PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

ANNA MARIA WOODFORDE by SAMUEL WOODFORDE

VOL. XLII NO. 2 SUMMER 2009

Thursday, June 14 – This Morning Miss Priest came to Breakfaste and spend the Day with me, I was very glad of her company and we spent a very agreeable Day together. In the Afternoon Mr Priest and two of his Sons came to Tea and took home Miss Priest with them. After they were gone I wrote a letter to Mr Samuel Woodforde my Br. which I begun at Seven and finished before eight, being in haste to send it up to Mr Bidewells that he may put it in the Post Office to Morrow. A very pleasant warm Day.

('Nancy Woodforde – A Diary of the Year 1792'
in D. H. Woodforde [ed.], *Woodforde Papers & Diaries*, 1932)

ISSN 1365-327X

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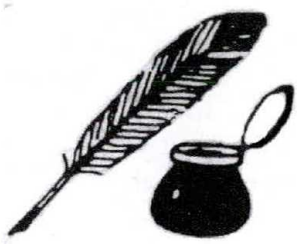


EDITORIAL

Readers of James Woodforde's Diary often find themselves wanting to know more of his niece, housekeeper and companion Anna Maria – Woodforde's Nancy. It might be said that this is greed for, thanks to her uncle, we already know exactly what she did and where she did it for a continuous period of almost twenty-seven years; far more information than we possess of many much more celebrated women of her day. But, of course, what we particularly wish to know is what *she* made of the events and people the Parson's Diary tells us of and, especially, what she thought of *him*. We do have her Diary for the year 1792, published in *Woodforde Papers and Diaries* in 1932 and re-issued by this Society in 1990. This is invaluable because it enables us to witness the same scene in a different, often more colourful, light as when, on 2 September, she in her 'Blue Gown and Straw Colour'd and Purple Bonnet' entertained Mrs Townshend – 'in a worked Muslin Jacket a dark Green sash and a Hat trimm'd with dark Green ribbon' – and the two Miss Townshends – 'in Jackets and hats trimm'd in the same manner with two sorts of Ribbon, Straw Colour and Brown'.

There is, however, another source of information about Nancy; one which tells us much more about what was foremost in her mind and what she thought of her uncle. This is a small cache of surviving letters. In 1971 the Society published, as its first Journal Supplement, *Some Letters of Anna Maria Woodforde to Members of her Family* with an introduction and commentary by Roy Winstanley. As so few of the present membership were members then and as the Supplement had taken the relatively ephemeral form of half a dozen stapled A4 sheets, I thought that their re-appearance in this more robust format would be welcome. More importantly, for those unfamiliar with them, it is a more robust, more distinctive, more energetic and more positively likeable Nancy who emerges from their hastily scrawled pages.

In one of these letters, written to her sister Juliana when her uncle was away overnight in Norwich, Nancy expresses her fear of being left unprotected – 'Our House being so lonely am afraid of Rogues'. Roguery and the harsh retribution which frequently followed are the subjects of Stuart Archer's essay on 'Crime and Punishment in

Eighteenth Century England', illustrated with particular reference to the Diary from which we know that the presence of strangers in the district or rumours of break-ins or poaching would cause Woodforde himself much anxiety. Disinclined to question the political status quo, he would not have doubted the validity of a judicial system primarily concerned with the protection of property. A harsh penal code, most notoriously represented by the Game Laws, encouraged the petty offender to defend his liberty with violence. Like many people today and as Mr Archer suggests, Woodforde probably exaggerated the threat to his own household for it was 'a threat which went unrealized for the majority of his countrymen'.

In one of her most revealing letters, written to her mother in 1780, Nancy describes her early friendship with Mrs Davie and her circle – 'she is the most accomplish'd sensible woman I ever met with, indeed I never saw such cleaver people ...'. Thanks to Carole Child we now discover that Elizabeth Davie's half sister was more than merely 'cleaver'; Mary Cockle, as she became, was a bluestocking of considerable learning and accomplishment.

Finally, a reminder that you will be reading this within a few weeks of the 250th anniversary of James Woodforde being 'Made a Scholar of New College' and of his recording the fact at the beginning of what was to become one of the most sustained, satisfying and readable examples of the diarist's art. Thank you, James.

MARTIN BRAYNE

SOME LETTERS OF ANNA MARIA WOODFORDE TO MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY

Introduction

Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Misc. e.470 consists of a square notebook, partly grey and partly with a marbled back similar to those of the small notebooks used by James Woodforde for the greater part of his diary: containing 59 leaves. It originally belonged to Robert Woodforde, the Treasurer of Wells Cathedral, who used its first 25 pages to make, in a crabbed, spiky and in places nearly illegible old man's hand, a list of his books and their prices. The notebook then came into the possession of Nancy Woodforde. She copied down the addresses of her mother, her father and her Aunt Melliora, in a very careful hand, and then used nearly all the remaining sheets to make copies of letters which she had written to various members of her family. Three leaves contain verses, one headed "Elegant Stanza"; and five are left blank.

The notebook contains eleven family letters: two each to her mother, her father, Juliana and William, and three to Melliora. One of these, the last, is incomplete. One letter, which comes first in the book, is unrelated to the family series, and appears to be a kind of exercise in letter-writing. Other letters have been torn out of the book: this can be seen by odd words left on torn edges of paper.

Unlike the single letter of Nancy's that actually went through the post (MS Eng. lett. d. 180, fols 1-2: to Mrs John Woodforde) the copies were carelessly made, full of spelling and punctuation errors. Two of the letters were printed in the journal (Vol. II, No. 1, Spring 1969) but these were, to some extent, "cleaned up" for publication. The transcripts printed here, on the other hand, are much closer to Nancy's actual text, although they are not actually verbatim renderings. In her haste, carrying out the very tedious job of copying a letter which she had already written once, Nancy wrote such surrealistic words as "extostulate" and "concenient". These and other errors have been silently corrected; and in some places a change in the sense has been indicated by a full-stop enclosed in square brackets [.]. But I have made no attempt to impose modern rules of punctuation on Nancy's rather breathless but charmingly informal style.

The value and interest of these letters is twofold. Here and there they illuminate some small detail of the writer's life and surroundings with a vividness equal to that of the diary itself. A fine example is where Nancy, finishing a letter to the absent and errant Bill, is interrupted by the arrival of her uncle and his friend Mr Hall, with the "brace of hares" they have captured in their coursing expedition. All go straight down into her postscript. The second great source of interest in these letters derives from the light they throw on Woodforde himself. They show, for example, that his resentment at the way things had worked out at Ansford was deeper than he ever allowed himself to express in the diary. It is not there that we shall learn that nothing in the world would have induced him to live at Ansford again, or that at one point he was refusing to write to any of his relations except his favourite Mrs Pounsett. In another connotation altogether, it is not he who tells us that his disgust at the entire Davie–Walker acquaintance enveloped even the harmless Dr Thorne, whom he forbade Nancy to write to or see. It is she who tells us these things; and therefore these letters, slight though they are and without any pretensions at all to literary distinction, may take their modest place in the story of Weston Parsonage.

No. 1. To her Mother

Weston, October 10th. 1780

Dear Mother – I am extremely obligd to you for your Kind Letter and the more so because I know your aversion to writing, I'm sorry to hear you and my Brothers has [sic] been so ill but hope by this you are all perfectly recovered, I should have answered Yours before but really I have been so engagd in going out & having Company at home that I have not had a[n] opportunity therefore hope my Dear Mother will excuse me [.] last week I dined at Mr. Howes's who sent his Chaise for me there I'm a great favourite of the old Gentleman there was a great deal of Company a Mr. & Mrs. Donne a new married Cupple, also a Mr. & Mrs. Huett & Mr. & Mrs. Paine, likewise a very handsome officer. I had the pleasure of hearing him sing a very good song which pleased me exceedingly, I'm very intimate with his Sister, a Mrs. Davie she is the most accomplishd sensible woman I ever meet with, indeed I never saw such cleaver people for my part I don't know what to say or do with

them, and at cards, I would sooner give them my money than play for it they are so quick, Lately Esq. Custance Lady made us a morning visitt and invited us to dine with them the day following which we accepted and she was so polite as to come after me in her Coach and Four she is a most amiable woman I like her exceedingly [.] she showed me a great Deal of her beautiful work which pleased me very much, she tells me it will be much pleasanter for me when she comes to live at Weston. I expect to see her every day to call on me and take me to see their new hall which will coast Twenty Thousand pounds the building it is about a Mile from my Uncle's house I expect them to dine with us very soon [.] I suppose you have made a great deal of Cyder this year as its recond a very good year for apples in the county tho' we have but fue but what we have are very fine. My Uncle has lost one of his best horses this summer he was taking ill of a fever one day & died the next [.] we have had Mr. Lewes here this summer he came 13th of July and staid with us till the 21 of August [.] Should be much obliged to you if you would inform me in your next whether you received the Letter I sent the 16th. of June last, I make no doubt but one of my Brothers would write for you if you would be so kind as to write which I hope you will. please to make my Compts to all Friends [.] it begins to grow very cold, here for my part I dread the cold weather very much, we have just [illegible] our carpets and begun drinking Tee by Candle light we spend our Evenings very agreeable I work and my Uncle reads to me. he begs his Compts to you and says he shall always be happy to hear from you we drink your health very often – now for a Touch of the fashions when I dined at Mr. C I was dressed in my Apricot gown and a sute of dark green Ribbands an they told me that dark green is the most fashionable colour that was wore, therefore beg you will get some for the winter. they trimm their caps with tiffany and white crape they likewise trimm their gowns all round the grain with silk of the same [.] I fancy by this time you are quite tir'd with this (s)crall therefore will Conclude with my Duty to yourself and my love to my Brothers, and believe me to be with the Sincerest Respect your Dutiful Daughter Anna Maria Woodforde.

Although Nancy wrote clearly that the Howes dinner had taken place "last week", its date was 8 September, just over a month before the letter was written. Mrs Paine was a daughter of the host: she and her husband appear in the diary as "Mr. Paine and his Wife with a long chin". His name was Alexander, and the news of his suicide shocked Woodforde when he heard it on 26/12/1781: he "made away with himself on Sunday last by throwing himself headlong into a deep Pit". Castres Donne, curate of Mattishall, had married Anne Vertue on 10 January, at St Andrew's church, Norwich, and the couple were staying or lodging at Mattishall with the Hewitts, also present at the dinner. Mrs Davie or Davy, so famous in the Weston annals, was a niece of Mr Howes' third and present wife, Catherine Kett. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Roope (b. 1747), fourth of the thirteen children (by two wives) of Dr Charles Roope of Pulham, who died in this year, aged 63. On 12 December 1769 she had married Launcelot Davie of Southwold, presumably the son of another Launcelot Davie, "Surgeon", who was buried there in 1741, aged 33. Two of her three children: Elizabeth or "Betsy" (b. 1770) and Nunn (b. 1771) are well-known to readers of the diary. There was a third child, Thomas, who was born in 1773 and of whom no record seems to exist beyond his baptismal entry. No doubt he died in infancy.* In the year of his birth his father died and was buried at Southwold on 14 December. Mrs Davie was thus a fairly young widow at the time Woodforde was friendly with her. She and Betsy were at the party, although Nancy does not make this clear. Also present were two of her brothers, Charles (b. 1746), who afterwards became a doctor, and Turner (b. 1753). Nancy's "handsome officer" was Turner, who "is in the Militia and appeared in Regimentals". The Custances were still living at Ringland. Mrs Custance paid her morning visit on Saturday, 16 September and the dinner took place, not the next day but on the following Tuesday. "Mr. Lewes" was Woodforde's poor cousin James Lewis, of Nottingham. This was his last visit to Weston Parsonage, for he was already dead when Nancy wrote, having died on 24 September "on his return from my House,

This is indeed the case. Thomas was buried on 12 December 1773 just two days before his father – see Carole Child, *What happened to Betsy and Nunn? More on the Davie Family*, Journal XLI, 1 (Ed.)

homeward". The horse died on 11 August: he was that "good-natured" beast whose demise upset Woodforde for more than economic reasons. "Tiffany" has a number of different meanings: here it is glossed "a kind of thin transparent silk; also, a transparent gauze muslin, cobweb lawn". (O.E.D.)

No. 2. To William

Dear Frater I'm exceedingly sorry to hear by the letter you sent my uncle of the quarrel with your Captain [.] You desired me to let you know what my Uncle says concerning it which is this. that he is sorry you should have disobliged your C-n and is likewise afraid you are not a real Midshipman if you was he says it would be a great dishonour to you to leave the ship [.] We were in great hopes that you was perfectly settled and in a fair way to do well but are sorry to be so disapointed indeed I can't think what you will do my Uncle says he cannot think of doing any thing more for you unless you will try to do something for yourself which he is afraid you will not as he thinks you are rather of a unsettled disposition – pray do try to make it up with your Captain if you can. Should be glad to have heard what you qua[re]lled about as my Uncle is appre[he]nsive that you are to blame therefore let me know in your next [.] I'm sorry you should have such a dislike to your Officers to be sure it must be very disagreeable to you to be with such dastardly scoundrels but never mind them if you make it up with your C-n [.] if you leave the ship I wish you may get a Lieutenancy of M's as that what you seem to like best. I suppose you have not hear[d] of Mr. Guppys Death he died about six weeks ago and has left all his Effects to Mr. Pouncet [.] I have also the news to convey to you of my Cousin R W e, and cousin Sophys elopement carried her off into D e and there they were married to the great displeasure of her Brothers and her high and mighty sister. they are to live in Mr. Pounscets House at Ansforde so much for Somerset news [.] Ego sum sorry to tell you we have been very much alarmed by two highwaymen who infested the roads between Hockering and Honeygam and have committed many robberies in the said roads but am happy to tell you they are safely lodged in Norwich Castle [.] am also sorry to tell you that poor spring is dead he lost his life by a dreadful sprain of the shoulder, but we have a young dog very much like him which we call spring in

memory of the poor Fellow [.] I go on very well with my Latin I'm just come to propria quae maribus – I have nothing more worth communicating therefore will Conclude with my best wishes for your success and believe me to be your most Affectionate sister A M W

P S Since I wrote the above my Patruus and a Mr. Hall is just returned from coursing and brought home a brace of hares [.] They both beg their Compt's and Mr. H wishes you all the success you can possibly wish for don't be afraid of my Uncles being angry with you for I will say as much as I can for you and I make no doubt but he will harken to what I say as I flatter myself I am no small favourite with him [.] In haste adue pray let me hear from you soon as I am afraid this will not come safe.

The news from William to which this is an answer arrived at Weston Parsonage on 21/11/1780, "Nancy also had a Letter from her Brother Bill Woodforde to let her know he is going to leave his ship". Nancy's reply was written on 29/11/1780 and sent off three days later. The ship was the "Ariadne frigate" and the captain's name was Squire: the two afterwards made up their differences, as we see from the diary entry for 16/12/1780, and became lifelong friends. Mr Guppy was the uncle of John Pounsett, the diarist's brother-in-law. The elopement of Robert White and Sophia Clarke was known at Weston Parsonage by September 1780: her brothers (really half-brothers) were James and Richard Clarke, and her "high and mighty sister" was Fanny, Mrs Frank Woodforde. The highwaymen were mentioned in Woodforde's m.s. entry for 12 November: they were "taken" on the 21st and executed at Norwich on 7 April of the next year. The accident which befell "Spring", and his subsequent death, are recounted in the Diary for 9, 10 and 11 November. "Frater", "ego sum" and "patruus" (uncle) are remembered fragments from Nancy's Latin lessons, and "propriae quae maribus" (words of the masculine gender) is a term used in the Latin grammars of the time.

The postscript gives an impression of wonderfully vivid actuality,

especially when it is put beside this entry from the Diary:

> Nov. 29 – I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at home. Nancy breakfasted, dined, &c. here again. Mr Hall called upon us at breakfast, and afterwards we we [sic] went a Coursing till 8. o'clock, and had 2. very fine Courses and killed both Hares. Jack found one sitting in the Hedge, and Mr Hall and myself gave Jack a Shilling apiece – 0 = 1 = 0.
>
> We had dinner to day at 2. o'clock on Mr Hall's Acct. who dined & stayed with us till 4. o'clock and then set of for Winborough Wood – We had for Dinner a Couple of Fowls boiled & a face and a very fine Hare rosted – gave Mr Hall one of the Hares to carry home with him. I sent a note to Du Quesne this morning to dine with us, but he could not, having a Corpse to bury.

No. 3. to Juliana

Dear Sister. I should have answered your kind Letter before I'm exceedingly obliged to you for your very sensible Epistle indeed it gave me both pleasure and satisfaction to hear you are so much happyer and that you intend to become the amiable Jane Augusta Juliana Woodforde for my part I had no idea of receiving a Letter from my dear Sister, as I did not think you would write half so well but now I find you are so clever with your pen must intreat you to write to me as often as you can find an opportunity [.] I'm sorry you should think me so unnatural as Not to think you worth my attention, no! I hope I never shall be so divested of humanity not to have a proper affection for my Brothers and dear sister [.] I should have answered your [letter] before had not you informed me that my Father intended writing soon therefore deferd it on that account in hopes of hearing from him: but am sorry to say I have not as yet had that pleasure. Pray make my most dutiful respects to him and tell him I hope it will not be long before I shall be favour'd with a Letter from him as I long to hear how you all like your new Habitation [.] It gave me great pleasure to hear my Brother comes on so amazingly in his drawing I make no doubt but he will make a great proficient in that science if he applys himself strickly to it which I hope he will pray tell him he must not forget his music for I promis[e] myself great pleasure in hearing him play when I come into S. which I hope will be next Summer for I long to see my Somerset Friends, I assure

you I look upon myself quite in another world tho' we live in a very genteel manner and perfectly happy [.] I like my Uncle exceedingly he is a very worthy good kind of a man and I hope heaven will reward him for his goodness to me [.] we were very surprised to hear of my cousin R W-e and Sophy C-s elopement. I can't imagine why her Friends should be so much averse to the match as its by no means beneath herself pray tell them if they are married that I wish them all the joy and happiness the world can afford, we were sorry to hear Mr Richard Clark has been so ill but hope by [now] he is much better [.] I suppose you have heard by my Aunt W that we have dined lately at Esqe, Custance, Mrs C was so polite as to come for me in her Coach and four she is a most amiable Lady She showed me a great deal of her butiful work which pleased much [.] our worthy Friend Mr Du Quesne is lately returned from the Archbishop of Canterbury where he has been on a Visit this Summer he begs his Compts to my Aunt Clarke and cousin sam to whom please to present mine we shall dine very soon at Mr Du Quesne with Mr and Mrs Custance [.] we have not heard from my Brother since the 15 of September than he was in the Leith Roads he was going in quest of P. Jones success attend him and may Heaven preserve him from all the dangers of the sea [.] I have nothing more worth communicating but that I enjoy perfect health I use a great deal more exercise here than I did in Somerset in hopes of getting better of my lameness but am afraid I never shall be able to walk without the assistance of a stick tho' I'm much better [.] pray make my best Respects to my Uncle and aunt W and tell my Aunt that I hope to hear from her soon My Uncle begs his Compts.

I conclude your most affectionate Sister

A M W

This rather patronising, elder-sisterly letter belongs to the same period as Nos. 1 and 2, and was probably written not long after No. 2. The letter to which it was a reply, and the letter from Bill to Parson Woodforde also mentioned, arrived together on 29/9/1780. This is proved by the following diary entry made on that date: "...

Rec'd also one from Bill Woodforde from Leighthe Roads. Rec'd also one for Nancy from Somerset." "15 September" must obviously refer to the date on which the letter from Bill to his uncle was written: why it took a fortnight to come from Edinburgh is something of a mystery. It is unmentioned in No. 2, written on the same day, but completed and presumably sealed up some time after breakfast, before the letter from Bill arrived. "P. Jones" was John Paul Jones, the famous American privateer of the War of Independence, still being fought. The "new Habitation" must have been one of the many changes of address made by Heighes and Juliana during these years: there is no clue as to its whereabouts. The brother who was doing so well at "drawing" was Samuel, later R.A.

No. 4. To Juliana

Dear Sister With infinite pleasure I take up my Pen to write you a few lines which will inform you that we are all well at Weston and sincerely wish that this may find you and all Friends the same in Somersett. I should have certainly wrote to you long before this Time had I not been certain of you hearing from us by my Aunt Pounsett pray make my Duty to her with our thanks for her last entertaining Letter which my Uncle intends answering soon [.] I can assure you it gave us great concern to her that my Uncle Johns letting his House and of his intention of going to Bristol to reside [.] I make no doubt but you with the rest of His Friends are very sorry at his leaving Ansford. I sincerely wish that Bristol may prove agreeable to their expectations if they have left your Neighbourhood I beg you will make my affectionate regards to them and likewise to my Amiable Friend Mrs Richard Clarke and all other inquiring Friends. Hope Mr and Mrs Parry will prove agreeable Neighbours to you. How greatly shall I miss My Uncle and Aunt when I come to Ansford it will give me pain to go by the old House without calling [.] My Uncle has expended a deal of Money here this Summer in building and repairs he seems to like Norfolk better than ever for my part I cannot say I do I should be glad if he

would live in some part of Somersett I can't wish him to live at Ansford as I know that Place is extremely disagreeable to him. I often expostulate with him concerning his spending so much Money here but all to no purpose he says he will make things convenient and agreeable to himself. We have not been above a Week this Summer without company or going out our Neighbourhood is being increased this Summer our visiting is all in such a high Style that I cannot say its perfectly agreeable to me – last Week I returned from a visit to my Friend Mrs Bodham of a fortnight where I spent Time extremely agreeable my amiable Friend Mrs Davie being [one of?] the party she has lately spent some time with us here we are as intimate as ever she is a most Charming Woman. I suppose you will be Astonished to hear that I have rode near a Hundred Miles this Summer. I have often rode Twelve Miles in a Day and many Times Six Miles before Breakfast (all these Miles on Horseback remember) [.] week before last I received a Letter from my B^r Sam he informed me that he should be at Ansford soon to spend a few Days and then go to Town he likewise gave us some hopes of seeing him here before Christmas we hope that we shall have the pleasure of seeing him soon. I [am] quite pleased to hear that you are so fond of writing as I shall expect to hear from you often [.] you have heard that I have received a letter from my B^r W^m some time ago which gave me and my Uncle infinite pleasure I suppose he will be home soon. I wrote him a long letter last Winter which he received at New York he informed me that it was the only Letter he had received since he left Europe: if you should see him before me pray make my love to him and tell him we shall be glad to see him in Norfolk. My Uncle is now at Norwich and will be there two nights [.] I was invited to a private Concert but did not go having had a bad Cold lately and its not being quite well [.] Mr Du Quesne is of the Party being a Musical man [.] I suppose you would have went if you had been in my place [.] My Uncle has lately received a Letter from my Father concerning his affairs which gave us great concern. I intreated my Uncle to answer it but could not prevail on him he says that he will not write to anyone but Mrs P [.] pray don't think much of our coming to Somerset as I am afraid we shall not come my Uncle says that he shall not think of coming Untill some of his Friends have been here first if you show this to Mrs P pray tell her

not to let any notice of what I have said concerning our not coming to my Uncle in her next as I know he would not like my saying any thing concerning our not coming into Somerset. I have lately had a new Black Cloak lined which my Uncle had for burying Mrs Townshend [.] You can imagine how disagreeable it is to me to stay Home all night without my Uncle Our House being so lonely am afraid of Rogues but I say nothing of it to him as he is so good to me in every other respect [.] we were sorry to hear of the Death of Mrs Farr it must have greatly affected my Aunt White in losing such an intimate Friend. I hope you figure among some times [sic] at Castle Cary Assembly. if you don't like to direct a Letter yourself I don't doubt but any one will do it for you if you ask them.

I am sure I must have tired you with reading this therefore will conclude with my Duty to my Father

and am your affectionate Sister
A M W

In so far as the character of the diarist forms a topic of these letters, this is perhaps the most revealing one. As Nancy was to complain so bitterly in later years about the dulness of life at Weston, it may seem incongruous to find her criticizing him for spending too much money and living in a "high Style". At the same time it is wise to recollect that a single letter is always the creation of one mood, which may be contradicted by another written a day or two earlier or later. This letter also betrays embarrassment, for Nancy had, as it were, a foot in both camps, and here she seems to be trying to reassure Heighes, through Juliana, that she is still a Somerset girl at heart. Altogether the letter hints at family conflicts and bitterness hardly so much as glimpsed in the diary. The mysterious last line may be explained as showing Nancy's realisation that Juliana could be afraid to let her father know she was writing to Norfolk. He was a man of uncertain temper, at least in his latter years.

Most of the items of Norfolk news are corroborated in the diary. Woodforde's "very pretty Concert" took place on 19 November, the night before the letter was written. By "private", Nancy means

that all the performers were amateur. William wrote from "Sandy Hook New York" on 13 December of the previous year. Nancy, inaccurate always where dates are concerned, is wrong about the time she spent with the Bodhams: she went with her uncle to Bodham's Rotation on 4 November and returned on 13 November. I do not even pretend to understand the allusion to the Townshend funeral, which is a welter of hopeless confusion. There was only one Mrs Townshend, and Woodforde had beaten her at billiards, "altho' she plays well" at Honingham Hall on 2/11/1781: so far from her having died about this time, she was to survive until 1825. Woodforde, however, deputizing for Mr Du Quesne, had buried her baby daughter, "Miss Harriot Townshend about a Year and a Qr. old" in the chancel of Honingham church on 7/8/1783: but he specifically records that all he got out of that particular funeral was a pair of white gloves and a white silk scarf.

No. 5. To William

My Heart shares most tenderly the distress of my Dear Brother and no words can describe the anguish I felt at reading your Pathetic Letter which brought me the Melancholy particulars of our dear departed Sisters Funeral which I think was conducted with Propriety and in the same manner that I should like for myself. To convince you that I felt a sympathizing Pang when my dear Sister was going to depart this Mortal Life; shall relate a Dream I had the Night before she died; which was this that I saw her Coffin in your Room, and that some Person said it was exactly the length of me, and that I was to die the next Day and that some one told me that the Bell had Tolled for me in the Morning – this is really true and so remarkable that it never will be forgot by me. There is not a Day that passes but I lament the loss of my Sister and Experience has taught me that the Heart will continue to sigh even after the Soul is resigned [.] I believe I may truly say that you and I have experienced the most poignant Grief for the loss of those we love but it was the will of the Almighty to take them from us, as such we must submit, and when we consider the Shortness of human Life,

resignation scarce seems a virtue, instead of looking back with criminal and unavailing sorrow on account of those gone before we ought to look forward and rejoice because we are so soon to follow. I envy you the pleasing Melancholy of weeping o'er the Grave of our dearly beloved Sister and conversing with her ideal shape, but hope the Time will come when I shall personally participate in your Sorrow o'er the remains of my dear Sister [.] I have lately read a Elegy which I much admire, and think it very applicable to my Sister and us therefore will transcribe a few lines for your perusal

O from thy kindred early torn
And to thy Grave untimely born(e))
Vanished for ever from my view
Thou Sister of my Soul adieu

Fair with my first Idea twined
Thine Image oft will meet my mind
And while remembrance brings thee near
Affection sad will drop a tear

As I know that you are fond of poetry have presumed to send the above think it would not be unpleasing to you on such a subject. I am astonished at not hearing from my B^r^ Sam, have wrote him two Letter(s) and have not had any Answer: pray did he say any thing of receiving my Letter to you? don't forget to let me know in your next [.] I find that you have wrote to him now! will he be distress[ed] at reading the Melancholy news which your Letter must have contained. Must not omit telling you that dear Betsy Davie has spent six Weeks with us this Summer she came to us the beginning of June, her Company was a great comfort and pleasure to me particularly so in my unhappy situation [.] Whilst she was here, Mr & Mrs Thorne, Mr & Miss Walker and Mrs Davie dined with us Mr Walker has often enquired very kindly for you he is much improved since you last saw him he has been in Norfolk ever since the beginning of August for change of Air being in a very poor state of Health. I returned home with Miss Davie, and spen(t) almost a fortnight with her and her Mother Mr Walker was with us almost every Day which made it very agreeable; Whilst I was there with them we all went to Holkham which is by far the most magnificent Place I ever saw, but as you have seen it shall only say that I was very much pleased with the Hall, the State Bedroom which is great indeed [.] By the

assistance of Mr Walker and the driver I was able to get in and out of the Carriage very well. we also went to see the Ruins and Gardens of Mr Lee Warner of Walsingham which are very curious and beautiful, I think I have heard you mention them [.] my good Friends made these Excursions on purpose to divert me [.] My Taper will not allow me to say any more than that I am your

Affectionate Sister A M W

we were sorry to hear by your letter that my Aunt Pounsett was not so well as we could wish hope soon to hear from her and that she is perfectly recovered. Pray make my best respects to my good Friends at Castle Cary with thanks to my Aunt for her kind Letter on the Death of my Sister which I look upon as a great proof of her friendship for me and shall answer it very soon [.] Duty to my Father and Compts to enquiring Friends Uncle desires Compts [.] pray let us hear from you soon [.] I think your Letters are a long While coming to me. you must think me very good in answering your so soon

---

Juliana died on 12 May 1788, and was buried four days later – "Juliana Woodforde aged 28 years, 16th May": Ansford Parish Register.* Betsy's visit to Weston Parsonage began on 10 June and ended on 23 July, when Nancy went to pay a return visit to her and her mother at Foulsham. Robert George Walker, now or later Betsy's fiancé, who had presumably been out of Norfolk since his mother's funeral at Weston on 24 March, turned up at the Parsonage on 6 August: in the course of the next twelve months Woodforde was to see a great deal more of him than he would have thought desirable or necessary. There may be an entry in the Diary referring to the despatch of this letter, but I have not located it. In the absence of more exact information, the probable dating of the letter is some time in September.

It is not belittling Nancy's real, though possibly short-lived grief to say that the first part of the letter is a composed production of the

* For Juliana see R. L. Winstanley, *Juliana Woodforde – a Case of Consumption*, Journal XXXII, 4 (Ed.).

romantic sensibility school. Very likely it was to the taste of William, who seems to have been an adept himself at this sort of thing, although none of his letters has apparently survived.

Mr Lee Warner's ruins were those of Walsingham Priory. Woodforde made no mention of the visit of Nancy to Holkham, but both he and she were invited there on 5 November, "in Commemoration of the glorious Revolution of 1688" – a Whiggish festival which he as a good Tory could not very well have attended.

No. 6. To Melliora *January 7th 1791*

My Dear Aunt can have but a faint Idea of the pleasure her Charming Letter gave me for which I return my most grateful thanks. Was quite surprised to hear of so many Marriages and glad that Miss Popes was one of the Number [.] You must have been very gay in having Mrs Palk and her Sister in your Neighbourhood am oblig'd to Miss P for her kind enquiry, and should have been highly pleased to have seen her. We were sorry to (hear) that my Aunt P has had a return of her nervous complaint and that she was prevented from spending the Winter at Ansford. However hope that the Christmas diversions soon recover her Health and spirits and that she will favour us with a long Letter soon. Pray give my love to my Cousin Jane P. and tell her she was very good in acquainting me that the Gentleman was well Who was at their House in September last and that such Intelligence will always give me pleasure [.] last Week I received a Letter from B^r W^m by which I heard that my Mother is quite in a deranged state of Mind cannot say but that I was a little affected at hearing of her unhappy situation and I labour under the most disagreeable apprehensions fearing that she will do some dreadful action My B^r informs me that she made a Will about ten or twelve years ago and that Ralph has got it with him at Bristol: suppose my B^r does not know how she has left her effects as he does not say anything on that subject. Pray God grant that there may be no wicked artful things done to deprive the right Heirs from inheriting their shair of an Estate and that things may soon come to a happy conclusion. Shall now change the subject for a more

agreeable one and acquaint you that my good Friend Mrs Custance in September last took me with her to a grand music meeting where we heard the Messiah performed in S. Peters Church Norwich in a most Heavenly manner by a hundred hands Signora Storace Sung Angles [sic] ever bright and fair most divinely. but I must confess that I think Madam Maras Voice superior to Stor[a]ces to be sure they are both wonderfully admired, there were between eight and nine hundred Gentlemen and Ladies in the Church I sat with Sir Edmund and Lady Bacon their handsome Son and Mrs Custance [.] Sir Thomas Beauchamp came to our seat after the Music was over and very politely asked me how I did Sir John Wodehouse also paid his Compts to the party I was with [.] I had the honour of being handed to my amiable friend's Coach by the Premier Bart of England who I like better than ever for I have seen him many times this last summer One Sunday he came and walk'd to Church with us and in the Evening he with his Lady and Mr and Mrs Custance drank Tea with us after Tea they Desire[d] to see my Uncles Coins which entertained them some time and was a relief to one's poor distorted Countenance. The next news I have to tell you is that in October I din'd at Mr Du Quesnes with L^{d} and Lady Stowell, the Right Hon^{ble} Mr and Mrs Townshend Miss Cornwallis and Mrs Custance who was so kind as to take me with her. we dined between five and six o'clock, drank Tea at eight and return'd home at a little after ten. I played at Cribbage with Mr Townshend Lady Stowell and Mrs Custance and had the honor of win[n]ing three shillings of her ladyship [.] It was a Sable meeting for we were all in Mourning for the late Duke of Cummberland. Lady S. was dres'd in a Tucket with long sleeves the flounce of the Coat very narrow she had on a small high Cap with wings and a spotted Cravat [.] The Ladies were all in Caps except myself who had on a very small high Crown Black Hat which I made for the Mourning [.] the above Ld and Lady are very fashionable people and near my Age. Mr & Mrs Bodham and a Miss Donne of Norwich made us a visit on the 15th of December they staid only one night Miss D. and I sleept together and laughed and talked till near four in the morning. they enquired very kindly for you all and desired Compts I hope to make them a visit in the Spring. Mr B. has built a Hot House lately which takes up a deal of his time and prevents them from going out very often; I believe

Nanny will soon wish it down. Mr and Mrs C. very often enquire for you all [.] the Miss Custances Warts have disappeared a long time but Mrs Custances still remain: she lately made me a present of a very pretty Work Basket which I suppose cost near half a Guinea Her Apron is finished and is one of the most elegant I ever saw [.] we talk of having them and Mr Du Quesne to dine with us next Week. In November came a Servant with Mr & Mrs Townshend's Compts to Miss W. beging her acceptance of a fine Pheasant Mrs Custance thinks it a wonderful favor indeed. Suppose the Marquis told them that it was a favourite bird of mine, now I am talking of eatables must inform you of a simple way of making a Ham eat very tender and mild which is only putting it into Ground five or six Days before you intend to dress it pray try it and let me have your opinion of it you must take care and bury it where the dogs can't come at it or perhaps they may make as free with it as they did with Mrs Pounsetts Charter [.] hope you had no damage done by the Wind which blew so very tremendous on the 15th and 28 of Dec^br^ we were very much alarmed by it here Uncle was up almost all the Night on the 28 and saw some dreadful Lightning for my part I expected the House to fall about my Ears every moment but thank God we had no harm done by it. Suppose I may now congratulate my B^r^ & Sister on having a Son for an almost certain according to the Family way that the second Child will prove of the Masculine Gender sincerely hope that she with the little one are as well as can be expected [.] I wish much to see my Niece and all my Somersett Friend[s] but when that will be God only knows [.] I fancy you have given up that machanical motion of walking every Morning after Breakfast for my part I shall pursue it when the Weather will give leave and have walkd three hundred and fifty six miles since June. My Paper is almost finished therefor[e] must conclude with our best Comp'ts to you, Mrs Clarke, my Uncle and all Friends wishing you all a happy New Year and I am my Dear Aunts obligd Friend

Anna Maria Woodford

P S hope our good Friend Mr Pounsett continues well and that he will escape the Gout this Winter: also that his Mother is as well as her age will admit of [.] I congratulate your amiable Neighbour Mrs J. Burg[e] on the increase of Family I hope she is well and that the little Stranger is in a thriving state and we wish Mrs F.

Woodforde in a Similar Situation as my Br told me that she expected a New Years Gift. Doctor Clarke we hope is well and more happy than he has been of late. can't close this without beging and intreating that you will write soon. have not seen Mr Du Quesne since October and am sorry to tell you that he is very poorly with a nervous complaint and not able to go out for air or exercise therefore he cannot come next Week. We were glad to hear that Mrs Clarke and her son were well and that they live in so genteel a Place as Hackney. We have had some fine Green Peas up this Month. Have not heard from Br Sam a long time wish he was come home. We were lately invited to Dine at Mr Thornes but Uncle would not go nor let me he does not like them on account of the Davies I am never to visit the Thornes again this is only between you and I [.] I never hear any thing of Davies [.] Have been out only four times in the Whiskey since you was here

(Letter breaks off at this point)

Some account of Ralph Woodforde and his uneasy relations with Anne Dorville's eldest children may be found in my article "Brother Heighes" in the journal, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Summer 1971); and all the kinsfolk of the Custances mentioned in the letter appear in Mrs L. H. M. Hill's article "The Custances and their Family Circle" in the journal Vol. III, No. 4 (Winter 1970). Brother William's elder son was also William. He became an army doctor, emigrated to Canada after having seen service in the Peninsular War, married there and lived at New Brunswick. "Miss Pope", and her sister Sally, lodged at a hatter's in Newgate Street, London, and Nancy and her uncle had seen them in 1789. The Bridegroom was a Mr Gudgeon.

The date of Nancy's "grand music meeting" was 10 September 1790, and the Weston Parsonage folks appear to have arranged to attend only after Mrs Custance "good-naturedly and genteelly" offered them places in her coach. On the 8th Woodforde had entered in his diary this grumpy comment: "Norwich Musick Festival begun this Morning. I did not go having had enough of the last

Musick Meeting in September 1788 – at which I experienced a great deal of uneasiness and for which it cost me beside about 7. 0. 0." He tells us that the concert he was at this year lasted from 11 am to 3 pm and that "Select Pieces from the Messiah, Joshua &c" were played.

"Madam Mara" (1749-1833) was born Gertrud Elisabeth Schmeling; she was a cripple and as a child singer had had to be carried on to the stage by her father. Her English debut was in London (1784): she had been at the previous Norwich Festival, where Woodforde heard her sing in "Judas Maccabeus". He says nothing about her appearance at the 1790 concerts, but that the second singer was "Miss Pool". According to Grove's "Dictionary", Mara had a "worthless husband and numerous lovers". Goethe wrote a birthday poem to her in 1831, the year before his own death.

Nancy Storace, of Italian descent, was born in London, 1766. She first appeared on the stage at the Haymarket Theatre at the age of eight, in 1774. Ten years later, she married in Vienna a violinist named John Abraham Fisher, whose ill-treatment of her caused him to be banished from the Austrian dominions, by the special orders of the emperor. She was the original Susanna in Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro", first produced in the year of her marriage. In 1786 the composer wrote for her the scena and aria "Ch'io mi scordi di te" (K. 505). She died at Dulwich in 1817. Like Mara, Storace was technically a soprano, but her voice had a wide range, and no doubt she sang the contralto parts in the excerpts from Handelian oratorio put on at Norwich. Contemporaries, however, said that her voice had "a peculiar harsh twang".

The dinner-party at Mr Du Quesne's house, Berries Hall, was on 22/10/1790. Woodforde did not attend it, as he had to go to the Archdeacon's Visitation at Reepham on that day. He describes the titled guests as "Lord and Lady Stawel of Holte-Forest near Farnham, Surrey. The present Lord Stawel is Son of the late Hon. Henry Bilson Legge. Lady Stawel, late Miss Curzon, is Daughter of Asheton Curzon Esq., Brother of Lord Scarsdale". He adds the information that "Nancy likes Lady Stawell better than his Lordship", and mentions the cribbage game and the three shillings. The royal personage in whose memory an official period of mourning had been decreed was Frederick Henry, Duke of

Cumberland and Strathearn, Admiral of the White, 4th son of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, and therefore a brother of King George III, who died on 18/9/1790, aged 45.

Acknowledgment: I should like to record here my grateful thanks to Miss Mary Barham Johnson, for biographical information about the families of Donne, Roope and Davie, some of which is printed here.

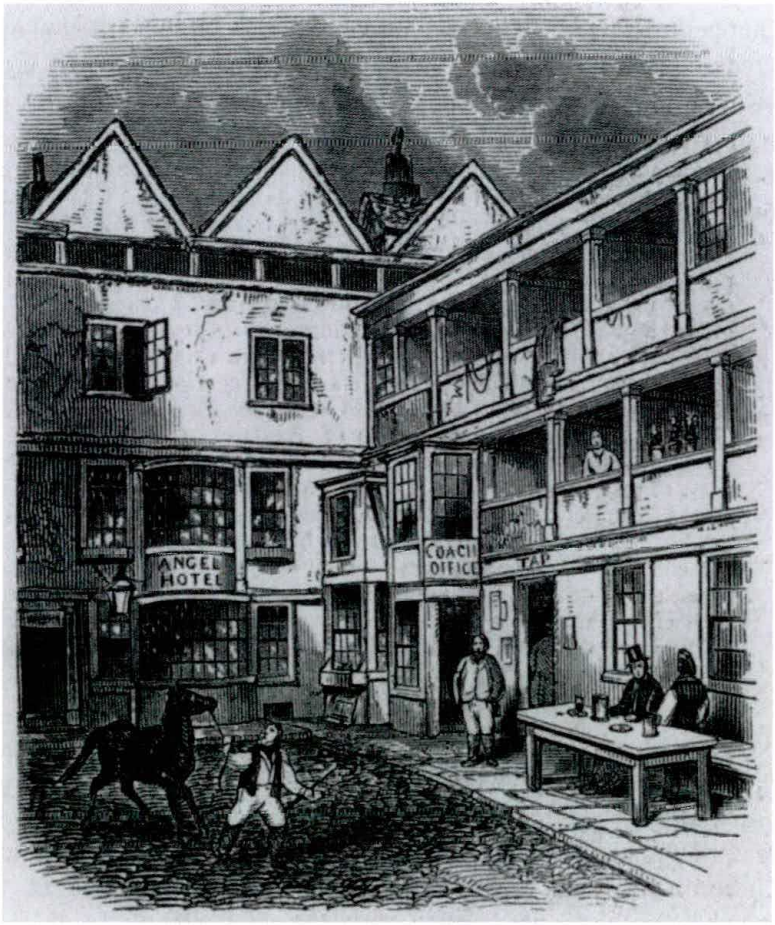
WOODFORDE INNS: 2 – THE ANGEL, BACK OF ST CLEMENT'S, STRAND, LONDON

When he first gave up travelling between Norfolk and Somerset on horseback, having Nancy to escort, James Woodforde would break his journey at the Bell-Savage Inn, Ludgate Hill, London. Preferring it to the Swan-with-Two-Necks, Lad Lane, at which the Norwich coach put up, they would take a hackney coach to the famous old inn which they found to be 'a very good house' kept by 'very civil People ... by name Burton'. It had the further advantage that it was the inn from which the Salisbury coach departed. Unfortunately, the Burtons had some less welcome guests – members of the family *Cimex lectularius*, the bedbug:

> I was bit terribly by the Buggs last night, but did not wake me –

The following day – 1 June 1782 – the Woodfordes travelled on to Somerset and by the time he arrived at Mr Pounsett's house at Cole he was 'terribly swelled on the face & hands by the Buggs'.

We do not know where the travellers stayed on their return journey to Norfolk as that part of the Diary is missing but it seems likely that, despite the bugs, they again stopped at the Bell-Savage for when they next went to Somerset, in June, 1786, they went from Lad Lane 'to our old Inn the Bell Savage at Ludgate Hill'. Once more Woodforde records that he was 'Very much pestered & bit by buggs in the Night' (25/6/1786). The following day he states that he was:



Angel Inn, St Clements, Strand – Illustrated London News, May 1849
(Mary Evans Picture Library)

> Bit so terribly with Buggs again this Night, that I got up at 4 o'clock this Morning and took a long Walk by myself about the City till breakfast time.

For the next two nights in which he stayed in London he kept his clothes on and sat up 'in a great Chair with my Feet on the bed and slept very well considering'.

Unsurprisingly, in view of this persistent noctural torment, he decided on his return from Somerset to change his inn, although his

decision may have been affected by an apparent change in the destination of the coach from Salisbury. He and Nancy stayed at

> . . . the Inn where
> the Salisbury Coach, Inns, at the Angel at the
> back of St Clements in the Strand – a very good Inn
> and there supped and slept & had very good beds –
> (6/10/1786))

Situated at the point where Wych Lane met Hollowel (or Holywell) Street, commonly known as the Backside of St Clements, the Angel was, like the Bell Savage, an inn of considerable antiquity. It was from there in 1554 that Bishop Hooper was taken to Gloucester to be burnt at the stake. Writing of it in 1720 the historian John Strype described it as 'a very large Place and of great Resort especially for the Cornish and West Country Lawyers'.[1] A century and a half later another historian described Wych Street as having 'an excellent air for breeding attorneys in, the chief subject of all conversation turning here upon verdicts, costs, damages, writs of inquiry &c.'[2]

Such references to lawyers travelling between the Angel and the West Country inevitably serves as a reminder of the occasion in 1795 when Woodforde, on his way home from Somerset, found himself sharing the close confines of the coach from Bath with an old college acquaintance:

> a Counsellor Bragge Member for Monmouth &
> a Contemporary of mine at New College as he
> did not acknowledge me, I did not him –[3]

Twenty years before Woodforde had canvassed the University to obtain a law scholarship for Bragge who himself had voted for Woodforde in the election for the Weston living. Bragge was related to both the Lord Chancellor, Henry Bathurst and through marriage with the future prime-minister Henry Addington and was clearly Woodforde's social superior, but one might have thought that the two men would have acknowledged one another. They must have felt very relieved when, having travelled through the night together, they reached the Angel and were able to part company.

The Angel may have played a more conspicuous part in legal history for just a few years before Woodforde's first visit it had been the scene of what the reformer Granville Sharp, writing to the then

Lord Chancellor, Lord Camden, described as 'a most notorious breach of the laws of nature, humanity and equity, and also of the established law, custom and constitution of England'. Sharp's letter was prompted by an advertisement which had appeared in the *Public Advertiser* of 28 November 1769:

> TO BE SOLD, a Black Girl, the property of J.B------, eleven years of age, who is extremely handy, works at her needle tolerably, and speaks English perfectly well; is of excellent temper and willing disposition. Inquire of Mr Owen, at the Angel Inn, behind St Clements church in the Strand.

This was just two years before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, crucially ruled, in the case of James Somersett, that slavery could not exist in Great Britain.

The comings and goings of James Woodforde were, of course, of far less significance but the diarist was certainly stimulated by the time he spent in the capital and some of the most illuminating Diary entries must have been written at the Angel. It was from there that he and Nancy would make their shopping expeditions – the Parson buying everything from fishing hooks to sealing wax – take trips to the theatre and visit such 'sights' as the Foundling Hospital and Magdalen Chapel. They would also visit friends – especially the Pope sisters – and relatives and be visited by them. Nancy, no doubt, especially enjoyed being re-united with her brother Samuel who would take them to art galleries but James might have had mixed feelings about his trips out to Hackney to visit his Sister Clarke and her disabled son, also Samuel, who on one occasion he found 'much emaciated ... shut up in a Room quite dark excepting a very small fire'.[4] It was certainly a rare event for uncle and niece to find themselves at the Angel and 'quite by ourselves all the Evening'.[5]

As for the Angel itself it appears to have been a good inn and the servants 'very civil People'. Its doors, however, were probably never more welcome to the Woodfordes than on 29 October 1795 when, having witnessed the attack on the King's coach and run the gauntlet of a 'Mob of the lowest class' in the Strand, they were 'glad to get back to our Inn safe'. Five days later –

> We packed up our things this Morning and
> then paid our landlord since Sunday night 1 : 19 : 6

> Our beds & servants bed was charged out of the above one pound 1/6 each Night for each of us and one Shilling for Briton –

and Parson Woodforde left the Angel for the last time.

The old inn probably remained much as Woodforde had known it until the middle of the following century but in 1855 the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported significant alterations:

> The old Angel Inn at St Clement Dane's, Strand, near the corner of Wych Street, had until recently quaint galleries round the court-yard, which have been lately removed as alterations are now taking place to suit the new habits which have arisen.* This inn nearly two centuries ago was that where the coaches for Cheltenham and the west of England started from. The changes which the removal or reconstruction of our old coach inns, and stabling effect, may not appear to alter features to a casual observer, but to the curious traveller they are much, and indicate a social change of great importance.
> * i.e. 'the development of the railways'.

Although able to adapt to the arrival of the railway, the Angel could not withstand the onslaught of the London Country Council's first large scale improvement scheme – the Aldwych scheme of 1905. The old buildings to the north of St Clement Dane's were pulled down and replaced by a new crescent-shaped development to which was attached the Saxon-sounding name of Aldwych on which a new, far grander hotel was constructed – the Waldorf.

REFERENCES

1. John Strype, *A Survey of the cities of London and Westminster*, 1720.
2. W. Thornbury, *Old & New London, Vol. 3*, 1878.
3. Diary, 28 October 1795.
4. Diary, 21 October 1793.
5. Diary, 19 October 1793.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

'Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law' (Oliver Goldsmith)

The most common view of crime and punishment in eighteenth century England is of a system designed for a savage society immured in brutal violence, only checked by a harsh criminal code, aimed above all at the protection of rights of property.

This view is enshrined in the textbooks of the last sixty years. J. H. Plumb in 1950 wrote of 'violence, born of despair and greed ... burning, looting and destruction by the mob were commonplaces of life ... to the desperate poor, a riot was a clarion call to their instinct to survive, for in the burning and looting there was many a windfall.'

Twelve years later Dorothy Marshall repeated this bleak view:

> Extreme poverty made thieving and bullying the only alternatives to starvation. Overcrowding, poverty and ill-health together with monotonous food and over-long hours of work often found compensation in drunkenness, in a love of brutal sports and in a violence that broke out again and again when the pressure became too great. It was a hard, harsh world for the mass of the English people, and one singularly devoid of pity. Disease, violence, early or sudden death were all too common. Men were hanged for food rioting; children were hanged for petty thefts.

In 1982 Roy Porter, one of Plumb's pupils, took the argument even farther. For him the English became 'an ungovernable people'. 'Crime was rife and often bloody ... violence ran through public and political life ... Highwaymen were romanticised, smugglers were feted and excise men hated ... in 1740 disturbances paralysed Norwich for five days over the price of mackerel ... disorder pockmarked Georgian England.'

There were certainly fears of approaching anarchy, and that most conservative of observers, James Woodforde, often expressed them vividly. Yet the irony is that it was France which suffered revolution, and it was the French who in fact proved to be as 'ungovernable' in 1789 as the English had been in the 1640s.

James Woodforde did take a keen interest in law and order. His student diary notes attendance at a trial in March 1761 when a

criminal was condemned to die. He also notes that all the College gates were shut on the morning of his execution to prevent students attending. In February 1763 he visited the prison in Oxford:

> After Dinner down to the Castle
> to see the Prisoners; where we
> drank two Bottles of Port, and for
> Wine etc I paid 0 . 1 . 6
> William Cartwright, a young, goodlooking
> Fellow who is in the Castle for
> High Way Robbery drank with
> us the last Bottle, and smoaked a Pipe
> with us, and seemed very sorry
> for what he had committed.
> We gave him between us 0 . 2 . 0
> For Porter 0 . 0 . 2

The visit appears rather different to those of John Wesley and his 'Holy Club' prison visits with their redemptive purpose – here the accent seems to be on the frisson of excitement to be gained by drinking and smoking with a Highwayman.

Woodforde was to take a keen interest in public executions throughout his life. In March 1775 he attended a hanging at Oxford:

> At half past eleven this morning went with Cooke
> to see George Strap hanged – who was hung
> about a Qtr before one o'clock near the Castle.
> He confessed (just as he came out of the Castle)
> the Crime for which he suffered, but not before.
> He pulled up his Cap two or three Times to delay.
> A Methodist prayed by him in the Cart for some
> Time under the Gallows – He seemed full hardy.
> It is said that he declared Yesterday, if he had
> only his Liberty for one Qtr of an Hour, he would
> employ it in murdering of his Wife. I think
> I never saw such sullenness and Villainy on one Face.
> Jack Ketch kissed him twice before he went of.
> His Body was carried to Dr Parsons's, to be dissected
> and anatomized pursuant to the Sentence.
> I do believe that there were more than six
> Thousand Spectators present when he was hanged.

This account has some of the classical features expected of public

hangings: the last minute confession; the attempt at delay; the Methodist seeking to save his soul; the courage and defiance of the condemned man; the dissection of the body; the large crowd emphasising the functions of deterrent, terror and celebration.

In March 1785 at the Assizes at Thetford five prisoners were condemned to execution:

> ... One Js Cliffen
> a most daring Fellow was hanged on Thursday
> last at Norwich on Castle Hill
> and behaved most daringly audacious – His crime
> was robbing 2 Old Men, Brothers by name Seaman
> ... one of them died soon after ...
> Cliffon's Body was this day carried to Badley Moor and
> there hung in Chains at one Corner of the said Moor.

The hanging in chains was a further insult to the criminal and another, perhaps more extreme deterrent. The corpse was hung in an iron cage and left to rot. One murderer in Halifax was hung so that his arm pointed to the place where he had committed the murder.

The harshness of the law was mitigated by the issue of pardons. About half of those condemned to death escaped the gallows and were imprisoned or transported to the colonies. James Woodforde never showed any interest in the possibility of pardons and never expressed criticism of the penal system. Significantly, eight days after the execution of Cliffen he wrote:

> After breakfast, being fine Weather, I took a ride &
> Will with me, thro' Hockering, North Tuddenham, to
> Baddeley Moor where Cliffen stands in Chains, most
> shocking road all around where he stands for some way
> thought we should have been mired ...

It is the road that is shocking, not the sight of the corpse. How difficult it is to enter the mentalities of pre-industrial England.*

In May 1790 he made a special journey to Norwich to see an execution:

* V. A. C. Gatrell in his *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People* (1994) does refer to Woodforde's acceptance of the execution as an example of his withholding of personal engagement and to the everyday normality of the event, but fails to acknowledge his visit to see the body in chains – surely an instance of 'engagement' and of interest in the macabre? [Ed.]

We got to Norwich by 11 o'clock and we walked directly on the Castle-Hill, where a man by the name John Beckitt was hanged for murder about a quarter before 12. We were very close to him as he came out of his cell, seemed indeed very penitential during the whole time. He was rather short but strongly built, black hair, blue sailor's jacket and dirty trowsers. As soon as the execution was over my brother and I went to the King's Head to have his hair dressed .... (Beresford, Vol. III)

Again we note the vivid details made possible by the proximity of the spectator, the behaviour and appearance of the condemned man, and the casual resumption of everyday life after the execution.

Woodforde himself had experience of a murder trial. In June 1775 he read in the *Oxford Journal* of the shocking death of one of his neighbours in Somerset:

Thursday last ...
the Inhabitants of this Parish were alarmed by
a report that Mrs Tucker, Wife of Mr Reginald Tucker
had dropt down dead in an apoplectic Fit.
Several People immediately repaired to the house
where a Scene the most shocking to human nature
presented itself, one of the finest Women in these
parts dead on the floor, weltering in her blood,
with her Skull fractured, so that her Brains came
out at the back part of her head; her face, breast,
shoulders, arms and one of her ears bruised in
a barbarous manner – The Coroner was sent for
and a Jury empanelled to sit on the body ...
... Mr Tucker was examined but per-
sisted on his Innocence: Blood however ap=
=pearing on his Cloaths, and strong grounds of
Suspicion arising against him, the Jury brought
in their Verdict Wilful Murder, and he was taken
into Custody. – A second Jury were summoned the
next day, who gave the same Verdict.

On 25 August the diarist decided to attend the trial at the Wells Assizes:

I got up this morning at about 5 o'clock and at six
I set off again for Wells to the Assizes and got there
about 8 o'clock ...

I put up my horses at the Goat …
… where I dined at half past 2 o'clock.
At half past 8 this morning I went to the Assize Hall …
Tuckers Trial was the first that came on.
Tucker walked into the Hall very undauntably and
behaved without any Concern for a long Time.
The first thing he did was to object to the major Part
of the Jury …
I stayed in the Hall till near 3 in the afternoon & then
I went to the Goat & eat a bit of Dinner …
… and we stayed there
till half past 4 and then went to the Hall again …
the Judge was summing up, which lasted a great
while and after that the Jury was a long time
in debating how to bring him in. At last however
at about a quarter after 6 the Jury delivred in
their verdict and brought him in Guilty. The
Judge then immediately passed Sentence of Condem=
=nation on him, and to be executed Monday next.
The whole Hall seemed to rejoice at the Sentence, as
it was the general Opinion that he was guilty.
He persisted in his Innocence at the very last.
Tucker spoke for half an hour in his Defence … The
Judge behaved very well to him & spoke very impartially.
Tucker cried when the Coat was produced in Court.
I could not get near the Judge as there was
such a great Croud. The Judge did not go out of
the Hall any of the time. It lasted near ten Hours …
I got back to the Parsonage about half past 8 o'clock …
Mrs Pounsett & Sister White informed me that my Name was
called in Court this afternoon at Wells three Times, to
appear before the Court to Tuckers character but was not
to be found – The Court soon passed over my Name.
NB It was the Time that I was gone to Dinner –
I never heard of it before I came home – tho' I was in
the Hall for near two Hours after Dinner & saw many
People that I knew there & they never told me of it –
I really never knew a Breath of it till I came home –

Three days later:

Poor Tucker was hung this Aft: about 5 o'clock near
Wells – & it is reported that he persisted in his Innocence
to the very last – however I cannot think him innocent …

It does seem appropriate that James was denied his moment of fame in the Court Room due to his need for a late lunch, but given his conviction that Tucker was guilty, he would have hardly made a convincing character witness.

Most of Woodforde's contact with crime came through minor cases. He was familiar with petty theft and with the danger from strangers in villages where the law was enforced by local Justices of the Peace and unpaid constables. In December 1769 in Somerset he noted two unsettling incidents:

> A strange man was found this Evening in my Fathers little House … but he got clear. He was up to no good there.

Twelve days later and just a week before Christmas he recorded:

> Some people have been about my Fathers House again this Evening about 8 o'clock – Jenny & the Maid being at the little House some Person or another came to the Door of it & rapped against it three Times with a Stick – What it means I know not. Brother Heighes, Jack & myself all armed took a Walk at twelve this evening around the Parish to see if we could meet any idle Fellows but we did not, & therefore came home about two. We waited at my Fathers some considerable Time, till Brother Heighes was very uneasy, being very cold in his Feet.

The three brothers were taking the law into their own hands in this armed night patrol, but the nature of the arms is not revealed – staves or guns?

In January 1770 there was another example of petty theft:

> For a Summons warrant against Robert Biggin & his brother Nathaniel for shrowding an Ash Tree of my sister Jane Woodforde's last Thursday Night to ap= =pear before the Justice next Friday at 2 aft. Pd 0. 0. 6
>
> January 23rd
> I sent the Summons warrant this afternoon by W^{m} Corpe to the Tithing man, Tho^{s} Taylor and it was served this Evening.
>
> January 26th
> … I went up to Justice Creed's & heard my Wood Stealers examined. Rob^{t} Biggons was found Guilty and his brother Nath^{l} acquitted, therefore Robert was ordered to pay me six shillings by the 9 of February,

if he does not he is to be whipped from Cary Cross to Ansford Inn.

The public nature of the threatened punishment was an essential part of the intended deterrent. It was not always popular with Woodforde for he noted that:

> Robert Biggen for stealing Potatoes was this Afternoon
> whipp'd through the Streets of Cary by the Hangman at the
> end of a Cart ...
> He being an old Offender there was a collection of 0. 17. 6
> given to the Hangman to do him Justice – But it was
> not much for all that – the Hangman was an old Man
> and a most villainous Fellow indeed.
> For my part I would not contribute a Farthing to it.

The reference to the Hangman is puzzling: executions took place after the Assizes in county towns. Villages did not employ their local executioner.

In July 1770 we see the machinery of local justice once more:

> I read Prayers & preached at Cary Church and
> whilst I was preaching one Thos Speed of Galhampton came
> into the Church quite drunk and crazy and made a
> noise in Church, called the singers a pack of Whorebirds
> & gave me a nod or two in the pulpit.
> The Constable Roger Coles Senr took him into Custody after
> and will have him before a magistrate tomorrow.

There must have been a local lock-up to use before the Justice of the Peace was called in.*

In Weston Longville security was sometimes fragile. On his first visit to the Rotation Club in January 1777 James felt the dangers of a dark night, despite the company of his servant:

> Went on my mare & my servant Will with me to Mr
> Du Quesnes where I dined, spent the afternoon and
> stayed till 8 at night ...
> As there was no moon to come home by it was very
> disagreeable to come through the Wood but
> I thank God that I got safe & well back, tho' very dark.
> When there is no moon for the future will get
> back before it is dark.

* The famous Round House in Castle Cary was not built until 1779. [Ed.]

Instances of theft were common. Highwaymen 'infested' the roads around Norwich – which was an affluent city, the second or third most populous in England in the mid-eighteenth century. Woodforde had reason to be anxious for on certain days after tithe audits he had to carry hundreds of pounds in bills and cash from the villages to be banked in Norwich.

The theft of game and poultry by organised gangs was a serious threat, especially close to the Christmas season. In November 1782 he reported:

> M[r] Custance told me this morning that he had a few
> Days ago about 80 Turkies, geese, Ducks, & Fowls stolen
> from him in one night – many of them that were fatting.
> This is the time of the Year that many idle Fellows
> from Norwich go about the Country stealing Poultry
> to send them to London to make a Penny of them.
> I never had any stolen yet but daily expect it.

In March 1783 Woodforde did experience crime at first hand:

> The first thing I was informed of when I came down
> Stairs was that my Stable had been broken up, in the Night
> and that there was stolen out of it, a Hatchet, a Hook,
> a Bridle and a pair of hedging Gloves of Bens.
> There was seen yesterday a couple of idle Fellows passing
> and repassing my house, I saw them once go by, one of them
> was in a long blue Coat, the other in a brown one ...
> There were several Stables in the Parish broken into
> besides mine last night ... and several things stolen.
> Nancy was very much alarmed on hearing the above.
> I did not go to bed tonight until after 12 o'clock.

In May two fellows were tried for the robberies in Norwich and imprisoned for three years.

In July 1784 the local Squire was infuriated by the conduct of his gardener:

> M[r] Custance's Gardener was this morning turned
> out of his Place and payed of – being found out by
> M[r] Custance in sending Fruit &c to Norwich by the
> Elsing Carrier – M[r] Custance went after the Carrier himself
> this morning and took from him 4 Quarts of very fine
> Strawberries and some Cucumbers packed up by
> Hylett for to be sold – M[r] Custance in a very great Passion.

Historians of crime have developed a theory of 'social crime' in the eighteenth century. Activities such as poaching, smuggling and even coin clipping were accepted by society as the acceptable face of illegality – acceptable in a time of harsh repression and class legislation. Poaching by organised gangs and on a large scale escaped such tolerance, but smuggling was certainly condoned. Woodforde's diary famously gives many examples of his complicity in the activity of the local blacksmith, Robert or 'Moonshine' Buck. Tubs of gin, rum and brandy were frequently left at his door and the contents hastily bottled. Tea was also a valued item. In September 1792 there was a scare and Woodforde had to see to the 'necessary business' in hiding his recently delivered tub of rum, as rumour spread that Buck had been informed against, but in the end the smuggler escaped with a 'pretty easy' fine and the deliveries from 'Moonshine' continued as before.

Perhaps the greatest criminal issue to appear in the diary is the threat to peace and security from the mob and the riot. Crowds were easily inflamed in the eighteenth century by bribery and drink. Wesley had to suffer many attacks encouraged by hostile gentry. There were riots against high food prices, against turnpike roads, against enclosures, and against popery and striking workers were often swallowed up in wider protests. Woodforde was keenly aware of the dangers of mob rule and may even have exaggerated the threats. In June 1778 he reported:

> In the Evening took a ride to Norwich …
> … about 9 o'clock there was a great Riot upon
> the Castle Hill between the Officers of the western Battalion
> of the Norfolk Militia, and the common soldiers & Mob …
> … The Mob threw Stones & some of the
> Soldiers running their Bayonets at the Mob and
> wounded them – Some of each Side were hurt but
> not mortally wounded or any killed. It lasted till Midnight.

Apparently this report was not supported by the local press, either through censorship or indifference.

He was alarmed by the possibility of the spread of revolutionary principles from France to England. On 14 July 1791 he noted:

> I hope this Day will be attended by no bad
> Consequences, this being the Day that the French

Revolution first took place there last Year
and many Meetings advertised to be held this Day
in London, Norwich & throughout this Kingdom.
Pray God! Continue thy Goodness to this Land
and defeat all the designs of the Enemies to it.

(He seems to have his dates a little confused.)

One week later his fears appeared to have been justified:

Shocking Accounts on the Papers of dreadful
Riots at Birmingham, Nottingham &c on Account
of commemorating the French Revolution the
fourteenth of this Month – The Presbyterian and
Independent Meeting Houses pulled down to the
Ground and the inside furniture burnt – many
of the Dissenters Houses destroyed – amongst the
rest D[r] Priestlys, both Town and Country Houses burnt.

In October 1792 the dangers seemed more local:

M[r] Jeans informed us that he had heard
it rumoured about, that there would
be a great Mob collected at St Faith's Fair
on Wednesday next, on Account of the
dearness of Wheat & other Provisions, but
I believe rather from the late propensity
of the discontented to a general Disturbance
so prevalent at present in France.
The Norwich Mob to meet the Country Mob.

In December 1792 the fears were still alive:

Alarming Accounts on the Papers, Riots daily
expected in many parts of the Kingdom, London & &c
... Norfolk Militia to meet on Monday next,
One division at Yarmouth, the other at Lynn.
Every appearance of troublesome
times being at hand, and which chiefly
are set on foot by the troubles in France.

One week later the authorities took action:

The meeting at Norwich on Tuesday last was
a very full one, almost all the Magistrates
in the County attended, and very active
measures taken to prevent any public

disturbances from the different Societies or
Clubs, respecting their late levelling behaviour …
seditious publications of late spread abroad everywhere.

James was horrified by the regicides of France. On 26 January 1793 he wrote:

The King of France Louis 16 –
inhumanly & unjustly beheaded on Monday last
by his cruel and bloodthirty Subjects.
Dreadful times I am afraid are approaching to
all Europe. France the foundation of all of it –
The poor King of France bore his horrid fate
with manly fortitude and resignation …
And have mercy upon his Queen, 2 Children –
Their lives are in great danger now of being taken
away by the French Assassins or Ruffians.

In October 1795 he actually witnessed an attempt at regicide in London, where he was hoping to see the State opening of Parliament:

… The Park was
uncommonly crouded indeed …
… his Majesty was very
grossly insulted by some of the Mob, and had
a very narrow escape of being killed going to
the House, a Ball passing through the Windows
… supposed
to be discharged from an air-Gun …
he was very much hissed & hooted at …
The State-Coach Windows … were broke all to pieces by the Mob
… such a Mob of the lowest Class that quite alarmed us …
the most violent and lowest Democrats –
It is said that there were near two hundred
thousand people in St James Park around 3. o'clock
I never was in such a croud in all my Life –
… We were glad to get back to our Inn safe –
Dreadful work was expected to be done to night.

In November 1796 he sent his two servants, Ben and Briton, to enlist in the local militia. They returned from Reepham each with a black stave and a black leather guard on which were painted the letters EHLA – the Eynsford Hundred Loyal Association. With

domestic turmoil and the threats of imminent foreign invasion from France and Ireland, loyalty was indeed at a premium.

In his sixty-three years' life James Woodforde had experienced a variety of crimes and witnessed a range of punishments. Yet the more lurid versions of violence and lawlessness seem to be a little exaggerated in his case. Alarms there were and gaps appeared in the control of authority. Riots and robbers tore at the fabric of power but never destroyed it. A conservative such as Woodforde lived in a closely knit rural society in which crime was the exception rather than the rule for most of his parishioners, friends and family. His fears were real enough, but in the end they went unrealized for the majority of his countrymen.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Stuart Archer's excellent article about James Woodforde's servants contains a small but common error. He refers to 'fees for weddings, baptisms and funerals', but then, as now, no fees were payable for baptisms. It is true that Woodforde received payments when he baptized the Custance children, but these were 'thank you' presents and given very discreetly. There were standard payments from women at their churching. He often returned these when he knew the woman to be poor.

On the subject of the Parsonage servants, I have often wondered how Briton and Betty Dade felt when they were asked to be witnesses to JW's new will on 29 April 1799, indicating that they were not to benefit from it after so many years' service.

Peter Jameson
East Sussex

MRS DAVIE'S TALENTED LITTLE SISTER

Charles Roope of Pulham Market in Norfolk had eight surviving children by his two marriages. Elizabeth, destined to achieve a degree of fame as Mrs Davie of James Woodforde's diary, was the only daughter of his first marriage and Mary, who this article is about, was her half sister and the only daughter of his second marriage to Eleanor Collins. She was very much younger than Mrs Davie. In fact, having been christened on 23 April 1772, she was about six months younger than Mrs Davie's own youngest child, Nunn.

Mary makes a few appearances in the diary. As 'little Miss Roupe' aged only eight, she was present at Mr Du Quesne's rotation on 18 April 1780 and five years later, at the height of the hot air balloon mania, having watched Mr Decker sail off in a south-easterly direction over Norwich, she walked with James Woodforde back to the Priests' house for dinner.[1] She was clearly a very self-possessed child, but it is her life after James Woodforde's death that is more interesting as she was to achieve minor fame as a poet and writer of educationally improving books for girls.

I don't intend to provide a complete catalogue of Mary Cockle's works, and indeed that would prove difficult as some of her verses appeared anonymously, but I hope to give some idea of her writings. Her poetry would not appeal to modern tastes. It is highly sentimental and in a style that has long gone out of fashion, but it, and verses like it, filled the pages of the periodicals and annuals of the day such as *The Juvenile Keepsake*, *The Ladies Fashionable Repository* and *The Iris: A Literary and Religious Offering*.

What made Mary become a writer? All of Charles Roope's children seem to have been well educated and Mary may also have been influenced by his contacts with some of the leading non-conformist families of East Anglia, although the Roopes themselves do not seem to have been chapel-goers. Elizabeth Roope married into one of these families in 1769 when she became the wife of Lancelot Davie of Southwold while Charles Roope's friend Philip Meadows, an attorney from Diss, was a member of the Meadows family of Norwich who were leaders of the Unitarian movement there. One of Philip's sisters was the grandmother of the writer Harriet Martineau

and the other the mother of John Taylor, a Norwich manufacturer, hymn writer and deacon of the Octagon Unitarian Chapel. The dissenting movement was particularly active in Norwich at the time and the prosperous chapel members were keen supporters of political reform and held progressive, liberal beliefs which included a belief in the importance of education for women. It was this background that would nurture the talents of many women who were then beginning to make their mark on the literary world, women like Harriet Martineau and Amelia Opie, both born in the city.

John Taylor's wife Susanna Cook was a friend of, and corresponded with, many literary figures of the day. A woman with a strong but warm personality she provided encouraging support to her many friends including Amelia Opie and Anna Letitia Barbauld (who for a while had kept the school at Palgrave where the Custance boys had been pupils).[2] The Taylors' home was always a welcoming place to visitors and it is entirely possible that Mary Cockle may have been present at some of her literary gatherings and through these connections received encouragement in her own writings.

Mary's husband was George Cockle, a surgeon like her father Charles Roope. Later in life it seems that some people assumed that she was the widow of James Cockle (1782-1854) who had made his fortune by formulating one of the most successful patent medicines of the nineteenth century. Cockle's Family Antibilious Pills were widely advertised in the newspapers of the day and provided relief to generations of Victorians from their digestive troubles. The Dictionary of National Biography states that James Cockle was born in Woodbridge, Suffolk, the son of Andrew Cockle, a vintner, and his wife Anne, and mentions only that there was a younger sister. I believe, on the evidence of parish records and census returns, that the family was in fact much larger and that George was their eldest son and was born in London in 1768. The family then moved to Cambridge where John, who was to become a surgeon practising in Trimley, Suffolk, and William, who was to practise in Terrington St James, Norfolk, were both born before they finally settled at Moat Farm, Burgh, near Woodbridge.

In 1794 George Cockle married Rebecca Riches, a local girl from Woodbridge, and three years later their son George was born. It was

to be a short-lived marriage as Rebecca died in the January of 1800. On 7 June 1801 George Cockle remarried in New Buckenham and his second wife was Mary Roope. The wedding was witnessed by her brother George Roope (to whom she remained close throughout her life) and Henry Browne, an attorney who had been in partnership with Philip Meadows at Diss and was also one of Charles Roope's executors.

It was to be another short-lived marriage, but for a different reason – the couple soon parted but the reason remains a mystery. George Cockle took his son with him and settled in St Ives in Huntingdonshire where he continued to practise as a surgeon while Mary, presumably left to fend for herself and with only her small annuity inherited from her father to support her, found work as a governess. She became part of the household of William the Duke of Clarence and his mistress the actress Dorothea Jordan at their home, Bushy House in Teddington, Middlesex.

The two decades either side of 1800 were a time of domestic bliss for the Duke and Dorothea. George, the first of their ten children, had been born in 1794 and the last, Amelia, was born in 1807. The boys were tutored by the Duke's chaplain, the Revd Thomas Lloyd, while responsibility for the girls seems to have been shared by Mary and a Miss Sketchley.[3] Given Mrs Jordan's own unconventional life and generous nature, the fact that Mary was separated from her husband would (if she knew of it) not have concerned her.

Something of a poet herself and also an unsuccessful playwright she may well have encouraged Mary to write, and it was during this time that in 1806 her first work *The Juvenile Journal or Tales of Truth* was published. Mary also followed her employer by writing a play – a tragedy – 'which was accepted and even under rehearsal at the late Drury Lane Theatre, but the fire at that place prevented its representation'.[4] The fire on the night of 24 February 1809 totally destroyed the theatre and all that could be salvaged were a few books and, ironically, a bureau in Dorothea Jordan's dressing room. Any copies of Mary's play went up in smoke.

In his reminiscences the writer John Taylor (not to be confused with John Taylor of Norwich) recalled a dinner party held by Mrs Jordan at her home in Cadogan Place which probably took place in 1813, a few years after the Duke had left her.

> Miss Fitzclarence was of this party, and a more unaffected, amiable, and agreeable young lady, I never met. She was accompanied by Mrs Cockle, who was sometime her governess. Mrs Cockle has published several poems, and some tracts on education, which are highly creditable to her talents and character.[5]

It is also recorded that the Duke rewarded Mary for her services with a pension of £40 a year.[6]

Like many other women writers of the time and doubtless also a reflection of her time as a governess, Mary Cockle's words were sentimental, moralising and religious in tone and aimed at the younger reader. Her first published work, *The Juvenile Journal or Tales of Truth*, appeared at the end of 1806 and was advertised in the newspapers as a Christmas gift. Her second book, *The Fishes Grand Gala*, appeared in 1807 and 1809 saw the publication of *Important Studies for the Female Sex, in Reference to modern Manners; addressed to a young Lady of Distinction*. This was to be her most successful work and ran into several editions. The studies consisted of essays on such subjects as 'Religious Example'. 'on Truth', 'the Duties of a Daughter' and 'the Duties of a Wife'. Perhaps Mary, with a failed marriage behind her, was not best placed to provide religious instruction to young ladies concerning the correct running of a home and family, however *The Critical Review* commented that:

> Mrs Cockle appears to be a follower of Mrs Hannah More and her religious sentiments shew the stamp of that school; but she does not possess the art of conveying instruction with equal felicity and elegance. We give Mrs Cockle every credit for good and virtuous intentions, and hope that her book will tend to improve those females who read it, in the knowledge and the practice of the Social and domestic duties.[7]

The journal was rather less enthusiastic about *Simple Minstrelsy* published some two years later, commenting that:

> This volume contains no less than seventy-four pieces of poetry on various subjects, and addresses to different friends. Mrs Cockle evinces great warmth of affection towards her numerous friends, as there is scarcely a circumstance upon which our fair poetess has not warbled her lyre.

1810 saw her respond, as others did, to the heroic death of Sir John Moore during the retreat to Corunna. Most famous, and frequently parodied, were the verses by Charles Wolfe:

> Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
> As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
> Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
> O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

Mary Cockle's tribute begins:

> What frequent tears the Patriot Muse has shed:
> A nation's tribute to her mighty dead!!
> What suns have set in Glory's radiant way,
> To gild with cloudless beams a brighter day!
> Succeeding WOLFES, in conquest's glowing hour,
> Succeeding CHATHAMS, eloquent no more!
> From the parch'd plains of Egypt's barren sand,
> And there, where Tagus laves fair Lisbon's strand,
> To that where Trafalgar's victorious wave
> Saw dear-bought laurels deck a NELSON's grave;
> In the full blaze of victory's bursting light,
> What orbs have sunk and left the sudden night!
> Yet shed their parting beams of brightness here,
> To shine unsetting in a purer sphere!
> Another falls – and MOORE's unconquer'd name
> Gives a new hero to a nation's fame.

After writing *Lines on the Lamented death of Sir John Moore* she continued to write verses aimed at adult readers rather than children. Four poems were privately published by the Typographical Society of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Only 20 copies were printed of each, which suggests that she may have funded their publication herself and also that she spent time (perhaps as a governess?) in Newcastle.

Lines Addressed to Lady Byron, A Reply to Lord Byron's Fare-thee-well and *Elegy to the Memory of Princess Charlotte* all appeared in 1817 and were followed by *Elegy on the Death of King George* in 1820. Throughout her life most of her works were published under the name Mrs Cockle, but occasionally she used the genteel pseudonym of A Lady. In 1826 *Lines to a Boy Pursuing a Butterfly* by A Lady was published in Newcastle. Sometimes also

ascribed to the pen of a Mrs Septimus Hodgson, half of the poem was chosen to represent Mary Cockle's verse in *Parnassian Molehill*.

Perhaps Mary had her own brief marriage to George Cockle in mind when in *Lines Addressed to Lady Byron* she wrote:

> Marriage vows, dissolv'd as soon as tied –
> Like thine dissolv'd ere scarcely ratified.

Mary sent the unsolicited manuscript to Joanna Baillie, the Scottish poet and dramatist (and close friend of Mrs Barbauld) who enjoyed considerable fame at the time. She wrote a reply dated 19 July 1816 thanking Mary for the poem and apologising for not replying sooner 'as I did not know how to direct for you till I enquired of M^rs^ Bartley'. She ended the letter:

> Your Elegy on Sir J. Moore I have frequently heard mentioned with praise, and to receive it from your own self would be very gratifying to me. But may I beg you will not take the trouble of sending it from such a distance. I shall procure a copy of it here; and taking your kind will for the deed, value it as if it had come immediately from your own hands.[8]

I wonder if Joanna Baillie did obtain a copy?

Like so many other educated women of the time trying to survive on a reduced income Mary turned to teaching and opened a small school for girls in Ipswich. Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer (1822-1904), born in London to an American family, who went on to write popular history back in her home country, was educated for a time at the school and in 1893 wrote a short autobiography which included a charming reminiscence of her time there:

> Meantime many were the troubles into which I fell by reason of short sight. I remember causing an irreparable loss to a dear old lady, who was kindness itself to me. She was Mrs Cockle widow of Dr Cockle, the proprietor and inventor of Cockle's Pills. She was at that time living in Ipswich, where she took a small number of day scholars. I was, however, for family reasons, sent to live with her from Mondays till Fridays. When I read 'Cranford', I think of my life with Mrs Cockle. Almost every evening in the week we went out to small whist parties, she and I, in a sedan-chair. While the old ladies and the two gentlemen of their

society (a doctor and the garrison paymaster) played cards, I was accommodated with a cushion and one of the silken-covered annuals, then so popular, to which, by the way, Mrs Cockle was a frequent contributor, and her poetry, as I remember it, was graceful and refined. At nine came in a sandwich-tray, with orange wine, cakes, and almonds and raisins. The conversation at these whist parties was curious. The subject most vehemently discussed was the lawfulness or unlawfulness of speculating on the decrees of Providence by life-insurance. Nearly all the old ladies boycotted the West India planters, and unless their grocer would guarantee that the sugar he sold was not slave-grown, they took none in their tea. But this has nothing to do with my eyes, which is 'another story'.

In our turn we gave card-parties. Mrs Cockle had a mania for collections. Her lodgings were as full of curiosities as a museum. She had collections of shells, marbles, eggs, minerals, autographs, feathers and fossils. Amongst other things she had a collection of hair. Now she had heard of a lady who had six hairs of George III. She wrote to her and offered to exchange three hairs of the heroine of the 'Exiles of Siberia' for three hairs of King George. The exchange was made and the collection of hairs was being exhibited at one of our parties – the new acquisition especially – when, child-like, I begged that I might 'see, too'. Putting my head very near the paper that I might see King George's hairs at all, a sudden breath, too rashly drawn, sent the precious hairs flying – whither we never knew! The dear old lady did not scold me, nor did she even harrow up my feelings by expressing deep disappointment. Among her treasures I remember a long golden lock that had once adorned the head of Madeleine, the beloved first wife of James V of Scotland. When her coffin was disentombed, at Holyrood, this lock (presumed to have grown after her death) was hanging through a chink in the coffin.[9]

About this it is only fair to comment that James Cockle was very much alive at this time and no doubt enjoying – if he took his own pills – extremely robust health, while her real husband was still practising medicine at St Ives. Perhaps it suited Mary, and she considered that it would do her no harm, if people automatically associated the term 'widow of Dr Cockle' with the proprietor of the famous patent medicine. Also it should be mentioned that the garrison paymaster was none other than her own brother, George

Roope. Originally destined to follow his father's profession and apprenticed to a surgeon, he had had a change of heart and instead enjoyed a very successful career with the army. In 1816 he was appointed barrack master at Ipswich, a post that he filled for some 30 years until his retirement. Never marrying, he died in 1849 and was the subject of an obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine.*[10]

Mary continued to write her whole life and some of her poems were reproduced in *The Ipswich Journal.* In 1833 they published *The Angel of Consolation* in which a grieving mother is consoled (or not) by an angel's words

> Doubting mortal – raise thine eye –
> See where holy hope is nigh.
> Whispering, with a seraph voice,
> Weep not daughter, but rejoice!
> Mourning mother, yield thy claim
> To a higher – holier name.

Her final book, *An Explanation of Dr Watts' Hymns for Children*, was published in the year of her death. She died 21 February 1836 and was buried in the churchyard of St Matthew's in Ipswich. Much of the churchyard has been redeveloped but a record of the gravestones was made by a Victorian rector who noted her epitaph. She:

> employed her acknowledged
> talents in inculcating the soundest
> principles of religion and morality
> in the female mind.
> Her literary acquirements and
> private virtues secured her a
> large circle of distinguished
> acquaintance;
> by whom as well as numerous strongly
> attached friends and relatives
> her loss is deeply
> lamented[11]

Three months after her death *The Ipswich Journal* announced the forthcoming auction of 'A small collection of Books, Shells, Fossils, Minerals and a variety of Fancy Articles, the genuine property of Mrs Cockle of Ipswich, deceased'. And so, in turn,

souvenirs of her own life made their way into other ladies' collections to be brought out, displayed and discussed over a glass or two of orange wine.

George Cockle lived on until 1854 and was buried at Heigham, Norwich aged 86 and he may have spent some of his latter years in the Asylum there. In the 1851 census patients were only recorded by their initials not their names and it is quite possible that he was the patient known only as 'G. C. a widower aged 84, occupation surgeon, birth place unknown'. His will, written some 30 years before, makes no mention whatever of his wife.[12]

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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 £16 (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.

Website:
www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk

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