

## **Full Event Programme:**

### **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October:**

#### **A Vision of the Natural World: Poetry Workshop:**

10am-12pm, £12.50.

As part of the Edward Thomas Digital Poetry Festival, Hampshire Poet 2020, Kathryn Bevis, will be leading a nature and poetry-writing workshop online via Zoom.

Whether you're an experienced poet or a complete beginner keen to explore the wonderful practice of writing poems in response to the living world, you'll find the prompts and sensory stimulus you need to gather the raw material for your poem, as well as tuition and guidance in how to craft the poem itself.

Access to an outdoor space, however small (a garden, potted plants on a balcony, or even a window box) would be ideal but it's not a prerequisite. Come prepared to play!

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/vision-natural-world-poetry-workshop>

#### **Highlights from Faber's History as a Poetry Publisher:**

7pm

Discover the story of how Faber & Faber became one of the biggest and renowned poetry publishing houses in the world!

Founded in 1929, Faber & Faber has published Edward Thomas since 1938, making him part of a list that includes many of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. In this talk, Toby Faber will reveal some of the stories from Faber's archive that explain how that list was built.

This talk is given by Toby Faber; Toby is a non-fiction writer and novelist who has also been Managing Director of Faber & Faber. His book 'Faber & Faber: The Untold Story', was published in 2019.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/highlights-from-fabers-history-as-a-poetry-publisher-tickets-116861635297?aff=erelpanelorg>



## **Friday 2nd October:**

### **Places of Inspiration: Identifying the places that inspired Edward Thomas.**

11am

Discover some of the locations that inspired the work of poet, Edward Thomas.

Some of the locations of Thomas's poems are obvious, others have been identified through the poet's writings and some may be composite or imaginary landscapes. However, there are a number of poems where more precise identification is possible drawing on his extensive writings and observations, including his field notebooks and letters, and other contemporary sources as well as by walking the ground.

Our speaker Nick Denton, who is working to discover these locations, will cover his progress so far, putting his findings in the context of the countryside in England and Wales that Edward Thomas knew and loved.

The talk is followed by a live Q+A with Nick.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/406>

### **'Sad Songs of Autumn Mirth': Mental Health, Nature and Edward Thomas.**

2pm

This talk explores the relationship between nature and mental health in the poetry of Edward Thomas and reflects on the contemporary relevance of the poet's treatment of this subject. Throughout his life Edward Thomas suffered from severe bouts of depression that he examined with unflinching honesty in his poems. Thomas's mental health was intimately connected with the need for deep engagement with the natural world as a way to ease his suffering. This talk will draw upon close readings of the poems to consider how nature helped Edward Thomas's mental health, the extent of its impact on his wellbeing and the lessons his poetic reflections on the subject can offer to contemporary understanding of this complex illness.

This talk is being given by Elizabeth Black: 'I am an academic with a specialism in ecocriticism, modernism and poetry. My first book was published by Routledge in 2017 and is titled *The Nature of Modernism: Ecocritical Approaches to the Poetry of Edward Thomas, T. S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell and Charlotte Mew*. I am a huge admirer of the work of Edward Thomas and I am currently researching connections between his work, the Eco Gothic and folk horror'.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/407>



Edward Thomas and 'Spirit of Place' with Matthew Oates.

4pm

In the poetry of Edward Thomas, it can seem that the places he loved are almost speaking to us through his words.

Edward understood that locations could be more than just the sum of their physical parts, that they can hold unique, distinctive and cherished aspects that could hold wonder and awe for those who could see it. He appreciated this 'Spirit of Place' and celebrated it through his writing.

In this talk nature poet, author, broadcaster and ecologist Matthew Oates explores the links between Edward's work and 'Spirit of Place', examining his personal relationships with the landscapes he loved and wrote about.

Matthew Oates writes for The Times Nature Notebook. He lived around Selborne for many years before working for the National Trust as its specialist on Nature.

Jade Cuttle, The Plant-Whisperer: An eco-story

7pm

"I notice things no one else does. I'm not talking about phantom stalks snipped off last season, the ghosts of petals snatched away too soon, seeds never sprouted. I'm talking about vibes: tuning into the chatter of plants."

In this extended poetic monologue, a self-confessed plant-whisperer shares a fictional elegy to a houseplant, radio drama-style, offering a sinister and surreal insight into the side-effects of self-isolation. Using a device that is able to perceive the electromagnetic waves from the surface of plants and translate these into pitch, the story is accompanied by an ambient musical backdrop that allows the plant to sing. Tune into the inner world of plants and use it as a springboard for thinking and writing poetically about your own connection to nature.

Jade Cuttle is Arts Commissioning Editor at The Times. Her criticism and reviews have been published in The Times, TLS, the Telegraph, and the Guardian. She has been commissioned to write poetry for BBC Radio 3, BBC Contains Strong Language and the BBC Proms, winning competitions run by Ledbury Poetry Festival, the Poetry Society and Poetry Book Society. As a songwriter fusing metaphor with melody, Jade released an eco-themed album of poem-songs *Algal Bloom* through Warren Records with funding from the PRS foundation and Make Noise, performing across the BBC network and at festivals such as Latitude. Previously, she was a poetry editor at *Ambit*, worked at the Poetry Society and tutored at the Poetry School where she devised a poetry course for adults; judging the Costa Book Awards (both Poetry, and the Costa Book of the Year) and later the Ginkgo Prize alongside Simon Armitage. Her plant-whispering poetry workshops have been programmed at festivals, schools and universities and filmed for BBC One. She holds a first-



class degree in Modern and Medieval Languages and Literature (Russian and French) from Cambridge University (Homerton College), and graduated with Distinction from the MA in Poetry at the University of East Anglia. [www.jadecuttle.com](http://www.jadecuttle.com)

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/419>

Hampshire Poets Together: An evening of poetry.

8pm-9pm

Sit back, relax and join us for an evening of local (digital!) Hampshire poetry with Hampshire poets, Stephanie Norgate, Maggie Sawkins, John Haynes, Robyn Bolam and Steve O'Brien.

This poetry reading evening will take place over Zoom, bringing the poets into your living room as they share their work with you.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/409>



## **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October.**

### **Translating Thomas**

1030am-11am

Join Marie-Marthe Gervais, archivist for The Edward Thomas Fellowship and university lecturer, as she introduces former Portsmouth University lecturer and colleague Vladimir Fisera who will look at the joys and challenges of translating Edward Thomas's poetry into a foreign language.

Whilst anthologies of Thomas's work have been brought out in several languages, there are only individual poems that have been translated into French. Many of these are the work of Vladimir who will be reading some of them in this session that has been recorded from his home in France.

This is a FREE recorded event, but registration is necessary.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/420>

### **Home to the Hangers: Film Screening and Q+A**

11am-1140am.

Join us to watch the award-winning film 'Home to the Hangers', and have the opportunity to meet the director, A D Cooper and star Alex Bartram.

The stirring and moving words of poet Edward Thomas narrate the story of a traumatised soldier's return to ancient woodland. The familiar, enveloping landscape prompts him to discard his uniform, and with it, seemingly, the ordeals of war. An imaginative blend of poetry and film that sensitively captures the complexities of identity, inspiration and the search for inner peace.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/413>

### **Alison Brackenbury: A Poetry Reading.**

1130am-12pm

Join poet Alison Brackenbury as she reads poems from her own collection about or linked to Edward Thomas. She will also include extracts from her correspondence with Myfanwy Thomas (Edward's daughter) about the folk songs Edward sang with his family.

This moving reading will be followed by a live Q+A with Alison on Zoom.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/414>



### Exploring 'The Ickneild Way'.

12pm-1pm

Discover the Ickneild Way through the eyes of Edward Thomas.

This talk given by Guy Cuthbertson will talk about his editing Edward Thomas's prose and especially *The Ickneild Way* (1913), which he is currently working on for the Oxford University Press volume entitled *Pilgrimages*. The talk will explore Edward Thomas's writing and walking, as well as the Ickneild Way, an ancient road that has changed significantly since Thomas's day.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/415>

### Edward Thomas as the Superfluous Man

1pm-2pm

This talk considers Thomas's depiction of himself in his autobiographical prose and poetry as a 'superfluous man' in the light of new ideas about social welfare during the late 19th and early 20th century.

It will argue that Thomas's deployment of this archetype from Russian literature offers a critique of a narrow concept of social progress focused on Liberal-productivism and imperial expansion, as well as allowing him to voice his doubts about his own usefulness. Ultimately, Thomas finds in literature, and especially in poetry, a way of reconnecting to both the cultural and natural environments of the time.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/412>

### A Gathering of Poets: Poetry and Conversation

2pm-3pm

Join poets Daljit Nagra, Yvonne Riddick, Matthew Hollis and Zaffar Kunial for a vibrant session of poetry readings and an exploration of what Edward Thomas means to them and their work.

This exciting session brings together four very different poets each with their unique style and identity and shares their work with you in your own home.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/416>



## 2 Poets, 1 Conversation: Andrew Motion and Michael Longley.

4pm-5pm

'Eaves drop' on the conversation between two old friends and multi award winning poets, Andrew Motion and Michael Longley. This event brings the two friends together in the digital world we currently find ourselves in. Be inspired as they talk about their poetry and of course Edward Thomas and his influence on them over the years as well as topics of the day, such as poetry in schools.

**Andrew Motion:** Andrew Motion was UK Poet Laureate from 1999 to 2009 and is co-founder of the online Poetry Archive. In 2015 he was appointed Homewood Professor in the Arts at Johns Hopkins University; he lives in Baltimore.

**Michael Longley:** Michael Longley has published twelve books of poetry including his latest collection, *The Candlelight Master*, which appeared in August this year. *Selected Prose 1962-2015* was published in 2017. In 2001 Longley received the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, and he has won the Hawthornden Prize, the T.S. Eliot Prize, the Griffin International Prize. Longley was appointed a CBE in 2010, and from 2007 to 2010 he was Ireland Professor of Poetry. In 2017 he received the PEN Pinter Prize, and in 2018 the inaugural Yakamochi Medal. He is a Freeman of the City of Belfast.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/417>

## Edward Thomas and the Dymock Poets

5pm-7pm

Three talks will explore the influence that the village of Dymock, and its landscape had on Thomas's poetry and friendships.

Literary history was being made in the village of Dymock in the years before the First World War but it is nearly 90 years since the phrase 'The Dymock Poets' was used for the first time. Linda Hart wrote "This was the title of a magazine article in the autumn 1933 issue of Gloucestershire Countryside. A magazine editor may thus be responsible for turning six disparate writers into a group of poets. But more likely, the author of the article came up with the title. He was John Haines, a Gloucester solicitor, naturalist and poetry-lover who was friendly with Gibson, Abercrombie, Frost and Thomas and visited Dymock now and again."

The Dymock Poets were aspiring poets but not a self-selected group. They comprised of Robert Frost, Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, and John Drinkwater. Through connections with the Poetry bookshop in London, and other friendships, three came to live for a time in cottages around Dymock, in



northwest Gloucestershire. Encouraged by Abercrombie, Frost left Beaconsfield to rent a cottage in Leadington, and Thomas came to stay nearby for a few weeks in 1914.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/411>

Edward Thomas and Robert Frost – An Inspirational Friendship.

7pm-9pm

Join us, along with The Edward Thomas Fellowship and our American friends from the Robert Frost Society to explore the friendship that inspired two of the 20th centuries most beloved poets.

This is a story about two men at the beginnings of their careers confiding in one another about their deepest hopes and aspirations for their art, told through the study of their personal correspondence over the life of their short-lived friendship.

With readings from these letters by Emmy-Award winning American actor Gordon Clapp and British actor Tom Durham, Frost Scholars Don Sheehy, Virginia Smith and Robert Bernard Hass along with Edna Longley, Guy Cuthbertson and Ralph Pite on behalf of the Edward Thomas Fellowship will discuss this storybook literary friendship before opening up to a truly international discussion which you can be part of!

As a member of the audience you will be invited to take part in the final discussion to share your thoughts and views on this truly inspirational friendship.

<https://www.petersfieldmuseum.co.uk/node/410>

Full list of current participants:

Andrew Motion
Michael Longley
Kathryn Bevis
Stephanie Norgate
Maggie Sawkins
John Haynes
Robyn Bolam
Steven O'Brien
Nick Denton
Elizabeth Black
Toby Faber
Matthew Hollis
Daljit Nagra
Yvonne Reddick



Zaffar Kunial
Alison Brackenbury
A D Cooper
Alex Bartram
Adrian Grafe
Andrew McKeown
Guy Cuthbertson
Jade Cuttle
Vlad Fisera
Matthew Oates

### Who was Edward Thomas?

Edward Thomas was a poet, critic, and biographer who is best known for his careful depictions of rural England and his prescient understanding of modernity’s tendency toward disconnection, alienation, and unsettledness. Although prominent critics and authors as Walter de la Mare, Aldous Huxley, Peter Sacks, Seamus Heaney, and Edna Longley called Edward Thomas one of England’s most important poets, Thomas wrote all of his poetry over a three year span, 1914–17, and was much more widely known as a critic and prose writer during his lifetime.

Most critics would agree with Andrew Motion, who states that Thomas occupies “a crucial place in the development of twentieth-century poetry” for introducing a modern sensibility, later found in the work of such poets as W.H. Auden and Ted Hughes.

