PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

JOHN JOHNSON OF LUDHAM: A TANNER "IN A LARGE WAY"

(By kind permission of Mrs Margaret Sharman)

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A growing body of manuals and works of general instruction told polite people what and how to read, both silently and aloud, and how to write elegantly, particularly when composing letters.

Still, the literature of politeness emphasised self-fashioning more than the instruction of experts. Above all keeping a journal or diary, which Addison explicitly recommended, was the most important means by which refinement might be cultivated. To write and read one's own journal was to be a spectator of oneself. Such self-consciousness, a form of self-examination that looked at appearances as well as the inner self, helped shape a polite person. Today reading these journals puts us in the place of the eighteenth century spectator.

– John Brewer: *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century, 1997*

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EDITORIAL

Parson Woodforde, as has often been said, is not Parson Kilvert: his diary is not his confessional. Search for long enough, however, and you are sure to come across the inner-self of our generally undemonstrative hero, often revealed with admirable succinctness. Surely everything about Woodforde's aesthetics, for example, is summed up in his description of the house and garden of Dr Knight of Shepton Mallet: "not only beautiful but very neat".

Who, you may very well wonder, was Dr Knight for he does not make an appearance in *The Diary of a Country Parson*? He does, however, feature quite prominently in Volume 4 of our Society's edition of the diary where Woodforde describes him as "an extreme good natured & sensible Man, and / very comely and neat, but is very deaf indeed". He is sometimes accompanied by Mrs Knight who "does not / seem the best kind of [Wife] for the good natured Doctor". The Knights were part of that circle of friends which included the families of Lawyer White and Mrs Payne about whom there is still a great deal that we do not know. They serve, however, to remind us of one of the most striking features of Woodforde's Somerset diary: the remarkable diversity and complexity of his social life. Roy Winstanley has, of course, done much to explain the nature of these various relationships so that, in terms of its "polite and commercial people", Castle Cary must be one of the best understood of mid-eighteenth century communities. In recent years Robin Gibson has further enriched our knowledge with studies of Mr Hindley and Justice Creed and, in this issue, he provides us with some valuable new discoveries about Woodforde's brother-in-law Dr Richard Clarke and his family.

A particularly important and interesting sub-section of our membership is made up of those members who are the descendants of people who figure in the diary. Many readers will remember Miss Barham Johnson, one of our pioneer members who was able to tell us so much about the Donnes, Hewitts and Bodhams. Castres Donne, the curate of Mattishall, was, of course, one of the first people to call upon Woodforde after he arrived in Weston. Now, carrying on an illustrious tradition, Miss Barham Johnson's niece, Margaret Sharman, has produced a first-rate article on Castres' brother-in-law – and her aunt's great-great grandfather – John Johnson, the tanner "in a Large way" of Ludham.

John Heighes, himself descended from one of Woodforde's

forebears, has written to remind us of that charming diary Mary Woodforde's "Booke". Readers unfamiliar with the diary of Woodforde's great-grandfather's second wife can read more in the Society's edition of *Woodforde Papers and Diaries* available from our President.

During the summer months when at Oxford, Woodforde would often hire a boat from Mother Gardener at Folly Bridge to go "up the Water" to Binsey or Godstow, on at least one occasion returning soaking wet ("I was in the Water coming down 20 Times"), on another with a broken oar ("p^{d}. 0..0..6") and, one afternoon, "instead of going to the Theatre to hear the / Oratorio Judas Maccabaeus". Whether or not the Bridge occupies the site of Oxford's prime topographical feature – the ford – is a question debated by Francis Bennion in a fascinating article which originally appeared in *Oxford Today* and is now, with permission, reprinted here.

Last but by no means least, I am very happy indeed to introduce the drawings of Mary Price who carries on another Journal tradition – that for fine illustrations which, in the past, was so strongly associated with the work of Marian Peck, Bertha Fügl and Veronica Zabel.

– MARTIN BRAYNE
Editor

Ansford church

THE CLARKE FAMILY OF ANSFORD

The head of the Clarke family of Ansford, Dr Richard Clarke, was the brother-in-law of Parson Woodforde, and members of his family appear very frequently in the Ansford diaries. An essay about the family, by Roy Winstanley, appeared in Journal XI, 3 but as this was twenty years ago many members will be unfamiliar with these close relations of our parson. Much of the previous article described the controversy about Dr Clarke's Will and how Parson Woodforde helped to resolve the difficulties. Yet, given that the doctor was a wealthy man, I have been puzzled as to why his widow, the parson's sister, became so poor when, later in her life, she moved to London. Now some new information about the doctor's Will suggests why this was so and also gives more insight into the conflict between some members of the family.

Family Background

Richard Clarke was not a native of Ansford and he is not traceable at Epsom where Parson Woodforde's forbears lived and where his grandfather was the incumbent. He was born in 1715 and arrived at Ansford some time before 1744 when he married Martha Collins, the half-sister of Parson Woodforde's mother. Thus, when our diariest was only four, he became the nephew of Dr Clarke. Then later, when the doctor was a widower, we have the unusual circumstance that he became the diarist's brother-in-law when he re-married sister Sobieski (Sophia) Woodforde in 1753. These rather confusing relationships are shown in the family chart shown below. It can be seen that the doctor had two sons by the first wife and four children by the second. This meant that our diarist had the former as cousins and the latter as nephews and nieces.

The first wife, Martha, had lost her parents while still a child and it is likely that the diarist's parents, her near relations, largely brought her up with the Parson, Samuel Woodforde, acting as her guardian. After giving birth to two sons, James and Richard, who figure so much in the early diaries, Martha had a daughter, Hester, who lived only a day or two. Then a year later, in 1751, Martha herself died aged only twenty-six.

Sobieski Woodforde, Richard's second wife, had been born in 1726 and the Ansford Register states that she and Richard Clarke were married on 9 April 1754. Her father, Samuel Woodforde, officiated while the witnesses were the diarist's Uncle Tom and his wife

Sarah. Sobieski was provided with a dowry of £700 to which her mother added a further £100. However, the dowry was not paid for eleven years although Samuel allowed his daughter 4% per annum interest which she signed for in his account book.

The eldest child of the couple, Jenny Clarke, was born in December of the same year as the marriage and she, plus the subsequent three children, were all baptized in Castle Cary church. Thus, we can deduce that the doctor's residence was in that parish.

Doctor Clarke

Young James Woodforde greatly respected and admired his brother-in-law who had a very successful career. When the diary begins, the doctor had already become a specialist and had built up a reputation a long way from Ansford and Cary for inoculation as a preventative against smallpox. This consisted of the pre-Jennerian technique of injecting the actual smallpox organisms into the body. These were taken from mild or recovering cases to induce a similarly mild and harmless onset of the infection, although in practice some inoculations did go disastrously wrong, precipitating a fatal attack of the disease. But Dr Clarke was either lucky or highly skilled for in the diary there is only one case of an inoculation patient dying in his care.

The doctor set up a hospital for the reception of his inoculation patients. This was located somewhere in Cary until about 1769 when, near the end of his career, he moved to Ansford and Woodforde refers many times to "Dr. Clarke's new hospital". The Clarke's home, probably adjacent to the hospital, was in Tucker's Lane between Ansford churchyard and the Parsonage. The demand for treatment became so great that the patients sometimes had to be housed in the family rooms and occasionally the elder daughter Jenny had to lodge at the Parsonage.

We can therefore visualize Richard Clarke in his fifties as a highly successful and fairly wealthy man, of high repute in the community. Although at this time in the eighteenth century medicine was still very primitive, men like Dr Clarke made a big contribution. He was on familiar terms with the famous Dimsdale who inoculated the Empress Catherine of Russia and whose method may have formed the basis for Clarke's treatments, although Dimsdale's book *The Present Method of Inoculation for the Small Pox* was not published until 1767.

Dr Clarke also played a prominent role in local affairs. He helped in the negotiations for solving the great quarrel about the singing gallery in Castle Cary church. And he was also influential in family affairs: in arranging the share-out of the property left by the diarist's mother and in trying (unsuccessfully) to patch up Heighes' marital affairs.

During the first thirteen years of the diary we see Dr Clarke and his family coming up to the Parsonage for afternoon and evening visits and our diarist, with equal frequency, visiting his sister's house. But in the early months of 1773 the doctor began to suffer from some illness or mental disorder and, on 15 April, Woodforde wrote:

> Mr. Richard Clarke made us a visit this morning &
> he informed us that his Father had cancelled his Will
> Mr. John Pounsett spent the Aft: supped &c. at Parsonage
> Sister Clarke & Sam, James & Richard Clarke and my
> Brother supped and spent the Evening at the Parsonage.

During the next two days the diarist spent much time talking to his sister and the doctor's sons. He wrote: "The old Doctor I find is worth not much less than 16000 Pd." (At current value this would be worth nearly one million pounds.) The family was now seriously worried as it was thought that the doctor was incapable of making another Will. A legal adviser, Mr Messiter from Wincanton, was brought in and a meeting was reported by Woodforde on 20 April:

> In case he dies intestate Mr. Messiter says that Mrs. Clarke
> will come in for two thirds of all his real Estate (his first
> Wife's estate excepted) & also two thirds of his personal Estate
> that Richard Clarke Junr. & Sister Clarke's Children as
> well as James Clarke the Heir at Law will have all
> the rest of the personal Estate equally divided between all
> six of them – & the Heir at Law have all the rest Estate
> only paying the thirds to Mrs. Clarke as before excepted
> & those thirds after her decease of the real Estates to go
> to James Clarke as being the Heir at Law –

Richard Clarke would have suffered the most from such an outcome and the diarist continued to say that James would give some part of the estate to Richard who was said to be very hurt by the situation. It was also said that the personal estate was worth £9000. (Presumably this implies that the real estate* was worth

* The real estate is not itemised in detail in the Will but there are references to various "freehold messuages" located in Ansford and Wookey.

about £7000 if the previous total estimate of £16000 was correct.) Two days later, the diarist went to see Dr Clarke "to make a Will agreeable to his Family & himself & he agreed so to do which I am very glad of – The poor Doctor cried a little –".

The family then took no risks that he might destroy this Will, so Sister Clarke brought the Will for the diarist to keep for them after it had been drawn up by Mr Messiter "to the satisfaction of them all". From this statement one might assume that all parties were indeed happy. However, this seems unlikely as is indicated by later actions of Sister Clarke, and the cause of her concern is evident from the details in the Will which has recently been found in the Public Records Office (probate granted 18 June 1774).

This final Will states that all of the real estate is to be divided between James and Richard and the personal estate is to be distributed as follows:

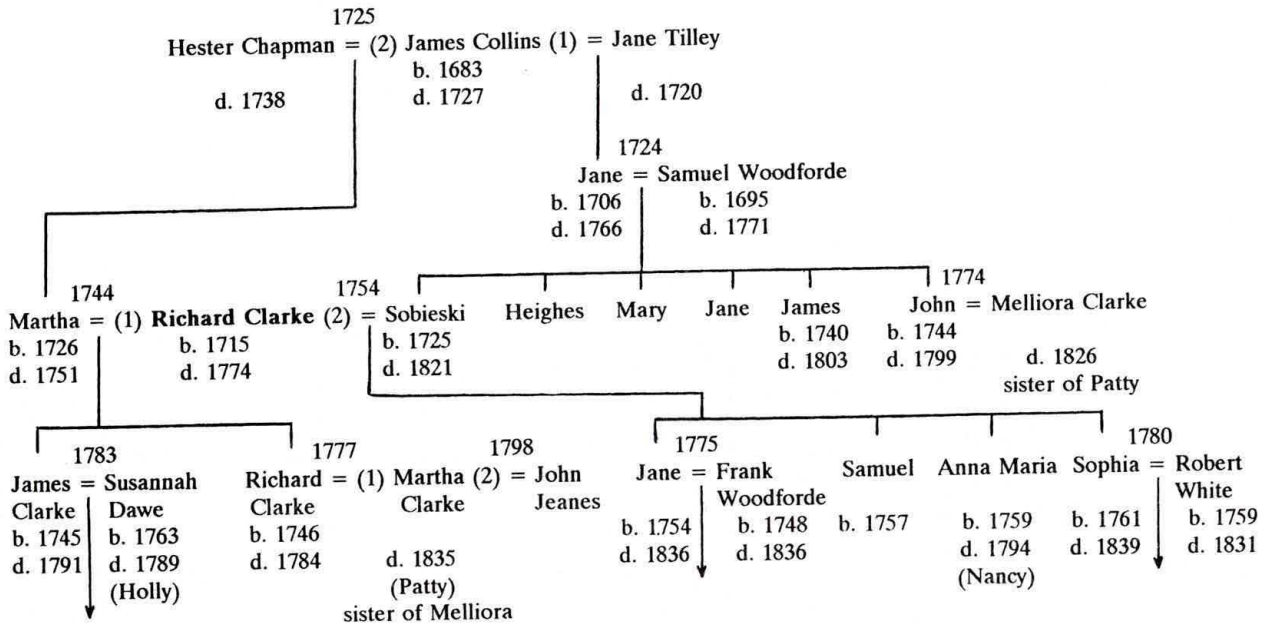
. . . £1000 to his wife Sophia plus the annual interest during her lifetime on a further £1000 to be invested by James and Richard. . . . To daughter Jane £1000, to son Samuel £1600, to daughter Sophia £1150 and daughter Anne to have the interest on £1150 to be invested on her behalf by James and Richard.

The residue of the personal estate to go to James and Richard. (This would be about £2000 if the £9000 estimate for the total was correct.) The household goods were to be divided equally between his widow and James and Richard. And, finally, the Will states that James and Richard were appointed joint Executors of the Will.

It is surprising that Sister Sophy had apparently agreed to such a Will, given that she would have none of the real estate and her income would only be about £40 or £50 per annum from the invested £1000 plus whatever she had left over from her legacy of £1000. This situation, whereby the sons gain far more than the widow, was not uncommon at this time among wealthy people, especially where there was an entailed estate. In such circumstances the eldest son was left the real estate and the widow moved out of the family home into a small "Dower House". It is not clear where Sister Clarke and her children were to live since the family house would have been owned by her stepsons, and yet the diarist did not appear to recognize that the Will would cause his sister hardship.

The Will also makes Sobieski financially dependent on her stepsons who were responsible for her investment income and also that for the young daughter Anne. Furthermore, the administration of the bequests

The Clarke Family



to the other children who were under age could be a potential cause of conflict given that the stepsons were the Executors of the Will.

After signing this Will the doctor continued to come up to the Parsonage but his behaviour was somewhat erratic and on 23 July the diary reports what happened when the doctor appeared at the Parsonage late at night:

> When we were gone up to bed, there was a knocking at the Door almost 11.o'clock, which was poor D^{r}. Clarke, I went to him with my night Cap on & spoke to him, but he did not come in – He should not go about so late by himself –

The doctor was obviously suffering from some form of dementia but no more is heard until December 1773 when Woodforde came home from Oxford and reported that Dr Clarke is much worse: "his legs swell and he talks but very little and looks very ill indeed". Then six months later, in May 1774, when Woodforde made another visit to Ansford, he says:

> I made a visit in the morning to M^{r}. Clarkes and saw the poor Doctor, who is greatly altered for the worse and am afraid he will be but a few days here – He was up, gasping for Breath, knew nobody, and said never a word – He walked about but not without a Person to support him being so very weak –

Finally on 29 May:

> Poor D^{r}. Clarke departed this life about 5. in the Evening – and I hope for a much better one –

It is odd that the diarist then left for Oxford on the next day. One might have expected him to take part in the funeral of such a close relative by marriage and a man that the diarist had always admired. But perhaps he was so disillusioned by the loss of his father's livings that he did not want to prolong his stay in the area, especially as it was likely that his enemies, Uncle Tom and family, would be at Dr Clarke's funeral.

Sister Clarke

Since she was so much older (15 years) than the diarist it is unlikely that they were ever very close. However, they spent much time together while the diarist lived at Ansford and she trusted and relied upon his support. On 18 March 1774 when her husband was in the advanced stage of his illness she gave £1000 to her brother for safe keeping. At this time, she was probably afraid of her two stepsons

and apprehensive about her future after her husband's demise. A few months earlier, on 12 November, she had also passed over to the diarist her marriage agreement in which her husband was to give her £1600.

The diarist returned to Ansford in September 1774, a few months after the doctor's death, and was staying at the Parsonage with his recently married sister Jane and her husband Mr Pounsett, who were living there temporarily. On 17 September Sister Clarke, with her own attorney, Mr Martin from Bruton, came to see the diarist about the doctor's Will; she was now seriously worried about her circumstances and dependence on her two stepsons, and her fear of them. The diary indicates what Mr Martin said:

> . . . told her
> that she had no Occasion to be uneasy, that James &
> Richard would not injure either her or Children –
> That the legacies must be put into the Funds &
> that she & her Children must be supported this Year
> out of the whole Effects – that all her Apparel, Jewels
> & her Childrens, they could not touch any of these –

There then follows a statement by the diarist which appears to suggest that Sobieski was considering a challenge to the Will in order to claim some of the real estate. The attorney said that this would mean setting aside the whole Will and would delay the payment of her share of the personal estate. Furthermore, as her expectancy from the real estate was not worth much more than a hundred a year, she was better to be silent. She was also told that she could not insist on staying in her house, even for a week if her stepsons did not allow it. Finally, it appears that the diarist and his brother-in-law Mr White were asked to act as trustees for the children and they were told that if they refused only the Court of Chancery could act for them.

This clearly shows that Sister Clarke was belatedly regretting her previous agreement to the Will and again we do not know what the diarist felt since he does not express any view on his sister's concern. Perhaps he did not think she would be so poorly placed, given that she should have some access to the funds left to her younger children for their upbringing. Perhaps he did not want to be placed in a situation of conflict with his two cousins, and perhaps also he was not well disposed to his sister as she maintained a friendly attitude towards his enemies, Uncle Tom and his family. Sobieski would undoubtedly have encouraged the developing

friendship between her daughter, Jenny, and young Frank Woodforde (they married within the next two years) and Sobieski would have regarded her daughter's future as much more important than her brother's sore feelings.

However, Sobieski must have been determined to ease some of her worries and, in the following months, her Attorney, Mr Martin, persevered on her behalf while on the other hand Mr Messiter was acting for the stepsons. One of the unresolved issues was the trusteeship for the Clarke children who were under age. And Sobieski would have been trying to obtain some security of tenure in her house. The issues took several months to resolve, as is evident from the diarist's report nine months later on 5 June 1775 from Oxford, about a letter from Mr Martin of Bruton asking him to act as a Trustee for Mrs Clarke's children. Then a few weeks later on 25 July while at Ansford the diarist met Mr Martin and:

> . . . talked over M^{rs}. Clarke's Affairs – M^{r}. White and self both refused to act as Trustees to the late D^{rs}. Will – Things are to remain as they are and M^{r}. Martin and M^{r}. Messiter are to settle for both parties –

Clearly the diarist still did not want to get involved in any conflict between his sister and his cousins. However, two months later, he reports:

> M^{r}. Martin and M^{r}. Messiter settled M^{rs}. Clarkes affairs to day & very amicably, & very well for Sister Clarke –
>
> (22/9/1775)

At some time afterwards the diarist had a change of heart about the trusteeship and he did take on that responsibility for the children, which he refers to on 23 November 1776 when he received some papers to sign.

And so Sobieski probably continued to live in the same house at Ansford, but as the diarist was away at Oxford it is not clear whether she did at some time move to another house. From February to May in 1776, the diarist was making his final visit to Ansford before departing for his new home in Norfolk. During this time he visited his sister's home several times and she appears to have been living quite comfortably. On 14 March he dined at her home and gave her servants 2s 6d. And she appears to be enjoying a spending spree with part of her inheritance as, two weeks later, at the end of March, Sobieski departed for a long holiday in London, and on 6 April the diary records:

Had a letter this morning from Sister Clarke in London, she admires the City much & is in good Lodgings, she desired to hear from me but sent no Direction where she is – p^{d}. – 0: 0: 5

The omission must have been rectified as he sent a letter to his sister on 20 April, but she had not returned from London by 9 May when the diarist returned to Oxford. There is no further news of Sobieski until 10 April 1777 when the Parson was much disturbed by a letter from his brother-in-law Mr Pounsett saying that "M^{rs}. Clarke is going to be married to one Ryal of Sherborne a man who drives his own waggon to Bristol – is much in debt & has 10. Children already. –"

The Parson responded immediately as follows:

– I sent her a trimming Letter to day on the above account.

Then, on 19 April, he must have been greatly relieved to hear from his sister assuring him that the affair with Ryal is entirely over.

Later in that year, during his holiday visit to Ansford in the summer of 1777, he saw much of Sobieski and they seem to have been on friendly terms. On 2 August he paid her £50 out of the £100 which he had been keeping for her since 1774.

Some two years later, Sobieski and her son Sam paid a long visit of about six months to Norfolk in 1779/80. She had also been a companion and chaperone for Nancy who was going to stay permanently at Weston. Thereafter, there is little news about Sobieski's whereabouts for some thirteen years, apart from the occasions when she sees the diarist during his holiday visits to Somerset. Surprisingly, she then moved to London with her son sometime around 1792. And in October 1793, when the Parson was on his way home after his holiday in Somerset, he visited Sobieski who was living with her son Sam at Hackney. Two years later, on 27 June 1793, the brief visit was repeated but this time Sister Clarke was living in very poor circumstances. The Parson wrote: "Was very sorry to see my Sister Clarke look so bad and so decrepid". By this time she and her son were probably living on the small (£40 or £50) annuity from her £1000 investment, the lump sum bequests to her and her son Sam having been spent.

There is then little further mention of Sobieski and it is not known how long she stayed at Hackney, but she did return to Ansford at some time and was buried there on 3 August 1821. She was 96 and the longest lived of all the Woodfordes.

Sobieski's Children

Jane (Jenny)

Jane, the eldest daughter, was the only one mentioned at all frequently throughout most of the Ansford diaries. She was a teenager for much of this period and was often present at the social visits between the diarist and her parents. During this period she seems to have been well liked by the diarist and they often played cards together. She was well educated and attended Taunton School. The diarist's feelings became cooler towards her from 1774 onwards during the rift with Uncle Tom, as Jane had become very friendly with Frank Woodforde. On 23 March 1774 the diarist was visiting Bath and found that Jenny was also there with Aunt Tom and her son Frank, who were staying at the house of the Woodforde Aunts. After her marriage to Frank some eighteen months later she largely faded out of the diary, although she became the mistress of the Parsonage for over sixty years, had a large family and lived to the age of eighty-one.

Samuel

Much has been written in the Society's Journal about this rather odd character, who was somewhat mentally deficient. His development and character was fully assessed by Roy Winstanley in his essay in Journal XXIV, 1, 'The Case of Samuel Clarke'. He never seems to have worked throughout his life and usually appears closely alongside his mother. But soon after the death of his father, when only seventeen, he went off alone to London for five weeks at the end of 1774. The diarist thought that this was very foolish and wrong, but Sister Clarke was not overly concerned. When aged twenty-two, he accompanied his mother on their lengthy stay with the Parson in Norfolk. At various times the diarist had reported some odd incidents connected with the loss of money and other items where Sam might have been under suspicion. In 1791, Nancy received a letter from brother John's wife, stating that "Sister Clarke but poorly and her son as Strange as ever". In that year Sam appears to have been the reputed father of an illegitimate baby born to one Anne Gulliver of Castle Cary and, if so, it is possible that this event caused the removal of Sam and his mother to Hackney in London.

In October 1793 when Woodforde met his sister at Hackney, he reported that Sam was much emaciated and confused and was shut

up in a dark room (the usual practice for mental conditions) although he did recollect the Parson. At this time he would have been 36 years old. When the Parson saw him two years later, Sam still looked decrepit and shabby but he talked very sensibly. There is no further reference to Sam in the diary and the Hackney registers, checked by Roy Winstanley, reveal no trace of him.

Anna Maria (Anne or Nancy)

She was probably a mental defective from birth. She does not appear to have lived regularly at home and was boarded out with a carer, Betty Lancashire, in Ansford. She died in 1794 when aged 35. Her father provided an allowance for her lifetime as recorded above in his Will.

Sophia

She was a young girl for most of the duration of the Ansford diaries and she was quite a favourite of Parson Woodforde, who often gave her presents and small sums of money. Indeed, she seemed to have charmed many people with her bright personality. For example, when only eight, she was included in the group with the diarist and other adults who dined at Justice Creed's house. About this time, while some friends of the Clarkes were visiting Ansford, the diarist reported their "taking great notice of her" and they then took Sophy back to Wells with them.

In September 1772 Justice Creed's friend Mr Hindley arrived for a holiday visit, together with a large party of his friends and relations. Among these was his great-niece Charlotte Pippard, aged twelve, and she became friendly with young Sophy; during this time, on 25 September, the following charming account by the diarist indicates his kindness towards children:

> Miss Charlotte Pippard & Sophy Clarke dined and spent the Afternoon at Parsonage, they spent the greatest part of the morning with me also – I fetched them both in my Chaise and carried them back in it –

In 1774, when she was thirteen, Sophia was still called "my little niece", and she again dined at Justice Creed's with the diarist and Mr Hindley. Thereafter, while the diarist was at Oxford and Norfolk, we lose sight of her until 1779 when the Parson was visiting Somerset. He then met the eighteen-year-old girl on a few

occasions and describes her on 14 June as "A very fine girl indeed". A year later, in September 1780, the Parson had a letter from Sister Pounsett saying that Sophy Clarke and his nephew Robert White had gone off together to be married. Her stepbrothers James and Richard, together with her sister Jane and Jane's husband Frank, were all angry about it, but the diarist expresses his feelings very clearly in the following entry:

> . . . they think Rob[t].
> too much of the Clown – their Pride is hurt much –
> for my Part I think it is a good Match on both sides and
> if they marry I wish them happy – they are both good natured.

Two months later the Parson heard that the couple were married in Devonshire. They returned to Ansford and when Robert's father died some four years later they took over the tenancy of the White family farmhouse (known as Ansford Lodge). Robert's mother, the diarist's sister Mrs White, then moved to Shepton Mallet to live with her other son, James. Sophia and Robert raised a large family, but only three daughters survived their parents, and only one of these, Elizabeth, married and she did not have any children. Robert died in 1831 aged 72 and Sophia died eight years later, aged 79. Some time afterwards their daughter, Melliora, sold Ansford Lodge to nephew Bill's youngest son, George Augustus.

The Stepsons of Sobieski

James Clarke

He was the eldest of Sobieski's two stepsons and was five years younger than the diarist. Much of the following is taken from an article written in 1987 by Roy Winstanley (Journal XX, 2) about James and his wife, who became friendly with the great Methodist, John Wesley.

James was apprenticed to his father and on 1 January 1767, when he completed his term, there was a great celebration party lasting till 4 o'clock in the morning. Thereafter, James worked as his father's assistant until he succeeded to the practice after the death of his father, but Woodforde never regarded him as the equal of his father. However, he seems to have prospered and was able to live with some affluance in a handsome house.

There are several episodes in the diary which show that James as a bachelor was a violent and quarrelsome person, and on several occasions he nearly came to blows with Brother John. On 14 March

1774 he so frightened a maidservant into "Fitts" that Sobieski had to stay up all night with her. He was also one of the ringleaders in the riot over the singing gallery in Cary church.* On one occasion, in June 1770, he behaved so rudely to the diarist that he refused to have anything to do with his cousin until he apologised. The next day James did send a note of apology but this must have been rather half-hearted as there was still much ill feeling between them. Thereafter, for about six months James virtually disappears from the diary until the following January when on the 4th, at Dr Clarke's home, the diary reports that James

> . . . desired to speak to me in another Room
> this Evening at D^{r}. Clarkes, where he acknowledged the
> rudeness he was guilty of some time back, upon which
> I shook hands with him and made up the affair –

The diarist received a letter from Heighes in December 1782 saying that James was going to marry Susannah Hawley Dawe, and in March 1783 he learned that they were married. Susannah was related to the Dawe family of Ditcheat and the diarist had met her in July of the previous year during his holiday visit to Somerset; he then described her as "a very handsome, genteel young Lady" and he subsequently calls her "Holly". When the Parson met James some three years later he was living in quite a prosperous manner. He had a handsome residence, Ansford House, on Ansford Hill just to the right as the road from Cary comes out on the hill. He also owned a phaeton coach, a type of light two-wheeled carriage which could travel at quite a high speed.

The diarist tells us very little more about Holly, but in August 1789 she was in the party which went to Sherborne to see the King and while there she dined at her mother's house, who had presumably moved from Ditcheat at some time. It appears that Holly was a religious person and she became friendly with the famous Methodist John Wesley who preached at Cary on several occasions in 1784, 1785 and 1787. On the latter visit he met James and Holly who are mentioned in the "Itinerary" of his travels, when he recorded that he had dinner at Mr Clarke's. And in 1789 he was again in the district, and he paid yet another visit in September 1790 when he wrote the following in his Journal:

> . . . Since I was here God has taken to himself that amiable
> woman Mrs Clark who, to a fine person and a good

* See Ken Baddley: Trouble in the Gallery, Journal XXIX, 1 (Ed.).

> understanding, joined a very uncommon degree of deep religion. . . . Afterwards I called upon her deeply affected husband who spent some hours with us the next day. I hope he will no longer sorrow as one without hope but will trust to meet her in a better place.

Holly had died in November 1789, only three months after the visit to Sherborne, and she left two infant children, aged one and three. Wesley also mentioned that James was not of "our faith" although his wife had been a staunch Methodist. Soon after the death of his wife James' health broke down, and on 18 February 1790 the Parson heard that James had suffered a stroke and lost the use of one of his hands, and moved to Bath. Then, on 21 May 1791, the diarist heard that "M^{r}. Clarke has grown childish like his late Father", and he died a few months later on 27 September.

Some years later, in 1807, their daughter Martha was married at Cary, her brother James being a witness. James had inherited Ansford House and he sold it to James Woodforde, the (possibly illegitimate) son of Heighes' wife, Ann Dorville. Coincidentally, this James also became the local doctor and so followed on the tradition of James Clarke and his father before him.

Richard Clarke

He was only a year younger than his brother and was a less colourful character. He was engaged in some form of agriculture and is mentioned several times as carrying cheese for the diarist and for taking down trees. He and his brother had also offered to take up the tithe of Castle Cary after it was taken over by Parson Wickham, but we do not know whether this materialised. In 1777 Richard married Martha (Patty) Clarke, the younger sister of brother John's wife Melliora. The diarist had met them on 6 January 1775 when he described them as "very agreeable ladies indeed". The sisters came from nearby Evercreech and were closely attached to one another. During the two years before her marriage Patty stayed with her sister at brother John's house. This could not have been altogether pleasant, given brother John's frequent bouts of drunkenness and bad behaviour. For example, on 18 July 1775, the diary reports that John had been very drunk and abusive to his wife and that "poor Miss Patty Clarke was very unhappy about him".

Richard must have been fairly prosperous and he had a new house built in Castle Cary in 1775, two years before his marriage. The

diarist called it "a very pretty box". This elegant house still stands at the top of the High Street and it became Patty's home for the rest of her long life, nearly sixty years. Parson Woodforde visited the house many times during his holiday visits.

Richard had suffered from poor health for many years before his marriage. He was thought to be consumptive and he died in February 1784. There were no children from the marriage and, at some time after Richard's death, brother John and his wife moved in with Patty. Then a few years later, in 1789 and 1790, they all enjoyed a long (six month) holiday in Norfolk. During her widowhood Patty appears to have lived very comfortably and she had her own chaise. In his Will, Richard had left her only £100 plus £10 per annum to be added to her settlement – but this must have been quite substantial.

On 15 June 1787 the diarist reported that Patty was going to marry the local (Cary) resident Sam Burge but this did not happen. However, several yeas later in 1798 she married John Jeans (thought to be unsuitable by Parson Woodforde) and they lived in Patty's house at Cary. Her second husband died in 1817 but Patty herself lived for nearly twenty years more, dying in 1835.

Her sister Melliora had been living with Patty for some years; probably since her husband, brother John, died in 1799; at some time after Nancy Woodforde returned to Somerset in 1805 she also joined the two widows and all three lived in Patty's house for the rest of their lives. Melliora died in 1826 and Patty was the sole beneficiary, gaining £800 plus other possessions. Then a few years later Nancy died in 1830.

After her death, Patty's possessions were valued at only £350 although this probably excluded the real estate comprising the house at Cary plus property at Alhampton from her second husband. Among the bequests in her Will she left portraits of the Woodforde family, presumably inherited from her sister, to Jane Woodforde and Sophia White, the two half-sisters of her first husband.

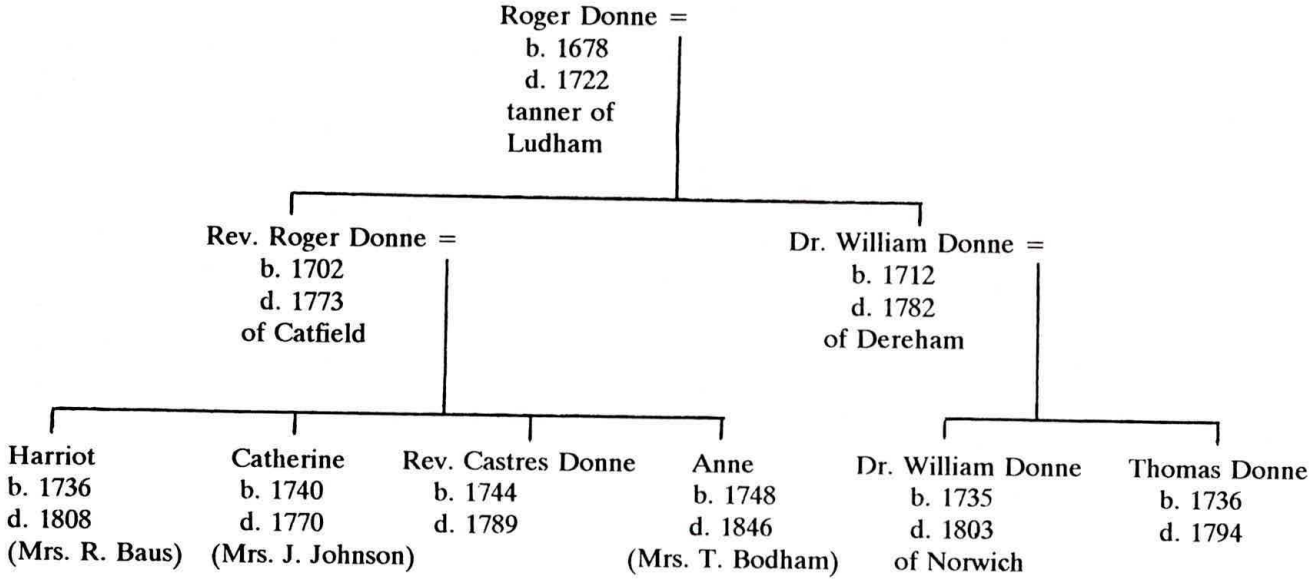
THE TANNER 'IN A LARGE WAY'

On 14 April 1778 James Woodforde 'took a ride' of a few miles to take part in a Rotation at the home of his friend Castres Donne, the curate of Mattishall. After the death of his mother, widow of the Rev. Roger Donne, vicar of Catfield, Castres provided a home for his sister Anne in what Woodforde called 'a very small, poor Cottage', near Mattishall church. Besides Woodforde and the two Donnes, those present at the Rotation were George Howes and Thomas Bodham, who had not yet made up his mind to give up his Cambridge Fellowship and marry Anne. Two children were staying in the house, Catharine Johnson (Kitty), aged 11, and her brother John, aged 8 and on holiday from Gresham's School, Holt. Woodforde found them 'fine children', and added that their father was 'a Tanner but in a large way and lives near Catfield'. Their mother was Castres' and Anne's sister Catharine.

The tanner, John Johnson of Ludham near Catfield, was baptised in Holt on 28 May 1717, the third son of William Johnson and Mary Crofts. When or why he set up his tannery in Ludham I do not know, but an earlier inhabitant of the village, Castres' grandfather Roger Donne, was described at his marriage as a tanner, so the craft was presumably already practised there. John Johnson almost certainly lived in the Great House, a property built in 1680 and about a mile from the village. It is now refaced with flint and called the Stone House. To the rear of the house were barns and a meadow which stretched down to the River Ant, and there is a tradition in the village that this was the site of a tannery. The road on which this house stands is called Johnson Street. Over the years John Johnson acquired considerable property in the village and beyond, and was one of the foremost landowners of the district.

His first wife was Mary Bacon: nothing about this marriage is known except that the couple's first child, John, died in 1747, and in 1751, two years after giving birth to a daughter, Sarah, Mary herself died. After her death John cast around for another wife, and, date unknown, married Hannah, surname unknown. She also had a son John, but he too died as an infant. Their daughter, Hannah Maria (known as Maria), was born in 1758, and her birth was swiftly followed by that of another daughter, Anne. Both girls lived to marry and have children, but long before this their mother had died, after giving birth to another son, who lived for only a few days.

DONNES


Roger Donne =
b. 1678
d. 1722
tanner of
Ludham
Rev. Roger Donne =
b. 1702
d. 1773
of Catfield
Dr. William Donne =
b. 1712
d. 1782
of Dereham
Harriot
b. 1736
d. 1808
(Mrs. R. Baus)
Catherine
b. 1740
d. 1770
(Mrs. J. Johnson)
Rev. Castres Donne
b. 1744
d. 1789
Anne
b. 1748
d. 1846
(Mrs. T. Bodham)
Dr. William Donne
b. 1735
d. 1803
of Norwich
Thomas Donne
b. 1736
d. 1794

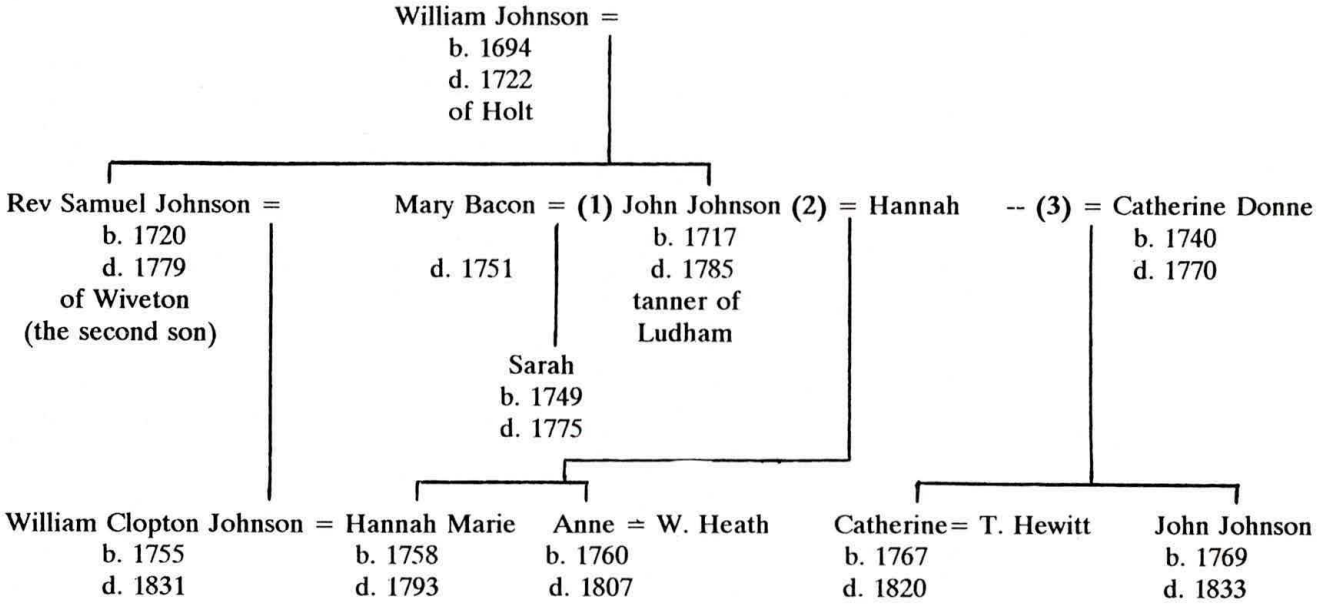
Castres Donne's eldest sister Catharine was 25 and still living in Catfield in 1765 with her parents when she became John Johnson's third wife, and took on the job of mothering his three surviving children. A branch of the Donnes lived in Holt, where John Johnson was born, and the two families were already on friendly terms; this was the first of several marriages between them. In the year of his marriage to Catharine, John Johnson gave Dr William Donne of Dereham, Catharine's and Castres' uncle, the huge sum of £1000, for which Dr Donne mortgaged his house, the George Inn, and the bowling green in Dereham. The £1000 was needed to set up Dr Donne's son Tom in London as a 'silk throwster'; Tom was to return it on receiving a legacy that he had been promised by his Donne grandmother.

The year 1770 seemed to be an auspicious one. At last the tanner had a son, another John, born to Catharine the previous November, and their daughter Kitty was a robust two-year-old. Furthermore, John senior had perfected a method of improving the tanning process, an invention sufficiently important for him to request from the Patent Office in London a licence, that he 'should and lawfully might use, extend, and vend [the process], within England, Wales and the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed'.

His method of tanning shoe leather, printed by the Patent Office as 'A.D.1770 ... No. 958' but taken from John Johnson's own description reads as follows:

> Into a scouring vatt, which will contain about six barrells, is put five barrells of water as it comes from the pump or spring. Into that quantity of water I put seven pounds of the spirit of vitriol, or the same quantity of either the spirit of sea salt or aqua fortis, tho' I more frequently make use of the vitriol only. When the scouring is thus made, the hides that are designed for sole leather are put into it for working, or more generally in an older scouring first, and if kept with handling and shifting, as in the common way of working of soles, will be compleatly wrought in twenty-four hours; a worker thus made [sic] will compleatly work six, sometimes seven, sole hides. When the hides are thus wrought, they are laid away with bark, and treated as in the common way of tanning, until they come into the second layer of bark. Then, before the leather is laid into the vatts that will hold fifteen sole hides, when barked down with about fifteen bushels of bark into fourteen barrels of wooze, I put seven pounds, or, if necessary, ten pounds of the spirit of vitriol ... [then] it lays still for at least ten or twelve weeks.

JOHNSONS


William Johnson =
b. 1694
d. 1722
of Holt
Rev Samuel Johnson =
b. 1720
d. 1779
of Wiveton
(the second son)
Mary Bacon = (1) John Johnson (2) = Hannah -- (3) = Catherine Donne
d. 1751
b. 1717
d. 1785
tanner of
Ludham
b. 1740
d. 1770
Sarah
b. 1749
d. 1775
William Clopton Johnson = Hannah Marie Anne = W. Heath Catherine = T. Hewitt John Johnson
b. 1755
d. 1831
b. 1758
d. 1793
b. 1760
d. 1807
b. 1767
d. 1820
b. 1769
d. 1833

After another soaking in 'the woose', for a further twelve or fourteen weeks, 'they are drawn out of the vatt, in order to be dryed for sale, compleatly tanned'.

The Patent Office granted his request, and John Johnson prepared to go to London to receive, and pay for, the official document. For this he had to have a court dress made, comprising a 'raspberry-cream colour coat', a woollen and silk waistcoat, edged with green braid, with buttons of plaited metal thread, and satin breeches. Years later his son John gave his half-sister Anne 'a small piece of Lace ... that belonged to our Father's Waistcoat as he had two lac'd Waistcoats made up when he went before the house respecting his Patent'.

Then the blow fell: on 26 July Catharine suddenly died. There is no hint in any of the letters of this period as to why this happened. Her husband was devastated. He must have felt that he was obliged to attend the summons to London to appear 'before the said Lord the King in his Chancery', on the stated date, 4 August, presumably just after Catharine's funeral. He brought home a large parchment which stated: 'He hath with much application, Study and Expence invented and found out a new method of Tanning Leather through bringing which into use in this Kingdom will he conceives prove very advantageous and beneficial to our Subjects and will also tend to Encrease of the Public Revenue. He is the first and sole inventor of the said new method of tanning by vitriol oil.' The document, with a large red seal and in its own box, is still extant in the family.

He had paid over £73 for the patent; out of this the Secretary of State's Office, the Attorney General, the Signet Office, the Privy Seal Office, the Lord Chancellor's Office and the Crown Office had all had their cut. The venture proved profitable, for John Johnson sold it to three other tanners: on 8 Oct. 1772 Benjamin Murrill of Beccles paid £115, and John Huggman of Halsworth paid £120 'for leave to make use of his Patent'. Even his apprentice, William Edwards, was obliged to pay £115 before he could use spirit of vitriol, for according to John Johnson's lawyer, 'Mr Wright of Norwich', the apprentice had been bound before the patent was taken out, and therefore 'was not entitled ot use it any more than a stranger'.

Catharine had been much younger than her husband, who was now 53, too old and probably too dispirited to look for a fourth wife. Three months after her death Castres told his sister Anne: 'My Bro Johnson is shrunk almost all away, but *that* Mrs [William] Donne

says proceeds from his laying alone,' and he adds, daringly, 'Do ask her, for I forgott it then, How it comes about that my Coz is so preposterously bulky.'

Sarah, the eldest daughter, struggled to bring up Maria, Anne and John, while the Donne grandparents at Catfield took Kitty to live with them. Catfield was close enough to Ludham for frequent visits to be made, often in a carriage borrowed from the tanner, whenever coach repairs and lame horses allowed. When young John was three, Harriet Balls, another of Castres' sisters, and married to a Catfield farmer, wrote to tell Anne Donne at Mattishall that Kitty 'went yesterday to see brother John ... they had not the happiness of seeing her Papa. Miss Johnson [Sarah] is very well, as is the sweet Boy – he and his Sister were very gracious to each other, and sat on one Chair.' John Johnson seems to have avoided social contact after Catharine died, and Anne Donne was told in 1771, 'we never see him, he is so taken up with barking affairs'.

Just down the road from the village lived the excise man, on the alert for smuggling and non-payment of dues. On every pound weight of tanned skin a tanner had to pay ½d – or so it seems from a contemporary document from Iteringham, where one Michael Towne got away without paying for 10 years by suborning the exciseman. (He was found to have 259 lb of skinns and '1335 pieces of soles.') This document reminds Michael Towne that tanners must 'give or send notice in writing ... when they take their hides or skins or Pieces of hide or Skins out of the wooze to be dried'. No tanner may take his hides away from the yard when dry until he has paid the duty and the hide has been stamped. He must keep scales and weights, and render an account in writing every three months. Even if the excise officer was satisfied, a supervisor could appear at any moment to check up for himself.

John Johnson's new tanning method seems to have brought in widespread custom. The *Norfolk Chronicle* for 6 October 1784 bears the advertisement:

> Many applications have been made to Mr Johnson of Ludham for his Leather in the Retail way, and as he does no Retail Business, this is to inform all country shoemakers that they may be supplied with very fine well-seasoned Sole Leather manufactured to the greatest Perfection by the above Mr Johnson.

In this year his daughter Anne married William Heath of Hemblington, who I believe was a cousin of Woodforde's visitor

of 1794, Robert Heath Marsh (see Journal XXXI, 3). The *Norwich Mercury* of 1 May 1784 described her approvingly as 'a young Lady whose many amiable qualities cannot fain making happiness the certain attendant of the connubial state'. (On her death in 1807 the young John wrote: 'The black wax is for my poor sister Heath, who died on the 4th October, and leaving nine dear children to wish for her in vain.')

Two years after Anne's wedding her sister Maria married their cousin William Clopton Johnson, the son of the tanner's brother Samuel, who was the vicar of Wiveton. Sarah, who had looked after them all so well, had died unmarried in 1775, aged only 26. After her two half-sisters married, Kitty returned to Ludham to look after her father, until he 'submitted to Fate' on 26 July 1785. He bequeathed his house and much of his land, including the tannery, to Maria, and so her husband became a considerable landlord, benefiting from a further 88 acres at the time of the Enclosure Awards in 1802.

Thomas Bodham had at last married Anne Donne in 1781, and after John Johnson died they enlarged his house at South Green, Mattishall, to give Kitty a home. Castres Donne, now vicar of Loddon, looked after John in his school holidays. Kitty became the wife of a lawyer of Mattishall, Thomas Hewitt. Her daughter, another Kitty, married Castres' grandson, William Bodham Donne, who had also been part of Anne Bodham's capacious household, in the last years of her long life. John metamorphosed as William Cowper's 'Johnny of Norfolk', but that is another story.

Acknowledgements

Much of the background to this article is based on research carried out by my grandmother, Catherine Bodham Johnson, and by my father and aunt, John and Mary Barham Johnson. The Iteringham document is in the Norfolk Record Office (BUL 4/19/12) and the tanning specification was obtained from the Patent Office. I am also indebted to Mrs Beulah Gowing for her extensive knowledge of the history of Ludham.

MARY WOODFORDE'S BOOKE – BETWEEN THE LINES

In his introduction to the Society's reprint of *Woodforde Papers and Diaries*, Roy Winstanley described Mary Woodforde as "a highly intelligent and sensitive woman who can just about write and no more".[1] Such an assessment may be made because she too kept a diary, in which she recorded, in few words, events which were happening in and around a Hampshire country rectory, or from further afield when news reached her a day or two after it had occurred. Mary Woodforde's Book reveals much less of the social history of the times than do the diaries of her husband's great-grandson, but some of the entries are sufficiently interesting to invite further investigation, hence these notes.

Mary was the second wife of Parson Woodforde's great-grandfather, the Revd Dr Samuel Woodforde, Rector of Hartley Mauditt and Curate of West Worldham, adjoining parishes about three miles south-east of Alton in Hampshire; he was also a Prebendary of Winchester, which, as Mary's diary shows, necessitated both periods of residence and visits to attend meetings of Chapter.

> *May 14 1685*
> We came to Winton to reside in the House which was our good and honoured friend's, the Bishop of Bath & Wells, Dr. Ken.

Dr Thomas Ken (1637-1711) preceded Dr Samuel Woodforde (1636-1701) at Winchester and the house, which no longer exists, was known as '2 The Close', the site now being in the garden of the Deanery. Miss Woodforde's comment,[1] that "he and his wife Mary moved into their friend Bishop Ken's house in the Cathedral Close", suggests this to be their sole residence, which the diary shows was not the case. The house must have been that occupied by Dr Ken before his consecration in 1684. Thomas Ken was bishop of Bath & Wells until the accession of William and Mary, to whom he could not swear allegiance because he had already done so to James II, this despite his experience as a non-juror. Dean Spence described him as ". . . the perfect type of the Anglican high churchman, perhaps one of the purest souls ecclesiastical history ever tells us of ".[2] Ken wrote the hymns, "Awake my soul and with the sun", "Glory to thee, my God this night" and "Her Virgin eyes saw God incarnate born", all considered worth retaining in 1983 in *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, New Standard Edition.

Ken was four years old when his mother died, with the result that he was brought up by his elder sister Anne, who became the second wife of Izaak Walton, author of *The Compleat Angler*. Walton took over the responsibility for Ken's education, when his father died when Ken was 14, sending him to Winchester and then to New College (as Parson James), where he must have been the Oxford contemporary of Samuel Woodforde.

Also May 14 1685
. . . may I always have the place in the book of Deuteronomy, the 10, 11 and 12 verses in my mind.

Mary does not make it clear from which chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy her chosen verses were taken, but as she was writing about the house in Winchester it may have been chapter 6, ". . . a land with large flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig . . . be careful that you do not forget the Lord".

November 10 1685
M^{r}. Charles Stewart's Lady was delivered of a Son

In the Hartley Mauditt registers it is recorded that on 17 November 1685 there was baptised Simeon Stuart, son of Charles Stuart Esq and his wife Clemence. (See later comment on the Stuart family.)

January 14 1686
Ann was married to W^{m}. Osgood

The Martley Mauditt registers reveal her to have been Ann Purdy and that the Osgoods had six children in the years up to 1700. William Osgood died in 1717 and is recorded as Parish Clark of Hartley Mauditt. On 27 May 1718, Ann Osgood of Hartley was married to Edward Heighes of East Worldham, in Winchester Cathedral. Why the Cathedral, we do not know; could it be that Mary Woodforde was living in the Cathedral Close and made the arrangements? An entry at Hartley records the burial on 22 April 1731 of Anne Heighes, formerly Anne Osgood.

April 1 1686
How Timothy is commanded (commended?) for having known the Holy Scriptures from a child

No, not a son missed by earlier researchers but a revealing of Mary's Bible reading of that day, some words of St Paul to Timothy, including 2 Timothy 3 v. 15, ". . . and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures".

May 27 1686
My dear husband this day gone to Winton to keep residence

The distance from Hartley Mauditt to Winchester is about 18 miles, so a journey time of twice that recorded by Parson Woodforde for Weston to Norwich. On 24 June Samuel made the journey again, this time to a Chapter meeting.

July 19 1686
. . . there happened a fire at the Parsonage House at Shaldon . . .

Samuel was presented to the living at Shaldon (now spelt Shalden), in addition to Hartley Mauditt, but as both livings were the gift of Sir Nicholas Stuart of Hartley, it was presumably this parish which Samuel was required to serve, with a Curate living in the Parsonage House at Shalden. Shalden is north west of Alton.

June 3 1686
Daughter Alice went with her Brother Heighes towards Garsington

Probably Garsington south-east of Oxford, a journey of about 40 miles.

January 14 1687
My Dear little Willy went to Winton to board at Mr. Wallaces, to go to school

William was baptized at Hartley on 19 February 1679, so he was about eight years old.

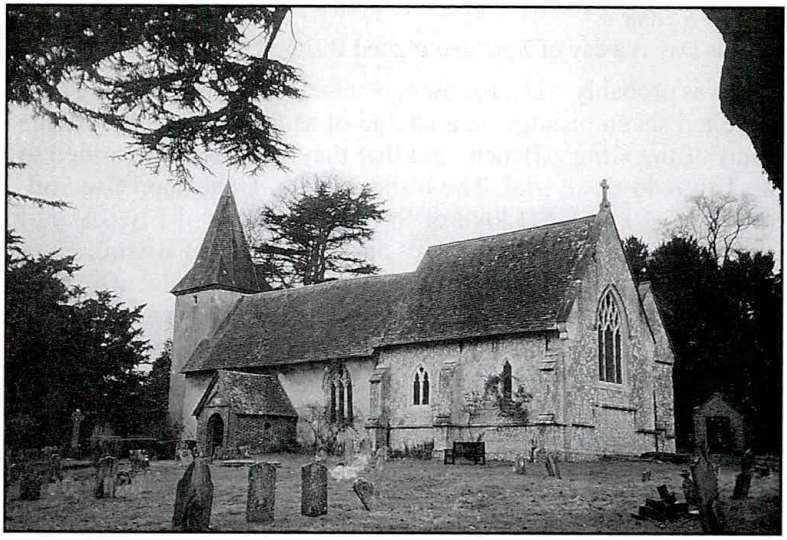
March 8 1687
Yesterday my dear husband went to Winton about Jack

Presumably the John of September 1688 and September 1689. The writer has yet to find John's baptism, but the evidence suggests that he was born between Samuel and Mary, say late 1670 or early 1671, perhaps when his father was serving a curacy in another parish. (See also the next comment.) The day before Mary had received

the cutting news that my second son was in rebellion at the College at Winton, where he and all his companions resolved not to make any verses, and being called to be whipped for it several of them refused to be punished, mine amongst the rest.

June 1 1687
My Husband had a kind letter from the Bishop of Ely in order to carry Sam to Cambridge

Samuel was baptized at West Worldham on 20 January 1669, which suggests that the curacy at West Worldham of Samuel senior may have commenced before his acceptance of the incumbency of



All Saints Church, Farringdon. Alexander Dalgress was Rector here when he married Alice Woodforde.

Hartley Mauditt in 1672, although the West Worldham registers do not record this, showing the parents simply as Samuel and Mary. The entry for the marriage of Heighes Woodford to Mary Lamport on 9 October 1690 and that of his brother Samuel to Susannah Wakeford of Selborne on 28 November 1699, both at West Worldham, are more explicit, recording each of them as "son of Dr. Samuel Woodford, Curate of this parish." Samuel junior became a Scholar of St John's College, Cambridge.

> *August 31 1687*
> My husband and self were invited to dine at my Lady Norton's at Rotherfield

This must have been Rotherfield Park, west of the village of East Tisted, which is on the Alton to West Meon road. Pevsner describes a later house built by a subsequent owner, but states, "The position of Rotherfield Park is superb".[3] It is about 5 miles from Hartley. Spare a thought for how Mary got back onto the pillion, without the stone mounting steps probably used at home, after falling off the horse she was sharing with her husband – and was she dressed for dinner or could she change on arrival? Mary's maiden name of Norton and the entry for 3 June 1686, referring to "My dear Aunt, Katherine Norton . . .", may indicate a family connection with Lady Norton.

June 8 1688
This Day is a day of Trial to our good Bishops . . .

This was probably when the news reached Hampshire that the king had cited seven bishops on a charge of seditious libel, before the Court of the King's Bench, and that they had been committed to the Tower to await trial. The bishops were Archbishop Sancroft, Compton of London, Lloyd of St Asaph, Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, Ken of Bath & Wells and Trelawney of Bristol. Their "crime" was to oppose the King's Declaration of Indulgence, a part of his attempt to return the Church of England to Rome, which led to the end of the reign of James II. The trial actually took place on 29 June, the verdict being delivered the following morning, which explains Mary's entry of 1 July. The Woodfordes must have been most concerned for their friend, Thomas Ken.

The acquittal was immediately followed by an invitation signed by seven eminent men, including Bishop Compton of London, to Prince William of Orange, a grandson of James I, to save the country from James II. It was this same Henry Compton, Bishop of London, who gave his name to the Compton Census of 1676, the manuscript of which is in the William Salt Library in Stafford, which lists for most of the parishes of the Province of Canterbury, 'conformists', 'papists' and 'non-conformists'.

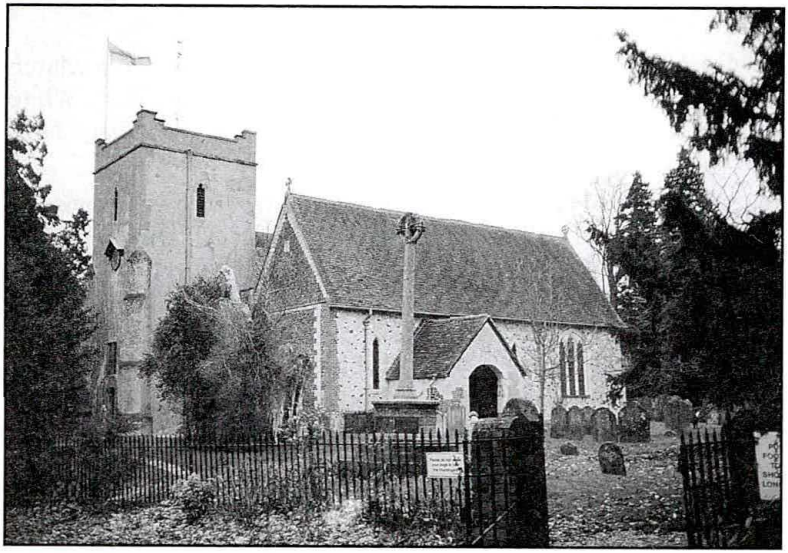
January 16 1689
My dear husband and son Heighes are gone with Sir Nicholas Stuart

The Stuarts were the major local family, who owned the Hartley Mauditt Manor House and estate, from 1614 to 1790. They were active Royalists during the Civil War, which might account for the final spelling of their name from Steward and Styward.

July 16 1689
This day my dear Master is gone to Winton . . . about taking the Oaths

This would have been the oath of allegiance to the new king and queen. William of Orange landed in Torbay on 5 November 1688. (See note on Bishop Ken, 14 May 1685.) It would seem that, like Ken, Samuel Woodforde also had doubts, having sworn allegiance to James II.

July 18 1689
My daughter Alice Woodforde was married to M^{r}. Alexander Dalgress



St Mary's Church, Selborne, where Mary Woodforde was godparent to Mary White

The Revd Alexander Dalgress was Rector of Farringdon, the parish which is south of Jane Austen's village of Chawton and west of Hartley Mauditt. If the Woodfordes were living in Hartley, then Alice would have moved away a little over two miles. Gilbert White served Farringdon as curate for 25 years from 1761, before resigning to serve his fourth and final term as curate of Selborne. In comparing the neighbouring parishes of Selborne and Farringdon, W. H. Hudson wrote, "Farringdon village, with its noble church and fine old farm buildings and old cottages, is the better village of the two".[4] (See also the next entry regarding the White family.)

April ? 1690
I was God Mother to M[r]. White of Selbourne's daughter

This must have been the Revd Gilbert White, Rector of Selborne, the adjacent parish to Hartley Mauditt, who was the grandfather of Gilbert White the naturalist. Examination of the White family tree at The Wakes shows Mary, born 1689 and Sampson born 1691, but no child born in 1690. (The famous Aunt Rebecca, whose tortoise Gilbert White brought back to Selborne by post-chaise, was born in 1694.) However, all becomes clear when it is remembered that the year 1690 commenced at the Feast of the Annunciation, 25 March, so a child baptized at a week or two old at the beginning

of April 1690 would have been recorded as being born in March 1689, if born before Lady Day. So it must have been Mary White who was Mary's god-daughter. The dates in Mary's diary have obviously been revised in line with the present calendar.

The White family of Selborne has become well known because of the publication of Gilbert White's letters as *The Natural History of Selborne*. Gilbert White (1720-1793) was a near contemporary of Parson Woodforde (1740-1802) and both record details of the weather over the same period. For example, Parson Woodforde reports heavy rain at Cole during his holiday of 1782 and that year Gilbert White measured the highest annual rainfall in Selborne, for the period 1779 to 1787.[5]*

> *June 25 1690*
> Son Dalgress' first Son was baptized . . . M[rs]. Jane Stewart (being) God Mother

Jane 'Stewart' was probably the then unmarried daughter of Sir Nicholas Stuart, who married Thomas Pleydall of Coles Hill, Berkshire, at Hartley on 25 June 1692. The choice of godmother suggests a similar relationship to that which existed between Weston Parsonage and Weston House. Perhaps "their maids took tea with our maids", or found some other reason for visiting, to exchange the local news which is not included in the diary of Mary Woodforde.

So Mary Woodforde's Booke invites reading from other sources, as between the lines comes a picture of a wife and mother, Mistress of the Rectory, greatly caring for her husband and family, extremely devout as the glimpses of her daily Bible readings show. A "highly intelligent and sensitive woman" indeed, recording the comings and goings of her family and visitors to this quiet corner of Hampshire, which remains as peacefully quiet to this day, if not more so.

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1. *Woodforde Papers and Diaries*. Edited by Dorothy Heighes Woodforde. Morrow & Co., 1990 (This edition available through the Society)
2. *The Church of England*, H. D. M. Spence. Cassel & Company (publ circa 1900)
3. *The Buildings of England – Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, Nikolaus Pevsner & David Lloyd. Penguin Books, 1867.

* Both also recorded the atmospheric effects that were consequent upon the massive Icelandic volcanic eruption of June 1783. See James Woodforde, *Gilbert White and a volcanic eruption*, Journal XXVI, 4 (Ed.).

4. *Hampshire Days*, W. H. Hudson. Oxford University Press, 1980. First published 1903 by Longman, Green & Co.
5. The Natural History of Selborne, Gilbert White. Letter V to Thomas Pennant. Many publishers.

Dates of Baptism for Mary's Children
(not given in *Woodforde Papers and Diaries*)
At West Worldham: Samuel – 20 January 1669
At Hartley Mauditt: Mary – 18 December 1672
Robert – "Baptised at home as soone as born being in imminent danger of death April 1 and upon ye Saturday Sennight April 10th publicly presented in the Church"
Anne – 27 June 1677
William – 19 February 1679

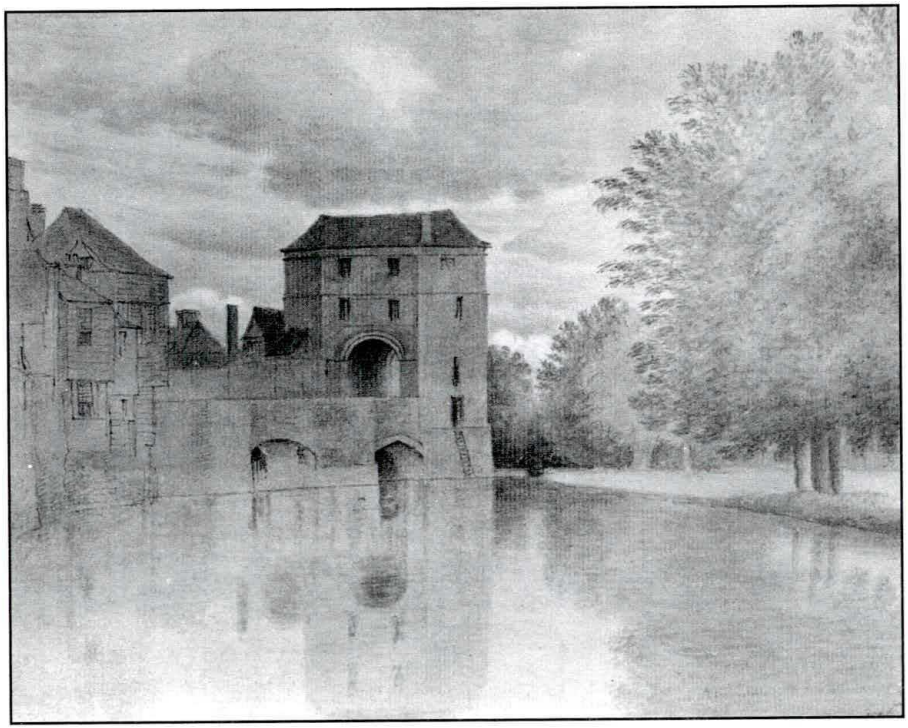
SO WHY DID THE OXEN NEED A FORD?

As we all know, Oxford's name derives from the Anglo-Saxon "Oxnaforda", a ford for oxen. Or does it? The first literary appearance of the name is in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year AD 912. The prefix "Oxna" appeared in many different forms on coins of that period minted in Oxford. The Middle English version, "Oxenford", has been shortened to Oxford, though the longer form is still in use other than as the city's name. The latinized form of the name is "Oxonia". Oxon, an abbreviation of this, has been in use continuously since the twelfth century as a short form of the county's name.

Obviously this is all to do with oxen. Yet there are queries. What exactly was this ford? Why in Anglo-Saxon times did oxen need a ford to cross a major river? Why should such a ford be so important that a city was named after it?

It is agreed that the ford came first. The seventeenth century antiquary Leonard Hutten, relying on a work published in the reign of Edward III, wrote of "The Saxons, from a certain Ford neare unto the Towne, named Oxenford". Anthony Wood says the Anglo-Saxons styled it "after the same signification as the Graecians did their Bosphoros and the Germans Ochenfurt on the river Oder".

In his history of Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire, John Blair says the ford was of regional importance before the settlement attained any size



John Malchair: Friar Bacon's Study, 1765 (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)
– the defensive gate at the southern end of the bridge over the Thames at Oxford which was heightened in the early seventeenth century and became known as Welcome's Folly, hence Folly Bridge.

(perhaps even before it came into existence). Margaret Gelling's investigation of Oxfordshire place-names tells us that most of the county's fords gave rise to settlements at their sites. She believes, however, that in the case of Oxford the existence of the ford was a secondary consideration, the main reason for choice of site being defence. That a settlement should arise at the site of a major ford is natural. Settlements often arose at crossroads, which, in a sense, a ford is, the river being a highway too. In the Anglo-Saxon period, the Thames was more important as a highway than many roads.

Like most commentators, Blair locates the ford in what seems the obvious place: the highway, or causeway, which gives its name to the district of Grandpont. This is where Folly Bridge now crosses the Thames or Isis, which, towards the end of the eighth century, formed part of the boundary between Mercia and Wessex. The north–south road was a main trading route between central Mercia and the Channel ports. It ran, says Blair, "from Offa's citadel at Tamworth, through Coventry and Banbury, and then down the Banbury road to the broad Thames crossing, which may already in Offa's time have been known as the "oxen-ford".

Recent archaeological evidence points to the construction of an artificial embankment at St Aldate's during Offa's reign. This would have formed part of a river crossing consisting of connected islands, embankments or causeways, and fords. By this means the trade route crossed the difficult Thames floodplain.

What are the other possible sites? Hutten located the ford downstream from Grandpont, where, near the Domesday village of Kennington, the bridge carrying the former railway line to Thame crosses the Abingdon Road. H. E. Salter argued for a position on the line of the present footpath from Osney Mead to Hinksey, at the point where it crosses the Bullstake stream. The 1998 *Encyclopaedia of Oxford* suggests that Magdalen bridge "may be [the crossing] of the original 'ox-ford' ". Binsey and Parson's Pleasure have also been suggested, but in his *Early History of Oxford* James Parker insists that Folly Bridge "occupies the site very nearly, if not exactly, of the older fords over the shallow streams which intersected [the water meadows]." He adds: "possibly, indeed it may be said probably, this was the original ford from which the town derived its name". R. H. D. Davis, in a detailed refutation of Salter's suggestion published in *Oxoniensia*, gives what may be thought the definitive answer:

> . . . the original oxen's ford was indeed on the line of St. Aldate's and the Abingdon Road, but . . . did not consist of one particular ford, but a whole series of fords which could be negotiated by heavy ox-carts . . . it would have been by far the most serious obstacle for traffic on the route from Northampton to Southampton, and it is not in the least surprising to find that it was eventually converted into an elaborate causeway.

The word "oxen" was a synonym for cattle; they were used for hauling carts and wagons, and for ploughing in teams of eight. The amount of work which such a team could do in an average year was converted into a unit of land measurement, an oxgang being the holding of a man who could contribute one ox to a co-operative eight-ox team.

In primitive societies cattle were a form of wealth akin to money. They were so valuable that rustling was widely prevalent. Around 973 King Edgar issued a set of regulations intended to suppress traffic in stolen cattle. So might oxen have been driven over the ford in a form of currency movement? The only ordinary money in use in later Saxon and early medieval times was the silver penny, but, as Henry Loyn points out in a history of Anglo Saxon money, its value was so high that it was impractical for most people to carry it around in their pockets or purses. So, fines, tributes or amercements were sometimes levied in oxen rather than in money.

Drove ways or drove roads, along which cattle were driven for long distances, are a feature existing from prehistoric days. One such way, starting near Shaftesbury in Dorset, is known as the Ox Drove. Blair creates an image of Mercian herdsmen:

> Tramping down the Banbury road to the place where the Martyrs' Memorial now stands, the herdsman of 950 would see a rampart of coursed rubble walling, topped by a parapet and fronted by a ditch. Once through the low central North Gate, he would find ahead of him a broad roadway of compacted limestone cobbles and gravel, running on over the central crossroads at Carfax and dipping down towards the river . . . As he drove his herd through the South Gate and down onto the cobbled ford, the church and houses of the priests of St Frideswide's [now Christ Church], over on his left, would seem to dwarf all other buildings in their scale and density.

We are left with this question. Why did the fact that this was an "oxen-ford" become a matter of notoriety hardly replicated elsewhere in England? Why was the village or town named after

the "oxen-ford" rather than, for example, the already existing convent of St Frideswide? Blair suggests it is because this was a deep ford, and that only the valuable oxen had legs strong enough for a footing to be retained when waters were high.

If we examine the names of the early fords in Oxfordshire it is not really surprising to find one named after oxen. Of thirty-one fords in the county, eight were named after the owner, three after the goods carried across (barley, hay and salt), twelve after geographical features, four after the animals crossing (geese, oxen, sheep and swine) and four for other reasons.

We find also that at least two other English Oxfords, admittedly of insignificant importance, have existed. A 937 grant of land at Brydancumbe in Wiltshire included a location named "Oxnaford". Richard de Aquila, who died in 1176, gave the manor of Oxenford in Surrey to the monks of Waverley.

There is an "Oxford" in Germany, as Wood pointed out in the passage cited above, in Bavaria on the river Main (not, as Wood suggested, the Oder and the modern spelling is Ochsenfurt). Wood also mentioned the "Bosphoros", more usually spelt Bosporus or Bosphorus. This comes from the Greek word meaning ox ford. It denotes the strait of eighteen miles which separates the Black Sea from the Sea of Marmora, traditionally regarded as the frontier between Europe and Asia. It is curious that an ox ford should have traversed this ancient boundary, and confirms the economic importance of such crossings in former times.

However, let us pause. It is entirely possible that though Oxford was indeed named after a ford located at what is now Folly Bridge, it was not after all a ford specifically reserved for oxen. Parker advances the theory that the prefix "Ox" may derive not from the animal but from the Celtic word for a river, often found in the form "Ouse". This name was once applied to the Thames where it flows past Oxford, and survives in the form of Oseney or Osney ("Osen eye", island in the Ouse).

The prefix "Tam" was often but not invariably added to this root, leading to the form "Tam-esis". In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* it is spelt "Tem-ese" in about twenty places. Parker plausibly writes: "That a ford over [the Thames] should be called from the river, is more likely to have been the case than from certain cattle which may have crossed the river . . . Osen eye, close by the ford, has retained its softer sound, while a tributary stream [the Ock at

Abingdon] has acquired a hard sound very similar to that which was acquired in Oxford.

It follows also that the name "Isis", as applied to the Thames around Oxford, has its origins in the second element of "Temese", a form often found as "Ouse". Parker writes: "Though the whole river in all historical documents has borne the name Tam-ese and never that of Ouse or Ise . . . a part of the river probably once bore the name of Ouse; possibly of ese or Ise".

Perhaps the most convincing possibility regarding the origin of Oxford's name is that when the ford began to be crossed by the Anglo-Saxons the Celtic name for that part of the river was still in use, developing along the lines "Ouse-ford", "Osna-ford", "Ock-ford". The Anglo-Saxons, in a linguistic move of a type commonly found, came to regard the element sounding like "Ox", the corruption of a Celtic word for river, as denoting a useful animal well known to them.

Thereafter it seemed more natural to speak of "Oxenford" until the liking for abbreviation took over and "Oxford" won the day.

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BOOK REVIEW

Roy Winstanley and Peter Jameson, ed., *The Diary of James Woodforde, Vol. 11, 1785-1787*, The Parson Woodforde Society, 1999, pp. 338.

On one's first acquaintance with Volume 11 four features are quickly apparent: the appearance of a new name on the front cover – that of Peter Jameson – the handsome 'Caslon' typeface, a copious collection of Notes, and a well-organised index. I understand that Roy Winstanley has given a great deal of support and advice in the production of this volume but that the entire transcription, the bulk of the material in the Notes, and the index have all been produced by Peter Jameson, whose labours with his word processor have provided us with this handsome new volume.

I like the clear 'Caslon' typeface* but find the curling flourish

* It is fun to discover that William Caslon worked in the eighteenth century and apparently provided type to the most distinguished printers of his day. He died in London in 1766.

between s and t and between c and t somewhat irritating; why is it provided for just these two-letter combinations? As in earlier volumes published by the Society, the comprehensive Notes add new dimensions to our reading; only the absence of a note on "Fools Cap Paper" (3 February 1785) sent me in search of a dictionary to pursue the interesting derivation of 'foolscap'. There is just one consolidated index in this volume which is easier to consult than the sectionalised indices which have been compiled for earlier volumes. It was also pleasing to find that the previous practice of indicating which passages had been extracted by Beresford has been discontinued; all we need to know is that we have a complete transcription of the ms diary. Overall, we are therefore much indebted to Peter Jameson who has set new standards in the presentation of the diary, supported by his enthusiastic mentor Roy Winstanley.

The three years covered by his volume see Woodforde in his mid-forties, settled in Weston with his niece Nancy, a period punctuated by one long visit to the west country in the summer of 1786. Nancy's brother William arrives in November 1785 and stays at the Parsonage until they all three make the journey to Somerset. Otherwise the days seem crowded with visits to and from Woodforde's various acquaintances, accompanied by detailed accounts of the meals which they shared and the games of cards which might follow. The years are delineated by the Tithe Audit Days – and the settling of outstanding debts soon after – but also by close observation of the weather as the seasons rotate. In the earlier months the Custances at Weston House and the Micklethwaites at Hungate Lodge were clearly regarded as the 'Genteels' of Woodforde's parish, their presence (or absence) at church being frequently noted. It is probably inaccurate to use words such as snobbish or obsequious with respect to Woodforde, but one gains an impression that the horses and carriages which attended outside his church were felt by him to add substance to the proceedings within – signifying the presence of the 'Genteels' who had come to attend his service. A single sentence in the diary, for Sunday 29 January 1786, is very revealing: "Only myself of our genteels at Church"; as *Mrs* Custance was in her pew that day, the implication is clear – that Woodforde considered there to be just three gentry in the parish and he one of them.

Reverend Mr Du Quesne of Tuddenham is a very regular visitor to the Parsonage and in April 1786 Mr Jeanes arrives on the scene (to become in fact the *Vicar* of Witchingham):

About 1.o'clock, who should come to my House but
M[r]. Jeanes the New Rector of the Witchinghams, I mounted
my Mare immediately and went with him to Great
Witchingham & inducted him into the Church &c. –
(19 April 1786)

Many dozens of minor characters cross the stage: farmers, neighbours, tradesmen, shopkeepers, tinkers, tailors, servants and innkeepers, their names preserved in perpetuity by Woodforde's pen, but we learn very little about them – and the social divides of the time are very clear.

As we have come to accept, there is little or no account of conversation in the diary and one longs for Woodforde to tell us sometimes what was actually *said* when time was spent in company. A rare, albeit abbreviated, exception is provided when Woodforde meets Mr Smith of Mattishall "in Weston Church Yard privately" –

I stayed with him near an Hour, talking over
the Affair between him & M[rs]. Davy – by which
he made out that M[rs]. Davy was as artful and
bad as any Woman could be –
It surprised me astonishingly indeed
(18 February 1786)

By contrast, there are numerous occasions when we long to know what may have been the topics of conversation:

I sat and chatted with M[rs]. Custance about 20. Minutes –
Soon after we had dined, M[r]. Du Quesne came to us,
smoked a Pipe with me & drank Tea with us again –
(1 August 1785)

In many respects, events are recorded as they might be found in a ship's log book – which will record that a vessel docked in a particular harbour at a certain time, but not the small talk of captain and crew. Thus, Woodforde's nephew Samuel arrives in Weston on 19 November 1785:

Nancy's Brother Sam[l].
From London came here in a Chaise, and he dined
supped & slept here with his brother . . .
came here about 3. This Afternoon.

Now we have already been told that Samuel –

is going to Italy to finish his Studies
in Painting – M[r]. Rich[d]. Hoare made him
the Offer and with it £100 per Annum (1 October 1785)

So, there must have been a great deal to talk over – of Samuel's time in London, of Richard Hoare and his generous support, of painting, of Italy, of Samuel's impending journey, of his aspirations for the future; this must have been the first occasion on which a member of the family would travel outside England. We are told nothing, just that:

> He . . . came here about 3. This Afternoon
> Morn' cloudy & windy but mild
> Afternoon – wind very high – lasted till 12.
>
> (19 November 1785)

Items of expenditure and income are noted carefully of course and one recalls that Woodforde's diary probably developed out of an exhortation from his father to keep such records when Woodforde first went up to Oxford. It is curious to find how trifles are recorded with the same precision as much larger sums:

> 22 September 1786:
> At Quadrille this Evening – won – 0: 0: 6
>
> 23 September 1786:
> went to M[r]. Harry
> Martins by appointment and borrowed of him 50: 0: 0
> for which I gave him my Bond – so that I owe
> M[r]. Martin now on Mortgage and Bond – 700: 0: 0

As usual, between the accounts and the log book of events, we are left with the delightful residue of incidental comments and asides with which we *are* favoured and which endear Woodforde to us for the light he casts on his eighteenth century environment. When disappointed by his omissions we have to remind ourselves repeatedly that Woodforde wrote his diary for his own purposes and not for our enlightenment over two centuries later.

Typically, this volume contains a number of passages which provide delightful glimpses into Woodforde's domestic life. Thus on 30 June 1785:

> Nancy & self very busy most of the Morning & Evening
> in papering the Attic Chamber over my Bedchamber –

and on the following day:

> I got up about 6. this morning, breakfasted early,
> and after we breakfasted, we worked very hard till near
> Dinner Time, in papering the Attic Chamber again –

Most of us will be able to relate to such a household activity but why did Woodforde and Nancy attempt such a task themselves

when numerous artisans were employed to undertake all manner of other tasks about the house and grounds? And what if Mrs Custance had called unexpectedly to take tea with them . . .?

Although somewhat atypical, the assembly at Weston Parsonage on 13 July 1785 deserves mention. No less than ten visitors –

> dined, supped & spent the
> Evening, and stayed till 3. o'clock in the Morn' with us.

The dinner menu occupies eight lines here . . . and during the proceedings Woodforde is called away "to name a Child of Mrs. Custance's who was brought to bed this Afternoon":

> I soon returned to my Company but lost my Coffee & Tea –
> After Tea and Ladies & Gentlemen got to dancing and danced
> and sang till Supper Time – about 12. o'clock this night
> we all got to dancing again . . . They all stayed with us till 3.
> o'clock in the Morning

One has to wonder what the locals (and the Parsonage servants) thought of such goings on – and also wonder to what extent Woodforde actually *enjoyed* the proceedings. On the next day he records that "We were all pretty much fatigued by Yesterdays raking . . ."

Quite apart from organised events of this kind it is to be noticed how the spontaneous 'social call' was so much a normal component in the daily round of Woodforde's era and it is amusing to take stock of the events of a day such as 25 October 1786, a "fair and fine" autumnal day –

> Mr. Thorne & his eldest Daughter called this Morn'
> Just as they were gone Mrs. Custance came to us and
> took Nancy out an Airing with her, returned about
> 2. o'clock, and Mrs. Custance stayed & dined with us –
> Whilst Mrs. Custance & Nancy were out an Airing Mr.
> and Mrs. Bodham of Mattishall called here and
> spent an Hour at Weston Parsonage – Mrs. Custance
> and my Niece returned soon after Mr. & Mrs. Bodham
> came here, Mr. & Mrs. Bodham never in Company
> with Mrs. Custance before – They seemed to like each other –
> Mr. Jeanes called whilst the above Company
> were with us – but he could not unlight –

It is surprising not to find a note to the effect that the parson was a little "hurried" by all these events. Another passage (10 August 1787) vividly describes the domestic alarm occasioned by a storm:

> About 1. o'clock this Morning there was a most
> violent Tempest – very much Lightning and the

most vivid, strong and quick I think I ever saw
before . . .
We were much alarmed, the Maids came down stairs
crying & shrieking at 1. o'clock – I got up immediately . . .
I had lighted my little Lamp, and had only laid down
on my Bed with most of my Cloathes on – and was just
dozing when I heard the Maids all of a sudden
shrieking at my Door –

Perhaps in step with his advancing age and increasing nervousness, observations of storm, wind, thunder, lightning, snow, sleet, ice and frost are to be found in abundance and we are repeatedly reminded of the hardships of the time:

Very sharp Frost indeed last Night & this Morning
it froze the Water in my Bason this Morning that
I wash in, quite over, in half an Hour after it
had been brought up Stairs –

(26 December 1786)

Comments of this kind remind us that before we can *start* to appreciate rural life in eighteenth century Norfolk we would first need to disconnect our gas and electricity services. We would also need to sever our relationships with doctor and dentist. Troubled by toothache Woodforde was driven to sending –

for John Reeves the Farrier who lives at the Hart
and often draws Teeth for People . . .
he pulled it out for me the first Pull, but it was
a monstrous Crash and more so, it being one of the Eye
Teeth, it had but one Fang but that was very long –

(24 October 1785)

Nancy was unwell for much of the stay in Cole in the summer of 1786 – "something of the Ague I believe" and during her stay received the following medicaments: "a mustart Vomit", "Rhubarb", "James's Powder", "Mixture of Pepper-mint", "another Powder", and "the Bark". She recovered in due course from both the illness and whatever effects the treatments may have added: "Nancy much better all day & eat very hearty".

Servants of the Parsonage come and go but the most important event of this kind is the departure of William Coleman. He "came home in Liquor behaved very rudely and most impudently to me indeed" (12 April 1785) and was dismissed the next day. Woodforde was clearly upset by the events:

Being so much hurried last night & this morning made
me quite ill all day – vomited a good deal at night (13 April 1785)

Coleman reappears to ask pardon for his bad behaviour, Woodforde promises to give him "a Character", and he is thereafter given odd jobs as a gardener and helps with the brewing, but in due course returns to Somerset. He is replaced by Bretingham Scurl ("We call him Briton"). Over a year later, during Woodforde's visit to Somerset we find him giving a shilling "To Will[m]. Coleman at Sister White's" (5 September 1786).

For those who have not read the diary for these years, there are some curious events to be enjoyed. For example:

> M[r]. Deckers Baloon with Decker himself in a boat annexed to it, ascended from Quantrells Gardens
>
> (1 June 1785)

> _ . . . the Captain and my self went and saw the learned Pigg at the rampant Horse . . . He would spell any word or Number from the Letters and Figures that were placed before him . . .
>
> (19 December 1785)

> walked to the Assembly-Rooms near Chapel Field and heard an excellent lecture on Astronomy &c. spoken by One Walker with a View of his Eidouranion or transparent Orrery – was highly pleased with it.
>
> (19 December 1785)

> went . . . to see the Automaton in S[t]. Stephens opposite the rampant Horse, at which we were all highly Astonished . . . the Deception indeed is wonderfully ingenious –
>
> (16 March 1786)

Woodforde records "an Eclipe of the Sun – but a small one" (19 January 1787) and an early reference to the use of an umbrella – to protect him from wind and snow at a burial service (28 January 1787).

On his journey home from the West Country he comes close to rubbing shoulders with Mr Pitt the Prime Minister at that time:

> NB: At the same Inn at Hindon was M[r]. Pitt the prime Minister, in the same dilemma as we were all the Horses being engaged –
>
> (4 October 1786)

This notable event would surely be recounted at great length in later conversations back in Weston?

As usual there are a few mysteries to note. Whatever happened to Nancy's "small red Trunk" left behind in London on their return from the West Country? It is never mentioned again despite the fact that it contained "all her principal Matters" (11 October 1786). What was the "little Lump" sent to Nancy from Mrs Davy "done up in a parcel"? (10 December 1786) Why were Nancy and Betsy Davy "sent to Coventry", apparently for three days? (12 February 1786) And *how* did Woodforde recall so exactly all his items of expenditure – as for example on 3 January 1787 when he meticulously records no less than twenty-four sums of money paid out on a visit to Norwich? Did he note the amounts in a pocket book as he went on his rounds?

I must resist the temptation to extend my extracts from this part of the diary any further, but I hope to have whetted the appetites of those who have not yet dipped into these pages. We have a further three years of Woodforde's diary in the form of a complete transcript: the delightful mixture we have come to expect – of banalities, social gatherings, domestic scenes, curiosities, and mysteries. We are very much indebted to those who have laboured to provide us with this fine new volume.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I welcome the advent of a Letters section in the Journal; few articles fail to raise doubts or queries which, when answered, add to our understanding. Unchallenged errors, however, risk repetition as established facts. The nature of past illnesses and deaths remain a fertile field for conjecture and the evidence for several hypotheses advanced in the Journal have appeared to me less than conclusive. The Parson's final illness, his fainting spells and, most recently, Juliana's death are instances where alternatives deserve consideration.

In 'Juliana Woodforde – A Case of "Consumption"?', Vol. XXXII, 4, which was unreferenced but may have been motivated by Thomas Dormandy's *The White Death*, Roy Winstanley's careful analysis of Juliana's illness and death probably reaches the correct conclusion but it does not consider possible alternatives and contains some statements that are open to debate.

Infection with the measles virus inevitably involves the respiratory tract to a greater or lesser extent, for which reason it remains a major childhood killer in unprotected communities, notably in Africa. It can reactivate 'healed' tuberculous infections or give rise to other chronic bacterial infections of the lungs or pleural cavity. An untreated empyema, or abscess of the pleural cavity, causes a prolonged wasting disease, ("consumption"), with recurrent fever leading to death for which the presence of the tubercle bacillus is not a prerequisite.

Apart from the period when the Brontë children attended the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, it is very doubtful that they were ever malnourished. This myth originated by Mrs Gaskell forms part of her vendetta against Patrick Brontë and has been repeated by a succession of authors until convincingly challenged by Juliet Barker in her magnificant *The Brontës*. Generations of readers have been indoctrinated with a picture of a harsh, restricted upbringing which it now appears was far from the truth.

Over-prescription of antibiotics does not play a major part in the current worldwide resurgence of tuberculosis: rather the reverse is true. The chemotherapeutic agents used to treat tuberculosis have, in the main, little or no place in treating other organisms and are reserved for that sole purpose. Bacteria develop resistance when exposed to antibiotics in inadequate concentration or for too short a period to bring about total eradication.

When tuberculosis gains a foothold in a population whose immunity is lowered by famine, HIV, alcohol or drugs, there is little prospect of the sufferers being either willing or able to afford a prolonged course of treatment. Each incomplete or inadequate course renders the organism resistant to yet more antibiotics; these organisms are then shared within a desperately deprived community. Frighteningly high prevalence levels have been reported in the prison populations of Eastern Europe and Africa where economic and social reasons preclude effective control. Death from tuberculosis is probably a better measure of social deprivation today than in the past when even a monarch, Edward VI, was reported to be scrofulous!

Yours sincerely,

Peter Leftley
Romsey, Hants

THE AGE OF THE TRAIN

Somerset

It is easy to see the trains that puff cheerfully across green acres in old railway posters as a welcome part of the traditional, rural environment, and motor-driven traffic, with its appetite for more and wider roads, as alien. If only we still had the old Somerset and Dorset line! A close look at the half-hidden village of Pitcombe or at Templecombe, offers a different perspective.

In the 1860s the new line, thrusting southwards from Bath, had to traverse sudden hills and valleys in south Somerset. Ruthless Victorian engineering ironed out a route and the local impact can be seen at Pitcombe. The village lies in a narrow, steep-sided valley. There are substantial stone houses of the 17th and 18th centuries and, a little apart on the slope towards Pitcombe Hill, one can see the church with its perpendicular tower and the decorative Victorian lodge and schoolhouse.

The only ways in and out of Pitcombe are narrow lanes, some of them twisting and precipitous. Parson Woodforde used to walk here from his own parish seven miles away, and in 1773, enjoyed a haunch of venison at a friend's house at Cole on the way. Less than a hundred years later, Cole was to be the site of a railway station and spectacular embankment.

In the heart of Pitcombe is a lovely range of old cottages. If you take just a few paces across the lane from their front doors you come face to face with a gaunt and brutal three-arched railway viaduct which towers above all the dwellings, between massive sections of embankment that press into the village from either side. Embankments and viaduct dwarf the buildings and block out the sky.

Templecombe has just been hung with crusader banners and pennants, one field decked out with striped tents for the jousting which celebrates the days of the Knights Templar, who came in 1180. It was the railway, however, which arrived in 1860; its low bridge blocked the view by the church and its famous junction turned a picturesque village into a railway town – part of the price paid for railway travel.

CHAIRMAN'S ENDPIECE

Hold the front page!

It was perhaps not the very front page of the *Telegraph* at which members first grasped and then gasped, but that inner section. Without warning our Parson had once again been catapulted into the lives of tens of thousands of readers. British Telecom certainly benefited from the ensuing flurry of phone calls; committee members to each other; members to committee members and friends to members. But what of the impact on the Society and its members?

In common with other appearances of Woodforde within the media, there are some very natural protective responses from the committee and members. Certainly no sound, video or word 'bite' can convey the full richness of the diarist and his environment. Predictably any 'bite' includes reference to food (pun intended) and omits so many of the gems to be found in the diary. So our natural response is perhaps to seek to redress the balance, in this case by including reference to Woodforde's life at Oxford, in Somerset, on his journeys, in his dealings with his friends, and so on. But is this response necessary?

From the Society's point of view I believe no harm has been done; any person intrigued by such media exposure will soon discover for themselves the true Woodforde. Will it benefit the Society? The answer is yes – responses to the article have shown a very genuine interest in Woodforde and as a consequence membership has increased. Have Telegraph readers been misled? Well perhaps they might have a biased view – but at least they now have sight, not ignorance of Woodforde.

You will gather I support the appearance of Woodforde in the *Telegraph.* The Reverend Jameson and Phyllis Stanley are to be congratulated for achieving coverage which benefits both the reader and the Society. To members who joined as a result of the article, we extend a very warm welcome and look forward to your involvement with the Society.

The minds of committee members are currently very much focused on the May Frolic.This annual event is complementary to the Journal, the Newsletter and the Society's publications and is one of the few occasions when members meet. The Society's Annual General Meeting coincides with the Frolic and I draw your attention to details on the AGM which appear elsewhere. Each year the

membership elects its committee at the AGM and consequently we all have the guardianship of the Society in our own hands.

I look forward to meeting many of you in Somerset, renewing old acquaintances and making new friends.

NIGEL CUSTANCE, *Chairman*

THE PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1968 by the Rev. Canon L. Rule Wilson and may be said to have two main aims: one, to extend and develop knowledge of James Woodforde's life and the society in which he lived, and the other, to provide opportunity for fellow enthusiasts to meet together from time to time in places associated with the diarist, and to exchange news and views.

Membership of the Parson Woodforde Society is open to any person of the age of 18 years and over upon successful application and upon payment of the subscription then in force, subject only to the power of the committee to limit membership to a prescribed number.

The Annual membership subscription of £12.50 (overseas members £25) becomes due on 1 January and should be forwarded to the Treasurer, Dr David Case, 25 Archery Square, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7JA.

PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY COMMITTEE 1999/2000

George Bunting	*President*
Dr Nigel Custance	*Chairman*
Martin Brayne	*Vice-Chairman & Editor*
Dr David Case	*Treasurer*

Jenny Alderson, JoAnn Archer, Suzanne Custance, Mollie Matthews, Phyllis Stanley, Ann Williams, Roy Winstanley

The Parson Woodforde Society is a registered charity no. 1010807

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