

THE JEFFERIES-WILLIAMS MEMORIAL SCHEME.

By J B Jones

This project was launched during the early weeks of 1938 in all the six newspapers circulating in North Wilts. The idea was to erect a sarsen-stone (on Liddington Hill) bearing bronze plaques with brief inscriptions. Nothing architectural or obtrusive was at any time contemplated.

One of the two owners of the hill, W.J.Hughes, a farmer, gave a grudging consent to erect (see his letter below); the other, a Mrs. Wilson, was bitterly hostile:- "I will never have a Memorial of ANY sort put on my Downs, I hate the look of them."

Next, people of eminence in North Wilts and outside were approached by letter to discover what amount of public support the scheme was likely to command. The Prime Minister gave a valuable lead when he wrote :-

"In view of his interest in Natural History, Mr. Chamberlain is much interested to learn of the project for a Memorial in honour of Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams. He cannot claim to be a Wiltshireman himself, but the furthest ancestor of whom he has any knowledge "lived at Lacock. If this connexion with the County is a sufficiently strong one, he would be very happy to lend his name in support of the project."

(Numerous other letters of a similar character are given later. In sum, they constitute a striking testimony to the esteem in which our two Wiltshire writers are held by those whose opinion carries weight. Further, the idea of the memorial being a Joint one is generally approved therein.)

I had kept closely in touch with Hughes, and was on the point of having the stone erected when he suddenly and arbitrarily closed our scheme down. Meanwhile the following communications from him had been received by me:-

(1) 22/1/1938. Replying to your letter:- if it is found to be the wish of many that your projected monument be erected on Liddington Hill then I shall not withhold my consent. Actually I am not usually sympathetic towards memorials and surely the works of Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams already serve that purpose. .

(2)10/5/38. Your suggested route is the correct one.

(3)9/5/38. The site you have chosen meets with my approval. I was on the hill this morning and had no difficulty in finding it.

(4)27/5/38. The contractor may start when he likes. I hope he will not leave any holes open during the night which are dangerous for cattle, horses, and sheep. Yes, you may use the route you suggest if you prefer it, but I should have chosen the 'eastern' one as being the smoother of the two, and I expect I know both routes better than any man living.

(5) 9/6/38. *I have been advised not to sign any agreement as to, the site of the proposed memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams. I shall be in Swindon to-morrow evening and will probably give you a call about 6 o'clock.*

(6) 11/6/38. *Further to our conversation of yesterday:- It is my opinion that the adequate measure of public support which was a condition of my permission to allow the proposed erection on my land has not been forthcoming. In addition to appeals in the local Press you admit having issued 150 circulars and written many letters and it appears that only about 50 people are interested.*

As you are already aware I personally do not consider that the proposed memorial will serve any useful purpose and since it would appear that the general public are of the same opinion I herewith withdraw my permission which was always conditional.

Altogether, these statements (in writing) would have been sufficient for us to hold him to his word, but litigation was not to be thought of. Subsequently, Mr. Raymond Thompson (Director and General Manager of the Swindon Press) together with the Editor of the Swindon Advertiser, interviewed Hughes, but failed to move him. He (Hughes) offered them compensation (which was refused), and referred obscurely to some action on the part of his neighbour, Mrs. Wilson, as the cause of his changed attitude. The result was that Liddington Hill was banned us at the very moment of the seeming success of our hopes, and, upon the suggestion of Mr. R. Thompson - his Press has supported the Memorial Scheme all along - a new site was sought in the neighbourhood of Barbury Hill four miles distant.

I quote here a valedictory letter written by me to Hughes at this period. It will throw light upon matters which cannot well be brought into a summary account such as this:-

August 14. 1938.

Dear Mr. Hughes:-

I must ask your serious attention to the letters (or postcards) you wrote me in the Spring of this year in connexion with the proposed ; Memorial to the famous Wiltshire writers, Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams. Letter No.3, and notably the opening sentence of No.4, destroy your main contention that your permission to erect the stone remained "always conditional," (v.No.6).

"The contractor may start when he likes," is decisive of your meaning; its permission is absolute, as you then meant it to be. Consequently you could not, as a man of honour, withdraw such permission except by agreement. In view of what happened in this respect, the inference is obvious. You had evidently forgotten some of the documents in the case. Then, there is the important fact that, at your interview with Messrs. Thompson and Colman, you expressed yourself as ready to make compensation in money. What is this but a further acknowledgment that you had broken your word? We were not asking you for a subscription. Money indeed! Did you think money could atone for the irreparable wrong done by you to the sacred cause of Literature which Jefferies and Williams worthily represent? Could money wipe out your callous disparagement of the hallowed memories of these heroes whom your fellow Wiltshiremen delight to honour? It is to your undying shame that you believed it could.

Posing as a literary Mussolini - "actually I am not usually sympathetic towards memorials;" "I personally do not consider the proposed memorial will serve any useful purpose;" the comedy of this! - you appoint a time-limit to the receipt of our subscriptions, a most impudent and unheard-of course. We had been collecting these for 2-3 months only, and the invariable rule is to allow such collection to proceed until the sum desired is obtained. But to have done so in the present instance would have allowed that "adequate measure of public support" to materialise, when even a breach of faith might not avail.

Had a spark of that good-will usually manifested towards such efforts been shown here, any difficulty that cropped up would have been dispelled immediately. One expected such a work as ours to have been welcomed and facilitated. At Liddington, it is greeted as if it were criminal - "So you are the culprit, are you?"

I wonder whether you also remember thumbnailing your heavy way down my lists of subscribers on a certain day of June last, and counting the Lord Lieutenant of Wilts, the Bishop of Salisbury, the Marquis of Ailesbury, the Marquis of Bath, and the Member of Parliament for the Swindon Division as "FIVE"? Such was the senseless method which was to decide for you what constituted an "adequate measure of public support," a cunning formula which after all has deceived you. These "FIVE" are, in your estimation, mere nobodies. Fortunately for the Jefferies-Williams Memorial Scheme, we have many like them among its subscribers.

A Wiltshireman, you should, at any rate have envisaged the disgrace likely to fall, and now fallen, upon your native county: Mrs. Wilson is, I believe, a stranger to Wilts. Had you possessed a loyal son's affection for his homeland, you might have acted as her good genius. Even our savage ancestors revered the bard, and feared to do him despite. But without, more than physical sight to guide him, a man may lose his way catastrophically. Yours is a case in point.

The beautiful 'grey-wether' of Overton Down, which you have both spurned as an unholy thing, will go, a pledge of love and good omen, elsewhere. This is a tragic happening for Liddington. By every canon of fitness and, even common-sense that noble hill should commemorate the gifted Wiltshiremen whose genius has made its name and fame known world-wide. Yet it is deprived of that right by the sullen obscurantism of so-called "owners" whose only interest in it is "of the earth, earthy;" in their language, and with sickening iteration, "MY DOWNS," "MY LAND."

Whenever admirers of Jefferies and Williams, and they are neither few nor an ill-conditioned rabble, assemble around the sarsen Memorial stone soon to be erected on Barbury Down, they will turn towards Liddington Hill with an eager, instinctive movement, and the inevitable question asked will be:- "But why was this not placed on Liddington?" You, above all others, will best know the searing answer which will make you famous.

Yours, etc., J.B.Jones.

The erection of the sarsen-stone upon Barbury was now the main scheme, but I could not forget the bitter disappointment of Liddington. On its highest point is a concrete pylon for use in the trigonometrical survey of Britain now pending, and the thought occurred to me that it might be possible to place a memorial plaque upon this. I wrote to the Ordnance Survey to enquire if these structures were intended to be permanent. The rest of the story is best developed by means of letters which passed between myself and Major Hotine, Chief of the Trigonometrical and Levelling Department, Southampton.

(1) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones 25 August,1938

"In reply to your letter of the 21st.August,1938, I "am desired by the Director-General to state that the "concrete pillars which have been erected in conjunction "with the new triangulation of Great Britain are not to "be removed when triangular measurements are complete, "but are intended to serve as a permanent record of the "position of these Fundamental Triangulation Stations, "and as readily accessible reference points for the "future maintenance of the National surveys and plans.

(2)From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones;5 September, 1938.

"I must apologise for not answering your letter of August 27 regarding the proposed Jefferies-Williams Memorial sooner, but I have now had an opportunity of consulting the Director-General in the matter and he agrees that we should do all we can to assist you. I enclose a detailed drawing of the pillar, from which you will be able to gauge the size of plaque which would be most suitable. We have a brass fitting in the top of the pillar and a small brass fitting on one side of the pillar, but it would be sufficiently in keeping if your plaque were to be made of bronze. You could, of course, have a completely free choice of wording, except, I suggest, you should not use such words as 'erected to the memory of' or any such suggestion that the pillar has been put up solely for the purpose of a memorial.

It may interest your Committee to know that our triangulation pillar on Gibbet Hill, Hindhead, has an inscribed plaque and a collecting box inserted at the request of the local Committee of the National Trust. We have also a memorial plaque incorporated in our triangulation pillar on Sugar Loaf in South Wales. In the latter case the memorial is to the Viscountess Rhondda and was included at the request of the National Trust, who own the site...

(3) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones, 16 Sept. 1938. Dated from Lichfield

"Your letter of Sept.7 has been following me around the country and I have now also received the reconnaissance party's report.

I do not think there will be any difficulty about putting an inscribed plaque on the Liddington Castle pillar, but there are matters to consider.

We got permission from the landowner to erect 'an Ordnance Survey Triangulation Station,' and I think we should get his further permission to add to it. I do not suppose for a moment there would be any difficulty, and I will write to him as soon as I get back to Southampton. Meanwhile, could you give me any idea why he refused you permission? This might indicate the best way of approaching him.

The other point is that the concrete has by now set very hard, and I cannot say without trying whether we can chisel out holes to take bolts to fix the plaque permanently. I expect it will be possible, and we will do it if so. I will look into this also next week.

(4) From J.B.Jones to Major Hotine. 18/ix/'38. Answer to the preceding.

"Many thanks for your very kind and welcome (Lichfield)letter. I will come at once to the point you raise.

A Mrs. Wilson has a life interest in the Eastern half of Liddington Hill; the Western half, where your pyramid is situated, is the property of a small farmer named Hughes.

He (Hughes) gave us permission last Spring to erect our sarsen-stone on his land; then, just before its erection, withdrew this permission.

The Director of the Swindon Press, (Mr.Raymond Thompson) and one of his editors - their organisation has sponsored the Jefferies-Williams Memorial Scheme - had a two hours interview with Hughes, but could not move him. Hughes even offered them money as compensation for breach of faith. The reason given by him for this volte face was that Mrs.

Wilson had got to hear of what was afoot, and that he had to obey her orders, viz., retract his permission. Does Hughes hope to buy her property advantageously on her death (she is over 70)? Are there mortgage difficulties? One can only guess. She professes a hatred for memorials: "I will never have any memorial on my Downs. I hate the look of them", yet she tolerates staring marbles, ridiculous with ill-spelt ungrammatical inscriptions, in memory of her own people in Liddington Churchyard; our memorial is an unhewn stone native to the Downs. She wields some baleful power over Hughes, and compels him to act as a man of dishonour.

Beside written evidence of Hughes' repeated permissions, I obtained oral confirmation of the same in presence of a witness, an old school-chum of H. This third party said to me, when told of developments, "I thought it would be all right. I heard you, and can't understand Bill Hughes going back on his word like that."

As you know, we are now compelled to erect our memorial sarsen on Barbury Hill. But it is Liddington Hill which is sacred to Jefferies and Williams. 'There was a hill to which I used to resort,' says Jefferies in one of the most eloquent passages of the 'Story of My Heart,' written when he lay a-dying " in distant Sussex. Williams prophesies in his poem, 'Liddington Hill,' that he shall live again in the flowers on the hill-slopes:-

*A thousand years will come and go,
And thousands more will rise,
My burl'd bones to dust will grow.
And dust defile my eyes;
But when the lark sings o'er the wold
And the swallow weaves her nest,
My soul will take the coltsfoot gold
And blossom on thy breast.*

I knew Williams intimately for the last 20 years of his tragic life: of Jefferies' works I have always been an ardent admirer. For the last 40 years I have lived in this district, and for long past have hoped to see a joint tribute to these two gifted writers on the one spot of Downland marked out above all others for such a commemoration. Now two graceless creatures squatting on the roots of Liddington have done bitter despite to the memories of Wiltshiremen whom they should have been proud to honour, and whom, one is proud to say, most Wiltshiremen desire to honour.

There are one or two other points. Jefferies in his youth was a reporter on the staff of a Swindon newspaper; Williams, later, also wrote occasionally for it, so that the Swindon Press naturally takes a deep interest in them. Mr. Raymond Thompson, (recently co-opted a member of the Jeff.-Will. Memorial Committee) is pushing forward the Barbury Hill alternative, a work of salvage of the original scheme. I have shown him your letter, and he is highly pleased with it. Should you find it necessary, in your communication with Hughes, to mention any of us here, would you please refer to Mr. Raymond Thompson, and not to me. R.T., a person of far more consequence than myself, would have greater weight with Hughes: besides, it has been my duty to address some plain-spoken words to Hughes who would not be so placable if reminded of my existence just now. I am sure you desire atmosphere as well as facts.

You mentioned inscriptions. Here is a suggestion for consideration: THE HILL BELOVED OF RICHARD JEFFERIES & ALFRED WILLIAMS. Can it indeed be possible that an unobtrusive plaque attached to your pillar, and bearing such an innocent inscription, can hurt Hughes' feelings?

In another letter of mine which I expect is awaiting you, I have tried to show what an exceptionally influential body of supporters is behind our movement. Hughes is utterly blind to this, being a most obstinate fellow. Yet I can conceive it possible that he might like to find

a way out of his present condition, and you may be the appointed instrument to help him /us. Barbury cannot now be altered, but Hughes might mitigate the obloquy in store for him by hearkening to you.

I do hope I have not tired you with all this. I cannot really say with what expectancy I hang upon the next few days, neither can I tell you how deeply grateful I am for your willingness to lend us your powerful assistance. May good fortune accompany your skilled leading.

P.S. I should imagine that news of Hindhead and the Welsh Sugar Loaf would impress Hughes.

(5) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones. 20 September. 1938

Many thanks for your letter. I enclose a copy of a letter I have just sent to Mr. Hughes, which I think explains itself. If Hughes does not provide his permission to go ahead with this scheme, then I will take an early opportunity to see him and possibly also Mrs. Wilson. But I am sure you will agree that we could not possibly go further with the scheme without obtaining the permission of the actual landowner.

COPY OF ENCLOSURE. (From Major Hotine to W.J.Hughes.)

You may remember that we met while we were measuring a base over your property last November, and I hope this will serve as sufficient introduction. We are not at the moment proposing to invade your land afresh, but a further question has arisen in connection with the Ordnance Survey triangulation pillar on Liddington Castle regarding which I should be grateful for your co-operation.

The Director-General has recently been approached by the Jefferies-Williams Memorial Committee with a view to incorporating a small inscribed plaque to the memory of Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams who, as you may know, were two well-known Wiltshiremen in literary and natural historical associations. We do occasionally allow such plaques to be incorporated in our triangulation pillars where there is a considerable and influential local body in favour of such a course, and particularly where two stones might be erected on the same hill when one would serve both purposes. For example, we recently incorporated a memorial plaque to the Viscountess Rhondda on Sugar Loaf Hill in South Wales at the request of the National Trust. In this case also the Director-General wishes to assist the local committee so far as it is in his power to do so and would agree to the incorporation of a suitable plaque in the side of the triangulation pillar provided that you, as the owner of the land in question saw no objection.

*I do not suppose for a moment that you would have any objection to this proposal, but that does not of course free us from the necessity of obtaining your formal consent. I believe that all that is proposed is to add a small metal plaque, similar in design to the very attractive plaque which is used as emblem for National Trust properties and which we invariably incorporate in our triangulation pillars on National Trust property. The inscription would be something like this -
"LIDDINGTON HILL - THE HILL BELOVED OF RICHARD JEFFERIES AND ALFRED WILLIAMS"*

This would not of course be in any way unsightly and neither would it even faintly suggest a tombstone inscription.

The Jefferies-Williams Committee will provide the necessary plaque from their Fund and we shall do the fixing. I need hardly add that the latter will be properly done without any damage or inconvenience.

I notice from our files, as well as from my memory of our conversation last November, that your association with the Survey has always been a pleasant one and will, I venture to hope, justify my making this further request. The Ordnance Survey is not, of course, directly and officially concerned with the establishment of this small memorial plaque, but we

have nevertheless a very cogent indirect concern to cooperate as closely as we possibly can with influential local bodies. For this reason the Director-General is most anxious to meet the wishes of this Committee, especially as this can be done without any harm to ourselves or to anyone else. Wiltshiremen do not, moreover, have complete monopoly of admiration for two such Englishmen as Jefferies and Williams and neither is a desire to honour them entirely confined to Wiltshire.

As soon as I hear that you have no objection to the proposal I will go ahead making the remaining arrangements direct with the local Committee.

(6) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones. 22 September, 1938.

I enclose a letter received from Mr. Hughes. You will see that he has not at any rate definitely refused, although I think it very probable that he would do so if given the opportunity to misjudge the situation in any further letters. I propose, therefore, to take an opportunity next week to see him.

Encl. From W.J.Hughes to Major Hotine.

If I were to make an immediate reply to your request it would definitely be in the negative, for the approach to the Director-General is a sequel to 'what has gone before.' It would greatly help me in making a reply without prejudice or bias if you could let me have a copy of the letter sent by the Jefferies-Williams Memorial Committee to the Director-General. Alternatively, if you are likely to be in this district and would bring the original for me to inspect, I would also show you correspondence re this proposed memorial, which would explain my present attitude. I assure you that no discourtesy to you is intended in my reply. If you do propose to call on me, kindly advise the day before, and please do not choose a Monday.

His request to see a copy of the letter sent by the Jefferies-Williams Memorial Committee presents a little difficulty. This request cannot very well be refused. I should imagine that his object in making it is to ensure that the Committee has not, in approaching us, 'blackguarded' him for his previous refusal. Your own letters do not show him up in a very favourable light, and I feel sure that if I were to show him these he would again refuse. May I suggest, therefore, that you let me have a letter from Mr. Raymond Thompson, addressed officially to the Director-General, and outlining exactly what we propose to do, and asking tentatively if we would have any objection to incorporating such a plaque in our Liddington Hill pillar. I would suggest that this letter, which, if dated, should be dated before the 18th September, should make no mention of Mr. Hughes at all.

I am afraid that this suggestion may strike you as somewhat Machiavellian, but we do, after all, want to put this scheme through, and must use the best method calculated to secure Mr. Hughes' consent, short, of course, of stooping to amoral practices. I have a good deal of experience of dealing with the 'Hughes' of this world, and would anticipate little difficulty in securing his consent if you will do as I suggest. I shall, of course, do nothing to aggravate any ill-feeling which may exist between yourself and Hughes.

The letter would do equally well if written by you as Secretary. I have merely suggested that Mr. Raymond Thompson should write it since you yourself, with a fuller knowledge of the circumstances, had previously suggested something of the sort.

It is not difficult to imagine with what huge joy at heart I wrote the letter which follows. Was this sinister Liddington Hill to be conquered at last? Not till plaque and pylon met would I believe it.

I at once laid the draft before Mr. Thompson who inserted the second paragraph, had the whole typed officially, and signed the fateful document which was posted off without delay to Southampton. (The pre-date of August 27 has no special significance: it was chosen merely as being early.)

(7) From Mr.R.Thompson to the Director-General. Ordnance Survey, Southampton. 23 September,1938 (Postmark).

Dear Sir:-

A local Committee, under the chairmanship of the Mayor of Swindon, is putting forward a project for erecting a sarsen-stone Memorial on Barbury Hill, on the Marlborough Downs, Wiltshire, to the two local writers, Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams.

It was the Committee's hope that a site could be obtained on Liddington Hill, and every effort was made to achieve this, but the owners of Liddington Hill have been unable to accede to the request.

The Committee is well backed, locally and otherwise, its supporters including the Prime Minister; the Poet Laureate; the Lord Lieutenant of Wilts (Sir Ernest Wills); the Chairman of the Wilts County Council (the Marquis of Bath); the Marquis of Ailesbury; Lord Border; Mr. Justice (Viscount) Finlay; the Master of Marlborough College; Captain Cazalet, M.P. for the Chippenham Division; W.W.Wakefield, Esq., M.P. for the Swindon Division; the Bishops of Salisbury, Bristol, and Monmouth; Prof.Sir Alfred Zimmern, of New College, Oxford; H.J.Massingham, Esq.; Canon Goddard, M.A.; P.S.A., Secretary of the Wilts Archaeological Society; Mrs. Calley, of Burderop Park, Chiseldon; and very many others.

To come to the point, no tribute to Jefferies and Williams would be complete without some commemoration in situ, however insignificant in appearance, of their intimate connexion with the neighbouring hill at Liddington. This being axiomatic, and in view of the fact that an Ordnance Survey Triangulation pyramid stands on Liddington Camp ramparts, would you be so good as to allow this pillar to house a small memorial plaque, bearing the briefest inscription? Such kind permission would allow our Barbury Hill Scheme to be supplemented in a manner which must of necessity bring Joy and satisfaction to the numerous admirers of Jefferies and Williams, both in England and in the United States.

The inscription need be nothing more than:-

" LIDDINGTON HILL: THE HILL BELOVED OF RICHARD JEFFERIES AND ALFRED WILLIAMS.

Yours very sincerely,

Raymond Thompson, Director and General Manager.

The Czecho-Slovakian crisis put Liddington Hill temporarily into the background; at the time one felt it might be permanently. September 28, the date of the next letter quoted, is the Wednesday when Mr. Neville Chamberlain made his famous announcement to the House of Commons.

(8) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones. September 28.1938.

Many thanks for your several letters recently, including that from Mr. Raymond Thompson, dated the 27th August.

Owing to the international situation I am having considerable difficulty in getting away from Southampton at present in order to see Mr. Hughes. I have accordingly sent a copy of Mr. Raymond Thompson's letter to him in the hope that he may be able to give his permission to this perfectly reasonable proposal straight, off, and thereby save me from the necessity of visiting him. If, however, he is unable to do this, then I will take the earliest opportunity after the present situation has cleared up in order to see Mr. Hughes, although I am at the moment quite unable to make any definite arrangements.

I deeply regret having even to appear to go back on my promise to see Mr. Hughes, but I am sure you will realise that the circumstances are in no way under my control.

(9) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones. 5 October, 1938.

I have now received Mr.Hughes' permission to carry on with fixing your memorial plaque to our pillar on Liddington.

I think it would be advisable to strike while this iron is hot and would suggest that you put in hand immediately arrangements for getting a suitable plaque made. I enclose a dimensioned diagram of the pillar from which you will be able to gauge a suitable size for the plaque.

If you will let me know when the plaque is ready and where it is I will arrange to have it collected and fixed to the pillar as soon as possible.

Alternatively, if you wish to have the plaque fixed yourself there would be no objection to this. It would be necessary to chisel out holes in the concrete to take holding down bolts for the plaque and to grout these bolts in firmly with a good cement mixture. The joint between the plaque and the pillar should also be made good with a cement rendering to prevent any possibility of moisture getting in between the plaque and the pillar and possibly disintegrating both on freezing.

The ball is now at your feet and I await your further instructions.

10) From Major Hotine to J.B.Jones. 29 October 1938.

Many thanks for your letter of the 26th.October. As it happened, I was in London yesterday and collected your plaque myself. It is correctly spelt in accordance with your postcard (returned herewith), and indeed is a very good job all round.

A slight difficulty arises at the moment owing to the fact that all my best men are working in South Wales on an intensive programme of pillar construction, to be ready for next year's occupation, and will in all probability have to continue working there for the next three to four weeks. If, however, there should be an opportunity to get your plaque fixed sooner, then I will not neglect it. The pillar constructor will be instructed to call upon you before he starts work SO that you may see the plaque actually being fixed, and may also give him any last minute instructions you see fit. He will, in any case, be told to fix the plaque on the north side of the pillar.

The long expected occurred on the eighteenth of November, 1938. There was a strong wind, with plenty of wild, yet not angry-looking cloud. The view into the Vale of White Horse over Coate and South Marston was clear: Barbury, where the sarsen-stone rejected by Liddington's Children of Belial to go, looked impossibly near for four miles. From to-day onward, thanks to the gentlemen of the Ordnance Survey, Liddington Hill outwardly and visibly remembers its two dedicated spirits, its rightful function and its glory.

(11) From Major Hotine to J. B.Jones. 21 November. 1938.

Many thanks indeed for your kind letter of November 19. I am glad, to know that the plaque has been fixed to your satisfaction. It has been a real pleasure to do what we could to assist you in this matter.

Dimensions of pylon-

Base: 2ft.square; top: 1ft.2ins.square; height: 4 feet,
Height of Liddington Hill; 905 feet.

**LETTERS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSED JOINT MEMORIAL TO
RICHARD JEFFERIES & ALFRED WILLIAMS.**

(1) From the Prime Minister. [see page 1] Mar.10,1938.
Plus this letter to Richard Harold Jefferies [the writer's
son] later...

Prime Minister's Crest
25th March, 1940.

10, Downing 8street, Whitehall,

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Prime Minister to say that he was pleased to receive your letter of February 18th. He had not previously heard the final outcome of the scheme for the erection of a memorial to your father and Alfred Williams, and he therefore asked Mr. Jones to send him particulars of what had been done, and Mr. Chamberlain has been much interested to see photographs of the memorial erected on Barbury Hill, and to hear of the commemorative plaque affixed to the Ordnance Survey pyramid on Liddington Hill.

It is a pleasure to Mr. Chamberlain to feel that these memorials now stand on two magnificent sites on the Marlborough Downs. Mr. Chamberlain desires me to add that he is grateful to you for the references in your letter to his own work.

**Yours sincerely,
A. Neil Rucher**

(2) From the Bishop of Salisbury. Mar.16,1938.

Thank you for your letter of the 14th. I am very much interested in your proposition that there shall be a memorial upon Liddington Hill to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams. I think the County does well to honour in such a way two of its very distinguished sons, and, while I wish the undertaking every success, I shall, of course, make my modest donation to the fund when it is opened. You may certainly use ay name for what value it may have as well-wisher and supporter. I shall look forward to learning how matters progress. It is most interesting that the Prime Minister is sympathetic on two counts - first, community of interest in Richard Jefferies, and then also on account of a Wiltshire ancestor.

(3) From the Bishop of Bristol. Mar.29.1938.

Please forgive ray long delay in answering your letter I am delighted to let you make use of my name in connexion with the Jefferies-Williams Memorial Committee. I am glad to be associated with so worthy an object.

(4) From the Marquis of Bath. April 10, 1938.

I am extremely sorry that the letter you wrote to me on February 5 has remained unanswered. I sent it to a friend of mine for his opinion, and he mislaid it among his papers.

I am forwarding your suggestion with regard to a memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams to the Archaeological Society which I am given to understand will be having a meeting shortly.

Please forgive the delay which is not my fault. I shall be glad to let you have my name as a supporter to the proposed memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams.

(5) From the Marquis of Ailesbury; 27 Mar. 1958.

I shall be very happy to allow the use of my name in the matter of erecting a worthy memorial to the two distinguished Wiltshiremen, Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams.

(6) From Lord Horder. Mar. 26, 1938.

Please forgive me for the delay in this reply to your letter of the 5th. You caught me in an unusually busy time.

I am quite enthusiastic about your project. I wonder if you would care to come and see what we have done here to memorialise Edward Thomas, one of Jefferies' great admirers? Any week-end would find me free.

By all means use my name in any way you think helpful.

Two questions you will, I am sure, not mind:

1. Is there any chance of securing Liddington Hill for the nation?

(2) Are you sure that two men should be celebrated together?

•

(7) From Mr. Justice (Viscount) Finlay. Apr. 23. 1938.

I have read with much interest and sympathy your letter and your article advocating the erection of a memorial on Liddington Hill to Jefferies and Williams. If my name is of any use you may certainly use it, for I shall warmly support your project.

(8) From the late Miss May Morris. Kelmscott Manor; March 9, 1938.

About the Memorial on Liddington Hill: the only sort of a memorial I should support would be something entirely plain. such as a natural grey stone, inscribed. I am sure that both those men whom you wish to honour would have much disliked anything that sticks up on a wild and beautiful place (it is the, Down you are thinking of, isn't it?) A piece of rugged stone that one would come upon quietly on the hill-side would be appropriate and dignified. I will be pleased to add my name to your list if the Memorial takes this form; otherwise, i.e. if anything monumental is arranged for, I must be out of it.

(9) H.J.Massingham. March 21. 1938^

I shall be both honoured and delighted for you to use my name as patron or whatever the J.-W. Memorial Committee decides. I need not say how cordial is my support for your proposal, and if my name can be of the slightest use to you, pray use it. I should be glad to learn in course of time how -your excellent scheme, which deserves the approbation of all lovers of the true England, advances. Indeed, I know Liddington well.

(10) From Mr. Walter de la Mare. 24 Mar.. 1938.

Many thanks for your very kind letter concerning the project of a memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams. I am a great admirer of the writings of Richard Jefferies, although I cannot claim to be familiar with more than a few of his books; with the work of Alfred Williams, I regret to say, I am far less well acquainted. For this reason I feel that I should not be justified in describing myself as more than a 'well-wisher' to the scheme; but this certainly does not prevent my hoping that it will be successful. If, however, you feel that this justifies the inclusion of ray name among those who share this desire, do by all means add it to your list. This would not, I gather, involve my being a member of any committee or of taking any active part in the raising of the necessary fund -which I fear would be impracticable?

(11) From Reginald Arkell. 9Mar.1938.

Of course you may use my name in the way you suggest.

(12) From Leonard Clark, Esq. 19 May, 1938. (Biographer of A.W.)

Thank you for sending me the official form of appeal made in connection with the Jefferies-Williams Memorial on Liddington Hill. However, I cannot see what good my name will do in attracting subscribers. I enclose my small mite and would it were more.

I will do anything I can to help, though as I said in my letter to the "Advertiser", I would rather see Ranikhet endowed.

At this stage of my work I can quite confidently say that Alfred Williams was the greater man and deserves a separate remembrance. But the time will come when this will be recognised.

(13) From Edmund Blunden. May 22,1958.

I hope that the endeavours of yourself and others will be successful, and shall be glad if my name is worth being associated with the project in general, and can assist at all,

As a boy I enjoyed Richard Jefferies' books greatly, and I came upon the work of Alfred Williams too at an early date; so I have a personal gratitude to both these writers, though not very familiar with their homes and haunts.

(14) From John Betjeman. March 16. 1938.

I shall be delighted for you to use my name in any way you wish in connection with your excellent project for a memorial at Liddington to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams.

One of the best memorials to those excellent men would be the preservation of Liddington from speculation.

Good luck to you and your Committee. Any help in newspapers you want from me when the committee is formed, let me know about. If Mr. W...n will do the Times, I will try the other and cheaper papers.

(15) From Prof. Sir Alfred Zimmern. 31 March, 1938.

I have read with interest and appreciation your article about the suggested joint memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams on Liddington Hill. I welcome anything that will perpetuate Alfred Williams' memory. All of us who hold A.W.'s memory dear are indebted to you.

(16) From Captain Cazalet. M. P. for the Chippenham Division. 2/6/'38.

Thank you for your letter and for all the information about the Jefferies-Williams Memorial on Liddington Hill.

I have very much pleasure in enclosing a small donation.

I do hope you will be successful in your appeal which is such a worthy one.

(17) From the Master of Marlborough College. 18 March, 1938

I am willing to add my name to the supporters of the scheme for a Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams memorial, and to serve upon the committee if I am required to do so.

(18) From W.W. Wakefield. Esq.. M.P. Swindon Parl. Division. 31 March 1938

I shall be very pleased indeed to have my name added to the list of Patrons of the scheme for a memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams, and I wish you all success in your efforts.

(19) From Dr. A. Mansbridge. March 16. 1938

I am delighted to hear that you are planning a memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams. I can imagine that you will get the approval of everyone to whom you write, I shall be quite happy to let you use my name in any way you wish, and I will do anything I can to forward the most desirable consummation of the whole matter.

(20) From Viscount Home. 14 March, 1938

I am obliged to you for your letter of 12th. March, in which you flatter me by asking me to join in a scheme for erecting a memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams.

I hope you will forgive me declining your kind invitation. I confess to being too modest to suppose that these two great men require any encomium from me in commending such a plan to their native countryside, and while I am Chairman of the Great Western Railway - it touches English life at such a vast number of places that I cannot be supposed to have personal contact with the local interests of any particular spot.

This letter is not intended to be in any sense a discouragement to you - and, Indeed, I send you all my best wishes.

(21) From Canon Goddard. F.S.A. Apr.7. 1936.

Our Committee (of the Wilts Archaeological Society) at their quarterly meeting to-day passed a resolution entirely approving of your proposal to set up a sarsen-stone with bronze tablet or tablets in memory of Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams on Liddington Hill, and wishing you success in the matter... If you think that it would be a good thing to have the blessing of the Wilts Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England as well as of the Wilts Archaeological Society, I could get the next quarterly meeting of this Committee to say 'Good luck' to you. I am afraid neither Society will do more, but there ought not to be any difficulty in raising the few pounds necessary for so simple a memorial.

(22) From Stanley Hirst.Esq.. Director of Education. Swindon.11/5/38.

I think the proposed Jefferies-Williams Memorial on Liddington Hill is an excellent conception, and I shall be very glad to be associated with it. I assume the memorial will not be very costly, and I enclose herewith a postal order as a donation towards the cost. If necessary I shall be willing to increase the amount.

(23) From Mrs.Calley. Burderop Park. May 26, 1938.

Miss Calley and I are pleased to send you a donation towards the Jefferies-Williams memorial. We like the idea of a sarsen stone so fitting to the country.

(24) From J.T.G. Masters. Esq.. Hampton Lodge, Highworth. 10/5/'36

I must apologise for the delay in answering your letter I have been unwell and from home and was not present at the Meeting of my Council when they expressed sympathy and interest in the proposal to do something in memory of Jefferies and Williams.

Of course I am also interested in your scheme but I fear that I am not able to take a lead in it with you as I am rather fully occupied already. It is a compliment you pay me

to ask me to do so. I shall however hope that you will let me know later how you progress.

Mr. Williams was of course personally known to my family and my Father was particularly drawn towards him. They had many discussions on literary matters at Stanton Fitzwarren Rectory in the years before the War.

(25) Prebendary C.W.Francis, The Rectory, Liddington.27/5/38

I am very grateful to you for your courtesy in notifying me about the proposed Jefferies-Williams memorial on Liddington Hill. However, I am bound to say that I have very little personal interest in the proposed memorial.

(26) From Henry Williamson. 23/57 '38.

Mr. Williamson would like very much to help publicise the idea of a memorial to Richard Jefferies and Alfred Williams... and will write a letter to The Times which should focus attention on the idea just at the right moment. If this is done too early, he feels it might not have the desired effect... If therefore you could let Mr. Williamson have all the details as far as you have gone, and would let him know the best time for him to write to The Times, he will be happy to do all he can. (Signed by H.W.'s secretary.)

(27) From Harold Peers. Esq.. Marple Bridge. 27/6/'38.

It was of great interest to me to notice recently in the Daily Express an announcement of a proposed memorial to Richard Jefferies. Can I do anything apart from bringing the proposal to the notice of Jefferies' lovers of my acquaintance to make it more widely known?

I have intensely admired the writings of Jefferies since first coming across one of his books just after leaving school. No other author means so much to me and never will. I read a great deal, have my own library of 600 volumes, but always come back to Jefferies with delight and wonder.

I enclose postal order. If there should be more required, I should like to know, and I will see if I can manage a further sum.