

PRESS RELEASE

Viking is pleased to announce that it has acquired the rights to publish Claire Tomalin's next book, a biography of the novelist and poet Thomas Hardy. Hardy represents a return to the nineteenth century for Mrs Tomalin, whose book on the relationship between Charles Dickens and Ellen Ternan, *THE INVISIBLE WOMAN*, is widely regarded as one of the great biographies of recent years. Her most recent book, *SAMUEL PEPYS: The Unequalled Self*, has won both critical acclaim and extraordinary sales: it was voted the Whitbread Book of the Year, and has been a number one bestseller in both hardcover and paperback.

Tony Lacey, Publishing Director, said that he was delighted Viking had secured the rights: "We've published five of Claire Tomalin's biographies - all of them in fact except the first, about Mary Wollstonecraft - and it's been thrilling to watch her rise to preeminent position among contemporary biographers. I think Hardy is the perfect subject for her: a literary genius whose life spanned the Victorian and early modern ages, and one whose life so closely impacted on his work. Like a great many other people, I'm sure, I can't wait to read it - I only wish we were publishing it next year!" Viking has acquired UK and Commonwealth rights inc Canada via David Godwin of DGA, and will publish in 2007.