

THE THOMAS HARDY FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER No. 9

WINTER 2005

Edited by John Pentney

Editor's Notes and Fellowship News

Welcome to the first *Newsletter* of the Fellowship's third year of existence and thank you for your continuing support and encouragement - all but one or two members have now renewed their subscriptions for 2005 which represents a very low drop-out rate for any organization. It was reassuring to see almost half the membership at our very convivial Christmas lunch at Lydlinch in December - I still marvel as to how Janet Scott-Puttock managed to feed so many of us using the resources of a very modestly equipped village hall kitchen: did she practise at the biblical feeding of the five thousand? Also, we have already enjoyed our first meeting of this year, foregathering at Simon Curtis' home in Dorchester on 8 January as a prelude to a walk to Stinsford church for seasonal readings.

An account of both these meetings appears below; and the informal get-together at Simon's enabled us to discuss ideas for the rest of this year's programme of events. With many members present, there was maximum membership input; and the results, including a few ideas that could not be accommodated in last year's programme, will be found at the end of this *Newsletter*. I trust that there is something of interest for everybody, including those unable to join the walks. Whilst the Fellowship remains relatively small (but slowly growing), such democratic participation remains possible despite - or even because of - the lack of a formal committee structure. A financial summary for last year also appears in this issue.

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The Fellowship's profile is gradually being raised in accordance with the policy of sustainable growth. My account of the first twenty months of activities appeared in *The Dorset Year Book 2005*. This is the publication of the Society of Dorset Men of which Hardy was President 1907-09 when it was the Society of Dorset Men in London.

Also, the Fellowship will soon have its own internet website up and running. This is thanks to the kindness, generosity and technical expertise of David Manford, IT expert and husband of our Plymouth member Pene. It is intended to set out the Fellowship's objectives, list the forthcoming programme on a rolling basis, post brief illustrated accounts of events shortly after they occur, include excerpts from *Newsletters* and incorporate a downloadable membership invitation form. It will include links to other relevant websites, but not try to duplicate the excellent Hardy material already available elsewhere on the web - there's no point in trying to reinvent the wheel. Hopefully, however, members' original research articles first published in the *Newsletter*, will be posted. If anybody has any idea for a suitable design for a Fellowship logo, please contact me.

I am sure that Hardy would have enthusiastically embraced such modern communications technology if it had been available in his day. After all, he proclaimed Darwinism; and keenly availed himself of the new technology of his times such as railway travel, the steam ship, the telephone and the motor car even if the Max Gate plumbing was not state-of-the-art by the 1920s.

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A strong Napoleonic Wars emphasis will be noted in the 2005 programme. This is as it should be in the Trafalgar bicentenary year, given Hardy's immense interest in this epoch which plunged much of Europe into intermittent war for over two decades. Official celebrations under the banner of SeaBritain 2005 [*sic* - I hate the modern ungrammatical fashion for capital letters mid-word] include a Naval

Review at Spithead off Portsmouth to which representatives of the French and Spanish Navies have been invited. For Hardy, the Napoleonic Wars had the same immediacy as World War II has for us. We are of course still celebrating the extended centenary of *The Dynasts*, in which the Battle of Trafalgar is graphically described; and the atmosphere of the times is skilfully evoked from a Wessex perspective in *The Trumpet-Major*. In this novel, the hero Bob Loveday enlists on *HMS Victory* under the captaincy of Dorset man Thomas 'kiss me' Hardy, although his part in the Trafalgar action occurs off-stage. There are of course also many other references to the Wars in Hardy's short stories and poetry.

Last year, I was emphatically reminded of the strong influence of the Napoleonic Wars on the British public consciousness and popular imagination during a drive down the Welsh Marches. My journey began in Shrewsbury's Abbey Foregate, whose eastern end is dominated by the classical column memorial to Salopian hero General Viscount Hill, who briefly appears in *The Dynasts* Part Third in his rôle as Wellington's second-in-command at Waterloo. As I passed through Ludlow, I reflected that Dinham House, in the shadow of the great castle, had in 1810-11 been home to Lucien Bonaparte - Napoleon's younger brother - on parole, after his capture at sea. Was Hardy aware of this association when he visited Ludlow Castle in 1893?

Further south, I passed through Hereford, where there is an 1809 memorial to Admiral Lord Nelson on Castle Green - it's a smaller version of his Column in Trafalgar Square, but with an urn substituted for the planned statue as an economy measure. Further south still, I continued through Monmouth where there is a remarkable collection of Nelsoniana - originally assembled by Lady Llangattock - in the town's museum: there seem to be as many items of Nelson memorabilia as there were relics of the True Cross in medieval Christendom. The hero of Trafalgar was in the habit of visiting the town and its surroundings.

Just to the south east of Monmouth, above the start of the Lower Wye Valley is The Kymin, a hill on whose slopes there is a curious rustic structure, rather like a Romano-Celtic temple, known as the Naval Temple. This was built in 1800 'an extraordinary jingoistic gesture' (John Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, 2000, Penguin [now distributed by Yale University Press]), to celebrate Britain's naval victories in the Napoleonic Wars since the 1793 Battle of the Nile, and the admirals responsible. Nelson visited it on a Wye boating tour from Ross in the summer of 1802 with Sir William and Lady Emma Hamilton, and proclaimed it as 'the only monument of the kind erected to the English Navy in the whole kingdom'. The Wiltshire antiquarian Sir Richard Colt Hoare visited it the following year, but dismissed it as being 'in very bad taste' (quoted in Newman). Whether it was the architecture, the sentiment that inspired it or even both that offended Sir Richard, I do not know; but I feel that Nelson's views were more in tune with the popular feeling of a country recently at war - indeed the March 1802 Treaty of Amiens secured only a brief respite before the conflict with Napoleonic France was resumed fourteen months later. The Kymin Naval Temple now belongs to the National Trust.

As I headed down the glorious Lower Wye Valley and past Tintern Abbey (of Wordsworth fame) to Chepstow, I mused on how circumstances had conspired to popularize this and other scenic areas of Britain in the late 18th/early 19th centuries. The Napoleonic Wars had effectively closed continental Europe to the wealthy, previously accustomed to undertake the Grand Tour. This was also the Romantic era in literature, and the writings of those such as William Gilpin, vicar of Boldre near Lymington, proclaiming the Picturesque and Sublime beauties of the Wye Valley and other parts of Britain, had suggested a ready and acceptable alternative to mainland Europe for the leisured traveller. Britain's finest scenery was now truly fashionable, especially amongst the Romantic poets, and the tourist industry was born.

The left bank of the Lower Wye is of course closely bordered by Gloucestershire's Royal Forest of Dean. Nelson's interest in the area was not just romantic. The practical sailor was anxious that the Navy had access to adequate supplies of oak timber for the construction and refitting of Britain's 'wooden walls'. During his 1802 tour, Nelson also visited the Forest only to find that much timber had been sacrificed to charcoal burning and that there was no programme of replanting. However, he did find a timber merchant with sufficient stocks to complete the refitting of *HMS Victory*, which had been stalled for two years because of a timber shortage. He recommended to Parliament the replanting of large areas to secure a sustainable source of timber for the Naval dockyards. With typical government

tardiness, Parliament did not adopt Nelson's advice until three years after Trafalgar, when it ordered the replanting of Dean oaks. These are now 200-year-old mature trees known as 'Nelson's Oaks'. Although Nelson did not foresee that iron and steel would soon come to supersede timber for warship construction, his concern has recently paid dividends in a very fitting way: last year, two of the 'Nelson Oaks' were felled to provide timber for the restoration of *HMS Victory* (*The Times* 18 May 2004).

In the course of about 80 miles, I had encountered so many resonances of one of the most major and influential conflicts in British history - a conflict that fascinated Hardy and inspired and informed many of his writings.

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My attention has been drawn to an article in the Bristol-based *Western Daily Press* of 28 October 2004, which is prominently headed 'Book experts fall out over Hardy's sexuality' and sub-headed 'Gay friends gathered around West's great man of letters'. The article arose from the then forthcoming auction on 4 November by Dorchester-based Duke's of a book of William Barnes' poems inscribed to Siegfried Sassoon by Hardy. Sassoon is described as 'a member of the Max Gate Circle, the group of largely gay literary figures and luminaries drawn to Hardy at Max Gate', which included T.E. Lawrence, Max Beerbohm and Walter de la Mare. I'm not sure Circle with a capital C is quite the right word to describe their relationship to Hardy and Max Gate - they were generally infrequent visitors on separate occasions, even if some of them may have socialized together elsewhere. The sale had prompted 'book expert' Chris Copson to speculate that 'The fact that Hardy formed close friendships with men such as Sassoon and Lawrence may perhaps cause his own sexuality to be subjected to scrutiny. Although his association with homosexual literary figures does not certainly indicate repressed homosexuality, neither of his marriages were conventional in the standard Victorian breed-a-large-family way He had a strong mother and he was brought up in a small Dorset village. We can suppose that Hardy's upbringing would have completely stifled any but the most conventional sexual leanings. It would be intriguing to know whether the inscription in the book indicates more than just literary admiration'.

Of such stuff (and nonsense, one might add), false rumours are born. Hardy's friendship with such men doubtless derived from the affinity of a sensitive human being and writer for other similar souls. Anyway, such friendships were generally initiated by the younger generation of writers seeking out a highly respected senior figure from the world of letters - they were attracted to Hardy as a very eminent writer they greatly admired, not because of Hardy's or their own sexuality. Acquaintance with a few homosexual writers who sought him out is hardly evidence of repressed homosexuality on Hardy's part, and conveniently ignores his friendships with heterosexual writers and his very evident strong sexual attraction to women such as Florence Henniker. Given Hardy's wide-ranging acquaintance, it would be surprising if it did not include a few homosexuals. I think the article tells us rather more about Mr Copson's pre-occupations than it does about Hardy.

The Fellowship's Christmas and New Year Events

by Stephen Mottram

The Fellowship held two events 'in the bleak midwinter', a month apart, either side of Christmas; and both were successful and enjoyable. Twenty-seven people were at the Christmas lunch in Lydlinch village hall on 4 December, kindly booked for us by Bob and Janet Scott-Puttock. It was Janet who also prepared the splendid food. There was the usual convivial conversation, of course, but we also enjoyed buying and selling books at knockdown prices: an opportunity to get rid of duplicates and free-up much needed bookshelf space; and an opportunity to find new delights in books we had not seen before or had been looking for.

If there was plenty of books, there was plenty of food too, and some of us went back for seconds or even thirds and still the cuisine kept coming from Janet's kitchen. Replete at last, we listened to various

members' seasonal Hardy readings - some of us could identify with the over-indulgence in the short story 'Absent-Mindedness in a Parish Choir', although in our case it was food rather than alcohol. At the end of the afternoon, we helped to load up the pots and pans so as to fill the Scott-Puttocks' car. How on earth did they manage to get it all into the village hall in the first place?

Our 'Happy New Year' meeting was held at the Dorchester home of Simon Curtis on 8 January, where we brought our own 'indoor picnic' food to share. More convivial chat, but also an important discussion on the Fellowship programme for 2005 and how members would like to see the Fellowship develop.

After lunch, we walked to Stinsford church for Hardy readings. We followed the route - past the east side of Max Gate, across the railway line and through the allotments - that Hardy would have taken so often. This is the theme of his poem 'Paying Calls' which reminds me of the story told by the vicar of Stinsford at Hardy's heart funeral service that he would gather buttercups, daisies and cowslips and place them on Emma's grave and the graves of other kin in the churchyard. As we 'went by footpath' across the former water meadows we gingerly stepped through the mud, watched by inquisitive cows. A sunny day and 'though tempting was the air', it was hardly 'the time of midsummer'! Incidentally, the church now has a 2004 update of the booklet *Thomas Hardy and Stinsford Church*: fourteen pages of text, photographs and drawings for 60p.

Our return was via the westward continuation of the riverside path from the bridge at Lower Bockhampton to Grey's Bridge (commissioned by Lora Grey, daughter of Squire Audeley Grey of Kingston Maurward). This route is the reverse of that described by Hardy in his poem 'The Third Kissing-Gate' - before its removal, that gate used to be situated near the junction of the path down from the church with the riverside path. It was near the now-extended 'Three Bears Cottage' - the bears can be discerned in the patterning of the thatch.

We ended our day at Simon's house again for tea. Our thanks to him and to Janet for their kindness and hard work in enabling these events to take place. Thanks, too, to all the people who have been able to attend, who have maintained the Fellowship - not least to those who travel long distances to be with us and who drive home in the wintry dark.

A Tale of Two Poems

by Stephen Mottram

'The Third Kissing-Gate' is a rare example of Hardy's reducing nine stanzas of an already published poem to five. This shorter poem (895 in *The Complete Poems*) plots a girl's progress across the water meadows until she meets her lover at the kissing gate. 'The Forsaking of the Nest' (published in *Nash's Magazine* in 1912) concentrated on the girl's father, as he imagines her homeward progress and puzzles as to why she is late. Doubtless the later shortened poem is the more polished, but the magazine version had a certain charm, and it is not known why Hardy made the changes for collection in *Winter Words*, unless it was so as not to identify the occupants of a cottage which may have been the earliest section of the existing 'Three Bears Cottage'. As it is not readily available, the original version is printed below:

The Forsaking of the Nest

The hoers quit the mangel- field,
The firelight flecks the loam,
It is the minute of the hour
She named to start for home.

'I see her step forth from the town
And leave the lamps behind,
And trot along the eastern road
Where elms stand, double-lined.

‘And now she nears the branching path,
And takes the quicker way
Across the meadows where the brooks
Glide gurgling night and day.
‘By now she clacks the kissing-gate
Beneath the storm-tried trees,
And passes to the second mead
That fringes Mellstock Leaze.

And soon she swings the wicket next
The grey brick garden wall,
And sees the third mead stretching down
Towards the waterfall.
‘When through the third-reached kissing-gate,
Still nearer and more near
She draws to me; and, as ’tis eight,
She should be almost here.

‘And now she should approach the door,
Unlatch it with her thumb,
And show the form I have reared and roofed -
But ah! She does not come.’...

What chanced by that third kissing-gate
When the hushed mead grew dun?
Lo! Two dark figures clasped and closed
As if they were but one.

The waiting father counts the clock,
And still no footstep nighs,
For new delight has come to mock
All early filial ties!

Editor’s Postscript:

The kissing gates along the westward extension of the riverside path were removed for legal reasons. When the definitive map of public rights of way in Dorset was compiled by the County Council, for some utterly bizarre reason, the path from Lower Bockhampton to Grey’s Bridge was classified as an unmetalled county road, not as a footpath or bridleway as would have been more accordant with its physical characteristics and usage. It would have been legally possible to drive a motor vehicle along it, although anything wider than a motor bike could not have negotiated much of its ungated stretches. This odd classification may have been connected with the County Council’s former policy of refusing to classify any green lanes throughout the county as ‘roads used as public paths’, but it does not adequately explain why something as narrow as the riverside path should be deemed to be a county road like green lanes actually wide enough for the passage of cars or farm carts.

I understand that it was pressure from the then owner of ‘Three Bears Cottage’ - a retired senior police officer - who insisted on the removal of the kissing gates, so that his daughter could ride her horse along the path. The obstruction with kissing gates of a county road theoretically and legally open to all traffic was technically illegal - clearly horse riders cannot negotiate such gates, let alone motor vehicles.

Since then, the route has been much more sensibly classified as a bridleway. However, if it had originally been designated as a footpath, there could have been no legal challenge to the kissing gates and these Hardy-associated artefacts might have survived - or at least similar replacements, allowing for the natural decay of wooden gates. On such twists of fate can depend the survival or destruction of our literary landscapes.

A Happy Feline Hardy Coincidence

by Helen Martin

In January 2004, I gave a home to a tiny five-month-old black kitten who had been born and lived in a hedge in a Dorset village. As a precaution, I had her tested for FIV - the feline equivalent of the HIV virus. Sadly, the test results were positive, which meant I was unable to keep her in case she bit one of my other cats, thus spreading the virus

Extremely upset, I then e-mailed everyone in the faculty of the university where I lecture to see if there were any flat-dwellers who were prepared to offer her an indoor home.

I received an enquiring phone call from another lecturer who said her flat-dwelling sister-in-law in London might be interested, and after many phone calls etc, the re-homing day dawned and both ladies arrived.

We talked a lot whilst the kitten became acclimatised to their presence, and somehow, Hardy was mentioned. To my delight it appeared that both ladies were Hardy lovers. I knew that the London dweller's last name was Greenslade, so enquired very tentatively if she were related to Bill Greenslade, the Hardy scholar [his edition of Hardy's *Facts Notebook* was published last year - Ed]. To my amazement she replied 'I'm his sister', and then my faculty colleague remarked 'And I'm his ex-wife'.

I had felt happy about whom the kitten was going to when I met them, but now felt even more so. They left shortly afterwards with the comment that the kitten would be read passages from *Jude The Obscure* every night. I felt that if Hardy could have known about this episode, he would have enjoyed it, and as a cat lover would have approved. Indeed, the kitten has continued to thrive, and is now a happy playful young cat.

The Bridge of Lodi

by Josephine Pentney

The favourite Quick-step 'Speed the Plough' -
(Cross hands, cast off, and wheel) -
'The Triumph', 'Sylph', 'The Row-dow-dow',
Famed 'Major Malley's Reel',
'The Duke of York's', 'The Fairy Dance',
'The Bridge of Lodi' (brought from France)
She beat out toe and heel.

Last December the Editor and I spent a few days in Paris, where we visited some of the places explored by the Hardys on their honeymoon in September 1874, including Les Invalides. The Hôtel des Invalides was founded in 1670 by Louis XIV to offer care and accommodation to wounded soldiers and veterans; this vast complex of buildings once housed as many as 5000 pensioners in the years after Waterloo, and there would still have been 1000 in Hardy's time. Today there are a mere 80 veterans; and much of the complex is now occupied by the Musée d'Armée, an extensive range of galleries (too much to attempt in a day) covering French military history from the Middle Ages to World War II. Les Invalides is dominated by the magnificent Church of the Dome (gilded on the exterior), rivalling the contemporary dome of St. Paul's in London. This was the soldiers' church in which several eminent Marshals of France are buried. The church was modified by the construction of a crypt in which the monumental tomb of Napoleon was built to receive the Emperor's remains, exhumed from St. Helena, in 1861. This is more than a tomb; it is a national shrine ornamented by a series of marble bas-reliefs aggrandizing Napoleon's administrative achievements as well as his military victories; the statue represents him as a Roman emperor.

Hardy and Emma would have visited the tomb, of course, but not the Musée d'Armée which was not then in existence. How Hardy would have revelled in the Napoleonic galleries. He would have been

thrilled to be able to see the Emperor's personal effects (even the somewhat bald stuffed dog and horse), the re-creation of his campaign tent and the reconstruction of the room at St. Helena where he died (containing two beds: in which one he breathed his last is apparently uncertain); but disappointed, perhaps, that Waterloo does not feature in the displays.

While wandering through these galleries, we discovered a large model (scale 1:144) labelled 'The Battle of the Bridge of Lodi'. It was only a week or so previously, at our convivial Fellowship lunch in Lydlinch village hall, that we had listened to Helen Martin reading 'The Dance at the Phoenix' (*Wessex Poems*), and with the poem so fresh in our memory we realised that the name of the dance must surely refer to this engagement, today one of the lesser-known battles of the Napoleonic era. The battle took place on 10 May 1796 on the bridge across the Adda river, between the Revolutionary army commanded by the youthful General Bonaparte and the Austrian forces. This French victory was decisive for the rest of the Italian campaign, as it allowed Bonaparte to enter Milan. The 3-D model is a relief map in carved wood made in 1804, depicting the engagement in great detail, complete with hundreds of lead soldiers. How Hardy would have loved to have seen this.

The Life records that in the spring of 1887 Hardy and Emma toured Italy and arrived in Milan: 'Hardy had lately been obsessed by an old French tune of his father's, "The Bridge of Lodi", owing to his having drawn near the spot of that famous Napoleonic struggle....' The account goes on to describe how the Hardys became friendly at their hotel with a young Scotch (*sic*) officer of Foot returning from India, apparently a kind of Farfrae, who to Hardy's amazement had heard neither of the battle nor of the tune. Hardy persuaded the young officer to accompany him on an excursion to Lodi (leaving Emma at the hotel) where, we are told, 'the two re-enacted the fight'. One wonders how just two of them managed this! The visit to the battle site and Hardy's regret at the local inhabitants' total ignorance of an engagement fought there less than a hundred years previously inspired him to pen 'The Bridge of Lodi' (*Poems of the Past and the Present*), not one of his most familiar poems.

How, I wondered, did a tune which celebrated one of Bonaparte's early victories, 'brought from France' become such a popular dance in Dorset? A little research at home soon revealed that the dance is also known as 'Lord Nelson's Hornpipe' and is in fact a tune familiar to Hardy enthusiasts. I have two recordings of it under this name, one by the Mellstock Band, the other by Tim Laycock and the New Scorpion Band (*The Plains of Waterloo* CD). It is scarcely surprising that the tune should have been renamed in honour of England's greatest hero, but I have not been able to discover how or when the tune was first introduced to England, nor when it acquired its alternative title. Perhaps it was 'brought from France' by Wellington's returning troops, or perhaps there was an informal market in popular tunes across Europe - today's equivalent of downloading music from the internet. It was evidently known to Hardy as 'The Bridge of Lodi' and we may be sure that as a youth he would have played it on his violin at many a 'rattling randy'.

I am indebted to Mrs Lilian Swindall of the Dorset County Museum for supplying the following information: 'The tune "Lord Nelson's Hornpipe" is listed as No. 65 in the music book belonging to Thomas Hardy's father, and No. 140 in the James Hook manuscripts book (which belonged to Thomas Hardy's grandfather)'.

Thomas Hardy and Athelhampton

by John Pentney

Athelhampton Hall or House, usually known simply as Athelhampton without a suffix, is a fine late-medieval and early Tudor country house, about half-a-mile east of the village of Puddletown. In the earlier Middle Ages, the manor had belonged to the de Pydele family, but passed to Nicholas Martyn of Waterston when he married the de Pydele heiress Alice, probably in the late 13th century. Their descendant Sir William Martin or Martyn built the present house. [This is derived from Hutchins' *History of Dorset* and differs from the house guide book account which is confusing - it is anachronistically stated that the de Pydeles acquired the manor in the reign of Richard II but that Richard Martyn married the de Pydele heiress c. 1350 some years *before* the accession of Richard II in 1376!]

Hardy probably knew of Athelhampton from an early age as his mother often walked with him the few miles across the heath from Higher Bockhampton to visit his numerous cousins at Puddletown. He made a watercolour sketch of the house in 1859 and his father had worked on its restoration. He assisted John Hicks in preparing the drawings for the new Athelhampton parish church, 1861-62, on the opposite side of the former A35. On 3 September 1895, Hardy wrote to Florence Henniker saying 'I have just returned from Athelhampton Hall' where presumably he had dined with Alfred C. de Lafontaine who had bought the house in 1891, restored it (subsequent to the work on which Hardy's father was engaged) and laid out the gardens. In 1899, Hardy stayed a night there, so he was clearly on good terms with de Lafontaine.

As Athelhall, Athelhampton features in a few of Hardy's writings. In the short story 'The Waiting Supper', the heroine Christine Everard attends a party there with her sweetheart Nicholas Long. The poem 'The Dame of Athelhall' about an aborted elopement ends with a typical Hardyan irony - the married 'dame' who has had second thoughts about eloping with her lover, returns to Athelhall only to overhear her husband rejoicing at her elopement as it will enable him to marry *his* lover after 'a quick divorce'.

The poem 'The Children and Sir Nameless' records the association of the owners of Athelhampton with the Athelhampton chapel or chantry in Puddletown church, which contains various effigies to members of the Martin family who are buried there. Here again, irony is to the fore - the arrogant Sir 'Nameless' believes that a fine alabaster effigy on a tomb will immortalize his name, but the effigy is placed on the floor by church restorers and his name is erased, along with the effigy's nose, when kicked by the feet of schoolchildren bored by tedious sermons. For his fictional purpose, Hardy has probably conflated the alabaster effigy (believed to be that of Sir William Martyn, builder of Athelhampton) on a canopied altar tomb with the earlier effigies of an unknown knight and lady on the floor of the chantry.

Although Endelstow House in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is largely based on Lanhydrock House near Bodmin, Denys Kay-Robinson (*The Landscape of Thomas Hardy*, 1984, Webb & Bower) contends that Hardy imported some of the architectural features he describes from Athelhampton.

Fellowship Financial Statement

The Thomas Hardy Fellowship has funds amounting to £216.69 as at mid-January 2005.

Expenditure in 2004 was £120.15, compared with £107.16 in 2003. Outgoings are postage costs (mainly for the *Newsletter*), stationery, *Newsletter* printing (from camera-ready copy produced by the Editor), telephone, printer ink cartridges and venue hire for certain events. We have reluctantly had to

increase the subscription rate for non-UK members to reflect the high cost of airmailing the *Newsletter* abroad - the weight/price increments are far less generous than for the UK. There are over 40 subscribing memberships (i.e. including couples in joint membership), so each renewal cycle the Fellowship receives about £200, though this should increase (as will outgoings) with any growth in membership. In addition to subscription income, a few miscellaneous donations have been received. But - for various reasons - expenditure is not going to go down, and an increase in postage rates had to be absorbed in 2004.

We have considered the possibility of opening a Fellowship bank account, but have decided against this for the time being because we do not yet have a formal committee structure, and the sheer bureaucracy entailed to comply with banking regulations designed to prevent money-laundering. The amount of work involved would be quite disproportionate to the Fellowship's current scale of financial activity. Members should rest assured that the officers seek to maintain financial accountability whilst spending funds as economically as possible. We feel that the annual UK subscription of £5 is a very modest amount in today's debased currency, and represents good value for money.

As always, it is important that members let us know any thoughts they may have, and if they have any particular wishes regarding Fellowship events and activities.

Stephen Mottram - Hon. Treasurer

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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 disk or by e-mail *attachment* (rich text format please) - the latter two methods entail the least amount of editorial re-typing.

THE THOMAS HARDY FELLOWSHIP

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME 2005

N.B. Fuller details of the later events will be published in later *Newsletters* and on the forthcoming website.

Saturday 5 March: 11.00 a.m. Meet at the north porch entrance to the Minster church at Wimborne Minster for an exploration of Hardy's Warborne in *Two on a Tower*. After a pub lunch we will walk or drive to The Avenue to view the outside of 'Lanherne', Hardy's rented Wimborne residence, 1881-83.

Sunday 10 April: 2.00 p.m. Meet outside Words Etc bookshop, Cornhill end of South Street, Dorchester, for a walk around the town led by Stephen Mottram on the theme of 'Pouncys' Dorchester, then and now' - John Pouncy was a contemporary of Hardy's and a pioneer photographer who with his son Walter recorded the county town, and whose *Dorsetshire Photographically Illustrated* of 1857 was probably the first book published in Britain with reproduced photographs.

Saturday 14 May: Meet at 10.15 a.m. on the station platform at Norden Park & Ride (signed from the A351 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. A wet weather alternative - Nine Barrow Down is very exposed - will be an exploration of Hardy's Knollsea (Swanage), followed by the Corfe tea.

Saturday 25 June: 2.00 p.m. Meet at Down Farm (NGR SU 999148) off minor road signed to Wimborne St Giles from the A354 Blandford-Salisbury road. The track to Down Farm is no more than about 150 yards from the junction with the A354, on the right. Park in farmyard (toilets available) for a visit to Martin Green's private museum of Cranborne Chase archaeology and rural by-gones - admission £2 per head. Martin Green is an acclaimed amateur archaeologist as well as a farmer. This will be followed by tea at 5 Hyde Gardens, Pimperne courtesy of Gill Jackson and Fred Hoskins at about 5.00 p.m. **Names for Down Farm and tea to Hon Organizer John Pentney by 17 June please.**

Saturday 9 July: Evening outdoor dramatic performance of *The Return of the Native* in the grounds of Stafford House, in honour of Norrie Woodhall's forthcoming 100th birthday. Fellowship honorary member Norrie Woodhall played the part of Tess's sister Liza-Lu in the original Hardy Players' adaptation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, in which Norrie's sister Gertrude Bugler played Tess. To apply for tickets, £20 per head inclusive of a light supper, please contact Olive Blackburn (01305 - 263614). Profits to Cancer Care. Non-Fellowship event.

Saturday 16 July: 10.30 a.m. Meet by the Hangman's Cottage, Glyde Path Road, Dorchester for a mainly level walking tour of the town, based on the theme of Crime and Punishment in Hardy's Casterbridge, led by Josephine Pentney. Bring a picnic lunch to eat at Maumbury Rings (weather permitting). Meet at the outer entrance to Dorchester Prison in North Square at 1.50 p.m. for a visit to 'Casterbridge Gaol' courtesy of the Governor, Steve Holland. **For security reasons, all prison visitors must give names (plus addresses of any non-Fellowship members) to the Hon Organizer John Pentney by 9 July - leave large bags in your car if possible.** Followed by tea at the Oak Room, Antelope Walk, reputedly the venue for the Dorchester sitting of the Bloody Assizes.

Saturday 13 August: High Stoy walk led by John Pentney and a meal at The Hunter's Moon Inn, Middlemarsh - a favourite walk and watering hole of Hardy's.

Friday 16 September: It is hoped that some Fellowship members will be able to see the proposed re-enactment of Nelson's funeral procession on the Thames in London - official details not yet finalized.

Saturday 24 September: Visit to the 'Nelson & Napoleon' exhibition at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich - this is part of the SeaBritain 2005 Trafalgar bicentenary celebrations. Admission: adult £9, concessions £6 - tickets may be booked online at the Museum website. It is hoped to travel by riverboat from Westminster Pier (the nearest to Waterloo station) to Greenwich.

Saturday 29 October: A *Trumpet-Major* walk from Springhead pub, Sutton Poyntz, led by Fred Hoskins.

Saturday 3 December: Christmas lunch and book sale/exchange at the Hooper Hall, Lydlinch near Sturminster Newton.