PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

THE REV. CORNELIUS CARDEW
From a portrait by John Opie, R.A. (1778)

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Did they try to shoot him, or only groan?

When the King went to open Parliament at the end of October [1795] he was hooted by the mob. Woodforde, who was passing through London, witnessed the incident and wrote

> I am very [sorry] to insert that his Majesty was very
> grossly insulted by some of the Mob, and had
> a very narrow escape of being killed going to
> the House, a Ball passing thro' the Windows
> as he went thro' Old Palace Yard, supposed
> to be discharged from an Air Gun – but very
> fortunately did not strike the King or Lords

Francis Place, a member of the London Corresponding Society,* gave a rather different account of the incident:

> On October 29 the King went to open Parliament.
> An immense number of people had assembled in St James'
> Park who hissed and groaned and continually called out –
> No Pitt, no War, Bread, Bread, Peace, Peace.
> When the coach had nearly reached the House of Peers
> one of the windows was Broken – this happened in the
> narrow street between St Margarets & Henry VII Chapel
> – A pretence was set up that the King had been shot at
> & an inference was drawn of a plot to kill him.

The government at once took occasion to introduce two Bills, one making it a treasonable offence to incite the people by speech to hatred or contempt of the king, constitution or government; the other forbidding meetings of over 50 persons without prior notice to a magistrate, defiance of whose orders was to be punishable by death. These Bills were universally unpopular.

– C. B. Jewson, FSA, Jacobin City (1975)

* The London Corresponding Society was an association of politically activist working men, very few of whom would of course have had a vote. It was later made illegal, in the reaction against what was seen as the revolutionary threat from France.

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EDITORIAL

I think it is scarcely open to doubt that Thomas Woodforde, the "Uncle Tom" of the early diary, is apart from the diarist himself the most interesting person in his family – or would be, if only we knew more about him and could verify our speculation with accurate knowledge. As it is, one rather brief interlude in his very long life is recorded in great detail in his nephew's diary. The rest of his life is mere shreds and patches, little more than basic statistics from parish registers and other official documentation. And this unsatisfactorily fragmented evidence is itself full of gaps. Thus we know when and where he was born, but possess no idea at all of the education he may have received; nor do we know how he earned his livelihood, nor what his status was in the community of which his brother was rector of the parish. Even the diary itself varies a good deal from one of its parts to another both in its attitude to Thomas and the amount of attention he is given. In the days of his youth James quite likes his uncle, who is shown as regularly taking part in the social meetings and get-togethers of which this originally very close-knit family was so fond. Then Thomas becomes the schemer whose intrigues deprive James of any hope of the Ansford living, and "my greatest Enemy". Worsted, in that battle, James afterwards ignores him, and he is mentioned only twice more for the rest of his life, with a third and last reference in the form of one of the diary's famous obituary notices, this one pointedly unaccompanied by any form of good wishes for an after life. There is a number of incidental mysteries about this episode in the diarist's life which cry out to be elucidated but of course never will be. For example – although to an unprejudiced observer today it must appear sufficiently obvious that Thomas was the aggressor and quite deliberately set out to purchase the living for his son, he was supported by many of the family, among whom was the diarist's own "Sister Clarke".

But Thomas was in quite another way responsible for approximately half the diary, and the part which with many readers remains the favourite. Woodforde was anything but a globe-trotter, and knew little even of his own West country, which to him was Somerset. He knew from personal experience little of Dorset, and only that part of Wiltshire which lay adjacent to the Somerset border; he never went near to anywhere in Devon and Cornwall in his life. It is a safe bet that he would never have dreamed of making his home in a place so far away as Norfolk, to visit which must have

seemed to him much like a journey to equatorial Africa to us, if he had not been virtually driven there by the demands of his career. As it was Uncle Tom who unwittingly sent him there, we must be grateful that he made the later diary, as we know it, possible. If we would find Woodforde unthinkable without Mrs Davie, Ben Leggett, Betty Dade and Mr du Quesne, we might acknowledge that we owe them and so much else only to Thomas.

The mention of Cornwall a few lines back reminds me that in this issue for the first time that county enters our chronicles. Cornelius Cardew and James Woodforde never met, but the two families became related twice over through marriage.

I should like to make a comment on Jim Holmes' agreeable essay 'But was it Woodforde's Clock?' There surely must be a strong possibility that the long-case clock still existing and keeping good time is the one that once lived in Woodforde's Rectory. It is of course rather disconcerting that the family which now owns the clock does not bear the same name as the person who bought Woodforde's timepiece at the sale of his household effects in April 1803. But it was a valuable piece of equipment, of which it is unlikely that there were many in so small a village; and it is always possible that it changed hands, possibly more than once over a space of nearly two hundred years.

R. L. WINSTANLEY
Editor

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As we move into the Autumn your committee prepares for its next meeting – normally in London. The purpose is to take stock of progress over the previous 6 months and to sketch out the way ahead. In looking forward we not only look at the short term everyday problems facing your society but also at what we need to achieve in the next two to three years.

Let me give you a flavour of the challenges with which the committee has to deal. The failure of the Editor's typewriter after many years of faithful work almost brought us to a complete standstill! The machine has withstood Roy's hammering away into the night, copious amounts of Tipp-Ex correction fluid/paste, and ream upon ream of Woodfordiana. Perhaps it too should be considered an item of Woodfordiana. We have replaced the typewriter and look forward to the copy which will flow from it.

One of the tasks, as yet invisible to members, which Roy is undertaking is the production for the Society of previously unpublished material. It will take some time before this will see the light of day and it is not a straightforward task. However, gearing this activity in terms of Roy's time and the pre-funding of its eventual publication are typical of the committee's deliberations. The Oxford Frolic and the need for additional help on the committee will also need our attention.

The committee welcomes members' ideas Please let us know how we can better serve you. Now is the time to write – it will catch our attention and be discussed in November.

NIGEL D. E. CUSTANCE
Chairman

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 Rev. 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 D.D. 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 D.D., F.R.S., 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 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 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.

* 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.

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. 6. The diarist thought them the worse for wear:

> Mr. 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 school 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 M.A. 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 dependents, 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 being not 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 Mrs. 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 M^r^. Dalton & M^r^. 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, "Tho^{s}. 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 business 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: "Mr. 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 North 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 Tho^{s}. 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 –

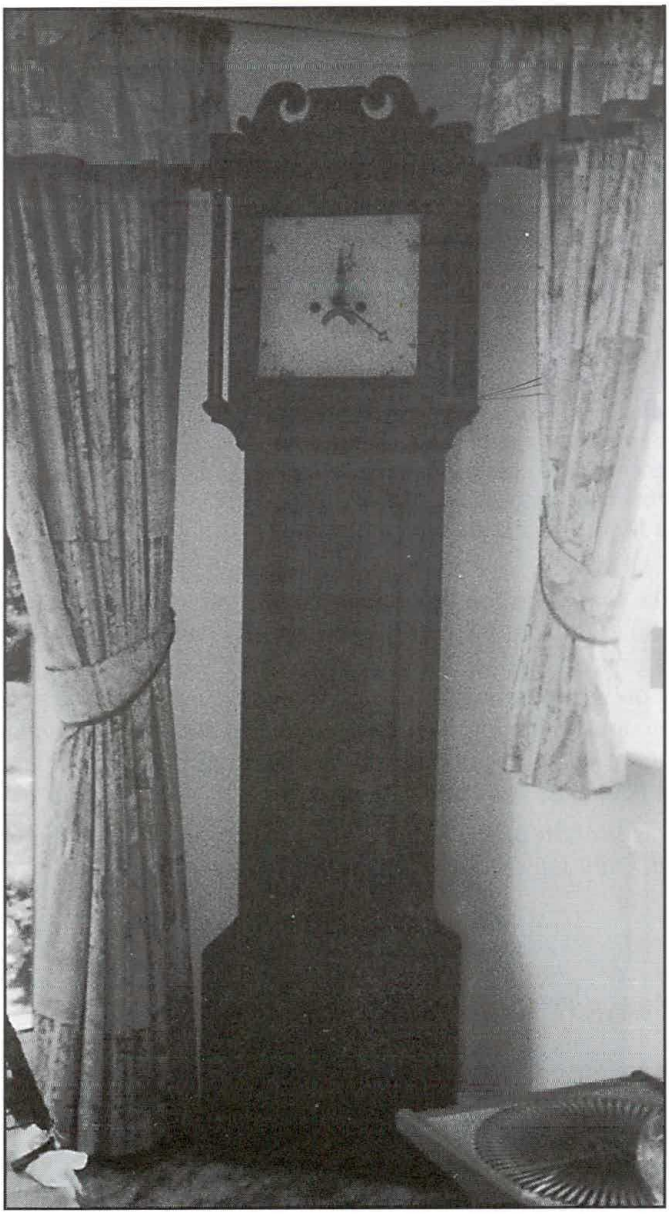
– Ibid., 6/4/1800

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.

BUT WAS IT WOODFORDE'S CLOCK?

A talk on Parson Woodforde led to the question: did we know that possibly one of Parson Woodforde's clocks still kept the time for a local family mentioned in the diary? It was described as a "Kitchen clock", which I took to be a wall clock. When I visited the fortunate owner, I was pleased to discover it was a long case clock or, as usually termed, a grandfather clock, in a rather plain case and with a very faded painted face, obviously a timepiece suitable for a kitchen or the back premises; unlike the more ornate clock for a hall, parlour, dining or drawing room.



The family had never claimed that it was a Woodforde clock but cherished it as a good timekeeper handed on from one generation to the next. The present owner only vaguely remembered its history but had an uncle he thought was better informed and whose address he gave me.

With great hopes I arranged to meet him, only to be a little disappointed. He said, as far as he could recall, nobody had mentioned Parson Woodforde in connection with the clock; only that it was "bought at a sale following the death of the rector of Weston Longville". It had been a valued family possession ever since, a treasured antique dating back to the early 1800s.

On a further visit to the clock, when I photographed it, I was informed that the name of the clockmaker, though badly faded, could just be seen if viewed from a certain angle. After several attempts I succeeded in seeing the name clearly: John Simmonds, Reepham. This was exciting! John Simmonds (1733-1815) is recorded as clockmaker, watchmaker and repairer at Reepham. He was a good craftsman, nothing very special. He is mentioned 13 times in the diary, 1782-1802:

[1782] Mar: 6
... M^{r}. Symonds of Reepham came to my house this Morn' and cleaned my lower Clock and my Jack – he dined with our Folks in the Kitchen – I p^{d}. him for a brass Case for my large burning Glass or reading Glass –0 : 1 : 0
Cleaning my Clock – also paid him – 0 : 2 : 6
Cleaning my Jack – also paid him – 0 : 1 : 0
– *m.s. Diary*

[1782] Oct: 23 –
... Mr. Symonds came here this Afternoon and cleaned my Jack and took away the Compass Wheel, as it re= =quired so large a Weight to it & was always breaking the Line – I hope now it will do better & with a less Weight, and above one quarter of the Weight –
– *Ibid.*

[1789] Feb: 6 – Friday –
M^{r}. Symonds of Reepham, Watchmaker, came to my House about Noon, and he dined with our Folks in Kitchen – He cleaned my large Clock I paid him a Bill for cleaning my Clocks and Watch from the year 1780 – 1: 3: 6
Cleaning my Clock this day included in the same –
– *Ibid.*

[1789] Nov: 17 – Thursday –
M^r^. Symonds cleaned my Spring Clock – He dined here –
– *Ibid*

[1790] Nov: 12 – Friday –
Sent Briton to Simonds of Reepham with my Watch for him to clean
He returned home by dinner time –
– *Ibid*

[1790] Nov: 19 – Friday –
M^r^. Simonds of Reepham, Watchmaker, brought my watch
home this morning and he stayed and dined
with our people, after he had cleaned
my eight day clock below stairs, which he made –
[OUP ed.]

[1791] March 21 – Monday –
Symonds of Reepham, Watchmaker, was at my house
to day and cleaned my upper clock and he dined
with our folks in kitchen –
[OUP ed.]

[1794] Dec. 16 – Tuesday –
M^r^. Symonds of Reepham, cleaned both my
eight day Clocks to day, almost the whole day
after them, he breakfasted & dined with our folks.
When he went away, which was in the Evening
I paid him a Bill for cleaning Clocks & Watch
from October 1789 to Dec: 1794 – 1: 0: 6
cleaning my Clocks to day included in it –
I did not take any change of him out of a guinea –
– *m.s. Diary*

[1796] Sep: 11 – Sunday –
Briton spent the Day at Reepham with his Friends –
sent a Note by him to M^r^. Priest to invite him
& Family to dinner on Wednesday next
I sent my watch also by him to Symonds the
Watchmaker to be cleaned and regulated properly –
– *Ibid*

[1798] Wednesday May 2^nd^ –
M^r^. Simonds of Reepham came to my House this Morning and
cleaned my Clock for me – I likewise let him have my Watch
– *Ibid*

[1798] Tuesday – Sep^tr^. 11^th^ –
Sent Ben this Morning to Symonds of Reepham after my
Watch, which he has had some time for to clean – he
returned with the same about 2. o'clock this Afternoon –

[1800] March – 28 – Friday
Clock cleaned by Simonds of Reepham.

– Ibid

[1802] January – 12 –
Jn Symonds of Reepham, Watchmaker, Son of old
Mr. Jn Symonds, called on me this Morn',
with a Bill due to his Father for cleaning
my Clocks, from May – 1 – 1798 – pd. him 0: 16: 0

– Ibid

These passages extracted from the diary may well leave a reader in some doubt as to the number of clocks Woodforde had in his Parsonage. At different times, as we have seen, he mentions both an "Upper" and a "Lower" clock, "my large clock", a "spring clock" and "both my eight day clocks", as well as a clock kept "below stairs", which would suggest that he also had a clock kept on an upper floor. The inventory listing his household effects sold in April 1803 is not altogether reliable as proof of what was in the house during his lifetime, as we do not know what the heirs, Bill and Nancy, may have taken out for themselves before the sale. But as it stands, it contains a mention of just two clocks: one, called an eight day clock, located in the hall, went to a Mr Neal for the high price of £4. 13. 0., around £300 in our money. The other is described as a "wood clock", part of the contents of the kitchen, which brought in only 12/6d, and may well have been a wall clock standing on a bracket.* It seems reasonable to assume that what its owner called his "large clock" was a full sized clock with a long case and to be identified with the more expensive of the two at the sale.

A member of the Society seeing a picture of the clock we have reproduced to accompany this article said it very much resembled a similar one also made by Simmonds of Reepham and known as a "kitchen clock". He also said that in many cases the movements were supplied from Birmingham and fitted to long case bodies made locally. The clockmaker then painted his name on the face.

The Brand family

Mary Brand (1845-1930) was the main source of family history but as so often happens, failed to write it down and much is lost. It is possible that she made the forgotten reference to Parson Woodforde and the clock. Circumstantial evidence is very unreliable but she

* The term is not to be found in any of the extensive collection of books on the subject which were consulted in the Birmingham City Library. It may perhaps refer to a type of pendulum, "wood rod and lead bob", but this is no more than a guess. (ed.)

did tell of her husband's family buying a clock "at the sale in Weston following the death of its Rector in the early 1800s". Unless Neal, who is stated as the purchaser of Woodforde's clock, was himself a member of the Brand family, this theory would seem to have been exploded; but it is always possible that it came into their hands by a subsequent purchase. So the clock in our picture might after all have once been the property of Parson Woodforde.

[1783] June – 29 –
... I read Prayers, Preached & churched 3. Women this morning at Church – M^{r}. Custance, M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Micklwaite and my Niece at Church this Morning – Rec^{d}. for churching the 3. Women – 0: 1: 6
Gave Chapman's Wife one of the above – 0: 0: 6
One of the Women gaye me a bad Sixpence – the women churched were Chapmans Wife, Billy Bide= =wells Wife, and Brands Wife of E. Tuddenham –
– *m.s. Diary*

[1783] June – 30 –
I privately named a Child of Brands of East – Tuddenham, by name – John – this Afternoon –
– *Ibid.*

[1789] April – 2 –
... Before they returned; I took a Walk to a Cottage just by M^{r}. Bodhams to see one Mary Brand an old Woman of 80. who belongs to Weston and to whom I send Mony every Year out of the Charity belonging to Poor Widows of Weston. She lives with her Daughter, Wife of Jos: Bruton and a Tenant to M^{r}. Bodham, I found her spinning by the fire tho' she is almost blind – I gave her to buy Tobacco as she smokes – 0: 1: 0
– *Ibid.*

[1796] June – 11 –
Saturday –
In the room of my last Boy, I took one John Brand of France green, this Morning on trial –
– *Ibid.*

[1796] Oct: 10 – Monday –
... my Boy, John Brand, left my Service to day, as he had proper Notice so to do, being the most saucy swearing Lad that ever we had, and am afraid that if he does not soon do better, he will bring his poor Mother with sorrow to her Grave –

He can do his Work well if he pleases, but cannot
be trusted out of Sight – but the worst is, he is profligate.
Ben paid him his Wages due to him for four Months
Service, due this Michaelmas day at the Rate
of two Guineas per Annum – He went before
Dinner – and in the Evening my new Boy of this
Parish by name Barnabas Woodcock between
11. and 12. Years of age – succeeded him

– *Ibid.*

[1797] Oct: 23 – Monday –
George Brand of Mattishall and Amelia Norton
of Weston were married this Morning by Banns
at Weston Church by M[r]. Maynard of Attlebridge,
who called on me after –

– *Ibid.*

JOHN DUPRÉ

May: 12. [1774]
... Whilst I was at Supper I was sent for to quell a
Riot in Holliwell – I left my Supper and went
with Holmes & Oakeley into Holliwell but it
was pretty quiet – However I met with two Gen=
=lemen [sic] going into a House & I accosted them &
I believe they were the same that made the dis=
turbance, I asked them their Names & Colleges
& desired them to go to their Colleges directly
& wait on me to Morrow Morning at New-College.
Their names were Taylor of Worcester Coll: and
Duprie of Exeter College –

May – 13 –
I breakfasted, and slept again at New-College –
M[r]. Taylor & M[r]. Duprie waited on me this morning
about 9. o'clock, but they coming without an
Epistle, I sent them back after the same, and
in about an Hour they brought me their Epistles
I gave them a Lecture & dismissed them with=
=out a Imposition being the first Offence –

– *Diary, Volume 6 (Oxford and Somerset)*

John Dupré came from an ancient Jersey family (the same family as the 'cellist, Jacqueline DuPré), the pedigree of which is in the Bulletin of the Societé Jersiaise, Volume 9, 1918. The spelling has varied from Du Pray, Du Prey, Du Pré and finally Dupré. The family was established in Jersey from at least 1480, and John (or "Jean") was the fifth of that name. Among John's ancestors on his father's side were a Jean Du Pré, Centennier of Ste Maria, & Procureur du bien public, Jean du Pré, Lieutenant de la Milice, Avocat de la Cour Royale (1691-1732). John's father was Recteur of St Clement, chaplain to the Garrisons, and Recteur of St Helier from 1761-83. John (baptised St Clements on 28 May 1752) and his two brothers Eduard and Michel, all became clergymen: Eduard succeeded his father as Rector of St Helier (1784-1823) and Michel became Rector of St Jean, though he died in Southampton in 1818.

The Dupré family seem to have been very talented and active in public life, and prone to disputes, generally due to their misuse of church or school money. Eduard had insulting verses published about him concerning his profits on the sale of communion wine; John's nephew had to fly from arrest concerning a duel; Michel got into trouble for hardly ever visiting his own parish.

In 1768, at the age of 16, John was sent to Pembroke College, Oxford, and from 1773-83 he was elected a Fellow of Exeter College. In 1783 he married Eleanor Bayley at Tring, Hertfordshire. I have a copy of her portrait; she was a very fashionably dressed and proud-looking lady and I don't envy anyone who cared to cross her! Comparing John's portrait with that of James Woodforde, I know that I should not have taken my problems to my own relative, though I am sure I could have talked to James! John was an expert at acquiring wealth and position for himself and his family. He passed over his Fellowship on marriage to his brother Michel (who in his turn saw to it that it went to a cousin on his mother's side in 1788); he married his daughters to wealthy clergymen. He himself became Headmaster of Tringhead Grammar School, Herts. and then in 1788 was appointed Headmaster of Berkhamsted, Herts., one of the Edward VI Grammar Schools. In common with many headmasters, he did not regard it as a serious crime to charge fees and acquire the free school funds for himself; he was in fact a comparatively good head of the school, an excellent teacher, and offered an unusually broad curriculum. He published sermons – described as "written with elegance" – and the book was subscribed to by both Archbishops,

13 peers of the realm and many MPs. I tried to read them in the British Library, but I'm afraid I couldn't get through them! In 1790 he obtained his doctorate; I don't know what he had to do for that, but he had an excellent reputation as a preacher. He accumulated church livings: Mentmore, Bucks., Bow Brickhill, Bucks. (and owned the patronage of that living), Toynton, Lincs. and was also curate of Tring (there were complaints there about his greed for money), curate of Farndon, Notts. and almoner to the Earl of Marchmont. His signature, needless to say, rarely appears on the Registers of any of these churches! He finally handed over the school to his son, Thomas, who very nearly proved the end of it and had to be removed by order of Chancery, according to Col. A. L. Wilson and Mr Garnon Williams who were writing a book on Berkhamsted School at the time I was researching into the Dupré family, and who gave me much helpful information. By 1813 he was living in Weymouth, and actually officiating at baptisms there.

One of his daughters married the Rev. Joseph Addison (my great great grandfather) whom John Dupré recommended as having worked in various parishes, including one in Jersey, though strangely enough his name never appeared in the Registers!

He died in 1834 at the age of 83 (unfortunately I have never been able to trace a Will); there was a very long and flowery obituary of him, describing him as "an eloquent preacher, and endowed with talents of the highest order with an intense and persevering thirst for knowledge". Most of his children became or were married to influential clergymen; likewise his grandchildren, though two of those, on the Addison side, became Generals in the British Army; mostly, I am glad to say, by their own merits!

It is strange to think that this influential and wealthy prelate was ever in the position of being reprimanded by our gentle and essentially "ordinary" friend, Parson Woodforde!

COLLATERAL RELATIONS – CORNELIUS CARDEW AND HIS FAMILY

To me, one of the most fascinating aspects of Woodforde family history is the way in which the Parson's kin continue to emerge in wholly unexpected ways. That is why we must never be in a hurry to discount anything he might say about his kinsfolk. For example, his assurances that he was related to the Yeatman family, several members of which he refers to as his cousins, deserve to be treated with respect, although so far no confirmation of that supposed familial tie has been discovered.

Until quite recently, I knew of the name Cardew only through some lines in the Woodforde *Family Book*, and a partially accurate pedigree, faintly written and not easy to decipher. Now some most valuable genealogical information has come to light, which enables us to place this family securely in the Woodforde story. They are all the more welcome as being interesting and quite distinguished people in their own right.

A preliminary word on sources. The head of this family was a diarist and also made out a periodical summary of personalities and events which he called a 'Quinquennial Review'. The diary appears to have been lost, but while still available was extensively utilized to form the basis of *A Memoir of the Reverend Cornelius Cardew, D.D.*, written by his descendant Sir Alexander Cardew, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, published in Truro, 1926. Practically all the factual detail given here, excluding that which concerns the Woodfordes, comes from this biography, for the loan of which I am indebted to the Librarian, the Public Library, Truro. The author treats his ancestor, and subject, with immense respect, calling him "the Doctor" throughout the work.

Cornelius Cardew was born on 13 February 1747/8 at Liskeard, Cornwall. His father and grandfather were both stonemasons or, as the Cornish term went, "helliers". In view of this, it is strange that in the University matriculation record of Cornelius, the father's title is recorded as "gent." – *Alumni Oxonienses, Second Series, I.* He had a great-grandmother who went mad and "was at first merry and used to wander about playing on the dulcimer". We know almost as much about the schooling of young Cornelius as we do about Woodforde's pre-Winchester education. Thus we are told that "he was first taught to read and write by his mother and then attended a little school in the Market Place at Liskeard kept by a

Mrs Andrew". Later, he was "sent to Mr Thomas Bennicke's Writing and Arithmetic School", and in July 1758, at the age of 10½, he was entered at Liskeard Grammar School.

He was fortunate in his teacher. The Rev. Richard Haydon gave a great deal of help to this extremely bright pupil, and once intervened to stop his parents taking him away from school and making a saddler's apprentice out of him. Cornelius was Head Boy when Haydon retired in May 1764. His successor John Lyne was also useful. "After consulting various persons, he sent in the name of Cornelius as a candidate for a scholarship, while the father of one of his schoolfellows gave him a letter of introduction to the authorities of Exeter College". He went into residence there in April 1766. An early task was "transcribing some Hebrew MSS" for Dr Kennicott, a Fellow of Exeter (and an acquaintance of Woodforde), who was working on the Hebrew Old Testament. In June 1768 Cornelius was set to making a catalogue of the college library, work that took him two years. His own diary of this period is largely a record of academic labour. But there exist a few personal details of his life. On a visit to London he saw "Powel the Fire Eater", a "turn" that might well have interested Woodforde and, on another plane altogether, met the Corsican nationalist hero Pasquale Paoli. He suffered a good deal from toothache and finally had his teeth "stopped with lead", a procedure which was probably as unpleasant, not to say dangerous, as it sounds. On 17 January 1770 he took his B.A. degree.

Before his ordination, and while he was still at Oxford, he was offered a living at Charlestown, U.S.A., acceptance of which, as Sir Alexander Cardew says in his delectably deadpan manner, "would have had far-reaching results for his descendants". He turned it down, "having other plans". Instead he went to Exeter (the Devonshire county town of that name, not the Oxford college), where on 2 July he began to work as usher or assistant master of the local school. He took minor orders in September of that year, and was given two curacies, which he seems not to have retained for long.

In Exeter, he lodged at the house of a haberdasher, Mr John Brutton. Cornelius was a susceptible young man. He tells us that he had been actively involved in affairs of the heart since his thirteenth year, something which may be commonplace to the sexually precocious youth of the present time but must have been highly unusual in the eighteenth century. The Bruttons had six daughters among their family of eight children, and to one of these, Elizabeth or Betsy, he

soon became engaged to be married.

He did not stay long as an assistant, for in December 1770 the Headmaster of Truro Grammar School announced his forthcoming retirement. Still supported by his Oxford sponsors, Cornelius applied for the post, to which he was appointed on 12 June 1771, at the very early age of 23. Just about a year later, on 10 June 1772, he was married to Elizabeth Brutton.

At St Erme, a few miles from Truro on the Bodmin road, there was a vacant curacy. He applied for this on the day after he had been accepted at the Grammar School. But he ran into trouble after the man who had agreed to take him on died suddenly, replaced by a Dr Wynne, who announced that he did not intend to pass more than three or four weeks a year in the parish, creating a situation which imperiously called for the services of a full-time curate. But the bishop of the diocese did not want Cornelius at St Erme, as he favoured another candidate named Harris, and at one point actually ordered him to leave the curacy. Cornelius stuck to his guns, and after a wrangle which lasted some two years was at length left in possession. He was to hold St Erme, as curate and rector, for sixty years. (Dr Wynne finally ended up buried in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey, a very long way from Cornwall.)

Teacher and clergyman, Cornelius led a busy life. As Headmaster of the Grammar School, he seems to have come perilously close to the ultimate pedagogic horror, the unrestrained eighteenth century flagellator. We hear that he acquired a reputation for "severity". If he was notorious in that way at that time, there must assuredly have been little or no cruelty of which he was not capable. Even Sir Alexander Cardew has to admit that he was a convinced believer in the efficacy of corporal punishment and "wielded the rod freely", although, as befits this devoted work of family piety, he at once adds "we may assume that the Doctor, if severe, was just and that his severity was never pushed to such lengths as to forfeit the respect and goodwill of his pupils". Well, of course we can assume that, if we want to, but Cornelius' own diary testifies against him and tells quite a different story. As early as 1773, one year after his appointment, complaints were being made about him on this score. Between 1773 and 1802 eleven pupils actually absconded, and this in a scholastic establishment where there were never more than twenty-five boarders at a time. He also had trouble with some parents over the way he mistreated their children. In our efforts to ascertain what kind of a man he was, we might look at his portrait

by John Opie, painted in 1778 when he was just past thirty. The picture shows a long oval face, the hair combed forward over the forehead and a striking but faintly sinister expression. Not altogether a bad looking man, but I don't think I should have enjoyed being a pupil in his school. A much later portrait (1830), by Edward Opie, gives Cornelius a frankly villainous expression, with what appears to be the shaven skull of a Victorian convict. Indeed, he looks a bit like Magwitch, popping up among the tombstones in the brilliant first chapter of *Great Expectations.*

But he was undoubtedly a pillar of his own particular society and naturally involved in the local politics of the district. At various times he was a Capital Burgess, twice Sheriff's Chaplain, and twice Mayor. Politically he was an opposition Whig, belonging to the group led by Charles James Fox and supporting the Prince of Wales against his father. Sir Alexander says he never had any time for the prince as a human being; but during the Regency crisis provoked by the king's mental illness in 1789 affairs of state seemed to be running strongly in his favour. Cornelius, an ambitious and striving man, hoped for preferment when, after being made one of the prince's Chaplains, he was given "repeated and solemn promises that he should have the living of Lanteglos". In spite of a journey he made, all the way to London, to press his claim, in the end the benefice was given to someone else. But the Prince of Wales turned up trumps in the end, as we shall see.

Cornelius' first marriage did not last long. Elizabeth had poor health, her afflictions all stemming from pregnancy and childbirth, which the quite rudimentary medical practice of the time could do nothing to cure, or even alleviate. Her clinical record is that of a woman who probably should not have had children. But there was no practical possibility, at that time or for long after, of sparing her an experience that was always dangerous and ultimately fatal to her. She had "milk fever" after the birth of her first child, while subsequent to another birth she was seized with violent convulsions and continued very ill for a fortnight. At last these obstetrical abnormalities were too much for her. In February 1777, four days after the delivery of her fourth son, she died at the age of 27. Two of the children survived.

Bereaved, Cornelius spent only a short time as a widower. In November 1778 he made "proposals", using bizarrely enough his late wife's sister as a go-between, to Mary Lukey Warren, the 25-year-old daughter of Sam and Blanch Warren – he was a

solicitor in Truro, who had died the year before. Mary was an orphan, her mother being long dead. Disputes broke out between Cornelius and her brother, Thomas Warren, who carried on his late father's legal practice, but these were eventually smoothed over, and on 20 December 1778 a terse entry in his diary records: "Was married to Miss Warren". In addition to Elizabeth's two boys Cornelius supported a large family of five sons and four daughters, an expense which goes some way towards an explanation of his search for preferment.

In 1782 he gained the benefice of Lelant, or Ewny Lelant, worth £200 a year, in the St Ives district. As this is too far from Truro to admit of his residing there and at the same time looking after St Erme and ruling the Grammar School, he put in a curate at £45, the wage he himself received as curate of St Erme. The going rate for curates was perhaps higher in Cornwall than in some other parts of the country. In 1804 the Rector of St Erme, Dr Wynne, at last kept his appointment with the Abbey cloisters, and Cornelius was given the living. Next year he resigned from the Grammar School. The chronological order of these moves possibly suggests that there had been some criticism in Truro about his activities as a pluralist. He went with his family into residence at St Erme, where he stayed for the rest of his life, retaining both benefices. He is noted as having paid only one visit to Lelant during the long period of his incumbency there, and that was for the purpose of seeing about his tithes.

In 1808 Cornelius lost his second wife, who was "suddenly taken ill in the night" of 5 September, and died about a week later. As he put it: "at about 5 o-clock I was deprived of my dearest wife". He sent an obituary announcement to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which is more than he had done for his first wife, and this was printed in the issue for February 1809 (Vol. 79, p. 182):

> 1808 – Sept. 11 – At St Erme parsonage, Cornwall, after a short but severe illness, Mrs Mary Lukey Cardew, wife of the Rev. Cornelius Cardew, D.D., Rector of that Parish. No event of the like mournful nature has, for a long time in that neighbourhood, occasioned more deserved regret or excited stronger sympathy. Her heart was warm and her benevolence unaffectedly diffusive; and whilst, in the relative situations of wife and parent, she evinced herself to be most attentive and indulgent, in the more extended circle of society, in which her life had been actively and meritoriously engaged, she, in an eminent degree, conciliated esteem and honour.

He alluded to this, and to the death about the same time of two of his sons, in the Quinquennial Review for 1811; and long afterwards, in 1826, put up a memorial tablet to her in the church at St Erme.

The eldest son, John Haydon Cardew, born in 1773, was like his father at Exeter College, where he was an Exhibitioner. He took Orders and, presumably as Chaplain, was attached to a naval vessel, *HMS Standard*, with which he made a voyage to St Helena. He became the curate of St Gluvias, Penryn, near Falmouth. In 1797 the young man was given a sort of consolation prize to reward his father over the disappointment about Lanteglos. This was the living of Curry Mallet in Somerset, to which he was presented by the Prince of Wales. He later became also vicar of Salcombe, Devon.

The Curry villages lie midway between Taunton and Castle Cary. It is not known precisely when Haydon Cardew went to reside in Somerset, as he appears to have continued to live at Penryn for some years. The friendship between the Cardew and Woodforde families may have developed naturally from the chance acquaintance of clerical neighbours; but there was to be in the following generation also a marriage tie. Cornelius Cardew's sister-in-law Dinah (or "Di") Brutton who had, as we saw, helped Cornelius to woo his second wife, was married to Thomas Braithwaite, a naval captain and former flag lieutenant to Admiral Howe. In 1807 their daughter Mary married none other than Thomas, eldest son of our Parson's detested Cousin Frank.

Cornelia was the third of the Cardew daughters, born in 1793, and attended a school in Exeter kept by a Miss White, leaving at the age of 16, a year after the death of her mother. Next summer, 1810, Cornelius took the three youngest girls (their elder sister had been married in 1807) on a jaunt to Oxford and London. They went first to Taunton and then to Ansford, where they stayed at the Parsonage. Thomas Woodforde, who had married Mary Braithwaite back in 1807, no doubt had his own household, but his younger brother Francis (b. 1786) would with equal probability have still been living with his parents at Ansford Parsonage. This may have been the first time the young people had met.

The holidaymakers spent ten days at Ansford, and then went on to Oxford and stayed there for another ten days. Then they went to Greenwich where Di Braithwaite, now a widow, was Matron of the famous naval hospital, and Cornelius was invited to preach in the chapel. They proceeded to Windsor, the king being at a service in the Royal Chapel, and saw Eton College. They returned via

Andover and Salisbury, reaching Ansford again on the third day. When the others continued their homeward journey, Cornelia was left behind.

Perhaps it was in the quiet time after her father and sisters had gone, very good for long, intimate talks as they strolled round the garden that the more long-standing members of this Society remember so well and with so much pleasure, that Francis and Cornelia came to know each other. The date of her return to her Cornish home is not known, but two years later, on 6 June 1812, Harriet Woodforde, the sister of Thomas and Francis (she would marry at Lyme Regis George Thomas Chamberlayne, a later rector of Ansford, after the Woodfordes) came to pay a return visit to the Cardews in Cornwall. Then she and Cornelia went to stay with Haydon Cardew, the latter's half-brother.

Cornelia returned to her home at St Erme on 1 August, and on that same day "Mr Francis Woodforde declared himself by letter". This was all very seemly and proper, and particularly so if the proposal was addressed to Cornelia's father, not to herself. On 3 September Francis arrived in person and was formally accepted.

Cornelius Cardew, however, was not happy. Perhaps this daughter, to whom he had given the feminine form of his own Christian name, was the best-loved of his children. Although he had given his consent to the engagement, he plainly did not think much of Francis as a prospective son-in-law. On 24 March 1814, he entered in his diary: "Cornelia's beau remiss in writing".

At this a really frightful thought must strike us. Could this sort of thing actually run in families? Have we got Parson James and Betsy White all over again? It is a great relief to hear that the marriage did come off, as planned, although not until three years had gone by, a delay perhaps explained by the reluctance of the father to see it ratified. But Cornelius, with whatever misgivings, rose nobly to the occasion, giving his daughter a "marriage portion" of a thousand pounds, and an extra hundred guineas for "paraphernalia", which I suppose is the same thing as the Victorian lady meant when she spoke of her trousseau.

If Cornelius disapproved of Francis even before the wedding, he did not like him any better after it. In 1821 he wrote plainly: "I am not indeed without some apprehensions about my poor Cornelia, she has been miserably disappointed in the connection she has formed, but I trust God will sanctify whatever trials she may endure

and that all may finally operate for her good". He does not sound as though he had managed to convince himself that this would happen. Five years later he noted: " A cloud still seems to hang over the prospect[s] of my daughter Cornelia, but I trust she will patiently bear any distresses which it is not in the power of her friends to alleviate". His final reference to her is in the Quinquennial Review for 1831, the last year of his life. There he says: "I cannot but grieve for the unfortunate marriage of one of my daughters". This, after sixteen years of presumed marital disharmony, is a clear enough intimation that the union is beyond hope and that all a woman trapped in an unhappy marriage in this way can do is to bear it as patiently as she can, and look upon it as a life-sentence. But whatever Cornelia's woes, and however wretched her existence, at least her life was not shortened. She lasted until the age of 87, outlived all her brothers and sisters, and survived both her daughters by many years. Francis, the unsatisfactory husband (virtually nothing is known about him from the Woodforde side of the record), died in 1867, and was buried at Ansford with other members of his family. I do not know if this might suggest that he had not been living in the same home as his wife.

This unfortunate marriage produced three children. Francis Henry Woodforde M.D. (1818-90), the eldest child and only son, was a highly prosperous physician in Taunton, where he owned and ran two private "lunatic asylums". Dr R. E. H. Woodforde in the *Family Book* tells us that he was "much interested in Natural History and he had a large collection of British birds", most of which he doubtless murdered himself, in the grand tradition of Victorian naturalists. In retirement he lived at Ansford Parsonage. Dr Woodforde again:

> As children we were afraid of him because he had his grave dug outside his study window. He was however buried in Ansford Churchyard.

His eldest child, and only son, Francis Cardew Woodforde, was a teacher, and eventually attained the dignity of becoming Headmaster of Market Drayton Grammar School, in Shropshire. But he shared his father's interest in the flora and fauna of the countryside, and reached a point at which bashing the simpler classics into the heads of recalcitrant schoolboys was far less attractive than trying to capitalize on his hobby. So he gave up

scholastic lore, and was for a time quite a well-known writer on his favourite subjects. Francis Henry's daughter Alice was the lady who married the highly eccentric clergyman Lorenzo Player Fedden (Journal XXIV, 4). She is said to have died in 1890, the same year as her father. This cannot possibly be right. Dr Woodforde says: "I have visited them; a curious old couple". But her parents were not married before 1845, so in 1890 she could not have been older than in her early-to-middle forties. She was the last Woodforde to have occupied Ansford Parsonage. After her death Fedden, who survived until 1931, married his housekeeper. It is related of them that for twenty years they did not speak to one another, communicating by the companionable and ingenious contrivance of exchanging notes. It is a safe bet that his missives to her resembled the famous "chops and tomato sauce" of Mr Pickwick to his landlady more than they could have been like more conventional marital correspondence.

Neither of Francis Henry's sisters matched him for length of life. Emily, the elder, married General Mountsteven of Bodmin in 1836 and died in 1847, the year her younger sister married the globe-trotting Carter (Journal XXVIII, 4). With a name like that one might have expected Emily's spouse to be as famous as the Duke of Wellington; and it is easy to imagine Napoleon clumping morosely round St Helena and muttering through clenched teeth: "Parbleu! Ma foi! If it hadn't been for that scélerat de Montetienne, I'd still be dictating terms to all Europe!". The environs of Bodmin would be beautified by the Mountsteven Column, and there would (of course!) be a Mountsteven Society patronized by peppery retired colonels all re-fighting the battles of long ago. But poor old Mountsteven was unluckily born too late. By the time he reached high rank in the army, a military career led nowhere but to inevitable retirement and a meagre existence on half-pay, rather than either imperishable fame or a glorious death on the battlefield.

But all that is mere fantasy from which we gladly return to our starting point in the eighteenth century. Cornelius Cardew, if perhaps not quite so admirable a character as his descendant believed him to be when celebrating his virtues in what I have called a work of family piety, was clearly a very interesting man, who would be much better known today, if only his full diaries had been preserved. Directly descended from him, or collaterally related through three or four prolific West Country families, a huge crowd of people carry on his ancestral genes. Many married cousins, and

the various lines became interrelated many times. So many of them were there, that a hundred and thirty-four descendants of Cornelius Cardew saw service in the Great War, plus seven from the United States. Among this total were five who bore the name of Woodforde.

BATH IN WOODFORDE'S TIME

(After dinner talk on 10 May 1997 during the Society's Frolic in Bath)

Woodforde, as you will all be aware, was familiar with Bath throughout his life, presumably first seeing it as a boy and from then on often revisiting it on his journeys between his Somerset family home and his other main residences in Oxford and Norfolk. He came to know Bath's streets and landmarks very well, especially the half-dozen or more inns and lodgings he stayed at over the years, the coaching services in and out of the city, and of course the shops he sometimes patronised – buying on different occasions such items as fish, pheasants, a melon, silver knee buckles, bargain-price lengths of muslin for dresses, two dozen fish hooks, a couple of new pamphlets, and a riding cane for his nephew Bill which, alas, soon broke in two when they tried putting it to use. Woodforde acted as guide to his niece Nancy at Bath, showing her the sights. He visited the churches, coffee houses, and at least one bank. On one occasion, as he took a stroll in the surrounding meadows, he encountered two young prostitutes and gave them some good advice and a shilling. And naturally he learned the route to 1 Portland Place, built in the 1780s in the upper town, where his old Norfolk neighbours the Custances went to live, and that breezy corner just below it where Nancy's hat blew off in a sudden squall and spoilt her precious hairdo as they went to pay their friends a visit. But in his diary Woodforde affords us only a glimpse of eighteenth-century Bath. What was the rest of it really like?

Centemporary artists and novelists were not entirely wrong in the picture they painted of the Georgian spa, but of course *their* viewpoint too was partial and offers only hints and impressions of

the whole truth. What I shall try to do briefly in this talk, then, and what I attempted in my anthology *Voices of Eighteenth-Century Bath*, is to present a somewhat more balanced historical account without the idealisation and nostalgia that too often gets in the way. So let me begin by pointing out that the Bath that Woodforde experienced was a rapidly growing place. In 1700 it had still looked like a small West Country town, mostly clustered within its mediaeval walls, with narrow streets and Cotswold-style stone buildings. At most its resident population was then 2500-3000 people, though in the summer months that number was swollen appreciably by visitors coming to bathe in the various hot baths and to indulge in the new medical fashion for drinking the waters. In sharp contrast, by 1800 Bath ranked among the dozen largest cities in the country. Its population had increased by ten or twelve times. The built-up area now spilled out across the surrounding fields, and over the river, and climbed theatrically up the hillsides in Classical terraces which rose above the smoky atmosphere of the lower town and provided splendid panoramas of the Avon valley. Around 1790 Bath could be described as "the most admired city in Europe" and perhaps that was not too extravagant a claim. Once, its visiting season had lasted barely 2-3 months in the summer, but by the later eighteenth century high season had stretched to a full nine months from September round to June, and summer was the slack time. This lengthy season was indeed essential if the huge investment in accommodation, amenities, services and entertainments was to be at all profitable. In the past, the approach roads had been difficult and dangerous and coaches from London had taken three days with two overnight stops to complete the hundred miles. By the end of the century the turnpikes had made travel quick enough to do the run from London easily within a day. Bath was a very powerful magnet that drew tens of thousands of visitors annually from all parts of Britain and Ireland, even from the Continent and the colonies. They poured in with their domestic servants and sometimes their children, putting up at the dozen or so good inns and hundreds of lodging houses or going to stay with relatives and friends. And on top of all that were the people in transit (like our diarist so often) and the daily influx from the surrounding districts as people came in for the provisions market and shops, or may be to meet friends, consult a doctor, do a business deal, or have some fun. Don't forget either that from about the middle of the century Bath was becoming a favourite place to retire to. Accommodation may have been on the expensive side but the cost of living was

otherwise surprisingly reasonable for a place whose amenities compared favourably even with London's.

Woodforde witnessed much of this growth. Until 1750 expansion had been fairly modest, though Queen Square and the Parades had been built by then. The period of really fast development began soon after the mid-century. Over the next few years, in great spurts of speculative building, the suburbs spread enormously, above all in Walcot parish on the slopes of Lansdown which grew into one of the richest pieces of real estate in the country. A complete upper town came into being, linked to the old city centre by a new thoroughfare, Milsom Street, laid out in the 1760s. One result was to shift Bath's centre of gravity northwards – which in turn threatened the commercial interests of the lower town. A major reason for the Bath Improvement Act of 1789 was therefore to revitalise the city centre and help beat off the challenge of the mushrooming suburbs, for the centre was where the Corporation derived most of its income, from its holdings of property and its monopoly on the hot springs. Private developers on the other hand found their chief opportunities on the outskirts of Bath. Every time Woodforde returned he must have been struck by the fresh streets and houses, by scaffolded buildings in progress, newly excavated ground, heaps of building materials, and by the thunder of wagons and carts carrying stone and brick, timber and tiles, sand and lime, lead piping and window glass, and the sound of sawing, hammering and bawling workmen. At times even the city centre looked under siege: the Market place area in the 1760s and 1770s when old properties were demolished to make room for the new market, the Georgian Guildhall, and the road through to Pulteney Bridge; and again in the early 1790s as the old cramped Pump Room came down, Cheap Street and Stall Street were both widened, and a new colonnaded street was pierced through the ancient district of Bimbery to link up with the Cross Bath. On his visit in 1793, and even more in 1795, Woodforde would have admired the fine rebuilt Pump Room and the new private baths alongside it. In scarcely two decades the cluttered centre he used to know had been transformed, opened up, and given a Neoclassical dress. One bonus of all the digging of foundations had been the unearthing of substantial Roman antiquities which certainly excited some classically educated visitors and probably interested Woodforde himself.

There were some, inevitably, who deplored the way Bath was being overbuilt". Yet much unspoilt countryside remained on the spa's

very doorstep. Over the river, for example, Widcombe and Lyncombe were still delightful retreats, loud in summer with nightingales and boasting a couple of rural pleasure gardens with access to springs of mineral water. The healthy surrounding hills – notably Claverton Down and Lansdown – retained their old popularity with horseriders and for carriage outings, while the urban area itself was interspersed with trees and wedges of green that gave Bath something of a garden-city feel. Just across the river lay a long-established pleasure garden, Spring Gardens, where refreshments were sold and Sally Lunns were first popularised, and which held public breakfastings and concerts, and on summer evenings had displays of coloured lamps and firework shows. In the 1780s a rival pleasure garden sprang into life, Villa Gardens, and then in the 1790s two further garden projects were launched. Woodforde visited one of them, Sydney Gardens, and deemed it "very pretty". And he would know the popular rendezvous of Crescent Fields, just below Royal Crescent, which Betsy Sheridan called "the present Mall of Bath, and I think the pleasantest I ever was in".

If it was to maintain its position as the leading leisure resort in the country against growing competition from other spas like Cheltenham or the up-and-coming seaside resorts such as Weymouth and Brighton, Bath had to keep its public amenities up to the mark: not so easy in the poorer districts of the city, though in the smarter parts it managed a good standard, with smooth pavements, regular street cleansing, and decent illumination at night from public and private lamps. However, the streets themselves were surfaced with small limestone blocks that quickly ground down under the pounding of carriage wheels and the hooves of countless horses. This produced a powdery dust which turned to mud when it rained. And if you add to this the mess from building operations, the quantities of ashes from domestic coal fires, the droppings of horses and of animals passing through the streets to the slaughterhouses, then you see why, in bad weather, fashionable women in long skirts sometimes wore metal hoops called pattens under their shoes to raise themselves above the dirt – or, failing that, called for a sedan chair. Sedans were something else Woodforde could not have missed, for by 1794 the byelaws permitted as many as 250 chairs to ply for hire, rather necessary in Bath where many streets were quite steep and carriages had no really effective braking systems. There were designated sedan chair

stands, rather like taxi ranks, but since it required two chairmen to carry each passenger this was always quite an expensive mode of conveyance. Did Woodforde ever use one? (He would surely have noted the price in his diary if he had). He might also have observed the arrival of another personal vehicle on the streets, the invalid wheelchair later known as a Bath chair. At night any moving vehicle had to carry an illuminated oil lamp or else be accompanied by a link boy with a flaming torch. As you go around Bath you can sometimes still see outside houses the snuffers (like inverted metal icecream cones) used for dousing the flames. At night too the watchmen kept a look-out for fires and malefactors. By national standards Bath was a relatively law-abiding place, but it was far from crime-free. Cases of assault, brawling and drunkenness often came before the magistrates, but offences against property were considered more serious and ranged from housebreaking and shoplifting to acts of vandalism when windows and street-lamps were broken, sedan chairs slashed, and brass fittings wrenched from doors. It was a constant source of irritation that these offences, as well as the occasional murder or infanticide, could not be prosecuted any nearer than the Taunton and other Somerset assizes. The city's own gaol catered only for petty criminals and unfortunate debtors.

In social terms there was a glaring contrast between the ostentatiously affluent and the wretchedly poor. At the bottom of the heap were the vagrants who turned up each season at Bath to beg on the streets despite the risk of being publicly whipped. But the spa had its own sizeable underclass of poor: not just the unemployed, sick, disabled and elderly, but all the ill-paid artisans, journeymen and casual labourers who faced immediate hardship whenever a bad harvest or cold winter forced up food prices. In fact, some years the Corporation had to arrange for cheap distribution of food and fuel to avert the danger of rioting. But only once did a really grave riot occur and that was for a different reason, a local manifestation of the Gordon Riots against Roman Catholics in 1780 when a new Catholic chapel was burnt down by a mob, giving every visitor and property owner in Bath a frightful scare. The incident would surely have been reported in the *Norwich Mercury* and *Norfolk Chronicle*, and one can imagine Woodforde at far-off Weston Longville throwing up his hands in horror when he read it. Should real disorder break out at Bath the magistrates had only the parish constables and the sedan chairmen to call on,

unless it happened that troops were temporarily stationed in town or a company of wartime militia was available to help.

One social problem lay in the numbers of deprived children, the nearly destitute street urchins referred to by one writer as "untaught ... almost savage, cursing, swearing and fighting in the streets all day, and many without a home at night". Some saw a partial solution in the Sunday School movement which had reached Bath in the 1780s with a policy of reforming working-class morals and inculcating habits that would lead to regular employment. By 1790 many hundreds of local poor children were being taught scripture, psalm singing, spinning, kitting and simple dressmaking. Their Sunday lessons were rounded off by marching them in crocodiles to the Abbey Church for a short service. *They* at least saw inside a church. The *adult* poor, by contrast, found it difficult to attend church even if they wished to, and the more religious-minded among them turned instead to the Methodist and Dissenting chapels. The Anglican parish churches were mostly middle-class preserves, while the various private subscription chapels were, as one contemporary phrased it, "for the convenience of the rich, and the emolument of their respective builders [and] absolutely shut against the Poor". Walcot parish, with its enormously swollen population, was in the worst case, and it took until 1798 before the new Free Church (later called Christ Church) opened specifically to admit servants and poorer citizens to the non-paying area of the nave. Woodforde probably heard about this development either through the Custances who lived not far away, or because one of the prime movers behind the initiative was an absentee Norfolk clergyman then living in Bath, the Rev. William Leigh, rector of Little Plumstead. Otherwise, as I said, there were the Nonconformists, ranging from Baptists and Moravians to Unitarians and Quakers, and the Roman Catholics, whose numbers increased notably in the 1790s when many French émigrés, refugees from the Revolution across the Channel, sought a temporary home at Bath. Meanwhile the City Corporation remained a bastion of orthodoxy, going so far in 1790 as to instruct the city's two MPs to oppose any relaxation of the laws against Dissenters. The same body also disliked the anti-Slavery movement. Too many local interests were obscurely tied to the slave trade, and at least some of Bath's splendid Georgian architecture must have been financed by income from slave plantations across the Atlantic. Certainly black people could be

seen at the spa, usually working as servants.

There were many sides to Bath. It is true that people coming for pleasure, lured by the glamour or the hope of raising their social status or even finding a marriage partner, far outnumbered the seekers after health, yet the spa's medical reputation still brought many sick, crippled, pain-stricken and dying people in desperate need of a cure. Invalids were an everyday sight, and the dozens of physicians, surgeons, apothecaries and fringe practitioners like dentists, for instance, found Bath something of a goldmine. The continuing importance of the mysterious hot waters is shown by the construction of the lavish new Pump Room in the 1790s and in the five bathing establishments. The General Hospital was still a curiosity in not serving Bath citizens, only outsiders, but gradually other medical institutions had arisen to treat the local sick. The well-to-do, of course, resorted to private practitioners.

In education the place had its ancient Grammar School, where the curriculum centred on Latin, and a highly-thought-of Bluecoats or charity school for boys and girls alike. Perhaps more interesting were the girls' finishing schools for which Bath was well-known, and the boys' schools that aimed to equip their pupils for careers in commerce or the armed forces. And besides all these must be mentioned the innumerable instructors in useful subjects and polite accomplishments like foreign languages, music, dancing, drawing and riding.

As a regional centre Bath could offer many specialist services. You could find people there to survey your land, carve a memorial tablet, auction your goods, sell you a horse, provide fire insurance cover, advise you on a law suit. Quite outstanding were the retailing facilities. The provisions market counted among the best in the kingdom and it is easy to think of Woodforde, so keen on the inner man, savouring the mouthwatering produce on display. But he was no mean connoisseur of the shops either, and every sort existed – from humble chandlers and pawnbrokers all the way to luxury gift shops which could sell you anything from a chiming clock or a jewelled snuffbox to a blunderbuss. All the market traders, the shops, the street hawkers and door-to-door salesmen depended on a complex network of suppliers and a constant flow of commodities, not simply from the neighbourhood but from the port of Bristol, South Wales, the industrial Midlands and North, and above all from London, the biggest manufacturing place of all and the great fashion centre and trend-setter. Coach and wagon

services, as we know from Woodforde's own record, left from and arrived at the principal inns at all hours of the day and night, and the postal services (which Bath had done so much to improve nationally) must have been kept humming.

My time is nearly at an end and I've still said little about many aspects of eighteenth century Bath, not even the celebrated diversions and entertainments, or what the caricaturist Rowlandson called the "Comforts of Bath". But these are perhaps familiar anyway from the pages of Smollett, Jane Austen and others. I have tried to give some impression of Bath in its seedier as well as its genteel circumstances, and of course I will be happy to consider any questions you may have, whether on the management of the balls, the incidence of suicide; or any points more relevant to Woodforde. Take gambling, for instance. In June 1772 Woodforde's brother John travelled over to Bath for a cockfight and won £50 in bets. Gambling is another dimension of Bath and could provide material for another hour or two's talk, so better not tempt the speaker too far!

I'll end by reminding you that Woodforde's final look at Bath was in the shadow of economic depression and the wars with France. With the financial crisis many of the hectic building projects came to a sudden halt. Terraces and crescents were temporarily left half-built, sometimes for the duration of the war. Yet with the seaside resorts on the South Coast dangerous and Continental travel out of the question, Bath was more popular than ever. The Duke of York took a house in Royal Crescent and at times it seemed you could hardly move without stumbling over some titled personage. Over a thousand nobility, gentry and military and naval officers would attend the prestigious Master-of-Ceremonies assemblies and balls. All this helps to give the lie to the theory sometimes advanced that Bath was already by then in social decline. In reality the spa remained fashionable for two or three decades longer, its fortunes really beginning to deteriorate only from the 1820s. So we can say with confidence that Woodforde knew Bath in its heyday. The only shame is that he didn't tell us even more about it.

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 £12.50 (overseas members £25) becomes due on 1 January and should be forwarded to the Treasurer, Dr David Case, 25 Archery Square, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7JA.

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