PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

"STRONG BEER AMAZINGLY LIKED" ?
Abel Hold (1815-1896) – 'Watter Joe'

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VOL. XXXIII NO. 2 SUMMER 2000

1789
Jan^{ry}–4–I breakfasted, dined, &c. again at home –
Nancy breakfasted, dined, &c. again at home –
Betsy Davy breakfasted, dined, &c. here again –
M^{r}. Walker breakfasted, and spent the Morn' here
At 12. he went from my House in a Chaise for
Norwich to go for London this Afternoon –
I read Prayers and Preached this Morn' at Weston=Ch.
None from Weston House at Church – had a very
small Congregation, it being so intensely cold.
I never felt the cold so much in my Life before
It froze the whole Day long within Doors & very sharp
The Barometer in my Study very high 30=5 –
The Thermometer in Ditto very low – 48 –
The Air very clear and very piercing –
Morn' very fair but most bitter hard Frost
Afternoon – ditto – most piercing –
1800
August–2–We breakfasted, dined &c. again at home –
SaturdayVery fair and very hot indeed, Thermometer
about Noon in the Study with Window open
up to N^{o} – 100 – Without any Sun in the Room
Rec'. of Eliz: Lyng of Elmham for a Copy of Weston
Register of her Christning0: 1: 0
Her Maiden name was Rudd –
Dinner to day Pork & Greens & Beef-Steaks &c. –
Afternoon still hotter, Thermom: up to 102 –
Morn' very fair – very hot
Afternoon – sultry hot & little Air
Evening – ditto

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Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

Chairman	*Editor*	*Treasurer*
Dr Nigel Custance	Martin Brayne	Dr David Case
1 Hillside Cottages	Long Croft	Fairfield
High Street, Fowlmere	Whitehough Head	25 Archery Square
Cambridgeshire	Chinley, High Peak	Walmer, Deal
SG8 7SJ	SK23 6BX	Kent CT14 7JA

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

'Watter Joe' was the Yorkshire nickname of Joseph Broadhead (1772-1852). Clearly it does not refer to his favourite tipple!

EDITORIAL

We are obliged to admit that there is something faintly ridiculous about groups of earnest enthusiasts devoted to the memory of the life and times of minor literary figures. 'Minor' is, of course, a word which they would never admit; 'neglected', perhaps, 'misunderstood', certainly, but 'minor' – never! Quite different are those literary giants who will survive without the petty assistance of the Jane Austen Society, the Dickens Fellowship or the Johnson Society of London – admirable as those august organisations undoubtedly are. By contrast, there are those who deliberately seek out the obscurer by-ways of literary endeavour, who, if the road were to be widened to permit a readier flow of pilgrims to the shrine, would straightway vanish only to reappear on some other weed-choked, ivy-girt pathway.

Where do we of the Parson Woodforde Society stand? As a literary figure Woodforde is probably not so much minor as negligible. It is what he says that is significant not the way that he says it, charming as that can occasionally be. Our conviction – no guarantee of good judgement – is that James Woodforde is a diarist of the highest importance. The fact that the 5-volume edition of Beresford has been out of print for many years and that professional historians of the eighteenth century rarely make more than the most hackneyed of references to the Diary might suggest that our assessment is indeed faulty. And yet, and yet . . . the more of it we read, as the Society's own edition reveals more and more to us, the more convinced we become!

Cynthia Brown's article in this issue of the Journal finely illustrates the real historical value of Woodforde, for she shows how he can concentrate our minds on an aspect of life in the eighteenth century; not only what brewing beer, in technical terms, actually involved but what it was like to be living in a house where the crucial activity of brewing was actually going on. Read the article and you smell the malt, feel the steamy clamminess, sense Woodforde's annoyance with Coleman and irritation with Scurll – and experience his pleasure in a job well done.

Mrs Melliar is one of those Diary characters – Mr Jeans is another – who carry about them a distinctly flashy (sexy, perhaps?) air. Woodforde, staid and conservative, was uneasy in such company. Even today the energetic, sub-literate letters of Joanna Cheeke (the future Mrs Melliar) have the power to stimulate speculation. Derek

Matthews here offers us further insights into the louche society in which she moved and its connections with the more respectable world of our Parson.

Readers will remember Adrian White as the author of an interesting piece on Woodforde's London friends (see Journal XXX, 1). In researching his own family history he has been fortunate enough to find – in Canada! – a fascinating memoir of a near contemporary of Woodforde. Edward Nares was, however, a few years younger than our diarist and his interests – in the picturesque, for example – reflect later fashions. We can look forward to learning more of the Fellow of Merton in a later Journal but what, one wonders, of his wife who, after his death, so faithfully and, apparently, expertly, produced the memoir from her husband's papers?

Here too you will learn more than you may have known hitherto about the life of James Woodforde the boy. Before going to Winchester he was taught at Mr Jaques's school at Urchfont in Wiltshire, about which more is now known, and before that he was at Mr King's school at Compton Pauncefoot, a village visited during this year's Frolic. I hope that the Frolic report, illustrated by Mary Price, will provide a pleasing souvenir of that happy event.

MARTIN BRAYNE
Editor

CORRECTIONS

Two significant errors crept into the Spring Journal, viz:

1. In Robin Gibson's article *The Clarke Family of Ansford*, p. 9, penultimate line – should read £100 not £1000.

2. In the Donne family tree accompanying Margaret Sharman's article on *The Tanner 'In a Large Way'*, Harriet married Mr Balls not Mr Baus.

Apologies.

WOODFORDE THE BREWER

"Brewed a barrel of table beer today" is a familiar phrase in the diaries. Although tea and coffee were introduced into England during the seventeenth century, they were expensive and beer remained the staple drink until well into the nineteenth century. It was realised that the boiling process in brewing overcame the potential dangers of poor water supplies and, in homes where there were a number of people, visitors, servants and labourers, such as the large country houses, farms and parsonages, they all brewed their own beer, varying between the use of the latest equipment in a custom-built brewhouse down to the domestic copper in a farmhouse. Just before Michaelmas in 1778 Woodforde worked out that in the last 12 months he had brewed 40 coomb of malt which made 40 barrels of 30 gallons and 40 barrels of 10 gallons. At the time he was employing some workmen of Mr Hardy with the understanding that they each had a daily allowance of three pints of beer. On Woodforde's reckoning they were drinking at least 5 pints and he was no longer prepared to continue the arrangement (19/09/1778).

Home brewing during the eighteenth century was a lengthy, time-consuming occupation requiring judgement, skill and stamina while working in a steam-filled room with a slippery floor. Woodforde was evidently competent in the various procedures as he expressed no concern when he brewed half a hogshead (1 hogshead = 54 gallons) of beer for Mr Cheese, the Rector of Babcary, in March 1765 (18/03/1765), afterwards adding more malt to brew a further half hogshead of ale for himself.

The principle was to pour boiling water from a copper into a mash-tub, add malt and keep it warm for several hours, drain the liquid – the 'wort' – back into the copper, add hops and boil for up to four hours. The liquid was then strained, cooled and the yeast added. When it had finished working it was "tunned", i.e. put into barrels. A strong beer might be ready to drink in a month, a table beer in four days. On 11 February 1767 Woodforde was busy preparing for brewing the following day; he got up before 1 a.m. and brewed a three-quarter barrel of strong beer and some small beer and had it all cooled and tunned by four o'clock in the afternoon (12/02/1767). This was at the Lower House, Ansford.

The brewhouse needed to be high with, if possible, louvred windows and ventilators to allow for the escape of steam. There

would be a copper, which was not necessarily made of copper, and often referred to as the 'furnace', hung in a brick surround with a fire underneath. A domestic copper held 20 gallons, a brewing copper 40 gallons. The bottom of the latter was convex which helped to produce a rolling boil when the hops were added. There would also be a mash-tub, underback, keelers or coolers and a variety of staved vessels and barrels. An acceptable brew depended on scrupulously clean equipment in premises where the brewer was able to regulate the temperature for the different processes, which was difficult in households without a purpose-built brewhouse. Whether the brewhouse at Weston Parsonage was a separate structure or attached to the house is open to question. In the large country houses with the latest equipment the copper could be of a size up to 400 gallons. Woodforde was shown Mr Custance's new brewhouse in 1781 – "everything on a very large Scale, so large as to brew / eight barrels (i.e. 288 gallons) at a brewing, every Article most convenient" (26/10/1781).

Woodforde and Bill arrived in Weston in May 1776. After two weeks of settling into the Parsonage, Woodforde ordered two vessels of beer and ale from Bircham of Reepham. They held 36 gallons each and the total bill was £4.4.0 which Woodford thought "very dear" (08/06/1776). There were three more barrels in July (20/07/1776); in October he had two of ale and one of small ale (09/10/1776), which probably argues that the words 'ale' and 'beer' were interchangeable. Finally, in December, Woodforde brewed for the first time at Weston. For this first brew he "brewed only 1 Vessill of 36 Gallons (i.e. 1 barrel) and I allowed 1 Coomb of Malt and one pound and half of Hops, which I think will make tolerable good ale" (17/12/1776). Malt and hops were bought from Mr Palmer of Morton. Malt was made from barley. After steeping it in water for about two days it was spread on a malting floor for a week or two where it was constantly raked and turned to ensure even germination before being loaded into a kiln. The degree of heat and the length of time in the drying process depended on the flavour required. Either way the result was a friable starch which had to be ground, but not more than five days before brewing. Measured by bulk, five bushels (4 bushels = 1 coomb) was considered to be enough for a hogshead of ale and the same quantity of small beer. "I sold ten Coomb of very good Barley this morning / to my Malster Mr Palmer at $^{s}13.3^{d}$ per Coomb, for / which he owes me the sum of – 6: 12: 6" (26/11/1783).

Trying to determine Woodforde's exact method of brewing is beset with difficulties; was 'ale' synonymous with 'strong beer', 'table' the equivalent of 'common' or 'small beer'? Small or table beer was the general thirst-quenching drink which was drunk at every meal including breakfast. "I got up this morning a little after 6. eat some cold / Meat & drank half a Pint of small Beer" (08/04/1784). Over the years words change, both 'ale' and 'beer' are defined as an alcoholic liquor made from fermented malt with the addition of hops to give a bitter flavour. 'Ale' derives from the Old English, 'beer' from Germanic countries. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* adds that 'ale' was formerly an unhopped beer, such as the spruce *beer* which Woodforde drank at Mr Taswell's on 24 September 1781 and "liked it very well". Dialects also play their part. In some counties 'ale' was used for the stronger brew, in others it was the weaker. The brand names used by the commercial breweries have added to the confusion. Woodforde appears to have used the words indiscriminately which might reflect opposite uses in Somerset and Norfolk. Brewing, as with cooking, is a very personal occupation governed by the preferences of the operator. Comparing Woodforde's brief remarks with the very detailed advice in a contemporary book, *The Housekeeper's Instructor*, which contains 'Proper Rules for Brewing Malt Liquor for Large or Small Families' is enlightening. Woodforde did not record all the days that brewing took place; when Will Coleman was in charge of brewing it was evidently such a clockwork occurrence it is barely mentioned. "I took a ride to M^{r}. Du Quesne's this morning, stayed / with him about an Hour then returned home – / Jack went with me Will being brewing –" (07/04/1785). It is only with payments to Thomas Palmer for malt, averaging £22 a year, and when Woodforde was teaching Briton to brew, that it becomes apparent that brewing took place about once a month, the normal country practice.

March and October were considered to be the best months for brewing strong beer for keeping as the weather was more likely to be temperate. In March 1787 a barrel of strong beer was brewed (28/03/1787) and on 6 October 1790 "brewed a barrel of strong beer alias October". Among the sale of Woodforde's effects, the brewhouse contained a forty gallon copper, furnace and lids, an iron-bound mash-tub, an iron-bound water stand, 2 ale stools, various keelers and a pail. In the cellar there were numerous iron-bound barrels, two beer casks and yet another ale stool and two brass cocks. On the day before brewing everything had to be

prepared. The utensils were examined, cleaned and scalded where necessary and the malt ground. The copper was filled with water and the fire laid. The correct 'set' of the copper enabled the flames to curl evenly round the base. "To M^{r}. Hardy for doing something to my brewing / Furnace, being very foul – p^{d}. him – 0: 0: 6" (31/12/1785). This evidently did not cure the problem because the following year: "Had my brewing Copper new set by M^{r}. Hardy" (03/11/1786).

Brew day started early. When Lizzie the maid was ill and prescribed bark and drops of laudanum every two hours, Betty was to sit with her till four in the morning to give the bark, then Will would take over "as he brews to Morrow" (14/08/1783). The fire was lit under the forty gallon copper and when it came to the boil, approximately two hours hence, it was poured into the mash-tub. The copper would burn if left empty; either it was quickly refilled for a further mash or the fire had to be raked down rapidly. The water in the mash-tub was 'ready' when it had cooled to between 140-158°F – "when the steam cleared and you could see a shadow on the surface", thermometers were seldom used. If too hot the malt grains set irretrievably, if too cool not enough sugar was extracted. The malt was poured in and stirred vigorously for twenty minutes. This was easier if there were two men: as one poured the other stirred. This may illuminate such occasions as when Woodforde noted: "We brewed again to day at which I assisted my Man / Briton most of the Day" (29/09/1785). The stirring completed, a small amount of malt was sprinkled on the top to stop evaporation, covered with a lid and sacks and left to stand for two hours. The 'two hours' was convenient; if the wort was drained into a second copper, the re-filled first copper would, hopefully, be boiling and ready for the second mash. An alternative method was to have a holding vessel near the copper in which the first wort was held until the water for the second mash was ready. As there was only one copper in the Parsonage brewhouse, this might have been the function of the iron bound water stand mentioned in the inventory. The temperature of the water for the second mash was not so crucial as the condition of the malt had been determined by the first mash. It was even possible to use cold water for the third mash for small or table beer.

The wort was strained from the mash-tub, which had a central drainhole with a large wooden plug, a 'penstaff', into a shallower staved vessel called an 'underback' from where it was pumped or bucketed back into the copper. There is no mention of a hand pump

in the Parsonage brewhouse. The wort in the copper was brought to the boil and the hops added. Extreme care had to be taken as the liquid could boil over in the same manner as a pan of milk; an iron pole was used to control it, and one solution was to draw off a bucket of liquid and pour it back when it had cooled slightly. The boiling times varied between one and three hours, depending on whether it was for the first, second or third mash, strong or common beer.

After the boiling the wort was cooled by running it through a series of 'keelers' or 'coolers', shallow staved vessels (the more sophisticated were lined with lead). The cooled wort went into the fermenting tun or back into the cleaned mash-tub, the yeast added and kept at 60-70°F which was yet another complicated process. The yeast floated on top of the wort, the working took three hours or more, fermentation generated heat and if the temperature rose, cold wort had to be added. If the wort was too cool the beer was difficult to clear but the liquor had to be cold before it was tunned otherwise it might fox and taste sour. When it had finished working – some said three hours, others three days – the beer was 'tunned', i.e. drawn off into barrels. The discrepancy between three hours and three days for the yeast to work may be explained by whether the beer was 'strong' or 'common'. The barrels lay on their sides on an ale stool in the cellar, the bung hole not being sealed until all trace of working was complete. On one occasion Woodforde is quite explicit:

> Brewed a barrel of common beer and instead
> of tunning it in the Evening as usual I put it into
> the Mash-Tub with the Yeast, and covered it over
> with Bags, and to stay all Night so. My Beer of
> late having not been clear and fine, so that I
> was willing to try some other scheme – and I hope
> this will answer – if it does it will be much better
> on many accounts, especially the trouble of tunning
> it of a night which was rather disagreeable –
> All that I am afraid of is, that the Beer might be less brisk
> (09/05/1793)

This was a well-practised method. When Will was brewing the inconvenience of waiting to tunn did not affect Woodforde!

The cellar could be a further cause of trouble. According to *The Housekeeper's Instructor* even the best brewed liquor might be spoiled if the cellar had been dug in damp springy ground. A garden that contained the 'great pond' could well have been damp. In May

1780, after relating how he demonstrated his bleeding machine for horses to Mr Roupe, Woodforde notes: "Altering the Roof of my Cellar to day making it shorter", he then invited Mr Roupe to dine with him (10/05/1780). Shorter? Does he mean lower?

Woodforde's favourite mix for beer appears to have been one and a half pounds of hops to a bushel of malt (17/12/1776 and 05/01/1786). However, *The Housekeeper's Instructor* is definite: "remember, that half a pound of good hops is sufficient for a bushel of malt for immediate drinking, and a pound of hops to a bushel of malt for keeping". An additional hint suggests adding more hops in hot weather to help its keeping qualities, so perhaps Woodforde was not being extravagant with the hops, particularly as it was thought to be more economical to give the servants a good small beer, because if the beer was poor the servants would "be feeble in summer time, incapable of strong work, and subject to various disorders".

There is little doubt that Will Coleman was well versed in the art of brewing before he came to Weston. 'Greyness' and other ills to which beer is prone were never mentioned when he was in charge. Woodforde was certainly never called to witness "thick brownish kind of bubbles swimming on the surface of it, very much like Ratafee-cakes" (05/01/1796), called 'burying-cakes' in Norfolk and supposed to presage the death of family or friend. So it was a black night indeed when Will returned home "in liquor behaved very rudely & impudently to me" (12/04/1785). Woodforde prevaricated no longer: Will was dismissed before eight o'clock the following morning.

Woodforde's heart must have been heavy at the prospect of teaching his new man, Brettingham Scurll *alias* Briton, the techniques of brewing. "Busy all Day, shewing Briton the method of brewing – / It made me rather cross – Ironing being also about" (07/07/1785). "Very busy a brewing to day to teach Briton the way" (29/07/1785) and the next week he was "very busy again in brewing all day to teach my new man . . . I was tired pretty much before I went to bed it being / 12. o'clock, on Account of tunning my Beer" (04/08/1785). "I got up early this Morning to see about Britons / brewing and to instruct him in the same – / Was up on the Foot almost the whole day w^{ch} tired me (06/09/1785). Briton could be forgiven if he sometimes thought the techniques of brewing were never ending. The situation began to improve, for on 19 January 1786 Woodforde optimistically says "We brewed again today at

which I assisted very little", but he is still assisting in May, and in November "Was busy Yesterday & to day in teaching my Man / Briton in brewing some strong beer" (01/11/1786) which may have been for the tithe audit held on 5 December.

Once when Woodforde was assisting Briton in brewing, he realised that six pails of liquor had disappeared as it was cooling while he was at dinner. During that time Norton's wife was carrying away some of the last liquor drained from the grains which he had given her. He couldn't be sure she was the culprit but he counted thirty pails taken out of the copper and only 22 pails put into the barrel. At the next brewing he stayed while Downing's wife took the liquor from the grains. He took thirty and a half pails from the furnace and put twenty-eight and a half into the barrels – "This plainly shows that there must be a defect somewhere / I rather strained my left arm in lifting so many / Pails of Beer . . . It pained me very much all the Evening" (17/01/1786). Perhaps this throws a question mark over Coleman's misdemeanours. Selling the remaining malt grains was a common custom: "Gave my old Woman the grains which / she sold to one Solomon Arthur for – 0: 1: 0" (18/03/1765) and from the grains further small beer could be made. Did Coleman, in his position of brewer-in-chief, sell the grains and look the other way when the occasional pail of liquor disappeared, and did he receive favours in kind from the proceeds? Was it a coincidence that the final occasion on which Will came home "in liquor" was just four days after he had been brewing; four days being the period of time needed for small beer to reach a drinkable condition?

Woodforde was brewing beer in a manner similar to that practised for at least the last two centuries. (There are records of hops being grown in Norfolk in 1482.) Despite all the disadvantages of unsophisticated premises and equipment, the servants and the unpredictable weather, the quality of the Parsonage beer was usually up to standard. For the tithe audit held on the first of December 1795 twenty-one people dined. They drank small beer and strong, punch and wine "as much as they pleased to make use off [sic] – Strong Beer amazingly liked and drank / in great Quantity"

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* It has been a particular pleasure to find much useful information in this book. Francis Steer was one of the founder members of the Parson Woodforde Society (Obituary, Journal XI, 3, p. 39). After spending considerable time in Norfolk during the war, he joined the staff of the Essex Record Office. In 1953 he was appointed County Archivist of East & West Sussex and from there worked on the archives of New College, Oxford.

JOANNA CHEEKE AND THE QUEST FOR "THE FOXHUNTER"

In Journal XXXII, 2 (Summer 1999) I wrote an article about the relationship of Joanna Cheeke (Melliar) to the aristocratic Ilchester and Holland families. Letters were reproduced that showed that Joanna was probably the mistress of Lord Ilchester. Henry Fox, his brother, was almost certainly the father of Joanna's child about two years before her marriage. Joanna married in 1763 to become the Mrs Melliar of Woodforde's diary. The article included a letter from Lady Ilchester to her husband which was in many ways obscure and included reference to an unidentified "Foxhunter". A follow-up letter of mine (Journal XXXII, 4) identifying Lord Ilchester as the "foxhunter" has proved erroneous, as further discoveries reveal.

Here are relevant parts of Lady Ilchester's letter,[1] dated 30 December 1747, reproduced again for convenience:

Dear Ste,
The Shrimp is just come bouncing in like a coach
& Six. She has been making Citty Visits for me. I
have a great Cold & rawish Nose so cant go
to Court to wish the King a Happy New Year
as I intended. Kitty & Colebrokes come to town to
Day. Kit dines here tomorrow I suppose I shall
hear great News & I hope Good. M^{r}. Spude Elias Velvet
Man is very Well he lay spraling in my Room
before the fire a great while this Evening
shewing all for Nothing he loves me I fancy

vastly. I hope some time or other to have
rare fun with Mr. Fever & his two
Doxeys: . . . . . .
The Count is just come to shew Miss Cheeke
Neddys Letter. (as there was nothing new
coward was quite in the right.) Mr. Fox has shewn ye
Shrimp what Beau Digby says, she thinks (of?)
the foxhunter much in the night but
wont say why, she thinks it would be
very kind if your lordship would [some?][word missing]
how or other bring it about. [Mr.?] [word missing]
Guppy may know & believe what
the Fox hunter says there are things in
the World, she says, that no one has seen.

I think My Brother seems pretty
well. Adieu

This letter was written to Lord Ilchester ("Ste" for Stephen, his christian name) by his wife. The next letter, Joanna's first letter,[2] will be seen to relate to the one above and was written on Twelfth Night, just eight days later:

[7 January 1748]

My Lord
Lady Ilchester and Miss Powlett are gone to
Twelvth night or what you will. Lady Caroline
Fox dined here and stayd with me near an hour after
they was gone for the play. She desired me to go with
her to see Masqurade Dresses there is to be one next
Thursday Lady Caroline & Lady Ilchester has almost
prevail'd upon me to go, Mr Fox is so good as to
offer me a Ticket. We was last night at court it
being real twelveth night, there was a prodigeous crowd
but I am to give no particulars of it because my Lady
will have the pleasure of doing it her self but might
say that I liked it really. Will your Lordship be so good
as to make my compliments to Mr Digby and thank
him for the honor of his letter the first line of
which, shock'd me very much, but when I found
it was only the Foxhunters speech to Miss Davison &
not Mr Digbys to me, I grew a little easy,
I am glad that affair is likely to be made up I have a
notion it will be better for both. I find by your Lord-
ships french letter that Miss Davison can command
anything from Mr Guppy I mean hares woodcocks &c

I hope you dont think that the message that was sent
last from my Lady was mine, about Mr Guppy. I ll assure
your Lordship I never said one word but Mr Fox stood by
my Lady when she was writing and sent just what
he pleased which I hope you think was
not that sort of message I should have sent I have
great pleasure in requainting your Lordship that the
velvet man & Miss Julien are quite well and
excessively pretty, I long that you should see the
man for nothing was ever so sweet nor
sensceible, I am to write this evening to Mrs Horner
so shall only take the liberty of adding that I am
with the greatest respect
Your Lordships most Dutyfull
and obedient Servant
Joanna Cheeke

Janry 7

This letter, found in the British Library, was written by Joanna Cheeke to Lord Ilchester. Lady Caroline Fox was the wife of Henry Fox, one of the Lennox sisters who have recently gained considerable attention as the subjects of Stella Tillyard's *The Aristocrats* and the subsequent television series based on that book. It seems to show that Joanna, by no means of aristocratic birth, was moving with great ease among the rich and famous.

Joanna apparently writes to say that Edward Digby should be thanked for the honour of making her the subject of his letter but, since she was shocked by what was written, was probably only being polite.

At this point, I have to say that the interpretation of these two inter-related letters is fiendishly convoluted and for that reason the text will be divided into subheadings to help make things clear.

An Explanation of the First Part of Lady Ilchester's Letter

The letter starts with a description of Joanna boisterously returning to the Ilchester's London home after "making Citty Visits" which, no doubt, involved doing a social round on behalf of the indisposed Lady Ilchester and perhaps leaving calling cards. Nicknames are being used for nearly everybody in this letter, as well as their usual names, which all adds to the confusion. "The Shrimp" is Joanna Cheeke, "The Count" is Henry Fox, the brother of Lord Ilchester, and "Neddy" and "Beau Digby" are both used as nicknames for

Edward Digby, a nephew to the Fox brothers and destined to be the future sixth Lord Digby. "The Foxhunter", another nickname, cannot be identified from this letter.

Joanna's letter makes it quite clear that Henry Fox told Lady Ilchester what to say to *her* husband in her letter and that he stood over her while she did it. One has to assume that her passivity combined with Henry Fox's dominance must be factors that led her to comply. Lady Ilchester's letters,[1] in general, can be noted for their conventional subject matter, so with hindsight her letter reproduced is so uncharacteristic of her writing that it should have been spotted as a rogue letter in the first place. It is, at least, partly a spoof engineered by the mischief-making Henry Fox to tease his brother, Lord Ilchester, and Lady Ilchester's declared intention to have "rare fun with M^{r}. Fever & his two Doxeys" etc. must be the pure invention of Henry Fox. The latter, with the same motive, then went on using Lady Ilchester's letter to pass on the message that Joanna, Lord Ilchester's probable sometime mistress, was thinking about "'the foxhunter' in the night". More mischief is obvious when he further suggested that Lord Ilchester should somehow or other "bring it about". We shall see that there was even more to this contorted tale when more is revealed about "the foxhunter".

"M^{r}. Spude Elias Velvet Man", in the same letter, is strange. I had spotted that "Elias" was probably "alias" but not how it came to be written as a name. If Henry Fox was dictating it would have been easy to assume from the similarity in pronunciation that a name was being used if there was no concentration on the meaning. Joanna's letter refers to "velvet man" and it is clear that a baby is being referred to and not a dog, as I previously thought. The baby is the Ilchesters' first son, Henry Thomas Fox, born 10 August 1747. Julien is his sister, born in 1745. It is possible that further punning was intended with "Spude" and the slang word "spewed", commonly used as a word for vomited. This may have been Henry Fox making up a nickname for the child who had just "spewed" as he was dictating his letter.

A further dictation error is possible in the last sentence of Lady Ilchester's letter. If Henry Fox had said "Your brother seems pretty well", meaning himself, which is what Lady Ilchester should have written, then that would have made sense. However the letter says "My brother" which makes no sense since she didn't have a brother but presumably that is what she felt she had to write because she, in a confused way, must have thought that was what Henry Fox

wanted. She may, on the other hand, have used "brother" as a term meaning "brother-in-law".

The Conveyance of the Message about the Foxhunter

Joanna's letter makes it clear that the message that so shocked her originated with the "Foxhunter" who told it to a Miss Davison. It is difficult to know what the significance is of Lord Ilchester's "french letter" and what it has to do with Miss Davison being able to command game from Mr Guppy. One could conjecture that writing in French would be one way of conveying otherwise indiscreet messages and there is a precedent for that in another of Joanna's letters.[3] Likewise one can conjecture that Mr Guppy was a weak character and should take the blame for passing on the message which so shocked Joanna and that he was instructed to do this by Miss Davison who was in the habit of giving him commands which she would expect to be obeyed.

Lady Ilchester's letter seems to confirm that Mr Guppy is next involved in the conveyance of the message, for it says he "may know & believe what the Fox hunter says". The next person involved is Edward Digby who writes to Henry Fox who then, as we have seen, makes Lady Ilchester pass on the message to her husband.

What the Message was about

The same law that decrees that a dropped slice of bread always lands butter side down must have been operating when the tiny piece of paper missing from Lady Ilchester's letter included just the two alphabetical letters that could alter the whole meaning about "the foxhunter" as has now been found out with the help of Joanna's letter. In my previous article, the title of "Mrs." referring to Guppy towards the end of Lady Ilchester's letter had been determined by the "she says" part of it and the assumption that Joanna had been thinking of a male "foxhunter". Joanna's letter makes clear that it is a Mr Guppy that is involved and that being so, the "she says" must refer to a female "foxhunter". The message is, therefore, that Joanna was thinking about a female "foxhunter" in the night.

Using the information in Joanna's letter, one can interpret the next sentence in the Ilchester letter in the following way: "Mr. Guppy may know and believe what the Fox-hunter (a lady) says (to Miss Davison about Joanna) namely that there are things in the world she (the Foxhunter) says, that no one has seen". A hint that Joanna

has done things that no one knows of which she, the foxhunter, is in a position to know about.

It hardly needs to be spelt out that the message referred to in the letters implies a lesbian relationship between Miss Davison and the "Foxhunter" and some involvement of Joanna with the latter. However, the truth of it cannot be found (and may not even have been known at the time) and it should be emphasised that the interest lies in examining and discussing what is, after all, probably tittle-tattle, gossip and rumour that passed for entertainment in a certain section of society.

Mr Guppy and Joanna Cheeke

In the context of his connection with the Ilchesters, there is one more mention of Mr Guppy that has been written about before. It is from the Ilchester hunting book, and someone who wrote the entry about the christening of a child had picked out Joanna's name from among the godparents, to humorously highlight her pronouncement about renouncing the glory of the world etc. Mr Guppy was among the godparents.

> 1753 Aug 16 This day Miss Anny Cheeke & Miss Maria Fenn stood Godmothers to James Wallis's 1st child and M^{r}. Wm Digby & M^{r}. Guppy Godfathers. mem: Miss Cheeke was heard to renounce the glory of the world & all carnal lusts of the flesh in a very audible voice so did M^{r}. William Digby; M^{r}. Guppy & Miss Maria Fenn.[4]

William Digby was another nephew of Lord Ilchester and Maria Fenn was Lady Ilchester's maid.

The identity of Mr Guppy can begin to be established with the help of another of Joanna's letters[2] of a later date.

[about 2 Nov 1759]

castle cary 4 o clock

My Lord
I came here about an hour ago &
not before, when I came to
cole I found a very agreeable party
& captain Pounsett who is an exceeding
civil gentleman to oblige me sent for
a fiddle as he imagined I shoud like it
& proposed a little Ball we danced
till near three, got to bed about
five, about ten this morning a party

of gentlemen & Ladys went a
hunting, I made one double upon M^r^.
Guppys hunter behind captain pounsett
who went over hedges Ditches & all sorts
of frightfull places but I had no fear[?]
& Rode violently indeed. I found M^rs^.
Russ rather better tho but very indifferent,
I am exceedingly sorry Lady Ilchester
was sick in the night. I hope this
letter to day your Lordship need not
make any excuses for opening Lady
Susan's letter as my Lady & your
Lordship was vastly welcome, I am much
obliged for the news pappers &
am

Yr Lordships most
obedient & obliged
Humble Sev^t^
J: Cheeke

rideing & dancing
has agreed with me
so well that I feel quite
Lank & empty

poor Sr Charles I am
monsterous sorry

The second letter mentions a horse belonging to Mr Guppy and the Pouncett family of Cole.

The Sir Charles referred to is almost certainly Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, a friend of Henry Fox, who died by his own hand on 2 November 1759[5] and this gives an approximate date for the letter. Cole is a small hamlet close to Bruton and home to the Pouncett family, John from that family being a future in-law of Parson Woodforde. Cole is also the home of the Guppy family. Captain Joseph Pouncett, the brother of John, is to be the subject of a separate article.

The letter shows Joanna, in her usual extrovert role, galvanising those around her into action and in spite of her age of thirty-eight quite happy to dance well into the night and follow with a day of hunting.

There is now a link between Joanna and someone who must be the John Guppy of Cole who features prominently in the Woodforde diaries of later date. This, with further evidence to be introduced later, will show that he is the same Guppy mentioned in the first two letters. Joanna was visiting the Pouncetts of Cole and they are

related by the marriage of John Guppy's sister, Edith, into that family; this can be established by a reading of Woodforde's diary. The latter also shows that John Guppy was a farmer and a bachelor. The parish records of Pitcombe,[6] in which the hamlet of Cole lies, show that he was born in 1710 and died in 1779, and furthermore there is no record of any other Guppy in that parish with whom he could be confused.

Miss Davison and John Guppy

Surprisingly, about twenty-five years after Joanna's first letter (of 1748), Parson Woodforde's diary is the next source of material. These two extracts are from 1773.

> I called on M[r]. Pouncett of Cole this morning on Horseback
> and M[r]. Pouncett & myself took a ride over to Batcomb
> and dined at D[r]. Dunns there with him, his Wife, a
> M[rs]. Reynolds, Miss Davison an old Maid & Sister to M[rs]. Dunn,
> and M[r]. Millar of Evercreech a Clergyman there –
> D[r]. Dunn & Family there, behaved very genteel & kind to me –
> We spent the afternoon there & after Tea we came away –
> I gave D[r]. Dunns Servant Mary – 0: 1: 0
> M[r]. Pouncett returned home with me, supped &c at Parsonage
> (28 July 1773)

> I walked to Cole about noon by myself to M[r]. Guppeys
> and dined at his House upon a fine Haunch of Venison
> with M[r]. Guppey, M[rs]. Pouncett & her Son John, D[r]. Dunn
> and his Lady, M[rs]. Reynolds & Miss Davison, and M[r]. Step:
> Watley of Batcomb – M[r]. Watley of Batcomb spent the
> afternoon with us at M[r]. Guppeys –
> D[r]. Dunn, his Lady, M[rs]. Reynolds & Miss Davison went away
> soon after Tea – as did Mr. Guppey, & Mr. Water to Bruton Markett
> and M[r]. Pouncett & myself then smoked a Pipe in the Garden
> I gave M[r]. Guppeys maid Sybbil coming way – 0: 1: 0
> I gave his man Ellis Coleman also – 0: 1: 0
> M[r]. Pouncett walked home with me about 7. o'clock and
> he supped & spent the Evening at Parsonage.
> (21 Aug. 1773)

It would seem that through the friendship of Parson Woodforde with John Pouncett, his future brother-in-law, he was introduced to a new circle of friends which included Dr Donne (Dunn), his wife, a Miss Davison and a Mrs Reynolds, together with Mrs Pouncett and John Guppy, both of whom he had met earlier. Dr Donne

(Woodforde later altered the spelling from Dunn) is recorded on a handsome mural monument of white and Sienna marbles in Bruton church as John Donne and it records:

> In memory of John Donne esq; who died May 19, 1782 and lies interred in Batcombe church.

It became the custom over the next six years to 1779 for the households of Dr Donne and his wife (usually including Miss Davison and Mrs Reynolds), Mrs Pouncett, Mr Guppy, each in turn, to host mid-day dinner parties and to include Parson Woodforde who also became one of the hosts. These social occasions were limited by the fact that Dr Dunn, a surgeon in Bath, only came to his house near Batcombe during the summer season and later, by the fact that Woodforde could only attend and hence record them when he made his trips from Oxford or Norfolk. The above two extracts are typical examples of the other dinner party entries, stretching over six years in Woodforde's diary. The dinner parties which he recorded are those which took place in the years 1773, 1775, 1777 and 1779 during his visits to Somerset. When Parson Woodforde was there to record these happenings, not every one was present. For our purposes, it is worth noting that Mr Guppy and Miss Davison were present at the same time on many occasions and, almost invariably, Miss Davison and Mrs Reynolds were together at the same time. Even with the passage of twenty-five years, the coincidence of the names Guppy and Davison would be too great for it not to be of significance and John Guppy of Cole and the Mr Guppy of Joanna's first letter must be one and the same. Miss Davison is now an "old Maid" as Woodforde notes and likewise, she must be the same person that was mentioned in Joanna's first letter. She was a sister of Dr Donne's wife and, according to Woodforde, Mrs Reynolds was also related to that family in some way.

Miss Davison and the "Foxhunter"

Joanna's first letter maintains that what was said about her originated from what the "Foxhunter", who we now know to be female, said to Miss Davison (spitefully, perhaps, as these two had fallen out) and then Joanna goes on to say "I am glad that affair is likely to be made up I have a notion it will be better for both". The implication is that these two ladies, as we have noted, were more than just good friends and the message about Joanna thinking about

one of them in the night etc. was understandably why she was initially shocked, and the more so if it caused the mirth of Henry Fox and friends. If she were to lose the patronage of Lord Ilchester it would be social disaster for her, and perhaps there would have been some financial loss; as we see, she had written to him to deny that she had said anything that would implicate herself in the message.

The Identity of the "Foxhunter"

Searching for the "Foxhunter" is rather like solving a detective mystery, proceeding from the known to the unknown; searching for elusive clues to identify a suspect. There has been no direct evidence, only a nickname, and everything else is circumstantial; in the end, having to decide if a case can be brought and acting in one's mind as both prosecution and defence. With this being so, a case is presented with what evidence can be found. If the case is shaky, I can only plead that the alternative would have been to say that there was absolutely no case at all, which I believe to be not so.

In dialect, the name "Reynolds" is used for a fox[7] and the name "Foxy" is also the inevitable nickname of any man surnamed Reynolds in early twentieth century use.[8] The name "Reynolds" is derived from "reynard", the French for "fox". Although not recorded, there seems no reason for the nickname "Foxy" not to have been used in former times.

Mrs Reynolds, although she obviously married at some time, is never mentioned in the company of her husband. Pitcombe parish records show the following entry for marriages:

> 1745
> Dec. 28 Samuel Reynolds & Betty Baker

The time of the marriage is before the time of the letters in 1747/8, so this fits datewise. There is mention of him on 26 August 1775, in the Woodforde diary, when:

> M^{r}. Reynolds of Bruton an Acquaintance of D^{r}. Donnes
> called at Parsonage just at Dinner Time but did not stay long.

Also, on 28 March 1776 from the same source:

> D^{r}. Donne & his Lady, & a M^{r}. Reynolds, M^{r}. Guppey, M^{r}. Will^{m}
> Burge Jn^{r}. & his Wife & Miss Adams supped &c. with us –

Again the coincidence of the names, Reynolds with Dr Donne in this case, has to be too great for it not to be of significance in linking

him with our Mrs Reynolds and these entries are a further illustration of husband and wife never appearing in the same company. One has to assume that they separated at some time. It is not unreasonable to postulate that the name "Foxhunter" came about when a man with the nickname of "Foxy" Reynolds was pursued with determination by a young lady at a time when she was eager to marry him.

The pairing of Miss Davison with Mrs Reynolds at the dinner parties will have been noted but this is more significant if it is noted that, when they are absent, they are usually absent at the same time. For instance, in 1775 (except 17 September when both are present) and 1777 they are not present with Dr Donne and his wife when the summer dinner parties took place with Parson Woodforde, so in that sense, they do seem to be a pair.

For these reasons outlined above, Mrs Reynolds fits the criteria for the nickname of "Foxhunter".

There are counter arguments which now should be mentioned for the defence, so to speak. The fact that the ladies are both related to the Donne family makes it not at all unusual that they should be under the same roof in that household (if that was the case). Moreover, would they move in polite society in the way that they do as mentioned by Woodforde? The reply to that is, that if there had been a lesbian relationship and it had not been overt in any way (especially as we are dealing with a time twenty-five years later) or if it was no more than tittle-tattle anyway, about two ladies who just preferred each other's company, then there seems to be no reason to rule out Mrs Reynolds as the "Foxhunter" just on those grounds.

When Woodforde returned to Somerset in the summer of 1782, Dr Donne had recently died and there was no further mention of Mrs Reynolds, so perhaps she was dead too. There the story seems to end except for a little postscript. Nancy Woodforde, the parson's niece, also kept a diary[9] for a little while and in 1792 on 24 December gave a somewhat fuller account than was written in the diary of Parson Woodforde of the will of Mrs Donne who had recently died. The following is an extract:

> Miss Pounsets Letter informed us of the death of Mrs. Donne, Mrs. Webb of Roundhill and the Dowager Lady Ilchester. Mrs. Donne has left a hundred and twenty Legacyes, to Miss Pounset she has left one hundred Pounds and a quarter of her Plate, to Betsy Guppy £50, to Mrs. Pounset Senior five Guineas, but

nothing to Mr. Pounset, to Mrs. Milward 20 pounds and Mrs. Melliar 20 pounds.[10]

Joanna Cheeke, who became Mrs Melliar, had not featured at all in the later part of the story but after writing all the above I have found that her grandfather, John Cheeke, had married a "Johanna Davisson" of Batcombe by special licence on 14 April 1687.[11] Miss Davison and Mrs Donne therefore must also be related to Joanna's grandmother. The story comes full circle, having begun with the Lady Ilchester letter in 1747 and, 45 years later, another letter tells of the death of Lady Ilchester and of the will of a lady with a "Foxhunter" connection mentioning that Joanna gets a small inheritance. It should be said that Mrs Donne, being the sister of Miss Davison, was also a Davison, but in the context of what has been written we have to assume that she is not the Davison that was first associated with the "Foxhunter".

To summarise this convoluted story would be a help. The Foxhunter (probably Mrs Reynolds) delivers a "speech" to Miss Davison. The burden of this message is then conveyed to Mr Guppy who, in turn, passes it on to Edward Digby. Digby mentions the matter in a letter to Henry Fox, who persuades his sister-in-law Lady Ilchester to include it in a letter – part spoof – to her husband, which he dictates. The rumour, if it is a rumour, so shocks Joanna that she has to write to Lord Ilchester to deny it. The identies of Mr Guppy, Miss Davison and the "Foxhunter" are then examined.

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6. Dwelly's Parish Records Vol. VIII.
7. Wright, J. – The English Dialect Dictionary.
8. Partridge, E. – A Dictionary of Slang & Unconventional English, 8th Edn.
9. Woodforde Papers and Diaries, Ed. D. H. Woodforde.
10. Betsy Guppy had been mentioned several times in the diary on the occasion of Woodforde's visit to Somerset in 1786 and also later. She was described as "poor little Betsy Guppey, an Orphan" and she had obviously been adopted by the older Mrs Pounsett (the mother-in-law of Woodforde's sister, Jane) when she became an orphan. She must have been a relative of Mrs Pounsett, whose maiden name was Guppy.
11. Marriage Allegation Bonds of Bath & Wells – A. J. Jewers (1909).

MR JAQUES'S SCHOOL AT URCHFONT

Members of the Society who attended the recent Sherborne Frolic will have been reminded that the first boarding school attended by the young James Woodforde was "Mr King's School" at Compton Pauncefoot -- or Ponsford as Samuel Woodforde calls it in his account book – some six miles to the south of Ansford. Beneath a heading denoting disbursements "for James Woodforde", an entry dated 12 January 1747/8 reads:

p[d] M[r] King for half a years Boarding	5 : 0 : 0
To Do for Pens, Ink & Paper	1 : 10½
NB Sent my son James to M[r] King's School at Compton Ponsford.[1]	

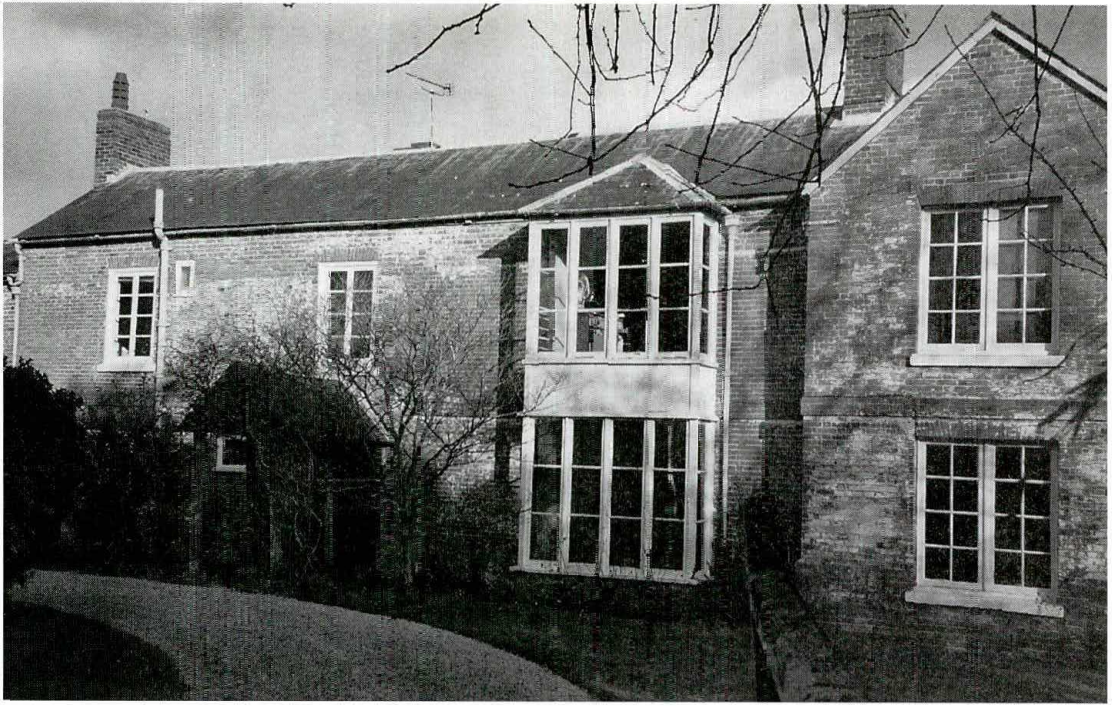
Samuel continued to pay £5:0:0 per half year to Mr King, plus variable amounts for books and stationery, until January 1749/50 when we find entered in the account book the following –

January 5: 1749 [O.S.] Then sent my Son James to M[r] Jaques's School at Urchfont	
gave for entrance	1 : 7 : 0

On 2 July 1750 he pays what appears to be an initial payment for board and instruction of eight guineas and continues to pay varying amounts "for Boarding, Books &c" for the following two years.[2]

James would have been nine years old when he first made the journey to Urchfont in Wiltshire, some 5 miles S.E. of Devizes and about 35 miles – a good day's travel – from his home. This large village lies near the western end of the Vale of Pewsey and beneath the northern facing chalk escarpment of Salisbury Plain. Already a substantial settlement by the time the Domesday Book was compiled – when it possessed three mills – by the mid-eighteenth century Urchfont would probably have been intermediate in size between Ansford and Castle Cary. Whatever misgivings the young James had as he approached Mr Jaques's house he would, no doubt, have been delighted by the sight of the green with its large pond at the heart of the village. Perhaps it was here that he was to learn those skills of the model shipwright which would one day enable him to pronounce with such authority on the failure of Nephew Bill's *Anna* when first launched on the Great Pond at Weston:

> to
> his great Chagrin and the Company's disappointment
> it upset or went down to the starboard Side almost
> immediately and took in Water, & could not be righted
> She was by far too much overmasted – (10/6/1786)



The Old Vicarage , Urchfont, Wilts, Mr Jaques's home. The ground floor room with the bay window is the largest in the house and may have served as the schoolroom. (With permission of the owner)

The questions which must have occupied him most on the journey from Somerset would doubtless have concerned the temper of his new schoolteacher, how well he would get on with his fellow pupils and the kind of place that he was to live in. Of the teacher, the pupils and the place we can begin to make a provisional assessment.

George Jaques was the vicar of Urchfont. He had been born in 1695 and was thus an exact contemporary of James's father. Like James – but not Samuel – he was from Somerset, his family being from Somerton.[3] Teacher and father were both up at Oxford together, Jaques at Queen's and Woodforde at New College. In 1723 Jaques was instituted as vicar of Tilshead, a remote village high up on Salisbury Plain to the south of Urchfont where he also became vicar in 1729. Although it is possible that Jaques and Samuel Woodforde had known each other since Oxford days, it is not very likely that they would have maintained a relationship over the intervening period of thirty years. Jaques, however, was to gain further preferment which may, more feasibly, explain the arrival of young James Woodforde on his doorstep. In 1744 he had become a canon of Wells where James's great-uncle Robert Woodforde was Treasurer and Canon Residentiary. The probability must be that it was Robert who recommended Jaques to his nephew. Evidence that the close at Wells was a recruiting ground for Mr Jaques is provided by the following diary entry – for 6 April 1774 when James was back at Oxford for the second time:

> Dr Lovel of Merton Coll: Son of Canon Lovel of Wells & whom I went to School with at Urchfont dined with me in Hall & spent the Aft: in MCR with me –

Attempts to locate Urchfont School in the past have been unsuccessful not least because there seems to be no surviving reference to it beyond the papers of the Woodforde family. The Victoria County History for Wiltshire tells us that in 1727 there were 31 private schools in the county and, in 1704, there had been over 50 charity schools but, although a number of village schools are named, there is no mention of Urchfont.[4] Nor does there appear to be any reference to it in the archives of Windsor Castle where the records of the parish church are housed. Clearly it was neither a large nor a long-lived institution. The notion that it was a school of some size arises from the following entries in Woodforde's Oxford diary – "Supped & spent the Evening at the Star with the Urchfont Clubb" (16/04/1760) and "Supp'd & spent the Evening at the Star with our Urchfont Clubb" (30/04/1760). The question

which arises is how many old boys are required to constitute a "Clubb"? Not necessarily very many, for on 26 February 1763, we read the following – "I enter'd this Morning into a Breakfast Clubb; this is the Sasafras Clubb, We have only three members, Geree, myself & Dyer". It may well be that the Urchfont Club was equally exclusive. It is even possible that the principle, and perhaps the only members, gathered for the third and last time on the only other occasion when Lovel is mentioned in the diary –

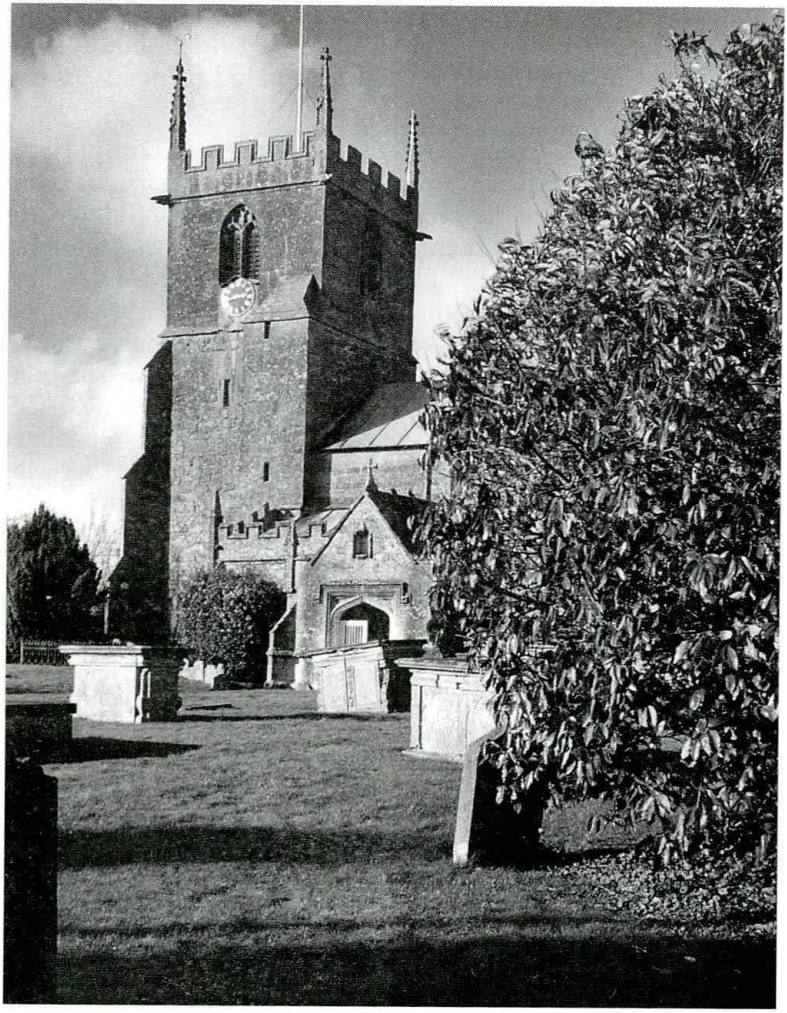
> Supp'd & spent the Evening at the Kings Arms in Hol=
> =lywell, with Doctor Creswicke Dean of Wells, & his
> Lady, together with Hobhouse & Lovehill –
> (24/05/1760)

Thanks to the researches of Mr Peter Thorpe of Urchfont and the kindness of the present occupant of the Old Vicarage, it has been possible to identify the probable location of the school. The Old Vicarage, which has been a private dwelling since 1970, occupies a site adjacent to the churchyard. Although it has been extended since a sketch of it was made in 1845, it is clear that part of the building, in which a cruck beam is in evidence in one of the gable ends, dates back to well before the eighteenth century. This was, almost certainly, Mr Jaques's vicarage. In this 'original' part of the building is to be found, next to a room thought to have been the vicar's study, a much larger room which could well have served as a schoolroom (see accompanying photograph). Although Jaques himself had five children – two sons by his first wife, Alice, who died in 1746 and two daughters and a son by his second wife, Rachel – the sons of Alice both died in infancy, so that there may well have been sufficient room in the house for a small number of boarders.

However, there was also another clergyman living in Urchfont at this time who also played a part in the running of the school. This was the Revd Charles Gibbes to whom, by 1752, Samuel Woodforde was paying fees:

> Jan 15: 1752 paid to M^{r} Gibbs for boarding
> Books &c. by J^{n} Coleman 10 : 6 : 8^{5}

It may be that Gibbes had simply taken over Jaques's school. On the other hand, it may be that, as Jaques's own family grew, he needed to board his pupils elsewhere. Gibbes had certainly been living in Urchfont for some time; since at least 1740 when the parish register reveals the baptism of a son, George, on 25 April. George was thus of the same age as James Woodforde and it may well be



St Michael and All Angels Church, Urchfont – the view from the Old Vicarage.

that they were taught together. George, too, found his way to Oxford, arriving at Trinity a year before Woodforde entered Oriel prior to his migration to New College.[6] There is, however, no mention of George Gibbes in the diary – unless, of course, it is as one of the "Urchfont Clubb".

Gibbes senior was a native of Wiltshire having been born at Huish, further down the Vale of Pewsey in 1712. He had gone to Oxford and become rector of the twin parishes of All Saints, Chitterne (in 1743) and St Mary's, Chitterne (in 1750). Chitterne lies a few miles beyond Tilshead on Salisbury Plain but Gibbes appears to have lived at Urchfont where eventually he was buried on 25 November 1794. His son George became rector of Woodborough, another Vale of Pewsey parish, but it was *his* son who was to bring distinction to the family. In 1819 George Smith Gibbes FRS, FLS, FRCP, DMed, fellow of Magdalen College, was appointed physician extraordinary to Queen Charlotte and, in the following year, was knighted.[7]

We know a good deal more about Woodforde's life once he arrived at Winchester – who his classmates were, what he studied, how well he performed and much more.[8] Of the teachers that he left behind in Urchfont we know that Mr Gibbes saw out his days in the village, but what of Mr Jaques? At some stage he appears to have moved to Stert – halfway between Urchfont and Devizes – a small village where the church was a chapelry of Urchfont. The normal procedure appears to have been for the vicar of Urchfont to appoint a curate to serve Stert but in Jaques's case it looks as though he looked after the chapel of ease while Gibbes served Urchfont and, presumably, himself employed a curate to look after his own parishes at Chitterne. Even today Stert is a sleepy place of thatched houses, cottage gardens and enchanting views. It was here that George Jaques died and was buried in 1773.

This, of course, is all a far cry from the young James Woodforde and his arrival at Urchfont in 1749. What we can say with certainty of the young man's time in Wiltshire is that he would have worshipped at the beautiful church of St Michael and All Angels, and that, long before he went to Winchester, he would have been familiar with the story of King Arthur whose carved head, together with that of his queen Ahlswith, adorns the outer door of the porch. He would also have learnt sufficient Latin and Greek to ensure that, by the time his name appeared on the "Roll ad Winton", he was able to pass muster in the demanding classical exercises expected

even of the most junior boys. For my part, I like to think of him and his school fellows, full of fun and forgetful of Latin, sailing their boats on that lovely village pond.

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Acknowledgements

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THE UNPUBLISHED MEMOIRS OF THE REV. EDWARD NARES 1762–1841

Early Years

The Rev. Dr Edward Nares (1762-1841), a near contemporary of the Rev. James Woodforde (1740-1803), does not figure among eighteenth century diarists. Strictly, he was not a diarist but a prolific recorder of thoughts and opinions, including sketches of events and experiences during his life, albeit not on a daily basis. His manuscript was transcribed by his widow into 460 neat pages of memoirs. Regretfully, in contrast to the homely detail supplied by Woodforde and Kilvert, there is much introspection and theological dispute. A recurring theme, particularly in later years, is his want of the preferment which he felt was his due. His expectations were centred on his antecedents, especially his exalted, although unwelcomed, marriage to a daughter of the 4th Duke of Marlborough (thereby hangs a tale). Regius Professor of Modern History at Merton College, Oxford, was to be the summit of his achievements. His antecedents, upon which he placed such store, were as follows.

Nares was born 26 March 1762, the third son of the Hon. Sir George Nares (1716-86), a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. His mother, Mary Strange (1726-82), was the daughter of the Rt. Hon. Sir John Strange, sometimes Solicitor General of King George III, later Master of the Rolls and a Privy Councillor. Lady Strange, his maternal grandmother . . .

> . . . was one of the four daughters of Mr Edward Strong, a very eminent Mason who was particularly concerned in the building of St Paul's, of which he laid the last Stone upon the Lantern, October 26th, 1708, the first stone having been (33 years before, viz. June 25th, 1675) laid by his elder Brother Thomas. Mr Strong was also engaged in the building of the Churches . . . after the fire of London, Greenwich Hospital, and many of the first Houses in the Kingdom, particularly Blenheim, anno 1705.

Mr Edward Strong's eldest daughter married Earl St Vincent, and became Godmother of the Rev. Nares' youngest daughter Caroline Louisa. Other distinguished connections by marriage are mentioned. Strangely, at this point he omits his uncle James Nares (1715-1783), Doctor of Music, for many years organist and composer to Kings George II and George III, and for 13 years Master of the Children of the Royal Chapels. His funeral was conducted in Westminster Abbey prior to interment in St Margaret's, Westminster.

Nares' eldest brother, John, was educated at Eton and the Bar, becoming Commissioner of Bankrupts and a Police Magistrate. His second brother, George Strange Nares, was born in 1759 and, after Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, entered the army, becoming a Captain in the 70th Regiment of Foot. He so distinguished himself at the taking of Martinique in the West Indies that the expedition commander, Lord Grey . . .

> .. . caused his thanks to be returned to him at the Head of the Army, and as a remuneration for his Gallantry, gave him a civil post of considerable emolument . . . but he lived but a short time to enjoy this new appointment, dying but a few days after of the fever prevalent in those parts. . . . In consideration of his father's services, His Royal Highness the Duke of York, was pleased to give his only son an Ensign's Commission whilst still but an infant.

Reflecting the grim death rate of the time, four of Edward's seven sisters died young. Two of the survivors made good marriages, one remaining unmarried. Despite the family's status (their father was

then King's Sergeant* and MP for the City of Oxford), their mother taught all the children to read and personally supervised the education of her daughters . . .

> . . . whereas in Schools they must learn School tricks, intrigue, Cabals & prevarications.

The sons were presumably considered to be of sterner stuff, John being sent to Eton. Edward, at the age of eight, followed his brother George to Westminster School where his early years were unhappy. To the burden of shyness, timidity and home-sickness was added ragging by his fellow pupils occasioned by his slight physique and air of exclusiveness. Some protection was afforded by the presence in the school of his older brother and of a cousin (later Archdeacon Robert Nares, 1753-1829), also by the kind protection of certain "great Boys". He sometimes gained comfort by playing truant to see his father who from time to time sat on the Bench in nearby Westminster Hall, whilst himself remaining strictly incognito. By frequent wandering around the precincts of the House of Peers and observing the comings and goings of their Lordships and their equipages, the lad became expert at recognising their coats of arms and their personages.

> I came to have a fondness for the study of Heraldry, and soon became such a proficient that I could have marshalled any public procession as well as Garter King of Arms.

Edward Nares was initially an indifferent pupil. Seeing no relevance to his tuition he idled his way through the lower school. His interest in Greek, however, and efforts in Calligraphy, excited ambitions to do well in the Upper School. This coincided with his father moving to Great George Street, quite close by, so that he needed no longer to be a boarder. This enabled him to make copious use of his father's well-endowed library. Also, having entire possession of the house when the family were in the country, he was able to choose his own occupation. Study at last became one of them.

> The first Book I ever remember to have read with a view to useful information, was The History of England in 12 vols., written I believe by Goldsmith in the form of letters from a Nobleman to his Son. . . . I never wanted encouragement from my Father. He gave me both Books and money to buy Books. . . .

* Woodforde makes reference to Nares senior on 4/5 March 1761 and on 8 March 1775. See note on him in *The Oxford and Somerset Diary*, p. 228. (Ed.)

> My desire for knowledge now became excessive, and the family were frequently many hours a Bed and asleep, before I could avail myself to put out my candle. . . . Not many years passed before I had written two plays, a mock heroic poem, a Burlesque novel, many pieces of poetry, both light and grave, and an abundance of occasional pieces in prose and verse which my family were careful to preserve.

The young Nares thus displayed more diligence through the upper school, although such application was primarily directed at subjects of his own choosing. In 1779 he quitted Westminster School, ". . . placed so low as to be (I think) the last Boy in the School and, for some weeks before I quitted it, head of the Town Boys."

Immediately after leaving school Edward Nares was entered as a Commoner at Christ Church, Oxford. His Tutor at College was Dr John Randolph, later Bishop of Bangor (translated to London in 1809), "a most eminent Scholar and very worthy man, though too reserved to give me the encouragement of which I stood in need, notwithstanding the strong desire I always felt to acquire knowledge." Nevertheless he excelled in mathematics and "out of a large Class that attended the lectures in Algebra I remember to have been one of four only who completed the course. The present Marquis of Wellesley, Earl Bathurst and Wm. Frankland (MP for Thirsk) being the other three, receiving particular commendation from the Dean." By his father's request to the Vice Chancellor (Bishop Home) he was allowed access to the "Bodelian [sic] Library . . . a priviledge regularly reserv'd for Graduates only".

At about this time his father acquired "a pretty place in Hampshire", Warbrook House, in the Parish of Eversley. Having once represented Oxford in Parliament, Nares senior had a particularity for the place and would arrange the Oxford Circuit to coincide with the summer vacation enabling his son to accompany him for the latter part of the circuit. This gave him opportunities of visiting other parts of the country, broadening his outlook and combatting his natural diffidence. Bearing no wish himself to follow the law and having been provided with a horse, also having the use of his father's carriage, he spent his days sight-seeing or in calling upon families to whom he had been introduced. Meantime his father dispensed justice in the local Law Courts, meeting only in the evening for dinner:

> ... tho it was little to the comfort of either of us, being daily obliged to dine in publick. My Father's situation and Character

> ... procured for me an easy introduction to respectable families wherever we went and, as my shyness wore off, I found much amusement in the life I was leading. In order more effectually to rid me of this Shyness ... he did everything to encourage me to go much into company and would purposely introduce me to the High Sheriff and be put in the way of proper society.

He then goes on at some length to criticise the manners and pretensions of the lower orders. A predilection for dancing and finery was now apparent, involving him in some extravagance, although his love of books and learning, greatly encouraged by his father, did not desert him.

Nares gradually extended his circle of friends beyond his former schoolmates, including some of rank and fortune. In 1781 he suffered an undefined accident and debility for which he was sent to convalesce at the 'hot wells'. In August 1782, to the great grief of his family, his mother died of a dropsical disorder, aged only 55, reputedly brought on by her distress concerning her son's illness. On 24 January 1783 Nares took his Bachelor's degree. His father had encouraged him to aspire to a Fellowship at Merton College for which a degree was essential. However, he twice failed through lack of seniority.

> In February died Dr. Nares – my Father's eldest Brother. ... He was Master of the Chapel Royal, Organist and Composer to his Majesty who always professed a great personal regard for him. He died at the age of 72. ... He was Father of the Rev. Robert Nares, at present Cannon of Litchfield, Archdeacon of Stafford, and Rector of the valuable living of St. Mary's in the Town of Reading, and Chaplain to the Duke of York.

The appointment of William Pitt as Prime Minister in December 1783, aged only 24, inspired Nares to relate an occasion of their meeting before he had become a celebrity. Whilst accompanying his father on one of his Western Circuits in 1780, attended also by Mr Pitt as a barrister, they were present at the Judges' Assize dinner:

> It often happened that in my place at the bottom of the table Mr. Pitt, as junior counsel, sat next to me with Mr. R. Burke, Brother of the celebrated Mr. Edmund Burke, being on the other side of the table.

In excusing his late arrival Pitt explained that he had been reading letters announcing the dissolution of Parliament. He wished to be nominated for the seat of Cambridge but did not expect to succeed.

His doubts were well founded, but shortly after he was returned for the pocket borough of Appleby. Pitt entered Parliament on 23 January 1781, when not yet 22 years old.

> I received many personal civilities from Mr. Pitt, but after my Father's death never made any attempt to renew the acquaintance, for which I have been blam'd and blame myself. But this was one of the consequences of the Shyness that still hangs about me.

In the summer of 1784 Edward Nares, with an old school friend and accompanied by a servant, set out for a tour of the Lake District. Wishing to view the lakes by moonlight the young travellers killed time by diverting through Wales and Anglesey. Availing themselves of a conveniently waiting packet boat they travelled on to Dublin, arriving to find the city in turmoil due to objections to the import of certain English manufactured goods. A man was seen being chased through the streets by the mob before being tarred and feathered. Moreover, a riot at the door of their theatre resulted in two men being shot. They wisely therefore heeded a caution not to walk too close to the houses but to keep in the middle of the street. After this three-day diversion they returned to their original plan and headed back via Chester and Caernarvon with:

> ... a short visit to the Episcopal palace at Bangor to Bishop Warren, an intimate friend of my Fathers, and our new neighbour in London. From Chester we passed on to the Lakes. ... One night we passed on the Water at Keswick. The moon shone beautifully ... and the effect of the Scenery was much heightened by frequent discharges of small Cannons in the Boat, the sound of which reverberating from the Rocks and Mountains was peculiarly grand and solemn.

After criss-crossing the Lake District to their hearts' desire the party's funds were exhausted. Nares goes on to describe his efforts to raise money at this distance from London, encountering both suspicion and good nature, but succeeding eventually by the power of influential connections.

Young Nares, it is clear, fancied himself as a poet. Following the Montgolfier brothers' successful experiment in the previous year, ballooning was very much a topic of interest at this time. Nares recounts:

> On the 30th. November (1784) I had myself been present when Messrs. Blanchard and Dr. Jefferies (an American) ascended in one from the Area in Grosvenor Square in London.

A farcical attempt to cross the Channel was the inspiration for Nares to write an Epic Poem in four cantos, titled 'Ballooniad' – "The Poem was a good deal notic'd at the time and, I was inform'd, translated into french for the amusement of the Dauphin." Having expressed his enthusiasm for writing verses, both gallant (for the ladies) and humorous (for others), Nares gives examples of his work. These were followed at length by a dissertation on the probable causes and examples of his congenital shyness – in essence an excess of sensibility.

In September 1785 Edward received a letter from his brother Captain (George) Nares inviting him to join in a trip to the continent. He was glad to accept. Resting at Calais after a fatiguing journey he was startled to be roused from his sleep by three armed men. They enquired who he was, from where he came, where he was going and what his business might be in France. They were Police Officers who, according to the 'Old Regime', were obliged to make these enquiries of all strangers and travellers.

Once at large, Edward was struck by curious differences in the life about him, both in dress, manners and customs, not necessarily to the detriment of his hosts: he seemed to be in a new world. Even his brother, who had seen military service overseas, was impressed by the strangeness, more even than when he first encountered the American Indians. They visited and were entertained at several monasteries, remarking that their hosts were by no means abstemious. While still at Calais another, more alarming, encounter occurred. While in the company of two navy captains they were accosted by a number of French officers, alleging that there had been some insult. They maintained that a challenge had been made which should be satisfied, four against four. Young Nares, who admitted to being diminutive, was to be matched against a French dragoon, six feet tall and bulky with it. However, one of the English officers expressed himself so forcibly regarding the disgraceful behaviour of one of the French, that all were persuaded it was merely a misunderstanding (*un mal entendre*) and, after many bows and apologies, they retired. The following day a military parade took place to which they were invited by the Commandant, but thought fit to decline. The Commandant had distinguished himself in the American War, having been decorated with the Orders of St Esprit and St Louis, as well as the American Order of Cincinnatus.

Shortly after this adventure Edward and his brother journeyed on to Lille (then in Flanders) where they joined a compatriot and his

party. Their new companion was a celebrated man of his day, namely the Rt. Hon. Isaac Barré, Member for Calne and Clerk of the Pells. He had been taking the waters at Aix la Chapelle in the faint hope of thereby curing his blindness. Isaac Barré was an entertaining character who amazed them with his ability to disregard and make light of his handicap, thus:

> That good natured Minister Lord North was labouring under the same great Misfortune. Col. Barré and himself had acted much in opposition to each other in the House of Commons for many years. When Lord North heard that Col. Barré was also blind, he observed that tho' Barré and himself had so long been in a state of hostility, he could now safely say there were no two men in the Kingdom who would be more happy to see each other.*

At St Omer the travellers visited a Carthusian Convent [sic] whose white clad monks introduced them to their strict regimen. Sunday, in contrast, saw them attending a grand military parade. They were greatly impressed by the splendid sight, but also amused by the appearance of the Commandant – so different from an English General. He was seen to walk up the Cathedral in pattens, his hands in a muff, and wearing earrings. Notwithstanding his effeminate appearance he was a very distinguished officer. Edward's 13-day excursion ended on 13 October with a stormy 16-hour sea-crossing, involving the packet twice grounding on the Goodwins.

In 1786 the Nares family was thrown into confusion by the death of their father, Sir George Nares. The American War had depreciated the funds required to meet all legacies without resorting to selling the family estate. A scheme of family arrangement could have resolved the difficulty had the youngest daughter not been still a minor and thus unable legally to give her consent. Matters were in consequence thrown into Chancery and despite, or because of, the three executors being lawyers, the interminable delays and enormous costs virtually extinguished the estate. Edward Nares thus lost both his expectations and his source of influence.

An attempt on the life of King George III caused consternation across the country. No harm was done to His Majesty, who pleaded that the woman concerned be not handled roughly. Nevertheless

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* Woodforde refers to this hostility – see the entry for 02/03/1782:
Colonel Barre put the prime
Minister L^{d} North quite in a Passion
L^{d} North called to Order from the Chair
in his reply to Colonel Barre – (Ed.)

she was committed to Bedlam where, with other curious members of the public, she was visited by our diarist. When he entered her cell she was reading one of Pope's works and was apparently being treated with humanity. Edward was disheartened when a second attempt to become a Fellow of Merton College in the summer of 1787 failed, despite the support of his friends, almost causing him to abandon efforts to become a Member of Oxford University.

It is not clear how Nares occupied himself until in 1788 he writes of his plan to accompany a friend on a grand tour of the continent. On 19 April he and a Mr Clitherow, a Fellow of All Souls, set out from Brighton, travelling via Dieppe and Rouen to Paris, arriving there on the eve of the Revolution. In view of the startling events to follow, Edward's account of the unfolding drama is illuminating:

> On the 26th. April we attended Parliament. ... A few days afterwards two members were sent to Prison & the Duc D'Orleans banish'd. This was, I believe, generally regarded as the first measure of force on the part of the Government and the grand preliminary of all the dismal scenes & Events that followed. ... I was able however to attend the Court at Versailles and ... I believe it was the very last day on which their Majesties Louis XVI and his Queen Marie Antionette dined together in public. ... At dinner we were plac'd next to them for some time. ... Her Majesty was certainly a most Majestic figure, graceful in her Manners, and her features handsome. She did not appear quite at her ease and there was, I apprehend, too much cause for her to be otherwise. She eat [sic] nothing, but had a plaited Napkin plac'd before her. Little cd. I suppose when I saw her in such splendour ... that I was looking upon a person doom'd so soon to suffer on a Scaffold. If she was really chargeable with the faults imputed to her it shd. be recollected that she was the queen of a very voluptuous and most unprincipled Nation. She sat on a Throne surrounded by profligate Ministers, servile Courtiers and the most abject Flatterers.
>
> The King's countenance was mild and benevolent and had in it, to my Judgement, more marks of an honest sincerity in it than falls to the lot of the french in general. He made but a hasty meal, spoke but little and seem'd heartily glad when the ceremony was ended. Numerous dishes were plac'd successively on the table of most of which he tasted, but eat [sic] little. None but the Queen sat at the table with him. After we had withdrawn we were conducted to the apartments of his second Son, the Duc de Normandie, afterwards Louis XVII, at that time only three years old. The Dauphin was yet living, but too ill to receive us.

Until now the travellers had been enjoying a busy round of sightseeing while acquiring, at the same time, a very poor opinion of the French generally. The weather being hot and their conditions not agreeing with Edward, never very strong, he soon fell ill and regretfully was unable to proceed beyond Montargis. Despite his best efforts his condition deteriorated so markedly that the party prudently decided to retrace their steps towards England. Upon reaching Chantilly Edward's symptoms became so alarming that the party took lodgings and sent for a physician from Paris. They had not long been there when a large party arrived with several carriages and a splendid retinue of servants. Upon enquiry they learned that this was no less than the Cardinal of Rome. Edward's friend, Mr Clitherow, fearing that so large a company would disturb his patient, waited upon the Cardinal and requested that he ask his suite to make as little noise as possible as a person in the inn was very ill. The Cardinal, with the utmost politeness, gave the desired directions. Nevertheless they were disturbed next morning by an incredible noise and bustle. The reply to their enquiry as to the cause was, "it was only the Cardinal's chaplains calling up his nieces!".

On 15 May Edward was recovered sufficiently for him and his companions to leave Chantilly and resume their journey via Boulogne, back to England. His regret at the termination of an excursion which had promised such interest and delight was more than assuaged by the discovery that had he proceeded he would have run a great risk of missing certain opportunities which awaited him at home. The allusion was to the chance of again standing for election as a Fellow of Merton College, for which he was assured he would be successful. The election took place on 2 August. Despite his having been obliged to keep to his bed at that time his election was unanimous.

> Thus honorably was I at last made a Member of a Society most antient and respectable in the University of Oxford.

(To be continued)

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Retirement has enabled me to pursue to a greater extent than formerly my interest in the origin of place-names, particularly those of Warwickshire, the county of my birth. You will understand, therefore, why I found of great interest Francis Bennion's article "So why did the Oxen need a Ford?" in the Spring 2000 edition (Vol. XXXIII, 1) of the Society's Journal. Whilst there is no doubt regarding his erudition and mastery of the subject, I wondered why he made no reference to the second element of the town and county's name – 'ford'. Of the many experts I have consulted many make little or no mention of the fact that 'ford(e)' is one of the few Anglo-Saxon (OE) words that have remained unaltered down the ages.

Perhaps the best known town in my county is Stratford-upon-Avon where we lived for sixteen years. The origin of it is 'Straet ford' – ford where the (Roman) road crosses the river Avon (Avon stems from the old British *Abona* and the Welsh *Afon*, a river). As noted earlier, few place-name experts refer to the origin of 'ford'. Stenton, Ekwall, Reaney, Mills and others make mention of it but little else as does Clark Hall's *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1894 reprinted 1996). Birch's monumental *Cartularium Saxonicum* gives the earliest mention of the word but not its origin. James Hill, in his *The Place Names of Somerset* (1914) devotes a chapter to 'Local Characteristics – Fords' but does not refer to the origin. The great difficulty is that Anglo-Saxon and Old English, like Latin, are dead languages not spoken nowadays, and therefore there must always be the possibility of several interpretations.

With regard to the Diary, of the many places mentioned by Parson Woodforde the one that has attracted my attention is Urchfont. This place, where the Parson had attended school, was first referred to on 16 April 1760. Its meaning is thought to stem from 'Eohric', a personal name and 'funta', a spring. In the Domesday book it is recorded as 'Ierchesfonte', Eohric's spring.

R. N. Heaton
Galhampton

Editor's note – Interestingly, although Woodforde used the modern spelling of Urchfont, a plaque above the door of the village hall describes it as 'Erchfont Village Hall'.

Dear Sir,

I believe that Robin Gibson's interesting article on *The Clarke Family of Ansford* (Journal XXX, 1) perpetuates an error in an earlier article about the White family (in Journal XII, 3).

Mr Gibson's article mentions Ansford Lodge as the White family's farmhouse. The house that was being built for John Pouncett and his wife is known, from a diary entry of 19 March 1776, to have been the subject of a dispute about a common boundary hedge with Ansford Parsonage; which land belonged to which property being also in dispute. Ansford Lodge is consistent with an architectural style of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Ignoring recent modern housing infill, Ansford Lodge is and was adjacent to Ansford Parsonage and there seems to be no reason to believe that it wasn't this house that was built for the Pouncetts and that it was therefore not the White family farmhouse. Before 1782 the Pouncetts had moved yet again, from their Ansford property which seems to be Ansford Lodge, to Cole Place, near to John Pouncett's old home, this being where Woodforde stayed in 1782. Cole Place is of seventeenth century date and cannot be the house being built for the Pouncetts in 1776 as stated in the original article.

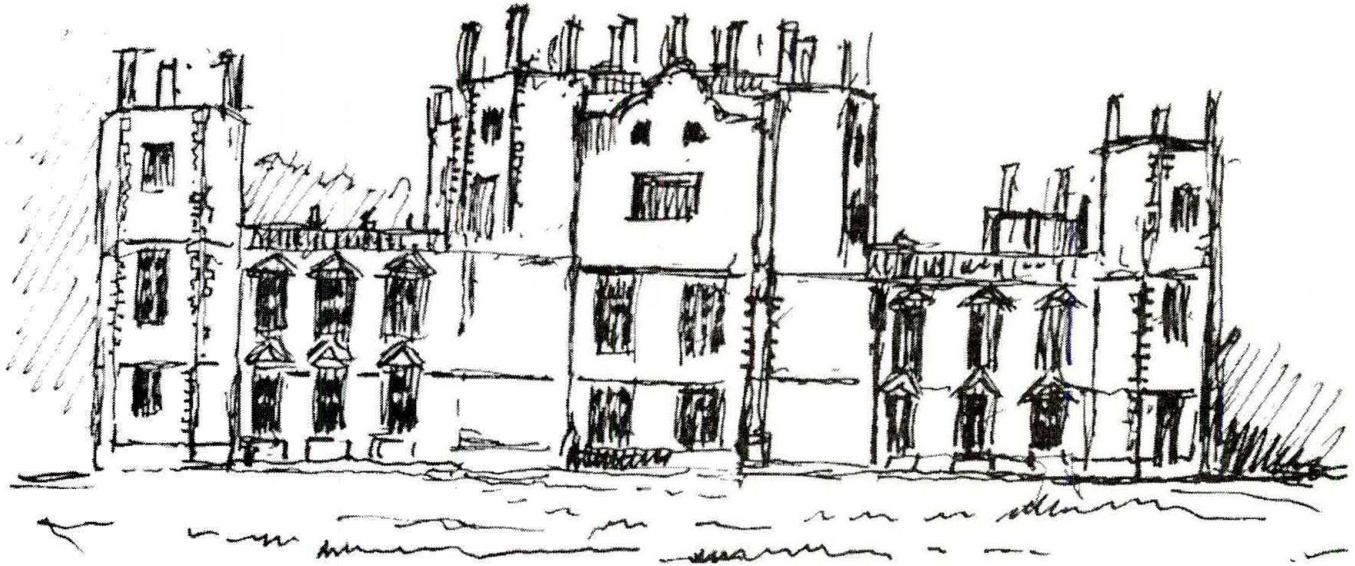
D. F. Matthews
Castle Cary

The Hart, Weston Longville

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY ANNUAL "FROLIC", SHERBORNE, 19—21 MAY 2000

Although it was probably not appreciated either by the eight year-old James Woodforde, as his father took him off to Mr King's school at Compton Pauncefoot, or by the adult Brother John as he reeled back from "Cammell Fair", the countryside to the south of Castle Cary is breathtakingly attractive. The steep dip of the Jurassic rocks give geological, and hence scenic, variety; the north–south ridges give the landscape its grain; and three or four thousand years of husbandry and woodland management have combined to produce country of outstanding beauty even by the standards of the Somerset–Dorset border. Appropriately enough, between Sandford Orcas and Rimpton lies the little hamlet of Heaven's Door. This was the district to which George Bunting and Mollie Matthews were inspired to bring the Society for the annual Frolic.

Having assembled on the Friday afternoon – or later, depending on the condition of the A303 – at the Sherborne Hotel, we gathered for the sherry reception, buffet and, most pleasingly, the renewal of old friendships and the creation of new ones. The AGM followed with our Chairman, Dr Custance, reporting on the progress of the Society over the past year, paying particular tribute to Phyllis Stanley who, after serving the Society for 17 years, to the dismay of fellow Committee members had decided to step down. As membership secretary, editor of the Newsletter and mastermind of Norfolk frolics, Phyllis's contribution has been outstanding, but it is perhaps for the solicitude with which she has welcomed new members to the Society that Phyllis will be most missed. Fortunately, her great fund of Norfolk knowledge and her enviable ability to evoke scenes from the Woodfordean past will remain at the Society's disposal. Nigel also paid tribute to the work of Roy Winstanley and Peter Jameson on Volume XI of the diary, published earlier in the year. Dr Case reported that the Society's finances were healthy and drew our attention to the new gift Aid Scheme. Martin Brayne summarised the position with regard to publications, past and future. Tribute was also paid to the work of Mr Roger Heaton, retiring after many years as the dedicated and conscientious honorary auditor of our accounts. Mr Bryan Sampson, a member since 1996 and partner in a Lowestoft firm of accountants, was elected to take his place. There being no new nominations, the Committee, with the exception of Mrs Stanley, were re-elected.



Sherborne Castle

Group of members outside Sherborne Castle Tea Rooms, 20 May 2000

Saturday morning saw us at Sherborne Castle, the scene of the King's visit and Woodforde's *dies memorabilis* on 4 April 1789. We were expertly guided around the house and were able to appreciate many of its treasures while viewing from the Solarium the park about which the royal party progressed amongst their loyal subjects for "near 3 Hours".

We then headed northwards towards Sandford Orcas, the site of "my Estate" where the tenant was obliged to "keep the Orchard full with apple Trees, & with willows agst the Brook". From there it was on, via Marston Magna and West Camel, to Babcary where Woodforde was curate from January 1764 to October of the following year. There, with the help of his "old and honest Woman" Mary Creed, the young Woodforde first tried his hand at housekeeping. We were introduced to the church by Mr Ian Teesdale, for many years churchwarden, who spoke to us from the Jacobean pulpit from which Woodforde would have preached. Conscious of what Mr Teesdale told us of the church's Victorian

Holy Cross Church, Babcary

additions, many of us tried to identify the location of the famous games of fives.

From Babcary, with George Bunting pointing out the principle locations of Woodfordean interest, we travelled on by way of Lydford and Alford – no longer paying 2p at the Gate – to Ansford and Castle Cary. Then came the highlight of the day – a visit, thanks to the kind hospitality of Mr and Mrs J. A. F. Buxton, to Galhampton Manor, the home, in Woodforde's day, of his friend Counsellor Melliar. Here was a most attractive house, with unusual stone strapping, beautiful gardens and stunning views to Cadbury Castle to the south (the two "Spitting basons" which Woodforde had sent to the Counsellor in 1768 were, fortunately, not in evidence!). The diarist, one suspects, would have surveyed Mr

Buxton's pigs with a far more expert eye than most of his latter-day followers, but could hardly have enjoyed the splendid afternoon tea, provided by our generous hostess, more. The Galhampton visit was a great privilege, its strong Woodfordean associations richly enjoyed.

In the evening came the banquet dinner at the Sherborne Hotel. This proved to be another excellent meal which concluded with the toast to our Parson's "imperishable memory" being proposed by Phyllis Stanley. By way of post-prandial refreshment we were treated to an address by Mr Derrick Hunt of Bradford-on-Avon who was able to demonstrate the close involvement of many of the diarist's Somerset associates and the proposed Dorset and Somerset Canal. Unlike Messrs Burland, Martin, Messiter, W. Woodforde and others, Mr Hunt appears to have struck a rich seam of which we can expect to hear more. Thus a memorable day ended and, in Woodforde's words, "It was a most delightful Day, thank God for it".

St Mary's Church, Compton Pauncefoot

Sunday morning took us to Compton Pauncefoot for Morning Service. St Mary's church was well known to Woodforde who would have worshipped there as a child when a pupil at Mr King's school. The much appreciated service was conducted by the Revd John Angle, Team Rector in the Camelot Group of Churches. Lessons were read by our President and fellow member Canon John Maybury. Our thanks are due both to the Revd Angle and to local members of the congregation who kindly provided refreshments after the service.

Then it was back to Sherborne, many of us finding time to stroll around that pleasant town before returning to the Sherborne Hotel for Sunday lunch. Here it was announced that the fiendishly difficult Quiz, set by last year's winner Ann Williams, had been won by Dorothy Golding. JoAnn Archer gave details of next year's Frolic and they will be found in the accompanying Newsletter. Our Chairman then offered thanks to all who had assisted with the organisation of yet another successful gathering before we made our farewells. We had been treated to fine landscape, beautiful buildings, much that we did not hitherto know of Woodforde and that particular blend of good fellowship which is the very spirit of our Society.

Notes for the Guidance of Contributors

The Editor welcomes articles on any subject relevant to the life and times of James Woodforde and will be pleased to consider material of a wider historical compass which might be considered to be of interest to Society members.

The following notes are **for guidance only** and are not intended to be prescriptive. The Editor is pleased to receive contributions in whatever form is most convenient to the author.

Text may be submitted in typewritten, word-processed or handwritten form on one side of A4 paper, preferably double-spaced with a margin and with numbered pages. Any sub-headings should be clearly indicated as should the approximate position of any illustrations.

It would be helpful if the following conventions were observed:

1. Spellings of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary should be observed except in the case of quotations where the original spelling should be used.

2. Capitals should be used to indicate proper names and titles, e.g. 'Dr', 'Sir'.

3. Compass points may be abbreviated, e.g. 'NW', except where used at the beginning of a sentence when they should be spelt in full with a hyphen, e.g. 'North-West'.

4. Capitals should be used for place-names, e.g. 'Norfolk', 'West Country' but 'the river Wensum', 'northern Somerset'.

5. Italics should be used for the titles of books and quotations in a foreign language.

QUOTATIONS

a. Complete quotations from the Diary of two lines or more should be indented and, where possible, be taken from the Society's edition. They should be followed by the date in brackets, e.g. '(06/11/1782)'.

b. Other longer quotations should be similarly indented and followed by the name of the author and work in italics unless they have already been given in the text.

c. Shorter quotations should be given in the body of the text using the referencing system outlined below. Such quotations should be in single inverted commas and quotations within quotations in double inverted commas.

d. Omissions from quotations may be indicated by three full stops; additions should be enclosed in square brackets, e.g. [*sic*].

NUMBERS AND DATES

(i) Words rather than figures should be used at the start of a sentence. Figures can be used for specific quantities, e.g. '107 acres', or numbers that are larger than single figures, e.g. 'six old men' but '27 children'.

(ii) Dates in the main part of the text should be written as '6 March 1786' and, where in brackets after a quotation as '(06/03/1793)'. Periods of time should be written as 'in the early eighteenth century' or 'the 18th-century British navy'.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

Footnotes and references should be indicated in the article itself by numbers in superscript, e.g. 'towards the Rectory[3].' A list of references and notes should then appear at the end of the article listing them in numerical order, e.g.:

Notes and References

1. Journal XV, 4, 3.
2. Norfolk Record Office Inclosure 1826 Reel No. 113/1 and 2.
3. Dorothy Heighes Woodforde (Ed.), *Woodforde Papers and Diaries*, London, 1932.
4. D. H. Woodforde *op. cit.* note 3.

The Society's Journal should simply be referred to as 'Journal' with volume, issue and page number as above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements to individuals and institutions should be placed at the end of the article following any Notes and/or References.

CHAIRMAN'S ENDPIECE

The highly successful Frolic in Somerset enabled me to summarise aspects of the Society's activities. However, for the 300 or so members who were unable to attend I'd like to use this opportunity to relay the message that I gave at the AGM.

The year has been one of quiet evolution. Although superficially the handing over by Roy Winstanley to Martin Brayne of the Journal's editing may have been seamless, there are subtle changes. Martin has skilfully built on Roy's achievements and added more. We now have the Letters section, enabling members to both offer information and probe contributors' thoughts. Incidentally, Martin hopes that those who miss the 'Notes & Queries' section of the Journal will now embrace this alternative.

Roy's influence is also seen in the Society's publications, an area within which there is both evolution and revolution. The Reverend Peter Jameson, guided by Roy, has evolved into a true Woodfordian expert. His transcription of the Diaries together with comprehensive notes is a delight; his editing of the product in conjunction with Roy an asset to the membership. This past year has seen the publication of Volume XI of the Diary while Volumes IX (a revision to the previously titled Norfolk III) and XII are well under way. The revolution has been Peter's exploitation of his wordprocessor, providing in one operation copy ready for the printers, thus reducing both the timescales and the likelihood of errors in the process.

Our treasurer David Case remains calm despite the challenges of late payment of subscriptions, surges in expenditure due to publications and the Frolic. I admire his ability to handle both the finances and the committee – he steers the decisions we have to make with diplomacy worthy of an overseas ambassador.

In looking back over the last 12 months one realises how much energy other committee members have also contributed to the Society. Ann Williams in her support to the committee itself through meetings/minutes arrangements; our President with Mollie Matthews and Jenny Alderson for the successful Frolic as well as Suzanne Custance for always being on hand to help. In anticipation of 2001, JoAnn Archer has been planning with great attention to detail our London Frolic – of this more anon.

Finally, can I close this contribution with a tribute to Phyllis Stanley who preferred not to stand this year for election to the committee.

Her enthusiasm for Woodforde is infectious, her energies and achievements unmatched. Whether it be her editing of the Newsletter, her organisation of Norfolk Frolics, the Woodforde presence at Weston Longville church or History Fairs, her boundless excitement is evident. We look forward to seeing Phyllis at events Woodfordian; we look back with immense gratitude for her friendship and commitment.

NIGEL CUSTANCE
Chairman

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1968 by the Rev. Canon L. Rule Wilson and may be said to have two main aims: one, to extend and develop knowledge of James Woodforde's life and the society in which he lived, and the other, to provide opportunity for fellow enthusiasts to meet together from time to time in places associated with the diarist, and to exchange news and views.

Membership of the Parson Woodforde Society is open to any person of the age of 18 years and over upon successful application and upon payment of the subscription then in force, subject only to the power of the committee to limit membership to a prescribed number.

The Annual membership subscription of £12.50 (overseas members £25) becomes due on 1 January and should be forwarded to the Treasurer, Dr David Case, 25 Archery Square, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7JA.

PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2000/2001

George Bunting	*President*
Dr Nigel Custance	*Chairman*
Martin Brayne	*Vice-Chairman & Editor*
Dr David Case	*Treasurer*
Ann Williams	*Secretary*

Jenny Alderson, JoAnn Archer, Suzanne Custance, Mollie Matthews, Roy Winstanley

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