

# Appendix: Some places on the route mentioned in the works of Simon Evans

(research by Dr Mark Baldwin)

*MTRACS: More Tales from Round About the Crooked Steeple (1932)*

*RACS: Round About the Crooked Steeple (1931)*

*SDSW: Shropshire Days & Shropshire Ways (1938)*

## **Cleanlyseat Farm** (from *SDSW*)

‘The rising sun begins to silver the pale grey sky and, at Clanly Seat, a small farm nestled near a spinney, a peal of cockrow rings through the air.’

## **Detton Hall Farm** (from *SDSW*)

‘When I climb to the rough pastures and open moors above Detton Hall Farm, I feel the full force of whatever wind may blow, and here the air is full of the wild bleak cries of peewits.’

## **Detton Mill Weir** (from *RACS*)

‘The little Rea, after tumbling over Detton Rocks turns sharply into the dingle and promptly enters into harmony with the surroundings, flowing slowly and murmuring gently, until he reaches Goesland Ford, a full quarter of a mile away, where he can be heard chattering and gurgling over the pebbles.’

## **Duddlewick Farm** (from *RACS*)

‘In the space of four years I have walked the Valley of the Rea more than twelve hundred times; not the whole long length of the River but from the old stone bridge [New Bridge] below the village to Dudlick Mill . . .’

## **Goesland** (from *RACS*)

‘On Steeple Slopes I often meet my friend, and almost always from the West he comes. In the lower spinneys he first greets me, soft and sad at times like gentle sighs, but in Goesland Firs he whispers gaily. Oh! the music in the tree-tops.’

(from *MTRACS*)

‘After climbing the long, humped backs of Nethercott Meadows I looked down into the narrow lane which leads to Goesland Dingle.’

## **Hardwicke Farm** (from *MTRACS*)

‘This morning, as I stood on the bank above Gipsy Coppice, Long Ned, the ploughman, came by with his team.

“Mornin’,” he called. “I dunna know what be a-goin’ on, but there be four smokes at Hardwicke yonder.”

A farm-house with four chimneys smoking at once puzzles Ned.’

**Hardwicke Ford** (from *RACS*)

‘Our little River Rea was unusually high, and as I approached the old footbridge at Hardwicke Ford I could see the clay-brown waters swirling rapidly away. At this point the River is perhaps twenty feet wide.’

**Hinton Wood** (from *The Countryman*, October 1938)

‘At the limit of my outward walk I had a shelter hut, a little place supplied by the Post Office in which a man could rest in fair comfort until the hour arrived when he was due to start on his return walk . . . The river Rea flowed not far from the doorway, and from the open window I could see the high-reared head of Titterstone Clee . . . Set in such surroundings – the stream a few yards away, Hinton Wood not far distant . . . I gained a quiet happiness.’

**Honeysuckle** (from *SDSW*)

‘Beyond the rough ground of Detton Moors Honeysuckle Brook, after splashing and crashing for many a mile between high banks of fern and ling, gurgles and chatters over the stones which almost fill his throat, for here he tumbles into the Rea and at once the song of the stream rises to a gay, tumultuous roar.’

**Moorbrook** (from *SDSW*)

‘The curlew’s flight is dignified and perfectly controlled, as it sweeps down each note becomes longer, vibrates, and then falls into a lower key until it becomes indescribably soft, then, as the bird disappears in the long lush grass of Moor Brook Meadows, the sweet notes fade away and all seems strangely still.’

**Musbatch** (from *SDSW*)

‘Up the Green Lane I walk and on through Musbatch Coppice. Here a cock pheasant, a bright long-tailed flame of colour, waits until I am almost on him before he rises with a disturbing flutter and a loud throaty ‘Kuk-kuk-kuk’. Once well on the wing, for he is no light-weight, he volplanes between beech trees to the low-lying daffodil fields and there he disappears.’

**Neen Savage Ford** (from *RACS*)

‘I know the varied music of this friendly stream; the deep hollow tune he sings as he flows beneath the hanging wood and round the ruined mill; the low pleasant murmur as he gurgles and trickles over the stony ford at Neen.’

**Nethercott Farm** (from *SDSW*)

‘On rare occasions, between Nethercott Farm and Titford Dingle, I see Reynard the Fox slinking up from the cow pastures. He moves easily up Stepple Slopes. At sixty yards or so he throws a sly knowing look over his shoulder as if to say, “I don’t mind this fellow, he never has a gun.”’

**Oreton** (from *RACS*)

'I often look at him [the river Rea] from the high hills, like a happy boy he seems to play hide and seek, quietly he disappears into "a tunnel of green gloom", for perhaps half a mile he is hidden, then into the open once again chuckling and laughing about the stones, glinting and sparkling in the sun as he glides through Oreton meadows.'

**Prescott** (from 'Leisure' by W H Davies, quoted in *RACS*)

'After climbing Prescott Bank I like to lean upon the gate and rest awhile.

“What is this life, if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare,  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows;  
No time to see when woods we pass  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass,  
No time to see in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars like skies at night.  
A poor life this, if full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.”

**Reaside Farm** (from *SDSW*)

'The field path to Reaside Farm is close against the river, narrow strips of woodland line the banks, the leafy branches interweave to make a 'tunnel of green gloom'. Here I may catch a glimpse of a bright blue jewel flashing for an instant over the water – the kingfisher is a shy bird.'

**Ron Hill** (from *SDSW*)

'My first climb is Ron Hill. Here the air seems always cool and calm, from the summit I look eastwards over a sea of foliage – Wyre Forest stretching away towards the Severn . . . Near the outskirts of the town, thrushes, almost always perched on the topmost boughs, sing with loud glee.'

**Stepple Hall Farm** (from *RACS*)

'It is a morning in February (February mornings have a beauty all their own). I had loitered through my favourite dingle, Stepple End, crossed the old footbridge over the Rea, and was climbing the steep meadow towards the ploughland of Stepple Hall Farm.'

**Titford Bridge** (from *SDSW*)

'The music of place names in and about the valley will for ever ring in my ears – Musbatch Farm and Nethercott, Titford Bridge and Stepple Slopes, Duddlewick Mill and Hardwicke Forge, Thumper's Hole and Honeysuckle Brook.'