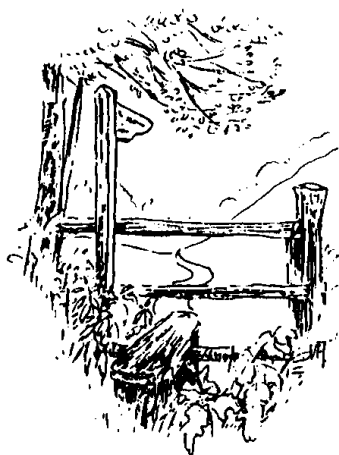


THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



*You sleep too well - too far away,
For sorrowing word to soothe or wound;
Your very quiet seems to say
How longed-for a peace you have found.*

Walter de la Mare
(1918)

The Birthday Walk – Sunday 22nd April 2018

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. To mark the 80th anniversary of its' unveiling, a short dedication will be given by John Owen (Vicar of Steep).

The afternoon walk will start at 2:30 pm from the car park of Bedales School, and will be a more leisurely stroll of around 2 ½ miles. It will include a visit to 2 Yew Tree Cottages – the Thomases third (and final) home in Steep and Berryfield Cottage (their first home in the village).

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 and take note of the safety briefing at the start of both walks. You are also encouraged to read the Health and Safety Procedure on the Edward Thomas Fellowship website.

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 again 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. This year we will mark the 80th anniversary of the unveiling of the memorial stone and pay tribute to the life and work of Edward Thomas through poetry written by his friends and admirers.

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 bear right at next junction. The path veers slightly left with a small beech spinney on the right. When you reach a gate, near a huge double-boled beech tree, go left through a wooden swing gate and up a rising path. Go through another swing gate, then bear right past a row of beech trees and onto the Shoulder of Mutton Hill. Continue across clearing until you reach the memorial stone - erected in 1937 to mark the 20th anniversary of Edward's death. This year we will be commemorating the 80th anniversary of its' unveiling on 2nd October 1937.

We shall pause at the memorial stone for some readings.

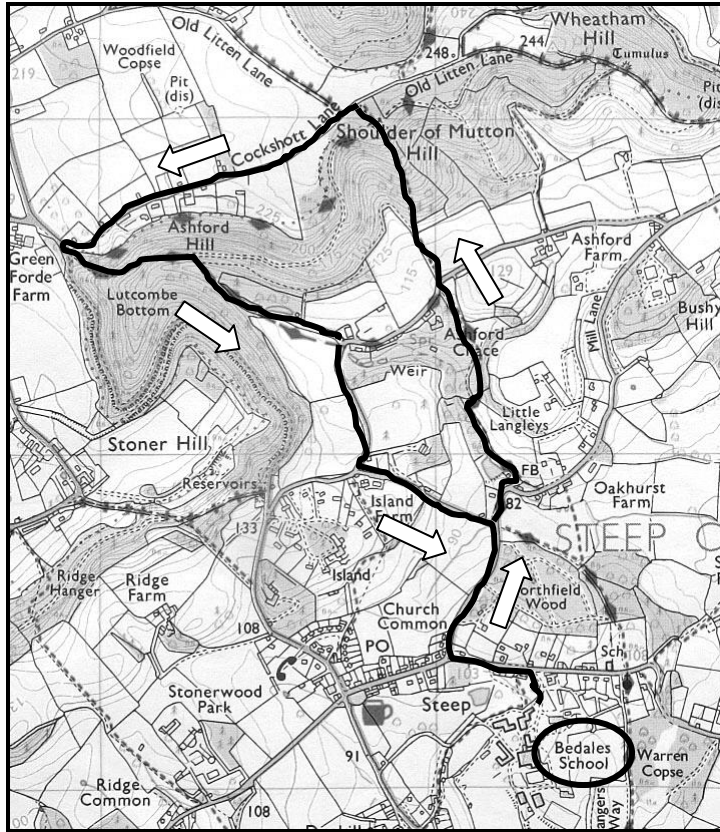
Continue up hillside and ahead at information board and through woodland. When you reach a wooden fingerpost, go left along track. Pass Old Litten Lane and continue along untarred lane which eventually merges with tarred lane (Cockshott Lane). Pass The Red House (the Thomases second home in Steep) and 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).

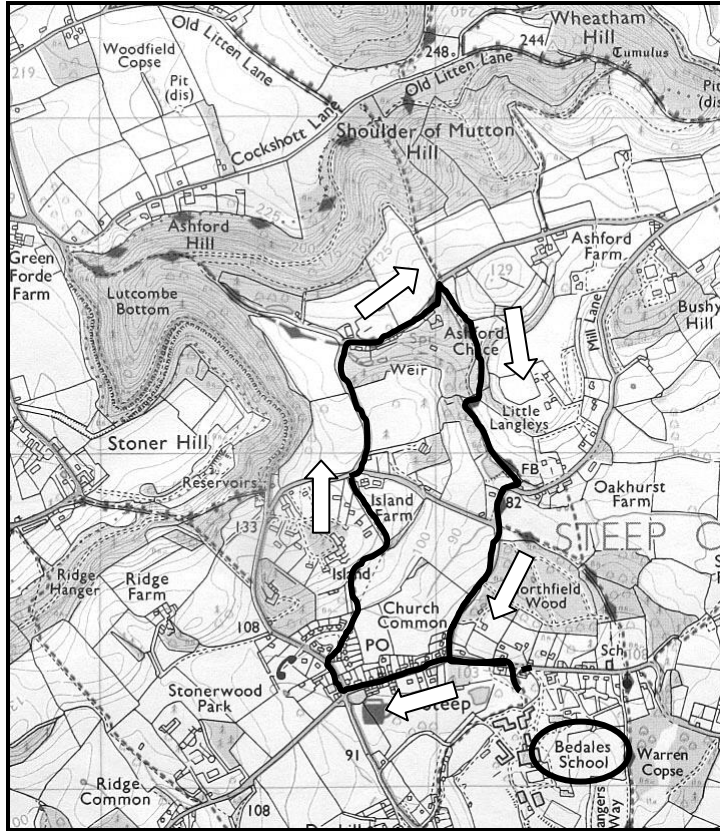
After leaving The Bee House, pass the Edward Barnsley Workshop (makers of bespoke furniture) and then bear left down sunken path, that runs parallel to the main road down Stoner Hill. Shaped like a water chute, the sunken path proceeds downhill with steep hanging woods on the left. Fork right at next 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 (2 ½ miles)



The Afternoon Walk (2:30 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 Thomases third and final home in Steep.

We shall pause here for a reading.

Retrace your steps to the road and bear right along it. Go right at the T-junction past The Cricketers Inn and then take the first right along a narrow hedged avenue and keep ahead across a green. Pass a row of garages before you reach a wooden swing gate. Follow path as it arcs around the field edge. Look back (after 50 metres) to see a large oak tree in the centre of a square sloping field and beyond it the back garden of 2 Yew Tree Cottages. Eventually the path doubles back on itself and swings right through ninety degrees. Continue along narrow fenced path until you reach a road. Bear right towards the junction at Island Farm Lane, then keep ahead, past 'Byways' (former home of "the Bone's"). Helen Thomas describes this sunken lane with high banks in her memoir 'World without End':

'We were very isolated here... tucked away among trees and hills, and the winding lane which led to the outer world was the darkest lane I have ever known; so deep and dark it was that the entrance to it on the main road looked like the entrance to a tunnel'.

Follow the lane as it bears sharp right, past a cottage with a high-pitched roof, and a crumbling malmstone wall, reinforced with masonry nails and capped with ridge tiles and climbing plants. In due course, you will pass Berryfield Cottage (the Thomases first home in Steep, where they lived from 1906 until 1909).

We shall pause here for our final set of readings.

Take the next right along a tarmac drive (The Hangers Way) and then half left along a woodland path. Zig zag right and then left across a sloping meadow and bear right down steps and past a spectacular waterfall. When you gain the road, maintain direction up Mill Lane. Pass the war memorial and bear left at junction to retrace your steps to Bedales car park.

