Rural History (2005) **16**, 1, 83–93. © *2005 Cambridge University Press*
doi:10.1017/S0956793304001311 Printed in the United Kingdom

The Land that Richard Jefferies Inherited

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Abstract This article comprises the annual Birthday Lecture of the Richard Jefferies Society as it was delivered in October, 2004. The text sketches the economic, social and environmental history of Jefferies' period (the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s), drawing *inter alia* on his works and referring especially to his home district in north-east Wiltshire. It alludes, firstly, to the fortunes and environmental effects of both intensive and 'tumbledown' arable farming. Second, it describes the creation of sporting estates and the letting of sporting rights as swift responses by some landowners to falling cereal prices. Third, the text points to under-investment in education and non-agricultural activities as hampering adjustment to the depression, and shows that Jefferies was a free trader who grasped that rapid and extensive food importation and labour emigration would have been a proper response. A related paper, Eric L. Jones, 'Richard Jefferies' Writing Criticised and Defended', is to appear in the Richard Jefferies Society *Journal* in April, 2005.

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Edward Thomas said that for the youthful Richard Jefferies the land was 'alive with the dead'.[1] It was also dead with the dead. The poet Peter Levi demonstrates in his *The Flutes of Autumn* what is plain on reflection, that 'it is intolerably sad to read the British countryside'.[2] Jefferies had beaten him to it, writing in *The Gamekeeper at Home* that, 'it would be difficult to find an acre of ground that has not been stained with blood . . . Everywhere under the flowers are the dead'.[3] Jefferies Land, subjectively attractive as most of us find it, was and is the unintended product of actual violence, inefficient economic processes and what in any other English-speaking country would be recognised as grotesque social inequities.

What I want to do in this lecture is to set Richard Jefferies in the context of change in the agricultural countryside during his period, in the hope of understanding his writings and abilities better. Consider where he sits in the stream of time. I can just touch his day by virtue of having talked to farmers who could remember as small boys the harvest of 1879, when the wheat came home 'sopping like manure', and Jefferies could touch the Napoleonic period because he listened to the tales of 'old Jonathan' at Draycott Foliatt.[4] Napoleonic times were indeed closer to him than his time is to us. It seems reasonable to treat the social and economic changes throughout the entire nineteenth century as accessible to him either through direct observation or the 'proxy of his own ancestors'.

I do not intend, however, to describe the savageries of the early nineteenth century. They are well known. 'It was as common to see man-traps at the ironmongers' doors

during my time as it is now to see spades exposed for sale', was written at the end of the century about the early years.[5] Transportation was not abolished until 1868 – *after* Jefferies had begun work. Nevertheless, society had by then somewhat calmed down, because the economy was growing. It was certainly repressive but relative to the early nineteenth century it had become orderly. People earned a little more and Jefferies could note in the 1880s that the health of villagers had improved within memory.[6] The adults around him when he grew up could easily remember appalling times and he heard all about them, but he grew into personal consciousness in years that were by comparison merely harsh.

I

One reason for the continued social inequities was that landownership was grotesquely unequal. In 1873 over half of England was in estates of more than a thousand acres owned by only one in every 2,081 people. Four-fifths of the British Isles were owned by just seven thousand individuals; only Austria-Hungary and Romania had such an unequal distribution. Moreover, as was said by David Ricardo (himself a landowner who is buried in Wiltshire), 'the interest of the landlord is always opposed to the interest of every other class in the community'.[7] Magistrates even adjudicated on cases involving their own estates.

In rural southern England escape from landowner domination was not ordinarily possible. 'Open villages' did offer a little freedom since cottages could be rented there from small proprietors who could not and did not police the parish. The Sarsen of *The Amateur Poacher* was one such; according to Jefferies it was 'liberty, equality, and swearing' (p. 247). Presumably Sarsen was Chisledon, which certainly looks like an open village for all the plaques to the landowning Calley family in the church. The Okebourne of *Great Estate* was also apparently Chisledon. A tradesman in such a place might be moderately free, 'partly liberated by the nature of his calling from the despotism of his superiors' opinions', as Le Quesne puts it in his book on another Wiltshire author of Jefferies' day, Francis Kilvert.[8]

The estate system as a whole was not truly self-sustaining and many, perhaps most, landowners were really *rentiers*. The system depended on injections of capital originally from high office, service at court, colonial extortion, slave plantations, trade or industry, and the money was often passed across through marriages with what J. K. Stanford referred to as 'vacant heiresses'. Absolute levels of income were high for the bigger landowners simply because they held such vast tracts of country, while the rent share of national income was protected by tariffs on imports of foreign grain until the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. As we shall see, it was also buffered *afterwards* because the feared floods of imported grain did not materialise for over thirty years. And if, despite everything, the rate of return on land was lower than the industrial or commercial alternatives, there were the compensations of political influence and the amenities of country life.

Only a minority of landowners engaged vigorously in agriculture. Two exceptions who must have come within Jefferies' ken lay just over what was then the Berkshire border. One was the Australian who revamped the Buscot estate but went bust in the depression,

though not before he had installed an industrial-scale distillery. The other was the Earl of Radnor who built the nearby model farm at Coleshill. In *Hodge* a classic 'improver' who made equivalent improvements, such as laying down a railway round the estate, is described at length; I would like to know whether Campbell of Buscot or Lord Radnor were men our author had in mind.

The period on which Jefferies could draw personally was the Golden Age, at the period when its sun was setting, and the early years of the depression, when the incessant rain was starting. The Golden Age is the standard label for the relative prosperity between about 1853 and 1873. This period was when the countryside was at its most crowded. At many seasons there were gangs of people in the fields and moving about the countryside. The coppices had workers in them during the winter months, making the enormous number of hurdles with which to pen sheep, and there were other woodmen at all seasons. The woods today are less disturbed, otherwise we would not be seeing an explosive growth in the population of roe deer.

In Jefferies' most formative years product prices were only gradually favouring livestock farming; there was as yet neither a supply of overseas grain to ship to Britain nor the transport to bring in a volume sufficient to extinguish cereal growing here. Arable farming was thus unexpectedly given a generation's lease of life after the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. There was a refinement of mixed farming rotations that alternated cereal crops and fodder crops (roots or clover) in ever more complicated versions of the stereotypical Norfolk four-course. The rotations were often amended in detail, partly to stave off crop diseases induced by intensive farming. Sheep were hurdled to feed off the fodder crops and their dung manured the land for the following grain crops. Whichever category, cereals or livestock, made most money in any given year compensated for the less profitable.[9] The incentive remained to plough more and more of the grass downs, level earthworks and eradicate trees and hedges.

Although I believe the system was under ecological strain, this arrangement coped with alternate fluctuations in the prices of cereals and livestock products. But the system cracked apart when cheap grain imports arrived in the late 1870s. The chalk downs began to revert to sheep pasture, which snuffed out many arable farmers and meant a steeply falling demand for labour. The biggest local entrepreneur of the depression era was Henry Wilson, a Ramsbury butcher, who threw thirty farms together and ran sheep.[10] Contrary to much received opinion, this change was a very good thing overall: the price of a loaf fell, to the benefit of the health and well being of most people in England. There had been nothing Merrie about a life of labouring for a farm worker's pittance or about living in small cottages that were often damp and usually insanitary.[11] Jefferies saw the start of the change. Edward Thomas noted the shift in his views in favour of farm labour, over the tipping point of the depression, between *Hodge* in 1880 and the publication of *The Story of my Heart* in 1883.

According to the Environment Agency, modern farming produces less value than it destroys. But all the needless horrors of the modern landscape were present in Jefferies' young days, in embryo if you like, but indisputably. As Jefferies put it, 'the wicked turnip is responsible for the destruction of old England'.[12] And as Thomas Hughes had one of his characters say, the farmers would 'plough and sow turnips on their fathers' graves',

destroying the earthworks as they went.[13] He had particularly in mind the Lincolnshire improver at Seven Barrows on the Lambourn Downs, only a few miles east of Coate. The destruction of archaeological sites was then infinitely less apparent than their subsidised obliteration today but Jefferies knew of many tumuli that had been ploughed out.[14] Farmers did not lack the desire to press their activities to modern limits, all they lacked was the technology.

While the depression somewhat rescued the downland from assaults by the plough, Jefferies recorded offsetting changes in the vale, where farms were going over to selling greater volumes of liquid milk instead of making butter and cheese. The rough and wet places, rich with thistles, rushes and grasses, were grubbed up and drained to produce hay.[15] Wildlife and wild flowers suffered on the clays just when they were recovering from the previous ploughing and clearing of the downs. It is Orwellian doublespeak to think that farmers have ever been tender towards the environment. They are small or medium-sized businessmen and, as Jefferies' near-contemporary, Prince Kropotkin (b. 1842) said, to them a field is a roofless factory.[16]

The advantage of the countryside that Jefferies inherited, relative to the earlier world of the Corn Laws and our later one of the Common Agricultural Policy, was that farm incomes were not subsidised by the consumer or taxpayer. This contrasts with the present day, when almost forty per cent of gross farm receipts are direct transfers from tax-payers' pockets and an employee of English Nature has suggested that more houses should be built in the countryside because their gardens might save wildlife from the devastation agriculture is causing.[17] After the Repeal of the Corn Laws, the Victorians more sensibly learned to let markets adjust to cheaper imported grain. An unnecessarily dear loaf was not politically feasible then and the labourers whom Jefferies saw were not obliged, as we are, to pay half as much again as the world market price for their food. This was just as well, because although Jefferies notes that they were better off and healthier than a generation earlier (thanks to a fraction of them starting to leave the land), their real standard of living remained abysmal.[18]

II

If the systems of landowning and farming were not efficient by economic or technological criteria, it is hardly surprising that they failed to support a fair or efficient society. The biggest acreage of Berkshire in the hands of a single family belonged to the Cravens but this leading family never had interests much beyond horses, hounds or mistresses. It was increasingly joined by other landowners, though perhaps not all could afford the tariff of a Harriette Wilson.[19] John Betjeman claims that 'most country house libraries stop at the end of George IV's reign, except for the addition of sporting books and works of reference on husbandry, law and pedigree of family and livestock'.[20] William Beckford, later of Fonthill in southern Wiltshire, had been advised as early as 1783 to suppress writings in which, exceptionally for the date, he displayed a hatred of blood sports, for fear this might prejudice the House of Commons against him.[21] Blood sports were already a fetish and external sources of income plus agricultural protection enabled many landowners to subordinate farming to sport.

Hence Jefferies inherited a landscape that was already remodelled for hunting, shooting and fishing as much as for farming. Great extents of land had been altered to suit the fox. The fox-hunter, Thomas Assheton Smith, enormously rich on the proceeds of Welsh slate quarries, had turned Andover into a timber mart in 1828 when his men sliced rides through the woods. Like those who imitated him, Smith compensated by planting shelter belts and hill top copses. Pheasant *battues* became the glories of shooting estates. The number of keepers rose, with dire consequences for anything with a hooked beak. River banks were half cleared to make room for casting fishing flies without entirely removing the shade trees that trout prefer. Jefferies was quick to write on the ecological consequences of the dense stocking of both trout and pheasants.[22] Victorian developments in the style and technology of the various sports are well known. As we see them today they have virtually ossified in the approved forms of the period. The rules were thoroughly artificial and demanded expensive equipment, which kept out the *hoi polloi*.

The extent to which land was given over to sporting uses amazed foreign visitors. 'Doubly precious is land in England, and yet so much of it is given to parks and pleasure-grounds . . .' remarked the American walker and naturalist, John Burroughs, in 1884.[23] The concomitant was its fierce protection against trespass and poaching. The suggestion has been made that the harshness with which river poachers had been treated early in the century tailed off, possibly because landowners decided on reflection that going easy was a bit safer than risking another Labourers' Revolt or, worse, a revolution like the French.[24]

This interpretation perhaps reflects the following factors: labour had started to leave the land during the Golden Age; a proportion of the most active poachers had already been transported or gaoled; there was incessant propaganda of the 'keep us in our proper station' type about the sanctity of property and the inevitability of the existing wealth and income distribution; and the incentive to take the risk of being caught may have waned once real wages had risen a little. In addition, before the depression, landowners found the level of farm rents acceptable and did not continue to turn their estates over to sporting uses as energetically as they had done earlier in the century. During the late nineteenth century depression this altered. For instance, gentlemen could no longer get a day's free fishing for the asking. The transition from arable farming and relatively casual sport into a commercialised sporting landscape negated the gains of access and environmental interest that the arable slump might otherwise have brought to the public. Free trade offered a chance to relax pressure on the environment and open the countryside to everybody but the opportunity was squandered by cashing in on blood sports.

Gamekeepers and other estate employees were in greater demand: in my own family, eight Joneses were working in the 1880s as keepers on the Craven estate at Ashdown and as far afield as York and Carmarthen. The demand for estate hands was, of course, insufficient to offset the shrinkage of farm work. It is possible therefore that poaching increased again because of rural unemployment and that campaigns against poachers intensified because game and fish were becoming more valuable to their owners. In 1884 Jefferies wrote a sardonic piece called 'Shooting Poachers' in which he claimed that poachers armed with old muzzle loaders were battling it out in the woods with keepers, and farmers' sons who had joined in for the sport, all armed with six-shooters.[25] Using

revolvers meant the purpose was shooting poachers; revolvers were not dual-purpose weapons like shotguns.

On the rivers, fishing rights certainly became more valuable and houses were built for the express purpose of selling or letting to fly-fishermen. The building of the railways facilitated access from London and the final phase of excluding villagers from fishing on the chalk streams began. More training stables occupied land made cheap by arable farming's decline. Meanwhile, 'game itself – meaning live game - has become a marketable commodity, bought and sold very much as one might buy a standing crop of wheat'.[26] Geographers would call this a transition from a landscape of production to a landscape of consumption, though southern England had long been a bit of both.

Jefferies waxes eloquent about all this, observing that even poor land close to towns could be made to pay if it were keepered, supplied with a 'box' for temporary residence, and let for shooting.[27] He describes the owners of small estates building up disproportionately large stocks of game attended by keepers, and adding extra rooms, billiard rooms, conservatories and a range of modern stabling to their homesteads. 'The object, of course, is to let the house, the home farm, and the shooting for the season; including facilities for following the hunt.'

In 1900, George Dewar wrote that, 'partridge and pheasant shooting, like trout fishing, has increased distinctly in value within the last five-and-twenty years, which indicates how quick off the mark Jefferies had been to spot the trend in 1880. Furthermore:

> Some Hampshire landowners and farmers now try to make up by game what they have lost by the fall in the value of wheat and live stock. A great many 'shoots' are let for the season to Londoners, who not only help to keep the farmer going . . . but also bring a little custom to the local inn and to the people who let out conveyances.[28]

Accordingly, there is nothing new in our world, where farmhouses with a few paddocks are being sold as residences and others are sold with the sporting rights but without the farmland.[29] Outsiders are again buying up arable farms within a few miles of Coate in order to amass shooting estates where the cropping is all spring corn, the stubbles are left for pheasants in the autumn and thus no disturbance from ploughing takes place at that season.

On Cotswold, J. Arthur Gibbs reported in 1898:

> Now that farming is no longer remunerative, the whole country seems to be given up to hunting. Depend upon it, it is this sport alone that circulates money through this deserted land . . . farms are to be had for the asking, rent free; but nobody will take them, and the country is rapidly going back to its original uncultivated state.[30]

Hunting, shooting and fishing became obsessive social rituals. Jefferies must have seen or known of Charles Brooke, second Rajah of Sarawak, who every winter rented Chesterton House, Cirencester, for the hunting. Brooke seduced quite a few of his neighbours' wives, keeping a diary about his affairs in bad French. He lost an eye as the result of a hunting accident and marched straight from the hospital into the nearest taxidermist to buy a handful of glass eyes: tiger, leopard, albatross.[31]

The urban upper middle classes and professionals were growing in numbers and their desire for status turned them towards the fashionable sports of their betters. For these

they could afford to pay. The corporate hospitality that now underwrites shooting and fishing, if not hunting, was foreshadowed in the form of a countryside reshaped for renting out to sporting incomers, although, unlike us, Jefferies did not inhabit a land where half the bag from shoots is bulldozed into burial pits.

Sport was stylised and as we see it today has become an example of cultural lag: the apparatus, dress-codes and behavioural forms of pheasant shooting, fly-fishing and hunting, were Victorian developments from more casual, personal, and technologically less advanced methods. The classic example is the difference between Colonel Hawker, who trailed after individual pheasants at Longparish near Andover to get a shot, and his successors who by Jefferies' day slaughtered waves of pheasants driven over them by beaters. Whereas Hawker shot any species that took his fancy, including starlings going to roost in the reeds of Alresford Pond, Jefferies inhabited a world where pot-hunting was *infra dig*. Weedy fields characteristic of declining investment in agriculture were highly suitable for pheasants. Between 1867 and 1923, the Marquess of Ripon killed over half a million head of game, including 200,000 pheasants, and was reputed to roll about in the cart full of the dead birds at the end of the day.[32]

The intensification of shooting and increase in the density of keepering meant that potential competitors and predators on game birds were relentlessly shot or trapped. My great-grandfather's cousin shot an eagle at Ashdown and his brother, the keeper at Hodson in the time of Alfred Williams and Kate Tryon, shot blackbirds because they disturbed the pheasants.[33]

III

When arable farming and the trades dependent on it went into their long decline from the 1870s, the community lacked resilience. Farm workers had few other skills and even less education. Limited education hindered labour mobility. Emigration to the towns or overseas was the best option but to take place on any scale among people with little access to information it awaited feedback from the pioneers. Jacob Baker, whose account of the hardships of his life at Hodson was published in the *Devizes Gazette* in 1850, emigrated the next year and the year after that wrote home from South Australia, 'we have a goint of fresh meet on our table everey day . . . we do not put tea in the pot with a tea-spuoan, but with the hand! . . . This is the countrey, my boys.'[34] But for the next quarter of a century things looked up a little bit at home and it was in any case a brave move to go so far. Mrs Haughton tells the tale of a woman, leaving for Australia, who was pestered by her children as to what going down to the sea in ships would entail. All she could do was to send them to look at the narrow boats on the canal, presumably at Pewsey Wharf.[35]

Peter Lindert shows that under-investment in primary education is the biggest barrier to economic development and that everywhere around the world elite rule typically fails to invest enough in it.[36] Contrary to British mythology, Britain began to slip back in the nineteenth century and funded primary schooling less than some other countries with lower average incomes. Village schoolteachers' diaries show children continually taken out of school for potato picking and similar jobs, farmers' interests coming first, they being the school governors.

Few new jobs were created in rural southern England outside estate work or domestic service. Capital was substantially in the hands of landed proprietors who had never invested much locally except in agriculture and the creation of pleasure grounds. Farm incomes were falling and it was useless to look to most farmers for fresh enterprise. Housing provision was deplorable and sanitation was conspicuous by its absence.[37] Modern villages, with their abundant private transport, access to the world through the internet, and old cottages thrown in twos and threes into single, glamorised dwellings can only romanticise our vision of the past. Some original houses have vanished because they were too flimsy to survive. Others were removed as substandard in the rural slum clearance programme of the 1930s – consider what substandard must have meant then in a country which still has over one million houses officially condemned!

The subjective attractions of Jefferies Land were always the unintended consequence of economic and social failure and what we see of them today is the sanitised residue.[38] The market towns escaped development until the present transformation of, say, Overborough-Marlborough into Dorking because their economic function was eroded by the decline of the arable farming around them and the failure of their businesspeople to devise alternatives. The district had long been, at least in part, a 'landscape of consumption' sucking in money from London and subordinating some of its agricultural potential to sport. This process was intensified from the 1870s. Overall Jefferies' Land was a low productivity countryside almost everywhere except in Brunel's Swindon: it was a landscape of failure. This is why, despite continued landscape destruction, it has remained a treasure chest stuffed full of relicts from earlier periods. There has not been vigorous enough development to obliterate all of them. It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.

This failure was not a foregone conclusion. Southern England never lacked capital, at least in the hands of a landed class repeatedly recruiting incomers; historically it did not lack inventiveness; nor, strictly speaking, did it lack natural resources.[39] The deficit was the absence of a local venture capital market. Although capital was brought in by merchants and so forth when they bought estates or succeeded in co-opting one of J. K. Stanford's 'vacant heiresses', their spare funds seem to have been deposited outside the region again, in London commerce, northern industry, or increasingly in the overseas empire. Meanwhile the primary resources, the people, were allowed to rust out. Jefferies recorded the onset of this process, which ended a dozen years after his death with a crowd of idle men kicking their heels under the elm tree in the square at Ramsbury.[40]

IV

It must seem cruel or paradoxical that what was taking place in Jefferies' later years was a more rational international division of labour. Britain specialised in industry and services (and liquid milk production) while other countries, better fitted for the purpose, supplied the grain and (once refrigeration came in) the meat. Trade between Britain and the 'Neo-Europes' was much to the benefit of both.[41] Protecting the growing of cereals in England would have been irrational. Protection always means taxing someone and in the case of bread the tax would have fallen most heavily on the poorest in society, for whom staple foodstuffs represent a higher proportion of household outgoings than they

do for the better off. That inefficient option had prevailed under the old Corn Laws and has been imposed again under the Common Agricultural Policy. Jefferies was fortunate to live in an interlude.

Unfortunately, adjustment to the new circumstances of his day was inadequate. Resources were not reallocated to other occupations fast enough. Agricultural labourers were unable to leave the industry at due speed. At first they can scarcely have understood what was happening. Although Jefferies was soon to grasp the essentials, too few labourers had access to his works or could have read them if they had. Most could not change their jobs and hope to go on living locally. Most were not equipped to do well in the cities or northern industry; the railways and police took only the most able, creating an aristocracy of labour which by definition was small.

Few options remained except emigration. Jefferies said that people were 'discovering by slow degrees that no organization can compel, or create a demand for labour at any price, there are now signs on the one hand of acquiescence, and on the other of partial emigration'.[42] The bolder individuals took their chance, including some of Jefferies own close kin who went to Texas and New Zealand. A Meyrick from Ramsbury had much earlier written from Australia, 'those Ramsbury fools may starve at home'. Now whole groups were positively driven to take the plunge, for instance there were schemes to help people from Ramsbury and Aldbourne migrate to Patagonia. Arch's union helped others move to Queensland and New Zealand.[43] Alfred Williams remarked that the Aldbourne men 'go not so much to the towns as to the colonies, which is a mark of courage in them', though it may merely indicate a preference for remaining on the land wherever it might be. No-one pretends that the sea voyages were pleasant or that life was always easy in new, raw lands: a Brazilian government emigration scheme led to many deaths and the sarcastic Mr Meyrick himself drowned while droving sheep across a river in Australia.

No doubt, too, but that many lived homesick in overseas exile, dreaming of England however many handfuls of tea they could afford to throw into the pot. The vast majority, however, had no wish to come back or for their children to do so. Why should they have wanted to return? In 1911 Fred Thacker met in the pub at Little Bedwyn two of the broadest-shouldered young men he had ever seen together, brothers from Ramsbury home on holiday after eight years working in Canada, to which they had gone a mere sixteen years after Jefferies' death.[44] They were profoundly impressed by the deterioration of the district, with men loafing in harvest time, cottages pulled down, the population scantier, and the very malt-houses in disuse. *They* were not going to come back for longer than a summer vacation.

International trade now enabled Britain to import food and export manufactures, which for most people offered the well-known benefits of trade. Yet the withdrawal of resources from agriculture was not fast enough to offer the full benefits to workers in the arable sector. Investment in social infrastructure was far too low for the labour market to work well. One indicator of low labour mobility and poor education was the survival of thick local dialects, again something romanticised by middle-class observers who neither think nor care that this commonly restricts full social participation. Perhaps uniquely among rural writers, Richard Jefferies spotted both the problem and the solution. In his essay, 'The Idle Earth', probably written between 1884 and 1887, he said:

It is a question whether the millions of money at present sunk in agriculture are not a dead loss to the country; whether they could not be far more profitably employed in developing manufacturing industries, or in utilizing for home consumption the enormous resources of Southern America and Australasia; whether we should not get more to eat, and cheaper, if such was the case . . . It is questionable whether the million or so of labourers . . . and the thousands of young farmers . . . would not return a far larger amount of good to the world and to themselves if, instead of waiting for the idle earth at home to bring forth, they were transported bodily to the broad savannahs and prairies, and were sending to the mother-country innumerable shiploads of meat and corn.[45]

Notes

1. Edward Thomas, *Richard Jefferies* (London, 1978), p. 7.
2. Peter Levi, *The Flutes of Autumn* (London, 1983), p. 95.
3. Richard Jefferies, *The Gamekeeper at Home* (Oxford, 1978), p. 52. For the present contribution I also read the remaining four of the five works which are the core of Jefferies' oeuvre: *Wildlife in a Southern County* (London, 1949), *Hodge and his Masters* (London, 1946), *Round About a Great Estate* (Bradford-on-Avon, 1987), and *The Amateur Poacher* (Oxford, 1978). In addition I read two collections of his essays: *The Hills and the Vale* (London, 1909) and *Landscape with Figures* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1983).
4. Cf. the man at Langley Burrell, twenty miles from Coate, who in 1870 told Francis Kilvert's father that he could remember the news coming of the execution of the French king in 1793 (A. L. Le Quesne, *After Kilvert* (Oxford, 1978), p. 147). Kilvert (1849–1879) was a near-contemporary of Jefferies who also grew up in Wiltshire.
5. George Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window: Recollections of a Midland Town before the Railway Age* (Oxford, 1948), p. 126.
6. Jefferies, *Wildlife*, p. 132.
7. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, 'Political Losers as a Barrier to Economic Development', *American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings* 90:2 (2000), 128–9.
8. Le Quesne, *After Kilvert*, p. 100.
9. E. L. Jones, *Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 191–210.
10. Barbara Croucher, *The Village in the Valley: A History of Ramsbury* (Ramsbury, 1986), p. 157.
11. I do not deny that the inhabitants of such places came to love them. Mr. Mervyn Penney tells me that Daniel Cook, the Aldbourne wheelwright and undertaker, buried the last male inhabitant of Snap and went back out of the goodness of his heart to fetch the widow, whom he housed in a cottage in Aldbourne; she hated it because, as she said, she did not have the birds and foxes to watch.
12. Jefferies, *Great Estate*, p. 19; see also *Wildlife*, p. 53.
13. Thomas Hughes, *The Scouring of the White Horse* (London, 1892), pp. 69–70, and Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (London, 1906), p. 9. For other examples see E. L. Jones, 'Land Utilization Change and Weather Conditions on the Marlborough Downs ca. 1500–1960' in A. J. Cain and J. D. Currey, 'Area Effects in *Cepaea*', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 246 (1963), pp. 30–31.
14. Jefferies, *Wildlife*, p. 73.
15. Jefferies, *Hodge*, p. 323. See also *Wildlife*, pp. 236, 312.
16. Jefferies, *Amateur Poacher*, p. 279. See also *The Hills and the Vale*, p. 207.
17. For the scale of modern transfers, *Financial Times* 11th June 2004.
18. Jones, *Agriculture*, pp. 211–33.
19. Frances Wilson, *The Courtesan's Revenge: Harriette Wilson, The Woman Who Blackmailed the King* (London, 2003), on Lord Craven and his circle.
20. John Betjeman, *Guide to English Parish Churches* (London, 1993), p. 44.

21. Frank R. Heath, *Wiltshire* (London, 1919), p. 153.
22. Hugoe Matthews and Phyllis Treitel, *The Forward Life of Richard Jefferies: A Chronological Study* (Boars Hill, Oxford, 1994), p. 160.
23. John Burroughs, *Fresh Fields* (Boston, 1885), p. 111.
24. Tony Hayter, *F. M. Halford and the Dry-Fly Revolution* (London, 2002), especially p. 29. Le Quesne, *After Kilvert*, p. 148, takes a not dissimilar view that the fear of a revolution, French-style, had meant gradually better treatment of the poor, though the savagery with which the mobs of 1830 were treated and the cruelty of the 1836 new poor law unions may argue against him.
25. Jefferies, 'Shooting Poachers', in *Landscape with Figures*, pp. 276–80.
26. Jefferies, *Hodge*, p. 36.
27. Jefferies, *Gamekeeper*, pp. 36–9; *Amateur Poacher*, pp. 277–8.
28. George A. B. Dewar, *Hampshire with the Isle of Wight* (London, 1900), p. 258.
29. *The Independent*, 1st November 2003.
30. J. Arthur Gibbs, *A Cotswold Village* (London, 1923 edition, first published 1898).
31. Cassandra Pybus, *White Rajah: A Dynastic Intrigue* (St. Lucia, Qld., 1996), p. 189.
32. E. L. Jones, 'Victorian Field Sport and Field Science', *Biology and Human Affairs* 43:2 (1978), p. 34.
33. The eagle was displayed in Newbury Museum until irretrievably disposed of a few years ago. For the blackbirds, see Kate Tryon, *Adventures in The Vale of the White Horse* (unpublished typescript of 1910 in possession of the Richard Jefferies Society, p. 160).
34. Quoted in Mark Baker, 'Aspects of the Life of the Wiltshire Agricultural Labourer, c1850', *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine* 74/75 (1981), p. 162.
35. Mrs. Haughton, *In a Wiltshire Valley* (London, 1879), p. 57.
36. Peter H. Lindert, 'Voice and Growth: Was Churchill Right?' *Journal of Economic History* 63:2 (2003), 317, 330.
37. I was told by a former chairman of Latton parish council that there were still houses there without indoor sanitation as recently as the 1980s.
38. For a similar conclusion see 'In Love with Economic Disaster', *The Spectator* 9th August 2003.
39. E. L. Jones, 'The Constraints on Economic Growth in Southern England, 1650–1850' *Contributions* V, Third International Conference of Economic History, Munich, 1965 (Paris, 1974), 423–30. As to the landed class, W. H. Hudson pointed out that, 'the gentry, the landowners, and the wealthy residents generally, are always in a sense foreigners', because they do not intermarry with the local population. (*Hampshire Days,* London, 1928, p. 212). They were not intrinsic to the society and removed their sons to boarding schools elsewhere.
40. Croucher, *The Village*, p. 158.
41. Notice that Americans and colonials attended local livestock auctions even before the 1870s were out. Jefferies, *Wildlife*, p. 144.
42. Alfred Williams, *Villages of the White Horse* (London, 1913), p. 175; Jefferies, *Hodge*, p. 62.
43. Nigel Scotland, *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire 1872–1950* (No place stated, 1991), p. 31.
44. Fred S. Thacker, *Kennet Country* (Oxford, 1932), p. 188.
45. Jefferies, *The Hills and the Vale*, pp. 220–21.