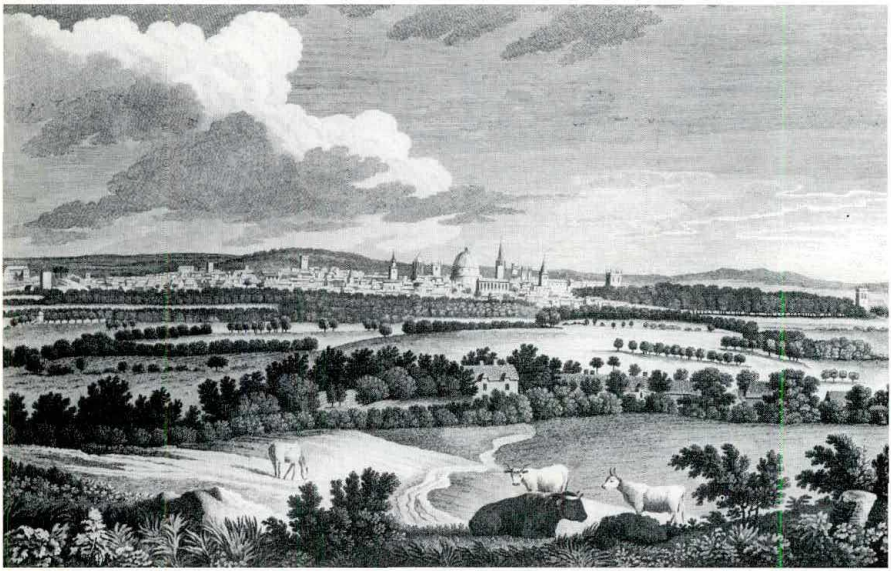
PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal



John Malchair: OXFORD FROM THE SOUTH,
OXFORD ALMANACK, 1767
(Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

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'The farmyard must be cleared away entirely, and planted out to shut out the blacksmith's shop. The house must be turned to front the east, instead of the north; the entrance and principal rooms, I mean, must be on that side, where the view is really very pretty; I am sure it may be done. And *there* must be your approach, through what is at present the garden. You must make a new garden, at what is now the back of the house; which will be giving it the best aspect in the world, sloping to the south-east. The ground seems precisely formed for it ... The meadows beyond what *will be* the garden ... must be all laid together, of course; very pretty meadows they are, finely sprinkled with timber. They belong to the living, I suppose; if not you must purchase them. Then the stream, something must be done with the stream; but I could not quite determine what. I had two or three ideas.'

'And I have two or three ideas also,' said Edmund, 'and one of them is, that very little of your plan for Thornton Lacey will ever be put in practice. I must be satisfied with rather less ornament and beauty. I think the house and premises may be made comfortable, and given the air of a gentleman's residence without any very heavy expense, and that must suffice me; and I hope may suffice all who care about me.'

(Conversation between Henry Crawford and Edmund Bertram in – Jane Austen: *Mansfield Park*)

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EDITORIAL

Writing this at the end of the warmest October on record made me think that perhaps even in respect to climate, which we have always tended to treat as one of the constants of modern history, the world of James Woodforde has been lost. It is true that long before 'global warming' became a media cliché thrown at every flood and heat-wave that comes along, Professor H. H. Lamb of the Climate Research Unit of UEA was writing books with titles such as *The Changing Climate* and *Climate, History and the Modern World.* Nevertheless, it is only in recent years – and only on this side of the Atlantic, apparently – that awareness has been raised. This frost-free October drew my attention to the Weston autumns recorded in the Diary. Of mists there seem to have been few but of mellow fruitfulness, in the form of 'pecks' and 'baskets' of apples, plenty. We can, of course, rely upon Woodforde the gardener to mention the frequency of frost, often qualified with some such epithet as 'small' or 'sharp'. He also employed, as we still do today, however inappropriately, the concept of the seasonal norm – 'Very dry, and warm Weather for the Season' etc. A study of Woodforde through the seasons would surely make for fascinating reading: any offers?

At the time of writing I have read the reviews of Richard Holmes's *Redcoat: the British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* but not the book itself. I therefore do not know whether he tells us what the eighteenth century British infantryman in the Mediterranean, India or the Caribbean wore beneath the heat of the sun. This is a question which struck me during the summer as, perspiring freely, in shorts, open-neck shirt and sandals, I made my way around the splendidly preserved – and British – Fort Marlborough on the island of Minorca.

A book that I have recently read is concerned, in part at least, with another island with a British military presence at a later date, Zanzibar. Yvonne Bird, our Newsletter editor, has discovered a wonderful collection of Victorian family letters which she has edited to produce *A Quaker Family in India and Zanzibar, 1863-65.* The writer of most of the letters, Mrs Bird's great-great aunt, is at this time a young mother whose concerns are mostly domestic and maternal but her acute powers of observation, enlivened by a fine, painterly eye, present us with a vivid picture of mid-Victorian life in the tropics. It can be obtained from the publisher, Sessions of

York (01904 659224), for £12.50; excellent value.

A hundred years before these letters were being sent from Karachi ('Kurrachee') and Zanzibar, James Woodforde was wrestling with the academic exercises, the disputations, necessary for gaining the MA degree. Robin Gibson, who in the past has helped us to place Woodforde and his Somerset friends in the context of the Castle Cary of their time, now helps us to understand the background of the Diarist's Oxford, pointing, not least, to the ways in which New College was atypical of the University in general. The remainder of this edition is devoted to Three Other Clergymen. Margaret Sharman has found in the Norwich Record Office the sale catalogue of the goods of Woodforde's one-time friend George Howes (1709-86), enabling her to guide us around the furnished and equipped Hockering Parsonage. Adrian White continues to relate the story of the Revd Dr Edward Nares. Now Regius Professor of History at Oxford but will he ever get the mitre he clearly believes he deserves? Clifford Bird has rediscovered the reminiscences of the Revd Canon Walter Hubert Marcon (1850-1933), Rector of Edgefield, whose stories of country life in nineteenth century Norfolk provide a link, at once instructive and entertaining, with a world in which on an October day in 1782 our Diarist would write:

To Cason for a Sack of Nonparells p^{d}	0: 10: 6
To Clerk Hewitt this Evening for a Tub of Gin w^{ch}	
he brought in a Basket, smuggled Gin – p^{d}	0: 5: 0
Gave him for his trouble of carrying over –	0: 1: 0

Which we could not read were it not for the earlier publication of *The Diary of a Country Parson.* In 1979 George Bunting looked back to the reception originally afforded to John Beresford's book in an article reproduced here: 'A Review of Reviews' reviewed.

Talking of reviews, if any member(s) would like to provide a review of the Society's newly published Volume 12, I should be very happy to hear from them.

MARTIN BRAYNE

WOODFORDE AT OXFORD

Oxford must have had a big influence on Woodforde when one considers that he was there for such a large part of his young adult life. Initially he was there as an undergraduate for five years from 1758 at the age of eighteen. He then returned for short periods until he took his MA in 1767 and continued to return nearly every year for short visits up to 1773 when he moved back to New College as a permanent resident until obtaining his Norfolk living in 1775.

During this time at Oxford, his diary gives some account of his activities and yet the entries are rather less revealing than in the rest of the diaries. His life at the university does not involve the day to day contact with friends and neighbours within an established community and so it is difficult to become acquainted with his contacts. It is also difficult to appreciate the meaning of many entries about college and university procedures in the eighteenth century.

However, the diary does provide an insight into the nature of university life and there are many interesting references to the social life of undergraduates. Unfortunately, Woodforde's style of reporting leaves out much of his social life which would have been of great interest. For example, he rarely mentions his daily dinners taken in the college hall and so we have no record of ordinary college fare nor of the atmosphere in the great hall on these occasions. Yet he carefully notes his companions at those meals taken privately such as breakfasts and suppers although omitting the nature of the meal unless it is rather special. Presumably he felt that simple fare and the daily dinners in hall were too routine in nature to deserve mention.

But the most important omission concerns the prime purpose for being at Oxford. I have long wondered why he makes virtually no mention of his studies. He does record, albeit briefly, the various tests and exams he had to take, but we have no impression of their nature nor of the degree of difficulty. Since Woodforde is usually quite meticulous in reporting his activities one might deduce that he did no studying at all. Yet, considering his rather sober and serious character this seems unlikely, even though he was a young man who liked his pleasures. But there is absolutely no mention of any reading or writing activity nor of meeting with a tutor. This seems very odd since the reference books indicate that there were appointed tutors at the college during the eighteenth century.

Perhaps they were few in number and were not generally used or made available. It seemed worthwhile to investigate this subject and perhaps thereby gain a better impression of Woodforde himself during these formative years.

The Structure of the University

During the eighteenth century the number of colleges at Oxford varied somewhat around twenty as some of the halls of residence were converted into full colleges. The colleges had a large amount of autonomy and although the university, under the direction of the Vice Chancellor, was responsible for the formal examinations and granting of degrees, the colleges had a strong influence over the final exams and whether degrees were to be awarded to individual students.

The head of the college was a semi-permanent appointment, usually by election from one of the senior members of that college. Most heads remained in their position for the rest of their lives even when they gained other appointments, so that to be both Bishop or Dean or Professor and head of a college was not abnormal. The head was responsible for all aspects of running the college including the education, welfare and discipline of the students. He was assisted by a group of senior fellows who were normally resident at the college and each was given some specific responsibility. At New College those with an educational role were called Deans. There were five of them: for Civil Law, Divinity, Arts (two) and Canon Law. However, these responsibilities seem to have been largely notional at New College. The remaining senior fellows were given a more administrative role.

Most of the students of the university were undergraduates studying for the first (Bachelor) degree but there would also be many graduates in part-time residence who were preparing to take the second (Master's) degree. The undergraduates may be regarded in two categories: Foundationers who were sponsored and supported financially by their college; these were usually called "Scholars" but some colleges called them by different names, such as "Demies" at Magdalen College. The other category were students who had to pay their way and they were called "Commoners". Many of these came from wealthy backgrounds and were called "Gentlemen Commoners". They were distinguished prominently from other students in various ways; they wore silk gowns and velvet caps and were given many other privileges in their living and

dining accommodations. There was very little if any pressure on these wealthy young men to study or attend any lectures.

Many of the ordinary commoners hoped to obtain one of the coveted scholarships and so ease the financial burden to their parents. Some (including Woodforde) began by entering Oriel College since this particular college made no restriction on the number of its undergraduates and the successful student then would move on to their chosen college at a later date.

In addition to the normal undergraduates, some colleges admitted poor students known as "Servitors" who were allowed to study while also acting as servants to the other students. One of the most notable servitors was the famous preacher George Whitefield who took his degree from Pembroke College in 1736 and who later became the leader of the Calvinist Methodists. One of his more famed duties at Pembroke was the 'drawer of corks'. Samuel Johnson had also been a servitor at Pembroke for a brief period of fourteen months.

During the middle of the eighteenth century the number of students declined substantially. According to Manbridge[1] there were about five hundred and seventy students at Oxford. (Cambridge had fewer, only three hundred and eighty.) In 1759, the year of Woodforde's entry to New College, only 182 freshmen were admitted to the university and undergraduate numbers were at their lowest during the whole period of four hundred years from 1500 to 1900. Midgeley[2] states that many colleges were at times half empty, with some exceptions such as Christ Church where the gentlemen commoners tended to gather and also at New College where the strictly limited number of places were always keenly sought by scholars from Winchester College. Thus the university had a mixed society with the gentlemen commoners and the servitors at opposite ends of the spectrum – the very rich and the very poor. There were only a few gentlemen commoners at New College and while Woodforde occasionally mentioned them they were not included in his circle of friends.

The diverse nature of the colleges was emphasized by those which were linked with different parts of the country. Midgley[2] states that students from Wales formed 75 per cent of the undergraduates at Jesus College; most students at Exeter College came from Devon and Cornwall; most students at Queen's came from Cumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire and many students at Wadham came from Dorset and Somerset.

Teaching at Oxford

Historians have not been impressed by the level of scholarship of the university in the eighteenth century and the general standard of teaching was poor. There were about twenty professors in different academic subjects but they did little if any lecturing and they often appointed deputies to carry out such duties. However, they included a few notable scholars who made a universal impact, such as Blackstone and his "Commentaries on the Laws of England" and the Wartons, father and son, who were distinguished Poetry Professors.

Perhaps the most powerful men at the university were the Proctors. Four were appointed annually from senior members of the university and they were responsible not only for disciplining the students but also for directing the public (university) examinations. Woodforde was elected to serve as one of the junior members of this team in 1774 and there are many examples in the diary to show that he took his duties seriously.

The educational curriculum at Oxford was established as long ago as the sixteenth century by Archbishop Laud who set down the "Laudian Statutes" which prescribed the nature of a series of successive tests and examinations which should be taken over a period of seven years to obtain both Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The Bachelor's degree required four years of study with a further three years for the Master's degree. Unlike the practice of today, the Master's degree was by no means automatically conferred. It required the passing of several tests during part-time attendance at the university. However, none of the tests for either degree were written exams – all were oral.

The Laudian syllabus covered a broad range of subjects and many of the tests were aimed at how to engage in debate and argument in such subjects as Moral Philosophy, Logic, Economics, Ethics and Greek and Latin. The apparent objective of the broad scope of BA and MA studies was to equip the student to face the moral and intellectual challenges of the outside world while, after taking these degrees, some, such as lawyers, would then pursue more specialized studies. The vast majority of graduates took holy orders and this was obligatory for appointment as a senior fellow, apart from the lawyers.

Although this Laudian policy was still followed in theory it was not so in spirit. While the formality and the number of tests and exams

was strictly followed, the content and supervision of many of the tests was very lax and individual colleges could and did exercise great influence over the awarding of degrees and the final degree examinations appear to have been a formality. (All this laxity was to change around the end of the century when the new honours syllabus was introduced.)

The twenty appointed Professors made a very small contribution to the students' education and although some of the senior fellows had educational responsibilities there is little evidence that they provided much guidance or direction. There were some designated college tutors or lecturers but there is little evidence of a general or widespread tutorial activity although Samuel Johnson indicates that there was an effective set of tutors at Pembroke College. Reference to the standard works such as those by A. D. Godley[3] and L. G. Mitchell[4] give the impression that the quality of tuition depended much on the particular college and the persistence of the particular student. And it does not seem that New College had a high academic reputation, nor does Woodforde appear as a highly conscientious student; he only attended lectures on two occasions during the four years he was at New College when he listened to Professors Blackstone and Warton.

Thus, while it was mainly a bleak picture, there were exceptions where the college head was a keen educationalist or where a tutor was diligent or perhaps where the student was both diligent and persistent in searching for guidance. Undoubtedly some conscientious students like Whitefield at selected colleges received a good education and even the great Samuel Johnson was not uncomplimentary about the education he received.

There are very few first-hand accounts of experiences at Oxford but the following two accounts give a vivid illustration of the low standard of educational practice at Oxford.

William Bagshaw Stevens

This former student of Magdalen College between 1772 and 1776 wrote a journal which was described in the Society's Journal Vol. XXXI No. 1.[5] After taking his degree Stevens became a schoolmaster and head of Repton School. He hoped to obtain a fellowship at Magdalen for both the prestige and the additional income but, unlike the routine appointments as fellow at New College, there was a long waiting time and they were much sought after. Stevens

had a very good reputation as a scholar and was bitterly disappointed that he had to wait about ten years until his appointment. When he was awarded his fellowship he was also appointed college lecturer in Moral Philosophy. Since fellowships were not generally available to those having significant outside jobs it is somewhat surprising that he should ever have gained one, bearing in mind that he was earning a reasonable salary and was not resident at Oxford. However, such rules were interpreted very flexibly.

Although being obliged to give one lecture a term he refused to give one at all in the first term. On another occasion he gave it so late that the students had already gone down. On several other occasions he gave his lectures by proxy, until he was eventually reprimanded. He himself describes his lectures as being "read to a Compelled Audience in a Language they will not understand. So much the better for the credit of the Lecturer". (Godley[3] makes a similar point in defence of the Professors' laxity that students would not understand many of the lectures.)*

One might have thought that Steven's poor teaching record would lower his esteem in the eyes of the college president. But not so, as he was then offered the Tutorship of the college which he had the prudence to refuse much to the disappointment of the president who was finding it difficult to fill the vacancy. His standing at the college was elevated further when he was elected Dean of Divinity.

Edward Gibbon

The following account is derived from Gibbon's "Memoirs of My Life" as edited by Betty Radice.[6] This famous historian was a former undergraduate at Magdalen College. Gibbon must have been one of the youngest undergraduates; he was one month short of his fifteenth birthday when he entered the college as a Gentleman Commoner in 1752. His prior education had been very scanty due partly to much illness and he was largely self-taught. When he

* We, perhaps, get something of this in the following entry in Woodforde's Diary (for 2 July 1761):

> Went to the theatre where I heard Tom
> Warton (the Poetry professor) speak on Poetry –
> And after him Shebbear of St Mary Hall
> speak on Sculpture Painting, and after him
> Russell of C.C.C. on the same, and he spoke ex=
> =cessive well (in English) indeed –
>
> (Ed's note)

arrived at Magdalen College he was received with some deference; he wore a velvet cap and silk gown and had a generous allowance to command unlimited credit from the local tradesmen. He had free access to the college library and his apartment consisted of three elegant and well furnished rooms.

Of his fourteen months at the college he stated that they were the most idle and unprofitable of his whole life. This he blamed largely on the lack of guidance from competent tutors and lecturers. However, he does admit that his youth and lack of prior education was a handicap. He was a member of the "fellows club" but his hopes of benefiting from their learned discourse were dashed since most of their conversations were concerned with college business, politics and local scandal. As a gentleman commoner he was not subject to the normal disciplines of compulsory attendance at chapel and hall dinners and this must have encouraged a slothful attitude.

Although a tutor was assigned to him he was indolent and did not much care whether Gibbon learned or not. The sessions with his tutor were restricted to reading a few Latin plays; soon boredom set in and the excuses made by Gibbon to avoid a lecture were quite happily accepted. He was given no plan for study and was not required to submit any exercises for inspection. After a term his first tutor left and he was then assigned to another senior fellow who was even less interested in young Gibbon, and during the succeeding eight months he was never summoned to attend any lecture. Consequently, he spent much of his time away from Oxford in travel around the country.

Woodforde's Education at New College

A cursory glance at the diary might lead one to suppose that Woodforde received a great many lectures from two named people, but it transpires that these, Mr Phil Hays and Mr Orthman, were giving him lessons in music and dancing respectively! It seems that Woodforde was very keen to play various musical instruments, including the "Spinnett", and he was sufficiently proficient to play the organ in New College chapel.

However, there are some clues which indicate that Woodforde was not completely indolent. He was by nature a cautious and conscientious man and so one would expect him to make some preparation before his exams. One clue stems from his purchase of

a few books during his first year at New College, and they indicate the nature of some of his studies. On 18 October 1759 he bought Wallis's *Logic* and logic was the main subject tested during the initial studies of all undergraduates. Then in the following year, on 17 June, he bought a Latin Euclid text.

He also seems to have diligently completed his punishment exercises for failing to attend chapel and other misdemeanours. For example, in June 1761, when worse for drink, he and two others abused one of the senior fellows, Mr Whitmore. He was then told by Whitmore to produce a summary account of the first three books of Hutchinson's *Moral Philosophy* when he is examined for his degree. However, Woodforde wanted to achieve this task as soon as possible and so he obtained the necessary books and submitted his essays in two parts within the next three weeks, on 6 July and 11 July. Yet during that time he does not refer once in his diary to what must have been a considerable amount of work involved in producing the essays. This event confirms what we might have suspected, since Woodforde rarely refers to his private activities or

New College Lane

thoughts. We therefore have to look for other clues in order to gauge his attitudes and industriousness.

Having therefore ascertained that Woodforde could and did at some time study effectively, it seems that this was largely based on his own reading without any systematic guidance from an appointed tutor. His studies were probably guided by published lists of the subjects to be covered in the various college tests which also served as preparation for the more formal and public university exams. There were two types of test. One consisted of either a statement read out in Latin in either college chapel or hall – these were called "Declamations" and several titles of Woodforde's efforts are given in Roy Winstanley's biographical book.[7] The other form of test was called a "Disputation" and this involved a debate with another student about some assertion of logic or philosophy. Both forms of test were also held in the college chapel or hall in the presence of senior fellows. The formal university exams were held in a more formal manner in the "Schools" buildings.

Although there was widespread use of "cribs", Woodforde probably did some reading as preparation for some of these tests. There were two public exams, both of the "disputation" type of test. The first exam, called "Generals", took place on two separate days and the first test lasted two hours. The second and final examination was called "Answering Under Bachelor" when Woodforde debated with a graduate under the scrutiny of two of the proctors; this exam also took place on two separate days, 2 and 18 March 1762, and each test took a few hours. Despite their length none of these exams seemed to have caused him much, if any, trouble, and it seems that the debating was largely repetitive and of low standard. Godley[3] gives an example of the nature of these "disputation debates" and suggests that the students made wide use of "strings" which were handed down from past students. These strings consist of two or three arguments, each on those subjects which are to be debated in the schools. The two disputants obtain a sufficient number of them and learn to repeat them by heart. The students sit opposite one another and when the proctor comes in to preside over the exercises they begin to rehearse what they have learned.

On 18 March 1762 Woodforde wrote in his diary:

> I have now done all my Business for my Batchelour's degree.

Woodforde had completed these exams after only two and a half years into his four year spell at New College. However, although

he had completed all of the "public" exams conducted by the university he still had to carry out further college exercises. After preparing for two of these later Declamations their deliveries were cancelled. On one occasion none of the senior fellows were present in the chapel to hear his speech so he sent it to the Dean. However, this statement gives us a further clue about the extent of Woodforde's studies since it tells us that he did prepare carefully for these exercises – he had in fact written up a verbatim script and this also confirms that he did not record his preparatory studies in his diary. The final college examination took place on 14 April 1763 when the senior fellows met with Woodforde and three other candidates and their "Grace" was passed. This seems to have been a formality – at most there might have been a brief review of the student's record of "passing" the previous "tests" but even this is doubtful since the "examination" meeting was said to be held "just before dinner"!

Another indication of Woodforde's studies arises from his close acquaintance with one of the senior fellows, Edward Whitmore. He was seven years older than Woodforde and was one of the Deans for much of Woodforde's four year term as an undergraduate. During this time it is likely that Whitmore did give Woodforde some tuition although as usual he refers only to the meetings by mentioning the accompanying meal if there was one. There were over forty such meetings with Whitmore and although some of these were just social occasions, some had a more serious purpose. For example, on 17 April 1761 he records:

> Had my supper carried to Whitmores
> where I supped with Whitmore –
> Spent the evening afterwards in
> Whitmore's room with Baldwin.

Baldwin was one of the College Chaplains and it is probable that Woodforde was being coached by these two seniors. On 17 October 1761 he also records:

> I gave some verses on the King's marriage to Dean Whitmore.

Thus we see some glimmers of the more serious side of Woodforde in his youthful days although his diary entries indicate that most of his time was spent in various social or sporting occasions.

After his "final exam" on 14 April 1763 he had to wait until 1 June when he was awarded the BA degree by the Vice Chancellor at a formal ceremony at the Convocation House of the university.

Although he had little difficulty with the tests for his BA degree he had a much tough task in passing the exam to obtain his orders as a Deacon. This occurred on 23 May 1763 just before he received his BA when he was examined by the Chaplain of the Bishop of Oxford:

> I was set over in the middle of the
> fifth chapter of St. Paul to the Romans
> and construed that Chapter quite to the End –
> I was quite half an hour examining –
> He asked a good many hard and deep Questions,
> I had not one Question that yes or no
> would answer.

After taking the BA degree Woodforde had several more exams to take in order to obtain the MA. These tests appear to be more stringent and extensive than those taken earlier, although he again omits reference to any study or reading. During 1764 and 1765 he returned to Oxford for a few weeks to take several preliminary exams for his MA. In 1766 he was much preoccupied with his church duties in Somerset and did not return to Oxford until April 1767 to take the final exam known as "Austins". This consisted of a "disputation" in schools on 9 May with another student. He seems to have prepared well for this exam as he met with his fellow disputant the previous day:

> May 8 –
> I breakfasted in Williams Sen^{r} Rooms with him (that is) eat my own breakfast in his Rooms, and afterwards disputed with together as we are to go up in the Schools to Morrow to do Austins for our MA –

This particular exam took about two hours. Shortly afterwards on 20 May he took the final public exam in the Schools when he had to respond to three questions which took all of two minutes! Then final (college) exam followed on the next day when Woodforde himself had to organize a meeting of the senior fellows so that he could be "examined" by them. Then a few days later, on 23 May, he attended the formal presentation of the MA degree by the Vice Chancellor.

And so we come to the conclusion of his studies. During the next week there were the concluding celebrations involving Woodforde treating the other college members to wine. He also settled his debts and paid the various fees for the examinations. On 2 June 1767 he left Oxford to return to his duties in Somerset.

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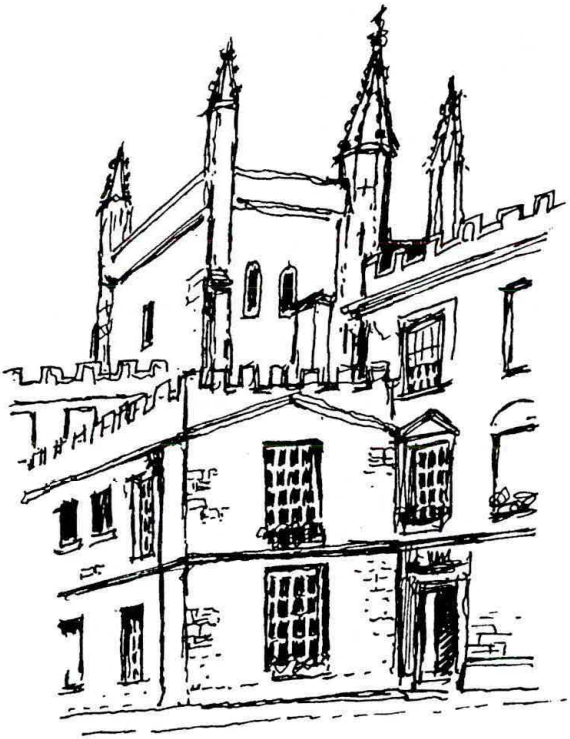

New College Chapel

'A SALE THIS DAY'

On 14 March 1786 Parson Woodforde recorded 'A Sale this Day at Hockering Parsonage House of the Furniture &c. late Mr. Howes's.' He did not deign to go to the sale, but did he out of curiosity send for a catalogue? These were distributed the previous Saturday, three days before the auction, to six public houses – the George at Dereham, the Swan at Mattishall, the Dog at Easton, Lenwade Bridge House, the King's Head at Wymondham, and the Cock at Hockering – as well as at the premises of Wright Smith, cabinet maker.[1]

The auction was held over four days (nowhere does the catalogue say at what time they started), and on the first day the auctioneer, Mr Jonathan Gleed of Norwich, began with the kitchen items. Bids were advanced by sixpence up to one pound, then by one shilling to five pounds, after which they went by five shilling leaps. But at eighteenth-century prices surely most of the lots fetched far less than five pounds. Mrs L. H. M. Hill, in 1969,[2] described Hockering rectory with its big kitchen which sported a Georgian dresser, and a great fireplace.

The day of the sale began soberly, lot 1 being 'Two hakes, iron bar, and maid'. The maid appears to be a stand or holder, to judge by lot 24: 'Range, iron back and swinging maid'.[3] There are 39 lots in all, spits, racks, gridirons, linen-horses, brushes, an 'iron camp-oven and cover' – but no saucepans or open pans of any kind. These essential receptacles for boiling the mountainous joints of meat, and stirring the caper sauce, were sold on day four, from the Back-house. There were two contraptions for weighing ingredients, an 'iron jack, chain, case and weights', and a pair of steelyards and weight – the balance with a short and long arm, the latter having a sliding weight along its length. The earthenware, and the dishes and plates of 'oblong Queen's ware', were sold in various lots. The rest of the china, the glass and the pewter, was sold separately, some on the third day and the rest at the end of the sale. There were three 'box-irons', for the laundry maid's use (though the ironing boards seem to have been kept upstairs).[4] The kitchen furniture comprised two oval wainscot tables and three chairs with wooden seats. The list's most appealing item is the parson's warming pan, very necessary in winter, to judge by the few blankets in the bedrooms, and candlesticks and snuffers to light him up the stairs. When he went visiting after dark he no doubt took

Hockering Rectory, Norfolk, home of Mr Howes
(From a sketch by Marian Peck)

with him one of the four 'lanthorns' . But what was he doing with three parrots' cages?

No doubt an added attraction to buyers and non-buyers alike was a tour of the house and grounds. From the kitchen they all moved to the 'Little Parlour', though for some reason only half the items were advertised on day one, the rest being auctioned the following day. The two entries together give six 'walnut-tree F seat chairs, stool and cushion'[5] and three tables (one mahogany, with a green cloth, and one 'Dutch, on castors'), a mahogany tea-chest and tea-kettle stand, three pictures and a portrait on copper, and various fire-irons. A walnut bureau and two bookcases suggest that this may have been where George Howes wrote his sermons. The books that filled the bookcases, a 'valuable Collection', were to be sold in a separate auction, with a separate catalogue.

I am assuming that the rooms were taken in the order in which they appear in the catalogue, and if so the participants then trooped up the 'handsome Tudor staircase, of oak and walnut' (Mrs Hill) to the Hall Chamber, to be confronted by two more walnut-tree F seat stools and a bedstead with check hangings, mattress, bolster and

A

CATALOGUE, &c.

First Day's Sale.

TUESDAY, March 14, 1786.

KITCHEN. No. 1.

LOT

1 TWO hakes, iron bar, and maid
2 Toaſt-iron and gridiron
3 Pair of bellows
4 Gridiron and riddling-pan
5 Nineteen iron ſkewers and pair ſteak-tongs
6 Two iron candleſticks and two pair ſnuffers
7 Box-iron, heaters and reſt
8 Copper warming-pan
9 Iron camp-oven and cover
10 Oval wainſcot table
11 Two ditto
12 Thirteen knives, twenty forks and two boxes
13 Tin ware in lots
14 Fender, tongs, ſhovel and poker
15 Two braſs candleſticks
16 Iron jack, chain, caſe and weights
17 Pair ſteelyards and weight
18 Box-iron, heaters and reſt
19 Ditto and heaters
20 Spit and frame
21 Ditto and racks
22 Spit

The Sale Catalogue – extract
(Norfolk Record Office, MC 471/1/13, 746X8)

two pillows, two blankets and a cotton counterpane. There was a deal closet with sliding doors, japanned dressing drawers, and the windows had a 'festoon curtain'.

Down again to the hall itself, which contained a miscellany of objects: a mahogany table 'and draw', a pillar and claw table, a bureau, a painted buffet, a 'cloaths-press, with doors and pins', a 'door shutter and sickle chamber plough', six painted garden chairs, a fowling piece, and a twelve-hour clock, in a case. Other objects must have been even more miscellaneous, for the last item is 'Sundries'.

The cellar came next, devoted entirely to beer making equipment – five beer vessels, three ale-stools and trough and some more 'sundries'.

The last bids of the day were from the attic. The attics, Roy Winstanley wrote,6 were reached by 'a kind of fixed ladder'. His description of these tiny rooms, with bare joists and gaps in the roof tiles providing the only light, makes chilling reading. The Middle Garret, whose contents were sold on day one, contained a bedstead with 'sacken bottom', and a squab cushion, old door and box. Not much comfort here for a hard-working servant girl or lad – but who actually slept here? I suspect that it was the 'tweeny', the youngest servant of all. There is a far superior Maid's Chamber and Man's Chamber, not apparently in the attic, the maid's bed having 'check hangings', two blankets and a quilt. Only the Middle Garret contained a bed: blocked off by rough wooden doors were the Lumber Garret (containing amongst sundry junk another warming pan), the Flour Garret, with bins and measures, and the Corn Garret, which must have been out of use, for it contained only an ironing board and four 'tressels'. But there were delights to come on the third and fourth days.

The second day's sale began in the dairy and has no surprises – 'stable lanthorn and odd things', a butter keeler, cheese press, milk pail and stool, and churn – though it is odd to find a splined partition door with lock and key being a saleable item. Then, having auctioned the rest of the contents of the Little Parlour, and prospective buyers moved on to the storeroom, a repository for articles as diverse as a pestle and mortar, two lead tobacco-pots, a dresser shelf and a pair of spice drawers, a napkin press, and a backgammon table with dice box and dice.

The Best Parlour was probably one of the 'two large rooms facing south, in one of which Mrs Howes must have strutted' (Mrs Hill) on a Wilton carpet, looking at the view from windows festooned

with elegant check curtains. On the walls hung the family arms in a glass frame, and two framed pieces of embroidery, 'Mrs Howes's work' and 'glass doors'. There were altogether five tables, the principal of which was a handsome square mahogany dining table with octagon ends. In various alcoves, probably, stood the Japanned tea table, the mahogany folding 'jamb' table, the mahogany pillar and claw tea table, and 'turn-corner, three-top, sunk card table'. Two arm chairs and cushions, and six walnut chairs with F seats (once more) completes the list of heavy furniture – there is no sideboard or cupboard. Where then did they put the mahogany voider,[7] and the japanned tea-turn? A pair of Senex globes (one would be terrestrial, the other celestial) in the Best Parlour surely indicates that Howes' interests extended beyond parochial affairs. They were especially mentioned, in capital letters, on the catalogue's front page summary.[8] The oddest items are 'two window shutters and bars' and an 'iron rimmed fixed stove and tiles'. Were these not integral to the building?

The auctioneer's object seems to have been to keep his clients on hand for all four days by alternating between the contents of reception rooms, bedrooms, storerooms and china and glass, but I will leave the room-by-room and day-by-day configuration and continue with the other principal rooms in the house. The Best Chamber (over the Best Parlour?) was presumably the Howes' bedroom. The bedstead had yellow cheney hangings and at the windows were yellow 'festoon' curtains to match. Again, only two blankets and a white quilt over the 'feather bed' and two pillows over a bolster, but the fireplace was obviously in use, for a brass fender and a fixed stove 'and crotch bar' are mentioned, and two of the lots contain tongs, shovel and 'catches', a poker, and stove board and brush. Perhaps it wasn't so cold after all. There was a table with three drawers and a cloth, and six of the walnut F seat chairs, 'stuffed, covered and cases' – presumably loose covers – and an easy chair on castors. For clothes there was a substantial piece of furniture, a walnut 'chest on chest of drawers', and two closets with shelves. On the walls were six prints of unidentified subjects, and two of the Crucifixion.

Mrs Hill speaks of a powder closet in the south-east corner, and perhaps this is where the 'wainscot wash-hand stand, basin and bottle' stood, next to a 'walnut-tree night chair'. Nowhere is there mention of a bath-tub or hip-bath, but presumably the Howes must have taken baths in front of their bedroom fire on occasion.

The Kitchen Chamber contains rather more furniture than the Best Chamber; besides a four-poster bed with blue cheney hangings it also has a second bedstead. The six chairs have 'matt' seats, and the night-chair has a pewter pan. A 'solid mahogany bureau' sounds an odd item in a bedroom. Was it for clothes? But there is also a large 'cloths press, one draw and pins' and a 'hanger', which may have been a hanging wardrobe. Strange anomalies such as a 'large alarum, or fire bell', a sword, and a 'bell and drag, as fixed' also came under the hammer.

The Back Chamber seems to have been a general purpose room, for besides a chest of drawers and four chairs, there is an oat 'binn', two ironing boards, a dresser, two quilting frames and a hair bag and trough. An 'old pillow, ticking and bolster' are lying about, but no bed is mentioned. A fishing net seems a strange intrusion.

Out of doors bidding continued for two farm wagons, two 'dickies' and four carts, and there was also a long list of farm impedimenta. Howes at this time had two cows and a calf, three pigs and seventeen sheep. In the stables were the parson's horses – a male named 'Punch', two mares, 'Bragg' and 'Gypsey', and a 'Black hobby' (pony) called 'Jackson'. I think in earlier days he preferred riding horseback to sitting in a bumpy vehicle. In 1780 he intended to do away with his chaise altogether, to Woodforde's dismay.[9] He must have got rid of 'the old Shatterdam',[10] for at the end of his life he owned a 'handsome modern chariot' with glasses, cushion and box, and among the china items was a pair of chariot lamps. Perhaps the fourth Mrs Howes persuaded him to buy her a vehicle befitting her dignity, and he had to be content with that.

Notes and References

1. A copy of the catalogue is in the Norfolk Record Office, MC 471/1/13, 746X8.
2. Journal II No. 2, Summer 1969, reprinted by Roy Winstanley in Journal XXIV, No. 3, pp. 44-5.
3. The OED (Compact Edition) gives 'applied to various inanimate objects', which is unhelpful as the examples given are a clothes-horse and a washerwoman's dolly.
4. A box-iron, flat-iron and Italian-iron are three varieties, distinguished by shape (OED).
5. What does the F stand for, here and below?
6. Journal XXIV, No. 3, p. 45.
7. Here (out of several OED entries) a receptacle for sweetmeats, I think.
8. 'Senex' is the maker's name. These globes would be relatively rare in a country house, and worth a fortune today. Pers. comm. David Ferrow, antiquarian of Great Yarmouth.

9. 12 January 1780.
10. The coach he left in Norwich to be repaired after the axle broke on 24 March 1783.

[11]

CHINA and GLASS.

LOT

23 Six enamelled coffee mugs
24 Pair of china candleſticks with braſs rims
25 Pair ditto
26 Four ornament white diſhes
27 Four ſmall plates, tea pot and ſtand, ribb'd
28 Quart glaſs decanter
29 Pair large glaſſes and jug
30 Five water glaſſes
31 Six ditto, wrought
32 Four gill glaſſes, 7 wine
33 Seven jellies, and pint decanter
34 Pair chariot lamps
35 Hall lamp broken, glaſs lanthorn

BEST CHAMBER, No. 11.

36 Bedſtead with yellow cheney hangings
37 Feather bed
38 Bolſter, two pillows
39 Two blankets
40 White quilt
41 Fixed ſtove and crotch bar
42 Braſs fender
43 Tongs, ſhovel and catches
44 Iron poker, ſtove board and bruſh
45 Two yellow feſtoon window curtains
46 Eaſy chair, cover and cuſhion, on caſtors
47 Walnut-tree night chair
48 Six ditto f. ſeat chairs, ſtuffed, covered and caſes
49 Walnut-tree cheſt on cheſt of drawers
50 Ditto chamber table, 3 drawers and cloth
51 Swinging glaſs
52 Wainſcot waſh-hand ſtand, baſon and bottle
53 Chimney glaſs and glaſs ſconce
54 Six prints, framed and glazed
55 Two ditto, of Crucifixion, in lots

The Sale Catalogue – extract
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THE REMINISCENCES OF A NORFOLK PARSON
by Revd Canon Walter Hubert Marcon

Another diary? Not quite. It comprises a number of articles first published in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, revised and reprinted as an 84 page paperback in 1933 and 1934. Canon Marcon was born in 1850 at Edgefield, three miles south of Holt in Norfolk, about fifteen miles north of Weston Longville. He became Rector of Edgefield in 1875, following his father and his great-uncle who between them gave over 100 years of faithful service in the ministry.

The Revd Bransby Francis was the Rector in Parson Woodforde's time, from 1760 to 1825, and died in harness aged 90. Did they ever meet? In part of the old tithe barn he built a schoolroom and with his daughters taught the children of the parish.

The joy of this little book is the recorded stories, memories and songs of people in their 80s and 90s who would have been contemporary with Parson Woodforde's era. The foreword mentions the diary of the Rector of Weston Longville as "lately come very much to life" (1933) and "Parson Woodforde was, as his editor said, a lovable thing. He was superbly indifferent to the danger of small-pox when duty called him to the bedside of a dying cottager. He was delightfully human, kind to his tythe-payers, whom he feasted royally, kind to his servants, devoted to his niece Nancy and to his dogs, and not at all ashamed of the 'honest smuggler', who secretly provided the Parsonage with ill-gotten booty."

The two parsons are compared as knowing the fields they farm, both sportsmen and both scholarly sons of Oxford. After the quotation – *quantum mutatus ab illo!* – (How changed from what it once was) the two parsons are contrasted and the closing advice is offered that: "No-one who would peer into the mysterious depths of the East Anglian mind can afford to ignore this book."

The writer couldn't put the book down because of its interest and humour, throwing light on the culture and attitudes that might well have held sway just 15 miles away in Weston Longville, albeit 100 years earlier. For instance, Canon Marcon writes about "Smuggling Tales" which may well be relevant, "I now asked the question what became of all the contraband stuff . . .").

And there is more!

Clifford Bird

* * *

Smuggling Tales

I will put what I heard as nearly as I can in the Norfolk language; language, mind you, not a patois. The difficulty will be the spelling for which I must ask patience in the reader:

"Ah! that wuz a time o' day, that wuz! I ha' known the time when I used to ha' to go for old W—— W—— down to Blakeney Quay to get a cargo o' liquor. All our hosses and carts would rattle down on to the Quay, where the tubs stood. There'd be hundreds on 'em. An' they'd be all on to the carts and gone in a quarter of an hour. Then as soon as ever we were out o' the town, you could hear the guns of the Preventive men ablazin' away arter us. Du they navver hit us, not they! Cos why? that was all a planned thing, that wuz: they knew where to find a keg for their selves. But they blazed away arter we'd gone, to let the folks know, *they'd werry near caught us*, and then they'd go and find the kegs put for their selves. Anybody what had a hoss an' cart used to go down. We'd get 2s. 6d. a night. Sometimes we'd hev to go 10 nights afore the ship cam' in, and then we'd get 5s. apiece. And we allust left a keg inside the Parson's gate here. Why! in this house where we're now a settin' I ha' seen the chamber right cram full o' casks, so that they had to prop the ceilin' on-an-end (underneath) with larch poles. Ah! (with a sigh) there was a sight o' liquor drunk at that time. If you got together £20 and sent it over by ship that ud be £100 when ta cum back. My father he got £20 – twornt all his own – and that werry time the ship was lost and the money wos lost tu."

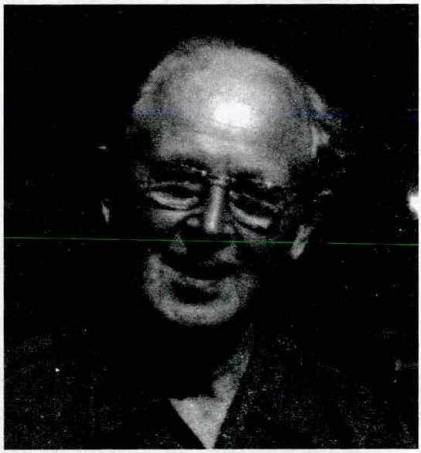
I must here interpolate what happened to these same horses and carts as told me by the farmer who was the prime mover in the matter. The time came when the Preventive men were replaced by Coastguards men drawn from the Navy sometimes and supposed to be stricter in the matter of duty. So that one fine night all the carts and horses were caught, confiscated, and stalled in Weybourne ready for sale by auction. The owners came to my farmer friend and said, "Look here, sir, they won't suspect you. Do you go down to Weybourne and see what you can do." He went, and found the horses in charges of a sailor chap who knew no more about a horse than a cow knows about the gable end of a barn. Moreover, it was in July, a time when horses shed their coats. So the farmer asks to look at the horses; and going up to the tail of the first one, pulled out a handful of hair from the haunches, exclaiming "Here's a rare bad job, here! Do you know what this horse has got? He's got the mange! See what I've pulled out. I shouldn't wonder but what

they've all got it – that's a wonderful catching thing", and going down the stable of course pulled out a handful from each horse. "Whatever shall I do with them?" asks the sailor chap. "Well," says the farmer, "tain't a mite o' use your putting them up for sale. Nobody will buy 'em for fear of giving it to his other horses. Tell you what I'll do, I'll give you £5 for the lot." The bargain was closed, and that night every horse was in its own stable.

* * *

I now asked the question what became of all the contraband stuff. "That used to go to different places, some a long way off. I have known my father drive a tamer for old Mr —— and go with a waggon full o' thorns into Suffolk and be gone for a week at a time. That was only thorns on the top, for you've a nigh guess that they've enough thorns o' their own in Suffolk, but in the 'boke' of the wagon was bacca and liquor."

IN MEMORIAM



Sidney Quin, a founder member of the Parson Woodforde Society and its Chairman for the years 1975-1977 died peacefully on 11 September last at the age of 88. During his long years of association with the Society, and particularly during his period as a member of its committee, Sidney was always both enthusiastic and purposeful in forwarding the aims of the Society and encouraging its membership. He planned and organized two of the most successful 'Frolics' in Somerset and Norfolk, as those of us privileged to attend will well remember. He was ably assisted in this by Pamela, his wife, who doubled as the Society's secretary at this time.

Sidney was first a gentleman, in the true sense of the word. Unfailingly courteous to all with whom he came into contact it was a pleasure to be in his company and to talk of Woodforde. He came of church stock. His father was a parish priest and Sidney's early life was intimately connected with parish affairs. Sidney was educated at St John's, a public school for the sons of clergy, and afterwards at the St Alban's School. His father's early death led Sidney towards a business career. This turned out to be entirely with the then Westminster Bank, where he began work as a clerk. Natural ability enabled him to progress through the bank's administrative structure to the position of Deputy General Manager at head office, from whence he retired in 1973. His service with the bank was interrupted only by war. Sidney joined the RNVR and

saw service both here in England and in West Africa. He left the navy in 1946 with the rank of Paymaster Lieutenant Commander. His love of the navy continued after the war and he became associated with the Sea Cadets as well as maintaining and operating his own boat.

Sidney was a cultured man with many interests outside of a busy professional life. He was an accomplished pianist and cellist and became a painter, with landscapes his principal subject. He was well read, favouring the classical writers, but his Woodforde volumes occupied pride of place on his bookshelves. Not least of his interests was his Vice Presidency and Directorship of the Royal Academy of Music. As its treasurer he took an active part in major fund-raising events, on one occasion bicycling from Land's End to John O'Groats on a sponsored ride. Other involvements included work for the Red Cross and the National Trust, together with a variety of local groups, cricket club and parochial church council among them. He was also a broadcaster on both radio and television, speaking on financial matters; he contributed too advice columns on money affairs in women's magazines.

Sidney married Barbara in 1940, who predeceased him. He is survived by his second wife Pamela and by the two sons of his first marriage. To them and to the rest of his family we extend our deepest sympathy.

On behalf of the Society I attended Sidney's funeral on 21 September at the St Mary's Church, in Northchurch, near to his home in Berkhamsted. It was a moving service with over 100 present, and the incumbent was assisted by Sidney's son, the Reverend David Quin. Always a staunch and valued member of our Society Sidney will be mourned by all members who knew him.

GHB

LETTER

Dear Sir,

I noticed an oddity recently in the Diary for July 1778.

On 6 July Mr Pounsett and sister Jenny were preparing to journey to Somerset by way of London after a long visit to Norfolk. "Mr. du Quesne called on us this morning to let us know that he goes to London this Evening in the Night Coach, which my Sister was very glad of." (Later) "Mr. du Quesne, Jenny and Mr. Pounsett got into the Coach taking leave and went for London."

Then, on 9 July, at dinner with Mr Howes: "Mr. du Quesne nor Mr. Donne present, the former is gone into Lancashire, the latter to Cambridge."

Was it necessary for Mr du Quesne to go to London before he could get the stage to Lancashire? Now, one can travel from Norwich to Lancashire on the National Express Coaches by changing at Peterborough. Perhaps this was not possible then? Of course, it may simply have been that Mr du Quesne had some business in London previous to going north. However, it would be interesting to know more about the coaching routes of the eighteenth century. Does anyone know if there is a study on the subject?

Caroline Mosey
Stratford-upon-Avon

THE MEMOIRS OF THE REVD. DR. EDWARD NARES 1762-1841

The Professor

In the course of February and March 1817 Doctor Nares was committed to reading 20 lectures on Modern History, 12 on Political Economy and, as a Select Preacher, to deliver three sermons at St Mary's, Oxford. All were to be encompassed by difficulties. Having prepared a series of discourses on points of biblical criticism he was warned that he was unlikely to have any audience for his initial address as it coincided with a sermon by the Dean of Christ Church at the opening of a new church. Although there was in fact a modest and appreciative attendance, no Sunday was available for his two remaining sermons. These therefore had to lie over to the following term. Faced with the prospect of further difficult journeys and lodgings, Nares was minded to resign the Preachership. He was only dissuaded by the procurement of a substitute for these occasions.

The professor had been warned that he should not expect anywhere near the same number to attend his history lectures as in the previous year, due to familiarity with the subject and its not being one required for examinations or degrees. Sure enough, from a previous attendance of 120, the numbers dwindled to seven. With this situation in prospect Dr Nares set himself the task during the previous summer of studying in depth the subject of Political Economy, a subject unfamiliar to him but which was particularly mentioned in the Warrant of his appointment. The more he learnt, the more it engaged his interest. Book after book was absorbed, despite the begrudged interruptions of daily life and the strain it was putting on his eyes.

> I completed my task entirely to my own satisfaction & left home with an intention of instructing the University on such subjects as the "Wealth of Nations", Trade, Commerce, Mercantile & Agricultural Systems; Origin, Use & Character of Money, Employment of Capital & Industry, Foreign Exchange, Taxation, Funding System, including all the operations of a Sinking Fund, Population, Poor Laws, etc. etc.

The professor appreciated that in an institution where so many young men of birth and fortune were destined to become members of the establishment, Political Economy ought to be encouraged in order to prepare and qualify them for public affairs. It was his

intention to speak his mind on the matter in his Terminal Lecture before the heads of the University, due on the 12 March. Unfortunately, the Prince Regent was due to receive a University address on that day, drawing the leading dignitaries to London. On Nares' appearance for his lecture there was only one other present, namely Dr Hall of Pembroke College, who perforce had to be asked to be patient and allow time for further attendance.

> A few came at length. To those, I read the Lecture which I had very particularly prepared as an introduction to a totally new Study . . . to be told that they were thoroughly impress'd with the importance of what I had recommended.

This was a prelude to further difficulties. Although his course on Political Economy was due to start the next day, the Professor found it almost impossible to agree suitable days and times to suit those wishing to attend. Eventually, some accommodation was reached, albeit not pleasing to all.

> I procur'd a Class of about 37 – remarkably respectable – for except a new Noblemen, it entirely consisted of some of the most eminent Tutors in the University. I had great reason to be highly gratified by the effect of my Lectures. I shall ever reflect upon it as a most happy period of my life.

Nares and his family were experiencing a full and agreeable social life in the University town. On 30 March they left Oxford to stay two nights with his cousin Robert, Archdeacon of Reading. As the Duke of Marlborough was eager to show them his nearby seat at Whiteknights, they spent the whole of the 6 April with him. The fifth Duke's gardens with their collections of plants and books were wonders of the age and impressed all who were privileged to see them.

> A short time ago the Kin g of Prussia sent his Gardener (sic), expressly from Berlin, to visit the gardens – they are not only singular & peculiar from the very rare and large collection of all descriptions of Exotics, but from the taste with which they are laid out and arrang'd, entirely under the Duke's own directions.

Edward Nares now turned his back on the lively social and academic scene and, after spending two days in London, returned once more to the peaceful life of his parish at Biddenden. The change gave him cause to reflect once more on his lack of recognition despite all his theological work, and to despair at the unsavoury manoeuvres which seemed necessary to attain preferment; preferment which he solely desired for the sake of his family.

> While the Marlboroughs do not serve me, the world in general will suppose we are on no good terms; and while *nobody else* serves me, that family may well suppose nobody thinks me worthy of being serv'd.

The 12 June 1817 found Professor Nares once more in Oxford. On the following day he read his [extra] Terminal Lecture which was so poorly attended that it would have been better had it been cancelled. On 15 June he had to preach before the University; 50 minutes in the morning and for over an hour in the afternoon. A crowded audience received his words with the appreciation appropriate to a new topic, and entirely to his satisfaction. Certain suggestions were made that he should commit his lectures to print but previous experience with printers deterred him.

Weighing on Dr Nares' mind at this time was a proposal of marriage received and accepted by his daughter from Mr Canning, MP for Petersfield, and a great friend of the Marlboroughs. Although he was well connected, being a cousin to a Cabinet Minister and brother-in-law to Lord Castlereagh (whose sister was his first wife), the match was not welcome to her father. He felt that his 19-year-old daughter was too young and that the union would not redound to her happiness. His misgivings proved to be well-founded. Little that he learned of the suitor was to his credit and his character was doubtful. Difficulties then arose over the settlement.

> It wd. almost appear however that providence is always doing better for us than we cd. do for ourselves. But at the very moment when we expected everything to be on the Eve of being settled, Mr. C. withdrew in so unhandsome a Manner that I am now at open variance with this near friend of the Ministers & probably those of the Marlborough family with whom I was previously on the best of terms.

Not only was Nares bitter at the scurrilous version of events that were circulating, but also shocked at the cynical attitude expressed to him by 'his betters'. The Marlboroughs made it plain that they had no inclination to do anything for him and, in conversation with his doubtful friend, Lord Shaftesbury, the latter put it squarely that in personal and public affairs self-interest was ever paramount.

Ostensibly, these memoirs leap forward to January 1819, but from a reference to the length of his ministry at Biddenden, it is clear that this should read January 1818. It was with genuine regret that he again left behind the sincere warmth and affection of his

parishioners to take up his academic duties at Oxford. The Duke had written hoping to see him at Blenheim and offering him and his family the use of his box at the theatre while in London. On their way he and his family broke their journey to visit his old friend Mr Blackstone, a long-time steward or agent, and executor of the late Duke. Nares learnt that certain of the Duke's family, notably the Churchills, blamed him for the breaking of his daughter's engagement. Mr Blackstone, however, thought that Nares had acted quite properly and was to be congratulated on the outcome. Canning had been a bad husband to his first wife and was ostracised by his own family.

As the professor was given no opportunities to read his course of lectures, he was able to accept an invitation to spend a week or so with the Duke of Marlborough. They had concerts every evening and, during their stay, the Vice Chancellor and the heads of Colleges were invited to meet them at dinner. Among them was his old rival, long reconciled, the Bishop of Oxford, now a Fellow of All Souls. On 5 March the Revd Nares preached the Assize Sermon at St Mary's and was complimented on it at the Assize Dinner by one of the Justices, before a distinguished company.

After leaving Oxford for Kent on 16 March, the Nares family responded to an invitation from the Duke of Marlborough by making a return visit to Whiteknights, his estate near Reading. So impressed was the Professor that he devoted the next three pages of his memoirs to describing the marvels of the Duke's botanical collections, and to his varied talents. In doing so he refers obliquely to the Duke's financial embarrassments, occasioned by his collecting mania.

> Had the Duke at this time been as affluent as he appeared to be, and *might* have been, our short visit . . . would have been everything that was interesting and agreeable . . . 'till dinner we were occupied constantly either in the Shrubberies, or Conservatories, or Library, where everything was rare and beautiful. I am tempted to notice two Books of most celebrity, and which were then kept in a beautiful Box of sandal wood and sealed by a chain of Gold of more than 60 Guineas value. The Boccaccio cost the Duke £2260, the Regents Missal £698. The latter belonged to the Regent Duke of Bedford.

No expense was spared. A military band of 17 musicians played to the assembled company at dinner, and in the drawing room concerts were given by eminent performers. Nares bore testimony, from

long acquaintance, to the Duke's accomplishments.

> His pecuniary embarrassments have since expos'd him to much obliquy and, I fear, much disgrace. I know the many disadvantages under which he laboured from the peculiar treatment of his Parents, tho' his conduct has been far from correct in many most Essential points. I had my hopes that when he came to the title . . . his near connections would have done every thing to redeem his Character . . . instead of which most of them appear to have left him to struggle against a host of rapacious and usurious creditors and what the consequence may be I cannot pretend to conjecture. I shall always think him an injur'd man, tho' I cannot pretend to vindicate his general course of life. On Thursday, March 26th (my birth day) we went home.

On 28 May the Revd Edward Nares preached a sermon at Ashford on behalf of the District Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. The collection at the door was more than expected, but he again resisted pressure from the Committee to have the sermon committed to print. Nothing more is recorded until he notes the death of the Queen on 17 November 1818. It seems that Her Majesty became somewhat unpopular late in life having reputedly 'amassed great riches regardless of the public'. It now transpires that the amount of her estate was quite contrary to such expectations and it became known that she had 'exercised many private charities and been more bountiful than avaricious'. A bereavement closer to home was to cloud the dying days of 1818, namely the death of Edward's sister, Susannah (Henning), on Christmas Day. She was widely lamented 'for her amiable character and great worth'. Edward undertook an arduous journey to Somerset to attend her funeral and subsequent interment in Wells Cathedral.

The Professor was able to read another course of lectures in Merton Hall, Oxford, during February 1819, before 'a numerous and respectable class . . . and received, as before, innumerable civilities & attentions from the heads of Colleges & other members of the University'. The Duke was too involved in his personal affairs to entertain them at this time. After a silence of twelve months an invitation was received for his daughter to visit Lord and Lady Churchill who offered to send their coach. As she was still under age and neither Mrs Nares nor himself were mentioned, the invitation was respectfully declined. The Nares were, however, on affectionate terms with Lord Charles Spencer and family, and frequently exchanged visits. From their grandsons, Charles and George Spencer, Nares learnt that 'atrocious falsehoods had been

propagated in their family' by the Cannings, concerning the breakdown of his daughter's marriage arrangements. It was alleged that he had insisted that his daughter's fortune from the Duke of Marlborough be settled on the children of his second marriage. Nothing was further from the truth. Fortunately, Nares was able to produce correspondence, not only revealing the true state of affairs, but also showing that the late Duke had approved of his proposals for the marriage settlement. With bitter thoughts of the duplicity of those he had previously respected, on 5 April he returned to Biddenden, determined to sever all such perfidious connections.

The year 1819 was notable for the republication of ten volumes of Macklin's Bible, the historical prefaces having been written by the Rev. Dr Edward Nares. The Prince Regent had graciously agreed that the work should be dedicated to him and that his name should head the list of subscribers. The Doctor had also accepted an offer for the publication of the sermons which he had delivered at Oxford in 1816 and 1817 as a Select Preacher. It was his intention that they be dedicated, out of gratitude, to his patron, Lord Liverpool. Having completed his course of 20 lectures and read his Terminal Lecture, the conscientious rector returned to Biddenden to take his Easter duty. He remained there until November when he travelled again to Oxford to preach a Terminal Lecture, and 'to shew my willingness to discharge such duties of my Professorship as were imposed upon me'. On his way back he attended another address to the Prince Regent. The year 1820 followed a similar pattern although, having no history class, he substituted a course on Political Economy.

> The demise of our venerable Sovereign George the 3rd, & accession of George 4th, rendered the 1820 memorable in a publick point of view, but of my own concerns I know not that I have much to say.

As Edward's friends continued to encourage him in the view that he was ripe for advancement, he reluctantly attempted to keep 'in the swim'. As a Regius Professor, and thereby a servant of the Crown, he ought to be presented at Court and kiss hands. Accordingly, on 7 June, on his way to Oxford, he attended the levée of HM George IVth, and went through the ceremony of a fresh presentation. The court was crowded and made specially interesting by the host of dignitaries and their multifarious costumes.

> I felt for the King as it was the very day after the embarrassing entry of Queen Caroline into London, the issue & consequences

> of which I have no inclination to dwell upon' on all accounts I lamented her acting upon the bad and mischievous advice of those who had persuaded her to come at such a moment and in so undignified a manner. I wish, for the sake of both their Majesties, the Event of this short period could be expung'd from the Pages of our National history.

Early in the Lent term of 1821 Nares was again at Oxford to discharge the duties of his professorship. However, no mutually agreeable time could be found for his lectures to suit the few who had put their names forward. A Terminal Lecture was read as usual. What had once been a sinecure had now, through a change in perceptions, become an anomalous institution. The professor found that the cost of removing his family to Oxford and providing for the duties of his parish in his absence, absorbed the whole of his salary. Moreover, the abundant hospitality, given and received, added greatly to his expenses. Twice more he visited Oxford during the course of the year in order to read a Terminal Lecture. On the second occasion he took the opportunity of entering his son as a Postmaster (Portionista) at Merton College.

> In the month of August I preached by desire in the Cathedral of Canterbury during the race Week, the annual Sermon for the benefit of the Infirmary.

It was so unlikely that he would have a sufficient class on his next visit to Oxford in February 1822 that he accepted an invitation from the Duke of Marlborough for himself and family to spend a pleasant week at Blenheim. While there his son joined them for a day or two from Merton College, it being his first term in residence. On 5 June he preached, by appointment, the Visitation Sermon at Ashford, it being the Primary Visitation of the Hon. Archdeacon Percy, later Bishop of Carlisle. Again, in February 1823 he travelled to Oxford, this time alone, having little expectation of a class. After showing himself he returned early to Biddenden. During the course of the year he submitted a work to the press, titled *Heraldic Anomalies*. Although he surmised it might have had a better reception with a different title, nevertheless it reached a second edition 'but is not now easily to be met with'.

While the Nares family were staying at Blenheim a frequent companion was Lord Henry Churchill, the Duke's third son. Lord Henry also paid them a visit at Biddenden in the summer of 1823. On his return to Blenheim he wrote to the Rector's daughter with proposals of marriage, enclosing in the same cover a letter from the

Duke expressing his ready acquiescence.

> As my daughter was now of age & quite capable of judging for herself, I put both letters into her hands, only desiring to be told whether I should write "Yes" or "No" to the Duke; she decided on the latter, and so I wrote . . . observing that I had taken my Daughter's own answer without making a single remark and, as such, I sent it to him.

The Professor was able to read a short course of lectures at Oxford in early 1824, staying in lodgings in the absence of his friend the Dean of Exeter. Lord Henry Churchill was a frequent visitor. Little was seen of the Duke, although Nares and his son were pleased to dine with him on 26 March, the Duke's birthday.

Meantime the Duchess was taking a hand in the courtship. Her Grace had gone to Hastings, only 25 miles from Biddenden, where Lord Henry was to join her. From there she wrote to Edward Nares expressing the highest opinion of his daughter and an earnest desire to have the match take place. Her intervention was significant. She had endeared herself to the Nares family in the past, having been chosen by Lady Charlotte, his first wife, as a favoured guardian for her children in the event of their ever being orphaned. Her position and character made her eminently suitable for this role.

> I had therefore nothing to do but to let things take their chance. It could not but be pleasing to me to know that my Daughter was held in such high Estimation in her Mother's family . . . In the Spring of 1824 Lord Henry Churchill was accepted, and the Marriage took place on the 13th July following at Biddenden. The Duchess came from London to be present at the Ceremony which was performed by her Brother, the Hon. Stewart, now Bishop of Quebec.

In the Lent Term of 1825 the professor was again in Oxford to read a Terminal Lecture and, in the absence of a history class, another course of lectures on Political Economy. The latter were subsequently superceded by a distinct Professorship, much to Nares' annoyance having expended so much time and study on the subject. He notes (without comment) that the first two professors appointed became respectively a Master in Chancery, and Archbishop of Dublin.

With his Oxford professorship making less demands upon him, the Revd Nares retired to a quieter life in his rural parish. Being of a studiouis nature, however, he turned again to literary pursuits. Two undertakings were proposed to him and engaged his interest. One

was to continue Tytler's *Elements of General History*, from the period where he had left off, to the demise of George III. The other was to write *The Life of Lord Burleigh.*

> I was in no manner aware of the trouble such works, particularly the latter, wd. give me, but the moment my assent was given, paragraphs were inserted in the Newspapers almost daily, to answer the Booksellers purposes of occupying the ground to the exclusion of others, by announcing that such works were in hand, or preparing, before I had set my pen to paper.

Nares found himself reasonably well equipped for the history project which could be undertaken at home. He was vexed, however, to find himself committed to the latter work. It would entail consulting many books, manuscripts, tracts and State Papers, which could only be examined in their proper location, entailing expensive journeys and long absences from home. He had no choice but to proceed. It was therefore with some reserve that on going to Oxford in November to read a Terminal Lecture he received the Vice Chancellor's card, 'begging to be allowed to propose my name as a select preacher for the years 1826 and 1827, to which out of respect to the University, tho' at the hazard of great inconvenience, I assented.'

Before the year was out, as a preliminary to his researches, Nares called upon Robert Peel, the Secretary of State, to obtain access to the State Paper Office, which was readily granted. As Peel was then the MP for the University he seized the opportunity to express a wish to exchange his professorship (more suitable to a University resident) for some church preferment. The Minister's advice was that he should direct his request to Lord Liverpool. His Lordship, in reply, intimated that 'the applications for Crown preferment were so many and pressing that he "could not see his way" to any such advantageous removal, as I had a fair right to look to'.

The Reverend Doctor regretted undertaking *The Life of Burleigh* almost from the start. This would have been less so could he have had a free hand, but he found that,

> . . . it threw me into the hands of persons who, however Eminent & respectable in their line of business, were perfect Strangers, engaging in it only on a *Speculation* which might or might not succeed with the publick, and who seemed to take a perfectly wrong view of the subject from the first.

The project was to occupy almost the whole of his time for the next five years, attended by disagreements, hindrances and vexations

beyond measure. Not least of these was the worry, when called away, of leaving unattended many really valuable books, or even more valuable manuscripts, which had been sent to him for his work and which required numerous extracts, references and sometimes corrections. He even postponed his usual spring visit to Oxford to a later date, coinciding with the Commemoration. He seized the opportunity to pass many hours in the *Bodelian* (sic) library.

In July 1826 Nares' friend, Dr Vaughan, Warden of Merton & Dean of Chester, died. Many seemed to think that he stood a fair chance of succeeding him. A letter to the Archbishop to enlist his support failed to produce a response. Unfortunately, his supporters were outnumbered by the junior Fellows. The choice fell on Dr Marsham, a relation of Lord Romsey. 'He was no sooner chosen than he wrote to me in the kindest manner, and with a delicacy of attention, very striking and complimentary'.

The Revd Doctor Nares preached a sermon as a Select Preacher before the University on 29 October, and stayed on to read a Terminal Lecture. Being in London in December he had a long conversation with the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace. His Grace referred to the Merton vacancy and hoped that Nares did not think him unmindful of his interest, but that he felt obliged to appoint one of the three aspirants whose names had been sent up by the College. So ended the year 1826.

A REVIEW OF REVIEWS – FIFTY YEARS OF WOODFORDE (from Vol. XII, 1 – Spring, 1979)

When I was asked, some months ago, to review Roy Winstanley's admirable *Ansford Diary*, it occurred to me to look back to the kind of comment first accorded the publication, in the 1920's, of *The Diary of a Country Parson.* I thought then that it would be interesting to seek some comparison between the two events. While turning over some of these early notices and newspaper cuttings I was struck with the idea that members of our Society might find some interest in an account of those reactions of over half a century ago. I thought, too, that it might be worth while to attempt some kind of inventory of the various responses to the diary as they have developed over the years. The early comment, while broadly welcoming, seemed from the outset to accept that the value of the diary itself was intimately linked with the editorial treatment it had received. As further volumes were published it appeared to me that this early judgment was modified a good deal and this, too, seemed to deserve some examination.

Understandably enough the appearance, in 1924, of what eventually became Volume 1 of *The Diary of a Country Parson* gave no indication on its title label that it was to be, in fact, the first volume of a series. Although this possibility was touched upon in the introduction, the publishers, Oxford University Press, were obviously not convinced that the book would commend itself to readers. Only when the rapturous welcome afforded to the book had made clear the necessity for a reprint was the decision made to proceed with a second volume. Thus, within two months of the original publication, the reprint appeared, bearing on its label the magic "Vol. I". More curious was the fact that neither the publishers nor the editor, John Beresford, seemed aware that they were not the first in the field. Some twenty years before, a series of extracts from the diary had been printed in a local magazine published and circulating in Woodforde's home town, Castle Cary, in Somerset. This journal, a monthly production of a few pages, contained snippets of information on local affairs and personalities likely to interest the inhabitants of the small town. Somewhat naturally, the diary extracts presented related only to the earlier part of Woodforde's life, when he was curate in and about the area. It would be appropriate to include in this essay reference to the degree of enthusiasm with which these gatherings from the diary were

received. Sadly, it is not possible to do so. The little magazine was too parochial to attract a large readership, nor was it, in fact, the editor's policy to invite readers' letters. Small wonder, then, that these first glimpses of the diary attracted little interest. The editor himself, when introducing the extracts, referred to them merely as a collection of scraps and facts relating to Cary and Ansford. No other comment was offered.

In 1924, when Beresford's first volume appeared, conditions were very different. To begin with, a book from so august a publishing house was bound to attract routine attention at the very least. It might be thought, too, that the timing was fortuitously apt. The reading public, still shrinking from the horror and bloodshed of world war were, perhaps, in a mood to receive gratefully this detailed picture of an earlier, more gentle, world. A world not so far removed in time as to be incomprehensible to them, and so very attractive in terms of peace and tranquillity. In a word, some readers may have found in Woodforde and in the pervasive "Englishness" of the diary the perfect example of escapist literature. There was, too, the circumstance that the public mind had been prepared to some extent for the delights and intimacies of diary-reading, said by some to be an acquired taste, by the then recent success of the serial publication of the Farington Diary.

A veritable flood of reviews, criticism and comment followed the appearance in April 1924 of the diary as edited by Beresford. A mere list of the publications containing these reviews would be unhelpful, nor would a catalogue of quoted extracts be more than irritating. The fact was that almost all established periodical journals of any literary pretensions found the diary worthy of attention. From the *Times* to the local press comment, particularly in Norfolk, opinion was basically favourable, although the *Times* struck that unfortunate note which has become, in the mind of the superficial commentator on the diary, synonymous with Woodforde. "It is mainly" said the *Times*, "a record of hearty eating and drinking". Even the *Times Literary Supplement*, with the Olympian quality of its review, maintained that the diary "concentrates on food". As might have been expected the *Eastern Daily Press* found space for long reviews, quoting liberally from the diary and drawing attention to the very detailed picture of eighteenth century life which emerged from it. Perhaps the more considered reviews came from serious quarterly journals, although here a divergence of viewpoints was obvious. The periodical

History, after commenting that the diary itself was "a delightful thing", attacked the editorial methods, stating them to be unsatisfactory and claiming to have detected what it called "slipshod workmanship". Not so the *English Historical Review*: here the reviewer found the editorship to have been admirable. He was the first, this particular reviewer, to point to the undoubted value the publication would have to historians of rural manners and customs. *The London Mercury*, the *Somerset Yearbook*, *Notes and Queries*, were other publications whose reviewers enthused: "the peculiar effect of rare actuality" as a penetrating comment from the last-named of those journals. And from across the Channel *La Revue Historique* offered thanks to Beresford: "En attendant, remercions M. Beresford de nous avoir fait connaître une âme simple et tranquille".

The first real essay I can trace on Woodforde came from the pen of Sir Edmund Gosse, although A. E. Walkley had written earlier a piece for the *Times*, subsequently published in book form. The Gosse essay appeared in 1925 as one of a number of literary pieces under the general title of 'Silhouettes'. Briefly summarizing the diary and attempting an analysis the essay seemed, in essence, to be an acknowledgement of the writer's rather grudging admiration. "The dressing up", wrote Gosse, "of the confessions of Woodforde, made to his diary, are only just amusing enough to be worthy of preservation". Following in the steps of the *Times*, he made reference to Woodforde's supposed preoccupation with food. "Tired of reading so much about a pig's face and greens", said Gosse. It did not surprise me to discover that the dish is mentioned only twice in that first volume, and that over a period of more than twenty years. Thus are myths created.

Volume II was published in 1926 following the unanimity of the public welcome for Volume I. It, too, received enthusiastic approval from all quarters. "The Pepys of Norfolk", said the *Eastern Daily Press*, noting that in the opinion of the reviewer the editing could not have been better done. *Notes and Queries*, while more restrained, felt that the publication would give unusual pleasure and that here was a fresh source of economic history, valuable to students. The major daily and weekly publications added to the swelling chorus of appreciation, although a number of them restricted their comment to the diary itself and made no assessment of editorial method. It was perfectly plain that the demand for more Woodforde, far from abating, was actually

growing, and when Beresford produced his third volume in 1927 one of the daily newspapers, reflecting the general mood, said of it that "It brings the same feelings of happiness and joy". It was now that the diary began to attract the attention of perhaps more percipient writers.

Virginia Woolf, in an essay called 'Life Itself', published in 1927, wrote in gentle and sympathetic vein of the delights of Woodforde, dwelling wonderingly on the mystery of the reasons behind this daily recording of trivia. It might be the desire for intimacy, she thought. Two Woodfordes, perhaps, in conversation one with the other, the diarist not quite the same man as the reverend gentleman who visited the poor and preached in church. Fanciful, this, and so different in spirit from the views of Augustine Birrell who also wrote on Woodforde at this time. Not entirely unsympathetic, he could still write that "The Vicar [sic] of Weston's Diary is the Diary of a Glutton", and that if "sworn off the subject of Parson Woodforde's unsubdued appetite for food, there is little more to say". This view, though, did not prevent Birrell from remarking that Woodforde was "one of the most kind-hearted, wide-minded and generous of men", and in a particularly memorable phrase, after commenting upon Woodforde's charity to two young girls, "both common prostitutes", wrote "It is meat and drink to me to meet a priest like this". Although Birrell, towards the end of his essay, was constrained to say that there was more in Woodforde than mere gastronomy, there is little doubt that this piece of writing went far to perpetuate the image of Woodforde as a man addicted to the pleasures of the table.

In 1929 Volume IV made its appearance. Said George Saintsbury, writing in the *Times*: "Would there were half a dozen volumes still to come". It was clear that the public appetite for Woodforde was unsated. The *London Mercury*, in the person of its ebullient reviewer, wrote: "Why is it never stated in plain English that this is the greatest literary discovery of our time?" Not all reviews were so eulogistic, but all looked forward to more. The Oxford University Press issued in 1931 a short, pre-publication leaflet entitled "Goodbye to an Old Friend", announcing the arrival of Volume V which, they said, completed the series and "takes the reader, sorrowing, to the diarist's death". How nostalgic to recall that the volume sold at 12s 6d net! Like its predecessors, Volume V drew forth unstinted praise, most of which contained an element of sadness. "We part regretfully", said the *Times*. "Many will lay

down this book with a sigh", wrote the reviewer in *Country Life*. Other journals recorded similar views: "an enduring literary treasure", a quote from the *Eastern Daily Press*, is representative of them. The single discordant note was struck in a long essay in the *London Mercury*, by Sir F. D. MacKinnon; curious this since that very journal had carried the earlier notice: "the greatest literary discovery". The criticism, though, was of the editor, not the diary. Beresford had, according to the reviewer, copied too faithfully the methods of Lord Braybrooke, the first editor of Pepys. He, Beresford, had leaned too much in the direction of "public interest"; his annotations concerned history, not divine chit-chat; politics, not trivia. These comments drew a reply from Beresford himself when, in a short letter to the editor, published in the succeeding issue, he offered an explanation and a defence of his chosen method. "I tried to edit the Diary for the plain man", wrote Beresford; "one has to steer, as best one can, a middle course between pompous peers and pedantic knights".

After the appearance of the last volume of the diary, press review and comment, apart from a very occasional mention, tended to cease, to be renewed only when, in 1935, Beresford's abridged Woodforde, a one volume edition, was published. Yet between these two events, Volume V of the full edition and the large, single edition of 1935, there was published another essay on the parson, an essay which I find the most satisfying of them all. G. F. Bradby was not writing principally on Woodforde; indeed, his pre-occupation was with the Brontës, but he brought to his study of Woodforde a deeper insight than had hitherto been shown.

It is impossible to summarize effectively Mr Bradby's account of the diary, "a strange and tantalizing record", he called it. Woodforde was, in his opinion, reticence personified but, claimed Bradby, by reading between the lines "we can come to know the parson better than he knew himself". All that Woodforde actually meant to do was to keep a concise and accurate report of expenses and receipts, of weather, of his health and his food, of his duties. But the cumulative effect of such trivial matters is surprising, a revelation, a pen-portrait of a living man, but a man says the essayist, whose heart was never in his vocation. In religious affairs he but did his duty, and in doing so was both generous and benevolent; but that was because he was a kindly-natured man, not because he was a parson.

It could not be expected that the abridgement, when it finally came

out, should arouse such a furore as had the original editions; and so it turned out. There were still many, however, to welcome the volume as likely to extend the parson's appeal, to open up the diary to a wider audience. The *Norwich Mercury* thought that the edition would "bring the diary within reach of those who have neither the means nor time for the complete edition". Desultory references only appeared over the next few years. An essay or two of singularly little worth and the growing use of Woodforde as source material for works of social, economic and local history marked the years leading up to the outbreak of war in 1939. There was one exception, a scholarly biographical essay by the then Sterling Professor of English History at Yale University. Beresford's untimely death revived interest. He was killed in an air-raid on London in 1940 while on duty at the Treasury: he was fifty-two years old. His literary memorial was, and is, Woodforde's diary. One of the obituary notices described it as "the enchanting record of the doings of an entirely undistinguished man" and, in drawing attention to Beresford's kindness and charm of manner, accorded him the attributes which he himself had ascribed to James Woodforde. Little was heard of the diary during the remaining war years and for a time afterwards. There was, of course, an occasional passing reference in Norfolk newspapers and devotees kept alive a degree of interest.

Post-war attention revived following an article in *Chambers' Journal* in 1950. The writer referred to Parson James as "an Average Englishman" and, harking back to the past, urged planners of the post-war environment to "read him with care". Perhaps interest aroused by this article prompted the Oxford University Press to reissue the single volume edition as an item in the 'World's Classics' series. Reviewers of this issue, writing in 1950, agreed that the diary was, indeed, worthy of its place among the greats and hoped that it would whet the appetites of a new generation of readers. In 1951 the correspondence columns of the Norfolk newspapers carried a number of letters on Woodforde, and particularly about the portrait of him, painted by Nephew Sam, which was to be generously presented to Weston Longville church by the late Mr Charles Clutsom. It was about this time, too, that R. W. Ketton-Cremer, that well-known writer on East Anglia, contributed his 'Thoughts on Woodforde' to the Norfolk Press. By now, interest was rather more widespread. A short talk on the BBC, called by the narrator 'The Tranquil Stream', introduced

Woodforde to listeners. The journal of the Norfolk freemasons published a short account of Woodforde's membership and more lengthy articles appeared in county magazines. Mrs Berta Lawrence, long a member of our Society, published her *Somerset Journal* with Woodforde material included and, in 1959, an essay was published which associated our diarist with Pepys and Johnson, with Blake and Coleridge, with Turgenev and Tolstoy, all referred to as exceptional men of genius; this, probably the highest praise ever accorded to Woodforde ought not, perhaps, to be taken too literally!

The record is beginning to approach the present. In 1964 Bernard and Joan Mewes bought the Ansford birthplace of James Woodforde, saved it from otherwise certain destruction and began the long and loving restoration. How redolent of Woodforde it still is! More short articles here and there, another radio broadcast in late 1966 and then that advertisement of 1967 which resulted in the formation of the Parson Woodforde Society. This event, too, drew press comment and undoubtedly revived interest in and enthusiasm for the diarist. Canon Leslie Rule Wilson formed the Society in 1968. Can it have been mere coincidence only which induced the Oxford University Press to reissue in August of that year the full set of five volumes? The diary became even more widely known. Journals, magazines and newspapers, some for the first time, began to carry articles and references. Publications catering for special interests extracted from the diary selections of material peculiar to their particular subjects. In 1969 the Oxford Historial Society published *Woodforde at Oxford.* This volume, edited by Dr W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, contained the full entries made by Woodforde not only while he was in residence at the University, but also when he paid visits there after 1763. The book does not compare favourably in terms of printing or presentation with the volumes of Beresford; no doubt conditions were very different from those existing nearly half a century before. Not only is the production itself inferior but the editing, while scholarly, is in no way as sympathetic as was Beresford's. The index is adequate without the expansiveness of the earlier volumes. The book did not attract the public attention it merited, although it was reviewed; it appears to have received general welcome as additional material from the Woodforde saga.

It has not been possible in this account to consider the entire range of comment upon and review of our diarist and his life, nor would

it be appropriate here to discuss the very great contributions made to Woodforde studies by our own Society, its founder, editor and members. Perhaps it would be fitting to conclude this brief story with a mention of the two latest attempts to bring Woodforde to a new audience. A paperback version of the single-volume selections has appeared, and the BBC have recently broadcast a television programme: 'On the Banks of the Wensum'. Entertainment rather than instruction or information was presumably the intention, no doubt very laudable, and perhaps it succeeded in this. For myself, I thought the medium unsuited to the message; it will be interesting to see if any increased enthusiasm results.

This essay first appeared in Vol. XII, 1 of the Journal for Spring 1979 (Ed.)

Notes for the Guidance of Contributors

The Editor welcomes articles on any subject relevant to the life and times of James Woodforde and will be pleased to consider material of a wider historical compass which might be considered to be of interest to Society members.

The following notes are **for guidance only** and are not intended to be prescriptive. The Editor is pleased to receive contributions in whatever form is most convenient to the author.

Text may be submitted in typewritten, word-processed or handwritten form on one side of A4 paper, preferably double-spaced with a margin and with numbered pages. Any sub-headings should be clearly indicated as should the approximate position of any illustrations.

It would be helpful if the following conventions were observed:

1. Spellings of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary should be observed except in the case of quotations where the original spelling should be used.

2. Capitals should be used to indicate proper names and titles, e.g. 'Dr', 'Sir'.

3. Compass points may be abbreviated, e.g. 'NW', except where used at the beginning of a sentence when they should be spelt in full with a hyphen, e.g. 'North-West'.

4. Capitals should be used for place-names, e.g. 'Norfolk', 'West Country' but 'the river Wensum', 'northern Somerset'.

5. Italics should be used for the titles of books and quotations in a foreign language.

QUOTATIONS

a. Complete quotations from the Diary of two lines or more should be indented and, where possible, be taken from the Society's edition. They should be followed by the date in brackets, e.g. '(06/11/1782)'.

b. Other longer quotations should be similarly indented and followed by the name of the author and work in italics unless they have already been given in the text.

c. Shorter quotations should be given in the body of the text using the referencing system outlined below. Such quotations should be in single inverted commas and quotations within quotations in double inverted commas.

d. Omissions from quotations may be indicated by three full stops; additions should be enclosed in square brackets, e.g. [*sic*].

NUMBERS AND DATES

(i) Words rather than figures should be used at the start of a sentence. Figures can be used for specific quantities, e.g. '107 acres', or numbers that are larger than single figures, e.g. 'six old men' but '27 children'.

(ii) Dates in the main part of the text should be written as '6 March 1786' and, where in brackets after a quotation as '(06/03/1793)'. Periods of time should be written as 'in the early eighteenth century' or 'the 18th-century British navy'.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

Footnotes and references should be indicated in the article itself by numbers in superscript, e.g. 'towards the Rectory[3].' A list of references and notes should then appear at the end of the article listing them in numerical order, e.g.:

Notes and References

1. Journal XV, 4, 3.
2. Norfolk Record Office Inclosure 1826 Reel No. 113/1 and 2.
3. Dorothy Heighes Woodforde (Ed.), *Woodforde Papers and Diaries*, London, 1932.
4. D. H. Woodforde *op. cit.* note 3.

The Society's Journal should simply be referred to as 'Journal' with volume, issue and page number as above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements to individuals and institutions should be placed at the end of the article following any Notes and/or References.

CHAIRMAN'S ENDPIECE

We are fortunate that the Journal is wrapped in an efficient and recognisable fashion. Little chance that it will be mistaken for seasonal junk mail, rather it is seized and, like some eagerly awaited Christmas present, opened with keen anticipation – I am sure you will not be disappointed with the contents. Perhaps like me you will store it safely for reading during a quieter moment, away from the Christmas festivities.

Your committee would by this time normally have had its 'mid-term' meeting. For us to meet at this time of the year brings an added boost to our enthusiasm. Meeting friends, reviewing progress to date and looking at the detail for next year's Frolic is a true reward for committee members.

This year our schedule is different. The Norfolk Frolic is deliberately being held later than normal and a consequence is that the committee probably will meet in February. For us (well, me in particular) this gives more thinking time – we need to look ahead to 2003 and recognise the bicentenary of Woodforde's death. This significant year for the Society cannot pass without special consideration. In the next few paragraphs I hope to encourage us all to give this some thought.

For the Society to hold its Frolic on the day of Woodforde's death or internment is impractical – although individually we may wish to make our way to Weston Longville. One thought that follows is to have a one day informal winter's gathering, complemented by a celebratory Frolic later in 2003.

Norfolk would seem the obvious venue for the 2003 Frolic; however, this breaks with the tradition of changing venue from year to year, normally alternating between Norfolk and Somerset. Would two years in a row in Norfolk prove unpopular? Perhaps more importantly, could we find an organiser for the second event?

Alternatively Somerset, with its very rich association with Woodforde, is equally inviting. With an abundance of houses surviving from Woodforde's time, our Frolics bring alive the characters and the environment in which he lived. Again the onus of organising the event too often falls on the same individuals – who surely should some time be able to sit back and enjoy rather than organise the proceedings.

I hope you will be able to give some thought to the way in which we should recognise Woodforde's contribution to our under-

standing of society during his lifetime, and to the enjoyment he brings to each of us. It is not just the venue, but also the content of any Frolic that deserves attention. Perhaps we should also look towards some more tangible way of marking his impact? Your thoughts are always welcomed.

Your committee and I thank you for your encouragement and wish you a Merry Christmas and every happiness in the year ahead.

NIGEL CUSTANCE

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.

PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2001/2002

George Bunting	*President*
Dr Nigel Custance	*Chairman*
Martin Brayne	*Vice-Chairman & Editor*
Dr David Case	*Treasurer*
Ann Williams	*Secretary*

Jenny Alderson, Professor Bruce Archer, Yvonne Bird, Suzanne Custance, Revd Peter Jameson, Mollie Matthews

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