



Journal No. 11 2002

CONTENTS

The Dewy Morn: Jefferies, Being and History by Roger Ebbatson

Richard Jefferies and Thomas Hardy: Parallel Lives? by Carolyn Clarke

Was 'Dad' Uzzell ever at Hodson Cottage? by Ken Watts

Book Review: At Home on the Earth

The Dewy Morn: Jefferies, Being and History

Roger Ebbatson

In *The Dewy Morn*, Richard Jefferies would synthesise two crucial strands of his thought - the pantheist and the historical. The novel represents a distillation of his entire writing project; as Jeremy Hooker remarks, "The seeing is visionary, with the dawn freshness of his boyhood, but it is realistic too, with a political dimension." The opening sequence of the novel, in which the heroine Felise Goring ascends the downs, transmits a sense of rapture in the physical world only rivalled by some of the nature sonnets Gerard Manley Hopkins was covertly composing at this time. It is Jefferies' insistence upon the sheer thisness of nature, the 'heavy grasses drooping', the 'blue veronica', the rutted tracks, all leading to the 'very depth of enjoyment' (DM, pp 1-3),² that marks out the opening pages. Felise bathes in the early morning like a swimmer, 'lying on the flowers and grass, extended under the sun, steeped in their sweetness' (DM, p 4). But the physical leads to a spiritual afflatus, 'a sense of existence - a consciousness of being, to which she was abandoned', and yet she remains anchored in the physical, tracing the 'brown stained wood' of the oak bark or the 'brown boulder-stone in the lane', 'ancient, smoothed, and ground in times which have vanished like a cloud' (DM, p 5). The heroine, whilst she is 'gathering from sunlight, azure sky and grassy fields, from dewy hills and all the morning, an immense strength to love', is characteristically waylaid by her ecstatic communion so that she 'lost the sunrise' (DM, p 6). Nevertheless, she makes directly for the ridge, and gains a panoramic view of both horizon and valley, motivated by a 'concentration and burst of desiring' (DM, p 12) for the unknown hero, Martial Barnard. But this erotic impulse is embedded in nature:

The richness of the corn in the plain, and of the luxuriant grasses in the meadow; the ancient oaks and the thousand elms; the hedges hung with honeysuckle, and where the roses were coming; the sweet waters, and the flowers that stood by them; all that grew afar to the horizon. (DM, p 19)

Her first encounter with Barnard is represented in a remarkably erotic scene involving his stallion, Ruy. As W J Keith remarks, 'the way in which she conveys her tenderness towards him by the gentle stroking of his horse is an effect worthy of Lawrence'.³ A reading of this remarkable opening sequence may be framed by another Jefferies text, and by the concerns and issues addressed in eco-criticism. Felise's fictional scene reinfects the experience recounted in Jefferies' spiritual biography of the previous year, *The Story of My Heart* (1883), in which he recounts how he would climb the downs 'to obtain a wider horizon of feeling'(SH,

p 20),⁴ whilst simultaneously Touching the crumble of earth' in order to 'touch to the unutterable existence' (SH, p 21): 'I hid my face in the grass, I was wholly prostrated, I lost myself in the wrestle, I was rapt and carried away' (SH, p 22). He would turn his gaze away from the sky:

I felt down deep into the earth under, and high above into the sky, and farther still to the sun and the stars. Still farther beyond the stars into the hollow of space, and losing thus my separateness of being came to seem like a part of the whole. Then I whispered to the earth beneath, through the grass and thyme, down into the depth of its ear, and again up to the starry space hid behind the blue of day. (SH, p 23)

Both novel and autobiography offer a signification of place in the form of a cultural poetics of space. That this is not simply a self-defeating romantic gesture is signalled by Jefferies' sense of a geographical and historical past, of landscape as a sediment of time. In a 'deep, narrow valley' he thinks of the 'cycles of years' and of ancient animal forms (SH, p 28), always seeking the instantaneous 'Now' that is inflected by his historicised sense of the presence of the man 'whose body was interred in the tumulus'(SH, p 38):

It is eternity now. I am in the midst of it. It is about me in the sunshine; I am in it, as the butterfly floats in the light-laden air. Nothing has to come; it is now. Now is eternity; now is the immortal life. Here this moment, by this tumulus, on earth, now; I exist in it. The years, the centuries, the cycles are absolutely nothing; it is only a moment since this tumulus was raised; in a thousand years more it will still be only a moment. (SH, p 41)

Jefferies here encounters the wholly other that is nature in a moment that mediates the rhetoric of the sublime through the attempt to articulate experience of the numinous. This 'ecological sublime' is carefully prepared in both novel and autobiography: in these texts the otherness of nature is insisted upon and registered, paradoxically, in a language which yet seeks to move beyond language. This move is exemplified in Jefferies' poetic account of his meditations in the 'deep hollow on the side of a great hill'. In this 'green concave opening to the sea', the combination of 'Silence and sunshine, sea and hill gradually brought my mind into the condition of intense prayer' (SH, p 33). Such a moment penetrates to the innermost of being, and corresponds to what the philosopher of being, Martin Heidegger, designates the 'clearing':

In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing. Thought of in reference to beings, this clearing is more in beings than are beings. This open centre is therefore not surrounded by beings; rather, the clearing centre itself encircles all that is, as does nothing, which we scarcely know.⁵

It is this clearing that grants us 'access to the being that we ourselves are', an access desired equally by Jefferies and his fictional avatar. Nature-writer and philosopher share a sense of 'ecstatic dwelling in the nearness of Being'.⁶ Truth, defined by Heidegger as 'the clearing and concealing of beings', occurs through

'being composed', and all art is, *'in essence, poetry'*. Art 'breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual', in a process that takes place in 'the open region which poetry lets happen', a region where 'beings shine and ring out':⁷

As I move about in the sunshine I feel in the midst of the supernatural: in the midst of immortal things. It is impossible to wrest the mind down to the same laws that rule pieces of timber, water, or earth. They do not control the soul, however rigidly they may bind matter. So full am I always of a sense of the immortality now at this moment round about me, that it would not surprise me in the least if a circumstance outside physical experience occurred. (SH, p 43)

The complexities of this move are to some extent mitigated through fictional form, so that in *The Dewy Morn* Jefferies is able to generate a plot out of his opening prose-poem; indeed, the scene of Felise's ascent is accompanied by a commentary which is sympathetic to that Victorian confinement of woman to the domestic sphere which Felise, with her absent-minded guardian-uncle, somewhat evades. Jefferies notes here the 'powerlessness of women': 'They cannot stir, they cannot move in matters that concern them most dearly' (DM, p 48), and he compares Felise to Tennyson's Mariana, remarking, 'Woman's life seems to be nothing but waiting' (DM, p 49). It is whilst she is in this attitude of 'waiting' that Felise indulges in the bathing-scene which prompts the text to an erotic climax celebrating the female body. Jefferies' handling of this scene at the pool experiments with perspective, offering the same events twice, first from the point of view of the 'impersonal' narrator and secondly from that of Martial, concealed in the bushes. In both instances the emphasis is similarly upon the sculptural/erotic attractions of Felise's physique. The narrator, for instance, notes that 'The action of lifting the arms in this manner opens the ribs, decreases the waist, slightly curves the back, and extends and develops every line' (DM, p 63), whilst Martial observes the 'dew upon her knees, wet from the liquid water' (DM, p 91), in a scenario that imbues him with 'potent life-giving perfume' (DM, p 92). The emphasis in both versions of the scene is upon sight as the primary sense, an emphasis confirmed in Jefferies' curious interpolated 'essay' on the female knee, in which 'all grace begins' (DM, p 66), and in the narrative insistence on Felise's unconscious act of self-revelation:

That shoulder - the left - raised a little higher than the other, on account of her position, was partly bare, the tunic having slipped somewhat. Unconsciously she pressed her cheek against it, feeling and caressing it. Her shoulder lifted itself a little to meet the embrace of her cheek, and the tunic slipped still more, giving it and that side of her bust freedom to the air. She liked to feel herself; the soft skin of the shoulder met the softer cheek; her lips touched the place where arm and shoulder are about to mingle. (DM, p 69)

There is an undeniable voyeuristic element here that characterises the novel more generally, as in the miller's secret spying on the rustic lovers, Abner Brown and

Mary Shaw, and the ploy through which the malevolent land-agent, Robert Godwin, watches the courtship of the hero and heroine. Jefferies' own delighted perception of female beauty, later displaced onto his hero in the second version of the scene, takes the form of a kind of exhibiting of Felise in a process that tends to render her an object of readerly consumption. Femininity is here aestheticised to produce a moment of Utopian ecstasy through the association of the feminine with nature. Jefferies' representation of the feminine shares with Hardy's portrayal of Tess a desire to appropriate a female sexuality which is essentially unknowable to a pattern which draws upon the female/nature, male/culture binary paradigm. Yet Jefferies' double scene, in its delighted physicality, resonates with a deeper, more probing implication, his aim here and in *The Story* identifiable as nothing less than a definition of being. The bathing-scenes might, in this light, be inflected through consideration of Heidegger's notion of the 'uncovering' of Being. The essence of existence, Heidegger holds, 'is not an agreement of knowing with its object, still less of the psychical with the physical': 'What is to be demonstrated is solely the Being-uncovered of the entity itself - *that entity* in the "how" of its uncoveredness'. In such a situation as the bathing-scene, 'uncoveredness is confirmed when that which is put forward in the assertion (namely the entity itself) shows itself *as that very same thing*'.⁵ Truth is understood as 'Being-uncovering', and thus functions in Heidegger's argument as 'uncoveredness': 'Uncovering is a way of Being for Being-in-the world'. Jefferies' fictional representation appears to enact that 'concern in which we tarry and look at something', in an act that 'uncovers entities within-the-world', so that 'These entities become that which has been uncovered.'⁹ There is a sense in which truth must be 'wrested from entities' so that they 'get snatched out of their hiddenness'. Indeed Heidegger's thesis here shadows that erotic appropriation which is central to Jefferies' scene: The factual uncoveredness of anything is always, as it were, a kind of *robbery*'. The goddess of Truth, Heidegger notes, offers two pathways, 'one of uncovering, one of hiding'.¹⁰ But the uncoveredness of Truth prompts *discourse*, just as Martial's contemplation of Felise leads to the love-plot. Language takes the form of 'assertion' that 'expresses itself as such about entities which have been uncovered.'" In this way truth/uncoveredness becomes *'a relationship between things which are present-at-hand'*.² Being, in both Heidegger and Jefferies, 'reveals itself as *physis*, "nature"', and they seek to explore the connection between the essential ground of being and narrative: 'History begins only when beings themselves are expressly drawn up into their unconcealment'. Indeed, *The Dewy Morn* may be read as an exposition of the implications of Heidegger's proposal that 'Only existent man is historical. "Nature" has no history'.¹³ In his preparatory notes for the novel, Jefferies describes the bathing scene as a 'Poem of Love', and reflects that, because Felise functions as 'a Goddess of Nature', 'there must be no Realism round her'.¹⁴

However, the heroine's erotic pursuit of the impassive Martial Barnard, who is compromised by his broken engagement to Rosa Wood, a wealthy tradesman's

daughter, serves as a catalyst to the action. This entanglement interpellates the heroine, in her ecstatic unity with nature, into history, since Barnard is preoccupied not only with his failure with Rosa but also by the 'critical condition' of his finances (DM, p 85). He is an impoverished tenant-farmer on the Cornleigh estate, and as such answerable to the predatory economic system put in place by the agent, Robert Godwin. This 'very hard man' (DM, p 114) runs the estate strictly according to the letter of the law, dispossessing the villagers of their water supply, and seeking to expel the aged parents of Abner Brown from their tied cottage:

It is a custom fatal to the cottager's social progress, in reality injurious to the interests of landowner and farmer - especially to the landowner - and diametrically opposed to the interest of the country at large, because it forces the agricultural population to be nomadic instead of settled. (DM, p 115)

This is precisely the situation addressed in Hardy's 1883 *Longman's Magazine* . essay, 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', where he remarks upon the 'increasing nomadic habit of the labourer' in recent times. 'A depopulation is going on', Hardy observes, 'which in some quarters is truly alarming'.¹⁵ Four months later, in his companion *Longman's* piece on 'The Wiltshire Labourer', Jefferies would note that 'Ceaseless effort to obtain wages causes a drifting about of the agricultural population', and as a result 'the fixed population may be said to decline every year'. 'All these cottages and allotments have only been held on sufferance, on good behaviour, and hence they have failed', Jefferies claims, and he goes on to argue, 'You cannot have a fixed population unless it has a home, and the labouring population is practically homeless', moving around 'in restlessness and discontent'. There is an undertone of eugenics to Jefferies' thinking on this topic, as when he expresses the hope that his plan for a 'fixed population' 'would soon breed a race of men of the sturdiest order, the true and natural countrymen',¹⁶ as he designates them, but this is allied to a belief in democracy and the secret ballot. The diagnosis of a newly nomadic tendency in the countryside is susceptible of two readings: socially, it speaks of the uprooting and expropriation of the labouring class, philosophically, it might be inflected through an existential sense of loss. It is in this sense that Heidegger writes, 'Homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world', or that George Lukacs defines the dominant theme of modern fiction as 'transcendental homelessness'.¹⁷

Felise wishes to intervene in the Browns' situation, but because Abner works not for the estate but for her uncle, there is no redress. She 'knew little of these matters' (DM, p 117), the narrator observes, but the trajectory of the novel is to inculcate her into knowledge, to immerse her in the tide of social history, whilst Mr Goring, with his 'calm intellect' (DM, p 118), stands aside in his rural retreat. Goring's contemplative nature is in contrast to that of Robert Godwin, a man 'absolutely devoid of imagination' (DM, p 126), to whom both being and nature are a closed book:

The shape of the oak, the shadow, the birds who came to it, all its varied associations - its dream - had no meaning to him. Sometimes he saw the sea, its green plain, from the higher ground; but it did not attract him to the shore. (DM, p 127)

The agent is, furthermore, 'ceaselessly on the alert to extend the authority of his employer':

Footpaths were stopped, and odd corners of waste ground enclosed with stone walls costing thrice the value of the land, in order that no one might 'squat' and presently assert a right to a few square yards of their own country. (DM, p 133)

The writing project implicit in *The Dewy Morn* is that of translating the discursive regime of such journalistic essays into fiction; the task for the reader is to recuperate a sense of a historic English past - the period of the Great Depression - with equal sensitivity to both the referential and aesthetic qualities of the text. Jefferies' fiction raises in an interesting form issues surrounding the relation between literature and history. As an explanatory model, historical writing itself is governed by the same structures and procedures as fictional narrative; this, however, does not invalidate attempts at historical representation such as Jefferies' essays here. On the contrary, the plot of *The Dewy Morn* tends towards the production of a politicised subject (notably Martial Barnard in his key speech) capable of playing an allotted historical role. In such a climactic scene, but also more generally in the demise of Godwin and the compromises effected by the landowner, it is shown that human consciousness can intervene significantly in social development. Jefferies does not frame his story specifically in terms of class struggle, and it is notable that the rural proletariat is ineffectual as compared with the middle-class Barnard; nonetheless, the tendency of the narrative as history is fuelled by a progressive insight into current tendencies in the English countryside. Richard Jefferies, that is to say, in this novel as in his writing more generally, negotiates a transformation from conservative to radical positions, a journey, one might say, from ideology to understanding. Jefferies' characters, in the course of his narrative, emerge from nature into society, acquiring a social consciousness and an ability to act. *The Dewy Morn* demands a reading that will recover its historical specificity whilst properly registering its status as literary text. Jefferies' careful plotting enables him to articulate the key agrarian problems of the Great Depression caused by the poor seasons of the late 1870s and the substantial increase in North American imports. The eviction of the Browns from their tied-cottage is linked, through Abner's love affair, to the pregnant Mary Shaw's suicide attempt in the mill-pond. Although rescued by Martial, Mary dies in childbirth, victim of the stringency of the Cornleigh estate. Martial Barnard, compelled by the farming crisis to sell Ruy to Robert Godwin, decides to give up his tenant-farm, and creates a sensation by addressing a meeting in the market town of Maasbury in which he attacks the vapid squire, Cornleigh Cornleigh, and the entire system of rural governance. Godwin, who has harboured a secret

passion for Felise, believing she has given herself to Barnard, captures and ties her up, attempting to get the horse to trample on her face. Barnard intervenes, shooting his beloved horse dead. Following a melodramatic confrontation with Mr Goring, the land-agent finally shoots himself, 'giving a cold, deadly sensation to the finale', as the narrator remarks (DM, p 390).

The layered strands of Jefferies' plot enable him to synthesise a number of aspects of social history here. This was a time when, as Alan Howkins has written:

Commercial pressures challenged the notion of a classless and united agriculture, with labourer and farmer living harmoniously together under the benign gaze of parson and squire.¹⁸

By locating the action of *The Dewy Morn* in the immediate past Jefferies is able to analyse the historical process whereby the countryside was penetrated in complex and often contradictory ways by the logic of capital and the market economy. Like Hardy, Jefferies records irreversible changes in patterns of rural living: this is the background to the enclosure of land, the destruction of the old town church, and general expropriation that goes on under the rule of the Cornleighs and their agent. The society Jefferies writes about is one wholly impregnated by the effects of agrarian capital, and the crucial separation of capital from labour. The small-scale commodity production of an earlier 'feudal' pattern is already failing, the 'natural' peasant economy, in which production is tied to use value, replaced by a capitalist system tied to exchange value. Jefferies both laments this process, through the mouthpiece of Barnard, and seeks social reform; *The Dewy Morn* should be read not only as a reflection of, but intervention in, this crisis in the English landscape. In an 1877 essay on 'The Future of Country Society', Jefferies had argued that 'Nowhere are the classes so distinctly defined as in the country', and deplored the fact that the 'old social links are gone, and no new ones have yet sprung up'. Elements of popular carnival - the village revels, the maypole, the mummers and morris-dancers - are becoming 'extinct': The rural population insensibly acquiring a roving spirit, assumes more of a floating character.'" And in a radical unpublished essay, Jefferies wrote scathingly of the 'Divine Right of Capital', contrasting the figures of labourer and financier: 'One man whipped with hunger toils half-naked in the Pit, face to face with death; the other is crowned by his fellows sitting in state with fine wines and the sound of jubilee'.²⁰ In a thoughtful analysis of Jefferies' position, Diana Morrow traces the changes towards the advanced liberal radicalism of his final years:

The later variant of radicalism was one which criticised established landed elites, extolled the benefits of education, and generally welcomed the growth of a more democratic polity in which deference/dependence relationships would no longer feature.²¹

Morrow justly points out the contradictions in the thinking of the early Jefferies, 'capable of referring to the agricultural labourer in sneering and derogatory tones',

whilst simultaneously expressing a 'deep and sympathetic appreciation of the tyranny of labour'.²² Her analysis of the evolution of Jefferies' thought in the early 1880s is crucial to a historicised reading of *The Dewy Morn*: he comes to appreciate that 'the old-style rural social order . . . could not continue because the countryside had been so irrevocably transformed by ongoing depression, technological and educational developments, and the prospect of an extended franchise'. But this social radicalism is characteristically linked, in Jefferies' case, to his adoption of 'the mantle of transcendentalist nature priest', offering the Utopian possibility of a time when man, 'inspired by the abundance and beauty of nature, would cast off the constrictions of the present and fulfil his potential'.²³ Elsewhere, Morrow justly describes *The Dewy Morn* as 'a novel which gives vent to a passionate and impetuous radicalism': this is a novel, she observes, which 'virulently attacks landlords, unequivocally supporting the extended franchise and defending the 1872 Ballot Act'.²⁴ This attack is located most dramatically in the climactic scene of the presentation to Comleigh Cornleigh, which orchestrates and synthesises the historical and social concerns of the novel. Cornleigh's speech incoherently promulgates his faintly ludicrous scheme for introducing art into the labourer's cottage:

'The object of this Society is to elevate the artistic ideas of the agricultural labourer [hear, hear! - hoo, hoo!] - contemplation of art - require surroundings - support art manufacture. But incomparably the - the - the - hum - ha - [highest influence/ whisper] - the highest effect - influence - art is on the moral and social well-being of the community,' (DM, p 343).

Following a slavish supporting address by the local cleric, Martial Barnard announces his own financial ruin, which he partly attributes to 'that huge octopus, the Church', an institution 'which saps with its innumerable suckers the strength out of the land' (DM, p 352). Ecclesiastical greed has been compounded, in his analysis, by the obduracy of landowners in relation to rents, and by the servility exacted of the tenant-farmers who 'have consented to this kow-towing, this hat-touching, this contemptible humility' (DM, p 355). The depression in farming, Barnard explains, is due to the succession of poor seasons and 'the enormous competition of America' (DM, p 353), and this conjunction has led to a change of heart in the landed gentry: "'Was there ever anything more despicable? To grind us and oppress us, to insult us and ride over us in their time of prosperity; and now to fawn on us and treat us as equals, to beckon to us, and to hope to get over us with such manifestations of affection!'" Barnard, and through him Richard Jefferies, holds that "'There never will be any more prosperity in English agriculture till the entire system is revised'" (DM, p 358). This outburst, Mr Goring avers, is 'the first time the truth has been spoken in Maasbury.. .since the Crusades' (DM, p 359), and on their way home he and Felise pass the village churchyard in which Mary Shaw is buried:

"Could there be anything more grotesque - more hideous in its mockery?" said Mr Goring, "than to hang up pictures in cottages, and Mary lying there for want of a home?" (DM, p 360)

It is possible to argue that the failure of Jefferies' career as a novelist is tied up with his radical handling of rural issues. If the novel offers a form of knowledge, then it may be that the knowledge proffered in *The Dewy Morn* was antipathetic to the reading classes. By contrast, K D M Snell has examined the ways in which Hardy's realism as a delineator of rural conditions was circumscribed by the requirements of the literary market and his own class mobility. He argues that Hardy's novels 'rarely enter seriously and sympathetically into the area of labourers' values, priorities, and subjective experience', and that they are 'reticent on the actual conditions of life in Dorset', such as low wages, unionism, sexuality, family structures, and the impact of the Poor Law.²⁵

The self-inflicted death of Robert Godwin marks a kind of end-point to the novel's immersion in history: adopting a characteristically 'matter-of-fact manner', he places the muzzle of the pistol to his breast, but it fails to ignite. Godwin does not give in to 'this accidental reprieve', and shoots himself at the second attempt:

The bullet entered his heart and he fell dead; his face struck a bunch of yellow fungi growing in the grass, and lay still there. (DM, p 385)

In the ensuing analysis of Godwin's character, Jefferies reverts to the questions of nature and being which motivate the novel's opening. The agent is one for whom there is no 'meaning in the stars or in the hills, or in the sun' (DM, p 386). Prompted by an 'insane' frenzy he had attacked his desired Felise, and yet his death 'atoned for nothing' (DM, p 388). The telling juxtaposition of the yellow fungi and the agent's dead face offers an intense image that concentrates the implications of the novel: Godwin seems to press down upon the earth he has so steadfastly neglected in life. Heidegger observes that 'Upon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world', and it is the failure of Godwin to 'dwell' which marks him out for death. In his obduracy, indeed, the agent resembles Heidegger's stone, an object that 'presses downward and manifests its heaviness', but is yet impenetrable. Godwin might be seen as exemplifying the way in which, in Heideggerian thought, the earth 'shatters every attempt to penetrate it', causing 'every merely calculating importunity upon it to turn into a destruction'.²⁶

In the penultimate chapter Jefferies ties up the loose ends of the plot, Martial Barnard being drafted into a 'great firm of marine engineers', but earmarked as independent parliamentary candidate for Maasbury at the next election. In consequence, he and Felise are married. The removal from history is complete, and the final chapter, set at Goring's country house, is marked by a return to nature in the ecstatic register of the opening pages. It is an early morning in May, and Felise watches the dawn whilst her husband sleeps; above a 'stratum of darkness'

the skylark 'soaring sang in the clear air', whilst a white light 'rushed rapidly through the atmosphere, not only rising to the zenith, but spreading horizontally over the fields'. The 'night-blue tint of the sky' begins to change, and the landscape is suddenly revealed 'distinct and clear' (DM, p 393) as the dawn chorus is heard:

The stars were gone, and the deep azure of the morning filled the sky. By the ridge of the hill the white light shone brightly; above it a purple mingled luminously with the blue; towards the zenith the loveliness of the colour is not to be written. (DM, p 394)

With Barnard lying asleep, Felise feels 'joy of intense rest in possession' (DM, p 394), a 'true and restful happiness' which, Jefferies suggests, 'is for woman only' (DM, p 395):

A golden breath came up among the bright whiteness of the light over the ridge of the hill; there were scarlet streaks, the lips of the morning. In glorious beauty of the sunrise her heart brimmed to the full of love. (DM, pp 395-6)

These pages may be filtered through the lens of Heidegger's late essay on the 'end of philosophy', which stresses that 'What is evident is what can be immediately intuited'. Heidegger seeks to project a sense of 'pure space and ecstatic time' through his mysterious and poetic image of the clearing:

Light can stream into the clearing, into its openness, and let brightness play with darkness in it ... the clearing, the open region, is not only free for brightness and darkness but also for resonance and echo, for sound and the diminishing of sound.

The technical-rational mode of modernity is rejected in both Heidegger and Jefferies, writers who seek a 'place of stillness', 'the clearing of what is open'. Their entire work may be predicated upon the exploration of 'the possibility of the path to presence'. The configurations of the natural world offer themselves as 'a manner of presence', and as Heidegger suggests, there is 'No outward appearance without light'.²⁷ Jefferies' mood in this closing scene may be linked to his late essays and their preoccupation with what he termed 'the Beyond'. In 'On the Downs', for instance, he categorises the wind which is invisible and yet 'material' in terms reminiscent of Heidegger's stone: 'As the wind to the fixed boulder lying deep in the sward, so is the immaterial mind to the wind'. He insists upon the materiality of being, contrasting the 'fullness of Nature and the vacancy of mental existence'; the inner mind must, he insists, 'rest on every blade of grass and leaf in its quest for being':

Stoop and touch the earth, and receive its influence; touch the flower, and feel its life; face the wind, and have its meaning; let the sunlight fall on the open hand as if you could hold it.

From the touch of a flower, Jefferies believes, 'there is an immaterial influence ... which escapes language'.²⁸ George Steiner speaks of Heidegger 'striving to get

language and his reader inside the actual world . . . trying to make luminous and self-revealing the obstinate opaqueness of matter',²⁹ and this is valid for Jefferies' project also. One of his final notes reveals a writer still grappling with the issues of being that inform and motivate so much of his later writing, issues which are crucial to a reading of *The Dewy Morn*:

I see the sand and the stars, and the subtle cosmic material far up, and feel through, and the more I touch these the greater grows my soul life and soul touch.³⁰

It is the achievement of *The Dewy Morn* to reconcile what Jefferies designated his 'inexpressible desire of physical life, of soul-life' (SH, p 77) with his lapidary recognition that 'the wheat is beautiful' but 'human life is labour'.³¹ Richard Jefferies' mature fiction, *Green Feme Farm*, *The Dewy Morn* and *Amaryllis at the Fair*, is centred upon the trope of figures in the landscape. As in Hardy, human relations are framed by the natural setting, but Jefferies' response to nature is characterised by a rapturous immediacy foreign to Hardy's imagination. In the introduction to his paintings, D H Lawrence notes the English delight in landscape, which he feels 'is waiting for something to occupy it', and which offers 'a form of escape... from the actual human body'. *The Dewy Morn* counters this claim, its sensuous immediacy placing Jefferies closer to Lawrence's account of Cezanne, a painter who 'wanted to live, really live in the body, to know the world through his instincts and his intuitions'. Cezanne's revolutionary project, Lawrence holds, one that carried him beyond the bodiless play of light in impressionism, was to 'touch the world of substance once more with the intuitive touch' in a move that would 'displace our present mode of mental-visual consciousness'.³² Despite the scandalous marginalisation that has afflicted Jefferies' writing, he remains a crucial witness of the need Steiner identifies in Heidegger to 'remember Being so as to bring it into radiant disclosure'. Heidegger 'cites the rootedness of existence in the actual contours of the ground' and 'summons to remembrance the autonomous life of organic and inorganic matter' in a project which is implied in Jefferies' own practice. Mankind's relation to nature, as Steiner observes, has developed adversarially into 'provocation and imperialism':

We have compelled nature to yield knowledge and energy, but we have given to nature, to that which is live and hidden within it, no patient hearing, no in-dwelling. Thus our technologies mask Being instead of bringing it to light.

Ecological devastation is answered, in Heideggerian thought, by a need to reject metaphysics and return to the earth. Lawrence held that the business of art was 'to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment',³³ and this is the crucial issue in *The Dewy Morn*, and elsewhere in the later work. In essence, Jefferies writes as a poet, one who may 'give thanks for whatever homecoming to Being is open to mortal man'.³⁴ Edward Thomas aptly characterised Richard Jefferies as a man 'big enough' to take risks in his work, one

who, having 'allied himself to nature', transmits 'the delight of the senses and of the spirit, to men',³⁵ It was his 'mystic consciousness', Thomas observes of Jefferies, that 'gave a more solemn note to the joy which is the most striking thing in all his books'; like the 'excess' of the oak scattering its doomed acorns

... he is at one with nature and the forces of life, and at the same time by his creative power he rescues something of what they are whirling down to oblivion and the open sea, and makes of it a rich garden, high walled against them.³⁶

References

1. Jeremy Hooker, *Writers in a Landscape* (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 1996), p 26.
2. Richard Jefferies, *The Dewy Morn* (London: Bentley, 1891), pp 1-3. Subsequent reference is to this edition.
3. W J Keith, *Richard Jefferies* (London: Oxford Univ. Press. 1965), p 132. On the wider connections between the two writers, see Roger Ebbatson, *Lawrence and the Nature Tradition* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1980).
4. Richard Jefferies, *The Story of My Heart*, ed. S J Looker (London: Constable, 1947), p 20. Subsequent reference is to this edition.
5. "The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. D F Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), p 178. (Subsequently cited as *Basic Writings*).
6. 'Letter on Humanism', *Basic Writings*, p 246.
7. 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *Basic Writings*, p 197.
8. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J Macquarrie and E Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), p 261.
9. Ibid p 263.
10. Ibid p 265.
11. Ibid p 266.
12. Ibid p 267.
13. 'On the Essence of Truth', *Basic Writings*, pp 126,127.
14. *The Nature Diaries and Notebooks of Richard Jefferies*, ed. S J Looker (London: Greywalls Press, 1948), pp 145,103.
15. *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. H Orel (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp 181, 188.
16. 'The Wiltshire Labourer', in *The Hills and the Vale*, ed. E Thomas (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), pp 255,257,259, 261,266.
17. 'Letter on Humanism', *Basic Writings*, p 243; Georg Lukacs, *The Theory of the Novel* (MIT Press, 1971),p 41.
18. Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p 194.
19. Richard Jefferies, *Landscape and Labour*, ed. J Pearson (Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press, 1979), pp 94,95.
20. "Thoughts on the Labour Question', *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* 8 (1999), p 19.
21. Diana Morrow, "'Thoughts on the Labour Question": An Alternative View', *ibid* p23.
22. Ibid p 24.
23. Ibid p 25.
24. Diana Morrow, 'Richard Jefferies' "The Coming Voter"', RJSJ 71998.
25. K D M Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), p 392.
26. "The Origin of the Work of Art', *Basic Writings*, p 172.

27. "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', *Basic Writings*, pp 442-5.
28. 'On the Downs', *The Hills and the Vale*, pp 271,272,273, 275.
29. George Steiner, *Heidegger* (London: Fontana, 1992), p 86.
30. *Notebooks*, p 283.
31. 'One of the New Voters', *The Open Air* (London: Dent n.d.) p 107.
32. D H Lawrence, 'Introduction to These Paintings', in *D H Lawrence: Selected Critical Writings*, ed M Herbert (Oxford: OUP, 1998), pp 258,259,267,276-7.
33. 'Morality and the Novel', *ibid* p 173.
34. George Steiner, *op cit*, pp 129,136,139,146.
35. Edward Thomas, *Richard Jefferies* (London: Dent, 1938), pp 297, 299.
36. *Ibid* p 295.

*Birthday Lecture, given by Professor Roger Ebbatson to the Society at Chiseldon
on 13 October 2001*

Richard Jefferies and Thomas Hardy: Parallel Lives?

Carolyn Clarke

Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots; Hitler and Stalin: the theory of two people living in the same period of history and being profoundly influenced - perhaps even obsessed - with one another, but each living on parallel planes of existence, in so far as their lives did not cross - they never actually met - goes back to the time of Plutarch. How far is the concept of parallel lives true of Hardy and Jefferies?

Two parallel lives is not quite a true definition of these great country writers, because there is one documented meeting. In early February 1880, Thomas Hardy records a meeting at the Continental Hotel, London, where the publisher George Murray Smith of Smith, Elder & Co. had held a dinner. Hardy recalls that Jefferies was at the time 'a modest young man then getting into notice as a writer, through having a year or so earlier published his first successful book, entitled *The Gamekeeper at Home*'.¹ Hardy adds no further comment, yet one presumes Hardy and Jefferies spoke to each other at the dinner; it would have been most unusual if they had not as they had plenty in common: the first three novels of both authors had been published by William Tinsley. Both writers had left Tinsley and moved to Smith, Elder & Co. Apart from this dinner, there is no recorded evidence of the two writers having met, yet there is substantial evidence that these two parallel lives influenced each other.

Jefferies and Hardy were both born in the 1840s² and described nineteenth-century rural life and made use of local folklore and legends. Hardy, we know, read some of Jefferies' published works. Edward Garnett (1868-1937), in his introduction to the new Duckworth edition of *Amaryllis at the Fair* (1904), on which he was seeking Hardy's opinion, argued that the spontaneity and naturalness of the loosely structured *Amaryllis* made it a superior novel to Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, since the heaviness of the plotting made the reader too conscious of the author's controlling presence. Hardy's reply, dated 21 November 1904, serves as something of a critique of *Amaryllis* and answers Garnett's argument in a tone of injured pride:

I have finished reading the book that you have been kind enough to send me ... It is a very thorough study, on a large scale, of a farmer and his family, and would have made a good first book of a novel as long as *Tom Jones* or *Clarissa*. I like it exceedingly.

The question that you raise in your preface, of the relative virtues, as fiction, of studies or sketches of character and scenery like the present, and the same when connected by a rounded plot or drama, that (if perfectly constructed) is like an animal organism, and does not contain a line which fails to help on the development - is one of interest. I understand you to hold that it is greater to succeed in the first kind, without attempting the more subtle second, than to attempt the second and succeed but indifferently therein outside the qualities of the first, (assuming these to be equal in both cases.) Some might answer that this is despising in the story with a cohering plot all that you have valued in the other and the higher aim in addition. Nevertheless, it is the attitude of the English critic in general

not to value the artistic aspect of a composition as a whole, so that you are not singular in your doctrine.³

Clearly Hardy in some respects valued Jefferies' abilities as a writer. However records remain totally silent on Jefferies' view of Hardy, but it is fair to assume that he knew something of his writings, since Hardy's 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' was published in *Longman's Magazine* in July 1883 and was followed in November 1883 with Jefferies' 'The Wiltshire Labourer'.⁴

Eleven years earlier Jefferies had written a letter to *The Times*, dated 12 November 1872, in which he had evidenced that the Wiltshire labourer was, at that time, adequately paid and well-housed; he even wore 'really good clothes on Sundays'.⁵ This letter appeared against the background of agitation and considerable press publicity and public debate attending upon the formation of the first Agricultural Labourer's Union at Leamington on 29 May 1872. Hardy must have heard its founder Joseph Arch for, in his essay, 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', he recalls: 'Nobody who saw and heard Mr Arch in his early tours through Dorsetshire will ever forget him and the influence his presence exercised over the crowds he drew . . .'. Hardy would have been unlikely to take the same viewpoint as Jefferies, the latter being the son of a working farmer who would take a rather patronising view of an ordinary farm labourer.

Despite this, and the earlier cited difference of opinion on the relative value of 'studies or sketches of character and scenery' as compared to 'the same when connected by a rounded plot or drama', Hardy clearly had some sympathy for Jefferies: a reference in 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' to 'Misery and fever lurking] in his [Hodge's] cottage, while to paraphrase *the words of a recent writer on the labouring classes*, in his future there are only the workhouse and the grave'⁶ is clearly a reference to Jefferies who, in the final chapter of *Hodge and His Masters* (1880) had drawn a moving picture of the last days of the aged labourer.

So far, certain well-known parallels, established by fact, in the life-paths of the two writers have been set out, but did this parallelism go further? Could they have even borrowed or lifted material from one another? Andrew Rossabi has described already certain similarities in plot and structure between *Desperate Remedies* and *The Scarlet Shawl*, though he maintains that the parallels were most probably coincidental.⁷ But there are similar striking parallels in Jefferies' 'Uptill-a-Thorn' (1883) and Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891). In 'Uptill-a-Thorn'⁸, Jefferies' sympathies are clearly with the labouring class, and his views appear much closer to Hardy's social and political views than those expressed in earlier letters to *The Times*.

Although there is no definitive evidence that Hardy read 'Uptill-a-Thorn', the similarities in theme and imagery between this short essay and Hardy's own novel are so striking that it must be concluded that either Hardy used, and was influenced by this essay, or both writers had knowledge of a local story or legend around the theme of a 'maiden ruined'. In a manner similar to Hardy's association of Tess with the harvest, and cycle of the days and years, Jefferies sets the scene with the farmer and the sun as 'the leading actors and the haymakers as the chorus'. In the opening paragraph Dolly, a field worker, pins her torn dress with a thorn. Then, Taking a June rose which pricked

her finger, she put the flower by the "rant" or tear and went to join the rest of the haymakers. The blood welled out of the scratch in the finger more freely than would have been supposed from so small a place.'

Physically, Jefferies' description of Dolly bears more than a passing resemblance to Tess, her skin being 'white and soft', 'lips red, a little full perhaps', 'the softest brown eyes under long lashes ...' However, it is not only in appearance that the heroines mirror each other. In both narratives, the prick of the rose thorn (reminiscent of fairy stories of awakening princesses and associated sexual symbolism) precedes the betrayal and rape/seduction of Tess/Dolly. As a comely woman, Dolly is attractive to all the male field-workers, while inciting the envy of other females. All the men 'petted and flattered her', including Big Mat 'a favourite with the master, and trusted' (note the use of irony here, commensurate with Mrs Durbeyfield's trust of Alec d'Urberville). Dolly was also admired by Mr Andrew, the farmer's son who, like Angel Clare, was only working on the farm in order to gain some practical experience before moving on to further education and higher things. Echoing the Tess/Alec relationship, Dolly becomes pregnant (as with Tess the seduction/rape is left deliberately ambiguous), she lives with Mat *but is not married to him* and next harvest there is a child 'wrapped in a red shawl, placed under the shocks while she worked.'

The influence of Greek mythology on Hardy's work is well documented; in the same tradition, Jefferies compares Big Mat's unchecked rage, following a bout of drinking, to that of Ulysses in the battle with Irus. The description of Dolly's smiling figure and laughing lips and shape clearly echoes 'laughing Aphrodite', the stock epithet of the goddess of love in Homer. The Homer allusion is extended through Dolly's blindness, following a blow from Big Mat, which knocks out one of her eyes. Finally, Dolly's true love, Mr Andrew, returns but mistakes Dolly for a beggar, putting a silver coin in her hand and walking on, leaving Dolly 'like a violet over which a wagon wheel had rolled. The thorn had gone deep into her bosom.'

Parallels between writers should not be over-emphasised; they could be coincidental. 'Uptill-a-Thorn', though haunting in many respects, is not a literary masterpiece; it has neither the length nor evocative qualities of *Tess*. Nonetheless, it does seem that both writers either drew on a common rural culture integrating mythology, fairy stories and local traditions, or that Hardy had read 'Uptill-a-Thorn' and therein saw the germ of something much greater.

Footnotes

1. Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*, 1928. Macmillan, p 175. The poet and critic Matthew Arnold and the novelist Henry James (who owned a copy of *Wild Life in a Southern County*) were also present at the dinner.
2. Hardy 1840; Jefferies 1848.
3. *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, edited by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate; Vol. III 1902-08, 1982. Oxford, Clarendon Press, pp 147-8.
4. Reprinted in *The Hills and the Vale*, 1901. Ed. Edward Thomas.
5. Cited from Andrew Rossabi's Introduction to *Hodge and His Masters*, 1979. Quartet Books.
6. I am grateful to Andrew Rossabi for drawing this quotation to my attention.

7. 'On *The Scarlet Shawl*', Andrew Rossabi, RJSJ, 1995, p 20.

8. Part I of a two-part essay 'The Field-Play' in *The Life of the Fields*, 1884.

Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank the following people for their help with this article:

Phyllis Treitel, Andrew Rossabi, Roger Ebbatson.

Was 'Dad' Uzzell ever at Hodson Cottage?

Ken Watts

*The following is a revised version of the notes published in the Edward Thomas Fellowship
Newsletter No. 43.*

In about 1894 Richard Jefferies's biographer the poet Edward Thomas while fishing the Wilts and Berks Canal near Cambria Place in New Swindon met 'an entertaining and lasting acquaintance' named David Uzzell. Almost from the first day he called him 'Dad' in the Wiltshire style. Edward Thomas was then aged sixteen and staying with his grandmother in the railway village at Swindon. Despite the disparity of thirty-seven years in their ages Edward Thomas and David Uzzell became firm friends and 'Dad' Uzzell taught the London boy much of his country lore.

Several years after Edward Thomas had been killed in the Great War his wife Helen described in *As It Was* (1926) a 'tiny honeymoon' which she and Edward spent in 1896 staying 'just outside S-' [Swindon] 'in the cottage of his old gamekeeper friend'. In her description of this episode she refers to the gamekeeper and his wife as 'Dad and Granny', describes the cottage as standing 'like a fairy tale cottage in a wood', and mentions its 'deep thatched roof and 'the huge reservoir nearby'. This leaves us in very little doubt that her description is of the gamekeeper's cottage at Hodson on the Burderop estate although there is some doubt about whether 'Dad' Uzzell ever lived at Hodson. In this context it is relevant to note that when in his letters Edward Thomas mentions the possibility of visiting the Uzzells he always refers to coming to Swindon - not to Hodson.

In two pen portraits of 'Dad' Uzzell Thomas describes how 'his features not less than his manner and look raised him above the ordinary labourers from whose class he was sprung':

Latterly Dad had sobered much when he was no longer able to perform his old feats of strength and daring. To make amends perhaps for the past he had turned tee-totaller and finally Salvationist. It was a strange step from poacher to street corner preacher, but it was doubtless sincere.

Although it is quite usual to describe a reformed character as a 'poacher turned gamekeeper', my investigations over many years suggested that 'Dad' Uzzell never became a gamekeeper and never lived at Hodson. It is therefore possible that Helen Thomas may have transposed 'Dad' and 'Granny' Uzzell from their home in Swindon to Hodson Cottage. Whether or not Edward and Helen Thomas stayed at Hodson for their 'tiny honeymoon', they would almost certainly have visited it during this 1896 visit because of Edward's interest in the gamekeeper's cottage as the former home of Richard Jefferies's keeper Haylock. They would also have visited it in 1907 when they both stayed little more than a mile from Hodson at Broome Manor Farm while Edward

was researching *Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work* (1909) and Helen particularly recalled visiting on this occasion 'the special places connected with Jefferies'.

David Uzzell was born in May 1841 at Kemble, now in Gloucestershire but then in Wiltshire prior to 1895 county boundary changes. In his daughter Eliza's September 1871 birth certificate - she was born at Gloucester Street in Cirencester - his occupation is given as 'Jobbing Labourer'. His three sons moved to Swindon to obtain work in the railway factory and at some time he appears to have followed them, probably after 1891. A check on the few Burderop papers in the Wiltshire Record Office at Trowbridge shed no light on the matter of his possible presence at Hodson. Neither the 1891 census nor the annual editions of the *North Wilts Directory* reveal an Uzzell at Hodson, and my search of the 1891 census returns for many parishes in north Wiltshire including Swindon and Chiseldon - Hodson is in Chiseldon parish - also failed to find David Uzzell who may not then have moved to this area. Edward Haylock (the gamekeeper of Jefferies's *The Gamekeeper at Home*) was in 1891 incidentally living at 21 High Street, Wroughton, with his wife Emma, presumably in retirement as he was then seventy.

The gamekeeper at Burderop in the 1891 census was John Walters living at 'Hodson Park Wood Keeper's Lodge', and from 1893 to at least 1897 the *North Wilts Directories* list the keeper as John Thomas Staniforth. By 1901 he had been superseded by Thomas Harrod and by 1902 John Jones had taken over as keeper. Although the Wiltshire directories do not reveal the location of David Uzzell in the 1890s, his three sons (the 'Bill, Tom and Charley' mentioned in a 1910 letter by Edward Thomas to 'Dad' Uzzell) are listed living in Swindon. William Uzzell was in 1898 at 31 Queen Street and in 1906-1910 at 38 Haydon Street, Thomas Uzzell was in 1897-1898 at 23 Turner Street, in 1901 at Cambria Bridge Road, and from 1906 to 1910 at 6 Morley Street, and Charles Uzzell was in 1906 at 16 Byron Street, in 1910 at 130 Chapel Street, and in 1917 at 6 Cambria Houses. These addresses are relevant because we know from the autobiographical *The Childhood of Edward Thomas* that 'Dad' Uzzell for a time 'lived with his wife under the roof of a son', and that this son was probably the middle son Tom who was in 1897 living at 23 Turner Street.

By 1906 David Uzzell is listed at 6 John Street Terrace where he died in 1919, and evidence has recently come to light that he lived at this address as early as 1899, only three years after the 'tiny honeymoon' described by Helen Thomas. This information is provided by the marriage certificate of 'Dad' Uzzell's daughter Kate Eliza Uzzell dated 23 December 1899 which gives their address as 6 John Street Terrace, New Swindon.

A little earlier, when he was at Oxford in 1897 soon after the honeymoon Edward Thomas wrote a letter to 'Dad' Uzzell in which he speculated about Uzzell's patron saint and wrote: 'I forgot it was St John'. Thomas often wrote joking letters to his friend and this seems to be a punning reference to his address at John Street Terrace. After he became in his old age a reformed character and an ardent Salvationist David Uzzell's home at the now-destroyed John Street was within a few yards of the Salvation Army Citadel in Fleet Street where I am informed that Salvation Army records reveal that he was both a captain and a caretaker. A photograph survives of 'Dad' and 'Granny' Uzzell in Salvation Army uniforms holding their old-age pension books. When Edward Thomas was killed in France David Uzzell wrote a moving

letter to Helen dated 5 May 1917 from 'Swindon, Wilts' saying: 'it was a blow to me and my family we all liked him we was cut up as bad as if it had been one of our hown boys' and ending: 'God Bless you all rite soon pleas'.

In a letter which she wrote to me in August 1992 Edward and Helen's youngest daughter Myfanwy indicated that something her mother once said inclined her to think that the stay at Hodson might have been a fiction. Myfanwy also recalled that shortly after her mother's death in 1967 she visited Hodson Cottage and closely examined the book (now lost) of gamekeepers' records and there was no mention of David Uzzell. It may also be significant that the late Professor R G Thomas - for long the accepted authority on Edward Thomas - after having many long conversations with Helen Thomas almost ignored the Hodson honeymoon when he merely mentions in his *Edward Thomas: A Portrait* (1985) 'Helen's own warm-hearted account'. Seventeen years earlier he had (in his *Letters from Edward Thomas to Gordon Bottomley*; 1968) accepted Helen's account and listed in his biographical table under September 1896: 'ET and Helen spend a "honeymoon" at Swindon, "and put up in the cottage of his old game-keeper friend"'.

The possibilities seem to be either that Helen romanticised their honeymoon by transferring it to Hodson Cottage after they had stayed with the Uzzells in Swindon, or that they stayed at Hodson with keeper Staniforth and Helen by accident or design telescoped Staniforth and 'Dad' Uzzell into a single person living at Hodson. Helen's graphic description of Hodson cottage and its surroundings suggests the latter. It should be remembered that she wrote her book with no view to publication as a therapy to help her recover from the shock of losing her husband and therefore had no obligation to be strictly accurate (the book is demonstrably inaccurate in some other respects). She was also writing in 1926 thirty years after the event, a fact that is emphasised when she writes: '! do not remember the hamlet to which our cottage belonged'.

Mrs Frances Gay - the former secretary of the Richard Jefferies Society - researched this subject many years ago, discovered David Uzzell's presence at John Street, and concluded that it was unlikely that he ever lived at Hodson. Unfortunately the 1901 census returns when they become generally available in 2002 may not resolve this matter but, if they list David Uzzell living at 6 John Street Terrace, New Swindon, they will provide additional evidence that he was a long-term resident at this address and apparently never lived at Hodson.

Note. All the streets mentioned above were in New Swindon. Queen Street is south of Fleet Street, Haydon Street is south of Station Road near the station, and Turner Street is north of Westcott Place off Manor Road. John Street formerly ran east-south-east from directly opposite the Salvation Army Citadel at the east end of Fleet Street.

Book Review

AT HOME ON THE EARTH: A New Selection of the Later Writings of Richard Jefferies. Selected and introduced by Jeremy Hooker. *Green Books, Totnes* 2001
ISBN 1 903998 02 6. £9.95, US\$16.95.

There have been many anthologies of Jefferies in the last hundred years or so, and it is fascinating to note how the choices of the compilers vary as fashions change. The first was H S H Waylen's *Thoughts from the Writings of Richard Jefferies* (1895), and the Victorian liking for 'great thoughts' duly blends with the early-twentieth-century emphasis on 'Nature' in T C Watkins' *A Little Book of Nature Thoughts* (1904), a taste epitomized by the title of Eric Fitch Daghish's *Out of Doors with Richard Jefferies* (1935). Henry Williamson's anthology (1937) is the first to stress representativeness, reproducing extracts from his early fiction, the *Times* letters, and selections from virtually all his books. But the most successful - and decidedly one of the best - was Samuel J Looker's *Jefferies' England* (also 1937, with several subsequent reprints). This was the book that for many of us (including Hooker and myself) provided an inspiring entree into Jefferies' writings.

Hooker's new anthology does for the early-twenty-first century what *Jefferies' England* did for the mid-twentieth. It is remarkable in that, with the exception of some notebook-entries, Hooker has chosen to limit himself to the later essays, from *Nature Near London* onwards. Oddly enough, this is a characteristic shared with Waylen's pioneering selection. Otherwise, however, the two books could hardly be more different - mainly because, while early anthologists like Waylen often picked out stray paragraphs or even sentences that took their fancy, Hooker has a proper respect for the integrity of Jefferies as an artist and the essay as a literary form.

There are some, of course, who will miss well-loved passages in the early work - especially, perhaps, the engaging wrong-side-of-the-hedge raciness of *The Amateur Poacher* and the crisp, clear-sighted portraits of individuals in *Hodge and His Masters*. Yet it is amazing to see how much of Jefferies' tonal range is represented here. His earlier sport-and-gamekeeper phase is reflected in 'A London Trout', while the John Brown and Job of 'My Old Village' are as unforgettable countrymen as Jefferies ever created. Moreover, the advantages of Hooker's policy are considerable. As one reads through these selections, one appreciates the sharp focus on the visionary side of Jefferies that came to the forefront after his health broke down in the early 1880s. Jefferies' England then metamorphosed into an England of the mind, as he was forced to draw upon his vivid recollections of the world he had once known so intimately but could visit no longer.

An additional bonus is the reproduction of twelve woodcuts by Agnes Miller Parker that graced some of the Lutterworth Press volumes in the late 1940s and brilliantly create a visual equivalent of Jefferies' prose. All in all, I can think of no better way of introducing Jefferies to new readers than by directing them to this book.

WJ Keith