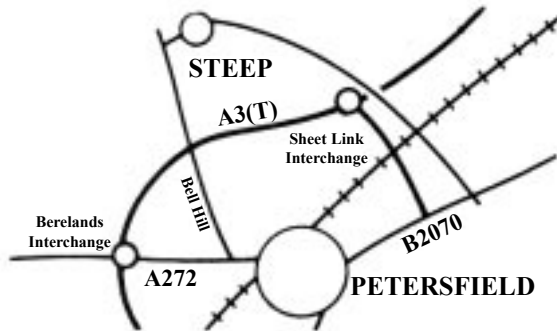


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## How to get there

Steep is two miles north of Petersfield just off the Petersfield to Alton road. Limited parking is available in Church Road. There is a bus service from Petersfield Station to the Cricketers pub.



### Places to visit in Steep

All Saints Church (at the start of the walk).

The Hangers Way, a medium distance footpath from Queen Elizabeth Country Park to Alton station (21 miles) passing through Petersfield, Steep and Selbome - details from East Hampshire District Council, Tel. 01730 234386 or Hampshire County Council, Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Tel.023 9259 5040.

**Refreshments** A range of snacks to full meals at the Cricketers pub. Also village shop. The Harrow Inn is situated one mile east on the Sheet road

**Information** Petersfield Tourist Information Centre  
01730 268829

MAPS - Ordnance Survey Path Finder 1265 - Petersfield and the Meon Valley (1:25,000).

Credits: This leaflet was prepared by Anne Mallinson for East Hampshire District Council:

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## Literary walks in East Hampshire



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### Edward Thomas 1878 - 1917

‘This corner of Hampshire provides the ground base to the majority of his poems’

R. George Thomas  
Biographer of Edward Thomas

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## *Points of literary interest*

- a No.2 Yew Tree Cottages, one of a group of semi-detached cottages in the village of Steep, was Edward Thomas's third and last home in the area. He lived here with his wife Helen and their three children, 1913 - 1916, during which time the majority of his poems were written.
- b Lutcombe Bottom with its deep coombe runs into the side of the chalk hills. A cottage once stood here. Thomas recalls a ruined one in his poem 'A Tale'  
*"Here once flint walls,  
Pump, orchard and wood pile stood  
Blue periwinkle crawls  
From the lost garden down into the wood."*
- c A path below the road which winds up Stoner Hill, away on your left is described by Edward Thomas in his poem 'The Path'.  
*"Running along a bank, a parapet  
That saves from the precipitous wood below  
The level road, there is a path. It serves  
Children for looking down the long smooth steep,  
Between the legs of beech and yew..."*
- d The third house on the right, the Red House, was the Thomases home from 1909 - 1913. Here Edward and Helen's younger daughter, Myfanwy, was born in 1910. She unveiled the plaque on the house in August 1985. Two of Edward Thomas's poems, 'The New House' and 'Wind and Mist' refer to the house. (The house is private property, please respect the privacy of the owner).
- e The subject of Edward Thomas's first poem 'Up in the Wind', an isolated inn, (The White Horse) lies away to the left, about two miles away...  
*"It hides from either road, a field's breadth back;  
And it's the trees you see, and not the house..."*
- f The memorial stone was erected in 1937 when the hillside was dedicated to the memory of Edward Thomas. There is a plaque on the stone. Thomas refers to the hill in several of his poems. In 'When First' he writes,  
*"Fast beat  
My heart at sight of the tall slope  
Of grass and yews,..."*  
Just below the stone is a wooden seat (replacing an earlier one) erected in memory of Rowland Watson and his wife, who did much to promote recognition of the poet.
- g Berryfield Cottage was the poet's first home in Hampshire. Edward and Helen Thomas moved here from Kent in 1906, so that their two children Merfyn and Bronwen could attend Bedales School.
- h Two small lancet windows designed and engraved by Laurence Whistler were installed in the south wall of the church in 1978 to commemorate the centenary of Edward Thomas's birth. The poet's name also appears on the memorial tablet situated on the wall, left, inside the church door.

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# Route

- 1 From Steep church walk across playing field opposite and at the far end of the Common follow footpath downhill through woodland and over stream. Climb stile, turn left and follow Northfield wood edge to wicket gate into Mill Lane. Turn right and stop to enjoy the fine view of the Hangers before you - the wooded slopes of Ashford hill and Shoulder of Mutton hill with its sweep of chalk grassland where the Edward Thomas memorial stone stands.
- 2 Almost immediately take the lane left to proceed up hill, leaving Mill Meadow Farm on your right. At this point look left across valley field and you will see Yew Tree Cottage - No.2 was the poet's last home - on the skyline, left of centre. (See a).
- 3 Proceed to T junction and turn right. Here the lane is sunken and tree lined, with ferns on the banks - a feature of this area. Continue to 'Hangers Way' sign on left and follow this trackway beside pond and the Ashford Stream to Lutcombe Bottom (See b).
- 4 At the end of the made-up track way keep straight on. If the climb up this bridleway looks too steep, an alternative route - but missing points D and E - will take you more gradually to the top of Shoulder of Mutton Hill. (See directions at the end of the text.) The bridleway climbs steeply up Ashford Hill between yew trees and bankside ferns. Stoner Hill is to your left. (See c). At the top turn right into Cockshott Lane - and you are on the level again.
- 5 On the right, you will pass the workshops of the famous furniture designer, Edward Barnsley.
- 6 The third house on the right is the Red House (See d). (Please respect the privacy of the owner). Continue along the lane - which gradually becomes a trackway - until you reach the sign 'Old Litten Lane' on your left (See e), keep straight on for a further few yards, then turn right at the 'Hangers Way' sign.
- 7 Follow the route straight down Shoulder of Mutton Hill, now bare of many of the magnificent beech trees which were uprooted in the hurricane of 1987, until you reach the Edward Thomas memorial stone. Here you have a panoramic view over the countryside. It is a fine place to stop for a while. (See f).
- 8 Continue straight down the hillside, ignoring the Hangers Way sign to the right. After descending a flight of steps cut into the hill, climb the stile at the bottom and follow field edge to the lane. At this point you can see Berryfield Cottage, to your right, a solid stone house with a tiled roof. This was the Thomases first home in the area. (See g).
- 9 Cross the lane and take the stile beside gate into field. Follow the path down valley and through wood. (Note the land on the right is private). Then, with the nursery plantation on the left and the Old Mill Pond on right, proceed until footpath turns right over footbridge by waterfall into Mill Lane.
- 10 Turn right and follow road until you reach the wicket gate into field on your left. You now retrace your steps back to Steep church - following the wood edge on your right until you reach the stile, and the footpath through the wood to the playing field again. If you would rather finish the walk by keeping to Mill Lane and seeing the war memorial, where "In Peace from the Battle" Edward Thomas's name appears in the Roll of Honour, instead of turning left at the wicket gate proceed straight on, up the road to the T junction. Where the war memorial stands turn left and you are back in Church Road, with Bedales School on the right and Steep church further along.

A visit to All Saints church will enable you to see the two small windows, dedicated to Edward Thomas. (See h).

### *Alternative Route.*

Take Hanger way path to to the right and follow this track up the hillside ignoring further Hangers way sign, to the top of the Shoulder of Mutton Hill. Then pick up the route again which leads right to the memorial stone.

# Map

