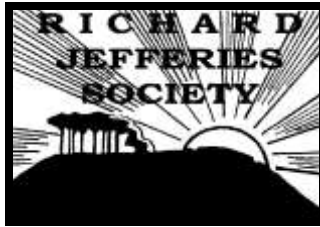


THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2012



The old cow-shed at Coate Farm circa 1960.
See p.22.



THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY

The Richard Jefferies Society is a Registered Charity (No 1042838) and was founded in 1950 to promote appreciation and study of the writings of Richard Jefferies (1848-1887).

From July 1st 2012 the annual subscription for Membership is set at £12 single and £14 couple. Life Membership is available for those over 60 at ten times the annual rate. Overseas Members should add £1.50 towards additional postage costs. There is an online facility for Members to subscribe using our Paypal account where payments can be made by credit/debit card (richardjefferiessociety.co.uk). An additional £1 supplement is added to cover Paypal charges incurred. This facility is particularly useful for overseas Members – the exchange rate is calculated for you.

Members receive spring and autumn newsletters, an annual report and one or two *Journals* and can take advantage of the Society's extensive library. Activities include spring meetings, a study day, special outings, events, a Birthday Lecture and an Annual General Meeting.

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES MUSEUM, COATE FARM

The Richard Jefferies Society provides the volunteers to open the Jefferies Museum at Coate to the public on the second Wednesday of the month throughout the year from 10am to 4pm as well as on Sundays from May to September (incl.) from 2-5pm. Admission is free. There is usually a good selection of Jefferies' books on sale at reasonable prices.

NEWSLETTER

The spring newsletter has been edited by Jean Saunders and despatched by Margaret Evans.

The deadline for submitting material for the autumn 2012 Newsletter is **September 1st 2012**. Please send your contributions to the Hon. Secretary preferably by e-mail (info@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk), or by post to Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Oxon SN7 7SS.

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Members' names and addresses are held on a computer data base. We are required by the Data Protection Act 1998 to inform Members that they have the right to object to information being held in this way.

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For more information contact:

The Richard Jefferies Society

Hon. Secretary

Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot,

Oxon SN7 7SS

Tel. 01793 783040

Email: info@richardjefferiessociety.co.uk

Website: richardjefferiessociety.co.uk

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2011-2012

Mr Simon Coleman 01225 332367 ColemanS1@cardiff.ac.uk	Member Elected 2010-13	Flat 3, 49 King Street, Bath, Somerset BA1 2BN
Prof Roger Ebbatson 01684 567612 ebbatson@tiscali.co.uk	Member Elected 2010-13	157 Upper Welland Road, Malvern, Worcs WR14 4LB
Mrs Margaret Evans 01235 765360 evansme@ntlworld.com	Mem. Sec. Re-elected 2009-12	23 Hardwell Close, Grove, Nr Wantage, Oxon OX12 0BN
Mrs Norma Goodwin 01962 864684 Norma.goodwin@btinternet.com	Member Re-elected 2009-12	'Wildings', 3a Momford Road, Oliver's Battery, Winchester, Hants SO22 4LE
Mr Geoff Hirst 01969 663553 geoff@vghirst.fsnet.co.uk	Treasurer Re-elected 2009-14	Scarr House, Thorally, Leyburn, N Yorks DL8 3SU
Professor Eric Jones 01285 712657 el_sbjonas@hotmail.com	Member Re-elected 2011-14	6 Leafield Road, Fairford, Glos GL7 4LL
Miss Helen Newman 01214 232100	ALS rep Re-elected 2010-13	67 Higgins Lane, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1LJ
Dr Duncan Pepper 0117 9249088 dr.duncan.pepper@googlemail.com	Member Re-elected 2011-14	1 Nugent Hill, Bristol, BS6 5TD
Mr John Price 01672 515150 jtprice@waitrose.com	Chairman Re-elected 2010-13	Granham West, Granham Hill, Marlborough, Wilts SN8 4DN
Mr Andrew Rossabi 0208 347 5447	President Elected 2010-2015	1 Bloomfield Court, Bloomfield Road, Highgate, N6 4ES
Mrs Jean Saunders 01793 783040 jeanadsaunders@tiscali.co.uk	Secretary Re-elected 2010-15	Pear Tree Cottage, Longcot, Faringdon, Oxon SN7 7SS
Mr Richard Stewart 01473 216518	Member Re-elected 2010-13	Valezina, 112 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XW
Lady Phyllis Treitel 01865 735678	Vice-President & Friends of Ridgeway	Eidsvoll, Bedwells Heath, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5JE
Mr John Webb 01793 853171 WWWebbrass@aol.com	Librarian Re-elected 2011-14	Padbrook, Bincknoll Lane, Wootton Bassett, Wilts SN4 8QR
Ms Rebecca Welshman 01460 75008 rw296@exeter.ac.uk	Member Elected 2010-2013 Student rep.	The Coach House, Mainscombe, Roundham, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 7TL
Mr Ray Morse is a co-opted Council Member		

FROM THE CHAIR *by John Price*

My last Chairman's Report was written at the time of the Jefferies' Festival, and, as can be seen from the accompanying photograph, a farm wagon was borrowed from the Agricultural Museum and brought to Coate Farmhouse, so that readings of Jefferies could be made "from the cart" as had happened at the original Festival. The photograph shown is of me launching the Poetry Competition, about which you can read more in this Newsletter.

Although the Museum has had few open days over these winter months, there has been much activity involving meetings about the future of the premises, and the proposed Trust; meetings with officers from Swindon Borough Council; a meeting with Lesley Nel, who is the Groundwork South West Officer for the Swindon area, and who may be able to help with the development of the garden at Coate; a meeting with Elizabeth Neathey, the Museum Development Officer for Bath, Somerset and Swindon; and finally Jean Saunders and I attended a one-day course at STEAM on Collections Care recently, as a result of which we have already decided to replace the felt lining in the display cases with unbleached calico. Felt apparently degrades, and gives off harmful acid fumes to the detriment of anything inside the closed case.

It is a sign of the times in which we live, that most of the officers we met are on short-term contracts, and there is much uncertainty about their futures, and indeed, the future of their posts. Your Society represents what our Prime Minister calls "The Big Society" – as we have provided continuity at Coate for decades, whilst officers and elected Swindon Council members have come and gone.

Jean Saunders and I sat for 6 days in November at the latest Public Inquiry into the Coate development Appeal. We were allowed to make our case, and, interestingly, were also allowed to cross-question the "expert" who had been brought in to attack the Jefferies-Land defence. This was particularly interesting, as Swindon had chosen not to include any reference to Jefferies in their objection to the proposals, but the developers had thought it worthwhile to pay someone to attack the objections that they anticipated we would make! The Inspector's Report is with Eric Pickles as I write [January 31st], and we will hear the outcome by early April. It is sometimes difficult to believe that we have now been through this process 4 times in the past 8 years.

You will already have read and heard about the Samuel Looker archive, rescued from an attic in Doncaster last year. Some of the discoveries from it have been referred to in the last Newsletter, but last week three of us spent a day undertaking a preliminary sort of the documents. This is a detailed task, because the boxes of material are thoroughly mixed up, with newspaper cuttings, letters, photographs, receipts, programmes for events, notes,



magazines, and manuscripts all randomly mixed. There is a wealth of material here, which could keep researchers busy for many years – and not just on Richard Jefferies matters. The correspondence to Looker starts in 1917, and continues until the 1960s. One of the earlier letters is one from Alfred Williams, writing to Looker from a hospital in India about poetry, and particularly Keats. There is, of course, no mention of Richard Jefferies here, as it would have pre-dated Looker's discovery of our author. Because he was a publisher's reader, and looked at three or four manuscripts per week until he was in his seventies, Looker's correspondents included many well-known names. G.M. Trevelyan and Katherine Mansfield are amongst them, as was W.H.Davies – who seemed to be a close personal friend. Being an early Fabian, Looker knew GBS, and although there are no letters from Shaw, there is at least one early pamphlet of his. There are letters from Freddie Brittain of Cambridge (whose books the Society acquired a few years back) and F.R.Leavis – then the editor of *Scrutiny*. Other letters unearthed are from Faith Compton Mackenzie, Richard Church, Harold Hobson, Bradfer-Lawrence, John Wain, - and even John Arlott – though he was simply asking SJL to sign one of his books (a cricket anthology).

Two articles torn from magazines particularly caught my eye – and I found their contents particularly interesting. The first is from *The Field* in 1948. It is an article listed in the *Bibliography*, and the author is Arthur C. Clarke, the well-known science fiction author. Titled “A Link with Jefferies”, it describes a series of letters found in a copy of *Red Deer* that Jefferies had written to the son of the Huntsman of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds in the early 1880s. What I had not realised until finding this was that Clarke was the Great Grandson of Arthur Heal – the Huntsman in question. In view of the respect that other sci-fi authors held for *After London*, I find this earlier connection with a master of the genre quite intriguing.

The second article also dates from 1948, and is from *Amateur Cine World*. We have been aware for many years of the existence of a film shot in 1948 by the Production Unit of the Swindon Public Library Film Society, and, indeed we have a copy of the film. What I had not realised, however, was that in that year the film came top in a competition to find the Ten Best Amateur Films of 1948. The prize was £50 and a Silver Plaque. The judges' comments are as follows: “*A Tribute to Richard Jefferies* sings a song of the camera, gracefully and with dignity. It is neither lavish nor expensive in conception, (It cost £27 to make). The photography is for the most part superb, the theme tenderly conceived and executed”. They go on to praise various aspects of the production. Also in the magazine is a five page illustrated article on “The Making of the Best of the Ten Best Films of 1948.” This gives an illuminating account of how Swindon (as it was) decided to make this tribute to their own valued author.

As you will see from this Newsletter, there is much to look forward to this year. I am particularly relishing the programme for the Broadway Arts Festival in June, and it will also be rewarding to be present at the ceremony to finally mark the grave of Oliver Jefferies at Eltham.

I do hope that as many of you as possible will join us for our events in 2012.

BIRTHDAY LECTURE 2011 REPORT

The Bulpitt Archive

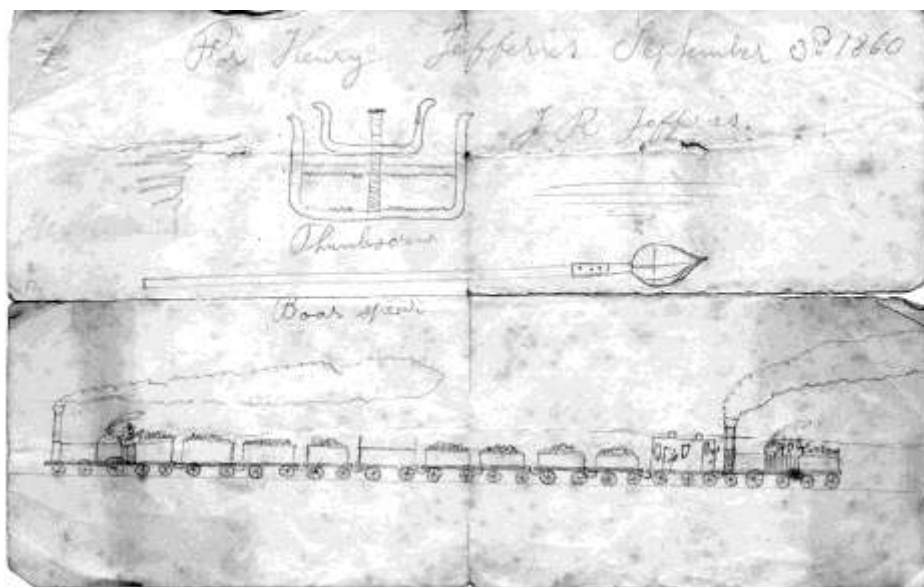
Andrew Rossabi took the Chair to introduce the speaker, our own Chairman – John Price, who gave an illustrated talk about an archive purchased by the Society in February 2011. Twenty eight Society Members attended the lecture held at Liddington Village Hall on November 5th.

Mr Price provided a background to Claudine Bulpitt, who lives at Frome. It was she who had inherited a remarkable collection of Jefferies' ephemera kept in a brass bound writing slope for many years. Mrs Bulpitt was unaware that she was a direct line descendant of Maria and Samuel James Gyde (Richard Jefferies' uncle and his mother's brother). The archive consisted mainly of material collected by Sarah Jane Gyde (1850-1932) – Richard's cousin and a daughter of Samuel Gyde. The list of items in the collection is as follows and John Price showed slides of some of them:

1. 30 letters from Elizabeth Jefferies (Richard Jefferies' Mother) to Sarah Jane Gyde. These are the only letters known written by Elizabeth, whose character image previously had been derived entirely from writings by Richard Jefferies and others.
2. Two letters from Richard Jefferies to his Aunt Ellen, dated August 17th 1864 and November 8th 1870. Being previously unrecorded, these are therefore not included in the Society's recent publication.
3. Two printed copies of a previously unknown poem; 'In Memory of Ellen Jefferies', by Mary Jefferies – Richard Jefferies' unmarried aunt who died in 1862 aged 47. Ellen, Richard's sister was killed by a runaway horse and gig on February 10th 1851 when she was 5 years and 6 months. Richard was then 2 years and three months.
4. An 'In Memoriam' card for Richard Jefferies.
5. A Richard Jefferies visiting card.
6. Two sheets of drawings done by Richard Jefferies, aged 12, for brother Henry.
7. Notes in pencil about Margaret Gyde (another cousin), the musician, probably written by Sarah Jane Gyde.
8. Letter from Aunt Ellen to Sarah Jane Gyde on her mother's death (Maria Gyde, 1819-1905).

9. Part of a poem in pencil on the back of a printed flier for Richard Jefferies' 'Swindon' (which was never published).
10. A copy of the Stereoscopic Photo of Richard Jefferies.
11. 2 different *Cartes de Visites* of Coate Farmhouse.
12. A mounted photo of Coate Farm – taken from Edward Thomas's *Richard Jefferies*.
13. A handwritten draft letter to the *Daily News* about the appeal, and a copy of the letter as printed.
14. 2 handwritten copies of a notice announcing that Walter Besant and Henry Kinglake had commissioned Margaret Thomas to make a bust of Jefferies for Salisbury cathedral, and a copy of the announcement as printed.
15. Various Newspaper cuttings – all undated and unidentified.
 - (a) 9 book reviews or advertisements.
 - (b) 2 references to Richard Jefferies' work in reviews of other titles.
 - (c) A review of Besant's *Eulogy*.
 - (d) An obituary for Richard Jefferies.
 - (e) A comment from a Bath paper.
 - (f) Report of Lord Avebury unveiling a tablet in Swindon.
 - (g) A reference to the Bust in a report of Kinglake's funeral.
 - (h) An article by John Peel from the *Daily Telegraph*.
 - (i) A copy of 'Great Thoughts' for March 23rd 1895 with an article on Richard Jefferies.
16. A Prayer book inscribed; 'Sarah Jane Gyde from her cousin Sarah Jefferies'.
17. A 1st Edition of Edward Thomas's *Richard Jefferies* – no inscriptions.
18. A copy of *Field and Hedgerow* 1892 (B26.7), inscribed: 'Evie'(?)
19. *The Gamekeeper at Home* 1878 (B8.2). 2nd Impression of 1st Edition. Inscription on half-title: 'E. Jefferies'
20. *The Dewy Morn* 1st edition. Inscribed: 'E. Jefferies. With the Author's best love. Sept. 10th 1884'.

A double-sided page of pencil drawings of spears, guns, thumb-screws and a train were shown to the audience. According to the inscription on them, they were sketched by Richard Jefferies on September 3rd 1860 for his younger brother Henry. Now the drawing paper is torn and has yellowed; the sketches are much faded, but they have been reproduced on the next page – would any child of 12 years of age draw this sort of subject matter now?



Clearly, it was impossible to do more than touch on the contents of the archive material. As such, Mr Price limited his talk to quoting extracts

from some of Elizabeth Jefferies' letters to Sarah Jane Gyde, where she talks about (a) her health; (b) Bath; and (c) Richard himself. From this correspondence, Elizabeth Jefferies does not come across as a bitter or dissatisfied person – but rather one who feels sorry for herself although resigned to her situation. She values highly the contact with Sarah Jane. Mr Price's selection from the letters has been reproduced in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal* No. 22 (2012) pp.23-27.

By an amazing co-incidence we learnt that Simon Coleman (a Society Member) now lives in the house next door to where Elizabeth and James Lockett Jefferies ended their days in Bath!

John Price then read out the content of the two new 'Aunt Ellen Letters,' written 6 years apart. He distributed copies of the text so that Members might add them to their own collection of *Richard Jefferies' Letters to Aunt Ellen* (Faringdon: Petton Books, 2010). These additional letters have also been reproduced in the *RJS Journal* No. 22 (2012) pp.28-30.

Mr Price concluded that we have gained some extremely useful and valuable information about both Richard Jefferies, his mother and other members of the family. The Society will discuss the best way to make the archive available to Members and the public.

SAMUEL LOOKER ARCHIVE

John Price had intended to give a very brief outline of the contents of the Looker archive at the Birthday Lecture. However, the papers were not collected until November 8th 2011 and there are many boxes of papers to sort through. At first glance, the main items of interest to the Society are two original manuscripts in Richard Jefferies' hand; the text for one ('The Heart of England') was reproduced in the Appendix to *Richard Jefferies: Man of the Fields* by Samuel Looker and Crichton Porteous (London: John Baker Publishers, 1965). A second conspectus covers Jefferies' ideas for a new magazine that was never published. There is a book that once belonged to Jefferies bearing his name and Victoria Street, Swindon address; entitled *Wayland Smith*. There are letters from Jefferies' son Harold – important to us because no-one has seen his writing before, and several letters to Looker from Jefferies' daughter Phyllis. There are some Jefferies' family photographs, six photos of illustrations of John Lockett Jefferies' sketches that were published in *Man of the Fields*, copies of many documents now in the archives of the British Library, press-cuttings and other letters that might contain something new and of interest to the Society, plus several books signed by various authors and dedicated to Samuel Looker. Simon Coleman has been asked to catalogue the massive collection and report on the contents at a later date.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jefferies' Festival raffle

David Brackston, a Somerset-based artist, was invited to hold an exhibition of his paintings at the Post Modern Gallery in Swindon as part of the Jefferies' Festival last summer. The paintings were based on quotes from Jefferies' works. David was generous enough to donate one of his paintings as a raffle prize and the proceeds of £92 were given to the Society. The raffle was won by Alex Coppock Bunce.

Kaye Franklin MBE

Kaye Franklin, Chair of Swindon LINK's wheelchair focus group, has been recognised by the Queen for her work in the community and was awarded an MBE in last year's Birthday Honours list. Kaye, who is a Member of the Richard Jefferies Society and a main stay of the Friends of Alfred Williams, has more than 30 years experience in the local voluntary and community sector.

It is good to hear that the valuable work of volunteers is recognised. Well done, Kaye – and well deserved!

Swindon History Forum and Swindon Heritage Group

Society representative Andy Binks reported that the Swindon History Forum met in January and they are planning to issue a quarterly publication containing articles about Swindon's history. The Richard Jefferies Society has been invited to contribute. Ray Morse has been representing the interests of the Richard Jefferies Museum at Swindon Heritage Group meetings. It seems that the latter group also wants to set up a forum in Swindon.

Richard Jefferies Society *Journal*

Rebecca Welshman and Simon Coleman have kindly taken over the editorial work involved in publishing the *Journal*. At the moment the plan is to issue two editions a year and these might be published in the winter and summer. The newsletters would continue to be despatched in spring and autumn.

Mail order sales

Norma Goodwin has retired from managing postal sales of our publications. We are most grateful to her for finding the space to store the books and dealing with queries and orders from Members. Our stock is stored at the Museum now. Postal sales will be dealt with by the Hon. Secretary in the future (see p.2 for contact details).

Please could we draw your attention, in particular, to three of our publications: **Richard Jefferies: an Anthology** by Hugoe Matthews & Rebecca Welshman, Kate Tryon's **Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land** and **Richard Jefferies: an Index** by Hugoe Matthews & Phyllis Treitel. They are must-haves for any Jefferies' follower and they are books that you can dip into at any spare moment. Supplies of *World's End* and *Restless Human Hearts* (softback) are almost sold out and won't be re-ordered.

<i>Richard Jefferies' letters to Aunt Ellen</i> , 2009 (softback - 155g)	£ 4.50
<i>Amaryllis at the Fair</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Carolyn Clarke (softback – 295g.)	£ 6.00
<i>Greene Ferne Farm</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009 Introduction by George Miller (softback – 207g.)	£ 5.00
<i>The Interpreter: a biography of Richard Jefferies</i> – Audrey Smith, 2008 (softback – 279g.)	£ 5.00
<i>The Scarlet Shawl</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi. (softback – 294g.)	£ 5.99
<i>The Dewy Morn</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2009. Introduction by Rebecca Welshman (softback – 442g.)	£ 7.00
<i>Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land</i> – Kate Tryon, 2010 (limited edition soft-back)	£12.00

(Add UK postage & packing £1.20 extra per copy)

<i>Restless Human Hearts</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi, 2008. (hardback; £20 – 776g.) (Softback version £8 – 711g.)	£20.00 ----- £ 8.00
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Index</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 2008 (hardback – 558g.)	£15.00
<i>The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies</i> – Matthews & Treitel, 1994 (hardback – 561g.)	£12.00
<i>World's End</i> – Richard Jefferies, 2008. Introduction by Andrew Rossabi (softback – 576g.)	£ 7.99
<i>Richard Jefferies: An Anthology</i> – Matthews & Welshman, 2010 (hardback – 525g.)	£20.00

(Add UK postage & packing £2.75 extra per copy)

Books by Members

To the Boy – a collection of poems by Tom Saunders, published by Reuben Books (ISBN: 9780956282859, 74pp, £5) available through any good bookshop, or on the Internet at reubenbooks.co.uk.

Memorial Event for Richard Oliver Launcelot Jefferies

HERE LIES
RICHARD OLIVER LAUNCELOT
JEFFERIES
18 JULY 1883 - 16 MARCH 1885
BELOVED SON OF
THE AUTHOR RICHARD JEFFERIES
AND HIS WIFE JESSIE

After nearly three years of negotiations with church authorities, of filling in forms, consultations and addressing a million other hurdles, the Eltham Society has succeeded in placing a small (24"x18"x2") inscribed

memorial stone to mark the exact spot where baby Oliver was buried in St John's Churchyard, in a common grave that once bore a wooden cross.

The Eltham Society has organised a commemorative event to which our Members are invited. The memorial is positioned behind the church and off a footpath in front of the brick wall of Beadles car sales. Whilst in the area, Members might also like to see the outside of the house where the Jefferies' family were living (it bears a blue plaque), about a 15 minute walk from the churchyard.

Andrew Rossabi, our President, along with John Price, our Chairman will be present on the day. Please join them if you are able.

Richard Oliver Launcelot Jefferies Memorial Event St John's Churchyard, High Street, Eltham Friday 16 March 2012 at 2pm

Richard and Jessie's baby son (known as Oliver) died, aged only twenty months old, whilst the Jefferies' family were living at 14 Victoria Road, Eltham (now 59 Footscray Road).

Harold Jefferies (Richard & Jessie's first born son) recounted the death of his baby brother as 'a terrible blow to father. His suffering, which was far greater than that of the child, prevented him from attending the funeral, and mother and I were, I believe, alone in the coach to Eltham church. The agonised expression on father's face, as he stood at the open door watching the little cortège slowly move away, haunted my mind for many years,' (Worthing Cavalcade, *Richard Jefferies: My Father* by his son, 1944, pp.19-20).

We are most grateful to John Kennett (a Member of both Societies) for ensuring that there is now a fitting memorial for the baby.

The Eltham Society has borne the bulk of the cost of providing the memorial (nearly £800) and all the anxiety in so doing. We are pleased to have helped a little by donating £100 towards it.

Broadway Arts Festival, Glos. (8-17 June 2012)

The Society is particularly interested in visiting the elements of the festival that feature artist and garden designer Alfred Parsons RA (1847-1920). Parsons was commissioned to illustrate Jefferies' essay 'St Guido' for the 1884 edition of the *English Illustrated Magazine*, and 'An English Deer Park' for *The Century Magazine*, October 1888.



Parsons, and his artist friends, rented Russell House, where John Singer Sargent began painting *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*. Parsons created a garden for himself and his friends at Russell House and was commissioned to design others in Broadway – including the beautiful 2½ acre formal garden at Luggers Hall. Features include a rose garden, parterre, walled garden, potager, white garden, koi pool and herbaceous borders – all connected by gravel paths with seating areas. There is an abundance of clipped box and yew hedging, plus a Victorian hazel walk. The gardens are normally open to the public only 2 days a year.

Booking arrangements are still being finalised by the organisers and at the moment the phone-line is not operating (0845 1905450). As such we advise Members to make your own arrangements nearer the time. We have supplied current information (on the next page) and hope to see some of you on either June 13th or 15th. Those of you with Internet connection can obtain information at:

<http://www.broadwayartsfestival.com/index.php>

**Wednesday 13th and Friday 15th June – starting at 10am and repeated at 2pm
(approx 3 hours)**

**Talk by Marion Mako at the Lifford Hall, Broadway WR12 7AL
'Alfred Parsons at Broadway' plus Tour of the Gardens of Russell House and
Luggers Hall, Broadway, Gloucestershire.**

Tickets limited to 50. Cost £15. Prebooking is essential.

Marion Mako is a garden and landscape historian and designer specialising in English herbaceous planting. Her talk on Alfred Parsons will be followed by a tour of the garden of Russell House, once home to the American painter, sculptor and writer Francis D. Millet, followed by a tour of the award winning landscaped gardens originally designed by Alfred Parsons at Luggers Hall.

There are various exhibitions running throughout the Festival including photographic and arts collections. The Country Gardens exhibition [at Haynes Fine Art, 42 High Street, Broadway] is open between 10am-5pm and features over twenty oils and watercolours by Parsons, together with important works by John Singer Sargent, Alma Tadema, Lucien Pissaro and many others.

We have been advised that buying a rover ticket for £7.50 would permit entry to all of the exhibitions. At the time of writing, details of where to purchase tickets are not available.



Broadway Village Green by Parsons, 1887

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY POETRY COMPETITION 2011-2012

‘Nature and Landscape: The concentrated silence of green things’

Please can we remind and urge aspiring poets to enter the Richard Jefferies Society Poetry Competition? The closing date for entries is June 30th 2012 – plenty of time to compose a Haiku or even a minor epic (up to 40 lines maximum).

We welcome submissions relating to Jefferies’ writing on nature and landscape including, but by no means limited to, such themes as:

- ❖ City and country
- ❖ The human presence in nature
- ❖ Mankind’s need to engage with the natural world
- ❖ Rural change
- ❖ Victorian rural life or thought
- ❖ Landscape and perception
- ❖ A strong attachment to a place
- ❖ Wild life
- ❖ The elements
- ❖ Consciousness and the wider universe

COMPETITION RULES

- ❖ Closing date for receipt of postal and online entries: 30th June 2012.
- ❖ Poems should have no more than 40 lines, and no fewer than 3 lines.
- ❖ Maximum of 3 entries.
- ❖ Entries MUST NOT have been previously published (including online).

ELIGIBILITY

- ❖ Open competition.

ENTRY FEES

- ❖ £5 per entry.
- ❖ £8 per 2 entries.
- ❖ £10 per 3 entries.

(payable by cheque to ‘Richard Jefferies Society’ or online via Paypal at richardjefferiescreativity.co.uk/poetrycompetition)

ENTRY FORMAT

- ❖ Entries must be in English.
- ❖ Postal entries must be typed, single sided, with pages numbered and securely fastened with a staple. Each entry on a new sheet.
- ❖ Poems to be single spaced.
- ❖ Entries must show no name, address or identifying marks other than the title (Online entries should have an ID number which we will supply when you enter).
- ❖ The filename of online entries must be the title of the entry and it must be either a .doc, .docx, .rtf, .wps, .pdf or .txt file.
- ❖ Entries cannot be returned, so please keep a copy.

- ❖ No corrections can be made after receipt, nor fees refunded.
- ❖ Postal submissions should be sent to:

Richard Jefferies Creativity
 c/o Rebecca Welshman
 Old Coach House
 Maincombe
 Crewkerne
 Somerset
 TA18 7TL

- ❖ Email submissions should be sent in the form of an attachment to:
 poetrycompetition@richardjefferiescreativity.co.uk
- ❖ Closing date: 30th June 2012.
- ❖ Please ensure that you use the correct postage.

RECEIPT OF ENTRY

- ❖ Enclose a stamped addressed postcard marked 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENT' if you require acknowledgement of receipt of your postal entry. It is not possible to confirm receipt of entries by phone, but email entries will be acknowledged by return.

RESULTS

- ❖ To receive the judges' report for the winning entry only, enclose an A5 stamped addressed envelope. Alternatively, check the website for details after July 2012.

COPYRIGHT

- ❖ Worldwide copyright of each entry remains with the author, but the Richard Jefferies Society will have the unrestricted right to publish the winning poem (including runners up), in any relevant promotional material.

JUDGING

- ❖ The judging panel will consist of: Professor Tim Kendall (Head of the English Department at the University of Exeter and published poet); Paul Davidson (published poet); Simon Coleman (Richard Jefferies Society), and Rebecca Welshman (Richard Jefferies Society). The judges' decision is final and no individual correspondence can be entered into. Judges are unable to comment on individual entries.

PRIZE

- ❖ **The winner will receive a certified £100 Richard Jefferies Poetry Prize and one year's free membership of the Richard Jefferies Society. The winning entry will be published in the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*.**

PRIZEWINNERS

- ❖ The prize-winner will be notified in writing by 15th July 2012.
- ❖ Entry implies acceptance of all the rules Failure to comply with the entry requirements will result in disqualification.

Further details about the competition and the judges can be found on the poetry competition webpage: <http://www.richardjefferiescreativity.co.uk>

SAVE COATE CAMPAIGN

The Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government will make his decision known about the planning appeal inquiry on April 3rd 2012. If you are quick off the mark, please write to the Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles at Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU (Email: eric.pickles@communities.gsi.gov.uk) – quoting Planning Appeal No: APP/U3935/A/11/2155834. There is a sample letter that you might adapt at <http://jefferiesland.blogspot.com>. However, it is better to express in your own words why Jefferies' Land is important to you.

By the time the planning inquiry was held last November, the campaign to protect Jefferies' Land was boosted by further news coverage in several national papers. In an article in *The Times* on September 3rd 2011, Simon de Bruxelles reported on the fight to protect Jefferies Land and the government's proposed intention to relax planning policy guidance that might make it easier for developers to gain planning permission. This article was followed by another by writer Adam Thorpe in the *Guardian Review*, October 15th 2011 urging the public to write to the planning inspector about the proposed threat to Jefferies' landscape. There was a news item from journalist Jack Watkins ('Writers back Jefferies campaign,' *Country Life*, October 12th 2011) that reads as follows:

CAMPAIGNERS are fighting to save the landscape that inspired the Victorian nature writer Richard Jefferies. The author spent the first 27 years of his life at Coate Farm, near Swindon, Wiltshire. Visitors to the farmhouse, now a literary shrine, can still walk around the orchard vividly described in *Amaryllis at the Fair* and along the ancient hedgerow he called 'the highway of the birds'. Jean Saunders, secretary of the Richard Jefferies Society, says proposals to build 900 houses and a business park would affect countryside 'central to shaping the imaginative genius'. She argues that views towards and from Liddington Hill, on whose slopes Jefferies underwent the 'mystical' experiences described in *The Story of My Heart*, will also be lost. Several literary figures, including Richard Mabey and former Poet Laureate Andrew Motion, have supported the campaign (www.jefferiesland.blogspot.com), which includes a 52,000-signature petition. Councillors rejected the proposals earlier this year, but a public inquiry begins on November 15.

This was followed in the December edition of *The Oldie* by an article by Candida Lycett Green as part of her 'Unwrecked England' series. In the article entitled 'The Richard Jefferies Museum and Landscape, Swindon', Candida describes the expansion of Swindon swallowing up villages, woods and countryside that she remembers as a child and then writes about her recent visit to the Richard Jefferies Museum:

But there is one corner left untouched – the gentle, pastoral landscape which was the inspiration of Swindon's famous son, Richard Jefferies, one of our greatest country writers and visionaries. 'One day the area will be glorified,'

Edward Thomas wrote in his biography of Jefferies, 'It will be known as Jefferies' Landscape and it will be as Selborne was to Gilbert White.'

If you take the very smallest road off the Coate roundabout you can park under trees beside Coate Water, the setting for Jefferies' classic children's book *Bevis: The Story of a Boy*. 'So we will,' said Bevis, 'we will find a new sea where no one has ever been before. Look! There it is; is it not wonderful?' And it is...

... A new cinder path leads along the familiar hedgeline to Coate Farmhouse where Jefferies was born in 1848 and which is now looked after by Richard Jefferies Society volunteers. Although the adjacent road has now become a dual carriageway, once you are through the front door you feel calm. It is one the nicest museums you could wish for – well loved, cosy and intimate. From the living room there is a view of the mulberry tree mentioned in a poem and the deep shade of the evergreen oak planted by Richard's father. From his study-cum-teenage-bedroom on the attic floor, his simple drop-leaved writing table stands where it always did, by the window which looks onto the orchard and the Sun Inn beyond...

... It seems unbelievable that despite the large number of brownfield sites in Swindon, Persimmon and Redrow are appealing to build 900 houses here. It will kill Richard Jefferies' landscape stone dead.

The Oldie article appeared whilst the Inquiry was still sitting enabling our Chairman to give the Planning Inspector a copy of it.

Adam Thorpe had a second letter published in the *Times Literary Supplement* on December 9th 2011 urging people to write to the Secretary of State.

The planning inquiry was held in Swindon on 15 November and took up six days. Your Secretary and Chairman attended every day to give evidence related to Richard Jefferies. It is just possible that some small matter of detail, that might be unacceptable to the Planning Inspector, might lead to a recommendation in our favour. We can only wait and hope, but be assured that we have done everything humanly possible to stop the development going ahead.

Gilbert White Talk

On May 12th 2012 Peter Bainbridge will be giving a talk at the Museum as part of the Swindon Festival of Literature. Gilbert White (1720 – 1793) was a pioneering English naturalist and ornithologist, best known for *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789). This book was a compilation of his letters to eminent zoologists and contained White's discoveries about local birds, animals and plants. He believed, for example, in distinguishing birds by observation rather than by collecting specimens. Jefferies was invited to write a short preface to a new edition of White's *Selborne*, published in 1887. It includes Jefferies' thoughts on the great naturalist with whose work his own has often been compared.

STUDY DAY

THE WORKING WO/MAN IN JEFFERIES' WORKS

SATURDAY 28th July 2012, JEFFERIES' MUSEUM, COATE

PROGRAMME

Whether it was the agricultural labourer, shepherd, gamekeeper, tenant farmer or other worker, Richard Jefferies had much to say about their life and toil. The study day will explore Jefferies' descriptions of the working man and woman and what conclusions we might draw about Jefferies' views as he matured.

10.30 Doors open and refreshments.

11.00 Welcome and introductions by the Chairman.

11.15 Select a relevant piece of Jefferies' writing or about Jefferies on the subject of the working man or woman to read to others. See notes.*

1.00-2.30 Lunch break. Bring a packed lunch or eat at the Sun Inn next door. RJS publications and second-hand books on sale. Opportunity to look around the Museum.

2.30 Prof. Roger Ebbatson will talk briefly about 'Women in the Fields'.

Andrew Rossabi will address: The Labour Question. Did Jefferies' views change about the agricultural labourer or did he write to suit his audience?

3.45 Refreshments.

4.15 Depart.

* Notes

Extracts selected for reading should be no more than about 5 minutes long. The choice of material is endless. The obvious sources for study include:

The Gamekeeper at Home

The Life of the Fields

Toilers of the Field

Landscape and Labour

Hodge and his Masters

Richard Jefferies: An Anthology by Matthews and Welshman.

COATE FARM AND MUSEUM REPORT

A walnut tree has been planted in the Jefferies' garden as a memorial to our former President, Hugoe Matthews, along with a dedication plaque.

Thanks to a kind donation from Mark Daniel, a new wooden finger-post sign now points the way to the Museum along the new path from Coate Water to the Jefferies' back garden. Engraved brass plaques, indicating Museum opening times, have been placed in strategic places to save visitors a 200 yard walk and find the place closed!

Michael Ponting donated a glass display cabinet that has been placed in the attic study room. Currently it contains the two newly acquired Jefferies' hand-written manuscripts, *Wayland Smith* – a book that once belonged to Jefferies, and an extract from Looker's 1949 pamphlet 'The True Richard Jefferies' where he describes the book.

There have been many festivals and events organised to commemorate Richard Jefferies over the years, including the one held last year. Carolyn Clarke has added to the Museum archives by kindly donating her report of the Society's Festival held on 14-16th August 1998 to celebrate 150 years since Jefferies' birth. The document contains a description of the programme along with the talks given and the places visited. The document is illustrated with old and new photographs which include pictures of Coate Farmhouse, Clarendon House (where Richard went to school), the Victoria Street home (now renamed Victoria Road), the Corn Exchange, the site of the old flour-mill, the squeeze-belly stile, Coate Water, Gamekeeper's Cottage, remains of Holyrood Church and of Christ Church along with the grave of John Jefferies (Richard's grandfather). Carolyn mentions that the grave was neglected and unkempt in 1998. Has anyone visited it lately? Is it still neglected? If so, would anyone like to volunteer to care for it?

The document is now on loan to the Richard Jefferies Museum where it was added to the archives on October 27th 2011.

Museum Open Days 2012

From the beginning of May to the end of September, the Museum will be open every Sunday from 2-5pm as well as the usual second Wednesday of the month from 10am-4pm throughout the year. We are extremely grateful to all our volunteers who have helped at the Museum. During 2011, volunteers donated the equivalent of 155.5 full days to work in the garden and in the building.

Old Photographs of Coate Farm

It is always a pleasure to come across old photographs of Coate Farm. The Internet is an invaluable source of historic information. Our Secretary discovered a film shot in Swindon in 1960 when Swindon Council took some pride in Richard Jefferies. The film can be accessed on our web-site. There is a section in it about the writer, showing places that influenced his works that include the Gamekeeper's Cottage, Liddington Hill, Coate Water and his old home at Coate. The photograph (front cover of newsletter) was taken from the film footage and shows the old cow-shed at Coate Farm. The walls and buttresses still stand, albeit in poor condition. The thatched roof is long gone.

The following photograph is from an old postcard circa 1911. The original picture was taken by William Hooper (1864-1955), a well-known photographer in Swindon.



The picture reveals that the back garden at Coate Farm is still recognisable now. The view would have been taken standing in front of the summerhouse. Note the mulberry tree in the foreground left that still stands proudly in the middle of the lawn. The espalier apple tree growing against the south-facing wall of the house was removed by Swindon Council along with the espalier pear tree. You can make out the yew trees next to a rectangular-shaped box hedge. The original wooden slatted window in the attic is now replaced with frosted glass, whilst additional windows were added on the first floor around the 1960s. The veranda is much the same as now. Note that the lean-to extension to the house has

been removed whilst the garden wall, on the right, has gone. The child in the picture is likely to be one of the Ferris children. The artist, Kate Tryon befriended Mr Edward Ferris, the auctioneer, on her first visit to Coate from Massachusetts in 1910 and it was Mr Ferris who allowed the Jefferies' Festival to be held in the gardens the following year. Those of you who own a copy of Kate Tryon's *Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse: Jefferies Land* (Faringdon: Petton Books, 2010) will be familiar with two further photographs of Coate Farm and the Ferris family at this time.



CITINGS OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

On a chance visit to the Pimlico Gallery at 39 Moreton Street, SW1, the first things Andrew Rossabi saw hanging on the wall by the door were three coloured prints of game birds with the signature or initials of Charles Whympster, who provided the wood engravings for the illustrated edition of *The Gamekeeper at Home* published by Smith, Elder in 1980. The framed prints, which measured about 21 x 25cm, showed a grouse, a brace of pheasants, and a partridge. They were priced £250 each. The gallery owner, Walter J. Richards, was unable to supply any information about the provenance of the prints, save that they were 'restrikes' (i.e. on modern paper but from the original plates), then hand-coloured. The prints incidentally were more impressive than the rather dull, wooden illustrations Whympster supplied for *The Gamekeeper*.

Tim Radford in the Weatherwatch article for the *Guardian*, published on September 9th 2011, reproduces a long quote about the kestrel in an article titled 'how well the windhover hovers, with wind or without.' He writes:

Kestrels (or windhoovers) must hover facing the wind, or it would upset them, hence the popular supposition that they cannot hover without a wind. As Richard Jefferies writes in his 1884 collection *The Life of the Fields*, 'The truth is, he can hover in a perfect calm, and would do so in a room if it were large enough.'

'A kestrel can and does hover in the dead calm of summer days, when there is not the faintest breath of wind. He will, and does, hover in the still, soft atmosphere of early autumn, when the gossamer falls in showers, coming straight down as if it were raining silk. If you puff up a ball of thistledown it will languish on your breath and sink again to the sward. The reapers are sweltering in the wheat, the keeper suffocates in the wood, the carter walks in the shadow cast by his load of corn, the countryside stares all parched and cracked and gasps for a rainy breeze. The kestrel hovers just the same. Could he not do so, a long calm would half starve him, as that is his manner of preying.'

Jefferies dismisses the idea that kestrels exploit thermal updraughts. Such ascending currents are rare, and when they do exist, local. The kestrel can hover anywhere, in the face of a stiff gale, and in a perfect calm. 'The only weather he dislikes is heavy thunder, rain or hail, during which he generally perches on a tree, but he can hover in all ordinary rain. He effects it by sheer power and dexterity of wing.'

On September 14th Professor Eric Jones attended a lecture in the Corinium Museum given by Dr David Rollison (University of Sydney) about his new book on the medieval and early modern history of Cirencester. Dr Rollison referred to the long line of historians of Cirencester and mentioned Jefferies several times, putting him high on the list for making the workings of the town clear in the 'Fleeceborough' chapter of *Hodge and his Masters*.

Prof. Jones went on to read Rollison's *Commerce, Country and Commonwealth: The People of Cirencester, 1117-1643* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011). Rollison says Cirencester 'had a distinctive mythology, enshrined in its twilight years by the great country writer Richard Jefferies, in a chapter of *Hodge and His Masters* entitled 'Fleeceborough - A Despot' ' (p.247) and he

cites *Hodge* repeatedly. This is with respect to Richard Jefferies' thesis of associational community, which he compares with that of his contemporary, Ferdinand Tönnies. On p.180 he refers to *Hodge* as 'Richard Jefferies' lasting contribution to English sociology in the 1870s,' whilst on p.248 he writes, 'Jefferies' accounts of rural life in the district merit a full-scale study.' Prof. Jones remarks that Rollison's book is not as narrow, or even as local in its implications, as the title suggests and he is convinced that Jefferies' importance is not so much literary as historical and sociological.

A quote was found in the *Cape Cod Times* that features a weekly 'North Cairns Nature' column. In an article entitled 'In the silence and small things, the spirit finds hope,' published September 18th 2011, the author extols the virtues of a beautiful autumn walk in the countryside away from the noise of modern technology, but in the 'talk' of nature. She quotes:

To be beautiful and calm, without mental fear, is the ideal of nature. The hours when the mind is absorbed by beauty are the only hours when we really live,' wrote the 19th-century English naturalist and novelist Richard Jefferies in *The Life of the Fields* -- at a time and in a culture that was slower and closer to the natural world. We have fled so far from there in the name of progress that we now seek what we have forgotten, how to find our lonely way back to land and water, trees and light.

Sharley McLean reported that P G Wodehouse read Jefferies according to Robert McCrum's biography of Wodehouse.

Peter Robins was amused to see a picture of the Venus Accroupie, a statue much admired by Jefferies, used in an advertisement for Harrods (*House and Garden*, November 2011). The statue had gained some clumsy arms and a most inappropriate head!

Extract from the *Daily Telegraph* ('The Battle to Save London's Green Spaces', Travel section, November 9th 2011). Christopher Woodward, Director, Garden Museum, states 'Encased by concrete and with its green spaces and gardens under threat, London needs to look to the visionaries of its past to protect its future,' and, naturally, mentions Jefferies:

In 1885 the nature writer Richard Jefferies wrote *After London*, a novel in which the city is reclaimed by wild nature. He had come to hate a city in which the poor lived in tenements separated from nature, and flowers potted on window sills were choked by soot. His novel inspired William Morris to write *News from Nowhere* (1890), a story in which the hero wakes up to discover that London has become transformed into a city of small-holdings, mills, and gardens. (In it, Parliament Square has been replanted as an apricot orchard and the Houses of Parliament converted to a store for manure). Morris's futuristic fantasy has captivated generation after generation, and was a particular inspiration to the planners of the 1930s and '40s. Their generation created the Green Belt, perhaps the last great visionary act of planning in London.

Jefferies, Morris and Howard understood that there are two types of green space. There are parks, in which we stroll, walk the dog and admire the flowers grown by other people. Parks work, and have enjoyed an astonishing revival thanks to tens of

millions of pounds invested by the Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People programme. But the second type of green space is 'doing' space: space in which you dig, bend, sweat, and grow. This is a space of your own, whether a garden, allotment, or a balcony big enough to immerse your hands in soil and roots.

Margaret Hunt came across an article in the Cricklade Historical Society's Bulletin No. 5, Volume IV, dated February 2004. In the second paragraph in a lengthy article entitled 'Old Highways Near Cricklade,' an un-named contributor writes:

The difficulty in tracing old tracks was noted in 1873 by the author Richard Jefferies who lived at Coate near Swindon: 'the old green lanes and bridle tracks which once crossed the country in every direction, get fewer in number year by year. There is little or no documentary evidence to be found — nothing can be traced except through the memories of men'. Although some of the former tracks are shown in old maps, there is very little other information about them, and the following description is my interpretation of the available evidence.

The quote is taken from Ch V of *Wild Life in a Southern County*.

Valerie Haworth sent a cutting from The Arthur Ransome Society newsletter (*TARS Signals* Jan-April 2012). This gave a brief report on the group's visit to Coate Water and the Richard Jefferies Museum last year with a recommendation that their members should read *Bevis* in order to 'notice what an inspiration it was to Arthur Ransome'.

Whilst the *Swindon Advertiser* no longer prints a regular monthly column about Richard Jefferies, one of their reporters visited the Museum last year. As a result, there was a pleasant article entitled 'Museum is a real hidden treasure' published on December 27th 2011.

Anthony McGowan reviewed *Blood Red Road* by Moira Young in the the *Guardian Review* (January 14th 2012). It reads: 'The genre [post-apocalyptic] has been graced by some of the finest works of speculative fiction, from Richard Jefferies's haunting *After London* to Cormac McCarthy's dark masterpiece, *The Road*.'

Brian Morris copied a recent edition of ARKADIA with a page devoted to Richard Jefferies. There is an introduction to the writer, a quote from 'Meadow Thoughts,' accompanied by an illustration of a 'Meadow Path' by Mary Sumner, along with news of three recent re-issues of Jefferies' works.

Recently Rebecca Welshman's father (Malcolm Welshman) was a guest on Phil Hammond's Saturday Morning Surgery, BBC Radio Bristol. Mr Welshman had to imagine famous dinner guests and he selected Richard Jefferies. It was an opportunity for him to talk about the life and works of Jefferies and the Richard Jefferies Society.

The interview was in relation to Malcolm's book *Pets in a Pickle* which has become a Kindle bestseller – animal and veterinary stories based on his time as a vet in practice.

The Victorian Hugos: 1885 ¹

The Hugo Awards are given to the best science fiction or fantasy works and are awarded every year at the World Science Fiction Convention. Unfortunately they have only been awarded since 1953. In recognition of works that predated the awards, the following choice was made for 1885 novels and published in an online article dated October 19th 2011 where Jess Nevins nominates *After London* as the winner. We thank io9 for allowing us to reproduce the article:

The Hugo short list for novels from 1885 would likely have consisted of F. Anstey's *The Tinted Venus*, Richard Jefferies' *After London*, Henry Morley's anthology *Ideal Commonwealths*, Rosa Praed's *Affinities*, and the English language version of Jules Verne's *Mathias Sandorf*.

Mathias Sandorf would have taken the Hugo, but *After London* would have been the deserving winner.

Anstey (real name Thomas Anstey Guthrie) isn't read much now, but in his time he was a major humorist. He was more popular with the British than with Americans, but his *Vice Versa* (1882) was a smash with both. *Vice Versa* is about a father and son who switch bodies and learn respect and affection for each other. It was the source of the films *Freaky Friday* and *Vice Versa* and every other parent-child body-switch story and film and is still in print today.

Vice Versa made Anstey's reputation, and when *The Tinted Venus* was published it was billed as 'by the author of *Vice Versa*.' I thought *Vice Versa* was variously ham-handed, twee, and miserable—the hell of the Victorian English boarding school is driven home with force, but the humour is much less effective. I was not much more impressed with *The Tinted Venus*, a farce on contemporary society and Cockney life in which a man puts a ring on the finger of a statue of Aphrodite, which comes to life and pursues him romantically. Anstey isn't an unskilled writer, but humour ages very quickly, and what might have caused the audience of 1885 to laugh will likely not raise a smile today. Nor will Anstey's snobbery toward the lower classes sit well with modern readers. Nonetheless, Anstey's reputation and the humour of the book would have given *The Tinted Venus* (which is still in print, for what that's worth) the nomination.

Jefferies has retained his reputation better than any writer here except Verne. He was a novelist and naturalist who was known in 1885 for his first two novels, *Wood Magic* (1881), an animal fable about a young boy who talks to the animals, and the non-fantastic *Bevis* (1882), about that boy's adventures as an older child. Both are worth seeking out: *Wood Magic* is full of concisely-drawn animals but does not fall into the traps of sentimentality or anthropomorphism, while *Bevis* lets Jefferies indulge his strengths, the depiction of pastoral scenes and childhood.

Neither work would have prepared Jefferies' readers for *After London*, or *Wild England*. Jefferies was in very poor health when he wrote it. He died of

¹ <http://io9.com/5851505/the-victorian-hugos-1885>

tuberculosis just two years later, and his son died while Jefferies was writing *After London*. Jefferies' emotional state can be seen in *After London*, a post-apocalyptic novel in which Felix Aquila, the son of a Baron, travels around England 130 years after an unidentified something destroyed British civilization, reduced London to a polluted hellhole, and left the English at a feudal level.

Jefferies' style is less stiff and dated than Anstey's, and his descriptions of the ecology and civilization of post-apocalyptic England are striking and memorable. *After London* was very successful and was the first major post-holocaust novel, a genre which would continue to be popular until Queen Victoria's death. Jefferies didn't invent the post-apocalyptic novel—the British had been revelling in them since the catastrophe novels of the 1830s and the Future War novels of the 1870s. But *After London* influenced other writers in ways that previous post-apocalyptic novelists had not. *After London* has aged only a little, has never gone out of print, and is deservedly seen as a classic. Popular enough to receive a nomination, it would have deserved the award itself.

Henry Morley was famous in his lifetime as a scholar (at University College in London) and editor (the well-received series Morley's Universal Library and English Men of Letters). The 23rd volume of the Universal Library was *Ideal Commonwealths*, an anthology of utopias which included Plutarch's 'Life of Lycurgus,' Thomas More's *Utopia*, the first English-language translation of Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun*, and Bishop Joseph Hall's *Mundus Alter Idem*. Morley's skills as a translator were not up to his other scholarly skills—his version of *The City of the Sun* is not just poor but is inaccurate. A full and accurate translation of Campanella, a historically-important utopia, would not appear until 1904, but *Ideal Commonwealths* was a popular success. More importantly, it was an academic success and became the standard anthology of utopias in both the U.K. and the U.S., a title it held for almost a century. It remains in print.

Like many Victorian women writers, Rosa Praed was prolific, skilled, successful, popular, and forgotten much more quickly than her male counterparts. Praed made her name with romances and stories of her native Australia, but became much better known in the 1880s as a writer of occult fantasies. *Affinities* was her first novel of the fantastic. It's a roman a clef-society novel-occult horror about the threat posed to a young woman by a decadent poet and black magician (who is clearly meant to be Oscar Wilde). Praed has an easy, readable style that has aged only a little, and the proselytizing on behalf of Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy is much less obvious in *Affinities* than in Praed's later work. *Affinities* isn't as good as Praed's *The Brother of the Shadow* (1886), but nonetheless it's entertaining, found many fans, and is well deserving of the Hugo nomination it would have undoubtedly received.

Verne needs no introduction. *Mathias Sandorf* is in some ways typical late-period Verne: full of adventure (Count Sandorf seeks Edmond Dantes-like vengeance on those who foiled his attempt to overthrow the Austro-Hungarian government), full of realistically-advanced technology (Sandorf's island fortress

has electric boats, mines, and torpedoes, but nothing too fantastic or hard to credit), and dark (at its heart *Mathias Sandorf* is a revenge story in which murders are dressed up as justifiable homicides). Until recently Verne was badly served by translators, and the edition I read was the Victorian one rather than the (reportedly much better) 2005 translation. That said, I was unimpressed with *Mathias Sandorf*, despite Verne's attempts at writing an Dumas-like adventure story. *Mathias Sandorf* appeared during the 1877-1890 period when so much of Verne's work feels forced and uninspired, written because Verne wanted to write rather than because Verne had a novel he wanted to write. I think Verne's many fans would have given *Mathias Sandorf* the 1885 Hugo Award, but I think it's the weakest of the five finalists.

Three other novels would have received votes: *The Fall of the Great Republic* (1886-88), Luis Senarens' *Across the Continent on Wings; or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Greatest Flight*, and H.N. Crellin's *Tales of the Caliph*. *The Fall of the Great Republic* is an arm-flailing screech about the dangers of unrestricted immigration—the Irish take over the United States. British Hugo voters would likely barely have noticed it, but the more conservative of the American Hugo voters would have voted for it, more from sympathy with its ideology than from affection for its prose style. Similarly, the Edisonade *Across the Continent* dime novel is wretched as fiction and ethically disgusting, but it would have received votes from voters in search of morally vacant adventure fiction. *Tales of the Caliph* is a delightful Arabian Nights-style set of stories and stories-within-stories which I think is superior to all but *After London*, but *Tales of the Caliph* is humor, and humor novels rarely get the same consideration by award voters as more serious fiction.

HOW DID YOU FIRST DISCOVER RICHARD JEFFERIES AND THE SOCIETY?

Norman Chaney in the USA was contacted by the Hon. Sec. to discover how he knew about Jefferies. He replied: 'I am Professor of English at Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio. In the course of writing a book on, as of now, seven nature writers, I intend to include Jefferies as one who has an immanental experience of the world of nature that is philosophical and religious, though non-theistic. That generally describes the approach I take to him in a chapter I am preparing for the book.

But beyond the book itself, we have a study-abroad program at Otterbein University that encourages students to travel and study (with faculty supervision) for a three-week period during summer or January. I am proposing one of these study-abroad programs (for about ten students) to Swindon and Jefferies country. Upon return to the university, students are required to bring their experiences to bear on an academic project... I hope you and your group are successful in saving the fields at Coate, and that my wife and I can still see

something of what Jefferies saw and wrote about out of his heart.

In the spring of 2013, my wife and I plan to spend part of my sabbatical in England. (I have enjoyed other sabbatical experiences at Cambridge and Edinburgh.) During that time, we will be scouting possibilities for accommodations and activities for students in Jefferies country.

One of my purposes in joining the Richard Jefferies Society is to broaden my acquaintance with people who know and love Jefferies, whereby my own knowledge and love of him might increase. In my opinion, he stands in rank with Thoreau as a writer who truly felt his way into the world of nature.

As for Jefferies, it is indeed tragic that he is so little known. When I mention him to people—even those I expect would know of him—I end up having to explain who he is. I came to know of him one day in a bookshop by picking up a used copy of *Bevis*. I wanted to know more about a man who could write like that. I went on from there exploring his work. The Welsh philosopher D. Z. Phillips confirmed me in my belief that he was something special when I came across a discussion of *The Story of My Heart* in one of Phillips' books.

Peter K Robins of Norfolk writes:

Some time in the late Sixties I took a holiday in Fort William in the Lochaber district of the Scottish Highlands. The town is overlooked by Ben Nevis and tourists, commonly unaware that the town receives four times as much annual rain than London, are cheerfully informed by the locals that, 'If you can see the top of Ben Nevis it is going to rain and if you can't it's raining.'

And rain it did when I was there, the only relief a shelf of books thoughtfully provided by the owner of the B&B where I was staying. The thickest book I could find was *A Flax of Dream* by Henry Williamson, an author unfamiliar to me at that time. The four-part saga of Willie Maddison was much influenced by Williamson's discovery of a copy of *The Story of My Heart* in the spring or early summer of 1919 in a Folkestone second-hand bookshop. 'I stood there for an hour,' he later wrote, 'so rapt was I in the pages, which were a revelation to me . . . indeed for some time afterwards I thought that Jefferies was with me, and of me.'

After reading *The Story of My Heart* forty years ago I joined The Richard Jefferies Society and went on to read and collect both Jefferies and Williamson, spending many happy times in second-hand bookshops. In his later years when Henry Williamson was able to

travel to Swindon as President of The Richards Jefferies Society to give a talk, I was able to meet him.

I am particularly fond of Jefferies' essay 'Out of Doors in February' (collected in *The Open Air*) which I read every year as it lifts the spirit in a bleak month. Living in rural Norfolk, I am fortunate to see each day the enduring truth of Jefferies' observations and revelations of the natural world.

Vicky Brandrick contacted the Society in September 2011. She wanted to donate some Jefferies' books and decided that it was about time that she joined the Society. Vicky was born in a small village a couple of miles from Wootton Bassett (near Swindon) where she had freedom to roam the countryside and shared Jefferies' passion for the Downs. She was a junior reporter on the *Swindon Advertiser* in the 1940s, after leaving Grammar School in Swindon, and she recalled an elderly retired journalist telling her that Richard Jefferies didn't do what he was told to do when he worked on the newspaper. Her father worked for the GWR. The GWR supported a number of educational and recreational Societies in Swindon for their work force to enjoy and she remembers her Swindon social life with great affection. Vicky Brandrick went on to be a writer and artist and is now a welcome Member of the Society.

Her fine copy of *The Gamekeeper at Home* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1906), with illustrations by Charles Whympster, has been placed in the Museum.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

Alliance of Literary Societies



The ALS AGM weekend will take place on 12-13th May in Nottingham this year. It will be hosted by the Dickens Fellowship.

Contact Helen Newman should you require further information (see contact details on p.4) or go to <http://www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk/>.

Wiltshire Heritage Museum 41 Long Street, Devizes. The Richard Jefferies Society is a long-standing member of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. We have a ticket that will admit 3 members to the Museum at any one time. The ticket is also valid at Salisbury Museum. Please contact the Chairman if you would like to borrow the ticket (see p.4).

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2012

- Sat 3 March* Joint meeting with the Friends of Alfred Williams. This year it is the Friends turn to host the gathering. Select a short extract to read to others by or about Richard Jefferies or Alfred Williams or just come along to listen. There is also a walk around Coate Water, in the footsteps of Richard Jefferies, leaving from the Rangers Information Centre at 10.30am and finishing at the Museum around noon.
- Fri 16 March 2pm Ceremony at Eltham Churchyard to unveil memorial plaque to Jefferies' baby son. See p.13.
- Sat 14 April* Professor Eric Jones will talk about the American pioneering naturalist Robert Kennicott (1835-1866). Lecture entitled: 'Saving Kennicott's Grove: successful conservation at an American Coate'.
- Sat 12 May* 'Selborne, Gilbert White, Jefferies and others' – a talk by Peter Bainbridge. See p.19.
- 8-17 June Broadway Arts Festival featuring Alfred Parsons RA (1847-1920). See p.14.
- Sat 28 July A Study Day: 'The working wo/man in Jefferies' works.' Jefferies' Museum: 10.30am-4.15pm. Talks by Andrew Rossabi and Professor Roger Ebbatson. See p. 20.
- Sat 3 Nov AGM and Birthday Lecture. Information in the autumn newsletter.

* Meetings begin at 2.00pm in the Jefferies Museum, Marlborough Road, Coate, Swindon. Doors open at 1.00pm – an opportunity to look around the Museum. Park free at Coate Water, only 5 minutes walk away. Those with a disability can park at the Museum; space is limited – when the ground is firm there is plenty of room. Parking is also available in Dayhouse Lane and at the Sun Inn. Meetings are open to the public and free to attend.

From Swindon town centre (Fleming Way), there are several bus services that stop next to Coate Water roundabout. These include: Monday to Saturday - daytime: Numbers 13, 14, and 20.