PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY

Quarterly Journal

NEPHEW SAM
Samuel Woodforde R.A. (1763-1817)
Self portrait, 1801 or 1804
By kind permission of the Director, Royal Academy of Arts

VOL. XVII, NO. 4 WINTER 1984

[1781]

Septem: 1 – I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at home –
Nancy breakfasted, dined &c. &c. here again –
One Ginn of Norwich an Upholsterer (and whom I never saw but once before & that at Mr. Carrs) and another Person with him one Gay an elderly Man who I never saw before, both called at my House this morning about 9 o' clock and drank some fresh Beer & eat some Bread & Cheese being returning from Shooting – they had killed 2. brace of Birds – did not offer me any of them –
It was making I think rather too free with my House –
They are at Mr. Press Custances –
Mr. Press Custance sent me this Night 2. brace of Partridges –

Morn' excessive hot again – S –
Afternoon – ditto – SW

Sept: 2 – I breakfasted, dined, supped & slept again at home –
Nancy breakfasted, dined &c. here again –
To Mr. Ringars Harvest Men gave a Largess of– 0: 1: 0
To Mr. Peachmans Ditto – 0: 1: 0
To Mr. Kerrs Ditto – 0: 1: 0
My Servants Will & Lizzy went to a Harvest Frolick at Harry Dunnells this Evening – a good many People there – amongst the rest Young the Schoolma[s]ter who was scalded very much by a Kettle of hot Water, he being very drunk indeed there as was said –

Morn' cloudy but hot – ENE –
Afternoon – cooler – NEN

– James Woodforde: Diary of the first six years in Norfolk 1776-1781 – Volume III, 1780-1.

Issued to Members of the Parson Woodforde Society

Chairman	*Editor*	*Secretary*
G. H. Bunting	R. L. Winstanley	Mrs. P. Stanley
Old Schoolroom	6 Corville Road	76 Spencer Street
CASTLE CARY	HALESOWEN	NORWICH
Somerset	West Midlands	Norfolk

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

As Editor of the Journal, it is alike my duty and my pleasure to break new ground whenever possible, showing Woodforde himself in a fresh light or supplying a new context to his activities. This has been done here, I submit, in two quite different ways.

First, the excellent article by our Chairman which I am delighted to publish here gives for the first time details of the Parson's involvement with freeemasonry. This may have been only one more of his immediately vivid but transient and short-lived enthusiasms, abandoned as soon as he left Oxford and the society of other masons; but while it lasted he attended the meetings with great assiduity and showed a considerable interest in the proceedings. All this Mr. Bunting has recorded for us, and also added much valuable information about eighteenth century freemasonry in general. We are all indebted to him for this work.

It may appear rather more than inconsistent that, having so long opposed the preoccupation of those who think about Woodforde only in connection with food, I should turn right round and produce an article on that very topic. I can plead in my own defence only that, perhaps for the first time, it at least attempts to provide a field of serious enquiry, which may serve as a starting-point for other enquiries, to be carried on by those who know more about this aspect of eighteenth century social history than I. The first part compares the food habits of the people of Woodforde's time and class with our own. The second part ventures to enquire what people lived on if they were not fortunate enough to be possessors of a living in the gift of New College, Oxford. Everyone who has ever done any historical research knows that, in all epochs with the possible exception of our own, the lower down the social scale you go the harder it becomes to find out anything of value. If we wish to ask about the ordinary diet of labourers' families, none of the answers to any questions that might be put are forthcoming from the diary, so for once it is necessary to go right away from our usual primary source and seek other sources of information.

When the reader has in his hands this last number of the Journal, the year 1984 will be on its last legs. It reminds me once again that George Orwell's celebrated horror-novel of that name has proved to be most ludicrously out in its forecast of coming events. Many things that have happened in this year I personally found quite deplorable; but at least we are not yet living in the Orwellian nightmare, and there is no reason to believe we ever shall be. I see that Orwell's professional eulogists are now saying that he never intended *1984* to be a literal prophecy of the future, rather an exposé of some sinister tendencies he saw developing in the immediate post-war era in which the book was written. All I can say to that is that such an opinion was not held by the commentators of that time. They took it for a straight vision of what was to come about, and almost without exception it scared the very wits out of them. As for me, I thought that its ever coming about was a very unlikely postulate indeed. I found it an unpleasant book, its black pessimism morbid and hysterical, and I have never had the slightest desire to read it again.

In answer to a correspondent, I should like to say that all the short items in the series *Collated Characters* have so far been written by Penny Taylor, whose idea the series was. At the same time, it was planned as an open-ended sort of collection, and anyone who has a favourite person among those written about in the diary and would like to add him or her to the list, is very welcome to send in a contribution. For that matter, any member who would like to write on any topic associated in any way with the Parson is of course included in the same invitation. For a constant, regular stream of new contributions is the very life-blood of our Journal, without which it would soon dwindle to nothing.

– R. L. WINSTANLEY

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It is in the nature of things that the latest Membership List, recently circulated, will contain minor errors of one sort and another. One such has already been noted, the incorrect date printed on the cover. As previously announced, the list shows membership to the end of 1983; a supplementary, to be issued early next year, will include the names of members joining in 1984. I shall be obliged if any member whose name or address is in any way incorrect will write to me immediately. Amendments received in time will be included in the supplementary list.

With the publication of Norfolk III it is perhaps timely to remind members that copies of other of the Society's publications are still available. Ansford I (1759-1763) may be purchased at the advantageous price of £4.00, postage included, while Norfolk II (1778-1779) is obtainable for £7.00, again with postage paid. Both volumes are extensively annotated by our editor. Members requiring copies should write directly to me. The new volume, Norfolk III (1780-1781) at £8.50 will also be available.

For the benefit of newer members I should like to mention again that a register is maintained of those seeking copies of earlier editions of the printed diaries and associated volumes, including secondhand copies. Members interested are invited to write to me directly. Similarly, members wishing to dispose of Woodforde material may care to contact me.

By the time that these notes reach you your committee will have met in London to consider a number of matters affecting the Society. Not least among these will be the future of our annual Frolic. It is appreciated that many members will be reluctant to see major changes; the facts must be faced, however, that the event is increasingly difficult to arrange and, inevitably, more costly. It is hoped that we shall be able to bring you some news about this before long.

I should also like to take this opportunity of reminding members that annual subscriptions are due early in the New Year. Prompt remission of the appropriate sums saves a good deal of

time and trouble, as well as reducing our postage bill for reminder letters. May I ask, therefore, that even if all other New Year resolutions fail, this one you will keep.

Christmas and 1985 seem very far away as these notes are prepared, yet by the time they reach you the season will be upon us. Two centuries ago Woodforde ushered in 1785 by noting that he and Nancy "drank all our Friends Health wishing them all a happy new Year." May I convey those very same wishes to all members, their families and friends.

G. H. BUNTING
Chairman

BROTHER WOODFORDE – THE PARSON AS FREEMASON

Recent publicity about the system of freemasonry and the desirability, or otherwise, of membership by public figures, brings to mind the fact that James Woodforde too was once a member of the order. It is true that his association was limited to his Oxford days, and that he seems never to have taken a prominent part in proceedings: it is likely indeed that his interest was never more than superficial, once his initial enthusiasm had waned. The University Lodge into which Woodforde was admitted in April 1774 was named after the supposed founder of the institution, King Alfred himself. Its three principal officers were known as Right Worshipful Master, Worshipful Senior Warden and Worshipful Junior Warden; there were, of course, other, lesser officers.

Legend assigns the beginnings of the cult to Old Testament times, to the construction of the Tower of Babel, or the building of Solomon's Temple. Yet other versions trace its origins in England to the time of the crusades. It is generally accepted however that medieval craftsmen, with their guild signs and symbols, could well have given rise to the masonic system. It is also clear that modern freemasonry owes its existence to the foundation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Before this time church hostility, following an earlier period of favour, had brought about actual prohibition of the order in the fifteenth century. By the seventeenth century fresh impetus had been

given to the movement, following the rise of scientific and humanist speculation so that, by the dawn of the eighteenth century, a gradual expansion began. Benevolence and charity became the accepted rationale of the movement.

It is difficult to assess from diary evidence alone the strength of the lodge into which Woodforde was initiated, or to calculate its influence on university matters in particular. That there was a fair degree of inter-relationship is self-evident since analysis reveals that members, including senior university officials and office holders, were drawn from at least seven of the colleges. Brasenose and Pembroke, Exeter and Christ Church, Magdalen and New College are all mentioned in the diary as providing lodge members, while from other sources Balliol is also listed. As might be expected from one of Woodforde's habit, he recorded meticulously in his diary the occasions upon which he attended lodge meetings as well as listing the names, and sometimes masonic degree, of those brethren he met there. Of course, the same men are mentioned time and again in the diary in connection with matters which have nothing to do with free-masonry but are related either to university business or ordinary social intercourse.

It was in the entry for 21 April 1774 that Woodforde first mentions the lodge and his membership:

> I went with Holmes to the Free-Masons
> Lodge held this Day at the New Inn, was there
> admitted a Member of the same and dined
> & spent the Afternoon with them –
> The Form & Ceremony on the Occasion
> I must beg leave to omit putting down –

Robert Holmes, a Fellow of New College and later, after Woodforde's death, Dean of Winchester, had first met the diarist in the previous year. According to Woodforde's own entries they were frequently in one another's company and had obviously struck up some form of affinity. Although there is no direct diary evidence, the matter of Woodforde's possible membership of the lodge had first been mooted early in 1774 and was therefore most likely connected with his election to the office of Sub-Warden of his college in December 1773.

Whether or not this is so, the Alfred Lodge minute book reveals that a proposal for Woodforde's membership had been made in January 1774. It is noted that the proposal, made by the then W J W, was to be referred to a ballot to be held on the occasion of the next lodge night. This took place on 10 February and, after the voting, the lodge resolved that Woodforde be admitted.

These, then, were the events leading up to the meeting on 21 April. According to that same minute book Woodforde was entered as an Apprentice and paid the appropriate fees. Oddly enough, the sum recorded by the diarist as being paid, £3.5.0, does not accord with the lodge records. Here the admission fee of £2.2.0., a term subscription of 10s.6d. and the obligatory charity payment of 2s.6d. add up to only £2.15.0 or ten shillings less than Woodforde's own figure. It is impossible to account for the discrepancy, although it would not be the first of his arithmetical errors if the mistake were his.

Less than three weeks later, on 5 May, Woodforde attended the lodge for the second time. The diary entry for the day reads: " . . . I was promoted higher . . . For some fees at my Promotion £1.1s.0d." The lodge minute book gives us a little more detail of the nature of this elevation. Woodforde ceased to be a mere Apprentice and as duly recorded: ". . . was passed Fellow Craft"; this being a position midway between that of a new recruit and full membership. On this occasion there was no difference in the two records over fees, the one guinea entered by Woodforde being exactly that shown by the lodge book. It was a well attended meeting. Woodforde names 16 other brothers, including his friend Holmes who had originally introduced him.

There is no record of a meeting during Woodforde's short absence from Oxford in late May but he was back for the meeting of 16 June when he was to be further promoted. A day or so before this Woodforde bought his apron, a feature then, as now, of masonic dress. He described it as of "white Leather lined with white Silk & silver Tossills", and it cost him 13s.0d. The meeting itself was held at the early hour of 9.00 a.m. and, following a breakfast, Woodforde together with another brother was made a Master Mason. According to the lodge minutes he

was "raised to the DIGNITY of MASTER . . .". Once again the fees recorded in the two accounts coincide: £1.1.0. for the promotion and 10s.6d. for the medal signifying his new degree. His first appearance, fully qualified as it were, was at a special meeting held little more than a week later, on 24 June. This was the grand festival day of the lodge when no fewer than 27 of the brethren were present. It was the meeting of the year at which the officers were chosen and the last before the summer recess. It was certainly a lengthy affair. Woodforde records that it began at 1.00 p.m. and did not break up until 8.00 in the evening. Much of this time would certainly have been taken up with the "very elegant Dinner" he mentions. John Napleton, later to become a Canon of Hereford and a leading reformer of the university system Woodforde so much enjoyed, was made R W M – "chaired" as Woodforde put it. Dr. Wall, Martin Wall the future Professor of Clinical Medicine, became W S W, and Thomas Velley of St. John's the W J W. To round off the occasion six of the members were raised to the degree of Master Mason. Woodforde was no longer the "new boy".

Woodforde's official duties as Pro-Proctor and Sub-Warden detained him in Oxford until early in September, although they were not onerous enough to preclude a good deal of wining and dining. Some of this conviviality was in the company of masonic brethren, including dinners at the New Inn, the habitual venue of lodge meetings. It is unlikely, however, that these gatherings were in the nature of official meetings, but simply social events. One such took place in July and another in late August when Woodforde used his influence to secure the admission to hospital of a waiter, one of those who regularly served the freemasons at their lodge dinners. By early October Woodforde was back at New College but it was to be a full month before the Alfred Lodge reconvened. Woodforde made his usual list of those present and noted that he had paid his quarterly subscription. A similar meeting in the month following is noteworthy only because Woodforde, in his diary entry for 10 November 1774, sheds a little light on what actually took place on at least one occasion. Woodforde notes that Martin Wall presided as R W M, which must indicate that it was customary for the "chair" to be taken by the Senior Warden in

the absence of the elected R W M. Then the assembled brethren were addressed by one of their number, James Wood of Brasenose, on the subject of masonry itself. Although only in his early thirties, he would come to a mysterious end in the following year. He is last recorded as being present at a lodge meeting on 23 March 1775. On 28 November Woodforde wrote: "It is reported that Brother Wood of Brazen Nose died suddenly in a Chaise between Lyons and Paris in France some time back–". Readers with a taste for the more grotesque forms of melodrama may refer back to the ludicrous story that Mozart, if not murdered by his envious rival Salieri, was poisoned by the freemasons for revealing their secrets in *The Magic Flute*! He was of course an assiduous lodge member himself, and one of the very last of his works was a little cantata which he wrote for the freemasons of Vienna.

By early December 1774 when the lodge next met, Woodforde had just learned of William Master's refusal of the living of Weston Longville. Woodforde himself was next in line, although another claimant, John Hooke, was in the offing. The December meeting gave opportunity, therefore, for judicious canvassing. The important election came on 15 December, the day after the lodge meeting. The Warden of New College John Oglander spoke for Woodforde, but it is worthy of note that the other principal speakers on his behalf included Dr. Wall the lodge W S W and Robert Holmes his original sponsor. When it came to the vote, Lucas, Cooke and Williams, fellow lodge members, were for Woodforde. Only Trotman and King amongst those who voted for Hooke have been positively identified as members of the Alfred Lodge.

In the period up to the end of the Lent term, 8 April 1775 – and just before Woodforde set off upon his first visit to Norwich and Weston Longville – he had attended five more lodge meetings, missing only that held on 6 April, when he was busy entertaining visitors from Somerset. Apart from his usual listing of names Woodforde reveals that one new member was a Russian he calls "Suzzerof" and "Sufferof", whose name was rather more accurately rendered by the Oxford register when the University granted him the degree of M.A. by diploma on

2 June of this year. He was one of twelve Russians sent to study at Oxford by Princess Catherina Dashkova, a friend of the Empress Catherine II. Woodforde also recorded a slight change in the masonic regalia favoured by the lodge, when the blue "ribbands", from which hung suspended the medals worn by the Master Masons, were changed to white. Yet another entry reveals the surprising fact that Robert Holmes, so frequently in attendance at lodge meetings, and who had introduced Woodforde, was not himself a member! He was not, in fact, to become one until long after Woodforde had left Oxford for good. He was, undoubtedly, a member of another lodge.

The special meeting of the lodge on St. John's Day in 1775 saw the annual election of officers and Martin Wall succeeded Napleton as R W M. Woodforde himself became Chaplain, the only masonic office he was to hold. There can be little doubt that, had he not left Oxford when he did, further promotion would most likely have come his way; as with other facets of university life, seniority played a major part in these matters. He attended one other meeting that summer, late in June, before abandoning Oxford for a long stay at Ansford and did not return to his college until early October. A routine series of lodge meetings took place that winter with only the last of the year, held on 11 December, proving anything out of the ordinary. This was a special meeting, summoned by the Treasurer in order to settle the lodge's accounts. The Treasurer failed to show up and Woodforde, with some justification, having put off a dinner with Oglander, the Warden, in order to attend it, recorded a little testily: "NB. nothing done."

The new year, 1776, was ushered in with a period of intense cold, with hard frosts, piercing north east winds and a good deal of snow. The lodge met only once during January and then again in early February, the 8th. This meeting, held as usual at the New Inn, was to be Woodforde's last. The diary entry is routine enough; the day was a stormy one and Woodforde spent part of it in writing to a Norwich lawyer, asking that the matter of the dilapidations at Weston Parsonage be resolved. He paid a barber's bill and then "dined and spent the afternoon at our

Lodge . . .". He makes no mention of the fact that this was a last appearance for him. There is obviously nothing specially significant about the meeting. The usual list of names is given, but that is all: it may well be that he anticipated future gatherings of similar kind before making his final break with the university. The lodge minute book records his attendance but thereafter is silent. His name appears no more.

Two minor mysteries remain. Long before Woodforde had been elected Chaplain of the lodge the minutes had recorded that he "acted as Chaplain" on 12 December 1774. Woodforde himself records no such event. A lodge meeting had been held four days earlier, but he had made mention of nothing but routine. It is true that on 12 December he had attended evening chapel, but this too was a fairly regular event. The minute book also credits Woodforde with acting as W J W on 6 June 1775. There is no mention of this in the diary, nor indeed of any lodge meeting held on that date. There had been one five days earlier but on that occasion Suvorov the Russian had been specifically mentioned by Woodforde as W J W. At the next meeting, on 22 June, Velley is named as Junior Warden. Dr. Wall, the Senior Warden, was elected Master for the ensuing year. Two days later, on St. John's Day, "our grand day for choosing new Officers and the like", Woodforde was elected Chaplain, as has already been mentioned, and could hardly have acted as W J W into the bargain. These contradictions remain obscure.

Woodforde's association with the Alfred Lodge had lasted for a little less than two years. He had attended some two dozen meetings during that time and had named over 60 members of the university who, at one time or another in that period, had also been freemasons. A round half dozen or so had been as assiduous in their attendance as had Woodforde himself. For the majority, however, intermittent appearances seemed sufficient. One of the members most frequently present was Thomas Stinton of Exeter college, who had been made W J W in 1775. He was destined to inherit the mantle of Napleton and Dr. Wall by becoming R W M although this would not be until 1781, five years after Woodforde's time. But not for long; when Stinton

took over the Alfred Lodge was upon its last legs. It ceased to function during his second year of office.

EXTRA-MURAL FAMILIES

1. *The Greaves of Weston and East Tuddenham*

The Greaves family, who appear in the Weston register as "Grave", are traceable both there and at East Tuddenham. In February 1777 Parson Woodforde buried John Greaves of East Tuddenham at Weston: " ... rec^{d} for burying him as he was a Stranger, the Sum of 0 : 6 : 8 and which I gave back to his Widow as she is poor and has many Children". Poverty is the common denominator here, if this was, as seems probable, the "John Grave" who had occupied the "Tenement at Greensgate" repaired by the Overseers in 1761 (Journal XVII, 3, 17-19). The family seems to have left Weston after this date but, as was the custom, John was buried in his native parish. His widow, assumed to be the "Widow Greaves" of the diary, was a sister of Betty England, Mr. du Quesne's housekeeper, and also of a Mrs. Preston of Norwich, whom Mr. Maynard buried at Weston, with James Woodforde's permission, in December 1798. The unmarried name of the trio would appear to have been Fox, possibly connected with Ben Leggett's cousin of Attlebridge.

Five children are listed in the Weston register:

Anne, Daughter of John & Susan Grave baptised 8/1/1758
John, Son of John & Susan Grave baptised 29/7/1759
Thomas, Son of John & Anne Grave baptised 20/7/1760
Elizabeth, Daughter of John and Anne Grave baptised 17/3/1765
Susannah, Daughter of John and Susan Grave baptised 6/4/1766

The eldest of these children is never mentioned again, and there may have been others, born between 1760 and 1765, who did not survive. At first sight these names appear to refer to two different families, but in view of the fact that the two girls, Elizabeth and Susannah, were undoubtedly sisters, it must be

regarded as practically certain that all of them were children of the same parents. The discrepancy in the mother's Christian name could have arisen if she were named "Susannah", like her younger daughter. She may also have been the "Susan Graves, a Widow", buried at Weston in 1812, aged 82.

In 1777 Woodforde records various dealings with "Neighbour Greaves"; he may have been the younger John, returned to Weston with his mother and sisters. But the principal connection between the family and Weston Parsonage began with the occasional employment of the widow as a washerwoman to help out the maids on the allotted "Washing Days", and with the arrival of her daughter Elizabeth as a new maid on 5 May 1780. Woodforde describes her as "a neat Girl and I hope will do – tho' she is small", and "about 15.". In fact she was sixteen, but her diminutive size may well have made her look younger.

She became "my little Maid", or Lizzy – there was already a Betty in the household – and in company with Jack Warton the "Skipjack" she carried out such lesser duties as collecting eggs from roving hens, finding acorns for the pigs, collecting stones and helping the senior maid Betty Claxton, who may well have been a sharp taskmistress.

After the trouble when Sam Clarke said he had "lost his Purse in Kitchen", it fell to Lizzy when clearing the grate to discover the remains of the purse, and a guinea, thereby freeing all the servants from suspicion.

Woodforde seems to have regarded her with affection and she no doubt was an engaging little person. We see her attending various frolics in the village, visiting Norwich with her mother to buy a new pair of "stays"; and on one glorious occasion, to watch the Bishop Blaise procession in Norwich, March 1783. "I was willing that all sh[d] go who could", Woodforde says. It was a merry party, with Mrs. Davie and Nancy in the Howes' chaise, Woodforde, Will, Ben and Lizzy on horseback, and Jack up behind the chaise.

Later that year the Parsonage servants, all but one, fell victims to the fever, clearly a type of malaria, and "called the Whirligousticon by the Faculty", an allusion to the dizziness that was

one of its symptoms. Lizzy and Jack were the worst affected; but the boy had the better resistance of the two and got over it sooner. Lizzy was very ill from August to October and the ups and downs of her illness, the seeming recovery followed by sudden relapses, are vividly present in the diary. Woodforde was very concerned. Dr. Thorne was called in and prescribed "the Bark". This, known variously as "Jesuit's bark", "Peruvian bark", "Cinchona" and, to us, quinine, was one of the very few remedies in the pharmacopeia of that time which could have been of any use to the patient. With this the doctor ordered laudanum, the tincture form of opium, to counteract any purging action on the part of the quinine. Ironically, Woodforde thought a few days later that it was making her worse and took her off the quinine on his own responsibility. Dr. Thorne, who knew better than to insist on his own opinion against that of his well-heeled clients, obligingly substituted "Camphire Powders". Meanwhile, Lizzy's mother had been called in, not I feel so much to be with her daughter as to do her work about the house.

After the Tithe Frolic in December that year Will Coleman was to startle the household with the "fit" in which he belaboured the maids and then plunged into the Parson's "great Pond". He had fallen under Lizzy's spell and wanted to marry her; but she refused him. Later Briton arrived, Will went home to Somerset and life in the kitchen returned to normal.

In the spring of 1784 Lizzy was again ill with fever but Dr. Thorne called and "happened to have in his Pocket a Vomit and a Rhubarb Powder which he left for her". Among her remedies in this illness was "red Bark", which the Parson thought did her good. This is very strange, for the medicine was merely a variety of quinine, which he had rejected in the illness of the previous year. However, she made a timely recovery, for she was now due to enter service at Weston House. She departed on 5 July with her wages and "0 : 2 : 6 extraordinary". She was succeeded by the ill-fated Molly Dade.

How long Lizzy remained at Weston House is not apparent. Five years later (1789) she was in service with Mr du Quesne, and was to be the cause of great worry and uneasiness to that

gentleman, since she found that she was expecting a child by James Atterton, or Arthurton, the valet. And no sooner were they hastily married than another maid, Mary, found herself in the same state. Atterton had been involved with Lizzy's sister Sukey some time earlier, but Lizzy no doubt took a philosophical view, since she was the one to achieve a wedding ring. Atterton stayed in Mr. du Quesne's employment and presumably settled down with Lizzy and their child – by implication a son, James. (See Journal I, 4, 19.)

In 1792 Woodforde baptised their daughter Elizabeth in du Quesne's absence, and when that amiable clergyman died in September 1793 Atterton was remembered in his Will with £20 and mourning clothes. No doubt he also came in for the usual valet's "perks".

What became of the couple after this has yet to be revealed. Later entries in the diary indicate that they returned to Weston parish, where James' father and brother lived, since on 3 December 1794 Woodforde buried the daughter Elizabeth, "Aged about 3. Years" there. On the 17th. he sent Lizzy "a fat Chicken fit to dress, she being very ill indeed, many think her in a Decline ... she very late laid in ...". However, there is no record of Lizzy's death, so perhaps this pessimistic rumour was unfounded.

Sister Sukey was already a maid at Weston House when Lizzy went there, having been recommended to Mrs. Custance by Woodforde. She had been in Mr. du Quesne's service but left as she did not get on with her aunt, Betty England. She often visited the Parsonage at Christmas time with the other Weston House servants, and her affair, if such it was, with Atterton must have been overlooked by the Custances, since she was still in service with them in the early 1790's. On 8 February 1792 Woodforde was told by Atterton that she was "in the last stages of a Consumption" and, sadly, she died on 26 April, aged only 25; "and extremely good have M^{r} and M^{rs} Custance been to her in all her illness", the diarist reported.

Brothers John and Thomas were both carpenters who did many odd jobs for the Parson. It was John who altered the four-poster

bed in the garret for the visit of the John Woodfordes and Patty Clarke, thereby helping to create the "Cabbin", so much appreciated by Nancy and Patty, who slept there together for the whole of the visit. He also helped to erect the famous weathercock, by means of which all those variations of wind and weather were recorded in the diary. He died on 19 or 20 March 1791, after a few days' illness, of "the Peripneumony". This word, a variant of "pneumonia", had according to *Shorter O.E.D.* been in the language since 1550, so the condition must have been known, at least to contemporary doctors; but this is the only time it appears in the diary. John Graves left a young widow, Sarah, who was shortly to bear a second child, another John, baptised on 24 April 1791. "Young Widow Greaves" paid her late husband's tithe and dined in the Parsonage kitchen two days after the Frolic of that year. Her story had a happy ending for in October 1796 she married John Hubbard, who had lost his wife, and his children and hers were perhaps joined by half-brothers and sisters in the course of time.

The original Widow Greaves seems to have gone on living at Weston, probably acting as "help" to various households. Woodforde noted that on 16 January 1797 she brought him from another and recent widow, Mrs. Mann, "a black silk Hatband & a p^{r} of grey Gloves for the Death of her Husband, J^{no} Mann". No "Greaves" or "Grave" appears in the 1801 census list compiled for the Parson by young Stephen Andrews, but John Hubbard had eight persons in his household, one of whom could perhaps have been the mother of Mrs. Hubbard's late first husband.

---

2. *John Hamerton and the Lyng Paper Mill*

> The Master M^{r} Hamerton went with us and shewed us the whole Machinery which is indeed very curious –
> – Diary: 12/2/1778

Woodforde's first meeting with John Hamerton was when he met him at dinner at Mr. Baldwin's in February 1778. During their visit to the paper mill Woodforde and Mr du Quesne

"bought and shared a Ream of writing Paper, 20. Quires ... I paid for mine 0 : 5 : 0 –

Paper-making in East Anglia had begun in the last quarter of the seventeenth century when at least one mill, and quite possibly more, were established in Norfolk. The increase in the price of imported papers gave encouragement to home producers and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 caused a widespread immigration of Huguenot refugees, many of them papermakers, and thus provided the English industry with an influx of skilled workers.

After press censorship was abolished in 1695 the printing of newspapers spread to the provinces, being established in Norwich in 1701 by Francis Burges. He began to publish a weekly newspaper, and within seven years there were three newspapers plus a large number of other publications produced in the city. Paper and board were not only required by the book trade but were also used by the woollen industry for pressing, finishing, packing and wrapping. Connections were established between the location of the paper-making industry and the woollen and cloth-making districts, of which Norfolk was one of the foremost throughout the eighteenth century. The growth of the worsted industry in Norwich between 1710 and 1790 gave considerable impetus to local paper-making. Before the early years of the nineteenth century water wheels were the source of power, and large quantities of water were also needed during the manufacturing process. Eighteenth century mills were therefore sited where there was "a good head of water". There were several mills strung along the Wensum above Norwich, but this is the only area in Norfolk where there was anything like a concentration of mills.

By August 1778 "Nephew Bill" had become acquainted with Mr. Baldwin, the vicar of Lyng, and Mr. Hamerton, visiting them on his own at frequent intervals, and they both became interested in Bill's wish to join the Navy, Mr. Hamerton promising to "use all his Interest for him". This was the eighteenth century word for "influence", and Hamerton evidently had some pull in naval circles through his brother's being employed at the Admiralty.

From the diary entries Bill appears as a rather volatile young man given to such juvenile pursuits as making model ships, firing off the Parson's cannon, building snow "Temples" and taking pot-shots at the local small game; also to more sophisticated exploits with the Norwich "Town Ladies" and Sukey Boxley. But he must also have possessed a great deal of charm, perhaps like his irresponsible father and his Uncle John, though one wonders just how it came about that Hamerton was so concerned about his prospects: "we sat and talked a good deal about Bill's proceeding with regard to the Navy – Mr Hamerton said that he would do what he could, and would advance him Money to rig himself out ...". Hamerton does not seem to have had daughters for whom he might be seeking an alliance – an advantage because Bill "would have been very soon promoted". However, Bill's instability in the end outweighed the charm, and after he had shilly-shallied about going to sea, and failed to join the ship that had been found for him, Hamerton told Woodforde he "believed him to be a very unsteady Man". (Diary, 22/1/1779).

John Hamerton is recorded as running the paper mill at Taverham, which was to become the most important in the county, from about 1758, and two years later he took John Anstead as his partner at both Lyng and Taverham. The partnership ended in 1793, and the two parted on friendly terms, Hamerton taking the Lyng mill. Within eight months of Woodforde's first visit (1778) the Lyng mill was destroyed by fire, and the Mill House was only narrowly saved. Paper mills were particularly prone to fire, due to the combustible nature of the rotting rags used.

No further reference to Hamerton occurs in the Beresford edition until 8 May 1797, when Woodforde dined at Mr. Anson's at Lyng, the guests including "Old Mr Hamerton". On 21 June Bill, who was on a visit to Weston, "took a Walk to Lyng to see his good old Friend Mr Hamerton ... They were very glad to see him". On 17 February 1800 the Parson records: "Old Mr Hamerton of Lyng, who died last week, is to be buried to day and it is said that the Funeral will be very expensive –". There is a wall-tablet to his memory in the chancel of Lyng church,

flanked on the other side of the altar by a similar one to the Baldwin family.

The mill was then taken over by Thomas Hamerton but he became bankrupt four years later. It then passed to John Abbot Dusautoy of Hampshire who soon after published *The Paper Maker's Ready Reckoner, or Calculations to shew the prime cost of any ream of paper.* Earlier, an advertisement by John Hamerton in the *Norfolk Chronicle* for 1/2/1783 lists the wide range of types and sizes of paper available from the mill. In 1832 Lyng Mill was destroyed during machine-breaking riots but was later rebuilt and owned by the firm of Robberds and Money until the mid-1860's.

Additional material from
The Early History of Paper-Making in Norfolk by David Stoker, Norfolk Archaeology Journal, Vol. XXXVI, Part III: 1976.

THE INNER MAN: A MODEST INQUIRY INTO THE FOOD AND EATING HABITS OF PARSON WOODFORDE'S CONTEMPORARIES

> Some people (said he) have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else.
>
> *–J. Boswell: LIFE OF JOHNSON*

> Johnson ... often said ... that wherever the dinner is ill got there is poverty, or there is avarice, or there is stupidity; in short, the family is somehow grossly wrong: for (continued he) a man seldom thinks with more earnestness of any thing than he does of his dinner; and if he cannot get that well dressed, he should be suspected of inaccuracy in other things.
>
> *–H. L. Piozzi: ANECDOTES*

Ever since Beresford's selections from the diary gave so much prominence to the food the Parson ate, it has been difficult to dissociate the two in the public mind. I fancy, all the same, that the attitude of readers may have undergone a considerable

change over the years. The earlier generation, contemporaries of Beresford himself, probably found that to read about so much highly appetizing food at such extremely low prices reinforced that urge to idealise the past which they were happy to share with the editor; and therefore would contemplate the Woodfordean spreads with admiring envy. Witness the late Airey Neave who with a fellow-inmate of the wartime prison-camp used to read aloud the accounts of the most sumptuous meals in the diary, and imagine he was helping to eat them! Modern diet-conscious readers, on the other hand, perhaps look upon the diarist's gastronomic career as an Awful Warning, and insist that he dug his grave with his teeth, in common with so many of his fellow-gourmets.

But in fact – and this must surely be the great Woodfordean paradox – in spite of there being so much about food, at least in the later years of the diary, it is not really a very helpful source if we are trying to discover something about Woodforde's actual eating habits. Merely to list the dishes on the table says nothing about the consumption of food at a meal. We tend to be rather bewildered at the idea of so many goodies, and to imagine that, simply because a lot of food was there, everyone present at the meal must have eaten a lot. As Mrs. Grigson has pointed out, this belief stems largely from ignorance of the way eighteenth century meals were served. At a dinner party with a number of guests, you were virtually restricted to what was placed opposite you, or at the most a little way to the right or left. If you wanted something else, you had to attract the attention of a neighbour and have the desired dish passed to you. The custom of taking along your own servant to share with the host's butler or footman the task of waiting at table may have widened the area of choice to some extent. But I confess to being wholly in the dark as to the amount of latitude which polite etiquette would have allowed to a visiting servant whose particular job it was to look after the needs of his master, or to the guest to behave with the unconstrained freedom he enjoyed in his own home. Suppose Wodforde were to find himself stationed opposite the "Rabbit smothered with Onions" which, in the idiom of his day, he may not "chuse" to sample at the moment. Would he bawl out: "Pass me the pigs' ears, Briton, my man!" –

even if the dish containing those succulent appendages is right up at the top of the table, opposite the plate of his host, Mr. Townshend himself, of Honingham Hall? We may conclude that with so much variety of food every guest had enough to eat, not that they all ate everything in sight.

Woodforde, whose psychic make-up included a liberal admixture of hypochondria, was frequently exercized in mind over the connection between food and health. Some foodstuffs were positively "good" for him, he thought. Others he no doubt imagined were equally "bad", and would tend to avoid them, although there are few signs in the diary of his having had any real dietary aversions. At different times he thought he had benefitted by giving up tobacco, or substituting "Sage Tea" for the more usual Indian or Chinese brew. At New College in 1774 he went for a week without supper, evidently in the belief that it would be beneficial to give his stomach a rest. Once or twice a transient indisposition forced him to admit that he had "made too free" with some favourite dish or other. Once he imagined that consuming hot gooseberry pie and laughing as he ate it combined to give him the "Hickups" which, much to his distress, lasted for some days.

But when we try to investigate real eating habits, his or those of any other of his contemporaries, we are greatly hampered at the outset by the fact that their terms of reference are quite different from ours. Without being experts, most of us know that all food may be divided according to its properties, into protein, fat and carbohydrate. The vitamins, those essential ingredients in a normally balanced diet, were not discovered until the 1920's, although it is true that eighteenth century people had a good deal of empirically acquired knowledge about vitamin deficiency, as we know from Captain Cook, his lemons and the scurvy. More recently we have become uncomfortably aware of the dangers of a high calorie intake and the insidious effects on the arterial system of blood-cholesterol. Perhaps it was as well for the peace of mind of Woodforde's contemporaries that they had no idea of the lurking perils attendant on a "hearty meal". All the same, they could tell accurately enough that, in terms of ingestion, some foodstuffs were "heavier", some "richer" than

others. Observe our Parson when he sets his sister to rights in what, if he expressed his ideas aloud, must have seemed to the lady an insufferably holier-than-thou attitude:

> My Sister P. complains a good deal, more so than I think she ought – She eats too gross things – too rich for her Stomach –

Woodforde's contemporaries knew how to regulate the amount of food taken after an illness or during convalescence. It was quite sound medical practice for doctors to instruct their patients who were recovering from feverish ailments to "live low". It made good sense, also, to do this when people had been inoculated against smallpox. That is why the Parson flew into such an uncharacteristic temper when he heard that the cook Molly Salmon had surreptitiously put eggs into the rice milk ordered by Dr. Thorne for Ben and Jack. She may have been good with her needle, and a "very pretty Woman" at that; but handsome is as handsome does, and he gave her notice on the spot. He was shocked when the "frightful old Woman", Goody Tuddenham, gave beer and egg yolk to her smallpox patient, Neighbour Downing, alleging that they were "hearty things".

To a modern reader there can be no mystery about what was essentially wrong with the Parsonage meals, and with similar meals put on all over the kingdom. They were totally unbalanced, owing to the immense preponderance of meat over everything else. There was good historical precedent for this, originating from the basic fact that much of the land was better suited to stock-breeding than to any other form of agriculture. No-one ever questioned the belief, handed down from immemorial times, that meat-eating was necessary for the maintenance of health and vigour, and that an abundance of meat was the infallible sign of national prosperity. What comparison could there possibly be, our compatriots thought, between tough, burly John Bull, nourished on the roast beef of Old England, and the rickety, asthenic Frenchman who lived, as everyone believed, on soup and roasted frogs? Hogarth's famous engraving of *Calais Gate* trumpets this vainglorious patriotism in the most blatant way.

So a good householder and wise host knew better than to provide meals for his guests which were lacking in ample

quantities of meat. Yet it is unwise to assume that the average Woodfordean dinner-party was no more than an orgy of flesh-eating. The gardens of both Ansford and Weston Parsonages were able to supply a very satisfactory array of vegetables in season. Incidental details that found their way into the diary suggest that the yields were often very high and that the food-plants appeared, in all but a few abnormal years, with perfect regularity and in excellent time. Indeed, we sometimes come across them earlier in the year than they are now expected, like the asparagus which Mr. Custance's gardener managed to have ready to eat by February. It is true that the diarist did not always take the trouble to differentiate between one vegetable and another, lumping them together under the single title of "Garden Stuff". It is noteworthy, all the same, that he more than once complains of a lack of this same "Garden Stuff" at the dinner tables at which he ate as a guest. So we must conclude that he expected to have vegetables as a necessary part of a dinner, and presumably he would eat his share of them. He had an abundance of all the native fruits, not only pears, plums and several varieties of apple but also peaches, nectarines, apricots. There was no shortage of imported citrus fruits at what must sound to us like out-of-this-world prices. Pineapples were rather beyond his reach, a true luxury article; but he tasted the fruit at Creed's, and on one or two other occasions. Only bananas, of all the fruit familiar in our shops, were quite unknown to him and would not make their appearance here until the late nineteenth century, when the introduction of refrigerator ships made it possible to bring in these highly perishable things.

The quality of food, and its value or otherwise in terms of health, can as we all know vary a good deal according to the way it is cooked. Woodforde's servants had three ways of cooking meat dishes for a hot meal. They could be boiled, roasted or fried. It must be obvious that if a chicken, say, was fixed on a spit and, as it revolved, was "basted" by pouring back over it the fat which dripped from the carcase, it would be a very different dish from that produced if the same bird had been boiled. Woodforde did in fact eat a good deal of his meat boiled and, however strange it may seem to us, a boiled dish and a

roasted one would often appear on the same menu. He also ate a fair amount of fish, much lighter and more easily digested than any sort of red meat. The diary mentions a wide variety of edible fishes, for some of which he gives the dialect name only, untraced until I began to annotate the Norfolk diary.

Our modern dietitians have singled out sweet dishes as among those likely to do most damage, for many of the ingredients they find most suspect are involved in the making of cakes and puddings. With Woodforde's meals, many of the favourite sweet dishes are extremely rich. On the other hand, the proportion of sweet to savoury dishes was lower than in our time. Sweet things appeared as part of the "second course", which also included savouries, just as in the first course; and there were never more than one or two of them on a single menu. Woodforde, I fancy, did not have a particularly sweet tooth and never seemed to mind if sweet dishes were omitted. On the other hand he liked Mr. du Quesne's *Charter* well enough to transport the recipe to Somerset, where we find his sister making it. While he was resident at Oxford, although not so far as I know at any other time, he ate *New College Pudding,* once including it on the menu for a special Oxford dinner-party at which he was host.

We might look at this particular sweet more fully. By Woodforde's time it had been a speciality of the college for hundreds of years. There is in the archive a copy of the recipe in a seventeenth century hand, written out by one of the New College cooks. I have chosen, however, a modern recipe, as being rather easier to understand. It comes from Nell Heaton: *Traditional Dishes of the British Isles* (1951):

> Mix together ¼ lb. shredded beef suet and ¼ lb. grated breadcrumbs. Add ¼ lb. currants, a pinch of salt, 2 tablespoonsful of sugar, ½ a grated nutmeg, 1 oz. shredded candied peel, 3 well beaten eggs and sufficient milk to make a thick creamy consistency. Fry the mixture in spoonfuls in a little hot butter till browned on both sides, shaking the pan frequently so that they do not burn. Serve on a very hot dish dusted with caster sugar.

Now, if you were trying to pick out a single dish which most completely violates all the rules of modern healthful eating, this

would have a good claim to be selected. It neatly combines all the ingredients which today's dietitians say are worst for us and, as if that were not enough, the whole concoction has to be fried in butter and "dusted" with caster sugar! Make this a regular feature of the dining table, our modern food-experts will tell us, and you don't have to look far in search of reasons for the obesity, hypertension and so on, that plagued Woodforde's contemporaries. Assuming that this opulent sweet was a regular feature of the dinner in Hall which all resident Fellows were expected to attend, although by no means all did, as we know from the diary, those who lived and ate in New College regularly over a long term of years doubtless found that it helped to round their paunches into that academic rotundity we see caricatured in the sketches of Rowlandson and others. But we have no evidence that Woodforde particularly liked that dish, and he appears not to have eaten it anywhere except in college.

We have so far been discussing mainly the more obnoxious features of eighteenth century diet. It must be admitted, however, that in some ways the food of the more prosperous households was superior to our own. It was untouched by the chemicals which many see as a most sinister and potentially dangerous innovation, and declare that any food which contains them is adulterated. The use of preservatives did not come about until the manufacture of foodstuffs on a large scale became an industry and they had to be kept for sometimes lengthy periods before eating. When women were liberated, as they say, from the kitchen and took to doing full-time work carried on outside the home, food which required hours of cooking began to give way to "instant" food, which could be prepared in minutes. But this means that we can no longer talk of natural food, unless we prepare it ourselves. It is true that by law food manufacturers are now obliged to state clearly everything that is put into the food. But the amounts are not stated; nor, if they were, would the information be of much use to the average customer. As to the pesticides and herbicides and sprays of all kinds that are used in the production of fruit and vegetables, the hormones given to animals to make them grow faster, and all the rest of it, we can hardly be blamed if sometimes we find

ourselves yearning for the innocently uncomplicated methods of Woodforde's time.

Again, it was always a sign of gentility to put on your table bread with the greatest possible degree of whiteness. But however many times flour was "bolted" to remove the bran and the wheat-germ that darkened the bread, it still remained the traditional stone-ground article. It was not until the late nineteenth century invention of the rolling mill that it was possible to take all the goodness out of flour and leave a residue that was hardly more than pure starch, although we are told that the nutrients are later put back into the product. Certainly it is lacking in taste. But it has often been observed that modern shoppers take little account of taste, if they are pleased with the colour and appearance of the article they buy.

*

In the diarist's time food was, like dress, determined by considerations of social class in a way that has no parallel in ours. Food habits are commonly acquired in early childhood, and Woodforde's solid middle-class meals in the Norfolk years were very similar, as we see from the early diary, to those which his father put on the table at Ansford Parsonage. We see as we read that what he called "Frenchified" dishes, the ragouts and fricassées he occasionally consumed at Weston House, or Honingham Hall, or at special times in New College, never appeared on his own table. This may have been simply because his rural cooks were not capable of rising to these sophisticated culinary refinements. But I think that he himself would have regarded such luxurious dishes as not really in keeping with his station in life. And similarly, although the larger and more prosperous of the local farmers probably had a standard of living not much inferior to his own, in the homes of the smaller cultivators and the upper stratum of tradesmen the food would have been simpler and less varied. When the Parson made his inspection visit to Weston in 1775 and first stayed at the Parsonage the tenant's wife, young Bridget Dunnell, provided plain repasts, and a single dish to each meal. On one day he reported, seemingly rather disgruntled: "Nothing but Bacon & Eggs to day for Dinner at Weston". Another time he had "minced Veal

& Norfolk dumplins", and a third dish was "a boiled Leg of Mutton & Caper Sauce". Bridget must have been a skilful cook of simple dishes, for he went out of his way to praise this, of which he "eat very hearty, though alone".

Continuing to descend the rungs of the social ladder, we soon discover that the further down we go, the more difficult it becomes to find out what the people lived on. But we soon discern a different style of living altogether. The labouring class in both town and country worked for wages, lived from week to week upon their earnings and had no possessions except, in economic terms, their labour. Unlike the middle classes, whose diet could to some extent be dictated by personal taste, the working class family ate only what it could. And in bad times it could afford very little. Bewick, the engraver, was clearly not describing the worst cases of poverty when he wrote that the poor ate "coarse bread, oatmeal porridge, and milk, which was varied only on Sunday by a stew containing a little meat with cabbage or other succulent vegetables". Oatmeal does in fact frequently appear as the main item in the diet of the poorest people, but the Sunday meat is nothing like so common.

The information about such matters as food and drink in the diary is commonly so full that we tend to forget that there are whole areas within the framework of this topic of which the Parson tells us little or nothing. We know that on each Christmas afternoon his selected "poor old Men" were regaled with roast sirloin of beef, "plumb Pudding" and a glass of his home-brewed strong beer. We do not know what they had to eat for the other 364 days in the year, except that we can be quite sure their ordinary provender would bear no comparison with the food at the rector's house.

A simple explanation of this could be that Woodforde after all was writing Woodforde's diary, not that of Tom Cushion or Richard Buck. But I am sure there is more to it than that. For the diarist gives so many incidental details about the people in social classes beneath his own, that it is permissible to enquire why he was silent about the household economy of many people, about which he must have known a good deal.

I can best explain how I think this came about by telling a true story. A few years ago, at Solihull, near Birmingham, a young artist painted a picture of a starving child, one of the millions of victims of natural or man-made calamities that have so grievously afflicted some parts of the world in our century. It was exhibited with others on the wall of a restaurant. After a day or two the manager of the restaurant asked the painter to take his picture away because it was upsetting the patrons. The artist retrieved his painting, it was hung in another restaurant, and the same sequence of events followed exactly. It may not be the most admirable of human traits – but the fact remains that people who are just about to tuck into a square meal do not like to be reminded of starvation; it may affect their appetite.

We do not have to look far to find an answer to the question why there is so little in Woodforde's diary about the food of poor people. Their meagre rations could not have been considered a proper subject for polite conversation round the well-stocked Parsonage dining table. At Mr. Podsnap's similar table a century later the annoying Frenchman who insisted upon talking about the number of people who died every week of starvation in the streets of London was brusquely put in his place by the offended host. In putting on the old men's Christmas dinner, and inviting workmen and others to eat an occasional meal in the kitchen with his servants, Woodforde was carrying out the basic obligation of charity enjoined on all Christian people, and most of all on the clergy. His own sympathies, too, led him in the same direction. He was sorry for Harry Dunnell, with his shaky health and large family to support; so Harry was given an unusually large number of meals at the Parsonage. But the diarist would not in his wildest dreams have imagined that a poor labourer ought to have as much to eat, or such appetising food, as himself. That notion would have gone dead against the sense of order and proper social gradations, which his contemporaries regarded as a vital element in the healthy functioning of society. But at the same time, there must always have been, as a sinister counterpoint to their waking thoughts, a suppressed, buried fear that in a society in which the extremes of riches and poverty were so vast, the poor might one day rise and take what the wealthy refused to

give them. That fear became acute after the Revolution had broken out in France. We can understand the venom with which people like Tom Paine were assailed for daring to suggest a more equitable way of sharing out the nation's wealth.

So it is not at all surprising that the picture of the rural labourers' life a reader derives from the diary is something more than imperfect, blurred in places, and in others so opaque that we can scarcely discern any of its features. We are so accustomed to associate conditions of gross poverty with large overcrowded cities that, when we discover that in 1801 young Stephen Andrews' house-to-house survey for the census revealed the total population of Weston Longville to be little more than 350, we are tempted to ask ourselves what they had to worry about. It would be more pertinent to enquire how many employers of labour there were in the village. The squire, Woodforde himself, and one or two of the larger and more prosperous farmers about completes that list. Many of the job-opportunities were for domestic servants, a kind of employment for which most of the labouring people would have been little suited. The farm servant like Ben Leggett, who "lived in" and enjoyed the security of his tenure, was getting to be a minority, as the farmers discovered that it was cheaper and more expedient to employ labour on a casual basis.

In spite of there being so much in the social structure and the economic system of the time that worked to their disadvantage, it was not that the labourers and their families were always hungry and miserable. The first half of the century had been, upon the whole, a good time for them. It was rather that their domestic economy was balanced on a knife-edge, and all sorts of unforeseen contingencies could intervene to upset it disastrously. A poor harvest sent up the price of bread and a hard winter meant that the fringe-occupations which kept men in employment during the off-season could not always be prosecuted. In 1795/6 both of these adverse conditions were present, and the better-off had to dig into their pockets to help the poor survive. On 5 February 1796 Woodforde wrote:

> Sent Ben this morning after breakfast to M^{r} Girlings with a ten Pound Note for him to dispose of the same to the Poor of

Weston as he should think best to their advantage in this inclement Season –

By the 19th. of the month the collection had reached the respectable figure of £46.15.0, and Woodforde remarked: "The Money is to be laid out in Bread and Coal". In fact there is no mention of coal being given away. The bread was distributed generally at church on Sundays, after the service, fifty shillings-worth at a time. This went on until 21 July, showing that poverty continued in the village long after the cold weather which had exacerbated it was gone.

It might be permitted to ask here, since the question does seem not to have been put before – in what form did the people eat this charitable bread? After all, dry bread on a freezing winter day, to people whose bodies were likely enough to have been chilled through insufficient heating, could have been appetizing only if they were desperate with hunger; although it is true also that dry bread and cold beer were all that the sons of the rich got at Winchester, after they had been up and attended a chapel service followed by two hours of lessons in the winter. I think it is likely that the villagers poured boiling water over the bread and made it into "Tea kettle broth", which was still a staple of East Anglian farm labourers in the early twentieth century.

We can see from the quotation above that by the term "the Poor" Woodforde meant simply poor people in general. That was the definition accepted by most of his contemporaries. However Edmund Burke, in his *Letters on a Regicide Peace – 3rd. Letter, 1797* remarked incidentally in the course of that work that the only "poor" were the real paupers, those who could not work and lived wholly on relief. This distinction was in effect an attack on the Poor Law with its tendency, since the Speenhamland system was now subsidizing wages out of the parish poor rates, to pauperize the labourer, whether or not he was in work.

In the same year as Burke's letter was published, and two years after the bread had been distributed to the "poor" of Weston Longville, there appeared Sir Frederick Morton Eden's (1766-1809) monumental three-volume work called *The State of the*

Poor; or, an History of the Labouring Classes in England. The title suggests that Eden like others accepted the term as covering all those who found it hard to subsist, whatever their exact status. But in one place in his book he makes a distinction, as Burke did, between the "actual poor", the paupers on relief, and the "labouring part of the community ... whose daily subsistence absolutely depends on the daily unremitting exercize of manual labour". Eden was a follower of Adam Smith, believed in *laissez faire* and disliked the concept of State intervention in matters of social welfare. He criticized the Poor Law, as did many others at the same time, both for its inefficiency and because it was held to undermine the independence of the working man. This is, of course, all part of the great Poor Law debate which went on for centuries. Indeed, echoes of it continue to sound even nowadays, since the pronouncements on the subject of successive Governments alternate between extolling the benefits of the Welfare State and telling us to stand on our own feet!

There was, of course, no poorhouse or "House of Industry" at Weston, but on the basis of such evidence as has survived we can affirm that the village had its long-term paupers, mainly sick or elderly, as well as children being brought up by the parish. We know that the poorest working families could not always survive without the interposition of private charity. Presumably writing after the census of 1801 had been taken, Arthur Young estimated the poor – of both categories, naturally – to number eight millions, out of a total population of nine millions. Assuming that this is correct, and that Weston followed the national percentage, we have a situation in which eight people out of nine are poor, but little sign of any distinction between the workers most affected by poverty and the outright paupers. Certainly to be a pauper carried with it the loss of some civil rights, and was also held to be a social stigma and a disgrace. This accounts for the struggle which some people kept up, to be independent and stay off the parish. But was there much difference, in material terms, between one way of life and another?

We can begin to answer this question only by looking at some factual evidence, which will enlighten us on such topics as income, expenditure, diet, housing and so on. This not being available so far as Weston Longville is concerned, we have to seek it in other sources from which the same or at least recognisably similar conditions may be taken.

This is where Eden comes in very appositely. *The State of the Poor* may be called a very rare, early example of a kind of study which did not become general until the nineteenth century: the social survey, complete with facts and figures. The parallels between these and the working people in Woodforde's diary may seem not to be very close. Eden took most of his data about the poor from towns or, because he was concerned with the impact of industrialism upon village society, from workers in cottage industry rather than from farm labourers. But when allowance has been made for all this we are left with certain features, common to the life of working people at this period, which enable us to reconstruct imaginatively something of the way in which Woodforde's poorer parishioners lived.

Eden printed in his book a number of household budgets, each consisting of expenses set against income. There is naturally considerable diversity among these household accounts, some trades being better paid than others. The number of dependent children in a family, and whether the wife and/or any of the children were earning any money, were also factors to be taken into consideration. Bearing in mind what was previously said about "butcher's meat" being the yardstick of good living, some relatively well-off working class families could afford to spend as much as £60 a year on this. But by far the majority of the accounts show a far lower meat-consumption, and some families did not eat meat at all.

What must surely be the ultimate rock-bottom of quasi-independent poverty is shown in the finances of a hand-spinner

in the village of Seend, Wiltshire. He had been badly hit by the introduction of spinning machinery, which more than halved the value of his output. This man earned 8 shillings a week, about the same as or fractionally higher than the average wages of an agricultural labourer at that time. It is not stated how many children he had, but his wife and their eldest child together made 4/6d., also by spinning. On top of that the parish allowed him 1/6d. a week, which meant that he was technically a pauper, his earnings being made up to a bare subsistence level. The fourteen shillings income was expended in this way:

	s	d	
Bread costs (for about 8 lb. a day)	11	0	a week
Butter, 3 lb. bought of his master at the reduced price	1	6	ditto
Remains for cloaths, and other necessities	1	6	ditto
	14	0	

Nothing is allowed for fuel, and Eden goes on to say that the only way the man could provide heating was by sending his children out to pick up wood, "who are thus, to some degree, educated in the art of thieving". They lived in a house built on the wasteland, which was "in a very ruinous condition". The man could not afford to repair it himself, and was afraid to ask the parish to do it, in case they claimed the house from him. If he had had to pay the rent of a cottage it would have cost him from £1.10.0 to £3 a year.

A widow in the same parish with eight children had an almost identically low income, but spent in a rather different way. Her eldest son was a bricklayer earning 1/8d. a day, a skilled man's wage, but he had a home of his own and gave his mother only 6d. a week "for washing and mending". The second son was also settled away from home. The third and fourth sons brought in five shillings between them, but the employment of one of them was irregular. The widow and her two eldest daughters earned four shillings spinning; "but work of this kind cannot always be procured". She was given five shillings by the parish. This money was spent as follows:

	s	d
Barley flour	8	3
Yeast, 2d., salt, 3d.	0	5
Tea, 2 oz.	0	6
Butter, 2 lb.	1	8
Cheese	0	7½
Soap and blue	0	4¼
Candles	0	7
Thread and worsted	0	3
Coals	1	0
Garden-stuff, chiefly potatoes	0	9
	14	4¾

This family – the widow was described as "a decent, frugal, and industrious woman" – could at the best actually have a whole penny-farthing over at the end of the week, which we can only hope made them as happy as Mr. Micawber said such triumphs of solvency always did. The barley bread was home-baked; when it had to be bought, a week's supply of bread cost 13 or 14 shillings, almost as much as the family's entire collective earnings. Nothing is entered in respect of clothing, "which they could give no account of". The implication must be either that this was supplied by private charity or given by the parish.

We have, therefore, details of one family which lived wholly and another partially upon bread and butter. Eden calls them "a fair specimen of the general mode of living, among the labouring people in this county; except that when the husband is dissolute, or the wife idle, the distress is infinitely greater". To which it might be asked how dissolute could you be on fourteen bob a week, even if you drank the lot?

It is only fair to say that Wiltshire and neighbouring Dorset had over very many years the lowest wage rates in the kingdom. If one compares the above figures with another set from the city of Manchester, a better standard of living becomes apparent. A carter there with five children earned 12/- a week, "constant wages", his wife had 6/- a week "by roving cotton" and two daughters did nursing and brought in 4/6d. Bread was still the largest item of expenditure but this family spent 1/6d. on meat, the same amount on potatoes; they had milk, cheese and butter,

and as much as £5 a year went on clothes. But this was too high a living standard even for the superior wages, and as a result the family was living above its means. There was an excess of expenditure over income amounting to £3.12.0 in a year.

However, by far the most graphic and revealing of all these accounts is one which concerned a farm worker at Monmouth. I quote the account in full, for it really opens the door and takes the reader inside the home of this very poor worker. As such, it provides an admirable background to what we read about the labourers in Parson Woodforde's diary:

> Samuel Price, a labourer, 52 years old, has a wife and 9 children, viz. a girl aged 17, who is subject to fits, and not able to work; a boy, aged 16, at service; a boy, 15, at home; another boy, 14, at home; 3 girls, 12, 10, and 8 years old; a boy, 3, and another boy, 1½ years old; the wife is now pregnant.

	£	s	d
The father, mostly, works for a gentleman at 8s. a week, and beer; except in hay and corn harvest, when he has 1s.6d. a day, and victuals; annual amount about	21	3	0
The boy, who is 15 years old, earns, by going on errands, &c. about	2	12	0
The other children earn nothing, but pick sticks for fuel in the winter	0	0	0
The wife earns, by baking bread for sale, annually about	1	5	0
	£25	0	0

EXPENCES

The man says, bread at present costs him about 9s. a week throughout the year, and that he could use more if he could get it	23	8	0
Butter and cheese, about 6d. a week; he uses neither meat nor beer	1	6	0
Tea and sugar, about 4d. do.	0	17	4
Potatoes, 6d. a week	1	6	0
Fuel	0	8	8
House-rent	2	2	0
Soap, candle, thread, &c. about	1	6	0
	£30	14	0

Here appears a deficiency of £5.14; yet, the man says that his children mostly go without shoes and stockings, and that the cloaths worn by him and his family are, mostly, if not wholly, given them by charitable people. The gentleman, for whom this labourer works, allows him about 3 pints of milk a day, which, with a little bread, serves his children for breakfast; his wife drinks tea; their dinner is, bread, potatoes, and salt, sometimes a little fat, or dripping, if it can be procured cheap; their supper, generally bread, or potatoes. The man says, his family is little more than half supplied with what they could eat. He rents his house of the corporation of Monmouth, at 2 guineas a year; but not being able to pay his rent, he says, they lately seized on all his working tools, some of his furniture, &c. and sold them, so that he is obliged to borrow spades, axes, &c.: he applied to the parish for relief; which they offered, on condition that he would come into the poor-house with all his family; which he has hitherto refused to do. From farther enquiry, it appears, that the man is honest and industrious. He is determined to remain in his house, in defiance of the corporation. His children having been bred up in idleness, and in the most abject illiterate state, (although several of them have been in service,) are so saucy, that no person will employ them.

*

We may now return to our original query, as to whether it was better or worse to be an outright pauper, deriving all one's livelihood from official charity, than to struggle along on the lowest possible level of bare subsistence. We have seen the corporation of Monmouth pressurizing Samuel Price to move into the workhouse with his family. The motives which impelled very poor people like him to resist "the house" for as long as they could possibly survive outside it were doubtless extremely mixed, and had to do at least as much with pride and a fear of losing their personal liberty and being regimented, as with material considerations. But if we pose a simpler question – would the Price family have lived and eaten better in the local workhouse? – we are in a position to return something of an answer. The "Bill of Fare" for that very establishment is printed in *The State of the Poor*, and here it is, for comparison with the household budget already given:

	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Sunday,	Milk pottage	Meat and vegetables	Bread and cheese
Monday,	Broth	Bread and cheese	Ditto
Tuesday,	As Sunday	As Sunday	Ditto
Wednesday,	As Monday	As Monday	Ditto
Thursday,	As Sunday	As Sunday	Ditto
Friday,	As Monday	As Monday	Ditto
Saturday,	As Sunday	Ditto	Ditto

Now, even the most friendly critic of the workhouse system could hardly fail to detect a certain tendency towards monotony in this diet. In particular, the provision of supper does not seem to have exercised anyone's imagination unduly. Again, the quality of the food provided must always remain in question. The "milk pottage" could have consisted very largely of tap-water, and "broth" have contained almost anything the workhouse cook chose to sling into it. All the same, it must be counted as a considerable improvement on the kind of food Samuel Price was providing for his family by his own efforts.

Perhaps the larger towns, with greater problems, had at the same time more to offer in this direction. What seems, at least on paper, to be a much less cheeseparing weekly menu was provided by the workhouse for the city of Bristol in the same period:

	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Sunday,	Water-gruel	Soup made of bullock's head	Bread and cheese
Monday,	Ditto	Pease-soup	Ditto
Tuesday,	Meat and potatoes	Ditto	
Wednesday,	Broth	Bread and cheese	Ditto
Thursday,	Water-gruel	As Tuesday	Ditto
Friday,	Broth	Pease-soup	Ditto
Saturday,	Gruel	Bread and cheese	Ditto

This list, which shows some attempt made to vary from day to day a fairly narrow range of dishes, is of particular interest because the amounts allowed are stated:

> 1 lb. of meat, and the same quantity of bread, are allowed to each person, on meat days. On Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 6 oz. of cheese are allowed for the 2 meals; and on other days, 3 oz.: the Poor eat their victuals in their lodging rooms.

At the same time, it must be stressed that we do not know how closely such a list as this would correspond to the reality of what was actually doled out. No doubt the starving paupers featured in the various workhouse "scandals" which were to surface at intervals for the next half-century appeared also to be protected by similar documents. But the workhouse master of Andover in the most famous of all these cases sold the paupers' rations in the town. As a result, when stocks of bones were collected from the slaughterhouse to be broken up for the local glue factory, the famished inmates fought one another for the fragments of putrid marrow in the bones.

In some cases, the workhouse was "farmed": that is, a private person undertook to provision and run the workhouse in return for a fixed sum of money. Clearly, his profit vanished unless he could carry out his obligation for less money than he had been given, and under such an abusive system he had a direct incentive to skimp the diet of the paupers.

But we have not quite yet plumbed the depths of misery. The very low-paid workers and the poorhouse inmates alike both had a supply of food, however inadequate, and a roof over their heads. The beggars and vagrants who roamed the highways could be certain of nothing except hunger, cold and a final miserable end. The unemployed and unemployable, petty criminals, disabled persons, children whose parents had died or abandoned them, the very old and the sick and the demented made up a huge mass of human flotsam who lived outside the social structure altogether. Woodforde's diary, and that of Dorothy Wordsworth only a few years later, are the most eloquent witness of this. They were the hapless casualties of a society which so far had not evolved even the most rudimentary

notion of its own responsibility to provide for the well-being of its members.

In very general terms, it may be said that moving down from one social group to another, reasonably good living standards obtained as far as the superior artisan and shopkeeper class in the towns and the small farmer, or farmer-cum-tradesman in the rural areas. From that point everyone was on the poverty line, or below it. Much is heard today about "the quality of life". We find it difficult even to imagine either the physical or the mental life of the very poor in Woodforde's day. They lived in a society which built magnificent houses, created a countryside more beautiful than it had ever been, or would be again, made the most exquisite things for human use or adornment, produced the poetry of Pope and the paintings of Gainsborough – and eight out of nine people were hopelessly deprived of everything that went to make up what we should call an acceptable level of civilized life.

*

A member of the Society once urged me to write a historical novel based on Woodforde and life at the Parsonage. My answer was that it is difficult enough to write novels based on contemporary society, where you can at least see something of what is going on, let alone trying to re-create a long vanished era, for which so much vital evidence has been lost. However, if any aspiring literary person would like to try his or her hand at such a work of art, I am prepared to donate a synopsis of one scene, free of charge.

A typical Woodforde dinner-party is in progress at the Parsonage, in the "great Parlour". All the guests are tucking into the rich food, and chattering away about whatever it was that used to form the staple of conversation at that table, something the diarist never tells us. A guest who has never been there before, and certainly will not be invited again, has just got through all three volumes of *The State of the Poor*, and become conscious of all the hungry people who crowd the pages of that book. In a lull in the conversation, he murmurs apologetically about the poor in really bad times having no bread.

Mrs. Davie, that brash woman – we have type-cast her in the role of the pushing, overblown widow so familiar in eighteenth century novels and plays – now perceives her chance to shine. Elevating her voice so that it echoes down the table, she asks brightly:

Why don't they eat New College pudding?

All conversation instantly ceases; and the Parson decides that, after all, he doesn't like her very much. End of scene.

Yes, I know that Woodforde had finished with the Davies years before Eden's book came out, and anyway he was no longer giving big dinner-parties by then. He never put New College pud on the Norfolk table, so she could not have sampled it and probably never heard of the stuff. That is what we historical novelists call artistic licence. Next question, please!

NOTES AND QUERIES

Flat Fish (Journal XVII. 2, Notes & Queries)

A "Compleat Angler" friend of Mrs. Phyllis Stanley, who regularly fishes in the Wensum, thinks that when Woodforde mentions flat fish as far inland as Lenwade, he was referring to small bream. These fish are very flat: vertically flat, not horizontally flat. Being "bottom feeders" they are very muddy fish and not very good eating. In the Diary they were distributed among "the poor" who, no doubt, were pleased to accept fish of any quality.

Tea or Coffee?

From the helpful information received in answer to the query as to whether people were in the habit of drinking tea or coffee or both (Journal XVII. 2, Notes & Queries), it is beginning to look as if they drank both, one after the other: an idea definitely distasteful to the twentieth century palate.

Mrs. Vera Cunningham has drawn my attention to the Diary entry for 28 April 1779, when Parson Woodforde rode over to Sparham "and made a visit to the Rev^{d}. M^{r}. Attle, who behaved

very complaisant and civil tho' a visit so long due to him from me. I drank a dish of Coffee, and one dish of Tea there and returned home," adding that "Mr. Attle has a noble House and his Fields about him look exceeding neat and well – He built the House himself and it cost 1000· Pound." Maybe the serving of both coffee and tea was expected with this standard of living?

Miss Penny Taylor writes: "Tea, coffee and chocolate were all introduced into England in the 1650s, and seem to have been served together, although chocolate (in a two-handled cup with a lid) became more of an "early morning" drink. Fanny Boscawen's letters mention that she was in the habit of drinking both, and account for her being unwell "by drinking both coffee and tea at breakfast." (1799).

A Worcester cup of the period in my possession holds three fluid ounces, about average for the conventional coffee cup. *Life in a Noble Household* refers to individuals having their own sets of cups. Lady Margaret Russell (1685) had a set (number unspecified) of "tea dishes" costing £1.14.0. and, three years later, bought a set of six, costing £1.4.0. While in residence in Oxford Woodforde records the purchase of "half a Dozen stone Coffee Cups", and the Parsonage sale inventory includes "12 blue and white cups and saucers, and six china breakfast do": also "11 cups and saucers and 3 basons".

The date of the introduction of "afternoon tea", complete with plates, is difficult to trace, but it was well established as a separate meal by the 1840s (Charlotte Brontë). I imagine it came when the dinner hour became earlier and supper later.

Mr. George Bunting refers to Trollope. In *A Small House at Allington,* the penultimate Barchester novel, one of the characters is Adolphus Crosbie, one of Trollope's near-villains. He jilts Lily Dale, the gentle daughter of a widow, for Lady Alexandrina De Courcy. His punishment, after marriage, is dullness and boredom. It is related of him that, after a dreary dinner, "he would go upstairs, and have, first a cup of coffee, and then a cup of tea". This reads as an element of farce, until it is realised that it was probably normal behaviour.

A Chelsea tea service, evidently new, sold by Mr. Christie on 17 February 1770, links the tea and coffee correspondence with the "curious Cabinet" (Journal XVII, 2, Notes & Queries).

> Lot 70 A very curious and matchless tea and coffee equipage, crimson and gold, most inimitably enamelled in figures, from the designs of Watteau, consisting of 12 tea cups with handles and saucers, six coffee ditto, tea pot and stand, slop bason, sugar dish and cream ewer 431 ls.'

The use of the word "curious" seems to confirm that when Woodforde bought his "curious cabinet" he meant "well made", a meaning corroborated by O.E.D.

Hake – see Five Weston Poor Law Documents (Journal XVII. 3, 23 ed.)

1. Chambers' Dictionary: "A hook, especially a pot hook."
2. From Dick Joice: "Over the Fire in the living Room was a Hake on which mother allus hung the big iron kettle (held a gallon water), a Big Boiler, or the Frying Pan (Frying Pan allus hung over the Fire.)"
3. From Beatrix Potter: *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers:* "He jumped right up into the chimney, balancing himself on the iron bar where the kettle hangs."

From Miss Bertha Fügl of Norwich, who adds: " 'Black as the hakes' is still said by some ancient people."

From *The Vocabulary of East Anglia* (1830) Robert Forby; David & Charles reprints: "Hake, s. a pot hook. The progress is: *hook, hoke, hake*; but this is inverted order. Ours is the ancient word from which the others came." (Ed. Notes & Queries).

Notes on the Widows' Cottages, Greensgate, Weston Longville

Miss Penny Taylor writes: Note the following reference to the Widows' Charity: "Will[m] Large who now lives in the Cottage where Johnny Heavers did (belonging to the Widows Charity) given by one Chapman to these poor Widows – called on me this Morn' ... –Beresford V, 289 – 13/12/1800.

The cottages would appear to have been at least two attached buildings. In 1761 one was occupied by John Grave (Greaves ?) and the other(s) by four widows, who would be unlikely to have had a whole cottage apiece. Presumably the "other cottage" was allocated to paupers, failing a supply of widows. The rent seems to have been £3.0.0 p.a. for each, but what the conditions of tenancy were is not clear – Woodforde notes various occasions when he was paid rent, usually around 14 December.

In 1793 (not 1791) both buildings appear to have been housing families, not widows – Peachman, whose house was burnt down on Easter Sunday, and Heavers, whose cottage narrowly missed the fire – hence the assumption that the buildings were attached. The Peachmans were no doubt rehoused by the parish, and J.W. notes on 17/5/1793 that it was decided to "build a Barn for the other Cottage." This was finished on 11/6/1793.

The Heavers continued in occupation until 1798, and on 14 December Squire Custance asked Woodforde to allow William Large, who had succeeded Thurston as parish clerk, "to have John Heavers's House & Land if he leaves the same as Mr. C. would wish to have him live nearer Weston-House as he works continually there and to live where poor Tom Thurston did."

When Large paid the rent in 1800 it had risen to £5.0.0. Perhaps it was increased after the barn was built and more land added.

A NOTE ON *AUTHORITY VERSUS JOHN PEDDLE*

In the second of the two articles, published in the last issue of the Journal, written to illustrate some aspects of Woodforde's activity as a Pro Proctor of the University, I put in a few words about the performers at the Sheldonian Theatre on that afternoon, or evening, when Woodhouse and Peddle made such nuisances of themselves.

Mary Linley, indeed, is well enough known. She turns up in all the biographies of Sheridan, and there is an excellent book devoted to the Linley family, *The Linleys of Bath* by Clementina

Black (1911), a new edition of which was issued only a few years ago. Mary is also associated with the art of Gainsborough, who painted a most exquisite full-length portrait of her and her sister. This is in the Dulwich College Picture Gallery. I was brought up near that neighbourhood and have known the picture all my life. Who knows, perhaps the sight of it and others like it, caught at an impressionable age, contributed towards creating my interest in the eighteenth century.

Only after the essay was written did I discover that two of the other musicians present, Cecilia Davies and "Mr. Crosdall", have notices in D.N.B. We can put them together and compare them, as confirmation of an irrefutable fact of life, that some receive the ha'pence and others little but the kicks.

John Crosdill was probably born in 1751. He began his musical career as a choirboy at Westminster Abbey. On 4/2/1768 he was elected a member of the Royal Society of Musicians, while in 1769 his long association with the Three Choirs Festivals began. In 1776 he became principal 'cello in the Concert of Antient Music, and two years later was appointed violinist at the Chapel Royal, a post he kept for the remainder of his life. At the same time he also became a member of the king's private band. He was principal 'cellist at the great Handel Festival in 1784. About 1790 he married "a lady of fortune", and was enabled to retire, although he played in public so late as 1821, at the coronation of George IV. He died in 1825.

Cecilia Davies (1750?-1836) – but her real birth-date may have been 1740, since one source records that her first public appearance was at a concert in 1756. Her father was living in 1751 "opposite the Golden Leg in Long Acre", but the family made frequent summer trips to the Continent to fulfil musical engagements. In Vienna she and her sister Marianne taught the young Archduchesses, daughters of Maria Theresia, and she also sang in Milan, Florence and Naples, being indeed the first Englishwoman to sing on the Italian stage. She appeared in London in 1773, and at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford in the following year, as well as at the Encaenia performance mentioned in our essay; but in 1784/5 Lord Mount Edgcumbe

found both sisters in Florence, poor and without work. D.N.B. says that her first appearance in oratorio in England was at Drury Lane in 1791, but this can be right only if *Hercules* is considered an opera not an oratorio at all. By that date she must have been well past her peak. Soon after, she ceased to appear in public and fell into poverty, which she tried to relieve on one occasion about 1817 by publishing a collection of songs by various composers. She existed on a pension of £25 a year from the National Benevolent Fund, with donations from the Royal Society of Musicians. Bedridden for many years, she died at last, "forgotten and deserted", in Great Portland Street, London, on 3/7/1836. Only two people attended her funeral. D.N.B. mutters disapprovingly: "She was a good actress, but thoroughly italianized by her foreign education". (ed.)

COLLATED CHARACTERS 2

Reeves, Thomas and John

Thomas Reeves, or "Doctor", makes his mark very early in the Weston part of Woodforde's diary, being called in on 4 June 1776, just eleven days after the diarist's arrival at the parsonage, to draw a tooth that had been giving trouble for some days. He made rather a bad job of it, and the diarist's words are indelibly written on the reader's memory: ". . . he came and drew my Tooth but shockingly bad indeed, he broke away a great piece of my Gum & broke one of the Fangs of the Tooth it gave me exquisite Pain all the Day after and my Face was swelled prodigiously in the Evening & much Pain. Very bad in much Pain the whole Day long – Gave the old Man that drew it however 0.2.6. He is too old I think to draw Teeth, can't see very well . . ."

Thomas was then 64 and must also have been failing in his veterinary work. In 1780 Woodforde was so dissatisfied with his treatment of "My great Horse" (Jack), that he would not employ Thomas again. "The Dr. gave Ben a draught for him to take, but the poor Horse was so ill on his return that we could not give it him, and about 10 o'clock this morning died. Am very sorry for him as he was so good natured a Beast . . . I could not have thought he would have died so soon . . ."

In March 1783 Thomas died, and his son John (Johnny) with whom Woodforde was to have a long and more profitable association as landlord of the Hart, not only supplied port and rum to supplement the parsonage stocks, and simple domestic remedies such as "yellow Basilicum" but maintained the veterinary and "medical" sidelines, attending cows Patty and Polly – which involved the rather drastic "cure" for "Tail-shot" and dealings with old blind Rodney, who figured in the final parsonage sale as a "useful horse".

Johnny Reeves was in demand in his roles of dentist and unqualified practitioner of smallpox inoculation. Unfortunately we have no account of his inoculation technique: "Sherwood's daughter and Cuppers Daughter that were inoculated by Johnny Reeves a fortnight ago . . . are now seized with the small Pox in the natural way . . . tho' they were supposed to be out of it by being inoculated." (8/4/1791). Woodforde had, however, trusted him to draw a tooth in 1785, although it turned out to be "a tremendous crash".

Johnny Reeves seems to have given up the Hart between May 1799 and June 1800, when he is noted by Woodforde as being at Ringland, but he still came over to Weston to treat the parsonage livestock, when required. He and his wife had numerous children, among them being the well-remembered Tabitha Bithia, baptised by Woodforde in March 1785. Mrs. Reeves is noted as taking Betty Dade to Dereham in her "little cart" to visit Betty's brother, the Master of the House of Industry there.

"Mr. Reeve" attended the sale of Woodforde's goods in 1803 and is recorded as having bought some domestic items, but does not seem to have been interested in anything other than "a pair of steelyards" – perhaps those used in 1799, when Woodforde and Mr. Page Junior of Attlebridge did not agree about the weight of a haystack – "Pro futuro – Cavete Venditores."

"Poor Old Thomas Cushion" (Cushing)

The sparse entries for Tom Cushing, with never a comment or an aside from Woodforde, indicate that apart from his activities in "Pigg" killing, mole-catching, and hedging and ditching, his

chief aim in life was to attend the Parson's Christmas Dinners, tottering home to his wife replete with roast beef and plum pudding, and clutching J.W.'s shilling for his wife Mary. He figured among the ancients who took part in the Beating of Weston Parish bounds on 5 May 1780, receiving a present of half a guinea for his efforts from Squire Custance. One can assume that his regular performance of these tasks in the rustic calendar brought him a scanty living until his death on 7 September 1787 at the age of 82. No doubt the "Piggs" of Weston Longville, so many of whose relatives he had bumped off at a shilling a time, received the news with quiet satisfaction and were given a brief respite until his successor took over.

Mary Cushing, 19 years younger than her husband, died a month before him. Perhaps we may supply a smutch of poetry as an epitaph for them both:

"... he for a little tried
To live without her: liked it not, and died."

William Mason of Sparham

> Mason of Sparham came to my House with his 10 bells this Afternoon and played before my Company and they were as well pleased as Children on hearing them. (30/12/1778)

The first reference to Mason credits him with "12 bells put in a Machine of his own making" in 1776. The following year Woodforde notes 10 bells. Later Mason acquired a "Bell Harp" – at one point referred to by Woodforde as "wire Musick". On this occasion Mrs. Mason came with her husband. He was generally entertained in the parsonage kitchen on his visits, which occurred in December, mainly after Christmas. On one occasion he is recorded as being the bearer of a message from Woodforde to the Rev. Mr. Stoughton of Sparham. After the early years, when his "tip" was 1/-, he was usually given 1/6d. and on the occasion when his wife accompanied him, they received 2/-.

William Aldridge of Norwich

> One M^{r} Aldridge who carries about Cottons, Linnens, Muslins, Lace, Holland &c. in a Cart and comes round regularly this way once in ten Weeks, called at my House this morning –

> One Mr Aldridge who carries about Cottons, Linnens, Muslins, Lace, Holland &c. in a Cart and comes round regularly this way once in ten Weeks, called at my House this morning –

Mr. Aldridge, apart from being a regular supplier of material for Woodforde's morning gowns, also provided dress lengths for Nancy and the maids, sometimes given by the Parson as presents, also ribband for purses, cotton scraps for patchwork, thick stockings for the gout, and "Castle Cary stockings". On one occasion he sold Nancy a scarf-shawl "as good as new", returned by a Miss Stone. This seems to have been a general practice, since Nancy herself secured on approval for three months a gown from the Burdons, another pair of travelling drapers, noting in her diary for 1792 that she had decided to keep it and had paid the 2½ guineas asked. In December 1795 Aldridge paid a bill for Woodforde to a London peruke maker for a wig bought earlier. It was always an occasion when he called, and only rarely that Woodforde bought nothing. Like many callers at the Parsonage, Aldridge was given dinner in the kitchen.

PARSON WOODFORDE SOCIETY
COMMITTEE 1984/85

Revd. Canon Leslie Rule Wilson ..... President
G. H. Bunting ..... Chairman
Mrs. M. Matthews ..... Vice-Chairman
R. L. Winstanley ..... Editor
Mrs. P. Stanley ..... Secretary
Dr. H. Boardman
Miss B. S. Custance
Dr. N. Custance
J. E. Holmes
Mrs. S. Knight, M.B.E.
Miss D. W. Taylor

Annual Membership Subscription £5.00

CASTLE CARY PRESS LTD, SOMERSET