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| <b>Institution:</b> University of Hull   |
| <b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D29: English Language and Literature  |
| <b>Title of case study:</b> Thomas Hardy: Wessex to a Wider World  |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Dr Jane Thomas's internationally renowned research on the major Victorian novelist and twentieth century poet and short fiction writer Thomas Hardy - supported by the British Academy, the Henry Moore Institute, the Thomas Hardy Society of Great Britain and The Thomas Hardy Association of America - has led to a more inclusive approach to the study of his life and work by scholars and the general readership, which acknowledges the importance of the so-called 'minor' novels, and the contribution made to his career by his first wife Emma.</p> <p>Findings have been shared with the general public through four biennial international conference/festivals attracting between 100-250 predominantly lay enthusiasts from 17 different countries; numerous public talks; four Radio 4 broadcasts; a reading in Westminster Abbey; as adviser to the Dorchester Community Play and Academic Director of the Thomas Hardy Society (924 members in 2012) and a key member of its Council of Management since 2008 where she offers academic leadership and advice on their various activities. (<a href="http://www.hardysociety.org">www.hardysociety.org</a>).</p>   |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The underpinning research on Thomas Hardy's life and work by Thomas as Lecturer in English, University of Hull (1995) and Senior Lecturer (2007) constitutes an internationally recognised body of work which has been published in major scholarly journals and academic presses and in more accessible forms in the <i>Journal</i> of the Thomas Hardy Society and <i>The Reader</i> (no 51: Autumn, 2012). Her output includes: two monographs; four edited editions from easily affordable presses such as Wordsworth and Sutton Press (her Wordsworth edition of <i>The Well-Beloved</i> with an introductory essay (2000) is still in print), as well as a contract from CUP to edit a volume in the definitive edition of Hardy's works ; seven chapters in books; nine articles and over twenty invited talks and lectures at national and international events ranging from an international scholarly conference at Yale University to a meeting of Grimsby Historical Society.</p> <p>Thomas's first monograph: <i>Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent</i> was distinguished by a contestatory examination of Hardy's marginalised novels and demonstrated his insight into the constitution of femininity through prevailing ideological practices. It was reviewed as 'a well-written, engaging, and much-needed examination of an important and neglected part of the Hardy canon' (<i>Victorian Review</i>, 25 (2), p. 110). It led directly to a commission to write the chapter on 'Hardy's Romances and Fantasies' and a contract to edit <i>A Pair of Blue Eyes</i> for the <i>Cambridge Edition of the Works of Thomas Hardy</i> (Cambridge: CUP) which is forthcoming in 2014.</p> <p>In her first and her second monograph, <i>Thomas Hardy and Desire</i>, her aim has been to explore comprehensively Hardy's oeuvre (novels, poetry and shorter fiction), to dispute the major/minor categorisation, to demonstrate his informed and sympathetic appreciation of gender issues and to challenge biographical readings of his work. An early version of a chapter from <i>Thomas Hardy and Desire</i> was delivered as a seminar paper at the major, international 'Thomas Hardy at Yale' (2010), funded by a British Academy Overseas Conference Grant, and at the International Thomas Hardy Conference in the same year.</p> <p>'Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure and Comradely Love' reveals Hardy as an informed and sympathetic correspondent of campaigning homosexuals during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and her chapter on 'Hardy and Masculinity' (<i>Thomas Hardy in Context</i>, 2013) examines his strong challenge to prevailing ideas on the gendered construction of masculinity and heterosexuality.</p> <p>Her article, 'Icons of Desire' and her chapter, 'Thomas Hardy, Pictorialism and the Visual Arts' demonstrates the breadth and depth of Hardy's knowledge on culture, art and aesthetic practice and offers a substantial challenge to the prevailing view of him as a 'flawed realist'. Thomas gave a plenary lecture on 'Hardy and James McNeill Whistler' at the 2011 'Thomas Hardy at Yale' conference and a revised version at the 2012 'Thomas Hardy Conference/Festival' in Dorchester</p> <p>In February 2013, she was awarded a prestigious Henry Moore Institute Research Fellowship to</p> |

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work on Hardy and the 'New Sculpture' the results of which will be disseminated in an invited paper at Trinity College, Oxford in November 2013 and at the Institute itself at a later date..

A recently published article 'In Defence of Emma Hardy' on the role of Emma Hardy in her husband's career as a writer appeared in *The Hardy Society Journal*, 9 (2) Summer 2013 (39-59).

Her most recent publication is a contribution to a Forum on Thomas Hardy published in *The Reader*, a magazine of poetry, fiction and accessible academic articles. *The Reader* is the official publication of 'The Reader Organisation' which is dedicated to reading for pleasure in order to 'improve ... literacy, well-being, and social skills' and is an official partner in Mayor Joe Anderson's campaign 'to make Liverpool the UK's foremost literate city' (<http://www.thereader.org.uk/>).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) pp. xii + 172.
2. *Thomas Hardy and Desire* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 90,000 wds pp. x + 233.
3. Thomas Hardy, 'Jude the Obscure and Comradely Love', *Literature and History*, 16(2), Autumn 2007:1-15.
4. 'Icons of Desire: The Classical Statue in Late Victorian Literature', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 40, nos 1-2, pp. 1-15
5. 'Thomas Hardy's Romances and Fantasies', *Blackwell Companion to Thomas Hardy* (ed) Wilson, Keith (Blackwell, Oxford, 2009), pp. 281-98.
6. 'Thomas Hardy, Pictorialism and the Visual Arts', 2013, *Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy* (Cambridge: CUP), pp. 436-448; 'Hardy's Simple Profundity' in 'Four Helpings of Hardy', *The Reader* (51), Autumn 2013, pp.56-70 (63-65).

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Key insights and findings from Thomas's work include critical and popular reconsideration of Hardy's so-called 'Minor Fiction'; his relationship with the visual arts; his sympathetic exploration of issues of gender and sexuality, a new interest in his paintings and sketches and those of his first wife Emma Gifford, and discussion of the cultural dissemination of his work in popular music, film and culture. Her work has led to a decade-long collaboration with the Thomas Hardy Society and its Council of Management. The Society currently has over 1,000 members largely drawn from the lay public in 17 countries including New Zealand, Canada, Japan, China, India, USA, UK, Russia, Italy, France, Spain, Holland and Hong Kong (membership list available). Thomas is also a member of the Thomas Hardy Society's Council of Management and offers advice and support on events and issues including: the use of Hardy's house Max Gate (owned by the National Trust) and a proposal to build 1,000 houses on a cornfield between Max Gate and William Barnes' house 'Came Rectory' which has since been overturned.

Plenary lectures delivered to the Society's biennial International Conference/Festival in 2002 and 2006 resulted in an invitation to co-direct the event's first Postgraduate Symposium (2008). This event, which has since become a regular feature at the Hardy Festival Conference, introduced Hardy enthusiasts to the best of cutting-edge research by young, beginning academics. One comment in the questionnaire returns for 2012 particularly praised the Wednesday pm Postgraduate panel. The delivery of a plenary lecture on echoes of Hardy's work in contemporary popular music by 'The Stranglers', Beth Orton and P.J. Harvey at the 2008 THS Festival Conference demonstrated the impact of her interest in the cultural dissemination of Hardy's work. Thomas was subsequently appointed as Academic Director of the Nineteenth (2010) and Twentieth Conference Festivals (2012). The latter featured a very popular lecture by cartoonist Posy Simmonds on her graphic novel *Tamara Drewe* (also released as a film in 2010) which is based on Hardy's novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* and one by film critic Philip Kemp on Michael Winterbottom's 'Hardy Trilogy': *Jude the Obscure*; *The Claim* (based on *The Mayor of Casterbridge*) and *Trishna* based on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Several respondents rated these

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lectures as 'the best' and one commented on how Posy Simmond's lecture 'provided interesting insights into the creative role of an author' and how the talks had prompted them to watch the films again (or for the first time) with renewed interest.

The Biennial International Thomas Hardy Festival and Conference, is jointly sponsored by the Thomas Hardy Society, Dorchester Town Council, West Dorset District Council, Dorchester Business Improvement District, and the Faber Academy. Its remit is to enhance the appreciation of Hardy and his work in the UK and the wider world. The Festival and conference take place in St Peter's Church, Dorchester (where the Society's Council of Management also meets every second month), and features a variety of events including Poetry Readings, Lectures, Seminars, Receptions, Suppers, Tastings, New Writing from Wessex, Quiz, Guided Walks, Coach Tours, Drama, Dance and Musical Performances, Book Launches, Exhibitions and an Antiquarian Book Fair. Thomas organised the programme of lectures for 2010 which featured academics and writers Claire Tomalin (author, biographer and literary editor and broadcaster); and poetry readings by Christopher Reid and former Poet Laureate Sir Andrew Motion. 53 questionnaires (out of 176 attendees) were received for the 2010 Festival Conference. Of these 24 felt that the balance between academic and popular events was excellent and one felt that 'the seminars are the highlight of the Conference'. Another declared it 'an ambitious and well-organised conference, all rewarding and very enjoyable' and that 'the mix of lay and academic makes for an extremely pleasant experience'. An indicative comment concerning the Society and its Festival Conference was that it: 'deepens your appreciation and understanding of England's second greatest writer; I suppose that's your job!'. There was a request for 'an afternoon workshop for the ordinary poetry writer'. This was followed up in the 2012 conference (see below).

Thomas also directed the 2012 Programme, which featured leading scholars, authors (Posy Simmonds), broadcasters, and playwright (Rupert Creed). One respondent to the questionnaire praised two of the Academic lectures adding that they 'threw new light on Hardy for me'. Another stated that the lectures were 'very stimulating' demonstrated 'new insights into Hardy's poetry' and offered a 'new window onto Hardy's writing'. Another replied: 'I enjoyed each of the lectures. Truly enlightening!' and one respondent concluded: 'thank you for a very stimulating week'. Mr Paul Stephens commented 'mix of academic, artistic and popular is perfectly in the spirit of Hardy – a wonderful conference and great atmosphere'. Appreciation was shown for 'the warm welcome, kindness and excellent organisation' and a respondent from India commented 'thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of this exceedingly enriching experience'. 120 delegates, reflecting the broad base of the Society's membership, attended the 2012 event which featured a creative writing collaboration with Professor Herbert Tucker (University of Virginia) and the renowned poet Daljit Nagra resulting in the public performance of six Hardy inspired poems by members of the general public at the Conference dinner on Sat 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2012 and their subsequent publication in the Autumn edition of the *Thomas Hardy Journal* (Oct 2012). One respondent to the questionnaire – commented 'went to Daljit Nagra's creative writing workshop – very good stimulus provided & lots of good work done by everyone to be followed up later!'

Thomas's research has also led to invitations to address the Hardy Society in Sheffield as well as Grimsby Historical Society; a position as Hardy Advisor for the Dorchester Community Play (to be performed in March 2014) and a collaboration with the playwright Rupert Creed on a theatrical performance and series of workshops that will explore the extent to which the avowedly personal 'Poems of 1912-13' can be freed from the biographical straightjacket. These will feature as part of the 2014 International Hardy Conference and Festival thus demonstrating the sustainability of her impact into the next REF period.

Thomas's interest in Hardy's informed and sympathetic exploration issues of gender and sexuality have led to media appearances including two programmes for BBC Radio Four's 'Woman's Hour' *Hardy Walks (The Mayor of Casterbridge)* - broadcast on 21 October 2008, repeated 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 and featured in Radio Four's 'Pick of the Week' on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 - and (*Jude the Obscure*), 12 November 2008. She was interviewed by phone for the *Guardian* newspaper about the sale of the 'Kings Arms', Dorchester and featured in 'Hotel Immortalised in Hardy Novel up for Sale' (*Guardian*, 20 December, 2007).

Thomas gave the 'Thomas Hardy Birthday Lecture' at the Council Chambers, Dorchester in June 2010. Questionnaires completed by members of the public asked about the ways in which 'the lecture changed the way you thought about the subject? And whether 'this lecture made you want to find out more about the topic or authors/poets?' (questionnaires available). The event was

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advertised in the *Daily Telegraph*, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 and *Dorset Echo*, 25/5/10; *View from Dorchester*, 26/5/2010; *Western Gazette*, 27/5/2010.)

Following the delivery of her findings at the 2011 'Thomas Hardy at Yale' conference and in revised form at the 2012 'Thomas Hardy Conference/Festival' in Dorchester, she was invited to advise the Director of the Dorset County Museum on an exhibition of Hardy's paintings and sketches which have never before been in the public realm. An exhibition of Hardy-related artwork is now planned to coincide with the opening of the 2014 Festival Conference.

In February 2013 she was awarded a prestigious Research Fellowship at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds. Planned outcomes include public talks and a possible future public exhibition at the Institute on Poetry and Sculpture arising from her fellowship there. The impact of this research will be to bring to public attention the close links between literature and sculpture in the second half of the nineteenth century especially in the work and aesthetic ideas of Thomas Hardy who was greatly influenced by the work and writing of the practitioners of the 'New Sculpture' (1877-1910).

A talk by Thomas, entitled 'In Defence of Emma Hardy' was given at The Rectory, St Juliot (Emma Gifford's home) as part of the Society's Cornwall Weekend (7-10 March 2013) to celebrate the 143<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Hardy and Emma's first meeting. The talk was published in the *Thomas Hardy Journal* in October 2013 and has initiated some interest in the role of Emma Hardy among the community of Hardy enthusiasts.

She is on the Editorial Board of the *Thomas Hardy Society Journal* (members only) and contributes to the Thomas Hardy Website ([www.hardysociety.org](http://www.hardysociety.org)) which features a monthly newsletter, news and events, walks and general information on Hardy and his work. She has spoken at festivals, and for literary and historical societies, at schools and in the media.

A 'Fudge Book Club' meeting on *Far from the Madding Crowd* which Thomas was invited to lead, directly resulted in member signing up to read for a PhD on Hardy and other writers under her supervision.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Congratulatory letters from members of the general public, including one from a person, who was immediately inspired to read more Hardy. Others endorsing the accessibility and impact of the 2012 Conference and Festival.
2. A selection of 6 poems inspired by the collaboration between Thomas, Professor Herbert Tucker and Daljit Nagra at the 2012 Conference/Festival in the *Thomas Hardy Journal*, Autumn 2012, which also featured Thomas's lecture.
3. Thomas Hardy Society website which has 138 'likes' on Facebook. Conference pages (see Brenda Parry's report: <http://www.hardysociety.org/index.php/society-conference/previous-conferences>)
4. Questionnaires from the 2010 and 2012 Conference and Festival.
5. BBC audience numbers for 'Woman's Hour' and 'Pick of the Week'.
6. Grimsby Historical Society (Hazel Hale: [http://www.history.org.uk/resources/he\\_resource\\_1139\\_17.html](http://www.history.org.uk/resources/he_resource_1139_17.html))
7. Online discussion following the talk 'In defence of Emma Hardy' (one long response from Dr Alan Frizzell (author of a *TLS* article on Emma already received)
8. Exit questionnaires for the Thomas Hardy Birthday Lecture "What will survive of us": Hardy, Larkin and the Legacy of Art'.