



**The Edward Thomas Fellowship  
Annual General Meeting**

**By Zoom (Virtual Meeting) 46 attendees  
Reports previously circulated**

**21 March 2021 14.30 – 15.30**

**1. Welcome and Chair's opening remarks**

Jeremy formally welcomed members to the first virtual AGM and the first to be led from the new Edward Thomas Study Centre at the Petersfield Museum

Jeremy  
Mitchell

**2. Apologies**

David Kerslake, Margaret Keeping, Elizabeth Black, Marion Dell, Steve Huntley, Kelly Jones, Shirley Reynolds, John Scadding, Nicola Scadding, Michael Spielberg, Stephen Stuart-Smith and David White

**3. Minutes of last AGM and matters arising**

**Acceptance of last year's AGM minutes:**

Approved as a true record Proposed: Lucy Milner Seconded: Colin Thornton  
34 accepting, 3 abstentions.

**4. Membership Secretary's report**

As of 31<sup>st</sup> December, there were 331 memberships comprising 364 individuals. In addition, there were 9 Complimentary Memberships and 7 Institutional Memberships.

We have had 8 new members join since the last report in March 2020.

**Underpayment of the Subscription**

In 2020 the Chairman sent a letter to each member paying less than the required amount informing them that if they neglected to amend their subscription the August 2020 newsletter would be the last one they would receive.

There were many responses but the 17 members who have still not responded will be deleted from the membership list before the next newsletter is sent out in February.

David  
Kerslake

**5. Treasurer's report**

- The Fellowship has set up an Internet Banking Account which makes it a great deal easier to manage the accounts day to day.
- Two savings accounts ancillary to the main account, have also been set up: one holds monies from the *Edward Cawston Thomas Legacy* (formerly in a Building Society Account); the other is a *Purchase and Development Fund* for the new Edward Thomas Centre at Petersfield Museum. The latter has received several generous donations. Where there are funds surplus to our regular running costs, we may, as a committee, decide to transfer money to this fund for particular projects or purchases.

Barbara  
Kinnes

- The accounts this year show a pleasing surplus. Notecard sales have, understandably, been fewer, there has been some payments of subscription arrears and expenses for the Birthday Walk and Study Day were, of course, not incurred.
- The result is that finances are looking in a very healthy state at the present time

Approval of last year's annual accounts:

Proposed: Marie-Marthe Gervais Seconded: Mike Cope

Jeremy thanked Barbara for her 'excellent maintenance and presentation of the accounts.

## 6. Youth and Academic Engagement Report

### Youth Engagement

- Engaging English Literature undergraduate student groups: the ETF offers great opportunities for English students to engage with Thomas's work in an engaging way and to meet new people and enjoy the countryside. Robert Woolliams
- Ahead of the 2020 Edward Thomas Digital Festival on 1-3 October, Robert contacted number of Eng Lit undergraduate societies on Facebook: Southampton University English Society responded and promoted the event on Facebook. Robert will attempt further conversations ahead of future events.

### Academic Engagement

- Robert has contacted academic specialists in Thomas's work and early 20<sup>th</sup> century poetry as a 'way in' to student engagement; he encouraged them to take up ETF membership.
- Robert will follow up those interested in ET DigiFest and those interested in speaking at future ET events.

### Next steps

- Robert invited suggestions or comments on this report ([r.e.woolliams@live.co.uk](mailto:r.e.woolliams@live.co.uk))
- Richard noted, as a point for widening contact, that medical professionals were interested in the psychological, therapeutic content of ET's writing: Robert to contact and discuss this with ETF member Dr David Thomas

Robert was thanked for his work in helping to secure the Fellowship's future.

## 7. Social Media Reports

The technology behind the ETF Twitter account allows the building of previously undreamt-of worldwide relationships with people from all different walks of life and different links to Edward Thomas. Julia Maxted

Facebook - The Fellowship has a group page - a search for "Edward Thomas Fellowship" on Facebook invites new members to join; interaction is not expected. Currently, 213 people are in the group, a mixture of Fellowship members and worldwide ET admirers. The platform updates members on events, shares information (by anyone in the group), links to mentions of Edward in the press. Lucy Milner

Instagram - I run an account on behalf of the Fellowship called @EdwardThomasPoet. Currently, the 202 followers can follow 177 other accounts of other poets, writers, and artists, nature societies, all in keeping with Edward Thomas and his work. Regular new posts usually include a poem or some prose, with appropriate photos. Following hashtags #edwardthomas and #edwardthomaspoet reveals how many times he is mentioned, in the UK and worldwide Please do follow us if you're on Instagram.

## 8. Poetry Competition Report

- The Competition continues to attract considerable interest and a good response, with this year probably the highest in quality as well as in numbers. Out of the 500 + poems submitted the majority were emailed and received by Barbara who comments:  
'Over 400 entries came via email and it was pleasing to see the generally high quality of so many entries, even if there was a more sombre and reflective tone in many poems this year, no doubt arising from the current Covid situation.'
- Many entrants leave it very much to the last minute to send their contribution and it is rather overwhelming when between 250 to 300 entries are pouring in over the final weekend, all needing to be processed and acknowledged. It would be much appreciated if there were to be a more regular flow of entries over the competition time frame.'
- To avoid in future the unequal demand on any one individual, emails will go to separate people of the reading team.
- Publication of a second anthology will be considered after the next competition, with a shorter print run.

Thanks were given to Margaret Keeping, Barbara Kinnes, Richard Emeny and the judge Jane Draycott.

Margaret  
Keeping  
  
Read by  
Barbara  
Kinnes

## 9. Study Centre / Petersfield Museum Report

The Study Centre is complete; books are being sorted into genre by date for easier access.

The centre contains towards 2,500 books plus a small collection of artefacts. Regulations permitting, it will open in the summer.

Jeremy introduced Ryan from Petersfield Museum who informed the AGM that this year's Edward Thomas DigiFest is scheduled for Mon 27 Sept – Sunday 3 October

Jeremy  
Mitchell

## 10. Election of Committee Members

Carried out by membership vote (excluding committee member votes)

Vote: 35 in favour, 1 abstention

## 11. Proposal for the Edward Thomas Fellowship to become a registered charity – results of Membership vote

Two documents had been sent in the AGM members' pack, a Fellowship one summarising the pros and cons of becoming a charity, the other with similar content from the Alliance of Literary Societies.

54 (including committee 11)

Yes – 47; No – 2; Abstain – 5

Concern noted that members were concerned that the change in status would not impair the personal ethos of the Fellowship; Jeremy affirmed that every effort would be made to uphold the valued ethos and relative informality of the Fellowship.

Richard commented on other literary societies which had moved to charitable status and none are recorded as regretting the change.

Ian Morton has volunteered to join the committee and to help support its progress as a charity.

## 12. Other Matters Carried Forward from Delayed 2019 AGM

**Fellowship funding for the Purchase Fund – results of Membership vote**

A Fellowship purchase fund (the **Purchase Fund**) has been established for purchasing books and other items for use by and retention in the Edward Thomas Study Centre in Petersfield Museum, at the discretion of the ETF Committee.

**It is proposed by the Edward Thomas Fellowship Committee that:**

(i). The Purchase Fund will be established through voluntary donation and each year a maximum of 10% of the annual Edward Thomas Fellowship membership subscriptions - subject to there being a sum equal to this amount available by way of annual surplus;

(ii). Any items so purchased shall at all times remain the property of the Edward Thomas Fellowship; and

(iii). Any member of the Edward Thomas Fellowship may nominate for purchase by the Fellowship books and other items felt to be of interest and benefit to the Fellowship. Such nomination to be made to any serving Committee Member of the Edward Thomas Fellowship.

47 votes in favour of the Purchase Fund.

13. **Any Other Business** – advised to the Chair at least fourteen days before the meeting

**Election of Ian Morton to the Committee:**

Proposed Jeremy Mitchell Seconded: Lucy Milner

Yes – 39; Abstain – 1

Jeremy welcomed Ian back to the committee.

**Publication of William Cooke's book on Edward Thomas and**

Richard, supported by Julia, recommended ETF publication of William Cooke's book Edward Thomas and Gordon Bottomley: Comrades in letters

Publication costs permitted to £4000 for 500 copies.

Carried; Abstentions – 2.

**Committee Members – 2020**

Chair Jeremy Mitchell

Membership Secretary / Newsletter David Kerslake

Treasurer Barbara Kinnes

Minutes Secretary Benedict Mackay

Other Committee Members:

Mike Cope; Richard Emeny; Marie-Marthe Gervais; Margaret Keeping; Julia Maxted;

Lucy Milner; Robert Woolliams

**Poetry winners**

The meeting concluded with the welcomed reading of this year's winning poems from the Poetry competition.

Vanessa Lampert *Bedlington Terriers*

Bill Dodd *Our Lady of Tortelli*

Caroline Gilfillan *Evidence*

Jeremy thanked them for this fitting close to the AGM

After the AGM Matthew Oates, via Zoom, gave reflections on a reading of Edward Thomas's poem *March* and his preoccupation with Spring. Jeremy thanked him for his contribution.

Ben Mackay drafted 23.03.21