

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

AUGUST 2021

NEWSLETTER No. 122

FROLIC & AGM 2021 – 13TH-15TH SEPTEMBER

The Frolic is going ahead as planned on September 13th-15th. If you wish you had expressed interest earlier, then contact me (details on p4) in case there are still places.

All members, whether registered for the Frolic or not, are invited to attend the AGM, which will be held at Holbrook Manor in Wincanton on Monday 13th September, around 5pm. If you plan to attend but are not staying for the Frolic, please contact me (details on p4) so that I can alert you to any change of time.

We have booked our trip to Stourhead on Tuesday 14th September, where we will see Samuel Woodforde's most highly-rated works, and have time to walk a little in the gardens by the lake. The coach will return via Alfred's Tower, Castle Cary and Ansford. After dinner that evening there will be a talk by Maureen Wincott, local historian and PWS member, on "Castle Cary and Ansford in Woodforde's day".

OUR PRESIDENT STEPS DOWN

Since 2014 our President has been Professor Richard Wilson, an historian with extensive knowledge of Norfolk in the eighteenth century. He has now reluctantly decided to step down. The Society has benefited from his great scholarship and his in-depth knowledge of Woodforde's diaries. Those who attended the Norfolk Frolic in 2018 will remember his fascinating after-dinner talk and our visit to the Norfolk Club. The new President will be announced at the forthcoming AGM on September 13th, but we hope Professor Wilson will continue to write for the Journal.

PORTRAIT OF REVD JAMES WOODFORDE ... CONTINUED

In the last newsletter we reported that the portrait of Parson Woodforde, which until last year hung in Weston Longville Church

where it attracted damp, had been restored. However, it is still with the conservators; there have been many discussions about the dampness which will inevitably remain in the Church, even after specific issues have been addressed. Plans are also being made for a high-quality photograph of the restored portrait, which will be framed in a period frame and can be displayed in the Church.

REVD ROBERT MARSH

We are sorry to announce that long-standing member, Revd Robert C. Marsh of Seaford, Sussex, passed away in March. Dr Stuart Chatfield writes:

“Robert Marsh was a friend of mine of nearly 40 years and we had a mutual interest in Parson Woodforde. He always passed me the quarterly journal when he had finished reading it and we often discussed them. Therefore I have a continuous run going back nearly 20 years. (I keep everything – he did not!) He expressed in his letter of wishes that I had his complete set of the Woodforde diaries which I have now collected. I look forward to reading them all, as he did over a period of many years. I would like to join myself now – as I can no longer expect to receive his journals passed on to me of course.”

Dr Chatfield is now a Life Member and in addition has made a generous donation in memory of his friend.

ST MARY’S, NORTH TUDDENHAM

The Church of St Mary’s, North Tuddenham, not far from Weston Longville, is one of “100 Church of England Treasures.” It is “a mixture of a Byzantine church and a museum of Victoriana”. It has recently attracted combined grants of forty thousand pounds from the National Churches Trust and a Wolfson grant for fabric repair.” In James Woodforde’s time, North Tuddenham was held by the Revd Thomas Shelford, whom Woodforde met many times, and described as “a very sensible, well-behaved & agreeable gentleman.” [12th May, 1777] After Thomas Shelford’s death, he was succeeded by his son Leonard.

DON'T FORGET THE INDEX

Do you find yourself searching through old PWS Journals looking for a particular article? If you have access to the internet, you can use the on-line Journal Index on the Society website *www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk*. Go to "Publications" then scroll down several pages to the link to "Indexes to the Society's Journals". There are indexes for people, places, subjects, authors and book-reviews. If you can't find what you are looking for, then try "search" or "find" for a distinctive word in the title. Remember, "less is more" when searching. Also on the website are old copies of this Newsletter. Find them under "Newsletters".

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO ...

In the Summer of 1771, curate James Woodforde had just lost his father. Samuel Woodforde's funeral, on 22nd May, was a grand and elaborate occasion, with many pairs of gloves being distributed as was the custom. The three unmarried children, James, John and Jenny agreed that John would live in the Lower House, while James and Jenny would live in Ansford Parsonage and Jenny would pay James £16 p.a. for her board and lodging, tea, sugar and wine being extra. This seems strange to us, as no doubt Jenny would have earned her keep by housekeeping duties.

On June 24th, there was a scene with Frank Woodforde, who was to succeed to the Ansford living. James was clearly very bitter about Frank supplanting him. Frank was so young that he was to wait two years before he was ordained. In the meantime, Mr Dalton of Cucklington was to hold the Ansford living and promised not to turn James out of the Rectory.

On September 21st, Mr Wickham of Shepton Mallet, the brother-in-law of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, told James that he had been given the living of Castle Cary. (The Bishop often alternated with the holder of the advowson in presenting candidates for vacant livings.)

So 1771 had been a dreadful year so far, but matters looked better by September 25th. James had become interested in Betsy White of

Shepton Mallet, his sister Mary's niece-by-marriage. He thought he might "make a bold stroke".

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