PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

WILLIAM WOODFORDE

In the uniform of Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the Western Battalion of the East Somerset Volunteer Infantry, 1805

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Johnson and his friend, Beauclerk, were once together in company with several clergymen, who thought that they should appear to advantage by assuming the lax jollity of *men of the world*; which, as it may be observed in similar cases, they carried to noisy excess. Johnson, who they expected would be *entertained*, sat grave and silent for some time: at last, turning to Beauclerk, he said, by no means in a whisper, "This merriment of parsons is mighty offensive".

– James Boswell: *The Life of Samuel Johnson (Oxford ed. 1124/5.*

[1778]

Dec: 23 – I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept at home –
To Spaule my Blacksmith a Bill of – 1 : 5 : 0
M^{r}. Du Quesne, M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Howes, M^{r}. Bodham, M^{rs}. Davy's 2. Children Betsy & Nunn, M^{r}. and Miss Donne and their Cousin a little Boy by name Charles Donne of London dined & spent the Afternoon with me being my Rotation – and all but M^{r}. Du Quesne supped & spent the whole Night with me being very dark & some falling Rain – M^{r}. Bodham, myself & M^{r}. Donne sat up the whole Night and played at Cards till 6. in the Morning ...
About 6. in the Morning we serenaded the Folks that were abed with our best on the Hautboy – ...
we were exceeding merry indeed all the Night - ...
I believe at Cards that I lost about – 0 : 2 : 6

– James Woodforde: *Norfolk Diary II*

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EDITORIAL

It is, I think, not too much to say that our Journal has of late positively taken on a new lease of life. When I was at Oxford, I found the academic line to be that the fruits of research were of no value unless they led to the provision of fresh knowledge, information on a particular subject that had previously been unknown. It is precisely this that the Journal has been able to provide. Sir Angus Fraser on both the naval and military careers of Nephew Bill, Dr Hilary Boardman on typhus, Martin Brayne on the Icelandic earthquake which was responsible for the unusually cold weather in the winter of 1783, Dr David Case and Ms Julie Champeney on the identity of the house in Weston Longville which, ever since the year in which the Parson Woodforde Society was founded, has erroneously been thought to be Woodforde's own Parsonage – all these are notable in that they throw new light on the subjects which they have been written to illustrate. Members have been offered a bonus in the form of eight extra pages which were found necessary to accommodate all this first class work, which makes the present issue a very special one. I offer it now to members in the certainty that they will enjoy it, and take it as clear evidence that the aim of our Society, to increase our understanding of Woodforde and his times, continues to be very gratifyingly met. While I appreciate that not all readers are equally devoted to this aspect of the work that goes into the Journals, and some are content with a well-written article which does not attempt to break new ground, there can be no doubt that the presence of all these essays testifies to the healthy state of the Journal and the Society.

I hope I may be forgiven for drawing our readers' attention to a production of my own; but it is common knowledge that I have written a biography of the Parson, and some will already have ordered copies in advance of publication. The typescript was delivered to the publisher in May last. I had no news of the book until, only last week, I received quite late in the evening a wholly unexpected telephone call, to inform me that a proof copy had been made and would be reaching me "in the next few days". As was once said of the fraternity of patient fishermen: "But still the angler baits his hook with hope"; and in the same spirit I now dog the postman on his round, confident that, once I have this copy in my hands, things will begin to move.

– R. L. WINSTANLEY

Editor

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Following a recent committee meeting held in London, a number of matters of interest to members are reported here. It is proposed to print shortly a very full index, consisting of some 80 pages, to the contents of the first 25 years of the Society's Journals. This index, invaluable to anyone with interest in Woodforde, has been compiled by David Case and will be issued in the size and format of the Journal itself. Because of the current high costs of printing and postage it will not be possible to issue this work free to members and a charge of £3 a copy, to include postage, has been fixed. A form will be circulated shortly on which you may order a copy of this indispensible aid to your knowledge of James Woodforde.

A decision was also made to produce, in photocopy form, bound to match the original editions, Norfolk Diary volumes II and III, currently out of print. A number of requests have been received, urging this upon your Society, but again, costs are prohibitive unless a guaranteed number of copies are ordered. As with the index referred to , it is proposed to circulate a form on which orders can be placed. If the response is there, the work will be put in hand. At the same time, completely revised editions of Ansford I and II are nearing completion and these too will be the subject of a circular letter. Please watch out for these items.

You will note too that this issue of the Journal has more than the usual number of pages, a Christmas gift, in fact, made possible through the generosity of one of our members. Included with this issue members will find a subscription renewal form; *please* make use of it as required. For members who pay via banker's order please make the necessary amendment to the instructions to your bank. Failure so to do makes a great deal of unnecessary work for your treasurer.

As always at this time of the year I am not able to say if this issue will reach you by Christmas. If it does, may I wish you and your families a most sincere "Happy Christmas" – if not, then I trust that you will have enjoyed the festivities and that you will have the most prosperous New Year. As with Woodforde himself, "May Happiness and Peace attend us."

G. H. BUNTING
Chairman

NEPHEW BILL: SAILOR AND SOLDIER

Nephew Bill has had a poor press on the whole, from Parson Woodforde's diary onwards. Dorothy Heighes Woodforde, Bill's great-great-granddaughter, was unusual in being drawn towards him – largely, it would seem, because in her childhood the portrait of Bill in Lieutenant-Colonel's uniform looked so much less sombre than any of the other family portraits, mostly parsons, doctors and lawyers (D. H. Woodforde, ed. *Woodforde Papers and Diaries*, London 1932, pp. 30-1; 2nd edn, 1990). The portrait in question is reproduced in monochrome in the first volume of Beresford's edition of the diary, and in colour in Century Hutchinson's selection, *A Country Parson* (London 1985).

So far, no-one appears to have investigated Nephew Bill's naval and military service. Yet sailors and soldiers lend themselves to research, for the paperwork required by the Admiralty and the War Office ensured that even people who served two centuries ago still remain within our purview. The present article surveys the material relating to William Woodforde which can be uncovered in the Public Record Office in Kew (PRO: ADM, HO and WO series) and the Somerset Record Office in Taunton (SRO: DD/CN series), and links it to relevant entries in Parson Woodforde's diary. Quotations from the diary are from transcripts made by Roy Winstanley, whether in the volumes published by the Society or (for 1782 onwards) kindly provided specially.

I should start by mentioning several Journal articles which are very helpful in filling in some of the background. The domestic situation in Bill's parental home (or homes) is covered in `Brother Heighes and Sister Woodforde' (Journal XXV, 4), and several other aspects of the Somerset side of his life emerge in 'Two views of Galhampton' (XXII, 3). A letter very relevant to my theme is transcribed in 'Bill Woodforde to his father' (XV, 1; also in II, 2). An important Norfolk episode is dealt with in 'Blacked-out passages in Woodforde's diary: and the "Late Affair" of Sukey Boxley' (XIII, 4) and 'Found: Wood-forde's missing maid' (XXVI, 3). I must also acknowledge Phyllis Stanley's good offices in opening up a short-cut, in the form of a ready-made anthology of relevant diary entries, when I mentioned that I was thinking of investigating the naval phase of William Woodforde's life, and in drawing my attention to material in pre-1980 issues of the Journal.

Bill was probably glad to escape from home at the age of 18 by accompanying his uncle James in May 1776 to live with him in

Norfolk, though neither of them appears to have given much thought to what he was to do there, and once they settled in Weston Bill was left pretty much to his own devices. Perhaps their highly successful visit to Great Yarmouth not long after arrival (17-20 September 1776) helped to strengthen any vague ambitions Bill may already have had of getting into the Navy. The bustle of the maritime traffic obviously appealed to both, even though the town would not reach the peak of its importance as a naval yard until later in the century.

There was little bustle at Weston to enliven the diary's constant refrain of "Bill breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at Weston". Once they had been together in Norfolk for some 12 months, critical remarks about Bill became recurrent, until the Parson's thoughts turned to how pleasant it would be to be rid of him. On 17 June 1777, he gave stark expression to these thoughts: "Bill made me uneasy & very angry with him at breakfast by contradicting me in a very saucy manner – I therefore told him that I was determined that he should not return with me to Weston but that I would leave him in the West". When the time came on 21 August for going back to Norfolk, however, there was no question of Bill's staying behind in Somerset.

Within two months of their return, Bill's desperate boredom got the better of him: "My Nephew was very dull this Evening does not like my House at all, he says its [a] very Melancholy Place and would not be obliged to live here for three times the Value of the Living ..." (*Diary* 8/10/1777). The next nine and a half lines were fiercely subjected to one of those obliterations for which Bill must be a prime suspect. From now on, complaints about Bill's behaviour punctuate the diary. The Parson's doubts about him increased sharply as he observed him with the maidservant Susannah Buxley. On 11 May 1778, he noted: "Bill was up in the Maids Room this morning, and Sukey was still abed there – I believe there is an Intimacy between them, as she keeps the Door [?] fast". On 27 July there were similar suspicions, so that when, on 26 August, she confessed "that she was with Child and half gone", it must have been a relief to hear her claim that the father was a certain Humphrey (now identified as Humphrey Garrod or Garwood), and that "she was not concerned with any other Man, though she said that my Nephew had ... come into her Room when she was in bed and tried every way to get her to comply". Bill himself told a different tale on 30 August, under interrogation by his uncle in Norwich: "I questioned Bill a good deal in the Evening at the Angel about his being great with my Maid Sukey, and he confessed something of it to me, that he had been great with her 3. or 4. Times – The first Time was Feb. 28. early in the morning in

her Room ... if so Bill certainly had Sukey first ... I was very restless & uneasy all night".

On the very day of Sukey's confession, the question of a midshipman's place for Bill comes up for the first time in the diary: but it had obviously been under discussion before. Mr Hammerton, the owner of the Lyng paper mill, offered to introduce Bill to a ship's captain in London who would use his interest on his behalf. At the prospect of Bill's leaving, the Parson almost had a change of heart and certainly a twinge of self-pity: "I have been very uneasy & most unhappy all day about one thing or another – When Bill goes away I shall have no one to converse with – quite without a Friend". Bill returned on 7 September from the trip to London with the news that Captain Allen of HMS *Chatham* was ready to take him if he could be properly equipped. As that was going to cost some £60, Bill had to go back to Somerset to try to raise the money. £60 was precisely the sum that the Parson's hard-drinking younger brother John – "Captain Jack" – had been given for similar purposes when he became an ensign in the Somerset Militia eleven years before (*Diary* 10/10/1767). It was a substantial sum, but kitting out a midshipman was not cheap. His best uniform had to be a blue tail-coat lined with white silk and adorned with gold anchor buttons, completed by breeches and waistcoat of white nankeen, with stockings to match and a three-cornered hat. For daily use he would need a short working jacket and trousers with a glazed hat and a boat cloak. For cold weather he had to be provided with a frieze watchcoat as well. To this had to be added a proper proportion of white-frilled shirts and stockings, with books on seamanship and navigation, a sextant and (for sidearm) a midshipman's dirk with a sharkskin-covered hilt. All had to be packed neatly into a midshipman's chest, with the name painted clearly on the lid.

As a midshipman needed to put in over three years' service before his gross pay accumulated to £60 – three and a quarter years, if one allows for standard deductions – there could be no question of paying this off out of income. Apparently Bill managed to extract some £50 from his family, but the *Chatham* had sailed by the time he got back to London from Somerset. When he reappeared at Weston, relations with Parson Woodforde spiralled downwards. The Parson was now looking for trouble, and on 6 November he confided to his diary that "This morning I had some suspicion that Bill was concerned with my Maid Nanny and also that she appeared to me to be with Child". As this new maid, Anne Lillistone, had arrived only three weeks before, he was presumably not blaming Bill for her condition – which turned out to be imaginary in any case. On 17 November he had something

less insubstantial to denounce: "Bill told me this morning that he had the Foul Disease ... He is the occasion of nothing but troublesomeness to me I will therefore get rid of him as soon as I can". And after six days of bad temper, illness and depression on his part: "I told Bill this morning that I should have nothing more to say to him or do for him – And I gave him his Mony that he desired me to keep for him – He was very low on the Occasion and cried much". Word came from Mr Hammerton that the *Chatham* would soon be back at Sheerness and Bill should meet her there. On 7 December Parson Woodforde accompanied his nephew to Norwich and saw him on to the coach for London "on his Sea Expedition, which if he does not succeed in on board the Chatham, is not to return here but go into the West & get into a Bristol Privateer". Privateers were armed merchant ships, licensed to cruise against enemy ships to their owners' profit. As privateersmen received no wages and had to depend on their share of prize money, it is no surprise that their vessels were often short of seamen.

Early in the New Year – 3 January 1779 – it emerged that Bill had changed his mind and "gone into Somersett & does not intend going into the Chatham". Mr Hammerton and the Parson had no difficulty in agreeing (22 January) that Bill was "a very unsteady Man" to have forgone so wilfully the berth that the captain of *Chatham* had been keeping for him. "His father had wrote a Letter to him to let him know that he would get a Lieutenancy of Marine for him that his Uncle Tho^{s}. Woodforde had promised to speak to my L^{d}. Guildford for him about the same – I wish my Head might never ake before that Time". Francis North, 1st Earl of Guilford (1704-90), was the father of Lord North, George III's Prime Minister; Bill would seek to cultivate him in later years.

Nine months passed before the Parson received a letter from Bill (23 October 1779) "from on board the Fortune Sloop of War, and now at Spithead performing Quarantine being lately arrived from of the Barbara Coast, had been out about 2. Months – He informs me that he had suffered many hardships – and he seems to be tired of the Sea already – He now sincerely repents of his late behaviour at my House at Weston, and of his not taking my advice to him". In fact, Bill had been in the Navy since 5 July. Apparently it had needed only a few months at home to convince him that there was no place for him there.

Bill had chosen to link his fortunes to the star of a naval Lieutenant named Matthew Squire. He was following the accepted route for setting himself up in a career. The application of "interest", as the eighteenth century called it – that is, personal influence and patronage

– was regarded as a normal and inevitable aspect of society. However discreditable such a system may now seem, it did not necessarily lead to the advancement of unworthy men; indeed, it produced those responsible for virtually every one of the many British naval victories that were so decisive at the time. Squire was not one of the greats, though he attained flag rank (as a Captain was almost bound to do if, like him, he remained on the Captains' seniority list long enough to reach the top of it). Once he was commissioned, his career is not too difficult to trace:

– Lieutenant 20 September 1765, with service on *Druid*, a sloop (1767), and *Mermaid*, a frigate (1768);

– Commander 21 January 1771 (not really a rank at that time, but denoting a Lieutenant with an independent command), his successive vessels being *Bonetta* (1771), *Otter* (1775), and *Fortune* (1779), all of them sloops, i.e. in the largest class of fighting vessel commanded by an officer of lower rank than Captain; and beneath the 6th Rate or lowest class into which larger men-of-war were divided on the basis of number of guns carried;

– Captain (or, less equivocally, post-Captain) 6 November 1779, and, as such, now commanding "rated ships" or "post ships" square-rigged on three masts: *Ariadne* (1779), *Astrea* (1781), *Solebay* (1790), *Magnificent* (1795) and *Atlas* (1797);

– Rear-Admiral of the Red, 14 February 1799.

Squire did not long enjoy his flag rank, for he died on 22 January 1800.

Of all his vessels, the three which are important to us are *Fortune, Ariadne* and *Astrea*. They encompassed Bill Woodforde's entire naval career, such as it was. They also formed a neat progression from sloop to 6th Rate to 5th Rate (a progression in size and complexity that would continue for Squire until it concluded with *Atlas*, a 2nd Rate). I was, however, unable to establish anything of his background from the official records. Even his year of birth had to come from elsewhere. According to a tablet in Chelsea Old Church (see James Harris's note, 'Captain Squire', in Journal IX, 3), he was 55 when he died, which would place his birth in 1744 or January 1745. If that is accurate, he must have gone afloat when he was a boy, in his early teens – something that was not unusual at the time – and would have been 34 or 35 when Bill joined up with him. But one would like to know much more and, in particular, why he was prepared to take an interest in Bill.

An enquiry of the Maritime Information Centre at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich produced three useful references. There was a very brief obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (February 1800, p. 184) which said Squire died at Durham Place, Chelsea (near the Royal Chelsea Hospital) and was a brother of the Messrs. Squire of Peterborough. Two queries from Mr H. J. K. Jenkins in *The Mariner's Mirror*, the journal of the Society of Nautical Research, shed light on that connection. The first (Vol. 71, 1985, p. 91), seeking information on the family's link with the Admiralty, said:

> During the late eighteenth century, a formidable commercial clan surnamed Squire operated in and around Peterborough. Via such inland waterways as the River Nene, the family's influence even filtered to the North Sea and coasting trade. The Squires' holdings included a bank, numerous inns, a fleet of barges, and some wharf-installations. Part of the success story seems to have reflected a link with the Admiralty. Certainly, when the very large prisoner of war depot at Norman Cross, near Peterborough, came into service in 1797, the Squires were involved in profitable shipment of prisoners by water. Moreover, Thomas Squire, then the dominant member, was appointed as a parole agent.

The second (Vol. 74, 1988, p. 295) asked for any information regarding Rear-Admiral Matthew Squire, who "had seen considerable service in the West Indies, notably as captain of the frigate *Solebay* when she took part in operations against French political extremists *circa* 1790-91". It turned out, however, that Mr Jenkins was unable to suggest how it might have been that Bill Woodforde came to know him.

Matthew Squire was appointed to the command of *Fortune* on 1 June 1779 and was discharged from her on 11 November 1779. She was a sloop of 300 tons, 97 feet in length, with 14 six-pounder guns and a complement of 125 men. The ship's musters (ADM 36/10277 and 10278) and pay books (ADM 35/327) in the PRO show that William Woodforde joined her at Spithead and served from 5 July to 11 November 1779, being rated throughout as "Captain's servant". There was never any mention of his being a midshipman. The "servant" label is, however, deceptive. Most of the "young gentlemen" who entered the Navy in the hope of rising to commissioned rank began in ratings like Able or Ordinary Seaman or Captain's Servant. The captain was allowed four servants for every hundred men in his ship. Very few of them were domestics; their relations with their captain were rather like those of apprentice to master, or

of a follower to his patron. One curious feature of the entry in the pay book is the form of Bill's name: J. W. Woodford. (The first letter is rather ambiguous, but seems more like a *J* than a *T*.) The lack of the final *e* in the surname is not unusual – it is in fact the norm – but this is the only instance of an extra initial in ships' records of him. It makes one wonder if Bill had a second given name; no baptismal entry for him has ever been found.

Ships' logs can make for tedious reading, with long spells of nothing more high-powered than details of weather, bearings to landmarks, provisioning, repairs and maintenance. Moreover, most ships spent at least half their time in port, whether in harbour or, more often, at anchor in some reasonably secure road (sheltered anchorage), such as Spithead or the Nore. *Fortune's* log for the period (ADM 51/370) is no exception. There was only one bout of real sailing during Bill's four months on board, and that was when, from 18 August to 18 October, *Fortune* made her way southwards as far as Mogador (now Essaouira), and back. Nothing much appears to have happened when they got there, though during their five days moored in Mogador Harbour Bill acquired a number of exotic souvenirs, including the Moorish sword and leather purse which he later presented to the Parson with heavy hints about how short of cash he was (*Diary*, 2/12/1779 and 4/12/1779).

Whatever the rationale of these two months at sea and the visit to the Moroccan Atlantic port, it must in some way have been embedded in the conflict which set the background for Bill's entire period of naval service from 1779 to 1784 – the American War of Independence, a war with repercussions at sea extending far beyond American waters. In its final stage it was largely a naval struggle between Britain and European enemies, exacerbated by the League of Armed Neutrality formed by the northern nations in 1780, in resistance to the British claim to a right to search neutral shipping believed to be trading with the American rebels. Three Continental countries were involved in outright hostilities. In 1778 France struck an alliance with the US; Spain entered the struggle against Britain shortly before Bill joined the Navy; then, in 1780, Britain declared war on the Netherlands because of the help the Dutch were giving the other side. No doubt Spain's entry created a need to cultivate friendship with the Barbary States.

Beresford claimed (*The Diary of a Country Parson*, Oxford 1924-31, Vol. 2, p. 50) that Bill played some small part in the search for "the desperate buccaneer Paul Jones", but he gave no source or dates for this. It seems difficult to substantiate. Jones, who can also be

described as an American naval hero, depending on who is writing the history, sailed with a little squadron round the British Isles in August-September 1779, creating much alarm as he did so. There is no sign that *Fortune* had any connection with measures taken against Jones at this time. In an engagement in September, Jones won a stunning victory over British ships, but subsequently did not have another command.

Though the letter from Bill which arrived at Weston on 23 October was unenthusiastic about life at sea, there was little time for reflection before he transferred from *Fortune* to his next vessel. (As it turned out, the move was timely: *Fortune* was captured by the French five months later in the West Indies.) Within a few days he was on board HMS *Ariadne* at Sheerness, a 6th Rate frigate of 430 tons, 108 feet in length, with 20 nine-pounders and a complement of 160. Bill served on her from 15 November 1779 to 30 April 1781, as can be traced in pay books (ADM 34/39 and 48) and muster tables (ADM 36/9083 and 9084). His commander was once more Matthew Squire, now elevated to post-Captain. For the first two months (15 November–14 January) Bill was rated as A.B. (Able Seaman), and thereafter as Midshipman. Although appointments to midshipman depended on the captain's patronage, the number for each ship was fixed (in the case of *Ariadne*, at four), and a captain did not always have a midshipman's berth at his disposal. Now 21 years old, Bill fell into an age bracket (21-25) which accounted for about a third of the Navy's midshipmen. (The 16-20 age group represented almost 40 per cent.) At the same time, he appears not to have abandoned the thought of trying for a commission in the Marines, for on 1 January 1780 Parson Woodforde had a letter from Bill's father "in which he informed me that he had lately rec^{d}. a Letter from L. Guildford concerning his Son William, who lately waited on L^{d}. Guildford in Person as a Midshipman – and his Lordship desired to know his Name and Age – We were pleased with it."

As *Ariadne* had been assigned to patrol and convoy duties in the North Sea, and put in from time to time at Yarmouth, Parson Woodforde had fairly regular news of Bill. There were some narrow escapes to be reported. The first must have been more than a little embarrassing for the newly appointed post-Captain. On 15 January 1780, a letter arrived from Bill saying that the *Ariadne* "had been in great Danger striking on the Sands near Yarmouth" – and also asking for money. The incident is described in the entry for 6 January in the captain's log (ADM 51/60):

> Fresh Gales and Cloudy Weather Abreast of Lowestoff Tack'd. At 1/2 Past 2 the Ship Struck Hoisted out the Boats and try'd every Method to gett her off it being Ebb Tide, found only 2 fathom a' Midships the Same a Head & a Stern. She lay Thumping very hard, the Rudder Unshipp'd, the Pintles being all Broke Started Water in the Hold, and Fired Guns of Distress at 5 ...

A cod smack and a Customs cutter eventually came to their assistance from Yarmouth. Not until the afternoon of the next day was *Ariadne* out of her predicament. The entry ends: "Served Grogg to the Ships Company".

Parson Woodforde, writing on 26 February, made much of the high winds and extreme cold. His discomfort was nothing to the havoc they created among ships lying in moorings. On 11 March "Sister Clarke", who was staying with the Parson, "had another Letter from Bill Woodforde who is still at Sheerness, and his Ship has had another Misfortune being greatly damaged by the high Wind on the 26. of last Month". The log put it much more eloquently, in a style that would hardly be out of place in *Finnegans Wake*:

> ... at 1/2 Past 4 AM in a Heavy Squall the Head Lashing gave Way the Ships Bow Swung off from the Levant & falling athwart her Stern, Carried away the Starboard Mizzen Channell & Quarter Gallery then the Aftermost Lashing Gave way drove Athwart Hawse of the Jane Armed Ship (She Lying Close By us,) her Bowsprit took our Mizen Stay Carried it away, then the Mizzen Mast Went By the board With the fall it Broke 6 feet Below the Hounds Snapped the Larboard foremast Shroud Carried away the Mizzen Topsail Yard, Ensign Staff Poop Lanthorn And all the Taffrail Stanchions, In Rubbing along Carried away all the Quarter Stanchions Bullworks & Hammock Irons Abaft the Mizen Mast Larboard Side, then Swung Clear, Cutt the Sheet Anchor With the Stream Cable & 6 Inch Hawser Bent to it in Bringing up the Hawser Parted Rode by the Stream Cable about half an hour, then felt her touch the Ground, abaft ... [Etc, etc].

The following day they fired several guns for assistance.

The letter received from Bill on 22 April evidently contained nothing worth recording in the diary, although by then *Ariadne*'s guns had been used to more offensive purpose, first in a brush with two cutters near Flamborough Head (27 March), then in another on 14 April. The letter which arrived on 27 May *did* betray some real excitement: "Had another Letter from Bill Woodforde on board the Ariadne – He has been in an Engagement but not hurt". This refers to a set-to on 30 April 1780 between a small British squadron, headed by *Ariadne*,

and three French privateers of from 20 to 24 guns each, sighted when *Ariadne* was cruising off Flamborough Head with the *Fury* (16 guns, Commander Alexander Agnew) and two armed ships, the *Queen* and *Loudun* (Commanders Richard Trotter and Stephen Rains), each of 20 guns. *Ariadne* opened fire, but in return suffered some damage to sails and rigging. Squire ordered the other three British vessels to engage, and *Queen* kept up brisk fire while *Ariadne* was carrying out running repairs. *Fury* and *Loudun* held aloof. Eventually the enemy sheered off, pursued by *Ariadne* and *Fury*, both of which managed to get off a few broadsides, though *Fury*'s pursuit seemed less than fully urgent. The privateers escaped by using sweeps (long oars) in the calm weather. The *Queen* had suffered considerably from the action, sustaining seven wounded, including the captain. (Cf. R. Beatson, *Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain from 1727 to 1783*, London, 1804, Vol. 5, p. 147; and W. M. Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present*, London, 1899, Vol. 4, p. 51.) Captain Squire was far from pleased with the way *Fury* and *Loudun* had been commanded, and appears to have requested a court martial. For reasons that are not obvious, it did not begin until May the following year.

The diary records a surprise visit to Weston on 9 June 1780. "About 2. o'clock who should make his appearance at my House but Nancy's Brother Will[m]. ... He came from Yarmouth on Horseback this morning – He wore his Uniform – and he dined, supped & slept at my House – Nancy was very happy to see him indeed." *Ariadne* was in Yarmouth Roads, provisioning and carrying out maintenance. Alas, by the time Bill left Weston again on the Sunday evening (11 June), with a present of 5 guineas from the Parson in his pocket, *Ariadne* had sailed; and back he came to Weston. When he caught up with his ship on 17 June, once it had returned to Yarmouth Roads, he discovered that in his absence a great deal had happened. On two successive days, 14 and 15 June, enemy vessels had been captured – *Déception* from Flushing, loaded with tea and liquor, and *La Princesse de Robuq* from Dunkirk. It was the taking of prizes that made service in the King's Navy lucrative for some. Captured ships and their cargoes became the property of the captors; they were sold off and the proceeds shared out among the crew or crews according to rank. In peace time, without such supplements to their pay, officers found it difficult to make ends meet. Since Bill had missed all the action, he began to worry that he would also be excluded from the share-out. The "inferior and petty officers" (a miscellaneous category which included midshipmen) were together entitled to a one-eighth share of the value of their ship's prizes, as compared with the

commander's quarter. As there was a complement of 32 of those on a 6th Rate like *Ariadne*, Bill's portion can be assessed as 0.39 per cent, or 7s. 10d. per £100 of prize money due to the ship. All was well in the end. On 21 June Parson Woodforde "had a letter from Bill on board the Ariadne to let me know that he will be admitted to his Share of the late Prizes".

Most of the remainder of 1780 was spent off the east coast of Scotland and around Orkney and Shetland, and led to quite a number of chases and sometimes engagements. The letter which the diary notes on 29 September as having come from "Leighthe Roads" was simply written in *Leith* Roads. By early November, however, *Ariadne* was back down south. From 12 November to 23 December she was moored in Sheerness Harbour. Bill now showed ominous signs of dissatisfaction. On 18 November there was "a Letter from Bill Woodforde from Sheerness who tells us that he is going to leave the Ariadne, the Captain whose Name is Squire and him not agreeing and that he intends to try again for a Lieutenancy of Marines – am afraid he will not turn out well in the End, as he is so unsteady – I doubt not that he has given Captain Squire just cause to be angry with him." And on 25 November "Nancy also had a Letter from her Brother Bill Woodforde to let her know that he is going to leave his Ship". Nancy's reply was published in 'Some letters of Anna Maria Woodforde to members of her family', in Journal Supplement No. 1, 1971. Her report of the Parson's displeasure probably held no surprises for Bill (transcript kindly provided by Roy Winstanley):

> You desired me to let you know what my Uncle says concerning it which is this. that he is sorry you should have disobliged your C-n and is likewise afraid you are not a real Midshipman if you was he says it would be a great dishonour to you to leave the ship We were in great hopes that you was perfectly settled and in a fair way to do well but are sorry to be so disapointed indeed I can't think what you will do my Uncle says he cannot think of doing any thing more for you unless you will try to do something for yourself which he is afraid you will not as he thinks you are rather of an unsettled disposition – pray do try to make it up with your Captain if you can. Should be glad to have heard what you qua[rr]elled about as my Uncle is appre[he]nsive that you are to blame therefore let me know in your next I'm sorry you should have such a dislike to your Officers to be sure it must be very disagreeable to you to be with such dastardly scoundrels but never mind them if you can make it up with your C-n if you leave the ship I wish you may get a Lieutenancy of M's as that [is] what you seem to like best.

By 16 December, all seems well again: "Nancy had a Letter from her Brother Will this Evening wherein he mentions that all matters between him and his Captain are made up". Not for long, however – on 20 January 1781 we read: "Had a Letter from Bill Woodforde this Evening, he talks of leaving the Ariadne". No information is given about the contents of Bill's letters to Nancy mentioned on 27 January and 7 April. By the latter date, his service on *Ariadne* was drawing to a close. The ship's main duties in the early months of the year had been to escort convoys between the Humber and Cuxhaven at the mouth of the Elbe. Bill was discharged from the ship on 30 April, and Captain Squire a few days latter, with the prospect of a court martial in respect of the previous year's incident with the French privateers still hanging over him, for Squire himself was to stand trial along with Commanders Agnew of *Fury* and Rains of *Loudun*.

The court martial began on 28 May on board the *Santa Margarita* at Sheerness. The court did not take long to conclude unanimously that Squire's conduct, "so far from being blameable was spirited great and highly to be commended, and that his Tacking from the Enemy when engaged was a prudent and proper measure"; he was honourably acquitted. Rains and Agnew, on the other hand, were both cashiered after several more days of evidence and deliberation. Rains was found "not to do his utmost to Obey the Orders of his Commanding Officer or to Assist and support the Queen Armed Ship when Engaged". The finding in the case of the naval officer Agnew was rather similar, but the court was "of Opinion that he suffered himself to be led away by improper advice [from the Master of his ship] which he should not have attended to", and though it acquitted him of cowardice and disaffection, he was found guilty of neglect of duty. Despite the court's recommendation that he should be considered compassionately, "from his Age and infirmities and long service to his Majesty having served for forty four years with an Unblemished Character till now together with a large Family who owe their support to him", the sentence of dismissal from the Navy was upheld (ADM 1/5318, ff. 272-365). He died nine months later.

At the court martial, Squire was described as late commander of HMS *Ariadne* but now of the *Raleigh*, a ship captured from the Americans in September 1778. (Clowes, Vol. 4, pp. 20-1, claims that Squire was in command of one of the British vessels involved in that capture. I believe that to be an error, but the point is not important in the present context and need not be discussed here.) *Ariadne*'s muster table had *Raleigh* inserted against Bill's name as the next destination for him too, but unlike Squire he did not show up in *Raleigh*'s pay book (ADM 34/652), or at any of the musters at Spithead (ADM

36/8168). There was a change of plan, and *Raleigh* went out of commission on 11 June (ADM 51/4303), and was sold two years later. Perhaps Bill went back to the West Country for a couple of months.

It was to the frigate *Astrea* that Squire was next assigned and, in his wake, Bill Woodforde. They joined the ship on 2 July 1781. She was a 5th Rate of 703 tons, 126 feet in length, with 26 twelve-pounders and 6 six-pounders, and a complement of 220 men. Once more, the pay books (ADM 34/64) and musters (ADM 36/9654 and 9655) show that Bill had to serve as an A.B. for a few weeks, until he was rated Midshipman from 4 August. He spent over two and a half years on *Astrea*. At 24 shillings a month (i.e. the lunar month of 28 days) as an A.B. and 30 shillings a month as a Midshipman, that would earn him £50. 4s. 6d. (£44. 10s. 3d. net, after deduction of an advance, the cost of clothing drawn from the Purser, the shilling a month that every officer and man was charged for support of the Chatham Chest, and the sixpence a month deducted from all for Greenwich Hospital, another charitable foundation for pensioners).

This time, Bill's service took him to the American arena of the war. Only one set of captain's logs for the period exists in the PRO (ADM 51/23), covering July 1782–February 1784; but in seeking to make good the gap from a lieutenant's log in the National Maritime Museum (ADM/L/S/420B), I found that the missing captain's log must long ago have been filed with that in error, for it was there too. *Astrea* was in home waters (Portsmouth and Spithead) until October 1781, when she set sail for America, escorting a convoy. Apart from the taking of a Spanish sloop, the crossing was largely uneventful. By the time *Astrea* reached Charlestown Harbour (Boston, Massachusetts) in late December, the need for a strong British naval presence in North America had diminished. The fighting on land died out with Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in October 1781, after a British squadron sent to his assistance was driven back by the French fleet blocking Chesapeake Bay; and the British naval commander, Rear-Admiral Robert Digby, transferred much of his force to the West Indies to protect British possessions there. *Astrea*, however, remained at Boston until the end of March 1782, when she picked up a convoy and sailed to New York. From 20 April to late July, most of the time was spent cruising off Chesapeake Bay, and one reads of chases, boardings, and sometimes engagements with American or French vessels. From 22 July to 31 August they were moored in the North River, New York, and at Sandy Hook (on the New Jersey side of New York Bay). It was then that Bill appears to have written his

first letter to Weston Longville since joining *Astrea*. It arrived on 13 December:

> M^{r}. Custance's Servant brought Nancy a long wished for Letter from her Brother Will^{m}. now stationed at New York in North America, very happy and very well. has gone thro' a good deal & weathered it all. It was dated from Sandy Hook, New York Aug: 19 He has taken many Prizes and is in no want of Cash – ... He is on Board the Astrea Frigate with his old Cap^{t}. Squire, whom I hope will prove a good Friend to him – He met with also a Cap^{t}. Foukes of the Lion of 64. Guns who is very kind to him, a Somerset Man and a near Relation of M^{r}. Rob^{t}. White Sen^{rs}. –

The *Lion* was Rear-Admiral Digby's flagship, also moored at Sandy Hook, and her Captain, William Fooks, would himself be promoted to Rear-Admiral in 1797. A John Fooks, attorney, of Shepton Mallet, is mentioned in Parson Woodforde's diary from time to time (eg 12/8/1793), often in the company of Robert White, the Parson's brother-in-law.

September of 1782 saw *Astrea* progressing northwards, escorting convoys. By 10 October she had worked up the St Lawrence River and moored off Quebec. There she picked up another convoy and sailed back to Nantucket Shoals and New York. December brought some lucrative engagements. *Astrea* was sailing with the British ships *Diomede* (44 guns) and *Quebec* (32 guns) off the Delaware when they fell in with several foreign vessels. On 20 December *Astrea* captured the brig *Lake Constance* from Philadelphia, bound for Bordeaux laden with tobacco. The following day, she boarded another small ship from Philadelphia, with a cargo of flour and tobacco. Then the squadron set off in pursuit of the *South Carolina*, a heavily armed American frigate. After an 18 hour chase, *Diomede*, seconded by *Quebec*, closed with the American, which fought for two hours and then, as *Astrea* was coming up fast, struck her colours (Clowes, Vol. 4, p. 91). The fact that *Astrea* had not fired upon the *South Carolina* made no difference to her entitlement to a share of the spoils. And prize money was all the more important on overseas stations, for it was the only cash the men could hope for until they returned to England and could be given their pay. Sometimes, however, the share-out was long in coming. It was as late as 19 February 1785 that Samuel Woodforde noted in his diary: "My brother's share of Prize-money is 8 Guineas for the 'Carolina' ". (D. H. Woodforde, p. 91).

January to mid-March 1783 was spent cruising off Bermuda. From 7 April to 26 June *Astrea* was moored in the East River, New York and then off Staten Island. When they set sail again on 27 June, Bill

must have left behind for dispatch the letter which reached Nancy on 4 September.

> Nancy rec^{d}. a long Letter from her Brother William dated the 29. June from Staten Island in North America, brought by M^{r}. Custance's Servant from Norwich this Evening. The Letter came to – 0: 2: 4. He is very well and has escaped many Dangers in America – He sent inclosed in his Letter some continental Mony Paper valued there at – 10. Shillings and which he desired to be given to me –

In June *Astrea* joined her last convoy off Nantucket. From 9 July to 16 November she remained in Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia, immobilized by the political developments. The war had been brought to an end by the Treaty of Paris, signed on 3 September 1783.

Astrea returned to New York just after Washington re-entered the city in triumph, towards the end of November 1783. After a couple of weeks moored off Staten Island, she headed back for England in mid-December. From 13 January to the time of being paid off on 25 February 1784, she was moored successively at Spithead, off Purfleet in the Thames, and at Woolwich. Bill began to tighten his family knots again, with letters to siblings and father. Nancy received one on 24 January. The doubly poignant letter which he wrote to his father on 17 January from Spithead was transcribed in the Journal of Spring 1982 (Journal XV, 1). It is poignant, first because of his description of how it felt to be on the last King's frigate to leave New York, and to give up "those enchanting isles" and witness "the most stinging and most mortifying scene of seeing the 13 stripes hoisted on a Battery of our own erection and French & American ships sailing by us without paying the least homage, with their insulting colours flying". Poignant again, because of the bitten-back reproach towards its close: Bill says how glad he has been to have news from Sam of family and friends in the West, "which I have been most anxious to learn *Not* receiving a single Scrape of a Pen all the long time I was in America from the West which caused me many a heavy hour and I thought it *cruel*".

Bill signed off that letter as Heighes' "Dutiful [replacing Affectionate] & unsettled Son". The future was now very uncertain for this 25-year-old. Perhaps the idea of canvassing for a commission in the Royal Marines had come back to life, for his postscript referred to an Indian canoe made of bark which he intended to present to the Earl of Guilford. If nothing else, commissions in the Marines had the charm of being free appointments, unlike those in the Army, which had to be bought; but the promotion prospects were at the best of

times poor, since the number of senior officers needed was so small, given the fragmented nature of the operational requirement for Marines. As for the Navy, Bill was some way off being in a position to qualify for a Lieutenant's commission. Although he had served more than the two years minimum as midshipman, he had not yet been six years at sea as required of a candidate for a commission, and further openings were now going to be much more restricted as the fleet was reduced to its peacetime establishment. Once the American War of Independence was over, the majority of officers had to go ashore on half-pay until hostilities started with the French Republic in 1793; while for those fortunate ones remaining on full pay, there could be no more prize money to share. Midshipmen were not commissioned officers, and therefore had no entitlement even to half-pay. As we have seen, Matthew Squire would eventually find other ships; but the Royal Navy, with every commander besieged by friends seeking appointments, offered the younger man little attraction or opportunity as a career. Captain and Midshipman went their separate ways, although, as subsequent events show, they must still have been on amicable terms.

In the end Bill would find a bigger prize. Meanwhile he did the rounds of his relatives. It was not until 8 November 1785 that he reached Weston, being joined by his brother Sam 11 days later. The Parson noted on 20 November: "It gave me much pleasure to see Nancy and her two Brothers appear so happy here – and so in each other". Sam went back to London on 5 December, but Bill (often referred to now in the diary as "the Captain") stayed on. It was suggested in the Autumn 1989 Journal, p. 32, that the cognomen of "Captain" was in fact a militia rank, but I can find no trace of Bill having ever been in any military unit in this time of peace, when Pitt allowed the armed forces of the country to go into rapid decline. Roy Winstanley has pointed out to me that a similar gratuitous promotion was conferred on Thomas Rooke in the diary in 1761 (cf. 'Early friends – the Rookes of Somerton', Journal, XXVI, 2), and suggests that it was the Parson's way of promoting Bill to a rank which he may now have thought he deserved. Certainly, relations between uncle and nephew seem much more relaxed than they were during Bill's previous period in Weston. They go around together quite a lot, and there are no longer sour comments about Bill in the diary. Bill now had a fund of experience which must have made his conversation more entertaining and less confined than that of many others in the small Norfolk circle of acquaintance.

On 23 June 1786 uncle, nephew and niece all set out for Somerset, with a short stay in London. When the Parson and Nancy returned to Norfolk in October, Bill stayed in the West Country. How long it was before he then began to take a serious interest in Anne Dukes and she in him, I have no idea. When he eloped with her in 1788, he was 30 and she was 17. He may not have been considering it primarily in this light, but it was a sound career move. On his side, he had good looks, little money and few prospects. On her side, she had £5000, and no parents alive. It is difficult to translate very old sums of money into current terms, for so many other things have changed beyond meaningful comparison, but £5000 in 1788 must represent something like a quarter of a million pounds nowadays. On 11 October 1788 Parson Woodforde received a long letter from Brother Heighes, announcing that "his Son Will^{m}. is going to marry a Miss Jukes a fortune of £5000". The lack of punctuation between Miss Dukes and her fortune may indicate that in family eyes there was little distinction to be drawn between the girl and her money. The couple were married on 16 November 1788. There is nothing to suggest that the marriage did not turn out well enough for both of them. They settled down in Galhampton in Somerset and had three daughters and two sons. Eventually they moved from Galhampton Place into Ansford Lower House.

In Bill's more mature years, though his role in daughter Julia's bizarre romance with the Trappist monk may or may not be open to criticism (cf. D. H. Woodforde, pp. 105-241; and `The tale of the runaway monk – Juliana Woodforde and James Power', Journal VIII, 1), Woodfordeans can give him credit for playing a major role in keeping the various branches of the family in touch. Bill was to revisit Weston twice more, staying for seven weeks in 1797, after he heard of the Parson's sudden and mysterious illness, and for four months in 1799/1800. He also kept on friendly terms with his former Captain, Matthew Squire, right up to the end. In October 1793, the Parson and Nancy broke their journey back from the West Country in London, and Squire, Bill and Brother Sam came to breakfast with them at the Angel Inn and accompanied them to the Leverian Museum; the following evening the same trio took Nancy to Covent Garden Theatre (*Diary* 21-22/10/1793). When Bill returned to Somerset, Squire went with him (*Diary* 9/11/1793), and it was Squire who had the ultimate benefit of the Norfolk turkey sent to Sam from Weston the following month (*Diary* 15/2/1794). Squire and his wife visited Bill at Galhampton early in 1799 (D*iary* 23/3/1799), just about the time of his promotion to Rear-Admiral; and Bill evidently called on him on the way to Norfolk that year and would have spent a few days

with him in Chelsea if Squire had not died (*Diary* 31/1/1800). Three years later, when Parson Woodforde died on the first day of 1803, Bill completed the 238 mile journey from Castle Cary to Weston inside 48 hours, having had no sleep at all en route. He and Nancy were the major beneficiaries in the small estate.

His brother Sam had nicknamed him "the Squire". Bill does appear to have followed the pursuits of a country gentleman once he had the chance. One of these would be military. In the early stages of the Seven Years War, the perceived threat looming on the Continent had led to the passing of the 1757 Militia Act. Militia regiments were re-established, after the period of dormancy, in all the counties of England and Wales, and a widely detested form of conscription by ballot was introduced to make up the numbers serving in their ranks, though those who were unlucky in the ballot might furnish a substitute or pay a fine instead, if they could afford it. But in addition to these militia regiments there were, from 1778, in times of danger, various other auxiliary forces, not resorting to conscription, and known by such names as fencible infantry, volunteer infantry, and fencible or yeomanry cavalry. They waxed and waned according to the threat. They were disbanded in 1783 at the cessation of hostilities; formed again from 1794; at a peak during the invasion scare of 1798; and receded after the Peace of Amiens of 1802. Britain's renewal of the war against France in May 1803, and the consequent fears of invasion, soon led the Government to encourage the resurgence of a multitude of local auxiliary forces. By the end of the year they reached their zenith with some 463,000 men in the United Kingdom as a whole, more than five times as many as in the militia. Some 20,000 of these were in Somerset. (On the general history of volunteer forces in Britain, see I. F. W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1945*, Manchester 1991; and for Somerset, W. G. Fisher, *The History of Somerset Yeomanry, Volunteer and Territorial Units*, Taunton 1924.)

Corps of volunteers often depended heavily on subscriptions. Many were set up by local Volunteer Associations which elected a committee and also, in some cases, the officers – or the officers might be chosen by the committee. (This element of military democracy was reduced by an Act of 1804.) The corps were not subject to military regulations. Command was vested in the Lord Lieutenant of the county, who was in turn responsible to the Home Office, or Home Department, as it was then called. Men could join and leave as they wished. Most of the men were paid only while training for a few weeks a year, and lived at home the rest of the time. Anyone serving in the Volunteers or Yeomanry was exempt from the militia ballot.

This exemption was a powerful incentive to enrol, for during the Napoleonic Wars most of the militias were embodied on permanent duty, usually outside the county in which they were raised. A man in the militia was subject to the same penal code as in the Army, whereas in a Volunteer unit it was the Commanding Officer's power to discharge men and so make them liable to the militia ballot that provided a major element in ensuring a degree of discipline – but then the regulations of some corps forbade the dismissal of any man without the consent of the majority of the members. (See J. W. Fortescue, *The County Lieutenancies and the Army 1803-1814*, London 1909.

When hostilities were renewed in 1803, Bill Woodforde was 45 and had five children under the age of 14. None the less he joined in the widespread movement to arms. By August 1803 offers to form new corps of Volunteers were flowing in within the county. One, signed by 200 men, was for a body to be known as the Castle Cary and Ansford Infantry – "a Company to March to any part of Great Britain in case of Actual Invasion or appearance thereof and for the suppression of Insurrection or Rebellion" (HO 50/86). Its Captain was to be William Woodforde. Another was for a company of Ditcheat Volunteer Infantry, headed by Richard Leir as Captain. Both proposals were approved, and Bill's appointment as Captain dated from 13 August 1803. The Castle Cary and Ansford Volunteers soon went up to two companies (Captains: William Woodforde and Robert White), and the Ditcheat Volunteers also (Captains: Richard Leir and James Woodforde); in Ditcheat, 143 volunteered out of 175 men between 17 and 55 years of age (Fisher, p. 36). Captain Robert White seems likely to have been Bill's Ansford cousin, son of Parson Woodforde's "Sister White", who in 1780 eloped with Sophia, daughter of "Sister Clarke" (*Diary* 23/9/1780, 18/11/1780); while James Woodforde was Bill's younger brother (or perhaps half-brother), who eventually settled in Ansford as a doctor, but when last seen in the diary was still living in Alhampton (*Diary* 4/1/1797), only a mile from Ditcheat, and in the same parish.

By October the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset was, sensibly, seeking to devise a more co-ordinated framework for these local initiatives, and put to the Home Office plans for bringing a dozen of the companies together (including the two at Castle Cary) under the command of a Colonel with military knowledge and experience. Bill thus found himself a Captain in the 1st East Somerset Regiment of Volunteer Infantry. After a little more reshuffling which brought in the Ditcheat Volunteers as well, there emerged a regiment made up of 12 companies, under the command of Colonel John Berkeley Burland. Burland was the man whom the Woodfordes had favoured

as a candidate for a Parliamentary vacancy in 1795 (*Diary* 25/8/1795); (cf. 'Yeatman, Farr and Burland: genealogical jig-saw and family mystery', Journal XVI, 4); and he had been a field officer in the Somerset Fencible Cavalry and afterwards Colonel of the county's Provisional Cavalry. His new corps had two Lieutenant-Colonels, Henry Hobhouse and George Scott, and an establishment of 1000. Scott's promotion created a vacancy at Major, and Bill was appointed to it on 8 December 1803 (HO 50/86). When the unit assembled for 21 days training at Wincanton and Castle Cary from 17 May to 6 June 1804, his daily rate of pay was 14s. 1d. (WO 13/4530). By that time brother James had resigned his short-lived captaincy, two and a half months after Bill became a Major in the same regiment. The reason given by the Lord Lieutenant to the Home Office on 24 February 1804 was: "Captain Woodforde is a Medical Man, and finds his Military Engagement interfere very materially with his Profession" (HO 50/119).

In December 1804, after Colonel Burland had died, the Lord Lieutenant proposed that the 1st East Somerset Volunteers be split in two, since they covered too wide an area (HO 50/119). The reorganization was put into effect on 7 March 1805: one man, Henry Hobhouse, still presided over the whole as Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant, but there was now an Eastern Battalion, under Lt-Col. George Scott, and a Western Battalion led by Lt-Col. William Woodforde, whose rate of pay when on duty was 15s. 11d. a day (WO 13/4530). The Western Battalion was made up of two Castle Cary companies and one each from Ditcheat, Sutton Montis, Cadbury and Yarlington (HO 50/143). The Woodforde clan was certainly doing its bit for king and country (and Volunteer bodies and souls) at this time. The Bridgwater Volunteers had as their Assistant Surgeon a John Woodforde, appointed on 14 May 1804. He was a second cousin of Bill's, the one who practised as a doctor at Bridgwater. And the two battalions of the East Somersets each had a Woodforde as Chaplain. Only his surname was shown. The appointment date was the same in both instances, 15 October 1804. Could this one man have been other than Francis Woodforde, Rector of Ansford – Cousin Frank, the man who had installed himself, instead of our diarist, in both the coveted living and the family house?

From the start, Bill was a stickler for his battalion's status. At this point the material in the Somerset Record Office begins to amplify what can be gathered from the PRO, since it gives additional insight into what was being said locally. During the first period of permanent duty after Bill became Lieutenant-Colonel, at Taunton in May-June

1805, he was outraged to find that, when the two battalions were drawn up together, the superintending Brigadier did not always give the Western Battalion precedence by placing it on the right of the other – a place which he felt it merited because, he argued, the Castle Cary companies had been first among the local Volunteers. Even before the training was over, he persuaded Lt-Col. Hobhouse to take this up with Lord Poulett, the Lord Lieutenant, who simply suggested that it be settled by the same method as in the militia – the drawing of lots. The following week, poor Hobhouse had to forward a counter-claim from the Colonel of the rival battalion, which received a similar response (SRO: DD/CN 18/3/1). Bill was vehemently opposed to subjecting such an important issue to chance, and on 2 September addressed a long letter to the Home Secretary, suggesting that the militia analogy was flawed, because militia units which were all raised at the same time had no other option (HO 50/143). Lord Hawkesbury's judgement of Solomon does not appear to have been preserved, but it evidently came down on the side of the Lord Lieutenant. Almost two years later, Bill still had not conceded defeat and in May 1807 tried to regain the advantage when the two battalions were being made entirely distinct: he wanted his to be numbered "1st Battalion". Poulett would have none of it. He refused to act on the reorganization until drawing of lots was accepted as the means of determining precedence. And he avoided the numbering trap by restyling them the West and East Somerset Battalions of Volunteer Infantry.

Whether or not occupying the right of the line, Bill was still at the head of the West Battalion when he reached his fiftieth birthday in 1808; but its pay lists in WO 13/4530 run out later that year. By then the Government was disenchanted with the Volunteer system, much deteriorated since the victory at Trafalgar, and had undermined it with sweeping changes setting up local militia alongside the regular militia. There was provision for balloting (with no possibility of substitution) to make up any shortfall in numbers, but in some essential respects these new battalions had less stringent conditions than the regular militia. In particular, they were not liable to serve outside their own or adjacent counties, and the period of annual service was limited to a maximum of 28 days. The local militia may be likened to the Home Guard of the Second World War ("Dad's Army"), a purely local defence force; whereas the regular militia was more akin to the Territorial Army, and could be called upon to serve in any part of the country, or to act as reliefs for the regular troops in the garrisons.

The Local Militia Act of 1808 also contained an important provision enabling corps of Volunteer Infantry to transfer themselves bodily into the new force, regardless of the normal age limits, while allowing those who preferred not to join in to resign. This was coupled with a continuing process of weeding out inefficient Volunteer corps. The effect, according to one military historian, was to convert "at a stroke a large number of uncontrollable men into corps which could be disciplined and compelled to obey orders; and this was a great step in advance" (Fortescue, p. 214). A number of Somerset units refused to transfer to the new regime and were gradually dissolved from lack of funds; the East Somerset Battalion of Volunteer Infantry was one of these and was disbanded in November 1809. The county ended up with seven regiments of Local Militia, numbering over 6,000 men.

The West Somerset Battalion was one which transferred. In January 1809, the Lord Lieutenant's list of proposed commissions was approved (HO 51/42). Most of the officers in Bill's battalion and about a third of the NCOs made the move; they were joined by a contingent from the Yeovil Volunteers, and became the East Somerset Regiment of Local Militia (HO 50/202 and 229). The field officers were: William Woodforde, Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant; George Tuson, Lieutenant-Colonel; Richard Leir and William Wilson, Majors. In WO 13/3604, a box containing grubby bundles of papers relating to the new unit, one can trace much of Bill's remaining military career. The regiment had its headquarters at Castle Cary. A second William Woodforde makes an appearance as a Lieutenant, at 6s. 6d. a day. This was Bill's elder son, now 18 years old. In 1810, during the training at Bridgwater, he is shown as Surgeon, with 11s. 4d. as his daily rate. Then he disappears from the pay lists – not surprisingly, for we know that he chose to become a full-time Army doctor and took part in the Peninsular campaign, being present at the storming of Badajoz in 1812 (D. H. Woodforde, pp. 101-2).

That 20-day training period at Bridgwater in 1810 started on 3 May. It may well have been Bill and his officers, therefore, who made an anonymous appearance in the diary of another Somerset parson. William Holland, Vicar of Over Stowey, attended the Visitation in Bridgwater at this time. After a bad dinner at an inn on 7 May, he and his companions "were obliged to adjourn to another room that the Officers of the Local Militia might dine in ours". He protested to his diary that the "clergy as a body of people are surely the most respectable and ought not to be turned out of their rooms backward and forward to serve the conveniency of any other body of men whatsoever" (*Paupers and Pig Killers. The Diary of William Holland,*

a Somerset Parson, 1799-1818, ed. J. Eyres, Gloucester 1984; 2nd ed, Penguin English Library 1988). According to the *Western Flying Post* of 28 May 1810, on the other hand, "the very orderly conduct of the men [of the East Somersets] during their stay at Bridgwater received the highest encomiums from the inhabitants" (quoted from *The Castle Cary Visitor*, Feb. 1910, p. 12).

In 1812-13, the upper levels of Bill's regiment can be seen to be coming apart. In June 1812, his most senior officer, Lt-Col. Tuson, resigned. In September, Bill told the Lord Lieutenant that "some particular business" would prevent him attending the annual training (SRO: DD/CN 18/3/3). He put Major Richard Leir in charge of that. Leir was the man who had raised the Ditcheat Volunteers ten years before. Bill's relations with his Quartermaster, John Crean, leave no doubt that something was now drastically wrong. One blinks as one sees the terms in which Crean referred to him in official correspondence with the General Officer Commanding Western District for Home Defence and with the Superintendents of Military Accompts, speaking of "gross impositions on the Regiment, Service & myself, to the amount of several hundred pounds" and a large debt to himself in respect of storage allowance (HO 50/288; WO 13/3604). Asked by the Home Office for more specific charges, Crean gave vent on 1 January 1813 to a litany of accusations about how the accounts had been padded: clothing account falsely boosted by £100 or more; nearly another £100 for fictitious alterations and fittings; packing and carriage inflated by £10; each knapsack overpriced by 1s. 6d.; over £140 added to the account for new white accoutrements; the £29 annual allowance for store rooms simply pocketed; and pressure on the Quartermaster to make and sign a false pay list (HO 50/303). Crean himself, however, was already under suspicion. The War Office was investigating the suspected forgery of a captain's signature in which he was held to be implicated (WO 13/3604), so that any unsupported allegation by him about Bill cannot be taken on trust.

Evidence from other quarters does mount up. When Major Leir writes to the Lord Lieutenant in March 1813 to say that he wants to resign his commission (SRO: DD/CN 18/3/3), Lady Bracknell's adage comes to mind: to lose one may be regarded as a misfortune, but to lose two looks like carelessness. (Leir was told that his resignation had to be submitted through his Commanding Officer; and he appears then to have desisted.) A letter of 17 April from Crean addressed to the Chairman of Lieutenancy, at one of the periodic meetings of Deputy Lieutenants, made it clear that the potential loss of officers could be much greater:

> I am commanded by the annext List of Officers ... to communicate to you ... that it is their Determination not to join the above Regiment for training with Lt Colonel Woodforde the present Commandant except he do clear up the charges alledged against him but they should be very sorry to leave the Service had they a proper Officer at their Head (SRO: DD/CN 18/2/2).

The "annext List" contained the names of one of the two Majors (Wilson, not Leir), seven Captains and eight Lieutenants. The meeting did not think it proper to give any opinion on the subject but recommended that Crean should approach the Lord Lieutenant.

Bill's downfall came within a matter of weeks. The final steps leading up to it are obscure. There is no record of a court-martial (WO 92/1). There does, however, appear to have been some kind of inquiry, perhaps by the GOC Western District. Unfortunately it is difficult to trace papers relating to District Commanders during the Napoleonic Wars: they need to be looked for among any private archives of the officers concerned. Up to June 1813 the GOC Western District was Lt-General Richard England; if any papers of his survived, they have so far eluded me (and the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts). Whatever it was that happened, the outcome was a stiff letter of 10 June 1813 from Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, to Lord Poulett, regarding "the proceedings which have been had against Lt Col Woodforde":

> As it appeared to me, as well as to the Secretary at War, that under the Circumstances therein stated, Lt Colonel Woodforde was no longer worthy of retaining the command of the Regiment, I lost no time in recommending to the Prince Regent that he should be forthwith displaced, and I have now the honor to acquaint your Lordship that His Royal Highness was pleased to order that your Lordship should displace him accordingly (HO 51/50).

A few days later, Poulett wrote to "William Woodforde Esq^{re}" (that 'Esq^{re}' is eloquent): "I am under the necessity of acquainting you that I have struck your name out of the List of Commandants of the Local Militia of the County and that you are hereby displaced accordingly" (SRO: DD/CN 18/3/3).

Nothing further emerged to shed light on the grounds for the "displacement". In considering such evidence as there is, one has to allow for the possibility that Crean was offloading some misdeeds of his own on to his Colonel. His allegations centred on the clothing and equipment accounts and on the allowance for storage. Nowadays, if there were accounting irregularities in such areas, suspicion would

have to fall in the first place on the Quartermaster, for most clothing and equipment is centrally procured and then stored and issued through the Quartermaster hierarchy. But in Bill's day things were different. Equipping a military unit was something of a business venture on the part of the officers. They received funds from the government and negotiated with suppliers for what was needed, making a profit if they could. Commanding Officers enjoyed wide discretion in the spending of the various clothing funds. There were plenty of grey areas in regard to what could be done without falling foul of the regulations, and one way of making a profit on clothing was to apply inferior standards. It was not uncommon for militia clothing accounts to be consistently underspent. Most Colonels used such surpluses to defray other regimental costs for which allowances were inadequate. Some do appear, however, to have benefited personally by hanging on to their profits, at the expense of their officers and men.

In Bill's case, the allegations fell squarely within the area of fraud. A telling factor is Crean's letter of 17 April 1813 to the Lieutenancy: it would have been foolhardy to invoke the names of the other officers in his list unless it was capable of standing up to a simple check. And for Bill to forfeit the loyalty of so many of his officers, he must have been perceived to be going well beyond what was acceptable custom and practice, and disregarding the overall interests of the regiment. It is difficult to see how Crean could himself have been responsible for malpractices of the kind he described, for he would not have had direct access to the money: a Quartermaster's particular accounting responsibilities were concerned with the pay lists, and it was those accounts that formed the main basis of the charges subsequently brought against Crean. Clothing and accoutrements would have been dealt with in Bill's account with the regimental agent. The question of storage allowance, on the other hand, was more of a matter between Bill and Crean alone. There was an annual payment of £29 for the cost of storing regimental clothing and equipment, and again the money would not have gone into a fund managed by Crean. He claimed that the stores had all along been kept in his house at Castle Cary, and that Bill simply pocketed the £29 each year. All in all, Bill seems very lucky to have escaped a court martial.

The man the Lord Lieutenant wanted to succeed to the command was Major Richard Leir. He must have been related in some way to the Rev. Thomas Leir of Ditcheat who had been at school with Parson Woodforde: "M^{r}. Leir of Ditcheat made us a morning Visit. He was an old School-Fellow of mine at Winchester – and is now Rector of Ditcheat" (*Diary* 14/6/1782). Both Ditcheat and Charlton Musgrove,

near Wincanton, were Leir family livings, and indeed this Thomas Leir held both of them. Most of the information which I have about the Leir family is derived from a booklet kindly shown to me by George Bunting – C. Chancellor's *The History of the Priory, Ditcheat*, Ditcheat 1980. Perhaps Richard Leir of the East Somerset Local Militia was Thomas's fourth son, Richard, born in 1772, the one who "became a lawyer and built Ringwell House in Ditcheat early in the 19th century as a home for his family". But in 1813 it was at Charlton Musgrove Rectory that Major Leir was living, though the Rector was Thomas's third son, Paul. To Roy Winstanley I am indebted for the information that the Harriett Mary Leir who married Bill Woodforde's younger son George, a solicitor, in 1832, was the eldest daughter of Thomas Leir's second son, William, who succeeded to the Ditcheat living in 1812.

Major Leir did not at first fall in with the Lord Lieutenant's plans: he said he had no wish for higher rank than he already held. If this was with an eye to avoiding the legacy of a high-ranking crisis in regimental administration, he showed acumen and foresight; but it fell into his lap anyway. One aspect of this regiment that must have heightened confusion was the way in which various of its members apparently felt free to write to the War Office, the Home Office, the Lord Lieutenant, and senior military commanders. If there was any prior internal consultation, there is now little sign of it. On 12 July 1813 the Adjutant wrote to the Home Secretary to excuse his delay in sending in the usual monthly returns of permanent staff: the serjeants and drummers on the staff had walked out because their pay had for some considerable time been withheld by the Quartermaster. The Adjutant had therefore complained to Major General Stevens, who had instituted an inquiry (HO 50/303).

On 19 July the Lord Lieutenant directed Major Leir to take steps to renew the men's clothing (declared unserviceable at the last inspection) in preparation for the annual training. As a result, August turned out to be an especially eventful month. The Home Secretary was putting pressure on the Lord Lieutenant: on the 3rd, he begged leave "to call your Lordship's attention to the necessity of taking the earliest opportunity that offers of soliciting a proper Person to succeed Mr Woodforde" (HO 51/50). On the 6th, the Lord Lieutenant proposed 14 September to the Home Office as the date on which the regiment should assemble for annual training at Bridgwater (HO 50/303). Then he asked the War Office to authorize Major Leir to receive the regiment's allowances for clothing etc until such time as there was a new Lieutenant-Colonel. The War Office would have none of it, for it was contrary to the regulations governing the local

militia. When the Lord Lieutenant turned for help to the Home Secretary on the 11th, he received short shrift. By return he was told that if he was unable to find someone else to take command, he had better do the job himself, although it was expressed more politely than that: he was reminded of "the expediency of your acting as Commandant until you can find a Person who is both fit and willing to fill that situation" (HO 51/50). Since 1778, Lord Poulett was already Colonel of the 1st Somerset Militia – a largely honorific position. His request that Leir be authorized to draw the pay and allowances for the ensuing training period was more successful: evidently a Major *could* be entrusted with that (WO 13/3604). But without a solution to the clothing problem, there appeared to be no means of getting ready in time for the appointed date, and the Lord Lieutenant had to request a suspension. On the 17th Leir wrote two letters from Charlton Musgrove. One asked the Office of Military Accounts for the appropriate instructions and forms to enable him to draw the money for the training period. The other, to the Home Secretary, addressed his knotty predicament on clothing (HO 50/303). On the strength of Lord Poulett's directions, he had ordered clothing and other equipment for the 928 men in the regiment. Now he had a letter from the Lord Lieutenant telling him that he was not to be allowed to clothe the regiment. But the suppliers were saying the order was too far advanced to be cancelled. Having become personally responsible for payment to the suppliers (and at this point he summarized his services to the country over the past ten years), he pleaded for authority to draw what was due.

Perhaps Major Leir felt by now that if he was going to carry all the responsibility, he might as well carry the rank too. On 30 August Poulett recommended his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel, which took effect on 3 September (WO 13/3604). The way was now clear once more for going ahead with the assembly of the regiment on 14 September – or so it seemed, until Lt-Col. Leir tried to draw the regimental pay from the general agent for local militia. On 12 September he wrote to inform the Home Secretary that the agent had refused to accept the bills when presented. His concluding comment seems suavely menacing: "I need not point out to your Lordship the hazardous Consequences likely to ensue from a new raised Regiment disappointed of their Pay" (HO 50/303). Since history does not record that eastern Somerset was laid waste by enraged soldiery in mid-September 1813, we must assume that a solution to the immediate pay problem was found. No doubt both Leir and the Home Office had been mindful of something that happened just over two years before, when the West Mendip Local Militia assembled at Bath:

> A dispute arose between the officers and men respecting the marching guinea, as they term it; a deduction was made from it for trowsers, which the men objected to, and some of them refusing to obey the word of command, were taken up and put into the city gaol. About eight o'clock in the evening, the privates met in a large body, advanced to the prison, broke open the doors, liberated their comrades, and carried them off in triumph; several of the officers were ill-treated for endeavouring to suppress the riot (*Taunton Courier*, 24 May 1810).

The four men who had been released were soon recaptured, and the ringleaders of the rescue party were court-martialled. One of them was sentenced to a flogging. He escaped the 50 lashes, however, for the Commanding Officer reprieved him. The Lancashire Militia and the Bath Volunteer Cavalry and Volunteer Infantry were standing by for further action, but their intervention was not needed.

Even after getting through the 1813 training, Leir was still left with plenty of other tidying up to do, most notably in regard to the suspended Quartermaster's accounts. Crean's court martial had been scheduled for 10 November 1813 at Plymouth, on charges of withholding pay and defrauding the public and refusing to deliver up pay lists. Various members of the East Somerset Local Militia went down to testify. The court assembled. Crean did not join them: he had absconded (WO 92/1). With him disappeared the opportunity for some forensic examination which might have left more clues for the researcher curious to discover just what had been going on. Crean appears never to have been seen again in his old haunts, although the Office of Military Accounts kept addressing demand notes to him at regimental headquarters, while the War Office in August 1814 was still seeking legal advice on recovery of money due from him in respect of 1809, 1810, 1811 and 1812. The amount he had omitted to pay the various permanent staff members alone represented underpayments of £156. 17s. 2½d. spread over 1811-13. (Why the men concerned should have put up with him for so long is a minor mystery.) Paperwork involved in straightening all this out was still taking up Leir's time even in 1815. Not until he had a letter of 23 February 1815 from Lord Palmerston himself at the War Office could he be sure that the £157 arrears were going to be paid (WO 13/3604). By then the need for standing armies was largely over, and the Volunteer units were already dissolved. Leir appears to have relinquished his command early in 1816, the year in which the local militia ballot was suspended and the regular militia returned to its peacetime status and was "disembodied".

It can be seen that the standard summary of Bill's military career (given in *The Castle Cary Visitor*, June 1899, p. 144, and replicated in Beresford, Vol. 2, p. 50 and D. H. Woodforde, p. 101) – "in 1804, he raised the first Corps of Volunteer Infantry in the County of Somerset, and was Lieut. Col. Commandant of the regiment when it became the East Somerset regiment of local Militia" – is just as deficient as previous accounts of Bill's life at sea. Filling in some of the gaps in regard to these two phases in the Woodforde family story has the added benefit of creating a few windows which allow the eye to range beyond the Parson's little world and look at the wider panorama outside.

JAMES WOODFORDE, GILBERT WHITE AND A VOLCANIC ERUPTION

When, on New Year's Day, 1791, Woodforde reported on "The late violent Storm of Wind with most terrible Thunder and Lightning on Thursday Morn' December 23, 1790," he went on to remark, with typical lack of commitment to the notion, that "It is thought by many that it was attended by a slight Shock of an Earthquake". The severity of the storm cannot be doubted. In Hampshire Gilbert White wrote in his Journal:

> Dec. 23. Thunder, lightening, rain, snow!, A severe tempest. Much damage done in & about London: damage to some ships at Portsmouth. Vast damage in various parts! Two men were struck dead in a wind-mill near Rooks-hill on the Sussex downs: and on Hind-head one of the bodies on the gibbet was beaten to the ground.

It does, however, seem most unlikely that the storm should coincide with an earthquake; the two phenomena being totally unrelated and the occurrence of any kind of perceptible earth tremor being very infrequent in Britain. Possibly a lightning discharge from cloud to earth at the height of the electrical storm gave the impression of the earth itself moving.

Woodforde was, albeit quite unwittingly, witness to the effects of another manifestation of tectonic activity – a volcanic eruption. The

event, which took place in Iceland, began on 8 June 1783. The young Henry Holland, later to be physician to Queen Victoria and a celebrated Icelandophile, gained from an eye-witness an account of the events which led up to the eruption:

> May 30 [1810]. Kieblaviik – We obtained from Mr Jacobaeus, a more accurate and detailed report of the appearance near Cape Reikianes, connected with the eruption of the *Skapte Fells* A.D. 1783. – For three or four months previously to this eruption, flames were observed rising out of the sea, a few leagues to the W. of Cape Reikianes – giving an appearance which resembled the burning of two or three large ships at this distance – Mr J. himself was a frequent witness to this phenomenon – Connected with the bursting out of these flames, occasional noises were heard, and there was an appearance of small islands of rock rising from the sea – No suck rocks, however, were afterwards found – but vast quantities of *pumice stone* were floated on the surface of the sea into the *Faxe-Fiordr*, and large banks of this substance formed upon different parts of the shore ... After these phenomena had continued for 3 or 4 months, they suddenly ceased – & immediately afterwards the great volcanic eruption commenced at *Skapte Fells*, covering with lava and scoriae a district of great extent.
>
> *The Iceland Journal of Henry Holland*, 1810: p. 82

This eruption – probably the largest of historic times in terms of the volume of material ejected – was not a *central* eruption producing a single volcanic cone but a *fissure* eruption taking place along a vertical tensional fracture in the earth's crust. The Laki eruption, as it is now most commonly called, took place along a fissure 25 kilometres in length in southern Iceland. The consequences were catastrophic, almost certainly Iceland's worst ever disaster. The eruption continued for six months and in that period of time about 11 cubic kilometres of basalt poured from the fissure, flowing for more than 50 kilometres and completely infilling the valley of the Skapte river. The consequences in human terms were devastating. In all approximately 10,000 people, one-fifth of the country's population, died as a result of the eruption. Some were overwhelmed by the advancing lavas or poisoned by the sulphurous fumes but many more died of starvation as falling ash buried crops and pasture.

How, you may wonder, did these dreadful events affect James Woodforde far away in England? Initially, the greatly increased volume of dust circulating in the atmosphere produced sensational red skies and other indications of pollution. The red sunsets of

industrial cities, like the more extreme manifestations of a polluted atmosphere such as the London peculiars or peasoupers, so common in the days before smoke control legislation was introduced, were, of course, the product of the accumulation in the lower atmosphere of carbon particles and sulphur compounds. Such industrial pollution was relatively localised but volcanic eruptions can have a global effect. There appears to have been a two week time lag between the Laki eruption and the dust reaching the British Isles. The dust may have been brought down by the upper atmosphere by the descending anticyclonic air which caused both Woodforde and White to complain of crops being "scorched" by frost in late June. The relevant extracts from Woodforde's weather notes appear to be the following:

June 25 – Very uncommon hazy, hot weather –
The Sun very red at setting –
June 26 – Sun very red this Afternoon –
June 27 – Morn' still uncommon hazy and hot –
June 29 – Morn' very hot and still hazy –
July 10 – Morn' very hot and hazy with light winds –
July 13 – Morn' very hot and hazy still –
Aug. 19 – Morn' very hot and hazy –

The connection between this sequence of weather and the Icelandic eruption is made by Gordon Manley in his eminently readable and scholarly *Climate and the British Scene* (1962). Manley draws attention to a similar pattern of weather recorded in the Journal of Gilbert White at Selborne:

June 23 – Vast honey-dew; hot & hazey; misty. The blades of wheat in several fields are turned yellow as if scorched with the frost. Wheat comes into ear. Red even: thro' the haze. Sheep are shorn.
June 24 – Vast dew, sun, sultry, misty & hot .... The sun "shorn of his beams" appears thro' the haze like the full moon.
June 26 – ... Sun looks all day like the moon, & sheds a rusty red light.
June 28 – ... The country people look with a kind of superstitious awe at the red louring aspect of the sun thro' the fog ... "Cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit".
July 11 – ... No dew, sun, & hase, rusty sunshine!
Sept. 1 – Red sunshine. Sowed a bed of Coss-lettuce.

White summed up the phenomenon in a letter to the Hon. Daines Barrington:

By my journal I find that I had noticed this strange occurrence from June 23rd to July 20th (1733) inclusive, during which period the wind varied to every quarter without any alteration in the air. The

sun, at noon, looked as black as a clouded moon, and shed a rust coloured ferruginous light on the ground and floors of rooms: but was particularly lurid and blood-coloured at rising and setting.

Walter Johnson, who edited the 1931 edition of White's Journals, notes that "These red skies were associated with distant volcanic eruptions", the association between volcanic eruptions and unusual atmospheric effects having been firmly established since the Krakatoa eruption of 1883. Tennyson was aware of the connection as he makes clear in these lines from *St Telemachus*:

Had the fierce ashes of some fiery peak
Been hurl'd so high they ranged about the globe?
For day by day, thro' many a blood-red eve,
In that four-hundredth summer after Christ,
The wrathful sunset glared against a cross ...

It has also been suggested that similar red skies occurring at sunrise and sunset in England in 1815 were caused by the massive eruption of Tambora in what was then the Dutch East Indies and that these inspired J. W. M. Turner further to pursue his exploration of the "natural sublime" and of atmospheric values in particular.

With the passing of the red summer skies of 1783 the effects of the volcanic eruption in distant Iceland were by no means over for the people of the more populous areas of north-west Europe. The veil of volcanic dust in the atmosphere had the effect of significantly reducing the amount of incoming solar radiation while the ejected sulphur produced a cloud of sulphuric acid which would also have absorbed the sun's heat, so that the following winter was an exceptionally cold one. As has been pointed out by Peter Francis in his study of *Volcanoes* (1976), the great American polymath Benjamin Franklin came close to an explanation. At the time, dubbed the "Electrical Ambassador", he was the first diplomatic representative of the United States in Paris. He observed that:

During several of the summer months of the year 1783, when the effects of the Sun's rays to heat the Earth should have been the greatest, there existed a constant fog over all Europe and great part of North America. This fog was of a permanent nature; it was dry and the rays of the sun seemed to have little effect towards dissipating it, as they easily do a moist fog ... Of course, their summer effect in heating the Earth was exceedingly diminished.
Hence, the surface was early frozen.
Hence, the first snows on it remained unmelted ...
Hence, perhaps, the winter of 1783-4 was more severe than any that happened for many years.

In fact, as we have seen, the summer of 1783 in England had been hot as well as hazy and the cold winter can be attributed more to the screening out of incoming solar radiation in the winter months themselves. By the end of the year Gilbert White was already recording an exceptionally cold spell:

> Dec. 31 - Ice under people's beds. Water bottles burst in chambers. Meat frozen. The fierce weather drove the snipes out of the moors of the forest up the streams towards the spring-heads. Many were shot round the village.

By 13 February 1784 he was noting that "the frost has lasted 28 days". Not surprisingly conditions appear to have been still worse in East Anglia. On 21 January Woodforde records: "Bitter cold, very hard Frost, and much Snow in the Night". On 8 February he was to preach at Norwich Cathedral and his journey there on the previous day was a hazardous one:

> Feb: 7 -
> ... Snow very deep indeed & bitter cold Weather -
> About 11. o'clock this morning myself, M^{rs}. Davy, Betsy
> and Nancy got into Lenewade Bridge chaise to go to
> Norwich as I am to preach to Morrow at the Cathedral –
> We were obliged to have four Horses the Snow being
> so very deep – We got to Norwich I thank God safe
> about 2. o'clock – We were obliged to go round
> by M^{r}. Du Quesnes to get to the Turnpike road
> as soon as we could on Account of the Snow w^{ch}
> is very deep indeed especially over France Green
> and no Tract of Wheels to be seen – We were very
> fearful going over that Green as it was very dangerous.
> It was very hard work even for the four Horses to get
> over that Green – It was much better on the Turnpike.
> The Snow in some places was almost up to the Horses
> Shoulders. – Towards Lynn the Snow is much deeper and the Road
> to it almost impassable ...

Returning two days later, he found "the Snow as deep as we went and harder work for 4 Horses than going to Norwich". By the following week the Overseers of the Poor Law were obliged to take action:

> Feb. 16 –
> ... M^{r}. Mann and M^{r}. Buck Overseers of the Poor called on
> me this Morn' to desire me to subscribe something
> to the Poor during this very severe Weather and I
> gave them for myself and Nancy – 2: 2: 0

It was going to be a long as well as a hard winter. On 24 January Gilbert White records: "The Thermom[r] at Totnes, in the county of Devon abroad this evening was, I hear, at 6". On returning from a trip to London on 2 April he writes:

> No snow till we came to Guild-down; deep snow on that ridge! Much snow at Selbourne in the fields: the hill deep in snow! The country looks most dismally, like the dead of winter! A few days ago our lanes would scarce have been passable for a chaise.

Harsh winters are not, of course, solely the product of volcanic eruptions but there does appear to be a strong correlation between large-scale volcanism and subsequent cold weather. Following the Tambora eruption, the Thames froze over and 1816 was described as "the year without a summer". The Krakatoa eruption appears to have had a similar effect and Paul Simons writing in the "Weatherwatch" column of *The Guardian* (24/5/93) has suggested that the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines earlier this year, producing some 15 million tons of sulphur in the atmosphere, may cause a cooling of global temperatures for the next two or three years. We shall see.

TWO TOPOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

1. Maps of Weston Longville[1]

It has always been a disappointment to me that we have no drawing or painting of the Old Parsonage at Weston as it would have been known to Woodforde. It would add so much to our appreciation and understanding as we read the diary of the man who lived there for a quarter of a century. For me, the interest is accentuated by the fact that one of my ancestors, Robert Case, worked there as Woodforde's Yard-boy. As Roy Winstanley[2] has noted:

> No-one has the remotest idea of what Weston Parsonage looked like from the outside ... If only Nephew Bill had taken it into his head to draw the Parsonage instead of the Church! If only Nephew Sam, a professional artist, ... had turned his attention to the house ....

We also need to bear in mind that the "Old Parsonage" was replaced by the present building in about 1841 although the new rectory is believed to have been built on the same site. Any picture or drawing which predates this event would therefore be of considerable interest.

I have recently constructed an index to all issues of the Journal of the Parson Woodforde Society which have appeared to date (Spring 1993) and it is hoped that this may appear as a Supplement to the Journal in due course. In preparing this index I came across an article which mentioned papers relating to Weston which were on display at one of the very first meetings of the Society.[3]

Amongst these papers was a map said to be "of the glebe, curtilage and Parsonage of Weston Longville ... dated 1731". I was immediately curious to know more about this map as it was reported to contain an "actual picture of the Parsonage in 1731".[4] This map is not mentioned in the excellent Journal article which discussed the appearance, layout, and contents of Woodforde's parsonage.[5]

I have recently been able to examine this 1731 map and have spent some time trying to assess whether or not it really *does* pertain to the "Old Parsonage" at Weston Longville.

The map is drawn in black ink on fine cloth paper and is about 19 x 28 inches in size. Across the top in large letters is written:

> A True Survey of the Estate of the Reverend Mr Smith Situate lying and being in Weston in Norfolk and is now in the pofsefsion and occupation of him the Said Mr Smith together with the Appurtenances thereto belonging. Carefully taken by me Edmund Carter Surveyer 1731

In the early Journal article in which reference was made to this map it was assumed that the "Reverend Mr Smith" referred to was the same Mr Smith, "Rector till 1733, when he was succeeded by Dr Ridley who was Woodforde's predecessor". I suppose that this was a perfectly reasonable assumption, but we have no proof that they are one and the same; it *is* a rather common mame!

The map depicts what appears to be a substantial building – drawn, it seems, so that the representation of the front elevation occupies the area on the ground upon which it stood (see Fig. 1a, which is slightly larger than the original). Next to the house are three outbuildings (they have no chimneys) and within two hundred yards of the house (according to the scale shown) are four small cottages (see Fig. 1b, photo-reduced from the original). The main building faces south west and appears to be surrounded by a wall or fence; to the south west it

seems clear that the boundary is a paling fence with a central gate. Avenues of trees are shown to the south west and north east of the house. A note explains how the paths and cartways have been drawn.

The greater part of the map depicts land to the north east and north west of the house which includes some twenty small fields, most of which are approximately rectangular in shape and occupy about four acres apiece. The largest is of eleven acres. At the left margin is a list of these fields (none are named) designated A, B, C, etc. with an indication of their acreage and the total area occupied by house and fields is given as 101 acres.

It is important to record that there is a note at the foot of the list of fields which indicates that seven of the parcels of land were "sold to Mr Dade 1759" – these include the ground on which the house stands and three small parcels of land adjacent to the house on which the outbuildings are located.

The house itself appears to be of at least two stories with what appear to be sash windows and a central doorway below a semi-circular portico. It seems that there are four substantial columns at the front of the house, dividing the frontage into three equal parts.

The title to the map states very clearly that the property was located in "Weston in Norfolk" and I know of no other place with this name in the county. However, I can find nothing else to confirm that this map does indeed relate to the old parsonage. The house lies in the same south west/north east alignment as is depicted on other pre-1841 maps and we have the association with the "Reverend Mr Smith" as noted above; however, all the following considerations leave the further identification of this property in doubt:

i) The field lay-out on this map bears no resemblance whatsoever to the field layout adjacent to the rectory on maps made about a hundred years later. This may or may not be a meaningful comment; the arrangement of field systems associated with buildings are remarkably permanent; however, they could have been totally transformed at a change in ownership or as a result of the enclosure procedures of the early nineteenth century.

ii) There are two lanes drawn on the map which again bear no directional semblance to the layout of paths and roads on later maps (again, this may or may not be a meaningful comment).

iii) There is no "fixed point" on the map (for example Weston church) which would enable the location of the house to be confirmed

(on the scale to which it is drawn one wouldn't expect the church to be shown).

iv) The map shows the location of a "Pit", a "Marl Pit" and a "Gravel Pit" – none of which are located in similar positions (relative to the known position of the rectory) to those found on later maps.

v) There is no pit or pond (or anything like it) shown on the map in a location relative to the house where one would expect to find Woodforde's "Great pond" – which I assume was there when Woodforde arrived in Weston.

iv) There are no other words on the map which might have indicated the location or direction of any other place or property.

Last, but not least, there is the clear note, obviously added at a later date than that of the original survey, to the effect that the house and adjacent fields were "sold to Mr Dade 1759". We know that a Dade family was living at Mattishall[6] and another at Weston[7] and Mr Dade the farmer first paid tithe to Woodforde in December 1776. However, it appears that the Dade family of Weston did not own their own property, as Woodforde records[8] that:

> My Nephew & self took a Walk in the Afternoon to M^{r}. Dades ... M^{r}. Dade has got a very good Farm House to live in – It belongs to M^{r}. Loombs [probably "Lombe"]

If the house depicted on the map *is* the "Old Parsonage", and presumably owned by New College Oxford, how could it be "sold" to a Mr Dade?

From all the above I have to conclude that, in my own opinion, this is *not* the old parsonage. At best, the conclusion has to be "not proven"!

However, if indeed it is *not* the old parsonage, what house *is* depicted on this map and where was it? The acreage of the total "Estate" (101 acres) was considerable but I can find no such area on later maps of Weston (c. 1800) in which the overall shapes of the fields bear any resemblance to those shown on the 1731 map. (Fig. 3).

Was the "Reverend Mr Smith" mentioned on the map the same as the Mr Smith who was the incumbent at Weston? If so, did he really own this estate at Weston when he presumably had the use of the old parsonage (assuming for the moment that they are not one and the same)?

If the two Mr Smiths are not one and the same who *was* this other "Reverend Mr Smith"?

In the Norfolk Poll for 1734 there is no Mr Smith (or Mr Dade) at Weston and owning property there.[9]

Can anyone shed any further light on these tantalizing fragments of information?

References

1. The article in Journal XIV, 1, page 25 (1981) may be considered as Part I of a series.
2. Journal IV, 3, p. 35.
3. Journal I, 2, p. 4 (1968).
4. Ibid, p. 9.
5. A Tour of Weston Parsonage 1984: Journal XVII, 1, p. 25 (1984).
6. See Journal IV, 2, p. 47.
7. First mentioned in Woodforde's Diary 5 May 1775.
8. Diary, 25 November 1776.
9. Norfolk Poll 1734 seen at the Norfolk County Record Office.

Postscript

After the above article was written I happened to visit the Norfolk County Record Office during the Summer of 1993 and checked once again through the list of maps pertaining to Weston. To my surprise I found that they held a copy of the estate map described in my article! To my further surprise I noted that this item was referred to in the card index to the maps as depicting "Hungate Lodge".

My futher enquiries led to a comment from staff at the Record Office that they believed this information had been supplied by a Julie Champeney. I immediately wrote to this lady asking how the building depicted on the estate map had been identified in this way and explaining why it was of so much interest to the Parson Woodforde Society.

By this sequence of events the lady in question (a member of our Society), has been prompted to set out her fascinating findings which are described in the following article.

Fig. 1a

Hungate Lodge

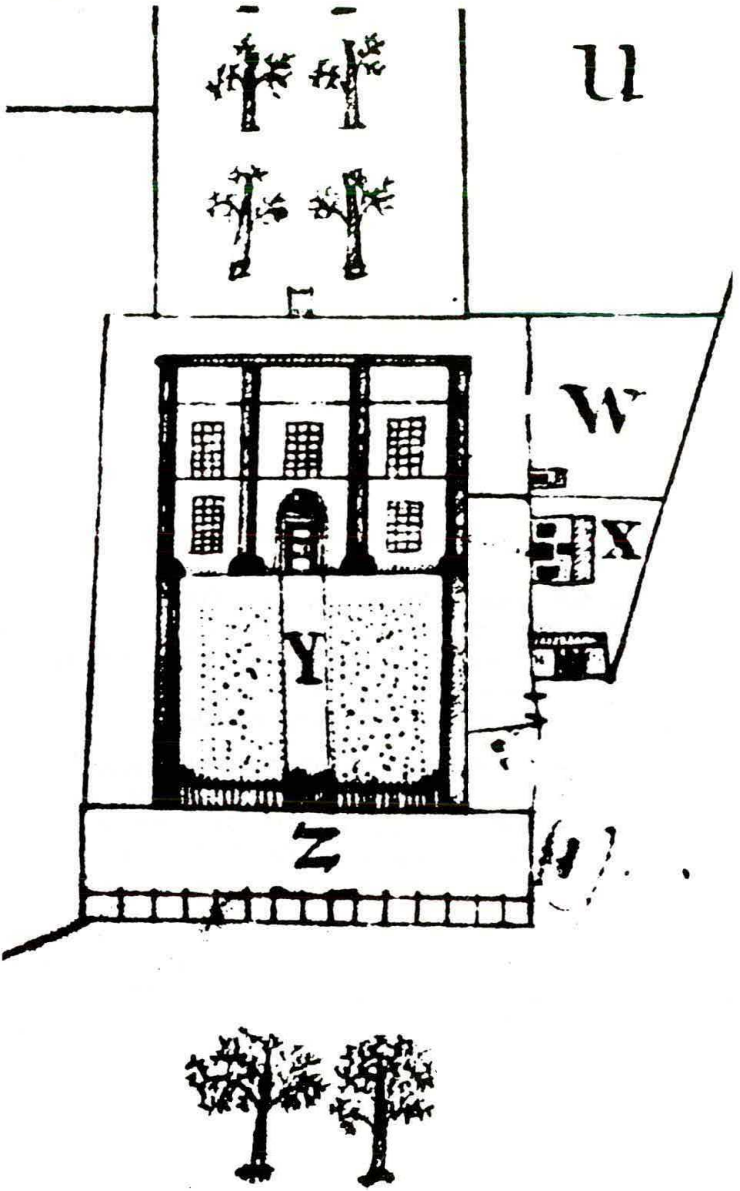


Fig. 1b.

The Rev. M[r]. Smith's Estate
Weston, 1731

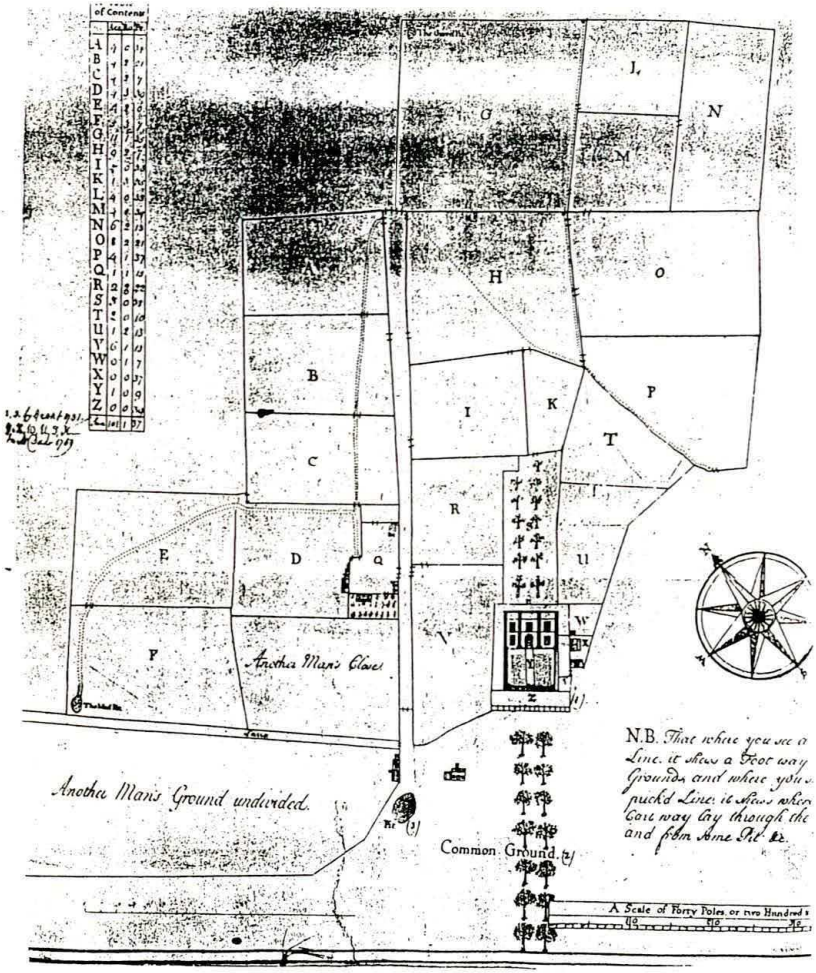


Fig. 2.

Enclosure Award Map, Weston Parish, 1825

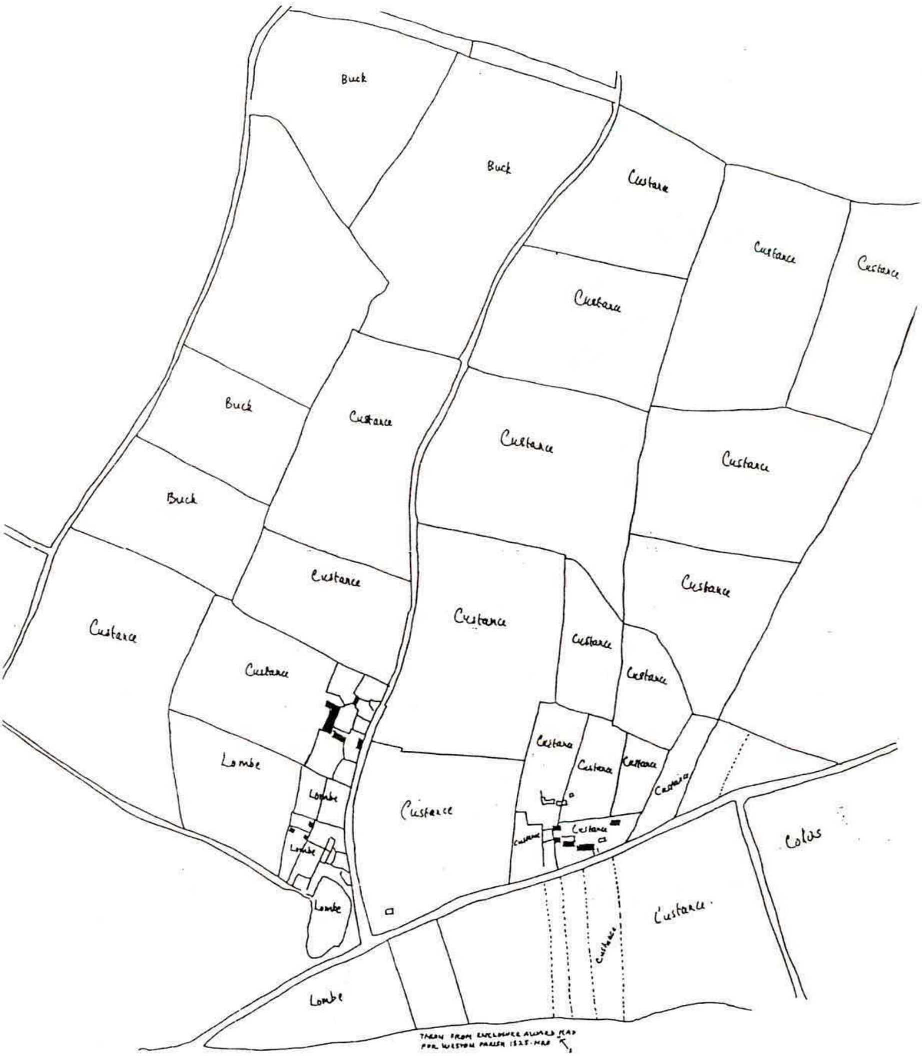
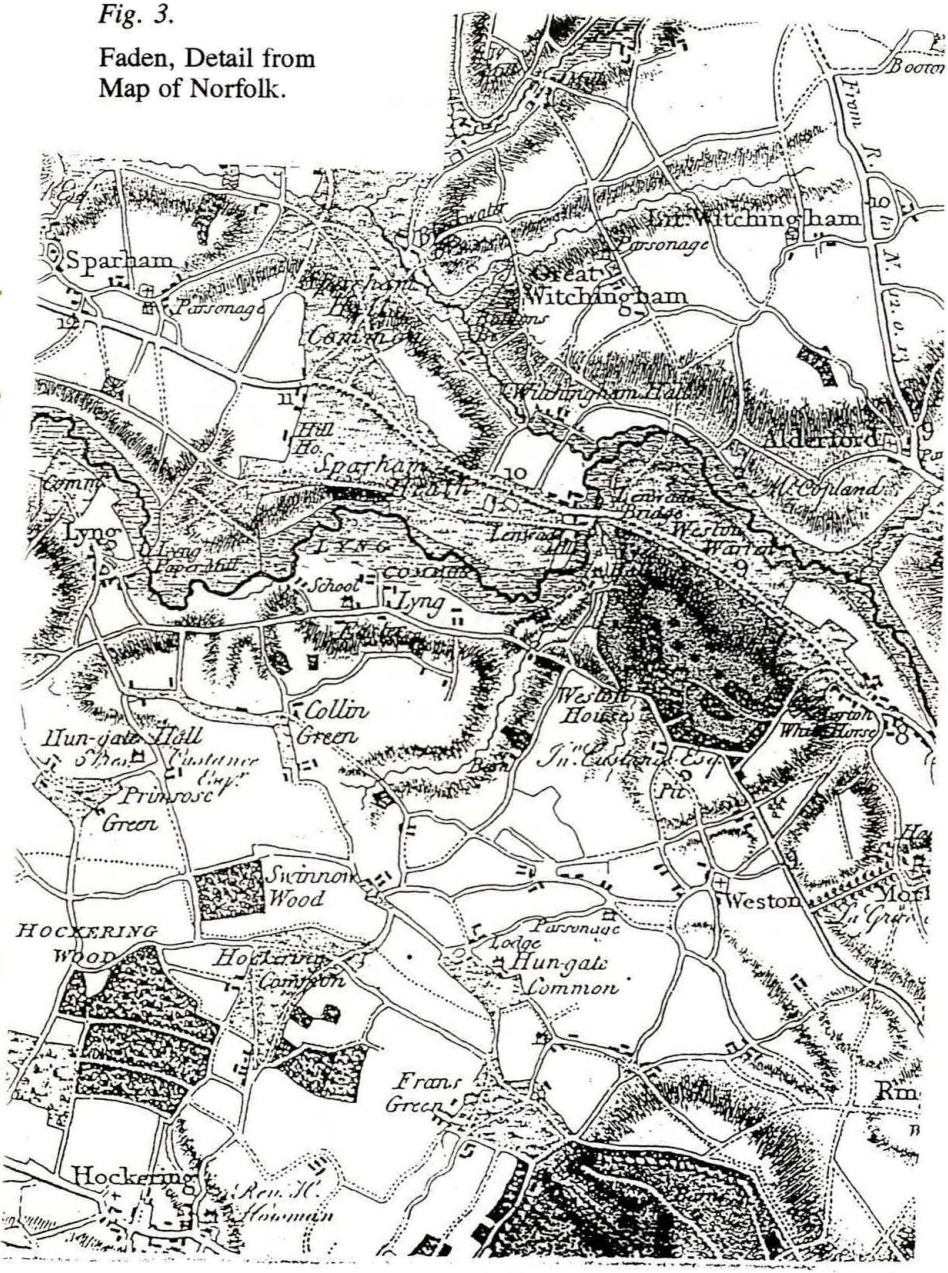


Fig. 3.

Faden, Detail from Map of Norfolk.



II. The Landscape of Woodforde's Weston – Hungate Lodge

Hungate Lodge features throughout the diary and readers may be interested in the following notes based on information from maps, two of which are unpublished and therefore not easily available to the public.

On 21 May 1783 Woodforde rode with Squire Custance to arrange about repairs to a road in Hockering "which is very bad ... We then returned back to Weston, stopped at Hungate Lodge and went over the house which is repairing."

The following month on 27 June Woodforde writes: "After breakfast Nancy and self dressed ourselves and walked to Hungate Lodge to make the first visit to M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Micklethwaite who were both at home and appear to be tolerable agreeable – He is very young. She is much older and appears rather high".

A few weeks later the new occupants of the Lodge are fully integrated into the social scene for on 5 September 1783: "About 3. o'clock I walked up to M^{r}. Micklethwaites at Hungate Lodge, and there dined and spent the Afternoon with him, his wife, old M^{rs}. Brainthwaite Mother to M^{rs}. Micklethwaite, M^{r}. and M^{rs}. Blofield from London and Miss Spencer, sister to M^{rs}. Blofield. M^{rs}. Blofield is a merry, sensible, pretty young lady. After tea we got to Whist at which I lost 0 4 0. M^{rs}. Blofield and self against M^{rs}. Micklethwaite and Miss Spender."

On 19 March 1786 Woodforde writes: "I read Prayers and Preached this afternoon at Weston – None of the Genteels from Weston House and Hungate Lodge. M^{r}. Micklethwaite of Hungate Lodge is said to be in a very dangerous way – in a decline."

Hungate Lodge, we can gather from these entries, was owned by Squire Custance, and let by him to tenants, to "genteels". It was therefore a gentleman's residence. Indeed Squire Custance's brother, Press Custance, lived there from time to time as the diary states. On 8 October 1800: "Mr. Press Custance is coming to live at Hungate Lodge at the Old Michaelmas Day, we hear. (He lived there about fifteen or sixteen [years] ago and in the same style as he did then)".

Woodforde was able to visit Hungate Lodge easily on foot because it lay only threequarters of a mile from the Parsonage, to the south west, by a lane which is now bordered by remnants of the World War Two airfield and the present turkey farm. The lane, which is called Hungate Common, was lengthened to accommodate the airfield so

we must imagine Woodforde turning left before the present T junction in order to reach the Lodge.

The Lodge is no longer there but it can be found on Faden's map (Fig. 3) which was printed in 1797 and is therefore contemporary with Woodforde's last years. The Lodge is named, and marked with the symbol of a tiny house which Faden uses to distinguish gentry houses from farmhouses which are denoted by black rectangles. It is important for what follows to note that the Lodge is shown situated on the north edge of the common.

Faden's map is only small scale and for more details of the Lodge we can turn to the Enclosure Award map of 1825 (Fig. 2). Here, thanks to Faden's map, we can locate the Lodge by correlating the pattern of the roads and common and find details of the property's environs. The shapes of the fields associated with the property at the sides and rear form a distinctive pattern. If we compare this pattern with the pattern created by the fields shown on the estate map of the Rev. Mr Smith's property in Weston parish, 1731 (Fig. 1b), we find that the two patterns are the same. We can therefore conclude that the Rev. Mr Smith's house and Hungate Lodge are one and the same property. The identification is confirmed by the fact that Smith's house faces the common.

The realisation that the Smith estate map shows Hungate Lodge means that various nuggets of information of interest to readers of the diary can be gleaned from it. If, for instance, we could ascertain that the house had not been rebuilt, we would have here a sketch of what it looked like in Woodforde's day as estate maps are reliable in this respect. Hungate Lodge was a small gentleman's house of three bays, fashionably designed in a style which harked back to classical times, with four engaged pillars separating symmetrically placed sash windows under a parapet which tidies away the irregular roof line. The centrally placed front door is emphasised by the semicircular hood which is such a feature of early eighteenth century houses.

The regular beauty of the design of the façade is echoed in the garden layout. Here is a formal garden aligned on the corners of the house. An axial path leads to the front door through what appears to be a parterre garden, which could mean low box hedges arranged in patterns filled in with gravel or flowers. The garden is enclosed to left and right by, most likely, brick walls which seem to be lined with arched pergola walks (like those remaining in the walled garden at Melbourne Hall, Derbyshire) and enclosed to the front by a fine iron fence and double gates.

A very striking feature of the layout is the pair of avenues which are aligned on the centre of the house at the front and rear. These avenues confirm the status of the house, for avenues were an almost indispensable adjunct to the houses of the nobility and gentry in the early eighteenth century. Faden's map depicts many avenues, most of which have disappeared long since. However, the reader can still get the feel of this particular style of landscape design, for the road to Blickling, on leaving Aylsham, passes by Aylsham Old Hall which is still enhanced by its formal walled garden and avenue aligned on the front door.

The owner of this neat estate, the Rev. Mr Smith, was of course Woodforde's predecessor but one in the living of Weston. The attractiveness and style of his property in Weston as revealed by this map goes some way to explain why he so neglected the old thatched parsonage as to cause his son some years later to make an offer of £100 "out of a Principle of Conscience from a due conviction of the misbehaviour of his father, in suffering the Parsonage to fall into such a ruinous state," causing the dilapidations dispute with which Woodforde had to grapple on his arrival in the living.

Smith's estate map shows the Hungate Lodge property to have covered some 101 acres which included service buildings to the east and a home farm to the west. In front of the house, on the common, there are two features marked which are of relevance to the diary. First, there is a house with an annexe. Might not this be the Hungate Common Poor House, situated thus conveniently under the eye of the rector?

For the second feature on the common, the Pit, read Woodforde for 17 July 1798: "M^{r}. Maynard called on us this morning and stayed near an Hour with us, during which time Ben went unknown to me with my large net and drew that Great Pond which made me very uneasy indeed as I would not have had it done on any Account. Caught 5, small pike and a few flat fish." The following day, "M^{r}. Stoughton of Sparham made us a morning visit and stayed with us about an hour, I asked him to dinner but he would not. He also told us that he was soon coming with Press Custance to Weston on a fishing excursion and to drag Hungate Pond which Ben did yesterday unknown to me, which still made me more uneasy than it had made me before, however I acquainted M^{r}. Stoughton of it and done unknown to me, I would not have drawn upon any account whatever. Dinner today Pike boiled and fryed –"

I think it most likely that Hungate Great Pond is the Pit marked on Smith's map where it is shown full of water, since Faden marks a large pond in that position and at no other point on the common.

I hope these notes allow a few more pieces of the Weston landscape to emerge from obscurity. My grateful thanks are due to George Bunting for showing me the map of the Rev. Mr Smith's estate and generously permitting me to photocopy it for the archives of the Norwich Record Office and the Centre of East Anglian Studies at the University of East Anglia.

Postscript: The site of Hungate Lodge is at Ordnance Survey TG 097149. The OS map of 1907 marks a building at this spot near the former road.

"PUTRID FEVERS"

We live in a hostile world of pathogenic organisms ever threatening our welfare, and at times our survival. Nowadays we are able to protect ourselves against them by immunisation or disrupting their means of transmission to mankind, vectors such as fleas, lice, mites and ticks, and we neglect these barriers at our peril. But it was not always so, and down the ages communities have been decimated by epidemics of such diseases as bubonic plague, smallpox, malaria, and many others. Naturally these epidemics created alarm and even terror in defenceless communities. Such were "the putrid fevers" of Parson Wood- forde's day.

The putrid fevers were then known by a variety of colourful names identifying the place of the outbreak or a salient feature of the disease itself, such as petechial – small red or purplish spots in the skin.

> ... The putrid Fevers, justly called Camp, Hospital, Jail, Bilious, putrid, Malignant or Petechial fevers, carry terror in their very name ...

So wrote a contemporary physician of what we now know to be typhus fever. He also explained why they were so greatly feared:

> ... Fevers of the Putrid and Inflammatory Sort, or a mixture of both contribute most largely to Bills of Mortality, no disease so common to all ages and both sexes, none seizes the healthy so often,

none is owing to so many different and contrary causes, none affect all parts of the body more grievously or vary so in severity ...

Significantly, too, his book, he explained, was:

... written for young and inexperienced doctors, those intending to practise in London, or take charge of the sick in the Fleets and Armies ...

– communities in those days very subject to outbreaks of the putrid fevers, people herded together in insanitary conditions favourable for rats, fleas, and lice. Impressments from our verminous gaols were often the cause of outbreaks of putrid fever in the ships of the Royal Navy. A contemporary likewise described the putrid fevers as:

"... the perpetual Enemy of the human Species, a Scourge of the human race causing Devastation of almost whole Parishes ..."

Of an outbreak the previous autumn he further observed:

"... in many Houses not less than two or three young People died in the Space of three, others from four to seven Days, notwithstanding the joint Assistance of eminent Physicians ..."

So we should not be surprised to find Parson Woodforde using similar language in his references to the putrid fevers:

[1767] Oct. 20 –
I buried poor Richard Collins late Servant to Uncle Tom
this afternoon at C. Cary – who died mad in the Fever
that rages in these parts. It is called the putrid Fever –

[1767] Oct. 23 –
Young M^{r} Tho^{s}.Francis died this morning in the Fever –
He has had the Fever most violently – quite Frantick.
from the Fever good Lord deliver us, if it be Thy Good Will –

The previous July we read of him "burying a number of people as a Fever rages in Castle Cary." Throughout his life, for Parson Woodforde the putrid fevers were as menacing and unwelcome as smallpox, and he treated them as such:

[1787] Oct. 17 –
S^{t}. Faith's Fair to day, I would not let any of
my Servants go to it, on Account of a very bad
Fever of the putrid kind, raging there and of
which many have died there already –

The words "putrid" and "malignant" indicated an infection of much graver severity than inflammatory. Parson Woodforde differentiated

between the two but did not define the difference between them. He was using the medical jargon of his day. According to an eminent physician, however, the word "malignant hath of late years fallen into very great Disrepute, having been often made use of to cover ignorance or magnify a cure."

The putrid fevers which they so feared, typhus fever, like the bubonic plague of earlier days, was primarily an infection of rodents, transmitted to humans by insect vectors, fleas, lice, ticks and mites. An account of the signs and symptoms of typhus fever culled from contemporary medical textbooks should help to clarify the florid jargon of the physicians of the day.

Briefly, the salient features of typhus fever are its sudden onset with high fever, severe headache, a characteristic rash, and general toxaemia. The onset is accompanied by rigors and an intense frontal headache. The eyes are red and suffused, and the victim's appearance bloated. The rash appears about the fifth day, the face usually remaining clear, with macules, flat spots of different sizes, varying in colour from rose pink to purple. Deeper red or purplish-red spots appear later, known as petechiae, caused by damage to the small blood vessels of the skin. With recovery they fade leaving a brown pigmentation which slowly disappears. They sometimes coalesce, however, to form haemorrhagic patches, known as ecchymoses or purpura. The patient is dull and lethargic throughout with a dry tongue and sluggish movements. Characteristic prostration and stupor are early and continue until recovery begins. Prominent features throughout are dry, foul tongue and mouth and dry skin indicative of dehydration. The toxaemia and dehydration often produce delirium and coma. With the conditions prevailing in Parson Woodforde's day there was, as we gather from the previous excerpts, a significant mortality rate.

– *The Putrid, Malignant, or pestilential, petechial Fever* by John Huxham, M.D., F.R.C.P. Edin., F.R.S. London, 1757, and from other sources.

Here again, the overriding impression is of the suddenness and severity of the onset of the fever, according to one, with "a host of formidable Symptons"; – "giddiness, faintness, nausea and vomiting, violent headache, depression of spirits and shivering all in a few hours." Huxham lists "a great Diversity of Symptoms – rigors, sometimes very great, sudden heat, giddiness, nausea and vomiting, and headache – a severe fixed pain over one or both Temples or over or in the Eyes or Orbit of the Eyes, with redness and wateriness of the eyes as in Measles, and the Countenance more bloated and

dead-coloured than usual." There was a general malaise, but also "A Sort of Lumbago or Pain in the Back and Loins, and always an universal Weariness and much Pain in the Limbs." "Prostration of Spirits, weakness and Faintness," according to Huxham, were "very often surprisingly great and sudden." They were, indeed, constant and differentiating features of the putrid fevers, appearing sometimes with "Delirium even on the very first Night." Some had also to endure "a great Heat, Load and Pain affecting the Stomach with perpetual Vomiting or black Choler."

As the fever took its toll the tongue reflected the severity of the infection and the patient's deteriorating condition. One described it presenting "a variety of Colours," varying from "yellow, brown or green, to violet, black or purple," with "brown or black the highest degree of pollution," and "almost always a mortal Symptom." Huxham left a telling picture of the effect of the toxaemia and dehydration on the patient:

> ... The tongue grows daily more dark and dry, sometimes exceeding black, and so continues for many days together. At the Height of the Disease it generally becomes vastly dry, stiff and black, of a dark Pomegranite Colour, hence the Speech is very inarticulate and scarcely intelligible ...

With the "Lips and Teeth furred up with a very black tenacious Sordes," too, inevitably, the patient suffered:

> ... a very great unquenchable Thirst, yet no kind of Drink pleases, whilst at other Times, however, one is amazed to find no Thirst complained of though the Mouth and Tongue are exceedingly foul and dry. This is always a dangerous State, and ends in a Phrenzy or Coma ...

– the terminal stage in dehydration, reflecting salt and water depletion. The poor patient is quite incapable of appreciating sensory stimuli, pleasant or unpleasant. "Delirium and Convulsions," we read, like "Prostration and Weakness," were "constant features of the putrid fevers," with "few Symptoms more alarming than Watchfulness":

> ... The putrid fever patient cannot sleep, though neither headache nor pain. He remains in a State of Watchfulness for forty-eight hours, perhaps four or five days and nights, often longer, brooding on uncomfortable ideas. Delirium then at hand ...

The delirious patients exhibited a variety of patterns of behaviour: one "perpetually sighing as if under the Extremity of Grief," another

"had no Manner of Sleep for a very long time yet lay very stupid," whilst others "lay very stupid but often starting and muttering to themselves." Huxham described the condition as "a Pervigilium and perpetual Phrenzy." The cause of the Watchfulness, according to one physician, lay in:

> ... too strong a direction of Nervous fluids to the organs of Sense, particularly to the brain itself, and too much Watchfulness rubs down the finest parts of the brain and produces delirium ...

The "Scarcity, acrimony, colour, thickness and paleness" of the patient's urine, reflecting the fluid balance, were thought to "denote the condition of the humours and indicate the remedy," hence duly studied. Likewise the stools were thought to hold the key to the cause and outlook. Huxham described those in putrid fevers to be "intolerably stinking, green, livid or black," frequently, he observed, "with severe Gripes and Blood." One of King's George III's physicians sought to discover the cause of the king's madness in the royal stools!

Huxham described the typhus fever rash as "a very considerable Efflorescence" over the limbs and body, "though seldom on the face," and "like the Measles in the Malignant Fevers, but of a more dull and livid Hue." "Sometimes it was of the Erysipelas kind, sometimes more Pustular, the Pustules," – septic pimples – "frequently very eminent, and of a fiery red Colour, better felt than seen and gave an odd roughness to the Skin. The Skin appeared as if inflamed and swoln as it were, the Arms, hands and Fingers were evidently so and very stiff and somewhat painful." Fiery eruptions sometimes boded ill: "Every Symptom seemed more aggravated and patients died in a most raging Phrenzy."

"The Eruption of the Petechiae" Huxham described as "uncertain". "Sometimes they appear on the fourth or fifth Day, sometimes not till the eleventh or twelfth or later." The profusion and nature of the petechiae reflected the severity of the infection and the outlook:

> ... large black or livid Spots are almost always attended with profuse haemorrhages (ecchymoses) – and small dusky brown Spots, like Freckles, not much less dangerous than the livid or black ...

"Large black and bluish Marks resembling Bruises," Huxham records, "were frequently seen towards the Close of the fevers," – thought by another physician "like those suffering from Scurvy," – haemorrhagic purpura, characteristic of vitamin C deficiency, but caused by the damage to the small blood vessels. These, with

"Lividity and Coldness of the Extremities [were] certain tokens of approaching Death," – indicative of the total collapse of the cardio-vascular system.

Sometimes the gastro-intestinal tract seemed to be overwhelmed by the severity of the infection. The condition of the mouth and tongue became so foul and dry as to creat "great Difficulty of Swallowing, Pain and Ulceration of the Fauces and Oesophagus," – throat and gullet. These were but manifestations of severe gastro-intestinal infection and dehydration, as evidenced by "a bloody Dysentery with Sphacelation [gangrene] of the Intestines, black, sanious bloody Stools, horribly foetid, and extremely infectious." Another symptom mentioned by Huxham, "Singultus," – hiccups – is a symptom of the utmost gravity in intestinal infections. Such cases are forcible reminders of the physician's statement that "none affects all parts of the body more grievously" than the putrid fevers.

During my researches I came across an account of an outbreak of a contagious fever in Italy in 1528 by a physician, Hieronymus Fracastorius, – "an Epidemic of Lenticular Fever." It was of particular significance in that he claimed: "It was this epidemic in which I was able to distinguish this malady from other fevers." His names for the contagion were of interest, too: "The Fever called Lenticular or Puncticulae," from which, he wrote, "many die, many recover." It was called "lenticular" or "puncticulae," he explained, "because they produce spots which look like lentils or flea bites," puncticulae.

He described the contagion as "a pestilent fever but more often called malignant rather than pestilent." He was certainly a shrewd observer, noting that it was "contagious only on handling of the sick," – that is, within range of the vector – "not at a distance by fomes &c." – that is by naso-pharyngeal droplet infection. He also observed that "People had gone from Italy to countries where this fever did not exist and died of it there, so must have carried it with them." This we now know to be so from a form known as Brill's disease, a mild form of louse-borne typhus originally in immigrants and proved to be a recrudescence of a previous infection in their former country.

According to Fracastorius, sometimes a deceptively mild onset deceived doctors into anticipating an early resolution of the disease, when "symptoms of malignant fever begin to show themselves with prostration of the whole body and a lassitude such as follows over-exertion. The patient can only lie flat on his back, the head becomes heavy and the senses dulled." Between "the fourth to the seventh day the mind would wander, the eyes become red, and the

patient garrulous." On the fourth to the seventh day, too, "a red, or often purplish-red spots broke out on the arms, back and chest, looking like flea bites though often larger and in the shape of lentils, hence the name of the fever." The macules, spots, of the rash vary in size from 2 - 6 mm., hence some could look like flea bites and some like lentils.

He further recorded about the fever: "The urine was pale but became red, clouded, like pomegranite wine," and the "excrement corrupt and offensive." The pulse was "small and slow," and "Some patients were sleepy, others wakeful, whilst some patients experienced each in turn." Some "patients felt little or no thirst, but the tongue became foul."

Signs of impending disaster included such as: "If the patient suddenly felt all his strength had failed him"; "If the urine was held back," – total kidney failure with anuria; "If lentil spots remained suppressed," or only "broke with difficulty," or were "livid and purple." "If all these together, death was certain."

These are remarkably like those of Dr Huxham some two hundred and thirty years later.

Typhus fever still remains, and ever will remain, a threat whenever people are herded together in insanitary conditions favourable for verminous infestation. Rickettsia, the organism causing typhus fever, with its world-wide host reservoir of rodents and other animals and wide variety of vectors in close contact with humanity, will always pose a threat. Typhus fever, nowadays often called Rickettsia, is still found in various forms across the five continents: Epidemic and Endemic Typhus, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Scrub Typhus in India and the Far East, and Q Fever in Australia and elsewhere, and many others.

Moreover there are occasional reminders of the threat when the protective barriers break down or are neglected in peacetime or war. The Trench Fever prevalent among the troops in the 1914-18 war was a modified form of typhus. A frightful outbreak of typhus fever followed the end of that war in Eastern Europe, and especially Poland, left devastated by the campaigns on the Russo-German front, with a total breakdown of essential services; such, indeed, that western nations felt themselves threatened: "The pestilence had begun to spead westward like a prairie fire. People were trying to flee before it." Relief parties were organised on a large scale. One such, the American Polish Typhus Relief Expedition 1919-21, reported on the conditions there. At one stage it was estimated that there was a weekly

pool of a million cases of typhus fever, with a weekly mortality of a hundred thousand people. This may possibly have been an overestimate, but it revealed what happened when the barriers broke down, and could so easily do so again. Typhus fever was again a problem in Poland and Russia during the last war, as was Scrub typhus with our troops in Burma. Without the necessary safeguards there could be an outbreak of typhus fever in conditions prevailing in some regions of the former Yugoslavia today.

I must record my gratitude to the staff of The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Euston Road, NW1 2BE, for their invaluable help in finding the original sources for this study.

WOODFORDE FROM HIS MANUSCRIPT, 1786

May – 10 –
We breakfasted at the Kings Head and spent the
Morning at Norwich till near 1. o'clock – then
we got into a Chaise, called on Nancy at M^{r}. Jeanes
took her with us and went for Weston –
To my Barber at the King's Head – gave – 0 : 1 : 6
At Clarkes Shop for Gloves – p^{d}. – 0 : 4 : 6
For Fish to carry home from Becks – p^{d}. – 0 : 4 : 0
At the Kings Head for Chaises &c. p^{d}. & gave – 1 : 19 : 6
To M^{r}. Jeanes's Servants, Man & Maid – gave – 0 : 2 : 0
We got home to Weston about 2. o'clock – and soon
after we reached [here] M^{r}. Jeanes, having been at Witchingham
called on us and dined & spent the Afternoon with
us. – We had for Dinner some Schaite & a Neck Mutton –
Soon after Coffee he set forth for Norwich again –
To Drivers, to and from Norwich – gave – 0 : 3 : 0

May – 11 –
1786
I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept at home –
Nancy & Brother breakfasted, dined, &c. here again –
Last Night about 5. o'clock (omitted to be put
down yesterday) I buried Barnard Dunnell's Wife
of Morton, at Weston – aged – 35. Years
Poor Woman, she had been very sickly & weak

for many Years, & died of a Consumption at last –
Being a Stranger – I had for burying her – 0 : 10 : 6
I also had a present of a P^{r}. of Gloves besides –

(The Jeans family were still living in temporary accommodation at this date, not yet having settled in at Witchingham. Bridget Dunnell, who had looked after Woodforde at Weston Parsonage during his inspection visit in 1775 – he very much praised her cookery – was a daughter of Stephen Andrews. – See *The Andrews Family* in Journal XV, 1 & 2 (1982)).

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