

THE
RICHARD
JEFFERIES
SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021



The Plough Inn, Badbury—oil painting by Kate Tryon, c.1912



Upper Upham House—oil painting by Kate Tryon, c.1912



The Interior of Upper Upham House—oil painting by Kate Tryon, c.1912

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Cover images of oil paintings by Kate Tryon, circa 1912:

The Plough Inn, Badbury
Upper Upham Manor House and Interior
Burderop Park and the Gamekeeper’s Cottage, Hodson

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2021–2022

2021

Mon 8 November 2021, 7.30–9.00pm by Zoom.

BIRTHDAY LECTURE: ‘Richard Jefferies and the Sea’ by Andrew Rossabi who will explore the role of the sea in Jefferies’ writing (see back cover).

Mon 13 December 2021, 7.30–9.00pm by Zoom. Share readings (approx. 5 minutes) by or about Jefferies on the theme of Injustice. For ideas see *Richard Jefferies: An Index* by Matthews and Treitel (Petton Books, 2008), pp.102–103.

2022

Mon 10 January 2022, 7.30–9.00pm by Zoom. Share readings (5 minutes) by or about Jefferies on the theme of the Weather. For ideas see *Richard Jefferies: An Index* by Matthews and Treitel (Petton Books, 2008), pp.201–202. Colin Corkerton will open with an explanation of why he suggested the theme.

Sat 7 May 2022, 11.00am–4.00pm Annual General Meeting (morning) and Spring Lecture (afternoon), Richard Jefferies Museum, Coate. More information in the Spring 2022 Newsletter. There will be a **Zoom** link too.

Mon 14 November 2022, 7.30–9.00pm by Zoom. John Lockett Jefferies, artist. An illustrated talk about the works of Richard Jefferies’ uncle.

Mon 12 December 2022, 7.30–9.00pm by Zoom.

BIRTHDAY LECTURE: ‘Coate Water and Colonial Visions: Islands and Lakes in *Bevis* and *After London*’ by Dr. Mark Frost (Previously postponed. See *RJS Spring Newsletter*, 2020, p.37).

NEWSLETTER: edited by Jean Saunders and Peter Robins. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. The deadline to submit material for the Spring 2022 Newsletter is **1 March 2022**. Please send your contributions, preferably by email, to the Hon. Secretary as below. The newsletter is also made available on the Society’s website as a free download. Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material.

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FROM THE CHAIR

Barry Sloan

At the last AGM, that was the first to take place by Zoom, we were encouraged by Members to make better use of online video-conferencing. Members on email were contacted to establish who might wish to be involved in online events and to receive occasional news. Now we have a 'virtual' group of 70 members. These were then canvassed to find out the best time to meet in the winter months and asked for suggestions for meetings. This has led to the establishment of Zoom meetings that will be held on the second Monday of the month from November to January inclusive and starting at 7.30pm. The programme will include a return of the Birthday Lecture. If you missed the opportunity to add your email address to the mailing list, send a message to the Hon. Sec. (see p.2).

Some of the meetings will be informal based on a topic that you might like to research. For example, you might select an extract by or about Jefferies to read out. Matthews and Treitel's *Richard Jefferies: an Index of Themes, Thoughts and Observations* (Petton Books, 2008) is an invaluable guide to point you to articles on a wide range of topics. We have some hardback copies of the book available for £10 including postage (See p.42. Contact the Hon. Sec.).

At the same time we will still meet in person once a year for the AGM and Spring Lecture at the Richard Jefferies Museum but with the addition of a video-link facility for those who cannot attend, courtesy of the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust.

In order to better clarify which part of the Society's spring mailing refers to matters associated with the Annual Report from that of the Newsletter, the autumn newsletter will no longer carry items that are better placed in the Annual Report and the spring newsletter will be in two sections.

Once again there were strong contenders for our literary award for the best nature writing published in 2020. Ben Macdonald repeated his win from the previous year but this time with co-author Nick Gates for *Orchard: A Year in England's Eden*. You can read Richard Stewart's analysis of the decision on pp.37–38. *Orchard* not only celebrates the exemplary achievement of Nancy and her son David who maintain this exceptionally valuable habitat as a small bulwark against the irreparable losses of wildlife that have already occurred so widely. It also reminds us that comparably rich environments still exist on a much larger scale in the Carpathian mountain area of Eastern Europe, and urges consideration of practical ways to improve the fragile situation in Britain. In all these ways, *Orchard* is an urgently telling and timely intervention in current

ecological issues which will appeal to any reader who is concerned about the future of wildlife in this country.

At the time of this newsletter going to the printers, Ben Macdonald was booked to speak about *Orchard* at the Marlborough Literary Festival on 2 October at St Mary's Church Hall, Marlborough. The September issue of *Wiltshire Life* included a splendid two page feature on Ben, the book, the Richard Jefferies Award and Richard Jefferies as part of their coverage of the Festival.

After consultation with The White Horse Bookshop, who sponsor the prize, it was agreed to rename the accolade 'The Richard Jefferies Award'. We are extremely grateful to Mike Pringle who used his design skills to draft a sticker that publishers of the winning book might add to future reprints of the book cover and which might be adapted for use as a logo. This is still to be agreed. There is now a dedicated website for the Award at:

<http://www.richardjefferiesaward.org>.

Mike has also improved the Society's letter heading that has been used on the front cover of this newsletter and in the logo below.



Judging by the response so far for this year's nominations, the competition will be fierce again. John Price and Rebecca Welshman will have a difficult task to select a short list whilst the judging panel that adds Pete Bainbridge, Roger Ebbatson, Patrick Dillon, Debby Guest and myself will struggle to choose an overall winner.

Rob Cowen, on hearing that his book had been nominated this year said, '*The Story of My Heart* remains one of the most influential books of my life,' and added 'none of us [nature writers] would be here, but for RJ.'

Our thanks go to Cats Solutions in Swindon who have been printing the Society's newsletter for the last fifteen years. The print company has been taken over and can no longer undertake small printing jobs. We have turned to the printers of our *Journal*, Copytech UK, based in Peterborough, who will, no doubt, make an equally good job of the newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2022

The annual subscription fee for Society membership is now £15 (£8 UK students) regardless of how many people, living at the same address, register as members. Subscriptions are due on 1 January 2022. Renewal forms are enclosed with this mailing where appropriate. Whilst Paypal is an easy way to renew subscriptions, particularly for those living overseas, the Society incurs charges. Please may we appeal to UK members, who have access to online banking, to transfer monies to our Lloyds Bank account direct or organise a Standing Order payment with your bank. Any cheques received will not be banked until next year. Thank you for your cooperation.

DISCOVERING RICHARD JEFFERIES IN LATER LIFE

Peter Brown

While I was watching a BBC adaptation of *Howards End*, one of the characters mentioned that he enjoyed reading the nature writings of Richard Jefferies. This was a name I had heard and decided to look him up.

Doing some research I was amazed that during much of my youth I had followed in the footsteps of Richard Jefferies. I was born in 1942 in my grandparents' cottage in the hamlet of Hackpen, which is within half a mile of Barbury Castle and Jefferies' Memorial Stone. At the age of three I moved to Turnball Road, Chiseldon next door to the corner Toll House¹. I remained there for the duration of the Second World War before moving to a cottage in Burderop Park. It was here that my days were spent following in the footsteps of Jefferies. Many hours were passed with friends walking through Burderop woods on to Hodson and eventually through the back gate to Coate Water. Another route to Coate Water took us past the American Air Force Hospital in Burderop, down Ladder Lane to Broome Manor and on to Marlborough Road.

Liddington Castle and Barbury Castle were favourite places of mine and now when I visit them I think of Jefferies and I am sure that, had we been around at the same time, we would have certainly met up.

My early school days were spent in Wroughton—a daily bus ride from Burderop. On moving to senior school we registered in the playground of the junior school before being escorted the half-mile up Wroughton Church Hill to the senior school. A short time later it was moved into the American Air Force Hospital in Burderop Park, a short walk from home: 500 yards to the Calley Mansion House Lodge and a further 500 yards past the Ha-Ha to the American

¹ See *RJS Journal* No.36 (2021), p.132

Air Force Hospital Gate House. Once in the base it was a walk to the bottom where the classrooms took over the Second World War British Army huts.

At the age of ten I started as a bread delivery boy for Dick Preddy a local baker based in Wroughton. A friend and I delivered bread locally in Burderop and Hodson sitting on the back of the open bread van, legs dangling freely (not sure that was legal even in 1952). Our first call was The Calley Arms public house where Dick stopped for his regular bottle of Guinness while we continued to deliver bread to the local inhabitants. One of the deliveries was to the little thatched cottage (Pheasant Cottage) at Hodson Bottom and I agree with those who believe this cottage was the one Jefferies referred to as the 'Witch's Cottage' in *Bevis* and not the Gamekeeper's Cottage up the hill on the left side.² My next delivery was up the footpath to the Burderop Park Estate Laundry House and across the road to the Gamekeeper's Cottage which Jefferies referred to in *The Gamekeeper at Home*.

On my frequent visits to Barbury Castle I would spend many hours during the mushroom season in the field where the Jefferies/Alfred Williams Memorial Stone is situated. This field was a particularly good place to gather mushrooms and I often sat leaning against the Memorial Stone eating raw mushrooms without realising why it was there.



The Jefferies/Alfred Williams Memorial Stone
view towards Liddington Hill, across
the Jefferies' ancestral home at Draycot Foliat

Thus began my relationship with the works of Richard Jefferies, followed by a visit to the museum and the purchase of many of his books and those written about him. My collection is now over 40, many that I have yet to read.

Eventually moving away from Richard Jefferies Country to Whitehaven Cumbria, my biggest regret is not being aware of his writings sooner.

² See *RJS Spring Newsletter*, 2018, p.26–29 and front cover image.

BURDEROP LINK WITH RICHARD JEFFERIES

Published in the *North Wilts Herald*, 4 June 1937, p.8. The writer of the article is unknown. The image of Mrs. Boulter is reproduced from the newspaper.

By the veriest chance I stumbled across a lofty haunt that once served as a place of inspiration for Richard Jefferies, the author and naturalist, who lived at Coate.

While rambling in the neighbourhood of Hodson I found myself in Burderop Park, and halted, for respite from a climb of Hodson heights, at a fallen beech, a veritable monarch of Burderop which has been a woodland sentinel of the Calley estate.

Soon I espied an experienced veteran of Burderop, who told me that the spot was a popular haunt of Richard Jefferies. It seems that he welcomed its friendly shade, and spent much time there writing manuscripts for his famous books.

He certainly had an excellent taste, for, from the fallen tree, one commanded a panoramic view of the very cream of the White Horse Vale, and in the distance of the Cotswolds. From here, too, may be admired a picturesque stretch of Coate Water, an avenue of stately beeches, and, below, a variety of woodland scenery.

Even the much-maligned Swindon presents an attractive appearance from the Burderop site.

While on the subject of Richard Jefferies, I am reminded of a friend of mine at Malmesbury who has a close personal association with the Swindon author.

I refer to Mrs. M. Boulter [pictured left] of Crudwell-road, who was Jefferies nurse-maid. Mrs. Boulter is an octogenarian, still blessed with health. She is an enthusiastic gardener, and, in spite of her advanced age, tends her flowers and vegetables with great care and skill.



[Ed. For more information about Mrs. Matilda Boulter see *RJS Journal* No.34, 2019, p.66.]

COATE RESERVOIR BURST

There are news reports of breaches in the integrity of Coate Reservoir in several newspapers dated May 1866, two of which are reproduced below. It is highly likely that the articles were written by Richard Jefferies.

Bursting of the Canal Reservoir at Coate/Great Alarm in the District

North Wiltshire Herald, Monday, 5 May 1866

On Wednesday last, a leak was discovered in the culvert which conveys the water of a spring beneath the reservoir at Coate. The ordinary method of proceeding, that of throwing clay overboard just above the spot, was resorted to, and with apparent success, as the leak sensibly diminished. On Thursday afternoon, however, the water which flowed from the culvert was found to be rapidly increasing in volume, and ere the men under the charge of Mr. Day, keeper of the reservoir, could proceed to the spot, part of the meadows adjacent in the occupation of Mr. Jefferies and Mr. Barnes, were under water. Attempts were immediately made to lower an iron hatch from the bank above, but having been unused for many years it could not be moved until a sledgehammer was procured. Meanwhile men had been dispatched to convey warning, while the whole neighbourhood was in a state of alarm, and the foot-traffic upon the highway road suspended, as it was several feet deep in water. At length, however, the hatch was forced down and the danger ceased, although from the necessity which then arose for shutting down another hatch at the upper extremity of the culvert in order to prevent the water of the reservoir escaping there, it is feared that considerable damage will be occasioned to the grass crops by the accumulation of spring water denied a passage through the culvert, and it is stated that a field in the occupation of Mrs. Baden, of Dayhouse Farm, is already partially flooded. A graphically written and excited account of the affair, by an eye-witness, is unavoidably postponed.

Swindon Advertiser, 7 May 1866

On Tuesday afternoon last, about two o'clock, an accident which, had it not been for the strenuous efforts made by those present, might have resulted in a fearful catastrophe, occurred at the Coate Reservoir, near Swindon. The Coate Reservoir is the property of the Wilts and Berks Canal Company, and was built by them in the year 1822 for the purpose of supplying their canal with water. The reservoir, which is about 90 acres in extent, and from 20 to 30 feet deep, is supplied by a stream of water running in at the southwest end, and has an outlet through the embankment at the east end. By the side of the first-mentioned stream there is another stream, and this stream has to be carried through a brick culvert under the whole length of the reservoir, where it is emptied into a brook. For some time past there have been several leakages in

this culvert, and it was only a week before this occurrence that Mr. Choules, of the Sun Inn, Coate, with several friends, was walking in his garden, when he noticed that there was a large quantity of mud and clay coming down the stream. Thinking that all was not right, Mr. Choules went up to the reservoir and spoke to the keeper about it and they both proceeded to the upper end in a boat. On arriving there they found that the water was quite clear, when they at once commenced to make a search for the leakage, and the keeper continued to do so until Tuesday morning last, when he came into Swindon and obtained the assistance of another man. They then returned together, and having found the hole, commenced ramming hay and clay into it to stop the flow of water. They had not been thus engaged long before they were startled by the sudden disappearance of the hay and clay altogether, and it was immediately apparent that they had knocked the top of the culvert through. The men then immediately ran to shut down the hatchways, but this was found to be impossible, as they had not been worked for upwards of twenty years. The water continued to rush through the hole and out into the adjoining meadows, carrying with it something like 50 tons of clay and brickwork, and in a short time the road to Marlborough and the fields along the side of the stream were all under water to a considerable depth. In less than two hours the water would undermine the embankment and cause that also to give way; but fortunately for those living in the immediate neighbourhood, the men at last succeeded in shutting down the hatches and stopping the rush of water. The scene in the village on the first appearance of the water was one of utmost confusion; people were running about expecting every minute that they would be washed away. A poor Irishwoman happened to be going along the road at the time the water came down, and before she could get out of the way the water had reached to her knees, and she, not knowing which way to run, stood still, and sung out to some persons in an adjoining field to know if they had often such floods in that part of the country. The force of the current was so strong that two large oak posts, of great weight, lying in Mr. Choules' garden, were carried across several fields, where they were ultimately found. In consequence of the hatches being shut down, the stream of water at the other end of the reservoir has been bayed back, and is now extending over the land for a considerable distance, there being no outlet for it whatsoever. Several engineers have since visited the scene of the accident, and given it as their opinion that if the water had been allowed to run a short time longer the bank must have given way and had this happened, the consequences would have been most disastrous. The water rushed on for several miles before it was distributed, and in the evening several persons arrived from Marston 4 miles off, to ascertain the cause of the flood.

THE MARY COX 'PRIVATE JOURNAL'



Mary Cox (1844–1920)

Mary, known affectionately as 'Pollie,' was Richard Jefferies' first cousin who lived opposite Coate Farm, at Lower Snodshill Farm, where she was born on 27 December 1844. She was the daughter of William (1809–1863) and Fanny (née Jefferies) Cox (1812–1901). William Cox was a tenant farmer on land that grew from 51 acres (1845) to 100 acres (1861). The area is now the site of a hotel and petrol station on the Marlborough Road. Mary's brothers William (1843–1909), James (1846–1925) and Tom (1855–1927) were playmates of their Jefferies' cousins, and it was James who accompanied Richard in their abortive attempt to go abroad and march to Moscow.

Mary is believed to have been romantically involved with Richard before his attentions turned to her younger sister Lizzie (1849–1891) and, ultimately, to Jessie Baden of neighbouring Dayhouse Farm whom he married in 1874. Mary worked in the family dairy and continued to help her mother on the farm after her father died. She moved from Snodshill Farm to West Drayton (west London)

with her mother in 1880 along with younger brother Tom. She looked after her mother as she aged (Fanny died in her 89th year) and then moved to Roydon, Essex to help bring up the children of her sister Lizzie Abbey who had died of tuberculosis aged 42.

Both Mary and her brother James³ kept diaries. Mary's eighth diary is the only one of hers known to exist and runs from 8 February 1887 to 16 October 1889. She was living at West Drayton at the time of writing and the period covers the time when Richard died.

The diary shows how devoted she was to her sister's children. On the 1911 census Mary is recorded at Lightwater Poultry Farm, Bagshot, Surrey with her nephew Alfred Jefferies Abbey who was a poultry farmer. Mary died on 8 March 1920, aged 76, at Meadow Cottage, Roydon, Essex.

Her days are filled with letter-writing, and making clothes. She is clearly a proficient needlewoman.

She records visits to Swindon and is in close contact with her Hall cousins and Aunts in Swindon. There are regular reports of illnesses or complaints about not having a maid!

This diary has been on loan to the Richard Jefferies Museum by Andrew Lewis since 5 April 2009. The diary has been transcribed painstakingly by John Yard and his wife who first looked at the diary on a visit to the Museum in 2012.

John is a great grandson of Mary's brother, Tom. He has made no attempt to correct the text in any way and also created a spreadsheet to help identify the individuals named and their relationship to Mary.

John has kindly made his transcript available to the Society and to the Museum. A version has been added to the Society's 'Talks and Articles' collection as No.138 along with footnotes and photographs.



Mary's 'Private Journal'

³ James Cox emigrated to New Zealand in 1880 when Mary, Tom and his mother moved from Coate. His diaries were donated to the Alexander Turnbull Library (NZ) and were published in *Nearly Out of Heart and Hope*, edited by Miles Fairburn (Auckland University Press, 1995).

A HALLELUJAH FOR JEFFERIES

'How did you discover Richard Jefferies?' has often been a question posed to members in past newsletters. Responses have included having been given a gift as a child of, say, *Bevis*; an unexpected find on a dusty library shelf or in a second-hand bookshop; or from reading another author, such as Henry Williamson.

The anonymous writer of the following tells of his discovery of Jefferies having spotted a copy of *The Life of the Fields* in his local bookshop. It was published in the *Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette* 22 Oct 1898. So moved was the reader by Jefferies' essays that he was prompted to imagine choral music.

INTRODUCED TO NATURE

When calling upon the village bookseller one day for a few weekly papers, I noticed a small volume, entitled *The Life of the Fields*, lying on the top of a recently opened parcel. Listlessly I turned the pages to an essay on 'Meadow Thoughts,' and read, 'Down the road skims an eave swallow, swift as an arrow, his white back making the sun-dried dust dull and dingy; he is seeking a pool for mortar and will waver to and fro by the brook below till he finds a convenient place to alight.' Why, here was something after Gilbert White's own heart! On I went—the next paragraph, 'I can never read in summer out-of-doors. Though in shadow the bright light fills it, summer shadows are broadest daylight. The page is so white and hard, the letters so very black, the meaning and drift not quite intelligible, because neither eyes nor mind will dwell upon it. Human thoughts and imaginings are pale and humble in bright summer light. The eye wanders away, and rests more lovingly on green sward and green lime trees. The mind wanders yet deeper and farther into the dreamy mystery of the azure sky.' Ah! I thought, I cannot enjoy all this just now; I must reserve it for a better opportunity. So I bought the unpretending volume, put it carefully into my pocket, went home, laid it lovingly aside, and strolled out for an evening's walk as far as Watty's rose garden.

That night, long after the twinkling stars had first appeared, I sat in the great wicker chair under the lamplight, and read, slowly and reverently, 'Meadow Thoughts,' 'Clematis Lane,' 'Sea, Sky and Down,' and then, 'The Pageant of Summer,' till all but one faint star had disappeared from the sky, and my white pigeons fluttered up to the windowsill and began to coo at the soft dawn of day.

Such, 'by grace and special favour,' as a previous writer happily puts it, was my introduction to Richard Jefferies. The following afternoon I spent across the river, among the ancient trees of Dollan woods, seeing old things in a new light, through the eyes from which many scales had fallen.

There seemed to come before my mind the vision of a bowed head, and sensitive fingers wandering over the keys of a great organ. I seemed to hear a grand ‘Hallelujah Chorus,’ as when Handel first attempted to enunciate the mystery of ages. Even today, whenever I read that most wonderful of Jefferies’ essays, ‘The Pageant of Summer,’ I always hear the strains of the great musician’s chorus. And, before my mind, as often as I read the opening sentences of *The Story of My Heart*, come two pictures—one of a sick man, his lofty forehead resting on his white, delicate hand, his eyes, dreamily sad, peering into a far future; and another, of Handel once more at the organ, calling forth that passion of utterance which would fain ascend to the very portals of Heaven in the recitative from ‘Theodora,’ commencing ‘Angels ever bright and fair.’

Here was the very song of nature! Now the roll of thunder, then the rattle of the summer shower; and again—when all else was hushed, and the evening sun looked down upon the rich, moist fields—the sweet, pathetic solo of the speckled thrush. The open-air choir had sung, the thousand mighty accompaniments had made music, the plaintive rest-song of the mavis had thrilled the still eventide, for countless ages and in many a clime. But never before had their harmony been understood as by Jefferies, nor had any listener hitherto possessed so delicate an ear as the solitary man walking over the Wiltshire Downs. Nothing in ‘The Pageant of Summer’ appeared reiterated unless it had first been uttered by waving grass blade or humming bee, or glad bird or restless wind. Truth was in every word on every page. But a kindred spirit is needed to interpret rightly the written songs of Jefferies. Not only must one be appreciative of the music, but he must also be able to understand the words of the song. To the dweller in ‘that busy hive, the city,’ the works of Richard Jefferies will always be like an Italian ‘romanza,’ written in a foreign tongue, and only half understood.

The image displays the musical notation for the 'Hallelujah' chorus from Handel's Messiah. It consists of four staves, labeled S. (Soprano), A. (Alto), T. (Tenor), and B. (Bass). Each staff contains a melodic line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah.' The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines, indicating the rhythm and pitch of the vocal parts.

Musical notation for Handel’s ‘Hallelujah’

THE SUN INN REVISITED AND THE PLOUGH

Jean Saunders

Those of you who have read Kate Tryon's *Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: 'Jefferies Land'* (Petton Books, 2010), or who have seen her charming oil paintings donated to the Richard Jefferies Museum by her daughter back in 1960, will know something about this devoted American follower of Richard Jefferies. She came to England at least six times to paint the places that Jefferies wrote about in Wiltshire. We have taken advantage of the full-colour pages of the cover of this newsletter to reproduce images of a few of her paintings.

In the last newsletter (*RJS Spring Newsletter*, 2021, pp.11–13) I wrote about the fire at the Sun Inn, Coate and mentioned the innkeeper Ann Choules (born 1829). Further research reveals that her maiden name was Bramble and her father, William, was not only the licensed victualler at the inn, from at least 1841, but also the local millwright who operated opposite the Sun Inn, pictured on p.13. Ann's mother, Elizabeth (1791–1862) was the landlady and when William Bramble died in 1856, mother and daughter were the innkeepers. So now we know that the Bramble/Choules family at the Sun Inn were the immediate neighbours of the Jefferies family for all the years that they lived in Coate and also related to them (see later).

At this same time William Choules (whose son Ann Bramble later married) was the innkeeper at The Plough (see front cover illustration of the inn by Kate Tryon and the old photograph below). The inn was located between Chiseldon and Badbury on the old turnpike road to Marlborough.



The Plough Inn

When William Choules died, his son Joseph (born 1830) took over as the landlord of the inn. According to Arkell's Brewery: 'When the brewing equipment was sold in 1864 it included a copper of 120 gallons. It features in Alfred Williams' book, *Villages of the White Horse* and had previously been a centre for 'rustic sports' including back-swording, wrestling and prize-fighting. Arkell's leased the pub after that date and finally bought the freehold in 1907.' Arkell's bought the Sun Inn in 1891, the year of the fire.

The Plough also featured in Jefferies' books although never named as such. It could be the inn where Dickon lived (*The Amateur Poacher*) and it is certainly the location in Ch. IX titled 'Gleaning' in *Greene Ferne Farm* (1880) where men are busy digging up a skeleton in the road by the Plough Inn and discover part of a Roman trumpet with the inscription 'Gaudeamus' (Let us rejoice): 'Felix gave them half-a-crown for the relic, and rode on slowly, while the group adjourned to the inn to drink it.' The trumpet with inscription is actually recorded at Upper Upham House.¹



The entrance to Upper Upham House

The two inn-keeping families were brought together in the 1860s. Joseph Choules married Ann Bramble and they took over the running of the Sun Inn (see mention of Mr. Choules on pp.8–9). The 1861 census showed that both The Sun and The Plough inns had Cox family helpers; i.e. relatives of Mary Cox (see pp.10–11). The links between the Jefferies/Choules/Cox families go back further. Richard Jefferies' great granduncle Thomas had a son (also named Richard, 1781–1811) who married Mary Choules (born 1779). Mary was the sister of Elizabeth Bramble (of the Sun Inn) and the mother of Richard Jefferies' Uncle William Cox (of Lower Snodshill Farm) who married Richard's Aunt Fanny Jefferies.

¹ Jefferies writes about Upper Upham in 'History of Swindon and Antiquities of its Environs,' *North Wilts Herald*, 26 October 1867 and published in *Jefferies' Land*, edited by Grace Toplis (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1896). See also see Kate Tryon's paintings of Upper Upham on the front inside cover of this newsletter.

MILITARY MANOEUVRES

Peter Robins

In modern times, military exercises usually take place on Salisbury Plain, of which the Ministry of Defence owns 150 square miles, about half of the Plain's extent. Yet at the turn of the twentieth century the military favoured the Vale of the White Horse for its war games. Alfred Williams, writing in his *Villages of the White Horse* (Duckworth, 1913) noted that the Vale of the White Horse provided 'an ideal ground for military manoeuvres' which were staged 'along the slopes and plains, amid the wheat stubble and the turnip fields.'

At the start of autumn in 1893, Coate was chosen as the military HQ for a series of manoeuvres in the region. Below is a report from a Dublin newspaper, the *Evening Herald*, 7 September 1893.

A lengthy report of the forthcoming manoeuvres appeared in *The Swindon Advertiser*, 2 September, which included an amusing story of troops seeking directions to Coate:

"They had reached Aldbourne, and the officer in charge ventured to inquire of a native how far they were from Coate (pronouncing it distinctly Coat). The Aldburian looked puzzled for a moment and then exclaimed, "Lor' bless 'ee, zur, you musn't ax vur Coot; yer must zay Caught, and then they'll know where you want to get to."

The little village of Coate, in Berkshire (*sic*), which Sir Evelyn Wood has selected for his headquarters during the manoeuvres of twenty thousand troops this week has been, consequently, an object of interest to the military authorities of all Europe. Thus associated with the throbbing of the drum and the rattle of musketry, the one great claim of the village to fame—that it was there Richard Jefferies lived and wrote—may be easily overlooked. The cottage he lived in still stands. The whole neighbourhood teams with interest, both historical and modern. Swindon itself is one of the most phenomenally developed towns in England, while hard by there is the great forest of Savernake, with its lovely straight avenue four miles long, and shaded by arches of tall trees, and the troops in Berkshire are under the shadow of the birthplace at Wantage of Alfred the Great. In their time the peaceful hills and vales of Wiltshire have seen actual war in its worst form, for round Devizes Cromwell's legions did some of their heaviest fighting, and a statue of the Madonna is still pointed out there as having been hurled down by the Parliamentarians, but replaced by unknown hands during the night. As a military manoeuvring ground the whole district is unequalled.

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THE KEEPER'S COTTAGE. (From "The Gamekeeper at Home.")

JAMES JOYCE AND RICHARD JEFFERIES

Friedhelm Rathjen

We are grateful to Friedhelm Rathjen for allowing the Richard Jefferies Society to publish the following extract from his book *Irish Company: Joyce & Beckett and more* (Edition Rejoyce, 2010), pp.163–165.

Jefferies is a writer who did not escape Joyce's attention, as Harald Beck discovered a few years ago and Alistair Stead reported in the *James Joyce Broadsheet*: in the library episode of *Ulysses*, we can find the phrases 'In painted chambers loaded with tilebooks' and 'mesial groove', which both are quotations from *The Story of My Heart*, the most interesting book by Jefferies.¹ But where did Joyce pick up these quotations? According to the catalogue *James Joyce's Trieste Library*, Joyce owned Thomas's book—to be exact, a copy of the second edition printed in 1911.² The 'mesial groove' quotation can be found in Thomas's book³; the 'tilebooks' quotation, however, is nowhere in there, so Joyce must have had at least one other, additional source. There are some other details in Thomas's study of Jefferies that may have had an influence on the text of *Ulysses*, but for reasons of space limitations I cannot discuss these here in full but only give an abbreviated list:

A description of Coate reservoir: 'It was reputed to have a whirlpool. [...] The south-west side has its now peninsulated island and many willows; then a gulf—The "Fir-tree Gulf" of *Bevis*—shadowed by tall willows'⁴—see Joyce's allusion to whirlpool and gulf in the 'Scylla and Charybdis' episode.

A paraphrase of Jefferies' 'Meadow Thoughts': 'The thought comes to him amid the weariness of printed matter at the British Museum: the pigeons fleeing about the portico lure him again to the something beyond thought'⁵; and a quotation from 'Sunlight in a London Square': 'I stood under the portico of the National Gallery in the shade, looking southwards [...] I looked for the swifts, but they had gone, earliest of all to leave our sky for distant countries'⁶—see

¹ [Harald Beck] / Alistair Stead, 'Of Tilebooks and Mesial Grooves,' in *James Joyce Broadsheet*, No. 61, (February 2002), p.3.

² Michael Patrick Gillespie and Erik Bradford Stocker, eds., *James Joyce's Trieste Library: A Catalogue of Materials at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin*, University of Texas at Austin, 1986, pp. 237 f. (no. 499).

³ See Edward Thomas, *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work* (London: Hutchinson, 1911), p.204: 'The lips and hair of Cytherea, "Juno's wide back and mesial groove," slake the same thirst.'

⁴ *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work*, p.28.

⁵ *ibid.*, p.221.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp.230 f.

Stephen's augury in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, remembered at the end of 'Scylla and Charybdis'.

Several hints at Jefferies' fascination with Homer—"The first attraction of books for him was that of the unusual, the adventurous, the antique. "Ulysses," he says, "was ever my pattern and model."";⁷ "Everything beautiful is Greek," he writes; "the greatest poet was a Greek—Homer"⁸; quoting from *Amaryllis at the Fair*. 'Homer is thought much of; now, his heroes are always eating. [...] Ulysses eats a good deal in the *Odyssey*; Jupiter eats. They only did at Coombe Oaks as was done on Olympus'⁹; quoting 'Nature in the Louvre' from *Field and Hedgerow*: 'But imagination stops our ears against the song of the cold sirens on the rocks, and helps us to go on living as if for ever, to do and to be the greatest and most god-like things, making nothing of time or death. Thus, the contrast is not between imagination and reality, but between imagination and death'¹⁰.

Another quotation from Jefferies: 'Time's the great physician and Nature the best nurse'¹¹—see a line in 'Hades': 'The great physician called him home.'¹²

Biographical information: 'He mentions how he used to be afraid of thunder and lightning, but had the cowardice frightened out of him when lightning struck his aunt's house one day while he was there alone'¹³—see Joyce's fear of thunderstorms.

A quotation from *The Gamekeeper [at Home]*: 'that's the real cause of these here rinder-pests'¹⁴: see the *rinderpest* motif in *Ulysses*.

Quoting Jefferies' widow: 'Almost his last intelligible words were: "Yes, yes; that is so [...]"'¹⁵—see the final 'Yes' of *Ulysses*.

Quoting Walter Besant on Jefferies: "[...] He was satisfied with the words of the great socialist and anti-sacerdotalist" (i.e. Jesus)¹⁶—see Molly quoting Bloom, 'the first socialist he said He was'.¹⁷

⁷ *ibid.*, p.54 (the quotation is from Jefferies' *The Amateur Poacher*).

⁸ *ibid.*, p.72.

⁹ *ibid.*, p.294.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.316.

¹¹ James Joyce, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (Harmondsworth Penguin, 1986 [Student's Edition], 6.942-3.

¹² Thomas, *op cit.*, p.70.

¹³ *ibid.*, p.71.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.135.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp.322-3.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.323.

¹⁷ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 18.178

BOOKSHOP LOGIC

Walter Besant's Society of Authors, established in 1884, published a monthly journal, *The Author*, with a circulation of about 800. A letter in the issue of 15 November 1890 from C.W. Radcliffe Cooke tells of his experience when he tried to buy a book by Jefferies.

THE DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY OF BOOKS

How important this subject is, and how singular are the ideas of the distributors upon were forced on my notice.

Some years ago, on the occasion of the death in distressed circumstances of Richard Jefferies, the charming, and in common repute, successful writer, public attention had been widely drawn to his case by correspondence and articles in the press, and I concluded that his books would probably, therefore, be prominently displayed in the booksellers' shops. I went to several large shops in London, but none of his books were exposed either in the windows or on the stalls outside. Ultimately I entered one where I had been accustomed to deal, and made some enquiries. After a little search copies of some of his books were produced, among them being an illustrated edition of "The Gamekeeper at Home," the very thing for a gift to a child. I bought the copy, the only one in the shop, and expressed my surprise at never having seen that edition before. "Oh," said the young man who served me, "very few people have. It does not seem to have been pushed. The public won't buy what they don't see, you know." "Then," said I, "why didn't you put it in the window?" "Oh, we only put books in the window for which there is a demand." I pointed out the contradiction between his preaching and his practice, but he cut me short with a "Well, sir, it's our rule, that's all I know. Besides, it's an old book now."

C.W. RADCLIFFE COOKE.



Charles Wallwyn Radcliffe Cooke (1841–1911), pictured left in 1893, was a Conservative MP from 1885–1900, but his great interest was cider production on his Herefordshire farm. He wrote *Four Years in Parliament* (London: W.H. Allen, 1890) and *A Book About Cider and Perry* (London: H. Cox) was published in 1898.

'A KARAKTERISTIK LITTEL BOOK'

Peter Robins

Isaac Pitman is remembered for his promotion of phonetic shorthand which he first presented in 1837. Pitman had rearranged and improved an earlier system published by Samuel Taylor in 1786. But he was also an advocate of spelling reform and created a new phonetic alphabet which he announced in the 4 January 1873 issue of his *Phonetic Journal*. Pitman added 15 new letters to the alphabet after rejecting the letters *c*, *q*, and *x* to offer an alphabet of 38 letters. The 1881 census records Pitman's entry recorded phonetically as Eisak Pitman, reflecting his enthusiasm for the change, but he reverted to Isaac in the following census.

A short piece about Jefferies appeared in *The Phonetic Journal* of 24 September and 1 October 1887 typeset in the 'First Staje ov Spelling Reform' and we reproduce the latter below. *The Phonetic Journal* was published weekly by Isaac Pitman and Sons and the strapline under the title read DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGATION OF PHONETIC SHORTHAND, AND PHONETIC READING, WRITING AND PRINTING. Sales peaked at 20,000 after the publisher cut the price from 3d to 1d. The journal consisted of articles mainly in traditional spelling with some sections presented in a reformed style.

[First Staje ov the Spelling Reform.]

JURNALISTIK NOTES.

The first book ov the late Mr Richard Jefferies, whoze konnektion with the Pres woz notist last week, kontainz an interesting roferens to jurnalizm. It woz printed at Swindon, apparently in 1873, so that it must hav been written when he woz a mere boy. It iz said to be "a quaint and karakteristik littel book." Speaking ov jurnalizm the author sayz, "a great paper iz like a Jezuit sosiety—it haz spiez overywhere. Leading artikelz in such paperz ar not the opinionz ov a singel man, but the expression ov opinion gatherd from a wide serkel ov influential personz; hens their offekt in shaping publik viewz."

‘WE SHALL SEE IT SEPARATE THE ATOM’

Peter Robins came across the following letter from Arnold H.J. Baines published in *Notes and Queries*, 1 January 1955. It refers to S.J. Looker’s transcription of one of Jefferies’ manuscripts published in *The Old House at Coate*. Looker has omitted that Jefferies was prescient about separating the atom. Did Looker omit it as it seemed too fanciful? Looker was known to suppress things he thought readers may not like. The manuscript page is reproduced on the next page. Baines (1921–2001) was one of the earliest members of the Government Statistical Service.

RICHARD JEFFERIES

ALTHOUGH we must all be grateful to Mr. S. J. Looker for editing Richard Jefferies’ *The Old House at Coate* with such elaborate care, the facsimile page from the manuscript given at p. 200 of his 1948 edition (Lutterworth Press, London and Redhill) indicates two errors in his text. Jefferies wrote “We shall certainly handle the life-force, the zoistic electricity, as we handle and know water: *we shall see it separate the atom; we shall see it crystallize the particles: we shall put it in motion ourselves and cause it to build the imitation of a plant.*” The italicized words have dropped out of the text at p. 51. This is the more to be regretted, as Mr. Looker might have cited them as yet another instance in which Jefferies was in advance of the thought of his time.

On page 53, line 7, Mr. Looker reads “The imitation plant will be a *continuation.*” The correct reading appears clearly to be *combination*, as in line 4.

ARNOLD H. J. BAINES.

Andrew Rossabi felt it unlikely that Looker deliberately suppressed the text:

More probably he omitted the words through negligence in his transcription, especially as he printed a facsimile of the manuscript page in which the words occur. Everything hinges on the interpretation of the word ‘separate’. If Jefferies had meant ‘split’ he would surely have said so or used a synonym such as ‘divide’. My understanding is that he meant one day we would be able to separate the individual atoms from the particular object or substance that they composed: in a word somehow to see the atom as a separate thing. Perhaps he meant by means of ultra-sophisticated instruments. The image of an atom the size of a boulder shows his general line of thought. He argues that one day the life force will no longer be a mystery but familiar, something we will be able to harness to create imitation plants ourselves. He then changes tack, to end with a wonderful expression of the four miracles of water, earth, air, and sunlight, ‘marvellous beyond expression’.

45
life-force, the Zolotic electricity, as we should
know water: we shall see it separate
the atoms; we shall see it crystallize the
particles: we shall put it in motion
in various ways, cause it to build the imitation
of a plant. We shall not think it more
wonderful than that my water where
existence has been the mirror of so many
things. The water that runs down the
bank, the earth which I place my foot on, the
air I breathe, the sun light coming so softly
through the apple bloom: there are the four
miracles. They are astounding miracles,
they are marvellous beyond expression. Tell
you as I told you before that today, this
hour we are among the stars. The imitation
plant of future times is still not the nearly
so wonderful, for it will be only a combination
— a putting together of things already existing,
just as a machine is made of iron & brass,
but the engineer did not construct the atoms
of hydrogen or oxygen. The imitation
plant will be a combination. A subtle
force already in existence: in the vegetable

Facsimile page from the manuscript of The Old House at Coate.

THOSE DEPARTED



Anne Ponting died on 24 March 2021. Along with her husband Michael, the couple have been members of the Society since 1998 and, living in Oxford, were able to attend our meetings and events in Swindon. Anne née Williams was born on 31 May 1935 and married in 1959. Their daughters Susan and Janet were born in Oxford and there are now four grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Our deepest condolences go to Michael for losing his soul-mate. Michael's grandparents lived in a cottage opposite the gamekeeper's cottage in Hodson Bottom. His grandmother took in the laundry for the Burderop

Estate. Michael spent many happy hours visiting his grandparents as a young child and we look forward to him writing his memoir about his time there.



Ron Scroggins died in May this year. He had been a member of the Society since June 1977. Born in 1945, he grew up in Portslade, Sussex until moving into a flat in Hove in 1996 along with hundreds of books that fed his appetite as a bookworm. He might have attended Society gatherings at Jefferies' grave in Broadwater Cemetery in Worthing and would certainly have followed in the footsteps of Jefferies' Sussex days as he was very much into conservation and wildlife. As well as the Society, Ron's niece Julie said that her uncle was involved in CAMRA and the Uckfield

Preservation Society. Julie was kind enough to supply information and photos of her uncle. She added that Ron 'had vascular dementia and sadly passed away in a really good care-home which he had been in for approx 15 months and prior to that he was in another care home for about 2 years... He was quiet, kind and very caring with a great sense of humour.' Ron worked as a telephone technician and retired early at fifty. He was able to spend at least 20 years very happily researching the family tree. The Society sent condolences to his family and friends.



ANOTHER COATE BUILDING GONE



John Macclay has reported that the old Coate Primitive Methodist Chapel, pictured left above, near the Spotted Cow, has been pulled down to make way for two 3-bedroomed houses. Primitive Methodism appeared at Coate from at least 1828 when a building was registered for worship. The souvenir *Official Handbook of the Brinkworth and Swindon Centenary District Synod*, 1910, records that: 'For many years the Services were held in the cottages of Messrs. Webb and Gregory. In 1888 the present building was erected,' although the chapel is marked on earlier maps and must refer to the old thatched cottage pictured above. Edward Thomas proclaimed in chapter 2 of his biography of Richard Jefferies that his father 'was a Churchman: for some time the Coate services were held at the back of his house; and it was as much out of his hatred of the Methodists as of love for the Church that he offered to give the land and to cart the stones for the chapel at Coate'. The Methodist Chapel would not have existed in Jefferies' time but he would have been referring to a service held at the thatched cottage in Chapter 1 of his 'Chapters on Churches', first published in the *North Wiltshire Herald*, 24 November 1866 and reprinted in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No.3, 1994, p.8.

I passed before a cottage upon my left, from which issued the most unheard of sounds ... to my deep disgust—disgust at the way in which they were mentioned—the names of 'Christ', 'Lord', 'Word', &c., mixed up in the most inextricable, almost blasphemous manner, I instantly concluded that I had lighted upon a body of 'ranter's', led by ignorant, uncultivated men, who, let it be observed have, and are, doing more to cast religion into ridicule than all the sceptical and satirical writers that have ever held a pen. ...

GRAVE NEWS

Michael and Pat Parrott have managed to clean off the crystalline growth on the marble of Richard Jefferies' grave and have put a shine on the brass plaque on the seat in the memorial garden at Broadwater cemetery. The mulberry tree in the memorial garden appears to have recovered from the ill-effects of previous drought conditions. Michael advises that the fractured kerb stone at the foot of W.H. Hudson's grave (pictured below), might be better left and just propped to appear level. It has been repaired before. The Society has agreed to follow Michael's advice.



In the summer Michael and Pat reported that they had cut back unwanted growth from Jefferies' grave but had to stop short of a full clearance due to what they thought were small bees, or insects with golden wings in the sunlight, that had set up home on the grave. Richard would have been pleased.

John Kennett has tidied up the memorial stone for Richard Oliver Launcelot Jefferies (Richard and Jessie's baby son) in St. John's Churchyard, Eltham. Grass and weeds had buried it.

Jennifer Carpenter and Bryan Jones have been sowing wild flowers on Jessie Jefferies' grave in St. Piran's churchyard, Perranzabuloe, Cornwall.

Mike Pringle is still trying to get permission to clean the Jefferies' family gravestones in the churchyard of Christ Church, Swindon.

The Society expressed a vote of thanks to all concerned for their kind assistance and active help.

CITINGS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

Please email your citations to richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com.

An Index of the Citations published in the Society's *Newsletters* since 2006 is available online, formatted by date and alphabetically, and can be viewed on the Newsletter link of the Society's website.

There is a reference to *After London* in an article by Simon Ings that was published in *The Times* on 13 February 2021. In listing his best science fiction books Ings includes *The Swimmers* by Marian Womack and notes that alien invasion and 'wild invention ... has been a signature delight of science fiction since Richard Jefferies's *After London*.'

Alison Fure noted this in *A History of Malden* by Kenneth N. Ross (Vizetelly, 1947): 'The famous naturalist Richard Jefferies who lived in Tolworth was fond of the Hogsmill river and in *Nature Near London* describes how for over three years, and sometimes daily, he used to go and look for trout, which lurked under the bridge under the Tolworth-Ewell road. This was a narrow bridge with brick parapets, which disappeared when the road was widened. The same book contains a chapter entitled Nightingale Lane, which is thought to be Old Malden Lane—though the nightingales have long departed. Jefferies named about sixty wild flowers that grew along this road.'

Giles Wood opens his March 2021 article, titled 'Farewell, my lovely Leyland Cypress,' in *The Oldie* with a quote from *Bevis* (Ch X): 'Human beings must be kept taut, or, like a rope, they will slacken.' Giles was recounting an incident that had made him get up earlier than his usual lockdown hour when late nights had become respectable. 'Well before ten' he was forced to emerge to check-out what unfortunate tree was the victim of the dreaded chainsaw in his village, only to find that it was a 20-year-old leylandii that took just minutes to fell. He bemoaned the loss of the perch for many of his feather friends but kept quiet about it aware that Wiltshire villagers don't take kindly to being lectured and, anyway, appear not to like trees of any description.

In the Spring 2021 edition of *The Oldie*, Giles Wood mentions 'the drastically under-read novel *Amaryllis at the Fair* by Richard Jefferies'. Giles was reflecting on the differences between night-owls, like himself, and the up-with-the-lark type, like his wife. He had to admit that early risers have the moral high ground particularly during the short daylight winter hours and pointed to life in *Amaryllis*, as an example of 'conventional age-old wisdom'.

In the June 2021 edition, Giles Wood pondered on the question of how he had managed to live in Wiltshire so long without reading *The Pevsner Guide to Wiltshire*. He answered his own query by remembering all that he had learnt about the county from Ken Watts' *Exploring Historic Wiltshire* (1998) and most

of all Richard Jefferies' writings that had provided a 'forensically detailed picture of local life in the last century ... [H]is intense gaze falls not only on the natural world but also on the ways and customs of ordinary folk and their masters in town and county.' Wood also reminds readers about the bust of Jefferies on the west wall of Salisbury Cathedral.

Freya Wood is following in her father's (Giles) tradition of plugging Jefferies whenever possible. In Jefferies' essay 'Footpaths' (*Nature Near London*) he opens: "Always get over a stile," is the one rule that should ever be borne in mind by those who wish to see the land as it really is—that is to say, never omit to explore a footpath, for never was there a footpath yet which did



not pass something of interest.' This is the inspiration for Freya Wood's latest painting titled 'Always get over a Stile'. Freya was an art scholar at Marlborough College and subsequently studied the MA Fine Art course at Edinburgh University, at the Charles Cecil Studios in Florence and at The Royal Drawing School in London. She is inspired by the Wiltshire landscape and Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart*.

Matias Barberis Rami is a researcher in Social Sciences, currently working on Research and Science Policy, and is the current Editor of the *EuroScientist*. In his article of 18 March 2021 titled 'Dystopian Literature: inspiring innovation and policy making'¹ he gave the examples of Jefferies' *After London*, Arthur Clark's *The City and the Stars* and J.G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* as examples that propose 'diverse solutions to apocalyptic situations ... [that] make us ponder about issues such as political organization, what to do with memories of humankind or how to organize the society. They very deeply narrate the suffering of the characters, showing off their emotions as many of us may behave in similar situations nowadays.'

Charles White recalled the actual quote that referred to Ravilious encouraging his art students to read Jefferies (see *RJS Spring Newsletter*, 2021, p.27). In Helen Binyon's *Eric Ravilious: Memoir of an Artist* (Lutterworth Press, 1983), she remembers a student of his at Eastbourne Art School in 1925 who said: 'He encouraged us to read widely, and on discovering my ignorance of contemporary

¹ <https://www.euroscientist.com/dystopian-literature-innovation-policymaking/>

writers other than popular novelist, he lent me one of two Aldous Huxleys and a David Garnett. My love of Hudson and Richard Jefferies I owe to him and we were all reading *The Natural History of Selborne*.’

Professor William Baker (Northern Illinois University) has written the Richard Jefferies entry for *The Literary Encyclopedia* published in March 2021. *The Literary Encyclopedia* was founded in 1998 with the aim of providing a reliable scholarly online reference work for English-language readers, primarily in the higher education humanities.

The Friends of the Dymock Poets published two memorable articles related to Jefferies in this year’s *Journal*, vol.20 (2021). The first by Roger Ebbatson, titled ‘The South Country: Richard Jefferies and Edward Thomas’ (pp.65–74), explored their need to take refuge in the rural parts of southern England as if it were part of them, and to write about this area that they both knew so well at a time of Britain’s growing industrialisation.

The second article of relevance is by Friedhelm Rathjen. This is an edited and shortened version of a chapter from his *Irish Company: Joyce & Beckett and more* (Edition Rejoyce, Scheeßel, 2010), p.163–6. The article titled ‘Edward Thomas and James Joyce: Inventing a Connection’ made good use of Thomas’s biography of Jefferies to make links between the two other writers. With his kind permission the Rathjen text is reprinted on pp.18–19.

Patricia Pye’s *Sound and Modernity in the Literature of London, 1880–1918*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) explores how London is represented in late Victorian and early Edwardian literature from an auditory perspective, concentrating on writers such as Conrad, Doyle, Ford and Gissing. However, the last section ‘Silence, the Suburbs, and “Life Beyond the City”’ contains a short chapter on Jefferies, which mainly concentrates on *After London* and *Nature Near London*. Pye says that ‘the city had stimulated his literary imagination, and this interest encompassed that area of “semi-country”, as he terms it in *Nature Near London* (1883); where much that is “beautiful and interesting can be found”, yet the city’s proximity may always be sensed.’ Gideon Perret, who supplied the citation, remarked: ‘This idea recalls what Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts have termed “edgelands”, familiar yet ignored spaces that are neither city nor countryside (*Edgelands: Journeys into England’s True Wilderness*. London: Vintage, 2012.), an intriguing connection that might be worth investigating further.’

On 21 April 2021 *The Independent* ran an article titled ‘Earth Day 2021: The “revenge of nature” in fiction, from Day of the Triffids to Godzilla and Swamp Thing,’ by Joe Sommerlad. There is no prize to guess that Jefferies’ *After London* (1885) featured prominently along with a picture of Jefferies to illustrate ‘Mother Earth turning against humanity and seeking retribution for the evils

of pollution and deforestation was a potent nightmare for novelists and filmmakers long before global warming was well understood'. Sommerlad describes the book as 'one of the first post-apocalyptic science fiction novels, in which [Jefferies] imagines the fall of British civilisation and the countryside moving in to reclaim the land. Forests grow where ploughed fields once lay, domesticated pets run wild and the capital reverts to a poisonous swampland, its citizenry returned to a state of feudal barbarism.'

Conor Jameson brought our attention to an article by Richard Smyth that was published in the *TLS* on 7 July 2017. Titled 'Plashy Fens— the Limitations of Nature Writing', Smyth explored the contributions of different nature writers, old and new, and asked if nature writers of the past decade owe Gilbert White a debt? He mentioned that in 1946, James Fisher, a zoologist, used a foreword to *Selborne* to give his views on nature writing when he said:

White has been elevated to the fountain-head of a tradition—of elegant nature writing—which has developed into a mockery of the honest language of the Natural History. Sometimes this tradition has been known as the White-Jefferies-Hudson tradition . . . The epithet applied to writers in this tradition is usually charming. Charming nature writing. Oh, the critics and reviewers, the weekly columnists, the nature correspondents, who find Nature "charming"; who find White's *Selborne* "charming"; who find the emotional, romantic outpourings of Jefferies "charming"; who find the humourless introspection, the self-conscious pessimism, the nostalgic obscurantism of Hudson "charming"; and who lump them altogether in their charming paragraphs to charm those who think nature is a thing!

Smyth goes on to discuss this view in detail and includes: 'Richard Jefferies's arch essay "Nature and Books" (1887) explained at length the futility of writing on nature; no book or monograph, he says, can tell him the true colour of a dandelion seen in reality. In numerical comparison with the facts of nature, there are "no books; the books are yet to be written". "Man's mind is the most important fact with which we are yet acquainted".'

The writer Ruskin Bond was interviewed for *The Tribune India* in May 2021, coming up to his 87th birthday and in celebration of 70 years of writing. He was asked which 'writings...provide emotional catharsis.' Bond had mentioned in the *Hindustan Times*, on the 7 May 2020, that he carried *The Story of My Heart*. As such it was no surprise that he mentioned very few authors but repeated that he liked Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart*.

Andrew Rossabi came across an essay by M.B. Kinch titled 'Q.D. Leavis: An Appreciation' that was published as a pamphlet by the Brynmill Press in 1982. Kinch points to Leavis's essay on Jefferies (see *RJS Journal* No.36 [2021], pp.87–96) as an example of how literary criticism can help renew interest in a writer that deserves greater recognition.

Gill Piper found a mention of *Bevis* in *All Among the Barley* written by Melissa Harrison (Bloomsbury, 2018). Set just after World War I, the book is about the changes in the fading traditions of country life, based at Ada and George Mather's 60-acre Wych Farm. Their daughter Edith is showing her small book collection, including those 'from dear old Jefferies', to a woman from London who is spending time in the village learning about the old ways, farm methods, stories, speech etc.

Will Abberley, based at the University of Sussex, wrote an excellent review of *Richard Jefferies: a Miscellany* (Galileo Publishers, 2019) and expressed well-deserved praise for Andrew Rossabi whose 'curation exhibits the rich variety of Jefferies' work'. The book review, published in the *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2, December 2020, pp.317-8, is accurate, well-informed and sympathetic to Jefferies.

Praise for the book was echoed in this year's *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Magazine* (pp.297-298). Andrew Rumsey ends his review describing the anthology as a 'fine, fluent and sympathetic collection' and 'a perfect gate' to discover or rediscover the depths and delights of Jefferies' writing.

If you haven't purchased a copy of the *Miscellany* yet, it is the perfect book to introduce Jefferies to a new audience (paperback, £9.99).

Mike Pringle spotted that Melissa Harrison had written about the children's books that inspired people for *The Guardian*, 12 June 2021. Hot amongst the favourites were the writers BB and Henry Williamson but she pointed to 'nature writing breeding nature lovers' and quoted *Bevis* as an example. Bevis Watts, who worked for many environmental organisations and who is now the head of Triodos bank, said that he was named in the hopes that he would 'have as good a life as the boy in Jefferies's book, a life that had a close connection to nature.' He had grown up with the strong notion that 'the importance and joy of spending time in nature and respecting it.' You might recall that Margaret Hunt spoke to Bevis Watts in 2016 (see *RJS Autumn Newsletter* 2016, p.22) and it was revealed that his father read *Bevis* whilst at university, and was so much attracted by all aspects of it that he was inspired to pass on the name.

Eric Jones provided a passage about Jefferies in James Fisher's *The Shell Bird Book* (London: Ebury Books, 1966), pp.202-3. Fisher died in a car accident in 1970 and was a major 'public ornithologist' of the immediate post-war years. The Society's repeated applications to obtain permission to reproduce the extract from the chapter 'Literature, Music and Art' remain unanswered but we publish it with full acknowledgement to the late author, his publisher Ebury Press and Michael Joseph and the published copyright holder Shell-Mex and BP Limited.

... Jefferies, at the same time, knew at least 120 [Fisher had just complained that Hudson knew less than 100 British birds from personal observation], from the evidence of such of his novels, essays and illustrated newspaper articles as have been published in book form.

As an observer, Jefferies was as close to nature as John Clare, knowing rather more flowers and rather fewer birds than the earlier ransacker of field life. He wrote without Hudson's skill, and at the same time without Hudson's morbidity, and with a Wiltshire farmer's son's true feeling for the soil and those who lived on or by it. To English and rural folk Hudson acted as, and doubtless seemed to think like, a man from Mars. Jefferies was of the rural folk. As a schoolboy I found his enthusiasm incredibly inspiring, especially *Wild Life in a Southern County* (1879), *The Life of the Fields* (1884), the posthumous *Field and Hedgerow* (1889) and the novel *Bevis* (1882). Lately (1948) S.J. Looker has edited some scattered and even unpublished material into *Chronicles of the Hedges* which includes some gold, notably a fine and scholarly essay on the nightingale written when Jefferies was sick to death.

Jefferies memorabilia are not like Hudson's. He comparatively seldom turns up in anthologies, though a 'Bird's Nest' passage from *Field and Hedgerow*, and 'The Hovering of the Kestrel' and 'Birds climbing the air' from *The Life of the Fields* have a sure future as anthology material. From this last collection two essays on game, sport and conservation (like the flight articles, first published in the *St. James's Gazette* of 1883) show a deep grasp of such data as there were and a remarkable anticipation of present issues and thinking: they were certainly ahead of the ideas of the conservation societies of that time and, in the assembly of the facts backing their conclusions, superior in scholarship to Hudson's rather later excursions—with some special selection of data and some special pleading—into the same field. Notwithstanding Hudson's apparently unassailable literary reputation I cannot like him very much. But despite the Victorian essay-heads of Jefferies—The Pageant of Summer; Meadow Thoughts; Clematis Lane; In the Fields; The Meadow Gateway; The Summer Hum; etc., which would send me straight over to the *Daily Mirror* (or *British Birds*) if I met them in the 1960s, I like Jefferies's long, pouring paragraphs of clear and clean-watched ruralities very much indeed. Better these than Hudson's cheerless vision of Earth, direct ancestor of the Romps with Dame Nature which, garnished with cultivated ignorance, are still occasionally to be found, expressed in a Suitable Tone of Voice, in the Top People's Paper and (bless it) now and then in the liberal phenomenon that does not seem to bother who its customers are, as long as they get a good read.

Jefferies, much more a human realist than Hudson, was a defender of legitimate blood sports and himself a shooter, poacher-sympathiser and man of the blustery fall and winter days with retrievers and pointers.

John Price noted an article titled 'Call the copse! The sudden flourishing of culture about trees' by Charlotte Higgins (*The Guardian*, 24 June 2021). 'From a fake forest in central London to Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* told from the orchard's point of view, writers, directors and artists are exploring the roots of nature' that includes 'one imagines the city of the future, ruined, the foliage taking over again, returning southern England to forest, as in Richard Jefferies'

extraordinary post-apocalyptic novel of 1885, *After London*'.

Michael Stagg was re-reading *Franciscan Spirituality: Following St Francis Today* by Brother Ramon SSF (1994). Brother Ramon was Guardian of Glasshampton Monastery before leaving to explore the hermit life. The author of several books, he was invited to write this book by the Third Order of the Society of St Francis. Brother Ramon died in 2000. In the chapter titled 'Mystical Life' he tells of his own searching for 'nature mysticism': 'I soon came across it in the poetry of Shelley and Wordsworth, and in that beautiful, melancholy account of Richard Jefferies' search *The Story of My Heart*'.

Janice Lingley reported an article by Richard Moore-Colyer titled 'The Culture of the Fields: Hay and Haymakers in Wiltshire and Southern England before 1900' in *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, Vol. 114, 2021. Moore-Colyer discusses the centuries-old methodologies of haymaking practised well into the 19th century, until superseded by technological developments, and he refers to *The Toilers of the Field* (1892, pp.119–20). In connection with the role of female workers, following comment made by an observer of haymaking in the year 1802, Moore-Colyer writes: 'Two generations later Richard Jefferies noted that in Wiltshire (notwithstanding the availability of horse-drawn hay rakes) it was not uncommon to see up to twenty women working in echelon to shake and toss the cut swathes. Rather disapprovingly Jefferies wrote of babies being left to slumber in the shade of a hedgerow as their mothers sweated at their tasks. Like Jefferies, my grandmother (d.1960), the wife of a Northamptonshire farmer, vividly recalled seeing the haymakers' children sleeping in the fields under the watchful eye of an old woman.'

An article by Janice Lingley titled 'Song of the Norfolk Longshoremen', which presents a reworking of a sea song or chanty as a 'found poem', and draws upon Roy Clark's (1911–2008), *The Longshoremen* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1974) a work of socio-economic history concerning the East Anglian herring fishery, has occasion to refer to two works by Jefferies: his essay titled 'Strength of the English', in Samuel J. Looker, editor, *The Old House at Coate* (1948) (Bradford on Avon: Ex Libris Press, 1985), pp.131–140, and the portrait of the agricultural labourer John Brown, in 'My Old Village', in *Field and Hedgerow* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co, 1889), pp.311–329. Janice writes: 'In the late 19th century, the fishery became increasingly important to the economy of the East Anglian coastal towns and inland villages. It was these communities that supplied the fishing vessels with their crews, seasonally augmented by countrymen who combined farming with fishing. These men, known as "joskins", were valued for their great physical strength, then, as the rural writer Richard Jefferies observes, a notable characteristic of the landworker.' Her article

was published online in the December 2020 edition of the postgraduate journal *Exclamation*, available on the University of Exeter's website.

David Miles, former Director for Oxford Archaeology and Chief Archaeologist for English Heritage, gave a Zoom talk on 'The Land of the White Horse' on 29 July 2021 as part of a Festival of Archaeology event. The White Horse at Uffington has been cared for by people for almost three millennia. In that time, the meaning of the horse has changed, yet it has remained a symbol of continuity and enchantment.

Andrew Rossabi reported that David Miles gave a tribute to Jefferies near the beginning of his talk that came in the context of Richard Ingrams' book on the Ridgeway, where he says that the Uffington White Horse cocks a snook at archaeologists because no one really knows its purpose or who put it there. That led into David Miles discussing the charge that archaeologists were dryasdust Gradgrinds taking all the magic and wonder out of the sites they scientifically explored. He quoted Ecclesiastes: 'He who increases knowledge increases sorrow'. Miles preferred to think that archaeologists increased the sense of wonder and magic, and went on, against a background of Agnes Miller Parker's illustration in *The Old House of Coate* of Jefferies pictured below: 'I rather like the words of Richard Jefferies—Richard Jefferies was the great naturalist and mystic of the downs. There's a very nice little museum in Swindon dedicated to his work. He describes lying on the downs, lying on the ground of the downs, gazing at the stars. [quote from *OHC*, p.34:] "They [the stars] were not above, nor all around, but I was in the midst of them." [quote from *The Story of My Heart*, Chapter II, para 2:] "Full to the brim of the wondrous past, I felt the wondrous present." He [Jefferies] was a man who really knew the downs, I think.'



Among the Society's archives there is a photocopy of an exercise book with 'Sarah Jefferies, Xmas 1866, Sydenham' written in her hand on the cover. The first page consists of a list of 20 questions, such as favourite name, flower, book, animal etc. The following pages reveal a list of answers from family and friends, including Ellen Gyde (Sarah's cousin b. 1854), Charlotte Groombridge (the sister of Josephine with the 'beautiful eyes' according to Richard Jefferies), and E.C. Snow (the daughter of John Snow, the publisher). It seems that favourite flowers mentioned the most were snowdrops, lily-of-the-valley, violets and roses.

There is one entry of note. Signed R.E. Harrild, albeit that the middle initial is

not clear, but it is dated 1868. This might be that of Robert Harrild (b. 1849) and affectionately named ‘Pet’. He was the brother of ‘Horty’, who married Charlotte Groombridge. Richard Jefferies knew Pet, Horty and their brother Frederick very well from childhood onwards—they were sons of Horton Harrild—Uncle Thomas Harrild’s brother. For the question: ‘What you most admire?’ Pet answered ‘You!’ and for ‘What you most dislike?’, his answer was ‘Your brother’. That must be a reference to Richard rather than Harry or Charlie. But it is likely to have been written in jest. However, Richard wrote to his Aunt Ellen on 25 January 1867: ‘And my old friend, though he rather shunned me last summer, probably on account of what the Sydenham people chose to consider my outlandish hat, Robert Harrild—“Pet” once called—does he find the inside of an architect’s office so pleasant as he expected? Of course the first house he plans, and which actually is built, his brother [Horty] the photographer will take to make an addition to his friend’s albums.’

Derek Niemann, writing in *The Guardian* on 25 July in ‘Country diary: danger lurks everywhere on the time-hardened teasel’ describes how this plant, that starts life so soft, turns into a prickly, beautiful, savage. Niemann informs that the other name for the teasel is ‘Venus’s basin’ because its lower leaves form a bowl that Jefferies observed to be a ‘natural rain-gauge’ and he quotes from Ch. XI of *Wild Life in a Southern County*: ‘If it is a large plant, the cup nearest the ground—the biggest—will hold as much as two or three wine glasses’ and he paraphrases Jefferies’ observation that ‘this water remains there for a considerable time, for several days after a shower, and is fatal to numbers of insects which climb up the stalk or alight on the leaves and fall in’.

Janice Lingley came across the following historical citing of Jefferies in connection with the Besant biography:

In his Presidential Address to the Essex Field Club’s Ninth Annual Meeting on 26 January 1889 (*EFC Archive*, Vol. 3, 1889, pp. 103–4), Edward A. Fitch emphasised the importance of the Club’s Field Meetings and commented: ‘The late Richard Jefferies was a close observer and a facile interpreter of nature, and Mr. Besant tells us in the *Eulogy* (p.227), that he began as Thoreau recommends, by writing down everything that he saw; by so doing he presently attained a wonderful power of minute observation.’ Mr Fitch subsequently quoted the passage from the *Eulogy*, in which Besant states what a revelation, as a town-dweller, reading Jefferies’ descriptions of the natural world was: ‘I remember the delight with which I drank, as a bright and refreshing draught from a clear spring-head, the story of the country life as set forth by him, this writer, the life of whom I had never before read. . . . None of us—poor street-struck creatures!—can see the things we ought to see.’ (pp.167–8).

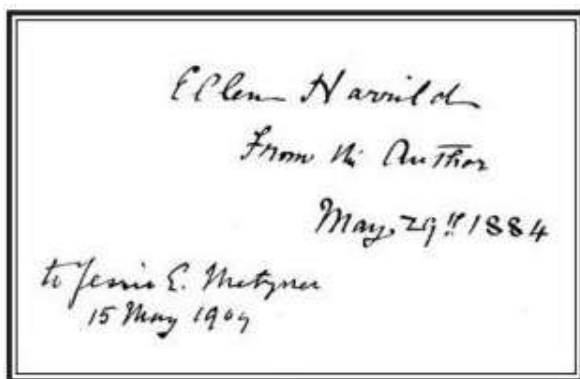
Michael Sherwood found a passage from *Wood Magic* where ‘The Brook’ holds a conversation with Bevis. It runs from ‘When he woke next morning, Bevis quite forgot what the Squirrel had told him’ to ‘Why do you go

about asking questions, dear? Why don't you sing, and do nothing else?' The extract forms part of chapter 2, headed 'Nature' in *Our Nation's Heritage*, a collection of short pieces by various writers edited, with an Introduction and an Epilogue, by J.B. Priestley (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1939). The general tenor celebrates but bewails the loss of the beauty of the country. Telling is the title of the Epilogue: 'Britain is in Danger'. (Of course, little did he know we were on the brink of war, but the despoliation of the countryside by, e.g. ribbon development, is Priestley's theme.) There is a didactic tone to much of this and indeed the book may have been aimed at those of school-age—Michael's copy is stamped 'Ladysmith Senior Girls' and 'Specimen', a school in Exeter. There are a number of evocative sepia photographs of people and places, such as ploughing, scything, and tranquil scenes.

Robin Harrild came across reference to another inscribed copy of *The Life of the Fields* in the Jarndyce catalogue for 2018. (see 'List of Author Inscribed and Associated Copies of Richard Jefferies' Books' by George Miller, *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No. 34 [2019], pp.124–132). This was described in the catalogue as a 'Presentation Copy to his Beloved Aunt Ellen Harrild', although the actual dedication read: 'Ellen Harrild/From the Author/May 29th 1884' and was most impersonal.

Jefferies was living at Lorna Road, Brighton at this time, shortly to move to Eltham a month or so later. Although the dedication might have been more affectionate,

Jefferies didn't send the book to his mother until 7 June and the one to his wife is dated 6 June. In Ellen's hand, there is also an inscription 'to Jessie E. Metzner/15 May 1909'. Jessie Metzner was another niece who was living with Aunt Ellen until her death. Robin suggests that the book was given to Jessie, born 14 May, as a birthday present.

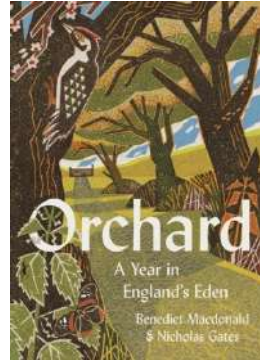


Peter Robins spotted that Hoopoe Press in the USA published a paperback edition of 'The Pageant of Summer' in Yiddish in June this year. It is only 26 pages long, so, presumably, it is just the essay published in *The Life of the Fields* that has been translated. A translation into Yiddish is the first known.

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES AWARD 2020

Richard Stewart

The winner, announced on 24 May 2021, was *Orchard—A Year In England's Eden* published by William Collins price £20.



Ben Macdonald and Nick Gates in the orchard

Having achieved three 'firsts' last year (*RJS Autumn Newsletter*, 2020, p.34) Benedict Macdonald now has a fourth, being the first writer to win in consecutive years. In this instance there is a joint author, Nicholas Gates, who also provided most of the colour photos. The book covers the rich biodiversity of a Malvern Hills orchard whose owner is described as 'the best wildlife farmer that I'd ever met'. A brief history of orchards prefaces the monthly studies of its interconnected wildlife and fascinating information includes the word itself which began as 'garden yard' then expanded to 'fruit garden' with almost all of our cultivated species originating from the foothills of Kazakhstan. The importance of monasteries before their Dissolution is also documented, not just in propagation but in actual spread as well. This was reversed in the second half of the twentieth century—the 1970s and 1980s saw grants actually becoming available for many orchards to be 'grubbed relentlessly from the British countryside'.

A two-page map of the main orchard is included, with both authors stressing the good fortune and privilege of being able to have continued and long term access for their studies. The chapters are written alternately with each introduced by a short quote, sources including Dickens, Shakespeare, Keats, Auden, Thoreau and an African proverb. I couldn't detect any significant difference in writing quality from the authors sharing the twelve chapters. The orchard itself has been spared any use of chemicals since the 1930s and its interconnected and rich biodiversity is perhaps best exemplified by a list of

nesting bird species, almost all being in decline nationally: lesser spotted woodpecker, willow tit, spotted flycatcher, redstart and bullfinch ‘in intricate pair bonds’. As many as ten pairs of blackcaps overwinter and the rotting fruit attracts over five hundred visiting fieldfares. Goshawks hunt in the orchard and other wildlife includes studies of a wide range of trees and the importance of an uninterrupted fungal subterranean network. Insects include battling stag beetles ‘like Sumo wrestlers’ and the abundance of bat species. Thankfully they also champion ivy, a much maligned species, offering in autumn ‘the latest opening restaurant in town’ as the umbels come into flower and ‘a thermal winter blanket’ for roosting and hibernation.

The authors provide plenty of ideas for creating similar wildlife habitats and the July chapter takes the reader to the abundance of small orchards in the Carpathian mountains of eastern Europe where there is ‘an older way of managing the countryside’ and consequently ‘the remarkable soon becomes the everyday’.

This book is also important because declining orchards have definitely received less publicity than diminishing habitats such as ancient woodlands, peat bogs and unimproved meadows, probably because most survivors are commercially managed and privately owned.

Finally, here is a selection of quotes from the panel of judges:

‘If you ever needed a concise introduction to ecosystems and why habitats are important this is a great start’.

‘The choice of an orchard illustrating the collaboration between humans and the natural world is a strength and gives it a relatable focus’.

‘Richly detailed, beautifully supported by colour photos and written in a very readable style’.

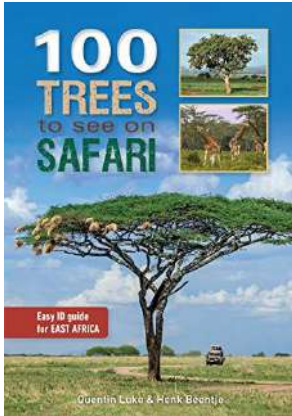
‘An absorbing record of a year spent in the unspoilt orchards of Herefordshire, neatly contextualised by comparisons with the situation in eastern Europe, where agricultural development has proceeded more slowly, to the benefit of plants and wildlife’.

‘The book celebrates the beauty and individuality of the orchard in ways that are reminiscent of Jefferies; particularly, I thought, through its sensitive depiction of the timelessness of the orchard, and its microcosmic environment where every life—even the tiniest organism—matters’.

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Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to the judges: Barry Sloan, Rebecca Welshman, Debby Guest, Roger Ebbatson, Pete Bainbridge and, especially, to Richard Stewart and John Price who sifted through all the initial nominations. Nominations for this year’s publications should be sent to the Hon. Secretary before 1 December 2021.

## BOOKS BY MEMBERS



Henk Beentje (was based at the National Museums of Kenya for five years, and at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, for 25) and Quentin Luke (a Kenyan friend of his) have recently published a user-friendly guide to some of the more widespread East African trees: Luke Q & Beentje H. 2020. *100 Trees to See on Safari in East Africa*. (Struik Nature, Cape Town, 2020). ISBN: 978-1775845492. East Africa is a premier wildlife destination, well known for its mass migrations of herds and fearsome predators. But as iconic are the trees that grow there: among them mangroves, cycads, palms, marulas, acacias, sausage trees, fever trees, toothbrush trees and giant

bamboos. This book showcases 100 of the region's most visible and significant trees, arranged by the habitats in which they occur. It features: Concise descriptions of each tree and its parts, plus notes about the various uses of the tree parts; multiple images showing the full tree and key ID features, including flowers, leaves, fruit and bark; where to see the trees, including the national parks and nature reserves; a brief introduction to the trees of the region and their vegetation zones; colourful, interesting and geared for quick tree identification, this handy guide will enhance any safari experience in East Africa. There are almost 500 photographs, depicting the full tree and its diagnostic parts; written by two of the region's most accomplished botanists.

Earlier this year Beentje was also responsible for two flora treatments that were published for this 'niche market' as Henk described the books.



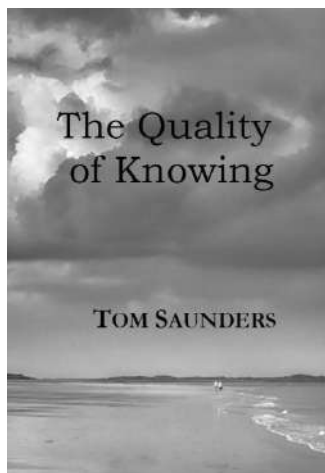
Sue Birley's *Travels with a Brompton in the Cévennes and other regions* will be published by Cranthorpe Millner in the new year. The book cover image is not available yet, but this is a picture of Sue with said bicycle from June

2011 in the Roussillon part of Languedoc-Roussillon.

In September 1878 Robert Louis Stevenson set off on a walking tour of the Cévennes mountains in southern France, his luggage (and Sue's) carried by a small donkey called Modestine. About 120 years later Sue and David Birley travelled through the same region, *their* luggage and occasionally themselves carried by two small folding bicycles of the genus Brompton.

In 20 chapters, *Travels with a Brompton* details nearly 30 years of exploring diverse regions of France. An introduction describes sundry attempts at cycling there on 'big bikes'. This was rendered difficult or impossible by the fact that in Tour de France country the railway system seems to have it in for bicycles. To the chapters describing cycling in particular regions local historical and geographical information is added in the hopes that the reader will want to take off and ride through the French countryside. The book should appeal equally to armchair travellers as the information provided renders getting out of the chair unnecessary.

There will be more information in the next Society Newsletter.



Tom Saunders' *The Quality of Knowing* (Reuben Books, 2021) is his fifth novel. ISBN: 978-1-9993172-4-9, paperback, £10. It opens with the lines: 'The heat was unimaginable, the green of the countryside burnt to a dusty brown. Met Office records had now been equalled and exceeded. Gardeners everywhere mourned the wilting of their best blooms and grew nostalgic for rain and resentful of hosepipe bans. Deliveries of sun-block and sunglasses failed to keep pace with the soaring temperatures. The neglected Victorian seaside resorts were crowded again.' The main character, Dominic Keller, is driving home to the house he grew up in, and back with his mother and the ghost of his older sister, Saskia.

Happy memories of his childhood are mixed up with the tragic details surrounding Saskia's death as an adult and his long term feelings for Lorelei Murchison, the wayward child of a famous novelist he and his sister befriended when they were growing up.

The book evokes thoughts about the randomness of history, about teenage illusions and the importance in some people's, but not all people's lives, of continuity and a sense of place. Some people need adventure, need change and excitement, others need only a place to call their own.

## SOME SPIRIT LAND

A found poem in Jefferies' 'Wild Flowers', *The Open Air*, 1885  
published in *Some Spirit Land*, Colin Blundell, (Hub Editions, 1987).

scarce fit to be touched  
lest it should fall to pieces;  
too beautiful to be long watched  
lest it should fade away;

a story that cannot be told  
because he who knows it is tongue-tied  
and dumb: ... motions of hands  
wavings and gestures rudely convey

the framework ... but the finish is not there;  
no day ... no hour of summer ... no step  
but brings new mazes:  
I am obliged to turn away

from the endless cataloguing of days  
the counting of grass stems  
the watching of wings  
and the long fall of leaves

but how shall I shut out the sun?  
how shall I deny the constellations  
of the night? ... the things  
that take root in the mind

Colin Blundell has been kind enough to allow the Society to reprint any collected poems in future newsletters and *Journals*.

## PUBLICATIONS

A full list of books and pamphlets published by the Richard Jefferies Society appears in the *RJS Spring Newsletter*, 2021, pp.37–38.

Please can we draw members' attention to two particularly useful reference books that were written by Phyllis Treitel (former Chair and Secretary) and the late Hugoe Matthews (former President). Their painstaking research and dedication led to the production of *The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies* (1994, 240pp., hardback) and *Richard Jefferies: An Index of Themes, Thoughts and Observations* (2008, 260pp., hardback).

*The Forward Life* catalogues events or facts in chronological order that are pertinent to Richard Jefferies' life and can be dated with reasonable accuracy. The starting point is the marriage of Jefferies' parents; and the end point is his death. Inevitably some discoveries and new information has come to light since 1994. Andrew Rossabi's biography *A Peculiarly English Genius: A Biography of Richard Jefferies* brings information up-to-date and goes further than any other biographical study published. At the moment only Volumes I (2017) and II (2020) are available in hardback, 800pp. *An Index* provides information about the published work of Richard Jefferies. It is partly a word-index (e.g. names of species) and partly a subject-index (e.g. Nature and Man, Farming, Religion) and the main emphasis is on Jefferies' non-fiction.

This gave rise to *Richard Jefferies: An Anthology* where material was selected by Hugoe and Rebecca Welshman (2010, hardback 264pp.). This book demonstrates the full range of Jefferies' output and provides short quotations on a multitude of themes aimed at encouraging the reader to go to the primary source for further enjoyment of Jefferies' writing.

These hardbacks are still available under special offer and can be purchased from the Hon. Secretary (see p.2). The prices quoted below include postage within the UK. Overseas members should contact the Hon. Sec. to establish postage costs overseas.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>A Peculiarly English Genius: a Biography of Richard Jefferies, Volume I, The Early Years, (1848–67)</i> by Andrew Rossabi        | £20.00<br><del>£40</del>    |
| <i>A Peculiarly English Genius: a Biography of Richard Jefferies, Volume II, The Years of Struggle, (1867–76)</i> by Andrew Rossabi | £30.00<br><del>£60.00</del> |
| <i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel                                                                             | £10.00<br><del>£20.00</del> |
| <i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel                                                                   | £8.00<br><del>£15.00</del>  |
| <i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman                                                                        | £10.00<br><del>£20.00</del> |

## BOOK REVIEW: *THE LONG AFFRAY* BY HARRY HOPKINS

Andrew Rossabi

Harry Hopkins' *The Long Affray: The Poaching Wars in Britain 1760-1914* was first published in hardcover by Secker & Warburg in 1985 and reissued in paperback in 2008 by Faber in their Faber Finds series and in 1986 by Macmillan. Hopkins died in 1998.

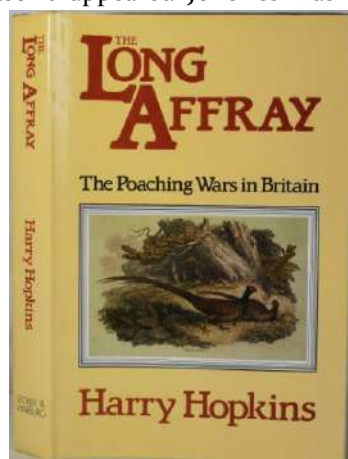
Harry Hopkins' book on the poaching wars, which was brought to the Society's attention by Janice Lingley (*RJS Spring Newsletter*, 2021, p.40), is an excellent work—highly informative not only about gamekeepers and poachers but about the history and structure of rural society in general. I strongly recommend it as background reading to *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *The Amateur Poacher*.

However, I have one major grouse. The picture Hopkins presents of Jefferies is one of a conservative largely on the side of property, the status quo, the game laws, and the keeper. His picture in short is skewed and nowhere more so than where (p.277) he cites the opening sentence of Jefferies' article 'Shooting Poachers' in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (13 December 1884; collected by Looker in *Chronicles of the Hedges*, p.50):

The sport of shooting poachers, which comes in towards Christmas, is now in full swing, some capital sport has already been obtained, and there appears to be a plentiful supply of human game on hand.

On first reading this I did a double take because it appeared Jefferies was quite serious (if writing in jocular vein) and regarded shooting poachers as first-class sport, an impression Hopkins does nothing to correct. Anyway, the passage inspired me to look up the *PMG* article. It quickly transpired that Jefferies was being bitterly sarcastic and the whole thrust of his article was against shooting poachers and against gamekeepers who went out with any such intention.

Jefferies' irony, in particular, is often missed. As Mrs Leavis said in her *Scrutiny* article (see *RJS Journal* No. 36 [2021] p.88): 'Jefferies was one of those comprehensive geniuses from whose work you can take what you are inclined to find.'



## BOOK REVIEW: A STROKE OF GENIUS

Jefferies' penultimate novel *After London* was published here and in the US by Cassell & Company in 1885. The literary critics were generally favourable and a review in *The American Bookseller* 15 June 1885 called it 'a stroke of genius,' citing Defoe and Balzac:

*After London; or Wild England*, is the somewhat strange title of a strange work by Richard Jefferies. He depicts in a strain worthy of Defoe the relapse of the country into barbarism after London had come to an end, and the most of the population of England departed.

Forests sprang up everywhere, the river became choked and formed swamps, and the mighty buildings of olden days were buried in the mud. The domestic animals became wild, while the foreign animals that had escaped from the menageries, roamed the deserted fields. The few men who could not leave the island lived in the woods as bushmen, or in numerous petty republics which grew up on the borders of the central lake beneath whose surface many ancient cities are buried.

Such is the *Wild England* in which Mr. Jefferies has placed the home of the Aquilas. The adventures of Sir Felix and Aurora must be read in the paper of the book itself, which is as circumstantial in method and naturalistic in effect as anything in Balzac.

The idea of the book is a stroke of genius, and the way in which it is worked out is equal to the conception. The air of reality which is thrown over every scene and incident is a triumph of art.

If the civilization of Europe perishes again, as the old civilization of the Roman world perished, leaving traces of lost arts, inventions, and machines, and if a new world had to grow from the ruins, would it be like *Wild England*? Read and think.

*Richard Jefferies Society Autumn Newsletter, 2021*  
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Burderop Park—oil painting by Kate Tryon, c.1912



Gamekeeper's Cottage, Hodson—oil painting by Kate Tryon, c.1912



# RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY BIRTHDAY LECTURE



**Monday 8 November 2021, 7.30pm**

Zoom meeting (email [richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com](mailto:richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com) to register)

## **Richard Jefferies and the Sea** *Andrew Rossabi*



Caspar David Friedrich, 'On the Sailing Boat'.

The sea played an important part in both Jefferies' life and writings. Andrew Rossabi will explore the sea's role in Jefferies' work.