

Transcript of DP/MT/1/9/10

Bronwen Simmons, old-Bedalian older daughter of the poet Edward Thomas, dies peacefully at her home in the Lambourn Valley on Easter Saturday. She was 72.

Born in Kent when Edward and Helen Thomas and their son, Merfyn, were living at Rose Acre Cottage, Bearsted, near Maidstone, the family moved to Berryfield Cottage, Ashford Chace, at the foot of the Shoulder of Mutton hillside, in the autumn of 1906. This remained their home until 1909 when they moved into the Red House in Cockshott Lane – a house built for them by Geoffrey Lupton. Here their third child, Myfanwy, was born. Both Bronwen and Myfanwy attended Bedales School.

In 1913 they returned to the village of Steep where they lived for a further three years, and from Yew Tree Cottage Edward Thomas enlisted in the Artists Rifles in 1915.

Bronwen Simmon's last visit to Steep was on 3rd March 1974, on the occasion of the first Edward Thomas Birthday Walk held in memory of her father, born on 3rd March 1878. Led by Major John Bowen the walk took place from Petersfield to Selborne via the memorial stone to the poet on the Shoulder of Mutton hillside.

Due to ill-health Mrs. Simmons was unable to be present at the start of this year's birthday walk, but her good wishes were conveyed to the walkers before they left Steep church on Sunday 2nd March for this now annual event.

Edward Thomas was killed at the Battle of Arras on Easter Monday 1917. His widow survived him for 50 years, for the last twelve in the village of Eastbury, near Newbury, where their daughters Bronwen and Myfanwy also made their homes.

(See also Peterborough, Daily Telegraph, Saturday 12th April.

From Anne Mallinson

The Poetry Bookshop

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