PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY JOURNAL

Bosmere House, Creeting St. Mary, Suffolk.
by Eleanor Irving

VOL VI No. 3 WINTER 1973

Each house is swept the day before
And windows stuck wi evergreens
The snow is beesomd from the door
And comfort crowns the cottage scenes
Gilt holly wi its thorny pricks
And yew and box wi berrys small
These deck the unused candlesticks
And pictures hanging by the wall.

Neighbours resume their annual cheer
Wishing wi smiles and spirits high
Glad christmass and a happy year
To every morning passer bye
Milk maids their christmass journeys go
Accompanyd wi favoured swain
And children pace the crumping snow
To taste their grannys cake again.

- JOHN CLARE: 'THE SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR'
(1827)

... Weston Singers sang the Christmas Anthem this Morning at Church and very well indeed. The following old Men dined at my House to day being Christmas Day. Thos. Cary, Thos. Carr, Christ. Dunnell, Nath. Heavers, John Peachman and my Clerk Js. Smith. To each of whom, I gave after Dinner 1s/0d, 6. 0. Dinner to Day, Surloin of Beef rosted and plumb Puddings. It pleased me much to see the old Folks so happy as they were.

- JAMES WOODFORDE: 'DIARY, 25/12/1792'

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EDITORIAL

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the last Journal for 1973. It has been in many ways a difficult year for us, harassed as we are by money problems, caught in the inflationary spiral and subject to ever mounting costs. Next year's raised subscriptions may ease the situation a little, and it is hoped that none of our members will leave us because of that measure, taken most reluctantly by the Committee. We have been greatly helped by a most generous gift, the munificent action of a member who wishes to remain anonymous. This has enabled us to balance our budget for the year.

The essays and articles to this issue are all of a biographical nature. I should like particularly to recommend Mr. Erith's study of a holiday visit made by the Parson in his first Weston year. Apparently this was the only time our diarist was ever a guest in a country house. Mr. Erith also provided the fine array of illustrations, including that on the front cover.

As usual, I had more material available than space in which to print it, and something had inevitably to be sacrificed. In this case it was an essay on bishop Bathurst, who was one of Woodforde's close friends in the New College days. If it is asked why I have chosen to retain a piece about a farm servant and omit one about a bishop, the answer is simply that the essay on Ben Leggett was considerably the shorter. It was also overdue; being, in fact, a companion piece to 'Poor Will Coleman!', published in the Journal as long ago as 1970. I have held Ben back all this time, expecting fresh information which has never transpired. I now print what I have been able to discover about him, in the hope that another researcher will be more fortunate than I have been, and continue the story.

I am pleased to include the notes on Thurloxton and its district which were sent to me by Mrs. Berta Lawrence, and have added more information about a neglected

episode in Woodforde's early life. My review of her new book 'Somerset Legends' also appears in this issue.

I am also greatly indebted to the Rev. Gordon 'Jimmy' James, Priest-in-Charge of All Saints, Weston Longville, for the interesting account of the Weston Flower Festival held this summer, which he has kindly allowed me to reprint from an issue of 'Wensum Diary'; the monthly magazine of Weston Longville with Morton-on-the-Hill and Great and Little Witchingham, of which he is editor.

From the same source I have reprinted the charming and philosophical little poem about the Great Witchingham School sports, from what is so far our youngest but certainly not least talented contributor!

- R.L.W.

NOTICES

The Woodforde week-end in 1974 - the Bicentenary of Parson James Woodforde's presentation to the living of Weston Longville - will be held in Norfolk from 14 - 16 June, when we hope that the Bishop of London, a founder member of the Society, will be able to preach in All Saints, Weston Longville, on the morning of 16 June. Please note these important dates in your diary.

Subscriptions for 1974 will be due on 14 January. The single subscription is now £3.00 and the double subscription £3.50.
Please assist us by paying promptly.

L.R.W.

We must apologise for the delay in the printing of this issue but, as you will appreciate, this is due to the three day week power crisis.

WOODFORDE'S SUFFOLK HOST

One episode in the Parson's life to which Beresford did not pay full justice was the week Woodforde spent in a country house in Suffolk, in May 1775.

It was just after the diarist, accompanied by his friend Washbourne Cooke, had visited Weston for the first time. Beresford paraphrased the diary here by saying:

> The next day Cooke leaves him to go and stay with his brother-in-law, a captain Uvedale, at Boxmoor House, near Needham in Suffolk, where the Diarist is to re-join him in about ten days' time...
>
> On May 9th the Diarist joins his friend Cooke at Boxmoor, about thirty-seven miles from Norwich...

Beresford then quoted the diary, giving the reunion with Cooke and Woodforde's meeting with the very agreeable Uvedales. "Here", wrote Beresford, "he spends a most pleasant week, visiting Ipswich and going out in the Captain's 'Chariot' to call on various neighbours and relatives of the Captain's".

Now to anyone living within 30 miles or so of Needham this is tantalizing information. Where was Boxmoor House, and does it still exist? And who were the friends and relatives of Captain Uvedale whom Woodforde visited? And was Uvedale a retired army captain, or perhaps an officer in the local militia?

Tne answer to the last question was given in Chambers' 'Dictionary of National Biography', issued in 1816. It mentioned a 17th. century Rev. Robert Uvedale, a famous botanist who had an aristocratic school in Enfield Palace, and who

introduced the cedar tree into England (1). He was also vicar of Enfield, Middlesex, Orpington in Kent, and rector of Barking in Suffolk. To quote from this source: "A full length portrait of him was until recently in the possession of the late Admiral Uvedale of Bosmere House in Suffolk". (2)

BOXMOOR House was, then, a misreading by Beresford, in transcribing Woodforde's diary, for BOSMERE House; and Captain Uvedale was not an army officer, but must have been a captain in the Navy who later became an admiral. 'Bosmere' must, of course, refer to that curious round lake, part of the River Gipping, which gives its name to the Bosmere Hundred.

A little way from Bosmere lake stands Bosmere Hall, formerly called Bosmere House. It is a large mansion of three storeys, set in a park, with fantastic gables and steep Victorian rooves covering the top storey. It hardly seemed possible that this would be the Bosmere House that Woodforde visited in 1775, but it was!

It was originally a two-storeyed Georgian building but in 1890 a tenant, Mr. Tidswall, with 8 children and 19 servants, decided to add on a top storey to house this retinue. A faded old photograph, taken before these alterations, showed that the original house was certainly a Georgian one, and the title deeds reveal that Captain Uvedale built it in 1768. (3)

So much having been found out, it seemed worth while to obtain xerox copies of Woodforde's original entries for the week of his visit there, which the Bodleian Library in Oxford obligingly produced by return of post.

This is what Woodforde wrote:

May - 9 -
I breakfasted at Norwich and then forth for Suffolk -

...

I changed Horses at Schole Inn - 20 Miles from Norwich -

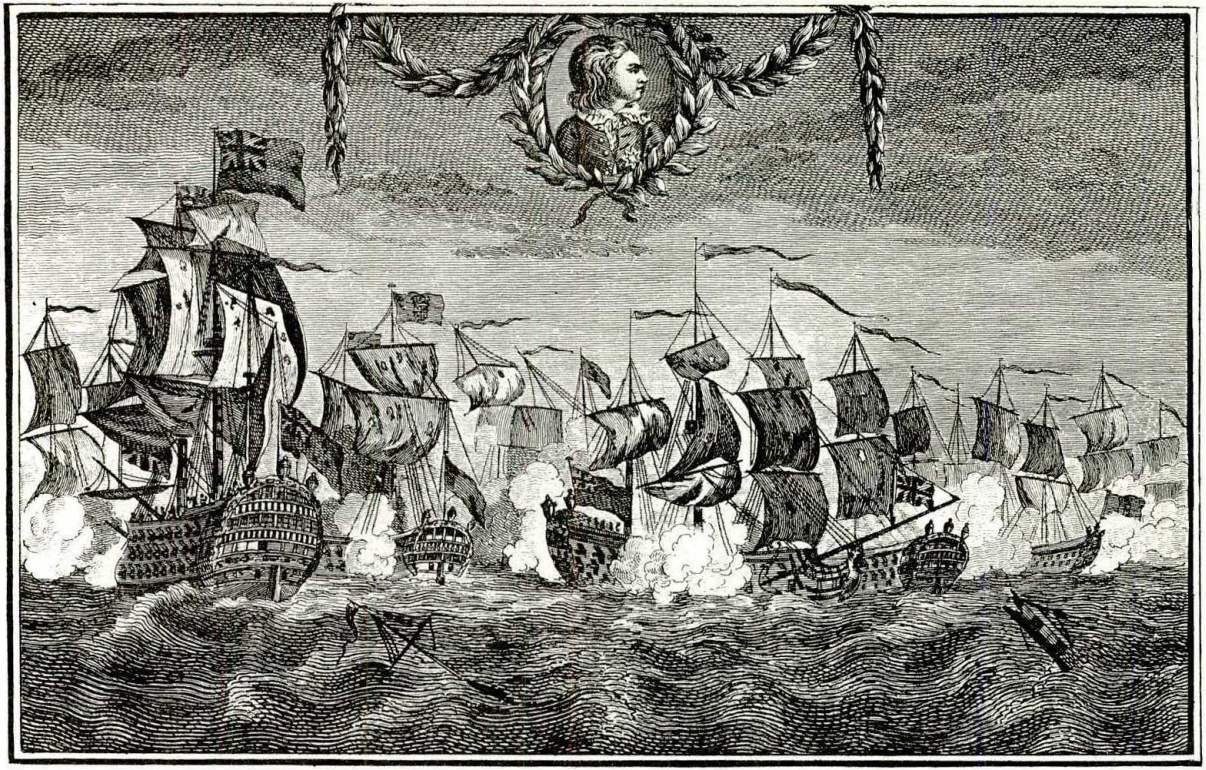
...

From Schole Inn went to Bosmeer about 17. Miles & just at Bosmeer met Cooke in the Fields walking - Cooke conducted me to Bosmeer House to his Brother in Laws Captain Sam[l]. Uvedales, who has a most no=ble House & a very fine Estate all round the same - For the Schole Chaise, Driver & Turnpikes - p[d] 0:14:0. I dined, supped & slept at Captain Uvedales with his Wife & M[r]. Cooke - - - Every thing very elegant - - Captain Uvedale & Lady behaved exceeding civil & polite to me indeed - very agreeable People - - Miss Uvedale who lives at Needham about a Mile of(f) drank tea in the Afternoon with us - she is a Sister of the Captain's - her father lives at Needham.

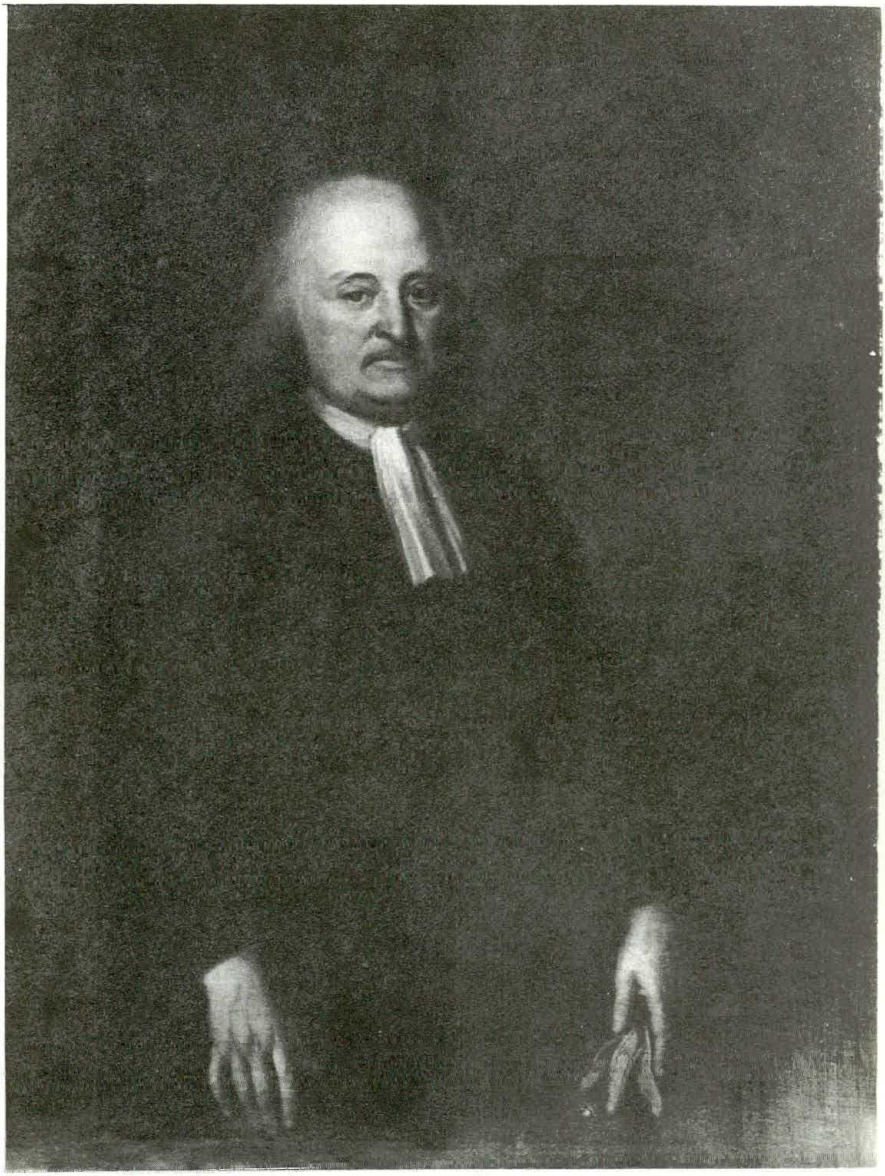
* May - 10 -
I breakfasted, supped & slept again at Bosmeer. I had a most elegant Room to sleep in indeed - M[r]. Uvedale the Captains Father called at Breakfast - We all dined at old M[r]. Uvedales at Needham to day and spent the Afternoon - with old M[r]. Uvedale his two daughters & some strangers - - -
Old M[r]. Uvedale is a Clergyman & has two Livings -
At Cards Quadrille after Tea - - - won - - 0:1:0
We were very cordially entertained at Needham.

* May - 11 -
I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at Bosmeer. M[r]. Uvedale, Miss Uvedale, M[r] Cooke & self went in the Afternoon in the Captains Chariot to Ipswich where we drank Tea with two old Maids by name Reeves we saw the Militia & heard the Roll-calling in the Evening in the Market Place - - - - - - - - -
Ipswich is about 6. Miles from Bosmeer - - -
We returned about 9. o'clock - - - - - - - -

* May - 12 -
I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at Bosmeer. Miss Uvedale dined, supped & spent the Evening with us. In the afternoon we went in the



The Moonlight Battle



Rev. Robert Uvedale, botanist. (Artist unknown)
Rector of Barking 1700-1723
By permission of the Ipswich Museums Committee

Chariot & saw a Mr. Bacons House, we drank Tea with him - - -
Mr. Bacon has a noble new House building, but what is a great Misfortune, the Family of the Bacons have been always mad, but the above Mr. Bacon is clear of it only he is apt to be very low sometimes - - - - he is a Batchelor but has 5000. per Annum, he is a Clergyman, his Father would have him to be so.

* May 13 -
I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at Bosmeer. In the Afternoon we went in the Chariot and Miss Uvedale with us to another Mr. Bacons Brother of the other Gentleman & a Clergyman also who lives at Coddingham, and there we drank Tea, this Afternoon & played at Quadrille at 3. per Fish - - - He has a very pretty House indeed lately built - - At Quadrille this Afternoon lost - - - 0:4:6

* May - 14 -
I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at Bosmeer. Captain Uvedale & his Lady & Cooke went to Church in the Chariot this morning, I stayed at home not being dressed in Time - - - - - - -
In the Afternoon I went with Capt: Uvedale, his Lady and Cooke in the Chariot to Needham Chapel & heard a very indifferent Sermon from a Mr. Griffith, Curate there. We spent the Aft: at old Mr. Uvedale's at Needham, with him & his daughters & a Mr. Marriott

* May - 15 -
I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at Bosmeer. Old Mr. Uvedale & two daughters dined & spent the Afternoon at Bosmeer - he and one of his daughters returned to Needham in the Evening - the other supped &c with us Capt. Uvedale, myself & Cooke took a Walk to Needham in the Evening & smoked a Pipe there with a Shop-keeper by name Marriott a very hearty Man. It being our last Night at Bosmeer we made very late hours of it - We got to Quadrille after Supper with Miss Uvedale & did not go to Bed before 2.o'clock. at Quadrille this Evening - - - lost - - 0:1:6
The Capt. went to bed in very good time - - -

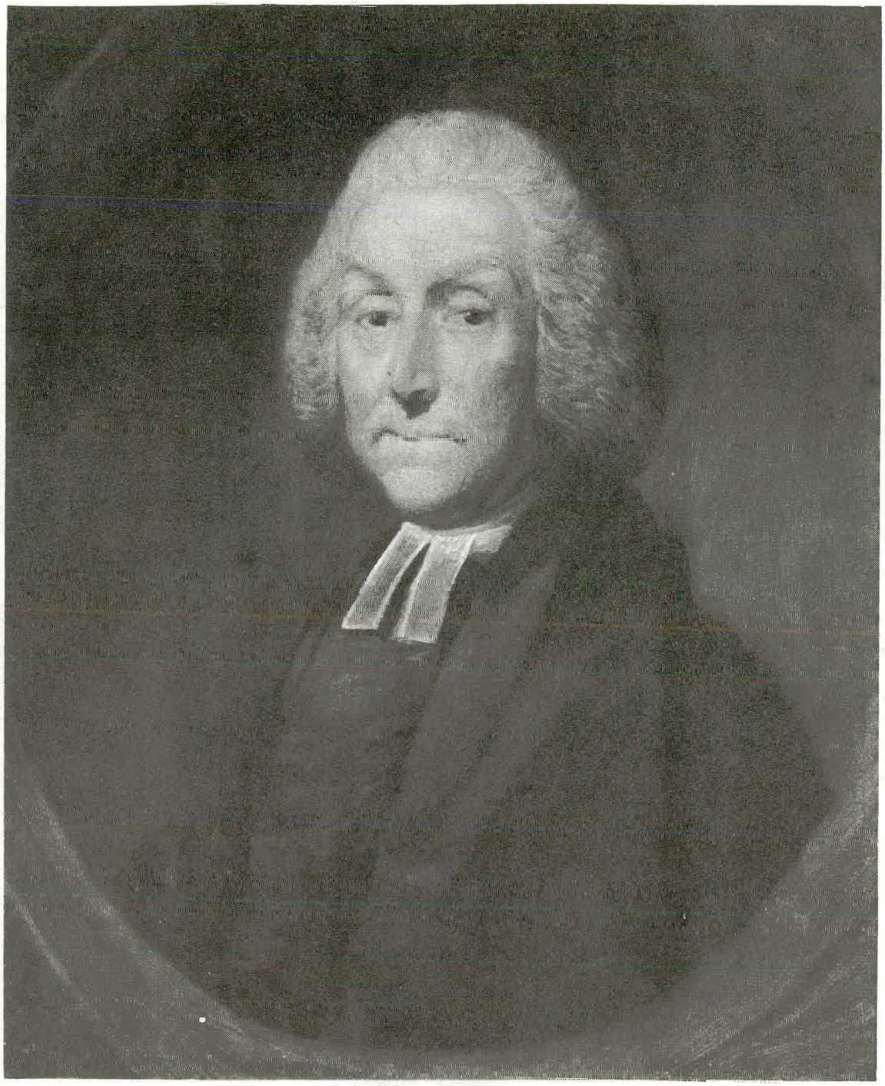
* May - 16 -
We got up at 5. o'clock and at 6. Cooke & myself went in the Captains Chariot for Ipswich to go in the Ipswich Post Coach for London to day. The Captain was up as soon as us to give orders - We took our leave of M.rs Uvedale last Night. I left in my Bed Chamber on the Table - - - 0:10:0
for the Captains Chamber Maid - - - - - - -
We got to Ipswich by 7. o'clock - - - - - -
Gave the Coachman & Servant Boy - - 0:10:0
For the Captain he took a ride a different way. I never met with more Civility anywhere than I have done at Capt. Uvedales - his Lady very agreeable. At 7. this morning we got into the Ipswich Post Coach for London - two Strangers were with us We breakfasted at Colchester, dined at Brentwood supped & spent the Evening and slept at the Turks Head Coffee House in the Strand - London - - -
At Colchester for our breakfasts - - p.d - - 0:2:0
At Brentwood for our Dinner - - p.d - - 0:6:0
For our half Fare - Cooke p.d the other p.d - 0:15:0
Gave the Coachman - - - - - - - - - - - - - 0:2:0
Very fine Road & pleasant from Ipswich to London very much fatigued by the Journey & late Hours before.

- - - - - -

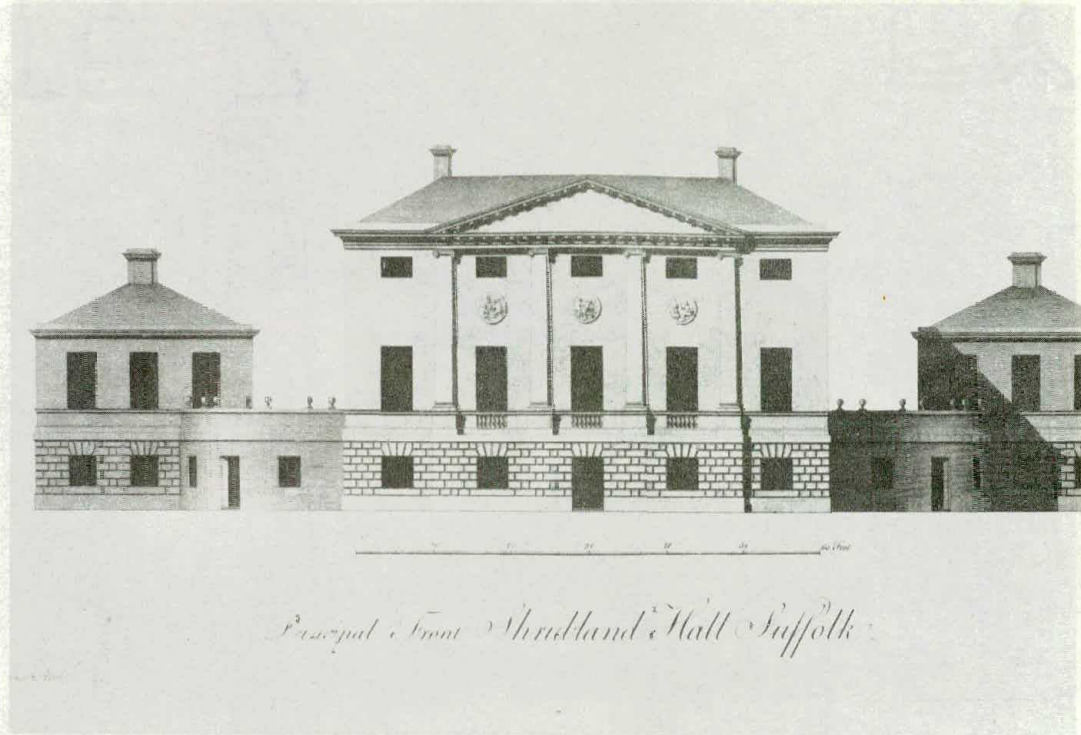
Some comments on the persons and places mentioned here must be made.

Among the title deeds of Bosmere House is an estate map, which shows the mansion and park of 60 acres, and the southern half of the mere as Uvedale's property, all being in the parish of Creeting St. Mary.

"Old Mr. Uvedale", the Captain's father, and the son of the botanist, was rector of Barking, Suffolk. Needham, although a much larger place, was ecclesiastically a chapel-of-ease to Barking. By "Needham Chapel" Woodforde meant the present Needham Market parish church. Old Mr. Uvedale and his two unmarried



The Rev. Samuel Uvedale by Thomas Gainsborough.
Rector of Barking, Suffolk 1723-1775.
From the collection of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Mellon.



Shrubland Hall as Woodforde saw it, by James Paine, from a drawing in the Sir John Soane's Museum.

daughters lived in Needham Street, the house being the present Barclay's Bank, where there was the traditional Uvedale cedar tree in the garden. Marriott's shop is four doors to the south of it. About three years previously old Mr. Uvedale had gone to Bath, and while there had his portrait painted by Gainsborough (4). Old Mr. Uvedale was at this time seventy-five years old, and he died a few months later. The ages of the party were: Woodforde was thirty-five, Miss Uvedale forty-two, Cooke thirty-one, his sister Mrs. Uvedale thirty, and the Captain fifty.

It was incorrect of Woodforde to refer to "two old Maids by name Reeves". Actually, they were Sarah and Jane Reeve, who lived in Northgate Street and came from a very distinguished Ipswich family. Their sister Clara Reeve was a writer who two years later swept England with her novel 'The Old English Baron', which went into 13 editions and was ranked with Horace Walpole's 'Castle of Otranto'. A brother Samuel was an admiral, and another brother, the Rev. Thomas Reeve, was headmaster of Bungay Grammar School. Some 15 years later Woodforde mentioned Thomas Reeve, without apparently connecting him with his sisters in Ipswich. In 1790 he was on a business trip to Bungay and wrote in the diary: "Before I left Town, saw Master Thomas Roupe who is at School at the Rev. Mr. Reeve's - gave him 0:1:0".

The rich Mr. Bacon's house was Shrubland Park, now owned by Lord de Saumarez. It was apparently not quite finished when Woodforde saw it. The house was designed by James Paine in the Palladian style (5). Later owners of Shrubland with too much money have altered it out of all recognition. There is some truth in Woodforde's assertion that the Bacons were mad - at least, Mr. Bacon's father Montague Bacon, the scholar and critic, spent the last five years of his life "in Mr. Duffield's Madhouse" in Chelsea.

"The other Gentleman" was the Rev. Nicholas Bacon, of Coddenham Vicarage, two miles east of Bosmere. This is still a very pretty house indeed, as Woodforde said. It is a red brick house, with "most elegant" fittings and plasterwork, and an Ionic porch, set in a small but beautiful park. The present owners found a playing card behind a fitted bookcase in the study with the name 'Nicholas Bacon' written on one side. The other side was the ten of clubs.

Five years later Nicholas Bacon married Anna Maria Brown. She was twenty-seven at the time and was the elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Brown of Tunstall. She appears in one of Gainsborough's most famous pictures: 'Mr. and Mrs. John Browne and child', she being the child, then aged two. (6)

Having disposed of all the minor characters in this episode, it only remains for me to say something of the major figure, Captain Samuel Uvedale himself. He was the only lay member of an otherwise completely clerical family. His grandfather the botanist, his father and two uncles, his brother and his son-in-law were all parsons.

He was born in 1725 at Barking, Suffolk, (7) and the first mention of him in naval records is when he was gazetted lieutenant in 1747. In 1756 the Seven Years War broke out, and gave him a chance to distinguish himself. The 'Gentleman's Magazine' for June 1759 quotes the despatches from the West Indies from General Barrington to "Mr. Secretary Pitt", a report of the combined operations which resulted in the capture of the island of Guadeloupe. It was important that the key port of Petit Bourg should be quickly taken; and while the army attacked by land, the navy was also represented:

> We found Captain Uvedale there in the Granado bombship throwing shells into the fort; the enemy did not remain in it long.

In the following year Uvedale was made Post Captain and given command of the frigate 'Boreas' of 28 guns and 170 men. In October 1760 three English frigates, of which 'Boreas' was one, engaged five French frigates off Jamaica:

> At midnight the Boreas engaged the Sirenne, but being disabled aloft fell astern, and could not come up with her till 2 p.m. on October 18th. off the coast of Cuba. A hot action then ensued and at 4.30 the Sirenne struck, (i.e. hauled down its flag in token of surrender) having lost 80 killed and wounded. The Boreas had lost but one killed and one wounded.

Of the other four enemy frigates, one was captured, one escaped, and two were forced on shore and blown up. The 'Sirenne' ('Sirène'?) of 32 guns was immediately added to the British Navy under her own name. Admiral Holmes gave the strongest commendation of the three commanders who were then engaged.

In 1762 "the Boreas of 28 guns, Capt. Samuel Uvedale", was one of about 50 ships on the Jamaica station, and served under Sir George Pocock at the reduction of Havana.

According to one source, at about this time Uvedale captured a very valuable prize, and with ensuing prize money was later able to build Bosmere House and buy the land round about it. (8)

In 1763 the Seven Years War ended. Uvedale had been on the West Indies station for four years. Almost immediately after the fleet arrived home the marriage of "Captain Uvedale of the Boreas to Miss Cooke of Edmonton" was announced in the 'Gentleman's Magazine'. He was thirty-eight and she eighteen: they were distantly related. It was probably a marriage arranged by the families, and a clause in the title deeds shows that he had settled £3000 on her! They went to live at Needham while Bosmere House was

"building", since in 1764 Uvedale and his father were listed as subscribers to Kirby's 'Suffolk Traveller'. Between 1763 and 1767 three children were baptized at Edmonton. Two of them died in infancy.

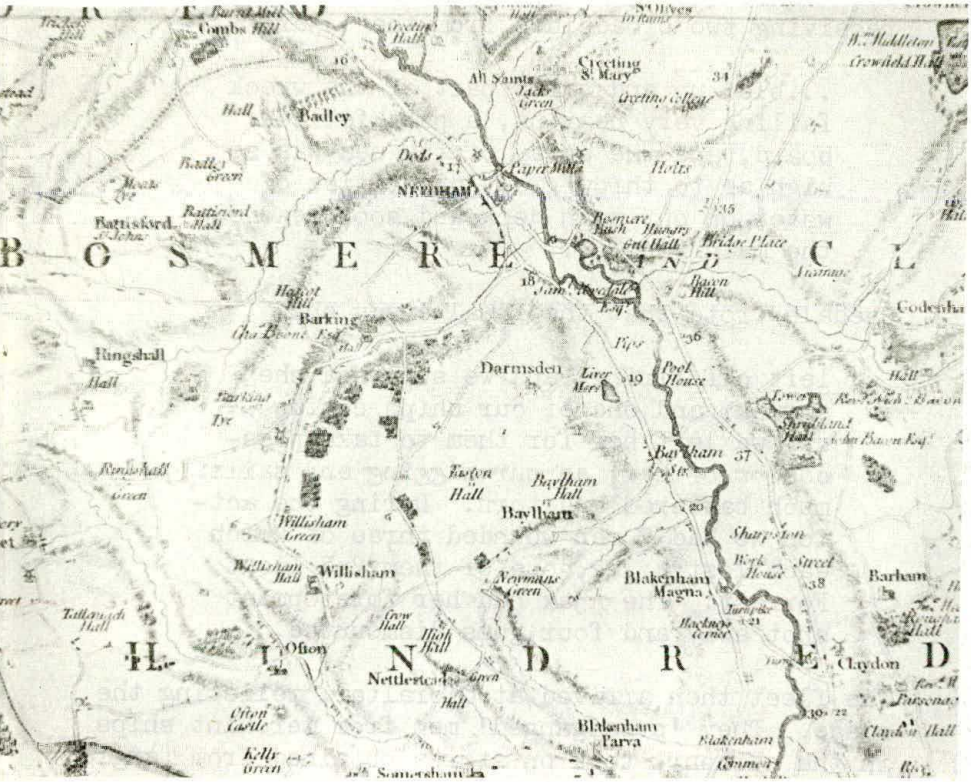
Nothing more is recorded of Uvedale during the twelve years of peace until Woodforde's visit in 1775. But in that year war broke out again with France and Spain, and in 1778 the American colonies revolted.

Uvedale rejoined the Navy and in 1779 was given a ship-of-the-line, the 'Ajax' of 64 guns and 600 men. His logbook for the time when he was in command is preserved in the Public Record Office. It began on 24 August 1779 when he wrote: "Took command in Portsmouth Dock". The next three months were occupied in fitting out, taking in stores, guns and finally ammunition. On 14 December the entry is "punished Daniel Kidney with twelve lashes for drunkenness and disobedience of orders". A week later Admiral Rodney assembled all the captains and lieutenants, and on the 30th. of the month they were at sea escorting a convoy, "144 sail in sight".

On 21 January there was the laconic entry: "departed this life two seamen ". In the next three months a score of other seamen "departed this life" with no more explanation in the log; a reminder of the toll that accident and disease took in the navy of the 18th. century.

Rodney had orders to proceed to Gibraltar, relieve the besieged garrison there, and sail to the West Indies. The voyage to Gibraltar was full of incident and several prizes of enemy merchantmen were taken.

Off Cape St. Vincent a Spanish fleet with convoy was sighted. What followed is now known as "the Moonlight Battle", which took place at night in a strong gale and heavy rain. (9) 'Ajax' was in the thick



Map of the Bosmere region.
Detail from Hodskinsons Map of Suffolk 1783.
Suffolk Records Society.
(Showing the seats of Uvedale and the two Bacons.)

of the fight for eight hours and engaged eight or nine enemy ships in turn, giving and receiving broadsides as they passed. One Spanish vessel, the 'Santo Domingo'. 70 guns and 600 men, after receiving two broadsides from the 'Ajax'

> ...blew up and sank, part of the wreck falling very near us, a part fell on board, and the spray of the sea was so high as to throw great quantities of water on our main deck and soon reached the main topsail.

Uvedale wrote that the final enemy ship

> left off firing, and we supposed she struck, and one of our ships coming up, we left her for them to take possession of her, as our rigging and sails much battered and torn. During the action we had 9 men wounded three of which each lost a leg, one of them 2nd Lieut. Forrest. The Ajax had her foretopmast shot away and four guns dismounted.

The fleet then arrived at Gibraltar, relieving the siege. They 'pressganged' men from merchant ships in the harbour, took on stores obtained from Tangier, and sailed to the West Indies.

On 17 April Uvedale fought his last action, the very bloody battle off Dominico, which afterwards engineered a lot of bitterness between the commanders. (10) Rodney placed himself in the centre: Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker commanded the van, with Captain Uvedale in the 'Ajax' and Captain Affleck of the 'Medway' in his squadron. Vice-Admiral Joshua Rowley commanded the rear. Quite a Suffolk gathering!

In the battle the British and French fleets were about equally matched. Rodney, commanding from the 'Sandwich', signalled that the fleet should stick together and attack the enemy's rear. But the

British commanders, either ignoring these signals or not understanding them, adopted "Standing Orders", which was to engage the enemy one against one in extended order. The enemy, with more tactical wisdom, concentrated on the British centre, with the result that the 'Sandwich' took on three enemy ships at once and very nearly sank. Both sides took a terrific battering, all ships had heavy casualties, but none sank. Rodney was furious, but the truth was that the fleet had not had time enough to be welded into a "band of brothers". Anyway, he had to send home an account of the battle and make it sound like a victory. He ended his despatches with the following sentence:

> Captain Uvedale of the Ajax, whose health would not permit him to remain in the country, and Captain Bazeley of the Pegasus (frigate), are charged with my dispatches, and will acquaint their lordships with every particular they may wish to know. Enclosed I send a list of the killed and wounded. (which amounted to 473)

What had happened to the health of Captain Uvedale that he had to be sent home? So far as can be gathered from the log of the 'Ajax', Uvedale started the battle in perfect health. He had written:

> The signal for the ships ahead to stand in and attack the enemy; and the signal for a general action, which the Sterling Castle (the leading British ship) and the Ajax began with three of their (the French) van ships. At 3 o'clock the enemy was drove out of their line and bore away. At 5 employed knotting and splicing the rigging.

As the 'Ajax' suffered 4 killed and 15 wounded, there was a hiatus in the log as the details of the action are not mentioned at all. "Knotting and splicing" are things that would have to be done

after an engagement was terminated - as it were, licking one's wounds!

Actually what had happened was that Uvedale had concussion. When he got back to England to report to the Admiralty, he claimed complete forgetfulness of the whole action because during it something heavy fell on his head. (11)

When the news of the battle reached England, Woodforde happened to be in Norwich. He wrote in his diary:

> The fireworks began about 11. o'clock and lasted about an hour. A representation of the engagement between the English and French fleets under Sir George Rodney.

Captain Uvedale was found another ship to command, the 'Dublin' of 74 guns, in which he served under Admiral Darby. He was still feeling the effects of his concussion when the squadron decked at Spithead in December 1780, and he wrote the following letter to the Admiralty.

> My Lord, When I last applied to your lordships to serve, I flattered myself my health was sufficiently established to enable me to do my duty. But since I have commanded the Dublin I find the giddyness with other alarming complaints returned, which induces me to request your lordships permission to resign the command of the Dublin, and I trust your lordship will believe me when I affirm that when I find myself in a situation to do justice to His Majs Service, I shall most readily make your lordship a tender of my service.
>
> I am my Lord with the greatest respect your Lordships very much obliged most obedient and faithful servant, Samuel Uvedale.

So he left the active service of the Navy. He was fifty-five, and the most senior on the list of Captains. But he must have recovered as he lived for another twenty-eight years.

There was much bitterness when the war was over about the appointment of officers to flag rank. There was a debate in Parliament, in the form of a vote of censure, in which both Pitt and Fox spoke. Pitt naturally opposed the motion and Fox was for it. The promoter Mr. Bastard particularly mentioned six senior officers who had led distinguished careers in the Navy, and had been passed over for promotion: Captains Laforey, Thompson, Balfour, Bray, Sir Digby Dent, and Uvedale. The motion was lost, but the result was that Uvedale was put on the superannuation list and given the rank of Rear Admiral.(12)

Uvedale retired to Bosmere, but his domestic life was saddened by the death of two of his three daughters at the ages of nine and ten. The other daughter married the son of the vicar of Edmonton, Dr. Owen, but died only two years later. His niece Sophia Uvedale married at Barking the Rev. Thomas Reeve, headmaster of Bungay Grammar School, the four witnesses to this marriage being Samuel Uvedale and his wife Margaret, and the "two old Maids" Sarah and Jane Reeve. (13)

By the time Uvedale died in 1808 his exploits had been forgotten. The 'Gentleman's Magazine' merely reported the death "at Ipswich of Saml Uvedale Esq., a Rear Admiral of the Royal Navy in the Superannuation list. He was made Post Captain in 1760".

When his widow died in 1814 monuments were put up in Creeting St. Mary and Edmonton churches.
The Bosmere estate was purchased by Sir William Middleton of Shrubland, whence it passed by inheritance to Lord de Saumarez. It was sold in 1947 to the present owner, Mr. Dick Last, who farms the land and lives in part of the house.

My very grateful thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Last, who showed me over their house, produced the title deeds and supplied much useful local information. They had already suspected that their house was where Woodforde had stayed in May 1775. Mrs. Last showed me the "very elegant Room" where she thought Woodforde probably slept.

EPILOGUE

When, after this visit to Suffolk, Woodforde and Cooke returned to Oxford, they found a new member of New College there, who had come up as a Gentleman Commoner. His name was Nathaniel Lee Acton. His father held estates in Bramford, Livermere and Baylham, the latter adjoining Bosmere.

Woodforde got quite friendly with Acton. They went and had their silhouettes drawn once, and Woodforde five times recorded in the diary that he took a long walk around Oxford with Acton, the last time being the day before he left Oxford for good.

Acton eventually succeeded to his father's estates, and his signature actually appears on one of the title deeds of Bosmere - in connection with shooting rights. Acton's father and mother were painted by Gainsborough, but he himself and both his wives were painted by Romney. Acton's only child, a daughter, married Sir Wm. Middleton of Shrubland Park where all these portraits eventually came together.

Woodforde mentioned Acton once again in the year 1800: a man who formerly worked for the Squire at Weston Longville "but now with Lee Acton Esq., called on us this morning. He came to see his mother at Ling, who is ill. I asked him to eat and drink but he did neither."

NOTES

(1) Robert Uvedale commissioned a "sea-captain" to fill a portmanteau with cedar cones from Mount Libanus. This captain found about 300 cedar trees above the general line of vegetation, all dying from lack of moisture.

(2) Mrs. Eleanor Irving visited the site and drew the sketch, now on our front cover, from the faded old photograph.

(3) The portrait of the Rev. Robert Uvedale was sold with the effects of Barking Hall in 1918 and bought on behalf of the Ipswich Museums, but never shown. It was unearthed by Miss P.M. Butler, F.M.A., the curator.

(4) Ellis Waterhouse in his 'Gainsborough' attributes this portrait to the "late Bath period", about 1770-4. My thanks to Michael Archer, F.S.A., for tracing its whereabouts.

(5) The only known drawing of Shrubland Park, as it was originally, is in Paine's book 'Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Houses 1767-83'. This photograph was kindly supplied by the 'Sir John Soane's Museum', Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

(6) Ellis Waterhouse: 'Gainsborough', p.56 and Plate 11

(7) According to the Barking Parish Register; but this fails by four years to tally with his age on the monument at Creeting.

(8) Charnock's 'Lives of Distinguished Seamen', not very reliable.

(9) This drawing of the Moonlight Battle appeared in the 'Town and Country Magazine' for 1780, where Rodney's despatches are printed on pp. 154-7. The figure in the cameo is of Prince William, later king William IV, who was serving in one of the other ships.

(10) Rodney's despatches are given in great detail in 'Town and Country Mag.' op. cit., pp. 278-80. For a dispassionate appraisal of the battle see Spinney's 'Rodney'.

(11) Footnote to Spinney's 'Rodney', quoting a letter from Countess to Capt. the Hon W. Cornwallis, 4/6/1780

(12) This debate was adjourned on more than one occasion. 'Gentleman's Magazine', pp. 890 and 983.

(13) Barking Marriages Register 1783.

APPENDIX: WASHBOURNE COOKE ("Cooke Sen.r")

Washbourne Cooke was born in 1744, the son of the Rev. Francis Cooke, vicar of Edmonton. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. William Washbourne, who had been vicar of Edmonton prior to the Rev. Francis Cooke. Washbourne Cooke had a sister Margaret, who married Captain Uvedale of the 'Boreas' in 1763.

Washbourne Cooke was educated at Winchester, and came to Oxford on 7 July 1762, when he was eighteen. Woodforde appears to have known him before this date, since he set out from New College to meet him:

> ... Rode out the Grey Horse this evening toward Abingdon by myself. For going through a Turnpike O. O. 1. I met Cooke in Bagly Wood who was coming from Winton School, to be sped to our College. Cooke spent the Evening in the B.C.R. (i.e. the Bachelors' Common Room at New College)

The next day, 8 July, Woodforde records:

> ... We had a meeting of the 13 in the Audit-House. Cooke was made a Scholar of this House. M.r Cooke came in Ridly's Place. Dicky Ridly has married a fortune.

A note on another page of 'Woodforde at Oxford' says: "Strangely enough this was the son of Gloster Ridley, the non-resident Rector of Weston Longville, whom Woodforde was to succeed in 1774".

Although Woodforde was four years older than Cooke, they seem to have become great friends, and remained so for the rest of the time Woodforde was at Oxford: that is, at intervals until 1776. Three months after Cooke's arrival. Woodforde became ill, and Cooke was often among among those who came and sat with him in his room. On 29 November Woodforde wrote:

N.B. I made a bargain with Cooke this Evening to drink a Pot of Porter every Night, and to take it by Turns every Week to treat one another; It began to Night and I am to treat this Week, and Cooke is to treat me next Week, his Week begins this day sennight.

On 5 May 1774 Woodforde records a meeting of his Free-Masons' Lodge. Among those present were "Mr. Cooke" and Sir George Beaumont, the artist and subsequently patron of Constable and Wordsworth. In the latter part of 1774 Cooke had breakfast in Woodforde's rooms nearly every day, and on 15 December Cooke was one of those who voted for Woodforde as a candidate for the living of Weston Longville. On 20 December the officers of New College for the following year were appointed. Woodforde became Dean of Divinity, and Cooke one of the Bursars.

During the early months of 1775 Woodforde and Cooke were very much together, both as Proctors of the University, and for meetings of their Lodge. Cooke often had breakfast in Woodforde's rooms, and they still drank porter together on most of the days; but whereas they used to spend 2d. on it, they were now spending 6d.

On 10 April they set off together on their historic journey to Weston Longville - "My Norfolk Expedition". Woodforde paid Cooke's travelling expenses "as he goes to oblige me". In London they did some sight-seeing, but Woodforde's main purpose was to see the bishop of Norwich there, who instituted him to his new living. On 13 April they set off for Norwich, and from there on the 15th. they travelled the nine miles to Weston and slept at the Parsonage.

The next day, it being Easter, Cooke read prayers and preached. Woodforde administered the Sacrament - he had over forty communicants. For the last year his curate had been Mr. Howes, the vicar of Hockering, two miles distant.

> ... Mrs Howes and her niece Mrs Davy were at Church and they would make us get into their Chaise and go with them to Hockering to Mr Howes, where we dined and spent the afternoon and came back to Weston in the Evening in Mr Howes s Chaise about 8. o'clock
>
> ...
>
> Cooke likes my House and Living very much. For my part I think it is a very good one indeed.....
>
> Cooke is mightily pleased with his Scheme.

They stayed at Weston until 27 April when they went to Yarmouth; then, returning to Norwich they dined at Mr. Priest's.

> ... with him, his Wife, and Mrs Davy who seem to be fond of Mr Cooke. She is a very young Widow, but has two Children. We returned to our Inn about 10. o'clock where we drank a bottle of Claret, this being Cooke's Birthday, for which he paid....
>
> We were highly pleased with our Scheme to Day.

Cooke was in no position to marry an impecunious widow with two children, as marriage would have entailed resigning his Fellowship at New College. So the next day he set off to visit his married sister Margaret Uvedale, at Bosmere House. Ten days later Woodforde joined him. They stayed at Bosmere until 16 May, when they left and went to London. On the 18th. they went to Covent Garden Theatre and saw 'The Merchant of Venice':

> We sat in the Prince of Wales's Box, Cooke having two tickets from a Miss Saville, who took the whole Box, we each paid 0. 5. 0.

Next day they were back in Oxford. For the rest of the year Woodforde and Cooke continued to breakfast together, and were often busy with the College

accounts. On 20 December the officers for the ensuing year were elected, Cooke to be a sub-warden. On Christmas Day Woodforde wrote: "I assisted the Warden at the Altar, The Sub-Warden Cooke being at his Curacy". This was presumably one of the College livings within easy reach of Oxford.

On 15 February 1776 Woodforde recorded: "Sub-Warden Cooke and Oakeley breakfasted with me". The next day he left Oxford for good, and in May he took up his new living in Norfolk.

There is no mention of Cooke in the diary, at least in the printed version edited by Beresford, until twelve years later. He must, however, have been given the living of Whaddon fairly soon afterwards as he resigned it in 1778. In 1792 he became rector of Hardwicke, Bucks, another New College living. Woodforde on his last brief visit to Oxford in October 1793 "met and dined with my old Friend Washbourne Cooke, presented last year to the living of Hardwicke.... After leaving Miss W. (Nancy) at D^{r} Holmes's, I went to New College and there dined in the Hall and spent the afternoon in the Senior Common Room with Cooke, who acted as Sub-Warden", and several others.

In 1795 Cooke also became rector of Hatford, Berkshire, which was a living in the gift of his own family. He died in office at Hardwicke on 18 February 1804 at the age of 59, a bachelor.

Washbourne Cooke was no relation to William Cooke ("Cooke Jun^{r}") who was two years younger, and came from Enford, Wiltshire.

From the diary, it is evident that Washbourne did not play bowls, but at billiards he was about as good or as bad as Woodforde. He may have been a great dog-lover, or merely very tolerant: Woodforde wrote on 30/6/1774: "An Order also was made in the thirteen to sconce all the Dogs seen in the College - Cooke Sen^{r} against it".

Cooke evidently did his fair share of drinking, and even Woodforde had to write on 13 March 1764:

> I was invited to dine at the Kings Head with the members of the Tripodical Club, this Day being the Anniversary Feast of the above Club, by Cooke and Milton - but as there will be a great deal of drinking, I desired to be excused.

It seems possible that Cooke's relatively early death was caused, as Woodforde's too may have been, by drinking too much while at Oxford.

---

ed. note: The "Milton" referred to in the last-quoted diary entry was William Milton, who became a Scholar of New College on 4 March 1763, "in Clobery Noel's Place, who died of an Apoplexy". In later life he was the parson of Heckfield, Hampshire. He was the father of Frances Trollope and the grandfather of Anthony Trollope.

GREAT WITCHINGHAM SCHOOL SPORTS, JULY 1973

Sports was fun
Even tho' there wasn't much sun
Running, Jumping, Relays too
Who will win? Us or you?
The crowd make a din
As they race and race
They go at such a pace
Sad to say
With dismay
Some lose
Some win

- SALLY KILLINGTON (aged 10)

NOTES AND QUERIES

Ornithology

Many people to-day are interested in Natural History, and ornithology in particular. I managed to combine the meeting in Norfolk with a trip round some of the nature reserves of the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust.

Parson Woodforde's diary gives various mentions of birds and some quaint names for them. I give a list below. Perhaps the two "Whistling Plovers" in 1785 were Golden Plovers, but what was the "Pippet-Grebe"? Perhaps some member could identify this name. The description would fit a Great Crested Grebe, once persecuted for its neck feathers but now, happily, numerous on flooded gravel-pits.

THE DIARY

1773 21 May ... a grey owl was found in by back-kitchen this morning. He came down the chimney. I gave him his Liberty again ...

1778 6 January ... Bill went out a shooting again this morning and brought home only 4. Blackbirds. Gave Bill this evening for powder and shot 2/6

1784 26 January ... I rejoiced much this morning on shooting an old Wood-pecker, which had teized me a long Time in pulling out the Reed from my House. He had been often shot at by me and others, but never could be a match for him till this Morn'. For this last 3. Years in very cold Weather did he used to come here and destroy my Thatch. Many holes he has made this Year in my Roof, and as many before...

1785 18 April ... Saw the first Swallow this Season this Morning ...

" 19 December ... the best Supper I ever met with at an Inn. - Hashed Fowl, Veal Collopes, a fine Woodcock, a Couple of Whistling Plovers, a real Teal of the small kind and hot Apple Pye ...

1791 3 May ... Saw the first Swallow this morning ...

1793 25 November ... N.B. Blackbirds & Thrushes singing this Morn' in our Garden as if it was Spring, very mild ...

1795 23 January ... M^{r}. Buck the Farmer brought us this Morning as a present an uncommon bird, shot by M^{r}. Emeris this Morning in Weston, not good to eat, called by what we could find out, a Pippet-Grebe, remarkable for the beautiful Feathers on his breast, like the finest white Sattin, with uncommon feet, about the size of a duck, only much longer Neck with a long sharp pointed bill, something of the Moor-Hen species, a smutty back.

(Note by ed. Notes and Queries). - Kenneth R. Jones

The Grey Owl (Tyto alba), otherwise known as the Barn Owl or Screech Owl, as in Shakespeare:

> Now the wasted brands doe glow,
> Whil'st the scritch-owle, scritching loud,
> Puts the wretch that lies in woe,
> In remembrance of a shroud.

And indeed it is the eeriest and most sinister sound. The bird was almost certainly much more common in

Woodforde's time than it is now. The plover he mentions may possibly have been the Grey Plover (Squaterola squaterola), a passage bird and occasional winter migrant. His allusion to the "real teal" which contributed with the plovers to the superlative dinner at the 'Kings Head' shows it was the Teal (Querquedula crecca) and not the larger Garganey (Q. querquedula)•Woodforde's "Pippet-Grebe" was plainly the Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus): the description is accurate, except that the grebes are not even distantly related to the moorhens. The term used by the diarist is unknown: but 'tippet grebe' is one of many names for the crested grebe: Christine E. Jackson: 'British Names of Birds' (1968) p.44. Shorter O.E.D. glosses the word as: "A species of grebe, of which the skin, with the feathers on, is used for tippets". Woodforde evidently misheard the term as spoken.

Words with Altered Meanings

I was interested in Mr. Jeffares' letter on words which have changed their original meaning. My favourite is 'Brave':

1784 11 March ... Nancy taken very ill...
12 March ... Nancy a good deal better...
13 March ... Nancy brave to day...

I originally interpreted this as 'putting a brave face on it'; whereas apparently she was well again, as instanced by:

1786 28 August ... Nancy still better this Morning, got up pretty early and took the Bark twice to day - In the Evening brave ...

'Bait' is mainly associated with teasing and fishing nowadays. Parson Woodforde used this term to mean 'feeding on a journey':

1776 21 May ... From Baldock we went on to Royston about 10. miles, there we baited our horses and selves a little time at the Crown kept by one James ...

(Mr. Winstanley's note: 'At the bottom of the hill which I climbed nearly every day for six years to reach the school I attended in South London, stood the 'Tulse Hill Hotel', an old coaching inn. Still to be seen incised in the stone work of the facade were the words 'Livery and Bait'. 'Livery' is glossed in Shorter O.E.D. as 'Allowance of provender for horses' and 'Bait' as 'Food, refreshment; esp. a feed for horses, or slight repast for travellers, upon a journey'. Woodforde, therefore, was using the last-named term in both its related senses.)

How did one grate beef?

1783 30 April ... We had for Dinner a Leg of Lamb boiled, a Piece of rosted Beef, a baked plumb Pudding, some Crabbs, Tarts, Rasberry Creams, and hung Beef, grated ...

After this extensive meal, the "hung Beef, grated" must have been a finale in the shape of a small savoury!

- Mrs. Mary Steed.

Please send queries and comments to

Mrs. Cynthia Brown,
The Cottage,
Great Bealings,
WOODBRIDGE,
Suffolk.

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NOTES ON THURLOXTON AND DISTRICT

(ed. note. The following information was sent to me by Mrs. Berta Lawrence, author of 'Coleridge and Wordsworth in Somerset' and other books on West Country topics. I am very proud to be able to publish them here, with Mrs. Lawrence's permission. Readers will be pleased to read those notes, as they carry a stage further the research already begun on what used to be an obscure phase in James Woodforde's life).

THE SANFORDS AND WALFORD HOUSE

There is no village of Walford. Three miles from Taunton, on the way to Bridgwater, there is an extremely busy road-junction called Walford Cross. Close to this, alongside the A.38, lies the park of Walford House. This house, visible from the road, is a fine 18th. century building with a colonnaded front. It is in the parish of West Monkton, a village situated two or three miles from Thurloxton and approached, like the latter, by a lane leading off the A.38.

The Sanfords were a very old and rich Somerset family. Two of its members, the Rev. John Sanford and the Rev. James Sanford (father and son) were rectors of West Monkton over the years 1743-83. The Rev. John Sanford bought up an estate and built Walford House on part of it, letting his rectory at West Monkton to a farmer and residing at Walford House, about half a mile from his church. The Rev. James similarly lived here. The new rectory at West Monkton - a house now called The Court - was built in 1783.

In the 1790's Walford House was the seat of Henry William Sanford, Esq.

It is now divided into flats, but is well maintained and retains the elegant parlour where Woodforde dined.

THURLOXTON

The village has an inn called the 'Star'. Until a few years ago, it also had the 'Green Dragon' which Woodforde knew. The 'Green Dragon' has now closed as an inn. It stands on a high bank at the corner where the quiet lane to Thurloxton joins the A.38. Its entrance is approached by two flights of steep steps - dangerous for heavy drinkers like Mr. Cross!

SQUIRE CROSS' HOME

All Thurloxton property was, until recently, owned by the Portmans. The historian Collinson wrote in 1791:

> Mr. John Cross, gentleman, has a residence adjoining the churchyard, a small house with neat gardens.

This house must have stood where Manor Farm now stands, a large, pleasing, early 19th. century house (so it looks) in nice grounds. The present occupant tells me that there are remains of older buildings with cob walls at the back, and that the present house was built on the site of a ruined one. Also, this is marked on the Ordnance Survey Map as the site of the former manor house, the present large Thurloxton Manor being a 19th. century house built by the Colthurst family (brick manufacturers).

Therefore I think it fairly certain that Woodforde lodged where Manor Farm is now. There are no records of these houses, unless the Portman family owns some.

'NEWTON CHAPEL'

North Newton, near North Petherton, is a small, rapidly-growing village reached by a right-hand turn, as you travel from Taunton to Bridgwater on the A.38. Parson Woodforde needed to ride at least 3 miles from Thurloxton to serve the chapel. There is a number of lanes he must have used: e.g. 'Moon Lane'.

The church, rebuilt again in the 1880's, retains a supposedly ancient tower of red sandstone combined with blue lias. The age of this tower is often disputed. The church also possesses very interesting and beautiful Jacobean carved woodwork: e.g. a door carved with the figures of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

A chantry chapel, preceded by a Saxon chapel, stood here before the Reformation. This fell to ruin, except the tower, and in Elizabeth's reign the Minor Canons of Wells acquired its materials which they used to build an alehouse and stables (for use when they collected rents, etc.), and also to provide stocks, pillory and ducking-stool for North Newton.

In the reign of Charles I Sir Thomas Wrothe became lord of the manor. He built a new chapel, adorned with carved woodwork, and paid for the stipend of a minister.

This village lies a mile or two from Athelney, where King Alfred lay all one winter in hiding from the Danes. In Sir Thomas Wrothe's time the famous 'Alfred Jewel' was found in a field behind North Newton vicarage.

The village now has its own vicar.

BLAKES OF PADNOLLER

These Blakes were collateral descendents of the great Admiral Blake. Their monuments are in the little church at Charlinch. One is "To the memory of Nathaniel Blake of Padnoller", who died in 1787, aged 45: one to Betty, his wife, who died in 1765; another to Julia, "daughter of the late Nathaniel Blake of Padnoller". She died 1823, aged 74. Presumably they were members of the household Woodforde met.

Padnoller Farm is a nice stone-built, L-shaped house, covered by a magnolia, standing beside the A.39 Bridgwater - Minehead road, just before the turn to Fiddington.

NEWS FROM WESTON

WESTON LONGVILLE FLOWER FESTIVAL SUCCESS

It really was a huge success, and the 4,000 people who came to the four day festival (an average of 1,000 every day) must surely have been the greatest influx this village has ever seen. The flower arrangements in the Parish Church were magnificent and we are so very, very grateful to the members of the Drayton Flower Club, and to other talented friends, for wonderful work. Besides the flowers other attractions in the Church included a small exhibition of Parson Woodforde 'relics', and a superb model of the church made entirely from straw by Mrs. A. Wales. Across the road in the village school there was an exhibition of local arts and crafts superbly organised by Mrs. Scales. The range of work on display was vast and one greatly admired the many-sided talents of people living in this part of Norfolk. Outside, there were two well-stocked stalls. The Skipper Family had no difficulty in selling ice-cream, home-made cakes &c. from their stall, whilst Mrs. Mytton and Mrs. Rutterford were selling fruit and vegetables, plants and goldfish from their very busy stall. Down the road at the Village Hall, Mrs. Phyllis Thomas was looking after the refreshments and she had a wonderful band of helpers to cope with the coach parties and car loads of visitors. The excellent car-park arrangements were in the capable hands of Mr. C. Holman. The church was packed on Sunday evening for Festal Evensong when the sermon was preached by the Vicar of St. Anne's, Kew Gardens, the Revd. Canon Clifford Pronger. We have mentioned, by name, those who were chiefly responsible for organising this great Festival and to whom we are so very, very grateful. But they, in turn, received lots and lots of help from other people - far too numerous to mention - and have asked the "Wensum Diary" to record their gratitude for all the hard work and co-operation of these

many people who helped. THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL. YOU WERE SIMPLY WONDERFUL AND YOUR KINDNESS IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. Finally, a special word of thanks to Lady Prince-Smith who co-ordinated all the various aspects of the festival and whose expert planning over many months contributed very largely to its success. Also, a special "Thank You" to Mrs. N. Clutsom, our hard-working treasurer.

- Reprinted from 'The Wensum Diary' Vol. I No. 10, October 1973, by kind permission of the editor, The Rev. Gordon James.

Mr. James has also sent me the following, which needs no introduction. All members must surely be excited by the way this essential work is being tackled (ed).

THE RESTORATION OF WESTON LONGVILLE CHURCH - FIRST STAGE (1973)

All broken windows, traceries &c. have been repaired and the new Clerestory windows have been inserted.
Nave and Chancel Rooves: lichen removed, broken tiles and some lead flashings renewed, new coping-stones placed at the east end of chancel, &c.
South Porch: Entirely new roof, some repointing of walls, lean-to shed removed.
Gutters and Downpipes: New gutters provided for N and S chancel, and S aisle. The remainder have all been cleaned and painted, and a new soakaway provided.
Extensive Repointing of all church walss.
Tower: Repointing parapet walls, completely new roof, new waterchutes replacing old drainpipes, new (bird-proof) belfry louvres, one new ladder, some new stonework.

THE TOTAL COST OF THIS FIRST STAGE OF THE RESTORATION PROGRAMME, NOW COMPLETE, IS APPROX. £5,000. WE HAVE RAISED £4,000 TOWARDS THIS AND NOW URGENTLY REQUIRE £1,000.

Quite independently of the restoration work, we can also list the following achievements:

(a) New notice board by the entrance to the churchyard.
(b) Improvements to and regular maintenance of the churchyard, including the provision of a car-park.
(c) Installation of Pew Heaters and an entirely new lighting scheme.
(d) Church Choir formed and equipped with robes and music.
(e) Complete overhaul and rebuilding of the organ.
(f) New carpets and curtains provided for the chancel and sanctuary.
(g) New, embroidered hassocks.
(h) Guide-book, postcards, Christmas cards and other literature are now available.

NOT ONE PENNY OF THE RESTORATION APPEAL FUND HAS BEEN SPENT ON THESE ITEMS. MANY WERE PRIVATE GIFTS: THE REMAINDER ARE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONGREGATION.

THE RESTORATION OF WESTON LONGVILLE CHURCH - SECOND STAGE - to be attempted when funds become available

1.	Repairs to N and S Aisle Rooves	Est. cost.	£1,400
2.	Essential re-glazing work	" "	1,600
3.	Restoration of the peal of Five Bells	"	1,700
4.	Repairs to Pews		400
5.	New glazed door to S side of Porch, re-hanging main existing door on E wall of S.Aisle and fixing new door, general refurnishment of the Church	" "	900
6.	Providing Tower Arch Screen and Ringing Platform &c.	" "	1,300
7.	Interior decoration (complete)	" "	1,000
8.	Miscellaneous repairs	" "	100
9.	Fees &c.		100
		TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	£8,500

This is a most impressive and ambitious programme and it will take many years to complete. We have made a great start and are already making plans for future fund-raising activities, so we are confident of eventual success. I am sure that Parson Woodforde smilingly approves of all that we have done and are doing!

G.J.

BOOK REVIEW

BERTA LAWRENCE: 'SOMERSET LEGENDS'

- David & Charles, 1973. (published 10 Nov.)

As Wordsworth, a subject of Mrs. Lawrence's earlier book reviewed here, said: "The world is too much with us". There can seldom have been a time when the world showed a more unlovely face than at the present moment. The more inane among our noisy progressives would no doubt apply to this book the fashionable smear-word 'escapism'. But it seems to me that there are times, of which this is one, when a little judicious escape is not only justified but actually necessary, if we are to retain our balance in the madness of our epoch.

So my advice is - buy, borrow, beg or steal a copy of 'Somerset Legends', take it home, switch off the television or, better still, pull out the plugs and banish the discordant sights and sounds: and with Mrs. Lawrence for your guide, go back into our legendary past. I promise you it will be both an enjoyable and a rewarding experience.

The West Country, and Somerset in particular, has always been a place favourable to the growth and proliferation of legends. Partly this was due, I suppose, to the fact that so much in the very distant past of the island took place in that area. But legends have always flourished in Somerset, down almost to modern times. So, in this book the reader will meet king Bladud, the founder of Bath, a wholly mythical personage: king Arthur, probably derived from a real person, but around whose name a great accretion of legend built up: king Alfred, solidly based in historical time, but, as the hero king who saved his country, the natural focus of legend: and finally 'king Monmouth', a common-place young man who lived in the hard-headed days of the later Stuarts, but about whom stories are told as extraordinary as anything recounted of Bladud.

Mrs. Lawrence divides her material into three main groups of three each: 'Saints', 'Kings' and 'Rogues and Criminals', and there is a special long chapter devoted to Monmouth and his rebellion.

Mrs. Lawrence's account of the 1685 rebellion and the battle of Sedgemoor is as detailed as it is exciting, and the aftermath fascinates even more. Monmouth, who had been in those parts only once before in his life, very quickly became a legend. Various ghosts of him turned up in country houses; and one of these was seen "by a London journalist" (not the most credulous of beings, one would imagine) in the open air so late as 1924. A silver buckle believed to have belonged to Monmouth was being 'touched' as a remedy for scrofula many years afterwards, an interesting variation on the story of the 'kings evil'.

This is a very skilfully written book, carrying on the reader from story to story, so that he is reluctant to put in down before it is finished. One of its great charms, to my mind, is the careful, detailed topography. Mrs. Lawrence has an exhaustive knowledge of old Somerset, and has been to all the places she describes. A fine piece of natural description is contained in what she calls "the most deeply-rooted of all the legends about journeys of the boy Jesus in Somerset... his visit to Priddy, that cold, windswept village on the high open top of Mendip that looks to far horizons".

She begins by saying that to imagine the scene, one must forget the evidences of later lead-mining in the area:

> Nevertheless, walking that exposed and lonely plateau one sees much that Jesus might have seen in AD 15: endless grey stone walls; clumps of ash trees; lonely pools; fields strewn and ribbed with limestone, and packed in places by swallet-holes whence issues the strange voice of subterranean streams finding

> their way through a honeycomb of caverns....
> Here He could have stood under the spacious sky and the soaring larks, whose song even to-day is often the only sound to break the silence.

The first of the saints is Joseph of Arimathea, and Mrs. Lawrence tells the story of the miraculous thorn and the traditional founding of Glastonbury Abbey. The other two are specifically English: Aldhelm and Dunstan. Both became the subject of extensive hagiography in the Middle Ages, and the legendary details added to the real lives of the men. With them we are in the real country of the religious myth. Aldhelm strikes his stick into the ground, and it becomes a living tree. As a child Dunstan walks in his sleep, ascends to the roof-beams of the Abbey, and drops to the ground unhurt. His physical battles with the devil are well-known from paintings and glass windows: in one of these, the best known, he seized the fiend by the nose with the red-hot tongs with which he was working at his forge. After his death, the abbey bells suddenly began to peal by themselves, with joy at his return there.

The legends of the three kings are of a different character, and do not bear the imprint of the monastic chronicle as do the saints' lives. We are told that Bladud was the father of King Lear. As a young man, he suffered from leprosy, and the frightened people persuaded his father, Lud Hudibras, king of Britain, to exile him. He became a swineherd, but the animals developed his disease, until he saw them wallowing in the swamp at the place where Bath now stands. He was cured too, of course, and Mrs. Lawrence recounts the happy ending of the fairy-tale:

They found Hudibras and his queen holding a feast, to which a ragged old swineherd and his sunburnt boy could not be admitted. Bladud persuaded a servant to drop into the queen's wine-cup the chased gold ring that he always carried about his neck. The queen drained her wine and saw the ring's glitter.
"Bladud my child! Where is he?", she cried down the hall.
So Bladud came home amid great rejoicing.

A good deal of the story of Arthur is pure legend, and the story recounted by Gildas, of the great battle of Mount Badon, in which the king defeated and threw back the Saxon invaders, is doubtless part of it. Gildas was not a "saint", and few who have been obliged to read his book would agree that he was "a great scholar": he has bedevilled the history of the post-Roman age in Britain with impossible confusions. His proper place is in a book of legends.

Alfred is the hero of one of the most famous of all English history stories, the tale of the burnt cakes. Mrs. Lawrence recounts what she calls a "much later and prettified version" of the legend, in which the shepherd's wife is named Gillian and the sound of his horn at the end of the story brings "a hundred nobles galloping to the cottage door". I seem to recollect that this story is not in the early m.s.s. of the near contemporary life of Alfred by Asser, and comes from a chronicle written after the Conquest.

The section devoted to 'Rogues and Criminals' opens with Bampfylde Moore Carew, the so-called 'King of the Beggars', whose story is well-known. He comes into a book about Somerset legends only by adoption, as it were, for he was born in South Devon: but many

of his exploits were performed in the neighbouring county. The other two will be little known outside the West Country. John Poulter, alias Baxter, was an 18th century highwayman who was tried at Wells and hanged in 1754. The account of his career contains little or nothing that could not have happened. Jack White, born at Wincanton in 1690, was aged forty when he was executed for murder. He may have been a person of disturbed mind, for his crime seems to have no motive and, at his trial, his only defence was to say "the hounds of hell were after me". On what Mrs. Lawrence calls "this simple, sordid tale" was engrafted a considerable melodrama, which has it that Jack really came from a family of "decayed gentry", called Leblanc (!). His brother William disappeared for twenty years and then returned with his life savings to help his improverished family. He was murdered for his money by Jack, who of course did not know he had killed his long-lost brother.

I have surely written enough to make it clear that this is a rich and varied book, compulsively readable and full of that indefinable something called 'atmosphere', without which history becomes as unexciting as heaps of sawdust. The book is very attractive in appearance, and the illustrations are well-chosen and interesting, although the pictures in the text have come out less clearly than the plates.

In her introduction, Mrs. Lawrence writes that "These legends form part of a regional inheritance that inevitably is dwindling". One of the most valuable services that can be performed by a book like this is that it will help to keep the legends - beautiful, strange, grotesque, comic or terrible - alive even in our time which holds such deep and irrevocable antipathies to the past.

TWO SHORT PIECES

Lieut. Col. J.H. Busby has kindly sent me the following:

ALFORD WELL

Beresford, Volume I, p. 75, refers to a visit by the diarist on 26 and 27 March 1776 to Alford Well, which water he says is supposed to have "done great things in complaints of the Kings Evil". Another reference to Alford Well is in 'The Journeys of Celia Fiennes' (Cresset Press, London, 1949, p.16). The reference appears in "a journey from Newton Toney by Salisbury and Wilton to the Isle of Purbeck", and although no date is given this is thought to be 1685-1686. Celia Fiennes was at Castle Cary, and goes on to say: "Thence to Alford 2 miles, where was a minerall water which company resorts to for drinking, formerly it has been more frequented than of late; many now send for them severall miles and have Beer brew'd of them, there being no good accommodation for people of fashion, the Country people being a clounish rude people; the waters are mostly from Alom (alum), its a cleare little well and a quick spring, the bottom of the well has a sort of blewish Clay or Marle: its a quick purger good for all Sharpe Humers or Obstruction".

PICKWICK OF BATH

11/10/1793: "...We got to Bath (Thank God safe and well) about six o' clock this Evening to the White Hart Inn in Stall Street, kept by one Pickwick, where we drank Tea, supped and slept, a very good, very capital Inn, everything in stile."

Many readers must have been struck by the name 'Pickwick', and wondered if there was any connection with Charles Dickens' famous novel. Cecil Roberts in 'And so to Bath' (Hodder and Stoughton, 1940), has some thing on the subject. He says that Pickwick is a hamlet of Corsham on the main road to Bath, and that Dickens may have picked up the name on a visit to Bath and also noticed the name of Moses Pickwick, Mail Coach Proprietor at the White Hart, for he makes Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller comment on the similarity of name as they take their seats on the coach.

BEN LEGGETT - AN UNFINISHED STORY

> Yet still he fills Affection's eye,
> Obscurely wise, and coarsely kind:
> Nor, letter'd Arrogance, deny
> Thy praise to merit unrefin'd.
>
> - SAMUEL JOHNSON: LINES ON THE DEATH OF MR. ROBERT LEVET (1781)

If one may be allowed to liken historical research to the technique of the detective story, the Ben Leggett case must be acknowledged as one which the Great Detective most signally failed to clear up. Seen through Woodforde's diary with the greatest clarity and vividness for the space of over a quarter of a century, he vanished at last in total oblivion, leaving a great question mark hanging in the air and no answer to cap it.

There is an amusing paradox here. My own researches, and those of others, have brought to notice sundry figures whom one might fairly call peripheral to Woodforde's life. It may indeed seem faintly absurd that I should have traced practically every recoverable detail of the life of Reginald Tucker, and yet be unable to discover what became of Ben after his master died. I am sure that for what Dr. Johnson and Virginia Woolf called the 'Common Reader', the people who really matter in Woodforde's story are those who can be read of in the printed diary. After all, they have had half a century start over the newly discovered figures. It would have been a scoop indeed to have found out whether Ben married Betty or not, if he became a farmer in Crownthorpe, and so on. All I can give here is the negative statement: there is no trace of him in Weston after Woodforde's death.

But if it is impossible to provide fresh information, it is still useful to have a try at interpreting the facts we already know. I have always thought that Ben is, perhaps, the most enigmatic, the hardest to understand of the Parsonage servants.

This may seem odd, for at first sight it would appear easy enough to place him. Very nearly a Founder member of the Parsonage domestic circle, and the servant with by far the longest term of continuous employment, Ben looks almost like a paragon of his type. He was trusted, steady, dependable. He was "my Farming Man", who looked after the Parsonage glebe land practically on his own. Regularly he went to Norwich with the Parson's barley and wheat, and arranged prices with maltster and miller. He could buy and sell farm animals on his own initiative. And even if one argues that these services were all part of the job he was paid to do, his sterling qualities were often called for in other ways. When Will Coleman ran mad, on the night of 2 December 1783, and jumped into the "great Pond" terribly frightening his master and Nancy, it was Ben, of course, who at once got him out.

But if one takes a closer look at this master-and-servant relationship, there would appear something a little odd about it. By comparison with the other servants, Ben would seem to have been treated rather stingily. When he was first taken on, in 1776, he was young, and his wage of £10 a year was not a bad one, although it was not particularly generous either, when one considers what he had to do to earn it. Then time passed; he grew, not exactly old and grey but at least middle-aged, in the Parson's service; yet his wages never altered. They were still £10 in 1802, the last year Woodforde lived to pay wages. No account was taken of the considerable inflation of prices after the outbreak of the French war in 1793. And if this is compared with the great increase which Ben's opposite number, the other manservant, received (1776: Coleman four guineas - 1802: Scurl £8), it is plain that Ben's financial status must have deteriorated.

If one then looks at the tips and other perquisites which made up such an important part of an 18th. century servant's earnings, Ben again came in for uncommonly few of these. There is a great deal of evidence in support of this. Let us take one entry

which speaks for itself. It is new evidence, since the entry is not found in the printed diary. On 16 December 1793, in an unusually generous mood, Woodforde tipped the servants all round. As he put it:

* ... Gave Betty for a gift, 2/6. Briton s d
also 2.6. To Molly 2/6. - Ben 1/0 - Tom 1/0

In other words, Ben received the same trifling tip as the young "skip-jack", less than any of the other adult servants received. The discrepancy, indeed, may have been more glaring. In the manuscript, the ink made something of a blot as Woodforde wrote down the boy's present, and he may have written "1/6" here. It is impossible to tell, since the single amounts cannot anyway be reconciled with the total sum, for he says he "Gave in all, 10/6".

Servants were also given presents in kind. The sort of gift that fell to Ben's lot may be fairly represented by the "Waistcoat Piece", worth 6/-, which Woodforde gave him on his return from a Somerset holiday in 1789. At the same time the two maids had a "Cotton Gown" each which had cost the Parson £1. 8. 0. for the pair.

Still, if Ben was satisfied with his lot, it is not for us to complain of it. I see him as a slow, ox-like man, infinitely patient and good-humoured, of great physical strength: very seldom roused to anger, a man without envy in his soul. I see him at the 'Hart', if some local trouble-maker tried to egg him on to squeeze more money out of the Parson, smiling to himself and taking a deep pull from his tankard. There were men of his kind all over the farms of England: they produced the food by which everyone lived. They were the salt of the earth.

In spite of the deceptive sense of timeless peace in Woodforde's diary, Ben was in fact living at a time of profound social change, when the age-old pattern of

rural society was beginning already to break up. Contemporaries tell us, and modern historians have copied it, that the farm servant who lived 'in' as a celibate was becoming much less numerous. But this traditional role was filled in Woodforde's household by Ben, for a period of twenty-six years. Woodforde was always quick to react to any real or imagined dissatisfaction on the part of a servant; but he never at any time says anything about Ben in this respect. Indeed, it is true that he never really says a wrong word of Ben. And, when the length of their relationship is considered, this is a striking tribute to the man, in its own particular way.

*

Ben shared with Shakespeare, arguably the only thing they had in common, a surname which could be spelt in a number of different ways. Woodforde called him 'Leggatt' or 'Legate', while parish documents in which the name appears hover between 'Leggett' and 'Legget'. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the form 'Leggatt' appears on the First World War memorial outside Weston church.

Ben, however, was not a Weston man. He was born at Ringland, where he was baptized on 16 December 1753, the son of William Leggett, a small farmer there. His mother's maiden name was Norris. There is no trace either of the baptism of William Leggett, or of his marriage, in the admirably kept and indexed registers of Ringland church, now in the Norwich and Norfolk Record Office. It is likely that he was not a native of the parish; and he seems also to have had at least one other son as well as the five children entered in the Ringland records. Ben was the second of these. He had an elder sister Mary, born in 1750, two brothers named William (1756) and James (1760), and one considerably younger sister Elizabeth, who was born on 24 June 1765 and baptized on 11 July of that year.

Some time between this date and 30 September 1776, when Ben appeared at the Parsonage with his father and was taken on by Woodforde, William Leggett and his family must have moved to Weston. Although the entry for that day carried absolutely the first mention of the Leggetts in the diary, Woodforde wrote of Mr. Leggett as though he knew him, and certainly did not give any indication that he came from outside Weston parish. Hence it is probable that the Leggetts were there before the Parson's arrival. The entry runs:

> ... Mr. Legate and his son Benjamin called on me this morning and talked about my taking on his son at old Michaelmas as a servant, and I agreed and bargained with him for the sum of per annum 10. 0. 0
> Gave him as earnest of the same being usual 0. 1. 0

Ben was nearly twenty-three; but we can guess that he was slow of speech and not very good at bargaining, by the fact that he seems to have left the negotiations to his father. However, he soon settled down in the Parsonage household, and it was not long before his services were being called upon in ways quite other than those doubtless specified in his verbal contract. On 28 November, when he had been working for the Parson only about six weeks, "Poor Neighbour Downing" who had the smallpox was so ill that he was thought to be dying. Woodforde says, with some unconcern: "My Man Ben I ordered to sit up with him to-night". Ben had just been inoculated, and presumably considered to be immune. All the same, it seems quite an assignment to give to a man who had been hard at work in the fields all day.

The great difficulty one finds in trying to reconstruct the life of Ben Leggett at Weston Parsonage with any sort of coherence comes, naturally, from the fact that Ben did his work efficiently, year upon year, and gave

no trouble. The one clear indication that he slept in the house comes from an entry which recounts one of his rare lapses - the incident during harvest-time in 1778 when Ben, sent to help out at Stephen Andrews' farm, returned helplessly drunk and was found by the Parson lying flat on his back on the bed with a candle flaring beside him. From this entry and the inventory of Woodforde's goods we can discover where he slept, and very uncomfortably he must have been lodged, to judge by the extraordinary collection of cast-off articles with which his room was cluttered. (See my article 'Maidservants at the Parsonage' in Journal Vol. IV, No. 1. Spring 1971)

The incident was wholly uncharacteristic of the man, although Ben like everyone else in that age of strong liquor and deep potations could take his share. But it is clear that, at least by comparison with an intemperate man like Will Coleman, Ben was strictly an occasional drinker, and that he usually drank only when the beer was provided by someone else. In 1777 he and Will were sent to Norwich "with a Cart" to bring wine from Mr. Priest's wine-shop and "some dishes and plates &c. from Mr. Below's - China Merchant". They did not return until seven in the evening, and when they came back they were "both rather in liquor". However, it was Will who was so surly that he retired to bed without doing his usual job of waiting at table while the Parson ate his supper. One of the many casual jobs Ben had was to go round to the farmers in the parish in turn and tell them all the date of the next "Tithe Frolic". He was inevitably treated by the farmers, some of whom were much heavier drinkers than himself. In 1794 he "returned about 5. o'clock in the Afternoon, half Seas over, that is, much in Liquor, but not very much", Woodforde says, showing a fascinating exactitude in defining degrees of intoxication. The year before, he had pleased and doubtless surprised his employer by returning home without a trace of drunkenness. "He never returned so sober before on any former Occasion of the same kind ..." Also in 1796 he was "tolerably sober". These blameless outings must have been all the more gratifying to Woodforde if he

remembered what had happened in 1792:

> He got very full indeed of Liquor somewhere or other. The Horse got away from him and came home, leaving him in Peachmans Lane lying down, we got him home however about 3. o'clock ...

It was, indeed, rather a habit of Ben's to become detached from his nag when he became too intoxicated to ride the animal; as other similar incidents tell us. Perhaps he had a poor head for alcohol, particularly the potent, home-brewed stuff of the period.

Ben had two homes in the parish, the Parsonage and his father's farm; and the diary shows that he was sometimes given the day off "at his Fathers by my leave". Elizabeth, the youngest Leggett child, died of tuberculosis on 24 September 1784, and the account in the diary of Woodforde's "going to Ben's Fathers" and reading prayers to the dying girl reveals that the farmhouse was within walking distance of the Parsonage. The burial notice in the Ringland register reads:

> Elizabeth Leggett, Spinster, D^{r}. of William Leggett (of Weston) & Elizabeth his Wife late Elizabeth Norris Spinster aged 19 Years was buried September 26th. 1784. Certificate brought Oct^{r} 3rd. 1784.

The fact that Elizabeth was buried at Ringland, not Weston, would perhaps point to a continued residence by some at least of the family in that parish. And, indeed, there were still Leggetts there. But members of the family, other than Ben, make sporadic and occasional appearances in the diary, and are regularly mentioned only in Woodforde's annual lists of those farmers who attended the Tithe Audits. The evidence from this source is not easy to interpret.

On 3 December 1776 Woodforde entered: "....Legate Sen^{r} and Son of Ringland" ... and "....Legate Jun^{r} at the Horse". This was presumably a public-house, and the man who kept it may have been William Leggett's younger brother, as Woodforde often uses "junior" in that sense. The "son of Ringland" must have been named Thomas, older than any of the children born there. In the 1777 Tithe Audit "M^{r} Legate Sen^{r}" and "M^{r} Legate Jun^{r}" attended. In 1778 Woodforde, perhaps uncharacteristically tired of writing up the day's happenings in detail, failed to specify the names and merely wrote: " * twenty nine gentlemen". In 1779 " * Thomas Legate" and "Will Legate" are specified, and again in 1780. These details are taken from the m.s. as they do not appear in the printed diary. For the next three years, 1781-1783, William Leggett and Thomas Leggett were present: they were, perhaps, Ben's father and eldest brother. In 1784 the entry reads: "Thos Leggatt for his Father", "William Leggatt" being also mentioned, but as a "Parlour Guest". In 1786 the diary reads: "Will^{m} Leggatt Sen^{r} "and Will^{m} Leggatt Jun^{r}" This last was no doubt the younger William of the Ringland registers, now a man of thirty. In 1787 Elizabeth Leggett, the elder William's wife and Ben's mother, died: that year "Ben's Father" alone attended the Audit, and did not dine with the rest of the farmers. Before the end of the next year the family had evidently left Weston: neither then nor in any subsequent year does the name figure in the list. So far as I know, there is no mention in the diary after 1787 of any Leggett in Weston except Ben.

As with the servants in general, there is more information about Ben himself in the last two volumes of the diary than in the others. Becoming increasingly housebound, Woodforde relied more and more on them to keep him in touch with what was going on in the world outside the walls of Weston Parsonage. So

the comings and goings of the servants are chronicled meticulously in the last few years. In the period 1797-1802 covered by Mr. Beresford's fifth and last volume, Ben is twice described as being at "Lenewade Races": he bought shares on Woodforde's behalf in two different lottery tickets: in 1800 he paid the Rector's annual account with New College, something which Woodforde used previously to attend to himself.

When one of the local farmers, Hugh Bush, a man who was "made so unhappy by his Wife & Family and also by his own bad Actions that his life was miserable", committed suicide by drowning himself in a pond "near his House", Ben sat on the jury at the coroner's inquest, held the day after the body had been recovered, and helped to bring in the stark verdict of "Lunacy".

But the most surprising information about Ben comes from late in the diary. He had occasionally given Ben time off to go to a place called Crownthorpe, near Wymondham. On 28 March 1802, at the end of a very discursive entry, all about nephew Samuel and Mr. Dade the curate, Woodforde wrote:

> Ben went to Crownthorp this Morning on his own private Concerns, having an estate there. He returned home to dinner, and very well indeed..

He had travelled about 8 miles south of Weston. Ben was now approaching fifty and had now, no doubt, sobered completely. A small man of property, going to visit what he owned, would not fall off his horse in alcoholic incapability. A little later we came across the entry which tells us that Ben's Crownthorpe estate must have been a freehold, or at least that part of it was. He was one of the forty-shilling freeholders of the old unreformed franchise, and as such entitled to vote in the prestigious county elections, which he did in July of the same year.

It is interesting to see that Ben was evidently a Tory like his master, for he cast his vote as a 'plumper' (i.e. gave it to a single candidate rather than two for whom he might have voted) for "Colonel Wodehouse". This was the son of the former M.P. for Norfolk Sir John Wodehouse, whom Woodforde had supported in the 1784 election, even going so far as to buy cockades in the Tory colours for all his servants, during the short-lived period of the diarist's political enthusiasm when he was on particularly friendly terms with the high Tory Mr. Custance.

The farm servant of Ben's kind often married late, after a long engagement, while both parties were saving for their own home. It is not known when Ben became engaged to Elizabeth or 'Betty' Dade, the head maid at the Parsonage. One would have thought, on the face of it, that they make an unlikely pair. To use the modern idiom, she was hardly Ben's "type". A highly intelligent woman, capable, efficient (it was she, much more than Nancy, who ran the Parsonage) she was also a hypochondriac, endlessly stuffing herself with pills and swallowing the nauseous medicines of the period, with a string of complaints, partly imaginary and partly due to some psychic disorder, about which she and Woodforde must have had many fascinating conversations.

Woodforde was aware of the nature of her trouble, and at one point suggests that her health was suffering because of the frustrations of the betrothal. At one point he comments, tersely: "I hope he hath not been too intimate with her". This suspicion was surely unfounded. Had Betty not, in 1793, sent Winfred Budery smartly to the right-about, throwing her out in Woodforde's absence on the discovery that the other maid was "with Child"? And indeed, when we read further we discover that it was Betty, not Ben, who was rocking the boat. On 27 September 1801, a Sunday, Ben found out that his fiancée had betrothed herself to another suitor: to add insult to injury, it was his own cousin.

Thomas Leggett of Ringland, a small farmer. This is the only time, in the whole extent of the Norfolk diary, that Ben is recorded as having lost his temper. Even although by October she had veered round to Ben again, the last mention of the affair between them is that she and Thomas are again being "talked off". "O ! woman", as Ben might have reflected, as he grimly hoed row after row of turnips:

> O ! woman, in our hours of ease
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please .....

He could not possibly have known the history of Miss Betsy White, of Shepton Mallet, who had played the Parson just such another trick a quarter of a century before. But he may have considered his master a fortunate man to have avoided the snares of matrimony.

By this time, Woodforde was so near his end that he could find little to write about except his physical ills. Ben's last recorded jobs were as a carrier of messages to the doctor, to bring back medicines for the ailing man. Here again, one wonders why it was thought necessary to send a fifty-year old man who was doubtless busy on the farm. But on 23 September 1802 the diarist wrote: "Sent Ben this Morning after Dr. Thorne being very ill". The following day: "Sent Ben this Morning again to Dr. Thorne's after medicine, he returned home by 10. to breakfast with the same & which I began taking at Noon". On 3 October, he again wrote: "Sent Ben this morning early to Mattishall after Medicine for me to Dr. Thorne's. Ben returned home to breakfast". That is the last word of Ben. It was, within a few days, exactly 26 years since Ben had arrived with his father at the door of the Parsonage.

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The historical researcher might be likened to a blind-folded man on an exceptionally dark night, searching an endless succession of haystacks for a single needle which is not there. Or, to change the metaphor somewhat,

such a work as Woodforde's diary is an electric torch, throwing an intense beam of light for a little distance, within which the details show up, brilliantly and beautifully illuminated. Then the light is switched off, we grope in absolute darkness.

What became of Ben Leggett? It was on the face of it, unlikely that, at the age of fifty and possessing land elsewhere, that he would seek another living "in" job at Weston. The latest date I have of his presence in Weston is April 1803, when he turned up at the Parsonage sale. Miss Symonds kindly searched the Weston registers at my request. She turned up 19th. century Leggetts, 20th. century Leggetts, but no Ben. Neither did he go back to live in Ringland, as there is no trace of him in that parish.

No trace of Betty either: she is not to be found at Weston, or at Mattishall where her parents were still living in 1803, or at East Dereham, where her brother William was governor of the House of Industry. Her last recorded appearance in Weston was at the end of May 1803, when she signed the register as a witness to the marriage of her colleague Sally Gunton.

But, of course, there is Crownthorpe. What more likely than that Ben went back, evicted his tenant, married Betty there, and settled down to farm on his little estate, which might, of course, have included rented land also: Unfortunately there is nothing at Crownthorpe. I was told when I applied there that the name Leggett does not occur, either in the church registers or in any other documents of the time.

I must admit I find this very difficult to understand. Woodforde is our authority that Ben did own land in that parish; and only by supposing a total destruction or loss of all the secular parish documents is it possible to reconcile this with the news that his name is unknown. However minute the size of his holding, he would have had to pay a Poor Rate on it. This would, indeed, not have established his actual residence in

the parish; but it would have told us how long he was a landowner there. I was simply told that his name is not to be found, and given no details of the extent of any search that might have been made. The County Record Office do not possess any documents belonging to Crownthorpe parish, and the probability, therefore, is that they no longer exist.

If that is so, the story of Ben Leggett ends here.

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IN MEMORIAM

I record with great regret the death of Mr. J.W.C. East of 'Ben Rhydding', Ilkley, Yorkshire, which occurred on 26 August. Mr East was one of the six people who replied to my notice in the Personal Column of 'The Times' in 1968 when I invited Woodforde-lovers to get in touch with me, and so was one of our foundation members. Though he was not able to come on our excursions he took a great interest (shared by his wife) in the affairs of the Society, and looked forward to the issue of each Journal. One of the last things he read was the latest Parson Woodforde Society Journal, and in a letter to me recently his wife wrote: "Oh, how he enjoyed those Journals from the very first one in 1968 until now. For the pleasure your friendship gave my husband I express my gratitude". On behalf of the Society we offer to Mrs. East and her son Alan our sympathy in the loss they have sustained. May he rest in peace.

- L.R.W.