

¹ "Memoriam (Easter, 1915)", Edward Thomas, from *Edward Thomas – The Annotated Collected Poems*, Ed. Edna Longley (Tarsset: Bloodaxe Books, 2008)

Continue to The Cricketers PH on Mill Green Common and through the woods (Stoneymore and Mill Green Common) to The Viper PH. Bear left at the junction and take Ingatestone Road towards Blackmore/Highwood.



Huskards House, Fryerning, Essex, October 2012

From the Community Club car park turn left down High Street towards Market Place and take the right turn on to Fryerning Lane on the right and follow the road, over the A12 bridge, to the green at Fryerning. Turn right towards Mill Green and Writtle bearing left at Huskards.



Ingatestone & Fryerning Community Association car park with new outdoor seating area, June 2013

The flowers left thick at nightfall in the wood. This Easteride call into mind the men, Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, should Have gathered them and will do never again.¹



THE RIDE



Ingatestone Pedallers Social Cycling Group

“EDWARD THOMAS - SHELOW” CYCLE RIDE

MAPS: OS: Landranger 167 - Chelmsford, Harlow & Bishop's Stortford, Explorer 175 - Southend on Sea & Basildon and 183 - Chelmsford & The Rodings; Sustrans Cycle Maps: Essex & the Thames Estuary Cycle Map

START & FINISH: Ingatestone & Fryerning Community Association car park, grid ref TQ652996

FURTHEST POINT IN THE RIDE: Skreens Park Farm on Elms Road, Roxwell, grid ref TL624086



St Christopher's, Willingale, July 2017. All photographs R W Fletcher unless stated.

Carry on straight past the turning to Boyton Cross and cycle on for another three miles, passing the hilltop wood on your right at Cooley Spring and the turning on the right to Elms Farm.



Road to Elms Farm off Elms Road, Roxwell, Essex, June 2013



Dukes, Roxwell, Essex, June 2013

You pass St Paul's church on the right and take the turning, Wyse's Road, on the left, which leads you to the junction with the A414 at The Fox and Goose PH. Carefully cross this busy road to Cooksmill Green where you cycle down past the church and houses, meeting NR1 Bridge, turning right at the junction directing you to Roxwell and Skreens. Take Stonehill Road for a mile and a half to Roxwell where you bear left on to Elms Road at the pretty junction with St Michaels School behind you, passing over Roxwell Brook and going past the large house, Dukes, on the right. This is where you meet part of the Essex section of Le Tour 2014 which follows Elms Road to the Willingale turning.



Highwood Village Hall, Loves Green, Highwood, Essex, April 2013

Down the hill you pass out of Ingatestone & Fryerning into Highwood around the bend on the descent by Barrow Wood on your left and along the lane past Oddy's wood yard and Cock Lane and on to the junction with Blackmore Road/Highwood Road with the road sign pointing left to "Barrow Farm Riding Disabled" and right to "Loves Green Edney Cm'n Writtle". Turn right and travel through Loves Green, Highwood. Go past school on the right and the new eco-friendly village hall on the left.



Fallow Deer resting at Deerslade Wood, Mill Green, Essex, June 2013

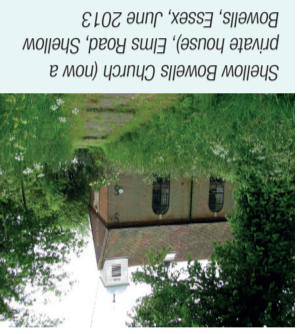
Tall nettles cover up, as they have done These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough Long worn out, and the roller made of stone: Only the elm butt tops the nettles now. This corner of the farmyard I like most: As well as any bloom upon a flower I like the dust on nettles, never lost Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.⁴

At the end of the village street turn left, back on NR1 again, towards Radley Green and Norton Heath on Spains Hall Road. This takes you past a large farm, Spains Hall, on the way to Pigstye Green, which, judging by the scent in the air around here on a warm day, seems a very appropriate name!



Willingale, Essex churchyard with its two churches, June 2013

You pass Skreens and hidden Georgian Shellow Bowells church, which was converted to a house in 1974. At Shellow Bowells you cross the Essex Way long distance footpath, again crossing it in Willingale, after you have taken the turning on the left which takes you through that pretty village with the cricket ground on the left and the churchyard with its two churches, Spain and Doe, on the right.



Shellow Bowells Church (now a private house), Elms Road, Shellow, Essex, June 2013

If I were to own this countryside As far as a man in a day could ride, - And the Tyes were mine for giving or letting, - Wingle Tye and Margaretting Tye, - and Skreens, Gooshays, and Cockerells, - and Martins, Lambkins, and Lillyputs, Their copses, ponds, roads and ruts...³

Bear right at Pigstye Green taking Norton Heath Road which travels round in a loop, on to Willingale Road leading to the Heath going past Offin's on your way. At Norton Heath, before you reach the A414 again, turn left on a short road indicated as "No Through Road" which takes you to the crossing of this road on to the small lane towards Fingrith Hall and Blackmore. Follow this down for a half mile or so and take Fingrith Hall Lane into Blackmore village by The Leather Bottle PH.



First World War air raid memorial window in Blackmore Church, Essex, June 2012

Turn left at the main road in the village, over the pond and right on to Ingatestone Road to Fryerning and Ingatestone. Follow this road round to the left on the sharp bend with the turning to Swallows Cross and Mountnessing and follow the road through the woods towards Woodbarns.



Fryerning Wood, Blackmore Road, Fryerning, Essex, June 2013

Follow Blackmore Road left at the junction with Green Street and cycle on past the turning on the left to Beggar Hill and on to Fryerning Church on its hill, passing Bag Lane to Mountnessing on the right on your way at the top of the dip. Going past the church you return to the green at Fryerning and then turn right and follow the original outward journey in reverse back to the Community Club car park where you started.

Now all roads lead to France
And heavy is the tread
Of the living; but the dead
Returning lightly dance:....⁵

The ride is approximately 20 miles, and the loop has taken you around some of the Essex countryside known by the poet Edward Thomas (1878-1917) who was killed by a shell burst at Arras in France. He had been stationed at Hare Hall Camp, at Gidea Park near Romford between November 1915 and September 1916 and his family had also been living for a time at High Beech near Epping. In her two volume memoir of her husband which Helen Thomas published in 1926 and 1931, she states that Essex was " - a county he had not known before, which he found interesting and beautiful"⁶ and more recently, Robert Macfarlane talks of Thomas being "Surprised by how much he likes Essex"⁷. He discovered via route marches and his cycle rides (as far as a man in a day could ride, indeed!) the quieter Essex countryside, some of which is covered in this cycle ride, and in the other ride to the south east of Ingatestone, The Edward Thomas Ride - The Tye, around Margaretting Tye and Stock.

The ride starts and finishes at Ingatestone & Fryerning Community Association to celebrate the 2013 installation of cycle parking there, the first secure designated cycle parking in the village High Street. This will hopefully lead to more, which should help create a greater interest in cycling in the area and lead more people out to discover the hidden Essex countryside that Thomas wrote about in his poetry.

READING LIST:

Macfarlane, Robert, *The Old Ways*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012)
Thomas, Helen, *As It Was and World Without End*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1972)

Thomas, Edward, *Edward Thomas – The Annotated Collected Poems*, Ed. Edna Longley (Tarsset: Bloodaxe Books, 2008)

Hollis, Matthew, *Now All Roads Lead To France – The Last Years of Edward Thomas*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2011)

⁶ Helen Thomas, *As It Was and World Without End*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p165

⁷ Robert Macfarlane, *The Old Ways*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012), p345





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⁵ From "Roads", Thomas, Ed. Longley, p106-108, Notes p269-272

"EDWARD THOMAS - SHELOW" CYCLE RIDE

-  Cycle route
-  The Essex Way
-  NCN - National Cycle Network
-  Public house
-  Cafe / Restaurant



Cycle Parking, Ingatestone & Fryerning Community Club

"HUSKARDS" HOSPITAL, KEEPING THE FLAG FLYING.

Great interest centred in a concert given at the Working Men's Club, Ingatestone, on Friday evening, in view of the fact that half of an excellent programme was sustained by a minstrel troupe consisting of convalescent British soldiers from "Huskards," Ingatestone, which, since the early days of the war, has, by the kindness of Major and Mrs. Frank Hilder, the wounded, Mr. Thomas Atkins, bright and cheerful in all circumstances, is especially fond of a musical evening, and it kept an enjoyment which he derived from Friday's proceedings.

Essex County Chronicle, 5 March 1915

