

# RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2006

### FROM THE CHAIR

The past few months have been both busy and important from the Society's perspective. The first point to mention is that we have a new Secretary! You will have been aware of the need to fill this important post, for the best part of a year now, since Phyllis Treitel announced that she would not be standing for a further stint in the role. We are all enormously grateful to her for the way she has managed the Society's affairs for the past 10 years, and the range, and quality, of meetings and activities has been in no small part due to her energy, contacts, and powers of persuasion. I therefore took the chair at the last AGM convinced that we would have no one person to fill the position; and that we would have to share out the duties of the post amongst existing officers and Council members. When the moment arrived for the election of a new Secretary, I asked (as one does in the circumstances; more in hope than expectation) for any last minute nominations or volunteers, and was delighted and astonished, when a hand was raised towards the back of the room - cautiously, but firmly. It was Jean Saunders, who, as you will be aware, has over the past two years, done more than any other one individual, to fight the proposed developments at Coate. I was surprised that she felt she would have the time and energy to take on the responsibilities, but Jean is the sort of person who thrives on work of this nature, and has thrown herself into the tasks involved, energetically, enthusiastically, and efficiently.

The second piece of good news was the generous presentation by Ethelwyn and Nigel Gregory, to the Wiltshire County Records Office in Trowbridge, of the extensive correspondence between Henry Williamson, when he was President of the Society, and Frances Gay, Ethelwyn's mother, as Chairman. Mrs Gay had wisely kept this correspondence confidential during her life, as some of the material in the letters is very personal and sensitive. The letters are now all in the public domain, and will prove an invaluable source of reference to Jefferies and Williamson scholars in the future.

Steve Hobbs of the Wiltshire Records Office and I went to Princes Risborough on a beautiful day in November, with a dozen or more Red Kites circling overhead as we approached the town, and received the letters from Mr and Mrs Gregory. A photograph of the occasion is reproduced here.

To move swiftly from red kites to red potatoes; members may remember that a few years ago, one of our number from Scotland, Dr. Duncan Pepper, discovered some "Forty-Fold" potatoes in a supermarket in Edinburgh. He kindly distributed some of these amongst interested members, who tried them, and in my case, also grew some on as seed potatoes in subsequent years. I had quite thought this was a one-off experiment in rare breeds, and so was delighted and surprised to find some of the same variety in our Marlborough branch of the same supermarket. Along with suggested cooking instructions on the wrapping, was the statement, "these were first grown in 1836". As Mr Iden in *Amaryllis at the Fair*, refers to them as "old-fashioned" and "auld", on several occasions, it would seem very likely that the Forty-Folds known by Richard Jefferies had been around long before 1836. Further research is continuing, but I can report that Charles Darwin, in his *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, refers to two varieties of Forty-Fold, "The Old Forty-Fold" and "Taylor's Forty-Fold". Darwin's book was published in 1868, and this confirms my theory that Waitrose has got the date wrong; not in this case the "use by date", but the "first grown" date! I am continuing with my researches with Wisley and Kew, but if any members can help with this I should be most interested to hear from them.

And now for the bad news (which I have deliberately kept until last). As many of you will already know, the Planning Inspector in November reported that he was recommending that the proposed development should go forward at Coate. Not only did he recommend this, but he made the following

comments on the section headed, “Literary Landscape”:

10.11 I understand the relevance of the Coate landscape to the life and works of local writer Richard Jefferies. Much of his writing has drawn upon his upbringing in the immediate area and is set within this landscape, around Coate, Day House Farm and Coate Water. The development land is a central and integral part of the landscape depicted in his writings. However, I do not find that I can attribute such weight to this factor as to justify turning down the designation of this area for development. To some people Jefferies and his works are an integral part of the literary landscape of Britain. However, it seems to me that he is not known or thought of in the same way as more major figures such as Hardy or Wordsworth. That is not to denigrate his works or to undervalue his contributions, but there does not seem to me to be the weight of acclaim to justify a stop being placed upon the development of this land.

10.12 PPS7 makes reference to historic areas, but, overall there is little in national or local policy guidance that would directly support the protection of land such as here at Coate for this reason, regardless of the cultural importance of his writings. The land carries no formal historic designation. Development, although directly affecting the immediate area of Richard Jefferies’ upbringing, would still leave intact some of the landscapes whose virtues he extolled in his writings. In conclusion, I do not consider that it would be justified for the Local

Plan to protect this area because of its literary links.

So; the Inspector/Literary Critic has spoken! It has been pointed out to him that Richard Jefferies topped the poll of “most admired countryside writers”, in the *Guardian*’s survey last summer, but this must not be allowed to stand in the way of allowing the building of a University overflow on the Jefferies Countryside. A University, to boot, that does not even have a department of English Language or Literature!

We fight on. Simon Barnes in an article in the *Times* in January, referred to the proposed destruction of “Jefferies’ Land”. This pre-empted our proposed letter to the same paper, and my follow-up letter was, unfortunately, not published. I am pleased to say, however, that George Miller (who has spent an enormous amount of time on the project), is collecting the opinions of various leading personalities in the world of art and literature, who have expressed their views as to why Richard Jefferies is important to them, and why his countryside should be preserved.

I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend our Study Day or AGM this year. Failing that, we welcome members visiting the Museum, on its open days, as it is through meeting as individual enthusiasts, that the Society, and the heritage of Richard Jefferies, can be maintained and strengthened.

**John Price**

### **Message from Phyllis Treitel**

This is my last Newsletter: Jean Saunders will edit Newsletters from now on. Please send her your contributions - they are most welcome.

I am indebted to Helen Newman for cheerful, efficient typing of my scribble, and to Margaret and Ray Evans for producing the envelopes, ready to fill. Peter Robins has helped with wise advice, lots of cuttings and, for the Journal, eagle-eyed proof reading. Thank you all.

## COUNCIL MEMBERS 2005

- President: Hugoe Matthews (elected 2004 for 5 years)
- Treasurer: Geoffrey Hirst (elected 2004 for 5 years)  
Scar House, Thoraby, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 3SU  
(Tel. 01969 663553)
- Secretary: Jean Saunders (elected 2005 for 5 years)  
Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 7SS
- Vice Presidents: Brian Fullagar  
Phyllis Treitel
- Members of Council: John Price, Chairman (elected 2004 for 3 years)  
(with duties) Granham West, Granham Hill, Marlborough, Wilts. SN8 4DN  
(Tel. 01672 515150)
- Margaret Evans, Membership Secretary (re-elected 2003 for 3 years)  
23 Hardwell Close, Grove, Nr. Wantage, Oxon OX12 0BN  
(Tel. 012357 65360)
- Ray Morse, Meetings Secretary (re-elected 2003 for 3 years)  
28 Tismeads Crescent, Swindon SN1 4DR  
(Tel. 01793 530520)
- John Webb, Librarian (re-elected 2005 for 3 years)  
(Tel. 01793 853171)
- Helen Newman (re-elected 2004 for 3 years)  
Richard Stewart (re-elected 2004 for 3 years)  
John Savage (re-elected 2005 for 3 years)  
Eric Jones (re-elected 2005 for 3 years)
- Co-opted: A.S. Hickerton

## REPORT ON THE AGM AT CHISELDON 8 OCTOBER 2005

If those of you who can't come to an AGM think that it is an occasion for stodgy formality - think again. Although we no longer, alas, enjoy Len Grugeon's jaunty introductions, we still enjoy meeting old friends, scanning the books and papers put out for inspection, buying something from John Price's bookstall, savouring Chiseldon and the view of Liddington Hill.

It was not warm enough, this year, for us to sit out for our picnic, but the charming hall was lavishly heated and the 26 of us for the AGM and 2 more for the lecture seemed to fill it comfortably. Margaret Bathe did the refreshments.

The Chairman brought us all up to date on Coate and other matters under 'Matters

Arising'. The Treasurer, who was unable to be present, had provided us with notes to accompany his account. Eric Jones, John Savage and John Webb were re-elected to Council. No one had been proposed as Hon. Sec. Mrs. Jean Saunders tentatively offered her services. The offer was warmly accepted. Margaret Evans offered to add the distribution and despatch of Newsletters and Journals to her other duties. Ray Morse suggested that if Phyllis Treitel were made a vice-president she could be retained on Council. And so it was.

During the lunch break, a few of us drove, with Lisl Grugeon, to Coate, where we gathered to sprinkle some of the ashes of our late Chairman, Len Grugeon. It was a form of

home-coming for him, and we were glad to

remember him, and all he did for the Society.

4

### **BIRTHDAY LECTURE: 'RICHARD JEFFERIES: AN INDEPENDENT MIND'** **HUGOE MATTHEWS**

It seems a long time since Hugoe Matthews addressed us, but his respect for, and knowledge of, Jefferies and his work has not diminished. His lecture examined Jefferies as an original thinker. Not only that, but Jefferies' view of himself as a thinker. This side of Jefferies has been overlooked.

The lecturer pointed out how important it had been for him to read through all Jefferies' work, in the order in which it had been written. As the AGM programme announced, he has compiled a list, in the form of a booklet running

to 20 pages, of every work by Jefferies that was ever published, in date order; using this list, any reader may now explore the whole oeuvre systematically. Copies of the booklet were on sale on the day. There are some left (see page 12). For those with good eyesight there is an A5 version at £1.50. The A4 version (same text) is £2.00.

We thank Hugoe warmly for the masterly way he set out his thesis, and then proved it. The full text may be found in Journal no. 15.

### **COATE FARM AND MUSEUM (OPENING DATES)**

The Museum will be open on the following dates in 2006:

7 May, 21 May\*, 4 June, 18 June, 2 July, 16 July,  
6 August, 20 August, 3 September, 10 September, 17 September.

From 2.00-5.00 pm.

\*This is a special day and we hope to be open from 10.00-5.00 pm.

If in doubt, check with Jean Saunders. There may be other extra openings in May because of Museums and Galleries month. Kirsty Hartsiotis is the new Curator. Jean Saunders will join the list of Museum volunteers - come along and meet her. 10 September is Heritage Day.

Those coming to Study Day (29 July) who would like to visit the Museum should let the Chairman know, on the day.

Much work has been done on the farm recently, and more is planned. A fence has been erected by Arkell's to deter destructive visitors. Thick scrub has been removed by valiant volunteers. Moves have been made to secure official protection for the garden and outbuildings: they not only hold precious mementoes but, vitally, provide the house's setting.

We still hope to install the Harold Adams memorial seat, and only await an occupant for the residential part of the house (for security reasons).

If you know of a group who would enjoy a special opening and guided tour, please consult Jean Saunders.

### **PUBLICITY**

A new leaflet has been created to inform visitors about the Museum. Entitled 'Richard Jefferies - Farmhouse and Museum', it will fulfil a long-felt need. More details when it is ready.

### **Radio, Newspapers and Magazines**

In November and December, 2005, letters by Jean Saunders and Patrick Esmonde were published in *Guardian*.

On 15 December, *Country Life* published an article by Mark Daniel entitled 'Save the Richard Jefferies Apples'. In it, he referred, in particular,

to the russet apple, and to measures to raise new trees. These trees and their locations have been included in The Tree Register of the British Isles. Mark's article included an attack on the plans for developing the land adjoining Coate Farm, and Coate Water.

On 7 January, 2006, a whole column of Simon Barnes's Wild Notebook in *The Times*, was devoted to a biting attack on the proposed Coate development, and what he terms 'a witless piece of planning.'

On 10 January, Mark was on Swindon Breakfast Radio (7.30 am) discussing Wiltshire dialect and Jefferies. On 14 January a letter from Jean Saunders was published in *Guardian*.

On 16 January, a whole page in *Swindon Advertiser*, page 14, was devoted to the 18th of Swindon Borough Council's 50 pledges, namely to protect the special character of Coate Water.

### **SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN**

The Swindon Local Plan inquiry inspector's report was published on 2 December. Unsurprisingly, David Fenton agreed with the planners that land at Coate was suitable for the development of a university campus, no more than 1800 houses and 25 hectares of offices. He was of the opinion that the need for the houses in the Plan period was not urgent and that the numbers may have to be revised down if environmental constraints reduce the availability of development land.

Mr Fenton's recommendations were extremely guarded. He proposed that English Nature's minimum buffer should be accepted around Coate Water nature reserve, that treasured open landscapes to Liddington Hill and the countryside must be preserved to maintain Coate Water's 'Country Park' status, that the University of Bath must agree legal conditions to secure the future of Oakfield Campus and to secure site(s) in the town centre for stand-alone facilities, and that business use must be linked to the hospital or university. The leader of Swindon Borough Council, Mike Bawden, was quoted as saying 'No University, no houses'.

However, the Inspector lacked any appreciation for protecting Jefferies' literary landscape. This was based on Mr Fenton's perception that Jefferies work was not important compared to that of Hardy and Wordsworth. The Richard Jefferies Society has lodged a formal complaint with the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, challenging the Inspector's comments based on his personal view and not on expert opinion. The Society has also asked Swindon Borough

A large photograph of the view towards Liddington was followed by a picture of Jean Saunders, and her fears that the pledge will not be honoured.

The Spring 2006 issue of *This England* has an article (pages 42-3) entitled 'The Wiltshire World of Richard Jefferies', as part of a series called Literary Landscapes of England. Terry Gray, its author, is to be congratulated on an excellent article, and we thank the publisher for adding a message about the Society, and the threat to Coate.

Council to commission a report on the importance of Jefferies Land as a planning matter to consider. Swindon Council is now considering the changes needed to their Coate, or what they now refer to as Commonhead, planning policy. The developers intend to amend their planning application some time in the spring.

In the meantime, over 26,000 people have signed the Save Coate petition. A Jefferies Land Conservation Trust, established in September 2005, is working on an original use of the proposed development area linking use to the Coate Museum and to other facilities at Coate Water. The main aim is to create a major nature sanctuary whilst making use of fields and existing buildings for educational purposes linking studies to Jefferies and an appreciation of literary and historic landscapes.

Simon Barnes added a fillip to the campaign in his 'Wild Notebook' article published in *The Times* on 7 January. He quoted from 'Wild Flowers' and then went on to express concern about the *witless piece of planning* that would destroy *the human associations with Swindon's greatest writer - and great writers are not thick on the ground, even in Swindon*.

For more information about the Save Coate campaign or Jefferies Land Conservation Trust, contact Jean Saunders on 01793 783040 or e-mail [jeanadsaunders@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jeanadsaunders@tiscali.co.uk) or write to the Hon Sec's address or look at these web sites: [www.savecoate.org.uk](http://www.savecoate.org.uk) and [www.jefferiesland.org.uk](http://www.jefferiesland.org.uk)

John Chandler, historian and RJS member, was commissioned to examine the links between Jefferies and the area of land under threat from development. In his report, published by the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust in December, Chandler discusses the importance of Coate to Jefferies' writing. The pamphlet is suitably illustrated with maps and appropriate quotes.

The A5 sized pamphlet is on offer free to Society members. If you would like a copy, send a stamped self-addressed envelope {9x6 inches} to Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 7SS.

### **For internet users**

Those of you with access to the Internet can now keep up to date with news and events about the Society. A news blog has been set up at <http://richardjefferiessociety.blogspot.com>

This has been set up to complement Simon Coleman's web site at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~lissmc/rjeffs.htm> that focuses on the Life and Works of Richard Jefferies.

If you would like to receive the occasional e-mail with news or you have information to impart to others send it to [R.Jefferies\\_Society@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:R.Jefferies_Society@tiscali.co.uk)

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### **Coate Farm and grounds**

There have been endless rounds of meetings between the Society's committee members and the local authority in order to progress the vital work that is required to maintain the buildings and grounds.

The Society has written to English Heritage requesting that **all** the buildings and man-made structures related to the farm are covered by the Grade II protection. The current description attached to the listing only covers the main farmhouse. The Society has asked that the dairy, barn, pigsties, workshop, main garden wall, boundary marker and the ha-ha wall with the square drain are all covered by the designation.

A meeting was organised with the Council's arboricultural officer to point out the trees of literary and environmental importance that we believe should be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Somewhat frustrated by the neglected look of the Coate farm grounds, twenty volunteers from the Society and the Jefferies Land Conservation Trust have given up the odd Sunday to tackle the brambles, nettles and overgrowth choking the trees, grounds and buildings. Plans to restore the orchard and add new plantings that Jefferies might have chosen are making headway.

**Jean Saunders**

### **DATA PROTECTION ACT**

Members' names and addresses are held on a computer data base. We are required by the Data Protection Act 1984 to inform members that they have the right to object to information being held in this way.

The Newsletter has been compiled and edited by Phyllis Treitel. Helen Newman has done the typing. Despatch by Margaret Evans.

### **OBITUARY - JOHN FOWLES**

John Fowles died on 5 November 2005. He was born in 1926 and educated at Bedford School and New College, Oxford. In his early life he was a school teacher. Famous for his novels, he also wrote non-fiction: *The Tree* (1979), *The Enigma of Stonehenge* (1980) and *Thomas Hardy's England* (1984).

In 1980, Oxford University Press published Jefferies' *After London*, in the World's

Classics series, with a powerful and perceptive introduction, dated 1978, by John Fowles. Thereafter he was an honorary member of the Society. In 1981 he gave to the Society his working papers for this Introduction, suggesting that they be auctioned, and the proceeds used to augment the Society's funds. This was done (see Annual Report for 1982 p.12 and Annual Report for 1983 p.8) and the gift greatly appreciated.

In 1987, Ex Libris Press published a new, illustrated edition of *Round About a Great Estate*. Again, John Fowles wrote the Introduction, and also a glossary.

In 1990, his wife Elizabeth died. He later remarried and continued to live in Lyme Regis. Although he did not participate in the Society's activities, he was aware of our preoccupations, and promptly signed the Coate petition form, a gesture that was made full use of by the campaign leader, Jean Saunders.

### JEFFERIES IN THE GARDEN

It is lunch time and we are outside on a sunny summer's day. We sit in a shady corner near the buddleia and pond, trying to keep clear of the song thrushes feeding young in our fuchsia bush. We finish our food, I scatter cake crumbs on the lawn and start to read the latest edition of *Envoi*, my poetry magazine. Almost immediately I am distracted as a blackbird feeds her young with the cake crumbs and above a large white nectars on the buddleia, then transfers to the tall purple *verbena bonariensis* nearby. A gatekeeper is on the remains of the marjoram and the still flowering thyme is full of bees. I have now read one poem but its meaning escapes me. I try again but now a meadow brown is on the lawn and close by two green-veined whites appear to be mating. A red admiral, its bold colours sparkling in the sunshine, is now on the buddleia with a slightly tattered comma also feeding. A big dragonfly, some kind of hawk, is hunting over the lawn and a robin has come out from the pine's shadows to spreadeagle itself on a sunny patch of grass. At the far end a young blackbird is splashing and drinking from our large water tray. Now we watch one of the parent thrushes arriving at the nest with a beak crammed full of worms: the young have been gaping, bills wide open, not just for food but also hot in the direct sunlight now on the nest. They are so crammed tight the parent has to stand up to feed them.

I turn again to the book but now a lovely sleek woodmouse with big ears and a very long tail runs across the slabs around the pond and into cover, where twitching vegetation marks its progress. The thrush is still busy, though conscious of a magpie's arrival in our large silver birch. I look on the pond but for once can see no frogs or pairs of damselflies laying eggs. The pinky *sedum spectabile* hasn't attracted any

His diary is published this year by Jonathan Cape as *John Fowles The Journals* price £25.00 and some extracts have appeared in *Saturday Guardian*. The entry for 30 October 1989 is a typical one: "I live like Jefferies, like John Clare, I can't celebrate it in words - not lack of words so much as the knowledge that I cannot surpass their words."

Jean Saunders wrote to Sarah Fowles expressing our sorrow, and received a card in reply mentioning John's devotion to *Bevis*.

butterflies as yet and there are no birds feeding on scattered apple cores.

It is so still I can hear the young thrushes calling. Time to turn again to the book but suddenly the woodmouse finds courage to venture out onto the lawn and quickly polishes off the remaining cake crumbs. Some years ago one actually climbed into one of our finished yoghurt bowls to lick off the remainder. Now a small white is on the buddleia and beyond our garden a grey squirrel is taking another unripe walnut, then carrying it in gaping mouth onto our lawn, prior to burying it. The woodmouse is back into cover and now I hopefully scan the sycamore next to the walnut, for any purple hairstreaks feeding on its honeydew. It's a forlorn hope this time of day as they are more active in the early hours or in the evening when the sun is directly on the tree.

By now the book has been dropped and I sit back to relax and just enjoy the summer beauty of our wildlife garden. Above us, in a deep blue sky, a sparrow-hawk is circling.

What has this to do with Richard Jefferies. It's quite simple:-

'I can never read in summer out-of-doors. Though in shadow the bright light fills it, summer shadows are broadest daylight. The page is so white and hard, the letters so very black, the meaning and drift not quite intelligible, because neither eye nor mind will dwell upon it. Human thoughts and imaginings written down are pale and feeble in bright summer light. The eye wanders away, and rests more lovingly on greensward and green lime leaves. The mind wanders yet deeper and farther into the dreamy mystery of the azure sky. 'Meadow Thoughts' from *The Life of the Fields*.

**Richard Stewart**

## CITINGS OF JEFFERIES

Geoff Hirst spotted in *London Review of Books* a reference to an American poet, Schuyler. He frequented many painters, including Jackson Pollock, and in the house of one of them - Fairfield Porter - he gazed at the books. This is thought to have inspired the following poem:

Early in the middle  
of the afternoon, the light slants  
into rooms that face south-west: into this room  
across a bookcase so the dead-brown gold-  
stamped  
spines look to be those to take down now.  
Hodge and His Masters, The Cereals of  
America..  
If a leaf of gold were beaten to transparency  
and all that here roots and extrudes were  
tarnished silver  
and blackened bronze - bumped and brushed  
against  
here and there into highlights -  
were seen through it by wind-flickered quick-  
setting sun,

October would look no different than it  
does.

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Martin Haggerty, who will be giving this year's Birthday Lecture, belongs to The Milestone Society. He has kindly sent part of a copy of their newsletter of January 2006. On page 21 there is a quotation from 'Meadow Thoughts', a reference to the milestone at Coate, a sketch of the milestone and details of the threatened development. This was compiled and sent in by a Wiltshireman, Rod Smith.

In the same newsletter, page 23, he reports on another stone, now in Swindon Museum. It declares: 'Here ends Coate Road', but the curator did not know where it had stood. Do we know?

...An early-rising listener tells us that in Mark Tully's Sunday morning Radio 4 programme 'Something Understood', Jefferies was mentioned.

## BOOKS

We have had some generous gifts of books, including a substantial one from our President. These will be put out (priced) for sale in the Museum. We can't send them by post but members are very welcome to come and buy.

### New Editions of *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *The Amateur Poacher*.

David Burnett, of The Excellent Press, 9 Lower Raven Lane, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BW, has produced facsimile reprints of *The Gamekeeper at Home* and *The Amateur Poacher*. *The Gamekeeper* is reproduced from the revised Edition of 1890 with the Whymper illustrations, and the *Amateur Poacher*, which is not internally illustrated, is also reproduced on good quality paper from an early Smith Elder Edition. Both are hardback, with illustrated dust jackets, and are offered to members of the Society for £15.00, including postage. The full retail price for each is £18.95. Orders, with cheques, payable to Excellent Press, should be sent to the address above.

Literary Surrey. Just out, a new book about Surrey's writers, by Jacqueline Banerjee, includes a chapter on Richard Jefferies. In an interview, published in *The Informer*, Ms Banerjee said: 'I really enjoyed researching Richard Jefferies ... I always thought of him as a Wiltshire person. So I was surprised to find he actually lived in Ewell Road. They finally put a blue plaque up there in May 2003.' The book, price £9.95, may be bought at Regency Bookshop, Victoria Road, Surbiton. We should be happy to publish a review if anyone living near cares to do one.

## OTHER SOCIETIES

Wilts Archaeological & Natural History Society. We have tickets which enable our members to visit, and make use of the facilities of

the Museum at Devizes. If you would like to borrow a ticket, please apply to John Price.



**The Edward Thomas Fellowship.** There is much to report from Newsletter 55. Details of the Memorial Service for Helen Elizabeth Myfanwy Thomas (1910-2005) held at Eastbury on 25 September 2005; unpublished letters from Edward to Gordon Bottomley; advance plans for the commemoration in 2007 of Edward's death 90 years ago; this year's Study Day, which will concentrate on links between Edward Thomas and Walter de la Mare.

**The Friends of the Ridgeway.** After years of nagging, the NERC Bill is finally before Parliament. The what? The National Environment and Rural Communities Bill. One of this Bill's aims is to end the right of motor vehicles to go wherever horses and carts could go, in the past.

While we wait for the Bill to become law, and urge the Government to hurry, Wiltshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, and West Berkshire Council have placed permanent, seasonal, TROs on sections of the Ridgeway. Walkers do not need to know which bits, unless they would like to act as volunteer monitors, in which case they should talk to Phyllis - 01865 735678.

The young man organising the rubbish-laden, noise polluting raves on the Ridgeway has been given an ASBO (Anti-Social Behaviour

Order). If he offends again it becomes a criminal offence.

**Surbiton & District Bird Watching Society.** Bulletin 265 has just reached me. The Society was founded in 1954 by Hockley Clarke, a great Jefferies enthusiast - hence our inclusion on their mailing list. They have talks, in Surbiton Library, outings (to see birds), bird counts, and so on. Above all, they keep us in touch with what the birds are doing in Jefferies' old haunts. If anyone would like to join them, contact Ruth Shinebaum, 020 8397 034; [www.sdbws.ndo.co.uk](http://www.sdbws.ndo.co.uk). If you are knowledgeable about birds perhaps you would like to be our 'contact'. If so, please tell Phyllis Treitel or Jean Saunders.

**Alliance of Literary Societies.** Their latest Newsletter gives details of events organised by our sister societies - see [www.sndc.demon.co.uk](http://www.sndc.demon.co.uk). The AGM is on 13/14 May 2006 at The Abbey Church Rooms, Westgate Street, Bath and will be jointly hosted by The Jane Austen Society and the Burney Society. It promises to be a very interesting weekend, including talks, guided walks and dinner at the Redcar Hotel followed by a play. Details can be obtained from Helen Newman on 0121 423 2100.

**STUDY DAY - SATURDAY 29 JULY 2006**

**LAWN COMMUNITY CENTRE, LAWN, SWINDON**

(maps - apply to Jean Saunders)

**RICHARD JEFFERIES, POETRY AND THE POETS**

**PROGRAMME**

- 10.30 Doors open and refreshments.
- 11.00 Individual contributions by members (see below).
- 12.30-2.00 Lunch break. Time for visits; Coate is nearby.
- 2.00 Speaker: Richard Stewart - "Edward Thomas; Prose and Poetry".  
With supporting programme.
- 4.00 Tea and disperse.

Members' contributions (morning). Time limit 5 minutes each. A quotation or comment on one of the following:-

- A poem written by Jefferies;
- A poet liked by Jefferies;
- A poet who liked Jefferies' work;
- A poem praising or referring to Jefferies;
- A passage of Jefferies' prose that is almost poetry;
- A poem of your own about Jefferies;
- A poem (or part) that matches a passage of Jefferies' prose.

Guidance to contributions:-

For Jefferies' own published poems see *Field and Hedgerow* (ed S J Looker); *Chronicles of the Hedges*.

For unpublished poetry see *Richard Jefferies - Man of the Fields* by S J Looker. Chap.4.

For poets Jefferies liked see 'Richard Jefferies' Reading' by W J Keith, *RJS Journal* No. 2.

Poets praising Jefferies: there are many, including Alfred Williams, Charles Sorley, W J Keith. (and see Autumn Newsletter 1997 p.18; Autumn Newsletter 1999 p.19)

Jefferies was not a good poet. We might try to explain why, and why he wrote poetry when his prose was so good. We may, by the time we have finished, discover why other poets found him so worthwhile. The scope is wide.

## **RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE AND LOAN**

If you would like any of the following, please write to Mrs. Norma Goodwin, Wildings, 3a Momford Road, Oliver's Battery, Winchester SO22 4LE.

Postcards:	now 25p or any 3 for	65p
	Watercolour of Liddington Hill & quotation	
	Wild flowers & quotation	
	Portrait of Richard Jefferies	
Richard Jefferies & Old Town (guided walk)		25p
Richard Jefferies in Eltham		25p
Richard Jefferies in Surbiton		50p
Richard Jefferies & Coate Water (guided walk)		50p
A Jefferies Land itinerary		20p
Back numbers of the Journal		£1.00
<i>The Story of My Heart</i> (paperback)		£2.00
Richard Jefferies in Sussex		25p

### The Published Works of Richard Jefferies (in order). 2005

This is a 20-page booklet with card covers, compiled by Hugoe Matthews

A4 size                   £2.00

A5 size (same text)   £1.50

Postage Add 20p for orders up to £1, 40p for orders up to £2 and 60p for orders £2 and over. Very small orders can be paid in postage stamps.

### **Scarce Jefferies Works on CD**

These may also now be obtained on loan from Mrs. Goodwin:

CD-01 *The Scarlet Shawl*

CD-02 *Jefferies Land*

CD-03 *Greene Ferne Farm*

CD-04 *Restless Human Hearts*

A fee of £1 is charged for the loan of each CD. See page 6 of Spring Newsletter 2004 for details. Cheques to the Richard Jefferies Society.

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### **More books on CD**

The following books are now available for purchase on one CD. Currently the files are in WORD format but can be altered on request. Inquiries to Jean Saunders. A fee of £2.50 is charged. Postage is included.

After London

The Amateur Poacher

Amaryllis at the Fair [part]

Bevis [part]

Field and Hedgerow

Greene Ferne Farm

Hodge and His Masters

Jefferies Land

The Life of the Fields

The Open Air

Pageant of Summer

Restless Human Hearts

The Scarlet Shawl

The Story of my Heart

World's End

Also included:

*Richard Jefferies and Coate* by John Chandler

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2006

- Monday\*  
2 March  
Joint Meeting with Friends of Alfred Williams.
- Monday\*  
2 April  
Phyllis Treitel: 'Charles Sorley (1895-Oct.1915)  
Poet and disciple of Jefferies'.  
Research by A S Hickerton.
- Wednesday  
3 May  
12.30 pm. Meet for readings from Richard Jefferies and  
Alfred Williams at the Memorial Stone, Barbury Castle  
Country Park. This is part of the programme of the Swindon  
Festival of Literature. Bring a picnic. No charge; lots of  
free parking.
- Monday\*  
8 May  
Janet Flanagan: 'Wilts and Berks Canal -  
Local history in Swindon'.
- \*Meetings begin at 7.30 in the Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Swindon.  
Visitors welcome - no charge.
- Saturday  
29 July  
Study Day. 'Richard Jefferies: Poetry and the Poets'  
Lawn Community Centre, Swindon.  
For details see page 11.
- Monday\*  
4 December  
Archives. The Society's archives will soon be deposited  
at Trowbridge. Early scrapbooks, photographs, reports,  
some never shown before, will be brought for display and  
discussion, before translation to the Record Office.
- Saturday  
14 October  
Annual General Meeting at Church Hall, Chiseldon.  
Birthday Lecture .  
Speaker - Martin Haggerty:  
'William Morris and the English Countryside'.  
  
Martin is a campaigning environmentalist; he is a member  
of this Society, manages the website of the Edward Thomas  
Fellowship, and until recently was editor of the William Morris  
Society *Newsletter*. He lives in Scarborough.