

## THOMAS, PHILIP EDWARD (1878 - 1917), poet

**Name:** Philip Edward Thomas  
**Date of birth:** 1878  
**Date of death:** 1917  
**Spouse:** Helen Berenice Thomas (née Noble)  
**Child:** Helen Elizabeth Myfanwy Thomas  
**Child:** Bronwen Thomas  
**Child:** Merfyn Thomas  
**Parent:** Mary Elizabeth Thomas (née Townsend)  
**Parent:** Philip Henry Thomas  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** poet  
**Area of activity:** Literature and Writing; Poetry  
**Author:** Gwyn Jones

Born 3 March 1878, at Lambeth, son of Philip Henry Thomas, Tredegar, clerk in the civil service, and Mary Elizabeth (née Townsend). He was educated at S. Paul's School and Lincoln College, Oxford, 1898-1900, and early showed his love of the countryside, unspoiled people, and literature. He married Helen Berenice Noble, 20 June 1899; there were three children: Mervyn, born 1900, Bronwen 1904, and Helen Elizabeth Myfanwy 1910. After a couple of years in London they moved to Bearsted, Kent, in 1901, to the Weald (Sevenoaks), in 1903, and to Ashford, near Petersfield, in 1906. His first book, *The Woodland Life*, was published in 1897, and from then till early 1915 he was the slave of wholesale reviewing and the commissioned book. *Oxford*, *Beautiful Wales*, *Richard Jeffries*, *A Literary Pilgrim in England*, *Feminine Influence on the Poets*, *Borrow*, *Swinburne*, *Marlborough*, are a few titles from these years. Overwork and literary frustration increased his melancholy and told on his health. Among his friends were 'Dad' Uzzell, [W. H. Davies](#), Gordon Bottomley, [Gwili](#) (John Jenkins, 1872 - 1936), and Edward Garnett. In July 1915 he enlisted in the Artists' Rifles, was transferred to the Artillery later, went to France in February 1917, and was killed at Arras 9 April of that year. Some six months before enlisting he had begun, under the influence of Robert Frost and with the pen name 'Edward Eastaway,' to write the poems on which his fame now rests secure. His *Collected Poems* appeared in 1920 with a preface by Walter de la Mare. His poems and Helen Thomas's *As It Was* and *World Without End* are his enduring memorials.

### Author

Professor [Gwyn Jones](#), (1907 - 1999)

### Sources

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

Philip Edward Thomas, *The Childhood of Edward Thomas A Fragment of Autobiography* (London 1938)

Helen Thomas, *As it Was, a World without End* (London 1935)

R. P. Eckert, *Edward Thomas: a biography and a bibliography* (London 1937)

James Guthrie, *To the Memory of Edward Thomas* (Bognor Regis 1937)

John Moore, *The Life and Letters of Edward Thomas* (London 1939)

John Moore 'A Note on Edward Thomas' in *The Welsh Review*, iv (1945), 166-78

E. Cefni Jones, *Gwili: cofiant a phregethau* (Llandysul 1937)

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Edward Thomas](#)

### Works

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 24122B: Edward Thomas poetry manuscript 1914-\[1915\]](#)

### Additional Links

VIAF: [19686045](#)

Wikidata: [Q1293865](#)

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