

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2019



A first glimpse of Jessie Jefferies' grave, 21 September 2018. See pp.25-27.
Photograph courtesy of Jennie Carpenter

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 is open to all on payment of the current subscription of £12 single or £14 couple (£8 students). Overseas Members incur additional postal charges of £5.

Members receive spring and autumn newsletters along with a *Journal*. The next annual report will be included in the spring 2020 newsletter. The Society has a library of books by and about Richard Jefferies stored at Michael Sherwood's home in Devon. The Society's archives are placed in the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Chippenham, or are on display at the Richard Jefferies Museum. The Society awards an annual literary award for excellence in nature writing and provides a research bursary for projects that promote a new understanding of Richard Jefferies.

Hon. Sec.

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NEWSLETTER: edited by Jean Saunders; and proof-read by Peter Robins. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. The deadline to submit material for the autumn 2019 newsletter is **30 September 2019**. Please send your contributions, preferably by email, to the Hon. Secretary as above. The newsletter is also available on the Society's website as a free download.

The Society is most grateful to Janice Lingley for collecting and collating the 'Citings of Jefferies' section as well as providing an Index. Our thanks are extended to Ray Morse who is maintaining the newspaper-cuttings album.

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2018-2020

Pete Bainbridge (re-elected, 2016-20), Simon Coleman (re-elected, 2016-20), Patrick Dillon (re-elected, 2018-22), Roger Ebbatson (re-elected, 2016-20), Margaret Hunt (Swindon Secretary, re-elected 2018-22), Ray Morse (Hon. Vice President – not a Trustee), John Price (re-elected 2018-22 johnprice@richardjefferiesociety.co.uk), Mike Pringle (elected, 2016-20), Andrew Rossabi (President, re-elected, 2015-21), Jean Saunders (Hon. Secretary, re-elected, 2015-21), Tom Saunders (Hon. Treasurer, elected 2017-2023), Barry Sloan (elected, 2016-2020. Elected as Chair 2018), Richard Stewart (contact for Literary Award, tel: 01473 216518, re-elected 2018-22), Phyllis Treitel (Vice President), Rebecca Welshman (re-elected, 2016-2020). In order to secure a degree of data protection for the Society's Executive Council members, full contact details are no longer provided. The dates in post have been extended 6 months to accommodate the new regime (see the 'Important Notices' below). The Council is now conducting more business matters by email.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

The Richard Jefferies Society is required by law to obtain permission from members to hold their contact details on a database. That information will be used for communication purposes (e.g. sending out newsletters etc.) and will not be divulged to a third party. On termination of membership, information held will be removed from the database.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Some major changes are taking place within the Society. For a charity entirely managed by volunteers since 1950, we are doing well. However, the average age of members continues upwards and there is no longer a concentration of members living in the Swindon area. At the 2018 Annual General Meeting members voted overwhelmingly to change the Constitution to enable the AGM to be held in the spring months of April/May rather than on the dark October/November days. The preferred date is the second Saturday in May avoiding school holidays, Bank Holidays and the Alliance of Literary Societies' Weekend. A Spring Lecture will follow the AGM.

Our membership year and financial year will now commence on 1 January starting 2020. As such the current 2018-2019 subscription year will be extended six months, at no additional cost to members. Membership renewal notices will go out in the autumn newsletter for those who pay by cheque or by Paypal. Those who pay annually by Standing Order will need to instruct their bank to cancel payments on 1 July and make them instead on 1 January commencing

2020. A form is included with this mailing for those concerned. Please send the form to your bank before 1 July 2019.

The AGM/Lecture for 2019 has been postponed until May 2020. The 2020 spring newsletter will include the Annual Report and financial statement for 2018-2019. The *Journal* will continue as normal in paperback format and will be sent out in the summer, or with the spring newsletter.

Regrettably, for the time being, the Study Day has been cancelled. Swindon is still the most practical place to hold the AGM/Lecture but visits to other places associated with Jefferies will continue.

The joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams will still take place as planned. The Friends will chair future meetings that should take place on the first Saturday in April.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE FRIENDS OF ALFRED WILLIAMS

Sat 6 April 2019, 2.00-4.30pm

Richard Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road, Coate,
Swindon SN3 6AA.

Select a short extract to read to others by or about Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams, or just come along to listen.

The meeting is open to the public and free to attend.

As you will be aware, John Price stepped down as Chair at the last AGM. He has done much for the Society that goes way beyond the general duties of Chair and we cannot thank him enough for all his tireless help. However he is still active in the Society as an Executive Council member and, along with Richard Stewart, will continue to prepare the shortlist for the yearly literary award. John is still the main contact should you wish to purchase any second-hand Jefferies' work or should you want to borrow the ticket for the Devizes or Salisbury museums.

The Society is delighted to announce that Barry Sloan was appointed Chair at the last AGM. He is an Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Southampton and holds degrees from Trinity College Dublin (1971 and 1973), the University of Southampton (1977) and University College Cork (1983).

We regret to announce that Eric Jones has stepped down as Vice Chair and as an Executive Council member for personal reasons. We are exceedingly grateful for his valuable contribution towards the management of the Society and for all his support. The post of Vice Chair is vacant at the moment.

FROM THE CHAIR

Barry Sloan

As you will have read above, John Price has relinquished the position of Chair of the Richard Jefferies Society, and I have been elected to succeed him in the meantime. I want to add a personal word of thanks and appreciation to John for his extraordinary work on behalf of the Society in addition to the appreciation expressed at the Annual General Meeting. It is good that we will still have the benefit of his knowledge and experience as the Society moves into a new phase and different running arrangements, which we will all be learning as we go forward.



I also want to thank Eric Jones for his work and support for the Society, and for the wry humour which he often brought to discussions!

The decision to have fewer conventional meetings and to conduct much of the Society's business via the internet is highly practical given the widely scattered locations at which members of the Executive Council live. Apart from overcoming problems of the time and costs of travel involved in attending meetings, this will ensure that all Council members will be able to participate fully in the Society's business, not just those present on the day. We hope, too, that greater use of virtual communication will appeal to existing and potential younger members, many of whom will already be familiar with business conducted in this way, and will encourage more people to consider becoming Executive Council members in future. This leads me to a point I would like to urge as strongly as possible: while the membership of the Society holds up remarkably well, all organisations need to attract newcomers who bring fresh ideas, energy and enthusiasm, so I am exhorting you to use any personal or organisational contacts you have to promote membership of the Richard Jefferies Society. Please highlight the diverse enterprises engaged in by the Society: its regular *Journal*, the publications it has supported, the annual literary award it co-sponsors, the occasional meetings it arranges, its association with the Jefferies Museum, and the bursary it is offering to support an appropriate scholarly project. We are really keen to receive applications for this and to have a stake in some current research. This is already an ambitious range of activities, and to sustain them and – better still – build on them, 'new blood' would be hugely beneficial.

BIRTHDAY LECTURE 2018: 'A Walkabout in My Wood' by
Richard Fortey, 27 October 2018, Liddington Village Hall.

Margaret Hunt

Eric Jones, AGM Chair, introduced the speaker, Richard Fortey – the winner of the 2016 Richard Jefferies Society and White Horse Bookshop Literary Prize. The book, titled *The Wood for the Trees, a Long View of Nature from a Small Wood*, was used as the basis for the talk, accompanied by an excellent pictorial display. Professor Richard Fortey, a distinguished palaeontologist, had spent all of his working life at the Natural History Museum.

Richard began by saying that the publication of the book followed his acquisition of part of Lambridge Wood, near Henley-on-Thames, within the area of the Chilterns Ancient Landscape. His purchased area was then re-named Grim's Dyke. The woodland had originally formed part of the National Trust property Grey's Court, named after the De Grey family (that had moved to East Anglia in the 19th century).

Most of the trees in Richard's wood were beech, a previous resource for owners; there were also cherries. The presence of wych-elm was important for its resistance to Dutch Elm Disease. An understorey of holly trees was now present.

Many interesting types of fungi and general flora and fauna were to be found in the wood. This had given rise to research into the intertwining of individual aspects of countryside phenomena. Particular attention was drawn to the abundance of bluebells on this ancient site, some of them being white. Lesser celandine were also plentiful.

Butterflies and moths were listed, 206 distinct species having been identified. Beetles, included those that were wood-burrowing, were also referred to.

Hares lived in the wood during winter time, and eight species of bats had been noted. Grey squirrel predatory activity had recently been curtailed by the influence of buzzards.

The ecosystem was not natural. Land usage had changed since Saxon times; for example, trees were cut for fuel before coal was produced, and scrubbing brushes were made from cherry wood until the 1950s. It was also indicated that flint tiles had in the past been made from the wood's clay-based soil, and that this became coloured glass when fired.

Richard described, and showed an illustration of, a Chiltern Cabinet made of cherry wood, used for the storage of a variety of items found on site.

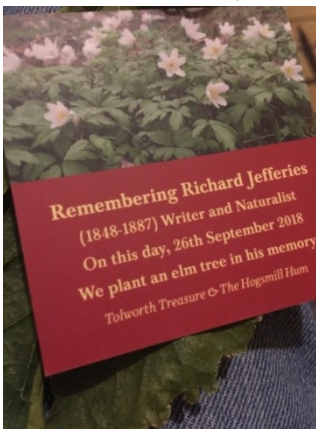
The talk came to an end with questions and comments from an interested audience and responses from the speaker.

SURBITON AND TREE PLANTING

Andrew Rossabi gave two lectures that were advertised in the autumn 2018 newsletter (p.8). The first, organised by the Esher and District Local History Society, was very successful and attracted an audience of 50 members.

The second was held at Surbiton library on 26 September and it coincided with a beautiful sunny autumn day – perfect for planting a tree at the Richard Jefferies Bird Sanctuary that followed the talk.

On preparing for the lectures Andrew revisited the Tolworth area as it was some 26 years since he was last there. He observed that the Hogsmill River presented a scene vastly different from that which greeted him then. New houses are now close but the banks of the river itself are lush and it might just be possible for Millais to paint another Ophelia from its banks. But Holman Hunt would be hard put to find a wheatfield for his Hireling Shepherd. There are still some fine hayfields nearby (Six Acre Meadow) with sloes and damsons in autumn. The Kingston Borough information boards make much of Millais and Hunt's association with the area, and with the Hogsmill in particular, but make no mention of Jefferies and his trout.



However the interpretation board at the Richard Jefferies Bird Sanctuary does provide some information. The photograph above of Andrew reading the board shows just that. Thanks to Alison Fure who also sent a picture (see left) of the plaque made by Lucy Furlong for the tree-planting event.

Lucy Furlong mentioned in the Society's autumn 2018 newsletter (p.9) that there would be a programme about their previous walk 'In the Footsteps of Jefferies' Tolworth'. This was broadcast on 8 October 2018 on Radio 4 and titled 'The Art of Now: Women Who Walk'. The recording was repeated on

27 January 2019. Albeit only a brief glimpse of the event, the publicity is much welcomed and the Society extends grateful thanks to Alison Fure and Lucy Furlong for bringing Jefferies alive again in the Tolworth area.

JEFFERIES SOCIETY RESEARCH BURSARY

The bursary is a sum of up to £2000 p.a. offered by the Richard Jefferies Society to support costs associated with ongoing, high-quality research projects which serve to promote new understanding of the writings of Richard Jefferies, or of the issues which relate to or arise from his work. This could, for example, take the form of new approaches to his life or his work, or a wider consideration of his place in late-19C agrarian and nature writing.

The bursary will be restricted to one award per project, and applications are invited from postgraduate students, and also from tenured and independent scholars and researchers.

Typically the bursary might assist with costs incurred to:

- secure permissions to reproduce copyright material
- create an index
- visit an archive or other location to study key resources
- support the development of an output in print or other media (e.g. film, digital resource)

In all cases the applicant must provide a breakdown of how the sum requested is to be used. Other kinds of request will be considered, but will not include a bursary to provide IT equipment, to meet tuition fees or to cover conference costs.

The application may be made at any time of the year, and would be considered at the subsequent meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society Executive Council. An application form is available from the Hon. Sec. or can be downloaded at <http://richardjefferiessociety.blogspot.co.uk/p/bursary.html>

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY AND WHITE HORSE BOOKSHOP LITERARY PRIZE 2018

The final shortlist for the nature-writing 2018 prize was announced on 14 January as follows and in no particular order:

- *Kings of the Yukon: an Alaskan river journey* by Adam Weymouth, (Particular Books)
- *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* by Kate Bradbury (Bloomsbury Wildlife)
- *Wilding* by Isabella Tree (Picador)
- *Our Place*, by Mark Cocker (Jonathan Cape)

The illustrious judging panel consists of Roger Ebbatson, Debby Guest, John Price, Barry Sloan, Richard Stewart, and Rebecca Welshman. They will meet in Marlborough in May to select the winner.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Janice Lingley's recent and excellent article ('Talks and Articles' series [No. 114] <http://richardjefferiessociety.blogspot.com/p/articles.html>) on the meaning of and background to the field names appearing in Jefferies' *Round About a Great Estate* has been accepted by the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society in a revised format for publication in their 2019 magazine.

Andrew Rossabi has been asked to select favourite Jefferies extracts and quotes for an anthology that will be published in July this year by Galileo Publishers (based in Cambridge). It will be titled *Richard Jefferies: A Miscellany*, and will be published in paperback, priced £9.99. The Jefferies book follows a trio of nature writing miscellanies for Edward Thomas, William and Dorothy Wordsworth and John Muir which appeared two years ago.

Robin Harrild, who has produced several family trees for the Harrilds, Billings and Baxters, has started to work on two for James Luckett Jefferies and Elizabeth Gyde's (i.e. Richard Jefferies' parents) ancestors and progeny.

There has been an update provided online for *Richard Jefferies: An Index* by Phyllis Treitel and Hugoe Matthews (Petton Books, 2008). The book is an invaluable guide to the principal elements in the published works of Richard Jefferies. In the last ten years, there have been some additions and deletions to note in the list of published works that can be downloaded at http://richardjefferiessociety.co.uk/published_works.pdf

TO THOSE DEPARTED

NANCIE CATOR

In January Robert Cator informed us that his mother died in September 2018 after a short illness. Nancie Doreen Jefferies Cator was the granddaughter of Richard Jefferies' brother Charlie (1858-1934). She wrote an informative tribute to her grandfather in the Society's *Journal* No.5, Spring 1996. Nancie was always a good source of information about the Jefferies' family and was always keen to share this with the Society.

Nancie was born on 24 April 1923 in Guildford to Dorothy (Jefferies) and Reginald George Herbert. Both Charlie Jefferies and his sister Sarah Billing (1853-1913) and their families were in close contact living nearby in Guildford. Indeed both Sarah and Charlie are buried in Guildford cemetery. Nancie married Harry Cator in 1943 and they had three children.

Nancie was the executor of Christine Billing's (Sarah's daughter) will and probate in 1967 amounted to assets of £73,022 that were essentially gifted to Nancie's mother and four other cousins of Christine Billing. Richard Jefferies' daughter Phyllis Hargrave, who died before Christine Billing, shared the last

years of her life with her cousin Christine Billing and, no doubt, Nancie inherited some material that Phyllis must have once looked after.

Our former President Hugoe Matthews was able to purchase some Jefferies, Gyde, Harrild and Billing family memorabilia from Nancie that now belongs to the Society, much of which is now on display in the Richard Jefferies Museum. The acquisitions include a set of family bibles given to Charlie Jefferies inscribed 'Charlie Jefferies / From his Mother / November 25 1880', many books either printed by Harrild or owned by the Billings, and a small wooden cylinder labelled 'Copy of Freedom / City of London' containing two scrolls confirming the admission of Thomas Harrild, (Richard Jefferies' uncle with whom he lived as a small child in Sydenham) on 9 January 1845, and Robert Thomas Billing (Sarah Billing's husband), 'Citizen and Stationer', on 7 June 1910. There are three autograph albums that belonged to Christine & Helen Billing (Sarah's daughters) and to Nancie's mother. There are locks of hair that include one fair curl labelled 'Toby/December 8. 1881' (Richard and Jessie's son, Harold Jefferies). There are also documents related to the sale of the Jefferies' farm at Coate and a rough plan of the farm for insurance purposes.

ETHELWYN GREGORY

We are sad to learn from her son that Ethelwyn Gregory died on Christmas Eve aged 94 and after a long illness. Ethelwyn was the daughter of Frances Gay to whom the Society owes a great debt of thanks. Mrs. Gay was a founder member of the Richard Jefferies Society, our first Chair from 1950 to 1971 and then a Vice President until her death in 1974. She also doubled up as Secretary from 1967 to 1971. Mrs. Gay was a prolific letter writer and we have Ethelwyn to thank for donating her mother's correspondence with Henry Williamson to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (formerly the Wiltshire County Records Office in Trowbridge) in 2006. This news was recorded in our Spring 2006 newsletter along with a photograph, reproduced above, of Ethelwyn and her husband Nigel presenting the folder of letters to Steve Hobbs. Nigel Gregory was also a member of the Society until his death in 2008.



MARIE CHESHAM

Marie Chesham was a long-standing member of the Richard Jefferies Society. She lived with her husband David at Lamberhurst in Kent. The village was famous for its iron foundry and supplied the cast-iron railings round the churchyard of St Paul's Cathedral.

Marie's funeral took place on 22 January (her birthday) at the Eden Valley Burial Ground near Edenbridge in Kent. A reception was held at the adjacent Kent & Surrey Golf Clubhouse, where tributes were paid and memories recalled.

Marie's husband David gave a succinct résumé of her life and background: Marie spent her childhood in East London; Walthamstow and then Leyton. During WW2 her family were evacuated to Buckinghamshire.

Her first job was with a national newspaper where she met Bill, her first husband. She was 19 and he 23 when they married. They had two sons, Glenn and Dean.

Her abiding interests were art and literature. In particular she developed an interest in the Beat Generation which was a literary movement started by a group of authors, which included Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs, and whose work explored and influenced American culture and politics in the post-war era.

While looking on the shelves of the local library for titles by author Fay Weldon she noticed a book by an English writer and artist by the name of Denton Welch which eventually led her to discover the writings of Richard Jefferies. She thereafter joined the Richard Jefferies Society.

Andrew Rossabi recalled his friendship with Marie, which came about as a result of a talk he gave on Jefferies the Hunter. This included a hypothetical scene between a diffident Jefferies and a latter-day hardboiled New York publisher telling him to wise up and eschew the gun-toting stuff, which was not to the modern taste and was damaging sales. Marie was tickled by the humour of this and they became friends, making outings to various Kent villages and churches, one (All Saints, Tudeley) with stained-glass windows by Marc Chagall; to Rye, where they visited Henry James's home, Lamb House, and walked in the walled garden; and to the Baptist Chapel at Jarvis Brook near Rotherfield that Jefferies described in 'The Country Sunday'. Andrew remembered Marie as a brave, strong-willed woman who was always true to her feelings.

Marie had a keen interest in political matters which was encouraged by her father Albert. Like him and other members of her family she joined the Socialist Party of Great Britain. It was in the SPGB that she met David in 1976 and they were married five years later.

During the time Marie lived in Chislehurst she became involved in amateur dramatics. She was, for a while, a Samaritan volunteer, and in later life, worked

with the Bridge Trust which helped homeless people in West Kent achieve independence and get a home of their own.

She did not always enjoy good health, particularly latterly. She suffered with atrial fibrillation, a heart arrhythmia, for twenty years and developed cervical cancer in 2011. She broke her neck in a fall in 2012. After that incident she had numerous further falls and was constantly in and out of hospital and convalescence.

Ultimately becoming too frail to remain at home David was able to find her a place in a residential care home in March 2018 where she was very well cared for until she had yet another fall in November which resulted in her breaking a hip. Despite undergoing an operation the following day she never recovered from the trauma of that event.

She passed away peacefully on 3rd January with four members of the family at her bedside.

In addition to her two sons, Marie leaves two brothers, a sister, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



After the period of remembrance at the clubhouse a simple but moving ceremony of laying the wicker casket to rest then took place at the burial ground. Andrew and David read passages from *The Story of My Heart* which included the following quotations:

It is eternity now. I am in the midst of it. It is about me in the sunshine; I am in it as the butterfly in the light-laden air. Nothing has to come; it is now. Now is eternity; now is the immortal life.

O beautiful human life! Tears come to my eyes as I think of it. So beautiful, so inexpressibly beautiful! The song should never be silent, the dance never still, the laugh should sound like water which runs forever.

The photograph (left) records a memorable day's outing to the garden of the Gamekeeper's Cottage, Hodson when Marie and David joined the Society for a walk from Coate to Hodson on 9 May 2010.

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER RICHARD JEFFERIES AND THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY?

Malcolm Steward wrote in August 2018: I am now 80 years old and the start of this was in 1943 when the first book I can consciously remember reading was *The Little Grey Men* by BB. This led to *Brendon Chase* in which *Bevis* is mentioned and I read that at ten and immediately bought my own copy with the E.H. Shepard illustrations. By the time I was thirteen I had read it so often that I could almost quote much of it, and I had lived much of it including making a matchlock gun and building a sailing canoe, running away from home and living wild for a week but, like *Bevis*, my concern for the people at home sent me back.

Time went by and I ended up being posted to RAF Wroughton a mere 3 miles from Coate and the 'Long Pond'. So I obviously explored the area thoroughly, walking round the reservoir and identifying the peninsula, the quarry and other places. I lived in married quarters up on the downs and often walked over Berenborough Field, which I suspect is where Jefferies walked rather than Liddington, being both nearer and more attractive as well as much windier and wild. It is now some 50 years since I was there so my recollections may be rose-tinted by time and distance. Now I read *Bevis* at least once a year and bore grandchildren with it. Harry Potter it ain't.

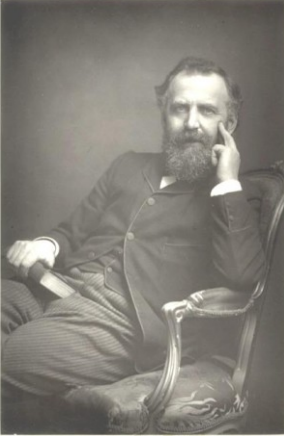
Julia Tolley wrote on 5 November 2018: In 1994, based at an office in Lorna Road, close to 'Savernake', I knew only from the plaque that Richard Jefferies, naturalist, had lived there. Ten years later, a chance find of Edward Thomas's biography of Jefferies revealed that he had lived in Surbiton – my father's birthplace, mother's home. I had sentimentally christened it 'Urbiston', Tolworth becoming 'Lotworth' whilst recording life history events. Prompted to discover more I collected Jefferies' works, linking in particular his accounts of nature in the area around the Hogsmill to those memories of mine and older family members. I had caught and nurtured a sturdy stickleback from the very same place he described. My grandfather was gamekeeper at Tolworth Hall where my father and five siblings were brought up at The Lodge. I have inherited photos, stories and memorabilia of life there in the early 1900s.

Eventually in 2015 I joined the Society. This year the Richard Jefferies' experience came full circle for me when I found details of the Surbiton members' May Bank Holiday walk to the site of the former Lodge on the internet. Having reached their destination, being held aloft for all to see was the photo of my 'Gamekeeper at Home' with his four-year-old, left-handed son shortly to learn how to handle a gun safely.

EDITORS AND WRITERS

Peter Robins

The *Pall Mall Gazette* was an important daily, evening newspaper to which Jefferies contributed from when he first came to London in 1877 until his death. Many of the essays published were later collected in *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *Wild Life in a Southern County*, *The Amateur Poacher* and *Round About a Great Estate*.



In 1883, John Morley, the editor, was elected to parliament and handed over the editor's chair to William T. Stead (pictured left in 1881). A biography of Stead by Frederic Whyte, *The Life of W.T. Stead*, was published in 1925 (Jonathan Cape) and a reference to Jefferies has recently been found in this work:

[1883] On September 3 Morley, still holiday-making in Scotland, writes to condemn the 'Literary Notes' in the paper – he does not like them at all. He does not know from whose pen they come, but he asks Stead very firmly to know from whose pen they come, but he asks Stead very firmly 'to let them drop'. On the following day he has some instructions to give in connection with

the contributions of Richard Jefferies, whose essays on country life were then so popular. 'If you have any occasion to write to him,' Morley warned Stead, 'remember that he is very touchy and needs gentle handling.'

On seeing the quote, George Miller was able to add the following comments:

It's clear that Morley didn't rate Jefferies, acknowledged he was popular but regarded his contributions amounted to little more than 'padding'. He wrote damning reader's reports on *Nature Near London*, *Amaryllis* and possibly *After London* for Macmillan, who consequently rejected all three. We don't have any correspondence between Jefferies and Morley but if there had been any it would undoubtedly and not unreasonably have been 'very touchy' on Jefferies' part. By contrast Jefferies got on well with Stead and sent him a copy of *Amaryllis* with a letter. In fact he was on good terms with most of his editors and sent them his books, but there are no known inscribed copies to Morley.

No contributions by Jefferies were published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* during 1882, the last year of Morley as editor, so it is tempting to suspect that there was a disagreement between Morley and Jefferies.

Stead made radical changes to the *Pall Mall Gazette* introducing banner headlines, shorter paragraphs, illustrations, diagrams and maps and adopted a campaigning style. Jefferies' articles were then signed 'Mr. Richard Jefferies' as previously published essays had been unsigned.

FIRE! FIRE! SCENES OF PROVINCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL LIFE IN THE EIGHTEEN SIXTIES IN JEFFERIES' BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

Alain Delattre

This article with footnotes was first published in the Society's Spring Newsletter 1990 (pp.7-8). The content was based on a true-life incident published in both the *Swindon Advertiser* and *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard* in October 1861. The fire broke out at Dayhouse Farm between 11pm and midnight on Thursday 17 October 1861 (not 20 Feb 1862). John Fox (1826-1879) the accused, was born and bred in Badbury where he lived most of his life apart from nearly six months at the Devizes Assizes awaiting trial for the alleged offence. He married and had one son. The case came to trial on 29 March 1862 when the jury acquitted John Fox. The judge had directed that the decision was right although the case was one of strong suspicion. No doubt, after that, life was even harder for John Fox and one would suspect that it did nothing to curb his heavy drinking habit. Jessie Baden would have been eight at the time, Richard nearly thirteen.

Scene I — Daye House Farm, Coate

On Wednesday 19th February 1862 [16 October 1861] John Fox, a labourer who lived in Daye House Lane, Badbury, was discharged by his master, Andrew Baden, because he had 'left the horses', a capital professional crime in those times. Few people in the village, even among his workmates, would have sided with the man; certainly not any member of the Jefferies families in the neighbourhood, and least of all the writer's mother who, since her first born, Ellen, a girl of five, had been killed, eleven years before by a runaway horse and the jolting gig behind, had become and remained half-mad with disconsolate grief.

On Thursday morning, John Fox returned to Daye House to receive his last wages.

Scene II — The Crown Inn, Swindon

In the evening, an old friend of ours stepped on the stage of this little tragicomedy; his name was Abner Webb, long known to us all Jefferiesians, thanks to Edward Thomas, who wrote: "In the tall copper under the steep thatch of the older part of the house (James Luckett) used to brew some very good, strong ale – 'Goliath ale' – and he would let his milker, then Abner Webb, take as much as he liked of this. James Jefferies would then come into the milking-shed sometimes, and find Abner happy but incapable on the floor. He would milk his cows himself, and pass it over, until he at last had to tell Abner one Friday that he would pay him wages no more.

‘Well’, said Abner, ‘if thee doesn’t know a good sarvent, I knows a good maister, and if thee won’t pay I, I’ll sarve for nout’. And he remained on the farm.¹

On Thurs. 20th Feb. 1862 [*sic*], Abner was no longer, or not yet, employed by J.L.J., but, a few fields away, by his brother-in-law, Farmer Cox of Lower Snodshill.²

At 6.30 p.m., in order to warm up his insides after a long day of February labour, Abner resorted to the regular licensed and paying beer-fountains of the Crown Inn in Marlborough Road, Old Swindon, where at about eight, he met John Fox. Abner left the place for about half-an-hour, but, on coming back, saw his friend still there; they decided to go and tap another brew, choosing The Bell and Shoulder of Mutton opposite.

Scene III

At half past ten the two labourers left Swindon for good, and walked back home; the reader is left free to picture their tipsy progress through the winter night, what sort of home they were to find on arriving, and the welcomes their families were preparing for them.

At the corner of Daye House Lane, there was a gate, and they parted; Abner walked straight on, his cottage being situate next to the Marlborough Road, and John turned right into Daye House Lane, towards his Badbury home. It was about 11.00 p.m.

Scene IV — Daye House Farm

Enter Farmer Andrew Baden and Emma, his second wife who was Jessie’s mother. They had just realized that their stables were on fire. The memories of Captain Swing’s exploits during the Labourers’ Riots of 1830-31 were fully alive in Wiltshire, where the very highest number of threshing machines had been broken, and where the labourers had paid the highest penalty by far; but they had been renewed for the people of Daye House, as they were living in the brand new residence built by the Stone family after the old place had been burnt down in the forties.

In the light of the flames, Emma recognized John Fox, and told her husband; in Swindon, John Millard, Inspector of Police saw the blaze, and, as he was in duty bound, rushed to help.

John Fox was charged with arson. Abner, Emma, Andrew, and John Millard

¹ Edward Thomas, *Richard Jefferies*, J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1938, p. 28. Also see *Amaryllis at the Fair*, Chapter III.

² He had married James Lockett’s elder sister Fanny; their daughters Mary and Eliza were courted by the writer before he became engaged to Jessie Baden; their beautiful old place was destroyed quite recently by incendiarism, most conveniently making place for a new hotel.

appeared as witnesses, Fox was committed for trial at the next Lent Assizes. But my hero is Abner, and to him let us return, seven years later, on ...

Scene V - Swindon Police Court, Tuesday, March 18th, 1869

Magistrates present - A.C. Goddard, Esq. (Chairman), D. Archer, Esq., Rev. G. Daubeney, H. Galley, Esq., and W.W. Codrington, Esq.

Ellen Gregory, of Coate, was charged by Abner Webb, of the same place, with having assaulted him at Swindon on Sunday evening last. It appeared that Gregory, a young single woman was recently confined of a child, of which she alleged Webb to be the father. Last Sunday evening, Gregory with her child, and a female companion, Emily Lester, were at Swindon, and finding that Webb was drinking at The Mason's Arms, Lester, with Gregory's child in her arms, carried it into the room where Webb was sitting. Shortly after this, Gregory also entered the room and, according to Webb's statement, at once commenced to scratch his face and use very abusive and provoking language towards him. This however was denied by Gregory and Lester, both of whom declared that on Webb seeing Gregory, he rushed at her and attempted to push her out of the room, upon which Gregory gave him a slap in the face.

The Bench dismissed the complaint, thinking both parties to have been greatly to blame.³

Scene VI — (a flash back)

1863. The Bell Hotel, occasion, The Annual Dinner of the local section of The Society for the Prosecutions of Felons. Established about sixty years before. A selection of quotations from the reports in the local press:

Presidency, Mr. A.L. Goddard, M.P., supported on the right by Sir Daniel Gooch, Bart., M.P., Major Calley (High Sheriff of the County). Among those

³ [Editor's note: However the story does not end there. In a report of the Swindon Police Court held on 25 March 1869, the *Swindon Advertiser* recorded four days later that 'Abner Webb was adjudged to be the father of the bastard child of Ellen Gregory, and ordered to pay 1s. 6d. per week towards its maintenance.'

Ellen was born in Coate a few months before Richard Jefferies in 1848. In 1861 she was a servant for the Lester family at Broome. In 1870 she married Young Fisher (b. 1825) some 23 years her senior. He was an agricultural labourer and had married previously in 1857. The 1871 census lists a son as Robert Fisher, aged two, and he was, no doubt, Abner's son.

Abner (1841-1896) had been unlucky in relationships and family. He married Mary Ann Mayell in early 1862 and their son John was born a couple of months later. Mary Ann died aged 27 the following year. John was only 15 when he died. In the meantime Abner married Sarah Jane Choules (1855-1876) in 1874 but she died two years later. He married for the third time in 1894 but was dead himself two years later.]

present were Messrs. T. Arkell, R. Horton, J. Jefferies.⁴ The repast having ended, the Chairman proposed the customary loyal toasts, which were heartily drunk.

The Chairman said: 'I believe one of the oldest supporters of the association is our friend Mr. Jefferies (hear, hear).'

Mr. Jefferies said: 'I beg leave to return thanks to the company for their kindness in drinking my health, and as I am unable to make a speech, I have asked my friend and neighbour Mr. Piper⁵ to do so . . .'

On giving one of the other toasts, a distinguished member uttered these words, which might well account for the labourers' alleged propensity to incendiarism: 'The committee report there were four cases of prosecution at the assizes for felony committed upon the property of members of this society, one of arson on the property of Mr. Andrew Baden.'

The Chairman has recently been over the great convict establishment of Portland, and saw everything so comfortable that he really felt it would be a temptation to crime to allow a poor labourer to inspect it.

Such was Jefferies' raw material, which he exploited in topical essays and fiction.

John Brown and Abner Webb were his father's real life labourers; the former retained names and character in 'My Old Village,' while the latter was turned into Abner Brown in *The Dewy Morn*; the heavy drinking, 'immorality' and incendiarism of Dolly and Big Mat in 'The Field-play' (*Life of the Fields*) were inspired by the real life adventures of John Fox who was eventually acquitted, Abner Webb and Ellen Gregory reported in the local press. By whom?

On the night when the Badens were awakened by the blaze from their stables, Jefferies was Bevis, about [nearly] thirteen years old, and Jessie only nine [eight]. But in 1869, he had been employed three years as a reporter in Swindon and Cirencester. Certainly by far the larger part of his production lies anonymously hidden in the columns of the old papers treasured by The British Library.

No doubt at all for me; some day, not very far ahead, those wonderful men with the thinking machines, feeding figures into their computers, will be able to decide on anonymous authorship with accuracy and certitude as faultless as their guidance of celestial objects millions of miles beyond Jefferies' beloved Sun.

⁴ Grandfather of Richard Jefferies.

⁵ Joshua Henry Piper: founder and editor of the *North Wilts. Herald*.

TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS OF JEFFERIES

Peter Robins

PURE GENIUS: In the following extract taken from George A.B. Dewar's memoir, *A Younger Son: His Recollections and Opinions in Middle Age* (Grant Richards Ltd, London, 1920), the author vividly recalls, nearly forty years later, his startling introduction to the writings of Richard Jefferies.

George Albemarle Bertie Dewar (1862-1934) was a journalist and edited *The Saturday Review* 1913-1917 and was editor of *The Nineteenth Century* 1919-1925, serving as a war correspondent between. In addition he wrote numerous books including *The South Country Trout Streams* (1899), *The Book of the Dry Fly* (1910), *Wild Birds Through the Year* (1913), *This Realm, This England* (1913) and *The Faery Year* (1906), a collection of essays Dewar had contributed to *The Standard* on nature, the countryside and farming, in the tradition of Jefferies whose essays were published in *The Standard* from 1875 until his death.

It was about the time I left Oxford that one day at the bookstall I bought *Longman's Magazine*, and read therein 'The Pageant of Summer.' [June 1883 issue] Now, there was style! I had not read anything of Richard Jefferies before, except perhaps some of his unsigned papers in *The Standard*, and the wonder of this thing took me by storm. It was not till years later that I read *Amaryllis at the Fair*, a story deep in parts as Thomas Hardy, and infinitely beautiful. But I understood at once here was one of the masters, high privileged of the gods. Thoreau was great, Jefferies was greater than Thoreau. I shall not forget that railway journey in the company of one of my new prophets – for Jefferies was nothing if not the prophet. I forgot Emerson and Carlyle, and for a time everyone, in the inspired author of 'The Pageant of Summer.'

Sometimes one turns back again to these great authentic writers after leaving them for years, curious – and not without misgiving – to discover if the thrall is still there. I turn back to Jefferies, to his 'Bits of Oak Bark,' or 'Meadow Thoughts'; there was no illusion or crude judgment about our early zeal there at any rate; this was one of the immortals. But there is Jefferies and Jefferies. *The Gamekeeper at Home* is an agreeable book: *Amaryllis*, *The Story of My Heart*, and 'My Old Village' are works of pure genius.

AN UNHAPPY MAN: Alfred Newton (1829-1907) was an eminent zoologist and ornithologist and travelled widely to Lapland, the USA, Iceland, Scandinavia and Germany in pursuit of his scientific investigations. He was greatly interested in extinct bird species such as the great auk, great bustard and the dodo. This led him towards the conservation of birds and Newton was a supporter and member of the Society for the Protection of Birds, campaigning against the fashion of women adorning their hats with feathers.

Newton also formulated ideas for closed seasons for the hunting of birds, mammals and fish which were incorporated into game laws. Alfred Newton was Professor of Comparative Anatomy, Cambridge University 1866-1907.

In a biography of Newton, *Life of Alfred Newton*, by A.F.R. Wollaston, (John Murray, London, 1921), the author tells us that Newton was greatly influenced by Darwin and Gilbert White but he had little time for popular naturalists such as Richard Jefferies or Frank Buckland as they lacked scientific training.

Wollaston quotes a letter of 12 September 1904 that Newton wrote to G.E.H. Barrett-Hamilton, a naturalist at the Natural History Museum, in which he confirms his unfavourable opinion of Jefferies:

You must go elsewhere for details of Richard Jefferies. Several books have been written about him. He was an unhappy man, with bad health and a genius for "word painting," which took with the public. He tried to write novels, but they were invariably scouted; yet such is the ignorance of people in regard to Natural History that his books about animals were read with rapture, though they were every bit as bad as his novels. The greater part of the poor wretch's life was spent in abject misery, as he was too proud to let his friends know that he often had not enough to eat; at least so I have heard say. I believe at the last he was better off, but then it was too late. I regard the poor man with great commiseration, but there is an utterly false note (as it seems to me) in all his writing.

TALES FROM THE STAVE

Peter Robins

In a scrapbook of unidentified newspaper cuttings of dramatic and musical criticisms held at Boston Public Library and credited to Philip Hale, the distinguished music critic of the *Boston Herald*, is a review of the US premiere of *Two Poems* by Frank Bridge (1879-1941).

Bridge's compositions were inspired by texts from Richard Jefferies' *The Open Air* and *The Story of My Heart*. In 1923 Bridge gave concerts in Rochester, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland and New York mostly featuring his works *The Sea* and *Summer*, regarded as the epitome of the British pastoral school. The tour was sponsored by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, heiress to a Chicago pork-canning business, and supporter of the arts.

Benjamin Britten was Bridge's most celebrated pupil.

The unsigned newspaper review is dated 12 November 1923.

Mr. Damrosch introduced to the subscribers of his Sabbath Concerts in Aeolian Hall another member of the British musical colony whose presence this season in America is making us all sit up and mind our Ps and Qs. This was Mr. Frank Bridges, one of the so called Younger British School of Composers (most of them are what Miss Daisy Ashford would have called elderly men of forty-two or thereabouts). Arthur Bliss, whom we have discussed above, and Eugene Goossens, who is conducting in

Rochester, are distinguished members of the same clan. Mr. Bridge is distinguished, too, though his music has made less stir in the world than that of his colleagues and is less known in America.

Mr. Bridge is forty-four years old and startlingly resembles Mr. Chesterton as Mr. Chesterton would look if he cut out carbohydrates and subsisted for a while on spinach and philosophy. Mr. Bridge is conductor as well as composer, and has directed English opera performances at Covent Garden and orchestral concerts at Queen's Hall. He has written much chamber music and some works for orchestra, but none of these latter, we believe, had been heard in New York before yesterday.

He appeared yesterday in person to conduct the works from his pen which Mr. Damrosch had placed on the afternoon program. These were 'Two Poems,' described by the program as 'new,' and this was their first performance in America. 'New' is, of course, a relative term. Mr. Bridge is said to have composed these two pieces in 1915, and as things go in music nowadays that makes them almost pre-classical.

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Mr. Bridge's 'Two Poems' are tonal mood pictures suggested by lines from the prose of Richard Jefferies, the poetical nature-lover, novelist, journalist and philosopher, who lived and died in England between 1848 and 1887. Jefferies was an idyllic celebrant of the beauty of the world as it disclosed itself to him in the countryside that he best knew – that of the South Downs. He possessed the secret of writing what have subsequently been called 'Nature Thoughts' without drowning himself in a sea of sentimental Pantheism. 'Hardly any of us,' he wrote, 'but have thought "Some day I will go on a long voyage" but the years go by and still we have not sailed.' Jefferies himself sailed often – not on shipboard, but on voyages of the imagination that took him over hills and woods and orchards and across the windswept downs that he loved best.

Mr. Bridge has chosen as the text for his two little sermons in tone a brace of paragraphs from Jefferies' meditation that yield him, first, a contemplative and deeply felt Andante, and, second, a Scherzo. The first is based on the following fragment from one of Jefferies's prose studies:

'Those thoughts and feelings which are not sharply defined but have a haze of distance and beauty about them, are always the dearest.' [*The Open Air*]

The second has the following for a text:

'How beautiful a delight to make the world joyous! The song should never be silent, the dance never still, the laugh should sound like water which runs forever.' [*The Story of My Heart*]

Incited by these suggestions, Mr. Bridge has written music that is worthy of the designation that he has given them – they are truly 'poems,' truly poetic. Mr. Bridge, like Jefferies, avoids the sentimental lure. He can write on such dangerous themes as solitude and contemplation and fading loveliness without losing his head or boring us with undue lusciousness. His manner suggests a slightly acidulated Debussy – it is quite French, and full of distinction and finesse; but it has its own inflections, its own color and design. It is delightful music, and we should like to hear it again.

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Another composer inspired by Jefferies' works was Ivy Frances Klein whose 'Noontide in the Meadow' was published in 1958. This was a two-part song for female voices with piano accompaniment. No further details have been traced.

More recently, Julian Anderson's 'Harmony', a five-minute piece for chorus and orchestra, inspired by a distillation of *The Story of My Heart* was given its premiere at the Proms in 2013. It can be heard on:

<http://richardjefferiesociety.co.uk/Harmony.mp3>

Frank Bridge's *Two Poems* were mentioned by former Chairman John Price (RJS *Autumn Newsletter & Annual Report 2005-2006*) to be available on the Naxos label and they are now, at the time of writing, also offered by Lyrita: Naxos 8557167 and Lyrita SRCD243.



Frank Bridge with his wife Ethel (centre) and the American patroness Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge

## THOUGHTS ABOUT HENRY WILLIAMSON

*Richard Stewart*

One of the unexpected outcomes from the visit by the Henry Williamson Society was a comment that none of his books could be found in the Coate farmhouse natural history collection. Another added that all most people knew about him was *Tarka The Otter* and his fascist politics. The latter had a considerable adverse effect on his later life and he was never awarded any MBE or similar which one would expect, given his long and very successful literary

career. It of course raises the controversial issue of whether creative works should stand apart from their creator's behaviour, beliefs and politics, a matter currently being debated about Wagner being performed in Israel.

However, there is little doubt that Williamson is one of our greatest writers about wildlife and the countryside, alongside, in my opinion, W.H. Hudson, Edward Thomas and Richard Jefferies, though to me Jefferies is at the top of this short list. I am thankful to a friend, in my student days, recommending that I read Williamson's *The Lone Swallows* which is dedicated to Jefferies and has many references to him. This led me on to reading Jefferies and for those not familiar with Williamson's work this book is a good introduction. It ranges from his sixteen-year-old nature diaries to passages written just after the First World War, which had a significant and lasting influence on the author. Seeing vast clumps of flowers cut down by mowers he writes that 'very soon swathes of dead youths were lying in ruined cornfields, and the righteous were condemning others for the results of their own unclear ways and thoughts'.

The book has a rich mixture of both human and wildlife studies, starting with a humorous study of young Ernie who is often a visitor to his 'Devon hermitage'. There is a powerful story of the long-term relationship between local villagers and the resident ravens and in 'Days of Spring', 'The Incoming of Summer' and 'Meadow Grasses' there are superb studies that reflect similar essays by Jefferies. Even immured in London, for work and residence, he finds and describes great beauty surrounding him, writing 'here and there in the fountain-shaped elms a yellow patch of leaves showed like a spilled plash of water imprisoning a sunbeam'.

My own edition is enhanced by the illustrations of C.F. Tunnicliffe, who keeps commendably close to the text. In three separate owl illustrations he makes each individual and closely related to the textural source. Williamson's phenomenal success *Tarka The Otter* was also enhanced by Tunnicliffe's superb illustrations. That book would be the obvious follow-up for reading but I would also recommend the four books following the life of Philip Maddison: *The Beautiful Years*, *Dandelion Days*, *The Dream of Fair Women* and *The Pathway*. Not all focus on natural history, especially the third, but closely reflect Williamson's own life. *The Pathway* includes what is almost certainly the most personal, convincing and detailed description of the Christmas truce during the First World War.

There is of course a much closer relationship between Jefferies and Williamson and I covered much of this within a twelve-page article in edition fourteen, February 2005, of our Society's *Journal*.



## JESSIE (BADEN) JEFFERIES AND GRAVES

By chance the Society discovered a memorial at Holy Cross Church, Chiseldon for Jessie Jefferies' father, Andrew Baden, and his two wives Jane and Emma (see photograph on the back cover). Jane died on 19 October 1850 'after a lingering and painful illness, borne with Christian fortitude, and a realization of the great truth that "Christ is all in all",' according to a report in a local paper.<sup>1</sup>

The sentiments expressed in the article give an indication of the Badens' strong Christian religious beliefs and the atmosphere in which the Baden children must have been raised. It is no surprise that Jessie Baden never shared her husband's views on this subject.

Andrew and Jane Baden had nine children. A year after Jane's death Andrew married the servant at Dayhouse Farm – Emma Smart; she is recorded as such on the census that was held on 30 March 1851. Andrew and Emma married on 25 October 1851 in Little Hinton. Emma was born in Liddington on 12 March 1824 to a publican and she was around the same age as her step-children. Jessie was their first child to be born on 2 February 1853. Emma died of uraemia on 10 November 1873 aged 49. The following year Jessie and Richard married at Holy Cross on 8 July 1874.

Jessie was only eleven years old when her father died. The tombstone gives the date as 28 July 1864 (aged 67) but probate gives his death as the day before. Emma took over the management of Dayhouse Farm. In *Greene Ferne Farm*, Emma is clearly the model for Mrs. Estcourt and Jessie – Margaret Estcourt. Picture the fields around Dayhouse as those in the novel whose title is drawn from the names of two fields on the farm: 'Fern Ground' and 'Green Fern'.

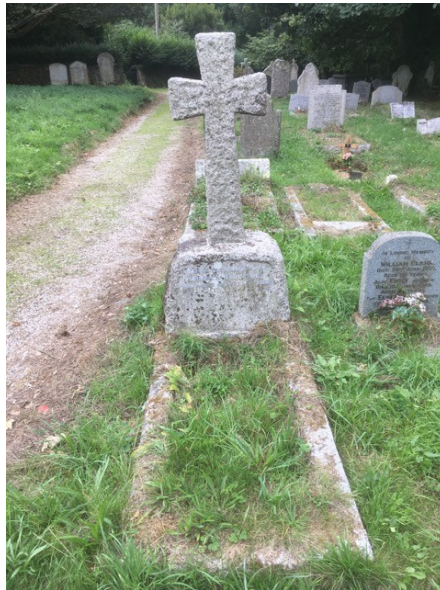
Colin Wilkins, the Chairman of the Friends of Holy Cross, and a descendent of Andrew Baden's brother, was kind enough to investigate. He found a total of five gravestones in the churchyard bearing the name Baden – all related to Jessie. The inscriptions on the Andrew Baden tombstone are still really crisp and even the stonemason's name 'Tarrant' is clearly legible.

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It seems that this is a time for discovering graves. Further to the report about Jessie Jefferies' grave (see autumn newsletter, 2018, p.21) Bryan Jones and Jennie Carpenter uncovered her memorial in St Piran's churchyard, Perranzabuloe on 21 September 2018. The grave was completely buried in a deep thicket and they spent hours clearing growth to check primarily that this was, indeed, Jessie's grave. See the front cover photograph of their first glimpse of the memorial. The

¹ *Reading Mercury, Oxford Gazette, Newbury Herald, & Berks. County Paper*, Saturday Morning, 26 October 1850.

cross, base and kerbing matched the design of the grave that Phyllis (Jefferies) Hargrave commissioned for her husband Alfred, who was buried in the same churchyard seven years after her mother. This grave was also discovered and photographed earlier that month.²



Alfred Hargrave's grave, September 2018.
Photograph courtesy of Ian Bell

We are extremely grateful to Bryan and Jennie for their help to clear Jessie's grave. The work would have been impossible without them. Jane Barclay, a local gardener, was employed to clear a three-foot wide path around the grave and she will undertake long-term care of it. Eventually Jane hopes to plant spring bulbs within the kerbing once cleared of bramble roots and blackthorn. Many thanks to those members who have contributed generously to the Grave Fund that has enabled the work to be carried out.

The inscription on Jessie's grave is in far better condition than anticipated, no doubt protected for so many years by the deep thicket surrounding it. Clearly the Cornish Family History Society had recorded the inscription for 'Richard' incorrectly as 'Michael' and the record can now show: 'IN/ EVER LOVING MEMORY/ OF JESSIE JEFFERIES/ WIDOW OF RICHARD JEFFERIES/ WHO PASSED AWAY/ JULY 12TH 1926'.

² The inscription on Alfred Hargrave's memorial reads very simply: 'Sacred to the memory of Alfred Hargrave who passed away Feb. 5th 1933'.



Jessie Jefferies' grave, 17 October 2018.
Photograph courtesy of Jane Barclay

Broadwater Cemetery

Michael Parrott reported that last autumn the cemetery had ox-eye daisies and red clover in bloom. Bees had been busy on festoons of ivy flowers.

A crystalline growth on the kerb stones proved to be a difficult problem, particularly on the lettering at the foot of Richard Jefferies' grave: 'To the honoured memory of the Prose Poet of England's fields and woodlands'. A lady on an 'Antique Roadshow' programme had a marble bust she kept in the garden with the same problem. The expert's solution was to bring it indoors! Mr. Parrott was given further expert advice and the marble is now clean and bright again.

The Jefferies-Hudson Memorial Garden is still Rotavated in the spring and re-sown, not cut, in the autumn by the local council.

The Friends of Broadwater Cemetery will be seeking an estimate for re-cementing the fractured foot-stone on the W.H. Hudson grave (see RJS Spring newsletter 2017, p.16). The Richard Jefferies Society has agreed in principle to contribute towards the repair.

FOR THE LIBRARY

Peter Robins has donated the auction catalogue for Lawrence Fine Art's sale held on 24 June 1982. It included details of Harry Bradfer Lawrence's (1887-1965) remaining Jefferies' collection that had remained in private hands after most had been purchased by the British Library. The catalogue lists first editions, association copies, autograph letters and other manuscript material some of which Bradfer Lawrence had purchased from Samuel Looker.

George Miller kindly donated the following books to the Society's library:
1. *Nature in Books*, by P. Anderson Graham, Methuen 1891. It contains a substantial biographical section on Jefferies where evidence of his authorship of 'Chapters on Churches' was found.

2. *The Boys' Dumas: G.A. Henty: Aspects of Victorian Publishing*, by John Cargill Thompson, Carcenet 1945. There is a section on Henty's version of *Bevis*.

3. *Betrachtung und Humor* (Contemplation and Humour), edited by Erich Hock (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch, 1948). This is an anthology of essays in English from the 18th and 19th centuries with German translations on facing pages. It includes an extract from Jefferies' 'Meadow Thoughts'. Michael Sherwood translated the end-notes as follows:

Jefferies was born in 1848 at Coate, near Swindon. As a fifteen-year-old he attempted to get to Russia and America, without success. Eventually, he became a contributor to a local newspaper. His novels remained unsuccessful; by contrast, he gained increasing notice as an expert on rural life and in depicting nature. Above all, his autobiography *The Story of my Heart* (1883) had lasting influence. He died at Goring in 1887.

'Enough is more than enough'(p.267)¹: Properly: enough is as good as a feast. In one of his shorter essays, Lamb discussed the untruthfulness of this English saying.

Our sincere and grateful thanks go to Gideon Perret, in Germany, who took great pains to translate Hock's Introduction to the Jefferies' extract on pp.12-13 and provide notes. Mr. Perret commented that the German sentences were incredibly convoluted, so he broke some up to improve readership. Apparently 'Übermensch' has become a standard expression in philosophy, and hasn't been translated. 'Umfassenden Seins' has been translated as 'Higher Life'. The word 'Sein' has a long history in German philosophy, from Karl Marx to Martin

¹ Michael Sherwood notes that Jefferies remarks: 'Never was there such a lying proverb as "Enough is as good as a feast",' and he goes on to give examples of the profligacy of Nature. Number VI of 'Popular Fallacies', one of *The Last Essays of Elia* by Charles Lamb, says of this proverb — 'Not a man, woman or child...really believes this saying. The inventor of it did not believe it himself. ...It is a vile cold scrag-of-mutton sophism...'

Heidegger, though it probably goes back even further. Hock might have thought of Heidegger, who around 1948 was just beginning to teach again after he had been banned from German universities. More likely Hock was rather thinking of Thoreau who appears in the same volume. There is a chapter in *Walden* called 'Higher Laws' in which he speaks of a higher life, which roughly corresponds to Emerson's 'Over Soul'. And isn't that similar to Jefferies' 'Soul Life'? Perret was unable to find much information about Erich Hock but he seems to have mainly written about German poetry.

This is Mr. Perret's translation of the Introduction to Jefferies:

If [John Addington] Symond's work is to a great extent fed by an aesthetic sensibility, the work of Richard Jefferies originates from a mystical sense of nature, which – in contrast to Shelley for example – is paired with a minute observation of animal and plant life. This observation is committed to the age of exact natural science, it lacks, however, the strength to form great poetic symbols. Jefferies' basic experience is a primordial feeling of heightened existence in the face of nature, which is considered sacred and whose immediacy is not distorted by any given thought pattern. This experience is altogether beyond expression and contains the idea of an increased, if still unknown, degree of soul life to which everything physical becomes meaningless. It corresponds to the certainty of a Higher Life, higher than any idea of a deity would be able to express. Jefferies is filled with a tremendous hope for an 'ideal man' in whom the spiritual and the intellectual attain the same level – a belief in the future that is vaguely reminiscent of Nietzsche's concept of the 'Übermensch'. Jefferies laid down these thoughts mainly in his autobiography *The Story of my Heart*, however, they also permeate the essay 'Meadow Thoughts' which as a beautiful poetic prose piece is quite convincing, even if the underlying spiritual content seems questionable.

THE BOOK YOU WILL NEVER FIND

Collectors of books by Richard Jefferies may be vexed if they rely on Longmans' catalogue included in many of their books in 1892. Longmans advertised four books by Jefferies, one of which did not appear under the title given:

FIELD AND HEDGEROW. Last essays. Crown 8vo. 3s 6d.

THE STORY OF MY HEART My Autobiography. Crown 8vo. 3s 6d.

RED DEER. With 17 illustrations by J. CHARLTON and H. TUNALY. Crown 8vo. 3s 6d.

WILTSHIRE LABOURERS. With autotype reproduction of bust of Richard Jefferies. Crown 8vo. [no price given]

According to George Miller, Longmans and Jessie Jefferies signed an agreement on 26 April 1892 for Longmans to publish a collection of essays by Jefferies titled *The Wiltshire Labourer and Other Papers* which Longmans advertised as *Wiltshire Labourers*. When, why and by whom the title was changed to *The Toilers of the Field* is not known. The new title was published at

the end of 1892 at 6s. It seems more than likely that the new title may have been suggested by Victor Hugo's *The Toilers of the Sea*, a popular novel at the time.

BOOK REVIEW

Richard Stewart

The Lost Words – text by Robert Macfarlane, illustrations by Jackie Morris
pub. Hamish Hamilton, 2017 at £20 (ISBN: 978-0241253588)

‘Once upon a time’ words began to vanish from the language of children. They disappeared so quietly that at first almost no one noticed – fading away like water on stone. The words were those that children used to name the natural world around them’. So begins the introduction to what is also described as ‘a spell book’ and to me this is one of the most important natural history books for many years. It is a response to the 2015 decision to excise many words related to the natural world and replace them with such alternatives as blog, bullet-point, chat-room, voice-mail etc. This was in the *Oxford Junior Dictionary*, aimed at seven to nine year olds, and the explanation given was ‘that the dictionary needed to reflect the consensus experience of modern-day childhood because nowadays the environment has changed. Words deleted included bluebell, magpie, heather and weasel. That changed environment facing future generations is reflected in a recent study of two hundred children aged four to eight: ‘51% couldn’t describe a bumblebee, 59% had never climbed a tree and 77% couldn’t identify a sunflower.’

This large handbook aims to redress that situation, using six pages of illustrations and acrostic spell-poems to describe twenty of the deleted words, in alphabetical order and a mixture of plants, birds, mammals and amphibians. I found my first copy in the adult wildlife section of a bookshop but there were others in the children’s area. The first two pages introduce the subject within an illustrated word puzzle, then the acrostic poem is opposite an illustration with a final two pages showing the subject in a landscape setting. Robert Macfarlane’s poems have varied styles, many capturing the ‘jizz’ of the wildlife described, others like that for the newt having a more humorous intent. My only grumble is that many of the illustrations, especially those of birds, have flattish heads, for no reason that I can fathom.

Already my local Suffolk Wildlife Trust has mounted an appeal to have a copy in every county primary school, with individual bookmarks for each child and programmes of wildlife activities aimed at their age group. This has been so successful that it has now been extended to special schools, high schools, pupil referral units and other learning facilities, with connected workshops. Incidentally, there is a copy of the book at Coate farmhouse.

This has nothing directly to do with Richard Jefferies but John Price, in the Spring 2015 newsletter, commented 'I cannot imagine that the newly included words are found often in stories read by seven to nine year olds, but the range of wonderful children's literature available in the English language commonly includes the newly omitted words'. Jefferies himself wrote, in *The Dewy Morn*:

All of you with little children, and who have no need to count expense, or even if you had such needs, take them somehow into the country among green grass and yellow wheat – among trees – by hills and streams, if you wish their highest education, that of the heart and the soul, to be completed.

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

All the Running You Can Do is Tom Saunders' second novel (Reuben Books, 2018). Strangers meet and go on a search for two people close to them who are missing. Mary McCluskey said 'I loved this book – an intriguing story, well rounded characters but most of all I loved the beautiful descriptive prose, the sense of place, the awareness of the natural world.' Richard Jefferies gets a name check! Price for hardback (250pp.) £20 (including UK postage) ISBN 978-0-95622828-9-7. Available by contacting the Hon. Sec. or from Reuben Books at: <http://reubenbooks.co.uk/running.html>.

Entity Apart is an anthology of short stories and poetry by Helen Newman (Reuben Books, 2019). It is a varied collection of memories, fiction, sadness and humour. It is priced at £8 (plus postage) and in softback (130pp.) ISBN 978-1-9993172-0-1 and can be obtained from Helen direct. Please phone 0121 4232100.

A PECULIARLY ENGLISH GENIUS: OR A WILTSHIRE TAOIST

A biography of Richard Jefferies, Volume I, the Early Years 1848-1867.

The distribution of Volume I would be much assisted and reach a wider audience if the book was available at libraries. Please ask your local library to order a copy. If you still haven't bought your copy, you can do so for the bargain price of £30 including postage (equivalent price for similar academic publications is over £100). Contact the Hon. Sec.

There will be a review of Volume I in this year's *Journal*. Feedback has been excellent and, in particular, Andrew Rossabi's painstaking research and attention to detail.

Volume II will cover 'the years of struggle' from 1867-78. There is no deadline for the publication of Volume II yet but the draft book is over three-quarters complete.

MAIL ORDER BOOKS & AUDIO CDS

Postal sales of the Society's publications are managed by the Hon. Secretary (see p.3 for contact details). Some stocks are very low as indicated below.

Publications are offered at a special price with free postage in the UK. Overseas members should enquire about postal rates. Cheques should be made payable to The Richard Jefferies Society and orders sent to the Hon. Sec.

There is also an extensive stock of second-hand books held by John Price. Please ask if there is a book that you need.

<i>A Peculiarly English Genius: a biography of Richard Jefferies, Volume I, The Early Years</i> , by Andrew Rossabi 2017 (hardback 800pp)	£30.00 £40
<i>Richard Jefferies: A Spirit Illumined</i> . Various writers, 1987 (pamphlet)	£1.50 £3.50
<i>The Jefferies Canon</i> – W.J. Keith, 1995 (pamphlet)	£1.50 £3.50
'Essay on Instinct' – Richard Jefferies, 2012 (pamphlet) - ONLY 3 COPIES LEFT	£1.50 £3.50
'A Natural System of National Defence' – Richard Jefferies, 2014 (pamphlet) - ONLY 4 COPIES LEFT	£1.50 £3.50
<i>Richard Jefferies' Letters to Aunt Ellen</i> , 2009 (soft-back)	£ 3.00 £4.50
<i>Amaryllis at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Carolyn Clarke (soft-back)	£ 3.00 £6.00
<i>Ben Tubbs Adventures</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2016. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (soft-back)	£6.00 £12.00
<i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by George Miller (soft-back)	£ 3.00 £5.00
<i>The Interpreter: A Biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008. Introduction by Eric Jones (soft-back)	£ 3.00 £5.00
<i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (soft-back)	£ 3.00 £6.00
<i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (soft-back)	£ 5.00 £7.00
<i>The Farmer's World: Richard Jefferies' Agricultural Journalism in the late 1870s</i> , 2016. Introduction by Eric Jones (soft-back)	£7.00 £12.00
<i>Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land</i> – Kate Tryon, 2010 (limited edition soft-back) + pamphlet 'Walks in Jefferies-Land' by Kate Tryon	£10.00 £20.00

<i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008 (hardback; £10)	£10.00 £20.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008. (hardback)	£10.00 £20.00
<i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994. (hardback)	£8.00 £15.00
<i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (soft-back) - ONLY 3 COPIES LEFT.	£5.00 £8.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman, 2010. (hardback)	£10.00 £20.00
<i>The Rise of Maximin</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2012. Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (hardback – limited edition of 60 copies) - ONLY ONE COPY LEFT.	£25.00

Hugoe Matthews' full list of published works (2008) has been updated and can be downloaded at http://richardjefferiessociety.co.uk/published_works.pdf

The following audio CDs are available at £1.50 each, unless otherwise stated, with free postage. The complete set is on offer for £8.00.

A Song of Summer. Paul Scofield reads 'Nature and Eternity' (*Hills and the Vale*).

The Man on the Hill with Paul Scofield.

The Story of My Heart. Extracts read by Paul Scofield.

After London. Extracts read by Paul Scofield.

Bevis. Extracts read by Michael Williams in 12 episodes (3 CDs). £4.50.

A Drift of Time. A play with Robert Stephens as Richard Jefferies.

There are a few copies left of the pamphlet 'Richard Jefferies in Eltham', written by John Kennett and published by The Eltham Society in 2001 (available for £1 plus second-class letter postage). It includes the first two verses of a poem by Anna McCourt who, apparently, befriended Richard Jefferies between 1884-1885 and actually lived at the home he rented in Victoria Road, Eltham from around 1900 to her death in 1916. The poem 'To R.J. on Reading His Book' was published in an undated book titled *Hymns and Poems by Mrs. McCourt* and, as John Kennett suggests, must refer to Jefferies and *The Story of My Heart*. She was clearly very religious and expresses in the poem that Jefferies would find spiritual rest if he only turned to God.

There are small stocks of the *RJS Journal* too going back to 1992. These numbers are sold out: 13, 15, 25 and 32. Price for pamphlet format is £2.50 each including postage (Nos. 1-31). Price for the book version is £6 incl. postage (No. 32 onwards).

CITINGS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

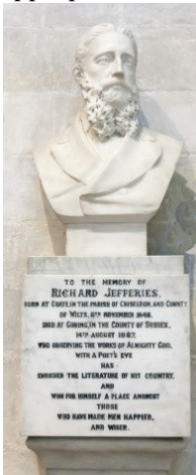
Janice Lingley

Please send your citations to citings@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk

An Index of citations published in Society newsletters since 2006 is available, formatted by date and alphabetically. The Index can be viewed on the website at: <http://richardjefferiessociety.blogspot.com/p/newsletters.html>

When Margaret Thomas's bust of Richard Jefferies was unveiled on 9 March 1892 at Salisbury Cathedral, writes Peter Robins, the accompanying inscription with its mention of 'Almighty God' was the cause of some controversy.

A few years later, when the English poet and author Richard Le Gallienne (1866-1947) was touring the country for his book *Travels in England* (John Lane, 1900), he commented on the bust and its dubious inscription and offered an appropriate alternative:



There is a monument in the Cathedral which I was glad to see ... Richard Jefferies, who was born and lived at Coate, not many miles away, and 'who,' as the inscription runs, 'observing the works of Almighty God with a poet's eye, has enriched the literature of his country and won for himself a place amongst those who have made men happier and wiser.'

Poor Jefferies! Well meant as the bust is, it is to be feared he would hear of it with a bitter laugh, and suggest a less placid inscription, which one ventures to write for him: *This bust is raised to the memory of RICHARD JEFFERIES, a man of genius; a naturalist of remarkable gifts, a master of English prose, whom while it was possible to help we did not help, but left to fight unaided a battle, fought with rare but wasting courage, against ill-health, poverty, and the neglect of an untrained public; but to whom doing ourselves no more honour than him, we raise this ironical, unnecessary memorial.*

The writer Inigo Thomas quotes from Jefferies' essay 'The Bathing Season' (collected in *The Open Air*) in the 30 August 2018 issue of the literary journal *London Review of Books*. Despite the noisy miscellany of holiday-makers on Brighton Beach, the uproar is not bothersome to ear or eye, says Jefferies:

... you hear nothing and see nothing; it is perfectly jolly and exhilarating, a preferable spot to any other. A sparkle of sunshine on the breakers, a dazzling gleam from the white foam, a warm sweet air, light and brightness and champagniness; altogether lovely. The way in which people lie about on the beach, their legs this way and their arms that, their hats over their eyes, their utter give-

themselves-up expression of attitude is enough in itself, to make a reasonable being contented.

The above quotation appears in an article by Inigo Thomas titled ‘On the Shore’. Mr. Thomas, a member of the *LRB* editorial board, comments that the ‘utter give-themselves-up expression’ is still familiar one hundred and forty years on.



Geoff Hirst, who sent the citation, says, ‘I like the word “champagniness”. It doesn’t appear in *Chambers [Dictionary]*. I suspect it might not even be in the *OED*. Perhaps it ought to be.’

Actually it is listed in the *OED* under ‘champagne’, and Jefferies is cited as the word’s sole source. The picture (left) of ‘Brighton Beach’ is by Alan Maley.

An essay by Jefferies, ‘Marlborough Forest’ (an earlier name for Savernake), published in the *Graphic* in 1875, and collected by Edward Thomas in *The Hills and the Vale* (1909), is quoted in an article titled ‘Savernake Forest Oaks’, by Jack Oliver and Joan Davies, which appeared in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* (Vol. 94 (2001), pp.24-46).

Oliver and Davies’ account of the Forest oaks is based on expert dendrology, but nevertheless has much of interest for the general reader. The ‘King of Limbs’ (pictured below) is one of the ancient tree growths that is discussed. Access to the tree, which is located in Birch Copse, can be difficult in summer due to the prolific undergrowth, the bracken especially being up to seven feet high, or more. This comment by Jefferies is cited: ‘More bracken. What a strong tall fern! It is like a miniature tree. So thick the cover, a thousand archers might be hid in it easily!’ Though Jefferies’ account is factually descriptive, it is also historically and imaginatively aware. As Edward Thomas says in his introduction to *The Hills and the Vale*, in this essay Jefferies ‘is dealing already with another and more individual kind of reality’; as in the following:



Time is now no more than it was to the oak; we have no consciousness of it. Only we feel the broad earth beneath us, and as to the ancient giant, so there passes through us a strength renewing itself, of vital energy flowing into the frame.

Andrew Rossabi writes that he ‘has been reading (and thoroughly enjoying) the early school stories – *The Gold Bat*, *Mike at Wrykyn*, *Tales of St Austin’s* – of P.G. Wodehouse (1881-1975).’ According to Robert McCrum’s biography, *Wodehouse, A Life* (2004), p.20, the young Wodehouse was ‘a precocious reader, steeped in late-Victorian classics such as F. Anstey’s *Vice Versa*, Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* and Richard Jefferies’ *Bevis: The Story of a Boy*.’

In an article titled ‘Nothing Except All England: Kipling and the Idea of the Poacher’, published in the September 2018 edition of *The Kipling Journal*, Stephen Ridgewell compares the eponymous ‘Lob’ of Edward Thomas’ poem (based on a real-life poacher and friend of Thomas, the Wiltshireman, ‘Dad’ Uzzell) with the archetypal countryman of the *Puck* stories, ‘Old Hobden’. Dr. Ridgewell observes:

Like Thomas, Kipling was clearly influenced by the work of Richard Jefferies. Best described as something between Gilbert White and Cobbett, in books like *The Amateur Poacher* (1879) and *Bevis* (1882) this singular author drew on a rich seam of memory and imaginative impulse to create new templates for countryside writing and stories about children.

The comment is linked in the references to an article by Janice Lingley dealing generally with Jefferies’ influence on Kipling, ‘Magical Rural Topographies: Kipling’s *Puck of Pook’s Hill* and Richard Jefferies’ *Bevis, The Story of a Boy*’, previously published in *The Kipling Journal* in June 2016.

National Trust nature conservator Matthew Oates, writing in *The Times*, 6 October 2018, commented, in his article titled ‘This Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness’, on the brilliance of the autumn colours this year following the long hot summer, the spiders’ webs shining with dew, and the nocturnal song of the newly arrived redwings. He notes also the lamentable decline of the small tortoiseshell butterfly, an insect whose population normally thrives during prolonged spells of warm weather. In similar vein, he observes:

The People’s Walk for Wildlife through London two weeks ago passed through a city centre all but bereft of birds. Long gone are the myriad starlings and sparrows eulogised by the great Victorian nature writer Richard Jefferies and his Edwardian successor W.H. Hudson. Even pigeons were scarce with Trafalgar Square ethnically cleansed of them.

Mr Oates evidently had in mind the countless numbers of birds Jefferies observed in Surbiton, described in his essay ‘Flocks of Birds’, collected in *Nature Near London*.

Thanks to both John Price and Peter Robins for this citation.

Contemporaneous with the People's Walk for Wildlife (22 September 2018) were a quotation from, and comment on, Jefferies' essay 'Flocks of Birds' by Robert Macfarlane, editor of the 2012 edition of *Nature Near London*, on Twitter the social networking website:

'Sparrows crowd every hedge, their numbers are incredible . . . of greenfinches there must be thousands . . . turtle-doves in the copses, the larks are so many . . .'

Richard Jefferies writing in 1883 on the astonishing abundance of birdlife near London; a reminder of how much has gone.

Mr. Macfarlane's Twitter correspondents replied with comments on the hazards which birds then faced, such as children armed with catapults, and trappers who sold the caged birds for profit. Members may like to be reminded of the complete quotations to which the abbreviated Twitter posting refers:

Sparrows crowd every hedge and field, their numbers are incredible; chaffinches are not to be counted; of greenfinches there must be thousands. From the railway even you can see them. I caught glimpses of a ploughed field recently sown one spring from the window of a railway carriage, every little clod of which seemed alive with small birds, principally sparrows, chaffinches, and greenfinches. There must have been thousands in that field alone. In autumn the numbers are even greater, or rather more apparent. (p.27)

The first spring I resided in Surrey I was fairly astonished and delighted at the bird life which proclaimed itself everywhere. The beves of chiffchaffs and willow wrens which came to the thickets in the furze, the chorus of thrushes and blackbirds, the chaffinches in the elms, the greenfinches in the hedges, wood-pigeons and turtle-doves in the copses, tree-pipits about the oaks in the cornfields; every bush, every tree, almost every clod, for the larks were so many, seemed to have its songster. As for nightingales, I never knew so many in the most secluded company. (p.28)

Thanks to Neil Underwood for this citation.

The first volume of *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings: A Selected Edition*, published in 2011 by the Oxford University Press, presents the autobiographical works, *The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans* (1913) and *The Childhood of Edward Thomas*, published posthumously in 1938. In his introduction, the editor Guy Cuthbertson comments that these two works by Thomas may be compared with other notable examples in child-centred Victorian literature, in which localities are associated with literary and historical events and personages. John Ruskin's *Praeterita* (1885) and Kenneth Grahame's *The Golden Age* (1895) are mentioned; Jefferies' *Bevis, the Story of A Boy* (1882), evoking the classical world of the *Odyssey*, is considered to be a pre-eminent example. Dr. Cuthbertson suggests that the relationship between *The Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans* and *The Childhood of Edward Thomas* is comparable in autobiographical terms to that of *Bevis, the Story of a Boy* (1882) and *The Story*

of *My Heart* (1883). Furthermore, both authors had written prose works about the countryside and their ages were similar. Thomas' 1909 biography of Jefferies is quoted:

... the mood, the very vocabulary, of these early country books was against the revelation of which he was in search; the matter of those books could be the subject of everyday talk, while it is likely that he said not a word of his inner life until he wrote *The Story of My Heart*. The form of fiction, however, in *Wood Magic* and in *Bevis* put Jefferies more at his ease, and he could say of *Bevis* what he could not yet say of himself. But now, at the age of thirty-four, with five more years to die in ... he was not shy of speaking out in his own person, of going back to the fields of his youth to glean where he had already reaped and harvested – fairy gleanings gathered so late by the ghost of the reaper.

[From the Faber edition (1978), pp. 162-3; pp. xvii-xviii]

Though Thomas overtly refers to Jefferies as an important influence only in *The Childhood of Edward Thomas*, nevertheless, Dr. Cuthbertson observes, Jefferies 'is the spirit of the place whenever Thomas writes about Wiltshire' (p.xxxiv).

W*ild Life in a Southern Country* was featured in an Exhibition of Books organised by the National Book League at the Victoria & Albert Museum, as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain. There were forty books appearing in 'The Countryman' section of the Exhibition, and the 1879 edition of Jefferies' observations of Coate, its landfolk and environs, is itemised in the Exhibition's catalogue, and stated to have been loaned by a Mr. C.A. Newnham. The entry reads:

Jefferies was the son of a Wiltshire farmer, and became a journalist on the *North Wilts Herald* before he achieved fame with his *Gamekeeper at Home*, 1878, and other works of natural history.

Jefferies' name appears with William Cobbett, John Clare, Elizabeth Gaskell (author of *Cranford* (1853)), and the Dorsetshire dialect poet, William Barnes.

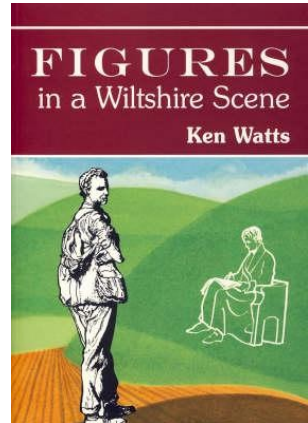


Richard Jefferies appears among the splendid pageant of distinguished individuals presented in the pages of *Figures in a Wiltshire Scene* (2002) by Ken Watts. The selection is judicious and thoroughly interesting, and includes, for example, Sir Philip Sidney, whose sister's literary circle was based at Wilton; and the 'Poets of Empire', Sir Henry Newbolt at Netherhampton, and Rudyard Kipling and Sir John Davies at Tisbury (though he does not appear, Arthur Ransome also lived in this area). The chapter on 'Wessex and King Alfred'

features Vespasian and the Roman Conquest. Also included is, of course, Edward Thomas. Appended to the chapter on Jefferies, is an account of the tragically brief life of the poet Charles Sorley, who was killed, aged 20, serving in France during the First World War. His fine poem ‘Richard Jefferies: Liddington Castle’, members will recall, was among the poetry researched and selected for publication in the 130th Anniversary Edition of *The Richard Jefferies Society Journal* (2017, No 32, p.116).

The chapter on Jefferies is detailed and informative in terms not only of Jefferies’ life history and his writings but also his critical reception and the two early biographies by Besant and Thomas. Mr. Watts’ approach to his subject is skilled, balanced and impartial. There is no dearth of praise where he considers it due, and he also gives a sympathetic account of *The Story of My Heart*. The author, himself a Wiltshireman, has long taken an interest in the county’s history and topography, and has other titles on these topics to his credit.

Thanks to Michael Sherwood for this citation.



Consider England, published in 1994, represents a collaborative venture by the historical writer Linda Proud and the artist Valerie Petts. The text is structured upon the English landscape, the origins and development of its laws, and the history of the English language, its literature and religious beliefs. The illustrations, a combination of paintings in water-colour and monochrome vignettes, are delightful. Accompanying the pictures and texts, and separately featured, are numerous quotations from a miscellany of famous writers, among them Jefferies. The following extract from ‘My Old Village’ (collected in *Field and Hedgerow*) is juxtaposed with a tinted drawing of the Anglo-Saxon village reconstructed on the archaeological site at West Stow, Suffolk:

... the cottage and houses came in little groups, some up crooked lanes, hidden away by elms as if out of sight in a cupboard, and some dotted along the brooks, scattered so that, unless you had connected them all with a very long rope, no stranger could have told which belonged to the village and which did not. They drifted into various tithings, and yet it was all the same place. They were all thatched. It was a thatched village. This is strictly accurate and strictly inaccurate, for I think there were one or two tiled and one ‘slated,’ and perhaps a modern one slate. Nothing is ever quite rigid or complete that is of man; all rules have a chip in them.

Thanks to Michael Sherwood for this citation.

The citation of Jefferies by the academic, local historian and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, J.H. Bettey, in his book *Rural Life in Wessex 1500-1900*, first published in 1977, is testimony to the fact that Jefferies is regarded as an authoritative and reliable source of information concerning the rural socio-economic history of his day. In his chapter on 'Domestic Life', and the generally bleak conditions endured by farm labourers in the nineteenth century in terms of their housing and diet, Dr. Bettey observes:

Richard Jefferies, who wrote with such intimate knowledge of Wiltshire farming and farm labourers in his classic work *Hodge and His Masters*, also attributed the slowness and lack of vigour of the labourers to their poor diet. In a letter to *The Times* in 1872 Jefferies wrote of the Wiltshire labourer that his diet was mainly bread and cheese and that 'His food may, perhaps, have something to do with the deadened slowness which seems to pervade everything he does – there seems a lack of vitality about him.'

Thanks to Michael Sherwood for this citation.

Thanks to Bryan Jones for bringing the nature writer Ernest William Hendy to our attention. Bryan considers that Hendy's writings are to be valued because they express, as the obituary which appeared in the March 1951 edition of *British Birds* records, 'the beauty of the living bird and its ways, and the emotional and philosophical satisfaction deriving from the contemplation of Nature as a harmonic whole.' Hendy's book *More About Birds* published in 1950, the year the author died aged 78, includes a chapter on Jefferies.

Hendy, who lived with his wife in Porlock in Exmoor, was a bird enthusiast, with several books to his credit and numerous articles published in newspapers, periodicals and journals. His obituary goes on to say that he 'brought a poet's



mind and a classical training to the study of birds and wild life, and his approach bore fruit in a rare degree of insight into Nature, matched by an originality and felicity of expression which endeared his writings to a great many lovers of birds and of the countryside.' Hendy especially admired the writings of W.H. Hudson and corresponded with him over a long period.

Hendy expresses a certain empathy with the mystical aspect of Jefferies' writings, which he says, 'runs like a golden thread throughout his mature writing', and discusses *The Story of My Heart* in a very positive manner. He makes special mention of Edward Thomas' 1909 biography as 'a most sympathetic and

understanding appreciation of Jefferies' genius, which should be perused by every lover of nature and literary craftsmanship.' Hendy goes on to remark on Jefferies' exceptional powers of observation in connection with his descriptions of birds, such as the bright plumage of the yellow-hammer, the song of the willow-wren and the flight of the swallow. Living as he did on Exmoor, Jefferies' book on *Red Deer* (1883) had a special appeal for Hendy. He says that its lore, though written 'over sixty years ago, is still accurate and brings delight to all who love those graceful creatures hunted and unhunted.'

Writing in *The Week* magazine, husband-and-wife authors Giles Wood and Mary Killen list their choice of the books Mary reads to her husband in order to keep him awake at the wheel. The list includes *After London*, described as 'a spine-tingling preview of the ecological consequences that will naturally unfold when post-apocalypse, the man-made landscape is left to its own devices.'

Thanks to John Price for this citation.

A quotation from Jefferies' *Wild Life in a Southern County* appears as an Epigraph in a book titled *Ancient Tracks: Walking Through Historic Britain* (1994) by the journalist, writer and poet, Des Hannigan, with photographs by Simon McBride. Each of the seventeen chapters describes a walk along an historic route in Scotland or England. The epigraph to the chapter on 'The Ridgeway, Oxfordshire and Berkshire' reads: 'It is not a farm track; you may walk for twenty miles along it over the hills; neither is it the King's highway . . . With varying width, from twenty to fifty yards, it runs like a green ribbon . . .' This brings together two extracts from a long passage describing the Ridgeway in Chapter 3 of *WLSC*.

Thanks to Michael Sherwood for this citation.

The *Derbyshire Life & Countryside* magazine, 14 November 2018, features an article titled 'Derbyshire's Rich Heritage of Angling and Natural History Writing.' Penned by Andrew Griffiths, the article features an interview with a former Chief Executive Officer of the Peak District National Park, Mr. Jim Dixon, who now runs an antiquarian bookshop. Mr. Dixon is quoted as saying: 'when I went through my scientific and academic career I was always very aware of the heritage of natural history writing. People like Charles Darwin, Joseph Banks, and in the modern era, Richard Jefferies and W.H. Hudson.' While working for the Peak District National Park, Mr. Dixon was successful in obtaining funding to restore the ecology of the moorland within the Park, which had been damaged by industrialisation. Members may like to view the website 'Moors for the Future: Peak District'.

Peter Robins writes that, in its 30 March 1895 issue, *Notes and Queries* published a letter from a reader, L. Petty of Ulverston, about apparent similarities between Jefferies' *Wood Magic* and a camp-fire tale that appeared in a book by the explorer H.M. Stanley.

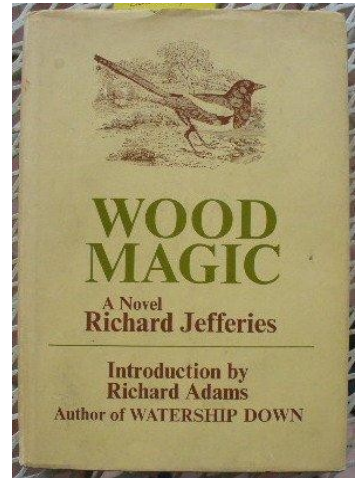
RICHARD JEFFERIES'S 'WOOD MAGIC' – The following extract from H. M. Stanley's 'My Dark Companions and their Strange Stories,' 1893, pp. 272-3, came as a shock to me after reading for the fourth time Jefferies's 'Wood Magic.' How it came about that Richard Jefferies wrote a story so exactly paralleled by this of the African I am unable to say; but perhaps some of your correspondents may explain. It is in the 'Adventures of Saruti':-

Close by this lake is a dark grove, sacred to Muzingeh, the king of the birds. It is said that he has only one eye, but once a year he visits the grove, and after building his house, he commands all the birds from the Nyanzna and the groves to come and pay their homage. For half a moon the birds, great and small, may be seen following him about along the shores of the lake, like so many guards around a king; and before night they are seen returning in the same manner to the grove. The parrots' cries tell the natives when they come, and no one would care to miss the sight, and the glad excitement among the feathered tribe. But there is one bird, called the Kirurumu that refuses to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Muzingeh. The other birds have tried often to induce him to associate with the Muzingeh; but Kirurumu always answers that a beautiful creature like himself, with gold and blue feathers and such a pretty crest, was never meant to be seen in the company of an ugly bird that possesses only one eye.

Here we have the history of the quarrel between the seemingly old magpie, Kapchack, and the jay, in a condensed form.

L. Petty's query is puzzling as *Wood Magic* was first published in 1881, more than a decade before Stanley's book, if Petty suspected plagiarism. It seems likely that both Stanley's and Jefferies' tales were influenced by two of Aesop's *Fables*, 'The One-eyed Doe' and 'The Peacock and the Magpie.' In the latter, a magpie is elected king of the birds after giving an eloquent speech, overturning the birds' original choice of the magnificently-feathered peacock. In *Wood Magic*, unlike Aesop's *Fables*, Jefferies never pointed out the moral at the end.

Jean Saunders makes a convincing case in her article 'Alice Clarke Mullen's Letters to Samuel J. Looker and *The Story without an End*' (*RJSJ* 2018, No. 33, 51-57) that *Wood Magic* was based on Jefferies' familiarity with Friedrich Wilhelm Carové's *The Story without an End*.



Michael Sherwood reports that the popular BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Gardeners' Question Time', was broadcast, on 23 November 2018, from North Wiltshire. Ann Swithenbank, Bob Flowerdew and Chris Beardshaw formed the panel of experts.

Mike Pringle, declaring himself a volunteer at the Richard Jefferies Museum at Coate, was one of the questioners. A member of the panel remarked upon Mike's T-shirt with a portrait of 'the great man himself' emblazoned upon it, and Mike responded with some brief details of Jefferies as a writer who was a keen observer of nature. He then enquired about propagating the 'gnarled old mulberry tree' in the Museum garden, and was given some expert advice on truncheon cuttings and layering.



The mulberry tree at Coate Farm

An article on 'Nightingales' which appeared in *St James's Gazette* in April 1886, and was included by Samuel Looker in *Chronicles of the Hedges*, published in 1948, is quoted in Isabella Tree's book titled *Wilding, the Return of Nature to a British Farm* (2018). The citation reads:

According to Richard Jefferies, a naturalist writing in Surrey in 1886, 'a couple of roughs would come down from town and silence a whole grove.' A nightingale makes a poor prisoner and the majority battered themselves to death against the bars of their cages. 'The mortality was pitiable,' describes Jefferies. 'Seventy percent of these little creatures that were singing a week before in full-throated ease in the Surrey lanes would be flung into the gutters of Seven Dials or Whitechapel.'

The 'rewilding' project in progress on the Knepp Estate in West Sussex, using grazing animals to create natural habitats on land formerly intensively farmed, is attracting rare birds, the turtle dove, the nightingale and peregrine falcon, and other threatened species such as the purple emperor butterfly.

Thanks to Michael Sherwood for this citation.

[Research by Dr. Rebecca Welshman has revealed that the unsigned 1886 *SJG* article, attributed by Samuel J. Looker to Jefferies, was the work of the nineteenth-century nature writer, John Watson: see her article titled 'Bibliographical Discoveries: Jefferies' Imitators', *RJS Journal* 20 (2011), pp.19-25.

The *Swindon Advertiser* has a regular feature titled 'On This Day', recalling past news items. The 9 January 2019 edition of the newspaper reveals that on this day in 1953 the following report appeared:

Local apathy toward Swindon-born Victorian nature writer Richard Jefferies was the title of a talk to be delivered by Mr. G.A. Streetly at the year's first meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society. The programme for the first half of the year also included talks entitled Round About Wiltshire, The Nature Diaries of Richard Jefferies and Richard Jefferies' Landmarks and Countryside. Round About Wiltshire was to be accompanied by a series of lantern slides.

In his article titled 'Money Can't Buy You Style' for the February 2019 edition of *The Oldie*, Giles Wood includes quotations of Jefferies by way of contrasting, in a world of climate change, the finest November he can remember with the winters of yesteryear. The following comment draws upon the chapter titled 'Hodge's Fields', in *Hodge and His Masters*:

During one of Jefferies' own Novembers, he wrote of the 'wild pleasure' of sheltering under the lee of a good thick copse when the wind was rising and the storm was near. 'With a rush, the leaves stream outwards, thickening the air, whirling round and round; treetops bend and sigh, the blast strikes them, and in an instant they are stripped and bare.'

Giles Wood describes Jefferies' style as 'elegant', 'neither under or overwritten', and compares the work of modern-day Nature writers with the chapter in *Wild Life in a Southern County* titled 'Notes on the Year'. The writing is 'rich with detail, from the timing of cocks crowing in winter to the precise date of arrival of snipe and woodcock – the others seem to offer fiction but no fact.'

The title of the article refers to the garden of a newly built mansion on the downs near Rockley, now boasting an avenue of 'lollipop' whitebeams alternating with fastigate purple beech.

Thanks to John Price for this citation.

Acknowledgements: Thanks for permission to quote to Dr. J.H. Bettey, Mr. Jim Dixon, Dr. Stephen Ridgewell and Mr. Giles Wood.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

Devizes and Salisbury Museums

The Richard Jefferies Society is a long-standing member of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. We have a free ticket that will admit just one member to the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, 41 Long Street, Devizes and to the Salisbury Museum. Please contact John Price should you wish to borrow it (email: johnprice@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk).

The Alliance of Literary Societies

The Alliance of Literary Societies' Literary Weekend in 2019, will be hosted by the George Eliot Fellowship in Nuneaton, 17 – 19 May.

More information at <https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com>

Richard Jefferies Museum Trust

To keep up-to-date on news about activities at the Richard Jefferies Museum, please go to the Trust's website: <http://richardjefferies.org/>. There are also Facebook and Twitter pages.

From the beginning of May to the end of September, the museum is open to the public on Sundays from 1.30-5.00pm.

Throughout the year, the museum is open on the second Wednesday of the month from 10.30am to 4pm.

The Trust has had an extremely busy year – see Mike Pringle's report that follows.

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM

Mike Pringle

The last few months have seen a lot of steady growth at the museum. Partly, this has been due to the recent larger grants, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Arts Council England (ACE), and partly due to us quietly working away on our 'foundations' behind the scenes.

In terms of the grants, the ACE grant, which totalled £55,000 for two years, plus our in-kind contributions and earned income, was a great success, with dozens of artists involved; hundreds of events; and thousands of visitors. An important element of this has been our two regular arts workers, Suzie and Rosie, who have been running events every week almost throughout the entire two years, with help from other regulars such as Ian (and now Angelina). The final major event (apart from Halloween and Christmas, of course) was this year's Poetry Swindon Festival, which, as in the two previous years was a triumph, helping us to keep up our developing reputation as part of Swindon's

(and the UK's) literary event landscape. The HLF grant was for £11,000 and focused on renovating the 'cabinet room'. This is now complete, with the team of three fantastic volunteers (Liz, Caroline and Halina) decorating the whole room; refurnishing and painting the cabinets, which are also now relined, with their own internal lighting. There are new displays on the walls; more artefacts to complement the books; a number of activities for children; and the floor is covered with a printed vinyl map of Jefferies' Land.

Behind the scenes, the office has had a bit of an overhaul and the team of volunteers which looks after the management/administration has really settled in, and grown, with the inclusion of a newly elected temporary Chair, Ann-Marie Scott, who has vast experience in all office matters as well as things like health and safety, document writing and financial management. Meanwhile, Andrea See has been working on our working processes, improving our accounting, recording of information, computing and café systems. On top of this, volunteers have sorted out all our filing and documentation, not to mention our shelves! This has all meant that our paperwork has moved on quite a bit, with a new handbook for volunteers, revised policies, a working digital calendar, and a website which is establishing itself nicely in tandem with a very solid social media approach. Supporting all of this, as well as many of our events, has been Tony Hillier, local 'community poet' and volunteer with a lot of experience in general community activity, and a mass of energy!

We now also have a new Museum Development Officer in place for the area, so can now push on with updating our Accreditation. Outside, the gardens are looking fantastic, again thanks to the team of volunteers which looks after them, particularly Martin and Steph (with occasional input from Robert), and, in the vegetable growing area, Beth, Liz and Sophie. Their efforts were rewarded with the museum scoring top marks in the Royal Horticultural Society's 'Britain in Bloom' community programme.

The coming year is already looking exciting, especially as we will start the year with a newly-thatched cottage, and it does look beautiful! As part of the work much of the brickwork has also been re-pointed, and the chimneys have been looked after too. We are currently about to start work on a project funded with £10,000 from Big Lottery Fund, and are working on another Arts Council grant bid based around some of themes in *Wood Magic*. Having now established a regular young family audience, these projects will have a particular focus on getting more adults involved with the museum. Of course, this does not only include visitors, but volunteers too. A number of our core team of volunteers are mentioned here, but it is important to note that we have many others, some of whom have been with us for a while and moved on, some who show up now and again, and some who are only just getting their feet

under our table. We rely on the goodwill, and enthusiasm, of all these wonderful people, and will continue to grow and develop the team.

One of the most ambitious things we shall be exploring this year is the idea of bringing back the cowshed. In the years the Trust has been running the museum we have established such large numbers of visitors to our events that space has been a real problem, particularly when the weather is bad. Having a simple, timber-framed building within the three remaining walls of the old cowshed would enable us to hold more indoor events. Such an idea would also give us a space to rent out to local groups, but, perhaps most importantly, would enable us to turn the museum over to just being a museum and be developed accordingly. As part of the idea, we see the other outbuildings being overhauled too, so that they play a bigger part, possibly as Victorian farm display areas. However, we know that such ideas are very ambitious and we hold no illusions about the obstacles that may present themselves. It may even be that the idea never gets off the ground at all, for whatever reason. But we are at least going to investigate.

It's going to be an interesting year.



Re-thatching completed by Swindon Borough Council in January 2019.
Photograph courtesy of Royston Cartwright.

A blue plaque is to be added to the building this year.



The Baden family memorial for Jessie Jefferies' parents,
Holy Cross church, Chiseldon. See p.25.
Photograph courtesy of Colin Wilkins, August 2018