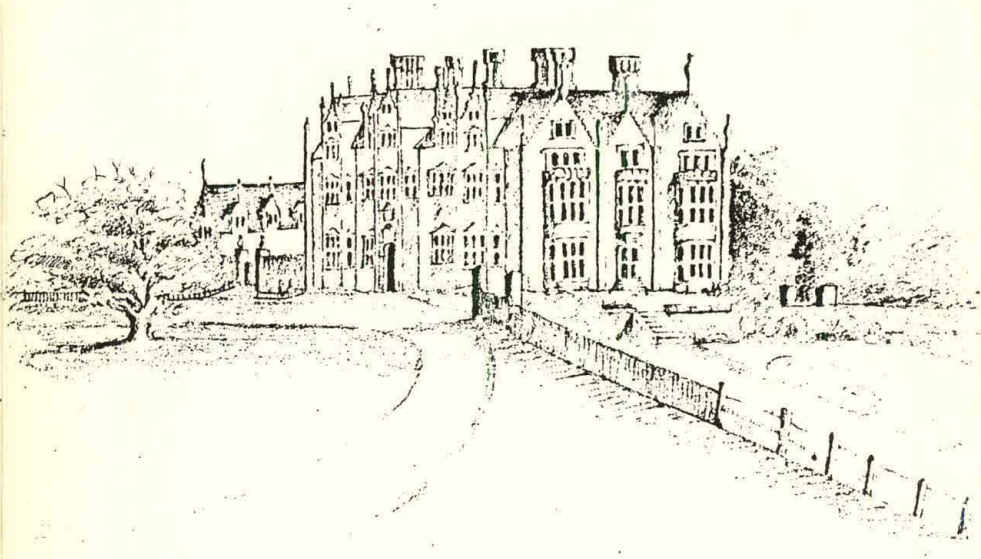
PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal



BARNINGHAM HALL

By kind permission of Miss Mary Barham Johnson and Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe

VOL. XXII, NO. 2 SUMMER 1989

I wish, O Son of the living God, O ancient, eternal King,
For a little hidden hut in the wilderness that it may be my dwelling.

An all-grey little lake to be by its side
A clear pool to wash away sins through the grace of the Holy Spirit,

Quite near, a beautiful Wood around it on every side,
To nurse many-voiced birds, hiding it with its shelter.

A southern aspect for warmth, a little brook across its floor,
A choice land with many gracious gifts such as to be good for every plant.

This is the husbandry I would take, I would choose, and will not hide it;
Fragrant leeks, hens, speckled salmon, trout, bees.

Raiment and food enough for me from the King of fair fame,
And I to be sitting for a while praying God in every place.

— *'The Prayer of Mauchan' from the Gaelic: early monastic, between seventh and tenth century. Quoted in Frank Delaney: 'A Walk in the Dark Ages', Collins, 1988.*

Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

Chairman
G. H. Bunting
Priddles Hill House
Hadspen
CASTLE CARY
Somerset

Editor
R. L. Winstanley
6 Corville Road
HALESOWEN
West Midlands

Secretary
Mrs. P. Stanley
76 Spencer Street
NORWICH
Norfolk

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Members will see that this is considerably shorter than usual, since what is likely to prove the most important long-term topic is fully explained in a separate announcement, to which they are referred.

The present issue of the Journal deals with the most recent of our annual Frolics. An account of the week-end, by our Secretary, appears on another page. Miss Mary Barham Johnson's account of the Donne and Mott families, the latter's home being Barningham Hall which was visited in the course of the "Gathering", contains material given in her talk about them to the Society, and from her too comes the very fine sketch on our cover. A very recently published book by Mr. A. E. Goodwyn is reviewed here, a rare instance of topicality in a periodical issued every three months. This replaces an article on the Snook family of Sandford Orcas, withdrawn at the last minute because a whole new store of information had come to my notice.

After a lapse of some time, our series on British Diarists has reappeared. Some readers may find that the account of Dorothy Wordsworth's life is so different from what they have read and remember about her, as to be disconcerting in its effect. I can only reiterate my conviction that her life was deeply tragic, and that layers of accumulated sentiment have to be stripped away before it is possible to arrive at the bitter truth, that the most hopelessly shackled of all slaves are the slaves of love.

— R. L. WINSTANLEY

AN EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT - THE PRINTING AND PUBLICATION OF JAMES WOODFORDE'S DIARY

At the 1988 Annual General Meeting a question was put to the Chairm, and which I answered. By that time the Parson Woodforde Society had issued eight volumes of the complete text of the diary, with notes, and a ninth, the *Oxford and Somerset 1774-1775* volume, was in preparation. We had taken the diary from its beginning in 1759 to the end of 1781, the point at which the first volume of the O.U.P. edition, which we have so thoroughly superseded, comes to an end. The question was simply - where did we go from there?

My answer may be read in the Agenda of the A.G.M. published with the spring 1989 Journal. I said that there were three possible options - (1) to suspend further publication of the diary; (2) to print the entries omitted from Vols. II-V of *The Diary of a Country Parson,* bearing in mind that these later sections contain a much greater proportion of interesting entries than Vol. I; (3) to go ahead with the printing of the complete diary.

The first two suggestions have, frankly, nothing to recommend them; so let us consider the third. It took nine years, 1979-88, to transcribe, annotate and get published the diary down to the point now reached. This was because of the methods employed to do the work. I do not say it was *laborious* - that is Dr. Hargreaves-Mawdsley's word, not mine - but it certainly involved a great deal of time and hard work. For the first few years I had to go to Oxford to copy direct from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library, and if this had continued only a small fraction of the entries already published could have been transcribed in the time. Fortunately, through the generosity of the late Mrs. Arisoy we were able to acquire a microfilm. But even with its aid there was a lot to do. I made first a handwritten copy, and then a rough-typed version which was given to the typist to make a fair copy to be photographed by the printers. One of my former Oxford tutors told me years ago that this was the wrong way to go about it, and that the task would be accomplished far sooner, as well as the possibility of copying errors eliminated or at least greatly reduced, if we simply obtained photocopies of the manuscript pages.

That was not on, for two then insurmountable reasons: we could not possibly have afforded such an expense, and Bodley would never have given their consent, given the age and frail condition of the manuscript, to subject it to a process which might well have resulted in serious damage. It may also be the case that the kind of machines, the existence of which I have only just discovered, had not yet been invented.

The high tech. age in which we live has produced what must be the ultimate marvel of the photocopying world. It is possible to make blown-up copies of a microfilm which renders them instantly visible and from which the printers could work directly.

Now, twenty-one diary years (1782-1802, both dates inclusive) remain to be considered. At the rate I have been going, it would take another fifteen years to finish the work. Add to this that it is getting harder and harder to find trained and competent typists. It would really seem that the old method here will not work for us any longer.

If, however, we were to get a complete copy of the remaining microfilm, I could undertake to annotate it in not more than six months. In saying this I am mindful that in the last twenty years of the diarist's life, he was living in his secluded Norfolk parish and no longer constantly meeting new acquaintances, as he tended to do at Oxford. A good deal of the annotation for the late period, therefore, would consist of cross-reference, and directing the reader to notes already made in earlier volumes. On the other hand, there is much that still requires elucidation; much information scattered in the Journals and needing to be brought together.

I have left until last what is really the most important question: is there any call for an absolutely 100% complete Woodforde, with all its repetitions and what some would call triviality? Most of the volumes already published by the Society contain around 200 pages, and cover only two complete years of the diary. Even if we went over to printing directly from the manuscript, and reduced the type-format so that it included four years to a volume, we should still find it difficult to contain both text and notes in less than five or six further volumes. Could these be produced and marketed without our suffering financial loss?

Of course I cannot give an answer here. In 1924, by no means everyone was convinced that the first volume of the Beresford edition would appeal to the public at all, but in spite of its many imperfections it became a best-seller and made possible the financially successful sale of the other four volumes, to say nothing of the abridged versions which appeared later.

But one thing I do know; whether we were planning continued publication of the diary or not, we should have in our archives one complete and annotated version of the whole work. This master copy could be utilized in more than one way. For example, other copies of various parts could be made, to lend or sell to members as required.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

A full account of our 1989 Frolic appears elsewhere in this issue. Members present enjoyed superlative weather throughout the weekend and were loud in their praise of the arrangements. Our thanks are due to Phyllis Stanley and her helpers for a memorable "Gathering."

I was able to tell those at our AGM that, due to the generosity of the late Mrs Kemal Arisoy, one of our American members, we may be enabled to fund the reprinting of those diary volumes currently out of print and also to secure a master copy of part of James Woodforde's original manuscript. Already, as a result of this bequest, I have been able to obtain a number of new copies of *Woodforde at Oxford,* edited by W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, and members interested in a acquiring a copy should advise me accordingly – it will be a case of "first come, first served".

Members will note from the printed list of the committee that two changes have taken place. Miss D. W. Taylor, "Penny" to us all, the indefatigable compiler of those indexes so valuable an addition to our published diaries, and Dr Hedley Boardman, a most knowledgeable Woodforde scholar, have both decided to retire from our councils after many years of service. Our grateful thanks to them both were duly recorded. Mrs Joan Souter of Devon, a real Woodforde enthusiast, and Dr David Case of Cheshire have joined your committee and will, I feel sure, bring new ideas to our deliberations.

I was able to announce that our invitation to acquire Life Membership of the Society for the payment of a single fee has been taken up by a number of members – a list of whose names will be found in this issue. Members were also invited to approve minor changes to our Constitution necessitated by this and other subscription details. Further amendment may become essential in the event of a successful conclusion to our application for Charity status, currently before the Commissioners. Once final details have been settled and approved a copy of the revised Constitution will be sent to each member.

A last point. I am often asked if I can help members to obtain a first edition of Beresford's *Diary of a Country Parson*. A copy, all five volumes, is now available and I shall be pleased to give details to any member interested.

G. H. BUNTING

DONNES AND MOTTS

In the Journal for summer 1986, in an article on Mrs. Bodham, I cluded a pedigree of the Donne family, from which it may be seen that Castres Donne (1745-89) married Anne Virtue. But nothing has yet been written about her family.

Our Society's visit to Barningham this year has stimulated me to relate something about the connection of the Donnes with the Motts. "Who were the Motts?", you will say, "and what have they to do with Anne Vertue?" It was her brother Thomas who, on inheriting the Barningham estate, had taken the name of Mott.

I do not know how Castres Donne came to know Anne Vertue, but he may have met her at a ball at the Assembly House in Norwich, when he was working as a clerk.

In 1776 Castres became curate of Mattishall. His father, who had been rector of Catfield, had recently died, and Castres made a home for his mother and sister Anne at Mattishall. On 12 August he called on Woodforde, and on 27 August Woodforde dined at their "poor Cottage House" and described Mrs. Donne as "a very chatty, merry Woman, and very fond of Cards indeed". He probably saw the portraits of Mrs. Donne and her husband, the Rev. Roger Donne, and perhaps also one of her half-brother Abraham Castres, who was envoy at Lisbon at the time of the great earthquake, and was given the portrait by the English residents in gratitude for his care of them at that time. Her daughter Anne was away at Norwich, staying with her cousin Dr. Donne so as to attend a ball, and she was probably still there when on 5 September Mrs. Donne died. In her last letter to Anne she had complained of having a very severe cold, and having to go to the Kerrs at France Green. She probably developed pneumonia.

For the next three years we get news through Woodforde of many of the young Donnes - Molly, Anne and Fred (with pearl and silver buckles) from Norwich; Charles and Betsy from London (it was Betsy who sang all night for several nights and sent Woodforde home at sunrise); and there was Matilda Church, "a Lady rather deformed but dressed extremely well with a prodigious high Head indeed", who was a cousin of Mrs. Donne's step-daughter, Mrs. Hewitt.

Castres could not afford to marry on a curate's pay, and was desperately looking for a church living. He went to London to see if any of his mother's relations or those of his aunt Cowper could help him to one, but he had no luck there. However, William Manning, rector of Brome, who married Dr. Donne's granddaughter Bessie, was succeeding his father as rector of Diss, and he offered Castres the curacy of Brome *with his house.* Though the salary would be no higher ,the good house and garden would make his marriage possible. Then he heard that the living of Loddon was vacant, and that the patron was Dr. Keene, bishop of Ely, whose brother had been a great friend of Abraham Castres when they were both envoys at Madrid. Presumably Castres wrote to the bishop, and his name procured him the living.

Woodforde wrote on 24 January 1779: "M[r]. Donne was obliged to officiate at Loddon to day". Beresford misread the name as *London*, a fault which has not been corrected in the O.U.P. reprints!

After a spate of farewell dinners, Castres was seen off by Brome on 9 March. On 6 April we find Woodforde and Mr. Bodham riding to Brome. It looks as if Mr. Bodham was missing "Miss Donne", and he must have been disappointed to find that she was not there, but had gone to her sister Harriot, Mrs. Balls, at Catfield, and Castres was being looked after by his little niece, Catherine Johnson, aged 12.

We hear no more of Mr. Bodham for 15 months, during which time he was chewing over his problems. He had been ordained deacon, and was curate of Brandon Parva. If he was to retain his Fellowship, he must be ordained priest that year. Mattishall was in the gift of his college and was likely to be vacant very soon, but Mr. John Smith was senior to him and would probably accept it. If so, he might be offered a living he could not administer from his good house at Mattishall. Before the end of the year the rector of Mattishall died and John Smith did accept the living, but also Mr. Bodham's brother died and left him his share of the family property, so the increase in income would balance the loss of the Fellowship. These are only my conjectures; there is no written evidence, except that Mr. Bodham was not ordained priest and had to get Woodforde to administer the sacrament at Brandon Parva.

On 29 July 1780 we learn from Woodforde that Mr. Bodham had ridden from Catfield to Weston, 20 miles, and was "very chatty".

Meanwhile Castres Donne had married Anne Vertue, and Woodforde met them on 8 September at Hockering. They were staying with the Hewitts at Mattishall. All he tells us of Anne is that she was "an agreeable Lady, but rather deaf".

On 13 February 1781 Woodforde heard at Hockering that Mr. Bodham and Miss Donne were married at Brome. Was he perhaps a little hurt that he had not heard of it from Mr. Bodham himself? He and Nancy made "the Wedding Visit" on 8 March. Nancy described the bride's clothes - pink gown and coat, trimmed with white ermine; gauze apron with two flounces; painted ribbons in the cap; white shoes with "large B-s".[buckles]

In October Castres and Anne had their first child, and named her Anne Vertue. Two years later they had a son and named him Castres Mott. His godfather Thomas Mott made a Will, naming him as his heir if he did not have a son himself. But the next year he married, and did have a son, John Truston, the second name being that of the previous owner of Barningham.

In October 1784 the Donnes had another son and named him Thomas Vertue. In November Mr. Balls died and Anne went to Catfield to be with her sister Harriot. Castres took his little Anne to Norwich and handed her over to Mrs Bodham, and on his return to Brome, before he had even dismounted, he was told that the baby had died. This was a terrible shock. Next day he put the little corpse in his cart and drove to Catfield to break the sad news to his wife. The child was buried at Catfield, and a memorial tablet erected in the church.

In 1786, when little Anne was about to go again to Mattishall, Castres wrote that she was bringing a silver knife and fork. "Mr. Mott was so good as to give them both a very handsome silver knife and fork. The first use Castres made of his was to sharp it on the threshold in the kitchen, but Nanny would have hers laid up in Satin Paper".

Mr. Mott was with Castres Donne at Bungay on 31 July 1788 where Woodforde saw them ("We had some Chit-Chat together"), but in November he was very ill and Anne and Cas-

tres were sent for. The doctors would not allow them to see him, nor did they tell Mr. Mott that they had come. After several days Castres went home, but Anne decided to stay a few days longer. Whether she saw her brother alive we do not know. He died in December, aged 28.

One day Castres went up Loddon steeple, and was very stiff afterwards. Soon after he had what sounds like lumbago, although he thought it was paralysis. The doctor bled and blistered him, and gave him bark, and he seems to have recovered, for his wife wrote that he had been to the Bath, and she hopes he would soon take a ride to Mattishall "one washing week as at that time I like best to have him from home, as he has, like all his sex, a great dislike to that week".

But on 4 December 1789 Woodforde tells us that when his brother and Nancy went to call at Mattishall, they found that the Bodhams had gone to Brome "on a very melancholy Occasion indeed, no less than the death of M^rs^. Bodham's only Brother, M^r^. Castres Donne, an old Friend of mine, who died on Wednesday last".

Mrs. Donne had of course to leave Brome, and she found a house at Swaffham. Mr. Bodham adopted Anne and made her his heir. Little Castres went to Scarning school.

In 1793 Mrs. Bodham's nephew John Johnson was about to be ordained, and was looking for a benefice. It happened that Hempnall was vacant, and the patron was J. T. Mott; but as he was still a minor the gift was in the hands of the bishop for that turn. Mrs. Mott seems to have persuaded the bishop to allow John Johnson to hold it until Castres Mott Donne should be ordained, namely for 15 years. He took the tithes but never went there otherwise, so presumably Mrs. Mott paid for a curate to serve the church there.

When Mr. Bodham died in 1796, Woodforde met Castres Mott Donne at the funeral and arranged to show him the gardens of Weston House. He saw him again in 1799 and described him as "a very fine young Man indeed now, and I believe a very clever Scholar. His Aunt Bodham supports him entirely, as well as his Sister, who lives with her Aunt". John Johnson was very attracted to Anne Vertue Donne, and proposed marriage; but she refused him and married her cousin Edward, son of the Nor-

wich doctor. Mrs. Bodham gave them the Mattishall house and moved first to Swaffham, later to Dereham, then to The Cedars, Mattishall. In 1807 Castres Mott Donne was ordained and became rector of Hempnall. He married Frances Manning and had five children, whose names were Roger Manning, John Thomas, Harriette, Castres Mott and Anna Maria, born between 1812 and 1818. He took pupils, one of whom was a son of Lord Albemarle, of whom we hear more later.

We must now skip 12 years. The year 1819 was a sad one for the Donnes. In May Edward Donne died. In June Castres Mott Donne died. In August Edward's mother, now a widow, died at Mattishall. Edward and Anne's son William Bodham Donne was a pupil of his uncle and was at Hempnall when he died. He was delicate and not expected to live; however, he survived until he was over 70! Mrs. Castres Mott Donne took a house in Norwich. She was pregnant at the time, but the baby died. Mr. Mott offered to pay for the education of her eldest son, Roger. He went to Mr. Rees at Trunch.

In 1821 John Johnson became curate of Gimmingham near Cromer. The Motts called, and John and his wife, with the latest baby, returned the call. They found Mr. Mott very ill, "the use of his legs entirely gone". Telling all this to his niece, he ends: "What a sweet place Barningham is!"

The next year he was asked to be godfather to the Motts' baby, Lucy. Mr. Mott wished to receive the Sacrament and John went over and "administered it to him and Mrs. Mott and seven others in the great room upstairs". Mr. Mott then went to Norwich for mercury treatment, and later to Bath, where he received several letters from John Johnson.

Mrs. Castres Mott Donne died in 1822. It seems that they all had a fever, for when the children came to Mattishall Mrs. Edward Donne sent her son William to Mrs. Bodham lest he should be infected. John Johnson wrote to Mr. Mott: "Poor dear Castres! How soon has he been followed by her who followed him to the grave". He had heard that Mrs. Edward Donne intended to adopt little Anna, and Mr. Rees had most nobly offered to educate John. When Mr. Rees became headmaster of Paston school at North Walsham, he took Roger and John with him. Mrs. Castres Donne moved to Norwich and made a home for Harriette and Castres.

When Roger left school, Lord Albemarle's son Mr. Keppel got him into the Navy. For some unrevealed reason he was dismissed his ship. Probably he was too proud to accept naval discipline. Mr. Keppel helped him to another ship, and he wrote happily for three years. He was a signals officer and very happy. But in 1835 he suddenly turned up at his grandmother's in Norwich. She wrote of his "misdemeanor", but gives no details. When she was expecting a visit from Mr. Mott Roger ran out, much to her annoyance. Mr. Mott said that Roger ought to acknowledge his late misconduct to Mr. Keppel, but not beg from him again. Mrs. Donne thought that he ought to acknowledge it to Mr. Mott for, she wrote to Harriette, "he has been more his friend than Mr. K—, as his education has all been from him".

Roger went to London to Dr. Wright, son of the Dr. Wright who married Mr. Bodham's sister Mary. There he heard of an expedition going to Spain to support Queen Isabel against the Carlists. He enlisted, and with kind letters to General Evans from Lord Albemarle and Mr. Keppel, he sailed for Spain. From the newspapers we learn that the whole party was housed in a damp old monastery, and they all died of a "putrid fever".

Although John Thomas Mott was her nephew, Mrs. Castres Donne always called him "Mr. Mott". She describes seeing him and his son Henry, her favourite, in a procession which passed her window on an election day. Henry was ordained as rector of Barningham and Bodham. Mrs. Edward Donne and Anna were at Cromer, and Henry's sister Mrs. Alderson of Baconsthorpe sent a carriage to take them to Bodham to hear his first sermon, which they liked. Mrs. Mott and her daughters Kate and Lucy went to Leamington for Kate to have treatment. She was ordered "not to mind the pain of her back nor lay on the sofa, but to walk."

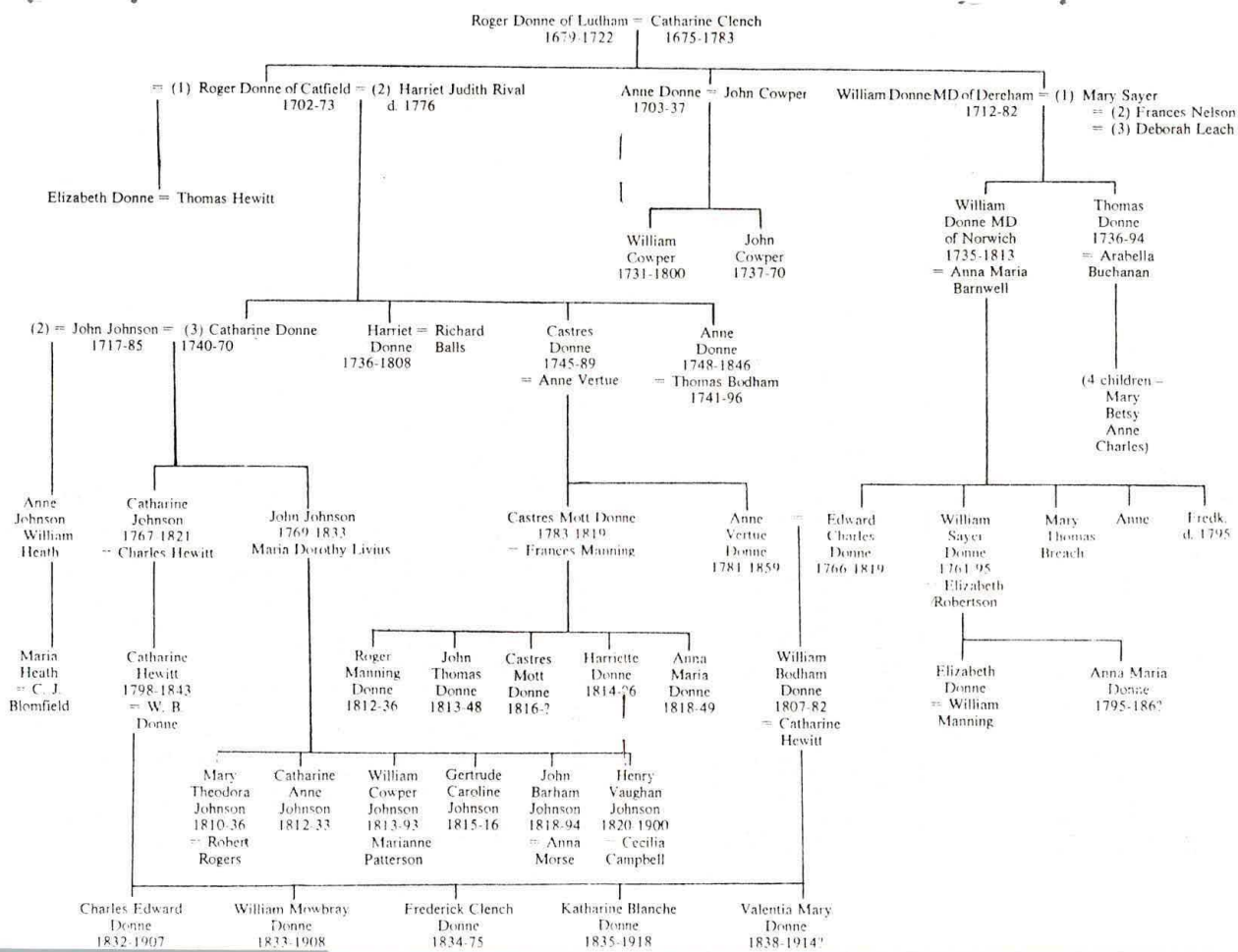
John Thomas Donne trained as a surgeon in Dublin and Glasgow, and at an eye hospital. His M.D. certificate is signed, among others, by Astley Cooper, who had been inspired to become a doctor by watching Dr. William Donne operate at Norwich Hospital. John got an appointment as assistant to a medical man at Hendon but, attracted by the higher pay, became an army surgeon in India. Soon after his arrival he wrote to his grandmother that "the Regimental Surgeon is an

ill-tempered Scotsman, and at first tried to frighten me by bullying, but he soon found out that it would not answer, for my blood was up in a moment, and I think I frightened him, for he is now very polite and civil, in short we are friendly". He was very much liked, especially by the ladies, and longed for a wife. He begged his sisters to send him one. In every letter he shows his concern for his brother Castres whose brain was affected. He begged Anna to come out to him, for Indian weather would suit her lungs. He always enquires for the Keppels and Motts, and asks when Katherine and Lucy Mott will get married. In 1844 he wrote: "I am nearly 31 and not married – how shameful – our side of the Pedigree will be extinct". He was distressed at not being able to save money to support Castres and Anna. He was obliged to borrow from his sister Harriette, who had a good post as a governess.

In 1847 Mr. Mott died, and when John heard of it he wrote: "Poor Mr. Mott. He was a most excellent and worthy man. I have put crape on my hat, but I could not get any Black-edged Letter Paper. Where will Mrs. Mott and her daughters reside? Poor Girls, they will miss Barningham much. I hope they will soon get married and have a comfortable home. I fear Barningham will henceforth be a proscribed Territory to the Donne family. However I have spent many happy days there and often think or rather dream of them."

Henry Mott having died, the new owner of Barningham was the younger son John. William Bodham Donne had for some years acted as deputy for his father-in-law, Charles Hewitt, who was no longer able to work. He wrote to a friend: "A new Pharoah has come who knew not Joseph, and I am no longer Steward". The new Steward, a Mr. Johnston, dunned John Donne for a debt of £222.12.5. Poor John wrote that he would endeavour to pay, but was not aware that anything was owing. Mrs. Castre's son, who died in 1839, left an account book which shows that some of her payments for Roger had to be accounted for to Mr. Mott, or perhaps were loans.

In his next letter John said he was glad that Mrs. Mott was settled in Norwich where there would be opportunities of marrying off her daughers. He added: "I would not mind taking Lucy off her hands. The Girl might do worse"!


Roger Donne of Ludham = Catharine Clench
1679-1722 1675-1783
= (1) Roger Donne of Catfield = (2) Harriet Judith Rival
1702-73 d. 1776
Anne Donne = John Cowper
1703-37
William Donne MD of Dereham = (1) Mary Sayer
1712-82 = (2) Frances Nelson
= (3) Deborah Leach
Elizabeth Donne = Thomas Hewitt
William Cowper 1731-1800
John Cowper 1737-70
William Donne MD of Norwich 1735-1813 = Anna Maria Barnwell
Thomas Donne 1736-94 = Arabella Buchanan
(2) = John Johnson = (3) Catharine Donne
1717-85 1740-70
Harriet = Richard Donne Balls
1736-1808
Castres Donne 1745-89 = Anne Vertue
Anne Donne 1748-1846 = Thomas Bodham
1741-96
(4 children – Mary Betsy Anne Charles)
Anne Johnson William Heath
Catharine Johnson 1767-1821 = Charles Hewitt
John Johnson 1769-1833 Maria Dorothy Livius
Castres Mott Donne 1783-1819 = Frances Manning
Anne Vertue Donne 1781-1859
=
Edward Charles Donne 1766-1819
William Sayer Donne 1761-95 = Elizabeth Robertson
Mary Thomas Breach
Anne
Fredk. d. 1795
Maria Heath = C. J. Blomfield
Catharine Hewitt 1798-1843 = W. B Donne
Roger Manning Donne 1812-36
John Thomas Donne 1813-48
Castres Mott Donne 1816-?
Harriette Donne 1814-96
Anna Maria Donne 1818-49
William Bodham Donne 1807-82 = Catharine Hewitt
Elizabeth Donne = William Manning
Anna Maria Donne 1795-186?
Mary Theodora Johnson 1810-36 = Robert Rogers
Catharine Anne Johnson 1812-33
William Cowper Johnson 1813-93 Marianne Patterson
Gertrude Caroline Johnson 1815-16
John Barham Johnson 1818-94 = Anna Morse
Henry Vaughan Johnson 1820-1900 = Cecilia Campbell
Charles Edward Donne 1832-1907
William Mowbray Donne 1833-1908
Frederick Clench Donne 1834-75
Katharine Blanche Donne 1835-1918
Valentia Mary Donne 1838-1914

John had so often pressed Anna to come to him, that at last she decided to go. He wrote that he was ill, and being sent to Aden, and he hoped to meet her there in September. So in July Anna and Harriette went to London to get the ticket and buy suitable clothes. On their return they found a letter from John's doctor in Madras to inform them that their brother had died. This was such a shock to poor Anna that she never recovered. She blamed herself for not going to look after him. She did not live long.

William Bodham Donne seems to have tried to care for Castres, but when he moved to London, he got him into a mental home.

Harriette retired to Norwich. William Bodham Donne's granddaughter Katie was very fond of her, and it was when she was staying with Harriette in Norwich for the Music Festival that she was kissed behind a pillar by John Johnson's grandson, Henry Barham Johnson; and in due course they became my parents.

THE ANNUAL "GATHERING" 1989

When our Chairman gave notice, two years ago, that the 20th Anniversary Frolic was likely to be the last he would organise, the call that went out for a Social Secretary met with no response. So I volunteered to organise this year's "Gathering", based in Norwich, and thought it might not be appropriate to write my usual report for the Journal. However, our Editor thought otherwise and it gives me the opportunity to thank all the local members who helped with the many and varied events and to commend a form of group organisation to any members who feel they could come up with ideas for future Frolics.

It is always difficult to find hotels which can cater for 60-70 guests for meals and provide a suitable room for our AGM, without going into the banqueting-range, but Norwich is fortunate in having Wensum Lodge, a Continuing Education Centre run by Norfolk County Council. Situated by the River Wensum, in a street the diarist records having walked along,

Wensum Lodge is a maze of buildings, containing a Norman Undercroft, twelfth century Merchant's House, seventeenth century buildings, a Victorian brewery and newly-built extensions. At first members complained that they lost their way but it took very little practice to find Jurnet's Bar, where sherry was served, and the dining room!

On Friday 19 May, after a delicious and varied buffet supper, we held our Annual General Meeting in the Crown Room, the walls hung with pictures of mighty Percherons, the brewery's dray horses. Our Chairman and Treasurer reported that the Society continues in a very healthy manner, both as regards membership and financially. Following the death of our American friend, Mrs Kemal Arisoy, members were surprised to learn that the Society will benefit from the interest on a sum of money which she has left to us. This will enable the Society to carry out plans for further diary publications and our Editor explained a proposal for photocopying the manuscript diary and enlarging the print before publication. A great deal more will be heard of this exciting project in due course.

Saturday morning was spent in the very heart of Norwich. First of all members gathered at the Castle Museum, which boasts that it is "one of the great treasure houses of Europe". Mr Robin Emmerson, Assistant Keeper of Art, had re-staged for our benefit an exhibition 'Buying Tableware in Parson Woodforde's Norwich' which, together with the largest known collection of early teapots, eighteenth century portraits and views of the Norwich and Norfolk James knew, by members of the Norwich School, made a fascinating tour. In the Castle Keep is a fine display of the trappings of the Guild Processions which the diarist describes, especially the event in March 1783. Three examples of "Snap" who walked in the procession, snatching at hats and demanding payment, hang overhead. We were grateful to Norwich members Jean and Frank Pond for guiding our company through the museum, pointing out the landmarks which can be seen from the Castle Mount and shepherding us down to the Market Place via Davey Place, site of the *King's Head*. As the great space of the market opened out before us, described by various eighteenth century travellers as the finest in all England, there was the choice of shopping, as James so frequently did, visiting the Guildhall, mentioned in the diary as being the centre of the Mayor-making ceremonies,

visiting the church of St Peter Mancroft, the scene of the music concerts, or making straight for the Central Library where a fine documentary exhibition awaited. Some energetic members managed a fleeting visit all round!

Norfolk and Norwich Record Office and the Local Studies Library had put on show a fine collection of documents and books relating to Norwich elections, music festivals, Weston Longville and church documents completed and signed by the diarist. Space does not allow for a complete list, but the centrepiece was the fine parish register given by Mr Custance in 1783, the presentation page painted either by the ill-fated Love or his employer Mr Wistler. In the same case was the parson's sermon book, writ large to overcome the lack of light on winter afternoons! The 1801 census return on which James had listed the Weston families was there. We are very grateful to the Library for putting on this particularly interesting display.

Lunch was taken in the Music Room of the Assembly House, nearby, which has been redecorated in the style Woodforde would have seen. There are many diary entries which include reference to the Assemblies, the notable families who attended, including Squire Custance and his wife "both full dressed - M^{rs}. Custance made a very beautiful appearance . . .". It was a cool and elegant venue, much appreciated by those of us beginning to feel the effects of the unseasonably warm weather!

The afternoon was spent at Barningham Hall, near Holt, in North Norfolk, the visit having been arranged by Peter and Margaret Medway with Sir Charles and Lady Mott-Radclyffe. The diary connection here is twofold: the ancestors of Squire Custance were living and held land in Barningham Northwood and Barningham Winter in the sixteenth century, and the Mott family, connected with the Donnes, became owners of the present estate and Hall in the eighteenth century. Tom Custance had prepared a family tree showing the Squire's descent and it had been planned that Miss Mary Barham Johnson would bring her Bodham and Donne portraits to Barningham to explain the family connections and the kindness of Thomas Mott, whom Woodforde met in Bungay, to the Donne family. Because our schedule was pretty full, Miss Barham Johnson agreed to postpone her talk until next day at Weston Longville. Sir Charles took us on a tour of his home, his commentary

being both interesting and highly amusing, and, as there were so many of us, the tour had to be repeated three times! The Hall possesses a large walled garden, with cordon apple trees 250 years old, a lake and a ruined church, the chancel having been restored for use as the parish church. Margaret was waiting in the coach-house with a welcome cup of tea and an immense variety of cakes. North Norfolk was putting on its very best show of weather, making our visit even more enjoyable. We returned to Norwich via Mannington, home of the present Lord Walpole, and Blickling, formerly home of the Hobarts.

After dinner (main course "prodigious fine turkies rosted") we settled down in the Crown Room to see a new selection from Jim Holmes' vast collection of slides. Although his programme was wide-ranging, and included shots of Mrs Kemal Arisoy on one of her visits to Norfolk, Yarmouth figured prominently and put the thought into members' minds that it might be a good idea to visit that "sweet town" when the Frolic next comes to Norfolk. We expressed our thanks to Jim for rounding off a very good day in fine style.

Next day members made their way to Weston Longville. In the programme I had suggested a route which ran through Costessey, past the remains of Costessey Hall, the *Falcon*, where Nancy dried her rain-soaked clothes, the site of the Custances' home before they moved to Weston House and Ringland Church, where Woodforde met that mot reluctant of bridegrooms, Robert Astick. How many came that way without getting lost is hard to say, but most turned up at the Old Rectory where Mr and Mrs Pearson had invited us to walk in the garden and see the ponds, the old trees, and foundations of the old house and walled garden. Next door, at Glebe Farm, Miss Durrant invited us to see the barn, Ben Leggett's domain! Quite a number of members insisted on making the journey from the church to the Old Rectory and Glebe Farm on foot, it being more in keeping wih the atmosphere of the visit; and indeed it was quite easy to imagine James and Nancy, and all the diary characters, there in a vastly changed Weston.

After morning service at All Saints Church, the preacher being the Venerable Anthony Foottit, Archdeacon of Lynn, formerly of Somerset, we made our way to the Village Hall where ladies of the parish (and their husbands!) had prepared lunch.

Archdeacon and Mrs Foottit and the Rev. and Mrs Illingworth joined us and we enjoyed an absolutely delicious meal, the ingredients of which, including the roast beef, I was assured had all come from Weston.

Margaret Sharman had been responsible for bringing her aunt, Miss Barham Johnson, and the portraits. Many members will have seen these at Miss Barham Johnson's home and of course Mr and Mrs Bodham appear in the Beresford five-volume edition of the diary. Set up on the stage, in bright sunlight and with a display of purple lilac, the portraits made a striking backcloth as Miss Barham Johnson unfolded the family connections and their contacts with the diarist. She has put all this information into an article printed in this number of the Journal.

And so the Frolic, held in the Society's 21st year, came to an end, with hearty thanks expressed to all the members who had played a part in making it a very interesting and happy occasion.

JOAN MEWES AND THE OLD PARSONAGE

In the Editorial of the last issue of our Journal there was a passing allusion to the great fight that Joan and Bernard Mewes put up to save the Ansford Churchfields from the fate which later overtook them. Joan died on 1 April last, about three weeks before the spring number reached our members.

It is natural that the news of her death should send the mind of many of us back to the very early days of the Society, when the Old Parsonage at Ansford was in a very real sense its headquarters, the focal point of all the Somerset Frolics (there has never been anything even remotely like it in Norfolk) and the natural centre round which the activities of the Society orbited. We were here very fortunate. Of how many societies devoted to the commemoration of a literary or historical figure could it be said that his birthplace was still in existence and had not yet been converted into a museum or was in the hands of insensitive, uncomprehending people who cared nothing about the old associations of their home?

Now, Joan and Bernard were the perfect hosts. They opened their beautiful house, without qualification or restriction of any kind, and let the Woodfordean pilgrims wander free and unconstrained wherever they might wish to go. They appeared to like our presence in their home as much as we enjoyed being there. And it was by no means only at the time of the annual celebrations, which in those days used to be held on or very near to the Parson's birthday. Any casual caller had only to knock at the door of the Old Parsonage and say "Woodforde" to be invited in and given the same hospitable reception.

It is for services such as these that I say, and it deserves to be remembered, that Joan and Bernard were absolutely vital to the well-being of the Society in the first few years of its existence, and that without them it might not even have survived.

For my part, I was privileged to be invited to stay at the Old Parsonage on several occasions. I always felt, whenever I crossed its threshold, that the atmosphere of Woodforde's time, in spite of all the changes the house had lived through during two whole centuries, was still perceptibly there. Of course, you do not have to go to Ansford or Weston Longville to be able to appreciate the diary, but surely it adds almost an extra dimension to our enjoyment of it to think of all the episodes and incidents in which the house played a part, and the great number of now famous diary characters who knew it as guests or servants or workmen or friends of the man who was born there. This thought always came most strongly upon me when I was actually there. The house indeed was very old long before his time, but it is still he who for us has stamped his personality on it most vividly.

When I stayed at the Old Parsonage I was given what I think would in the eighteenth century have been called the master bedroom, and very likely that in which James Woodforde was born. It is a large room of magnificent proportions, and runs the complete breadth of the house, so that it has one set of windows at the front, looking out on Ansford Hill, and another opposite at the rear. I remember once getting out of bed in the mist of an early dawn and going to stand by this window, looking out across the paddock and over the churchfields to the hazily looming tower of Ansford church, the only part of that building which is not a nineteenth century replacement. From that point the houses already built along the right hand side of

Tucker's lane are not visible. It was a view that James Woodforde must have looked on many thousands of times. It was as though one commanded a Wellsian Time Machine and had been able to turn back the clock two hundred years, and see with his eyes. I had never before in my life felt so strongly the attraction of the past. Naturally I was not to know that this "sweet especial rural scene" had only a few more years to go before the hand of progress obliterated it for ever. But today I am grateful that I had a chance to see it.

So it is easy to understand that the Old Parsonage had a very special place in my affections. For me it was all the history of England. Bought as a semi-derelict property after years of neglect and ill-treatment, it had been most lovingly and with exquisite taste restored by Joan and Bernard. In their time it held more beautiful and precious things than any other house I ever entered. I never ceased to marvel at the way Joan kept it and, so far as I can remember, without much help from outside. I was there once when she had just lost her "treasure", and I believe that domestic help was very difficult to acquire in Ansford and Cary at that time. It made no difference. Everything always shone and gleamed, bright as a new pin. As the saying goes, you could have eaten your dinner off the floor there.

The garden was in its way as lovely as the house. The lawn was not only a place to take tea on. It was the ideal spot where one could laze gently in the sunlit peace of a warm summer afternoon, and feel almost like Mr. Beresford and his titled friend talking of "History, Books and Men" in a garden in Wiltshire. A gap in the high hedge - I am not of course describing its hemmed-in aspect of today - led through to the vista of unravaged rural beauty that I had seen in the distance from the upstairs window.

I remember the white doves that lived in the dovecote opposite the house, circling and wheeling so gracefully about us. They were eventually joined by another bird identified by the rings on his legs as a racing pigeon. Plainly this pigeon had been flying overhead, killing himself to get back to his home loft, when he chanced to look down and see the elite ones living the life of Riley, with nothing to do but to look decorative. He weighed up the disadvantages of his life, long journeys in a cage followed by release in places he had no wish to be in; high winds, con-

fusing fog, hawks and falcons, cats, boys with air-guns - and there and then decided on immediate retirement from his profession, without giving notice. He also appreciated the Old Parsonage.

I make no apology for the joke, for I do not write in a mood of sadness. My memories of Joan and her house are all happy ones, full of laughter and good fellowship. Joan had a handsome cat, who I suggested might be re-named *Lorenzo Fedden,* in honour of that eccentric clergyman who lived in the Old Parsonage after the last of the Woodfordes to dwell there had gone. He and his wife occupied separate parts of the house, did not speak to one another for 20 years and used to communicate by writing notes! Joan thought that it could not be right to bestow such a verbal tongue-twister on a harmless, respectable cat, and asked me to contemplate her, when calling him in at night, wandering about the garden with shouts of "Forenzo Ledden!", "Lofenzo Redden!" and so on.

Joan was in hospital for the last two years of her life, and for some time before that had not been well enough to prosecute her formerly very active existence, which also had included the management of the shop in Cary. I did not see her very often after she and Bernard left the Old Parsonage in 1983. But they, and the Old Parsonage as it was in the first days of the Parson Woodforde Society, are now part of its history and will always, I trust and believe, be remembered with affection. *(ed)*

WESTON LANDMARKS

In the Spring 1986 issue of the Journal (XIX No. 1) there is an interesting article by Dr. Case on the roads at Weston, with sketch maps showing their layout in James Woodforde's time and later. The first of these sketches, taken from a map based on surveys made in 1790-92, shows two roads running eastwards from the Parsonage. By 1826 they have disappeared, or nearly, and between them the new road is shown which is there today. Dr. Case notes that it is called "The New Road" on the 1826 map at New College, and it seems fairly certain that it was not there in Woodforde's lifetime.

However, on 21 May 1783 there is this entry in the diary:

> There were 17. Teams carrying Gravel on the new Road by my House this morning - they begun at 6. o'clock and continued till 3. in the Afternoon - My little Team with them all the Time and carried 6 Load -. . .

Was this other "new Road" perhaps the southerly one of the two shown on the 1790 map sketched by Dr. Case? The northerly one of the two had probably existed a long time as it was the most direct route to the church. It was also the road to Greensgate, the scene of the fire in 1793 when the Widow's Cottage was burnt, the ashes being blown into the Parsonage garden.

Two years later, on 27 July 1785, the diary mentions another road being constructed:

> M^{r}. Custance called on me this morning, stayed but a very short Time with us, being going to Peachman's to meet S^{r}. John Lombe about putting a path-road aside by M^{r}. Micklethwaites - from my House to his - . . .

It seems likely that this is the road which appears on all three of Dr. Case's sketch maps, running along the north-west boundary of the Parsonage grounds. If you follow this road on the 1838 Ordnance Survey map it leads to a sizeable house at the western corner of Hungate Common, probably Hungate Lodge, although it is not identified. Mr. Micklethwaite was living at Hungate Lodge at the time and he must have found its remoteness a major drawback, especially when the surrounding lanes became impassable in winter. The "path-road" was originally planned as a convenient short cut; perhaps it also encouraged the occupants of Hungate Lodge to attend Weston church. On the modern Ordnance Survey map the road turns into a track before its end and the house, like so much of Woodforde's landscape, has vanished.

The 1838 map also marks the location of the "Mouse House", mentioned by Woodforde, which still exists under another name. On the most recent Ordnance Survey map it is shown as "Wood Farm", on the road that goes from Frans Green to the Main A47 road. The wood opposite the house, unnamed on the modern map, was called Mouse Wood in 1838, and must have been there already when Parson Woodforde walked that way.

BRITISH DIARISTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES
NO. XV - DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth
The Alfoxden Journal 1798
The Grasmere Journal 1800–1803
ed. Helen Darbishire - O.U.P. World's Classics (1958)

Dorothy Wordsworth was born on Christmas Day, 1771, in a fine upstanding house in the main street of Cockermouth, north-west of the Lake District: "by far the most stately and pretentious house in that little town to this day" says the Wordsworthian biographer Mary Moorman.* She was one of five children, and the only girl, with two elder brothers, Richard and William, and two younger, John and Christopher. William Wordsworth was eighteen months her senior, but they were baptised together on the same day. Their parents were John and Ann Wordsworth, née Cookson, the daughter of a linendraper of Penrith. John Wordsworth was an attorney who had become "law agent" to Sir James Lowther, afterwards the first earl of Lonsdale, the owner of the house in which Dorothy and her brothers were born.

The young Wordsworths were orphaned in childhood. They lost their mother in 1778, her death being attributed in typical eighteenth century style to having "slept in a damp bed" on a visit to London. At once Dorothy, aged six, was sent to live with a cousin, Elizabeth Threlkeld, of Halifax, Yorkshire. She lived in Halifax for the next six years, for part of the time at a boarding school there. By what must have seemed to her a strange and cruel decree, she did not return to her father's house as long as he lived. The biographers, who appear to have a vested interest in producing Dorothy as an example of a woman, all the phases of whose life brought her fulfilment, say that she was very happy with the Threlkelds. But it is likely enough that a child of that age, especially one so sensitive as Dorothy Wordsworth, would have seen the banishment as a rejection of herself, and a rejection which was bound up with her being female, since her brothers continued to live at home with their father.

---

* *William Wordsworth, a Biography: The Early Years 1770-1803. O.U.P. (1958), 5.*

He died at the end of 1783, and the Wordsworths made up a story about his death too. He was a coroner and in the course of his duties had to conduct two inquests in a remote corner of Cumberland. Losing his way while riding home he was forced to spend the night on the cold fell side, which proved fatal to him. I find it difficult to believe such tales, for in neither his nor his wife's case is the factor at all likely to have caused the death of a young person in normal health. It is more probable that in both there was some hidden and latent cause, beyond the power of contemporary physicians to recognise.

Although John Wordsworth's employer was a great northern magnate and immensely rich, he was notorious for an extreme reluctance to pay his debts.* The law agent died intestate and with his affairs in confusion. Lowther owed his estate something over £4000, largely for money laid out in bribes in one or the other of the nine Parliamentary boroughs in Lowther's control. The debt was never paid in his lifetime. It was finally settled by his successor, but not until after the Wordsworth children had grown up.

Their orphaned condition and the shortage of money ensured that they were split up among various relations for longer or shorter periods of time. Dorothy had three such sets of foster-parents: first the Threlkelds, as mentioned; then, very unhappily, she was with her maternal grandparents and their son, "Uncle Kit",† one of the two official guardians of the children, at the Penrith drapers' shop; finally another Cookson uncle, who had just become rector of Forncett, twelve miles from Norwich, took her to live with him in 1788, when she was nearly seventeen.

Meanwhile William Wordsworth, a pupil at Hawkshead Grammar School at the time his father died (one of his older contemporaries there was Fletcher Christian, the famous mutineer of *H.M.S. Bounty*), finished his time there and went on to Cambridge. His liking for rambles about the countryside

* For Sir James Lowther, see *Boswell: the Applause of the Jury 1782-1785,* ed. Irma S. Lustig and Frederick A. Pottle. Heinemann (1982).

† Dorothy's grandmother Dorothy Cookson was born into the ancient, landed Crackanthorpe family. She outlived her brothers and inherited the property, which passed to her son in 1792; whereupon he abandoned Penrith and the drapery trade, and became "Christopher Crackanthorpe, Esq. of Newbiggin Hall". He has had a very bad press from the Wordsworth biographers, chiefly because he did not like or get on well with William, although fond of Dorothy.

during his vacations caused his uncle Christopher to talk slightingly of his "truant disposition". While at Cambridge he made a more ambitious trip which took him to Switzerland and over the Alps. His companion was a young man named Robert Jones, who afterwards became a country parson. He was addressed in one of the most wooden of Wordsworth's sonnets, with its now notorious opening line:

Jones, when from Calais southward you and I . . .

On 27 January 1791 he took a pass degree, as was usual at the time. Still at a loose end, he then spent four months in London, a stay of which no trace has ever been discovered. In November, he went to France; not as might be thought to study the revolution at first hand, for at this time he had little or no interest in politics, but to learn the language. He decided to stay in Orléans. There he met Annette Vallon, a young girl from Blois. She came from a family of doctors and surgeons traditionally devoted to the *ancien régime*, and was herself in later years a member of the "resistance movement" in Napoleon's France. They became lovers, and she bore his child, a daughter whom Annette named Caroline, in 1792.*

Wordsworth became interested in revolutionary politics through a friend he met in Blois, Michel Beaupuy, who was in the army, became a general and was killed in battle against the Austrians in 1796. During a visit to Paris he became involved with the Girondin party and, seemingly, with a group of "English Jacobins" and radicals there.

Whether, if he had been a free agent, he would have stayed in France and stood by Annette can never be known. His posi-

* Wordsworth's daughter was, we are told, brought up "in perfect purity and innocence", although Dorothy was afraid that French manners must be "unfavourable to true delicacy"! In 1814 she married Jean Baptiste Baudouin, employed in the Mont de Piété, or French Government pledge office, and had two daughters of her own.

Generous enough to his legitimate children, Wordsworth was horribly stingy to Caroline. Upon her marriage he gave her an annuity of £30, but when in 1835 he wanted to convert this into a lump sum payment, to be invested in French bonds, he supposedly could raise only £400, about sufficient to bring in half the value of the allowance. On 2 April 1835 Annette, pleading for the money to be paid, addressed a desperate letter to Dorothy, in very idiomatic and hit-or-miss French, comic in its mangling of English place names, "Grasner" for Grasmere and "Ridelmonde" for Rydal Mount, but eloquent and touching through its emotional content. We have no evidence that it was ever answered, or that Dorothy was at this date in any condition to have read it. Annette died in 1841.

tion as a foreigner, in that land bursting with hatred, suspicion, hysteria and paranoia, was difficult enough; and his Girondin friends were soon to be wiped out by the triumphant Jacobins, the extremists defeating the moderates as always happens in times of violent political upheaval. And his money had run out. As he later and somewhat naïvely put it in the *Prelude*:

> Reluctantly to England I returned,
> Compelled by nothing else than absolute want
> Of means for my support.

All the more because their young lives had been so disrupted and divided, the Wordsworths grew up with a strong mutual affection, most fervently expressed and felt between William and Dorothy. They had a long term plan to live together, and eventually this did come to fruition, although not through any act of will or energy on his part. He knew a well-off young man named Raisley Calvert, whose brother had been one of Wordsworth's schoolfellows at Hawkshead. Raisley was dying of tuberculosis. He had inherited some trust money from his father, a one-time steward to the duke of Norfolk, which he would have the free use of upon attaining the age of twenty-one. As it was, and fortunately for William, he just made it. He came of age in November 1794 and died in the January following, having left Wordsworth £600, finally increased to £900. In those times it was a sum which, invested sensibly, was enough to provide a modest livelihood. It meant that, at least to a certain extent, he could choose where he was to live. And, most importantly for both their lives, he could share a home with Dorothy.

But, at the time he received the Calvert legacy, he had no certainty about what to do next. He had some notion of going to London and getting on to the staff of a newspaper, or that he and Dorothy should support themselves by "writing and translation", which was stigmatised by one of their relatives as "a very wild bad scheme". At this point a friend came to the rescue by offering the loan of a house, Racedown Manor in Dorset, off the road from Lyme Regis to Crewkerne.

It may appear strange that these north-country people, who were to spend the greater part of their long lives in the Lake District, at no great distance from their birthplace, should at

first have intended to settle in the west. At the time William was presented with Racedown, Dorothy was visiting friends in the north. She did not even take the trouble to return to her uncle at Forncett, but arrived with William on 26 September 1795, a date we know because the caretaker of the house, empty until their arrival, was himself believe it or not a diarist, and put down their coming in his record.

Racedown always remained in Dorothy's memory as a very special place. It was, she wrote later, "the first home I had", and "I think it is the place dearest to my recollections upon the whole surface of the island".

They spent two years there, and when they left it was owing to the influence of their great friend Coleridge, who was living at this time at Nether Stowey in Somerset, in a house provided by his admirer and benefactor Thomas Poole. They came into the area only to pay Coleridge a visit, and did in fact stay uncomfortably in the "miserable little cottage", which was dark, damp and infested with mice which Coleridge refused to set traps for. It was he who found and negotiated the renting of Alfoxden (or "Alfoxton" as it was called in the Wordsworths' time), about four miles from Stowey.

This sounded an extremely attractive proposition, a small mansion, "vacant and fully furnished", at a rental of only £25 a year.* The owner was a minor and there was an absentee tenant, Mr. Bartholomew, who sub-let to Wordsworth. Not only was it in a beautiful part of the country, on the northern edge of the Quantocks, but they had the added bonus of Coleridge's company which, Dorothy said, was "our principal inducement in coming here".

*

The first, short Journal begins without preamble on 20 January 1798. The first entry is worth quoting in full, because it is characteristic of Dorothy Wordsworth's nature writing:

> The green paths down the hillside are channels for streams. The young wheat is streaked by silver lines of water running between the ridges, the sheep are gathered together on the

* For comparison, it might be recalled that the rent of the small terrace house in Portsmouth where Dickens was born in 1812 cost his father £35. Even allowing for the inflation of the years between the two dates, the Somerset home was low-priced. See Michael J. Allen: *Charles Dickens' Childhood* (1988), *16-20.*

slopes. After the wet, dark days, the country seems more populous. It peoples itself in the sunbeams. The garden, mimic of spring, is gay with flowers. The purple-starred hepatica spreads itself in the sun, and the clustering snow-drops put forth their white heads, at first upright, ribbed with green, and like a rosebud when completely opened, hanging their heads downwards, but slowly lengthening their slender stems. The slanting woods of an unvarying brown, showing their light through the thin network of their upper boughs. Upon the highest ridge of that round hill covered with planted oaks, the shafts of the trees show in the light like the columns of a ruin.

The features of this kind of writing may be summed up as, first, that it contains accurate representations of observed natural phenomena – mature snowdrops do droop their heads as described here – and second, that it is straightforward simple prose; there is nothing in the passage that could baffle a reader of today, except perhaps the "purple-starred hepatica", a Latinism then still current for the common liverwort. Dorothy keeps careful account of the seasons. She often tells us what time of day it was, and the kind of weather prevailing, the vagaries of which are communicated directly to the reader, as in another early passage, dated 1 February:

> . . . The Wind blew so keen in our faces that we felt ourselves inclined to seek the covert of the wood. There we had a warm shelter, gathered a burthen of large rotten boughs blown down by the wind of the preceding night. The sun shone clear but all at once a heavy blackness hung over the sea. The trees almost roared, and the ground seemed in motion with the multitudes of dancing leaves, which made a rustling sound, distinct from that of the trees . . . The wind beat heavily against us as we returned. Full moon. She rose in uncommon majesty over the sea, slowly ascending through the clouds. Sat with the window open an hour in the moonlight.

Perhaps Dorothy intended at first to write a pure nature diary made up of descriptions of this kind, a genre little practised at the time, except by specialists such as Gilbert White. It was almost certainly started to help William. The close relationship between some of the poetry he was writing in these days and her Journal has often been noted. For example, his famous piece about the wild daffodils, *I wandered lonely as a cloud,* owes much to her prose description, written a few years later at Grasmere:

. . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and about them, some resting their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them from the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing ever changing . . .

Coleridge must also have read the Journal. A passage dated 7 March 1798 reads:

One leaf only upon the the top of the tree - the sole remaining leaf - danced round and round like a rag blown by the wind.

He remembered this when he came to write *Christabel:*

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can;
Hanging so light and hanging so high
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

But it is in the nature of diaries to evolve in ways that their creators never dreamed of when they made the first entries. With Dorothy, another sort of entry comes gradually to share the page with the nature notes. At first they come in short sentences briefly reciting what she had done on a particular day:

January 28th. Walked only to the mill.

February 11th. Walked with Coleridge near to Stowey. The day pleasant, but cloudy.

February 23rd. William walked with Coleridge in the morning. I did not go out.

Although so fragmentary, these entries do form themselves into a kind of picture of the life the brother and sister were leading at this stage in their companionship.

At the same time, we are told nothing of the events which were going on around them. There is no hint of the trouble they were running full tilt into, or the adverse circumstances which forced them to leave Alfoxden.

It is to be remembered that this was war time. Perhaps there is no other case, in all the wars in which Britain has been involved, where the Government so felt itself to be fighting against a principle, rather than just a foreign enemy. The overriding war aim was to oppose the doctrines of the Revolution,

and prevent their spreading here; and this was prosecuted all the more vigorously because the Government did not know how many people in this country looked on the revolution with sympathy, and fear enormously exaggerated their real numbers.

It was not a propitious time for strangers, who spoke in tones very different from the local accent, to come into rural Somerset. Their way of life also attracted much adverse comment: they did not go to church, but spent the Sunday washing clothes; they were addicted to suspicious long walks about the countryside; they had shown an unseemly interest in the local brook and had asked someone if it were navigable all the way to the sea. Wordsworth was known to have connections with France, and to have visited that country a few years previously.

A former Alfoxden servant talked to the former Alfoxden cook, who was in service at Bath. She talked to her master, Dr. Lysons, and he wrote two letters to the Home Secretary Lord Sidmouth about "an emigrant family, who have contrived to get possession of a Mansion House at Alfoxton". And "the Master of the House has no wife with him, only a woman who passes as his sister". Wordsworth was variously thought to be an "English Jacobin" and, because he and Dorothy were very dark-complexioned (De Quincey indeed thought she looked like a gipsy), a French spy. In fact, Wordsworth loathed the Jacobins, who had overthrown and killed his Girondin friends, and by now both he and Coleridge were back-pedalling at full speed away from the revolution.

In the light of all the gossip and denunciation, it was imprudent of Wordsworth to take for guest of honour at his housewarming party at Alfoxden on 23 July 1797 none other than "Citizen John" Thelwall, a notorious "agitator", who had been tried for high treason but acquitted by a London jury. The Home Office now sent down a "detective", named Walsh, to report. He thought that "this will turn out no French affair but a mischiefous gang of disaffected Englishmen". The "inhabitants of Alfoxton House are a Sett of violent Democrats".

No official action was ever taken, and the report lay buried until the Home Office papers were examined in this century. But the immediate upshot was that Mrs. St. Aubyn, the grandmother of Alfoxden's child owner, refused to extend the lease

which expired at Midsummer 1798. So on 25 June of that year they left what Dorothy called in a letter "that beautiful place". She also wrote that she had never left a house with so much regret.

But nothing, no trace of that emotion is given expression in the Journal. It had already come to an end in May with the terse entry:

> Walked to Chedder [sic]. Slept at Cross.

*

When the Journal was taken up again nearly two years later, William and Dorothy were back in their native countryside of the Lake District. The Grasmere Journal runs from 14 May 1800 to 16 January 1803, but there is one extensive gap in the record, between 22 December 1800 and 10 October 1801. As the 22 December entry ends in mid-sentence, it seems more likely that the Journal was continued in another volume, now lost, than that nothing was written between the two dates cited above.

It is much fuller and more like a real diary of daily events than the Alfoxden Journal. The more vivid and personalized style is revealed in the first entry:

> Wm. and John* set off into Yorkshire after dinner at 1/2 past 2 o'clock, cold pork in their pockets. I left them at the turning of the Lowwood bay under the trees. My heart was so full that I could hardly speak to Wm. when I gave him a farewell kiss. I sate a long time upon a stone at the margin of the lake, and after a flood of tears my heart was easier. The lake looked to me, I know not why, dull and melancholy, and the weltering on the shores seemed a heavy sound.

On her way back she "met a blind man, driving a very beautiful bull, and a cow – he walked with two sticks". She went on to write that she intended to keep a Journal until her brothers' return, "because I will not quarrel with myself, and because I shall give Wm. pleasure by it when he comes home again". She noted that at Rydale "a woman of the village, stout and well dressed, begged a ha'penny; she had never done it before but these hard times!" Later:

* b. 1773, the next brother after Dorothy. In the naval service of the East India Company and Master of the *Earl of Abergavenny* East Indiaman from 1800; drowned when the vessel went aground on a reef off the Dorset coast and broke up, 5/2/1805.

> A young woman begged at the door – she had come from Manchester on Sunday morn, with two shillings and a slip of paper which she supposed a Bank note – it was a cheat. She had buried her husband and three children within a year and half – all in one grave.

Homeless, wandering beggars, turning up at all times, are a regular feature of this diary and bear eloquent testimony to the harshness of conditions to the poor. But to many readers its most interesting aspect will lie in the unique glimpse it affords of Wordsworth actually at work. He was something of a late developer, and had written little of value during his years of wandering and uncertainty. A period of intense creativity, very much inspired by the friendship of Coleridge, had then set in, begun at Alfoxden and continuing at Grasmere. Altogether, it did not last for much longer than a decade, but during that time a great part of his most characteristic and memorable poetry was written.

> Sunday morning 14 March 1802. William had slept badly – he got up at nine o'clock, but before he rose he had finished *The Beggar Boys*, and while we were at Breakfast that is (for I had breakfasted) he, with his Basin of Broth before him untouched, and a little plate of Bread and butter wrote the Poem to a Butterfly! He ate not a morsel, nor put on his stockings, but sate with his shirt neck unbuttoned, and his waistcoat open while he did it . . .

Wordsworth was a hale man who lived to be eighty, but composition plainly took a lot out of him, and we hear from Dorothy a good deal about the minor illnesses probably brought about by creative tension: headaches, indigestion and fatigue. "William not well": "William a bad headach": "Wm. sadly tired – threatenings of the piles". We shall have occasion to look more closely at her own state of health later. Here we need just put forward the possibility that much of the malaise which plagued her was, to use the modern term, "psychosomatic", since she identified so totally with William as to feel the stresses he went through when writing poetry. On the other hand she had worse troubles of her own.

Sometimes the longer entries of the Journal provide not only natural description but a whole picture of country life, as in this entry, dated Good Friday (16 April 1802):

. . . after Wm. had shaved we set forward; the valley is at first broken by little rocky woody hills that make retiring places, fairy valleys in the vale; the river winds along under these hills, travelling, not in a bustle but not slowly, to the lake. We saw a fisherman in the flat meadow on the other side of the water. He came towards us, and threw his line over the two arched bridge. . . . As we go on the vale opens out more into one vale, with somewhat of a cradle bed. Cottages with groups of trees, on the side of the hills. We passed a pair of twin children, 2 years old . . . Sate on the next bridge we crossed – a single arch. . . . A sheep came plunging through the river, stumbled up the bank, and passed close to us, it had been frightened by an insignificant little Dog on the other side. Its fleece dropped a glittering shower under its belly. When we came to the foot of Brothers Water, I left William sitting on the bridge, and went along the path on the right side of the Lake through the wood. I was delighted by what I saw. . . . I hung over the gate, and thought I could have stayed there for ever. When I returned, I found William writing a poem descriptive of the sights and sounds we saw and heard. There was the gentle flowing of the stream, the glittering, lively lake, green fields without a living creature to be seen on them, behind us a flat pasture with 42* cattle feeding, to our left, the road leading to the hamlet. No smoke there, the sun shone on the bare roofs. The people were at work ploughing, harrowing, and sowing; lasses spreading dung, a dog's barking now and then, cocks crowing, birds twittering, the snow in patches at the top of the highest hills, purple and green twigs on the Birches, ashes with their glittering spikes quite bare. The hawthorn a bright green, with black stems under the oak . . . We then went on, passed two sisters at work . . . one with two pitchforks in her hand, the other had a spade. We had some talk with them. They laughed aloud after we were gone, perhaps half in wantonness, half boldness. William finished his poem before we got to the foot of Kirkstone.

It is very much to be feared that the bold or wanton girls were taking the rise out of our poetical pair, and that they must often have seemed comic to the working people of Grasmere.

In spite of the air of resigned sadness that permeates Dorothy's writing, the years at Alfoxden and the early Grasmere time must have been the happiest period of her life. The Platonic

---

* The cattle are grazing
Their heads never raising:
There are forty feeding like one!
—*Wordsworth: The Cock is Crowing.*

love affair, in which she shared William's life, was all that she wanted.

It was by no means all that he wanted. Although it is clear that he loved Dorothy in his way, there is no sign that he returned any of her adoration of him. The former lover of Annette Vallon was a normally sexed man and once, years later, confided in a letter that the various illnesses from which he suffered at this time were brought about by sexual frustration. It was inevitable that he should soon marry.

And, in fact, on 4 October of this year he was married to his childhood sweetheart, Mary Hutchinson, an orphan like himself and Dorothy.

The wedding is noted in Dorothy's journal, in the strangest way. She says that she slept all the previous night with the wedding ring on her finger, and when she handed it to William in the morning, "he slipped it again onto my finger and blessed me fervently", almost as though he were proposing some kind of symbolic marriage in addition to his real union with Mary. This kind of thing has gone down well with the biographers, but one need have no great psychological insight to recognise it as an unhealthy situation. Dorothy did not attend the ceremony herself, but

> . . . when I saw the two men running up the walk, coming to tell us that it was over, I could stand it no longer, and threw myself on the bed, where I lay in stillness, neither hearing or [sic] seeing anything . . .

The language sounds more appropriate to a death than a marriage. And indeed, something in Dorothy's life had truly died. The idyll of Racedown, Alfoxden and Grasmere was over. It is not at all surprising that very soon after this the journal came to an end.

*

Nearly all Wordsworthian biography is badly flawed by sentimentality; and it is a kind of sentimentality born of two long-established traditions which were until quite recently of immense power and influence. One of these is the male-inspired contention that the supreme vocation of a woman is as the helpmeet of a man, serving his interests in a way that entirely ignores or inhibits any she might have of her own. As

Dorothy Wordsworth filled this role in her brother's life, after his marriage as well as before, she has always been a favourite of those people who saw women in that light. The other factor, which reinforced that view of her, is the puritan doctrine with its idealisation of those human relationships which appeared to have no outwardly sexual expression. Dorothy herself was born and nurtured in these traditions. If she was humble, regarding herself as less than her brothers, belittled her own qualities and was content with the most menial tasks in William's household, it was because the society in which she lived had conditioned her into harbouring its values which she accepted quite naturally and without question. Again, in her time, and for long after, the only way it was permitted to a young unmarried woman to show open affection for a man was within the brother-sister relationship. Even so, the free, unconstrained manner of William and Dorothy did not go unscathed by scandal and gossip, just as they had attracted unfavourable comment at Alfoxden. De Quincey told Richard Woodhouse, Keats' friend, that even in London he had heard stories "of Wordsworth having been intimate with his own sister". It is likely that the Wordsworths never understood to what extent their way of life made them into objects of this kind of suspicion. Dorothy referred to her Grasmere neighbours as "excellent people, friendly in performing all affairs of kindness and humanity".

The latest life of Dorothy, by Robert Gittings and his wife Jo Manton, appeared so recently as 1985. A good enough book in its way, lucidly and agreeably written and full of interesting detail, its overall picture of Dorothy differs very little from that of Ernest de Selincourt early in the century.

Yet in recent years few things have changed more radically than our view of women and their place in society. The extent of this change is well expressed in a review of Gittings and Manton.* For Dorothy the happy fulfilled heroine of Dove Cottage the reviewer substitutes a victim of exploitation, a woman of high intelligence and sensibility submerged in a sea of menial duties. One paragraph in particular crashes in brutal collision with the genteel picture of the biographers:

---

* *By Norman Fruman. T.L.S., 28/6/1985.*

In her Journal for May 31, 1802, Dorothy Wordsworth wrote: "My tooth broke today. They will soon be gone. Let that pass. I shall be beloved - I want no more". She was then thirty years old, plain, barely five feet tall, weighed less than one hundred pounds, ate so poorly and worked so hard that her prematurely aged appearance regularly shocked friends and relatives who had not seen her for some time. She suffered constantly from headaches, raging toothaches, bowel complaints, vomiting and assorted bodily ills, and yet never had anything resembling proper medical or dental attention until many years later. Her toil was unremitting: cleaning, mending, gardening, sewing clothes and curtains, shirts and nightcaps, brewing beer, making wine, boiling preserves and jelly, and always, the copying of William's manuscripts.

I must confess that I do not understand what Dorothy may have meant by *I shall be beloved*, rather than *I am beloved*, which we should naturally expect. We know that, deeply convinced of her own lack of attractiveness, she ruled out marriage as a practical possibility for herself, while she was still a young girl.* Gittings and Manton go from registering this to saying that "with all her lovable qualities, there is no sign that she ever aroused or experienced physical desire, nor that she felt this as a loss". But how can they know this? How far may it ever be said of anyone by another person? What does seem quite clear is that in her conscious mind, in spite of all her incidental miseries, Dorothy was for a long time content to devote herself to William, shouldering the burden of housework and all the other tasks that fell to her lot. What went on below the level of consciousness very likely helped to produce the illnesses of which the reviewer wrote, and in the course of time far worse things.

We might have said that the decisive time for her came with William's marriage, were it not that there was no decision to be made. It would certainly have been well for Dorothy if she

* De Quincey indeed wrote of Dorothy's "unsexual appearance when out of doors"; apparently she stooped as she walked. He also mentions her stammer and general excitement and tension; "an air of embarrassment and even of self-conflict, that was sometimes distressing to witness". But in the context this probably meant no more than that he himself did not find her attractive. Although he paid the Wordsworths some handsome compliments, everything he wrote about them betrays De Quincey's resentment that they, once revered friends, had dropped him. Dorothy had been catty about his marriage to Margaret Simpson, and he must have known of this. He was paying off old scores. - *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets, Penguin ed., 131 et seq.*

could have broken away and freed herself from the loving enslavement she was trapped in.

But escape was something she could never even have contemplated. Her brothers Christopher and John were each making her an allowance of about £20. Wordsworth was marrying on £70 a year and the sum of £400 which belonged to Mary. Dorothy now wrote to her eldest brother Richard, asking him to contribute another £20. She could have just about managed to live alone on £60 a year; but of course she had no intention of ever doing so. In the letter asking for Richard's financial assistance, she wrote: "I shall continue to live with my brother William". Mrs. Moorman calls this "a wise and unselfish decision". Unselfish it certainly was. Dorothy wanted the extra money not for herself but to throw into the common fund. But so far from being wise, it is the very measure of her captivity.

Dove Cottage (it did not acquire that name until after the Wordsworths' time, and they referred to it merely as "Town End", the part of Grasmere where it was situated; but it had once been a public house called the *Dove and Olive Branch*) is very small, as anyone who has been inside the house will confirm. Apparently it consisted of only six minute rooms. I remember on my only visit asking innocently how the Wordsworths managed to put up Walter Scott and his wife, who stayed there in 1805. The lady in charge of the place explained in great detail how they would have"doubled up", just as though she had been there to see it!

So now it was no longer a case of the celibate Dorothy living with a celibate William. She was sharing a tiny, cramped house with a married couple whose marital activity was constant. The cottage quickly filled up with children. John Wordsworth was born in 1803, the younger Dorothy, always known to the family as "Dora", a year later, Thomas in 1806 and Catherine in 1808.

It may have seemed for a long time that Dorothy adapted to the change very well. She and William continued to make occasional expeditions together. She cossetted and mothered him as she had done ever since they first began to live together, a task in which she was enthusiastically abetted by Mary.

In 1829, when she was fifty-eight, Dorothy's health suddenly broke down. The Wordsworths were strangely ignorant of the first principles of medicine, of even the simplistic kind understood by their contemporaries. Allusions to diseases and ailments in Dorothy's letters show that she was no more knowledgeable in this respect than the peasant women who were her neighbours at Grasmere. The family now provided another fatuous explanation, like those dreamed up to account for the death of the parents. Dorothy's complaint had been caused, they said, by her taking too long a walk on a cold day! The intense pain which marked the very sudden onset of this illness – "For forty-eight hours she was in excruciating torture," William wrote – suggests gallstones, acute inflammation of the gall bladder and biliary colic, to quote a modern diagnosis of her condition. From this, with many ups and downs, she finally recovered, only to suffer a mental collapse, of which the family first became aware on 17 February 1835.

Gittings and Manton print a special appendix, headed *Dorothy Wordsworth's Mental Condition*, by an expert, a consultant physician in geriatric medicine. His findings agree totally with the romantic idealisation of Dorothy developed throughout their book, the image of a happy, fulfilled woman struck down by a random illness that bore no sort of causal relationship to what her way of life had been. According to this view, Dorothy fell victim to the form of pre-senile dementia known today as Alzheimer's Disease.

It would naturally be most improper of me to question the doctor's thesis, if only it could be found to fit the facts of the case. But, as Lord Jeffrey said of Wordsworth's *Excursion*, "this will never do!". Alzheimer's Disease is a malady of genetic origin which causes a rapid degeneration and death of brain cells. It is progressive, the patient's condition steadily worsening. Dorothy on the other hand had short-lived but apparently complete remissions, during which she was able to speak and behave rationally and even to write letters, some of which are printed in Gittings and Manton. She had one such period of lucidity about the time Wordsworth died in April 1850. His son-in-law Edward Quillinan reported that "Miss W. is as much herself as she ever was in her life, & has an absolute command of her own will! . . . and in short but for age and

bodily infirmity is almost the Miss Wordsworth we knew in the past". Also, she went on living in her crippled mental state for 20 years, much longer than Alzheimer patients usually survive.

But what makes me think that she suffered not from Alzheimer's Disease but from psychotic madness was the sinister way in which her attitude to the family was altogether reversed. She had been for so long the loving servant, ministering to her brother's every need. Now she became a domestic tyrant, ready to fly into storms of "rage and fury" when thwarted. And William, that egocentric man, who had so exploited her love for him, was the most patient of all in bearing with her unpredictable moods. Mary wrote: "She is now become the Master of her brother, who humours all her waywardnesses, as quite to enervate him". We can never know to what extent he blamed himself for his sister's condition.

She must have been a considerable trial to the family. The woman who had loved the open air and long walks in the country, for which she had been criticized for her devotion to such an "unfeminine" pleasure, now sat all day in front of the fire on even the hottest days, insisting on its being kept up to an unbearable heat. She ate enormously and grew very fat. In 1841 Crabb Robinson, the family friend and frequent visitor to the household, wrote:

> She has so little command of herself that she cannot restrain the most unseemly noises, blowing loudly, & making a non-descript sound more shrill than the cry of a partridge or a turkey.

A few years earlier, this prim and priggish man had been shocked to hear her "repeating the Doxology . . . repeating the Amen in a loud tone and mocking a clerk with loud laughter".

There are even stories of a more or less deliberately induced incontinence, and of violence. She wrote herself in 1836, in a letter to her nephew Christopher:

> I have got through a mighty struggle - and thank God am now as well as I ever was except that I have not recovered the use of my legs. My Arms have been active enough as the torn caps of my nurses and the heavy blows I give their heads will testify.

The Wordsworths were now much better off than they had been in the early days, and could afford to have Dorothy looked after. But it is difficult not to see in all this that she was paying the family out for all she had suffered at their hands, although, in one of her rational intervals, she was heard to murmur: "My brothers were all good men, good, good".

Early in 1853 Mary wrote despairingly that she was

> . . . in her usual state - yet more indifferent to gone by Events. She passes more of her time in bed: which is a relief to her Attendants as well as herself.

But she was still capable of gleams of lucidity, and in the same year wrote to Mary, who was away on a visit. The letter is coherent, although rather childish in its expression:

> My dearest Sister,
>
> I have had a good night so I think I will write. I was in bed all day. I am well today. My love to Miss Fenwick and Miss Jane - love to Hanna.
>
> Mrs. Pearson is poorly and the Doctors say she cannot live. We have got a cow and very good milk she gives. We only wish you were here to have some of it.
>
> Thomas Flick is a little better and we are all quite fit. Mary Fisher's sister is just dead.
>
> Dorothy Wordsworth

After that last flicker of reason, the lamp went out. In July 1854 Mary wrote to Robinson that "Your old friend is very much disturbed - so much as it has been very sad to see her".

Dorothy Wordsworth died on 25 January 1855. The sightseer who visits Grasmere churchyard may see the graves of brother and sister, side by side.

Note: After the completion of this essay, a new book was published, *William Wordsworth: a Life* by Stephen Gill (O.U.P., 1989). In spite of its title, this book is mainly concerned with an exhaustive analysis of Wordsworth's poetry, and offers few new biographical insights. Dorothy here plays a very subordinate role in her brother's life. Dr. Gill accepts without question that Alzheimer's Disease was the cause of her mental

breakdown, and has little to say about the underlying tensions in the household. He goes, however, beyond anything I have declared, in saying that Dorothy's love for William was "unquestionably profoundly sexual". The real interest lies not in this but in the way she sublimated her emotions at such terrible cost to herself.

SOME PEEPS AT PARISH REGISTERS

The article on Public Records in the winter 1988 Journal aroused memories of some amusing incidents which occurred when I was researching church registers.

Some time ago I went to Holt to trace my early Donne and Johnson ancestors. The Rev. Charles Linnell, author of *Some East Anglian Clergy* who was then rector of Letheringsett, arranged for the records to be on view in the church. We sat side by side at a table, each with a register to study, watched by the old sexton, to ensure that we did no damage. Presently I said: "Here's a Johnson", and the old man said: "Whas' that a Johnson you're a-lookin' for? One was buried here a' Tuesday last, just outside o' this here door"; and he went out - and did not return for about twenty minutes! Giggling, we returned to 1592, when Praxides the wife of Thomas Donne died, and 1649 when Anne Crofts who married William Johnson was born. It was exciting to see the signature of Thomas Donne, churchwarden, at the bottom of some of the pages.

There were two Thomas Donnes, father and son, both churchwardens; the younger one, who is buried in Norwich in St. Peter Hungate church, was the father of William Donne who was interred in Letheringsett church, his tombstone having his family crest, a wolf saliant, which is that used by John Donne, the poet, dean of St. Paul's.

On another occasion, when I was trying to find out more about Mrs. Davie, the young widow in Woodforde's diary, I went to Pulham Market, where her father, Dr. Roope, had lived. I had made an appointment with the rector and, when I arrived, there he was with another man to greet me. "Meet Mr. Roope", he said! As I had just stepped over Dr. Charles Roope's tombstone, this was quite a shock. This Mr. Roope, a grandson of one of Dr. Roope's sons, had made a beautiful book of Pulham

families, and this was open at the Roope page, on which I discovered that Elizabeth Roope had married Lancelot Davie of Southwold.

So I went to Southwold, and there in the churchyard I found the gravestone of Lancelot Davie, physician, and also that of a baby son who died the same year. And in the same row of graves were several stones with the name "Nunn", which gives the reason for the name of Mrs. Davie's son, Nunn Davie.*

As Mrs. Davie had once lodged at Thurning, I went there to see if she had been remarried or buried there. The church is a little gem, with box pews and a three-decker pulipt, though I have recently learned from F. H. Jeffrey's book *God's East Anglia* that these came from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1825. It had been decorated for a Harvest Festival and smelled delightfully of apples. When the rector arrived we went to the tower, to an old chest, and spent some time lifting out a battered Christmas crib, numerous old bibles and hymn books, several registers, too late for my search, and at last at the very bottom an early register of narrow vellum leaves, thonged together with a leather strip. The rector, who had never seen it, was fascinated, and started to hunt for names still existing in the parish. As he was very short-sighted, I had to stand very close to him to get a peep. My face was nearly touching his when some women arrived to collect the apples - what a gift for gossipers!

BOOK REVIEW

E. A. Goodwyn: Elegance & Poverty - Bungay in the eighteenth century.

The author, whose study of the history of the Shipmeadow House of Industry *A Prison with a Milder Name* was reviewed in Journal XXI, 3, has now produced an absorbing account of life in a small country town from 1700 to the early 1800s, with its contrasts of prosperous townsmen dwelling in substantial houses, some refurbished and others rebuilt after the disastrous fire of 1688, and the "Poor" - humble labourers striving for long hours on a pittance, living in any cottages or tenements they could afford, or the truly poverty-stricken,

* See Penny Taylor: *The Davie Family of Debenham* in *Journal XVII, 2, 16-23.*

dependent on charity or just scratching a living, to be found in shacks and hovels, some even built into the ruined walls of the castle.

This account gives many aspects of life; the houses and the characters that inhabited them, traders, industrialists, professional men and the well-to-do, who made up a century which saw more progress towards an ordered, civilised society, and which gave rise to a new vocabulary: Elegant, Genteel, Curious, Neat, Nice, Polished, Accomplished, Fine, Fashionable, Agreeable, Commodious, Ornamental . . . But behind this screen of refinement and superficial values lurked the real problem: criminals. "Rogues and Vagabonds", footpads, beggars, vagrants and all the "undeserving" poor. And as for the "deserving" poor – how to provide for them, find them occupation, prevent their increase, apprentice and even perhaps educate their children – all this while keeping the Poor Rates within acceptable bounds. The author has consulted many sources of contemporary social history, such as parish records, newspapers and pamphlets, diaries and letters, documents and topical verse, all adding up to a formidable record which could well apply to any small town during the century.

Bungay's "Age of Elegance" can be said to have begun with the discovery by John King, a local apothecary, of a mineral spring on his land adjoining the Common, which led to the creation of a Spa and Bath House. ". . . in a wholesome Air, free from the piercing Blasts of the North, East and West Winds . . . the water from its exquisite Coolness, Sweetness, Lightness and continued rapid motion may justly vie with any in England and to render it more pleasant and agreeable there is now erecting a commodious Foot Bridge over the County River, wide enough for a Sedan Chair to pass over . . . for the more safe conveyance of Gentlemen or Ladies from the Bagnio to their coaches." So runs one of John King's newspaper advertisements. King had published *An Essay on Hot and Cold Bathing* which is now a collector's piece. Among his cases he gives that of a Tailor ". . . who from a weakness fixed upon his Ancles and Knees became incapable of walking, but after a fortnight's Cold Bathing he so well recovered the use of his legs as to run away without payment for his immersions." The spa gave rise to other genteel and elegant developments: a theatre, "Gentleman's Club", book club, assembly rooms and regular race

meetings. Tradesmen began to enlarge their premises in order to stock those rare and refined goods demanded by the wealthy and the socially aspiring townspeople, but behind the prosperous façade Mr Goodwyn reveals the grinding poverty of agricultural and other humble workers, dependent upon a few pence and a crust of bread, decimated by smallpox or "consumption" with the dark shadow of the Shipmeadow buildings standing like a jail within sight of the town.

Here we find those commemorated by tombstones in the town's church and Meeting House burial grounds, some of them familiar names to members of the Parson Woodforde Society: John and Esther Aldis, who came to Bungay to run the *King's Head* inn; Robert Doughty, "my Shoemaker at Bungay"; Utting the innkeeper and Thomas Miller the bookseller, worthies of the town, doctors, attorneys, artists, writers, rising merchants and affluent townsmen. The paupers, alas, have no memorials save in such records as the churchwardens' accounts: "Removing Goody Wyatt's bed to the Workhouse - 0.0.6", followed a few entries later by "A Coffin for Goody Wyatt - 0.3.0.; Winding for her - 0.2.6.; The Minister and Clerk - 0.4.0.; and Beer for the Bearers - 0.2.0." - probably more money than poor Goody Wyatt had ever seen together.

The chapter headings give the range of this book - Schools; Occupations and the social order; The Poor and the House of Industry; The Scourge of Smallpox; The River Trade; The Drama and the Races; Elizabeth Bonhote and other authors, and a miscellany of items from newspaper reports. Members may be acquainted with an earlier book by Mr. Goodwyn, *Selections from Norwich Newspapers 1760-1790.* Bungay, standing on the Norfolk-Suffolk boundary, only 15 miles from Norwich, had more affinities with that city than with Ipswich - except for the Assizes! Many Bungay affairs were covered by the Ipswich press but a greater proportion appeared in the *Norwich Mercury* or the *Norfolk Chronicle* which may have caught the attention of James Woodforde, who had many associations with Bungay. One such notice is recorded in the Diary on 11 November 1796: ". . . I was sorry to see on the News this Evening the death of poor M^{r}. Aldis of Bungay, late Butler to M^{r}. C[ustance]. . . "

Elegance & Poverty is obtainable, price £9.95 post free, from Morrow & Co. Publishers, Bungay, Suffolk, or from local bookshops.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

Recent changes in the membershp list are shown below. I shall be obliged if details of any errors which may have occurred, together with any further changes known to members, may be notified to me.

Mollie Matthews
South Cottage
Castle Cary, Somerset.

LIFE MEMBERS

HARRIS, Mr & Mrs James	14 Hereford Flats, Old Church Street, Chelsea, London SW3 5BX
HOWES, Col. P. C. R., OBE	4 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PG
JONES, Miss Averil D.	'Cilfach', Hirnant, Penybontfawr, Nr Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 0HS
SOUTER, Mrs Joan P.	'Edgehill', 37 Kingsgate Close, Brunel Park, Torquay, South Devon.
WICKHAM, Mr D. E.	116 Parsonage Manor Way, Belvedere, Kent.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

BARHAM JOHNSON, Miss M.
FÜGL, Miss Bertha
MEWES, Mr Bernard
WILSON, Rev. Canon & Mrs L. Rule
WINSTANLEY, Mr Roy L.

Additions

CLARKE, Mr G. H.	3300 Foster Avenue, Juneau, AK 99801, USA.
EMDEN, Mr G. G.	71 Shirley Drive, Worthing, W. Sussex, BN14 9BB
FENNER, Mr & Mrs G. E.	13 Heigham Grove, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 3DQ
FLETCHER, Mrs M. J.	33 Wood Street, Chatteris, Cambs. PE16 6LJ.
GOODWIN, Mrs E. A.	'Cherry Hill', Ashmans Road, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9NS.

NIXON, Miss J. M. V.	117 Downton Road, Salisbury, Wilts. SP2 8AT.
OVENDEN, Mr A.	Flat 1, 15 Richmond Road, Ilford, Essex IG7 1JG.

Amendments

ATKINS, Mr R.	9 Vicarage Close, Old Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk NR8 5DL.
BARNARD, Mr A.	4 Ashgrove, Littleborough, Lancs. OL15 8LR.
BOWATER, Mrs V. L.	'The Sarn', Hopton Castle, Salop. SY7 0QF.
BRAYNE, Mr M. L.	Garden Cottage, Eccles Fold, Chinley, via Stockport, Cheshire SK12 6BY.
CARRINGTON, Mr D.	3 Sherwood Close, Bexley, Kent DA5 3EB.
HAMPSON, Mr R.	Top o' th' Vale, 2 Vale Road, Shaw, Oldham, Lancs. OL2 8JE.
HILLS, Rev. A. J.	31 Drayton Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 2EN.
JONES, Rev. & Mrs V. G. C.	44 McHardy Street, Havelock North, 4201 New Zealand.
WALLIS, Mrs M.	18 Herne Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 5BP.
WALSHE, Miss W. M.	*should be* WALSHE, Mrs D. W. M.
BAKER, Mrs C. E.	*should be* PARKER, Mrs C. E. 2 St Davids Crescent, Oadby, Leicester LE2 2RL.

Deceased

JAMES, Mrs Erica	SMITH, Mr D. Babington
MEWES, Mrs Joan	

Resignations

BROWN, Mrs M. M.	CANT, Mrs R.
CORBALLY, Mrs D. C.	SHARP, Mr & Mrs E. A.

CORRIGENDA FOR JOURNAL XXII, 1

p. 21 line 6 from foot of page - for HORSE'S read HORSES'
p. 34 par. 3 line 1 - for Kinnersly read Kinnersley
p. 36 line 7 - for 0: 2: 6 read 0: 3: 6
p. 39 line 15 - for 1779 read 1789
par. 3 line 11 - del. "it" between *Baggs* and *has*

THE MELLIAR HOUSE

That characteristic of human nature which has the need for change and a wish for being up to date has resulted in many old houses being an amalgam of different styles. The possibility of doing up a house has always depended, of course, on the availability of money so that, just occasionally, a house that has descended the social scale has escaped the depredations of modernisation.

Age and decay result in essential repair and alteration, of course, but more change than this results to a house from the dictates of fashion. In our own times we see this same change accelerated by prosperity and one sees what is commonly regarded as the unfortunate result of old buildings unsympathetically restored with modern windows and "Georgian" doors etc.

Mr. Melliar's house has not escaped the improvers of previous generations and it is interesting to relate the alterations to the period associated with the diary of Parson Woodforde and, moreover, because alterations are more likely when change occurs in other ways, i.e. new ownership or death resulting in a legatee acquiring a sum of money, to relate alterations to these changes also. The house dates from about 1640 and is built of the local stone and was originally thatched. A wing was added to the rear subsequently and there are three Queen Anne sash windows which are apparently unusual in having four panes width instead of the usual three or five panes width. The key stone and mouldings of these windows match that of the front door so the door and its associated canopy were inserted at the same date. Many other changes took place or had taken place by this time which are difficult to date and these include the removal of original fireplaces and chimneys, removal of some walls and perhaps the beginnings of some corridors. It would seem that by the time Mr. Melliar arrived on the scene, considerable alteration had already taken place. *(See Journal Vol IX No. 3 Winter 1976: Notes towards a Social History of Castle Cary in the eighteenth century. Pt. III. A Chronicle of the Melliars by R. L. Winstanley.)*

The first indication of Mr. Melliar's residence is the lead fire mark of the Sun Insurance Co. put over the front door in 1749 and still in position after 250 years. The associated policy which

can be looked up from the number on the fire mark shows that his dwelling house was insured for £200 and his household goods, furniture and printed books were insured for £100. The premium was fifteen shillings a year.

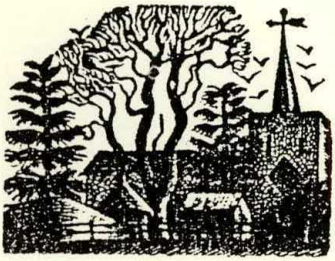
From the front door one enters a hall and to the left is an eighteenth century panelled room with a contemporary carved wooden fireplace. The carving on the main panel of the fireplace consists of a basket with fruit, flowers and foliage flowing from it on each side in an asymmetrical way. This helps to date the room to about 1740-50 so it is possible that Mr. Melliar was responsible for the insertion of this room on taking up residence and it is, perhaps, where he held his club meetings, the social occasions mentioned in the diary from 1760 onwards.

In July 1772 William Melliar died, leaving Mrs. Melliar a widow and this may be of significance in the bringing about of another alteration, for by May 1773 Woodforde tells on two separate occasions of bringing a party of people to view Mrs. Melliar's "new room". Although he lists all the people he brought, he frustratingly neglects to mention what they came to see. This new room can only be another reception room to the right of the hall but one looks in vain for anything that resembles fashion of this period, i.e. Neo-Classical or Adam-type decoration. There is, however, amongst the clutter in the stable belonging to the house, one half piece of an Adam fireplace, the half obviously having been re-used and cut to fit a corner grate in a bedroom of the house. Naturally its altered odd appearance would not have led to its retention here. This piece of fireplace is most likely the last remnant of Mrs. Melliar's "new room".

The next event that one can relate to an alteration is Mrs. Melliar's death in 1819 and this is when Mrs. Melliar's "new room" could have disappeared. The room today has Regency period features: a bay window with sashes almost to the floor, plain panelled shutters, no dado rail and a relatively simple marble fireplace.

The two rooms described have a strong individual character of their periods which survive today, but even they incorporate features of other periods such as the 17th century mullioned windows and boxed-in beams. The other rooms of the house

have an amalgam of features from the past but largely no changes occurred after the Regency period. The thatch on the house was replaced with slate sometime in the nineteenth century and about the year 1900 two large Edwardian-style rooms were grafted onto the end of the rear wing.



CASTLE CARY PRESS, SOMERSET