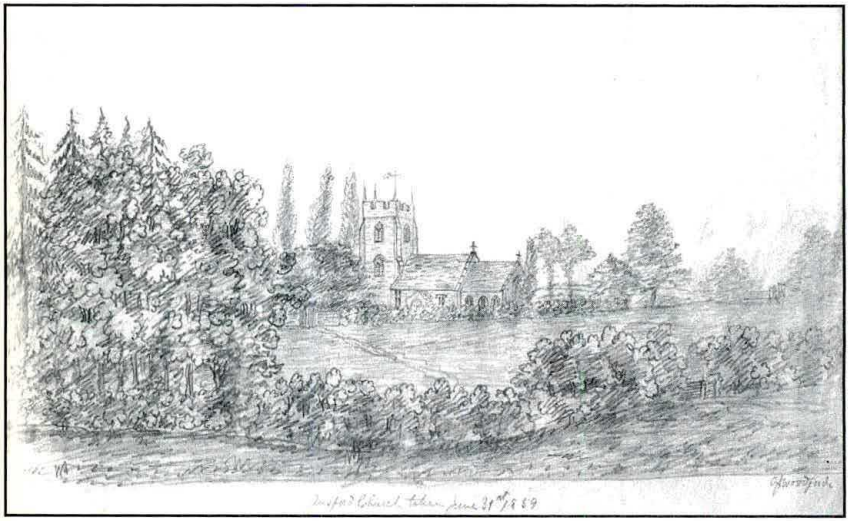
PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal



ANSFORD CHURCH, 21st JUNE 1859 by A. J. WOODFORDE
(Parson Woodforde Society)

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Saturday, 30th April

Have just finished reading Rupert [Hart-Davis]'s fifth volume of correspondence with George Lyttelton. I can hardly bear the knowledge that there can be but one more, for Lyttelton died in 1962 and we have now reached 1960. He complains of increasing deafness and pains, yet is never self-pitying. Rupert's spryness is a slight irritant ... Lyttelton's letters are the more fascinating. Yet he complains that, whereas Rupert has so much to tell about the million things he is doing and distinguished folk he is seeing, he has so little, as a retired schoolmaster living in Suffolk. It merely proves my theory that the best diarists and letter-writers are those who are *nobody* and have *nothing* to write about.

James Lees-Milne, *Holy Dread: Diaries 1982-1984*, ed. M. Bloch (2001)

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

The second day of August 1776 is notable for being the first day on which Woodforde applied the word 'home' to Weston Parsonage, thus marking, as Roy Winstanley pointed out, 'a further stage in his gradual acclimatisation there'. Interestingly, whilst the diarist from then on 'breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at home', his nephew, Bill, continued to breakfast, dine, sup and sleep 'at Weston'. This remained the pattern until 23 June in the following year when:

> ..... my Nephew, self &
> my Servant Will: Coleman set forth on our Journey
> into Somersett

where they remained until 21 August. On that day James and Bill set off for Norfolk, travelling via Oxford and arriving safe and well on 29th when they supped and slept, rather formally, 'at the Rectorial House'. Another period of re-adjustment then begins and it is almost another month before the Parsonage is once more referred to as 'home'. On returning from his next Somerset visit, in 1779, the Parsonage is immediately 'home': the diarist has settled down to his life of quiet domesticity in Norfolk.

There was, however, another 'domus' in Woodforde's life – his old school at Winchester. The second of two articles on Woodforde's Winchester is reprinted here for the particular benefit of members attending our Frolic in September. There was, of course, no Winchester Diary so that we cannot know if his schooldays were happy or otherwise. We do know from the early Diary that he did have many Wykehamist friends and suspect that he had fitted in unexceptionally at school – Widmerpool's overcoat was not for him!

It has been observed before in these pages that people who have little more than a walk-on role in the Diary often performed something altogether more important, even distinguished, elsewhere. Mr Creed, Robert Holmes and Harry Peckham all spring to mind. To their number we should certainly add the name of John Culley of whom Woodforde has little to say other than listing him, together with John Baker, Robert Emeris, Henry Case and other tithe frolickers. However, for many years Culley's portrait, by the RA John Jackson, hung in the Norwich Corn Exchange, bearing, as Beresford informs us, the inscription – 'This portrait of John Culley Esq., was placed in this building AD 1829 by the corn

growers and corn buyers of Norfolk as testimony of their sense of the perseverance, zeal and unwearied exertions used by him in providing and settling for the public use in this agricultural county a Corn Exchange.' That no record appears to exist of the present whereabouts of this portrait reflects sadly on a city to which he made a most important contribution.

If members of our Society were to be marooned on a desert island with nothing but eight records, the Bible, Shakespeare and one of the Society's volumes of Woodforde's Diary, it is difficult to know which of the latter would prove most popular but our latest production, Volume 13, must be in the running. A typical comment comes from Michael Platt – 'almost every day is a treat'. It has sold particularly well so do be sure to order your copy if you have not already done so.

It is pleasing to welcome the appearance of a new quarterly magazine, edited by our member Paul Minet, *The British Diarist*. It is likely to prove of great interest to many in this Society and further details will be found in the Newsletter. We wish it every success.

MARTIN BRAYNE

WOODFORDE'S WINCHESTER

Very little written by James Woodforde touching his schooldays at Winchester has come down to us, and it is unlikely that he wrote much more than we have. Although the diary shows him as quite willing to recall his time there, most often there was only one kind of experience which had the power to evoke a reminiscence. This was when in later life he met one of his old Wykehamist schoolfellows; and even here the diarist invariably wrote down no more than the man's name. Otherwise, references to Winchester are of the greatest rarity, and where they occur they tend to be about extra-curricular activities rather than school life. On 15 November 1781 he bought from a chemist named Landy in Norwich Market Place some of his inevitable rhubarb and 'a small vial of Goulard's Extract', which cost him threepence. Then the diarist continues:

> The above M[r]. Landy was of Winchester and his Mother whom I knew very well and often ticked with her lived in a House in College Street and kept a Huckster's Shop there, and she had many a Shilling of me.

This kind of thing is exactly what one would expect of the diarist. He was essentially far more interested in people than in institutions of any kind. Therefore we shall never know whether he loved Winchester or hated it; or, which is far more likely, if he simply accepted it as he accepted other places and experiences in his lifetime, and made the best of them.

The first entry in the diary was made on the day when he became 'a Scholar of New College'. The first of the expense-account entries which antedated the diary was written on 8 May 1758, and related to his admission at Oriel. At that time he was still a Winchester Scholar; but his next account of personal expenses did not come until October of that year, after he had left school and gone into residence at Oxford. Perhaps it was his father who suggested to him the advisability of making a record of purchases and other outgoings, something there would have been little need for when he was at school.

Woodforde, then, does not help us to form a picture of Winchester as it was in his time, and we cannot see the College through his eyes. But we can illustrate what must have been his life there by calling upon other sources, notably the archives of Winchester and printed books based on those archives. For, as the regime both

inside and outside the classroom was such a fixed and unvarying one, we can with some confidence reconstruct his schooldays by reference to what was done at the school while he was there.

In the late fourteenth century William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester and former Chancellor of England, drew up a plan for twin charitable foundations at Winchester and Oxford, both dedicated to St Mary. The seventy Fellows of New College exactly balanced the same number of Winchester Scholars, who migrated there after passing through the school. They were to be 'poor and without means', and their education and cost of maintenance were to be at the expense of the Foundation which he had endowed. The primary purpose of this educational charity was to provide a supply of able boys to be priests and monks; or, if they remained laymen, to enter the service of the king or one of the greater barons. The Foundation was under the control of a Warden and twelve Fellows: there were also two Masters to take charge of the teaching, chaplains and an organist, besides a large number of servants.

Over the long expanse of nearly four centuries which separate the time of William from that of James Woodforde the diarist, there had naturally been great changes. The confusions which arise when one begins to study the history of Winchester come from the fact that there was what practically amounted to a tacit conspiracy to deny and disown change. This led to an elaborate form of 'double-think', in which the letter of William's Statutes was often piously upheld while their spirit was flouted; or while keeping one law eighteenth century Winchester cheerfully violated another. One instance must suffice. The Statutes laid down that the salary of the Head Master was to be £20, and that of the Under Master £10. By Woodforde's time they had risen to £42 and £32 respectively, but as these sums were not economically realistic, the custom had developed whereby the parents of other relations of a Scholar helped to pay the costs of his education. For so long as his son was at Winchester, Samuel Woodforde paid £3 each half year to the 'Informator', as the Head Master was rightly called, and £2 to the 'usher' or 'Hostiarius'. Exacting these sums, the Fellows shut their eyes to another of the Founder's directions, that on no account should the masters take money from or on behalf of their pupils.

This is of the utmost significance. Well before Woodforde's era, Winchester like other Public Schools had ceased to be a haven for the bright sons of poor people. Practically all the eighteenth century Scholars came from the same professional middle class as

Woodforde himself, or were aristocrats like his friend Bathurst. Nor is this all. It was the Head Master of Woodforde's day, Dr John Burton, ruling from 1724 to 1766, who did most to attract into the school the 'Commoners', outright fee-payers who had nothing to do with the Foundation, building for them a special boarding-house inside the College premises, 'Commoners' Hall'.

Winchester, then, was in transition during this time. Outwardly changeless, with its wealth of archaic ceremonial customs and its mediaeval notions of good education, it lurched its top-heavy way from age to age, like some unwieldy and monstrous saurian. Below the surface of things, even this classic example of a social anachronism was beginning to feel the effects of change, although this would not be complete until the middle of the nineteenth century, when at last William of Wykeham's entire scholastic plan and the Wykehamist way of life that went with it were remodelled and brought up to date.

If the question is asked: how did any particular boy obtain admission to Winchester? – the answer is that it may have depended to some extent upon ability, but far more was it the outcome of favour and privilege. A family connection with the College was a great help, and Woodforde's was already three generations old. The 'Roll ad Winton', or list of new admissions, was made up at the time of the annual Election, in Woodforde's time always held in early or mid-September, by the six examiners: the Warden, the Head Master, the Warden of New College, his Sub-Warden for the year, and two New College Fellows, the 'Senior Poser' and the 'Junior Poser', taken in rotation. If the numbers were up to full strength, and those who left the school were fewer than those on the new Roll, a boy might wait some time before there was a vacancy. This seldom happened in the eighteenth century. In 1752, Woodforde's year, the Scholars numbered sixty-four. A year later they were down to fifty-four.

It is difficult to estimate to what extent the Election constituted a serious test for the applicants, as it certainly did for the boys at the other end of the school who were competing for places at New College. The best account of a Winchester Election seen through the eyes of a schoolboy is in *What I Remember* (1887) by Thomas Adolphus Trollope, Anthony's elder brother and grandson of William Milton, the diarist's contemporary at Winchester and New College. By 1820, the date Thomas Trollope took the Election, it had degenerated not only into a formality but an outright farce. On

the other hand, Woodforde prepared his cousin Francis for the Election of 1762, and the diary shows that he went to some trouble in making up test-pieces and exercises for the boy. This would suggest that some sort of examination, however superficial, was being held at this time, and that Woodforde himself would have had to pass a similar examination ten years before.

He arrived as one of eleven boys. Here is the list of the other ten, adapted from the Great Register of Winchester College:

George Wickham C.F.	29/8/1742	Swalcliffe, Oxon.
William Hearst C.F.	14/7/1738	Harbridge, Hampshire
John Oglander	26/9/1737	Reading
William Willis	8/11/1737	Huish Champflower, Somerset
Edward Loggin	5/10/1738	Beoley, Worcs.
John Phillips	8/12/1736	St Paul, Bedford
Benson Bennett	1/1/1740-1	Eardisley, Herefordshire
Thomas Middleton	12/10/1739	Kensington
Thomas Brown	17/1/1739-40	Titchfield, Hampshire
Richard Fisher	16/5/1743	St Giles, Reading

At the end comes the diarist's own notice, here quoted verbatim in its Latin form:

> Jacobus Woodford de Almsford Com: Somerset
> Bapt. June 1740 Batho-Wellens.

There is no reason to believe that this is other than a representative list, except that it is slightly shorter than in most years. The preponderance of boys from the West country is exactly what would be expected, in that epoch of slow and poor communications. The age-range is a wide one, from nine to nearly sixteen. The initials after the first two names signify 'Consanguineus Fundatoris' – 'Founder's Kin' – always placed first. Three of the ten: Hearst, Oglander and Loggin, went along with Woodforde to New College, of which Oglander became Warden. This proportion of four successful candidates out of eleven ought to dispose finally of the mythical notion that to all Wykehamists acceptance by New College was automatic. Two more reached University: Brown was at Christ Church and Phillips (who became vicar of Alford in the diarist's own part of the country) at Balliol. Middleton was expelled after persistent absences. Richard Fisher, the youngest boy on the list, was perhaps insufficiently robust to withstand the rigours of life at an eighteenth century Public School. He was attacked by the

'stone', taken away and died soon after. Willis and Benson Bennett, whom Woodforde, meeting in later times, called 'M[r]. Benson Earle', which probably means that had changed his name upon inheriting property, left in the ordinary way as Superannuates, their time being up.

By the time Woodforde entered the College the Scholars, the Commoners and a third group, the Quiristers were being taught together. The Long Rolls which record year by year the progress of every boy put members of the three groups in three parallel lines. The evidence of Woodforde's diary would suggest that his close acquaintance was practically confined to those who, like himself, were Scholars on the Foundation. At this time there were three classes or, in Winchester parlance, 'Books': Fourth, Fifth and Sixth. A lower form, 'Second and Fourth' seems at this time to have been mainly for Quiristers. The first two were each divided into Junior, Middle and Senior parts. There were no fixed terms as modern schools know them, but the scholastic year ran from September to September, with two breaks, about Whitsun or somewhat later, and at Christmas, although these may have been unofficial, and available only to boys who lived at no great distance away, like the diarist. After the Election, a new Long Roll was drawn up, and if a boy had been promoted to a higher class, or from one part of a class to another, his new place was inscribed on it.

The tribe of superficial commentators who have aired their views about Woodforde are unanimous that he was an exceptionally dull man, and even Dr Hargreaves-Mawdsley, the editor of the Oxford volume, appears to share this bleak view of the poor Parson. So far as his boyhood is concerned, the Long Rolls tell rather a different story. On arrival, he was placed not in the lowest form but in the next, Middle part of the Fourth, where he was indeed the last of three, but this placing very likely came from his being the last to arrive and occupying the bottom place on the Roll ad Winton. Next year he moved up into the Senior part of the class, and was third of six. In 1754 he was in the Junior part of 'Fifth Book', where he was third of nine, his best placing. Next year he was sixth out of thirteen in the Middle part, and in 1756 tenth of thirteen in the Senior part. In 1757: that is, from autumn 1757 to autumn 1758, his last year, he was in the Sixth class, but placed very low at fifteenth out of eighteen. Obviously Woodforde was not a brilliant student like his close friend Geree, but his record is respectable enough. He did what was required of him, and unlike many of his

schoolfellows, never failed to move up at the end of a year. He seems, rather significantly, to have done less well in his later years, when those who were developing into academic high-fliers had outdistanced him. We see also that he was never chosen to be a senior prefect or to deliver one of the formal Latin orations at Election time for which Winchester was famous. He was an average boy, as he was to be an average man.

Everyone knows, however vaguely, that all that was ever taught in eighteenth century Public Schools was Greek and Latin. Unlike most beliefs of its kind, this one can stand investigation and turns out to be largely true. The devotion of the epoch to the classical world was so complete, so intense, so servile, that an understanding of the classics was held to be the one real distinguishing mark of an educated man. To Addison early in the century an 'illiterate' person was one who had no classical learning. Other academic skills, such as a knowledge of history or the ability to use one's own language well, could safely be left to the individual's own personal preferences. At Winchester mathematics were not taught until long after Woodforde's time, and even then as an extra, and by an outside teacher. No modern language was studied until the 1820's. Simply from a knowledge of eighteenth century educational ideals, we could make an informed guess at the Winchester curriculum, in broad outline. But, as it happens, we can do much better than that. By great good fortune a fully detailed list of the books studied throughout the College at one particular time has survived. This was found 'in a drawer in the Head Master's study' so recently as 1934, so the information it contains is not in any of the standard histories of Winchester. It can be dated almost with certainty to the school year 1755-6, when as we have just seen Woodforde was in the Middle part of the Fifth class. The document shows that sometimes all the members of the Fifth were taught together, sometimes it combined with the Sixth into a single large class, while at others it split into two or even all three separate parts. This year Woodforde would have studied Virgil, Horace, Lucius Florus, Juvenal (interesting because this is the one Latin author with whom we can be sure he retained more than a nodding acquaintance), Quintus Curtius and Sallust. In Greek he worked on Homer, Anacreon and the Greek Testament.

All this represents fairly advanced study. The simplest Latin prose authors, such as Caesar and Cornelius Nepos, are not on the list, and the assumption must be that Woodforde was quite proficient

in Latin by the time he arrived at Winchester. At the same time, there were nine year old boys on the Foundation, who could not have been at home with these adult authors. We know that Latin Grammar was still being taught to the lowest section of the Fourth; but this class was also doing Virgil.

The way in which the classics were taught appears very strange to modern ideas of what is educationally desirable. A great emphasis was laid upon sheer memorizing, and bishop Bathurst claimed that he had 'learned 16,000 lines of Greek and Latin verse' at Winchester. We have evidence of this in another list which has survived and is now among the Woodforde papers at New College. This contains the books or parts of books which each of the boys of the Middle and Junior parts of the Fifth class had to commit to memory in August 1756. Woodforde's is the third name on the list, and to him were allotted the second book of Horace's 'Epistles' and the sixth book of the 'Aeneid'.

The working school day was inordinately long, even when it is remembered that in all spheres of eighteenth century life long hours of work were the rule. It began at the inhuman time of 5.00 am; or just possibly 5.30 by the time Woodforde was at the College. If the boys were up at 5 o'clock (the prefect on duty in each Chamber used to rouse the room with a cry of 'Surgite!' ('Get up!') they had to be in Chapel by 5.30. At 6 o'clock, still fasting, they were summoned by a bell into 'School'. The morning lesson lasted three hours, and only after that came breakfast, served about 9.00 am. Then the boys were dismissed to study of 'meditate' in their chambers, until 11.00 am. The next hour was also spent in 'School'. Dinner was at 12 noon, and the pupils then went to work again as soon as it was over, through the whole of the long afternoon for four days in the week, broken only by a snack served in the summer months only. At 5 o'clock came supper, after which the Scholars studied in the Chambers until 8.00 pm, when there was a second service in Chapel. After that a drink was given out, and as soon as they had swallowed it, the pupils were despatched to bed, one would imagine fairly exhausted.

The above time-table is taken from a list dated 1647. There is another extant list in the College archive covering the years 1825-9. The two are virtually identical, except that by the early nineteenth century the evening meal was called not supper but dinner, and the midday meal lunch. Dinner was now served at 6.00 pm, and evening Chapel was not until 8.30 pm. It is not surprising that some of the

boys cracked up under this Spartan regime. The Register contains many notes about boys who became so ill at school that they had to be taken away; and some died, either at the school or soon afterwards.

We might here look more closely at the meals, for they are characteristic of an age which did not minister to the comfort of schoolboys. Unattractive though the heavy mental diet of endless Greek and Latin sounds to us, often provided at the most unfavourable and inopportune times, it is almost pleasurable by comparison with the staggeringly uninviting food which kept the boys alive to enjoy the benefits of a classical education. If Woodforde in his adult years was fond enough of the pleasures of the table, and did justice to the excellent meals served up to him by a succession of well-drilled cooks, his love of good eating could only have been intensified by any memory he may have retained of the awful Winchester dietary. Breakfast, taken as we have seen only when the boys had been up for four hours and at work for three, consisted of dry bread and beer, and possibly broth. It was only in 1766 that after the Election Scrutiny of that year the College was advised 'to allow Butter and Cheese to the Children to their Breakfasts', and not until so late as 1838 that tea replaced beer as the breakfast drink. Friday, and originally Saturday were meatless days. On the other four work-days dinner consisted of 40 lbs weight of boiled beef. On Sundays there was a smaller quantity, 30 lbs, but this was roasted and presumably less unpalatable. In the absence of any adult supervisory authority at meal-times the duty of seeing the food shared out devolved upon the 'Prefect of Tub', who presided over the division of the meat into four chunks, called 'fercula' or 'messes'. These were then sub-divided into smaller lumps called 'dispers'. A disper was a boy's individual portion. Most of these weird arrangements were already ancient in the seventeenth century. The pieces of meat served as dispers had a variety of unpleasant nicknames: 'Fleshy', 'Fat Flap', 'Cat's Head', and others. However, remembering the very similar types of epithet bestowed on the 'School Dinners' of our time by those who eat them, I do not know if we can agree with Mr Cook, the Winchester historian, that the slang implied a particularly nauseous quality in the food.

At half-past three, astoundingly in summer only (we are not told what, if anything, took its place in the winter months) the snack already mentioned was handed out. This was called 'bevers' (Low

Latin 'bevere', from 'bibere', to drink), and like the breakfast was made up of bread and beer. As if dinner had not contained enough heavy animal protein, supper was a meal of precisely the same kind, except that the meat now was not beef but mutton. This was supplied, after the College ceased to slaughter its own meat at the end of the seventeenth century, at the rate of one sheep and a half each mutton day. Trollope mentions potatoes with the evening meal in the 1820's, but by his time the diet had in many ways improved. There is never any mention of green vegetables, or of fruit; but this last the boys would buy for themselves, whenever they had any pocket money. We hear of a special Wykehamist baked pudding, which sounds rather attractive from its recipe. According to one of the lists, it appeared at the noontime meal on Fridays and Saturdays. The food was particularly good for the three days of the Election, always kept up as a feast.

Beer was drunk at every meal and was, in addition, freely available outside these special times. Trollope remembered that, while every food article was measured out carefully, 'the beer was given absolutely ad libitum'. It was drawn off from the casks in the cellars into leathern jacks called 'gispins'. Originally the Quiristers had done this, but by the eighteenth century the Scholars were obliged to fetch their own beer. A regulation of 1778, not too far away from the diarist's time at the College, is valuable because it merely rehearses the traditional practice restored after a period when it had been discontinued:

> The Gispins of Beer are to be placed in the Hall, as formerly, viz., three gispins to supply the six Ends, by placing one in the middle of each of the three forms, so as conveniently to serve two Ends. And the Junior Boys at each End is to pour the beer for the rest.

The term 'Ends' at this period meant the two long sides of a table. The three 'forms' corresponded to the three classes into which, as we saw, nearly all the Scholars were divided, so that the members of a class sat together at meals. This, however, was the arrangement only for the 'inferiors'. The prefects were accommodated separately. Their meat was not cut into 'dispers', but was dressed by the cook according to their orders, and paid for by themselves according to the established tariff made up with reference to the additional expense of the mode of preparation ordered. They alone had plates. For the rest there were 'trenchers', described as 'flat pieces of wood about nine inches square'. Knives and forks were

not provided for the 'inferiors', who used their own private supply of cutlery or ate with their fingers.

Meals were taken in 'Hall', and this, together with 'Chapel', 'School' and 'Chambers', made up the fixed points round which all Winchester College life revolved. The Scholars went twice a day to chapel services, as we have seen, in the morning and evening, wearing a surplice over their gowns. They were, presumably, required to sing there, for a knowledge of plainsong was traditionally expected of them. Almost the only question asked of Thomas Trollope in the 1820 Election was 'Can you sing?'. However, the main work of providing the music for the chapel services must have fallen upon the Quiristers, who were on the original Foundation and, in very early times, had alternated singing in the choir with personal service, wearing the Scholars' cast-off gowns and eating the left-overs from their table! Once the voices of the Quiristers broke, they were of no further use to the College, which usually got rid of them by apprenticing them to tradesmen in the city or elsewhere. In the eighteenth century their numbers fluctuated widely, with an overall tendency to decline. There were only a few of them in Woodforde's time, and after he left they almost disappeared altogether, but were restored by Warden Lee late in the century. However, by one of the anomalies in which the history of Winchester is so rich, by then they were presumably unable to sing, for we hear of choir boys being hired from the cathedral to take part in chapel services. Early in the next century the Quiristers were taken out of the school altogether and located in a house in College Street.

Woodforde's schoolroom was 'New School', built in 1687, a most beautiful, classically proportioned, light-filled masterpiece of a building in the Wren tradition. It retained its original purpose and use until quite recently. Here still stands the ornate and elaborately carved High Seat of the Head Master, like the bishop's throne in a Cathedral, near the famous 'Aut disce', that constant reminder to the pupils of the purpose of their being in the College. At the other end of the room was the smaller and plainer seat of the Under Master, flanked by the 'Tabella Legum', the rules of Winchester. All the Scholars were taught by these two: the senior boys by the Head Master and the rest by the assistant, and they were taught standing up, as they are seen on Flaxman's fine monument to Joseph Warton in the Cathedral. This will have appreciably added to the exhaustion the boys must have felt at the end of the long

school day. Each of them had in School a 'scob', a sort of locker for keeping books and papers. It had a double lid, and when the upper lid was propped open and the lower lid closed, it served as a desk with bookrest. There is a picture of a scob, with a gowned Scholar, in a recent book, *The Public School Phenomenon*, by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy. It can be seen from this that there was no proper seat, and the Scholar appears in the roughly drawn sketch to be perching on the trestle which supports the adjoining 'scob'.

A good part of the boys' waking hours was spent in their 'Chambers', originally six in number and finally seven after 'New School' was built and part of the former schoolroom adapted to make an additional dormitory. The rooms were on the ground floor of a block along one side of 'Chamber Court', and on the floor above the twelve Fellows of the College traditionally slept, although by Woodforde's time the Fellowship was practically a sinecure and many Fellows were non-resident. The Long Rolls which record the class position of each Scholar also give the number of his Chamber. The rooms were re-allocated each year. Woodforde spent his first two years in First Chamber, the third in Seventh, the fourth and fifth in Second, and his last year in Fourth, where there was only one other Sixth Form boy, the Benson Bennett already mentioned. The aim of the changes was probably to ensure that each Chamber contained both Senior and Junior boys. Some, however, managed to retain the same Chamber throughout nearly all their school career.

I have been in the Chambers, no longer used as dormitories, which are now on the floor above, the Fellows' old quarters. By modern standards the area is very small for the eight or ten boys who would have occupied a room. Each Scholar was provided only with a bedstead, which seems to have been little more than a wooden frame with iron strips nailed across it and straw piled on. If something more luxurious were required, his relations had to supply him with a bedstead. Every other necessity of a sleeping room was collectively called 'Chamberstock', and could either be provided from outside like the private bedstead or hired from the College. By each bedside was 'a Toys' (singular), a box in which personal possessions could be kept. Woodforde had all these things of his own at the College. When he left in 1758 he lent them to a Thomas Bedford, of Gosport, a new boy on the 'Roll ad Winton' that year, on condition that he kept them in repair. Seeing them again in 1762 he described them as

. . . a bed, Bolster, Sheets, Scobb, Chest,
Bands, Towels, Toys, Desk, Gowns, Blanketts
and Ruggs, and Surplice –
– Ansford Diary I, 46 (17/9/1762)

The Statutes laid down that in each of the Chambers three senior boys were to keep order. They served on a daily or weekly rota, arranged by themselves, and the boy on duty was known as 'Praepositor (or Prefect) in Course'. One of a list of regulations dated 9/9/1778, but going back to 1756 when the diarist was at College, reads

> That the Praepositor in course take care that the Chamber door be always kept open, when the boys are in them, till Bed time, which is half-past eight for the inferiors (when a chapter of the bible is to be read by the praepositor in course) and Nine for the praepositors; and that the doors be constantly locked at half-past eight.

The 'Junior' in each Chamber carried out the kind of duties, possibly making the beds of the senior boys or keeping the room tidy, which in other public schools were known as 'fagging'. He was the youngest boy, or possibly the newest arrival. Woodforde wrote of his cousin, who had just been admitted in the 1762 Election: 'Frank is in third Chamber, and Junior there'.

We have already seen that for the boys a school day was divided into long classroom hours, periods of private study in their Chambers, services in Chapel and mealtimes. There was only one recognised and permitted form of leisure activity. On Tuesdays and Thursdays the day was enlivened by expeditions to St Catherine's Hill on the outskirts of the city, called in the Winchester jargon 'Going on Hills'. These outings were known collectively as 'Remedies', and consisted of 'Morning Hills', 'Afternoon Hills' and, in the summer months at least, 'Evening Hills'. When later generations of pupils were to find themselves dragooned into some form of organized and compulsory games practice, the eighteenth century Wykehamist understood by 'Hills' a completely free activity, which was often no more than walking or rambling; although at different times we hear of 'football and cricket of sorts, bird-slinging, pole-jumping, tree-climbing, mouse-digging and above all badger-hunting', as Mr Cook puts it. Some of these outdoor pursuits appear decidedly odd. The badger is a nocturnal animal which lives largely underground, and the only way it could possibly have been 'hunted' was surely for specimens to be brought in for the occasion, like the 'bag-foxes' which can be read about

in Victorian sporting novels, used when the natural supply of the animals was low in the district. As for mouse-digging, the devotees of this amusement provided themselves with a special kind of miniature pickaxe, adapted for probing the little creatures out of their holes. The object was to capture them alive, and bring them back in triumph to the College, where they were kept in cages. Bathing in the river Itchen was also popular. But we hear also that William Whitehead, admitted 1727 and later one of the series of limp eighteenth century Poets Laureate, would find some 'sequestered nook' and read 'a book of poetry'. Apart from these set occasions, leaving the school premises except by permission and with a special pass was forbidden, under threat of expulsion. The last of the famous Winchester 'insurrections' in the eighteenth century was sparked off by the expulsion of a senior boy who had done no more than slip out to watch a military parade on the Cathedral green.

What, finally, can we say about old Georgian Winchester, so totally at variance with all our most cherished ideas about education? Any moderately competent first year student at a College of Education could be warranted to produce an essay, decorated with all the modish truisms and jargon of our time, to show that it was an absurd, top-heavy and irrational system, loading the mind with masses of useless and archaic intellectual lumber, while neglecting the contemporary world almost entirely. It still remains true that the eighteenth century Public School did somehow manage to turn out well-educated and civilized people; and the great emphasis laid on extempore speaking and declamation played a great part in developing the superb Parliamentary oratory of the time. Everyday life at Winchester leaves an impression on the mind of those who have studied it of harshness: cold, fatigue, hunger, misery, must have been the lot of these boys for a great part of the working day. But there was, naturally, enough of those things in the world outside. And the bullying and beating which was so much part of the spirit of the place that it went unnoticed until it occasionally reached outrageous proportions and created a scandal? There can be little doubt that it went on, but as a matter of fact little evidence is available from Woodforde's time at the school. It may have been that the tough-minded Burton kept it in check, and after he was replaced by Warton, by all accounts a weak man and a poor disciplinarian, the college began to slide into the state of anarchic barbarism which has left its trace upon the records.

However, in the final outcome, we are here interested in Winchester only because James Woodforde was there. If we try to estimate what effect the six years he spent there could have had upon him, it would seem, rather disconcertingly, that he reacted against the place in every possible way. Subjected to the appalling regimen of Winchester, he became conspicuously fond of good food and comfort in later life. The intensive and gruelling classical education he received could have led either to a lifelong devotion to the classics, or to complete indifference. In his case, it was indifference. He wrote his diary in English, day in, day out, with never a sign that Latin or Greek meant anything to him at all. Towards the end of his life he did take to writing down scraps of Latin, perhaps to foil Nancy whom he no doubt suspected of a wish to pry into that extraordinary document – he became a very suspicious man in his last years. But these were by no means the advanced Winchester stuff but simple schoolboy tags which he might have learned at Urchfont, or even sitting at the feet of Mr King of Compton Pauncefoot when he was eight or nine. 'Qui vult canem verbere, facile invenit baculum',* he wrote once when he was annoyed with Mr Custance. It seems very little to be left with, after so much effort.

The most hair-raising denunciations of English Public Schools have come from people unable to forget or forgive their sufferings there. People so diverse as the Elder Pitt, Shelley and Lord Salisbury, to name only three, loathed Eton and everything it stood for. As for Winchester itself Sir Sydney Smith, the hero of Acre,† not what one would call a weakling by any sort of standard, used to 'shudder' at the memory of the place, as his daughter and biographer recollected. At the other end of the emotional scale is Thomas Gray, something of a misfit in adult life, who was never so happy as when he was a boy at Eton:

> Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
> Less pleasing when posest;
> The tear forgot as soon as shed,
> The sunshine of the breast;

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* 'He who wishes to beat a dog, easily finds a stick'

† I wonder if there is a confusion here between the Admiral, Sir Sidney Smith (1764-1840), who entered the navy at the age of 13, and his near namesake Sydney Smith (1771-1845), the wit and canon of St Paul's who, according to his daughter and biographer Lady Holland, would 'speak with horror of the wretchedness of the years he spent there: the whole system was then, he used to say, one of abuse, neglect and vice'? (Ed.)

Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention every new,
And lively chear of vigour born;
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Sydney Smith or Gray, you can take your choice. But these were both extreme views, and I do not think that James Woodforde was ever a man of extremes in anything.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the former archivist of Winchester, Mr Peter Gwyn, for the invaluable help he gave me at a time when my ignorance of all Wykehamist affairs was total. He also supplied me with photocopies of original documents, and in every way made the researcher's task light and very pleasant. I should also like to thank the present archivist, Mr Roger Custance (no relation of the Squire, he tells me!) for patiently answering my questions. Woodforde's private reading and study list is quoted by permission of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford.

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JOHN CULLEY: HE DINED AT THE PARSON'S TABLE

Part I – Farmer and Philanthropist

We can assume that James Woodforde approached the annual tithe gathering with mixed feelings. On the one hand he was about to receive the money which would pay his bills for the coming year and some of his farming neighbours were pleasant company. On the other hand, the provision of a good meal with sufficient liquid refreshment was a worrying job and every year the company included tithe payers who over-indulged in the home-brewed strong beer and became argumentative. Nancy dined alone on the day of the frolic and there is a Diary entry for 4 December 1792 which demonstrates her uncle's sensitivity to the occasion.

> . . . None were asked to drink Tea this time, as
> I thought improper so to do – to introduce
> all kinds of People to my Niece and having
> no other Woman with her – and I could
> not ask one without the whole –

Yet he also adds

> They all went away well pleased & friendly
> It was the most agreeable Audit I ever had.

And one cannot but wonder if Nancy would have welcomed some lively company, having seen the Custance family leave the village for Bath two months before.

A newcomer to the frolic on 6 December 1791 was John Culley, a lifelong Baptist, who in later years was to become a miller, agriculturist and philanthropist and, although the Diarist introduces him to us with the comment '... spoke very highly of my strong beer', Nancy would never have been offended by improper behaviour on his part! John Culley was born in Buckenham, Norfolk in 1769, into a dissenting family descended from Richard Culley, pastor and founder of the Meeting Hill Baptist Church at Worstead. He farmed land at Ringland and Morton owned by Capt Le Grys. The land he farmed in Weston is unknown but in 1801 he was paying James 5 guineas tithe.

Late in 1793 John Culley married Lucy Paul at St Michael Coslany church in Norwich. This magnificent knapped-flint, decorated church stands close by the site of St Mary's Baptist church, which in the eighteenth century had been constructed from two old houses.

In 1795 and 1796 a son and daughter were born and baptised at the Old Meeting House, which stands close by the Octagon in Colegate, visited and admired by James and Warden Oglander of New College, with the Steward and outriders, who visited the city in April 1784. Apart from a note of his name, attending the tithe frolic, the Diarist tells us nothing about John Culley except that he was not present at the dinner on 24 November 1801 but paid his due two days later. However, we know from the list of purchasers at the 1803 Parsonage sale that he attended and bought a large japanned tray for 5/6d.

His farming enterprises must have flourished. We learn a great deal about his financial position from Charles Jewson's biography of Simon Wilkin.[1] In 1811 John Culley, together with other members of his family, was able to subscribe one quarter of the total cost of rebuilding St Mary's Baptist church and six years later bought the water corn mill at Costessey, which he had rented from Simon Wilkin until that young man was declared bankrupt. Here the Diarist again enters the picture: it was in December 1783 and January and August 1787 that James met Simon's father, William, each time at the Priests' House in St Giles. Simon Wilkin had inherited the mill at Costessey at his father's death in 1799. An orphan at an early age, in the care of the Baptist minister Joseph Kinghorn, Simon had been well-educated but was no businessman and, after spending his time as entomologist, Fellow of the Linnean Society, newspaper proprietor and papermaker in partnership with Richard Mackenzie Bacon, in May 1817 all his estate and extensive possessions were put up for sale. Later that year John Culley and other Baptist friends subscribed to a fund to set Simon up in a printing business with William Youngman at 2 Gentleman's Walk, opposite the Guildhall, in Norwich. At the sale in 1817 John Culley had also bought farms in Costessey and Drayton totalling 384 acres. He was now a farmer and miller of substance and in 1824 proposed the building of a corn hall or exchange on the site of Sir Benjamin Wrench's house.[2] A hall was completed in 1828 and a street – to be named Exchange Street – led to this fine, new building. An association of corn growers and buyers arranged for John Jackson RA to paint John Culley's portrait and until 1963, when the fitments of the Cornhall were sold at auction prior to the demolition of the building, the picture, together with that of Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester ('the greatest farmer in Norfolk') hung on the far wall opposite the entrance.

In the meantime, Simon Wilkin married Emma Culley and we are indebted to Charles Jewson for telling the story of their unusual honeymoon in Europe, accompanied by Emma's parents, Simon's sister and brother-in-law and friends, making a party of nine. Illness, seasickness, bad lodgings, bad food and bad feelings among the party led Simon to write to Joseph Kinghorn '... I cannot look back to any two months of my life in which I have suffered more unhappiness.'

In the 1830s John Culley engaged in philanthropic activities and local politics. A fine Baptist chapel (still in use) was built in Costessey and a village school opened, at which his employees' children received a free education. As respondent for Costessey, he answered the questions of the Poor Law Commissioners relating to the conditions of farm labourers in the area (see Part II).

Lucy Culley died in 1837. John married again, losing his second wife, Mary, in 1844. He was to be laid to rest in the churchyard of St Edmunds, Old Costessey in June 1857, aged 87. The Culley grave, numbered 198, lies next to the pedestal tomb of Simon Wilkin, who died at Hampstead in 1862 and his wife Emma, who died at Brighton in 1879. In the same grave lies their daughter, Emma Mary, who died at the home of her grandfather, John Culley, in 1839, aged 11.

Three years after his death John Culley's Cornhall was demolished and replaced by a larger building at a cost of £16,000 (£10,000 more than the original building).[3] His portrait, reported as '... head was excellent but the figure was totally different from the character, manner and deportment of that gentleman', cannot be traced since it was auctioned in October 1963, thus thwarting the Society's intention to discover portraits of persons known to the Diarist.

Notes

1. *Simon Wilkin of Norwich*, C. B. Jewson, Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia.
2. A 16th century house on the border of the parish of St Andrews where the Norwich School of Artists met and held exhibitions.
3. *History of Norwich*, A. D. Bayne.

Part II – John Culley and the Poor Law Commissioners

In addition to what we know of Culley's family life, Christian commitment and career as a farmer and miller, an unusual source also provides us with a remarkable insight into his opinions of the poor and their treatment. By 1830 the cost of looking after the poor

had been rising for decades and there was widespread dissatisfaction among the upper and middle classes whose taxes provided the bulk of poor law relief. In 1833 the Prime Minister, Earl Grey, set up a Poor Law Commission to examine the working of the poor law in Britain. Their work, in which John Culley was in a small but fascinating way involved, led to the Poor Law Amendment Act of the following year.

Prior to the passage of the 1834 Act, a variety of acts of Parliament, some of which were permissive rather than prescriptive, had produced considerable variations in the operation of the poor law from one part of the country to another and even from parish to parish. The basis of the poor law had been established in the late Elizabeth period. Parliamentary legislation in 1597 and 1601 required the annual election in each parish of overseers of the poor answerable to the parish vestry and local JPs. The overseers were empowered to raise revenue from local rates and to administer diverse charities that had been set up for the relief of the poor. From the late-seventeenth century onwards a small number of workhouses had been established for the employment of the able-bodied poor. More were built following Acts of 1722 and 1782. Some were established by groups of parishes who often contracted-out their operation. One such was the 'house of industry' at Gressenhall, near Dereham, set up to provide for the combined hundreds of Mitford and Launditch in 1776.

The 1782 Act – known as Gilbert's Act after its promoter Thomas Gilbert, the MP for Lichfield – was relatively humane legislation which, while encouraging the formation of poor law unions, provided that no pauper be sent to a workhouse more than ten miles from his home and did away with the wearing of paupers' badges.

In 1795 overseers of the poor meeting at Speenhamland in Berkshire introduced a system under which low wages might be supplemented by an allowance, varying with the cost of bread, paid out of the poor rate. The 'Speenhamland System' spread rapidly across southern England, having the attraction that it enabled farmers to keep wages low knowing that they would be made up from the rates. Such abuses contributed significantly to the rise in the rate levied. Whether or not this system was adopted at Weston remains uncertain and the answer awaits further research. Roy Winstanley assumed that it was not as 'Norfolk was not one of the so-called Speenhamland counties'.[1] In fact, the system was quite prevalent in the county[2] so that we can probably be no more sure

than was Beresford who concluded that 'Whether the precise Speenhamland scheme which regulated relief in accordance with the price of bread was actually adopted in Weston is not clear'.[3] Certainly we know that whereas Woodforde paid £1. 10. 3d for the six month period between Lady Day and Michaelmas 1794, for the sixth months from Michaelmas 1800 to Lady Day 1801 he paid £6. 13. 0d.[4]

* * *

In their efforts to create a more uniform, more efficient system of Poor Law administration, Grey's Poor Law Commissioners began their work of enquiry by issuing questionnaires to prominent local representatives. John Culley – '50 years an occupant of from 800 to 1600 acres' – was the respondent for Costessey and his answers to more than fifty questions can be found in the voluminous *Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners of the Poor Law*. Australian academic Tom Barley, a native of Costessey, summarises Culley's responses as showing 'an unusual sympathy with the unemployed Agricultural Labourers, not evidenced by other Norfolk respondents'.[5]

The labourers on Culley's large farm certainly appear to have earned a relatively good wage, justifying his claim that they were 'satisfied and industrious'. In answer to the question 'What, on the whole, might an average land labourer, obtaining an average amount of Employment both in Day-work and Piece-work expect to earn in the year, including Harvest-work and the value of all his other Advantages and Means of living except parish relief?', he replies as follows:

> My constant labourers with families average at least 15s per week and £6 for the Harvest. Day wage is 2s per day; where a Man's children work their earnings are to be added to the 15s per week.

The proximity of Norwich no doubt demanded that Culley pay good wages. In 1838 Dr Kay, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner for Norfolk and Suffolk estimated that a Suffolk labourer with a wife and five children earned only 10s a week. In 1851 in Lincolnshire, 'a middling wage county', the average wage for a male farm labourer was still only 11s 4d.[6]

The earning power of women had declined considerably since Culley had started farming fifty years before. Then, he said, 'the Women and Children had spinning to do and they brought in as

much as a Man' which in those days was 'only 12d per day'. In his working lifetime, of course, the rise of the large-scale mechanised textile industries of Lancashire and the West Riding had seen the collapse of the domestic industry in East Anglia so that, by 1831, the only employment for the women of Costessey was 'in the fields' where 'they earn but little'.

Asked whether the family could subsist on such earnings, Culley's reply reminds us of the gulf between the labouring classes and the wealthy farmers and gentry:

> They live upon the best white bread with very little meat ... plenty of potatoes and salt, with garden plants, very little beer, drinking tea or water. If the Malt Tax was taken off they would all brew as once they did, which would give yeast for bread as formerly.

In the absence of a better balanced diet, the change from beer to tea must have been for the worse, although, perhaps, not quite as bad as was made out by William Cobbett who viewed tea drinking as 'a destroyer of health, and enfeebler of the frame, an engenderer of effeminacy and laziness, a debaucher of youth and a maker of misery in old age ...![17]

The Speenhamland system does not appear to have been adopted at Costessey. Asked if any able-bodied labourers in employment were receiving regular relief from the parish, Culley replied:

> All the year, except at harvest, some are employed on the roads or in the gravel-pits, or at digging upon 16 acres which we have to employ them; but no part of the men's wages is paid from the parish to labourers upon farms.

He was firmly of the opinion that work must be seen to be worthwhile, that work for work's sake – he was perhaps thinking of digging the 16 acres – sapped the morale of the poor:

> The want of Employment, *such as where the man knows he is doing good*, is the great evil to be removed. The poor want only this kind of employment to make them happy and industrious again.

He responded in similar terms to a question which specifically addressed the causes of the so-called 'Captain Swing' riots which had swept across the southern and eastern counties of England during the winter of 1830-31. A reduction in agricultural wages – partly the consequence of mechanisation – and the severe winter

of 1829 had caused widespread rural discontent which exploded in November 1830 in outbreaks of arson and machine-breaking. It was Culley's belief that the riots were –

> Wholly caused by want of full Employment for the Poor. Men will not be content if their labour be not free and if that labour is not beneficial to their employer.

It was an enlightened opinion shared by the North Walsham magistrates who published the following public notice on 24 November 1830:

> The *Magistrates* in the Hundreds of *Tunstead* and *Happing*, in the County of Norfolk, having taken into consideration the disturbed state of the said Hundreds and the Country in general, wish to make it publicly known *that it is their opinion* that such disturbances principally arise from the use of Threshing Machines, and to the insufficient Wages of the Labourers. The Magistrates therefore beg to *recommend* to the Owners and Occupiers of Land in these Hundreds to *discontinue the use of Threshing machines, and to increase the Wages of Labour* to Ten Shillings a week for able bodied men, and that when task work is preferred it should be put out at such a rate as to enable an industrious man to earn Two Shillings per day.
>
> The Magistrates are determined to enforce the Laws against all tumultuous Rioters and Incendiaries, and they look for support to all the respectable and well disposed part of the Community; at the same time they feel a full conviction that *no severe measures will be necessary*, if the proprietors of Land will give proper employment to the Poor on their own Occupations, and encourage their Tenants to do the same.[8]

The government and the magistracy in general took a far less compassionate stand. The militia were called out to quell the riots and, despite the fact that no farmer or landlord had been killed, 19 rioters were hung and more than 500 transported to Australia.

A number of the Commissioners' questions concerned the Settlement Laws – proof of settlement in a parish being necessary to claim poor relief. Asked what would be the effect of 'an enactment enabling Parishes to tax themselves in order to facilitate Emigration?', Culley was of the view that for as long as men were supported by the parish they would not emigrate. A further question asked how the Settlement Laws might be altered 'for the purpose either of extending the market for labour, or interfering less with contracts, or diminishing Fraud or Litigation' and his answer shows

a keen understanding of the way in which large landowners would seek to minimise their Poor Law obligations. The right of settlement was obtained either by birth or service (in a parish for more than a year) and it was Culley's opinion that –

> The abolition of Settlement by Service would be a good thing ... I feel that if settlement is to be gained by residence, Proprietors, who hold in the country the whole or large proportions of any parish, would not suffer cottages to increase therein. So the burthen of the poor would be thrown upon other places, where no such control exists.

In other words, a dominant landlord, such as the squire of the typical estate village, could control population growth – and hence limit the amount he, or his tenants, might pay in poor rates – by limiting the amount of house building. In villages in which there were numerous small landowners, no such control would exist and landlords might be more tempted to build cottages as a source of income. In the case of Costessey, for example, Culley says that the owners of cottages are 'generally small proprietors who rent them high'. Such villages were more likely to experience population growth and, with it, the potential number of paupers.

The John Culley who emerges from these pages is a man concerned to do what was 'just and fair to the Poor', a man anxious to put his Christian principles into practice. His place in history involves far more than an annual appearance in the flickering candlelight at Woodforde's tithe frolics. In later life he played an important role in Norwich political life, actively supporting the Lowestoft to Norwich Navigation Bill of 1827 and the great Reform Bill of 1832 as well as making so many important contributions to the life of Costessey. Thanks to men such as he, England had changed a good deal since those far off winter evenings at Weston Longville.

References

1. R. L. Winstanley – *Parson Woodforde and the Tax System* (1984), p. 23.
2. See, for example, J. Steven Watson – *The Reign of George III, 1760-1815* (1960), p. 538 and E. W. Bovill – *English Country Life, 1780-1830* (1962), p. 17.
3. J. B. Beresford – *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Vol. V (1931), p. 297.
4. See *Diary* entries for 2 December 1794 and 11 May 1801.
5. I am indebted to Tom Barley for this information.
6. G. E. Mingay – *Rural Life in Victorian England* (1979), pp. 87-8.
7. Quoted in E. W. Bovill, *ibid*, p. 20-1.
8. Quoted in E. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé – *Captain Swing* (1969), p. 156.

TWO WORLDS: 1778-1785. MISS BURNEY & MR WOODFORDE

Fanny Burney was born in King's Lynn, where her father, Dr Charles Burney, was organist and music teacher. He later became famous as a music historian. In 1778, when she was 25, Fanny's first novel *Evelina* was published anonymously. At first, not even her family, now living in London, knew the secret. Fanny became acquainted with Mrs Thrale, wife of a wealthy brewer, and much involved in the society of the day. At their fine house in Streatham she was to meet many of the most well-known 'celebrities' of the late 18th century, and, eventually, she came to know King George and Queen Charlotte. How impressed Woodforde would have been!

1778

F. B. August, Streatham.

When we were summoned to dinner, Mrs Thrale made my father and me sit on each side of her. I said that I hoped I did not take Dr Johnson's place – for he had not yet appeared. 'No,' answered Mrs Thrale, 'he will sit by you, which I am sure will give him great pleasure.'

Soon after we were seated, this great man entered. – Mrs Thrale introduced me to him, and he took his place. We had a noble dinner, and a most elegant dessert. Dr Johnson, in the middle of dinner, asked Mrs Thrale what was in some little pies that were near him. 'Mutton,' answered she, 'so I don't ask you to eat any, because I know you despise it.' 'No, madam, no,' cried he; 'I'll despise nothing that is good of its sort; but I am too proud now to eat of it. Sitting by Miss Burney makes me very proud today!'

London. Next day.

Yet my honours stopped not here; for Hetty – told me she had lately met Mrs Reynolds, sister of Sir Joshua; and that she talked very much and very highly of a new novel called 'Evelina'; though without a shadow of suspicion as to the scribbler; and not contented with her own praise, she said that Sir Joshua, – found himself so much interested in it, that he sat up all night to finish it!

J. W. Weston.

Aug. 1.
Very busy laying turf round
the Pond –

Aug. 9.
I prayed for poor Miss Rose this morning, she being in the last Stage almost in a Consumption –

Aug. 17.
Begun shearing my Wheat this morning and gave the Shearers according to the Norfolk Custom as under a good breakfast, at 11. o'clock plumb Cakes with Caraway Seeds in them & some Liquor, a good Dinner with plumb Puddings and at 4. Beer again –
N.B. The above are called elevens & fours's –
Only Ben and Will my Shearers of Wheat –
Before the Dew is of in the Morn' they mow Oats –

Aug. 22.
To (Cary) for eggs sold for me at Norwich rec^{d}. 0: 3: 4
M^{r}. Cary was very runty about the Eggs, he carried for me said he would not be troubled any more with them –

Aug. 24.
About 9. o'clock we went down with our Nets to the River by Lenewade Bridge a fishing & did not return till 6. at Night ... We carried down some Victuals & drink and a Bottle of smuggled Geneva –
We were all pretty well tired & sleepy this Evening –

Aug. 28.
Had 4. Chimnies swept this morning by Wilkinson's Boys – paid them for the same – 0: 4: 0
There was about 2. Bushells of Soot which I had for nothing.

1779. January
F. B. Visiting Mrs Cholmondeley in London.
Mr and the Misses Cholmondeley were with her; but who else think you? – why Mrs Sheridan! – Miss Linley was with her; she is very Handsome, but nothing near her sister; the elegance of Mrs Sheridan's beauty is unequalled by any I ever saw – She is much more lively and agreeable than I had any idea of finding her; she was very gay, and very unaffected, and totally free from airs of any kind. – Just then the door opened, and Mr Sheridan entered. Was not I in luck? – And now I must tell you a little conversation which I did not hear myself till I came home; it was between Mr Sheridan and my father. 'Dr Burney,' cried the former, 'have you no older daughters? Can this possibly be the authoress of Evelina?' Some time after, Sir Joshua returning to his standing place, entered into confab with Miss Linley and your slave, during which Mr Sheridan,

joining us, said: 'Sir Joshua, I have been telling Miss Burney that she must not suffer her pen to lie idle – ought she?' Sir Joshua: No, indeed, ought she not. Mr Sheridan: Do you then, Sir Joshua, persuade her. – Sir Joshua: She has, certainly something of a knack at characters – And to throw it away is – Mr Sheridan: Oh, she won't – she will write a comedy – she has promised me she will! 'Mr Sheridan,' I exclaimed, 'are you not mocking me?' 'No, upon my honour!'

To be sure, as Mrs Thrale says, if folks are to be spoilt, there is nothing in the world so pleasant as spoiling!

J. W. Weston. January

13th.
I took a walk to Church this morning to see the Lead
that would not do again on the Chancel weighed ...
M[r]. Du Quesne called on me at Church and was very
sorry to see my Chancel so ruinated by the late Wind.

18th.
This being the Queen's Birth Day about one o'clock
I fired of my Blunderbuss once on the Occasion –
... To my maid Betty for 1 Couple of Rabbitts – 0: 0: 8.

21st.
Poor J[s]. Pratt died this Afternoon in the small Pox
in the natural way – He never could be prevailed
on to be inoculated – He had left a Wife just
ready to be brought to bed, with 6. more small Children –
Pray God send Comfort to the poor Widow & Family –

28th.
At 1. o'clock I took a ride to Mr Barnham's at Coulton
and there supped, dined & stayed till after 12. at Night
with him, his Wife, Mr. and Mrs. Kerr, Mr. and Miss Donne
and Mr. Bodham, and we were very genteely entertained
and were very merry & pushed about the Wine brisk ...
They all dine with me to Morrow –

30th.
I took a walk to Church to see how my Chancel goes on –
... Had a pure quiet Day of it & went to bed in good Time –

1780

F. B. Bath. (Fanny writes to her father about the Gordon Riots in London) June 9th.

The accounts from town are so frightful that I am uneasy, not only for the city at large, but for every individual I know in it. Does this

martial law confine you quite to the house? Oh, what dreadful times! A private letter to Bull, the bookseller, brought word this morning that much slaughter has been made by the military among the mob. But what is it they want? Who is going to turn Papist? Who indeed, is thinking in an alarming way of religion – this pious mob, and George Gordon excepted? Wagers have been laid that the popish chapel here will be pulled or burnt down in a few days; but I believe not a word of the matter –

June 10th.
The threats I despised were but too well founded, for, to our utter amazement and consternation, the new Roman Catholic chapel in this town was set on fire at about nine o'clock. It is now burning with a fury that is dreadful, and the house of the priest belonging to it is in flames also. The poor persecuted man himself has, I believe, escaped with life, though pelted, followed, and very ill-used. (Fanny and her companions left Bath that night in fear of further rioting, but eventually, all disturbances were quelled, and Lord George Gordon, the instigator of the riots, sent to the Tower. However, he was later acquitted.)

J. W. Weston.

June 10th.

... M^r^.

Du Quesne came in his Chaise (having a bad Cold) to us
and spent the Afternoon here, and just as he was going
home Bill returned which made him stay about half an
Hour longer with us
Great Riots have been in London this last Week –

June 11th.
I read Prayers, Preached, churched a woman and
christned a Child by name John this morning at Weston –
Nancy and Bill at Church this morning – My Squire also
and Lady at Church & came to Nancy & spoke to her ...
Bill breakfasted, dined & drank Tea this Afternoon and
about 5. o'clock this Evening he went off for Yarmouth
to go on board the Ariadne – Nancy very low at parting.
I made Bill a present this afternoon of 5: 5: 0.

1781

F. B. Streatham. May.

(Mr Thrale had died, and the Brewery was to be sold. Mr Johnson was one of the Executors. Together with Fanny and other friends he was at Streatham to support Mrs Thrale.)

Thursday. This was the great and most important day to all this house, upon which the sale of the brewery was to be decided. Mrs Thrale went early to town, to meet all the executors, and Mr Barclay, the Quaker who was the bidder. She was in great agitation of mind, and told me if all went well she would wave a white pocket handkerchief out of the coach window. – the coach appeared in sight, and a white pocket handkerchief was waved from it.

(Mr Crutchley, a friend of Mrs Thrale's, tells Fanny about a mutual acquaintance, Mr Seward.)

'When he was at my place,' said Mr Crutchley, 'he did himself up pretty handsomely; he ate cherries till he complained most bitterly of indigestion, and he poured down Madeira and port most plentifully, but without relief. Then he desired to have some peppermint water, and he drank three glasses; still that would not do, and he said he must have a large quantity of ginger. – he took that, but still to no purpose. At last, he desired some brandy, and tossed off a glass of that; and, after all, he asked for a dose of rhubarb. I advised him to take a good bumper of gin and gunpowder, for that seemed almost all he had left untried.'

J. W. Weston.

May 7th.
Mr. Du Quesne made us a short morning Visit – he
has been very bad in a Cold and not well having
a Cough – I gave him some black Currant Robb –

18th.
We had for dinner again today a brace of small Pike,
a brace of pretty Trout & a brace of Perch – we dined
both Nancy and myself on Fish –
We both took a little Rhubarb this Evening, having Colds –

19th.
Had a new Coat & Waistcoat brought here this Evening.
Nancy had also a new Hat-Cap brought home –

24th.
Nancy and myself took some Brimstone & Treakle
a little before we went to bed to night –

1782

F. B. At Miss Monckton's Assembly. December.

The company in general were dressed with more brilliancy than at any rout I ever was at, most of them were going to the Duchess of Cumberland's, and attired for that purpose. Just behind me sat Mrs

Hampden, still very beautiful, but insufferably affected. Another lady, in full dress, and very pretty, came in soon after, and then a conversation began between her and Mrs Hampden, of which I will give you a specimen. 'How disagreeable these sacques are! I am so incommoded with these nasty ruffles! I am going to Cumberland House – are you?' 'To be sure,' said Mrs Hampden; 'what else, do you think, would make me bear this weight of dress? I can't bear a sacque.' 'Why, I thought you said you should always wear them?' 'Oh yes, but I have changed my mind since then – as many people do.'

Mr Burke very quietly came from Mrs Hampden, and sat down in the vacant place at my side. After many most delicate compliments upon the book (Fanny's second novel, Cecilia), he then told me that, notwithstanding his admiration, he was the man who had dared to find some faults with so favourite and fashionable a work. I entreated him to tell me what they were – He then enumerated them – 'But' said he, when he had finished his comments, 'what excuse must I give for this presumption? I have none in the world to offer but the real, the high esteem I feel for you;' – Here's an orator!

J. W. Weston

Dec. 12th.
Between 11. and 12. took a ride to M^{r}. Custances and made them a morning Visit, both at home, after being there some little Time, Lady Jernegan and a M^{rs}. Nicholls an old elderly Lady came there ... Lady Jernegan, who I never saw before, is a fine Woman, tho' large, and extremely sensible, but very much given to Satire – She is a rigid Roman Catholick and breeds her Children up that way –

21st.
To Taylor Clarke, making me a morning Waistcoat out of an old Coat, for lining, buttons &c. p^{d}. 0: 6: 10.
To poor people of Weston today being St. Thomas Day for things against Christmas as usual on this Day, and which I hope always to do – gave 0: 16: 0.

25th.
This being Christmas Day, I went to Church this Morn' and there read Prayers and administred the Holy Sacrament – M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Custance both at Church and both Received the Sacrament from my Hands ... We had mince Pies for the first Time today –

1783.

F. B. London. June 19th.

We heard today that Dr Johnson had been taken ill, in a way that gave a dreadful shock to himself, and a most anxious alarm to his friends. Mr Seward brought the news here, and my father and I instantly went to his house. The stroke was confined to his tongue – I had the satisfaction to hear from Mrs Williams that the physicians had pronounced him to be in no danger, and expected a speedy recovery.

J. W. Weston.

June 13th.
Mrs. Custance's 3. little Boys with 2. Nurse Maids came
here this afternoon and stayed there till 8. at night,
I gave the little Boys for their supper some strawberries
and milk with which they were highly delighted –

23rd.
Plumb Cake & bread & Butter at Tea –
We smoked a Pipe under the old Tree in the Garden.
To Goody Doughty for Oranges & Lemons – 0: 1: 6.
I went Will to Norwich after Fish but there
were none to be got – He brought back some Lamb &c.
Morn; very fair & hot –
Mr. Custance sent us some Beans
this morning which was very acceptable.
A smart Frost this Evening.

28th.
The Barley & Oats look quite scorched by the
Frost, last Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday Nights.
Almost all Grass appears affected by the same ...
Still uncommon weather for the Season. –

30th.
Mr. Love the Painter dined with our Folks in Kitchen.
He brought me the Register from Mr. Whistlers which
I sent by him to have Mr. Custance's Name in gold Letters.

1783.

This year brought two very sad changes to Fanny's life. The first was the end of her great friendship with Mrs Thrale, who had recently re-married, to a musician, Mr Piozzi. Fanny, Dr Johnson, and most of Mrs Thrale's friends, had very much disliked this match, and although Fanny made overtures to her friend, it seems that Mr Piozzi was too resentful to allow his friend to accept them. The next sorrow was the death of Dr Johnson.

F. B. Nov. 25th.

My father set me down at Bolt Court; I was anxious to again see poor Dr Johnson, who has had terrible health since his return from Lichfield. He let me in, though very ill.

I had seen Miss Thrale the day before. 'So', said he 'did I'. I then said: 'do you ever, sir, hear from her mother?' 'No', cried he, 'nor write to her. I drive her quite from my mind. If I meet with one of her letters, I burn it instantly. I never speak of her, and I desire never to hear of her more.' I saw him growing worse, and offered to go – 'Be not', he said, in a voice of even tenderness, 'be not longer in coming again for my letting you go now.'

'Remember me in your prayers!'

Dec. 20th.

This day was the ever-honoured, ever-lamented Dr Johnson committed to the earth. Oh, how sad a day to me! I could not keep my eyes dry all day! – but let me pass over what to mourn is now so vain!

J. W. Weston.

Nov. 25th.
I went to Church this morning and buried another
Child of Horners Daughter Mann – aged 7 Weeks.
Am afraid they have been very remiss in care towards Children.
Between 2. and 3. o'clock M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Custance came
to us and they dined, spent the Afternoon and stayed
till near 9. in the evening with us, were highly
Pleased with their Entertainment & were very merry.

Dec. 27th.
M^{rs}. Custance made us a long morning Visit, tho'
the Roads so bad with Frost & Snow –
I wrote out a Song for her from the poor Soldier –

1785.

F. B. Windsor. Dec. 16th. (Fanny is staying with Mrs Delany, in a house given to her by the King on her widowhood.)

The King went up to the table, and looked at a book of prints – He turned over a leaf or two and then said: 'Pray, does Miss Burney draw too?' 'I believe not, sir,' answered Mrs Delaney; 'at least, she does not tell.' 'Oh,' cried he, laughing, 'that's nothing! She is not apt to tell; she never does tell, you know! Her father told me that himself. He told me the whole history of her Evelina. And I shall never forget his face when he spoke of his feelings at first taking up the book!' Then coming up close to me, he said: 'But what? –

what? – how was it?' 'Sir,' cried I, not well understanding him. The 'What?' was then repeated with so earnest a look, that, forced to say something, I stammeringly answered: 'I thought – sir – it would look very well in print!' I do really flatter myself this is the silliest speech I ever made! He laughed very heartily himself – well he might – and walked away to enjoy it, crying out: 'Very fair indeed! That's being very fair and honest!' The door soon opened again, and the Queen entered. She hastened up to Mrs Delany, with both her hands held out, saying: 'My dear Mrs Delany, how are you?' Instantly after, I felt her eye on my face. – I immediately dropped a curtsey. She had made one to me in the same moment, and, with a very smiling countenancy, came up to me, but she could not speak, for the King went on talking, eagerly, and very gaily repeating to her every word I had said during our conversation upon Evelina, its publication, etc. etc. The King then, looking at his watch, said: 'It is eight o'clock, and if we don't go now, the children will be sent to the other house.' Mrs Delany put on her Majesty's cloak, and she took a very kind leave of her. She then curtsied separately to us all, and the King handed her to the carriage.

J. W. Weston

Dec. 31st.
Most bitter cold today, froze sharp within doors
all day long – tho' the Sun shone very bright –
It being the last Day of the Year, we sat up to
night till 12. o'clock, then drank a happy
New Year to all our Friends & went to bed.

References

The quotations are from the Everyman edition of *The Diary of Fanny Burney* and from the Society's edition of *The Diary of James Woodforde*.

WOODFORDE'S OTHER CLOCK AND THE GIRLING FAMILY

Two hundred years ago Mr William Parsons, auctioneer of Attleborough, Norfolk, advertised a sale of 'The Effects of the Revd Mr Woodforde' on Tuesday 19 April and the two following days, at Weston, near Lenwade Bridge. Interested buyers could obtain a catalogue from local inns, Attlebridge Bull, Lenwade Bridge, Mattishall Swan and Weston Hart. A copy of the catalogue can be found in the archives of New College, Oxford and the Society has a typed copy of the list of sale prices, from which we can see that £437: 16: 9d was raised. We can assume that attendance at the sale was good and bidding brisk. Fifty-two of the successful bidders were known to the Parson and their names appear in the Diary. Mr Dell, soon to be inducted as the new Rector of Weston, spent £11: 19: 0d on items built into the Parsonage, namely the kitchen range and accessories, brewing copper and furnace and a dresser in the kitchen. Nancy recorded in her diary that three days after the sale ended she met Mr Dell in All Saints church and later dined in his company at Weston House. Conversation was no doubt constrained while the diners that day strove not to remind her that the household goods which had surrounded her for over twenty years were now scattered in surrounding homes, the proud possessions of neighbours.

Much has been written about the Symonds 8-day clock which stood in the hall at the Parsonage. Bought by a Mr Neal(e) for £4: 13: 0d on the second day of the sale, if it is correct that it was handed down to the present day through the Arthurton family, it now stands in the home of a Society member. But what has happened to Woodforde's other clock, described as 'A bracket clock with chimes on mahogany bracket'. This clock was secondhand when bought by the Diarist in Oxford.

> 10. May 1774.
> Paid M^{r}. Locke Silversmith in High Street this morn
> for a Secondhand Spring Clock which I have had
> this Term & which belonged to a M^{r}. Route in the
> Corn-Markett – the Sum of – 5: 5: 0

Its removal to Weston caused some problems:

> 18. May 1776.
> … M^{r}. Lock sent my Clock by Jones's Waggon to day for Weston
> Sent my Pictures also, by Jones's Waggon to day …

28. May 1776.
Sent a Neighbours Cart very early this morning to
Norwich after my Boxes that are there, and about
5. o'clock in the Afternoon they returned and out of
14. Boxes they brought me 13. the other was not there –

On 7 June Mr Symonds of Reepham called at the Parsonage to set the clock right after its journey, at a cost of 2/6d. Successful salesman that he was, we can imagine him mentioning to James that what he needed to set off his entrance hall was a smart, long case, 8-day clock and he had one in his workshop, almost ready for sale. The bargain concluded, Mr Symonds delivered the new clock on 31 August and collected his 6 guineas. Four months later he was back in Weston to attend to a non-striking clock, but which clock we do not know. However, he collected the Diarist's watch for cleaning and returned it a fortnight later. So through the years Mr Symonds of Reepham called to clean and regulate the spring bracket clock, the long case 8-day clock and Woodforde's pocket watch (not included in the 1803 sale) waiting years for his money but enjoying satisfying dinners in the Parsonage kitchen. Both clocks were sold on the second day of the sale and the bracket clock, with chimes, on mahogany bracket was knocked down to Mr Girling (who attended all three days of the sale with his wife) for three guineas.

John Girling married Sarah Hilling at Great Melton in 1770 and farmed in Lyng where, the next year, the first of his three sons – John Jnr – was born. He called on Woodforde on 23 October 1780, in company with his brother-in-law William Howlett, concerning tithe for a portion of farm land they were taking over. The Diarist says '... We could not fully agree this meeting ...' and, having misheard the name, called him 'Mr Galland'. By 5 December all was agreed and 'Mr Girling' and 'Mr Howlett' attended the tithe frolic. The next year the Squire and Mrs Custance had moved into Weston House and John Girling was appointed their steward with care of the 100 acre Home Farm. At the beating of the bounds of Weston, fully described in the Diary, Mr Girling's land is said to be bordering Lyng by Weston Old Hall. By 1785 the family was complete with the birth of six daughters and two further sons, all baptised in the parish of Lyng.

Throughout the pages of the Diary information about the Girling family appears, buying Woodforde's surplus turnips to feed sheep, attending the annual tithe frolic (later John Jnr was invited as Mr

Custance's gamekeeper: he was overcome by the strength of James' home-brewed beer). When in 1793 John Girling could not pay his tithe on time, we learn that the amount owing was £44: 10: 0d. This was the only time the Diarist recorded an individual payment. The money was forthcoming early in the next year.

In October 1794 the Diarist performed the marriage ceremony when the eldest girl of the family, Mary, married George Barnard in All Saints church. Two months later her father and uncle, William Howlett, were concerned to see that James got home safely after his fainting fit on Christmas Day. And we can see many examples of duties John Girling was asked to perform on behalf of the Squire. Most notable was the occasion of the need for action when official instructions arrived in the village concerning the threat of invasion in 1801. When Woodforde wrote out the list of inhabitants at the time of the 1801 census, the Girlings (17 in household) came immediately after the Custances (16) and the Woodfordes (7): an important farming family in Weston.[1]

On the first day of the sale Mr Girling bought farming implements totalling £2: 4: 6d, a plough (£2: 4: 0d), a road cart (£8: 5: 0d) and polled cow Sally and her calf (£15: 5: 0d).

On the second day Mrs Girling bought items for the kitchen – a flour kid,[2] rolling pin and plate racks (7/-d) while her husband acquired dairy equipment – barrels and cooler (£1: 2: 9d) plus the all-important 'bracket clock with chimes on mahogany bracket' (£3: 3: 0d).

On the third day the family acquired many useful household articles such as baking tins, china dishes, knives and forks, drinking glasses, beer jugs and four asparagus shapes for £2: 0: 6d. Mrs Girling would be delighted to acquire another mattress for the family (£1: 8: 0d) and – possibly for her own use – a mahogany dressing table with three drawers that locked (£1: 8: 0d). Their total expenditure was £37: 7: 9d, exceeded only by Mr Rump's £47: 7: pd).[3] In contrast, brother-in-law Howlett spent £5 on farming implements and Mrs Girling's sister, Ann, bought knives, forks and a pair of carvers for 4/9d.

If Woodforde's other clock has survived to the present day it no doubt descended through the many Girling families, starting with the marriage in 1794 of Mary Girling to George Barnard. They continued to live in Weston for some years and George became the Custance's gamekeeper. Ann Girling married John Burton of

Carleton Rode, near Attleborough, in 1801, the service conducted by Mr Dade. Her sister Elizabeth has left us a description of the day in a surviving letter to her brother. Seven months later came the first death in the family when Hannah, the fifth daughter, succumbed to tuberculosis at the early age of 22. Eighteen months later Sarah, the second daughter, married Benjamin Betts of Moulton.

In 1806 John Girling junior married Elizabeth Thacker and William Girling married Mary Knott from the adjoining parishes of Oulton and Blickling. John presumably continued life as a gamekeeper, moving to estates in Norfolk. No record of family baptisms has so far been found in Oulton, Blickling or back in Weston. William eventually settled on a farm in Lyng where the last four children of the marriage were baptised. Elizabeth Girling, the youngest daughter, to whom we are indebted for the news that Mr Dell immediately doubled the tithe in Weston upon taking over the parish from the Diarist, died at the age of 21 in February 1807.

Five years later Mr Girling of the Diary died. His widow was buried beside him ten years later. The site of their grave in Weston churchyard has been invaded by the roots of a large tree and the headstones of John and Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth have been moved to face the east wall of the south aisle of All Saints church.

There were to be two further marriages in the Girling family. Maria at the age of 36 married John Tippell from Stuston in Suffolk and Thomas, the youngest son, also went into Suffolk for a partner. He married Frances Ollett of Redgrave and immediately began producing a biennial family of ten, including twins. He farmed in Weston until at least 1830 when the last child had been baptised in All Saints. Then the family gave up farming and moved to Norwich. In May 1838, aged 54, Thomas died and his body was carried the nine milesot Weston to be buried in the churchyard.

If Woodforde's other clock was still chiming the hours it was probably the treasured possession of this family. Thomas had no doubt taken over the family farm in Weston and cared for his widowed mother. She would have recalled that April day when her husband had successfully bid for the clock. She had known the Parson who owned it: he'd said it came from Oxford.

Notes

1. Journal VIII, No. 2, Autumn/Winter 1975, *The Girlings -- Chronicles of a Farming Family*, Roy Winstanley.

2. Flour kid – a small wooden tub, O.E.D.
3. At this time Mr James Rump, a papermaker, was moving into the area, becoming a partner in the running of the Lyng papermill and later running the mill at Swanton Morley. His purchases at the sale included prestigious items of furniture – the mahogany sideboard, the bureau and bookcase, mahogany secretary and chest upon chest with drawer. He bought curtains, a large carpet, seven pictures and a quantity of china and glas,s obviously taking the opportunity to furnish an empty house!

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

The article *Norfolk is a Language* in the Spring Journal sparked off some most welcome correspondence. Dr David Case kindly send a copy of *Larn Yarself Norfolk* (1996, reprint 2002) by Keith Skipper who is a well-known writer and broadcaster on Norfolk topics, and it has been a really good read.

Stanley and Dulcie Watkins wrote to Phyllis Stanley with a fascinating explanation of the word 'dodman' (snail): 'In fact a Dodman was a man who laid out the old straight tracks across country using two staffs to sight between, just like the Roman surveyors, only many years later. It was the extended eyestalks of the snail which resembled the Dodman's two straight sticks. In the West Country there is an ancient figure of a man with two long staves, cut into a chalky hillside – Dodman!'

I am grateful to John Gray who spotted the misprint in the definition of Dwile – a rag (not a rug). He had found the same error in Forby's book,[1] 'any coarse rubbing rug', but much preferred Nall's definition:[2] Dwile – a refuse lock of wool, a mop, any coarse rag. Sewell's Dutch Dictionary has Dwey;/dweil – a clout to wash the floor, from the Dutch dweylen – to mop. He continues:

> Interestingly, the Church Accounts of Pulham St Mary the Virgin for 1899 give an item of expenditure as: Dwiling, lampglasses, brooms and miscellaneous 0-10-6d. A few words common in my younger days were:
>
> Gimmers, pronounced Jimmers – hinges (same root as Gemini, the twins).
> Lewcome/Lucom – a window in the roof of a house or dormer window.

Pod-gutter – fat (pod = belly).
Hancy-gutter – thin (a hancy/harnser is a heron).
Gimprey – the lace edging on a lady's underskirts. A girl twirling in a dance to reveal her petticoat or a lady sitting immodestly was said to be showing her gimprey (from guipure lace)*
Rally – the shelf formed by the top of a wall supporting the roof. As a lad I claimed 'bounty' from my father for catching rats and mice. I found the rallys in buildings convenient for placing traps, safe from cats and dogs who were inclined 'to stick their silly snouts on the bait, and sarve the silla beggars right I say'. My dear old dad, feeling along a rally for some small thing he had placed there, put his fingers on a trap. More startled than hurt, he nevertheless forbade me from 'setting a trap in such a damn fool place again'. Regrettably, I still have to laugh at the memory.

On a different tack, I once asked an old hedgecutter who the previous day had stabbed his hand on a blackthorn which had broken off in his flesh, how his hand was, and received the memorable reply, 'That whooly bulked and shot (throbbed with a stabbing pain) all night. I dangled it in the chamber-lie (contents of the chamber pot) and that fared to ease it a mite. The missus ha' bound it up this mornin' wi' grease and honey and that do fare easier.' Strangely, having started to fester the thorn rose up and was easily plucked out. 'Chamber-lie and honey' – oh, what we have lost to modern medicine!

John ends up – 'Will close now (I ha' runned out-a paaper!).'

What lovely stuff! How James Woodforde would have identified with and enjoyed such things.

Yours sincerely,

Clifford Bird
Diss

References

1. Rev. Robert Forby (1759-1825), *The Vocabulary of East Anglia: An Attempt to Record the Vulgar Tongue of the Twin Sister Counties, Norfolk and Suffolk*, originally published posthumously in 1830, reprinted 1970.
2. Nall, G., *An Etymological and Comparative Glossary of the Dialect and Pronounciation of East Anglia*, 1866.
   Also consulted were *Beccles Talk 2001 – A Speech Odyssey*, by Anne Frith and others.

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* My wife says that as a young girl if your petticoat was showing people said meaningfully, 'Queen Anne's lace', and you had to hitch it up quickly.

Dear Sir,

With reference to my article in the Spring 2003 Journal, 'Mrs Melliar's "new Room" ', it has been suggested to me that the new room was made by converting Mr Melliar's lawyer's office, this being redundant space when he died. It seems unlikely, however, that this is so for two reasons.

Firstly, the decor of this room, at the time he was alive, was citron yellow and pea green which does not have the sobriety to be expected in a lawyer's office. Secondly, the room is on the side of the house which gets least sunlight and, presumably, wouldn't have had a big bay window like the 'new Room'. It would be important, it seems to me, that a room used as an office in Melliar's day would have to make maximum use of natural daylight. Directly opposite the Melliars' house is a 'cottage' of the seventeenth century with a relatively enormous ground floor leaded light window, and this is because the building would have been used for weaving. It is an example of how natural light was important at that time.

I suspect that Mr Melliar's office was the panelled room to the left as one enters by the front door. It is on the sunny side of the house and had (and still has) an early eighteenth century bay window. There is evidence that one of the main reception rooms was on the first floor when Melliar was alive. When he died, it seems likely that the panelled room became a reception room in its place but this was not the 'new Room'.

Yours faithfully,

Derek Matthews, *Castle Cary*

Dear Sir,

Would it be possible as a further tribute to J. B. Beresford and following your article on him to reprint all or some of the five Introductions he wrote to his edition of the Diary?

I have to say that I have not read them myself but presume they would be about the same length as the Introduction he wrote for the World's Classics edition (1949). I feel sure they would be just as interesting. Some of your readers will know them but many will not.

Yours sincerely,

Claude Lack, *Northampton*

BOOK REVIEW

Raymond Chapman, compiler – *Godly and Righteous, Peevish and Perverse: Clergy and religious in literature and letters, an anthology*, Canterbury Press, £20 (ISBN 1-85311-492-8), 2002.

The Revd Dr Raymond Chapman, the compiler of what is described on the cover as 'this sumptuous anthology', is an Anglican priest and Emeritus Professor of English Literature in London University. In his Introduction Chapman sets out the theme of his chosen passages. In general, it is that, in the history of English-speaking peoples, 'the clerical presence has been inescapable' and 'the position of parish priest shows a remarkable continuity over the centuries'. In addition, there have been clergy who have gone overseas, settled in a foreign country, such as America or India, and contributed to its religious life. 'I have tried', says Chapman, 'to build up a picture of clerical life in its many aspects, and particularly the effects on the lay majority'. In developing this theme he has introduced characters fictional as well as real, mainly Anglican but not exclusively so, lay as well as clerical, and of both sexes. So, 'the religous, the monk, and friars and nuns ... and clergy wives' appear; they make up 'an essentially lovable company'.

The anthology has been nicely set out and printed; the 267 pages being divided into twelve chapters each carrying the title of a phrase from *The Book of Common Prayer*, such as 'Then Shall Follow the Sermon' and 'In Sundry Places'. To each chapter there is an excellent preamble and to each person featured a short, but apt, introduction. Those featured do so in roughly historical order and are linked together by some common characteristic – for example, the personalities appearing in Chapter 5 – 'Then Shall Follow the Sermon' – are all types of preachers, and those in Chapter 10 – 'Joyful in the Lord' – illustrate the existence of 'a rich store of clerical humour over the centuries'. The span of time covered by the writers quoted begins with The Acts of the Apostles (St Luke) written during the last third of the first century AD and the Venerable Bede (672-735 AD) and ends with The Revd R. S. Thomas (1990s) and the anonymous contemporary author of a poem. In his Introduction Professor Chapman acknowledges present-day writers such as Joanna Trollope who have created fictitious clerical characters, and television programmes wherein clerical figures have 'entertainment value' such as *The Vicar of Dibley*. (*Dad's Army* fans should note another recent publication

from Canterbury Press – *Vicar to Dad's Army*, by the character-actor and churchman, Frank Williams.)

throughout the book points are made which develop the reader's awareness, educate and move him; we are, for example, informed that 'The speech of St Peter in Acts 2: 14-36 is the first recorded instance of following the example of Jesus in giving instruction to a gathered company'. With 'the growth of book production and particularly the novel, books were written to defend every imaginable religious position'. Noteworthy paragraphs are J. T. Coleridge's tribute to John Keble's way of reading the scriptures to a congregation; J. C. Jeafferson's understanding of *The Vicar of Bray*; Thomas Morton's account of a Trappist monk's way of ending a summer afternoon's work in the fields; Charles Kingsley's home-life, with the pleasure he gave his elderly mother; and Charles Dickens's story of the care devoted to The Revd Septimus Crisparkle, by his mother.

But what is there in the anthology to interest members of the Parson Woodforde Society?

Firstly, of the authors from whose writings passages are included in the anthology, the dates of these nine approximate to Woodforde's own (1740-1803) – George Crabbe, William Cole, John Galt, Edward Gibbon, Oliver Goldsmith, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne, John Wesley and Tate Wilkinson. Woodforde himself possessed books by two of them – Goldsmith and Smollett (see Diary entries for 12 May 1790 and 4 February 1785). Secondly, from the included passages of authors prior to 1780 it is possible to deduce something of the Anglican view of the ideal priestly pastor, which Woodforde inherited through his ordination as deacon in May 1763 and priest in September 1764, and thereafter sought to emulate in his ministry.

Thirdly, here and there are lines which will set members perusing the Diary for relevant supportive evidence. Here are some instances. Chaucer wrote of a parish priest who would give 'To poor folk in his parish round about' and in the Diary we read on 6 January 1789: 'Sent Ben round my Parish with some Money for the Poor People this severe weather'. Goldsmith wrote of the priest who 'in his duty prompt at every call/He watched and wept and prayed for all'. Diary entries for the period 7 June to 17 July 1776 record Woodforde's ministrations to 'Mr Rose a farmer who is in a Consumption' and Professor Chapman quotes a further instance. Chapter 4, 'To Instruct the People', a chapter focusing on clergy

who were teachers and tutors, will move members to recall that in September 1773 Woodforde was hopeful of gaining the 'Mastership of Bedford School', an appointment in the gift of his Oxford college. Finally, the mention of Laurence Sterne's Parson Yorick and his habit of noting down on every written sermon the times, dates and places where it was preached: this was also Woodforde's custom, and just like Yorick he would also draw on sermons of others in print, e.g. Tillotson (1630-94), 'a pattern on which 18th century divines modelled their sermons' (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*).

Fourthly, the anthology directly refers to Woodforde by devoting three pages to him. By means of seven well-chosen quotations from the Diary, Professor Chapman brings out Woodforde's 'pastoral concern' and 'belies the bad image of the careless eighteenth century parson'. So we find a twenty-first century scholar siding with a contemporary view of Woodforde – namely, that of the Rt Revd Lewis Bagot, Bishop of Norwich (1783-90). The Bishop had nominated Woodforde to preach in Norwich Cathedral on Sunday, 8 February 1784. Woodforde went to see him in order to get release from the duty. But the Bishop remained firm, telling Woodforde, '... he was willing that the Pulpit at the Cathedral should be filled properly by able and beneficed clergy, and that it was rather a compliment conferred by him on those so appointed' (24 October 1783).

Of his hopes for his anthology Professor Chapman writes in the Introduction, 'If readers learn a little from these pages about their clergy, that will be good. If they find enjoyment, and come back again to re-visit new friends, admire patterns of behaviour or remind themselves of some horrid warnings, that will be even better'.

Personally, reading the anthology has set me asking myself, 'I know how I hope others see me. But, in reality, how do they see me? And what is my expectation of them?' An answer suggested itself to me in these lines of Isaac Walton in his T*he Life of Richard Hooker*, quoted by Chapman, '... bear with each other's infirmities, and live in love, as St John says, "He that lives in love, lives in God, for God is love".'

I close this review with an observation and a tip to the reader. The observation – in his Introduction Professor Chapman remarks, 'If space were unlimited and copyright unrestricted there are many more who could find a place'. I cannot speak on copyright matters,

but on the subject of space there are at the end of the anthology at least five blank pages which, it seems to me, would provide sufficient room to include works of John Bunyan and John Betjeman, as well as some mention of a naturalist clergyman (e.g. Gilbert White), a clerical hymn writer (of whom there are many) and a clerical musician (e.g. J. B. Dykes); while The Revd W. V. Awdry (the author of the Thomas the Tank Engine stories for children) would have been an ideal companion for The Revd C. L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) who does appear. If the vacant space could have been used on these lines what is after all 'a sumptuous anthology' would have been even more so.

Lastly, my tip for readers. Here and there Professor Chapman provides the reader with a helpful explanatory note of uncommon words and classical allusions appearing in the quoted passages. But this is not so in every case, so a dictionary and an encyclopaedia can be a helpful aid to the reader at times as, for example , with the word 'pachydermatous' on p. 64 and the name 'Semiramis' on p. 119.

Enjoy becoming acquainted with the anthology's 'essentially lovable company'.

[Two further anthologies with a clerical theme are *The Faber Book of the Church and Clergy*, by A. N. Wilson (1992) and *The Parson in English Literature* by F. E. Christmas (Hodder & Stoughton, 1950).]

A TRUTH

What Eye but drops the pitying tear,
When poor abandoned Royal Lear
Exclaims in accent wild –
"Unlook'd for, melancholy Truth!
"O! how much sharper than a Serpent's Tooth,
"It is to have a thankless Child!"
Thus spoke the King, the beams of Glory shorn,
An helpless Outcast, destitute, forlorn;
Deserted at his utmost need,
By those his former Bounty fed.
The striking portrait Shakespeare drew – not I –
Edmund, do thou, and thy Compeers apply.
Ye who abuse the noblest gifts of God –
Who strain your powers to turn from Virtu's road
A Prince, whose unsuspecting mind
Vainly in you would kindred likeness find;
O, may the Royal Youth, unmask'd, behold
Those venal flatt'rers for expectant gold!
Soon with remorse he'd quit the devious way,
And curse those Arts that led his youth astray;
Once more a Nation's confidence enjoy
A Father and a People's Joy;
And give new force unto the grateful strain,
Which says, "Old Lear shall be a King again!"

(taken from Lloyd's Evening Post, Monday, February 23, 1789)

Copied from the original notebook of the Revd James Woodforde, 1789, by the late Mr Oliver Woodforde.

CHAIRMAN'S ENDPIECE

Whilst Woodforde's year comprised some 365 – and occasionally 366 – days, his Society has a somewhat less predictable span. One might have assumed our Annual General Meeting and Frolic would fall each year at approximately the same time. Not so, this 'year' is 16 months long!

In setting the date for this year's Frolic the availability of accommodation and access to places of interest dictated our autumn timing. Winchester occupies a short part in Woodforde's life yet its influence has a disproportionate significance. Arrangements for the Frolic are progressing smoothly thanks in particular to Suzanne's efforts. Finalising numbers is important so the sooner we know who is coming the easier it makes the local arrangements. It is also exciting to know that there will be new folk to meet and earlier acquaintances to re-kindle.

Organising a Frolic is an entirely voluntary activity – and one that is not exclusively reserved for committee members! Your committee comprises a range of individuals, bringing together complementary talents and shared enthusiasm. Elected for one 'Society' year the committee's first due is to assign the various functions to be undertaken. Naturally one hopes that there will be a match between talents and opportunities. Such a match has been true in the past so potential new committee members should not hold back. After many years as a committee member, I feel it is time to actively encourage new people on to the committee. My not standing in the election – held at the AGM – will enable others to step forward; so get those nominations in to Ann!

I look forward to seeing many of you in Winchester.

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.

The Parson Woodforde Society is a registered charity no. 1010807

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