

Richard Jefferies' Fight with Thomas Jenner Baden plus information about the Baden family and Mary Rawlings

On 16 October 1871 Richard Jefferies wrote to his aunt in London. Among other matters he told her that he “was most brutally & cowardly assaulted the other day. I was much disfigured in the fact at first, and suffered a great deal of pain for a week, but it is now nearly well – except my hand which was much cut, & which I could not use at all for some days.”

The attack happened on 7 October. Jefferies charged his assailant, Thomas Jenner Baden¹ and John Smith with assault. The case was heard on Thursday 12 October and reported in the *Swindon Advertiser* of Monday 16 October (p.4). The report is likely to have been summarised by Jefferies himself.

The fight took place in Day House Lane near Badbury Wick. Day House Farm was tenanted by Mr Andrew Baden. He had two wives. By the second wife he had a daughter Jessie who later became RJ's wife. By the first wife Mr Baden had several children, of whom Thomas Jenner Baden was one. Baden was fourteen years older than RJ.

According to the newspaper account (see next page) Jefferies had walked to Liddington that Saturday evening, returning by Badbury Wick Lane. He met Baden and a man called John Smith. Baden greeted RJ. RJ said: “I want to know what you mean by going about the country blackening my character and that of a lady. I expect that you will apologise or withdraw the statement you made in a letter received by Miss W H Baden².” Baden replied “What letter there is no such letter.” RJ said that there was. Baden replied: “You are a liar then.” RJ said: “I have it under lock and key.” Baden offered to knock Jefferies' head off, seized him by the whiskers and punched him in the chest. This happened again so RJ punched Baden in the mouth and knocked him down. Baden got up, agreed to apologise over a drink at the Goddard Arms. RJ agreed and was about to walk away when Baden hit him in the eye. RJ knocked Baden down. Smith now intervened, urging Baden to fight on, which he did. Eventually the fighting stopped and Baden offered to write, apologising. He did not write – hence the court case. RJ was represented by William Ormond. The four magistrates included Horatio Nelson Goddard and Mr Calley. Mr Ormond and Baden's solicitor Mr Bartrum conferred. The result was that Baden agreed to express regret for the letter, provided it was proved to be untrue.

About what and whom the letter concerned was not reported. It might have been about Mary Rawlings who had once worked for the Badens as a servant. There is an allegation that Richard Jefferies fathered Mary's son Henry Woolford Rawlings – evidently Henry bore a striking resemblance to RJ and he went on to be a newspaper journalist. However, there is no proof and Henry is more likely to have been fathered by a Baden where there is a long history of the name “Henry” in the family, unlike the Woolfords or Jefferies' (Henry Jefferies, RJ's brother, is likely to have been named after a Gyde).

¹ Thomas Jenner Baden was baptised on 26/12/1834 (died in Swindon 1901) and was the third son of Andrew Baden's first marriage to Jane Choules (he later married Emma Smart - a servant at his home at Day House Farm – the mother of Jessie Baden). Thomas Baden was not living at the farm in 1871.

² Could this be M H Baden (Thomas's sister)? – Mary Hannah Baden (b.3/4/1826), still living at Day House Farm in 1871. There are no Miss WH Badens on the census around this time).

Thursday, October 12.

Magistrate present. David Archer, Esq. (chairman), H.N. Goddard. H. Calley, and H. Tucker, Esquires.

Thomas Jenner Baden and *John Smith* were charged with assaulting John Richard Jefferies, on the evening of the 7th of October. Mr. Osmond appeared for the complainant.

The case having been called, Mr Osmond said this was a somewhat [pointed] case should it be found necessary to proceed with it, but, acting on his instructions he begged to say that if the defendant would apologise for his conduct the case would be withdrawn.

The defendant, Mr. Baden, having refused to offer any apology, Mr. Osmond proceeded to state the facts of the case, which he purposed supporting by evidence.

The complainant, sworn, said He was a reporter living at Coate. On Saturday evening last he left home, going towards Liddington, and afterwards returned by Badbury Wick Lane, towards Day-house. When he entered the lane he saw Mr. Baden coming towards him. As they approached, Mr. Baden held a slight stick he had in his hand to his hat, as a salute, and stopped, and he (complainant) then stopped. Baden said "How do you do!" and he replied, "Oh, Mr. Baden, I want to know what you mean by going about the country and blackening my character and that of a lady. I expect that you will apologise or withdraw the statement you made in a letter received by Miss W H Baden³." He replied "What letter—there is no such letter." Complainant repeated that there was. Baden then said "you are a liar then." The complainant replied, "I have it under lock and key." Baden then defied him to produce it, and he answered he could do it at a proper time. Baden then said, he would knock his head off, and throwing the stick he had in his hand down, came towards him in a fighting attitude, and, seizing him by his whiskers by his left hand, struck him in the chest with his right hand. The second blow knocked him back a pace, and on recovering himself, Baden came at him again, and he then put himself on his defence and gave defendant a blow in the mouth, and knocked him down. On getting up Baden said, "that's allright Dick, you put me down fairly. I'll apologise. Here's my hand, and we'll go to the Goddard Arms and have a bottle of wine," to which he replied "very well," and thinking the matter settled, put his hand in his pockets, but before he had moved from the spot defendant gave him a violent blow in the eye which staggered him and blinded him with blood. Before he recovered himself, defendant struck a second blow, after which he again defended himself, and a second time knocked Baden down. At this time Smith came running up the lane shouting "go it, Baden, knock him down, fight it out." For a few moments Baden did not seem inclined to do this, but Smith continuing to urge him on, he took his coat off, and came at him again, striking him in the chest and caught hold of him in a wrestling manner, and they both fell on the bank by the side of the road. When they got up Baden again seemed inclined to give up, but on Smith again urging him, on he went a third time. On this, the complainant, called upon Smith to bear witness that Baden had struck him on that occasion without the least provocation. Baden again said he would apologise, to which the complainant said he would accept an apology in writing, but he had not since received the written apology.

At this point of the case the Magistrates retired. On returning into Court, the Chairman suggested that as it was very clear family matters of a disagreeable nature must almost if necessity be imported into the case if it was suffered to proceed, it would be better if the case was arranged. The Bench thought Mr. Baden should express regret for what had taken place, and thus settle the matter.

Mr. Baden said he could not apologise as he considered himself that he was the injured party.

Mr. Bartrum, who entered the room, said that he had been requested to appear on behalf of Mr. Baden, and he had no doubt if the case was adjourned for a time an amicable arrangement would be arrived at.

The case was accordingly adjourned for a time, and on its being called on again Mr. Osmond consented to withdraw on Mr. Baden expressing regret at having written the letter complained of, providing the information on which the letter was written was found to be untrue.

³ Could this be M H Baden (Thomas's sister)? – Mary Hannah Baden (b.3/4/1826), still living at Day House Farm in 1871. There are no Miss WH Badens on the census around this time).

Mary Ann Rawlings Born 1846 (Jan/Mar) at Chiseldon.

Parents: father - William b 2/3/1823 (Chiseldon) – died 23/5/1876 (Chiseldon); mother - Kezia Osman born 5/3/1824 in Chiseldon (bp 5/6/24) – her parents were Thompson & Sarah Osman (In 1851 she was a cook living in at Wood St, Swindon).

Grand-parents: John Rawlings b 7/9/1794 (Castle Eaton), Anne Brown 1799-1878 (Chiseldon). Gamekeeper at Hodson.

Brothers and sisters: John 1845; William 1848; James 1849.

In 1851, Mary was living with her grand-parents at Hodson. In the 1861 census Mary is living at Coate with her grandparents John & Anne Rawlings.

Her illegitimate son: Henry Woolford Rawlings was born in Dec 1866 & bp. 10/3/1867, Chiseldon.

In the 1871 census Mary is still living at Coate with her son aged 4 and grandmother Anne Rawlings.

By the 1881 census Mary had married John Woolford (bp. 9 July 1827; beer-keeper at the Spotted Cow Inn at Coate (featured in *Greene Ferne Farm*) & formerly a farmer at Snodshill Farm) where Henry Rawlings was now adopted by John Woolford (renamed Henry Woolford (aged 14)). Their children (all born in Chiseldon): Alice: 1874; (Emily) Annie: 1876; William: 1878; Mary; 1881. Daughter Ellen was born 1886. John Woolford died on 22 February 1888.

By the 1891 census, Mary (now 55) was still living at the Spotted Cow Inn but with a new husband – Daniel Smith (aged 44 - bp. 25 July 1858 Aldbourne) as inn keeper.

By the 1901 census Mary and Daniel Smith were still running the Spotted Cow Inn (along with Mary's children: Emily A Woolford aged 25, William Woolford: 23, Mary 20 & Ellen 15) with John Brunsden as a boarder aged 69 (the Brunsden family worked at Snodshill at one time).

Edward Thomas interviewed Mary Smith whilst researching for *Richard Jefferies: his Life & Work* (London: Hutchinson, 1909). According to Phyllis Treitel, Jessie Jefferies was reluctant to speak to Thomas about her husband when she learnt that he had interviewed Mary who had worked as a servant in the Baden household when

Jessie was living there. According to Andrew Rossabi, Mary was the model for Bevis's "Polly the milkmaid".

Henry (Rawlings) Woolford (Mary's son)

Born in Dec 1866 & bp. 10/3/1867, Chiseldon.

Mother: Mary Rawlings Father: ????

On the 1891 census, Henry Woolford (aged 24) is living at Coate (now a newspaper reporter) with the head: Henry Baden (b. 1825 at Wanborough – nephew of Andrew Baden – Jessie Jefferies' father) and Elizabeth Ruth Baden (aged 21). The census records that Henry Woolford is Henry Baden's grandson (this is either an error on the part of the census or true – in which case he was not Richard Jefferies' illegitimate child). Elizabeth is recorded as Henry Baden's daughter (grand-daughter?).

On the 1901 census, Henry Woolford has married Elizabeth Baden and is still working as a journalist/author (living at 30 Prospect Hill, Swindon) whilst Henry Baden (Andrew Baden's nephew) is now lodging with the couple.

John Woolford

Born 9 July 1827 (Bp 9/8/1827 Chiseldon)

Parents: John (b 1793) who farmed 115 acres at Snodshill in 1861 and Sarah (b.1790 – died before 1861?) Woolford

Brother: William (b. 1825) Sister: Mary (b. 1829)

Married Mary Rawlings (see above).

Died 22 February 1888.

Richard Jefferies lived with John Woolford at Snodshill Farm October 1870. He writes to Aunt Ellen about the housekeeper – Mary Hibblewhite born in 1836 Liddiard Millicent. On the 1871 census there is also mention of a servant, Harriet Keen (b. 1854 Liddington Wick). By 1881 he was the inn keeper at the Spotted Cow, Coate.

William Baden (b. 1767 - Chiseldon) married Mary Vennel (b. 1771 – Laycock?) on 4 Nov 1792 at Chiseldon. Children: Edmund, Elizabeth, John, William, Mary & Andrew. The following two sons are of interest:

1 **Andrew Baden (yeoman) 1795-1864** (Jessie Jefferies' father)

Day House Farm, 230 acres

Born bp 3/11/1795 Chiseldon

Married 1. Jane Choules (b. 1801) on 15 January 1816. Buried on 23 October 1854). She is on the 1841 census but not on the 1851 census for Day House.
2. Emma Smart born 1826 at Liddington (father John was a builder) on 25 October 1851 at Little Hinton, Wilts. Emma was a servant at Day House (1851 census)

Buried 30/7/1864

Children of Andrew Baden and Jane Choules (1800-1854 bd 23.10.54)

Emma Jane	bp 11.9.1818 – in census as deaf and dumb. Unmarried
Ann	bp 6.9.1820
Andrew	bp 6.5.1822
William	b. 3/4/1826 - a Lifeguard. Married Maria. Died June 1873.
Mary Hannah	b. 3/4/1826 – died Dec 1907 in Swindon. Unmarried teacher.
Adelaide	b. 9/7/1830 bp 31/12/1830. Died March 1900 at Chiseldon? Married Edwin Ing (born 1831) in Sep 1855.
Elizabeth	b 18/3/1832 – bp 4/10/1833, set up school in Northampton. Unmarried. By 1901, retired - living at the home of her brother-in-law, Edwin Ing at The Mound, Swindon.
Thomas Jenner	bp 26/12/1834 . Died in Swindon March 1901. His godfather Thomas Jenner provided for him. Engine fitter. Married.
Edmund Benjamin	b 1836

Children of Andrew Baden and Emma Smart (1826-Dec 1873)

Jessie	b. 2/2/1853 d. 12/7/1926 –married Richard Jefferies the author on 8/7/1874
Fanny	bp. 3/9/1854 d. circa 1913-15
Walter	bp 2/8/1857. d. Sep 1911. Married Ruth Susannah. 1891 living in Wroughton with wife, sons: Andrew (10), Charles A (7), Walter (4); daughters: Francis M (9), Mabel (5) and Leah (1).
Alice	bp 16/10/1859
John Andrew	b 1863 Railway Clerk

Servants recorded on the censuses:

In 1851	Emma Smart
In 1861	Ann Jefferies born Wanborough (18 years old)
In 1871	Sarah Ann Ovens born Goatacre, Wilts (20 yrs)
	Mary Ann Hatton born Garsden, Wilts (17 yrs)

Mary Rawlings could have been a servant at Day House Farm in the 1860s – she lived close-by with her grandparents.

2 WILLIAM BADEN (bp 30 May 1793 at Chiseldon, died 30/11/1871) married ANN REEVES (b. 1794 at Draycott Foliat to 17/5/1875 daughter of John Hany Reeves) on 11 April 1815

Their children appear to have been born in Wanborough: Henry (1825), Francis (1828), Andrew (1830 – NOT Jessie's father), Louisa (1831), James (1835), Edwin (1845)

HENRY BADEN (c 1825)

Married on 28/4/1842 at Brinkworth, Wilts

Wife: Elizabeth R Ayliffe (1817-1888)

Born in Somerford

Children of Henry & Elizabeth Ayliffe:

William (1843)

Ellen (1845)

George (1846) – b. Wanborough

Harry (1848-1898) – b. Wanborough

Francis (1852 Stratton) m Eliza Hazell

Elizabeth (1854)

Emily Jane (1856 Stratton) m Richard Pearce (1862)

Ruth (1860 Stratton)

2 grandchildren are listed living with Henry & Elizabeth on 1871 census:

(Elizabeth ?) Amelia Baden (b. Dec 1867 Stratton)

Elizabeth Ruth Baden (b. Dec 1869 Stratton) who later marries HENRY WOOLFORD (Mary Rawlings illegitimate son) between 1891 & 1901.

HENRY (Rawlings) WOOLFORD

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On the 1901 census, Henry Woolford has married Elizabeth Baden and is still working as a journalist/author (living at 30 Prospect Hill, Swindon) whilst Henry Baden (Andrew Baden's nephew) is now lodging with the couple.