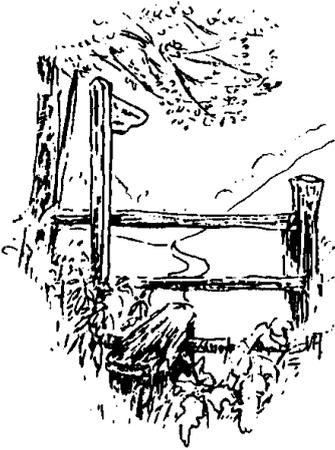


THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



*'You have brought light where there was uncertainty;
you have shown me what I knew not; perhaps in part you
have made me know myself, understood before by you.'*

**Letter from Edward Thomas
to James Ashcroft Noble
(April 1896)**

The Birthday Walk – Sunday 6th March 2022

*This year there is only **one walk** scheduled, and it will be led by Mike Cope.*

Participants should assemble in the car park of Bedales School, Church Road, Steep, GU32 2DG at 10:15 am for a safety briefing. The walk (a fairly strenuous 5 ½ miler) will start at 10:30 am prompt and will include a visit to the memorial stone on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill.

Members of the fellowship will read appropriate poems and prose during the walk. There will also be opportunity for participants to volunteer for a reading. This year, the theme is: 'The Woodland Life' and 'Poems of place around Steep'.

*We will return to Steep Memorial Village Hall for lunch around 1 pm. Please **bring your own packed lunch and a drink** to eat in the hall.*

*It is important that any social distancing rules that may be in force at the time of the walk are observed. Please bring hand sanitizer to disinfect your hands after touching surfaces. Although no longer a requirement, we recommend taking a **lateral flow test** before you come and if you test positive or have Covid symptoms, please stay at home.*

We would also advise walkers to read the Health and Safety procedure on the Edward Thomas Fellowship website. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear (walking boots or sturdy trainers).

All those participating on the walk do so at their own risk.

Parking and toilet facilities will be available at Bedales School throughout the day. Please wear a mask or face covering when entering the building.

After lunch the AGM and Birthday Tea will take place in Steep Church around 3 - 3.30 pm.

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.T.A.) is numbered in the roll of honour for Steep. Proceed downhill and bear left along Island Farm Lane. Continue up this steadily rising slope past the livery stables until the gradient levels out and the lane becomes enclosed with high banks on both sides. At the end of the road, bear right past 'Byways' (former home of Muirhead Bone – Britain's first official war artist).

We shall pause here for a reading.

On the high banks of the lane you can see the exposed layers of local malmstone, with tree roots entwined around it. When the road bears sharp right, keep ahead along the Hangers Way into Ashford Hangers. To the right of the track are the shallow clear waters of the Ashford Stream. In due course pass Lutcombe Pond, with water of exceptional 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. In due course, you'll reach the junction that was the setting for the poem: 'The Tale'.

We shall pause here for a reading.

When you see a wooden fingerpost, bear right along the Hangers Way. This track – often scarred and rutted by rainwater- gets progressively steeper. There are loose broken rocks on the left that have fallen from the bank of Upper Greensand and the exposed roots of the hanging yew trees intertwine with the underlying geology. Water has gouged out deep channels in the white chalky path. As you gain height, the Greensand is mixed up with more friable strata, and superb views of the South Downs open up. Fallen beech and yew trunks litter the path on both sides – the usual casualties of Hanger Country. In due course, bear half right into woodland and proceed along a narrow sloping path, which snakes around the hanger. Step over, duck under, or walk around any fallen trees that have blown over and may be blocking the path. Continue through a grove of yew trees and cross a stile to emerge on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill. Bear left here for the memorial stone - erected in 1937 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Edward's death.

We shall pause at the memorial stone for some readings.

Proceed downhill for 100 metres, then bear left into woodland and follow the path that contours around the hanger. When you reach a clearing and a memorial bench for Ellen McCutcheon – 'who dearly loved these Hangers'- bear right downhill through a de-forested area. At the bottom, go right along a wide track with high banks. Turn right at the T-junction, and then sharp left when you reach a gate and a large beech tree. Follow the path through woodland, then go left at the next junction. Continue along the right hand edge of a ploughed field and when you gain the road, zig zag right and then left along a tarmac drive (The Hangers Way). When the drive ends, bear half left along a path that is invariably muddy, at all times of the year! Follow the path as it zig-zags right and then left, across a sloping meadow. Pass Little Langleys bird hide, then bear right down steps and past a spectacular waterfall. When you gain the road, maintain direction up Mill Lane and past 'Oakridge' - the former home of sci-fi writer John Wyndham. Bear right at the T-junction for the lunch stop at Steep Memorial Village Hall.

