

Robert Frost – 50 and 100 – a celebration



The Studio, The Questors Theatre, 10 June 2013.

Robert Frost – 50 and 100

Robert Frost brought his family to England in 1912. He had one objective – to get his poetry into print. He achieved that, and his first collection, *A Boy's Will*, was published in 1913. A second collection, *North of Boston*, followed a year later.

This reading takes those two collections as its starting point, and focuses on Frost's time in England, and in particular on his friendship with Edward Thomas. Despite their very different backgrounds (or perhaps because of them?) they became very great friends. Thomas promoted Frost's work; Frost encouraged Thomas to write his first poetry.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 changed everything. Frost and his family returned to the United States where his first two collections were re-published and followed in 1924 by his first Pulitzer Prize winning collection, *New Hampshire*. Thomas continued to write, enlisted, and was killed on Easter Day 1917 at the Battle of Arras.

Their poetry has strong similarities in both theme and style. Both write about nature and the natural world with an eye for detail which could only come from close observation and first hand knowledge. Frost's poems of the period often feature a 'missing' second person who has come before the narrator and leaves a mark upon the landscape through some symbol – a pile of wood or tuft of flowers – for the narrator to find. Thomas also has his mysterious 'stranger' in his poem *The Other*. I hope you'll find other connections throughout this evening's reading.

Nigel Lawrence

Though tonight's event is essentially free, we would ask if you could give a donation – whatever you feel appropriate – to The Questors Theatre at the end of the evening.

The Poems (in order of reading)

The Pasture – Robert Frost

The Tuft of Flowers – Robert Frost

The New Year – Edward Thomas

Into My Own – Robert Frost

After Apple-Picking – Robert Frost

Swedes – Edward Thomas

Mowing – Robert Frost

The Wood-Pile – Robert Frost

The Other (Abridged) – Edward Thomas

Mending Wall – Robert Frost

As the Team's Head Brass – Edward Thomas

Reluctance – Robert Frost

Roads – Edward Thomas

The Road Not Taken – Robert Frost

The Music

Fauré *Pavan*

Debussy *Syrinx*

Elgar *The Serious Doll* from *Nursery Suite*

The Performers

Nigel Lawrence

Sarah Morrison

William Morton (Flute)

Ann Sawbridge

Paul Vincent

Lighting Operator and Stage Manager

– Martin Choules

ASMs - Anne Furneaux, Jo Perse,



The direct quotes from Eleanor Farjeon are taken from her book *Edward Thomas: The Last Four Years*

The following books have also been used for research into Frost and Thomas:

Matthew Hollis *Now All Roads Lead to France*

Robert Macfarlane *The Old Ways*

Helen Thomas *Under Storm's Wing*

With thanks to: Mark Fitzgerald (and the cast and crew of Dracular – Fangs of Destiny for allowing us to use their set),