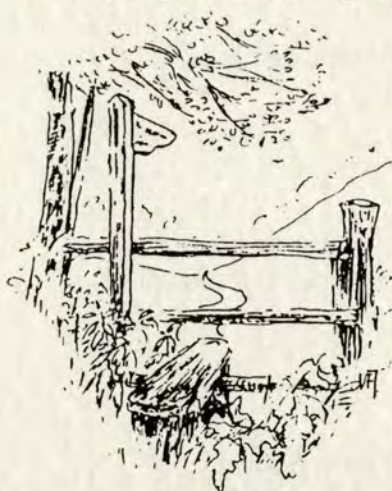


THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



This pre-Christmas newsheet is additional to the usual newsletters and has been made possible by the generous sponsorship of postal costs. The aim is to let members know of news, books, and events, some of which might prove useful in Christmas planning. We hope it might also serve to help members to forget the rain and the fuel problems for a little while at least. The late January newsletter will be despatched as usual.

NEWS ITEMS

THE FELLOWSHIP COMES OF AGE

2001 marks the 21st birthday of the Fellowship. To celebrate we intend to have a party (with some surprises) later in that year. It will probably take place in Oxford but more details will be announced in the full newsletter. All members will of course be welcome and we hope that many will come whether to renew old acquaintances or to meet other members for the first time.

SIR LAURENCE WHISTLER

Members may have seen that Laurence Whistler was knighted in the Birthday Honours List for his services to art, and, in particular, the art of glass engraving. Both the Memorial Windows at Steep and Eastbury were designed and engraved by him. We understand that he was delighted by the honour which was much deserved and we send him many congratulations.

THE COMMITTEE

We are sorry that pressure of work has caused Christopher Gammon to resign from the Committee and thank him for his help in the past. In replacement Steve Turner has kindly accepted an invitation to join it. Steve and Pam Turner will be arranging future Birthday Walks, so it is fitting that they should be represented and we welcome him.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Bankers Order form for the new subscription rates (operative from 1st January 2001) was enclosed with the August newsletter. Although the new rates had been publicised previously, they were inadvertently omitted from the form. We apologise

for any confusion this caused. The new rates are £7.00 for single membership and £10.00 for joint membership.

NOTECARDS

For a different type of Christmas card or simply as a useful (and handsome) means of letter writing, why not order some sets? The engravings have been much praised and an order form is enclosed.

OBITUARIES

Sadly the deaths have occurred of our first Chairman's, Anne Mallinson's sister Barbara, who gave much quiet help to Fellowship events, Joan Kilbey, Eric Norris and John Parkhurst. There will be more details in the January newsletter, but meanwhile we send our condolences to their families.

BIRTHDAY WALK, 4TH MARCH 2001. Full details will be available in January. We shall be returning to Steep after our millennium absence.

BOOKS

FISHERMAN'S FRIEND by Christopher Scoble

It is very unusual for an unknown aspect of Edward Thomas' life to appear in a book, but an important new work has just been published and members will wish to take account of it. It is a biography of the Edwardian writer, Stephen Reynolds, well known in his day but much less so now. He first met Thomas in March 1907 and the two were close friends for the next five years until Reynolds moved out of literature. Reynolds is mentioned in Professor Thomas' *Portrait* but little background information has been available before this new book. Sadly, all letters between the two friends were destroyed, but the author has been able to piece together their visits to each other and their meetings in London to provide a picture of Thomas from a slightly new angle. In view of their closeness, members may be interested to know more about Reynolds himself, whose work with the fishing communities of South Devon is in itself fascinating.

A leaflet and order form with further details is enclosed.

A SELECTION OF BOOKS, many with a Christmas theme, by Anne Harvey is detailed on an enclosed sheet.

SMALL AFFAIRS ON THE ESTATE by Robert Etty, published by Pikestaff Press, Ellon House, Harford, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0NH at £3.00 is a selection of twenty poems, one being about Edward Thomas, by Fellowship member Robert Etty. Robert has written for help in solving the following mystery.

'A few years ago a second-hand bookshop established itself briefly in Louth, Lincs. On its shelves I came across a first edition of John Moore's, *The Life and Letters of Edward Thomas* and a copy of *The South Country*. I bought both books. Flicking through *The South Country* in the shop, I noticed a small piece of paper affixed to the page at the end of the Introduction. This is inscribed, in blue ink, *Old Friend Helen*

Thomas. I pointed this out to the bookseller and asked if he knew anything about it. He confirmed that it was indeed Helen's signature. He told me that he had bought a large number of books, some of which related to Edward Thomas, from an old lady who had contacted him. Helen Thomas, she said, had been a good friend of her late husband. He had received a lot of letters from Helen, some of which were on the subject of Edward's writing. When the old lady had been clearing out her husband's possessions, she had found the letters and thrown them away. She cut out and kept only the signature in the book I now own. The bookseller told her that, if she had kept the letters, they would have been worth far more than the entire library. The flyleaf of the book is inscribed *To Dinah With all my love Gerald 12/39*. I wonder if this would mean something to any members.'

Any theories please to the Editor who will pass them on the Robert Etty.

We are always happy to let members know of publications which are either by members or connected with Edward Thomas but can only do so of course if the editor is informed of them. Please don't hesitate to let him know. People often say how interesting they find the variety of subject matter which is covered by their fellow members.

A CHRISTMAS EVE RADIO PROGRAMME

To accompany Christmas preparations, one could hardly do better than listen to Sean Street's programme, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, on Radio 3 between 5.45 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. An old Edison wax cylinder uncovered in the Musee D'Orphee in Paris, which purports to be of Oscar Wilde himself reading the poem (but sadly it was not him) was part of the reason behind the programme. Simon Callow instead will be reading the whole poem.

Sean has also been commissioned to write a poem to accompany a silent film of Wimborne, Dorset, made in 1945.

ADLESTROP AGAIN

Adlestrop Revisited was very well received at Wells Literature Festival on 1st November, and Anne Harvey and Douglas Verrall will be performing it for the last time this year on Saturday 18th November at *the Stables Theatre*, Hastings at 8.00p.m. Tickets: £6.50 - £4.50, tel: 01424 423221.

Please send items for the next newsletter to Richard Emeny, Butler's Cottage, Halswell House, Goathurst, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2DH (01278 662856)

Finally, the Committee sends best wishes to all members for Christmas.