

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

APRIL 2017

NEWSLETTER No. 109

FROLIC 2017

This year's Frolic will be in Wincanton in Somerset, between September 8th–10th, 2017. We will be based at Holbrook House near Wincanton. On the Saturday, we will have a trip to Bath, coinciding with its Jane Austen festival. We may be able to watch the Regency Costumed Parade through the city. Further details and a booking form are enclosed.

GIFT AID

Very many thanks to those members who filled out a Gift Aid form in response to the Appeal in the Winter Newsletter. At £4 per member per year, it is a great help to the Society's finances.

A TALK IN HOLT

On 16th March, Society member David Sharp gave a talk to the Holt Society about Parson Woodforde. There was an appreciative audience of some 50–60 people, and there were lots of questions: they included Woodforde's income, his charitable giving and its worth today; the curates he employed in his declining years; his strange medical beliefs; heating in his home; travel to Somerset; and "was he a happy man?". Perhaps a lonely one, whose diary was a friend, was the answer.

"WHAT WENT ON IN 'CONVIVIAL EVENINGS' WITH MISS TWIDDY?": VOLUME 7 REVIEWED IN THE *EDP*

On 25th March, the *Eastern Daily Press* reviewed the Society's latest volume of James Woodforde's *Diary, Volume 7, 1776–7*, edited by Dr Heather Edwards and published last summer. The Society and Dr Edwards have been well served by the review by Trevor Heaton, which covered more than a full page. It introduced newcomers to Woodforde's Somerset background, his early troubles in Weston with Nephew Bill, and his late-night visits to Norwich establishments, such as on June 9th, 1777.

ALL SAINTS', CASTLE CARY & ST ANDREW'S, ANSFORD

The Diarist's father, Samuel Woodforde, was Rector of St Andrew's Church, Ansford, and Vicar of All Saints' Church, Castle Cary. The two churches have up to now been in separate parishes, although they have often shared a priest. Samuel Woodforde held both livings, but he was succeeded by his nephew Frank Woodforde as Rector of Ansford and Thomas Wickham as Vicar of Castle Cary.

Since October 2010 the priest-in-charge of both churches has been the Revd Liz Mortimer. At the start of January 2017, the two became one parish and benefice. Both churches will continue to function as before, although "Friends" who can give financial support will be welcomed.

SUSAN YAXLEY OF THE LARKS PRESS

Members who know the series of "pocket biographies" published by the Larks Press will be sorry to hear that its founder, Susan Yaxley, died last November. The series included "James Woodforde" by our late Editor Roy Winstanley, written in 1996, and just 14 pages long. Other biographies in the series which may be of interest to members include Robert Walpole and Horatio Nelson. Susan Yaxley set up the Larks Press in 1984; it was based in Dereham and many of its subjects were associated with Norfolk. Over 30 years it produced over 170 books. She was an historian who published much on Norfolk history, and she was involved with a variety of other activities, including producing plays for "The Stibbard Players" for 36 years.

PARSON WOODFORDE IN THE PRESS

A member recommends the articles by Ronald Blythe in the *Church Times*, which sometimes mention Parson Woodforde. In December 2016, Ronald Blythe quoted from Woodforde's diary for 9th December 1795, when he gave a dinner for Mr and Mrs Corbould, and also quoted a comment from 22nd December 1795 on unseasonably warm weather. Ronald Blythe is best known to us as the author of the Introduction to the popular one-volume paperback of Beresford's "World Classics" edition.

In the third leader of the *Daily Telegraph* on 21st March 2017, Parson Woodforde's regular winter comment about the severe cold freezing the Chamber Pots under the beds was quoted. It was in support of a recently published medical finding: living in cold surroundings burns up fat and helps to prevent the development of diabetes. Also cited was the Victorian diarist Francis Kilvert, who found in December 1870 that his morning cold bath was covered with ice.

"THE MAKING OF A FINE CITY"

On Saturday 17th June and Sunday 18th June, a conference will take place on "Norwich and the Medieval Parish Church, c.900 – 2017: The Making of a Fine City". It is the conference of the "Medieval Parish Churches of Norwich: city, community and architecture research project" of the University of East Anglia. It will be held at Norwich Cathedral, and enquiries may be made to Helen Lunnon at h.lunnon@uea.ac.uk.

The scope of the project includes the 58 medieval churches of the City, including those ruined or lost.

CASTLE CARY & ANSFORD HOUSING PLANS

In the past we have reported on the proposals for housing development in Castle Cary and Ansford. Planning permission had previously been granted for some 285 new homes; now an additional 200 homes are to be built either side of Station Road, between Castle Cary and the station. There were objections from all the local councils, who fear the roads and infrastructure will be unable to cope. A public enquiry has recently been held, and the Government Inspector has found in the developers' favour.

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO ...

On 18th March 1767, Uncle Tom admitted to James Woodforde that he had visited Mrs Powell of Harpenden and asked her for the Livings of Castle Cary and Ansford, which the diarist described as "dishonourable and dishonest". Later that day "Uncle Tom came to Parsonage this afternoon and wanted to set matters right which he could not do to me I'm sure."

A month later, Samuel Woodforde, accompanied by his children Jane and John, travelled to London, en route to see Mrs Powell at Harpenden. James did not go, either because he was going back to Oxford the next day, or because it would have been impolite and ungentle for the claimant to confront Mrs Powell directly. James does not record the outcome, but evidently Mrs Powell did not change her mind.

Society's website: www.parsonwoodforde.org.uk
