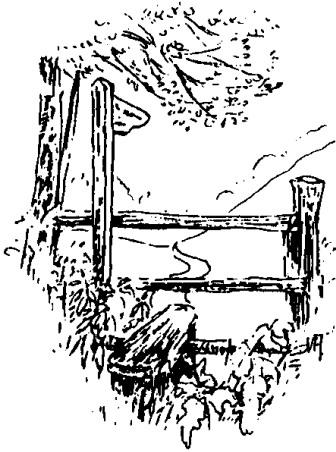


# THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



*Pray do not let me get on to the wind.  
You would not understand about the wind.  
It is my subject, and compared with me  
Those who have always lived on the firm ground  
Are quite unreal in this matter of the wind.*

**'Wind and Mist'**  
(1915)

## ***The Birthday Walk – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023***

*There will be two walks this year, running in parallel. The longer walk will be led by Mike Cope and the shorter walk by Deirdre Mitchell.*

*Participants should assemble in the car park of Bedales School, Church Road, Steep, GU32 2DG at 10:15 am for a safety briefing. The longer walk (a fairly strenuous 4 ½ miler) will start at 10:30 am prompt and will include a visit to the Red House and the memorial stone on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill. The shorter walk will follow the main walk as far as Lutcombe Pond and then diverge.*

*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 will be: 'Poems and prose associated with the Red House'.*

*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.*

*The timetable for the afternoon is as follows:*

*1 pm: Lunch in the Reading Room, Orchard Building, Bedales School.*

*Please bring your own picnic lunch and a drink.*

*2 pm: Interactive talk by Suzanne Conway looking at 'The Longing of Thomas Hardy and Edward Thomas'.*

*3 pm: AGM*

*4 pm: Tea and Biscuits, depart*

*(Note: We will not be visiting Steep Church for the Birthday Tea this year, since Bedales will be hosting us for the whole afternoon.)*

### ***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 and bear left along Island Farm Lane. Continue up this steadily rising slope, past the livery, 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). On the high banks of the lane you can see the exposed strata of local malmstone, with tree roots entwined around it. When the road bears sharp right, keep ahead along the Hangers Way into Ashford Hangers National Nature Reserve. To the right of the track are the shallow clear waters of the Ashford Stream. Pass Lutcombe Pond, with water of amazing clarity, which has been filtered through the chalk of the surrounding hills. At this point the 'shorter' walk will diverge and join the route at \*\* below.*

*In due course, the rising path meets a junction that was the setting for the poem: 'The Tale'. You may still find fragments of blue plate here, if you look carefully. When you see a wooden fingerpost, bear left up a bridleway. Shaped like a water chute, the path proceeds uphill with a steep hanging wood on the right. The abundant ground cover here is hart's-tongue fern, a species that prefers alkaline soil and damp conditions. At the top, turn right along Cockshott Lane and past the Edward Barnsley Workshop (makers of bespoke furniture). Bear right to enter the garden of The Red House (The Thomases second home in Steep).*

*We shall pause at The Red House for some readings.*

*When the houses and tarmac peter out, continue up the untarred lane with bushes and trees on both sides. Pass Old Litten Lane on the left and after 100 metres turn right (at the wooden fingerpost) towards 'The Shoulder of Mutton'. Continue past a bench and a small information board describing the Poet's Stone and proceed downhill following the yellow arrow. The eye is irresistibly drawn to the rolling hills of The South Downs, the highly wooded middle distance, and the dark yews and junipers in the near distance. If you lower your gaze you will be rewarded with a view of Berryfield Cottage (the Thomas family's first home in Steep) nestling at the foot of the hill. Majestic beech trees line the route to 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.*

*Follow the lightly worn path that hugs the left hand edge of the hillside and threads its way past shrubs and bushes and then under yew and beech trees. Bear left through a wooden swing gate and proceed downhill to a double-boled beech tree, which has been recently damaged in a gale. Go through another swing gate and right along a track with field to your left, on a lower level. When you reach a junction (where there is a wild apple tree that bears fruit in autumn), go left and proceed along right hand edge of a ploughed field. \*\*At the road, go right and then immediately left along a tarmac drive (The Hangers Way). When the drive ends, bear half left along path, whose muddy sections have been refurbished with stones and sand. Follow the path as it zig-zags right and then left, across a sloping meadow. Pass Little Langleys bird hide, then turn right down steps and past a spectacular waterfall. Gain the road, and maintain direction up Mill Lane and past 'Oakridge' - the former home of sci-fi writer John Wyndham. Bear left at the T-junction and take the first footpath on the right, to return to the car park of Bedales School.*

**The Morning Walk (4 ½ miles)**

