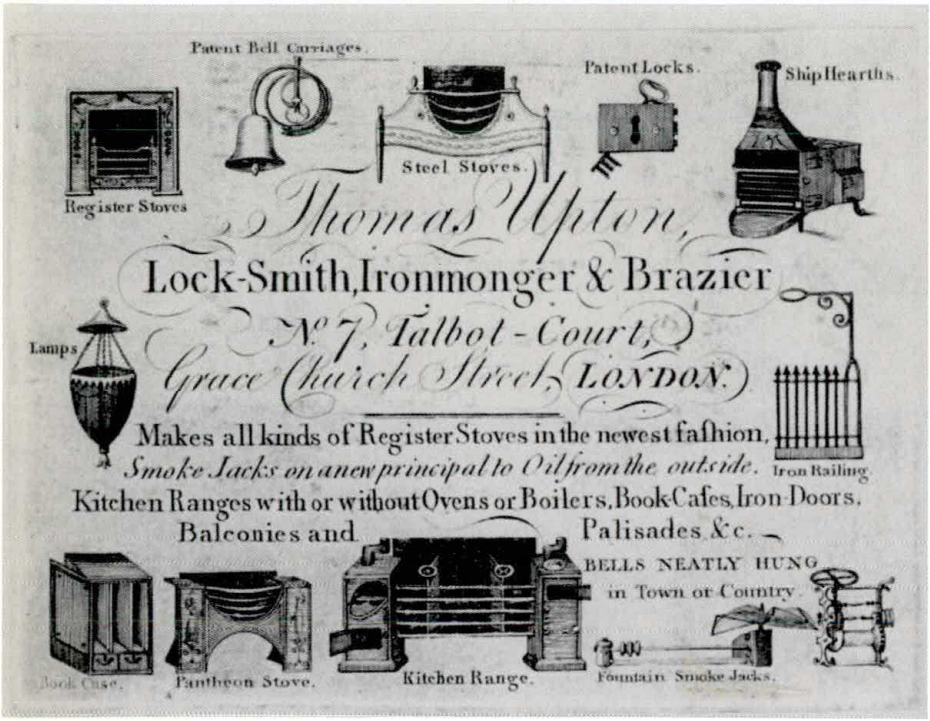
PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal



"We were obliged to breakfast, dine, supp & spend the Evening in the best Parlour to day having a new Grate putting up in my Study – a Pantheon Stove"

(Diary, 16 January 1783)

VOL. XLIV NO. 4 WINTER 2011

I skated this afternoon down
To Sanford, and for a Glass
of cherry Brandy at Beckley's – pd. 0 - 0 - 3
For mending my skate at Kennington
by Sanford gave a Cobler – 0 - 0 - 1
For putting on my Skates – pd 0 - 0 - 1½
There were grand fire-Works
on the River by Folly bridge
this Evening, therefore I did
not come of the ice 'till seven
o'clock this Evening –

(*Diary*, 21/01/1763)

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us – for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six, – I wheeled about,
Proud and exalting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate …

(William Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book I)

ISSN 1365-327X

Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

Chairman & Editor
Martin Brayne
Long Croft
Whitehough Head
Chinley, High Peak
SK23 6BX

Membership Secretary
Mrs Ann Elliott
22 Gaynor Close
Wymondham
Norfolk
NR18 0EA

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

It will come as a sad shock to many of you to learn that we have lost our President. George's death came within a few weeks of him donating to the Society his remarkable collection of Woodforde Papers henceforth to be known as the Bunting Collection. Having joined the Society shortly after its foundation, he became the Treasurer and then Chairman, occupying the two roles for almost twenty years and doing much to build up its reputation and carrying through the transition to a Registered Charity. He also negotiated with the executors of Mrs Arisoy's estate thereby doing much to secure the Society's financial viability. Few people have had a greater knowledge of British diarists or a greater love of that of James Woodforde in particular. An obituary will be found elsewhere in the Journal. He will be sorely missed.

In the past George did much to arrange our Frolics in the South West and it was a great shame that illness prevented him from attending this year's meeting in Dorchester of which you can read in the following pages. Arranging a Frolic is a major undertaking and the Committee had decided that next year we would simply meet for a day in London, holding the AGM and, perhaps, visiting the Foundling Hospital. This proposal, however has caused much dismay and arrangements are now being made for the usual two night residential Frolic to be held in London early in September. See the Newsletter for details.

On 24 December 1777 Woodforde – who would never have made a good supermarket manager – dressed his Windows 'with Hulver Branches that had Berries on them'. We like to do much the same ourselves although this year I fear the berries have come rather early. As for New Year's Eve, we shall hope to drink 'a Happy New Year to ourselves and Friends in a Glass of Gin Punch', remembering, too, those we have lost.

MARTIN BRAYNE

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THOMAS WOODFORDE

I have called this a sketch, for in the circumstances it could hardly be anything more. Of course James Woodforde had the last word about all the people he put into his diary. As it were, he produced and directed the show; and if he chose to cast Thomas as the villain of the piece ("my greatest Enemy") we, the mere spectators, have no grounds but to accept his judgement. This is so of all the characters we meet in the diary, but particularly in the case of Thomas, since practically all we know about him comes from that source. Otherwise, materials for the study of his life are wholly lacking. Even the Woodforde *Family Book*, usually reliable enough in giving information about many other members of the clan, fails us here. It supplies nothing beyond Thomas' date and place of birth, and immediately afterwards falls back upon quotations from the diary.

Thomas was the seventh child of his parents the Revd Heighes Woodforde and Mary Lamport, born at "Ebbesham al^{s}. Epsome in Surrey, Feb: 5: 1705/6. Baptized Feb: 19". Unlike his two elder brothers, Samuel and John, he did not go to Winchester, their academic and clerical career was not open to him, and there can be no doubt that this discrimination against him dictated many of his actions in later times. He must surely have come into Somerset either with or in the train of Samuel, after the latter had been appointed to the churches of Castle Cary and Ansford. Otherwise, it is difficult to understand how he could have established himself successfully in places so far from his native part of the country. We recollect James' comment, in the diary, that his father had "made" Thomas and his family.

We do not know – and it is symptomatic of the general dearth of proper information about him – how he made his living, although in the absence of any knowledge to the contrary it is natural to assume that, living in that rural community, he was a farmer. I have always been inclined to harbour the notion that Thomas was the mysterious uncle (if this is right, really great-uncle) who in an extraordinarily garbled passage of Farington's diary is credited with having introduced Samuel Woodforde, the painter, to the Hoare family who became his patrons. He is called there "an Attorney", however,

and no other evidence of any kind exists to suggest that Thomas was a lawyer. But whatever his trade or profession, there is no doubt that Thomas did well enough in life to be able to purchase, when the time for it arrived, the living of Ansford for his son. As for the circumstances of his life, we have just one inconsiderable crumb of information. A list in the Ansford Rector's account book is headed "An Account of goods left at Lower House, when my Brother, Tho^{s}. Woodforde, took the same – 1751". Thomas and his wife were there until 1765. A diary entry dated 10 July in that year states that "Uncle and Aunt Tom left our House below, and laid for the first Time this Evening in their own House – A new built one". But we are not told where this house was situated.

We are also very much in the dark about the circumstances of Thomas' marriage. His wife was born Sarah Adams. About her family all we know is that she was the sister of "D^{r}. Adams" – John Adams DD. She and Thomas had one son, Francis, baptized 27 February 1750/1, not the solitary survivor of a larger family but an only child. Thomas appears to have been middle-aged at the time of his marriage, and Sarah was only a few years younger than himself, so it is likely that she had gone beyond the age to have more than one child. In the time when they were all on friendly terms Woodforde often refers to them as "Uncle Tom" and "Aunt Tom", as we have seen.

The association of the Woodforde family with Winchester was a close one. Thomas' grandfather Samuel Woodforde DD, FRS, a friend of bishop Ken* when that prelate ruled over the diocese, had sent all four of his sons to the school. In the next generation Thomas himself was, as we have seen, the only one of three who was left out. The diarist's father had only one of his progeny at Winchester but in addition Thomas made his son a Wykehamist. In this one may see the effect of inter-familial rivalry, and the actions of a man determined to secure for his child the advantages he had not possessed himself.

By September 1762, when Frank was old enough to be admitted to Winchester, James Woodforde, between ten and eleven years his

* Author of the 'Morning Hymn' and the 'Evening Hymn'. After the Revolution of 1688, Ken was a "Non-Juror", one who refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to the new king, whereupon he was ejected from the see. In Mary Woodforde's delightful diary, she recounts how she and her husband, riding companionably upon one horse, set out to dine with the bishop. The saddle slipped and they both fell off.

elder, was already a seasoned diarist. It is a real pleasure, after so long groping in the dark, to bathe in the flood of light that the diary sheds on Thomas' affairs.

When he came to be enrolled at the school, it was useful to Frank to have his cousin with him, who knew the ropes at Winchester and could help to ease the strangeness of his initiation to boarding school life. Thomas was prepared to pay all his nephew's expenses on the journey. The day before they started out Thomas borrowed "a Portmanteau", into which James "put a few Things ... which I am to carry". Then, on 13 September:

> Went upon the Old Cream Horse
> this Morning with Uncle Tom
> and Cousin Frank Woodforde
> for Winchester –
> Cousin Frank is designed for
> Winchester college, this election –
> Richard Collins, my Uncle's Man,
> Went with us –
> My Uncle Tom is to frank me
> there, and back again.

The travellers stayed the night at Salisbury, where Woodforde noted the scaffolding round the cathedral spire, then under repair. Winchester was reached next day. He and his uncle "supp'd at the New-College Table". The days of the election constituted the only time that visitors were allowed freely about the school, although the diarist had to spend the nights at an inn, the *White Hart*; with the exception of a single night when he returned so late after "a grand Supper" at the school that he found the inn doors locked against him:

> ... but there being
> a post chaise near the Gate in the
> Street, I got into that and
> there I slept 'till I was extremely cold –
> and then the Gates were open –

Next day Woodforde wrote: "I went and got Frank a Laundress, a Taylor, a shoe Maker, a barber, and a Blacksmith". It is hard to understand what the last-named tradesman was for, unless he was a farrier, to shoe the boy's pony. Thomas Bedford, who was leaving

as a superannuate, had a number of articles: bedclothing, furniture and other things, including a "Scobb", a sort of desk for use in the schoolroom, and a "Toys" (singular), a box which each boy had by his bed. Woodforde had left all these things with him, four years before, presumably on loan. These Uncle Tom now bought for a total sum of £5. 15. 6d. The diarist thought them the worse for wear:

> M[r] Bedford promised me to put
> them in repair, but he has not –
> therefore he has not used me well –
> My Uncle paid for them before
> I had examined them, and Unknown to me –

On one day James went to the room of a Winchester Fellow after dinner, and "had delightful Singing", but neither Thomas nor Frank could have been fond of music, for they missed the concert and went back to the inn instead.

Frank went before the Electors, carried out his "Election Task" and was duly admitted as sixteenth on the "Roll ad Winton", which this year contained twenty names. Before he left, Woodforde went to the school with Frank and a boy named King who was also a new entrant, and "saw them both in their respective Chambers". Then next day the diarist and his uncle started back on their way home, accompanied by "Tom Kiddle's Son of Cary", who rode back the horse which had taken Frank to Winchester. But how this local citizen chanced to be in Winchester, on hand for the job, is anybody's guess. Woodforde does not enlighten us.

Four years now passed before Woodforde again saw his old school. Early in September 1766 he and his brother John were on their way to Winchester when "Going up White sheet Hill we overtook Uncle Tom and we went together to Salisbury", where his uncle was taken "extremely ill" and, eschewing further horsemanship, took a postchaise and, accompanied by Mr Penny the former curate of Castle Cary, went on to Winchester. It is a safe bet, I think, that Thomas had utilized each of the intervening elections since 1762 to go to Winchester and do a bit of energetic canvassing on behalf of his son. The suspicion becomes certainty when we read that, upon arrival at the school, "Uncle Tom went to the Warden's Rooms as usual". He would clearly know what went on at the time of a boy's final Election, when he was due to leave Winchester. The favoured

candidates were not necessarily the brightest, or the most scholarly, but those who had the greatest number of powerful and influential voices to articulate their claim. Behind Frank we see his father in the background, pushing him, the very picture of the resentful youngest who had been denied his chance of a public schoo leading to a professional career. If his brother could have a son of his a Fellow of New College, then surely he could do the same.

But a surprise and a disappointment awaited him. Frank Woodforde had now been four years at Winchester. His career had been fairly uneven, unlike that of cousin James, very much an average pupil. One year Frank had failed to gain promotion from his class to the one immediately above it; but he had made amends for this in the next year by jumping right over a class. In 1765 he had second place in the middle part of the fifth class, but again he failed to move into the senior part of the class at the end of the scholastic year. Now in 1766 he must have been ready to move upwards, and this would have entitled him to take the Election for the first time. He was between 15 and 16 years old. But his name does not appear anywhere in the 1766 Long Roll because, by the time it was made out, he had left the school. The Long Roll tells us no more than what has been set down here. We must turn to Woodforde for further elucidation. On 4 September he wrote:

> Cousin Frank was determined to leave College, and there=
> =fore resigned this morning which made my Uncle very uneasy –

However ridiculous the idea of a schoolboy "resigning" from his school may appear to us, and however Frank's being "determined to leave" conflicts with everything we are told about the authority and control which eighteenth century fathers exercized over their children, Frank was not to be dissuaded and effectually insisted upon leaving on the spot. This is indisputable and clearly proven by the omission of his name from any part of the Long Roll, already mentioned. He did not take the Election, so he is not on the "Roll ad Oxon". He was not given a class position for the ensuing year because he was no longer a Scholar of Winchester.

But there was far more to it than just that. The diary passage just quoted was written by James with the most enviable insouciance. Frank leaving was, to use our modern idiom, Uncle Tom's problem,

and if he had been rendered "uneasy" at the way things had turned out, no-one else had any reason to feel the least anxiety about it. The diarist was wrong there, if he had only known it. For it was James Woodforde whose life was to be most changed by his cousin's decision to leave Winchester.

Thomas acted at once, to limit if not to repair the damage. He took his son up to Oxford (there 11-19 October) and enrolled him at Pembroke. A new scholastic year had just started. But Pembroke, although it was Dr Johnson's "nest of singing birds", was a poor college without benefices in its possession. As Frank had cut himself off from any of the well-endowed New College livings, the only thing to be done was to find him another. And, bearing in mind that Thomas was no super-rich magnate, able to buy up property and arrange preferments regardless of cost, the only livings that were in practice within his grasp were those held by his brother at home. The way his mind was working is made clear by an action he had carried out even before he went to Oxford with Frank. He edged Brother Heighes out of his position as Steward to the Lady of the Manor, Anne Powell, and took it over himself. This was obviously done, not for the emoluments of the post, which must have been trifling at the most, but rather to ingratiate himself with Mrs Powell and place himself in a relationship with her by which it would become possible for him to make her an offer for the advowson, or right of presentation to Ansford rectory. Of course, this was a long term policy. Nothing could happen in the lifetime of Samuel Woodforde. But from the moment that Frank left Winchester, the position of the diarist was weakened.

Woodforde undoubtedly loved his father very much, and certainly wanted to see his life prolonged for so long as was possible. Yet the notion of one day succeeding him as incumbent of the two parishes must always have been at the back of his mind. There was nothing unusual in this. Although it may have been absurd for Archdeacon Bathurst to expect to be Bishop of Norwich in succession to his father, at the parish level these family reversions were not uncommon, as the history of the Leir, Burton and Leech families, all in Somerset parishes well known to Woodforde, clearly shows. There was also, in the same part of the country, Mr Dalton of Cucklington, said by Woodforde to be a relation of his own, whose

grandfather and father had in turn held the same Dorset living that he himself also held at this time.

The diary entry (1/10/1766) in which James describes Thomas' move over the Stewardship is the first in which a tone of disapproval appears:

> I dined, supped, and spent the Evening at Parsonage –
> I spent the Afternoon at Uncle Toms, with him, his Wife, M^{r}
> Seth Burge and Cousin Frank Woodforde –
> I desired my Uncle, as he is appointed Steward to M^{rs} Powel
> and M^{rs} Etterick which he got by very shabby Means, to let
> Brother Heighes have the full Profits of the Stamps as he sup=
> =planted him in the Stewardship; and it was denied me –
> Nothing was so scandalous to be sure –...

In spite of this, there was for some time no overt break between the two sides of the family. Social meetings with his uncle, "Aunt Tom", sometimes Frank on holiday from Pembroke, and a girl named Miss Jordan who was related to his aunt, are recorded by Woodforde about the turn of the year. On 16 February 1767 he took Frank and the young lady to "a very good Concert and a very genteel Ball" at the *Bear Inn*, Wincanton. This was the occasion when, discovering her to be the best dancer in the ballroom, he danced non-stop with Miss Jordan "from 10. to 4. in the morning". Afterwards he doubted whether Aunt Tom would honour her promise to pay Frank's half of the chaise fare, augmented since the vehicle had been kept out all night. Later, she agreed to pay the money, but now he refused to "take any thing". Such trifling differences were unable to disturb the social peace of their mutual sodality. It is not until March that Woodforde seems to wake up to the realization that Thomas was dangling after the benefices, and the danger to his own interests that this could imply. A passage in the diary describes how Reginald Tucker, driven out of his London home by a fire, had come with his step-daughter into the district. He then goes on at once:

> Uncle Tom who came from Oxford, London & from M^{rs} Powels
> at Harding near S^{t} Albans in Hertfordshire his Lady
> with whom I am afraid that he has been endeavouring to
> supplant my interest in the Livings here for his Son, as
> he told my Father positively that he should not go to
> her, because he was not provided for her ...

The last lines are hardly intelligible – emotion always caused Woodforde to write with far less than his usual clarity, and he was certainly writing with suspicion and considerable anger in this entry – but there is no doubting his lack of trust in Thomas. The subsequent lines of the entry recount that Thomas "& his Wife and her Niece Miss Jordan" came to the Parsonage for the afternoon – no longer is she his "Aunt Tom" and the diarist has no thought for the prowess of Miss Jordan as a dancer. (15/3/1767). Three days later he walked home with his uncle after church, and tackled him about the livings. Thomas was obliged to admit that he had been asking for them: "Very ungenerous treatment to me & my Father", since he had been asked by his brother not to do so, and had "moreover said in answer that he should not see M^{rs} Powel and would not try" for them. Woodforde finished off the entry by noting:

> Uncle Tom came to Parsonage this afternoon and wanted
> to set matters right which he could not do to me I'm sure ...

On 27 March he wrote that he had talked to his aunt "at M^{rs} Parrs concerning my Uncle's late Treatment towards me". But there was never a sign that anything said or done by the Parsonage folk would have any influence at all over Thomas or in any way weaken his determination. The old friendly relationship between the two sides of the family had turned into estrangement.

Samuel Woodforde had aged, perhaps rapidly after the death of his wife. By now he had effectually retired from active work, just as his son did in his own last years. He must, however, have been anxious about the future of the livings. Eight years before, he had used up a great deal of energy in support of James' claim to a place at New College, making trips to London, Oxford, Bristol and "Hornchurch Essex". Now he roused himself, although belatedly:

> My Father, Sister Jane and Brother John set out all for
> London very early this morning – and Almighty grant
> they may all have a good Journey & safe return –
> My Fathers chief design is to see M^{rs} Powel at Harding near
> S^{t} Albans in Hertfordshire, about these Livings here –
> – *Ansford Diary III, 20/4/1767*

But the next day James himself left for Oxford, to take his MA. By the time he got back, returning on 3 June, his father and the others

had long been home. He recounts nothing about any outcome of the visit, and this must mean that no arrangement could have been reached with the Lady of the Manor.

In August Woodforde's great-aunt, widow of the sometime Professor of Medicine at Oxford, came on a visit and was staying with Thomas. The entry about this describes how the old lady "threw up the sash at my Uncle's & made me a very low Congee – She also sent her Maid down to Parsonage to desire me to go & see her but as I do not go to my Uncles I think I cannot go". However, the great-aunt persisted so much that in the end he weakened:

> I paid my Comp[ts] to my great Aunt this afternoon
> at Uncle Toms, but he looked very cool upon me –
> I should not have went, had it not been greatly desired
> by my Aunt &c, &c, again and again –
>
> *Ibid, 21/8/1767*

After that, everything seems for a time to have settled down, and Woodforde ceases to write about the livings or Uncle Tom. We might here take advantage of this hiatus in the narrative, and say something about the common traffic and deals in church patronage that were a feature of the time.

No-one enquires, oddly enough, how Samuel Woodforde came into the possession of his two Somerset benefices. In reality, they were the outcome of a classic piece of nepotism, derived from his Uncle Robert, the Treasurer of Wells Cathedral, who must have had the ear of the contemporary bishop. Of course, in strict theory all benefices must have been awarded in this way. The right of presentation was vested solely in the bishop of the diocese, but with the Reformation came the plunder of monastic lands, sold off by the Crown to lay people who naturally prized the ownership of church patronage with the power of using the livings as gifts to needy relations, friends or dependants, or as an addition to the monetary value of their property. In practice, there had evolved a compromise whereby the bishops and the lay patrons shared them out between themselves, as indeed happened in the case of the two under our survey.

Since Thomas was seemingly intent upon buying up the patronage of these livings as soon as they became vacant, it might occur to us

to wonder why Samuel did not forestall him by making a bid for them himself. His income from that source was not very large, but he was also a moneylender upon quite an important scale, to judge by the sum in cash and bonds that was found in the Parsonage after his death. However, he made no such move.

While the diarist's life, quiet yet busy and fully occupied, continued without disruption, there are in the diary more and more ominous references to the state of his father's health. On 26 August 1770 he wrote concernedly:

> My Poor Father was very bad last Night, in a pain in his Stomach, he sat down to dinner with us, but could not eat one Mouthful. He drank some Port Wine in the afternoon and was better for it – A bad purging is upon him … – pray God send him better Health–

At the end of the year, the sacrament was administered to him at home, "he not being well enough to go to church". Although there were guests for dinner at the Parsonage, and tea-drinking:

> My Father did not dine with us, but in his own Room – … My Father would not come out of his Room to them all the Time, we made the best excuse for him that we could.
>
> – *Ansford Diary IV, 30/12/1770*

A revealing passage, eloquently showing the uneasiness felt by this community at the mere idea of a dereliction in the laws of hospitality.

Early next year, Samuel Woodforde made the visit to Bath which has been recounted in a recent essay in the Journal. He returned on 14 February, "but little better for the waters". From then on it was a progression of inexorable decline.

It was only now that James made a move which prudence might have counselled him to make a long time before. He wrote to Anne Powell "to apply to her for the Livings of Cary & Ansford in case my Father should not recover". Four days later, while he was still awaiting a reply:

> Uncle Tom spent part of the Aft: before Church at Parsonage – My Father saw him, and he talked to my Father a good deal, but to little purpose – my Poor Father is very bad indeed to day, worse I am afraid than ever he was –

On 28 March he had a dusty answer from the patroness. Cary, she wrote, had been "promised". Mr Beresford, who had little familiarity with eighteenth century idioms, and who was probably misled by the diarist's strange remark that he had received "a most kind Letter", thought that this meant the benefice had been promised to him; in reality, it means that the promise had been made to another contendant. "Some Person had told her that I do not want Cary". Nothing had been said of Ansford; "therefore I intend to send her another Letter".

His father was now plainly dying, and at the same time his brothers were adding to his misery by the way they behaved. On 26 April he wrote:

> Jack was worse to night than ever I knew him. His ways are most beyond description – I never knew a Man swear like him & for so long together – Pray God to turn his heart soon, for I dread the Consequences.

On that day Anne Powell's second letter had arrived:

> Had a Letter this morning from M^rs^ Powel, wherein she informed me that her Circumstances were such that she could not give away the Living of Ansford, and that she had been offered 14. Years Purchase for the Advowson –

That is, fourteen times its annual value; the usual way of estimating the value of real property at the time. Woodforde says nothing about the identity of the person who had made the offer, but there can be hardly any doubt that he guessed it would be Thomas Woodforde.

Samuel Woodforde died on 16 May, the day after his sister, "Aunt Parr". The sincerity of the diarist's grief cannot be disputed, and the passages in the diary about his father's illness and death display an emotion hardly seen elsewhere, throughout its length; although, characteristically, between two grief-laden passages this appears:

> My ever dear Father left his sole effects both real and personal between me, my Brother John & Sister Jane, and he left me his sole and faithful Executor, his own words –

Thomas and his son attended both the family funerals, while Frank and his mother still came up to the Parsonage of an afternoon, occasionally. But Anne Powell must have accepted Thomas' offer

at once, for on 22 June Frank was heard boasting in Castle Cary that "he had both the Livings of Castle-Cary and Ansford promised him".

Two days after this, Woodforde wrote with a rare shaft of sarcasm, not usually one of his verbal weapons:

> After Prayers I made a little visit to M^rs^ Melliar where
> I met M^r^ Frank Woodforde & told him before M^rs^ Melliar,
> Miss Melliar & Miss Barton what great obligations I was
> under to him for not offering me to hold his Livings
> for him, instead of Mr Dalton & Mr Gatehouse.
> From such base Actions & dishonest men O Lord deliver me.

This needs a little explanation. Frank Woodforde was now 20 and had graduated in the previous year. The minimum age for ordination was 22. In those cases, and there were lots of them, where the designated incumbent was under the right age, it was usual to approach some neighbouring clergyman who would formally take over the living under an unwritten "Gentleman's Agreement", to vacate it as soon as the former was old enough to supersede him. This was familiarly known as "Keeping a living warm". In Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* Dr Grant has the Bertram family benefice on these terms, while Edmund Bertram is still a schoolboy and for the rest of the novel's action. It would have been natural for James to be asked to occupy this stand-in position. But Thomas Woodforde quite clearly did not want him involved with the livings at all; possibly fearing that if he were once presented to them he might fail to keep his side of the bargain and refuse to leave when ordered to. This explains the reference to Mr Dalton, the rector of Cucklington.

James was so alarmed and angry that the very next day he "rode so far as Shanks House in the Parish of Cucklington", to have it out with Dalton who, dragged no doubt unwillingly into the controversy, tried to explain his part in it:

> M^r^ Dalton was quite astonished when I told him how
> I had been used by my Uncle, and said that he would
> not have been concerned upon any account, if he had
> known it, & when very much pressed by M^r^ William Melliar
> he being a distant Relation of his Wife, he did at
> last consent to his being prescribed to hold the
> Living of Ansford for Frank – M^r^ Dalton mentioned
> my name to hold it for him, but not regarded at all –

The part played in this by the Melliars was probably no news to James, as he must have seen the closeness of the friendship between them and Thomas' people, and mistrusted them accordingly. On 9 July, as curate, he formally inducted Dalton "into the Rectory of Ansford", the witness being Mr Perry of Ansford Inn. James' legal position with regard to the Parsonage was that of a sub-tenant holding of the rector of Ansford. Plainly afraid that there was no limit to the sheer unscrupulousness of Thomas, he and his sister were apprehensive that they might be expelled from the house. At their meeting, Dalton had attempted to reassure him on this point, saying that "none could turn us out but he himself & he will not".

Another blow was the death of his favourite niece Jenny White, aged 10, of diphtheria, an epidemic of which was raging at the time. She died at four o'clock in the morning of the day after he had gone to "Shanks House". In spite of the total enmity now existing between the two parties, protocol demanded that all the males of the family should assemble at funerals; and once again, for the third time since the spring, Thomas and Frank were among the mourners. On 28 July Mr Dalton came over to Ansford to make his statutory acceptance of the 39 Articles and the Prayer Book. Woodforde signed the usual form confirming that this had been done. Dalton then repeated his former assurance about the rent-free occupation of the Parsonage, "as long as he continued Rector". And, in spite of everything: "Uncle Tom had the assurance to ask me to dine with him".

On 21 September he heard that the fate of his other curacy had been decided. He was "at Crocker's", otherwise known as the Royal Oak, and watching an exhibition of "Cudgell-Playing (alias Back-Sword)" when he was called out by a message to go to Ansford Inn, to meet Mr Wickham, the vicar of Shepton Mallet, by whom he was told:

> that the Bishop of Bath and Wells had given him the Vicarage of Castle-Cary, this day Sennight at Bath.

He wanted to know if Woodforde could continue to serve the living for him, and how much his father had made out of it. James' answer to the first question was: "I told him I could serve it for him but till he was provided" – i.e. until the vicar could get someone else; which

shows that he was already thinking of a move back to Oxford, although two years and more were to elapse before he actually returned there. But Betsy White had already come into his life. It was in this month that he had the pleasure of her company on her visit to Ansford, that he enjoyed so greatly.

On 7 December a storm in a tea-cup blew up suddenly, with miniature Atlantic waves slopping over the edges. Thomas Woodforde sent James a certificate to be read in Ansford Church, declaring Frank's intention of taking Minor Orders. The diarist refused to sign it, on the grounds that this should have been done a month before the ordination and that the right time had gone by; neither would he allow Gatehouse, presumably cited as Thomas' nominee, to preach in the church. His brother-in-law Mr White came to see him twice, "but I remained inflexible". Finally Thomas appealed to Mr Dalton, the nominal rector, who wrote to James telling him to sign the document; which he did at last. One has the impression here that he was merely splitting hairs, and trying to make things as awkward as possible for his cousin.

Just as he had been afraid that Thomas would drive him out of the Parsonage, so now he began to worry about losing the curacy of Ansford. He does not, indeed, directly voice these apprehensions in the diary until so late as June 1772; but by then he was so convinced that he "was to be turned out" of it, that he enlisted the help and services of Mr Wickham. On 18 June he went to Shepton Mallet, where he met Wickham, and went with him, in the latter's "Chair", to the Deanery of Wells, and on to the Palace, "to see the Bishop". He had picked the right supporter, for Mr Wickham was influential in these episcopal circles. His wife and the dean's wife were sisters, which was probably the reason he became vicar of Castle Cary.

The bishop, appealed to, was sympathetic, "vindicated my Cause much". Woodforde showed him Mrs Powell's letter about the purchase of the livings; "but it did not amount to facts". He naively entered this remark, presumably uttered by the bishop, in the diary, as though he had made it himself and it helped his case. But the bishop agreed to send a letter to Dalton "to continue me if possible". Woodforde was enchanted with everything: the politeness and "Affability" of the dean's family, the cordial behaviour of the bishop. "I don't know when I ever spent such an Afternoon or

Day –". It was all so very different from the kind of treatment he had been receiving from Uncle Thomas. Two days later the promised episcopal letter arrived, addressed to Dalton but sent first to Wickham, who at once passed it on to Woodforde: "and which I sent my Man William with immediately to M[r] Dalton about 7. o'clock and he did not get back till 12.". Woodforde was delighted: "the Bishop could not possibly have said more in my behalf, & for which I shall I believe continue Curate of Ansford longer than agreeable to Frank Woodforde".

The diarist's fears that he would have been "turned out" of the Ansford curacy without the Bishop's intervention were well-founded. On the next day:

> I sent M[r] Tho[s] Woodforde a Note as I came from Church
> this morning, to inform him what the bishop says –
> He sent me a Note back that his Son would preach at
> Ansford next Sunday, if he heard not from M[r] Dalton –

But in the light of what had happened Thomas was forced to draw back. However, Woodforde could not take this disputed service himself, since on that Sunday he would be in Oxford, to be sworn in as a "Poser" at the Winchester Election in September:

> M[r] Wickham has promised to serve my Churches
> of Cary and Ansford for me to day –
> I hope he will meet no trouble in doing.
> The Bishops Letter will I believe continue
> me as Curate of Ansford –

Quite apart from the living, James and his uncle continued to squabble over other matters. There were two main bones of contention. One related to the Will of Woodforde's great-uncle the Treasurer of Wells Cathedral, of which Samuel and Thomas had been co-executors. Everything had been settled long before, and it was entirely through the obstinacy of Thomas that various legacies were not yet paid. Now, according to the diarist, Thomas began to raise objections about which he had never uttered a word in his father's lifetime. The other concerned the vexed question of "dilapidations", the sum payable by an outgoing cleric, or as in this case his estate, to his successor, in respect of necessary repairs and maintenance of the property which had not been carried out.

Woodforde considered that his father had kept the Parsonage in excellent condition, and resented the bills that his uncle submitted. There was also one exceptionally mysterious source of dispute, concerning Aunt Jenny, the Bath landlady and Thomas' youngest sister. From the two lawyers who were investigating the Treasurer's Will, James found out that she had been left the sum of £100 "for the Poor which never transpired to me till today", meaning that he had never been told anything of it. He wrote to his aunt, sending the letter by a messenger, "Thos. Francis the Mason". Aunt Jane did not trouble to write back, but sent him a verbal answer, saying that:

> My Uncle Tom would answer my Letter to her – so
> that she is as bad as her Brother in the Affair –

So 1772 went out and 1773 came in. On the surface nothing had altered. James continued to serve both churches on the same turnabout system, as he had done when his father was alive. Yet everything had changed for him. His feelings might be likened to those of some "redundant" worker of our own time, who knows that through no fault of his own his firm will go out of businss and throw him out of work. On 26 June 1773 he wrote down: "Very uneasy in my mind as I must soon leave Ansford".

Less than a month later the blow fell. Frank, now ordained as priest, was inducted into Ansford Church on 19 July:

> ... and he imme=
> =diately sent me a Line that he intends serving
> Ansford next Sunday himself which notice of my
> leaving the Curacy is I think not only unkind
> but very ungentleman like – I must be content –
> Far be it from me to expect any favour at all from
> that House – all their Actions towards me are bad –

And next Sunday Frank was there to take his first service. His father in the congregation perhaps felt a glow of satisfaction. He had proved to the world that he could have a son of his in the Church. And, who knows, perhaps he felt that he had got his own back, and erased a memory of unfair treatment that went all the way back to his own boyhood.

An entry in the diary, dated 26 September, may surprise the reader. On that day Frank, "being very bad in a sore throat", could not take

the usual service himself, or get anyone else to do it for him. So James, presumably of his own volition, sent a message to say he would do it. After the service his uncle thanked him. This may be taken to prove that, in spite of all he had suffered at the hands of Thomas and Frank, he bore no malice; or maybe that it was just that being exiled from Ansford Church was so intolerable to him that he was happy to be back, if only for a single day.

With Thomas' victory, the story of his relations with his nephew really does come to an end. The diary was to run on for a further twenty-nine years, and in all that length and expanse of personal writing there are just three entries which concern Thomas. Therefore, a brief epilogue to the tale is all that we need.

*

As we know, James was by no means the loser in the long run. His originally warm regard for Mr Wickham cooled rapidly, and after that cleric had twice promised to serve Castle Cary for him and then failed to turn up, it was not so long before he surrendered the curacy. New College, to which he now returned, looked after him in the end, providing him with a living much better endowed than either Cary or Ansford; worth indeed more than both of them put together.

In 1777, 1779, 1782 and 1786 he returned to spend his holidays with relations in Somerset. In the diary of these visits, there is no word of Thomas or Frank. But then in 1789 the ice was finally broken and there was something of a reconciliation. This was accomplished by degrees. First two of Frank's children turned up at Cole Place, to call on young Jenny Pounsett. Then Frank and his wife came over to dinner, and during the course of that visit must have said something like the eighteenth century equivalent of "why don't you come and have a meal at our place?"

So it happened that on 11 July of that year Woodforde once more saw the interior of his birthplace, sixteen years after he had last beheld it. He seems to have gone there with a rather self-conscious determination to praise everything he saw: "the House and garden greatly altered for the best". He described the meal in detail and praised it, adding: "M^{r} Frank behaved very hearty and generous to us"; but in associating his niece Jane with the hospitality of her husband he perhaps inflicted a little sting: "as did his Wife, who

seemed to be very attentive", which is rather like saying, as he once did, that Mrs Jeans acted the part of a good mother. Mr du Quesne, visiting from Norfolk and on his way to South Wales, was there. Frank had tactfully not invited his father to the party, but:

> Between Dinner & Tea I took a Walk by myself
> to my Uncle Toms and saw him and his Wife
> who were both glad to see me – both very old.

He also, during the course of this visit, looked in at Ansford Church, and pronounced it "very neat", his highest term of praise for a building. At Ansford Inn, greatly benefited by the increase in traffic along the turnpike road upon which it stood and now a thriving and important hostelry, he and Frank were both present, along with a number of other men, at a "Turtle and Venison" dinner, and "We had for dinner several Tureens of turtle, as fine a Haunch of Venison as one would wish to see, also a large venison Pasty and a Neck of Venison, Pies &c. –". A week later, another party at the same venue was arranged in order to settle the betting on a horse race; but this festivity met the common fate of sequels, and was not nearly so successful. The venison this time was "Indifferent and not done". He and Nancy, with other relations, dined again at the Parsonage. Woodforde was always inclined to be critical of meals eaten outside his own home, and remarked dismissively that they were given "some Soals not quite fresh". Then on 25 August he and Frank were fellow-guests at Creed's old home, where a Captain Johnson was looking after the insane son of Lord Willoughby de Broke. Later Frank would take on this responsibility himself. When at last the diarist left the West Country, on 8 September, he included Thomas and Frank among the friends he "took leave" of.

Four years now went by before he was again in Somerset. On one day, 16 July 1793, after dinner with Sister White and her son Robert:

> Called on my old Uncle M^{r} Tho^{s} Woodforde & his Wife,
> also on their Son M^{r} Frank & Family, they all behaved
> very genteelly – My Uncle very hearty, 87. Years of Age,
> walked with us from his own house to the Parsonage
> without a Stick – My Aunt is 84 – & pretty hearty considering.

A week later he met Frank, his wife and eldest daughter, at a party

held by Mrs Richard Clarke in Cary. Then on 30 July he and Nancy were again at the Parsonage, along with Woodforde's brother and his wife and the same Martha Clarke, her sister. The eldest daughter Fanny was the only one of Frank's children who dined with the guests, the others evidently being considered too young. Once again the Parson criticized some of the food: "a fine Round of Beef but stale in some parts".

The next, and last, of Woodforde's Somerset holidays seems to have been something of an anti-climax. His former host, genial Mr Pounsett, had died earlier in the year, and his sister, he says, was greatly changed: "she is vexing, fretting & complaining all the day long". Not that he was in very good shape, himself. At one time his hand was so swollen and painful that he had to have meat cut up for him. Perhaps there was some diminution of the mutual cordiality that had marked the meetings of the last two holiday years. Frank and his wife were again guests of "Patty" Clarke, but when on 29 July Frank came to Cole to issue an invitation for two days hence, all Woodforde put down was "I cannot promise", and the diary for that day shows that he did not accept it, although Frank, his wife, daughter Fanny and son Tom had dinner at Cole and spent the afternoon there later on. Finally the diarist went to the Parsonage again, for one of the long daytime visits that comprised dinner, the afternoon and finally supper. It was the last time he would ever enter his birthplace.

He had been back in Norfolk only some four months when the diary records the

> Death of my Uncle Thoˢ Woodfordes Wife,
> Occasioned by a late fall she met with, that
> broke one of her thigh bones, and being at an
> advanced age, above 84, could not be set –
> Pray God! her death may be succeeded with Bliss
>
> – *MS Diary, 17/2/1796*

The Ansford register, however, reads:

> Mrs Sarah Woodforde aged 87 years Feb. 13th

Thomas outlived his wife by a little over four years, and Woodforde had the last word about him. I give the whole entry, as to extract a part only of it would leave rather a misleading impression:

We breakfasted, dined, &c. again at home –
M^{r} Dade read Prayers & Preached this
morning at Weston Church –
Nancy had a Letter this morning from
her Brother Will^{m} W. of Gallhampton by
Weston-House Family – informing us of
the Death on Sunday last of our aged
Uncle, M^{r} Tho^{s} Woodforde of Ansford
in Somersett – aged – 94 – Years
Dinner to day, Loin of Veal rosted &c. –
Rather faint and weak to day –
Our Maid, Betty Dade very poorly to day –
– Ibid., 6/4/1800

Put like that, with the news sandwiched between mundane lines which merely recount a very ordinary day, with the now almost obligatory daily report of the diarist's shaky health, and a reference to that of his housemaid thrown in, and the customary pious wishes conspicuously lacking, this entry seems to relegate his late Uncle Tom to the absolute periphery of his life, neither friend nor enemy, only a person he once knew, years ago.

Thomas Woodforde had almost the longest life span of the entire family. Only James' sister Sobieski lived even longer.

This article first appeared in Journal XXX, 3 – Autumn 1997. – Ed.

AUNT TOM AND HER RELATIONS

Although, as the author himself says, it is no more than a 'sketch', Roy Winstanley's 1997 biographical essay on Thomas Woodforde – 'Uncle Tom' – is the most comprehensive study we have of the man the diarist described as 'my greatest Enemy'.[1] It is now possible to add a little more detail to the outline which Mr Winstanley was able to provide.

'We are very much in the dark about the circumstances of Thomas' marriage', wrote Mr Winstanley. This remains substantially the case but we now know much more about his wife – Woodforde's 'Aunt Tom'. An error in *The Family Book* is at least partially responsible for the mystery. Therein, Thomas's wife – Sarah (not 'Mary' as Beresford has it in Vol. V of *The Diary of a Country Parson*) – is described as the sister of 'the Rev. John Adams DD.' She was, in fact, the sister of the Revd. *William* Adams DD[2] and the daughter of John Adams, an ironmonger, who in 1726 was Mayor of Shrewsbury[3] and his wife Elizabeth Jorden. Sarah had been born in 1708, a couple of years after Thomas, and was very probably the Sarah Adams who on 4 December 1740 married 'Thomas Woodford' of the parish of St George's, Hanover Square, at St Benet Paul's Wharf, the little Wren church beneath St Paul's Cathedral.[4]

Of particular interest is Sarah's brother William. This was Dr Johnson's friend, Dr Adams of Pembroke College, Oxford, who makes several appearances in Boswell's *Life*.[5] William, who was five years older than Sarah, had gone up to Pembroke in August 1720, graduated MA in 1727 and became a fellow of the college. When Johnson had entered Pembroke in 1728 he was placed under the tutorship of another fellow, William's cousin William Jorden, of whom the Great Cham said, 'He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man, and I did not profit much by his instruction'.[6] Although he clearly did not have a high regard for Jorden's academic accomplishments, he nevertheless recognised his pastoral qualities. According to Boswell, Johnson –

> ... had a love and respect for Jorden, not for his literature, but for his worth. Whenever (said he) a young man became Jorden's pupil, he became his son.

Dr Adams was considerably more gifted than his cousin. Famously, in his *Essay on Mr Hume's Essay on Miracles* of 1752, he made the argument for the credibility of the Gospel miracles and David Hume is said to have told Adams 'You treated me much better than I deserved'.[7] Shortly before Johnson's death Adams tried to persuade him to believe in a merciful God and that he would not be condemned to the everlasting torment which Johnson feared. Boswell met Adams when he visited Oxford along with Johnson in 1776 and of him wrote –

> Dr Adams, the worthy and respectable master of Pembroke, has generally had the reputation of being Johnson's tutor. The fact, however, is that in 1731 Mr Jorden quitted the College, and his pupils were transferred to Dr Adams; so that had Johnson returned, Dr Adams *would have been his tutor*. It is to be wished, that this connection had taken place. His equal temper, mild disposition, and politeness of manners, might have insensibly softened the harshness of Johnson, and infused into him those more delicate charities, those *petites morales*, in which, it must be confessed, our great moralist was more deficient than his best friends could fully justify.

Adams had left Pembroke in 1730 on being appointed to the curacy of St Chad's, Shrewsbury and subsequently marrying Sarah Hunt by whom he had a daughter who also features in Boswell's *Life*. He was appointed prebendary of Lichfield in 1747 and of Llandaff in 1749 and in 1755 became Rector of Counde in Shropshire.[8]

When in October 1766 Thomas Woodforde went up to Oxford to enrol his son Francis at Pembroke, he was not able to call upon his wife's cousin, William Jorden, who had died in 1739, or his brother-in-law William Adams, who did not return to the College, as Master, until 1775 but it would seem likely that he used the connection to secure Frank's place. Furthermore, according to Douglas Macleane's history of Pembroke, Dr Adams was 'of Wightwick descent', which is to say of Founder's Kin; Richard Wightwick and Thomas Tesdale having provided the endowment necessary to transform Broadgates Hall into Pembroke College in the early seventeenth century. This meant, of course, that Francis Woodforde was also descended from one of the founders of the College.

Within a month of Thomas's return from Oxford on his mission to secure a place for his son, he and his wife were entertaining Mrs Woodforde's niece 'Miss Jordan' who is first mentioned in the diary on 12 November. She then appears at fairly regular intervals throughout the winter of 1766/7 and on 16 February James Woodforde takes Miss Jordan to a 'very genteel' Concert and Ball at the Bear Inn, Wincanton where –

> Miss Jordan (the best Dancer in the Room) was my Partner and we did not set down one dance, but danced from 10 to 4 in the morning

This may have been the beginning of a lasting romance but, alas, within a month the diarist discovered that his Uncle was 'planning to supplant my interests in the Livings here for his Son' (15/3/1767). Miss Jordan did not leave her Aunt's until 17 June. The evening before her departure she paid a visit to Ansford Parsonage to take her leave but thereafter we hear no more of her.

Another relation of Aunt Tom's had appeared the year before Thomas himself made his journey to Oxford. On 2 September 1765 we read that 'Uncle Tom and his Relation Mr Adams spent the Afternoon here' (i.e. at Ansford Parsonage). This may have been Dr Adams himself but he had received his doctorate ten years before and we normally expect the diarist, a stickler for correct forms of address, to use his proper title. The previous year another of Aunt Tom's relations – 'One Mr Welch, a tradesman in Princes Street Bristol' puts in a brief appearance at the Parsonage (*Diary*, 16/06/1764).

Although we now know rather more about Thomas Woodforde than was provided by Roy Winstanley's 'sketch', we still have no firm knowledge about how he made his living. Winstanley suggested that 'in the absence of any knowledge to the contrary it is natural to assume that, living in that rural community, he was a farmer'. I think this unlikely. Neither he nor his wife were natives of Somerset and while his brother, Samuel Woodforde's, wife's family had long been domiciled in Ansford where they were landowners, there was no such local connection – other than via Samuel – in the case of Thomas and Sarah.

It seems to me less likely that he was a farmer than that he was a lawyer. Winstanley refers to 'the garbled passage' in Farington's

Diary which seeks ot explain how Samuel Woodforde, the artist, came to be introduced to the Hoare family of Stourhead. That passage reads as follows –

> Woodforde told me that he was born at a Village near Castle Carey in Wiltshire – That an Uncle of his, an Attorney, having business with the late Mr Hoare of Stourhead, had carried some drawings which He had made when between 16 and 17 years old, to Mr Hoare's who immediately offered him encouragement ...[9]

There are certainly some inaccuracies here. Castle Cary is, of course, in Somerset and, although young Samuel's father, Heighes, may have been described as an 'attorney', none of his uncles were but his great-uncle, i.e. Thomas, may have been. Had he not have had at least some legal training, could he have persuaded Mrs Powell to appoint him Steward to the Manors of Castle Cary and Ansford? If, as Mr Winstanley believed, Thomas was an executor of Mrs Powell's Will, then the possibility of him being an attorney would perhaps be still stronger.[10] However, the sole executor of the Will was a Mr Charles Wray of the parish of St Dunstan in the West in the City of London and James must have received his legacy of £50 via his Uncle who was the recipient of £100.[11]

In all of the documents that I have seen Thomas Woodforde is described as 'Gentleman', suggesting that he was not compelled to earn a living. He certainly seems to have been quite well-off by the time we get to know him. He had sufficient resources to build himself a house in Cary which he and Sarah moved into in 1765. He also had the means – £600 – to purchase the advowson and Rectory of Ansford from Mrs Powell. Perhaps he made a quick fortune? At the time of his marriage – at the age of 35 – he was living in one of the most fashionable parts of London, the parish of St George's, Hanover Square. Sarah, whose father had been a Mayor of Shrewsbury, was, we might assume, also from a reasonably prosperous family. On the other hand, the Thomas Woodfordes were not so well-off that they could support their only son and any family that he might have. It was necessary for them to provide him with a profession. As they both lived to a very great age, this turned out to be a very prudent move. The mystery remains: of all the advowsons that they might have purchased, why this?

If James Woodforde read the generous tributes paid to his Aunt

Tom's brother in the *Gentleman's Magazine* when he died in 1789, one in particular may have caused him to smile wryly; in it William was described as 'a mild and excellent man; a governor of his college; careful to promote the interests of his young men.'[12]

REFERENCES

1. R. L. Winstanley, *A Sketch of the Life of Thomas Woodforde*, Journal XXX, 3.
2. J. Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. IV, London, 1838.
3. Shrewsbury Town Council, *Former Mayors of Shrewsbury*.
4. Guildhall, St Benet Paul's Wharf, Register of Marriages 1728-1742 – P69/BEN3/A//01/Ms5718/2.
5. According to Burke, *op. cit.*, 'Thomas Woodforde [of Ansford] m. Miss Adams, sister of Dr Adams, head of Pembroke College, and from this marriage sprang the family of the late Francis Woodforde, rector of Ansford.'
6. J. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.
7. L. Stephen, rev. P. Barcroft, *Adams, William (1706-1789)*, ODNB, Oxford, 2004.
8. L. Stephen, *op. cit.*
9. J. Greig (ed.), *The Farington Diary*, Vol. IV, London, 1924.
10. See R. L. Winstanley (ed.), *The Diary of James Woodforde (1776-1777)*, Vol. 6, 1991 – Note 14, Feb. 1776.
11. For Mrs Powell's Will see Prob 11/1007.
12. L. Stephen, *op. cit.*

DORCHESTER FROLIC, 2011

On Friday 16 September some fifty people assembled at the King's Arms Hotel, Dorchester, at the start of the annual Frolic. The hotel was made famous by Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The weekend started with drinks in the bar, then we went up to the first floor to the glittering "Casterbridge Room", immediately over the grand portico. Here the bookstall was set out and we had dinner. We were to find that the quality of the food and the standard of service were excellent throughout the weekend.

After dinner, the AGM was held. Martin Brayne, in his role as chairman, told us about the plans for a plaque to James Woodforde in the Cloisters at New College, Oxford, which the Society would fund with the late Professor Everitt's donation. There was a discussion about the Norwich Bridewell Museum, currently closed but due to reopen in the summer of 2012. It was considered that £500 was a suitable donation for the Society to make. A further opportunity for publicity had arisen with an approach by the Village Hall Committee of Weston Longville, concerning a possible joint

King's Arms, Dorchester

Weymouth

venture to provide information boards and a tourist trail. After the Treasurer's report, which showed the Society's finances were fairly satisfactory, there was an interruption when one of our number was taken ill and the AGM was halted.

On Saturday, we set out early in our coach to travel the short distance to Weymouth, where James Woodforde stayed for three nights in July 1779. The weather was fine and we were able to explore the sea-front and admire the Georgian buildings of the town. Martin Brayne had provided us with a self-guided tour of Weymouth which told us which buildings would have been seen by Woodforde in 1779, and also of the associations with George III and his family. The old harbour, across the estuary, was particularly evocative. Weymouth is preparing to host the Olympic sailing events in 2012, and the town is being renovated in preparation. We particularly admired the newly-restored statue of George III which looked magnificent in full colour. At St Mary's Church, those of us who were persistent were allowed into the (locked) church to see the

painting of *The Last Supper* by Sir James Thornhill, who was also responsible for the grisaille in the Dome of St Paul's Cathedral and for the Painted Hall in Greenwich. Sir James was MP for Melcombe Regis, the old name for what is now the main part of Weymouth.

Leaving Weymouth at the end of the morning, we travelled in our coach across the causeway to the Isle of Portland, a journey Woodforde had made by ferry with his hired "Tim Whiskey" vehicle. We paused briefly by St George's Church, which has a claim to be the best eighteenth-century church in Dorset. Nephew Bill was married to Anne Jukes on Portland in November 1788, possibly at this church. We continued up to the Heights Hotel where we had a buffet lunch overlooking the most wonderful view of Chesil Beach.

After lunch there was a long and hot drive to north Dorset. We visited Sturminster Newton Water-Mill, no longer a working mill for the production of flour or animal feed, but in working order as an attraction for visitors. Society member Roger Bayliss was on hand to greet us. We had a tour of two floors of the mill and saw the machinery working. The mill-pond lay beside the mill, and we thought of the associations with Hardy's *The Return of the Native*: this was the spot where the heroine drowned herself.

Stock Gaylard church

Next came one of the highlights of the weekend: we travelled a short distance to Stock Gaylard House, which had been visited by Woodforde in 1760 and again in 1771. It is a private house, but the owners, Mr and Mrs Langmead, had very generously opened their house especially for us and showed us over part of the ground floor. It was a real privilege to see a period house with so many original features. Mrs Langmead is a descendant of the Yeatmans, to whom Woodforde was apparently related. We saw the dining room, where pedigrees and other historic documents had been laid out for our perusal, the drawing-room, and the old kitchen with its original range. In the stone passage leading to the former servants' quarters was a row of bells, including "Red Room", "Yellow Room" and "Blue Room". It is by no means certain that this is the same Blue Room in which James Woodforde stayed, where he found the bed too small but didn't like to complain. We also visited the tiny church, situated in the garden but a parish church in its own right. Stock Gaylard has an extensive deer park stocked with a herd of fallow deer, and as we stood in the garden a buck escaped from the park and bounded across the lawn.

Back in Dorchester, the Frolic Dinner took place in the Casterbridge Room, and after dinner we gave the annual toast to the memory of James Woodforde. Then Somerset author James Crowden spoke about the poet William Crowe and read from his work. He was followed by a second speaker, John Roberts, who filled in Crowe's bio- graphical details. William Crowe (1745-1829), was at Winchester and New College, Oxford, and appears as a friend in Woodforde's Diary in 1774-6, when the two frequently breakfasted together. Crowe's long poem "Lewesdon Hill" (1788) had impressed both Wordsworth and Coleridge, and Wordsworth's "The Prelude" was influenced by Crowe. We heard extracts from both poems. In the 1780s William Crowe was Rector of Stoke Abbott, Dorset, and later held other livings, but he is also remembered for his lifelong position as Public Orator of Oxford University. He was famously eccentric, with rustic manners and a West Country accent. After the two talks, Martin Brayne gave a few concluding words, and Charles Milnes gave a vote of thanks to the speakers.

On Sunday morning, several different courses were possible. Some of us went to church, some to the Roman Villa or the County

Museum. A walking tour of Dorchester had been provided, with particular emphasis on Thomas Hardy connections, both historic and fictional.

Just before lunch, the interrupted AGM was recommenced. It was announced that Suzanne Custance, after many years' service, was stepping down from the Committee. She was unable to be present, but in her absence thanks were expressed for all her work. In Suzanne's place, Charles Milnes, a co-opted member, became a full member. The Committee was re-elected en bloc. It was announced that the 2012 Frolic would probably be a single day only, held in London, with the AGM in the morning, then lunch and an afternoon tour or visit.

The Quiz resulted in a tie between three people. The ever-helpful hotel manager, Steve, suggested the tie-breaker: "When was the Hotel first mentioned in historical records?" – a question which allowed Lee Abraham to emerge as the final winner.

After lunch most of us departed, although several were staying on for an extra day or two in order to see more of Dorchester. We went away with good memories of the beautiful scenery of Dorset and the Jurassic Coast, and of the warm welcome we had had at the King's Arms. We hope to meet again next year.

Pigeon loft at Stock Gaylard

QUIZ – FROLIC 2001

James Woodforde as we knew him

We know what James Woodforde thought about his friends, family and colleagues, but what did they think of him? In the absence of surviving historical documents, we have to imagine their opinions. All of the following statements have been made up especially for this Quiz. Who is the speaker in each of them?

1. " James is my most dutiful son. Heighes is so fitful and Jack is such a wild boy – I don't know what will become of him. At least Sandford is in good hands and my Uncle may rest easy in his grave."
   (a) Rev. Samuel Woodforde (b) Mrs Jane Woodforde

2. "My brother James – what a missy! He can't take his drink like a man, and he doesn't know how to enjoy himself. This evening, for example there is a hop at the Ansford Inn at which we are bidden to attend disguised. I am going as Richard Crookback, but James will not appear in any costume but his own. And will he be bold enough to stand up to dance, or will he be too fearful of exposing himself?"
   (a) Heighes Woodforde (b) John Woodforde

3. "All four of us are in Somerset again. Our Uncle James has come from Norfolk but he will not make up with my Brother his former Companion, nor with Cousin Frank Woodforde. He is too apt to fall out with Friends. I hope he does not ask my Father that I accompany him back to Norfolk. When I am in his presence, I keep my head in my Work and do not speak, so that he may think I am too young to be in Company."
   (a) Nancy Woodforde (b) Bill Woodforde
   (c) Juliana Woodforde (d) Sam Woodforde

4. "Something must be done about Miss Sherman's attendance at Church. Mr Woodforde should make arrangements that do not offend our friends. I have spoken to him about it."
   (a) Squire Custance (b) Mrs Custance (c) Press Custance

5. "James Woodforde has many fine qualities. I count him as a true friend, but he sometimes shows too little resolution. I asked him to accompany me to see the Bishop but he would not, being

unwilling to meet any difficulty."
(a) Henry Bathurst (b) Justice Creed (c) Mr Du Quesne

6. "You asked if Mr Woodforde eve rpaid his addresses to me. It was hard to be sure with him – he talked much but I couldn't always follow him. Aunt Mary thought his attentions lacked fervency."
(a) Nancy Bignell (b) Betsy White (c) Mrs Davy

7. "Mr Woodforde? I know him, although he could never be an intimate acquaintance, and his manners are very plain. After all, I am descended from Charles II, and I am afraid Mr Woodforde's connections are quite inferior."
(a) Lady Beauchamp (b) Lady Ilchester (c) Lady Jerningham

8. "The Rotation Club is breaking up and it's all Mr Woodforde's fault. Yesterday he was very rude to my wife when she civilly asked him to our Rotation next week. He ranted at her in front of the Company and we were mortified."
(a) Mr Bodham (b) Mr Howes (c) Mr Smith of Mattishall

9. "I am not impressed with Mr Woodforde. As Bishop of Norwich, I am his spiritual Lord, so when I entered him on the list to preach in the Cathdral, I did not expect him to find every possible excuse to avoid the duty. But for all that, he is a sound fellow."
(a) Bishop Blaize (b) Bishop Yonge (c) Bishop Bagot
(d) Bishop Horne (e) Bishop Manners-Sutton

10. "Well! Here I am in Weston Longville – a Deacon and a Curate. My Rector, Old Mr Woodforde, seems a kindly man. He is excessively set in his ways – at table all must be arranged exactly so. I pity his Niece. He is much troubled by his health and does not like to walk to church, so I may hope to arrange matters as I wish. My Uncle thinks I am well settled."
(a) Mr Corbould (b) Mr Cotman (c) Mr Dade

11. "I'm sorry the Master has died, but he was a sad invalid. I have given him the best years of my life. What now? I don't want to spend the rest of my days by a hot oven – Lydia may do that if she wishes."
(a) Betty Dade (b) Sally Gunton (c) Ben Leggett (d) Briton

12. "All three of my Brothers are dead now. James was my favourite. We had a troublesom time over the manner of his leaving Ansford, but it comforts me that my Grandchildren are growing up in the old Parsonage. Brother James thought much of the ties of near Relations, so I regret that it is eight years since I last saw him."
    (a) Sister Clarke (b) Sister White (c) Sister Pounsett

And finally ...

13. "I have the best Master in the World. I know I shouldn't have done what I did this morning, but I couldn't help myself. There are two angry People in the Yard with my Master. He looks sad. I know he will forgive me."
    Who am I?

(Answers on page 48)

'LEWESDON HILL'

A new edition of 'Lewesdon Hill', published by the Flagon Press with Introduction by James Crowden, can be obtained for the special price (including p&p) to members of the Parson Woodforde Society of £6-50 (cheque payable to James Crowden Publishing) by writing to James Crowden, Forge House, Fore Street, Winsham, Chard, Somerset TA20 4DY.

WOODFORDE WOODWORK

In The Society's archive there is a copy of a document of two foolscap pages written in a confident hand and headed '1777 M^{r} Woodford D^{r}'. It is a bill for work done over the course of four years by the carpenter Stephen Bennett Junior of Castle Cary. 'Mr Woodford' was not Parson Woodforde, who by this time was living in Norfolk, or his father, who had died several years before, but James's brother Heighes who by 1777 was separated from his wife and living with his children Nancy and Samuel. Although the writing displays a certain flourish, the spelling displays a Pooh-like wobbliness; thus, the first item, dated 28 July 1777, reads – 'Making Nue Chaire for Miss Nancy £1 - 12 - 0'. This and several references to 'pickture' frames and straining frames, presumably for Samuel, make it clear that the recipient of the account is Heighes.

Two families of carpenters figure prominently in the Somerset Diary – the Bennetts and the Coles. In the early years of the Diary it is the Roger Coles, father and son, who work for both James's father and, once he moves into the Lower House, James himself. It was, presumably, Roger Coles Sen^{r} who accompanied the Revd Samuel Woodforde and his brother – 'Uncle Tom' – to Wells in August 1764 to advise on dilapidations following the death of their uncle Robert, the diocesan Treasurer. Later in the same year the diarist paid –

> ... young Roger Coles for making me a small
> Writing table, with a Drawer & Lock & Key – 0 : 8 : 0

When at the end of 1767 James moved into the Lower House he employed Roger Coles Jun^{r}, together with his man John Tanner and apprentice Bob Chaffin, for four weeks in making improvements – including a built-in book-case some parts of which were 'turned' by Stephen Bennett. Tanner's contribution came to an abrupt end on 15 October when, we read –

> John Tanner runned away this Morning and
> gone entirely of from my Work, and Roger
> Coles went after him after breakfast, and over took
> about 14. Miles of, with some of the Tools with him
> for stealing of which he threshed him, & let him go

A case of Tanner tanned (and given the sack). When we next come across John Tanner – on 8 April 1768 – he is working for Stephen Bennett.

By this time James had fallen out with Roger Coles to whom he had given a great deal of business including such diverse jobs as making a deal writing desk, a table of old walnut, an oak chopping board and – also of oak – a garden roller. The relationship was temporarily terminated on 20 November 1767:

> Roger Coles has been Work for me all Day again, and this
> Evening I paid him of a very unreasonable Bill of 1 : 10 : 3

Thereafter the name Stephen Bennett – Sen^{r} and Jun^{r}– appears more frequently in the Diary. It was, presumably, the senior Bennett who has make occasional entrances prior to that, such as on 6 December 1765 when he is paid 'for making a Frame for a Picture of mine, the South East Prospect of Oxford'. His son is not specifically mentioned until 1769 when we read of him having spent a day 'making my new Settle' for which he is paid 1/6d.

On 1 May 1769 Woodforde pays an unspecified Stephen Bennett a bill of £3 - 2 - 0 and 'being sober' added a sixpence. Thereafter we find him dealing with both Bennetts despite a complaint similar to the one that caused him to dismiss Coles:

> To Stephen Bennett Jun^{r} for a Deal Plate
> very roughly made paid this afternoon 0 : 5 : 0
> N.B. I've done with him being very extortionate

It was, however, Stephen Senior who was employed to make the coffins for both Samuel, the diarist's father, and Aunt Parr when they died within a couple of days of one another in May 1771. Later that year James had further reason for discontent with Stephen Junior:

> I had a new oaken Cabinett brought me home this morning by
> Stephen Bennett Jun^{r} of Cary for which he charges me 2 : 5 : 11
> But I shall talk to him to Morrow about it, as he came just at Dinner

The following day he paid him 2 guineas and from then on we find that the name of Roger Coles Jun^{r} begins to reappear in the Diary. It was he who put up some shelves 'in my Study' at the Parsonage (6/6d), mended the Four Acres Gate (8/2d), did some work at 'the

Gubbs House' (3/-), charged £2 - 12 - 0 for '2 New Gates, Posts &c.' and made Aunt Anne's coffin (£1-1-0) when she died in June 1772. At none of this did Woodforde demur and it was Roger, too, who performed Woodforde's last carpentry commission in Somerset when he was employed to make 'Boxes for packing' in May 1776, when the diarist finally left Ansford for Norfolk.

This brings us back to Heighes' account with Stephen Bennett Jun[r]. As we have seen no work seems to have been too small for either the Bennetts or the Coles. They all seem to have been prepared to both make furniture and do the smallest repair jobs. Between 28 July 1777 and 29 August 1779 Heighes ran up a bill of £2 - 18 - 6 on 25 items, the most expensive of which was Nancy's 'Nue Chaire' referred to above; the least costly involved 'Mending Stick' – 2d. What is interesting about the account, however, is that of these items a large number seem to have been connected with Sam's artistic ambitions (he was 14 in 1777). They include:

1777 Sept.	13	Large carved pickture frame	0 - 5 - 0
	15	Two small straining frames	0 - 0 - 8
	24	Mending pickture frame	0 - 0 - 2
Dec.	8	Oack board to draw on	0 - 0 - 6
	11	Nue pickture frame	0 - 1 - 0
1778 Jan.	29	Making large oack board for drawing Cock Match on	0 - 2 - 0
Mar.	5	Making board to draw land skip on	0 - 1 - 6
	26	Making large straining frame of Deal	0 - 1 - 6
May	11	Making large straining frame of Deal	0 - 1 - 6
Aug.	8	Making large straining frame for picture of John Brains	0 - 1 - 6
1779 June	17	Righting pickter frame	0 - 1 - 0

On 30 April 1778 Stephen Bennett also lists 'Mending Fiddel' – 1/6d. He, or his father, may have had some particular expertise in this regard as one of them – probably Stephen Senior – appears to have been a violinist for on 19 April 1768 Woodforde entertained Mr, Mrs and Miss Melliar, Mrs Farr, Miss Payne and various members of the family and –

> We had some Country Dancing and Minuets ...
> I gave Stephen Bennett the Fidler 0 - 2 - 6

The 'Fiddel' that was mended may have been Nephew Sam's as, according to his uncle, he was a good violinist for when he was back in Somerset in the summer of 1777 we read that on 5 July:

> Brother Heighes and his Son Sam dined &c. with us –
> Sam brought his violin with [him] and played several
> Tunes to us – he is amazingly improved both in
> Painting and in Musick – he is a very cleaver Youth
> I gave Sam this Afternoon – 0 - 2 - 6

Stephen's bill also includes reference to two of Sam's siblings. Nancy's 'chaire' apparently had 'wheals' which suggests that it was something like a Bath chair. Remember that originally it was to be Nancy who accompanied James to Norfolk but on 21 July 1775 he wrote in his Diary that –

> Poor Nancy Woodforde looks very bad & thin, she
> has an ugly Complaint in one of her Legs –

This was later diagnosed as scrofula or the King's Evil and it compelled Nancy to stay at home, her place being taken, with all the upset it would entail, by her brother William. The bill also includes another device designed to assist Nancy's mobility – a 'Nue Mahoganny Stick for Miss Nancy' (1/9/1779).

On 16 June 1779 Stephen charged 2/- for 'Mending Mr Williams watch twice'. This was, perhaps, in preparation for Bill at last joining the Navy. Three weeks later he left Somerset for Portsmouth to join the Fortune, 'Sloop of War, of 12 Guns'.

It is good to know that Heighes was prepared to spend money on his children but it would be even better if we knew that Stephen, who had a much younger family, had at last been paid!

REFERENCE

The document referred to here is part of the Bunting Collection, donated by our President and now part of the Society's archive.

BOOK REVIEW

John Vallins, *Wessex Diaries*, illustrated by Tim Millar, Flagon Press, 2011, ISBN 978-0-9562778-2-4, 144pp, £16.95.

If the Parson Woodforde Society were a church it would be a broad one. While its default newspaper is probably the *Daily Telegraph*, a significant proportion of members – my correspondence suggests – are readers of the *Guardian*. I am one myself and, although I have never really forgiven the Scott Trust who own it for dropping the Manchester from its title, I have been a dedicated reader (to the disappointment of my *Telegraph*-reading father) since moving north fifty years ago.

One of the newspaper's features which has helped retain my loyalty is 'The Country Diary' – a column which might equally well appeal to readers of the *Times* or *Telegraph*. All of we addicts will have our favourite Country Diarists. Mine include William Condry (Wales), Veronica Heath (Northumberland), A. Harry Griffin (who wrote on the Lake District for 53 years) and, especially, the recently deceased Roger Redfern (Peak District). A relative newcomer is John Vallins who writes, employing a broader frame of reference than is traditional among contributors, from Somerset and Dorset. He has been writing every fortnight for almost twenty years and now some of the best of his pieces have been collected together as *Wessex Diaries*.

As a young teacher Vallins had taught at the King's School, Bruton where he met John Steinbeck who was then living in the town. From there he moved to Cranleigh where his pupils included Alan Rusbridger. His lessons on the poet John Clare inspired the future journalist to travel to Northampton and even to the asylum where the poet had been an inmate.

In due course Vallins became the headmaster of Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and Rusbridger the editor of the *Guardian*. When the teacher announced that he was about to retire to rural Somerset, Rusbridger was quick to recruit his services. He did well to do so for there is after nearly two decades an enthusiasm and freshness about Vallins' writing on his adopted county which suggests that he can hardly believe his good fortune in finding himself in such a lovely part of the country with such a good job.

It is clear that he is as enchanted by the place-names as he is of those of old varieties of apple, by traditional skills like bell-hanging, hedge-laying or hurdle-making and by the accent of the older country folk. But although you sense that he – like all the best schoolteachers? – is more interested in applauding people's strengths than in condemning their petty failings, his spectacles are not rose-tinted; he writes of foot-and-mouth and the Mendip farmer who lost 100 lambs in an April snowstorm. But Vallins has a positive outlook on life and he is especially good at telling a good story; whether of the revival of the village shop (at Maiden Bradley) or the power-generating capacity of Gant's Mill on Woodforde's River Brue.

Somerset (and Dorset) readers will enjoy Vallins' book (and Tim Millar's illustrations) for the insight and affection with which they portray their part of England, while for those of us who live further afield it is a delight to know that life goes on in Yarlington and Batcombe, Compton Pauncefoot and Wyke Champflower.

M.L.B.

IN MEMORIAM – George Henry Bunting (1925-2011)

Our President, George Bunting, passed away on Sunday, 30 October at the age of 86. When, in 1995, George retired from the post of Chairman, a position which he had held for almost twenty years, Roy Winstanley wrote of him "He did not indeed found the Parson Woodforde Society, but it may quite confidently be stated that he has created it, in its present successful form". Nor did George's contribution end there. As President, he retained the keenest interest in the Society's affairs and its Committee could always rely upon him as a source of wisdom, advice and steadfast encouragement. Within recent weeks he has donated to the Society his own collection of Woodfordeiana, henceforth to be known as the Bunting Collection.

George was born in London on 13 June 1925, the eldest son of Minnie and John Bunting. When War broke out in 1939 he was briefly evacuated to Bedfordshire but, on reaching the age of 18 in 1943, he joined the RAF, specialising in radar and wireless communications. It was when in the RAF that he married Mabs with whom, happily, he was to be for the remaining 66 years of a rich and fulfilling life.

After leaving the services, George became a local government officer, qualifying as a Chartered Secretary and Legal Executive. An agile mind, sharp intellect and fine administrative skills were soon recognised and he rose rapidly through the ranks to become Principal Officer for the large London Borough of Camden.

While holding down positions of high responsibility, George found time to read widely, develop a remarkable range of interests and play a full part in family life. In the words of his daughter Pamela, "when he took us ice skating he learnt to ice skate, when he took us swimming he learnt to swim and when we went to high school he became Chairman of the PTA."

George was incredibly well-read and while his reading might have taken him in any number of directions, it is the great good fortune of this Society that he became an especially avid collector of diaries. He made many scholarly, yet lively, contributions to the 'British Diarists' series of this Journal, providing articles on diarists as diverse as Claver Morris, Joseph Naples and Francis Kilvert.

George Bunting (second from R.) with members of the Society, Wells Cathedral Library 1986.

Woodforde, however, was his particular favourite and it is no coincidence that on retirement he and Mabs should choose to move to lovely Priddles Hill House, Hadspen, in the very heart of Woodforde's native country. There they restored the house and created a large and beautiful garden which the Society's members had the privilege of visiting.

George and Mabs were not to remain 'outsiders' for long. George threw himself into researching the history of the area, became Chairman of the Castle Cary Museum, Vice-Chairman of the Pitcombe PCC and Chairman of the Parish Council. He did much to revive the fortunes of his parish church when redundancy threatened and his 'Short History of St Leonard's, Pitcombe', published in 2004, is a model for what a good church guide should be.

While Roy Winstanley was editing volumes of Woodforde's Diary for the Society, it was George who provided the administrative – and moral – support; negotiating with Castle Cary Press, arranging for publication and distribution. When Roy came to write his biography of Woodforde, it was George who undertook the not

always easy role of finding a publisher and seeing the book through the press. Rightly, it is dedicated to 'George Bunting and members of the Parson Woodforde Society'.

George was buried in the graveyard at Pitcombe on 10 November 2011 on a sunny, autumnal afternoon in the beautiful part of the country which he and Mabs had made their own. He leaves Mabs, his daughters Pam and Gill, six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and his many, many friends in the Society he did so much to create.

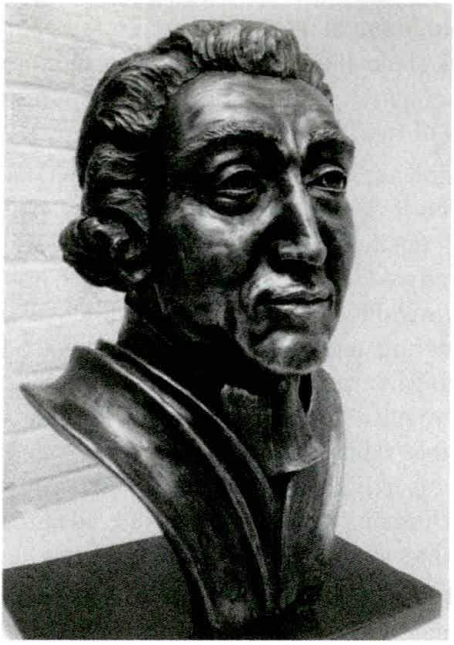
WOODFORDE IN BRONZE

It was in October last year that a friend of mine, the then manager of the Parson Woodforde pub and restaurant at Weston Longville, came to tea. My husband and I had helped him with a few last-minute preparations to get the place ready for opening after its refurbishment and I had re-framed a print of the Parson to hang in the entrance as part of a visual history of the place. It was during general conversation that he suggested I make a portrait head of the Parson.

The idea gestated and I revisited Weston Longville to study the original painting. It hangs in the village church which provided his living for 27 years. Painted in 1806, three years after his uncle's death by his nephew Samuel Woodforde RA, from a sketch made almost 20 years earlier, it seemed to me rather unconvincing.

I had read the diaries with fascination and, as far as I was concerned, they and the portrait did not quite seem to match up. Here was a youthful, fresh-faced man of indeterminate age, certainly not typical of someone of the Parson's stature and standing and in his mid-forties.

I had formed the impression from my readings that James Woodforde was not a particularly energetic man. He did the occasional bit of digging in his garden and enjoyed walking the



James Woodforde –
48 cm x 28 cm, on
a black slate base

dogs. Even getting himself to church and taking the services was a bit bothersome when the weather was inclement or he was disinclined, so it is not unreasonable to assume that the circulatory problems that blighted his later years probably began to manifest around about this time.

Years of socialising and partaking of rich food and drink must surely have left their mark? Known to have been frugal in his use of coal to heat the house, it is reasonable to assume he consumed the type and quantity of food necessary to provide body-warmth, particularly in winter. None of this is immediately apparent in the portrait which portrays a red-lipped, dewy-skinned man with rather vacant soft-brown eyes. Yet, on closer inspection the inner corners of his eyes are discoloured and he certainly has dark bags beneath, both frequently signs of poor kidney function. He has a double chin and jowls as well. The eyes hint at weariness beneath a twinkle of kindness. Perhaps the rosy cheeks are a gentle tilt towards florid by a grateful nephew keen to present his Uncle in the best light? James' small mouth is shown quite tight and formal yet at the corners there are turn-ups that indicate a touch of suppressed humour. Highlights in the painting show he had a fairly prominent bridge to his nose and lowlights hint at a dimple in the chin. So by reading the painting carefully to determine its skeletal structure and using intuition to interpret what I saw, I set about creating the Parson's portrait in three dimensions instead of two.

As well as physical resemblance, I wanted to indicate his character. To my mind, James Woodforde was a slightly starchy person, conscious of his social position, given to acts of generosity, particularly where his family were concerned. No burning Christian zeal or grand reforming ideas shine through his journals and the odd bit of tax evasion, gambling and buying of illicit goods tells something of his easy-going interpretation of the law. In fact I fancy he carried out his Ministry with as little disturbance to his cherished personal routine as possible. Therefore I modelled him dignified, caring and tolerant, with an air of spirituality occasionally punctuated with bursts of humour. In middle age, I judged him to be of a more portly stature than the painted portrait represents.

After seeing an image of the bust, Stephen Butt, a descendant of James' nephew, William, kindly wrote: "Wow! this is really

something. My immediate reaction to the image was that I 'knew' this person. I am attaching a picture of my grandfather Reginald Woodforde, and I really do see a strong likeness. Reginald could also look austere while having a great sense of humour. When I was 7 years of age, he would take me for long walks which were filled with stories and fun. The painting of the Parson hung, throughout my childhood years, in my grandfather's house, over the mantelpiece in the front room. I totally agree with your thinking. Parson James was a deeply understanding man. He was a father to his nephews and niece because their own parents were not up to much. He has been described as 'kindly Uncle James' which fits the bill perfectly ..."

On completion of the head, which was first modelled in clay and then cast in bronze resin, I contacted our manager friend, only to find he had moved on. Sadly, in the present difficult economic climate, the owners – who had had massive outlay and had not directly commissioned the portrait, were unable to afford the £1,500 to buy him.

I have since contacted Castle Cary Museum, New College, Oxford, Woodforde's Brewery, Castle Museum, Norwich, the Parson Woodforde Society and Norwich City Library in an effort to bring a modern focus onto the story of Parson Woodforde and his journals which are so important for students of domestic history and those of us who enjoy a more general insight into the past.

I have not entirely given up hope that he may one day grace a venue more fitting to his importance than my living room, but until that day comes James Woodforde's homely gaze sheds a very warm presence on my family and we shall miss him when he goes.

Further information can be found on Linda Preece's website – www.anglianartbronzes.co.uk. – Ed.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. (b) Mrs Jane Woodforde. JW's estate, Sandford Orcas, was left to him by his great-uncle John Collins. See 26 June 1762 and accompanying Note.
2. (a) Heighes Woodforde. He went as Richard III to the Masquerade Ball on 3 February 1767.
3. (c) Juliana Woodforde. It is the Summer of 1779. Bill W is in disgrace. "Work" = Sewing, so the speaker must be Nancy, aged 22, or Juliana, aged 18 or 19. Of the two, it is surely more likely to be Juliana who could look as though she was "too young to be in Company".
4. (a) Squire Custance. See 19 June 1780.
5. (b) Justice Creed. 14 September 1768, the affair of the Church Gallery.
6. (b) Betsy White, niece by marriage of Mary White.
7. (c) Lady Jerningham. See Note on 12 December 1782.
8. (b) Mr Howes. See 29 July 1783.
9. (c) Bishop Bagot. See 24 October 1783.
10. (c) Mr Dade. He arrived 2 June 1799 as a Deacon and was not ordained Priest until 21 December 1800. His Uncle was the Dean of Norwich.
11. (d) Briton. His family were bakers, and his sister Lydia took over the family bakery.
12. (a) Sister Clarke, Sobieski Woodforde. Her daughter Jane (Jenny) Clarke married Frank Woodforde who displaced James Woodforde from Ansford Rectory.
13. Fly the greyhound, who stole a shoulder of mutton from the Carys on 11 April 1794. His confidence in Woodforde's forgiveness was misplaced as he was hung that evening.

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 £16 (overseas members £25, student members £10) becomes due on 1 January and should be forwarded to the Treasurer, Dr David Case, 25 Archery Square, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7JA.

Website:
www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk

The Parson Woodforde Society is a registered charity no. 1010807

FWB PRINTING WINCANTON SOMERSET BA9 9EB 01963 33755