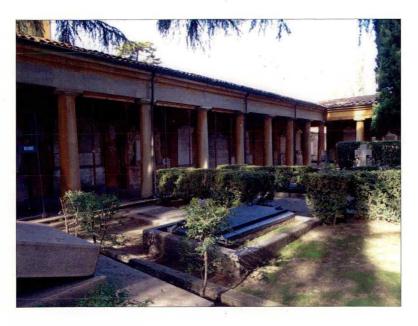
PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY JOURNAL



The Non-Catholic Section of the Certosa Cemetery, Bologna – Burial place of Samuel Woodforde, R.A.

To Spragg's lame son for a Christmas Carol – gave – 0: 0: 6

Morn' very fair & fine -

SWS

Afternoon – Ditto –

SWS

The Diary of James Woodforde, Vol. 9, 25 December 1781

The most important as well as the most trivial notes in my Father's journal generally concluded with the state of wind.

"Poor Mrs Burgess died in childbed," says he in one part – "Poor Tom Burgess much afflicted: wind W.N.W.". I do not know how it is, but that statement of the wind always alleviated any pain I felt at the afflictions he related. There was a consolation in finding that the course of nature went on. One contrasted the cool perseverance of the wind doing its duty with the griefs of my father's friends.

Poor Tom Burgess had lost his wife, but yet he ought to be comforted, for the wind was not a south-wester. My dear father had such a habit of recording the state of the wind on everything, that I will not positively affirm he did not sometimes head a Christmas account with

"Blowing hard; wind S.W."

Benjamin Haydon, *Autobiography & Memoirs*, 1746–1846, Vol. 1, 1926

ISSN 1365-327X

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Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

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EDITORIAL

One of the characteristics of Advent or, as Alan Bennett, with typical waspishness, has it 'what nowadays is called the countdown to Christmas', is the recommending of books published during the course of the preceding year. Of the books I have to mention, two are works of members of this Society: Alan Ledger's A Moment in Time, a biography of the Keble brothers (reviewed elsewhere in this Journal) and Roy and Lesley Adkins's Gibraltar which describes in fascinating detail the siege of that place - 'the greatest in British history' – which lasted from 1779-1783. Their story begins with the sinking, at Spithead, of the Royal George which was intended to form part of the fleet that, it was hoped, would bring relief to the beleaguered Rock. Despite the enduring popularity of William Cowper's poem - "Toll for the Brave? The Brave! that are no more" etc – the purpose of the voyage on which she was supposed to set sail has largely been forgotten. Nor did Woodforde make any reference to the plight of the garrison although he did express relief at "the joyful News of Peace......with America, France and Spain" (25 Jan. 1783).

Quite a different book is Judith Flanders's *Christmas: a Biography*. Whilst clearly aimed at the seasonal purchaser, it is far from being the kind of market-conscious potboiler that gets piled high in the supermarkets. It is a sharp, scrupulously researched examination of what Christmas has meant, especially in Britain and North America over the centuries. The author makes typically careful use of Woodforde's diary and is able to point out that although he 'attended many parties on 5 January in Norfolk', he never labelled them Twelfth Night celebrations. Likewise, whilst on 25 December 1785, 'My large Wax Candle was lighted up this Evening, being Christmas Day' as though it were an annual event, he had never once mentioned it in his previous quarter century of diary-keeping. A further book which members of this Society may enjoy is Richard Holmes's This Long Pursuit: Reflections of a Romantic Biographer, culled from his working notebooks and involving subjects as varied as Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle and the first woman to attend a meeting of the Royal Society, Mary Wollstonecraft, the painter Thomas Lawrence, and the Dutch intellectual Isabelle de Tuyll (Boswell's 'Zélide'). Holmes is

especially good on the byways down which biography leads. Byways and airways, for at one point, when writing his biography of Coleridge, he became obsessed with ballooning.

You will read these words almost exactly fifty years after the notion of a Parson Woodforde Society first found expression in print. On 7 December 1967 the Personal Column of the *Times* contained the following notice;

PARSON WOODFORDE. The many who have enjoyed "The Diary of a country Parson" and who would be interested to hear of the proposed Parson Woodforde Society are invited to write for particulars to Box 0266 K. The Times.

Any who responded would have thereby been directed to the Revd Canon Leslie Rule Wilson who, a fortnight later, followed it up with a letter, containing a similar invitation, to *Country Life*. By the following March he had written to all who had responded to say that "As eighty people have asked to become members, I feel that we are justified in forming the Society". Which is all a rather long-winded way of saying that next year will mark our fiftieth anniversary.

The highlight of the celebrations will take place over the week-end of 28-30 September when the Annual Gathering & Frolic will take place at the Maid's Head Hotel, Norwich.

Someone who has been a member for very many of those fifty years is Ann Elliott, our Membership Secretary since the year 2000 and, prior to that, editor of the Notes & Queries section of the Journal. Ann has now decided that it is time to step down from this crucially important role which she has performed with both charm and efficiency for such a long time. We thank her and wish her many future years in which she can deservedly observe the progress of the Society from the sidelines. Happily, Ann's position has been taken up by one of our new Committee members, Diana McKay.

Whether or not, like Woodforde, you enjoy 'a fine Surloin of Beef' and 'Plumb Puddings' on Christmas Day, do have a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

THE LIFE AND WIT OF SYDNEY SMITH

Based on a talk given by Martin Brayne at the Annual Frolic, Holbrook House Hotel, Wincanton, 9 September 2017

Although Sydney Smith belonged to a generation later than James Woodforde – he was born at Woodford in Essex in 1771 – superficially at least they had much in common. They were both educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford and both became clergymen but although products of the same education they could hardly have been more different. Sydney became a Whig, James a Tory. Smith moved in aristocratic and intellectual circles, was famous in his life time and became known as 'the Smith of Smiths'; Woodforde was happiest among the minor clergy, lived an obscure life and only achieved fame more than a hundred years after his death.

The scholastic achievements of the two were likewise contrasted. While James Woodforde was, at Winchester, a pupil of very ordinary accomplishments, Smith was an outstanding scholar who became Prefect of Hall (the equivalent of Head Boy). However, while Woodforde was a loyal Wykehamist who appears to have been proud of his old school, Smith was to describe the public school system as one of 'abuse, neglect and vice'. In part at least this may reflect their different temperaments, the one a conformist, the other something of a rebel, but it may also be the consequence of a marked change – for the worse – in the running of the school. By the time Smith arrived the Headmaster was Joseph Warton, a brilliant scholar but ageing and apparently unconcerned that the numbers on roll were falling drastically and discipline neglected so that bullying was rife.² Even a future Archbishop of Canterbury – William Howley – resorted to violence: 'he knocked me down with the chess-board for check-mating him'. 3 Sydney's younger brother, Courtney, twice ran away. Just as were Sydney's criticisms, they were somewhat abrasive so that in one history of the College he is referred to as 'the rogue Wykehamist Sydney Smith'.4

Nor did New College meet with his entire approval. Writing some years later about what he saw as the shortcomings of the university system, he anticipated the reforms which would not be introduced until after the first University Commission's 1852 report,

suggesting that, instead of an education based entirely on the classics, the universities should teach 'all the liberal arts and sciences useful to human life'. 5 As it was, he asserted that 'a genuine Oxford tutor would shudder to hear his young men disputing upon moral and political truth, forming and pulling down theories and indulging in all the boldness of youthful discussion. He would augur nothing from it but impiety to God and treason to kings'.6

Anyone who held such views was not likely to find that advancement in the Church would come easily and so it proved. After ordination in 1796 he left Oxford to become curate at Netheravon, a rather bleak spot on Salisbury Plain. Famously, he was to define the countryside – in which he would spend the biggest part of his life – as 'a kind of healthy grave'. After a year at Netheravon he wrote 'Nothing can equal the profound, the immeasurable, the awful dulness of this place, in which I lie dead and buried, in hope of joyful resurrection in the year 1796'. More seriously, he was truly appalled by the poverty and ignorance of many of his parishioners. On a very limited income himself (the £100 a year he still received as a Fellow of New College was his main source), he established a Sunday School in which reading and writing were taught and a 'school of industry' in which girls were taught to sew, darn and knit. He also ensured that the charity of his squire's wife, Mrs Hicks Beach, was directed towards the most deserving cases.

'Joyful resurrection' did not in fact take place until the summer of 1798. The squire of Netheravon, Michael Hicks Beach, had provisionally arranged for Sydney to take his son, also Michael, on a Grand Tour of Europe. The continuation of war on the Continent, however, necessitated a change of plan and it was decided that the Athens of the North, Edinburgh, should be their destination. Young Michael was by no means a dedicated scholar but whatever frustrations Sydney experienced in his tutorial role was more than cancelled out by the satisfaction he received from the friendships he formed. The Scottish Enlightenment was in full intellectual ferment and Edinburgh was at its centre. He quickly made the acquaintance of Dugald Stewart, the professor of Moral Philosophy at the university and the pioneer of political economy. Soon after he met Francis Horner, Francis Jeffrey – a future Lord Advocate – and

Henry Brougham – a future Lord Chancellor. Of Horner he wrote, "My desire to know him proceeded first of all from being cautioned against him by some excellent and feeble people to whom I had brought letters of introduction, and who represented him to me as a person of violent political opinions; I interpreted this to mean a person who thought for himself ...". Such unconformity was to be typical of Sydney Smith.

With these brilliant friends he joined in the foundation at Jeffrey's home, 18 Buccleuch Place, of *The Edinburgh Review* in 1803. Lasting as these friendships proved Sydney always found the Scots a source of humour. When they were debating a suitable motto for the *Review* and before hitting upon the forbidding words JUDEX DAMNATUR CUM NOCENS ABSOLVITUR ('The judge is condemned when the guilty are acquitted') he had suggested TENUI MUSAM MEDIATAMUR AVENA which he had translated as 'We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal'!

By this time Smith had married, having in 1800 walked down the aisle at Cheam in Surrey with Catherine Pybus, a friend of his sister Maria. Having solicited his father, Robert, for some financial help towards marriage, he had received the unambiguous and, given the record of their relationship, not unsurprising response 'Not a penny'. As his biographer Hesketh Pearson has pointed out, 'Sydney, as an honest churchman, perceived that one of his marriage vows would be quickly accomplished ... he endowed his wife with all his worldly goods flinging his entire fortune into her lap. It consisted of "six small silver teaspoons, which from much wear had become ghosts of their former selves".'8 Fortunately, 'Mrs Sydney', as she was always known, brought to the marriage a modest dowry, to which a grateful Hicks Beach added a cheque for £750. It was a love match which endured until parted by death.

It was Catherine who persuaded Sydney that if he was to make a name for himself in the Church they must go to London. So in 1804 they moved to the capital, Sydney earning a living as a non-beneficed preacher. He had a compelling pulpit manner and his message had a particular appeal to the more progressive Whigs. Although his own faith was that of an orthodox Anglican, he had a strong detestation of religious bigotry and was appalled by the discrimination against both Catholics on the one hand and

Dissenters on the other. At the Temple Church he preached on Toleration – 'Charity towards those who dissent from us on religious opinions is always a proper subject for the pulpit. If such discussions militate against the views of any particular party, the fault is not in him who is thus erroneously said to introduce politics into the Church, but in those who have really brought the Church into politics'. Thus, while Woodforde could write (on 28 January 1783):

I read Prayers, Preached by desire of Mr Custance and administered the H. Sacrament at Weston – Mr Custance at Church & at H. Sacrament – Considering the Quantity of Snow falling this morning, there was a respectable Congregation ... Among the rest was my Thatcher Harrison & rec'd the H. Sacrament from my Hands – he is reputed to be a rank Methodist.

Smith was of the view that 'No eel in the well-sanded fist of a cook-maid, upon the eve of being skinned, ever twisted and writhed as an orthodox parson does when he is compelled by the grip of reason to admit anything in favour of a Dissenter'.

This opinion was expressed in the anonymously published *Letters* of *Peter Plymley* which appeared in 1807–8, in which the writer railed against all types of religious and political intolerance. Smith, always anxious to gain promotion within the Church, denied being the author but his style was unmistakeable and his friends had little doubt as to their origin. It was not until more than thirty years later when, compiling his collected works, he went as far as to admit that

Somehow or other, it came to be conjectured that I was the author: I have always denied it; but, finding that I deny it in vain, I have thought it might be as well to include the letters in this Collection. ¹⁰

Eventually, in 1806, thanks to the assistance of his Whig friend Lady Holland, Sydney gained a living of his own: Foston, in North Yorkshire. Although worth £600 a year, it was quite a remote spot which the new incumbent famously described as "twelve miles from a lemon", and was without a habitable rectory. For almost five years, while a new rectory to Smith's design was being built, the family lived at Heslington, near York, in what is now the Catholic chaplaincy of the University. For the benefit of his sophisticated

London friends he described the performance of his clerical duties at Foston in the following amusing terms:

'Tis mine, with all my consecrated dress on To read the evening and the morning lesson; With band bi-forked and with visage calm To join the bawling, quav'ring Clerk in Psalm; With brawny fist the velvet lump to beat And rouse the faithful snoring at my feet.

In fact, he took his pastoral duties very seriously as he took the farming of his glebe, but the latter could be frustrating as a letter he wrote to *The Farmer's Magazine* in 1819 makes clear:

Sir,

It has been my lot to have passed the greater part of my life in cities. About six or seven years ago I was placed in the country, in a situation where I was under the necessity of becoming a farmer; and amongst the many expensive blunders I have made, I warn those who may find themselves in similar situations against Scotch Sheep and Oxen for ploughing. I had heard a great deal about the fine flavour of Scotch mutton, and it was one of the great luxuries I promised myself in farming. A luxury certainly it is; but the price paid for it is such that I would rather give up the use of animal food altogether than obtain it by such a system of cares and anxieties. Ten times a day my men were called off from their work to hunt the Scotch sheep out of my own or my neighbour's wheat. They crawled through hedges where I should have thought a rabbit could scarcely have found admission; and where crawling would not do they had recourse to leaping. Five or six times they all assembled and set out on their return to the North. My bailiff took a place in the mail and overtook them half way to Newcastle. Then it was quite impossible to get them fat. They consumed my turnips in winter, and my clover in the summer, without any apparent addition to their weight; 10 or 12 per cent always died of the rot; and more would have perished in the same manner if they had not been prematurely eaten out of the way.

My ploughing oxen [to which he gave the names Lug, Tug, Haul and Maul] were an equal subject of vexation. They had a constant purging upon them, which it was impossible to stop. They ate more than twice as much as the same number of horses. They did half as much work as the same number of horses. They could not

bear hot weather, nor wet weather, nor go well downhill. It took five men to shoe an ox. They ran against my gate posts, lay down in the cart whenever they were tired, and ran away at the sight of a stranger.

I have now got into a good breed of English sheep, and useful cart-horses and am doing very well. 11

Typically, he divided part of his glebe into allotments for parishioners to work for a nominal rent.¹²

Good as Sydney was to the poor, there can be no denying the attraction which blue blood had for him. Only five miles from Foston was Castle Howard, the palatial home of the earls of Carlisle. Although the 6th Earl was sometimes irritated by the radical nature of Smith's contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*, he nevertheless used his influence with his wife's family, the Devonshires, to present him to the living of nearby Londesborough, worth a handsome £800 a year. In what was increasingly regarded as a rather dodgy deal, Smith agreed to resign the benefice after nine years in favour of the Duke of Devonshire's nephew who would then be of canonical age.

In common with many another humourist Sydney Smith was prone to depression. So too was the Earl's wife, Georgiana Cavendish, who became one of his regular correspondents and to whom prior to her husband succeeding to the title, he wrote:

Foston Feb. 16th, 1820

Dear Lady Georgiana,

Nobody has suffered more from low spitis than I have done – so I feel for you. 1st. Live as well as you dare. 2nd. Go into the shower-bath with a small quantity of water at a temperature low enough to give you a slight sensation of cold, 70 or 80. 3rd. Amusing books. 4th. Short views of human life – no further than dinner or tea. 5th. Be as busy as you can. 6th. See as much as you can of those friends who respect and like you. 7th. And of those acquaintances who amuse you. 8th. Make no secret of low spirits to your friends, but talk of them freely – they are always worse for dignified concealment. 9th. Attend to the effect tea and coffee produce upon you. 10th. Compare your lot with that of other people. 11th. Don't expect too much of human life – a sorry business at the best. 12th. Avoid poetry, dramatic representations

(except comedy), music, serious novels, melancholy sentimental people, and everything likely to excite feeling or emotion not ending in active benevolence. 13th. Do good, and endeavour to please everybody of every degree. 14th. Be as much as you can in the open air without fatigue. 15th. Make the room where you commonly sit, gay and pleasant. 17th. Don't be too severe upon yourself, or under-rate yourself but do yourself justice. 18th. Keep good blazing fires. 19th. Be firm and constant in the exercise of rational religion. 20th. Believe me, dear Lady Georgiana,

Very truly yours, Sydney Smith¹³

Given the political differences which separated Smith from the great majority of country clergy, it is not surprising that he made few friends among his Yorkshire colleagues. A notable exception was Francis Wrangham, the Archdeacon of the East Riding, who shared similar views on Catholic emancipation and earlier in his career had set up a parochial library in his parish of Hunmanby. 14 Not that this provided immunity from Smith's wit. Writing to Wrangham, who had a tendency to show off his knowledge, for some advice, he added - 'I am sorry to cause you trouble, but to apologise to you for asking information is, as it were, to beg pardon a cow for milking, or a pump for giving water'. And, after a day's fishing on the lake at Castle Howard, he wrote to Lady Carlisle, 'We had a miraculous fishing, catching 105 perch, each larger than Mr Wrangham's fingers, and quite as rapacious'. 15 Smith was always suggesting that his friend was on the look-out for promotion, even suggesting that 'On a distant rumour of a vacancy lately, he asked to be made Dev of Algiers'. 16 The joke, as Alan Bell has pointed out, is that Wrangham was quite innocent of any kind of avarice, ecclesiastical or otherwise. In truth, it was Smith who was ambitious for a mitre.

Each year Sydney would spend some time in London, being very popular in the fashionable world that centred on Holland House. Writing to her son at Oxford in 1823 Lady Holland reported, 'Sydney is as joyous as ever, making us laugh beyond all measure'. There he would meet and enjoy the company of the other great wits of the day – Henry Luttrell, who he always twitted on matters gastronomic (it was Luttrell that he said conceived of heaven as "eating pâté de foie gras to the sound of trumpets"), the

banker-poet Samuel Rogers, the politician Lord Lansdowne, who he visited at Bowood, and, of a younger generation, the politician and poet Thomas Babington Macaulay ("There are flashes of silence in his conversation which are very agreeable"). It was Macaulay who labelled him 'the Smith of Smiths'.

Something of the surreal nature of his conversation is caught in this account by the genre artist C. R. Leslie of a dinner at the house of Lord Lyndhurst, the Lord Chancellor:

..... The conversation turned on the custom in India of widows burning themselves, an instance of which was recent. When the subject was pretty well exhausted Smith began to defend the practice, asserting that no wife who truly loved her husband could wish to survive him.

"But if Lord Lyndhurst were to die, you would be sorry that Lady Lyndhurst should burn herself."

"Lady Lyndhurst," he replied, "would no doubt, as an affectionate wife, consider it her duty to burn herself, but it would be our duty to put her out; and, as the wife of the Lord Chancellor, Lady Lyndhurst should not be put out like an ordinary widow. It should be a state affair. First a procession of the Judges, and then of the lawyers."

"But where, Mr Smith, are the clergy?"

"All gone to congratulate the new Chancellor." 18

But, despite the nonsensical nature of much of his humour, Sydney Smith continued to pursue the causes for which he felt deeply. Harriet Martineau described his tendency to switch from humour to high seriousness – 'In the midst of his jocose talk, Sydney Smith occasionally became suddenly serious, when some ancient topic was brought up or some life-enduring sensibility touched; and his voice, eye and manner at such times disposed one to tears almost as much as his ordinary discourse did to laughter. Among the subjects which was thus sacred to him was that of the Anti-Slavery cause.'19 It was a cause which he had taken up, in a prophetical manner, in the Edinburgh Review in 1824, inveighing against 'the great disgrace and danger of America - the existence of slavery which, if not corrected will one day entail ... a bloody servile war upon the Americans - which will separate America into slave states and states disclaiming slavery, and which remains at present the foulest blot in the moral character of that people'.

It was thanks to the patronage of Lord Lyndhurst that in 1828 Smith was made a prebendary of Bristol Cathedral. It was in Bristol Cathedral on 5 November in that year that he caused a sensation by, instead of delivering the traditional sermon praising loyalty to the monarchy, he preached on the virtues of religious toleration – especially towards Catholics. The following year the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed.

In 1829 Smith exchanged Foston for Combe Florey, near Taunton, writing to another of his regular correspondents, Lady Grey - 'I am extremely pleased with Combe Florey, and pronounce it to be a very pretty place in a very beautiful country. The house I shall make decently convenient. I have 60 acres of good land round it. The habit of the country is to give dinners and not to sleep out ... My neighbours look very much like other people's neighbours: their remarks are generally of a meteorological nature'. Two years later, with the Whigs at last in power and the Reform Bill being bounced back and forth in Parliament, Sydney was appointed to 'a snug thing', a Canon Residentiary of St Paul's. This involved a visit to Court where he went 'horrible to relate! With strings to my shoes instead of buckles - not from Jacobinism, but ignorance. I saw two or three Tory lords looking at me with dismay ... gathering my sacerdotal petticoats about me (like a lady conscious of thick ankles) I escaped further observation.'

One of his duties as canon of St Paul's was to see to the maintenance of the monuments. He wrote to his friend Henry Hart Milman, who for some time had been a canon of Westminster:

Pray tell me the sort of person you employ for cleaning the monuments. Is it the curate, or a statuary, or is it a mere mason's labourer? Or does it (as in the case of a Scotchman caught and washed for the first time) require acid? I propose to establish a cleaning fund and to compel every dead hero to pay something towards keeping himself clean.²⁰

Despite the apparent flippancy, Smith was a conscientious and effective cathedral administrator.

From this time onwards he retained Combe Florey, where he had again built himself a new parsonage, but, while recognising the need to 'hasten home and feed my starving flock', spent only Christmas and part of the summer in Somerset, most of the rest of the year being in London, 'submerged in a Caspian Sea of soup'. ²¹ With increasing age he became more conservative, opposing the open ballot and, especially in so far as it threatened to give more power to the Lords Spiritual, the Ecclesiastical Commission. An old friend, Lord John Russell, was not convinced by his arguments – put forward in the *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton* – and was afraid that he might not accept a dinner invitation. Sydney replied, mixing conviction with affection –

You say you are not convinced by my pamphlet. I am afraid that I am a very arrogant person. But I do assure you that, in the fondest moments of self-conceit, the idea of convincing a Russell that he was wrong never came across my mind. Euclid (dear John) would have had a bad chance with you if you had happened to form an opinion that the interior angles of a triangle were not equal to two right angles, the more poor Euclid demonstrated, the more you would not have been convinced ...

I shall have great pleasure in dining with you on Sunday. I thought you had known me better than to imagine I really took such things to heart. I will fight you to the last drop of my ink; dine with you to the last drop of your claret; and entertain for you, *bibendo et scribendo*, sincere affection and respect.²²

Although he had read and reviewed many travellers' tales for the *Edinburgh Review*, and had, without Catherine, visited the Hollands in Paris in 1826, an increased income made foreign travel possible. In 1835 and in the belief that 'every wife has a right to insist upon seeing Paris', they went to France. There they 'saw all the cockney sights and dined in all the usual restaurants'. The trip was a great success, not least gastronomically. Two years later a visit to the Low Countries and the Rhine agreed with him rather less, writing to Lady Carlisle, 'they are usurped from the kingdom of frogs and are the proper domicile of aquatic reptiles ... Everything you breathe is fog or Tobacco.'23 Catherine took her tourism seriously, immersing herself in the guidebooks, but Smith thought having 'seen between 7 and 800 women without clothes painted by Rubens', he must 'positively refuse Mrs Smith to see any more'.24

Smith remained both a conscientious clergyman and avid diner-out until almost the end. In the summer before he died he wrote:

I am seventy-four years of age; and being Canon of St Paul's in London, and a rector of a parish in the country, my time is divided equally between town and country. I am living among the best society in the metropolis, and at ease in my circumstances; in tolerable health, a mild Whig, a tolerating Churchman, and much given to talking, laughing and noise. I dine with the rich in London, and physic the poor in the country, passing from the sauces of Dives to the sores of Lazarus. I am, upon the whole, a happy man, have found the world an entertaining world, and am thankful to Providence for the part allotted to me in it.'

To Lady Holland who, like Sydney, died in 1845 he expressed the belief that 'We shall all meet again in another planet, cured of all our defects. Rogers will be less irritable; Macaulay more silent; Hallam will assent; Jeffrey will speak slower; Bobus [his elder brother, Robert] will be just as he is. I shall be more respectful to the upper clergy'. He died at his London home, 56 Green Street, on 22 February 1845 and is buried in Kensal Green cemetery. A plaque in Bristol Cathedral sums up his qualities. It was erected in 1909 —

As a tardy recognition
Of one who reasoned liberally
Illuminating civic wisdom with Christian charity
Political judgement with social wit
And common sense with uncommon insight.

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in this selection, written just five months before he died, was addressed to Lady Carlisle.

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BOOK REVIEW

Allan P. Ledger, A Moment in Time: John and Thomas Keble and their Cotswold Life, Umbria Press, 2 Umbria Street, London SW15 5DP, 2017, £14.99.

John Keble was born in 1792, when James Woodforde had been Rector of Weston for sixteen years. John and his brother Thomas, born in 1793, grew up in Fairford, in Gloucestershire, a very similar world to Woodforde's home at Ansford and Castle Cary. The Kebles too went up to Oxford, Corpus Christi rather than New College. However, things had begun to change at Oxford in the thirty years between Woodforde's departure for Weston and John Keble's arrival at Corpus. The examination system had been reformed and degrees were classified. The Kebles' father, unlike Woodforde's, had scholarly interests and taught his sons at home. John, at eighteen, secured a double first class degree and was elected a fellow of Oriel, then the academically most distinguished

Oxford college, and the first college to elect fellows on academic merit. Thomas only secured a second, but became a tutor and fellow of Corpus.

John Keble's later colleagues as fellows of Oriel included Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman, over whom he exercised great influence. He was one of the most influential Oxford churchmen of his generation. His *The Christian Year*, published in 1827, was one of the most widely read poetry collections of the nineteenth century, going through 158 editions by 1873, with sales of 379,000 copies. Some of the poems are still sung as hymns. His sermon preached before the judges at the Oxford assizes in 1833 was regarded by Newman as the origin of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement. He spent most of his life, after his father's death in 1835, as vicar of the country parish of Hursley in Hampshire. However, his influence was such that two years after his death in 1866 the first new Oxford college for two hundred and fifty years was founded in his memory. Thomas became vicar of Bisley in Gloucestershire in 1827.

The Keble brothers' early ordained lives were spent in very much the same way as Woodforde's fifty years previously. Their father, like many eighteenth-century incumbents, lived in Fairford, the nearest market town to his parishes of Coln St Aldwyn and Poulton. He was also non-resident incumbent of Blewbury, then in Berkshire, where he employed a curate. The Kebles, like the Woodfordes, were well established in local society. They, like Woodforde in his various curacies around Ansford and Castle Cary, and later his neighbours around Weston, exemplify the lives of country clergy in the 'long eighteenth century' until the 1830s. John, while living at home in Fairford, was curate of Eastleach Martin and Eastleach Turville, whose rector was vicar of Burford, where he lived, and then Southrop. He and Tom also assisted their father as his health failed at Coln and Poulton. Although not living in their parishes, they regularly and frequently visited their parishioners and were attentive to their needs. However, following the allegations in the 1830s that clergy who did not live in their parishes were pastorally inattentive to their parishioners, both Keble brothers subsequently held only one parish, each building a new parsonage house in which to live. Thomas Keble was considered an exemplary Tractarian incumbent, not only building a

new vicarage, but rebuilding Bisley church and building new churches for the four hamlets in the parish. He also sought to relieve the distress of his parishioners resulting from unemployment following the decline of the cloth industry in the Cotswolds, distributing food and clothes, and organising emigration for those who wanted to leave for America, Australia and New Zealand.

Allan Ledger, whose father was vicar of Southrop, and whose uncle was vicar of Eastleach Martin and Turville, provides a wealth of detail about the Kebles' family background and their long association with Fairford, and about Thomas's ministry at Bisley, as well as information about succeeding generations of Kebles at Fairford until 1996. There are also twenty-six appendices providing wide-ranging additional information about the Keble family and their Gloucestershire parishes. These include a letter with a new account of John Keble's intervention in the Gloucestershire agricultural depression following the Napoleonic Wars and, more surprisingly, an article from *The Times* of 23 July 2016 suggesting the Tractarian influence on Theresa May's father.

For those who want to know more of John Keble, Georgina Battiscombe's *John Keble: A Study in Limitations*, Constable and Co., London, 1963 remains the most recent biography. However, the best source for both Kebles is the articles in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, which is available online through public libraries.

IN SEARCH OF SAM

Of the many brilliant pieces, incorporating both stylish writing and diligent research, which Roy Winstanley wrote for this Journal, few are the equal of the 'commemorative essay' on Samuel Woodforde RA which appeared in the Spring 1973 number. The part to which I have more than once been drawn back is that which deals with Samuel's final days:

In the summer of 1817 he was travelling between Ferara and Bologna. Jane [his wife] may have accompanied him, but it seems more likely that he was alone, seeing that no word from her about that fatal journey ever reached the Woodfordes. Somewhere along the route he was taken ill. All that was ever known about his illness was that it was a "fever". We do not know where he died, except the bare fact that it was in Bologna, nor in what circumstances.

But it must have been a lonely, horrible death. I have no use for the romance-biography, and the last thing I would wish to do is to emulate Lytton Strachey reconstructing the last moments of Queen Victoria. But some aspects of Samuel's last illness are easy to imagine. Roads, and conditions generally, were much more primitive in Italy than in contemporary England: and this was the ravaged Italy of the immediate post-war epoch. He would have grown steadily worse as the coach rocked and lurched over the stony tracks. Then, arriving at the town, he would, perhaps, have been carried upstairs and put to bed at some strange inn. There would have been heat, raging thirst, giddiness, delirium, the foreign tongue which his failing mind could no longer grasp. ¹

Just a hint of the 'romance-biography' here perhaps? Would the road across the flat, north Italian plain really have been 'stony'?² Was he taken to 'some strange inn' or to the apartment he and Jane had – we do not know – been renting for weeks? Yet, Winstanley succeeds in holding our attention: we will always remember that Samuel died of a fever in, or near, Bologna.

We do not know quite why the couple were in Italy. Samuel and Jane appear to have set off shortly after their marriage, at St Bride's in the City of London on 7 October 1815, and it may be that the couple intended to take up permanent residence there as Samuel Redgrave speculates.³ Some support for this theory is provided in

the diary of friend and fellow artist Joseph Farington who had reported that, on his arrival in Rome, Woodforde was 'much disappointed' at the increase in the cost of living since he had left that city in 1791.⁴ Whatever the reason for the Woodfordes being in Italy that was certainly where he breathed his last and is buried.

As part of his research Winstanley contacted the Italian Institute in London enquiring about Samuel's place of burial and, on 26 April 1972, the Deputy Director replied:

Dear Mr Winstanley,

I am pleased to inform you that I have now heard from the Sovrintendenza Archivistia per L'Emilia e la Romagna about the painter Samuel Woodforde. It appears that he was buried in the cemetery of the Certosa in Bologna in the section for non-Catholics, place No. 31. On the tombstone appears only his Christian name and surname.⁵

In his article Winstanley says that 'A plain stone bearing only his name and the date was set up to mark the grave'. In fact, there is no reference to a date either in this letter or in an accompanying letter in Italian from the Director of the State Archives in Bologna which states that 'Sulla lapide risultano soltanto nome e cognome'. This same letter says that 'il pittore inglese' was buried on 28 July 1817, the day after, according to the reference works, he had died, conforming with Italian practice, especially during the hot summer months.

This year being the 200th anniversary of this event Ann and I decided to mark it by paying a trip to Bologna and the Certosa Cemetery. We were well-prepared. We had read that the cemetery had been established just sixteen years previously on the site of a former Carthusian monastery and graveyard which had been closed by Napoleon in 1796. Bologna was at that time part of the short-lived Napoleonic Cisalpine Republic. Bonaparte's own sister, Eliza Bonaparte Baciocchi, is buried beneath one of the many sculptural masterpieces which are a feature of the Cemetery.

In Samuel's day it was still a relatively modest place but over the course of the next century there developed around the original nucleus a complex of loggias, cloisters and porticoes that became progressively larger and more monumental.

MUNICIPIO DI BOLOGNA

CINCIPERO CONCONALE

Archivir N.

Recinto Of l'Anthing

Qualità Copper

Numero 3/

Titolo e data d' acquisto /8//

INDIVIDUI SEPOLTI Cognome e Nome	Paternith	DATA d'immissione
Fordfud Samuele Ingless		20 Lagio Vin
		1

The internment record

Byron, visiting Bologna just two years after Samuel's burial, wrote to John Murray describing how he –

... went to the beautiful Cimetery of Bologna – beyond the Walls – and found, beside the Superb Burial Ground, an original of a Custode who reminded me of the gravedigger in Hamlet – He had a collection of Capuchin Skulls labelled on the forehead – and taking down one of them said "this was Brother Desiderio Berro who died at forty – one of my best friends – I begged his head of his Brethren after his decease and they gave it me – I put it in lime and then boiled it – here it is teeth and all in excellent preservation – He was the merriest, cleverest fellow I ever knew, wherever he went he brought joy, and when any one was melancholy the sight of him was enough to make him cheerful again – he walked so

actively you might have taken him for a Dancer – he joked – he laughed – oh he was such a Frate as I never saw before nor ever shall again" – He told me that he had himself planted all the Cypresses in the Cimetery – that he had the greatest attachment to them and to his dead people – that since 1801 they had buried fifty three thousand persons.⁷

Byron's stay in Bologna was like the visitation of a force of nature. Twenty-five years later Charles Dickens, the last number of *Martin Chuzzlewit* fresh from the press, had set out for Italy and, reaching Bologna, found that floods in the Apennines were detaining many travellers bound for Florence. He was obliged to accept an 'out-of-the-way room' at the top of the hotel which contained a bed 'big enough for a boarding school'. There the waiter 'had one idea in connection with the English; and the subject of this harmless monomania was Lord Byron'. No matter what the subject of conversation, or the question asked, the waiter would find an excuse to reminisce about 'Milor Beeron'. As with most places he visited, Byron made a strong and lasting impression. There is a Via Byron to this day and buses carry his name on their destination display.

Like the poet, the novelist visited the Certosa:

There was a very smart official in attendance at the Cemetery where the little Cicerone had buried his children. When the little Cicerone suggested to me, in a whisper, that there would be no offence in presenting this officer, in return for some slight extra service, with a couple of pauls (about ten pence, English money), I looked incredulously at his cocked hat, wash-leather gloves, well-made uniform and dazzling buttons, and rebuked the little Cicerone with a grave shake of the head. For, in splendour of appearance, he was at least equal to the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod; and the idea of his carrying, as Jeremy Diddler would say, 'such a thing as tenpence' away with him, seemed monstrous. He took it in an excellent part, however, when I made bold to give it him, and pulled off his cocked hat with a flourish that would have been a bargain at double the money.⁹

Eschewing the modern equivalent of Dickens's 'little Cicerone', Ann and I took ourselves to the Via Rizzoli in the city centre and boarded the Number 14 bus, heading for the Piazza Giovanni XXIII and soon, having crossed the line of the walls, were heading westwards. Fortunately, it was not a match day as our place of



All that remains to mark Samuel's burial place

descent was 'Stadio', the stadium of Bologna's Serie A football team. A helpful passenger signalled the direction in which we were to walk with a flourish that would have done justice to the 'smart official' and soon we saw a line of tall, majestic cypresses. The very ones, surely, planted by Lord Byron's Custode! A beautiful covered arcade led all the way to the imposing south-eastern entrance. This was on the opposite side of the Cemetery to the 'Recinto degli Acattolica' in which Samuel lay so that we had plenty of time to admire the painted tombs, sculptures and later works of stucco and scagliola as well as the collective monuments to the heroes of the Risorgimento, the Great War and the Resistance.

Eventually, after many a thoughtful pause and sad shake of the head, and with the help of a modern version of the Custode, we found our way to the non-Catholic section of the cemetery. A cemetery within a cemetery, it was separated by high walls from an entrance drive on one side and the Jewish cemetery on the other. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, as most of the occupants were foreigners, although the hedges were well-manicured, the graves and tombstones were less well tended. In some places the plaster was peeling from the ochre-coloured walls and part of the portico

required support. Some of the gravestones were in an advanced state of disintegration and others seemed to have disappeared entirely, only a patch on the plaster indicating where they had been.

The system by which the graves were numbered was not immediately obvious but before long we identified No. 31. It lay beneath the portico which runs down the western side of the section but disappointment! No gravestone remained.

Had a mistake been made? We searched the rest of the graveyard but without success. We took ourselves to the nearby 'uffizio' and explained our problem. There the efficient, friendly staff were able to produce the original internment record. The place we had found was indeed Samuel Woodforde's last resting place. Assuming that, as the 1972 letter suggests, it was still there then, at some point in the last forty-five years the small memorial stone must have collapsed and been swept away.

Perhaps, at some future date, the Parson Woodforde Society may wish to restore it?

NOTES

- R. L. Winstanley, Samuel Woodforde R.A. (1763–1817): A Commemorative Essay, Journal, Vol. VI, 1.
- 2. C. Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, 1846, describes the journey from Bologna to Ferrara in very different terms. Because of the danger of robbers it was stipulated that 'whenever we left Bologna we should start so as not to arrive at Ferrara later than eight at night; and a delightful afternoon and evening journey it was, albeit through a flat district which gradually became more marshy [as they approached the Po] from the overflow of brooks and rivers in the recent heavy rains'.
- S. Redgrave, A Dictionary of Artists of the English School, 1878. Redgrave states that Samuel died of 'an inflammatory fever' at Ferrara but, if so, it seems unlikely that he would be buried the following day 30 miles away at Bologna.
- 4. J. Greig (ed.), The Farington Diary, Vol. VIII (1815-1821), 1928.
- Letter in the Society's archives, dated 26 April 1972 addressed to Mr Winstanley from the Italian Institute in Belgrave Square.
- Letter in Society's archives, dated '21 aprile 1972' from the Archivo di Stato, Bologna.
- 7. Leslie A. Marchand (ed.), Byron's Letters and Journals, Vol. 6, 1818–19: The Flesh is Frail, 1976.
- 8. Charles Dickens, Pictures from Italy, 1846.
- Charles Dickens, op. cit. Jeremy Diddler was the artful swindler in James Kenney's 1803 farce Raising the Wind.

FROLIC REPORT - Wincanton, 8-10 September 2017

Holbrook House, Wincanton, had been the venue for our Gatherings on a number of occasions in the early history of the Society. We were last there to celebrate our 25th anniversary (i.e. in 1993) and now we returned just one year short of our 50th year of studying the life and times of James Woodforde. Then we would meet in May, today early in Autumn. Nowadays we begin on the Friday evening with the AGM.

The Chairman welcomed us before introducing his Report. The decision made last year to reduce the number of journals from four to three per year, rather than increasing the subscription, appeared to have been successful in that there had been few resignations and none had quoted this as a reason. Mr Brayne, sadly, had to announce the deaths of two prominent members of the Society: Mrs Marjorie Futter, the author of *An Historical Walk around Weston Longville*, and Diary editor Peter Jameson. Attention was also drawn to the lengthy, entirely positive review of our latest publication, the new edition of Vol. 7, by Heather Edwards, which appeared in the *Eastern Daily Press* in March.

In presenting her report our treasurer thanked those members who had answered her appeal to pay by standing-order and to those who had now gift-aided their subscription. A particular thank-you was reserved for a Staffordshire member who had presented the Society with a cheque for £1000. Thanks too, were offered to our Membership Secretary, Ann Elliott who, after performing that role with charm and efficiency since 2000, has announced her intention to resign. An appeal was made for a replacement.

The following morning saw us assemble on the 'gravel sweep' of this country-house hotel for our transport to Bath. The direct route – across the old Somerset coalfield – being closed by roadworks, we were obliged to make a most picturesque diversion which took us round by Stourhead and Longleat: more Woodforde, less Skinner. Bath itself was busy with Janeites, many in period dress, participating in the Grand Regency Costumed Charity Promenade. We Woodfordeans, more modest in both numbers and appearance, sympathised with Fanny Price arriving at Mansfield Park.

After lunch, and having battled against the tide of rugby fans

flowing to the Recreation Ground for Bath v Saracens, we re-assembled at 1 Royal Crescent. More period costume but expert guides and what a fine job the Bath Preservation Trust have made of making this one of the most attractive locations in this not un-attractive city! The Custances' house at Portland Place must have been something like this when visited by the Woodfordes, uncle and niece, in 1795.

In the evening we sat down to a fine dinner at Holbrook House; the toast to 'the Imperishable Memory of Parson Woodforde' being proposed by Mr John King. This was prior to a talk by Mr Brayne on Woodforde's fellow collegian of a later generation, 'Humour's pink primate', Sydney Smith. Of this you can read more elsewhere in the Journal. The vote of thanks was proposed by Lee Abraham.

The following day, being Sunday, it was off to Ansford for the service at St Andrew's led by the Reverend Liz Mortimer, where we were welcomed by the bells rung by a team which included our Frolic organizers, the accomplished and industrious Jenny and Peter Alderson.

After lunch at Holbrook House, Pauline Fletcher was declared the winner of Katharine Solomon's ingenious and entertaining quiz and thanks were again rendered to Jenny and Peter for arranging yet another highly successful and enjoyable Frolic. With which, we broke up, vowing to meet in the same month next year – our 50th Frolic – in Norwich.

FROLIC QUIZ 2017

Sister Pounsett's Diary

Who knew that Sister Pounsett kept a Diary? A fragment has recently come to light, albeit badly water-damaged – some words are unreadable.

Opposite is a transcript. It appears to be from August 1782, when James and Nancy were visiting Cole.

Can you supply the missing words? Fill in (1) to (20) below.

- (1) [a] Amelia Maria [b] Anna Maria [c] Anna Matilda
- (2) [a] eleven [b] seventeen [c] twenty-three
- (3) [a] New College [b] Oriel College [c] Winchester
- (4) [a] two [b] three [c] four
- (5) [a] Sub-lieutenant [b] 3rd mate [c] Midshipman
- (6) [a] Asteria [b] Astiana [c] Astrea
- (7) [a] Lord Cornwallis [b] General Gage [c] Admiral Rodney
- (8) [a] Maryland [b] Massachusetts [c] Virginia
- (9) [a] Bluett [b] Troyte [c] Webster
- (10) [a] Devon [b] Dorset [c] Wiltshire
- (11) [a] 1770 [b] 1772 [c] 1774
- (12) [a] Bromley [b] Fulham [c] Lambeth
- (13) [a] Branthwaite [b] Custance [c] Townshend
- (14) [a] Bute [b] Chatham [c] North
- (15) [a] Barden's [b] Barnes' [c] Barton's
- (16) [a] Hunting Lodge [b] Travel Lodge [c] Premier Inn
- (17) [a] Heighes [b] James [c] John
- (18) [a] Fish [b] Gannet [c] Rabbit
- (19) [a] five [b] seven [c] nine
- (20) [a] Gully [b] Guppy [c] Gussy

The Diary of Jane Pounsett

August 7th. Nancy in a great pet this morning. She says she wishes folk would call her by her given name (1). She fears that those who read the Diaries in future times will think she is only Nancy. I told her nobody will read our Family Diaries, not mine and certainly not her Uncle James's, which is very uneventful. I am (2) years older than her, so I will continue to call her Nancy as I always have.

Brother James also peevish because he has finished his Notebook & so cannot write his Diary as he has left the new Notebook in Norfolk. I gave him a bundle of old Household Receipts so that he may write his Diary on the back. Although there is little of interest in it, writing his Diary gives him Pleasure. He has written long entries in it ever since he was at (3) many years ago.

August 8th. This morning I went secretly to Allhampton on horseback behind my Servant Ellis. Met Sister Anne Woodforde by arrangement. (Brother Heighes would not like it as he is estranged from her.) She has (4) boys at home with her now, Ralph the eldest is 15. Sister Anne frets about her eldest boy Bill, who is away across the ocean, a (5) on the (6). Why is he still away at War, when (7) surrendered in (8) last Autumn? Returned to Cole by midday, no-one the wiser (except Ellis).

Brother James had another long letter from his Friend Mr Du Quesne at (12) Palace in London. Much ado in the Capital, according to Mr Du Quesne. The Leader of the Ministry, Lord Rockingham, has lately died. Mr Du Quesne and his Patron Mr (13) are uneasy with the State of Affairs. They wish Lord (14) might return to lead the Government.

August 9th. An excursion today, to the Bristol Channel. Husband and Brother James and young Sam Woodforde rode, and Nancy and I went in the Bruton Chaise. We called at Shepton Mallett, to take up my little Jenny, who is at school at Mrs (15). Then we went on through Wells, Cheddar, and Axbridge, where we spent the night at the Lamb, an indifferent Inn. It is just opposite to King John's (16), a decayed building.

August 10th. We went on with our Journey from Axbridge, by Berrow Sands to Brean Down by the sea. A delightful prospect over the Water – to the left, the Bristol Channel and Bridgwater Bay – to

the right, the mouth of the Severn and the distant coast of Wales. They speak a different Language there. When I was keeping house for Brother (17) in Bristol, I once heard a Welsh Man speaking his Language – very strange it sounded. At Brean Down, Jenny played with her ball and Sam did a wonderful drawing of a boy with a (18). He is very clever. After refreshing ourselves with cold meats, we returned to Axbridge and stayed the night again at the Lamb.

August 11th. We left Axbridge and returned to Shepton Mallett. Jenny's School Mistress angry because Jenny was taken away from School for three days, when I had told her only one day. I told her it was for the greater benefit of Jenny's Education. Brother James gave Jenny 2/6d as a present for being good on our Excursion. I thought it too much as Jenny is only (19) and will not spend it wisely, but I did not say anything.

We reached Cole at 3 o'clock. Old Mother Pounsett says we should have taken her with us on our Excursion, but Brean Down is no place for the Infirm. Since the death of Uncle (20) two years ago, she has few people to converse with when Husband & I are absent.

Brother James spent the evening writing up our Excursion on the backs of my Mercer's Bills.



From Mrs Beeton's Shilling Cookery Book

IN MEMORIAM - PETER JAMESON

The Revd Peter Jameson, one of the great contributors to the work of the Parson Woodforde Society, passed away on 3rd July. His Funeral with solemn requiem mass was held at St Bartholomew's Church, Cross in Hand, East Sussex on 28th of that month.

Peter was educated at Stowe School, Buckinghamshire. It was a happy experience and he returned there on several occasions in later years to stay at the Gothic Temple, now owned by the Landmark Trust. It was, doubtless, being educated among such classical surroundings that inspired Peter to apply to study Architecture at Cambridge. He was admitted to Trinity College and whilst there was drawn to the church and soon after graduation began to study for ordination. He was ordained priest in 1963 and spent the greater part of his ministry in London, serving churches in Earl's Court, Notting Hill and Stoke Newington. On retiring from the clergy in London, he and his partner Powell, with whom he was to enter into a civil partnership, returned to Colemans at Cross in Hand, which his parents had built in 1938. Back in Sussex, Peter became a keen member and stalwart supporter of the Heathfield Choral Society.

Whilst still the incumbent at St Olave's, Woodberry Down, Peter had, in 1995, joined the Parson Woodforde Society, becoming a member of the Committee five years later. By this time he had already contacted Roy Winstanley with a view to assisting with the editing of the Diary and, in 1999, they published Volume 11 to which Peter had contributed a clearer typeface, the Caslon font and a frontispiece. The following year, that in which Roy died, they produced a revised Volume 7. Working at a remarkable rate, Peter then, over the course of the next six years, went on to edit six further volumes, completing the entire project in 2007. He greatly improved the quality of the indices as well as producing one for the whole series. He saw the Diary not only as a unique work of social history but also as the record of the life of a Church of England clergyman, re-emphasing the part which Church festivals played in Woodforde's life.

In addition to his scholarly accomplishments, Peter was a man of great charm and understanding who will be much missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

LEAVES FROM AN UNWRITTEN JOURNAL

Aunt and Uncle Bodham (1790-1796). Pt. V (cont.)

Mary Barham Johnson inherited a great number of family papers and portraits which no doubt did much to inspire her keen interest in the lives of her forebears and, especially, in that of Anne Bodham. In 1984 she presented a copy of this unwritten journal to the History Group of the Mattishall Society. It was composed by Mary from a variety of sources, including Parson Woodforde's Diary and family letters and other papers and amounts to a most interesting biography of one of the Rotation Club's most attractive characters.

We are grateful to Mrs Iris Coe of Mattishall for transcribing the 'Journal' from the MS and to Mary's great-nephew Dr Martin Sharman for blessing an enterprise of which this is the twelfth instalment. (Ed.)

1792 (cont.)

Sat. Sept. 8.

Kate sent a letter from her Bro. John. They do not return till 17th, John then proposes to spend a week in London with a Mr Rose, a friend of Mr Cowper's, and another week with a College friend, a Mr Mountain in Essex, from whence he can re-visit Audley End to continue his description of the grounds, after which he will go to Ludham to settle money affairs with Bill Johnson, where Kate goes also next week.

Wed. Sept. 26.

A long letter from John telling me of their journey by Chaise from Chichester to London and from thence to Weston Underwood. In their way they called on Mr Cowper's Cousin General Cowper of Ham. While conversing with Mrs Cowper, John overheard General Cowper speaking of Chancellor Thurlow, whom he thought bearish and hard-hearted, for when his Uncle Ashley wrote to ask him to present my Bro. Castres to a Living he took not the smallest notice of it. John's plans are gone all awry, for Lady Hesketh is at Cheltenham taking the waters for gall-stones, and is unlikely to be able to go to Weston Underwood until January. Mrs Unwin being so helpless, John does not like to leave Mr Cowper, though he is hard put to it not to lose patience with her ill-temper. She is maybe jealous of Mr Cowper's affection for John.

Sun. Oct. 21.

Willy Donne with his Lady and the dear children are here, being on the move to Bawburgh. Little George is now 4 years old and Bessie 2 – sweet children, but very frail. My dear Anne delights in them. She will be 11 next week, and is already quite a little woman. Poor Mrs Donne is not fully recovered from the loss of a baby. Willy is dreadfully thin and looks ill. I was obliged to write to Nancy Woodforde to postpone her visit, though it is but two days since I invited her, but Sister Balls being here we have no spare bed. Have invited her for next week after our return from Swaffham. Having had no answer fear she is provoked. At church this morning Mr Smith spoke of a subscription being raised for the relief of the poor French clergy who have been banished and have sought shelter on our shores, many of them having lost their all. Dreadful news from France – the poor King deposed and may be brought to trial.

Mon. Nov. 5.

Now returned from Swaffham. Aunt Bodham failing sadly. Nancy writes that she cannot be with us this week, having Mrs Jeans and her children, and does not know when they will leave, but does not think it will be in her power to fix a time for coming until the Spring as we must expect bad weather for travelling in an open carriage. I fear she was put out by my asking her to postpone her visit.

Fri. Nov. 30.

Dined at Dereham at my Nephew's, this being his 23rd Birthday. His Portrait is come from Mr Abbott's – a good enough likeness, though somewhat too serious. John is now determined on inviting Mr Abbott to South Green to paint Mr B— and Self.

My Bro. Hewitt's Nephew Charles of Holt is now at Dereham at Mr Crisp's the Attorney – an amiable young man – plays the violin – diverted us vastly by his stories. We talked also of Mr Cowper and of what is to become of him when Mrs Unwin is no more. She has been as a Mother to him, and he has become dependent on her. Mr Hayley has invited him to retire to his house in Sussex, but that he says he would never do, for besides finding the melancholy wildness and coldness of that country unendurable there are many traits in Mr Hayley's character and habits which can never be reconciled with his own. For one thing he has put away his wife, and has a son by his housekeeper. Mrs Unwin was shocked when she

learned of this from her waiting-woman. Nor did she approve of the other guests, Mr Romney and Mrs Smith, neither of whom live with their lawful Spouses. Mr Hayley is also impetuous and domineering. John says that he crossed out some of Mr Cowper's bold and forcible language and supplanted it by what he disdainfully calls flimsy, tinsel lines. Their stiles are so different, it is like mixing French with Old English. There are besides other disadvantages, such as want of fires and nearly raw meat, which Mr Havley swallowed like a cannibal – poor John gagged at every mouthful! Mrs Unwin has a married daughter who ought to take some responsibility for her Mother, but will not visit her while she keeps a girl named Hannah Wilson, whom she treats as her Niece, but whose Mother was a natural daughter of her late Father. The girl is sent to a boarding school where she has learnt to put on airs and dress extravagantly. Lady Hesketh, who is now at Bath, looks to Mr Rose and my Nephew to comfort Mr Cowper in the future. It is all most distressing for poor John, who must work hard for his degree, and prepare for his ordination. Almost I could wish he had never discovered our Cousin.

Mon. Dec. 15.

Mr Abbott has been here, and Mr B— and I and Kate Johnson have sat for our Portraits. He was a pleasant visitor. He brought his Portrait of Mr Cowper, who is not at all as I had pictured him – the face broader and heavier than John's. Mr Abbott says that it is acclaimed as a good likeness. Mr Cowper has written a little Verse on it –

Abbot is painting me so true That, trust me, you would stare And hardly know at the first view If I were Here or There.

Thurs. Dec. 27.

Mr Woodforde's maid Betty Dade being at her Father's called to enquire after us, having heard how poorly we have been. Send word back that we hoped to see them here soon. She informed us that poor Mr du Quesne has suffered a bad fall, bruising his nose.

Sat. Jan. 26.

Dreadful intelligence from France – the poor King beheaded by the guillotine. No news of the Queen or the Dauphin – I should say the new king, for he should be so by rights. What horrors perpetrated in the name of Freedom! Pray God it may never happen here. There is much disaffection in the country – Revolution Clubs springing up in many places. Our dear Anne leaves us on Monday for School in Norwich. I pray there may be no riots or disturbances there.

Sat. Feb. 2.

France has annexed Belgium and declared War on Britain and Holland. The temper of our people having been roused to hatred by the late atrocities, many will now welcome the chance to fight.

Mon. Feb. 25.

Dined at Willy Donne's, Mrs Dade and Eliza with us. Called at Weston in our way. Poor Nancy lonely now that Mrs Custance is gone to Bath.

Tues. April 23.

Sister Balls with us for a few days. Dined at Weston. Mr du Quesne better after his fall. All much elated at the intelligence that the French armies are defeated by the Austrians and Prussians, their General gone over to them. Pray God the War may soon end and France be purged of its madness. My Sister informs me that our Nephew John is apprehensive concerning his coming examination for which he must write an Essay and carry on a discussion in Latin. He is to go again to Coz. Cowper's in a few days. His devotion to him is touching, but I dread the consequences. Our Portraits are arrived from Mr Abbott. Sister Balls thinks them very good.

Tues. April 30.

With what bitter sorrow must I write that our dear Sister Wright is no more. Her maid Judith sent word as we were then going to bed that she had been taken by a fit. Though we hurried there immediately, we were too late to see her alive. Mr Wright bled her and she had come to her senses for a few moments, but to no avail. Poor old Judith is sore distressed, having cared for her for so many years, and become like one of the family.

Sat. May 4.

Dear Sister Wright's funeral took place to-day. The new Curate, Mr George Smith came through it well, though he was somewhat nervous, it being the first large funeral he had conducted. Dear Mr Woodforde was one of the Bearers, and Mr du Quesne also, though he looked far from well. Poor Mr B— feels it much, having been devoted to his Sister. I requested of Mr Woodforde to spare Nancy to us for a few days to cheer us.

Tues. May 7.

Coz Cowper has sent me a Poem to thank me for the purse I netted for him.

My gentle Anne, whom heretofore,
When I was young, and thou no more
Than plaything for a nurse,
I danced and fondled on my knee.
A kitten both in size and glee, —
I thank thee for my purse.

Gold pays the worth of all things here;
But not of love; – that gem's too dear
For richest rogues to win it:
I, therefore, as a proof of Love,
Esteem thy present far above
The best things kept within it.

Mon. May 13.

Mr Wright with his Niece Miss Browne, and Mr George Smith dined here to meet Mr Woodforde who came to fetch Nancy home. After dinner Mr Wright's friend Mr Dashwood looked in. He and Mr Woodforde were at Oxford and have many mutual acquaintances. Much talk of the Volunteer Regiments being raised. Very flat without Nancy.

Thurs. May 16.

Dined at Mr Wright's – the first time of going there since our dear Sister's death. Same company as on Monday, except that we missed Nancy.

Tues. May 28.

Dear Mr B—taken very ill yesterday – vomited much blood – thank

God is somewhat better, though not out of danger. Mr Wright fears it is a consumption. My Sister Balls is at Yarmouth, and Kate Johnson at Hemblington, where her Sister Heath expects another baby, I cannot therefore count on any help from them.

Fri. June 7.

Mr B— has made a remarkable recovery and to-day felt well enough to call upon Mr Woodforde and Nancy to bid Farewell before they go off for Somerset.

Mon. June 10.

Nephew John faces his examination to-day for the degree of Bachelor of Civil Laws. If successful he will take the degree to-morrow, and be examined next day for ordination, the Bishop's Chaplain¹ being in the College. He may then be ordained whenever convenient to the Bishop.²

Fri. June 21.

Dear John is to be ordained next month to the Curacy at Dereham, a great relief, the Bishop having at first refused owing to the weakness of his voice, and the Bishop of Bristol³ a Cousin of Mr Cowper's, to whom he had applied, having also refused to comply. However, on Mr Mott's offering him the Living of Hempnall to hold for little Castres Mott Donne, the Bishop relented. He will employ a Curate at Hempnall and continue to live at Dereham. John has sent me some Verses of Mr Cowper's thanking him for the bust of Homer which he procured for him from Mr Plowman. It was a bulky package to transport, but John contrived that it should go by water from Bungay to Yarmouth, from thence to Lynn and up the Ouse to Bedford, and from thence by wagon. He shews great ingenuity in divising unexpected gifts. I must endite Mr Cowper's lines lest they should be lost.

Kinsman belov'd, and as a Son by me!

When I behold this fruit of your regard

The sculptur'd form of my old fav'rite bard,
I rev'rence feel for him, and love for thee.

Joy too and grief. – Much joy that there should be

^{1.} Rev. J. Oldershaw.

Wise men and learn'd, who grudge not to reward With some applause my bold attempt and hard, Which others scorn. Critics by courtesy.

The grief is this, that sunk in Homer's mine
I lose my precious years, now soon to fail,
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,
Proves dross, when balanced in the Christian scale.
Be wiser thou – Like our forefather Donne,
Seek heav'nly wealth, and work for God alone.

Thurs. July 4.

Kate writes from Hemblington that her Sister Heath has been brought to bed of another daughter—to be named Catharine Johnson Heath, Kate to be the Godmother. The other children, Maria, Willy and John thrive.

Mon. July 8.

My dear Nephew John Johnson was ordained yesterday by the Bishop of Norwich in the Palace Chapel. Tom Talbot is to go to him as a Pupil, Mr B—being no longer able to attend to him.

Mon. Sept. 16.

Sad news that poor old Mr Ashill has died, and also dear Mr du Quesne, who has been failing much lately, though he would not own to it. Must write to inform Mr Woodforde and Nancy who will feel it much, especially being away in Somerset and unable to pay their last respects. Poor Mr B— is very low. Hear that Ria Johnson has given birth to another son, to be named Henry.

Mon. Sept. 21.

Poor old Miss Ashill has died. The shock of her Brother's death must have proved too much for the poor woman.

Sat. Oct. 26.

The poor Queen of France has been beheaded – how terrible to contemplate. No news of the young King.

Mon. Nov. 25.

Being a mild day, drove to Weston to call upon Mr Woodforde and Nancy on their return from Somerset. They were distressed to see Mr B— looking so poorly.

Wed. Nov. 27.

Mr B—taken very dangerously ill last night in a fit—quite senseless for some time. We wholly thought he had gone, but he has rallied somewhat this evening.

Tues. Dec. 10.

Mr Woodforde and Nancy called to enquire after us. Mr B—pleased to see them. I felt poorly, having a bad cold.

Mon. Dec. 23.

My dear Nephew John Johnson was ordained Priest yesterday. Mr Heyhoe has asked him to serve Yaxham and Welborne, Mr B—being no longer able to help him there and he being in very bad health at his daughter's, Mrs Camel, at Bungay. John has asked me to buy the Advowsons for him, promising to repay me when he receives the Hempnall Tithes. There is no Parsonage House at either of the Livings, but they could be served from Dereham, and John dreams of building a House in future.

1794

Wed. Jan. 22.

Poor Mr B—taken very bad again last night. It is intensely cold and looks like snow. Cannot throw off my cold.

Wed. Feb. 12.

Kate Johnson sent to enquire for us. Her Bro. John was written for last week to go to Coz. Cowper, he being ill again. Kate has her little Nephew John Heath with her – 2 years old – and a Mr Farish from Cambridge who is to serve John's Churches during his absence. John is much pleased with a sketch of Coz. Cowper taken by Mr Lawrence the celebrated artist, who was brought for the purpose by Mr Rose. When engraved it will form an embellishment to any new edition of his writings.

Sat. Feb. 15.

Hear that Sir John Fenn has died. My Nephew will be much distressed. I grieve for poor Lady Fenn.

Sat. Feb. 22.

[Here is a cutting from the Norfolk Chronicle on the death of Sir

John Fenn.] 'If the inquisitive antiquarian, the clear, faithful, and accurate writer, be justly valued by literary characters; if the intelligent and upright magistrate by the inhabitants of the county in which he resided; the informing and pleasing companion; the warm and steady friend; the honest and worthy man; the good and exemplary Christian, by those with whom he was connected, the death of few individuals will be more sensibly felt, more generally regretted, or more sincerely lamented.'

Fri. March 21.

My dear Niece Kate Johnson drove over this morning in a Chaise which went on to Wymondham to meet her Bro. John off the Coach from London. Having been 7 weeks at Coz. Cowper's doing no good, he wrote to beg Kate to summon him home. Poor Coz. Cowper is again dreadfully deranged – thinks he shall be torn away by spirits and lost eternally. Nothing will persuade him that it is an illusion. Lady Hesketh has begged John to find him a home in Norfolk. He is in train with Charles Hewitt for Mr Rash's house, for which they ask £700. He actually proposes to use all the Hempnall Tithes to buy it. Lady Hesketh says she will answer for the upkeep and the servants' wages. Mr B— is much against him sinking his whole income without any security should Lady Hesketh die. John is to meet his Bro. Heath at Hempnall Tithe Audit on Tuesday, and has promised to seek his advice. He takes the boy John Heath with him, and will spend a few days at Hemblington.

Wed. April 23.

Who should turn up this morning but dear Mr Woodforde and Nancy. It did Mr B—good to see them, but I was distressed that they should witness his extreme irritability. Nothing is right with him now. Am glad to hear that Nancy has some new neighbours – a Mr and Mrs Corbould, newly married – Mr Corbould a clergyman but without a cure, also the new Rector of Honingham and Tuddenham, Mr Mellish, unmarried, his Mother and Sister living with him, and Mr and Mrs Howman of Hockering.

Fri. July 4.

Dear Sister Balls is come on a visit, to my great comfort, Kate being gone to London to Mr Abbott's and John to Cambridge, from whence he goes to Coz. Cowper's again for several months, St John

Smith serving his Churches during the School vacations, he being now a Master at the Perse School, Cambridge. John had told Lady Hesketh he should not go there again, but her letters were so pitiable that he at last consented, although most unwillingly. Lady Hesketh and Mr Greatheed of Newport Pagnell have been an excursion into Lincolnshire in Lady Hesketh's carriage to enlist the help of Dr Willis (who was so successful in restoring the health of the King), who agreed to take Mr Cowper in his home, but Mrs Unwin would not suffer him to leave her. Dr Willis went to see him and left an attendant to minister to him, but finding he could do no good, Mr Cowper refusing to take the medicines prescribed, he refused to remain.

Tues. July 8.

Am much relieved that Mr B— has let the Farm to Mr Bruton, being unable any longer to farm it himself.

Tues. Aug. 19.

Kate Johnson writes from Hemblington that her Bro. John intends returning home on Aug. 30th, finding he can do no good at Mr Cowper's. He has sent the little Spaniel 'Beau' to Hemblington, it being difficult to give him sufficient exercise. John hopes to bring Anne Donne with him from London. Kate's Sister Ria Johnson has lost her last little boy, Henry, a great grief to them.

Fri. Oct. 17.

Mr Woodforde's man Ben called in his way to fetch Mr Thorne, his master having a bad foot. Brought a Note from Nancy. Replied that we cannot wait on them at present, Mr B—not being well enough. Heard from Kate Johnson that they have engaged Peggy Perowne to go to them so that my Sister Balls may come here for the winter.

1795

Wed. Jan. 7.

Betty Dade, who has been at her Father's, called for news to take back to her Master. Could not send good news, Mr B— being very sadly and near blind. Have been obliged to get Mrs Rudd to sit up o'nights to keep the fires in this severe weather. Betty told me that old Mr Smith can scarce move for the pain in his feet. Mr Wood-

forde was taken very ill on Christmas Day, but is better, and Miss Nancy tolerably well.

Tues. Jan. 20.

Poor Fred Donne has died – only 27 years old – how sad for my Cousins losing two of their family so young – and poor Willy looks like going the same way.

Wed. Feb. 4.

Heard from Kate Johnson that her Sister Ria has died, having never recovered from the birth of another little boy – John. She was such a gay child. I fear that her husband broke her heart by his mismanagement and drinking. Kate fears there will be little profit now from the Tanneries, for Ria was the better manager of the two.

Wed. Feb. 11.

It being a mild day, Mr B— was able to overlook the workmen enlarging the coach-house. He complained much of their work, but cannot see clearly and confuses them by continual change. I do my best to calm them and appeal to them to be patient.

Sat. April 18.

Kate's Sister Heath has another girl – to be named Susannah. They had been apprehensive lest her Sister Ria's death should affect her, but she came through well. Now that she has 5 children, I should hope this will be the last.

Tues. May 19.

Poor Willy Donne is gone. I feared he was in a decline when I last saw him. Now I hear that his poor wife is likely to follow him.

Wed. June 3.

Much cheered by a visit from Mr Woodforde and Nancy whom we had not seen this year due to the long, severe Winter and late Spring. Mr B—rather better than of late—enjoyed shewing Mr Woodforde his new coach-house and the alterations in the Stable-yard and Garden. He was however more than usually difficult at dinner, being ashamed that his friends should witness his helplessness. Mr Woodforde has been unable to serve his Church for several months, having a sore on his ankle. They go into Somerset next week.

Wed. June 24.

Kate Johnson sent me a letter from her Bro. John. He was all but upset in his way to Mr Cowper's, a spring of the Chaise breaking. His boy Sam Dent was near crushed by the portmanteau falling on him. Poor Coz. Cowper is in a pitiable state, like a ghost, nothing but skin and bone and perpetually groaning. John is hoping to get that minx Hannah Wilson apprenticed, nothing being likely to come of her attachment to a young man who gave himself out as being an Officer and having £700, but who is quite illiterate. Lady Hesketh's woman found a letter from him which she shewed to her mistress. Poor Mrs Unwin cannot speak clearly, but is carried downstairs to sit in a chair.

Wed. July 8.

Dear Kate Johnson called to inform me that Charles Hewitt has asked for her hand in marriage and she has accepted! Though he has been in and out of the house at all times for months past, she has but now realised his intentions and is quite overcome. Charles will soon be out of his time at Mr Crisp's and will then join his Father at Holt.

Tues. July 14.

Sister Balls received a parcel of striped gingham from Nephew John – chosen as he says by the combined taste of Lady Hesketh and himself, she liking one of the stripes and he the other! He sent also some patterns in case I should like to choose one for my 'little back'. He still intends bringing Coz. Cowper to Norfolk so soon as Mrs Unwin dies, which he thinks may be within the next 10 or 12 months, or even weeks. He places all his hopes on a change of scene to restore Mr Cowper's mind – unlikely I fear at his age. I trust he will not be so foolish as to bring him to his own house. He congratulates us on the speedy restoration of the French Monarchy now that the poor young King is dead, his Uncle the lawful King being at liberty, for, says he, 'a King in a cage is no King at all'. He hopes glorious things from the Emigrants and French Royalists. He sealed his letter with black wax for poor Louis XVII, using the seal that Mr B— gave him engrossed 'God save the King'.

Sat. July 18.

A disturbing letter from Nephew John announcing that he is bringing Coz. Cowper and Mrs Unwin and their servants to Norfolk

on the 29th of this month! and requesting me to beg Mr Wright for the use of his house until they can settle on a lodging. Send a Note to Mr Wright asking him to call upon me on a matter of urgency. It was not an easy request to make, such a disturbance to his household being no light matter. John's suggestion that Mr Wright's nieces Miss Browne and Miss Saffery should be accommodated at his house in Dereham did not meet with approval. After much cogitation Mr Wright suggested approaching Mr Leonard Shelford, who has been appointed to N. Tuddenham on the death a week or two back of his Father, and who will likely be there to conduct the Services to-morrow. Were he in no hurry to move into the Parsonage he might be agreeable to letting it to Mr Cowper till Michaelmas. Have written to John to beg him to postpone his departure until satisfactory arrangements can be made.

Sat. July 25.

Sister Balls has been to Dereham - found poor Peggy Perowne surrounded by boxes containing Books, Plate, Knives and Forks, Wine, Brandy, Rum, a Celarett, and a Stilton Cheese! Kate is expected this evening, being dragged away from Yarmouth. Peggy has ordered the Dereham Chaise to meet the party at Watton on Thursday, whither they will arrive from Barton Mills, where they spend the night. They come all the way by Chaises, spending the first night at St Neots. Mr Shelford having been so good as to comply with Mr Wright's request, expressing himself as honoured to have it in his power to assist so great a Poet, Peggy is busy preparing to send what is necessary to Tuddenham, where Mr Shelford's maids will make what preparations they can. Think of poor John undertaking a 3-day journey with Mr Cowper deranged, Mrs Unwin helpless, and only the Servants to help him at the Inns. I fear that Lady Hesketh has too strong a hold on him. Flattered by the attentions of 'Her Ladyship' as he calls her, he has allowed himself to be trapped into the care of both Invalids. I take it very strange of John not to have consulted us earlier. In the letter which Sister Balls received on Tuesday he mentioned bringing Mr Cowper to Norfolk when Mrs Unwin dies, but there was no hint that he had already fixed to travel next week, though he must have made his plans by then, his Sister Kate and Peggy Perowne having been written to concerning the necessary arrangements for their reception at Dereham!

Fri. July 31.

Kate sent word by the Butcher that the travellers arrived safely at Tuddenham yesterday evening, having sustained the journey remarkably well – Mr Cowper quite composed, thinking it a delightful dream – Mrs Unwin in high spirits, only sorry they had not stopped in Cambridge to see the sights! John is much elated at the success of his plan.

Tues. Aug. 18.

Mr B—has looked long to have Mr Cowper under his roof, but only to-day did John at length prevail upon him to walk over to see us, for he had, I suspect, dreaded the meeting. His condition is far worse than we had conceived. He accepted a dish of chocolate, but scarce raised his eyes from the floor, nor uttered a word. When John pointed out Mr Abbott's picture of him he was much distressed. being now a scarecrow to what he was then. Mr B—complimented him on his Poetry, but could not rouse him to speak of it. It is a formidable charge that dear John has so cheerfully accepted. He declares that Norfolk air is doing Mr Cowper good, but I much doubt of his recovery. They walk each day in the lanes, but have seen no-one. They go to-morrow for Mundesley to a Lodging procured for them by Peggy's Brother-in-law Mr Colls. John has asked to sleep here Saturday nights when he comes to serve his Churches. Kate is now returned to complete her interrupted visit to the Dades, and Peggy comes to help us with Mr B— who cannot be left a moment.

Sat. Aug. 22.

Nephew John arrived by the Norwich Coach. He is well satisfied with the Lodging at Mundesley – half a house, the other part being occupied by a German Apothecary, Mr Kaliere, who is most attentive to Coz. Cowper. He recommends sea-water in his footbath. They walk twice a day about four miles. Hannah Wilson is with them, but John is apprenticing her to a Milliner at Norwich, and also hopes to send Mrs Unwin's retinue home, four Servants being a great expence and quite unnecessary.

Fri. Aug. 28.

John arrived this evening, having coached to Dereham and walked from there. He is in train with Mr Crisp for a house at Dunham – too

large – but its nearness to Dereham an important consideration. The premises must be vacated for two months in the shooting season, but a visit to Mundesley could be arranged for that time. John will consult Lady Hesketh concerning the Rent before deciding. He is much distressed to find his Uncle so much worse since he was here last week. Sister Balls and Peggy Perowne are very good in sitting up with him, he being very restless o' nights. He is dreadfully wasted from prodigious sweats and entire loss of appetite.

Fri. Sept. 4.

John has looked at Dunham Lodge to-day. The house is too large, but is the only one available, and as the winter approaches he will be unable to serve his Churches from Mundesley and must return to this neighbourhood. Kate is gone to Holt to Mr James Hewitt's. Poor Mr B— was very bad last night, screaming that he was on the top of the steeple, sitting upon the edge of the battlements and shrieking lest he should fall off. Poor John was much distressed.

Sat. Sept. 19.

John has settled with Mr Crisp to hire Dunham Lodge. Having prevailed upon Coz. Cowper to view it last Wednesday, they travelled by Post Chaise and spent the night at John's house in Dereham, Peggy Perowne having gone to help Sally prepare for their reception. Though thinking the house too large, Coz. Cowper did not refuse to go there. John and Kate Johnson will remain with them until they settle with reliable attendants, Mrs Unwin having at last been prevailed upon to send the present ones home. Mrs Colls has her eye on a nurse who is come-at-able.

Sat. Oct. 3.

Hear that Mrs Mott is married to Mr Rolfe of Saham. She will I presume let Barningham until little Johnny Mott is of age. John Johnson proposes to take Coz. Cowper and Mrs Unwin to his house in Dereham next Wednesday, the season getting late for travelling here every Saturday. Our Coz. seemed quite at ease the night he spent there lately, and is not averse to remaining there until his house at Dunham is ready for occupation. I fear I must part with Peggy Perowne, though I can ill spare her, but it is not to be thought of that Kate should be left alone with the Invalids.

Sun. Oct. 11.

John looked in after his Service at Welborne. Coz. Cowper is tolerably settled at Dereham. The journey was more formidable than he had anticipated, having no attendants to assist him with Mrs Unwin. Peggy Perowne has now taken charge of the old Lady with her usual good management, and Sally has risen to the occasion with goodwill. I dread the outcome for poor Kate, but trust her approaching marriage will help her to bear up.

Fri. Oct. 23.

Dear Sister Balls is returned from Dereham, whither she went to assist Kate Johnson in closing up the house. Yesterday John conveyed Coz. Cowper and Mrs Unwin to Dunham Lodge, Peggy Perowne being there to receive them, and having engaged a civil couple to attend them - a Mr and Mrs Johnson! - a circumstance which may cause some confusion. John sent back a Note to inform Kate of their safe arrival. Peggy added a few lines, saying how nicely Mr Cowper helped her to sheet Mrs Unwin's bed, Sally not being expected until to-day. I fear that poor Sally will find the house a large one to manage. She and Kate went off for Dunham this afternoon. Poor Kate dreads being cooped up in that great old house so far from all her friends. Sundays, when John will perforce be away all day, will be a trial to her indeed. John was much averse to her betrothal to Charles Hewitt, doubting his steadiness, being too fond of good living for one with little means, we must however trust that the responsibilities of marriage will lead him to more frugal ways.

Sun. Oct. 25.

John called between his Services. He had hired a horse and cart from Dereham to fetch him from Dunham, it being near 16 miles from Dunham to Welborne. I trust he may soon be able to return to Dereham, but at present Coz. Cowper does not settle to anything. The only thing which can take off his thoughts from his terrible depression is listening to Novels which John reads to him for hours on end, day after day. They will soon have exhausted all the books in the Dereham Circulating Library.

Sat. Oct. 31.

Terrible disturbances in London, the King's life in danger from

angry mobs. Should the price of bread rise any higher I fear there will be great distress this winter, driving the poor to desperate measures. We give to beggars at the door most days.

Sun. Nov. 8.

John called in his way from Welborne. They find the house at Dunham very cold, being so high, and having no shelter from the wind. Their chamber windows look over the tops of the trees and command a prospect of 30 miles each way. On clear days they can see Ely and Norwich Cathedrals. In that storm on Thursday night they expected to be blown away. Poor Kate and Peggy were so terrified through the shaking of their beds that they got up and went downstairs.

Tues. Nov. 24.

Hearing that the Woodfordes are returned from Somerset, sent William Ward with a Note to Nancy to enquire after them and to inform them that Mr B— is rather worse, it is therefore not possible for me to invite them here. Nancy returned a kind Note.

Sun. Nov. 29.

Coz. William Donne called in his way to Norwich having been to Dunham yesterday to see Coz. Cowper. He could do little for him beyond prescribing opiates. He looked far from well himself. The loss of his sons Fred and Willy within a few months has been a severe blow. Willy's wife is thought to be dying of the same complaint. She has given birth to another little girl – to be named Anna Maria. The last child, Lillias, is but a year old, Bessie is 5 and George 8. Coz. William is much pleased that his son Edward, now at Cambridge, intends studying Medicine. Molly – Mrs Breach – now has two little children. Anne is still at home and a great comfort to them. My Anne sometimes spends Sunday with them from School.

Tues. Dec. 15.

Poor Mrs Willy Donne has died. The 3 little girls will go to their Grandmother and Aunt Robertson, little George to his Grandfather Donne.

1796

Mon. Jan 18.

Dear Nancy Woodford paid me an unexpected visit this morning, it

being a very mild day. It did me good to see her, being extremely low, Dr Lubbock having been unable to do anything for Mr B—beyond soothing him with laudenum. Mr Wright had but then come to see him when Nancy appeared, and Tom Talbot and his Sister calling, I had but a few minutes parley with Nancy. Her Uncle cannot get out this cold weather. Mr Corbould officiated for him, to his great relief, for he would be distressed indeed were his Church not served regularly. Tom Talbot was grieved to learn how much worse poor Mr B— is, hoping to give him the latest intelligence from Cambridge.

Sat. Feb. 6.

Dreadful news from London – the King and Queen attacked by a Mob when returning from the Theatre – a stone thrown at their coach, though providentially their Majesties were unhurt.

Wed. March 9.

Fast Day. I durst not leave Mr B—to go to Church, but sent some of the Servants. Pray God that some relief may come to the poor stricken country, and that we may be preserved from the horrors of invasion. Nephew John Johnson called in his little cart in his way from Welborne. Coz. Cowper goes on much about the same - will settle to nothing but listening to Novels. John could stay but a few minutes, saying that Clarissa Harlowe was awaiting him in the 7th volume, and that between ourselves it would have been her wisdom to have waited for him till this time, for he should have made her a better husband than that Lovelace! Poor lad, it is time he were married, but situated as he is, going nowhere and seeing no-one, it would be a brave woman who would marry him whilst he is tied to Mr Cowper and Mrs Unwin. I can see no end to it. Mrs Unwin who has been estranged from her daughter Mrs Powley for 8 years, has expressed a desire to be reconciled to her before her death, John has therefore invited her and her husband to Dunham. Maybe they will see fit to take the old Lady home with them and relieve poor John of that burden.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

- (1) [b] Anna Maria
- (2) [c] twenty-three (Sister Pounsett b. 1734, Nancy b. 1757)
- (3) [a] New College (Although JW started a proto-diary or account book in 1758 at Oriel College, the phrase "long entries" must refer to the Diary proper, started in Autumn 1759 at New College.)
 - (4) [b] three (Ralph b. 1767, Francis b. 1769, James b. 1771)
 - (5) [c] Midshipman (Diary 9/6/1780)
 - (6) [c] Astrea (Diary 13/12/1782)
 - (7) [a] Lord Cornwallis (Diary 1/12/1781)
 - (8) [c] Virginia (Diary 1/12/1781)
 - (9) [c] Webster (Diary 10/8/1775)
- (10) [a] Devon (Diary 10/8/1775)
- (11) [c] 1774 (Diary 28/5/1774)
- (12) [c] Lambeth (Diary 20/6/1782)
- (13) [c] Townshend (Diary e.g. 27/9/1777)
- (14) [c] North (Diary 30/3/1782, & Note)
- (15) [b] Barnes (Diary 27/6/1782)
- (16) [a] Hunting Lodge
- (17) [c] John (Diary 23/10/1764)
- (18) [a] Fish (PWS Journal, Summer 2012, front cover)
- (19) [b] seven (Jenny Pounsett b. May 1775: Diary 18/7/1775)
- (20) [b] Guppy (Diary e.g. 14/10/1780)



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, Mrs Ann Brayne, Longcroft, Whitehough Head, Chinley, High Peak SK23 6BX.

Website:

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The indexes cover Subjects, Names, Places and Authors.

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