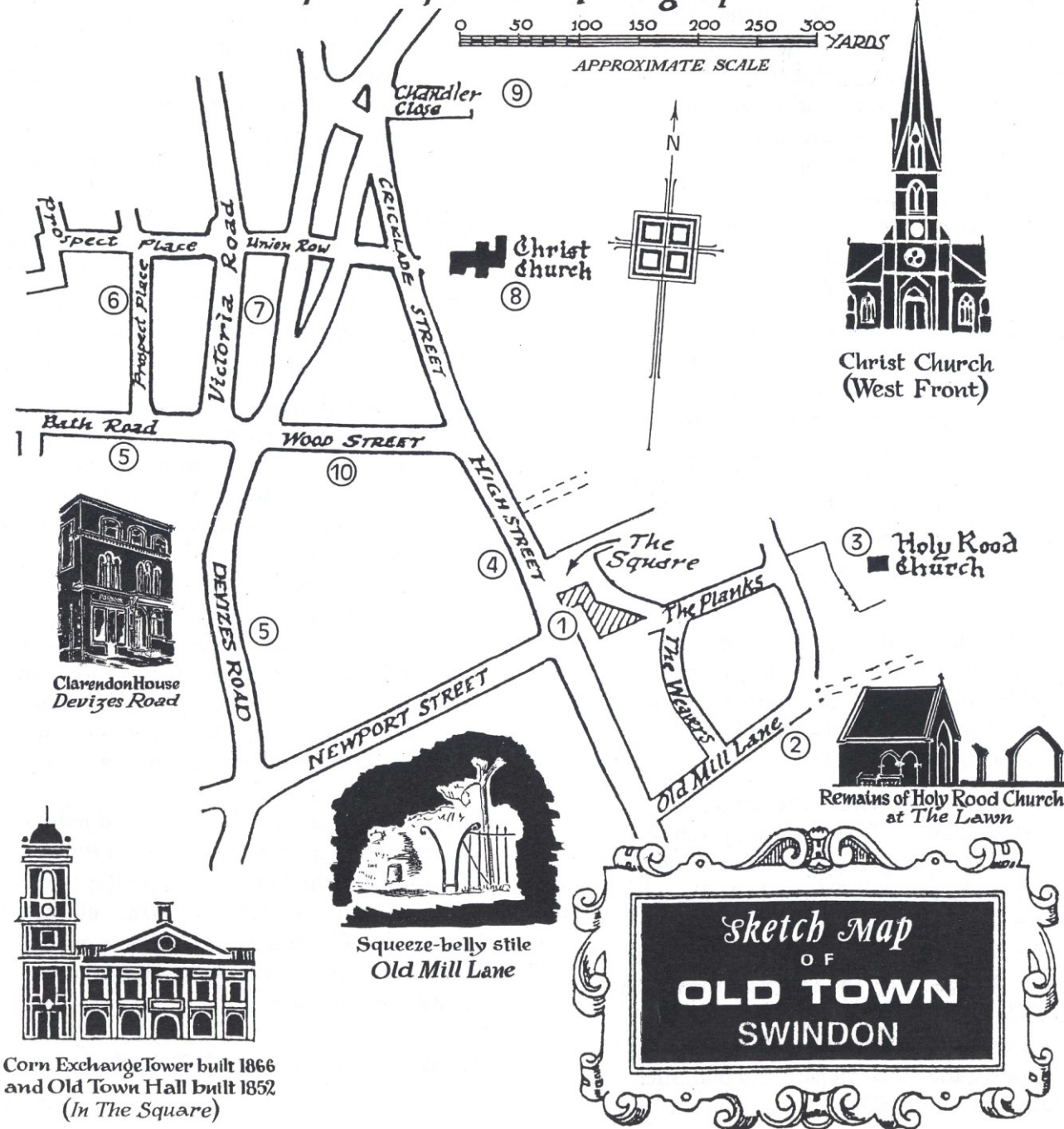


Numbers on the map correspond with paragraph numbers overleaf



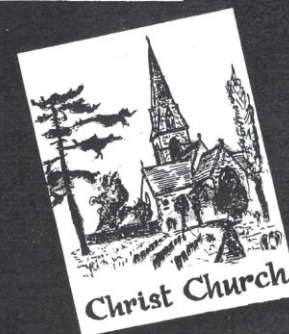
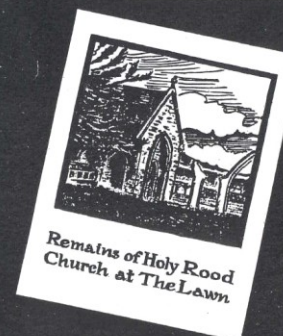
Richard Jefferies

in

Old Town

Swindon

A guided walk



OLD TOWN WALK **In the footsteps of Richard Jefferies.**

The Walk begins at **The Square**.

1 The bakehouse and shop belonging to Richard Jefferies' grandfather, John Jefferies (1784-1868), stood to the right of the Corn Exchange building, fronting the road. The shop has long since been demolished. Richard went there frequently, as a child, and would have found there, also, his aunts Eliza (Sewell), Mary and Sarah.

2 Take the lane leading out of The Square along The Weavers and continue left into Old Mill Lane. On your right is an old 'squeeze-belly' stile. The path beyond it leads to Coate and would have been used by Richard to come and go, on foot. Continue along Old Mill Lane and note the buttresses in the churchyard wall. Close to this spot stood the mill, once in the charge of Richard's great uncle James. The Goddard family mansion, 'The Lawn', now demolished, stood a few yards farther on.

3 On the right stands what is left of Holy Rood Church. The gates are locked but if the key is obtained you may see the box tomb of Richard's great grandfather Richard (1738-1825). Richard, the writer, was baptised here.

4. Return via The Planks to The Square and go into High Street. Notice the Bell Inn, occasionally visited by Richard where, as a young reporter, he would talk with Sir Daniel Gooch and other leading citizens. Cross High Street and walk to Newport

Street. The National School, now pulled down, stood in Newport Street; it was run by a Mr Jenkins, and Richard attended in the evenings in his teens.

5 Turn right into Devizes Road. Richard went to two schools here: Fentimans at Springhill and the Misses Cowell at Clarendon House (corner of Phillips Lane). Continue along Devizes Road and turn left into Bath Road. Number 19 was, in 1866, the premises of the North Wilts Herald. Under its editor, Mr Piper, Richard began, at age 17, his career as a journalist.

6 Cross Bath Road and enter Prospect Place. Only a few houses remain dating from the 1850s. In Prospect Villas (now a car park) the Misses Cowell had a school which Richard attended in 1861.

7 Enter Union Street and cut through to Victoria Road. There is now a plaque on number 93. Here Richard went to live with his bride, Jessie Baden, in 1875, and here their first child, Harold, was born. They left for Long Ditton, London in 1877. At what is now the offices of The Star were the offices of The Swindon Advertiser owned by William Morris (not Morris of Kelmscott). He was a friend to Richard and published some of his works.

8. Cut through Union Row to Christ Church (1831) having crossed Cricklade Street. Richard's grandfather, John, is buried here. Walk into the churchyard; having reached the far end of the church, look right. There is a row of Jefferies' graves with round-topped headstones.

9. OPTIONAL. A few yards below Christ Church is Chandler Close and Holy Rood School. In the grounds are three blocks of stone engraved (1989) with quotations from Jefferies by sculptor Caroline Webb. There are also some seats.

10. Return along Cricklade Street to The Square but do not leave without a brief visit to Wood Street: Richard knew it well. Here, in rooms over 'Lay's Tearooms' (now The Royal Oak), he and Jessie stayed for a short while before moving into 22 Victoria Street (now 93 Victoria Road). In Wood Street were shop properties owned by John Jefferies and bequeathed to Richard's aunts Fanny and Martha. Martha Hall's school was next to the King's Arms.

Richard Jefferies (1848-87) was born at Coate, Swindon. He drew inspiration from nature and his surroundings for his writing. His birthplace and home is now a Museum open to the public.

For more information about Richard Jefferies apply to the:
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Richard Jefferies Society.
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