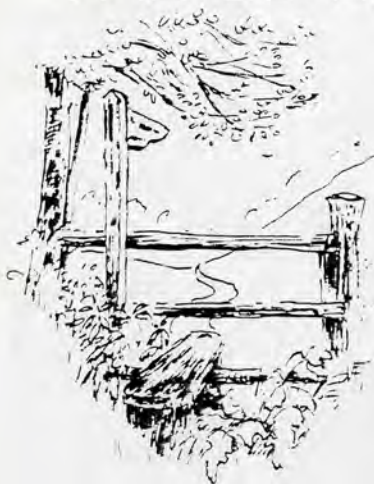


THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP

Newsletter No. 6



"Summer is perfect now", wrote Edward Thomas in his opening line of 'A Little before Harvest', and as this Summer Newsletter, our sixth, comes to you now, it seems appropriate to recall these words from 'The Heart of England', as we welcome the re-issue of this book of essays, after so many unobtainable years. Particularly, too, with our Autumn Walk in mind - and a walk on the Wiltshire Downs - for as Thomas wrote.... "For how proud-thoughted are these long, curving downs, whether they make a highway at noon for round white clouds or at night for the large moon. They uplift and allure and lead far away the eye."

The Marlborough Downs Walk - "A vast playground for the shadows of the clouds" - SUNDAY, 26th SEPTEMBER, 11 a.m. for 11.30 a.m. start.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, our Autumn Walk in Wiltshire, in Richard Jefferies Country, will take place on Sunday, 26th September.

Meeting point is in the Car Park at Barbury Castle Country Park, 5 miles south of Swindon. Accessible from M4 Junction 15 and Swindon via A345 or A361, and B4005 (linking Wroughton and Chisledon). The site is extensively signposted. Map ref. SU157761. Toilets (no running water) at car park.

The Route is a circular one of approximately 9 miles, taking in a magnificent area of the Wiltshire downland beloved by both Thomas and Jefferies. The route, selected by our Wiltshire member Kenneth Watts, who has walked many miles over the countryside tracing the paths taken by these two country writers, is from Barbury Castle, south along the Ridgeway over Hackpen Hill to Glory Ann and Totterdown. "This is pure downland", wrote Thomas, "the breasted hills curving as if under the influence of a great melody."

After Lunch (please see note below) the route will continue by way of Rockley and Old Eagle and then along the downland track, on the old turnpike road from Salisbury to Swindon, with its splendid views E and W across the Marlborough Downs - climbing gradually to Four Mile Clump and so back to the Iron Age hill fort of Barbury Castle, to finish with a visit to the nearby Richard Jefferies (and Alfred Williams) Memorial on Burderop Down. The walk will be led by Kenneth Watts.

As we shall be walking over the downs and away from habitation there will inevitably be no pub at hand for the lunchtime halt. Therefore please bring your own fare and liquid refreshment, to enjoy at Totterdown sitting on the sarsen stone of your choice "among the flocks of 'grey wethers'" which are a feature of this area. And there are magnificent views to take in. (Also good tree cover for shelter from wind and/or rain if necessary!)

The route is not a strenuous one, as there are no particularly steep gradients (as on the Quantocks), but for those who do not wish to walk the whole way arrangements could be made to join at some point where

cont'd.

the route is intersected by a road. Details will be given in the Walk Leaflet, available in September. Some members of the Richard Jefferies Society will be joining us for the occasion and to them we extend a welcome to this Autumn Walk.

As some of you may like to make a weekend of the occasion - as we did last year in Somerset - we have pleasure in suggesting a Get-together at 'The Elm Tree' in Chisledon, on Saturday evening, 25th September, at 7.30 p.m. Some of the Richard Jefferies Society members may perhaps join us. Bar food will be available (ordering and paying for your own).

Mrs. Sheila Povey, a member of the Richard Jefferies Society, has accommodation in Swindon (a double and a single) if anyone wishes to contact her at 20 Farleigh Crescent, Swindon 35248.

Many of the places associated with Jefferies and Thomas are close at hand (see Chapter I of 'Richard Jefferies' by Edward Thomas; Chapter 3 of 'As it Was' and Chapter 9 of 'World without End', both by Helen Thomas).

Full details of the Walk, in the form of our usual Walk Leaflet and Map, will be available from 14th September, on receipt of 35p - in postage stamps if you wish - sent to Anne Mallinson at The Selborne Bookshop, Selborne, Alton, Hants., GU34 3JH. She would also like to know in advance if you plan to be at the Get-together at Chisledon on the evening of Saturday, 25th September.

COMING EVENTS:-

Thursday, 19th August - A Celebration of the Countryside, in Selborne, at the Bookshop. Visitors welcomed any time during the day, from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Special 'Lavengro Lunch-time' with the Ingrams and their gypsy caravans in another quiet corner of the village. The Open Day celebrates publication (OUP paperback) of 'The Heart of England', 'Gilbert White's Year', 'Field and Hedgerow' (Jefferies) and 'Lavengro' (Borrow), and also the opening of the Bookshop's new 'Rural Room', with its display of books and hundreds of country bygonees. Flora Thompson is also officially welcomed that day to join Gilbert White and Edward Thomas as the third writer of the Bookshop's Hampshire trio. If you hope to call in at some time during the day, a telephone call (Selborne 307) would be appreciated - particularly if you are planning a lunch-time visit.

Friday-Sunday, 1st to 3rd October - Writers in a Landscape: A Conference on South Country Writers, Winchester School of Art. The programme will include Kim Taplin speaking on Richard Jefferies and Edward Thomas. Further details (if not enclosed with this newsletter) s.a.e. to the organiser, Jeremy Hooker, Winchester School of Art, Winchester, Hants., SO25 8DL. The conference is non-residential.

Birthday Walk 1983 - Sunday, 6th March. Make a note of the date now.

FROM THE LAST NEWSLETTER:-

Visit to the Edward Thomas grave in France. The proposed group visit to Agny will not take place this autumn. Insufficient replies were received to warrant a firm booking with the travel agent. However

any members should wish to make their own arrangements, General Tyacke has kindly given us the name of an agent who specialises in planning visits to war graves: Summerfield Coaches, 247 Aldermoor Road, Southampton, SO1 6NU (tel: 778717/8).

'Poems in their Place' - the TV programme on Edward Thomas - went out in March and from all accounts was much appreciated. I, for one, have recalled the programme many times with pleasure during this season of "willow-herb, and grass, and meadowsweet, and haycocks dry". John Arlott was the narrator, and included 'Adlestrop'. Produced by John Ormond from B.B.C. Cardiff. Hope the programme is repeated.

EDWARD THOMAS: LETTERS AND MANUSCRIPTS - SALES

Sale at Sothebys, 29th/30th June, 1982. Two Autograph letters signed, the first, Lot 623, Berryfield Cottage, 30th August, 1908, to Cazenove, describing his 'South Country book', and the second, Lot 624, Wick Green, 12th December, 1910, to Denis, commenting on some readers' reports, were withdrawn as bidding did not reach the reserve price.

Catalogued by George S. MacManus Co. in Philadelphia, U.S.A., at \$10,000.00 "An important early Notebook". Early holograph manuscript notebook, 76 pages 4to., entitled 'Naturalis-Historia' - comprises a calendar for the period 1894-1895 (March), author's notes and compositions, and bears Thomas's Lincoln College, Oxford, card pasted in at the front. Also contains more extensive observations for February and March, 1895. Notebook is accompanied by 40 pages of manuscript fragments by Thomas. Catalogue entry runs to 43 lines, with various E.T. quotes.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS -

'The Heart of England', first published 1906, published OUP in paperback, 15th July, at £2.95 - referred to elsewhere in the newsletter.

'This England', Summer Issue 1982, £1.30, contains double page illustrated article by Edward Eastaway Thomas - 'The Edward Thomas Birthday Walk'.

'The Letters of Edward Thomas to Jesse Berridge', with a Memoir by Jesse Berridge, edited and introduced by Anthony Berridge. Price approximately £8, publication late 1982. Contains some 75 letters and some previously unpublished photographs, from the Enitharmon Press.

- OF RELATED INTEREST -

Ivor Gurney's 'Collected Poems', edited by P. J. Kavanagh, will be published this year by OUP, and Gurney's 'War Letters', to be published jointly by Carcanet and the Mid-Northumberland Arts Group, will follow early next year.

Poetry Wales Press are producing a special summer issue devoted to W. H. Davies.

THE YEAR TO DATE

The Tenth Birthday Walk from Steep to Selborne, on Sunday, 7th March, was led by Edward Thomas's grandson, Edward Cawston Thomas and Pam Snelgar.

After an extremely wet Saturday and rain through most of the night, Sunday delighted us all by producing a perfect day of sunshine - true 'Edward Thomas weather', although the mud underfoot left us in no doubt that it had rained for days! The bells of Steep and Selborne churches heralded the day's start as they rang out on B.B.C. radio to celebrate the tenth walk, and some 180 persons set off for the Shoulder of Mutton on the first stage of this special anniversary walk to Selborne. In the village, after pub lunches had been enjoyed by the walkers who streamed in, hot and thirsty, over a period of an hour, memories of the 10 years were revived by a display of photographs, press cuttings and newsheets recalling the Birthday Walk occasions, which was set up in the Village Hall. Here everyone gathered too, to hear tributes to those who had helped to ensure the success of the walks over the years. As all the Fellowship's officers, and members of the Committee were present, together with the Fellowship's two Honorary Life Members, the Chairman took the opportunity of inviting them onto the stage and was able to say a few words of welcome and appreciation to everyone - together for this very special occasion. Harry Holmes, the Fellowship's first Hon. Treasurer, was also thanked for his work, and Gordon Frater, his successor, was welcomed.

Back at Steep, walkers enjoyed the excellent tea provided, as usual, by the ladies of the parish, with the proceeds going to church funds. Before the final Birthday Tribute in words - this year compiled by Michael Bakewell's wife, Melissa, and based on the diary entries of Gilbert White and Edward Thomas over a corresponding seasonal period - a tribute was paid to the organiser of the Birthday Walks for 10 years, Anne Mallinson, who was presented, on behalf of the Committee, with a commemorative plate and with an illustrated card, designed by Vicky Thomson, featuring the ten walks, signed by all the walkers. (Thank you all, I was very touched - and overcome - to receive both these lovely tributes - Anne.)

In Memoriam - Easter 1982

In commemoration of the 65th anniversary of Thomas's death at the Battle of Arras, two small posies of spring flowers were placed on either side of the War Memorial in Steep Church on Good Friday, 9th April. The posy placed on behalf of the poet's daughter Myfanwy, our President, was of primroses, and from the Fellowship, of wild violets and wood anemones.

"The flowers left thick at nightfall in the wood
This Eastertide call into mind the men,
Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, should
Have gathered them and will do never again."

In Memoriam (Easter 1915). Edward Thomas.

'One of these Fine Days' - Memoirs by Myfanwy Thomas (Carcenet Press, £6.95) was published in May. To celebrate the occasion many people joined Myfanwy at 'The White Horse', Priors Dean, on Friday, 14th May, and it really was 'one of these fine days' - a perfect May day, with the Hampshire countryside looking its very best for the occasion. The pub, too, had a festive air as members of Edward Thomas's family, and the Fellowship mingled with their friends and 'White Horse' regulars, as pub lunches and pints were enjoyed in the open air. It was most

relaxing - for everyone except Myfanwy, who was kept busy signing and inscribing copies of her book as she received congratulations, and the usual happy welcome to 'her own world' again!

After lunch, several cars took the road to Steep. Two impromptu stops were made en route. First for a stroll down part of Green Lane, the broad lane of which Thomas wrote that

"Some day, I think, there will be people enough
In Froxfield to pick all the blackberries
Out of the hedges of Green Lane...."

With its bursting May-time hedgerows and birdsong, and bluebells and stitchwort lining the green way, one felt it had probably changed little since Myfanwy's childhood, or when Edward and Helen took their last walk there in the autumn of 1916.

Afterwards, Cockshott Lane gave us a brief peep of the house in which Myfanwy was born before we wended our way down Stoner Hill and along the lane below the Shoulder of Mutton, and so to the vicarage in Steep.

Douglas and Pam Snelgar had provided a really splendid English country tea, set out in the shade of the chestnut tree on the vicarage lawn. Congratulations to Myfanwy, and thanks to all those who contributed in their various ways to make the day such a memorable one.

Items for the Edward Thomas Fellowship Newsletter

The Hon. Secretary, Alan A. Martin, Munster Lodge, 29A Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 9PG, will be pleased to receive information of relevant events, items of interest, publications, etc., which could be included in forthcoming Newsletters, and names and addresses of prospective new members.

Anne Mallinson.

August, 1982.