
How to get there



Liphook lies off the A3 12 miles north of Petersfield.

The walk starts in the cul de sac off the Longmoor Road 2 1/2 miles west of Liphook.

Please park so as not to inconvenience others.

Places to visit

Liphook - a bust of Flora Thompson by Philip Jackson can be seen in the Library.

Flora Thompson lived in the house that is now the Midland Bank. Note the plaque on the wall.

Refreshments

A range of snacks and meals are available from the Deers Hut pub and also from the pubs in Liphook.

Credits

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

Maps Ordnance Survey Path Finder
Midhurst & Petworth 1266
Haslemere & Hindhead 1245



Literary walks in East Hampshire



Flora Thompson 1876 - 1947

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’, poems.
Flora Thompson*

Points of literary interest

- a Flora Thompson, who came to Liphook in 1916 when her husband John was appointed the postmaster, spent her final year, 1927-28, in this area, at Woolmer Gate', which 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."*** And, she goes on... ***"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 to-day is always the earliest in the district to ripen."***
- 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."***
- (a facsimile of the guide was published in 1992 - see Acknowledgements at the end of these notes)
- 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 trodded by the naked feet of primitive man."***
- 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 '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, quaint 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, larger 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."***
- f Flora knew well the local network of roads, lanes and pathways which provided the source for many of her observations and delights, later to be shared with her readers in the pages of 'The Peverel Papers'. ***"The lane"***, she wrote, ***"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."***

And, finally, it is of interest to record here too 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'.

Acknowledgments:

The Peverel Papers, Flora Thompson (Century)

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The facsimile of Flora Thompson's Liphook guide is available by post at £3.40 from The Bramshott and Liphook Preservation Society, 12 London Road, Liphook, Hants GU30 7AN

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DLA, Oxfordshire County Council for the cover portrait of Flora Thompson.

Route

The route is about 6 miles (3 1/2 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.

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. Continue to Old Thorns driveway entrance and at this point take track to the left; signposted to Weavers Down House, close to the old oak tree stump.

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 lands lie on your right. Red flags warn of any danger.
- 3 Continue on the bridleway down hill, and straight on with the field fence on your left. In due course you will cross the Hampshire border into Sussex and a little further on you will also cross the site of the Roman Road from Chichester to Silchester, though there is no visible evidence. (see d) The Sussex Border Path later crosses our route.

Continue following the bridleway along the fence line until you drop downhill to the railway bridge at Langley.

- 4 Over the bridge continue straight on along the lane where Langley Court can be seen across the fields on your left. Soon afterwards, take the first turning left down a track to a junction of paths (you'll see the driveways here to Langley Court and Nursery). At this point cross over road and take bridleway into woodland opposite (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 formerly well known 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 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.

Map

