# PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal



THE FORTUNE TELLER (Samuel Woodforde)

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**SUMMER 2014** 

I danced with Mr John Wood again, twice with a Mr South, a lad from Winchester, who, I suppose, is as far from being related to the bishop of that diocese as it is possible to be, with G. Lefroy, and J. Harwood, who, I think, takes to me rather more than he used to do. One of my gayest actions was sitting down two dances in preference to having Lord Bolton's eldest son for my partner, who danced too ill to be endured.

(Letter from Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra, 8 January 1799, R. W. Chapman (ed.), *Jane Austen's Letters*, 1932)

Friday 6th June 1806

Lady Temple's was very full and the temporary room extremely well managed. All London was assembled and most of the Princes attended. I danced with a little *Dog* of a *Baron* who proved my companion for Supper. Lady B. got him me and I really could have strangled him. He stunk like a *pole cat*.

(From the Diary of Harriet Wynne, Anne Fremantle (ed.), The Wynne Diaries, 1952)

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## **EDITORIAL**

This issue of the Journal is unusual in two respects: the people with whom it is concerned lived most, if not all, of their lives in the nineteenth century and, unlike most of Woodforde's contemporaries, many of them spent part of those lives abroad.

When the opportunity to purchase, on very favourable terms, a major oil painting by Samuel Woodforde presented itself to the Society earlier this year, your Committee felt that it was an offer we could hardly refuse. The chances are that, had we declined the offer, it would have fallen into private hands and, quite possibly, been exported. The Society already possessed a number of small works, mostly drawings, by the Parson's gifted nephew as well as the lovely portrait of Mrs Priscilla Wyatt, the generous gift of the late Paul Minet, which appeared on the cover of the Journal in June 2013. This raises the question of where such works could be displayed so as to be accessible to members of the Society and, indeed, the public at large. The Committee have had some ideas but, before approaching any of the institutions we have in mind, we would welcome any suggestions which readers might have.

It seems very likely that the model for the newly acquired work — *The Fortune Teller* (see front cover) — was Samuel's future wife Jane Gardner. She certainly bears a striking resemblance to a known portrait of Jane as well as to that of the model for *The Country Girl* auctioned by Woolley & Wallis of Salisbury in March this year. It is entirely typical of Samuel's style of portraiture. Jane was in Italy when Samuel died there, just two years after their marriage, in 1817. Other than that there was a dispute between her and the Woodforde family and that she donated two of Sam's works, a self-portrait and one of herself, to the Royal Academy on her death, little was hitherto known of Jane's subsequent life. David Case has sought to offer a more complete picture.

Readers of Woodforde's diary, whether they have read the one volume World Classics or Folio editions or the 17 volumes published by the Society, or something in between, often find themselves pondering on what happened to diary characters after James recorded that last dinner of 'rost beef' on 17 October 1802. Understandably, we are most frequently asked about what

happened to Nancy and her brother Bill but we also receive enquiries about many of the less prominent personalities and their descendants. The other three essays in this issue are concerned with a number of such characters who were part of the great nineteenth century British diaspora to North America and Australia.

Randolph Lieb-Warmsworth, who lives in Newfoundland, writes of two medical Woodfordes – Bill's son William and *his* son Samuel George. After a colourful career as an Army surgeon, William spent much of his life practising medicine in Canadian New Brunswick before returning to live out his days in Ansford following the death of his wife in 1844. That was the very year in which his father died and it is unlikely that he arrived back in time to exchange tales of the War of 1812 with Bill's of the War of Independence. It would be fascinating to know whether Samuel George, who had been in London training for his profession since the mid-1830s, ever met his grandfather. What we do know is that in the year in which the old man died, the young doctor returned to Fredericton N.B. where he appears to have become a pillar of local society.

Another medical Woodforde was the Parson's Cousin Bob's grandson John Woodforde who in 1836 was a surgeon on board the *Rapid* bound for South Australia with Colonel Light's survey party. Being a Woodforde, John kept a diary – a fascinating account of pioneering days in and around Adelaide. The Pioneers' Association of South Australia produced a synopsis of the diary which, with permission, is reproduced here.

In the Spring Journal Carole Child told us much of Woodforde's neighbours the John Wilsons, father and son, of Lyng. Three grandchildren of the Revd John Wilson Jnr also emigrated to South Australia and one of them, Priscilla, married a man who, in common with John Woodforde, had sailed with Colonel Light aboard the *Rapid*. Janet Epps, herself Australian, tells the fascinating story of their pioneering days in South Australia.

# JANE WOODFORDE (FORMERLY GARDNER) THE WIFE OF SAMUEL WOODFORDE

#### Introduction

The Society has recently purchased a portrait thought to be by Samuel Woodforde, nephew of our parson James Woodforde. It is apparently a portrait of Jane Gardner, who married Samuel Woodforde in 1815, and is known to us as 'The Fortune Teller' (see front cover of this Journal). This painting is believed to have been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1808. I have been circumspect with my description in the preceding sentences as this painting is not signed, or dated, and does not bear a title. On the reverse of the frame there is just a date 26.10.89 written in chalk which may be the date when it was sold at auction. However, we are confident of its authenticity as it was previously owned by Mr George Bunting, a former President of this Society and an authority on Woodfordeiana, who purchased the portrait for a substantial sum. At the time of writing, various lines of investigation are in hand in an attempt to document the provenance of this painting.

At the same time, we are aware that we know very little about Jane Gardner and this article is a preliminary attempt to document the few facts about Jane which are accessible. I must emphasise that an essential starting point in learning about Samuel Woodforde and his wife is a lengthy article in the Journal submitted by Roy Winstanley in 1973 and I shall quote extensively from this source.<sup>2</sup> It is clear from the content of Winstanley's article that additional details can now be added to his narrative.

# The Origins of Jane Gardner

Jane Gardner was baptised 4 May 1788 at the Sussex parish of Amberley, the daughter of 'James and Eliz. Gardner'. She had an elder sister Elizabeth, baptised 14 January 1787 at Amberley, daughter of 'James and Elizabeth' and we shall be learning more about her later. There was also a brother James, baptised 23 January 1791; he became a builder, married twice and lived into his nineties, but he plays little part in this story. About the parents little is known but they are probably the James Gardner and Elizabeth White married at Amberley 20 April 1786. 'Jas Gardener' [sic] is named in

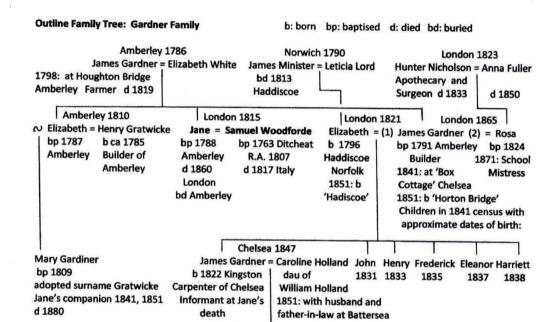
Land Tax records of 1798 at Amberley as occupier of 'Houghton Bridge' and this is probably where Jane was born.<sup>3</sup> James Gardner, Jane's brother, gave his birthplace as 'Horton Bridge' in the 1851 census. James Gardner, their father, was buried at Amberley 26 November 1819; he is referred to elsewhere as a farmer (see attached Outline Family Tree).

Amberley is a small village in Sussex situated at the foot of the South Downs, about 45 miles from London, noted today for its abundance of thatched cottages. Why or how Jane Gardner appears in her early life in London is not known but Winstanley speculates that she may have been Samuel's model and speculates again that 'it is possible that, if Jane Gardner was his model, that she was his mistress also'. It seems that Roy Winstanley was much given to speculation. If 'The Fortune Teller' was painted in about 1808, this was when Jane was aged about twenty, and seven years before her marriage to Samuel.

I have found four family trees which include our Samuel Woodforde but none of them provide information about his wife Jane.

# The Marriage

Samuel Woodforde, Bachelor, and Jane Gardner, Spinster, both 'of this Parish' were married by licence at St Bride's in the City of London on 7 October 1815.5 Both signed in a good hand. The witnesses were John Wightman and Ann Wightman; as John was witness to numerous marriages at that time the Wightmans were probably a local couple and of no significance in this story. Winstanley notes that 'What is clear is that Jane had no contact with [Samuel's] family and that the Woodfordes knew nothing of her. We do not know if any of them were invited to come up to London for the wedding, but it is surely not very probable'.6 It is easily overlooked that Samuel was twenty-five years older than Jane. Very soon after their marriage the couple travelled to Italy. We know this from the diary of Joseph Farington where he notes on 27 January 1816 that a colleague had received a letter 'from Samuel Woodforde, RA, from Rome where he had just arrived. <sup>7,8</sup> We know also that Samuel and Jane were in Venice in 1816 when Samuel



Amelia E

b 1850

**Edward Gardner** 

b 1854

Jane F

b 1857

Caroline

b 1862

Battersea 1875
James J Gardner = Elizabeth J Fell

b 1849

painted another portrait of Jane; this is reproduced after page 28 of Winstanley's article.

#### So Soon to Become a Widow

Less than two years after their marriage, on 27 August 1817, The Morning Post announced the death of 'Samuel Woodforde, Esq., R.A. ... last month at Ferrara in Italy' and added bland comments about his style of painting. 9 Winstanley speculates at length that 'it seems ... likely that he was alone ... it must have been a lonely, horrible death'. 10 Samuel was buried, Winstanley tells us, in the Bolognese cemetery of 'La Certosa' in plot no. 31: 'A plain stone bearing only his name and the date was set up to mark the grave, and still exists'. 11 We have no information concerning the whereabouts of Jane at that time - she may have still been in Venice (Ferrara is about 55 miles from Venice). There seems to have been no immediate communication that we know of from her to the Woodforde family to inform them of Samuel's death. But what a shock for the bride of less than two years. All we know is that at some time later she returned to England. It appears that there were no children of this marriage and Jane did not remarry.

## Samuel Woodforde's Will

I do not intend to describe Samuel's will in detail, but only the ways in which it affected Jane and its unexpected features. <sup>12</sup> The most surprising of these is that Jane was not made an executrix; the executors were Samuel's siblings William Woodforde, James Woodforde, and Anna Maria Woodforde. A number of paintings were to be sold to provide a yearly annuity of £170 'to my dear Wife Jane Woodforde'. Also: 'I give to my Wife her own portrait and also any one of myself which she may choose I also give her the choice of any out of my fancy pictures'. 'All the remainder of my property and personal Effects' was left to his three siblings named above; it seems strange that Jane was not the residual legatee. The will was dated 25 October 1815, just eighteen days after his marriage to Jane, and proved at London 3 January 1818 by the oaths of his three executors. <sup>13</sup> The terms of this will may be a reflection of the fact that it was written so very soon after his marriage. It is also worth noting

that 'her own portrait' cannot have been the painting dated 'Venice 1816' which has been mentioned above, as the will was written in 1815. So we may wonder which portrait it was? Winstanley missed this point as he had incorrectly recorded the date when the will was written.

A further surprising observation about this will is that Samuel's signature was not witnessed and the will copy is accompanied by a quaint and informative affidavit.

#### Affidavit attached to Samuel's Will

In recognition of its importance I quote this below in full. Note that, being a legal document, it is bereft of any punctuation:

Appeared Personally Martha Jeanes and Meliora [sic] Woodforde both of Castle Cary in the County of Somerset Widows and made oath that they knew and were well acquainted with Samuel Woodforde of King Street in the parish of Saint James Westminster in the County of Middlesex deceased for some time before and to the time of his death and also with his manner and character of hand writing and subscription having often seen him write and subscribe his Name and having now attentively viewed and perused the paper writing hereto annexed purporting to be and to contain the last will and testament of the said deceased beginning thus "I Samuel Woodforde of" and ending thus "25th day of October 1815" and thus subscribed "Saml Woodforde" They these deponents say and depose that they do verily and in their Consciences believe the whole series and contents of the said paper writing beginning and ending as aforesaid and also the subscription thereto to be of the proper handwriting and subscription of the said Saml Woodforde deceased [signed] Martha Jeanes Melliora Woodforde Twenty second day of December one thousand eight hundred & seventeen the said Martha Jeanes and Melliora Woodforde were duly sworn to the truth of this Affidavit by virtue of this Commission hereto annexed before me Thos Woodforde Commissioner

The will was proved twelve days later. Several factors are worthy of observation. Why wasn't Jane involved in the preparation of the affidavit? Possibly because she was a beneficiary of the will. Secondly, the affidavit is completed by two widowed ladies of the Woodforde family and a Commissioner who was of the same

family. Melliora was the widow of James Woodforde's brother John and Martha Jeanes was her sister; the Commissioner was probably Dr Thomas Woodforde, James Woodforde's cousin. It could be construed that the will was being validated solely by members of the Woodforde family and it would be members of the Woodforde family who would seem to have been the main beneficiaries. One has to wonder if this unusual procedure was the cause for Jane's subsequent dispute. Had the will been declared invalid as not witnessed, Jane would surely have been the sole beneficiary, as the relict of the deceased.

According to the *Woodforde Family Book*: 'After Samuel's death there was a troublesome law suit between her [Jane] and the Woodforde family as to the interpretation of the husband's will. It lasted many years'. <sup>14</sup> No record of this law suit has yet been found. In *Woodforde Papers and Diaries* (Ed. Dorothy Heighes Woodforde) it is noted '... that the family quarrelled with her over the ownership of some of his pictures'.

# Jane Woodforde's later life in England

We have no knowledge of Jane's life after the death of Samuel in 1817, until the Victorian census records come to our aid. In the 1841 census return we find Jane Woodforde back in her place of birth:

At High Street Amberley:

Jane Woodford [sic] 45 (Occupation) Independent

Mary Gratwicke 25

In the 1841 census ages above 15 were recorded to the next lower multiple of 5, nevertheless Jane was about 53 at that time and seems to have docked a few years from her age. Mary Gratwicke was Jane's niece, the illegitimate daughter of her sister Elizabeth. Mary, the daughter of Elizabeth Gardiner [sic], was baptised at Amberley 2 August 1809; her mother later married Henry Gratwicke in 1810 and Mary assumed her stepfather's surname. She was still with Jane Woodforde in 1851:

At Church Street Amberley:

Jane Woodford [sic] Head Wid[ow] 60 Independant [born]
Amberley
Mary Gratwicke Niece U[nmarried] 35 Amberley
Fanny Lindfield Servant 16 Storrington

In 1851 Jane was about 63, so still 'modifying' her age. This household was apparently a comfortable arrangement and Jane could afford to employ a servant. Jane's sister Elizabeth Gratwicke was living not far away with husband Henry at Bishops House (today described as a Grade 2 listed thatched cottage) but their brother James was in London.

Mary Gratwicke 'otherwise Gardiner' late of Amberley, Spinster, died 11 December 1880, aged 71, at Amberley. She was not a wealthy lady as her 'Personal Estate' was noted to be under 30 pounds.

In the interval between 1839 and 1848, Jane petitioned the Royal Academy about her income. 15 The Academy's record title for 1839 reads: 'Copy of humble petition of Jane Woodforde, Amberley, Sussex, to the President and Council'. I have seen two of these documents in both of which Jane sets out her difficult financial predicament and appears to be asking for additional support. She writes with a neat educated hand but unfortunately does not date her petitions. In one letter, having set out her very complicated problems in managing a leasehold property, she ends:

Your Petitioner therefore humbly submits that as the Widow of an Academician to be allowed an Increase of Pension or any other relief out of the funds of your Honorable Society as will relieve her from her present Wants and Embarrasments And your Petitioner will ever Pray &c Jane Woodforde

She had previously, in 1839, been awarded a pension of £60 per annum from the Royal Academy.

In one letter to the Royal Academy she recounts that her annuity, whose value had been determined back in 1818 at £170, under the terms of Samuel's will, had fallen in value based on the investments made and the Woodforde family had not put matters to rights. She submitted a bill in the High Court of Chancery in 1834 hoping for redress, but we do not know the outcome of these proceedings. Her solicitor was a Mr John Combe of Staple Inn Chambers.

It is to be wondered why Jane never remarried. She was about 29 years of age when Samuel died and judging from her portraits an attractive young woman. Her annuity of £170 set up in Samuel's will was to be terminated if she remarried, but this does not seem to



Amberley churchyard. Jane in foreground, to her right (headstone leaning backwards) is Mary Gratwicke d. 1880, Jane's niece and companion at Amberley. Beyond Mary Gratwick – dark-coloured headstone – is Elizabeth Gratwicke d. 1856, Jane's sister. To the left of Elizabeth Gratwicke is a pale double-headed gravestone for James and Elizabeth Gardner, Jane's parents.

have been a considerable hindrance to remarriage. Winstanley comments 'this was little enough to live on in Victorian England'.<sup>16</sup>

## Jane Woodforde's Death

Jane's death was registered in 1860 in a London Registration District. The certificate records that Jane Woodforde, aged 71, 'widow of Samuel Woodforde an artist', died 15 October 1860 at 16 Sutherland Street South. The cause of death was given as 'decay of nature' which I assume was a kindly expression for 'old age'. The informant was James Gardner of 13 Church Street, Kings Road, Chelsea. B James was Jane's nephew (son of her brother James) and it must have been he who arranged for her burial. Jane was buried at Amberley, her birthplace, 19 October 1860, just four days after her death, and the register records her late residence as 'Sutherland Square, Walworth, Surrey'.

#### Jane Woodforde's Will

Now we come to a difficult subject. Jane died in 1860 so her will should appear in the National Probate Calendar 1858-1966.19 However I can find no will; I am grateful to Carole Child who has carefully duplicated my searches with the same result. However, it appears that there was a will of some description. Here I quote from Winstanley again: 'Jane was still holding the two portraits allowed to her by [Samuel's] will, when she died'. Winstanley incorrectly surmises here that the portrait of Jane was the one painted in Venice in 1816, but as explained above, Samuel's will was dated 1815, so that the portrait left to Jane must have predated 1815. He goes on: 'She bequeathed both portraits to the Royal Academy. A passage in the Academy Council's minutes for 8 November 1860 records their acceptance: "Recd a letter from Messrs. Coombs and Wainwright announcing the death of Jane Woodforde widow of the late S. Woodforde, R.A. and containing the following extract from her will:

As to the portrait of my late Husband Samuel Woodforde painted by himself, and the portrait of myself, painted by the same Samuel Woodforde, and which are now in residence at Amberley aforesaid, I give the same to the Trustees of the Royal Academy for ever

It was resolved that the two portraits be accepted ... and the portraits be deposited at the Royal Academy."20,21

Winstanley goes on to say 'But the Royal Academy has no record of the second portrait (presumably of Jane) ever having been accepted and it is not in their collection'. It is important to note that Winstanley may have been seeking a record of the wrong portrait. He continues: 'Its whereabouts after 1860 were completely unknown until some time in the early 20th century when Richard Woodforde, unconnected with the Parson's family, bought it from a dealer under the mistaken impression that it represented an ancestor of his own. When he discovered his mistake, he put it up for auction. It was not sold, and later Dr Woodforde bought it. A rather poor reproduction of this work appears in Miss Dorothy Heighes Woodforde's volume. Our own version, I think, is much better'. <sup>20</sup> But 'our own version' to which he refers is the 'Venice 1816' portrait which appears after page 28 in Volume VI, no. 1 of the Journal in which Winstanley's article appeared. This cannot have been the portrait bequeathed to Jane in Samuel's will dated 1815.

The upshot of all this is that we have no idea what happened to the portrait of Jane actually bequeathed to Jane in Samuel's will; this is the 'second portrait' apparently 'not in their collection' at the Royal Academy.

My tentative conclusion about Jane Woodforde's 'will' referred to above is that she may well have written a will – but that it may not have been proved – and thus is absent from the records. Its provisions, however, may have been followed by whoever administered her estate. If I am right, then this is a great pity, as Jane's will would have been an exceedingly interesting document. The existence of a will of some form would appear to be supported by the fact that the Royal Academy were corresponding with 'Messrs Coombs and Wainwright' who were probably solicitors acting for Jane Woodforde.<sup>22</sup>

# The Portraits of Jane Woodforde (or of Jane Gardner)

It is very likely that Samuel Woodforde employed Jane Gardner, or coerced his wife (the same) Jane Woodforde, to pose for many of his portraits of ladies; but to confidently identify her as a model for his various paintings is impossible. The painting which we have purchased (see front cover of this Journal) is of a seated lady with the index finger of one hand resting on the palm of another. It therefore seems reasonable to deduce that this is 'The Fortune Teller'.

We can only identify four portraits which are definitely of Jane or portraits entitled 'The Fortune Teller' painted by Samuel Woodforde:

- a) 'her own portrait' which was bequeathed to Jane in Samuel's will. We have no date or description for this portrait, but it must predate 1815 when Samuel made his will. It is almost certainly the portrait which Jane bequeathed to the Royal Academy (see above), but apparently not received by them. Its subsequent history is unknown.
- b) The portrait entitled 'The Fortune Teller' contributed to the Royal Academy in 1802 (see Note 1 below). This is very unlikely to be the painting we have purchased, depicting a mature lady, as Jane would have been only about 14 years old in 1802.
- c) The portrait entitled 'The Fortune Teller' contributed to the Royal Academy dated 1808 (see Note 1 below). Jane would have been aged about 20 in 1808. This may be the painting we have purchased.<sup>23</sup>
- d) The painting of Jane Woodforde apparently inscribed 'Venice 1816' which is reproduced in Journal VI, no. 1, after p. 28. From the nature of this portrait it surely cannot be interpreted as being 'The Fortune Teller'. This is the painting which Roy Winstanley incorrectly assumed was that described in a) above.

# **Summary and Conclusions**

Having assembled what little is known about Jane I find myself feeling sorry for her. She was born about 1788 in the small Sussex village of Amberley and probably while still young ended up in London, possibly (and here I speculate in the manner of Roy Winstanley) to find work as a domestic servant. She was somehow caught up in the hustle of the artists' world and may have posed for Samuel Woodforde when she was about 20 years old. He may indeed have used her as a model for many of his paintings. Whatever the circumstances, we find them marrying in 1815 at St Bride's and within a few months she is taken off to Rome by her new husband. Less than two years later she becomes a widow and has to find her way back to England. It appears that she returned to Amberley, her place of birth, and then became involved in various disputes. She

apparently disputed the terms of Samuel's will with members of the Woodforde family, probably about the ownership of some of Samuel's paintings, but possibly about the way in which Samuel's will, which was not witnessed, was validated. She petitioned the Royal Academy about the terms of her annuity and asked for an increase in her pension. It would seem that Jane probably felt that she had not benefited adequately, having been the widow of such an eminent painter. She may have been left with just the two paintings which Samuel had bequeathed to her in his will. She had no children and did not remarry. We know little about her later life except that she died in London in 1860 but was taken for burial to Amberley, her birthplace. It seems that she definitely made a will, bequeathing her two paintings to the Royal Academy, but this will cannot be found.

Her legacy for us is the very fine painting we now possess, which we confidently believe to be 'The Fortune Teller', possibly the portrait which Samuel painted of Jane, contributed to the Royal Academy in 1808. We now need to make every effort to try to establish the detailed provenance of this fine portrait.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- Algernon Graves writing in *The Royal Academy of Arts: Complete Dictionary of Contributors from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*, Volume IV, mentions two portraits contributed by Samuel Woodforde entitled 'The Fortune Teller, one in 1802, which has Samuel's address on the reverse (51 Great Marlborough Street), and a second with date 1808 (with no details on the reverse).
  - 2. Journal VI, no. 1, p. 4.
- 3. Land Tax Redemption 1798 for Amberley: Proprietor: Jno Upperton, Occupier: Jas Gardener 'for Houghton Bridge'. This appears at present to be the address of an attractive-looking public house in Amberley; Houghton Bridge is a small hamlet within the parish of Amberley.
- 4. Journal VI, no. 1, p. 36.
- The original entry may be seen on the 'ancestry' website, under 'London Marriages'.
- 6. Journal VI, no. 1, p. 36.
- 7. As reference 6; Samuel had complained 'that a great change had taken place in the state of that country' and complained also about high prices ... 'little is to be gained by going from England to Italy'.
- 8. Joseph Farington (1747-1821) was a landscape painter, R.A. in 1785. His Diary was published in the 1920s.
- 9. The entry may be found in the website 'findmypast' under 'British Newspapers'. In one of Jane Woodforde's letters (see Note 15 below) she mentions that Samuel died at 'Bolognia in Italy' 27 July 1817. See also Note 11.

- 10. Journal VI, no. 1, p. 37.
- 11. Winstanley had received this information from Archivo di Stato, Bologna, in a letter dated 1972. The Certosa di Bologna became the city's cemetery in 1801.
- 12. The will copy may be found in the 'ancestry' website under 'PCC wills 1384-1858'. Another copy is preserved at New College Oxford.
- 13. NB not 1817 as recorded by Winstanley.
- Woodforde Family Book: unpublished, compiled by Dr R. E. H. Woodforde. Copies are held in the Society's archives.
- 15. Royal Academy of Arts Collection items RAA/SEC/2/97/1 to 5. Curiously, one item filed under date 1848 gives Jane's address as 'of Amberley but now residing at 3, Smith Terrace, King's Road, Chelsea'. I am grateful to the Royal Academy for copies of two of these documents.
- 16. Journal VI, no. 1, p. 39.
- 17. Jane Woodforde: death registered December Quarter 1860 (Newington 1d 146).
- 18. In 1861 James Gardner was at 13 Church Street, Chelsea, Carpenter aged 38 born Kingston with wife Caroline and four children; James was Jane's nephew, son of her brother James Gardner. It also is of interest to note that in one of her letters to the Royal Academy Jane mentions purchase of the leasehold in 1840 of 'Box Cottage, Kings Road, Chelsea'. In 1841, at 'Box Cottage 2' Kings Road Terrace, Chelsea, was a James Gardner and his family; this was Jane's brother.
- The National Probate Calendar 1858-1966 is available on the 'ancestry' website.
- 20. Journal VI, no. 1, p. 40.
- Winstanley's information concerning the Royal Academy was based on a communication from the Librarian, Royal Academy of Art, quoting Academy Council minutes, November 1860.
- 22. Efforts to identify such a firm of solicitors have so far proved unsuccessful.
- 23. Was it perhaps the painting on view at George Bunting's house in 1990? See Frolic Report in Journal XXIII, no. 2, p. 13: 'of special interest was a portrait painted by Samuel'.

# A SYNOPSIS OF THE DIARY OF DR JOHN WOODFORDE – SURGEON ON BOARD THE 'RAPID', 1836

The following article was originally published by the Pioneers' Association of South Australia in 1950/51. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of that Association. Dr John Woodforde was the grandson of Parson Woodforde's Cousin Bob.

Miss H. J. Cuseen, a granddaughter of Dr John Woodforde, M.R.S. and L.A.H., Surgeon of Colonel Light's survey party on board the 'Rapid', has made his diary available to us, and I hope in due course our Association will be able to publish it. In the meantime I have made a brief synopsis of its contents which I think will interest you.

Dr Woodforde, a young man of 26 years, left England aboard the 'Rapid' and arrived in Ante-Chamber Bay, Kangaroo Island, on 19 August 1836. He was sportingly inclined, and with his gun on his shoulder took many rambles on the island, and later on the mainland, in search of game, providing many changes of diet for the ship's company. It may be interesting to enumerate some of his gustatory notes.

'I have had tolerable sport with my gun, shooting sufficient seafowl for the mess dinner tomorrow.' In this excursion he states 'the mosquitoes have bitten me unmercifully.' 'Some settlers came aboard to sell some wallabies. These animals are anything but tempting to the sight, having much the appearance of an enormous rat, but they were excessively grateful to the palate after our long course of ship's fare.'

Another evening, 'It was late when we returned, but we were in excellent spirits, not a little heightened by the sport we have had, killing 5 brace of teal, a wild duck, and a spurwing plover.' Again, 'I went on shore with some of our men to draw the seine net and we caught 26 fine salmon trout, so that we shall have a capital dinner.' Later, 'Returned on board to sup off porpoise fry which is excellent – similar to pig's fry. We harpooned a fine one this morning, and hope to make many good meals of it. Lieut. Field and I started in the jolly-boat after breakfast to try our luck with hook and line, and in the course of two hours caught sufficient fish for all hands.'

Again, 'We found the net full of dog-fish and stingray. Of the latter, bad and coarse as it was, we ate heartily at breakfast. It is not unlike skate and I have ordered some of it to be hung for a day or two to give it a fair trial. The dog-fish were disgusting looking, but anything in the shape of fresh provisions is so acceptable that we intend having some fried for breakfast tomorrow.'

'Returned with  $2\frac{1}{2}$  brace of teal – the second fresh meal this week – worth recording as fresh meals are few and far between and some of the men are beginning to suffer for want of them.'

'I sent 2 of our natives to hunt with our dogs and they have captured a fine kangaroo which will be sufficient to feed all hands for 4 days.'

'Jacobs and I went out with my gun and killed a brace of quail. We sent our dogs out with 2 of the natives and they have returned with a fine kangaroo. Later Col. Light and I took our rods to the stream and caught 5 dog-fish in less than 2 hours.'

'This morning I was up to my eyes in flour making a pudding with birds we shot – it is my first attempt and intended for tomorrow's dinner – "the proof of the pudding, etc."'

Another morning, 'we were pretty successful shooting parrots and lowries enough for 2 large puddings. I shot a few quail which with those of yesterday will make us a nice pudding — a thing not to be sneezed at in this infant colony. Today I have dined off the roast leg of an emu. It was excellent, far superior to kangaroo and scarcely to be told from roast beef.'

## Description of the K.I. Inhabitants

The sealers living on K.I. are Englishmen – some of them having deserted their ships to settle here – and others being run-away convicts from Sydney. We were given to understand that they were little better than pirates, but were agreeably surprised to find them a civil set of men and they will be of much use in forming a colony here. Some of these men have whale boats in which they frequently cross over to Cape Jervis, from which place they have at different times stolen the women who now live with them. These women are very clever at snaring game and fish whilst the men remain at their little farms on the island.

One of these named Walland has a farm about 7 miles up the river,

which does him great credit, as he has several acres of flourishing wheat and most of the English vegetables. He has been 14 years on the island and is called the 'Governor' – he has 2 native wives.

Incidentally, Woodforde writes, 'There must have been a great mortality among the kangaroos on the island since Flinders' time, or he must have mistaken the wallaby for them, as we have not seen one and the sealers say there are none.'

# Dr Woodforde's Description of the Aborigines

The sealers again visited us this morning, bringing with them two native men and a woman belonging to the mainland. These men are brothers and one of them is father of the woman who lives with the sealers on this island. They were much better looking than we had expected and probably good specimens of their tribe – their stature is 5ft 6in and their limbs very small – their complexion dark coppercoloured – their features are coarse but exceedingly good-humoured, occasionally giving way to immoderate fits of laughter, especially when we gave them brandy and tobacco, of which they seemed very fond. They have large flat noses and long beards – their hair is not woolly. They are a very ignorant and indolent set of men depending entirely on their women for the means of subsistence, which are very uncertain and which probably accounts for their emaciated appearance.

We have hired one of the sealers and his two native women to go to the mainland with us, and as they have capital kangaroo dogs they will answer a double purpose, that of providing fresh food and, by means of the women, conciliating the natives should they prove hostile.

We landed the 2 native women and they set off with their dogs in search of kangaroos. The activity of these women is astonishing, as not one of our party was able to keep up with them for more than a mile. The women returned this afternoon with a fine kangaroo.

Our sealer and his women were despatched this morning to Encounter Bay to engage some of the natives to take care of our vegetable garden. They returned bringing with them 8 natives who promised to take care of our garden.

These men are much the same in appearance and belong to the same

tribe as the 2 we saw on the island. It appears that the smallpox commits great ravages amongst them as 3 of them were deeply pitted and one had lost an eye from the same disease. Two of them had congenital malformations – the most singular – of the arm, there being in place of that useful member a shrivelled stump not more than 10 inches in length with 3 small appendages – the rudiments of fingers – at the end of it.

They are all more or less tattooed in a very rude way, the principal incisions being on the back, and two large ones of a similar shape over each blade bone. Their faces are free from these mutilations, which are made with pieces of flint. This tribe is a very small one -a great number being carried off yearly by disease and a still greater number being put to death shortly after birth.

We have just returned from our natives' fire, where they entertained us with their native dance called by them 'Corroborey'. It is chiefly characterized by feats of activity and violent contortions of muscle, having nothing of grace in its composition. They dance it to a very monotonous harsh kind of vocal music, constantly repeating the same words.

After the dance was over I played them an air on the flute. They seemed much pleased, but did not evince any great surprise.

Some of the natives showed much ingenuity this afternoon, capturing several very fine fish of the salmon species. They descried a shoal from their huts – a distance of half a mile – and upon a signal given each man dashed into the water with a small net under his arm and each succeeded in bringing out 2, 3 or 4 enclosed in it in an incredibly short space of time. They immediately brought them to our tents and gave them to us, but we only took 3 from them, in return for which Col. Light intends to give them a meal of beef. This Cape Jervis tribe have evinced much goodwill and not the slightest disposition to thieve. They are very useful to us, fetching our wood and working in any way with great cheerfulness. Yesterday they were all rigged out in new jackets and trousers and are promised each a new cap if they remain faithful.

Contrary to the opinion of most people I think that with kind treatment they may be as easily civilized as any other race of savages. One of them who has lived with Walland, the chief sealer on the island, speaks a little English and understands much more, so he is a good interpreter. He generally accompanies me out shooting and fetches the game out of the water as well as any dog. He is much pleased when I kill a bird on the wing and expresses his surprise by the exclamation 'Wirradoure'. I have been engaged with one of the natives this evening learning the language and teaching him in return words of English. They are very apt at pronouncing words, but they forget them the next minute.

Today I am again at work at my hut which progresses slowly, having lost the services of the native men who have taken it into their heads to leave us for a while, leaving their women behind. I enlisted 3 of them and found them very useful in carrying reeds for my thatch.

I started this morning with 3 of the natives to hunt the opossum, which they do very cleverly. The opossums are found in hollow gum trees. When he sees a likely tree the native strikes the trunk with his waddy (a short club of hardwood used both in war and the chase). He listens intently, then examines the bark to see any claw marks. The natives are good climbers, making their way up the largest tree by means of notches which they cut with the end of the waddy. In these notches they place their toes, drawing themselves up by means of a pointed stick which they thrust with great violence into the bark. Our success was but moderate, only 6. The females are very good eating, but the males are strong and require much disguising to render them palatable.

# **Description of Rapid Bay**

The land from the ship had a very promising appearance, and, on landing, we were gratified by its superiority to K.I. The soil is very good and the grass growing in its natural state is abundant. The gum tree grows to an immense size, rivalling in splendour our English oak. The soil in the valleys is excellent, but that on the hills is shallow and mixed with rock and stones of many kinds. We found some fine cypress, likewise daisies similar to those in English meadows.

The heat has been excessive these last 2 days, the thermometer in the tents yesterday being 118 degrees. We have no mosquitoes at Rapid Bay, but the flies are the most torturing of torments, alighting by hundreds on the face and creeping into the ears, eyes, and nose, thus keeping one in a constant fever. I gave 5/- for an old gauze veil which acted as a defence against the brutes, but rendered the heat almost suffocating, which last evil I willingly endured to be rid of the first. I was unfortunate enough yesterday to lose my veil, and my poor face is again doomed to be victimized.

#### Incidents

Sunday, 28th August, 1836. The bay at K.I. has presented today a singular scene of bustle and merriment on the occasion of a wedding on board the 'John Pirie'. The ceremony was performed by the captain, after which the happy pair proceeded to the tents where the marriage dinner was prepared. Our crew was invited to the feast, which was wound up with one or two amicable fights, amongst which the bride and bridegroom were conspicuous.

13th October. Jacob and I were the only 2 officers on shore at Rapid Bay, and in the night the carpenter and one of the labourers broached the rum cask and got dreadfully drunk. The latter was nearly dead this morning when I drew him out of the sand in which he was nearly buried.

19th November. Poor Jacob, good-hearted but unsophisticated companion of ours, is in a peck of trouble today, having met with a chapter of accidents in the night. About 1 a.m. he came in his shirt and nightcap to my tent to borrow a loaded gun to shoot a native dog which he said had been into his tent. Hardy, who was sleeping in my tent, happened to have his gun loaded and lent it to him. We shortly heard the report and soon after poor Jacob, muttering to himself, made his appearance quite broken-hearted, for instead of the native dog he had killed a favourite little bitch, heavy with pup, belonging to Hardy, and to make matters worse, had broken the borrowed gun and has been obliged to purchase it. His misfortunes did not end here, for in his flurry he tumbled over, or through, a chair belonging to another officer. The ghost of Hamlet is a fool to the figure long pale Jacob cut on entering our tent in the abovenamed costume with the moon shining on his white visage.

#### The Doctor's References to his Professional Work

2nd August, 1836. Went on shore this morning to see a patient at the tents.

31st August. Went on board the 'Duke of York' at 7 a.m. and was much pleased to find my patient better.

2nd September. Went on board the 'Duke of York' and as Field was very ill remained on board all the rest of the day. Next morning -I have not left the vessel today as it is blowing a gale. Field, I am happy to say, is better.

5th September. Before breakfast I visited my patients on board the 'Duke of York' and at the tents on shore, and I have had the satisfaction of dismissing from the list 2 which I am sending to hospital in Hobart Town. One of these is suffering from a severe attack of rheumatism and is lying in one of the tents in a most miserable plight with a wet bed under him and devoured by mosquitoes — the other is in a rapid consumption and is not long for this world.

6th September. Capt. Ross, of the 'Lady Mary Pelham', begged me to visit his mate, who is suffering from a complication of disorders brought on by exposure and drinking. I was happy to find that no fresh disturbance had occurred on board.

7th November. Just as I received my letters by the 'Africaine' this morning and was eagerly opening the first, a message arrived for me to attend a labour, Mrs Hoare, wife of a labourer. She is safely delivered of a fine boy, who, at my request, is to be named 'Rapid'. One of the labourers – Heath – in fighting fractured the first metacarpal bone of the right hand. I have now reduced it and he is comfortable. Another man – Bristow – is under my care with a dreadfully inflamed finger from a fishbone wound. This shows a great disposition to slough and an amputation is not improbable.

4th December. A sealing cutter anchored in Rapid Bay and disposed of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of potatoes to us with cheese and mutton and birds' eggs, which are very fine. I have recommended a distribution of potatoes to the labourers as they are showing a disposition to scurvy.

15th December, 1836. Col. Light has offered to renew my engagement as a shore-going surgeon, my former one on board the 'Rapid' being ended on the 31st inst. He also brought me letters ex 'Tam o'Shanter' – one from my mother. My mother and sister wish

me to return, but as I think there is a chance of my bettering myself here I think it right to make a trial.

2nd January, 1837. I was called at 10 p.m. last night to Mrs Finniss, and at 1 a.m. she was safely delivered of a girl.

8th January. The 'Cygnet' is to remove our party to Adelaide, but I do not consent to Mrs Finniss taking the journey for at least 8 days more.

22nd January. Finch, one of our men, who had left the camp to shoot without leave, returned after having been lost 3 days. He has been a great sufferer, both from want of food and an accident, his powder having exploded while attempting to make a fire and dreadfully burnt the poor fellow's face and arms. We all embarked on the 'Cygnet' at 1 p.m.

Last night Mr Finniss gave me 3 sovs. for attendance on Mrs Finniss, which I consider as liberal in a young colony for an accouchement. One job a week of this kind would give me a very pretty lift!

29th January. I have not been able to repeat my visit to Adelaide as I do not like to be absent from Mrs Finniss, who is suffering from a supperated breast.

30th January. My Finniss' party proceeded to Adelaide today to assist Col. Light, but I remain here till Mrs Finniss can be removed.

24th February. After dinner I was sent for to see the surgeon of the 'Buffalo' – Mr Jackson. He was suffering from a determination of blood to the head. I bled him largely and remained with him till 12 at night, at the Rev. Mr Howards, at whose hut he was taken ill. He is here on leave from his ship to attend Mrs Fisher in her approaching accouchement.

25th February. I am making my bower my surgery and see my patients there from 9 to 10 a.m. I almost despair of getting a hut before the wet season. I have nearly come to resolution of renting one of Mr Fisher's wooden houses at £13 per annum, but as they have but 2 rooms I am doubtful as to the propriety of dividing the expense and living with my present chum Jacob. We have messed together ever since arrival in Adelaide and I shall be sorry to part – as he is an excellent young man, although so bad tempered that nobody can manage him half so well as I can by humouring his

whims. He is a feeling, kind-hearted fellow, simple, bashful, and sensitive in the extreme, but I really begin to think my own temper much improved as I find I seldom quarrel with anybody.

27th February. I received a visit from Jackson this morning. He brought with him 2 officers of the 'Buffalo', whose names I forget. He was very warm in his thanks for my attention to him and kindly offered to do duty for me if I wished to absent myself at any time. He is a very gentlemanly fellow and I am happy to make his acquaintance.

28th February. I with difficulty walked to see my patients this morning and found my foot so painful I have remained at home reading all the rest of the day. Poor Jacob is confined to the tent with a bowel complaint for which I have prescribed water gruel as being easier of digestion than parrots.

8th March. My time has been pretty well taken up this week with my patients, who increase daily, and should money be forthcoming I am not at all dissatisfied with my beginning.

17th March. We have had 3 deaths this week. Mrs Gouger, a child, and Mr White, who came out to establish a brewery. The latter was a patient of mine and died of exhaustion succeeding a severe attack of pneumonia on a broken constitution. My practice is still on the increase.

21st March. I have scarcely any leisure time, but am not able to stand much fag for want of proper sustenance.

25th March. Started as usual to see my patients, when I saw Mr Mann, the Attorney-General, and Hill, my old messmate, hurrying along with a number of men. Upon asking Hill the cause of the row he very civilly pressed me in the King's name to assist in taking into custody some seamen of the 'Buffalo' who had created a disturbance. I accordingly joined them 'nolens volens' and in a few minutes had a job cut out for me. These men being intoxicated had no idea of civil law and treated poor Hill very uncivilly by knocking him down with a bludgeon, laying open his temporal artery. I have just helped carry him home, dressed his wound, and left him pretty comfortable, but not overpleased with his warlike expedition.

The man that wounded Hill is still at large. Justice being as yet slack, there being no prison. Hill is doing well and out of danger.

28th March. The doctor attended the land sale and purchased 2 acres – No. 747 at £5/10/-, and 900 at £4. He is pleased with 747, delightfully situated, commanding a fine view of the mountains and at a convenient distance from water. He attended Mrs Paris in labour last night.

11th April. My practice goes on increasing and if I find my bills come in a reasonable proportion I think it will scarcely be worth my while to remain attached to the survey, that is, if I am required to accompany the party on the country sections.

I have been very successful in my midwifery and have consequently many respectable names on my list, and as I make a rule of being paid for this at the time I am now enjoying many little comforts which my pay would not enable me to.

There are 5 medical men here, but I am happy to say my name stands as high as any.

28th April. The 'Rapid' arrived last Sunday from Sydney and is to proceed to England, whither a passage has been offered me. I have declined it as my prospects here begin to brighten and my practice increases daily.

I have just been applied to by a body of labourers to become surgeon to a Benefit Society, and at present can see no objection. The society is not yet formed nor my salary fixed, so that as yet I have promised nothing.

# Woodforde's Support of Col. Light

On 12th January Jenkins, who came ashore, has given us very unpleasant news of the proceedings up the Gulf. He says that there are great dissensions and that the landed proprietors are going to institute an enquiry into the conduct of Col. Light and party, whom they reproach for not having yet divided the sections. God knows these gentlemen little deserve any reproach, as I can fully testify, that far from being idle they have worked like slaves, sacrificing their personal comfort in every shape to the public weal and of course have met with public ingratitude as their reward.

On 24th January, "I then left 'Glenelg', which is the name the Governor has been pleased to give to Holdfast Bay, and started for

Adelaide to pay my respects and report myself to Col. Light. I took dinner at Col. Light's and met with as much kindness and attention as ever. In the evening I visited such of my old messmates as are encamped at Adelaide, and returned to Glenelg by moonlight, where I arrived at 1 a.m. In the selection of the site for the town Col. Light has shown, in my opinion, great judgment and firmness. There are many discontented who are impelled by envy to find fault with his choice. It appears to me that there is nothing to wish for in the selection, as the soil is excellent, the pasture fine, abundance of fine water from the lagoons and river which we find may be obtained anywhere by digging 6 or 8 feet. The town is on a gentle eminence in the middle of a beautiful plain. The country is moderately wooded, principally with the gum tree, which averages the size of the oak. Our prospects are very cheering and I am very confident they will continue so under the able guidance of Col. Light."

On 26th Fabruary the doctor records: 'I repaired with Jacob to Col. Light's. Dinner was on the table and we spent a very pleasant and sociable afternoon. We had an apple pudding for dinner, the first apples I had seen since leaving England. They were brought from Sydney, and were a great treat, as were some fine onions and cheese. These are not everyday luxuries. After tea Col. Light and Maria came to see my bower, on the builder of which they were pleased to bestow many encomiums for diligence. We then returned to take a parting cup and cigar.'

8th March. I have just paid a visit to Col. Light, who informs me that the allotments of town land will take place on the 16th inst.

17th March. The town acres are all completed and the first meeting took place last Wednesday. A second meeting takes place today, and on Monday next lots will be drawn. Everything went smoothly at the last meeting till the later end, when some wrangling ensued between the Governor and Samuel Stephens, when the latter very politely told the Governor he was no gentleman, upon which His Excellency threatened to put him in custody. Surely these two gentlemen do not understand the duties of their respective situations!

#### **Incidents**

Sunday, 27th November. My birthday. Piping hot. Most of the 'Rapid's' on shore. I accompanied Col. Light and Mr Finniss on a walk up the hills after dinner and finished the evening at the hut of the surveyors, with whom I was invited to take tea and cake – the latter made and sent by Mrs Lipson.

Xmas Day. Reminds us of old England and our friends warming their knees by a rousing fire with all other Xmas comforts. Here we are broiling under a sun, half of us nearly blind with opthalmia – a very distressing and purulent kind. All I have to say is that a sincerely hope my dear friends at home are spending a merrier Xmas than we are here. If not – I pity them.

The Governor gave his first ball at Government House on Monday last (15th April). I was there, and a very lively party we had, there being present a number of naval officers from the 'Buffalo' and 'Victor'. The latter is a sloop of war stationed on the coast. We had plenty of dancing and music, but very little supper. On the whole we spent an agreeable evening and all went smoothly.

On 18th August, 1838, Dr Woodforde married Caroline Carter at Trinity Church. Miss Carter arrived on the 'Buffalo' on 28th December, 1836. There were 8 children of the marriage, including:

Meliora – mother of the late head mistress of Creveen School, North Adelaide, and her sister – our member – Miss Harriet Julia Cussens. Also George Woodforde, retired bank manager.

Harriet Julia – mother of Mrs Sweetapple and Miss O'Halloran.

John Woodforde died in 1866 and is buried in the North Road Cemetery. His tombstone bears the inscription:

To the Memory of
JOHN WOODFORDE, M.R.S. & L.A.H
1810 – 1866
Surgeon of the Survey Ship 'Rapid', 1836
and of Caroline, his wife.

# DR WILLIAM AND DR SAMUEL GEORGE WOODFORDE

On 24 September 1891, there appeared in the Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada, *Gazette*, an obituary which announced that Dr Samuel George Woodforde had passed away and would be buried the following afternoon. In that newspaper item it was stated that Dr Samuel George Woodforde had been a gentleman of high standing and an accomplished scholar of ancient and modern literature.

Samuel George Woodforde was a grandson of Parson Woodforde's 'Nephew Bill', and in reading that obituary one is tempted to conclude that Samuel George was a much more impressive personage in the perception of his contemporaries than Parson Woodforde ever was. But then the questions arise. What do those distinctions accorded to Dr Samuel Woodforde really mean? Information from Wikipedia and the City of Fredericton indicate that the city's site was chosen in 1785 to be the capital of the Province of New Brunswick because it was far inland and thus safer from French and American raids than the settlement on the coast which became New Brunswick's largest city Saint John (not to be confused with St John's, Newfoundland; it has happened to air travellers who have ended up in the wrong place).

Fredericton was named after Frederick William, Duke of York, one of King George III's many children, but at the time of its founding reportedly only three farmers lived there. In that year (1785) Fredericton was promptly granted an institution of higher learning, called King's College, but some 30 years later, in 1814, it still had only a population of about 400, the teachers and students at King's College included. The college grew, of course, as did the city, and became what is now the University of New Brunswick. But neither the obituary nor any other source indicates that Dr Samuel G. Woodforde ever taught there, either literature or anything else.

During the Victorian Age, medicine made enormous strides. Previous to the Industrial Revolution, people died quietly all over England and other countries, in garrets and hovels and jails, on ships and behind hedges, in servants' quarters of grand houses, and that was accepted as the way it was. But the Industrial Revolution massed ever more tens of thousands of poor country people in the

slums of the rapidly growing industrial cities to which they came to look for jobs. Actually, even amidst the Dickensian horrors of the lives of the working class in the early 1800s, life expectancy increased, and the population grew significantly. But it was this massing together of poverty, filth, sickness and death, in city slums, that frightened the better off people and also stirred a concern for the poor which led, among other things, to much more effort to discern, understand, and prevent diseases. Demand arose for more sanitary measures, such as sewage disposal. These concerns led to the first Public Health Act in 1848, which in turn brought about great improvements in the practice of medicine.

If Dr Samuel G. Woodforde kept himself informed of developments in medicine in Britain, he was able to give his patients ever better care, which presumably would have made him a gentleman of high standing. Being credited with being an accomplished scholar would indicate that he did in fact read much, and that may well have included professional texts.

So Dr Samuel George Woodforde was a gentleman of high standing, and an accomplished scholar. But his obituary also indicates that he was a person with a very interesting youth. It is told that he was born in 1821 in Fredericton, and that he left his parental home in 1835 or 1836 to travel to London where he studied at Guy's Hospital. The obituary does not have any answers to such questions as, for instance, whether he travelled alone. After all, he would have been only 14 or 15 then. And how did he travel? The Cunard Line started regular service between London, Halifax, Boston and New York only in 1840. Young Samuel must have made the journey on a sailing vessel, either from Saint John or Halifax – or from some smaller port. How interesting it would be now to be able to read an account of that trip, and of the impact that the huge city of London made on the boy Samuel who came from a very small town in a distant colony.

Was it normal then for boys that young to make such long voyages alone? Where did Samuel obtain the money for his trip and his study and sojourn in London? Was it normal then for 15-year-olds to be accepted as medical students? The information about the training of medical doctors before 1848 is contradictory. There were evidently no national regulations. Various local medical societies set their

own standards, somewhat like the old guilds. There were gentleman students – no females – who never got their hands soiled in any actual hands-on work. They attended lectures, and after graduation were called Doctor. Lower class students – so the available information indicates – became surgeons in a hands-on apprenticeship much like bakers or blacksmiths, and upon graduation were called Mister, not Doctor.\*

Indeed, in some occupations that we now call professions, such as dentists and veterinarians, the apprenticeship system persisted till right into the 20th century. James Herriot makes reference in one of his books to new regulations in the 1930s which held that thenceforth all veterinarians must have university training, but that established practitioners who were trained in the apprenticeship system, or for that matter taught themselves and had enough talent to succeed, could join the professional association. Some German visitors tell that in the 1950s apprenticeship-trained dentists still practised in competition with university-trained dentists in Germany.

From the fact that Samuel George called himself 'Doctor' after his training can be deduced that he was indeed one of those young gentlemen who became physicians without ever actually touching a patient. It would be easy to see Samuel George as a professional not much above the level of a clever medicine man or shaman. Yet his obituary states that he received his degree in medicine in 1840, when he was 19 – in Germany, of all places! That would entail a knowledge of German, wouldn't it? The Germans have always been quite rigid and bureaucratic; it is hard to imagine the Germany of around 1840 as a place where one could just buy a medical degree.

But where would Samuel George have learned German? His obituary states that he was in London at the coronation of Queen Victoria, which took place late in 1838. Did he move then to Germany? And what is one to think of the statement in the obituary that Dr Samuel G. Woodforde 'saw Wellington and Lord Brougham frequently'. It must mean that Samuel George either saw

<sup>\*</sup> Editor's note – Nephew Bill's half-brother James began his medical training at the age of 15 when he was apprenticed to a surgeon-apothecary in Trowbridge. He did not go to Edinburgh University to continue his medical training until he was 20. See 'Js Woodforde, son of Nancy's Mother', *Journal XXXI*, 3.

those two important men pass by now and then in coaches on the streets of London, or that he – how can one phrase this delicately? – was adept at making himself interesting. After all, there is no corroboration, and what would the great man who had been made a Duke and had served as Prime Minister want to talk about with a teenage boy from the colonies?

Nevertheless, whatever questions and doubts may be aroused by an account of events in the life of Dr Samuel George Woodforde that occurred half a century earlier and on the other side of the Atlantic, one gains the impression that he must have been clever and courageous boy, and that his sojourn in London must have been an enormously exciting time for him. London was then the largest city in the world, full of imperial glory, throbbing with the fervour of industrialisation. The first railway station in London, Euston Station, which still exists, although in much altered form, was opened in 1837 by the London and Birmingham Railway. The boy Samuel G. surely saw a steam locomotive before anyone in North America, South America, Asia or Africa had seen one.

He returned to Fredericton, New Brunswick, in 1844, and may well have travelled then by steamship.

II

The obituary has many interesting things to tell about Dr Samuel George Woodforde. What it does not speak about are any grieving children, siblings or other family members. Only a widow is mentioned. It is stated that Dr Woodforde was the son of Dr William Woodforde (this William was the son of Parson Woodforde's 'Nephew Bill'). Of Dr William Woodforde it is said that he was born at Ansford House, Somerset, England, served as an assistant surgeon under Wellington in the Peninsular Campaign across Spain, and was wounded at the siege of Badajoz. He came with the 104th Regiment to New Brunswick right after that siege, and then participated in an infamous March to Quebec. Later he returned to Fredericton, New Brunswick, and there practised medicine for many years. And all this arouses many questions. Such as how this man transitioned from being an assistant surgeon to being a doctor?

On 26 October 1887, about four years before the death of Dr Samuel

George Woodforde, there appeared in the Saint John, New Brunswick *Daily Telegraph* a printed account of an interview given by the Doctor. He did not talk in that interview about himself, or even much about his father. His topic was 'Men of Half a Century ago – Fredericton in its Glory'. Yet he did not speak of what made the small town of Fredericton so glorious more than 50 years earlier, either. He mentions a welter of people who were prominent in that time and place, but who were not related to him or his father, almost as though he wants to display how well connected he and his father were to the upper class of that small colonial society. Of his father, he tells little more than what was four years later repeated in his obituary.

William was born in Ansford House, but Samuel George did not give any date or tell of any uncles and aunts. By 1812, William was assistant surgeon in Wellington's army, and at the siege of Badajoz, a strongly fortified ancient town in the southwestern area of Spain, across a river from Portugal from where Wellington's troops had been assembled and marched across the border.

William Woodforde was then 21 years old. Given that, a generation later, his son Samuel George had only four years of study, while still in his teens, to become a medical doctor, and that surgeons were regarded as lower on the social scale, it seems reasonable to assume that William joined the army at about 15 years of age – there are reports of 8-year-olds serving on Admiral Lord Nelson's ships – and was trained in the army by way of the usual apprenticeship, which included certainly, at least at first, the removal of sawn-off limbs, mopping up blood, washing the floors in a cursory manner – hygiene was not much valued then – and holding down screaming patients – anaesthetics were only invented about 40 years later. Yet William's subsequent history suggests that just like his son he was a very intelligent, adaptable, capable man.

Along the narrative of William's life, the siege of Badajoz represents a point at which it is difficult to stay on course. There is so much that could be said, and asked, about the siege of Badajoz in the spring of 1812, and all tends to lead away from William Woodforde.

It seems that both the French in the fortress, who were outnumbered at least 1 to 4, and the British/Portuguese besiegers who were out in the open, fought valiantly. Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterward the

Duke of Wellington, emerges from the affair with much credit. His cannon succeeded in blasting three breaches through the walls of the fortress, but Wellington was so upset by how the bloody bodies of his soldiers piled up in those breaches that he actually started to cry and wanted to call a retreat. Yet the French garrison had been drawn away from other sectors to defend those breaches, and British soldiers managed to make their way over walls and attack the French defenders from the rear.

Badajoz was a very important victory on Wellington's campaign across Spain and into France, which forced Napoleon two years later to his first abdication. It was also one of the factors that prompted Napoleon's foreign minister, the Duc de Talleyrand, to the decision to undermine Napoleon's power and strategies. Talleyrand is a fascinating personality, an ultimate survivor. He was a bishop at the age of 21, and from then on somehow managed to have positions high in succeeding French governments, even though these had widely different characters and at times succeeded by revolution. Talleyrand was part of the Ancient Regime under Louis XVI, and then was part of the revolutionary government which cut off the head of that king. That revolutionary government was unstable to the point that its permutations and the Terror that it inflicted on France has filled many volumes of history. It became the Consulate, and then Napoleon hijacked it and set out to turn Europe into an Empire for himself and his family. Talleyrand was his foreign minister.

After Napoleon was driven into exile, Talleyrand became a minister in the restored Bourbon monarchy under Louis XVIII. As late as the 1830s he was French Ambassador in America, on behalf of the 'Citizen King' Louis Philippe, who had come to power in yet another revolution. Talleyrand wanted to be rich and safe, and accomplished that. But he also wanted France to be prosperous, stable and secure. At the Congress of Vienna he represented his country so dexterously (1814/1815) that before long France was treated as an equal by the victorious powers, rather than as a badly defeated enemy.

It is still remembered that at one point Napoleon called Talleyrand 'merde in silk stockings'. Afterwards Talleyrand remarked 'What a pity that such a great man was so badly raised!' And he excused his

betrayal of Napoleon by saying that 'Four million dead for the vanity of one man is too much!' And this brings us to the subject that makes the siege of Badajoz such an uncomfortable subject.

It was a very bloody affair. About 2000 of the French defenders were killed and about 5000 of Wellington's troops also died. And somewhere between 3000 and 5000 civilians perished.

Civilians have always been killed in the conquest and bombing of towns and cities. Perhaps Tamerlane can be mentioned. He had the heads cut off 45,000 residents of a city in Mesopotamia that he had conquered, on the general principle that all town people are corrupt, and had the heads piled up in a pyramid. Statistics now available indicate that the Napoleonic wars caused more than 4 million casualties, and that half of these were actually civilians. But Badajoz remains an uncomfortable subject.

By the time of the siege of Badajoz the Spaniards had already started to revolt against French occupation and Napoleon's brother, who had been imposed on them as King of Spain, although the man seems actually to have tried hard to give good government. Probably nowhere is the temper of the country and the times better expressed than in the famous painting by the Spaniard Goya that shows poor Spanish rebels being executed by French soldiers. The Spanish residents of the town of Badajoz can be presumed to have looked forward to being liberated by Wellington's troops from the French occupiers. And Wellington had strictly forbidden the usual practice that permitted troops who had conquered a town to plunder, rape and kill for three days with impunity. But something went very wrong ... records indicate that a generation later, in 1845, Badajoz had little more than 5000 burghers. This would suggest that most of the civilian residents of the town perished in 1812.

III

William Woodforde was wounded at the siege of Badajoz, as the reminiscences of his son Samuel George indicate. But the injury cannot have been very serious because after the conquest of the town William was sent on active duty to Canada. The war of 1812 had started and William participated in the (somewhat) infamous March to Quebec. Again, questions arise, and answers would demand much more research. It is stated that William Woodforde

marched to the Town of Quebec with the 104th Regiment, but there is no indication of whether the whole regiment had been shipped across the Atlantic from Spain.

John LeCouteur, a native of Jersey in the Channel Islands, was also enlisted in the 104th Regiment and participated in that March to Quebec. He subsequently wrote a book about the expedition and his part in it, of which several historical societies in Eastern Canada still have copies. He tells of having an easy life in New Brunswick for seven months, and then being sent on the onset of the harsh Canadian winter to the protection of the City of Quebec whose population was of French descent and was deemed unreliable, and where an incursion of American troops was expected. Any reader who wants to take the trouble can see on a map or in an atlas how the northeastern part of the American State of Maine bulges between the Canadian provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick. Even at present there is no direct road betwen the New Brunswick capital Fredericton and Quebec Ville. Major roads circumvent that bulge, which comprises very difficult, mountainous and sparsely populated terrain. The actual distance from Fredericton to Ouebec City is only about 200 miles, but John LeCouteur tells that the troops suffered as they forced their way through high snow and bitter cold, thick forests, and over high steep mountains.

He wrote of many men never seeing their wives or sweethearts again. We can only guess that bitter cold, exhaustion, inadequate diet, unsanitary conditions and infectious diseases, which were not even recognised then, took a large toll. And when the British troops from New Brunswick arrived at the Town of Quebec after about a month of struggle against wilderness and the elements, none of the feared American troops had shown up there. The 104th regiment was ordered to march another 200 miles upriver alongside the St Lawrence, and then again another 200 miles, so that the disgruntled soldiers talked of themselves as Wandering Jews. By the spring of 1813 they were at Kingston on Lake Ontario, and some of the soldiers, seeing British warships there, started to cry with relief because they thought they were back on the shores of the Atlantic.

In 1814 William Woodforde had returned to Fredericton, New Brunswick. The wars against Napoleon seemed to have come to an end; the Emperor was in Elba. And the war against America was

also winding down. William Woodforde was transferred from the 104th Regiment to the New Brunswick Fencibles, volunteer troops which were used for patrol and garrison duty but could not be sent elsewhere. Perhaps William Woodforde still received some pay. In any case, he established himself in the town – remember, it then had only 400 residents – as a doctor.

In some texts about medical practices in the early 1800s it is suggested that the American, full of egalitarian sentiments, called both medical doctors and surgeons 'Doctor'. Americans are maybe inclined to believe that they can improve something by giving it a fancy name. And perhaps the little Fredericton of that time was desperate for any sort of medical practitioner. All these facts may have come together in the case of Dr William Woodforde. It must be assumed that he was an intelligent and capable man who gave as much satisfaction to his patients as any other doctor in New Brunswick.

It is not at all clear why Dr Samuel G. Woodforde in his interview in 1887 called the early 1800s the Glory Days of the City of Fredericton. It has already been mentioned that the town had a population of only 400 in 1814. But the province must then have indeed been a fascinating place. The French had been in the area since the early 1600s, it was part of their large North American colony called la Nouvelle France. What are now called the Maritime Provinces of Canada was a region that the French first called La Cadie, which soon became l'Acadie. The French were in general not much inclined to emigrate to what Voltaire called dismissively 'a few acres of snow', so the small French population of the region formed alliances with the local native Indians and intermarried with them.

An attempt to describe the turbulent history of l'Acadie with its numerous skirmishes against the British and its local baronies would be interesting in itself but would carry the narrative too far from Dr William Woodforde. Even the infamous expulsion of the Acadians is not nearly as simple a topic as it is made out to be in eastern Canada and the USA. In that narrative, the English – not the British – decided in 1755 to expel all the Acadians from the lands that had been their home and scatter them over other British colonies, and did so out of sheer arbitrary malice. But from

historical sources comes a far more convoluted tale of shifting alliances, oaths tendered, taken, ignored, of guerilla attacks by French and Indian detachments against the British while some segments of the Acadians simply wanted peace and good government and were ready to live quietly under the British crown. One interesting little historical tidbit is that when the great French fortress of Louisbourg was conquered in what is now Nova Scotia, in 1758, documents were discovered which showed that the French governor had paid Indians for scalps of 'les anglais', meaning English-speaking Protestants.

It was all a grand melee, which ended with the fall of the French colonial capital, the City of Quebec, to General Wolfe and his British troops in 1759. The French territorial claims had encircled the British colonies, right down to Louisiana, and after that threat was removed from them most of those colonies revolted against British rule. During the expulsion of the Acadians, which affected an estimated 10,000 individuals, many Acadians fled into the vast woods of the area, and made their precarious home along shores where they could fish—the British could take the grain and livestock from farms, but could not take the fish from the sea. During the American Revolution, a trickle of United Empire Loyalists came to New Brunswick, a small number when compared with that of the new United States, but impressive when it is considered that these people had to leave behind the homes of a lifetime, and relatives, properties and careers.

By the time William Woodforde settled in Fredericton, Loyalists and others had taken over the farms of the expelled Acadians, but the Acadians were increasingly emerging from the woods and remote shores to become part of the mainstream of development. The whole province is 28,000 square miles in size, about half as big as England, and by 1814 there were an estimated 40,000 residents in New Brunswick, far more than there ever were Acadians.

At present, French-speaking Acadians form about half of the population of New Brunswick. They live for the most part in the northern half of the province, and have a significant university in the City of Moncton – which was named after an obscure English officer, not after George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, as is often claimed. The English-speaking population lives mainly in the

southern half with the City of Saint John, the largest in the province and still proud of its Loyalist heritage. The native Indians have ceased, at least for the time being, to be a large political factor.

Not long after settling in Fredericton, Dr William Woodforde married the daughter of a Loyalist, Colonel Miller who had become the commander of a provincial regiment — so said Dr Samuel George Woodforde in 1887, some 70 years after the event. Samuel G. was strangely cursory when speaking of his background in that interview, but it must be remembered that by 1887 it was more than 50 years since he had left his parental home, and thirty years since his father had died.

Who knows? Perhaps these two men never had a good relationship.

Samuel G. says that his father raised two sons and two daughters. He is evidently one of these sons, but says nothing about the other, and so far nothing has been found about him. Similarly, Samuel G. mentions nothing at all about one sister, and says of the other one only in passing 'My elder sister married the late John Grant, civil engineer, of Fredericton, and now resides in London with her daughter, Mrs William Lays'.

William Woodforde evidently managed to transform himself from an assistant army surgeon of little repute to a respected doctor, from 1814 on in Fredericton. He may even have become prosperous. There is in the archives of the Anglican diocese of Fredericton, where a cathedral was built in 1858, a curious entry about a 'coloured child' being born in the home of Dr William Woodforde, in 1832. Other explanations are possible, but the most readily evident one is that the mother was a servant in the home of the doctor.

#### IV

Dr Samuel George Woodforde stated in 1887, in his almost infuriatingly detached manner, about his father, 'after many years he returned to Somersetshire where he died'. Martin Brayne of the Parson Woodforde Society has provided the information, gathered from the unpublished 'Woodforde Family Book' which apparently contains in full or part the diary of an Anne Woodforde, that Dr William Woodforde died on the 8th day of September 1856, aged

65, at Lower Ansford House in Somerset, where he had been living with three sisters.

Here again, many questions arise, such as whether, when Dr Samuel George Woodforde returned to New Brunswick in 1844, he and his father practised together – and possibly had a falling-out – or Samuel G. set himself up in competition with his father. Was it something like that, and the early death of two of his children and his wife, that prompted Dr William Woodforde to seek in old age the comforts that the scenes of his childhood and the solicitude of his three sisters could provide?

It is to be hoped that a professional historian will take on the story of the two Woodforde doctors in New Brunswick and mine it for much more information. Dr William and Dr Samuel George and their times are truly interesting!

#### THE WILSON FAMILY OF LYNG CONTINUED

Editor's Note — The Spring 2014 edition of the Journal contained Carole Child's article 'The Two John Wilsons — Father & Son'. The present article continues the story of the Wilson family into the nineteenth century and as far as Australia.

John and Elizabeth Wilson's five daughters all married. The eldest, Priscilla (inheritor of the lands at Hasketon via her grandfather Benjamin Crofts) married Robert Barnes, Captain of the ship Acton of Hull, and, subsequently, Robert Shearcroft from Lincolnshire, and thirdly William Piggins, the last two husbands probably both farmers. Similarly her sister Maria married first a Mr Bennett before then marrying surgeon Charles Martin Demages from Middlesex. The fourth daughter, Sarah, married Revd John Mathew, Rector of Reepham and protégé of James Woodforde's friend St John Priest (or perhaps more correctly the son of his friend Revd Richard Priest).4 The youngest daughter, Penelope, married coal merchant John Adams of St Marylebone, London, and was recorded in both the 1841 and 1851 censuses as being matron of Guy's Hospital at St Olave, Surrey. None of the mariages of these four daughters are known to have resulted in ongoing generations of the family. It was left to John and Elizabeth Wilson's second daughter, Elizabeth Ann, who married Lyng shopkeeper William Chambers at St Martin in the Field, Westminster on 16 May 1800, to continue the family line.

It is curious that William and Elizabeth Ann were married in London, when both hailed from Lyng in Norfolk. Elizabeth was 'of full age' being twenty-two at the time of her marriage (her groom was aged thirty-two), so it was clearly factors other than a furtive under-age marriage that led to them being married so far from home. Possibly it was more to do with 'doing the fashionable thing' and, as the Wilson and Croft families appear to have regularly visited London, perhaps they were more inclined to conduct such an important event in their lives in the country's capital.

In August 1801 Elizabeth Ann and William's first baby, William, was born. Their next three babies – Amy and two Samuels – did not survive. Little William and Amy were born at Lyng, and christened there in St Michael's – perhaps even being baptised by their





Elizabeth Ann Wilson and William Chambers who married at Westminster in May 1800

grandfather John Wilson jnr, so Elizabeth and William must have returned to Lyng and William's shop soon after their marriage in London.

By the time the first Samuel was born in June 1804 the family had moved to East Bilney where William now occupied himself as a farmer. According to his daughter Priscilla, William's farming enterprise was, in due course, to make him a prosperous gentleman. Priscilla was much later (February 1887) to write in a letter<sup>1</sup> to her nephew: 'my father ... was a very enterprising man, when he married he had £4,000 and my mother had £500'. So presumably William made a good profit from selling the business in Lyng, and Elizabeth would have received money from both her grandfather's estates (or at least one of them) shortly before her marriage, all of which may have helped pay for the new farming enterprise.

While living at East Bilney the family expanded further with baby Hugh born in 1806. Around this time, again according to their daughter Priscilla in her February 1887 letter, William went into business with a partner who managed their joint tannery business. 'He bought a farm at Bilney, got on well till he had money to play with and he went into partnership with a farmer thinking to make a fortune quicker. The partner managed it and it failed. He had only the tannery. Father having a good farm, he had to pay all. This

reduced my parents.' So when the business failed it was William Chambers who had to settle the debt by selling his farm. After the birth of Hugh in December 1806 at East Bilney, the next couple of babies – Benjamin in March 1808 and Charles in August 1810 – were baptised at Shipdham, hence it could be presumed that it was during the period December 1806 to March 1809 that the family left their farm at East Bilney.

William apparently soon recovered his situation, however, by becoming surveyor of the turnpike road as well as doing some auctioneering. Priscilla recalled, 'Father was surveyor of the turnpike road from Norwich to Swaffam for which his salary was £300. His auctioneering etc brought him £500 a year to £650.' William and Elizabeth Ann continued to have more children – James in 1811, John in 1816 and, lastly (after six surviving sons, no doubt a much longed-for daughter) Priscilla in 1817. A big family event occurred on 29 August 1819 when all the still unbaptised children – James, John and Priscilla – were baptised together at Hockering, presumably where they were living, at a base along the turnpike road. Sometime after this the family moved to the outskirts of East Dereham, to Etling Green, where a gate for collecting tolls was maintained on the turnpike road.

Apart from losing three of their children in infancy, and then their farm, tannery and livelihood, William and Elizabeth Ann and their family continued to be beset by tragedy. Over just a two year period and during a worldwide cholera epidemic,<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Ann (in 1830), her husband William Chambers (in 1831), their sons Charles (1830) and Hugh (1831) and Elizabeth Ann's mother Elizabeth Wilson (1830) all died – in 1830 alone, members of three generations of the family died. It is not known if any or all of them died from cholera, but it is noted that this was quite a possibility, at least in some of the cases, with such an infectious epidemic sweeping the globe. While Elizabeth Wilson's death at the age of 84 may not appear surprising, her daughter Elizabeth Ann was just 53, her husband William was aged 61 and their sons were just 19 and 25.

The auctioneering business had clearly become a family affair with William and Charles, and perhaps some of the other sons, joining their father in the East Dereham-based business. In 1830<sup>3</sup> we read of a sale 'by Auction By WM. CHAMBERS At the George Inn, East

Dereham in the county of Norfolk On Friday 21 July instant at 5 o'c A Capital POST CORN WINDMILL with roundhouse', while in 1832 there is a newspaper advertisement for 'Watering Farm, East Dereham. By William Chambers on Monday and Tuesday, the 1st and 2nd days of October 1832'. With William Chambers snr dying in November 1831, his son William was clearly keeping the family business going despite his losses.

William Chambers left a Will dated 30 September 1830, valued at under £300, leaving 'all my property to be equally divided amongst all my children and appoint my two sons William and Hugh as executors', signed by William Chambers in the presence of J. Matthew, S. Mathew and Elizabeth Adams (daughter of Penelope Wilson/Adams). During the course of executing the Will, William's son and co-executor Hugh died, leaving William inr to conduct the execution of the Will on his own. The ages of the surviving children in 1832, at the end of this horrific run of family deaths were: William aged 31, Benjamin aged 23, James aged about 20, John aged about 16 and Priscilla aged 12. By early 1840 William Chambers inr had also died – reputedly after a 'horse accident'. Apart from a letter from his sister Priscilla to William's wife Ann dated July 1840,1 referring to her letter of 3 March discussing William's death and thanking her for 'sending me the lock of hair of my poor departed brother', and a separate note from her saying he was 37 when he died (hence a date of 1838-39), there is no apparent record yet transcribed that readily fits this death. In any case, William left behind his wife Ann and a son, William Jackson Chambers, aged about 5. It appears Ann immediately found work as a housekeeper for Revd Philip Gurdon at Cranworth Rectory and sometime later headed to London to work as a nurse. By the time of the 1851 census Ann was a 38-year-old 'Sister of Ward' at St Thomas' Hospital, Southwark, presumably assisted in getting this position by her late husband's aunt Penelope (Wilson) Adams who was the matron at Guy's Hospital. Sometime later, and with failing health, Ann moved to Guy's Hospital, where she lived on for the remainder of her days in 'Guy's garrets'.

It is not known just what Benjamin did in the years after his parents' death except that he married Emily Baker at St Giles, Norwich in October 1832. William and Elizabeth Ann Chambers' younger

children James, John and Priscilla were actively supported by their mother's sisters, expecially Priscilla (Shearcroft), who lived at Long Sutton in Lincolnshire and Sarah (Mathew), now a widow living at Montpellier Place, South Lambeth, right beside the homes of her Croft relatives and perhaps Penelope Adams and her family also. While young Priscilla settled into her new London home with her aunt Sarah, James and John headed for Long Sutton, and presumably with their aunt Priscilla Shearcroft's help, found employment as apprentices – James as a carrier and John 'to learn the art of farming' at nearby Newton Hall owned by the Redins, 'gentleman farmers' and friends of the Shearcrofts. Before long James was a qualified carrier, John a farmer and both were married to daughters of the Redins, James marrying Katherine in August 1836 and John marrying her sister Mary, probably in the same ceremony.

In the depressed English economy of the 1830s, James and John sought opportunity well beyond county boundaries and indeed the shores of England, and together with their new wives, brother Benjamin and his wife and younger sister Priscilla, immediately following the marriages, set sail for the very new colony of Adelaide in South Australia. Family legend has it that 17-year-old Pricilla was the only single woman on board the John Renwick and received endless marriage proposals. Being of an adventurous nature she had great fun on the voyage, even having herself tied to the mast 'so she could enjoy the full thrill of a storm at sea without being washed overboard'. In a letter written much later, a friend of Sarah Mathew's, Tom Verlo, was to recall: 'Well do I remember the announcement of his [James] and family going abroad. I was sitting on the dear old sofa and you, like many of our set, conjured up many imaginary evils, as they have happily proved, for now is their energy and industry prospered'. 1 Indeed it did!

Immediately upon arrival James discovered that, with Colonel William Light still surveying the future city of Adelaide a few miles distant from the ship's landing place, the tiny settlement comprised 'frail tents ... interspersed with huts constructed of reeds, bark and branches of trees. Boxes and trunks served for tables and chairs. As there were neither vehicles nor animals, all wood had to be carried and water conveyed on skids or sledges ... there was not a horse, not a bullock, not a donkey, nor any sort of vehicle to be seen. So this

was why all the colonists goods had been dumped near the seashore, covered with tarpaulins to protect them from the salt air and the blistering sun ... The honour of building the first vehicle in the colony, apart from Colonel Light's wheelbarrows, goes to James Chambers. So does the honour of carving out the first roads to Adelaide from Glenelg and from Adelaide to Port Misery ... with this clumsy carriage and two oxen imported from the Cape in passing, he could earn £20 daily. Thus commenced his prosperous career. 5 The Australian Dictionary of Biography further notes that 'he was also first to make a "bullock-drawn vehicular contrivance" for carrying goods and luggage from Holdfast Bay to the newly-chosen site of Adelaide'. In no time James had secured housing blocks in the first land sale open to settlers, had imported horses from Tasmania to establish the new colony's first stable and, having secured lucrative haulage and mail contracts to service the rapidly growing colony, was presented with immense opportunity to supply all manner of commercially based transport facilities, both to the public and the embryonic 'government'.

Meanwhile James' brother John quickly developed a reputation for also being rather a 'mover and shaker', doing the first ploughing in the new colony<sup>6</sup> and building the first house in Adelaide to have a fireplace, door and glass window - the house itself was built of mud, rushes and grass. 'The house was 16 by 10. I carried the rafters and everything required. ... It was hard work to carry these things on my shoulders, but when the work was done I had a more comfortable hut than anyone else here'.4 According to John's wife Mary in a much later interview: 'We were happy enough, mixed together, and did not make silly distinctions. It was fashionable in those days to go to weddings and picnics in bullock drays and many a pleasant outing we had. ... The blacks? Oh well, they were as frightened of us as we were of them at first. They would stand off a long distance and watch us as strange beings, and we would keep at a respectable distance and regard them in the same light. ... One black woman who, of course, could not understand a word of English, came up one day and helped me to light the fire and boil the kettle. After that she came regularly.5

Priscilla, meanwhile, was also enjoying her new lifestyle, living in James and Katherine's household, although also having originally purchased some land for herself. By 1840 her letter to her sister-in-law Ann Chambers noted: 'I had been here eleven months ... and I have not heard from England. At last I had the unspeakable pleasure of perusing a letter from Reepham, then one or two from others'. In this same letter1 she confides to Ann that she had thoroughly enjoyed a visit to a friend who lived 20 miles from Adelaide where she met her future husband, Alfred Barker, who she married in June 1842. Alfred had had an adventurous life, running away from school to France when he was aged 15, being disinherited as a result, then taking to the sea, initially with a whaling crew then joining Colonel Light on his voyage to South Australia in the Rapid in August 1836.\* Alfred eventually left the ship and with his friend Captain Field successfully overlanded a cattle herd from Sydney to Adelaide, meeting hostility from aboriginals along the way. In 1887 Captain Field's brother referred to these friends as 'two grand old pioneers [who] did their part faithfully and well'. The money raised from the sale of the cattle financed Priscilla and Alfred's first home.

In 1852 James Chambers was yet again in the news, escorting one million pounds of gold from the Victorian diggings to the Treasury in Adelaide - a task not without danger, indeed the 'Captain Melville gang' of bushrangers was boasting of their plan to hijack it - occasioning the Commissioner of Police himself, Alexander Tolmer, to personally escort the expedition. As Revd B. J. Armstrong of East Dereham noted in his diary on 11 February 1854, James Chambers had by this time become a very wealthy and influential man. 'He took to the diggings 100 horses for which he received near £10,000 and thus became one of the most thriving and wealthy men in the colony. He is in possession of several thousand acres of land, a lead mine of great value, a large property in Adelaide, a flock of 15,000 sheep, a herd of 2,000 cattle and about 2,000 horses etc etc. He has just disposed of his mail and coach establishment for £14,000'.7 It should be noted that a significant extent of his rural possessions were either owned or run in conjunction with his brother John Chambers (especially in later years), and also, in part, Priscilla's husband Alfred Barker. Around the time of Revd Armstrong's diary entry, James was in England for

<sup>\*</sup> Editor's note - This was the voyage on which Dr John Woodforde was surgeon.

an extended stay during which he visited Norfolk and arranged for a stone to be raised in St Nicholas' churchyard in East Dereham in memory of 'Charles, son of Wm and Elizabeth Chambers and Hugh his brother. This stone is erected by the remaining brothers and sister, James, John and Priscilla after 20 years absence in the Colonies, Adelaide South Australia. August 1855.' It is noteworthy that this memorial made no mention of either Benjamin (who had also gone to Adelaide with his wife but appears to have been treated more as a servant than an equal) and the eldest of the sons in the family, William – who might also perhaps have been remembered, having also died some years previously, in a horse accident in Norfolk.

Despite the great prosperity that James Chambers and his family enjoyed, he was clearly a man to hold grudges and not to budge one inch on his position despite the passing of decades or hardships experienced by those unfortunates caught up with someone who had crossed his path. James' nephew, William Jackson Chambers (the only child of his brother William) who had been aged about 5 when his father was killed in the horse accident, sailed to Adelaide in 1854 to join his relatives – relatives who had been encouraging him to visit them ever since he was a child. Unfortunately for the unwitting 19 year-old, he went straight to James' home upon arrival and, despite being met with warm hospitality after his arduous voyage, this all changed when James arrived home and informed him that he would not be able to stay, nor could he assist with employment, due to some mysterious 'transaction' between himself and William's father – clearly some decades in the past.

Was it something to do with William ultimately being the sole executor of their father's Will perhaps and having crossed – or perceived to have crossed – his younger brother James in the process? In any case, whatever the history, it was news to William, who promptly fled Adelaide in a state of hurt and humiliation – and with empty pockets. William initially worked on road-making in the Flinders Ranges before heading for the Victorian goldfields where he remained until 1861, walking from one lot of diggings to another, trying to stay alive while continually close to starvation and perpetually seeking his fortune – or at least trying to find enough gold to pay for his voyage back to England. William didn't make his fortune in Australia, but it is known he returned to

Adelaide after his uncle James died unexpectedly and it appears he was most warmly welcomed by his relatives who were much aggrieved by what had happened and quite likely gave him the funds to return home to England. Once there, William eventually married his cousin Anne Elizabeth Jackson, became a grocer and draper, had five children, and then returned to Australia in 1885, buying a farm at Table Cape in north-west Tasmania, where Chambers Bay still remains as testament to his presence there. His sons went on to become bankers, one daughter returned to England to marry and the other married an engineer in Tasmania.

When James Chambers returned to Adelaide from England in 1854, he and John took up large pastoral leases in northern South Australia, turning over land and making large profits. Ultimately James settled on holdings of around 270 square miles in the Flinders Ranges while John had lands at Cobdogla along the River Murray where he ran cattle and bred horses in large numbers and was a keen supporter of the turf. At one point the Chambers brothers held around 200 miles of River Murray frontage land, providing plenty of adjistment opportunity for the Flinders Ranges livestock. Around this time, in 1856, James wrote to his aunt Sarah, 'Mine has been a strange career and when I review the orphan boy of Etling Green without house or friend (except my aunt Shearcroft) how much, how much I say I have to be thankful for'.<sup>1</sup>

In 1857 James and his partner William Finke established the Great Northern Mining Company, having located copper ore on one of James' Flinders Ranges properties. By the late 1850s James and William Finke held leases over about half a dozen promising copper prospects in the Flinders Ranges and the Nuccaleena Mine was in production, albeit at a modest level. James wrote to his aunt Sarah in 1859 that William Finke was returning to England 'to dispose of the mineral property at one hundred thousand, and £20,000 paid up in shares'. Klassen (1991)<sup>8</sup> records that 'Immediately a great rush for their shares followed. In fact it was so great that the subscription list had to be closed "almost as soon as it opened". According to H. Minchum (1964)<sup>9</sup>, this whole affair (which became complex, affecting the highest level of Government and the Law in South Australia as well as shareholders in England) ultimately 'brought about a political storm, a newspaper war, and a violent conflict of

views and interests that involved many in high places, not the least being Governor MacDonell'. A last word from James on the matter, in a letter to his aunt Sarah in London in 1860: 'You would see by the papers he accomplished his object in selling the mines. The amounts appear almost fabulous'.<sup>1</sup>

In James' 1859 letter to his aunt Sarah (above), he went on to say, 'I am now exploring the Interior and in six months shall I hope to have the pleasure of giving you an interesting account as we want to plant the Flag of England in the centre of the Island'. This was further discussed by Kerr (1980)<sup>5</sup> who records that James and John 'soon joined with William Finke in employing an explorer and surveyor to look not only for new pastures, but also for signs of gold, silver and copper. It was typical of them that they hired the best such man available - John McDouall Stuart ... [who] wanted to be the one who found out just what this continent had to offer to the would-be pastoralist and seeker after gems and metals'. Finke and the Chambers brothers went on to equip McDouall Stuart for several expeditions. McDouall Stuart soon became inspired to be the first white man to cross Australia from south to north, an enthusiasm enhanced by James who saw the prospect of finding a route for an overland telegraph link between Adelaide and the north coast of Australia, where a marine cable would connect Australia with Java and from there to the rest of the world. McDouall's last expedition was largely funded by the Government who were by now keen to be the backers of the first successful expedition to make the south-north crossing of the continent after the failure of the high profile Burke and Wills expedition in 1861. Nevertheless, Finke and the Chambers brothers provided most of the wages, the horses and other items required for this expedition - an expedition that was successful in reaching the coast just east of today's Darwin, where McDouall Stuart raised the Union Jack, hand-made by James' daughters, and named the place Chambers Bay – an adjacent bay he called Finke Bay. Along the way he also named the Finke River for his friend and backer William Finke, the Katherine River (and hence the town of Katherine and the Katherine Gorge) after James' daughter Katherine Chambers and Chambers Pillar after his friends James and John.

A year after setting out, John McDouall Stuart returned in triumph,

but he was very ill and emaciated; what's more he returned to find his friend and backer James Chambers had died unexpectedly during his absence. A surviving letter from William Finke to James' aunt Sarah in August 1862 explained: 'The cause of his death was carbuncle on the spine. His sufferings were great but his departure was quite unexpected by us as well as himself.\(^1\) James' death, together with a very severe drought around that time, led to much of his property and livestock being sold – interestingly much of this was taken up by future cattle baron Sir Sidney Kidman, the greatest cattle baron in Australia's history.

James, John and Priscilla Chambers lived in extra-ordinary times — a childhood of prosperity that quickly turned to loss of all they owned, then revival of their father's fortunes only to lose parents, grandmother and two brothers in quick succession. Generous and caring support and guidance from their mother's sisters in the following difficult years enabled them, together with their brother Benjamin and their new wives, to take on the mighty challenge of sailing to the far end of the globe and chancing their luck on a better future — which they pulled off with a breathtaking level of success. James, John and Priscilla, and also their nephew William Jackson Chambers had quite large families and have collectively left behind a very substantial dynasty of Wilson descendants in Australia (and probably none at all in England!).

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir

I enjoyed the article on Harriet Arbuthnot in the Spring Journal – a worthy entrant to the series of British Diarists.

You say (at the top of page 30) 'the expression *prime minister* was not used in its modern sense until the early twentieth century', and of course it is correct that in the nineteenth century the official term was 'First Lord of the Treasury'. But the term was in use much earlier – James Woodforde himself refers to Mr Pitt as 'the prime Minister' on more than one occasion.

However, it may be that the expression was not universally known. The book *Recollections of a Sussex Parson* by Edward Boys Ellman, 1815-1906 (reviewed in the Journal of Summer 2008) includes an amusing anecdote from the author's childhood.

His father, John Spencer Ellman, was much engaged with politics in Sussex, and when Lord Liverpool had to resign in 1827 Ellman was anxious to know who was to succeed him. He arranged to have a message brought down from London as soon as the new Prime Minister was appointed. The news was brought to him by his groom, a man who evidently only knew the word 'prime' as a slang term denoting approval, for he delivered a more respectful message: 'Mr Canning is a very good minister'.

Katharine Solomon Wimbledon

### 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, student members £10) becomes due on 1 January and should be forwarded to the Treasurer, Dr David Case, 25 Archery Square, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7JA.

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