

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

AUTUMN 2012

NEWSLETTER No. 91

BLOOMSBURY FROLIC

By the time you read this, the Bloomsbury Frolic will have taken place. We hope that it was as successful as usual, and that members enjoyed the opportunity to visit the eighteenth-century attractions of the area. An account of the Frolic will be printed in the Winter Journal.

BRIDEWELL MUSEUM, NORWICH

The Norwich Bridewell Museum was formally opened on 28th June after a 2-year refurbishment, to which the Society has contributed part of the cost. The Opening Ceremony was attended not only by a crowd of Civic and County dignitaries but also by Phyllis Stanley, representing our Chairman Martin Brayne. The following day, Ann Williams, Phyllis and I attended an "exclusive preview". We saw the Woodforde display, a large interactive panel with 6 buttons: press one and listen to a reading from the Diary! We were impressed with the new museum which will bring back memories for anyone whose ancestors worked in local industries such as shoe- or chocolate-making, or who remembers old home appliances and domestic furnishings. Martin Brayne himself recently made a trip to Norfolk and, amongst other appointments, visited the Bridewell to see the Woodforde display.

PAINTINGS BY SAMUEL WOODFORDE, R.A.

Mabs Bunting, the widow of George Bunting our former President, would like to remind members that she has a significant oil painting by Samuel Woodforde, the Diarist's nephew. It is of Jane Gardner who became his wife in 1815. If you are in the Castle Cary area and would like to see it, call Mabs on 01963-350462 to arrange a visit.

Paul Minet, who died last February, has left the Society an original oil painting by Samuel Woodforde. It is a portrait of Mrs Priscilla Wyatt of

Milton Place, Egham, Surrey, painted in 1785. She is in her forties and is wearing a lovely white and silvery-blue costume and a broad-brimmed straw hat. Priscilla Wyatt was born Priscilla Edgell and was the heir to Milton Place in her own right. In "Woodforde Papers and Diaries" by Dorothy Heighes Woodforde, Samuel Woodforde's diary has four references to "Mr Wyatt" in 1785, although not to his wife or her portrait. Members who attended the recent Frolic will have seen the portrait.

JOURNAL OF A SOMERSET RECTOR

Society Member Mrs June Skinner would like to offer someone the chance to read the "Journal of a Somerset Rector" which she has recently finished. She enjoyed it so much that she is ready to post her paperback copy on to the first member who contacts her. The "Somerset Rector" was the Rev. John Skinner (no relation) who was Rector of Camerton, near Bath, whose diary runs from 1803 to 1834. He has been featured in the PWS Journal in the past, most recently in Autumn 2004. Mrs Skinner found the diary extremely interesting and a great contrast to Woodforde – the poverty and illness of the local people feature much more prominently. Her phone no. is 01263 519602, if you would like her copy.

WESTON LONGVILLE – "THE LOST VILLAGE"

In June, the *Wensum Diary*, the parish magazine of Weston Longville and surrounding parishes, had an article quoting from a book written in 2007 by Richard Askwith entitled *The Lost Village: In search of a forgotten rural England*. The author had visited Weston Longville hoping to find it full of Woodfordean characters, from Cobb the Rat-Catcher to Reeves the tooth-drawer. Not surprisingly, what he found in 2007 was disappointingly different.

That same month, the *Wensum Diary's* regular serialisation of extracts from Woodforde's Diary reached June 1778. In that month, the Parson, Nephew Bill and the Pounsetts visited Yarmouth and found the town "quite alive" celebrating the King's birthday: "Bells ringing – the Flags from the Ships in the Sea & on the Quay all flying" – a happy

coincidence that this appeared in the *Wensum Diary* in the month of the Jubilee River Pageant!

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Annual Subscription for 2013 will become due next January 1st, and, if they have not already done so, members might consider setting up a Standing Order so that their Bank will pay the subscription automatically in 2013 and future years. Payment by Standing Order greatly simplifies matters for the Treasurer. To obtain the appropriate form, please contact the Treasurer, Dr David Case, at Fairfield, 25 Archery Sq, Walmer, Deal, Kent, CT14 7JA.

AN EVENING WITH PARSON WOODFODE

In the Spring Newsletter we advertised a dramatic event in Suffolk which was being planned as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. It was called "An Evening with Parson Woodforde", and featured 20 characters and 20 scenes taken from the Diary. Some photographs of the performance may now be seen online.

Visit <http://pettaugh.onesuffolk.net> and search for "Woodforde" to see the gallery of 14 photos.

NORWICH CASTLE MUSEUM

In June, Phyllis Stanley and I visited Norwich Castle Museum to see the Colman galleries. They have recently been transformed, at a cost of £100,000, donated by the Colman family and various art funds. The works of John Sell Cotman, John Crome and other painters of the Norwich school are represented in two "British Masters" galleries. The *Eastern Daily Press* considered that the return to Norfolk of what is possibly John Crome's greatest picture, *The Poringland Oak*, was a major achievement. We saw the Henry Walton painting of Mr Custance, which the Society helped to buy in 2004, but not the Beechey portrait of the Custances.

FUTURE WOODFORDE EVENTS?

Are you planning a Woodforde talk or other event early next year? If you can send me details by mid-November, your event can be publicised in the Winter Newsletter. My contact details are on the back page.

SOCIETY'S ONLINE "BLOG"

If you are reading this Newsletter online, then you may already have noticed that the Society's Website now includes an online "blog", an informal diary. If, however, you are reading a paper copy of this Newsletter but have access to the internet, then take a look at the Website *www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk*, and find the new "blog".

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