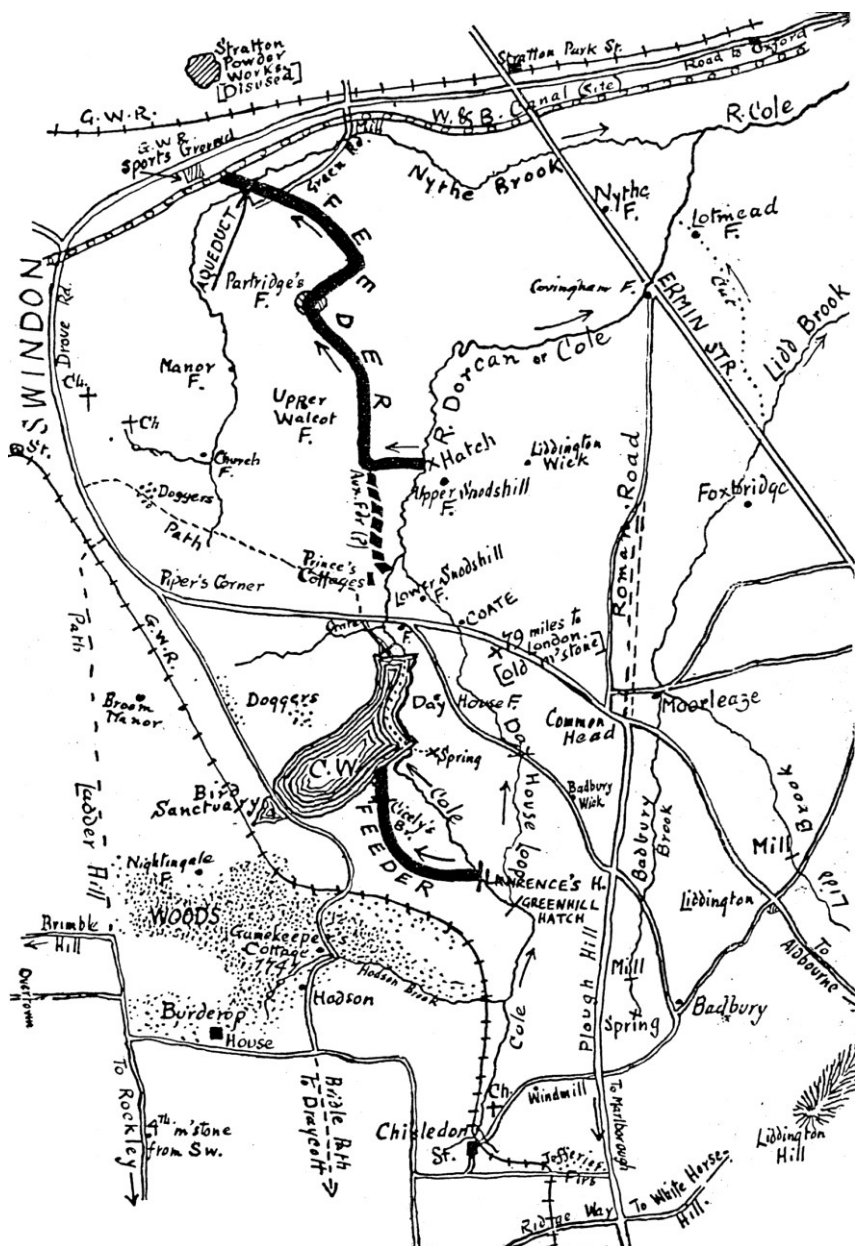
The Hatches behind Coate & the Coate water stream

Illustration by H E Tidmarsh

Published in *Art Journal*, January 1893

From an article entitled 'Round About Coate' by P Anderson Graham

⁸ *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No.6 (Spring 1997), p.3



Coate Reservoir System, 1940
Drawing by J B Jones

RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM

It has been a fruitful year at the Museum and that includes the orchard! There were 1,400 visitors during 2013 whilst volunteers donated the equivalent of 300 days to help look after the gardens and buildings and to welcome visitors.

The orchard has been a delight. For the last three years it has been managed as a wild flower hay meadow with just a circular path cut around the edge. Unfortunately we didn't have livestock to graze it at the end of summer and it was hard work cutting the long grasses, but it was worth the effort to see all the butterflies attracted that year. The new fruit trees are doing well and some are now nearly seven years old. The Richard Jefferies Russet apple tree, so carefully nurtured by Mark Daniel in his Brighton garden and moved to the Jefferies' garden nearly four years ago, bore full-sized fruits that were delicious.

The new pond (just over a year old) looks like it has been there for years and it is set in a wild surrounding (apart from the fact that it is now over-shadowed by the new hotel at the Sun Inn) in order to attract as much wildlife as possible. Dragonflies found the pond last year, so there are hopes that they laid eggs in it.

The woodland planted in Home Field has taken a big knock, environmentally, as a result of the work carried out to extend the miniature railway at Coate Water. Many trees have been removed along with scrub, and the ground has been built up to extend the track to the back-garden fence of Coate Farm. The work isn't completed yet. Regularly I used to watch deer and foxes in the garden, that were a delight. They have all disappeared with the loss of habitat and as a result of the disruption to their "home field".

Thanks to the generosity of the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust, much work has been undertaken to improve facilities. For example, the old privy in the garden, that has been derelict for over 30 years, has been restored and the builders discovered an associated septic tank that no-one knew about.

The Stepping Stones project, that has transformed the former cow-yard into a vegetable plot, had its first year of produce. There are plans to add more raised beds for herbs this year.

The Farmstead Project was a one-off exercise and we have learnt a great deal about the old farmhouse and out-buildings at Coate.

The Richard Jefferies Museum Trust, established over two years ago, is still seeking a lease from Swindon Council to manage the place. The Trust plans to change it to a child-friendly venue and have started to re-arrange rooms. The Richard Jefferies' drawing of an anemone (see page 2) has been adopted as part of their logo for the Museum.

As I am no longer part of the Museum team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Society's volunteers for all their help during my time there and for the donations of items that have added value to the collection. I am very proud of what I have achieved but it has been a pleasure and a delight too.

Jean Saunders
12th January 2014

RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY ARCHIVE

The Society has been storing a considerable amount of its archive material at the Richard Jefferies Museum and making it available for visitors to enjoy. However, a change of circumstances means that the Society is now looking for safe and secure storage elsewhere, including a facility to store our extensive library of books and our stock of publications.

An opportunity has arisen to use a new office space in West Swindon that would be completely free of any charges and on a 6 month lease basis. The downside is that if the landlord finds a paying customer, we may not have an opportunity to renew the lease. However, the Charity, who organises the lease, has more office space available in Wiltshire.



1947 photograph of the thatched cowsheds & cottage at Coate Farm
sent to Winthrop Young by J B Jones
See page 10

MAIL ORDER BOOKS

Postal sales are dealt with by the Hon. Secretary (see p.3 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)
<i>Richard Jefferies' letters to Aunt Ellen</i> , 2009 (softback - 155g)	£ 4.50
<i>Amaryllys at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Carolyn Clarke (softback – 295g.)	£ 6.00
<i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009 Introduction by George Miller (softback – 207g.)	£ 5.00
<i>The Interpreter: a biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008 (softback – 279g.)	£ 5.00
<i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi. (softback – 294g.)	£ 5.99
<i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (softback – 442g.)	£ 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 £1.20 extra per copy)

<i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008. (hardback; £20 – 776g.) (Softback version £8 – 711g.)	£20.00 ----- £ 8.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008 (hardback – 558g.)	£15.00
<i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994 (hardback – 561g.)	£12.00
<i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback – 576g.)	£ 7.99
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman, 2010 (hardback – 525g.)	£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)

SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

The developers planned to start building the access roads on the building site last autumn, but the construction has been delayed. At the moment there are some archaeological works taking place in the fields of Dayhouse farm. There are still arguments whether Dayhouse Lane should be stopped up to traffic. The problem arises because the large business park will breach the Lane as it will be located on the Coate Water side of the road. The Society has argued for a bridge across the Lane in order to separate development traffic from that which uses the lane – including joggers, horse-riders, cyclists, walkers and motorised vehicles. The developers don't want the expense of a bridge; they would prefer to stop up the lane half-way along. However this would mean that traffic will be able to gain access to the development area from the southern end of Dayhouse Lane thus turning a quiet narrow country lane, much used for recreational purposes, into a major access route.



View of Liddington Clump from Day House Lane, November 2011

The Planning Inquiry for the draft Swindon Local Plan 2026 appears to be delayed. As a result of the fact that Swindon does not have an up-to-date town plan, the developers are having a field day (no pun intended) and much countryside around Swindon is targeted for house-building. As such it is not just the landscape at Coate that will suffer albeit that Jefferies' Land is by far the most valuable site from an aesthetic, archaeological, literary and wild life point of view.

STUDY DAY
Humour in Richard Jefferies' writing

SATURDAY 26th July 2014
JEFFERIES' MUSEUM, COATE

PROGRAMME

Comedy is under-explored in Victorian literary criticism, but it is pervasive in the texts of the era, from brief moments—Dickens' caricatures and Thackeray's asides—to more extended treatments, in Lear's nonsense verse and Jerome K. Jerome's widely popular *Three Men in a Boat*. Jefferies has been accused of having no sense of humour (e.g. by W.H. Hudson) but this is far from the truth. He does not write with the intention of making readers laugh out loud, but Jefferies' humour and satire can be found in his works and in his letters. You should have fun seeking extracts to illustrate this.

10.30 Doors open and refreshments.

11.00 Welcome and an introductory talk on Victorian humour.

11.45 Select a relevant piece of Jefferies' writing by or about Jefferies (5-10 minutes long) on the subject of humour to read to others.

1.00-2.30 Lunch break. Bring a packed lunch.

RJS publications and second-hand books will be on sale and you can explore the Museum, and Coate Water.

2.30 Readings continue.

3.45 Refreshments.

4.15 Depart

CITINGS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

Eric Jones treated himself to a copy of Robert Michael Pyle's *Mariposa Road: The First Butterfly Big Year* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010). The book covers a year's butterfly twitching around the USA. Pyle uses as a section heading a quote from *After London* relating that in wild times, the wild habits have returned. Pyle is a major lepidopterist and the author of the US butterfly field guide.

Peter Bainbridge acquired a copy of *Cycling after Thomas and the English* by David Caddy (Spout Hill Press, 2013). The book is about the author's own version of Thomas's *In Pursuit of Spring*, which inspired him to do the journey. There are a few references to Richard Jefferies.

Roger Ebbatson reported that the new biography of Benjamin Britten states that *Bevis* was one of the composer's favourite books. Entitled *Benjamin Britten: A Life in the 20C* by Paul Kildea (Allen Lane, 2013), Britten's passion for the sea and sailing is obvious, and so too, Arthur Ransome's *Swallows & Amazons*.

Andrew Rossabi came across another Ronald Blythe mention of Richard Jefferies in his 'Word from Wormingford' column in the *Church Times*. In the Christmas issue (20/27 December 2013), Mr Blythe writes:

My old friend Richard Mabey has given me his selection of Richard Jefferies' writings, knowing how I love his work. There is a passage in it that repeats a passage in my life when the ancient house in which I was born burnt down. This was some years after we had left it. I once took Richard to see it.

Jefferies wrote: 'Such old-fashioned cottages are practically built around the chimney; the chimney is the firm nucleus of solid masonry or brickwork about which the low walls of rubble are clustered. When such a cottage is burned down the chimney is nearly always the only thing that remains, and against the chimney it is built up again.'⁹

But my birthplace was never built up. There it stood, for years and years--as I once said, like a great charred tooth--until a smart bungalow dismissed it to history.

Blythe goes on to recall 'the night a wild swan came down the chimney and beat about the papered bedroom in terror, creating havoc'.

Rebecca Welshman attended 'Nature Matters' a symposium at Stamford Arts Centre, Lincolnshire, that was organised by New Networks for Nature. The meetings bring together a cross-section of individuals and institutions, whose professional work and private lives are inspired by the natural world. There Dr Welshman was fortunate

⁹ The quotation comes from the 'Village Architecture' passage in Chapter V of *Wild Life in a Southern County*. It appears on p.77 of Mabey's Jefferies anthology *Landscape with Figures* (Penguin, 1983).

enough to meet Chris Packham and Bill Oddie. She gave Chris Packham a copy of the Richard Jefferies anthology she compiled with Hugoe Matthews and explained who Jefferies was as Mr Packham hadn't heard of him. Incidentally, Chris Packham has just been made President of the British Trust for Ornithology.

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Eric Jones' new book *Revealed Biodiversity: An Economic History of the Human Impact* (World Scientific, 2014), ISBN 978-981-4522-56-4, was due to be released in February 2014. There are, of course, references to Richard Jefferies and the proposed development at Coate. The book:

.. aims to show that for several centuries environmental conditions have been substantially the product of economic fluctuations. It contests the notion of perpetual decline in species composition. The arguments are supported by far more precise historical detail than is usual in books about ecology. The need to take the gains to human society into account when assessing environmental change is strongly emphasized. The book features case studies including England, the Netherlands, USA, East Asia, Brazil, and the areas of modern agricultural 'land grab'.

Patrick Dillon is quoted as saying:

Revealed Biodiversity refers both to the possibilities of enjoying nature in the modern world and the importance of understanding it through a well-argued and accessibly written economic history. Environmentalists will not find this book a comfortable read, but it is an essential one if they are to engage meaningfully with the issue of biodiversity.

Roger Ebbatson has a chapter entitled 'Women in the Field' in a new book, *Gender & Space in Rural Britain*, ed. G. Goodman, (Pickering & Chatto, 2014). Prof. Ebbatson's contribution is based on a revised version of his article published originally in the Society's *Journal* No. 24 (Winter 2012, pp.11-20). There is another chapter in the book by Barry Sloan entitled 'Between two Civilisations' that also refers to Jefferies.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

Alliance of Literary Societies

The ALS Literary Weekend 2014 will take place in Canterbury the weekend of 31 May/1 June. This will be organised and hosted by the Christopher Marlowe Society. It will consist of a weekend of talks, tours and conversation about books and writers, centred on Canterbury.

Contact Helen Newman should you require further information (0121 4232100) or use the Alliance's website at:
<http://www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk/>.

Devizes and Salisbury Museums

The Richard Jefferies Society is a long-standing member of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. We have a ticket that will admit 3 members to the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes Museum at any one time. Please see information about the Museum drawn from their website. The ticket is also valid at Salisbury Museum. Please contact our Chairman if you would like to borrow the ticket (see p.4).

The Wiltshire Heritage Museum

The Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Library and Gallery were set up and are administered by the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society (WANHS), founded in Devizes in 1853, after the acquisition of the John Britton library of topographical and antiquarian books and manuscripts by a group of Wiltshire gentlemen. The inaugural meeting resolved to form a society 'to cultivate and collect information on archaeology and Natural History in their various branches and to form a Library and Museum illustrating the History, natural, civic and ecclesiastic of the County of Wilts'. Most of the original members were clergymen and landed gentry.

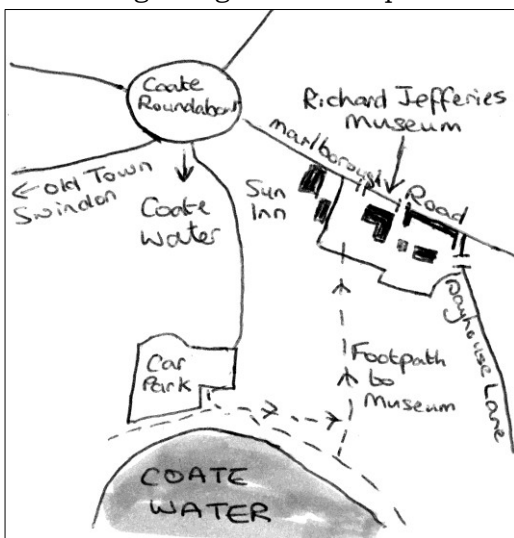
The Museum and Library have been at their current location in Long Street since 1873, occupying first the old Victorian Devizes Grammar School, then the two Georgian houses on either side of the Entrance Hall. Further extensions have increased its size to the present day. It has overseen many of the famous excavations on Salisbury Plain and the Marlborough Downs made by the Cunnington family and is a repository of the artefacts and writings of earlier antiquaries such as Sir Richard Colt Hoare of Stourhead House.

Its collecting area once covered the whole of the county, although this is now shared with neighbouring museums like the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum and the Alexander Keiller Museum at Avebury. Today the Museum is still collecting, and provides a valuable service in identifying and recording artefacts recovered both professionally and by members of the public interested in the increasingly popular subject of archaeology.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2014

- Sat 1 March* Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams. It is the Friends turn to host the meeting. Select a short extract to read to others by or about Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams or just come along to listen.
- Sat 5 April* Guided walk and talk around Coate Farm by Clive Carter as a result of his discoveries about the buildings as part of an architectural and historical survey and study. See p.11.
- Sat 10 May* Illustrated talk about Geoffrey Winthrop Young and his *Bevis* archive by Jean Saunders. See p.10.
- Sat 26 July A Study Day. Jefferies' Museum: 10.30am-4.30pm. Theme: Humour in Richard Jefferies' writing. See p. 32.
- Sat 25 Oct AGM and Birthday Lecture, Liddington Village Hall.
More information in the Autumn 2014 newsletter

* Meetings begin at 2.00pm in the Richard Jefferies Museum,



Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon, SN3 6AA. Doors open at 1.00pm – an opportunity to look around the Museum. Park free at Coate Water, only 5 minutes walk away (there is a footpath from the car park to the Jefferies' back garden) or at the Museum: space is limited when the ground is wet. Meetings are open to the public and free to attend.

From Swindon town centre (Fleming Way), there are several bus services that stop next to Coate Water roundabout. These include:

Monday to Saturday - daytime: Numbers 13, 14, and 20.

The Museum is open to the public every Sunday from May-September (2-5pm) and the second Wednesday of the month, 10am-4pm, throughout the year.