

# **THE THOMAS HARDY FELLOWSHIP**

## **NEWSLETTER No.17**

### **EARLY SPRING 2007**

**Edited by John Pentney**

#### **Editor's Notes and Fellowship News**

Welcome to the first *Newsletter* of 2007 as the Fellowship enters its fifth year of existence. It was very agreeable to catch up with so many enthusiastic members and friends at the Christmas lunch in December and at the New Year gathering. As the days lengthen and winter turns to spring, we can look forward to this year's events.

Unless you have recently joined the Fellowship or have paid in advance, subscriptions for 2007/08 fall due on 1 April. The change in renewal date from January to April has been introduced so that renewal forms do not get lost amongst your deluge of Christmas post. If a renewal form is enclosed with your copy of this *Newsletter*, please attend to your subscription as soon as possible, returning your cheque to me in the first instance, *not* the Treasurer, as I maintain the membership database.

\* \* \*

Hardy has been in the national news far more often than is usual during the latter part of 2006 and early this year. Last year saw the publication of two new Hardy biographies by Ralph Pite and Claire Tomalin, the latter in particular receiving extensive media (press and television) coverage. Then there was the fliore created by the National Trust over its proposal to use Hardy's Birthplace as a holiday

cottage for much of the year. Despite the opposition, it seems that the Trust is still pursuing this bizarre idea.

Finally last year, *The Times Literary Supplement* for 6 December launched a bombshell with the publication of an article (it may be read on-line at: <http://tls.timesonline.co.uk/article/0..25338-2490047.00.html>) by a retired medical practitioner Dr Robert Frizzell, claiming in 'a retrospective diagnosis' that Emma Hardy had died of syphilis, having been infected by Hardy. He maintained that both Emmas's physical and mental symptoms together with the wording of some of the Poems of 1912-13 supported his thesis. This was also reported in *The Times* and other national papers. Shortly afterwards, on 15 December, the idea was refuted by *The Times*' own medical correspondent, Dr Thomas Stuttaford, who formerly specialized in genito-urinary medicine including sexual diseases, and whose opinion in such a matter may therefore carry rather more weight than that of Dr. Frizzell.

Any intelligent person, even without medical qualifications, can realise the dangers in such 'retrospective diagnosis': without the primary evidence of Emma's body (whose exhumation would be quite unthinkable), it can be no more than mere conjecture. I can only hope that the suggestion has been dismissed as improbable soon enough to prevent its being repeated as established fact. Unfortunately, it's a story that will appeal in an age all too ready to believe in the most improbable conspiracy theories, as it depends in part on an alleged cover-up by the doctor who signed Emma's medical certificate of death. It seems to have been a spin-off from Tomalin's biography, as Dr Frizzell is cited in the endnotes commenting on the causes of Emma's death, but with no mention of syphilis - so it seems he formed his theory after corresponding with Tomalin, who herself rejects the idea.

This year, the media have focused on the Fellowship's oldest member, 101-year-old Norrie Woodhall, and the fact that the last of the original Hardy Players was taking part in a programme of readings in Dorchester's United Church on 11 March. This led to a number of local and national newspaper and television interviews and appearances, including the BBCI lunchtime news on 12 March.

Norrie's autobiography, mentioned in the last *Newsletter*, is now available by mail order overseas as well as in the UK from Alan Hodge, 7 Hollands Mead Avenue, Owermoigne, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8HX (Tel: 01305 - 853573). Please make cheques payable to: Mrs A.N. Woodhall - £8.15 UK, £9.90 rest of EU and £12.50 rest of world, all inclusive of postage and packing.

# MEETING REPORT

## The New Year Gathering

by John Pentney

On Monday 1 January about fifteen Fellowship members met at the home of Mary and Mike Wyatt on the southern outskirts of Wimborne Minster, a new venue for the Fellowship's customary New Year gathering, previously held in Dorchester. This is the nearest equivalent to an AGM that we have . without a formal committee structure all members are invited to contribute ideas for the forthcoming year's programme of events. I like to think that this process is as democratic as is reasonably possible . absent members had been invited in the previous *Newsletter* to submit their ideas in advance, but on this occasion had not done so. I hope this indicates that the kind of events we arrange are to their liking. After coffee and biscuits in Mike and Mary's lounge, a provisional outline programme for 2007 was agreed, and the outcome will be found on the programme pages at the end of this *Newsletter*. It was then time for our buffet lunch to which we had all contributed food for sharing.

After lunch the hardier amongst us donned our coats for a walk, leaving the others in 'hearthside ease'. We headed down the hill towards Wimborne, but just before the bridge over the Stour, we took a track to the eastwards, a former drive to Canford House guarded by a lodge built in the distinctive cottage style of Lady Wimborne's Canford estate houses. Shortly afterwards, we came to a former railway bridge over the drive, whose elaborate neo-Gothic design, insisted on by Lady Wimborne, must have added to the construction costs of the Southampton & Dorchester Railway in 1845-47. Hardy would have passed over this bridge many times when the railway it carried was the principal artery linking Dorset with London. We climbed up the steps giving access to the top before resuming our walk, closely paralleling the River Stour which had overtopped its banks and appeared much wider than usual as a result of recent heavy rains.

Shortly we arrived at Canford Magna church, only to find it locked; but we noticed a light in the vestry and attracted the attention of the man inside who admitted us

to the interior. Here we admired this historic structure which includes much Saxon work in the chancel, indicating early importance. Canford is now subsumed in the Borough of Poole, a reversal of its former status, for the medieval town of Poole was founded out of part of the vast manor of Canford and its new urban status was confirmed in 1248 by the grant of its first charted by William Longespée II lord of Canford. There is nothing new about new towns.

After emerging from the church we walked around the outside of nearby Canford Manor, home to Canford public school since 1923, whose present buildings mainly date from two phases of nineteenth-century Gothic Revival construction for Sir John Guest, a South Wales ironmaster. Canford must have offered a very different ambience from Dowlais. A surviving fifteenth-century medieval wing, known as John of Gaunt's Kitchen is the only relic of earlier manorial buildings. It is the only portion that we can imagine as being familiar to Barbara Grebe, the heroine of Hardy's *A Group of Noble Dames* short story 'Barbara of the House of Grebe', set in the late eighteenth century, wherein Canford Manor appears as Chene Manor. I read out the relevant section of the story.

As we retraced our steps towards the road, we were suddenly deluged by a very heavy squally shower .all too familiar Fellowship weather, some might think. On reaching the road, a few accepted the offer of a lift from Mike Wyatt who had brought his car down to meet us. The rest of us walked the remaining few hundred yards back to our hosts' house, knowing that we could hardly get any wetter. Soon our coats and shoes were drying in front of the kitchen Aga, as we enjoyed our tea, before departing to our various homes. Our thanks are due to Mary and Mike for kindly hosting this event.

## ***TESS OF THE D 'URBER VILLES***

### **Fiction Inspired by Fact**

**by Tony Bradbury**

A study of Thomas Hards prose makes it increasingly obvious that, not only are his novels well-structured (almost certainly due to his architectural training), but it contains

elements of the social history of Dorset, his extensive knowledge of agricultural processes, his profound awareness of theology and religious worship, and the manners and morals of the various gatherings and ‘crashes’ he frequented when in London

Details of Dorset’s history during the 1870s are to be found in his most famous novel (most of my acquaintance seem to have read it, but their reactions are mixed).

When Tess and Angel Clare married on a New Year’s Eve, the weather was wintry, but as they departed on their honeymoon near Wellbridge Mill, the crowing of a cock was interpreted by Dairyman Crick’s wife as “It only means a change in the weather” said she [to her husband], “not what you think: ‘tis impossible!”.

Later quotations from the text also mention the weather: ‘The sun was so low on that short last afternoon of the year. . . .’, but as it set, the weather changed: ‘It soon began to rain.’ Four days later, when Tess separated from Angel and she returned home, she told her mother that the marriage had taken place the previous Tuesday.

During the 1870s New Year’s Eve fell on Tuesdays in 1872 and 1878. Records at the Meteorological Office show that rain fell on both those days; the rainfall was about a quarter of an inch at Wimborne and Weymouth, the nearest stations at that time. They are about equidistant from Hardy’s Wellbridge (Wool), so it is a reasonable assumption that it rained there as well.

In 1872, Hardy was living at home at Bockhampton, engaged in writing *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. The writer of this piece does not know if he was actually at home on 31 December, but he was very soon afterwards. Although he wrote *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* at the end of the 1880s, his retentive memory would have enabled him to incorporate the fact of the year’s end rain into his fiction, especially as it served his novelistic purpose.

As previously noted, the last day of 1878 was also rainy, but, for the following reasons, this year seems improbable. In the years before 1872, an increasing number of agricultural workers and farmers, dissatisfied with low wages and poor prospects, had emigrated, mostly to South America and Australia. By 1872, the numbers had greatly increased, as the government of Brazil, eager to expand its agriculture, made tempting offers to single men, or to married men whose families would accompany them. About this time, Joseph Arch, a prominent advocate for a farm-workers’ Union, visited Dorset in an attempt to ‘persuade’ farmers to increase the weekly wage. He spoke at a meeting.

near Dorchester, and was supported by a large and enthusiastic audience.

In mid-December 1872, the *Dorset County Chronicle*, which was of course available in nearby Bockhampton, carried an advertisement for the Royal Mail Line, which offered a facility to embark at regular intervals from 24 December 1872 to 10 March 1873 in 'magnificent steamers to Brazil and the River Plate at modest prices. £30, 1st class.' As the Brazilian government granted free or assisted passages to suitable applicants the number of emigrants increased.

However, the same issue of the paper carried a report of one family, heavily in debt, which took the chance to escape. It also published a letter, expressing 'with . . . that 300 agricultural labourers were proceeding from Dorset and the adjacent counties to Brazil. . . . I have just been reading. . . an account of a trip to Brazil in which [a clergyman] from personal observation, he states that the climate of Brazil is quite unsuited for farm labour by Englishmen. . . to lure ignorant men to proceed. . . is little less criminal than murder.'

Many years later, Hardy wrote scathing comments in the novel about the emigration after Angel Clare went to Brazil: he 'was lying ill of fever. . . having been drenched with thunderstorms and other hardships, in common with all the English farmers and farm-laborers who. . . were deluded into going thither by the promises of the Brazilian government, and by the baseless assumption that those flumes which, ploughing and sowing on English uplands, had resisted all the weathers to whose moods they had been born, could resist equally well the weathers by which they were surprised on Brazilian plains.'

This sweeping condemnation was not fully borne out by the facts. Some emigrants did adapt, and refuted the 'doom and gloom' indeed, much later an article in one of the Dorset magazines suggested that their descendants remain even now in South America Some did return to England, more or less healthy, but because the Brazilian government had been overoptimistic about the prospects for its agriculture, the vision of a land filled with milk and honey had proved illusory

As Hardy wrote that Angel Clare had come to Brazil 'in a fit of desperation, the Brazil movement among the English agriculturalists having by chance coincided with his desire to escape from his past existence', it is a reasonable guess that his past reading of the *Dorset County Chronicle* influenced his writing (did he read the letter quoted above?).

Before the 1870s, agricultural options in Dorset were mostly performed by hand. Steam-powered threshing machines had been introduced in the 1830s, but their use had provoked

widespread rioting, which was suppressed by draconian measures. In early 1870, the Dorchester Farmers' Club had listened to a lecture on the advantages of steam ploughing. It is possible that the audience foresaw the difficulties which would arise again in their workforce, and were eager to forestall it by employing mechanical methods that would render them less dependent on manual labour. Consequently, in August 1870 a company based in Leeds branched out into Dorchester and acquired a depot from where farm machinery could be hired on contract. It was mainly staffed by 'foreigners' (i.e. from the north of England.).

Hardy was usually living at home during this time, so he would have known of this new development; and expressed his repugnance many years later in the opening of Chapter XLVII of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Tess and her fellow-workers, having spent the winter being alternately soaked and frozen in the open fields were pressed into the service of the 'red t3mnt', the threshing-machine. By it stood the engine-man, who 'was in the agricultural world but not of it. He traveled with his engine from farm, from county to county ... He spoke in a strange northern accent. ... his eyes on his charge, hardly perceiving the scenes around him, and caring for them not at all: holding only strictly necessary intercourse with the natives ... He had nothing to do with the preparatory labour. ... If any of the autochthonous idlers asked him what he called himself he replied shortly, "an engineer".'

Hardy wrote eulogistically when he described the hand-threshing scene in his earlier novel, *Far From the Madding Crowd*. He may have been influenced by the philosophy of his former mentor, William Barnes whose dialect poetry well depicted the old rural methods. However, Hardy in his later years seemed reconciled to the remorseless march of change, and it can be surmised that; by the time his career in prose came to an end, his opposition to the changing landscape ended also.

There have been two major chronologies of Tess's lifespan. Professor Carl Weber\* supplied one in 1934, and another not greatly differing in 1938. Paul Ward gave a different version in 1988. Weber gives 1867 as the year of Tess's birth, and July 1889 as the year of her execution. Ward gives her birth-year as 1852, and her death in 1874. Both agree that she lived for 22 years,

Weber stated that Hardy started writing the story of Tess soon after the lime that she 'died'. Ward mentioned at some length the emigration to Brazil, and supplied figures showing that British emigrants were at the maximum between 1866-76.

The numbers were far fewer between 1846- 65 and 1876-85.

Acknowledgments are due to Professor Michael Milligate and to Barbera Kçrr, whose respective books on Hardy and rural life in Dorset supplied much of the information in this article. Michael Milligate kindly supplied copies of the chronologies

**\*Editors note** Weber's thesis, propounded in his *Hardy of Wessex*, that Hardy's novels were evenly distributed temporally and spatially 'through nineteenth-century Wessex in accordance with an overall master plan does not stand up to critical scrutiny. Hardy's novels' internal chronologies contain many anachronisms; and his concept of Wessex evolved slowly, with the earlier novels being later revised to make the topographical detail more consistent, but many anomalies remain.

## **My Road to Hardy and What He Means to Me**

**by John Pentney**

*Note: Having strenuously urged other Fellowship members to contribute articles on how they became interested in Hardy, I feel that it is only fair to record my own journey of Hardyian discovery. This is the most autobiographical piece I have ever written.*

The road was the A337, or to be more precise, that stretch of it that runs from my former home town of Lymington to New Milton, in Hampshire: In the summer of 1968 - I was almost 11 and half way through my two-year A-Level course my family had decided to go and see the 1967 John Schlessinger film of *Far from the Madding Crowd* at the now-closed Waverley [shades of Sir Walter Scott] cinema in New Milton, Lymington's own Lyric cinema having closed about 1960, I was; becoming engrossed in Hardy's powerful tale and the superb photography when the screen suddenly went blank and the emergency lights came on. This was an inauspicious start. There was a power cut, and when it became apparent that the electricity was unlikely to be restored within a reasonable time, patrons were issued with complimentary tickets for a later day. A few evenings later we had better luck and succeeded in seeing the whole film. I was immediately hooked by Hardy's story and very soon purchased a copy of the novel - the film tie-in Pan paperback edition with stills from the film on the covers: This was to be but the first item in my now extensive collection of books by and about Hardy,

Having rapidly devoured *Far from the Madding Crowd*, I was anxious to read more of this great author's words. However, this was not quite my first introduction to Hardy, for I had previously read *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *The Trumpet Major* in the fourth form (1965-66) at Brockenhurst Grammar School – also on the

A337. Although I travelled to Brockenhurst by steam and latterly electric train, I walked the final stretch to the school gates along the A road I had quite enjoyed reading the two middle-ranking Hardy novels but took it no further at the time, as they were, not part of the O-Level English Literature syllabus. I had 'also read a little about Hardy and his Wessex in the municipal guide to Dorchester, a town I first visited through my interest in archeology rather than for its literary connections. I had heard the popular misconception that Hardy's vision was one of unrelieved gloom apart from *'Under the Greenwood Tree.*

So it was *Far from the Madding Crowd*, generally rated as Hardy's first major novel, that really fuelled my intense interest in Hardy. It was disappointing that no Hardy text was in the syllabus option chosen by the school for A-level English literature my modern novel was Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale*, the alternative of Hardy's *The Return of the Native* not being adopted by Brockenhurst. I would have felt more at home with Egdon Heath, similar to the lowland heaths of the my native New Forest area, than with Bennett's 'Five Towns' of the Potteries. This did not deter me though from more extra-curricular reading of Hardy novels, short stories and poetry, plus some biographical and critical works; and soon I was exploring the Hardy country in the adjacent county of Dorset by ear. Unfortunately I had missed the 1968 Hardy Festival in Dorchester which coincided with the awakening of my Hardy enthusiasm.

At university in Oxford (1969-72), although I was reading Modern History (i.e. medieval and modern history), I continued to read more Hardy and I completed his novels with *Jude the Obscure* shortly after my graduation. The imaginative world of literature was a welcome relaxation from the more factual world of historical studies Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was a set text for the first term and I was pleased when one of the lecturers read out "Hardy's poem 'Lausanne: In Gibbon's Old Garden 11-12 p.m.'. Incidentally, Edward Gibbon had been an M.P. for Lyrningion, but it is doubtful whether he ever visited the borough. Oxford also gave me the opportunity to explore Hardy's Christminster of course, and the Jude settings around Wantage in Berkshire before much of it was absorbed by Oxfordshire. I have always loved chalk downland scenery, and the Berkshire Ridgeway in the Hardy country of North Wessex was splendid for walking.

At this time I could also readily identify, with Hardy's loss of religious faith. Like Hardy, I was brought up in the Church of England of the Book of Common Prayer but came to question its metaphysical aspects whilst retaining a liking for its traditional liturgy, music and architecture. I still believe that a knowledge of Christianity is essential to any appreciation and understanding of Western culture and history, and I do not like to see its place in education subordinated in a vapid multiculturalism. Since that time, Hardy's 'series of seemings' has made far more sense of the world and the human condition for me than any religious creed. His idea of a universe indifferent to humankind is consonant with my own impressions and experiences of life's vicissitudes.

After university, I came to work in Somerset (Hardy's Outer Wessex), and although the County Council proved to be a poor career choice (people trained to think for themselves were regarded as dangerous and subversive by those of limited imagination and intelligence), it enabled me to live within easier reach of the heart of Dorset's Hardy country. From Lymington, the large Bournemouth/Poole conurbation had been something of a barrier to negotiate or bypass in order to reach the Dorchester area. The Hardy world was an essential counterpoint to the banality and sheer silliness of much local authority work and along with my other interests helped preserve my sanity.

I had joined the Thomas Hardy Festival Society, as it then was, in 1969 and had been able to attend a few events during university vacations, but now I could take a more active role, joining the Council of Management in the mid 1970s. For many years the Hardy Society was an important part of my life and I served in a variety of positions, including Acting Chairman for a few weeks. It was at the Society's 1980 Summer School in Weymouth that I met an attractive young lady who had also been drawn to Hardy by the film of *Far from the Madding Crowd* plus the 1978 BBC TV adaptation of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, although I suspect the late actor Alan Bates was as big an attraction for her as Hardy! Josephine and I celebrated our silver wedding last autumn, so ours has truly been a Hardy romance.

Although I remain a life member of the Hardy Society, like many others I have otherwise largely severed my connection with it since the unfortunate events of the acrimonious 2002 AGM and its aftermath. For me, the once friendly literary society had ceased to exist and I no longer felt at home there. Together with others similarly hurt and alienated, I was a founder member of the Thomas Hardy Fellowship, whose principal movers and shakers are former Society officers, but we

are far more than the Hardy Society-in-exile, having carved out a distinct identity and role of our own.

Apart from Hardy's philosophy, intellectual honesty, mastery of the English language, accomplished story-telling and fine characterization, one of his greatest attractions as a writer for me is his strong sense of place. I have always been interested in places, their landscapes, history, archaeology, architecture and traditions. I think that my own appreciation of place in fiction first developed from reading as a child the 'Lone Pine' novels by Malcolm Saville who set his children's adventure novels in such evocative real locations as the South Shropshire hill country, Romney Marsh, the North Yorkshire Moors etc. Saville had the ability to interweave interesting topographical detail with exciting plots, having been influenced by Arthur Ransome and almost certainly Hardy. I later moved on to John Buchan, who again had the facility to draw his readers into his landscapes. So when I progressed to Hardy, the 'partly real, partly dream country' of his Wessex immediately struck a resonant chord with me. Clearly, here was an author who was interested in many of the same things as myself. I have been exploring the Hardy country ever since and had the satisfaction of showing it and interpreting it to many others by leading guided walks and tours over many years.

I have much to thank film director John Schiessinger for, and his version of *Far from the Madding Crowd* remains for me, forty years after it was shot, *the* definitive adaptation of any classic novel. But above all, I have to thank Hardy for bringing me so much personal fulfilment, not least in my marriage and the many true friendships with fellow enthusiasts, even though some are now sadly but inevitably 'friends beyond'.

**Postscript:** as ever, similar contributions are welcomed from members. . . *please.*

## **Loss of Faith in Victorian Times**

**by Stephen Mottram**

I knew that A N Wilson (Betjeman's recent biographer) had written a volume entitled *God's Funeral* but it did not occur to me that it might relate to Hardy. When discussing Wilson's (sympathetic) treatment of Betjeman with a friend, she

told me that the earlier book used Hardy's poem (Gibson, ed., *Complete Poems*, 1976, poem 267) as a starting basis for the whole book. Whilst the book is not in any sense a book about Hardy, it satisfies that Wilson sets out the whole of the poem immediately after his preface and follows this, in the first paragraph of the book, with:

'The English poet Thomas Hardy, some time between 1908 and 1910, wrote a poem in which he imagined himself attending God's Funeral. It is one of his most extraordinary poems, and it expresses in the most cogent form some of the issues which will be explored biographically in the following pages. It starts - what a good film-sequence it would make - with the Wessex pessimist seeing the macabre procession as a "strange mystic form" is carried to Its, or His, last rest.'

Wilson then more or less devotes the next five pages to Hardy, referring to 'the simple unfairness of life' and goes on to say:-

'Hardy depicts suffering which is not so much 'innocent' [e.g. as in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*] as pointless. He is more Homeric than Hebraic, closer to *The Iliad* than to Job. The reader finishes a novel of Hardy's knowing that stoicism is not its own reward; nor will it be rewarded by some sympathetic external agency. Many Church Christians, particularly the clergy, must have tried to hide this from themselves when they read Hardy's novels, and seen his "pessimism" as a distorting lens; they had to wait until they were exposed to the shrapnel and gunfire on the Western Front before their imaginations were exposed to some pitiless Homeric reality, which Hardy could see relentlessly at work in the Country villages of Dorset.'

William Walsham How, Bishop of Wakefield, appears two or three times during the course of the book and always gets a bad press from Wilson. He says that Hardy was hurt that the Bishop wastefully lit a fire at the height of the summer in order to burn his copy of *Jude the Obscure* and in any case, Hardy believed that had the Bishop known Hardy as he was, he would have found a man whose personal conduct, views of morality and vital facts of religion, hardly differed from his own.

At the beginning of Wilson's concluding chapter, he says of Hardy's poem that it:

'is utterly uncompromising. There is no consolation here, as there is in Hardy's best-known anthology piece "The Oxen" in which he rehearses the old legend that the cattle fall on their knees on Christmas Eve and hope "it might be so".'

In “God’s Funeral”, he has accepted that it is not so. To this extent, he speaks for his generation.’

In between the first and last chapters there are some 400 pages of erudite discussion on the thoughts of people like Carlyle, Marx, Engels, Coleridge, George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Swinburne, Gosse senior, Arnold, Ruskin, Tennyson and a whole host of interesting Church people who lived out their busy, productive lives but now lie forgotten. Yet this book is not a book only on religion and loss of faith - it is much more. I do not pretend to understand the more esoteric discussions but it is a potted biography of so many people (there are five or six hundred people listed in the index) and some (like Darwin) appear throughout. If you have any interest in Victorian life, this is a book for you (it was first published by John Murray in 1999 with a paperback by Abacus a year later). It is a brilliant history lesson with the added bonus of featuring people Hardy knew or whose books or lives he had studied.

One thing which caught my eye, in the chapter on Swinburne, was the phrase ‘peradventure he sleepeth’ from 1 Kings ch XVIII verse 27. I’d always puzzled on Hardy’s use of these words in the rape/seduction scene in *Tess*. In my ignorance, the biblical reference had escaped me though it is annotated in modern paperback editions. Hardy paraphrases Kings; and in the Wessex edition of 1912 opted for simpler language (but see page 74 of the 1998 Penguin Classics edition). Well, I prefer the old word but it was good to find the answer to a puzzle, unexpectedly, in such a rewarding (reference) book on English history.

## **Fellowship Finances**

Balance of funds at 11 November 2006	£258.73
Expenditure since 11 Novemb 2006	
Hon. Organiza & Editor’s expenses	
- <i>mainly</i> Newsletter printing, postage & stationery	£196.19
Hon. Treasurers expenses	0.23
Hire of Pimperne Hall	£16.00
Total expenditure	<u>£212.42</u>

Income since 11 November 2006

Subscriptions - 9 @ £5	£45.00
Subscriptions - 1 @ £6	£6.00
Subscriptions - 2 @ £7	£14.00
Subscription - 1 @ £20 (including 3 years in advance)	£20.00
Total subscription income	£85.00
Collection at Pimperne poetry reading	£16.50
Total income	<u>£101.50</u>
Net expenditure since 11 March 2006: £212.42 - £101.50 =	<u>£110.92</u>
Current balance of funds: £258.73 - £110.92 =	<u>£147.81</u>
Stephen Mottram - Hon. Treasurer	

## **New Member**

Details of new members are removed here for confidentiality – they are published in the paper edition

The Editor welcomes contributions of short articles, accounts of Fellowship activities, letters, book reviews etc. in typescript, legible handwriting, on 3.5” floppy disk, CD, DVD+/-RW or by e-mail (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 2007**

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](http://www.the-thomas-hardy-fellowship.org)

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

Saturday 31 March: Visit to Hardy's Emminster and Port Bredy - meet at 11.00 am, in The Square in the centre of Beaminster for an easy walk around sites of Hardy interest led by John Pentney. This will be followed by a visit to Bridport and West Bay which feature particularly in the short story 'Fellow Townsmen.' Pub lunch

Sunday 22 April: Visit to Owermoigne (Nether Moynton) - Meet at 1.00 p.m. in the village hall, near the church, for lunch followed by a visit to the Old Rectory, a village walkabout, readings in the hail and tea. There will be a small charge for hail hire - please bring food to pool and share for lunch and tea.

Saturday 9 June: *Ethelberta* Purbeck Walk - Meet at 10.15 a.m. on the station platform at Norden Park & Ride (signed from the A35 1 just north of Corfe Castle) in order to catch the 10.30 a.m. Swanage Railway steam train to Swanage. We will then walk back to Corfe Castle village via Ulwell Gap and Nine Barrow Down following in the hoof prints of Ethelberta's borrowed donkey as described in *The Hand of Ethelberta*. About six miles with one steep climb and one steep descent; please bring a picnic lunch. We will meet non-walkers at about 4.30 p.m. in the Square at Corfe for tea in one of the village tea shops. Last time this walk was attempted, we had to fall back on the wet weather alternative of an exploration of Hardy's Knoilsea (Swanage), so hope for good weather.

Saturday 28 July: The Mills on the Stour - Meet at 1.00 p.m. at Sturminster Newton Mill (NGR ST782135, access to car park from A357) for a picnic lunch, followed by visit to mill interior (small admission charge) and a gentle walk around

Hardy's Stourcastle. About 3.15 p.m. drive via A357 and A350 to White Mill (admission free to National Trust members, NGR ST 958007) near Sturminster Marshall for a guided tour at 4.00 p.m. This will be followed at 5.00 p.m. by a cream tea kindly provided by Gill Jackson and Fred Hoskins, after which there will be appropriate Hardy and William Barnes readings on the theme of watermills. *Names for tea to John Pentney by 21 July please.*

Thursday 18 August: A T.E. Lawrence Walk - Meet at 10.30 a.m. at Culpepper's dish car park (NGR SYS 16925) for a walk led by Stephen Mottram on the themes of Egdon Heath, T.E. Lawrence, Hardy's friends at Moreton House, and Moreton church with its Whistler windows. Lunch at the tea rooms in Moreton village and visit to Cloud's Hill (Lawrence's cottage - admission free to National Trust members). 6 miles (2'4 miles in the morning, 3'2 afternoon) mostly level, but with two moderately steep climbs, one after 4 miles and the other near the end. Lots of Hardy readings, varied scenery, a re-mn of the leader's 2003 walk, but in the reverse direction and with revised notes. Walk due to finish by 4.00 p.m. but with option of driving to Moreton for tea.

Saturday 27 October: An Autumn *Woodlanders* Walk a 5-mile fairly level walk in the Melbury Park (King's Hintock Park)/Melbury Osmond area led by John Pentney. Meet at 1.45 p.m. at the south entrance to Melbury Park at the east end of Evershot village - NGR 576047, ample car parking space. Non-walkers may wish to join the visit to Melbury Osmund church which the walkers will reach at about 2.45 p.m. It is hoped to be able to arrange for tea afterwards at a nearby hostelry. Postponed from 2006.

Saturday 8 December: Christmas Lunch, Lydlinch - arrangements are likely to be similar to the previous three years - full details will appear in the late summer *Newsletter*.