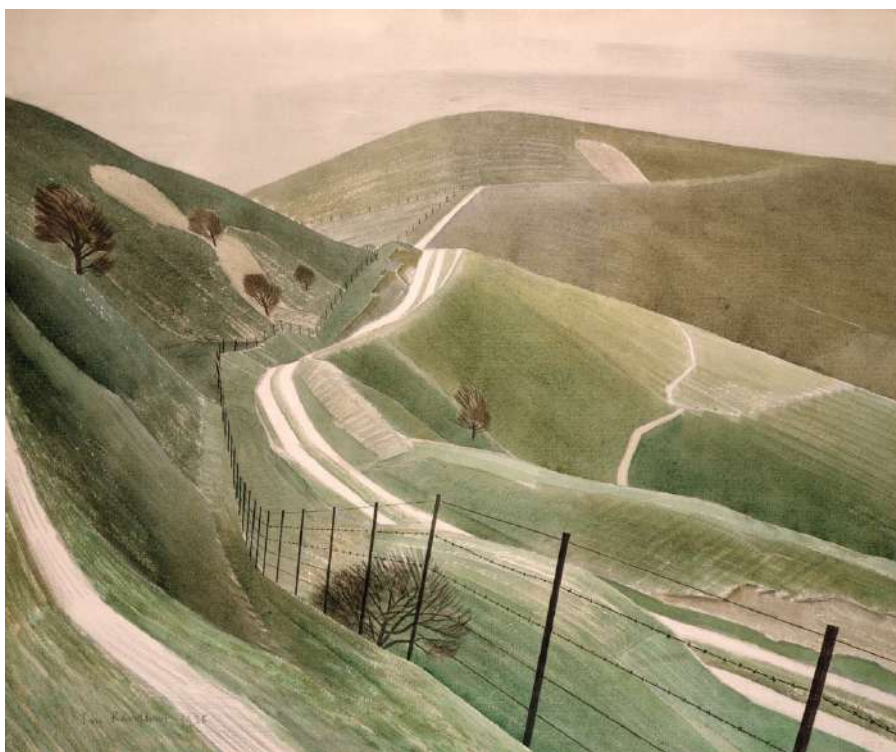


THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

**ANNUAL REPORT 2020
& SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021**



'Chalk Paths,' on the South Downs, near Lewes, by Eric Ravilious, 1935. See p.27.



'The Vale of the White Horse,' North Wessex Downs, by Eric Ravilious, 1939



'Beachy Head,' by Eric Ravilious, 1939

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



Annual Membership is open to all on payment of the current subscription of £12 single or £14 couple (£8 students). Overseas Members incur additional postal charges of £6. The membership year runs from 1 January. Members receive spring and autumn newsletters along with a summer *Journal*. The annual report is included in the spring newsletter. The Society has a library of books by and about Richard Jefferies stored at Michael Sherwood's home in Devon. The Society's archives are placed in the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Chippenham, or are on display at the Richard Jefferies Museum. The Society awards an annual literary award for excellence in nature writing and provides a research bursary for projects that promote a new understanding of Richard Jefferies. The Society's website is a rich resource for information.

Hon. Sec. Jean Saunders
The Old Mill, Mill Drive, Foulsham,
Norfolk NR20 5RB
☎ 01362 683210

Email: richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com

Website: <http://www.richardjefferiessociety.org>

NEWSLETTER: edited by Jean Saunders and Peter Robins. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society. The deadline to submit material for the Autumn Newsletter is **1 September 2021**. Please send your contributions, preferably by email, to the Hon. Secretary as above. The newsletter is also available on the Society's website as a free download. Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY, 2021

~~Sat 3 April, 2.00-4.00pm. Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams.~~ This meeting has been cancelled.

Sat 8 May, RJS Annual General Meeting and Spring Lecture. In view of the pandemic controls, these meetings will take place by video-conferencing. Those of you with Internet access will be able to 'attend' the meeting. Conor Jameson will be delivering the Spring Lecture and will be exploring the influence of Richard Jefferies on the life and work of W.H. Hudson. See p.41 for more information.

Ballot papers are enclosed with the mailing for the AGM.

FROM THE CHAIR

Barry Sloan

Welcome to the Annual Report (2020) and Spring Newsletter (2021) which has been collated and published on time in spite of the numerous obstacles and challenges that have characterised a difficult and distressing year. Thank you once again, Jean and Peter, for your indefatigable efforts on behalf of the Society.

You will realise from a quick glance at the Contents page that this Newsletter is as full and varied as ever and confirms the enterprise and enthusiasm of the contributors whose work continues to add to our knowledge and understanding of Jefferies as a man and our appreciation of his singular contribution as a writer.

Following a year in which museums everywhere faced the severest difficulties, the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust report is a really encouraging highlight, showing a number of ways in which opportunities have been seized and new initiatives taken, particularly to engage and involve young people.

Likewise, the reputation of the Richard Jefferies Society and White Horse Bookshop literary prize appears to be growing, if one is to go by the unprecedented number of long-listed nominations this year. It will be interesting to see the eventual winner decided by the judging panel from the final six titles, all of which are books of great merit.

Finally, I hope that many of you will be able to use Zoom to ‘attend’ Conor Jameson’s Spring Lecture on W.H. Hudson and Richard Jefferies. Do remember to arrange in advance to get access to the meeting. And, in the meantime, as we have all learnt to say to family and friends these days—‘Stay safe!’

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2020–2021

Pete Bainbridge (re-elected, 2020–23), Simon Coleman (re-elected, 2020–23), Patrick Dillon (re-elected, 2018–22), Roger Ebbatson (re-elected, 2020–23), Margaret Hunt (Swindon Secretary, re-elected 2018–22), John Price (Vice President), Mike Pringle (re-elected, 2020–23), Andrew Rossabi (President, re-elected, 2015–21), Jean Saunders (Hon. Secretary, re-elected, 2015–21), Tom Saunders (Hon. Treasurer, elected 2017–2023), Barry Sloan (Chair, re-elected, 2020–2023), Richard Stewart (2018–22), Phyllis Treitel (Honorary Vice President) and Rebecca Welshman (co-opted 12/11/2020). In order to secure a degree of data protection for the Society’s Executive Council members, full contact details are no longer provided.

MEMBERSHIP

A warm welcome is extended to members who joined the Society since the last annual report was published:

Yash Bhagwanji
Tim Conyers
Daniel Phillips

Anthony Sturgeon
Tim Walsh
Eddie Wills

There were 208 subscriptions for 2020 but sadly membership numbers dropped to 200 by the end of the year as a result of deaths. Although the majority of members live in the United Kingdom, others live in Europe or in English-speaking countries. The Facebook group has 177 subscribers. Thanks go to Rebecca Welshman and John Shortland for managing the virtual group where the audience is quite different and includes only a small percentage of actual Society members.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

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

THE VALUE OF NATURE: LITTLE THINGS DO MATTER

Rebecca Welshman

This article was first published online on the writer's blog on 14 January 2017 and is reprinted with the kind permission of Dr. Welshman.

Findings from a research study suggest that those of us who value possessions, status and wealth are more anxious, depressed and unsociable than those who don't. These claims were made by a group of researchers at the Northwestern University, who published their report in *Psychological Science*, the Journal of the Association for Psychological Science in 2012.

But these debates are hardly new. Richard Jefferies, known for his writings on nature and society, questioned the value of materialism 150 years ago. He recognised that the pursuit of wealth promised nothing in itself, and through his writing tried to help people find happiness through nature. The Victorian era saw the birth of materialism as we know it today. London became the fastest growing metropolis in the world, and with the expansion of towns and railways, Britain underwent a radical rural to urban transition.

Known best for his writing on nature and rural life, Jefferies made his living as a journalist, writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and other papers and magazines of the time. This autumn marks 149 years since the publication of his letters to *The Times* about the working conditions and pay of Wiltshire agricultural labourers, which brought him national acclaim and helped earn him a special place in Victorian literature.

As a country lad who moved to the city—first Surbiton, then Brighton, Jefferies was well qualified to comment on the changes taking place around him. In his articles in the London *Standard* he conveyed the physical and psychological health benefits of spending time out of doors and encouraged people to take more notice of the nature around them. As he wrote in his novel *Restless Human Hearts* (1875), nature could be found even in the heart of London:

The dead brown leaves, driven by the wind, penetrate even into stony London, and rustle along the pavement and whirl round in eddies at the corners of the street. They are a voice from the woods, an echo from the forgotten land, messengers from Nature, abiding still in her solitudes, warning wilful and blinded men to return ere it be too late.

One of Jefferies' London thinking places was a spot in front of the Royal Exchange, the hub of the Victorian commercial world, which remained the centre of commerce until 1939. Here he stood and watched the streams of

traffic flow past—hundreds of men, women, horses and carriages, bustling and rushing to and fro. Amidst the hurrying footsteps, wheels, different coloured omnibuses, some carrying bales of straw, stirring up the dust in their efforts to reach their different destinations, Jefferies pondered where it was all going. Everyone seemed wrapped up in their own world, indifferent, it seemed to the character of the place itself:

all these men and women that pass through are driven on by the push of accumulated circumstances; they cannot stay, they must go Where will be these millions of to-day in a hundred years? But, further than that, let us ask, Where then will be the sum and outcome of their labour? ... There will not be any sum or outcome or result of this ceaseless labour and movement; it vanishes in the moment that it is done, and in a hundred years nothing will be there, for nothing is there now.

Jefferies strove to answer these questions in his soul-searching autobiography, *The Story of My Heart*, a book that brought him posthumous fame as a nature mystic and social commentator. Jefferies wrote that he desired ‘increase, profit, and exultation of body, mind, and soul [and that] the surroundings, the clothes, the dwelling, the social status, the circumstances are to me utterly indifferent. Let the floor of the room be bare, let the furniture be a plank table, the bed a mere pallet. Let the house be plain and simple, but in the midst of air and light ... let my mind be furnished with highest thoughts of soul-life.’

During the years that followed his death, the book was reprinted more than any other of his books. Jefferies’ ideas had reached the receptive ears of an Edwardian readership—this was his time, but he did not live long enough to see it. In 1916 Bertrand Russell declared that ‘It is the preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else that prevents us from living freely and nobly’.

These concerns remain pertinent today, not least because they have gathered in magnitude. The research by Northwestern University has shown that materialism negatively affects people. Northwestern University psychologist Galen V. Bodenhausen claims that ‘irrespective of personality, in situations that activate a consumer mindset, people show the same sorts of problematic patterns in wellbeing, including negative affect and social disengagement.’ As many others have done since, Jefferies questioned what people were working for—beyond money, what real value did all this labour have? He hoped his writings would offer people ways to experience more joy in the simple things of life—‘more sunshine and more flowers’—feelings that couldn’t be generated by the pursuit of materialism.

Jefferies found beauty in the most ordinary things—a blade of grass, a flower, even a patch of ground. Man-made things paled into insignificance next to the design-less beauty of natural phenomena:

I had forgotten that the parlour, beside the chair and table, had a carpet. The carpet has a pattern: it is woven; the threads can be discerned, and a little investigation shows beyond doubt that it was designed and made by a man. It is certainly pretty and ingenious. But the grass of my golden meadow has no design, and no purpose: it is beautiful, and more; it is divine. (*The Old House at Coate*)

It is well-known that the beauty of nature promotes feelings of wholeness and well-being. A 2011 survey of 3000 people on behalf of ‘Three Barrels Brandy’, about what boosts our happiness, ranked three of nature’s own remedies in the top ten, which suggests that we are already a nation that finds enjoyment in the simple things. ‘Swimming in the sea’, ‘waking up on a sunny day’, and ‘sitting in the sun’ outranked ‘booking a holiday’, ‘finding a bargain’, ‘winning a £10 lottery prize’, and ‘getting a promotion’. ‘Finding a £10 note in an old pair of jeans’ and ‘going on holiday’ topped the poll, with spending time with friends and family, and quiet moments of reflection, including listening to old songs and looking at photos, largely constituted the top 30. More recently, GPs in Scotland have been prescribing walking outdoors as a remedy for depression. In Shetland, GPs now prescribe ‘nature’ activities to help reduce stress, anxiety, lower blood pressure, and ease other conditions. In February, you can make a windsock to ‘appreciate the speed of the wind’; in March, you can make beach art from natural materials; in April, you can ‘touch the sea’ and ‘make a bug hotel’; in May, you can ‘bury your face in the grass’; in July, you can ‘pick two different kinds of grass and really look at them’; in August, you can summon a worm out of the ground without digging or using water; in September, you can help clean the beach and prepare a meal outdoors; in October, you can ‘appreciate a cloud’; you can ‘talk to a pony’ in November, and ‘feed the birds in your garden’ in December.

London has some of the largest and well-maintained parks in Europe, many of which don’t charge entry fees, with flowers, open spaces, and water fountains which capture the sunlight. These things are all around us, but how often do we really notice them? In 2010 a series of studies were conducted by the University of Rochester which found that nature increases energy levels, feelings of vitality, and general happiness. Professor of Psychology, Psychiatry and Education, Richard Ryan, commented that ‘Nature is fuel for the soul,’ and that ‘often when we feel depleted we reach for a cup of coffee, but research suggests a better way to get energized is to connect with nature.’

Ryan added that nature can help us to fight infection, fight exhaustion, and increase our general physical health.

Slowly, it seems, in some capacity our capitalist consumer-driven society is waking up to the benefits of the simple things that are all around us. Jefferies' love of nature was so strong that 'the buzz of a bee at the window' would cause him to feel connected to the abundance of treasures which lay just outside, at his fingertips. The sounds, textures, colours and forms of nature were powerfully alive to him, even during years of illness. Just a glimpse of a lark through his window in Goring recalls to him the vibrancy of former times:

To-day through the window-pane I see a lark high up against the grey cloud,
and hear his song. ... So beautiful to watch as if he were my own, and I felt it all!
It is years since I went out amongst them in the old fields, and saw them in the
green corn.

Mysterious and ever-changing, with the weather and the seasons, nature held him under its spell and sustained him to the very end.

Like all good relationships, our connection with nature needs to be cultivated and maintained. We can make a little difference to the happiness of the wildlife and flora around us, even just by considering and appreciating that we live in an ever-changing and vibrant living world. Nature is amazingly receptive to positive efforts to help and sustain it. Only the other day the robin that I have been feeding came to the open window of the kitchen and began singing the clearest sweetest song, amplified by his close proximity to a level before unheard. He was, of course, reminding me that I had neglected to put food out on the bird table that morning. My feeding the robin is a small thing. Yet I like to think that he will live through the winter and go on to nurture broods of youngsters of his own next spring. Every little thing we do, however small, has an effect and leaves a legacy for the future.



THE SUN INN, COATE, BURNT



'Back of the old Sun Inn. House at Coate near Swindon,' sketched by John Luckett Jefferies (the writer's uncle) from the orchard at Jefferies' farm. The pencil drawing is in John Luckett Jefferies' sketch-book, dated 1840, but this illustration might be later. John died in 1856 from tuberculosis just before his 32nd birthday.

The following report is taken from the *Wilts and Gos. Standard* dated Saturday, 7 March 1891.

The Sun Inn, Coate, Burnt.

In the early hours of Tuesday morning [3 March 1891]—about a quarter to one—a serious and destructive fire broke out on the premises of the Sun Inn, Coate. The fire was first discovered by a gentleman who was proceeding to Swindon. He immediately raised an alarm, called up the neighbours, and then went and fetched the Swindon Volunteer Fire Brigade. By the time they arrived, shortly after 2 a.m., the fire had obtained a very strong hold on the premises, and smoke was issuing from all the windows upstairs and down. The occupants, Mrs Ann Choules (a widow), her daughter, Miss Choules, and a servant, had already been rescued through the bedroom windows by means of a ladder, and conveyed to a place of shelter. Seeing the serious condition of affairs, the Fire Brigade, under Captain F. Bowering, endeavoured, if not to cope with the fire, at least to prevent it spreading to the adjoining out-buildings, and worked unceasingly till daybreak, when the fire was subdued, but not before the roof, which was of thatch, had fallen in. There was a plentiful supply of water, the Reservoir being not far distant. Plenty of willing hands assisted in getting out what furniture and effects it was possible to save. The house is a very old one, and the origin of the fire is at present unknown. Mrs. Choules is insured in the Sun Fire Office.

The census for 1891 was undertaken not long afterwards on the 5 April 1891. It would seem that Henry Baden (Andrew Baden's nephew and a cousin of Jessie Jefferies) was kind enough to provide the Choules with shelter. Ann Choules had been an innkeeper at the Sun Inn since, at least, the 1871 census and would have been well-known to the Jefferies' family.

Farmer Thomas Large had rented the Jefferies' farm from Jonathan Gosling at this time and the granddaughter of one of his daughter's recalled the incident to Jean Saunders on a visit to the Richard Jefferies Museum. Edith Susan Large, born on 25 November 1877, was thirteen at the time of the fire. She told her granddaughter that they were woken up in the night and saw the inn ablaze through a window at the gable end of Jefferies' farmhouse and all rushed out to help in whatever way possible.

The Sun Inn was bought from Ann Choules by Arkell's in the year of the fire. The blacksmith's shop was still there at that time (read about Ikey, the blacksmith, in *The Amateur Poacher* and Jonas in *Bevis*). The pub was rebuilt (see picture below circa 1920) and Ann Choules remained as innkeeper according to trade directories dated 1895. Then, for a third time, the pub was rebuilt again in 1937 just after the Council widened the road at Coate, added the Coate Water roundabout and moved Amaryllis's garden wall inside the row of espalier lime trees. Arkell's claim on their website that 'there had been a building here as early as 1685 and it was in use as The Sun alehouse by 1779, though it remained closed for several years in the first quarter of the 19th century.' By 1900 Arkell's owned more than a quarter of the pubs in the Swindon area.



Sun Inn, undated postcard circa 1920. It reveals that there is a 'Fare Station' stop with time-tables for coaches to Marlborough and Hungerford.



Swindon Advertiser: 'RICHARD JEFFERIES' WALL—A photograph of the work in progress on the setting back of the wall of the Richard Jefferies' house at Coate, Swindon. The beginning of the new wall is seen on the right, its original position is marked by the line of trees, which were inside the fence, its removal is due to a road widening scheme at this point, sentiment having had to give way to safety.'

REUBEN GEORGE

Jean Saunders



The undated postcard above pictured the 'Birthplace of Richard Jefferies' along with a gentleman standing at the squeeze-belly stile opposite Coate farmhouse. This picture has puzzled me. Who was the man wearing a bowler hat, smoking a pipe and holding a cane? Did he have anything to do with Richard Jefferies? Clearly it was a photograph taken before the road widening in 1935 when the garden wall was rebuilt inside the row of lime trees (see p.13). I am almost certain that the man was Reuben George, an important and prominent figure in Swindon and supporter of Richard Jefferies.

Reuben George was a socialist, pacifist, member of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, an authority on Wiltshire local history and one of the founder members of the Swindon Worker's Educational Association (WEA) who did so much to ensure that Richard Jefferies was celebrated. He served as Mayor of Swindon from 1921–22 and was elected to both Swindon and Wiltshire County councils where he served on many committees.

The Jefferies' farm at Coate was bought by Swindon Corporation from Percy Herring in 1926. Herring had acquired the farm for £2,000 on the death of Job Lawrence, the Coate Water bailiff, in 1922. "Then yielding to the repeated persuasions of Reuben George, former mayor of the Borough and a Jefferies enthusiast, [Herring] sold it to Swindon Corporation who, he understood, wished by its use to honour the memory of the writer."¹

Reuben George was born on 11 September 1864 in Barton St Mary (now engulfed by Gloucester); the son of a boot-maker. Reuben worked as a

¹ 'Jefferies Farm Situate at Coate in the Parish of Chiseldon in the County of Wiltshire' by Frances Gay, *Swindon Review*, 1955.

labourer and in 1887 married Clara Georgina Acton before moving to Swindon where he was employed as an agent for the Wesleyan and General Insurance Company. He died on 4 June 1936 and was described as a 'champion of the underdog'.² His death touched the hearts of ordinary folk to whom Reuben had devoted his life. The procession to the funeral from Christ Church to Radnor Street Cemetery stretched a quarter of a mile long and 'all along the route the streets were lined with people of all classes rich and poor, workmen who had sacrificed part of their lunch hour to pay a last tribute, sobbing women and business people who had closed their shops... it was the greatest public demonstration of spontaneous affection for a public figure that the town of Swindon has seen for very many years.'³ His wife died just three weeks later on 26 June.

Thanks to John Chandler and Andy Binks, who searched archives for photographs of Reuben George, along with those acquired from Sheila Povey to publish the Kate Tryon book, the identity of my mystery man became clearer. Three photographs of WEA events helped solve the puzzle. The first would have been taken around 1912 when Kate Tryon joined WEA celebrations for Richard Jefferies in a walk to Hodson. No names were given but the gentleman at the front looks like the same man at the stile—sporting a pipe, walking cane, three-piece suit and bowler hat—followed by Kate Tryon (see below).



² 'Swindon Pays Tribute to the Late Mr. Reuben George,' *North Wilts Herald*, 12 June 1936, p.13.

³ *ibid.*

And another (below) of a Swindon WEA ramble with George pictured, arms folded, but wearing a flat cap.



Below: a picture of members of the WEA revealing Reuben George in the back row standing next to Alfred Williams, who is on the far left of the picture.



And finally, a photograph of when he was Mayor in 1921–22.



Surely this is the man at the squeeze-belly stile?

Many thanks are due to Reuben George for the large part he played in keeping Jefferies' life and works alive in Swindon apart from pushing Swindon Corporation to buy Coate Farm. For example he visited the secondary school in Chippenham to talk to them about Jefferies. The event was reported in the *Wiltshire Times*, 12 December 1925. It is recorded that he had made 'a special study of the Wiltshire writer ... he told of the author's life and character, mentioning his ill-health and ... interspersed his account with readings from Jefferies' works, selecting gay and solemn extracts to illustrate the writer's treatment of various subjects. He dwelt upon the love Richard Jefferies bore to nature ... and talked familiarly about the cottages, downs, and woodlands mentioned in *The Gamekeeper at Home*, *Bevis* and others of his noted books.' George concluded with the quote: 'On the spring the daisies will come and the thrushes will sing on the bough'.⁴

⁴ Quote from Jefferies' *Wild Life in a Southern County*, Ch. VI.

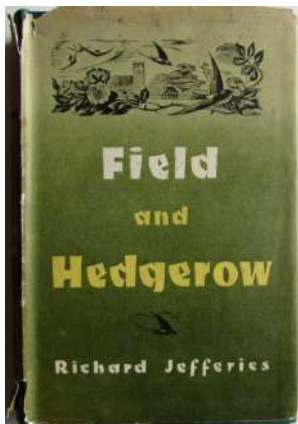
AGNES MILLER PARKER

Andrew Rossabi

Agnes Miller Parker (1895–1980) was a Scottish wood engraver born at Irvine in North Ayrshire. Daughter of an industrial chemist, eldest of eight children, she studied at the Glasgow School of Art (1911–17) where she met her future husband, the painter and fellow student William McCance. McCance was imprisoned as a conscientious objector during the First World War. The couple married in 1918 and the following year moved to London.

There, and in southern England, Parker spent most of her career. The bulk of her work consisted of wood engravings for book illustrations, the only way the art could become widely disseminated, as the career of Thomas Bewick had shown a century earlier. Her early engravings reflected the influence of Cubism and the Vorticism of Wyndham Lewis. Her distinctive style was characterized by fine draughtsmanship and skilled use of black and white design, with strong yet delicate cross-hatching and stippling. In subject matter Parker showed a particular feel for insects, birds, animals, and rural life.

In the early 1930s she was one of four engravers who worked for the Gregynog Press in Wales: William McCance, Gertrude Hermes, and Hermes's husband Blair Hughes-Stanton were the others. She won critical acclaim with her illustrations for *The Fables of Esop* (a limited edition of 250 copies published by Gregynog Press, c.1932) and again with those for Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1938) published by the Limited Editions Club in New York. She illustrated *Through the Woods* (1936) and *Down the River* (1937) by the popular country writer H.E. Bates.



She illustrated editions of several works of Richard Jefferies published by the Lutterworth Press and edited by Samuel J. Looker: *The Spring of the Year* (1946), *The Life of the Fields* (1947), *Field and Hedgerow* (1948), *The Old House at Coate* (1948), and *The Open Air* (1948).

In the 1950s and 1960s she illustrated editions of Thomas Hardy's novels and Shakespeare published by the Limited Editions Club of New York.

In 1955, following her divorce from McCance, she moved to Glasgow and thence to Lamlash on the Isle of Arran where she lived for the rest of her life.

Parker is now regarded as one of the greatest wood engravers of the twentieth century.

~~~

The standard work is Ian Rogerson, *The Wood Engravings of Agnes Miller Parker* (London: British Library, 2005).

Rogerson chronicles the rise, demise and rebirth of wood engraving in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Society of Wood Engravers was founded in 1920. The decade saw a burgeoning of the private press: the best-known names were the Golden Cockerel Press, Gregynog Press, Nonesuch Press. Wood engraving was primarily associated with the private press movement but a few far-sighted commercial publishers used the medium with conspicuous success. By the 1930s wood engraving in Britain was 'a veritable nest of singing birds leaving behind a legacy of imaginative book illustration which has rarely been surpassed'. (*op.cit.*, p.11) Macmillan, Dent, Gollancz featured the work of Clare Leighton and Agnes Miller Parker; Dent later that of Robert Gibbings. Parker would have remained relatively unknown but for her work for Gollancz.

Of Parker's illustrations of Jefferies Rogerson spoke of

the creation of over one hundred and twenty wood engravings which would illuminate the prose of Richard Jefferies and make a substantial contribution to the restoration of his reputation as a master of his chosen literary genre. (*op.cit.*, p.53)

The revival of interest in the 'almost forgotten figure' of Jefferies was entirely due to the efforts of Samuel J. Looker. Jefferies was

a writer who managed to combine detailed observation with an almost religious appreciation of nature in a poetic style of writing that never toppled over into the sentimental. (*ibid.*, p.54)

The Lutterworth Press jackets

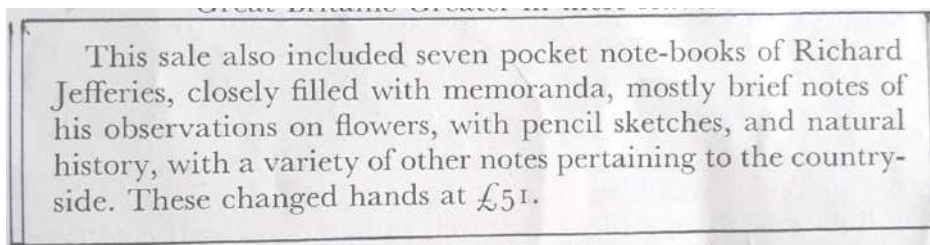
stand out, small but bright among the dross of immediate post-war publishing... While a weary public were still suffering from six years of war, *The Spring of the Year* was like a burst of sunshine on a bomb site where wild flowers indicate resurgence. (*ibid.*)

Nevertheless Rogerson believed Parker less successful at rendering Jefferies' mysticism. The image of sunlit water held in a cupped hand was beautifully composed but did not deliver the spirit of the moment as well as Gertrude Hermes (whose wood engravings illustrated the edition of *The Story of My Heart* published by Penguin in 1938).

## JEFFERIES' NOTEBOOKS FOR SALE

*Jean Saunders*

In August 2020 Robert Brown, a long-standing Richard Jefferies Society member, supplied me with a cutting from *The Connoisseur* dated 1942 that highlighted an auction at Hodgson's held on 16 April 1942. Seven of Richard Jefferies' notebooks sold and fetched £51. Samuel J. Looker is known to have been the buyer.



Not only is there some confusion about the total number of notebooks that Jefferies' kept but Looker's memory of them. Just before he died in 1965, he wrote :

At auction ... I obtained four of Jefferies' notebooks [1937].<sup>1</sup> These cost £5. When eight more arrived at the sale-room a few years later I had to pay £51 for them. Later still I bought four further notebooks from my friend Mrs. [Phyllis] Hargrave, Jefferies' daughter. The sixteen (there should have been twenty-four in all) were all that survived. Eight short: those written during his most creative years, and every effort to trace them, continued to this day, has failed.<sup>2</sup>

Over twenty years earlier, in 1943, Looker wrote: 'Last April ... I was fortunate enough to secure in the sale-room after spirited bidding, seven more notebooks ... I obtained fifteen in all.'<sup>3</sup> So most confusing!

In one of her earliest letters to Looker (19 July [1942]), Phyllis Hargrave mentions the last four notebooks she planned to sell:

I am thinking of sending four more notebooks to Messrs Hodgson but perhaps you would like to buy them as I think you purchased some I sent to their sale a short time ago, these are the last ones I have. I know you make such good use of them & appreciate them.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Nature Diaries and Note-Books of Richard Jefferies*, edited by Samuel Looker (Billericay: The Grey Walls Press, 1941), p.35. Notebook contents quoted come from numbers V, XI, XIX and XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> *Richard Jefferies: Man of the Fields* by Samuel J. Looker and Crichton Porteous (London: John Baker, 1965), p.xvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Jefferies' England* edited by Looker (London: Constable, 1943), p.270.

Life is so uncertain & I have no one to leave them to & should not like them to fall into unappreciative hands some day.

These four are particularly good & full of interest...<sup>4</sup>

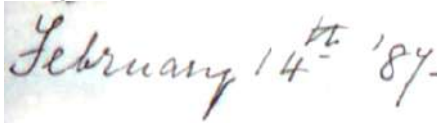
In her next letter to Looker (27 July [1942]) she wrote:

I send you by registered post one of the note books, the date inside, Feb 14<sup>th</sup> '87, [i.e. NB XXIII] is in my mother's writing, which was just six months before my father died & probably the last note book he used. I do not like parting with these little books at all but feel they would be safe in your hands especially if you will leave them to the nation.

I am offered £20 for the four, perhaps that is more than you wish to give.

I sometimes feel perhaps I ought to destroy them & not put them in the market at all but these times are hard for everybody.

Indeed, the date 'February 14th '87' is in Jessie Jefferies' hand-writing.



By the time of Phyllis's next letter (July 31<sup>st</sup>[1942]), Looker had sent her a cheque for £20. She wrote:

Thank you for your letter & cheque for £20. I am hurrying to acknowledge these & send the other three note books...

And by August 4<sup>th</sup>[1942] Phyllis writes:

I have had the note books for many years & I could never bring myself to part with them. I have often been on the point of destroying them yet could not bear to do that either. However I feel confident now that they are in good hands. I am sorry that the price was high but I have my brother & his large family (seven) to consider as well as myself.

According to Phyllis's letter of 27 July 1942, she thought she might be sending Looker her father's last notebook. But there were two more that are now part of the British Library collection, and Looker bought notebook XXIV in 1937 that he seems to have forgotten too!

Looker sold his collection to the antiquarian Col. H.L. Bradfer-Lawrence and when he died in 1965, the collection was on loan to the Fitzwilliam Museum. In May 1975 the collection was bought by the British Library. What is certain is that there are sixteen little notebooks in the archives of the

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<sup>4</sup> Phyllis's letters to Samuel Looker are sent from Overdale, Cox, Perranporth. She does not include the year but the envelope, addressed to 'S. J. Looker Esq, Book Nook, Grange Road, South Green, Billericay, Essex,' is postmarked: 'Truro, Cornwall, 5pm, 19 July 1942' along with a 2½ pence stamp. The letters are part of the Richard Jefferies Society's Looker Archive held at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham.

British Library.<sup>5</sup> But there are at least another eight or nine notebooks. Where are they?

Jessie Jefferies allowed Sir Walter Besant access to the notebooks to write his *Eulogy*<sup>6</sup> for her husband. Besant wrote on p.173:

I have before me a great number of note-books filled with observations, remarks, ideas, hints, and suggestions of all kinds by him. He carried them about during his walks, and while he was always watching the infinite wealth and variety of Nature, the multitudinous forms of life, he was always noting down what he saw. To read these note-books is like reading an unclassified index to the works of Nature.

and he quotes extracts ‘taken at random from two or three’ of them starting with an entry from 16 October 1878 and ending on 21 May [1879]. Notebook II runs to July 1878 whilst number V starts on 24 May 1879. This suggests the entries are from notebook IV (perhaps also III). Maybe, as a thank you and memento for writing the *Eulogy*, Jessie let Besant keep notebooks III and IV.

Might Jessie have sold some?<sup>7</sup> Phyllis was clearly reluctant to part with her father’s notebooks and her brother Harold shared in any profits from sales as part of Jessie’s instructions in her Will. But would Jessie have sold any to help her children? Jessie was certainly a loving mother and a dutiful wife, but did she have the same loving attachment to Richard and his works?

In his notebook XXIII Richard expresses his despair at the height of his suffering. He writes on 2 May 1887 (folio 28), three months before his death:

No hope— no gratitude, to whom—/—no love —no heart to turn/to—

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<sup>5</sup> Notebooks numbered I, III, IV, VIII, XV, XVII, XVIII, XX and XXI are missing.

The others are dated as follows— 1876–?, II: March–10 July 1878, V: 24 May–30 July 1879, VI: 31 July–27 Oct. 1879, VII: 4 March–14 June 1879; IX: 14 Oct. '80–17 Sep. '81, X: 26 Sep. '81–24 Mar. '83, XI: 4 Apr.–25 Sep 1883, XII: Nov. 1883–April 1884, XIII: 21 May–4 Oct. 1884, XIV: 5 Oct. 1884–March 1885, XVI: 5 June–23 Aug. 1886, XIX: 1–9 Jan. 1887, XXII: 14 Feb.–8 Mar. 1887, XXIII: 2 Apr.–16 May 1887 and XXIV: 19 May–7 June 1887.

<sup>6</sup> *The Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* by Walter Besant (London, Chatto & Windus, 1888), pp.173–178.

<sup>7</sup> Did Jessie experience hard times around 1901 when she was trying to sort out her son Harold. She informs Thomas Mosher that Harold was ‘very anxious to find some employment other than the sea. Though he has followed it for so many years (he is now 27) he gets to dislike it more and more.’ Jessie sold ‘The Chaffinch’ poem to Thomas Mosher the year before. Jessie and Phyllis were living at 257 Chesterfield Road in Ashford at the time of the 1901 census (31 March). Harold’s name cannot be found on this record, so he might have still been at sea, but there is a letter from Harold to Mosher from this address, also dated 4 January 1902, where he is clearly seeking work. It seems that Harold’s uncle, Robert Billing, gave him a proof-reading job, based in Guildford, in 1902 before he emigrated to Canada in 1905. No doubt Jessie and Phyllis’s move to Chiddingfold, just eleven miles away from Guildford, where both Richard’s brother Charlie and sister Sarah (Billing) were living, was to enable Harold to work for Robert Billing.

When Edward Thomas requested access to the notebooks whilst researching work for his biography of Jefferies,<sup>8</sup> Jessie informed him that her son, Harold, had them but she wouldn't supply Thomas with an address to contact him.<sup>9</sup> Harold was living in Canada by then.<sup>10</sup> Might Harold have parted with any? Could some be in Canada? And when were the notebooks returned to Jessie that Phyllis sold later? By contradiction Looker claims that Jefferies' sister Sarah Billing had some of the notebooks and that she wouldn't let Thomas see the notebooks.<sup>11</sup>

Hopefully the lost notebooks are in someone's careful ownership. Any information would be most welcome.

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In the 1990s Phyllis Treitel spent many months copying the contents of the notebooks at the British Library by hand. Lady Treitel was far better at reading Jefferies' handwriting than Looker who was also very selective in what he chose to include in his book.¹² Lady Treitel's transcripts were donated to the Richard Jefferies Society in March 2020 by her sons. These have now been typed up and the electronic document (it is not available in print at the time of writing) also includes images of Jefferies' illustrations. This large document can be downloaded from the Richard Jefferies Society website from the 'Publications' page.

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An interesting symbol appears regularly in Jefferies' last two notebooks that Samuel Looker interpreted as meaning 'Lyra's Prayer'<sup>12</sup>. The symbol appears whenever Jefferies wants to note his feeling of ecstasy, for example: the overwhelming emotion he experienced when gazing at the sculpture of the Venus Accroupie or his feelings of elation on Liddington Hill. The figure looks like a combination of the Orion and Lyra constellations, as well as the lyre, a figure with arms raised and the palms turned upwards or it could embrace the Greek capital 'ps' (ψ) superimposed as in the Greek word *psyche* (ψυχή) or soul.

<sup>8</sup> *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Works*, Edward Thomas (London: Hutchinson, 1909)

<sup>9</sup> In his introduction to *The Chronicles of the Hedges* (London: Phoenix House, 1948) p.13 Looker quotes from a letter from Edward Thomas to Dr. Rake.

<sup>10</sup> On 14 April 1905, aged 30, Harold Jefferies arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada sailing from Liverpool.

<sup>11</sup> *Richard Jefferies Man of the Fields* by S.J. Looker and Crichton Porteous (London: John Baker, 1964), p.xi.

<sup>12</sup> *The Nature Diaries and Note-Books of Richard Jefferies* edited by Samuel J. Looker (London: The Grey Walls Press Ltd., 1948).

Jefferies referred to his 'Lyra's Prayer' in chapter two of *The Story of My Heart*:

One evening, when the bright white star in Lyra was shining almost at the zenith over me, and the deep concave was the more profound in the dusk, I formulated it into three divisions. First, I desired that I might do or find something to exalt the soul, something to enable it to live its own life, a more powerful existence now. Secondly, I desired to be able to do something for the flesh, to make a discovery or perfect a method by which the fleshly body might enjoy more pleasure, longer life, and suffer less pain. Thirdly, to construct a more flexible engine with which to carry into execution the design of the will. I called this the Lyra prayer, to distinguish it from the far deeper emotion in which the soul was alone concerned.

In the context of when the symbol was used, it seemed to indicate the 'far deeper emotion in which the soul alone was concerned.'

## THE LONDON PARKS

*Peter Robins*

Tucked away at the foot of a column in the *Morning Post* of 8 Jan 1884 was a short announcement about a forthcoming series in the newspaper's sister weekly: 'Richard Jefferies, the author of *The Gamekeeper at Home*, is about to contribute a series on The London Parks to our contemporary weekly, *Society*.'

In Jefferies' notebook XII, an entry written some time between 8-12 January 1884, he recorded: 'Thoughts suggested by the beauty of the London Parks.' supporting the claim made by the *Morning Post*.

It is a great loss that the proposed series of essays has not been traced as, to date, no accessible archive has been found for *Society*. Despite Jefferies' best intentions, it is likely, as George Miller has suggested, that it was a proposal Jefferies agreed, 'but didn't follow up due to illness and other circumstances...If he had written anything substantial it surely would have registered in one way or another at some point.'

There are eight Royal Parks in London and one imagines, as an example, the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, though a tenth of the size of Coate Water, would have offered Jefferies a place of reflection with its model yachts, bird life and its many visitors as well as an ideal subject for his pen.

## CREPUSCULAR RAYS

Andrew Rossabi contacted *The Times* to point out Richard Jefferies' description of the phenomenon of crepuscular rays that Paul Simons wrote about in an article titled 'Trick of the Eye that Inspired Constable', on Tuesday 13 October 2020. Simons quoted the American poet Sarah Helen Whitman (1803–1878) who wrote about it in *A Still Day in Autumn* (1853)—

Warm lights are on the sleepy uplands waning  
Beneath dark clouds along the horizon rolled,  
Till the slant sunbeams through the fringes raining  
Bathe all the hills in melancholy gold.

but Jefferies had described the spectacle also in Chapter II of *Wild Life in a Southern County* (1879):

When the sky is overcast—large masses of cloud, with occasional breaks, passing slowly across it at a considerable elevation without rain—sometimes through these narrow slits long beams of light fall aslant upon the distant fields of the vale. They resemble, only on a greatly lengthened scale, the beams that may be seen in churches of a sunny afternoon, falling from the upper windows on the tiled floor of the chancel, and made visible by motes in the air. So through such slits in the cloudy roof of the sky the rays of the sun shoot downwards, made visible on their passage by the moisture or the motes floating in the atmosphere. They seem to linger in their place as the clouds drift with scarcely perceptible motion; and the labourers say that the sun is sucking up water there.

## CIVIL SERVICE QUESTION

In the *RJS Autumn Newsletter 2020* there was an article by Peter Robins titled: 'Shall We Use an Algorithm Minister?' The question posed to applicants for the Civil Service, based on Richard Jefferies, has come to light. The quotes are taken from the opening and closing lines from 'January in the Sussex Woods', first published on 22 January 1884 in the *Standard* and collected in *The Life of the Fields* (June 1884).

Question 7. Write in blank verse or in rhymed and metrical verse a poem on the theme of either extract given below:—

(i) The lost leaves measure our years; they are gone as the days are gone, and the bare branches silently speak of a new year, slowly advancing to its buds, its foliage, and fruit. Deciduous trees associate with human life as this yew never can. Clothed in its yellowish-green needles, its tarnished green, it knows no hope or sorrow; it is indifferent to winter, and does not look forward to summer. With their annual loss of leaves, and renewal, oak and elm and ash and beech seem to stand by us and to share our thoughts.

RICHARD JEFFERIES

(ii) The short January evening is of but a few minutes duration; just now it was only dusky, and already the interior of the wood is impenetrable to the glance. There rises a loud though distant clamour of rooks and daws, who have restlessly moved in their roost-trees. Darkness is almost on them, yet they cannot quite settle. The cawing and dawning rises to a pitch, and then declines; the wood is silent, and it is suddenly night.

RICHARD JEFFERIES

## MUSICAL PANTHEISTS

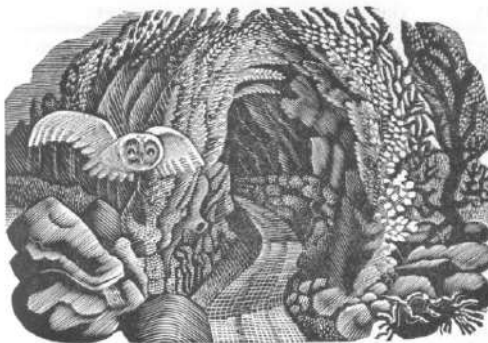
In revealing his musical taste in the *RJS Autumn Newsletter 2020*, Robert Albright made an interesting observation that he found the piano music of Debussy the ideal accompaniment to reading Richard Jefferies.

Co-editor Peter Robins came across an article in the 18 June 1946 issue of *The Listener* titled 'The Other Delius' by the musicologist Arthur Hutchings in which he explored Delius's nature mysticism:

He [Delius] stands head and shoulders above those contemporaries, English or European, who wrote 'nature pieces', not because he depicted English scenery but because he possessed a peculiarly English version of mysticism, called by Evelyn Underhill 'nature mysticism', as distinct from devotional, philosophical, or aesthetic mysticism. ... But how many know well the Delius who, in the exultation of a 'A Song of the High Hills' is the musical counterpart of Richard Jefferies in 'The Hill Pantheist'?

Whether 'accompaniment' or 'counterpart', that said, the composer Frank Bridge was inspired and wrote works from his interpretations of Jefferies' *The Open Air* and *The Story of My Heart*. See 'Tales From The Stave' in *RJS Spring Newsletter 2019*.

Julian Anderson's five-minute piece for chorus and orchestra, titled 'Harmony', was inspired by *The Story of My Heart* and was played on the first night of the Proms in 2013.



'Owl on a Rocky Hollow Lane,' Eric Ravilious, 1930s

## SOUTH DOWNS, NEAR LEWES

(See front cover illustration)

In a letter from Richard Jefferies to his Aunt Ellen Harrild he writes on Sunday, 21 June 1868:

I remember running about the Lewes downs with the young Baxters and pelting each other with pieces of putty blown through tin tubes, and now he's [Wynne<sup>1</sup>] married. I suppose 'twill be my turn next. And still the stars shine on.

And this from the opening lines of Jefferies' essay 'On the Downs':

A trailing beam of light sweeps through the combe, broadening out where it touches the ground, and narrowing up to the cloud with which it travels. The hollow groove between the hills is lit up where it falls as with a ray cast from a mirror. It is an acre wide on the sward, and tapers up to the invisible slit in the cloud; a mere speck of light from the sky enlightens the earth, and one thought opens the hearts of all men. On the slope here the furze is flecked with golden spots, and black-headed stonechats perch on ant-hills or stray flints, taking no heed of a quiet wanderer. Afar, blue line upon blue line of down is drawn along in slow curves, and beneath, the distant sea appears a dim plain with five bright streaks, where the sunshine pours through as many openings in the clouds. The wind smells like an apple fresh plucked; suddenly the great beam of light vanishes as the sun comes out, and at once the single beam is merged in the many.

Eric William Ravilious (22 July 1903–2 September 1942), pictured below, was a painter, book illustrator and wood-engraver who recommended Jefferies' novels to his art students. He grew up in East Sussex and is well-known for his watercolours of the South Downs as well as of places that Jefferies knew so well that include Beachy Head, the White Horse at Uffington and landscapes in the North Wessex Downs. See illustrations on p.2.



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<sup>1</sup> Wynne Edwin Baxter (b. 1844 in Lewes) was the oldest of four children born to William and Anne Baxter. William was the brother of George Baxter who married Jefferies' Uncle Thomas Harrild's sister, Mary.

## A GRAVE UPDATE

Surprising news has been discovered about some Jefferies' family graves.

The first was that an undated image was found of Phyllis Hargrave's tomb at Seaford Cemetery—pictured right. The existence of the grave of Richard and Jessie's daughter was unknown to the Richard Jefferies Society. Moreover, Phyllis is buried next to her cousins and good friends Christine and Helen Billing (daughters of Richard's sister Sarah). This led to further research and an article about Phyllis's life that has been published on the Society's 'Talks and Articles' website page (No. 135).



The second surprise was not so good. It is well-known that Richard's grandfather John, his grandmother Fanny, his uncle John Luckett and his aunts Eliza, Sarah, Mary and Martha are all buried in Christ Church graveyard in old Swindon along with other family members. John Luckett was one of the first to be buried there not long after the church was built. Mike Pringle made a visit to the churchyard in October 2020 only to find that many of the headstones had been moved and inscriptions were, virtually, illegible. There had been vandalism in the churchyard around Christmas, 2009, when nearly 100 graves had been attacked. This is the likely reason that headstones were moved to safety. John Luckett's headstone was also found to be badly crumbling away. Mike sought the advice of a stonemason who believed that the headstones would clean up nicely but that the only hope for John Luckett's grave was to bring it inside and, perhaps, treat it to prevent further damage. A Grave Fund has been set up (to which there have been some generous contributions already). The priority is to commission the stonemason to restore John and Fanny Jefferies' headstone and return it to its original place and to stop John Luckett's grave from deteriorating further. Mike will be in discussion with the church wardens who have proved to be impossible to contact in the present climate of lockdown.

Another interesting find was an old photograph (see next page) of the graveyard at Christ Church revealing the Jefferies' family area. The girl on the right is likely to be Daisy Sewell (born 4 October 1882) who is standing between the headstones of her great aunts Sarah Jefferies (died September 1,

1864 aged 44) and Eliza (Jefferies) Sewell (died 30 September 1894 aged 81) and her husband George Sewell. Both women are daughters of John and Fanny Jefferies. Daisy Sewell is a daughter of Richard Jefferies' cousin Emily née Hall. The younger girl (who cannot be identified) on the left of the photograph is standing behind a small cross (now broken off). This memorial is to two children: Frederick James Hall (born 2 Sep 1864; died 18 January 1871 aged 6) the last child of William and Martha (Jefferies) Hall and Ethel Mary Hall (born 27 Oct 1888, died 24 May age 19 months) daughter of John Jefferies Hall and Mary Hall (i.e. Ethel is Martha's granddaughter). To the right of the girl is a headstone dedicated to Mary Jefferies, daughter of John and Fanny Jefferies who died on 24 January 1862, age 47. It is more than likely that the graves of John Luckett and John & Fanny Jefferies are to the right of Mary's.



Progress on the repair of the kerbstone of W.H. Hudson's grave at Broadwater Cemetery appears to have come to a standstill.

Reports about the St. Piran's churchyard at Perranzabuloe are not good. It seems that virtually all the cemetery has been stripped of bushes and foliage. Perhaps the Society is responsible for setting the trend by uncovering Jessie Jefferies' grave that was buried in a deep thicket.

## RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM TRUST



**Richard Jefferies Museum**

Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon SN3 6AA

*Mike Pringle*

The diary of the museum sits forlornly open at pages from March 2020, with not much worth recording in there since then, thanks to the pandemic. However, there has been some activity in the months between then and now, with plenty of online progress, a book, a fair amount of maintenance, some restoration work, a few actual events on site, and an amazing international competition.

Early on last year, the museum successfully applied for a £12,000 Arts Council grant. This meant that all bills were covered and also provided enough money to purchase new IT equipment and cameras, as well as put together a host of new online resources. On the website now you can see a 'season' of musicians who created videos of their performances; a mass of arts and crafts activities for adults and younger children to do themselves at home; virtual art exhibitions by The Arborealists and Sarah Singleton; and a whole new learning programme aimed at schools. On top of this, late last summer, during the period when lockdown was lifted, the museum managed to hold four actual events on site. On four consecutive Sundays the events fluked glorious sunshine for Covid-safe events which included the annual vintage apple-crushing day, an outdoor photographic exhibition, an art activity day for adults and children, and a live virtual tour of the museum.

The 'coffee table' book (now titled *Wild Life*) is now complete; one of the benefits of the first lockdown was that it provided the much needed time to pull the whole project together, and even get several proof copies printed. The plan is to send the books out to anyone we can think of with 'influence' in subjects such as nature writing, the environment or climate change, and to as many media outlets as possible, both locally and across the country. We hope that, through its simple glossy format, the book will help to raise Jefferies' profile a little, making it easier for us (museum and Society) to operate in today's fast-moving, soundbite world. Practically speaking, we hope that we can use the book to inform people about Jefferies in support of grant applications, media articles and, importantly, for raising funds for our

proposed new building. Because of the pandemic, there hasn't been much point in pushing ahead too fast with printing the book, so instead we have used the time to try to find a foreword from a well-known voice. So far, no reply from either Chris Packham or John Lewis-Stempel. Finally, huge thanks go to the Society for the support shown for the book. Firstly, the Society proposed to award the year's £2000 research grant towards the project, and then also decided to further support the project to the value of £2000 from other funds. These funds, along with money from the museum, will cover printing costs and the, not insignificant, costs of postage. Thank you! Thanks also to Jean Saunders and Andrew Rossabi for kindly reading the first draft.

On site, the lack of visitors and events has at least allowed certain maintenance tasks, and some restoration of agricultural equipment, take place. In the first lockdown, the museum's downstairs cloakroom was given a full overhaul: decorated from top to bottom; sink re-plumbed; wall cracks dug out and re-plastered; wall mounted baby changer fitted; retiled floor; and all new fixtures and fittings, including grab bars and emergency pull cord to make the space much more accessible (if not perfect) for mums with babies/pushchairs and people with disabilities. Other parts of the museum were also given a new coat of paint, and lots of small 'invisible' jobs took place inside and out. Outside, the gardeners kept going for much of the year, saving the place from complete overgrowth and producing, among other things, a beautiful 'hot border' along the inside of the orchard wall. The summer also saw the restoration of a number of the agricultural implements acquired from the old Agricultural Museum, including the large chaff cutter, which is now almost back to working condition—look out for a video in the not too distant future.

Last year also saw the launch of 'My Wildlife', a nature writing competition for young people. From what was assumed to be a local competition, this somehow went viral and ended up receiving over six hundred entries from every corner of the UK and from countries all over the world, including India, China, USA, Spain, Thailand, Australia, Germany, and several African nations. The overall standard was very high, and after whittling the entries down to a manageable number, the judge, author Anna Wilson, selected a winner and two runners-up in each of two age categories. The project has been such a success, we will certainly look at doing it again, but the work involved has been huge, so it may not be an annual event!

Now, as the world waits for a life beyond lockdown, the final touches to a planning application are being pulled together, and the museum's external doors (including the arched blue gate) are all undergoing a bit of restoration and a new coat of paint for, hopefully, a new brighter year for everyone.

## JEFFERIES AS A PIONEER ECOLOGIST

Book Review by *Brian Morris*

*Chaos and Cosmos: Literary Roots of Modern Ecology in the British Nineteenth Century* by Heidi C.M. Scott (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014). ISBN: 978-0271063836, 220pp.

In 1980, some forty years ago, I gave a talk on 'Changing Views of Nature' to the National Fauna Preservation Society, in Blantyre, Malawi. My talk, published later as an article in *The Ecologist* (1982), stressed the important role that literary naturalists—specifically Richard Jefferies, W.H. Hudson and Ernest Thompson Seton—played in the wake of Darwin's evolutionary naturalism, in the development of an ecological worldview. At that time precious few philosophers, anthropologists, historians, least of all literary critics, expressed any real interest in the natural world. For most humanist scholars nature was simply a backcloth to human activities.

In my study *Richard Jefferies and the Ecological Vision* (Oxford: Trafford Publishing, 2006) I later explored at length Jefferies' unique role both as a critic of industrial capitalism and as a pioneer social ecologist.

Heidi Scott's important study is specifically focused on the 'literary roots' of modern ecology, and she gives pride of place to Richard Jefferies. Indeed, she suggests, after giving a long extract from *The Old House at Coate*, that the tension expressed by Jefferies between the ecological paradigms of balance and chaos (the emphasis on disturbed nature) provided the 'organizing principle' of her own study. She offers us a rather abstruse interpretation of the quotation:

Jefferies' divine chaos recovers hope from Victorian angst by substituting the sublime splendour of infinite creativity for a pre-ordained mechanistic cosmos. To be designed and purposeful, as he calls the 'microcosmos' is to be static, inorganic, regulated. Critiquing at once the religious conviction of divine providence and the Enlightenment prediction to see nature as a grand machine, Jefferies asserts the 'absence of order' is a large, liberating view of an organic natural world. (p.9)

More simply put: Jefferies offered an important critique of the Cartesian mechanistic conception of nature, and celebrated, like Darwin, the creativity, the dynamism, the unpredictability and the historicity of the biosphere, organic nature.

Later in the study Scott offers an interesting, detailed and insightful discussion of Jefferies' futuristic novel *After London* (pp.53–63). She suggests that Jefferies had a deep ecological vision of primary nature, that he was

acutely aware of the complex relationship between wild nature and the industrial complex, as well as being optimistic about the self-recovery of nature. She concluded that Jefferies' novel *After London* offered an implicit message that the ecological crisis is not simply a crisis of nature but also a 'crisis of (industrial) civilization'.

Like Buddhism, Jefferies' writings continue to have, with respect to the present ecological crisis, a contemporary relevance.

The book is warmly recommended.

## MORE ON BOOKS

Peter Robins came across two books where Richard Jefferies is featured. The first: *The Country Child* by Piers Dudgeon (Headline Book Publishing, 1992) is made up of chapters on writers who had a rural upbringing. Richard Jefferies is discussed in Chapter 4 from pp.111–122 and includes photographs of Coate Farm, Coate Water, and the Council Oak. The title of the chapter is 'Midsummer Joys' and most of it covers Bevis and Mark's exploits that might be based on Jefferies' real childhood.

The second book is fiction and titled *Patricia Ellen* by Mary Wiltshire (Mills & Boon, 1924). The novel features a journalist/artist named Timothy who leaves London for Avebury, marries a local girl and settles in Beckhampton. In Chapter VI he receives a commission to supply colour drawings for a deluxe edition of a 'New Life of Richard Jefferies.' He is somewhat reluctant to undertake the job as it would mean leaving his dear wife to visit villages in the Coate area as it was difficult for her to travel with him, albeit that Avebury was no great distance away and the fee for the commission is persuasive. However, Timothy contracts a chill, tuberculosis is diagnosed and he dies young. The author here attributing Jefferies' end to the character. The author's real name was Frances Isborne of Devizes, and she was a piano teacher.

Tom Saunders was re-reading *Three Men in a Boat: to Say Nothing of the Dog* (Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith, 1889) for the umpteenth time and pondered on whether Jerome K. Jerome (2 May 1859–14 June 1927) had been influenced by Jefferies. In Chapter 13, writing about the Cistercian monks, Jerome said:

A grim fraternity, passing grim lives in that sweet spot, that God had made so bright! Strange that Nature's voices all around them—the soft singing of the waters, the whisperings of the river grass, the music of the rushing wind—should not have taught them a truer meaning of life than this. They listened there,

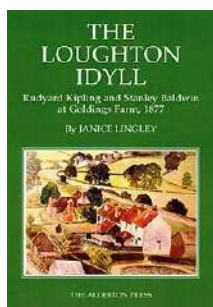
through the long days, in silence, waiting for a voice from heaven; and all day long and through the solemn night it spoke to them in myriad tones, and they heard it not.

Surely Jerome had read *The Story of My Heart* published only six years earlier in 1883 or was influenced by this from 'My Old Village' (1887):

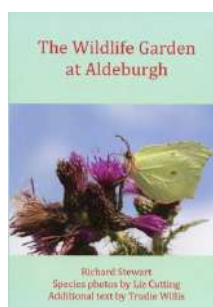
No one else seems to have seen the sparkle on the brook, or heard the music at the hatch, or to have felt back through the centuries; and when I try to describe these things to them they look at me with stolid incredulity. No one seems to understand how I got food from the clouds, nor what there was in the night, nor why it is not so good to look at it out of window.

Nick Thomas has been reading Joseph Conrad's works lately that put him in mind of Jefferies. Does anyone know if Conrad read any Jefferies' works?

## BOOKS BY MEMBERS

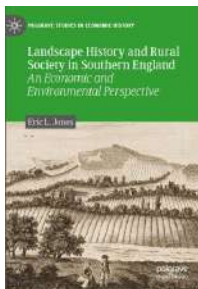


*The Loughton Idyll: Rudyard Kipling and Stanley Baldwin at Goldings Farm, 1877* by Janice Lingley (Loughton: The Alderton Press, 2020), softback, 76pp. ISBN 978-1-905269-34-1. Published in association with The Kipling Society, the book features research carried out in collaboration with the Loughton & District Historical Society into a six-month holiday Kipling, Baldwin and Kipling's sister Trix spent as children on an Epping Forest dairy farm. A Blue Plaque on the erstwhile site of the farm now commemorates the holiday.

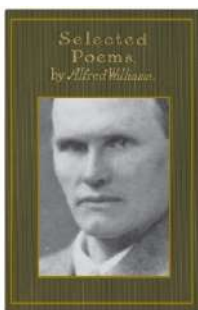
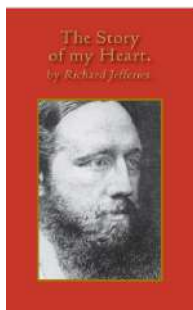


*The Wildlife Garden at Aldeburgh* by Richard Stewart (2020), softback, 80pp. ISBN 978-0-9564584-6-9. For many years Trudie Willis has opened her ten-acre garden at Priors Oak on the edge of Aldeburgh in Suffolk for a wide variety of charities. She has raised over £50,000 and one beneficiary has been the Suffolk branch of Butterfly Conservation. They have now sponsored a fully illustrated book about the creation, development and rich wildlife of a garden run on organic principles, adjacent to an RSPB reserve and by its coastal position attracting many migrant

species of wildlife. The wildlife studies are by the well-known photographer Liz Cutting and copies are available from local outlets or from Richard Stewart at 'Valezina', 112, Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk. IP4 2XW for £7.50, post free.

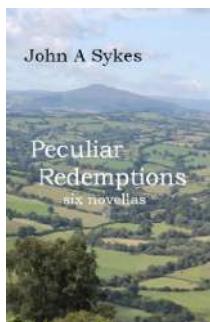


*Landscape History and Rural Society in Southern England: An Economic and Environmental Perspective* by Eric Jones (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) ISBN: 9783030686154, hardback. This book includes mentions of Jefferies including crediting him with inventing the term 'wild life'. It is based on exceptional first-hand observation of a dozen sites and close consideration of topics in the ecological and economic history of southern England. They range from reclaiming chalk down-land, occupying low-lying heaths and reconstructing parkland, to wool-stapling and the manufacture of gunstocks for the African slave trade. Additional themes include the tension between ecology and institutions in decisions about the location of economic activity; the decay of communal farming ahead of enclosure; and other interesting puzzles in rural economic history.



Last June Hobnob Press published a new edition of Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart* and Alfred Williams' *Selected Poems*. Both books are published in paperback at £8.95 and introduced by John Chandler. Copies can be purchased from Hobnob Press at 8 Lock Warehouse, Severn Road, Glos., GL1 2GA. Telephone John Chandler on 07715 620790 or email [john@hobnobpress.co.uk](mailto:john@hobnobpress.co.uk). *Selected Poems* is largely a facsimile of

John Chandler's own copy of the book which was inscribed by Alfred Williams to Reuben George (see p.14) and given to George for Christmas 1925, just before it was published in 1926.



*Peculiar Redemptions* is John Sykes' first book of fiction to be published (Foulsham: Reuben Books, 2021). There are six novellas making up the 346pp. paperback (ISBN: 9781999317256) that have a common linking theme whereby a supernatural element combines intriguingly with reality to produce reconciliation.

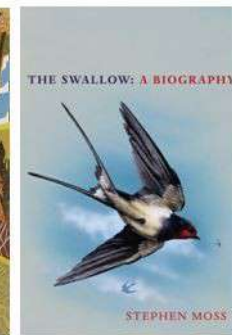
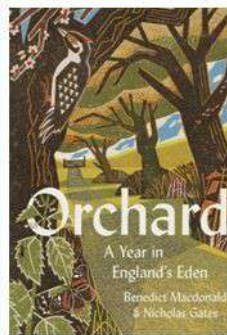
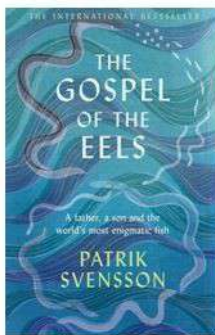
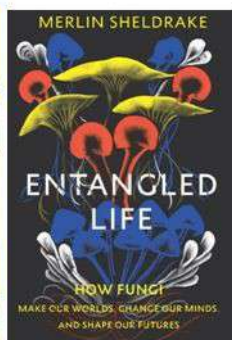
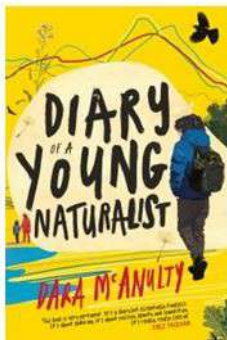
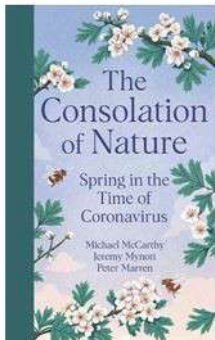
Copies can be obtained from the author direct by sending a cheque to John Sykes for £8 to 1 Llanstephan Cottage, Totnor, How Caple, Herefordshire, HR1 4TJ.

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY &  
WHITE HORSE BOOKSHOP LITERARY PRIZE



THE WHITE HORSE BOOKSHOP  
MARLBOROUGH

LITERARY PRIZE 2020  
Short-list



Richard Stewart and John Price considered a long-list of 34 nominated books published in 2020. Not only were there an exceptional number of nominations but the quality of the writing was very high making selections very difficult. The following books made the final short-list on 14 January 2021:

- *Orchard: A Year in England's Eden* by Benedict Macdonald and Nicholas Gates. [Collins]
- *Diary of a Young Naturalist* by Dara McAnulty. [Little Toller]
- *The Consolation of Nature: Spring in the Time of Coronavirus* by Michael McCarthy, Jeremy Mynott and Peter Marren. [Hodder]

- *The Swallow: A Biography* by Stephen Moss. [Square Peg]
- *Entangled Life* by Merlin Sheldrake. [Bodley Head]
- *The Gospel of the Eels: A Father, a Son and the World's Most Enigmatic Fish* by Patrik Svensson. [Picador]

This year the judging panel is Roger Ebbatson, Barry Sloan, Pete Bainbridge, Rebecca Welshman, Debby Guest and, of course, Richard Stewart and John Price. The winner will be announced on 24 May.

The award is now in its seventh year. Richard and John have undertaken a phenomenal and painstaking task of reading through, on average, three books a month for the short-listing process. Recording our thanks to them, and to the other judges involved, is a mere token of appreciation for their hard work. Regrettably Richard will be standing down this year and our gratitude for his help and dedication is beyond words. Rebecca Welshman has kindly agreed to take on the arduous job of sifting through the nominations with John.

Please send nominations for this year's publications to the Hon. Sec.

### BARGAIN PUBLICATIONS

Postal sales of the Society's publications are managed by the Hon. Secretary (see p.4 for contact details). Some volumes are out of stock (*The Rise of Maximin* and Kate Tryon's *Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies' Land*), stocks of others are very low, and will not be reprinted. Prices are set at print-cost and include postage. There is also an extensive stock of second-hand books held by John Price. Please ask if there is a book that you need.

|                                                                                                                                                           |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>A Peculiarly English Genius: a Biography of Richard Jefferies, Volume I, The Early Years, (1848-67)</i> by Andrew Rossabi 2017 (hardback 800pp)        | £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 2017 (hardback 800pp) | £30.00<br><del>£60.00</del> |
| <i>Richard Jefferies: A Spirit Illumined.</i> Various writers, 1987 (pamphlet)                                                                            | £1.50<br><del>£3.50</del>   |
| <i>The Jefferies Canon</i> – W.J. Keith, 1995 (pamphlet)                                                                                                  | £1.50<br><del>£3.50</del>   |
| 'Essay on Instinct' – Richard Jefferies, 2012 (pamphlet)                                                                                                  | £1.50<br><del>£3.50</del>   |
| 'A Natural System of National Defence' – Richard Jefferies, 2014 (pamphlet)                                                                               | £1.50<br><del>£3.50</del>   |
| <i>Richard Jefferies' Letters to Aunt Ellen</i> , 2009 (softback)                                                                                         | £ 3.00<br><del>£4.50</del>  |

|                                                                                                                                       |                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Amaryllis at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009.<br>Introduction by Carolyn Clarke (softback)                                  | £ 3.00<br><del>£6.00</del>  |
| <i>Ben Tubbs Adventures</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2016.<br>Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)                                   | £6.00<br><del>£12.00</del>  |
| <i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009.<br>Introduction by George Miller (softback)                                       | £ 3.00<br><del>£5.00</del>  |
| <i>The Interpreter: A Biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008. Introduction by Eric Jones (softback)                  | £ 3.00<br><del>£5.00</del>  |
| <i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009.<br>Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)                                      | £ 3.00<br><del>£6.00</del>  |
| <i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009.<br>Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (softback)                                        | £ 5.00<br><del>£7.00</del>  |
| <i>The Farmer's World: Richard Jefferies' Agricultural Journalism in the late 1870s</i> , 2016. Introduction by Eric Jones (softback) | £7.00<br><del>£12.00</del>  |
| <i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008.<br>Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008 (hardback; £10)                       | £8.00<br><del>£20.00</del>  |
| <i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008. (hardback)                                                             | £10.00<br><del>£20.00</del> |
| <i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994. (hardback)                                                   | £8.00<br><del>£15.00</del>  |
| <i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008.<br>Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)                                            | £5.00<br><del>£8.00</del>   |
| <i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman, 2010. (hardback)                                                        | £10.00<br><del>£20.00</del> |

## CITINGS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

Please email your citations to [richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com](mailto:richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com). Janice Lingley is no longer compiling the citations but the Society is extremely grateful for her fine work and will miss her contribution.

Tim Radford, writing about sunlight in 'Weatherwatch' for *The Guardian* on 21 September 2020, drew attention to the brightness of sunlight that can 'put out' a book brought outdoors to read. He quotes examples from Jefferies' *The Life of the Fields* (1884) to illustrate the 'beautiful and wonderful light [that] excited a sense of some likewise beautiful and wonderful truth, some unknown but grand thought hovering as a swallow above.'

Christopher Somerville, writing in *The Times* about a good walk in Ely (Sat 22 August 2020), describes a nine-and-a-half mile journey that starts near Ely Cathedral and continues along the tow-path of the River Great Ouse, with a detour through Little Thetford, and returns to the Great Ouse where it meets the River Cam. Describing the hops that hung in the hedges Somerville

quoted from Jefferies to describe the heavy odours when in flower: 'like the half-fabled haschish ... intoxication without wine, without injurious after-effect, dream intoxication'. The quote comes from 'The Country-side: Sussex' that was first published on 24 August 1886 in *The Manchester Guardian* and collected in *Field and Hedgerow*.

Michael Sherwood came across an excerpt at the end of Chapter 50, headed 'Workers on the Land', in *The English—A Social History, 1066-1945* by Christopher Hibbert (Book Club Associates, 1987). It concerns 'upwardly mobile' farmers in the mould of Hardy's character Gabriel Oak in *Far from the Madding Crowd*; contrasting Oak's lack of social pretensions with the description of a farmer's daughter in what the author merely states is 'a book published in 1880' by Jefferies and quotes a passage from chapter X of *Hodge and His Masters*:

A banker's clerk at least—nothing could be thought of under a clerk in the local banks; of course, his salary was not high, but then his 'position.' The retail grocers and bakers and such people were quite beneath one's notice—low, common persons. The 'professional tradesmen' (whatever that may be) were decidedly better, and could be tolerated. The solicitors, bank managers, one or two brewers (wholesale—nothing retail), large corn factors or coal merchants, who kept a carriage of some kind—these formed the select society next under ... the clergy and gentry.

Peter Robins came across another damning review of Jefferies' *Restless Human Hearts* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1875) that was published in *The Observer* on 1 August 1875 and which is not known before. The reviewer refers to Richard Jefferies as the authoress and clearly believes that no man could have written anything that would be in favour of female liberation or a trial marriage. The reviewer clearly read the novel carefully and *in toto*: the synopsis is accurate and detailed, and ends: 'Mr. Jefferies' tale has, in addition to its vulgarity, the disadvantage of being "infected with a corruption unsurpassed in its foulness".' Now if that doesn't tempt you to want to read it, we should be surprised. It is curious how the reviewer latches on to the lurid elements in the story but almost completely ignores the spiritual aspects and the nature mysticism theme. If the novel is so utterly loathsome, why rehearse the offensive contents at such length and in such detail? The cause of morality would surely have been better served either by completely ignoring the book or by dismissing it in a single sentence. If you are tempted to buy a copy, there are a few Petton Books' 2008 hardback editions available for a bargain price of £8 including UK postage only (contact the Hon. Sec.). There is a superb Introduction by Andrew Rossabi that looks at both the faults and qualities of the novel.

Andrew Rossabi noted that there are several references to Jefferies in Susan Bruxvoort Lipscomb's, 'Introducing Gilbert White: An Exemplary Natural Historian and His Editors', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35, No. 2 (2007), pp.551–67.

Janice Lingley found an impressive number of references to Jefferies in Harry Hopkins' *The Long Affray: The Poaching Wars In Britain* (London: Papermac, 1986) along with quotes from many of Jefferies' works that cover poaching, the treatment of poachers and the work of the gamekeepers.

Angela Atkins put up a blog on 16 January 2021 about the literary associations for Liddington Hill of Richard Jefferies, Edward Thomas, Charles Sorley and Alfred Williams that included a circular walk of 4.5 miles. <https://swindonian.me/2021/01/16/about-liddington-hill-swindon/>

Gideon Perret was rereading one of his favourite Canadian authors, Frederick Philip Grove, and came across a short reference to Jefferies in a letter from the Canadian poet, Arthur Leonard Phelps (1887-1970), to Grove, dated 3 December 1922 (Klaus Martens (Ed.): *Over Canadian Trails: F. P. Grove in New Letters and Documents*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007, p.165.) Addressed from Wesley College, Manitoba University, where Phelps was Chair of the English Department, he extolled the virtues of Grove's *Over Prairie Trails* which he described as 'great prose' and added: 'I put it on my shelf beside Jeffries (*sic*) and Burroughs and they are, for special reasons, just a little higher up towards the quality corner of the shelf—You give us the observation of the scientist made with the eye of a poet.'

Giles Wood is always good value for his quotes from Jefferies. Writing in *The Oldie*, February 2021, headlined: 'My new rural enemy? Instagram rambler,' Wood complains about those not there to enjoy the beauty of nature or birdsong. He describes his personal stress created by different types of 'walkers' who cross a path on his own 'little domain', numbers of whom have increased during the lockdown periods. Wood falls to Jefferies' *The Gamekeeper at Home* (Ch. VIII) to find an appropriate view on attempts to divert a path:

Many fields are traversed by a perfect network of footpaths ... Nothing causes so much ill-will in rural districts as the attempt to divert or shut up a track like this. Cottagers are most tenacious of these 'rights', and will rarely change them for any advantage. 'There always wur a path athwert thuck mead in the ould volk's time' is their one reply endlessly reiterated...

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SPRING LECTURE

### SATURDAY 8 MAY 2021

This year both the AGM and the Spring Lecture will take place on Zoom. For those unfamiliar with the virtual technology of video-conferencing, it is very easy to take part assuming that you have access to the Internet and have an email address. If you wish to take part in either event, please send an email to [agm@richardjefferiesociety.org](mailto:agm@richardjefferiesociety.org) by 1 May. You will be sent an email with a link to access the meetings nearer the time.

Ballot papers are included with this mailing for those who wish to vote in the AGM. The AGM will start at 11am and the Lecture at 2pm. Members will be able to chat over lunch should they desire to do so.

### SPRING LECTURE : W.H. HUDSON AND RICHARD JEFFERIES



Conor Jameson is currently writing a book about W.H. Hudson. His other passion is the goshawk. He has written two books for Bloomsbury—*Silent Spring Revisited* (2012) and *Looking for the Goshawk* (2013) and also articles for *The Guardian*, *BBC Wildlife*, *The Ecologist*, *Birdwatch* and *Birdwatching* magazines. He has been a scriptwriter for the BBC Natural History Unit. His 2014 book *Shrewdunnit: The Nature Files*, is a compilation of many of his essays, published by Pelagic, and has worked in conservation for about 30

years, in the UK and abroad. Conor was born in Uganda to Irish parents, brought up in Scotland, and now lives in England. He will be writing an article that covers his Lecture that will be published in the 2022 *RJS Journal*.

### **Agenda Item 8 for the AGM: Motion**

The Executive Council of the Richard Jefferies Society propose that:

A new scale of membership subscriptions should be introduced from 2022. Subscriptions for 2021 have been held at the same rate for nine years but with diminishing returns. A small increase is proposed for individuals and couples/families at the same address. As there is no extra cost to the Society for family membership it is proposed that the same annual fee of £15 should be applied to both. The student subscription would remain at £8.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
SATURDAY 8 MAY 2021  
Meeting starting at 11am  
Register your email address to take part  
(send email to richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com)

AGENDA

- 1 From the Chair
  - 2 Minutes of the last AGM, 9 May 2020 (see p.43)
  - 3 Matters Arising
    - 3.1 Richard Jefferies Society & White Horse Bookshop  
Literary Prize (see p.36)
    - 3.2 Publications and books
    - 3.3 Richard Jefferies Museum Trust (see pp. 30–31)
    - 3.4 Broadwater Cemetery, St Piran's Churchyard, Christ  
Church churchyard (see pp.28–29)
    - 3.5 Bursary Award
  - 4 Annual Report
  - 5 Treasurer's Report (see pp.44–46)
  - 6 Election of Examiner of Accounts: Rob Brailsford.
  - 7 Elections to Executive Council.

Andrew Rossabi and Jean Saunders are due to retire. Both have agreed to stand again in their current roles of President and Hon. Sec. respectively for a further five years. Rebecca Welshman has agreed to be re-nominated as a member for three years after a one-year break. Richard Stewart and former Vice Chair Eric Jones have agreed to stand as Honorary Vice Presidents in recognition and appreciation for their valued contribution to the Society for many years. The position of Vice Chair remains vacant.
  - 8 Motion (see previous page)  
Membership subscriptions from 2022.
  - 9 Any Other Business
- Any motions or resolutions for debate should be sent to the Hon. Sec. before 1 April 2021, as should nominations for Executive Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded.

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Richard Jefferies Society held on Saturday 9 May 2020

The AGM was to be held at Liddington Village Hall but a gathering had to be cancelled as part of the efforts to constrain the Covid-19 epidemic. The Executive Council agreed measures to be taken on 16 March that would allow the Society to continue as a charitable organisation and so meet its Constitutional requirements. All Members were canvassed for their opinion by post in order to agree specific constitutional matters and were requested to respond by 9 May. Those members who responded and agreed the following are listed as 'present'. There was no opposition received and no further questions or matters were raised.

**PRESENT:** Rod Attwood, Pete Bainbridge, Margaret Bathe, Henk Beentje, Gillian Bromhead, Peter Brown, Richard Burge, Roy Burton, Colin Corkerton, Alan Cudmore, Patrick Dillon, Roger Ebbatson, Brian Emery, Peter Faulkner, Norma Goodwin, Robin Harrild, Geoff Hirst, Margaret Hunt, Bryan Jones, Janice Lingley, Piers Maynard, Brian Morris, Chris Moughton, Helen Newman, Michael Parrott, Sylvia Pilot, Mike Pringle, Peter Robins, John Price, Andrew Rossabi, John Sanders, Jean & Tom Saunders, Michael Sherwood, David Sleep, Barry Sloan, Michael Stagg, Richard Stewart, Kevin Stone, Tony Taylor, Adrian Thomas, Neil Underwood, Jonathan Wood, and Anita Woods.

### Agenda Item 3. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the last meeting held on 27 October 2018 were agreed as a true record of proceedings.

Agenda Item 4. Matters arising were covered in the current Spring Newsletter 2020 and taken as read.

### Agenda Item 5. Annual Report

The contents of the Annual Report were accepted as a true record of the Society's activities for 2018–19.

### Agenda Item 6. Treasurer's Report

The 2018-2019 published accounts were accepted as correct.

### Agenda Item 7. Election of Examiner of Accounts

Rob Brailsford was re-elected as the Examiner of Accounts.

### Agenda Item 8. Elections to Executive Council

Pete Bainbridge, Simon Coleman, Roger Ebbatson, Mike Pringle, and Barry Sloan were re-elected for a further 3-year term of office on the Executive Council. Barry Sloan was re-elected as Chair. John Price was elected Vice President.

*Jean Saunders*  
Hon. Sec.  
9 May 2020

## TREASURER'S REPORT

**Financial Statement for financial period 1 January 2020 - 31 December 2020**

### Receipts and Payments Account

| <b>Receipts</b>                  | Unrestricted   | Designated    | Restricted  | <b>Total<br/>2020</b> | <b>Total 2019</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Subscriptions</u>             | 2181.38        |               |             | 2181.38               | 2350.83           |
| <u>Donations:</u> <i>General</i> | 258.82         | 500.00        |             | 758.82                | 1442.90           |
| <i>Grave</i>                     |                |               |             |                       |                   |
| <i>Fund</i>                      |                | 453.07        |             | 453.07                | 426.00            |
| <u>Book</u>                      |                |               |             |                       |                   |
| <u>Sales:</u>                    | 2293.82        |               |             | 2293.82               | 659.55            |
| <u>Gift Aid Reclaim</u>          | 564.63         |               |             | 564.63                | 1180.79           |
| <u>Interest received</u>         | 308.16         |               |             | 308.16                | 263.40            |
| <b>Total receipts</b>            | <b>5606.81</b> | <b>953.07</b> | <b>0.00</b> | <b>6559.88</b>        | <b>6323.47</b>    |

### Expenditure

|                           |                |                |                |                 |                |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <u>Publications</u>       | 870.58         |                |                | 870.58          | 1075.45        |
| <u>Rent/Room Hire</u>     | 0.00           |                |                | 0.00            | 55.00          |
| <u>Subscriptions paid</u> | 66.00          |                |                | 66.00           | 66.00          |
| <u>Lecture fees</u>       | 0.00           |                |                | 0.00            | 48.43          |
| <u>Administration</u>     | 874.04         |                |                | 874.04          | 1449.37        |
| <u>Insurance</u>          | 28.00          |                |                | 28.00           | 235.20         |
| <u>Webb Lit. Prize</u>    |                | 1042.61        |                | 1042.61         | 1022.80        |
| <u>JLF</u>                |                |                | 2113.95        | 2113.95         | 252.12         |
| <u>Gift</u>               | 2000.00        |                |                | 2000.00         |                |
| <u>Graves</u>             |                | 48.00          |                | 48.00           | 142.50         |
| <u>Biography</u>          |                | 3944.44        |                | 3944.44         | 0.00           |
| <b>Total payments</b>     | <b>3838.62</b> | <b>5035.05</b> | <b>2113.95</b> | <b>10987.62</b> | <b>4346.87</b> |

### Excess of receipts over payments

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>-4427.74</b> | <b>1976.60</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|

### Bank/B.Soc/Paypal/P.Cash

as at 31 Dec 2019                      61421.50

as at 31 Dec 2020                      **56993.76**

2020                      2019

### Statement of Assets

#### Cash funds:-

|           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Bank      | 14324.06        |
| Paypal    | 1273.60         |
| B/Society | 41,396.10       |
|           | <b>56993.76</b> |

#### Restricted and Designated funds

|           |                 |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Biography | 7188.67         | 11133.11        |
| Webb Lit. | 22386.11        | 22928.72        |
| JLF       | 11079           | 13192.95        |
| Grave     | 688.57          | 283.50          |
| General   | 3500.00         | 3500.00         |
| Reserves  | <u>12151.41</u> | <u>10383.22</u> |
|           | <b>56993.76</b> | <b>61421.50</b> |

## Notes to the accounts

The JLF (Jefferies Land Fund) reserve is 'restricted' to ensure that any disposal is for educational use. An annual allocation of up to £250 is allowed for research for the RJS *Journal* and newsletter and up to £2000 for the Bursary.

There is a stock of publications worth around £1000 that are an asset of the Society but which do not appear in the Society's receipts and expenditure accounts.

The John Webb legacy is 'designated' for the annual RJS and White Horse Bookshop Literary Prize award. £500 is donated by the White Horse Bookshop towards the £1,000 literary prize.

General funds cover the essential running costs of the Society.

Reserves are available for unexpected expenses, gifts etc.

Administration costs remain low thanks to the generosity of Trustees and members who give their time freely to manage the Society, and contribute towards the objects of the Society. Thanks also to members who have made generous donations in appreciation of our work, including the new Grave Fund.

The Society's Trustees provisionally approved the financial statement at their meeting dated 6 February 2021.

Rob Brailsford (Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales), Examiner of Accounts, has checked the accounts, confirmed that the accounts are correct and signed his report to that effect on 20 February 2021 (see next page). We are most grateful and thankful to him for his good service and advice.

The figures for the yearly receipts and expenditure are sent to the Charity Commission along with any updates about the Trustees.

*Tom Saunders*  
Hon. Treasurer  
1 March 2021



**CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's  
report on the accounts**

**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

**The Richard Jefferies Society**

**On accounts for the  
period ended**

31 December 2020

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1042838

**Set out on pages**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the period ended 31 December 2020.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Signed:**

*Robert Brailsford*

**Date:** 20 February 2021

**Name:**

Robert Brailsford

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body**

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

**Address:**

19 Prospect Place, Swindon, SN1 3LQ



Memorial to Hudson and Jefferies, Memorial Garden, Broadwater Cemetery with engraved quote from 'Hours of Spring', *Field and Hedgerow*: 'I wonder to myself how they can all get on without me: how they manage, bird and flower, without me to keep the calendar for them. For I noted it so carefully and lovingly, day by day,'



The plinth on Hudson's grave, Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing.  
'In Memory of /William Henry Hudson / Born 4<sup>th</sup> August 1841 in Buenos Aires / Died 18<sup>th</sup> August 1922 in London. / Also in Memory of Emily, his wife / Died 19<sup>th</sup> March 1921 in Worthing./ I will not fail thee.'

# RICHARD JEFFERIES LECTURE



**Saturday 8 May 2021**

**Zoom meeting starting at 2pm**

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

## **W.H. Hudson and Richard Jefferies** *Conor Jameson*



Hudson meets an imaginary Jefferies at Goring. Oil painting by Lance Cattermole, R.O.I. 'My mind was full of sadness, when hearing the crunching of gravel beneath other feet than my own, I suddenly looked up, and behold, there before me stood the man himself, back on earth in the guise of a tramp!' *Nature in Downland*.