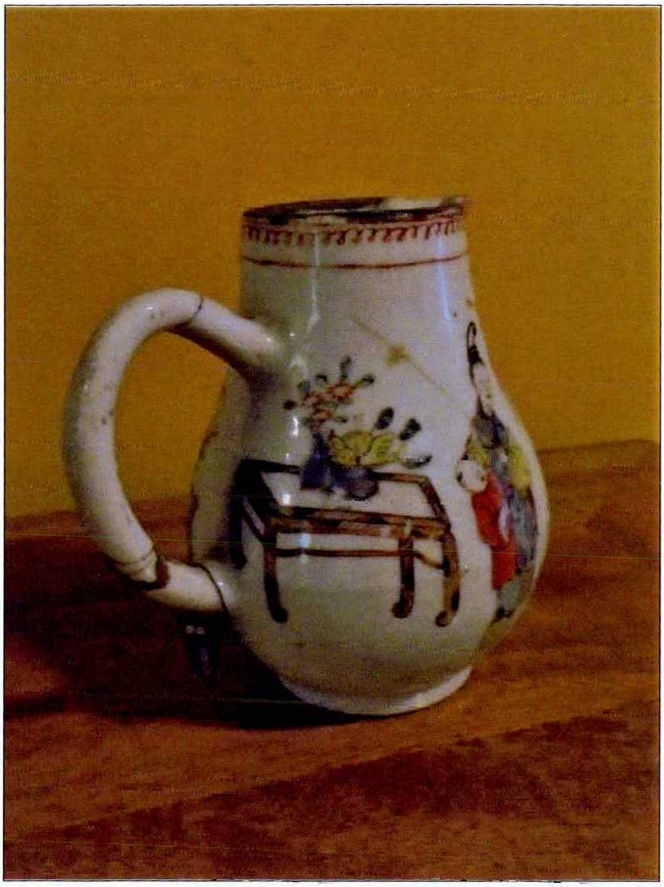
PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY JOURNAL



MR DU QUESNE'S CHINESE JUG

(Parson Woodforde Society)

VOL. LII NO. 1 APRIL 2019

Attached to the base of Mr Du Quesne's Chinese Jug (see cover):

Sept. 1857
Given me by
Hannah daughter of
Elizabeth servant to
Revd Thomas Du Quesne
Vicar of Tuddenham Norfolk
Who was born (1717?) died
1793 son of Gabriel
Marquis Du Quesne
(Note by Rev Arthur Du Cane)

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EDITORIAL

Relations between James Woodforde and the Vicar of Honingham, Thomas Roger Du Quesne, got off to a rather rocky start when, on 18 November 1775, the diarist, still a Fellow of New College, received a letter informing him that 'a Clergyman the Rev^{d} Mr Du Quesne and Will^{m} Timpson Carpenter at Hockering' put the sum owed to him for dilapidations at Weston Parsonage at 'no more than £26 : 9 : 0'. There was 'a very large Difference' between that sum and the £175 suggested by Woodforde's own survey. Despite this shaky start, however, once the dilapidations question had been satisfactorily resolved and Woodforde was settled at Weston, the two became the best of friends and remained so until that melancholy day in September 1793 when Woodforde, on holiday in Somerset, read 'in this Day's Paper from Bath that our valuable and worthy Friend the Rev^{d} Mr Du Quesne of Tuddenham was no more'.

There can be no doubt that in that highly stratified society Du Quesne was a rung or two further up the social ladder than was Woodforde. His connection with the powerful Townshend family, referred to by Richard Wilson with such fascinating detail in the last issue of this Journal, brought advancement in the form of no less than three prebendal stalls. He restored and expanded Berry's Hall to make it one of the most desirably elegant 'Vicarage Houses' in the county, in marked contrast to Woodforde's own far more humble 'comfortable, quiet, happy, thatched Dwelling'. Yet things might have been very different for Du Quesne, as they were for his brothers whose lives were short and far from easy, for their father, although the 3rd Marquis Du Quesne, was unable for most of his life to adequately provide for his family so that they were dependent upon the charity of relatives and friends. An article by the late Francis Steer on Thomas Du Quesne's remarkable will which first appeared in Vol. 1 No. 4 of this Journal is here reproduced. It paints the picture of a well-to-do divine with a tender conscience.

To readers of eighteenth century journals the name of Robert Marsham of Stratton Strawless, Norfolk, is likely to bring to mind the naturalist friend and correspondent of Gilbert White. Alan Ovenden here tells us of the marriage between his son, also Robert,

and the eldest daughter of the Custances. Katharine Solomon, prompted by a talk given by another of our members, Maureen Wincott of Ansford, has a further suggestion regarding the naming of Woodforde's sister Sobieski. Poland also features in Jennifer Soan's latest contribution.

I wrote my very first Journal article in 1987. It was about the diary of a non-conformist minister James Clegg of Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire. The article finished with a quote from Clegg's diary, the entry for 6 December 1748. I have been reminded of it in recent weeks:

> I slept not so well last night, was something indisposd today, my heart is heavy and at times full of sorrow for the great loss of my Dear Wife. I would submit but cannot yet conquer griefe, when I recollect the agreeableness of her person, the beauties that even in her advanced age adorned her body and mind, when I reflect upon her good sense and judgement, her great prudence and discretion, the cheerfulness of her temper and conversation, her strictest regard to truth and justice, her charitable and benevolent temper and her most tender and affectionate concern for my health and ease and satisfaction, it fills me with sorrow that I cannot express and scarce know how to bear. O God of all consolation support and comfort, direct, guide and counsel thy weak creature.

THE FAMILY OF THOMAS ROGER DU QUESNE

In an article which appeared in this Journal fifty years ago and is reprinted on another page, Francis Steer identified three principal sources of information on Du Quesne and his family in addition to Woodforde's Diary, namely (I) *Mr Du Quesne and Other Essays* by John Beresford (1932); (ii) a chapter entitled 'Henry Newman and the Du Quesnes in *Eighteenth Century Piety* by 'my old friend the late Canon W. K. Lowther Clarke, D.D.' (1944); and Du Quesne's Will.[1] It is on the last of these that Steer in his article concentrates but my attention was recently drawn to the second source by some letters in the Society's archive. They begin with a letter, dated 19 September 1943, written by Lowther Clarke, editorial secretary of the S.P.C.K. and addressed to 'Miss Du Cane' of Fittleworth House, Pulborough, Sussex. It begins –

> Dear Miss Du Cane,
>
> I am at work on a book based on the old papers of S.P.C.K. Among them is a series of letters written by Henry Newman, Secretary of the Society from 1708 to 1743, to and about the Du Quesne family. When the Marquis [Mr Du Quesne's father] went to Jamaica as Governor of Port Royal, Newman became guardian of the children. When Mr Beresford published his *Mr Du Quesne* in 1932, with the help of your brother,[2] he said there was a gap in the story from Geneva days to the appearance of Thomas at Cambridge. But we have the whole story here.
>
> The Marquis had 5 children: William, who died in Jamaica, a young soldier; Ann who is mentioned without name in the pedigree as marrying '? French'; Thomas; Elizabeth, who died as a baby; and Henry, who went to the bad.
>
> Lady Du Quesne ended as housekeeper at Carisbrooke Castle. Beresford's account of the Marquis is inaccurate; he was well paid in Jamaica but made the place too hot to hold him by smuggling.

Lowther Clarke goes on to ask Miss Du Cane 'whether you have found out anything more about the family since the publication of the book?' (that is Beresford's). He also points out that the Newman letters include reference to 'a Mr Du Cane (spelled thus), a rich banker in the City, who had two boys at St Paul's School, whom he

brings to see the young Du Quesnes, claiming relationship. He is obviously of the same family, but an earlier 'emigré'.'

A further letter from Lowther Clarke to Miss Du Cane, dated 6 January 1944, announces that he has now finished his book, based on the S.P.C.K. records, and it is to be entitled *Eighteenth Century Piety*. He asks for permission to use the 'blocks' of the Marquis and Lady Du Quesne used by Oxford University Press to illustrate Beresford's book.

Another letter, written in January 1968, by Miss Du Cane's nephew, Mr C. E. B. Du Cane, to Canon Wilson, our Society's founder, appears to confirm the 'earlier emigré' hypothesis:

> According to my records, our branch of the Du Cane family left France at the time of the Massacre of St Bartholomew in 1572. They fled to Flanders and later crossed to England at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, due to the persecution of the Protestants by the Duke of Alva.

Despite the distant nature of the relationship between this branch of the family and that of the Marquis, many of the Du Quesne family records ended up in the possession of the Du Canes. Mr Du Cane says that he has a copy of 'Roger' Du Quesne's will and portraits of Françoise, wife of Henry, 2nd Marquis Du Quesne, Gabriel, 3rd Marquis Du Quesne and his wife Elizabeth [our Mr Du Quesne's parents]'. All three of these portraits are reproduced in Beresford's book. In a later letter, dated 13 February 1968, Du Cane explains how the pictures came to his family – 'I have just discovered that they were *given* in 1857 by the third Lord Bayning to the Revd Arthur Du Cane.' This Lord Bayning was the grandson of Mr Du Quesne's cousin, Woodforde's 'Mr Townshend'.

So what does Lowther Clarke tell us about the Du Quesne family? From Beresford we know that Mr Du Quesne's grandfather, the 2nd Marquis, had left France following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 just a year after the birth of Du Quesne's father, Gabriel, and had purchased an estate at Aubonne in the canton of Vaud, Switzerland. By the end of the century young Gabriel was studying philosophy at Geneva university and a decade later was received at the court of Queen Anne as a representative of the Protestant Cantons of Switzerland. He must, as Beresford says,

'have found the air of England congenial' as, two years later, he became a naturalized Englishman. Not long after that he joined the Life Guards and within a couple of years had married, as her second husband, Elizabeth Bradshaigh, daughter of Sir Roger Bradshaigh Bt., of Haigh Hall, Lancashire. As we have seen Beresford only mentions two children of this union – Thomas Roger who was baptized at Twickenham 28 August 1718, details of whose 'youthful years' he believed to be 'entirely lacking' and an unnamed future wife of a 'Mr French'. Thanks to Henry Newman's letters, unearthed by Lowther Clarke, we know a good deal more than Beresford was able to discover.

Before examining this information it might help to say something of two benefactors of the Du Quesne family. Firstly, Henry Newman himself. He was born in New England in 1670, the son of a Congregational minister, and was educated at Harvard College where 'I was honour'd with the care of the public library'.[3] By the 1690s he was frequently travelling, in the capacity of merchant, across the Atlantic, settling for a time in St John's, Newfoundland where he became S.P.C.K. correspondent.[4] Soon afterwards he appears to have moved permanently to London and in 1708 succeeded the eminent antiquarian Humphrey Wanley as the Society's secretary. This was, of course, a period of bitter religious controversy between High and Low Churchmen but the S.P.C.K. seems to have avoided this quarrelling and to have embraced both factions.[5] Newman, however, had a particular interest in the welfare of Huguenot immigrants, among them the future Marquis Du Quesne.

The other person who played a major role in supporting the Du Quesne family was Lady Du Quesne's godmother, Lady Torrington. Confusingly, there were four women with that title in the early decades of the eighteenth century. This was Anne, the wife of the second son of the first Earl of Bradford, who had been created Baron Torrington in 1716 but had died three years later.

Newman it was who introduced Thomas's father to the Duke of Portland, who was appointed Governor of Jamaica in 1721, leading to Du Quesne's promotion to the post at Port Royal. Situated at the mouth of the Kingston River, it was a place with a notorious reputation, having, prior to a major earthquake in 1692 which had

killed half the population, been a nest of pirates, including Henry Morgan, whose raids on the Spanish Main had caused it to be known as 'the richest and wickedest city' in the world. The town was rebuilt after the earthquake but further damage was caused by a fire in 1703 and it was gradually superseded by Kingston as the largest settlement on the island.

In June of the year following the Duke's appointment, Lady Du Quesne was at Portsmouth in preparation for sailing to Jamaica when she was summoned to see her daughter Elizabeth who was dangerously ill. The little girl died on 21 October by which time her mother must have departed as it was Newman who wrote to Du Quesne to announce the loss. The other children had also been left behind. Initially the baby, Henry ('Harry') had been left with Newman himself although by October he was writing to the Duke's chaplain, the Revd Mr Galpine, to report that 'I have never parted with a child with more regret than with him for though he could not speak every feature in his face made a thousand orations for him, and his incessant good humour oblig'd everybody that play'd with him to love him'.[6]

The two elder boys, six year-old William ('Billy') and five year-old Thomas ('Tommy') had been left at a nursery school kept by French refugees, the Revd Mr Lefevre and his wife, in Church Road, Chelsea. According to a letter written by Newman to Gabriel's brother Marc-Antoine-Jacob who was living in Southampton to improve his English, the fees for the two boys amounted to £64 a year.[7] In the letter of 21 October in which Newman disclosed the death of little Elizabeth, he told Du Quesne, perhaps by way of consolation, that he had been to Chelsea and 'I heard Billy say his prayers and his lesson in French'.[8]

The eldest of the boys' siblings, their sister Ann, had been left in Switzerland with their grandfather who died towards the end of 1722 in Geneva. The widow sent for Marc-Antoine-Jacob who, before setting out, dined with Newman and Lady Torrington at her ladyship's house in New Bond Street where the future of his brother's children was doubtless a subject of conversation. Early in the New Year Newman wrote to Du Quesne – now the 3rd Marquis – saying of the boys in Chelsea, 'Their cloaths being thin, I have put them in mourning for their grandpapa in a dark grey drugget trim'd

with black'. It is one of the many details in the correspondence which are testimony to Newman's genuine involvement with the lives of the children.

The letters must have been a great source of interest and comfort to their mother. The Marquis – whose letters have not survived – must have mentioned to Newman that she spent her days anxiously awaiting the appearance of a fresh sail as Newman wrote to him saying, 'The less you suffer my Lady Du Quesne to live in sight of the ocean or ships the easier she will be in her mind, that she may not think of letters till they come'.[9] Unfortunately, this was easier said than done: Port Royal was situated at the seaward extremity of a long narrow peninsula, so that the sea was never more than a short distance away.

At first the Marquis appears to have enjoyed a certain amount of success in his new role but his dubious involvement with trade – especially in indigo – ensured that unfavourable rumours about him soon reached Newman and Lady Torrington. Following the collapse of the South Sea Bubble just a few years before, any suggestion of corrupt trading was viewed with the greatest suspicion in London, added to which Newman, whose care for the children appears to have been unwavering, soon found himself seriously out of pocket, no remittances coming from Port Royal.

In the summer of 1726 Du Quesne's patron, the Duke of Portland, died in Jamaica and he was succeeded by Brigadier Robert Hunter who, although at first willing to retain the Marquis in his command, rapidly became disenchanted with him. Newman wrote to Du Quesne suggesting that he come home and live a quiet life incognito, advice which by the end of the year the Marquis had followed. He had not, however, finished with what Newman called 'your romantick schemes of making an immense fortune'.[10] In 1729 Archdeacon Thomas Russell of Cork provided him with the funds necessary to set up in the wine trade. At first he did well, travelling to Lyons and branching out into oil, olives and other foodstuffs. However, within a few years this business too had failed and by 1740 he was petitioning the Lords of the Treasury for a share of his Majesty's Bounty, he being in 'a starving condition'.[11] The petition was unsuccessful. Gabriel Du Quesne in fact survived for another seven years, being buried at St Marylebone on 7 February 1747.[12]

After their return from Jamaica the Marquis and Marquise appear to have lived apart. In 1727 we hear of Elizabeth 'going to see the Dutchess of Bolton in her Coronation robes'. In 1729 she writes to Archdeacon Russell to say that she is lodging 'in Great Maddox Street, behind Hanover Square new Church', so as to be near to Lady Torrington.[13] Throughout much of the next decade she seems to have lived in the Isle of Wight being for much of that time housekeeper to the Governor of Carisbrooke Castle. This further suggests a connection with the Duke of Bolton who was Governor from 1726 to 1733 and then again from 1742–1745. However, at the beginning of this second gubernatorial spell Newman writes to Sir Thomas Lowther to say she has had the 'inconsolable affliction of being removed by the Duke of Bolton the new Governor of the Isle of Wight'.[14] He hopes that 'the remainder of her life will be made as comfortable as can consist with the infirmities of gout and an advanced age.' When she died I have not yet been able to establish.

Of the children Newman's letters tell us a considerable amount although less about 'Tommy' – our Mr Du Quesne – than the others. The eldest, Ann, appears to have returned to Switzerland with her uncle, Marc-Antoine-Jacob, on the death of her grandfather. Communication with her mother seems to have been via Newman in London who, in 1725, wrote to Lady Du Quesne saying, 'Miss in Geneva is well. I sent her 3 pairs of shoes t'other day'.[15] In 1725 we hear of Lady Torrington sending 10 guineas for her education, stipulating that it was not to be used for dancing or music lessons. The Marquise is assured that at the half-boarding school which she attends she learns 'religion, good manners and several works fit for a gentlewoman'. On her arrival in London Newman wrote to her mother that she is 'just now over from Geneva, wonderfully improved for her age as to be in danger of being, through her beauty and accomplishments, the toast of the town'.[16] Her religious education certainly seems to have been thorough as she knew 105 of the Psalms by heart. Once in England Ann was sent to board at Twickenham 'under my Lady Torrington's protection' and, to the relief of her mother, quickly learnt to converse in English.

During the 1730s Ann seems to have lived with her mother on the Isle of Wight. Shortly before his death in 1743 Newman wrote to Jonathan Belcher of the Middle Temple:

> Miss Du Quesne ... was happily marry'd the 17th instant [March] to Mr John French only son of a Gentleman of the isle of Wight, a discreet man in good circumstances, who was so pleased with Miss's charms that he told his parents he could think of no other person, and that he should think himself happy to have her tho' without a fortune. Sir Roger and Lady Bradshaigh with her principal friends readily agreed to the proposal.[17]

Of her married life we know nothing other than that she had two daughters mentioned in Thomas's will.

As we have seen, when their parents departed for Jamaica William and Thomas were sent to 'a kind of nursery school kept by the Rev. Mr Lefevre and his wife at Church Lane, Chelsea'. In January 1727 the two boys were moved to St Albans Abbey School, travelling under the supervision of a Mrs Daws who carried with her a letter from Newman telling the head-teacher, the Revd John Fothergill, that she would pay the entrance fee of a guinea each, that they had with them their books from Chelsea, that they were able to read in both French and English and that they had had the smallpox. They should be allowed 6d a week pocket money which, however, was not to be spent on fruit or nuts. Their arrival took place on the eve of Billy's eleventh birthday. 'I shall always be glad to hear of their welfare', wrote Newman, 'and desire they would write to me in French till they can do so in Latin'.[18]

A couple of months after their arrival at St Albans we read that Lady Torrington was attempting to get William the position of page to HRH the Princess Anne, the eldest daughter of the new King, George II. However, some months later we find Newman writing the following letter to William at St Albans:

> Dear Billy,
>
> I thank you for your letter of the 26th of last month which I received at Madam Du Quesne's when the postman brought hers, and I am glad to find you mend in your writing, as I hope you do in your knowledge of the Latin and French tongues.... I hope also that you are design'd for a great comfort and blessing to your parents and brothers in whatever station of life the providence of God may call you to though there is as your mother desires me to tell you no likelihood at present of your being admitted to the honour of waiting on Her Majesty as one of her pages, from some

hints that have lately been given to your mamma, but don't let this discourage you, it may be you want to be humbled, and have in conversation boasted too much of the honour your friends aim'd at for you.... Believe me to be

dear Billy
Your most humble servant[19]

Nothing came of this or of Newman's plans to get William a place in the Custom Office, 'in London or on the coast' but by 1732 we read that, thanks to Lady Torrington's influence, he was a young clerk in the lottery office. Two years later he followed his father into the Army and to Jamaica. It was a destination about which Newman had considerable misgivings, writing to him on Christmas Eve 1735, 'Dear Billy, though heaven withholds from you the blessings which others lavishly enjoy, I hope you will live to see the clouds dispersed'.[20] He recommends that he study nature and the management of plantations and advises that 'when you are quarter'd in a desolate place let the Holy Scripture or some other good book be your daily amusement and if you can inspire the soldiers under your command with a love of virtue and religion when they are destitute of every advantage for acquiring it, such heroism will make you the darling of God and men and add a glorious lustre to your account hereafter.' Like so many before and after him in the Caribbean William died of a fever within a couple of years.

The youngest of the children, Henry, seems to have been a difficult child. He was a couple of months short of six when Newman wrote to John Fotheringay describing him a 'a rugged child'. Even as a three-year old Newman had written of him that he was 'as wild as a buck and has spirit enough for six children'.[21] For a short time he was at a dame school but was quickly transferred to a boys' school 'being too ungovernable for a mistress ... the master pins him to his gown'.

We do not know for how long Henry stayed at St Albans but at the age of 14 we hear of his returning from the West Indies in a man-of-war and imposing himself not on his father but on Newman who wrote to the Marquis, 'To prevent his hindering my clerk and molesting the tranquillity of my little family, I have been oblig'd to put him in a writing school in my neighbourhood, but when I sent yesterday to know whether he was there, he was not, nor had been

there all the forenoon, being gone to Tyburn to see the men hang'd, a curiosity I can't blame him for'.[22]

Harry's record as a ship's boy was less than exemplary. He deserted HMS *Gloucester* at Gibraltar, working his way home on merchant ships and completing the last leg, from Harwich to London, on foot, and left the *Hampton Court* in Jamaica despite the promise of a midshipman's berth. It was as a former member of the company of the latter ship that he made his will. The contrast with his brother Thomas's will could hardly be greater:

> I Henry Du Quesne
>
> Do make this my last Will as follows. I give to my father thirty pounds to my mother forty pounds to be paid to her own hands and without her husband to be a good discharger – notwithstanding her covertures I give to my brother Thomas ten pounds and to my sister Jane Anne twenty pounds and I give one half of the residue of my personal estate to my said mother for her separate use and such her Receipt as aforesaid to be a good discharger for the same and the other half thereof I give to my sister and I make my said brother Thomas my Executor hereof as witness my hand this second day of February one thousand and seven hundred and thirty-six.

It was not until 10 April 1742 that Administration 'of the Goods and Credit of Henry Du Quesne late of H.M. Ship the Hampton Court in ports beyond the seas' was granted to 'Jane Anne Du Quesne spinster the lawful attorney of Thomas Roger Du Quesne the Brother and Sole Executor named in the said Will now residing at King's College in the University of Cambridge'.[23] If his will is anything to go by Harry was much closer to his mother than his father.

By contrast with his brothers, Thomas Roger could hardly have had a more fortunate life beginning with an education at Eton and King's College paid for, according to Lowther Clarke, by Colonel Townsend (thus spelt) who was married to Lady Torrington's niece.[24] Unlike his brothers, Thomas was also able to take advantage of another family connection. Their mother's sister, Elizabeth Murray, married General Egerton and was to become the great-grandmother of Charles Townshend of Honingham who presented Thomas to the livings of Honingham and, later, East

Tuddenham with which it was then combined, in 1753.[25] He died at the age of 75, having enjoyed the comforts of Berries Hall for most of his adult life. Newman has no colourful stories of his young life. We can perhaps assume that, like his friend James Woodforde, he was chosen from among his brothers as the one most suited to a university education and entry into the Church.

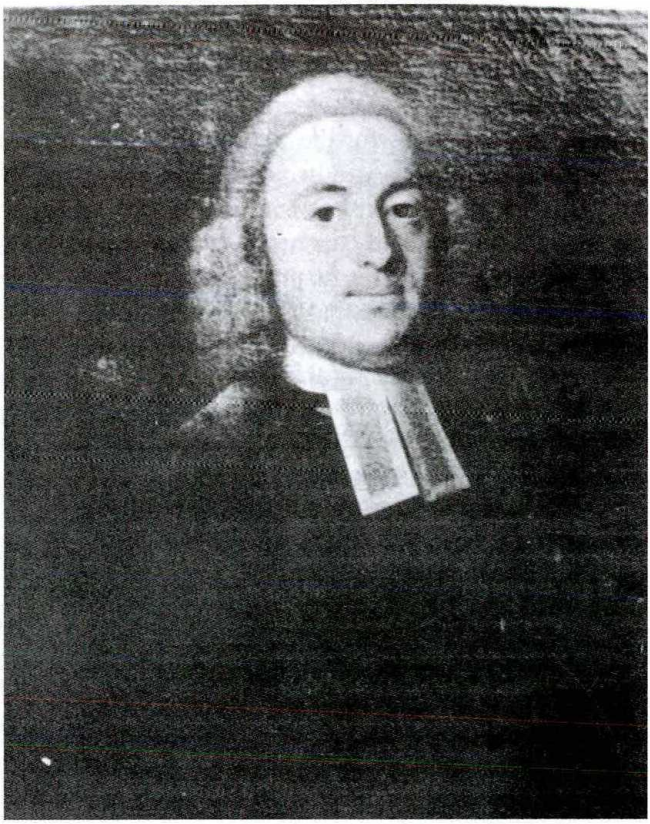
REFERENCES

1. F. Steer, 'Mr Du Quesne of East Tuddenham', *Journal*, Vol. 1, 4.
2. This was Mr Louis Du Cane who, according to Beresford, 'sent me a copy of Mr Du Quesne's remarkable will, and supplied the portraits and pedigree'.
3. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (a) 'Henry Newman, 1670–1743' in *Eighteenth Century Piety* (1944).
4. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was founded in 1698.
5. W. Gibson, *The Church of England, 1688–1832: Unity and Accord* (2001.
6. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b) 'Henry Newman and the Du Quesnes' in *Eighteenth Century Piety* (1944).
7. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.*
8. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.*
9. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter dated 30 Aug. 1723.
10. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter dated 4 Nov. 1726.
11. J. Beresford, *Mr Du Quesne and Other Essays*, 1932.
12. London Metropolitan Archives, Church of England Burial Registers, 1538–1812, Ref. no. *P89/MRY1/003.*
13. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter dated 6 Nov. 1729.
14. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter dated 17 Aug. 1742. Lowther Clarke describes this Sir Roger and Lady Bradshaigh as Ann's great-grandparents. In fact this was the 3rd baronet and his wife, Ann's uncle and aunt.
15. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter dated 25 June 1725.
16. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.*
17. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter 31 March 1743.
18. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter 10 Jan. 1727.
19. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter 5 Dec. 1727.
20. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter 24 Dec. 1735.
21. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter 11 March 1725.
22. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.* Letter 12 Aug. 1736.
23. National Archives, PROB 11/717.
24. W. K. Lowther Clarke, (b), *op. cit.*
25. J. Beresford, *Mr Du Quesne and Other Essays*, 1932.

MR DU QUESNE OF EAST TUDDENHAM

The first reference to the Reverend Thomas Roger Du Quesne in the printed Diary is on p. 171 of volume 1 where, under the date 18 November 1775, James Woodforde notes the receipt of a disconcerting letter about dilapidations at Weston Longville which had been surveyed on behalf of the widow of the last incumbent, Dr Gloster Ridley, 'by a Clergyman, the Rev^{d} Mr Du Quesne and a Will^{iam} Tompson, Carpenter at Hockering'; the issue was amicably settled in December 1776 (see the *Diary*, vol. 5, Appendix II, pp. 417, 418). The last diary entry to mention Du Quesne was made on 20 April 1797 (vol. 5, p. 28) where the Parson (after a gargantuan meal with Du Quesne's successor, Edward Mellish, at East Tuddenham) observes in an almost perfunctory manner, 'Great alteration indeed since Mr Du Quesne's death', the reference being to the state of the garden at Berry's Hall which served as the parsonage house from 1754 to 1908 and lies within half a mile of Honingham and a mile of East Tuddenham.

Woodforde and Du Quesne had been friends from 1776 until the latter's death on 15 September 1793 at the age of 75; the diarist was then only 53 and he survived Du Quesne by ten years. The extent of the intimacy of the two men is manifest by the numerous references in the Diary, but there are other sources of information on Du Quesne's family and his career. In addition to the footnotes on p. 70 of vol. 2 and pp. 60 and 61 of vol. 4 of the Diary, we have (i) *Mr Du Quesne and other Essays* by John Beresford (1932); (ii) a chapter entitled 'Henry Newman and the Du Quesnes' in *Eighteenth Century Piety* (1944) by my old friend, the late Canon W. K. Lowther Clarke, DD; and (iii) Du Quesnne's will. Of the first, one hopes that a new edition will be printed because it is a delightful piece of sensitive writing; of the second, although it concerns a period before that in which we are interested in Thomas Roger Du Quesne, it is a valuable addition to our knowledge of his family background and therefore complementary to Woodforde studies; of the third, its merit lies in the picture it provides of Du Quesne's character, his home and the ultimate disposition of his worldly wealth and possessions. It is this third source which is the subject of this essay.



Revd Thomas Roger Du Quesne (1717–93)
after the portrait painted in 1750 by Heins

It was on 19 February 1791 that Thomas Roger Du Quesne signed and sealed the long will which he had written with his own hand. It is a rambling document, almost a series of random thoughts put down on paper as they occurred to the old man but, in the usual fashion employed for testamentary documents of the period, this one began with the pious exclamation, 'In the Name of God, Amen'. The testator then declared himself ('blessed be God') to be of sound memory, understanding and disposing judgement and recommended his soul to Almighty God and His mercy 'through the merits of Christ my Redeemer'. He then proceeded to dispose of his goods and in the following analysis no alteration has been made in the sequence of the original clauses; in some few instances, the

rather involved detail has been reduced to more simple terms without, it is hoped, any loss of the true intention expressed by the testator.

Du Quesne's first care was for the faithful Elizabeth (sometimes called Betty) England, the widow of his trusty servant Robert England; he left her an annuity of £50 for the term of her life. In addition she had a horse and cart of her choice, a cow, pigs and poultry, coombs (i.e. measures of four bushels) of wheat, barley, oats and peas, and all her master's hay and coals. Equally comforting to her, no doubt, was the bequest of half of her master's stock of port, rum, brandy, shrub (a drink made with rum or other spirit to which the juice of acid fruit such as orange or lemon had been added), white wine, porter, Geneva (Hollands gin) and other liquors that he should leave. The other half of the port, white wine and shrub was left to Richard Priest, the rector of Reepham; the other half of the rum, brandy, porter and Geneva was left to Stephen England, Elizabeth's son. Further material comforts were bequeathed to Elizabeth England in the form of firewood, tea, sugar and coffee, sheets and other linen, a bedstead and its furnishings, kitchen utensils and furniture, mahogany tables, various chairs, a walnut and other looking-glasses, a walnut bureau, a travelling trunk covered with red leather, an old-fashioned clothes chest, a mahogany tea chest (i.e. caddy), 'my prayer stool in my little parlour', sundry items of porcelain including 'my Wedgwood breakfast tea pot;, silver, plates, dishes, mugs, chocolate and coffee pots made of copper, glasses, candlesticks, 'what wide mouth bottles she may choose for putting fruit', brewing and dairy utensils, and a barrel of table beer. These and many other items were listed in detail, but some are perhaps too trivial to mention individually in this paper, but taken collectively they demonstrate the standard of furnishing and the variety of household equipment in the house of a fairly rich country clergyman during the closing years of the 18th century: here was a degree of comfort and grace not to be found in the homes of less fortunate sections of society. We can compare Du Quesne's affluence with the povery of the curate described in Crabbe's poem, 'The Borough' –

> Behold his dwelling! this poor hut he hires
> Where he from view, though not from want, retires;

Where four fair daughters, and five sorrowing sons,
Partake his sufferings, and dismiss his duns;
All join their efforts, and in patience learn
To want the comforts they aspire to earn …

The extensive bequest to Elizabeth England was conditional upon her living in a hired house and becoming a housekeeper, that is to say, she had to live as a householder in her own right; if she became a mere lodger in someone else's house she was only to have such furniture and goods 'as will be necessary & comfortable in that state of boarding or lodging'. Du Quesne took every precaution to ensure Elizabeth's well-being and he inserted an involved clause in his will which, in effect, laid responsibility on his executor; he says (with a remarkable disregard for legal phraseology) 'I don't doubt it I mean that she should live in her helpless state comfortably & happily'.

The executor was none other than Du Quesne's patron and cousin, Charles Townshend (1728–1810) of Honingham Hall. Although he was something of a vicar of Bray in the political sphere, he held various government offices and in 1797 was created Baron Bayning of Foxley in Berkshire, but was not this territorial designation probably an error for Foxley in Wiltshire or, more likely, in Norfolk? This Charles Townshend will be referred to throughout as 'senior' to distinguish him from his son, also called Charles and who lived from 1785 to 1823.

Du Quesne's mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Roger Bradshaigh, 2nd Baronet, of Haigh in Lancashire, and this fact obviously accounts for the parson's second Christian name. Du Quesne had inherited £1000 from his cousin, Sir Roger, 4th Baronet, but as the 'fortune' of £500 which belonged to Du Quesne's sister (unnamed) was in the hands of the 3rd Baronet and was never paid because he died insolvent, the rector felt compelled to put matters right. He accordingly left £500 in trust for his niece, Frances, wife of Benjamin Powell (in 1791 a pavior living at Chatham); the income was for the support of the niece, her husband and children, the capital to be divided among the latter on the deaths of their parents. William, son of another niece, Jane Burden, received £400 with certain provisos which need not concern us. The remaining £100 (thus disposing of the £1000) went to Du Quesne's god-daughter, Lady Elizabeth Keith Lindsay, daughter of

Alexander, 6th Earl of Balcarres and 23rd Earl of Crawford (1752–1825) by his wife Elizabeth (née Dalrymple) who had inherited the Haigh property on the failure of male heirs in her maternal family, the Bradshaighs. This god-daughter also had £100 being part of £200 which had been bequeathed to Du Quesne by Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh, wife of the 4th Baronet: the other £100 went to Frances Powell on the same conditions as the £500 mentioned above. The testator felt it unnecessary to leave anything to some Catchpole relations because they had been provided for under a Bradshaigh will.

To his cousin, Countess Balcarres (née Elizabeth Dalrymple), Du Quesne left his mother's diamond ring and a gold repeating watch which Lady Dorothy Bradshaigh had bequeathed to him, but on the death of the Countess these items were to go to Lady Elizabeth Lindsay. This clause, like others in the will, are marked N.B. Bradshaigh family treasures, including a mezzotint portrait, two cannel coal (coal which can be cut and polished like jet) medallions, miniatures by Christian Friedrich Zincke (1684?–1767), an enamel-painter born in Dresden, and other portraits of Du Quesne's parents and grandparents and of Job Yates (his mother's first husband) were divided between Lady Balcarres, William Burden and Frances Powell, but the two latter recipients had to promise to keep them in the family.

Charles Townshend, sen., had paintings of Haigh Hall, of his mother Henrietta Powlett in masquerade dress, of Lady Torrington, and of Abraham 1st Marquis Du Quesne; prints of the Royal Family; two sea-fight pieces; an ormulu urn; a messotint of Lady Torrington '& indeed all my household goods & furniture not disposed of otherwise in my will'. Du Quesne's own portrait, that of his greyhound bitch 'Fly', a large landscape and the largest brewing copper were left 'to the Vicarage House for ever'.

Men like Woodforde and Du Quesne, brought up to value their friends and to cherish their own possessions, were the salt of 18th century England. A person's will is a very intimate document and as one reads that of Du Quesne's a picture comes to mind of this elderly, bewigged parson sitting in his study and concentrating on the disposal of his goods. Nothing is overlooked; no one is forgotten. If Robert Priest, a Norwich wine merchant, would like

East Tuddenham Church
from a drawing by Miss S. Whitcombe

Du Quesne's spa water machine and dumb waiter he can have them; William Burden was left an armorial seal of brown crystal set in gold (how many letters had it sealed before the invention of adhesive envelopes?) and 'my gilt silver watch if he has not a watch'. Space does not allow every small bequest to be mentioned, but niece Powell's husband, Benjamin, was to have the parson's shirts, stocks, night-caps, sheets, table cloths, towels and wearing apparel not otherwise disposed of. 'My black cloth tuck up gown' was to go to the Rev. Richard Priest who would have more use for it than the pavior; Elizabeth England was charged with the disposal of other gowns, wigs, boots, shoes and stockings.

The rector had been a good friend to Elizabeth England's son, Stephen. He had lent him money without interest and that arrangement was to continue; he was also to have Bedford and White Foot (two of the parson's horses) and all the waggons, carts, harness and implements of husbandry except those left to his mother. £20 was left to Du Quesne's old servant James Arthurton. In an age of illiteracy clergy often looked after the modest savings of other people: Du Quesne was no exception and he gave careful

directions regarding such matters so that his trusting and poorer friends were protected; in all these financial arrangements we can see the kindness and integrity of this man.

Elizabeth England had another son, Robert; he had made drawings of birds and other subjects which the parson bequeathed to Elizabeth with a print of our Saviour on the Cross. Her faithful service was continually remembered with more and yet more gifts such as a mourning ring, a suit of proper mourning, head-dress, handkerchief, apron '& what is proper'. Thomas Twaits and James Arthurton, also servants, had mourning clothes and other bequests and the testator wished these men to attend his funeral. They and two maid servants were each to have a whole year's wages. The Rev. Richard Priest was left £20, a mourning ring ('which I desire him to wear for a twelve month at least for my sake'), eight mahogany chairs ('which he gave to me') and the two settees to match, a 'collaret' barometer and the best card table on which, no doubt, many a game of loo had been played.

Libraries collected by well-educated men often reveal a secondary interest and in Du Quesne's case it was medicine and surgery; the books on these subjects, with £20, went to his godson, Richard Priest of Harleston, the remainder of the library was to be divided between the Priest family – the Rev. Richard of Reepham, the Rev. St John of Scarning, John who was a druggist at Norwich and Richard of Harleston after Charles Townshend, sen., had made his selection. 'I would have given my whole library to Mr Townshend my executor', writes Du Quesne, 'but I give the above books to the Priest family only as unfit in dress for a handsome library'. Manuscript sermons were to be divided between the rectors of Reepham and Scarning, Du Quesne carefully noting that they were not all his own compositions. The Priest family also had the musical instruments – a bass viol, two violins, two German flutes, and music and song books.

In 1783 Du Quesne had added a prebendal stall in Ely cathedral to his list of preferments (see the *Diary*, vol. 2, p. 70); to his godsons, Marcell Cotman, and William, son of the Rev. Mr Metcalfe of Ely, he left five guineas each and to Metcalfe the balance of wine and spirits 'which may be remaining of my stock in my Prebendal house'; the screens and the green baize doors he had had made for

the dining room there he left to the house as heirlooms. Rebecca, daughter of the rector of Reepham, had 'the gold medals given to me by Mrs Barwick for a Quadrille pawn': how one would like to know what they were and where they are now. Albinia Terry, sister of Mrs Potter who kept the *Ram* inn at Newmarket '& for whom I answered I give 5 guineas'.

Du Quesne subscribed two guineas annually during his lifetime to each of four institutions: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Charitable Corporation for the Relief of the Widows and Children of Norfolk Clergymen, and the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. To ensure that those deserving causes would not be the poorer after his death, Du Quesne left £50 to each of them in trust with the intent that the interest thereon should be applied towards carrying on the charitable purposes for which they had been founded. But provision was also made for the clerks of East Tuddenham, Honingham and Scole churches (Du Quesne held the last mentioned benefice from 1756 until his death); they were to have ten shillings each, yearly, in addition to their stipends and 'as an encouragement to the obtaining & keeping' of good clerks, but if the parishes attempted to take advantage of the bequest by lessening the salaries, the legacies were to be void.

It had been Du Quesne's habit to distribute bread and meat at Christmas to the poor and the labourers of East Tuddenham and Honingham, so provision was made to continue this 'for ever' by making available the annual sums of £2 8s. 6d. and £1 11s. 6d. to the respective parishes 'to be distributed in my usual manner ... at Christmas in the week following that in which the Townshend's gifts are distributed & which I desire may be distributed as usual by the butcher who serves this house & by the bread sellers in Tuddenham & Honingham as usual'. If these sums of money seem absurdly small to us today, we must recall that a shilling in 1791 had a very different purchasing power where food was concerned from what it has in 1968. Neither must we forget that a modest dole of bread and beef was very welcome fare to the poorer classes. Dickens' lines –

> Oh, let us love our occupations,
> Bless the squire and his relations,

Live upon our daily rations,
And always know our proper stations

are perhaps appropriately quoted here, but the benefactions of men like Du Quesne were invariably made in Christian charity.

Food for the mind as well as for the body was provided by the rector in the form of good books or tracts, to the value of £1 a year, to be bought from the S.P.C.K. by the minister of East Tuddenham and Honingham and disposed of according to the plan of a Mr Revans who, with his wife, had previously made a similar bequest: the literature was to go to children who could repeat their catechism. The money for these parochial bequests, amounting in all to £6 10s. 0d. a year, was to be available from (among other sources) the testator's investments in Reduced Bank Stock, Navy Bills or the Norwich and Swaffham Turnpike Road. If, however, any of these benefactions were not paid, then the sum involved was to go to the poor and the poor children of St David's or Lichfield for similar purposes. Du Quesne was Chancellor Canon of St David's and he had also held a prebendal stall at Lichfield since 1765. Lastly, Du Quesne gave a dozen leather buckets (to be painted with the name of the parish) to be hung in the lower part of the belfry of East Tuddenham church as fire-fighting equipment; similar buckets may still be seen in the tower of the fine church of Evercreech in Somerset, a parish where John Woodforde, the Diarist's brother, had some property.

The Hon. Mrs Caroline Cornwallis (daughter of William Townshend, and the widow of Frederick Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1768–1783) was left £100 and Mrs Annabella Townshend (the Exor. Charles's wife) was to have £5 'for a tippet or muff as a keepsake'; Charles, son of Charles Townshend, sen., and afterwards 2nd Baron Bayning, was bequeathed 'my brown chrystal buttons & a gold shirt buckle given to me by Mr Pelham'.

As Du Quesne contemplated that he was nearing the end of his life, he recalled that he had never paid a debt of fifteen shillings to a person in Durham Yard in the Strand, London, 'for want of opportunity'; as he had forgotten the name of his creditor, he discharged his conscience by leaving two guineas to the minister or churchwarden of the parish in which Durham Yard was situated 'to

Berries Hall
from a drawing by Miss M. Peck

be distributed to a few of the most industrious poor' of that place. Likewise he 'had fifteen shillings left in my hands many years ago as the balance due [to] the Revd. Mr Pent formerly of Kings College whose quarterages I used to receive for him & he dying & I not knowing how conveniently to pay it & neglecting & forgetting it as such a trifle it has never been paid', so Du Quesne asked his executor to enquire at Little Finbury [*recte* Finborough, 4m. SW of Stowmarket] in Suffolk if any of the Pent family lived there. If so, the fifteen shillings were to be paid to them, but otherwise the money was to go to the minister of the parish for distribution among the industrious poor there who were not in receipt of relief.

In 1791, Du Quesne had paid £100 which he had promised towards the repair of St David's cathedral so a provision in this respect included in a previous will made in August 1790 was declared void.

If Charles Townshend, sen., declined executorship of the will, Richard Priest of Reepham was asked to undertake it and he was to have £100 for his pains. The residue of Du Quesne's 'goods & chattels, monies in cash, notes or bills, debts & dues to me which will I believe amount to a considerable sum' was left to Charles Townshend, sen. Almost as an afterthought, further bequests of curtains, 'my 2 round green face skreens in my little parlour', and

the best bird cage and one of birds were made to Elizabeth England; James Arthurton, sen., was to have five guineas as a remembrance of his merit and good behaviour to Du Quesne. The rector's writings and papers – a fairly large bundle – concerning his livings and preferments were left to his several successors in each. And so 'As I have meant to do I hope that I have in this my will discharged the several duties owing to relationship, justice, gratitude & charity'.

Du Quesne asked to be buried in some convenient place in the chancel of East Tuddenham church if there was room and there was no danger to the wall; he also desired a black marble stone to be put over his grave; both these requests were observed. The funeral service was to be conducted by Richard Priest of Reepham and the four upper pall bearers were to be Leonard Shelford (rector of North Tuddenham), James Woodforde, George Smith (vicar of Mattishall) and the Revd Thomas Bodham of Mattishall 'as my oldest neighbour Clergy', but if it was thought that six upper bearers were more usual and proper than four, Thomas Jeanes (rector of Great Witchingham) and Roger Freston Howman (rector of Mattishall Burgh with Hockering) were to be added; the usual scarves, hat-bands and gloves were to be provided. But yet again, Du Quesne says, 'Lastly I desire that my executor will give to Elizabeth England any proper trifle she may wish for if he pleases but which I may have forgot'.

The will was signed and sealed on 19 February 1791 in the presence of John and Elizabeth Willans (or Willians, for one signs in one way and one in the other) of Honingham, but on 15 June 1792 (but not signed until 7 July) a codicil was added because of the extra-ordinary increase in Du Quesne's estate by reason of fines which fell to him from his canonries at St David's and Ely. These fines were not penalties paid by wrong-doers but sums paid by lessees on the renewal or granting of leases; a substantial payment was often demanded on such occasions with only a small annual rent payable during the term of the lease; thus those entitled to income from leaseholders frequently had in a lump sum what would have been due to their successors in office if an equitable annual rent had been paid. Du Quesne obviously felt a little uneasy over this: as a victim (albeit a willing one!) of a prevailing system he could do nothing about it beyond benefiting his legatees. So he increased by £100 the

legacies to his Powell nephew and niece and to his great-nephew, William Burden; he left a further £100 to be equally divided between the children of Charles Townshend, sen., as pocket money; he added £10 a year to Elizabeth England's annuity and reduced the debt due from her son, Stephen, by £78.

As a considerable portion of this extra money came from Du Quesne's canonry at Ely, he left enough to the treasurer of that cathedral to provide an augmentation of £5 a year to the salary of its organist 'as an encouragement towards having & keeping a good one', but the usual salary was not be lessened on that account. An extra five guineas was added to Thomas Twaits' legacy and Betty England was to have the bath stove in the garden bed-chamber if she wanted it, plus the rector's dog, 'Boxer', '& any little article which she may wish to have which I have forgot to specify & which my executor may think proper to gratify in' – words repeated almost exactly from the will of less than eighteen months earlier.

Six months went by and on 30 January 1793 Du Quesne wrote a second codicil. Elizabeth England was again remembered: this time certain curtains were bequeathed, a servant's garret bedstead and the kitchen clock 'given to me by Mr Lowe'. This clock must have been a large one because Du Quesne stipulated that if it could not be fitted into Mrs England's new home without being cut down or otherwise altered, she was to have another and more suitable timepiece. In any case, whatever clock was selected, Mrs England was to have it only for her lifetime; the rector was very particular that his possessions went to those people who would treasure and respect them. Stephen England was to have a japanned clock and his mother 'my 2 round face skreens on stands which are in my keeping room & one of my square fire skreens in my dining room if she desires to have one but for her life only & then both of them [sic] to go to Mr Townshend my executor'. With all these items of furniture and £60 a year for life, did any housekeeper have a more appreciative master? Betty's monetary bequest was the only one to become effective immediately on Du Quesne's death – all other beneficiaries had to wait for twelve months after that event 'but then to be paid duly & truly'. Lastly, John, son of John Priest of St Giles's Street, Norwich, druggist, and godson of Du Quesne, was to have five guineas.

This second codicil was not signed until 30 March 1793 and on 18 May following Du Quesne added another which recorded that as he had already advanced £100 to Benjamin Powell the additional bequest in the first codicil was revoked. Many people have had an obsession about death and have made it almost a hobby to change their wills: Du Quesne was such a one and on 12 August 1793 he added a memorandum about his pall-bearers and expressed the wish that his apothecary, Mr [recte Dr] Wright of Mattishall, should attend his funeral and have the usual scarf, hat-bands and gloves '& what is usual for the hearse driver to have' – this last sentence is somewhat obscure in its meaning. Then follows an almost pre-Reformation touch: 'After the first evening service on Sunday after my funeral I desire to have the value of one pound in loaves of bread to be distributed amongst the poor of East Tuddenham'. One other condition regarding the Englands was imposed: 'If Betty should not be satisfied with the annuity which I have left her or it would not be thought sufficient by my executor or in general I desire him to add to it'. It was also particularly desired that five guineas should be paid to Stephen England's son who had been born since the will was made.

A further memorandum concerned a small piece of land about which there had been some question as to whether or not it was glebe, but if Mr Townshend was not satisfied with Du Quesne's rather involved account of the circumstances it was to be valued, exclusive of the tithe, paid for out of the residuary estate and presented to the living: 'I do this for peace, security & prevention of disputes after my decease'.

The end came on 15 September 1793. Du Quesne was buried in the chancel of East Tuddenham church and a flat stone was laid over his grave. His epitaph records his parentage, education and character in the voluble language of the period. From what we know of Du Quesne we may judge that what is engraved on the stone is a true assessment of the man: he was of a cheerful disposition and his amiable qualities procured him a large circle of friends but he did not allow the enjoyments of society to interrupt his parochial duties. He comforted the afflicted, visited the sick and relieved the necessitous; such a pastor could hardly fail to be respected and beloved by his parishioners. We can see these qualities reflected in

his will and in his portrait; the latter shows the large head, a full and gentle mouth above a strong chin, the well-placed eyes, straight nose and high forehead. The portrait was painted by John Theodore Heins (1732–1771) in 1750; Heins also painted a miniature of William Cowper's mother which occasioned the poem 'On receipt of my mother's picture out of Norfolk, the gift of my cousin, Ann Bodham'. We got a glimpse of Du Quesne's powers of description in the letter he wrote to Woodforde which was printed in the last issue of the *Journal*; we can discern the quality of a tender conscience (perhaps rare in rich 18th-century divines) when unearned wealth came his way or he recalled that liabilities totalling thirty shillings had remained undischarged for many years.

Parson Woodforde was at Cole when Du Quesne died and so was unable to attend the funeral. In the diary for 26 September 1793: 'We were sorry to see on this Days Paper from Bath that our very valuable and worthy Friend the Revd. Mr. Du Quesne of Tuddenham was no more. It is a very great loss to us, but I hope to him, Gain. Pray God he may be eternally happy'.

I am most grateful to Canon L. R. Wilson for the loan of a transcript of Du Quesne's will and other source material which has enabled me to write this paper. *F.W.S.*

(This article by Francis Steer, MA, FSA, Archivist of New College, Oxford, was first published in Journal I, no. 4, Winter 1968.)

STUART LOYALTIES? ANOTHER NOTE ON CLEMENTINA SOBIESKI

More than once in the last decade, questions have been raised about the naming of Parson Woodforde's eldest sister, Clementina Sobieski, known as Sophy.[1] What follows proposes a new explanation for the naming of the child who was to become the diarist's 'Sister Clarke'. As with a previous explanation, it involves the 'Polish Princess' Clementina Sobieska, who was placed under house-arrest in Innsbruck on the orders of George I, from where she was rescued by an Irish Jacobite; she escaped to Italy and married James III, the Stuart claimant to the throne. The new explanation also brings in the young Charles II, on the run after the Civil War.

In the Newsletter for December 2018, a report of a talk by Maureen Wincott described a story long known in Castle Cary.[2] After the Battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651, the 21-year-old Charles Stuart, who had been crowned Charles II in Scotland but was a wanted fugitive in England,[3] stayed a night at Castle Cary on his way to escape to the Continent. He left England via the Sussex coast on 15 October 1651. The local theory claims that his night in Castle Cary was passed, not at the Manor House as was otherwise assumed, but in Ansford. The plan was that it should be at the Lower House, the home of the Collins family, Parson Woodforde's maternal ancestors. On 16 September 1651, when Charles Stuart spent his night in the area, the Collins couple at the Lower House were James Collins (1618–1669) and his wife Dorothy Watts (d. 1714). They were the diarist's great-great-grandparents.[4]

The Lower House, which was between the Rectory and St Andrew's Church, Ansford, passed down in the Collins family to Jane Collins who married the Revd Samuel Woodforde and became the diarist's mother. The Lower House features in the diaries of the 1760s, when James and his brother John lived there. It burnt down in 1892.[5]

When the Parliamentary soldiers came searching for Charles Stuart that night in 1651, the story is that Charles and James Collins hid in a ditch between Lower Ansford and the Half Moon Inn on Ansford Hill, and when the soldiers burst in to the Lower House, Dorothy Collins was alone, reading her Bible.[6] James and Dorothy Collins'

first child, Nicholas, was born in the same year, 1651, so when the soldiers arrived, Dorothy must have been either heavily pregnant or looking after a baby. It must have been a frightening experience for her. Her baby, Nicholas Collins (1651–1723), married Joane Russ in 1678; she died in 1737. They had a son, James Collins (1683–1727) who married as his first wife Jane Tilley (d. 1720). Their only child, another Jane (1706–1766) was James Woodforde's mother.[7]

If the story of the night that Ansford gave shelter to a royal visitor was passed down in the Collins family to Jane Collins, then perhaps she absorbed a family loyalty to the Stuarts. Her great-grandmother Dorothy lived until 1714, when Jane was eight, so the child may have heard the story first-hand from Dorothy. After her death, there was still Grandfather Nicholas and her father James Collins to remind Jane of the family allegiance.

External events may have kept alive the family's Stuart sympathies. In 1714, the last Stuart reigning monarch, Queen Anne, died and was succeeded by George I, a distant relative. Jacobite hopes were centred on James III (1688–1766), the son of James II. Louis XIV declared James III 'King of England, Scotland and Ireland'. In 1715, there was a badly-managed Jacobite rising, and James III fled back to the continent.[8] In 1719, he contracted to marry Princess Clementina Sobieska of Poland. George I, worried by the continental alliances this important match would bring, arranged with the Hapsburg Emperor to have her placed under house-arrest in Innsbruck.[9] George I had a track-record for imprisoning women – by 1719 his own wife had been confined in the Castle of Ahlden in Lower Saxony for twenty-five years, and she had six more years to serve before death released her.[10] Princess Clementina was luckier – she was soon rescued by an Irish officer who had taken part in the 1715 Jacobite uprising; they escaped to Italy and she was married to James III. Their two sons, Charles Edward and Henry Benedict, born in 1720 and 1725, revived the hopes for a return of the Stuart dynasty. These events, reported in the newspapers in Britain, would have allowed sympathisers to keep up with the Stuarts in Italy.

In 1724, Jane Collins married the Revd Samuel Woodforde, who was already Rector of Ansford and Vicar of Castle Cary. They lived initially in Epsom, where her first child was born in 1725.[11] It might

have seemed important to her to remember the Stuarts by naming her new baby daughter 'Clementina Sobieski', after a contemporary princess who had made a romantic escape to marry a Stuart King, James III, the nephew of Charles II, thus linking her family loyalties with a modern heroine.

Possibly this accounts for the choice of name, otherwise a puzzling one.

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CHARLES WILLIAM MARSHAM OF STRATTON STRAWLESS AND FRANCES ANNE CUSTANCE OF WESTON HOUSE

In 2013, while researching Robert Marsham 1708–1797, the naturalist and Fellow of the Royal Society, I acquired a likeness of his great-grandson, Charles William Marsham. The portrait is executed in very fine graphite on paper, and was made in Naples by Raffaele d'Auria, who became a noted portraitist of Neapolitan society. The picture retains its original frame and backing board, now expertly conserved, and preserves some interesting personal information.

Charles William was born 30 August 1814 and baptized at the Church of St Margaret, Stratton Strawless on 25 September of that year. His father was (another) Robert Marsham, while his mother was Frances Anne Custance, the eldest daughter of James Woodforde's squire.

Woodforde memorably records the birth of Frances Anne in his diary entry for 25 June 1783:

> Nancy & myself dined & spent part of the Afternoon at Weston House with M^{r} and M^{rs} Custance … whilst we were at Dinner M^{rs} Custance was obliged to go from Table about 4. o'clock labour Pains coming on fast upon her – We went home soon after dinner on the Occasion …
> We got home between 5. and 6. o'clock –
> After Supper we sent up to M^{r} Custances to enquire after M^{rs} Custance who was brought to bed of a fine Girl about 7. o'clock and as well as can be expected.

The following day Woodforde named the child:

> I walked up to M^{r} Custance's this morning soon after breakfast and named the little Girl by name Frances Ann, and a very pretty Infant She is.

He duly recorded the birth and baptism in the Weston Longville parish register:

> Frances Anne __ Daughter of John & Frances Custance (late Frances Beauchamp) was born June 25th 1783__ baptized __June 26th 1783.

Charles William Marsham
by Raffaele d'Auria

The public baptism of Frances Anne took place on 10 September 1783:

> I walked to Church this morning between 11. & 12.
> and publickly baptised M[r] Custance's little Maid by
> name Frances Anne – Lady Bacon & Lady Beauchamp
> stood Godmothers, and M[r] Custance stood Proxy –
> After I had performed the Ceremony M[r] Custance came
> to me and made me a Present of – 5: 5: 0

At the age of three, she was painted together with her parents by William Beechey. The painting is a famous one, and is in the care of the Norfolk Museums Service.

Frances Anne, usually referred to as Fanny or Miss Custance, appears frequently in the diaries: a smallpox inoculation; a case of scarlet fever; taking tea at the rectory; a sojourn at Bath; and her gradual coming-out into society. No doubt, had he lived for another eighteen months, Woodforde would have rejoiced at Fanny's marriage to Robert Marsham at Weston church on 26 June 1804. Fanny had just passed her twenty-first birthday, and was just one month younger than Robert.

Robert inherited the Stratton Strawless estate from his father in 1812; he became a high sheriff of Norfolk, and is remembered today in the Marsham Arms public house at Hevingham, which he founded in 1832 as a hostel for homeless farm labourers.

Charles William was the fourth child and second son born to Robert and Fanny. Details of his early life are scanty. What is certain is that at the age of twelve or thirteen he visited Naples. The reverse of the picture frame has a label in careful adolescent handwriting, 'C. W. Marsham Naples 1827'.

On 13 April 1841 he married Emily Louisa Macdonald at Blickling church. Emily was the daughter of the chief of the Clan Ranald. The service was conducted by the Reverend John Custance, the fourth son of Woodforde's squire and Charles William's maternal uncle. Woodforde had baptized John on 11 May 1787:

> Took a ride to Weston House this Morning to enquire after M^{rs} Custance &c. – M^{r} Custance was rode out, but I stayed till he returned which was after 2. o'clock, soon after his return I walked up with him into the Nursery and there privately baptised his new-born Son – by name John –

John went up to Trinity Hall, Cambridge in 1809, and was ordained priest in 1821. He was rector of Blickling with Erpingham from 1839 until his death in 1868.

Charles William suffered debilitating ill-health for many years. Nevertheless, he played a gentleman's role in the life of the county: he was gazetted ensign in the Eastern Regiment of Norfolk Militia in 1829; commissioned deputy lord lieutenant in 1843; and was a magistrate.

After nearly twelve years of marriage a son, Charles Robert, was

born to Emily and baptized at Stratton Strawless on 23 March 1853. Tragically, Charles William had died three months previously on 13 December 1852, aged just 38. His death was ascribed to bronchitis, and chronic hepatitis over many years. It might be asked whether Charles William's youthful stay in the insanitary conditions of Naples in the early nineteenth century played a part in his later illness.

The portrait bears another label on the reverse of the frame: 'Given to F. S. Marsham by her father'. F. S. is Frances Sophia, Charles' elder sister, and Robert and Fanny's second child. Whether it was given by Robert to Frances in remembrance of a beloved brother, one can only speculate.

Emily remarried in 1856, to Lt Colonel Hugh Fitzroy. They lived at Stratton Strawless Hall and had four children. The Fitzroy tombs dominate the entrance to Stratton churchyard. Charles William's burial service was performed at Stratton by the rector of Hevingham, but of his final resting place there is no trace either among the weathered nineteenth century Marsham headstones at Stratton, or at Hevingham.

Charles and Emily's son and only child, Charles Robert Marsham, married Fanny Florence Carey, the daughter of a naval officer, in 1881. However, the marriage was without issue and Charles Robert, like his father, died young, at the Hotel Splendid, Nice, on 21 March 1885, and was buried nine days later at Stratton.

WITH NAPOLEON IN RUSSIA 1812

The Diary of Lt. H. A. Vossler – a soldier of the Grand Army, 1812–13.

Heinrich Vossler was born in 1791 in the Wurttemberg town of Tuttlingen where his father Johann, having started his working life as a clerk, was then an administrator of church property in the town and as a result was able to live in some style and social standing. He had intended that his son should enrol at a university but before Heinrich was old enough Frederick II, the King of Wurttemberg, had issued a decree limiting the categories of citizens allowed to pursue such a career, and as the son of a lay servant of the church Heinrich did not qualify. Instead, he took up employment as a clerk for a few months until he had persuaded his mother, his father having died, to allow him to enrol in the army as a volunteer cadet. This was in June 1809. The next year he transferred to the Royal regiment of Light Horse as an ensign and was quickly promoted to second lieutenant in the Duke Louis' Chasseurs. Duke Louis was the Crown Prince of Wurttemberg, his father Frederick was an autocratic ruler with a somewhat sinister reputation: his first wife had disappeared in Russia in unexplained circumstances when Frederick and two of his brothers had senior positions in the Russian army.

By 1806 Wurttemberg was part of Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine with an increase of territory, population and wealth, and Frederick became king of the new state. He was never popular and was regarded by many as having 'unpleasant qualities'. None of this, however, prevented his marriage to Charlotte, eldest daughter of the King of England, although George and Charlotte had considerable misgivings. Frederick's daughter Catherine had married Napoleon's youngest brother Jerome so her stepmother would have had the interesting experience of entertaining England's arch enemy.

When Napoleon Bonaparte embarked on his expedition to Russia in the summer of 1812, preparations had been underway since January 1811 on an unprecedented scale. All his advisers had serious reservations on the dangers of such an enterprise but the original intention was not to penetrate into the vastness of Russia proper but

to proceed with caution and patience. He announced that 'I shall open the campaign by crossing the Niemen and it will be concluded at Smolensk or Minsk'. The winter would be spent at Vilna where he would 'busy myself with organising Lithuania' and free that country from the Russian yoke. Should Tsar Alexander not sue for peace by then, the year 1813 would see further advance into the country.

Controversy has always surrounded Napoleon's decision to abandon his strategy of patient advance. His generals were by 1812 eager to give battle to the Russians, their confidence increased by the huge resources of men, horses and materials available to them. The numbers were spectacular. Over half a million men were supported by seventeen battalions of transport to keep 200,000 supplied with provisions for the long march ahead. These wagons needed up to 10,000 drivers and twice as many horses and oxen to pull them. Each corps had its own herd of cattle. Twelve thousand pieces of ordnance took up more horses as did the transporting of bridge- and boat-building equipment. The greatest numbers of horses were required for the cavalry, some 80,000 of them. Besides the fighting men were engineers, gunsmiths, blacksmiths with their forges, bakers with hand mills for grinding corn, tailors and boot makers and an unknown number of camp followers. Marshal Davout's First Corps of seventy thousand men stationed in Northern Germany was one of the best for organisation and discipline with supplies for twenty-five days stored at depots along the route. Not all were so fortunate and inevitably there were many, particularly the non-French, who made up forty per cent of the numbers, who had to fend for themselves. Few had any idea of the intense cold that awaited them and winter clothing was not a priority. Tsar Alexander realised his forces were no match for the French – hoping to avoid any large scale encounters the idea was to wear down the enemy and let the unforgiving distances and the climate do their worst. The sheer magnitude of the French invasion force would contribute to its downfall, it was in the end too vast and unmanageable. On 22 June 1812, Napoleon issued a Proclamation in which he announced 'Soldiers – the second Polish war has opened; the first ended at Friedland and Tilsit'. The scene was set for one of the greatest military disasters of all time.

It was some months earlier, in early February, that Vossler and his companions in the Chasseurs received 'the long awaited order recalling all troops from leave' and, on the 17th of that month, they moved out of their quarters. They were keen to get going and spurred on with the 'hope of rapid promotion and a thirst for adventure' they were enthusiastic about an approaching war with Russia. This was still in doubt for neither their commanders or the newspapers referred to the possibility but once they had crossed the border 'they were, at last, convinced. All fears of a return to barracks vanished, our hearts grew lighter, and the troops began to sing on the march'. 'Comrades, we're off to Russia' they sang. Full of enthusiasm, and content with one day's rest in six, no one gave a thought as to what might lie ahead. One or two said 'wait and see' but they were ignored.

By 23 March the column had reached the Thuringian Mountains. Vossler derived much pleasure from the impressive scenery along their way and was especially delighted with the high wooded peaks, deep valleys dotted with pretty villages, the rushing rivers and romantic ruined castles. By the end of March they had reached the outskirts of Leipzig where they had a few days of rest. Here it was that they had their first encounters with their French allies. 'We had been warned repeatedly to avoid quarrels with them', some of whom went out of their way to provoke a quarrel and but for the 'firmness with which our admirable sergeant-major Beck handled the situation' there could have been a serious incident.

Life so far had been good to them with comfortable quarters, good food and plenty of local wine. Even in Saxony which had been revaged by war in 1806 they were met with hospitality and generosity. Good harvests had restored the peasants' prosperity. They were on the march by 7 April and on the 11th orders were received from the Emperor Napoleon for the Chasseurs to join the Silesian Lancers and 6th Polish Hussars. This was a great honour for the regiment which would be part of the vanguard of the Grand Army's Cavalry reserve, under the overall command of Marshal Murat. The honour bestowed on the regiment was tempered by a general unease about the level of support to be expected from the French who themselves had misgivings about the competence of their allies. Vossler and his comrades would rather have remained

with their countrymen.

On 16 April they were inspected by Brigadier-General Ornano who 'expressed himself well satisfied with our bearing and wished us a pleasant journey to Poland'. Two days later they entered the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. At the first stop Vossler found comfortable lodgings at a Benedictine Monastery, but his men had to share the miserable dwellings of the villagers and eat pickled cabbage and potatoes. The next day they set out on an eight hour march across a vast plain; the dreadful weather and extreme poverty they met with depressed them all, made worse by not being able to communicate with the inhabitants. 'Never before had I felt so ill at ease as among these people with whom I could not exchange so much as a word'. He really felt their conditions had reached rock bottom. By 22 April they had crossed the plain and were relieved to reach Poznan; the surrounding villages were occupied by German settlers with a better standard of living, their houses were clean and tidy, but Vossler was saddened to hear about their difficult lives among people who resented them and tried to make their lives difficult. Before they left on the 24th he took time to bring his diary up to date. On the 30th they crossed the Vistula in great barges and by 3 May they had left the Grand Duchy and set foot on East Prussian soil where 'we now thanked God that we were among human beings once more'. The 14 June they were back in Poland and it was here that Vossler had his first experience of the ruthless requisitioning of supplies which left 'a swathe of pillage and destruction'. An order had been issued by Napoleon for every regiment to provide itself with rations for twenty-three days which left the inhabitants with very little. Much to his dislike Vossler had to lead 'one of these abominable patrols', something he always regretted.

On 18 June the vast Grand Army began to assemble for the Niemen crossing; for six days great masses of soldiers had rolled across the plains to the banks of the river which formed the frontier with Russia. On the evening of 23 June, Vossler watched as two pontoon bridges were thrown across the great river and at dawn the next day the main body of the Grand Army, some 320,000 of them, began the crossing, which took two days and nights. What had started in bright weather then continued in endless downpours of rain, day after day, a lack of fodder for the previously well-fed horses began

to take its toll and large numbers of men were weakened by outbreaks of dysentery and fevers. Little was seen of the Russians who melted away before they could be attacked. On 27 June they had reached Vilna prepared for a battle with their main force but the Russians had burnt the stores kept in the town and destroyed the bridge over the Vilna river. From then until the 5 July there was no time for any rest, the Russian tactics of skirmishing and retreat keeping everyone on the alert. Very early on the 5th Vossler's corps was on the march and for the next five hours constant harassment by the Russians left them extremely tired and facing a well-placed enemy beyond a wide expanse of swamp and thick scrub.

Marshall Murat, realising the unpromising nature of the terrain, 'gave the order to retreat so as to give the men and horses a chance to gather their strength and in order to reconnoitre the enemy positions'. Just before the attack at four in the afternoon their colonel gave a short speech of encouragement. The Duke Louis' Chasseurs gave a good account of themselves, beating back several squadrons of Cossacks, but for lack of more support were obliged to withdraw. Little was gained except a few prisoners and horses and their Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Hohenlohe was captured. 'Half an hour later the King of Naples inspected the regiment, honoured it, as he rode along the lines, with the exclamation, "Foundre, vous avez bien chargé!" and promised glittering rewards which, however, never materialised'.

On 21 July they rejoined the Grand Army near the town of Dissna and the next day eighteen regiments of cavalry crossed over to the right bank of the Dvina river. The fast current and rock-strewn river bed made it impossible to bridge and they were obliged to swim across, losing men and horses in the attempt. Once across they were met by an 'ominous silence ... dense and menacing forests met the eye in every direction'. He was filled with sombre forebodings.

Once over the river, Vossler had an opportunity to pen his thoughts on the situation thus far. 'We were embarked on a strenuous campaign entailing frequent forced marches ... either smothered in sand or knee-deep in mud ... these difficulties multiplied almost beyond endurance by the steep slopes of the many ravines, exhausting the animals pulling heavy wagons and equipment. They had to endure unbearable heat and downpours the like of which I

had never experienced ... unwholesome food and brackish water saw the troops ravaged by disease ... by the time the army reached the Dvina they were thousands of horses short. All these circumstances not only weakened the army but led also, of course, to a slackening of discipline which gradually, and in proportion to the exertions demanded of them, the complete dissolution of entire regiments and divisions'. On 26 and 27 July the battle of Vitebsk took place in which Vossler did not apparently take part.

From then to the 13 August saw daily skirmishing with the Russians as they advanced along the narrow road towards Smolensk. Several days of rest and better weather raised their spirits and improved their health. The roads were more passable and the 'countryside bore a somewhat more friendly aspect ... here the retreating Russians had ceased to lay waste to the countryside, contenting themselves with destroying all stocks of food and removing most of the inhabitants with their goods and chattels'. Any benefit derived from the rest days was soon dissipated when their regiment 'was quartered on the forward fringe of the Grand Army, had to be ready to move at a moment's notice and to stand by mounted every morning from half-past one until five o'clock to guard against a surprise attack by the enemy'.

The next major objective of the campaign was the well-defended fortress city of Smolensk situated on a hill overlooking the left bank of the Dnieper river. A review of the Grand Army by Napoleon on 14 August alerted the Russians to an impending attack and so they were well prepared for the assault which took place at noon on the 17th. The French were able to push back the defenders who melted away overnight after a hard-fought battle which left the city a smoking ruin. Vossler and the Chasseurs were not involved in the action, their job from 13 August to 6 September was to protect the rear of the army from attacks by partisans. They found little in the way of provisions in the deserted countryside and all shared meagre rations of meat and bread and vodka. Often his only meal was bread soup which was all he had on the eve of Borodino. On the march towards that place they passed through towns which, although devastated, had been taken over by the French Administration 'which spread itself comfortably over the houses still standing'. Beyond the town of Dogorobuzh they 'met many, sometimes very

many, soldiers who had dropped by the roadside from sheer exhaustion and had died where they lay for lack of help'. The dire conditions made it impossible 'to establish field hospitals for the sick and exhausted'.

They rejoined the main body of the army on the evening of 6 September 'and as we rode into camp we were congratulated on all sides upon our timely arrival. The whole army seemed alive with a cheerful bustle, and if one discounted the pale, worn faces of the soldiers he could fancy himself in a camp replete to the point of abundance'. Despite heavy losses the large number of remaining troops were mostly the strongest and most experienced. Everyone expected to reach Moscow where all hardship and privation would end.

At dawn the next day the regiment was mounted and formed up, they had been read Napoleon's 'brief but inspiring proclamation' and began their advance. They saw hand-to-hand fighting ahead and were met by sustained gunfire. They found some shelter in a ravine from the intense cannon fire before advancing towards the enemy where they stood their ground. Massed ranks of Russian cavalry threatened them with destruction until twenty-four cannon came to their aid along with some new regiments and 'with their aid we beat back a number of attacks'. Eventually, enemy positions were overrun, gunfire gradually ceased and the Russians melted away. 'Only one battery of six guns kept up its fire on our flank ... seemingly concentrating their fire on the officers. A captain at my side was wounded and almost at the same moment I was hit by a ricochet on the brass band of my helmet and knocked unconscious'. It was half-past five in the afternoon when Vossler left the battlefield and was taken to the Wurttemberg dressing station. Half of the one hundred and eighty men in the regiment were killed or wounded, many officers and the corps commander General Montbrun. The ferocious battle cost the lives of 28,000 French and 44,000 Russians. He commented that the Russians were defeated but by no means routed and that they had fought with great courage and tenacity.

On the way to the Wurttemberg dressing station they passed the Emperor who appeared somewhat 'cold and aloof'. At the dressing station he was given first aid by the regimental surgeon, Doctor Roos, surrounded by the dead and dying, and was then moved to a

barn where he spent the night with other survivors of the battle. The next day they were taken to the village of Elina, where for the first time in two months he had a solid roof over his head. The house was shared with eight other officers, all of them wounded and sick, with no medical supplies and nothing to sustain them but thin gruel made with stale meat. Vossler's head wound had 'reduced me to a state of stupor' from which he recovered only after they were moved an hour's march from the battlefield a week later, to an old windowless manor house. Here the sick were separated from the wounded and conditions were more cheerful, although the cold at night was intense and the more able-bodied spent their days 'either sitting in front of the stove and keeping the fire going or visiting other wounded who were confined to their beds', some of whom were remarkably cheerful in spite of serious wounds.

Whenever he could, Vossler brought his diary up to date and again recorded the dire conditions endured, from sleeping on the ground in pouring rain, his clothes soaking wet for days on end, and being infested with vermin. Bouts of diarrhoea left him so weak he could hardly mount his horse without help. By this time he had lost all the horses he had with him when making the Niemen crossing and had to make do with 'a scruffy Cossack pony ... and my servant's and baggage's transport was reduced to spavined Russian carthorses'. This was the first time he mentioned having such a thing as a servant.

At the beginning of October there was a false alarm about an attack from Cossacks when a band of them had been sighted in the distance, and although nothing came of it the hospital commandant decided it was time to move out to a village with undamaged houses some one and half hour's ride away; as the least wounded, Vossler was entrusted to inspect it. He set out on the morning of 6 October accompanied by one trooper. Their quickest route lay through the battlefield where a ghastly sight met their eyes. Everywhere he looked there were piles of corpses, the ditches were filled with them, and he came across hundreds of maimed bodies of men in the Wurttemberg uniform. He 'continued to thread my way through the corpses, the horror of the scene mounting as I progressed'. At the Great Redoubt he found bodies of men and horses 'piled higher and ever higher around a position that had changed hands again and

again'. At the centre there was a wooden cross with an inscription to the memory of General Montbrun – the Bravest of the Brave – whom Vossler called his dear and gracious General, kind and considerate to all and having faced death many times unscathed met his death at Borodino. He then rapidly crossed the battlefield, the sight of which 'seared my soul so that I shall not forget it to my dying day'.

Vossler and his trooper eventually found the village they had been sent to reconnoitre, found it unsuitable and made their way back to Elina, this time skirting around the battlefield. Their report decided the commandant to evacuate the sick and wounded to Gzhaisk and again Vossler was tasked with what he regarded as an extremely hazardous enterprise along a dangerous road to prepare for the reception of the patients. It took him and his trooper until the next day to reach their destination, having stayed overnight at a village where they were welcomed by numerous French soldiers and the wounded survivors of an attack by a band of peasants. On arrival at Gzhaisk the commander refused to let him return to Elina alone and so he joined the battalion when it set out for Moscow.

On 10 October they joined the main highway to the Russian capital. By the 16th they were only six hours ride away and at this point he received orders to turn back and establish a hospital at Viazma or Smolensk, preparations being already underway for the abandonment of Moscow. The able-bodied still went forward but Vossler was not allowed to go with them, much to his regret at never seeing the 'ancient Capital of the Tsars'.

The road back to Gzhaisk, reached on 26 October and Viazma on the 30th, had seen constant attacks by Cossacks 'swarming around us constantly' and anyone who left the main body of men would be killed. Vossler was in command of the rearguard and was responsible for a large number of wagons full of the hospital patients and such supplies as they had. On 3 November they were caught up by the first fugitives of the Grand Army and from them learned of its retreat from Moscow. When they set out they mustered some one hundred men, some fit for duty, others in the wagons; the numbers increased daily and the column soon became a confused mass of many thousands, generals and foot soldiers alike seeking safety in numbers. Some were armed, many were not, too

many had burdened themselves with useless loot. On 9 November Vossler reached the heap of smoking rubble that was Smolensk 'famished and half frozen'. Here they met with bitter disappointment: expecting to find provisions and a corps of 40,000 fresh troops there was only the flotsam of the Grand Army camping in the ruins. More bad news awaited him on hearing that his servant, believing him to be dead, had taken the two horses and all the baggage and retreated with a convoy of wounded towards the Berezina river. With several officers of his old regiment, Vossler took refuge from the cold in the remains of a house which they heated with broken furniture and any wood they could find.

Napoleon and his Imperial Guard had reached the city on the same day and their hope was to join the troops selected for his escort. This, however, came to nothing and they set out once more on 13 November, reaching the Imperial headquarters at Krasnoye on the 15th, which came under a heavy attack during the night and was only beaten back with great determination.

When he left Smolensk, Vossler had with him a small bag of flour and two worn-out Cossack ponies, one of which carried him for three days before collapsing from fatigue and the other, too weak to carry anything except his few remaining possessions including his much-needed coat, had been captured along with his temporary servant. Finding a pair of top boots and being able to borrow six ducats helped, but he had no protection against the cold. 'On the 24th I was entrusted with the odd and, under the prevailing conditions, preposterous mission of assembling all the stray chasseurs wandering along the road and re-forming them into a fighting unit'. It was impossible to keep any together once they realised he had no food for them and he gave up the unequal struggle, which could have earned him a reprimand had he met his commanding officer. That night was spent in a barn full of hay which kept out the cold but the following one was spent in a wood in the open in the snow. By walking up and down he escaped being frozen to death. 'Next day however, fortune smiled on me, for I met a Frenchman encumbered with two sheepskin coats, one of which he sold me for three ducats'. The next day brought more good news: his old servant with two horses and the baggage had been enquiring after him and was waiting at a small village. 'I doubt if I ever had a

more welcome surprise or felt greater relief and contentment in all my life ... from now on I could face the cold in comparative comfort'.

That night they reached a village and in one of the houses found a sergeant and fifteen chasseurs of his regiment. These men had travelled by side roads and were well mounted and armed and had food to share with him. This village was half an hour's ride from the Berezina where they awaited their turn to make the crossing. Had it not been for the bravery of the French engineers led by General Eble no crossing could have been made. They worked in freezing water to construct two pontoon bridges, each one hundred and five yards long, one for cavalry and infantry and the other for the artillery and supply wagons. These were completed by the 26th and under the personal supervision of Napoleon the first troops crossed in good order on the 27th. At dawn on the 28th the main bulk of the army began to crowd onto the bridges, the wagon bridge giving way under the weight several times before becoming impassable by midday. 'An immense flood of men, horses and wagons now surged towards the other bridge.' Vossler described the total chaos and confusion as all semblance of order gave way in the frantic surge to cross over to safety. About one o'clock the cry went up, 'the Cossacks are coming'. Thousands were cut down and trampled to death. 'This ghastly scene ended only with the approach of darkness, when a detachment of French engineers on the far bank dismantled their end of the bridge, leaving what remained behind – men, horses, guns and wagons of every description – at the Russians' mercy'.

Vossler and his chasseurs were caught up in the immense crowd as soon as they set out and were soon parted in the crush, only his servant and Quartermaster Veikelmann keeping with him. Caught up in the seething mass before he even got to the bridges he was twice thrown from his horse; the first time he was pinned underneath and with great effort dragged clear by the quartermaster. When the alarm was raised about approaching Cossacks and the vast mob surged forward he was again thrown to the ground and resigned to his fate 'when I saw looming above me a fellow German, a Saxon cuirassier. I called out to him, he seized me by the arm, pulled me up and heaved my horse to its feet also. I found it

hard to express my relief and gratitude. With his huge powerful horse he pressed ruthlessly on, riding down whatever could not get out of his way in time, and I followed in his wake.'

They decided to approach the bridge from the river bank and at the second attempt succeeded in scrambling on to it, his horse leaping up beside him, and so he reached the far bank. He was joined by his servant and the quartermaster but he never saw the cuirassier again. They waited for him until darkness fell and Russian gunfire reached the far bank and then turned away with a heavy heart. 'This day, and the cruel spectacle of it all, is something I shall never forget as long as I live.'

Ironically, the following night saw a rapid fall in the temperature and the Berezina river froze over. In increasingly bitter weather they made their way to Vilna where they hoped to find food and shelter, reaching the city on 7 December. Only two of them made it, his servant having died from exhaustion at a little village the previous night.

Unlike many who reached Vilna, Vossler and other Wurttemberg cavalry officers found no shortage of food, they were also given an advance of pay from the war chest which enabled them to buy fur hats, gloves and boots; his two horses also had a chance to recover. The contingent gathered around General Count Norman who was chosen as leader for their retreat from Russia. Beyond the Niemen each one would make his own way home. They departed from Vilna on the morning 9 December, a couple of hours before the Russians arrived. Some days later they crossed the river and parted company.

At this point in the narrative Vossler gives a further overall and harrowing account of what he witnessed of the retreat from 8 November on. The effects of extreme hunger and extreme cold and ever increasing desperation produced ever more ghastly sights of gruesome and unnatural behaviour. Writing this in 1828 he said, 'in closing this account of the retreat I have written nothing but the truth ... have never yet to this day of writing seen an account of the retreat that could be described as exaggerated . it would be impossible to exaggerate the misery endured by those who took part in it.'

On 13 December, Vossler and two other officers bought two sleighs which their horses could pull. Quartermaster Veikelmann was still

with them and two Troopers, Hoffmann and Sommer, were engaged as servants and coachmen. They proceeded as rapidly as they could through lands ravaged by the French armies in the spring and to avoid the hostile inhabitants. At the little town of Inowroclaw the remains of the Wurttemberg regiments had been ordered by their king to assemble and reorganise. He refused to believe reports of the disaster until one of their number was delegated to 'enlighten the King as to the true state of affairs'.

On 6 January 1813 the new order was received for all to make their way home by easy stages and the next day Vossler was on his way home. On 20 January Vossler was back on his native soil, 'pale and emaciated, my clothes in tatters and penniless'. He had lost his entire equipment and all his horses and was in debt. On Sunday 24 January they paraded in Stuttgart before the King and the Crown Prince where promotions were announced, including his own to a full lieutenant. The five days' leave he was allowed were spent in Tuttlingen with his mother and sisters, overjoyed to see him but concerned about his poor state of health. Had he been allowed a longer stay Vossler felt he would have completely recovered. While at home he was endlessly questioned by a stream of visitors all eager to hear his extraordinary adventures. There were also those who sought news of their relatives and for most of them there was no happy ending. Everywhere in the kingdom nothing else was spoken of but the terrible events of the Russian war, and survivors were treated with the utmost sympathy.

Meanwhile Napoleon had opened his campaign for 1813. Wurttemberg and Bavaria and for a while Saxony were still his allies and so, on 3 February 1813, the Duke Louis Chasseurs regiment was reformed. Vossler, along with every cavalry officer who had been in Russia, received as a gift one horse and twenty louis d'or to pay for new equipment. The next few weeks were occupied with drilling the men and training the horses and by the end of March they were fit for combat. Vossler, however, was not at all fit for combat, recurring bouts of typhoid fever still undermining his health to such an extent that when the regiment set off on their way east he had to travel in a chaise and only by 23 April was he fit for service. Even so, he says 'I was happy enough to continue my military career'.

He was part of the 1st Wurttemberg Army Corps on their way to join the French army in Saxony to repel the combined forces of Prussia and Russia, who were defeated by Napoleon on 2 May at Lutzen. Vossler's regiment then joined with a section of French forces who set off in pursuit of Blucher's army towards the Ertz mountains. On 11 May they crossed the Elbe river where Napoleon stood to watch and inspect the Corps as it passed. The Chasseurs' duties were mainly forward reconnaissance and it was on one of these sorties that their billet was attacked from the woods by a strong force of Cossacks which overwhelmed the inexperienced soldiers and ended with Vossler losing his horse and being taken captive.

From then on until his eventual release in January 1814, the narrative is a record of his experiences as a prisoner of war. Taken behind the lines through Polland then to Minsk and finally to the Russian town of Czernigov, he, along with hundreds of other captives, was held until finally, 'At the beginning of January 1814 a second order for our speedy repatriation arrived, and at last serious efforts were made to expedite our departure.' Every officer was given one hundred roubles to buy winter clothing which they sorely needed. They departed at daybreak on 19 January and on 22 March, on arrival at Stuttgart, they presented themselves to General von Dillen, 'who was as surprised and shocked at our appearance as was everyone else who met us.' After many weeks of treatment his health showed no signs of recovery and so, at the end of June 1814, Lt Vossler handed in his resignation from the army, which was accepted. He received the Knight's Cross of the Military Order of Merit and was entitled to call himself von Vossler, and as a war invalid was entitled to a post in the civil service. He took this opportunity and when he died in 1848 he was head of the finance department in the town of Herrenberg.

The Diary is lodged in the Stuttgart State Archives and was translated by Walter Wallich and published by Constable and Co, 1998.

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.

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