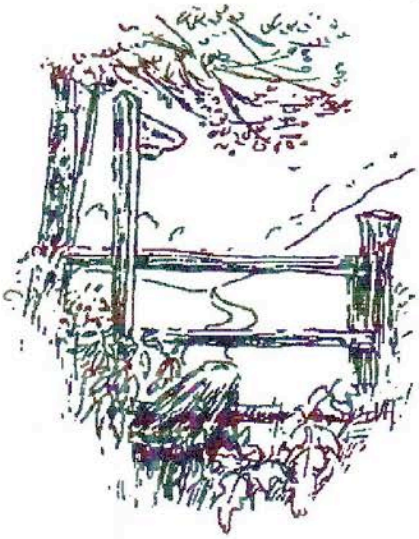
THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



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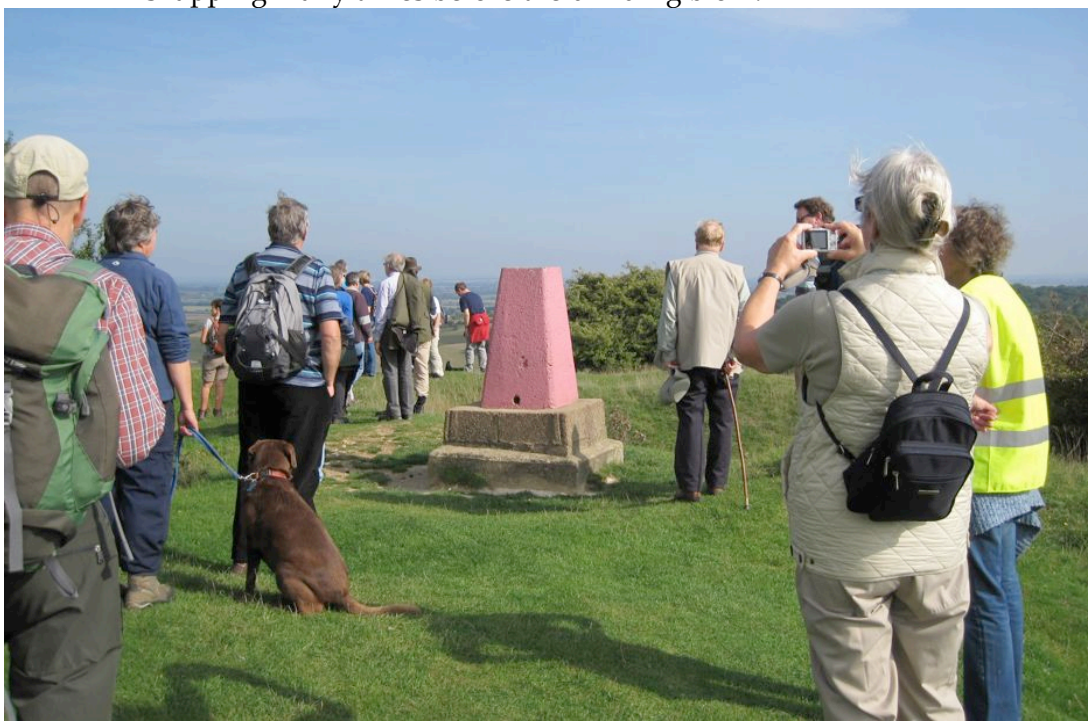
He would attack any dog of equal or greater size, and test the magnanimity of the mastiff and the churlishness of curs running behind carriers' carts. But if a little dog attacked him, he lifted up his head, fixed his eyes on me, and looked neither to left nor right, but muttered: 'You are neither dog nor cat; go away.' As for a mouse, he thought it a kind of beetle, and was curious but kind. He would, however, kill wasps, baring his teeth to avoid the sting and snapping many times before the dividing blow.



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Please send material for the next Newsletter as a Word document in an email attachment. Thank you. Please note that the gap between the appearance of the print version of the newsletter and its appearance on the web has been extended from six months to two years.

Thank you from the Ex Honorary Secretary

As some of you already know, Christine and I recently moved from the Isle of Wight to Lincolnshire. This necessitated me taking the decision to resign from the Edward Thomas Fellowship committee and to relinquish my role as Hon. Secretary as I felt that it would have been impossible for me to carry out the role in the manner that I would have wished.

Over the last twenty-five years I have had the great pleasure of being a member of the committee, first, organizing the annual birthday walks, two autumn walks on the Isle of Wight and organizing the four visits to Agny in France. All of these pleasurable tasks were made much easier for having Christine at my side to offer invaluable advice and to keep me on track when I got carried away with some idea or other.

Then in 2001, Richard Emeny invited me to take over as the Hon. Secretary of the Fellowship. At the time I was managing an engineering company on the Island, I admit to having had certain reservations, but Richard convinced me that I would always have the other member of the committee to assist me. And what assistance and support they have given me over the past twelve years. I feel immensely privileged not only to have had their support, but the continuing encouragement and advice of our excellent Chairman, Richard Emeny who gave unstintingly of his time and knowledge of Edward Thomas, thus enabling me to carry out the necessary requirements of the Fellowship on your behalf.

I leave the committee in excellent health; especially as we have, as a result of the recent survey recruited five new committee members who I have no doubts will be a great asset to the future and well-being of the Fellowship bringing new ideas with them.

I would like to pay tribute and to offer my most sincere thanks to all the members of the Thomas family, past and present, who always encouraged me and gave me great support and advice, but the final word of thanks must go to Christine, she listened to me when things got difficult and she was always there to assist me, without her the Fellowship would not be what it is.

Colin G. Thornton, December 2013

Colin Thornton

Colin has been a part of the Edward Thomas Fellowship since its beginnings and before then attended the centenary weekend in Steep in March 1978. He has served on the Committee for many years, organising with Chris a variety of events, including the trips to Agny. In 2002 he was appointed Honorary Secretary, a position he has filled with great distinction. In August 2013 family concerns caused him to resign with immediate effect. As Secretary, Colin gave his time, energy and thought to the wellbeing of the Fellowship to a degree well beyond the call of duty. Probably only his fellow Committee members are aware of how much he undertook for the benefit of the Fellowship.

As someone who has known him for over thirty years, I find it difficult to select just one aspect of what he has done, much of it behind the scenes, but perhaps I should mention the organisation and leading of the Birthday Walks, a relentless task, the organisation of which is largely invisible (at least we hope so), but is complex and tricky. With the increasing popularity of Edward Thomas, the job of Secretary has also become busier and more time-consuming , especially in dealing with the multitude of inquiries from many non-members throughout the world, encouraged by the ease of communication afforded by email and the like. Always Colin has been a great ambassador for the Fellowship and for Edward Thomas, and the standing of both has been enriched by him.

Colin will be much missed and I wish Chris, who has been a loyal and tolerant helpmate throughout, and him the very best of good fortune and health for the future and look forward to seeing them at future Fellowship events.

The Future

Finding a replacement for Colin at short notice was not going to be easy, but fortunately Ian Morton, who has been a Committee member for some years kindly agreed to step into the breach. I am most grateful to him for this, and am glad to say that he is already making his presence felt. We are lucky to have him, and to have the four members, who as a result of the questionnaire sent out earlier this year, have volunteered to join the Committee. I will ask the AGM to ratify all these appointments.

Richard Emeny (Chairman)

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From the Chairman

By the time this newsletter has been despatched, 2014 and the various ceremonies and commemorations connected with the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War will be upon us. My purpose in writing is to outline what the Fellowship will be doing during the period from 2014 to 2017. First, however, many thanks to all those who completed the questionnaire that was sent out last year, the results of which were published in the Autumn newsletter. We were delighted to receive eighty responses, approximately 20% of the membership, a figure that would have pleased Mori or Gallup. It was helpful to receive positive suggestions, and we expect to implement some of those such as regional meetings and events and more poetry readings in the future. One very important feature of the responses was that it appears that the membership is generally happy with the way the Committee runs the Fellowship. As Chairman I am well aware of the amount of work that individual Committee members put into planning and arranging events, the Birthday Walk and so on. It is gratifying to learn that you think we are more or less on the right path. Finally, the questionnaire brought us four volunteers to become Committee members and they are most welcome.

During the centenary period there will an enormous number of commemorative events organised by a wide range of organisations , many of which will be moving and informative, some of which will probably be little more than nonsense. Our intentions for the period will I hope be balanced and a programme, which may be subject to change, is set out below. As far as possible the items echo Edward's activities a century on. Thus his visit to the Dymock area in 1914 will be mirrored by an event there in conjunction with the National Trust in 2014. I would like to highlight certain items: first, the establishment of an Edward Thomas Study Centre which is the subject of a separate article and which we hope could be opened at about the time of the centenary of his death. Second, we will replace the 'four sisters' at the White Horse in Priors Dean. These were four beech trees that disappeared many years ago and are referred to in the poem 'Up In The Wind.' At the same time the Edward Thomas Bar in the 'pub with no name' will be enhanced. We are fortunate in the present licensees, who are enthusiastic about the Thomas connection. We are also looking forward to a joint event with Cardiff University, the repository of the greatest collection of Thomasiana in Great Britain.

Undoubtedly the most moving item on the programme will be the visit to Agny to mark the centenary of Thomas's death in 1917. The Fellowship has visited several time over the years and seen many changes in the part of Arras where he was killed. There have also been noticeable increases to the cost of going, partly because of the variation in the exchange rate between sterling and the Euro, partly because of the increased interest in the First World War and partly because hoteliers and the like have increased their charges enormously. Because of this we are trying to make economies by joining with one or more other groups with interest in specific First World War writers. Progress will be reported in future newsletters.

Naturally, all these events, which are not intended to replace our regular events, require much planning and preparatory work. Consequently, we would welcome volunteers, who feel they have an interest in one or more particular event to help. They would not have to be Committee members or join it on a long-term

basis, just help in whatever interests them. They would be very welcome and should contact the Secretary in the first instance.

- 2014 Walk, readings and other items in the May Hill area in conjunction with the National Trust
- 2015 Extended walk to include the White Horse, Priors Dean, tree planting and celebration of the Edward Thomas Bar; poetry and music event at Steep Church
- 2016 Visits to Codford and High Beech. Theatrical and music event at Steep. Visit to Silverdale and Cartmel area
- 2017 Visit to Agny. Depending on the agreement of the owners, we also hope to unveil a plaque on the house occupied by Edward in the Cowley Road, Oxford.

Richard Emeny

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The Birthday Walk, Sunday 2nd March 2014

The Walk: The Birthday Walk is the main annual gathering for Fellowship members. As in previous years, there will be two walks during the day, and members are welcome to join either or both walks. Both walks will start at the car park of Bedales School, Church Road, Steep, GU32 2DG, where parking and toilets will be available throughout the day.

Those coming on the morning walk should meet in the car park between 10:00 and 10:30 am. Walk sheets will be available on the day. The morning walk – a strenuous 4 ½ miles – will start at 10:30 am prompt, and will include a visit to the memorial stone on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill. The afternoon walk will start at 2:30 pm from the car park of Bedales School, and will be a more leisurely stroll of around 2 ½ miles. Members of the Fellowship will read appropriate poems and prose during the walks and at the end of the lunch break.

Refreshments: for full details of lunch, please use the enclosed booking form.

Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear (walking boots or wellingtons) for both walks. All those participating in the walks do so at their own risk.

We shall end the day at Steep church, around 4:00 pm, where tea will be available at a modest cost. This will be followed by the Fellowship's short AGM and the Birthday Tribute, which will include readings from the prose works of Edward Thomas.

For further information about the walk, please contact the organiser, Mike Cope (tel: 01483 772913). The walk sheet will be available towards the end of February, and for an advance copy, please email: mike@copedr.freeserve.co.uk.

As usual, we will be having supper at the Jolly Drover, Liss, near Petersfield on the evening of Saturday, 1st March 2014. If anyone would like to be there, could they please contact the Hon. Secretary, Ian Morton, to arrange the necessary booking (tel: 01934 835357; mobile: 07557 653691; email: ianandbreeda@btinternet.com).

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Note of the latest meeting of the Fellowship Committee held on 16th November 2013 in Oxford.

Committee Membership; Four Fellowship members, Margaret Thompson, Pauline Wills, David Kerslake and Barbara Kinnes had volunteered to join the committee and were duly elected. Colin Thornton had resigned as secretary for personal reasons and Ian Morton was elected as his replacement. All these appointments will have to be confirmed at the next Fellowship AGM. The committee decided to recognise the outstanding service Colin had given the Fellowship in due course.

Finances; The Treasurer reported that the Fellowship finances are in good order. Expenditure in2013 had been light compared with previous years. There had been a couple of welcome sales of the 'Words into Wood' book.

Membership; The Secretary reported that membership stood at 377. However a number of members' subscriptions were outstanding and a few members' standing order payments were below the current subscription level. The Secretary will put reminders in the next newsletter and in some case contact the members personally.

Study day 2014; Good progress is being made. Two speakers have confirmed and a third is in discussion. The possibility of a musical contribution is being investigated. The Study day will be held on 21st June 2014 in Oxford.

Social Media; The Committee agreed to establish a Facebook site and in the longer term look at the use of Twitter to complement the excellent existing web site provided that matters of operation, control and quality can be established. The objective being to bring the life and works of Edward Thomas to a wider and probably younger audience.

Birthday walk 2014; A number of alternatives had been investigated but none of these were found to be practical. So we will return to a similar format used in recent years.

Petersfield Museum Tim Wilton-Steer Edward Thomas Study Centre; The Chairman reported on the early stages of this project which should be completed in April 2017. The centre would house the extensive collection compiled by the late Tim Wilton-Steer of work by and about Edward which Tim's widow wishes to make available to those who want to study Edward.

Programme of activities up to and including 2017; The Committee agreed a possible programme of events leading up to 2017. Detailed planning will now take place and further details will be provided as plans firm up.

How I came to Edward Thomas; the Committee agreed to invite Fellowship members to compose a paragraph on how they came to Edward Thomas. A selection of these would be made by the editor and published in future newsletters.

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The Icknield Way Association and the Edward Thomas Fellowship: Celebrating the Publishing Centenary of *The Icknield Way* by Edward Thomas

"Would you like a bacon butty?" asked the lady behind the servery at Pirton Sports and Social Club. I declined the offer and asked for a cup of coffee instead. It was a promising start to the Autumn event jointly organised this year by The Icknield Way Association (IWA) and The Edward Thomas Fellowship on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th September. 2013 marks the centenary of the publication of Edward Thomas' book "The Icknield Way" and it was decided it was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate both a beautiful walk across several counties of England and the book about the path that Edward had chosen to explore and write about before 1913.

About thirty members of both organisations were welcomed by Tom Chevalier, Chairman of the IWA. Then we all set off in warm sunshine on a four mile walk led by the IWA. We left Pirton on the Icknield Way, ascending the chalk downs, past newly ploughed fields to Deacon Hill. The pink trig point at the top was a surprise (see the cover of this newsletter). Why was it painted pink? No one seemed to know. At 567ft it gives superb views over the lowlands of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire with very little effort. It was difficult to imagine that the towns of Hitchin, Letchworth, Luton and Stevenage were so close. We returned to the Sports and Social Club for a delicious buffet lunch provided by the IWA.

The afternoon programme began with a short tribute to Professor Thurstan Shaw. Thurstan Shaw was the founder of the Icknield Way Association and had died aged 98 on 8th March. This was followed by an entertaining, illustrated talk by the key speaker, Hugh Thomson about his most recent book, "The Green Road into Trees: an Exploration of England". In the past Hugh has written books of exploration about Peru, Mexico and the Indian Himalaya. This book is about his exploration of the Icknield Way.

Richard Emeny, our Chair then spoke about "Edward Thomas, Walking and the Icknield Way". He gave a succinct biography of Edward's life before giving us his views on Edward's book "The Icknield Way."

"The Icknield Way", a film produced by Luisetta Mudie completed the afternoon's programme. Luisetta's film was a quirky documentary about people and places along the Icknield Way, interspersed with quotations from Edward Thomas. Overall the day had provided something for all possible interests.

On Sunday morning thirteen members of the Fellowship and IWA met again in Pirton for a walk led by Larry Skillman, our Honorary Treasurer. We followed yesterday's route in reverse to our destination, Deacon Hill but this time with readings. The sun shone again and the leisurely walk provided the ideal opportunity for us to discuss our interpretations of Edward's poems and prose. I came away from the weekend inspired to attempt to walk the 110 miles along the "oldest road in Britain" linking the Ridgeway Path to the Peddars Way following paths close to the ancient route.

Pam and Stephen Turner

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Study Day 2014

The Study Day for 2014 will be once again at the Friends' Meeting House in St Giles, Oxford, on 21st June from 10.30 [coffee] to 4.30.

There will be two speakers: Judy Kendall is an academic, translator and poet, and has researched into and written of Thomas's poetic life. She will talk on Edward Thomas, Birdsong and Flight. Jean Moorcroft-Wilson, well known to the Fellowship, is an academic and eminent biographer whose forthcoming biography of Thomas is expected to be published in the autumn of 2014, the first full Life since George Thomas's nearly thirty years ago. Her talk will have an intriguing title – *Is* a Man's Life of any Worth a Continual Allegory?

There will be good time for readings from Thomas's poetry and prose and members are invited to contribute to these.

It should be an interesting and relaxed day. The fee of £15 will include refreshments and a buffet lunch.

A booking form is enclosed with this newsletter. To reserve a place please return it by the end of April to David Thomas, The Forge, Taylors Lane, Trottiscliffe, Kent ME19 5DS.

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The date of the proposed Autumn Walk on May Hill is Saturday 20 September.

AGNY Cemetery, row C, Grave 43: Update

At the start of this December, the following query was received via the Fellowship's web site:

Dear Sir,
I am wondering if any of the Edward Thomas Fellowship are aware, or know why the headstone in Agny cemetery has been replaced, and the new one no longer bears the word 'Poet' at the bottom?

My attention to this came through Dovegreyreader Scribbles blog where someone posted a comment recently at the end of a post I wrote after my visit to the cemetery in 2011. The comments can be viewed here
http://dovegreyreader.typepad.com/dovegreyreader_scribbles/2011/10/team-edward-thomas-frans-visit-to-agny-military-cemetery.html

As you will read the headstone did not seem to be worn nor defaced. Has anyone heard about this?
Yours sincerely,
Frances Howard-Brown

A query was raised by the secretary with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the following response has been received.

> *Thank you for your email of 3rd December. I have reviewed our records and can confirm that 2nd Lt. Philip Edward Thomas' headstone was replaced on 24th April 2013. The Commission constantly evaluates the condition of headstones and there is a perpetual cycle of repairs, alterations and replacements ongoing, to ensure all of the nearly 1.7 million Commonwealth War casualties are adequately commemorated. Having reviewed our original archival documentation I can confirm that the one word inscription 'POET' was inscribed on the headstone of 2nd Lt. Thomas in early 1993 at the behest of his next of kin. As a result when referring to the original post-First World War documentation this addendum was unfortunately missed off during the headstone production process. However, I can confirm that we will arrange to have the headstone altered in due course in order to reflect the decision to have the one word inscription 'POET' marked on the headstone in perpetuity. I will forward this alteration on to our Records department who will action the change as soon as practicably possible'.*

Progress will be monitored

Ian Morton

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Dedication of the Edward Thomas Memorial Window in Steep Church

On Saturday 7th December All Saint's Church, Steep was full as Dr Rowan Williams, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and former Archbishop of Canterbury, conducted the dedication of the replacement window, the original having been vandalised in 2010. The first dedication of both windows had taken place on 3rd March 1978, and their installation was as a result of the determination of the then vicar, Douglas Snelgar, and his helpers who included Jill Balcon, Sir Alec Guinness, Myfanwy Thomas and Anne Mallinson. The two windows, designed and engraved by Laurence Whistler, while appearing different were meant as a pair to complement each other. Because of this, following the break-in and severe damage to the right hand window by burglars, it was decided that the replacement should be an exact replica. Tony Gilliam, who had worked with Whistler, and is a well known glass engraver, has provided a remarkable copy. Those coming to the next Birthday Walk will be able to see it in situ.

It was clear from the beginning of his address, spoken without notes, that Rowan Williams has a profound knowledge of the poetry and prose of Edward Thomas, whose work he admires, and who he feels asks all the right questions and then moves on. Dr Williams has the gift of being able to speak about profound matters in a straightforward way, so that anyone can understand him and deepen their own understanding, perhaps returning to read Thomas in a different light.

The vicar, John Owen, the Steep PCC and the parishioners deserve many congratulations on achieving this happy outcome. It has not been easy, but their hard work is much appreciated. There are not many left who attended that first dedication at the Centenary Weekend in 1978, so it was a pleasure to see Pam Snelgar, Douglas's widow and his daughter, Sarah in church. The Fellowship was well represented, and of course Steep provided its usual wonderful tea for what was a joyous and enjoyable occasion.

Richard Emeny, December 2013.

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Arthur Ransome and Edward Thomas, Extracts from a Letter

The friendship between Arthur Ransome and Edward Thomas is well known. It flourished particularly in the first part of the Edwardian period during which the two shared lodgings in Chelsea. Thomas moved out after a short period, largely because he found it difficult to get on with Ransome in the forced proximity of sharing a small apartment. Ransome was possibly equally relieved to be on his own, but the friendship between the two continued albeit at a greater distance and with more reservations on Thomas's side at least.. The experiment of living in central London was interesting from Thomas's viewpoint, and had it continued, his writing might have taken different courses.

We know from the War Diary that in 1917 (27th/28th January) Thomas spent his last free hours before embarking walking across the Wiltshire Downs from

Codford Camp to East Hatch where Ransome was renting a farmhouse, and where Myfanwy was staying. She was therefore the last family member to see him. Ransome was not at the farm, as he was working as foreign correspondent for the Manchester Guardian in Russia where he witnessed the 1917 Revolution and became a trusted and sympathetic press reporter for the Bolsheviks. He was almost certainly also used as a spy. Subsequently, after a divorce from his wife, Ivy, he married Evgenia, Trotsky's secretary, and settled in England. They are both buried in the idyllic churchyard of Rusland in the Lake District. Apart from the coincidence of 'rus', it seems a strange place for a daughter of the Russian revolution to end her days.

On 26th September 2002, Myfanwy wrote to Ken Watts in response to a letter from him. Ken is a member living in Wiltshire, who has written widely about that county and its historical, literary and artistic associations. He has kindly donated that letter to the Fellowship Archive at the University of Gloucestershire and allowed the following two extracts to be printed in the newsletter. To the best of my knowledge the two events have never before been made public. The extracts are reproduced below as written and punctuated.

'I am not sure whether I ever knew Arthur Ransome personally. I remember Mother (Helen) describing their, his and Ivy's secret marriage to which Helen and Edward were witnesses and after a meal out, the four went to a music hall where Vesta Tilley was performing. They had a box at the theatre and Arthur had a very hearty laugh and when Vesta Tilley sung a rather saucy song with the chorus "And now I have to call him Father" Arthur laughed and clapped so loudly that she started to play up to him and herself was laughing so much, the theatre manager had to come and tell Ransome he must quieten down or else leave the theatre. He more or less behaved himself and at the end of the show insisted on going to the stage door and presented a bouquet to Vesta and gave her a hearty kiss. Ivy was very shocked and later on on their wedding night insisted that he rinsed his mouth with a solution of those dark purple crystals and water (I forget what the crystals were called - most households had them for sore throats to gargle with!) She wasn't taking any risks.

…

'Ivy was a very strange character - when I stayed with her that last time of saying goodbye to my father, Arthur was already in Russia - she used to sing a song to Tabitha

What is the matter with Tabitha R?
When he Daddy is far away
Then her Mummy has time to play-
What is the matter with Tabitha R
She's alright.

'We used to go out for picnics in a donkey cart which was fun and I remember some way of cooking eggs in snow! I'm afraid I shocked Ivy's mother by singing songs my father had learned in camp-

'All of a sudden a bull rushed out
And I heard a farmer shout
Cover up anything red Sir,
So I covered up my old Dad's nose,

So I covered up my old Dad's nose,
So I covered up my old Dad's nose.

'But all the time I was staying with Ivy and Tabitha, I sent letters to Mother - I couldn't spell but told Ivy what I wanted to say and she told me how to spell it letter by letter. BUT instead of my messages to Mother she spelt put the most cruel and spiteful criticisms of Mother's looks and behaviour, which at first in Mother's keyed up state broke her heart until of course she realised that a child would never think of such things. And when I came home again and when Edward was killed Ivy sent boxes of presents for me and Mother which Mother returned - I never knew if she wrote back to Ivy about the so-called letters from me- I rather think not. But in the end Ivy gave up trying to make up for her cruelty and we had nothing more to do with them. I often wondered what had happened to Tabitha who was not a lovable companion but told tales of me tripping her up etc. and once or twice Ivy put me to bed with no supper- but Kitty Gurd their maid took pity on my sobs and brought me a bowl of bread and milk.
Strange memories!'

Ivy's and Arthur's marriage was already unhappy when he went to Russia and after the divorce he found that Tabitha refused to see him. Edward's initial view of Ivy can be seen in a letter he wrote to Gordon Bottomley on 15th March 1909: 'Arthur Ransome is married, I hear, & is coming to try to live for the summer near here. I met his lady. She belongs to the higher orders and no connection of hers has ever been in trade. She paints herself. She has many rings. But she is pretty & spirited and clever but not clever enough to do her own hair.'

There seems to have been a slight improvement on this opinion, as, on 2nd March 1915, he wrote to Bottomley: 'Helen has been staying away a bit (with Baby) at the Ransome's. A. is away. She likes Mrs R very much indeed & consequently thinks even less of A. than before. He has turned Superman.'

Later in the same year, 30th June, in another letter to Bottomley, Edward's view has changed even more, and very much at the expense of Arthur: 'By the way my travelling companion as far as Stroud (Jesse Berridge) and I stopped one night at Ransome's - with *Mrs* Ransome & had a most pleasant time. I must say I like her very much & can't think why she married such a great man. She still has an irreducible maximum of admiration & affection for him ..... (words omitted) The place is however very full of him, his pipes & books, photographs of him, certificates of prizes which his white mice have won etc. You know it is close to another great home, Beckford's Fonthill.'

Ivy's admiration was not irreducible, and the books left in the house by Arthur became the subject of a lengthy dispute between him, Ivy and Tabitha. He never had them returned to him.

Richard Emeny, November 2013

I am very grateful to Ken Watts for permission to use the letter. The quotations from Edward'd letters to Bottomley are taken from *Letters from Edward Thomas to Gordon Bottomley*, edited and introduced by R. George Thomas, OUP 1968.

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An Edward Thomas Centre

For many years members have wished to have a Centre based reasonably close to Steep, where Edward's work could be studied and where like-minded people could meet, but costs and lack of premises have made it impossible. Two coincidental events have changed that. Hilary Wilton-Steer, the widow of Tim Wilton-Steer whose obituary appeared in the newsletter, has most generously donated the whole of Tim's massive collection of Edward Thomas items, almost certainly the largest in private hands, to become the nucleus of an Edward Thomas Centre. Apart from the extraordinary monetary value of the collection, which includes books, documents and pictures, it is a wonderful tool for anyone wishing to study Edward's work. it is extremely generous of Hilary and her family to make this donation, which will also serve as a memorial to a delightful man. We are very grateful to her for her kindness.

By chance premises may become available. Petersfield Museum is hoping to purchase the police station, a Victorian listed building, in the town, and we are working in partnership with the Trustees of the Museum to help them acquire the building and to use part of it as the Edward Thomas Centre. No sale has yet occurred and there is much preparatory work still to do, but if all goes well, we hope to open it officially in 2017 close to the date of the centenary of his death.

In some ways Petersfield may seem an unlikely town for such a centre, but we know from our long association with the area, including Steep of course, that many students of Edward visit, expecting to find material about him. It is also easily accessible from London. While Tim's collection will represent the nucleus of the Centre, there will be modern facilities for study and research and we hope that it will grow by attracting more items in the future.

Currently, the Trustees are applying for grant aid, launching appeals and so on to raise money for the purchase and the alterations that will be needed to the building. They would welcome assistance from anyone with experience in this field or who can give practical help in any way. If you feel that you can assist, please contact our Secretary in the first instance.

Richard Emeny

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How I came to Edward Thomas

From conversations at the various Fellowship events and particularly those held during the Birthday walks, it is clear that members of the Fellowship have come to the life and works of Edward Thomas by a wide variety of routes ranging from Poems on the London Underground to formal academic study. Some members like the poetry, some the prose and others are more interested in his life.

Your Committee has decided that it would be of interest to the membership as a whole for those members who would like to share their route to Edward, for them to write a short piece, say half a page of A4. A selection of these would be made by the Newsletter Editor for publication as space allows in the Newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to the Secretary. They can be either handwritten and sent to Ian Morton, Secretary Edward Thomas Fellowship, 21 Verlands, Congresbury, Bristol, BS49 5BL or attached to an email in Word format and sent to ianandbreeda@btinternet.com.

Edward Thomas: In search of the lost father
by Azucena Keatley PhD

My husband and I embarked a few years ago on an exciting project to translate into Spanish the poetry of five First World War poets: Rupert Brooke, Charles Hamilton Sorley, Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen and Edward Thomas. While we were working on this translation we inevitably built up a more or less clear image of each of our poets. In these lines I just want to share a few ideas concerning my interpretation of Edward Thomas.

As a psychologist, I cannot avoid my training influencing my own views. Psychology and especially psychoanalysis are always muddy waters to swim in if we consider their theories as absolute truths, but if we just consider any psychological interpretation as a mere hypothesis, it can be a useful way to reflect on any subject from a different perspective.

My first encounter with Edward Thomas was his poem "Lob". I read and tried to translate it and even when the translation was not difficult I got the feeling something was missing. That sensation of a piece omitted was always present in the poems we translated and I began to wonder if there was something else that I was not grasping. In my view his poetry painted a beautiful picture, something familiar like the English countryside but at the same time it was odd like a portrait in which the person who should have been portrayed was absent leaving an empty space. Thomas's poetry, so to speak, is for me the presence of an absent figure.

Reading his biography, it is easy to imagine this figure could have been his father. Thomas's relationship with him was never warm and was always tense. Could this have been the origin of Edward's depression? Maybe so, if we also consider that his mother seemed to have been a weak woman with the same depressive traits.

A French psychoanalyst called Didier Anzieu published in 1981 a group of essays about creative work titled "The body of the artwork" that could offer us a way to understand the creative writing of Edward Thomas. Anzieu defines five stages of the creative process. The first of them is creative wonderment. This can be the result of a crisis or an intense emotion, a certain sensation, image or affect that will become the backbone of future artwork. The second stage will be when the future creator becomes aware of the unconscious psychic representation. In this process, it is very common to need the help of a friend or a master in order to overcome the emotional resistance to those contents. The third phase will require the author to intuit a code and make it take shape. In the fourth moment the work itself will come into being and in the last one the work will be presented to the public.

In Thomas's particular case the third phase of this creative process will assume a central meaning. What we learn from our father is in the centre of the creative process: it is the anchoring of the message in the code, and the ability to create a code is part of the lesson human beings learn from the paternal figure.

The work of the code itself can be limited by several factors. One of them might be something that is hidden, and another could be a kind of emptiness produced in childhood sometimes by a loss, sometimes by a lack of meaning, a broken chain in the history of the individual, and yet a third case could be a failure in communication with adults. In this third case the artwork would try to preserve

the little that was communicated, attempting to reduce the separation, trying to say what is ineffable.

The traces of that failure in communication between the little Edward and his parents are easy to follow in what we know of his life. His father was ambitious for his son to succeed, and indeed follow him into the Civil Service while he was much more reserved, like his mother, and was more interested in an academic career.

During his childhood Edward established a good friendship with a Wiltshire countryman, possibly a poacher, called "Dad" Uzzell. It was Uzzell who gave Edward an enduring love and understanding of the countryside and probably acted as a father figure for the young man. During those years he wrote his observations of the countryside and wildlife in notebooks from where his future books emerged. It is not difficult to imagine those notes and the future books as Edward's attempt to retain the bit of "Dad" in opposition to the severe father figure he knew from his own father.

I also find fascinating the position he gives to Nature in his writing. In 1908, asked about Nature, he said: "Man seems to me a very little part of Nature and the part I enjoy least[1]". His idea of Nature seems close to the origin, the entity that generates and sustains life, something very similar to the parental unit but, at the same time, different from the life it generates. This conception could be read as a good metaphor of his own relationship with his parents: he comes from them and belongs to their lineage, but at the same time he is different and he disappoints his progenitors as man disappoints Nature.

Later on the father of Helen, his future wife, James Ashcroft Noble could have played a similar paternal role, as a mentor in his ambition to become a writer. It is interesting that Thomas dedicated his first book, *The Woodland Life* (1897), to him a year after his death. There could be some links between the death of his mentor and the premature wedding of Thomas and Noble's daughter, Helen, forced by her pregnancy. Edward Thomas became a father himself at the age of twenty two, before he finished his degree. The young man was then forced to be a husband and a father and his dreams of becoming a Fellow at his Oxford college were banished and he was forced to find alternative ways to support his family. This "accidental[2]" pregnancy could be read in two possible ways: on one hand the closeness to Helen allowed him to keep alive the memory of his mentor and on the other becoming the father of a child could have seemed like a way to assume the paternal figure he longed for so much. Maybe that tension and the possible frustration the marriage and paternity generated could have been reflected in the periods of serious difficulties he went through with his son Merfyn.

The pressure of family life did not help his depressive temperament and he needed to consult several doctors. He received psychoanalytic treatment from Dr Godwin Baynes who would in due course become a follower of Carl Jung. The therapy was very helpful for Thomas. It is possible that the psychoanalytic setting offered him a frame where he could develop a relationship with a "paternal" figure embodied in his doctor.

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[1] In Edna Longley page 23. Edward Thomas. The Annotated Collected Poems. Edited by Edna Longley. Bloodaxe Books, Highgreen 2008.

[2] From a psychoanalytical approach it is difficult to accept certain things happen by accident, an unconscious wish could trigger an accident like a pregnancy.

He also took frequent curative absences from his family. My view of them is that they could be a way of avoiding his responsibilities, as many depressives do, but it could have also been a way of running away from something. Those absences could also be read as a way of escaping from his role as a father.

The poetry took a very long time to flow from the fountain pen of Edward Thomas and it needed the encouragement of Robert Frost to really take shape. Perhaps Frost took for Thomas the role of the father or the mentor who gave him the resolution to write poetry. And it is in the poetry that we can meet the best of Edward.

It is also interesting that, at the same time he began to write poetry, the First World War started and he was pondering the possibility of joining the army. He finally enlisted in July 1915. Life inside the army has a paternal hierarchy that could have had a positive effect on Thomas, even when he criticised it in several letters.

The poem he dedicated to his father in February 1916 is moving and revealing:

I may come near loving you
When you are dead
And there is nothing to do
And much to be said.

To repent that day will be
far out of your reach[3]
Impossible
For you and vain for me
The truth to tell.

I shall be sorry for
Your impotence:
You can do and undo no more
When you go hence,

Cannot even forgive
The funeral.
But not so long as you live
Can I love you at all.

To me the most important of the lines he wrote is the one he crossed out: "far out of your reach". It sounds like a way of accepting and recognizing the impossibility of conquering that father figure for himself as son of his father and also as father of his own son. And it is precisely his ability to accept and at the same time to summon that "far out of his reach" that makes the poetry of Edward Thomas unique. His poems could not be included in any of the literary fashions of his time or any other; it is just the impact of the life and the landscape around him that triggers his emotions and fears in the shape of poetic lines. It is also interesting to notice how different each of his poems is.

[3] line crossed out in the original manuscript.

Coming back to Anzieu's theory and the importance of the code when a piece of art is composed, it is interesting to note the use Thomas makes of syntax[4]. A major part of the code and rules that constitute language is syntax. Thomas manipulated syntax in order to get the poetic effect he wanted by breaking its code and creating a more personal one. This also can be seen as his way of differentiating his own style from the code inherited from his father.

The perspective he takes in his poetry is also distinctive. He does not take a position, just observes what is emerging through the lines: emotions, landscapes, sensations, people, actions... he describes what he sees, what he feels, what he thinks as if he were painting a picture or composing a symphony with words. The psychoanalytic treatment he received could have influenced his language making it as singular as Edna Longley[5] claims in her edition of his collected poems. Longley mentions too the prominence of the image, of the music in his poetry and that could also be exacerbated by the Jungian tendencies of Dr Baynes as that psychoanalytic approach gives a central importance to archetype and the collective unconscious.

The most striking characteristic of his poetry to me is his gallantry in facing through the beauty the fear, the emptiness and the sorrow. His approach is very different from any of the others war poets, or indeed any other poet and that is his originality.

The poetry and the army life seemed to give a new perspective to Edward. His relationship with his own father continued to be difficult and it unbalanced Edward easily but he and Merfyn began to communicate better and grew closer. He was also greatly appreciated in the army by his superiors and his men. From the weak communication between his father and himself he was able to build space that gave him the strength to become a father to his son, to his men and even to himself.

He was killed by the blast of a shell as it went by him, not by shrapnel and there was not a mark on his body. His death was as sad and as original as his own poetry and it was keenly felt by his fellow soldiers, several of whom wrote to Helen expressing their affection for him and their sadness at his death, but I would like to quote a sentence from the letter his commanding officer wrote to Helen after his funeral: "He was rather older than most of the officers and we all looked up to him as the kind of father of our happy family" (Franklin Lushington, Major Comdg. 10th April 1917).[6]

The writing of Edward Thomas, especially his poetry is his triumph in my view. He conquered through his words the figure and the status of a father. He raised from "No Words Land[7]" the paternal figure that he never knew and portrayed that elusive figure in poetry and prose, becoming as Ted Hughes called him: "The father of us all[8]".

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[4] Edna Longley page 23.
[5] Edna Longley page 13 and page 23.
[6] Page 294 of Edward Thomas A portrait. R. George Thomas Clarendon Press, Oxford 1985.
[7] This is my play on the words "No Man Land".
[8] On Remembrance Day, 11th November 1985 the Poet Laureate Ted Hughes unveiled a memorial stone to sixteen First World War poets, Edward Thomas amongst them. During his address Ted Hughes referred to him as 'the father of us all'.

'What Quests they Propose!': The importance of roads and travelling
Part 2
by Heather Cobby

In the previous newsletter we published the first half of a chapter from Heather Cobby's thesis. The thesis is called Paths to Glory: A Study of Edward Thomas's Journeys towards Epiphany. *Here, below, is the second half of the chapter entitled '"What Quests they Propose!": The importance of roads and travelling'.*

An example of one of these passages is the story of another of Thomas's encounters with the 'other' side of himself, a philosopher who could not decide whether his condition was 'happiness or melancholy'. He had been 'digging all day in a heavy soil' and 'half of his life lay behind him like a corpse' and 'half was before him like a ghost'.[9] He was unsatisfied with the result of his labour, as Thomas often was with his writing, and was dwelling on the fact that he was getting older and had nothing much to show for it. He felt 'destitute and solitary' but had his mood suddenly lightened by the sound of a woman's voice singing, producing a rare moment of ecstasy and lyrical description. One of the catalysts for Thomas's ecstatic moments was music, especially simple folk songs, and he loved both singing them and hearing them sung.

A second encounter is with a ghostly philosopher, Arthur Aubrey Bishopstone, another alter ego, but whose story is more tragic.[10] Even though the general tone is sad and weird, there are brief interludes of quiet ironic humour which lift it. The story is that this philosopher has no job and he and his wife and seven children have to live in a barn. He is eventually accused of neglecting them and ends up in prison where he and two of the children die. The wife and the rest of the children apparently start another life elsewhere and 'there was nothing they missed less than Arthur Aubrey Bishopstone'. This is another illustration of Thomas's gloomy preoccupation with his working way of life, the fact that he felt guilty for not having had a settled job and a regular income to provide for his family, only getting a second class degree and feeling a failure. He had chosen the precarious life of a writer rather than a steady pensionable position in the Civil Service which his father had planned for him. One of his reasons for enlisting later was to get a good pension for Helen.

In the Dedication to this book Thomas describes the road somewhat sombrely as a 'symbol of mortal things with their beginnings and ends always in immortal

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Bibliography: Didier Anzieu. *El cuerpo de la obra. Ensayos psicoanalíticos sobre el trabajo creador*. Siglo XXI Editores: Mexico 1993 (Original edition in French Editions Gallimard 1981)
Edward Thomas. *The annotated Collected Poems*, edited by Edna Longley. Bloodaxe Books Ltd: Highgreen 2008. R George Thomas. *Edward Thomas. A Portrait.* Clarendon: Oxford 1985. Matthew Hollis. *Now All Roads Lead to France. The Last Years of Edward Thomas.* Faber and Faber: London 2011.

[9] Thomas, *The Icknield Way*, p.137.
[10] Ibid., p.234ff.

darkness'.[11] He could not find a beginning or end of the Icknield Way and to him it was like the seemingly endless road of life which the soul has to travel from the darkness of the womb to the darkness of death. He was ambiguous about many things and especially about darkness, welcoming it early in life but later often fearing it, as will be seen later in this chapter. At the time of writing *The Icknield Way* the neurasthenia, or depression, that bothered him for most of his life, was particularly severe. He felt divided within himself and as though there were 'a sort of conspiracy' going on inside his head that he said, 'leaves me only a joint tenancy and a perpetual scare of the other tenant and wonder what he will do'.[12]

Some of his metaphorical darkness must also have been because he was struggling to find a better way to express himself in prose and eventually in poetry and he was not sure of the way. He frequently uses the metaphor of the path to illustrate his constant endeavours to find his way towards something, which will be discussed more fully in connection with hiraeth in the next chapter. A classic example of this is found in his poem, 'The Path', where he describes 'the path that looks/ as if it led on to some legendary/ or fancied place where men have wished to go/ And stay; but they find that 'sudden, it ends where the wood ends'.[13] Here Thomas is trying to describe his characteristic yearning for some thing or some 'where' and his frustration in not being able to attain it. Lucy Newlyn quotes David Gervais saying, "A walk to Thomas was like a quest. Paths gave him a metaphor for knowing".[14] They led him on towards discovering truth and knowledge about himself and his ecstatic experiences.

It is widely believed that in *The Icknield Way* and more so in *In Pursuit of Spring* Thomas uses the symbolism of the road to demonstrate his travelling towards a knowledge of better expression for his writing which eventually led to the ecstatic experiences of poetry. All his life he had tried out different methods of writing his experiences, from his early essays through journalism to stories and then to poetry and one of the problems that critics feel occupied him so much at this time was that he seemed to be coming out of the darkness of his feeling of exile from the Romantic Period and the poets whom he admired for their means of expression, to the present darkness of not being able to find a way of expressing himself that related to the twentieth century. Longley tells us that, 'Thomas unwaveringly believed that the new century required a new poetry, even if not one which would directly express its spirit'.[15] By the time he wrote *In Pursuit of Spring* he was more confident and sure of his voice and eventually he emerged into the light with the outpouring of his poetry, but he never lost that sense of yearning and searching even in the poems, showing that it was part of his nature anyway.

In an essay called 'Edward Thomas and England', Robert Wells says of Thomas and Robert Frost that, 'Both men feel themselves to be face to face with an immense and uncontrollable darkness about which nothing can be understood'. However, it is metaphorical darkness which he says that Frost 'tends to fight…,

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[11] Thomas, *The Icknield Way* p. vii.
[12] John Moore, *The Life and letters of Edward Thomas* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1939) p.172.
[13] Thomas, *Ann. Coll. Poems*, p.72.
[14] Lucy Newlyn `"The Shape of the Sentences": Edward Thomas`s tracks in contemporary poetry`, in *Branch-Lines*, Guy Cuthbertson and Lucy Newlyn, eds.(London: Enitharmon 2007)p.72.
[15] Edna Longley *A Language not to be Betrayed* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1981) p.ix.

while Thomas tends to welcome it'.[16] This is true on some occasions for Thomas, especially early on in his life when he walked in the darkness of night and enjoyed it,[17] but that was a physical darkness and not the metaphor for gloom and death which it later became. *The Childhood of Edward Thomas,* begins with his remembrance of a 'sweet darkness' which enfolded his life until he was about four. He finds it difficult to remember more than this, but it is a blessed, mystical memory, speaking of love and comfort and protection. When he tries to penetrate the darkness he hears the voice of his mother singing. Thomas regarded his mother highly and cared for her intensely all his life and it is this same feeling for maternal comfort that comes into his wish for the spiritual experience of religion. However, he never managed to gain the 'comfort' of religion which, according to the conclusion of his Oxford notebook entries, he wanted to experience when he went up to Oxford, and this would no doubt have taken away some of the fear of the darkness of death that he obviously had. He compares this lack of a religious experience to the "lack of a mother's sweetness in one's early education",[18] a concept that will be enlarged on in chapter three.

The fear of darkness and its connection with death and the war is portrayed in several of his poems, especially the penultimate one 'Out in the Dark'.[19] Thomas wrote this poem on embarkation leave and said his younger daughter's fear of the dark inspired it. Edna Longley quotes a letter to Eleanor Farjeon in which he says, "It is really Baba [Myfanwy, his younger daughter] who speaks, not I. Something she felt put me on to it".[20] But he is the one who fears 'Drums on my ear' presaging his going to war. The whole poem has a sinister feel increased by the first line of the second verse, 'Stealthily the dark haunts round/', and especially the last verse, 'How weak and little is the light,/ All the universe of sight,/ Love and delight,/ Before the might,/ If you love it not, of night'.

The earlier description of the Icknield Way connects the idea of darkness with death in a depressing way, but in *The South Country* Thomas is gaining from his travelling, again with connections to an 'underworld', 'all the *joys* [my italics] of life which come through the nostrils from the dark, not understood world which is unbolted for us by the delicate and savage fragrances of leaf and flower and grass and clod'.[21] His love of contrasting opposites here reveals a happy mix of masculine and feminine which echoes the sense of the 'mildness and wildness' that he admired in Coleridge's work and found in his pilgrimage to Coleridge's country. In the above passage his senses are stimulated by the combination of opposites and disparate parts that happens naturally in nature but which he found difficult to unite in himself. Nature's darkness is beneficent and even though its world is not immediately 'understood', something of it is revealed to him through his senses and is like a 'mother's sweetness' when compared with the immortal darkness of the soul which he and Frost seem to face and which seems to be implied in the above poem. For him the darkness of nature is a happily mystical experience, but his ambiguous

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[16] Robert Wells `Edward Thomas and England`, in *The Art of Edward Thomas*, ed.by Jonathan Barker (Southampton: The Camelot Press, 1987) pp. 63-74(p.65).
[17] Macfarlane, p.197.
[18] R. George Thomas, *Edward Thomas: A Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) p. 93.
[19] Thomas, Ann. Coll. Poems, p.138.
[20] Ibid., p.319.
[21] Thomas, *The South Country,* p. 60.

feeling for it later becomes fear as his depression deepens, and even later when the darkness becomes man-made as he looks towards his somewhat inevitable death in France.

Darkness for Thomas also connects with age. As previously seen, 'Dark Lane' in 'The Pilgrim' is so named because of the 'sense of its ancientness' rather than due to 'an extremity of shade', which adds to its healing power. Another poem of his, 'The Combe',[22] connects age with darkness in that the coombe is described as 'ancient and dark' because a badger was killed there, - 'That most ancient Briton of English beasts'. The darkness is a primordial one and in calling the badger an 'ancient Briton' Smith reminds us that he is going back to 'that legendary darkness which preceded the English and ultimately the Roman Empire too'.[23] Smith suggests that the badger represented 'that which remained most authentic and original at the core of Englishness'. 'Englishness' included 'Welshness' for Thomas, which is a concept that will be examined in chapter two in connection with hiraeth.

As a contrast to the apparent darkness of some old roads, Thomas describes in *The South Country*, how 'men set out upon [them]…at dawn with hope and followed after joy and were fain of their whiteness at evening'.[24] He is obviously thinking here about the whiteness of a chalk cart road against the darkness of evening, his poet's eye loving the contrasts of light and dark. Motion, discussing Thomas's poem 'Roads', explains how he saw them as 'a thread connecting dawn and dusk',[25] and this same idea is expressive of the early pilgrims who travelled from dawn to dusk, from darkness to darkness. Thomas's previously-mentioned similarity to them will be enlarged on in chapter three, but this concept of the road is also symbolic of the natural cycle of not only our day but our lives and therefore unites past, present and future. Thomas often in his poems returns from the dark present to the darkness of a vaguely-remembered past, in a longing similar to hiraeth, as in his well-loved poem, 'Old Man' where he is trying to think of what it is he is trying to remember but the result is, 'Only an avenue, dark, nameless, without end',[26] which has the sinister ring of a death premonition but could also be part of the notion of the never-ending cycle of life, a similar concept to his earlier description of the Icknield Way.

This longing for something in the past is connected with *hiraeth* for Wales where a major part of Thomas's walking, especially in his younger days, was purely for pleasure. He also used to wander freely on the various commons near his homes in Wandsworth, Clapham and Balham and also in the Wiltshire countryside of Jefferies when on school holidays staying with his grandmother in Swindon. Later, his walks were in what he called the 'South Country' of England, which, in his own words is the area 'south of the Thames and Severn and east of Exmoor, and it includes, therefore, the counties of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorset, and part of Somerset'.[27] His preference was for walking in the far West of England and especially Wales, often whilst staying with Welsh relations. Wisniewski quotes Thomas calling Wales his "soul's native land" in his 'Field

[22] Thomas, *Ann. Coll. Poems*, p.48.
[23] Smith, p.22.
[24] Thomas, *The South Country*, p.65.
[25] Motion, p.129.
[26] Thomas, *Ann. Coll. Poems,* p.36.
[27] Thomas, *The South Country*, p.19.

Notebook',[28] and in the same paragraph cites Thomas's statement: "Day by day grows my passion for Wales. It is like a homesickness, but stronger than any homesickness I ever felt – stronger than any passion". However by the time he writes *The South Country* he has come to regard that area as 'a kind of home', although he still feels he is 'mainly Welsh'.[29] Macfarlane believes, in his introduction to the book, that Thomas was eased by, above all landscapes, the south country, but it is obvious that his strong feeling for Wales never left him and as Myfanwe, his youngest daughter says in her Foreword to *Letters to Helen Thomas*,

I am sure that my father's feeling of searching for something, of not belonging came from a yearning – hiraeth (a beautiful, untranslatable Welsh word) – to belong to Wales but that he could not honestly ease his way in, as it were, without being born and reared there.[30]

Also, his last two books bring in the reward of seeing or imagining Wales at the end of the journey. *The Icknield Way* ends by saying that 'The utmost reward' for the traveller would be to find himself in Wales 'on the banks of the Towy or ....at St. David's itself'[31], and *In Pursuit of Spring* describes a rainbow over the 'blueness of the hills of South Wales'.[32]

Although strongly connected with Wales, his yearning and searching always appeared to be towards an ecstasy or joy which was elusive and ungraspable. As John Powell Ward says, 'But something in the trees, weeds or garden fences was just out of reach;'.[33] One of the purposes of this study is to try to discover more about this 'something' and whether it is an ideal home, a moment of ecstasy, or both or something else, an investigation that will be undertaken more fully in the following chapters. In his poem 'The Glory',[34] he is enticed on by the beauty of the morning to the 'something sweeter than love' that he cannot capture or realise, but which appears to be one of those ecstatic moments which are revealed in many of his poems and prose works. In the poems he is rarely able to grasp them, but in his prose stories his characters are able and studying these is a valuable way of analysing their nature.

The book in which Thomas realises his most prolonged and gratifying period of ecstasy is *In Pursuit of Spring* when he seemed happiest because he had a goal in mind. His mind was on the future and the rewards of achieving the goal rather than his present circumstances and this led to a reduction in his self-consciousness compared with his other writings. His goals generally were unsought but seem to equate with his ecstatic experiences, as Howarth identifies in discussing the poem, 'I never saw that land before'. The speaker 'never expected anything/ Nor yet remembered: but some goal/ I touched then;'[35] and he continues to describe an experience brought on by the beauty of the natural scene with which he is at one. If his goal is to see or capture a moment of beauty, this is subconscious as he generally

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[28] Wisniewksi, p.2.
[29] Thomas, *The South Country*, p. 23.
[30] Myfanwe Thomas, *Edward Thomas, Letters to Helen*, ed. by R. George Thomas (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2000)p.vii.
[31] Thomas, *The Icknield Way*, p. 310.
[32] Thomas, *In Pursuit of Spring,* pp. 300-1.
[33] John Powell Ward in *Branch-Lines*, p.229.
[34] Thomas, *Ann. Coll. Poems*, p.87.
[35] Ibid., p.120.

seeks 'to take much beauty by surprise…I never go out to see anything', as he tells us in *The South Country.* [36] Howarth says, 'the goal must be unpredicted and only found *en route'*,[37] which connects with his haphazard walking method. However, the goal in *In Pursuit of Spring* was predicted and planned and was found at the end. The goal was the Quantocks, with its memories of Coleridge and Wordsworth, and his aim was to arrive at the same time as spring, which he exaltingly achieved.

Nevertheless, Thomas generally disliked the self-conscious pursuing of known goals, particularly literary ones. Howarth continues: 'Such self-conscious conquest was equally what he disliked in Georgian Poetry where the poets are "loudly pursuing some form of magic, rapture or beauty", and he praises "Messers Davies and de la Mare" for not being "certain of their goal or of their way".[38] However Thomas himself did subconsciously pursue other goals, as in his poem mentioned above, but it was not a conscious pursuing of a known goal, as Coombes seems to think when he finds something 'relatively immature in the way Thomas often refers to happiness and beauty as "goals" that can conceivably be reached and retained, as if he hoped a golden land existed at the end of a journey'.[39] It seems obvious that to realise he had touched the goal, he must have experienced it before or had an idea of what it was, and it may have been connected with happiness, but knowing Thomas it is more likely to have been much deeper - a moment of ecstasy. Howarth clinches the argument by quoting Thomas saying that "happiness become conscious has deteriorated to pleasure, that life is not worth living for the sake of its pleasures".[40]

However unconscious Thomas's goal-seeking was, in his writing he always seemed to be on a spiritual quest. Jem Poster calls it 'an unfulfilled quest for a truth that lies beyond firm apprehension, and still further beyond clear definition'.[41] It is noticeable here that Poster talks about *a* truth rather than *the* truth because for Thomas, as for many people, truth is ambiguous, particularly when connected with memory. In his poem 'The Chalk-Pit',[42] one of the speakers says, 'I should prefer the truth or nothing' and Thomas constantly tried to get at the truth but often it seemed to elude him and become different things. Poster quotes the vague and ambiguous description of the bird's song in Thomas's poem 'The Unknown Bird': 'Sad more than joyful it was, if I must say/ That it was one or the other, but / 'Twas sad only with joy too, too far off/ For me to taste it'.[43] When discussing this poem in which he is trying to discover the identity of a bird that no-one else could see or hear, Poster compares Thomas's problem with that of James's in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse,* when James is confronted with the actual tower which is different from his previous image of it and eventually has to admit that both images are the same lighthouse.[44] Poster's thoughts about this poem reveal an aspect of Thomas's

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[36] Thomas, *The South Country*, p. 21.
[37] Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.67.
[38] Ibid., p.77.
[39] Coombes, p. 209.
[40] Howarth, p. 73.
[41] Jem Poster,`I Cannot Tell: Edward Thomas`s Uncertainties` in *Branch-Lines*, p.47.
[42] Thomas, *Ann.Coll.Poems*, p.88.
[43] Ibid. p.55
[44] Poster in *Branch-Lines*, p.46.

Modernism, the question of how we look at reality and whether there are multiple ways of looking at it.

This connects with Thomas's use of the double; the part of him which was always on show and the hidden one which was still Thomas. There is a sense in which he was always on a quest to discover the truth about himself and his experiences, to find his real self, analyse it and somehow unite his two sides. This knowledge helped him to experience some healing and recovery from his depression. The notes he took while out walking reflect this desire for truth by helping him with correct details of weather and landscape as well as wildlife, buildings, gravestones and their inscriptions.

Stan Smith talks about the 'quest which is also a flight', Thomas's flight from himself, as in 'The Other', and he quotes a passage from *The South Country* in which Thomas mentions two desires, 'one for going on and on over the earth, the other that would settle for ever, in one place as in a grave and have nothing whatever to do with change...'.[45] Thomas hated change yet always wanted something else, for instance was constantly moving house, mostly out of choice, but sometimes having a move thrust on him. He always felt that the next place would be better and more conducive to working at home but his personality hardly ever allowed that. Eventually, when he had made the decision to go to war and his poems were flowing, he was more united and at peace with himself and this poem was an early one, written before he finally decided to enlist.

As a contrast to this poem which has some sinister overtones, the quest to find spring in *In Pursuit of Spring* is a happier, lighter piece of writing. Critics point to its being 'almost poetry', which his friend Robert Frost said it was. Wisniewski picks out various passages and shows how they could be poetry as they stand. He says, 'It is an attractive possibility to read the book as Thomas's "road to poetry" both in the metaphoric and the literal sense'.[46] This is true in that it was his last book before his poetry started to flow, but as Lucy Kendall emphasises this was a 'gradual process arising out of responses to earlier writing'.[47] He had been experimenting with some poems before this book was written, early in 1913, and he had for a long time been considering an appropriate style of verse. Kendall refers to a letter written to Walter de la Mare on 7th September 1913 where he records an aborted attempt at poetry. Therefore the book should not be read as merely a road to poetry with the goal of a new method of communication at the end, but also as a lyrical and entertaining travel book that reveals much of Thomas and his spiritual journey.

Apart from *In Pursuit of Spring*, when he had a definite, concrete goal, Thomas is similar to the peregrini, or pilgrims that Robert Macfarlane describes. They were originally monks and religious travellers from the sixth to eleventh centuries who set out to travel to bays, forests, promontories, mountain-tops and islands of the Atlantic shores in search of something that he explains as 'wildness'. He says that these travels reflected their longing to 'achieve correspondence between belief and place, between inner and outer landscapes', [48] which is what Thomas tried to do on his walks. Macfarlane says that for these writers, 'attention was a form of devotion

[45] Thomas, *The South Country*, p. 111.
[46] Wisniewski, p.103.
[47] Judy Kendall, *Edward Thomas`s Poets*, (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2007) p.xiv.
[48] Macfarlane, p. 24.

and noticing continuous with worship'.[49] Thomas's attention to detail and 'noticing' the smallest details of the natural world, has been previously mentioned in connection with his poetry and is aptly illustrated in his poem 'But these things Also',[50] where his noticing the 'shell of a little snail', 'chip of flint' and 'mite of chalk' is a kind of meditation and almost nature worship. Also, 'wildness' was something he prized.

These ancient pilgrims were exiles in search of a promised land, and to some extent so was Thomas. He is the 'superfluous man' of his story in *The South Country* about another Thomas double who felt he did not belong anywhere. Thomas always felt himself an exile from his 'soul's native land', Wales, and also never really felt at home even when living in his chosen area in the country. The 'superfluous man', reflecting Thomas, says, 'I realise that I belong to the suburbs still. I belong to no class or race, and have no traditions.... I am world-conscious, and hence suffer unutterable loneliness'.[51] Robert Wells, in comparing Thomas with Bunyan, describes him as, 'a pilgrim without religious belief' who 'has no celestial city to journey towards',[52] meaning that although Thomas's journeys were not religious in the sense of travelling towards relics or holy places of religious faith, they were nevertheless like pilgrimages in that he travelled to find a deeper meaning in his life, to know himself better, and to find some sort of metaphorical home where he could rest. He also gained inner strength and healing from his journeys in the same way as the pilgrims would have done from visiting their shrines and holy places, but not the comforting prospect of journeying 'home' to heaven. The journeys for Thomas often seem inevitable and obligatory, more so without any goal, as in *The South Country*, where one of his characters is aware of 'the endless pale road....which the soul has to travel'.[53] This spiritual aspect will be investigated further in chapter three.

As has been mentioned, critics generally, especially Edna Longley, have identified Thomas's 'goal' as his successful poetry writing, and this was without doubt one of them but it was not his only goal. Longley comments on this in the poem 'I never saw that land before',[54] in which Thomas reveals: 'some goal/ I touched then;', but she also suggests that it was also the going back in his memory, or actually, in the yearning of *hiraeth t*o a special place in Wales where he had previously experienced one of his 'moments' of ecstasy. Longley quotes a section from his essay 'Penderyn' which recalls Thomas's visit in October 1914, and says it could be the same valley as that described in the poem. He talks about seeking and sometimes finding a goal more explicitly in the poetry, but in his stories the characters seek and always find and grasp it. Often it is an elusive moment of ecstasy as in his stories, 'The Island',[55] and 'The Artist',[56] which will be discussed in relation to ecstasy in chapter two. Sometimes the wish or need to reach the moment of self-forgetfulness is the driving force and in both these stories the beauty of nature

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[49] Ibid,, p.29.
[50] Thomas, *Ann.Coll.Poems*, p, 67.
[51] Thomas, *The South Country*, p. 85.
[52] Wells, *The Art of E.T.* p.65.
[53] Thomas, *The South Country*, p.78
[54] Thomas, *Ann. Coll. Poems*, p. 120.
[55] Thomas, `The Island` in *Light and Twilight,* pp.38-42.
[56] Thomas, *The Ship of Swallows*, pp.57-60.

lures the humans on towards an ecstatic experience. In his story, 'The Attempt',[57] the goal is self-elimination and the attraction of death by suicide, but reaching the goal always involves a forgetting of self, a requisite for his moments of ecstasy.

In other stories a oneness with the natural world is sought, which has the same end result. Adams, a painter in 'The Artist', 'walked steadily, but more and more slowly, into the broadening and deepening of the great day'.[58] His whole yearning and aim was to merge with the beauty before him and it was that place of unity that was the unconscious goal. Richard Harries quotes C.S.Lewis saying, "We do not merely want to *see* beauty…we want something else that can hardly be put into words-to be united to the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it".[59] With Thomas, this impulse is a partially unconscious goal as he does not realise that is what he has been aiming at until he reaches it.

The idea is stronger even than this in 'The Glory'. The speaker actually wants to take the 'moment' into himself in the action of biting. After partially experiencing a moment of ecstasy Thomas retreats from the beauty he is tempted towards and ends the poem with the line, 'I cannot bite the day to the core'. In his essay 'The Stile',[60] which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, he does not retreat but is able to fully experience the moment. He takes it into himself and uses it to forecast a confident and happy future. He describes being caught up with an 'immortal company' and the whole of nature, which he is equal to and at one with. It is an ecstatic period of epiphany which leaves him with the confidence to continue in oneness with the 'Infinite', however that is interpreted. His hesitant, doubting, over self-conscious self has disappeared. Whatever may happen to him in the future he is confident that he will always be united with the earth and sky, and that he has a purpose in the order of things. It seems to be the fulfilment of his yearning and searching.

This confidence is mirrored in the planning of the route for his pilgrimage to the Quantocks from London for *In Pursuit of Spring*. As he says at the beginning, it is a journey in a 'March Easter' and he was happy, 'The wind blew and the sun shone over London. A myriad roofs laughed together in the light'.[61] He speaks of the Quantocks as 'a distinct and sufficient goal because they form the boundary between the south-west and the west'. This is no 'unseen moving goal', the part of himself which he was chasing in 'The Other', but a fixed and definite reference point where he can feel his divided self united through the enjoyment of the spring countryside of the romantic poets, and at the same time see into Wales, the country he loved best.

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[57] Ibid., pp.61-66.
[58] Ibid., pp.57-60 (p. 57).
[59] Harries, 10-24 (p.20).
[60] Thomas, `The Stile` in *Light and Twilight* pp. 32-4 (33-4).
[61] Thomas, *In Pursuit of Spring*, p. 10.

Reviews

Andrew Webb, *Edward Thomas and World Literary Studies: Wales, Anglocentrism and English Literature* (Wales University Press, 2013)

Andrew Webb aims at nothing less than a thorough-going revisionist reading 'that challenges the prevailing critical consensus on Edward Thomas in several ways'. His book is a confrontation with received opinion and closed minds among those who read and study Thomas, and in pursuit of these ends it has certain flaws. Webb's prime aim is to reconfigure or repatriate Thomas, whose works are so often viewed as essentially English, as a Welsh writer whose Welshness has hitherto not been appreciated by critics. Thomas's 'Englishness' is now to be seen partly as a front for various subversions of British imperialism and colonial domination of Wales and a challenge to Anglocentric literary attitudes and culture. Webb offers his reading of Thomas as an example, within the growing discipline of world literary studies, of how a writer may be 'recovered' for his or her national literature in such a way that takes account of the historical, political and economic circumstances that condition literary expression and reception.

Webb begins his account of Thomas's literary development with the influence of O. M. Edwards, Thomas's tutor at Oxford, whose journal *Wales* proclaimed in 1891 'a literature that will be English in language but Welsh in spirit', and to whom Thomas wrote 'I am Welsh' and of an intention 'to help you and the Welsh cause'. This starting point is taken at the cost of ignoring other, equally plausible, formative influences such as the writer James Ashcroft Noble to whom Thomas dedicated *The Woodland Life* (1897), his first book, which Webb also ignores, and Thomas's expressions of early homage to Richard Jefferies.

Anglocentric critics have set the prevailing tone for misreading Thomas by failing to connect his Welshness, readily identifiable in his biography, with the aesthetic concerns of his work. An aspect of the rot set in early, Webb believes, with Thomas's friend and collaborator Walter de la Mare, who famously used the phrase 'mirror of England' in his introduction to the first edition of Thomas's *Collected Poems* in 1920, three years after the poet's death in the Battle of Arras. Webb enlists de la Mare as a World War 1 apologist who 'clearly tries to read Thomas's posthumously published poetry in a way that legitimizes the death of British soldiers in France' by stressing the rural England for which all the sacrifice supposedly occurred. 'His approach Anglicises Thomas, implicitly conflating Britain, whose uniform Thomas wore when he died, with the rural England his poetry supposedly represents, a simplification which, of course, leaves no room for his Welshness,' Webb says.

While it is almost axiomatic that the specific society in which an artist's work is written, read and criticized conditions the criticism, reading and writing (a poet is 'a mirror of his times' and critics no less so), some readers of Webb's analysis might have welcomed a more nuanced approach to de la Mare's Introduction that also examines, for example, their joint explorations of English countryside and literature, and de la Mare's own feelings for Thomas. Webb identifies further 'appropriations'

of Thomas in the cause of British culture at times of anxiety in Robert P. Eckert, an early biographer and Thomas's first bibliographer, before the Second World War; in Eleanor Farjeon's *Edward Thomas: The Last Four Years* in the late 1950s; and in the Northern Ireland poetry of Michael Longley. In all these cases, the lack of attention to other perspectives makes for very uncomfortable reading.

In his own 'introduction' to Thomas, Webb states that Thomas's prose has often been seen as 'preparatory work for the later poetry, but this is somewhat misleading, for it was not seen this way at the time.' This appears at odds with his earlier contention that the substantial body of prose and literary journalism has hitherto been largely overlooked. Either way, neither statement can be wholly supported. Thomas's prose is gradually being restored to print and interest in it has probably never been higher, although the famous 'just over a million words about 1,200 books' (R. George Thomas's estimate of Thomas's reviewing) has many avenues still to explore. More significantly, Webb fails to read the signs or the importance of the account Thomas leaves in his prose of his struggle to become a poet.

Webb confronts more than critics' unawareness of the details of the allusions to Wales and Welsh culture in Thomas's writings. He has to deal also with what he believes is a disinclination to see. By isolating and glossing Thomas's Welsh allusions, Webb constructs a narrative that 'locates' Thomas in a Welsh literary tradition. Some of this needs to be done. As Webb points out: 'The *Happy-Go-Lucky Morgans* [Thomas's only novel, published in 1913] is full of references … to Welsh culture which, being unexplained, are easy for the reader unfamiliar with Welsh culture to miss.' However, there is a vein of reductionism that runs through Webb's book, inevitably given Webb's objectives, and a tendency to strain as well as to inflate the significance of specific allusions—a mention can become an 'intervention', 'may allude' can modulate into 'alludes', allusions can be 'functions' and interest can 'inform' the work. Yet, without doubt, some passages of Thomas will never be read in quite the same way again after Webb's determined unearthing, and he proves again what has often been proven before, that Thomas is so complex that he must be read with all one's receptors fully open and receiving clearly.

Nowhere is this truer than in Webb's readings of certain of Thomas's poems. His approach is certainly out of the ordinary, but of course it is: the 'ordinary' is the Anglocentric consensus Webb seeks to 'complicate'. Here are two types of complication. Concerning the first stanza of 'Gone, gone again', Webb writes: 'While Thomas does not employ a strict c*ynghanedd* metre [a system of sound-chiming peculiar to Welsh verse], the techniques central to it—internal rhyme and constant repetition—effectively revolutionise the traditional form, which is pared down to the extent that it becomes something else'; while from 'Words', the line 'Choose me, you English words', 'may be read as that of a poet from outside the English nation, but one who nevertheless writes in the English language, as is indeed implied in the main inversion here: that the words choose the poet rather than vice versa.' There are similar notable revisionist readings of 'In Memoriam', 'Tears', 'The Combe' and 'The Other', which Webb links to 'coded' homosexuality and Thomas's 'subversion' of another dominant British cultural space, its anti-gay stance after the trial of Oscar Wilde.

Webb maps his template onto Thomas's work, ignoring much else that is not thus covered, so that his readings of the poems seem to downplay their origins in

emotion and experience, and the value these have for readers. Webb argues that Thomas 'uses his chosen position as a Welsh writer to subvert Anglocentric British literary space in specific ways.' His analysis, he says, 'takes issue with Edna Longley, the critic who has most shaped the field of Thomas studies for the last forty years, by complicating her Larkin-inspired presentation of him as the "missing link" in a native English poetic tradition' that follows a different course from Modernism. But Longley, especially in her Introduction and Notes in her edition of Thomas's *Collected Poems* (2008) has identified 'newer critical vocabularies'.

Edward Thomas and World Literary Studies is not exactly, as Webb claims, 'one of the first books to draw attention to' Thomas's writing across genres as journalist, prose writer and poet. But it contains much that is telling, some of which has not been told before, as well as much that works by suggestion and inference only. By positing Thomas's Welshness as 'central' to his work, it ignores other claims. How many centralities can a writer's work have? That is a primary question about Thomas, which Webb, within the framework of world literary studies, has yet to consider.

John Monks

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Seán Street's *Cello* (Rockingham Press, 2013) includes the poem 'Selborne', which was published in the last newsletter. The collection has five sections: 'Stone and Source', 'Cello Music', 'Three Songs', 'Not Being There' and 'Towards the Estuary'. The poet engages with a number of different landscapes, writers and themes, and the poems will surely appeal to admirers of Edward Thomas's work. There's an explicit connection with Thomas's era: *Cello* includes two poems that were commissioned by the Scott Polar Research Institute and the City of London Sinfonia for Cecilia McDowall's cantata *Seventy Degrees Below Zero*, marking the centenary of the death of Scott of the Antarctic. And the poem 'New Year' carries the subtitle '('*Combat Stress Reaction*': Cpl. Edgar Street, French Polisher, 1883-1952. Passchendaele, 1917)'.

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The George Borrow Society was formed in 1991 for those interested in the life and work of the writer George Henry Borrow (1803-1881), a gifted linguist and enthusiastic traveller whose best-known books were *The Bible in Spain* (1843), *Lavengro* (1851), *The Romany Rye* (1857) and *Wild Wales* (1862).

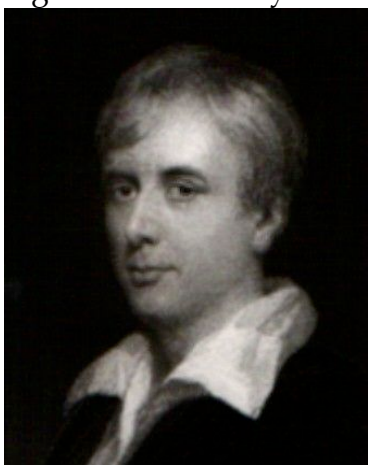
Until about 1940 Borrow was much admired. Today he is sadly neglected and unappreciated by many academics and by the general reader, but Society members, who come from a wide range of backgrounds and walks of life around the world, share a passion for Borrow and enjoy excursions to the many places in the UK and abroad visited by the writer and described in his works.

In fact one would expect him to be of interest to present-day readers, not least as a travel writer whose work hovers between autobiography, fiction and 'writing the road', and is therefore hard to categorise. He does not fit neatly into any one genre! He was also a notable linguist who devoted much of his time, with total enthusiasm but little success, to the translation of poetry from an amazing 47 languages. He was, both literally and metaphorically, a literary tourist, passionately keen, in Wales especially, to track down the birthplaces and graves of the poets he so much admired.

The Society meets in places associated with Borrow in order to hear formal papers on his life and work and to follow in his footsteps. In recent years we have followed his tracks in places as far-flung as Clonmel in Tipperary, St Petersburg, Southwold, Salamanca, Debrecen in Hungary, the Isle of Man, Llangollen, Seville, Gibraltar and Norwich. In 2014 the Society plans to hold events in Peterborough, Norwich and the Isle of Anglesey.

Twice a year the *George Borrow Bulletin* is published. This is a substantial journal which includes scholarly articles as well as news, notes and queries, details of relevant publications and book reviews, and reports of meetings with the full text of papers given.

New members are always made very welcome! Please see the Society's website at http://georgeborrow.org/ for further information.
George Borrow Society: http://georgeborrow.org/.
George Borrow Trust: www.georgeborrowtrust.org.uk.
See also the Friends of the George Borrow Society Facebook Group.



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Oxford University's Spring School on "*British*" *World War One Poetry* will be held 3 April 2014 - 5 April 2014. Booking for the Spring School is now open.

Ticket Prices: there are several different ticket options. There will also be an optional dinner banquet on the Friday evening at an Oxford College for a supplementary charge of £40. College dinner places are limited to 50 tickets, so book early to avoid disappointment. *Please note the ticket price does not include accommodation.* Option 1: £180 full rate Option 2: £180 full rate plus £40 dinner = £220 Option 3: £150 student rate Option 4: £150 student rate plus £40 dinner = £190. http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/news-events/upcoming-events/201404/british-world-war-one-poetry-spring-school.

The poetry of the First World War is some of the most important and influential work of the twentieth century shaping our attitudes to war, and still having enormous cultural resonances as witnessed by the national debate surrounding the commemoration of 1914 one hundred years on. However the poetry also brings into question so many 'truths' that it is appropriate that in 2014 we revisit this important body of work in a new light. Whilst poets like Sassoon, Owen, Graves, Rosenberg, and Gurney warrant detailed focus, alongside this 'canon' we should also turn attention to the women poets from the period, as well as Irish and "Empire" poets - questioning the notion of a corpus of purely British literature from 1914-18.

This is the second spring school run by Oxford University's English Faculty. The School is open to (and aimed at) members of the public, and particularly at those who have read some WW1 poetry but are now seeking a deeper critical appreciation. It will bring together world-leading experts in the topic, each invited to give an introductory lecture guiding the attendees to further avenues of study. Speakers will be encouraged to put together reading lists and follow-up exercises for students to do after each lecture on their own.

Speakers confirmed so far include: Adrian Barlow, Meg Crane, Guy Cuthbertson, Gerald Dawe, Simon Featherstone, Philip Lancaster, Stuart Lee, Jean Liddiard, Alisa Miller, Charles Mundye, Jane Potter, Mark Rawlinson, Jon Stallworthy.

Guy Cuthbertson will be speaking on Edward Thomas, 'Edwardian War Poet', on Friday 4 April.

Further details to follow but for all queries contact: english.office@ell.ox.ac.uk please include in the subject line 'WW1 Poetry Spring School'.

This School will be an excellent preparation for those who are considering attending the English Association's Conference on the War Poets later in 2014 - http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association/ww1poetry/ww1poetry.

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Annual General Meeting 2nd March 2014.
The article about the 2014 Birthday walk gives notice of the Fellowship's Annual General Meeting which will be held in Steep Church after the afternoon walk. If members want an item included on the agenda, will they please write by the 10th of February 2014 to the Secretary at the address below:
21, Verlands, Congresbury, Bristol, BS49 5BL
Or email ianandbreeda@btinternet.com

Other News

Seamus Heaney's 'last poem', 'In a Field', was a poem inspired by Edward Thomas. 'In a Field' is a response to 'As the Team's Head-Brass'. This last poem received plenty of attention in the press in October. Heaney and Thomas made the front page of *The Guardian* as a major news story on Saturday 26 October.

The Scotsman published a short story by Alexander McCall Smith called 'Yes, I Remember'. It is based on 'Adlestrop' of course and is about a chance meeting and conversation in a train. Apart from quoting from 'Adlestrop' it also quotes Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'.

Ingatestone Pedallers, a cycling group, took an Edward Thomas-themed ride around Mid Essex on the 21 July 2013, which went through Shellow Bowells and by Skreens Park. See www.issuu.com. They also did a ride via Margaretting Tye twice earlier in the summer. Contact Robert W Fletcher (10 Cherry Trees, The Meads, INGATESTONE, Essex, CM4 0AP-01277 354431/07910 679369).

And for That Minute: Incident at Adlestrop Station GWR by Leonard McDermid is published by Stichill Marigold Press. Paperback, £8.00. Available postage-free from: Stichill Marigold Press, Eden Cottage, Stichill, Kelso, Roxburghshire, TD5 7TA; 01573 - 470 255; leonardmcdermid@gmail.com.

John Purkis's 'Morris, George Borrow and Edward Thomas: a Green Road Opening' was published in *The Journal of William Morris Studies*, Vol XX, number 2 (Summer 2013), 73-82.

No Through Road is a new collection of verse by David Sutton.

Less is More by K. D. Knight is a collection of stories that includes 'Narrowing A Yellow Square', a story inspired by Edward Thomas.

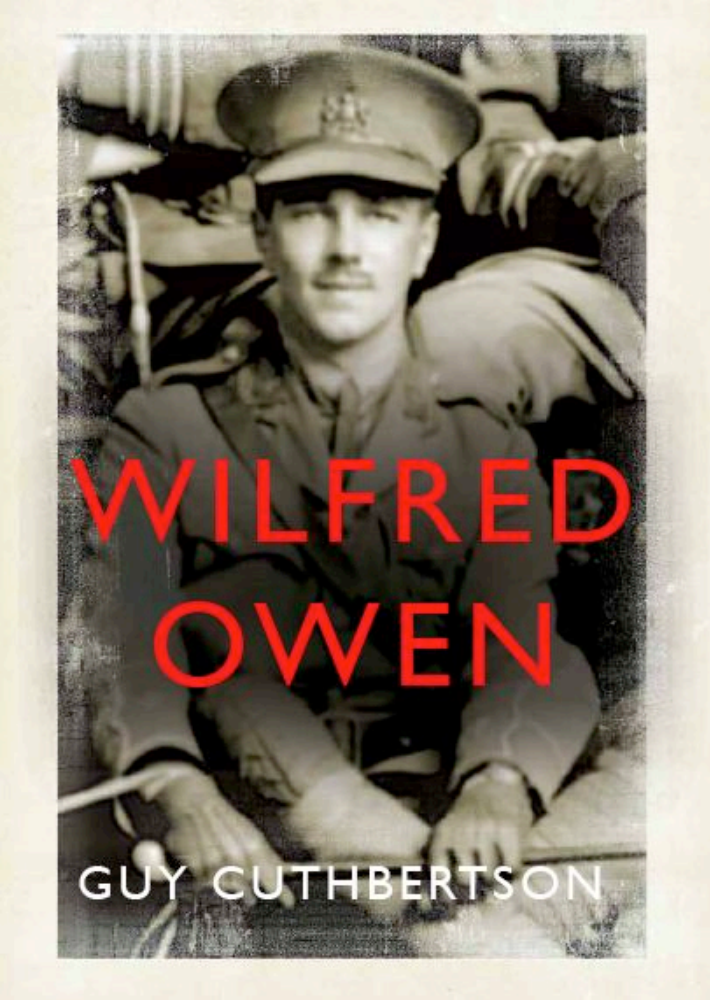
The *Open Country* programme on 30 January (repeated 1 February) was about Adlestrop.

Adlestrop village plus the Dymock poets are arranging something grand for 24th June when a chartered train will be stopping at Adlestrop and a 'celebrity' will be reading the poem. See Friends of Dymock Poets website for details.

A musical co-operative known as Pedal Folk conduct folk musical tours by bike. They have a large project lined up for April which involves following the route taken by Edward Thomas to celebrate the centenary of the publication of *In Pursuit of Spring*, writing songs based upon his prose and poetry as well as playing the songs he alludes to in his writing. For more information please visit www.pedalfolk.co.uk.

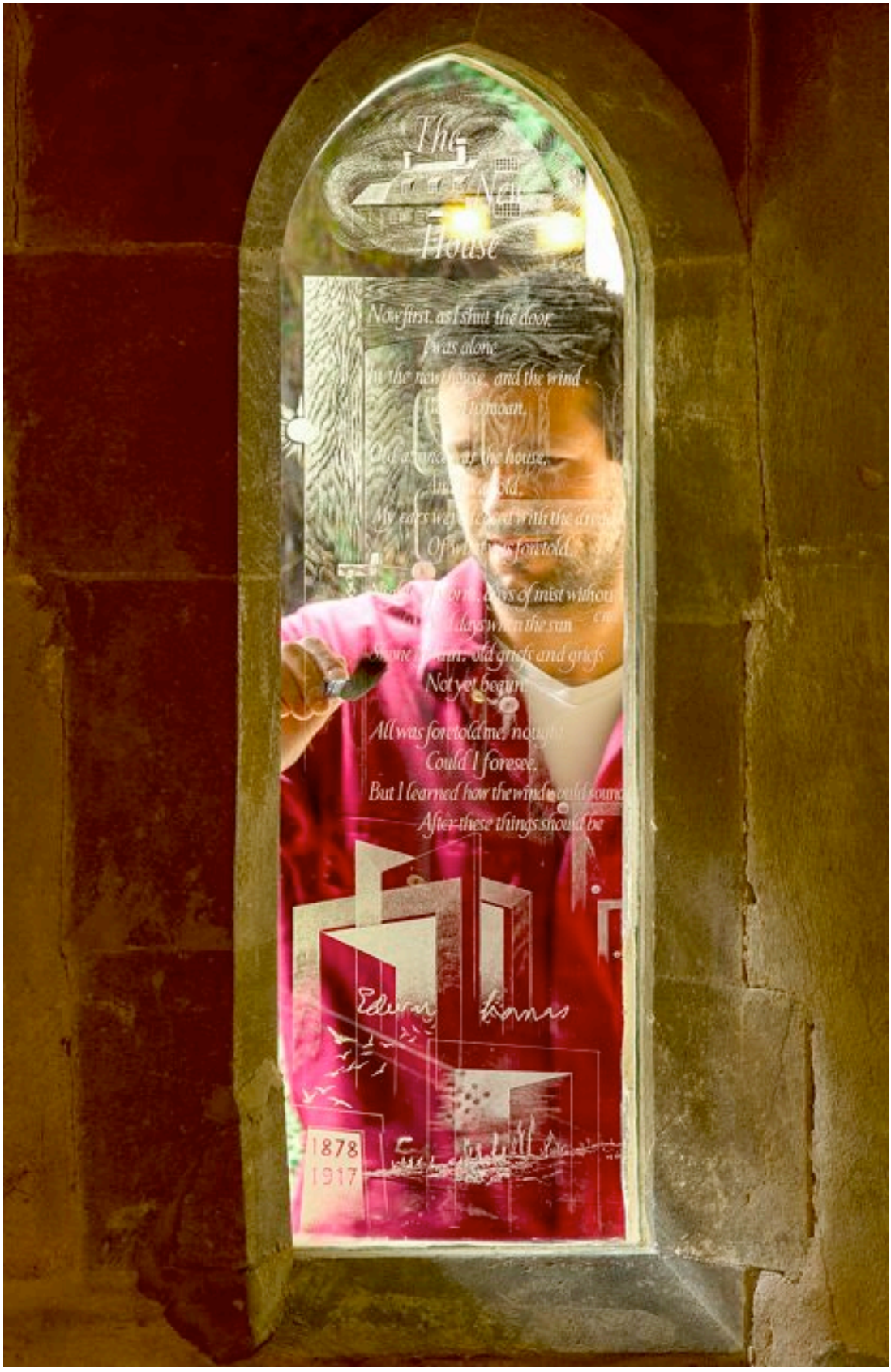
Radio 4's *Poetry Please* revealed that Robert Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' is the most broadcast requested poem. The 10 most broadcast poems on *Poetry Please* are
'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' – Robert Frost
'How do I love thee? Let me count the ways' – Elizabeth Barrett Browning
'Adlestrop' – Edward Thomas
'Fern Hill' – Dylan Thomas
'The Darkling Thrush' – Thomas Hardy
'Dover Beach' – Matthew Arnold
'Let me not to the marriage of true minds' – William Shakespeare
'The Listeners' – Walter De La Mare
'Remember' – Christina Rossetti
'To His Coy Mistress' – Andrew Marvell

Guy Cuthbertson's *Wilfred Owen* will be published by Yale University Press on 28 February. Edward Thomas appears in the book in a number of places, especially at Hare Hall. See www.yalebooks.co.uk.



Newsletter: it has been suggested that an electronic version of the Newsletter be made available to members as an alternative to the hard copy. We would like to gauge the amount of interest in this idea. Please contact Ian Morton or Guy Cuthbertson.

Back cover: the installation of the Edward Thomas window at Steep on 6 August 2013.


The
House
Now first, as I shut the door
I was alone
1878
1917