

# How to get there

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Liphook lies off the A3, 12 miles north of Petersfield. The walk starts in the cul-de-sac off Longmoor Road, 2½ miles west of Liphook.

## Transport

**Rail:** Liphook Station: [www.southwesttrains.co.uk](http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk), then a 30 minute walk up Portsmouth Road and along Longmoor Road.

**Bus:** Local bus services: [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)

## Places to visit

Liphook Library, where a bust of Flora Thompson by Philip Jackson can be seen. Flora Thompson lived in the house on the left as you walk back towards Longmoor Road from the Library. Note the plaque on the wall.

## Refreshments

The Deer's Hut, Griggs Green.

Old Thorns.

A range of snacks and meals are also available in Liphook.

## Further Information

Walks in East Hampshire: [www.easthants.gov.uk/walking](http://www.easthants.gov.uk/walking)  
Petersfield Tourist Information Centre: 01730 268829.

Follow the Countryside Code: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

The Shipwrights Way: [www.shipwrights.org.uk](http://www.shipwrights.org.uk)

The facsimile of Flora Thompson's Liphook guide is available from The Bramshott and Liphook Preservation Society: [www.liphookheritage.org.uk](http://www.liphookheritage.org.uk)

## Acknowledgements

This leaflet was prepared by the late Anne Mallinson of the former Selborne Circle of Rural Writers for East Hampshire District Council. Revised 2014.

*The Peverel Papers*, Flora Thompson (John Owen Smith) 2008.

Henry Westbury, Flora's great-nephew,  
for the front cover photograph.

## Maps

Ordnance Survey

Explorer Map 133

Haslemere & Petersfield

(1:25,000).

**East  
Hampshire**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Flora Thompson 1876–1947

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## *A walk around Weavers Down and Holly Hills, Liphook*



“And Oh, I would that I were there,  
In Hampshire now!”

From *Bog-Myrtle and Peat*

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*Literary Walks  
in East Hampshire*

# Points of literary interest

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East Hampshire has a wealth of literary associations. The literary walks have been devised to illustrate the work of six important writers who were close observers of their natural (and social) environment. Their combined experiences span more than two centuries of East Hampshire life.

a Flora Thompson came to Liphook in August 1916, when her husband John was appointed postmaster here. In 1926 they bought a newly-built house, Woolmer Gate, and spent the next two years living there, before leaving the area for Dartmouth in 1928. It is the second house you will pass on the right. Please respect the privacy of the owners. Flora had first become acquainted with the countryside north of the village when, at the turn of the century, she had taken employment as assistant to the sub-postmaster of Grayshott.

b This is the country Flora wrote of in her *Peverel Papers* – a collection of original essays based on her own observations of natural history and rural life – which first appeared in *The Catholic Fireside*. Flora called Weavers Down ‘Peverel Down’: “...out in the lanes and upon the open heath the broom in flower is a glorious sight. Upon Peverel there are large, long-established thickets of it, ... All down the tough, dark stems the pea-shaped blossoms hang, like a myriad of golden butterflies poised for flight.” She continues: “Today, for the first time this season, the long-drawn “Creak! Creak!” of the reaping machine has floated up from the valley fields. ... The particular field beneath Peverel which they have cut today is always the earliest in the district to ripen.” (*The Peverel Papers*, June 1924.)

c In 1925 Flora wrote a guide to the Liphook area and described the magnificent view from Weavers Down: “...a perfect panorama of beauty. Forestmere Lake [Folly Pond] lies like a mirror in the woods directly beneath; to the south is the blue ridge of the South Downs; to the north the heathery heights of Hindhead.” (*Guide to Liphook, Bramshott and Neighbourhood*.)

A facsimile of the guide was published in 1992 – see Further Information.

d Flora was fascinated by the paths and trackways over ‘Peverel Down’: “... some of them still in occasional use, but most of them overgrown and deserted.” She traced their ancient routes across the countryside: “...winding in and out to skirt the hills and the marshes, just as they were first trodden by the naked feet of primitive man.” (*The Peverel Papers*, June 1922.)

e Flora was a solitary walker and was often observed by local people as she explored the area, studying the wildlife around her. She had read Gilbert White’s *The Natural History of Selborne* and her inquisitive mind and attention to detail were in many ways similar to his. And birds to her too were of special interest: “The overhanging hedgerows are composed of gnarled old bushes – hawthorn and witch hazel, and the rarer spindle-berry. This thick greenery is a sanctuary for birds. ... Flitting from bush to bush today was a bevy of long-tailed tits, eight of them, quite tiny things, in rose and grey. They would settle upon a spray of hawthorn, each small head upon one side in a listening attitude, each tail, longer than the rest of its owner’s body, quivering upward; then, reassured of their safety, peck and peck again, each at its appointed knot of bloom, until the supply of whatever insect or caterpillar they were feasting upon was exhausted.” (*The Peverel Papers*, May 1924.)

f Flora knew well the local network of roads, lanes and pathways, which provided the source for many of her observations and delights: “The lane where I picked my speedwell and stitchwort this morning is at present a flower garden. It is an old and almost disused cart track, leading from the main road to the open heights of Peverel.” (*The Peverel Papers*, May 1924.)

And, finally, it is of interest that in *The Peverel Papers* and in Flora’s writing life in Liphook were to be sown seeds that grew years later into her classic trilogy, *Lark Rise to Candleford*.

# Route

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## The route is about 6 miles (3½ hours).

- 1 The starting point is off the A3 at Griggs Green junction, between Liphook and Longmoor Camp.

(Or, from the centre of Liphook, take the Longmoor Road.) At the entrance to the section of the Longmoor Road (a cul-de-sac), turn in and bear left, to park at dead-end opposite Pines Road. Please park so as not to inconvenience others.

Proceed east along the footway for about 250 metres towards Griggs Green (see a). At the signs on right-hand verge advertising The Deers Hut and Old Thorns, turn right and follow the road, with The Deers Hut on your left. Look out for the sculpture of a deer in a book on Griggs Green. Continue to Old Thorns driveway entrance and at this point take track to the left, following Shipwrights Way signage.

Follow this track over Holly Hills, with several houses on your right, until you reach the last one, Weavers Down House.

Continue straight on, which now becomes a sandy bridleway over Weavers Down between pine trees, silver birch, gorse and heather (see b). Old Thorns Golf course lies off on the right, with fine views west.

- 2 At a point further on there is a clearing on the left from which fine views of the surrounding countryside may be enjoyed, including glimpses of the South Downs (see c). Military land lies on your right. Red flags warn of any danger. Metal gates are on the path.
- 3 Continue along the bridleway until you drop downhill to the railway bridge at Langley. Continue along the Shipwrights Way and through the metal gate.
- 4 Over the bridge continue past the electricity sub-station, turning left opposite entrance to Little Langley Farm, onto bridleway. Continue along lane; at the junction, take path left of the Chapel Common pathway (see e).

- 5 Proceed on bridleway between banks, through woods, until the railway line is reached again. Take track under bridge and continue straight on. (The equestrian centre, Stocklands, can be seen on your right.) At this point you join the Sussex Border Path, which skirts round the field boundary on your left, until you reach the driveway to Home Park. Turn right at this point and, with Folly Pond on your left, continue until a bridleway left leads you to the driveway to Forest Mere, alongside Folly Pond.
- 6 Proceed until the private entrance to Forest Mere is reached and at this point take the bridleway off to the right, passing under a magnificent, but damaged, beech tree. Continue until the field ends on your left and at this point take the bridleway half right and so on to the common land again. Proceed on this bridleway towards the white house ahead of you. Keep to this path, which runs parallel to the private road serving the dwellings on your right (see f).
- 7 At a point where the private road takes a sharp turn, continue ahead on the bridleway. After a short distance there is a slight fork left leading on to the wide track, along the valley. Continue on this bridleway, passing soon under a splendid old oak tree, until you reach a meeting of bridleways. Continue straight on, uphill, and so back over Holly Hills to the junction of the Old Thorns and Weavers Down driveways.

Proceed right towards The Deers Hut and return to the Longmoor Road. Turn left and follow the footway back to your starting point.

Another Flora Thompson trail, from The Deers Hut to Grayshott and back, is available from:

[www.johnowensmith.co.uk/flora](http://www.johnowensmith.co.uk/flora)

This website also contains other information about Flora Thompson and her local connections.

# Map

