

Steep

Distance: 4.1m /6.7km, leisurely walking but with a stiff climb up Shoulder of Mutton Hill. Parts of the walk are on roads: remember to walk facing oncoming traffic. Respect the privacy of all properties, including those relating to the Thomas family.

Total ascent: 744 ft/227m

Refreshments: The Cricketers Inn, 1 Church Rd Steep GU32 2DW

The Harrow, Steep GU32 2DA¹

The White Horse, Priors Dean GU32 1DA (This is just off the Alton Rd at Froxfield and is the subject of Edward Thomas's first poem, *Up in the wind*)

Map: Explorer OL 33 Haslemere & Petersfield

Getting there:

If driving, park at All Saints Church, 77 Church Rd, Steep, Petersfield GU32 2DF

Steep does not figure on the route of *In Pursuit of Spring*, unlike the other 26 in this series. But Steep was where the Thomas family were living at the time of writing and from here he rode out on his research journeys with his brother Julian, his son Mervyn and his old friend Jesse Berridge. It was here that Thomas would have drafted much of the book about an east-west cycle route that passed through Alton and Alresford which is only 12 miles to the north of this village. It simply begged inclusion with these walks. As walk 1 at Wandsworth is the true start, a case can be made for Steep as the finishing point of the writing of *In Pursuit of Spring*. So here is the final walk.



Steep ridge from Harting Down, BM

¹ Robert [Frost] did come to Steep after all. The Frost family had all had such a busy time, hurrying down to London to see certain officials, one concerning Mervyn, but Robert was kind: he sent a telegram and arrived from the station almost at the same time. Edwy was so pleased. With Robert's help he could reach the old Harrow Inn. He was so keen that Robert should see it – its tiny room no bigger than our living room and Mr Coffin the landlord with his droll ways. So Edwy sat on his Humber and half scooted with his good ankle for the mile past the church, with Robert pushing on the saddle, both of them laughing like children. They stayed there most of the day until it was time for the train. (Helen Thomas: *World Without End*)



1. Lying on the far side of the road and opposite the church's lych gate is a signpost for the Hangers Way (green arrows). Follow the arrows across the field to an information board and then through the Ancient English woodland, keeping left down the slope and over a streamlet.



Steep Church, BM

2. Go through a kissing gate and follow the leftward field-edge track. It curves to the right and, by another kissing gate, leads on to Mill Lane with Island Farm Lane opposite.

The hedge is filled with field maple, hazel, ash, beech and oak.

This is a great place to pause and look at the Hangers ahead. On a clear day the Edward Thomas Poet's Stone can be seen up on Shoulder of Mutton hill.

3. Turn right along Mill Lane and pass Mill Cottage on the left.

The cottage is a fine Arts and Craft Movement building, created in 1907 by William Unsworth (1851–1912) and Henry Inigo Triggs (1876–1923) and built in part with timbers and stone from its predecessor. There are many examples of their work in the locality.

4. Walk down 100 yards to the Mill Fall.



Mill Fall, LW

The rush of waters can be heard on approach – and about which Thomas wrote:

*Only the sound remains
Of the old mill;
Gone is the wheel;
On the prone roof and walls the nettle reigns.*

*Water that toils no more
Dangles white locks
And, falling, mocks
The music of the mill-wheel's busy roar. ...*

5. Take the signed footpath to the right of the innovative Mill Fall built over the river's

flow, over the falls (using the narrow bridge which may require some care) and up a track on the left, passing water to the right and left, and into the woods.



Mill Cottage and Shoulder of Mutton Hill, LW

6. Continue to follow the path around the edge of the field. At the end of the field the path turns sharp right and enters the woods again, turning sharp left to follow the path through the woods

7. At the lane, (in which there is a large gate on the left to a private property, 'The Waterhouse') walk right. On reaching the road, turn left to Ashford Chace.

8. Just past the forecourt and archway and on the left, some steps lead up to the gardens and house of Berryfield Cottage



Berryfield Cottage, BM

The Little Langleys 'Hide' and pond are on your right.

The stream is on your left and the woods offer ash, sycamore, wych elm, holly and yew. This stretch can be quite muddy, although work has been carried out to make the path more stable. At the right time of year, you can catch the scent of wild garlic. At the end of this stretch there is another Hangers Way finger post as you reach a tarmac lane / driveway.

The Chase was built by Unsworth and Triggs in 1912 for the wealthy naturalist, explorer and writer Aubyn Bernard Trevor-Battye (1855 – 1922).

This was the Thomas family home from 1906 – 1910, after their move from Kent so that the children could attend Bedales School. It is a vernacular style farmhouse dating from 1820 and built of malmstone quarried from the Upper Greensand at the base of the hangers and reinforced with brick. Helen writes of this, their first Steep home, *It was a saying that the flint and brick houses were held together by tenpenny nails, because of the likeness of these little round stones to the heads of large nails. It stood on a little rise of a winding lane which ran at the foot of the steep sides of a vast raised plateau. The irregular sloping edge was in some parts like the downs; in other parts covered in a thick growth of trees – beech and yew for the most part – called hangers. Our cottage lay at the foot of one of the bare slopes - a steep hill dotted here and there with juniper bushes but crowned with a group of fir trees... A large old-fashioned garden stretched in front of the house running parallel to the lane – and above it, for you entered the garden up half a dozen steps from the lane. Every sort of flower and bush flourished in this garden. Its ancient hedges harboured many kinds of birds, and the yew tree by the gate was the home of a gold-crested wren... On the other side of the house the land sloped down to a stream which flowed through a wild water-meadow full of forget-me-nots, meadow-sweet, mare's tails and loosestrife. At night all we could hear was the wind in the hanger, the barking of foxes who lived there and the hooting of owls.*



The base of Shoulder of Mutton Hill, LW



Ashford Hanger, BM

9. Retrace steps for just less than 100 yards and, passing the lane on the right signed The Waterhouse and Hangers Way, take the footpath on the left, which begins the steep climb up Shoulder of Mutton Hill.



The Sarsen memorial stone, BM

10. Keeping the large hedge on your left, walk along the field edge, go through a barrier, entering a National Nature Reserve, and veering slightly to the right (do not follow the Bridleway which is sharp right), follow the yellow arrow towards and up the 50 well-worn steps (high and narrow in places). After the steps, where the tip of

It was a romantic spot, and the house belonged to it and we loved it from the first. Edward of course began exploring the country round and soon became familiar with the footpaths and byways. (Chapter 7, World Without End)

Here Edward wrote *Richard Jefferies*, 1909 and *The South Country*, 1909

The Ashford Estate was broken up and sold in 1908 necessitating the family move in 1910 to Wick Green on top of the ridge, which will be seen later in the walk.

Helen: *to reach this hillside you crossed a rough field sometimes crimson with sainfoin, or orange with dandelions, or silver with dandelion clocks, according to the time of year.* Thomas described this to Gordon Bottomley as *the most luxuriant beechen hill and coombe in the world.* His fieldwork books hold many lists of flowers he found on 'the Mutton' at different times of the year. In the entry notes in Fieldwork Book 30 on the 25 iv 09, Thomas exults *Glory of going up Mutton the beeches brown having much gold in it + wavy ag[ain]st large loose white cloud going fast W. to E. ag[ain]st deep blue sunny sky*

It was up this hill, a place of joy and reflection, that Thomas climbed in 1908 when, deeply disturbed by his difficulties in earning a living through writing, by the constraints and irritations of family life and his own inexplicable depression, he took a revolver, intent on committing suicide. It was a terrifying experience for both Edward and Helen and both later wrote about it with raw feeling.

Thomas kept notes on the seasonal changes at Steep and in his Fieldwork Book 36 he lists – on 1 viii 09 – the plants he finds as *A tiny cranesbill – thyme – self heal – pimpernel – Bartsia – a sort of hairy Milkwort – a few heartsease scorpion grass, hop trefoil – a small hawkweed – upright pink mallow, daisy, clovers on the Mutton – basil, thyme, centaury, cistus, self heal, big tufted knapweed, yellow wort, lotus, ragwort,*

the Memorial Stone is again in sight, follow the well-worn footpath, curling slightly to the left, and on up the Shoulder of Mutton to the Edward Thomas Memorial Stone with a seat alongside.

vervain, agrimony, eyebright, St John's wort, harebell, yarrow.

Pause and look back for a view of Berryfield Cottage.

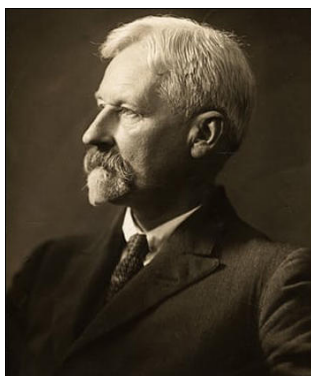
Writing to his old Swindon friend 'Dad' Uzzell, Edward had surmised *if they put a list of my books on my tombstone I shall want one as big as one of the stones at Stonehenge*. That wry and prescient remark was echoed in the setting up of this memorial stone, the story of which by Colin Thornton can be found in Newsletter 66 of the Edward Thomas Fellowship.

The inspiration for the Stone came from Rowland L Watson in 1936. He pulled together a committee of Thomas family members, Edward's friends, fellow poets and writers and published a prestigiously signed letter in *The Times* appealing for funds. They approached Alexander Keiller, the marmalade heir, owner and champion of Avebury, to suggest removing a sarsen from the Kennet area in Wiltshire, Thomas's favourite county. Steep, with its strong Thomas family association, was chosen as an appropriate setting and Lord Horder, physician to George V, donated this hillside to the poet's memory. A lorry brought the excavated four-ton stone to the top of Ashford Hanger. It was let down the one-in-four hillside on a bogey with a rope and pulley and plank system and was secured in a bed of concrete. The work was supervised by Gerald Unsworth, whose father's architectural work studs the local landscape. Poet Lascelles Abercrombie's brother, the influential town planner Patrick Abercrombie, designed the plaque and the words inscribed were chosen by Watson. *This hillside is dedicated to the memory of Edward Thomas Poet. Born in Lambeth 3rd March 1878 Killed in the Battle of Arras 9 April 1917 AND I ROSE UP AND KNEW THAT I WAS TIRED AND CONTINUED MY JOURNEY*. A competition had been held to choose a fitting Thomas quote for the memorial plate. This one came from *Light and Twilight*, his 1911 collection of stories.

On 2 October 1937 the poet laureate John Masefield addressed the gathered family and friends and Lord Horder unveiled the stone in the presence of Helen and two of the three



Memorial inscription, BM



Henry Nevinson

11. From the Stone carry on up through the beechwood hanger to the Shoulder of Mutton viewpoint and seat.



Shoulder of Mutton viewpoint, BM

12. Shortly after going on through the woodland, there is a set of short posts and a Hangers Way fingerpost pointing back at Shoulder of Mutton. At this point turn left and walk along Old Litten Lane.

13. Walk left along the lane, passing the Old Litten Lane turning on the right; here the track becomes Cockshott Lane and the location for The Red House.

children, other family members, friends, Steep residents and admirers of his work. Some of Edward's poems were read. The campaigning journalist and social activist Henry W Nevinson, who later in the day unveiled the Berryfield Cottage plaque, wrote to the bed-confined Watson, *There was quite a good assembly, Masefield, de la Mare, the Bishop, the Horders, and many other Intellectuals, besides a lot of local villagers, men and girls. Helen Thomas was delightful as usual, and refused to be overwhelmed with memories. The son and one daughter were present. Royal Garrison Artillery Trumpeters sounded the reveille from the hillside.* (Nevinson was the literary editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. He gave Thomas his first job – as a reviewer – in 1901 and visited the Thomas family in Steep. Thomas dedicated *The Heart of England* (1906) to Nevinson.)

In his poem *When First*, Thomas describes his first and last associations with this much-loved hillside.

*When first I came here I had hope,
Hope for I knew not what. Fast beat
My heart at sight of the tall slope
Of grass and yews, as if my feet*

*Only by scaling its steps of chalk
Would see something no other hill
Ever disclosed. And now I walk
Down it the last time. Never will*

*My heart beat so again at sight
Of any hill although as fair
And loftier. For infinite
The change, late unperceived, this year,*

*The twelfth, suddenly, shows me plain.
Hope now, - not health, nor cheerfulness,
Since they can come and go again,
As often one brief hour witnesses –*

*Just hope has gone for ever. Perhaps
I may love other hills yet more
Than this: the future and the maps
Hide something I was waiting for.*

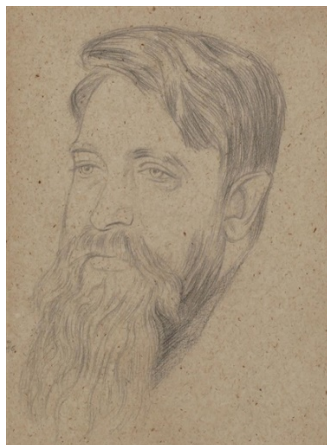
*One thing I know, that love with chance
And use and time and necessity
Will grow, and louder the heart's dance
At parting than at meeting be.*



The Red House, BM



Geoffrey Lupton



Gordon Bottomley by William Rothenstein

From here there is a repeat of the view from the Memorial Stone, this time framed by the hanger's fine beech trees and looking down to Ashford Chace and Berryfield Cottage and, further back, the South Downs.

(Cobbett's view, a scenic point on the Hangers Way, is reached by a short walk along off to the right.)²

After walking 700 yards (0.4 miles) and passing a couple of cottages, on the left is the well-hedged **Red House** with its three distinctive chimneys. This was a later name for the house which Edward Thomas called Wick Green and where the family lived from the birth of Myfanwy in 1910 to 1913. It was designed and built by Geoffrey Lupton (1882 – 1949). He was former head boy of Bedales and met Helen, working at the school, who introduced him to Edward. They shared, she said, *a certain uncompromising sincerity and hatred of affectation and humbug*. Lupton learned architecture and furniture design from Ernest Gimson, an admirer of William Morris and one of the greatest Arts and Craft exponents of the age. Lupton offered to build a home for the Thomases. Helen wrote: *It rose slowly, for Lupton himself built it to his own design. In his workshop great oaks – which he himself years ago had seasoned and sawn and planed – were transformed into beams, doors and window frames. Everything for the house that could be made locally was made: the bricks, the tiles, even the glass were made under Lupton's direction. The great nails that studded the doors, the hinges and the hasps, were forged by our landlord, and he taught us how to make the oaken pegs which held the tiles in their place. The children and I used to go up every day to see the gradual development of the house which was to be our home. We saw the great oak arches to support the roof shaped and hauled into their place, and the children walked on the rising walls which were to keep the fury of those hill-top storms from us.*

² "... out we came, all in a moment, at the very edge of the hanger! And never, in all my life, was I so surprised and so delighted! I pulled up my horse, and sat and looked; and it was like looking from the top of a castle down into the sea..." To access this point (SU731277) walk along the lane for ¼ mile. Steps lead up to an open stretch with benches.

14. Next door is The Bee House, a separate building lying between the Thomas House and Lupton's own cottage and workshops



The Bee House, BM

The house when it was finished was long and low, facing the south towards which most of the windows looked. The east end was taken up by the living-room, which had windows on all sides but the north. The land sloped so steeply away from the house towards the south that from the windows there was no foreground for the eye to rest on – nothing until the downs seven miles away; and when the downs were hidden by the mists that sometimes filled the coombe we felt as if we were on a ship at sea.

The family worked hard at developing the terraced gardens – overlooked by an alcove seat created at Helen's wish – but, she writes, the soil was stiff and stony and full of the most pernicious weeds. Edward told Bottomley, *The garden improves but the clay breaks first the back & then the heart. [It] is very crude, but the terrace and flowers are already pretty. We have some rosemary – at least I have by my study window... You should see my wallflowers, the yellow & the darker than blood. We are waiting for the cuckoo.* Nevertheless, they did not like the house. The raw oak creaked as it settled, the winds on this exposed plateau battered the building and shrieked down the chimneys, the rain seemed vindictive and the mists isolated them. *There was no kindness or warmth or welcome about that house*, commented Helen. It inspired Edward's poems *The New House* and *Wind and Mist*.

*Now first, as I shut the door,
I was alone
In the new house; and the wind
Began to moan.*

*Old at once was the house,
And I was old;
My ears were teased with the dread
Of what was foretold,*

*Nights of storm, days of mist, without end;
Sad days when the sun
Shone in vain: old griefs and griefs
Not yet begun.*

*All was foretold me; naught
Could I foresee;
But I learnt how the wind would sound
After these things should be.*



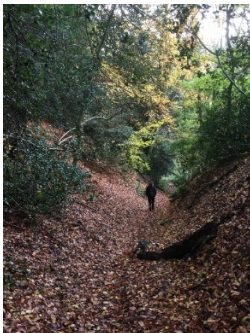
Old Man or Lad's Love - *artemisia abrotanum*, BM

15. Next along the lane is the Edward Barnsley Workshop.



Edward Barnsley

16. Carry on along the lane to the junction with Stoner Hill. At a point just before the Royal Mail post box, there is a sign indicating a short cut to the path down between Ashford Hanger and Lutcombe Bottom. Take this.



Ashford Hanger path, BM

It was in this house that Thomas wrote, amongst other works, *Feminine Influence on the Poets, Light and Twilight*, lives of Algernon Swinburne, George Borrow, Walter Pater and Maurice Maeterlinck and *The Icknield Way*.

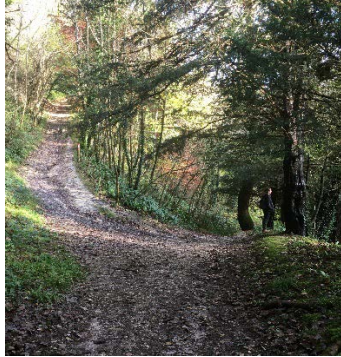
Built by March 1909, the Bee House was shared by Thomas and was a retreat from family noise and clutter. In his book-lined study he worked in solitude, reading hundreds of review books and writing endless reviews. Here he drafted elements of *In Pursuit of Spring* and other works. But perhaps its greatest significance is that it was here, on 3 December 1914, that Thomas drafted his first poem, *Up in the wind*, and the Bee House became the birthplace of many of his poems. He planted shrubs and flowers outside. He thanked Bottomley for the cuttings he sent: *The Old Man or Lad's Love you gave me is now a beautiful great bush at my study door*. The other half held Lupton's bee-keeping equipment – hence the name. Thomas's fieldwork books contain several descriptions of the changing view across the valley and on to the South Downs, seen in all weathers and light, and at different times of the day and night, always lovingly and perceptively described.

Helen recalled, *Below the terrace at the end of the garden Edward worked in a tiny study which Lupton had built with a thatched roof, a big fireplace and a long window. In the little border by the door he planted all kinds of sweet and aromatic herbs – thyme, old man, tansy, rosemary, lavender – and from this garden in years to come I took cuttings of them to plant on his grave in France.*

Lupton enlisted in 1915 as a private in the Army Service Corps, rising to the rank of Captain. His wife wanted to rent out the Bee House, so asked Thomas to leave, which he regretted having to do. He wrote in July 1916, *Yes, I was hustled out of my study 2 months ago. My landlord was at the front. His wife did what he never would have done.*

The study has lost its independence and is now connected to a later private house

Barnsley (1900 – 1987) was also a pupil of Bedales. Like his father Sidney and uncle Ernest, he became a great name in the Arts and Crafts Movement and was an influential



Hangers Way junction, BM

17. At the junction with the Hangers Way, follow the finger post downhill and to the right and again rightwards past another bridleway and follow the Ashford stream (which leads to an earlier waterfall) to the bottom and the road.

18. At the road turn to the right between the high banks and up the incline to the junction with Island Farm Lane. To the right of the properties ahead, and immediately after a drive bordered by two large white posts, take a footpath off to the left, snaking downhill to a kissing gate.

19. Continuing along the field edge and through the next kissing gate. Go left up the drive, past a block of garages on your right, to the road.

20. Crossing to the small green, go straight to an unsigned footpath which leads down to the main road. Turn left towards The Cricketers Inn.

furniture maker. Lupton retired from furniture making in 1923 and Barnsley took over the tenancy, living and working there till his death. The cottage and the connected workshops and associated outbuildings were part of Lupton's original project. Today the Edward Barnsley Educational Trust continues furniture making and training.

The path can be slippery after rain. Helen describes it as *a path winding up through the hanger by the stream which had its source half way up. This path was an ancient deeply worn track soft with leaves that for countless years had fallen and rotted between its high banks. It wound steeply up in the angle of the coombe among the noble beeches and yews which were characteristic of our hanger. Arrived at the lane on the top you had a wider view of the South Downs from Chanctonbury on the east to Butser on the west.* (Chapter 10, *World Without End*)

It was the path the Thomas children used each day when walking to and from school in Steep.

Edward describes it in *The Combe*:

*The Combe was ever dark, ancient and dark.
Its mouth is stopped with bramble, thorn, and
briar;
And no one scrambles over the sliding chalk
By beech and yew and perishing juniper
Down the half precipices of its sides, with roots
And rabbit holes for steps. The sun of Winter,
The moon of Summer, and all the singing birds
Except the missel-thrush that loves juniper,
Are quite shut out. But far more ancient and dark
The Combe looks since they killed the badger
there,
Dug him out and gave him to the hounds,
That most ancient Briton of English beasts.*

There are open fields again ahead. Looking across to the far side of smaller righthand field with the tree at its centre, is a view of the rear of the semi-detached 2 Yew Tree Cottages, the Thomas's last home in Steep.

21. Turn left down Church Road and look for the two paired pebbledash cottages on the left-hand side.



2 Yew Tree Cottage, BM



Rear of Yew Tree Cottage, LW



Edward Thomas with Myfanwy and neighbours' son, outside Yew Tree Cottage



Myfanwy Thomas

The secluded new Thomas home, (now 23 Church Rd), their last together, was *tiny and cramped*. It is approached by taking the path between the two cottage pairs on Church Rd. In October 1912 Edward wrote to Bottomley, *We have nearly settled to move in the Spring – into a new labourer's cottage that will just hold us with half our furniture*. Later, August 1913, he told Bottomley, *We have moved & are now fairly fitted into our narrow quarters to everyone's satisfaction*. Helen recalled in *World without end* (Chapter 11) that a *wealthy socialist aristocrat* built three couples of semi-detached cottages on some ancient farmland. By now, Thomas's reviewing work had virtually dried up and the family was struggling financially – until Edward secured matters by enlisting in 1915. Books were stored in the uphill study, larger furniture had to be abandoned. Helen was delighted with *the tiny compactness of the house* and she, Edward and the children enjoyed setting up home. An ancient yew gave the cottages their name and the *wild damson trees* in the garden gave them pleasure, especially when tenanted by a nightingale. Wild damsons continue to seed themselves around the generous allocation of the garden which reaches round the righthand side to the back. Helen remembered, *We soon had the garden in order – vegetables mostly with a border of flowers. By the only door into the house we planted the herbs which Edward so loved. Rosemary, thyme, lavender, bergamot and old man were there, all direct descendants of our first country garden, which we had*

22. The next house along Church Rd, no 29, has a plaque to the poet and writer Thomas Sturge Moore who lived there 1922 – 1932.



Thomas Sturge Moore

23. Continuing further along Church Road, and set into the start of Mill Lane on the left, is the individualistic Steep War Memorial which carries Edward's name.



Steep War Memorial, BM

Bedales School is then on the right.

propagated from cuttings each time we moved.

In *Old Man Edward* describes Myfanwy pausing and exploring the herbs:

*The herb itself I like not, but for certain I love it, as some day the child will love it
Who plucks a feather from the door-side bush
Whenever she goes in or out of the house.
Often she waits there, snipping the tips
and shrivelling
The shreds at last on to the path, perhaps
Thinking, perhaps of nothing, till she sniffs
Her fingers and runs off. The bush is still
But half as tall as she, though it is as old;
So well she clips it. Not a word she says;
And I can only wonder how much hereafter
She will remember, with that bitter scent,
Of garden rows, and ancient damson-trees
Topping a hedge, a bent path to a door,
A low thick bush beside the door, and me
Forbidding her to pick.*

....

The house bears a plaque carrying the inscription: *Edward Thomas, Poet & Helen his wife lived here 1913 – 1915.* There was a yew tree in front of this cottage, as its name suggests, but the insurers of the adjoined house insisted it be cut down because it was making the foundations unstable. Only its trunk remains, hidden by other vegetation.

Thomas reviewed Sturge Moore's *Art and Life* in March 1910 and wrote, *Even where his writing is certainly clear and good, we seem to detect too laborious (or not sufficiently laborious) a use of words after Pater's manner. The words too often have a mechanical, but not a living, value.* To Bottomley he added, *I have been reading Sturge Moore's Art & Life & tho I have a most complete admiration for his knowledge seriousness & original thinking I do find his power of expression very uncertain. It may have been haste that prevented me from understanding Sturge Moore, but I don't think so. I have a great admiration for him & I read very carefully and humbly.*

For his part, Sturge Moore in his *Some Soldier Poets* (1919), wrote of Thomas as being *an opinionated savage youngster ... His success in prose had always been middling... do his poems greatly succeed? Every time I read them I like them better... In some of these*



John Haden Badley

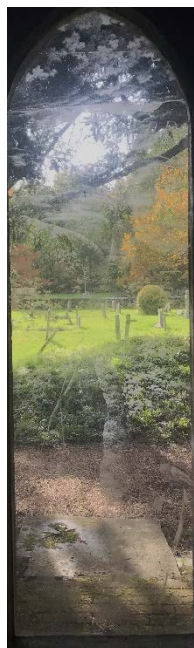
poems novelty is sought as though felicity were despaired... The Muse rarely lays her hand for the first time on a man in his late thirties, and when this happens we ought not be surprised if he proves himself a considerable poet with complex and subtle moods... only recognised after he has vanished, as better than our kindest thoughts had dared suppose.

English Heritage says of this Memorial, *War memorials have very strong historic and cultural significance, on both a local and national scale. This unusual memorial by a notable architect and garden designer has additional interest as an early First World War memorial; the earliest erected in Hampshire.* It was unveiled by Trevor-Battye on 6 December 1918, hard on the Armistice. Erected so soon, it escapes the ubiquitous formulations of other memorials which dotted the country in the next decade. Designed by Triggs, it is made from local sandstone and is faced with marble tiles carrying the names of 53 soldiers, including Edward Thomas, testimony to an immense loss and compounded grief for such a small community. The list of names is repeated in the Calvary memorial inside the parish church.



The Lodge, Bedales

24. All Saints Church is the final point of the walk.



From the Edward Thomas memorial window, LW

An independent, co-educational, day and boarding school, it was founded by John Haden Badley (1865 –1967) in Lindford Surrey in 1893 and located here in 1899. The school had a progressive liberal ethos in contrast to the competitive, classical and often harsh public schools for the children of the social elite.

Helen met the *very reserved and silent... and austere-looking* Badley. She said *Its co-education was its chief attraction for me, but I liked too its love of the open air, its unscholastic freedom of discipline, its freedom from monied snobbishness and its social life, simple and free and happy.* In Ch 7 of *World Without End*, she says she made friends with the staff – *rational, well balanced, Manchester Guardian-reading socialists* who led vegetarian, teetotal lives. She even worked in the nursery but later became estranged from *their theories and principles. They had no bigness, no unevenness, no spontaneity, no savour of the earth. Certain things were*

absolutely taboo among them such as corsets, face powder, beer, coarseness of any kind, free love and any kind of untidiness. Happy-go-lucky poverty and untimetabled lives such as ours they could neither understand nor tolerate. Edward frankly did not like them, and to them he was an enigma – a solitary wandering creature who worked irregularly, who drank and smoked in the village inns, who had no political beliefs or social theories, and who was not impressed by the school or its ideals – no, they could not like him or rope him in at all.

Edward was to say in December 1914, *I don't like the Bedales folk. All I like is the hills and my study.*

From 1941 Francis Bacon and his friend Eric Hall lived from time to time at Bedales Lodge, originally the Lodge house on the school's earlier driveway from Drovers Road, away from the main school buildings. It was used for staff accommodation but was available for rent to others during the war. Details of his stay are scarce but he seems to have been here from 1941 – 1943. His painting *Man in a cap* is signed on its reverse as *F Bacon/Petersfield*.

The church is a 12th century structure with a few later additions and improvements. It has various work connected with Bedales-trained former pupils. Inside the door and on the left is the Calvary memorial to the Steep dead of World War 1. A further Thomas connection is on the far side. In 1978 memorial windows were installed within a pair of lancet windows, designed and engraved by Laurence Whistler (the younger brother of artist Rex Whistler). He had earlier created the memorial to Helen and Edward in the Wiltshire Eastbury church. The right-hand section of the Steep window was inexplicably and wantonly smashed by intruders and a replica was engraved by Tom Gilliam, with the shards of the original recomposed and hanging alongside, courtesy of the Friends of Steep Church.

With thanks to Deirdre and Jeremy Mitchell and Richard Emeny of the Edward Thomas Fellowship, to Catherine Carberry, to Wendy and Roger Britton, Bristol Ramblers, to Jasia Major of Yew Tree Cottage for their valuable comments and suggestions and to Lydia Weedon for sharing her photographs.

