

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

AUGUST 2020

NEWSLETTER No. 119

FROLIC 2020 – FROLIC 2021

What a strange and stressful time we are living through. I do hope you have not been too adversely affected, although of course it has been difficult for everyone. Not unexpectedly, one of the casualties of the pandemic is this year's September Frolic in Wincanton.

Your Committee has had two virtual "e-meetings" this Spring. We decided with regret that the September Frolic could not take place as planned. Although the hotel, Holbrook Manor, will be open, it would be too difficult to reconcile our convivial dinners and the Stourhead excursion with the need for social distancing. Those who had booked for the September Frolic have already been contacted. We do apologise for the disappointment this must cause. The good news, though, is that we and Holbrook Manor have rescheduled the Frolic for **17–19th May, 2021**. A new Booking form will be circulated with the December mailing.

WOODFORDE PORTRAIT – UPDATE

Weston Longville PCC are pleased to report that their efforts to obtain funding for the restoration and conservation of the Portrait have been successful. The Church has been awarded two grants towards the conservation of the Portrait: one from Churchcare, part of the Church of England (with financial support from the Pilgrim Trust), and another from the Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust, which supports Cultural and Heritage projects, particularly in East Anglia.

The Parson Woodforde Society's own appeal for funds has also been remarkably successful and the sum of £3200 has been raised by members of the Society and members of the public towards the restoration of the Portrait. The PCC are extremely grateful for this support and would like to thank all of you who have contributed in this way.

Weston Longville PCC has received a Faculty from the Chancellor of the Diocese of Norwich authorising them to carry out the work and they

have now given the appropriate instructions to the firm of Kiffy Stainer Hutchins to commence work on the restoration and conservation of the painting.

PWS “BLOGGER” WANTED

The Society’s Website *www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk*, contains an irregular “blog” written by our Chairman and Journal Editor Martin Brayne, but he is more than ready to pass the task of blogging on to anyone prepared to write it regularly. If you are interested, please contact him on *editor@parsonwoodforde.org*, to discuss what form your “blog” might take; you will find him very open-minded!

MARY HARDY AND HER WORLD

The four volumes of commentary and analysis *Mary Hardy and her World 1773–1809* by Society member Margaret Bird made their appearance on 23rd April 2020. These companions to the complete text of Mary Hardy’s Diary (published in 2013) describe in lively detail a world also familiar to that other prolific Norfolk diarist, James Woodforde.

The publication of the new volumes was welcomed by the local press: there is a great appetite in Norfolk for serious history studies. The *Eastern Daily Press* gave three full pages of coverage and a feature appeared in the monthly glossy, the *Norfolk Magazine*. Margaret gave an interview to BBC Radio Norfolk on the value of the diary and the 32 years she had devoted to the task.

One reviewer wrote of “uncovering the great richness, and agitation, within the social, religious and economic challenges of the time”, and of “the scale of this remarkable achievement”.

Details are on the new website for Mary Hardy: <https://www.burnham-press.co.uk/mary-hardys-world>.

MARY BEALE, ARTIST

A book has been recently published entitled *My Dearest Heart. The artist Mary Beale 1633–1699*, and there is a Woodforde connection.

Parson Woodforde’s great-grandmother was Alice Beale, the first wife of the first Samuel Woodforde (1636–1700). Alice Beale was a first

cousin-by-marriage of Mary Beale, who is now recognised as an excellent artist. Samuel Woodforde 1st lived with Mary Beale and her husband Charles in London and briefly in Hampshire. His early journals (now in the Bodleian library) describe life in the Beale household. Mary Beale assisted him in translating some Psalms, and he wrote a poem to her, praising her as "The Excellent Mrs Mary Beale". When his first wife, Alice, died in 1664, the Beales were Samuel's saviours. Several of his family were painted by Mary Beale. The book is by Penelope Hunting, and is published by Unicorn.

SELF-ISOLATION IN WESTON LONGVILLE

"Not a Soul has call'd on us this Week. No Letters from our friends. We spend our time in reading."

(Nancy Woodforde's Diary, 10th March, 1792)

"Am sorry to say that I have not now one agreeable Female friend in Norfolk. The loss of Mrs Custance I greatly lament, indeed she was a charming neighbour. Mrs Bodham never calls and Mrs Jeans is a mear nothing at all and I am determined not to call often on them, therefore I shall spend my time as happy as I can and give up the thought of any Society, thank God I have very good spirits and can always amuse myself with reading, working and walking which is my chief delight."

(Nancy Woodforde's Diary, 5th November, 1792)

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO . . .

On May 2nd, 1770, all four of Brother Heighes' children, Nancy, Bill, Juliana and Samuel, were inoculated against smallpox, at Dr Clarke's Hospital in Ansford. This was not the cowpox vaccination developed by Dr Edward Jenner in 1796, but an earlier, more dangerous, method using live smallpox virus. It required careful nursing to allow the patient to recover from a mild attack of smallpox. But by May 22nd, all four children were well enough to dine at the Lower House, and Woodforde reported that they were "almost out of it", and that they had "a pretty sprinkling of the Small-Pox", adding enigmatically "Their Mother behaves quite unnatural to them."

Between mid-May and early June 1770, Castle Cary was visited by a theatrical troupe. Woodforde and his relations made many visits to see plays. The visit is described in the Journal article "High Jinks at Castle Cary" (Spring 2001, from the original Summer/Autumn 1978).

Society's website: www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk
