

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.

For further information, please contact Amelia Fairney, Viking Publicity Director on 020 7010 3247 / amelia.fairney@penguin.co.uk