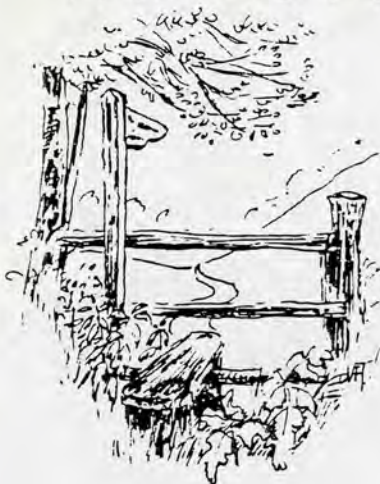


# THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP

Newsletter No. 4



A year has now gone by since Myfanwy Thomas greeted the first members of our Fellowship with her words of Welcome on the front page of the Fellowship leaflet. Many of us will recall too that glorious September day last year when we walked with her along part of the Icknield Way, perpetuating, as she mentions in her welcome, things that her parents treasured, amongst them friendship, the country and all that is in it; also walking and good company.

As this, our fourth Newsletter, comes to you now, we hope you will feel that our aims are achieving their object.

## 'Where the West Begins' - the Quantocks Walk, SUNDAY, 27th SEPTEMBER, 11 am for 11.30 st

As referred to in the last Newsletter, the Autumn Walk on the Quantocks, following Edward Thomas 'in pursuit of spring', will take place on Sunday, 27th September. Meeting point is in the Car Park at the Triscombe Stone, on the ridge of the Quantock Hills, at the top of Cockercombe, map ref. 164360, 11 am for start at 11.30 am. The route is a circular one of approximately 8 miles, taking in a delightful area of the Hills. As to be expected it is an up-and-a-down route (don't forget your stick if you walk with one), with superb views extending north to the Bristol Channel and south and west towards the Brendon Hills and Exmoor. The route, selected by Richard Emeny and Shirley Toulson, both of whom will also lead the walk, follows hill paths, lanes, field and woodland ways, giving pleasant variation for walkers. The 'Rising Sun' at West Bagborough is on the route and will be the venue for the lunch-time halt.

"Two old men sat in the small settle at the fireside talking of the cold weather, for so they deemed it. Bent, grinning, old men they were, using rustic, deliberate, grave speech, as they drank their beer and ate a few fancy biscuits." - Edward Thomas: 'In Pursuit of Spring'

The pub is small, and, as to be expected, has its own regular Sunday lunch-time trade, so it is important that we know in advance if you wish to have food there, so that we may make arrangements for either ploughman's lunch or pasties to be readily available. Please see note at end of the 'Quantocks' item.

It has been suggested that some members may like to make a Weekend of the Somerset Occasion and will travel to their chosen overnight points on the Saturday, 26th Sept. With this in mind we have pleasure in suggesting an Informal Get-together at the Bell Inn, Bishop's Lydeard on Saturday evening at 8 pm. The pub does Bar Food and the idea is that we enjoy an informal 'Edward Thomas Evening' together, each ordering and paying for our own food and refreshment. An indication of those attending would be most helpful. Please see note below.

Quantocks: Sunday Lunch Arrangements & Saturday Evening Meal Please let Anne Mallinson, The Selborne Bookshop, Selborne, Alton, Hants (tel. Selborne 307) know by 21st September if you hope to be present, and also your requirements for pub food.

Full details of the Walk, in the form of our usual Walk Leaflet and Map, together with sketch map of route to the Triscombe Stone, will be available from 14th September, on receipt of 9" x 4" stamped addressed envelope and 20p in postage stamps sent to Anne Mallinson at the above address.

The Triscombe Stone (our meeting place) is a very well known landmark and anyone local seen on the road in the area will be able to direct you. It is situated some 10 miles from either Bridgwater or Taunton (M5).

'Poems in their Place' - a series. Edward Thomas is the subject of one programme. BBC Cardiff still have no transmission date scheduled.

New Publications Since our last Newsletter 'A Language not to be Betrayed' by Edna Longley (Carcenet Press) has been published and the Penguin English Library 'Edward Thomas: Selected Poems and Prose' is out on 17th September ... in time to be carried, ten days later, in one's pocket perhaps from the Triscombe Stone. Another welcome companion is also in paperback this month, Faber's 'Edward Thomas on the Countryside', a selection by Roland Gant of Thomas's prose and verse first published in 1977. Extracts from these two selections will be read at our Somerset gathering.

Out of Print Edward Thomas titles Among our members are several people who specialise in antiquarian and secondhand books and may sometimes be able to help with your 'wants'. They are:

Joan Stevens,  
74 Fortune Green Road  
West Hampstead  
London, N.W.6.

Barry Bufton  
Downsway Books  
66 Trindles Road  
South Nutfield  
Redhill, Surrey

R.M. & R.C. Davis  
6 Chapel Rise  
Atworth  
Nr Melksham  
Wiltshire

Eric Norris  
Pioneer Books  
23 Orchard Avenue  
Bolton-le-Sands  
Carnforth, Lancs LA5 8HP

Richard Emeny  
Blackdown Books  
Charnwood  
Higher Nynehead  
Nr Wellington, Somerset

If there are any other names to add to this list we shall be glad to know.

Mr Barry Bufton reports that 'Edward Thomas: A Biography and a Bibliography' by R.P. Eckert, first published in 1937 and out of print for many years, is in print in the United States and is available from Folcroft Library Editions, P.O. Box 182, Pennsylvania 19032, USA. The price is \$31.50 which includes postage.

Edward Thomas Books in print The Selborne Bookshop will be glad to supply complete list on receipt of s.a.e.

Poems inspired by Edward Thomas - tributes in verse and music, by friends, contemporaries etc. Anne Harvey is at the present time gathering together all known poems and settings with a view to future publication and/or performances. If anyone knows of works which she may possibly not have come across Anne would be pleased to hear from you. Her address

Anne Harvey  
37 St Stephen's Road  
Ealing, W13 8HJ

Sale at Sothebys, 20/21 July, 1981 A series of 11 autograph letters and postcards from Edward Thomas to John Wilson, later of Bumpus, were sold during a sale of literary manuscripts. The Imperial War Museum (Dr Christopher Dowling) had hoped to purchase the series for their expanding Edward Thomas collection, but were unsuccessful. The lot fetched £900 and was bought by an agent. It is believed that the items will be going abroad.

George Borrow Centenary On a sunlit summer evening your Chairman, together with members Mrs Cecily Walker, a niece of Edward Thomas, and Richard Emeny attended the ceremony at Brompton Cemetery on Sunday, 26th July, to mark the centenary of George Borrow's death. After a triangular green and white wreath, designed and made up by Mr and Mrs Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald with flowers from their Surrey garden, had been placed on the saddleback grave, a tribute followed. Among the five readings Borrovian Dr Donald Morris recited from 'Lines to Six-foot-three', "a ... piece as good in itself as it is interesting" wrote Edward Thomas in his biography of George Borrow.

And, later on, on Waterloo Bridge - prior to the final tribute, when a Borrowian-type green umbrella containing individual posies of summer flowers was dropped into the Thames, Richard Emeny read again from Thomas's Book the lines from the song of the "genuine old English gentleman," in the twenty-fourth chapter of 'Lavengro' ...

"With such good things around me, and blessed with good health withal,  
Though I should live for a hundred years, for death I would not call."

On the following day Antony Hippisley Coxe opened the small centenary exhibition, 'They though him a Gypsy', in the Selborne Bookshop. This had been set out under an expansive quotation from the closing lines of 'George Borrow, the Man and his Books' in which Edward Thomas writes of Borrow, he "Comes to our doors with a marvellous company of Gypsies and fellows whose like we shall never see again and could not invent. When we have used the impulse he may give us towards a ruder liberty, he may be neglected; but I cannot believe that things so much alive as many and many a page of Borrow will ever die." This has proved to be true.

'To Edward and Helen' Our gathering at Eastbury on Saturday, 11th July, celebrating the anniversary of Helen's birth was a most happy occasion. Myfanwy Thomas, our President, welcomed visitors to Bridge Cottage on a lovely summer afternoon. The party of about 40, including a group of Richard Jefferies Society members from Swindon, enjoyed Myfanwy's garden and a stroll around the attractive village where Helen spent the last years of her long life. After tea in the church, organised by Myfanwy and her daughter Rosemary, Michael Bakewell's arrangement of the birthday tribute to Helen followed, with readings by Andrew Motion and his wife Joanna Jane, Nicolette McKenzie and Michael. The programme included excerpts from Helen's book 'Time and Again' and the poems from which quotations are engraved in the memorial window. Andrew and his wife also read two pieces chosen by Myfanwy, being particular favourites of Helens.

Among those present the Fellowship was very pleased to welcome Mrs Rowland Watson, whose late husband was responsible for the erection of the Edward Thomas memorial stone on the Shoulder of Mutton hillside above Steep in 1937. (see note later under Hon. Life Membership) After the readings, which took place below the fine Laurence Whistler window in celebration of the lives of Edward and Helen, flowers gathered at Steep from Yew Tree Cottage, were placed on Helen's grave, and on the adjoining memorial to Bronwen and Mervyn and their respective partners. A posy was also presented to Myfanwy. A donation of £10 was made to church funds.

#### Future Events

The Tenth Birthday Walk will take place from Steep on Sunday, 7th March 1982. To celebrate the first decade the Walk will again follow Edward and Helen to Selborne, and you may be sure of a special day's programme for the occasion. Full details will appear in the January Newsletter. Please make a note of the date now.

A programme with Richard Pasco and Barbara Leigh-Hunt Mr and Mrs Pasco, both members of the Fellowship, have very kindly offered to arrange a performance for us at some suitable date. We look forward to giving you news of this occasion in due course.

Honorary Life Membership We are very pleased to announce that Mrs Rowland Watson has accepted your Committee's invitation of Honorary Life Membership in recognition and appreciation of her and her late husband's dedication to the memory of Edward Thomas, & of their assurance of a wider knowledge of the poet.

Membership of the Fellowship now stands at 217; overseas enquiries are coming in and welcome members in Canada, Holland and Japan, in addition to all those in Britain.

Alan A. Martin, Hon. Secretary, of Munster Lodge, 29A Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9PG, will be pleased to forward the Fellowship leaflet and application form for membership to any enquirer.

Anne Mallinson  
September 1981