

THE THOMAS HARDY FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER No.24

Early Winter 2008

Edited by John Pentney

Editor's Notes and Fellowship News

Please note that the Fellowship's 2009 New Year Gathering will now be held on Saturday 3 January, and *not* on New Year's Day as in previous years. This is an experiment to see whether the nearest Saturday to 1 January might be more convenient for some members who may have family or other commitments on New Year's Day, or may even simply be nursing a post-hogmanay hangover! Once again we are meeting at Annette Lodge's Dorchester home and full details will be found on the Programme page.

The main purpose of this meeting will be to discuss programme ideas for 2009 - the Fellowship's seventh year. 2008 has been another successful year with

expeditions in various parts of Wessex, plus the first ever overseas study tour by a British-based Hardy organization when a number of us celebrated the centenary of the publication of the final part of *The Dynasts* with a visit to Brussels and the Waterloo Battlefield. This coincided with a mini heatwave in May; and despite a generally indifferent summer, we have not been unduly troubled by heavy rain during this year's outings, and indeed the Lulworth Cove boat trip was on one of the very few hot days of the summer. It's a Hardyian irony that in previous years with generally better weather, our events too often coincided with the only wet day in a long run of dry days.

* * *

Member Shirley Eveleigh has sent me the following horticultural note: 'I have received an early birthday present in the form of a Jude the Obscure rose, which is yellow, repeat flowering and disease resistant. It came from David Austin Roses (www.davidaustinroses.com). They also have a Tess of the d'Urbervilles rose which is red and a climber.' I think this gives a new dimension to Hardy perennials.

MEETING REPORTS

1. Cornwall

by John Pentney

On the evening of Tuesday 14 October a select few Fellowship members convened at the Cobweb Inn near Boscastle Harbour for an evening meal. It was good to observe that Boscastle's rebuilding following the disastrous 2004 flood was now virtually complete - on the previous Fellowship visit two years ago, some reconstruction was still in progress, and the visit before that had been only a few weeks after the flood when much devastation was all too evident.

All but one of us were staying at the same B&B in the upper part of Boscastle, and it was here that we all gathered on the Wednesday morning to drive into Wadebridge. Our objective was to visit the John Betjeman Centre in the former railway station building which has been tastefully converted to be a day centre for the elderly. It is also open (weekdays only - hence our mid-week visit) to anyone

for coffee and to view the fascinating room containing a fine collection of Betjeman memorabilia. This is an appropriate new use as Betjeman was a great lover of railways, and would have often transferred at Wadebridge from train to road transport for the last leg of his journeys to his Cornish home near Daymer Bay.

At the Centre, it was good to meet up with Simon Curtis who had driven over from his home in Plymouth. After coffee and a detailed examination of the Betjeman exhibits many of which were trustingly placed on open display (too tempting perhaps for the over-zealous souvenir hunter), we headed south eastwards to Bodmin to inspect the former county gaol. This has been privately purchased and is being slowly restored from a semi-ruinous condition as a visitor attraction. Hardy enthusiasts have previously visited the Victorian prisons at Winchester and Dorchester; and whereas these penal establishments have been modernized, Bodmin Gaol, having closed after World War I, preserves the grim atmosphere of a 19th-century prison. On arrival, we found that it was closed to the general public as a conference was being held there. However, on complaining that this closure was not listed on their website and that we had travelled many miles to visit it, we were all given free admission. We saw the sort of conditions, including the cells that Hardy's characters such as Aeneas Manston, Farmer Boldwood and Tess would have experienced on remand and after sentencing, but not too long for those who were hanged. After securing our own release, we had lunch at a café in Bodmin.

After lunch we inspected a few places associated with Emma Gifford prior to her marriage to Hardy. We began with the house in - appropriately - Emma Place overlooking the graveyard of St Petroc's church in Bodmin, where the Gifford family had briefly lived after moving from Plymouth. We then drove south westwards to St Benet's Abbey, the former home of Emma's friends the Serjeants. Both Hardy and Emma had stayed here at various times. It was never an abbey, but was probably a late-medieval hospital and now a small country house hotel. The proprietors kindly invited us inside to see the ground-floor rooms. Maltese crosses were very prominent in the decorative scheme.

We then headed to a minor crossroads which Stephen Mottram believes to be the location for Hardy's poem 'Near Lanivet'. Our last objective was Kirland Manor, just to the south of Bodmin, reached by tortuous narrow lanes with the final approach along a track by foot. Emma's snobbish father moved the family here from Bodmin in 1860 - one can understand that this large Georgian house would have appealed to a man of his social pretensions. The afternoon's itinerary

demonstrated that there are still many less familiar Hardy and Emma associations to be sought out in North Cornwall. The day concluded with another dinner at the Cobweb Inn.

Thursday mornings exploration began with a visit to the rather remote Minster church, one of the two ecclesiastical parishes between which Boscastle is divided, the other being Forrabury. Like Tintagel church, Minster has the unusual dedication to St Materiana and is situated in a woody dell below the level of the adjoining lane. We then made our way to the harbour area of Boscastle for a gentle exploration prior to lunch at the Cobweb. So concluded an interesting visit to Off Wessex.

2. A Walk around Shaston

by Mervyn Scamell

At 12.30 p.m. on Saturday 8 November 2008 nineteen Fellowship members gathered on a cold and sunless day for a walk around Shaftesbury, the Shaston of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. John Pentney, our leader, pointed out the nearby St. Peter's Church, the solitary survivor of Shaftesbury's great ecclesiastical era when it had boasted twelve churches. A few steps took us into the Mitre Inn where some of us paid for an abysmal dry sandwich lunch. How ironic that we should have convened by the fibreglass mock-up Hovis loaf in the High Street.

When we resumed our walk at the top of Gold Hill John read from "Jude" Hardy's description of the town. We felt for ourselves the full force of "*this breezy and whimsical spot*" over 700 feet above sea level and attainable only by steep hills on all but its eastern edge. The appearance in front of us of two under-clad little children who could have stepped straight out of "Jude" added an authentic touch.

John's notes were nicely complemented during the afternoon by Geoffrey Tapper's comments from his bank of knowledge as a 'local'. Geoffrey told us that the reason why the small town of Shaftesbury became one of the largest settlements in the British Isles not to have its own station was that Lord Stalbridge did not want the railway near his home, Motcombe House. Thus to reach Shaston 'Jude ascended from the nearest station', Semley, now disused.

Looking across to the misty Blackmore Vale we took in the superbly buttressed immense medieval retaining wall for the Park Walk, our next stop. Here we looked at the largely conjectural plan of the 9th-century abbey founded by Alfred the Great after his defeat of the Danes in 878. Of this, as Pevsner points out, 'little survives, and nothing standing up'. It was here that Edward the Martyr, murdered in 979 at Corfe, was ultimately buried, having been brought from the Saxon church of St. Mary in Wareham. John told us that it was believed that Edward's relics had been incongruously sold to the Orthodox Church by a sometime owner of the abbey site and that they might now be interred at the Brookwood Necropolis cemetery near Woking in Surrey.

Turning into St. John's Hill we came upon an ancient Yew tree with a strange memorial at its base incorporating a green man face, a wooden wheel and a beer bottle. Make of that what you can! Here Geoffrey was reminded of a tragic accident in 1898 when a close friend of his father had been cycling down the very steep hill and the brakes on his bicycle failed. He was killed in hitting the wall of St. James' Church at the bottom. Perhaps Hardy read the inquest report on this boy in the Dorset County Chronicle. Geoffrey also remarked upon Edwardstowe the nearby house where he had once lived. Parts of the house dated from the 16th century, making it the oldest domestic property in the town.

After another panoramic view to the north-west with the Old Castle site nearby and King Alfred's Tower at Stourhead just visible, a short walk along Bimport brought us to Ox House. Here Sue and Phillotson had lived. The house has a blue plaque on it erected by The Shaftesbury & District Historical Society. It bears the inscription, 'Ox House (c 1800) later enlarged, possibly belonged to John Grove, a Shaftesbury Benefactor. Featured as "Old Grove Place" in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. The low level relative to the pavement of the first floor windows explained Sue's injury-free jump in escaping from Phillotson, but from which window did she leap?

Our last stop came at 'the schools which were extensive and stone built' where Sue and Phillotson taught, the girls and boys being separated. The property is now old people's accommodation. The 'two enormous beeches with smooth mouse coloured trunks' mentioned by Hardy have now gone. One fell fairly recently onto a block of flats and the other was then felled. Trinity Church where Jude wandered after missing the bus is no longer used as a church but the pollarded limes remain in its grounds.

The rewarding day ended with welcomingly served tea and cake at Castle Hill

House, now a residential care home for the elderly but originally an Academy for the Sons of Gentlemen. In the warm lounge, opened last May by novelist Fay Weldon, we enjoyed the bonus of three Phyllis Wolff paintings of Shaftesbury scenes. Geoffrey was thanked for arranging the tea and John was thanked for leading our day and for his comprehensive notes.

TV Tess **by Fred Hoskins**

The announcement of a new adaptation for television of any literary work must surely cause a tremor among lovers of literature. Will it be as good, or as bad, as the last one? Will there be as many mistakes? What liberties will the TV writer take with the original work? *Cranford* was enjoyable although the script did indeed take liberties. *Lark Rise* was a disappointment and one wonders what Flora Thompson would have thought of the addition of a female comic character to her serious story of the grinding poverty and tribulations of Oxfordshire farm workers? So what were we Hardy folk to make of another adaptation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, with the problem of cramming a long novel into four hours of film?

Setting the scene of the club dancing on cliff tops led me to think the worst. Oh dear! If Marlott is moved to Dancing Ledge, then where on earth will Emminster and Trantridge be? And what is going to happen to the plot? However, although the reason for moving that scene was not at all clear, at least the filming was done in and around Wessex and not in New Zealand or Romania or France. It is easy to pick holes in the general setting of scenes, I know, but I will observe that the interior of the Durbeyfield cottage was roomier, cleaner and better furnished than was likely. Other than that, when there was such a choice of good old hymns from Hardy's time why did the adaptation have the 19th-century congregation sing a 20th-century hymn 'How Great Thou Art'? To those in the know these are irritations, but minor points relative to the overall presentation of a great work on the small screen.

In the main, the TV adaptor was true to the novel. He followed Hardy in his tilts at organised religion where rites and devotion to rules came before kindness, sympathy, humanity and what most would have thought to be real 'Christian' attributes. Indeed the TV writer added a little jibe of his own. On his return from

Brazil, Angel's sanctimonious brother expresses the hope that Angel is not upset that he is to marry the self-satisfied religious do-gooder Mercy Chant. 'Not at all.' says Angel 'You deserve each other'.

As to the casting of the main characters, Tess was lovely and conveyed innocence, and devotion. My view of Angel was coloured by the fact that I have a Folio Society edition of the novel with woodcut illustrations showing Angel as rather stocky and bearded. When he returns home and discusses with his father the advisability of having a wife to help him in his agricultural endeavours, he says that he has reached the age of 26, but Angel as seen on TV looked to this septuagenarian like an overgrown schoolboy, and without much depth of character. Perhaps, though, on second thoughts, Hardy's Angel was indeed an overgrown schoolboy (a schoolboy of Victorian times, but not of these modern 'liberal' times, of course) in his attitude to Tess and her confession.

Then there is Alec. Was he sufficiently villainous? He didn't look all that wicked - but never judge a book by its cover. Other than in pantomime, it is not mandatory for the villain to sport a pointed black moustache. Nobody, it is said, can be all bad, and Alec was a man torn between selfish vice and a wish to reform. Sadly, and typically, he blamed Tess for being so attractive that he is tempted away from his reformed way of life. I think the TV portrayal was fairly true to Hardy, but others may not agree, of course.

In the novel Hardy leaves the scene where Tess becomes a 'maiden no more' to the imagination of readers, who have to decide for themselves whether what happened was the result of force or blandishments. Happily, the same is true of this TV version, at least visually. But when Angel is chastising Tess about her past he says 'You say you were forced ', and so the viewer is being persuaded that there was force, whereas the reader is not. Less happily, the TV writer, or the producer, clearly found it necessary to comply with modernity and add the seemingly obligatory, but totally needless, nude scene (happily short) between Angel and Tess in the deserted house. If that was a minus for the writer, then he must surely be given a plus for the compelling murder scene.

Not having read the novel for some years, the first episodes on television made me get out the book and start from the beginning, and reading it helped me to see that in some places where I thought the writer had got it all wrong he had in fact got it right and it was my memory (or prejudice) at fault. I greatly enjoyed re-reading *Tess* and I also greatly enjoyed this latest TV *Tess*.

Wessex

by Stephen Mottram

The *Hardy Society Journal* for Spring 2008 carries a review of an Italian book and we are told (page 61) that Dr Costantino, author of the book, does not appear to realise that Wessex is not solely the creation of Hardy. So far so good, but the reviewer then goes on to refer to Dr Costantino's 'touching belief that bodies like Wessex Water, Wessex Motors, Wessex FM and, best of all, HRH the Earl of Wessex (a.k.a. Prince Edward) owe their titles to a novelist'. Setting aside the fact that His Royal Highness would probably prefer not to be known (Jordan/Katie Price-like) as an 'aka', one assumes that Her Majesty did not have to read a Thomas Hardy novel to give her the idea of using that title for her third son. But as my note in newsletter 20, page 14, makes clear, Professor Barry Cunliffe has demonstrated that Hardy was indeed responsible for introducing the word into everyday use.

I also referred to this in my notes for my T.E. Lawrence walk when I referred to Hardy's 'partly real and partly dream country' of his fiction. Hardy was well aware that his use of the term had been taken up outside his novels, as a result of his novels and I was again reminded of this when re-reading Michael Millgate's excellent *Thomas Hardy .His Career as a Novelist*. On page 96 he says that in an article of 15 July 1876 there are references to the Wessex Novels and Wessex Peasants. Millgate wonders if Hardy's reading of this article (saving it for his scrapbook and referring to it in the 1895 edition of *Far From the Madding Crowd*) and of an article of September 1877 which referred to the 'Wessex Rustic' contributed to his own conception of the nature and function of his fiction. As Millgate says, the articles (and one from France) make clear how strongly Hardy's imaginative world had already impressed itself upon his contemporaries.

What is certain is that by the time these articles had been written, Hardy had made deliberate use of the term 'Wessex'. Millgate says his first use seems to have been in chapter 50 of *Far From the Madding Crowd* but he quickly followed this up in the first sentence of *The Hand of Ethelberta*. The decision to use the term can only have been Hardy's, however much he may have been further encouraged by the articles he subsequently read. What seems remarkable to me - beside the fact of Hardy's re-introducing the term - is that prior to 1874 there was little use of the term by anyone. To quote Hardy 'I believe I am correct in stating that, until the

existence of this contemporaneous Wessex in place of the usual counties was announced in the present story, in 1874, it had never been heard of in fiction and current speech, if at all, and that the expression 'a Wessex peasant' or 'a Wessex custom' would therefore have been taken to refer to nothing later in date than the Norman Conquest'. In fact his statement needs mild correction. Barnes had used the term Wessex (in a specifically historical sense to denote the ancient kingdom of the West Saxons) in relation to his poetry in 1844 and 1848 and also in a lecture at Marlborough in 1866. Further, Horace Moule (who taught for a time at Marlborough) used the term in an 1862 article and it may be that it was Moule (who knew Barnes before he knew Hardy) who gave Hardy the idea for using the name, though it was only Hardy's use that caused it to become widely known.

In 1888 or thereabouts, Hardy wrote to Edward Marston, his publisher and partner in the firm of Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 'Could you, whenever advertising my books, use the words 'Wessex Novels' at the head of the list? I mean, instead of 'by TH', 'TH's Wessex novels' or something of the sort? I find that the name *Wessex* wh. I was the first to use in fiction, is getting to be taken up everywhere: & it would be a pity for us to lose the right to it for want of asserting it.' Hardy never had to deal with a major water company or take a car to a garage and he and Wessex never had a chance to listen to a radio broadcast from anything but the BBC but had he been able to live on into the latter parts of the twentieth century he would surely have been more than satisfied that a little whim of his, to use an historical and geographical term would be taken up and be so widely expanded into the world of commerce and much more.

Publishing Co-operation

by Stephen Mottram

In 1998 a friend went to New York and, as his party was leaving the Players' Club, he noticed in pride of place a short but signed and framed correspondence card written by Hardy and relating to *The Woodlanders*. He scribbled down the contents but was unable to read a few words. Since the card was clearly not included in the Millgate and Purdy edition of the letters, I wrote to Dale Kramer as the editor of the Oxford variorum edition of the novel. In his reply, he wished he had known of the letter when editing his book and suggested I write to Michael Millgate, who would best know how to gain information about the missing words. Millgate told

me that he would obtain a copy of the card or, if necessary make it his business to go to the Players' Club. Three years later he wrote to say that he had been there - alas, on the day that the twin towers were destroyed, 11 September 2001.

Hardy's short letter, merely dated 'Tuesday' was addressed to Osgood, Harpers' London representative and Hardy said that proofs of the novel could be had from the London publishers, Macmillan. Millgate hazarded a guess that the date was 6 July 1886 and it will be included in the 8th volume of the letters when it is finally published, perhaps next year. What interested me is that Hardy was writing to one publisher telling him that another publisher would let the first have proofs of Hardy's novel, then being first published. The answer is, of course, that Harpers was publishing in America and Macmillan was publishing in London, but the cooperation would hardly happen today. You also see a similar example in relation to *A Laodicean* in volume 1 of the letters. On 4 June 1881 Hardy wanted his English publisher to provide proofs that he could send to a newspaper in Australia and doubtless we would see many other examples if only we had the letters.

What I like about the academics like Kramer and Millgate is that if you tell them something interesting they will spend a great deal of time explaining it to ordinary Hardy enthusiasts like myself. Kramer explained that Macmillan appeared to regard the co-operation as 'gentlemanly conduct', a practice that was fairly common in 19th-century publishing when (say) the English publisher was happy to send proofs to America to save the need for Hardy to send manuscripts and amend proofs, thus saving time. Even so, publishing deadlines were very tight but an American publisher was able to have a complete novel in print within a very few days of the arrival of a copy printed in England. As Kramer commented to me, 'if only such speed were achievable today' Millgate guessed that the correspondence card is possibly the only survivor of a good many similar letters written between Osgood and Hardy.

It is clear that Hardy had no intention of correcting proofs before they were sent across the Atlantic, speed being all-important, especially when work would be quickly pirated. (International copyright only applied circa 1891, just in time for *Tess*.) The American Harper's Bazaar published weekly whereas Macmillan published its magazine monthly, increasing time pressure for the Americans (Hardy's letter to Macmillan dated 21 January 1886 in volume 1 of the letters refers to this). Millgate told me that the English monthly instalment for August was published on 29/30 July and the first corresponding American section was published on 21 August. Hardy would send the handwritten magazine instalment to Macmillan who would have sent it to Richard Clay, printers in Suffolk, who

would have had it back with Macmillan in 3 or 4 days. It is just possible that the proofs might not have been ready for Osgood to send to his American colleagues until 20 July, though Millgate guessed at 6 July for the correspondence card on the basis of evidence of subsequent instalments.

I write this now, ten years after the events, because there is a sad sequel to my enjoyable correspondence. The friend who went to New York was Dave Simpson, husband of Diane, whom some Fellowship members will remember from Hardy Society conferences and other events a decade and more ago. They will be sorry to learn that Diane died, suddenly, at her home in Southend-on-Sea on 24 August 2008, aged 47. I was able to go to the funeral in Leicestershire (where her family still lives) and as far as was possible on such a tragic day share with Dave, Diane's family and some members of the Betjeman Society a celebration of Diane's life. She is very sadly missed and I dedicate this little article to her memory.

Hardy, Max Gate and Stonehenge by **Stephen Mottram**

Question: What do Max Gate and Stonehenge have in common?

Answer: They both have (remarkably similar) 5000 years old Neolithic circles

When Hardy had Max Gate built (by his brother and his father) from 1884 he was constantly overlooking operations and in part was concerned to preserve the archaeology on his land. For his time, he did a good job. He even presented a paper to the Dorchester museum, describing the finds and how they were uncovered. But, like everyone else, Hardy thought of Dorchester as being a Roman town. When Maumbury Rings was excavated from 1908 he and others were astonished when it was realised that the Roman amphitheatre had a Neolithic beginning ('the blood of us onlookers ran cold' he wrote in *The Times*). It is not surprising that he had thought of the site his new home as primarily having Roman, not Neolithic origins. So, what did he find and what did he miss?

In his museum paper (read in 1884) he first described how to get to the (then remote) site 'in Fordington Field'. The route from Dorchester to the Wareham Road was then by Fordington Hill 'the site of the presumably great Romano-British cemetery'. He told his listeners that they then had to proceed a further half-a-mile

to where the relics lay, 'about fifty yards back from the roadside, and practically a level, bearing no immediate evidence that the natural contour of the surface has ever been disturbed more deeply than by the plough'. He went on to describe how he was one of two persons who saw the remains *in situ* - 'three human skeletons in separate and distinct graves'. They had been discovered about 'three feet below the surface'. Hardy told of the sizes of the elliptical graves, cut vertically into the solid chalk, and what other items were in them.

In 1891 Hardy erected what he called 'The Druid Stone' in the garden - in the place where it remains to this day. It had been found three feet down 'and the labour of getting it from the hole where it had lain for perhaps two thousand years was a heavy one even for seven men with levers and other appliances'. A 'quantity of ashes and half charred bones' was found around the stone. Hardy made the important observation that 'it had been lying flat'. After Emma's death the stone became associated with her through the poem 'The Shadow on the Stone' and it has been said that (rather sadly, you would think) Hardy once found his first wife burning all his love letters to her behind that stone. Perhaps more sadly for Hardy, he never learnt that the stone had been *in situ* for 5000 years. He made inquiries about it and was interested in it sufficiently to take visitors to it - to speak of it as of Druidical origin and possibly sacrificial. The true nature of the use of Hardy's 'Druid Stone' would not be known for another century.

After Hardy's death Florence purchased land adjacent to Max Gate and then sold nearly half of it to Colonel Drew who built a house on it, today called Louds Piece. The retained land was sold after her death, by auction, as a plot of land on which a house was later built, called Flagstones. (Max Gate itself was purchased by Hardy's sister Kate at the same auction and given to the National Trust so that the Trust could let it and thereby try to acquire and thereafter maintain the cottage at Upper Bockhampton, something eventually achieved in 1948.) By the 1980s Flagstones was in the way of the Dorchester bypass road and had to be demolished. It uncovered an important Neolithic site - one which extends beneath Max Gate itself. To quote the archaeological report 'the importance of the ridge for settlement, ceremony and burial from the Neolithic to post-Roman periods made it one of the areas of outstanding archaeological potential prior to road construction'.

Causewayed enclosures were built from c3700 BC, ie from about 5700 years ago. At that time they were sub-circular enclosures, a string of oval pits where the spoil dug from those pits formed a circular bank. Sometimes the pits ran into one another, but usually not, ie the ditches formed uninterrupted quarries with

causeways between individual pits, hence their name. In some cases there is evidence of timber palisades. The central idea of the bank seems to have been to ensure that it was built such that people from outside the circle cannot see in and people inside the circle cannot see out. Perhaps ceremonies were carried on inside the circle and perhaps different parts of the ditches were selectively used for different depositional activities. It appears that the ditches were often re-cut and objects ceremonially placed on the newly-cut surfaces. There is a causewayed enclosure at Maiden Castle, dating from 3550 BC, hidden below the Iron Age Hill Fort.

At Stonehenge, phase I of the monument - before any of the famous stones were erected - was a circular bank and ditch, 100 metres in diameter with a ditch of 50 or 60 segments. The internal bank was nearly 6 m wide and probably 1.6 or 1.8 m high. There were at least three entrances. The date was c 2950/2900 BC, by which time this sort of monument had become perfectly circular, unlike the early ones. Mathematical accuracy had not seemed important at first but by this time a desire for symmetry had emerged - a transition from old to new in the way of defining ceremonial space. And lo and behold, the causewayed enclosure excavated at Flagstones (exactly half of which still lies beneath Max Gate) is remarkably similar to the one at Stonehenge, though there is no longer any sign of the circular bank.

This Dorchester monument is also 100 m in diameter and perfectly circular. The thirty-nine segments excavated under Flagstones measured between 1.3 m and 3 m in width, 2 m to 5.8 m long and 0.8 m to 1.4 m deep. The date was probably between 3300 and 3000 BC, slightly earlier than at Stonehenge. Shallow schematic engravings were found on the lower sides of four of the chalk segments. Human remains were in three of the segments. In one, cremated remains were covered by a large sarsen slab, in another the bones of a young child were covered by a sandstone slab; and the skeleton of an older child was in the third, uncovered but with a fragment of sarsen close by. It has been suggested, based on evidence present, that the slabs had once formed a megalithic structure, demolished prior to the construction of the enclosure, though this is conjecture. As the pits began to fill, another burial was placed in a fourth segment. In the Early Bronze Age, a circular burial mound was placed in the by-then abandoned circle and about one third of this burial mound lies within the Max Gate grounds, just behind the house itself. Perhaps the mound was thus placed because of the intangible tradition of the place, a long term use of a place associated with a need to respect the dead.

Hardy's paper read to the museum refers to a circular hole being uncovered two

yards from the Romano-British graves, two feet in diameter and five feet deep. At the bottom was a small flagstone; above this was horn, teeth and bones. (Hardy describes the remains which he says was apparently of a bull.) There were pieces of a black bituminous substance and numerous flints, with a few pieces of tile - and brick of the thin Roman kind - and pieces of glass. None of this exactly matches the finds at Flagstones, though one notices the word flagstone in relation to his site and the name given to the future dwelling next door. At Flagstones, the pits were mostly filled with chalk rubble and had no Roman artefacts at all. Very occasionally there was the odd piece of bone from the very early Neolithic but of the relatively few finds in the ditches, most were of Iron Age date, with pottery and some Bronze Age flints. So we are no wiser than Hardy was as to the dates of this individual hole.

Stonehenge was important for Hardy. He set an important scene there, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and in 1899 wrote the draft of an article - published as an 'interview' for the *Daily Chronicle* - arguing that the (then privately-owned) site should be purchased as the property of the nation. *If only* he had known that the ditch which surrounded this structure was so similar to the one which, for more than forty years, lay under his feet at home.

Sources referred to (with very grateful thanks to their authors):

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JO. Bailey, *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy*, University of North Carolina Press, 1970, pp 412-413.

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Wessex Archaeology: *Excavations Along the route of the Dorchester Bypass*, 1997(pp 27-47 Frances Healey).

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Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy A Biography Revisited*, OUP, 2004 ch 13.

Andrew Lawson, *Chalk/and An Archaeology of Stonehenge and its Region*, Hobnob Press, 2007, pp 62 -77.

Editor's **note**: the use of metric measurements is standard in modern

archaeological practice. To convert metres to feet multiply by 3.28. Hardy of course used imperial measurements which may be more familiar to many Fellowship members.

New Members

Since the last *Newsletter* was published, we welcome the following who have accepted an invitation to join the Fellowship:

Removed to preserve privacy

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The Editor welcomes contributions of short articles, accounts of Fellowship activities, letters, book reviews etc. in typescript, legible handwriting, on 3.5" floppy disc, CD, DVD+/-RW or by e-mail (either as an attachment or in the body of the e-mail) . the electronic methods entail the least amount of editorial re-typing.

THE THOMAS HARDY FELLOWSHIP FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME 2009

N.B. Fuller details of the later events will be published in subsequent *Newsletters*, and on the Fellowship website: www.the-thomas-hardy-fellowship.org Please enter these dates in your diary.

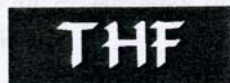
For walks, please dress according to the weather forecast and choose footwear appropriate to the likely underfoot conditions.

Saturday 3 January 2009 (please note change of date): 11.00 am. New Year's annual gathering to discuss the programme of events for 2009, kindly hosted by Annette Lodge at her Dorchester house at 26 Frome Terrace. Please bring food to pool for a shared 'indoor picnic' lunch and tea, and your ideas for Fellowship events in 2009. This is your opportunity to influence the programme in a democratic forum. After lunch there will be a gentle walk to Stinsford Church. Return to Frome Terrace for tea.

You are advised to park (free at weekends) near the Dorchester Library at Colliton Park. To find Frome Terrace: head for North Square across the High Street opposite South Street (the main shopping street), keep right past the prison outer entrance and descend the short hill towards the river. Frome Terrace is the residential road on the right, overlooking a branch of the Frome.

If you cannot attend this meeting, but have suggestions for the programme, please contact the Hon. Organizer. Annette would appreciate a rough idea of numbers attending, so if possible please ring her in advance on her Winchester number: 01962 865878.

Saturday 4 April 2009: A return visit to **Sherborne** the historic north Dorset town and Hardy's Sheraton Abbas. Meet at 10.30 am by the south porch entrance to Sherborne Abbey church. After visiting the Abbey, other parts of the town which feature in *The Woodlanders* will be explored, including Sherborne Old Castle (English Heritage – admission charge to non-members). Pub lunch **names to Hon. Organizer by 28 March please.**



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