

# THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

AUGUST 2022

NEWSLETTER No. 125

## FROLIC AND AGM 2022 – 26-27TH SEPTEMBER

This year's Frolic will be held in Norwich at the Maid's Head Hotel, between Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th September, departure after breakfast on Wednesday 28th September.

The AGM will be held at 6pm on Monday 26th September, and all members are invited to attend, whether booked for the Frolic or not.

On Tuesday 27th September, our coach excursion will include a visit to Weston Longville, then Dereham for a special exhibition on the Paston letters, then the "House of Industry" at Gressenhall, the former workhouse visited by Woodforde, now a museum. After dinner on the Tuesday, there will be a talk by an expert on the Paston letters.

If you want to book but have not yet done so, then please contact me (details on page 4). If you live in or near Norwich and do not need to stay at the hotel, you may book just for the excursion, and/or for one or both evening dinners.

## A NORFOLK COMMITTEE MEMBER REQUIRED

The Parson Woodforde Society constitution requires us to have a Somerset Committee member and a Norfolk Committee member. We have a Somerset member, Jenny Alderson, but since Professor Richard Wilson's retirement we have been lacking a Norfolk member.

Do you live in Norfolk, and would you consider becoming a Committee member? There are two Committee meetings a year, one usually in March, held online using Zoom, and the second at the Frolic. If you are interested, then contact Martin Brayne on 01663-750354, or by email on [editor@parsonwoodforde.org](mailto:editor@parsonwoodforde.org).

## **PWS DIARIES ALL AVAILABLE**

Following some re-printing, all 17 volumes of the PWS unabridged versions of Woodforde's Diaries are now in stock. Those members who only know the Beresford abridgements of the diaries will be surprised by how much more full and interesting the Somerset years are in the unabridged version. Also available are the booklets "Walks around James Woodforde's Norwich" and "The World of James Woodforde: a Chronology". If you are interested in any of these, contact Jenny Alderson to discuss prices and postage on 01963-350765, or email [jenny@aldersons.plus.com](mailto:jenny@aldersons.plus.com).

## **ALL SAINTS CHURCH, WESTON LONGVILLE**

Plans have been drawn up for the building of a toilet and kitchen inside the Church at Weston Longville. It will be in the north-west corner of the nave, and will enhance the church's value as a building for community use. It is not intended solely for churchgoers or for those attending a gathering in the church, but for anyone passing through the centre of the village. If you would like to contribute to this cause, please contact me (details on p4), indicating whether you are able to gift-aid your donation.

## **CURATE TO BE ORDAINED**

For some time, Revd Richard Turk has been serving as a Curate in the Wensum diocese. He is about to be ordained, and we wish him success in his work in the area. The clergy of the Wensum diocese are as follows: Revd Keith Rengert, Rural Dean; Revd Helen Rengert, Team Rector; and Revd Richard Turk.

## **A NORFOLK WRITER'S VIEW OF WOODFORDE**

In March, the *Eastern Daily Press* published a 2-page article about the Norfolk writer D. J. Taylor. His most recent publication is a collection of short stories entitled *Stewkey Blues*, written during

lockdown. (“Stewkey” is said to be a corruption of “Stiffkey” on the north Norfolk coast.) In the EDP article, D. J. Taylor makes the following comment “There, Parson Woodforde sits at Weston Longville in his rectory; there is hardly anybody for him to associate with, just a few local gentry. He takes his greyhounds out coursing and just sits there fretting.”

Is this fair? Some Society members may feel not, but certainly there is a marked contrast between Woodforde’s busy life in Ansford and at Oxford, compared to Norfolk.

## **MORE DINOSAURS!**

The ROARR! Dinosaur Park, near the site of Weston House, has added twenty new dinosaurs to its attractions! Eleven of them are “animatronic”, and nine static. The total number of dinosaurs will now be more than 150. I have only ever seen the dinosaurs in the Natural History Museum, but they are quite frightening when they detect your approach and start roaring.

## **TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGE**

In the spring and summer of 1772, James Woodforde recorded the heavy drinking and unstable life of his younger brother John, then 28 years old. Nevertheless, he argued John’s case with the mother of John’s sweetheart, Nancy Wason, but Mrs Wason thought that John would be an unsuitable husband. James loyally spoke up for his brother, but the relationship was broken off. Later, Nancy Wason was to marry Andrew Russ, one of John’s drinking companions.

On June 2nd, 1772, there was a big family outing to Stourton and Stourhead. They visited the gardens at Stourhead, including the Hermitage and the Temple of Apollo, King Alfred’s Tower, and the Convent. They returned via Redlynch, Lord Ilchester’s house.

On June 22nd 1772, James, John and Richard Clarke set off on a “Jaunt” to Oxford, where James had some official duties. John and Richard Clarke visited Blenheim. The three returned via Bibury and

Bristol. James took the opportunity to investigate whether the living of Bibury, worth £500 p.a., might be available. On 29th June, James travelled on by himself to Bristol, and met John and Richard Clarke at the Pelican in Thomas St, in the city centre. They were planning a night on the town in which James didn't join. The next day he returned to Ansford by himself, as John and Richard Clarke were sleeping in after their late night.

There is still a "Pelican" in Thomas St, perhaps the same one.

*Many thanks to contributors: Beryl Griffiths*

## **NEW MEMBERS**

Mrs S. J. Lloyd, Somerset (Life Member)

Mr J. R. White, Kent

Mrs P. Thomson, Derbyshire

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**Society's website: [www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk](http://www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk)**

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