FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Education Pack
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This Education Pack was compiled by Beth Flintoff, with contributions from Danielle Pearson, Rosie English and Neil Bull.

All production and rehearsal photographs by Michael Wharley.

Introduction

This education pack has been designed to support your visit to see Far From the Madding Crowd at The Watermill Theatre in 2015.

The pack is aimed primarily at those studying Drama or English, with articles of interest for anyone with a curiosity about the play. While there are some images, the pack has been deliberately kept simple from a graphic point of view so that most pages can easily be photocopied for use in the classroom.

Your feedback is most welcome, please email (beth@watermill.org.uk) or call me on 01635 570927.

Don’t forget that we offer workshops on most aspects of drama, and visit many schools in the surrounding area to work with hundreds of students every year. For a workshop menu, please visit the Outreach pages on our website, or contact me.

I hope you find the pack useful.

Beth Flintoff
Outreach Director

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The Watermill’s core Education and Outreach programme is generously supported by The Dr. Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation.
Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy lived from June 2, 1840, to January 11, 1928. He grew up in Higherbockhampton, Dorset, the eldest son of a stonemason. He had one brother and two sisters. Sickly from an early age, he was educated at home until he was sixteen. He then began an apprenticeship, and then a career, as an architect. He started writing poetry in the 1860s but did not publish his first novel until 1871. He married Emma Lavinia Gifford in 1874. It was not until the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Hardy’s fourth novel, that Hardy won widespread popularity as a writer, and he was able to give up architecture. The book was published serially in 1874, in *Cornhill Magazine*, a journal edited by Leslie Stephens, the father of Virginia Woolf. The novel was published in short sections, and as you read it, you can see that they intentionally leave the reader in suspense; this was a device to motivate readers to buy the next issue of the magazine. Early reviewers compared Hardy’s writing to that of George Eliot and recognized him as an important new voice in English fiction.

Hardy went on to write novels at an extraordinary rate for more than 20 years, writing one every one or two years. His most famous novels written during these years include *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. After the publication of *Jude the Obscure* caused a major scandal in 1895, Hardy stopped writing novels and devoted the rest of his life (more than 30 years) to poetry. His last great project was an epic poem titled "The Dynasts," a versed chronicle of the Napoleonic Wars. After some time in London he built himself a house in his native Dorsetshire and lived there for the rest of his life. He was widowed in 1912 and married Florence Dugdale in 1914.

Hardy was a devoted reader of philosophy, scientific texts, the Bible, and Greek literature, and he incorporated much of his knowledge into his own works. One of the most profound influences on his thinking was Charles Darwin, particularly Darwin’s emphasis on chance and luck in evolution. Though brought up to believe in God, Hardy struggled with a loss of faith suffered by many of his contemporaries; he increasingly turned to science for answers about man’s place in the universe.

One of Hardy’s central concerns in all of his writing was the problem of modernity in a society that was rapidly becoming more and more industrial. One of his projects as a writer was to create an account of life in the swiftly changing Dorsetshire as it had once been. He was particularly interested in the rituals and histories of that part of England, as well as the dialect of its locals. The title *Far From the Madding Crowd* suggests avoidance of the life of a city, modernized government, crowds and industry; in it, Hardy tries to fashion a portrait of what he saw as an endangered way of life and to create a snapshot for future generations.
Synopsis

This is a synopsis of the novel *Far From the Madding Crowd*, by Thomas Hardy.

At the beginning of the novel, Bathsheba Everdene is a beautiful young woman without a fortune. She meets Gabriel Oak, a young farmer, and saves his life one evening. He asks her to marry him, but she refuses because she does not love him. Upon inheriting her uncle's prosperous farm she moves away to the town of Weatherbury.

A disaster befalls Gabriel's farm and he loses his sheep; he is forced to give up farming. He goes looking for work, and in his travels finds himself in Weatherbury. After rescuing a local farm from fire he asks the mistress if she needs a shepherd. It is Bathsheba, and she hires him. As Bathsheba learns to manage her farm she becomes acquainted with her neighbor, Mr. Boldwood, and on a whim sends him a valentine with the words "Marry me." Boldwood becomes obsessed with her and becomes her second suitor. Rich and handsome, he has been sought after by many women. Bathsheba refuses him because she does not love him, but she then agrees to reconsider her decision.

That very night, Bathsheba meets a handsome soldier, Sergeant Troy. Unbeknownst to Bathsheba, he has recently impregnated a local girl, Fanny Robin, and almost married her. Troy falls in love with Bathsheba, enraging Boldwood. Bathsheba travels to Bath to warn Troy of Boldwood's anger, and while she is there, Troy convinces her to marry him. Gabriel has remained her friend throughout and does not approve of the marriage. A few weeks after his marriage to Bathsheba, Troy sees Fanny, poor and sick; she later dies giving birth to her child. Bathsheba discovers that Troy is the father. Grief-stricken at Fanny's death and riddled with shame, Troy runs away and is thought to have drowned.

With Troy supposedly dead, Boldwood becomes more and more emphatic about Bathsheba marrying him. Troy sees Bathsheba at a fair and decides to return to her. Boldwood holds a Christmas party, to which he invites Bathsheba and again proposes marriage; just after she has agreed, Troy arrives to claim her. Bathsheba screams, and Boldwood shoots Troy dead. He is sentenced to life in prison. A few months later, Bathsheba marries Gabriel, now a prosperous bailiff.


Photo: Sam Swainsbury and Gina Beck
Hardy and Censorship

Rosie English, The Watermill’s Marketing Officer, looks at the circumstances in which Hardy wrote *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

*Far From The Madding Crowd* is considered to be Thomas Hardy’s first truly successful novel. Although he had published three novels: *Desperate Remedies*, *Under The Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, prior to its publication, these did not have the instant success in literary circles or amongst the wider public market that *Far From The Madding Crowd* achieved. It was the first novel Hardy wrote after giving up work as an architect, his first to be written for a well-respected literary journal and the first novel in which he used the term ‘Wessex’ to identify the ‘partly real, partly dream-country’ his stories were set in. However, with his first commercial success, came also his first taste of the compromises required to achieve it. While writing *Far From The Madding Crowd*, Hardy experienced a degree of censorship of his work and was met with caution from his editor to publish anything outside the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable literary content.

*Far From The Madding Crowd* was first published in serial form in the *Cornhill Magazine* between January and December 1874. Two years earlier in November 1872, Leslie Stephen, the Editor of *Cornhill*, approached Hardy to write a traditional narrative on the pastoral theme to fulfil the nostalgic cravings of city readers witnessing the effects of rapid industrialisation on the surrounding landscape. The *Cornhill Magazine* cost one shilling and combined poetry, literary reviews and serialised novels by popular and critically acclaimed writers. It had a reputation for maintaining a high level of literary distinction but according to literary historian R. G. Cox, it was ‘hampered by a certain tradition of inoffensiveness’.

By 1873, *Cornhill’s* circulation had reached 50,000 and for Hardy, publication in it was a major opportunity to establish himself in the literary world. He accepted Stephen’s invitation and began writing. Throughout the process, Stephen provided significant editorial support but also requested that Hardy make certain cuts to the manuscript. For example he asked Hardy to “treat Troy’s seduction of Fanny in a gingerly fashion, tone down the treatment of her death and eliminate all references to the illegitimate baby”. This was to ensure that readers were not offended by the content of the novel. In the predominantly Christian society most people believed that the hand of God was behind every event; success was praise for virtue and failure was punishment for sin. Stephen was aware that seduction, premature death and illegitimacy were delicate issues that might cause controversy. He wanted to maintain *Cornhill’s* tradition of inoffensiveness.

Furthermore, Stephen removed all potentially distasteful words or phrases from Hardy’s proofs. Aware of the sensitivity of his readers, Stephen monitored the language used in early drafts to avoid causing offense or worse still, coming to the attention of the authorities. Though prosecution numbers were extremely low, the Obscene
Publications Act passed in 1857 ensured that conscientious writers, editors and publishers were mindful not to leave themselves exposed in any way to accusations of obscenity.

Stephen’s editing might seem prudish, but it was probably part of a strategy to protect Hardy (as well as the magazine) against claims of pessimism and advocating a fatalistic attitude. Fatalism, the idea that events are determined by fate and cannot be changed by human beings, contradicts the teachings of Christianity. Hardy was initially a religious man but lost his faith during the course of his life. He was greatly influenced by Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, first published in 1859, which launched the idea of the human species evolving over generations through natural selection. Darwin’s theory contradicted everything the Victorians thought they knew about science and left them feeling disconcerted and alone. Belief in God as creator gave people reassurance that there was a guiding hand in their lives. Hardy adapted Darwin’s ideas to show his characters suffering no matter what they did and failing to adapt in difficult circumstances – in these situations it seems that God’s guiding hand is nowhere to be seen. In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, for example, Fanny Robin fails to adapt and is unable to survive when Sergeant Troy spurns her. However, unlike Hardy’s later novels, which are characterised by their bleak and tragic elements, there are also examples of successful adaptation. Gabriel loses his sheep in an unavoidable natural accident but a combination of luck and hard work results in him finding alternative employment. Eventually he achieves a higher social standing that allows him to marry Bathsheba.

*On the Origin of Species*, as well as other works such as John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty*, which provided an impassioned defence of free speech and an assessment of the limits of societal power over the individual, fed into a society-wide fear of change. As a result any idea or work that threatened stability was viewed suspiciously and met with public criticism. With this in mind, it is understandable that Stephen felt the need to censor some of Hardy’s more liberal ideas in *Far From The Madding Crowd* to avoid ostracising his readers.

Arguably, Hardy also self-censored as the simple, traditional narrative he began with became more complex. Elizabeth James, former Head of British Collections 1801-1914 at the British Library, has suggested that Hardy attempted to make Bathsheba more feminine and less assertive because of contemporary criticism. At the beginning, she is strong-willed and feisty, she refuses Gabriel’s proposal and takes over her Uncle’s farm single-handedly. As the novel progresses, she mellows, accepts the help of Gabriel, falls in love and eventually marries. The fact that *Far From The Madding Crowd* was published as a monthly serial meant that Hardy was in a position to make revisions to successive instalments according to public reaction.

At this early stage in his career Hardy was prepared to compromise. He said: “Perhaps I may have higher aims one day, and be a great stickler for the proper artistic balance of the completed work, but for the present circumstances lead me to wish merely to be considered a good hand at a serial”.

But he would later tire of censorship. Following controversy about the frank portrayal of love and sexuality in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and *Jude The Obscure*, Hardy quit novel writing. In an essay
entitled ‘Candour in English Fiction’, he expressed his frustrations. He discussed the difficulties of being an artist and his concerns about Victorian censorship. When planning the fate of their characters, he argued that authors faced the terrible dilemma of deciding whether to ‘whip and scourge those characters into doing something contrary to their natures, to produce the spurious effect of their being in harmony with social forms and ordinances, or, by leaving them alone to act as they will... bring down the thunders of respectability upon his ear, not to say ruin his editor, his publisher, and himself.’ Hardy said that avoiding unsuitable themes resulted in the writer betraying his literary conscience by ‘arranging a dénouement which he knows to be indescribably unreal and meretricious’ and that ‘if the true artist ever weeps it probably is then, when he first discovers the fearful price that he has to pay for the privilege of writing in the English language—no less a price than the complete extinction, in the mind of every mature and penetrating reader, of sympathetic belief in his personages.’

Although he said he was willing to compromise for the sake of successful publication, it seems Hardy wasn’t entirely satisfied with the final Corndhill version. The novel was published multiple times after its debut in 1874 and each edition involved slight textual changes. By the time the first collected edition of the Wessex novels was published in 1895, the area of Wessex had been properly mapped out with all place names and distances within the area made consistent across all of the novels. Hardy also decided to reinstate some previously censored elements. For example, to emphasise Fanny’s vulnerability, in the chapter where Liddy and Bathsheba stage a vigil over her coffin, Hardy highlighted Sergeant Troy’s higher social status and the fact that Fanny died while pregnant with an illegitimate child. Hardy made other subtle changes and revised the use of dialect words for the 1901 six-penny edition, 1902 Uniform Edition and the 1912 Wessex Editions of Far From The Madding Crowd. He continued to make notes for future revisions until his death in 1928.

ROSIE ENGLISH

The fire at Bathsheba’s farm
Rehearsal Diaries

‘When Farmer Oak smiled, the corners of his mouth spread till they were within an unimportant distance of his ears, his eyes were reduced to chinks, and diverging wrinkles appeared round them, extending upon his countenance like the rays in a rudimentary sketch of the rising sun.’

Chapter One: Far From the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy

On Monday morning, as we gathered for the first day of rehearsals for The Watermill Theatre’s production of Far From the Madding Crowd, I must have resembled Farmer Oak. I was about to begin assisting Jessica Swale upon her new stage adaptation of Thomas Hardy’s novel and there was the familiar sense of nervous excitement in the room that one always feels on a first day.

As I listened to the actors bring the text and rich tapestry of characters to life, I was struck by how expertly Jessica had captured the sense of the community at the heart of Hardy’s story. And it made me understand how this was a perfect choice for The Watermill Theatre. It is a play with a rural community at its heart, being created by a creative community, within the rural community of Bagnor and Newbury. “I wanted to adapt this book because it has all the Hardyesque drama, but with a degree of joy too. It’s unusual that Hardy writes a happy ending, and there’s something celebratory about the book. It’s a love story to English rural life, and that felt so appropriate for Newbury,” Jessica told us.

Jessica and her designer Philip Engleheart guided us through their research, and then took us through the model box set and costume designs. Within The Watermill’s unique playing space he has created a multi-functioning set with trucks that move in and around the playing area to create architecture. Just as with Philip’s design for Sense and Sensibility, there are ingenious reveals, clever details and a set that achieves the ‘everyday that does everything.’ We will be transported to intimate interiors, open spaces, burning barns, churches and festivals.

We have also been incredibly fortunate to have Danielle Pearson working as our research expert. She studied Hardy and there seems to be no detail that escapes her. Coupled with this, we have original music by Catherine Jayes, who composed the musical arrangements for Calamity Jane last year, and a talented cast of actor musicians, with our Deputy Stage Manager Ceire Hoey keeping track of everything.
At the end of today’s rehearsal I turned to Danielle and we began to discuss the themes of the piece. The play is set in the Victorian era of the mid 1800s and covers a great many issues, politics and agendas, so how could we sum it up in one precise sentence? Danielle suggested a mighty fine starter for ten:

*Sexual politics in relation to shifting class.*

I think she may have nailed it.

Neil Bull, Assistant Director

Photographs show the team in rehearsal.
Top: Lisa Kerr
Middle: Jessica Swale, Ciere Hooey, Katherine Jayes
Bottom: Simon Bubb, Lisa Kerr, Gina Beck
Hardy and the Defence of Rural Life

"Dick the carter, Bob the shepherd, and Sam the ploughman, are, it is true, alike in the narrowness of their means and their general open-air life. But they cannot be rolled together into any such Hodge as is dreamt of by the distanced inquirer."
Thomas Hardy, The Dorsetshire Labourer, 1883

Thomas Hardy had a strange life. Born in rural Victorian Dorset, he died at the grand old age of 87 as a famous literary man in a world of jazz, flappers and Modernism. His father was a builder, his mother a servant, and he was raised in a humble cottage. Yet Hardy was to become one of the great literary figures of his age.

If it was unusual enough for a man like him to join the literary intelligentsia in London, by his later years an even rarer thing occurred – they came to him. In his Dorset house Maxgate, Hardy would eventually entertain the crème de la crème of turn of the century society, from T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia!) to George Bernard Shaw, Virginia Woolf and J.M. Barrie.

But all of this was unthinkable in 1873, when the young Hardy, then an architect, returned to his family home for a summer of writing. The result was Far from the Madding Crowd, serialized in the Cornhill Magazine. It was commissioned based on the "rural charm" of Hardy's earlier novels, and the writer was well aware of it. He had struggled to be published throughout his twenties, and he must have seen this offer as his big break. If the middle class readers wanted pastoral romance, then pastoral romance he would give them.

But Hardy was treading a fine line. He'd had an unusually advanced education for someone of his background, and so fell into an ambiguous social space. This experience of transitioning status would become a perennial theme in his work, and as he sat down to write Far from the Madding Crowd, his task was to render his rural community for the enjoyment of a higher class readership. How could he give his readers what they wanted, without betraying his own people by stereotyping them?

In a letter to his illustrator, Hardy asked that his "rustics, although quaint, may be made to appear intelligent, and not boorish at all." Later he would express the same sentiment much more caustically, in his essay The Dorsetshire Labourer. Here, he passionately defended the individuality and dignity of rural folk, a stance already taking shape in Far from the Madding Crowd. Though the novel is indeed bursting with charm and humour, he was careful to make his supporting cast feel real too, with their own desires and concerns.
It has been a pleasure for a confessed Hardy geek like myself to attend rehearsals of Jessica Swale's production. One of my favourite aspects of the adaptation is how funny, clever, and sympathetic the ensemble are, and the cast are really doing them justice! As we keep working to understand the Victorian Dorset of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, I'll be on hand to answer questions as best I can. So if you've ever wondered about God-Forgive-Me jugs, bushels of Biffins or Farmer Boldwood's Leicesters, watch this space...

DANIELLE PEARSON

Photographs:

Top: The wedding dance
Middle: Warren's Malt House
Bottom: Bathsheba (Gina Beck) and Sergeant Troy (Sam Swainsbury)
A Visit to Sheepdrove Farm

"I'm going to feed my father's flock,
His young and tender lambs,
That over hills and over dales
Lie waiting for their dams.
O stay! O stay! You handsome maid,
And rest a moment here,
For there is none but you alone
That I do love so dear..."

Searching for Lambs, English Folk Song, Anon

Hardy's world in *Far from the Madding Crowd* is pastoral, and sheep farming is in its very lifeblood. Just like in the folk songs he grew up singing (several of which are staged in our adaptation) Hardy writes love stories that play out in the open air. The cycle of the sheep farmer's year beats out the rhythm of the novel, and the characters' lives are often intertwined with the fate of their flock.

So, with rehearsals now well under way, we've been racking up an impressive list of sheep-related questions. How do you assist a ewe in lambing time? How long does it take to shear a sheep, and how on earth do you do it? How exactly do you save your flock when it gets into the clover?

These questions are particularly important for cast member Simon Bubb, whose character Gabriel Oak is an expert shepherd. But with the whole ensemble creating scenes of lambing and pasture bloat live on stage, we were keen to find out more.

Luckily for us, The Watermill enjoys the support of Sheepdrove Organic Farm in Lambourn, and before we knew it we were off on a field trip! Our curiosity was rewarded with a wonderful day. After being met with tea and delicious organic cake (carrot and beetroot, highly recommended) we were given a demonstration of sheep-handling, with several of our cast members draped in fleeces taking on the role of the sheep. After the general hilarity of these performances we were given a talk on Sheepdrove's admirable organic policy, and taken on a tour of the farm.

On a beautiful spring day amidst the Berkshire downs, it was easy to imagine we were in Hardy's unchanging Wessex. We got to meet some sheep, turkey, and the world's most adorable piglets, one of which entertained us by escaping from his pen. The cast left with armfuls of organic honey and wine bought in the shop, and more importantly, with many useful facts to inform their performances. We are very grateful to Sheepdrove Farm for a brilliant day and a wealth of authentic details, which I'm sure will be vital in bringing our pastoral tale to life.

DANIELLE PEARSON
A Victorian Agricultural Year

Danielle Pearson, Dramaturg on *Far From the Madding Crowd*, takes us through a typical Victorian agricultural calendar.

**JANUARY**
- Annual rent collection day on houses
- A quiet time on the farm, often used for maintenance jobs, e.g. repairs, hedging, coppicing, making fences, stock-taking etc

**FEBRUARY**
- Hiring Fairs - traditionally held on February 2nd each year
- Corn Markets - where the corn from the previous harvest can be sold
- Candlemas Day - it is said that if this day is sunny, half the winter is yet to come, but if it rains then winter is nearly over. Hence shepherds, who need spring warmth to help with lambing, do not want a warm Candlemas day
- Valentine’s Day
- Shrove Tuesday followed by Lent

**MARCH**
- The sheep are put to grass (allowed into the fields to eat away weeds and long grass)
- Lady Day - 25th March, this is the day that employment contracts traditionally begin and end
- Depending on when the ram was put with the ewes, lambing season will be beginning
- Pigs farrow (give birth) around March
- By the 1870's different types of fertilizers were being developed. If a farm was using these, they would be put on the land now
- Malting season ends (began in October)
- The clover or other fallow crops (such as mangelwurzel) can be sown now

**MAY**
- May Day - children have the day off school, collect flowers and make garlands. In the afternoon there is a parade, maypole dancing, club-walking, a special tea with sandwiches and cakes
- Sheep washing and shearing begins. Not just to sell the fleeces, this is also important because it protects the sheep from blow flies laying eggs in their wool
- Calving, and dairy farms can begin milking and butter-making
- Piglets are weaned
- Malting season ends (began in October)

**JUNE**
- Shearing ends, shearing supper held to celebrate with food and alcohol
- Cheese-making
- Soft fruit harvest
- Midsummer’s Eve (St John’s Day)

**JULY**
- Haymaking - meadows of grass are cut with scythes and left to dry, turned, stacked up at night to protect them from damp. After several days when it is sufficiently dried out, the hay is brought in and kept in a rick or loft. It is used to feed the animals through winter
- Herbs and vegetables sown into the kitchen garden
- Honey Harvest - bees swarming and hiving. Bees are kept in upturned baskets known as skeps. They usually swarm when the queen of a colony is dying, causing the colony to break off into smaller colonies and make several new hives. The art of beekeeping is to direct them into another hive you control/keep track of where they go, so that you don’t lose half your bees each time.

AUGUST
- Cereal Harvest - the same process for wheat, oats and barley. Firstly, the reaping, in which the crop is cut by farm labourers using long-handled scythes. They are then followed by men and women collecting and binding the swathes of corn ready to be stacked, collected in a cart and taken back to the yard. This is the most strenuous activity of the year and involves almost everyone on the farm in some capacity.
- Root Crop Harvest - i.e. for turnips and mangelwurzel, often used to feed the pigs - they are more useful for what they do to the land than as food for consumption.
- Harvest Festival - supper with music, dancing, alcohol and food.

SEPTEMBER
- Ploughing of fields, seeds sown for next year’s harvest.
- Hedgerow fruit harvest, pickles, preserves and jams can be made.
- The harvested corn is threshed and winnowed to separate wheat from chaff and make it fit for sale and consumption.

OCTOBER
- Autumn races.
- Apples ready for cider making (the apples are collected and pressed, then the juice is stored in stone flagons until it ferments).
- Malting season begins, and runs until April.

NOVEMBER
- The ram is put in with the ewes to ensure spring lambing.
- Winter fodder for livestock is prepared.

DECEMBER
- Meat and fish are smoked.
- St Thomas Day - the poor go "thomasing" (asking for donations) on this day, usually the 21st December.
- Christmas and New Year.
The *Far From The Madding Crowd* Timeline

Dramaturg Danielle Pearson demonstrates the structure of the novel and how its events relate to the agricultural calendar. This calendar was created by Danielle for the cast, to help with their research during the rehearsal process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY/ PUBLIC HOLIDAYS</th>
<th>PLOT EVENTS</th>
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</table>
| **Year 1**<br>DECEMBER | • ST THOMAS DAY 21st December. Also the shortest of the year/winter solstice, which falls Dec 20th-23rd depending on the year. The poor go "Thomasing", on this day, i.e. asking for gifts of food.  
• A lamb is born in Gabriel’s flock (most sheep lamb in March-April but these are Dorset breed, meaning they can lamb at any time of year. An old saying goes, put the ram in with the ewes on Guy Fawkes day, they will lamb by April Fools (i.e. pregnancy lasts for six months)  
• Malting Season is October-April  
• Meat and fish would be smoked at this time | Bathsheba moves to the Weatherbury neighbourhood - Gabriel first sees her. He pays for her toll at the turnpike; she saves him when he nearly suffocates in his shepherd’s hut |
| **Year 2**<br>JANUARY | • Daisy the cow stops giving milk (which generally happens 40-60 days after birthing a calf) | Gabriel proposes to Bathsheba and is refused  
He loses his flock over the cliff |
| **FEBRUARY** | • CASTERBRIDGE HIRING FAIR - hiring fairs were often held on 2nd February  
• CANDLEMAS DAY (it is said that if this day is sunny, half the winter is yet to come, but if it rains then winter is nearly over. Hence shepherds, who need spring warmth to help with lambing, do not want a warm Candlemas day)  
• CASTERBRIDGE CORN MARKET (the characters attend on two different occasions. The corn from last year has now been threshed, winnowed, and bagged, ready for sale)  
• VALENTINE’S DAY 14th February  
• Lambing continues on the farm  
• SHROVE TUESDAY, start of LENT | Gabriel puts the fire out, is hired by Bathsheba  
The malthouse scene  
Bathsheba pays the men  
Fanny goes to the barracks to see Troy.  
Bathsheba sends Boldwood a Valentine |
| **MARCH** | • The sheep go to grass (feed on the meadows before they are "laid up for mowing", i.e. they eat away the weeds and grass to make ploughing easier) | Boldwood is falling in love with Bathsheba |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LADY DAY - 25th March</th>
<th>This is the day that employment contracts traditionally begin and end.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>by this time lambing season should be finishing, (depending on the breed)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pigs farrow (give birth) around now, though it's unclear if Bathsheba has any.</td>
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**APRIL**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EASTER</th>
<th>Beehives would be set up now for a honey harvest in the summer</th>
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**MAY**

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<tr>
<th>MAY DAY celebrations - children have the day off school, collect flowers and make garlands. In the afternoon there is a parade, maypole dancing, club-walking, a special tea with sandwiches and cakes</th>
<th>Boldwood proposes</th>
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<tr>
<td>The SHEEP-WASHING</td>
<td>Gabriel and Bathsheba argue, he is dismissed. Bathsheba begs, he is to come back and save the sheep when they get into the clover</td>
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<td>The SHEEP-SHEARING. Not just to sell the fleeces, this is also important because it protects the sheep from blow flies laying eggs in their wool</td>
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<td>Clover is an important fallow crop that adds nitrogen to the soil. Later on in its cycle it can be fed to animals, but at this time it is immature. The sheep digest it too quickly, producing gas in their stomachs, and causing potentially lethal &quot;pasture bloat&quot;</td>
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**JUNE**

<p>| June 1st - End of the shearing | At the supper, Boldwood tries to extract a promise from Bathsheba |
| SHEARING SUPPER | He leaves for 5-6 weeks, &quot;until harvest&quot; |
| Description of the cows (they are not mentioned at any other time in the novel, but here we find out that Bathsheba has quite a large dairy farm!) | Bathsheba tours her farm at night, and bumps into Sergeant Troy, who praises her beauty |
| Mid-June - HAYMAKING - meadows of grass are cut with scythes and left to dry, turned, stacked up at night to protect them from damp. After several days when it is sufficiently dried out, the hay is brought in and kept in a rick or loft. It is used to feed the animals through winter | Troy helps with the haymaking and the hiving, flirts |
| WHEAT HARVEST - First the reaping, in which the crop is cut by farm labourers using long-handled scythes. They are followed by men and women collecting and binding the swaths of corn ready to be stacked, collected in a cart and taken back to the yard. This is the most strenuous activity of the year and involves almost everyone on the farm in some capacity | Troy and Bathsheba meet in the hollow, the sword play exercise. They kiss |
| Late June - HONEY HARVEST. Bees swarming and hiving (they are late this year). Bees are kept in upturned baskets known as skeps. They usually swarm when the queen of a colony is dying, causing the colony to break off into smaller colonies and make several new hives. The art of beekeeping is to direct them into another hive you control/ keep track of where they go, so that you don't lose half your bees each time | Bathsheba sends a note to Boldwood saying she cannot marry him. They meet and argue |
| MIDSUMMER’S EVE (St John’s Day) June 21-25 depending on year. | |
| JULY | Hardy seems to mix up his weeks a little here, saying that a week or two has passed after Midsummer (in June) but jumping straight to August | June/July - Bathsheba and Troy marry secretly in Bath |
| AUGUST | August 1st, LAMMAS DAY, The OAT HARVEST, same method as with the wheat, using scythes and collecting by hand, End of August, HARVEST SUPPER and dance - the storm - the corn ricks need covering and the barley needs thatching to protect from the rain | Bathsheba returns, married, Boldwood tries to bribe Troy into marrying Fanny Robin instead, and Troy laughs at him. At the harvest supper, Troy gets everyone drunk. When a storm rages, Oak and Bathsheba work together to cover and save the ricks. The tree is hit by lightning. Boldwood, distracted by thwarted love, forgets to protect his corn and loses most of it. |
| SEPTEMBER | Though Hardy doesn't mention it, the fields would be ploughed and the next years' corn sown around now, In autumn/ early winter the harvested corn is threshed and winnowed to separate wheat from chaff and make it fit for sale and consumption, September is also the time to harvest hedgerow fruits, to make pickles, preserves, jams etc | |
| OCTOBER | Autumn Horse Races in session at Budmouth, The apples are ready for cider-making (the apples are collected and pressed, then the juice is stored in stone flagons until it ferments) | The marriage of Bathsheba and Troy already failing - he is gambling away their money on the races. They meet Fanny on the road, Troy promises to meet her at Cambridge Union on Monday. She tries to walk there heavily pregnant, dies in childbirth. Her body brought back to the farm, Bathsheba discovers the baby inside the coffin with her. Troy returns, they argue, he claims Fanny is his true wife in the eyes of God. He pays for Fanny to have a proper burial. Bathsheba goes out and spends a night in the marshes, distraught. Troy goes swimming, nearly drowns, is picked up by a boat and agrees to 6 month contract sailing to America. Presumed dead back at Weatherbury |
| NOVEMBER | The ram is often put with the ewes at this time to ensure a Spring lambin | Oak is made Bailiff, Bathsheba believes herself a widow |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY</td>
<td>● Annual Rent Day</td>
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<td>FEB - MARCH</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>APRIL</td>
<td>Oak takes care of business on both Bathsheba’s farm and Boldwood’s</td>
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<td>MAY</td>
<td>Boldwood is starting to think he could marry Bathsheba after the 7</td>
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<td>years legally expected after a missing person case</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUNE</td>
<td>● HAY-MAKING</td>
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<td>JULY- AUGUST</td>
<td>Bathsheba returns from a 2 month trip to see her aunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
<td>● GREENHILL FAIR - Bathsheba sells sheep (old Wessex horned breeds)</td>
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<td>Troy is in a circus show at the fair. Bathsheba watches it, but does</td>
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<td></td>
<td>not recognize him</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Boldwood presses Bathsheba to accept him after 6 years. She promises</td>
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<td>him a definitive answer at Christmas</td>
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<td>OCTOBER -</td>
<td></td>
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<td>NOVEMBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
<td>● CHRISTMAS EVE, Boldwood’s party</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bathsheba reluctantly agrees that she will marry a frantic Boldwood</td>
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<td>after 6 years. He asks her to wear a ring</td>
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<td>Troy reveals himself dramatically, Bathsheba nearly faints</td>
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<td>Boldwood shoots Troy dead. Turns himself over to the police</td>
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<td><strong>Year 4</strong></td>
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<td>JANUARY -</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY</td>
<td>Bathsheba gets used to real widewood</td>
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<td>MARCH</td>
<td>Boldwood is cleared from an execution sentence, since after they</td>
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<td>find dresses and presents labelled “Bathsheba Boldwood” in his house</td>
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<td><strong>APRIL - JULY</strong></td>
<td>they decide he must have been of unsound mind</td>
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<td><strong>Bathsheba</strong></td>
<td>Bathsheba begins to revive, relies heavily on Gabriel for help in the farm and for emotional stability</td>
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<td><strong>AUGUST</strong></td>
<td>Oak claims he will leave the farm and go to California, Bathsheba is upset. Oak avoids her for some time afterwards</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEPTEMBER- NOVEMBER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DECEMBER</strong></td>
<td>• CHRISTMAS, a year since Boldwood's fateful party and Bathsheba's widowhood</td>
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<td>She goes to see Oak in his house, begs him not to leave her. They agree to marry.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JANUARY</strong></td>
<td>They marry quietly, the neighbours celebrate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Design Process

1. **Research**
   The first step in creating the set is for the Designer to research the era of the piece. Often the Designer will create a scrap book of images, materials and textures that may inspire their design. Initial ideas are discussed with the Director to make sure they fit with the Director’s overall vision.

2. **White Card / Storyboarding**
   The White Card is an unpainted model of the set which is sent to the production team who make sure it fits the space and the budget that is available. After it has been costed the designer makes the final model box (see photograph below).

3. **Drawings**
   The designer then draws a ground plan of the model box to the scale of the theatre. This gives the carpenter the exact dimensions to work from.

4. **Building The Set**
   The carpenter then starts to make the set. At The Watermill the set is built off-site in a large barn in Coventry and then brought to the theatre and constructed during the weekend before the show opens.

5. **The Final Set**
   The final set is fitted into the theatre. During the fit-up the designer will work with the production team to ensure that all the final details are perfected on the set before the show opens.
Meet The Stage Managers
Heidi Bird spoke to The Watermill’s Company Stage Manager, Ami-Jayne Steele Childe, and Assistant Stage Manager, Sara Shardlow.

How did you become a Stage Manager?

Sara: I became involved with student drama as a Stage Manager at university and realised it was good fun! Once I’d finished University, I did an internship with a theatre company in Sheffield and then I applied to Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama to do the Post-Graduate Diploma in Stage Management. After completing my course I did a placement at The Watermill Theatre. They then invited me back and I’ve not left!

Ami-Jayne: I originally wanted to work in lighting. I went to a rock concert when I was eleven and said to my Dad “That is what I want to do!” I volunteered at local theatres in their lighting department, but got more opportunities to work backstage. I decided to train as a Stage Manager and got a place at Rose Bruford. In the last term, professionals came to interview us and I got offered my first job.

Can you talk us through a day in the life of a Stage Manager?

Sara: It’s pretty varied! The first thing you do, if you’re in rehearsals, is read the rehearsal report from the day before.

Ami-Jayne: We then try to get the rehearsal room ready for the cast and creatives. We make sure they’ve got all the props that they need and check they’ve got enough tea and coffee!

Sara: Then we start finding props.

Ami-Jayne: We research or buy items online, look round charity shops or go to The Watermill’s props store; working through the big “To Do!” board.

The Stage Management “To Do” board

Sara: We’re also trying to think ahead to the technical rehearsal. We try and solve problems in rehearsals to make it as easy as possible when we get into the technical rehearsal.

What do you enjoy the most about being a Stage Manager?

Sara: How varied the job can be! It can be quite hectic and stressful, but often you’ll be having fun at the same time. It sometimes feels like you’re back at school doing a big creative project.

Ami-Jayne: We often have to find or make something really random. We’re always
thinking “how we can create that?” When you finish making or finding a prop it’s really satisfying to tick it off the big list!

**Do you prefer the rehearsal process or the performance?**

**Sara:** I find the rehearsal process more challenging. Once you’re in performance and you know the show, it becomes like a well-oiled production line. Equally, if something goes wrong during a show, it can be quite an exciting challenge because you have to work out how you’re going to solve it.

**What’s gone wrong for you?**

**Sara:** I’ve been kicked in the head and then not set a prop in time! Also, in *Peter Pan*, one of the actors came off-stage and said “my guitar string’s broken, we need a different guitar.” I had thirty seconds to run up to the dressing room and solve the problem; when it goes to plan it’s a great feeling.

**Ami-Jayne:** You’re really pleased when the audience haven’t noticed that something’s gone wrong.
Credits

By Thomas Hardy
Adapted and directed by Jessica Swale
Designed by Philip Engleheart
Music by Catherine Jayes
Lighting designed by James Whiteside
Sound designed by Neil Starke
Fight Director Paul Benzig
Dialect Coach Catherine Weate
Dramaturg Danielle Pearson

Cast in alphabetical order
Gina Beck Bathsheba Everdene
Alice Blundell Liddy
Simon Bubb Gabriel Oak
Matthew Douglas Boldwood
Ian Harris Jan
Emma Jerrold Mary Ann
Lisa Kerr Fanny / Cainy
Sam Swainbury Sergeant Troy
Ed Thorpe Joseph

Production Manager Lawrence T Doyle
Company Stage Manager Sara Shardlow
Assistant Production Manager Nelly Chauvet
Theatre Technician Josh Robinson
Deputy Stage Managers Ceire Hooey, Alice Barber
Assistant Stage Managers Ruth Hills, Izzy Taylor
Wardrobe Supervisor Amanda Dooley
Wardrobe Assistants Eloise Short, Becky Ryan
Set Construction Belgrade Production Services

Production Photographer Michael Warley
National Press and Publicity Clair Horwood