

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2022
ANNUAL REPORT 2021



'Sir Bevis and the Woodwoman' by J.W. North, 1887-8



'The Old Bowling Green' Halsway Court, Somerset, by J.W. North, 1865



'The Grass of the Field' by J.W. North, c.1874-80

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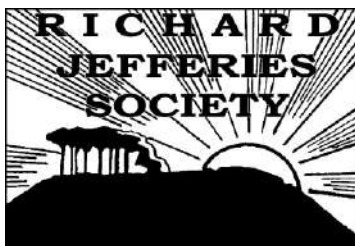
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THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY was founded in 1950 to promote appreciation and study of the writings of Richard Jefferies (1848–1887).

CONTACT: Jean Saunders
Hon. Sec.
The Old Mill, Mill Drive, Foulsham,
Norfolk NR20 5RB
☎ 01362 683210
Email: richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com
Website: <http://www.richardjefferiessociety.org>
Literary Award: <http://www.richardjefferiesaward.org>

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NEWSLETTER

The newsletters and *Journal* are edited by Jean Saunders and Peter Robins. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors or the Society.

The deadline to submit material for the Autumn Newsletter is 1 September 2022. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary. The newsletter and *Journal* are also available as free downloads on the Society's website.

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Erratum

Apologies to Michael Ponting for printing an incorrect date for his wife's date of birth. Anne was born on 31 May 1935 (not 4 March 1937, *RJS Newsletter*, Autumn 2021, p.24).

FROM THE CHAIR

Barry Sloan

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter for 2022 and the 2021 Annual Report. The new format should make it easier to separate out the contents of the two elements.

We are extremely grateful to John Price and Rebecca Welshman for reading the thirty-four nominated books for the Richard Jefferies Award and for arriving at a short list of six titles to be judged by the panel in May. The amount of work needed is phenomenal and much appreciated.



Our grateful thanks and appreciation are extended to Margaret Hunt for her huge contribution to the Society as the Executive Council's Swindon Secretary, for her years of help at the Richard Jefferies Museum and for keeping us refreshed at our Annual General Meetings held at Liddington Village Hall. As a result of a medical condition she decided to resign from the Executive Council earlier this year. Margaret is a Life Member of the Society who was born in Swindon. Her father, Cyril Wright, held the Society together for many years. Margaret deserves a well-earned rest.

Barry Sloan, 18 February 2022.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY, 2022

Sat 7 May 2022

Annual General Meeting (11am–1pm) details on pp.68–80.

Spring Lecture (2–3.30pm) see next page.

Richard Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon SN3 6AA from 11.00am–3.30pm. There will be a Zoom link too. Bring packed lunch. Park at Coate Water car park, a short walk from the Museum (Parking charge: £2). See map on p.73.

Sun 14 August 2022, Folk Festival, Richard Jefferies Museum. Bird in the Belly will be playing songs from their album ‘After the City,’ inspired by *After London*. See p.27. More information nearer the time at <https://richardjefferies.org/>

Mon 14 November 2022, 7.30–9.00pm by Zoom. Share readings by or about Richard Jefferies on the theme of Spirituality, inner peace and mindfulness through nature. More information in the next newsletter.

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

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

Zoom meetings are very easy to join and free. It has been a delight to put faces to names and meet members from all around the world. The meetings are held on the second Monday of the months of November to January inclusive from 7.30–9.00pm. Anyone willing to suggest a theme for readings who can also lead the meeting, please contact the Hon. Sec.

RICHARD JEFFERIES SPRING LECTURE

Saturday 7 May 2022, 2pm

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

The Old House at Coate

Mike Pringle



First floor Museum room.

This year the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust will be hosting the AGM and Spring Lecture at the Richard Jefferies Museum. Dr. Mike Pringle, the Director of the Trust, is organising an online video link for those unable to attend in person. He will give the Spring Lecture on 'The Old House at Coate' when you can hear more about the work of the Trust, their plans for the future and see inside the house, outbuildings and gardens.

W.H. HUDSON AND RICHARD JEFFERIES

Conor Mark Jameson

ZOOM SPRING LECTURE 8 MAY 2021

Some 29 members and two guests took part in the Spring Lecture given by Conor Jameson who presented an illustrated talk about W.H. Hudson and the Jefferies connections.

Our Vice President, John Price, introduced Conor: an author and conservationist who worked for the RSPB and Bird Life as staff and volunteer for 25 years, and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. He is the author of *Silent Spring Revisited*, *Shrewdunnit*, and *Looking for the Goshawk*. He is also a feature writer and has written for television. Conor describes himself as Scots-Irish, and Ugandan born, and, he now lives in a forest clearing in the fenland, north Cambridgeshire.

Conor agreed to write an article based on his presentation for the 2022 *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*. What follows is a brief recap of what he covered.

Conor discovered Jefferies as a 10–11 year old when he was given a copy of *Bevis*—he wanted to be Bevis! His introduction to William Henry Hudson (1841–1922) came during his time working for the RSPB. A life-size painting of Hudson stands over the fireplace in the main meeting room at Sandy Lodge.

It was Hudson's life-long attempts to stop the abuse of birds that led to the formation of the Society for the Protection of Birds. He campaigned to stop song birds being caged, for the abolition of the use of feathers for adornment (the Plumage Act was passed in Hudson's last year), and to put an end to taxidermy and bird fishing.

He came from humble beginnings and grew up in Argentina where he is still well-remembered and honoured. With no education, but with access to books, he worked as a goucho up until the time he emigrated to England in 1874 after both his parents had died.

On arrival, he wanted to hear English birds and breathe in the smell of breweries. He became a major authority on birds but struggled to make a living; he worked in an office initially. Hudson lived with mortality having suffered rheumatic fever that weakened his heart.

For a while he was homeless and lived in Hyde Park where there now stands a memorial in his memory created by Jacob Epstein and erected in 1925 (pictured on next page). It caused controversy at the time as some were

shocked by the naked figure that represented Rima, the nature spirit, in *Green Mansions*.



Hudson's literary output was phenomenal but it was not until about the age of sixty that his writing became popular.

He married Emily but had no children. One of his best friends was Edward Thomas.

Whether Jefferies and Hudson ever met cannot be established but they were almost neighbours at one stage.

Hudson admired Jefferies and wanted to be buried in Broadwater Cemetery alongside Jefferies in a similar design of grave. This wasn't to be but Hudson and his wife are buried in the same cemetery and there is now a memorial garden to both and a plaque on the wall (pictured below).



RICHARD JEFFERIES AND THE SEA

Andrew Rossabi

ZOOM BIRTHDAY LECTURE 8 NOVEMBER 2021

Our Vice President, John Price, welcomed nearly 30 members to the meeting and recalled that this was the 70th Birthday Lecture given to the Society. The first took place on 3 November 1951. It was also apt that Jefferies very first entry in his twelfth notebook, written on his birthday on 6 November 1883, reads: ‘S.L.[Sun Life]/ There is nothing like the sense/of the sun & sea & hill—after the/cities return to it—It can give/nothing yet it is best.’ In introducing our President, Andrew Rossabi, John mentioned that Andrew’s Lecture was drawn from a much longer essay that is available as No. 136 in our ‘Talks and Articles’ series. The meeting was a great success and drew in members from the United States, New Zealand and Germany, and with no carbon footprint to worry about!

Andrew’s illustrated Lecture opened with the thought that Aunt Ellen and Uncle Thomas Harrild first took Richard as a boy to the shore, ‘probably at Eastbourne, Worthing, and Brighton,’ according to Edward Thomas. This made an indelible impression on him expressed in *The Dewy Morn*: ‘the first view of the sea in youth, when the blue expanse brings tears to the eyes ... the first view of the sunlit sea, never again experienced, never forgotten; a moment of the most exalted life.’ Both in *Wood Magic* and *Bevis* it is clear that the sea held a huge fascination for Jefferies—from young Sir Bevis’s search for the sea over the hills in *Wood Magic* to the adventures of Mark and Bevis on Coate Reservoir, or the ‘New Sea’ where they learn to swim, sail and live like Crusoe on one of the islands in *Bevis*.

Jefferies could also picture the sea on the Marlborough Downs, whether it was the undulating folds of the coombes or the wafting of the grasses in the fields: ‘a faint sound as of a sea heard in a dream ... a fresh wave of the wind rushes through the bennets and the dry grass.’ And, of course, Jefferies created an inland sea in *After London* but it was the ‘real great sea’ where Bevis is most attracted. Jefferies’ encounters ‘the real great sea’ again in 1870—his holiday in Brussels—but whilst in Sussex, in a letter to his Aunt Ellen, he ‘rowed 6 miles straight out to sea, right into the back of the great ships. ... There is nothing more beautiful than a great ship under full sail in the midst of the ocean.’ Some of the holiday went into Jefferies’ early novels: the regatta in *The Scarlet Shawl*; the visit to the battlefield at Waterloo in *Restless Human Hearts*.

His Surbiton years included two extended holidays, Brighton in 1879 and Eastbourne in 1880, that inspired the last three essays in *Nature Near London*. He is then afflicted with severe and painful illness.

In *The Story of My Heart*, the sea, earth, sun, sky, and air brought him his soul life: he prayed to 'the distant sea far beyond sight ... I desired to have its strength, its mystery and glory'. He visited the East End docks and described the masts of the great clippers rising above the rooftops: 'Some day I will go on a long voyage; but the years go by, and still we have not sailed.' But the sea was never far from his thoughts, 'a sea-thirst,' whether looking at paintings in the National Gallery or even watching the hurrying crowds outside the Royal Exchange.

Recalling various places of pilgrimage where he went to be alone and to think, Jefferies records a time when he suffered a sense of 'moral drought' and 'some instinctive feeling uncontrollable' drove him to the sea: 'To get to the sea at some quiet spot was my one thought ... I stood where the foam came to my feet, and looked out over the sunlit waters. ... I prayed aloud in the roar of the waves—my soul was as strong as the sea and prayed with the sea's might.' Sun and sea are the twin presiding deities of *The Story of My Heart* and the book closes with them. The sea stands both for the infinity of ideas unknown and for the boundless potential of man. Jefferies feels he has only begun 'to realize the immensity of thought which lies outside the knowledge of the senses'.

The sea stands for many things in Jefferies' work but above all for the unknown, the beyond, the 'something beyond experience', of which he was always in search. The *Odyssey* was from his earliest years his favourite book. A sea voyage became a metaphor for his journey through life.

Jefferies' son Harold recalled his father's passion for the sea that he inherited. It was only right that their final days together were at their home, 'Sea View' in Goring, where they could see the rigging of the big ships from their breakfast room and a view of the sea from the bedroom windows.

Andrew felt that there is some primeval urge drawing human beings back to the sea although evolution was not a subject that Jefferies explored. Colin Blundell quoted from Jefferies' notebook (No XI dated 4 April 1883): 'The sea saves the trouble of thinking...' Jefferies, haunted by the idea that in trying to 'draw out the soul' you could easily 'lose the meaning in words'.

INJUSTICE IN JEFFERIES' WORLD
READINGS 13 DECEMBER 2021

This was our first readers' meeting held on Zoom from 7.30–9.00pm that focused on a particular theme. Jean Saunders had selected 'Injustice' as a subject. She hosted the meeting that was attended by 15 members including seven readers and provided the following report.

Jean Saunders: on 'paupers' and the workhouse. Jefferies wrote reports of meetings for the *North Wilts Herald* in 1868 that were held by the Guardians of the Highworth and Swindon Union—the workhouse at Stratton St. Margaret. 'After the County Franchise'—first published in *Longman's Magazine*, Feb. 1884, collected in *The Hills and the Vale*—revealed Jefferies strong condemnation and abhorrence of the Poor Laws. Even the labelling of human beings as 'paupers' jarred. It was a word that Jefferies put 'between inverted commas as a sort of protest, so that it may appear a hated intruder, and not native to the text.' He condemned local government for assuming 'that every labouring man ... will one day come to the workhouse.' It was no consolation to him 'that the "paupers" are properly looked after when I do not want any "paupers".'

Andrew Rossabi: two readings. The first from *Amaryllis at the Fair* when Amaryllis watches her father working so hard 'yet they were so short of money. How could this be? What a fallacy it is that hard work is the making of money; I could show you plenty of men who have worked the whole of their lives as hard as ever could possibly be, and who are still as far off independence as when they began. In fact, that is the rule; the winning of independence is rarely the result of work, else nine out of ten would be well-to-do.' The second reading was from Chapter VIII of *Hodge and His Masters*. The setting is an agricultural show (Haymaking. 'The Juke's Country') where 'certain prizes are distributed ... to those labourers who have remained longest in the service of one master. ... For sixty years that old man laboured upon one farm; sixty years of ploughing and sowing, sixty harvests... he puts forth his arm; his dry, horny fingers are crooked, and he can neither straighten nor bend them. Not the least sign appears upon his countenance that he is even conscious of what is passing. There is a quick flash of jewelled rings ungloved to the light, and the reward is placed in that claw-like grasp by the white hand of the marchioness.'

Colin Corkerton: from 'Country Places' in *Field and Hedgerow*. It was the wording on an old notice-board that attracted Jefferies' anger—'All persons found wandering abroad, lying, lodging, or being in any barn, outhouse, or in the open air, and not giving a good account of themselves, will be apprehended as rogues and vagabonds, and be either publicly whipt or sent to the house of correction, and afterwards disposed of according to law, by order of the magistrates. Any person who shall apprehend any rogue or vagabond will be entitled to a reward of ten shillings.' He pointed to an 'inhuman law [that] still holds good, and is not obsolete or a mere relic of barbarism. The whipping, indeed, is abrogated for very shame's sake; so is the reward to the informer; but the magistrate and the imprisonment and the offence remain.' Colin discovered that the wording on the notice-board comes from the Vagrancy Act of 1824 and this act is still in force. The Act was used to prosecute 1,320 people during 2018 and is most commonly employed by police as a threat to force rough sleepers to relocate.

Colin Blundell focused on the roots of injustice using seven short passages from *The Story of My Heart* as examples that include: the stupidity of 'ceaseless labour', 'the pageantry of power, the still more foolish pageantry of wealth, the senseless precedence of place' ... 'It is enough to lie on the sward in the shadow of green boughs, to listen to the songs of summer, to drink in the sunlight, the air, the flowers, the sky.' 'The complacency with which the mass of people go about their daily task, absolutely indifferent to all other considerations, is appalling in its concentrated stolidity. There should be no injustice because 'this our earth this day produces sufficient for our existence. This our earth produces not only a sufficiency, but a superabundance, and pours a cornucopia of good things down upon us. ... Why, then, have we not enough? Why do people die of starvation? Why have millions upon millions to toil from morning to evening just to gain a mere crust of bread?' 'Almost worse ... are those persons incessantly declaring ... that to work is man's highest condition. This falsehood is the interested superstition of an age infatuated with money.' And the blame lies with 'the well-to-do, who are the criminal classes. ... Food and drink, roof and clothes, are the inalienable right of every child born into the light. If the world does not provide it freely—not as a grudging gift but as a right ... —then is the world mad.'

Janice Lingley took her reading from Chapter 2 of *Bevis*, that highlighted the unfairness in how Bevis and Mark could play as they wanted whilst the poor

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carter's boy gets hauled away from joining in by the Bailiff. The incident is when Bevis insists that the carter's boy should help him move his home-made raft to the brook with the cart-horse. The carter's boy doesn't want to get into trouble again helping Bevis but the promise of a sixpence persuades him. Mark joins in the fun when the raft is launched, but ' "Yaa—you!" they heard a rough voice growling, like a dog muttering a bark in his throat, and instantly the carter's lad felt a grip on the back of his neck. It was the Bailiff who marched him up the meadow, holding the boy by the neck with one hand and leading the cart-horse with the other. Bevis and Mark were too full of the raft even to notice that their assistant had been hauled off' and probably without his sixpence.

Gideon Perret read a short paragraph about a deserted old mansion once used as a grammar school from Ch.4 of *Wild Life in a Southern County*. Graffiti was later discovered '(originally hidden behind furniture, we may suppose) bitter words of hatred against the injustice of ruling authorities—arbitrary ushers and cruel masters.' As a schoolteacher himself, Gideon also read from a report of unjust beatings of pupils at that time. Evidently Thoreau had a brief spell as a teacher but left because he was not prepared to inflict corporal punishment on his pupils to keep them in line.

John Price took 'Trespassing' as his theme and read from two articles that were first published in *The Live Stock Journal*. John's first reading was published in August 1877 and illustrated a particular abuse of a woodland that had been closed to foragers by the land owner. 'The fact was that for many years they had been permitted to take whatever wood had fallen to the ground without stint. Not content with this, many proceeded to pull down and break the growing poles, and destroy as much as possible. As for the rabbits and the little game there was, it quickly disappeared in a mysterious way. The result was, the owner closed his wood once and for ever and through these destructive proclivities a valuable privilege was lost to that hamlet.' The second reading dated March 1878 and was titled 'A Great Grievance (Trespassing)' that highlighted the damage done by 'gangs of roughs' accompanied by 'vicious dogs straying from the footpaths' and damaging and killing livestock. A suggestion was made that it should be made compulsory to lead dogs with a chain and to raise tax to 20s a head to stop men with half-starved families from keeping vicious curs. 'Why if it is lawful to shoot a man in the act of murdering another, it is not equally so to destroy a dog discovered killing a sheep?' There was a cry for a change in the law.

THE WEATHER IN JEFFERIES' WRITING
ZOOM READINGS 10 JANUARY 2022

Our second readers' meeting held on Zoom, took the topic of 'Weather and Climate Change.' Colin Corkerton, a retired meteorologist who worked for the UK's Met Office, chose the subject. Colin hosted the meeting and sixteen members attended with eight readers. He reports:

Colin Corkerton read from Chapter VIII 'Haymaking. "The Juke's Country"' from *Hodge and His Masters*. Despite all the technology available to the modern weather forecasters, Colin said how useful it was for the forecaster to leave their desk and step outside to get a feel of the weather. The reading described how Mr. George, the farmer, when haymaking would face to windward and gaze 'straight into the teeth of the light breeze, as he has done these forty and odd summers past. Like the captain of a sailing ship, the eye of the master haymaker must always be watching the horizon to windward'. He notes that even in the shade it feels sultry, 'the flies are numerous and busy—the horses can barely stand still' and 'the horizon has a brassy look, and the blue of the sky is hard and opaque'. He'd already noted the mercury falling in his barometer. All these signs make him decide not to wait another day and to instruct the men that day 'to cart as much of the hay as they can and the remainder out into haycocks and covered.' His caution is justified as that night there is a violent thunderstorm and it is raining steadily the next morning. There is more rain during the following three days. He made the right decision.

Andrew Rossabi highlighted that Jefferies knew extremes of wet and dry weather in his lifetime. 1879 was a notoriously wet year and 1868 was a year of drought. On Midsummer's Day, 1868, Jefferies in a letter to Aunt Ellen wrote 'it seems as if the weather had mistaken England for India'. Andrew gave two readings from Chapter 2 'A Drought' from *Wild Life in a Southern County*. Firstly, Jefferies first describes how in fine weather cloud on the horizon divides and melts away entirely as it floats towards the observer. The second reading describes the suffering of the creatures as the heat and drought increases. 'But under the beautiful sky and the glorious sun there rises up a pitiful cry the livelong day: it is the quavering bleat of the sheep as their strength slowly ebbs out of them for lack of food', and they 'hang entirely on human help. They watch for the shepherd as though he were their father; and when he comes he can do no good, so that there is no more painful spectacle than a fold during a drought upon the hills'. In a third

Reports of Meetings

reading from the same chapter Jefferies describes the phenomena of crepuscular rays, where in occasional breaks in large masses of cloud ‘long beams of light fall aslant upon the distant fields of the vale’.



Coate Water at sunrise by Michel Crabol

Janice Lingley read from *Bevis*, chapter XV ‘The War Begins’, where a lightning storm with no rain is described. *Bevis*’s governor said ‘it would not rain and there was no danger; it was a sky-storm, and the lightning was at least a mile high. But the lightning became very fierce and almost incessant, sometimes crooked like a scimitar of flame, sometimes jagged, sometimes zigzag; and now and then vast acres of violet light, which flooded the ground and showed every tree and leaf and flower, all still and motionless.’ *Bevis*’s friends who come to collect weapons for the forthcoming battle are scared by the lightning, but *Bevis* is quite sure it won’t hurt ‘because his governor had said so’. Colin thought that such a storm may well have developed over France and moved north during the evening towards southern England, a relatively common occurrence in summer and can give some spectacular lightning displays. This passage accurately describes what can occur.

John Price took his reading from Grace Toplis’ *The Early Fiction of Richard Jefferies* and the article ‘Traits of the Olden Time’. Here the use of almanacks is described and where there ‘was an old man, whose son is still living,—himself a venerable grey-headed person of seventy,—whose method in the matter predicting the weather in his self-made almanack, was to observe the first twelve days of the new year—a day for a month—as indications of the

weather that would prevail during the ensuing year. With the alteration of the calendar came a difficulty, but if I remember aright, the old fellow continued to calculate as usual'. Reliance was place upon the predictions in *Old Moore's Almanack* and he who has a copy 'is the oracle of the village, and this to men whose long acquaintance with the fluctuations of weather, the unreliaibleness even of the plainest signs, would, one would think, entirely unfit them for such blind faith'. Jefferies is sometimes unfairly credited with not having much humour but he displays humour here in this early article from 1866.

Lucille Kelleher read from 'Locality and Nature' in *Field and Hedgerow*. The relationship between the local conditions and the health of animals and people is highlighted and Jefferies writes it's 'certainly a marked fact that in the country, at all events, one house is noted for its healthiness and another close by for its unhealthiness and the cause is not traceable to the usual and obvious reason of drainage or water'. He goes on to mention 'the half-magical art of the Chinese, feng shui, by which they discover if a place be fortunate and fit for a house'. Jefferies says such ideas should not be ignored and says 'there has been an air of too much science in the affected derision of our forefathers' wisdom'. Jefferies is speaking from personal experience, moving himself more than once to try and improve his health. Colin mentioned that some GP practices use what's called social prescribing of outdoor activities for patients, and in Shetland this includes looking at clouds. See the *Annual Report 2020/Spring Newsletter 2021* and the article by Rebecca Welshman, 'The Value of Nature: Little Things Do Matter', where this is covered in more detail.

Eric Jones read from the end of Chapter 7 'The Farmhouse' from *Wild Life in a Southern County* where the farmer is never happy with the weather. It's either too dry; 'Terrible dry weather this here to be sure'; or too wet 'Drot this here wet weather!'; or not cold enough; 'Us never get no good old frosts now'; or too cold 'Drot these here frosty mornings!'. However, Jefferies is sympathetic and finishes with 'And so on for a thousand and one grumbles, fitting into every possible condition of things, which must not, however, be taken too seriously; for of all other men the farmer is the most deeply attached to the labour by which he lives, and loves the earth on which he walks like a true autochthon. He will not leave it unless he is suffering severely'.

50 years ago Raymond Williams regarded Richard Jefferies as 'perhaps the most brilliant imaginative observer of trees and animals and flowers and **weather** in this century'. [*The Country and the City*, (1973)]

Colin Blundell read extracts from *The Scarlet Shawl* to highlight Jefferies' use of the weather to depict a character's state of mind and emotions. Jefferies refers to Nora's state using a weather metaphor. She chooses to be stifled by her situation; 'What a forced and hot-house life, which a single frost, a single window left undone, would blast and ruin forever! Every moment spent therein more and more contracts the natural strength of the plant, and renders a return to the open air and the real sunshine impossible. It is a weakness of the feminine mind, but how much more a weakness of the masculine one!' Nora can't get out of the hot-house. When she glimpses Percival with Pauline Vietri, she is even more burnt up thinking he's deeply in love with another. 'What an insult to herself was this! She shivered, first with burning heat, then with a deadly cold. She was scorched with passion; it passed over her like the fiery wind of the desert, leaving all dry and arid behind it'.

Jean Saunders chose the opening paragraph of 'Under the Snow' from *Chronicles of the Hedges*. This paints a graphic picture of snowflakes falling and resting on the first thing they touch. It finishes 'But in the afternoon, when the sun shines in a cloudless sky, there floats above the current a golden vapour lit up by the rays. The sun sinks lower, and the disc becomes ruddy as it enters the mist above the horizon. Night falls, and the frost sharpens and the snow hardens on the boughs. Then in the morning as the sun rises the eastern side of the wood becomes glorified exceedingly. Each slender snow-laden branch—all the interlaced pattern of the trees—glows with an exquisite rosy light'.

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES AWARD

Regrettably Ben Macdonald had to cancel his talk about his prize-winning book *Orchard*, co-authored with Nick Gates, for the main Marlborough Literary Festival. However, this was rearranged to take place at the White Horse Bookshop on 28 October 2021, when Ben was presented with his prize by our Vice President, John Price. The Society's Executive Council agreed that in view of the fact the book was co-authored, both writers should be awarded £1000 instead of splitting the prize. The White Horse Bookshop, our sponsor, was in full agreement.

John Price and Rebecca Welshman had the difficult task of selecting the short-list for publications nominated in 2021. There were 34 books on the long list to consider and their decision was announced on 14 January 2022 in alphabetical order of book title:

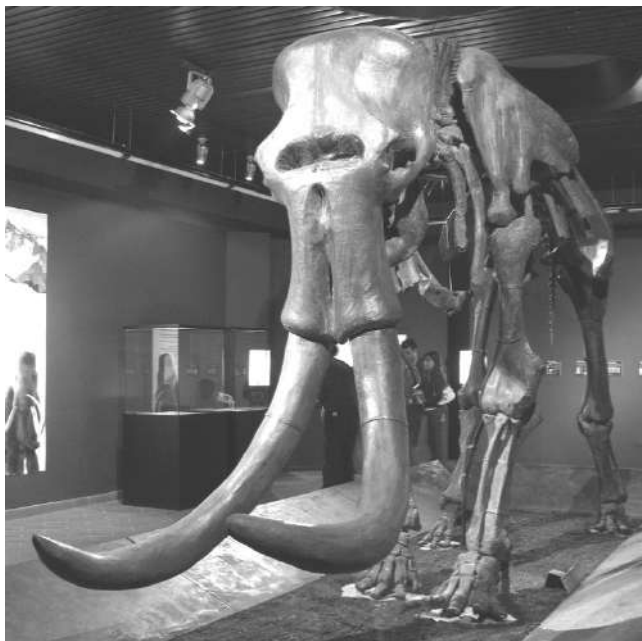
- *Birdsong in a Time of Silence* by Steven Lovatt (Penguin Particular Books)
- *Goshawk Summer: A New Forest Season Unlike Any Other* by James Aldred (Elliott & Thompson)
- *Ice Rivers* by Jemma Wadham (Allen Lane)
- *Islands of Abandonment: Life in the Post-Human Landscape* by Cal Flyn (William Collins)
- *On Gallows Down* by Nicola Chester (Chelsea Green Publishing)
- *The Sea is Not Made of Water: Life Between the Tides* by Adam Nicolson (Collins)

Barry Sloan, Debby Guest (from the White Horse Bookshop), Patrick Dillon, Pete Bainbridge and Roger Ebbatson join John and Rebecca on the judging panel to select an outright winner that will be announced around 20 May.

If you have read a book published for the first time in 2022 and feel that it is written in the spirit of Richard Jefferies' nature and countryside books, please let us know. Nominations should be sent to the Hon. Sec.

THEM BONES

Richard Jefferies wrote about the discovery of prehistoric bones from the *Pliosaurus* for the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard*, 26 July 1873 (see the *RJS Journal* No.36 [2021], pp.9–13). He also wrote about the mammoth in ‘Field Sports in Art. The Mammoth Hunter’, collected in *Field and Hedgerow*. How excited might he have been to cover the story explored by David Attenborough in BBC’s *Attenborough and the Mammoth Graveyard* that was broadcast on 30 December 2021? Back in 2017 Sally and Neville Hollingworth, amateur archaeologists, spotted the fossilised leg bone of a Steppe mammoth at a quarry at Latton, north of Swindon, near Cricklade, that was once the riverbed of the River Thames. Research revealed the site dated back 215,000 years and contained the oldest remains discovered in Britain. The Steppe mammoth was a forerunner of the woolly mammoth which is only tens of thousands of years old. At the Latton site the remains of five mammoths, a Steppe bison and a brown bear were found.



Steppe mammoth, courtesy of Davide Meloni.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=22025056>

RICHARD JEFFERIES RUSSET

Members will be aware that Richard Jefferies' father planted a Russet Apple tree in the garden at Coate Farm as a young man. Richard Jefferies wrote about sitting under the tree as a favourite spot in his poem 'Recapitulation':

Under a russet as the evening came
 I saw the sun sink, and the summer haze
 His golden glory turn to ruddy flame;
 Enlarge his disk and drink his darkling rays;
 Till on the sun-spot I could safely gaze,
 Viewing the abyss in his furnace red
 Made half immortal in my mortal days
 By thought of all the ages that had sped,
 And would be, up to this again they led.

and in *Wood Magic*:

In the evening, when the sun was sinking, [Bevis] went out and lay down on the seat—it was a broad plank, grey with lichen—under the russet apple-tree, looking towards the west, over the brook below. He saw the bees coming home to the hives close by on the haha, and they seemed to come high in the air, flying straight as if from the distant hills where the sun was.

which was echoed in *The Dewy Morn*:

Mr. Goring, in snowy shirt-sleeves, was sitting under his favourite russet apple-tree, taking his luncheon, which consisted of fruit, bread, and a little Burgundy in a tall old glass. From that spot there was a pleasant glimpse—not a view—a glimpse of the meadows which came up to the orchard fence.

The tree was productive for many years but died around 1999. However, twenty years earlier, the late Mark Daniel had taken cuttings grafted on to crab apple rootstocks that he cultivated in his garden at Brighton. One of these was planted to replace the original tree but this died as a result of vandalism in 2002.

In 2005 and 2006 further twigs were grafted from the Brighton tree and offered to people wanting their own, demand being widespread following a *Country Life* article. Mr. Daniel planted another replacement tree in the Coate farm garden some few yards from the original position that is now over-shadowed by a huge Holm Oak. This tree is doing well.

Mr. Daniel also supplied the Brogdale Trust near Canterbury with a specimen that could not match any registered varieties. Mr. Daniel was

informed that the variety could be called the Richard Jefferies Russet, but official registration of the title was not explored further. This was taken up recently by Marcher Apple Network, a national charity run by volunteers. On 1 September 2021, Ainsleigh Rice of MAN contacted the Society to say that they had a Richard Jefferies Russet cordon tree. It was grafted from a tree that Sir Andrew Large grafted in turn from scions provided by Piers Maynard (a Society Life Member). MAN wanted to submit this apple for consideration to be accredited and registered. The variety is now officially linked with DNA sample A2572 with the name 'Richard Jefferies Russet'. The list is distributed by the National Fruit Collection to the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, The Royal Horticultural Society and other organisations throughout the UK and Ireland, as well as European Institutions. In the event that another tree is found that has the same DNA, but an earlier provenance, then it will almost certainly require a revision leading to a name change, and the current one relegated to a synonym.

We are extremely grateful to everyone involved: to Piers Maynard, Sir Andrew Large, Ainsleigh Rice, Dr. Matthew Ordidge (Curator of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale) and most of all to Mark Daniel who would have been overjoyed to hear the news. Mr. Maynard is promoting the russet to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the Marlborough Downs Space for Nature, of which he is a trustee/director, to encourage use of the russet locally on Jefferies' Marlborough Downs and, more broadly, in Wiltshire.

Eric Jones reported that his own Richard Jefferies Russet did not fare so well last year but there was one particularly large apple (pictured right and compared with a £1 coin for size) which, when cooked and shared with his wife 'wasn't just good but truly sweet and excellent'. Often the apples were small and tasteless.

Farmer Iden would have promoted the therapeutic properties:

When [Iden] awoke he looked at the clock in a guilty way, and then opening the oven of the grate, took out a baked apple. He had one there ready for him almost always—always, that is, when they were not ripe on the trees. A baked apple, he said, was the most wholesome thing in the world; it corrected the stomach, prevented acidity, improved digestion, and gave tone to all the food that had been eaten previously. If people would only eat baked apples they would not need to be forever going to the chemists' shops for drugs and salines to put them right. (*Amaryllis at the Fair*, Ch.V)



74 DYER STREET PLAQUE

As a young man, Jefferies was a journalist with the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard* whose office was at 74 Dyer Street, Cirencester. It was with concern in 2018 that Eric Jones reported that the *Standard* had closed its office and moved its staff to Stroud.

The entrance to the building had displayed a plaque to Jefferies, recording his position as ‘the Wiltshire author’ who ‘was at one time its chief reporter’. Professor Jones wrote to the Cirencester Civic Society, which had been responsible for placing the plaque, about our concern that it should not be discarded, along with Jefferies’ memory. The Society agreed to do its best to ensure that it would be retained by the new owner of the premises. We were delighted to learn that on 26 June 2018 the old building had been given Grade II listing but unfortunately the description did not mention the blue plaque inside the doorway. To remedy the shortfall, the Richard Jefferies Society sent the information, along with photographs of the plaque, to the Historic England list entry (No. 14574409) on 20 November 2019.

We are pleased to report that recent photographs (below) taken by Eric Jones, on 17 November 2021, reveal the Jefferies’ plaque still sitting proudly in its original position.



GRAVE UPDATE

The Reverend Canon Simon Stevenette, vicar of Christ Church, Swindon, was not aware that his graveyard held Jefferies' family gravestones. He was delighted that the Society wished to organise the cleaning of the headstones, particularly in view of the fact that family members supported the initiative. However, he could not allow the crumbling John Lockett Jefferies' headstone to be brought inside the church.

Mike Pringle arranged for Toby Robson, a conservator, to clean the headstones on 13 February, as outlined in the *RJS Spring Newsletter 2021*, pp.28-29. The transformation is remarkable. Mike also found the fractured cross from young Frederick and Ethel's memorial. They plan to pin and glue this together again. The Society has agreed to fund the addition of a small plaque that will be fixed to John Lockett's headstone to duplicate the inscription. Many thanks to the generous donations from Members of the Society and Jefferies' family who have made this all possible.

Jennie Carpenter and Bryan Jones spent a day last November at St Piran's Church, Perranzabuloe, tidying up Jessie Jefferies' grave and planting more spring-flowering bulbs that promise a fine display this spring. On a visit to the grave on 16 January, the bulbs were starting to come up. 'It seems that Jessie has sub-let to a mouse—lots of small holes & burrowings in the soil!' Let's hope that the mice don't eat all the bulbs.

Pat and Michael Parrot undertook some tidying up work on 19 November at Broadwater Cemetery. They cleared the leather-like leaves that had fallen on Hudson's grave from the overhanging evergreen tree. Despite clearing some foliage, to let in some light, the grave is in too much shadow for even grass to grow. They will be returning to prop the split front kerb, and to clean some of the marble. It is the centenary of Hudson's death this year.

Conor Jameson reported in November 2021 that the Anglo-Argentine Society and, possibly, the Argentine Ambassador are thinking ahead to the Hudson anniversary. Ideas may include a return to Worthing and the gravestone. By chance, Conor had spoken to a man in a cemetery in Cambridge while looking for the grave of Prof. Alfred Newton, a Hudson associate (the big name in Victorian ornithology). Not only did he know about Hudson, he is the stone mason who engraved the plaque for Hudson's 150-year anniversary (of birth) in 1991. That occasion was also attended by the Argentine Ambassador. Needless to say he is happy to help if he can.

CENTENARY TRIBUTE TO RICHARD JEFFERIES, 1948

In the *Richard Jefferies Society's Autumn Newsletter 2020*, pp.30–31 there was news of one of the young boys, Ken Mears, who took part in the 1948 film production of a 'Tribute to Richard Jefferies'. The only person otherwise identified was Jack Jones, the actual gamekeeper who lived in the infamous Hodson cottage from the early 1900s.

In January this year we were contacted by the grandson of another young boy who portrayed the main character, 'Sir' Bevis, from Jefferies' fable *Wood Magic* [1881]. Daniel Wood, a reporter for the *Swindon Advertiser*, had watched the film and identified his grandfather as the child 'actor' who is shown picking a daisy to pieces in the garden [at Coate], is showered with apple blossom petals, and ends with a shot of him running down Liddington Hill to be carted back home. The child 'actor' was Michael Davis who, regrettably, died in November 2021 aged 81. Thanks to his grandson, we can reproduce a still from the film of Michael aged seven.



Wood Magic opens:

One morning as little 'Sir' Bevis (such was his pet name) was digging in the farmhouse garden, he saw a daisy, and throwing aside his spade, he sat down on the grass to pick the flower to pieces. He pulled the pink-tipped petals off one by one, and as they dropped they were lost. ... [R]olling on his back ... [h]e looked up at the blue sky, but only for a moment, because the glare of light was too strong in his eyes...A puff of wind came and showered the [apple blossom] petals down upon him; they fell like snowflakes on his face and dotted the grass.

and ends:

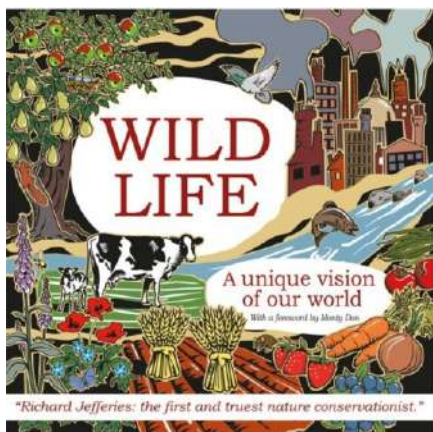
Bevis gathered the harebell, and ran with the flower in his hand down the hill, and as he ran the wild thyme kissed his feet and said: "Come again, Bevis come again". At the bottom of the hill the waggon was loaded now; so they lifted him up, and he rode home on the broad back of the leader.

It is an absolute delight to be able to put a name to the young face who played the part of 'Sir' Bevis in a tribute film made nearly 80 years ago. It is such a pity that he died last year and that we never had a chance to talk to him about his memories of the event.

Norfolk Film and Video Transfers was engaged by the Society to make a digital recording from the cine film that can be viewed on YouTube from a link on the Society's website.

RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM TRUST

RICHARDJEFFERIES.ORG



Wild Life was formally launched on Saturday 6 November 2021 (Jefferies' birthday) at Christ Church Community Centre that overlooks the Jefferies' family burial plot. The 260 page hard-back book is a superb introduction to Jefferies' life, works and the Museum at Coate. Beautifully illustrated, in full colour throughout, along with quotes from Jefferies and a wonderful foreword by TV gardener and Jefferies' fan, Monty Don, and afterword by climate change economist, Graeme Maxton.

Profits will go towards the proposed cow-shed rebuilding work in the Coate garden that will also serve as a meeting room.

The book can be purchased at the Museum and at the AGM/Spring Lecture this year. Orders by post should be sent to the Museum with a cheque made payable to the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust for a minimum of £20 plus £4.00 postage UK. As this barely covers costs, please add a donation and, if applicable, a gift aid declaration. More information and online purchases at <https://richardjefferies.org/our-new-book>.

The publication was aided by a donation of £4000 from the Society towards the printing costs of the book. Mike Pringle received a warm thank you letter from Sir David Attenborough who admitted that he had 'read only too little of Richard Jefferies' writings & looke[ed] forward greatly to learning more about him.'

Antique Road Trip fans might have caught an episode recently when antiques expert, James Brackston, was shown around the Richard Jefferies Museum by Mike Pringle as part of the television show. Filmed in November 2021, the episode was broadcast on BBC1 on 6 January and repeated on BBC2 the next day. It was superb publicity for both Richard Jefferies and the museum.

Look out for more information about the 'After the City' concert at the Museum this August. Further information will appear at richardjefferies.org.

HOW I DISCOVERED RICHARD JEFFERIES

Colin Blundell wrote:

From 1948 to 1954 I used to go to school by the single-decker 213 London Transport bus from Worcester Park to Kingston, Surrey. In 1953 I desperately fancied Elaine whom I saw every day on the bus but, being a very shy young man, could not begin to imagine a way to start talking to her. One morning in a crowded bus, standing over where she was sitting, I observed that she was reading something called *Bevis*.

Shortly after I found *The Story of My Heart* in one of the old trays outside Foyles in Charing Cross Road. Considering my secret adolescent passion, the name of that book seemed rather appropriate. I read it in Paris at Easter and was hooked forever.

When I eventually plucked up courage to speak to Elaine my opening gambit was, "I saw you reading *Bevis*..." to which she replied curtly, "Oh, that old thing..." Her very words! Soon after I transferred my passion to Maureen who travelled on the same bus; I didn't mention *Bevis* to her just in case... Neither relationship blossomed.

Little did I know that Jefferies might well have tramped around what were open fields where I lived in Worcester Park. I used to cycle past the barn at Tolworth to Surbiton, and walk by the Hogsmill long before I knew about his existence.

My eventual contact with the Society came about because Cyril Wright and I were both active members of the Peace Pledge Union and met quite often between 1964 & 1986. When I got early retirement from teaching in 1992 I got stuck into all sorts of other things while maintaining a personal philosophy owing practically everything to 1953.

NEWS IN BRIEF

SWINDON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY. True to form, Swindon Borough Council has closed Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, in Old Town, permanently. The contents have been moved into storage and there is no purpose-built gallery to take its place. There are a few Jefferies-related items that include the inscribed stone: 'Here ends Coate Road' that he writes about in 'Chapters on Churches' (*North Wilts. Herald*, 5 January 1867) and some of the Kate Tryon oil paintings that were donated for display in the Richard Jefferies

Museum by her daughter back in the 1960s. It is not known what has become of these items.

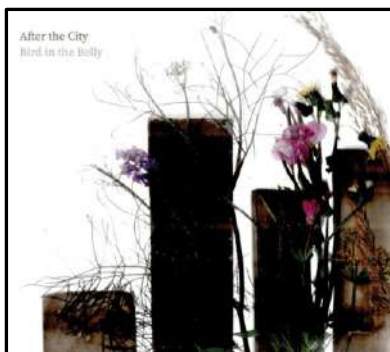
There is also sad news about RANIKHET, Alfred Williams' house in South Marston that he built from bricks collected from the disused Wilts and Berks canal. The current owner has gained planning permission from Swindon Council to build two modern detached houses in the garden and has submitted a further planning application to squeeze in a third detached house. Swindon Council rejected a previous planning application for a third dwelling house. The Society has submitted a formal objection.

MEMORIAL ELM AT RICHARD JEFFERIES BIRD SANCTUARY. Alison Fure reported that the elm tree planted in Jefferies' memory on 26 September 2018 was chopped down on Sunday 9 January 2022. The eight-year-old elm stood alongside the fence that borders the Richard Jefferies Bird Sanctuary in Surbiton. Alison commented that the tree was cut off just above ground level and that it would have taken some effort. It would appear that an axe was used due to the cut marks and similar marks were found on fingerposts, which suggests people walking around with weapons. No other trees were attacked and there was no sign of the cut-off tree. A 'sister' elm planted at the same time in Kingston cemetery, both originally from the Conservation Foundation, is fine. Locals are considering what to do now.

ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY E.H. SHEPARD FOR *BEVIS*. Mike Pringle came across two original E.H. Shepard illustrations for sale. The first is priced at £2,750 and titled 'Hunting by the willows', reproduced on p.75 of the Jonathan Cape edition. The second is 'Jack will have you some day' on p.227 and is priced at £1,250. A possible purchase was discussed by the Society's Executive Council on 2 February 2022, but completely rejected. The drawings were considered grossly over-priced and it is not an object of the Society to acquire art-work. That being said we own Shepard's sketch 'The fight by the quarry' from *Bevis* that was donated by Mrs. McClintock in 1965 and is on loan to the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust.

A FERN NAMED BEVIS. Mike Pringle came across a band called Bevis Frond named after a plant. Further research revealed a fern with the Latin name *Polystichum setiferum* or 'Pulcherrimum Bevis' which the RHS describes as 'an elegant evergreen fern with lance-shaped, erect to arching, glossy fronds,

with narrow pinnules and uppermost pinnae incurved and overlapping.’ An article in *Hartley Magazine* on ferns, dated 2 June 2016 described it as a ‘highly desirable fern’ that was once difficult to acquire. ‘This handsome fern was found in Devon by a gentleman called Bevis in 1876 ... Mr Bevis removed it from the hedgerow near Axminster, in order to show it to a local fern expert, and it’s never been seen since in the wild.’ Colin Corkerton has offered to buy the fern to plant in the Museum garden if there is a suitable spot.



BIRD IN THE BELLY, a Brighton-based traditional revivalist acoustic folk group, released a new album titled ‘After the City’ on 25 February. With *After London* as the inspiration, the group created a back story to suggest why the collapse of civilisation took place and ended with three uplifting songs, adapted from Jefferies’ prose, that offer hope. The beautiful melodies, some quite haunting, and the musicianship are superb. The

numerous reviews for the record have been extremely positive and the name Richard Jefferies is reaching a new audience. The CD can be ordered from Cargo Records. The band will be performing their new material at a folk festival that will take place at the Richard Jefferies Museum on 14 August (the anniversary of Jefferies’ death). With backing from the Society and members, the gig will be filmed and broadcast on the Internet. There will be a report in the next newsletter.

LIME TREE DOWN AT COATE. It is sad to report that the February storms brought down one of the lime trees that Jefferies’ wrote about. The lime tree was one of several that ran in a line next to the main wall in the front garden of the farmhouse at Coate. When the Marlborough Road was widened in the 1930s, the wall was moved. The limes ended up next to the road but provided much-needed screening to separate the old house at Coate from the busy highway and views of the ghastly petrol station. Here’s hoping that the remaining lime trees live on.

BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Ronald George Blythe, who shares the same birth date as Richard Jefferies (6 November) will be 100 this year. RJS Member, Alan Cudmore, has written a delightful and comprehensive memoir of Blythe, titled *Glimpses of Ronnie*, that was published last year for private circulation. Alan is a good friend of Blythe and, whilst there is an autobiographical element of Alan's life, his memoir for Blythe is based on their meetings, letters (Alan has a collection of 120 letters from Blythe to himself) and other friends and influences in common.

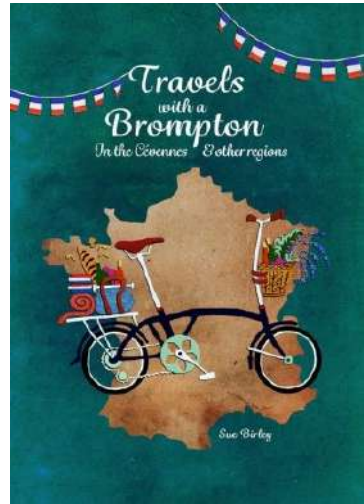


Blythe is best known for his work *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (1969), an account of agricultural life in Suffolk from around 1900 to the 1960s. A passage from *A Year at Bottengoms Farm* (2006) by Blythe discusses nature as a cure for depression:

My third nature cure seeker has to be Richard Jefferies who is young but consumptive and far from depressive. He died aged thirty-eight in 1887, a Wiltshire farmer's son who, whilst not a Christian, possessed a vision of nature—which included his own body—which the poet Elizabeth Jennings believed matched that of Thomas Traherne. Richard Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart* is an exultant, unhidden paean to nature and one which accepts the naturalness of death. It is a hymn to joy and a dismissal of Time. Christ taught the disciples to live in the Now, to step out without a penny, to be alive—really alive. As does Richard Jefferies.

George Miller's latest book of poetry has just been published by Hub Editions, Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire. Titled *The News and Weather, and other recent poems*, copies can be obtained for £6, plus £2 postage by contacting hedgesparrowpress@gmail.com; or phoning 01691 658330. The book contains poems about the joys of insect life, car sharing with Al Capone, the dreams of millworkers, two young Edwardian girls joy riding on a steam train, and other matters of great importance. Also of some moment are poems about the forces that are destroying these and so many other delights and possibilities of our lives on planet Earth. On such concerns the poet's voice is always the last and least to be heard, but often the one that is most remembered.

Sue Birley's travel memoir *Travels with a Brompton in the Cévennes and other regions* will be available on 26 April 2022 and can be pre-ordered from the publishers Cranthorpe Millner. The book follows the adventures of the Birleys and their folding bicycles over nearly 30 years of exploring France. This is a wine-fuelled account of sweaty pedalling and hard-earned free-wheeling via cols, war memorials, lavender fields and vineyards. It is a travel guide for those who long for two-wheeled trips in France and a lively read for the armchair traveller who chooses sofa over saddle. Sue's own Brompton, Modestine, is a descendant of the donkey Robert Louis Stevenson took on his travels in the Cévennes.



Bob Woodroffe, a long time member of the Society, has put together a diverse collection of poems created from a variety of stimuli over the years in *Plum Lines—Poetry from the Vale of Evesham and Beyond* that will be published by Greenwood Press in hardback on 2 April 2022; 64pp., priced £10+£1.50 p&p. The book includes poems about nature and the seasons in the Vale of Evesham. There are also poems about family, the pandemic, Evesham dialect poems and others inspired by myth and legend and completes a trilogy of Vale of Evesham-based poetry books.



The previous books in the series are: *Pick of the Crop*—published 2017, and *Another Lad of Evesham Vale*—published 2020.

For further details contact Bob by email: bob.woodroffe@outlook.com, write to 38, Birch Avenue, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 1YJ or phone 01386 446477.

www.greenwoodpress.co.uk

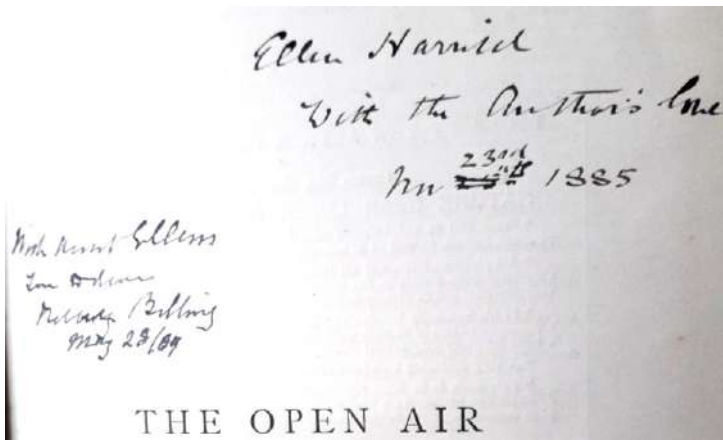
BARGAIN PUBLICATIONS

Postal sales of the Society's publications are managed by the Hon. Secretary (see p.2 for contact details). Prices are set at print-cost or lower and include postage within the UK. Overseas postage is extra.

<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 £40
<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 £60.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: A Spirit Illumined.</i> Various writers, 1987 (pamphlet)	£1.50 £3.50
<i>The Jefferies Canon</i> – W.J. Keith, 1995 (pamphlet)	£1.50 £3.50
'A Natural System of National Defence' – Richard Jefferies, 2014 (pamphlet)	£1.50 £3.50
<i>Richard Jefferies' Letters to Aunt Ellen</i> , 2009 (softback)	£ 3.00 £4.50
<i>Amaryllis at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Carolyn Clarke (softback)	£ 3.00 £6.00
<i>Ben Tubbs Adventures</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2016. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)	£6.00 £12.00
<i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by George Miller (softback)	£ 3.00 £5.00
<i>The Interpreter: A Biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008. Introduction by Eric Jones (softback)	£ 3.00 £5.00
<i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)	£ 3.00 £6.00
<i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (softback)	£ 5.00 £7.00
<i>The Farmer's World: Richard Jefferies' Agricultural Journalism in the late 1870s</i> , 2016. Introduction by Eric Jones (softback)	£7.00 £12.00
<i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008 (hardback)	£10.00 £20.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008. (hardback)	£10.00 £20.00
<i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994. (hardback)	£10.00 £15.00
<i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback)	£5.00 £8.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman, 2010. (hardback)	£10.00 £20.00

MORE ON BOOKS

Robert Brown responded to the comment in the *RJS Autumn Newsletter* 2021, p.36 that the inscription by Jefferies, in the presentation copy of *The Life of the Fields* to his Aunt Ellen, was rather ‘impersonal.’ Mr. Brown wrote: I used to have a lot of presentation copies, but the last two remaining, one to Ellen Harrild [*The Open Air*] and the other to his Mother [*Red Deer*], are somewhat more affectionate!’ The inscription to his mother reads: ‘E. Jefferies/With the Author’s love/January 14th 1884’, whilst the one to Aunt Ellen: ‘Ellen Harrild/With the Author’s love/Nov. 23rd 1885.’ (pictured below). This is followed by an inscription that reads: ‘With Aunt Ellen’s/Love to Mrs/Robert Billing/May 28/89.’ Sarah Billing was Jefferies’ sister who also lived with Aunt Ellen from time to time. But on 28 May 1889 she was living in Guildford where her youngest brother Charlie married Louisa Reeve that day. No doubt, Aunt Ellen had travelled to Guildford to attend the wedding too and presented the book to Sarah.

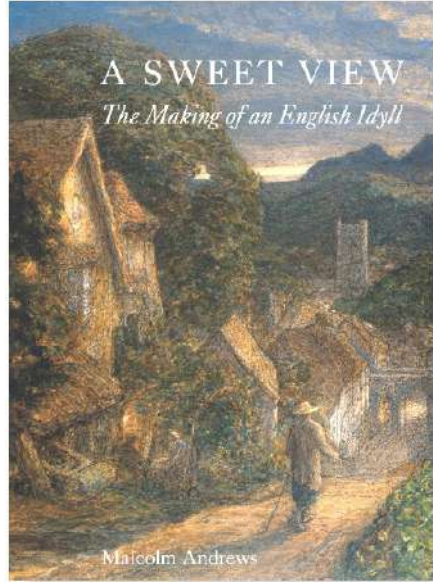


Mr. Brown added that he owns presentation copies of books from ‘other authors of that time with the expression “From the Author”, even to very long and close friends, but more often than not the author puts his or her signature. Possibly therefore just a matter of taste rather than an indication of affection (or lack of!).’

BOOK REVIEW

A Sweet View: The Making of an English Idyll by Malcolm Andrews (Reaktion Books, 24 Nov. 2012); pp.350; £35.

In this lavishly illustrated and illuminating study Malcolm Andrews sets out to examine the various ways in which English national identity was linked to ideas of a scenic landscape, ‘as that process links with developing ideas of the picturesque, the era’s cultural nationalism, the rise of feeling for local attachment, and the reaction to urbanisation’ (p.9). His focus is mainly on the south-east of England, notably Surrey, as a locus of the ‘landscape idyll’. Andrews provides the reader with a clear-headed and thoughtful guide to the way in which English culture came to be imbricated in perceived links between humanity and the



environment, and the first section of his study focuses productively on the late-eighteenth century debate about the conflict between the new vogue for landscape gardening and proponents of ‘the picturesque’. In literary terms, as Andrews demonstrates, this debate might be framed with reference to Charlotte Brönte’s response to what she termed the ‘carefully-fenced, highly cultivated garden with neat borders’ of Jane Austen, which she contrasted with her own taste for the ‘open country’ and ‘fresh air’ of a more rugged terrain, notably celebrated for example in Gilpin’s widely-read *Observations on the River Wye* (1782). Andrews pertinently reminds the reader of the low valuation, in the eighteenth century, placed on landscape painting, and he demonstrates how a countervailing move to value such art more highly was characteristic of the early nineteenth century, a development which would culminate most prominently in the art of Constable and Turner: ‘Rich distances, varied foregrounds, constantly changing sky-scapes: recognition of

England's landscape assets accumulated as Gilpin and others worked...to bring their distinctiveness into focus' (p.40). This art cultivated local attachment, which as Andrews shows would be at least partially motivated by the hostilities with France. In turning his attention to the ways in which Constable's art 'looked back to the late-eighteenth century picturesque' and forward to 'a countryside idyll for the later Victorians' (p.49), Andrews shows how Gilpin's picturesque excluded the extremes of 'sublime' landscape in favour of a 'moderated roughness' which would contrast with the 'groomed, efficient geometry' of landscape gardening, which was consonant with the new programme of land enclosure. Uvedale Price's *Essay on the Picturesque* (1796) and Goldsmith's poem, 'The Deserted Village' (1770) were significant interventions in the construction of an English idyll which ran counter to the rapid expansion of the towns and cities. Price's programme of 'managed accidents' would appal the new practitioners of landscape gardening such as Humphry Repton and 'Capability' Brown, but would inspire the art of Gainsborough, and more decisively of Constable, with his cultivation of ordinary English scenery. Andrews offers a nuanced and finely crafted analysis of Constable's art, though with no reference to the reactionary politics which he espoused.

Andrews's study goes on to survey what he defines as 'the domestication of picturesque England' which took place in the nineteenth century, when the 'characterising of the English rural scene oscillated between the Pricean picturesque and the new landscape of agricultural and industrial improvement' (p.97). This is followed by a perceptive account of the revival of pastoral for the Victorian 'sharp man of the world' (p.135) notably espoused by the secluded pastoral scenes beautifully celebrated by Samuel Palmer and his disciples. The link between modernity and pastoral was broken, and Palmer's aim was to restore it through his evocative portrayals of the South Country, and especially his 'valley of vision' in Kent. Andrews is alert to the Blakean tendency of this movement and writes incisively and knowledgeably on this revival of the pastoral impulse, a revival which was characterised, as he notes, by a focus on the Surrey hills in the work of Myles Birket Foster and Helen Allingham. This section is illuminating in its stress upon the broken ground, crumbling banks and exposed hedgerows which characterise Foster's work with its 'delicate leafy style'. In turning to Richard Jefferies, Andrews justly claims that 'no single writer did more to mediate and promote the experience of English scenery and natural life' (p.207), and he offers a succinct and generally valid account of Jefferies' life and work,

annotating ways in which the 'irregular, rough-hewn character' of the country would often be epitomised by the gypsies, 'a bit out of the distant Orient', as Jefferies would characterise them. In terms of gypsy lore, attention might here have been paid to the writings of George Borrow, but in outlining the Jefferies *oeuvre* Andrews proves a sympathetic and sure-footed guide, demonstrating how 'the books Jefferies wrote during the Tolworth years were deliberate mediations of country life and scenery for the city-dweller' (p.219), and insightfully noting the 'language of relaxed intensity' (p.220) through which Jefferies portrays the countryside. He justly sees connections with the project of Gerard Manley Hopkins in revitalising linguistic resources for the evocation of nature, and also demonstrates how Jefferies' work might be illuminated by the paintings of John William North. This chapter is exemplary in revealing the ways in which Jefferies' writing operates 'by a cumulative act of flooding the reader's mind with the abundance of named natural flora and fauna of the English countryside' (p.225)—a technique suggestively identified by Andrews as 'impressionist'. In terms of his deep familiarity with the many plants which were disappearing, Jefferies serves, as Andrews puts it, 'as a kind of memory bank or intellectual seed vault for the traditional English countryside' (p.229). At the same time his study is properly alert to Jefferies' sometimes contradictory sense of estrangement from nature, but he rightly concludes that no other Victorian wrote about nature with such ardour.

The two concluding chapters deal first with the conflict between change and tradition in the countryside, and the ways in which this fed into a sense of national identity, and the final chapter offers a full and suggestive analysis of the central role of the image of the country cottage in literature and art, as one of the most potent picturesque motifs in the 'sweet view' of the Victorian landscape. Overall, this splendidly illustrated and finely articulated study can be recommended reading for everyone with an interest, not only in Richard Jefferies, but also in the broader context of landscape history and art over the last two hundred years.

Roger Ebbatson

CITINGS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

Please email your citations to richardjefferiessociety@btinternet.com. or post to the Hon. Sec.

Erratum: Please note a correction to the citations in the Autumn 2021 newsletter on p.32, first line. Fisher claimed that Jefferies knew at least 120 birds, not 220! Thanks to Michael Sherwood for spotting the typo.

An article by Peter Merchant, Principal Lecturer, Canterbury Christ Church University, titled “What one sees another sees”: synchronicity in the Juvenilia of Anna Kingsford and Richard Jefferies’ was published in the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies* 2.2 (Dec. 2019), pp.102–117. The abstract reads: ‘This essay considers some of the work published by Anna Kingsford (1846–88) before she reached the age of twenty and by Richard Jefferies (1848–87) before he turned eighteen. It focuses on the year 1866, and explores some unexpected parallels between his writing and hers. What stand revealed are two oddly overlapping careers that were shaped by, but also both rose above, the not always favourable conditions under which in the later nineteenth century the young writer had to operate.’ Merchant focused on Jefferies’ ‘A Strange Story’, which is, possibly, one of his best early tales. This was published in *The Early Fiction of Richard Jefferies*, edited by Grace Toplis, whilst Andrew Rossabi included it in *Richard Jefferies: a Miscellany*. Merchant makes good use of Vol. I of Rossabi’s biography of Jefferies for references.

According to the Morehead State University website a notice, posted on September 2021, announced that Dr. Ronald Morrison, Professor of English, had received the MSU Distinguished Researcher Award: ‘Morrison earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Marymount College of Kansas in 1981. He went on to earn a Master of Arts in English in 1984, a Master of Philosophy in English in 1986 and a Ph.D. in English in 1988, all from the University of Kansas. He has been with MSU since 1988. He has served as an assistant professor, associate professor and as a professor of English since 1998. Both Morrison’s courses and research specialize in Victorian Literature, the British novel and literary theory. He has published widely on various 19th and 20th-century writers, including Charles Dickens, Richard Jefferies, and William Wordsworth, among others.’ This includes ‘Agriculture and ecology in Richard Jefferies’ *Hodge and His Masters*’, *Victorian Writers and the Environment: Ecocritical Perspectives (Among the Victorians and Modernists)* (Routledge, 7 Dec. 2016), Ch. 13, pp.205–219.

Citations

John Price found a reference to *Bevis* in a book review from *The Times*, 18 September 2021. In Andrew Billen's review of *Bewilderment* by Richard Powers, Billen describes the character Robin as 'a precocious genius and a modern-day version of the Victorian author Richard Jefferies's wood-loving nature boy Bevis.' John Price felt that this seems to be an inappropriate comparison to Bevis, having read other reviews of the same book.

Giles Wood's October worry was that not a single house martin nest had been occupied in his village last summer ('The strange death of our village house martins,' *The Oldie*, October 2021, p.33). Giles guessed at the reasons: intensive farming, human interference and 'weird weather'. Giles looked forward to the days when the swallows and martins gathered in masses on the telegraph wires ready to return to Africa. He turned to Jefferies' *Wild Life in a Southern County* (Ch. VIII) to express the superstitions of old folk who had a more sinister concern about swallows: 'If they do not return to the eaves but desert their nests, it is a sign of misfortune impending over the household.' With that, Giles' wife Mary read out another Wiltshire superstition reported by Jefferies: 'If an invalid asks for a pigeon—taking a fancy to a dish of pigeons to eat—it is a sign either of coming dissolution or of extreme illness.' But it does seem that 'weird weather' was largely to blame last year.

Rebecca Welshman found references to two original Jefferies' handwritten manuscripts held in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Utah. The first is a short-story titled 'The Flying Dutchman: a legend on the Great Western Railway' a melodrama about a fire that breaks out on a GWR train. The second is an unknown letter from Jefferies to William Tinsley, dated 5 March 1875, and relates to *Restless Human Hearts*. Both are exciting finds and with the permission of the University, the contents will be published in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* 2023 along with covering articles by Dr. Welshman.

Janice Lingley had an article in the *Journal of the Friends of the Dymock Poets*, No 20, 2021: 'Edward Thomas: *In Pursuit of Spring* and "Up in the Wind": Poetry as Palimpsest'.

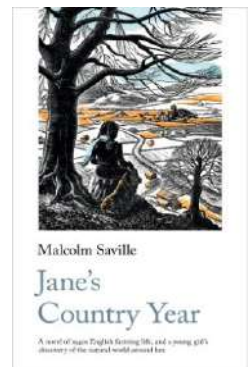
The narrator-cyclist of *In Pursuit of Spring* begins his quest on a Good Friday, setting out from a south-west London suburb on a day of grey cloud and rain. The pathos of a scene on the capital's outskirts, outside a shop selling caged songbirds, is contrastively extended by the quotation of a line from Jefferies' poem 'My Chaffinch.' One of the caged birds, a chaffinch less

'battered' than his fellows, sings 'every now and then: "My life and soul", as if he were a Greek'. In Jefferies' poem, the bird is joyously transcendent and conceived as occupying an adaptation of the legendary notion of a world tree; his fir is the centre of the dome of blue summer sky, and his song is evidence of a fully sentient and 'loving soul', deserving of 'a life immortal as a man's'.

Anne Williamson, writing in the *Henry Williamson Society Journal No.57*, September 2021, explored the events leading up to Williamson's attendance at the second WWF International Congress which was held in London on 16, 17 and 18 November 1970. In her chapter 'Henry Williamson and the World Wildlife Fund Second International Congress 1970' Anne Williamson delineates Henry's diary which records that on the 31 October he was a guest at a dinner at Walton-on-Thames of 'The Ghosts Club' where James Wentworth Day spoke and Williamson read a piece from *The Story of My Heart*. On 2 November Williamson was in Swindon for the Birthday Lecture of the Richard Jefferies Society, of which he was President. The distinguished conservationist Rolf Gardiner gave the evening talk. A photo accompanying the text shows Mr. Rolf Gardiner, Mr. Henry Williamson, Mrs. F.J. Gay (Chairman) and Mr. Harold Adams (Founder).

Michael Sherwood found that, unsurprisingly, Peter Ackroyd mentions *After London* in *London: The Biography* [Chatto & Windus, London, 2000]. Ackroyd gives examples from Jefferies to illustrate his own musings on whether London has its own natural light 'from a yellow sunset to an "indefinite violet" in the south-west, from the dazzling light of summer to the redness of winter sun when the streets and buildings are suffused with a "fiery glow".'

Malcolm Saville leaned heavily on Jefferies' *Bevis* in his early standalone novel about one girl's rediscovery of the natural world, *Jane's Country Year* (1946). *Bevis* is the favourite novel of one of the characters, and is used as a template for the protagonists to interpret their rural surroundings. It is also given as a birthday present. Handheld Press issued a reprint in 2021, using the original artwork by Bernard Bowerman. John Case (a RJS Facebook member) added that *Bevis* is also mentioned in one of Saville's Lone Pine mysteries: *Seven White Gates*. *Bevis* was clearly a book that Saville loved.



Citations

Michael Sherwood came across a chapter on limekilns in Geoffrey Grigson's *Country Writings* [Century Publishing, 1984]. He writes: 'Now and then, Richard Jefferies maintained of limekilns in Wiltshire, one would roll in his sleep too near the edge, tumble in and be burnt to a little white ash,' where the grim tale unfolds in *The Amateur Poacher* (Ch XII).

A short film was put up on YouTube in October 2021 to illustrate how far Jefferies was ahead of his time with regard to his apocalyptic vision that might now relate to concerns about climate change. It starts at Broadwater Cemetery, Worthing, with readings from *After London*, then moves to the South Downs with a reading from 'Downs' (first published in *The Times*, Sep 1881 & collected in *The Open Air*) that recalls the dreadful snow-storm of 1880-81 and finally to 'Jefferies House' in Goring with a further extract from *After London*. Chris Hare, a local historian from Worthing and a member of the Friends of Broadwater Cemetery is the capable guide and reader. <https://youtu.be/F9prK-hpAks>

Gillian Bromhead found a quote from Richard Jefferies' 'Venice in the East End' (collected in *The Life of the Fields*) that was published in 1996 in a special anniversary edition of *Poems on the Underground* edited by Gerard Benson, Judith Chernaik and Cicely Herbert. The book includes twenty four posters created for the London Underground. One titled 'The Way of Business' by Sir Frank Brangwyn in 1913 showed the London Docks at Wapping or Rotherhithe Stations.

The following quotation was wrongly attributed to *Nature Near London* and accompanies the poster:



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Fleet upon fleet; argosy upon argosy. Masts to the right, masts to the left, masts in front, masts yonder above the warehouses; masts in among the streets as steeples appear amid roofs; masts across the river hung with drooping half-furled sails; masts afar down thin and attenuated, mere dark straight lines in the distance. They await in silence the rising of the tide.

Giles Woods' November 2021 contribution to *The Oldie*, titled 'Mary's burning anger over my log shed,' included a quote from *Wild Life in a Southern County*. Giles had just spent an entire weekend chopping his own home-grown wood despite the fact that his wife had already bought a supply of logs. As much as anything it was a therapeutic exercise and an effort to be self-sufficient, as well as being productive. The veggies hadn't fared so well that year. But logs needed to be dry to burn well and Giles really needed a shed:

The one great desire of the cottager's heart—after his garden—is plenty of sheds and outhouses in which to store wood, vegetables, and lumber of all kinds... It is only natural that to a man whose possessions are limited, things like potatoes, logs of wood, chips, odds and ends should assume a value beyond the appreciation of the well-to-do. (Ch. V.)

Mary agreed that he should build a log shed next, but would the pressure be on him to be more productive?

Professor William Baker wrote the entry for 'Richard Jefferies' that was published in *The Literary Encyclopedia* 21 March 2021 (mentioned in the last newsletter). It is an online facility for students, but even though you have to take the trouble to set up a subscription, Prof. Baker says that his entry, by late October 2021, had been viewed 3,300 times. For *TLE* this number of reads is high and reveals considerable interest in Jefferies.

Colin Blundell found the following in Hilaire Belloc's *Cruise of the Nona* (Constable, 1925):

To our own modern world there must come either some vast religious reaction, or some vast religious novelty, or both. It is inevitable; for men live by religion. Yet no one speaking of the future takes it for one moment into account. I know of but one book, a book of singular genius, in which the thing appears, though tentatively; and that is in Richard Jefferies' fine vision called *After London*. But even Jefferies did not make of it the main source of change. In his day men had already begun to lose the significance of religion in human affairs.

The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham (where the

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Society's special archives are stored) put up an article about Richard Jefferies in their blog on 10 November 2021 outlining his life and works. It included an image of Jefferies' letter to his mother from our archives. Written from the 'The Downs' (Crowborough) and dated 8 Feb [1886] it is only one of two extant letters from son to mother. This one is particularly poignant as it discusses his deteriorating health.

<https://wshc.org.uk/blog/item/richard-jefferies.html>

John Shortland was speaking to an Environment Agency officer recently when the subject came round to *After London*. He told John that after he read it he sent jokingly a copy to a colleague called Richard Jefferies. But that RJ had come across Jefferies as a teenager and had become an environmentalist because of it. John remarked that it was 'good to know that RJ can still reach out and influence people's lives.'

On 18 November 2021, the online edition of 'English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature' published an article by Luke Lewin Davies titled "'Progressing Backwards": Rural Outsider Figures in Richard Jefferies, W.H. Hudson and Edward Thomas'. Davies focuses on the politics of all three writers and defends them against the criticism of Raymond Williams in his enormously influential *The Country and the City* (1973). Davies argues that, with the modern environmental crisis, the back-to-nature message of the three writers, and their criticism of the ideal of endless material progress, an ideal shared by Left and Right alike, has taken on a new attraction and relevance. Davies cites W.J. Keith (*The Rural Tradition*), Roger Ebbatson, and Andrew Rossabi.

Colin Corkerton reported that Trevor Beebee's *Climate Change and British Wildlife* (Bloomsbury Wildlife, 2018) includes a Jefferies' quote that he attributes mistakenly to *Wild Life in a Southern County* when it should state 'Out of Doors in February' (*The Open Air*). In Beebees's chapter 2 'How are plants responding?' he discusses some of the difficulties in the use of phenology to demonstrate evidence of climate change. He points out, for example, the first date of flowering of plants, the first frog spawn in a pond, the first appearance of migratory birds etc. are not uniform even over a small area and that this 'was recognised well over a century ago in Richard Jefferies' remarks on field lore' and includes the following quote:

Spring dates are quite different according to the locality, and when violets may be found in one district, in another there is hardly a woodbine-leaf out. The border line may be traced, and is occasionally so narrow, one may cross over it almost at a step.

Eric Jones reported a Zoom talk of the Aldbourne Community Heritage Group on 22 November 2021. It was by Jenny Greaves and about memorials in the church there. She quoted extensively from Richard Jefferies on the history of the Goddards to try to identify which Richard Goddard is commemorated on a brass in the church and even which century (15th or 16th) is meant. She was an admirably clear speaker but the upshot is inconclusive: Jefferies thought there was a mistake in the date on the brass but that probably was not right. This is surely an unusual piece of Jefferies' work to be quoted nowadays.

Colin Corkerton, a retired meteorologist, found a copy of a letter from a Royal Meteorological Society publication, possibly their monthly magazine *Weather*. The year is not recorded but likely to date from 1883 or 1884. The letter is headed 'The Will-o'-the wisp or Ignis Fatuus' and the writer, M.A. Waller of Chard, says he came across references to this in the works of Richard Jefferies. This from '*Wild Life in a Southern County*', chapter 20:

The ignis-fatuus is almost extinct; so much so that Jack-o'-the-Lantern has died out of the village folklore. On one occasion, however, I saw what at a distance seemed a bright light shining in a ditch where two hedges met. Thinking some mischief was going on, I went to the spot, when the light disappeared; but on retiring, after a search which proved that no one was about, it came into view again. A second time I approached, and a second time the light died out. A few nights afterwards it was there again, and must clearly have been some kind of ignis-fatuus. There was a small quantity of stagnant water in the ditch, and a good deal of rotten wood—branches fallen from trees.

Waller says the phenomenon is 'due to spontaneous ignition of methane formed by the decomposition of vegetation in the water of the marsh'. He also says literature abounds with reference to the phenomenon. For example it appears in Henry IV, Part 1, Act 3, Scene 3. Falstaff taunting Bardolph about his red nose likens him to an 'ignis fatuus or a ball of wild fire.'

Colin Blundell wrote: 'Reading *The Scarlet Shawl* for the first time(!) I found it amusing and somewhat surprising to find Jefferies, in 1874, "taking the micky", as we might say nowadays, out of people who are

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seemingly incapable of stringing a few sentences together without incorporating the mechanical meaningless expression “you know” as so many interviewees on the radio are annoyingly fixed with. I had thought it was a modern curse or habit fostered by “social media” but it seems perhaps not...

There was, however, only one opinion about her lips. All the masculine commentators agreed that they were ravishing. So rich, you know; and so full and luscious, you know; and such a Cupid’s bow, you know; so tempting, you know; and everything else that it was possible to know.

This is but one paragraph in the omniscient author’s lengthy engagement in a hilariously ironical description of his curious heroine Nora. Grace Toplis asserted that Jefferies had no sense of humour. I several times found myself in spontaneous laughter not *at* but *with* Jefferies throughout this admittedly rather uneven novel; this was one occasion!’

It was reported in the *Swindon Advertiser* on 13 January 2022 that Swindon had come 31st in the top 50 worst towns in the UK to live. Proud Swindonians jumped to the town’s defence. Both Richard Jefferies and the old house at Coate were included in the list of the town’s greatest assets.

On Sunday 16 January 2022 BBC Radio 3 broadcast a 15 minute feature on ‘The Pigeons at the British Museum,’ [*The Life of the Fields*] with readings by Chris Jackson. Will Abberley (senior lecturer in Victorian literature) reconsidered Richard Jefferies’ essay and argued that an essay written in 1884 should be essential reading today. He talked to Andrew Blechman, the author of *Pigeons: The Fascinating Saga of the World’s Most Revered and Reviled Bird*, and to Richard Mabey. Dr. Abberley emphasised how nature has been so good for the human condition during the pandemic but Jefferies showed that you didn’t need to go far, no need to search for the exotic when it was here on your doorstep.

ARTHUR GRANVILLE BRADLEY AND JEFFERIES

John Shortland recently discovered that Arthur Granville Bradley (1850–1943) was an ancestral cousin of his. Bradley was a prolific author of travel and other books. *Round About Wiltshire* was published in 1907 by Methuen. John has supplied the relevant text from the book that cites Jefferies.

CHAPTER IV Marlborough to Swindon and Highworth, p.94

It was in the next year that Richard Jefferies made his first literary hit in an eloquent paper in *The Times* defending the Wiltshire farmer’s attitude toward

the labourer, writing from almost the next parish to Ogbourne and himself a farmer's son. Indeed I can myself just dimly remember the Wiltshire Hodge on his seven to eight shillings scale, and the less we say of the price of grain at that time perhaps the better.

p.11-17 Returning by a lower road to the main Swindon highway, one passes through Liddington and Badbury villages; the latter a delightful umbrageous spot, replete with brightly tinted cottages, all heavily laden with massive hoods of neatly braided thatch, while a little stone manor-house fronts the deep lane, and little patches of garden blaze brightly behind old-fashioned hedges of clipped box. Emerging out onto the highway again, below Chiseldon, and heading for Swindon, two or three miles of level and somewhat solitary tree-bordered road brings you at length before a plain, unobtrusive oblong brick farm-house of six to eight rooms, standing a few yards back, behind a hedge enclosure. On the entrance gate a tablet is affixed, proclaiming that this was the home of Richard Jefferies; a fact, in the most complete and literal sense, for it was the freehold property, with the farm attached, of his father and his ancestors, and wherein he lived himself, till long after he had reached man's estate. The fields around and the downs rising two or three miles away from which we have just descended, and the reservoir nearly a mile long, which lies behind the house, were the actual materials which fed his imagination, and provided the nature portraits by which he will doubtless live. Though he was drawn, after marriage, by the possibilities of money and fame, to the neighbourhood of London, in whose inner or outer suburbs, and occasionally in places further afield, he made the most of such nature as was left about him. The modest roadside farmhouse at Coate, which then, I think, had a thatched roof, was a familiar landmark to me from childhood, as it was, no doubt, to every one who travelled the Marlborough and Swindon road, for the simple reason that landmarks were few, and a road you travel frequently, to catch trains, and not for the good of your health, or the enjoyment of scenery, though these advantages may often be incidentals, arranges itself in such stages with peculiar clarity.

Whether as a child in a coach, to whom two hours seemed an eternity, or, in after years, driving one's own horse with an interest in its movements, these punctuations of the highway remain unforgettable, and the solitary house at Coate was one of them to me. How little I thought, six or eight years afterwards, while reading at the other end of the world those articles in the *Pall Mall*, entitled *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *Wild Life in a Southern County*, that the writer was the son of the farmer at that familiar but somewhat insignificant farmhouse, set alone on the Swindon road. These papers told of a down country, but with no direct hint of locality, while the classification of the author puzzled me, as it no doubt did everybody else, not a little. How far were any of us from guessing, in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, of the strange genius, boy and man, who was ranging somewhere about our paths as we whisked along, or writing hopeless romances in that homely roadside house, with its orchard,

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garden and background of trees, so often passed and repassed in the way of travel, as you pass a milestone.

Richard Jefferies is a very big subject; neither is he a man who was or is popular with the crowd. Probably a great many people, without any pretensions to literary discrimination, read him, and still read him with real pleasure. Among the more discerning, there are, I presume, no two opinions regarding his powers, the remarkable nature of his inspirations, the originality of his mind, the tragedy of his life. Outside these admissions, which alone entitle him to a more conspicuous place, in a vulgar sense, than he enjoys, there are, I fancy, considerable differences. No mean following regard him as immortal; at any rate, as a native prophet and interpreter, matchless in his generation. They find no jar in the elaboration of detail which to others is somewhat of a blemish, though it may not seriously impair their sympathy and admiration for the divine spark that burned so brightly in his gifted mind, and was extinguished all too soon and in such unutterable gloom. Whatever the precise place of Jefferies, there is no doubt whatever but that he was unique. Though he has been compared to Thoreau, the analogy is very far indeed from being complete. The points that jar upon even the sympathetic countryman in Jefferies will often not be obvious to the townsman, who is apt to accept the ordinary commonplace of country life, sprinkled about among Jefferies' more occult observations, as all of a piece, and of like inspiration. These everyday truisms embodied among the rest, and imparted with the same slightly didactic air which pervaded some of his nature essays, prove a little disconcerting to the most appreciative readers of rural habit. But this, after all, is nothing, and his personality was, in truth, an extraordinary one.

The son of a respectably educated intelligent yeoman; the descendant on both sides of undistinguished yeoman stock, a soul found its way into Jefferies' body from sources which may well have baffled the family genealogist and upset the calculations of heredity. From childhood he was an incorrigible dreamer in those woods and fields with which his class are so materially intimate, but for this very reason so generally deaf to the sort of voices in which they speak to less habitual acquaintances. But they held Jefferies under as powerful a spell as Wordsworth, though the former's knowledge was of course much more technical of the earth and all that pertained to it. He was naturally familiar with farming, and wrote eloquently upon the subject; but seems to have had but little instinct for its practice. In short, he came into the world with a message, though it had hard enough struggles to reach the light. He played no games, though he was a sportsman in a solitary, desultory sort of way, and he had no friends, but roamed the fields alone, absorbed in everything on the earth beneath and the heavens above him, noticing the most minute things, and thinking marvellous thoughts. A heaven-born naturalist as well as a philosopher, he was in a strict sense neither botanist nor ornithologist. Though he dreamed on Liddington Castle of the men who had cast it up and of primitive England, even to the extent of writing a book

about it (*After London*), I do not think he had any of that technical knowledge of ancient monuments and races with which so many of his fellow-countrymen concern themselves. The literary bent forced itself out in his teens, and he became quite early a reporter on a Swindon paper. He also wrote little tales, very bad ones, a history of the Goddard family, and a quite practical little book on newspaper reporting.

The *Cacoëthes scribendi* was now fully open upon him, though he continued to roam the country in every spare hour, a tall, rather good-looking, brown-bearded man of loose limbs; unathletic but enduring, absolutely unsociable, utterly misunderstood, and known as 'mad Dick Jefferies' by the rustic youth of his acquaintance. From short stories he proceeded to novel writing for which he had not the faintest gift nor any equipment, though he persisted in his delusion to the contrary till he had wasted years in writing strange productions that no publisher would accept. His literary qualities, however, seem to have made themselves apparent to some, as we may well believe, in spite of the fantastic dukes and marquises whom, by some strange fatuity, he fancied in his ignorance of the world that he could paint.

In 1873, as already mentioned, he made a hit in *The Times* with one or two articles on labourers and farmers, that inspired a leading article under the impression that a sagacious middle-aged Wiltshire farmer had dropped words of exceptional wisdom, unusually well arranged into Printing House Square. Wiseacres say that he missed his chance in life by not following it up; but, be this as it may, he certainly erred woefully in his continued devotion to hopeless fiction, that went its weary circuit of publishers year after year, some of whose readers must however have been no little astonished at the eloquent English and fine abstract thoughts embodied among plots and people of a conception almost childish. At last he published a book or two at his own expense, and lost all his savings, as the volumes fell almost still-born from the press. On the strength of a small income, derived from his reporting work and from fugitive papers that began to find their way into the London Reviews, he married the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, and after a few months at the parental homestead, which, by the way, did not prosper, settled in Swindon.

His papers now began to attract so much notice that he moved in 1877 to the neighbourhood of London, and then with *The Gamekeeper at Home* published soon after in book form, followed by the other well-known works of the same type, he appeared to have laid the foundations of real success. He at any rate made enough to support the simple and almost isolate life that he and his wife lived, and even managed to save a little. He courted no society, and when not writing or reading was ranging the country round. He had now, however, found his mission, and wrote only on these subjects, in which he had no rival. His essays collected from time to time in book form brought him very little, and in his ignorance of the world this caused him much bitterness of soul. He could not understand that the praise of the critic did not mean of necessity the patronage of the multitude, and that in some ways he was writing too much above the

Citations

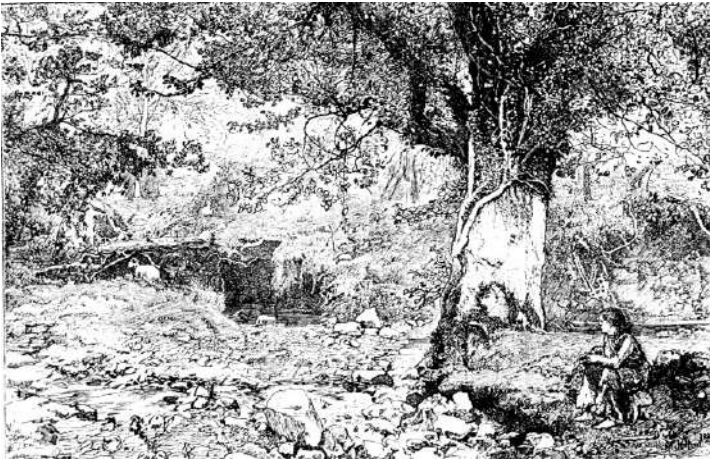
heads of the public for financial success, unless the public could be persuaded that it was the correct thing to read him. He was a prose poet, thinker, and philosopher, and some of his books will doubtless live, or should do so, but they did not sell to much advantage. The articles of which they were composed, however, provided him with a sufficiency, till an illness of a painful, indefinable, internal kind struck him, and after four years of poverty, though happily not of actual want and of labour under almost continuous torture, killed him in 1887, and cut off in his prime the most original genius of his generation.

He was not buried in his native county, but at Broadwater. His bust has been placed in Salisbury cathedral, and the tablet, already mentioned, on Coate Farm. But I am afraid the natives do not as yet know that delectable country between Swindon and Marlborough as 'Jefferies Land,' though literary gentlemen in London have solemnly rechristened it thus many times and foretold in effect that there would be no further use for old definitions and local nomenclature; that Coate and Wanborough, Badbury and Chiseldon, Liddington and the Ogbournes would lose their identity and become merged in the name of Jefferies to the greater glory of the squire and the parson, the shepherd, and the sheep farmer of those parts. Oh! Innocent aliens of the world of cities, who thus love to partition England into a sort of heptarchy sacred to the personality of their favourite modern authors. What a painful surprise these visits to the land of the prophet must sometimes be when it is discovered how little of a prophet he is in the kingdom that has been made over to him, and that the minds of the unenlightened are obstinately stored with memories of the old squire's father, or the late marquis, or entirely occupied with politics, or the price of sheep. The enlightened with imaginations have the stirring memories of a thousand years around them, sometimes at their finger ends, and the monuments, let us say to be safe, of four thousand confronting them, and resent being handed over to new gods by strangers, none the less, perhaps, if the god be a product of their own time and soil. The subtle quality of Jefferies' work makes it inevitable that he should be even less of a prophet among his own countrymen than even a popular novelist. It is possible that their grandchildren and great grandchildren will hold him in great honour, but who can say? Wiltshire may even then still be in the joint possession of John Aubrey and Sir Richard Colt Hoare, and the band of later antiquarians already canonized, and with that reasonable hope of local immortality to which the more distinguished labourers in such fields may look above all other men. It is enough for the present that the disciples of Jefferies have his best books, and those who would become so can now acquire them in cheap editions. For those more curious about his upbringing an almost literal account of it will be found in the so-called novel, but most engaging book, *Amaryllis at the Fair*. The story, such as it is, leaves off suddenly, and the characters melt away into obscurity; but the picture of the life at Coate is worth reading for that alone, and as a study is in parts not unworthy of his best works.

PAINTINGS OF JOHN WILLIAM NORTH, A.R.A. (1842-1924)

J.W. North's friendship with Richard Jefferies and his kindness to Jessie and the children need no introduction.¹

North was commissioned to illustrate Jefferies' essay 'Summer in Somerset' for *The English Illustrated Magazine*, October, 1887. There were nine illustrations in all that were the basis of etchings printed in the magazine. Best known to the Society is 'On the Barle' that was used on the front cover of the *Richard Jefferies Society Autumn Newsletter*, 2014. This was etched by H.H. Davey. 'In Holford Glen' is reproduced below; engraved by T.W. Lascelles.



In Holford Glen

This year marks the 180th anniversary of North's birth and an appropriate time to celebrate his work by reproducing coloured images of selected works on the cover of the current newsletter. Some notes follow.

SIR BEVIS AND THE WOODWOMAN, circa 1887-8, watercolour. (Front cover illustration.)

Signed with initials and dated 'JWN/RWS/1887-8', and signed, inscribed and numbered on an old label attached to the reverse of the frame 'No 1./Sir Bevis and the Woodwoman/in memory of Richard Jeffrey's (sic)/JW. North'; watercolour with scratching out 26 x 37in. (660 x 940mm.)

¹ See Steve Milton's article in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No. 32 [2017], pp.132-149.

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One of the most important of North's work to appear on the market for some years, this watercolour is unusually large in scale and epitomizes his highly original technique and strong tendency to abstraction. It was exhibited at the Royal Watercolour Society in 1888 and dedicated to his friend Richard Jefferies, the writer on English country life, who had recently died.

The curious title refers to an unidentified episode in Jefferies' novel *Bevis: The Story of a Boy*, published in 1882. The book records the adventures of Bevis, who is described as having 'short golden curls' (*op. cit.*, II, p.81), and his friend Mark, both aged about eight. Many of the adventures take place in the woods near Bevis' home. These woods and the river that runs through them become part of an imaginary world, known by the boys as 'New Formosa'. It is while the boys are playing truant in 'New Formosa' that they find a nest of bees in a hollow ash (*op. cit.* III, p.63). ['There was a shrill hum round it as the bees continually went in and out, returning in straight lines, radiating to all parts of the compass, so that they did not care to venture too near.']

This watercolour, which shows Bevis fighting off a number of bees, is possibly an imagined sequel, dreamt up by North.²

'THE OLD BOWLING GREEN,' Halsway Court, Somerset, 1865, watercolour, British Museum, London. (Front cover verso illustration.)

Captivated by the landscape, in 1868 North set up a second home at Halsway Manor, with the farm tenants, the Thornes. He attracted artist friends such as Edward G. Dalziel, George J. Pinwell, Frederick Walker, Sir Hubert von Herkomer and Robert Walker Macbeth to work with him. His painting *The Old Bowling Green* described a celebration of all North held dear as a young man. His friend, George Pinwell, and new wife, Isabella, spent part of their honeymoon at Halsway. North depicted the young couple paying each other timeless sweet attention, while a child plays with skittles on the lawn. Alluding to a pastoral English setting with the sheep sheltering in the porch, the old house stands as benign witness to centuries of church ownership, the wool trade and hospitable retreat.³

'THE GRASS OF THE FIELD', circa 1874-80, oil painting.

This painting was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1880 and, unusually, it was painted in oils during his time living in North Algeria that North first visited in December 1873 with his artist friend Frederick Walker. North had a house built there with the name 'Dar el Ouard' (House of the Roses) where he spent several months each year for the next six years. The

² The catalogue description when the painting was auctioned by Christies in 1992

³ With thanks to Dr. Louise Hurrell who allowed us to quote from her article published in the 2016 newsletter of the Friends of Quantock.

painting was reviewed positively in *The Times* (11 May 1880, p.8). The reviewer admired 'not only the carpet of wild flowers with which Spring covers the soil of Algiers, but the tangled growth of flowering or berried shrubs, with blue-green ranks of aloe spikes and cactus growths, all forming the framework for glimpses of blue and sunny sea and white-walled dwellings.'

The painting was sold at Christie's for £25,000 in December 2013.

'A BIT OF SOUTHERN ENGLAND', 1868, Gouache on paper, 248 x 175mm, Tate Gallery. Apparently the painting is not on view. It was bequeathed to the Tate in 1920 by Mrs. Louise d'Este Oliver. (Back cover illustration recto.)

'RAKING HAY', watercolour, signed J.W. North and dated 1872. Little is recorded about this attractive painting of a young woman raking up hay. There appears to be a picnic basket and, perhaps, even a wrapped baby or a flagon nearby. (Back cover illustration.)

It is certainly painted in Somerset, or possibly North Devon. It would have been painted before St. Michael's Mass on 29 September, the official end of harvest-time. Gleaning was women's work, by and large, and here is a woman with her child clinging to her mother's leg as she works, as quickly as she can, before livestock was turned into the field to graze the stubble, or be burnt off or dug over. Using a traditional gleaning tool, a y-fork, the woman collects all she can of the fallen grain from the wheat or barley harvest, indicating her poverty of status. The figures, looking quite well fed and clean, as they do, would probably indicate the artist knew his models. The trees and hazel stools around the field are shaped in a way that would indicate spring coppicing or thinning for domestic use, such as besom brooms (an early market staple seller in Taunton) and stakes for gardening/agricultural use. Charcoal making was a local industry, often carried out by solitary itinerants. As Steve Milton illustrates in his talk and essay, North was a tireless campaigner for the underdog all his life, and this work is no exception. In terms of paint, North layered the translucence of watercolour over and mixed with body colour, a technique much contested for years in the Royal Academy reviews in *The Times*. This approach became a staple of the works of North, Pinwell and Walker, although they were not the first to use industrially produced 19th century Chinese White pigment, increasingly to be found as a tube sold with all watercolour boxes to artists. Body colour or gouache, known since Egyptian times, lent opacity, density and flatness of texture to the backing medium, allowing the artist to work out of doors more easily as it provided a tougher layer of paint, always a problem in this country, when the inevitable downpour occurred. Wrestling with materials as well as nature was all grist to the mill of providing the viewer with the shared experience of the artist. Here, North invites us into a social and

Articles

environmental perspective that invites discussion and highlights the realities of life in rural areas, so far away from the painting's exhibition life in a top London gallery.⁴

Reviews

A journalist for *The Globe* (24 April 1871) reporting on the opening of the Water Colour Society in Pall-mall East had these unfavourable words for two of J.W. North's pictures: "The Timber Wagon," a wonderfully green composition without any perceptible perspective, and "The Village," also green and equally flat, are probably in some way morotorions, or the space devoted to their exhibition on "the line" would not have been so appropriated, but it must be confessed that we are not educated up to the point necessary to understand or appreciate them.'

Twenty years later Prof. Herkomer was far more appreciative (Herkomer succeeded John Ruskin as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford University, holding the position for nine years from 1885).

One of the most truly original painters of our times is Mr. J.W. North. Of this originality he himself is not aware, and was once greatly astonished to read in a criticism on his work that he had a strongly marked manner ... The only work of art that possesses the virtue of interpretation of nature emanates from a strongly marked personality. So it is with Mr. North. His work looks strangely out of place in any modern gallery where the dominant note is always the momentary fashion of the period. Mr. North strikes a note that is out of harmony with the noise of modern fashion in art. Strangely enough it has always been out of fashion; therefore it is true to say that he was as much ahead of his times twenty years ago as he is to-day.

... Mr. North never deviated from his earliest sense of colour, therefore we have in him a remarkable, if not unique example of a painter who had formed his style before he was ripe, and in ripening only added strength to the original direction. ... His works are the best of companions, for they embody tranquillity—arrived at through his method of handling masses, and by the secret attention to detail. Although his work is full of fascinating (technical) manipulation, he is nevertheless too little of the mechanic by nature to give a materialistic value to the aspect of his art. Indeed, the peculiar kind of ingenuity of his watercolour manipulation, and treatment of colour in that medium, are such as would never have come to a well-trained painter, or to a strong draughtsman. All nature is to him first a bouquet of colour which finally diverges and converges into distinct forms. He is apt to under-draw in his

⁴ Dr. Hurrell made these observations in a private communication, dated 17 October 2021,

anxiety to retain the bloom of nature's colour, just as many of us who pique ourselves on good drawing are apt to lose colour by over-drawing. Definition destroys mystery, and without mystery there can be no charm of colour. Extreme sensibility may be counted as genius—it is only a matter of degree; and if it be not over-strong in one direction, the many claims from the temperament will most certainly lower it to mediocrity. Mr. North's colour-sensibility overpowers all his other qualities, and as a great colourist he stands side by side with Turner. It is this sensibility to colour that makes him linger over insignificant passages for the sake of colour-quality, and makes him disinclined to engage himself on the more prosaic necessities of mere drawing. Again, by an overpowering mental continuity in his character, it is difficult—nay impossible—for his mind to turn into new channels until the immediate work on hand has been practically completed. From the same cause he finds it difficult to turn from colour to drawing, having first started on colour thoughts. In most works of art of a spontaneous kind do we find some touch of petulance, or of indifference,—somewhere; it may be in a corner, or it may be in half the picture—but whatever torture Mr. North endures in the process of a production, these decomposing blots are never to be found in his work.⁵



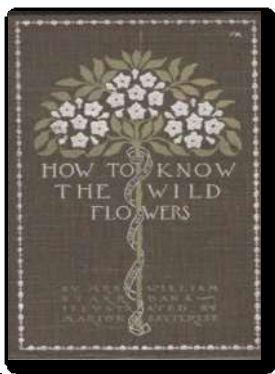
Exford from the Bridge
 From a painting by J.W. North, etched by W. and R. Cheshire
 to illustrate Jefferies' 'Summer in Somerset'
The English Illustrated Magazine, October, 1887

⁵ From Prof. Hubert Herkomer, R.A., M.A. In his lecture titled 'J.W. North, A.R.A., R.W.S., Painter and Poet' in Oxford, 1892.

JEFFERIES AND A NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN WILD FLOWER GUIDE

Janice Lingley

In 1893, a pioneering guide to the wild flowers of North America titled *How to Know the Wild Flowers, A Guide to the Names, Haunts, and Habits of Our Common Wild Flowers*, by Mrs. William Starr Dana (Frances Theodora Parsons (1861–1952))¹ was published in New York, and quickly became very popular. The *Guide* includes flowers also common in the British Isles (some having become naturalized in the States), and Dana supplements her detailed botanical descriptions with a diversity of quotations by, for example, Spenser, Shakespeare, Thoreau,



Emerson, Darwin, Emily Dickinson and John Burroughs. The *Guide* includes three quotations from Jefferies' essay 'Wild Flowers'² The title page features the following passage:

The first conscious thought about wild flowers was to find out their names—the first conscious pleasure,—and then I began to see so many that I had not previously noticed. Once you wish to identify them there is nothing escapes, down to the little white chickweed of the path and the moss of the wall.

¹ The text is available on the Hathi Trust website, and a biography of the author appears in Wikipedia. The *Guide* was illustrated by Marion Satterlee.

² First published in *Longman's Magazine* in July 1885, the essay was collected in *The Open Air* and published that same year by Chatto & Windus of London. In *The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies, A Chronological Study* (Boars Hill: Petton Books, 1994), Hugoe Matthews and Phyllis Treitel, observe that in one of his notebooks Jefferies refers to the essay, written in Crowborough, East Sussex, as his 'last piece' and comment that 'it was presumably written after the death of [his baby son] Oliver and while he himself was very ill'; and yet 'description of nature, reminiscence and mystical expression are brought together in almost perfect fusion'; p.197. Jefferies' bibliographers, George Miller and Hugoe Matthews, consider the piece 'one of his most moving, eloquent and poetic nature essays'; *Richard Jefferies, A Bibliographical Study* (Aldershot: The Scolar Press, 1993), pp.453–4.

The title page of the 'Flower Descriptions' quotes, 'A fresh footpath, a fresh flower, a fresh delight.' The entry for the fragrant Twin-flower, *Linnæa borealis*, cites 'Sweetest of all things is wild flower air.'



The American poet Robert Frost (1874–1963) was introduced to Dana's *Guide* by his friend Carl Burell (1864–1938) in the summer of 1896, when Frost and his wife Elinor stayed in a cottage in Allenstown, New Hampshire. Burell was a keen amateur botanist, with a knowledge of Darwin and Linnæus, and an enthusiasm for orchids and ferns. Frost's official biographer and friend, the academic Lawrence Thompson (1906–973), attributes to this period 'not merely the Frostian tendency to scatter flowers through all of his later poetry but also his new delight in having his eyes opened to details of nature which he had not previously noticed.'³ This capacity for keen observation is seen, for example, in 'Range-Finding'.⁴ In Frost's first collection *A Boy's Will*, published by David Nutt of London in 1913, when Frost and his young family were staying in England, the poem 'Rose Pogonias'⁵ features a hay-meadow strewn with 'a thousand orchises'. Orchises fall to the haymaker's scythe in 'Mowing', and a cluster of wild flowers is the symbol of a transcendent communion between two individuals engaged in analogous haymaking tasks, separate in time, in 'The Tuft of Flowers'. Another poem, 'Flower-Gathering', written for Elinor, concerns her young husband not infrequently being out botanising in the Allenstown countryside for hours at a time.⁶

³ Lawrence Thompson, *Robert Frost, The Early Years 1874–1915* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), p.217. Burell and his grandfather subsequently helped Frost manage the Derry farm, in New Hampshire, where the Frost family lived for ten years (1900–1911) before coming to England. The farm has been preserved as an Historic Site dedicated to the poet's memory, and may be visited.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp.217–9. 'Range-Finding' appears in Frost's third collection *Mountain Interval*, published in 1916.

⁵ The Snakemouth orchid, or Rose pogonia, *Pogonia ophioglossoides*, is a species of orchid occurring from central Canada to the east-central and eastern United States. The flower is pollinated by bees, and is found in moist habitats.

⁶ Frost married Elinor Miriam White in 1895. At the time of the Allenstown holiday, Elinor was expecting their first child.

THE OLD PRINTING HOUSE, 18 RED LION COURT

Peter Robins

In chapter XXVII of *Amaryllis at the Fair* Jefferies depicts the printing works at the Taylor & Francis' building in Red Lion Court, just off Fleet Street. Both of Richard Jefferies' grandfathers worked for Taylor's printing company where they became good friends.

Smoking was forbidden in the old House of Flamma because of the worm-eaten beams, the worm-eaten rafters and staircase, the dusty, decayed bookshelves, the dry, rotten planks of the floor, the thin wooden partitions, all ready to catch fire at the mere sight of a match. Also because of the piles of mouldy books which choked the place, and looked fit for nothing but a bonfire, but which were worth thousands of pounds; the plates and lithographic stones, artists' proofs, divers and sundry Old Masters in a room upstairs, all equally destructible.



THE CEILINGED ROOM IN RED LION COURT

From a drawing by Hanslip Fletcher

A drawing of a room at 18 Red Lion Court has recently come to light supporting Jefferies' description. The ornate ceiling is on the first floor and the windows look out on to Crane Court. The artist was Hanslip Fletcher who contributed drawings to W.G. Bell's books *Unknown London* and *More About Unknown London* published by Bodley Head in 1919 and 1921 respectively. The ceiling appeared in the later volume.

Walter George Bell was a London historian who poked about in the nooks and crannies of the capital, opening cupboards in ancient churches, delving into basements and finding subjects of interest in old buildings. Many of those featured in his books didn't survive the Blitz. Red Lion Court was undamaged by the war but a fire at the building in 1971 vindicated Jefferies' prescience.

The picture was also reproduced in *The Lamp of Learning: Taylor & Francis and the Development of Science Publishing* by W.H. Brock & A.J. Meadows (London: Taylor & Francis, 1984).

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There is a plaque in Red Lion Court that reads:

RED LION COURT

W CASLON JUNR  
LETTER FOUNDER

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR  
STUVWXYZÆCE



In 1816 William Caslon IV produced the first sans-serif printing type popularised by printers like R Taylor who worked in this court.

## MORE ON JEFFERIES' TEXT USED IN EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

An extract from 'The Pageant of Summer' was suggested for student exams in junior and primary education in Canada 1896. The advice was published in *Exercises in Rhetoric: with examination papers for use of candidates preparing for the primary examination*, edited by J.E. Wetherill B.A. (Toronto: The Copp, Clark Company Ltd., 1897). The editor noted: 'The exercises and examination papers collected here have been found serviceable in the editor's own classes, and he now publishes them in this handy form with the hope that many other teachers may find them an aid. Indeed, it is believed that a thorough mastery of all the matter covered by these exercises will be a sufficient preparation for the departmental examination in rhetoric.'

JUNIOR LEAVING AND PRIMARY, 1896. Examination paper 11.

As the wind, wandering over the sea, takes from each wave an invisible portion, and brings to those on shore the ethereal essence of ocean, so the air lingering among the woods and hedges—green waves and billows—became full of fine atoms of summer. Swept from notched hawthorn leaves, broad-topped oak leaves, narrow ash sprays and oval willows; from vast elm cliffs and sharp-taloned brambles under; brushed from the waving grasses and stiffening corn, the dust of the sunshine was borne along and breathed. Steeped in flower and pollen to the music of bees and birds, the stream of the atmosphere became a living thing. It was life to breathe it for the air itself was life. The strength of the earth went up through the leaves into the wind. Fed thus on the food of the Immortals, the heart opened to the width and depth of the summer—to the broad horizon afar, down to the minutest creature in the grass, up to the highest swallow. Winter shows us Matter in its dead form, like the primary rocks, like granite and basalt—clear but cold and frozen crystal. Summer shows us Matter changing into life, sap rising from the earth through a million tubes, the alchemic power of light entering the solid oak; and see! it bursts forth in countless leaves. Living things leap in the grass, living things drift upon the air, living things are coming forth to breathe in every hawthorn bush. No longer does the immense weight of Matter—the dead, the crystallized—press ponderously on the thinking mind. The whole office of Matter is to feed life—to feed the green rushes, and the roses that are about to be; to feed the swallows above, and us that wander beneath them. So much greater is this green and common rush than all the Alps.

Richard Jefferies

### Questions

1. What is the main theme of the paragraph, and where is it most clearly stated?
2. Point out any rhetorical devices by which the author makes the language forcible and impressive.
3. In what respects does the language of the extract differ from that of plain prose description? Illustrate by quotation or reference.

O CUCKOO!

Peter Robins

Two letters appeared in *The Saturday Review*, a weekly newspaper covering politics, literature, science and art, in the issues of 28 March and 4 April 1914 concerning Jefferies' apparent incorrect distinction of the gender of the cuckoo in *The Gamekeeper at Home*.

THE CUCKOO

2, Hare court, Temple, E.C.  
21 March 1914.

Sir—Can any of your readers explain why Richard Jefferies in his “Gamekeeper at Home” consistently refers to the cuckoo as “she”?<sup>1</sup> As far as I can trace, all other birds in the same book are “he” or “it”—the hawk, the crow, and so on. Yet, referring to the cuckoo, he distinctly writes “her song”.

Looking up what concerns the bird in the “Natural History of Selborne”, I find that White avoids any gender in this connection. Turning to Shakespeare, he has it, of course, in the famous lyric “thus sings he”, and in all other cases I think the implication is that “the plain song cuckoo gray” is male or at least hermaphrodite. This is in contradistinction to “the nightingale if she should sing by day” (“Merchant of Venice”), “my nightingale”, addressed by Antony to Cleopatra, and “nightly she sings” (“Romeo and Juliet”).

Perhaps Jefferies may have been influenced unconsciously by a country saying which he quotes, “She cries as she flies”. From what part of the country then does this come? Is “she” ever used in the masculine sense, as Scott makes his Highlanders sometimes use it?

Yours obediently,  
F.F. MONTAGUE

A response to Montague's letter was published in *The Saturday Review* in the following week's issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Ed: Smith, Elder & Co 1878, pp.87-88

THE CUCKOO

Hertford,  
30 March 1914.

Sir—May I be permitted, for the information of Mr. F.F. Montague, to quote—purely from memory—lines my mother used to sing as a lullaby sixty years ago in West Cornwall:—

The cuckoo is a fine bird,  
She sings as she flies;  
She brings us good tidings,  
She tells us no lies.  
She sucks the sweet flowers  
To make her voice clear,  
For when she sings “Cuckoo”  
The summer is near.

Yours faithfully,  
J. P. S.

Although J. P. S. attributed the lullaby to West Cornwall, c.1840s it was a traditional folk song, ‘The Cuckoo’, and published as early as 1780-1812 as a broadside ballad by a London printer (see illustration), copies of which are held by the Bodleian Library. The original text differs from the verse given by J. P. S. as the last four lines read:

She sucks all the bird’s eggs  
To make her voice clear,  
And never sings Cuckoo  
Till the summer draws near.



It seems more than likely, as Mr. Montague suggested, that Jefferies having written ‘As we approach, the cuckoo sings passing overhead; “she sings as she flies” is the common country saying’ he inadvertently spent the next three paragraphs referring to the cuckoo as ‘she’ when it is the male that makes the *cu-ckoo* call, the female only a rich, bubbling sound.

## The Cuckoo

*The Gamekeeper at Home* was made up from twenty-four unsigned parts (plus three previously published) which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* between 4 Jan-24 April 1878. At the same time Jefferies was contracted to the *Live Stock Journal* for a weekly column and was seeking additional work. Deadlines were tight and the slip is unfortunate but understandable.

## THE JEFFERIES' BAKERY AND GROCERY REVISITED

Jean Saunders

Just over two years ago I wrote about John Jefferies' shop and dwelling house on the corner of the Market Square and High Street in Old Swindon.<sup>2</sup> New information has come to light based on maps, films and photographs. Received knowledge is that the building no longer existed and I, for one, had no idea that the Town Hall/Corn Exchange was built and attached to the Jefferies' home during the time that the family lived there.

Some time between the 1841 and 1851 censuses John Jefferies moved his family from Newport Street to the High Street. John had been called back to Swindon by his father to run the bakery and mill between 1816 and 1817 as his elder brother, James Luckett, needed help. The location of that bakery has not been established but recent evidence, from a map drawn by a 14 year-old boy in 1804, reveals a building marked 'Mr Jefferies' about 100 yards further along the Coate Road (now the Marlborough Road) and close to Mill Lane (more about this in the next newsletter).

In 1841<sup>3</sup> Richard Jefferies' father (also named James Luckett) was already running the family farm at Coate with his sister Sarah until she returned home. James had married Elizabeth Gyde in September 1844. In young Richard Jefferies' time his grandfather John, grandmother Fanny, aunts Mary and Sarah, and John Luckett Jefferies, the artist, all lived and worked together at the High Street.<sup>4</sup> James was the first of John's children to marry and have children so it must have been a delight when Ellen was born on 23 July 1845, followed by brother Richard on 6 November 1848. But delight turned to horror when, after a visit to her grandfather's home on 10 February 1851, Ellen was killed accidentally on the Coate Road by a runaway horse and gig.

Richard Jefferies names the High Street as Black Jack Street<sup>5</sup> in *Amaryllis at the Fair*. Grandfather Iden asks Amaryllis to read some notes that he had made about the area:

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Jefferies' grandfather, portrayed as Grandfather Iden in *Amaryllis at the Fair*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Richard Jefferies Society Autumn Newsletter* 2019, pp.13–17.

<sup>3</sup> 1841 census information. John Luckett's occupation is recorded as 'farmer'.

<sup>4</sup> 1851 census.

<sup>5</sup> Black Jack Street, one of the oldest streets in Cirencester, would have been known by Jefferies during his time as chief journalist for the *Wilts & Glos Standard* whose office was nearby.

## Articles

'In 1840,' read Amaryllis, 'there were only two houses in Black Jack Street.' 'Only two houses!' she interposed, artfully.

'Two,' said the grandfather.

'One in 1802,' went on Amaryllis, 'while in 1775 the site was covered with furze.' 'How it has changed!' she said.

He nodded, and coughed, and smiled; his great grey hat rocked on his head and seemed about to extinguish him.

'There's a note at the bottom in pencil, grandpa. It says, A hundred voters in this street, 1884.'

'Ah!' said the old man, an ah! so deep it fetched his very heart up in coughing. When he finished, Amaryllis read on: 'In 1802 there were only ten voters in the town.' (Ch.XI)

Jefferies describes:

The step to Grandfather Iden's door consisted of one wide stone of semi-circular shape, in which the feet of three generations of customers had worn a deep groove. The venerable old gentleman, for he was over ninety, was leaning on the hatch (or lower half of the door), in the act of handing some of his cakes to two village girls who had called for them... He took Amaryllis by the arm as she stood on the step and pulled her into the shop. (Ch.X)

John's granddaughter, Fanny Hall, described the house as follows:

A large, rambling place, it held a mysterious charm for us all. Built on three sides of a square—the fourth being occupied by sheds of sorts—and a large back door leading out into the Square. On one side were the kitchen and outhouses: on another the best parlour—over it the best bedroom—and an alcove leading out from which were three bedrooms facing the street, as well as a large 'front-room' with a delightful window looking up the whole length of High Street; a storey higher, three more bedrooms, one of them approached by a tortuous passage and another with steps leading down to it, with mysterious trapdoors, from which we were all excluded.

The Dining Room, normally called 'Grandpa's Room', was pleasant, and we liked it because high up in a corner cupboard was kept a plentiful supply of sugar candy in a wooden bowl! There were two staircases: one leading from the kitchen had the bedroom occupied by Grandfather; then came a largish space in which stood a big box-mangle, which I recollect seeing the aunts and maid using laboriously, and on which I recollect seeing collected once about 20 or 30 huge straw bonnets evidently being turned out during a spring-clean. Then came a long, dark passage, which we usually scrambled through as speedily as possible, then another stairway leading down to the huge bake house itself, and

so to the ground floor.<sup>6</sup>

Fanny's brother Joseph Hall remembers:

The front room was the state apartment of the house... What a delightful old-world room it was! Solid Georgian furniture; paintings by a deceased son of the house, who had been a Royal Academy student; and big, glazed book-cases, holding the literary treasures of John Jefferies—a great attraction to Richard, these...The wide window, with the capacious, cushioned window seats, overlooked the market square; it was here that Amaryllis peeped out at the wonders of the fair.<sup>7</sup>

John Luckett Jefferies (the Royal Academy student) sketched his home around 1846, before the Corn Exchange was built. The first drawing is familiar and shows the shop on the left and the living quarters to the right.

In the second John Luckett pencils 'Corner of old Jefferies house in Swindon' that indicates that this was a view from the rear of the house, and suggests an extension built at right-angles on the back.



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<sup>6</sup> Fanny Hall, 'Old Swindon in the 1850s and 60s,' *Wiltshire Folklife Society Journal*, pp.23-24. Undated.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Hall, 'Cupid at Coate,' *Worthing Cavalcade*, p.36.





‘Corner of old Jefferies house in Swindon’

The Swindon Corn Exchange is a well-known landmark in Old Town albeit that it has been left to decay for many years. It was put in the top 10 of historic buildings at risk by the Victorian Society in 2019. Richard Jefferies mentions it in a series of articles published in the *North Wilts Herald* in 1867–8.<sup>8</sup> Headed ‘Modern Swindon’ the relevant piece appeared on 19 October 1867. Jefferies informs that bull-baiting was once carried out in the Square<sup>9</sup> and that:

Swindon once boasted a market-house, just as it now boasts a corn exchange; the difference being that, whereas the modern building is a substantial erection of stone, the place was supported upon oaken pillars. It was pulled down in the year 1793. Close by stood the stocks and whipping- post, which were taken down about the same time.

The Town Hall, built between 1852–54, shared walls with the Jefferies’ shop and dwelling house. The building work continued until 1866 adding a massive Corn Exchange behind the Town Hall along with an imposing tower, enclosing the Jefferies’ home even further. The OS map for 1894–1903 (see next page) reveals that the Jefferies’ property was T-shaped abutting the Town Hall. This tallies with John Lockett’s sketch of the rear of the house.

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<sup>8</sup> The articles were collected in *Jefferies Land: A History of Swindon and its Environs* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1896), edited by Grace Toplis.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.73. Toplis noted that bull-baiting probably lasted up to 1812.

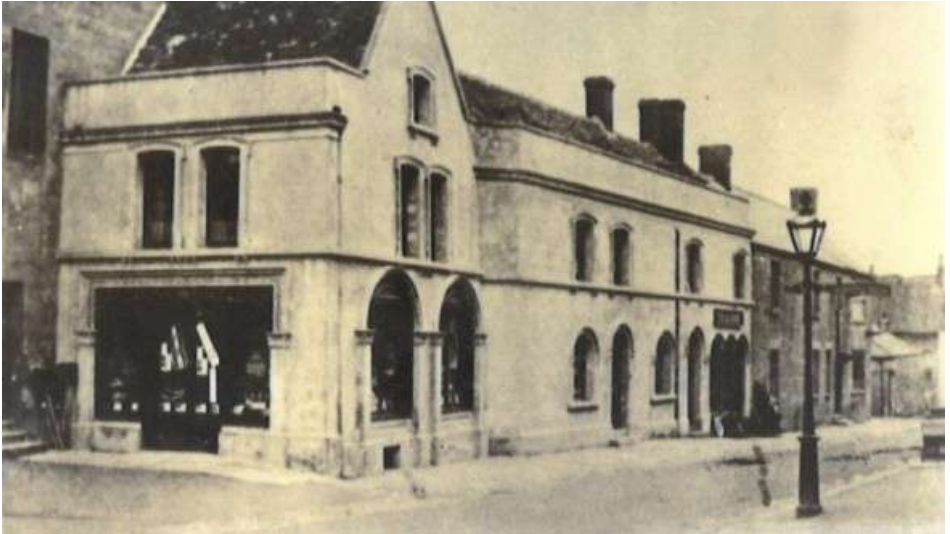


The Jefferies' family must have had to put up with a considerable amount of noise, inconvenience and mess during development that engulfed their home leaving them virtually no outdoor space and little light. No doubt John Jefferies' famous lardy cakes contained a certain amount of dust!

John's brother James died in January 1850, his son John Luckett died of tuberculosis on 3 August 1856, followed by his wife Fanny just two years later (3 March 1858). By the 1861 census John's daughter Eliza had moved in with her husband, George Sewell, to run the family business and they inherited the house and shop when John died in November 1868. Both of John's daughters Mary (in 1862) and Sarah (in 1864) had died by then. So many deaths in a household over a relatively short period of time that one wonders if the building work for the Corn Exchange added to their demise. By 1872 the Sewells were advertising the shop/house to be let and by 1874 George Sewell died as well. Presumably the shop was sold then.

There are some superb old photographs in online records. The first, taken circa 1890, shows the former Jefferies' shop and house, which, no doubt, was pulled down when the High Street was widened.

## Articles



Corner of the Market Square and High Street, 1890. The gable end wall of the Town Hall/Corn Exchange is just visible to the left of the shop.

The next image, from the Arkell's Collection, shows the time when George Cosser (b. 1847 in Hampshire) and Glendower Bond (b. 1876 Bristol) operated the grocer's shop during the late 1890s.



The shop and dwelling house was then taken over by William Akerman who appears on the 1901 census at 25 High Street and is shown in the 1904 picture. Brown and Plummer, wine merchants, occupied the premises from the 1930s until the late 1960s when it was bought by Arkells, the brewery.



Corn Exchange and Grocery, 1904



Brown and Plummer, wine merchants. Date unknown.

## Articles

A recent discovery of a film on YouTube<sup>10</sup> about the current state of the Corn Exchange revealed some interesting footage. An overhead view showed the extent of the dereliction of the building that has no roof with nothing but the facade, tower, and exterior walls standing.

But the film showed a curious white building next to the Corn Exchange that looked out of place. A search on Googlemaps street-view of the High Street, dated October 2020, showed more. The clip, reproduced on the next page, shows the boarded-up Corn Exchange. The old stonework of the wall of the former Jefferies' shop can be seen clearly in the gable-end wall. Next to this is a sorry-looking house, set back from the road, painted white and with a blue door. This was the curious building I had spotted from the air and I believe that this is likely to be the remains of the tail-end section of the T-shaped Jefferies' home suggesting that the building was not completely knocked down as formerly believed to be the case.

Examination of the Land Registry title document, dated 4 February 2000, reveals it to be known as 'The Forum and Link Block, High Street, Marlborough Road, Old Town, Swindon' which includes the large office block that was occupied by HSBC bank until 23 October 2020.

In Jefferies' time there was a drapery next to their home and then next along was the Mason's Arms (formerly known as 'The Lamb' and so called in *Amaryllis*)—all this was replaced by the offices.

Further digging revealed that the inside of the little white house had been gutted and refurbished as a toilet block for the offices.<sup>11</sup>

The property is currently owned by Holmhurst Limited, incorporated in the British Virgin Islands!

On 15 January 2020 Swindon Council granted Holmhurst Limited permission for change of use of the building from an office to flats. Whilst no detailed planning application has come forward, the draft plan shows the remains of the old Jefferies' house as the entrance to twenty flats whilst the second floor was reserved as a bicycle storage area.

And now it is, no doubt, too late to do anything to commemorate a building that was so important in Jefferies' life and in the story of *Amaryllis at the Fair*.

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<sup>10</sup> The History of the Swindon Corn Exchange,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SR2MGuevco>

<sup>11</sup> Telephone conversation with A. Ricab, architect, on 1 February 2022.





High Street, Swindon, October 2020. Left to right: boarded-up Corn Exchange with old stonework revealing the common wall with the Jefferies' shop; inset white building with blue door—likely to be the tail-end part of the T-shaped Jefferies' home; office block recently occupied by HSBC.



## THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

1 January to 31 December 2021

The Richard Jefferies Society was founded in 1950 and is registered with the Charity Commission. Charity Number: 1042838.

Registered contact: Jean Saunders, Hon. Secretary, The Old Mill, Foulsham, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5RB. Tel: 01362 683210.

The RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY (referred to as the SOCIETY in this report) is governed by a Constitution that is agreed by its Members and approved by the Charity Commission.

The OBJECTS of the SOCIETY are:

1. To promote interest in, and respect for the life and works of Richard Jefferies.
2. To hold meetings of its members and others, at which lectures may be given bearing on the life, work and times of Richard Jefferies.
3. To maintain a collection of and help make available to members copies of the works of Richard Jefferies and associated literature.
4. To monitor and protect as far as possible the buildings and countryside associated with Richard Jefferies.
5. To provide members with news and information about Richard Jefferies by means of a newsletter and/or journal.

The SOCIETY has a special concern for such places as the writer's birthplace (now a Museum run by the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust but owned by Swindon Borough Council), Coate Water, Liddington Hill, and the memorial stone on Burderop Down—all in Wiltshire. Other places of pilgrimage are places where Jefferies lived in Surbiton, Sydenham and Eltham near London, and Brighton, Crowborough and Goring-by-Sea, Sussex, where he died in 1887. His grave is in Broadwater Cemetery at Worthing.

MEMBERSHIP of the SOCIETY is open to all individuals/families, corporate bodies, learned societies, public libraries, schools and similar institutions who are interested in the objects of the SOCIETY as defined above. Members pay an annual subscription, due on 1 January, the rates of which are agreed at the AGM. There were 200 Members at 31 December 2021, mainly based in the UK, but also in Europe, USA, New Zealand, Australia and Canada.

The following people joined the SOCIETY in 2021: Colin Blundell, Ben Brown, Anne Clark, Hugh Close, Elizabeth Derrington, Frankie Douglas, Ian

Hook, Louise Hurrell, Carol Low, Fiona Oakley, Rosemary Savage, Elizabeth Westby and Trevor Winkfield. Regrettably six members died. The Facebook group has 223 members—mainly a different audience with only a small percentage of actual SOCIETY members. The Twitter account has over 250 followers.

The SOCIETY is managed by an Executive Council who meet three times a year in February, June and October. Executive Council Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting held in May. All elected Executive Council Members are Trustees, registered with the Charity Commission, and Members of the SOCIETY apart from the Honorary Vice Presidents who are appointed for life. There are no paid staff. The Treasurer, Secretary and President are appointed for a 5 year term of office; the Vice President, once elected, also holds the position for life. Other Council Members are elected for a 3 year term of office and other officers (e.g. Chair and Vice Chair) are appointed by the Executive Council. The Executive Council can co-opt Members, as required, but these have no voting rights. Colin Corkerton was co-opted in November 2021.

Members of Executive Council at 8 May 2021 (\* not a trustee)

| <b>Name</b>          | <b>Office</b>                    |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr Peter Bainbridge  | Member. Re-elected to 2023       |
| Mr Simon Coleman     | Member. Re-elected to 2023       |
| Prof Patrick Dillon  | Vice Chair. Re-elected to 2022   |
| Prof Roger Ebbatson  | Member. Re-elected to 2023       |
| Mrs Margaret Hunt    | Swindon Sec. Re-elected to 2022. |
| Professor Eric Jones | Hon. Vice President*             |
| Mr John Price        | Vice President. Elected 2020     |
| Dr Mike Pringle      | Member. Re-elected to 2023       |
| Mr Andrew Rossabi    | President. Re-elected to 2026    |
| Mrs Jean Saunders    | Secretary. Re-elected to 2026    |
| Mr Tom Saunders      | Treasurer. Elected to 2023       |
| Prof Barry Sloan     | Chair. Re-elected to 2023        |
| Mr Richard Stewart   | Hon. Vice President*             |
| Lady Phyllis Treitel | Hon. Vice President*             |
| Dr Rebecca Welshman  | Member. Re-elected to 2024       |



## *Annual Report*

The SOCIETY's FINANCIAL YEAR coincides with the Membership year and calendar year. The main source of funds arises from Membership subscriptions and donations that attract Gift Aid. Book sales account for some income. Book stocks are estimated at £1,000 at the end of this financial year. There were no grants received during the year and no bursaries awarded. The annual income is normally in the region of £5,000 a year and well below the Charity Commission's requirement to supply a published Annual Report. The SOCIETY holds a current bank account with Lloyds Bank (Swindon), a savings account with the Coventry Building Society and a Paypal account. The Examiner of the Accounts is elected each year by its Members at the AGM.

The SOCIETY obtains permission from Members to hold their contact details on a database under the General Data Regulation Act. That information is only used for communication purposes (e.g. sending out newsletters etc.) and is not divulged to a third party. On termination of Membership, information held is removed from the database.

The SOCIETY has Professional Indemnity Insurance with Markel Insurance.

The SOCIETY provides a research bursary for projects that promote a new understanding of Richard Jefferies thanks to the former Jefferies Land Conservation Trust which transferred assets of £20,000 to the SOCIETY in December 2013 on the understanding that these would be used for educational purposes.

The SOCIETY awards an annual literary prize of £1,000 for excellence in nature writing in memory of the late John Webb, former Society librarian and benefactor. He left a legacy of £25,000 in 2014. The Richard Jefferies Award is sponsored by the White Horse Bookshop, Marlborough (who donate half the prize money) and was first introduced in 2015. The Society manages a dedicated website for the Award: richardjefferiesaward.org. The judging panel, drawn from the SOCIETY's Executive Council and a representative from the White Horse Bookshop, deserve praise for their contribution, expertise and for giving their time and service freely.

Where possible the SOCIETY provides financial support to care for Jefferies' family graves through a dedicated Grave Fund supported by Members, albeit much good work is carried out for free by local Members.

The SOCIETY's website is a rich resource of information that is made freely available to the public. There is a Facebook group and Twitter account. There is an email group for Members wishing to receive news items of interest throughout the year.

The SOCIETY organises Meetings and Lectures that take place by Zoom in

winter months as well as a Spring Lecture and Birthday Lecture.

The SOCIETY is a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies, the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and the Eltham Society.

The main activities of the SOCIETY centre on the dissemination of information, publications, meetings, the Richard Jefferies Award and support for Jefferies-related activities. Indeed the advances in social media are such that the SOCIETY now reaches thousands of people around the world. The website alone attracts an average of 5,000 page views a month and keeps the public informed of activities, publications and news as well as providing free access to information and documents that can be downloaded.

The Richard Jefferies Award grows from strength to strength and attracts a growing number of nominations each year. Benedict Macdonald and Nicholas Gates won the latest prize for *Orchard* and this generated a considerable amount of publicity for the SOCIETY and the authors.

Spring and Autumn newsletters were produced and distributed to Members, and made available to the public for free via the online facility and social media.

The SOCIETY's Summer *Journal* was produced and distributed to major libraries and to Members, as well as to the public via the online facility. The principal aim of the *Journal* is to present material by Jefferies that has not been published or reprinted, or that is difficult to obtain, together with articles about Jefferies, items of research and discovery, synopses of talks and lectures, book reviews, material relating to where Jefferies lived, and correspondence.

An Annual General Meeting was held on 8 May 2021 in accordance with the Constitution. This was the first AGM to be held by Zoom and all Members were able to vote on Agenda items by postal ballot.

The SOCIETY maintains a stock of Richard Jefferies' works that are available for purchase by the public or our Members as well as publications produced under the SOCIETY's imprint: Petton Books.

The SOCIETY maintains an extensive library of books, along with archives, family memorabilia and documentation related to the SOCIETY or Richard Jefferies. The most important archives, that include original manuscripts and letters, are accessible at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre or are on loan to the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust. Other archives are stored by members of the SOCIETY.

The SOCIETY provides speakers on Richard Jefferies to other Societies, organisations and educational establishments.

## *Annual Report*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SPRING LECTURE  
RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM,  
MARLBOROUGH ROAD, COATE, SWINDON SN3 6AA  
SATURDAY 7 MAY 2022 11am–3.30pm

This year the AGM and the Spring Lecture (see p.5) will take place at the Richard Jefferies Museum, courtesy of the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust. A Zoom element will be in place for those who have access to the Internet.

. The Museum will be open from 10.30am.

### AGENDA for Annual General Meeting from 11am

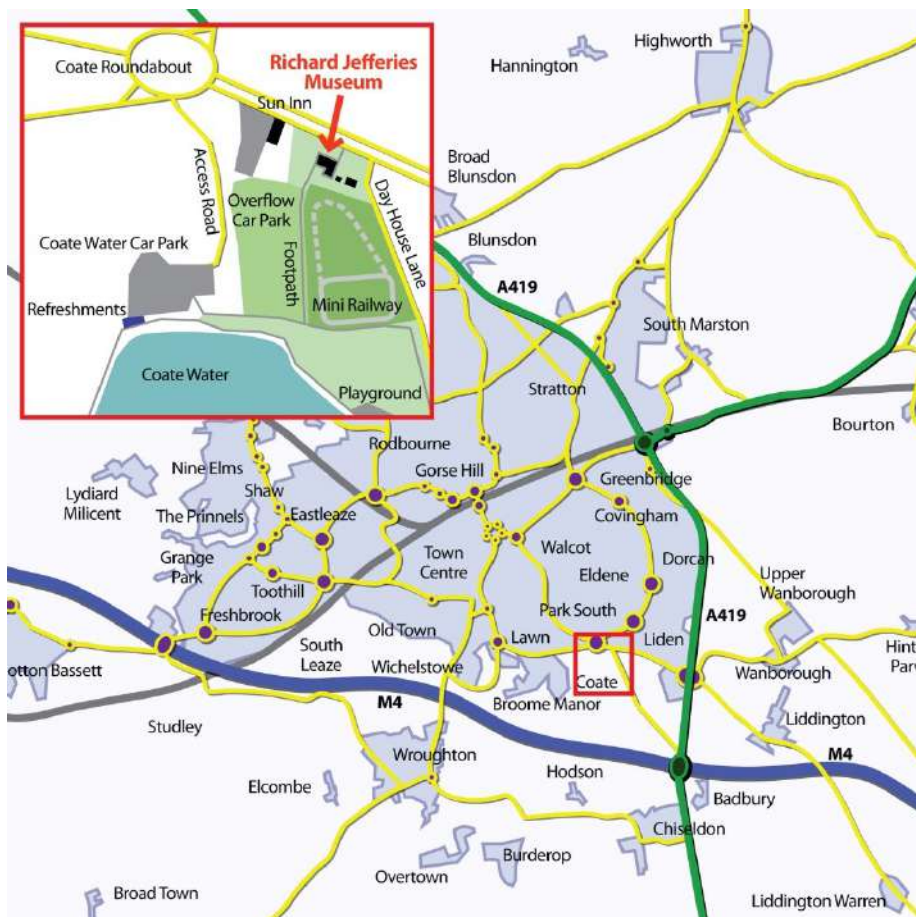
- 1 From the Chair
- 2 Minutes of the last AGM, 8 May 2021 (see pp.74–77)
- 3 Matters Arising
  - 3.1 Richard Jefferies Award
  - 3.2 Richard Jefferies Museum Trust
  - 3.3 Graves: Broadwater Cemetery, St Piran's, Christ Church
- 4 Annual Report
- 5 Treasurer's Report (see pp.78–79)
- 6 Election of Examiner of Accounts: Rob Brailsford.
- 7 Elections to Executive Council.

The Executive Council has nominated Colin Corkerton as a new member and trustee. A vote of thanks is extended to Margaret Hunt, Patrick Dillon and to Simon Coleman who have stood down.
- 8 Motions (none proposed)
- 9 Any Other Business

Any motions or resolutions for debate should be sent to the Hon. Sec. before 1 April 2022, as should nominations for Executive Council members. Both should be proposed and seconded.

Lunch from 1-2pm. Please bring a packed lunch.

2–3.30pm SPRING LECTURE: The Old House at Coate. Dr. Mike Pringle.



### Buses

There are several buses (e.g. 1, 1A, 3, 12, 13A, 14A) from Fleming Way in the town centre, a few minutes walk from the railway station. Ask for the Sun Inn, Coate, and you'll be dropped at the petrol station opposite the Museum. Some coaches from London stop here too.

Parking at Coate Water Car Park, a short walk to the Museum. It is a Pay-and-Display car park with a charge of £2.00 for the day.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

held on Saturday 8 May 2021 by Zoom and postal Ballot.

PRESENT: Pete Bainbridge, Richard Bidgood, Tim Bowly, Gillian Bromhead, Colin Corkerton, Patrick Dillon, Malcolm Dixon, Roger Ebbatson, Norma Goodwin, Eric Jones, Lucille Kelleher, Michael Parrott, John Price, Mike Pringle, Andrew Rossabi, John Sanders, Jean Saunders, Rosemary Savage, Michael Sherwood, Barry Sloan, Tony Taylor, Adrian Thomas, and Rebecca Welshman.

VOTING by Ballot and passing on apologies: Rod Attwood, Margaret Bathe, Henk Beentje, Andy Binks, Jonathan Ellington, Brian Emery, Margaret Gould, Carlos Hood, Margaret Hunt, Eileen Matthews, Piers Maynard, Brian Morris, Gideon Perret, Michael Ponting, Peter Robins, Tom Saunders, Michael Stagg, Richard Stewart and Tim Walsh.

1. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Barry Sloan welcomed Members to our first AGM to be held by Zoom.

2. MINUTES OF LAST AGM

The minutes of the last meeting, held by ballot on 9 May 2020, were accepted as a true record of proceedings. Proposed by Barry Sloan, seconded by John Price and carried by Members. A copy of the minutes was signed as correct.

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 RJS & White Horse Bookshop Literary Prize

A decision on the winner of the best 2020 publication will be agreed by the judging panel on 17 May. An announcement will appear on our website a week later. John Price reported that Ben Macdonald, last year's winner, has been invited to give a talk about *Rebirding* for the Marlborough LitFest that runs from 30 Sept-3 Oct 2021 and in association with the RJS/White Horse Bookshop Literary Award.

3.2 Publications and Books

Andrew Rossabi was invited to update members on the progress of Vol III of the biography. He had just completed the chapters on *Round About a Great Estate* and felt it was quite possible that Jefferies had returned to his homeland to revisit places of interest to refresh his memories. Jefferies' father, James Luckett, stayed with his son for about 3 weeks around this time and it is clear that James provided his son with a considerable amount of information for the book.

### 3.3 Richard Jefferies Museum Trust

Mike Pringle updated progress and was relieved to announce that the Museum might open on 17 May but that there had been no guidelines or rules issued by government as to how this might be done. A Government grant covered potential financial problems during lockdown and the volunteers have been able to get on with many jobs in the house and gardens. The planning application for the reinstatement of the old cowshed, that would serve the purpose of another function room, is complete but has not been submitted to Swindon Council yet. The Society will be pleased to add their support for the project. The *Wild Life* book is still awaiting a Foreword from an A-list celebrity before final publication. Mike gave a talk about the book at the Swindon Festival of Literature last week.

### 3.4 Broadwater Cemetery, St Piran's churchyard, Christ Church churchyard

Micheal Parrott reported that the Friends of Broadwater Cemetery have been unable to meet for some time but he visited Jefferies' grave and the Memorial Garden at Broadwater Cemetery very recently. He has polished the brass on the bench in the Memorial Garden and the mulberry tree was looking healthy. The marble on Jefferies' grave tends to suffer with crystal formation but Mike has cleaned this off and it all looks shiny again. With regard to the fractured kerb stone at the foot of W.H. Hudson's grave, Mike reported that it had fractured before, had been repaired and was more fragile. He advised leaving the kerb stone and propping it up so that the two halves were level.

Jean Saunders reported that there has been no news from the gardener who undertook to care for Jessie Jefferies' grave at St Piran's churchyard, Perranzabuloe. However, Bryan Jones and Jennifer Carpenter (Members who live in Cornwall) visited recently and have volunteered to carry out some weeding and plant wild flowers.

Mike Pringle reported that he has had great difficulty finding anyone in charge at Christ Church, Swindon, who can give the go ahead to restore and/or protect the Jefferies' family tombstones in the churchyard. He has not given up trying.

Barry Sloan proposed a vote of thanks to all those who have helped care for the graves, seconded by Andrew Rossabi and carried.

### 3.5 Bursary Award

Mike Pringle had reported on the *Wild Life* book under Minute Item 3.3. There have been no further applications for the Bursary Award.

4 ANNUAL REPORT

The content of the annual report was accepted as a true record of the Society's activities. Proposed by John Price; seconded by Michael Parrott and carried by Members with one abstention. The abstention arose because of the confusion of including the Annual Report in the Spring Newsletter with no clear definition of what is what. It was agreed that the Executive Council might discuss how matters related to the Annual Report might be separated out better in the newsletter.

5 TREASURER'S REPORT

No questions or clarifications arose. Pete Bainbridge proposed acceptance of the accounts, seconded by Mike Pringle and carried by Members.

6 ELECTION OF EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS. Rob Brailsford, a retired chartered accountant, is willing to continue to offer his services for another year. Proposed by Jean Saunders, seconded by Tim Bowly, carried by members.

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. The Executive Council proposed that all three should be re-elected, seconded by John Price and carried by Members.

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 Executive Council proposed their nomination, seconded by Norma Goodwin and carried by Members.

Barry Sloan reported that the position of Vice Chair remains vacant, and invited Members to volunteer.

8 MOTION. Membership subscription rate. Members considered the following motion formally proposed by the Executive Council:

A new scale of membership subscriptions should be introduced. Subscriptions 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.

There were no questions raised or doubts expressed. Norma Goodwin seconded the motion and this was carried by Members.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Lucille Kelleher (in Canada) suggested that future Society events might have an online video-conferencing element where feasible. There was general support for the idea and perhaps there might be a return to an annual Study Day, more meetings with a speaker and to share readings. Mike Pringle suggested that the Museum might be able to host actual meetings with a video link. It was proposed that the Executive Council should discuss this further and explore what other opportunities might be considered.

9.2 Alison Fure announced a walk in August that will be taking place from Court Farm Fields in Surbiton that will proceed to the Hogsmill Bridge, and end at Jefferies' former home in Surbiton. She was pleased to report that the disease-resistant elm tree that was planted as a memorial to Richard Jefferies next to the Bird Sanctuary at the nature reserve about three years ago is doing very well.

The AGM was closed at 12.20pm.

Jean Saunders  
Hon. Sec.  
9 May 2021



# Annual Report

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Statement for financial period 1 January 2021 - 31 December 2021

| <b><u>Receipts</u></b>           | Unrestricted<br>Funds | Designated<br>Funds | Restricted<br>Funds | <b>Total 2021</b> | <b>Total 2020</b> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Subscriptions</u>             | 2076.60               |                     |                     | 2076.50           | 2181.38           |
| <u>Donations:</u> <i>General</i> | 506.00                | 1400.00             |                     | 1906.00           | 758.82            |
| <i>Grave</i>                     |                       |                     |                     |                   |                   |
| <i>Fund</i>                      | 0.00                  |                     |                     | 0.00              | 453.07            |
| <u>Book</u>                      |                       |                     |                     |                   |                   |
| <u>Sales:</u>                    | 878.77                |                     |                     | 878.77            | 2293.82           |
| <u>Gift Aid Reclaim</u>          | 631.43                |                     |                     | 631.43            | 564.63            |
| <u>Interest received</u>         | 63.17                 |                     |                     | 63.17             | 308.16            |
| <b>Total receipts</b>            | <b>4155.97</b>        | <b>1400.00</b>      | <b>0.00</b>         | <b>5555.87</b>    | <b>6559.88</b>    |

### **Expenditure**

|                                         |                |                |               |                |                 |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <u>Publications</u>                     | 1429.23        |                |               | 1429.23        | 870.58          |
| <u>Rent/Room Hire</u>                   | 143.88         |                |               | 143.88         | 0.00            |
| <u>Subscriptions paid</u>               | 66.00          |                |               | 66.00          | 66.00           |
| <u>Lecture fees</u>                     | 50.00          |                |               | 50.00          | 0.00            |
| <u>Administration</u>                   | 1262.12        |                |               | 1262.12        | 874.04          |
| <u>Insurance</u>                        | 28.00          |                |               | 28.00          | 28.00           |
| <u>Webb Lit. Prize</u>                  |                | 2016.00        |               | 2016.00        | 1042.61         |
| <u>Jefferies Land Fund</u>              |                |                |               |                |                 |
| <u>(JLF)</u>                            |                |                | 132.97        | 132.97         | 2113.95         |
| <u>Gift</u>                             | 25.00          |                |               | 25.00          | 2000.00         |
| <u>Graves</u>                           |                |                |               | 0.00           | 48.00           |
| <u>Biography</u>                        |                |                |               | 0.00           | 3944.44         |
| <b>Total payments</b>                   | <b>3004.23</b> | <b>2016.00</b> | <b>132.97</b> | <b>5153.20</b> | <b>10987.62</b> |
| <b>Excess of receipts over payments</b> |                |                |               | <b>402.67</b>  | <b>-4427.74</b> |

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

as at 31 Dec 2020                      56993.76

as at 31 Dec 2021                      **57396.53**

### **Statement of Assets**

|              |                 |           |                 |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
|              |                 | Biography | 7188.67         | 7188.67         |
|              |                 | Webb Lit. | 21770.11        | 22386.11        |
|              |                 | JLF       | 10946.03        | 11079.00        |
|              |                 | Grave     | 688.57          | 688.57          |
| Cash funds:- |                 |           |                 |                 |
| Bank         | 15426.86        |           |                 |                 |
| Paypal       | 510.40          | General   | 3500.00         | 3500.00         |
| B/Society    | 41,459.27       | Reserves  | <u>13303.15</u> | <u>12151.41</u> |
|              | <b>57396.53</b> |           | <b>57396.53</b> | <b>56993.76</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 and up to £2000 for the Bursary.

The John Webb legacy is 'designated' for the annual Richard Jefferies Award. The Award of £1000 is shared by the White Horse Bookshop who sponsor it. As there were joint authors for *Orchard*, last year, the writers were awarded £1000 each, agreed by the Bookshop. An anonymous donation of £400 was added by a Society member.

There has been no spending on the Rossabi biography this year but Volume III is making progress.

There has been no spending on the graves thanks to member volunteers who have carried out work and have covered expenses.

General funds cover the essential running costs of the Society. This includes the Zoom hosting facility that allows meetings of 100 people for an unlimited time.

Reserves are available for unexpected expenses, gifts etc. The Society made a small gift of £25 to the Marcher Apple Network in thanks for registering the Richard Jefferies Russet.

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 the Society's work.

The Society's Trustees provisionally approved this financial statement at their meeting dated 2 February 2022.

The figures for the yearly receipts and expenditure have been sent to the Charity Commission.

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, dated 14 February 2022, to that effect.

We are most grateful and thankful to him for his good service and advice.

*Tom Saunders*  
Hon. Treasurer.  
15 February 2022


**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 2021**
**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").

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.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

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:**
**Date:**
**14 February 2022**
**Name:**
**Robert Brailsford**
**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body**
**Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales**
**Address:**
**19 Prospect Place, Swindon, SN1 3LQ**



‘A Bit of Southern England’ by J.W. North, 1868



‘Raking Hay’ by J.W. North, 1872