



Folklore, Thomas Hardy, and Rural Writing



A Joint Conference of The Folklore Society and The Thomas Hardy Society

11-13 April 2014

Together with The Folklore Society's Annual General Meeting 2014

at The Corn Exchange, High East Street,

Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1JF

FOLKLORE, THOMAS HARDY, & RURAL WRITING



**Ghosts and Visions, Rites and Charms
Legends, Magic and Ballads
Witches, Curses, Cures and Foretellings**



*Bathsheba tries divination
by Bible and key*



Mummers.

By kind permission of Dorset County Museum

Programme

Friday 11 April

13.00: Registration opens

14.00: Folklore Society AGM (FLS members only)

14.45: Session 1: Thomas Hardy: Education, Knowledge, and Research

Jeremy Harte: "Wide-Oh and the Toadman: Cunningmen in Dorset and in Hardy."
Jacqueline Dillion: "Ways of Knowing in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*"
Roy Vickery: "Plants and Plant-Lore in the Novels of Thomas Hardy"

16.15: tea/coffee

16.45: Folklore Society Presidential Address by Mr Robert McDowall

"W.H. Hudson and his Wessex Associations."

17.30—18.30: drinks reception hosted by The Folklore Society

Evening: options include:

- a) Self-guided walk (details will be in the conference packs)
- b) Meet at the conference pub The Kings Arms in High East Street
- c) **Sold Out now, sorry:** the Community Play "Drummer Hodge" at the Thomas Hardy School: <http://www.dorchestercommunityplay.org.uk/index.php/drummer-hodge>

Saturday 12 April

9.30: Session 2: Thomas Hardy and Mary Webb

Heather Hawkins: "Folklore and Belief in Thomas Hardy's Poetry"
Diana Coles: "The Folklore of the Welsh Marches in Mary Webb's *Gone to Earth*"
Dai Hawkins: "Folklore in the Novels of Mary Webb"

11.00: tea/coffee

11.30: Session 3: Victorian Rural Writers and Influences

Paula Gerrard: "*The Scouring of the White Horse*, by Thomas Hughes"
Angela Blaen, Tom Blaen and Anna Blaen:
"Under a Greenwood Tree?: Hardy and Westcountry Authors' Attitudes to Folklore with Particular Reference to Treelore."
Rupert Creed and Tim Laycock: "Hardy's 'Drummer Hodge' in Story and Song"

13.00: lunch (sandwiches will be provided for conference speakers only)

14.00: Session 4: Folklore in the Works of Thomas Hardy

Jonathan Memel: "Education and the Loss of Folk-Belief: The Cases of Avicé I and Elizabeth-Jane"

Tracy Hayes: "The Red Ghost and the No-Moon Man: Masculinity as Other in *The Return of the Native*."

Karin Koehler: "'...a letter in the candle': Folklore, Letters, and the Penny Post in the Works of Thomas Hardy"

Jessica Campbell: "'One of a Long Row': Tess, the D'Urbervilles, and the Experience of Folklore in Late-Victorian England."

16.00: tea/coffee

16.30—18.00: Session 5: Legends, Superstitions and the Rural Environment

Jonathan Roper: "Poets as Folklorists in late English Romanticism"

Mark Norman: "'Cockstrides and Carriages'--Parallels of Thomas Hardy's Dorset Ghosts in the Wider Westcountry Landscape"

Catriona Laskowski: "'Twer not a cross! 'Tis a thing of ill omen': The Superstitious Rural Mind in Hardy"

Evening:

- a) Self-guided walk (in the conference packs)
- b) Meet at the conference pub The Kings Arms in High East Street

Sunday 13 April

10.00: Session 6: Folk-Song, Drama and Performance

Peter Robson: "Fiction, Folklore and Reconstruction – Thomas Hardy's 'Play of St. George'"

Paul Cowdell: "What Victorian Peasantry? The Surprising Class Warriors of English Folk Song Scholarship"

Jerry Bird: "Mumming and Poverty in Hardy's Wessex"

11.30—12.00: tea/coffee and close of conference

ABSTRACTS

Jerry Bird: “Mumming and Poverty in Hardy’s Wessex”

This paper introduces the known mummers’ plays of Dorset, and Thomas Hardy’s involvement with, and use of folk drama in his fiction. Hardy had first-hand knowledge of mumming in his youth, and remained enthusiastic about it. He used the text of a local mummers’ play in a pivotal scene in *The Return of the Native* (1898), and published a play ‘for mummers’ in 1923. In one of Hardy’s notebooks, he summarised newspaper reports from 1828, in which a group of mummers from Fordington were indicted for rioting in Dorchester on Christmas Eve, and for assaulting his uncle, John Hardy, a drummer in the Bockhampton Band. Fordington was a notorious suburb of Dorchester (‘the mildewed leaf in the flourishing Casterbridge plant’, as Hardy described it). These reports are reproduced here together for the first time, and the incident is examined in the context of sweeping changes in the structure of society which had had manifested in vastly increased poverty and vagrancy. By the late 1820s, the authorities were becoming nervous about outbreaks of machine-breaking and fire-setting by the rural poor — desperate acts of civil disobedience that would culminate seven years later with the transportation of George Loveless and his fellow Tolpuddle Martyrs.

Dr Angela Blaen (University of Exeter), **Dr Tom Blaen** (University of Exeter), & **Anna Blaen** (University of Exeter): **“Under a Greenwood Tree? Hardy and Westcountry Authors’ Attitudes to Folklore with Particular Reference to Treelore.”**

This paper is drawn from a forthcoming book on folklore in the works of prominent late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Westcountry authors. It will seek to look at some aspects of Thomas Hardy’s attitude and relationship to folklore in comparison to that of his friends and colleagues, the authors: Eden Phillpotts, John Cowper Powys, T. F. Powys, Arthur Quiller-Couch and Henry Williamson. Hardy had an ambivalent relationship with folklore both as an academic discipline and in his own work, so that, despite a love of folklore and some links with the Society, he did not see himself as a folklorist, or even as an author wanting to precisely depict the rural culture around him but instead he used folklore as a part of pallet for his consciously fictional artistic settings. The use of folklore surrounding trees in the authors’ writings will be used, where, for instance, Hardy’s inaccurate use of elm instead of ash in works like *The Woodlanders* or in his poetry is contrasted with the deliberate use of authentic local folklore by his contemporaries, many of whom (in contrast to Hardy) did view themselves as folklorists.

Jessica Campbell (University of Washington, Seattle): **“‘One of a Long Row’: Tess, the D’Urbervilles, and the Experience of Folklore in Late-Victorian England.”**

In *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, Angel Clare observes in Tess “the ache of modernism”. But Tess differs from many late Victorians in wanting to escape country lore and superstition rather than longing nostalgically for a pre-industrial past. Tess mistrusts her mother’s reliance on the *Complete Fortune-Teller* and a host of “superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads” and dislikes learning history, arguing, “what’s the use of learning that I am one of a long row only – finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part”

(23, 126). But it turns out that Tess is caught in two particular “long rows.” First, her parents force her into pursuit of their rumored connection to the ancient, wealthy D’Urbervilles, which results not only in years of unhappiness for Tess but also, ironically, in her taking her place in the D’Urberville line by hearing the legendary “D’Urberville coach” and murdering Alec. Second, Tess’s wanderings significantly end at the ancient ruin of Stonehenge, depositing her at last in her place in an even longer hereditary line: the pagan ancestry associated throughout the novel with her mother. I will situate Tess’s unwilling entry into these legacies in the context of Victorian folk and fairy lore, particularly of the “pixy-led,” and in two related theoretical contexts: that of René Girard’s work on sacrificial scapegoats (which applies to Tess not only in her arrest for murder at the possibly sacrificial site of Stonehenge but in fact throughout her life) and that of Jacques Lacan’s insistence on the individual’s subjection to a pre-constituted chain of kinship, language, and desire.

Dr Diana Coles: “The Folklore of the Welsh Marches in Mary Webb’s *Gone to Earth*”

Mary Webb, 1881 to 1927, wrote about rural life in Welsh Marches. Like Hardy she made folklore an integral part of her novel. This paper will focus on her earlier, less well known ‘Gone to Earth’ which was published in 1917. This has strong echoes of Hardy’s Tess of the D’Urbervilles which was published over a quarter of a century earlier

This paper will seek to examine the legends incorporated in ‘Gone to Earth’ and to what extent the incorporation of folk beliefs shapes the development of the plot.

Dr Paul Cowdell (The Folklore Society): “What Victorian Peasantry? The Surprising Class Warriors of English Folk Song Scholarship”

In 1929 Frank Kidson edited a collection of folk songs entitled *English Peasant Songs*. This paper will consider some of the problems embodied in the notion that there might still have been an English peasantry in 1929, and will look at what the theorising of the Victorian English folksong revival owed to earlier folklorists. This is no historical question, as this theorising continues to be central to folksong scholarship. Recent understandings are firmly grounded in the work of the preeminent collector Cecil Sharp, so Dave Harker’s critical engagement was refreshing. Harker’s profession of a Marxist critique opened fruitful areas of research into collection and mediation but was undermined by an approach to class as reductive as the anachronistic Edwardian conceptions. C.J. Bearman’s statistical analysis highlighted these shortcomings and (despite its hostility to Marxism) also suggested ways of developing a deeper class-based study of folksong. Harker’s work, in turn, sheds new light on Bearman’s statistics. Notwithstanding their differences the scholars share a conceptual framework, which has driven them into a parochial impasse that downplays the significance of their dispute. This paper will seek to address that impasse in order to develop further critical understandings of class in folklore scholarship.

Rupert Creed and Tim Laycock: “Hardy’s ‘Drummer Hodge’ in Story and Song”

The presentation will focus on how the poem inspired the storyline of the play and how Tim approached composing & directing the music for the production.

The community play “Drummer Hodge”, in performance at The Thomas Hardy School, closes Sat 12 April: **now sold out for 11th and 12th, sorry**; for more details and ticket availability evenings before 11 April, visit: <http://www.dorchestercommunityplay.org.uk/index.php/drummer-hodge>

Jacqueline Dillion (University of St Andrews): “**Ways of Knowing in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*”**

When William Thoms first suggested the compound ‘folk-lore’ in 1846, he left the exact meaning of ‘lore’ open to interpretation. While the term had formerly meant ‘teaching’ or ‘doctrine’ as well as ‘learning’, ‘scholarship’, or ‘body of knowledge’, it had since taken on an archaic connotation. By the 1870s, leading voices in the Folklore Society argued that lore meant ‘learning of the kind that is opposed to science, meaning by “science” ‘ascertained knowledge’, whereas ‘unascertained knowledge’ was considered ‘apt to be very wrong’ and to be a threat to the new standards upheld in National School education.

Thomas Hardy was in a unique position to understand these dynamics: as a youth he attended National schools and as an adult he adhered to a lifelong plan of self-directed study in the pursuit of intellectual knowledge. Yet, he was able to empathize with earlier ‘folk’ approaches to knowledge, and throughout his work he challenges the assumption that ‘scientific’, standardized knowledge is wholly superior to ‘unascertained’ knowledge. In *Tess* in particular, Hardy questions this assumed hierarchy of knowledge, which informs the way an educated reader would understand the juxtaposition of Tess and her mother, the one ‘with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads’, the other with ‘her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code’. Though the narrator does not explicitly say which kind of knowledge is superior, the inference may be drawn. While authors and folklorists often lamented the kind of cultural whitewashing that came with standardized education, in *Tess* Hardy suggests a more personal danger: that Tess’s education has not equipped her for survival in her own culture. Not only do the National teachings and Standard knowledge fail to prepare her, but they create a barrier that keeps her from understanding other forms of knowledge, such as what has been called the ‘folk ways of women’ – the kinds of rules that Arabella Donn’s friends orally communicate in *Jude the Obscure*. Tess’s National School education is not only inapplicable in understanding the rules of the folk culture, but it creates a false sense of knowing: she doesn’t imagine that there are kinds of knowledge that her mother – like Arabella’s friends – simply expects her to have.

While individual portrayals of ‘folk knowledge’ such as Tess’s mother’s consulting the *Compleat Fortune Teller* may appear foolish when presented in the text, they form part of a greater network of tacit knowledge and understanding that cannot be easily substituted with standardized education. Tess’s education offers her nothing that helps her social negotiation with the classes above her own, even while it attempts to foster in her middle-class values that divide her against herself. Similarly, in *Jude* and in *The Woodlanders*, Hardy shows how the protagonists’ educations fail to help them understand the ways of the worlds they attempt to enter. The point is not that Hardy is saying it is better to have superstitions than education: rather, he suggests that education, improvement, and progress come with hidden costs.

Collectively, this educational ‘progress’ not only causes ‘the people’ to lose a sense of culture and heritage but at an individual level standard education often offers no alternative for what which ‘folk knowledge’ had offered previously. This paper will argue that Hardy presents folk culture as not necessarily inferior to standardized culture, but in fact often necessary for survival in one’s own culture.

Paula Gerrard: "The Scouring of the White Horse, by Thomas Hughes"

The White Horse of Uffington is one of the most enigmatic hill figures in the British isles, and has recently been dated to between 1400 and 600 BCE. In 1857 Hughes, who came from Uffington, saw the Horse being scoured, or cleaned, with all the traditional sports and games. Two years later he published "The Scouring of the White Horse," a fictionalised account of this event.

The story of the White Horse is amazing - how did something as easily obliterated as a hill figure survive for 3 millennia? There must have been a very strong belief that the Horse had to be cleaned and preserved.

Hughes' novel is based upon this folk tradition which was surviving in one specific landscape. He gave a detailed account of the event, and his characters praise the custom. They defend the rougher features, such as wrestling and backswording.

The book reflects his interest in the contemporary ideals of muscular Christianity. (The parson argues in favour of the manly sports of old England.) The novel describes traditional folk customs in order to support Hughes' social and religious beliefs.

This book is a fascinating mix of Victorian ideas, the detailed reporting of mid 19th century folk traditions, and the folklore of a small area of Oxfordshire.

Jeremy Harte (Bourne Hall Museum): "Wide-Oh and the Toadman: Cunningmen in Dorset and in Hardy."

Victorian Dorset was full of village seers, magicians and healers. They cured obstinate complaints, traced stolen property, brought lovers together, and foiled the malign powers of witches, though many were suspected of having a malicious streak themselves. These cunning-folk also feature in the Wessex novels, where they forward the plot, and also provide authentic rural colouring: Hardy made a point of including real knowledge in his works. But how much did he know? Fiction overlaps with truth in many areas; the isolated cottage of Wide-Oh Fall, his mysterious foreknowledge of visitors, and his psychological acuteness can all be matched in the wider tradition. But Hardy picked only what he needed as a novelist. He gave priority to men rather than women, and to helpful rather than negative powers. Unbelief in cunning-folk, a tradition common in satirical reminiscence, was not what he needed for his stories. Conjuror Trendle in 'The Withered Arm' is a much more dignified figure than his seedy real-life prototype. Literature is more than ethnography; but Hardy's literary response to the magical tradition reminds us that its own practitioners were also creative artists, though it was not books that they fashioned, but their own self-representation as dark healers.

Dai Hawkins: "Folklore in the Novels of Mary Webb"

Comparison of the lives and works of Webb and Hardy. (1) their personal/social/creative background and lives. (2) Shropshire and Dorset, land and folklore in their novels. Examination of folklore in each of Webb's novels: (1) what was the period depicted in each novel, and how did that affect the attitude of the characters to folklore? A certain amount of detective work is necessary in each case to ascertain the exact period depicted. The impact of late Victorian industrialization on rural society in her novels set in a later period is bound up with the degree to which folklore is real in the (fictional) characters' perception.

(2) how did MW use folklore for her own authorial purposes in each novel?

Precious Bane is generally regarded as MW's best work. It was dedicated to Thomas Hardy (with his

permission), and is to some extent derivative of him. It is set after the Napoleonic Wars, in an earlier period than her other novels, apart from her last, unfinished, novel. *Armour Wherein He Trusted*, so comparison of the function of folklore in *PB* with that in the others is illuminating.

Dr Heather Hawkins (Nottingham Trent University): **“Folklore and Belief in Thomas Hardy’s Poetry”**

Thomas Hardy makes frequent reference to rural folklore in his poetry. In this paper I discuss the manner in which Hardy employs folklore to question mainstream nineteenth-century religious belief and explore middle-class social conventions which were underpinned by Christianity. I propose that in poems such as ‘a Sunday Morning Tragedy’, ‘The Moth Signal’ and ‘The Dead Quire’, Hardy employs folklore as a catalyst for action. In doing so, Hardy recalls older non-standard forms of belief which have been recorded and celebrated in oral culture. I assert that such celebrations constitute an alternative legendary perception of history and religion which is re-told in rural literary forms to express the beliefs and traditions of an ancient but thriving culture. Such beliefs attempt to override the constraints of formal religion and social conventions of the urban centre to reveal the continuation of a vibrant rural voice.

Tracy Hayes (Open University): **“The Red Ghost and the No-Moon Man: Masculinity as Other in *The Return of the Native*.”**

The Uncanny represents an exploration of unfamiliar territory, or what Hugh Haughton describes as 'the sublime territory of unfamiliarity itself'. It is what Freud designated *Das Unheimliche* – the realm of the frightening, the disturbing, 'of what evokes fear and dread'. Thomas Hardy utilizes this anxiety of the unknown through two characters who have been endowed with folkloric qualities in order to emphasize their enigmatic marginality. Diggory Venn is a reddleman who lives like a gypsy on Egdon Heath, remaining for the most part out of sight of the other denizens, aloof, isolated, 'not of them'. His skin is permeated with redden dust and he is viewed by the other characters as Mephistophelean, a spectral figure whose sudden appearances have been used as threats to unruly children by generations of Wessex mothers. Christian Cantle is 'the man of no moon', an Unman whose liminal masculinity renders him as Other – he is 'the man no woman will marry', possibly not a man at all. In this paper I will demonstrate how Hardy challenged 19th century notions of hetero-normativity through his representation of gender as anomaly in order to subvert the eugenicist preference for 'the sound' over 'the morbid'; and how a masculinity perceived as 'unfamiliar' and thus 'unnatural' by his contemporaries was in fact integral to the maintenance of community stability.

Karin Koehler (University of St Andrews) **“‘...a letter in the candle’: Folklore, Letters, and the Penny Post in the Works of Thomas Hardy”**

This paper aims to examine the relationship between rural folk customs and Victorian advances in communication technology in Thomas Hardy’s works.

Letters are a ubiquitous feature of Victorian fiction, and Hardy’s novels form no exception. Only one of Hardy’s novels, *The Trumpet-Major*, is set before the introduction of the penny post, and this text significantly suggests that, in the early nineteenth century, epistolary communication was still an object

of folkloric superstition. When Miller Loveday finds out that a letter is waiting for him at the local post-office, he declares that he had discovered 'a letter in the candle' a few days earlier, thus alluding to a widespread customary belief. However, while, in the *The Trumpet-Major*, letters are integrated into the imagination and life of the rural community with ease – albeit as an exceptional and sensational phenomenon – in the novels set around the middle of the century, shortly after the advent of penny postage, long-distance communication seems to be envisaged rather as a threat, a source of anxiety. For Hardy's 'rustic characters', I will argue, advances in communication technology appear as a force likely to destroy the internal cohesion of their communities, and to erode the beliefs and traditions that bind them together.

Catriona Laskowski (Loughborough University): **“'Twer not a cross! 'Tis a thing of ill omen’¹: The Superstitious Rural Mind in Hardy”**

Hardy's upbringing in Bockhampton is one that he drew on throughout his writing career and the folk traditions of the rural communities were a major part of this. His knowledge of local superstitions, a lot of this gleaned from his grandmother, drove his writing and his explorations of fate in his works. His novels are driven by omens and premonition as his characters continually notice and respond to omens both good and bad. Hardy's preoccupation with fate is expressed and exemplified through the superstitions of his characters as they live with the 'the belief that "What will be, will be" ... one source of the quiet, undemonstrative courage with which many of Hardy's characters face whatever comes to them'.² It is the superstitions of Hardy's people which drive their thoughts and their actions throughout his novels.

This paper will explore the superstitious mind in Hardy. It will consider the importance of superstitions to the rural communities which Hardy presents in his novels and how this is informed by the rural environment itself. It will be argued that it is because of the rural environment and agricultural lifestyle that the people of Hardy's novels are superstitious because of the uncertainty of their lives and the lack of control they have over their individual fates. This paper will consider the use of bad omens in Hardy's novels, in particular those relating to beginnings such as bad omens about birth and marriages. By examining Hardy's presentation and response to bad omens in the novels this paper will examine Hardy's ideas about fate and the uncertainty of rural life.

1. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, ed. By Tim Dolin (London: Penguin, 1998), p.312
2. Ruth A. Firor, *Folkways in Thomas Hardy* (New York: Perpetua Books, 1962), p.1

Robert McDowall (Folklore Society President) **"W.H. Hudson and his Wessex Associations."**

This paper will examine the life and works of W.H.Hudson, a contemporary of Thomas Hardy who wrote and travelled extensively in Wessex, in particular *"A Foot in England"* and *"A Shepherd's Life"*. The paper will compare W.H. Hudson with Hardy and other writers of the same genre.

Jonathan Memel (University of Exeter): **"Education and the Loss of Folk-Belief: The Cases of Avicé I and Elizabeth-Jane"**

In *The Well-Beloved*, we're told that Avicé I has been taught 'to forget all the experiences of her ancestors'. Education has replaced 'the local ballads by songs purchased at the Budmouth fashionable music-sellers' and, where Avicé previously spoke 'the local vocabulary', her schooling has given her 'a governess-tongue of no country at all.' In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Elizabeth-Jane is similarly drawn away from the beliefs and speech of her local upbringing. This paper will consider the educations of Avicé and Elizabeth-Jane as processes of loss, in which traditional beliefs are suppressed, denied and replaced. Hardy presents modern forms of knowledge as threats to rural customs and speech: hence, in his later novel, Tess only continues to use dialect '*despite* the village school'. I will show, moreover, that Hardy's views on this subject were influenced by his close friend William Barnes, whose own practice as teacher, philologist and poet acknowledged the tensions between new and old ideas, but also suggested some points of reconciliation.

Mark Norman (Independent Folklore Researcher): **"Cockstrides and Carriages"-- Parallels of Thomas Hardy's Dorset Ghosts in the Wider Westcountry Landscape"**

In his talk to the Folklore Society in 2010 on Thomas Hardy's Ghosts, Peter Robson observed "(The) determination to preserve a record of Wessex/Dorset in the nineteenth century is of particular interest to folklorists, since Hardy makes many references to traditional culture, in all its forms, throughout his work."

Although not a folklorist, Hardy's folklore references provide a useful insight into the traditions, legends and stories of the Dorset landscape and offer up many similarities to those collected by Westcountry folklorists such as Theo Brown and Ruth L. Tongue. Concentrating on the mentions of Ghostlore, both in Hardy's body of literature and also his personal and family experiences, this paper attempts to expand upon the content of Peter Robson's original research and seeks parallels with ghost stories across the wider Westcountry landscape.

Taking in the religious, the gentry, the smuggler and the peasant to name but four, "Cockstrides and Carriages" provides a whistle-stop tour of a number of Westcountry ghost stories and considers whether Hardy's folkloric ghost themes are replicated more widely than Dorset and therefore whether his influences could also have been more widely drawn.

Dr Peter Robson (Independent Folklore Researcher): **"Fiction, Folklore and Reconstruction – Thomas Hardy's 'Play of St. George'"**

Thomas Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native* contains a partial description of a play performed by the "Egdon" Mummers. The fragments of dialogue sound genuine - so was Hardy recalling a real mummers' play and, if so, which one? When *The Return of the Native* was dramatised in 1920, Hardy produced a complete version of the play, which he called "The Play of St. George". This text seems, on the face of it, to be non-traditional but comparison with subsequently recorded Dorset plays and some consideration of the background to Hardy's production of the text enable a more balanced judgement of the play's authenticity to be made.

Dr Jonathan Roper (University of Tartu, Estonia): **"Poets as Folklorists in late English Romanticism"**

In the late 1820s, William Hone ran a programme of folklore collection that served as precursor to the Notes and Queries Folklore corpus. This paper takes two of Hone's contributors, the poets John Clare and William Barnes, as case studies to examine what Hone attempted to do.

Roy Vickery (Plant-lore Archive, www.plant-lore.com) **“Plants and Plant-Lore in the Novels of Thomas Hardy”**

The destruction of a threatening elm tree and the sowing of hemp-seed sowing drastically change the lives of characters in Hardy's *Woodlanders*, but plant-lore is less evident in Hardy's other novels. However, interesting fragments concerning the uses and folklore of plants can be found scattered throughout these. Was Hardy's plant-lore derived from his Dorset neighbours and his family, or from elsewhere? To what extent did he adapt and manipulate this material for literary purposes?
