

THE RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY SPRING NEWSLETTER 2002

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 1042838

Hon. Sec. Lady Treitel, Eidsvoll, Bedwells Heath, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5JE Tel.
01865 735678 (Best before 7.00 pm or Saturdays)

FROM THE CHAIR

In late January *The Guardian* printed a reader's letter in which Richard Jefferies was described as a 'ruralist'. There were other points to which I would have responded had I not mislaid the cutting. Then in February the Argentine composer, Alberto Ginastera was remembered on Radio 3 as an 'urbanite'. Of course the world has moved on since I received my copy of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as a twenty-first birthday present but it confidently assures me that a ruralist is one who leaves the town for the country and comes close to 'urbanite' as a follower of Pope Urban VI. But no matter: let us pretend to know what are the intended meanings,

Jefferies the 'ruralist'? Truly he was born and grew in the Wiltshire countryside. He lived on the family farm and knew about farming techniques. So was he an agriculturist? He could tell you much about plants, animals and insects — so was he a naturalist? Look into his works to learn about country lives and work in his time: he must have been an economist, a sociologist, an historian.

Stay a moment, or as our young would say, 'hang about!' Jefferies was a professional writer; journalist, novelist, columnist — his was a talent conditioned to write about anything, perhaps about nothing, making the results always interesting. He would today have flourished regularly and profitably in the broadsheet newspapers, the supplements, the weeklies, day upon day, week after week, years through years. His views would have been sought by the likes of Sue McGregor and David Frost. He would have delighted the Parkinson audiences, contributed anecdotes to 'Open Country', expertise to 'Farming Today' and rustic wisdom to 'Gardeners' Question Time'. Add his choice of eight recordings for Sue Lawley and the BBC could not have functioned without him.

A friend who once accompanied me to one of the Society's 'Members Evenings' was amazed, delighted and impressed by the variety of topics and material chosen from Jefferies' writings by the participants. An enthusiastic reader, at once he recognised the author's perceptive vision and wide range of interest. I have avoided the category of 'Jefferies the Mystic' although (or maybe because) Henry Williamson thought that Jefferies was one of the world's greatest mystics. But surely the minds of few writers have so firmly been locked into reality. When Jefferies describes some evidence of the natural world you read, you feel, you understand. Recourse to the two heavy volumes of my second edition S.O.E.D. offers the modern view of 'mystic' (1842!) as 'inspiring an awed sense of mystery'. Edna Manning in 'Richard Jefferies: A Modern Appraisal' regards Jefferies as 'a natural mystic' mainly on the strength of *The Story of My Heart* and some avant-garde thoughts about illusion and reality in 'My Old Village'. But she comments that Jefferies 'had such faith in life itself that he believed intelligence could be used effectively to solve all man's problems'. She quotes from the Jefferies

'Note Books' that we could 'indeed change the circumstances of the world and so end the bad affairs of killing ourselves over principles'.

If the Williamson view has validity it must take account of Jefferies the futurist, the Utopian, the cosmologist, but also the down-to-earth reporter. We must agree with my entranced visitor to the 'Members Evening' that possibly the most notable characteristic of Jefferies the writer is the wide range of his ideas. He was no sophist: his observation was personal, his conclusions realistic. He was bitterly aware that the world would continue to function without him.

Jefferies, writer and thinker. But 'ruralist'? 'urbanite'? His adult life was rationed between cities and towns, suburbs and country in Wiltshire, Sussex and greater London. Even in his locations Jefferies was wide-ranging.

Len Grugeon

Postscript: With road congestion charges looming I am reminded that the Cyclists' Touring Club publishes an ingenious guide and maps for touring Britain without using major roads. It could become a best-seller. Meanwhile, a contingency plan is ready. I propose to reach RJS meetings the hard way: from Shalford through Elstead, Dockenfield, Lasham, Dummer, Burghclere, Kintbury, Baydon, Wanborough, Stratton to Swindon. Happily there are sources of food and drink along the route and late arrival at meetings could become the norm. L.G.

COUNCIL MEMBERS 2002

President: Professor Jeremy Hooker (elected 1999 for 5 years)

Treasurer: Geoffrey Hirst (elected 2000 for 5 years) 91A Woodstock Road, Witney, Oxon. OX28 1ED (Tel. 01993 703958)

Secretary: Phyllis Treitel (re-elected 2000 for 5 years) Eidsvoll, Bedwells Heath, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5JE

Vice Presidents: Brian Fullagar, Robert McCloy

Members of Council: (with duties)

Leonard Grugeon, Chairman (re-elected 2000 for 3 years) 31 Poplar Road, Shalford, Guildford GU4 SDH (Tel. 01483 535377)

Margaret Evans, Membership Secretary (re-elected for 3 years) 23 Hardwell Close, Grove, Nr. Wantage, Oxon OX12 OBN (Tel. 012357 65360)

John Price, Vice-Chairman (elected 2000 for 3 years) (Tel. 01672 515150)

Ray Morse, Meetings Secretary (re-elected 2000 for 3 years) 28 Tismeads Crescent, Swindon SN1 4DR (Tel. 01793 530520)

Margaret Gould, Librarian (re-elected 1999 for 3 years) (Tel. 01793 520431)

Patrick Dillon (re-elected 1999 for 3 years) Helen Newman (re-elected 2001 for 3 years) John Webb (elected 1999 for 3 years) Richard Stewart (elected 2001 for 3 years)

Co-opted A.S. Hickerton

GIFT AID

Gift Aid forms were sent out last year and a good number of members returned them -thank you. We are putting the forms in once more in case there are other members who now feel able to qualify. The money we get back from the Inland Revenue is well worth the trouble taken.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY?

In common with many societies, the Richard Jefferies Society is beginning to have difficulty filling the posts of those who do the work. Margaret Evans, who has been Membership Secretary since 1997, and served on the Council for years before that, would like a rest.

Please volunteer. It will not be a life sentence. You would be elected for 3 years, and might perhaps do the job for 6 years altogether. It is somehow a reflection on the Society if we cannot find people to do the modest tasks that running it involves.

You can help, even if you can't volunteer. Make the job easier by doing one or more of the following:-

pay your subscription promptly, i.e. 1 July; if you are over 50 consider becoming a life member; arrange to pay by banker's order (advice is available); remember to sign your cheque.

Ring Margaret at 012357 65360 if you would like to know more; ring Phyllis at 01865 735678 if you want to volunteer.

REPORT ON THE AGM AND BIRTHDAY LECTURE 2001

The AGM and Birthday Lecture took place at Chiseldon on 13 October. The weather was almost summery: doors and windows were thrown open, picnic lunches eaten out of doors. Chiseldon Holy Cross Church (with a new 'Millennium window') looked lovely and so did the churchyard. About 30 members were present for the AGM, with another 5 or so for the lecture; we were delighted to see several new faces.

Our Chairman, Len Grugeon, was able to preside, in his customary charming fashion, despite an anxious spell in hospital only a few weeks before; we applaud his devotior to our affairs and his courage.

John Price and George Miller brought a select few books for sale; the Society in addition to the usual leaflets for sale had the new Jean Muir card (which is proving very popular) and copies of Professor Ebbatson's early articles.

Mrs. Gregory stood down from the Council after 6 years; Mr. Richard Stewart, of Ipswich, was elected, and Miss Helen Newman re-elected.

The question whether to apply for a place for Richard Jefferies in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, led to a lively discussion. No decision was taken; Miss Newman and the Hon. Sec. will seek information from other Literary Societies.

Professor Ebbatson has kindly allowed us to publish the text of his lecture in the Journal for 2002, so there is no need to summarise it here. It threw new light on one of Jefferies' most intriguing books - *The Dewy Morn*. We are most grateful to him.

LUNCH BREAK AT CHISELDON

One of the delights of the Jefferies AGM is the generous amount of time allowed for lunch. This is mainly intended for those wishing to dine leisurely at the local tavern but it can also be put to good advantage by the sandwich and thermos brigade, in which number I include myself. Obviously in October you need a mild, sunny day to sit outside and such was the case at Chiseldon. This is a welcome break from the necessary indoor nature of the AGM. Jefferies, after all, wrote little about indoor matters.

The village hall at Chiseldon is close to the church, where Richard Jefferies married Jessie Baden in 1874. Adjoining the old churchyard is another strip which at present has only a few graves. I sat at one end of it, with a beech hedge on three sides and using a somewhat rickety seat dedicated to the memory of Elsie Humphries, 1910-1983. This could be moved and at an angle cut out the car park to my left and gave a long panoramic view down the grass strip, over a low hedge and onwards to fields and distant woodland. It wasn't perfect as I was still conscious of noise and movement from the nearby carpark and the footpath to my right. The hedges were, however, an effective barrier and directed my gaze straight ahead.

The first thing I noticed was a largish butterfly passing on several occasions. I caught no flicker of colour but it was probably a red admiral, searching for nectar from Michaelmas daisies, late flowering buddleia or open ivy umbels. It didn't come down to the grass, probably because it was still wet and had only a few tattered dandelion flowers which would have held little nectar. Just one other insect, a late wasp, flew past, and the rest was down to the birds: blue tit and great tit, chaffinch and blackbird, mistle thrush identified by its looping flight, woodpigeons, crows and what at a great distance was either a kestrel or sparrowhawk. There were jackdaws as well, chattering amiably, an appropriate sighting as Jefferies spends some time in chapter four of *Wild Life in a Southern County* not just describing Chiseldon Church in detail but commenting on various birds, especially the jackdaws, adding that 'the bird has become so associated with churches that it is difficult to separate the two'¹. Then there were the species identified by their distinctive call: the yaffling laughter of a green woodpecker, jangling cry of a jay and the short piping call of a greater spotted woodpecker, eventually seen twice in undulating flight. None came close enough for any observation of individual behaviour but a magpie landed briefly on the edge of the churchyard wall, just visible to me. This was part of the opening scene in *Greene Feme Farm*, with the two farmers talking together before the morning service 'as they had done every fine-weather Sunday this thirty years. So regular was this pressure, that the moss which covered the coping-stones elsewhere was absent from the spot where they placed their arms'.

As I went back to the village hall a familiar sharp-fronted shape flew across the churchyard and I was able to add a nuthatch to what was a good list for the middle of the day. I had also, for once in my life, followed Jefferies' advice in 'The Haunt of the Hare': to remain quiescent and 'stir not an inch; speak not a word'.

Richard Stewart

MESSAGE FROM HOWARD KENSETT

Everyone who comes to Society meetings will be familiar with Howard: he was an excellent host to us in 1994 at Eastbourne. After the death of his first wife, he married Kathleen in a Quaker wedding in 1998. She had been a widow for 32 years and had spent 18 years working for the Samaritans.

Then began their quite unbelievable life together. They were in Switzerland before the wedding, and afterwards visited Spain, Italy, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Canada and the USA. For the Millennium they visited Kathleen's son in New Zealand and returned home via Los Angeles. In April last year they visited the Lake District and then Paris.

In August they were in Wiltshire for the 3-day course on Wiltshire writers at Urchfont, but staying at a bed and breakfast. There, unfortunately, on the last day, Kathleen fell and broke her hip. She was splendidly looked after in the Royal United Hospital, Bath, for 3 weeks. Howard and Kathleen then returned to Eastbourne. Sadly, she died in the Avalon Nursing Home on 15 December, shortly before her 93rd birthday.

Howard has made a donation to the Society in Kathleen's memory. He wants everyone to know how much happiness he enjoyed in his short time with her; the first book he gave her was *The Story of My Heart*, and he will scatter some of her ashes at Coate. He hopes everyone will come to the Memorial Service for Kathleen which will take place at: St. Mary's Church, Decoy Drive, Hampden Park, Eastbourne.

13 April 2002. 11.00 a.m. Reception at the Lansdowne Hotel.

COATE MUSEUM OPENING DATES 2002

Richard Jefferies' birthplace at Coate will be open (no charge) on the following Sundays in 2002:

5 May; 19 May*; 2 June; 16 June; 7 July; 21 July; 4 August; 18 August; 1 September; 15 September

* and visit of Friends of the Ridgeway

As usual John and Sheila Povey, Ray and Sylvia Morse, Mark Daniel, John Price, John Webb, Ethelwyn and Nigel Gregory and Jean Bone, Chris Bowles and Pam Smith, Margaret Gould and Phyllis Treitel will take it in turns to be in charge. More volunteers are needed - please offer.

The house and garden are open from 2.00 to 5.00 on the days listed. There is parking in Coate Water Country Park, next door.

Swindon borough, who own and maintain the property, have now put (at great expense) new thatch on the older part of the house, and are in the process of finding a tenant.

If you wish to make enquiries, please first try Ray Morse (01793 530 520), then the Hon. Sec. (01865 735678).

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - APRIL - OCTOBER 2002

Monday 8 April Mrs. Isobel Thompson, Museum Curator, Swindon Borough.

Talk: 'Plans for the Coate Museum'. Arts Centre 7.30 pm

Saturday 11 May 'Memories of Another Age': Ethelwyn Gregory will introduce this book on its publication day. The memories are those of Ethelwyn's mother, Mrs. Frances *Gay* formerly Secretary of the Richard Jefferies Society, and long-time resident of Swindon.

Time: 11.00 am. Place: New Heritage Centre, Swindon. (Swindon Festival of Literature)

Monday 13 May Mr. Simon Coleman, Archivist, University of Bath.

Talk: 'Past, Present and Future in Jefferies' Thought¹. Arts Centre 7.30 pm

Sunday 19 May Visit to Coate by the Friends of the Ridgeway

Saturday 8 June Outing to Savernake Forest. The coach will leave the Square at 2.00 pm. We shall examine the famous trees and read from Jefferies' writings.

There will be a stop for tea. Return by 6.00 pm. Names to Hon. Sec. please by 31 May. Cost £8 max.

Date not available Old Town Walk 2.00 - 3.30. This is part of the Old Town Festival and usually takes place in early July.

Saturday 27 July Study Day. See separate notice.

Saturday 12 October AGM and new video 'Jefferies Land', Lawn Community Centre, Swindon. See separate notice.

At some stage in the summer we hope to install the bench in memory of Harold Adams. It may be possible to arrange for the dedication to take place during the morning of 8 June. Please enquire of the Hon. Sec. (01865 735678) nearer the time, to confirm. If we are not able to arrange this ceremony for 8 June we shall try to arrange some other event in the morning, e.g. a walk.

STUDY DAY, CHURCH HALL. CHISELDON*
SATURDAY 27 JULY 2002
RICHARD JEFFERIES IN THE WORLD OF ART

PROGRAMME

10.30 Doors open; preparation; coffee and tea.

11.00 Exhibition of photographs, paintings, drawings, illustrations, etc.

Most of these will be the property of the Society but members are urged to bring along any picture relating to Jefferies that interests them.

11.30 to 12.30 Contributions by participants lasting (roughly) 5 minutes each. Examples already offered: photographs of 296 Ewell Road, Surbiton, showing bomb damage caused on 28 July 1941; an old carte de visite portrait of Jefferies issued by an Australian photographer; a photograph of the Venus Accroupie; a copy of J.W. North's painting 'Sir Bevis and the Woodwoman'; Keeper Haylock and family; posters.

Send in your name or bring any picture or map that intrigues you. For instance - has anyone a photograph of Charles Longman or George Smith - good friends of Jefferies?

12.30 to 2.00 Lunch break

2.00 to 3.30 1. Andrew Rossabi: 'Could Richard Jefferies have been an artist instead of a writer?'

2. Phyllis Treitel: 'Would Richard Jefferies have made a more successful art critic than an expert on rural life?'

4.00 Tea

*For map of Chiseldon see Annual Report 2001.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BIRTHDAY LECTURE
SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER 2002 THE LAWN COMMUNITY CENTRE,
GUILDFORD AVENUE, SWINDON

PROGRAMME

10.30 Reception and refreshments

11.00 AGM (members only) 1.00 Break for lunch

2.30 The Birthday Lecture (Visitors welcome) Speaker: John Webb Subject: Making the Video 3.15 The new video: 'Jefferies Land' 4.00 Refreshments
The Agenda for the AGM and the minutes of the 2001 AGM will accompany the Annual Report. Nominations to Council will be welcomed.

The Lawn Community Centre, on the corner of Windsor Road and Guildford Avenue, lies roughly half way (as Richard Jefferies might have walked) between Coate and Old Town, Swindon. It was formerly the Gamekeepers Arms and has recently been converted. There are shops nearby. Buses pass the door.

There is some parking (free) at the Centre. When this is all taken we are to park in a nearby school, not on the street. More detailed instructions and a sketch map will appear in the Annual Report.

STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT WORTHING

My wife and I had been shopping in Worthing whilst on holiday. As we drove away we passed a cemetery. 'Surely' I thought 'Jefferies is buried here. Or was it at Woking?'

Light rain fell. I parked by the Chapel and noticed in the distance a man apparently measuring the grave plots. 'Correct town, wrong cemetery,' he said, smiling. Dark beard, dark overcoat, friendly twinkling eyes. 'A surprising number of people ask me. Hudson is buried there as well.'

As the rain intensified, the dark figure resumed his task. Inevitably *I* forgot his directions and got lost in the straggle of suburbia. Strangely, when we reached Broadwater Cemetery the same smiling man appeared at the gateway. He had obviously taken the direct route yet his reappearance seemed slightly surreal at the time, like the White Rabbit in Alice, it seemed, always appearing busy, always unexpected.

The story gets stranger. As we entered the graveyard I noticed a bicycle propped against the chapel wall. Parcels hung from the frame. Beneath the crossbar was tied a heavy wooden cudgel or club, shaped like an African knobkerry. In a den in the bushes nearby sat what appeared to be a tramp, ragged and of indeterminate age drinking a can of Tennants lager, silently ignoring our greeting.

Jefferies grave proved difficult to find. We retraced our path to start again. The tramp had disappeared. Eventually with several apprehensive backward glances we found the white cross, only for the tramp to emerge from the yew trees near to us, stare briefly then melt into the November dusk. Several minutes later he reappeared some distance away, still pushing his bicycle, and left through a small gap in the cemetery wall, much to our relief. Who was he? Ostensibly just the usual harmless alcoholic vagrant. Nonetheless the antagonistic glower and the club suggested a rather more sinister aspect.

Standing there, an atheist amongst the "little gardens" of my childhood by the grave of my literary hero I still felt a sense of unease. Was the man the 20th

century equivalent of Jefferies' moucher? Perhaps a self appointed guardian of his grave?

A faded rose remained on the straggling bush by the marble cross. *I* read the messages on the plinth with sadness. Soon, after standing unmolested for more than a century they would be vandalised, just as he describes such vandalism of gravestones in his own lifetime. Just as the tuberculosis which killed him now threatens to emerge as a major disease problem after being virtually eliminated in my own lifetime.

Anxious to leave we turned slowly away, deciding to save W.H. Hudson's grave for a future visit as the light was fading. The familiar bicycle was back and leaning against a tree. Whether the club was still attached we did not notice but I felt the hairs stand up on the back of my neck; saw dimly the grinning face of the tramp as he raised another can to his lips in a parody of a toast. He had ridden back at some speed apparently to intercept us. Thankfully he did not follow as we left the chapel and reached the car. True to form the dark man materialised to wave us away, silhouetted in his lodge doorway. Our curious pilgrimage was over.

Guy Hall

BOOK NEWS

The Society has received a copy of *Welsh Journal* by our President, Jeremy Hooker. He now lives and works in Wales and has lived there before - hence the book. Published by Seren (Poetry Wales Press Ltd.), Nolton Street, Bridgend CF31 1EF at £7.95. ISBN 1-85411-301-1. www.seren-books.com

John Chandler, author of many fascinating books about Wiltshire, has taken over Hobnob Press and already has 4 titles: *Marlborough and Eastern Wiltshire* by John Chandler; *Little Imber on the Down* by Rex Sawyer; *Sarum Chronicle* (multi-author); *Endless Street: a History of Salisbury and its People* by John Chandler. Apply to Hobnob Press, PO Box 1838, East Knoyle, Salisbury SP3 6FA.

Charles Peers (not a member of the Society) wishes to sell his collection of Jefferies material. Apply to 228 Bramhall Lane South, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 3AA. 0161 439 4855.

M.J. Lancaster, Tite Street Press, 11 Winchester Court, Vicarage Gate, London W8 4AB wishes to advertise *Letters of Engagement* 1884-1888. It mentions *The Dewy Morn*.

C. Ambrose Winder compiles the Register of British Bookfinders, £3.99 post free. Toronto House, 11 Mayfield Grove, Harrogate, N. Yorks HG1 5HD. 01423 556239. The Clique has a website for book collectors. You can find out prices of old books by using www.ukbookworld.com. There are other services too.

The Arts Council of England supports a UK website for authors: www.author.co.uk/circles. If you pay £40 you can have your own personal website. Talk to Jill Yendell at 01566 86960. Tell us how you get on.

BRIEF NOTES

Another Honour for Paul Scofield

A year ago we congratulated Paul Scofield on being made a Companion of Honour. The University of Oxford has this year voted to confer on him the Degree of Doctor of Letters (honoris causa). This will be conferred on 19 June 2002.

The degree ceremony takes place in the Sheldonian Theatre (ticket-holders only) but there is usually a good crowd lining the streets nearby to welcome the honorands and other University dignitaries as they proceed to their lunch.

Fortyfolde

Dr. Pepper (of Edinburgh) who has been growing fortyfold potatoes, brought some with him when he came to Wiltshire last summer, and shared them. The Hon. Sec. boiled hers, in their purple skins, and ate them. They had an excellent nutty flavour. Helen Newman planted one of hers and has a fine plant. The January issue of *Saga Magazine* carried a letter from a reader in Reading who also enjoyed them, has planted a few, and was pleased with the resulting crop.

Penelope Lively on Jefferies

Michael Taylor of New Zealand has sent extracts from Penelope Lively's book *A House Unlocked*. Her grandmother lived in Somerset, and there the 14 year-old was able to read *Tarka*, *Bevis*, *Precious Bane*, and *Hudson*. They also had *Red Deer*. She sums up individual nature writers and comments on the genre, but one wonders how she can believe that *Toilers of the Field* is about 'the Edwardian farm labourer'. Never mind: 'Richard Jefferies ... is the great popularizer of nature and rural life. *Bevis* was a huge best seller and still very much around in the 1920s and 1930s ___'

Praise from Southern Arts

Southern Arts, based in Winchester, but threatened with re-organisation from Whitehall, has been generous to this Society in the past. We send them complimentary copies of our Newsletter and they send us news of their activities. After last year's Autumn Newsletter, their Literature Officer, Keiren Whelan, wrote to say how much he admired our newsletter. There isn't a contest for the best one but he thought that if there had been, ours would be on the shortlist.

The Ridgeway

Faithful to his promise, the new Chairman of The Friends of the Ridgeway, Ian Ritchie, has made several innovative changes. There is a new impressive leaflet that pulls no punches, and a more substantial newsletter. The new President is Chris Brasher (who lives close to the Ridgeway) and our patron is Sir Chris Bonnington. Vice-presidents (all MPs) are: Michael Ancram (Devizes), Julia Drown (Swindon South), Robert Jackson (Wantage), David Rendel (Newbury), Boris Johnson (Henley), David Liddington (Aylesbury), and Paul Goodman (Wycombe). As a result, several excellent newspaper articles have appeared including one by Mark Drew on 28 November 2001 in the *Swindon Evening Advertiser* headed 'Drive Them Off'. It quoted Julia Drown's suggestion that Swindon could set the fashion and close the Ridgeway to off-road vehicles. This prompted some lively letters. The Hon. Sec. added this Society's weight to the campaign by writing to Paul Doherty,

Swindon's Chief Executive, asking him to keep the Ridgeway 'walkable' (and incidentally not to mess with Barbury Castle). He wrote a friendly reply. The Friends' latest newsletter gives details of their website (see below) and news of increased membership and donations. They too are looking for a Membership Secretary.

On 19 May we shall host a visit from the Friends, They will first look round the birthplace and then tour Coate Water. Do join us.
http://website.lineone.netAS*friendsofridgeway/



The Ridgeway in Winter from the top of Hackpen Hill

JEFFERIES' EARLY NOVELS - ON THE INTERNET?

A member in Australia, Richard Wright, would like to make Jefferies' early novels available to all on the Internet as copies of *The Scarlet Shawl*, *Restless Human Hearts* and *World's End* are impossible to buy. In addition, once the book is recorded electronically, it will lend itself to analysis by modern methods. The arrangement so far is that the Hon. Sec. xeroxes pages from the Society's copy of *The Scarlet Shawl*, sends them to Professor Wright, who scans them into his computer. The results are good but not perfect - in other words they need proof-reading.

If there is a member with a computer who would like to help, Professor Wright's details are:

72 Campbell Street, Balmain, NSW 2041, Australia. Phone/Fax: +61 2 9818 1037 E-mail: richwrig@tig.com.au

Even if you have not got a computer, you can still benefit from this enterprise, once it is completed. For a modest sum, a 'shop' or a friend would transfer the text to a disk; you could then read it on screen or get it printed out.

OTHER SOCIETIES

The Edward Thomas Fellowship Mr. Emeny, the ETF's Secretary, has written suggesting the two societies might get together either for a meeting or for articles. Our reply was enthusiastic. Maybe this year's Autumn Walk will provide an opportunity. It is to take place somewhere in Wiltshire on Sunday 22 September, and will be led by Ken Watts. Ring nearer the time for details. Our own Journal, this year, carries an article by Ken which is based on one he did for the ETF and which they kindly agreed to our repeating. For those who have enjoyed reading about 'Dad' Uzzell there is more: the latest ETF Newsletter (No. 46) has a description of Dad, written by Edward Thomas when he was only 16. If you would like to see it send 2 x 19p stamps to Phyllis Treitel.

The Henry Williamson Society Journal No. 37 is a substantial book (96 pages) with 10 or 12 articles, including part III of a long work by Dr. J.W. Blench (a member of this Society) on *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight*. It follows a 33-page article by Tony Evans: 'Chasing the Cheriton' (short for The Cheriton Otter Hounds). The relevance of the article becomes clear when one understands that the records of the Hunt, mainly to be found in a book by the Hunt's Secretary and Master, W.H. Rogers, form the basis of many of the episodes in *Tarka the Otter*. Excellent photographs. The HWS website is: www.henrywilliamson.org

The William Morris Society The Society's New Year Newsletter (editor Martin Heggarty) brings with it, this time, a handsome Programme of the year's activities - 13 of them. Two stress the Arts & Crafts Movement: 'Gardens of the Arts & Crafts Movement' on 18 May, and 'Castles & Cider Country of the Welsh Borders', 26-28 July. There is one on Morris and Frank Brangwyn. Our own 'Art' Study Day will fit the theme. New website on Arts & Crafts Movement: www.artsandcraftsmuseum.org.uk

Surbiton and District Bird Watching Society The Surbiton Bird Watchers still send us their programmes and Bulletin, plus the *Annual Bird Report*. The 2000 report is a 92-page book giving bird sightings over a 12 km square area, roughly in the middle of which lies Surbiton. Jefferies would have liked to know that on 2 January there was a Brambling in Oakdene Drive, Tolworth; on 29 January about 400 Fieldfare at Rushett Farm (which he must have walked over); on 22 February about 300 chaffinches there; and on 15 April the first cuckoo at Tolworth Court Farm. This monitoring of bird populations is of great importance and we value the links with Jefferies.

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society *Wiltshire Studies* (WANHS's scholarly journal) is just out, full, as usual, of interesting matter. Choose from 'Hedgehogs in Wiltshire', 'Anglo-Saxon Decapitation and Burial at Stonehenge', or 'Agriculture in Wiltshire in the First World War'. There is a brief account of excavations at Abbey Meads, Swindon, and another at Kingsdown Crematorium; Jefferies would have loved it. The Society is some thousands of pounds over spent, and is working hard at raising money. Ironically, thanks to huge donations from the V & A Fund, NACF and others, the museum has just acquired the Stanchester Hoard. It consists of

1,196 gold, silver, and bronze coins dating from AD 406. It sounds wonderful. Not yet on display.

Alliance of Literary Societies

The AGM of the ALS is being hosted by the Arnold Bennett Society this year and will be held at the George Hotel, Burslem on 27th April, commencing at 10.30. It is an ambitious programme with events also being held on Sunday 28th, including the showing of two films, visits to local places of interest, etc. I shall be attending on Saturday. For further information, please contact Helen Newman on 0121 423 2100.

RICHARD JEFFERIES SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

If you would like any of the following, please write to Ethelwyn Gregory, 40 Stratton Road, Princes Risborough, Bucks. HP27 9AX.

The Story of My Heart, paperback Quartet edition Picture postcard (watercolour of Liddington Hill) quotation from *The Story of My Heart* Picture postcard (quotation and photograph) Richard Jefferies & Old Town (guided walk) Richard Jefferies in Eltham Richard Jefferies in Surbiton Richard Jefferies & Coate Water (guided walk) A Jefferies Land itinerary Back numbers of the Journal



DATA PROTECTION ACT & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members' names and addresses are held on a computer database. 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, Robert McCloy and Andrew Rossabi. The drawing of the Ridgeway is by Joan Mearns. Other drawings are by Stan Hickerton. Helen Newman has done the typing. Printing and despatch by Margaret Evans and Phyllis Treitel. Website www.bath.ac.uk/~lissmc/rjeffs.htm