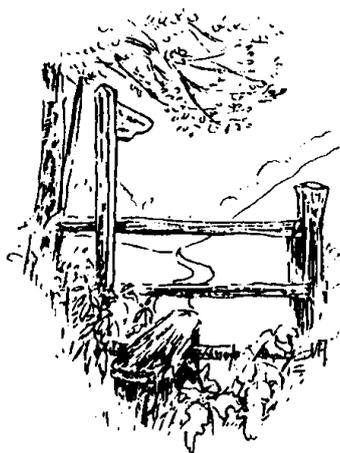


# THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



*No Man's Land like Goodwood Racecourse with engineers swarming over it and making a road between shell holes full of blood-stained water and beer bottles among barbed wire.*

**'The War Diary'**  
(March 21<sup>st</sup> 1917)

## ***The Birthday Walk – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017***

*As in previous years, there will be two walks during the day, and you are welcome to join either or both walks.*

*The walks will be led by Mike Cope and will start at the car park of Bedales School, Church Road, Steep, GU32 2DG. Parking and toilets will be available throughout the day.*

*Those coming on the morning walk should meet in the car park between 10:00 and 10:15 am. The morning walk (a fairly strenuous 4 ½ miles) will start at 10:30 am prompt, and will include a visit to The Bee House (Edward Thomas's former hill-top study) and the memorial stone on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill.*

*The afternoon walk will start slightly earlier than usual - at 2:15pm from the car park of Bedales School - and will be a 3 mile circular walk around Ridge Hanger. It will include a visit to 2 Yew Tree Cottages – the Thomas family's third and final home in Steep.*

*Members of the Fellowship will read appropriate poems and prose during the walks.*

*Please wear suitable clothing and footwear (walking boots or wellingtons) for both walks.*

***All those participating in the walks do so at their own risk.***

*Our lunch stop will be at Steep Memorial Village Hall. Please note that there will be no buffet lunch this year. Bring your own packed lunch to eat in the hall; there will be beer, wine and soft drinks available for purchase. For those who prefer a pub lunch, The Cricketers and The Harrow Inn are only a short drive away.*

*We shall end the day at Steep Church around 4:00 pm, where tea will be available at a modest cost. This will be followed by the Fellowship's short AGM and the Birthday Tribute. In this centennial year, the theme will be: 'Edward Thomas in France - in the trenches and on the front line'.*

### ***The Morning Walk (10:30 am)***

*Leave Bedales School via the footpath on the right hand edge of the car park. Turn left when you reach Church Road and then right along Mill Lane. Pass the war memorial where Edward Thomas (Lieutenant R.G.A.) is numbered in the roll of honour for Steep. Proceed downhill, past the turning for Island Farm lane, and keep ahead at the first right hand bend, past a spectacular waterfall. Go left at T-junction past Little Langleys bird hide, and follow path that zigzags right and then left across sloping field. Maintain direction along driveway (The Hangers Way) and when you reach a road, zig zag right and then left up edge of ploughed field. Pass a sign for Ashford Hangers and keep ahead at junction to climb manmade staircase leading to the Shoulder of Mutton Hill. In Summer, a host of chalk-loving plants adorn the hillside: Viper's Bugloss, Eggs and Bacon, St John's Wort, Wild Thyme and Scarlet Pimpernel. Keep going up the steep escarpment until you reach the memorial stone, erected in 1937 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Edward's death.*

*We shall pause at the memorial stone for some readings.*

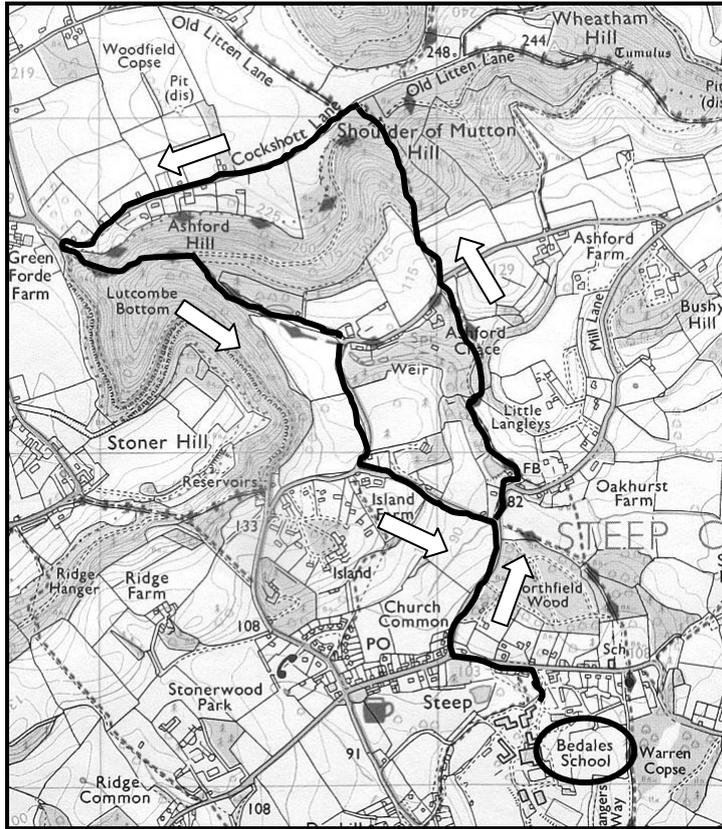
*Continue up hillside and ahead at information board and through woodland. When you reach a wooden fingerpost, go left along track. Pass Old Litten Lane and continue along untarred lane which eventually merges with tarred lane (Cockshott Lane). Pass The Red House (the Thomas family's second home in Steep) and then bear left into the grounds of The Bee House (Edward's former hill-top study).*

*We shall pause for readings in the garden (with grandstand views of Lutcombe and the South Downs).*

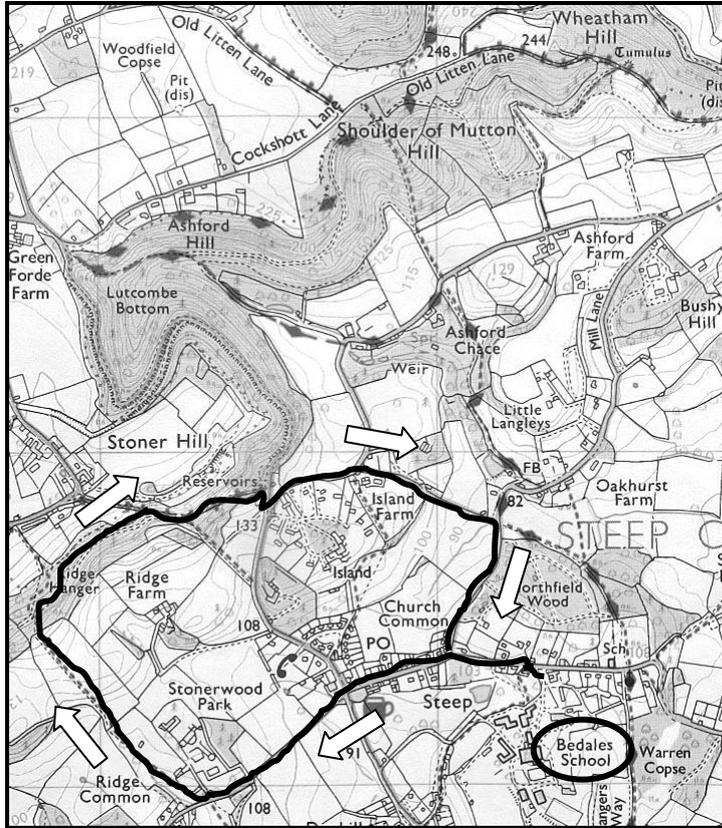
*After leaving The Bee House, pass the Edward Barnsley Workshop (makers of bespoke furniture) and then bear left down sunken path, that runs parallel to the main road down Stoner Hill. Shaped like a water chute, the sunken path proceeds downhill with steep hanging woods on the left. Fork right at next junction and continue past Lutcombe Pond, with water of amazing clarity, which has been filtered through the chalk of the surrounding hills. (The source of the Ashford Stream rises from the foot of Stoner Hill and flows into Lutcombe Pond.) Follow path along edge of stream and maintain direction up dark sunken lane with high banks. Look out for layers of white malmstone rock (below field level), which are intertwined with the tree roots.*

*Take the next left down Island Farm Lane and when you reach the bottom, go right up Mill Lane and past 'Oakridge' - the former home of sci-fi writer John Wyndham. Bear right at the T-junction for Steep Memorial Village Hall (our lunch stop).*

**The Morning Walk (4 ½ miles)**



**The Afternoon Walk (3 miles)**



### **The Afternoon Walk (2:15 pm)**

Leave Bedales School via the footpath on the right hand edge of the car park. Turn left when you reach Church Road and continue past Steep Memorial Village Hall. When you see two pairs of grey pebble-dashed cottages, turn right up the narrow alleyway between them (marked with a 'No Parking' sign). This leads to another pair of cottages, set back from the road. One of these - 2 Yew Tree Cottages - was the Thomas family's third and final home in Steep.

We shall pause here for a reading.

Retrace your steps to the road and bear right along it. Keep ahead at the junction along Ridge Common Lane. After road bends to the right, go right over stile and follow obvious path across field, where trees are equipped with tree guards to protect them from browsing animals. Climb stile in top left hand corner and continue along edge of next field, where the gradient rises. Go right at finger post, and under powerlines, towards the wooded escarpment of Ridge Hanger. Look left to see the misty roller-coaster ridge-line of the South Downs.

We shall pause here for a reading.

Enter woodland (near Ashford Hangers sign) and climb man-made staircase, turning right at the top, to follow yellow waymark. Fork right soon afterwards along lower path that contours around hanger, with spectacular views to right. The meandering path swings right and then left before reaching a vehicle barrier and a wide chalky track, lined with beech trees. Bear right here, down a track with high banks, until you reach the main road up Stoner Hill. Go right along road for 100 metres, then turn left down Ashford Lane - described by Helen Thomas (in 'Under Storm's Wing') as 'the darkest lane I have ever known'.

We shall pause at the next junction for our final reading.

Turn right along Island Farm Lane and when you reach the bottom, go right up Mill Lane. Pass the war memorial and bear left at junction to retrace your steps to Bedales car park.

